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Dakota took in a deep breath. He could feel his lungs getting weak already.

"What do we do, then?" He asked. 3 Tho, he was worried, but you'd never see it on his face.

"I think there's a healer around here – one I know of. We can go to her" Raksha suggested.

"Do you trust her?" "Yes. Yes. She's good". Raksha nodded and stepped out of the carriage afterwards.

He got outside and met the rest of the guards around.

"One of the enemies are alive" One of the guards pointed out, and Raksha rushed over to see the rogue breathing weakly on the floor, wounded and unconscious.

"Tie him up and bring him along" Raksha said to the guard who nodded.

"We head that way! The King needs a healer"" He pointed out, and they all got onto their horses. Shilah, after receiving the signal, returned to the carriage and was shocked to find the King in that state. Oh, no.... "My King" she wanted to call out, but restricted herself as she realized she wasn't that close to the King yet.

The side of his belly was bleeding and she noticed his breath was getting shorter. It was obviously from the fight. Was he going to be fine?

King Dakota didn't look at her as he leaned closer to the window and tried taking in the pains. He was never the type to show weakness and he wasn't ready to change that theory.

But Shilah was so worried as she didn't need anyone to tell her the King was really in pains. She wanted to touch him, comfort him, but didn't have the guts to.

"M.... My King" she stuttered. "Is... Is there anything I can do to help?"

But Dakota gave no reply. So, she just sat still as the carriage started moving.

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They didn't ride for too long before the carriage actually stopped moving and Shilah felt hopeful they'd'arrived at the healer's place.

The door opened almost immediately with Raksha showing up.

"We're here now, King. Come on" he helped Dakota out of the carriage, and with his hand over his shoulder, he led him into the old looking house in front of them.

Shilah' also stepped out and looked around, realizing the healer's house was actually the only house around the vicinity. An elderly woman came rushing out of it.

"What's happening...." She wore a perturbed look. "We need your help, healer" Raksha answered as he walked with Dakota towards the door. "The King!" The woman gasped. "It's the King!"

She ran and made the door wide enough for them to pass through. While the rest of the guards remained outside, Shilah went in with Raksha and the King.

"What happened to him?' the woman asked as she trailed behind them, into the sitting room which only contained some wooden chairs.

There was a staircase and Shilah could tell the house contained so many rooms. "We were attacked. Where do I drop him?" Raksha asked, not finding any bed around.

"Oh! Please, bring him here" the woman led them to a corner where they got to a door and opening it, they found a bed.

She helped Raksha lay the King on the bed since he was already unconscious. Well, King Dakota was quite a hefty man. It wouldn't be easy carrying him all by yourself.

A younger lady showed up at the door way instantly, a lady who was of the same height with Shilah.

Her eyes were dimming as she looked around to know who was being brought in. Her mother never brings anyone into that room unless it was someone very important. And she's never had such *important* person in months.

Well, her curiousity was fed when she discovered it was the King. And after having a glimpse of him at the bed, the next sight her eyes caught was that of a lady who got her frozen.

"Zoe" the woman called, sounding relived. "Thank the spirits you're here. Please, get me some water in a bowl"

But the Zoe didn't make a move as she just kept her gaze fixed on Shilah who had also turned to look at her. Shilah was confused. Was it just her, or the lady was particularly staring 'incongruously at her?

"Zoe?" The woman called with ached brows, wondering why her daughter was not making a move yet. "Didn't you hear what I said? I said I need some water. Now".

And slowly, the lady turned around and left.

Shilah was fixed for a few seconds, wondering what had been wrong with the lady.

"The claws that did this to him were poisoned" the woman's voice snapped her out of her thoughts as she turned to look at her.

"I know. Will he be fine?" Raksha asked.

"Of course; of course. It's a good thing you brought him in time. I'll just wait for the water before going to get the right herbs". The healer replied and that was all Shilah needed to hear. She had been so worried and hoping the King would really be fine.

Her hands were fiddling with the sides of her dress as she took a minute to scrutinize the room. Well, it appeared to be just a patient's room as all it had was the bed, a chair beside it, and a table containing some bottles, books, herbs....

The door burst open with the lady showing up again with the bowl of water. Just like before, her eyes were pinned on Shilah as she walked towards her mother with the bowl.

The healer was a little muddled at her daughter's reactions and was beginning to wonder if everything was fine with her. Or if she knew Shilah from somewhere.

Shilah was the most disturbed as that was the first time a person was staring at her that way. The lady didn't even look familiar. She had a ruffled hair which fell over her shoulders, some dark lining below her big white eyes and this cold, mean look. But she was beautiful.

She handed the bowl to her mother and took her gaze away from Shilah – finally.

"Thank you, Zoe" the healer said. "Now, I need you to get me some chamomile, gingko, and echinacea. Please, be fast with it".

And the lady just needed and left the room.

Well, the healer was used to her daughter being that cold because she was the type that never talked much. You could say she was rude as well. But, what she couldn't understand was why she was staring at the King's wife that way.

Shilah was also disturbed but decided not to rack her head over it as her main target was the King. Was he really going to be fine?

She watched restlessly as the woman used the water on the King's wounded spot, washing off the bloodstain. Was she doing a good job and could be trusted?

Hopefully, she was. Healers weren't witches, but just people with a wide knowledge of herbs and how to use them. Shilah was also a lover of herbs and had wanted to become a healer herself, but unfortunately, she didn't come from a family that could sponsor her. Anyways, she still read the little she could about them and with the herbs the healer had asked that lady to get, she could tell she was doing a good job.

They stayed in the room for a long time as the woman continued cleaning off the bloodstain.

"I need to get something" she suddenly said. "I'll be needing your help, please". She was referring to Raksha.

"If my daughter returns before I do, please let her know I'll be back soon" she told Shilah who nodded. And as she left the room, Raksha followed.

Shilah took in a deep breath, realizing she was the only one in the room with the King. She moved closer to him, noting how hard he was breathing. Oh! Whatever the healer had to do, she needed to be fast about it.

She sighed deeply and lowered herself to the side of the bed. If only she could say a prayer...

"I hope you get better" she placed her hand on his and cooed and instantly, she noticed a change in the rise and fall of his chest.

He breathed deeply and afterwards, stopped the heavy breaths. He was breathing normal! Tho, his eyes were not open.

Suddenly, she heard the door open and turned to see the same lady walking in with a bow of several roots and leaves. No doubt, they were the herbs the healer had asked her to get.

Zoe – her name – walked into the room with slackened steps, holding the bowl to her tummy with her cold gaze on Shilah, we usual.

Shilah swallowed hard as the lady got close. Who was this lady? And what has she done to deserve such uncanny stares?

Zoe got to the bed and placed the bowl on the floor.

"Um... your mother said to tell you she'll be back soon" Shilah decided to deliver the message as the lady stood upright after dropping the bowl. 2

She said nothing, only spared Shilah a stare before turning away and walking towards the door.

But just as she got close, she stopped and turned around to face Shilah.

"Why do you look so innocent, when you're not?" She asked. Shilah stood up from where she had been sitting immediately. She whirled around to look at the lady, her brows arching in confusion.

Zoe went on, her eyes having a mixture of ice and flames in them: "Why do you look so calm, when you're a storm? So weak, when you're the strongest of them all?

"I see you, slitting the throats of many; Bringing the mighty to their knees; Making men shiver at the mention of your name. The innocence you wear on your face, would only last for a short time. Who are you?" 17

Shilah could feel her heart in her throat and couldn't even gulp anything down.

Cold shivers sizzled through her body as she listened to what seemed like a dream to her. What's she.... What's she talking about? 3

Saying nothing else, Zoe turned around and left the room.

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Shilah's head wouldn't stop spinning from what the lady had said even after she left for a long time already.

What was sheWhat was she talking about?

She stood fixated, just staring at the closed door and tried digesting the words in:

Why do you look so innocent, when you're not? Her first question replayed in her head. What did she mean by that? Coulf it be possible... she was actually mistaking her for someone else? Oh, no....

The door opened immediately with the healer returning Raksha. They carried some supplies with them.

"My daughter arrived already?" The healer asked after noticing the bowl on the floor, and Shilah simply nodded.

She swallowed hard and went closer to the wall, her hand on her chest. Her attention was helplessly divided – she was trying to see how the King was being treated and was also thinking about what the lady had said. No matter how hard she tried, the words just wouldn't leave her head.

She stayed that way for a long time and didn't even realize when the healer finished with the King.

"Now, what next?" Raksha asked, staring at the King who seemed asleep.

"We'll just give him sometime. He'll definitely be fine" The healer answered reassuringly. "I'll take my leave now" she added and left.

Shilah had listened to them and felt relived that the King was really going to be fine. Her eyes glanced through the window and she noticed how dark it es. Definitely, there was noway they could ride back to the palace at that time. So, it would have to be the next day.

"Queen Shilah" Raksha suddenly called, turning to look at her. She couldn't tell if she was mistaken, or she really heard some echoes of sarcasm in his voice. "I hope you can go hungry for the night because we have nothing here".

"Of... Of course" Shilah gulped hard. She's been hungrier than this when she was with her family.

"Good. You can sleep here then" he added and walked away, leaving Shilah alone in the room with the King.

Shilah exhaled deeply as she dragged her legs towards the chair beside the bed and sat on it. Her eyes WERE pinned on the King, noting how he slept. But, was he really sleeping? To her, he was just unconscious and looked restless.

AT THE PALACE

Queen Nosheba could be seen at the balcony, staring into space as she held a wooden cup of wine in her hand. The cold air hit hard at the edges of her dress and swiped them up a little. Of course, it was very big and there was no way her body could be exposed.

It was dark and Nosheba had always enjoyed gazing up at the twinkling stars. Oh! Very soon, it'd be full moon.

You'll always be as useless as your mother! Those words hit hard st her and she drank angrily from her wine. Urgh! Could she ever get rid of those memories?

She continued staring into the dark space and sipping from her wine at intervals until she suddenly heard that familiar voice:

"The King is yet to return, yet his beloved wife stands at the balcony, sipping some wine like a visitor".

Nosheba scoffed, rolled her eyes and turned to see Chaska standing in front of her.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself, Nosheba? You act like a thing doesn't bother you"

"What exactly is your problem, Chaska?" Nosheba snapped. "Do you ever get tired of talking? No wonder the King married you, shortly after he married you". 1

"Yet, you still can't give him what he wants" Chaska replied, earning a glare from Nosheba. 2 "The King rode out for a meeting earlier this morning and is yet to return. But you don't even seem to care. Can you ever be useful?"

"Well, if you're so worried, why don't you take a horse, go out and find him?"
Nosheba rolled her eyes. Truth was, she had also been thinking about it. That was actually the reason she was there at the balcony, trying to see if they'd return.

"You've always been too pathetic, Nosheba. Now, I know I was never wrong to have said the King made a grave mistake in getting married to you" Chaska turned around to leave.

"When will you stop feeling bittered towards me and embrace the fact that you're not the only woman of the King?" Nosheba asked and Chaska stopped walking, but didn't turn to look at her.

"You know, I'd suggest you just wait until I give the King a male child. I promise you, Chaska, I'll put you in your place".

"That'll never happen!" Chaska whirled her head to look at her, her eyes blazing.

"Really? Well, just wait and see then". Nosheba chuckled and walked away.

*

BACK AT THE HEALERS PLACE

Why do you look innocent, when you're not? Why do you look calm, when you're a storm? I see you, slitting the throats of many, bringing the mighty to their knees, making men tremble at the mention of your name

Those were the words that echoed in Dakota's head as he turned uncomfortably in his sleep. He felt so tired and dizzy, but due to his unfortunate nature, he couldn't fall asleep. And finally, his eyes went open.

Deep breaths – that was what he took as he looked around and found Shilah sitting on a chair in front of him.

His body...he noticed he had been dressed in something more casual. Where was he?

"A healer's place" the answer echoed in his head. And again, his eyes went to Shilah.

Shilah had been sitting and watching the King as he struggled in his sleep. She felt so bad for him; so pathetic. It wasn't long before his eyes fluttered open and he looked at her. Oh, no ..He shouldn't be awake now. He really needed some sleep.

Dakota wondered what the words he had heard in his head meant... *Why do you look innocent, when you're not?*

It was more like.... it was being said to someone there in the room. He was only able to hear them in his unconsciousness and couldn't tell who it was, or who it was being referred to.

"My.... My King" Shilah stuttered. "You're awake".

Dakota exhaled deeply and sat up, his hand going over his injured side. But, he could tell the pains were dwindling.

. He turned to spare it a glance, then returned his gaze to Shilah.

"I was brought to a healer?" He asked.

"Y... Yes, My King. Prince Raksha had to" Shilah answered. She couldn't tell why she couldn't just talk to this man without stuttering.

Dakota glanced out the window and noticed it was dark. Obviously, they'd have to ride back in the morning.

He exhaled deeply and leaned back on the wall, fixing his cold gaze on Shilah who turned uncomfortable.

"Shouldn't you be getting some sleep already?" He asked gruffly, and Shilah shook her head. "I'll.... I'll be doing that very soon, My King"she gulped hard.

She felt like asking about him – asking if he wouldn't try to get some sleep already, but of course, she didn't have the guts for it yet.

And as for Dakota, he felt some hardness in him. But recalling how it has always been with Shilah – knowing it was going to cause him much hunger, he waved it aside. 1 And turning away to face the opposite direction, they stayed that way without saying any more word to each other.

Although, Shilah had dozed off on the chair during the night, she could tell the King didn't even blink a lid. She felt so bad for him and wished there was something she could do to help him sleep as he really looked so exhausted.

Perhaps, there was something she could do for him.... when they get back to the palace.

Dakota, on the other hand, was watching her when she slept. That innocent face... looking powerless, yet special.

How is it possible that he gets so hungry after intimacy with her? How's it possible her bare touch was able to calm his destructive wolf earlier that day? How? How possible?

With his hand on his jaw, he shook his head as he stared at her. He knew it wasn't comfortable for her to sleep on the wooden chair; he actually wanted to call her to come sleep beside him on the bed, but his grumpiness wouldn't let him. So, he let her be. 2

Next Morning,

Shilah had woken up to find Raksha in the room with the King who was fixing his belt. Oh; looks like he had gotten another dress. It wasn't really his type, but it looked royal.

Dakota noticed she was awake and only stared at her once, before looking away and concentrating on his belt. Shilah could notice – he was looking more of a king than he had looked more of a patient the previous night. That hard grumpy look of him was back on.

"Is that rogue still there?" Dakota asked, taking his sword from Raksha. "Yes, My King" Raksha replied, and immediately, Dakota walked out of the room.

It was obvious his wounds were healed up already.

"Come on, Shilah" Raksha gruffed and also left the room.

Shilah stood up, her back and waist hurting due to the uncomfortable situation she had slept in. Oh! She couldn't wait to get back to the palace and get enough sleep; but that would be after making sure the king sleeps as well.

She arranged her dress and walked out of the room, recalling the route out of the house. But, as she got closer to the door, she suddenly thought of something... The healer's daughter.

She needed to see her; ask some questions. Yes, she needed to.

Stepping out of the house, she found the guards around with a guy kneeling in front of Dakota who had his sword in his hand. Raksha was behind him.

Shilah could recognize that guy. Of course; he was one of the rogues from the previous day she could recall him getting caught. Uh-uh. So bad he has to be the scapegoat. But, what was the King going to do to him?

"Who sent you?" Dakota asked, glaring hard at the rogue in front of him. Even the goddess could tell his hands were itching to use the sword on him. But he said nothing, anyways.

"I'm giving you one more chance" Dakota gritted. "Who sent you to attack me?"

And after a little hesitance, the rogue finally mumbled: "No one".

"Hmph" Dakota huffed. "I'd have killed you, anyways". And with that, he slashed the sword through his neck and watched as his head roll off to the ground.

"Hah!" Shilah gasped in fright and quickly looked away, her heart racing so fast. Oh, no....

Irritation sizzled through her, she felt like throwing up. And as she looked away in deep breaths, her eyes ran into her – the healer's daughter.

She was standing at a corner, having some woods in her hands like she was just back from the forest. She stood and was staring at Shilah, but the moment Shilah made eye contact with 'her, she turned around and walked away.

The irritation died off from Shilah immediately as she ran after the lady, headings for the corner she had seen her take. She got there and found the lady breaking some woods there at the back. Yes, the place seemed to be the back-yard with the woods all over, some pots on the ground, a water guard and a fire spot.

Zoe noticed Shilah was behind her, but didn't turn to look at her as she just concentrated on the wood she was cutting. And Shilah, after staring at her for some seconds, took some steps closer.

"Hi" she uttered almost inaudibly, but Zoe didn't turn to look at her. She had this mean face.

"Are you a witch?" Shilah brought her self to ask, noting she didn't have much time.

"If I were a witch, the sisters of the red coven would've come for me a long time ago" she scoffed, drawing out a piece of wood from the one she had broken. "I'm only gifted with foresight". She added, giving only a second glance at Shilah before hitting her axe on another wood. 1

She answers afterall – Shilah thought with relief.

"Um.... I have a question, please" she cleared her throat. "The things you said yesterday, I.... I don't understand. What did you mean by them? Because as far as I know, I was born without the powers of a jackal".

"I do not have the answers to your questions" Zoe answered gruffly, hitting her axe hard on the wood again. It split it into the part she wanted and she pushed it away and took up another.

"But you...." Shilah got interrupted when Zoe hit the wood hard again. "But, you sounded so sure" she continued. "Please, if there's something I need to know, you should tell me".

"I know nothing, Queen. You're wasting your time" Zoe answered brusquely, taking another hit.

"Please...." Shilah was persistent. "You have the gift of foresight, right? You should be able to see through this...."

"My abilities are limited. I only see what the spirits wants me to see. And what I saw about you yesterday, was what I was permitted to see" She said. 1

Just then, a guard showed up.

"Queen Shilah, everyone's set. It's time to go" he informed her and left, and Shilah could feel her heart in her throat.

"So.... there's nothing you can do to help?" Shilah asked ruefully and Zoe stopped working and took in a deep breath.

"Where's your mother" She asked, looking at Shilah with those dark eyes of hers. "She's.... She's dead" replied Shilah, her curiousity quelling up.

"And your father?" Zoe asked.

"He's still alive – lives in this mountain".

Zoe took in a second deep breath.

"Go to the man you call your father, and question him". 3 She lifted her axe and continued working. 1

Shilah was stunned. Her father? Could he have the answers she needed?

She looked at Zoe who had already gone back to work and looked like she wouldn't be saying anymore word to her.

"T.... Thank" she sighed and turned around to leave.

"Queen" she suddenly heard her call and turned swiftly to find the lady staring at her with some bundled woods in her hands. She had something else to say?

"Stay close to the King. He needs you" Zoe said in a slightly softer tone and walked away.

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The ride back to the palace was a very long one and the whole time, Shilah was silent and in deep thoughts. It wasn't like she had anyone to talk to anyways as the King was always reticent.

The lady's words kept replaying in her head, over and over again. She just couldn't get rid of them.

First, the things she had said about her. Although, she had planned on resting as soon as she gets home, but with the look of things, that wouldn't be possible as she needed to see her father right away. Yes, she needed to ask him questions and know what the healer's daughter was talking about. 1

Secondly, the King. What did she mean by: "he needs you"? How on earth does the King need her? How? Someone who was that grumpy and rarely even looks at her? O

Urgh! There were so many flying questions in her head; so many flying questions and she wished she could just get the answers to them already.

As they rode into the palace, guards began running around, getting ready to welcome the King.

The horses in front of them stopped moving before their carriage was pulled to a halt and the curtains went open with two guards showing up. They stood at alert as King Dakota made his way out of the carriage. Then, Shilah followed.

"Greetings, My King" every head was bowed.

Dakota served a pause, his hands behind his back, then commenced walking while Shilah followed.

Queen Chaska was standing at the balcony and had a huge smile on as she watched the King alight his carriage. "Oh! Bless the spirits, he's safe" she exclaimed beamfully. But her smille died off when she noticed Shilah following behind him. That brat! It was so annoying to know she was actually the one that accompanied the King. If it had been Nosheba, she wouldn't really complain. But to think it was that commoner that just showed up about a week ago, it was just too annoying. I

Shilah stopped following the King when she got to the path leading to her own room. She started walking down the hallway while the king proceeded to a different path. "Shilah!" Queen Dyani suddenly called, running towards her.

"Greetings, My Queen" Shilah greeted when they stood in front of each other.

"Oh! Shilah, how many times will I tlel you to stop calling me Queen? Anyways, what happened? | was beginning to think something bad must've happened". Dyani cooed, touching her shoulders.

"Um ... We were attacked on our way back yesterday. The King was hurt and we had to take him to a healer".

"What???" Dyani shrieked immediately. "The King??"

"Yes. But, he's fine now" Shilah added and Dyani heaved a huge sigh of relief. The King might not really be the perfect caring husband for her, but she sure cares about the King.

"Come on, then. You should be tired. Let's get you freshened up" she held Shilah's hand and started walking away with her.

Well, Shilah was indeed tired, but she knew she couldn't rest at that moment as she had some

things to do.

Nosheba's baby had slept off just after breastfeeding and she was just covering her up when she heard the door opening and turned swiftly to see it was Raksha.

"Raksha!" She called in surprise as she sprang on her feet.

"My love!" Raksha cooed, running to meet her and pulling her into a tight hug. Nosheba sniffed on his shoulders which smelt of sticky sweat and dirt. "You're back".

"Yes. And I missed you". Raksha palmed her hair and withdrew after a while, but he didn't move away from her as he cupped her pretty cheeks in his palms.

"I... I was so worried about you, Raksha. Thought something might have happened to you". Nosheba said, her eyes staring into his. "I know. We were attacked on our way back and the King was wounded". Raksha explained.

"Oh. How's the King?" Nosheba asked.

; "He's fine now". Raksha replied and left her cheeks.

"And how's my baby doing?" He asked as he walked over to the little one on the bed, sleeping so innocently with face like her mother. He sat on the edge of the bed and ran his little finger on the smooth red cheek

"She's so beautiful" the words left his lips in a passionate whisper. Nosheba just stood and watched blankly.

He leaned forward and kissed the baby's cheek. "Oh, Nosheba" he sighed, shaking his head. "You don't know how much I want this; how much I want this family. I can't wait for the day we'll be together with you by my side as Queen, and our babies playing around. The imagination alone is overwhelming". He turned to look at Nosheba and she let out a smile.

"I'd also want that, Raksha" she said. "So, why don't we get to work immediately?"

Raksha stood up and went to her, palming her cheeks. He moved his hand down to her chest and touched the clothed nipples. "When will you be strong for sex again?" He asked, his tone going darker as his eyes trialed down to her thighs.

"I spoke to the midwife about it and she told me to wait two weeks. So, that means by next week, I should be ready". She replied and Raksha gave a satisfactory nod.

"Let's wait for next week then. This time around, I'll make sure it's a boy". He said.

"You better be sure, Raksha, because I don't don't want to go through another stress of carrying a woman for nine months"

"Don't worry, Nosheba; you'll carry a male child this time around. It's a promise". He pulled her close and kissed her. »

When Shilah entered the room, she took a bath first and told Dyani she wanted to make some tea for the King. Of course, Dyani was surprised and asked what it was meant for.

"The King is very exhausted and needs a lot of sleep" She began as she walked with Dyani to the kitchen. "While we were at the healer's place, I noticed how he had troubles falling asleep and with the injury he sustained, he really needs to

get some. So, I only want to make an attempt; to see if my tea would calm him down'.

"The King has tried so many remedies. Even Queen Chaska prepares tea for him, but they've all been futile and never make him sleep". Dyani said.

"Um...Well, I only want to make an attempt" Shilah shurgged.

She also informed the queen she'd be going to see her father that morning, although she didn't tell her the reason. Of course, she couldn't tell anyone what the healer's daughter had said.

They finally got to the kitchen and Shilah getting the herbs she needed, set to work immediately. She smashed the leaves and added some heated water to it, stirred the greenish content and filtered it out afterwards. To tame the sour taste from the leaves, she added some sweetener and sighed in relief as she stared at the ready cup of coffee. Then, she lifted it up and closed her eyes.

"Dear spirits" she began. "I pray for an effect on this; that as the King drinks of it, may it overwhelm his problems and put him to sleep. May his muscles be forced to relax, his eyes too heavy to stay open, and may the strongest wave of dizziness hit hard at him. May my prayers be heard" she lowered the cup from mid air. Dyani stood aside, watching in sheer curiousity.

"Um.... Is it possible....to deliver this for me?" Shilah turned to Dyani and asked.

"I don't understand. Why should I do that?" Dyani scoffed, but Shilah couldn't reply. She was probably just scared to give it to the King herself.

"Don't tell me you're scared, Shilah" Dyani noticed. "Oh; come on; The King might be grumpy, but he doesn't bite. You should hurry up and give it to him".

"Are you....Are you sure?" Shilah stuttered. "What if he rejects it? Or gets angry?"

"Of course, he won't get angry. Just take it to him, okay?" Dyani advocated and after a little more while, Shilah finally left the room with the tea

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King Dakota had just finished taking his bath and was dressing up when he heard a knock on the door. He didn't bother answering since he was still dressing up and of course, the knocker wouldn't dare knock again..

Finally done, he said: "Enter"

And the door opened with a guard taking a few steps pass the door.

"Let her in" he replied and the guard bowed and left.

Shortly, the door opened again with a nervous Shilah coming in and by this time, (This novel will be daily updtaed at Dakota was already taking his seat.

Shilah walked in with the cup of tea placed on a small tray, her head lowered and her cheeks turning all red.

"G... Greetings, My King" she stuttered as usual, standing in front of him. Dakota was taking up a book, his eyes not looking at her.

"How're you doing, Shilah?" He asked anyways.

"I'm... I'm fine, My King. Thank you". She replied, noting the strong scent around him; a scent she liked.

"Um.... My King" she continued. "Sorry to disturb but... I actually made some tea for you". Her heart was pounding so fast as that was actually the moment she was scared of. What if he rejects it?

"Some tea?" Dakota paused to look at her – for the first time since she walked in. "Why, if I may ask?"

Shilah gulped hard, she could feel her cheeks flushing already.

"Um.... it's nothing personal, My King. I just.... I just thought it was necessary to.... help relax your nerves and get you to sleep. I'm only trying to be of help, My King. But...if you feel upset about it, I can leave right away" Shilah said, trying to sound as innocuous as possible.

Dakota said nothing, only leaned back on his chair and gave her those cold stares. It got to an ineluctable point, Shilah started feeling uncomfortable and felt she had made a grave mistake coming in there in the first place. But.... he wouldn't punish her, would he? Of course, not. He wouldn't punish her simply because she made him some tea.

"You can set it down and leave" he finally spoke in that wintry tone of his and that was more than a relief for Shilah as she gazed up at him. 2 Thank the spirits!

She bowed and went closer to the table where she dropped the tea and took some steps back while Dakota went on to begin reading his book.

"Um.... My King" Shilah called, remembering she had one more thing to do. (This novel will be daily updtaed at "Sorry for disturbing, but ... I need your permission. I um.... I actually need to go home and see my father. It's very important, My King, and I'll be really grateful if you grant me this request".

As usual, her heart was pounding heavily in her chest. It just wasn't easy standing in front of someone like the King.

Dakota hesitated a little before looking up at him.

"Darci!" Dakota called and the door opened with a guard running in.

"My King...."

"Get two guards to accompany the Queen when she's going home". "As you wish, My King" he bowed and left and Shilah felt a hard skip in her heart. Two guards were to accompany her home? Okay... Now, she couldn't tell if he was just being protective or he was trying to make sure she doesn't run away.

"T.... Thank you, My King. I'm grateful" she bowed and left the room.

As soon as she left, Dakota dropped the book he was reading and took up the cup of tea instead. It was still a wonder that Shilah had made some tea for him. Of course, he could recall such herbal tea never works for his health. But somehow, he just felt like taking it.

Taking it closer to his lips, he took a sip and confirmed it tasted so good. Hmm. (This novel will be daily updtaed at 1 He took more sips and placed the cup back on the table to continue reading. I

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Pishan was walking down the balcony when he spotted Raksha coming his direction. His guts * told him Raksha would want to have a word with him, but he put on a non challant mood

anyways, and tried walking pass him.

"Pishan" Raksha called and he stopped to look at him.

The reserved Pishan said nothing, only stared at him. And Prince Raksha was a little surprised he didn't show some respects by greeting him. Pishan has always has some nerves. 2

"The list you talked about" he gruffed. "The one you said the King wants both of us to work on; I've changed mind and I'm ready to do it. So, where's the list?'

Pishan scoffed, then stared down at his legs. "The list is in my room, Pishan. I'll have someone bring it to you soon" he turned around to leave,

"Don't you think you're forgetting to pay some respect, Pishan?" Raksha called back his attention and Pishan stopped on his tracks immediately, turning around to face him.

"You claim you're being neglected and want to carry out the major tasks in the pack" Pishan was taking some steps towards him. "The King takes you with him to a meeting and you couldn't even protect him; he returned home, wounded. Truth is, if I had been the one with him, I'd have never let that happen". And with those strong words said, Pishan turned around and left, leaving Raksha in consuming flames of scepticism and vexation.

The tea had already gone down to half quantity in the cup and Dakota was still reading. Not reading; but trying to read.

He couldn't explain it; his vision was blur and heavy, light in his eyes were getting dim and the more he tried forcing them open to read, the more they itched and burnt him. His muscles were aching so bad, he needed to stretch them. His nerves became too calm and relaxed and it got to a point, he couldn't control it anymore.

He dropped the book and staggered on his feet, reaching for the bed. (This novel will be daily updtaed at He plonked his tired self on the bed and an unexplained wave blew over him; it was heavier than the wind; heavier than nature could give. 2 He couldn't explain it; all he could feel was an unusual calmness.

And for the first time in over ten years, King Dakota closed his eyes to a peaceful sleep.