

EBONY DARK

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I stare into the dark ebony of the night sky. Small pin pricks of light cast a hazy glow as I bite my lip. My skin crawls and chills dance across my clammy skin. My gaze drifts to a gaping hole in the ground crafted from the deepest fabric of midnight. Any form of light, it leeches onto and sucks back into its depths. Its gaping mouth beckons to me in humorless laughter.

If I thought humans were inherently afraid of the dark, I was wrong. We are just afraid of the nothing, that is the darkness. When nothing can be anything from our most terrible nightmares.

When the veil tore in my village, it sent everyone scrambling for answers. They scoured the eldest libraries for the most elusive prophesies to determine our world's fate. There were two world's. Mine, of light and another of the ebony dark. The veil separated them, for all our sakes.

When I was born, my shadows cast a heavy outflow of darkness across the blinding light of my world. My parents trembled for years at every footstep. I left dark splotches in contrast to the pure light. My raven hair and almost black eyes sent those around me trembling in fear. I was a black stain on a beautiful white fabric. As I grew though, people began to approach me in curiosity. My world was light. Even with my lack of mundane, my world did not have negativity. Just cold fear from the unknown.

“Elliana... throw the torch. See how deep it goes,” Arcand says.

I look over my shoulder and try to muster a smile. *You must do this. It's the only way.* I think to myself. His almost white hair shakes into his eyes with an enthusiastic nod. I look down at the glowing flame of the torch in my hands and lick my lips. The torch is more of a giant stick we found, from a tree that recently died not far from the hole. It was off limits, but we came anyways. The lush grass expanding for miles with the usual dusting of white flecked due was now black and charred. Like a poison spreading across our land. I shook my head vigorously. *For Arashthra and all I hold dear.*

Time is unforgiving... usually. But this felt like time paused. My dark brown fingertips slowly unravel. The silky skin scraping against the wood of the torch. I watch closely as it flips over itself and begins to plummet into the depths of the hole. A hole I would be throwing my body into momentarily if need be. The flame sputters as it begins to flip repeatedly. I can feel Arcand looking over my shoulder while he holds his breath.

What was in the depths? I'm sure my best friend's meditative training didn't prepare him for this. We don't say a word as the flame grows smaller. Not a sound comes from our lips as it's light skitters and sputters along. The black of the hole sucking up it's light. That is till I see it. Arcand obviously does too because he gasps and skitters backward, which sends me stumbling forward. I hadn't realized just how close he was. My feet flip over themselves and for a split-second cold fear roots itself in my stomach. Long spindly hands are climbing the walls, wanting to suck the darkness from me. If I thought it was starving for light, I was wrong. It was starving for more darkness and I was it's next meal. I was a living sacrifice, meant to save my world. But would I be enough? *Maybe.*