



Eboenia

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Description: Baltimore City is known as Charm City, the biggest city in Maryland. However, in a different realm above Baltimore City, there exists Charmden, a place filled with fairies. In this magical realm, Eboenia, a 22-year-old fairy, finds herself caught in a whirlwind of adventure. On her Wedding day, she gets captured by War, a mysterious and powerful warlock—or so he seems. Despite being natural enemies, Eboenia and War form an unexpected bond. As they grow closer, War starts teaching her the dark arts, challenging her to explore a darker side of herself. With secrets coming to light, Eboenia must decide if she'll follow in War's footsteps or find her own way back to her fiancé. This dark paranormal romance tells the story of a warlock and a fairy finding unexpected comfort in each other while navigating a world full of secrets, magic, and the human world.

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OCTOBER 20TH2020...

Baby, welcome to the party

I'm off the Molly, the Xan, the lean

That's why I'm movin' retarded...

I whined my hips to the infectious beat of Pop Smoke's "Welcome to the Party," surrounded by my friends, who I called sisters. The lounge at Fells Point, Moby Dick's, was filled to the brim with people celebrating the night away. We were marking a bittersweet occasion—my last night of freedom before stepping into a new life. My ceremony was imminent, and soon I would become the wife of Sin, the son of our realm's president.

“Get your life!” my friend Jinx shouted over the loud music.

“Damn shorty, I see you,” a tall man with locs commented as he sauntered past the bar, his eyes lingering on me. I winked at him, feeling the thrill of the night. I had enjoyed my fair share of human men before my arranged marriage to the leader's son. The thought of leaving this wild, carefree life behind made me dance more seductively. Our love for the human world was so strong that we even kept a small house on the outskirts of Baltimore City.

The man with locs slid his arm around my waist, and I playfully threw it back on him, feeling the rhythm take over.

“Eboenia!” Blair called out, tugging on my shirt with urgency.

“I’m having fun!” I replied.

She leaned in, her voice a whisper in my ear, “You’ll be a wife tomorrow. This isn’t good.”

Jinx pulled Blair away. “Let her get it all out!” she insisted.

I continued to lose myself in the music, dancing like it was my last chance. As the song ended, the man with locs pulled me aside. “Can I get your number?” he asked, phone in hand.

“We don’t have phones where I’m from. Besides, I’m getting married,” I told him with a shrug.

“Oh damn, my bad,” he said, retreating into the crowd.

Jinx approached with a mischievous grin, playfully tapping me on the ass. “Whew, you’ve been acting crazy tonight, and I love it!” she shouted, her eyes sparkling with excitement.

“Don’t encourage her; she could be punished for letting a human touch her,” Blair cautioned. She was like the mother of the group, but it made sense since she was the oldest at twenty-seven years old.

“Who would know?” I asked.

“You know how Sin is; he’ll have a whole army come here to spy on you!” Blair replied, concern etched on her face.

My sisters in spirit were Lune, Blair, and Jinx. Lune was pregnant though and unable to join us. Blair stood tall, her light skin smooth as silk, her sandy brown coily hair framing her face like a halo. She wore jeans, a sweater, and heeled boots. Jinx and I shared curvier figures. Her almond-colored skin, bold bald head adorned with intricate markings, and deep black eyes made her a captivating presence. Her freckles formed a phoenix across her face, and she wore a short leather skirt with a long-sleeve top that tied in the middle, revealing just enough cleavage, paired with black heels.

As for me, I stood five feet tall, my skin a rich shade of melted milk chocolate. My long locs cascaded down to my hips, and my stormy gray eyes sparkled like stars. Tribal designs covered my body, resembling an intricate maze, and my nature-green pointed nails shimmered under the lounge's lights, dusted with gold. I had a nice, juicy ass, voluptuous hips, and lovely titties. To keep it simple, I wore a tight-fitting dress that stopped just below my buttocks, paired with gold and brown platform shoes. Nude knee-highs with earth-tone flower trimmings ascended my thighs—we were true baddies, commanding attention wherever we went.

“One more drink and then we can leave,” I told them, feeling the night's energy coursing through me. I sauntered over to the bar, and with a flick of my wrist, a gold wand adorned with black rose designs materialized in my hand. I whispered a low chant, a secret language my mother had taught me, and the wand glowed, freezing everyone inside the bar. I was a fairy from a world called Charmden, a realm whose origins trace back over a billion years. We began as tiny shimmering orbs, gathering magical elements from earth, air, water, and fire—a fire that was not deadly to us back then. Over time, we morphed into human-like forms and sprouted wings.

I glided into the bar area, passing the bartenders frozen mid-action, their hands paused in the act of serving drinks. I crafted our cocktails, pouring tequila on the rocks and adding a sprinkle of crushed berries, which gave the drinks a red tint like cranberry juice. These berries were infused with a potent liquor from our world,

strong enough to knock out a grizzly bear after just a few sips.

“Ladies, here are your drinks. Don’t forget to leave your tip!” I laughed, handing them their glasses.

“Here’s a tip for you, next time give me a bigger glass,” Jinx quipped, taking her drink from the bar counter.

“I’ve had enough, Eboenia, but I appreciate the hospitality,” Blair said with a smile.

“Well, that’s two drinks for me!” I declared, raising my glass. I twirled my wand again, unfreezing the scene, and the club sprang back to life as my wand vanished.

“Don’t you just love having an advantage in this realm? We can do whatever we want,” I bragged, savoring the cocktail.

“Yes, I love it. I sort of feel sorry for the humans, though, who have to work and pay bills,” Jinx mused.

I downed one of the drinks in five seconds flat. I was the wild party girl, a badass if you want to be technical. Why did I have to be chosen to be the leader’s son’s wife?

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“Soooo, are you gonna give Sin some extra loving tonight?” Jinx teased, gyrating her hips playfully.

“No, I’ll more than likely conjure up a fake dick and fuck myself,” I replied, and Blair gasped.

“TMI!” she exclaimed, waving me off.

“Stop acting like you don’t get pounded into earth’s core. Sex is magical, liberating, and it just feels sooo good. Sin knows all the right moves, but the passion is lacking. And he doesn’t eat pussy,” I said with a shrug.

“Our men don’t believe in that, you know that,” Jinx reminded me.

“Why not? It’s so lame.”

“It is lame, but we live in a world that’s lost in time. Everything they do is old-fashioned. Getting pounded doggy-style is even forbidden. It simply has to be missionary because that’s what they know,” Jinx complained.

I finished the second drink and placed both glasses on the table. “I’m ready,” I said, belching softly. After hours of partying and drinking my pain away, I was done for the night. I laid my head on Jinx’s shoulder, and she kissed my forehead.

I was the youngest of my sisters at just twenty-two years old. Jinx was twenty-four. They weren’t much older, but they practically raised me. My father was killed in a battle against the warlock clan. My mother was found dead in the forest; her death

was ruled a suicide by poison—I was just five years old.

We exited the club, and the fall air kissed my cheek. “It’s a wonderful...night,” I slurred.

“Pizza sounds amazing right now,” Jinx said.

My stomach growled at the mention of pizza. “Yes, let’s get some!” I agreed eagerly.

“Human food gives me the runs,” Blair replied with a grimace.

“You can’t get curves eating vegetables, fruits, and wood worms,” Jinx joked.

“I have curves very much,” Blair chuckled.

“That’s right, tell her,” I laughed.

As we walked down the sidewalk, a black truck pulled up to the curb, blasting loud rap music. “Ayyyyyyyy!” I exclaimed, gyrating to the beat.

“Don’t get too excited, Eboenia. Your wings will come out,” Blair whispered.

The truck’s engine turned off, and a tall man wearing a black fitted hat stepped out. I was immediately smitten by his height—he had to be at least six-foot-seven. He stepped onto the curb and gave a man a dap.

“About time,” the man said to him.

I took in the tall caramel treat, dressed in a black overcoat, jeans, fitted hat and boots. He wore a diamond chain around his neck, and when he smiled, tiny gold things shimmered on his teeth under the city lights. His cologne reached out and kissed my

lips, and his full lips and neatly trimmed goatee added to his allure. I only saw him in profile, but I wasn't the only one staring at the beautiful giant.

"I want that!" I said aloud, and Blair quickly covered my mouth.

"We can all take him," Jinx suggested with a grin.

He glanced our way, and we hurriedly stepped off the curb, bursting into giggles. "Did you see how tall he is? And his nice physique? I bet he can do the worst things to me," I fantasized.

"Stop acting like a thot," Blair chided.

"This lil' twat is thumping," I replied.

Jinx exploded in laughter, and even Blair let out a giggle. "Why are you so kid-like?" Blair asked.

"Because I can be my true self out here," I said with a grin.

"Let's get some pizza and hurry back," Jinx replied.

We strolled through the busy streets of Fells Point, where humans partied at numerous clubs. The honking of horns and music spilling out into the streets, along with the scent of pizza, put me in a blissful trance. I loved the city!

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We stepped out of the cab in front of a cute brick home in Catonsville. The neighborhood was filled with the spirit of fall, and orange and red leaves scattered across the lawns and sidewalks. Halloween decorations adorned many of the neighboring doors, with carved pumpkins and playful ghosts swaying in the cool October breeze. I couldn't wait for Halloween, eager to show my true self and win best costume at a club. However, the smile quickly faded when I remembered I wouldn't be able to do those things as a wife. Jinx handed the driver fifty dollars and told him to keep the change.

I stumbled towards the stairs, savoring a cheesy slice of pepperoni pizza loaded with sausage, extra anchovies, pineapples, mushrooms, and spinach.

"Drive safe, sir!" Jinx called out to the cab driver as he drove away.

The porch light flicked on, and the door swung open. Sin stepped out, his face twisted in a scowl. I nearly dropped my pizza in surprise. "Here we go," Blair sighed. "Tell me about it," Jinx whispered.

Lune appeared behind him, cradling her stomach. She lowered her head, looking apologetic as if she regretted me being caught. "Hey, honey. I didn't expect to see you here," I said with a forced smile.

"I thought we had a discussion about you coming here!" he seethed, his voice sharp with frustration.

"I told you, she was just out grabbing me some food," Lune interjected softly.

“Know your place, Lune. I didn’t ask you anything,” Sin warned her.

Sin was my first boyfriend, but things didn’t work out. We were teenagers at the time, and we decided to remain friends, though we occasionally still hooked up. I was surprised he wanted to marry me when all we had was a relationship I had outgrown.

“Sin, this is my last night here. Can you try to be more understanding?” I pleaded, hoping to soften his stance.

His eyes softened as he descended the stairs toward me, dressed in a brown cloak and soft suede shoes. I’d be lying if I said he wasn’t handsome. Sin was the same age as me and we shared the same complexion. He also had long locs, but his were pulled back and away from his face. His forest green eyes glowed, highlighting his sharp cheekbones. He was slender and tall, standing at least six foot two. Sin was born to a fairy mother and an elf father, inheriting the delicate grace and softness typical of fairies. In contrast, elves were known for their directness and a certain harshness, often serving in the military thanks to their strength and sorcery. I remembered a time when Sin’s touch used to give me butterflies, but things were no longer the same.

“Good luck,” Jinx said as she and Blair entered the house with Lune, leaving the door open behind them.

“I get worried about you, that’s all,” Sin said, gently cupping my chin.

“I know. You can trust me,” I reassured him.

He leaned in, capturing my lips in a tender kiss. “You know I love you if I’m kissing you while you have that greasy garbage on your lips,” he teased.

“Try a piece. It’s not that bad,” I laughed.

“I want to try a piece of you. Are you ready to go back home?” he asked.

“Yes,” I replied, feeling a mix of emotions.

“Good, because I have a surprise for you,” he said, a hint of excitement in his voice.

“I love surprises,” I smirked, curious about what he had planned.

Sin was a sweetheart, but he was very clingy. His father, however, was a different story—an evil man who would punish any fairy or elf he deemed out of line. Hoax had a notorious reputation and wielded dragon fire from his staff to enforce his will. Sin was the opposite, but because of who his father was, many kept their distance from him.

Sin grabbed my hand and led me up the stairs into the house. From the outside, our home looked normal, but stepping inside felt like entering a slice of paradise. The interior resembled a treehouse, with branches decorating the ceilings and plants sprouting from the ground, as we had no flooring. At the center of our home was a small pool, where lily pads floated atop sparkling crystal blue water. Golden orbs hovered in the air, glowing like lightning bugs, and the floral scent permeating the air made me dread not spending the night in our getaway home. Around the pool were four pillows where we would sit, sipping forest rum and pouring our souls out to one another. Sin tugged at my hand.

“Are you okay, Eboenia? I feel like you were out partying,” he said.

“I’m fine, Sin,” I answered.

Lune sat down on a pillow, clutching her stomach. She was pregnant by a fairy who had been torched to death by Sin’s father, Hoax, three months ago for not defending a fellow fairy attacked by a warlock in Baltimore. Warlocks have been hunting fairies

and elves for a century—they were monsters.

“We will see you tomorrow,” Jinx said, hugging me.

“Yes, we will be at the ceremony, of course,” Blair added, following suit. I hugged her tightly, frustrated that Sin was coming between me and my sisters.

“I’ll see you later,” Lune said sadly, rubbing her midsection. She was supposed to get married too. Her pretty gold ring with a blue glow in the band sparkled. Lune was a dark-skinned beauty with kinky hair cascading down her back and deep gray eyes that held a world of pain. Her wings fluttered, a deep, iridescent purple, like twilight captured in cobwebs. I wished I could take away her pain, but there was nothing we could do. Sin pulled out a crystal from his pocket and tossed it into the pool. The water rippled, and a shimmering archway formed above it, casting a kaleidoscope of colors across the room. Leaves and branches intertwined, weaving a bridge that seemed to grow from the portal itself.

“I’ll see you all tomorrow,” I told my sisters.

“You won’t be needing this,” Sin said, taking the pizza from me and handing it to Jinx. She put her middle finger up behind his head. We crossed the bridge, the leaves whispering beneath our feet as we disappeared into our world.

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Charmden was a majestic forest where treehouses soared to touch the sky. Our world was enveloped by cascading waterfalls and towering flowers that could serve as plush beds. Some of us roamed Charmden in our human form, while others fluttered by in their fairy form, no larger than pigeons. Sin squeezed my hand as we passed a group of children kicking a ball, their laughter echoing through the trees.

“I don’t understand why you like that filthy city so much when you come from a place like this,” Sin remarked, his voice tinged with disbelief.

“Why does it matter anyway? It’s my last night out.”

We ventured deeper into the forest, where Hoax, Sin’s father, stood upon a rock, his army encircling him. He spoke with fervor about the warlocks, his staff tapping angrily on the stone.

“Every day, as soon as you wake up, I want you all to leave this realm and hunt those useless piles of shit for attacking our people! We are stronger! We are the true guardians of nature, and they are nothing! Just humans who practiced our way of life!” Hoax bellowed.

The dragon head engraved on his staff opened, unleashing a powerful red flame. I couldn’t tear my eyes away from Hoax; my fingers twitched with the urge to choke him and rip his throat out. He looked like a demon, with a long face, a white matted beard, silver locs, and pointed ears that curved like buffalo horns—he was a grand elf. One of his eyes was black while the other was white. His long black hooked nails and black vine-like branches wove in and out of his skin. Despite his tall, slinky frame, many feared him because of his staff. Fire was our kryptonite, capable of

dismantling our magic and devastating the forest.

“Eboenia! My daughter-in-law to be! Glad to have you returned to your kingdom instead of roaming the human’s world like a city rat!” Hoax called out to me.

His troops turned to stare, and I moved closer to Sin, hoping for his protection. But he stepped away, leaving me alone to face the judgment of dozens of male fairies and elves.

“And what is that you’re wearing, eh? You want to live like a human woman? Your mother had class, Eboenia! She would never leave this realm without her mate!” Hoax shouted.

He floated over to me, landing in front of me. Hoax slipped his hand between my legs, and I went frigid, wanting to attack him but knowing my wand was no match for his staff. His eyes were filled with lust as he violated me, slipping his finger inside while Sin watched.

“Father,” Sin whispered, his voice barely audible.

Hoax withdrew, sniffing his fingers as tears filled my eyes. “Well, at least we know she’s not laying down with a human when she leaves this realm. Leave it to me to do your job!” Hoax yelled at Sin.

“Yes sir,” Sin replied in a low tone.

“If I had a beautiful wife like Eboenia, she’d never leave my sight. Be a warrior!” Hoax commanded, punching Sin in the chest.

“Can we go now?” Sin asked, his voice subdued.

“Go ahead,” Hoax replied, sniffing his fingers again. “This scent will never not satisfy me,” he said, running his hand down my breast and squeezing.

“I need to bathe her to get that city smell off of her,” Sin stammered.

“Go ahead! Get out of my sight!” Hoax dismissed us.

Sin grabbed my hand and led me deeper into the forest. Tears streamed down my face, feeling dirtier than ever. It wasn't the first time Hoax had touched me as if I belonged to him. Sin's father was the reason I fell out of love with him. I pulled away from Sin.

“We can talk once we get home!” Sin urged, pulling on my arm.

We reached his treehouse, a structure shaped by nature itself. He opened the door and closed it behind us, hugging me tightly while caressing my back. “I'm so sorry, Eboenia. Please believe me,” he pleaded.

“I want to take a bath,” I replied, feeling dazed.

Sin picked me up and carried me down the wooden spiral staircase carved from the tree's interior. He took me to the bottom where we bathed in cool, cleansing water, its natural forest and floral scent enveloping us.

“I don't need your help,” I told him as he tried to remove my dress.

“Are you mad at me?” he asked, his voice filled with concern.

“Why did you bring me into this, Sin? How can you love someone and bring them into this life? You knew my sisters and I planned to leave Charmden and escape Hoax's sadistic ways!” I shouted.

“Shut your mouth before he hears you!” he gritted, his voice tense.

“Please, just let me bathe...alone!”

“I’ll wash you,” he insisted.

I tried to contain myself, aware of Hoax’s looming presence. I let Sin undress me and stepped into the pool. Moments later, he joined me. “It’ll get better,” Sin said, trying to reassure me. “Hoax is under a lot of pressure because the Hex13 are becoming more powerful with their spells. He thinks they have a new leader. Once they’re all dead, he’ll calm down.”

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He reached out, gripping my backside and pressing his erection against me. “Let me make love to you and ease your mind,” he added.

“I’m not in the mood.”

“We haven’t been intimate in seven days. I need to feel the inside of you,” he said, his voice pleading.

“So, what? You can be like your daddy and check my pussy too?” I angrily retorted.

“Watch your mouth!” Sin gritted, his eyes narrowing in rage.

“How about you stand up for me, Sin? At least talk to him and tell him I’m uncomfortable. Do you even care? Your father just had his disgusting fingers in me and you have an erection?”

“Why wouldn’t I? You’re the most precious here. You make men want to feel the inside of you,” he said.

“I’m not aroused.”

Sin backed away. “Is it because you touch yourself while you think I’m asleep?” he asked.

“I would do it while you’re awake. It’s my body, I can touch it whenever I want to!”

“Eboenia, I’m begging you to reason with me,” he said, his voice softening.

I ignored him, cleansing my skin and then climbed out to take a shower from the waterfall that poured down the tree's wall. To my surprise, my mind drifted off to the stranger who I saw near the lounge. I wondered how my life would be to be married to a human instead. Moments later, Sin came up behind me, wrapped his arms around my waist, I tensed up, not wanting to be touched.

"Look, I got you something," he said.

I turned around and Sin was holding a sparking gold necklace that had a leaf shaped medallion with a tiger eye shimmering in the center. "That's so pretty," I said with a half smile.

"As beautiful as you," he said.

He clasped the necklace around my neck and then kissed my forehead. "One day, we will live outside of this realm. I just can't leave right now until our realm is at peace. The Hex13's won't stop at nothing until our realm is destroyed," Sin continued.

The feud with the warlocks was another reason Sin hated for me to leave the realm. Fortunately, a warlock couldn't sense us unless they looked directly into our eyes. Our eyes revealed our true nature through a unique glow and color pattern that only magical beings could recognize, allowing them to detect us.

"Sure, Sin. Whatever you say."

Sin ripped off a lamb ear leaf from the floor and our homemade soap appeared in his hand. We were silent as he showered me, I would rather be a human than a wife to a pathetic son of a demonic ruler.

Sin was slightly snoring while I lay awake, watching the night sky. I couldn't sleep; Hoax's filthy hand constantly invading my body kept me awake. If only I could kill

him and get away with it. I slid out of our bed, which resembled a bird's nest but was softer with silk sheets. As I climbed out of the window, a surge of energy coursed through me. My golden, transparent wings unfurled gracefully from my back, adorned with black rose patterns that glimmered in the moonlight. My pointed ears extended, attuning to the soft whispers of the night. My body transformed into a delicate frame, allowing me to blend seamlessly with the shadows, becoming one with the night.

I flew towards the dark forest, the cool night air brushing against my skin as I passed a crowd of fairies partying around the lake, drinking forest rum and smoking natural herbs from their pipes. I continued on my journey, weaving through the dark forest, the scent of damp soil and pine filling my nostrils. As I ascended to the top of a mountain that overlooked our forest, the air grew crisp and thin, carrying with it the faint whispers of the wind rustling through the trees.

The sky above the mountain was flickering with yellow orbs, believed to be the spirits of our ancestors. I landed softly on the rocky ledge, my heart heavy with longing and unresolved questions. I wanted to speak to my mother, to feel her presence in the chill of the night air. My wand appeared in my hand, glowing softly under the moonlight.

“Mother, why do I have this if it's not able to defeat Hoax's staff?” I whispered, my voice trembling with frustration and sorrow. “This has got to be the key to defeating him. I want him dead for the harsh things he has been doing to me... I hate him so much that I hate the world I come from.” The words tumbled out, each one full of pain and anger. “Why did you leave me?” I asked, my voice breaking as tears spilled down my cheeks, mingling with the cool mountain breeze.

SEVENTEEN YEARS AGO...

My mother stormed into our tree cottage, panicking as if she had seen a ghost. She

kneeled in front of me while I was making dolls out of flowers. “Eboenia, listen to me,” she said, grabbing my shoulders.

“Yes, Mother.”

Unbeknownst to me, I was unaware of her mental state, but I listened intently to her. I was almost identical to my mother; she was so soft-spoken and delicate. There were many males in Charmden who wanted to fill my father’s shoes, but Mother stayed true to her first love. She placed a wand in my hand.

“This is our family’s wand, passed down through generations. You keep this with you and don’t tell anyone you have it. If Hoax finds out you have this, he will take it from you and then burn you alive. Don’t tell anyone, Eboenia. Keep this secret for me...for us. Promise me,” she said, caressing my face.

“I promise, but why is it so heavy?”

My mother cracked a smile. “Because it holds so much magic. I’m going to teach you what to say to it,” she said.

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She sat on the floor and then placed me onto her lap. She showed me how to summon my wand and make it disappear to hide it from others. When I woke up that night, I discovered my mother was dead...

I had a heavy heart as tears poured from my eyes, my wings wrapping around me in a tight embrace as I wept. I felt like a caged bird, longing for freedom, yet deep down, I held onto the hope that one day I would soar again. Instead of returning to Sin's bed, I lay in a fetal position on the ground. I hadn't planned on seeing Sin until the ceremony.

My sisters circled around me, their bare feet whispering against the mossy earth, as I guzzled an urn of wine pressed from the wild fruits of the forest. The taste was bitter and ancient, enough to make a human pass out after one sip. Laughter like wind chimes danced between us, and then their hands, sprinkled gold dust over my hair and shoulders. The flecks caught the fading sunlight and made my green dress sparkle with every breath I took.

Tonight, beneath the moon's silver gaze, Sin and I would carve each other's bodies in the pool beneath the waterfall, letting our blood mingle and flow into the earth. It was the way of our people—a soul tie, binding us beyond flesh and time. The water would carry our mingled essence downstream, a promise to the land and to each other: that we would be forever, as the tradition of Charmden demanded. I was getting choked up, my breathing growing more rapid.

“Calm down, Eboenia, just breathe,” Jinx whispered as she massaged my shoulders.

My sisters were wearing off-white, long, flowing gowns with head wraps made of

woven flowers.

“The ceremony only takes five minutes, if that,” Blair added as she moved my locs away from my shoulder.

Lune leaned against a tree and rubbed her swollen stomach. “I was supposed to get married to my offspring’s father. I never thought you would be the first out of all of us. As long as your heart is detached from this realm, nothing will ever make you happy. Running away is your only choice,” Lune suggested.

“Girl, hush your mouth! Hoax would punish innocent people if Eboenia runs away. We need to think of a smarter way, not a dumb way that’ll get people killed. Bad enough, he goes on a killing spree whenever he feels like it,” Blair reasoned.

“Hang in there for now,” Jinx told me as she rubbed my back.

“Y’all don’t understand. Once she and Sin are soul tied, she’ll feel compelled to be with him, and we all know Sin loves Charmden, even though his father makes his life hell,” Lune argued, and Blair snarled at her.

“I’ll be okay. Sin said he had a plan... maybe I can learn to trust him,” I said before drinking the rest of the wine.

I dropped the urn on the ground after I heard the elves and fairies singing and blowing their horns. Our ceremony was starting. Sin’s mother, Dove, landed in front of me out of the sky. She, too, was dressed the same as my sisters. Her platinum hair was pulled up into an updo, and she wore a gold crown on her head that reminded me of a bird’s nest. Dove was just as wicked as Hoax, but it came from a lifetime of abuse and infidelity. I heard her beauty was once paralyzing, until my mother came along. Her jealousy made her hideous. Her white pupils beamed at me, and she wickedly smirked, flashing a gold canine, as she circled around me.

“I can’t tell if you’re trying to marry my son or my husband... maybe both,” she teased.

“I’m only here for Sin,” I replied.

“You are an easy lay, just like your mother. She stayed on her back like a dead turtle. My son is too pure to lay with a woman like you, who leaves this realm and comes back speaking with a human tongue from the outside world. You make me sick!” she seethed.

Jinx faked a cough. “Whew, I think we used too much dust,” she laughed it off. Dove looked at Jinx and smacked her teeth.

“I’ll see you all at the ceremony,” Dove said. She strolled away, trying to force her hips to sway in the same rhythm as mine. I wanted to snatch every strand of hair out of her scalp.

“Don’t worry about her, she’s just ancient and miserable,” Jinx said.

“And she’s not fertile anymore. I can guarantee Hoax did something to her to make sure she couldn’t have any more of his offspring. A bunch of sick weirdos, if you ask me,” Blair replied.

“Let’s just get this over with,” I chimed in.

My sisters gathered behind me, each holding a section of the train of my dress as I walked towards the black unicorn with long, silky mane adorned with flowers and shimmering gold dust that made her onyx coat sparkle beneath the moonlight.

I climbed onto the back of the unicorn, her muscles bunching beneath me as she huffed and broke into a gallop toward the waterfall. The wind whipped my face, and

when I glanced over my shoulder, I caught sight of my sisters soaring through the sky, their gowns trailing behind them like pale banners.

“Slow down, girl! I had too much to drink!” I shouted, clutching her mane for dear life. The unicorn snorted, slowing her pace, but my head was already spinning and my stomach twisted into knots as we neared the waterfall.

The pool below dazzled in the moonlight, ringed by elves and fairies all dressed in off-white. They stood hand in hand, swaying side to side, their voices rising in birdlike calls—the ancestral calling. The sound, old and haunting sent shivers up my spine.

The unicorn knelt, and I slid off her back, legs trembling as I made my way to the center of the circle where Sin stood waiting. To his left loomed Hoax and his mother, Dove, both watching me with unreadable eyes. Sin wore an off-white dashiki stitched with gold, his locs styled into two bull horns that crowned his head. He smiled at me, nodding, and for a moment, the tension in my chest eased.

“You look beautiful as always,” he murmured, reaching out his hand. I took it, letting him pull me up onto the rock beside him. He caught a tear rolling down my cheek and brushed it away with his thumb.

“It’s okay, baby. I’ll protect you,” Sin whispered.

My sisters landed and joined the circle, slipping seamlessly into the ancestral call, their voices blending with the others in a chilling harmony.

Hoax’s right-hand man, Troph, approached, his face set and solemn. In his hands gleamed an eagle-claw-shaped knife and a wooden bowl—symbols of the ritual bloodletting, the last step before the soul tie. My heart pounded as I realized what was coming: we’d have to slice our palms and let our blood mingle—a promise sealed in

flesh and spirit.

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“Hold out your hand, the bride goes first,” Troph intoned.

Reluctantly, I extended my hand. Just as the blade hovered over my skin, a fierce wind swept through the forest. The necklace Sin had given me seared against my flesh. “Ahhhhhh!” I screamed, collapsing to my knees as pain burned through me. Panic erupted around us; everyone rushed to my side.

“Cut this foolishness out right now! It’s only the wind—the ancestors are speaking!” Hoax bellowed, slamming his staff into the ground.

Sin caught me before I tumbled into the water. “Get it off!” I shrieked. He tried to remove the necklace, but it burned his hands—the metal had absorbed the energy in the air, growing hotter as something powerful approached.

“What is that?” someone shouted, eyes wide with terror.

“I’ll be back!” Sin promised, vanishing into the chaos.

I sat trembling on a rock as Blair and Jinx pushed through the crowd to reach me. “Are you okay? What happened?” Jinx asked, worry etched in her voice.

“I’m fine. The necklace just burned me—something is here,” I replied, still shaken.

“Where did Sin get that from?” Blair pressed, but I could only shrug.

Suddenly, a woman’s piercing scream split the air, followed by thunder cracking the sky. Jinx and Blair hauled me up, but only a few feet away, a spear impaled one of

Hoax's warriors. Right before our eyes, he shrieked as the spear reduced him to ashes.

"What in the fuck was that?" Jinx screeched.

"I don't know, but we need to get the hell out of here!" Blair urged.

They helped me out of the pool, but we froze at the sight ahead. A portal spun open, double rings etched with ancient symbols whirling on its edge. From it stepped a tall, shirtless, caramel-skinned figure, masked, with black and gold spinning gears embedded in his body. He must have stood at least six-foot-seven, his athletic, muscular frame radiating menace. Around his wrist, a long gold chain glinted, links thick like a Rolex.

Without hesitation, he wrapped the chain around an elf's neck. The links morphed into spikes—he decapitated the elf in one brutal motion.

"Kill him!" Hoax roared, sending his army surging forward.

Behind the intruder, a dozen masked, shadowy figures emerged from the portal, hands glowing with power. Swords and strange weapons materialized in their grip. The elves and male fairies rushed to meet them, only to be sliced apart, their bodies falling in halves.

"If you're not part of Hoax's army, run and hide! Stay, and you and your children will be slaughtered!" the ring leader bellowed.

Hoax's dragon staff unleashed a ball of blue fire, but an orb flashed around the chain-wielding man, causing him to vanish. These were warlocks—how had they breached Charmden? Our realm's portal never opened for outsiders.

“Where’s Lune?” Blair cried, squeezing my hand in panic.

I was frozen, watching the warlocks turn fairies and elves to ash. They moved like living shadows, and it seemed no magic or weapon could touch them.

“I don’t know, but we have to go! Our magic can’t even scratch those monsters!” Jinx insisted.

We ran, dodging through the carnage as blood soaked the grass. I glanced back—Sin was fighting beside his father. I begged the ancestors to keep him safe, though I wished Hoax would perish. Jinx and Blair’s wings burst from their backs as we prepared to take flight, but a shadowy figure hurled a net, trapping them together.

“NOOOOOOO!” I screamed.

“Eboenia, get out of here before they capture you. You have to protect it!” Jinx shouted, meaning my wand. But it was too late. I summoned my wand, casting a dome-shaped shield over them just as I was tackled to the ground.

“They’re killing everyone!” Blair screamed as I struggled with the eyeless figure. I slashed at it with my extended nails, but my hand passed through its shadowy form. The dome’s magic shattered the net, freeing Blair and Jinx, who pounded on the shield, desperate to help.

My wand was knocked from my grasp. “Get off me, bitch!” I spat, wings fluttering. Twin gold daggers, engraved with flowers, appeared in my hands. I drove one into its eye, and the figure vanished.

A fairy soared overhead, clutching her baby, chased by a monstrous Rottweiler with gold eyes. I leapt onto its back, tearing at its ear with my teeth.

“Bitch, run!” I yelled at the fairy.

The beast clamped its jaws around my leg, yanking me off and hurling me deep into the forest. I crashed into a tree, my wing snapping. Pain seared through me as it slowly healed. The dog crept closer, growling, drool dripping from its maw. Suddenly, a whistle echoed through the woods, and the Rottweiler bolted, its massive form toppling a tree as it fled.

I staggered to my feet, determined to return to the village. But a portal spun open before me, gears whirring like the inside of a clock. The energy uprooted trees, the light nearly blinding. The deadly figure appeared—the one behind the massacre. He stepped out, his imposing frame and spinning gears radiating power. The portal vanished, and he pulled down his mask.

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Time seemed to stop. He was devastatingly handsome—neatly trimmed beard, close-cut hair with deep waves, full lips, strong jawline and cheekbones. He was gorgeous.

“How you doing, Lor Pussy Fairy?” he drawled, his deep Baltimore accent thick.

He advanced, and I backed away. “Stay the hell away from me!”

With a swift motion, he ripped the necklace from my neck and fed it to the spinning gear on his chest, where it melted into his skin. Seizing the moment, I slashed him with my venomous nails—Nightshade poison seeping into his veins.

“Now, you got me heated,” he growled, his voice a dangerous rumble. Green veins snaked across his skin, but he remained standing. In a blink, his chain shot from his arm, coiling around my neck. It burned like molten metal, searing my skin. I clawed at it, but it only tightened, choking me.

“Don’t fight it, pussy fairy. It’ll be over soon,” he taunted, voice dripping with malice.

He smirked, gold flashing on his teeth. I recognized that grin—the man I’d seen outside the lounge. That smirk was unforgettable.

He yanked the chain, dragging me closer. His tribal markings spun hypnotically, dizzying me. My magic fizzled, my wand out of reach—the chain was draining my strength, suffocating me. Desperate, I spat in his face. The chain constricted, cutting off my air.

“You filthy lil’ bitch!” he snarled, wiping the spit from his cheek with contempt.

Troph, Hoax’s right-hand man, came thundering toward us on a massive black Clydesdale, its wings camouflaged perfectly with the forest canopy. The horse beat the air, soaring above our heads as the warlock kept his grip tight around my throat.

“Let her go! She has nothing to do with our war!” Troph bellowed from above, his voice echoing through the mayhem.

“Nah, I can’t do that! I’m trying to bust her down first. After all, I’m making her wildest dreams come true!” the warlock shouted back, his tone twisted with mockery. He glanced down at me. “Don’t you want me to fuck you and give you pleasure your little elfy boy can’t?” he sneered, then leaned in, his breath against my ear. “I can hear all your past thoughts, see every secret desire,” he taunted, his grip tightening until black spots danced at the edges of my vision.

Troph conjured a fiery orb in his palm, then shaped it into a flaming sword. His horse dove from the sky, wings slicing through the air as he charged the warlock. “These old heads really think they can defeat me,” the warlock chuckled, pure arrogance in his voice.

A chain shot from his free hand, coiling around Troph and yanking him from the saddle. His sword clattered to the ground as Troph crashed into a tree. “Ahhhhhh!” he howled, the chain wrapping around his neck. I watched, frozen, as it ripped his head clean off his shoulders—blood sprayed the grass, and his body slumped lifeless.

The chain around my neck twisted, morphing into a birdcage that shrank me down to fit inside. I clawed at my throat, gasping for air as he scooped up the cage, holding me like a trophy.

“You’re a demon!” I spat.

He laughed, a low, chilling sound. “I’m worse than a demon. You’ve been around demons all your life, and you’re scared of a little decapitation?” he mocked, eyes glinting with wicked amusement.

“FUCK YOU!” I screamed, gripping the bars until my knuckles turned white.

He grinned, teeth flashing. “I plan to, Lor Pussy Fairy. If I’d known you existed, I would’ve been shown up.”

His ninja mask slid back over his face as he strode toward the village. My heart sank at the sight—bodies of Hoax’s men sprawled across the blood-soaked grass, limbs twisted, faces frozen in terror. The air stank of iron and burnt flesh, smoke curling from the wounds of the mutilated deceased. He was after Hoax’s army, but why drag me into this hell? Was it my whispered wish for Hoax’s death that damned us all?

An elf crawled nearby, half his face missing, blood bubbling from his mouth. The warlock summoned an ancient shotgun, gears spinning along the barrel. He pulled the trigger—two black blasts struck the elf, who screamed as his flesh burned to ash. The stench of cooked meat hit me, bile rising in my throat.

“Please tell me my friends are safe,” I begged, tears streaming down my cheeks.

“They got away,” he said, but his voice was flat, unreadable.

“Liar!”

He shrugged, nonchalantly. “I’m not here for you to trust me.”

Sin was kneeling in the grass, cradling his mother’s broken body. Her wings were butchered, her throat torn open, blood pooling beneath her. His face was streaked with tears and blood, agony twisting his features.

“SIN, RUN!” I screamed, desperation cracking my voice.

The warlock’s voice boomed over the carnage, commanding the shattered survivors’ attention. “Listen up! I’ll be back—and next time, everyone dies! Consider this a warning. Tell your bitch-ass leader in hiding that this is long overdue! I will continue to slaughter all of you until he mans up and faces me! He knows who the fuck I am, and I came back to collect his head! Oh, and this lil’ pussy fairy is my welcome-back gift!” he announced, shaking my cage for emphasis.

Sin rose, blood-soaked and trembling with rage. His ears sharpened, eyes slanted, teeth bared—his elf side barging through. “Put my wife down!” he snarled, voice trembling with rage.

The warlock smirked. “Be easy, dummy. I don’t want to kill you yet. I want you alive so you can hear about me making your pussy fairy squirt. A real warrior would’ve killed his father for disrespecting the women in his life. Let this be a lesson—let it strengthen your bitch-ass,” the warlock spat.

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“Sin, please don’t!” I pleaded, terror clawing at my chest.

Sin’s fists clenched, jaw tight. I glanced at the pool—bodies floated, the water the color of blood. The warlock was too powerful, even for Sin.

Sin charged, roaring with grief and rage. “NOOOOOO!” I shrieked. The warlock caught him by the throat, slamming him into the earth, never loosening his grip on my cage. I reached through the bars, desperate to help, but my hand fell short.

“Get your fighting skills up, playboy. Let that anger sizzle and marinate—let it resonate through your body. I’m teaching you something your daddy never would. I see your flaws, and you’ve failed your people and your mate. Thank your ancestors for seeing another day!” the warlock hissed.

He punched Sin in the face, knocking him out cold. “I’ll be back!” he barked.

I caught the terrified stares of my people—mothers clutching their children, hiding behind shattered trees. At least they were alive. The only dead female I saw was Dove. Was it personal?

A portal spun open, gears whirring, and the warlock stepped through, dragging me with him. The energy from the portal hit me like a tidal wave, and darkness swallowed me whole.

I opened my eyes to a blurred vision. From what I could make out, I was in a room filled with tall plants, birds, and glass cases lining the walls, full of weapons. My throat was dry, my head was throbbing, and everything felt like a dream.

This isn't Charmden!

Something heavy hung around my neck—a chain. I traced the chain to its source: a glowing globe sitting on four brass legs, the color of fire.

“Noooooooooooo!” I sobbed.

I rubbed my eyes and sat up in a brick-walled bedroom with huge windows. Still groggy, I stared outside—and gasped. The world beyond was alive with enchantment: the sky shifted from deep blue to vibrant green, casting a strange glow over floating gears that turned in perfect harmony above. Machine towers, pulsing with ancient, glowing symbols, drifted weightlessly, their radiant glyphs lighting winding, maze-like paths. Heavy chains bridged the gaps between islands of intricate machinery suspended in the air.

From my high vantage point, I saw a colossal machine at the city's heart, its spinning gears and glowing runes pulsing with the energy that sustained this realm. There was no nature here—just a seamless blend of technology and sorcery. Below, through a swirling portal, Baltimore blurred like a distant memory, while warlocks glided between islands on mechanical hoverboards. I once thought Charmden was magical, but this place was magic itself.

The wooden doors of the room opened, and he walked in: the warlock who had taken me prisoner. It all came flooding back to me. I had been captured by a demonic warlock who tormented my village.

“I didn't think you'd wake up,” he said.

“Fuck you!” I yelled. I grabbed a plant next to me and hurled it at him. He held up his hand, and the plant froze in place before floating onto a table in the corner of the room, next to a pile of books.

“Feisty lil’ muthafucka,” he said.

“Just kill me and get it over with!” I screamed.

He walked over to me, dressed only in a pair of gray sweatpants and socks. The diamond chain around his neck sparkled as he towered over me.

“I thought about it, but I can’t let something so beautiful die painfully just yet,” he replied. His eyes landed on my chest and his lips curved into a devilish grin.

I looked down at myself and realized I was completely naked. There was no telling what that sick bastard did to me while I was asleep. I sat on the floor with my back against the wall, pulling my knees to my chest. Alone... naked... scared... those were the emotions I was going through, but I wouldn’t dare let a warlock see me sweat.

“Can your perverted ass at least give me a blanket?” I asked him.

He snatched me up by the arm. My human form was about five feet even, and he seemed like a giant towering over me. “This isn’t your magical realm anymore, this my world. You don’t request nothing! I’m the one who gives order! You’re my pussy fairy, Eboenia. That’s the only purpose you serve which means you don’t wear nothing!” he seethed.

He violently gripped my chin. “You shouldn’t have intruded into our world and kidnapped me. I belong to someone else!”

“No, you belongs to me. The difference between me and that ugly stick figure muthafucka, Hoax, is I don’t have to take it. I can feel the heat radiating off your body, and it makes you uncomfortable that someone who killed your people is making your pussy wet,” he said, his voice low and taunting, every word scraping

against my nerves.

He was like a demon, feeding off my pain—he could sense it, savoring every flicker of fear in my eyes. My deepest desires, the ones I tried to bury, were in the hands of my capturer. I tensed up when he cupped my chin, pressing me harder against the wall. His cologne was rich, suffocating, and his intoxicatingly handsome face made me sick to look at. I hated how my body betrayed me, how his presence twisted something inside me.

I clawed at his arm as his touch invaded my mind—I despised him! Rage and shame tangled in my chest, burning hot and raw. I was unable to use my magic because of the collar around my neck, which inhibited my powers—I was helpless, trapped in his hold. He dropped me on the floor, leaving me clutching my jaw, my whole body shaking.

“Why not just kill me?” I cried, my voice cracking with mixed emotions.

“Because you’re my most prized possession,” he replied, his words dripping with twisted affection, his eyes never leaving mine.

He grabbed my arm, pulling me up from the floor. He dragged me out of the double doors and into a hallway with marble floors. “Where are you taking me?” I asked.

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He ignored me as he continued to pull me down the spiral staircase. His home was large and impressive, resembling a historic school with its majestic design. The ceilings were high, and the wide hallways featured detailed woodwork and aged brick walls. Big, arched windows let in lots of light that brightened the marble floors. The tall, vaulted ceilings, stained glass windows, ornate chandeliers, and the presence of columns or arches contributed to the cathedral-like feel.

“Don’t get any ideas. The orb the chain is connected to will immediately set you on fire if you try to leave the premises,” he said.

“Can I at least cover my body? I won’t ask you for nothing else.”

“This is your natural state. Many ages ago, fairies roamed naked. Maybe you should thank me for giving you the knowledge,” he responded.

“I don’t need a warlock telling me a damn thing about my kind. We are more comfortable around each other, but not outsiders!” I snapped.

He tightened his grip around my arm as we continued down the long hallway. His home had a lot of plants and water fountains inside. I would never tell him that it was somewhat keeping me grounded. The sounds of the birds and the smell of the plants reminded me of my forest.

“Get used to being naked, Eboenia. You’d never know when I’m having a bad day and just need to bust a quick nut,” he said.

“I’m extremely dry and loose. No amount of magic can heal my collapsed walls, so I

think it's best that you stick your dick into someone else."

We stopped in front of black wooden doors with gold latches. "There's nothing my magic can't heal, but if all else fails, that little mouth of yours will do," he replied.

"How much do you know about me?" I asked, worried that he discovered my wand.

"Before your mother died, she gave you a wand that she inherited from your ancestors. Only your friends know about the wand, even though she told you not to tell anyone. And I can't forget your fiancé, that bitch boy Sin, leaving you feeling lonely because he can't protect you from old man Hoax," he said with a smirk.

"It's rude to get into someone's head!"

"That is part of my gifts. You should be on your knees worshipping me for taking you away from that miserable life," he responded, with a self-satisfied grin.

"Can I at least have your name since you won't give me anything to wear?" I asked, raising an eyebrow.

"War," he answered too quickly, his gaze shifting momentarily—an indication it must've been a false name.

He opened the double doors, and we stepped into a dining room with a modern look. Bright nature paintings covered the walls, and in the corner, a bar area had shiny countertops and glass shelves. A sleek, modern piano sat near a window framed by rich red silk curtains, adding a classy touch to the space.

On the table, there was a spread of soul food. I sat at the table, not knowing where to start. When I reached for a biscuit, I noticed my hands had a different scent than usual. They smelled like shea butter, and with everything that was going on, I didn't

know how I missed it.

“Did you bathe me?” I asked War, who was at the bar.

“Only because I didn’t want the stench of blood smelling up my tower,” he replied.

There was something alluring about him that I couldn’t quite put my finger on; perhaps it was his dominance. It wasn’t just the way he talked; it was his entire personality. I hated myself for thinking this way—how could I find anything appealing about the monster who slaughtered the army of my realm? Even if he let the women and children live, the blood of my people was on his hands. The shame twisted inside me, hot and bitter, every time I caught myself noticing the strength in his jaw or the confidence in his movements. I couldn’t tell if he hated me because I was a fairy or because I was giving him a hard time.

“Do you want Charmden to yourself. If so, you don’t seem like the type that would want to live in that realm. It’s obvious you’re more humanized than most of us,” I said as I chewed.

War poured himself a glass of cognac then leaned back in the chair, taking a sip while his eyes pierced through mine. “You just like meddling into my shit, don’t you?” he asked.

“No, but I’m curious as to why a warlock wants Charmden.”

“My dealings doesn’t concern you,” he replied.

“You destroyed my ceremony.”

“I did you a favor which is why you’ll repay me with your body,” he sarcastically replied.

I set the half-eaten biscuit down, my appetite fading. “A favor? You call slaughtering my people and ruining my life a favor?”

War shrugged, swirling the cognac in his glass. “Come on shorty, you hated your life.”

“You don’t know anything about me,” I snapped, heat rising in my cheeks.

He smirked. “I know enough, that’s why you’re here.”

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I glared at him, refusing to look away. “You think you own me now? That I’ll just—what—fall at your feet because you’re stronger?”

He leaned forward, his voice dropping to a dangerous whisper. “You’re smarter than a fifth grader,” he chuckled.

I clenched my fists under the table. “I’ll never belong to you.”

“You already do, Lor Pussy Fairy. Hurry up and eat, so you can start your twenty-four-hour shift,” he replied.

I swallowed hard, forcing myself not to show fear. “You can take my body, but you’ll never have my loyalty.”

“I don’t need your loyalty. I just want to know if the myths are true about fairy pussy. I probably could’ve picked anyone from Charmden to serve me, but I’ve always had a knack for unique artifacts. I pick with taste,” he responded.

I left the conversation alone, War had a comeback for everything and he also didn’t care about anything but his own desires. Without knowing when the next time he was going to allow me to eat, I reached for a plate of noodles with eggs sitting in front of me. I picked up a noodle, dropping it into my mouth as if I was eating a worm. “Ummmm this is so good. I never had this before,” I said aloud.

“That’s yakamein. Not particularly soul food, but it’s decent,” War replied.

I grabbed a handful of noodles and stuffed them into my mouth. “Yo, eat right at my

table. You aren't in the forest anymore," he said.

"I will eat like a prisoner. If you want me to eat right, then allow me to wear clothing. Until then, I'll act according to how you treat me."

"You don't need clothing, it'll just get in my way," he replied.

My heart fell to the pit of my stomach, my fingers trembled as I slowly chewed. "I'll do anything you want me to, just not that."

"I have other plans other than ripping your pussy in half," he responded.

I rolled my eyes at him, reaching for the pitcher of water and guzzled it down. War's eyes landed on the trail of water that dripped down my breast, and oddly my nipples were erect. I felt shy under his hard gaze, causing me to look away.

"You seem pretty well off and you aren't bad looking. Why don't you have a mate?"

"Why do I need a mate when I now have in-house fairy pussy?" he asked. I snarled at him, furious that someone as beautiful as him is so wicked.

I sat quietly as I continued to stuff my face with fried chicken, greens, and whatever else was on the table that I couldn't identify. War ate silently, he looked to be deep in thought.

"Can I reach out to my sisters to let them know I'm alive?" I asked, breaking the silence.

"You aren't alive, Eboenia. The purpose is to be dead," he said.

"They'll be devastated!"

"I don't give a damn about them! Now eat your fucking food!" he angrily barked.

I was already full and in need of a drink to numb my pain. "Can I at least have a drink so that I can pretend I'm not here?"

"You aren't bound to the chair," he replied, basically telling me to get it myself.

I got up from the chair. I used my locs to cover my breasts. War's eyes followed me to the bar. If I leave the premises, I would be set ablaze. Funny how death didn't scare me, but the thought of burning to death upset my stomach, however, it would free me from War's prison. I grabbed a brown bottle that said Don Julio 1942.

War stood from the table. "I expect you to clean off this table by the time I finish my shower. Also, this room needs dusting," he said.

"You want me to clean too?" I shrieked.

"What else are you worthy for?" he asked.

Fed up with War's disrespect, I snapped, unable to control it. I charged into War, leaping onto him. I struck him across the head with the bottle. He choke-slammed me through the table, everything on the table spilled onto the floor. The winding gear tattoos on his body began to spin—symbols of stored magical energy ready to be unleashed, reminding me of the extremely overpowering force he wielded, poised to cast a spell on me.

"I was waiting for you to try your hand again, even after I warned you to not fuck with me! I knew you were going to make this a challenge," he said.

"Get your hands off of me!" I screamed as I scratched his face and wildly kicked. War snatched me off the floor and then pulled me out of the dining room by the collar

around my neck.

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"I'm never going to make this easy for you! All you warlocks need to be wiped off the face of the earth!" I screamed.

He dragged me down the hallway, through a swing door, and down a stone spiral staircase. The lanterns on the wall flared to life as War passed them. My back ached and cracked from being tugged down the stairs. Glowing ancient drawings appeared on the wall that matched his markings, spinning. He carried me into what looked like a dungeon that smelled like blood with cages big enough for a lion or two. On the shelves of his dungeon were bloody weapons. War was on a damn warpath and I underestimated him. He placed me onto a table and straps appeared around my body, spreading my legs apart.

"I'll stop!" I pleaded.

"The only thing that seems to instill fear in your heart is being taken advantage of. Perhaps I make your nightmare come true. I tried to be a decent nigga by respecting your space and letting you sit at my dinner table," he said, as he cupped my breast.

"Get your nasty ass away from me!" I shouted.

He leaned down and whispered in my ear. "You belong to me, Eboenia, and I'm going to make you feel it instead of keep reminding you. Maybe then you'll obey me like my lil' pussy fairy," he gritted, malice dripping from his tone.

He walked away and sat at a table, his back turned to me. A paring knife materialized in his hand, and he sliced into his wrist, letting his blood drip steadily into a bowl. As he chanted in a language that sent chills racing down my spine, the lanterns in the

room flickered. Black smoke began to swirl around War, enveloping him as the gear tattoos on his back spun with increasing speed. Glowing symbols emerged from his skin, casting themselves onto the wall like a spectral projection.

"War! Please stop!" I screamed, the energy in the room too dark, too heavy.

He ignored me, his voice relentless as he continued to speak—casting a spell that felt like it was unraveling my insides. "WARRRRRR!" I yelled.

After he finished, he carried the bowl over to me. Tears pooled in my eyes as he stared down at me with hate-filled eyes.

"I'm not the type of nigga who likes to go back and forth, you feel me? I like to get shit done without having to keep explaining myself. I told you I owned you and to act like you had some sense," he said.

"I'll behave!" I sobbed.

"Sshhhh," he said, placing a finger against my lips.

He ripped off a piece of my hair. A dark fog swirled around it, turning it into a sharp black needle. War dipped the needle into the bowl with his blood and then pulled down my lip. "In the beginning, you were just a prisoner at my tower, but now I'll own your soul. You had it easier at first," he said.

He drew on the inside of my lip, his blood burning through my flesh, tears spilling from the corners of my eyes. He dipped the needle back into the bowl and continued to draw. I kept still, feeling the burn travel throughout my body as my veins pulsed under my skin. My eyes fluttered and my back arched off the table—it was a crucial burn.

"AHHHHHHHHHHHHH!" I screamed, my heart pounding in my ears.

Moments later, the pain vanished, replaced by an aching clit, throbbing with extreme arousal. "I see that you feel it now," he said with a smirk.

"What is this!" I gasped, my skin tingling as if delicate feathers teased every inch of me.

"I bound your soul to mine, linking your life force to me as my blood is stamped and burned into your flesh," he said. War dipped his fingers between my pussy lips, where golden nectar—fairy's honey—coated his fingers. Our bodies produce a form of honey during arousal for our soulmates. This was the first time my flower had formed its own nectar. War tasted it, letting it drip from his beard, savoring its sweetness.

"Shit, this is sweeter than honey. Reminds me of agave," he said, his voice a deep rumble that stroked the inside of my walls.

My pussy was pulsating, my legs trembling with an overwhelming surge of arousal. I was damn near panting like a polar bear stranded in the Sahara desert. My pussy was dripping, and my nipples were hard, aching to be suckled as nectar drizzled from them too.

War chuckled, a sound that resonated through the room, and shook his head. "You'll be begging me to fuck you now," he said.

The mere thought of him sliding in and out of me, furious and relentless, sent a deep moan from my lips. If I wasn't restrained, I would have already been lost in my world, bringing myself to a climax with my fingers. War's warrior physique, chiseled features, and kissable lips were almost too much to bear—I was craving a warlock, a known enemy of Charmden.

“This is cruel!” I sobbed.

War’s fingers moved with maddening precision, stroking my center. “Do you want me to come in?” he murmured.

“WHYYYYYYYY!” I screamed, my body betraying me even as my heart splintered.

He leaned in. “I can’t let my ancestors down, Eboenia. Your beauty... it’s a curse. I’m drawn to you, but I can’t shame them. The only way I can live righteously is to give you what you craved—and satisfy them by hurting you.”

“Your ancestors are wicked!” I moaned, my legs trembling uncontrollably. War’s touch was like dark magic, his fingers dancing between my folds with a cruel, ancestral rhythm—a celebration twisted by pain and pleasure.

“All spellbinding beings are wicked. Just like you, going to the bars and using your gift to get free drinks. You maneuver through the human world with ease because you know they’re weak against your spells. That makes you a predator, Lor Pussy Fairy,” he replied.

He slipped two fingers inside me, and my body ignited, burning with desire. I rotated my hips, desperate for more, while his hand seized my breast. I looked down at him, heat rising in my cheeks at the sight of him standing between my legs, lustfully eyeing the sticky center oozing onto his fingers.

“Warrrrrrr,” I cooed.

He reached into his sweatpants and pulled out his beautiful, thick, veiny, ridiculously healthy dick. It was long and smooth, like he’d dipped it in cocoa butter just for me. The sight of it made my mouth water—nothing else in my life mattered except feeling him inside me. He moved his fingers, then slurped up my pussy honey with a greedy hunger that made my toes curl.

“Shit, I could eat this over my yogurt,” he growled, licking his lips.

“Please, release me!” I begged, my voice trembling with desperation.

War ignored my plea. He pressed the swollen tip of his shaft against my opening, which was oozing love potion, slick and ready for him. My legs trembled, my whole body on edge, and I bit my lip so hard I almost drew blood, trying not to explode right then and there. He guided the tip in, and a pulsing vibration shot through me—a surge of raw energy that made my back arch and a deep gasp rip from my throat.

“Ummmm hmmm... This big muthafucka hurt, don’t it? But I know it feel good to you. Keep your pussy fairy ass in line,” he taunted, his voice thick with lust and power.

He thrust forward, and my legs clamped against him, helpless to do anything but take every inch. How could he feel so damn good? War squeezed my nipple, then slapped my breast, sending a jolt of pain and pleasure through me before grabbing it again, rough and possessive.

“This tight ass pussy need to open up,” he grunted, his words sending another wave of heat straight to my core.

“It’s too muchhhh!” I whimpered, yet my center was creaming.

War pulled out of me, leaving me stuck in confusion. He put his dick away in his sweatpants as if his punishment wasn’t harsh enough.

“If you can break out of this, I’ll fold you up and give your lil’ pussy the deep strokes you crave,” he said.

War left me inside his dungeon, a heavy, delicious pressure building in my abdomen, feeling as if my clit was about to burst. My back arched off the table, and insane moans spilled from my lips as my pelvis thrust against the air, desperate for an orgasm.

“Ouuuuuuuu...ahhhhhhh!” I moaned, my voice echoing off the cold, stone walls. My body was slick with sweat, my throat parched, and my lips cracked like dry earth. My breasts felt heavy, filled to the brim with fairy essence.

“WAR!” I screamed, releasing a stream of ecstasy. My adrenaline surged, threatening to burst my heart, but instead, it fueled me. With newfound strength, I shattered the straps binding me, collapsing onto the floor. My fingers found my flower bud, stroking it with fervor while I squeezed my breast aggressively. It felt as if a lustful spirit had possessed me. My back arched off the floor, legs raised, as I circled my finger around my clit, moving my hips in a rhythm as if War was hitting my G-spot.

“Ummmmmmmmmm!” I squealed as I climaxed, falling back onto the floor, my chest heaving with exertion. Suddenly, a sharp pain pierced through my scalp. I sat up, feeling something hard and pointy growing, tears of pain streaming down my face. It was like a bone-crushing headache, as if my skull had been slammed against a

tree trunk. The pain numbed my face, drool slipping from the corner of my mouth.

“Arghhhhhhhh!” I screamed in agony. Blood dripped onto the floor as I examined my nails, now the color of tar and four inches long. The veins beneath my skin, once green as the forest leaves, had turned dark as mamba snakes, protruding visibly.

“What did he do to meeee!” I sobbed, staring at my reflection in a puddle of blood. War’s blood-curse hadn’t just marked my soul—it warped my body into a reflection of his dark magic.

“Come to the garden room. Make a left when you leave the dungeon, at the end of the hallway make a right. It’s the only door in the hall so you can’t miss it. Don’t make me wait, Pussy Fairy!” A voice echoed in my head.

I painfully got up, rubbing my temples to ease the excruciating headache. Each step up the stairs felt heavier than the last. Exiting the dungeon, I came face-to-face with a mirror in the hallway. I froze, like a startled deer, staring at the creature War had transformed me into. Onyx-colored horns adorned my head, a leaf-like symbol marked the center of my forehead. My upturned, slanted eyes were the color of smoke. I pulled my bottom lip down to reveal mysterious drawings I couldn’t decipher.

“The marking of his spell changed me,” I whispered in disbelief, my heart pounding as I realized I could never hide what I’d become.

Wiping away tears, I headed in the direction War had instructed. I made a right at the end of the hallway, stopping at a door made of tinted green glass. I opened it and stepped into the room. In the center of the enclosed forest was a crystal-green pool, surrounded by glass walls and a dome-shaped ceiling with the moon shining through.

The transition from the dungeon’s darkness to this paradise was jarring. The majestic

greenery and clear water took my breath away. A butterfly landed on my shoulder. “You’re so lucky to spread your wings,” I whispered to it as it flew away to perch on a branch.

“You didn’t take me as a nature boy,” I said to War, my voice still shaky but laced with curiosity.

“I appreciate the calmness of the forest,” he replied while watering his plants.

He exhaled a plume of smoke from the blunt he was smoking. Nearby, purple marijuana plants thrived near the pool. The enclosure was spacious enough for at least twenty fairies to live freely.

“Is there a reason why you asked me here?” I inquired.

He placed the water pitcher on the ground, his eyes roaming over my body. My heart raced as he approached, yet I stood my ground. War cupped my chin, igniting a strong arousal within me—my knees nearly buckled.

“Do we have an understanding now?” he asked, his thumb brushing across my lips.

“Yes, I’ll behave and serve you...even with my body,” I replied, the words spilling out before I could stop them.

“Good girl,” he said with a smirk.

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War backed away and removed his clothing. My eyes widened at the sight of his impressive form. His body was immaculate, but it was his long, thick dick, veined and heavy, that captured my attention. He stepped into the pool, and I licked my lips at the sight of his firm, symbol-covered backside.

“Come!” he commanded, his voice echoing with authority. Obediently, I followed him into the pool. The water was a cold shock against my heated skin, refreshing and energizing. War leaned casually against the stone wall inside the pool, and even through the water, his dick was still massive.

“He said he’d fold me up and give me deep strokes if I could get out of the straps! He’s a fucking liar!” I thought, bitterness rising in my chest.

“Eboenia!” War snapped his fingers, drawing my attention back to him.

“Yes.”

War smirked, his eyes glowing as they locked onto mine. “That’s right, I did promise to put that fire out, didn’t I?” he teased, having just invaded my thoughts.

“I’m not...I’m not sure,” I stammered, caught in the intensity of his gaze.

“I can read you. You want me to fuck you,” he stated, his words sending a shiver through me.

“How long does this spell last?”

War chuckled, a sound that was both menacing and oddly alluring. “My blood flows through your veins. That isn’t a spell, it’s a curse, and only death can end it. Once you stop feeling like a damsel in distress, you’ll see that I gave you a gift. Because not only will you be serving me on your hands and feet, you’ll be able to connect with your wand...that’s if I let you live of course,” he said.

“I can connect with it,” I lied.

War shook his head. “You don’t know all the languages to speak to it. I watched you when you used it in Charmden, you don’t know how to use it properly,” he replied.

“How can a Hex13 tell me about my wand?”

“I’m the only one in my universe who’s read and mastered every spell in our archives. Most who tried lost their minds—or their lives—to the magic. But I survived. I conquered it. There’s no magic I don’t command, Eboenia. That’s why I became the youngest wizard ever to rule Charm City.”

“A wizard?”

“My ancestors chose me for a reason,” he said.

This man is undefeatable! With as much power as he holds, he could’ve destroyed Charmden.

“And you want to be the president of Charmden too? That world belongs to us, it’s our home. Our ancestors created that world for us to hold on to our heritage.”

“That’s not my problem, and it’s no longer yours,” he said coldly.

“Where will they go? Not all of us desire to live in a human’s world.”

“You are no longer their kind. They’ll fear you because I marked you,” he replied. War dabbed his blunt on the ground and then snatched me up by the arm.

“I don’t know what it is about you, because I hate the fuck out of fairies. A bunch of useless gnats. I’m starting to think you cursed me too,” he said.

I stood still as War’s hand moved to massage my breast. “Fun-size sex toy. I can do what I want to your pussy and you’ll just have to take me,” he insulted cruelly.

He turned me around, pressing my back against his chest. I shivered as I felt his dick pressed against me, a potent reminder of his power and the dark chemistry that was brewing between us.

“Are you going to kill Hoax?” I asked. I don’t know what made me ask or how I even got this comfortable. There was nobody I hated more than Hoax. He was despicable and I wouldn’t mind seeing his head on a stake.

“Yeah, he’s a dead muthafucka walking,” War answered.

A smile crept onto my face at the thought of Hoax’s demise. Yet, I couldn’t help but wonder: would Charmden perish after Hoax is dead? If I could stay on War’s good side, maybe things would work out. Or was it the curse that made me complicit, to the point where I saw him as our savior? I despised these feelings, yet my pussy ached for him with an intensity that was hard to ignore.

I was lifted up, with legs straddling over his arms. War aggressively pulled my locs back, twisting them around his hand before he licked the nape of my neck. Is this what my life has come to? Being a cursed wizard’s whore?

In a trice, I felt myself being split open as he lowered me onto his shaft. I tensed, feeling the electrifying sensation of his girth inside me. “This isn’t for your pleasure,

so don't move," he said against my ear.

War glided through my tight center, gripping my locs as he licked the back of my neck. My body heated up, a mixture of agony and pleasure coursing through me. His girth was causing a bulging in my midsection.

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“It’s too deep!” I whimpered, caught in the intensity of the moment.

He ignored my plea, gliding me up and down his shaft, causing ripples in the water. My legs trembled with each thrust. “Ouuuuuuuuuuu...ahhhhhhhhhh!” I moaned, the sound escaping me uncontrollably.

“Warrrrrrrr,” I moaned out.

He released my hair, burying his fingers into the flesh of my thighs, stirring in and out, then around like the hands on a clock. My essence, or should I say honey, was thick like milkweed. The pain had subsided, replaced by a euphoric pounding that had me on edge. My walls gripped him tightly.

“This lil’ fairy pussy is so juicy...wet. Damn,” War whispered, his voice filled with raw desire.

My eyes fluttered as he went deeper...faster, causing my breasts to glow with a golden hue and my nipples to open like blooming flowers, honey dripping down my skin.

“I can smell the sweetness pouring out of your body,” he taunted.

“I’m ready to...ready to comeeeeeeeee!” I squealed, the climax building within me.

I rested my head against his chest, going stiff as psychedelic colors blurred my vision, exploding in a release that sprayed my essence into the pond, causing gold shimmers to float atop. Just when I thought we were finished, I felt something winding, jabbing

the back of my pussy and causing my lower back to ache.

“AAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!” I screamed, the sensation overwhelming.

The feeling had me thrashing side to side, jerking as if possessed. War’s dick was like a machine, twisting so fast against my G-spot my legs folded. “My energy is pouring into you,” he moaned while thrusting.

“Make it stoppppppppppppppppp!” I screamed, bucking forward from the pressure.

He roughly grabbed my neck, squeezing with authority. “I told you not to fucking move! This isn’t about you. I want your lil’ ass to stop breathing while I’m deep inside this tight ass pussy. Are you disobeying me again?” he asked, the intensity growing stronger. My essence was pouring out of me, and my clit was pulsing rapidly. War was torturing me!

“Noooooooooooo!” I whimpered.

War pushed me forward, his magic keeping me afloat. He grabbed my horns and slammed into me, smacking my ass with each thrust. Water splashed out of the pool as he fucked me senseless, driving me to the brink until I went paralyzed and mute. My body was thrown into an orgasmic shock.

“Ummmm hmmm...damn, you got some good sweet ass pussy,” War moaned, his sexy moans, growls, and grunts making my essence foam like suds.

“Uhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh,” War let out as he released inside of me.

He pulled out of me, and I slipped beneath the water's surface. As a creature of nature, I could hold my breath underwater for at least an hour. I closed my eyes, sinking to the bottom of the pool and resting on the smooth rocks. But War, being the

jackass he was, grabbed me out of the water and tossed me over his shoulder.

“What is happening?” I asked, bewildered.

War ignored me, carrying me out of the pool. With a snap of his fingers, a soft, silk pillow bed appeared in the garden. He laid me down gently, then spread my legs like a predator ready to go in for the kill. “I thought we were finished,” I murmured softly.

The gold swords on his side teeth gleamed as he gave me a devilish smirk. A dagger materialized in his hand, and he traced it down my cleavage, leaving a trail of blood that rolled off my skin. “I’ll cut your heart out if you interrupt me again. Spread those pretty and thick ass legs wider,” he ordered.

I obeyed, and War gazed at my swollen mound with lust-filled eyes. He traced the cold steel along the outline of my clit, causing my center to purr with anticipation.

“War,” I panted, in a begging tone.

He bit his bottom lip, then hovered over me, suckling on my nipple with such force that I gasped deeply. The dagger dissolved into smoke as he traced my center with the head of his throbbing shaft.

“Warrrrrrrr,” I chanted, as he slurped up my honey with fervor.

He pulled away from my breast, locking eyes with me as he entered me again. Tears slid down my cheek while he rocked me into the bedding.

“Open your mouth,” he ordered.

His good lil’ pussy fairy, desperate to please. The honey he sucked from my breast spilled off his lip, dripping down my throat as he watched with lust-filled eyes. With

every bounce of my titties, nectar trickled out, glistening in the moonlight—evidence of how much he owned me.

He shoved my leg higher, forcing me wide open, and drove in deeper, like he was determined to fuck me into submission—body and soul.

“This lil’ pussy grip me like she ain’t trying to let me go,” he growled, his mouth hot against my ear. My legs locked around him, but it was his grip in my hair—fierce, unyielding—that made me gasp. The wet, filthy sounds of our bodies crashed over the quiet pool, drowning out everything but him.

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“Babyyyy. Go deeper,” I begged, my nails raking down his back. He pinned my legs against my ears and slammed into me, stealing my breath, my thoughts—everything.

He didn’t slow down. He didn’t let up. He fucked me like he owned me, like he wanted to break me down and rebuild me from the inside out. As I teetered on the edge, fighting for control, he leaned in and licked a slow line up my neck. The sensation shattered what little resistance I had left—I cried out, body convulsing as I squirted hard around his dick, trembling, desperate, and completely his. He held me through the aftershocks, and in that moment, I knew I’d surrendered every part of myself to him in this moonlit paradise.

“AHHHHHHHHHHH!”

A man’s scream jolted me awake. I shot upright, heart pounding, realizing I was still in the garden room. My pillow was soaked with my own nectar, and my legs were practically glued together. I had to pry them apart, cheeks flushing hot as memories of War pinning me beneath him flooded back.

“This is sooo gross,” I muttered, grabbing the robe beside me. It swallowed my short frame, but as I pulled it on, War’s scent wrapped around me—powerful, earthy, with hints of pine and patchouli.

Aww, he finally gave me something to wear.

“NOOOOOOOOO!”

Another scream echoed through the garden. My legs ached, my body sore and heavy,

as if War's touch had drugged me into a deep, intoxicating sleep. Rubbing my temples, I pushed myself up and left the garden room, drawn by the commotion. I followed the noise up the wraparound spiral staircase that was hidden by a life-size unicorn statue. War's home was so big with many hallways, I hoped I wouldn't get lost. The chain connected to the collar around my neck extended everywhere in the tower.

As I climbed higher, I noticed that the walls were covered in intricate drawings, not paintings. At the base of the staircase, the words "Once upon a time" were scrawled in elegant script, setting the tone for the story that unfolded in images along the walls. The drawings told a tale—scenes of forests filled with fairies and hooded warlocks, their weapons raised as they rode on unicorns. One warlock caught my eye: he bore gear-shaped markings, just like War, and carried the same staff that Hoax now wielded against the people of Charmden.

"What is this?" I asked aloud.

Confusion washed over me. I had never truly understood the war between Charmden and Hex13, only that they had been killing each other for centuries. It had never occurred to me that, at one point, we might have been part of the same world. I continued up the staircase and nearly stumbled when I saw a drawing of the warlock with the dragon staff handing a fairy the wand that I now possessed. She had black wings with golden flower patterns inside them and horns that resembled the unicorns' in Charmden, but with a slight curve.

"This must be my ancestor. Was she cursed too?" I wondered aloud.

I quickened my pace up the stairs, eager to see the next chapter. The following drawing showed the warlock and the horned fairy lying in a garden of flowers, leaves covering their lower bodies, naked from the waist up—they were lovers. Urgency surged through me, and I hurried up the next flight, nearly tripping over my long

robe. This drawing depicted the horned fairy standing beside a swirling portal as elves poured through. The warlock—maybe I should say wizard, since he bore War’s markings—was on a horse, glaring at them, his face twisted with betrayal.

I pressed onward up the seemingly endless stairs, my heart pounding in my chest. The next scene made my stomach drop: the horned fairy, now in a white gown, stood in the pool beneath the waterfall where we held our ceremonies. She was marrying an elf. I squinted at the faces.

“Is that Hoax?”

I stared into his eyes, and recognition hit me—his sadistic ass, handsome and much younger than, but those eyes were unforgettable. Dove was there too, glaring at the horned fairy while the others danced in a circle, celebrating the wedding. My stomach twisted as I reached the top. Blood splattered the walls, marking the beginning of a bloody battle. War had erupted—elves and fairies against warlocks. My heart plummeted when I saw my headless ancestor lying in a garden of flowers, chaos raging around her. Did the wizard kill her? My gaze followed the story to the ceiling, where the wizard was shown burning alive in the woods, watched by mournful warlocks. At his feet, his magical source—the gears—fell away, turning to ash.

“Did they skip some chapters?”

“My brother is a good painter, ain’t he?” a voice said behind me.

Startled, I spun around. A man stood there, resembling War but he looked a few years older, with long locs. He wore a black hooded cape, jeans, and combat boots, a heavy gold chain around his neck with a red diamond Roman numeral thirteen medallion.

“Ummm, where is War?” I asked.

“He’s in the training auditorium with his warriors. What are you doing on this side of the tower?” he asked, peering down at me.

“I heard a man screaming. I got curious.”

He reached out and touched my face. I jerked away from him. “You are a beautiful little creature. And you shouldn’t roam the halls alone—some of us have sick thoughts about fairies. Might even cut your head off,” he replied.

“And some of us ain’t scared of no worthless ass warlock! Fuck you!” I spat.

“Ummm hmmm, a feisty one. No wonder my lil’ brother put a leash on you. You must’ve given him some magical pussy,” he chuckled.

“Gave it to him nice and slow, just like how I’m going to do you when I slice your throat open and watch you burn like that wizard in the painting!”

He raised his hand as if to strike me, but a door swung open. War strode out of a room where warlocks practiced magic—a makeshift school. He was shirtless, wearing clear glasses with gold frames. My breath hitched at the sight of him, the way his chest flexed with each stride, the arrogant confidence in his walk. His black jeans sagged just enough to tease. He glanced between me and his brother, anger flashing in his eyes.

“The fuck are you doing up here?” War bellowed at me.

“Being fucking nosey!” his brother answered.

“If I’m going to be living here, I should be able to go everywhere in this building!” I shot back at his brother.

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“You see that? You got this dragonfly, short-legged thot thinking she can just walk through here like she ain’t a fucking prisoner!” he said to War.

“She’s not a prisoner, she’s a play toy. And last time I checked, this is my home. Show some respect to my belongings,” War replied coldly.

“You got that, lil’ bro. Let me know when you’re finished with it so I can take it to the dumpster,” his brother sneered.

“No doubt,” War responded, just as nonchalant.

“I don’t think your precious wizard will be getting rid of me anytime soon. You know what they say about us fairies—our nectar is like crack,” I taunted his brother.

“Watch your mouth, Eboenia,” War scolded.

“I’ll be downstairs,” I muttered.

“Bro, our father would kill you if he knew you were sticking it in a goddamn woods creature. Kill her and get it over with!” I heard his brother say as I walked away.

“Yo, shut the fuck up! Me wanting to fuck her ain’t gonna stop nothing! I’ll cut your head off myself if you or anyone else questions me about what I do in the bedroom. Ain’t nobody checking me about shit, so get gone,” War snapped.

“Keep on, you’re gonna end up like the last one who stuck his dick in a fairy. You should know firsthand how it went down—don’t you see the visions? Ain’t this why

you drew on these walls? To remind yourself and us not to be tempted by a goddamn fairy? She poisoned you, bro. I can see it,” his brother whispered.

They must’ve forgotten how sensitive fairy ears were. “She’s dead soon anyway,” War said.

A single tear traced a silent path down my cheek as I listened to War speak of me that way. His words were a cruel reminder—I was nothing more than a plaything in his eyes, a vessel for his vengeance. I bore the weight of sins my ancestor had carved into his bloodline, suffering beneath his twisted need for punishment. Yet I realized that War had never confessed to his brother that he had bound me to him with a curse. Still, I could not bring myself to expose him; my heart would not allow it. The curse pulsed between us, relentless, weaving my soul ever tighter to his. Or perhaps his brother did know—and thought it was a fitting punishment.

I sat on a velvet chair in the hallway, staring straight ahead as I tried to figure out a way to survive. War and his clan allowed the women of Charmden to live. I could only hope he would spare my life in the end.

A portal ripped open in front of me, its spinning rings howling with wind so fierce I had to brace myself not to get knocked off my feet. War stepped out, looking pissed off and wild-eyed, his energy crackling in the air. I couldn’t even bring myself to look at him.

“The next time you hear something, stay away from it. What goes on in here ain’t got shit to do with you,” he snapped.

“It woke me up. How long have I been asleep, anyway?” My voice came out hoarse.

“Eighteen hours. Come,” he barked.

He snatched me by the arm, his grip iron-tight, and dragged me down the hallway. Upstairs, laughter and voices drifted down—his clan, probably. War hustled me along, practically shoving me before anyone could see. Another portal shimmered into existence right in front of us, and before I could blink, War shoved me through. The force of it nearly snapped my neck.

“What the hell is your problem?” I spat, stumbling as the portal snapped shut behind me.

Gunshots echoed somewhere outside. I sucked in a breath—city air—and realized I was no longer in that cursed tower anymore. I was standing in a regular-ass living room: exposed brick walls, black leather couches, a fireplace flickering low. I rushed to the window. Baltimore City. I let out a shaky breath, relief flooding through me at the sight of familiarity.

“Go upstairs and take a shower,” War said.

I turned to see him slouched on the couch, reaching for the centerpiece on the coffee table. He pulled out a stash and started breaking up weed, his stress rolling off him in waves. The collar was still tight around my neck, even though we weren’t in his world anymore. I reached for the chain, but it was gone—just the collar now.

“Your magic’s still dormant. I trust you won’t do anything stupid. Try to leave, that’s your ass,” War said, not bothering to look up.

I sat across from him, folding my legs under me, refusing to let him see me shake. “We need to talk.”

He leaned back, eyes burning behind his glasses, watching me like I was a puzzle he was tired of solving. “I didn’t bring you here to talk.”

“You know about my wand because your people gave it to mine. Your brother said you have visions. That wizard in the painting—is he your family? You’re doing all this to me because of what somebody did to a leader? I’m not even old enough to know what happened, and you hate me for it. You turned me into something you despise—I’m not that horned fairy!”

War shook his head, breaking up the bud with steady hands. “You’d be dead by now if you were. That bitch was a traitor. But since you inherited Clover’s wand, it’s only right you carry her shame,” he said.

“You’re torturing me.”

He stood, walked over, and grabbed my chin, forcing me to meet his gaze. “Your ancestor tainted your blood.” He dropped to his knees in front of me and yanked open my robe. “This is what you are—a nature whore, just like that bitch who betrayed her people for the enemy. You might not be her, but her essence is stamped on you through your ancestry,” he gritted out.

“I’m not a whore!” I hissed.

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He wrapped his hand around my throat, squeezing until I saw stars. “You are my whore,” he growled, then shoved me back onto the couch and went back to rolling up like nothing happened.

“You saw those visions because your slain leader isn’t at rest. By storming into my ceremony and causing bloodshed, you essentially created the very outcome you saw in your vision.”

“Charmden needs a reminder of their history—a little déjà vu. Besides, how else was I supposed to make you my pussy fairy if your little elf boy had already marked you with his blood? Shit, I was almost too late,” he said, a twisted grin flickering across his lips.

“Did the wizard kill the horned fairy?” I asked, my voice trembling.

“Nah, he didn’t kill her. He was set up—framed for her murder. They turned on him. That man built an army to protect Charmden, wiped out every other creature just to keep the forest safe. And you saw how he ended up—Charmden sacrificed him so a new leader could take over, a leader who was a wolf in sheep’s clothing. Our legacy was ruined, and we had to build our own world from scratch. But I’m not gonna be like that nigga. I’m not sparing any of your people,” he said.

“Did Clover have any children?” I whispered.

He looked at me, deadly serious. “If you were her direct descendant—daughter, granddaughter, whatever—I’d have killed you already. But you’re not. You’re just another branch on her rotten tree.”

“Where’s the bathroom?” I asked, standing up.

“Upstairs,” he replied.

I got up from the couch and walked up the staircase. There was a bathroom in the hallway and three bedrooms. I was curious about what War did outside of being a maniacal serial killer. His home was nicely decorated, with a luxurious feel.

“Do you know how to turn on the faucet or use a toilet?” War asked from the doorway, leaning against the frame.

“Yes, I do. My sisters and I frequent this realm a lot. I prefer to shower with forest water and handmade soap.”

“This ain’t a five-star hotel; this is hell for you,” he replied, crossing his arms. His chest flexed subtly, accentuating the muscles in his arms, which looked undeniably tempting. My gaze lingered momentarily on his firm six-pack and the deep V leading to his groin before I quickly turned away, feeling a rush of heat. I was turning into a sex-crazed lunatic.

The black and white towel underneath my feet was freezing cold from the air outside coming through the window. I hated human bathrooms. “Can you please use your magic to fix up this bathroom? I can’t shower like this, but I will if I have to.”

War’s tattoos came alive, spinning at a fast rate as his eyes glowed. Tree roots sprouted through the cracks of the floor, flower bushes emerged while the floor transformed into rich, earthy soil, the type of soil we had in our forest. Waterfalls cascaded down the shower’s wall, turning it into a small pond. Once the magic subsided, I was in a small forest.

“Don’t ask for anything else,” War stated, his voice firm but his eyes softening for a

moment.

“Thank you,” I said, genuinely.

He walked over to me with a colorful glass bottle in his hand with a cork.

“What is this?”

“Shower gel, created from earth,” he replied, handing it to me. Our fingers brushed, and he tensed up, his posture rigid. War liked to be the initiator, but just maybe he could be nicer if I proved to him I wasn’t like my ancestor. Before I knew it, I was leading him underneath the waterfall, the water streaming down the lines of his abs.

“You’re walking into a death trap, Eboenia,” he said sternly. The tranquility of his voice, mixed with its deep baritone, made it easy to momentarily forget he was demonic.

“I thought I was already dead, War,” I taunted.

“I tend to kill muthafuckas twice,” he replied.

“Make it three times,” I chuckled, though my heart raced.

Suddenly, War roughly cuffed my chin and pushed me against the wall. “Do you think I’m a joke?” he asked, anger flashing across his eyes like a storm.

In the blink of an eye, War's fingers were at my pussy, and I felt an electric shock mixed with a cooling sensation shoot through me, igniting a fire deep within. A hoarse moan escaped my lips, unbidden, as the unexpected sensation coursed through my body. My nectar trickled down my inner thighs, betraying the turmoil of emotions he stirred within me. I wanted to be his pussy fairy— I needed to feel his massive

dick inside of me, making my mound squirt once more.

War backed away into the hallway, leaving me breathless and helplessly yearning.

Asshole!

He left me steaming hot and throbbing once again. “Ouuuuuu! Why do I need it so badly?” I rhetorically asked myself.

As I continued with my shower, I wondered if I would ever see my friends again. His touch was a cruel reminder of my captivity, a blend of torment and longing that left me questioning everything.

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What if he's lying about Charmden's history? Could this be part of his punishment too? Nah, those paintings were too graphic...too detailed. What in the hell really happened?

I walked out of the bathroom after a much-needed shower and some oral hygiene care. War was sitting on the edge of the bed, fully dressed, casually smoking a blunt in the bedroom across the hallway. I entered the room and noticed the big bed, his jacket draped over a chair, and cologne on the dresser. The space was filled with plants, the walls painted a deep, consuming black. His bedroom was dark and serene, the air rich with the organic scent of his cologne mingling with the sweet smoke.

"Your body ain't but so big, what the hell take you so long to shower?" he questioned, exhaling a plume of purple and red smoke that danced in the air like enchanted wisps.

"It was calming," I replied.

He rose from the bed, looking like a mysterious figure veiled by night. He always wore black, but damn, he looked good in it. I turned away, clutching the towel tightly to my body, avoiding his eyes that seemed to strip me bare.

"I'm going to take this cuff from around your neck until we come back. I promise on everything, I'll do you dirty if you try to get away from me," he said.

"Where are we going?"

"To a friend of mine's party at the strip club. He's human, no ties to our worlds. So

when you go, act normal,” he replied.

“I can just stay here.”

“Nah, you’re coming with me. I’m trusting that you know your place and won’t do anything once that cuff comes off,” he said.

“I promise, I won’t.”

I was just excited to feel my wings again, to have magic coursing through my body. I also wanted to show War that he could trust me, despite everything.

“What if we run into the people from Charmden? Many of them come out to party.”

“They don’t give a fuck about you, Eboenia!” he snapped, his anger flaring.

“My friends care about me.”

“I’ll let you have that,” he replied sarcastically.

A gold key surfaced in his hand as he unlocked the cuff from around my neck. Instantly, my magic rushed back—my wings burst free, flapping wildly. “My wings,” I breathed, then louder, “My wings!” I spun in a shaky circle, desperate for something to hold onto, the thrill of freedom cutting through the ache, even if just for a second.

I zipped back and forth across the room, my joy uncontainable, accidentally knocking over a statue in my excitement. “I know I got a fly swatter in here somewhere,” War muttered, rummaging through a drawer with annoyance.

I shrunk to the size of a butterfly, trying not to disturb the pristine order of the bedroom. As I fluttered in a circle, I caught sight of my reflection in the mirror. My

wings, once fluorescent with a golden hue and black rose flower pattern, were now the opposite—black wings with intricate, shimmering gold flowers. I touched my horns and stared into my soulless eyes.

“I have her wings too?” I shrieked, turning to face him.

“I don’t know why you’re surprised. You thought I made your family’s history up? The only people who lied to you are the ones back at your forest. I might be a lot of fucked up things, but I’m not a liar. Your people started this war, but this time around, I’m going to end it,” he said.

Can I be the peacemaker? Shit, what am I even thinking? War wants a bloodbath. But maybe I can talk him into sparing my friends and Sin.

I extended my hand and chanted in an ancient tongue to summon my wand. It appeared in my grasp, and I exhaled in relief, having feared War’s curse might have banished it. With a graceful twirl above my head, a cascade of granite-colored dust shimmered in the air, gently settling over me. As it descended, fabric wrapped around my body, contouring perfectly to my curves. Black pointed stilettos formed on my feet, adorned with velvet black roses. The long sleeves draped over my wrists, trailing with delicate strands of lace. The sheer black one-piece was beautifully embroidered with black roses.

I landed on the floor and strutted over to a brass mirror to admire my transformation. “My clothing is no longer vibrant,” I mused aloud, yet I couldn’t help but appreciate how the outfit embraced my hourglass figure. The fabric was sheer, but the roses provided just enough coverage, leaving much to the imagination.

Turning to the side, I admired the open back, revealing the markings of my wings. War stood silently, watching me, utterly speechless. The magic had truly come to life, transforming me into a vision of dark allure.

“What do you think?” I asked War.

He leaned back slightly, a smirk playing on his lips. “I think you’re embracing your worth as an easy fuck,” he replied.

“That just means I look good.”

War chuckled, his eyes narrowing playfully. “If you wanted me to be your pimp, that’s all you had to say.”

Is he jealous?... HA! What am I even thinking?

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“My fiancé loved when I changed into sexy dresses for him. He admired it too and couldn’t wait to peel them off my body, before devouring my center like a juicy peach. That wonderful tongue of his used to make my legs shake,” I lied, just to press his buttons.

He looked unfazed, nonchalantly exhaling smoke from his blunt. “Male fairies do have a feminine side. Maybe he wanted to wear your clothes instead. I bet he ain’t looking for you though,” he said.

“I didn’t mean any harm. I was just going down memory lane, wishing he could rip off my clothing and fuck me like a raging bull. Say what you want, but male fairies have stamina.”

“They ain’t got courage, though. How does it feel to spread your legs for a winged queen who can’t even protect you from his father? No real warrior will allow his pussy fairy to be tampered with,” he said, bursting my bubble.

“That might be true, but he still made my legs shake.”

War walked over to me, his stare intense. I didn’t budge as he gently pushed my forehead with a finger. “I’ll put that cuff right back on you. Don’t let it being off get you to feeling yourself. I have a way of humbling muthafuckas,” he replied.

“I’m just full of energy now, don’t get offended by it,” I countered.

War’s mood lightened, and for a moment, I thought I saw a sparkle in his eye. “I know what you’re trying to do. A house pet can’t make me jealous, sweetheart. I can

do what I want with you, and even when you feel like you want to escape or you've had enough, you still have to put up with everything I do and say to you," he replied.

I turned to walk away, but he grabbed my arm, pulling me back to face him. "If he pleased you the way you said he did, how come I was the first to make you cream? I heard your thoughts while I was stroking your pussy, and I fucked every drop of sap out of you. And you want me to do it again, but I won't be tempted this time by a nature demon! I fuck when I'm ready," he said.

"A nature demon that you forced a soul tie with, War. You cursed me, made me crave you, and now you can't handle that I want you inside me again? If you ain't taking what's yours, then maybe I don't belong to you."

"That's your ancestor's spirit speaking through you. You don't get what I'm not giving. This isn't for your pleasure, this is your hell," he said.

"Then punish me."

War backhanded me, and I fell back into the wall. My face stung and I held my cheek. "You asked for that," he said.

"I didn't mean it like that!" I said, my ear still ringing.

"My dick only gets hard when you have a collar around your neck with a leash!" War stated. He was letting it be known that I only turned him on when I was helpless. Meanwhile, I wanted him so badly my pussy was beatboxing, and I could smell the sweetness pouring out of me.

He stepped closer to me, forcing me to look up at him. "I know you feel connected to your nature whore ancestor, but don't let that spirit get your head cut off. As long as that cuff is off your neck, you are an enemy to me. You might be bound to me, but

that curse doesn't make me feel the things you feel," he said.

His closeness, his scent and touch, was even more deadly to me without the cuff. I needed penetration, my hair pulled with deep thrusts.

"Whatever you say," I whispered.

There was a knock on the door. "Bro, you trying to go to Horseshoe? We haven't gambled in a minute!" A familiar voice called out. War walked over to the door, leaving my heart palpitating. I don't know what made me challenge him the way I did. He opened the door, and his brother's eyes almost popped out of his head.

"Goddamn, I wish they sold that at Lexington Market," he said to War. Hearing them constantly refer to me as an object pissed me off.

"Aight, you can bounce though. I got somewhere to be," War told him.

"Hold up, bro. You're taking her prissy ass with you?" he asked War.

I could see the look of betrayal in his eyes as he grilled me. He looked at me in disgust, and I smirked at him. "Yo, Grim, I thought I told you about popping up here. Can I just pop up at your personal crib?" War asked him.

"I can't believe this bullshit. You're taking her out like that's your mate. You better not knock her up either," Grim warned War.

"For the last fucking time, muthafucka, you better chill out!" War warned him. Grim backed away, shaking his head.

"That fairy pussy is toxic, ain't it? Go ahead and do you then. She ain't even got the cuff on anymore. I was with you if you just wanted to get your dick wet, but you got

her dressed up like her name Beyoncé and y'all are matching colors. Our ancestors fitting to piss on your spirit for the afterlife," Grim told him.

"I know you're still in your feelings you wasn't chosen, but see when you reach this status, you can do what the hell you want to do. That's difference between us big bro, you gotta live by the code...I am the code! Stay safe out here and don't go to the casino alone," War told him.

Grim looked at me with killer eyes. "Play it safe lor creature," he said, before his body turned into a black misty cloud and then disappeared.

"Please buy him some pussy so he can get rid of that attitude," I told War.

"Or I can give him what he wants which is yours," War replied.

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I kept quiet although I called his bluff. War didn't take me as the type that liked to share, even if it was something or someone he didn't care much for, as long as it was his, it was his.

We quietly walked down the stairs and out the front door. At the end of the sidewalk, a street sign read "W. Baltimore St." It was a quiet neighborhood, despite the sound of sirens coming from the next block. We descended the steps, and War hit the unlock button on a black truck parked at the curb.

"Wouldn't it be easier to use enchanted doors? Baltimore traffic can be bad, especially downtown."

"Do you ever be quiet? Goddamn, sit back and ride. You ask too many questions. And it would be stupid to step out of a portal in front of a club, wouldn't it?" he asked.

I rolled my eyes at him and then climbed into the Escalade. I could sense he was annoyed from the argument with Grim.

It was my first time being in a truck that size. He got into the driver's seat and started it up. So many lights lit up inside. Escaping crossed my mind; all I had to do was burst out the window and head back to Charmden, but my will wouldn't let me. It's like I had the thought, but my heart wouldn't let me act on it.

War pulled away from the curb, he looked so good driving with his black baseball hat pulled down over his eyes. His side profile and the markings on the side of his face brought out his jawline.

“How old are you? You said you were the youngest wizard, but young in your world or in the human’s realm?”

“I swear your head is like cement. I keep telling you to stop asking me questions that has nothing to do with you. Damn, I’m trying to let my mind wander,” he responded.

“I’ll stop asking. Just tell me, and I’ll stay quiet the rest of the ride.”

He looked over at me. “You do know I can easily get rid of your mouth to shut you up,” he replied.

“I know you can, but you can’t have me looking like that around your friends.”

“I’m twenty-three,” he answered.

“Wow, you’re only a year older than me. I thought you were in your hundreds because of your persona. I guess that’s what comes with being a wizard. Do you have parents?”

“They’re dead just like yours,” he answered.

“Did they die from the people of Charmden?”

“Hoax’s right-hand man killed my father when I was ten. My father killed my mother when I was five,” he said and I gasped.

“Why?”

“She fought with him when he came to take me back to our world. She hadn’t seen him in five years, and then he just shows up and tells her he’ll be raising me. He used his powers on her, and the force killed her. In our society, we’re bred for war—we

impregnate human women to produce soldiers. To ensure our sons can thrive in the immortal world, we have to sever all attachments to their human lives. That means killing their mothers when we take them—it's a necessary sacrifice. My father tried to do things differently, but in the end, he still had to take her life," he replied.

"Does that bother you?"

"Humans are born to die. At least she died for a cause and I'll always honor her for that," he said.

"No wonder y'all objectify women. You only use them to breed with."

"We don't have females in our clan. It's not our fault we have to come to this realm to get pussy. I told you our history, I told you how we were born to protect Charmden! We are killers, Eboenia. Highly trained killers. That's our DNA," he replied.

"I understand."

"Good, so now you can stop trying to get into my head and ask me questions like we're going to be husband and wife. I gave you a history lesson and now all you have to do is not piss me off enough to take your head off," he threatened.

War turned the knob on his truck's radio system, turning up the rap music he was listening to by an artist named, Roddy Ricch.

Fifteen minutes later, we were stepping into a club called Norma Jeans. The heavy bass thumped through my chest, making my heart race. "Wowwww," I exclaimed, eyes wide as the beat vibrated through my body. The DJ was blasting "Said Sum," and I couldn't help but let my hips sway, moving in sync with the rhythm. It was my first time in a strip club, and I was instantly captivated by the dancers on

stage—barely dressed, wild and free, their asses and titties twinkling under the neon lights.

War grabbed my hand, his grip firm as he guided me through the crowd toward a VIP section, where at least six people lounged. I strutted across the floor, still rolling my hips, feeling the eyes on me.

“I see you like this type of atmosphere,” War said, sounding annoyed.

“I do like to dance my pain away,” I replied.

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A man with long locs and a sparkling chain stood up, grinning as he gave War a dap hug. He was decked out in designer from head to toe, jewelry catching every bit of light. I wasn't familiar with any of the name brands—my people didn't shop at malls, our clothing was spun from magic.

“My nigga, Cashaun! I ain't think you'd make it,” he said, clapping War on the back.

Cashaun? War's evil ass name is Cashaun? Interesting.

“Ahhh shit, who is this?” the man asked, eyes sliding over me, lingering a little too long. He was average in the face but his body was solid, and when he grinned, rows of diamond teeth flashed.

“This is my lil' cousin,” War told him.

“Cousin? You got family?” the man joked, eyebrows raised.

“What's your name, sweetheart? I'm Jay,” he said, extending his hand. He held on longer than necessary. I slipped my hand out of his grasp.

“I'm Eboenia. Nice to meet you, and Happy Birthday,” I replied, giving him a genuine smile.

“Appreciate it. No disrespect, yo, but your cousin is gorgeous—and she smells good, too. My damn, I feel like I'm floating. I don't even want to be here anymore,” he told War, then looked at me. “We could take a walk around Patterson Park to get to know each other,” Jay said, his eyes twinkling as he looked me up and down.

“She’s just in town for tonight,” War cut in.

“You gotta talk her into staying for a few days. I want to take her around the city,” Jay responded.

“She ain’t got time for niggas,” War shot back, jaw tight.

Jay put his hands up, backing off with a grin. “Aight, aight. You don’t want me to marry in the family, I get it. Where’s big bro at anyway? I thought he was coming through.”

“You know he really don’t be with the strip clubs,” War replied, shrugging.

“Fuck it then,” Jay said, waving us to sit. I slid in next to War, my thigh brushing his, while across the table two women were giving me the evil eye. I felt exposed, out of place without my sisters. War was definitely testing me—that’s why he brought me out, to see if I’d try to run without the cuff.

“Cashaun! You don’t see me sitting here?” a young woman with a nose piercing snapped. She was pretty, with a short, wavy hairstyle and flawless makeup, a few shades lighter than me. Her eyes narrowed at War, arms folded across her chest.

“Chill out, Jade, damn,” Jay said.

“No, I’m not chilling out. This nigga been ducking me for four months and pops up, and act like he can’t even speak!” she spat, her body leaning forward, nails tapping the table.

“You know the nigga is in college! You be trippin’,” Jay told her, shaking his head.

“I’m in college too and still know how to pick up the phone!” her friend chimed in,

lips pursed, eyes rolling.

A brown-skinned man with a close cut reached over, tapping her leg. “Stay out of it, Reka,” he said.

“My bad, shorty, I get tied up sometimes,” War replied to Jade, not even glancing her way as he flicked ash from his blunt.

Jade crossed her arms tighter, the bitch was glaring at me like I was the reason behind War’s four month disappearance. I leaned closer to War, pretending to listen to his conversation with his boys, but really just trying to shield myself from her stare. I was itching to ram my horns through her eyes and slice her throat open. It was surreal seeing War blend in with these humans, laughing and talking shit like he hadn’t just threatened to kill me an hour ago.

“So, cousin, are you from around here?” Jade asked, her tone dripping with suspicion.

“No, I’m far from here,” I replied, keeping my voice even.

“Are y’all like first, or second cousins?” she pressed, eyes narrowing.

“The fuck does it matter, Jade?” War snapped, his arm draped territorially across the back of my seat.

“Because she’s sitting close to you like you’re fucking her! And she’s uncomfortable as hell when I look at her! I ain’t stupid, Cashawn!” Jade shot back, taking a long sip from her glass, her words slurring just a bit.

“You should’ve listened to me and got you a D.C. shorty. These Baltimore shorties be trippin’,” one of War’s friends chimed in, shaking his head.

“Shut the hell up, Damien! Y’all act like me and Cashaun hadn’t been on and off for two years! I’m tired of the excuses y’all make for him! He goes away and we don’t hear from him in weeks and then he comes back like nothing happened!” Jade ranted, her voice rising over the music.

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Damien, a short, chubby guy with long cornrows and a handsome face, just shrugged and sipped his drink. I scooted a little further from War, feeling the tension rise. Jay, ever the gentleman, poured me a drink and slid it my way.

“I know it’s a nigga’s born day, but I’m just trying to celebrate you. It’s all about you, sweetheart,” he flirted.

“I thought I told you this is my peoples. Come on, muthafucka, keep it PG,” War warned Jay.

“Thank you, Jay,” I said, shooting daggers at War as I took a sip.

“Chill out with that nice shit!” War’s voice echoed in my head, a warning.

I rolled my eyes and took another sip. “Let me relax with my drink and pretend I’m not here! I don’t want you upsetting your human girlfriend. At least you got good taste in women.”

“Just don’t do too much,” he replied, his eyes cutting to me.

It was going to be a long-ass night. If my sisters were here, Jinx would’ve already dragged Jade through the sky by her neck.

Over an hour later, the section was flooded with bottles of top-shelf liquor, and money was storming through like a blizzard. I was now drinking straight from a heavy, hand-painted bottle of Clase Azul tequila, the burn sliding down my throat like liquid fire. A few inches away, a dancer in a pink glittery thong, stacked heels,

and a see-through bra spun around the pole. I watched her closely, openly flirting with War as Jade's eyes bored into me from across the table—it was a fucking circus.

“You can touch it, handsome,” the dancer purred at War, slapping her ass with a smack that echoed over the bass. War's friends were wilding out with the other two strippers, dollar bills flying, bodies grinding. She bent over, ass cheeks clapping right in War's face, and didn't spare me a single glance. Maybe that was the point. Were strip clubs only for men? I eyed her up—slim waist, fat ass, perky tits, skin like golden honey, hair dyed a wild shade of pink. Her body was like a garden, flowers and vines inked in neon colors, wrapping around her limbs. Her cuteness made my jaw clench; I wanted to claw her face off. My anger simmered, boiling over—my nails sharpened, slicing open the velvet of the chair with a hiss.

“Don't be afraid to touch it,” she coaxed War. She pulled a trick, making each ass cheek bounce in perfect rhythm. War smirked and gave her a hard smack, the sound swallowed by the music.

“What's the matter, Eboenia? You wanna twerk on your cousin too?” Jade asked, yelling over the music.

“Don't be shy, baby. You can feel it too. It's just for fun,” the stripper finally said, turning to me. She looked at War, lips curled in a teasing smile. “Is your wife always this quiet?”

Now this hoe wanna acknowledge me!

“She's not my wife,” War responded.

“So, that means we can link up later,” she flirted, licking her lips.

I rolled my eyes, disgust curling my lip as I watched her grind on War. He was

locked in, his eyes glued to her body. The stripper's body language screamed for him to take her right there. The music faded into a low, pulsing hum, the partygoers blurring into a kaleidoscope of color at the edge of my vision. My focus tunneled in on the pink-haired bitch, her hips hypnotic, her movements almost supernatural.

Then, the air flickered—my magic, slick and black, slithered out from under my skin. As she spun, black spiders began to crawl up her thighs. They poured from her skin, crawling over her tattoos, writhing up her stomach and into her nose. I covered my mouth to let out a giggle.

“What...the...hell!” she shrieked. She stomped and thrashed, trying to shake them off. I grinned, watching as the spiders spilled from her nostrils, her screams lost in the turnt up club. She bolted for the back, leaving a trail of panic behind her. The humans kept partying, oblivious to what just happened.

“It was getting to the good part and you just had to mess it up,” War chuckled, unbothered.

“Fuck you!” I spat, venom in my voice.

“In due time,” War replied.

My veins pulsed with rage as I bit the inside of my cheek. Jealousy gnawed at me, clawing its way up from the pit of my stomach. War reached out, squeezing my thigh. “Calm down, lil’ one. Save that energy for later. No need to get jealous over a lap dance.”

“Who said I was jealous?” I snapped.

“I can feel it, see it in your eyes,” he said.

I stood, ready to storm off, but War's gaze locked onto me, daring me to make a scene. I could feel the pressure of his magic, invisible but heavy, like a warning pressing against my skin.

"Don't think I won't punish you here," he threatened.

"I'm going to dance. That's what you like, right?" I challenged, grabbing the bottle and taking a long pull. His eyes tracked me as I moved, hips rolling, a fragrant forest scent leaking from my pores.

When a fairy dances, it was like a mating call. It wasn't just my body or my beauty—it was the magic, thick and heady, oozing into the air. I climbed onto the table, letting my body move with impossible grace, as if I was both flying and rooted to the earth. War's eyes burned as I dropped low, spreading my legs, popping my pussy toward him, pheromones thickening the air like honey.

"Goddamn," he mouthed, licking his lips.

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A glittery gust of black dust spilled from my skin, sweeping across the club like a living storm. The men surged forward, aroused and entranced, drawn to me like moths to a flame, their hands outstretched and bills fluttering from their fingers. I was a goddess. The women glared daggers, lips curled in envy and arms crossed tight, especially the strippers who were no longer the focus. The whole room held its breath. War cocked his head, watching as I cupped my breasts, inviting him to taste, and for a moment, I forgot I was even in the human world.

“Lawd have mercyyyyy! I’m ready to pass out!” Jay hollered.

I rolled my hips, boneless and fluid. I lifted my leg behind my ear while still standing, popping my pussy even harder with sensual twirls before dropping into a split, slamming my mound against the table as if War were underneath me. I patted my pussy, then brought my hand to my lips and blew my scent across the room, letting it drift over the crowd like a spell.

“Is this what you like?” I taunted War, ignoring the hungry stares.

He stood from the chair, ripping me off the table. “You’re putting too much attention on yourself,” he growled in my ear.

“Nigga, stop hating and let her finish!” someone shouted from the crowd.

“Yes, let me finish!” I shot at War, smirking.

He dragged me through the crowd, and someone dared to grab my ass. War spun, fist flying—a burst of golden energy exploded from his knuckles, sending the guy

crashing through the wall.

“Ouuuuuuu!” the crowd erupted.

“I’ll holla at you later, Jay!” War yelled, the crowd of men trailing after us, possessed by my spell.

“Come on, man! We were just getting turnt up!” Jay protested.

We were almost at the door when Jade stormed up, almost tripping because she had too much to drink. “I knew that hoe wasn’t your cousin! That weird bitch been watching you all night!” she screamed, grabbing War’s sleeve.

I barely registered the movement—my wand flashed, transforming into a gleaming gold sword engraved with patterns of roses, and I drove it into her midsection with enough force to lift her off the floor. Blood poured from her mouth, her eyes widened in shock, and her legs dangled. Screams erupted, the music cut off, and the club plunged into silence.

War acted fast, rolling a gold marble across the floor—it burst in a flash, freezing everyone in place, time itself grinding to a halt. I yanked my sword free, Jade’s blood forming into bubbles, rising and popping in the air, from War’s stasis spell, before she dropped on the floor. The whole building was dead quiet, the only sound my ragged breath.

“What the fuck, Eboenia!” War roared.

“Your bitch asked for it! And so did you, for taunting me all night! You should’ve left me in the house.”

“It was cool until you got up on the table, shook the scent of your pussy everywhere,

and let loose that fairy dust. You knew what you were doing! That shit travels,” he snapped.

“I don’t care about that! You put me in a position where I felt like I had to defend myself!”

“Against what? A drunk piece of ass who was trippin’ on me ghosting her? You let every man in here get a whiff of your wetness. Now you’re fittin’ to get your limbs broken,” he sneered.

War yanked my sword out of Jade’s body. The air shimmered, and a swirling portal spiraled open beneath her corpse, swallowing her whole with a low, hungry moan. I snatched my sword from his grasp, and it vanished at my touch.

“Where is she going?”

“To a grave in my realm,” he replied nonchalantly.

“Are you saddened that I killed your human pussy fairy?”

He scoffed. “Pussy comes and goes. Yours is ready to be on the chopping block too.” His grip tightened around my arm, and he dragged me out of the club.

“Wait, we can’t leave your friends frozen in place!” I protested, glancing back at the motionless crowd.

“They’ll come to soon. And when they do, everyone inside that club will have no memory of the last twelve hours,” he said. Suddenly, War stopped short as we headed toward the garage.

Without warning, a mask materialized over War’s face, shadowing the lower half of

his face, and the hood of his black overcoat slid up, cloaking him in darkness. His chain coiled into his hand, links glinting with a sinister energy. My ear tingled—a sharp, electric warning. A fairy was close.

A white unicorn emerged from the garage, its metal horn gleaming, red eyes burning with malice—it was an army unicorn, bred for war.

The city outside was unnaturally still. Not a single car moved along the streets; the buildings stood dark and silent, and not a soul lingered in sight—it was as if the world itself had been emptied, turned into a ghost town. The world around us felt hollow and unreal. We weren't in the real world anymore—we'd slipped into a mirror image of the realm, a trick pulled by a sorcerer.

“Have you ever killed one of your own before?” War asked.

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“No, of course not,” I whispered, my heart thudding.

“Well, tonight’s the night where you’ll kill one of your people. Because if you don’t, I’ll fucking kill you myself,” he threatened.

“They’ll think I’m a traitor,” I breathed, the words barely escaping my lips.

War yanked my face toward him, his thumb dragging my lip down to reveal the mark he’d branded me with. “This makes you an enemy. Your loyalty is to me now—never forget that,” he growled, his eyes burning into mine.

He’s pissing me off, but I know I can’t let him fall. If War dies, I’ll be next. Maybe worse. I have to fight—not just for him, but for myself.

Hoofbeats thundered, echoing from the garage. In a blink, eight horsemen burst out, their unicorns’ horns shining likedrawn blades. Leading them was Crane, Troph’s son—now the lieutenant, stepping into his father’s place as next of kin.

Crane’s eyes raked over me, disgust curling his lip. “You sure don’t look like you’re being held captive. You’re dressed up all fancy in your human-inspired shit. Sin’s losing his mind over you, but here you are, standing with the fucking demon who just slaughtered your people! I always knew you were a traitor, Eboenia!”

War chuckled. “Sin should’ve fought for his pussy fairy when he had the chance, instead of crying over his dead bitch of a mother! Speaking of dead, I see you had to fill your father’s shoes. You should’ve seen the way his head ripped off his body, like tearing off a lobster tail. That muthafucka put up a weak fight—he was dead before I

even took my next breath.”

Crane’s jaw clenched, his eyes beaming. “We don’t die, demon. Our spirit lives on—something your kind will never understand. You have no tradition, no world, no legacy. You’re not a real wizard. There’s only ever been one wizard worth the name, and it sure as hell isn’t you!”

The seven warriors dismounted, moving as one. Their brown ninja suits clung to their bodies, hands flexing at their sides. Crane’s fingertips glowed with the same green as his eyes.

War stepped forward, chain swinging lazily at his side. “I’m fittin’ to put belt to all y’all pussy asses. You tree-living termite-looking punks,” he said.

Suddenly, one of Crane’s men vaulted over his leader’s head, loosing a poisoned arrow at War. The chain snapped through the air, slicing the arrow in half. Havoc erupted. Six warriors charged at War, while the remaining two lunged for me.

As I tried to ready my wand, I was slammed to the ground before I could aim. Rough hands clawed at my wand. “She’s got Clover’s wand!” one snarled, trying to wrench it free.

A vine snaked around my legs, tightening, dragging me across the pavement. “You’re coming with us!” the fairy hissed against my ear. Hoax would burn me alive if they returned with me because of my involvement with the fight.

I screamed a spell at him, unleashing a swarm of glossy, ravenous beetles. They poured from my palm and swarmed over his body, devouring his flesh and muscle in seconds. The fairy shrieked, his skin bubbling as the beetles burrowed beneath the surface, causing it to pop like bubbles—but even that didn’t stop him.

“You filthy slut! Shame on you for what you’re doing to Sin!” he grunted.

Another yanked me by my locs, hauling me toward a dark alley while his partner straddled my back, still clawing for my wand. My wings burst from my shoulders, tearing through fabric, and War’s gears flickered into existence—spinning wildly on the buildings and the ground, casting warped shadows to protect me.

The two fairies froze as four monstrous, dog-shaped shadows slithered from the darkness, jaws dripping with inky venom. I transformed into the size of my fairy, slipping out from under their grasp as the shadow hounds tore into them, shredding flesh and scattering blood across the alley.

Meanwhile, across the street, War was still battling the six warriors who had charged him. His chain lashed out, wrapping around one’s neck and yanking him off his feet. With a brutaltwist, War snapped the man’s spine, then swung the corpse like a club into a second attacker, splattering brains against the curb. A third warrior lunged, only to be impaled through the eye by the dagger end of the chain, its tip bursting out the back of his skull. Now, only three of Crane’s men remained, circling War warily as blood spattered his mask. His magic was too ancient for them to defeat.

Crane’s voice echoed throughout the street. “Enough!” Emerald magic circled around his fists. He hurled a volley of razor-sharp leaves at War, each one spinning like a cyclone. War’s gears spun faster, intercepting the leaves midair and turning them to ashes. Crane surged forward, swinging a blade of living wood, but War barely sidestepped, his chain snaking out to wrap around Crane’s wrist. Crane twisted, breaking free with a surge of green fire, and slashed War across the chest—drawing a line of black, smoking blood.

War touched his open wound, surprised that Crane was able to hurt him. But I knew firsthand that it was a poison that ate away at your flesh. War chuckled. “Damn, I’m starting to like your bitch-ass. That’s right, bitch-boy, honor your punk-ass father. At

least you can tell him you got your lick back when you meet up with him,” War taunted.

“Fuck you, coward! Show your face!” Crane replied. Blood was pouring out of him, but he was still standing.

War flicked his wrist and gears exploded from the ground, spinning like saw blades, forcing Crane to leap back. Crane’s magic lashed out, roots bursting from the pavement, trying to ensnare War’s legs, but War stomped, and a gear ground through the roots, spraying splinters.

At the same time, I darted overhead, landing lightly on the shoulder of one of the last warriors. My wand flicked, and a slender serpent slithered into his ear canal. His body seized, eyes rolling back as he collapsed, convulsing. I shifted back to my true form, straddling his chest, and with a savage swipe, my wand became a knife. I slit his throat wide, warm blood spurting over my hands and face.

Crane saw the kill and roared. “Eboeniaaaaaa! Nooooooooo!”he screamed as he saw the final member of his squad fall. Green magic blazed from Crane’s palms as he sent a whip of thorns lashing at me. I rolled aside, feeling the thorns graze my cheek, chest, and thigh, and hurled a swarm of beetles at his feet. He incinerated them with a burst of emerald fire, then charged straight at War.

War met him head-on, chain spinning, gears whirring and slicing through the air. Crane dodged and weaved, landing a punch that sent War staggering back. War grinned, blood on his teeth, and with a flick of his finger, a gear shot up from the ground and nearly took Crane’s leg off. Crane jumped, twisting midair, and landed a vicious kick to War’s jaw.

The two clashed in a blur of steel, wood, and magic, blood flying, gears grinding, roots shattering. Crane fought like a man possessed, but War’s taunting never faded,

even as blood dripped from his wounds and the ground became a red lake.

Crane was knocked to the ground, his body saturated with blood.

“I’m not going to beg you for my life!” Crane said, wheezing for breath.

War stood over him. “I almost don’t want to kill you—you’re way more fun than your pops,” he teased.

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I stood in the middle of the street, my heart beating out of my chest because Crane was Sin's best friend. It would crush Sin if he knew I was with War when Crane was murdered. War must've sensed it.

"Crane, just leave!" I yelled at him, and War glared at me.

"The fuck did you just tell him?" he asked.

Crane chuckled as he weakly pushed himself up, almost falling back, but he leaned against the streetlight instead. "You fucked her, didn't you? Hoax is going to kill you," he told War.

"I would be a fool not to fuck the enemy's pussy. Go ahead and return to Charmden. I'll see you soon. I'd rather kill you on your own soil—it's more disrespectful," War told Crane.

"You're going to end up like the last wizard," Crane coughed out.

"I'm cool with that, as long as I can take as many of you with me before I go," War replied, backing away.

Crane looked at me with saddened eyes. "I never liked you for Sin. You've always been nothing but trouble. Tainted goods with a poisoned snatch. You don't deserve that wand!" Crane said, and it broke my heart.

He mounted his unicorn, blood dripping down his arm. The other unicorns closed in around him, following as he rode ahead. Crane gave me one last look, then snapped

the reins. The unicorns galloped down the street, and as they reached the end, a blinding bubble of light opened in front of them. Without hesitation, Crane and his unicorns disappeared into the glowing portal. The bubble flickered and popped, and just like that, the street snapped back to normal—we were back in the real world, not the illusion.

“Goddamn, shorty, what happened to you?” a man asked as he walked past.

War hurriedly grabbed my arm and led me into the garage. We were leaving blood stains everywhere.

“I was caught off guard. I don’t like that shit at all, Eboenia. I know your enchanted pussy lured them here. You knew what you were doing, summoning those clowns up,” War argued.

He unlocked his truck, opened the passenger door, picked me up, and tossed me inside.

“Ouch!” I squealed, hitting my knee on the glove compartment.

He slammed the door so hard the window shattered, glass raining across the seat. The metal bent and groaned, as if the truck itself was afraid of him. War slid into the driver’s seat and pulled off. My stomach twisted—partly from the gnawing emptiness of not eating in almost a day, and mostly from the blood on my hands. I’d killed someone from Charmden. Crane would run back and tell everyone I fought with War—that I set it all up.

I pressed my forehead to the cold glass, desperate to open the door, to run. But the moment I even thought about escape, agony flared in my chest—like invisible chains yanking me back, the soul bind searing through my veins. I couldn’t leave him, not even if I wanted to. I was trapped, body and soul.

“My friends are going to hate me,” I whispered, voice trembling. “They’ll never forgive me.”

War glanced over, smirked—showcasing the gold swords on his teeth. That smirk was my weakness, the one thing that sometimes made me forget just how cruel he really was. “Hate is as strong as love, Eboenia. Either way, you’ll never leave their minds. You’ll haunt them.”

“Why are you so damn wicked and coldhearted?” I sobbed. “I hated my life in Charmden, but I love my sisters. They mean everything to me. You’re tearing my world apart. Do you want me to become like you?”

He didn’t look at me, but his smirk lingered, gold shining in the dim light. “No,” he said. “I want you to be worse than me.”

A sob rose in my throat. “I had to kill the minute you walked into my life. I’m a killer now.”

War’s eyes flicked to me, cold and emotionless. “I can’t be soul-bound to a weakling. This ain’t a fairytale, and I’m no savior. When we’re at war, you’ll fight too. I won’t have you slowing me down, or dying because you’re soft. Stop thinking about flowers that smell sweet, Eboenia. Start thinking about the ones that poison.”

I squeezed my eyes shut, wishing I could vanish. But the bind pulsed inside me, a shitty reminder—I belonged to him now, whether I wanted to or not. I wondered what my friends were up to. Lune would be having her baby soon, tears poured when I thought about missing her child’s birth.

The minute we walked into War’s brownstone, the cuff appeared around my neck. “Can I step over the threshold first?” I asked him. He ignored me, shrugging off his overcoat and shirts. War had a deep, open wound on his side, the flesh turning

green—you could almost see his rib. It was poison, and no matter how fast a healer someone is, poison takes longer. It seeps into your veins, slowing down rejuvenation.

War trudged up the stairs, blood still leaking from his wound. “I’ll order something,” he said, disappearing around the corner. My clothes peeled off me, falling onto the hardwood floor like dust particles.

Why do I feel so sorry for him? Ugh, the way he turned my life upside down in just two days! He does seem weaker—maybe he needs my help.

I tiptoed upstairs, following behind War. We climbed another flight of stairs to the fourth floor, where the empty halls slowly transformed into a secret room overlooking War’s realm. His brownstone was connected to his world. He sat in a chair that stripped the rest of his clothing away, golden-hued tentacles silhouetted by the projection of spinning gears on the walls. He froze, clutching the arms of the chair as the tentacles plunged into his wound, sucking out the poison. War’s pale complexion began to return to normal. He saw me standing off to the side, watching. I thought he’d tell me to leave, but he didn’t.

“I should make you get on your knees and suck it out another way. You do owe me that,” he said.

“I didn’t do that on purpose. You were showing that stripper too much attention. Were you trying to choose her to give your offspring to, birth a warrior?” I found myself asking. The cuff made me vulnerable; without it, I had some dignity.

After he was healed, he pushed himself up from the chair. He walked over to me, his gigantic, thick tentacle between his legs, veins pulsing. It wasn’t the time to be aroused, but I’d been craving it since the first time he entered me. War grabbed a fistful of my hair, yanking me around so my face and breasts pressed against the wall. His hard abs pinned me, his dick throbbing against my ass.

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My nails clawed at the wall as he wrapped his free arm around my chest, then dragged his tongue along my neck. When he sucked too hard, the swords on his teeth painfully nipped at my skin, leaving stinging trails of blood that he lapped up with a beastly hunger. “You knew I was going to make you pay for that shit you pulled at the club, right? I don’t like to be disrespected,” he growled.

My floodgates burst open, a stream of pussy rum drizzling down my inner thigh, warping around my calf like a ribbon. I felt it glide down to my toes and pool beneath my feet. War gripped my hair tighter, forcing my legs apart with his knee. Without warning, he ripped me open, tearing into my ripe fruit like a man possessed by lust. The pain shot through me, as he plunged so deep I almost slipped.

He didn’t wait for me to adjust. His movements were ravenous, punishing, each thrust a reminder of his dominance. My body trembled, caught between agony and pleasure, the darkness of his touch unraveling me. The wall scraped my skin, his teeth marked my neck, and I could feel the blood and bruises blooming beneath his grip.

War’s voice was a growl in my ear, each word punctuated by the brutal rhythm of his hips as he fucked me.

“You wanted that attention, didn’t you? You danced like you were in heat, like you wanted every man there to know you were ripe. That sweet scent of your pussy—do you even realize what you did?” He drove into me harder, making me gasp and my eyes fluttered. I heard a bone in my back crack from his grinding thrusts. “You must want to breed, Eboenia, because that little mating dance made me imagine you marked and heavy with the seed I’d put inside you. You put on a show for everyone, but this—” his hand slid between my thighs, fingers rough, “—this is mine. You’ll

pay for making me watch you beg for another's touch. This cuff around your neck means you're my pussy fairy! I'm going to fuck you until your stomach swell with my nut," he groaned.

"WARRRRRRRR!" I panted.

He pulled out of me, leaving me squirting after I came in mere seconds. War knew exactly how to strike my pressure point, leaving my legs trembling and weak. He spun me around to face him, his hands gripping my ass, kneading bruises into my flesh as he pressed me against the wall. He bit my bottom lip, then pulled it into his mouth, suckling hard as his kiss devoured me. The markings on his body spun, pulsing with a dark light that sent electrifying sensations through my veins.

"You wanted to put on a show, right?" he rasped.

"Can you drop it? I wasn't thinking clearly," I pleaded.

War stepped back, his length slick with my essence. "I can't drop it until I'm satisfied. I'm done giving out passes," he growled.

From his swirling markings, three shadows bled into the room. They twisted and stretched, forming into tall men—each one an exact, ruthless reflection of War. As their features solidified, I realized I couldn't tell them apart by face, but something in the way they moved, the glint in their eyes, told me everything. I decided, in my mind, to name them after the sides of War I knew too well: Ruin, Havoc, and Fury. Each one was a piece of him—his wrath, his evilness, his destruction—walking the flesh.

War cupped my face, his touch both tender and threatening. "You wanted more than a pair of eyes on you tonight, didn't you? You wanted to show off in front of my peoples? Well, now you'll get what you asked for. This is hell, and there are no more

passes.”

He lifted me effortlessly, tossing me over his shoulder as the others stalked behind. He carried me to a bed that rose from the floor—an altar draped in black and gold satin, with chains dangling from the canopy like a torture chamber. He placed me on my trembling legs in front of him, then settled onto the bed, watching as Ruin, Havoc, and Fury stroked themselves. Their hunger for my pussy was evident in their eyes as they licked their lips—they were apex predators, and I was a cornered rabbit.

My heart thundered in my chest. War was in control. He was my warden, and I was at his mercy.

He beckoned me. Like a spirit possessed, I crawled onto the bed. Ruin seized my hair, forcing my head down to War’s waiting manhood. I opened my mouth, surrendering to his dark magic. Familiar fingers parted my swollen lips, and a tongue—Havoc’s—slithered inside me. Another set of hands—Fury’s—gripped my breasts, squeezing until I whimpered.

“Ummm, hmmm!” War groaned as I licked and sucked him, still tasting my sugar water on his dick. I deep-throated him, triggering my gag reflex and producing a flood of spit. When Havoc flicked his tongue across my clit, I let out a hoarse cry. Fury parted my ass cheeks and, from the opposite direction, dragged his tongue around my anus. Ruin yanked a chain down and wrapped it around my wrists, binding my arms behind my back.

“Good girl, suck that shit!” War growled, his thickness ramming into the back of my throat. I gagged, spit sliding down my chin as Havoc’s tongue tormented my clit, wild and ruthless. When he slipped a finger into my ass, I shattered—my body convulsing, nerves on fire.

War’s moans were intoxicating—deep, raspy, vibrating through my bones. Feeling

him quake beneath me gave me a twisted sense of power, like I could break him with my mouth alone.

“HAVOCCCCCCC!” I screamed, my pussy throbbing, my ass squeezing around Havoc’s wicked touch. He was a devious eater, sucking my bud with a vengeance. A waterfall flooded down my thighs.

They stayed silent. It was for the best—if four Wars started talking, I’d lose my mind.

“Ahhhhhhhhh!” War groaned as he busted down my throat. Ruin snatched me away, greedy for his share. He lifted me, forced me into a reverse cowgirl, legs bent back, and eased his thick, long meat into my ass.

“OUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU!” I tensed, pain splitting me open. That kind of stretch was never on my list. Havoc and Fury’s faces and chests were soaked, Havoc chaining my left leg, Fury chaining my right. I was spread eagle, arms bound behind me, completely exposed. War gripped my hips and drove into my pussy—I creamed on impact. He grabbed my throat, staring into my eyes, biting his bottom lip like a beast about to devour me.

“You’re so fucking beautiful taking all of my dick,” he said, sliding in and out, slow and deep.

“It’s too muchhhh... I can’t take itttttttt, War!” I cried.

He pinched my nipple, hard. “You always say it’s too much, but you’ve been cumming nonstop. I’m going to teach you how to take pain. Now open your mouth.”

I obeyed. Havoc spit my pussy nectar into my mouth. Next, he captured my nipple, while Fury suckled the other—they were nursing on my fairy honey like starved demons.

“I’m going to make your life hell, Eboenia. Even when I’m not busting in your pussy, you’ll still feel me inside you. You won’t think, breathe, or sleep without feeling me. I own your soul,” War hissed, casting another spell over me.

“Yes, babyyyyyy!” I moaned, surrendering.

Ruin kissed the back of my neck, then licked my ear. The pain in my ass faded, replaced by a triple wave of pleasure. War slid out of my pussy and then beat my clit with the heaviness of his shaft—it sounded like a bat striking water. I fell back into Ruin, another orgasm ripped through me. War grabbed my leg, placing tender kisses on my drenched calf, never missing a stroke. Havoc and Fury kept nursing my breasts. The way they catered to my body was art itself. I kissed Havoc and Fury on their foreheads, while a heavenly sweet and gold glaze from my mound splashed on War’s chest. He pulled out of me and I felt Ruin exploding in my anus. I thought I was finished, until Havoc and Fury unchained me and repositioned me. I was now on top, facing Havoc, while Fury was behind me, tooting up my backside.

“Arhhhhhhhhh!” I let out when Havoc lowered me onto his dick and Fury entered my backside. War was gripping my hair, pulling me towards his length. With my other hand, I was jerking off Ruin. Drool was spilling out the corners of my mouth from War’s aggressive pumps. Havoc and Fury’s thrusts were so intense that I felt like my hip dislocated. The bed was sliding, the chains were rattling, and my body felt raw, like I was in a royal rumble.

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“ARHHHHHHHGGGGHHHHHHHHH! Y’ALL ARE STRETCHING MEEEEEEEEEE!” I screamed.

War smacked my face and then twisted his fist in my hair. “Clean it off!” he grunted.

Havoc flickered his tongue across my dripping nipple, the swords on his teeth nipping my skin, sending a cooling sensation through my body. Heavy nuts bounced against my skin, the room filled with the sound of me slurping and gagging, my overly soaking wet pussy echoing throughout. I felt dirty, like what I was doing was forbidden, but their touch, their hunger for me, made me feel powerful. I popped War out of my mouth while looking up at him.

“I want to taste you,” I said.

He tapped his shaft on my awaiting tongue. “I thought I told you, fucking you was only for my pleasure. Are you enjoying this?” he asked.

“Yes, I enjoy pleasing you...serving you my body until you’re ready for my heart,” I replied. The room was hazy, my thoughts spiraling. I felt high and even intoxicated while saying those words to War.

He caressed my chin while exploding on my tongue, staring deeply into my eyes. Fury shot his shaft milk across my back.

“Ummmmmm....you feel soooo fucking gooddddddd!” I moaned when Havoc bounced me on his dick. I bucked forward and Ruin positioned my legs in a squatting position and then smacked my ass. There was no more pain, just straight ecstasy.

With my nails clawing at his chest and shoulder, I bounced, whined and bucked.

Ruin was massaging my breasts and licking on my neck. “Shitttttt! You’re going to make me come again, babyyyyyyyyy!” I cried out. Havoc throbbed and pulsated, shooting his baby serum into my womb. I fell over, my back arching off the bed from an orgasm that rocked me so strong, it cramped my abdomen. War rubbed my clit while the other three pinned my legs back. I was panting, screaming and pulling at the sheets. He slid his dick into me again, balls deep. His gears spun, vibrating my body while he pressed firmly into my G-spot, his shaft moving in slow motion.

“It’s okay baby, I’m going to take you to the end,” he said.

My clit was the size of an acorn for arousal. Something remarkable happened, it blossomed like a flower, pink rosepetals opening. His eyes fluttered and he swayed side-to-side before we both came and collapsed...

“Go faster!” I yelled to Sin.

We were riding a unicorn, soaring through the moonlit forest, my arms wrapped tight around his waist. Night air whipped past us while glowing moths danced around our heads, their wings flickering like lightning bugs. The unicorn’s speed was a rush—wind tearing through my hair, heart pounding in my chest. When she leapt across a pond, we soared fifteen feet into the air, before landing in the mossy soil.

The unicorn slowed to a halt as we reached our hideout, hidden deep in the forest, far from the village. Here, the world was drenched in magic: a pink pond shimmered in the moonlight, tucked between tangled rose bushes heavy with blossoms. The water sparkled with minerals, tiny crystals floating on the surface like scattered pink diamonds. The air was heavy with the scent of roses and damp earth; it was a lover’s nest.

Sin slid off the unicorn first and turned, reaching his arms out to help me down. As he lowered me, he pressed his lips to mine. When my feet touched the ground, I looked up into his lovely green eyes, completely mesmerized.

“Eboenia, tell me something,” he said.

“What is it?” I asked, peeling off the fabric that clung to my body like paint.

“Tell me you’ll never love another man,” he said, his voice trembling.

“I will never love another man, you know that,” I promised.

Tears welled up in his eyes. “I wouldn’t know what to do if you stopped loving me. You’re the only thing that keeps me sane in Charmden. Lately, I feel like I can’t protect you—like something or someone will come and take you from me.”

“Sin, I’m not going anywhere. Now, let’s goooo!” I shouted, shaking off his worries.

I launched myself into the air, wings folding back before I cannonballed into the pink-tinted water. The pond was cool and silky, petals swirling around me as I surfaced, laughing. Sin dove in after me, naked as the day he was born, and wrapped his arms around me, pulling me close for a kiss. We were only seventeen, and because his mother forbade him from seeing me, we had to sneak off to secret places like this, deep in the forest where no one else dared to go.

“Your body is changing,” Sin whispered, eyes roaming over me.

“Because we made love. I’m a woman now,” I teased, laughing as his cheeks flushed.

“Or maybe it’s all that human food you sneak off to eat,” he said, grinning.

“Well, it did give me these,” I replied, pressing my breasts against his chest.

“And this too,” he added, squeezing my backside.

I rolled my eyes. “I don’t like the way the others are starting to look at you, especially my father,” he muttered.

“What do you want me to do? I’m getting older, Sin. I’m not a little girl anymore. I’m filling out. Let’s just have fun—play around, then lay under the moonlight, wrapped up in each other’s arms.”

Sin rubbed the back of his neck, worry etched into his features. “I hate when you leave this realm, and I don’t like when other men look at you. I get jealous, thinking someone might take you away.”

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I wrapped my arms around his neck and my legs around his waist, holding him close. “Stop listening to Crane. He just likes to stir up trouble and make you anxious. I’m not going anywhere.”

I kissed his lips, then hugged him tight. “I’m always going to be with you, Sin.”

“I don’t please you, though,” he whispered.

I pulled back, searching his face. “What are you talking about?” Sin was always doubting himself, always a little paranoid—thanks to Hoax, his father, who made him feel small and always questioned his worth.

“The fairy honey doesn’t come out of you when we’re together,” he said quietly.

“It rarely happens to anyone, Sin. We’re traditional—we only ever do it one way. Maybe if we tried something different, like me getting on top...”

He shook his head, looking scandalized. “That’s forbidden. My ancestors would shame me.”

“No, they won’t. Intimacy is like dancing—it’s supposed to be wild, hips moving, full of passion. Hoax won’t know. It’ll be our secret.”

I was willing to do anything to help Sin feel like he wasn’t worthless, so I lured him out of the pond and onto the damp soil. “Lie down,” I told him softly. Sin hesitated, then nervously settled onto a pile of wet leaves. I straddled him, pressing my lips to his, letting my tongue trace a slow path down his neck. I’d watched humans make

love in movies before, but I wasn't sure if I was doing it right—at least, not until Sin thrust upwards, his nails digging into my ass cheeks.

“Eboeniaaaa,” he chanted, his voice heavy with lust.

My wings fluttered, blending seamlessly with the pink garden surrounding us, scattering a hazy dust into the air that circled us like a golden cloud. Its fragrance made Sin relax, coaxing arousal from him. He tensed beneath me as I gripped his shaft, gliding him into my tight haven. His hands found my breasts, squeezing anxiously as I rode him. My wings guided me, lifting my knees from the ground, keeping me balanced atop him as if I were riding a unicorn.

“You’re the best at everything,” Sin groaned, biting his lip.

Just as I was about to slide down further, I heard bushes rustling—a warning that someone was near. Before I could react, a searing pain shot through my back. I twisted around to see Hoax, floating a few feet away, the gravity of his staff carrying him through the air. I scrambled off Sin as flames from Hoax’s staff burned through my flesh.

“Father!” Sin cried, scrambling to his feet. He rushed to my side, trying desperately to blow on the wound where my skin was turning to ash. The pain weakened me, paralyzing my limbs. Hoax landed before us, murder in his eyes.

“You let a promiscuous spirit get on top of you and steal your strength? You’re already weak, Son! Is this what you’ve been doing? Sneaking off during training to let her overpower you?” Hoax’s voice thundered at Sin.

“It burns!” I screamed, writhing.

Hoax swung his staff at me, the blow splitting my face open. Blood poured down my

chest like molten lava. “Father! Please, leave her alone. I’ll go back to training! Can I at least heal her?” Sin begged, his voice breaking as I lay in excruciating pain, vision swimming with stars. Through the blur, I saw Hoax strike Sin to the ground.

“You are a disgrace! No offspring of mine will lay on his back! Only females lay on their backs, and that is to breed! I told your mother you weren’t a true warrior! I’ve had to slice off the heads of many men who whispered devious things about you, calling you weak and sweet like maple sap!” Hoax spat at Sin.

I looked down at my side and saw a hole the size of a wasp nest, flesh charred and raw. My skin had stopped falling away, but the pain still burned from within, ripping another scream from my throat.

“Father, please help her!” Sin pleaded, but Hoax only berated him further.

Hoax seized Sin by the throat and hauled him up. “Challenge me, and if you make me bleed, I’ll cure her,” he growled.

“Leave him...leave him alone,” I managed to gasp.

Hoax’s sharp-toothed smirk twisted as he looked at me. “Oh, a rebel. You’re just like your mother. She was a fighter, too.”

He shoved Sin aside, then knelt before me. Hoax’s hand closed around my neck. “Son, I’m going to show you how to take what you want,” he told Sin. In desperation, I tried to summon my wand, risking everything for a chance at freedom, but nothing happened. Sin sat against a tree, looking like a frightened child, watching his father hover over my battered body.

“If you even turn your head, I’ll kill her! I want you to see how you capture a fairy’s soul!” Hoax barked at Sin.

“NOOOOOO!” I cried as he forced my legs apart.

He leaned in, his breath thick with the scent of tree bark and mud. “My son can have you, but your body will belong to me. The way you move your hips reminds me of someone—I wonder if you feel just like her,” Hoax whispered, but he trespassed where only Sin had been.

I shut my eyes, enduring his violent thrusts, his guttural noises echoing through the trees. Sin watched, helpless, as his father finished inside me. Hoax stood, adjusting his robe. “Head back to the village, Sin! She’s a strong one—she’ll heal by sunrise,” he said coldly.

I curled into a fetal position, wings wrapped tightly around me like a cocoon. Blood loss left me too weak to move, the cold of the forest seeping into my bones.

“If you shed a tear, I’ll do worse to you than her, pretty boy. GO!” Hoax barked at Sin.

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I listened as Sin and Hoax disappeared into the shadows, leaving me alone in the chill. My life changed in that moment. I fell out of love with Sin, finally seeing that men only wanted my body, only cared for their own pleasure. Sin could have challenged his father with his spells, but his fear outweighed his love for me. That's when I understood my love was real—because even though I feared for my life, I still tried to speak up for him. Yet, who would protect me? Who would have the courage to stand up to that monster for my sake? I closed my eyes, wishing my mother would come and take me away. I must have drifted into a deep sleep, because when I heard my name, the sun was already peeking over the clouds.

“Eboenia!” Jinx’s voice echoed desperately through the forest.

I was still in agony, the wound on my side throbbing—hard and charred, the flesh there all but cooked. My body trembled from the pain, but it was nothing compared to the ache in my heart. Jinx, Lune, and Blair descended from the sky, their wings beating the air as they landed in front of me, faces etched with fear and worry.

“What the hell happened?” Jinx shrieked, rushing to my side.

I collapsed into her arms, clinging to her as hot tears spilled down my cheeks. “Hoax...Hoax forced himself inside of me!” I sobbed, my voice breaking. They all gasped, as if it was their last breath.

“That ugly vermin! I’m so fucking sick of him!” Blair shouted, voice trembling with rage as she rubbed my back.

Lune knelt beside me, her gentle hands hovering over my wound, eyes brimming

with tears. “I can’t believe he did this to you,” she whispered, her voice cracking with sorrow.

“Sin left me...he left me! He didn’t even come back to check on me,” I choked out, feeling the betrayal burn deeper than any wound. Jinx rocked me gently.

“Fuck him, you have us,” she replied.

“One day, he’ll have to answer to our ancestors. I can’t wait for it. That sick bitch should be beheaded,” Jinx cried, her anger and pain mingling in every word.

“You have a wand, Eboenia. Why didn’t you use it?” Lune asked, her voice trembling with confusion and helplessness.

“Now is not the time, Lune!” Blair snapped, shooting her a glare.

“I’m just saying. She has this magical wand but what good is it doing, huh? She’s badly injured and he raped her! It’s not fair, damn it! How are we supposed to heal her? Our magic isn’t anywhere near as powerful as Hoax’s fire,” Lune’s voice broke, frustration and despair spilling out as she pressed her forehead to my shoulder.

Jinx’s wings fluttered as she spoke. “I think it’s time we find a home outside of this realm. This world isn’t like the fairytales our parents told us about. It’s dark, bloody, and cold.”

Blair and Lune pressed in closer, their arms and wings wrapping around me in a group hug. Despite the pain that wracked my body, I felt the warmth of their embrace seep into my soul, stitching together the parts of me that Hoax damaged. For a moment, in the shelter of their love, I could breathe again...

I shot up from that nightmare—the same one that always haunts me whenever I fall

into a deep sleep. When I woke, I was sitting in a garden tub filled with leaves, right in the middle of the forest. War sat in a chair nearby, watching me while he smoked, a book floating in his lap and those glasses on his face that somehow made him look less menacing. The last thing I remembered was passing out after taking four of him.

“You have to do something about that nightmare,” he said.

I sat up in the tub, and for a second, it felt like my pussy and anus were about to fall out. My body was covered in passion marks, my breasts still swollen, and my legs weak. War chuckled as he rose from his chair, the book in his hand evaporating into thin air. He walked over and perched on the tub’s edge, staring down at me like a hawk.

“Your little fairy-elf hybrid boy left you for dead, but you begged me to spare him when I took you from your wedding,” he said, sounding agitated.

“War, please—not now. I’m on the brink of death. I’m dehydrated and starving. How did I even get here?” I asked, looking around.

“Through a portal. I brought you here because your kind heals faster in nature—your deep connection to it supercharges your healing abilities. But back to the point—why do you care so much for those who betrayed you?”

“I’m not like you.”

He leaned in, his lips just inches from mine. “But you will be. It’s the only way you’ll ever truly fly,” he said, caressing my arm.

I leaned in too, my lips almost brushing his. “Are you jealous?”

“I don’t know those kinds of feelings. I’d rather embrace darkness than to let you

make me weak. I've come too far to fall into a fairy's nest," he replied, but his fingers tightened on my skin, betraying a need he'd never admit.

"You've already fallen there."

War cupped my chin and squeezed, yet his thumb traced my jaw with a tenderness that contradicted his psychotic ways. "I'm still liable to remind you of your purpose—which is to get fucked and shut up!" he said.

I kept my mouth shut. War loved putting me in my place, and we both knew the unspoken truth: his cruelty was a leash, but also a connection. I let it go, feeling the heat of his dominance settle over me.

"About that dream you keep having," War pressed.

"I don't want to talk about it."

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“You don’t have a choice. Your lover boy let his bitch-ass daddy violate you, and you still gave him your body, hoping he’d protect you from him,” he responded.

“Stop it, damn it! Can I go five minutes without you making it worse? Do you think you’re better than Hoax? What you’re doing isn’t any different!”

“I don’t have to force my dick into anybody! Everyone I fucked, wanted it more than I did, including you. Compare me to that nigga again, and I’ll rip your wings off your back!” he said.

“The only difference is you just curse them and make them want you!”

War’s anger still crackled in the air, but then—so suddenly it made my head spin—he caressed my chin with his thumb, the touch warmed my flesh. I’d learned to brace myself for these sharp turns in his behavior, but they always left me reeling, unsure whether to fear for my life or surrender to his touch.

“You should never trust the words of your enemy, Eboenia. That’s how you end up in the lion’s den. You don’t even know what kind of curse that was—you only know what I told you. But do you know who will never lie to you?”

“My sisters.”

War shook his head and took another puff of his blunt. “No, your heart. Always trust it.”

“Another one of your mind games! Are you telling me you didn’t curse me?”

“I’m telling your stupid ass that you trust your enemies too easily,” War said.

“That’s how I survive.”

“That’s how you get killed. You have to learn not to be afraid of pain,” he responded.

“You’re twisted, War. I’ve learned to deal with it because that’s who you are. We’ll never see survival the same way.”

A sharp dagger appeared in his hand. War knelt beside the tub, my eyes glued to the blade. He pulled me closer and slipped the dagger into my side, covering my mouth to stifle my scream. The pain was sharp, but the way his body pressed against mine, the way his hand held me steady, made the agony feel almost intimate—a secret shared between us alone.

“Shhh... Don’t think about it. Take deep breaths... relax,” he whispered, his lips brushing my ear. His cruelty was a test, a lesson, but also a twisted caress—a reminder that he could break me, or bind me, with equal ease.

How could I relax with a knife embedded in my flesh? “It hurts!” I squirmed in the tub, but even as I writhed, I felt his grip steady me, anchoring me to him.

“The enemy isn’t supposed to know they wounded you. Fight back, Eboenia. I’m doing this now, while you’re weak, because I want you to learn to never cave in,” he said, jabbing the knife deeper. Blood bloomed in the water around me, and I gasped, but War’s eyes never left mine.

“You are a creature of nature—we’re surrounded by your elements. Use them. Connect with them.”

I squeezed my eyes shut, pushing past the pain, and reached out with my

senses—down into the earth beneath the tub, into the roots, the leaves, the water. The scent of damp moss and crushed greenery filled my lungs. I tasted earth and copper on my tongue. Cool energy surged upward, prickling beneath my skin, racing through my veins with a tingling ache. Even as War's cruelty threatened to torment me, I found a strange comfort in his presence—the twisted intimacy of pain and survival, of being broken and remade in his hands.

Moments later, the pain ebbed away. I looked down and saw black veins writhing beneath my skin, like roots from a tree. The dagger inside me crumbled to ashes as my wound closed. Usually, when I healed, I felt every inch of my flesh knitting together—a scalding, searing pain. But this time, the magic of the elements around me flooded my body, cold and alive, fueling me as if I were undergoing my own kind of photosynthesis.

The last of the pain faded, and I drew a shaky breath, staring at the black veins that had just receded beneath my skin.

War leaned in, fingers hooking the cuff still locked around my neck. “Don’t get any ideas, lil’ pussy fairy,” he murmured in warning. “The lessons I teach can be taken away just as easily—if you ever try to use them against me.”

He tightened his grip, nearly yanking me from the tub. His teeth caught my bottom lip, biting hard enough to draw blood before his mouth soothed the sting with a slow, possessive suck.

“Remember,” he growled against my mouth, “I’m the only one who gets to break you. The only one who gets to put you back together. Don’t try no stupid shit.”

The gears on his chest spun, and a swirling portal opened behind him.

“You’ve been soaking long enough. It’s time we head back to my house,” he said.

War tossed me over his shoulder and stepped into the portal. I just hoped there'd be food on the other side—I was starving.

War watched me tear into a tray of raw frog legs at the kitchen table, my canines ripping out veins while I devoured the meat. Next to it was a platter of grub worms, their guts oozing cheesy, buttery shit when I bit down. War looked like he wanted to gag while poking at his steak, mashed potatoes, and asparagus like it might bite him back.

“Why aren't you eating?” I asked, holding up a fat grub between my fingers.

He grimaced. “My dinner table looks like a damn bait shop. If one of those things crawls on my plate, you're eating on the floor.”

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I shrugged, grinning. “I’m a creature, remember? This is how we do it at Charmden.”

War took a long pull from his D’usse, his eyes on me, face relaxed for once. No scowl, no bullshit. Just him, dark, beautiful and perfect, like a black rose with thorns.

“You ever gonna introduce me to Cashaun, or does he only come out around his human friends?”

“You nosey as fuck, aren’t you?”

“I don’t have a choice but to be at this point. How the hell did you end up with human friends when you spent most your life in another realm?”

He leaned back, eyes growing distant. “This house belonged to my mother. Jay’s mom lived next door. We grew up together—our moms were as close as sisters. I used to sneak out of our realm just to play with him. You can’t keep me away from the city. But those other niggas he hangs out with? They’re his people.”

“And he introduced you to Jade? Did you love her, or did you just fuck her like you hated her?”

War smirked, the swords in his mouth gleaming. “I fucked her the same way your elf boy was fucking you,” he replied.

At least the bitch is dead.

“One day, I hope I can read your mind the way you do mine. You know everything

about me. I wish I had that kind of magic.”

“You do. But you ran from it instead of using it. Charmden could’ve been yours if you hadn’t listened to your mother when she told you to hide your wand. Magic’s like a muscle—stop using it, it goes weak. Then when you need it, it’s already dead, or you have to try to revive it again,” he responded.

He stood up, sweatpants hanging low, skin shining. For a second, I wanted to climb him like a tree, let him fuck me right here on the table. But something in his face stopped me—something vulnerable, almost aching.

Is he nervous?

He walked over, coming up behind me, brushing my hair off my neck. He paused. “Do you want to see how I became this way?”he asked.

“Yes,” I whispered.

He kissed my neck, slow and deep, and then started whispering—not English, but something ancient and eerie, words that crawled under my skin. His voice dropped, deep and raspy, cutting through me. My nails gouged the table. I couldn’t move, couldn’t breathe. The words crawled inside my skull, dragging me under. Everything went black. The air reeked of blood, rot, and death. I saw War chained to iron poles, black-hooded warlocks circling him in a candlelit tower, their Hex13 medallions flashing in the dark.

A black cloud spilled from an urn, swirling inside a circle drawn in blood—two spirals, one black and one red, twisting around each other until they met at the center. The lines pulsed, wet and glistening, as if the blood refused to dry. The symbol seemed to breathe, promising rebirth through pain. War screamed—a sound that tore me apart—while shadows carved runes into his flesh, peeling him open like overripe

fruit. Their chanting was a curse, a soul offering.

Blood pooled at his knees, and from it rose a man—the same wizard from War’s painting. He stepped into War’s body, and I felt it: that twisted presence that stole me from my land and forced me to be his pussy fairy. War’s form stretched and swelled, power radiating off him. When he opened his eyes, they burned with that same corrupted magic.

He touched my neck, snapping me out of it. “I’m no longer the same Cashawn, Eboenia. I was chosen to carry out the duties of Azarion. I carry his soul with me and inherited his magic. Cashawn plus Azarion equals War,” he said, dropping a major bomb on me.

“How long have you been like this?” I asked War.

“It has been four months since my transformation. Up until then, I was a top-ranking Hex13. I overworked myself, studied the laws of spells, and mastered each and every one of them,” he replied.

I stood from the table, feeling weak from the effects of War letting me into his past. “I need to lie down. I don’t feel right.”

Tears burned down my face—the aftermath of the pain from Cashawn losing his life to welcome War’s was still raw. I thought War had just inherited his ancestor’s magic, the same way I inherited my wand. I never imagined he was the wizard. Every time I thought I had him figured out, he yanked me deeper into the dark.

I walked out of the dining room, heart hammering. As I hit the stairs, the doorbell rang, echoing through the house. I paused, wondering if it was someone from Charmden. War shot me a glance, and with a flick of his sorcery, my provocative lace robe transformed into a heavy two-piece sweatsuit that swallowed my frame. Then he

went to open the door. Jay walked in, looking rough.

“Broooo, you won’t believe the night I had,” he complained, voice hoarse. “I can’t remember shit. Some niggas ran down on me in Cherry Hill—stole my jewelry, my truck, a few g’s. Now Jade’s people blowing up my phone, saying she’s missing and she was at my party. Yo, I don’t remember none of that. You think it’s the pills I be popping?” He rambled, looking at War.

War shook his head. “Why you keep going over there? I thought you said you was done fuckin’ that one joint. You stay creepin’ over there, knowing what type of time they be on. As for Jade, I ain’t seen her. She wasn’t at Norma’s with us.” His city accent came out heavy talking to Jay, and I couldn’t help but find it attractive how he switched up.

Jay waved him off. “I ain’t trippin’ over them Cherry Hill niggas, that’s that lead poisoning got them geekin’,” he said, then paused, confusion flickering over his face. “Yo, I don’t remember seeing you at the party,” he said to War.

“I was there,” War replied.

When Jay finally noticed me, he looked at War, then back at me, clocking the collar around my neck. “What kind of freaky shit you got going on in here? Why she got that big-ass collar on? You doing it like that now?” Jay raised an eyebrow.

War just brushed him off. “Yo, that ain’t got nothing to do with you popping up at my crib.”

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Jay looked around. “A nigga wouldn’t have to pop up on you’d answer your cellphone. Who is this though? I swear I seen her somewhere before, but my mind blank. I need to stop smoking that exotic kush you be having. Fuck it though, dummy. We hitting the casino? You my lucky charm—I hit big every time you slide through with me.”

“Nah, I’m chillin’. You remember the faces of the folks who robbed you, though?” War asked, his eyes dark with something dangerous—he looked like he wanted to kill. I could tell he genuinely cared about Jay; that must be the Cashaun side of him.

Jay scratched his beard. He had a couple bruises on his face, and the neckline of his shirt was ripped. He looked like he’d just been rolling on the ground.

“Yo, I think it was Ronda’s youngest son who robbed me. I saw the lil’ nigga hopping in my truck—he is about three feet tall. I need to stop trying to be a step daddy to these bad-ass kids,” Jay said, and War cracked up.

“You’s a fool,” War chuckled.

“Who cooked?” Jay asked, eyeing the table. I tried to slip past him to grab my plate, but he already saw it. “The fuck was eating this Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter-looking ass food?” Jay scrunched up his nose.

“We’re roleplaying, hence the collar,” I shot back, laughing it off.

“Is that blood on your lips?” Jay asked, staring.

“It’s fake,” I quickly responded.

“Shiddddd,” he mumbled.

He picked up a piece of honeycomb from the plate, then dropped it quick when he realized there were still bees in it. “Yeah, I think I’m a head out. I’ll be at Ma Dukes’ crib, holla at me later,” he told War.

“Aight, I’ll rap to you soon,” War said.

Jay looked me up and down, like I was crazy. “What’s your name again, sweetheart?” he asked.

“Eboenia.”

He squinted, trying to place me. “Shit, I feel like I heard that before,” he muttered. Jay leaned in to War and whispered, “She’s fire, bro, but them gorgeous ones always crazy. I don’t even fuck with five-0, but if I don’t hear from you in an hour, I’m sending them people over here. I’m telling you, we got aliens in Baltimore. Ships all in the sky at night, spinning like cyclones. She’s one of them. Black folks don’t eat praying mantis wings!” Jay hissed.

War slapped hands with him and walked him to the door. Jay looked back at me. I leaned against the wall, arms crossed, grilling him. “Is there a problem?” I asked.

“Not at all, Nubian goddess,” he said, hands up.

War opened the door for him. Jay shook his head. “I’ll set a basket of garlic, holy water, and a cross on the front step. That woman ain’t human, bruh. I can see it in her eyes.”

“Yo, stop being paranoid,” War responded.

“Yeah, you right. I think I got rocked too hard,” Jay said, rubbing his head as he stepped out.

War closed the door, chuckling. “You shouldn’t have changed my clothes. I bet he would’ve remembered if he saw how that lace robe draped over my body,” I teased, then grew serious.

“So, since you have the wizard’s soul inside you, I’m sure you feel the things he felt. Did he—or you, or whoever I’m talking to—love Clover? Is that what this war against Hoax and his army is really about? Because she married him?”

He cocked an eyebrow, jaw set. “And who are you for me to tell the truth to?”

I turned to go upstairs, but War’s chain slid into his hand, snaking out and snapping around my waist. It yanked me back, squeezing until I gasped.

“War, let me go!” I squealed, twisting in his grip.

“For what? Ain’t you mine to play with?” He pulled me closer, the chain locked tight. “What you need to lay down for? I’ve been putting you to sleep for the past few days. You should be well rested,” he bragged.

“I’m tired of the bullshit!” I snapped. “I’d rather pay for the sins of what my people did to yours, but not because you fell for a bitch who spread her legs for another man!”

War’s grip tightened, chain digging into my sides. “Don’t let that slick tongue get your head popped off. I told you once before, you really don’t know shit. I tell you whatever I want because you aren’t worth anything to me for me to give you any

truths. I showed you who I am—deal with it,” he said, voice turning ice cold.

War gripped me by the neck, forcing my gaze to meet his. “Stop acting like you don’t crave it when I put you through hell. Your body’s burning up right now—I can see it in your eyes. You want everything I give you, the good and the bad, because you ain’t never had dick this good in your life. You’re not stupid, Eboenia. No matter how much harm I do, this is the safest you’ve ever felt. Remember, everything I build, I can break down just as fast. So lose that fucking attitude.”

“I’ll lose it when you let Clover go!” I replied.

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War released me, both from the chain and his grip on my neck. “I know you ain’t hating on a dead woman,” he said, shoving me.

“I’m not jealous, bitch!” I screamed at him.

“That’s the only time you backtalk me and challenge me. You’d kill over me again if you had to,” he replied.

“Can I go upstairs now?”

His eyes softened, but I knew better than to trust it. War grabbed my hand, caressing it. The sudden tenderness made my skin prickle with confusion. It was always like this with him—pain, then comfort, never in any pattern I could predict. He’d break me, then offer warmth, just enough to keep me hoping for more. It was a cruel magic, this way he kept me tethered, never sure if I’d get his wrath or his affection.

“Come here,” his voice echoed in my skull. I drifted closer, my chest flush against his, cursing how easily he could reel me back in. War’s grip clamped around my hips, his fingers hungrily digging into my flesh. He inhaled, nose buried in my hair, pelvis pressed hard to mine—he was ready to devour me, and I, damn fool, was already puckered up, waiting for him to suckle on my lips again.

“If it’ll make you feel any better, this beef is deeper than Clover. Besides, her death was good enough for her betrayal,” he finally said.

Then, the house convulsed. The floor shuddered beneath our feet, the chandelier above the kitchen table swung wild, glass prisms scattering rainbows across the

ceiling. In the living room, the couches screeched against the wall, a framed photo crashed to the floor, and the center table exploded into splinters as a portal ripped the air open. Gold light flooded the room, and three men in black hooded cloaks stepped out, diamond chains with Hex13 medallions flashing on their chests.

One warlock yanked down his mask. Grim—War’s brother. His angry stare could curdle milk as he mean mugged me. I stepped closer to War, returning the look.

“That bitch is still breathing? How about I put her out of her misery for you. Our clan is getting attacked while training and you’ve been MIA, up in that fairy pussy! Ain’t that’s how you died the first time?” Grim spat, venom dripping from every word.

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War’s voice was a growl. “Nigga, I ain’t never died. And the next time you come to my crib unannounced, I’ll forget me and your brother share a body and put your bitch-ass in a wicker basket, deliver it to hell, right next to your mother.”

The warlock behind Grim stepped forward, his mask slipping down to reveal a handsome face that couldn’t have been more than eighteen. He stood at least six-three, with deep mocha skin and hazel-gold eyes burning with power. Witch symbols glowed on his cheek, and when he spoke, his open-face golds flashed. “The elves released trolls in Druid Hill Park while our people were training. We can handle it, if you need more time with her. We just had to let you know because shit is about to get hectic,” he said to War.

Grim gave him a look sharp enough to decapitate someone. “Kissing his ass ain’t gonna replace me, dummy! Know your place!” he snapped.

“Ignore him, Crash Out. Keep up with your training so you can replace him and have him dust off your spell books,” War said, making Crash Out smirk.

“Replace me? Yeah right! Yo, I know you’ve been geekin’ for some fairy pussy, but let her go and focus on our plans!” Grim barked at War.

War moved faster than thought—one moment he was beside me, the next he was a shadow streaking across the room, a black flash that bent the light. His hand closed around Grim’s throat, black smoke pouring from his fingers, seeping into Grim’s skin and making his veins pulse. Grim’s eyes rolled back as War lifted him, slamming him through the drywall with a thunderous crack. The ceiling split, paint chips raining down around my feet.

Grim gasped, clawing at War’s hand, but War’s grip was iron, shadows coiling tighter, threatening to snuff the life right out of him. “Now, you know better than to fix your rabbit-ass mouth and come at me sideways. You must’ve forgotten what I can do to you.” War squeezed tighter. The gears on his chest spun at a furious rate. The other warlocks in the living room took a step back, not daring to intervene.

“I run this shit, Grim! You need to get it through your thick skull that being connected through blood ain’t going to keep saving you. And the only muthafucka who can disrespect my pussy fairy is me!” War said, then looked over his shoulder.

“That goes for all of you too! I’m still your leader regardless of my unfinished business, but leave her out of it! Don’t look at her! Don’t acknowledge her! Pretend she ain’t even here!” War barked.

Grim’s eyes turned pitch black, and dark veins spread across his face like a spiderweb as he conjured his sorcery. Suddenly, a swirling hole opened in the floor near War’s feet. Shadowy hands shot out from the darkness, grabbing at War’s clothes and yanking him back, trying to pry him away from Grim. War finally let go, and Grim stepped out of the hole in the wall, brushing debris off his cloak. The hands on the floor crumbled into ash, dissolving into dust.

“Aight, baby bro, I see she got your mind gone. I’ll let you handle it though. We’ll be waiting for you at the park,” Grim said, his voice heavy with sadness. He glanced at the other two warlocks who came with him, motioning for them to leave through the portal. The three of them stepped through, and just like that, they were gone.

A glint of sadness flickered in War’s eyes too. It was clear the brothers cared about each other, and Grim was worried about War’s choices.

“War, it’s okay to let me go if keeping me is coming between you and your clan,” I spoke up.

War looked at me, his eyes shifting from sad to cold. “I can kill you right now if you want to break the contract,” he said, meaning the soul-binding curse.

War’s gold chain slithered out of his hand, twisting and growing until it became a sharp axe. My heart raced and my legs shook with fear. “Tell me you want out, and I can end this shit right now!” he snapped.

That voice inside me spoke up again, betraying me for what felt like the hundredth time. “If I die, I won’t be able to feel you.”

War walked over to me, and I stood my ground, even though I was scared. His axe melted away into nothing, but I was still nervous about what he might do while he was pissed off. He tilted my chin up, looking down at me. “Good. Because even if you chose death, I’d just bring you back to life to kill you again for leaving me,” he said.

He unlocked the collar around my neck. My wings burst free, and I let out a shaky breath of relief. War waved his hand over me, and my clothes shifted—black petals wrapped around my body, forming a warrior-style catsuit. A black hooded trench coat appeared, draping over me, with slits for my wings to break through. Black knee-high

boots with metal trim snapped onto my feet. I hesitated, my mind racing. Did I really want to keep following War down this path? He looked at me, waiting for my answer.

“You want me to kill again?” I asked, my voice barely above a whisper.

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“Of course,” he answered, as if it were obvious.

I swallowed hard, searching his face for any sign of mercy. “War, those trolls... they have a taste for flesh. Fairy flesh.” My wings trembled at the memory of stories I’d heard—fairies torn apart, their bones picked clean. “You really want me to fight them?”

He just smirked, his eyes cold. “I won’t be far behind. This is what you were always meant to do. I didn’t make that wand for nothing,” he said.

A part of me wanted to scream, to beg him to choose another way. But the other part—the part that remembered how it felt to be close to him, to feel wanted, even if it was twisted—kept my mouth shut. I nodded, even though my hands shook.

War suited up too, his clothes turning black as night. A mask covered the lower half of his face, and a heavy medallion glowed around his neck like some machine from his world. A portal opened behind us, swirling with dark energy. I followed him through. It was starting to make sense, even if it was still confusing. Maybe, just maybe, I was where I belonged...

DRUID HILL PARK...

We stepped out of the portal and into the otherworld Druid Hill Park. Everything was darker here. A thick, gray fog hung in the air, making it hard to see. Through a cloudy wall, I spotted a white couple walking their dog on the real side of the park. They strolled by, laughing, unaware of us. We were like ghosts—close, but cut off from their world.

The air was heavy with awful smells. It stank of death, blood, and rotting meat. There was a sour odor too, like someone had left onions and garlic to rot in a pile of mushrooms. My stomach twisted.

“That stench is troll sweat,” War said.

A few steps away, a warlock lay on the ground. His guts spilled out, red and shiny. War knelt beside him and gently closed his eyes. The woods around us were thick with shadows, and I heard low growls and angry grunts echoing through the mist.

“War, what is this place?” I whispered, my voice shaky.

He stood up. “It’s a place we use to summon our deceased enemies for target practice,” he answered.

Suddenly, I heard a loud buzzing behind me, like a hundred angry bees. A scream cut through the air. I spun around and saw a monstrous looking fairy. She was naked, her skin the color of wet clay. Black wings beat the air behind her. Her teeth were sharp, her eyes huge and black, and her nails looked like claws.

She shot towards me, mouth open wide. My horns sprouted at the same time as my wand appeared in my hand. I pointed it at her, lightning burst out, hitting her square in the chest. She shrieked and melted into a puddle of black slime at my feet.

“What in the fuck was that?” I asked War.

“A tree nymph. Be careful with those—they can mimic voices, pretending to be someone you know to lure you deep into the forest. Their poison can decay your flesh instantly,” he replied.

The woods went quiet for a moment, but I could feel more eyes tracking us from the

shadows. War blew two small, tiger-eye cubes into his palm, rattling them like dice before casting them onto the ground. Two enormous panthers materialized, their fur threaded with the whirring gears of War's magic. Spiked bullhorns pierced their noses, and their canines glinted—razor-sharp and forged from swords. Their massive paws pressed deep into the earth. War muttered to them in his ancient tongue, and they melted into the forest, their black pelts dissolving into silhouettes.

War glanced down at me. “Stop being afraid, Eboenia. Your loud ass heartbeat is ringing dinner bells for everything out here,” he said.

“You’ve practically dropped me in hell. Am I supposed to be excited about this?” I whispered.

“You lived in Charmden. This forest might look spooky, but nothing here’s worse than that place. If you fuck this up, I’ll feed you to a troll myself,” he replied.

Suddenly, yelps echoed behind us, followed by a crack of thunder. A floating board appeared beneath War's boots, lifting him into the air and zipping him through the trees like a spaceship. I soared after him, plunging into the mist as the forest thickened with fog. I nearly collided with a tree when I spotted a ten-foot, hulking one-eyed troll. His skin was a patchwork of bark and leaves, and his zits oozed like volcanoes. Nearby, a warlock lay bleeding from his midsection, sprawled just a few feet away from the funky beast. The troll was hideous—his nostrils exuded slime as he snatched the warlock by the leg.

War sprang into action, his chain lashing out and coiling tight around the troll's neck, gears grinding as it squeezed.

“What should I do?” I panicked, eyes darting through the gloom for War's summoned panthers.

The warlock on the ground flung a sphere of fire at the troll, but it fizzled, useless, against the monster's bark-plated chest.

"I'm protected under Crane's magic!" the troll bellowed, his voice rattling the canopy. War's chain barely bit into the giant's neck, struggling to saw through the living armor. The warlock was too weak to stand; the troll raised his four-toed, stone-thick foot—grass and moss tangled over his claws—ready to stomp him flat.

I didn't think. I dove from the sky like a hawk, my wand morphing into a sword mid-flight. The troll howled when I sliced off his foot, his blood gushing out thick as gravy, drenching me in steaming, foul-smelling blood.

What the hell am I doing? I just saved a Hex13!

War zipped overhead, his chain still throttling the troll. I stabbed my sword into the earth. Cracks spiderwebbed through the ground, white light seeping up from below. Roots burst from the fissures, twisting like spiked anacondas, wrapping around the troll's legs and torso. The barbed roots punched through his barky hide, pumping venom that turned his skin a sickly, glowing green.

"Urrrrgghhhhhhhhh!" the troll roared, swinging a tree-trunk arm at War. War's chain finally ripped through, tearing open the troll's throat in a spray of black blood.

"Watch out!" the wounded warlock gasped. I spun around just as two of Hoax's warriors charged me, faces twisted with anger.

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“Traitor bitch!” one snarled, barreling into me with a fist like a sledgehammer. He sent me flying into a puddle of mud—or maybe troll shit, hard to tell in this hell hole. The fairy circled me, wings buzzing like saw blades, baring his fangs while the other fairy fought with the wounded warlock.

“How could you, Eboenia? I thought Crane was lying when he said you sided with the enemy! Your ancestors who died fighting Hex13 are rolling in their graves!” he spat, grabbing me by my horn. My wand slipped from my hand as he slammed my head into a tree. Stars exploded behind my eyes.

“You let that demon mark you!” he hissed.

He cocked back to bash me again, but I braced my foot against the trunk, shoved hard, and twisted free, slick with mud and blood. I spun, jabbing my nails deep into his chest. His eyes bulged. He gasped as his veins turned purple, his skin shriveling while I drained his energy, drinking it down like forest wine. He collapsed, clutching my arm, blood bubbling from his lips.

I stretched out my free hand and my wand snapped back to me, magnetized by my will. I drove the tip through his skull. “Now, get the fuck off my shit,” I snarled, shoving him off. He hit the ground, dead, and monstrous iron-toothed maggots slithered from the shadows, gnawing hungrily at his corpse.

I sprinted back to War. He still had his chain throttling the troll, while a dozen of Hoax’s men closed in, magic sizzling in their fists. Hex13 warriors streaked through the sky, coming from the far side of the forest. One of War’s panthers exploded from the treetops, tackling a fairy who was circling War with a jar of poison clutched in his

claws.

“Eboeniaaaaa!” a voice shrieked from the darkness. I whipped around and saw Jinx—bloodied, one wing torn and dangling.

“It’s Blair and Lune! They’re in trouble!” she cried, stumbling toward me.

“What...what are you doing here?” I demanded.

“We’re part of Hoax’s army now. We joined to find you. I’ll explain later, but we have to go—now!” she said, urgency in every word.

She limped away, fading into the shadows. “Jinx, wait!” I called, but she was already gone. Without thinking, I plunged after her. War and his crew could handle Hoax’s warriors and whatever else the forest spat out. Right now, Blair, Jinx and Lune needed me more.

I flew after Jinx, but lost sight of her in the thickening fog. The trees pressed closer, the temperature dropping with every step. Bodies—Hex13 and Hoax’s men—were sprawled across the ground, marking the place where the battle had erupted.

“Jinx!” I whispered, hoping there weren’t more trolls lurking.

“Eboenia! We’re right here!” she shouted.

I landed, the fog thicker at ground level. Something darted past me, fast as a shadow, knocking me against a tree. I clutched my wand, heart pounding, eyes scanning the gloom.

“Eboeniaaaa! Where did you go?” Jinx called out again, but something was off. Her voice trembled, on the verge of tears, but the pitch was just a little too high, the

cadence a little too perfect. I inhaled deeply, tuning out the stench of blood and rot, searching for her scent—pomegranate seeds was the way Jinx always smelled. I focused until my head spun, but her scent never came. I'd been tricked.

War warned me. He fucking warned me about the nymphs. They know my weakness—they could taste it.

My skin prickled as the fog seemed to circle around me, thickening with every breath.

Suddenly, my mother's voice echoed through the trees, cold and accusing, but wrong—too perfect, too hollow. "Eboenia, sweetheart. After all I sacrificed for you, why would you fall in love with the man who slaughtered our ancestors?"

I gritted my teeth, anger flaring. "Your ugly ass might as well come out and fight me! I know what you are, and you damn sure ain't Jinx or my mother!" I snapped. The thing laughed, furthering pissing me off.

The voice shifted again, melting into a sultry, unfamiliar tone. "Did Azarion ever tell you the truth about us?" The nymph was playing games, slipping between voices like changing masks, trying to dig under my skin.

Is this supposed to be Clover?

I clutched my wand tighter. "You're losing the plot, bitch. I don't know anyone by that name!" I spat back, refusing to let it get under my skin.

"Oh, that's right. You know him as War. I forgot—only I know that side of him. It's such a pity, Eboenia. You're the one who actually deserves the better half of him, but you'll never have it. He still loves me. It's me he craves every time he enters you. That wand you carry? He made it for me, back when I was his lieutenant. I was the first fairy to fight beside Azarion as he protected our realm. That's what made me

special. I was a warrior. You? You're too weak for that. You're only good enough to lay on your back," she sneered, her voice echoing from every direction, as if the fog itself was taunting me.

"Come out and fight me, and we'll see who's weak! I'll fold your ugly ass up!" I shouted, shoving off the tree, refusing to let the nymph's illusions break me.

She laughed, circling unseen. "Your skills can't touch mine, and neither can that lazy mound you've got. Did Azarion—Cashaun—War ever tell you I was the first pussy he ever tasted? He folded for me. A man who worshipped abstinence as a religion gave me his soul. I made the most passionate love to him. I'm the real pussy fairy, if you want the truth. Living in my shadow must be hell for you. You don't even know the language of my wand."

This time, the words landed hard. My grip on my wand tightened until my knuckles ached. Heat flared in my cheeks, shame and anger twisting together in my gut. I hated that she was getting to me, hated that part of me wondered if it was true—if War still craved her, if I'd ever be more than a shadow to him.

"Say what you want, but you can't say I'm dead, you dead-ass bitch! You willingly fucked Hoax. That says a lot about you! War can't stand your headless ass!" I yelled back.

Her laughter echoed, the fog swirling tighter. "We must have the same taste in men, because he had your legs spread, too. You didn't enjoy that one, though—what a shame. You're missing out, because Hoax is a great lover," she purred.

My heart hammered in my chest. I forced myself to shake off the illusions, but I could feel the nymph's words digging in, scraping at old wounds I tried to bury. I clenched my jaw, refusing to let her see how much she'd rattled me.

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I stepped away from the tree. “Bring your ass out here!” I shouted.

Through the mist, five figures appeared, surrounding me. When they came into focus, I realized they were all nymphs—three females and two males. “You gotta be shitting me,” I mumbled.

The nymph in the middle, who looked more like a cracked-out fairy than the others, smirked. Her skin was pale, cheekbones sharp, face pierced with silver rings. She licked her lips at me. “Let’s take it easy on the pretty thing. She’s not a real warrior, she’s Clover’s shadow,” she taunted.

One of the male nymphs grabbed my ass, squeezing it like he owned it. “She’s so plump... so filling,” he laughed, voice scraping my nerves. I swung my sword, slicing the bastard in half. It happened so fast, he was still laughing as his body hit the ground, split open.

“Get her!” the ringleader screamed.

They charged. Six-inch rose thorns shot from my body, stabbing into them and pumping toxin to slow them down. The closest one, I grabbed her by her thin braid, kicked her knee in until she dropped, then sliced her head clean off.

“MY SISTERRRR!” the ringleader shrieked, barreling into me with a thorn stuck in her eye. She clawed at me, nails digging in as we tumbled into a bush. She bit me, tearing a chunk out of my arm. I bit her back, ripping her lip off, then jabbed my nail into her eye socket. War taught me how to take pain, and the poisonous bite marks she left didn’t burn or throb—I just took it. My wand shifted into a sledgehammer. I

cocked it back and smashed it against her skull, knocking her off me.

The others lunged. I swung my sledgehammer, shattering the jaw of a female nymph. She dropped face-first, and I brought the hammer down again, splattering her skull like a watermelon.

“Talk shit now. I’m in whose shadow?” I yelled at the ringleader, watching her writhe on the ground. The other two, one male and one female, circled me.

“Kill herrrr!” the ringleader screamed.

I shot off the ground, grabbing the female by her bony chest and dragging her into the air with me. Blood gushed as I ripped out her nipple ring. She yanked my hair and spat a glob of burning spit into my eyes. We fought in the air like two eagles fighting over prey. Her talons locked around my leg. I elbowed her, digging my nails into her scalp and peeling it back, exposing tree lice crawling beneath her skin. The male nymph fired an arrow at me; I dove, ducking it, and it pierced the nymph’s nose, killing her instantly. I let her go—her body crashed into a tree and exploded into dust.

But the nymph’s venom was already working, paralyzing my wing and sending me crashing down. As I fell, tree branches tore at my skin, stabbing and scratching at me before I slammed into the ground, my head cracking against a rock.

Growls echoed nearby. Dizzy and bleeding, I sat up, blood pouring from my head. I could make out a troll gnawing on the flesh of a Hex13 member. This one was smaller than the one War attacked, but when she stood up, I realized she was pregnant.

“The bodies just keep coming,” she said, grinning with blood-stained teeth as she lumbered toward me. War’s panther appeared out of nowhere, lunging for her neck. The troll screamed as the panther ripped into her. I clutched my head, trying to steady

myself.

“There she goes! Get her!” a voice shouted.

“You gotta be shitting me,” I muttered.

I forced myself up, standing my ground as my wand shifted back into a sword. The male nymph stalked toward me, grinning with broken teeth, the ringleader behind him. “There’s no way in hell she’s still alive!” she said, voice shaking with rage.

“Y’all can’t kill me, bitch!” I spat, hocking up a glob of green phlegm.

The male nymph limped toward me, nails dripping blood. Suddenly, a warlock sailed overhead on a hoverboard, hurling a spiked chain ball of blue flame at the nymph. His screams echoed through the forest as he burned alive.

“You will not get away with killing my family!” the last nymph screamed. She flew at me, but adrenaline pumped through my veins, healing my wounds and dulling the pain. I rammed my horns into her, slamming her against a tree like a bull. Electricity shot through her, making her convulse and kick. I pulled away—she was stuck, eyes bulging, body twitching.

“I gotta admit, you know how to piss a bitch off,” I laughed.

I sliced her head off with my sword. Her body kept convulsing. I picked up her head, blood spilling from her eye sockets. “Killing is fun after all. If I’d known it’d relieve stress, I would’ve started sooner,” I told her.

“You... still aren’t... Clover,” she gasped.

I blew fairy dust in her face, cold as ice. Her head froze, turning into a white

crystalline ball. When it shrank, I pressed it onto my sword's handle, where it molded itself into the design. "I'll keep you in spirit so you can watch me be better than her," I giggled.

I stepped out of the shrubs. The pregnant troll was on her back, stomach split open. A few feet away, War's panther was chewing through her baby's sack, tearing the baby out.

"Help meee!" she pleaded, reaching for me.

I put her out of her misery, climbing onto her chest and decapitating her. Even monsters don't deserve to watch their child become panther food.

"You did good, turned your pain into fuel, just like I taught you," a voice rumbled behind me.

I spun around—War stepped out of the fog, bare-chested and smeared in blood. "You've been watching me?"

"From the second you dropped out of the damn sky," he said, eyes scanning me up and down.

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He moved closer, checking my body for wounds. Butterflies flipped in my stomach at his closeness. I could see the worry in his eyes, even though he tried to play it off.

“You should’ve seen this nasty-ass male nymph squeezing my ass,” I said, smirking. “How dare that crusty little punk put his hands on your lil’ pussy fairy?” I teased, just to watch him squirm.

He froze, jaw tight, the vein in his neck throbbing. Tried to laugh it off, but I could tell he was pissed. “He’s dead, so ain’t shit I can do about it now,” he muttered.

I rolled my eyes at him, and he just grunted, but I caught the way his eyes lingered on me—like he was making sure I was really still standing.

His men appeared all at once, about forty of them. They picked up the bodies of their fallen brothers. Hex13 wasn’t who Charmden painted them out to be—they had way more structure. I watched them wrap a dead warlock in a satin black, glowing sheet.

Out of the blue, the ground shook and the trees blew. The warlocks immediately lined up, weapons drawn and sorcery spiraling around their hands. The scent of sweat, blood, and burning wood permeated the air. A portal opened, and twigs and tree branches grew out of it, twisting together to form a bridge. My heart raced—it was warriors from Charmden entering the forest.

Crane emerged from the portal on the back of a double-headed, enormous unicorn, the beast rippled in muscle. The unicorn’s hooves slammed against the bridge, sending dull thuds through the ground. Behind him came an army of elves and fairies, all of them ready for battle. The Charmden warriors were dressed in brown dashikis,

gold arched headpieces shining on their heads, looking like they were ready to cast away the entire forest. Grim stood next to War with a shotgun in his hand, the thing looked like it came from a different dimension with spinning gears and shadows of silver twisting around it.

“I know y’all little Peter Pan, leprechaun ears ass niggas are tired of coming here to die. Where is your master?” Grim shouted out to Crane.

“Our master isn’t supposed to be battling with his army unlike yours. We protect him! Maybe you and your spell-binding thugs need to take notes and stop sending your master to do your dirty work!” Crane shouted back.

“Come on now, dummy! You know I’m a master that doesn’t mind getting in the field. I’m putting chain to all of y’all asses!” War said to Crane.

Crane’s unicorn carried him off the bridge; there were at least sixty of them. They had Hex13 outnumbered. Steel clanged. Chains rattled. The forest echoed with the sounds of a blood bath brewing and buzz of sorcery.

“I let you go the last time, but this time you won’t see the light of day!” War said.

“We will see about that!” Crane seethed.

Crane grimaced at me as I stood next to War. “Eboenia no longer has any ties to Charmden! She’s a traitor—a whore who broke the seal that protects Charmden and let those demons into our realm. Because of her betrayal, many of our people were slaughtered! Bring me her head and wings!” Crane told his men.

War chuckled, his menacing chain appearing around his wrist, almost blinding me when it flashed, his eyes burning with a fiery glow, his gears tattoos coming to life and sounding like a fan.

“Step back, Eboenia. You fought enough today!” War’s voice shouted inside my head.

“Where do you want me to go?”

“Head south and you’ll see our portal. Do not stop for anyone! Just keep going!” he said.

I transformed into my fairy form as the two clans collided. The air was buzzing with blue and gold flashes lighting up the forest. I flew past a warlock slicing off a fairy’s wing—blood sprayed, almost blinding me. My wings buzzed, fighting to keep me steady as bodies crashed and spells—no, sorcery—whipped through the air. The forest floor shook with every stomp and clash.

I looked over my shoulder, heart pounding, as War’s chain ripped mercilessly through the bodies of Charmden’s warriors, twisting and striking with brutal precision while he dodged Crane’s air attack. The horrific blood curdling screams of the dying echoed throughout the hollow forest. For a moment, I couldn’t move—my eyes locked on War. He was my captor, my curse, the one who bound my soul to his own. And yet, a part of me ached for him—longed for his presence, and I no longer tried to deny it.

Was it real? Or just another cruel trick of the soul-binding spell he forced upon me? The line between my own heart and the curse was so blurred, I could barely tell where I ended and the magic began. I accepted the longing, even if I didn’t understand it. I wanted to run to him, to fight at his side, but I didn’t know if it was love or just another chain.

The people of Charmden—once my home, once my kin in spirit—had turned against me. They called me traitor, spat my name like poison, never knowing I was cursed, not complicit. I decided to continue on my journey, heading in the direction War commanded. All I could do was survive—and hope that one day I’d know the truth of

my own heart.

I was sitting on a bench in the park, feeling like I'd just crawled out of a nightmare. Blood and mud were plastered all over me, a grim reminder of the fight I'd just escaped. The sun was coming up, but I felt cold and stuck, my feet glued to the ground. The portal that had brought me here had vanished hours ago.

A woman jogged by, her phone pressed to her ear, coffee in hand. She stopped when she saw me, eyes wide with shock. "Hey, are you okay? Do you need me to call 9-1-1?" Her voice was filled with concern, but I could hear the fear in it too. "I think this young woman killed someone," she whispered into the phone. "These addicts are getting younger and younger..."

Panic shot through me. I couldn't let her see me—couldn't let her call for help. What if I left this spot? Would War come after me, punishing me for even thinking about escaping?

"Excuse me! Hellooooo! Are you okay?" The woman waved her hand in front of my face, her concern turning into alarm.

I jumped up, feeling trapped under her gaze. I turned and bolted behind a nearby tree, heart racing. With a burst of magic, I transformed into a black butterfly with golden patterns. I took to the sky, desperate to get back to my sisters—the only family I had left since my exile from Charmden. But doubt crept in. Would they still want me after everything? What would I do if I lost them too?

Damn you, War, for ruining my life and turning everything upside down!

When I finally arrived at our home in the quiet neighborhood, I landed on the porch, nearly losing my balance as I shifted back to my human form. The door swung open, revealing Lune, who must've sensed me. Overcome with emotion, I pulled her into a

tight embrace, tears streaming down my face. "I missed you soooo much!" I sobbed.

"You had me so worried!" she exclaimed, sounding startled. She pulled me inside and shut the door. "Where are Jinx and Blair?"

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“Blair is resting in the basement from training. And Jinx is in Charmden, training for war,” she said, my heart sinking.

“What!” I shrieked, pulling away from her.

“Yeah, with Hex13 taking out most of Hoax’s warriors, the females are being forced to train. Crane is like a madman, torturing anyone he doesn’t think is fit to fight. Blair suffered a broken wing and a concussion while in training. Eboenia, what’s going on? Why is everyone saying you’re responsible for the attack at your ceremony?” she asked, rubbing her stomach anxiously.

“I had nothing to do with that! Sure, I didn’t want to marry Sin and wished death on Hoax, but I would never put innocent lives in danger like that.”

Lune squinted at me, stepping closer. She pulled my lip down and saw the marking War had stamped on me. “What is this? This looks like witchcraft,” she said, alarmed.

“It’s a lot to explain,” I replied, feeling the weight of her gaze.

I rushed downstairs to the basement, which felt like a small piece of Charmden. The walls had soft, glowing moss that lit up the space. Delicate vines hung from the ceiling, sparkling with tiny lights that looked like stars. In one corner, a small waterfall trickled into a clear pool, surrounded by bright flowers and lush greenery. Cozy nests made of soft leaves and petals were scattered around, creating an inviting home for us fairies. The air was sweet with the scent of nectar—the scent almost made me miss Charmden.

Blair was resting in her naked tiny fairy form on a bed of leaves inside a basket, her wing and head wrapped. I gently touched her face, and she groaned in pain. Summoning my wand, I sprinkled healing energy over her wings. They fluttered, flapping wildly as her eyes slowly opened.

“Be careful with her. She’s been stuck in that form since her injury. Her concussion won’t let her shift back. She’s fragile,” Lune warned from behind me, her tone different, her aura tense. I wondered if she believed I had orchestrated my own kidnapping.

I brushed my thumb across Blair’s forehead. “Eboenia?” she whispered, her voice weak.

“Yes, I’m right here,” I replied, a tear slipping down my cheek.

She sat up, holding her head. “We looked everywhere for you,” she said, sounding groggy. “It’s okay, I’m here now.”

“How did you get away?” Lune pressed.

“You wouldn’t understand.”

“I understand a lot! I need to know what you’re up to. I have a baby that could come any day now, and I’m not sure it’s safe to have you around. Your aura is dark, and your eyes aren’t bright like they used to be. Something or someone has gotten inside you,” she said, concern etched on her face.

“The brightness you thought you saw in my eyes was a façade. I don’t have to live in fear anymore. If you want me to leave, I can do that after I see Jinx,” I replied.

I picked Blair and held her close. “It’s her pregnancy hormones. She’s been a bitch

the last couple of days,” Blair mumbled, then sniffed me. “Ugh, you smell like shit,” she gagged.

“At least I know you’re feeling better,” I laughed, grateful for the moment.

Lune watched me closely as I helped Blair with her head wrap. Fairies were delicate and sensitive beings, and I knew Blair could’ve been healed if she hadn’t been feeling down from my absence. “Blair, I’m okay. You can come out of this form.”

I set her on the floor next to me and slowly helped her shift back, her wings folding into her back and disappearing. She stretched her arms once she came to her human form. “I feel much better now. You were always a good healer. Now, enough about me, where in the hell did that demon take you?” Blair asked.

“Come and take a bath with me,” I replied.

I peeled off my filthy clothing before stepping into the pond. The water instantly cleaned off my body, causing the grit and grime to disintegrate. Blair stepped in too, and we settled on the cooling rocks at the bottom of the pond.

“Come and join us, Lune. Don’t be such a prude,” Blair called out to her.

Lune stepped in wearing her long silk wrap garment, crossing her arms and pouting as if she didn’t want to be in our company. Blair rolled her eyes at her; this wasn’t what I was looking forward to.

“War is the wizard who captured me,” I told them.

“Did you just say wizard? As in the ancient teacher of sorcery? He looked a little too young to be a wizard,” Blair responded.

“Apparently, he was chosen. He was a warlock at first, but his body was sacrificed for greater power. The wand that I have belonged to his lieutenant, a fairy named Clover, whom I’m related to. War is just picking up the pieces of how things were supposed to be, and I know you two don’t want to hear this, but Hoax is the reason why Hex13 and Charmden are at war with each other. All of us lived peacefully together in Charmden until Clover invited the elves into our world,” I replied.

“Wow, I thought that was a myth. I heard my father talking about it when I was a little girl,” Blair responded.

“Do you not hear yourself, Eboenia? You want us to believe Hex13 were decent beings? Did you not see how they were killing our warriors? They are dark and wicked, and you’re brainwashed!” Lune yelled at me.

“Yes, they are dark beings, but only because they had to be! The wizard was framed for Clover’s death, which ignited the war. They are deadly assassins; I’m not denying that. War is as wicked as they come, but they still have structure and beliefs. They spared the women of Charmden and only came to kill Hoax’s warriors. That should tell you something!” I argued.

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“It tells me that they are still monsters, and you’re brainwashed. This might even be a trap. What’s next? They’re going to kidnap us too?” Lune asked, hysterically waving her hands.

“I feel like there’s something you need to get off your chest that has nothing to do with me being kidnapped!” I replied.

“I’m so sick of everything being evolved around you. These deaths are on your hands! And you think you can just march on back, wearing a witch marking, thinking shit is all good because you’re this beautiful and luscious goddess that our men seem to go crazy over. I liked you better before Hoax raped you, but knowing you, you probably set that up too,” Lune said, and Blair gasped.

“Why in the fuck would you say that!” Blair yelled at Lune.

“Because I have yet to receive any of y’all’s support during this pregnancy that I’ve been dealing with alone. Everything is about Eboenia! At first, it was about Hoax invading her, then it was about the wedding, and when she was taken, that’s all you and Jinx cared about! What about me, damn it!” Lune screamed.

“I think I should go,” I replied, standing up, but Blair pulled me back down.

“No, we’re family. Lune doesn’t mean those things,” Blair replied.

“Did you fuck that wizard?” Lune asked me.

“Why does that matter?” I asked.

“Because I heard you fought by his side and killed Charmden warriors together. Only a woman who opened her legs for a man would side with the enemy against her own people,” Lune said, and I laughed.

“Yes, I fucked and sucked him and enjoyed every second of it. My soul is bound to his, and despite how he captured me, he protected me. He showed me and made me feel things I’d never felt before, and I no longer feel bad about it!” I spat.

Blair rubbed my back, and Lune grilled her. “She’s brainwashed, Lune. This isn’t our Eboenia, so we need to be here for her. We don’t know what Hex13 did to her,” Blair stated.

“She’s always the fucking victim! She puts herself out there, teasing these men with her big breasts and ass! She is what Crane said she is, and it’s time we be honest!” Lune fussed.

In a flash, I swam over to Lune and choked her, digging my nails into her throat. My horns emerged, twisting and curling like dark, regal crowns. Her eyes widened in fear, and I heard Blair scream. “You’ll respect me, bitch! I’ll rip your throat out and slice that bastard out of your stomach if you keep speaking sideways about me,” I gritted.

“Eboenia, let her go!” Blair pleaded, pulling on my arm as I tightened my grip. I pushed Blair away from me while digging my nails into Lune’s throat; her blood cascaded down her neck, soaking the neckline of her dress.

Her eyes were wide open, the water in the pond splashing outside as her wings fluttered in panic. While looking into hereyes, I saw something...something dreadful. They say your eyes are the windows to your soul. I read her thoughts, felt her fears. This hidden ability came at a time I needed it the most. Maybe I always had it, but being with War gave me the binoculars I always needed.

“This is why you tried to talk me out of marrying Sin. A couple of nights ago when I came here after we went to the club, Sin was waiting for me. You had just finished sucking his dick. This is his offspring you’re carrying, and you’re jealous because he loves me and only came to you for sex!” I seethed.

“She’s lying, Blair. Get this monster away from me!” Lune cried, clawing at my arms. I head-butted her, making her dizzy. She slipped beneath the water, and I pulled her up by her hair.

“You’re the one who sent Hoax into the forest when he raped me! You snitched on me and Sin being together because you always wanted him!” I screamed at her. Blair wrapped her arms around me. “Eboenia, let her go. That is your sister! You have to fight the curse!” Blair pleaded.

I released Lune, and Blair rushed to her to check on her wounds. “That bitch never wanted me to come back!”

“I need to lay down. I’m cramping,” Lune whispered.

Blair helped Lune out of the pond and then sat on the ground. “What has gotten into you? Lune would never sleep with Sin!” Blair yelled at me.

“She’s a lying crazy bitch! Those Hex13 demons poisoned her mind!” Lune cried while rubbing her midsection.

“Where did those horns come from, Eboenia?” Blair questioned.

“It’s part of my magic,” I nonchalantly responded.

I floated on my back inside the pond, spreading my wings wide. Dark spiraling shadows circled around me, causing the light to dim inside the basement. It was my

dark magic radiating from me, a living entity that pulsed with my emotions. Black horned snakes appeared, slithering across the ground towards Lune, their scales glistening like volcano rock.

“Make it stop!” Blair screamed at me.

I backpedaled, ignoring their pleas. Blair hurried Lune up the stairs, cradling her midsection as she went. I had scared her into going into labor. Alone in the stillness, my thoughts turned to War. Was he alive? Why hadn’t he come to find me?

I heard Jinx’s voice, snapping me out of my daydream. In a surge of adrenaline, I flew out of the pond, accidentally stepping on the snakes that slithered beneath my feet, turning them to ashes in an instant. A black floral robe, woven from real roses, materialized over my body as I ascended the stairs. In the living room, I found Lune in the pool, laboring with Blair by her side.

“Eboeniaaaa!” Jinx called out, her voice filled with urgency.

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She was helping Lune into the pool when she collided into me, battered and bloody, her black eye swollen shut. Wrapping her arms tightly around me, she cried, “I missed you so much!”

“Get away from her! She has dark magic!” Lune panted, her voice strained with fear.

Jinx stepped back, her fiery eyes scanning me, taking in my transformation. Her clothes were in tatters, and her feet were badly cut. “I’m here now, and you’ll never have to worry about practicing with that bullshit army again,” I assured her.

“I don’t know what happened to you, but you look so good... like the queen of Charmden. I always knew you were special,” Jinx replied.

I wiped away a tear that slipped down her cheek. “I’m glad to hear those words coming from you,” I said, my heart swelling with love.

Jinx hugged me again. “I don’t care what they said you did; you’re still my sister. Hoax is on a rampage, sending his warriors to hunt us down and force us into training. I’ve seen so many fairies killed fighting his warriors in training. We need to do something!” she exclaimed, her body trembling with fear.

“I can kill him,” I murmured, the words spilling from my lips with certainty.

“That’s dangerous, Eboenia. You know how it feels to be burned by his staff,” she cautioned, concern etched on her face.

“That staff belongs to War, and he will get it back,” I responded.

“War? The Hex13 leader?” Jinx asked, her brow furrowing.

“Yes,” I affirmed.

“And you trust him? The leader of Hex13 who has been on a killing spree for these past months?” Jinx asked.

“Exactly! Ouuuuuuuuu!” Lune squealed, blood gushing from between her legs, circling around her in the pool.

“I need y’all’s help!” Blair shouted.

Jinx jumped into the pool to assist Blair with Lune. I sat on the cushion on the floor, crossed my arms, and watched Lune scream at the top of her lungs. Fairies carried their offspring for four months. Sin had arranged for me to be his wife a month ago. I could imagine the hurt and betrayal Lune felt, giving herself to Sin only for him to turn around and ask me to be his wife. It stung; the feeling hurt like hell because at one point, Sin was my other half, and I had even put my life on the line to protect him.

“Where is your child’s father, Lune?” I asked as she pushed.

“Leave me the hell alone! He’s dead! Your demon capturer killed him,” she replied, her voice filled with anguish.

“You still want to pretend that I’m just making this up? You’re a stupid low-level bed whore!” I spat, and Blair shot me a look of disapproval, as if silently telling me to behave.

“I see his head. Push again!” Jinx said, standing between Lune’s legs. Lune grabbed Blair’s hand and pushed, her purple wings turning pale as she strained.

“He’s out,” Jinx said, holding a baby wrapped in green leaves, known as the fairy’s sack.

“He’s not breathing,” Jinx said, panic rising in her voice.

Lune sat up, snatching her baby from Jinx’s arms. “What’s wrong with him?” Blair asked, her tone frantic.

“I don’t knowwww! He’s not breathing! I felt him kicking earlier... help meeeeeee!” Lune cried, desperation lacing her words.

Blair picked him up and jumped out of the pond with him. She laid him on the floor and pressed his chest before blowing fairy dust into his nose to get him to react. I looked at his face; he didn’t have any eye sockets, and his nose was deformed, with pointed needle thin ears. His elf genes were strong, evident in the shape of his small jawline.

“Eboenia, use your wand!” Blair urged, pressing on his chest.

“I can’t bring back the dead. My magic isn’t that dark... yet,” I responded.

“Now is not the time for pettiness! Help us!” Blair yelled at me, her frustration boiling over.

“He’s dead, but he has the same crystal-shaped birthmark on his arm as Sin,” I replied.

Jinx and Blair looked at Lune, their expressions filled with sympathy. “Did you really have him by Sin?” Jinx asked softly.

“My baby is dead, and that’s all you care about—are the lies? Hand me back my son!

Damn all of you!” Lune cried, her voice breaking.

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Lune climbed out of the pool, leaving a blood trail behind her. The vine-like umbilical cord was still attached to her son. She pressed on his chest, turned him over, and beat on his back, but nothing happened.

“Noooooooooooooooooooooooooooo! My babyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy!” Lune sobbed, her heart-wrenching cries echoing in the air.

Blair and Jinx wrapped their wings around Lune, swaying back and forth, nature humming to send her baby’s spirit off to the ancestors. I left them alone, returning back to the basement. The curse must’ve turned my heart cold against a lot of things because I felt no empathy for Lune’s pain. That air-headed bitch thought it was my fault for what Hoax did to me.

“It’s your fault your child didn’t make it. Bitch, should’ve kept her legs closed,” I said aloud, the bitterness spilling from my lips. I dove back into the basement's pond, curling up in a fetal position at the bottom, letting my wings cradle me. My last thoughts were of War before I drifted off...

My black rose dress dragged across the pink and yellow roses as I ventured deeper into the forest of Charmden—a place now unrecognizable from its former self. This hidden part of the woods was surrounded by cascading waterfalls, their music harmonizing with the air thick with white, rabbit-sized moths. Their psychedelic wings shimmered as they circled the ancient trees, casting kaleidoscopic shadows on the mossy ground.

I stopped at the tallest waterfall in Charmden, water thundering down into a deep lake below. Neon-colored fish darted at the bottom, their scales glowing like jewels in the

moonlight. Suddenly, a man rose from beneath the water, droplets sliding down his muscular back marked with forest-green gears. His broad shoulders glistened, and his locs hung like ropes. When he turned, I caught a glimpse of his chiseled jawline, the intricate markings tracing his beautiful, handsome face. It was him—the wizard who possessed Cashaun.

I was ready to step into the lake to join him, but another figure emerged from the depths. She was naked, her skin deep and rich, the color of pinecone. Horns adorned with fresh flowers crowned her head. Jealousy twisted my stomach as I watched my ancestor from the painting, Clover, wrap her arms around War. He turned to face her, smiling down with a warmth in his eyes that was no longer there.

“Azarion, I want to carry your child,” she said, her hands gliding over his chest.

“You want a life I can’t give you. You know my purpose in this land, and it is not to live that kind of life. I’m a warrior, born from beneath Charmden’s roots. My only purpose is to protect this realm—and you,” he replied, his voice deep and resolute.

“Why am I always chasing you? I constantly give myself to you, and you reject it,” Clover argued, her voice trembling.

“I told you when you seduced me what it would be. I’m a warrior first... lover at night. And the things you do to make me envious—like laying in Hoax’s bed. You invited the elves here, claiming they’d make great warriors, but they can barely conjure a sword. Opening our world to those creatures was a mistake!” he snapped.

Clover recoiled. “You destroyed their realm when you defeated the ogres in their forest! It was the least we could do since they were innocent. Azarion, you left their world lifeless. As for Hoax, he sees me in ways you don’t. He sees me as a delicate being. You treat me like a warrior with a pussy! He’s passionate, attentive—but my heart wants you. I’m begging you to love me back,” she pleaded, tears brimming in

her eyes.

Azarion looked away, jaw clenched. “I loved you too, Clover. But you betrayed me when you opened your legs for another man to spite me. You should be lucky I don’t have both your heads roasting on a firestick. I gave you your magic, created your wand from my own blood, and you fucked a man I disapprove of—right in our spot! I was abstinent before you laid eyes on me. I was focused! My chest aches when I see you with Hoax, but you know what will happen to me if I fail Charmden. If I get too distracted by you and your antics and it unbalances my energy, this body will perish. Charmden is the master of all of us. It can take away the gifts it gave me. If you cared about me, you wouldn’t do anything to ruin me.”

Clover slapped him, leaving three long scratches across his face. His gears spun, churning the water into a spiraling sinkhole. “Fuck Charmden! I’m going to marry Hoax then, and start a family with him. You might be the grand wizard of this forest, but not even your power or strength can match what I’m going to do to you! I hope my happiness with another man weakens you, and then you’ll perish!” Clover seethed.

“Your games will be the cause of your death,” Azarion warned, his voice cold.

“Then we’ll just die together. If I can’t have you, you don’t deserve to live!” Clover spat back.

“Head back to your village and let me enjoy my swim,” he dismissed her, turning away.

She spat on him, the glob landing on his chest before she flew off into the night. No wonder she and Hoax clicked—those assholes had the same entitled hearts, selfish, wicked pieces of shit!

Azarion's eyes burned red, flames flickering in their depths. "If Charmden takes away my position because of you, I'm coming back to destroy everything!" he roared before diving beneath the water.

I stepped forward, desperate to join him in the lake, but an unseen force yanked me back. "Let go of meeee!" I screamed as the world spun around me...

I was pulled from the bottom of the pond, water blurring my vision as I surfaced. I felt a pair of familiar arms around me. "I missed you so much," Sin's voice whispered.

I wiped my eyes, blinking until I could see him—Sin, his face bruised and shadowed. "Listen, Lune ratted you out to my father's most trusted men. They are here to get you. Jinx and Blair are being restrained with swords against their necks, so don't go up there and startle them. They think I'm on their side. I only came here to save you, but we need to get out of here—right now," he whispered.

"What...what happened?" I asked, still disoriented from the dream.

"We need to leave...now!" Sin insisted.

He pulled a crystal from his knapsack and tossed it into the pond. As it struck the water, a ripple of blue light spread outward, and a swirling portal shined open above the surface. "Sin, we can't leave them and I'm not going to Charmden," I said.

"We're not going there. Trust me, but we need to leave!" he gritted, pulling me toward the bridge of light.

"I can't leave my friends!" I whispered back.

"Forget them. I don't want my father taking you. I know a realm where we can hide

until it's over," Sin said.

"Sin, I can't leave my friends. Fuck Hoax—I think it's time you stop running from him. You're the only one who can get close. You can kill him."

"I tried, but it didn't go as planned. I'm sorry about Lune. I didn't mean for it to get out of hand, but at least that's over and her son can't come between us," he replied, gently touching my cheek.

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I pulled away. “Sin, go ahead and save yourself. I’m going upstairs.”

I diminished to insect size and zipped up the basement stairs. In the living room, I pressed myself against the greenery on the wall, my wings camouflaging perfectly with the leaves as I melted into the shadows. At least ten warriors crowded what was supposed to be our safe house. Lune sat on the floor, clutching her lifeless baby, her eyes vacant as she rocked back and forth. Jinx and Blair were naked, forced to their knees with thick, rune-etched ropes binding them—Charmden prisoner restraints, designed to sap a fairy’s magic and keep them grounded.

“I can’t believe you, Lune,” Jinx spat, her voice trembling with rage. “After everything, you called them here? This was our sanctuary, and you sold us out! I wish I could beat the afterbirth out of you.”

“Shut the hell up!” barked an elf, striding over to Jinx. He backhanded her, sending her crashing into the wall.

Another elf, taller and wearing a sash of bone, barked orders. “Sky, get down there and see what’s taking so long. And remember what Hoax said—if Sin tries anything suspicious, take his fucking head off.”

As Sky strode past, I whipped out my wand and flicked it at him. A bolt of searing violet light struck his chest. He screamed as his skin bubbled and melted, flesh dripping from his bones like wax.

“Ahhhhhh! My skin! My skin!”

“Who did that?” someone shouted, spinning around, panic in his eyes.

“My eyes!” Sky shrieked, clawing at his melting face before collapsing.

“Find the source! Now!” the leader of the group roared.

I transformed, scales rippling over my skin as I transformed into a slender garden snake. I slithered up the wall’s tangled vines, weaving through the uproar. Reaching Jinx, I shifted back into my fairy form, my wand glowing with charcoal fire as I sliced through the enchanted ropes binding her wrists and ankles. “Hold still,” I whispered.

As the ropes fell away, Jinx’s fairy magic surged back. Her clothing appeared in a ripple of light—fiery orange petals and shimmering leaves curling around her body, resembling a fire flame.

“About damn time,” Jinx hissed.

I darted to Blair, freeing her just as a warrior lunged at us. Blair’s skin glowed as her own garments materialized: a dress spun from golden grass, earth-toned petals, and delicate yellow moss, hugging her form.

Her hand flickered, and a slingshot materialized, strung with a cord of blue flame. She fired a blazing orb straight into a warrior’s face—his head detonated in a burst of fire and bone. Brain matter was everywhere.

Jinx leapt onto another guard, sinking her teeth into his cheek. He howled, thrashing as blood sprayed across the floor. “That’s for touching my titties, you piece of shit!” she snarled, tearing away a chunk of flesh.

The warriors surged at us. I grew to my full size, sword flashing with runes as I

carved through the nearest elf. Blood arced across the room as I severed his arms, sending him crashing into the pool.

“Get her! Don’t let that bitch, Eboenia, get away!” an elf screamed, clutching his bleeding stomach.

I plunged my sword into the water, channeling my magic. The pool glowed, swirling as a massive figure rose from its depths—a muscular water elemental, its eyes glowing like sapphires. It seized an elf and hurled him through the wall with a thunderous crash. The sweet melody of his bones cracking made me feel like a ballerina, spinning through the bloody gore.

Blair grinned, while clapping her hands together. “You picked the wrong house, assholes!”

Jinx, blood smeared across her mouth spat at another warrior. “Come on, then! I’ll rip you apart too!”

The living room erupted into mayhem—a battlefield of splintering wood and shuddering walls, the ceiling caving in as the water elemental rampaged, pounding attackers with the wild force of a gorilla. Sin burst from the basement, ducking falling debris. He snatched me up just as I was in the middle of slicing off a fairy’s head.

“Put me down!” I shouted, fighting the urge to use my magic on him.

“This is for the best!” he yelled, tossing me over his shoulder.

He barreled through the front door, sprinting down the porch steps as the house collapsed behind us. “I need water to open our realm. Fuck!” Sin cursed, scanning the street in desperation.

It was broad daylight—cars zipped past, horns blaring. “Get the hell out of the road!” a woman screamed from the window of an Altima. Sin flinched, panic flickering across his face; he was never any good with humans. In a flash, he leapt over a row of cars and bolted down the sidewalk. I bit his ear, hard.

“Ahhhhhhh!” he howled, dropping me onto the pavement.

Sin lunged back, grabbing my arm in a bruising grip. “I know that Hex13 leader marked you, and I’m still willing to fight for us. But we need to move—Hoax is about to unleash his special weapons.”

“I’m not going anywhere without War. He’s the only one I trust to protect me.”

Sin’s eyes darkened, pupils swallowing the whites until his gaze was nothing but two bottomless pits. His cheekbones sharpened, his whole body tensed with a violence that radiated off him in waves. He straightened, posture rigid and menacing—a living echo of his father when he was ready to strike. Then, with a sudden, venomous motion, he jabbed a thorn into my throat. Paralysis swept over me. I collapsed on the sidewalk, helpless, unable even to heal.

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Sin knelt beside me, tears glistening in his eyes. “I did all of this for you. I’m the one who broke the seal to open Charmden to outsiders. How do you think War got in? He was supposed to kill Hoax during the ceremony, but Hoax escaped. Losing my mother wasn’t part of the plan. Neither was you being kidnapped. That necklace I gave you was supposed to mark you as off-limits, but I’m assuming War needed to have you—just like my father couldn’t resist! My mother is dead because of what I’ve done for you! She was the only one who cared for me!”

He spat the words, gripping my face so hard his nails dug into my cheeks. “This is what I get for loving a jezebel and trusting a Hex13. I protected you in my own way, and all you had to do was be patient! Maybe I should just kill us both!”

Sin hoisted me over his shoulder like I weighed nothing. Blair and Jinx burst from the ruins of the house, wings slicing the air, while four of Hoax’s warriors gave chase, hurling fire and lightning. Orbs exploded against car hoods, alarms shrieking up and down the street.

“Let her go, Sin!” Jinx screamed.

“Mind your business! This is between me and my wife!” Sin snapped, his wings unfurling in a wild, desperate flutter. He was never a good flyer—most fairy-elf bastards weren’t. Their wings weren’t built for altitude.

The thorn lodged in my neck, its venom seeping into my veins, suffocating my healing magic. My strength faltered; even my bladder gave out. Darkness crept in at the edges of my vision. I was as good as dead.

“You’re making a big damn mistake, wimp!” Blair shouted, dodging a bolt of electricity.

Sin’s frantic flight sent us careening into a streetlight. Cars screeched to a halt, humans spilling out with their phones, faces lit up with shock and curiosity. Then, a golden spark split the sky. We crashed onto the roof of a truck, the windows shattering in a rain of glass. My vision flickered, darkness creeping in as a shadow swept over the street, snuffing out daylight. Someone or something else was coming.

Suddenly, we weren’t in the real world anymore. The neighborhood looked the same—cracked pavement, dented cars, shattered glass—but all the humans had vanished. We’d been pulled into a replica world, a perfect copy of the block, emptied of everyone except us.

Jinx and Blair rushed to my side. Blair yanked the thorn from my throat. “Come on, Eboenia. I know you can fight it. Damn it, Blair, she’s turning purple!” Jinx shouted, just as a dagger buried itself in her stomach, flinging her across the asphalt. Hoax’s warriors pounced on Blair, fists and boots raining down.

I gasped, lungs burning, as my body finally fought off the venom. Sin seized my locs, yanking me off the truck.

“Rotten runs in your bloodline! That’s why everyone’s dead. My father poisoned your mother because she killed his seed; she was his whore! He fucked her whenever he wanted to, even against her own will! My mother warned me about you, but my father convinced me—good pussy runs in your bloodline!” he snarled, venom in every word.

Hot, scalding tears blurred my vision, and my heart hammered so hard I thought it might crack my ribs. I wanted to scream, to claw at the truth he’d just forced into the light, but all I could do was choke on the pain.

Every memory of my mother twisted into something ugly and broken. The image of Hoax flashed in my mind—his cruel hands, his mocking voice. He once told me I was a fighter, just like her. Now I understood the weight of those words. The horror of what he'd done to me, what he must have done to her, crashed over me like a tidal wave. My hatred for Hoax didn't just triple—it exploded, burning through my veins, dragging me into the darkness War wanted me to explore.

A portal spun open in front of us, symbols whirling around its rim. I knew that magic—the man who owned my soul was coming. War stepped through, shirtless, gears and eyes glowing gold, black jeans and Timbs grounding him like a god among mortals. His heavy medallion flickered, casting shards of light. His brother, Grim, followed, shotgun slung over his shoulder, looking like a shadow as his long cape swirled around him.

“Lil’ nigga, I know you ain’t think you were gonna take my pussy fairy, did you?” War wickedly grinned, a chain materializing around his wrist.

“I’ll let y’all handle this,” Grim said, floating toward Blair and Jinx, who were getting stomped in the street.

War’s energy ripped me out of Sin’s grasp, yanking me through the air until my body hovered weightless above the ground. When I reached him, he wrapped his arm around me, holding me tight.

“I told your hardheaded ass to wait for me! I’m not showing you any mercy when we get back to Charm City!” War’s voice thundered in my head.

Sin’s face twisted with rage. “I helped you get into Charmden and you backstabbed me!” he yelled at War.

War just smirked. “Now, why in the fuck would you trust a man who hates your

bitch-ass daddy? Keep it a hunnid, twinkle ears, I was never on your side and never will be. I spared you in Charmden. I could've laid you out next to your mother. If anything, you should be thanking me!"

Sin's fists clenched, trembling with anger. Behind him, I caught a glimpse of Grim tearing through Hoax's warriors—his shotgun blasting orbs that exploded bodies into piles of guts, painting the street with carnage.

"I'm going to kill you! You betrayed me—I trusted your thieving ass!" Sin shouted, his voice cracking.

"I saw her through your memories when you came to me. Even those intimate moments, when she looked bored with you on top of her—you don't know what the hell to do with that magical pussy. The moral of the story? You should've handled it yourself and never come to another man to do your dirty work, because in the end, he's going to take it all. You gave her to me, dummy. Don't worry, though—I'll still kill your bitch-ass daddy as promised. Consider this a fair exchange, no robberies," War responded.

"She'll never love you. The dark curse you put on her will falter!" Sin screamed.

War just chuckled. "Grim, pack this nigga up! He's useful for target practice!" he called out.

Without hesitation, Grim swung the butt of his gun into the back of Sin's head. Sin crumpled to the ground, unconscious, and Grim tossed a luminous net over him, binding him tight.

Jinx and Blair limped over to me, bloodied and battered. Jinx clutched her wound. "Leave her with us!" she told War.

“War...help them,” I whispered, my voice barely audible.

He pulled me closer. “I didn’t come here for them,” he said, eyes never leaving mine.

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“They’re my sisters...please,” I pleaded.

War sighed, then called out, “Gather them up too, Grim.”

Grim looked appalled. “Bruh, really? Bad enough we had to make an exception for your fairy warrior.”

War’s tone was final. “It’s my kingdom and what I say goes. Not up for discussion.”

Grim shook his head, grumbling, “You’re lucky you’re my lil’ brother and I got mad love for you.”

He snapped handcuffs around Blair and Jinx’s wrists. The handcuffs were the same as the collar War used on me to restrain my magic. They exchanged nervous glances as Grim herded them toward the portal. “I ain’t gonna lie, shorty, I’m feeling the Vin Diesel bald head,” he said to Jinx.

“Fuck off!” Jinx spat, glaring at him.

“Well fuck you too then. I should’ve let that elf snap your neck!” Grim shot back, his voice edged with irritation.

“You don’t want to go there with us,” Blair warned him.

“Can y’all shut the fuck up and hurry up?” War barked, his patience gone.

“We can’t leave Lune,” Blair said, worry flickering in her eyes. I rolled my eyes.

“It’s another one with y’all?” Grim asked.

Once Sin, still tangled in the net, reached the portal’s edge, it sucked him in with a flash.

“Yes, moron, and I think she’s still near our fallen home. Can you please go get her?” Blair pleaded.

Grim looked at Jinx, a sly grin spreading across his face. “I’ll get your friend if you give me a massage tonight,” he said, rubbing her head.

She kicked him hard in the leg. “Don’t put your warlock hands on me!” Jinx snapped.

“Weak-ass kick,” Grim teased her, and she bucked at him. When he bucked back, I let out a slight chuckle. Grim was an asshole and got on my nerves, but he was harmless—though his mouth was reckless.

“It’s up to Eboenia,” War said, while Grim threw up his hands in frustration.

Blair’s eyes begged for mercy. I shook my head. “No. She’ll return to Charmden since she chose her side when she ratted me out. Sorry, Blair, but she betrayed me in the worst way possible.”

Blair’s shoulders slumped. “I understand,” she said quietly. Jinx nodded in agreement.

Grim nudged them toward the portal, and the three of them vanished in a beam of light. The collar snapped around my neck, and I shot War a glare. “Are you serious? You want my sisters to see me like this?” I grilled him.

A beam flashed from War’s eyes, and I felt the heavy collar morphing, metal shifting

against my skin until it turned into a chain necklace with a black butterfly medallion. The wings on it twitched, fluttering to life like some dark omen.

“It’s still the same, just has a new look. But you know you fucked up. Go on ahead and go first,” he said, stepping aside and giving me that look.

I stepped into the portal like a kid bracing for a scolding after breaking every rule in the book. Deep down, I was ready to explode at War for keeping Sin from me, but the truth was, War never told me anything. I couldn’t wait to let him have it—even if I knew he’d punish me for it.

We stepped into the dungeon buried deep inside War’s tower. It was even bloodier than the last time I’d seen it—the day War put that damn curse on me. The walls dripped with fresh blood, and the air smelled of iron and suffering. Jinx and Blair hovered off to the side, looking like they wanted to bolt.

“What the hell are you trying to pull with us?” Jinx demanded, voice trembling as she glared at Grim and War. The dungeon doors groaned and then, as if obeying some silent command, they glinted and split open, forming an arched doorway out of solid stone.

Grim and War didn’t answer Jinx. Instead, they shoved Sin into the cage with Crane. Crane was chained to the wall, hanging upside down like some slaughterhouse carcass, blood soaking his dashiki and pooling beneath him on the freezing concrete. The net that had trapped Sin twisted into a chain, hoisting him up from the ceiling. He dangled there, slipping in and out of consciousness, eyes rolling back.

“Let him go! He’s got nothing to do with this shit!” Crane yelled. He looked like he’d been stabbed a hundred times, blood running down his arms and dripping onto the floor.

“This is sick! Eboenia, say something! Your monster is out of control!” Blair snapped at me, voice shaking.

War just sighed, pissed off and annoyed. “Grim, get these nagging fuckin’ broads upstairs. Make sure they get a room with beds and a bathroom. If they mouth off again, toss them in the cell with these two lames,” he said, waving them off.

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As wild as it was, I still trusted War. I knew he wouldn't lay a hand on them unless he had no choice. I nodded at Jinx and Blair, trying to reassure them even though they looked scared out of their minds. "I promise, nothing's gonna happen to you," I told them.

"I'm trusting you... only you," Jinx said, voice barely above a whisper.

"What's with all the dramatics? Didn't we save your baldheaded ass? Y'all are some of the most ungrateful fruit flies I'd seen in my life. Goddamn," Grim snapped, nudging them to get moving.

"Don't fucking touch me!" Blair snapped, shooting daggers over her shoulder.

"Aight, funky butt," Grim snickered, following them up the stairs. Their bickering echoed down the stairwell, fading as they disappeared.

I turned to War, nodding at Crane. "What's the plan with him?"

"Use him to fuck with the enemy's head," he said flatly.

"Just kill me now! Nobody's ever gonna use me against my people! Charmden is in my blood—I'll never fucking fold!" Crane screamed, thrashing on his chain like a man possessed. War didn't even look back, just started up the stairs.

"Eboenia, come!" War barked.

"Yeah, go ahead and follow him, traitor! I can't wait to kill you too. My warriors are

dead because of you!” Crane spat, his voice ragged and full of hate.

War paused, then turned. The dungeon door yawned open again, like it had a mind of its own. He stormed back, grabbed my arm, and yanked me into the cramped, blood-soaked cell. Crane glared at me, then spat a mouthful of blood right in my face. As I wiped away the warm glob of blood, War delivered a bone-crushing punch to Crane’s gut, making him fold up and cough more blood onto the floor.

“Sin is your traitor. Eboenia didn’t know a damn thing about what we were planning. I suggest you watch your fucking mouth,” War growled, as I wiped Crane’s blood off my cheek.

“Lies! Sin would never do that to us... we’re family!” Crane groaned, his voice breaking.

“You don’t know what a man who hates his father will do when he keeps violating him. Maybe you should’ve been on board with his bitch-ass. Your father used to treat you the same way—I can see it in your eyes,” War said. Crane howled in rage, trying to drown out the truth.

War shoved a knife into my hand. “Go ahead. Stab him.”

“Fuck you!” Crane spat, blood dribbling down his chin.

“Stab him, Eboenia. That’s an order!” War barked, eyes burning into mine.

“Why? He’s already being punished!” I shot back.

War grabbed me by the necklace, nearly lifting me off my feet. His grip was rough, his knuckles white with tension. “That muthafucka just spit on you. I haven’t even disrespected you like that. He spit in your face and threatened your life. So you stab

this nigga and show him what I created!” he snarled, his eyes burning into mine.

I reluctantly took the knife from War, and drove it into Crane’s abdomen, twisting it until his body went limp, though he was still breathing—barely. “He’ll live,” War said flatly, barely glancing at Crane as he wiped his hands on his pants.

Crane choked on his own blood, gasping, his eyes wide with pain. War spun him around on the chain and slammed his elbow into Crane’s stomach. Crane doubled over, coughing violently.

“Toughen up! This is the easy part,” War promised, before heading to the stairwell. We walked up the stairs in silence, my footsteps heavy and unsteady. The second we stepped out of the dungeon, War grabbed my arm and spun me to face him, his jaw clenched and eyes narrowed.

“You hesitated stabbing him! Why is that?” War demanded, his grip tightening on my arm.

“His father used to beat him bloody when he was a kid, forced him to train early in their army. I have a soft spot for all victims, War—even the ones who disrespect me,” I replied, my shoulders slumping as I looked away.

War’s hand shot out, yanking me forward with such force my head snapped back, my vision swimming. My breath hitched, and I struggled to steady myself. “The fuck do you mean you have a soft spot for a muthafucka who belittled you, spat on you, and told his clan to cut off your head? Even now, he’s a prisoner—weak, barely conscious—yet he still finds the strength to threaten you. He sees you as a traitor, refuses to believe Sin let me into Charmden. If you show mercy to those weaklings again, I swear, I’ll euthanize you,” he growled, his face inches from mine.

“You should’ve told me about Sin siding with Hex13. I wouldn’t have reacted the

way I did when you captured me and forced you to curse me. This could've been avoided had you just said something, but you played with my emotions knowing fucking well I was vulnerable!"

"I saved you from that bullshit life and that weak-ass fiancé of yours," War replied, his lips curling into a sneer.

I snatched away from him, yanking my arm free. He looked at me like I was crazy, his brows furrowed. "You didn't save me, you turned me into a dark creature for your own sick and twisted mind games. Part of me appreciates some of the things you taught me, but the other part of me knows that everything I'm learning is to benefit you and not me! I want everyone to stop using me to boost their egos!" I screamed at him, my chest heaving as my voice echoed down the corridor.

"I don't need you to boost shit. The only thing you can do for me is make me nut!" War angrily spat, his nostrils flaring.

"Kill me then and end the curse," I challenged him, stepping closer, my chin raised defiantly.

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“You’re afraid of death,” he responded, his eyes narrowing as he studied my face.

I shook my head. “Not anymore. Go ahead and kill me, War! Do it!” I replied. steady as I stared into his beaming eyes. I was pressing his buttons, willing to put my life on the line to see how he truly felt about me. It was a bold move, but I was desperate to find out the truth about his need for me.

“I think that poison fried your brain. You aren’t thinking clearly,” he replied.

“Fuck you!” I snapped, my voice cracking with frustration. I spun away, storming down the hallway.

“Don’t walk away when I’m talking to you!” War’s voice thundered, echoing off the stone walls. His footsteps pounded behind me.

“I’m going to check on my sisters!” I hurled back, refusing to look at him.

Suddenly, something snaked around my ankles. I crashed to the floor, dragged backward, my nails scraping desperate lines into the polished stone. War reeled me in, wrapping my locs around his fist, yanking me upright until I dangled before him. My neck arched, exposed, vulnerable, my breath coming in shallow gasps.

“Get away from me!” I gasped, pounding his chest with weak fists. He didn’t budge. Instead, his mouth found the sensitive spot beneath my jaw, his lips hot and hungry. My body shuddered, heat pooling low in my belly. He grabbed a handful of my ass, pressing me hard against the cold wall, his body pinning me in place.

“War...stop!” I moaned, breathless, but my voice betrayed me, trembling with passion. My hands clutched at his shoulders, torn between pushing him away and pulling him closer.

He pressed closer. “Your body’s begging me to keep going. You make me hard every time you look at me with those sad, miserable eyes. You owe me for leaving the park when I told you not to. Make it up to me, and I’ll let you see your sisters,” he murmured, tongue tracing a slick, burning path along my neck.

“We can’t keep doing this...it’s setting me crazy,” I replied, on the verge of exploding into tears of frustration. My voice wavered, my hands trembling against his chest. I wanted to know how War felt about me outside of his hate for Charmden. I wanted to know his deepest feelings.

“You set me crazy too, Eboenia. It wasn’t supposed to get this far, but when Sin came to me, I thought he was setting me up. Luring me in to get killed because I’m the new leader of my clan. I had to get inside his head to figure out if what he wanted me to do was real. In his thoughts, I saw you...I felt you. I needed to have you, even if I had to kill you too, I just wanted to feel you. I came to Charmden that night, to get you. Capture you and make you mine to play with because that nigga was wasting your time. I’m not a gentle lover, but I am protector...I just can’t protect you from me,” he said, his thumb tracing my jaw as he spoke.

“You knew who I was when I saw you in the city, leaving the club with my friends? You should’ve just told me the truth from the beginning. It didn’t have to get this far. This curse is like a wave...it takes me up and then brings me back down,” I responded, my eyes glistening with tears.

A tear fell down my cheek and War licked it away. “It did have to get this far. I wanted you to see the destruction I brought on your people so that you’ll fear the thought of dying by my hands,” he replied, like a dark-hearted, obsessed psychopath.

“This is your final destination, Lor Pussy Fairy. You just gotta stop fighting and fall into me, so I can catch you and hold you forever,” he whispered. He pulled my lip down, tracing his tongue across the marking inside my lip. My eyes fluttered, feeling the darkness his grip had over me. My thoughts were spiraling and my pussy was leaking. My nipples tightened, the ache between my thighs growing unbearable. Wetness slicked my skin, the scent of my sweet cream thick in the air, wrapping around us like a spell.

“Okay,” I finally whispered, surrendering, my body relaxing into his hold.

I glanced down, catching the sight of his erection straining against his jeans. I was drawn to him like a bee to honey, wanting him to maliciously pound out my pussy, and feeling weak at his mercy. A portal opened, revealing a staircase shaped like clockwork gears, each step ticking with a chilling energy. War’s voice rumbled behind me. “I’m right behind you. Lead the way.” He placed a firm hand on the small of my back, guiding me forward.

I walked up the stairs that seemed to float in a dark sky, and at the very top was a door. When I reached the final step, the door opened, and I walked into paradise.

I found myself in a room that had to be the highest part of the tower—because when I looked out the window, I could see two worlds: his, and beneath it, Baltimore City. We were inside a three-floor bedroom. Books lined shelves that climbed the walls all the way up to a dome-shaped ceiling etched with glowing runes. His floating bed hovered above a glass-like floor, making me feel like I was walking across the sky. Sleek lamps drifted in the air, enchanted plants floated in the corners, and a wall-sized screen displayed shifting arcane symbols. Near the bed, a massive fish tank held a strange sea creature with gold scales and ancient markings, gliding through the water like a living relic. I was locked in on it, tapping the glass. It opened its mouth, revealing sharp, jagged teeth—a mashup of Komodo dragon and axolotl.

“Now, this is heavenly,” I said aloud, my voice full of awe.

War glided his hand across my ass cheek as he walked by. “This room belonged to the first wizard. It was his second home,” he said.

“I thought he only lived in Charmden,” I said, watching him undress.

“He created this world while living in Charmden—he died because of it, too,” War replied.

“What do you mean he died for it? I thought he died during the battle at the ceremony.”

War turned to face me, he delicately peeled away what was left of my black rose dress. The petals had wilted, shriveling up as they dropped to the floor. “You really think those weak Charmden warriors were strong enough to kill me?” he asked, nostrils flaring.

When War talked, he slipped in and out—sometimes he spoke about his old self, the wizard, in third person, other times he used ‘I,’ like he was both people at once. It was like Azarion and Cashaun were having a conversation through him. Azarion was quick to snap, but Cashaun was the one who tried to protect me. I was finally starting to tell them apart.

“I was just going by what you painted on the wall downstairs,” I said quietly.

He traced his fingers down my arm, sending goosebumps racing over my skin. “There were missing chapters,” he admitted, his voice softer.

“Are you going to share them with me?”

War just smirked and unclasped my necklace. My wings unfurled, stretching and fluttering, finally free. A floor-to-ceiling mirror appeared—a gleaming gold frame with tree branches winding through the metal, standing on four legs shaped like upside-down horns. The inside of the mirror sparkled, opening into a lush forest.

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“You’re being too generous. What’s the catch? You never take that collar off me in your realm. And you’re using fine magic to seduce me,” I accused, arching a brow.

War grinned, grabbing my hand. “I’ll show you,” he said, and pulled me through the mirror.

We stepped into a forest straight out of a dream—sky-high waterfalls, giant glowing moths, and tulips in purple, blue, gold, and pink, all towering over six feet tall. “I saw Azarion here with Clover in my dream,” I told him.

“It’s his birthplace. The forest gave birth to him, using the elements of the land to fuel his magic. But this is just an illusion—a mirror image of what used to be, before it was destroyed. This was the original Charmden, back when only the fairies lived here,” he replied, a trace of sadness in his tone.

I looked up at War, surprised to see horns sprouting from his head—taller, thicker, and deadlier than mine, with tiny, glowinggear symbols spinning inside them like wild clockwork. He was so beautiful, so striking, I could stare at him all day like he was a painting.

He grabbed my hand and led me through a bed of towering flowers. I couldn’t take my eyes off him. “Azarion didn’t have parents? He just rose from the ground?” I asked, still mesmerized.

“No. Charmden was his parent. And when you don’t obey them, they’ll punish you and take back every gift they ever gave. But you already know how ruthless they are. So you teach yourself to build your own world, create your own clan, study the

elements—prepare for what’s coming. My parents stripped me of my magic in front of my whole clan and handed my position to Hoax. A coward. He slithered into my world and dethroned me because they were scared. And because of their betrayal, their land and people suffered. The fairies—those nurturers—worshipped Hoax because they thought he killed me. Everyone I protected, they killed my spirit. They fucking betrayed me! But my clan, the humans I taught magic to in exchange for their souls, they were loyal. They protected my ashes for a hundred years so I could come back. And in the end, some weak-ass elf who didn’t know shit about defending his realm stole my life!” War’s eyes blazed, burning like fire.

I reached out to him, half-afraid he’d snap at me. “Your heart is broken,” I whispered.

War let out a bitter chuckle and turned away. “Fuck all of them muthafuckas. I sleep like a baby on titty milk, knowing their president’s killed more fairies than I ever did,” he said, stalking toward the waterfall.

I followed, feeling a pang of sympathy. “Who killed Clover?” I asked.

“Dove killed her out of jealousy. But she and Hoax were in it together—the whole thing was his scheme from the start. Hoax wanted to conquer Charmden, and Dove played right into his hands. It was all a hoax,” he said flatly.

“Why didn’t Charmden just get rid of him?” I asked.

“Because you can only unmake what you’ve made. I was born from Charmden’s roots, so the land could strip me of everything. But Hoax... he was never theirs to begin with. He came from somewhere else. The forest couldn’t touch him, no matter how much it wanted to. And after I was gone, he wielded that dragon fire staff. It bound the people of Charmden to his will, made them prisoners in their own home. No one—not the land, not the people—could lay a hand on him after that. It was their karma,” he replied.

I flew after War, shifting into my fairy form. When I landed on his shoulder, my wings buzzing in his ear, he shook his head. “Knock that shit off,” he grumbled, sounding annoyed.

I kissed his cheek, feeling his body relax beneath me. I crossed my legs, hitching a ride on his shoulder. “Can I ask you something?”

War sighed, sounding agitated. “Can you get off my shoulder? I’m getting flashbacks,” he said, but there was a hint of playfulness in his tone.

“Flashbacks of that bitch, Clover, huh?”

“Why you stay hating on a headless corpse?”

“Because I feel like I’m getting the leftovers. My question is, why did they punish you? I’m still confused about what you did wrong.”

“I created Hex13 through sacrifices. Humans had to offer their souls to me to become warlocks. I got hooked on dark magic,” he admitted.

I floated off his shoulder, hovering in front of him until he stopped. “You were punished for dabbling in wicked shit, War. What the hell did you think was going to happen? That type of magic is supposed to be forbidden in Charmden.”

“It was the only way I could keep my magic—be reborn without needing their damn forest. The wind started blowing different, the forest lost its green, the birds didn’t sing like they used to... I felt Charmden turning on me the second Hoax stepped into our world. I had to be ready, and I was right. The dark magic I used didn’t come from Charmden, and that’s why the land couldn’t touch it. It operated outside the laws of the forest—outside anything Charmden could control. I was made to kill, not to have a family, a wife... nothing. My purpose was to protect. All those lives I took, the

realms I ruined... it fucked me up. They created a monster, and when I started scaring muthafuckas, they decided they wanted a skinny, long-faced, mushroom-smelling elf to be the peacemaker,” he ranted, his filled with anger and pain.

War walked into the pool beneath the sky-high waterfall, all of his sexy nakedness on display, muscles flexing under the spray. I flew high above the ground, wings catching the mist, and dove in with my knees to my chest like a cannonball. My miniature frame barely made a sound when I pummeled into the water. As I swam back to the surface, War’s massive handscooped me out, setting me on a slick, mossy rock under the falling water.

“You look like a child. Go ahead and turn back,” he said.

“No, I don’t! Demon boy,” I shot back, grinning, water dripping from my hair.

“That’s why I kept that cuff on you, so you wouldn’t try this,” he replied.

I stood on the rock, hands on my hips, breasts bouncing, wings twitching with irritation. “Wait a minute. You literally call me your lil’ pussy fairy but you hate when I turn into one?” I leaned in, teasing, trying to read him. “Is that Cashaun speaking to me? I feel like he would be the only one who doesn’t like my fairy form since he grew up as a Hex13,” I pried, searching his face for a crack.

“Stop trying to figure it out. I don’t like it because I have too much dick for that form,” he said, smirking, but there was a flicker of something softer in his eyes.

I sat back, stretching my legs, water beading on my skin. “Is sex all you think about?”

“What do you want us to do? Get to know one another? The moment I saw you, I knew your whole lifeline. Do you expect me to take you out on a date? That’s a waste too because you have all of this nature. Nothing is better than being in this type of

realm,” he said, spreading his arms wide.

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“That’s what I like about humans. They experience love in such a unique way. They hold hands while walking through the park, visit museums together, get dressed up and dance the night away, go to jazz concerts, have these things called cookouts, baby showers, anniversaries. They celebrate the love they have for one another. All we have is trauma, magic, and a forest.”

“Shidddd, women get their brains blown out by their spouse almost every day in the city. But look at it this way—those same humans wish they could have your gifts, but they deal with trauma too. You can live for thousands of years in a safe environment. Stop fantasizing about a world you don’t know anything about. This life will always be the one I choose. And trust me, it could be a lot worse for you if I didn’t own you,” he said. There was a warning in his voice—a twisted kind of reassurance that I was safe with him, even though he was just as likely to hurt me.

I shook my head. “You’re so wicked and dark-hearted. Even when I’m vulnerable with you, you have to remind me that I’m your possession. I’m not even this open around my sisters.”

He didn’t flinch. “People use your vulnerabilities against you—and I have, more times than I can count. I don’t need to read your thoughts to know how much you crave the protection that comes with love.”

His voice was cold, detached—as if my suffering was nothing more than an interesting experiment to him. That was the real torment: not the curse itself, but the way he could watch me unravel and feel nothing.

“In my dream, Azarion told Clover he loved her. Stop acting like it’s wrong to want a

connection with someone that isn't just about sex!" I spat.

"Intimacy comes in all forms," he said, as if lecturing a child. "Our conversations are intimacy. When we kill together, that's another kind. When we argue, fuck, or when you make me want to break your wings because you're too damn nosy—that's intimacy too. Us being here, in this forest, in this crystal-clear pool, naked, is intimacy. Me teaching you how to unlock your gifts, sharing pieces of my past—things I never talk about—that's intimacy. Now drop it. I'm done talking about this nonsense."

He could walk away from my pain, untouched. That was the point, wasn't it? The curse wasn't just about binding me to him. It was about making sure I felt everything, while he felt nothing at all.

I changed the subject. "I want to come with you when you kill Hoax," I blurted.

He ignored me, ducking under the water, muscles rippling as he swam away. I laid on my stomach, propping my face on my hand, kicking my feet, tapping my nails against the rock. "I know you aren't going to ignore me!" I shouted as he resurfaced, droplets running down his face.

"I want to kill him for what he did to my mother."

"Not this time, Eboenia," he said.

"You can't always control me."

"Yes, I can and I will," he shot back, brushing me off like I didn't have a valid reason.

I transformed back to my normal form, body stretching, skin prickling as I shed the

fairy shape. War swam to the rock, water cascading off his body, and stood between my legs, heat radiating from him. I had to look away, heart pounding, but he grabbed my chin, rough and demanding, forcing me to meet his gaze.

“I said ‘no’,” he repeated.

“I heard you,” I whispered.

He picked up my leg, draping it over his shoulder. My nails dug into the rock as he kissed my inner-calf, his mouth hot, tongue tracing fire up my thigh. The waterfall’s roar faded, as I lost myself in our space. I watched, breathless, as he pressed two fingers against my puckering bud, rubbing slow, deliberate circles that made my skin tingle and veins stand out, pulsing with heat.

He buried his mouth in my bare pussy, tongue working magic, the cold bite of the sword on his tooth scraping the side of my clit. The pain was mixed with pleasure until I couldn’t tell them apart. A little trickle of blood welled up, and War licked it away, eyes locked on mine, the taste sealing a hex between us—binding, dangerous, and dark as the magic that kept him alive.

“Even the blood inside your clit taste like honey,” he said.

War pulled away from my throbbing, wet center, a smug smirk curling his lips. “She just let a tear out,” he teased, nodding at my glistening mound. Embarrassed, I squeezed my thighs together.

“How long are we supposed to be here? I need to go to bed,” I mumbled, fatigue washing over me.

Ignoring my protest, War tugged gently at my legs, slipping me back into the water. He wrapped my legs around his waist, his strong hands gripping my ass as he held me

up. My head found rest against his chest, and he began stroking my scalp, the gentleness caused an moan to escape my lips.

“Let’s just do whatever you want so I can see my sisters,” I sighed, closing my eyes. His embrace, the warmth of his body, and the soothing massage of his fingers nearly had me drifting off.

War carried me out of the pool, his mechanical gears whirring beneath my body. The sensation almost made me gasp, but he held me securely. “I can’t take all of you again. I’m still exhausted from last time,” I admitted, hoping he wouldn’t conjure up three of himself again.

He chuckled. “You say that now, but that’s not what I want,” he replied.

Suddenly, the lianas hanging from the trees began to move, coming alive with a will of their own. They wrapped gently around my arms and legs, pulling me away from War. “Nooo, War! I don’t like these things!” I protested, squirming.

“Just go with the flow,” he said, his voice calm.

The lianas continued their work, but instead of restraining me, they wove together beneath me, spreading out into a massive hammock—the size of a bed that could easily fit four people. The hammock was padded with thick layers of soft, mossy forest growth and fragrant petals, creating a natural cushion that cradled my body.

The vines gently lowered me onto the plush hammock, the earthy scent of moss and wildflowers enveloping me. War climbed in after me, the lianas shifting and stretching to support his weight as well, making space for us both. The hammock swayed gently, the forest itself seeming to rock us in its arms, as War settled beside me, in a spooning position. I automatically tensed up when he wrapped his arm tightly around me—this was different for us... extremely romantic.

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“Relax,” he whispered in my ear. He moved my locs away from my neck and then suckled on my sensitive spot. I felt his dick beat against my ass cheeks, his veins thick and throbbing, ready to release. His hips pressed closer, the heat of him making my breath catch, my body aching for more.

His hands hungrily found my breasts, burying his fingers into them while he tenderly played with my hardened nipples. I melted into his chest, surrendering to his touch. He kissed from my neck to my shoulder, and I curved my spine, letting my pussy lips catch the tip of his head.

“Straddle my face,” his voice blasted inside my head.

I happily obliged. Pulling away from him, I used my wings to glide up to the headrest of the hammock and settled on War’s chest. He scooped me up from underneath my legs, bringing me closer, my wet lips hovering right over his mouth. He wasted no time—his tongue flicked out, slurping up the slickness of my flower. My wings fluttered, shivering with every stroke, giving me the momentum to ride his face while I gripped the lianas above.

“Ouuuuuuuu...you know how to make it feel sooo good,” I moaned out.

The pressure he put on my bud made my legs shake uncontrollably, thighs quivering as heat shot through my body. I rocked back and forth, grinding down on his mouth, desperate for more. He smacked my ass cheeks, the sting making me gasp, then gripped them firmly, kneading my flesh as his tongue dove deeper, tongue-kissing my center. My hips rolled in slow, needy circles, then forward, chasing every spark he set off inside me. War’s tongue darted against my clit, plucking at it before he suckled

again, sending jolts of pleasure through my entire body. My head fell back, mouth open, as my whole body started to tremble.

“Go ahead and cum...I know you want to because your pussy is gripping my tongue. Ummmm, let me hear you moan for me. Stop holding it in before you suffer,” War said between slurps.

My wings carried me higher, fluttering in sync with the movement of my hips. War grabbed my ankles, sucking the very soul from my body. I covered my mouth to stifle my cries, even though it was just us in the forest. He sat up, ripped me out of the air, and folded me in his lap, my legs pinned back, still suckling on me. My clit opened like a flower, and honey exploded from it along with my essence.

“WARRRRRRRRRRRR!” I screamed out, tears filling my eyes.

He slipped his middle finger inside me, pressing it against my gushy spot, and my center sprayed like a whale breaching the surface. I clung to the lianas, raking my nails through the waves of his hair as I climaxed. The intensity shook me to my core, causing me to sob from the overwhelming pleasure.

“You taste so good, baby,” he murmured, catching my essence with the tip of his tongue as it dripped from the corners of his mouth. I laid back, my legs still quivering, my mound pushing out suds from creaming, my breasts swollen and nipples leaking my fairy essence.

War climbed on top of me, licking my lips, smearing my sweetness across mine. “This is the best pussy I’ve ever had in allmy lives, and it’s mine for life,” he declared, staring deep into my eyes.

“Lay into me,” I urged him.

War tongue-kissed me, a kiss meant for lovers, igniting a fire between us. A moan escaped his lips as I kissed him back with equal intensity, leaving deep claw marks on his shoulder while I clung to him. War gripped my locs, placing soft kisses on my chin, but when I reached for his dick, he pulled away.

“What the fuck did I tell you? This isn’t for your pleasure,” he growled.

“Yes, it is, because you belong to me too.”

He tightened his grip on my hair, asserting his dominance. “Do I need to put that collar back on?” he asked, tracing his tongue across my lips.

“You’ll still be mine,” I replied, my heart racing.

I scooted against his erect shaft, teasingly letting my entrance wet the tip while rotating my hips. The sounds of my wetness were loud, slick and inviting, echoing in the air as I kissed his chest and then sucked on his Adam’s apple, feeling him relax, falling deeper into me. War gripped my buttocks, pressing his dick deeper inside me. “Fuckkkkkk!” War grimaced, the pleasure evident on his face as I creamed on him, the sound of my slickness filling the space between us.

“Make love to me,” I begged, thrusting my pelvis forward, desperate for him.

He grabbed my throat and squeezed, dominating me even as he made love to me.

“I want to stop time,” he growled, his voice thick with emotion, “and kill every last nigga in your past that your flower blossomed for. I’m the only one who should water your garden.”

“I’ll help you kill them,” I heard myself say as if I was caught under a spell again.

“Ummmm hmmm...your soul is surrendering to me again,” War moaned.

“I’m at your mercy, baby,” I moaned out, completely lost in the ecstasy of our connection.

His muscles in his arms and chest flexed, the energy from his gears lifting us out of the hammock—we were floating like we were in outer space. I could hear the soft, rhythmic patter of droplets from my leaking pussy falling onto the hammock like rain. War shifted his body, turning us over until I ended up on top of him.

“Make me fall into you, Eboenia. I’ll let you punish me, but it better be worth it,” he threatened.

My wings flapped, the sound like a gentle breeze, carrying us higher into the air. I sprinkled a heap of fairy dust over War, watching him get high off my essence. His magical energy disappeared, not because of me, but because he was allowing me to dominate him. I hooked my talons into his chest, drawing blood, and rode him in the sky. War’s eyes looked hazy, and he bit his bottom lip, his gaze rolling backward as I leaned in, bucking my hips with a slow, deliberate rhythm. I ground counterclockwise, the sound of our bodies making music for lovers echoing in the air. I slapped War, leaving deep scratches on his face.

“What...”

I cut him off with another sharp slap, and I felt him harden inside me, his dick poking at my rib cage. “I’m going to leave a mark on your heart, the same way you left yours on me,” I said, riding him faster, my hips circling with a sultry intensity. War gripped my hips tightly, and I slapped him again.

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“Don’t touch me! This is for my pleasure!” I gritted through clenched teeth. War licked the blood off his lips, smirking. “I ain’t mad, Lor Pussy Fairy. I like pain,” he said, his voice thick with lust.

I gripped his face, burying my nails into his skin, feeling him tremble beneath me. War let out a deep moan, surrendering completely as he lay underneath me, between my legs. My wings carried me to the tip of his shaft, and my ass cheeks bounced as I danced on his tip. I dipped lower, taking half of his girth, letting my pussy’s honey drip down the thick veins of his wood like a honeycomb.

“You lil’ bitch,” War breathed out. I did it again, this time sliding down far enough to make him disappear into me.

“Ummmmmm... you better empty my nuts too. I ain’t gonna be getting slapped for nothing. But damn, you look like a goddess taking all that dick. Your pussy was made for me... and only me!” he groaned, his voice strained with pleasure. War’s dick bulged through my stomach, and I would have never guessed he was the type of man to let someone else overpower him in the bedroom.

A pairing knife engraved with a dragonfly appeared in my hand, glinting in the light. His eyes lit up, a sick fascination sparking within him as I welcomed the dark side. I ran the dagger down his chest, the sound of metal against skin eliciting a desperate “Ahhhhhh...fuckkkkkk!” from his lips, his face filled with pleasure. I ran the bloody dagger across my tongue, tasting his blood—rich, earthy, with a sweetness that ignited something primal within me. I was no longer my old self; the fairy I became in War’s possession was turning into his other half.

“Why do you feel this good?” I asked.

I kissed him, tonguing him down like I was starving for his acceptance. My pussy was so wet for him, my body burned with desire, and my heart ached whenever he was close. War was the final chapter in a story that would never end. My walls tightened around him, squeezing him with enough pressure that made him moan out “Eboenia.”

“You’re ready to make me bust...keep it steady just like that!” War groaned, his voice a deep rumble that sent shivers down my spine.

“Come in your pussy, baby. Fill me up with your love potion. Swell inside of me until my body aches,” I chanted, my hips moving in a hypnotic rhythm.

War let out a deep groan, “Ahhhhhhhh!” He released like I quenched his thirst. I squirted again, suckling on his lip as we came together. He gripped my hips, pumping upwards against my spot, forcing me to come harder. I sank my teeth into his shoulder to stifle my cries. Our bodies went limp, and we fell into the hammock, drenched in sweat and my wetness.

“Goddamn,” War whispered, pulling me onto his chest. He held me close, still trying to catch his breath. We didn’t say anything to each other; our loud breathing spoke enough for us.

“You trusted me, even without that collar. You let your soul melt into mine. Not just me falling into you.” War ran his fingers through my locs, pressing his lips against my forehead. “That was my old self. I almost forgot who I was before the ritual, but you make me remember it. It has only been a few months since I became the new leader, but the memory I have of my old life feels so long ago,” he replied.

“I wish I could fully get to meet him.”

“We would have never made it this far if you hadn’t met him. He’s been keeping you alive, protecting you from both clans,” he replied.

I hugged War, and he wrapped his arm around my waist. The way I was starting to see it, all we had were each other. “Keep me with you,” I said aloud, but I heard light snoring. When I sat up, War was sleeping peacefully. It was my first time seeing him rest; I’m usually the one who falls into a deep sleep after our lovemaking. He didn’t look vicious, or like a man who was harboring a corrupted soul of an ancient wizard. Watching him gave me butterflies, and my heart skipped a beat.

Is this what real love feels like?

We walked out of the portal hours later, drained and exhausted, though I felt oddly refreshed from the waterfall shower. The necklace appeared around my neck and I smacked my teeth. “Why do I need this again?” I asked War.

Black clothing materialized over his body, clinging to him like a second skin, and his medallion hung heavily around his neck.

“Because this realm is where my clan lives, and it’s a sign of disrespect to have an enemy here who could use magic against them. You aren’t a threat if you’re powerless,” he said.

War twirled his finger above my head, and my body spun magically as a heavy, long, and thick dress swallowed me whole.

“Can I at least look good? I feel like a prisoner again!”

“Sometimes my folks roam my tower—men, that is. What do you think you’re gonna be dressed like, Eboenia? You look your best when a muthafucka can’t see your titties or ass,” he shot back with attitude.

“You are soooo lucky I didn’t dress myself.”

“Don’t get choked out,” he replied.

“I’ll let you choke me out any day,” I said, winking at him.

I wandered over to a wall that looked like a giant TV screen, but instead of channels, swirling arcane symbols hovered across its surface. Some glowed softly, suspended in place, waiting. “What is this thing?” I asked, pointing at the strange, floating symbols.

War came up beside me, his eyes scanning the wall. “Each symbol stands for a different realm. See that one?” He pointed to a twisted star, glowing forest green. “That’s Charmden. Most of the time, the symbols just sit there, not moving. But if a portal opens and something comes out, the symbol shifts across the wall to show where it happened. It’ll flash red, like an alarm.”

“So, it only moves if there’s activity?” I asked, watching the symbols, all of them eerily quiet.

“Exactly. If a creature steps through a portal, the symbol slides over to the spot on the map where it appeared. The lines behind them are the city below us. If nothing’s coming out of the realms, everything stays still, just like this.”

“So it’s basically a magical security system. No movement means no trouble.”

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“Exactly. But the second something stirs, I’ll know exactly where to find them. When other portals open and magical creatures come out, it fucks with the energy here. A lot of that energy isn’t good. Our worlds would collide, and the balance gets thrown off. That’s why we track them down and keep our realm thriving. Fuck everyone else,” he responded.

“And that’s how you’re able to track down the elves and fairies to kill them when they come to the city?”

“Yes, but only unless you’re a female. Hex13 doesn’t harm women unless they fight with the enemy or join an army. Once you cross that line, you’re as good as dead,” he replied.

“Am I part of your army?”

War looked down at me with his glowing eyes, the gears spinning wildly on his neck. “I’ll allow you to hunt with me, but during a full-on battle, I won’t let you join,” he replied.

“So, you mean to me all of this time, we thought we wouldn’t be tracked down by Hex13 unless our eyes were covered? I thought nobody could tell what we were unless you saw it in our eyes.”

“That’s true for new warlocks. Highly skilled members of Hex13 can track you down from miles away. But your wand is special. If you were using it to leave Charmden, it wouldn’t show up here. Your wand was made by a wizard—this system doesn’t recognize its own magic as a threat,” he said.

A portal opened behind us, and through it I spotted stairs leading down. “Go ahead,” he said.

I stepped through the portal and started down the stairs, the loose dress dragging at my legs, threatening to trip me with every step. “What kind of shoes are these?” I grumbled.

“Slippers,” War answered from behind, his voice echoing off the stone walls.

“This is shameful. I thought we were past the humiliation rituals.”

“All you do is complain and fuck up decent moments. I can always throw you in the dungeon with your lil’ elf boy,” he shot back.

“Go ahead, so he can help me take this hideous dress off,” I retorted, rolling my eyes.

Just then, I lost my footing, teetering on the edge of a fall. War’s chain snapped out, wrapping around my waist, holding me in place. He dragged me down the stairs, the chain was squeezing me tight.

“Don’t take my kindness for weakness. I’m still on that bullshit,” War threatened, his chain releasing me with a snap.

We entered a grand hallway lined with paintings of a forest so lifelike the trees seemed to sway in a phantom breeze. Grim and Crash Out lounged at a small table by the window, tearing into whole roasted chickens. The rich, spicy aroma made my stomach twist with hunger.

“Joker and Harley Quinn,” Grim called out, his mouth stuffed.

“You stay on joke time,” War replied.

“Yo, Eboenia, appreciate you for saving me back in the forest. That big ass troll was about to take a young nigga out—dude was ready to stomp me into the ground. But is your homegirl single? The one with the coily brown hair?” Crash Out asked, grinning.

“What is up with y’all wanting fairy pussy?” Grim said, shaking his head.

“It don’t seem like it’s a bad thing. They’re beautiful, and they smell like fruit and flowers. What you trippin’ for anyway? You were just talking about the bald head joint a minute ago,” Crash Out teased.

“Stay in a kid’s place!” Grim barked, giving him a hard look.

I couldn’t fight my hunger any longer. I snatched up a smaller cooked bird from a platter, the Cajun spices hitting my nostrils and making my mouth water. “What is this?” I asked, already taking a bite.

“That’s a Cornish hen,” War replied, tossing a napkin my way.

Grease dripped down my chin as I savored the flavors. “Here you go, have some of these collard greens,” Crash Out said, passing me his bowl.

I dropped the hen into the bowl, then scooped it up, greens dripping. “Damn, you don’t feed it?” Grim asked War.

“Fuck off!” I shot back, and Grim waved me off, grinning.

“You’re gonna let her talk to your brother like that?” Grim asked War.

“Stop bitching,” War replied, barely glancing his way.

“Where are Jinx and Blair?” I asked, chewing.

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“Down the hallway. It’s the tree-looking doors with the leaf handle,” Grim replied.

“Go ahead,” War gestured, nodding down the hall.

I walked away, still eating like I hadn’t seen food in years. “Tell your girl I want to teach her how to read my spell book!” Crash Out called after me.

“She’s too old for you, fool,” Grim snorted.

I reached the double doors, balancing the bowl of chicken and greens. I pulled open the latch and stepped into a room that looked like a treehouse brought to life—sunlight spilled through leafy windows, books lined the walls, and a ladder led up to a cozy loft bedroom. Jinx and Blair sat on the floor by a small pool, feasting on seafood, veggies, and red meat.

“Eboenia!” Jinx called, her face lighting up. She rushed over, hugging me tight. Blair joined in, wrapping her arms around me too.

“I see you two are relaxed,” I said, soaking up their warmth.

“Yeah, I had to slap the asshole a few times. He told me I look like Lil’ Bill. Who in the hell is that?” Jinx asked, making me snort.

“I don’t know, but Grim is an ass wipe. He’s all mouth, so ignore him,” I said, shaking my head.

“This is your new home, huh?” Blair asked, pulling away.

“I’m wherever War is, Blair,” I answered.

She threw her arms up in frustration and flopped back down on the rug. Jinx rubbed the back of her neck, nerves flickering in her eyes. “I don’t know about this, Eboenia. They got these things around our necks like we’re pets. They aren’t any better than Hoax. We need to figure out a way to break your curse. War has you brainwashed,” Jinx said.

“She doesn’t care, obviously. This is how she wants to live,” Blair muttered, ripping the head off a shrimp. I joined her on the rug, set my bowl down, and peeled off the heavy dress, letting it fall in a heap beside me.

“I don’t know what y’all want me to do. My life has changed,” I told them.

Jinx sat next to me, crossing her legs. “Because that wicked wizard changed it for his own personal reasons. Don’t you want to be more than a pawn?” she pressed.

“I am more than a pawn, Jinx. War and I connect on a level only we understand. It was rocky at first, but he saved me from becoming Sin’s wife and Hoax’s daughter-in-law,” I replied.

Blair reached over, squeezing my leg. “We’re just worried this is another Hoax, but with dark magic. He’s taking advantage of you, and now we’re caught up in it too,” Blair said.

“They saved you from death. You too, Jinx. They’ll let y’all leave if you want. They don’t have a reason to keep you,” I replied.

“It’s so fucking hard to be in a realm that belongs to them when they’ve been killing our family. We don’t have anyone but ourselves because they want us extinct,” Blair said, her voice trembling.

“I feel safe here,” I whispered.

Blair let out a deep sigh. “Whatever you want to do is on you. It’s obvious he’s gotten to you in a way we’ll never understand, nor want to. War is dangerous... Hex13 are dangerous, period,” Blair replied.

“This is my destiny. I’ll always love both of you, even if you hate what I become. I’m not living in a cocoon anymore,” I said.

Blair and Jinx stared at me like I’d lost my mind. Jinx picked up her glass of water, taking a slow sip. Blair went back to eating, her bites small and hesitant, like she needed time to process everything.

“I mean, Grim is handsome if you want me to join the dark side with you,” Jinx said, trying to lighten the mood.

“You two are hot in y’all’s asses,” Blair replied, finally cracking a smile.

“I saw his print when he came in with our food,” Jinx laughed.

“I knew you were going to fall for his rude mouth,” Blair shot back.

“I wouldn’t mind getting drunk and fucking him, just so I have a reason to forget about it in the morning,” Jinx admitted, grinning.

“Can we at least pray to our ancestors and ask them to watch over Lune?” Blair asked, her voice softening.

“You two can do as you please with that one. I wish her well, but I’m not praying for her,” I said, voice flat.

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“I hate to be that person, but Sin does love you too. His love might’ve shown up late, but he’s the reason why Hex13 was able to come to Charmden. War backstabbed him, and he’s going to backstab you too. You can’t make a deal with the devil,” Blair stated.

“Sin doesn’t love me. He loved how I made him feel during intimacy. I was his relief whenever his father destroyed his manhood. If he truly cared for me, he would’ve never forced me to be his wife, knowing his father killed my mother. If it wasn’t for War backstabbing him, Sin would’ve never shown his true colors. He was fucking Lune, someone who was like a sister to me. Sin reached out to War because he was too scared to kill a man who treats him like shit.”

A knock rattled the door. “Training is in an hour!” War called out.

“Training? We’re not fighting for Hex13,” Blair whispered.

“It’s mandatory or you’ll go into the dungeon with the rest of your pointed ear punks!” War barked.

“Can we just go home?” Blair asked, her voice breaking.

“You’re stuck here until Hoax is dead. I don’t trust y’all’s big-ass mouths!” War snapped. Another knock. “One hour and bring y’all’s asses out! Y’all’s wardrobe is by the door!” I heard him stomp away.

“Geesh, he acts like he’s someone’s father,” Jinx complained, and I blushed.

“Big dick energy. He’s like that in bed too,” I said, feeding her a piece of broccoli.

“My body creams with fairy honey when we’re intimate,” I added, and they gasped.

“Reallyyyyy?” Jinx asked, fanning herself.

“That’s really a thing?” Blair asked.

“Yup, and my clit blossoms,” I said, cheeks burning.

“No wonder she’s stuck. She’s—what do the humans call it? ‘Dickmatized’,” Blair said.

I sprawled across the rug, making my ass cheeks clap, and Jinx smacked it. “I can’t believe you two are acting like this and we’ve been kidnapped,” Blair said.

Jinx waved her off. “Eboenia said we can trust them and I trust her. I just don’t like this thing around my neck,” Jinx said, tugging at the collar.

“We’re not from this realm, so it’s to protect them from being attacked in their own space. It’s their law,” I explained, and Blair rolled her eyes.

“Sooooo, are y’all like in love? He’s very possessive over you,” Jinx said.

“He don’t believe in love, but I feel this spark between us. A shift—his feelings have grown for me outside of our intimacy. He talks to me, tells me about his life. I don’t expect him to ever say he loves me. His protection is his form of love,” I replied.

“Ugh, she even speaks differently. I’m not ready for you to grow up,” Blair joked, and I flicked her off.

“I’ll be happy when you grow down. Loosen up sometimes, geesh,” I teased back.

“Here, try some of this wine,” Jinx said, pouring a pitcher into a glass. She handed it to Blair, but she pushed it away.

“I don’t want any of their wine. I barely want the food, but I need the strength in case I have to fight,” Blair muttered.

“More for us,” Jinx shrugged.

“Eboenia, promise me something,” Blair said, suddenly serious.

“Okay,” I replied, sitting up.

“Promise me that you’ll at least fight against his curse,” she replied.

“I was trying to at first, but now I don’t want to. If you love me, you’ll accept it,” I replied.

Blair didn’t respond, she ate in silence while Jinx and I joked around and sipped wine. Being the oldest and the mother figure made her out to be well observant, like she had to protect us. I didn’t fault her however, she would just have to understand I was breaking out of a cocoon.

An hour later, we were dressed in leather catsuits with hooded capes attached and thick combat boots. The suits were enchanted—soon as I slid mine on, it clung to my body like it was sewn just for me. The stitching ran in the shape of flowers, but the petals gleamed faintly, like they were alive.

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“Ouuu, we’re like Charlie’s Angels,” Jinx said, flipping her cape dramatically. Blair rolled her eyes, her lips twisted.

“My ancestors hate me right now,” she muttered under her breath.

Grim, Crash Out, and a few other masked men rounded the corner to escort us. Crash Out grinned wide, eyes sliding up and down our suits. “I love black on black. Hello, beautiful queens,” he said, licking his lips. Grim mean mugged him. “Stop acting like a chump!” Grim barked, elbowing him hard in the ribs.

“It ain’t my fault my mother taught me how to greet women!” Crash Out replied, bucking back.

“Your mama is dead,” Grim replied.

“I see her in my dreams,” Crash Out said, unfazed.

“Where is War?” I asked Grim, ignoring their argument.

“At the stadium,” he answered.

“And he sent y’all to come and get us?”

“Yeah, he trust us,” Crash Out said.

Blair folded her arms, glaring. “I don’t trust them.”

Crash Out grinned, undeterred. “I ain’t gonna do anything to you. I just wanna get to know you. You into young niggas?” He rubbed his hands together, eyes glowing as he looked Blair up and down.

“No, I’m not. I don’t date outside my kind,” Blair replied.

Grim chuckled, clapping Crash Out on the shoulder. “Don’t worry, her kind will be extinct after we’re finished with them. Them fairies and elves ain’t got our game, you feel me?”

Crash Out’s face fell a little, like he wasn’t used to getting curved.

A portal ripped open behind them, swirling with black and gold energy, the edges sparking like live wires. The warriors behind Crash Out and Grim stepped aside, making a path for us. I walked toward it first, glancing back so Blair and Jinx would follow.

Grim leaned in close to Jinx. “I’m gonna capture you, and when I do, you better not run from it either.”

“Please don’t make me gag,” she said.

“I got something you can gag on,” Grim said, grinning wickedly.

“You’re lucky I have this thing around my neck. I fight real dirty,” Jinx replied, tugging at her collar.

“I can’t wait. I hope you cut me deeply,” Grim flirted.

I stepped through the portal. The world spun, and suddenly I was standing in a stadium straight out of a nightmare. The place was massive—stands rising up in

jagged tiers, packed with masked warlocks. The air was thick with sorcery, heavy enough to taste. All around, enormous gears spun and clanked, some as big as houses, grinding against each other and spitting out sparks that rained down over the arena. The ground beneath my boots was black stone, etched with the Hex13 symbol, glowing blood red like it was fresh cut and bleeding.

War stood dead center, hands lit up, orbs swirling in his palms like miniature storms. He wore a black hoodie, the hood shaped sharp like a wizard's hat, shadowing his eyes. A heavy medallion caught the light at his throat, glinting every time he moved. His cape billowed behind him like a strip of midnight silk, catching the wind with every move he made. He looked dangerous as hell—dark, magnetic, and alluring. He gave true meaning to his name: War—wicked and reckless.

Blair leaned in, her voice barely a whisper. “My stomach is bubbling... what are they ready to do?”

“It looks like they are ready to fight,” Jinx replied.

We took a seat in the front row. Grim, Crash Out, and the other masked warlocks sat off to the side. When they pulled off their cloaks, they stood tall and shirtless, showing off physiques that looked sculpted from stone and glided with honey. Their skin was marked with glowing sigils and tattoos. Grim's back was a masterpiece—a colorful dragon, scales gleaming, its jaws open wide as it blew fire that looked so real, the flames seemed to flicker and curl right off his skin.

“War's brother hid all of that underneath that cloak? My ancestors, please forgive me as I might betray all of you,” Jinx whispered, eyes glued to Grim.

“It's not all of that,” Blair said.

Jinx shot her a look. “Are you a lesbian? Not that I'm judging, but geesh, you can still

admit these men are beautiful, masculine, and overpowering.”

“Of course not. I like men, just not ones who killed my people,” Blair shot back.

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Crash Out was more slender, still growing into his body, but his markings were just as wild—swords etched across his back, crisscrossing like the bars of a jail cell. The other warlocks followed suit, five of them now standing on the battleground, including War.

Suddenly, a gigantic hole split open in the center of the stadium, swallowing the light. Shadows swirled inside, thick and oily, and then a giant hand—skin the color of midnight, fingerstipped with claws like knives—reached up and gripped the edge. The ground trembled as a massive figure pulled itself out, standing at least ten feet tall. Its skin was a mottled gray-blue, rough as stone, with veins that glowed faintly purple beneath the surface. Its eyes were small, burning red, set deep under a heavy brow. Jagged tusks jutted from its lower jaw, and its teeth looked like broken gravestones.

It wore a tattered loincloth made of animal hide, stained with old blood and streaked with gold paint in strange, ritual patterns. Bands of hammered metal wrapped around its wrists and ankles, etched with runes that shimmered every time it moved. Across its chest, scars and tribal tattoos told stories I couldn't even figure out.

Blair grabbed my arm and squeezed so hard I almost lost feeling in my hand. Jinx clutched her chest, eyes wide, but I couldn't look away. I was too busy trying to figure out what kind of monster War had summoned.

A second creature crawled out, then a third, fourth, and fifth—each one bigger and meaner than the last. They all had those same broad chests, shoulders like boulders, thick calves that looked like tree trunks, and claws that could rip through steel. Their skin ranged from storm-cloud gray to deep forest green, some with patches of scales

or bone plating. One had a necklace strung with teeth and knucklebones, another had a helmet made from the skull of some beast with curling horns. Their canines were long and sharp, at least ten inches, gleaming wetly as they snarled at the crowd. One of them pounded a massive fist into its palm, the sound echoing like a war drum.

Jinx's voice was shaky. "What are those things? Are they... ogres?"

"Never seen anything like that before," I said.

"Yes, that's what they are. They told us stories about creatures like that at the bonfires when we were young," Blair whispered, still clutching my arm.

Right then, War's top garments vanished, his chain materializing in his hand. Butterflies swarmed my stomach as I watched his back muscles flex and rippled. Jinx let out a low whistle. "I understand, Eboenia. I totally get it."

The creatures lined up, looming over everyone, their eyes fixed on War. He spoke to them in a language that sounded like thunder and broken glass—harsh and melodic at the same time.

"What are they saying? Shit, tell me, Eboenia," Jinx hissed.

"I have no idea. War speaks different languages," I said.

"Demons do know all languages," Blair muttered, her eyes never leaving the monsters in the ring.

The ogres charged with a sound like thunder, shaking the stadium. War hovered above the black stone, chain spinning in a silver blur. I clutched my knees to my chest, eyes twitching as I watched, pretending not to notice the flecks of blood already staining the arena floor.

“This is insane. Hoax and his warriors train without weapons and magic,” Jinx said.

Surrounding us, the warlocks seated in the stadium had their spellbooks open on their laps. Quills scratched furiously as they jotted down notes, eyes darting between War and the monstrous ogres he’d summoned.

“This is like school to them. War and his top warriors are showing them how to fight. He’s a great teacher. He taught me a lot in a short span of time. Y’all should’ve seen me defeating a gang of nymphs. I murdered them all,” I bragged, and Blair shook her head.

“Ouuuuu, I wish I was there. I would’ve taken off their heads,” Jinx replied—and I believed her.

“War is exposing you to danger,” Blair said.

“Anyone who uses magic is exposed to danger. It’s always going to be that way for us, no matter what. We’re fairies and we’re females. We’re fetishized by everything with a dick. We were born into danger,” I replied.

“You do have a point there,” she said.

I focused back on the fight. War had deep slashes in his body, but he moved unfazed. His chain snapped out, wrapping around the first ogre’s wrist. With a savage tug, he yanked the beast off balance, then spun and whipped the chain across its throat. Blood sprayed, flying into our faces.

“The gore is magnificent!” Jinx clapped.

“Don’t tell me they got you too,” Blair said, and I laughed.

“I am a little aroused. I’ve been aroused since I arrived here. Wait, what if they cursed me through the food they gave us?” Jinx asked.

“Blair ate the same food, so that’s debunked,” I said.

Jinx nudged me, whispering, “Is it big?”

“I can’t tell you what War is working with. You’re crazy,” I giggled.

“I just want to know if the sin is worth it. I’m sexually frustrated—I want my head licked and wings pulled,” she said.

“He’s massive,” I said, and she gasped.

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“I hope it runs in the DNA,” she responded.

Blair made a noise of disgust. “I need a break from the two of you,” she stated.

Grim fired his shotgun, the blast echoing like a cannon, distracting a second ogre. Crash Out darted in, swords flashing, but it was War who descended, chain glowing with runes. He wrapped it around the ogre’s neck and, with a brutal twist, tore its head clean off.

The third ogre tried to retreat, its arm frozen and shattered by a warlock’s spell. War floated in front of it and lashed his chain, severing its head. The crowd erupted, and I felt Jinx fidgeting with excitement beside me.

I watched as War lifted another ogre, spinning it like a ragdoll before slamming it down hard enough to crack the stone. He stomped on its skull, crushing it flat, and the warlocks around us scribbled faster, their quills echoing over the roars of the ogres.

When the last ogre fell, War stood in the center of the arena, shirtless and soaked in blood. He held two severed heads high, letting the blood pour down his arms and chest, savoring the moment. The crowd of warlocks cheered, pumping their fists.

“Damn, that was fast,” Jinx said, clapping.

Meanwhile, I was mesmerized as I watched War carve a symbol on his chest. He was a sinister and barbaric wizard—and he was all mine. I wanted that kind of power. I wanted an audience to study my talents and use them in combat.

War swaggered over to me after dropping one of the ogre's heads. He placed the head in my lap, and Blair scooted over, shooting daggers at War. Jinx sniffed the ogre's head and poked it as the heavy thing almost crushed my legs.

"Y'all are up next," War said.

"What!" Blair shouted.

"I didn't stutter. I said y'all are up next! Either get in the game or get in the dungeon," War responded.

"War, she doesn't want to," I spoke up.

"She doesn't have a choice. When one fights, the rest follow. It's called partnership. If she's your sister like you claim, she'll fight with you. I'm curious to see how loyal these friends of yours are, especially this one," War said, looking Blair in her eyes.

"You're tweaking to kill me," War taunted her.

"War, don't start with her," I pleaded.

"This is my kingdom, Eboenia. I can do as I please. This one has a personal vendetta against me," War replied.

"You don't know shit about me!" Blair screamed at him.

War smirked, showing the swords on his teeth. A dagger appeared in his hand and he handed it to Blair. "Go ahead and get your lick back for me hanging your lover upside down in my dungeon," War told her.

"What lover? Blair doesn't have a lover," I spoke out.

“Damn, you don’t know about her and Crane?” War asked.

“You don’t know what you’re talking about!” Blair yelled at War.

The stadium grew quiet, and the warlocks stood with their hands glowing, ready to strike Blair dead if they had to. I stood, dropped the ogre’s head with a loud thump, pulled her back, and stepped in front of her.

“We don’t have a problem! Everybody be easy! She’s just mourning her man’s soon-to-death!” War told his men.

“Why are you standing in front of her? What, you think I can’t get through you?” War asked me, the veins popping in his neck from the adrenaline he still had from defeating the ogres.

“Please just leave her alone,” I whispered.

War stepped away, the dagger turning into ashes. “She ain’t sitting on her ass while we’re in training. If she could train for Charmden, she can battle with her sisters. She can’t get in that ring, she can get put in the ground. Something about fucking an elf rubs me the wrong way,” War said.

“I did not side with them and I was forced to train with them. You just want Eboenia to yourself!” Blair gritted.

“I ain’t gotta bullshit around to have what belongs to me,” War replied, then crossed his arms. “So, what are we doing, dummy? You getting your wings bloody or are you going to get put down?” War asked.

“Girl, please just come on. I’m not trying to die here. I’m too pretty for that,” Jinx told Blair.

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“I’m fighting with my sisters. I’m not a selfish monster like you,” Blair snapped.

War’s lips curled. “Yeah, we’ll see what your lil’ scared ass is about,” he replied.

He unclasped their collars, then unhooked the necklace from my throat. I rolled my eyes at him, but he just smirked. Grim strode over, escorting Jinx and Blair into the ring.

“You don’t need to hate my friends,” I told War.

“Blair’s energy is off, you’ll see for yourself. Be careful with that one,” he replied.

“She’s out of her element, but she loves me. Blair would never turn on me.”

“She’s fucking your enemy. A woman who gives herself to a man forms soul ties—her loyalty will always drift to him, no matter what she claims. Enough of this. Go prove yourself,” War said, waving me off.

“What’s the point of making Blair and Jinx fight? They’ve never trained for this.”

“It’s a loyalty test. If your friends don’t bleed for you like you do for them, tonight’s their last night alive,” War said, unflinching.

“You wouldn’t dare take my sisters from me.”

He shrugged. “What good are they if they don’t love you the way you love them?”

“Our business isn’t your business.”

War aggressively clutched my throat and yanked me toward him, staring down into my eyes. “I don’t give a fuck what they do to each other. I don’t need you carrying dead weight if they’re snakes. I brought them into my realm because you asked, so they better be worthy of being here!” War growled, then released me.

I stepped into the gore-soaked ring. My wings unfurled, horns jutting from my scalp. My wand shifted into a blade. Jinx gripped her spear, ready, while Blair’s hands trembled, sweat glistening on her brow.

“I’ve got your back, Blair,” I murmured, trying to steady her.

Her wings fluttered in agitation. “I’m not strong enough for this. That bastard knows it. He’s trying to break us so you’ll only lean on him.”

“You could’ve told me about Crane. I wouldn’t have judged you,” I replied.

She shook her head. “The Crane I sleep with isn’t the one you know.”

I met her eyes, searching her soul. Images crashed into my mind—Crane, fists flying, beating Blair in Charmden’s forest because he accused her of knowing I was a traitor. A tear slipped down her cheek; she must’ve felt me reading her. “I thought you were hurt from training, but you were never there. He gave you that concussion,” I whispered, anger burning.

“It’s War’s fault. Crane was never violent until War started this shit. He snapped under pressure. Before, he never laid a hand on me,” she replied.

“I used to pity him. He’s a beater, just like his father,” I spat.

The warlocks dragged away the ogre corpses, clearing the space. A horn blared. A portal split the air, and two warlocks hauled out Crane—shackled but healed, his eyes glowing a venomous green. He wore black, dressed for combat.

Crane sneered at Blair. “Still standing next to the wizard’s cum rag,” he jeered.

“Watch your fucking mouth,” Jinx snapped.

He spat at her feet. “Fuck you. You’re all traitors. Hoax will deal with you. I can’t wait for his army to rip you apart,” Crane snarled.

I glanced at War, who watched from the sidelines, unreadable.

The warlocks unshackled Crane. Magic crackled in his palms, ears pointed, cheekbones razor-sharp. “I know this will be my last moment, but I’m taking at least one of you with me for siding with the enemy!” he roared.

The bell rang. Swords materialized in Crane’s hands. He lunged at me, blades flashing. I blocked with my wings, then drove my boot into his knee.

“Bitch, you’re dying first!” Crane spat, rage twisting his face as he charged.

Crane’s swords blurred in the torchlight, every movement fueled by a hunger for revenge. I met his attack, my wand snapping into a broadsword. Steel shrieked against steel, but he was faster—his blade slashed across my bicep, hot blood splattering the sand. I grinned, letting the pain sharpen my focus.

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“Ouuuu, that felt good!” I hissed, dropping into another attack stance.

“Demons like pain,” Crane bellowed.

Jinx darted overhead, wings flickering. “Heads up, bastard!” she called, hurling a bolt of lightning from her palm. Crane spun, the magic grazing his cheek and searing flesh. He snarled, retaliating with a thrown dagger that caught Jinx in the calf. She crashed to the ground, blood pooling beneath her.

Blair hovered at the edge, hands trembling, torn between love and loyalty. She summoned a swirl of rose-thorns, but her heart wasn’t in it—the vines lashed Crane’s arm, drawing blood, but not enough to slow him. He ripped free, sneering, “I regret laying on top of you! You are a weak bitch!”

Blair’s eyes filled with tears. “Just surrender! Crane, please?—”

Pain flared in my jaw, but I sprang into the air, wings beating hard as I twisted above the arena. My limbs stretched and thickened, bones shifting beneath my skin. Silky fur rippled out, swallowing my fairy form as my wings vanished. I crashed down on all fours, landing with a heavy thud—massive paws digging furrows in the sand. My fur bristled, each strand stiffening and sharpening until it spiked up along my spine like rose thorns. In a blink, I was no longer a fairy but a monstrous wolf, venom dripping from my fangs.

Jinx, wounded but relentless, limped forward, summoning a gust of razor wind that shredded Crane’s cloak and left bloody welts across his chest. He retaliated with a blast of green fire, catching her in the side. Jinx screamed, skin blistering, but she

spat blood and didn't back down.

"I always hated you lil' dick fucks!" Jinx screamed at Crane, and he blew her a kiss.

Blair tried again, sending a flurry of enchanted petals at Crane, but at the last second, she pulled back, the petals barely nicking his cheek. I saw her hesitation, and so did Jinx. Without missing a beat, Jinx hurled a spear of ice, pinning Crane's hand to the ground. I lunged, wolf jaws clamping down on his shoulder, tearing flesh and muscle. Blood flowed heavily to the ground.

Crane roared, yanking free, his magic swirling around him. He blasted me with a bolt of pain—I shifted back to my true form, wand now a whip of shadow that lashed his face, peeling skin from bone. He staggered, one eye ruined, blood streaming down his neck.

Jinx, barely standing, screamed, "Blair, now!" But Blair's hands shook too hard—her love for Crane a chain she couldn't break.

Crane, half-blind and bleeding, spat, "You'll never kill me, Blair. You're too weak."

I pressed the blade of my wand—now a dagger—into his ribs, twisting. "She doesn't have to. I will, bitch!"

Crane collapsed, blood bubbling from his lips, but even then, his eyes sought Blair's. I stood over him, ready to take his head off, but Blair grabbed my arm. "Stop it! They are watching you. They'll kill you!" I whispered.

"Would you let me kill War? Why is War more important than Crane? They both do evil and wicked things, but you still want him," she said.

"Die with me," Crane told Blair, while blood pooled around him. He was on the brink

of death and still adamant to take one of us with him. Blair thought it was a confession of love, but I saw through it.

I pulled away from Blair to finish off Crane, who smiled at me with bloodstained teeth. "I gotta admit...this darkness suits you," he said.

"Let me embrace it!" I replied.

A hatchet spawned in my hand. I brought it down on Crane's forehead, the crack of his skull echoing throughout the stadium. His body twitched as he gasped, taking his last breath with a smile on his face. The warlocks cheered as I stepped away from Crane's body, wearing his blood like body butter.

"Eboenia! Eboenia!" they chanted.

War signaled that class was dismissed. The warlocks poured out of the stadium, vanishing through a door-shaped portal. Only seven of us remained. War came over and wrapped his arm around me.

"My Lor Pussy Fairy," he smirked, proud of my kill.

"I did it for Blair," I told him.

"I know. Your loyalty is your biggest asset. I might not always agree with your methods, but you're no traitor. Even through my darkness, you still manage to blossom," War said, caressing my cheek.

Grim, War, and Crash Out walked over to Crane's body. Grim knelt beside him, feeling for a pulse. "Yup, he's gone," Grim confirmed.

"Damn. I sort of feel bad, but he died true to himself. No matter how you feel, you

gotta respect a real warrior. At least give him a proper send-off—burn him, don't let him rot," Jinx said.

Grim walked over to Jinx, wiping the blood off her head with his towel.

"I didn't know you had all that in you. You're a feisty fairy, huh? How about I take you out to celebrate?" Grim asked.

"I guess I can let my biggest enemy wine and dine me," Jinx replied, rolling her eyes.

"What about the other one in the dungeon? The one that looks like a woman?" Crash Out asked.

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“I’ve got something for him later. He lives for now,” War responded.

Jinx limped to Blair, one hand pressed to her burned skin, blood dripping from her calf. Blair sobbed, clutching her bleeding shoulder, unable to look away from Crane.

“I can’t believe he’s dead!” Blair wailed into her hands.

“Crane was Hoax’s lieutenant. It was never gonna work out, not with his loyalty to Hoax and ours to Eboenia. Can’t you see that?” Jinx said.

Blair cocked her fist back and slammed it into Jinx’s face, knocking her to the ground. “Fuck you! It’s not always about Eboenia. Some of us had our own ways to cope with that fucked up world,” Blair sobbed.

I hurried to help Jinx up. She held her face, shocked that Blair had hit her. “He was going to kill you, Blair!” I screamed.

“No, he wasn’t. But I know who will—your demonic master! We had good lives before all this bullshit tore us apart! You need to leave, War. I’m not easily influenced like Jinx—she’s a damn follower! I can’t pretend he’s good for you. We had a code, Eboenia,” Blair replied.

“She’s not going anywhere, firefly. Eboenia is my wife,” War said, and everyone gasped.

“Bro, what! I thought this was only temporary to get your rocks off!” Grim exclaimed.

“Typical man. Ruining her life just to fuck her. She has been through enough of that!” Blair argued, tears streaming down her face.

“Nah, I ain’t gotta do that for some pussy. Eboenia is bound to me, and she will remain by my side through hell and back. The only way out is death, Blair, so you have to accept that you’ve lost her. She’s molded for my life now, not the one she once had in Charmden,” War told her.

“You see that? Those are mind games! It’s against her will!” Blair shouted, frustrated.

“Everything we do is a test. Doesn’t matter who you are—you’re tested on loyalty because your ancestors never learned it, so they couldn’t teach you. You failed the test, Blair. Being the oldest doesn’t make you the wisest,” War said.

“I think he just dissed me,” Grim whispered to Crash Out.

“War, maybe we should all calm down and talk about this,” I tried to intervene.

“This isn’t your program, Eboenia. When it comes to my tribe, I don’t discuss shit. She has to go,” War said.

Thin chains sprouted from his hand and struck Blair in the skull. “Noooooooo!” Jinx screamed, ready to charge at War, but Grim held her back.

“Trust me. If you come anywhere near us, I’ll kill her,” War’s voice blasted inside my head.

Blair dropped to her knees, her body twitching, eyes rolling back until only the whites showed. The gears on War’s body spun faster, the energy nearly knocking us over and threatening to rip my locs from my scalp. The powerful wind drowned out Jinx’s

screams.

Moments later, the chains snapped back into War's hand, and Blair collapsed onto her side. Her eyes fluttered wildly, like she was still possessed. War's gears dimmed and ground to a halt—the spell was finished, but I had no idea what he'd just done to her. Jinx rushed over, rolling Blair onto her back.

“What did you do?” I demanded.

“I took Crane out of her memory. She was gonna hate the fuck out of you if I hadn't,” War replied flatly.

“Thank you,” Jinx breathed, relief and exhaustion in her voice.

War just stalked away, like a grumpy old man. You'd think he hated doing anything good, and maybe he did—if you let him tell it, he never spares anyone.

Thank you, Cashawn, I thought to myself.

I knelt beside Blair as her eyes finally focused. She blinked up at me, dazed, then grinned. “I need to stop partying with you rascals. I'm so drunk,” Blair slurred, and the three of us burst out laughing, the tension breaking for just a moment.

Behind us, Grim and Crash Out were already piling Crane's remains onto a pyre, flames licking up into the night, sending sparks and smoke swirling into the dark sky.

Wait! Did War just tell us that I'm his wife?

We left the stadium, Blair wobbling, her hand pressed to her head. She leaned into Jinx for support, while Crash Out and Grim fell in behind us.

“She’s gonna have to sleep that off, bruh,” Crash Out said, shaking his head.

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War sat in a metal chair in the hallway, smoking a blunt. He looked strung out, blowing gear-shaped smoke rings, jaw clenched like he was ready to snap.

“What you doing, bro? You sending them out or keeping them here?” Grim asked, eyeing War.

“Just send them back to their room. Unless they got somewhere else to be,” War said.

Blair blinked, her words slurring. “Where are we?”

“Take her away from me!” War barked.

“I’ll be up there in a minute,” I told Jinx.

“You ain’t gotta worry about my lil’ crystal ball head. I got her,” Grim said, rubbing Jinx’s bloody scalp. She slapped his hand away.

“I got hair somewhere else though,” she shot back.

“I’m grown, baby. I don’t mind a forest. You’re a forest creature anyway, I’ll be swinging through that joint like Tarzan,” Grim grinned, and she waved him off.

“Ugh, I hate men,” Jinx muttered.

They started up the spiral stairs, Jinx and Grim arguing in that flirty, reckless way about who’d win a magic match.

“Would y’all please shut up! My head is killing me!” Blair groaned.

“Eboeniaaaaaa! Get me out of here!” Sin screamed from the dungeon, sounding more awake than before, even after Grim knocked him out.

“I don’t like this shit,” War grumbled.

“What’s wrong with you?” I asked.

He stood up, looking like he’d crawled out of a bloodbath, grime streaked across his face and his eyes sinister—still in kill mode.

“Usually when I bring people to my tower, it’s to send them to the other side. Now I got two extra fairies running their mouths, and that Blair broad almost got her brain rearranged. Only reason she’s still breathing is because of you. But I’m already regretting it. This isn’t what my clan expects from me. Grim and Crash Out are acting different too. That soft shit is getting out of hand. You and your friends are changing how we operate,” he said, pacing.

“Maybe that’s what you all need. You can still be who you are, follow your traditions. But acknowledging your feelings? That takes courage. That’s real strength,” I told him.

War shook his head. “Nah. I ain’t going out like Azarion. He let his guard down, didn’t see Hoax and his people plotting. I’m not making that mistake,” he said, pacing harder. “I’m saving lives instead of taking them, spending hours with you and inside you—” He stopped, frustration pouring off him.

“Help me understand,” I said.

He spun on me. “I don’t know what I’m fighting for anymore!”

Suddenly, slashes appeared on his skin, hissing and burning, glowing like molten lava. “I don’t know what’s happening,” I gasped.

Grim came down the stairs, eyes wide as War’s body lit up with fire. “Oh, shit!” he said, rushing forward. War vanished into a cloud of black smoke before Grim could reach him.

“What the hell was that?” I asked Grim.

He shook his head. “He’s punishing himself for not playing by the old rules. War hasn’t been the same. I tried to warn him, but he threatened to rip my spine out if I didn’t stay out of it. On top of that, bro is pussy whipped.”

“He’s doing everything he’s supposed to do. I don’t get it.”

“You’re still alive, firefly. Your friends are alive, the women and kids in Charmden are alive. Sin’s still breathing, Crane got spared twice, Sin also spared twice. We were supposed to wipe out everyone from Charmden, the whole realm, the night of your ceremony. War never half-steps a mission,” Grim said.

“I don’t know what to do,” I admitted.

Grim shrugged. “Ain’t nothing you can do. That’s just who he is. When he stepped into Charmden, I think his soul remembered who he used to be—protecting his people. But then the darkness creeps back in, reminding him of the betrayal. He’s like a machine, being pulled by three different souls.”

“I figured that out. Cashاون, War, and Azarion.”

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“The thing is, Cashaun’s fading. After a ritual, your old soul doesn’t leave right away. It’s a process—a harsh one. You’re trying to hold onto your old self, but it keeps slipping. I wish it would’ve picked me instead, so he wouldn’t be stuck in this sunken place twenty-four-seven,” Grim said.

“I’ll take care of him,” I promised.

“Shiddd, you better, or I’ll turn you into an ashtray myself. I’m keeping it real—it’s not gonna get any better,” he warned.

A cuff appeared in his hand and he snapped it around my neck. “I know where he’s at. I’ll be back,” he said. A portal opened behind him—an alleyway in the city, from what I could see. Grim stepped through and vanished.

“Eboeniaaaaaa!” Sin screamed again, his voice echoing from the dungeon. I was ready to go upstairs to be with Jinx and Blair, but Sin called out to me again. “Please. I need some water,” he said.

I walked down the hallway and descended the stone staircase, into the place that reminded me of hell. Sin was out of his rope, gripping the bars inside the dungeon and looking pitiful. His green eyes glowed when he saw me, scanning me from head to toe. “What happened to you?” he asked in terror.

“I killed Crane,” I said.

Sin pressed his head against the bars, his shoulders dropping, and I found it hard to feel sorry for him. “You’re just like my father now. A murderous, cold-hearted, sex-

crazed piece of shit! He was like my brother!” Sin yelled.

I walked closer to the bars, only a few inches away from him. “I have never sexually taken advantage of anyone. So far, I have yet to kill someone who didn’t deserve it. I’m nothing like Hoax!”

“I know I helped create this thing you are. If I had only been there for you, you would have never turned your back on me,” Sin replied, his tone softening.

“I forgave you for being a coward a long time ago. I thanked the spirits in the sky for allowing me to see what type of husband you would’ve been. But what hurts me the most is you knew what happened to my mother and didn’t tell me. If you loathed your father as much as I did, you should have told me.”

Sin shook his head. “Dove told me everything while she was dying. After she was gone, I started investigating the truth for myself. Listen, I said some foul things and put my hands on you, but please understand that I’m trying so hard to be better,” he said, his eyes filling with tears.

“It’s too late anyway,” I shrugged.

Sin reached his hand between the bars and caressed my face. “Nothing will ever break us. We have a bond that goes deeper than the depths of an ocean, you just don’t see it yet. We can leave our flesh behind—together. Both of us will be free of War and Hoax,” he replied.

“I am free of Hoax, War is going to kill him.”

Sin chuckled, showing signs of derangement. “You’ll never be free, Eboenia. Our family history is tainted and have been since we come from the same womb,” Sin whispered.

“The fuck are you talking about!” I yelled at him and Sin laughed.

“You heard me,” he said.

“I think that concussion is wearing you out!”

“Don’t be dense. Dove can’t have any children because of her injury she sustained during the war with Hex13 a hundred years ago. While Dove was taking her last breaths, she told me that Dynasty is my mother. Hoax used your mother to breed with, even though she was in love with another warrior. He killed your father when she gave birth to us because you weren’t his. I don’t care that we’re twins, I still love you. Let’s leave this world together, so we can find each other again in a different life,” Sin replied.

I burst out laughing. “You’re crazy! You’re a sick piece of shit! My mother only gave birth to me!” I yelled.

“Ask yourself, why don’t most of you have any family members. Also ask yourself why Hoax’s army is four times larger than the actual people of Charmden. And why the male fairies are always getting torched by Hoax for no reason at all. While you were out hanging with your friends in the human world, I was discovering the truth about my father! I wanted to know why he treated me the way he did and why Dove allowed it. I’m not crazy!” Sin cried while pounding his chest.

“What does the army have to do with anything!” I yelled back.

Sin’s eyes widened, desperate for me to understand. “You really don’t get it, do you? Hoax isn’t just some tyrant—he’s obsessed with making sure our elf ancestry survives, even if it means mixing it. Back in Divine Forest, ogres hunted elves nearly to extinction, snatching our women and killing our men. When only a group of male elves were rescued and brought to Charmden, Hoax realized pure elves wouldn’t last

long. So he started getting rid of the male fairies and forcing elf blood into as many families as he could.”

I shook my head. “Everyone knows there are hybrids in Charmden, Sin. That’s not a secret.”

“But you don’t know how many of those hybrids are his. Hoax fathered most of them himself. He’s been using fairies to build an army that’s loyal to him, and to make sure his bloodline never dies out. That’s why families disappeared. That’s why the army is so big. It’s his twisted way of making sure nothing like Divine Forest ever happens again.”

He leaned closer. “So why is it so hard for you to believe your mother was one of the many Hoax took advantage of? If he did what he did to you right in front of me, what makes you think he didn’t do the same thing to your mother—or worse?”

“What makes you so special for Hoax to steal you from my mother and have Dove raise you as her own? You aren’t a warrior and you’re afraid of everything. Why is he only claiming you as his only born? Answer that liar!”

“Because of my special stones. The stones that I can create to open different realms. If anything happens to him, I’d be the only one to take the throne and lead the army, that’s why training was important. I can open realms that are extinct. A magic I inherited from our mother,” he whispered.

“You’ll say anything to get me to take my own life. If I didn’t want to marry you, what makes you think I’d spend a second with you in the afterlife? You have your father’s manipulating ways down pat, and I’m not falling for it!” I shouted, slamming my hands against the bars so hard I felt the bones crack, blood dripping from my fists.

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“I’m not your sister!” I cried, my voice breaking.

Sin reached through the bars, grabbing my hands to stop me from hurting myself. “Yes, you are, and it’s okay. But you can’t deny our connection. You’ve always tried to protect me, and with you, I could finally be myself. We were lied to, Eboenia, and the damage is already done. I’m begging you—just join me,” he pleaded.

“War would’ve told me,” I shot back.

Sin let go of my hands, his eyes searching mine. “You’ll believe him over me?” he asked quietly.

“Yes, Sin! I’ll believe him over you because he saved me from drowning in misery.”

“He probably didn’t tell you because everyone who knew is dead! But if War looked into my eyes right now, he’d know I’m telling the truth about what Dove told me,” Sin insisted.

“Dove is a miserable bitch who despised my ancestors. She killed Clover for Hoax, so I won’t believe a damn thing that comes out of her mouth. She wanted me to suffer and I won’t let her. I don’t believe any of it and I refuse to. We don’t even look alike! We have different personalities!” I snapped.

“We have the same birthday, for fuck’s sake!” Sin yelled.

Suddenly, my stomach twisted and bile surged up my throat. I covered my mouth, dizzy and nauseous, my vision swimming. I stumbled up the stairs as fast as I could.

“Get back here, goddamn it!” Sin roared behind me.

I barely made it out of the dungeon before I collapsed in the hallway, the cold metal around my neck clanking against the floor as everything faded to black...

The forest was a suffocating sea of black trees, their twisted limbs blocking out the moonlight. Black unicorns with onyx eyes thundered past, nearly trampling me as they ran wild through the shadows.

In the heart of this nightmare, Hoax lounged on a throne grown from a living tree, its branches writhing and coiling like pythons. He clutched his dragon staff, a wicked smirk curling his lips as he watched me. Rising slowly, he extended a hand—long, deep gray fingers tipped with razor-sharp nails—beckoning me closer.

“What’s the matter, Eboenia?” he purred, his grin widening. “You look lost. Or maybe you’re just starting to see the truth.”

Disoriented, I glanced around, trying to piece together how I’d ended up in this hellscape. “The only truth I see is that you ruin everything you touch,” I spat, venom lacing my words.

Suddenly, something cold snaked around my legs—roots, thick and gnarled, erupting from the earth. They yanked me off my feet, dragging me across the ground toward his throne. Before I could scream, Hoax seized me by my locs, jerking my face inches from his.

He leaned in, his breath sour with rot. “You want to know why you have no family? Why Charmden’s forest echo with emptiness? It’s because I made it that way. Most of the soldiers that marches for me carries my blood. I took their mothers, broke their fathers, erased their names. I built my army out of myself, piece by piece, until all that’s left is me—my will, my legacy.”

Roots burst from the soil, coiling tighter around my arms and pinning me in place. I couldn't move. Hoax's tongue slithered across my cheek as he groped my breast, his nails puncturing my flesh.

"Your mother tried to hide her power, tried to keep her secrets from me. But I always find a way. I would have killed her sooner had I known Clover's wand still existed. You will join her and the rest of them sooner," he said.

With a savage motion, he ripped open my dress and dragged his sharp nail down my torso, slicing my skin and leaving a burning trail of blood.

"So young, so fresh. If my son hadn't deflowered you, you might have been worthy of being mine. I like my breeders pure, just like your mother was when I first ripped her open," he taunted.

"No seed from you would've been born alive. I'll kill all of your offspring!" I screamed, thrashing against the roots, desperate to break free.

He leaned closer, voice low. "You think you're different? You're just another piece in my collection. I took your family, your future, your hope. I made sure no one in Charmden could ever rise against me. Most of the children were mine!"

He pressed his weight onto me, saliva smearing my face as his hand slid between my thighs. Summoning every ounce of fury, I tore a chunk from his face with my teeth. He roared and backhanded me, the blow snapping my head to the side.

"Release your brother, or the city you love will perish! Everything you cherish will be left as nothing but hollow bone!" he thundered.

He rose, and Lune landed beside him, her presence cold and distant.

“Why are you siding with the one who destroyed Charmden?” I cried out. “He’s the ruin of our families, Lune!”

Lune’s eyes were dead. “I don’t care anymore, Eboenia. You killed my child. Everything I felt for you is gone.”

A sword materialized in her hand. Without hesitation, she drove it into my chest, twisting the blade as pain exploded through me.

“Eboenia! Wake your ass up!” Crash Out’s voice echoed through the darkness, pulling me back from the edge...

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I woke up to find Crash Out and two other masked warlocks looming over me. Crash Out had a bucket of water in his hand, droplets still clinging to the rim. “You were stretched out on the floor, yelling and screaming at someone with your eyes rolling back,” he said, his voice half-concerned, half-amused.

“I fainted from being overwhelmed,” I muttered.

They helped me to my feet. “Where is War? I need to see him,” I croaked, still dizzy.

“War’s in the city—Baltimore, not our city,” one of the masked warlocks mumbled. “He’ll be back after he cools off, probably linking up with his human homie Jay and some dime pieces to take the edge off.”

Crash Out shot him a glare. “What are you dry snitching for?”

“What? It’s not like this is some serious relationship. He only got her here because of that wand Azarion made for his old bed warmer,” the warlock replied.

“Civil, please shut the hell up, bro,” Crash Out snapped.

Civil pulled his mask down, revealing half his face etched with witch markings, one white eye gleaming, and a mouth full of gold teeth engraved with more sigils. He was easy on the eyes too—skin dark and rich, beard trimmed sharp. If memory served, judging by his build, he was one of the ones who fought with War, Crash Out, and Grim to take down the ogres.

“This is my cousin. He don’t talk much, but when he does, it’s too much,” Crash Out

said with a smirk.

“Does Hex13 practice incest? It seems like everyone is related here,” I asked, watching their faces twist in offense.

“Helllllll no. Hex13 is an all male clan. Civil’s father and my father were brothers. Why’d you ask that? That’s what’s going on in Charmden?” Crash Out shot back.

“Clover wasn’t a male,” I replied.

“That was before Azarion started Hex13 and she’s the reason why he wanted no females in his clan. She was an distraction,” Crash Out responded.

“Your people must’ve partaken in that kind of shame. I was just wondering why some of the warriors looked a little too magically inclined in the face,” Civil added, arms crossed as he stared at me like I was a child.

“I don’t know why I asked. I’m just tired,” I mumbled.

Civil’s gaze sharpened. “We heard you talking in your sleep. Did you see Hoax? And if you did, where was he?”

“It was just a dream,” I lied, trying to keep my nerves in check. Surrounded by three tall, lethal assassins with no magic to protect me, my anxiety spiked, but I forced myself to keep calm.

“A lot of our dreams are messages from our ancestors. When you get in tune with your magic, they’ll come more often. I’m not a fairy, but our magic’s got the same elements of earth, wind, air and water. I know what you saw was more than a dream,” Civil said.

The third warrior pulled down his mask, and I nearly jumped—half his face was sculpted from metal, witch symbols glowing faintly along the edges. He looked like something War had created from a machine. “Sorry about that. Had half my body ripped apart in battle,” he said, his deep voice sounding as if it hurt to speak.

“This is my big brother, Steel. We usually don’t introduce ourselves, but hopefully you can trust us and tell us what’s going on with you,” Crash Out said. I couldn’t see the family resemblance through all the reconstruction.

“Sin says he’s my brother. I don’t believe him unless it comes from War,” I replied, my voice tight.

“Hoax’s son, your fiancé?” Civil asked, eyes wide.

“Yes. We’re supposedly twins,” I said, and they all gasped.

“You fucked your brother and you want War to find out? Listen here, hummingbird. War believes in ancient tradition. You and your black Ken doll looking fiancé would be put to death,” Crash Out said, shaking his head.

“I’ll find War myself. Can you open the portal and get this cuff off my neck?” I demanded, tugging at the cold metal.

“We can’t do that. You’re technically still a prisoner, even if you’re not in the dungeon,” Civil replied, unmoved.

“Are you serious? War said I’m his wife!” I shouted, frustration boiling over.

“Not in a traditional way. More like you’re chained to him type of bondage,” Steel replied, his metal face catching the light.

“O...M...Fucking G! This is nuts. Wives should have some type of authority,” I snapped.

“Not here. Only outside this realm, and even then, that’s up to War. Now, we’re escorting you to your friends,” Steel said, motioning for me to move.

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“I want to kick all of you in the nuts for this bullshit!” I grumbled.

“My nuts are made of steel,” Steel deadpanned, and the other two cracked up.

“I can’t believe this nonsense!” I yelled, but they just herded me upstairs like I was some flight risk.

“Eboeniaaaaa! Are you safe? What are they doing to you?” Sin’s voice echoed down the hall. “Yo, shut that shit up! She’s safe, but you ain’t!” Crash Out shouted out.

“I’m soooo not your friend anymore,” I hissed at Crash Out.

“Damnnnnnn, that’s foul,” Crash Out replied, shaking his head.

They stopped at a door at the end of the hallway—different from the room Jinx and Blair were in earlier. Crash Out pressed his fingers to the gear-shaped handle, his touch lighting up the metal as the gears spun and the door opened on its own.

“Wait here until War comes back,” Civil said, nodding me inside.

I rolled my eyes and stepped into an enclosed forest, smaller than the one where War grew his weed. The doors shut behind me, sealing me in with the scent of roses and moss. Jinx was washing Blair’s back in the pool, the water tinted pink and scattered with floating pink roses.

“We thought you and your ‘husband’ were on a honeymoon,” Blair joked.

I peeled off my clothes and slipped into the warm, rose-scented water. “Why does it look like you’ve been crying?” Jinx asked, concern in her eyes.

“I’ll talk to you about it later,” I whispered.

I scooped water in my hands, helping to wash Blair’s hair. She looked out of it, eyelids heavy, barely awake. “I’ll wash yours next,” Jinx offered gently.

“Thank you,” I murmured, managing a small smirk.

Moonbeams spilled through the dome-shaped glass ceiling, vines crawling across the glass and blooming with black roses.

“I could stay here forever,” Jinx sighed.

“Yeah, it’s like being in Charmden but without all the bullshit,” I agreed.

Jinx looked me dead in the eyes. “Did War hurt you?” she asked as tears slipped down my cheeks.

“No, but when he does, I feel better. I just need him right now,” I admitted, my voice trembling.

She frowned, confusion written all over her face. “I don’t get how hurting you makes you feel better.”

I wiped my face and tried to explain, my words coming out paradoxical but honest. “It’s weird, but when War hurts my feelings, it’s like all the stuff I keep bottled up finally comes out. I cry, I get mad, but then I feel lighter—like I can breathe again. It’s almost like he forces me to face my shit, and somehow, I come out stronger every time. It’s messed up, but after the pain, I feel more alive. Like I’m not numb

anymore.”

Jinx shook her head, still not understanding, but she squeezed my hand anyway. “As long as you’re not in danger,” she whispered, and I rested my head on her shoulder, letting the warmth of the water and her comfort wash over me.

If Sin is really my twin, I won’t be able to live. I’ll have to join him in death.

I felt a breeze kiss my cheek and sat up, rubbing my eyes. Jinx and Blair were curled up beside me in fetal positions, camouflaged among the bed of flowers and the greenery surrounding us.

“Eboeniaaaa!” A sultry voice called out.

I stood from our makeshift bedding and walked to the edge of the central pool. A figure stepped from behind a tree—her locs trailed all the way to her ankles, and her midnight skin gleamed like polished leather, adorned with intricate gold-rose patterns. Black crystal charms dangled from her horns, her talons sparkled like crushed diamonds, and she smelled unmistakably of Nectarine Moonlure—a flower that only grew in Charmden, infamous for inducing extreme arousal in men when bathed in its essence. The pointed tips of her fairy ears were pierced with tiny bull’s horns. She looked at me and smiled, revealing sharp, piercing canine teeth.

She flew over with wings identical to mine, and we stood face-to-face, her height giving her a few inches over me. She was like a goddess—her unique fairy form was striking, picture-perfect.

“Why are you confined in this birdcage?” Clover asked.

“I’m not confined to anything. And aren’t you supposed to be dead?”

“That depends on your definition of dead,” she replied smoothly.

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She reached out to touch my face, but I backed away. “I’d rather my mother come to me. Not you. You brought those fucking elves to Charmden and ruined everything. I don’t know why you’re here, or if I’m dreaming, but either way, I want you to stay the hell away from me.”

“Everyone makes mistakes,” she said softly.

“Sadly, it doesn’t even matter anymore. The suffering we’ve endured is making me numb.”

“Don’t follow Sin into the darkness. I want you to be better than me, to give our ancestry a better name. That way, years from now, your descendants can be proud to call you their ancestor—and celebrate you, instead of shaming you. I was selfish. I let the power Azarion gave me go to my head. I tried to force him to become someone he wasn’t, all because of my own temptation. I fell into the enemy’s bed willingly, just to hurt a man I truly loved,” she said, her voice cracking into a saddened smile, tears glistening in her eyes. “I would’ve killed you had you existed in my time, just for catching his eye. I was a jealous creature and eliminated anyone who dared to look at him.”

“Azarion is all yours. He’s too hard on War.”

“Yes, he was always a harsh teacher,” she murmured.

Clover knelt beside the pool and dipped her talon into the water. Instantly, the surface turned smoky gray, swirling with visions. There she was, riding a unicorn with Azarion through the forest in Charmden. Her wings were golden, her face carefree,

youthful, and innocent.

“I wanted to be his wife, bear his children. We could’ve kept Charmden safe. I lured him into my garden, taunted him with my body, danced for him, sprinkled my scent on his bedding—seduced him until his body craved me. He had no sexual desires until I awakened them. I wanted to be the first and last fairy he ever had. I thought I possessed him, but he was dedicated to his purpose and it made me jealous. I envied the hold Charmden had on him, so I brought elves to ruin it,” Clover confessed.

The vision shifted. Azarion placed a gold collar around Clover’s neck to keep her head attached after decapitation. He then torched her body as it rested on a bed of her roses. Azarion’s body was bloody and battered—the war between him and Charmden had just ended.

“Your soul isn’t going anywhere. I own it now, and I’m going to make it suffer!” he shouted over her burning body.

Azarion’s gears whirled as he held Clover’s wand above the flames. A black shadow emerged from the fire, wrapped around the wand, and disappeared into it. The wand glowed in War’s hand until the fire ceased, leaving Clover’s charred body in a pile of burnt leaves. Azarion walked away, leaving the wand beside the ashes. A young fairy, barely thirteen and bleeding from a deep leg wound, collapsed next to Clover’s remains and wept.

“Come back, Aunt Clover. I don’t have anyone left! Everyone is dead!” she cried.

The wand on the ground pulsed with light. She picked it up, whispering, “I’ll keep it safe.”

The visions faded, and the water returned to its usual clarity.

“That was your great-grandmother,” Clover said.

“Your soul is trapped inside the wand? That’s why War told me I need to talk to it. You’ve been passed down for generations, and nobody knew you were inside.”

“Your magic is my prison for eternity. It feels good to have someone talk to me again,” she replied, meeting my gaze. “Only your master should ever restrain your magic. Take that cuff—never let another warlock bind you, not even if War approves. Refusing to let anyone else control you is a sign of loyalty to him.”

“It’s 2020. We don’t use the term ‘master.’ War isn’t my master and I’m not a slave. Also, I still don’t like you. Don’t think I’ll be speaking highly of you now.”

“I know you don’t. It’s because I bedded him first,” she taunted.

“You trapped him!”

“Azarion was a virgin wizard. He trapped himself in my flytrap. Besides, I had the better version of him. I couldn’t have handled the man he became—the one with a wicked heart,” she said, her face growing serious.

“Dynasty is Sin’s mother too. I know this because I heard her thoughts, felt her pain when she had me in her possession. I can still feel the connection with my descendants, and he only wants you to die with him because he’s afraid to die alone. Whatever fate he chooses, let him. If you don’t, he’ll always need you to save him. We don’t pity cowards—we uplift our protectors. War needs you and he needs you right now. Sin will adapt to his nature, whichever one he was destined to have.”

“Sin is my twin?” I asked aloud in disbelief, the words rolling off my tongue and making my stomach tighten.

Clover's eyes softened. "Hoax put fear in a lot of fairies. Because of him, your mother was afraid to trust her own magic—she was terrified that if she let the wand guide her, it would draw Hoax's attention or put her in danger."

"I slept with my brother," I choked out, then broke down in sobs.

Clover gently wiped away my tears. "Corruption destroys families. It's a system dictators use to control bloodlines and eliminate strong genes. That's what Hoax wanted—but you will turn this pain into strength, and you'll destroy as many enemies as you can. We're warriors. We turn our pain into power," she said, her sultry voice darkening, echoing the tone War takes when he's in beast mode.

She paused, her stare growing distant. "Dynasty tried to fight back, you know. She used her wand to end her pregnancies, to keep Hoax from claiming her children as his own. But when he discovered she was purposely miscarrying, he poisoned her."

"Who are you talking to? Go to sleep!" Jinx mumbled, stretching and yawning.

I turned to her. "You don't see her?"

"See who? Nobody's here," Jinx replied, eyes half-closed.

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I glanced over my shoulder, but Clover had vanished—gone so completely it was as if she'd never existed at all. The clang of metal hitting the floor echoed through the room, then faded away as the neck cuff collapsed, breaking apart and scattering into a pile of gray ash.

Jinx's eyes flew open, shock flashing across her face. She was suddenly wide awake, crawling out of bed and hurrying over to me. "We can leave now?" she asked. She noticed my tear-filled eyes.

"Talk to me? Are you upset because of what War did to Blair?" she whispered, gently taking my hand. Quickly, I wiped away the tears on my cheeks—I wasn't ready to talk about Sin, not yet.

"No, it's just these dreams. They keep coming back, and they always leave me feeling... unsettled. But I'm okay now," I said, forcing a crooked smile.

I summoned my wand. It appeared before me, swirling with thick black smoke that curled around the wood, shadows flickering across the walls. Jinx watched, her face tense. "What are you about to do?" she asked quietly.

"I need to check on War. I'll be back soon. Someone needs to stay with Blair—she's still not well."

My clothes shifted, weaving themselves over my body in a heartbeat. Black fishnet tights, patterned with winding roses, hugged my legs. A knee-length, hooded cloak draped over my shoulders, its fabric soft but sturdy. My feet slid into black lace-up boots, ballerina-inspired but reinforced for battle.

“I hope you’re coming right back,” Jinx said, worry flickering in her eyes.

“I will. You’re safe here, so try not to worry,” I told her, squeezing her hand.

I gripped my wand, pointed it at the pool, and commanded, “Take me to War.” The water rippled, then churned, swirling into a vortex of silver and shadow. The pool vanished, replaced by a glowing portal.

“Your magic has improved so much. We can take over the world now,” Jinx said, and I chuckled.

“I told you, War has taught me a lot in a short period of time,” I replied.

Through the portal, I glimpsed what looked like an ancient temple, its stone walls half-swallowed by thick, twisting vines. The hallway beyond was littered with scattered skeletons, their bones bleached and tangled as if left undisturbed for centuries. Shadows clung to every corner, carrying a ghostly chill. I had a bad feeling about this place, but I needed to know if War was safe—and not still lost in self-punishment. The temple looked haunted, as if the past itself refused to let go.

“I’ll see you soon,” I told Jinx before leaping into the portal.

I landed lightly on the cold, cracked stone floor, the impact barely a whisper. The roof above was long gone, exposing the night sky. Moonlight poured in, illuminating the intricate carvings that spiraled up the remaining pillars—designs of thorny roses and crescent moons. Out of a glassless window, I could see a dark forest with black trees, the same as what I saw in my dream of Hoax. The portal closed behind me with a soft hiss, sealing me in. The heavy scent of earth and decay hung in the air.

“STOPPPPPPPP! NOOOOOOOOOOO! I WON’T ASK AGAIN!” A young woman shouted at the top of her lungs. Her scream ripped through the ruined temple.

I pressed myself against the crumbling wall, heart pounding, and crept toward the sound, letting the shadows swallow me. When I reached the corner, I peered around it—and froze.

In the center of the vast, ruined hall, a circle of female fairies and Hoax's warriors stood watching. Two of the warriors had a fairy pinned to the cold stone floor, their faces twisted in delight. With a sickening crack, they wrenched her wings backward, splintering her bones. Her screams tore through the air, as blood spattered across the ancient carvings beneath her.

My nails scraped furiously at the stone, rage prickling beneath my skin, but I couldn't look away.

"This is what happens when you disobey our rules!" one of the warriors barked, voice booming off the broken pillars. "Hoax doesn't need whiny bitches in his army! During training, you only get two water breaks—remember that!"

The warriors released her, letting her battered, naked body slump to the floor, wings twisted and bloodied. The crowd didn't move. Some looked away; others stared with cold, empty eyes.

I scanned the faces, searching for War. My gaze landed on Lune, standing behind one of the warriors. Her face was expressionless; she felt nothing for the wounded fairy. The grief over her deceased baby was eating away at her heart.

That dream I had was a warning. You really sided with Hoax.

Suddenly, a hand clamped over my mouth, yanking me back into the shadows. My body tensed—wings and horns sprouted from my fairy form, ready to fight—until a familiar voice hissed in my ear, "It's me, Grim."

He released me, then appeared in front of me as a shadow—like a ghostly masked assassin.

“What the hell is going on? Where is this place?” I demanded.

“How did you get out of your cuff? And you aren’t supposed to be here. Crash Out and whoever else was supposed to be guarding you will be punished for letting you out,” he whispered, eyes darting around.

“My wand released me. We’ll worry about that later. Right now, what realm is this?”

“It’s Charmden. Azarion’s temple.”

“I’ve never seen this place before,” I replied.

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“War confiscated a portal crystal when he captured Crane, and when we used it, it led us here. How did you get here?” he asked, glancing over his shoulder.

“My wand led me here. Where is War?”

“He’s around, and you need to leave before you fuck up the plan,” he said.

“I’m not going anywhere and you can’t make me. If War tells me to leave, I’ll leave. But my soul isn’t connected to yours, so you don’t get to order me around,” I shot back.

“Aight, whatever. My clan brothers better not get an ounce of punishment because of you. Hope you’re brave enough to take their place if War flies off the handle,” he muttered.

A door creaked open. I slipped back, peeking around the corner just in time to see Crane stride into the temple on a black winged unicorn, his presence almost made my heart stop.

“Grim, what’s happening? I thought I killed him. I watched his body burn,” I whispered.

“That’s War in disguise to find Hoax and take back the staff,” Grim replied.

“Enough of this! We’re wasting time on these worthless creatures. Send them back to the village. A breeder isn’t capable of going to war against Hex13!” Crane barked, his voice echoing off the stone walls.

“He sounds just like him,” I murmured to Grim.

“The spell is temporary, so we don’t have time to waste,” he responded.

“How long does he have?”

“Two hours top, and we arrived here just thirty minutes ago so not much longer. If Hoax finds out we’re here, he’s going to go hiding again. War wants him gone asap, and you’re going to distract him, Eboenia. We’re on a secret mission, and if anyone hurts you, it’ll blow his cover because he’ll react,” Grim whispered.

“No due respect, Lieutenant, but Clover—our fairy warrior—fought battles,” a warrior called out.

A spear materialized in Crane’s hand. He hurled it with a flick of his wrist, driving it through the warrior’s eye and pinning him to the wall.

“Don’t mention that name in my presence again! Breeders are supposed to be on their backs, not in battle gear, so get them the hell out of here!” Crane roared.

“I want to be turned on, but the thought of kissing Crane is sickening,” I muttered to Grim.

“I’m not one of your friends. I don’t want to hear that. Talk about something else—like you getting the hell on,” Grim gritted, jaw clenched.

“I’m staying to train! I want to defeat Eboenia since she sided with Hex13 and killed my son. You can send the others back, I’ll stay!” Lune spoke out.

“That bitch! I can’t believe I called her my sister,” I told Grim.

“She’s an enemy now, so don’t hesitate when it comes to a point where you’ll have to defeat her. I ain’t gonna lie though, she’s a straight ten. Don’t tell my crystal ball I said that,” Grim chuckled, and I rolled my eyes at him.

Crane slid off the unicorn, he walked over to Lune to look her into her eyes to read her thoughts.

“You’re too weak to train. Head back to the village with the others,” Crane told her.

“I can’t do that. I saw them take Sin, and we don’t know if he’s alive. I need to do this for him too. Did you see him when they captured you? How did you escape?” Lune asked Crane.

“My father’s spirit showed me the way, but Sin wasn’t in the torture chamber with me. You will not be in my army because you’ll hold us back. I can still smell the afterbirth on you,” Crane told her.

Lune’s eyes filled with tears. “Walk with us,” a young fairy said to Lune, grabbing her hand.

Lune snatched away from her. “I don’t have anyone left! What else do I have to lose?” she asked.

“That’s the problem, you don’t have nothing to lose but I do! Head back to the village before I take your head off!” Crane told her.

The young fairy pulled Lune away to leave the temple. The others picked up the badly wounded fairy and carried her out as she screamed from her broken wings.

“Go ahead, get out!” Crane shouted at everyone.

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They left the temple, and a male fairy stayed behind by the name Daystar. Daystar was a beautiful man with a slim frame and wore wrap dashikis. He had stones at the ends of his locs and a feathered earring. His skin was smooth like butter and when we were younger, we called him a peacock because he was colorful. He grabbed Crane's hand once the coast was clear.

"I can't keep hiding us," he said to Crane and Grim gasped.

Crane snatched his hand away from him so quickly, I heard his bone snap. "Sin is missing and I don't have time for this colorful ass shit!" Crane yelled at Daystar.

"Aren't you exhausted of laying down with different women to prove to everyone that you're not different? This is who you are, Crane. I support every thing you do, even when you slept with Blair but I can't anymore. We can be ourselves in the human world. I go to their clubs and they are free to be themselves," Daystar pleaded.

Grim chuckled and I slapped his shoulder, but my hand went through it—he was like a real shadow.

Another fairy came back into the temple. "Crane, we need to talk," she said. She froze when she saw Daystar.

"Crane was a freaky ass nigga," Grim said.

"Blair dodged a serious bullet," I replied.

Daystar crossed his arms and jerked his neck. "We're discussing private matters of

Charmden, Sunny. Run along,” Daystar replied, shooing her away.

“For starters, you aren’t a real soldier. You hang around just to watch their junk and firm asses. You are a fairy queen and Crane hates fairy queens,” she said.

“I hate all of you and I wish you all burn to ashes. I’m being cornered with a bunch of bullshit! Get the fuck out of my face before I punish the both of you for interrupting my duties,” Crane replied.

“I’m pregnant,” she said and I gasped.

“Another pointy ear bastard with no fighting skills will be born and then slaughtered. Good for you and now you can leave,” Crane replied and Daystar walked away giggling.

“What did Hex13 do to you? You were never this cold to me,” Sunny replied, on the verge of tears.

“That was before I realized how pathetic you all are now go before I break your wings next!” Crane roared and she ran out of the temple.

He closed the temple doors and then put a tree log latch behind them so nobody could come in. “Eboenia, show yourself!” War said in a low tone.

I stepped out of my hiding spot, walking slow, eyes on him. Even though he was still wearing Crane’s face, I felt the real War underneath—his energy, dark and hungry, pulling me in. His eyes glowed when he saw me, and in a blink, he had me jacked up by my cloak, anger rolling off him in hot waves.

“When I told you to connect with your wand, I didn’t mean let it lead you into a death trap or get in my way. I told you that Hoax ain’t got nothing to do with you and you

disobeyed me,” War said. He yanked me closer, so close I could feel his breath on my cheek. My heart was thudding, but I didn’t flinch.

“I came here for you,” I shot back, chin up. “I wanted to be with you.”

His hand stayed on my cloak, fingers flexing like he couldn’t decide if he wanted to shake me or pull me in tighter. “You like making shit hard for me, don’t you?” he growled, his lips almost brushing my ear. “Keep pushing me, Eboenia. You’re going to end up with broken bones and swollen pussy lips,” he said.

A shiver ran down my spine, heat pooling low in my belly. “Maybe that’s what I want. You can always punish and torture me.”

War’s nostrils flared, and for a second I thought he might snap—either my neck or my self-control. Instead, he let go, shoving me back just enough to remind me he could do worse.

Grim stepped out of the shadows. “I told her she was in the way. Did you find him?” Grim asked.

“Hoax ain’t here, nobody has seen him since the night of the ceremony, but I did find out he has a bunker underneath his house and it leads to the secret weapons he’s building,” War answered.

“So, he’s hiding out underneath this temple?” Grim asked.

“This is where their warriors train and Crane’s hideout spot with him and his lover. Can you believe that? This was my home, my chair sat right there,” War pointed to an area that was covered in bones.

“We can rebuild it,” I told him, reaching for his hand. He snatched it away, but not

before his thumb dragged slow across my knuckles, sending a jolt through me.

“You know better than to touch another man. If Grim wasn’t here, I’d choke the life out of you. You like it when I do foul things to your body, don’t you?” War growled. I could tell he was aroused—the way his voice dropped, deeper and rougher. It was the same voice he used when he moaned my name, coming inside me.

“Yes, I do,” I answered, no shame in my voice.

“She’s a stalker now, bro. I tried to warn you, and now look at her. Trying to get her back banged out while you’re posing as a Charmden warrior who smashes fairy queens,” Grim said.

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“She’s my Lor Pussy Fairy, it’ll always be ready for me,” War responded.

“You wish you had someone who would go through realms to get to you. You’re such a hater,” I told Grim.

“I’m going to have your baldheaded friend hooked soon,” Grim said, rubbing his hands together. I waved Grim away, but my attention never left War.

“I’m going to do you in once this is over. I’m heated that you’re even here, distracting me!” War’s voice said inside my head.

“I’m going to make your life hell, so that you can take me through it,” I replied.

“What’s the next move, bro? You ain’t got much time left,” Grim said to War.

“Hoax’s home,” War replied.

“I’ll guide you to his house. It’s not in the main village and it’s heavily guarded,” I said.

“Lead the way,” Grim said, nodding.

“You—get inside my cloak,” War told me.

I shifted, shrinking down to my fairy form. My wings fluttered as I darted into the warm, shadowy space at the neckline of War’s brown cloak. He pulled the hood low over his head, hiding me from sight.

Grim stepped forward, lifting the latch on the door. War swung himself onto the back of his unicorn, the creature pawing at the ground, eager to move. A hoverboard appeared beneath Grim's feet. "I'll be right behind you," Grim said, his form dissolving into a wisp of shadow that slipped through the doorway.

The unicorn galloped out of the temple and plunged into the black forest. Its hooves barely touched the ground before it leapt, wings unfurling wide. With a rush of wind, we soared above the treetops.

"War, did you know Sin and I are twins?" I asked, clinging to his cloak.

"I only saw it in your eyes a moment ago," War said, voice low. "His fate is in your hands, he's not a threat to me. I was going to use him for target practice, but it's your call."

"Sin wouldn't have lasted a second. He's not that kind of warrior."

"He would've been good for training the rookies," War replied.

The unicorn banked sharply. I tightened my grip on War's cloak as the trees stretched higher, their tops lost in the mist. War's skin grew hot beneath my hands, and a burning slash of fire flickered across his neck.

"Still punishing yourself? It's almost a new day," I said.

"It's anger," War growled. "My temple looks like an ogre's bathhouse—ruined and forgotten. This forest was mine. My waterfall dried up after I was punished, and the trees started dying."

We flew on in silence, the dead forest stretching endlessly below, shadows swallowing the last traces of War's old kingdom.

There were three warriors posted up in front of Hoax's treehouse—the grandest oak in all of Charmden. The trunk was thick as a brick building, gnarled roots curling like petrified serpents into the black earth. The house balconies and arched windows glowed faintly with a green light. Moss and old bones hung from the railings, creaking in the wind. The whole place looked less like a haunted castle.

The unicorn landed, its hooves thudding on the mossy ground. War, still disguised as Crane, slid off the animal's back.

“What brings you out here, Lieutenant Crane? Is there something wrong?” one guard asked.

“I want you all to gather the others and head back to Hollow Forest. I just received word that Sin is alive,” War replied.

“You want all of us to leave Charmden?” another asked, glancing at the treehouse as if it might answer for him.

“Every soldier is to leave for Hollow Forest. Gather everyone in the center of the village, and when the portal opens, it's the signal to leave. We don't know how many Hex13 are hiding out in that forest, using Sin as bait. Hoax wants his son brought back alive, and we will bring him back to Charmden,” War said.

“I have a funny feeling about this, Lieutenant Crane. I heard Sin was a traitor,” the first guard responded, his eyes narrowing.

War strode over, in a flash, War's knife gleamed before it cracked into the guard's skull, splitting flesh and bone with a sickening crunch. The guard dropped to his knees, blood gushing down his face. War seized his head, and with a twist, drove two fingers deep into the guard's eye sockets. The man's screamed as War ripped his eyes free, tearing nerves and sinew. Blood and fluid splattered the moss, as the guard took

his last breath.

The other two guards froze, fear etched on their faces.

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“Tonight will be judgment day for all of you if you question the loyalty of the leader’s son again!” War barked.

They bowed their heads, trembling. “We don’t have any doubts,” they said in unison.

“Good. Now get the others and wait for the portal. If anyone is left behind, they are dead!” War snapped.

They scrambled onto their white unicorns and vanished into the mist, blowing their horns to alert the others in the forest that it was time to leave.

War shoved the dead warrior aside. “What’s at the Hollow Forest?” I asked, my voice barely above a whisper.

“A genocide waiting to happen for Hoax’s army. They’re being led straight to their deaths. A pack of massive forest wolves are waiting to eat. There will not be any more of their army,” War answered.

Seconds later, Grim crept up like a black-cloaked shadow, breezing by like the wind. His body dissolved into a swirl of smoke, slipping around the latch on Hoax’s wooden door. The door snapped open with a groan, inviting us into Hoax’s creepy fortress.

We stepped inside. My stomach twisted as the stench hit me—rank, sour, a mix of dirty feet and something worse.

“I can feel you tensing up. That is why I told you to let me deal with him,” War said.

“I need to face my fears,” I replied.

“It smells like feet and ass in here,” Grim said, wrinkling his nose as he closed the door.

“His disgusting ass scent infuriates me,” I gritted, trying not to gag.

I slipped out of War’s cloak, using my wand as a glow stick since the house was pitch black except for a single candle flickering beside a book on a table. I looked up—thousands of stairs lined the wall, stretching into the shadows. The place was packed with artifacts, and books cluttered with plants.

War picked up a book from the table, running his fingers over the cover. “This book is made out of fairy wings,” he said.

War opened it, frowning. “The pages are charred flesh.”

“Sheesh, and they say we’re demonic,” Grim muttered.

“I thought all dark magic was demonic,” I said, and War grilled me.

“You still have a lot to learn, Lor Pussy Fairy. Dark magic is magic reinforced to cast ancient spells that are forbidden. Demonic magic is when you make pacts or summon demons. We might be wicked, but we still speak to our ancestors from a spiritual realm and not those who are in hell,” War said.

“When all of this is over, maybe you should teach the others in Charmden. The few who aren’t in Hoax’s army,” I suggested.

“Yeah right,” War replied.

“Instead of us breeding with human women, we should be breeding with fairies,” Grim said, searching the floor for an opening to Hoax’s secret passage.

“For a muthafucka who was anti-fairy pussy, you sure have been having a change of heart lately,” War told him.

“I never denied they were beautiful creatures, but females’ presence brings out a different side in me. Like having a fucked up day at training, then you come across a vase of unique flowers that smells good—it takes your mind off things. I’m going to have one of my own,” Grim said.

“We’re not sex toys, Grim,” I told him, rolling my eyes.

“No, y’all are better,” he replied, as I looked around.

“What does that even mean anyway?” I asked, spotting a pot of mushrooms with sharp teeth. When I reached out, it snapped at me.

“War, you answer that,” Grim said.

“It means a warrior who is strong-willed can capture you, and discipline your pussy to please him. He owns your pussy and it’s his—nobody else can come close to it. A weak warrior isn’t skilled for that kind of trophy. You’re like a pure succubus—made to tempt and satisfy, but only a real man can handle you and claim you for himself,” War explained.

War came over to me, his body brushing against mine, making my center tingle. Our sexual tension was thicker than the book piles Hoax had stacked inside his home. War grabbed a mushroom and choked the life out of it, then moved the pot aside. A slight breeze came from a crack in the wall, leading to the floor. He was ready to move another book pile when glass shattered upstairs.

Grim reacted instantly, scaling the wall with ghostlike speed, his shadow flickering and stretching behind him. My wandtwisted in my grip, morphing into a sword just as books tumbled from the shelves, crashing to the floor in a storm of paper and wood. Seconds later, Grim landed on his feet, clutching a tiny, thrashing fairy in his fist. She kicked and swung at him, wild and furious, her wings pounding the air in a blur.

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“I knew I smelled Eboenia’s scent on Crane. What the hell is going on!” Lune screamed, her voice shrill enough to rattle the glass.

“We were being tracked,” Grim said.

“No, she didn’t track us here. She came looking for something else,” War interjected.

Lune’s deep purple wings sliced straight down Grim’s hand, parting skin and muscle with a wet sound. He cursed and released her, blood dripping as she snapped back to her normal size and charged straight at me. Instinct took over—I cocked back and knocked her into a table, sending her tumbling as books and dust rained down on her.

“That bitch is going to get us discovered,” Grim grimaced, watching his hand knit itself back together.

“Crane, it’s been you this whole time. You and Eboenia have been plotting against your own kingdom! You have a Hex13 with you inside of Charmden!” Lune shrieked, while scrambling to her feet.

“Who gives a damn! Let it go!” I hissed.

“Where is Sin, Jinx, and Blair?” Lune demanded, her gaze darting between us, desperate for answers.

“They’re safe. But what brings you here? Why are you snooping around Hoax’s home?” War asked Lune, stepping closer; his killer presence was surfacing.

“I don’t have to tell you shit!” Lune spat back.

Without warning, War charged, his hand closing around her throat. Her wings drooped, fluttering weakly as she clawed at his arms, feet kicking uselessly in the air. War’s eyes glowed, and the gears—those damned, ancient gears—appeared on the walls, spinning and grinding. Lune went still, her eyes blown wide, caught in some kind of hypnosis.

“Tell me what I want to know,” he demanded.

“I’m looking for the crystals Sin makes for his father. I know it can lead me to him,” Lune confessed, her voice flat and hollow, the words wrenched from her lips.

“Sin doesn’t love you, and your airhead ass is about to throw away your life trying to fight against assassins. You aren’t capable of going against warlock warriors. You won’t last a second. Take this as a warning and stay out of our fucking business!” I gritted.

“Sin promised me I was going to be his wife,” she whispered, voice cracking.

“He doesn’t want you, and I’m saying that as a friend. He only used you when I wasn’t around. The sad part is, you know it. You had a fiancé who loved you and wanted a family with you. Sin never wanted his son to be yours,” I said, my voice softer but no less honest.

“Bitch, you’re just jealous,” she snapped, venom in every syllable.

War released her, letting her drop to the floor like discarded trash. “She’s not like your other friend, Blair. She’ll still be your enemy, even if I take away her memory. You can’t erase a hateful heart—either kill her now or let it fester and get worse. Not all enemies can be redeemed,” War said, his voice heavy with old wounds.

Lune pushed herself up, trembling with rage. “I wanted a family, that’s all I ever looked forward to, and you killed my baby with your dark magic!” she spat.

She lunged at me, a dagger appearing in her hand. I swung my sword in a clean arc across her neck—her head snapped back, then tumbled to the floor. Her wings dimmed, flickering out like a candle in a storm, and her headless body crumpled, blood pooling around my feet. Relief washed over me—cold, pure, and undeniable. Death was fucking therapeutic.

“This will stay between us,” Grim said.

“You made the right choice,” War told me.

He turned back to the wall, moving books aside with methodical precision. My eyes stayed glued to Lune’s body, my heart pounding as I tried to come down from the high of killing. I thought back to when the four of us lounged around in our secret home, partying, drinking, laughing and crying together, but the memory was just a blank, empty space.

“Eboenia, get back inside my cloak,” War snapped, pulling me out of my trance. I shifted, wings buzzing, and darted into the hood of his cloak, settling behind his neck.

War moved the last of the books, revealing a wooden door in the floor. He opened it, and blue, sparkling water shimmered below, casting strange, shifting light on the walls.

“We gotta swim?” Grim asked, sounding more than a little disappointed.

“This is a portal, dummy,” War replied.

“I ain’t gotta keep getting lil’ nigga’d by you either. You forgot I used to beat your

ass when we were younger,” Grim responded.

“Yeah, until I hit my growth spurt and started slamming you through the floor. And I keep telling you, I might be younger, but my spirit’s old enough to be your great-grandfather,” War said.

Grim shook his head. “Yeah, aight. Eboenia is small—let her go first to scope out the scenery,” he suggested.

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“The fuck I look like, sending her in first? I’ll go first,” War replied.

“Pussy-whipped, evil-ass nigga,” Grim mumbled.

“Aight, I got something for you later on,” War threatened.

I clung to his neck as he jumped through the portal, plunging us into a world of darkness.

The portal spat us out into a dark tunnel beneath the city. The distant roar of traffic echoed off the damp walls, punctuated by the blaring of horns, while the acrid scent of exhaust fumes seeped into the air. Monstrous mushrooms with snapping teeth clung to the walls—a telltale sign that Hoax was near.

“I think we’re underneath Baltimore City,” Grim said from behind us.

“We are,” War confirmed, scanning the shadows.

“Didn’t think the ugly punk would be coming to the human world since he was so against it,” I whispered, glancing around.

“Nobody would suspect him being here,” War replied.

As we pressed deeper into the tunnel, we came across a trickle of water flowing downwards. War followed the stream, and suddenly halted, his eyes fixed on something in the darkness. In the center of the tunnel, a greenish-gray creature knelt in the corner, gnawing on a rat. Its ears were pointed, its head bald, adorned with

glowing symbols that pulsed eerily—symbols I recognized from Hoax. Its nails resembled talons, and judging by its shapely naked body, it was unmistakably female.

Grim acted quickly, darting across the wall like a flash of lightning, with a machete in its hand. Before the creature even registered his presence, he sliced its head clean off. The mouth continued to chew mindlessly on the rat meat, a disgusting sight.

“War, what is that?” I asked, my voice barely above a whisper.

“A goblin. It’s never a good sign when a goblin is in the city. They adapt easily and can disguise themselves as regular humans. I haven’t seen one since I killed their realm,” he said, his expression darkening.

Grim picked up the goblin’s head by its ear, finally stilling its twitching. “The hell is this? A gremlin?” he asked, his eyes wide with disbelief.

“A goblin. We need to find their nest,” War said.

“A nest?” Grim repeated, confusion etched on his face.

“Yeah, their mating nest. If they ain’t out killing and eating flesh, they’re fucking in orgies and reproducing in their nest,” War answered.

“Everybody getting coochie but me,” Grim grumbled, dropping the head to the ground with a thud.

We continued through the tunnel until we emerged into a vast indoor garden. The air was filled with an heavy scent of decaying flowers, mingling with the metallic tang of blood. Strange, monstrous plants twisted around rusted metal supports, while oversized flowers with jagged edges loomed ominously overhead.

In the center of the garden stood Hoax, with his dragon staff raised high. He was surrounded by a throng of goblins, all attentively listening to him.

“Listen closely!” Hoax’s voice boomed, dripping with malice. “I am your master, the one who resurrected you from the depths of hell! We will conquer this city, and turn it into our very own forest! We’ll trick the humans with promises of wealth, knowing their greed will blind them. They will become our new army—goblins, just like you!”

He leaned closer, his expression darkening, looking like the rotten monster he was. “But heed my warning: if you fail me, I will send you back to a world of darkness and non-existence!” Hoax shouted. The goblins laughed; some even drooled, hungry for the chance to infest the city with their filthy souls.

War and Grim were crouched in the shadows. My heart was racing as I listened; I couldn’t wait to see Hoax’s blood drip from my sword.

Hoax continued, his wicked grin spreading wider. “My warriors from Charmden are weak; we need fresh strength to defeat Hex13 and to get rid of that demon Azarion once and for all. With your help, we will rise!”

“Grim, go block the entrances so the goblins can’t leave, then send a signal to our realm,” War ordered, his voice low and cold.

“I’m not leaving you. There’s about fifty of those ugly muthafuckas,” Grim whispered.

“Eboenia isn’t a weakling—she can hold it down. She doesn’t have a choice but to,” War snapped. If I failed him, he’d punish me in a way I sure as hell wouldn’t enjoy.

“You’re putting too much faith in her, bro. She’s got skills, but I don’t know how these things fight. They might be too strong for her,” Grim argued.

“Don’t underestimate the magic in her wand. I know firsthand what it can do—it’s almost as powerful as my staff,” War replied.

Without another word, Grim melted into the darkness of the tunnel, gone in a blink. I felt War’s body shifting beside me—muscles swelling, his frame stretching taller. The Hex13 medallion materialized around his neck, his brown cloak dissolving into nothing, replaced by a black, open cape and a wizard’s horned hat that screamed power.

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“Why are you changing?” I asked, my own voice edged with anticipation.

“I want my face to be the last thing he sees before he takes his last breath. Follow my lead,” War growled.

Two golden orbs flickered into existence in War’s hands. They hovered, then exploded into shape—two massive black bloodhounds, their backs armored with thorny, mossy growths. Gold, sword-like canines jutted from their snarling jaws, metal teeth gleaming, claws poised to carve through bone.

“Goblins are terrified of canines. That’s their weakness,” War taught me.

The dogs were the size of the unicorns in Charmden, tails bristling with four-foot thorns. Their howls ripped through the tunnel, making the ground tremble and dust rain from the ceiling.

“Azarion!” Hoax screamed, shock twisting his ugly face as War stepped out from the darkness, his chain wrapping around his wrist. The hounds stalked closer to the goblins, growling, drool splattering onto the stone floor as they waited for War’s command.

“I’ve been waiting a hundred years for this moment! Last battle, you hid and ran like a little bitch, but not this time. You belong to me tonight!” War snarled.

A goblin lunged at War. I flicked my wand, summoning a spiral of black flame that wrapped around my chakram. I hurled it, slicing the top of her head clean off, purple brain matter spilling out as she collapsed at War’s feet. He didn’t hesitate—just

stomped her skull with his heavy boot, crushing it flat.

I walked behind War, wings unfurling, horns sprouting as my skin turned midnight black, gold markings igniting across my body. My fangs slid down—I was ready to get bloody. I gripped my wand, already tasting blood and death.

Hoax's eyes raked over me, hunger and hate mixing in his gaze. "This is déjà vu, isn't it? I'll take it easy on her before I kill her—just like I did her sweet mother. We've got the same taste, Azarion. We both like our pussy sweet, delicate, and very tight," Hoax taunted, voice dripping with malice. He sniffed his fingers and moaned while licking them. "My sweet pussy, Eboenia," Hoax teased.

"I know Sin is my brother," I called out. The smirk vanished from Hoax's face.

"He's not your brother!" Hoax spat, clenching his jaws. "Your mother only carried him in her womb. Dove—the woman who raised him from birth—is his real mother! Don't you dare twist the truth. The only goddamn reason I let Sin marry you was because it was his turn to breed offspring. I've always loathed you!"

"Of course you did, because you knew how disgusted I was by you!" I shot back, black energy swirling around my wand. "You had to take it from me, because nobody but Dove would want to spread their legs for a weak leader. That's not even your staff that you so proudly wield! Charmden should've discarded you!"

He patted his chest. "Charmden loves me! I was the better leader!" Hoax yelled.

"Don't waste your breath on a dead man," War said to me, then sneered at Hoax. "I'll tell you the truth though—I busted the biggest nut of my life as I slit Dove's throat. Her nipples went hard as pebbles; that was the only time I let her get close to me, and she died for it. Two of your bitches died with me on their minds, old dummy. You'll never conquer a pussy fairy because you're a bitch—a coward who couldn't defend

his own women against ogres or sire an alpha male.”

Hoax’s face twisted with rage. He slammed his staff against the ground, the crack echoing like thunder. “Get them! Rip off their heads and bring them to me—I want them hanging above my throne!” he howled at his goblins.

War let out a sharp whistle and his dogs exploded into motion, tearing through the crowd of goblins like living nightmares. Screams and snarls echoed off the tunnel walls as thorny tails whipped and gold fangs snapped, blood splattering across stone.

Hoax tried to bolt, panic twisting his face, but War’s chain shot out like a serpent, wrapping tight around Hoax’s ankles and yanking him off his feet. Hoax hit the ground hard, staff still clutched in his fist. He aimed it at War and unleashed a blast of blue fire, the flames licking across War’s shoulder, charring his cloak.

A goblin lunged for me, claws reaching for my locs. I raised my wand, sending a spray of black thorns into her chest, pinning her to the wall. I swung my sword, blade flashing with sorcery, and sliced through another’s arm. It howled, stumbling back, but I pressed forward.

“Stay back, bitch!” I spat, swinging my sword in a wide arc. The goblin’s claws scraped my forearm, tearing flesh, but I didn’t flinch. I slammed the stiletto spike that jutted from my foot into her chest, sending her sprawling into the shadows. More goblins surged from the darkness, shrieking, their eyes filled with bloodlust.

War’s dogs tore through the horde, their thorny tails whipping, gold fangs crushing cartilage. The goblins scattered, but not far enough—one leapt at me, and I met her with a slash that split her skull. My blood mixed with theirs was running down my arms and legs.

A sudden, deep rumble shook the ground. War and Hoax’s magic clashed, blue fire

and golden gears colliding in a shower of sparks. The walls trembled, cracks racing across the ceiling. War's chain lashed out, catching a goblin mid-leap and slicing it in half. "Eboenia! Move!" he barked, but I was already running, ducking as the tunnel ceiling gave way.

Chunks of stone crashed down behind me, dust billowing in the mayhem. War rushed forward, leaping over the rubble and planting himself in the open, just beyond the collapsing tunnel.

He glanced back at me. "Stay close, Eboenia! Don't get separated!"

"I'm right behind you!" I shouted, coughing through the dust.

Raising his hands to the sky, his tattoos glowing, he called down his power. The clouds above split open, and from the darkness, enormous black and gold birds with metal beaks and claws swooped down. Their wings spanned the length of city buses, feathers edged with razors. They dove into the goblin ranks, ripping bodies apart, sending goblin heads and limbs flying. War's voice thundered as he directed them.

"You want a war? I'll give you a fucking massacre!" War roared, his voice echoing with pure malice. "No magic is greater than mine. I died for this shit, and I'll do it again if I have to—just to drag every last one of you screaming into the dirt. I'll paint the city with your blood. Even if you surrender, you'll still die. No creature will be spared!"

He glanced back at me. "Stay close, Lor Pussy Fairy! You wanted this, so don't get weak on me. If you die on me, you'll pay me in the afterlife," War threatened, though his eyes softened for a moment.

"I'll always be right behind you!" I shouted, coughing through the dust.

“Good girl,” he said.

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Hoax tried to duck behind his goblins for protection as they scattered in panic, but the birds were relentless—tearing through the goblins. War stood tall in the center of the carnage, chain spinning, blood streaked across his face, but his eyes never left me, making sure I was still fighting.

I shot into the air, wings unfurling wide. As I flew, my wings shifted, the edges hardening into spinning, bladed fans. I dove through the crowd, wings whirling, slicing goblins in half as I passed. Their blood sprayed in ribbons behind me. I spun, my wand firing bolts of black lightning that incinerated any enemy who dared reach for me.

War's chain lashed out, catching a goblin mid-leap and smashing it into the pavement. He never took a step back, never faltered, his magic raining death from above and his fists breaking bones below. Every time I landed, he was there—covering his Lor Pussy Fairy, gears spinning around us like a shield, his voice calling out, “Eboenia! You good?” even as he fought three goblins at once.

Hoax's voice echoed from the street, battered. “Your magic is weak, Azarion! You never should have been resurrected! Baltimore is mine now! My babies will stop at nothing to build my new army—even if I'm dead!” He raised his staff, unleashing a wave of green fire that swept down the street, igniting cars and sending humans fleeing in terror. A woman carrying a Chinese carry out bag was tackled by a goblin. Her screamed rang my ears as it tore her face off.

A goblin leapt at me, claws digging into my calf. I stabbed it through the eye with my wand. Another tackled me from behind, but I spun, my wings slicing it cleanly in two. My vision flashed white with pain, but I kept moving—faster, deadlier, my

magic and blade working as one.

War was beside me in an instant, chain whistling and gears spinning in a deadly orbit. He hurled a gear at Hoax, but the bastard deflected it with his staff, laughing.

“You’ve lost your edge! I thought you were the assassin of realms, the wizard of Charmden, the leader of Hex13! My son, Sin, has more flair than you,” Hoax taunted, rambling wildly.

“Then stop running bitch boy! Let’s finish this!” War roared, his voice shaking the street. His eyes flicked to me, worry and pride burning in them.

“Whatever happens, you better not die on me!” War’s voice blasted inside my head.

“I won’t. I need you,” I responded.

The goblins pressed in, but we didn’t retreat. We fought back-to-back—me in the air, wings slicing, wand blazing; War on the ground, commanding the birds, chain and gears tearing through anything that got close.

We landed in an alley, breath ragged, surrounded on all sides. War’s gears spun faster, power crackling, but I could see he was weakening—blood pouring from his side, his face pale, but his eyes kept flicking to me, making sure I was alive.

Hoax appeared at the mouth of the alley, staff raised. “This is where you die, Eboenia. Just like your mother. Just like every weak little fairy I’ve broken.”

His words hit me like a punch to the gut. Rage and grief twisted inside me. “You didn’t break me,” I hissed, voice shaking. “You just made me cherish the art of death and you will be my best mural!” I said, raising my wand, black fire swirling around my hand.

Suddenly, the air shimmered like a heatwave. Black smoke spilled from the shadows, uniting into the spectral forms of the Hex13 warlocks. Their eyes burned with a white beam, their weapons flickering with dark sorcery. Grim burst from the portal, riding a massive black panther, shotgun blazing. “I’m merking all you baldheaded, stanking ass bitches tonight! We ain’t in Charmden, you duck-ass freaks! We’re in Murdaland, baby, and we drop shit!” he roared, blasting goblins to pieces, the panther tearing into the horde.

The Hex13 warlocks swept through the goblins, dragging them into the shadows, their screams and growls echoing off the alley walls. War’s chain was slicing through goblins like butter, but his eyes kept searching for me in the battle.

Hoax slammed his staff into the ground. The street split, and a monstrous centipede-beast erupted from a pothole, wrapping War in its coils, fangs sinking deep into his flesh.

“War!” I screamed, heart pounding. I hacked my way to Hoax, my sword arm numb, blood running down my face. I flicked my wand, sending a barrage of black thorns into the centipede, trying to free War. Hoax swung at me, but I ducked, slicing his hand clean off. His staff clattered to the ground, and he howled, dark red, mushroom-scented blood spraying the alley.

“You little bitch!” he shrieked, clutching his stump. “Why won’t you die?!”

I grinned, blood in my teeth. “Because I’m already dead! You killed me the day you forced your skinny, sickly dick into me! You picked the wrong bitch to fuck with and now my ancestors can rejoice in your demise. I pray the hell you go to will piss in your mouth and rip your asshole into shreds!”

War broke free of the centipede after he sliced it in half. He picked up his staff and Hoax screamed. “NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!” he yelled. War kissed his staff and it

glowed in his hand, a glow that never happened when Hoax had it. Hoax tried to crawl over to War, but I punched him in the face with all of my strength—he dropped.

War's chain snapped around the staff, and the dragon head at its tip—eyes glinting as if alive—suddenly stirred. “Daddy’s home,” War chuckled, as thick locs burst from his scalp, tumbling past his shoulders. In the center of War’s chest, a metal gearwheel seared itself into his flesh. The gear began to tick, and War’s head snapped back as golden light pulsed through his veins, illuminating his skin from within.

“Do you see the difference, Hoax? This is real power. This is what conquer looks like,” War said, his voice rumbling.

“My magic! Give it back!” Hoax wailed, his cry shrill and desperate.

The staff transformed into a chain with a dragon emblem and reptile ridges engraved into the chain. War wrapped his chain around Hoax’s neck, yanking him close. “I told you I was going to body your bitch-ass. My spirit couldn’t rest for one-hundred years. I never begged for anything, but I begged the spirit realm to bring me a warrior who could carry my soul, I damn near pleaded,” War growled, plunging his hand into Hoax’s back. Hoax screamed, thrashing, but War had a serious grip on him.

With a guttural roar, War ripped Hoax’s spine out, vertebrae snapping as blood splashed into my face like in a paintball fight. Hoax’s body crumpled, twitching before going still. The goblins shrieked and scattered; their short-lived master was dead.

The city was in a uproar—sirens wailing, humans ducking behind cars and dumpsters, some filming with their phones. Dead goblins sprawled in pools of black and purple blood, guts and limbs scattered across the street. War’s hounds prowled the carnage, snapping at twitching corpses, then, with a tired breath from War, the

hounds and summoned birds poofed into dust, swept away on the wind. The Hex13 warlocks slipped back through the portal under the weight of so many eyes. Grim slid off the panther, shotgun smoking, grinning like a madman.

“We’re going to have to use a lot of sorcery to fix what these humans saw,” Grim told War.

“It’ll knock the power out for a few days, but they’ll survive. A blackout is needed to erase their memories,” he replied, as his staff disappeared.

War staggered—bloody, but alive—and his eyes met mine. Relief flickered across his face, as if he’d been fighting for me as much as for himself. But then his gaze dropped to my chest, and worry creased his features. I followed his eyes—and saw a thorn lodged in my heart.

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I tried to pull it out, but it bristled like a porcupine, stabbing tiny needles deeper into me.

“War,” I whispered, before collapsing to the ground.

The needles pumped a hot poison into my heart. “No—no!” War shouted, scooping me up. I coughed up a thick stream of blood.

“It hurts,” I gasped, trembling.

War scooped me into his arms as a portal opened.

“Go ahead! We’ll stay behind to clean up this mess,” Grim told War, while three other masked warlocks—whom I presumed to be Civil, Crash Out, and Steel—walked over to him.

My wings were losing their sheen, growing dull—a sign that the end was near for me. Above our heads, I saw the shadow of a fairy in a gold wrap dress, her matching wings shimmering faintly as she hovered. She was a spirit, an ancestor come to guide me through the transition.

“No... please, no,” I whispered, coughing up blood.

War laid me on the cold, stone table inside his dungeon. His hands trembled as he hovered over me, and for the first time, I saw him—really saw him. Beneath all the menace, beneath the psychotic killer’s stare and the blood on his hands, his naked soul flickered through. His eyes glossed with unshed tears, raw emotion breaking

through the monster he was known as. If War could show this kind of purity, I knew it meant only one thing: he could see I was dying.

“What happened to her? Eboeniaaaa!” Sin’s scream echoed from his cell.

“You aren’t going anywhere. I swear on everything, you better not die on me!” War’s voice cracked as he pressed his palm over my chest, desperate to heal me, but I felt myself slipping further away—drifting toward death’s cold embrace. The golden fairy appeared again, and this time, she wasn’t alone. Two of them hovered above, their wings shimmering like heaven’s sunlight.

I squeezed War’s hand, my grip weak, lungs burning as I suffocated on my own blood.

“You killed her! She was safe before you kidnapped her and turned her into a Hex13! It’s your goddamn fault! Let me out of this cell right now!” Sin’s cries tore through the dungeon.

“I told your bitch-ass to shut the fuck up!” War’s rage exploded. He hurled a dagger through the bars, and I heard Sin’s body hit the ground with a thud.

“Ahhhh!” Sin groaned, pain twisting his voice.

War’s hands pressed onto me again, and this time, crackling tentacles of electricity shot from his fingertips, surging into my body. But I felt nothing—just the numbness spreading, swallowing me whole.

“We’re here to guide you. Don’t fight it,” a melodic voice whispered inside my mind.

“War,” I rasped, my voice barely a breath. “They’re calling me,” I managed.

“I don’t give a fuck about them! You belong to me, damn it! Tell them they can’t have you!” he shouted.

“We’re waiting for you,” another voice sang.

My back arched off the table as I choked on a gush of blood, curdling in the back of my throat. This was the same table where War had once bound my soul to his—and now, it was where I was taking my last breath. The final moment was silent as I slipped away...

The air was impossibly fresh, tinged with the scent of wildflowers and honey. Water cascaded from the sky itself, a waterfall of liquid crystal pouring down from the clouds above, scattering rainbows through the air. At the base of the torrent, a family of fairies stood in a circle, as if gathered for a special ceremony.

The men were dressed in pure white, their feathered gold wings unfurled and gleaming in the mist. The women wore flowing wraps of gold silk that caught the light, their hair crowned with headpieces woven from gold and white roses. Their singing, delicate as wind chimes, washed over and filled my soul with peace in the afterlife.

A fairy with long, ground-length curly locs turned toward me—and it was my mother.

“Mother!” I cried.

I soared to her, and she caught me in her arms, holding me close. Her hair smelled just as I remembered—jasmine and vanilla, sweet and soothing.

“We were waiting for you,” she whispered.

“I know. I missed you so much!” I sobbed, clinging to her.

She pulled back, her cheeks glowing with pride and love. “You’ve grown so beautiful. Look at you,” she said, her eyes shining.

A tall man with a long beard and silver-tipped locs stepped forward. Though he looked young, perhaps in his mid-twenties, his eyes held a depth of ancient wisdom.

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“This is your father, Ean,” my mother said.

Tears glistened in his eyes as he embraced me. “I never got the chance to meet you. I’m sorry you had to find me this way, but here, there is no pain, no death, no corruption—only paradise,” he whispered, his voice trembling with emotion.

I hugged him tightly, my heart overflowing. “I’m here now,” I sobbed, and my mother joined us, wrapping her arms around us both. Other fairies gathered, expanding our circle, welcoming me with open arms.

“That’s your grandmother, Lily,” my mother said as a short, stout, curvy woman approached, her high ponytail adorned with a hummingbird clasp. She reached up and caressed my cheek—she was so adorable, barely four-foot-eight.

“Welcome home, Eboenia,” she smirked.

“Come sing with us,” my mother said, reaching her hand out to me.

I grasped her hand, ready to join them at the waterfall, but I couldn’t move. My family stared at me, confusion flickering across their faces. I tried to step forward again, but I was rooted in place—War’s chain was wrapped around me, pulling me back. I turned, but there was no one there, only his never-ending chain.

“He won’t let you go. You belong to him. Go home, Eboenia,” my mother said.

I reached out to her, and she squeezed my hand. “I’m dead, Mother. It’s impossible to go back.”

My father rubbed her back as she wept. She missed me, and I missed her, too. As happy as I was to see her—them—I wasn't ready to leave War. He needed me, and I needed him. Our bond ran deeper than the surface.

"We'll see you again, but not too soon. We don't deserve you just yet," my father said.

The chain tightened around me in a possessive hold. "I love all of you. Please, watch over me," I pleaded.

"We will always be with you in spirit," my mother promised.

Suddenly, the chain yanked me, tearing me away from the waterfall so fast that I felt whiplash. It dragged me through a world of darkness...

I opened my eyes gasping for air, staring at the ceiling inside of War's room at his tower. My body was still sore from the thorns that exploded inside of my body. War was peering over me, caressing my cheek. He looked clean and refreshed, his scent filled my nostrils. "I'm alive," I cried and War wiped a tear away from my eye.

"I told you that you're stuck with me. I wasn't bluffing when I said that," he said.

I tried to sit up, but it was painful. War helped me up and propped pillows behind my back. His locs fell down his shoulders and he looked so handsome with them. "I like this look on you," I groaned.

"I cut them off and they came right back. Drink this," he said.

He grabbed a cup off the table and it was dandelion tea. I took a sip of it with my eyes still glued on War. His physique had change, more defined, ridges in all the necessary places and his silk black lounging pants sagged below his "V" print, his

body etched with more markings. The tea was hot and it cleared my throat some.

“Is Hoax really dead?” I asked. I faintly remember the battle, it all seemed like a blur, like a dream.

War sat back in the chair next to the bed. “Yeah, he’s gone. His army is also dead. The only Charmdens left are a small village of fairies,” he said.

“Where is Jinx and Blair?”

“Training with my clan,” he responded.

“Ohhh really? Did you force them, War?”

He leaned back in his chair, crossed his arms, his chest muscles flexed. He smirked at me. “Not really, I told them they couldn’t stay here rent free, and needed to do something instead of smoking my damn kush. They said they’ll learn our tradition if I let them stay in my forest room. They’ve been coming to visit you,” War replied.

“How long have I been asleep for?”

“A week in a half,” he replied.

War’s face got serious. “You know you died on me, right?”he asked.

“Yes, I saw my parents, and ancestors. I don’t know how I’m sitting here with you. Did your magic bring me back to life?”

“I gave you a new heart, someone who matched your blood,” he said.

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“I have a new heart?” I repeated.

“Yeah, I took it from Sin,” he said.

Tears fell from my eyes remembering Sin was trapped inside of War’s dungeon.

“You killed, Sin?” I whispered.

“Yeah, and I don’t regret it. In the long run, he served his purpose. Our missions aren’t always about killing the enemy, sometimes we have to fulfill other duties. I sprinkled his ashes in the garden so he could be free too,” he said.

I placed my hand over my heart, feeling it’s heartbeat. “I understand,” I told War.

War got up from the chair and wrapped his hand around my neck, bringing my face closer to his. “You’re a brave, Lor Pussy Fairy. Before you learned how to use your wand, you always had that fire in your heart. We’re going to run this shit together,” he said.

I kissed his lips. “I’m with you all the way.”

He applied slight pressure around my neck, kissing me back. It was a deep passionate kiss, almost snatched me off the bed. “You knew better than to take my pussy to another realm,” War threatened.

“Is that all you’re worried about?” I asked.

“If it was, I would’ve let go. Don’t ask me that stupid bullshit again,” he said.

My stomach growled and War heard it. “We’re about to have a feast at Grim’s tower,” he said.

“Wait, I can go to other towers here?”

“Yeah, with me. You can’t just go to another man’s tower,” he said.

I took another sip of the tea. “Help me up,” I said, handing War the teacup. He sat the cup down and then scooped me out of bed. My body was stiff and I could still feel the aftermath of the fight in the city. War walked me into his jungle style bathroom, standing me on a bed of stones underneath the ceiling shower head. The water came on and ran down my naked body. I let out a deep sigh, relishing in the fresh water beating against my skin.

War took off his lounging pants and stood behind me. He massaged shampoo into my scalp. I rested against his chest, savoring the moment. “Is Cashaun still inside you?” I asked.

“Yeah, I’m here,” War said.

“I can feel it. I saw you before I took my last breath.”

“As long as I got you in my possession, I can hold on to myself. You’re presence, essence, and aura is keeping me here. Besides, I don’t want to share you with other versions of myself,” he said.

“You’re jealous,” I chuckled.

“All killers have a jealous heart,” he replied.

“Good, I want to make you envious so I know where your heart is at.”

“Don’t forget I got crazy folks in my head that’ll do you dirty. Stop playing with me, Eboenia,” he said, and I giggled.

After War washed my hair, he used a honeycomb looking sponge to wash my body. The scent was earthy, and the soap had my skin tingling.

“I don’t know how to face Blair and Jinx for killing Lune. Does that make me a coward? What should I do or say?” I asked War.

“You gotta learn how to separate who you become when you’re on a mission and the friend they know you as. That is not their business, it’ll weaken your skills if you constantly have to worry about other’s feelings. They should never know what you do outside of their friendship,” he replied.

War used a separate cloth made from a broad, waxy leaf, slipping his hand gently between my legs to wash my center. His other arm wrapped securely around my chest, his lips pressing soft, lingering kisses to my neck—his touch was always his love language, wordless but deep. He exhaled, the sound heavy with something unspoken, and squeezed me tighter. His tall frame and heavy body nearly knocked me off balance as he cocooned me in his arms. I patted his hand.

“I’m not going anywhere, War,” I reassured him.

He spoke quietly against my skin. “You died trying to protect me. If Sin hadn’t been in the dungeon, you wouldn’t be here. I’m soul-bound to you too, and I didn’t realize it until you died on me.”

His words made my heart ache and flutter at the same time. “Well, at least I know this isn’t just a one-way street. I can torture your emotions now,” I teased, trying to lighten the mood.

War playfully mushed my face. “Don’t get fucked up,” he warned.

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I hesitated, then asked, “Did Sin die painfully? Did you torture him?”

His hand paused, then resumed its gentle motion. “No. It was a quick jab to the brain. He was ready to die anyway. He said he couldn’t live anymore because his feelings for you would never change, but he also couldn’t live in sin for lusting after you. I would hate to be into it with my mate’s twin brother over my pussy. He chose the right path.” War’s voice was matter-of-fact, but I could hear the finality in it—Sin would have died either way.

I nodded, sadness welling in my chest. “I know he found peace, wherever he is. Hoax did a number on his mind.”

War continued to wash me, careful and attentive because I was still so weak. Sin’s heart beat inside me now, its rhythm echoing my own. We could have been inseparable, had we known the truth sooner.

After our shower, War wrapped a towel around my hair. “War, can I ask you something?”

He glanced at me. “Go ahead.”

“Who will protect Charmden now?” I asked.

He chuckled. “Charmden is dead. Thanks to my staff.”

I blinked, stunned. “You got rid of it? What about the other fairies? The children? I thought you just wanted to get rid of Hoax and his army, take over the realm.”

He shook his head, meeting my stare with a hard truth. “I never said that. That’s what you assumed. When we get rid of the leader, the realm goes with it. That’s who I am, Eboenia. I never showed you differently. Being intimate with you, sharing my thoughts with you—it doesn’t change what I’m made to do.” He turned and walked out of the bathroom.

I followed, my legs trembling, the weakness in my body making every step ache. War stood at the window in his bedroom, his back to me, the markings on his skin flickering with restless energy. “Come here, beautiful,” he called.

I crossed the room and stood beside him, looking out over his city. Beyond the mechanical sprawl of War’s city, a tall mountain with a waterfall stood, the water tumbling in silvery sheets that caught the light and sent rainbows shimmering across the mist.

“I didn’t spend much time as Crane, but the little time I did, I realized how much the fairies hated Charmden. The women Hoax broke down, the children he used. That forest you see is their new home. Your friends, Blair and Jinx, convinced the survivors to come so they wouldn’t perish, but some chose to stay behind. Most of Charmden’s magic was tied to its trees and water. When I destroyed those, the realm began to die,” War said.

I tried to process it all, my mind reeling. “You killed Charmden?”

He nodded, unapologetic. “Without the trees and water, the realm can’t survive. It withers, just like its leader. That was always the plan. I don’t leave enemies or their legacies behind.”

I imagined the empty groves, the dried riverbeds, and the withered flowers. “I bet Grim is excited,” I muttered, trying to mask my sorrow with sarcasm.

“My warriors can’t stay out of their forest,” War replied, a hint of pride in his voice.

I narrowed my eyes at him. “You better not be creeping over there.”

He smirked, turning to face me. “I only have a soft spot for one fairy. I don’t need to explain any further.”

“Umm hmm. You know I’m a killer now, so if you want your dick, you better not be over there. A lot of them like to roam naked.”

He chuckled while shaking his head. “That’s what the strip clubs are for,” he said, giving my ass a playful slap.

“You can’t go there either!” I shot back, trying to keep my tone light despite the ache in my chest.

War walked away from the window. “My threats aren’t empty, War.”

He grinned over his shoulder. “Whatever you say, Lor Pussy Fairy.”

I watched him, feeling the weight of what we’d lost and what we’d become. War was who he was—ruthless, unyielding, but mine. And I was his anchor, for better or worse.

War opened the main door of his tower and stepped out, tapping his foot. Instantly, a hoverboard came into existence beneath him, its surface pulsing with electric-blue light. I lingered in the doorway, peering down—the drop was dizzying. One wrong step and someone without wings could fall to their death.

“Do I need something around my neck?” I asked.

“Nah, only when you need to be punished. I’m open to bending traditions a little,” he replied.

“You’re showing off today,” I giggled.

I shrank down to my fairy form and zipped through the air, landing lightly on War’s broad shoulder. The air in his realm was startlingly pure, almost crystalline, which was odd considering the entire place thrummed with mechanical magic.

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“The air, it’s so clean,” I marveled.

“The forest is helping with that,” War said.

With a flick of his wrist, we shot forward, gliding between towers as if we were ski boarding through the sky. War steered us to the balcony of a black tower etched with glowing Hex13 symbols. The hoverboard vanished beneath his feet, and we stepped inside Grim’s foyer. The floors were polished red marble, gleaming like fresh blood, and the black walls were lined with an arsenal of weapons—swords, axes, and spears.

“Grim’s home doesn’t have a garden? It’s soooo... gothic.”

“I told him his tower looks like a vampire’s lair,” War replied.

I hopped off his shoulder, shifting back to my normal size. War led me down a hallway where weapons outnumbered furniture a hundred to one. He pushed through a pair of heavy brass doors, their surfaces engraved with swords, and we entered the feast room.

Before I could take in the spread, Jinx and Blair rushed at me—both dressed in stylish, battle-ready catsuits and black stilettos with metal spikes. They nearly tackled me in a hug.

“Don’t knock her over, goddamn!” War barked.

“We weren’t expecting you to wake up for another few days. I’m glad you’re up—you missed a lot,” Jinx said, her voice trembling with emotion.

“War has filled me in,” I laughed, letting their warmth settle my nerves.

“He’s so mean to us,” Blair tattled, shooting War a look.

“That’s because y’all play too fucking much and act like children. Flying everywhere and knocking over shit,” War grumbled, and Jinx rolled her eyes.

Blair looped her arm through mine, grinning. “We’ve been training, and you won’t believe it—I took down a big ogre. Fucked him up!”

“Oh yeah?” I asked, delighted, and she nodded eagerly.

“I saved you his finger so you’d believe me,” she said, winking.

“Ugh, no thank you. This realm is turning you out, I see,” I responded.

“I was surprised myself, but Ms. Grandma thinks she’s a young hen now,” Jinx teased, nudging Blair.

Before we could go on, Grim, Civil, and Steel approached me.

“Welcome back, Eboenia,” Grim said, his voice gravelly but sincere. “You had us worried.”

“Awww, you have a heart after all,” I teased him.

“Yeah, I’m trying to do the right thing so Jinx can stop acting hard to get,” he replied, and she blew him a kiss.

“Stop playing and let me cuff you,” Grim told her.

“Give me more time to think about it,” Jinx teased him.

Civil stepped forward. “It’s good to see you on your feet again. War wasn’t the same without you,” he snitched.

“Yo, you talk too much,” War told him, and Civil shrugged.

Steel grunted. “Glad you made it, Eboenia. You fought like a true Hex13 and a lot of us... most of us appreciate you. You deserved your second chance,” he said.

“Thank you, Steel,” I smiled.

Their words warmed me, making me feel truly at home.

War’s clan had gathered near the long table, but before I could join them, Jinx got teary-eyed. She waited until War walked away before she let herself cry, hugging me fiercely. “Whew, I was holding it in because War seems like he’ll kill me if I cry around him. I thought you died on us,” she whispered, voice cracking.

I rubbed her back and kissed her cheek. “My life is just beginning, Jinx. It wasn’t my time to go.”

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Blair squeezed my hand. “I owe you an apology for the things I said about War. Hoax and his army have killed more of our family than Hex13 ever did, so if we can give them grace, I can put my hatred aside. I just want to protect you all, that’s why I nitpick. Jinx and I decided to live in the forest—we’ve got our tree house up and ready.”

“Thank you, Blair. Your acceptance means a lot to me,” I replied, my voice thick with emotion.

“Them killing Lune was a wake-up call for us. We’ve been living with our real oppressors for too many years,” Blair said quietly.

At the mention of Lune, my heart clenched. Jinx shot Blair a look. “You weren’t supposed to tell her Lune is dead so soon. She just got her new heart, don’t ruin it!”

“I didn’t mean to,” Blair said, biting her lip.

“Lune is in paradise with her child. I saw what it looks like, so I’m sad for us, not for her. We can celebrate her transition to a better place,” I said.

Suddenly, the door burst open and Crash Out bopped in, arms full of carry-out bags. He grinned at me, flashing his gold tooth. “Look who’s back! Good to see you, Eboenia. I knew you were going to wake up, you’re more solid than Steel’s big terminator looking ass,” Crash Out said.

“Bro, fuck you!” Steel said from across the room.

Crash Out winked at Blair, making her blush. “What’s up, pretty?” he teased, blowing her a kiss.

“Blair, Crash Out is young,” Jinx whispered, shaking her head.

“He just turned nineteen and we’re not dating. He just says nice things to me and brings me treats,” Blair replied, rolling her eyes but smiling.

“Bro, did you get the mumbo sauce?” War called out.

“Fuck, I forgot!” Crash Out groaned, plopping the bags on the table.

“I don’t know why y’all send him out to D.C. He don’t remember shit,” Grim grumbled as he rifled through the bags.

“I remember where my dick at, muthafucka,” Crash Out replied.

“You’re a virgin, bro,” Grim said, and we snickered.

War squeezed Crash Out’s shoulder. “Ain’t nothing wrong with being a virgin. I was one for thousands of years before I got bamboozled by that succubus,” War said, referring to Clover.

“Damnnnnnn!” Everyone said in unison.

“Jinx, come here, sweetheart. You had an order of duck fried rice, right?” Grim called, waving her over.

Jinx walked over to Grim to grab her order from him. They were flirting heavily, purposely brushing their hands across each other’s. I joined them at the table, taking a seat next to War. He handed me a fried chicken wing and I ate the whole thing, bone

included—I was starving.

“Y’all are too pretty to not have table manners,” Grim pointed out.

“So, what. You like it,” Jinx said, with duck sauce dripping from her lips.

The room buzzed with laughter, warmth, and the comfort of found family. Natural born enemies coming together as one was just a sign that we were never real enemies—we were supposed to be a family, and we found our way back to each other.

After the feast, War caught my hand and led me out of Grim’s tower. The others were still laughing and cracking jokes as we slipped away. War didn’t say much—he never did when he was in his element. We hoverboarded toward the forest.

“War, you better not drop me. You had too much to drink,” I said.

He wrapped his arms tighter around me, spinning us in lazy circles. “I should punish you for this,” I told him.

He licked my lips. “I can’t wait until you completely heal, so I can ruin your pussy again,” he threatened, and my nipples tightened in response.

“You can torture me now,” I challenged.

He palmed my ass and kissed me. “You don’t know what I’ll do to you when I’m gone off the Henny. It’ll give you a heart attack, send you back to those golden arched bridges in your heaven,” he slurred.

I moaned, pleading with my eyes for him to chain and dominate me.

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We crossed a floating bridge that glowed with blue runes, and soon the city's towers gave way to the emerald wild. The forest in War's realm was unlike anything I'd ever seen—trees with silver bark and leaves that beamed faintly, radiant flowers, and winding paths that seemed to rearrange themselves beneath our feet. The air was so clean it made my lungs ache with joy.

Fairies darted through, sprinkling dust over the flowers. The fairy who I saw wings get broken approached—a baby-faced beauty in a pink wrap, her coily hair tangled with shimmering dust.

"I heard about your fight with Hoax and I just want to say I admire you. War said this forest is in honor of you and we love it here, so we named it Eboenia's Fairyland," she said.

"Y'all really didn't have to," I replied, voice trembling.

She looked down, clutching her wrist. "I was twelve when Hoax... killed my parents and snatched me from my bed. It is the right thing to do after what you did for us. Please take this," she said, pressing a handmade beaded bangle into my palm.

I hugged her, a silent embrace. "I'll never take it off," I promised.

She pulled away. "I don't want to hold you two up," she said, then turned to War. "Mr. Azarion, can you tell Crash Out we're having a wine party later and he should come?"

"It's War, Bloom. I'm not that old," he replied.

“I heard you were,” she teased, darting away.

War scowled. “I don’t know what I was thinking bringing them here.”

I slid the bangle onto my wrist, the charms dangled like wind chimes. “You were thinking about me.”

I grabbed his hand and we walked through rose bushes, passing children sucking nectar from flowers. The deeper we went, the more alive I felt—the forest pulsed with War’s magic, sunlight and heat in my veins.

“This is nice for a family,” I said as we ventured further out, letting the nature revive me, my body no longer sluggish. The atmosphere was slowly bringing me back to life.

We wandered off the path, the forest growing denser but never dark. Instead, it glowed—every leaf and blade of grass seemed to hum with life. I could feel War’s magic pouring through the greenery.

“This whole place... it’s beautiful. It’s insane how I can feel your magic, even though it isn’t dark this time,” I told War.

I touched the trunk of a tree that thrummed with his power. “It feels alive. Like you.”

War grinned, stepping closer. He smelled of smoke and wildflowers, a little tipsy from the feast. He pressed me against the tree, his hands sliding down my sides. His lips brushed my ear. “Let me take care of you, Eboenia. I want to taste you.”

He touched my cloak and it turned to ash, swept away by the wind. He kneeled while spreading my legs. His tongue found my clit and he devoured me—no teasing, no mercy. He sucked and licked, tongue flicking and circling, rough and insistent. His hands gripped my thighs, holding me wide open.

“Fuck, War—” I gasped, grinding against his face, desperate for more.

He groaned, the sound vibrating through my core, his tongue plunging deep, then back up to my clit. My hips jerked, my hands tangled in his locs, nails scraping his scalp as he ate me like he’d been starved for years.

“Let that honey drip on my tongue. What the fuck I tell you about acting too scared to come?” he growled.

My body trembled, every nerve on fire. He sucked my clit, hard, then dragged his tongue down and fucked me with it, over and over, until I was shaking, my thighs clamped around his head. He didn’t stop, didn’t slow, just kept feasting, his eyes locked on mine, daring me to hold back.

“War, I’m—” I tried, but he just sucked harder, tongue fucking me until I shattered, crying out as my orgasm ripped through me, wetness pouring down my legs and onto his face.

He licked me clean, slow and thorough, then rose and kissed me, letting me taste myself on his lips.

He wrapped me in his arms. “One day, your belly will be swollen with my child. You’re mine, Eboenia. Always. Never forget that shit—I need you more than I ever thought possible,” he whispered in my ear.

The forest glowed around us, welcoming us to a new beginning—a never-ending fairytale of dark love, written just for us.