

He was so wrapped up in his rage and hate that he didn't notice the door open a few inches, shedding a thin line of light into the dark room. Only when the door shut with a soft thud did he look up, wishing briefly he could wipe the handful of tears that stained his fur.

"Calm yourself, Victor." A soft voice with a woman's lilt spoke in the darkness. "She will be alright. The lion brags, but his men do not touch with permission."

"Who's there?" he snapped, ears twitching as his gaze swept through the room. "Where are you?"

Soft laughter signaled the voice had moved closer. "I know it's been quite some time, but it hurts that you have forgotten me. Though, if the chocolate she-wolf is anything to go by, I am not surprised. How could a gal compete with a woman like that?"

"Wulf?" Victor's voice softened. "Dakota Wulf? Is that really you?"

"And he doubts his own pupils," another laugh. "Yes, oh mighty Death Bringer, it's me. I know I showed up a little late, but I did have to make a few calls and you wouldn't believe how hard it is to find this place."

"Don't you ever shut up?" Victor almost smiled, but anger swallowed it quickly. "Get me out, Wulf, I have promises to keep."

Metal jingled, silencing the dark wolf. The quiet click of a cuff signaled one ankle was free. A second click and he let his feet slide forward, stretching the tight muscles. A sigh of relief escaped his lips.

"How is she, Wulf?" He asked as he felt a paw grasp his arm, tentatively seeking the cuff on his wrist. A third click sounded before she answered,

"They broke her hard," Dakota's voice was sorrowful. "Hours, it only took a few hours to break her, Victor. And when she cried for you, calling your name over and over, during... They gagged her, silencing her voice. She only cries out now when they take out the gag to feed her, though it is less and less."

He was silent, listening to her speak. She shifted in the dark, finding his other wrist, and his gut churned. He could picture Lilian lying on that bed, crying for him to rescue her. He growled softly as Dakota began to speak again.

"Bruises are kept to a minimum, Kayin keeps talking about how she's too pretty to be covered in bruises. No broken bones, nothing dislocated. It may take a while, but she'll heal." Dakota paused as she found the final cuff, "She's fine, physically."

A final click and she released her grasp on the wolf. He stood, rubbing his wrists before stretching. He was sore, but it wasn't enough to distract him. Shaking, Victor's voice rumbled through the darkness,

"That's not true."

"I just saw her a few hours ago, she looked fine besides the bruising and blood from the..."

"They cut her deep enough to scar that damn tattoo." He flexed his fingers as they tingled with feeling and blood returned.

"The lilies? No they're-."

"The fuckin' crowns," he interrupted. "They cut my fucking crown."

"Crown?" Dakota asked, grabbing his arm and leading him towards the door. "What-? Oh. The crowns on her shoulder. I'm not sure I'm following..."

She opened the door an inch and the light from the hall illuminated the black wolf. Dakota could see the anger, the hate in those red tinted brown eyes as he stared at her. Even

through the bruises and blood, he still managed to send a shudder of fear through her. Suddenly she was glad those emotions were not aimed at her.