

Scarred Hearts

bluebells & vampirates

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The Kingdom of Nirus is one that has a lot of farm lands and mountains. The land has it all. The farm lands to the south, the rivers and waters to the west, the mountains to the north, and the castle to the east. The castle was a grey polished stone and the walls were high around the castle and the inner town. Outside the walls were small farms and other field based needs such as animal pens.

There are guards that move around the streets. There are markets and stores open as guards on horses and other soldiers walk the street and move to make sure everything is ok. There is a main paved road that moves down the middle of the town. The cobble leads to the castle gates and into the castle grounds. There is a small horse stable and a trainer ground for the soldiers. The main hall is as soon as you enter the castle. That is where there are three seats. A

king, a queen, and a princess. One throne for each of them.

Up the main stairs is where an older woman is standing over a table that has a map on the table. There are small flags along the border that are red. Enemies. The woman wore a crown and looks at her husband. The king looks at the queen and sighs. "I have too...my men are out there...i have to be too..ok..i will not be hurt. I am a good king and a good fighter...you know that my dear.." he moves close as he takes the queen's hands. "I have more guards coming...including a personal guard for our daughter...he is the best of the best.." the queen nods and sighs. "Alright my love.." the queen says. "Let me go get Anna...we need to let her know.." the king nods and lets his queen leave. . In a tall tower there is a room. There are two rooms in the tower but only one is being used and that is Anna's room. Her room is clean and the colors are ones of

bright and light. Mostly white with some shades of light colors such as pinks and greens. The princess sat there in the mirror and sighs as she fixes her hair. A mask sits next to her on her table. She does her hair then slides the mask on. This was her face. A white mask. Her eyes cut out so she can see and her lips and nose features made in the mask. She looks at herself and wants to scream but doesn't. Instead she stands and moves to her bookshelf. She is interrupted by a knock.

“Love...may i come in?” Her mother says. Anna sighs and says back in a small voice “yes mother..” her mother comes in and smiles at the women. “Hello dear...i have something to tell you..” she moves to Anna’s bed and Anna moves there as well. “Your father has to go to the front lines...i have tried to talk him out of it..but he doesn't listen to me..so we have gotten you a personal guard...he is on his way and will be here

soon...he is just going to make sure you are safe...he will join us for dinner and i want you to welcome him..alright?" Anna listens and nods "of course mother...i will make sure that i welcome him..." she looks down. Did she really need a guard?

August stood in his new room at a basin and mirror cleaning off his face. No matter how often or hard he scrubbed there were some marks that would never go away. Three painted lines made their way down his face, one for each rank of the mercenary group he used to be part of. Now for good or bad he had a new job instead, babysitting.

After his group had disbanded August had returned to his family and Kingdom and for the role he played in the war and proving his own value he was hired on to personally guard the king's daughter, the princess. He didn't know much about her, mostly her age although he had

been warned the the young woman was scarred and wore a mask to cover it. He was a fighter, for him scars were commonplace and worth showing off like badges of survival but he thought he understood why it was different in her position.

Looking down at the fine black tunic he now wore he glanced back at the armor. Apparently there was a dinner he would attend where he would be introduced to his new ward but he wasn't sure if he was supposed to wear his armor or not. He decided with it being a dinner and introductions he would leave it here. He had to wait on the steward to arrive and escort him anyway so he could ask on his arrival. He grabbed his sword belt and fastened it, the belt never leaving his side by more than a few feet.

A woman comes to the door of his room and knocks "sir, I am here to take you to the dining room.." the woman was an older maid and when he comes out of his room she bows before

turning and leading him through the castle. The castle was huge and had a lot of open areas of gardens. There were guards sparring in one of them then maids picking fruit in another.

The woman stops at a large door and bows as she pushes in the door. There in the room was a large table with four settings and the royal family standing. The mother and father talking to a young woman. The woman was only about 20 years of age. Her hair fell to the middle of her back and was a hazel brown. Her face was hidden. A mask sat on her whole face hiding everything but her eyes. Her eyes were brown as well and they were rich and dark. The father or king turns and smiles "come in come in August." The king walks towards the knight and holds out his hand to be shaken. "It is great for you to meet us here..thank you for coming...let's sit."

Anna looks at the man and her eyes widen softly. He had scars too. She shivers slightly as

she moves to her seat. A butler comes and pulls out her chair before she sits down. The other open seat is next to Anna. That seat was for August.

August followed after the woman silently. It would do him good to talk to her and learn more about the Kingdom and castle but he was nervous and didn't feel like talking at the moment. Besides with him being the personal guard he expected to spend a lot of time as a silent shadow looking over her. She might be the chatty type and make it to where that wasn't the case but for now it was just speculation.

When he entered August bowed as well not wanting to show disrespect to the royalty present. He rose and took the king's hand, locking his hand around his wrist. It was an old custom and he didn't know if this Kingdom greeted in the same way but he doubted the king would mind as long as respect was shown.

He looked around the room seeing the masked woman and knew that must be the princess. His curiosity rose as he pondered what she looked like under the mask but he assumed with his position he would find out eventually. He took his place at the table and looked down, why was there always so much silverware at a nobles table? He himself had been a youngest son of a Noble house and had been trained to follow protocol but he doubted he remembered much. He didn't bother since he knew with how many older siblings he had he would never inherit the wealth and need to bother with these things, until now when he suddenly did.

Anna sits and once everyone sat the food started to come out. They set down dish after dish and food after food. Anna didn't get a plate nor did she reach for the food as her parents did. The king looks at him and says as he gets his food “i have some rules. My daughter has to be in the

castle by nightfall...no garden walks or anything outside at night. You are to follow her everywhere and make sure that she is safe. She doesn't leave the castle land. Not a step outside the walls." His voice was serious as they talked.

Anna just looks down before every once and awhile she would look up and bite her lip. She was hungry...but she couldn't eat in front of him..she couldn't. The princess holds her hands in her lap and tries to not stare at the male to the side of her. He would be able to see that she was gripping her hands tight to give her something else to focus on other than the food.

The king looks at Anna and says "daughter...do you have any request..." Anna looks at her father before looking at August and says softly. "You won't see my face...or touch me...i don't like physical touch.." she says softly as she looks down. Her voice was soft and just above a whisper. "I don't eat in front of people...so i will

need to get food before i head to my room father.." she says and her father nods as a maid comes and starts to put together a plate for the princess.

August watched as the food was brought out and helped himself to it. Admittedly it was all delicious but it didn't escape him that the princess was not eating. As her father explained his rules he nodded his head in agreement, that was all easy enough although he was surprised she wasn't allowed out at night. He couldn't see the harm in letting her walk the gardens especially if he was with her but if that was the decree he would follow it.

His eyes moved to the young woman's lap as he saw the grip she had and was curious why. It didn't take much for him to realize that she didn't want her scars seen but she had to know eventually he would see everything, if he was her personal guard it was inevitable.

When the princess spoke he listened but he couldn't agree to everything she had mentioned. "I'm sorry your highness but I don't know if I can oblige." He said bowing. "If your safety relies on me touching you I can't let you be injured or worse out of fear of touching you. I can try to avoid it as much as possible but if doing so interferes with your safety I will do what I have to. I will honor your wishes however though of not trying to see under your mask." He turned back to the king. "Is that acceptable my lord?" He asked standing up so he could follow the princess whenever she left.

Anna looks at him and nods. Her father nods as well before smiling at Anna. "She will let you touch her if it is needed." He says as Anna stands and takes the plate. She smiles at the maid and nods her head saying thank you before turning and moving to the door. She didn't care if he followed her but she knew he would.

She walks quickly as she moves up the tower where her room was. Once they had gotten there she opened the door and went to sit the food down. "Um...you can stay here just turn away from me.." she says as she sits at her small writing desk and looks at the food.

She looks at him and waits before he is turned before taking off her mask. Her left side of her face was heavily scarred. She had a large scar running along her cheek and a few on her nose and lip area. She was beautiful but she didn't believe that. She quickly started to cry as she watched him. "Where are you from.." she asks softly before eating more.

August followed after her silently after bowing to the king and queen. He had planned on eating more food but what he had already eaten was enough for him and he didn't want to get into the habit of overeating. He was still learning his way around the castle but as he followed her

back it helped him remember the way from their tower to the dining room.

When they arrived he followed behind her and briefly examined her room, the layout was similar to his own but the design was much nicer and more...feminine. without being told he had already turned around so she could eat in peace, he had to turn a little more though noticing that he could see her reflection and not wanting to lose her trust.

"Where am I from?" He asked as much to himself as confirmation of her question. "That's a bit complicated. I was born in this Kingdom but since then I have traveled a good part of the world, most of this continent. When you see so much of the world the way I have it changes the way you think about your past and future." He thought about asking her the same but realized that was a silly question.

Anna takes off her mask and starts to eat. "I haven't been outside the castle..." she says softly as she starts to eat. She hums softly as she tastes the food. "Are you still hungry...I can get a maid to come up with some more food.." she says softly. "What is the outside world like...is it pretty ...i read some books that the hills and mountains are gorgeous.." she says. Anna sighs and rubs her face and starts to clean it without her mask. "Where were you before here? Do you have family.." she was starting to open up. She didn't know why but...she trusted him...

She finishes the food before putting her mask back on and then stands walking to him. "My mask is on.." she says as she rounds to face him. "Do you want a tour...the castle is large..." she says. "I mostly walk the halls when i am bored...or go to the library...my father doesn't like for me to leave the castle...but also...my face scares people..."

She looked sad at this fact. "O-or if you want to go back to your room..sorry...you probably don't want to.." she turns away and moves to her bathroom "you can leave...sorry.." she hides herself and sighs softly August closed his eyes to help remove the temptation to turn and see her appearance under the mask and just listened to her. He could have eaten more but he didn't need to and he doubted since he would be taking his meals with the princess that he would ever go hungry, it was nice of her to offer though.

"The outside world..." He began as his memory flicked from all the places he had been. "The outside world is beautiful, most of it anyway. The hills and mountains are larger than you can imagine, they make the view from your window look like nothing. There's deserts of sand where the days are melting and the nights freezing, the colors going from yellows and browns to blues. The oceans dwarf even the mountains, an

endless vision of blue and white beyond your vision. If you would ever like to hear about them, you need but ask."

When she mentioned her face scaring people he inwardly since as his mind went back to visions of the past. He remembered the look on men and women's faces as he came for them, ink and blood on his face as fire ravaged behind him. He had scared plenty of people...too many. He had met both the king and queen and they were beautiful people, even with scars he had a hard time imagining her not being so as well. Maybe him being attracted to scars made him a bad judge though."How about you give me a tour tomorrow instead?"

Anna nods and says "yes..that works!" She pokes her head out and smiles. "Umm..you can..you may take your leave. I am alright..going to just shower then get to bed." She would go back to the bathroom and start to run the water. She sighs

and rubs her face under the mask. If he left she would take off her mask and start to get washed up.

Her eyes would close and she just sits in the water thinking about the male. He had scars like her. He was very handsome...and nice. He didn't seem to judge her or fear her. She sighs and finishes her bath before putting on her sleeping clothes and moving to read a little in her bed. She rubs her face and sighs softly. She hated sleeping..she had bad nightmares and she always had them. "It is going to be ok....." she mumbles to herself.

"As you wish Milady." He told her before bowing and taking his leave "If you need anything I am just next door." He mentioned before closing the door behind him and heading to his own room. Stripping down from his new clothes he went to his trunk pulling out a pair of short

undergarments and putting them on for bed instead.

With that sorted he made his way to his bed and layed down. He wasn't used to beds this comfortable making it hard for him to get comfortable oddly. He was used to sleeping on the ground in a hide bedroll or occasionally a bed at a tavern but nothing like this. Eventually however he was able to fall asleep.

Anna reads for a while before moving to put her book up by drinking some water. She closes her windows and makes sure they're locked before filling her cup of water and even laying some blankets on the floor. She sometimes fell out of the bed and this would help her not hurt herself. As the final step she lays her mask on her side table before climbing into bed. She whispers "you are safe. You are safe. They can't hurt you. You are safe.."

Anna sighs and gets under the blanket. She closes her eyes and soon finds sleep but once again it is interrupted. Wolves attack her and she screams and kicks for what seems like an endless loop. The wolves scar her face. They eat her legs. She whines and screams waking herself up and she falls out of the bed. Her breathing was fast as she grabbed her mask and put it on. It was safe. She curls up and just holds her mask up to her face. She was hidden and just light sobs coming from a pile near her bed. The blanket had come with her. Her hair was a mess and her eyes were puffy with tears. She didn't know if she woke someone..she hoped she didn't wake her guard...even though a small part did want him to wake. She sighs and hides even more.

August was a light sleeper, he always had been but becoming a mercenary only made that more so. Part of that was sleeping in fur bed rolls and the like but also almost never feeling safe

enough to fully sleep. So when the princess suddenly screamed he was awake and on his feet in no time.

Reaching for his sword belt he pulled the sword free and grabbed the still lit lantern from his bedside table. He threw the door open and ran to hers, opening it with the same intensity before entering her room. He stood there for a moment waving the lantern around looking for intruders while wearing only his undergarments. The small scars and the body hair along his chest, legs, and arms exposed to the world.

August saw no threats, only his charge on the floor wearing her mask. "Are you alone?" He asked only having looked at her for the briefest moment before scanning the room more. Not seeing anyone around he lowered the sword and looked back at her curious as to what happened and wondering if she slept in her mask since it was still on.

Anna held herself and shakes her head “i am alone...sorry..just had a nightmare..” she mumbles and looks slightly up. She blushes and looks down to avert her eyes. “I-i am sorry...you can go back to bed...i am alright..” she says as she stays on the floor. She wasn't alright. She was shaking slightly and tears were still running down her face.

“Please...you can go...” she blushes. She was so embarrassed. She couldn't believe that she had a nightmare and he came running...she blushed and her ears were burning. “Please..i am already embarrassed enough.” Her voice was small as she stayed curled up. “Just a nightmare...that is all..” she says before standing and moving to her bed. She ties her mask to her face and then looks at him. “See...all good...” she smiles sadly.

August watched silently for a moment and listened, he didn't just hear the words but actually listened to what she was saying and the

way she said them. The mask made it harder to read her face but there were other things to see and read. It was obvious something had scared her, and badly at that. The way she shook and her voice came out he knew she wasn't okay.

He lowered his sword and sat it against the door and sat his lantern down on a table where he found some space before coming to sit next to her by the bed. He was her personal guard now and he knew he couldn't do much to help with those but he would do his best to try and guard her from her own mind as well. he started to place a hand on her for comfort but remembered she didn't like touching in time to stop himself leaving his hand awkwardly frozen between them for a moment.

"You know, we all wear mask in one way or another." He motioned over his own face as if he was putting a mask on. "For me it's when I'm around new people or too many of them. I'm not

a fan of those situations but I act like they don't bother me, that I don't have weaknesses." He turned his head and looked at her eyes through the mask, he was surprised by how beautiful they were. "You always wear the one mask around me, and that's fine, but you don't need to wear multiple. I'm your personal guard and you can talk to me about the things you can't others, it's part of the perks of having your own guard." August didn't say anything for a moment but reached up to his chest. He grabbed the amulet, a small iron shield on a frayed line of thread and pulled it off over his head. He held it out for her to take. "I have a lot of nightmares too, I saw...things in the wars...did things. It haunts me and invades my dreams. That shield never comes off of me, except now I suppose, it helps. Whenever I have a nightmare I just hold onto it and begin to feel better." He gave her a warm smile, the expression unusual on his face,

breaking his own mask of sternness. "Goodnight princess, yell if you need me." He told her before grabbing his lanterns and sword and going back to his own room. Anna looks at him as he begins to speak. She sinks down a little and her body seems to relax. She watches his face and smiles softly as he fakes putting a mask on. His words...meant so much. She had to be perfect some much of the time. Maybe she could be her true self around him. He didn't seem to care that she might have scars on her face. The knight saw through that. Through her mask and saw who she was. She goes to speak before looking at the amulet. Her eyes widen and she moves to take the small amulets. Her fingers rub on the thread and over the iron shield. She looks at him.

Her eyes were large and almost pleading for him not to leave. She looks at the amulet and slips it over her head and holds it close to her chest. The princess smiles back at him, her eyes showing

how thankful she was for him being there for her. She nods softly and says "good night..Sir August..." She watches him walk out of the room and close the door behind him. Once he was gone she took off her mask and then settled back into her bed. Her fingers traced the shield that was around her neck as she laid in the bed and smiled to herself. "Thank you August...you are my savior.." she mumbles before closing her eyes, sleeping for the first time in a while..without nightmares.

The next morning she didn't wake up as early as she normally did. She was curled up and under her blanket sleeping. Her hand around the amulet as if it would save her from her mind which it did. The sun came into her room and slipped over the bed hitting her hair in all the right spots. Outside her door, a maid would knock and wait to be let in. The maid was getting worried as the princess was normally up by now.

August felt awkward walking back to his room half naked wielding a sword and lantern but he had done his job. It was strange to be called Sir August, he wasn't sure if his new position actually made him a knight and sir or if it was just the princess who said as much. He thought about this all the way back to his room and into bed where he promptly fell asleep.

The next morning August woke up as soon as the first bit of sun touched his face. He yawned loudly and stretched before suddenly realizing something was wrong when he couldn't find his amulet before remembering earlier in the night. He scratched at his chest where it normally sat but other than the strangeness of it not being there it didn't bother him.

Crawling out of bed he began to exercise, doing what he could in the chambers without a field. If he had time later he might go to the training yard but only if he had time. After a good sweat had

started to form he drew a bath and cleaned himself ready to start the day.

With bathing out of the way he went to his wardrobe and opened it looking at the new clothes the crown had given him. None of it was much his style but it didn't bother him and it was comfortable and fit well enough. After equipping his sword belt and returning the sword to his scabbard since he had forgotten overnight he went outside and stood waiting at the princesses door for whenever she would awaken.

The maid looks at August and bows. "Sir.." she knocks on the door again and waits. Anna finally wakes up and yawns softly. She rubs her eyes and puts on her mask before walking to the door. the maid bows as the princess yawns "i can get ready myself..thank you Mia. Can you get my breakfast and bring it up..and bring my guard a serving as well.." the maid nods and bows before moving away. Anna looks at August and smiles "hello

sir..would you like to come in..or wait here..i just need to get ready and eat then i can take you on a Tour.." she smiles before turning and walking back to her room.

She opens her closet and tries to pick her outfit. She decided to pick a loose and flowy dress. She grabs it and takes it into the bathroom and sets it up before moving back to her room humming and getting different things. She touches the amulet and sighs as she takes it off and walks to August. "Here...thank you for letting me use it...it helped.." She hands the amulet to August and looks at him. "I bet your lover would love to have one. Matching one..." she blushes and turns. "I-i am sorry..that was inappropriate.." She puts the amulet into his hand, touching his hand before moving back to the bathroom and closing the door. She sighs and rubs her face before moving to get ready.

August had considered staying outside so she wouldn't have to worry about him while changing. Although since she had offered for him to come in she must not have been worried about it herself and probably had a changing screen or would do so in the other room. He decided just to follow after her.

He watched her as she went about her business but also looked over the room now that it was brighter out and he could make out more detail. When she handed him the amulet he had a bit of warmth coming through it, he could tell she really had used it and since she didn't scream again he assumed it worked. There wasn't actually anything magical about the pendant, it was just a piece of metal on a string but sometimes all you needed was belief in something and something to ground you for it to work.

Then he heard her mention a lover and he felt uncomfortable. As a mercenary he didn't have a lifestyle before to think about a family and he didn't think he did now for that matter. He had been to a brothel a time or two to help relieve himself during his time at war but he never had someone he would actually consider a lover. In the end he sat the amulet on her pillow so she would find it before bed, hopefully she would get some use out of it. "No lovers for me, it's just me." He said softly, finding a nice spot in the corner to look at instead of her now that he felt embarrassed.

The princess starts to put on her dress and pulls her hair up. She washes her face and the. Puts on her mask before walking out of the bathroom and smiles. "Ok! Breakfast should be here soon..we can eat on the balcony or in the tea room.." she holds her hands behind her back but looks at the guard. She blushed as she thought

how horrible that sentence was she spoke. She should never ask. But she did feel a little hopeful that..he didn't have someone. What was she thinking?

She tries to stop the blush as the maid comes back and had the two plates. It has a little of everything. "How about the baloney.." she says as she walks and opens the window doors.

The maid sets the food down, bows and then leaves. She sits and looks at him to follow. She takes her plate and turns slightly away from him before lifting her mask slightly to eat.

August took his plate and followed her out to the balcony thinking some sunshine and a good view would go well with breakfast. He was a bit surprised she wanted him to eat with her however since she had said the day before she didn't eat around people. Maybe this meant she accepted he was her guard and had more confidence with him.

He noticed her turn slightly and lifted her mask to eat and even though if he really wanted to he could look at her at the moment he respected her privacy and didn't. Instead he looked out from the balcony at the view while eating his own breakfast. He wondered if she would ever feel comfortable not wearing the mask around him.

Anna looks over and tilts her head "do you have any questions for me? I feel like we should know about each other.." she says before turning away again and eating a little bit before turning back to him.

She looks at him and basically just stares at him. He was very handsome..she also felt safe with him. Maybe..maybe he could see..no. That wouldn't be good. He would hate her. Seeing her true face. She turns away fully and eats all her food quickly before turning back to him and smiling "I am an open book..any questions about

me or anything." She wanted to know more about him. But she didn't want to make him uncomfortable. She would try and make him feel like he makes her feel..safe and comfortable.

August did have questions for her in fact, but most of them were ones he either didn't think she would answer or things he didn't think she should ask. He was curious about what had happened to scar her, what it looked like, if she was still going to be married off. None of these things felt appropriate to ask so he thought about it while he ate.

He did have one that he wasn't sure about asking but decided to anyway. "I'm not sure if this falls under a personal or professional question." He started still hesitant about asking. "If you are out with a...suitor, do I need to go and follow you or is it up to his own personal guard or no guards?" He asked, unsure of what would be correct.

Anna thinks and blushes “um..no..there..I won’t be wed...” she says as she looks away and bites her lip. “I have told my parents that I wish to not be wed and I will take over the Kingdom. No prince would want to...would want to be with..me..” she touches her mask and sighs.

She just sits there playing with her fingers. “All the prince’s make fun of me anyway...none of them would want to marry me..in all my years I haven’t had one suitor..” she turned to him and her eyes showed the sadness. She hasn’t been on a date, hasn’t been taken out to watch the stars, hasn’t even held someone’s hands.

“So you do not have to worry about that..” she smiles and chuckles sadly before taking the plates and moving back inside. She sees the amulet and blushes “are you sure you don’t want..your amulet back..”

August wasn't sure if he would get an answer much less that one. His heart went out to her and

for the first time he felt pity for her. With the mask he thought she might have less suitors but he didn't expect for her to have none. He once again began to reach over so he could comfort her before stopping. Now he wasn't sure if she actually didn't like physical touch or just wasn't used to it. He wasn't sure what to say as she got up.

When she went inside and she asked about the amulet he shook his head. "I think I've moved past the need for the amulet. It seemed like it helped you last night so for as long as you'll wear it I would like for you to keep it. Take it as a gift from me so that even while you sleep I can help guard your dreams."

Anna sets the plates down by the door for the maid and moves to take the amulet. She looks at it as she closes her eyes. "T-thank you.." she looks at him and a tear rolls down her face. She takes a deep breath before putting on the amulet and

says “ok! Tour time..” she says as she slips on her shoes and walks to her door opening it. “Come on!” She smiles as she turns and walks.

She would take him all over the castle. Showing him the grounds, both training and gardens, library, tea rooms, other bathroom, and the highest point at the castle. It was an attic that she sometimes used to read and just be away from people.

She stands in the attic of the tower and looks out the small window. “You said you went a lot of places...is there a place you can just lay in a field and sleep...I want to see that place..”

August just nodded his head to her thanks before following after her. He had had the smallest semblance of a tour when he was given the position of her personal guard but only the bare necessities. The library was impressive and in other circumstances he would have been happy to look around for a while. He had been different

than many of the mercenaries he had worked with, since he had come from a noble family even if a lower one he had been trained in etiquette and schooling and was one of the few who could read and write. The other parts of the castle were nice although not as exciting for him.

When they got to the attic he looked around wondering why they would use the highest room in the castle as an attic but he would never understand other people's decisions. As she talked about it he could tell she had been a lonely girl and now woman and he once again felt a sadness for her.

When she mentioned a field where she could lay and sleep the flashbacks started. Short memories of battlefields where both his friends and family and their enemies laid dying. His heart rate skyrocketed and he began to cold sweat for a moment before remembering where he was and what was happening. He calmed himself

panicking a moment longer as he realized his pendant was gone before remembering it was with her. He gave her a warm soft smile. "Plenty some look like oceans of green and gold when the wind blows hard enough.

Anna looks at him and sees the moment he started to panic. She moves to him and looks at him. Her eyes were worried filled "are you ok...did I do something" she asks softly as her own hand moves towards him. She never did this and it scared her. She pulls back her hand and bites her lip. "Do..do you want your amulet..I-I am sorry.." she says softly as she takes it off and holds it out to him. Her eyes were worried she had did something wrong.

She didn't like to see my one upset. She just wanted to see him smile. Without panic in his eyes. She steps closer and looks up at him. Her eyes were scanning his face. "Please tell me what's wrong.."

She was closer than she ever really has been to anyone. She bites her lip as she moves her hand finally and takes his. Her hand was shaking as she put the amulet into his hand. "You keep it..I am ok...I can deal with my nightmares..I don't want you to have any.."

"Don't worry about it, I'm fine." His smile was warmer now as his episode had passed. He had been away from the battlefield for months now but sometimes the sights came back to his mind and he felt like he was reliving them. It was often and it wasn't anything specific, sometimes a random word or phrase would just trigger that part of him and he had to grit his teeth and get through it, preferably without hurting anyone.

"Please keep the amulet, it would mean more to me for you to have it then for myself. You didn't do anything wrong just...I've seen things and sometimes the ghosts of those things come back to haunt me." Reaching out he took her hand

that held his amulet and tightened it in her own grip. "I know what it is to fight nightmares and scars, please, keep it."

Anna looks at him and at their hands. They were holding hands. She wanted to pull away but...she didn't. Why didn't she? She bites her lip and nods. "Ok...but if you ever need it...i can give it back..." she says softly as she stands close to August. "Thank you...you are the only person who...makes me feel..any kind of normal.." she says softly. Her eyes were scanning his face and she seemed to move closer to him. "I..." she starts to speak but then shuts herself up and pulls away from August. "Shall we go to the library..i want to read some books.." she blushes and turns away. Her ears were burning as she slipped the necklace back on and made her way down to the library.

As they walked, Anna was lost in her mind. She blushes even harder as she thinks about how

close she got to August. He smelled nice...he made her feel safe. She sighs and rubs her neck softly as they enter the library she moves to a large fireplace and sits in one of the chairs. It was clear she had been here multiple days or months or even years. She had a stack of books she was reading. She grabs one of the books and slips off her shoes and curls up in the chair. "You can come sit or look around the library..we have a large collection of books.." she smiles before opening a book. It was a story of a prince and a knight. She hums softly as she reads. She always wanted a fairytale ending. She wanted a knight to come save her. She looks up at August and blushes. No...he..he wouldn't..no...she thinks to herself and sighs as she reads. Her mind started to make the scenes from the book. The knight started to look like her knight. August...she sighs and tries to not think about the male. August looked back down at her not having any idea of the things

that were going through her mind. When she said she would keep it he nodded and let go of her hand. He was glad that he made her feel *normal* but he thought it was strange since they had just met. He then noticed how close she was to him and the way her eyes looked under the mask. He wasn't sure if she was just reacting to him treating her like a normal person but considering how she mentioned not liking physical touch he was surprised how little she seemed to mind being close to him and touching.

August was happy to be going back into the library but he wasn't sure if he should stay close to her or just be nearby in the same room. As she sat down he moved to the fireplace for a moment watching the fire lick the wood before moving to the shelves. He walked along them slowly tracing the spines of the books with his fingertips and reading the titles. There were plenty of options but he wasn't interested in

actually reading them at the moment. He pulled one down deciding to take it to his chambers to read before bed before going to where she sat. He stood behind her looking over her shoulder and starting to read the book as well. A fairy tale about princesses and knights, he hadn't read anything like this for a long time but he wouldn't fault anyone for what they enjoy, he wouldn't be surprised if he enjoyed it in the end.

Anna takes a deep breath and sighs as he walks away to look at the book. She curls up and tries to clear her mind. She couldn't believe she held his hand. She never felt like she needed to hold someone more than to hold him. That moment of his panic scared her. She wanted to hold him and make sure that he was ok. That he was safe. She blushes even more and groans softly before reading the book. The fire was comforting as she read.

She was curled up in the chair, her feet were tucked under her dress as she reads the book. She was half way through the story when he comes to her and stands behind her she takes a breath and can sense his presence. She looks up at him and smiles. Her eyes winking at the corners. "Do you want to sit? I can read outloud to you...if you wanted to know what is going on in this book.." she giggles softly and closes her book and turns to face him. She was very close. "Do you like stories of a knight saving a princess..." her eyes were scanning his face as she looks at his scars. She moves one finger to lightly touch his forehead were a scare was. "How did you get these..." she mumbles softly. August read along with her as she read before she mentioned him sitting and reading aloud. "If you would enjoy that, your highness. I'm perfectly capable of reading along like this but if you would enjoy doing so that would be

acceptable to me." He wasn't sure if she thought he was unable to read it on his own which he supposed would be true for many guards.

He was taken aback though when she suddenly giggled and closed the book and turned to face him. "I suppose they're nice on occasion although I wouldn't want to read only those stories."

August was about to ask her if that was what she enjoyed reading before he noticed her looking him over before touching him, he assumed a scar.

August froze for a moment, it was new and strange to have someone caressing his scars in this way. In the past he had shared a bed with women who would caress his scars throughout his body but not usually his face, and those touches were more out of eroticism than whatever the princesses touch was. Was it out of curiosity? Pity? Understanding? He didn't know but it was unusual.

He had almost forgotten to answer her, caught up in his mind the way he was before he grappled his thoughts together. "War, fighting, training, honestly I don't remember where most of them came from. The tattoos I know as well as some of the larger ones you can't see but the small ones...it's safe to assume they're small ones I can't remember."

Anna looks at him and traces a scar on his chin. "I remember mine..." she says softly as she looks at him. Her eyes were not of pity or anything but of...understanding. She bites her lip which of course he can't see before she pulls away and blushes. Her ears turned red. "S-sorry..." she turns and sits back down before motioning to the other seat and she starts to read out loud.

Her eyes were glued to the book. She didn't want to embarrass herself more. She slowly relaxed as she kinda got lost in the book. She read out loud and slow for a while before she would look up at

him. Her eyes were widened not of fear but of adoration. He was able to have a life with his scars. She wanted to be like him. Have the courage to show her face. She quickly looks away before yawning and saying “do you want to get lunch? I can eat here and you can go out to the town or...” she wanted him to stay but she pushed that away and stood. Slipping on her shoes she leads him out of the library and down to the kitchen.

The main cook looks at the princess and smiles “OH Princess! Are you hungry! We are cooking some soup right now!” Anna nods and smiles going over and looking at the soup. The princess and cooks start to speak in French. Anna always wanted to cook. Sometimes the cook would let her bake but never cook. He always said a woman of her level shouldn't get dirty cooking. Anna would just watch and then look at August. She smiles and says “do you want soup? We also have

bread and even some meat.." she says as she moves to him. His amulet hanging on her neck and falling to her chest.

As she wished, August took a seat in the other chair. His eyes flickered between her and the fire as she read and he listened. It wasn't a particularly interesting story, not that it was bad but just it very much kept in line with the others of its type. The most strange part was just having it read to him, he doubted he had experienced that since he was a child.

August noticed that as she read she seemed to relax and grow less tense. He hadn't been sure what had her so tense to begin with but suddenly she was done reading. "I don't think so, Milady. I believe your parents wouldn't like for me to leave you and besides that I would prefer to eat with you."

Following after her he looked around the kitchen curiously. He wasn't a cook, couldn't do anything

more than put food in a pot or pan really. When they suddenly started speaking French he began to get lost. He understood a little of what they said, not a lot but some. Ranking people in his mercenary group were expected to be able to communicate the basics but he couldn't follow everything. "Anything is fine for me princess, I'll take whatever you're having."

Anna nods and walks to grab a tray and she goes to help the older man who is the cook. She smiles and giggles as they speak in French. The cook pours out two servings of soup and adds a slice of bread to each of the bowls. She hums and thanks the cook before walking to August and smiles "come on..we can eat outside..there is a nice area." She says softly as she takes the tray and leads them to a small sitting area that they could eat at. She sits down the tray and takes the bowl meant for her. She looks at him and bites her lip.

She reaches up and unties one of the strings before sliding the mask to the side and she starts to eat. "You are the only one that makes me..feel safe to do this.." she says softly and slides the mask back down before turning to him and smiling. "Thank you..i don't know why but..you don't make me feel like a freak..." she says softly before she takes the bread and eats a little bit of it. She hoped he wouldn't betray her trust. She actually liked him so far. "Tell me about your home...or..your favorite place you have been.." she says softly as she looks at him and takes small sips of the soup.

Her lips that he would be able to see are pump and soft looking. There is a small scar that goes on her lip. It is small but it is able to be seen due to the discoloration of her lip due to the scar. She also had some scars on her left chin which was the side that he was sitting and facing.

August continued to watch as his ward and the cook spoke and seemed to have a good time until she was back. He wasn't particularly hungry but he could always eat and it smelled delicious. Eating outside seemed like a nice idea so he followed and sat with her before taking his food. He originally had turned as to not see her face until she spoke. Her words made it sound as if she was okay with him looking or even inviting him to do so. so instead of turning away he looked at her. Her whole face wasn't uncovered but enough to let him make out some of the scars. He felt bad for the woman now, not because of the scars themselves but how it would make others look at her. He could tell from the little he saw that she was indeed beautiful but he knew to most the scars would make her not so. That was most people though, to him what he could see she was still beautiful. Her lips were lovely and looked like the sort that begged

to be kissed although he couldn't be the one to do so.

Looking away a moment later he thought about what she might want to hear. He tried to make it obvious when he looked away it wasn't because her scars made him uncomfortable. "My family is a small noble house in your country. I might technically be a noble but with six older brothers I'm not in line for anything so I set myself to make my fame and fortune another way. I never quite managed that but for the most part I've had a decent life."

Anna watches him as his eyes scan her face she did show. She tries to not pull away or hide. She really did trust him. Also it was very hard to have a conversation without looking at him. She takes some soup into her lips as she listen to him talk about his family. "Well i think that you done well...i mean you are guarding the princess...but i bet you miss out there...what was it like...riding

a horse? I haven't rode one...i would love too...or see a pig..." she smiles at him and this was the first time she had really shown anyone her smile. Her teeth was clean and straight. She could only smile so big due to her scar but she still smiled and looked at him.

"Tell me about the fields again...or the mountains...or the ocean! Was the water cool and salty like the books say.." she became almost childlike. She wanted to know more about the world that she had hidden herself from. She even moved closer as if his words were gold that she had to pick up. "I wish i could go out there...away from these walls.." her smile fell a little as she thought about how her only real sense of the world was...well from her books.

"I am sorry..you probably don't want to have me picking your brain...but...did you come with a horse? You rode here? Can I see your horse...I

promise I am good with animals.." she looks at him and begs with her eyes.

August watched her begin to ramble as she got excited and admittedly it was a bit cute but it was overwhelming for him as he tried to keep up with everything she asked. He raised his hands, palms facing towards her in a surrender and slowed down motion, a smile stretched across his face so she would know he wasn't trying to be disrespectful or rude to her.

"One thing at a time, I only have one mouth." He thought about all the questions she asked for a moment debating on what to tell her. "How about this, everyday you can ask me to tell you about one thing? I'll tell you everything about that one thing I can think of but only that thing. That way you don't run out of things to ask me about." He offered hoping that would be enough to keep her excited but not tell her everything at once so she grew bored of him.

Anna looks at him and nods. "Ok..today can you take me to your horse and feel me about the animals.." she says softly as she smiles. She was leaning closer to him. "Please...I have never seen a horse...the knights don't let me see them.." she says softly as she looks at him. Her eyes were wide and her eyes just looked so helpful.

She ties her mask back on and stands up "come on!" She pleads and even gets on her knees before him and pleads with her eyes and hands "pleaseeeeeee...." She begs as she looks at him. Her eyes were large but also happy. She loved to joke and he could probably sense that this was the real princess. This was the real Anna.

August looked down at her large pleading eyes and debated. With her seemingly coming out of her shell and acting more...he didn't know, maybe herself, it wouldn't be good to not reward her for it. He was also worried though that she would

think he would drop everything to do her bidding which wasn't the case.

In the end he decided he would let her see his horse. "Alright, let's go to the stables. Before we do though I need to warn you, my horse is a large mountain breed called a Clydesdale. So it's going to be considerably larger than the ones you would normally see around here. So if you get scared or think you might, we can turn around and try another time." He didn't want her going and then getting scared and no longer wanting to experience them.

Anna jumps up and jumps a little "yay!" She says before smoothing out her dress and clearing her throat. "Of course..it would be my pleaser..and i wont get scared..." her eyes showed her true emotion...excitement. She would follow him down and looks around the parts of the castle that she hadn't really been in. As they walk more into the knight area they would look at her and

even some would talk. Anna immediately looked down and stops walking. "Um..maybe...maybe we shouldn't.." she wasn't scare of the horse but of the men around them.

Some of the knights laugh as they look at the one female princess and two the masked one. They would whisper and Anna would start to panic. Her hand grip the necklace as she tries to breathe. "August.." she says so softly as she bites her lip. She wanted to hide. Wanted to run away and not be here. Her mind was racing as the voices seemed to get louder and louder August walked with her leading her through the stables. He hadn't spent a lot of time here but it was where he had first entered the castle and did the testing of his abilities to show he was qualified to be her guard. Although he didn't know it very well he had to spend some time here and she didn't seem like she knew the area.

As they walked he noticed Anna growing more uncomfortable and heard the knights talking. He couldn't make out details but he could tell it was directed at the princess and not pleasant. When he saw her reach for the shield pendant he knew it was starting to bother her. Watching the men talk and the way Anna reacted he could feel his face getting hot as he grew angrier.

She was their princess, she literally had dominion over them and they were being both disrespectful and cruel. August stopped and squatted in front of her to be eye level. "We can go back but we're already half there anyway. Why should we go? It's my horse, your stable, your castle. So what if some pompous knights want to talk about your scars? Your scars showed what you survived and that you're tougher than they are, and can their words hurt as much as what become those scars."

He wanted to comfort her but he still tried to be mindful of her not being touched. "Besides, we have apples." He had taken a few apples from trees as they walked planning on letting her feed his horse but he could make other uses for them. He tossed one in his hand a couple times testing its weight and getting a good grip on it. A moment later he tossed it at one of the knights he had seen point and talk. The apple flew and smacked the man in his ear knocking him over into the mud at his feet.

Anna looks at him and bites her lip. She listens to him and just watches his eyes. He didn't have the same hatred. He didn't make fun of her. He made her safe. She takes a few deep breaths and nods. she closes her eyes before says "ok...we can still go.." she smiles at him before watching the apple being thrown at the knight. She giggles softly before saying "don't make them too mad.." she says before taking her hand off the pendant and

sighs. "Thank you...August.." she smiles before walking back to the stables. She knew where the stables were but she hadn't been to them. She looks around at the horses that were there and she bites her lip.

The workers would keep their eyes away from the princess. She looks around and tries to find the big horse. "Where is your horse.." she says softly before her eyes landing on the big horse. Her eyes widen and she breathes out.

"Wow...that is a big horse..." she says softly before slowly walking toward the horse. She just watches the horse and doesn't move towards the horse anymore. She just looks at the beast.

"What's his name.." she says softly as she watches the horse.

August walked with her in silence snagging another apple along the way to make up for the one he had thrown. When they arrived he didn't see his horse and laughed as she tried to spot it

but he knew if she could she would. A moment later a salt and pepper horse stepped out from behind the stables.

He approached the fence of the stable grounds and climbed up some steps before whistling. The large horse came trotting to the fence and stopped directly at him. "This is Kingdom, I know it's a strange name but it comes from an old story." Without the steps Kingdom's shoulders were eye level with him and that was without the neck or head. Actually riding him was intimidating for everyone else due to his towering stature. Taking an apple he held it up for Kingdom who delicately plucked it from his hands before quickly devouring the fruit. "Would you like to try?" He asked, turning back to look at her.

Anna moves to the fence and looks at the apple. She wanted to, but now she was slightly scared. She shakes her head "i am ok...just want to

watch.." she says softly as she looks at the horse. "Is he a good steed...I bet he is.." her eyes were large and seemed to be happy. She bites her lip and says "i want to ride a horse one day..." her eyes looked around the horse and hums softly. She would love to pet and feed the horse but she was just scared...nervous. She leans on the fence as she watches the horse.

"I bet you have ridden him everywhere...I mean he looks so fun to ride and just...be with.." she says as she leans against the fence. "Do you..do you think that maybe one day i could ride him..or you teach me how to ride..any horse...it doesn't have to be Kingdom..i-i.." she turns her face and blushes. God she is just embarrassing.

August smirked but he didn't look at her as he continued looking at his horse. "Well it wouldn't hurt to give him a brushing today, would you like to give that a try? He is a good steed without doubt but I didn't take him everywhere, he's a

very large horse and sometimes he was too big to bring along. Kingdom began moving his head against August's arm playfully while trying to steal the second apple before he just gave it to the horse.

"I don't know if you could ride this horse, at least not on your own." He looked at his horse and tried to picture the princess riding such a massive beast. "I would be willing to help you ride another horse if allowed or even Kingdom with me, not him on your own though. He's a great horse but the size difference between the two of you would make it more difficult."

Anna smiles and finally gives in. "Can I brush him.." she reaches her hand out for the horse to smell. She looked like a child discovering a new planet. Her eyes were wide and a smile that was hidden was very large. "We have horses that are supposed to be for me to ride but..my father doesn't let me...I have never even been in this

section of the castle.." she says softly as she pets the horse softly on the nose.

She was pretty much leaning over the fence to reach the horse. "I would love to ride with you.." she says as she looks at him and her ears turn red from blushing "o-or you can just teach me on a different horse and.." she stops herself from talking. "Brush him ok?" She smiles at him and hopes that he doesn't recognize she is embarrassed. August listened to her speak about the things she wasn't allowed to do and once again felt pity for the princess. All this wealth and power but so little freedom. He could see her getting embarrassed and had been all day but he didn't think much about it. He assumed it was due to her little interaction with other people. It seemed her castle was more like a prison in some regards.

"I'll be back in just a moment." He told her before walking into the stable. He grabbed a brush from

the wall and came back. Stepping back into the steps he began brushing the side of Kingdoms neck to show her how to do it. "Just start from where he can see you so you don't spook him, he doesn't know you or trust you yet. Sometimes it can be quick to gain someone's trust but sometimes it takes a while."

Anna takes the brush and does what he did. She watches the horse and smiles as she feels the fur. Her eyes and body relaxed as she brushes Kingdom. She hums lightly as she does it. "You still have to tell me about the animals.." she giggles as she looks at him.

Anna did feel safe and comfortable around August. She didn't know why. Maybe it was because of his scars or maybe because of his wall and welcoming being. But she liked that he was her guard. "Thank you for being my guard.." she says softly as she pets Kingdom. "I like you as my

guard..you make me comfortable..which I haven't been in a long time.."

August nodded his head as he watched her. "I know, I just needed to make sure you were doing it right first. " He sat the third and final apple down on the steps. "Feel free to try and feed him if you feel comfortable." Kingdom was a war horse so it was strange to see him getting primed and pampered like a princess's pony.

"Well you deserve to feel comfortable and safe, everyone does." He realized he still hadn't said much about his horse. "I bought Kingdom from some breeders up further in the mountains. There's a family that raised horses there that are really well known throughout the Kingdom, I wouldn't be surprised if the royal horses came from there. I had been looking for a horse to ride into and between battles but they only had Clydesdales usually used for working. I bought

him anyway and trained him up and after years of work were both here."

Anna brushes the horse before looking at the apple. She moves to the apple and takes it in her smaller hands. She walks to Kingdom and smiles as she holds out the apple. Kingdom takes the apple gently as Anna giggles. She pets Kingdom and smiles as she listens to August. "He trust you...animals i think have a sense who is good and who isn't..and i also think people and animals come into our lives for a reason.." she sighs softly as she takes the brush and continues to brush the hours. She watches Kingdom before asking "can..can i sit on his back?"

She looks at August and smiles. "I dont..i dont have too i just...never mind.." she turns and puts the brush down as she leans against the fence. She just looks at the horse and her eyes were kinda sad as she realized that she didn't have freedom. She was "free" to walk about the castle

but that was it. She knew other royals went out and saw their land. But she hasn't not sense that night. She sighs softly as she looks out at the people working around the stables. She bites her lip before looking at August. "Thank you for showing me him..he is a beautiful horse..."

August watched her carefully not expecting Kingdom to do anything but wanting to be cautious. When he took the apple and the princess laughed he relaxed. He was glad that she seemed to have enjoyed feeding him. "I wouldn't go as far as to say I'm a good person." He started looking back at his horse. In many ways he was certainly a good person, always willing to help others and stand up for those who can't do so themselves. That being said, as a mercenary he had done plenty of things that couldn't be called good and haunted him and even more things he had to just watch. "I will do everything I can to protect you, and I hope that

we can grow close, but I don't want to deceive you into thinking I'm a good person."

When she asked if she could sit on Kingdom he wasn't sure how to answer. "I would be fine with that but not bareback. He is a great horse, well behaved, but he isn't trained to let someone other than myself mount him without a saddle. If you would like to wait a bit I can get him saddled up and we can ride him together." He looked down at her and her clothes and wondered if it would work. "Would you be able to ride in a dress?" He asked not wanting her to have to expose anything by lifting her dress enough to saddle him.

Anna looks at him and tilts her head. "Can i sit sideways...or..." she looks at her dress and sighs. "I guess I can't..." she says softly as she smiles. "Thank you for trying though.." she says as she looked happy but also her eyes were sad. "I bet Kingdom just wants to take a good rest after a

long time on the road.." she reaches and pets him softly. She was ok just sitting by. It is what she had done her whole life. Yet..why did it bother her when it came to be with him. She never wanted to be able to have fun with someone more than August. She wanted to ride the horse and giggle and laugh. But she knew she couldn't. "It is ok sir August.." there it was. She was going back to her princess self. Not her true self. She looks out and at the sky. "Maybe another day..." or another lifetime. She knew she wouldn't be able to ride a horse this life. She wishes she was born somewhere she could ride the horse. Be free and go riding around the town and the countryside. Feel the wind in her hair. Her hand wanders up to the pendant and rubs it as she kinda hides herself. She doesn't talk or make eye contact and just stares, seeming to be lost in her own mind. Her own hell.

August thought for a moment not wanting to give up yet and not liking to see the disappointment that was clearly coming over her. "Hold on a moment." He told her with a smile before going back to the stable once again. He quickly grabbed his saddle and other gear before heading out to meet her, the heavy saddle resting on his shoulder.

"You want to ride a horse, we're going to ride a horse." Walking through the gate he approached Kingdom and began saddling him up. During his time as a mercenary he always took care of Kingdom himself and so the saddling process was second nature to him and made it go quickly. Taking the reins he led Kingdom around in a circle for a moment before pulling up next to the steps and Anna. "How much do you like that dress?"

Anna watches him put the saddle on and tilts her head. "I mean..i like all my dresses..really August

it is fine..we don't have too...if you want to ride him that is fine..i can go back to the library and read.." about the outside world. She tries to not look sad or upset but she clearly was. She smiles and tries to brush him off. "It is fine..really..you go..we can ride another time.." she says softly.

She really wanted to ride the horse. But she didn't have anything but her underwear under the dress. She wouldn't be able to ride the horse without showing off her legs or even more. She blushes and tries to hide that was well. "What about my dress?" She says softly as she moves towards him. The servants were starting to watch as they have never seen her ride a horse or even leave the castle before. Her eyes weren't on them though. They were falling on August. She trusted him and would see what he had planned.

August looked from her to the horse and then gave her his best warm comforting smile. "Do you trust me? If you want to ride Kingdom all we

have to do is get you up there. Your dress may work but I'm not sure,...if it doesn't all we need to do is rip about a foot of the fabric from the bottom, a little slit." He held up his hands about a foot apart to show her. "We may not have to but..."

August put his boot through the stirrup before hauling himself over and onto the saddle. From up here the princess looked so much smaller. The feeling of being on a horse, especially this large, was surreal. "Or we leave and you don't get to try." He had left space in front of him for her to join him if she decided to. He held out his hand so if she agreed he could pull her up to sit in front of him.

Anna looks at him and bites her lip. She thinks before moving and taking his hand. She lets him pull her up and they will have to cut the dress. She says and says "you can cut it.." she says as she trusted him. "I trust you August..." she says

softly and smiles to let him know she trusts him. She kept still as she watched him. She would make sure that if he needed her to move then she would or hold any fabric she would hold that. Once the dress is taken care of she looks at him and says "thank you.." her eyes meeting his. She was sitting in front of him and felt safe in the cage of his arms. She leans back a little and it was like a switch. Her back relaxes as she sits there. She was blushing a little due to their closeness but she was also excited. She pets Kingdom before looking back at him and says "are you ready.."

With a firm grip August pulled her up into the saddle in front of him. He was worried the dress would make it more difficult and he was correct. Reaching down to her the bottom of her dress he lifted it slightly. Quickly he ripped it hearing the sound of tearing fabric as he did so before letting go. He had even managed to do so with

barely seeing her leg underneath. It wasn't strictly proper but no one could see her leg anyway.

Now was the more difficult part. He had wanted her in front of him to make it safer for her. Falling from a horse was dangerous and Kingdom was larger than most with his back taller than most men. The problem now though was with the size of the saddle she was pressed right against him including his groin. "We're going to start at a slow trot." He told her hoping that going slow would cause too much bouncing or cause them to grind together. He had been in this situation before but always with a suitor, never the princess he was sworn to protect and not a woman a decade or more his junior. With a tap of his boots Kingdom slowly began trotting around the pen.

Anna leans against him and nods as she looks at him. "Ok.." she says softly before she looks back

forward and smiles. As she watches the horse slowly move her eyes brighten. She giggles and leans against him more. She felt relaxed here. She kept her hand close to her so as to not get in the way.

She felt them bounce and she gulped. She could feel his chest and body behind her. She kept her eyes down and tried to stay stop to stop them hitting each other or grinding. But that didn't really happen. They still bounced and even started to grind. She blushes and she tries to keep calm to not make him uncomfortable. Anna looks up at him and tries to see if he was noticing the effect of them being close.

August tried to just focus on the horse riding and keeping her from falling. His arms holding the reins were held close to her and with the way they sat it almost felt like he was spooning with her, spooning with a lot of jostling and bouncing.

He stared forward even as he noticed her looking up and back to him.

With a tap of his heels Kingdom picked up his pace into a canter and they got some actual speed going. This was more fun but not as fast as galloping but he didn't want to do that in this pen, another time they could open the gate and go to the larger pen for that. Unfortunately the extra speed only made the grinding worse and despite his concentration for otherwise, the feeling of his crotch constantly rubbing and bouncing against her was starting to respond. As he grew erect behind her he only hoped she didn't notice or wasn't aware of what it was so he could play it off. He couldn't see but he imagined he had a blush to his cheeks now.

Anna yelps slightly as she wasn't expecting to speed up. She blushes as she bites her lip. She giggled as they rode and she could feel him behind her and something poked her. She

blushes softly but doesn't look at him as they ride.

Her thoughts were running wild as she blushed. Her own body was heating up as he pretty much held her in his arms. It was so...romantic... she gulps before tapping his arm. "Let's stop for today ok?...dinner will be soon and.." she stops talking as she sees his blush. "Are you ok? Your face is red.." she says softly as she reaches up to touch his forehead. No fever.

"You should rest..let's stop and you can go back to your room.." she says softly as she accidentally falling back and pushing her back more into him. She tries to move and ends up grinding more against him.

August heard her laughing and knew she was having a good time which made it easier for him to enjoy it as well. He was glad he had decided to let her ride Kingdom but he wasn't expecting her to be done so soon. "If you're sure..." He said

before she asked if he was doing okay. "Oh I'm fine, no need to worry." He tried to play it off before she touched his forehead.

Pulling lightly on the reins Kingdom returned to a trot and finished the lap stopping at the steps again. Her accidental grinding and rubbing only made it worse for him but he remained calm as he slid off Kingdom and lifted her off and down. He casually tried to position himself to where his erection wouldn't be easily noticeable but that could be challenging. For better or worse he had always been a larger man and the material of his pants could only do so much to hide the stiffness of his thick member from the world. "Did you enjoy yourself?" He asked, trying to keep her focus away from him. Anna lets him lift her off and she moves the dress to hide everything due to the rips. She smiles nods "yes..I did..thank you letting me ride him..." she smiles before moving to Kingdom and pets his nose and smiles. Her

eyes were filled with happiness. "Thank you Kingdom.." she says as she moves away so August can get the horse back to his stable.

"I am going to go get changed..just come to my room once you are done!" She smiles before quickly leaving to go and change. She also had to calm herself down. Because while she tried to not show it, she saw his length. She blushes and tries to hurry to her room. Once there she would start to strip and take off her mask. She had left the door slightly open.

August wasn't super comfortable with her running off without him but he thought she would be fine just going back to her room. He nodded his head in agreement before smiling at her. "I'm glad you enjoyed it Princess, anytime you wish we can do so again." He watched her leave as he went to work hoping she hadn't noticed.

It didn't take August long to get the saddle removed and when he put everything away he went to Kingdom. He gave the horse a few pets before turning to leave. He might have been okay with her going on her own but he didn't want her to be alone too long. He arrived back at Anna's door and saw it already opened. He doubted anything was happening but he wanted to be safe and make sure. Slowly he entered the room and looked for her without saying anything.

Anna was turned away from him and he could see that her mask was on the bed. She had just gotten into her dress and was struggling a little to get zipped up. She hums softly as she finally gets the dress done up and she sighs.

The dress she wore was a dark red one that had a corset in the ribs. She wanted to look nice for dinner. She turns around and looks at him. Her eyes widen as she looks at him. The left side of her face was heavily scarred. They were healed

and had faded but her skin was still uneven. Her eyes were missed just barely.

She quickly turns away and grabs her mask before trying to put it on. Her fingers and hands were shaking so badly she couldn't tie the ribbons. Tears were falling down her face as she started to panic.

August wasn't sure what to do when he saw the princess finishing getting dressed. He hadn't actually seen anything so he was going to just tell her the truth about worrying something was happening. It was an honest mistake and he didn't see anything anyway so he didn't think much would be said about it. Then she turned around without her mask.

August felt like time was slowed as she turned around and he saw her full face with no mask to cover her. His heart leapt into his throat and the feeling of uncertainty returned. The scars were long and had apparently been deep and looked

painful. He had a scar on his back going from his shoulder blade to his hip from a sword wound that had been almost unbearable for a while but he couldn't imagine this on her face. It showed just how strong she was to be able to continue after that and make it through. He had seen her lips before remembering the fullness and she had always had beautiful eyes that he could see. Honestly only one thing came to his mind as he watched her begin to cry and panic. "You're beautiful." He told her softly before leaving the room and shutting the door behind him. He stood on the other side of it, his back leaning against it as he wondered what would happen now.

Anna heard him. Her heart stopped as she stood there. Her breathing was harsh as she fell to the ground. How could he think that..she drops the mask and sobs. She cries hard as she holds and hides her face. She had worked so hard and

yet...it failed. She holds her face as she curls up. She would not come out of her room for hours. She had moved to her bed and just left her mask on the floor. She didn't move or even cry anymore. Her eyes were red and puffy as she curled around herself. She held the pendent and just looked at it.

Did he really think she was pretty...how could he do that..see beauty in her? No one has ever said that. The doctors who healed her said she would never be beautiful again. She sits up and rubs her eyes looking around. The room was quiet. She moves out of the bed and grabs her mask, putting it on to go and find August.

August hadn't gone anywhere after leaving, choosing to remain by her door. He had accidentally stumbled upon what she tried most to hide and he knew it made her sad but he was still her guard and wanted to make sure she stayed safe. He heard her in there crying until

that eventually stopped although he wasn't sure if that was good or bad.

The truth was he had thought she was beautiful under the mask. It was true that the scar was large and covered a non-small portion of her face but that didn't matter. The curve of her nose, the soft full lips, her beautiful eyes, she was beautiful and even if she may have been more so without the scar it didn't change she still was. The scar had also shown much about her and in truth he had always had a thing for scars. Those usually either weren't so large or at least not facial but it still made it to where it didn't change his opinion on her looks.

Anna takes a breath before she opens the door and looks out at him. "August..." she says softly. Her eyes were red and puffy from crying. "Can you come in.." she says and leaves the door open to let him in. She goes and sits on the bed and taps beside her. She says quiet as she sits there.

“Um...” she speaks. Her voice was shaky “I..you saw all my face...right..” she asks but she knew the answer. “If you...if you don’t want to guard a monster I would understand..” she says softly and sadly. She didn’t want him to leave. Her mind had made her think he would yell and scream. That he would hate her. She takes a deep breath and takes off the pedant before setting it down in between them. “You can go if you want...I will tell me dad that you just left..or you had a family affair that needed to be taken care of.” She was in princess mode. She was detached and cold. Her voice was soft and quiet..and weak...

August had heard her coming towards the door so he wasn't surprised when she opened it behind him. He turned to look at her, seeing the mask back in place and being able to tell through the slits how red and puffy her eyes were. Quietly he followed behind her, closing the door and sat down beside her. He turned his head to

look at her waiting to hear he would no longer be her guard.

As she called herself a monster and removed the amulet he watched as she sat it on the bed, his heart aching she would refer to herself that way. When she was done August picked up the pendent and leaned towards her. Delicately he undid the chain and reached around her, fastening it back and lifting her hair over the band, he didn't know her hair was so soft. "Unless you want me to, I'm not going anywhere. I...I understand why you wear the mask." He began looking back to her to meet her eyes. "I understand why you wear it but you don't need to. I meant what I said, I didn't mean to see you but I'm glad I did. *YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL*" the last part was said sternly like it wasn't for debate.

Anna's heart stops as he puts the pendent back and tears start to flow again. She bites her lip and her hands shake a little. Her breathing was

starting to become a little harsh and she looked at him. She listens and tears just continue to flow. Her eyes were hurting from crying. She just looks at him before falling into his chest and crying. The mask was uncomfortable. She messes with it before she rips it off and throws it away from them.

Her whole body was shaking as she processed what he was saying. She just curls up and hides her face still from him. "Really...you aren't lying.." she asks so softly that if she wasn't right next to him. He wouldn't have heard it. She just stay close to him as she tries to calm herself. She does eventually and she finally speaks.

"I was attacked by..wolves...we were leaving the castle and had to go though the west woods...the wolves attacked and...killed guard but didn't hurt my mother or father....but I got hurt...bad...the doctor didn't think i would live.." she says softly as she takes the pendent and rubs

it to help her feel better. Her panic was coming back as flashbacks were happening. August listened carefully watching her throw the mask away. As she started to sob he moved closer and wrapped one arm around her to comfort her. She had told him she didn't like to be touched but that hadn't been true so far, besides she also didn't want to be seen and had just taken off the mask. He figured if she wanted him to stop she would tell him.

He wasn't surprised about the wolves and could easily see how that would cause those scars. He had a few times in his life had to fight off wolves but they usually left the big groups alone so not as much as he would have thought. Kingdom actually had his own scar from a wolf on his leg where one managed to bite him before he stomped its head in. "I promise I'm not lying. You aren't a monster, you're a very beautiful woman."

Anna just hides in his arms. She curls up and tries to not cry. "I..my mother...she thought..I won't survive..so..when i did...she looked at me like i was...a monster.." her voice cracks and a few more tears fall. "You haven't done that..and i am sorry i got upset with you seeing my face...i just...guess i didn't want to risk losing the person that makes me...happy.." she says as she hides.

She doesn't move till her breathing is steady and her eyes stop crying. Then she sits up and rubs her eyes softly. Making sure to keep her left side away from him to see. "I...I actually love touch...i love hugs..but...after being called a monster for most of your life...you tend to think you are..poison.." she says as she looks slightly up at him. Her scars on her lips able to be seen now. "Thank you...for making me feel comfortable and..happy..." she just looks at the mask as they sit there...she didn't know where to go..she didn't want to be alone but he probably wanted

to eat. "How about you go and eat...i will be fine...you go.." she rubs her eyes and they were starting to get irritated. August couldn't believe that her own mother would look at her like that. Her face might not have been the same as your average young woman's anymore but regardless how could she look at her own daughter that way. His parents were never the best but neither would ever act like that as far as he knew.

Hearing her say he made her happy filled him with warmth however. He had only met her yesterday but he was glad he had a positive effect on her. He wondered however if that was just because she wasn't used to any kindness made his giving it to her seem more kind than it should. Maybe he was taking advantage of her without realizing it?

"If it's all the same to you I would rather stay. If you would like for me to leave I will but I would rather stay." He looked at her and gave her a

tighter embrace. "Besides you got all dressed up in this beautiful dress, it would be a shame for no one to see you in it. How about we sit here like this for a while and then we send someone down for food?" He asked, looking at her eyes without breaking eye contact.

Anna smiles a little as she curls up in his embrace. "Ok...stay here...the food.." she mumbles as she closes her eyes and sinks into his embrace. She felt safe here. It was the first time in a long time that she felt this way. She wanted him to never leave. To never leave her alone.

"Kingdom was nice today...thank you for taking me riding...even if it was in a pen. Can you tell me about riding him in the wild.." she looks up at him and pleads with her eyes and her face. She wasn't used to people seeing her actual expression. Her eyes always had to do the heavy lifting so it was nice to not have to do that. She sits up and moves her legs to sit more on the

bed. They were closer now. A small blush comes to her face as she thinks about the horse and tries to not think about it.

August couldn't help but notice her moving closer to him but he supposed that was fine. After she mentioned going riding however he remembered the awkwardness of him getting aroused by her constant grinding and his manhood pressed against her back. He still hoped she hadn't noticed but if she did he just had to hope she didn't bring it up. Unfortunately her getting closer didn't help with that so he watched his breath to keep that from happening again.

"Kingdom is a great horse but he's meant more for power and stamina than speed. He can go very quickly in a spring but he's best for battle and long distance. He loved it when we were on a mountain one winter, and he looked gorgeous in the snow." He enjoyed talking about his horse

and if he wasn't careful he would start rambling. "Maybe tomorrow you can wear trousers instead and we can go somewhere with more space. Eventually I could teach you how to ride on your own." If she rode on her own he would've to worry about her accidentally getting his member against her sex and that would make things less awkward.

Anna smiles and her eyes light up. "I don't own..trousers.." she says softly as she looks at him. "Do you think my family will let the princess wear pants?" She giggles and covers her mouth as she giggles.

Her eyes were happy and calm in the moment. She leans her head against his shoulder and sighs. "What if I don't want to ride by myself.." she asks softly as she looks at him. She wasn't going to bring up the fact that she felt him on the horse. Or the fact that it made her inside warm and melty. But she really didn't want to be

alone. She wanted him to still wrap his arms around her and..keep her safe.

She would sigh and close her eyes, resting her head on his shoulder. "I want to see Kingdom in the snow...I want to see snow.." she hums softly as she sits there. Their legs touching.

August had assumed they would have at least some pants for the princess but he supposed since she wasn't normally allowed to ride the horses before there wasn't much of a point of having them. "Well you'll need to help me find you some then." She was much too small to fit his but he didn't want to keep ripping her dresses.

When she mentioned not wanting to ride by herself he couldn't help but notice the quick pulse of blood through his member again. He was going to have to get himself under control and stop thinking about the two of them on horseback, the bouncing making her ass grind against his member, both knowing and feeling it

trying to hide their pleasure...*DAMN IT STOP THAT*. This might be harder than he thought.

He knew it wasn't going to happen. She was a princess for one and while technically he was a noble he was barely and definitely not enough for the king and queen to agree with it. She even said she told them she didn't plan on marrying. Maybe he would be a concubine? Nope he needed to stop thinking like that. "The snow is quite beautiful, I'm surprised you don't get it here in the mountains."

Anna looks at him and nods "maybe one of the maids..." she hums as she leans against his shoulder. "We get some but..not a lot..not enough to kinda play with..and we are close to the water so it just melts." She says softly and yawns softly. She leans into him and closes his eyes just softly yawning.

Her breathing and panic has stopped and she is just calm and almost asleep. She doesn't open

her eyes as she mumbles “you like horseback riding with me too?” She wasn’t meaning to mention his member but her sleep and tired stare was making that reference.

August thought about the snow as she mentioned it but it seemed like she was growing sleepy. There was still plenty of time left in the day and she hadn't had dinner yet. Besides she was still wearing her dress and although it looked great it didn't seem that comfortable. If she wanted to sleep he wouldn't stop her though.

When she mentioned him enjoying horseback riding with her he wondered if it was just a question or if she was pointing out the erection he had at the time, he hoped it was the former. Scooting even closer to her he pulled her in tightly but gently "Yes it was fun, we can do it again if you wish."

Anna nods and smiles sleepily. "Yes..please...it was nice..." she says as he moves closer to her. She smiles and sighs "you're warm...and comfortable.." she says yawning. She seems to curl up, even move and tries to get comfortable. Her shoulders were uncomfortable and the ribs in the corset were nice. She sighs and sits up rubbing her eyes before standing and trying to get the dress undone. "August..can you..get the back?" She says softly as she tries to undo the ribbons on the corset.

Her dress hugs her body and she would need help getting at least the ribbons undone. "I want to change into a more comfortable dress.." she says softly as she looks at him and her eyes were tired. The crying and panic had taken a lot out of her. She just wanted to...well cuddle with August. She looked at him and her blush was back. She couldn't stop thinking about him and her on Kingdom. They were so close and she

could feel him. Her dress she wore before on that horse was a flowing and loose type of dress. She was worried he felt how he affected her.

August had been surprised when after he held her as she cried and panicked it had turned into just holding her. It was comfortable and he could tell by how she kept wiggling closer into him that she enjoyed it even before she had mentioned it. He was relaxed as well and was starting to get comfortable just as she stood up throwing him off.

When she asked him to help undo her corset it only threw him off more. He wasn't sure what he should do in this circumstance, it would probably be best to call her maid to help her but this was something simple he could do. Standing up he moved behind her and placed his hands on her hips to hold her steady for a moment while he looked the corset over. After he was able to see

it he began undoing it until it was loose enough for her to finish.

"Is that better, your highness?" He asked before moving away from her. He turned away from her and her wardrobe so he wouldn't be able to see her change. "Would you prefer me to go and wait outside while you change?" He asked, unsure of what he would prefer. Being outside might be easier because he would be less tempted to look but he didn't particularly want to leave yet either.

The grinding against his member earlier had really done a number on him. Admittedly it had been a while since he was intimate with anyone. He would have found her attractive regardless of that fact but his absence of intimacy had made him more easily aroused and it was messing with his brain. If it hadn't been so long he wouldn't even think about trying to take a peek at the young princess he was supposed to be taking care of, it wasn't right for her.

Anna sighs as he undoes the ribbon. "You can stay..just going to go into my changing slide.." she says softly before walking into the changing slide and pulls off the dress. There was a small light that made her silhouette show though. Her figure was a hourglass. It was as if she had the right curves in the right spots. She was short but everything was in proportion of herself.

She hums lightly and says "if you want to get a maid to bring dinner you can..also can you tell them to set up the table that is over by my desk." If he looked over there he would see a small table that is folded up. It was there because Anna often eats in her room.

She hums as she changes and finally comes out into a more bedtime dress. It still looked nice but it was more comfortable. She moves and sits back down before falling onto her bed and yawns. "My eyes hurt.." she mumbles as she rubs them and looks at August.

August watched as she disappeared behind the slide. With her behind there he didn't feel bad about watching her since he couldn't see details anyway. It might have been hard to tell under her dress but she was actually quite curvy. His eyes couldn't help but trace the curves of her body's shadow. All those princes and nobles who didn't want to be her suitor due to her scar were foolish and missing out.

When her new dress was coming on he went to the door and asked the maids to go get them some food and fix the table. When he entered he went back to where her mask was laying and picked it up. He sat down on her bed and held the mask for her there. "Are you going to wear this while the maids are in?" He asked unsure if her not wearing it was a temporary thing or all the time, maybe just around him.

Anna looks at him and sighs "I will..." she sits up and takes the mask from him. "I won't wear it

around you in private..but in public...it has to stay on.." she says softly as she puts the mask on and ties the ribbons. She looked at him and her eyes were clearly tired. She touches her mask and says "I hope you don't mind.." she says softly.

Two maids come up with the plates of food. They start to get the table set up and set the food. They nod before leaving quickly. Anna sighs and looks down "see..they rush out to give me space..they don't even try to stay.." She stands and moves to the table and pulls two stools up to the table and she sits. She takes the mask off and sighs softly. "Let's eat..."

"I don't mind at all princess. I'm a firm believer in people having control and deciding what they do with their own bodies. If you decided you wanted to cut off all your hair I would support you. Admittedly I would think it was a shame to see all that beautiful soft hair go away." When the maids entered he didn't say much as he watched

them come and do their business and go. He didn't know if this was commonplace for maids or just what hers did with her. It might not have actually been disrespectful but it was on the border enough to agitate him.

Following her to the table he sits at the stool and looks over the plate. Admittedly since he had only eaten soup today he was quite hungry. Seeing the roast beef and potatoes with carrots and then the smell hitting him made his mouth water and his stomach audibly growled. "My apologies princess, my stomach doesn't always mind it's manners."

Anna giggles as she looks at him. "It is alright..I bet the soup wasn't enough. If you ever want more more or something else just let me know..the chief will cook you anything!" She smiles before starting to eat. She hums and sighs. She loved roast beef. She continues to eat and as she does the princess looks at August.

Her eyes scan his face and even touches her scar. "How come your scars aren't...as ugly as mine.." she says softly. She wanted to know how he got his and how they look so handsome on him. How his eyes looking over her makes her heart flutter and her face blush. Did he have the same reaction to her?

She gets lost in her mind as she eats and her feet let out her nervousness by lightly tapping the floor. She bites her lip as she thinks and eats.

August was eating slowly, savoring his food when she asked about his scars. He stayed silent for a moment as he chewed his food and looked at his plate before setting his fork down. He looked up at her for a moment looking into her eyes before looking at her scar. He looked at it for a moment before his gaze went back to her eyes.

Standing up he reached down and pulled off his tunic showing his chest to her. She may have been able to see the night before but with her

waking up from a nightmare he doubted she really paid attention. Dozens of small scars covered his torso and arms, some fainter ones crept their way up his neck. Mixed in with those were some larger ones and as he turned around facing away his back was much the same. The scar from the sword slash went all the way from his right shoulder blade to his left hip, it was deep and gruesome and while the largest wasn't the only bad one. Moving closer to her he took her hand softly and placed it on his back guiding her hand over the long scar. "This one was from a sword slash." He moved her hands over to a few other scars a few inches long. "These were daggers." Turning around to face her again he placed her hand on the right side of his chest, opposite of his heart. Under her hand was an indent shaped like an X. " This one was an arrow that caught me in the lung. All of these were

from different battles." He looked up at her sadly for a moment.

His chest was still bare showing the defined muscles that his shirts mostly hid, his chest and abdomen had soft dark hair but wherever there was a scar the hair was either thinner or non-existent. "Do you think these scars are ugly? Do they make me less attractive?" He asked her with a straight face pausing to let her think for a moment. He hesitated for a moment before lifting his hand to her face and cupping it softly. His thumb delicately began tracing the length of the largest scar of her face but he never looked away from her. The scarred flesh felt different than the rest of her skin he touched, his calloused rough hands still soft if not smooth. "I don't think scars are ugly, they tell stories. Yours tells about your strength and will to live in the same way mine do. The scars don't make anyone less beautiful, they just make someone more

unique." Anna looks at him and her eyes widen as he takes off his shirt. her eyes were scanning his body and a blush was not very much on her cheeks. She watches him and lets him take her hand. her fingers glide over the different scars as he tells her where they came from. she doesn't look up at him as she moves her hands to lightly trace the scars. they were ugly...not on him. They were handsome and beautiful. When she looks up at him, her eyes wide as she speaks "no..they don't..they.." was she really going to say they make him look handsome..that the scars tell her she is safe with him.

She was shocked when he took his hand and cupped her face. her eyes were wide and she bites her lip. His hand was warm and the roughness of his fingers going over her scars were...nice....she watches him as he looks at her and tells her that her scars don't make her less attractive. that her scars are beautiful. She wants

to cry. but she keeps her emotions in check as she leans into his hand and closes her eyes.

She waits a few minutes before opening them and looking at August. her heart was beating out of her chest. She and him were close. He smelled nice and his hand was warm. she seems to be contemplating something before she looks at him and leans in...she lightly kisses his cheek and says "thank you...for everything.." she smiles as she leans back and takes his hand in hers and holds it on her face. her eyes closing again as they sit there.

August watched her eyes for her reaction, the minutes-long pause making him worry he did something wrong or said something he shouldn't. He could see that she had different thoughts and feelings running through her mind and he thought he could guess what most of them were but he could never truly know as long as he couldn't read her mind.

When she leaned forward he was worried she was going to try and kiss him. It wasn't that he wouldn't enjoy it but he knew there could never be something between them and he didn't want either of them to get hurt. When her lips touched his cheek however he smiled, that was fine. Her full lips were soft against his cheek and he briefly wanted to kiss her, to experience those amazing lips of hers, but he kept himself from doing so.

He was surprised when she took his hand and held it against her face but he didn't mind. He let her hold it there for a while before gently pulling it away. "Why don't we finish eating and then we can get ready for bed?" He asked her to remember all the times she seemed like she would fall asleep. "I'll even stay in here until you do if that's what you would like."

Anna looks at him and nods. "i would like that.." she says before turning to finish eating. She finishes soon after and looks at him to wait till he

is done. She then grabbed the mask and slipped it on before taking their plates and walking to the door. She finds the maid and gives them the plates before returning to the room. She moves and takes the mask off, sets it on her night table and makes her falling bed on the ground. She then gets into the bed and watches August. she blushes as she looks over his body and her eyes seem to show something that she wasn't sure what it was.

she blushes and looks down as she waits for him. "are you going to..nevermind.." she says before moving under the covers and hums lightly to herself to help calm her down. she bites her lip and tries to tell herself she wouldn't have nightmares. she was safe. they couldn't get her. her hand moves to her face as she starts to have flashbacks of that night. she tries to not show the panic on her face. this was every night she has this issue. she doesn't want the nightmares.

August finished eating his meal, thoroughly enjoying it before he remembered he was still shirtless. He had eaten alone in a tent often as a mercenary with varying states of dress so he hadn't really noticed it due to it being second nature. While she moved the plates he quickly pulled the tunic back on and watched her prepare for bed.

"Am I going to what?" He asked curiously wondering what the rest of her sentence was going to be. He wondered if she was going to ask if he was going to join her or maybe tuck her in, he honestly had no clue. After seeing her start to panic he moved to her and started brushing her hair. "Do you still have that shield pendant?" He asked not remembering if she had taken it off or if it was resting under the covers between her breasts. Sitting down on the ground he took her hand in his and just held it for a moment to hopefully help her relax.

Anna looks at him and nods. She takes it in her hand and shows him. Her eyes still looked panicked as he held her hand. Her eyes look at their hands and don't move as she tightly holds the pendant. "Don't leave till I fall asleep..." she says softly as she looks at him. Her eyes were filled with panic as she moved closer to the edge of the bed.

Her mind was starting to be clouded by sleep as her panic attack took a lot out of her. She doesn't stop looking at August as she finally closes her eyes and soon after falls asleep. Her hand relaxes around his and the pendant. She looks peaceful as she sleeps. She breathes evenly and she seems to be calm and relaxed.

August nodded his head in agreement not being bothered by staying with her until then. He felt her moving to be closer to him at the end of the bed as he sat there quietly. He understood nightmares, probably more than anyone else in

this castle and he hoped he could help ward them away from her.

When she seemed to be fully asleep he waited longer not wanting to accidentally wake her up by leaving her too soon. When he felt it was safe he delicately pulled his hand from hers and stood up. Leaning down over her he tenderly kissed her forehead looking at her scars one more time as well before leaving as silently as he could to not wake her.

In his own room again August undressed and slipped on some more comfortable trousers not bothering with a shirt as he crawled into his own bed. He began to read the book he had taken from the library under the moonlight trying to clear his mind before bed so he could sleep as well. The day had been busy and eventful and rather tiring. Normally he would be able to sleep easily with how tired he was but it was hard. His mind raced from all the things that had

happened and his body was still confused by all the stimulation it had during the day on the horses without ever having any actual release. Eventually he was able to calm both his mind and body however and fell asleep.

Anna would sleep peacefully for the first half but the second half of the night her nightmares were back. she tosses and turns before just sitting up awake. her breathing was harsh and she felt scared. she takes a few deep breaths as she looks around and holds the pendent. "he must have gone..." she says softly as she looks around not seeing August. she shouldn't wake him. she thinks as she gets out of bed and takes her mask. she puts it on and moves out of her room. she looks at his before moving to the attic space. she climbs the ladder up and gets under some blankets she had there. She takes deep breaths and tries to calm down.

Once she is in the attic she takes her mask off and just curls up watching the night move away from her. She leans against the cool wall of stone and curls up holding the necklace close to her. she felt tired but she wouldn't sleep. she couldn't go back to the nightmare. She sighs as she rubs her eyes and picks up a book that she had put up here and started to read about a knight who rescued the princess from her tower.

August however wasn't aware of any of that. Currently he was sprawled out in his bed taking up as much of the space as he could. His mouth was hanging open and he loudly snored into the night. He was currently having a great dream involving an outside banquet in a forest near a waterfall. The dream was great but eventually it woke him up realizing he needed to relieve himself.

Getting out of bed he made his way to use the chamber pot in a sleepy stupor. When he was

done and making his way back to his bed he decided while he was up he would check on the princess. Pulling on his boots he walked to her room and entered seeing her bed empty. Seeing her bed empty quickly woke him up and he began searching her room trying to find her with no luck.

When he knew she was no longer in her room he went back to his room and grabbed his shirt and sword belt before going through the castle. He was going to check the library before remembering the other places she had taken him. After getting lost for a bit he managed to make his way into the attic where found her reading. "You shouldn't be out of your room so late, milady. I was looking all over for you." He told her as he approached her and crawled under the blankets with her to join her.

Anna was lost in the book as he came up. she didn't hear him before he spoke. she jumps

slightly and says. "i didn't want to..wake you.."
she says as he moves under the blanket. she
blushes and hopes that the dim light would hide
that fact. "i..i am sorry.." she says as she closes
the book and looks down. "i didn't fall out of my
bed or wake up screaming...but i can't go to sleep
again..so i came here to read..it is hidden and
safe...you should go back to sleep.." she says as
she reaches up and holds his cheek.

she really didn't mean for him to be woken. she
wanted him to rest. she could lose sleep but he
needed it. he needed to be on point all day. she
was messing that up too. she lowers her hand
and looks away as she pulls her knees to her
chest. "you can go.." she says softly and weakly.
she was tired. but sleep brought nightmares,
nightmares brought her falling out of bed or
crying. she didn't want that. any of that. she sighs
as she looks out the small window and just curls
up next to August. She tried to keep away from

him but that was hard due to them being under the same blanket.

August wasn't expecting her to touch his cheek like that and it had thrown him off for a moment. "I don't know why you're apologizing for having nightmares. It's out of your control." He felt her pulling away from him and that made him feel strange like maybe he was upsetting her or even scaring her himself.

"Princess, if you would honestly prefer for me to go then I will." He didn't technically have to listen to her, he was her guard but it was her parents who appointed him and paid him. He would do as she asked most of the time but he didn't need to. "If that's what you want then fine, but there's another option. You can always move closer and curl up to me, and you can read that story to me outloud for us both to enjoy."

Anna looks at him and thinks. She would like to do that. He did make her feel safe and better. she

sighs and moves closer. she moves so she is basically in his lap leaning against his chest. she opens the book and looks up at him "is this ok?" she says softly. she didn't want to make him uncomfortable with her sitting in between his legs like this.

If he said it was fine then she would look at the book and start to read the story. She had read it multiple times but that didn't stop her from picking up to read it again and again. If he said it was an issue then she would blush and say sorry before moving to lean on his shoulder and start to read.

her voice was calm and she started to read out loud the book. it was a normally fairy tale end type of book. the type of story that Anna wanted to have. as she read she could see the actions in her mind. except when she saw the knight..it wasn't the blond hair blue eye knight but a brown hair brown eye one..with strong arms and

a smile she loved. Anna blushes as she tries to focus on the reading.

August was surprised when she moved In Front of him like that but he wasn't uncomfortable. He did hope this wasn't going to be much like the horse but without the bouncing and riding he thought it would be fine. The only uncomfortable part was not knowing what to do with his hands or arms in that position. He decided just to wrap them around her stomach like giving her a hug and if it was too much for her and she asked him to move them he would.

He listened to her read his mind half on the story and half trying not to focus on her body once again pressed up against his. The worst part was it was comfortable but he was worried about her accidentally rubbing against him the wrong way and her feeling him pressed against her. He could see the blush on her cheeks and wondered if she was embarrassed by the closeness as well.

Anna was shocked a little when he wrapped his arms around her but she just kept reading. She leans back and yawns softly before continuing to read. She shifts slightly but doesn't seem to notice anything as she reads. She turned the page and there was a beautiful watercolor of the princess and knight. The knight at the bottom of the tower and princess up above. She runs her hand over it and hums softly before continuing reading.

She would read and as she did her eyes would get heavy. He was warm and comfortable. She was fully relaxed and at one point she slumped down a little as she dozed off in his arms. She was breathing calmly as she rested against him. It was early morning by this time and her body was tired.

August listened to her reading and wondered if this fairy tale is what she dreamed about. It would make sense to him, she might not be

trapped in a tower but she was stuck in the castle grounds and he knew she hated that she was. He wondered if she would ever find her prince or knight to come rescue her, some man who could look past the scars or didn't mind them, maybe even appreciated them. He hoped she would.

He could notice her growing tired by the way she seemed to have a hard time reading and he wasn't surprised when she dozed off. This did unfortunately leave him in a situation where she was between his legs and resting on him. He highly doubted anyone would come up and see them but it wouldn't look great. With the way she sat and how they were under the covers it could give the wrong idea.

August continued to lay there for a while before he decided he needed to move. He moved his hands, wrapping one arm around her legs and keeping the other where it was. With an effort he rose to his feet and lifted her now carrying her in

his arms. He tried to ignore the fact that he had briefly been holding her ass not wanting to deal with that before he took her to a chair. Carefully he sat her down in it and covered her back up with the blanket before moving the other chair beside hers. He sat down in it so he was next to her and went to rest as well.

Anna would move and almost wake up as he moved around her and moved her to the chair. She curls up in the chair and sighs as she falls back asleep. She would sleep as the sun rose.

Anna wouldn't move and actually covered her face with the blanket. When she does wake up she rubs her eyes and yawns. She looks around and looks at the sleeping August. She reaches forward and taps his shoulder softly. "August.." she says softly as she stands up and moves to bend down next to him. She wanted to see the scars. They made him look handsome and he made them look less scary. She touches his arms

and traces a few of the tiny scars on his arm.
“Aasuuuggguuusstttt” she says again trying to wake him up.

August didn't notice the waking of the woman next to him or her saying his name while she touched his arm. He was currently having an interesting dream that would be embarrassing if anyone could see it. In his dreams he rode on horseback with a woman in front of him as they went along a mountain road. It was forested and quiet with a lovely view of the countryside and a Kingdom below.

He couldn't see the woman's face or make out any detail other than they were both nude. As they rode their bodies would press and grind against the other. His manhood was at full attention as it pressed into her and she would occasionally let out small moans from in front of him. He didn't realize that there was someone with him there nor did he notice his thick

member in real life full and swollen, throbbing against his thin pants for the world to see.

Anna looks at him then down. Her face blushes bright red. She bites her lip and looks up at him. Her body warmed and she gulped. She moves her hand from his arm and down to his pants. Her hand moves to his member and starts to palm his member. Anna had read some books that her parents never knew about and they shouldn't know about. She had never done anything but she did read a lot.

She gulps as she would look at him to make sure he didn't wake up. She bites her lip before she would climb into his lap and sits onto his lap. Her body was warm and her womanhood was beating with her heart. She moves her hips and starts to grind just like they were on the horse. She bit her lip as she tried to not wake him. Her heart was beating fast as she watched him to see if he woke up. August had no idea what was

happening around him. Normally he was a light sleeper but being in an awkward position in the chair and everything that had drained him earlier that day had him out like a light. His sexually charged dreams certainly didn't help with waking him up.

His dreams hadn't changed much for him. He still dreamed about him and the woman grinding on horseback together but it grew more intense. He felt as if it was actually happening to him, his swollen cock being rubbed and grinded against for his pleasure. A small deep moan escaped his lips in both his dream and reality, her consistent grinding against him pulling on his pants until his member sprung free from its cloth prison to press against her dress in the open air.

Anna blushes even more and bites down hard on her lip to keep her noises in. She gulps as she grinds and suddenly feels his member hit her back. She blushes as she looks at his face. What

was she doing? She should be..doing this..but her body was needy now. She gulps as she moves off his lap and moves in between his legs. She takes his rather large and thick member. She gulps softly as she looks at him and carefully licks up his length.

She closes her eyes as she takes his tip into her mouth and licks the tip over and over. Every once and awhile to make sure he wasn't awake. She looks at him before lowering her mouth onto his length and tries to take him more. She whimpers and moans softly as she moves her head up and down. Her womanhood was throbbing. She was shaking as she did this. She was nervous and it was making her more and more excited.

In his dream the horse had continued for just a moment before stopping. When the horse stopped him and the faceless woman both jumped off and he sat down under a tree. Once he was comfortable the woman came and sat in

front of him before lowering her head and teasing his cock with her tongue. He moaned quietly before she lowered her mouth down around him. His moaning picked up slightly but not very loudly. August's hand moved to the back of Anna's head and held her hair softly mirroring his dream. He had always been a huge fan of oral and it was hard for him not to enjoy every moment of it.

Anna whimpers and lets him hold her hair. She moves her hand to his and squeezes it. He needed to wake up. She wanted him to see her. She wanted him to hear her. She whimpers and pulls up before looking at him. His eyes were still closed. She licks up his cock and moves his hand to hers and kisses the back of his.

“August...please wake up..” she says softly before taking him back in her mouth and moans softly as he pushes her down. She closes her eyes

and lets him guide her down and up on his member.

Her womanhood was dripping now and it was needy. She whines softly as she slowly moves her hand down to herself and starts to make the friction that she needed.

August could hear his name being said in his dream and he felt his cock twitch at hearing it. He looked at the faceless woman, her face featureless except for the mouth that was taking him in. He couldn't help but think it reminded him of a mask. As the thought of a mask entered his mind the face changed to resemble the mask of the princess and eventually the mask fell away to reveal Anna's face, scars and all. He had thought she was beautiful all along but seeing her with his cock in her mouth made her even more so.

He could feel the fluttering stirring sensation in his balls and knew he was going to cum. His hand

in her hair tightened and pulled her down further as it started. His eyes shot open and looked down at Anna and her actually sucking his cock. His dick pulse and throbbed as his cum began to shoot out of him in thick strings before he even knew what was happening. The pleasure rolled through him in waves, a warmth spreading through his body. His muscles clenched including the hand holding her there involuntarily. It had been a long time since his last climax and it felt like this one wouldn't end as thick strings after string shot into her mouth and throat. As the pleasure died down he looked down at her in confusion, his body relaxing, and him trying to figure out what was happening.

Anna whimpers as he pushes her down. Tears roll down her face as he opens his eyes as she looks at him. His cum filled her mouth and she would pull off of him and coughs a little. Her face was red as she sat before him.

She looks up and wipes her face as she stares at him. Her eyes were half lidded and she was still very needy. She blushes as everything hits her and she backs away "I-I am sorry! I don't know..know what came over me!" She whimpers as she moves away and curls up. She had done it. He would leave. Her heart hurts as she looks away from him embarrassed, blushing and needy. He curls her knees to her chest as she waits for him to yell at her. Waits for him to drag her to her parents and demand that she is banished to the wild. She doesn't look at him as she waits for his response to her. She was nervous.

As August came to and looked down at his very wet still stiff cock and at her who had just been by him it started coming together. His mind was still foggy from just waking up mixed with the fogginess from just cumming, cumming hard at that but he thought he knew what had happened. While he was sleeping she decided

she wanted him. This was going to make things more complicated now and he wasn't sure how to feel about it.

On the one hand he did find her attractive and obviously she felt the same about him, but on the other she was much younger than him, he was sworn to protect her, she was princess, and she was very sheltered so it might be taking advantage of her. As his cock twitched again ready for more he made up his mind. They would have tonight and decide from there what to do.

August could see her distressed so he slowly stood up and made his way to her. Kneeling down beside her he cupped her face gently, the same way he had done the day before. Leaning in, he kissed her scar. With all the fears and doubts she had with her scars he thought that would be the most impactful for her. A moment later his lips trailed along the scar until they reached her mouth. He only kissed her lightly before he

pressed up against her and pinned her against the wall. She decided to take him in his sleep so as far as he was concerned she gave her consent. He wondered if she realized what she signed up for.

Anna doesn't look at him until he cups her face. She watches him and blushes as he kisses her scar. She blushes even more as she bites her lip. She goes to speak but he kisses her. Her eyes widen and she leans in but he pulls away. She was confused then not. She yelps a little and looks at him. She crosses her legs and looks at him. "I..I am sorry...I shouldn't.." she blushes and stops talking. She shouldn't talk..not right now..

She leans forward and kisses him softly. She would pull away and look at him. "What are you going to do.." she whispers. Her voice was soft as if it was a secret between them.

This was making her even more needy. Her hands find his shirt and look at him. She wanted his

scars. She pulls at his shirt softly and says "this off?" She tilts her head. She didn't know what he was going to do. But whatever it was...she wanted it. August didn't need her pulling at his shirt for him to take it off, he had already planned on doing so. Besides she did what she wanted and now it was time for him to do what he wanted and if she enjoyed it that would just make it sweeter for him. He placed a finger on her lips and looked into her eyes for a moment. "not another word." He told her before pulling his finger away and taking off his shirt. "You're going to do everything I tell you, we're going to have a good time, and later we are going to talk about this. For now you just keep quiet and be a good girl." He told her with a stern quiet voice and an even more stern expression.

When he thought he made that clear he leaned in and kissed her once more, not a little quick peck or the kiss of someone unsure, but a firm deep

kiss. Her full lips were soft against his as he used his to press hers open. His tongue slid between her teeth and found hers wrapping around it like a playful dance. He could taste his cum on her lips and tongue but he didn't mind, that was worth being able to cum in her mouth and have her suck his dick.

A moment later he stopped kissing her looking her in the eyes one more time to make sure she would go along with what he wanted. When he was sure she would, he began kissing at her jaw, gentle once again. His lips followed her jawline to her and he paused there for a moment, his hot breath against her flesh. Briefly and delicately he nipped at her earlobe before he began to kiss his way down her neck. When he reached her shoulder he stopped before biting down, not enough to break the skin or leave a mark for long but enough for her to feel the slight pain. . He lowered himself then and moved to her ankles

quickly pulling the dress up and exposing what was underneath. Seeing her undergarments he grabbed them before ripping them the way he had her dress the day before exposing her sex. He looked at the brown hair coating her sex and the gleam of wetness covering it. Reaching out he touched it, slightly, just enough to feel her warmth and let her know she was being touched without letting her enjoy it. Anna looks at him and nods at his words. She shivers as he speaks. She would just nod as not to speak. Her heart beats even faster as he calls her a good girl. She kisses him back and whines softly as they kiss. Her eyes closing and her hands moving around his neck. She whines as he pulls away and starts to kiss her jaw and neck. She shivers and moans lightly. Anna pulls away a little at the nip on her shoulder.

Her eyes follow him and he could see she was needy. She bites her lip and leans against the

wall to hold her up. She bites her lip and closes her eyes as he looks at her and even touches her. Her knees were already weak but this made it hard for her to stand. She was shaking as he lightly touches her. "Please..." she begs. She knows she shouldn't speak but she cant help it. She wanted no needed this. Her body was needed and she was as well.

She looks down at him wondering what she got herself into. She shivers and bites her lip as she looks at him. Her eyes wide and dilated. Her body was shaking with the need that he could see with him being close to her womanhood.

August took what was left of her undergarments and put them in his pocket, he was going to keep them when this was done, as a sort of trophy. For a moment he ran his finger along her slit feeling how hot and wet she was for him. He assumed this was her first time but he was still surprised how much she was craving him. He pulled his

finger back and sucked it briefly, taking in the flavor of her and finding her delicious.

A moment later he moved forward and pressed his face up an inch from her sex, his hot breath against her sex as he looked at it. Peanut forward he felt the fuzz of her trimmed sex against his face as his lips found the firm pink bud of her clit and began to kiss it lightly. It was true he wouldn't have any physical pleasure from going down on her but knowing he would provide her with so much pleasure made a shiver run through him. His tongue began lightly encircling the small fleshy bud as he continued sucking it, his mouth watering at the taste.

Anna leans her head back as he touches her more. Her breathing hitched and she balled her fist. She was shaking as she waited. She would be good. She had to go to bed. She bites her lip hard to keep her noise in. The castle was waking up

and moving. She whimpers as he moves forward and starts to taste her.

As soon as he did her legs almost gave out as she rolled her eyes into her head. She moans softly and one of her hands moves to his hand and pushes him more into her. She moans "August.." her voice was full of need and want. Her eyes closed and her hips even started to move against him. "Please...please August.." she moans and tries to get more and more attention from him. Her hips were moving a little more and her hand was wrapped in his hair tighter and tighter.

Anna's feedback was appreciated but unnecessary as August continued to take care of her. He wrapped his arm around her leg and pulled it in tighter to where she couldn't accidentally squirm or pull away, his hand pressing down on her lower stomach. The heat and wetness of her sex was exhilarating and

driving him crazy while he tried to focus. This wasn't helped by the fact she tasted great.

He took it easy at first not wanting to overwhelm her *too* much for now. Even though he was fairly sure she hadn't been with a man due to what she said about suitors and how she acted about herself and her appearance. What he didn't know however was if she had ever played with herself. He was going to enjoy himself and give her a time she would never forget but how much she could handle he didn't know.

He left her clit alone for a moment as his tongue explored the length of her sex and gently sucking at her lips. He knew that wouldn't do as much for her as her clit but he wanted her to experience feeling everything in case this was her first time. Bringing his free hand up to her he began prodding at her entrance with his finger. Her slick juices had his finger sliding in easily but he took his time not wanting to hurt her. The iron

grip she had on his finger was both worrying and exciting.

As his finger slid slowly further into her began to rub up against her sex feeling for the rougher section of her walls. His tongue went back to her clit and began to toy with it. As his tongue flicked along the rose bud he began moving his finger along with it in a matching rhythm. When he thought he had enough room he began to slide another finger inside of her. August wasn't ready to slide into her himself but he knew if she couldn't get at least three fingers inside her he wasn't going to be able to. . He got lost in himself for a while not thinking about what he was doing to her but just going with it and enjoying it himself. He began to hum into her wanting her to feel the vibrations as he began to speed up on her. He was never rough and was mindful of what she was enjoying and what she liked. Although it was one more thing to have to pay attention to,

he did his best to listen for anyone coming nearby. He should have put something on top of the base but he knew no one would come up here unless they made too much noise.

When he thought he had her satisfied August pulled his head and arms up and out from her dress. Grabbing the skirt of her dress he began to pull it up and off of her. The dress was fine and expensive but at the moment it was just in the way. He crawled over her slowly as he looked into her eyes, his member resting on her stomach. He kissed her again wanting her to taste herself on his lips. He leaned back and looked her over not having had the chance before. Underneath all those dresses the princess had an amazing body, her curves mesmerizing and enticing. His hand moved to cup her breast, molding the soft globe in his hand like a potter with clay, his fingers toying and teasing the stiffened flesh of her nipple. Anna hums as he holds her his hands

moving to her stomach makes her feel...special. She wonders how many women he had done this with. How many...this made her close her eyes and not look at him. Her hands ball into his hair and by her side. Even though he was holding her up her knees were still shaking softly.

She opens her eyes as he stops doing what he was doing. She looks down and immediately whimpers. He was making her feel so good and her mind was being clouded. Even though she knew that she had to be quiet her moans were getting louder and louder. When he slides into her she moans and leans her head back. Her eyes were closed and her body was shaking as she was feeling at this pleasure. Her eyes widen as she whimpers, being close to climax. But he pulled away before she could. She looks at him and bites her lip as he grabs the dress and lifts it over her.

Her body was pale but she watches him as he looks over her. She sucks in her stomach as his member touches her stomach. She moans into the kiss and could taste herself. She follows him as he pulls away from the kiss. She wanted more kisses. Her face was full of blush as he looked over her. She slightly covers her body embarrassed. She bites her lip as he takes her breast and starts to play with it. She breathes off harshly and looks at him. She bites her lip and moves her hand to his member and starts to move her hand up and down his length.

Her eyes were half lidded and seemed to be longing for something. She leans forward and kisses his neck softly and gently. She just kisses up and down his neck. Her hand moves up and down his member.

August leaned back in and kissed her once more for just a moment before moving back and looking at her. "You're not being a good girl right

now, you have to stay quiet." He told her noticing how loud she had gotten. He knew how badly she wanted him right now and he could have her soon but he was going to make her wait a moment.

Reaching down he slid his fingers back inside of her, it was easier this time now that they had made some room. As she stroked his cock he was having a hard time not sliding in himself but he knew he needed to wait as much as she did. "I need to know if you drink black stem tea." He told her sternly as his fingers began rubbing against the rougher top of her inner walls, his thumb rubbing her clit. He kissed at her neck as he played with her waiting for an answer. If she didn't drink the tea then he would need to make sure to pull out of her and not let his seed inside. If she didn't take it already it would be weird for her to randomly drink it now so it would still lead to that. If she did drink the tea however he was

going to fill her up and leave her leaking with his juices like a good toy.

Anna looks at him and whines softly. She shivers as he pushes his fingers into her and her breath is harsh against His neck. She moans as he messes with her clit and she tries to answer.

“N-no...I haven't...” she says softly as she pushes herself onto his fingers and moves her hips back and forth. She pants softly as she was getting close again. Her eyes roll into her head as she leans against him. “Please August..please..” she didn't know what she was pleading for but her body was hot and there was a tightness in her stomach as he moved his fingers. She whimpers and moves her hands trying to make him feel good as well.

Admittedly August was a bit disappointed but not surprised, there hadn't been a reason for her to drink it before so why would she. He moved his hand from her breast and cupped her face

once more before kissing her again, a slower, deeper kiss. He knew she wanted him and he was going to give her what she wanted, they would deal with the consequences later.

He broke away from the kiss and pulled his hand out of her to stand up, feeling his member slide from her hand. He bent down and pulled his pants off the rest of the way before looking at her. He moved back on top of her and kissed her once more as he felt the head of his cock rubbing against her entrance, the heat and warmth making him want to push it right now and all the way. His hand tenderly held her and he rubbed at her scar with care as his lips danced with hers. He wanted her to be distracted in case this hurt her. He grabbed his manhood and ran the tip along her slit a few times, getting it nice and wet before he slid the tip inside of her.

Anna kisses back and moans softly as he holds her. She doesn't want it to end as he pulls away

and pulls his fingers out. She felt empty as he stood back up. She kisses and wraps her arms around his neck as they kiss. She whimpered as she felt him against her. She was scared and nervous and excited. She lets him hold her as he kisses her scar. She felt him move against her and finally pushed in.

She whimpers and hides her face as it hurt. It hurt so bad. It was burning and it just hurt. She cries out and bite her lip. Her cries were against him as she tries to relax but can't. She was tight as he tries to push in. She breaks the kiss and cries "it hurts...it hurts bad.." she says softly as tears roll down her cheeks. Her eyes were closed as she digs her nails into his back. "It hurts..." she cries out and looks at him. She didn't want to stop but it was burning in her. she was hurting. August knew that she was hurting but he didn't know what to do for her. He could always stop but honestly he didn't want to do that, they had

already went this far so he might as well go all the way. He thought if they stopped she might regret it as well but he also worried she might tell someone about this and then he might be exiled or even killed.

He looked at her and wiped the tears from her eyes with his thumb as he looked into the beautiful blue eyes. "We can stop, if that's what you *want* we can stop." He stopped for a moment to give her the softest and briefest of kisses before looking back at her again. "Or you can hold out and make it through. If you make it through and give it time it will feel great but you have to choose." The decision was going to be hers, her grip was tight and he knew his cock would be sore later but he could accept that so it was for her to decide. He still slowly slid further inside her though, a soft moan escaping his lips from the warm slick iron grip she had on the head of his member.

Anna holds onto him and looks at him. "I don't want to stop.." she says softly as she grips onto his back and digs her nails into his back. "It hurts.." she says softly as she breathes out and says "go ahead..push in.." she hides her face and bites her lip. She kisses his neck and tries to breathe so her body would relax. She needed to. She took deep breaths and slowly her body relaxed around him and he was able to go in more. The more time that passes she starts to not feel the pain. She looks at him and says "please.." she was giving him permission to move. To Buck his hips.

Her arms around his neck held her to him and she wanted to be held as he touched her and made her feel pleasure. He was large and thick. She whimpers softly and breathes out as her hips start to roll against him and she moans into his ear. She kisses his collarbone and neck and even

his jaw. Any scars along the way she kissed over and over again.

August continued going slow as he pushed inside of her. She was incredibly wet but it could only do so much with how tight she was. His moan came out as a growl as inch by inch slowly disappeared inside of her. Her sex clenching tightly around him was painful for him as well but it also felt fantastic and he couldn't wait to be able to actually enjoy it.

He had managed to make it all the way inside of her, her sex like a clamp around him as his head was shoved as far as it could go inside her. When she pleads for him to start he happily obliges. Slowly he pulls out and slides in quicker than before but still slow enough for her to adjust. He grinds himself upwards wanting her to feel it along the upper part of her sex the most. As she loosened around him and it grew to be even more pleasurable he almost thought it was worth

it to finish inside her the consequences be damned.

Anna still holds onto him and as he moves her body lossens around him. Her breathing speeds up and she starts to moan softly. Her eyes closed as he started to move. She feels him hit a spot and her toes curl as she cries out in pleasure. She covers her mouth and whimpers and moans into her hand as he starts to hit that spot over and over.

Her body started to shake again and she was dripping. Her knees were weak and she just hides her face. Her face had scars but also her shoulders. Claw marks were able to be seen and these were mostly hidden when she wore dresses. She cries out into her hand as her boys tightens around him. The pressure coming back to her stomach. "August.." she moans into his ear as she bites her lip. She was so close. Her body felt on fire and was needing release.

August could tell that what he was currently doing was working for her as she tightened around him so he kept doing what he was doing not wanting to ruin it for her. Leaning forward he kissed her hoping it would distract her and keep her from making too much noise. The moaning and saying his name was enticing and made it better for him but getting caught would not.

Thrusting into her had grown much easier and although she still had a tight grip on him it wasn't as painful. Her body was magical though with the way it felt her sex was trying to milk him for his seed, her muscles clamping around him like a hot wet massage. He moaned into her mouth and concentrated on not cumming. He knew he could cum at any time but he wasn't ready, he needed her to get off at least once although he was surprised she hadn't while he went down on her. Keeping this small section of his mind thinking

like this made it much easier to keep himself from releasing.

Anna kisses him as her body tense and she releases. her body tense up all around him. Her eyes roll into her head as she moans into the kiss. She was on her tippy toes before she leaned into him and moaned softly. Her juices rubbing down his member as it goes in and out of her.

Anna breaks the kiss and lays her head onto his chest. Her eyes were dilated and half lidded as she looks at him with all the adoration she could. She wanted to make him feel as good. She kisses him and says “please..please faster..I want to feel that again..that pleasure..” she bites her lip as she wraps her arms around his neck and pulls him into a kiss. She kisses deep and hard as she pushes into him and wonders how he would fuck her. How he would make her feel good.

He returned the kiss matching her intensity but not for long. He broke away and looked at her for

a moment. "Good girl." He told her before kissing her again for just a moment. She had been good so far, she wasn't too quiet but she wasn't loud enough for them to get caught. He moved his hands along her sides and rested them on her hips. He couldn't believe she was so shy and self conscious when she looked like this.

Without saying anything he pulled her away and lifted her into his arms carrying her over to one of the chairs, where all this had started. He sat her down and bent her over the arm of the chair. He took a moment to admire her shapely ass from behind before moving closer. Lining his member up again he quickly thrusted roughly into her while reaching around putting his hand over her mouth so she couldn't yell.

Anna looks at him and yells slightly as she is lifted. She covers her body and looks at August. Her eyes show her wonder. She bends over and

holds herself up. She looks back at him and whimpers.

As he pushes in her eyes widen and she moans. His hand catches the moan and her knees slightly give out. She looks back at him and moans for him to move. Her breasts were hanging and any movement would cause them to move with her. As he moves she moans and even moves her hips to match his thrust. Over and over and over again. Her body was tired and so was her mind. She moans and looks back at him, her eyes half lidded and dilated.

August had been firm but gentle with her earlier but that was gone now. At the moment she was just going to be a toy for him to use to make himself feel good and he wouldn't be gentle. His thrusting was harder now as the sound of smacking from their bodies colliding filled the room. It wasn't loud enough for anyone to hear

but it provided an almost musical rhythm for her as he focused on the pleasure.

It took more and more of his concentration not to cum yet but he wanted her to get off at least once more, one more time to really make this memorable for her but it was getting harder to hold off. His hand not on her mouth moved to hold her breast, the feeling of it swinging in his hand beginning to push him over the edge. He couldn't hold it any longer so he could only hope she was close as well. The squeezing and clenching of her sex around his was too much and he knew he was cumming again.

Overwhelmed by the pleasure he forgot he was going to pull out and instead thrust as deep as he could into her and held himself there as he moaned. He could feel the string of hot cum filling her and a moment later he pulled out of her and stepped back. His cum leaking from her

shapely body was an incredible view but he quickly realized his mistake.

Anna moans as he speed up. Her eyes crossing and her body tenses and she release. She moans and grips the chair hard as he keeps thrusting into her. Her whimpers and whines are mixed into her moans as she looks at him. She moans as he pushes hard into her once more. Her eyes widen as she feel him release. He pulls out and her legs finally give. She sits down and looks at him. A tear rolls down her face as she looks at him. The look of fear. She thinks it is towards her. She covers herself up and grabs a blanket and covers herself

She looks away at him and says "i-i am sorry..i.." her voice was so soft as she thought he was scared and fearful of her. She knew he would regret this. Her heart breaks as tears roll down her cheeks. She felt the cum slip out of her and sighs. He would want to leave her now. She knew

it. "If you...if.." she couldn't finish her words as she curls up and cries. She felt so empty and lonely in this moment. She just wanted him to hold her. For him to say everything is ok August was confused when she suddenly started acting...scared? Confused? He wasn't sure what she was feeling or why it was directed at him. He quickly approached her but held his hands out in a way to make it clear it wasn't meant in a threatening way. He moved to try to squeeze beside her although there wasn't room in the chair.

He began to shush her silently as he wrapped his arms around her and patted her head. Delicately he wiped her tears away with a finger before kissing her cheek. "It's okay...it's okay, everything is okay." He hummed softly. He wasn't sure why she was the one freaking out, he was the one who might get killed. He didn't say anything else as he silently held her.

Anna leans into him and moves so he can sit. She sits in his lap and looks at him “do you r-reget it...i don't..i-i..” she says softly as she hides her face in his chest. She curls up and lets him hold her. “I don't regret it...” she says again and again. She was scared that he would leave her. “Dont leave...please..don't leave me...you make me feel safe..and myself..please don't go..” she would beg softly as she looked at him as if he was about to disappear right in front of her.

She had a few tears rolling down her face as she looked at him. She sits up and sits on his lap. “Please...” she says softly. “I just...i want to ride horses with you...and dance..and read and...” she says to try and convince him not to leave. He couldn't. She wouldn't allow him. Her lip shook as she says “it is royal order you can't leave..”

August didn't plan on going anywhere, at least he didn't want to. He was sure that if the king and queen found out he would, well that or he would

be dead. When she mentioned it being a royal decree however his eyebrows furrowed. That wasn't a fair thing to say, not at all and it hurt him that she would use their power dynamic like that. He took a deep breath and let it go however with a sigh. He could feel his semen running out of her onto his lap now and he realized they should probably clean up. "I'm not going anywhere but..." He wasn't sure what to say when he started that sentence. "We can't do this again. I enjoyed it a lot. You're so beautiful and it was fun but if anyone found out....if your parents found out somehow." He stopped and took another deep breath. "If they find out they will either exile me or take my head. Besides them being your parents they're also the king and queen and I just took the virginity of their only daughter and heir. In their eyes I'll have robbed you and them and made it harder to find you a suitor if you had ever changed your mind." He held her tighter for

a moment not wanting to let go. "I'm not going anywhere but I think we either need to give up this or lose everything."

Anna hides her face and hugs him. She listens to him and bites her lip. She nods softly and says "ok..." she sighs and says 'sorry..i should have used my royal status like that..i..i was just so scared that you would...well...leave and...make fun of me..i didn't want you to be like everyone else..' she says before sitting up and rubbing her eyes. "We should go and get cleaned...how...how am i going to get down here...i dont have my underwear.." she blushes and curls up in the blanket more and more. "Gosh i am so embarrassing.." She laughs at herself as she stays curled up. She looks at him and bites her lip.

She leans in and kisses him one last time. It's a sweet kiss. No lust or anything behind it. Just her telling him she cares. That she enjoyed it. That

she loved it. She pulls away and looks at him and says "i will get my dress on.." she moves off his lap and careful, and slowly, moves to her dress to slide it on. Once it was on she looks at him and leans against the wall as her legs were still sore. "Ready when you are to head down..then i am taking a bath.." she blushes as she almost ask him to join her but his last words ring in her head.

we either need to give up this or lose everything

August listened to her and was glad that she apologized but he was still sad this would be the first and last time this happened. "I don't know why you thought I would make fun of you. I told you before that I found you beautiful." As she climbed off of him and got dressed he watched her, sad to not be able to look at her naked form anymore. When there was nothing left to see he got dressed as well, placing her torn wet panties in his pocket.

When they were both ready he waited for her to go down before he followed and they went to their rooms. When he entered his he fetched a bath and cleaned himself properly, a little sad he had to wipe her off of him. When he was dressed once more in a forest green tunic and black trousers he went to her door and knocked before entering unsure if she was done.

Anna walks with him and goes to her room. She starts her bath and slips into it. She lays there in her tub...sad. She holds her heart and sighs. She was stupid to think anything more might happen. It was a lapse. He knew that...she had to get over it. She sinks below the water and stays there till she has to get air and she comes up. Anna looks over and hears the door knock "COME IN AUGUST!" She yells hoping he would hear her. She looks at the pendant on the seat of the bathroom and sighs. She should return that. "I am just finishing up.." she says before she gets

out and grabs a towel to dry herself. She wraps the towel around her and pokes her head out of the bathroom.

“Hi..” she says as she looks at him..she smiles before saying “um..have a seat i will be right there..” she rushes to her changing slide and starts to slip on a flowy loose type of dress. It was a pale yellow and she could tie it herself. Once dressed she moves out of the slide and moves to sit next to him. She held the pendent and held it out to him. “This is yours....” She knew if she held onto it she would fall for him. She couldn’t..he said they couldn’t so.. August entered and watched her come out with a towel wrapped around her. He couldn't help but admire her legs before she was hidden and changing. His stomach clenched knowing that not only would he probably not be able to see her nude again, much less be intimate with her but he also probably hurt her. He had figured she might be

developing feelings for him, that's why he was worried he was taking advantage of her but he didn't want to hurt her. When she returned his pendant he knew that was the case. "I would rather you keep it but I understand." He told her before putting it back around his neck.

"I was planning on going down to the kitchen for some food if you would like to join me, but I have to speak with you before anything else."

Reaching behind him he pulled out a piece of paper and opened it up for her to take if she would like. The paper was a note left to him by her mother, the queen, saying she needed to speak to him. It wasn't very detailed but it did mention she would require him to guard her while she went into town. He knew that part would mostly excite her but he also thought it might scare her, the part after that was worse. The reason she would be going into town was to meet with a suitor. Apparently with the war and

her father away they couldn't rely on her not having a suitor anymore and we're going to force her to go out, he knew she wouldn't enjoy this. He would still have to go get the details from the queen but he wasn't looking forward to it.

Anna nods and looks forward. "Yes..food sounds great.." She looks at him before taking the paper and reading it. She read the first part and was happy...then the second part. Her face drops as she looks at the word. Suitor. She sighs and nods "right...if mother says it.." she stands and moves to her closet and opens it. She tries to find a nice outfit. Her hands were shaking the whole time. A suitor. Her mother knew...Anna knew that the suitors wouldn't be wanting to marry her for her...but for the Kingdom and crown. She bites her lip as she stands before her closet. She felt so alone in that moment. Her eyes were empty and her face sad.

She finally picks out a dress that will show her curves and move back to the changing stall. She struggles for a few minutes before coming out in the dress.. she moves to grab her mask and slips it on. She ties it around her face and looks at August. "Breakfast?" She asks. Her voice cheerful but her eyes showing the pain she was in. She was sore and empty and...lost. She moves to her shoes and slips on her heels before moving to pull her hair up and then to the door. She would walk out and walk slowly down the halls to the kitchen. Her eyes were looking into nowhere and she felt...numb.

The chief looks at her as she walks in and sighs. He starts to make her some breakfast. It was the whole spread on two plates. Anna took hers and moves to the inside tea room. Once there she sat and just lifted her mask. She didn't take it off. She lifted it and ate. She didnt even lift it as high as before. It was lower and hid more. She was

hiding herself away again. She would eat slow as she just stares into the world. Lost, hurt, empty, and alone August didn't know what to do with himself at the moment, there were just too many thoughts and emotions going through him presently. He wasn't in love with Anna, he didn't even have feelings for her...yet. there was a seedling there, the beginnings of what could potentially blossom into feelings with nurturing and time. Regardless of that though he knew this was bothering her.

If he hadn't been born the seventh son of his house he could potentially be a suitor for the young woman. His age compared to hers might make it less likely but the age disparity wasn't so drastic as to ruin the chances. His family wasn't as powerful as many who would try for her hand but it was enough to get his hat in the ring and if she got the final say that was all that mattered. Unfortunately he was the seventh son so that

was pointless. His name being an option was still possible but he expected the king and queen would ignore it.

He wasn't sure why it mattered if he could be a suitor for her anyway, he wasn't in love with her. He still didn't like the idea of her getting hurt however and he knew this whole experience would be painful for her especially after what happened earlier. He tucked the pendant back into his shirt before following after her. . He was silent as he followed after her, he wasn't sure what to say or if he even should say anything. He could feel the princess shutting herself in once more and it broke his heart. When he sat down with her with their food and he saw how little her mask was lifted it only became more clear. The young woman he saw when they rode Kingdom or she was invested in a story was so much *better* than this one who acted like a shell of that amazing woman.

Honestly the worst part about all this was he would have to go with her and her suitor to wherever they went. He was glad that she would finally be able to leave the castle grounds and experience the larger world even if only a small portion of it but the reason why dampened that feeling. He didn't know for sure but he had a strong gut feeling that any of her potential suitors would only be after the throne and Kingdom. They might enjoy the woman's company and her personality but he knew not all men felt about scars the way he did and they would only hurt her. Then again he had hurt her just this morning so he wasn't any better.

There was one thing in that note that made it hit harder for him. She would have read it but not realized there was anything out of place by it. The queen had said the name of the first suitor was Bruno Dietrich, August's oldest non married brother. Anna sits and eats. Once she is done she

sighs as she waits for August to finish. "Are you going to go to my mother now.." she looks at him. Her eyes were sad. They were filled with sadness. She would stand and take his plate once he was done. She would walk to the kitchen and set the plates down. She would move back to August and says "i will be in the garden...you can go talk to my mother.." her voice was soft as she turned and walked away to the garden. She would sit on a bench and sigh. Her eyes were watery. She wanted to go back to yesterday. She wanted to go back to riding Kingdom. Laughing and curled up reading the book. She takes a deep breath as she waits.

Her mother was waiting for the guard in the main dining room. She had a few pages of paper and notes from different armies around the country. The queen sighs and rubs her eyes. Would Anna accept this...accept having to go on a date with a suitor. She didn't think so...but they had to do

something. They have too. The war was getting out of hand and there was a good chance that her father and the queen's husband might die. The queen sighs and leans into her chair. She would wait for August. Once August came to talk to her she stands and smiles "hello August..please have a seat." She says softly as she sits down too. She looks at the paper and sighs "I know that you might be wondering why your eldest brother might be wanting to suit my daughter...he wants to get to know her and if she likes him then he wants to marry her. Today they will go into town and walk around. You will be there in case anything happens. You will ride her down on a horse and make sure that she is safe." She smiles at August. "My daughter trusts you..I can see that. She is comfortable around you..so i trust you." She says softly as she takes his hand "make sure that she is safe. You will

leave at noon." She dismisses him and goes back to the paperwork.

Anna was still sitting in the garden on the bench. Her eyes were dry as she had cried for a few minutes. She looks at two birds in the bird bath and sighs. Would the suitor be nice..would..would he want to know her or just..just to get the Kingdom. She sighs and rubs her neck. The mask was uncomfortable. She just waits for August to get her. To get her to be taken to the town. Her first time in the town would be on a date with a male she didn't know. August sat and ate with her quietly. It wasn't that he didn't want to talk to her but the tension was still strong. He wondered if maybe he shouldn't have said that and instead just kept things going. They would have had to be more secretive but maybe it would have worked?

"I think I must, I'll meet you in the gardens but if there's anything else you need to do or

something you need to grab I would do so while I'm meeting with her." He gave her a smile and went off to meet the queen.

August listened to her and was respectful not letting his current feelings leak out as he listened. Bruno was actually his second oldest brother, the oldest Maximilian was already married however. Bruno was sort of a black sheep of the family. He always had some issues that his family tried to ignore but he was usually just not disc, they didn't talk about Bruno.

August bowed to the queen before he left. With the way she spoke to him and gave him her hand he couldn't help but wonder if she and her daughter had similar tastes and she was interested in him as well. He doubted this but he had thought it nonetheless. As he left he told one of the servants to go have the stable prepare Kingdom for a ride into town.

August himself left to go back to his room. He hadn't expected this earlier but now that he knew what was happening he would need to change. He stripped off his current clothes and put on the nicer ones he was meant to wear while representing the royal family. He wore a fine tunic done in the royal family colors and took the time to fix his normally loose hair. When that was done he headed to the garden to meet with Anna.

Anna would wait. She would hear his footsteps and stand up. She turns and her eyes widen. He was more handsome than ever before. She bites her lip and tries to hide her blush and she clears her throat. "Are we ready to leave.." she says softly as she walks towards him. His outfit had the royal colors which were blue and gold. One of the parts of his uniform was off and Anna reaches up to help him fix it. She does this without thinking. When she realizes she blushes

and says “s-sorry..” she looks away and sighs. The dress that she was wearing was a blue and gold dress. She had this dress for wearing out to eh town and other places but she hadn’t really worn it. She takes her hands and crosses them in front of her. “Lead the way..” she says.

She would follow August to the stables. The servants had gotten Kingdom ready for the ride. He had all new and unique items for the ride. The items were gold and blue. The saddle was a dark black with gold and blue accents. The servants were holding the horse waiting for them. They had a step ready for the princess. Anna would wait for August to get on first then she would get on behind him. She wraps her arms around his waist a little just to keep herself on Kingdom. She doesn't speak as she sits and waits for August to start their journey. As August entered the garden and saw her he tried his best to not show how he was feeling. This beautiful young

woman he had been learning about and now had a complicated relationship with was about to go on a date with his brother. The part that might be the most awkward was that no one in his family even knew that he was no longer a mercenary and currently the personal guard to the princess.

"If you are ready then so am I." He told her before she suddenly reached up and adjusted something on his outfit. Her closeness made him think about earlier that morning and he almost reached out to wrap his arms around her and pull her in for a kiss, he didn't, but he almost had. "You look beautiful by the way." He told her sincerely but wished she wasn't wearing the mask.

When they got to the stables August whistled seeing Kingdom in his new gear. He did take a moment to check it himself to make sure it was done right before mounting him. When he helped Anna but she moved to the back he

wasn't sure how to react. On one hand it could be awkward with them in a similar position to the day before but on the other hand her riding back there was dangerous. "I'm sorry princess but I must insist you move in front of me. I am sworn to protect you both as a whole and while we go out and I'm not fulfilling my role if you sit behind me." He told her in a stern serious tone. He wouldn't start going until she moved to where she belonged, in front of him. If she refused he could as well since he was following the orders of the king and queen.

Anna looks at him and sighs. She moves to sit in front of him. She makes sure to not touch any part of him. Her heart broke as she remembered them before. She gulps softly and says "lets go.." she says softly with no emotion. She just sits there looking ahead. As they start to move she holds her hands in front of her and tries to not think about the movement. She bites her lip and

tries to calm herself down. As they started to move into the town, the road became more cobble. The houses become more and more close together. The people look at the horse and start to mumble about the princess and her guard. She hasn't been seen. The people would bow as they passed. Anna looks around the town. She looks and tries to look like a princess. As they passed there was a loud barking of dogs. Her heart beats quickly as she looks at the dogs. Her eyes were full of fear as her body started to shake. She was about to panic. She grips her dress and bites her lip to try and keep her panic in but August could probably tell she was about to break. She looks down and tries to calm herself but nothing was working. Her hand goes up to her neck and she was missing the pendant..he had it. This seemed to cause her to spiral even more. August was relieved when she moved in front of him but her tension as she sat there was uncomfortable.

When they were away from everyone he leaned in so she could hear him. "Even if we can't do like we did in the morning, that doesn't mean you have to walk yourself away from me. We should be close, I would give my life to protect you after all." Even with her trying to keep her distance from him as they rode there were of course some moments of rubbing and he still held her fairly tight in his arms as he held the reins.

"I'm glad I get to be the one to bring you out of the castle, it means a lot to me." He told her before he heard the dogs barking. He could tell it was stressing her out and she would panic soon. "Princess I'm here with you, I promise I won't let anything happen to you." He told her as he scooted forward and moved closer as if to envelop her. He didn't know if she would even feel comforted by him anymore but he had to try, he hated seeing her scared.

Anna responds by leaning back and being hidden from everyone. She bites her lip and says "i..i am scared.." She was scared. She didn't want to meet this guy. She wanted to go back to the castle and to read while in the lap of August. To read to him and to have him hold her. She started to calm down by his presence and her hand was at her chest. It was like she was just holding something that used to be there. She leans her head back and looks up at August. What she would do to be able to reach up and kiss him. What she would do..

After she calms a little bit she sits back up and says "we can talk about this later." She would want to talk. But she couldn't now. Her voice was kinda stern. She sits up as they enter the center of town and she looks around for a noble she was supposed to be meeting. She didn't know who it was but she didn't really care. She would just do this then go to her mother and say she didn't

want to see him again. She messes with her hair nervously as they ride August would want to talk about this as well but he knew it would have to wait. He missed the feeling of towering over everyone on Kingdom but between that and having the princess with him the attention was a bit much. He wondered what it was like for Anna to be looking down on all these people while they watched her or bowed. This had to be a new experience and he hoped this experience was a good one since he didn't expect the rest of the night to go well.

As they reached the center of town August could make out one of his family's carriages, a sleek back carriage with golden trim, two black Friesian horses with white spots on their noses waited patiently at the front of it, a servant sitting on the bench. His brother stepped out in a black wool suit and rimmed hat. The man even held a black wood cane with gold trim. The man looked

pretentious and he felt an urge to punch his older brother, his brother always looked punchable. Bruno sat in his carriage waiting for the princess to arrive. He was growing tired of waiting however, the velvet padded seats weren't comfortable enough to be sitting for so long. As he watched he saw peasants begin moving out of the way before a massive horse pushed its way through. With the ornate saddle and decorations he assumed this must be the princess. Stepping out of his carriage he flourished his cane as he climbed down the steps and stood on the cobblestone.

Bruno didn't know much about the princess other than her face was supposed to be messed up and she wore a mask to hide it. Whatever though it didn't mean anything to him anyway. As long as that was all that was wrong with her she would look like any other woman in the dark, besides if he was king he could have attractive

concubines and not have to worry about sleeping with her at all besides making an heir. Oh to be king, it was close to his. All he would have to do is seduce one ugly woman and the throne would be his. As the horse arrived next to the carriage Bruno removed his hat and bowed to the woman and her guard. August stopped near the carriage and slid off of Kingdom before helping the princess down, he made sure to stand at an angle to where his brother and no one else would be able to try and sneak a peek under the princesses dress. When she was off August took a step away and stood closer to his horse and looked at his brother with a stoney expression. His brother was shorter than him by almost a foot and while not his most attractive sibling he was still passable. Bruno had always been his least favorite brother and he dreaded spending this time with him even if it was just as a shadow. Anna looked at the people and smiled at some of

them. Some of the children wave and she waves back. As they come to a stop, Anna looks at the male. She didn't think he looked very...well..handsome. She much more liked a man with a beard and who stood about a foot taller. That man was August. She shakes her head and tries to clear her head. She looks at August and lets him help her down.

She looks at August before he step aside and she turns to the male. "Hello.." she bows slightly and steps away from Kingdom and looks at Bruno. " it is a pleasure to meet you." She says softly as she stands there. The common folk look at the three. "This is my guard Sir August. He will be coming with us today. Where shall we start?" She says softly.

Her whole body language told August she didn't want to be here. She wanted to be back in the library. She didn't want to be here with this male. Her eyes didn't meet Bruno as she stood there

and waited for Bruno to speak. August watched her and could tell how little she wanted to be here and how uncomfortable she was. He looked down at his brother and wondered if he would recognize him now after hearing his name. It had been years since he had seen him, maybe close to a decade. August hoped his brother had changed from the pompous piece of shit he was before but he doubted it, maybe that was for the best though since he didn't have to worry about his brother ending up with Anna. Bruno heard the name August and looked up at him. He hadn't really paid any attention to the man other than that he was taller than he was, which made him too tall. Now after hearing the name he looked at him more and saw the man's face. "Ha!" He exclaimed in what may have been a laugh when he recognized him. "We have been introduced before *Milady*. This man you call your guard is in fact my baby brother."

He knew that his youngest brother wouldn't amount to anything, how could he be the seventh brother? August may have been the guard to the princess but that meant he was still just a guard, a man paid to be a wall and a shadow, a glorified babysitter.

Turning away from his brother not wanting to spare him a second thought and looking back at the princess. "I have taken the liberty and expense to set up a few things for us this evening that I'm sure you will adore." He told her with a smile that he thought was charming but in reality made him look like a snake. "If you would go ahead and step into *my* carriage and have a seat we will be going on a ride down to the lake." Climbing up the steps he stepped into his carriage and opened the door for her to join him. August went to speak to the driver when Bruno mentioned going to the lake. He told the man that his horse would follow but for the driver to

keep an eye out to make sure he stayed with them. Kingdom was well trained but it would still be a good idea just to keep an eye out for him. He also let the man know that if when they arrived at the lake Kingdom wasn't there then his brother wouldn't be the one to worry about. With that he returned to them.

As he climbed up the steps behind Anna his brother tried to shut the door on him. August caught the door and forced it open before glaring at his brother. "If you think I'm going to not sit in the carriage then you best go back home, I'm not leaving her side." He told her before climbing in and taking a seat across from the two of them where he could keep a sharp eye on them. Anna looks at the two and tilts her head. No way these two were brothers. She was still very confused. She looks at Bruno and says "of course.." She moves to the carriage and gets into the carriage. She sits next to Bruno. She

moves away to make sure that she wasn't touching the male. "Sir Bruno I will let you know that I wish not to be touched. I don't let anyone touch me." She says softly as she looks for August.

When he gets in her eyes widen softly as he speaks. His voice kinda scared her. She never saw him...angry..she looked down and wanted to reach up and touch the pendent but she didn't have it. She takes a deep breath and says "well are we ready?" She says softly. The princess would watch the outside. She felt uncomfortable in the small room. She wanted to be riding Kingdom. She wanted the air. She hated this.

She gulps softly as she looks outside and watches the world go around. This was the first time outside and she was stuck in the carriage not being able to experience everything. She sighs as she looks at the two and tries to figure out if they were truly brothers. She still couldn't

see it. She didn't know how August, who was very handsome, was the younger brother of this...man next to her. As they started moving Bruno made sure the blinds on the windows were all the way down. He didn't want anyone to be able to see into the carriage and he didn't want to be able to look out. He didn't know why anyone would want to look around at the gross town full of peasants and dirty people. August knew Anna would prefer to be able to see out of the carriage but he couldn't do anything about it. Occasionally August would glance outside to make sure they were going where they were told but he had to spend most of the trip listening to his brother talk about his "accomplishments". Running one of their father's wineries wasn't exactly a big deal when his father had put people in place to run it without any help. Bruno had spent the trip to the lake making sure to tell the princess about all the things he had managed to do, all the

things that made him better than most people. Admittedly though he was curious about what she was like under her dress. He wasn't curious about her face, he knew that would be horrid but how was her body? She had said she didn't like being touched but he was Bruno Dietrich, she would be honored and he wanted to feel her legs. So he reached over and placed a hand on her thigh trying to move it inward. August had been looking at the princess trying to ignore what his brother said when he noticed his hand come down. "Move it or lose it." He growled before rising up from his seat. Grabbing his brother by his collar he dragged him to the door of the wagon. Kicking the door open he tossed his brother from the carriage. His brother tried to wrestle and squirm free but he was a weak man who had never fought for anything. August admittedly enjoyed watching the man fall in the mud. Anna was sad when Bruno closed the

blinds. she wanted to see the world. she had not been to the lake so she wanted to see the way there. but instead she just looked at her hands and listen to bruno talk. she didn't care for what he was talking about and she didn't care about who anyone's father was or what they had done...she cared about how they made her feel and he wasn't doing a great job on that front.

she sighs and stops when she feels his hand on her leg. she looks at August with fear. she didn't like touching. she told him that and yet bruno touched her. she was about to say for him to remove his hand when August stepped in. her eyes widen as she watches what happens. it was so quick. before she knew it, it was just them.

August and Anna.

Anna looks at August and says "what..did you just...did you just throw him out of **his** carriage!" she goes to the window and looks to see the male get smaller and smaller as they go on. Anna

sits down and breaks out laughing. she covers her mouth or where it would be as she giggles. it wasn't a fake laugh but a real one. "why would you do that?" she asks while still laughing. her eyes were closed with laughter as she sits back and holds her chest. she finally calms down and looks at August. "you really don't like your older brother do you.." she giggles and bites her lip. August stopped out the door and told the driver to stop. It took the driver a moment but he began to slow as August looked back at his mud covered brother. On the bright side he could see they were already at the lake. It was quite the beautiful scene with the lake surrounded by evergreen forest and mountains. He couldn't wait for Anna to be able to see it.

He moved back to join her as the carriage stopped. He smiled hearing her laugh and seeing it in her eyes. With how down she had been since that morning seeing her happy was wonderful

and it made him want to kiss her but he stopped himself. "He's an ass right? I'm here to protect you, that doesn't just mean from violence, and I'll be more than happy to tell that to your mother and my father. So how do you feel about calling your date with him over and the two of us go for a ride around the lake on Kingdom?" He asked, his eyes twinkling and his smile warm and bright. Anna looks at him and nods. "Ok..can we still go to the lake.." she says as she moves towards him. She reaches out and takes his hand pulling him out of the carriage. She moves to Kingdom and pets the horse. She looks at August and smiles. "Come on.." she says as she needed his help to get up onto Kingdom. Once he was on she would let him help her and moves to sits in front of her. She looks around and her eyes widen at the beautiful surroundings. She smiles as she looks around like a child seeing the first fall.

She looks back at August and bites her lip. She would pull her mask up a little and lean in. She kisses him on the cheek and says "thank you.." she smiles before fixing her mask and says "lets go! I wAnna go down to the lake!" She smiles as she wiggles a little with excitement. August looked back at his brother who was starting to make his way back to the carriage with an angry expression on his face. He takes her hand happily and walks to the horse before mounting him. With a smile he helps her up and positions her Infront of him. He didn't even care if they grinded now he just wanted to see her happy and herself instead of the walled off princess.

Instead of looking around he instead watches her as she takes in the scenery. Seeing the excitement in her eyes made his stomach flutter. When she lifted her mask to kiss him it only made it more so. They would have to talk eventually but for now they could ride. "I can show you the

world, shining, shimmering, splendid." He told her as Kingdom picked up speed. "Tell me princess, when did you last let your heart decide?" Anna giggles as she leans into him and looks around. Once they got a little bit away from the carriage she takes off her mask and she closes her eyes letting the wind hit her face. She smiles and looks around. Her eyes take everything in. She giggles as they ride and she would look back at August. Her eyes lingered but she couldn't. She turns around and blushes as she holds her mask. She gulps as she pushes against August and makes sure that they would grind as they rode.

Anna watches the world. "August! Can we stop at the water!" She says as she points to the water. There was a small hidden area that she had seen. She smiles and if he would take her there she would slide off the Kingdom and run to the water. She slips off her shoes and lifts her dress a

little as she steps into the water. She giggles and looks at August. She drops her dress and says to August "come on!!" She giggles and spins in the water. The bottom of the dress is getting wet but she doesn't care. She walks on the bed of the lake. She picks up a few rocks and giggles as she sees fish. She was like a child who was seeing the world for the first time. When the mask came off August couldn't help but smile when he saw her beautiful scarred face. When she looked back and stared at him as well he could only smile at her. When she pushed back into him he knew she was aware of it and he didn't mind either. They would have to talk and figure things out eventually but he didn't think his approach earlier was the way to go about it.

When Anna asked him to stop at the lake he found no reason not to and followed her direction to where she wanted to go. He dismounted before helping her down and

watched as she ran into the water. He thought about standing there and watching but as she called for him he knew he couldn't stay there. He would strip down to his undergarments and go into the water, to protect her obviously. This was the side of her he liked the most and he hoped to see more of it that evening.

Anna smiles and looks at August. She bites her lip and blushes softly. She looks away before picking up some rocks. She looks at him as he swims and looks at her dress. She bites her lip but doesn't move to swim. She just stays near the shore and just with her feet in the water. She smiles as she picks up a rock that was really pretty. She stood there and looked at the mountains. She was relaxed and seemed to be happy.

She would look at August and giggles. She holds out the rock "look!" She says softly as she holds out the rock. She was standing there with the bottom of her dress being soaked. She had a

wide smile on her face and was kinda scared that when they went back that they would have to be like earlier that day. That she would have to be cold. "August! Come here!" She says as she motions for him to come to her August stayed relatively close to her and watched her before she called for him. He hadn't realized until that point that the princess most likely didn't know how to swim. Maybe that's why she just stood there in her dress? Swimming over to her he stopped and stood to see what she wanted to show him.

If she was interested he could teach her how to swim. Her dress would need to come off so hopefully she would put undergarments on but he could teach her. She might even enjoy it. For now though he would just see what she wanted to show him.

She had found a piece of sea glass. She shows him and blushes as she takes his hand and puts

the rock in his hand “there you go..” she says softly as she smiles. “That is a gift..” she looks around and looks at him. “How...how do you swim..” she says softly as she bends down and more of her dress gets wet. “I want to swim...but..i don't know how too..” she blushes embarrassed. She holds her arms as she looks at him.

Her eyes would wander his body. She shouldn't look. She shouldn't think about how she wanted him to touch her. How she wanted to feel his hands on her body. How she wanted him to kiss her. She bites her lip and says “can you teach me..” she says softly as she says her hands move to her dress and start to undo it. She couldn't get the ribbon undone. “Help me get my dress off...i want to swim..”



August looked down at the small green rock and clenched it in his hand after a moment of staring. "Thank you, I will cherish it." He told her with a warm genuine smile. He just needed to figure out where to put it for now. This was solved though when she suddenly asked about swimming.

"Swimming is easy, it's just finding the best way to keep from drowning." He told her as he moved closer. "The first step is to get out of that dress." When she started to undo her dress August reached down and grabbed her, slinging her over his shoulders. The water that had been absorbed by her dress had made her heavier but she was still easy to carry as he made his way back into the grass.

Sitting her down on the ground he went to Kingdom and put the rock in a saddlebag before coming back to her. His undergarments clung to him leaving nothing to the imagination as he began undoing her dress before helping her pull it off. When it was off he hung it from a nearby branch hoping it would dry at least partially before they left. Turning back around he couldn't help but look her over and crave her once more.

Anna looks at him and tilts her head before she is picked up and she giggles. She sits on the ground

and tries to get the ribbon out. She looks at him and blushes. She bites her lip. Her face was burning as she broke her face away from him and let him help her. She had just a bra and underwear on. She stands and looks at him. She covers her body and blushes "maybe we shouldn't.." she says softly as she looks down. She covers herself and says "we don't.." she says Her eyes were full of fear. She shouldn't have done this. She shouldn't have done this. She couldn't. She shouldn't. She bites her lip as she sits back down and covers herself. She was embarrassed. This is what she shouldn't have done. She hides her face as she sits there. She wanted to swim but this was too embarrassing. He probably was disgusted about her. He didn't want to have her naked around him. August's heart broke a little watching her curl up and cover herself trying to hide. Slowly he approached her and knelt down next to her.

Once again he took off his amulet and put it around her neck not bothering to fix her hair around it. He took her chin in his hand and lifted it so she could look into his eyes. "We do need to figure things out but tonight let's just enjoy it, you have the freedom you always wanted tonight. Let's make the most of it." He told her before leaning in and giving her a short but sweet kiss.

Like a moment earlier August grabbed her legs and picked her up before carrying her to the lake although this time he carried her in front of him. He went far enough into the lake to where she would be able to stand with her shoulders above water but deep enough for her to swim. He held her there and let her float with just his arms to help hold her up. "I don't want to guard the you I saw during breakfast. I want to be with you, the you I've been seeing since we were alone in the carriage. I don't know how we can make it work,

but I want to try something." He told her thinking having this discussion might be easier now while they were doing this.

Anna looks at him and nods. She was surprised when he kissed her. She leans into the kiss and smiles as they pull away. She sighs and giggles as he picks her up. She looks at him and shivers as they go into the water. She smiles as he holds her and lets her float. She kicks her legs a little as she looks at him. Her hands went to his shoulders as they sat in the water.

She looks at him and bites her lip. She knew what he was talking about. She gulps as he speaks. "I got hurt..." she says softly. "When you said...we had to give this up...i got hurt.." she says softly as she looks down. Her eyes were showing her sadness. "I am sorry...i shouldnt have...I shouldn't.." she just rested her head on his shoulder as he held her. "I want to continue to read and eat together..sit in the loft and watch

the stars.." she says softly as she looks at him. They were alone. The wildlife was soft and there were just birds. She looks at him as they swim a little. She moves and kisses him. Her kiss was a little sweet but also mixed in there was a little bit of need. She kisses him and pulls away "what do we do.." August held her less and less as they floated letting her get used to doing it on her own. He was always right there beside her ready to catch her and hold her if she needed him and couldn't manage on her own, not just at the moment with swimming but as long as she allowed him to be her guard. "I know you got hurt, and I'm sorry, I was scared. I wasn't lying when I said I would be exiled or killed and that's terrifying."

He kissed her back hungrily wanting to go further as well but now wasn't the time. He wished that his cock understood that but at least there was one more thing working to hold her up he

supposed. "I want to do all those things as well, if nothing else though, we need to be careful." He did enjoy doing those things with her, seeing her open up when she had someone she felt like actually cared about her. The sex was great too although unexpected but that was even riskier. "Especially the sex. That was nice and honestly waking up like that is about the best way to wake up I could imagine but that was even riskier. What if you ended up pregnant? How would you explain that to your parents?" Besides the embarrassment of the situation the fallout would be his death. . He leaned in and kissed her this time as he pulled her into slightly deeper water. "For now why don't we keep it between us? When we're alone we can do whatever we wish within reason, but if we're in public or around anyone, or anywhere someone could be at any point we behave. You don't have to retreat into your shell, hide behind your mask, you can

be yourself around me, we just can't show what we are doing." As a whole August didn't like secrets, and keeping any sort of relationship secret felt wrong and dirty. Admittedly it was a bit hot but it also just made him not feel good about it.

He wasn't even sure what their relationship was or should be. For one August wasn't even sure if he was the monogamous type, if that was the type of bond that was forming between them. He hadn't particularly seen himself as the settle down and marry type, he wasn't sure how he felt about it now but he had never pictured it for himself either. It might be one of those things where she had to continue life and just have him as a partner outside her royal marriage like a concubine. He doubted his brother would be the last potential suitor the queen tried.

"You know your mother is going to keep trying to set you up right?" He asked, looking into her

beautiful blue eyes. "Guarding you during those dates is going to be hard on me. Watching some other man either be interested in you or just want to use you, either way will hurt me." He admitted to her not liking the thought of someone like his brother trying to marry her for the crown. "I suppose we can always have mini dates on our own after those are over, make use of your freedom." He suggested thinking that wasn't a bad idea. "Maybe pretend those dates are between us and they're the third wheel?" Anna looks at him as he talks. She understood. They had to be careful. She looks at him and blushes softly "I can get some of the tea.." she says softly as she moves her hands to trace some scars on his body. She bites her lip "I order my own tea..my mother doesn't get it. I do. I can order the tea that will help decrease that chance.." she says softly. She kisses his cheeks and says "I would figure it out. My mother might

be a little cold but she knows I want someone who cares for me..all of me..and you do that. You are also noble. Yes you are the first in line. But..that doesn't mean you are better than them..like your brother..he reminds me over a snake." She giggles before kissing him again.

She looks at the water and grips onto him more. She nods and says "ok..between us..I mean it is us normally all the time.." she smiles and giggles. She looks at him and nods "yes..and every time we will go and sit though it and then go to a new place. Just you and me.." she says softly. She holds his face and smiles "you make me feel safe.. and..beautiful..." she smiles as she kisses him. She moves and wraps her hands along his neck. Her kisses got a little heated

August listened to her and he wished he could be as optimistic. He imagined she was right and her mother would prefer her to be happy but that didn't mean she would be okay with a seventh

son of a mid range noble house. Her getting black stem tea would be nice but if anyone discovered it then it would bring up questions that would be hard for her to answer. As long as she was willing to try though, so would he, if nothing else so he wouldn't have to see her shut down again.

As she wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him passionately he put his arms around her waist and pulled her closer into him. He stood on the bottom of the lake bed now instead of floating so they didn't need to worry about going under or floating away. "You are beautiful, you shouldn't need me to tell you that or make you feel that way." He raised one of his arms to caress the scars on her face. "Eventually I'll convince you of that." He told her as he leaned in and kissed her once more. He didn't bother holding back at the moment, he could tell from

the heat of her kiss that she wanted the passion as well and he would give it to her.

Anna leans into his hand and smiles. "You make me feel that way.." she says softly before kissing him back. She kisses him hard and as they kiss she lets out a small moan. She would move her knee to lightly press against his member. She pulls away panting softly as she looks at him. Her eyes were dilated and she was so happy. She didn't want to leave this area. This moment. She kisses his cheeks and scars. She moves to his neck and kisses down before sucking and nibbling on his skin. Her eyes closing and her knees gently rubbing against him. She looks up at him to see his reaction.

She would sit up and kiss him again, not letting him talk or anything. She kisses him over and over again. Her kisses became more and more heated and passionate.

She breaks the kisses and whispers "oh god..you are a good kisser.." she giggles as she leans her head into his shoulder and kisses his neck and shoulder again. She had the claw marks in her shoulder and her face but everywhere else...her body seemed..perfect.

August was going to say something but he couldn't as he was cut off by her kissing him once more. Her knee could feel his cock at full mast, well mostly, the cold water keeping it from being up to it's normal size. Since he couldn't speak he just slowly made his way to shore and accepted the kisses.

"Am I? You have a lot of people to compare me to?" He asked when he finally had an opportunity to speak. When he got to the edge of the lake he picked her up once more and walked out with her. He carried her while he kissed her long necks and shoulders until he reached an area under a tree, the ground underneath was covered in a

thick bed of soft moss and it was too far away from the path for anyone to stumble upon or hear them.

Gently laying her down on her back he climbed on top of her kissing her more easily now that they were out of the water. He could taste the lake on her skin, a musky dank taste but it didn't bother him. "What are you thinking right now?" He asked, pulling his lips away from her and gazing down into the blue pools of her eyes.

Anna kisses him and smiles "you know I don't.." she says softly as she bites her lip as he kisses her neck and shoulders. She lays on the ground and looks at him. She'd breathing was uneven as he kissed her skin and looked at him. "How I want you to touch me...how I want you to cover and erase what your brother touched.." she says softly

She looks at him before undoing her bra and slipping it off. She looks at him and bites her lip.

She knew they were hidden but it still made her body nervous. Her womanhood did pulse as she started to feel needy. "August...she says softly as she pulls him in to kiss her and her hands wander his body. She wants him to touch and hold her. Even if they didn't do anything else. Just to be kissed and held. That is what she wanted.

August smiled down at her as he listened to what she wanted. He returned her kisses and moved to lay beside her instead. He wrapped his arms around her and pulled her right to him. He grabbed her thigh and pulled her leg over him getting them as close together as they physically could without him being inside of her.

From the position they laid his cock would run against the slit of her sex but wouldn't enter her unless they knowingly meant to. His hands explored her body gently grabbing at her ass, massaging it in his hands. If there was one thing he regretted about that morning it wasn't not

being able to spend enough time exploring her body. Other than his front hitting her ass he hadn't even touched it and barely looked at it, that was a mistake, it was shapely and felt perfect to his touch. "We can just do this for now, if you decide you want me, you can have me." He told her flexing his member to make it bump against her sex to prove his point.

Anna looks at him and giggles as he pulls her close. She shivers and pants softly. She was soaking wet down there and he wasn't helping. She looks at him and hums as he moves his hands over her body. She moves closer and rocks her hips back and forth softly before settling down and nodding "ok..." she says before looking at him. "Do you think your brother only..wanted me for..the crown and..sex?" She asks softly.

She didn't like the male. He was like a snake. She much more enjoyed August. He didn't seem to want the crown and just wanted her to be happy.

That is who she wanted in her life. She kisses his cheeks and traces some scars on his chest. Her curves were showing and everything. She bites her lip and moves her hand downwards but stops on his stomach and just waits to see his reaction. August didn't particularly want to think about his brother while he was laying here with Anna like this. Having him brought up made it a lot harder to focus on the curves of her body and the way her lips felt pressed against his own. In truth he doubted his brother wanted her even for the sex, just wanting the crown. He would place a bet on his brother sleeping with her for an heir but for nothing more and only in the dark where he couldn't see her, his brother was a piece of shit. "I would rather not talk about my brother right now." He told her to hold back from kissing her for the moment. "I think he wants the crown and wouldn't care about you at all. I on the other hand don't want your crown, I would feel the

same if you were a baker's daughter.". He still wasn't sure exactly how he felt about her but that was something for him to discover.

Feeling her hands go down his chest only to stop at his stomach he was confused. He wasn't sure why she was stopping, she didn't have a problem with it while he was sleeping after all. He didn't say anything and instead kissed her and took her hand leading it downwards. He slid her hand down and moved his undergarments down so his member could spring free and she could hold it. He wasn't sure exactly what she wanted to do but he would allow it.

Anna looks at him and listens. She smiles and leans her head into his chest. "You make me feel that way..." she says softly before kissing him. She takes his member in her hand and starts to move her hand slowly up and down. Her eyes were closed and her body was warming up. She kissed him and her kisses were starting to heat

up. "August.." she breathes out as she kisses him again. She moans softly into the kiss and presses her body against his. "What do you think we should do..." she says softly as she kisses his jaw and his neck.

Her eyes were large and she seemed happy. She moves her hand up and down more and more. She watches him as she moves her hand. Anna's hair was slightly wet and she was for the first time in a while really happy. She smiles and says "you make me happy.." she says softly as she kisses him sweetly again but her hand is still moving. This time, August wasn't sure what he wanted to be doing. He was happy and content to just lay there with her, embracing and slowly exploring each other. The more she worked his cock however the more he wanted to slide it inside her. He kissed her once more before deciding what he wanted to do.

Reaching downward he grabbed the edge of her panties and slid them down as far as he could reach before taking her hand. He moved her hand away from his cock and leaned forward positioning himself at her entrance. He rested his forehead against hers and looked into her eyes as he slowly slid inside of her. It was easier this time already but he still took his time so it wouldn't hurt. The warm slick heat from her made it impossible to hold back a quiet moan from escaping his lips.

Anna looks at him and kisses him softly. She lets him pull her underwear down. She looks at him and watches him. She bites her lip and tries to keep her noises in. She looks at him and sucks in air as he pushes into her. She moans softly and hides her face in his shoulder and neck. She bites her lip and moans "a-a-August.." she says softly. As he pushed into her it didn't hurt as much. It was just slightly uncomfortable but not painful.

She kisses him and moans “you can move,..” she says as she rolls her hips slightly while he is in her. Her eyes close as she moans softly.

She covers her mouth to keep her moans in. She didn't want to give them away or draw attention to where they are. She looked at him and her eyes were begging softly as she rolled her hips more and more. She would even move herself up and down slightly and her body clenched around him as she did this. She moans softly into her hand. August didn't need her direction but her letting him know she was okay was helpful for him. He wasn't in a rush, they still had daylight and there was no one around to discover them meaning they could really enjoy it. He held her thigh tighter over him as he met her grinding with his own thrusting. The grip she had around him felt amazing and he could enjoy this slow moment as it felt more intimate than anytime they had so far.

The pace was slow but the constancy of it had him getting closer until he knew he was close. "I'm going to cum." He let her know before taking her lips against his. He never would have guessed a few days ago he would be intertwined with a young princess in a hidden grove by a lake laying in a bed of moss under the trees. He wasn't complaining but he never would have seen it coming. With a final thrust he buried himself as deep into her as he could manage. After he shot his load he laid there not wanting to move as his cock soaked inside her wet creamy hole.

Anna looks at him and whimpers as she kisses his neck as she moans. Her body was tense as he pushed in and out. This time it felt different than the last. It felt...more intimate. She moans as he continues to push into her and soon her body is becoming tense around him. She heard him and nodded before getting kissed. She moans in the

kiss as he cums and she follows behind him. She whines softly and kisses him more as they lay there.

She breaks the kiss and looks at him. Her eyes were half lidded as she leans into him and lays her head on his chest. She loved this closeness. She wanted this more..she bites her lip as she thinks about if he would maybe want to lay with her in her bed. She shakes her head and hides her face as she blushes. He wouldn't do that. No way he would lay with her. She bites her lip softly and sighs as she looks at him. "That was nice...i liked it more that what we did before.." She liked the intimate touch he gave her. She sighs softly as she looks at him. "Can we stay here...just...lay here..i dont want to go back.." August closed his eyes for a moment just soaking in that after sex warmth that ran through his body. His still sensitive member rested inside her but he would wait for it to go down and fall out of her on its

own, for now it was just a comfortable feeling. His fingers lightly traced the skin of her back and legs as if to memorize the feeling.

He hoped that her mentioning liking this more just meant this slower intimate sex was better for her and not her saying it was bad last time. "We can stay here for a while." He said, opening his eyes and looking at the position of the sun to see how much time they had. "Eventually we have to get up and get changed however. We're going to have to go back to the castle." He told her before kissing the corner of her lip. "Let's just enjoy it for the moment though."

Anna looks at him and moves closer to August. She smiles and sighs softly. "I dont want to.." she says softly and just grips on to August and lays on him. She closes her eyes and her breathing slows down and she relaxes "I wAnna lay here..forever.." Her voice was soft and quiet. She just lays in his arms and relaxes. She liked this.

She liked that his hands trace her body. Her face was relaxed and she just looked...peaceful.

She curls up and yawns softly as she moves closer and closer to him. She had fallen asleep and her facial expressions show that she is dreaming a not so nice dream. She whines softly before gripping the necklace. "No..no..no..stop.." she mumbles

August laid there just looking down on her until he noticed she was asleep. He wasn't frankly sure if her falling asleep was a good thing or a bad thing but either way he was comfortable and apparently she was very much so. It felt awkward though to have his member inside of her while she slept though so instead of letting it soak he pulled back until he felt it fall free.

When the nightmares started August just quietly leaned his forehead against hers and began to stroke her hair. He wondered what she was having nightmares about but assumed it was

wolves. It could have been nightmares about his brother but he was doubtful. He kissed the top of her forehead and held her closer as he played with her hair, hoping to calm her down. Anna moves closer and as he holds her she seems to calm down. Her eyes brows relax, her shoulders relax and her mumbling stops. She keeps holding onto the pendant as she curls up and lays with him.

Her dreams were now of happy ones. A horse ride with August. She and him were laughing as they rode Kingdom. They were..able to be together. She was happy and didn't want to wake up from this dream. August let her lay there as he just held her. If he wanted to he could have easily closed his eyes and took a nap with her but he needed to stay awake. He highly doubted anything would happen but he was her guard and he needed to keep her safe. Besides if they both were asleep they could potentially oversleep and

explaining themselves to the queen could be difficult.

He let her sleep for a while but after some time he knew he needed to wake her up. He looked over her sleeping form one more time before giving her a soft kiss. "You need to wake up Princess, we need to head back into town." They didn't need to be back at the castle yet and could spend a little time in town but they needed to get out of the forest.

Anna groans and shakes her head. "Noo.." she whines a little as she opens her eyes and looks at August. "I don't..wAnna.." she says, rubbing her eyes and moving closer to August. "Stay here.." she says softly.

She rolls over and curls up her back facing him as she pouts about needing to get up. "I am not going." She says softly as she closes her eyes and tries to sleep more. August rolled his eyes as she tried to get out of waking up. "Alright suit

yourself. I'm going to go by the bakery or maybe the candy shop while you sleep under the tree. Oh and I'll just go ahead and take your clothes with me too, I don't want to forget to take those back to the castle." He told her as he moved away from her and started to get up. "Actually I'm going to stop by the bakery *AND* the candy shop. Anna looks at him and pouts "you wouldn't." She says as she covers herself "leaving the princess out in the woods! Alone and nude!" She gasps and fakes fainting "oh my gods I can't believe it!" She giggles and sits up "fineeeee but I am reading to you tonight.." she says before moving and grabs her dress. She start to slip it out and turns away from him. She reaches back and ties the ribbon before looking at him and saying "help?" August wasn't sure why her reading to him was some sort of punishment in her mind but he was fine with that. Doing so seemed to make her happy so letting her read to him was an

easy way to make her feel that way. Of course he wouldn't actually leave her out there and he doubted she believed he would either.

He had been pulling his own clothes back on when she asked for some help with her dress. Coming up behind her he tied the ribbon to her liking before wrapping his arms around her waist and holding himself against her. He kissed her neckline and held her there for a moment silently before letting go. "Let's go to town."

He let go of her then and went to Kingdom who calmly munched on some grass and moss. He mounted his horse and helped her up as well before turning to take the trail back to the city. He held her mask up for her as well so she could use it if she needed. He didn't need her to wear it, but he knew how she felt without it and he assumed that would be no different while surrounded by strangers .

Anna looks at him and smiles as he holds her. She sighs softly as they stand there. Her hands over his arms and her eyes looking at him as he kisses her neckline.

She nods and smiles softly "ok.." she says before following him to Kingdom. She pets Kingdom before taking his hand and sits in front of him. She moves back and leans back against him. She looks at the mask and sighs before taking it, slipping it on. She looks at him and smiles "there..let's go.." she says softly As they rode August smiled and enjoyed himself. Even though he was on his own protecting the only princess of the Kingdom he didn't feel like he was under pressure. He felt carefree right now and he just rode his horse along a mountain road with a beautiful young woman on a lovely day.

When they arrived in the city they passed through the gate with no problem. Kingdom slowly made his way through the cobblestone

streets as people cleared space for them to walk through. He didn't know the city from top to bottom but he knew it well enough to find them a shop for what they wanted.

In this case he stopped in front of a small bakery. He had been smelling the bread and desserts from blocks away and he knew he had to stop at this one. As he stopped e dismounted and helped her as well before taking her hand and leading her into the shop. To anyone looking it would have just seemed as if her guard was helping her on the uneven pathway and making sure she was safe, for him however it was a moment to be a little intimate.

Anna looked around as they rode. She didn't get to see the world around before. She took everything in and sighs. She was happy. She was in nature and she giggled to herself. She looks at the people in the town and waves to a few. Some bow and some stand there. Some look at her

with happiness and some look at her with some mixed emotions. She looks down at her hands and tries to not panic. She takes deep breaths and sighs.

She looks at August as he gets off Kingdom and lets him help her down. She looks at him and smiles before taking his hand and walking into the bakery. She steps inside and takes a deep breath. She sighs and goes to look at the desserts. The daughter of the bakery smiles and explains things to the princess. Anna's eyes were wide with happiness. The baker comes out and smiles before looking at August. "What can I get you sir?" He says in a gruff old man voice. August looked around for a moment and watched as some customers left the shop outright and the ones who didn't have the princess space. He didn't know if that was out of respect or because of her mask making them uncomfortable. He

supposed it didn't really matter and it would make it easier for them to get what they wanted.

"Honestly I couldn't begin to tell you." August told the man as he looked around the area. "I'm here with the princess and this is her first trip to a bakery, or at least since she was a kid." He told the man. He didn't know if she had ever been as a child before the accident but he could find out later. "If there was one thing you would want to use to impress the royal family what would it be?" He asked with a warm smile on his face trying to make it clear he wasn't trying to intimidate the guy but just wanted to know what the baker himself thought was the best thing.

Anna looks at the dessert and giggles with her daughter. The baker looks at the two and sighs "she hasn't been here since she was born...even before her accident..she was kept away from us. The people. We see her every now and again but not constantly..i would say our sweet bread,

some of our pastries, and our chocolate cake is the best that we have. All fresh. And they will be on us. You nor her have to pay.." he smiles before going to grab the things he thought the princess would like.

Anna smiles and sees the baker's cat. She moves and pets the cat softly and smiles. Her eyes were just scanning the cat and the outside place August listened and what the baker had said was what he was worried would be the case. He didn't particularly like not paying for the goods, it felt strange to him and made him a bit uncomfortable. He had plenty of coin, his pay as a mercenary quite high due to his position and the pay he was now receiving from the crown was solid as well. Maybe he could repay them by asking for this bakery to be hired for some event sometime, or maybe see if he could get them invited to a celebration.

August turned and watched Anna laugh with the baker's daughter and then play with the cat. There was a certain childlike quality to her that was cute but heartbreaking. "Are you ready to go?" He asked her after he got the stuff from the baker. He wanted to stop by the candy store as well and he knew they wouldn't have forever until they had to return.

Anna looks at him and nods. "Do you think I can get a cat?" She says softly as she pets the animal. She looked kinda sad but still left with August. She would wave to the baker and his daughter before petting Kingdom and waiting for August to help her up.

She sits with August and sighs softly as she looks down. People were whispering as they got ready to head off and it was starting to make Anna a little nervous. She hides it and says "the candy shop?" She tilted her eyes and looked at him with big eyes and she was smiling. She just would wait

for them to get there before getting off the horse and moving into the shop. She was blown away and went to look at all the candy.

August wondered if she would be able to get a cat. He didn't see any reason she wouldn't be able to, hell if she wanted one he was surprised she wouldn't have it already. He knew he would have to talk to the queen tonight or maybe tomorrow to tell her about how today had gone so he could always ask then. He wasn't looking forward to giving his report however.

When they got to a candy store August helped her off as usual before making sure the baked goods were in the saddlebag. He had learned before one of the other perks of having such a large horse was people tended not to fuck around with it. As they entered the shop August wasn't surprised to see that there were a lot more kids in here.

August himself wasn't much on candy, he enjoyed it from time to time but as a whole he didn't have much of a sweet tooth. He had assumed the princess would enjoy it however especially if she hadn't been allowed as a child. Seeing her smile made it more than worth it. While she went to find stuff that she enjoyed August just got a small bar with what was supposed to be flavored with honey and lemon. As he bought it he also paid for all the kids there to be able to get one of something the old woman working the counter suggested. It wasn't much coin to do so and he knew they would enjoy it.

Anna looks at the candy and smiles. She got the smallest bag that was able to get some candy. She bites her lip as she tries to choose. She smiles and starts to pick. She just gets a few things of candy before moving to August and shows him. "I got these.." she smiles before

looking at the child and smiles. She bites her lip as she pushes her hand into her hand into the dress pocket. It was a small change purse. She pulls out a few coins before moving to pay for the candy. The old woman shakes her head and doesn't take the princess' money. Anna wants to pay but the old woman just takes Anna's hand and smiles.

Anna nods as the two giggles before moving back to August and says "ready...we should probably get back...you have to speak to my mother.." she says as she fiddles with the small bag of candy. She blushes under the mask as she thinks. This felt...like a date. She bites her lip before turning and quickly moving to the door. Her hands were shaking as she walked out and away from August.

As she walks back to Kingdom she pets him as she waits. In that time of her and August being apart a group of teenage boys would come

around the corner with their dogs. August would just hear a scream and barking. August agreed although he wasn't looking forward to it. They would need to talk before they arrived about what happened so that they could make sure their stories matched. He planned on keeping it nice and sweet and to the point. His brother tried to assault Anna so he stopped him. He then let the princess see the views to calm her down before they hit a couple stores on the way back. Short and to the point.

When the barking started August instinctively knew they were going to have problems. He heard Anna scream and even Kingdom got finicky even if he wasn't misbehaving. August took Anna's hand in his and gave it a squeeze before he leaned in close to whisper into her ear. "I'm here for you, I'm here, I'm right here." He cooed as if comforting a child. He took out a coin and threw it at the teenagers. "You lot, leave now."

He barked at them, a sharp intense expression coming over his face as he tried to intimidate them into listening before everything could go to shit.

Anna leans against August as she struggles to breathe. The barking was ringing in her ears. She was shaking against August. She starts to cry under the mask as she turns and hides her face. She was shaking against August as the boys were scared. They pulled the dogs away but the dogs were barking and trashing. Anna whimpers against August as the boys struggle to pull the dogs away before finally getting them away and leaving. Anna was gripping August very hard. She was scared. She was so scared.

Her eyes were wide as tears rolled down her face as she seemed to be stuck in a flash back. She sobs against August and whimpers. "NO NO NO STOP!" She yells as her knees slightly give out and falls to the ground. Her breathing was harsh

and she was taking in very small amounts of air. She was gripping her chest and she couldn't breathe. She was drowning. She grips her chest and sobs as she tries to breathe. She was shaking and couldn't stop it. August remained calm and level headed as he tried to work through the situation. He was used to high intensity moments due to his time in battle and that experience came in handy here but he still didn't have the answers to help. He loved dogs and didn't want to hurt them but he was prepared to if they didn't stop. Finally the teens pulled them away and August could focus on Anna.

He didn't know how to help fully but as she collapsed he joined her, kneeling on the ground with her. August pulled her into him tightly so she would know he was there but stayed away from her chest since she was having a hard enough time breathing. He began to pet her hair much the way he had under the tree while she

slept and just hoped it would be enough to help. Kingdom had calmed down and now blocked the view from onlookers from most ways. A few towns guard made their way over and began to move the crowd back as well to give them space.

Anna cries and leans into August. “No no nonononono” she mumbles as she grips onto August. She cries against him. She curls up and whimpers softly. “August..they are going to get you..” she mumbles softly. Anna tries to breathe but she can't. She looks at August and whines softly. “I cant breathe..” she says as she grips her chest. Her eyes were red and puffy from the tears. Her face was hidden by the mask and it was very hard for her to breathe. She starts to mess with the mask as she tries to get the mask off. “This off..” she says softly as she pulls the mask off again.

She sobs softly as she finally takes a breath. Her mask was just pulled away from her face. She

hides her face into August just to be able to breathe and to hide her face. She sobs softly. She was finally calming down and breathing. Her breaths were big and harsh. August wasn't sure what she wanted or how to help. When she said she couldn't breathe and started messing with the mask he hesitated unsure. Taking off the mask would help her breathe but he didn't know how she would react being seen by all these people without it.

Before he could decide what to do she had loosened the mask on her own. He did his best to hide her face then so no one else could see. Her breathing was still rough but better and he knew to just give her a moment. He stroked her hair some more and hummed a bit, not sure what else to do. Whenever she was ready they could mount Kingdom and get out of here. He picked up the bag of candy and put it in his bag as he waited patiently. Anna finally calms down enough to slip

the mask on more and sighs. She wipes her eyes and looks at him “ can we leave now..” she says softly as she leans into him. She would stand and let August help her up before leaning into him and closing her eyes. She doesn't want to see the world. She just wants to hide. She wants to lay in bed and hide from the world. She bites her lip and moves her hand to August and takes his hand. She doesn't want to be alone. She sighs softly as she tries to breathe and calms down.

As they come into the castle Anna would sit up and the servants would help get Kingdom steady. She would look at August and let him help her down. She leans into him as her feet hit the floor. “You speak to my mom..i will be in my room..” she says as she looks at him as if she was asking permission August explained what he was going to tell her mother to her when they were heading back. He held her closely as they rode and at one point when there was.no one around

he tilted her head back and moved the mask enough to kiss her. He knew he wouldn't be able to for a while and wanted a final one until then.

When they arrived he sent a servant with their bags of stuff to take to her room. "Get changed and wait for me and I'll come see you when I'm done alright?" He asked before giving her a smile and going to meet the queen. He was nervous as he approached having a similar feeling as he did before battle but this was an area he had much less experience. He knocked before entering the queen's study.

Anna nods and moves back to her room. She did as he told her. She got a small bath to help calm her before changing into a lounge dress and crawled into her bed. She moves to hide under the covers and sighs as she closes her eyes to wait. She was very exhausted from today.

The queen says "come in" she looks up and smiles at August. "Ah how did it go?" She says as she

sets everything else aside. "Anything happen?" The queen asks as she looks at him. She had a list of other men that she was wanting to invite to see Anna. August entered the room and looked around briefly before bowing to the queen. Once he was being addressed he rose from the bow. "It didn't go well at all, your highness." He admitted to the noble woman before him. "I'll be honest I had severe doubts when I saw the name and unfortunately those thoughts came true. To say that your daughter was remotely interested in him would be an exaggeration. After we arrived at the lake the man also attempted to sexually assault her. I wasn't sure how much damage you would be okay with me causing to the man so he kept his limb but he got hurt both physically and in his pride."

August took a breath before continuing. "After that since we're already up there we went for a ride on my horse to calm her down. I think the

fresh air and stunning view really helped her, not only with what had just happened but in general. We stopped by a couple shops in town on our way back and that only seemed to help more." He debated on if he should bring up the dogs but he decided against it since no one was hurt and it was something out of their control. "I think being able to get out of the castle grounds would do her some good and the people all seemed happy to see her." He didn't know if the queen would let her go out other than on a date with a potential suitor but it was worth a shot. "Also the princess would like to know if she can have a cat?"

The queen looks at him and sighs. She bites her lip as he speaks "thank you August for protecting her..and making her feel better." She smiles and leans forward "about him going out more...I will allow it but you must be with her and only for a short time.." she says softly before her eyes

widen “a cat? I..I don’t see why not..maybe you can take her to get a cat..” she smiles as she says “thank you..for bringing her back safely and for protecting her....please take the day to relax..” she smiles before dismissing him.

Anna was curled up and softly snoring as she had fallen asleep waiting for him.

August bowed before leaving the queen's chambers. He knew Anna would like that she was able to get out more so he would have to share that news with her. He wasn't sure where he was going to go about finding a cat however. He knew where he could go for a dog but we're cat breeders even a thing? He always just assumed people with cats just had one pop into existence one day and boom they have a cat. He supposed he could go into town and try to find out or even send a servant.

As he opened the door to the princesses chamber he looked around and found it quiet.

Moving to the bed he noticed the princess sleeping. Not wanting to wake her he removed her mask and sat it on her bed table before kissing her forehead. He left to go to his own room stripping down and climbing into bed. He placed the sea glass she had given him on his own bedside table before going to sleep as well.

Anna sighs as she sleeps. She was pretty tuckered out due to the events of the day. A little time pass, maybe a few hours and Anna wakes up and looks around. She rubs her eyes before getting out of bed and padding over to August room. She knocks on the room and waits. She soon gets impatient and opens the door before moving to the bed and climbing into the bed with him.

Anna yawns and closes her eyes laying next to August. She curls up and soon falls back asleep.

August had been in a deep sleep when Anna came to his room, he hadn't even realized she

had come in. He had noticed the weight change on the bed but he hadn't thought anything about it as he slept. At some point in the night however he rolled over and wrapped his arms around her and cuddled in close.

When the sun came up and sunlight shined on his face August groggily woke up. He noticed the extra person in his bed right away and it only took him a moment to realize who it was. He wasn't sure what to do for a moment before carefully getting out of the bed and locking the door. Regardless of what they did he didn't want anyone walking in and seeing her in there.

He had an idea then remembering how she had woken him up the day before. He went to the bathroom and cleaned himself up, washed off the stink from the day before and removed his underwear and then went back to his bed. Sliding in beside her he carefully moved her around for a moment before taking his member in his hand.

Slowly he put the head of his soft cock against her mouth and slid in the tip.

Anna doesn't wake as she is moved around. She was very tuckered out and was peacefully sleeping. Her mouth easily opens and slips around his top. She hums softly as she turns over and just moves but is still pretty much fast asleep.

She looked peaceful and calm as she laid in the bed with his tip in her mouth. Her tongue moves around his tip as her body moves in her sleep. Feeling her lick and suck it no matter how softly felt great and he was beginning to stiffen inside her. He moved a little more then and lifted her dress. He took a moment to admire her sex and the beautiful tuft of trimmed hair there. He slowly pushed his dick further into her mouth as he moved a hand down to her sex.

His fingers slid through her lips for a moment just enjoying the warmth before he began to

tease at her clit. His finger rolled around the fleshy bud as he played, focusing on every detail of her sex and the pleasure of her lips around him. When he felt like she had gotten slick enough he slid his finger inside her and gently curled it inside her.

Anna sucks in air as he plays with her. She whimpers softly as he starts to push in and moves around. She whimpered as her dreams were starting to change. She started to lick and move her head slightly as she did in her dream. Her body reacts to him and would tense and untense.

She moans softly as she moves her head and takes him more and more. She was panting now and her hips were moving to get more. Her eyes were still closed and she was still asleep.

August watched her squirm and even in her sleep the princess seemed to be enjoying herself as well. His finger inside her was soon joined by a

second as they teased her wet pussy. Her small delicate movements on his cock made him hold back a moan. Taking her hand in his he moved it and wrapped it around his shaft and used her hand to work it. He was getting close and after a moment more he came letting his load out into her sleeping mouth.

Anna moans softly as her moves her hand and pushes in another finger. She moves her hand with him and closes her mouth around him as he cums. Her eyes were still closed and she seemed to be passed out in sleep. She did try to swallow it all but she would wake up and groans softly as she swallows the load and looks at him her eyes showing her tired state and her confusion. She pulls off of him and says “wha..are you..getting pay back?” August smiled down at her as he took a moment just to enjoy the feeling of his orgasm. When it settled down he leaned over and kissed her, admittedly the taste of morning breath and

his cum on her lips wasn't great but he thought she would appreciate a morning kiss.

"You could say that, or maybe I woke up with some morning wood and just happened to see somewhere good to put it." He teased her before moving closer. "Now that you're awake would you like to cum yourself?" He asked moving his hand back to her sex after she pulled away. He would be happy to get her off but if she wanted to just start the day that would be fine too.

Anna kisses him and nods "yes please..." she pants softly as she whimpers as he puts his hand back to her neck. She looks at him and kisses him softly before moving to his neck and kissing him there. She rocks her hips against his fingers and hand and whimpers "more.." she breathes out as she bites her lip and moves and grinds against him softly. She moans softly into his neck and pants as she gets closer and closer to release.

She finally tenses and climaxes before relaxing her body and breathing in and out to try to calm her body. She hums softly and kisses him softly on the neck as she lays there. "How was the talk...we were suppose to talk about it last night..or...whenever i went to bed.." she says softly as she yawns against and curls up August didn't waste time as his hands moved to make her finish. He would spend all day working on it if she wanted but he assumed she would rather finish and feel good before going on with the day. He accepted all her kisses and gave her some as well.

When she was finished August gave her a last deep kiss before getting up from the bed. "Well I did come to your room but you were already out. " He told her before he started getting dressed for the day, a smile on his face while he did so. He was in a great mood especially after starting his morning like that but no one in the castle would

know why. "You are still going to have to go out with suitors, that's the bad part." He told her getting the bad news out of the way.

"The good news is that I did get permission to take you into the city. We can't go out for very long and I have to be at your side. Do you think you can live with those conditions?" He asked, knowing those wouldn't be a problem at all." Maybe her going out with his brother had worked out for them in a good way. "And also we can find you a cat."

Anna looks at him and just lays in bed. She curls up under the blankets and sighs. "Yeah ...I don't want to meet other suitors...they are all going to be the same..." she says as she lays in his bed. She looks at him as he gets dressed and sighs. "At least I can go places...maybe we can go into a field? Like the one you told me about..?" She smiles before sitting up and yawning. She moves out from his bed and wraps her arms around him.

“I want to get a cat...no dogs..i...i won't be able to relax..” she says softly as she stands there with her face in his back.

She pulls away before moving to the door and says “i will go get dressed..” she smiles before unlocking the door and quickly running to her room and starting to get her dress on. She wore a yellow day dress and braided her hair. She hums while she gets ready and grabs the mask. She sits on her bed just looking and holding the white mask. August continued getting dressed while she went to do the same. Her mention of going into a field gave him some ideas of something they could do. That would have to wait however until he had time to make plans. He threw on a soft blue tunic and cream pants thinking it was strange the difference in the clothes he now wore.

When he was done he waited on her for a moment, making his bed while he did so, until he

decided to just go over there. He knocked on her door briefly before entering and seeing her sitting there looking at the mask. "Debating on if you should wear it?" He asked curiously before he went to sit beside her and join her.

Anna sighs and nods "i..yesterday I couldn't breathe...i was panicking..and I couldn't breath..." she says softly as she looks at him. "But..what if i..scare before?" She says softly as she tilts her head and traces the mask. She leans into him and sighs "i will wear it...i..i guess just to not scare people...but i can take it off once we are alone.." she says softly. She takes hold of the pendent and says "you know...i gave this back to you.." she smiles as she looks at him. She was happy. She just holds it and traces the cool metal. "Do you think that the war will end.." she asks softly.

She had never even seen a sick person. She was slightly scared that one day...she would have to

see a dead one. That one day...the castle might fall. August wouldn't care if she wore her mask personally. He knew some people would be scared of her scars or pity her but he didn't really see them. He knew they were there obviously and he *could* see them but they didn't affect how he saw her. If she chose not to wear it he would support her and if she chose to wear it he would still do so.

"I know you did but I gave it back, again." He told her playfully, thinking about how often it has switched hands already. Her question about the war made him stop though. He wasn't sure why she was asking, he supposed it might have been because of her father. "I don't know, it always feels like it goes on forever slowly until it's suddenly going quickly and then it's over." He wondered if he would still be her personal guard when her father returned or if they would no longer need his service.

Anna looks at him and takes his hand “do you..do you think you would have to go and fight?” She didn't want him to go. She didn't want him to leave anymore. She wanted him to stay for as long as...as he wanted too. She grips his hand softly “i haven't heard from my father...i am scared..” she says softly as she looks at him. “Do you think he is ok..” she asks. There is a soft hint of fear in her voice. She was scared.

She takes a deep breath and stands “well let's go get food...we can talk about the things we need to after wards!” She says before putting on her mask and holding out her hand. She watches him and realizes that she..she felt..relaxed. August honestly didn't know how to answer her. "If your parents decide a draft is necessary then I might? With me being your personal guard I doubt it though. As much as they need good soldiers and fighters they also have to make sure they're not weak at home. They're going to want someone to

take care of you if there's some sort of assassins or something." He explained although it was as much him thinking out loud. He doubted there would be assassins involved but you never know.

"I can almost guarantee your father is safe though. He had seen the king just a couple days ago and even if they went on horseback as fast as they could they wouldn't be to the battlefield yet. They took carriages so it will still be awhile. " He took her hand in his and brought it to his mouth, kissing it softly before giving her a smile.

"No need to worry Princess, I'll keep you safe and your parents have their own guards." He was ready for food as well since they had skipped meals the day before. "I agree about starting off with food. Would you rather have lunch here so we can do more in town with our time or eat in town?" He doubted she would want to eat in town, the food would be worse and she would have to be without her mask.

Anna looks at him and smiles “i..i i would like to eat here...” she looks down and bites her lip. “Unless you want to eat...i..i..can eat...out..lets eat out..” she says softly as she pulls up and starts to walk to the stables. Her breathing was harsh. He wanted to eat in the town..so that is what they would do..

Anna stops as she looks at the stable and bites her lip. “W-where do you want to eat..i don't know a lot about the town..” she says softly as she looks down and chews on her cheek. Would he not want to eat with her in public? Her breathing was harsh as she almost started to panic. August didn't mind going and eating in town but he was surprised she wanted to. That is if she even did want to. The way she answered made him unsure of what she actually wanted. At this point he was so hungry he would eat just about anything. He figured they could think about that on the way.

When they arrived at the stables August went about preparing Kingdom as he thought about it. "I have eaten at a couple places in town before but only a couple. Maybe we can just follow our noses?" He asked as he climbed up on Kingdom and held his hand out to help her. "I know there's a place run by some people from the desert that always smells nice. I had their food for a while when I was in the desert countries and although it's different it's really good."

Anna follows him and gets onto Kingdom. "As long as i..i can remove my mask a little bit.." she says softly and leans into him "you pick.." she says softly as she pet Kingdom and would look around the world as they rode. She still did this. She loved the town and the world.

They would ride and she would smile as she waves at some of the children and the people. She hums lightly and pushes against him. Her eyes were scanning the area. She was a little

worried about the war but August was right. They would be fine August embraced her as much as he could without being obvious while they rode. He didn't think many people would look closely enough to see him having a more...intimate hold on her than he needed to but he wanted to be cautious. He was enjoying himself now, it was a beautiful day and he got to go out with her once more and although he wasn't a large fan of yellow it did look spectacular on her.

When they entered the town it was busier than the night before although people still let them walk through without incident. As they passed a flower shop August tossed a coin to a woman and pulled a single yellow daisy from a pot while they rode. Reaching forward he poked the stem through her hair and just above her ear. The bright yellow contrasting with her mask and crown and going very well with her dress. The

mask made it hard for most to see her emotions but the bright colors helped to show her friendliness for those who couldn't see her smile.

Watching the reactions from the townsfolk as they passed was an interesting experience. Most just looked on with interest or curiosity. Some looked on with admiration however but others seemed indifferent or even annoyed as their passing was inconvenient for them. August didn't mind any of these he just kept an eye out for anyone who seemed off or violent, and after the night before dogs as well.

As they made their way through August caught a whiff of a familiar scent on the wind. A menagerie of foreign seasonings could be smelled and he steered Kingdom in that direction. Admittedly he would have rather eaten at the castle since it was both free and rather good. If he was going to take her out though he would get something he couldn't have gotten at

home. . Within a few minutes August could see the restaurant. The restaurant itself was smaller than some of the other restaurants they had passed but it also looked quiet. There was an outer patio where a few groups currently ate. Through the windows August could see multiple skewers of large chunks of meat covered in spices and seasonings as they slowly rotated and cooked over flames. If he listened carefully he could hear the hissing of fat and juice from the meat dripping on to the flame.

August stopped Kingdom near the patio before jumping down and helping the princess off as well. He tied Kingdom onto the rail and put a bag of oats over his mouth for him so he could have a good meal as well. He took Anna's hand under the guise of safely leading her into the restaurant. His mouth watered as he opened the door and walked in.

As he entered the restaurant and made his way to the counter August looked at the meats seeing what was being cooked and sold for the day. A rotund man with dark skin and sharp features sliced shavings of meat from one of the large skewers and put them on plates with flatbread and roasted veggies before putting a sauce in a bowl. The man smiled and handed the plate to a woman who quickly went to sit down.

"I'll have the lamb shawarma on lavash and a jar of couzzi. August told the man in his own tongue. He put the coin for the both of them on the counter before looking at Anna. "What sort of meat would you like? Or no meat?" He asked not sure if she would like any meat at all. He doubted the princess had ever had any of this type of food with her seclusion in the castle. It would also be easier for him to order it since he knew the man's language, having spent more than a year in the desert countries. Anna looks at him and then at

the food and gulps. "Um..whatever you think is good.." she smiles as she looks around. She had never been here and it smelted nice. She looks at the food and how it is cooked. Her eyes wide and happy. She would move to take a seat and kick her feet softly as she does. She hums lightly and just wants to eat whatever he thinks is good.

Anna looks around and finds that the atmosphere is very nice and cozy. She loved the slight music that a person was playing.

Anna looks at August as he comes to sit down and says "this is a nice looking place.." she smiles at him. Her eyes closed with happiness. She wouldn't care about anything else if she was with him. He made her feel relaxed that she could go out and eat here. That she could look around and not feel stupid or like a monster. She liked that. She liked that he tried hard to get her out of the castle. She hopes that they can keep going into town and maybe other places. August just got

her lamb as well to make it easier for the man. He waited patiently at the counter until the food was done before bringing all of it to the table and sitting down. "So you might have to give it a moment, those roasters aren't a joke, it's going to be very hot." The man from the counter came by a moment later with two small bowls of water for them and the two men shared a knowing nod.

"So" August began as he pulled one of the bowls of water to him. "in the desert countries when you sit down for a meal you don't use silverware. It's more respectful for you to dip your right hand in water and then wipe it off with a cloth before eating." He explained as he did so. "Then after that you eat with your right hand."

August took the shavings of meat and the vegetables and put them on the large flat bread that came with the food before drizzling the garlic sauce over it. He took a bite and closed his eyes for a moment, taking in the flavors and

remembering some of the more fun moments he spent in the deserts. It was unbearably hot and there was a lot of time spent fighting but there were fond memories as well and the food helped bring them to the front of his mind. When he swallowed he opened his eyes, a new brightness in them, and looked at her. "How is it?" He asked hoping she would enjoy it.

Anna sits and looks at him. She watches how he eats the food then she copies him. Her eyes were closed as she ate then took in the flavors. She takes a deep breath and sighs. She chews the food before looking at him and nods as she finishes eating before saying "it is really good.." she smiles and giggles. She would eat more and more and sigh. Her eyes were happy and her lips were smiling. "It is really good.." she mumbles. Her mask was lifted just a little as she ate. She was able to eat with her mask still on.

She finishes and leans back before leaning into August. Her eyes were closed as she curled up. She was happy and full. Anna would sit up and look at August. "How do you know how to eat it right? Did you visit the desert land?" She says softly as she leans on her hand. She smiles just wanting to know more about him. August ate in quiet just enjoying the food and glad that she enjoyed it as well. When he was done he dunked his hand in the bowl and dried it off again. He pushed his plate and the bowl away from him before hearing her question.

"I suppose I did say you could ask me one thing a day and I would go into detail about it." He paused for a moment and relaxed, enjoying the sensation of a full stomach. "When I was a mercenary I spent some time in the deserts, a year and a half or so." He began as he closed his eyes and thought back about it. "It looks very

different here but just as beautiful. The heat was the worst part about it though."

Anna nods and looks at him "i wish i could see it...i only seen it on maps and read it in books.." she says and smiles. "Did you see an oasis? I heard about those.." she looks at him as he would talk. Her eyes were only on him. Nothing else seemed to matter. She just wanted to be there..with him..

She moves closer to him and tilts her head. The flower dropping a little bit but she pushes it back up and smiles. Once he was done she looked out the small windows "where should we go next? Can we see about getting a cat!" She smiles and giggles. She wanted to get a cat. She wanted a kitten August thought back to one of the days he thought he was going to die, maybe the one where that was the closest to happening. He had been in a battle and ended up dismounted and knocked out when he hit the ground. By the time

he had woken up everyone was gone. He had ended up wandering around for a day, bleeding and delirious his throat burning and cracking. He had managed to find an oasis then and it was the most beautiful sight he had ever seen. "They are the most beautiful sight in the world." Was all he told her about it.

"I'm okay with that but I don't really know where we could find a kitten." He admitted to her embarrassment before getting up from the chair. He took her by the hand and led her out until they were back on Kingdom. "I know where to get dogs but I've never heard of a cat breeder. Do we just walk around until we find a stray cat?"

Anna tilts her head and thinks. "Maybe the dog breeder can help us.." she says as she looks at him. She bites her lip and plays with her fingers. "I don't know either.." she says while looking down and sighing. She would look away from August almost embarrassed. She should know

her Kingdom. She should know what is where...she should have been eating at the restaurant way before August came here...but she hadn't. She didn't know where things were. She didn't know the people. She didn't know anything.

This train of thought causes her to look and seem sad. Her eyes not meeting his and her hands clenching together hard that she has white knuckles. She sighs and rubs her neck as she moves and tries to get onto Kingdom. "We can figure it out another day.." she says sadly as she doesn't look at anyone or anything and just stares into the ground and tries to not panic "Don't go giving up yet princess." He told her as he still tried to figure out something. He had gotten a couple ideas but he wasn't sure they would work out. He was sure he could find a cat but a kitten would be much harder. Going to a dog breeder was absolutely out of the question however.

August led them through the town to the outskirts where a large farm was located. He thought a town with fields this large and a granary might have cats to take care of rats and mice. As he approached a middle aged woman came out. August explained the situation to her and she told him that she didn't but the farm next to hers had kittens barely two months before. August thanked her and left following her directions until before they knew it they were at another farm in a barn looking at a group of small kittens.

Anna looks at him and just rides the horse with him. She looks at the old woman and her eyes light up at what the woman said. Would she get a kitten? The farmer at the other farm leads them out to the barn and Anna was awe struck. She bends down and looks at the group of small kittens. She pet the mother cat and then looks at the kittens.

The princess just sits in the barn and looks at the kittens. She picks up the smallest of the kittens. The kitten had a small white patch over her eye. She smiles and holds this small kitten. The farmer looks at the August and says "she can have that one..for 500 silver.." he looks at August. August looked at the farmer suspiciously. 500 silver was definitely way more than a cat would cost, hell he almost guaranteed he could go somewhere else and they would just give them one so they didn't have as many. Clearly the man was trying to take advantage of them. He looked at the princess and saw her interacting with the cat and even though she was wearing her mask he could tell she was happy and excited. August sighed and took out five gold from his purse and handed it to the man.

August approached the princess and the kittens and squatted down with her to look at them. "So have you decided on one?" He asked, looking

over them. He reached down and pet one waiting for her to answer. He had a basket with a blanket in it attached to Kingdom's saddle that the kitten could go in.

The farmer takes the gold and smiles as he walks off. Anna had her back turned to this and was fully focused on the small kitten sleeping in her lap. She looks at him. She nods and looks at the one in her arms "this one.." she says softly as she holds the kitten. She smiles and seems happy.

Anna would carry the kitten and stand up before looking at August and saying "how much for her.." she asks softly. She tilted her head and didn't see the farmer. August was quiet for a moment before smiling. "Nothing, it's a gift." He told her with a warm smile. He had cats around when I was younger but he wouldn't call himself a cat person, they were just kinda...there. Seeing how they made her feel however and knowing

they made her happy he was glad they took the time to get this for her.

He climbed up on Kingdom and helped her as well. "So do you want to go straight home to play with your kitten?" He asked her innocently not having realized the innuendo in what he said. Having a kitten along would limit what they could do in town but if she had something she would enjoy he would do it no question.

Anna smiles and moves to Kingdom. She gets on Kingdom and says "let go back.." she makes sure the kitten wouldn't fall or anything before leaning back into August. She yawns softly and looks at him. "Today was good.." she says softly as she yawns and closes her eyes. She wanted to nap.

She would fall asleep a little as they rode back to the castle. She doesn't wake and just says asleep leaning against the man behind her.

August just smiled faintly to himself as he noticed her fall asleep. He was glad she was having a good day and felt relaxed enough to sleep even out in public like this. He did his job and kept her close and safe so she wouldn't fall. He also had to do this for the kitten as well because the thing seemed determined to fall from the basket.

When they arrived at the castle gates August gently nudged her to wake her up. He wouldn't mind carrying her to her room even if it was a bit far but he didn't think that would be a good look for everyone in the castle. He would wake her up as gently as possible by the time they made it to the stables.

Anna groans and rubs her eyes as she leans into him. She yawns before sitting up and looking around. She gets off of Kingdom and takes the kitten. The kitten meows softly as she starts to make biscuits on the princess dress top. She

giggles and looks at August. "What should we do for the rest of the day.." she asks softly as she yawns and stretches.

Whatever they decided Anna moves to the main castle and hums as she holds the small kitten "what should your name be...August do you have any suggestions?" She says softly as she looks at him. The castle was quiet as maids milled around and cleaned. August raised his fingers to his chin as he thought about what to do. They would need to spend some time getting her room ready for the cat. It was a nice day out as well so if she wanted to they could find a patch on the grass in the courtyard and she could read.

"Well why don't we get things set up for this little guy...girl...whatever it is." He said not even knowing how to check on a cat. "How about the name Fish?" He asked, not really being good at coming up with names. "So you can tell people

you don't have a cat, you have a fish." That was dumb, that was definitely a dumb thing to say.

Anna looks at him and giggles. "Then it is fish!" She says before leading him back to her room and sets the cat down. She smiles as the kitten moves around the room sniffing and climbing on things. Anna looks at August and smiles "what do we need to do? I have never had a pet.." she says softly as she picks up fish and lays her on the bed before Anna lays on the bed and fish crawls over Anna.

The princess giggles and smiles as she looks at the cat. Her body seems to relax. Anna takes off her mask and the kitten rubs against her face and licks her scars. She giggles and smiles "W_what? Have you not taken care of a cat before?" He asked, confused. He had agreed to this thinking that she had experience taking care of cats. Cats were around when he grew up but it was outside or in the barn or stables he didn't know how to

take care of one inside. Maybe he could ask the maids or other staff if they knew.

He looked at her playing with the kitten and she was relaxed and seemed happy so he knew they would figure it out and she would enjoy it. "Well we know we need to get food and water so let's start with that." That part they could do and from there they could figure it out.

Anna looks at him and smiles "you know how i live!" She giggles as she plays with the kitten. She curls up with the kitten as she kisses the small cat. The two were just having a great time on the bed. "Fish do you want August to play with you?" Anna says softly as she giggles as the kitten licks and purrs before curling up and yawning. Anna smiles and says "if you want to get that wooden bowl...it is for fruit but i don't like whole fruit.." she says as she points to the desk. There was a small bowl that was clean and empty.

Anna moves the kitten onto her chest as Anna lays on the bed. She yawns and look at August. "August...who do you think my mother is going to send me on a date next with? Did you see the list?" She tilts her head August went to fetch the bowl and put some water in it for the cat although he thought the bowl would be too large. August locked the princesses door before going to the bed and laying down next to her in the bed. It would be just as easy to have a conversation like this and maybe it was watching the cat mixed with the afternoon sun but a nap sounded delightful.

Her question made him feel less like napping however. He didn't see the list but he knew she was supposed to have another one soon, maybe the night after. The man's name was something Mustafar but he had never heard of him. That wasn't strange in itself however since he didn't know most of the noble house well. "I think you

have a date tomorrow but I don't know their name or anything about them. " He admitted before reaching over to take her hand.

Anna nods and moves over to lean on to his shoulder "hmm.." she hums softly and sighs. "Let's not talk about it...i just want to.." she would yawn before snuggling closer to August "i want to take a nap.." she hums. Her eyes were closed and her breathing calm. "I just want to relax...this kitten need rest and so do i.." she hums softly and curls up. She would soon fall asleep against the male as she takes a nap. The room was warm and calm. Anna and the kitten were curled up with the sun hitting them on the bed.

Anna kept her eyes closed as she slept. She did have a nightmare and she would whine softly but fish would wake and purr while rubbing against Anna to help calm her down and it does work. She sighs and calms down a little from her

nightmare. August let her sleep and just laid there for a while watching her. He moved closer to her wrapping himself around her to hold and embrace her. He was comfortable, just laying there with her in his arms, it felt natural to do. This was all stuff he didn't expect days earlier when he accepted the position and here he was curled up with the young princess.

For a while he just got lost in his thoughts. He thought about the suitors she would have and coming to grips with the fact that it made him jealous. He thought about how he felt about her and tried to organize those thoughts to figure out just what it was he felt. He wondered what the future held for them and if he would eventually have to watch as she ended up with someone else and he would lose her. The negative thoughts eventually got to him and he wrapped himself even tighter around her for comfort and security.

As they laid there however the thoughts left and his body started thinking for itself. The slow rubbing against her had his member stiffening until he could no longer focus on anything but her body and his desire. He lightly kissed at the back of her as he lifted her dress. He didn't lift it enough to wake her or strip her but just enough to let him touch her. His fingers began to lightly toy and play with her sex through her undergarments.

Anna curls up in his arms and sighs softly. She moves her body as he kisses her. She slightly leans back into him and hums a little as she is still asleep. She didn't move or anything until he started to touch her. Her breathing changed as he touched her. She hums softly as her legs move so they are more open. Her hips would move slightly against him as he touches her.

Her eyes were open and she hums "August.." she say softly and looks back at him. Her face was

blushing as he touched her. "Wha.." she moans softly and bites her lip to keep her noises. Anna covers her mouth and pushes against him. Her free hand reaching back and palming him through his pants As she started to speak August went to put his hand over her mouth only to find hers had already moved there. As he felt her begin rubbing him through his pants he slid her underwear to the side and slid his fingers inside of her. He moved and stretched them inside her making sure she would be ready for him.

He moved her hand away from his crotch so he could undo his pants. Pulling out his member he moved closer to her. Pulling his fingers out of her he slid inside of her, her panties still held to the side to fit him. When she had gotten his cock nice and wet he pulled out of her. Slowly he began to move on her, his member held by the tight grip of her thighs. His other hand moved to her mouth

once more and slipped a finger in there so she could taste herself.

Anna looks at him and moans softly as he pushes his fingers into her. She arches her back as she pants against her hand. She moves her hips against his fingers. She moans and looks back at him as he moves her hand and takes his member out. She blushes even harder. She would never get over how big he was. She whimpers and bites her cheek as he pushes into her. She takes his fingers and sucks them as he moves into her. She moans and tries to keep quiet but she doesn't.

Her voice moans and gets louder as they continue. She rotates her hips to get him to hit her good spots. Once he hits that she moans loudly and grips the bedding. She was panting and pushing her hips back against his thrust. "Please.." she moans softly but still loud. August grinded with her, letting them find a rhythm together. One of these days he expected doing

this would be the death of him, getting caught sleeping with the princess. But how was he supposed to stop? He didn't plan on any of this, he never would have imagined the princess taking him in his sleep and starting this all but it was too late to stop. Her body was perfect and felt almost as if it was meant for him. Her sex felt like it was shaped around his cock, designed to fit perfectly around it and milk him for his seed, he was addicted to her and if this was how he died so be it.

Getting caught in the moment he moved his hand down her throat and held it, he was careful not to squeeze or make it where she couldn't breathe but he wanted her to feel it and know he was in control here. "Keep moving like that." He growled softly into her ear. He was getting close and he wanted to fill her up like the good girl she was. "Don't cum yet." He warned in the same soft

but domineering tone. "You're not allowed to cum until you feel me emptying inside you."

Anna moans and whimpers as she pants softly and grips his hand on her throat. She nods and moans as he thrust into her. She was so close. She was shaking with pleasure. She wanted to cum. She needed to cum. Her eyes close as she tries to not cum. "I-i can't...i-i have too.." she says softly as she cums against him. She moans softly and pants. She felt better as she blushed. She looks at him and moans "i-i couldn't..." she says softly as she moans as he continues to thrust into her.

She grips his hand and whimpers softly as she moves like he wants her. She felt bad. She came before him. She came early. She whimpers and moans softly and tries to keep her noises down and soft. She knew they couldn't get caught. She bites her lip and her body started to heat up and tense up as she came close again to release. She

whimper and moans “i..i..am going..to..” August felt her cum around his cock, the grip becoming even tighter causing him to almost cum then and there. Knowing she already came though he didn't see any reason not to do so himself. He began to thrust deeper into her, closing his eyes and just focusing on the way she felt around him.

As she began to whimper and moan again he knew she was getting close again. He barely heard her try to tell him she was going to cum again as his own pleasure built up. As he felt her clamp down on him once more he felt his own stomach and balls clench as he began to cum. He thrust into her and held himself there as he felt the overwhelming release of his climax, his hand on her throat tightening just a little. When he was done he pulled himself out of her and let her undergarments move back to covering her up as put his member away. He turned her head to face him before he gave her a deep but delicate

kiss, a warm feeling flowing through him in a mix of his pleasure and his feelings towards her.

Anna moans as he cums and she follows. She was shaking softly and pants as he pulled out of her and pulled her into a kiss. She kisses back and moves closer. She was blushing as they kissed. She sighs and smiles as she pulls away. She holds his face and moves to lay her head on his chest. She takes a few deep breaths and looks at him “i don't want to move..” she whispers to him as they cuddled. Fish was curled up on the pillow sleeping. Anna smiles as she curls up and sighs “do you think we can go to a field...i want to lay on the grass and read..” she says as she yawns. Her body and mind were tired. She wanted to sleep again but she shouldn't. She knew she wouldn't sleep tonight if she slept more right now.

Anna just lays there as the sun starts to go down. She didn't want this moment to end. She wanted

to stay here. She wanted to stay with him. She didn't want to see any other suitors. She didn't want to go on dates with anyone else but August. She blushes as her feelings start to show. She traces his shirt as she just thinks. She didn't know if he liked her...but she liked him...he took care of her...cared for her...he didn't care about the crown. She sighs and rubs her eyes. Her head was hurting now August continued to hold her as she got closer to him. "Then don't." He told her knowing she had no reason to get up. "Yeah we can go to the field the next day we have available. " The next day the two of them would have a date with another suitor. Maybe the day after that they could go if the weather was nice. August held her a while longer before getting up. "I'm sorry princess but it's getting late. I need to go into my room and get ready for bed and you do as well. We can get changed and then I'll come back and we can read for a bit, yeah?" He didn't

care if she read to him or he read to her but he thought that would be good enough for her to sleep. "You have a big day tomorrow so we should make sure to get rest tonight.

Anna curls up and sighs, nods and hums lightly as she closes her eyes. She was shocked when he got up. She looks at him and tilts her head. Her eyes were filled with confusion but she nodded and said "yes...right..i will get ready as well.." she says as she gets up and starts to get undressed for her bath. She hums softly as she starts to water and rolls her neck.

She was nervous about tomorrow. She didn't want another issue like the other day. She didn't want that. She sighs and gets into her bath and closes her eyes. She wanted to just....just be with August. She liked when they went out and he made her happy. He made her safe. She sighs and rubs her eyes as she was giving herself a headache.

She sits in the bath for a while before getting out and drying herself off. She wraps herself in a towel and moves to get sleep clothes. She hums as she slips on the dress then moves to her bookshelf. She picks a book and moves back to the bed and gets comfortable.

August watched her as she got up and stripped down. He wondered how he could be so lucky as his eyes traced the curves of her waist and hips. The way her ass sashayed as she walked and the way her legs let her seem to glide as she walked. She was so incredibly beautiful and she wanted him. This thought was swept away however as he realized that that didn't matter. She would in the end have to find a suitor she could tolerate for the good of her Kingdom. He would most likely be there behind her like a shadow, they may even continue what they've been doing, but it would never be the same. With that thought he tore his

eyes away from her and left to go to his own chambers

In his own chambers August took a quick bath before getting changed once more. His outfit was simple and it seemed a waste to put on a shirt since it would be coming off when he went to sleep anyway. When he was ready he went back to her room and moved to lay beside her in the bed. "So am I reading or are you?" He asked, reaching for her hand.

Anna sits in the bed and smiles as she takes his hand "you read to me!" She says as she hands him the book and moves to lay against his shoulder. She sighs and looks at him. "Are you ok?" She says softly as she looks at him. She knew he was upset. She takes his hand and rubs the back of his hand with her thumb. "I know you don't like me going on these dates...i don't like them either...but i have to do what my mother wants...you..you don't have to go with me...i bet

the princes have guards...you could take the day off..." she says softly as she curls up. She didn't want him to feel like he was stuck to her.

Anna looks at him and says "i-i am sorry...that you are stuck with me...that you aren't able to ride Kingdom.." she says softly as she rubs her eyes and tries to not cry. She bites her lip and turns away from him to hide her face. "I-i am sorry.." August was about to agree to read when she suddenly started apologizing and asked if he was okay. He was fine, he wouldn't pretend to enjoy the situation but he accepted it for what it was. He let her curl up closer to him and he moved to put his arms around her and embrace her tightly.

When she turns to look away from him he delicately cups her chin and turns her to look at him. He kissed her softly, no lust behind it, only tenderness and caring. "Your highness I will be here for you always. I may never be able to be

your suitor but I'll be here. What we do with that is up to you but I don't know if I'll ever be able to be more than your secret." He kissed her once more and just looked into her beautiful sapphire eyes, his brown ones boring by contrast. He gave her a smile trying to reassure her.

"Tomorrow I will come along with you, I want to be able to protect you and in the end maybe I'll be able to pretend it's the two of us instead." If nothing else he wanted to make sure that she was safe and the men she goes with couldn't take advantage of her. He gave her a final kiss before taking the book and beginning to read for her.

"Oh more princesses and knights." He exclaimed after starting.

Anna looks at him and kisses back. She melts in his hand as he speaks. She nods and smiles softly back. She nods and kisses back before curling up and smiling "I like princesses and knights" he says softly and yawns. She listened to him read and

would soon close her eyes and start to fall asleep. She curls up more and wraps around his arm. Her eyes were closed and her breathing was soft and relaxed. Anna looked peaceful when she slept. Her face was relaxed and no one would know she had bad night terrors in her sleep.

Fish moves and curls up on August's chest. The kitten yawns and curls up into a ball on the male's chest. The kitten starts to purr as she falls asleep as well. Anna was still wearing the pendant. It was in her hand and she held it close to her chest. She never left without it. She didn't want to leave it and have a panic attack. Anna mumbles and talks in her sleep.

"August...no,...don't...leave..." she mumbles August began to read the book to her as she got comfortable. The story was fine, not vastly different to any other book around the same subject but that didn't make it bad. He even let

the kitten curl up on his chest as he read until it seemed both of them were asleep.

He sat the book down and began to get up when she started muttering about him not leaving. He supposed he could stay a while but he couldn't stay in her bed all night. If anyone noticed he never left it could make people suspicious and rumors could spread. He waited a while longer before kissing her forehead and setting the cat in her arms. Quietly he left and went to his own room and went to bed himself. They were going to have a busy morning after all.

Anna curls up and sleeps peacefully. She yawns as she sits up and rubs her eyes. The sun was just barely up as the princess sat up. She moves into the bathroom and gets ready for the day. She does her hair and gets herself ready. She hums lightly as she does this. She looks at her closet before picking out a nice blue dress. She gets

into her dress. Fish lays on the bed and just sleeps.

Anna looks at her mask as she puts it on and hums. She didn't want to go on this date. She didn't know who it was but she didn't care...her heart told her she didn't want to see anyone but August. Her face blushes as she bites her lip. She had to stop thinking that...he didn't want to be together with her..her hand moves to the necklace as she sighs and just stands in front of her mirror. August was actually a bit surprised when he woke up alone. He had half expected for the princess to have nightmares and come into his room and curl up with him but maybe she felt safe now or the kitten made her more comfortable. He looked at the sea glass that Anna had given him before rolling out of his bed. Bathing himself quickly August put on the now clean uniform he had been given since they had an early start for the day. He even took the time

to brush out his hair despite normally neglecting it to give it a somewhat unkempt appearance. When he was done he pulled on his boots and put on his sword belt before going to meet with her. A maid met him outside and gave him a letter from the queen about the schedule for the day. After reading it he went to her door and knocked before entering.

Anna sighs and looks up. "Come in." She says. As he enters she smiles and moves to him. She closes the door and locks it as she leans up and kisses his cheek. "Hi..." she says softly as she blushes. "What does our day look like?" She tilts her head before moving to the bed and sits. She taps the bed beside her and smiles "sit.." her eyes were happy as she looks at him.

"Who are we meeting?" She asks as she takes the necklace into her hand and plays with it. She didn't want to go. She wanted to stay here..or go on a date with..August..Anna blushes as she

looks away softly. August entered and sat down beside her. When she was done speaking he turned to face her and reached up lifting her mask out of the way before leaning in and kissing her, a slow but passionate kiss since he knew he wouldn't be able to until that night. When he was done he repositioned her mask for her. He moved his hand to hers and held it softly but with a reassuring firmness to it as well.

"We're meeting someone with the last name Mustafar, that's really all I know. I don't know what the agenda is however or anything about the man." He gave her hand a squeeze "I know it's not a position either of us enjoys being in but we have to go through with it. Now come on milady we must be going. We are supposed to meet their carriage at the castle gates." He told her before standing up.

He gave her a soft smile and looked into her eyes, those beautiful blue pools he wanted to

stare in forever. Looking into her eyes then and realizing what he was thinking struck him. At some point he had developed feelings for her. Calling it love might still be a stretch but there was certainly something there now that there wasn't before. It had only been a short time since they had met but he knew he would die for her. This was a stupid thought however, not because she didn't deserve it but because he was setting himself up for a life of disappointment. Even if she didn't like a single suitor she would end up with one and he would have to move to her shadow, nothing but a guard. His smile became more pained then, his face unable to fully hide his pain. Javari waited as patiently as he could while he sat fidgeting on the cushioned seat of his carriage. He had met with a few potential suitors in the last few months. They had all been great in one fashion or another but he supposed that was to be expected. He had always been the

type to find the beauty in someone both in their appearance and personality but at the same time none of them had sung to him, not physically but in the way they made him feel.

The new princess he was supposed to meet, Anna he believed her name was, apparently had been hurt in an attack by beasts and now wore a mask to cover her scars. This wouldn't mean anything to him really, seeing as he always found the beauty in everyone and would care more about who she was under the mask and scars. It still made him nervous however but only in the sense that he was worried because he had never met her before.

He wore an outfit in his Kingdom's colors, a dark navy blue with beige trimmings. It was a bit fancy for his taste and far from comfortable but he needed to look his best and represent his Kingdom well. If the two were to be we'd it would mean another large army to help with

their war as well as establish a strong bond between their two powerful Kingdoms. He sat with his own guard, a mountain of a man named Thilani. The man was a menace to anyone who met him in battle but the man was always friendly and courteous to him and his family and was as loyal as they came. The man rarely spoke though so Javari had to wait in silence. Anna nods and takes his hand. She looks at him softly and takes his face in her hands. "Hey...it is ok..just a little bit of time here then we can go to the garden and read ok?" She smiles before leading him out of her room and puts on her mask. She hums softly as she walks through the castle and to the stables. She would pet Kingdom and giggled softly before waiting for August to help her up onto the horse. She would lean against August and look around as they start to move. She would take deep breaths as they moved towards the gates and saw the carriage.

She was nervous. What if he is like the other one...what if the male wants to see her face...she takes a deep breath as they come up to the carriage. She would let August help her down and would wait for the male to come out of the carriage to greet her.

Anna would bow and looks over the male. Her eyes weren't filled with any emotion and just was there. She speaks a little "hello sir. i have some request that i do ask for you to follow. The first that i will not be taking off my mask..the second one is that my guard will come with me everywhere..in the carriage on the walks anything that we are doing he is there..is that ok?" She says softly and looks at him. Her eyes were looking around as she was worried about if dogs would come around the corner. Her heart was speeding up as she moves her hand behind her back as she grips her hands together August appreciated her reassurement but he still wasn't

looking forward to this. He went through the motions of getting them on Kingdom and riding down to the gate ready to get this over with.

When they arrived he saw a man with dark skin step out from the carriage and wondered if he was from a Kingdom that he had been to before.

JM: When Javari saw the massive horse and the figures atop it he assumed that was who he was meant to meet. Himself and Thilani stepped from the carriage and greeted them politely with a smile. When Anna began to list her rules Javari just nodded. "Those are more than acceptable terms, milady. This is Thilani, my personal guard and it is much the same with him."

Javari bowed to the princess before shaking hands with August. "It is nice to meet you as well Sir August, we are happy to have you along.

Although I must admit I would have brought a larger carriage if I knew you were such a large man, between you and Thilani it could get a little

cramped so I must apologize." He made his comment in sincerity not having expected a man not much smaller than his own mountain of a guard.

"I'm afraid I do not know my way around your Kingdom well but my steward took the time to find some places we could visit for a pleasant night. If you don't like the places however feel free to let me know and we can change the plans accordingly." He walked back to the carriage door and held it open for them so they could enter, Thilani entered first as was their custom in his own home.

Anna smiles and nods as the prince accepts her rules. She looks at the two men and nods as he speaks. She watches the other male enter the carriage then she does. She sits on one side and looks around the carriage. She was nervous. She hums lightly as the two others get into the carriage as they start off to their first spot. She

rubs her hands together as she looks down at them. "I will say i am not sure where to start.." she says softly. She would act as she was expected too. She would talk to him and go with him however her heart didn't beat fast for this man. She didn't get blushy and nervous and happy with anyone but August.

She would look at August and her eyes showed her nervousness and anxiety. She bites her lip and would answer any questions that he would have before looking out the window and just taking in the world she had been hidden from. The prince seemed nice but he didn't fit her type. She liked someone who was more dominant...taller...has a beard....was August. August was patient and silent as he sat there occasionally glancing over at the two of them. He didn't expect anything to happen like with his brother but he wouldn't relax while they were out. The carriage was a bit bumpy but the soft

cushions kept it from being unpleasant before it suddenly stopped.

Javari got out up from his seat when the door opened, the driver having opened it for them. Javari gave the man a polite thank you and waited for them to step down. He had hoped that she would enjoy this place, his steward having asked around and found out it was held to great acclaim.

"I apologize if this restaurant isn't up to your taste, I'm not familiar with the places here but my steward said it was highly rated." He said, his tone apologetic. When she was out he walked beside her with the two guards behind them until they entered the restaurant.

The smell of freshly baked bread filled the large room and they were escorted to a private room just off of the main one. The restaurant was specialized in cuisine of the country and Javari was ready to try it knowing that it would be

different than what he was used to. "I'm sorry I hadn't really thought about the dynamics of eating while wearing your mask." He apologized sincerely, not having realized that ahead of time. "Should we just move on to the next stop? I wouldn't want to make you uncomfortable."

August had been in this place once before and remembered it being quite good but pricey. He wasn't sure if the man was trying to butter her up or if he was just so flushed with coin it hadn't mattered. When the man mentioned eating with the mask August felt a sense of sincerity from him and thought he must not be all bad.

Anna looks at him and smiles "oh..no we can eat..i..i can.." her breathing started to pick up as she looks down and hides herself. "Um..i can eat...i..i can manage.." she says softly as she looks down. Her eyes were darting as she started to spiral slightly into a panic. She moves towards

August and bites her lip as she tries to calm herself.

Her breathing was harsh as she couldn't breathe. She wanted to just disappear. but she had to do this. She had to push her feelings away as she was the princess. She was the princess that had to be out and about. She had to be strong. She gathers her breath as she looks up and says "it is ok..." she says softly not wanting to make him think she was mean or rude Javari smiled out of appreciation and when the waitress came he ordered for himself and Thilani but not for the other two. His guard didn't speak the tongue here and he knew the man but he wouldn't dare to assume what the princess and her guard preferred.

"I'm sorry, I know this is an awkward situation." He began knowing that it must be as awkward for her as it was for him. She seemed pleasant enough but he knew being made to go out on

dates by your parents was stressful and while maybe effective it wasn't how he ever dreamt about meeting someone to love. He was about to say something else when he heard a *thunk* and suddenly a bolt stuck out of Thilani's neck, and then he collapsed to the table. August heard a noise he recognized as a crossbow firing before he watched the huge man next to him fall. Immediately his battle hardened instincts kicked in and he flipped the table before grabbing Anna and pulling her down to hide behind it. "Hide here." He begged her with his eyes as he stood up and drew his sword seeing Javari had done the same.

A group of men dressed in common clothing with red scarfs around their necks and lower faces crowded into the room with a variety of weapons. August wished he had his armor now but he would do his best to make do. A stray

crossbow bolt struck the table, getting stuck in it and he ran towards them.

Javari fought alongside him as he maneuvered around the room trying to keep the men stuck in the doorway so they couldn't gang up on the two of them. He wouldn't be able to recall every detail of the fight but one by one the men fell to his blade and the blade of the man beside him until another bolt struck Javari in the chest. The man looked down in surprise before collapsing. . August had to fight alone now but the group was almost gone. He saw the man with the crossbow pull it up with a new bolt and thinking quickly August grabbed an ax from one of the fallen men and hurled it at him. The man fired but his bolt went into the ceiling as he tried to avoid the ax. The ax bit into the man's chest and he fell leaving only himself, Anna, and the staff standing. Or that was what he thought until he felt a pressure in his side before a burning pain. Looking down

he saw a dagger in his side and he drove his rapier through the wielder's eye before he collapsed to the ground. Anna whimpers and looks at August. Her eyes showed her fear. She watches him leave and she curls up. She stayed there till she didn't hear anything else. She slowly stood up and that is when she saw him fall. She screams as she runs to his side and holds his side. Her eyes were Filled with fear.

“Nonononononon!” She yells as she holds his side. Tears fell as she started to yell for help and the people started to get the guard. She holds his side and looks at August. “You are going to be ok...i am here..i am here...” she says as she holds him. The guards started to come and move around them. Her eyes never leave him. “I am here..” she says softly. She didn't leave him. She didn't leave his side even as a medic comes and starts to take care of him. He was moved from her arms and she screams. She didn't want him to

be gone from her. The guards moved him to a stable stretcher and rushed him to the castle and to the medical area.

Anna was brought back to the castle and cleaned up. Her hands were covered in his blood. The sun was setting as the prince and August were being taken care of. She would wash herself but she couldn't sleep. Even as she laid on her bed and tears rolled down her face. She takes her kitten and moves in the night. Her pads of her feet make a small soft sound as she moves to the medical ward. Her eyes were red and puffy. She didn't have her mask as she moved to his bed and sat next to him. She curled up and whimpered. "Please don't leave me.." August knew something was wrong when his eyes became foggy. He had been stabbed with a dagger before but this was different, it must have been poisoned. He could make out shapes and colors but not detail so he knew Anna was there with him. He felt cold and

couldn't make anything out around him and he could hear her crying not knowing if that was over him or if she was hurt as well.

August knew he was being moved although he couldn't move himself. The justling unevenness of him being moved caused him more pain but he couldn't speak and was having a hard enough time just breathing. Every bump of the carriage back to the castle sent a pain through him and he only hoped it wouldn't take much longer. He wouldn't even mind dying at the moment except for the knowledge of what it would do to Anna.

When he had made it to the castle he felt he was given medicine but he couldn't taste it to know what it was. With the way the medicine made him feel however he could only assume it was milk of the poppy. It caused a numbness to spread through him which was better than the cold but also made him feel worse knowing he couldn't control his own body. That numbness continued

to spread until it made him drowsy and he fell unconscious.

Anna sat there and just looked at him. She was curled up and her kitten was purring to try and help. But it wasn't helping. The woman was still crying as she looked at the man she liked....no like wasn't the right word...the man she loved..she wiped her eyes and set the cat down before moving closer to the bed and sitting next to the bed on the floor. She rested her head on the bed and held his hand. Her eyes were tired and her heart was also tired.

She sighs softly and just closes her eyes. She told herself that she would only sleep for a little bit but she fell asleep and stayed asleep. Her hand was still in his and never moved. Her eyes were closed and her body was finally relaxed. The night passed slowly as they both laid there and Anna just breathes softly August faded in and out of consciousness noticing that she was there

beside him holding his hand. It gave him comfort to know she was with him and in those fleeting moments where he would wake up he would give her hand a gentle squeeze to let her know he was still there with her, he couldn't speak but he wanted her to worry as little as possible.

The prince Javari had been in a similar state but his wound had been worse, and part way through the night he slipped away. He had no friends or family by his side when he died, utterly alone.

It had been three days since his stabbing when August woke up no longer drugged by the milk of the poppy. His head aches and his body is sore and stiff but he is conscious. He started to adjust in the bed and felt the sharp pain in his side where he had been stabbed. He winced but managed to sit up and look around the room.

Anna hadn't moved from his side. She would take naps, read and eat in the room. She was told about the prince and her heart ached. She made

sure that his body was taken care of and he is headed back to his family in the best way possible.

Anna had fallen asleep on the chair from reading a book. Her breathing was calm and her body seemed crunched up and slightly uncomfortable. She wasn't wearing a mask. The room they were in was private as she had made sure that she was able to not have to wear a mask here. There was a cup of hot tea next to her with a little bit of food on a plate. She whimpered softly as she slept. She was having a nightmare. "Anna." August said hearing his dry throat crack from disuse and dryness. He reached for her hand and squeezed it hoping she would wake up. Waking up to seeing her beautiful face was the best way he could imagine waking up and he wondered just how long she had been sitting there.

He didn't know if he would be able to speak for a while, maybe after a glass of water or better an

ale. Just being conscious and having her there made him smile although faintly. He still felt tired however and even that much was hard to do. He didn't see anyone else in the room so he brought her hand up to his mouth and kissed it, his dry lips probably making it unpleasant for her but it was the most affection he was able to show her currently.

Anna hums softly as her eyes open. She rubs her eyes and looks at him. Her eyes widen as she stares at him. She whimpers as tears roll down her cheeks. She moves to the bed and takes his hand. "Hi..." she whimpers softly. She sits on the bed and looks at him. Her eyes were filled with fear, happiness, and just relief.

"How are you feeling..?" She asks softly. She looks at him and rubs his hand and she was there for him. She wipes her eyes softly "do you need anything? How is your pain?" She says softly. She wanted to do something. She wanted to help him

"I feel like I got stabbed." He joked starting to laugh before that since waves of sharp pains throughout him causing him to wince instead. "Honestly I just need a stiff drink, maybe a mead and some whiskey." He told with his voice cracking. "More than anything though I'm just glad to see you."

Leaning over he kissed her forehead and closed his eyes again. "I really need a bath." He mentioned suddenly picking up the smell from his uncleanliness after not bathing in days. He assumed he was probably given a sponge bath but it wasn't the same. "Do you think they'll let me get out of this bed now?" He asked, wrapping his arms around her and embracing her feeling better now that he could just hold her.

Anna leans into his embrace and giggles at his request. She hums and shakes her head "you aren't healed yet...they have been coming for a few hours to check..but you need to stay in

bed..maybe we can get you to your room.." she hums lightly softly before curling up and just laying there and looking at him. "The prince is...he is gone." She says softly

The nurse would come in and smiles "oh! You are awake! Ok! Let's see about your wound.." she moves to his side and starts to clean the wound. However Anna didn't hide her face. She just looked at August and leaned into his touch. "Nurse..can we move him to his room..that way he is comfortable.." the princess would ask. The nurse looks at his wound before saying "I think that is ok. I will check with the doctor but he sound be able to move up there.." she smiles before finishing and leaves them once again. Anna just sighs and curls up next to him. "I was so scared.." she says softly. Almost so soft that he might not have heard it When the nurse came in August was worried about Anna being in the bed with him in his arms. They could probably play it

off as her just being relieved he was okay but he wouldn't be surprised if this caused rumors. He was her bodyguard and he knew that others knew she felt safe with him so it was plausible.

August listened to the nurse and asked her to bring him ale or mead on her way back. This wasn't the first time he had been injured like this after all and most of those times were on the battlefield where all he had was a bed and drinks. He had assumed that the prince wouldn't make it since it looked like the bolt would have grazed his heart but it was still disappointing.

"You don't need to be so scared over me. If something like that was going to kill me I would have died a long time ago." This would just be another scar when it healed over. Eventually he was going to run out of places for scars however and he wondered if she would still be attracted to him if he was more scared than not. "I love

you." He told her softly not planning on the words slipping out.

Anna looks at him and hums "i do worry...and i was so scared.." she says softly. Her eyes widen as the words tumble out of his mouth. She blushes and moves up to kiss him. She kisses him and says "i love you too.." she says softly. "I..i was so scared.." she hides her face into his chest. Tears roll down her cheeks as she whimpers. "I-i was so scared...you..you just laid there...i...was so scared you would die..." she says softly. Her body was shaking harshly.

"I held you...i held your wound and i...i just couldn't help you...i couldn't save you..i was so scared.." she says softly as she curls up and just cries. Her body was shaking and she was just so relieved that he was ok. That he was here with her. "God i don't know what i would do if you had died.." she says softly. She really didn't know what he would do. "My mother stopped me

going out of the castle..." she whispers as she curls up. August just held her wishing he could do something to calm her down. He was worried if she kept shaking so much she would reopen his wound. He hadn't meant to tell her he loved her, he hadn't decided if he had, but his subconscious must have made the decision for him.

When she said it back however he felt his stomach lurch and his chest flutter. He had assumed that she felt that way but he was always worried she wouldn't know the difference between that and crush since he was the first person to ever connect with her like this. That didn't matter now though, he was just delighted to hear her say it.

"Don't worry about what would have happened if I died, I'm alive now and that's all you need to focus on." He told her cupping her chin lightly and pulling her up for a soft kiss. Once again August worried about his dry cracked lips but he

needed to kiss her. "I missed seeing your beautiful face, my mind was full of nightmares while I was out." Memories of some of his worst moments in battle and new ones his mind had conjured up. He was just glad to be seeing her now instead.

Anna looks at him and kisses him tears rolling down her face. She look at him and leans into his hands. She had been so scared. She was so scared. Her own mind had made nightmares of him dying and she was so scared. She curls up and leans into his hands. "I was so scared....you...you are the only person i want to be around...that is all...i don't want to be with anyone else...no one else can make me feel safe.." she says softly as she kisses his hands and then smiles. She would move off the bed. She would watch as the doctor comes in and the nurse gives him a cup of water and the ale that he had asked for. The doctor would says "yes..i

think we can move you to your room for the rest of your healing..i will get some guards to help you up there.”

Anna smiles and looks at the rush of people. Two guard would move into the room and then help August up and they moved him into his room. Anna would move to the room and help August get comfortable. The rush of people would move out just leaving the two of them. Anna sat on the bed and smiles. “Hi...” she says softly as she takes his hand and smiles. “Can i get you anything...” she says softly August was sad when she got off the bed until the door opened and the doctor arrived. He wasted no time downing the water and then the ale feeling better when the cold liquid washed through his dry throat. He let the guards help him up but he was determined to use their help as little as possible. He was a proud man and wanted to do as much on his own as he could.

He walked slowly towards the door and to his room stopping occasionally and only needing their support occasionally when he would miss a step. When they arrived at his room he locked the door behind the two of them not wanting to be disturbed and told them he would call if he needed anything.

At the moment all August needed was alone time with her however. "For now I would just like to enjoy your company and hold you. Maybe later you can read me the story we were going to read the other night before everything happened." The book still sat on his bedside table next to the sea glass he had found and given him. "Maybe another kiss as well." He said the last bit more teasingly before beginning to cough but only for a moment.

Anna smiles and moves to lay next to August. She hums and nods. "Ok.." she kissed his cheek and then his lips. "Anything you want to have...i can

have brought here..water..food..." she says softly as she lays her head on his chest and curls up next to August. "They don't know who attacked us...my mother has more guards around the castle..there are guards everywhere.." she says softly and just hides her face. She didn't want to think about the attack. She just curls up and sighs softly.

She looks at him and smiles. She touches his face and hums lightly. "I don't want to lose you...i don't want to ever seen you on the ground bleeding every again.." she says softly. She had a few cuts but nothing crazy. She hadn't been hurt. Even if she was she wouldn't care. She was focused on the man laying with her. She smiles and hums softly. "You are so handsome..." August doubted they would know who was behind the attack unless there was some more knowledge he didn't know about the red scarves around their necks and face. The additional

guards was both nice and annoying as it meant they were safer but also harder for them to get time away other than in their rooms. There wasn't anything he needed at the moment but he knew later he would need some solid food and more to drink.

"I won't make promises my love. I'm here to guard you and keep you safe and if that means dying to do so I'm going to do it." He told her sternly wanting her to realize that was true and not wanting to hide it from her. "But let's not talk about this more tonight, okay, I want to just enjoy being with you."

Her words and actions while she called him handsome made him think though. He loved hearing it from her but at the same time he couldn't help but think that maybe after she had her first taste of intimacy and sex that she was missing it after only a few days. Later he would be more than happy to help her with that but at

the moment he couldn't do anything for her. She could go down on him without hurting him and vice versa but there was no possibility she would be able to mount him or him do so to her. "You're not just saying that hoping for us to get intimate are you?" He asked in a playful tone before kissing her forehead.

Anna looks at him and giggles. "No! How dare you say that!" She feigns being hurt and giggles. She curls up and just lays there. She doesn't say anything as she lays there. She doesn't move or anything. Her eyes close. She looked better and more relaxed. she yawns softly and hums "do you want me to read?" She says as she looks at him and sits up. She yawns and rubs her eyes. She didn't want to move or anything.

She grabs the book and then the sea glass. "You kept it.." she says softly and just holds it. She smiles and blushes. She took out the necklace and held the two items. She looked so happy but

also so sad. She was keeping something from August. She didn't want to tell him yet. She wanted to just curl up and stay here. She moved to sit closer to him and opens the book. August laughed softly but it hurt so he worked to control himself. "If you can read while still curling up to me then I would love to hear a story." He told her before she grabbed the book and sea glass. "Of course I kept it, you gave it to me, I treasure it." He told her sincerely. He would never throw it out if he had any say in it.

The look of sadness mixed with the smile didn't go unnoticed but he decided it wasn't worth worrying about. He assumed if it was something she needed to tell him then she would tell him when she was ready and he was okay waiting until then. He knew his anxiety would skyrocket if he worried about it too much so he did his best to ignore it.

Anna yawns and curls up as she starts to read the book. she was laying on his chest as she read. Her body relaxed and happy. she was so much more happy now that he was awake. she couldn't help but be scared when he was still asleep. when he was having nightmares and she couldn't help him. she would read for another hour or so before she closes the book before she curls up on his chest and yawns.

"do you need anything? water or food? how is your pain?" she says softly as she looks at him and smiles. "i am glad you're ok...i was so scared.." she says softly as she takes his hand and kisses his hand. she would just lay there and relax. August laid there and listened to her voice as she read relaxing into the bed. Sometimes he would close his eyes and almost drift off and other times he would just watch her and memorize her features. He would never get over how beautiful she was with or without the scars.

August thought for a moment wondering if he should say what was on his mind. "I probably should eat something and I don't need a drink but what I need more than anything is to know what you're not telling me." He said softly, giving her hand a gentle squeeze. He had seen that there was something she wasn't telling him and he wanted to wait for her to tell him but it was getting hard. The anxiety and nerves from not knowing had just been building up and the discomfort it brought him was getting to be too much.

Anna looks at him and sighs. She curls up and bites her lip. "My mother is putting together a ball..i have to...to...to pick my husband..there.."she says softly and her eyes prickle with tears. She curls up and hides her face in his chest. "I don't want to go..i want to lay here and stay with you...always...i...i want to tell her...that..i want to be with you.." she says softly.

She looked at him and took his hand. "I am scared...i am afraid that...that i-i am not going to be happy.." she says softly as she curls up and whimpers

Tears roll down her face as she sits up and curls up. She hated this. She whimpers and moves away like she didn't want to hurt him with her touch. She hated this. She was hiding from him again. August wasn't expecting that exactly but he had assumed it might be something like that. "We talked about this already though. Even if you're married to someone else I will still be here." He didn't mention the fact he would have to basically be a courtesan.

He didn't have much strength but he used what he could to pull her closer and wrap his arms around her. "It will be fine, even if you are married to another I will love you." He told her honestly although he knew it would be sad to see. "Please lay back, it's hard for me to struggle

to hold you." He told her, his side beginning to hurt again. Anna looks at him and lays back down. She lays next to him and kisses his hands. "I don't want another person...i want just you...i want to be able show you to the world...i don't want to have to hide my feelings.." she says softly as she kisses his cheeks and sighs. She just curls up. Tears falling from her eyes.

"All the prince's want to marry me because they want to be king...they dont want me...or..to even know me...they would hide me away.." she says softly and whimpers. She wipes and rubs her eyes. "You care for me...you don't see me as...as..a monster...even though I am.." she whispers the last part of that "I know, I want that too." He told her softly as he held her there against him. He did want to not have to hide being with her. It might have made the sex.more exciting but that was it. He doubted he would ever forget that time in the attic when he woke

up to her swallowing his dick and cum but he didn't want to hide their involvement.

"You are not a monster, don't ever say that." He told her his voice stern and serious. He tried to be gentle with her at all times but not on that.

"Do you think I would love a monster? Because I love you and if you're a monster that means I love a monster and I know that's not the case. You're a beautiful young woman, not some beast." His heart broke knowing she thought of herself that way.

Anna leans into him and nods. She doesn't speak as she curls up and lays next to him. "I just want to be with you.." she says softly. Her eyes closing as she yawns. She was tired. but he needed food..and water.. she sits up and rubs her eyes before moving to stand "what can i get you for food? And do you want water?" She says softly as she looks at him. She wanted to get food for him and if he needed anything else as well.

She yawns softly but doesn't move. She looks at him and just memorizes his face. He was very handsome. She loved his face and bears and everything...she looks at his side. "Do i need to change your bandages? Or..medicine for the pain?" She ask softly as she sits down and looks at him Augusts stomach growled loudly at the mention of food since it had been days since he ate or at least since he ate anything solid, he wasn't sure which. "I don't need medicine, I don't want to be unconscious anymore. Please just have the staff send up some water, and a lot of food, and a stronger drink."

He wanted to take a bath but he could do that after eating, maybe after she went to bed. He wondered if she had eaten or slept while he was in bed fighting death. He liked the thought of her staying by his side the whole time but he also wanted her to have taken care of herself.

Anna nods and moves to the hallway. She told her to bring a lot of food and water and then some strong alcohol. She smiles as she walks back to the bed and says "food will be up soon..do you want to shower? I can get a bath going.." she rubs his face softly. She smiles at him.

If he told her he wanted a bath she would stand and move to the bathroom and start a bath for him. She hums lightly and snaps her fingers. "I will be right back!" She tells him as she goes to her bathroom and grabs some of her salts that she uses for her sore muscles. She comes back and starts to mix the salt. It smelled amazing August didn't particularly want a bath yet and would have preferred to wait until after he ate but seeing her get so excited he couldn't help but agree. Slowly he got out of bed and stripped off his clothes thinking that if the staff arrived now to see him casually nude while the princess

was in his quarters it wouldn't go well. They would most likely assume either there was something going on between them or he didn't respect her and neither of those options would be good.

As he removed the bandage August inspected the wound where the dagger had pierced him. It was clean now and seemed like it was on the healing end. It would be just another scar eventually and he wondered if this would be the one that made her not attracted to him. He ran his fingers along the muscles of his abdomen and noticed the swelling of his balls. It made sense, it had been days since he had released even if it didn't seem like it to him.

He sighed before making his way into the bathroom and climbing slowly into the tub. It felt strange thanks to all the stuff she added but it smelled great. "Maybe after everything arrives you can climb in here with me?" I offer thinking

sharing a hot bath together could be nice and maybe even fun.

Anna looks at him and smiles as she sits next to the tub. She giggles “you need to rest...” she says softly as she takes his hand “i don't want to hurt you..” she says softly. She wanted to crawl into the tub with him and take care of him. But the need that her body was feeling was a lot. She gulps softly and blushes. “Maybe later...” she heard a knock and she stands. “That is the food..” she smiles as she turns and walks out of the bathroom. She closes the door to the bathroom and goes to the door of the bedroom. She talks to the maid and helps them get the food set up. She thanks the maids and then lets them out. She walks back to the bathroom and smiles as she unties her dress. She moves to the bath and steps in between his legs and sinks into the bath. “Hi..” she says softly sitting across from him. August was disappointed when she wasn't going

to join him but he understood. He washed himself being careful around his wound until he was all cleaned up. The water was still hot though and it felt good to soak so he chose to stay in there. If he closed his eyes and leaned his head back he could probably even sleep.

When she got up to grab the food he decided to do just that but made sure not to fall asleep.

When she suddenly was between his legs he smiled and opened his eyes. "Well hello there, I thought you said you wouldn't join me." He teased before looking her over. It still surprised him sometimes that someone so beautiful and sexy loved him but he wouldn't dare complain.

Anna blushes and says "well i need to clean up too...i barely moved from your bed side...." She says before moving closer to him and looks at him. "How are you feeling.." she says softly. Her hands moved to touch his chest and run her hands up and down his chest. Her eyes were

locked onto his. She loved him. She wanted to only be with him. No one else.

Anna knew no one would ever make her feel safe like he did. He made her feel normal and seen. She wasn't just the princess to him but she was Anna...she was herself. She could be herself with him. She knew that wouldn't be the same with a king or prince. She was scared of what her future might hold. She wanted to be with him...only him "I'm not going to complain about having you in here with me my love. Don't worry about be however, I'm sore and moving isn't easy but I'll pull through." Reaching forward he wrapped his arms around her and pulled her into him so she was laying on his chest. He missed being able to hold her and if what she said was true about the ball it would soon grow much harder to do so.

He was fully conscious that their naked bodies were pressed together but he tried to push that out of his mind since she already said she wasn't

interested at the moment. Instead he began running his hands through her hair to lather it up for her. She had such beautiful brown hair but he hadn't had many opportunities to really notice it. "Regardless of what happens at the ball I will love you." He eventually said making it clear it was on his mind

Anna leans into him and sighs at him running through her hair. She hums and hides her face. She didn't want to think about the ball. She wanted to stay here...in this moment. She yawns and leans into his hand "i love you too....i don't want to go...i don't want to go to the ball.." she says softly as she leans into him and runs her hand up to his hair and starts to run through his hair.

She leans in and kisses his cheeks then jaw then mouth. Her kisses started sweet but grew to be more hungry. She didn't want to hurt him. He was still healing. "Are you sure you aren't hurting?"

August wanted to tell her she didn't have to but he knew that he didn't have control over that and she did have to go. He understood why her mother was doing this but at the same time it made him bitter. He was only there to be her guard not to develop feelings for her but he had. If he had been born earlier then it wouldn't matter and he might have been able to court her but the circumstances of his birth prevented that.

He could feel himself begin to get angry when he felt her lips on his cheek. He smiled softly as he calmed down from her touch. When he felt the kisses become more out of desire he felt his member twitch as he grew confused. "I'm fine, just don't be rough with me " he told her, moving his hand to cup her scarred cheek, his thumb tracing the scars tenderly, the way she allowed only him to do.

Anna leans into his hand and smiles. "I don't want to hurt you...but..i want to make you feel good..." she blushes as she looks away. Maybe he didn't want her...her heart began to race as she sighs and pulls away a little "s-sorry...i-i overstepped..." she was embarrassed. She pulls away from him and sits on the other side of the tub.

Her eyes weren't meeting his. She was blushing. She wanted to make him feel good but if he didnt want that...oh god...she covers her face and whimpers. She was stupid. He didn't want her and she had almost. This was too much. She just stays curled up and hiding away from him. August could see she was getting into her own head before she suddenly moved away from him. Smiling he leaned forward and took her hand before carefully pulling her back to him and over him. Silently he kissed her and took her hand in

his, guiding it to his member until her hand was wrapped around him.

It was already starting to come to life in her hand, pulsating from the blood and growing with each heartbeat until it was its full size in her grip. "You never overstep with me, my love. I always want you, and always will. Let's just take it slow and I'll be fine. We can both still enjoy this." He told her with a warm smile before kissing her once more.

Anna kisses back and looks at him. She wraps her hand around him and starts to move her hand up and down softly. She blushes hard as she looks at him. "Are you sure..." she whispers softly. She didn't want to hurt him. At all. She wanted him to be happy.. she kisses him back and whimpers softly as her hands start to speed up. She would be fine if she was left with nothing. She was more focused on him and what she wanted to do for him.

Her eyes go half lidded as she kisses him. She was happy they could be here. She liked these moments when it was just them. She never wanted these to end. She kisses harder against him as her own body warmed up "I'm completely sure." He told her as he felt her start to move on him. It was an unusual experience not really used to having someone take care of him like this. It was pleasant and enjoyable but he found himself wanting more as she worked him.

He kissed her back happily before placing his hands on her hips. Delicately he pulls her over to where she's straddling him. " I need more." He tells her softly before guiding his member in place and moaning as he slipped it inside of her. Her tight warmth around him was amazing and he moaned into her kiss not being able to help himself.

Anna looks at him as he pulls her close and starts to kiss her. She moans as he pushes into her. She

starts to move her body up and down softly.
Making sure to not hurt him or anything.

She breaks the kiss and leans down kissing his neck softly as she whimpers “g-god..r-right there..” she moans as her body picks up the pace and her eyes close in pleasure.

August let her do the work as he laid there enjoying the pleasure. He would have been fine doing some of the work himself but admittedly this would be less likely to hurt him. He listened to her and did his best to stay still so she could keep the angle she had. It felt incredible for him but he wanted her to be able to enjoy herself as well, besides the angle that was doing so much for her was also getting him in the best way. Leaning forward he kissed and nibbled at her neck and shoulder knowing that he couldn't last much longer, although he was okay with it not being a long session.

Anna whimpers as they move together. She moans softly and leans into his kisses. She closes her eyes as she tense and finally cums. She breathes harshly and continues to move so he could finish. She would continue moving and rolling her hips to help him release.

Once he did cum she would lean into him and sigh. Her eyes close and she hums "I-I love that.." she says softly. She leans up and kisses him. She would pull herself off him and move out of the bath and grab a towel for the two of them. "Let's go to bed.."

August moaned quietly not wanting anyone to be able to hear him outside of his chambers. The tightening of her sex around him was too much and pushed him over the edge. His hands on her hips tightened as he came, all his pent up seed from the past few days shooting inside of her as she gyrated. He had to take a moment to relax

after that but he felt so much better. "As do I, princess."

When she was out he couldn't help but admire her body although he followed a moment later. Drying off Ezra pulled on a pair of undergarments and sleeping trousers before making his way to the food and drink that was brought up for him. "Sleeping with you sounds lovely but I need to eat first, it's been too long since I've had anything solid in my stomach and I can feel it eating at itself."

She smiles and leads him to the bathroom. She moves the food and sits next to him. "How are you feeling? How is your side?" She says softly. She didn't want him to be in pain. She takes some of the food and eats before giggling.

Anna lays on the bed and sighs softly. Her hand moves up to his necklace and she smiles "I haven't taken it off..I was so scared you know...I didn't leave your side..the nurse was starting to

worry about me.heh.." August picked at the food hungry but not wanting to eat too much too quickly and hurt himself. "I feel fine, this isn't exactly my first stabbing. "I'm glad you like it and I do appreciate you staying by my side. I didn't know what was going to happen there but I'm just glad you're safe." I leaned over and kissed your cheek on the scar before eating some more of the food. "I should be fine in just a couple days though, at least well enough to move around. Besides I feel better after our moment in the bath." The release of being able to cum and not worry about it had done a lot to make me feel better both mentally and physically and I doubted you would ever know how much.

She smiles and leans into his kiss. She looks at him as he eats. She touches her scar lightly as she says "I am glad...you.....you are the one.." she mumbles to herself. Her mind went to the ball. She curls up and sighs softly. She wanted to hide

from the world. She ended up moving under the covers and just hiding

"When is this ball exactly?" He asked, having a good idea that that was what was on her mind. He wasn't looking forward to it, that day would potentially be the hardest. The dates were hard enough but he would have to watch her dancing with plenty of other men and suitors. He knew why it had to be that way but he would have to see her pick who to marry from them as well. The thought made his heart clench in his chest.

She hides her face and sighs "at the end of this month..." she says softly. She looks at him and touches his arm. "You will be there right...I..I don't want to be alone.." she says softly as she wipes her eyes and curls up. "I wish we could run away...I don't want to go to this ball...I..I don't..." tears roll down her eyes as she hides herself. She didn't like this. She didn't want this "I will always be at your side Princess, as long as you'll have

me. When you have to make a decision at the end of the night I will be nearby watching you and protecting you as always." He wrapped his arms around her and just held her not knowing what else he could do to comfort her. If she wasn't the princess she wouldn't be in this situation but he also wouldn't have met her at all.

August wanted to change the subject, to anything else to get her mind off of this. He knew that the ball would be hanging over their heads, infecting their minds like a plague, but they shouldn't dwell on it. He wasn't sure what to say but had let his mind wander he decided just to talk to her about what he was currently thinking about.

"So that night in the attic, when I was asleep in the chair, what made you decide to take me into your mouth like that?" He asked, having been curious about it ever since. It still seemed so out of character for her, especially with her being a

virgin at the time, to decide to go down on her new guard while he slept. He didn't regret it, honestly he would love to be woken like that everyday, but he still was unsure of why she had done it.

Anna curls up into his arms and sighs. She just stays there and leans into him. She liked his hugs...she opens her eyes and looks at him. "I..I don't know...I haven't ever...felt that way..I..something just came over me.." she says softly blushing "did..did you like it?" She leans on his arm. She yawns softly. It was late but Anna didn't want to go to bed.

She smiles softly and blushes "I..I liked it.." she hides her face and groans at herself. She was being stupid and clingy...what if he.. He listened to her never moving his arms from around her. "That was the best way I have ever been woken up." He told her honestly but noticing how tired she was. "I'm glad you liked it, although I know I

enjoyed it more." Reaching up he began to softly play with her hair as he grew more relaxed as well. He knew his door was locked and no one would enter so it made it easier for him to relax. "I think it's time to sleep though love, I'm still quite tired." He explained before yawning. He was asleep within moments.

Anna looks at him and leans into the man. She doesn't fall asleep right away. She stays very still in his arms. When she knows he is asleep she starts to speak.

"August...I won't like what I will do at the ball...I..I won't choose a prince...I will choose you. I will choose you August...you make me happy...and safe...I want you as my husband...no one else...I am sorry if you are mad at me for it..." August didn't hear any of this of course since he was sleeping. His rest while he had been in recovery had been deep but his nightmares had been hellscapes of half formed ideas and

nightmares. Now his dreams were more vivid, more real but that didn't make them less terrifying. Dreams of Anna dancing with other men who would change and take on shapes of monsters before she chose them came one after the other.

In his sleep he moved to hold her closer, wrapping his arms tighter as if he would never let her go. He could smell her hair and feel the warmth of her pressed against him making it easier to push back the nightmares. Eventually the nightmares faded and were replaced by sweet dreams of her, dreams of the two of them. He dreamt of their time at the lake, watching it like a play before that dream faded to that first night in the attic where she had taken him in his sleep, another great memory.

Anna finally falls asleep after her speech to the man that she loved. She had very little nightmares unlike when August was hurt. She

barely slept when he was hurt. She would just sit there watching him. Wanting to be there if he were to wake up.

Her breathing changes slightly as she gasps opening her eyes. She thought she heard something. She sits up and looks around. Her eyes were scanning the room as if there was somewhere there. She couldn't let anyone hurt him again. August had been sleeping much better now but when Anna woke up it stirred him as well. His years of instincts kicked in and he sat up grabbing his sword belt and unsheathing the blade. He couldn't see shit but if there was someone or something around he wouldn't be found helpless. He stood up moving in front of her, if something wanted to hurt Anna they would have to get through him and even in his weakened injured state he wasn't a pushover.

She looks at him and rubs her eyes "I..it is nothing...s..sorry.." she curls up and bites her lip

slightly as she doesn't look at him. She didn't mean to wake him. She yawns softly as she looks back at him "I..I am sorry..I thought I heard something...I guess I have been on edge.."

She didn't mean to wake him or anything. She just was scared. She was always scared...she hides her face as she whimpers. Even if she said it was nothing, August waited a moment longer as he surveyed the room. When he was sure that the room was empty of anything that shouldn't be he put the sword back away and put the belt where it belonged. His side ached a bit at his sudden movement getting up but it was fine.

Sitting back down on the bed August took her by the chin and kissed her hoping to calm her down. "I love you Anna, and you're safe with me. Why don't you get some rest? I think I've slept too much lately and you haven't enough. I'll still be here when you wake up." He began to stroke her hair and tried to lay her down with her head in his

lap although he wouldn't force her to if she didn't want to.

She looks at him and kisses him back. She rubs her eyes and falls into his lap. Her eyes were showing how little sleep she had gotten. She had large bags under her eyes. Her movements were slow. She hid these from him to make sure he didn't worry but now...it was all done. She curls up and leans into him, her eyes closing softly.

She would fall back asleep but it was never deep. She would wake at any noise before falling back asleep. August got comfortable and let her fall asleep like that. He played with her hair, stroking it lightly as he laid back and closed his eyes. It was peaceful in the quiet night feeling the rise and fall of her back and chest as she breathed.

Even when she woke up he would comfort her and do what he could to help her get back to sleep. He would doze when he could and sleep lightly but she had stayed up with him as much as

she could while he was injured. When the sun peeked through the window he still let her sleep not wanting to wake her.

She slowly opens her eyes and rubs them softly. She sits up before looking at August. Her eyes were filled with sadness. She hugs him and sits in his lap making sure not to hurt him. "I...I missed you.." she says softly, hiding her face into his neck. She didn't let go. She was scared too.

Her whole life she didn't care about herself or anyone..but now..she loved someone..she loved August. She didn't want to lose him. She was scared she would. That he would back away from her. That he would leave her The next few weeks were both incredibly fast and incredibly slow. August had enjoyed every moment he was able to spend with Anna but he knew it was only a matter of time until she would be wedding someone else and it hung over him like a dark storm cloud. All the time he spent with her he

knew was temporary and eventually he would lose this time, having to spend time few and far between with her privately.

Now he was freshly bathed and dressed, readying himself for the ball where she would choose her husband. He wasn't even sure why he was putting so much effort into dressing so nicely, he had to look nice as her personal guard of course but this seemed like too much. The queen had set him out with his own special outfit for tonight, something in the house colors that showed his high position in the court. Blue and gold weren't his colors but admittedly the clothes fit him well in a way that suited him. He knew the princess was also getting ready now so he made his way across the hall to her room and knocked on the door to see if she was ready herself.

Anna loved the moments with August. She loved the moments in the library and her room. She

loved to be near him. But the ball was always there in her mind. She was scared of it.

She was in her room as her hair was being done. She had makeup on and her hair was in a style of half up and down. Her eyes were watching her maid finishing her hair. They would move to get into her dress. She slips into her dress. It was a dark blue that was fading into white crème color. It had accents of gold that represented her Kingdom. She looks at herself as she slips on her new mask. It was a skin color one that had blue and gold accents on it. She takes a deep breath softly as she takes her crown and holds it.

She jumps slightly at the knock “come in.” The maid moves to the door and opens it for August and eats him in.



August waited patiently at the door until he was told to enter. He knew she had plenty to do herself, much more than he was required to do anyway. August only had to bathe, wear the outfit and make sure his hair wasn't sloppy. Meanwhile she had all that and more and he wasn't jealous of that.

When August entered he looked right past the guard and at Anna. She looked beautiful, she always did but one thing was surprising to him. All this time he thought that she wouldn't be wearing a mask tonight but there it was. Admittedly it was a pretty mask, something that

looked more natural and he knew would bring attention. He had fallen for the woman behind the mask though, and found her beautiful behind it. It hurt him a little to see her wear the mask but he understood why she did so and couldn't fault her for it.

"You look beautiful princess." He told her as he looked her over. It was true he preferred her without the mask but she still looked absolutely gorgeous. A comment like this wouldn't be out of place so he wasn't worried about the maid hearing it, he had a feeling at least part of the staff suspected their relationship anyway. He dismissed the maid to leave, he could help with anything she had left. It was strange seeing the heavily bejeweled necklace around her neck instead of the shield one he had given her.

She looks at him and smiles. She blushes on her mask as he dismisses the maid. She watches her bow and leaves them alone. She looks at him and

smiles “hi...” she was nervous. She fiddled with the crown as she sighs “I am not ready..” she says softly. She was nervous. Her hand went to her neck and she sighs “I..I can’t wear it..what..what if I get scared or..overwhelmed...” she says so softly, moving to him.

“August..” she says softly as she lays her head into his chest. She didn’t know what to do..she looks at him and says “i..i can't wear this...i..i am not a good princess..” her eyes showed how scared she was. How tired she was. She moves to her table and pulls out the necklace. “I want to wear it...but..i don't know how to hide it...i...i can't wear it like I normally do...but..you can..” she says softly as she moves to him and puts it around his neck. “There...finished the outfit perfectly..”

She looks at him and hands him the crown. “Can..can you put it on..” she turns away from him so he could put it on.. once that was done

she turns to him and sighs.. “what happens if i mess up..” August didn't know if she was ready, not for the ball anyway. He knew she could do the dances, and be the princess she needed to be, but he didn't know if she could pick a husband. That was so much to put on one person, that wouldn't just be her husband but the king of their country. How could anyone, especially someone so young be ready for that?

He embraced her and held her as she leaned against him. He could see the fear now but this was something they talked about, something they saw coming. When she was suddenly away from him he was confused until she came back with the necklace. He leaned forward letting her put it around him, he felt like he was getting stabbed knowing what tonight would bring and knowing the medallion wouldn't help. In return he takes the crown and slips it on her. It suited her and was radiant and he knew whoever she

chose tonight would be lucky. "You won't mess up." He told her knowing that was as good as sealing his fate.

Anna looks at him and nods. "I..I just don't want to go.." she says softly. Her eyes showed her fear, anger at the situation. She takes a deep breath before taking his arm and saying "ok..ready.." she says softly.

They would walk to the ballroom and stand outside the ball. They could hear the music. The laughter. She takes her breath deeply as she looks at him. "Will you walk me out there.." she says softly. She didn't want to be alone. Her heart was racing. The music slowed and she could hear the door ready to open. She takes a deep breath before the two of them walk into the ballroom. The room was filled with all types of people, low born to high born. Farmers to princes. She looks around as her mother introduces the princess. Everyone claps for the princess. Before she

knows it she is pulled from August and is rushed to start dancing.

She was passed from one person to another. She was kind but her eyes were hollow....distant. August understood but there was nothing to be done but to lead her down to the ball. When they arrived and waited he wanted nothing more than to kiss her and hold her, do whatever he could before she would be wed. He knew as long as she wanted they would still be able to find their moments but it wouldn't be the same. There was an icy grip around his heart and his stomach felt like it was going to get crushed but he waited until he heard the queen announce the princess. "I love you." He told her before walking out with her.

The cheers and applause were all meant for her and it only made him feel self conscious as just a person there to escort her and keep her safe. Walking her out there felt as if he was walking

her down the aisle to hand her off to her husband at their wedding because in reality it wasn't much different than what he was doing. August watched the room but ignored most of the faces, he mostly watched for anything that could be a threat to her. As much as his heart was breaking he was there as his guard and he needed to keep her safe.

As she was taken away August could only watch and let her go. There were some women of different classes that came and spoke to him and asked to dance but he had been told he wasn't to dance tonight by the queen. He did his best to politely refuse, in another time he might have danced with the noble woman, found someone for himself but not now that he was in love with Anna. He would now remain single forever and share the moments with her he could.

She was passed from person to person. Her eyes always going to August. She bites her lip as she

steps away from her partner of the last dance. She was having a hard time breathing. Her mask felt like a gag. She looks at August. There were so many people.

Nobles of all kind come close and tries to dance with her. She couldn't. Her breathing speeds up as her vision goes in and out. She reaches for August as she tried to walk toward him. She wanted his arms. She stumbles as she falls to the ground and gasp for air. People crowding her and making it worse.

All Anna could think was that she didn't want them. She wanted..August. Her mind clicks as she knew what she would do. She didn't know if August would be upset but she would speak her heart.

Her mother rushes to her and backs everyone away. "Hunny.." she says softly as Anna starts to calm down. Her eyes close. She needed to be strong. She takes a deep breath and looks at her

mother. "I...I have made my choice." August watched Anna as she danced and he wished once again her mask had been left in her room. He couldn't see her face, had no idea how she was feeling right now. Part of him hoped she was enjoying herself, having a good time and letting someone interesting she liked. She deserved that but it would break his heart and he doubted she was enjoying herself.

He was watching her as she fell and was quickly there beside her. He pushed and shoved any man who got in his way as they started to form a mob around her. He had to push people away for her to have space before he heard the queen beside them. People had finally started to back away after August had to push a young noble to the ground as he insisted on helping her and August moved his hand to the hilt of his saber. He hadn't heard a word from Anna while he made sure she had space.

Her mother looks at her and nods. Anna looks at Alek and his hand on his saber. Her heart was full as he was there by her side. She took a breath softly as her mother helped her stand. She looks at August and smiles at him. Her eyes showing happiness only at him.

Her mother knew what was going to happen. She had seen her daughter and August become close. She was happy Anna found someone who would protect her. She knew that Anna wanted August and she would support them.

Anna and her mother start to walk toward the higher section of the room. She would turn to make sure August was there. She turns and says "August stay in there." He would be just below her. She smiles at him before turning and walking again.

She takes a deep breath as she speaks "I am sorry about what just happened. I sometimes get a little overwhelmed. But I have made my

decision.” Everyone hung on to her words. “I choose my husband to be...”

“Sir August.” She turns and looks at him.

August stayed on his guard keeping everyone away until Anna was on her feet. He couldn't see her face, only her eyes but she seemed to be smiling. He didn't know why she was smiling right now, she was on the floor overwhelmed just seconds earlier. Maybe she had found someone interesting that she liked amongst all the men trying for her hand. He went to follow her and the queen and was confused when he was stopped, maybe they thought he could protect her better from down there?

August stood there anxiously as he waited. She said she had made a decision which meant that he was about to find out who would be stealing the woman he loved. He would have to protect the new man as well making it even worse, but his priority would always be Anna. He turned

momentarily to make sure they were both safe on the stage before looking back to the crowd and looking them over.

Her words seemed to stretch forever, each syllable a twist of the blade in his heart. Then he heard his name, could she have meant another August he didn't know of? He didn't know how to react and as he looked over the crowd but no one came forward. She couldn't have met him though, he was the seventh son of a mid level noble house, just a mercenary, the king and queen would never allow it. She had said his name though, she must have meant him. He turned and looked at the queen who looked at him with a look on her face as if to hurry up. He obeyed and made his way to the stage and to Anna. "Are you sure about this?" He asked quietly, wanting to make sure this was what she wanted.

She looks at him as he looks around. She holds her hand out. She looks up at him and nods. She reaches back and slips out the ribbon from her mask. She takes off her mask and everyone gasps. Her own mother gasped and seemed so happy. Her daughter was being her true self.

She looks at him and says "I chose you. You make me safe. You make me happy." She says softly as she takes his hand and turns to the crowd. "This is my husband and the next king in this Kingdom." Her words were strong and everyone clapped. Soon people turn and go on dancing.

She sighs and looks at him. "Did I do ok?" August was still surprised when Anna made her declaration. He still expected the queen to interject at any moment. Regardless of how both he and Anna felt the queen could turn around and tell them it wasn't a valid option, he was barely a noble after all.

August looked up on her face, the scars being clear for the world to see now but she looked more beautiful than ever. He cupped her cheek lightly, his thumb caressing the scars from where the wolf had mauled her. "If this is allowed, it's perfect, I would happily be your husband." That part was true but he would also be king, that didn't mean anything to him but he needed to recognize it as well. "Is this allowed?" He asked as he turned to the queen.

The queen looks at the two and nods "August. You make my daughter happy. And makes her feel safe. You have a kind heart and a strong spirit. So yes!" She laughs as she hugs the two and smiles "it is allowed."

Anna giggles and leans into her mother. She looks at August and says "I am sorry I didn't tell you before.." she says softly holding August's hand. She smiles and looks out at the crowd. "You will have to get more fancy clothes. I am

sorry they aren't comfortable." She giggles August was getting whiplash from the sudden change in his day. He went from the lowest he had ever felt to the highest as he was told it was true and he could marry the woman he loved, or had married? He still wasn't exactly sure what the situation was involving that.

"Nah I'll just be the king who dresses like I'm homeless." He told her, taking her hand and leading her away from the crowd. He did take a moment to flip off his brother he saw in the crowd. When they were away from the crowd he cupped her cheek again and kissed her not worrying about the few people who would still see, there wasn't a reason to hide it anymore.

Anna smiles and giggles as she is pulled away. She smiles at his action before he cups her face and kisses her. She sighs softly as she leans into him. She loved this man.

She kisses back and pulls away softly "August..are you sure you are ok with it? You..don't have to..I.." she couldn't say it. She couldn't say he didn't choose her. Her eyes were looking over his. August wasn't sure why she thought he wouldn't be happy for this. It was a lot to handle, but he would manage to get through it since he had her. "I never imagined being King, I never wanted that. I want you though, and if being with you means I have to be king then I will accept that. All I want is you, to be married, to eventually start a family with you. I'm incredibly happy, this is just a lot to take in." He pulled her in and just held her enjoying being hidden away from the world for a moment.

She smiles and hugs him. She was so happy. She takes a deep breath as she was held. The music and people fading away. She didn't want this to end. She pulls away slightly and says "let's dance." She says before pulling him to the dance

floor. Everyone parting ways. His brother looking at them like he would kill both of them. August held her still feeling like this moment was some sort of surreal dream. He barely had time to register her words before she was dragging him along to the ballroom floor. August was a fighter not a dancer but he knew the basics. He wouldn't wow anyone with his dancing abilities but he could dance with her well enough to not step on her feet or drop her. "I love you Anna." He said in a hushed tone while they danced, the words being meant for only her.

She looks at him and blushes. She dances with him. She loved this man. She loved how he loved her. She bites her lip and says "I love you too...I..I am so happy.." she says softly as they dance "you have to get me a ring now." She giggles. He would have to know how to be a king but she would help him. She was just glad they could be together. August rolled his eyes at her comment

about getting her a ring. "On my salary I don't know if I can. You would think being the personal guard of the princess would pay better." He teased her playfully. Getting her a ring would be simple and more than worth being with her. For now he just needed to enjoy the dance however. As they spun he leaned forward and kissed her deeply, the first kiss they had shared while surrounded by other people.

August pulled away from the kiss and looked down at the swollen belly of his wife, the queen. His eyes moved from her stomach to her beautiful scarred face. Being King wasn't easy but his wife did most of the work and supported him which was all he could ask for. Every day he got to fall asleep holding her and wake up the same. Who could ask for more than that?

Anna giggles at his words. She leaned into him and spun before being kissed. Her eyes shut as she smiled and kissed him back.

Anna looks at her husband. The king. He was working hard and learning the ropes. It had been a few years after the ball and she was expecting their child. She looks at him and smiles. She loves him so much and her life was full and happy. She didn't hide and she wouldn't hide anymore in her life.

**** THE END ****