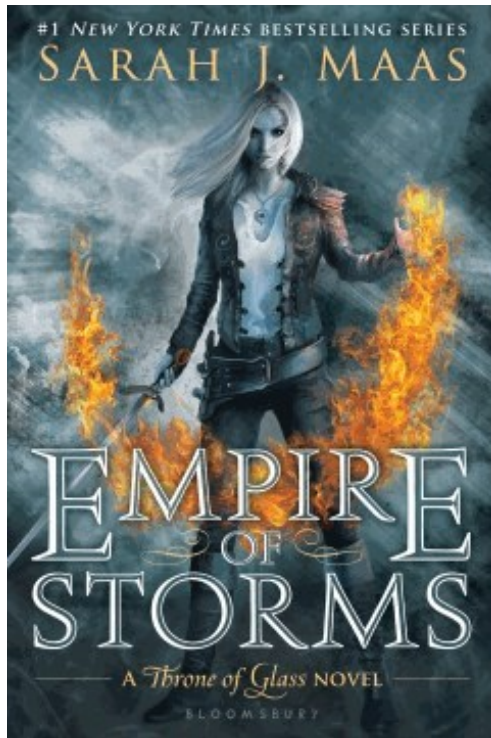


# EMPIRE OF STORMS



*Young Adult*

**By Sarah J. Maas**

ISBN: 978-1-61963-607-1



## Summary of Concerns:

This book contains obscene sexual activities; explicit sexual nudity; violence; and profanity.

**4**/5

**Not For Minors**  
BookLooks Review Rating

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| 17   | <p>She was delicately built, small enough that he might have thought her barely past her first bleed were it not for the full breasts beneath her close-fitting leathers.</p>  |
| 23   | <p>“Tempting as it might be,” Rowan said, nipping her ear in a way that made it hard to think, “I need to be on my way in an hour.” To scout the land ahead for any threats. Featherlight kisses brushed over her jaw, her cheek. “And what I said still holds. I’m not taking you against a tree the first time.”</p> <p>“It wouldn’t be against a tree—it’d be in a pool.” A dark laugh against her now-burning skin. It was an effort to keep from taking one of his hands and guiding it up to her breasts, to beg him to touch, take, taste. “You know, I’m starting to think you’re a sadist.”</p> <p>“Trust me, I don’t find it easy, either.” He tugged her a bit harder against him, letting her feel the evidence pushing with impressive demand against her backside. She nearly groaned at that, too.</p> <p>Then Rowan pulled away, and she frowned at the loss of his warmth, at the loss of those hands and that body and that mouth.</p>                                 |
| 25   | <p>Aelin lifted onto her toes. She felt Rowan’s eyes on her the whole time, felt his body go still with predatory focus, as she kissed the corner of his mouth, the bow of his lips, the other corner.</p> <p>Soft, taunting kisses. Designed to see which one of them yielded first.</p> <p>Rowan did.</p> <p>With a sharp intake of breath, he gripped her hips, tugging her against him as he slanted his mouth over hers, deepening the kiss until her knees threatened to buckle. His tongue brushed hers—lazy, deft strokes that told her precisely what he was capable of doing elsewhere.</p> <p>Embers sparked in her blood, and the moss beneath them hissed as rain turned to steam. Aelin broke the kiss, breathing ragged, satisfied to find Rowan’s own chest rising and falling in an uneven rhythm. So new—this thing between them was still so new, so ... raw. Utterly consuming. The desire was only the start of it.</p>   |
| 26   | <p>So Aelin kissed Rowan gently, his hands again locking around her hips.</p> <p>“Fireheart,” he said onto her mouth.</p> <p>“Buzzard,” she murmured onto his.</p>   |
| 68   | <p>She put a hand on his muscled chest, right where those two vials of poison were now hidden. For a heartbeat, she debated turning the deadly liquid within into steam.</p> <p>...Rowan again traced her mouth. “When you find me again, we will have that night. I don’t care where, or who is around.” He pressed a kiss to her neck and said onto her rain-slick skin, “You are my Fireheart.”</p> <p>She grabbed his face in both hands, drawing him down to kiss her.</p> <p>Rowan wrapped his arms around her, crushing her against him, his hands roaming as if he were branding the feel of her into his palms. His kiss was savage—ice and fire twining together. Even the rain seemed to pause as they at last drew away, panting.</p> <p>And through the rain and fire and ice, through the dark and lightning and thunder, a word flickered into her head, an answer and a challenge and a truth she immediately denied, ignored. Not for herself, but for him—for him—</p> |
| 177  | <p>His eyes traveled from her feet to her head, and he frowned again. “Bigger tits won’t prove or hide anything.”</p>  |

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|      | <p>Her cheeks heated. “Perhaps they’ll keep men distracted just enough that they won’t ask questions.”</p> <p>With that, she started upstream, trying not to think about the men who had touched and sneered in that cell. But if it got her safely across the river, she’d use her body to her advantage. Men would see what they wanted to: a pretty young woman who did not bristle at their attention, who spoke kindly and warmly.</p>   |
| 230  | <p>And a full red mouth made for the bedroom parted in a too-white smile as she took in Manon, the blood, the injury.</p>   |
| 254  | <p>Lysandra leaned against the brick wall, a foot propped against it to reveal a length of creamy-white thigh. And Aedion, with his hand braced against the wall beside her head, was no more than an hourly customer.</p>  |
| 255  | <p>He glanced at the delicate gold chain dangling around Lysandra’s pale throat, tracing its length down the front of her bodice, to where the Amulet of Orynth was now hidden beneath.</p> <p>“Admiring the view?”</p> <p>Aedion snapped his eyes up from the generous swells of her breasts. “Sorry.”</p>   |
| 283  | <p>Rowan traced his thumb over her mouth. “Even if Maeve had kept me enslaved, I would have fought her. Every day, every hour, every breath.” He kissed her softly and said onto her lips, “I would have fought for the rest of my life to find a way to return to you again.</p>   |
| 284  | <p>Rowan let out a low laugh, and said nothing else as he claimed her mouth, nudging her back against the crumbling chimney. She opened for him, and his tongue swept in, thorough, lazy.</p> <p>Oh, gods—this. This was what drove her out of her mind—this fire between them. They could burn the entire world to ashes with it. He was hers and she was his, and they had found each other across centuries of bloodshed and loss, across oceans and kingdoms and war.</p> <p>Rowan pulled back, breathing heavily, and whispered against her lips, “Even when you’re in another kingdom, Aelin, your fire is still in my blood, my mouth.” She let out a soft moan, arching into him as his hand grazed her backside, not caring if anyone spotted them in the streets below.</p> <p>“You said you wouldn’t take me against a tree the first time,” she breathed, sliding her hands up his arms, across the breadth of his sculpted chest. “What about a chimney?”</p> <p>Rowan huffed another laugh and nipped at her bottom lip. “Remind me again why I missed you.”</p> <p>Aelin chuckled, but the sound was quickly silenced as Rowan claimed her mouth again and kissed her deeply in the moonlight.</p> |
| 292  | <p>A grand total of five minutes before Lysandra barged in, Rowan had awoken—and begun the process of awakening her, too. Slowly, with taunting, proprietary strokes down her bare torso, her thighs, accented with little biting kisses to her mouth, her ear, her neck.</p>   |
| 316  | <p>She lifted her head to study his face, the harsh planes and the curving tattoo. He leaned in to brush a kiss to her mouth. And as his lips met hers, he joined their bleeding palms.</p>   |
| 349  | <p>She chuckled, starting to feel the cool kiss of the water on her naked body. “As far as memory serves, Prince, it was that insufferable swagger that won your cranky, immortal heart.”</p> <p>Rowan leaned into the thin veil of flame now melting into night-sweet air and nipped her</p>   |

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|      | <p>lower lip. A sharp, wicked bite. “There’s my Fireheart.”</p> <p>Aelin let him pivot her in the surf and sand to face him fully, let him slide his mouth along her jaw, the curve of her cheekbone, the point of her Fae ear.</p> <p>“These,” he said, nibbling at her earlobe, “have been tempting me for months.” His tongue traced the delicate tip, and her back arched. The strong hands at her hips tightened.</p> <p>“Sometimes, you’d be sleeping beside me at Mistward, and it’d take all my concentration not to lean over and bite them. Bite you all over.”</p> <p>“Hmmm,” she said, tipping back her head to grant him access to her neck.</p> <p>Rowan obliged her silent demand, pressing kisses and soft, growling nips to her throat.</p> <p>“I’ve never taken a woman on a beach,” he purred against her skin, sucking gently on the space between her neck and shoulder. “And look at that—we’re far from any sort of ... collateral.” One hand drifted from her hip to caress the scars on her back, the other sliding to cup her backside, drawing her fully against him.</p> <p>Aelin spread her hands over his chest, tugging his white shirt over his head. Warm waves crashed against them, but Rowan held her fast—unmovable, unshakable.</p> <p>Aelin remembered herself enough to say, “Someone might come looking for us.”</p> <p>Rowan huffed a laugh against her neck. “Something tells me,” he said, his breath skittering along her skin, “you might not mind if we were discovered. If someone saw how thoroughly I plan to worship you.”</p> <p>She felt the words dangling there, felt herself dangling there, off the edge of the cliff. She swallowed. But Rowan had caught her each time she had fallen—first, when she had plummeted into that abyss of despair and grief; second, when that castle had shattered and she had plunged to the earth. And now this time, this third time ... She was not afraid. Aelin met Rowan’s stare and said clearly and baldly and without a speckle of doubt, “I love you. I am in love with you, Rowan. I have been for a while. And I know there are limits to what you can give me, and I know you might need time—”</p> <p>His lips crushed into hers, and he said onto her mouth, dropping words more precious than rubies and emeralds and sapphires into her heart, her soul, “I love you. There is no limit to what I can give to you, no time I need. Even when this world is a forgotten whisper of dust between the stars, I will love you.”</p> <p>Aelin didn’t know when she started crying, when her body began shaking with the force of it. She had never said such words—to anyone. Never let herself be that vulnerable, never felt this burning and unending thing, so consuming she might die from the force of it.</p> <p>Rowan pulled back, wiping away her tears with his thumbs, one after another. He said softly, barely audible over the crashing waves around them, “Fireheart.”</p> <p>She sniffed back tears. “Buzzard.”</p> <p>He roared a laugh and she let him lay her down on the sand with a gentleness near reverence. His sculpted chest heaved slightly as he ran an eye over her bare body. “You ... are so beautiful.”</p> <p>She knew he didn’t just mean the skin and curves and bones.</p> <p>But Aelin still smiled, humming. “I know,” she said, lifting her arms above her head, setting the Amulet of Orynth onto a safe, high part of the beach. Her fingers dug into the soft sand as she arched her back in a slow stretch.</p> <p>Rowan tracked every movement, every flicker of muscle and skin. When his gaze lingered on her breasts, gleaming with seawater, his expression turned ravenous.</p> <p>Then his gaze slid lower. Lower. And when it lingered on the apex of her thighs and his eyes glazed, Aelin said to him, “Are you going to stand there gawking all night?”</p> |

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|      | <p>Rowan's mouth parted slightly, his breathing shallow, his body already showing her precisely where this was going to end.</p> <p>A phantom wind hissed through the palms, whispered over the sand. Her magic tingled as she felt, more than saw, Rowan's shield fall into place around them. She sent her own power tracing over it, knocking and tapping at the shield in sparks of flame.</p> <p>Rowan's canines gleamed. "Nothing is getting past that shield. And nothing is going to hurt me, either."</p> <p>Something tight in her chest eased. "Is it that different? With someone like me."</p> <p>"I don't know," Rowan admitted. Again, his eyes slid along her body, as if he could see through skin to her burning heart beneath. "I've never been with ... an equal. I've never allowed myself to be that unleashed."</p> <p>For every bit of power she threw at him, he'd throw back at her. She braced herself on her elbows, lifting her mouth to the new scar on his shoulder, the wound small and jagged—as broad as an arrowhead. She kissed it once, twice.</p> <p>Rowan's body was so tense above hers she thought his muscles would snap. But his hands were gentle as they drifted to her back, stroking her scars and the tattoos he'd inked over them.</p> <p>The waves tickled and caressed her, and he made to settle over her, but she lifted a hand to his chest—halting him dead. She smiled against his mouth. "If we're equals, then I don't understand why you're still half clothed."</p> <p>She didn't give him the chance to explain as she traced her tongue over the seam of his lips, as her fingers unlatched the buckle of his worn sword belt. She wasn't sure he was breathing.</p> <p>And just to see what he'd do, she palmed him through his pants.</p> <p>Rowan barked a curse.</p> <p>She laughed quietly, kissed his newest scar again, and dragged a finger down lazily, indolently, holding his gaze for every single inch she touched.</p> <p>And when Aelin laid her palm flat on him again, she said, "You are mine." Rowan's breathing started again, jagged and savage as the waves breaking around them. She flicked open the top button of his pants. "I'm yours," he ground out.</p> <p>Another button popped free. "And you love me," she said. Not a question.</p> <p>"To whatever end," he breathed.</p> <p>She popped the third and final button free, and he let go of her to toss his pants into the sand nearby, taking his undershorts with them. Her mouth went dry as she took in the sight of him.</p> <p>Rowan had been bred and honed for battle, and every inch of him was pure-blooded warrior.</p> <p>He was the most beautiful thing she'd ever seen. Hers—he was hers, and "You are mine," Rowan breathed, and she felt the claiming in her bones, her soul.</p> <p>"I am yours," she answered.</p> <p>"And you love me." Such hope and quiet joy in his eyes, beneath all that fierceness.</p> <p>"To whatever end." For too long—for too long had he been alone and wandering. No longer.</p> <p>Rowan kissed her again. Slow. Soft. A hand slid up the plane of her torso while he lowered himself over her, his hips nestling against hers. She gasped a bit at the touch, gasped a bit more as his knuckle grazed the heavy, aching underside of her breast. As he leaned down to kiss the other.</p> |

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|      | <p>His teeth grazed over her nipple, and her eyes drifted closed, a moan slipping out of her. Oh, gods. Oh, burning, rutting gods. Rowan knew what he was doing; he really gods-damned did.</p> <p>His tongue flicked against her nipple, and her head tipped back, her fingers digging into his shoulders, urging him to take more, take harder.</p> <p>Rowan growled his approval, her breast still in his mouth, on his tongue, his hand making lazy strokes from her ribs down her waist, down her thighs, then back up. She arched in silent demand—</p> <p>A phantom touch, like the northern wind given form, flicked over her bare breast. Aelin burst into flames.</p> <p>Rowan laughed darkly at the reds and golds and blues that erupted around them, illuminating the palms that towered over the edge of the beach, the waves breaking behind him. She might have panicked, might have been mortified, had he not lifted his mouth to hers, had those phantom hands of ice-kissed wind not kept working her breasts, had his own hand not continued stroking, closer and closer to where she needed him. “You’re magnificent,” he murmured onto her lips, his tongue sliding into her mouth.</p> <p>The hardness of him pushed against her, and she bucked her hips, needing to grind herself against him, to do anything to ease the building ache between her legs. Rowan groaned, and she wondered if there was any other male in the world who would be so naked and prone with a woman on fire, who would not look at those flames with any ounce of fear. She slid her hand between them, and when she closed her fingers around him, marveling at the velvet-wrapped steel, Rowan groaned again, pushing into her hand. She pulled her mouth from his, staring into those pine-green eyes as she slid her hand along him. He lowered his head—not to kiss her, but to watch where she stroked him.</p> <p>A roaring wind full of ice and snow blasted around them. And it was her turn to huff a laugh. But Rowan gripped her wrist, drawing her hand away. She opened her mouth in protest, wanting to touch more, taste more. “Let me,” Rowan growled onto the sea-slick skin between her breasts. “Let me touch you.” His voice trembled enough that Aelin lifted his chin with her thumb and forefinger.</p> <p>A flicker of fear and relief shone beneath the glazed lust. As if doing this, touching her, was as much to remind him that she had made it today, that she was safe, as it was to pleasure her. She leaned up, brushing her mouth against his. “Do your worst, Prince.”</p> <p>Rowan’s smile was nothing short of wicked as he pulled away to run a broad hand from her throat down to the juncture of her thighs. She shuddered at the sheer possession in the touch, her breath coming in tight pants as he gripped either thigh and spread her legs, baring her fully for him.</p> <p>Another wave crashed, parting around them, the cool water like a thousand kisses along her skin. Rowan kissed her navel, then her hip.</p> <p>Aelin couldn’t take her eyes from his silver hair shining with salt water and moonlight, from the hands holding her wide for him as his head dipped between her legs.</p> <p>And as Rowan tasted her on that beach, as he laughed against her slick skin while her hoarse cries of his name shattered across palm trees and sand and water, Aelin let go of all pretense at reason.</p> <p>She moved, hips undulating, begging him to go, go, go. So Rowan did, sliding a finger into her as his tongue flicked that one spot, and oh, gods, she was going to explode into starfire—</p> <p>“Aelin,” he growled, her name a plea.</p> |

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|      | <p>“Please,” she moaned. “Please.”</p> <p>The word was his undoing. Rowan rose over her again, and she let out a sound that might have been a whimper, might have been his name.</p> <p>Then Rowan had a hand braced in the sand beside her head, fingers twining in her hair, while the other guided himself into her. At the first nudge of him, she forgot her own name. And as he slid in with gentle, rolling thrusts, filling her inch by inch, she forgot that she was queen and that she had a separate body and a kingdom and a world to look after. When Rowan was seated deep in her, trembling with restraint as he let her adjust, she lifted her burning hands to his face, wind and ice tumbling and roaring around them, dancing across the waves with ribbons of flame. There were no words in his eyes; none in hers, either.</p> <p>Words did not do it justice. Not in any language, in any world.</p> <p>He leaned in, claiming her mouth as he began to move, and they let go entirely. She might have been crying, or it might have been his tears on her face, turning to steam amid her flames.</p> <p>She dragged her hands down his powerful, muscled back, over scars from battles and terrors long since past. And as his thrusts turned deeper, she dug in her fingers, dragging her nails across his back, claiming him, marking him. His hips slammed home at the blood she drew, and she arched, baring her throat to him. For him—only him.</p> <p>Rowan’s magic went wild, though his mouth on her neck was so careful, even as his canines dragged along her skin. And at the touch of those lethal teeth against her, the death that hovered nearby and the hands that would always be gentle with her, always love her—</p> <p>Release blasted through her like wildfire. And though she could not remember her name, she remembered Rowan’s as she cried it while he kept moving, wringing every last ounce of pleasure from her, fire searing the sand around them to glass.</p> <p>Rowan’s own release barreled through him at the sight of it, and he groaned her name so that she remembered it at last, lightning joining wind and ice over the water.</p> <p>Aelin held him through it, sending the fire-opal of her magic to twine with his power. On and on, as he spilled himself in her, lightning and flame danced on the sea.</p> <p>The lightning continued to strike, silent and lovely, even after he stilled. The sounds of the world came pouring back in, his breathing as ragged as the hiss of the crashing waves while he brushed lazy kisses to her temple, her nose, her mouth. Aelin drew her eyes away from the beauty of their magic, the beauty of them, and found his face to be the most beautiful of all.</p> <p>She was trembling—and so was Rowan as he remained in her. He buried his face in the crook of her neck and shoulder, his uneven breath warming her skin. “I never ...,” he tried, voice hoarse. “I didn’t know it could be ...”</p> <p>She ran her fingers down his scarred back, over and over. “I know,” she breathed. “I know.”</p> <p>Already, she wanted more, already she was calculating how long she’d have to wait.</p> |
| 358  | <p>Rowan didn’t know whether to be amused, thrilled, or slightly terrified that he’d been blessed with a queen and lover who had so little care for public decency. He’d taken her three times on that beach—twice in the sand, then a third out in the warm waters. And yet his very blood was still electrified. And yet he still wanted more.</p> <p>They’d swum into the shallows to wash off the sand crusted on them, but Aelin had wrapped her legs around his waist, kissed his neck, then licked his ear the way he’d nibbled</p>  |

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|      | <p>hers, and he was buried in her again. She knew why he needed the contact, why he'd needed to taste her on his tongue, and then with the rest of his body. She'd needed the same.</p> <p>He still needed it. When they'd finished after that first time, he'd been left reeling, to pull his sanity back together after the joining that had ... unleashed him. Broken and remade him. His magic had been a song, and she had been ...</p> <p>He'd never had anything like her. Everything he'd given her, she'd given right back to him. And when she had bit him during that second coupling in the sand ... His magic had left six nearby palm trees in splinters as he'd climaxed hard enough that he thought his body would shatter.</p> <p>But once they were finished, when she'd actually made to walk back to Skull's Bay in nothing but her flames, he'd given her his shirt and belt. Which did little to cover her up, especially those beautiful legs, but at least it was less likely to start a riot.</p> <p>Barely, though. And it'd be obvious what they'd done on that beach the moment they stepped within scenting range of anyone with a preternatural sense of smell.</p> |
| 360  | <p>Lysandra sat in bed, face drawn but eyes narrowed at the queen. It was the shifter who purred, "Enjoy your ride?"</p> <p>Aedion didn't dare move and was giving Dorian a warning look to do the same. Rowan bit down against the rage at the sight of other males near his queen, reminding himself that they were his friends, but—</p> <p>That primal rage stumbled as he felt Aelin's shuddering relief upon finding the shifter mostly healed and lucid. But his queen only shrugged. "Isn't that all these Fae males are good for?"</p> <p>Rowan raised his brows, chuckling as he debated reminding her how she'd begged him throughout, how she'd said words like please, and oh, gods, and then a few extra pleases thrown in for good measure. He'd enjoy wringing those rarely seen manners from her again.</p> <p>Aelin shot him a glare, daring him to say it. And despite just having her, despite the fact that he could still taste her, Rowan knew that whenever they found their bed again, she would not get the rest she wanted.</p>  |
| 374  | <p>If the young men of the town had been impressed by Lorcan's muscles, it was nothing on what those muscles were doing to the young women.</p> <p>...But what he lacked in charm he made up for with his shirtless, oiled body. And holy gods ... Lorcan made the young men who had visited her tent look like ... children.</p>   |
| 378  | <p>No, he'd been too busy contemplating what sounds might come from that full mouth if he slowly, gently, taught her the art of the bedroom.</p> <p>The attack, Lorcan supposed, was Hellas's way of telling him to keep his cock in his pants and mind out of the gutter.</p>  |
| 397  | <p>Her shoulders stiffened slightly. "I'm hungry."</p> <p>He smiled slowly.</p> <p>As if she'd heard that smile, Manon glared. "Food."</p>  |
| 420  | <p>He almost seemed to recoil. But she put a hand on his bare chest, over his heart. It still thundered beneath her palm.</p> <p>She said softly, feeling that heart beneath her hand, "I do not care if you are Fae, or human, if you are Valg or a gods-damned skinwalker. You are what you are. And what I want ... what I need, Rowan, is someone who does not apologize for it. For who they are.</p>  |



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|      | <p>You have never once done so.” She leaned forward to kiss the bare skin where her hand had been. “Please don’t start doing it now. Yes, sometimes you piss me the hell off with that Fae territorial nonsense, but ... I heard your voice. It woke me up. It led me out of that ... place.”</p> <p>He bowed his head until his brow leaned against hers. “I wish I had more to offer you—during this war, and beyond it.”</p> <p>She slid her arms around his bare waist. “You offer me more than I ever hoped for.” He seemed to object, but she said, “And I figured since both Darrow and Rolfe informed me I needed to sell my hand in marriage for the sake of this war, I should do the opposite.”</p> <p>A snort. “Typical. But if Terrasen needs—”</p> <p>“Here is the way I see it,” she said, pulling back to examine his harsh face. “We do not have the luxury of time. And a marriage to a foreign kingdom, with its contracts and distances, plus the months it takes to raise and send an army ... we do not have that time. We only have now. And what I don’t need is a husband who will try to get into a pissing contest with me, or who I’ll have to cloister somewhere for his own safety, or who will hide in a corner when I wake up with flames all around me.” She kissed his tattooed chest again, right over that mighty, thundering heart. “This, Rowan—this is all I need. Just this.”</p> <p>The reverberations of his deep, rattling breath echoed into her cheek, and he stroked a hand over her hair, along her bare back. Lower. “A court that can change the world.”</p> <p>She kissed the corner of his mouth. “We’ll find a way—together.” The words he’d given her once, the words that had begun the healing of her shattered heart. And his own. “Did I hurt—” Her words were a rasp.</p> <p>“No.” He brushed a thumb over her cheekbone. “No, you didn’t hurt me. Or anything else.” Something in her chest caved in, and Rowan gathered her in his arms as she buried her face in his neck. His calloused hands caressed her back, over each and every scar and the tattoos he’d inked on her.</p> <p>“If we survive this war,” she murmured after a while onto his bare chest, “you and I are going to have to learn how to relax. To sleep through the night.”</p> <p>“If we survive this war, Princess,” he said, running a finger down the groove of her spine, “I’ll be happy to do anything you want. Even learn how to relax.”</p> <p>“And if we never have a moment’s peace, even after we get the Lock, the keys, and send Erawan back to his hellhole realm?”</p> <p>The amusement faded, replaced by something more intent as his fingers stilled on her back. “Even if we have threats of war every other day, even if we have to host fussy emissaries, even if we have to visit god-awful kingdoms and play nice, I’ll be happy to do it, if you’re at my side.”</p> <p>Her lips trembled. “Och, you. Since when did you learn to make such pretty speeches?”</p> <p>“I just needed the right excuse to learn,” he said, kissing her cheek.</p> <p>Her body went taut and molten in all the right places as his mouth moved lower, pressing gentle, biting kisses to her jaw, her ear, her neck. She dug her fingers into his back, baring her throat as his canines scratched lightly.</p> <p>“I love you,” Rowan breathed onto her skin, and flicked his tongue over the spot where his canines had scratched. “I’d walk into the burning heart of hell itself to find you.”</p> <p>He almost had mere minutes ago, she wanted to say. But Aelin only arched her back a bit more, a small, needy noise coming out of her. This—him ... Would it ever stop—the wanting? The need to not only be near him, but to have him so deep in her she felt their souls twining, their magic dancing ... The tether that had led her out of that burning core of</p> |

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|      | <p>madness and destruction.</p> <p>“Please,” she breathed, nails digging into his lower back in emphasis. Rowan’s low groan was his only answer as he hoisted her up. She wrapped her legs around his waist, letting him carry her not to the bed, but to the wall, and the sensation of the cool wood against her back, compared to the heat and hardness of him pushing into her front—</p> <p>Aelin panted through her gritted teeth as he again dragged his tongue over that spot on her neck. “Please.”</p> <p>She felt his smile against her skin as Rowan thrust into her in a long, powerful stroke—and bit down on her neck.</p> <p>A claiming, mighty and true, that she understood he so desperately needed. That she needed, and with his teeth in her, his body in her ... She was going to combust, she was going to splinter apart from the overwhelming need</p> <p>Rowan’s hips began to move, setting a lazy, smooth pace as he kept his canines buried in her neck. As his tongue slid along the twin points of pleasure edged with finest pain, and he tasted her very essence as if it were wine.</p> <p>He laughed, low and wicked, as release had her biting down on his shoulder to keep from screaming loud enough to wake the creatures sleeping on the bottom of the sea.</p> <p>When Rowan finally drew his mouth away from her neck, his magic healing the small holes he’d left, his hands tightened on her thighs, pinning her to the wall as he moved deeper, harder.</p> <p>Aelin only dragged her fingers through his hair as she gave him a savage kiss, and tasted her own blood on his tongue.</p> <p>She whispered onto his mouth, “I’ll always find a way back to you.”</p> <p>This time, when Aelin went over the edge, Rowan plummeted with her.</p> |
| 427  | <p>At the opportunity she hadn’t taken to grab him, hold him hostage, and demand her freedom; at the arrogance in his assumption; at the heat that had gathered in her core and now throbbed insistently enough that she clamped her legs together.</p> <p>She had never been denied. Men had fallen to pieces, sometimes literally, to crawl into her bed. And she ... She didn’t know what she would have done if he had taken up her offer, if she would have decided to learn what the king could do, exactly, with that beautiful mouth and toned body.</p>  |
| 428  | <p>She began to unbutton the white shirt she’d been wearing for gods knew how long, but he growled, “I’ll do it myself.”</p> <p>Like hell he would. She touched the second button.</p> <p>Invisible hands wrapped around her wrists, tightly enough that she dropped the shirt.</p> <p>Dorian prowled to her. “I said that I’d do it.” Manon took in each inch of him as he towered over her, and a shiver of pleasure rippled through her. “I suggest you listen.”</p> <p>The pure male arrogance in that statement alone—</p> <p>“You’re courting death if you—”</p> <p>Dorian lowered his mouth to hers.</p> <p>It was a featherlight graze, barely a whisper of touch. Intent, calculated, and so unexpected she arched into it a bit.</p> <p>He kissed the corner of her mouth with the same silken gentleness. Then the other corner. She didn’t move, didn’t even breathe—like every part of her body was waiting to see what he’d do next.</p> <p>But Dorian pulled back, studying her eyes with a cool detachment.</p>   |

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| 480  | <p>And it had been during one of those times that Rowan had run his thumb over the scar on her palm, leaning to kiss her neck.</p> <p>...They had only discussed the matter once—last week. When she'd crawled off him, panting and coated in sweat, and he'd asked if she was taking a tonic. She merely told him no.</p> <p>...His green eyes turned distant, but he'd nodded, kissing her shoulder. And that had been that.</p>   |
| 491  | <p>A half smile cut across his granite-hewn face. And she wanted ... wanted to touch it. That smile, that mouth. With her fingers, her own lips. It made him younger, made him ... handsome.</p> <p>So she reached up with trembling fingers and touched his lips.</p> <p>Lorcan froze, still half above her, his eyes solemn and intent.</p> <p>But she traced the contours of his mouth, finding the skin there soft and warm, such a contrast to the harsh words that usually came out of it.</p> <p>She reached the outer corner of his lips, and he turned his face into her hand, resting his rough cheek against her palm. His eyes grew heavy-lidded as she brushed a thumb over the hard plane of his cheekbone.</p> <p>...But she rose up slightly, replacing her mouth where her fingers had been.</p> <p>The kiss was soft, and quiet, and brief. Barely a grazing of her lips against his.</p>  |
| 492  | <p>But he leaned forward, and despite the marshes, despite what gathered in the world, for the first time in ten years, Elide found herself not at all afraid as Lorcan caressed her lips with his own. Not afraid of anything as he did it again, kissing one corner of her mouth, then the other.</p> <p>Such gentle, patient kisses—his hands equally so as they stroked the hair back from her brow, as they trailed over her hips, her ribs. She lifted her own hands to his face and dragged her fingers into his silken hair as she arched up into him, craving the weight of his body on hers.</p> <p>Lorcan's tongue brushed against the seam of her mouth, and Elide marveled at how natural it felt to open for him, how her body sang at the contact, his hardness against her softness. Lorcan groaned at the first caress of his tongue against her own, his hips grinding against hers in a way that made heat scorch through her, made her own body undulate against his in answer and demand.</p> <p>He kissed her deeper at that request, a hand sliding down to grip her thigh, spreading her legs a bit wider so he could settle fully between them. And as all of him lined up with her ... She was panting, she realized, as she ground herself against him, as Lorcan tore his mouth from hers and kissed her jaw, her neck, her ear. She was trembling—not with fear, but with want as Lorcan breathed her name over and over onto her skin.</p> <p>Like a prayer, that was how her name sounded on his lips. She took his face in her hands, finding his eyes blazing, his breathing as ragged as her own.</p> <p>Elide dared to run her fingers from his cheek down his neck, right beneath the collar of his shirt. His skin was like heated silk. He shuddered at the touch, head bowing so that his inky hair spilled onto her brow, and his hips drove into hers just enough that a small gasp came out of her. More, she realized—she wanted more.</p> <p>His eyes met hers in silent question, her hand pausing over the skin above his heart. It was a raging, thunderous beat.</p> |

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|      | <p>She lifted her head to kiss him, and as her mouth again met his, she whispered her answer—</p>  |
| 511  | <p>Aelin stepped close and kissed him on the neck. Those pine-green eyes warmed slightly as they shifted from the ruin to scan her face.</p> <p>“When we get back to civilization,” he said, his voice deepening as he kissed her cheek, her ear, her brow, “I’m going to find you the nicest inn on the whole gods-damned continent.”</p> <p>“Oh?” He kissed her mouth. Once, twice.</p> <p>“With good food, a disgustingly comfortable bed, and a big bathtub.”</p> <p>Even in the marshes, it was easy to become drunk on him, on the taste and smell and sound and feel of him. “How big?” she murmured, not caring what the others thought as they returned.</p> <p>“Big enough for two,” he said onto her lips.</p> <p>Her blood turned sparkling at the promise. She kissed him once—briefly but deeply. “I have no defenses against such offers. Especially those made by such a pretty male.”</p> <p>He scowled at pretty, nipping at her ear with his canines. “I keep a tally, you know, Princess. To remind myself to repay you the next time we’re alone for all the truly wonderful things you say.”</p> <p>Her toes curled in her soggy boots. But she patted him on the shoulder, looking him over with absolute irreverence, saying as she walked ahead, “I certainly hope you make me beg for it.”</p> <p>His answering growl from behind made heat bloom in her core.</p> |
| 529  | <p>Lorcan watched in silence as Rowan slid a hand over her waist, the other cupping the side of her face, and kissed his queen.</p> <p>...It was why Whitethorn had strode to her—why Fenrys was now halfway across the plain, dazed, attention wholly fixed on where they stood, tangled in each other.</p> <p>...Given the heat with which the queen was kissing her prince, he wasn’t entirely sure what to tell Elide. But he let her squirm out from beneath him, twisting to her feet to spy the two figures on the horizon.</p> <p>...He hadn’t touched her since last night. There hadn’t been time, and he hadn’t wanted to think about what her kiss had done to him. How it had utterly wrecked him and still twisted up his guts in ways he wasn’t sure he could live with.</p> <p>...Aelin and Rowan at last pulled apart, though the prince leaned in to nuzzle her neck.</p>  |
| 571  | <p>“I knew you were a sadist.”</p> <p>He kissed her mouth once, twice, then the tip of her nose, nipping it with his canines.</p>  |
| 573  | <p>Let him lean in to brush his mouth against her bare neck, right under her ear.</p> <p>Manon arched slightly at that caress. At the tongue that flicked against where his lips had been. Then he pulled back. Away.</p> <p>Even as those phantom hands continued to trail up her hips, over her waist. His mouth parted slightly, body trembling with restraint. Restraint, where most males took and took when she offered it, gorging themselves on her. But Dorian Havilliard said, “The Bloodhound was lying that night. What she said about your Second. I felt her lie—tasted it.”</p> <p>Some tight part in her chest eased. “I don’t want to talk about that.”</p> <p>He stepped closer again, and those phantom hands trailed under her breasts. She gritted her teeth. “And what do you want to talk about, Manon?”</p> <p>She wasn’t sure he’d ever said her name before. And the way he’d said it ...</p>  |

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|      | <p>“I don’t want to talk at all,” she countered. “And neither do you,” she added with a pointed glance.</p> <p>Again, that dark, edged smile appeared. And when he stepped close once more, his hands replaced those phantom ones.</p> <p>Tracing her hips, her waist, her breasts. Unhurried, indolent circles that she allowed him to make, simply because no one had ever dared. Each brush of his skin against hers left a wake of fire and ice. She found herself transfixed by it—by each coaxing, luxurious stroke. She did not even consider objecting as Dorian slid off her shirt and surveyed her bare, scar-flecked flesh.</p> <p>His face turned ravenous as he took in her breasts, the plane of her stomach—the scar slicing across it.</p> <p>That hunger shifted into something icy and vicious: “You once asked me where I stand on the line between killing to protect and killing for pleasure.” His fingers grazed the seam of the scar across her abdomen. “I’ll stand on the other side of the line when I find your grandmother.”</p> <p>A chill ran down her body, peaking her breasts. He watched them, then circled a finger around one. Dorian bent, his mouth following the path where that finger had been. Then his tongue. She bit her lip against the groan rising up her throat, her hands sliding into the silken locks of his hair.</p> <p>His mouth was still around the tip of her breast as he again met her eyes, sapphire framed with ebony lashes, and said, “I want to taste every inch of you.”</p> <p>Manon let go of all pretense of reason as the king lifted his head and claimed her mouth. And for all his wanting to taste her, as she opened for him, Manon thought the king tasted like the sea, like a winter morning, something so foreign and yet familiar it at last dragged that moan from deep in her.</p> <p>His fingers slid to her jaw, tipping her face to thoroughly take her mouth, every movement of his tongue a sensuous promise that had her arching into him. Had her meeting him stroke for stroke as he explored and teased until she could hardly think straight. She had never contemplated what it would be like—to yield control. And not have it be weakness, but a freedom.</p> <p>Dorian’s hands slid down her thighs, as if savoring the muscle there, then around—cupping her backside, grinding her into every hard inch of him. The small noise in her throat was cut off as he hoisted her from the wall in a smooth movement.</p> <p>Manon wrapped her legs around his waist while he carried her to the bed, his mouth never leaving hers as he devoured and devoured her. As he spread her beneath him. As he freed her pants button by button, then slid them off.</p> <p>But Dorian pulled back at last, leaving her panting as he surveyed her, utterly bare before him. He caressed a finger along the inside of her thigh. Higher. “I wanted you from the first moment I saw you in Oakwald,” he said, his voice low and rough.</p> <p>Manon reached up to peel off his shirt, white fabric sliding away to reveal tan skin and sculpted muscle. “Yes,” was all she told him. She unbuckled his belt, hands shaking. “Yes,” she said again, as Dorian brushed a knuckle over her core. He let out an approving growl at what he found.</p> <p>His clothes joined hers on the floor. Manon let him raise her arms over her head, his magic gently pinning her wrists to the mattress as he touched her, first with those wicked hands. Then with his wicked mouth. And when Manon had to bite his shoulder to muffle her moaning as he brought her over the edge, Dorian Havilliard buried himself deep inside her.</p> |

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|      | <p>She did not care who she was, who she had been, and what she had once promised to be as he moved. She dragged her hands through his thick hair, over the muscles of his back as it flexed and rippled with each thrust that drove her toward that shimmering edge again. Here, she was nothing but flesh and fire and iron; here, there was only this selfish need of her body, his body.</p> <p>More. She wanted more—wanted everything.</p> <p>She might have whispered it, might have pleaded for it. Because Darkness save her, Dorian gave it to her. To them both.</p> <p>He remained atop her when he at last stilled, his lips barely a hairsbreadth above hers—hovering after the brutal kiss he’d given her to contain his roar as release found him.</p> <p>She was trembling with ... whatever he’d done to her, her body. He brushed a strand of hair out of her face, his own fingers shaking.</p> <p>She had not realized how silent the world was—how loud they might have been, especially with so many Fae ears nearby.</p> <p>He was still atop her, in her. Those sapphire eyes flicked to her mouth, still panting slightly. “This was supposed to take the edge off.”</p> <p>She kept her words low as his clothes slid over, hauled by phantom hands. “And did it?”</p> <p>He traced her lower lip with his thumb and shuddered as she sucked it into her mouth, flicked it with her tongue. “No. Not even close.”</p> <p>But that was the gray light of dawn creeping into the room, staining the walls silver. He seemed to notice it at the same moment she did. Groaning softly, he pulled himself off her. She tugged on her clothes with trained efficiency, and only when she was lacing up her shirt did Dorian say, “We’re not done, you and I.”</p> <p>And it was the purely male promise that made her bare her teeth. “Unless you would like to learn precisely what parts of me are made of iron the next time you touch me, I decide those things.”</p> |
| 585  | <p>Manon was awake when Dorian stormed into her room an hour before dawn. He ignored her unlaced shirt, the swell of those lush breasts he’d tasted only yesterday, as he said, “Put your clothes on and follow me.”</p> <p>...While they’d debated and readied for the past day, he’d contemplated Manon’s warning, after she’d made his very blood sing with pleasure. Unless you would like to learn precisely what parts of me are made of iron the next time you touch me, I decide those things.</p>  |
| 661  | <p>“Take off your shirt.”</p> <p>Aelin hesitated—realizing where this was going.</p> <p>Why Cairn’s belt carried a whip.</p> <p>“Take off your shirt.”</p> <p>Aelin tugged her shirt out of her pants and slung it over her head, tossing it in the sand beside her. Then she removed the flexible cloth around her breasts.</p> <p>“Varik, Heiron.” Two Fae males came forward.</p> <p>Aelin didn’t fight as they each gripped her by an arm and hauled her up. Spread her arms wide. The sea air kissed her breasts, her navel.</p>   |
| 668  | <p>“I have no use,” she crooned, “for self-righteous males who think they know best.”</p>   |

| Profanity | Count |
|-----------|-------|
| Ass       | 16    |
| Bitch     | 36    |
| Cock      | 1     |
| Piss      | 23    |
| Prick     | 5     |
| Shit      | 53    |
| Tit       | 2     |