The Memories Remain

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Summary

Tumblr prompt: LYSAELIN LYSAELIN LYSAELIN PLEASE MY LOVELY LOVE!!
where aelin is having a bad day with endovier flashbacks and lysandra is there for her

Notes

This is going in as part of my headcanon lysaelin rewrite, taking place after Aelin returns to Rifthold from Wendlyn and her training with Rowan, but before she rescues Aedion. She and Lysandra have just reunited recently but they’ve picked up where they left off when Aelin had been sent to Endovier.

TW for flashbacks, ptsd, and panic attacks.

For my lovely wonderful @city-of-fae

See the end of the work for more notes
The Memories Remain

The sun was beating down hard as Aelin made her way through the streets of Rifthold. Her hood was up, making the heat worse as she ran her errands. Each piece of her plan was falling into place and she couldn’t let up until she had Aedion back and the rest of her plans brought to fruition.

She was on her way to the bank when she heard the crack of a whip.

The memories had been pressing in all day and it was the trigger they needed.

Closing her eyes, Aelin tried to push them back but the darkness that descended only brought them closer. The skin on her back crawled at the memory of how the whips had felt and the sweat she felt creeping down turned to blood in her mind. Her eyes were wide now, trying to focus on the sunlight and the stalls around her but Aelin stumbled blindly into a courtyard to the side of the main street.

Alone, she ripped off her hood and tilted her head back, trying to burn the image of the sun into her sight so it would burn the memories away. Aelin gasped for breath, cursing her weakness and the time it took for her heart to slow and the phantom pain to fade.

Finally, when she had pushed the past away and regained her composure, Aelin slipped out of the courtyard and back on her way. She glared from under her hood as she passed by another group of riders, cracking their own whips at their mounts.

It was a long while before Aelin let herself into the warehouse apartment. Her day had been plagued by more of those damned memories, each one building on the last until her nerves were frayed and all she wanted was to forget. She knew she would never forget what had happened there - what was still happening there to others - but she had hoped that these flashbacks would end.

Weary enough at fighting back against them all day, she didn’t realize there was someone already in the apartment until after she had thrown a dagger at them. Thankfully, she had recognized Lysandra at the last moment and her dagger buried itself in the wall instead of her.

Wide green eyes flicked from the dagger to Aelin, who let out a sob and fell to her knees. Lysandra rushed to her side, completely disregarding her fine clothes to kneel beside her and frame her face with her hands.

“Aelin, what’s wrong? What happened?”

Sniffing, Aelin met her gaze and Lysandra almost cried out herself at the pain her beautiful eyes held. But she still didn’t know what caused this pain and if something happened to Aedion - “Aelin? Sweetheart, please talk to me. What happened?”

Surprising them both, Aelin collapsed into her lover’s arms. Shocked, it took Lysandra a moment before her arms closed around her. Aelin was strong, always so strong, and she had never seen her like this. Not even after some of the beatings Arobynn had given her. Not even when she had told Lysandra about her parents and her past.

Aelin didn’t cry but she shuddered in her arms. She looped her arms around the other woman’s waist and she held her close, her face buried in Lysandra’s neck. Lys found herself murmuring little nothings, running her fingers through Aelin’s dyed hair and waiting for the shaking to slow.

After immeasurable moments, Aelin finally seemed to realize that they were on the floor in front
the of the door. She pulled back, avoiding Lysandra’s eyes as she stood on weak legs. Holding her hands out, she helped lift Lysandra to her feet. She expected her to let go, but Aelin stood still, holding her hands for a moment.

“Do you have to leave soon?” Her voice was low and husky, caught on the sobs that she refused to let spill.

“I have the night off. My client postponed and Clarisse couldn’t find anything else to do with me.” She leaned close to press her forehead to Aelin’s. “So I’m all yours tonight.”

Tears filled Aelin’s eyes again but she ignored them and tugged Lys towards her bedroom. When she got there, she began to strip off her clothes. Coat and shirt and trousers until she was left in only her underthings.

Lysandra was quiet, still not sure what to do or how to help. When Aelin came to stand before her, she linked their hands and gripped tight. “Lys… could you please just hold me right now?”

Her heart broke and her tongue burned with questions but she held back. Cupping Aelin’s cheeks, Lys pressed a soft kiss to her lips. Aelin sighed into the kiss, letting it go on for several moments before she pulled back.

Turning, Lysandra let Aelin help her with her dress. Much slower than Aelin, her layers came off piece by piece until they matched. They crawled into bed and Aelin burrowed close to her, wrapping her arms around Lys and listening to heart beat under her ear.

Lysandra pulled the covers up and she pressed kisses onto the top of Aelin’s head. She knew that whatever it was, they weren’t in danger now and Aelin’s plans hadn’t been ruined. Otherwise, Aelin would be plotting and fighting, not… this. Biting her lip to hold back her questions, Lys waited. Aelin would talk if and when she wanted to and she was just glad to be able to hold her right now.

For so long, they hadn’t had anything. They were both scarred from their time apart and Lys treasured the fact that she could be here now.

Aelin was quiet long enough that Lysandra thought she might have fallen asleep.

“I hate that it haunts me like this, Lys. Endovier.”

Squeezing her eyes shut, Lysandra cursed every god and every fate and especially Arobynn Hamel. That godsforsaken place. They hadn’t spoken of it yet, except for the one night when Aelin had woken screaming and Lys had held her much like this until she fell asleep again.

“I would be surprised if it didn’t, Aelin. That place is… a horror.”

“But it makes me freeze and I can’t- I can’t move forward. I thought I could move past it but every time I hear the crack of a whip, I can feel my scars ache, Lys.” Her voice broke on Lysandra’s name and she raged at the circumstances that had brought this pain to her love.

She didn’t reply for a long time. Instead, she tightened her hold on Aelin, twining their legs together and tracing those scars with her fingertips. When Aelin lifted her head, Lys pressed another soft kiss to her lips. They let the kiss linger, reminding each other that they were here and together and safe for the moment.

“If I could take your pain away, I would, my love. In a heartbeat. But I am here whenever you need me, to hold you and listen to you and to lean on if you need it. The memories and the pain will fade
and I will always be here to help you push it back.”

Aelin finally let go and the tears streamed down her face. She kissed Lysandra again, her lips tasting of salt and light, and they stayed like that for a long time.
Aelin jolted awake in the middle of the night.

Frantically, she turned to find Lysandra. There wasn’t much moonlight, but a shaft fell across her bed and it allowed her to see her lover. Still peacefully asleep, Lys was curled around Aelin, her arm flung across her waist.

After her breakdown yesterday, Aelin had expected the nightmares. But these weren’t the normal ones, of her parents or Endovier or the king’s cold eyes. These had been worse. She had been happy, had been laughing and joyful in Lysandra’s arms. They had been in Terrasen and she had her throne and then-

Softly, so as not to wake her, Aelin let her hands wander, making sure that Lys wasn’t bleeding or hurt anywhere.

She didn’t wake up until Aelin pressed a desperate kiss to her lips.

“Aelin? Did you have a nightmare?” Her voice was sleepy and rough and Aelin loved the sound of it. When they were young and stupid, she had hated how perfect Lysandra was. Now she knew she wasn’t perfect and she loved her all the more. But her voice right now, husky from sleep and full of concern and love, was utter perfection.

Softly, Aelin kissed the corner of Lysandra’s mouth. “Yes, but not of- that place.” She kissed the other corner. “I dreamt I’d lost you.” Lys’ breath caught as Aelin captured her lips, licking into her mouth when she gasped and tangling their tongues together. When Lys threaded her fingers through Aelin’s hair, she pulled back. “And it was so much worse.”

“I’m here, Aelin.” Lys shifted and tugged until her queen was on top of her, cradled between her legs and pressed against every inch of her. “I’m right here. And I love you so much.”

“I love you, too, Lys. With every broken piece of me.”

Aelin sealed their words with a fierce kiss. Her hands wandered across her lover’s skin until Lysandra was gasping below her. She took the opportunity to kiss her way down Lys’ jaw and her neck. She kept her kisses and her caresses light, teasing against Lysandra’s skin as she made her way down.

Her fingertips traced across Lys’ collarbones and Aelin followed their path with her lips. She only broke their contact to drag her shift up and off of her, throwing it across the room. Lysandra gasped again when her lips ghosted across the swell of her breast before they closed around one of her nipples. Biting lightly, Aelin teased the tip until it stiffened, stroking her other breast with her hand.
Lys hated her breasts, wanted them gone as soon as she could shift again, but she was so sensitive and Aelin loved to make her writhe as she worshiped her. So she stayed there for awhile, giving Lysandra the love and attention and pleasure she deserved.

Aelin let her hands wander, drawing patterns and words on her skin as she kissed down her stomach and across her hips. Pressing her hips up against her, Lysandra begged, “Please, Aelin, I need you.”

“I know,” Aelin murmured against her soft inner thigh as she shifted to let Lys’ legs rest on her shoulders. She let her breath fall on Lysandra’s slit, already wet from Aelin’s touch, and she treasured the moans that Lysandra let slip as she kissed closer to where she wanted her. When she finally stopped teasing and licked up the length of her slit, Lys cried out.

Closing her lips around her bud, Aelin flicked her tongue out and dragged more of those noises out of her lover’s throat. She didn’t hold back and she didn’t tease any longer. Aelin drove Lysandra over the edge once and twice again as she used her fingers and tongue to find all of the spots that made her wild.

When she was shaking and gasping for breath, Aelin backed off. She caught those brilliant green eyes as she licked her fingers clean and she laughed quietly as a blush rose to color Lysandra’s cheeks. Gods, but she could gaze at this woman forever and be happy.

Lysandra ran a hand through Aelin’s hair, brushing it back before she ran brushed her thumb across her cheek. Covering her hand with her own, Aelin turned to kiss her palm.

She took her time crawling back up Lysandra’s body, kissing every inch of her and whispering her love and her regrets for the time they had spent separated and what had been done to them.

“Get up here, Ae,” Lysandra demanded when she was close to tears. She tugged on Aelin’s shoulder until she obeyed, rising up to kiss her with all of the love she held. She could taste herself on Aelin’s lips and she moaned into them. Wrapping her hands around Aelin’s waist, Lys brought her back down, straddling one of her thighs.

This time it was Aelin’s turn to gasp, pleasure spiraling through her veins as Lys gently stroked her fingertips over clit as she ground down on top of her. It wasn’t long before Aelin cried out against her lips and shattered for her.

Sweaty and spent, they laid in bed, tangled in each other and the sheets.

“You’re not broken, Aelin. And you’re never going to lose me.”

Lysandra had been the first person she had let in while she had been under Arobynn’s “care.” The first person she told her truth to and the first to love her as she was. This beautiful, clever, astounding woman who Aelin had finally found again after so long apart. Who had suffered so much herself and still found the courage to love.

Her lover.

Her consort.

Her mate.

End Notes
Thank you so much for reading, kudos, and especially commenting!

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