

# The Caged Swan

Krystal sat within her dungeon cell. Her back pressing against the cold stone as the girl slides down. The wraps around her chest keeping the her modest breasts hidden from the view of the guards. She thought long and hard about the situation she had found herself in. How many suns has it been? Three? Four? Five? She didn't know. The Doman had no way to really tell the time other than the seemingly clockwork method on which she obtained her meals.

The kunoichi couldn't complain though. Relatively, she had been treated well. The guards seemed well disciplined enough. The food wasn't that bad. For as bad as being captured was, this wasn't terrible. Her mind drifted to Alys. Her sweet, innocent Alys. The Xaela is probably worried sick about her.

It's been many a sun since her one message was put out. She's been unable to talk to either lover. When she didn't return that eve, her Xaela lover probably assumed the worst. Such a sweet girl, pulled up in to this. Krystal continued to ponder, would it have been better to have just taken the capsule? It would have acted fast, she likely would have died within a bell or two. Her captors wouldn't have even known she took it.

Yet as the face of Alys flew by, the face of Rinandra. She knew she couldn't. Poor Rinandra, she's been through so much in her life already. She's lost one lover already. Krystal knew exactly what it was like with the passing of her own Shiris. Her mind was abuzz, unable to find rest. The guards kept peering in to the cell and talking amongst each other.

Even when one tried to talk to the prisoner, Krystal refused to talk to them in Eorzean Common. Her mind kept flicking to the future. Surely, they would execute her for this. Even if they didn't, Deha might kill her. This opportunity was too good to pass up, but the Amazonian woman did tell Krystal that should it fail, Deha herself would kill her.

Krystal's chest tightened. Why did that beyond evil creature always have to be surrounded by people? Why were Paladins, exemplar of good, protecting one as evil as her? It made no sense to the Doman. Laying her head back once more, the girl thought long and hard. It turns out, Ashlyn had risen to the rank of Captain within the knights here.

There was no way that she wasn't getting executed to have an example made out of. They're probably only staving it so that she may attend herself. That was clearly it. Her jaw clenched as the Doman realized this. The very thought sickened her. The talk with the Lieutenant, who clearly understood her despite refusing to talk in her native Doman, said it was not the way of this land. Yet, the kunoichi refused to believe it. Were it not, why would it be taking so long to bring her a sentence?

Why would it be taking this long if they were not just waiting for that **oni** to get better before leading Krystal to the gallows. For the first time since Shiris' death. Tears began falling from her

ivory face.

*I'm sorry Alys.*

*I'm sorry Rinandra.*

*I promised you both I would return.*

*I failed in that.*

*For that, I'm sorry. I hope you both will forgive me when yet we meet again...*

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