

# Feared

Hiding around a corner with my back pressed into the cold brick wall, I wait. The torch's flame flickers, causing its light to dance along the ground. I try to steady my breathing when I hear the faint footsteps of a guard coming from down the hall. When he's right around the corner, I step out and swing the handle of my dagger into his temple.

He collapses to the stone floor. His blond waves gently lie around his face. He looks no older than twenty years, barely older than me. I briefly feel guilty for causing someone that young pain, before I bring my mind back to my mission.

I mostly specialize in theft, though occasionally I agree to help with an assassination. Really whatever brings me the most gold.

I make my way down the corridors until I reach the wooden doors to the treasury. Pulling out my metal lockpicks, I start on the lock. After several seconds, the door swings open with a reverberating click.

Inside the room are several wooden chests lined with golden trim full of riches. Along the gray stone walls are bookcases full of ancient tomes on almost anything you can imagine: even some on the sickness that changed everything for me. More torches fill the gaps between bookshelves, giving off golden light.

I fill my pockets with the golden coins from the chests and head out into the corridor. I carefully secure the door behind me, making sure not to leave any traces behind.

I've always enjoyed that feeling knowing I succeeded: either snagging riches or killing those I was hired to finish. That's what makes me so good at it. I'm the most feared assassin in Lyria, trained since the age of eight, and possessing powers most can only dream of.

I'm almost to the door when I hear a deep voice behind me.

“Imagine seeing you here, Calla.”

I spin around and see the figure of James, the captain of the royal guard, standing at the end of the hall. Well, darn. James being here makes my job so much harder.

He's about a foot and a half taller than me. If it came to close range fighting, he's probably twice as strong as me. His brown hair is cut short to keep it out of his eyes and is only a shade darker than his eyes.

“No response? You wound me, Calla,” he says in a slightly mocking tone.

“Why are you here, James?” I say quietly. I know if it came to a fight between me and him, I'd win.

When the sickness came through Lyria, it killed thousands of people, including my parents. A handful of younger children though, were gifted magic. People call us the Feared.

Three of us were taken to the palace to study or to fight in the army. The rest were deemed too dangerous to live, so they were hunted down to be eliminated.

I am probably the only one to have survived. My gift is to cast lifelike illusions. I can take hold of all five senses and even cause pain that isn't really there.

James responds, “Why, Calla, I'm actually here for you. You seem to visit here quite often, and have managed to cause this city quite a bit of distress for a girl of such a young age. I've been tasked with capturing you and bringing you back to the royal palace where you can stay in the prisons. If you'll just come with me now, it'll be so much easier for the both of us.”

“As nice as that offer seems, I think I'll have to pass on this one. I'd really rather stay away from the palace. Besides, James, you look to be about the same age as me, so it's not fair for you to call me young,” I say in the sweetest voice, putting on a smile. I pull out my knife again, ready for if he decides to try taking me by force.

“I was afraid you might say that, darling. Don't say I didn't try to do this the easy way.”

Oddly enough, he actually seems generally... sad.

I reach out with my power, trying to entangle him into a web of pain so I can escape.

Nothing happens. I try again and again, to no avail.

He seems to realize what I'm attempting to do. With a sad smile, he says, “I know what you're trying to do, but I was sent prepared. Your powers won't work on me. Please, just come with me.”

“As long as I'm alive I would never choose to go with you.”

“I thought you'd say that. I'm sorry, Calla,” he says in a voice filled with acceptance. That's when I sense something is wrong, to make him feel so genuinely sorrowful.

Suddenly, someone grabs me from behind, pinning my hands behind my back. I'm roughly handed over to James, and he gently ties my hands behind my back.

“I hate you,” I whisper to him, struggling to turn around to face him.

I feel one of his hands release mine to grab a cloth. He covers my mouth and nose. I start to drift off as he lowers me to the floor.

Right as I'm about to fall asleep, I hear him say, “That's fine, darling. Just sleep now so it can all be over.”