

5 princes and I By Kiraran Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Charms to Charming

My head is throbbing for some unknown reason. Why does it hurt?

Suddenly I felt the wind brushing past my skin. It was cool and relaxing. I took a deep breath and was welcomed by the scent of lavenders and roses. I moved my fingers and was surprised when I touched something spiky.....feels like gra**.

“Who is this girl?” I can hear a voice somewhere above me. From its tone, I can tell that it’s a male. Am I dreaming?

“I have no idea. Maybe she’s the girl that the queen was talking about?” Another voice said.

“Awe, how cute. But the way she dresses is pretty weird.” And another. I wanted to open my eyes to see what was happening, but I didn’t. I’m guessing that they still think I’m unconscious. Would they leave me if they think that I’m dead?

As if voicing it out, another male said “Is she dead?”

Great. There are more of them.

Whatever, as long as they think that I’m dead maybe they’ll leave me alone. I held my breath to make it look like my heart stopped beating. I’ve never been good at acting, but I guess that’ll have to do.

“Oi. She stopped breathing!”

“What do we do?!”

“Leave her. She is not of our concern.” A new voice said. This one has a hard edge on it. Oh, joy! More of them.

“Cut it out, Prince Ace. If you continue that kind of att**ude, you’re not gonna find a wife.” Argued the other.

“Stop it. Both of you. This isn’t the time to argue! This girl is in trouble and you would rather kill each other than help her?” Yeah! I’m gonna die here and you two would rather argue? Shame on you!

“Sorry, Fred,” said the other. I felt something soft brush my nose. I fought the urge to scratch where it once had been.

“Prince Ren, what are you doing to the poor girl? Or are you Dan?”

“It’s Dan, you idiot. Get your facts straight. I’m just tickling her nose with this feather, trying to get a reaction from her.”

“You really are stupid.”

My nose is itching...

“Hey, did you just call my brother stupid?” A new voice said. And he didn’t seem happy about the way that the other boy had called his brother stupid.

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I wrinkled my nose since it began to tingle. I was frustrated that I couldn’t even reach up and grab it – not when I’m still surrounded by strangers.

Let’s just hope that the worse thing that they’ll do is tickle my nose with a feather.

“Whatever, Prince Ren.” the same man who called the boy named Dan said.

“Actually, I’m Prince Dan.”

I actually want to sneeze now.....

“What?! But I thought that he said he was Dan!”

“Fooled ya!” The man beside me said.

“So you’re Prince Dan and you’re Prince Ren?”

“Why don’t you take a guess?” both the boys said at the same time. I heard the other men laughing.

I really want to sneeze now...

“I hate twins!”

My nose began to tingle more and I fought the urge to sneeze. Just keep it in, Rose. Come on.

“Don’t worry, Nate. We hate you too.” said the twins at the same time.

“ACHO!” I couldn’t stop the sneeze that was coming. It was too much for me.

Whipping my nose after I sneezed, I opened my eyes and was met by 5 gorgeous strangers that made me hold my breath. Two of them had the same faces – I assume that they’re twins. Both have chocolate brown hair which is combed sideward, their eyes are also a pretty shade of brown, only slightly lighter, like chestnut. Their skin was tanned in a somewhat golden color. They smiled and tilted their head to the side.

One prince gave me a warm smile that comforted me from all the stares. He has blonde hair which was combined backward. A few strands were covering his icy blue eyes. He was pretty tall.

Then my eyes darted to one with a cold stare, but despite that, he was good-looking. His hair was black and messy, his eyes are the color of midnight blue, which is currently giving me goosebumps.

The last one I couldn’t describe. He was looking at me without any emotion at all. Just a blank stare. But I can tell that he was curious. His hair was a nice crimson red that I was pretty sure wasn’t dyed like the other boys at my school. It was neatly combed and some of his hair is covering his eyes, which are the colors of the forest, a rare shade of green. A moment later, he gave me a wink.

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‘Kay.

They all look good, but what really caught my attention was their attire. All of them then were wearing... let’s just say some fancy and expensive coats. Did they come from a costume party?

This must be a dream. For sure. I brought a hand up and slapped myself.

I heard a few gasps.

It hurts. It is not a dream.

“Must have gone crazy.” My eyes landed on the black-haired guy. His mouth pulled into a thin line.

“Crazy? Looked in the mirror lately? Yeah sure, you look good in a costume, but white doesn’t suit you at all.” I rubbed my chin as if thinking “Maybe black will do. Yeah, that’s right. Do you watch Sleeping Beauty? You could be the male version of Maleficent. You know, the evil witch.”

The boy was caught off guard. Probably not expecting me to talk back at him.

“I have no idea what half of the things she said were, but it was damn funny and insulting. Did she just call you an evil witch?” One of the twins teased and they started laughing, followed by red, and blondie, who covered his mouth with his fist.

“Shut up.” was all Ace said before giving me a cold glare that made me shiver. “I’m not a witch you ignorant plebeian.”

“Prince Ace. That is not what a proper gentleman would do. Here.” the blonde one offered me his hand. I took it and let him pull me up.

“Thanks,” I muttered. In response, he made a small curtsy that surprised me. This guy is either a gentleman or just a dedicated cosplayer.

The blonde boy smiled. “I’m Prince Frederick Star from the kingdom of Hazel. What about you?”

Well, a dedicated cosplayer indeed.

“M-my name is Rosalie Amber Stan. Somewhere in Georgia.” Did I just stutter? I’m probably nervous since this is the first time that I’m talking to a guy. A hot one at that. Or maybe, because I am still confused as to how I got myself into this situation.

“Lovely name.” With that, he brought my hand to his lips. The gesture made me whimper and feel a little embarra**ed – for them that is. But did he just say kingdom? Wow, these guys are taking their cosplaying seriously.

“Allow me to introduce you to my companions, Lady Rose-”

“Please just call me Rose,” I said. I’m not comfortable with the ‘lady’ part since I hardly resemble a lady at all.

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“As you wish, Rose.” He said, then he gestured at the redhead, who took a step forward. “He is Prince Nathaniel Denver, from the kingdom of Vertex.” Prince Nathaniel bowed. “Please call me Nate if you wish.”

“Nice to meet you.”

“And the-” he gestured to the twins but was stopped by them.

“Fred,” said one of the twins. “We want to be introduced last.” continued the other.

These guys are embarra**ing.

“Very well,” Fred nodded and gestured to the prince, who I already started to dislike. “This here is Prince Ace Feradin from the Kingdom of Tordis. Please forgive him for his rudeness earlier.” Instead of bowing, prince Ace nodded his head once. “By the way, that’s PRINCE Ace for YOU”

“Of course, your highness.” I forced a smile and couldn’t help but add. “Royal pain.”

“Pardon?”

“Nothing”

“And finally,” Prince Frederick continued and gestured to the twins. “The twins. Um...gentlemen, will you please introduce yourselves since I couldn’t distinguish you from one another.” Prince Frederick gave an apologetic smile to them.

The twins faced me and offered me a smile. “My name is Renevier Rutledge, this here-” he gestured to his twin “-is my brother Daniel Rutledge.” His brother, Daniel, continued for him “We are from the Kingdom of Sanver.”

I clapped my hands after. Wow, these guys are good. Solid performances. I should ask them for their skincare routine since they all have flawless skin. “Nice to meet you.”

“By the way, Rose. Are you acquainted with Queen Elizabeth?”

“Queen who?” After I said that, we heard a galloping sound from a horse. A black stallion appeared and its rider was surprisingly a female. Her eyes had immediately found mine and she grinned brightly. She got off of the horse and hugged me. I was slightly taken aback. When she stopped hugging me, that’s when I saw it. Blonde hair, blue eyes.

My jaw dropped and I pointed an accusing finger at her. She’s the weird lady I saw before pa**ing out! “HEY!–”

She covered my mouth with her palm. “No need for that dear. Okay?”

“Your highness.” From behind her, the five princes were on one of their knees.

What is happening?

Chapter 4 Queen Elizabeth from Another World

“Rise,” she commanded. As she had ordered, the princes had risen to their feet. “I see you’ve met my niece. Princess Rose.”

“Who are you calling your-” Before I could finish my sentence, her foot collided with mine. Since she was wearing heels, it made the pain twice as painful.

I gritted my teeth together to prevent myself from screaming as I jumped on one foot while clutching my injured one. “What the fu-!” She stomped on my other foot, which made me switch to the other one. What is her problem?!

“Oh, what was that, my DEAR niece??” The girl faced me again, but this time with an annoyed face that meant ‘just-play-along’.

I swallowed. “Nothing, aunt-”

“Elizabeth,” she whispered to me

“-Elizabeth” I mumbled.

“Good.” She once again faced the princes, who were standing there patiently. “Gentlemen, my niece here will be staying with us and I want you boys to be kind to her. Teach her how to act like a proper lady-”

“Hey!”

“-and teach her some manners. If you impress her, she might pick you to be the next king of my kingdom.”

“What do you mean?” I asked. I was really confused. They were in a conversation where I wasn’t in. Pick a king? What’s this all about? “Sorry but I am not into cosplay/roleplay so please count me out.”

“You see, my dear niece. Since it had been 20 years and my husband and I still haven’t conceived a child-”

“Wait, 20 years!? Your role is an old hag? But you don’t look like one.”

The corner of her mouth twitched “I’m going to pretend that I didn’t hear that comment about an old hag, but thank you. You see, I’m a Fae. As in a fairy. Two human years mean 1 year for us. I’m 60 yrs old in human years. In other words, I’m only 30.” She whispered in my ear.

A fairy? Is she crazy or something?

“Y-you’re a.....”

“Fairy? Yep”

I backed away. “Get out of here.”

“Nothing is impossible in this world, my dear.”

In this world? I looked around me. We were on a vacant landscape. Tall trees stood behind us. Judging from its height, I can tell that I’m not in my city anymore. But how could this happen? I mean, novels about people being transported into another world are common these days, but that’s not what happened to me, right?

I mean, I haven’t been hit by a truck. And I am sure that I haven’t been reincarnated either.

She let out a sigh. “Look. I can tell that you are...a bit confused so I will explain everything later, okay?” She turned to the boys who were laughing but stopped when they saw her highness glaring at them. “She doesn’t go out much. She’s ignorant so please take care of her.” The queen said to them.

“Yes, your highness,” they said in unison.

“Good,” she turned her attention back to me “As I was saying. Since we don’t have an heir to our Kingdom, my husband and I decided to pick one of the princes from other kingdoms. As for the candidates, we have chosen the youngest sons of each kingdom and would give them a test to see who is fit to be king.”

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“And where do I fit in?” I crossed my arm over my chest. My mind is a mess right now. As of the moment, I believe that I am either kidnapped or in a weird dream.

“You, my dear, will be going to help us to decide that. You will pick a king.”

“Say what now?”

“I’m not going to repeat it since I know that you have heard me.”

“Fine! You want me to decide?! Nate!” I pointed to prince Nathaniel if I remember correctly. He was slightly taken aback and a confused expression was replaced.

“Do you want to be a king?”

“I...uh....Yes?” He said. Unsure of his answer. It made me wonder if the expression on my face had forced him to say yes.

“Good. Then you’ll be the king.”

“What!? But that’s not how you decide it!” PRINCE Ace said.

“Fine! Then you’re the king too.” I said.

“What!? You can’t have more than one king!”

“Gentlemen, please. Let us all just talk about it.” Prince Frederick tried to calm us down.

“Oh, prince Fred, you can be a king too,” I stated.

“Uhm...”

“Hey, no fair. We wanna be king too!” The twins said.

“Fine! You’re all kings! In fact, we ALL can be kings!!”

“Yay!”

“No!”

“This is ridiculous!”

“Is that even possible?”

“Hold it!!!” The queen shouted. She probably didn’t agree with my decision. Her head snapped in my direction and I winced under her gaze.

“You must take this seriously!”

“But why me?” I whined. She could have chosen other girls right? I don’t even do my homework properly and they expect me to pick a king in their play?

“Well, you’re the only girl who wasn’t drooling at their photos during the release of the game.” She lowered her voice so that only I could hear. I’m guessing that the princes don’t know this yet. But no wonder they look familiar. They were the models for that dating simulation game.

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My eyes widened at the mention of that stupid game at the store. That crap’? “How did you-”

“I was the old woman who gave you the charm.” She explained. I stared at her long and hard. Trying to find any resemblance of her to the old lady that I help back at the mall. That is so not possible!! She looks young!

Or did she.....?

“Listen,” I held my hand up to her. ” I know that you needed my help, but I’m very busy and my parents are probably worried about me. Besides, I have no interest or whatsoever in choosing a prince. I want to spend this summer sleeping and eating.”

“You can do that here. You’ll have tons of fun.” Insisted the queen.

“No. My parents might be worried about me right now. I must be going.” Then I took a step back and looked around again. “And how can you expect me to have fun when there is no WiFi!?” I whimpered.

“No.”

“What do you mean no?”

“It means that you are staying.”

“Did you just hear what I said?”

“Yes. Don’t worry! Just trust me. And your sister will be fine. I swear on my name.” With that, she turned on her heels and turned to the boys to talk to them about my ‘behavior issues’.

Trust her? When she’s the one who probably brought me to this place?

I’ll make sure to find a way to get back. For some reason, I know that I am not Georgia now and only the queen knows where we are. Maybe if I annoy her, she’ll send me back? I don’t have a problem with that.

That or she could murder me instead.

Wait, what about that charm that I made a wish from? Maybe it’s the key? Maybe if I can find it, then I will be free from here. Yes, maybe that’s it! All I have to do is to look for it. But where? If my hunch is right, maybe it’s with the queen? After all, she was the one who gave me the charm.

Feeling something hard in my short pocket, I pulled it out only to find that it was my phone.

I turned my back to them and checked to see if I could get a signal. Nope. No signal. No internet.

“Damn this other world bullcrap. Why can’t I be transported to a world with wifi!?” I cried.

“What happened?” Asked prince Frederick.

I grumbled “Nothing.”

“Gentlemen!” We finally turned towards the queen who seemed to be yelling at us. When she saw us turning our attention to her she let out a sigh of relief. “I want you boys to take the carriage here and prepare the horses. It’s time to go back.”

Without any hesitation, they went down the gra**y path to prepare the carriage that I hadn't noticed.

The queen approached me.

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“So I guess that I have no choice but to come?” I asked.

“Yep.”

“I still do not understand this situation,” I said honestly. The back of my head is starting to hurt.

“You did wish for this, right?” She let out a grin.

“That was a joke! I didn't even know what I was thinking.” Because of my frustration, I yelled.

“Even if you knew it was magical you're still coming here”

“But I thought that you said that the charm will grant me any wish that I desire, right? How can you be sure that I would wish this? Have you read my mind?” I protectively covered my head in case she'll read them.

“No.” she placed a hand on her hip.

“Then how?”

“Well, the item I gave you is magical for the Faes, humans can't go to this world unless they use that item and wish for it. But even if you didn't exactly wish to be here, you'll still be coming here.”

“You lost me there. And can we please speak in human terms? Like you kidnap me and throw me in a van. We sailed across the sea to an uninhabited island?”

“It seems that your mind still doesn't welcome the ideas of supernatural beings.” She chuckled. “Wishes can be altered, morphed. If you wish to have lots of money, then I will bring you here and you'll have tons of gold money. If you wish for more clothes, then I'll still bring you here and give you plenty of dresses. If you wish for a certain person to love you, then I'll give you something better from here, a prince.”

“Why you.....” It finally started to make sense. I had no choice in the first place!

“But turns out you wished for something better! Wishing that you’ll end up here! It made my task easier.” She then let out a Santa-like laugh.

Just like what people would say, ‘be careful what you wish for’.

“Say that I am playing along and believing what you just said. What was the purpose of that dating game that was just released?”

“It was an illusion that I made.”

“What do you mean?”

“It will be my basis in looking for the perfect girl who would be helping me choose for the future king. You see, if I will pick one of those girls who’s crazy with those games, then the princes can just use their looks to their advantage. It will be disastrous”

“I don’t even think that I’m the only one who isn’t interested in that stupid game.”

“True, but you were the only one who pa**ed the second test.”

I raised an eyebrow at her “What do you mean a second test?”

“Helping an old woman in need has proven your qualification. We all need a kind lady.” Then she winked.

Chapter 5 Other World Travel

“Your highness, The carriage is ready!” One of the twins approached us. I wanted to argue more but for now, I have to learn more about this world. I need to a**ess my situation first, how I got here and how I can go back.

“Thank you.” she nodded her head at the twin and hurried off. The twin-faced me and offered me his arm. I took it and let him guide me. “I don’t want to be rude but which twin are you?” Instead of becoming irritated like I thought he would be, he smiled but it didn’t reach his eyes. “I’m Renevier. But you can call me Ren. If you can recognize me that is.”

“Sorry. It must be hard for you two to be mistaken for each other.” I turned my gaze to the ground.

“Oh, no need to be worried. My brother and I have gotten used to that. It’s just that it would have been nice if someone can tell us apart.” When he said that, his gaze was turned to the clouds above. It must really be lonely if only the both of them can tell each other who is who. Maybe even their parents can’t tell them apart. What would have happened if they had gotten married? Would their wife mistake them for the other person?

That’s complicated. Even though they could be potential accomplices of Elizabeth, I couldn’t help but feel sorry for him. “Don’t worry. I’m sure that one way or another, someone might be able to distinguish you.” It might be hard since they act and look like one another though.

He was a bit surprised at what I said. A second later he laughed and shook his head. “Thanks, but I don’t think anyone could do that.”

“And why not? You’re both individuals even though your twins.” I said. “But not that I’m saying that we’re close for me to know that. I’m just probably a**uming things...” He didn’t answer but he did offer me a smile and not since were now with the others.

He led me to the carriage and helped me up before closing it. The carriage was huge. The outside was white with some gold details on it. Two white horses are leading. Inside, I was met by the smell of daisies. The chairs were a rich velvet color. It was soft. Red curtains were also hung in case you want some privacy or to protect yourselves from the rays of the sun.

From the window. I can see that the twins were driving the carriage while the rest of the princes were riding their own horses. Even the queen is riding her own. Looking at them actually made me feel like I really am in a different world.

These damn other world travels may not be all bad after all...

I opened the window near the twins. “Um... The queen isn’t riding with me?” I ask.

They just laughed. “The queen is a free-willed woman. She loves adventures and wouldn’t sit around and be pampered.” From the way that the other twin was behaving, I’m guessing that the one who I’m talking to right now is Dan.

“Thank you, Dan,” I said. I smiled to myself when I saw the surprised look on their faces. I’m guessing that I got the name right. Dan faced his brother with a confused look. I smiled before closing the window.

Even though I said the carriage was huge, I still have to squeeze my way to the seat since there are some baskets piled in here. What are these? Props?

The carriage started to move. It was rocky at first but after a while, it began to steady. I peeked out of the curtain to see that we had just arrived in a village. People were milling every store. When they saw us, they bowed their heads in respect. Some would wave at us. They seemed to be loved by the people, I thought.

Wait. Hold on. This can’t be right. If there’s a village over here then this isn’t a simple roleplay. This might actually be real. Was I taken to an old country where princes and princesses exist? How long was I actually pa**ed out?

The carriage came to a stop and I almost bumped my head onto the wall. Aren’t there any seatbelts in here?!

The door swung open and the twins appeared. “The queen wishes for you to come out,” Ren said. I don’t know how I know that it is him. Maybe because of the tone of his voice.

“Why?” I asked.

Dan grinned “Well, we have new luggage here. Well, all of them are the dresses that the queen has bought for you.”

Then I realized what he meant. If we add more stuff in here then I might as well be squished. “How many are they?” If it’s only 2 then I can handle it. Besides, where will I ride?

“About 20”

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“20?!” I gasped.

“Yes, the queen seemed pretty excited.”

“Stupid Queen and her stupid plan and her stupid dresses,” I grumbled. She could have bought me their version of a smartphone here. “Where will I sit?” I asked.

“Well...that’s for the queen to decide.”

Reluctantly, I got out while groaning. I can’t believe this. This is the only carriage, meaning I have to ride a horse. Don’t get me wrong, I love horses. The problem is that we don’t have a spare one, meaning I might ride at the top of the carriage. What a bummer! But at least I’ll have a nice view from there, right?

“Rose.” The queen called me. I lifted my head to hers and raised one of my eyebrows. “What?” I snapped.

“To whom would you like to ride?” She gestured her hands to the princes. What does she mean by that? Does it mean that I have to ride with some total strangers?..... Well, it’s too late since all of them are strangers. I’m surprised that I haven’t panicked yet.

I said yet.

I shook my head “Is that even a question? Can’t I ride with you?”

She smirked. “Sorry, dear. It’s too dangerous if you ride with me. And besides, I like to ride alone. So, go on. Pick!”

I have to stop myself from flipping her off. My eyes darted to the 3 princes who are on their horses. It seems cliché. She’s doing this on purpose!

Prince Fred noticed my distress and got off his horse. “Princess Rose, you can take my horse. I can walk on my own.” He offered me the horse. “I’ll just lead it for you.” He nodded his head and brought out that smile of his. The girls from this village squealed. I couldn’t blame them, this Fred guy is charming.

The queen huffed. “I guess that could work. Oh well. I’m going on ahead. Please watch over her. I’m going to arrange for dinner and tell the servants to prepare her room. Tomoda loo” with that, she was off. Riding her horse so fast that I was the one who shivered.

I really want to flip her off and scream bloody murder.

I let Prince Fred help me on the horse. He grabbed my waist and hauled me up and gave me the reins. "Are you comfortable enough?" He asked.

"Yes, I guess. Thanks." I nodded my head once to let him know my appreciation. I looked at the pretty boy and gave him an unsure smile.

Seeing that I am all secured on the horse, we started to ride again. Prince Fred guiding my horse.

People started to stare at me. Well, in my clothes that is. I forgot that I was still wearing shorts and a tank top, while the girls in this village are wearing dresses. In return, I glared at them. I wanted to scream that their queen brought me here. If they have a problem with me, they better bark at their queen.

And now with the gossiping. It seems that wherever I go, the gossip never stops. Some guys were even staring at my exposed legs that I showed them my middle finger. I heard a horse snorting beside me. It was Prince Nate riding his horse. He started to untie his cape and offered it to me.

"Here," he said. "It would give you some cover."

"Thanks." Not looking away from his face, I took it and wrapped it around me.

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He scratched his head as if he was embarrassed. "We figured that it was rude to say something about what other people would wear. Sorry, next time we'll give you a warning."

"It's Fine," I said and focused on my surroundings. Not like it really bothered me anyway. I saw the girls giving me a jealous look as they eyed the cape that I wore around me. Being the petty little brat that I am, I gave them all a teasing grin and waved the cape at them victoriously. I smirked wider as I saw the bitterness in their eyes.

"And besides," he added, which made me turn my attention to him once again. "It looks good on you. It should be a crime to cover it up." he finished with a wink.

When I scowled at his comment he laughed.

"I'm sorry." Prince Nate while laughing. I didn't respond.

“That’s what you get for disrespecting a lady, Prince Nate,” Prince Fred said. His face told me that he had witnessed the exchange a while ago and was amused by it.

“I was just trying to lighten the mood.” He pouted.

“A simple conversation would have been okay.”

“Okay, okay. I’m really sorry. Forgive me?” He made his eyes grow bigger, he pouted and showed his lower lip.

I groaned “I guess.” I hope they stop talking.

“Hey, you guys seem to have fun over there, let us join too!” One of the twins called from the carriage.

“Keep your voice down. Remember, we’re still in the village so we must be in proper behavior.” PRINCE Ace cut in. He sat on his horse with his back straight. He rode beside Nate.

“Sheesh! Live your youth once in a while, Ace. You’re too stiff!” Ren shouted back.

“Join us in our conversation, Prince Ace.” inserted Prince Fred.

“I’m just saying that a good image is important. It will help you to gain respect from the people.” PRINCE Ace’s attention turned to me. “You seemed like the person who doesn’t care about it. Look at the way you dress, it’s humiliating to the people around you. And to think that she’s a princess. Teaching her to act like a lady will be a pain. It’s not worth our time.”

I frowned at him. It’s not like I know their dress code here. And I’m not even a princess! I’m not even gonna cry about it, but he’s now on my naughty list. Is he picking a fight with me?

“Hey, Ace. Now that has gone too far” Prince Nate warned.

“Princess Rose, don’t mind him. He’s had a rough day.” Prince Fred tried to comfort me.

“He’s right, princess. Don’t mind him. He’s the one that’s not worth your time.” Said Dan.

“What’s your problem anyway, Ace? She didn’t do anything to deserve that kind of att**ude!” Ren couldn’t help but yell. The dark-haired prince and I met gazes. I smirked and stuck my tongue out at him.

Five of us against him. Sad boy.

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“Talk to her all you want, but don’t drag me in it.” PRINCE Ace said. “Disgusting woman. I bet you’re having a good time with all the attention that they are giving you.”

Disgusting? If he thinks that he can just step on me then he is so wrong. Nobody can call me disgusting just because of what I wear. We are beyond that time already!!

Or are we? What year is it in this world?

“Stop the car! I mean horse!” I said and unconsciously pulled the reins up. Prince Fred barely managed to stop as well. Then I pointed at him. “Who are you to even judge me? You don’t even know me. Did you think that just because you met me a while ago that you already know who I am? You think so highly of respect.” I said “Respect is earned not bought. I don’t care if you are a prince or not, but if you don’t respect me then you don’t deserve my respect either.”

He didn’t say anything anymore. Thankfully.

Prince Fred once again guided my horse to the same path we took earlier while Prince Nate shook his head at PRINCE Ace.

“Congrats, Princess. It was probably the first scolding he has received in public.” Dan gave me a thumbs up.

“It was?! Oh no.” I said sarcastically. I even waved my hands as I dismissed the thought.

“Don’t worry. We’re on your side in this. He did deserve a slap or two.” Ren a**ured me.

“And we’ll protect you if he attempts to kill you. I’ll be your knight in shining armor, Princess” Prince Nate appeared beside me.

“What are you blabbering about being her knight in shining armor?”

“I’m just trying to ease her worry. And as for the knight in shining armor role, it fits me well since I did offer her my cape and saved her from those corrupted eyes of our people.” Nate stated.

“Well if you’re the knight, then I’m her Prince Charming.” Prince Fred winked. I couldn’t agree more with pretty boy. He’s pretty much the most decent one among them.

“Hey! Now, what does that leave the two of us?” The twins yelled.

“Her servants, of course.” Nate was still grinning. I didn’t notice it but I started to laugh. Somehow, my worries had faded into thin air.

“Hey look. She’s laughing!” Dan said, relieved.

“No, I’m crying,” I said sarcastically.

“Glad to see her smiling now,” Nate said.

We just talked and joked throughout the ride. Prince Ace was riding behind us. Not talking which I was grateful for.

“Oh look. We’re here.” Ren announced and I suddenly realized that we had stopped.

I focused my attention on the castle in front of us. It was a huge castle. Stones lead the way to the castle. In front of it was a fountain. Two stairs lead to one door. All around us is a garden. To the left is a large pavilion. To the right is another pathway to the stables. The castle stood high and mighty.

Chapter 6 Thalia

At the entrance of the castle stood the queen and the servants, probably waiting for our arrival. I saw a man, maybe in his 40’s, standing beside the queen. I’m guessing it’s the king. Is that her king?

“Like it?” Prince Nate asked beside me as I marveled at the place.

“Uh hu.” I just nodded my head. “Are we gonna stay here?” I asked.

Dan got off the carriage. “Yep. Welcome to the Kingdom of Thalia.” Just as he said that Ren added. “The kingdom of magic.”

Yea right. It does look magical.

I’m in love. For a brief moment, I even thought about wanting to live here. I raised a hand and slapped myself.

No. I shouldn’t be blinded by the fanciness of the place.

“Here, let me help you down.” Prince Fred said and helped me down on my feet. They guided me through the stone floor and up to the door.

“So, how do you find your NEW home?” The queen asked. A smile tugging on her lips when I didn’t answer and instead, surveyed the surrounding with my eyes.

“I-” I started but the queen cut me off.

“Never mind. Dinner’s almost ready. We have to dress you up. Ladies,” the queen snapped her finger to the servants. “Bring her to her room and dress her up for dinner.”

“Yes, my queen.” The servants said at the same time.

When she said dress, that’s when the spell of the castle broke. “Wait,” I took a step back and almost fell off the stairs if Ren hadn’t caught me. He helped me set my footing again. “What do you mean by getting DRESS?!?!?”

The Queen and the servants had evil looks on their faces. I gulped. I don’t mind wearing shorts, but dresses are a different story.

“When you said dress, you didn’t mean.....” I trailed off, knowing that the queen fully understood what I was about to say.

“Oh yes.” With a single motion of the queen’s hand, the servants tried to grab me, but I was fast.

I hid behind Ren since he was near me and used him as a wall between the servants. Since there were at least 5 of them, they got past Ren easily. A servant grabbed my cape and pulled it. I almost choked, but I untie it and the servant fell.

“No!”

I ran to Nate next and hid behind him. “Sir Nate, you said that you were my knight in shining armor, right? Then do something and save me!!”

Nate had an amused look on his face. “As you wish, princess.” He caught me off guard when he carried me bridal style. “I’ll save you from the eyes of these men by giving you to these ladies to be dressed PROPERLY.”

“What?!”

Instead of answering, he just winked and approached the servants.

“Oh Prince Nathaniel, thank you!” The girls sighed dreamily.

I flail wildly “Traitor!” I accused.

He pretended to be hurt by putting a hand to his heart. “My love, how you broke my heart.”

“Look! A pretty lady.” I pointed behind him.

“Where?!— Umf!” When he looked behind him, I took the chance to get away but not before stomping on his foot. Serves him right.

I ran to Prince Fred next. “Prince Fred! You said that you’re my Prince Charming, right? Help me!”

Prince Fred smiled. “Yes, Princess. I am your Prince Charming”

I sighed in relief.

“And Prince Charming would like to see his Princess in a dress.” With that, he grabbed my arm.

I squeaked and elbowed him. “Umf!” He released his hold.

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I grabbed Dan and Ren next. “As my servants, I order you to protect me!”

“What do you think Ren?” Dan asked his brother.

“I don’t know. But I do want to see her in a dress.” Ren said.

“You know? You’re right. It might be interesting.” With that said. The two took hold of my arm and pushed me to the servants. “Traitors!” I yelled as the servants took me away. When I looked behind me, I saw them waving at me with a smile on their faces.

b****s, I’ll get you guys for this. And here I thought we all formed a mutual sense of respect for one another!

The servants lead me to a room on the second floor. They brought me to a rather large room with a twin-size bed with curtains falling from it. The floor was made of the red carpet. There was also a door that leads to a terrace. There was a large closet on the far side of the wall facing my bed.

A vanity table was beside it.

The servants locked the door and pushed me into the bathroom and cleaned me until the dirt and the smell of horses were gone.

Once I was done, I was wrapped in a bathrobe and was asked to sit on the bed while they shuffled the bag full of dresses, probably the one that the queen bought earlier. While they were busy shuffling for dresses, I grabbed my fallen shorts and tank and folded them neatly, and hid them under my pillow. In case of emergency.

They finally brought out a floor-length gown.

It was sky blue with ruffles on the neck. It was long-sleeved which made me hate it even more since I know that it’ll be hot.

“No,” I said.

“Princess you have to wear this.” said the servant who was holding the dress.

I ignored the Princess t**le. “Make me!” I challenge myself.

She sighed. “Girls, you know what to do.” The servants approached me and suddenly I was cornered on my bed.

“Mommy?” I whimpered

They won this time. They had managed to make me wear the dress. But I swear if they didn't gang up on me, I could have taken them. They also made me wear heels, but I don't mind though. The heels were only an inch or two tall.

"Time for your hair and makeup!"

"What?! Look, I agreed-" I started but was cut off.

"-forced" corrected the servant.

"-to wear this dress and these shoes, but don't make me wear those make-up!"

"Princess, you have to. Every princess should be presentable every time!"

"I said no!"

The door swung open and the queen came in and closed the door behind her.

"What's going on here?"

"My Lady, she-"

"I'm not wearing it!" I pointed to the table where the makeup was set.

The queen sighed. "It's just make-up, dear." She approached the table and grabbed the face powder and brush. "Come here."

"Get. Away. From. Me" I warned. Either she didn't hear it or she was stubborn.

"It'll be quick" she promised and took another step closer. I grabbed one of my shoes and raised it in the air like a sword. "You have to get through me first."

"Fine." She pointed her finger at a chair and a ribbon. They began to float in the air and tied me to the chair. "What the hell was that!? What is happening!?"

Things floated in the air!

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"You didn't say that I couldn't use magic, right?"

"Girl, who cares!? Do it again?" I was being silly right now for being attracted to her magic show. If I could clap then I would have already.

“No. We need to get ready.”

5 minutes later, there was make-up on my face. They were kind enough to make it light. Now, there was a rosy blush on my cheek, brown eyeshadow was applied, and n*** pink lipstick. My hair was in a neat bun with loose curls to the side.

“There, now don’t you look CIVILIZE?” The queen teased.

I glared at her and forgot the fact that I just saw things floating. I did not have the energy to do anything else. My mind is becoming a mess. I bit my lips unconsciously.

“Don’t do that. You’ll eat your lipstick.” She grabbed my arm and hauled me up. “Enough, we have wasted a good 5 minutes. We should go. Now”

“It was your fault for wasting those five minutes. If only you didn’t busy yourself with applying to make up on me then we could have gotten there earlier.” I grumbled. “Stupid another world, stupid makeups, stupid castle, and stupid dresses.”

“Well, if only you’d cooperate then we could have gotten there earlier, no?”

“Whatever.” I let it slide since I was hungry. Seriously, do princesses need to look like this every day? What a pain.

As we were going down the stairs. I saw that the princes were also dressed nicely. The twins were wearing blue long-sleeved shirts and pants. There are some kinds of gold patches on their shoulders. Nate was well suited with his maroon-colored tuxedo with a white shirt underneath. At the back, his red tux formed a ‘W’. Ace was dressed in black, which made me wonder if he took my advice. It was b***oned down with gold lines going down vertically. Fred was dressed opposite Ace. He looked good with white. It made his hair even lighter. There were also gold lines that designed his long-sleeved b***on-down attire. He looks good. Their eyes were focused on us once we were halfway down the stairs. The four of them smiled while Ace just stared at me with a blank expression.

Once we reached the end of the stairs, Nate approached and nodded at the queen. “Wow!” He exclaimed while looking at me. “This is not good for my heart.”

“Why?” I wondered. A little worried that he may have heart problems.

“You’re too cute.” he winked at me.

“I feel like my hand might slip and I’ll punch someone,” I said sweetly.

The twins got in between us and glared at Nate. “You’ve been taking advantage of our princess now, Nate.”

I gapped at them. Our princess!?

Ren on the other hand faces me. A soft smile on his lips. “You look beautiful today, Princess. I was glad that we handed you over to the servants.” He winked just like Nate. Are they all flirt?

I snapped my fingers. “Which reminds me,” I said and pulled Ren’s ear. “This is your punishment for handing me to the enemy earlier!”

“Ow! Why am I the only one punished?!” Ren whined.

“Cause you’re the one who reminded me,” I said with a deadpan expression.

“Sorry. Remind me to never remind you again. Okay?”

“If I do that then I am basically reminding myself.”

Prince Fred approached me next. “You look more beautiful than this morning. The dress suits you well.” He complimented me.

Am I seeing things? Or is he beginning to sparkle? Very lightly, I waved at the air around us to shoo the pesky sparkles away. Nope. Still there.

“Aw, come on, Fred. Stop using your charms on her.” Dan pouted.

“Enough with the chit-chat. Let’s eat.” The queen walked to the table and sat on the seat beside the King. Prince Ren pulled my seat for me, which was really sweet.

I sat between Ren and Dan while the beast(Ace) sat in front of me. So it was a glaring contest between us. Nate sat beside Ren while Fred sat beside Ace. The food was served. It seemed that our menu for today is mash potato and chicken with tons of gravy and ribs.

After saying a silent prayer I was about to dig in when I had a little problem. A pile of sp***s of all sizes was lined up beside me. Great, which utensil should I use now?

I peeked at Prince Fred and saw him using the fork in the middle of the set of eating utensils.

Just as I was about to reach it. Ren stopped me and took a table napkin that I didn't notice right beside my plate and placed it on my lap.

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“You should always place it there in case you'll drop something and ruin your dress.” He said politely.

“Thank you,” I said and started to cut the meat but it was too hard. When I tried to force it to tear, a piece of meat went flying and onto Ace's plate. He was surprised by the magical meat and searched for the culprit.

Oops

I gently placed the knife and fork down and pretended to be interested in my surroundings. Beside me, I heard Prince Dan chuckle softly. Glad to see him amused.

“Here, let me help.” He grabbed my knife and fork and he cut the meat into smaller pieces.

After finishing cutting the meat, he proceeded to eat his dinner. “Thanks” I whispered to him. It was embarra**ing how I seem to be the only one with poor table manners.

Ren though decided to tease me by getting my sp*** and feeding me a sp*** full of mashed potato. “Here baby, say ahhh.”

“Knock it off.” Even though I was offended by that gesture, I chuckled. “I'm not a child.”

“She's right, Ren,” Nate added. “She's not a baby, she's a BABE” he added with a wink.

Hang on my dear sweet fist. Please do not punch him.

“Rose dear,” the queen called. I snap my attention to her. She was beaming when she gestured to the King. “This here is your ‘uncle’ Luke.” The king smiled at me. “Well, it’s so nice to finally meet you, my dear.” He said and dab the napkin through his stubble.

“Sup, ‘uncle’.” That was all I said. So the King is also a part of this...

“My, you need a lot of work Rose.” The queen clicked her tongue and eyed my messy plate. I frowned and formed a protective circle around my plate.

“Dan could help you with the proper table etiquette, but I prefer Nate to help you with that.” She looked at Nate for his approval.

Nate nodded his head. “I’d be happy to.”

“As for your dance lessons, I would like to ask this favor of you, Prince Fred.”

“Of course, your Grace.”

“Say what?!” I exclaimed. “Why do I need dance lessons for?!” I asked and shoved another slice of meat into my mouth. This is delicious!

“Every princess must know how to dance,” she said.

“Nu-uh!” I said stubbornly.

She tsked again “Oh we better do something about that language of yours. Ren, Dan, I would like you to teach her how to behave like one, okay?”

“Yes, your highness,” the twins said at the same time. I was uncertain by the queen’s choice. I mean, the twins? Teaching me about behavior??

Even though my mouth was full of meat, I still laughed. Really? The twins? If I know better, we’re like the three stooges.

The queen must have noticed my uneasiness. “Don’t worry, Rose. Even though they don’t behave well in front of us, they are well mannered when it comes to guessing.” She a**ured me.

“As for the history and the background of this kingdom, I would like to ask this of you, Ace.”

No...

“Yes, your grace.” From the way he said it, he wasn’t as happy about it as me.

“Well, now that it’s settled,” the queen grabbed her fork and knife. “Let’s eat!!”

After dinner, we all went in our separate ways. The servants guided me to my room. The princes could have e*****ed me, but the queen told(ORDERED) them to rest.

I was too happy for the day to be over that I didn’t even think about changing. I yawned loudly before I lay down on the bed. As I fell asleep, I dreamed of another castle.

A castle that was smaller and different from this one. One where the people were walking alongside with animals.

Chapter 7 It’s Not A Dream

I woke up feeling heavy and hot. My face felt sloppy so I wiped the back of my hand across my face. When I brought it back I saw a hint of makeup. I cursed when I remembered that I had slept with both the dress and the makeup on. I also noticed that I was in a foreign room. I panicked and threw the covers away.

Great, so it wasn’t a dream after all.

What are my parents doing right now? Are they worried? Did they call the police or even a search party? What about my friend Jen? Is she worried? Did they think that I ran away?

I really wished that this was a dream. The time when I helped that old woman outside of the store, I didn’t expect that this would be my reward for being a Good Samaritan. I just have the worst luck in the world.

I hauled myself up using my elbows and groaned in pain as I felt a sting on my neck. I guess I slept on the wrong side of the bed.

I did a little stretch. It felt good to the muscles. I walked to my balcony gla** door and separated the curtains that covered it. Quickly, the early morning light brushed my skin giving me a welcoming heat, and quickly brightened up the room. I opened the door and went to the balcony. It gave an overview of a gra**y land filled with different kinds of flowers with rich colors. I enjoyed the soothing fragrance that is provided. It helped me to gather my thoughts.

I wonder if there's some sort of key out of this world. Perhaps I could ask the Queen about that later.

Once I was thought, I decided to go and take a shower first since I probably look horrible with the makeup still on. With each step, I took it felt so weird. Maybe this is how it feels when you're not used to the place you are in.

“Good morning, Princess.” I jumped as soon as I noticed a maid standing by my bed.

My jaw dropped and I pointed a finger at her. “H-How long have you been there? Why didn't I notice you?”

She said nothing and clapped her hand. Immediately, more maids entered the room and a**isted me to the bathroom just like yesterday. The bathroom was huge. It was white and the floors were tiled. I took a dip, actually, they tossed me for being uncooperative, in the lavender-filled tub and quickly relaxed at the wariness of the water.

Surely someone had filled this before I could have awoken since everything here was already prepared. From the tub to the shampoos and towels. I wish I had a rubber ducky, not that I ever had one.

I spent the rest of my 30 minutes there, playing with the bubbles since I was bored. None of the maids were willing to talk to me and were busy scrubbing my back. Once we were done, they wrapped me in a bathrobe.

On my bed, I saw a yellow dress laid out. Its sleeve was a little puffy on the shoulder and the rest of it was elegantly straight up to the wrist. It was made of smooth material. It was long but I don't think it's that long that it'll reach the bottom. I glared at it murderously.

On top of it was a note. The handwriting was in a neat cursive form.

Hello there my little niece!

I have prepared a dress for you! Isn't it cute?! You should be thankful.

~Elizabeth

I stared at the note in disbelief. This Queen is crazy if she thinks that I'll thank her for a dress!!

Well, I don't have to worry about the dress since I do have my clothes from yesterday. Good thing that I hid it so I would have a backup. I don't even care if it stinks or not. I'll just pour some perfume on it.

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Throwing the note aside. I reached for the pillow where I had hidden my clothes from yesterday. When I lifted the pillow I didn't see my clothes but instead, I saw another note.

Frowning, I read it.

If you honestly think that I would allow you to wear these then think again. You're wearing that dress and that's final.

I crumpled the note in my hand. I can't believe this! It was the only backup clothing I have! And she added an insult at the end!

Out of anger I kicked the side of the bed and winced in pain as my foot collided with the hardwood. "Urgh!" I growled in frustration. Not only was my clothes stolen but my feet hurt.

She plays this game well.

Now I have no choice but to put the dress on. It wasn't horrible or anything. In fact, it fits me well and was comfortable to move with, but I'm still against wearing these kinds of clothing. I found my ballet flats under the bed. I was thankful that the Queen didn't take them.

The maids helped me put the dress on and guided me out of my room for breakfast.

As I was making my way to the door, I found yet another note. What is with her and notes?!

I plucked it out and read it. Already guessing that it was bad news since the two notes before gave me nothing but depression. And I was right.

Your training with the Princes starts today. They will plan your schedule by the way. Good luck and have fun.

“I hate the Queen.” I hissed under my breath as I crumpled the paper in my fist and threw it across the room. What is she blabbering about training? What is this? The military?

She didn’t say anything about this. Unless it was the training to become a princess?

We went out of my room and made our way to the kitchen. The castle was huge both from the outside and inside. The ceilings were high and lit by various and expensive-looking chandeliers. Thousands of rooms could fit hundreds of people.

You can easily get lost in this castle, but lucky for me that the maid was e*****ing me. I went inside the kitchen and was greeted by the more maids, who all don’t plan on telling me their names.

“Good morning, Princess.” One maid greeted me. I gave her a nod and greeted her back. Being called Princess was a little weird for me since I always act unlady-like. She led me to a table and served me my meal. My mouth watered at the sight of eggs, bacon, and bread.

“Princess, if you need anything. Just ask me.” She said.

“Why won’t any of the maids talk to me?” I asked. No response. “Okay never mind. Thank you.” I said.

She smiled and before she left she said, “Enjoy your breakfast, Princess.”

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I don’t really want to be called a Princess, but I guess I have no choice since the Queen insisted on it. It makes me wonder though. Why does she need someone like me to choose a Prince when she can just choose them by herself?

Somehow I have a feeling that there’s another reason why she brought me here. Well, according to the novels and some webtoons that I read, these ‘other world’

scenarios only happen when you're dead or reincarnated. Either way, the reason why the protagonists were taken were never revealed.

I dismissed the thought as I began to dig in my food. Literally. I don't want to waste good food by thinking of things that'll make my headache. I am not much of a thinker after all. The food was delicious even though it was so plain. Maybe I was hungry.

As I fed the last bite of my breakfast to my mouth, that's when I heard them. I tensed.

"Where do you think Princess Rose is?" I heard Fred asked.

"I don't know, maybe she's in her room?" This time, it was one of the twins.

"No, she's not in there. I checked." Prince Nate inserted.

"You went to her room?! Nate, we really have to keep a close eye on you in case you'll do something to our Princess." it was the other twin.

"Hey! Just because I love women doesn't mean that I'll take advantage of her! What do you take me for??" Nate defended. Obviously hurt.

"Get it over with. Let's just eat our breakfast and worry about it later." Ace said.

I stiffened. I suddenly remembered the queen saying something about my training and how the princes will decide a schedule for me. I don't know why but my gut tells me to hide.

I am not ready for this.

As their footsteps had gotten closer, I got up and hid behind the curtains, which was a stupid idea, but it is easier to make my way to the exit if I keep following it.

I heard chairs being pulled out and greetings from the maids were exchanged. I was about to leave when I heard them talking. Out of curiosity, I listened and peaked.

"You know, we were supposed to make a schedule for her training today." One of the twins said as he sliced his food. Even with his slightly wet hair he still looks stunning. Now I'm being a creep.

“True, we have to decide who will go first.” The other twin agreed and looked expectantly to his fellow Princes.

“I think I should go first since table manners are important,” Nate said while putting food inside his mouth.

“No way.” The twins said bluntly. Which made Nate choke on his food. He covered his mouth with his fist as he coughed and reached for a gla** of water. He took several sips from it before wiping his wet lips with a table napkin. Wow, fancy.

“Why not?” Nate whined while Fred chuckled. Nate looked at Fred with a disbelief expression on his face. “Fred, not you too.”

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Fred shrugged his shoulders. “Sorry, Nate. The twins do have a point. I’d say that I should go first since dancing is not a simple task.”

“I think it’s a good idea after we go first.” One of the twins said. When both Nate and Fred started to protest, Dan cut them off by adding, “Making her a Princess is a lot of work to do and dancing needs proper posture, which we will be teaching her. Right, Ace?”

“Yeah, okay.” Ace said as he placed a slice into his mouth. Not joining the conversation or much less cared. He was also reading a book.

“What? You’re not even gonna fight for a place, Ace? Hey! That rhymed!” one of the twins yelled earning an annoyed face from Ace before he swallowed his food.

“I don’t care if I go last. Fighting for it seems worthless and besides, we will still get our time teaching that pain in a b*** of a Princess.”

Why does this guy hate me so much?

“Better watch your words with her, Ace. The tongue is sharper than a weapon. Even though you didn’t hurt her physically, you can still hurt her emotionally.” Nate warned while the twins glared at him.

“Besides, Ace.” Fred added “She’s a girl. Very delicate with their feelings. I don’t even know what she had done to you to deserve your hate.”

I don't even know if I should feel insulted in this conversation or not. And most importantly, I don't even know why I am eavesdropping!

"So says the Princes." Ace mocked. "Fine, you don't have to repeat it. I got the point." I think Ace needs another slap with my foot

"Ignore him. Let's just do something progressive like making the schedule for the training. Any suggestions on how to make the sequence?"

"Oh, I know! Let's play a game." Nate suddenly suggested. All the attention was on him now. I was curious too so I leaned in a bit.

My dumb self even thought of joining.

"What game?" Fred asked slightly worried since it's Nate after all. The twins though, seemed pretty excited while Ace seemed busy eating and would occasionally raise his head to give them an annoyed look.

"Whoever catches the Princess first shall be the first one and can have the whole day with her tomorrow. The second can have the next day, so on and so forth."

"Fine by me." Fred leaned on his chair contentedly.

"Alright!" The twins shouted in glee.

I was leaning too much and I slipped. "Hick!" I suddenly blurted out. I quickly covered my mouth with my hand when I had realized what I had done. I just revealed my presence. All heads turned to me. I waved awkwardly. "H-hey. Good morning." I squeaked and got up. Slowly, I felt my way to the exit while keeping my gaze on them. "Lovely day! Sorry for disturbing you. Please continue with your fancy way of eating." I laughed nervously and grabbed a random vase to cover my face.

Chapter 8 Cat and Mice inside the Castle

"Good morning, Princess Rose." They said in unison. Now, why on Earth are they being creepy?

And...UGH! I really hate being called a princess!

“By any chance. Have you heard what we were talking about just now?” One twin asked curiously while batting his lashes at me innocently.

“Of course not. Because that is rude. And...not nice.” I avoided their gaze. I was not that good at lying.

“Something tells me that she did hear us.” Ren sang, having an evil glint in his eyes as he communicated with his brother with his eyes. Nate and Fred were quick to notice this and suddenly, all heads turned to me again.

Only one thought screamed in my mind: Run.

Picking up my dress, I ran. I could hear the boys shuffling and the sounds of footsteps echoing inside. I made swift turns, not knowing where to go but as long as I can get away from them.

A thought suddenly occurred to me. Why was I running when I was already aware that the queen intends for me to have my training since yesterday? I know that I wasn't ready for the training but that isn't enough of a reason to run away. Maybe it's the thought of being chased that triggered a sort of reaction from me to run.

I stopped running when I put a good distance between us and put both my hands on my knees as I tried to catch my breath. With the size of this castle, it's easy to lose them. And it's easy for me to say that I too am lost.

“Great,” I muttered.

I continued to walk. Each time admiring the beautiful views from the floor to ceiling windows. Each window has a red curtain at the sides. It feels like you're walking in a Disney movie castle. The floor was made of white marble. Many stands held a flower vase with different flowers from it giving the castle a wonderful aroma. I'm guessing that they change the flowers every day and use the flowers from the garden outside my room. It's like there's magic involved in growing the flowers since the other flowers were not meant to bloom in this season.

From the ache on both of my feet, I'm guessing that I have walked for a long time. I even think that I have toured only a half of this castle. I also remembered some places, which would be helpful shortly in case I need to hide for emergencies.

I went straight and saw that up ahead, there are two ways which I needed to choose from, three if you consider going straight. I was deciding on whether I should go to the right, left or the straight one, when not one, but two Princes emerge from both sides.

Ren and Dan both stopped to look at each other, panting, before shaking their heads. I'm guessing that they haven't seen me yet, which I am currently standing at least 20 feet away from them.

No place to hide so I covered my face with my hands as if it would help. Why doesn't my brain work at the best of the time!?

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They were about to turn when their heads snapped in my direction. A bright grin plastered on their faces as they composed their posture.

"Hello there, Princess!" One greeted me while the other gave me a boyish smirk. "Going somewhere?"

"Princess? I am the castle ghost. I am not a p-princess." I stuttered. They began to advance at me slowly as a predator would to a prey. And I don't want to be the prey. "Actually," I said as I slowly took a step backward. "I'm kinda busy today and I guess you guys are too so let's just call this a day, Okay? You do your thing, I'll do my thing. It's a win-win. What do you say?" I offered.

One of them shook his head while the other was the one who talked. "Actually, you are our thing so we can't call it a day as you say." He paused. "Hey, it rhymed!"

I hate running...I should just give up.

I took long strides backward to keep a lot of distance between me and the Princes. One of them shook his head. "I think she's going to run away any minute now, brother. That means that we will have to chase her again." Ren nodded his head in agreement. "I know. The only problem is that there is a rule that says 'no running in the castle'." Then he had a mischievous grin on his face before he added. "But I don't consider this running, I call this chasing." He smiled that evil smile of his.

That was all I needed as I ran to the way that I came from and away from the brothers. Both were now hot on my heels.

“Better run fast Princess cause we’re catching up pretty fast!” Dan called and his voice was dangerously close. He’s taunting me.

“Jerks!” I called back and ran faster and almost tripped on my foot but quickly regained balance.

One of them blew in my ear. I screamed and ran faster if that was even possible. I heard both of them crackling with laughter behind me and I stopped in my tracks. Both of them clutching their stomachs from laughing. What I saw in front of me made my blood boil.

They were toying with me.

Out of anger, I took both of my shoes off and aimed each one to their heads. Unfortunately, they caught each one with their hand. Now each twin was holding one pair of my shoes.

Dan smiled again. “You know, Ren. I think we should return this to her.” He said, indicating my shoe which they now have in their hands.

“I think you’re right. It’s only proper for a gentleman like us to give this to her personally.” Ren winked.

“You can have it! As a token of my hatred.” I hissed and ran again. This time, not looking back. “Damn it!”

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“Language!!” They both shouted, amused clear in their voice.

“Shut up!” I yelled. I always wanted a prince to chase me while holding one of my shoes in his hands as he carefully put it on my foot and lived happily ever after in a castle. You know, all those cliché love story things. But never did I dream to have two of those Princes chasing me and me running away from them in a castle. Plus running around barefooted.

Why can’t I be transported to a place with decent princes!?

I was busy fussing with my dreams that I didn’t notice that both Fred and Nate were walking far ahead of me. I prayed that they wouldn’t look here, but I guess

that this isn't my lucky day since they just turned in my direction. They both grinned and made their way in the direction.

“Princess!” Nate and Fred called.

oh @\$%^&*()!!!

I stopped as I realized that I was completely trapped. Behind me were the twins and in front of me were Nate and Fred.

Since I don't really have a choice right now, the only thing I did was stop and pray. The next thing I knew was Dan and Ren crashing into Fred and Nate when they tried to dodge me. Both sides crashing to the ground with a thud.

I take it back. Luck was still on my side. “Hallelujah!!” I screamed and clapped my hands in delight. Not wasting any more time I ran in the opposite direction. The boys were just getting on their feet when they saw me running and went after me. Since I was barefooted, I can now run faster without slipping.

When I turned to the right, I went inside the room that I saw first and locked it behind me. I leaned against it while covering my mouth with both of my hands as I listened for them outside. My heart pounded in my chest. I could hear their voices and footsteps, then they were gone.

I sighed in relief. I thank God for my awesome luck. I guess I survived this day without the training. I hope the Queen will know of this. I would surely rub it on her face.

Someone cleared their throat which startled me. I gave out a loud squeak and dropped to the ground.

“Spare me, please! I just don't want to go to the training. I just wanna go home! Please kill the Queen and not me.” I begged. I don't know what came up to me when I said this.

“Easy child. It's just me. And why would I kill my beloved wife?” I raised my eyes and was met with yellow orbs that stared back at me. I let out the breath that I didn't notice that I was holding.

“Oh. It's just you ‘uncle’.” I said as I rolled my eyes. King or not, he's still a part of this plan that I really have no idea. He was sitting on a chair with a wooden table

in front of him. To his right were large bookshelves and to his left was a table with a bottle of wine on top of it and a painting on the wall.

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The King chuckled, wrinkles showing on his forehead. “You amuse me, child. No one has ever rolled their eyes at me or told me to kill my wife for fear that they may lose their head.”

“So am I gonna lose my head now?” I raise an eyebrow at him. He didn’t seem like the king who would do that.

He shook his head, amusement still lingered on his face. “No.” he paused and looked at my form which is still by the door. “By the way, child. Who are you hiding from?”

“If I tell you, will you promise not to give me away?” I looked at his eyes so I would know that he wouldn’t be lying. I can always tell if a person is lying by just looking through their eyes. I don’t know but their eyes would twitch if they do.

The King shrugged. “Depends on the reason.” When he saw my expression he took it back. “Okay, I promise I won’t.”

I saw that truth in his eyes and decided to tell him. “I was hiding from the Princes.”

The King had a confused look on his face, probably wondering why I would do such a thing. “Well, why are you hiding then? They didn’t do anything inappropriate, did they?”

I shook my head. “No, that’s not it. I don’t know if you know of this but did you remember what the Queen said yesterday about my training to be a Princess?” I asked.

The King nodded. “Yeah, good luck with that.” He muttered to himself but it was loud enough that I could hear it.

I pointed a finger at him. “I’m going to pretend that I didn’t hear that.” He raised both hands as if in surrender. “Anyway, the princes are playing a game of catch to see who goes first. Guess who’s the prey?” I exclaimed.

“You?” The King gasped dramatically. “And is that the reason why you’re running? Wouldn’t it be better if you just let them catch you and get it over with?” He looked at me with pity but I could still see the hint of a grin.

“Oh shut up! The least you can do is help your lovely niece.” I joked. His smile lowered a little and he looked to the side as if thinking of something. Guilt was present in his eyes. “Actually, I didn’t know. I just expected this. It seems that she has made her move pretty fast.” He said so low that I couldn’t almost hear it.

“What do you mean?” I asked.

The King jumped in his seat. He probably didn’t mean for me to hear it. “Nothing.” His eyes twitched. He’s lying.

Chapter 9 PRINCE or a Therapist

I narrowed my gaze at the king. “I don’t know what to say, my King, but you’re hiding something, aren’t you?”

He looks like he’s debating on whether he would tell me or not. Then he sighed. “I guess that you have the right to know. But you must not interrupt me when I explain. And please keep your voice low, she might hear us.”

“Okay? Know what?”

“Do you ever wonder why the Queen would need someone to choose the future King instead of picking one by herself?” He asked.

“Since the beginning of all this,” I admitted.

He nodded and placed both his elbows on top of the table and intertwined them and placed his head on top of it. “Well, that was just an excuse for the real reason.”

“I knew it!” I grinned in excitement. “Do I get a special task? Like do I have to defeat someone with my otherworldly powers?”

“I-” He paused. “I do not know what you are saying, but I do believe that even though Thalia is not as peaceful as we would like it to be, we sure aren’t at war to ‘defeat’ our enemy.” He explained.

I slumped on the ground. So I don't get any powers then. "So for what special reason was, I called here for?"

"In this world, my wife has the power to open a portal to your world. Since the Queen can go back and forth between the two worlds, she has become fond of your world-.....what do you call that? Oh! Yes! Romance stories. After each story's endings, she would always complain that the people's lives don't end in books, it should always carry on, so she thought of something. She would make a real-life love story in this castle. One that she would be able to see how it will grow, from the beginning to the end. And guess who are the characters? You and the Princes that you are hiding from." He ended. His eyes are now on me. Waiting for my reaction.

It took me a second to process his words. When they finally made sense, something just snapped in me. My blood boiled at this information as I just realized something.

"What?!" I shouted, not caring if the Princes would hear my screams.

The King raised both hands in front of him, trying to calm me down. "Shhh! Calm down. She might hear us!" He whispered.

"Calm down?! So I was dragged to this place to become a character for her romance fantasy and not to be a hero with superpowers!?" My reason for being angry was petty.

"I'm serious, she might hear you!"

"Then let her hear me! I am not a pawn." I didn't know what I did, but I remember grabbing one of the books from the shelf to steady myself. I pulled it off, attempting to throw it against the room.

"Not that!" The King yelled.

Too late I had already pulled it, but it didn't come off, instead, I heard a soft click and the shelf started to part. Both sides moved sideways revealing another room. On the couch sat the Queen. Her head turned in my direction as she paused what she was reading. "Rose, if you'll do a rampage, then you could at least have done it outside. I could hear your screams but your words were jumbled."

My fist clenched at my sides while the King's facepalmed and said "See? I told you she could hear us!" So this is what he meant when he said that she could hear us.

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My eyes were still glued on the person sitting on the couch so casually as if she had got no care in the world. She sighed. "If you have nothing to say then-"

"You!" I shouted. My temper rises at an extremely dangerous level. She took my life away, my family, and my friends and brought me to a place so foreign to me so that I could be someone that I don't want to be. To be a part of her stupid ideas.

Her face scrunched up in confusion. Looking at me as if I had gone crazy. "Me?"

"This!" I gestured at my dress and the place. "Everything! Did you take me to this place just to be what? A part of your silly role-playing fantasy!?" My fist was clenched so tight that my knuckles had gone white.

The Queen's eyes had bulged out. "You know? How?" Her eyes landed on her husband, who shrugged. She nodded her head, understanding. "Ahh, I see..."

"That's it? That's all you have to say?!" I was trying to keep my cool so I wouldn't choke her. "You took me here for a petty reason! If it were something dire I might have considered it but playing for a romance role!? Go find another girl!"

"I wouldn't just pick any girl. Your heart truly desired to escape your world."

"Listen to me. Bringing me here to grant me a wish and expecting a romance to bloom in front of you are two different things!" I yelled. "Ah damn it! Of all the genres you picked romance. I hope you'll get abducted by aliens so they will experiment on your brain for having a poor taste!"

I heard the Queen whisper to her husband. "What's an alien?" Before I burst out of the room. Blindly running away. I don't care if the Princes will catch me. I just want to be alone.

I ran. My feet are now cold against the marbled floor. My vision is getting blurry from anger. I wish a hole would just swallow me. Anything to leave this heck of a place. I want to go home.

“Romance my b***!” I grumbled.

Did I really want to escape my original world? Maybe, but not to become a pawn for someone else’s fantasy of romance. Well, at least I now know that reason why I am here. Unlike the other heroines in the novels that I read.

I stopped in front of one of the doors. Library, I read. I want to go to the library. It had always been my sacred place of comfort. The smell of old pages always comforted me. Even better since I wanted to be alone. I figured no one would be in here. I opened the door and went inside. The smell of old leather did comfort me. It reminded me of home. I closed the door behind me and I slumped onto the ground. Bringing my knees to my chest as I started to sulk and grumble some curses.

I would do anything to make their lives miserable. I would make them hate me until they will be forced to kick me out of here. The queen will not get what she wants. I am just not the right girl for this. I never liked the romance.

But I do admire pretty faces.

“If you’re done, can you please get up? It’s an unsightly sight for a Princess.”

Startled, I quickly lifted my head and saw that on one of the couches in the center of the library, sat Ace holding an open book. Probably in the middle of reading. He didn’t look at me when he spoke. He continued to read. His back pressed against the sofa. His face was so calm as he read.

“What are you doing here?” I asked.

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“Correction, what are you doing here?” He didn’t even bother to look up from the book that he is reading. I guess that he would rather read than talk to me.

I didn’t answer his question at first. Not knowing if I should tell him or not. I finally settled on the safest route. “I just wanted to be alone,” I muttered honestly.

“Why?” He asked. Eyes still glued to the book.

I glared daggers at him. How simple was it to look at a person while she’s talking? “What’s it to you?” I said bitterly as I rocked back and forth on the floor.

“If you want to mope then at least sit on that couch over there.” he pointed to a couch across from him while holding the book in the other hand. “It’s better than sitting on the floor. It’s cold.”

I ignored him and continued to rock back and forth. Not even bothering to give him a glance or an answer. This is silly.

The silence was growing thick, which I welcomed until he let out a sigh and closed the book that he was reading. He finally looked up and glanced at me. “You’re not gonna listen to me are you?”

I continued to rock while I avoided his gaze. I can tell that he was pissed at me for ignoring him. Serves his royal b***.

With a swift move, he put his book down on the couch and walked in my direction, and stopped just in front of me. He kneeled until his eyes were leveled with mine. “You are a stubborn girl. Come on, get up.” He ordered while tugging at my arm.

I narrowed my eyes at him and pulled my arm away. “And you’re a heartless self-centered royal jerk!” I stayed where I was still glaring at him.

“Well, you left me no choice then.” With a quick movement, he threw me on his shoulder. I yelped in surprise.

“Let me go!!” I screamed and kicked while I pounded on his back.

“Ow! Stop screaming. It hurts to the ears.” He rubbed his ear and winced as I continued to scream. “Quite! This is a library so shut up!” He hissed, shouting himself.

“Ace-”

“That’s PRINCE Ace for you!” He cut me off.

I just rolled my eyes even though he can’t see me. Why should I? I can call him whatever I want. “Whatever. I know you’re a jerk but will you please put me down?! You’re like a creep! Put me down! Now.” I continued to pound on his back.

“As you wish, Princess.” With just a flick of his arms, I was thrown on a leather couch with a thud. I bounced once and almost fell if I hadn’t grabbed on the back. I

glared at him as he made his way to the couch that he was sitting on a while ago, which was across from me. He grabbed the book that he was reading and placed them on his lap as he stared at me with a raised eyebrow. Probably wondering why I was glaring at him.

“So, want to talk about it?” He finally asked.

Chapter 10 Touch Move

I stopped laughing. My eyes went wide in surprise. I saw him smirk at me at my gaping face. “H-How did you.....know?”

He shrugged his shoulders as if it were obvious. “Well, it was pretty obvious from the way you dressed and the way you act. Plus the nonsense that the Queen is blabbering about training you like a Princess. Everyone knows that a princess is already trained in their childhood days.”

My mouth formed an ‘O’. “So who else knows?” I asked.

He thought for a moment. “All the Princes know.”

“Crap.”

“By the way,” He shifted on his seat. “Since I had caught you first that means that you and I will have our training tomorrow.”

“Double crap!”

“Oh, shut up. You’re not the only one who’s in agony you know. It’s all your fault.”

I raised my head and glared daggers at him. “My fault?!”

“Yes, if you had just sat on the couch as I asked you to, then I wouldn’t have to carry you and make contact!” Our voices were already rising.

What the hell is this? Touch move!?

“Excuse me but if you just minded your own business, then none of this would have happened!”

“What am I supposed to do?! Leave you there on the floor? Fine! Next time I’ll let you freeze to death on the spot!”

“Get off your high horse. Freezing to death just by sitting on the floor isn’t possible!”

“Not yet. But I hope you’re the first one!”

“Fine!” I spat

“Fine!” He spat back. He raised his hands in surrender as he got up. “You know what? Just meet me here in the morning. I’m leaving for today.”

Not wanting to be left alone I followed. He stopped and his head turned to me. “Why are you following?”

“I’m leaving too.”

“No! I’m leaving first. You stay here.” He ordered, not wanting me to tag along.

“No way! I’m leaving too.” I started to make my way around him but he stopped me.

“Stay!” He ordered.

“What am I? A dog? Move!” I pushed.

“I said I was leaving first! Don’t cut in!”

“Who are you? My mom? Move!” I pushed harder but he was too strong. We wrestled like that until both of us finally gave up. “Alright alright! Well, go out together!” He growled. He walked to the double doors and opened with. He turned to me and jerked his head. A gesture that meant to get my b*** out of here before he changes his mind. I quickly got out with a victorious smirk.

He closed the door behind him and gave me a murderous glare. Wow, if looks could kill I would be dead.

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“Now get out of my sight before I might do something that I might regret.”

“What? You’re going to be nice? Eww!”

“Don’t get ahead of yourself.” He started to leave when his eyes lowered to my bare feet. He raised his eyebrow. “Where’re your shoes?”

“Err....” I hesitated. Where are they? I remember throwing them at the twins...

“Princess!!” To my far left, I heard the twins calling me. Each of them holding a shoe. Yep, my shoes are with them alright.

Ace turned his attention to the two, his eyes focusing on my shoes in their hands. Understanding flashed in his face as the answer to his question appeared in front of him. A smile found its way to his lips. “I’ll be on my way now. Good luck and don’t forget about tomorrow.” With that, he exited as the twins approached, panting.

“W-where...have you...been?” One panted while the other continued for his brother. “We...have been...looking everywhere!”

“I was hiding,” I said.

“Where?” Twin one asked, finally recovered.

“Someplace where you two aren’t.”

Twin one suddenly became interested in the floor and pouted. Twin two saved his brother from his embarra**ment when he decided to ask, “Was that Ace?” He looked in the direction that Ace just went.

I nodded my head. “Yep, he was just leaving”. Twin two pouted. “Does that mean that he’s first?”

I sighed. “Unfortunately, yes”

Twin one decided to step up. “Well, at least we’re the second. Are we?”

“Yes.” I nodded. Acting as I’ll cooperate with the training.

“Good.” Both Princes went on their knees as they offered me my shoe. “My lady, can we?” Ren asked.

“No. Leave it there on the floor,” I said with a deadpan face.

But it would seem as if the twins are deaf. Deaf twin two took my foot and placed the shoe on my foot. Deaf twin one did the same after.

Both stood up in perfect synchronization, perks of being a twin I guess. They both have big smiles on their faces as they bowed. “We will be expecting your time the day after tomorrow princess.” Said twin two. “Until then take care and have a pleasant day.” They winked and left.

I made my way around the castle, wanting to return to my room. I was pa**ing one of the floor-to-ceiling windows when, suddenly, the curtains opened and Nate startled me by blocking my way. “Found you!”

“The \$-?\$&@€[€\+[^]€81!1!!!!!!!” I yelled when I was startled.

Nate gave me a funny look. “What was that?”

I coughed and cleared my throat. “You scared me!”

“Oops, sorry.” He gave me an apologetic smile. “By the way, has anyone caught you yet?” He asked.

What am I? “Yes. Two actually. Ace was first, then followed by the twins.” I said.

Disappointment flashed in his eyes. It was quick when he pouted. “Cheeky that Ace is and I thought I was the first. Well, at least I was not last.” He shrugged. “So, see you after two days?”

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“Can do anything about it?”

“Of course you can! No one can resist this charm!” He pointed to his face as he flashed me a smile that would make boys run of their money.

“Please! I’ve seen better.” At least in movies.

“Really?” He fake gasped. “Oh well, but none of them is as lucky as me to be in front of a beautiful lady such as yourself.” He winked before leaving me with a flushed face. “See you around Princess!” He called, then he was gone.

“Stupid Princes and their flirty attitude. And this stupid castle with their stupid queen.” I muttered as I turned right in the direction of my room. It took me a while to get there because of the size of this castle.

When I finally reached the floor to my room, I saw Prince Fred leaning against the door. His blond hair slightly covers his closed eyes. His head was lowered and his arms were crossed over his chest. He looked so charming. Was he waiting for me?

I made my way towards him, careful not to make a sound. His breathing was even. I think he’s asleep. I leaned in to see if he was really asleep and couldn’t help but notice the way his hair would fall to his eyes when he is leaning down, his long lashes, his high cheekbones, strong jaw, sharp nose, and the way that his mouth would move as he slept.

I feel like such a creep.

Oh and he smells so good! Kinda like pine cones. His eyes fluttered open and stared into my gray ones.

I gasped in surprise as I backed away.

Fred covered his mouth as he yawned and rubbed his eyes before he looked at me. From the look on his face, he probably just noticed me. “Hmm? Princess, how long were you standing there?” He asked.

“I-I-I....I just got here!” I stuttered. feeling relieved that he didn’t ask what I was doing.

Fred noticed where he was leaning and abruptly straightened himself up. “I-I’m sorry. Was I blocking your way?” He asked. “I was just waiting for your arrival.”

Oh right. The princes and their stupid games with a castle and a stupid queen.

I laughed nervously as I tucked a strand of hair behind my ear as gulped. “Sorry, but the boys beat you to it. You were the last....” I said.

He surprised me by laughing. “Well, I guess that waiting for you here instead of looking for you was a bad idea. Oh well, you know what they say ‘save the best for last.’” He bowed, then gave me a grin. “Until then, Princess. Have a good day.” with that he left. Leaving me staring at his retreating back.

He's handsome.

I opened my door and walked in while banging the door closed. I walked like a zombie towards my bed and slumped against it. I bounced once before the bed settled. I grabbed a pillow and buried my face in it.

“Getting comfy?”

“Shi-” I quickly sat up on my bed.

“None of that language dear.”

I glared at her. Grabbed my shoe and aimed at her threateningly. “What do you want?” The Queen sat on a chair at the far left of my room. A book in her hand. She shut it when she turned to me. Sadness in her eyes. She seemed to have aged a day. “Look, Rose. I didn't know....and I'm sorry.”

Did I hear her right? She's apologizing? Grab a wall, the world is about to end. I scoffed at her. “If you're truly sorry, then the least you can do is send me back.”

She shook her head. “That I cannot do.”

“Why?” I asked. Suddenly feeling tired.

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“The magic that brought you here...weeeeelllll it isn't ready yet.” She smiled innocently.

“What do you mean by that? What isn't ready?”

As an answer, she brought out a clear fist-size crystal orb. Something was thick and swirling inside of it like black smoke or mist. I stared at it dumbfoundedly. “What is that?”

“This is the thing that brought you here.”

I gapped “Really? I remember it being a flat paper and not an orb.”

She rolled her eyes. “Honey, you remember that I'm a fairy with magic, right? I used some of my magic to morph this thing to look like a charm.”

My mouth formed into an 'o'. For some reason I guess I now truly believe that I really am from a different world and that the queen is a fairy. And that I have no magic and I am not a heroine to save this world from a demon lord.

I waved my hand at her. "I don't care about the details. I only want to know when that thing will be ready to take me back home." So I can sulk and cry that I was taken to a different world as a romance protagonist.

The Queen scratched her head and avoided looking at me. A sure sign that it was bad. "I don't want to disappoint you, but I...don't know....."

"What?!"

"Now watch your blood pressure, my dear. I heard that it's not good-"

"What do you mean that you don't know? Explain. Now!" I demanded. I was pretty close to throwing my shoe at her.

"This magic is unpredictable. The amount of magic required to bring a human to our side depends on the amount of baggage they have. By baggage I mean emotional but sometimes it could be because of blood. In your case, you completely drained it. We have to wait until the mist will be gone. You will know if it will be fully charged when the ball turns into a solid ocean blue and would radiate a brilliant light. When that happens you can decide if you would stay or leave. Until then you're stuck." She explained.

"Can you at least-"

"I can't give you powers either. Zero magic means zero."

"When that thing will be ready, I would surely leave this heck of a place," I said.

A ghost of a smile appeared on her lips. "You wouldn't know that."

"Oh I know and my decision is final."

She shrugged. "Hmm....we'll see about that in the future, won't we? After all, with all the handsome Princes in this castle, you might change your mind." She winked, got up, and left the room closing the door behind her.

I sighed.

I yelled when the door opened once again and the Queen's head peaked out. "Oh, By the way, I searched the word alien in Merriam – Webster Dictionary." With a flick of her wrist, an iPad appeared. "It says-

"Get out!!" I threw a pillow at the door and she was gone. Sheesh!!! Give the person some rest!!

Dinner was served to me that night as I was reading the book that Ace had lent me. I just sat there on the bed. What does she mean by me changing my mind? She's still up with her plan?! The nerve. No worries. For now, I will 'cooperate' with her.

I'll take the lesson. I'll try to know more about this world as much as I can. For now, all I know is that I am in a different realm and only the queen can bring me back. It's a realm where princes and princesses exist. Okay, I think this much I can handle.

Until I can return home that is.

Chapter 11 A lesson with Ace –

"Will you stop doing that?" Ace asked me, pretty annoyed if I do say so myself.

We're currently at the library for my first lesson: History and the important people of each kingdom.

He kept on talking and explaining things. Continuously, if I might add. I was sleepy and uninterested. Who can blame me? And why do I even have to learn their history? Whenever I tried to sleep this off, he would snap his fingers in front of my face. So I ended up doodling on a piece of paper to entertain myself. Oftentimes I would blankly stare at the ceiling and unconsciously make faces that cause him to get distracted. Steams would have appeared from his ears because of how pissed off he was. I think he prevented himself from punching me so much that his knuckles had gone white.

I am trying to listen to what he's saying but all the terms that he is using make it hard for me to understand!

"It's obvious that you hate me and it is no secret that I also dislike you, so why can't we just agree to drop this lesson?" I said as I batted my eyes at him innocently.

“Not gonna happen.” He said as he opened a book. “This is a part of your lesson. So you’ll have to learn it.”

“Nothing you even say makes any sense to me.” I slumped on my seat. He didn’t bother to look up this time as he read something from a leather-bound book. His jaw clenched in annoyance, his black hair falling as he bent his head slightly forward to read in silence.

“Then I guess you need to try harder.”

I pouted. “Easy for you to say. You were born here. I was born waaaay over there.” Feeling disappointed, I started whistling.

“You are an annoying Princess!”

“Why thank you.”

His head perked up and gave me an annoyed look. “That wasn’t a compliment.”

“For me, it is,” I said and began to get comfy on the couch. I haven’t gotten much sleep since yesterday that my eyes started to close on their own. Not even a minute later and he was shaking me awake.

“No sleeping during cla** hours.” He said and continued to shake me. I tried to ignore him but I was getting dizzy from his shaking. My head bobbing back and forth.

Can’t this guy leave me alone?

I reached out and slapped his hand away. “Go away,” I said as I buried my face on the couch. A minute later and I heard a sound. I took a peek and I saw Ace holding a bag of cookies. He smirked when he saw that I was staring at it. “Now you’re awake?”

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“No, I’m not.” I blushed and looked away.

He started shaking the bag of cookies drawing my eyes at them again. “These are cookies baked by a well-known baker in Thalia. His bakery is so famous that countless dukes and even royals come to Thalia just to buy these.”

I stared at him. “You’re bluffing, aren’t you? The ‘baker’ is actually the chef of this castle.”

There was a long pause.

Ace suddenly cleared his throat. “Of course not. Why would you even think of that?”

I raised an eyebrow at him. “Are you taking me for a fool? You said that he is famous. Naturally, he would be hired by a nearby royal, which would be the king and queen.”

He stared at me. “What?” I asked.

“You actually got the name of this kingdom right. That’s a first.”

“I did!?” I gasped. “Wow, I am actually smarter than I thought. I could become a scholar.”

“Now what is the name of the kingdom that was destroyed in the year 455? Specifically 10 years ago.”

“You guys are in the year 465!?”

Ace frowned. “I asked you a question.”

“In case you haven’t noticed, I was already surprised by the current year and now you are asking me for the name of a ruined kingdom? I don’t know! Hogwarts!?”

“You’re hopeless! You didn’t even get that right.”

“I’m trying here!”

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“I said try harder!” He was yelling now.

“Well maybe if you can speak in a language I can understand then it might not be difficult! Back in my world, we have presidents and vice presidents. Only a few countries have royalty these days.”

“Then what are you? A plebian?”

“I’m a student who doesn’t even bother to do my homework and you expect me to learn this world’s history? Sir, I bid you good luck.”

He sighed and turned back. He didn’t even bother to look at me as he said that. He just went back to the couch opposite of mine and sat down. He sighed and ran a hand through his hair. A sign of his frustration. He then grabbed a book and started to read. “Self-study from now on.”

I frowned. “Hey, Ace.” He didn’t look at me as I called for his name. I wanted to ask him something.

Maybe he didn’t hear me?

“Excuse me, Ace? Yoohoo!!” I waved my hands for him to notice me.

He continued to flip through a book. Pretending not to hear when it was pretty obvious that I was calling him. I know he heard me. My voice was already loud enough. Why is he not answering?

Oh I see

“PRINCE Ace?” This time he looked up and gave me a questionable glance. “Yes?” He asked.

)/@@33&&/-&

Stupid-Arrogant-Royal-Pain-in-the-b***!!!

I clenched my fist at my sides because of my annoyance towards the prince in front of me. I forced myself to smile despite his att**ude. “Can I ask you a question?”

“No.” He went back to reading.

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I’m gonna kill this Prince.

“Why are you so grumpy?” I asked. Patience slowly faded. He didn’t even answer my question and proceeded to read. I might go wolf on him now and tear him limb from limb! Hopefully.

“There are things that you must learn in this kingdom. You must first learn the ranks and positions in each kingdom so you can know your place. As you might know, the king ranks the highest. Followed by the Queen, then the Prince and Princess.” His lips moved as he talked. His eyes were glued to what he was reading.

This guy is really serious about this.

My gaze darted to the bag of cookies on the table. I silently made my way towards it.

“Are you listening, Princess?” He looked up from the book that he was reading. He raised a questioning eyebrow at me. Face a mask of seriousness as he looked at me. I don’t need to be a mind reader to know that he didn’t appreciate my lack of interest.

“I...uh....yes,” I said and hid the cookies behind me.

“Oh really?” He asked. Not buying my answer to his question. He folded his fingers in front of him and placed his chin on top. “What did I just say just now?” He raised an eyebrow at me.

“Easy.....’What did I just say just now?’.” I said. I know that wasn’t what he meant, but that was the only thing I could think of.

“Your sarcasm always shows up in times like these. Let’s be serious now and answer my question properly.” His tone was dead serious. If I answer with another sarcasm, it might be my last. A small smile found its way to his lips when he saw my speechless form. He straightened up.

“You were really not listening.”

“You know what? I should go upstairs and look for more books to read. Probably a dictionary so I can understand some of the words that you are saying and not purely historical. Be right back!” I lied. I only ran upstairs to eat the cookies I stole.

It took me a while to get back as I made sure to finish all the cookies and leave no traces of crumbs on my face. I took a random book with me that if Ace ever asks, I’ll have proof. And if the book is now the right one then I’ll just pretend to be ignorant.

At least that was the plan, but when I came down, he was nowhere to be found. I looked around the library to find him. He must have left somewhere. I sat on the couch once again and closed my eyes to take a little break.

Chapter 12 – I mean PRINCE Ace

I woke up feeling rejuvenated. The dreams that I just had were awesome! I was floating in a cloud of cotton candy, Prince Ace was my servant and I finally told him how I feel. That he is emo wanna be punk.

I felt great after saying it. Speaking of Ace. I wonder where he is. Is he back?

My eyes scanned my surroundings until I found him at the door, talking to someone outside. Maybe it was a servant? He was only wearing a white long-sleeved undershirt that was tucked in his pants. It framed his muscular body well.

He said a quick thank you and closed the door. When he saw me, he gave me a tight smile that would make me cringe in fear.

What did I do now?

“Had a nice dream, Princess?” He asked. His lip was twitching as he forced a smile at me. Maybe he was angry that I had fallen asleep during his absence.

“Actually, I had a wonderful dream.” In my dream, I saw my family and my friends there. I felt at home and content.

His jaw clenched even tighter as he jerked his head towards the door “Come on. The others are waiting. Lunch is ready.” He held the door open, waiting for me.

I sat up and felt a soft material fall from my shoulder. I picked it up, it was Ace’s dark blue coat. It made me wonder what it was doing here with me.

Did he not see me sleeping and simply threw his coat there? How rude.

I made my way to the door, the coat in one hand as I brushed my hair with the other. I gave him his coat back when I reached the door. “Thank you.” I was meant to say it sarcastically but stopped myself since I don’t want to add more fuel to his already annoying form. We walked towards the dining room side by side. Neither of us said a word. I was afraid to make a sound for fear of him. He was releasing some sort of dark aura that can really eat you alive.

“Tell me,” I jumped at the sound of his voice. “What were you dreaming?” He tried so hard to give me a friendly smile, which failed miserably since it looked more like a grimace. It could make anyone cry and pee themselves.

I put a little bit of space between us since I was getting scared of this Ace. It was as if he was pissed or something. “Why do you want to know?” I asked nervously.

“No reason. I just thought that you owe me that much since I let you sleep.” He said. I thank my lucky stars when we reached the dining hall. Everyone was already seated and waiting for us. I sat beside Nate and sighed relief when Ace sat across from me and beside Fred. We began to eat and I made sure that this time, I had placed a table napkin on my lap. I began to stuff food in my mouth as Fred asked Ace about how our training is going. Ace glared at me as he muttered a reply. “Terrific.”

I grinned at him with my mouth full of food. I heard Nate tsk beside me. “You should not stuff food in your mouth like that. And don’t slouch.” Nate said and chuckled when he saw me glaring at him.

“Not turn to teach yet so let me have this short freedom,” I said as I shoved another sp*** full in my mouth. Nate continued to chuckle and tucked a piece of strand behind my ear.

“Nate, keep your hands off already,” Dan complained while his brother, Ren, pouted. “Yeah, Nate. Don’t tint her purity with your impure hands.”

Nate moved up to my hair and dusted it. Torn pieces of paper fell from my hair. “Your hair has a lot of paper.” He said.

My eyes widened and looked at Ace, who only stared at me and went back to eating. That jerk! It was definitely him!

Nate’s attention went back to the twins for their previous comment. They stuck their tongue out at Nate. If this were an anime, Nate would have an angry mark on his head. Nate gripped his fork rather tightly. “I could stab you guys now and end this mess.” He said as he forced a smile.

“Your highness.” One of the twins said without any emotion like he was bored or something while the other continued in the same tone. “Nate is threatening our lives with a fork.”

“Oh come now you boys. Don’t start a fight now.” King Luke said and shook his head at the boys. “Honestly.”

The twins tsk at Nate three times. “Now look what you did Nate.” One twin said. “You made the king angry.” The other continued. It’s amazing how the two of them know what the other one wants to say. I wonder if I had a twin...could be fun.

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Nate stood up and chased the twins as they hid behind Fred. “Now you boys. Settle down.” Fred said to them as he tried to separate Nate and the twins. “The Princess is looking so please be on your best behavior.”

So they have to be on their best behavior when I’m here?

Well, I wanna see some action so I devoured my meal faster. After that I got my table napkin and wiped it to my mouth and got up, leaving the dining hall. “I’m done,” I said.

At the corner of my eyes, I saw Nate smirking at the twins and ran around the table to get them. The twins and Nate ended up running around the table while Fred tried to stop them. So this is how the Princes behave when the rest are out. Interesting. Just like children.

I made my way to the library when I saw that Ace had also gotten up from his seat.

Oh no, I don’t want to have a lesson with him yet! Especially when he’s in a bad mood.

I briskly walked to the library since running around when your stomach is full is not good for you. Ace also noticed what I was doing and increased his speed. Too bad for him that I had gotten to the library first and locked the door behind me.

I heard him knock outside.

“Who’s there?” I asked even though I know that it was him.

“Don’t play dumb with me. I know you know that it’s me.” He growled.

I wonder if he’s related to a wolf or something. Growling like that.

“Open the door!” He screamed.

“Sorry, but the library is closed for today so please come back later.” I walked back to my couch and with my pleasure, I saw a book that I wanted to read since I finished reading the first book.

“Rose, you open this door right now.” He shouted. Voice rising from every word.

“Quiet! We’re in the library.” I said and grabbed the book while sitting on the couch and reading it. He didn’t say anything anymore. I just heard his groan in frustration and heard the door rattle. I guess he was leaning on it.

Three minutes later and I heard him try to talk to me again in a much gentler tone. “Princess, please open the door so we can begin the lesson.”

I smirked as I flipped onto another page and shifted my position so my stomach was laying flat on the couch. “Nope.”

I heard him mutter some profanities before he quieted again. After a few minutes he tried again, this time his voice was laced with warning and authority. “Princess, you open this door right now you hear?!” He said as he banged the door.

“The princess is currently not around. Please try again later.” I heard him kick the door and shout some curses.

I have no idea where I found the courage to act as I do now, but it is somewhat relaxing.

I was just one page away when the door was banged loudly making me jump. “Open this damn door or I’ll break it open!”

Wow. What a temper.

I ignored him and finished my reading. Just as I finished, I heard him bang the door repeatedly as if he was hitting it with his shoulder. He probably was.

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I set the book down and walked to the door. Now we wouldn’t want it to break, do we? The door was already rattling on its hinges. When I opened the door, Ace almost fell to the ground but immediately balanced himself. I slapped a hand to my

mouth to keep myself from laughing. I watched as he composed himself and glared daggers at me.

If looks could kill I'd be dead a hundred times already.

“Stupid, Princess.” He muttered as he made his way to his seat. I followed.

“Thank you, kind sir. But please don't call me a Princess anymore.” I said and sat down.

He raised an eyebrow at me. “Why?”

“I don't like to be called a Princess. It gets on my nerves.” I shuddered. My mistake when I said that got on my nerves when I saw him smirk.

“If you hate it so much, then all the more reason to call you a Princess.”

I knew this was coming when I said that. I have to watch my words from now on cause he might use them against me again. “Now, let's begin.” He declared. When he saw how unenthusiastic I was. He sighed. “What? Are you gonna sleep again?” He asked.

I shook my head. “No, I won't. But I might since things like these aren't my thing. If I can't sleep, then my consciousness might fly to somewhere else.”

“Now that is a problem.” I watched him as he rubbed his chin and thought for a moment. “What if I will just make a story out of it? Will that work?”

I have to say that I was impressed with Ace for his way of thinking. “It might.”

“Alright so, once upon a time-” He started.

“Oh, not that crap again,” I muttered and noticed him staring at me. I quickly covered my mouth with my hands. “Crap! Sorry. Please continue.”

“So there was this Prince, who had two older sisters. One day, the eldest was asked by another prince from a different kingdom to marry him. Since she accepts she had no choice but to leave the throne to the second eldest sister.

The Prince had a friend, a duke. A duke is another royal, but not like the king and queen. Their sons and daughters are the ones who will take the throne if there aren't any heirs to another kingdom. They are also good candidates when the king

is looking for someone to be betrothed to his son/daughter too. Dukes for males and Duchess for females.”

“Like the queen and the king? They don’t have an heir so does that mean that you and the boys are Dukes? Wait for no. You guys said you’re princes. This is confusing.” I asked. Afraid of the consequences since I just interrupted him. Surprisingly, he didn’t go all Hulk on me and answered calmly. “No. The princes and I are born of royal blood from a different kingdom. We are real Princes....we just don’t know what has gotten into the queen picking us instead of a neighboring Duke.

“So.” Ace continued. “The prince’s friend fell in love with his sister and again asked her hand in marriage. The Duke now becomes the new king and the sister becomes the new Queen. You see, when your rank is higher, your husband/wife’s rank will also become the same level as yours.”

“What happens to the Prince?” I asked.

“He remains a prince. If his friend and his sister, who is currently the king and queen die with no heir, then he succeeds to the throne.” He said flatly. He continued to explain to me something by making a storyline out of it. Even though he wasn’t good at it, he still forced himself for the sake of my learning.

I was surprised that I had learned a lot in such a short time. Ace was a good teacher if I do say so myself. “I want to say that it’s awesome, but the sword thing?” I said.

“Well, that’s the rules so we have to deal with it.” Ace looked out of the window to see that the light was still shining outside. “Seems like we finished early and had some more time.” I noticed that his eyes weren’t purely black, they were a dark shade of blue when hit by light. They are just so dark that you would mistake them as black.

I grinned. “Well, how about I’ll tell you something of my world?” I said and started to tell him how much we had improved. I told him about cars, airplanes, and other transportation rides. I also explained to him that we don’t use gold coins anymore and that our medium of exchange now is in the form of a dollar. He was leaning on his seat the whole time. He would often make comments like: “You guys use a piece of metal to take you to places?”, “You exchange valuables for a piece of paper?”, “How can a metal bird fly?”

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As I finished explaining things to him, he fell asleep.

And he goes all Hulk on me when I sleep.

I grabbed the book that he was holding and placed it on the table. His bangs were covering his eyes so I brushed them away with my hand. His skin is too smooth. I have to admit that he's cute despite the monster-like attitude that he possesses. His lips are a beautiful shade of pink and he smells so good. I placed a hand on his cheek as I leaned closer.....

.....then used my other hand to grab a pen and draw on his face.

I draw circles around his eyes and draw a mustache above and below his lips. I also drew stars on his left cheek. On his forehead, I wrote. "Kick me."

I smirked as I placed the pen back on the table.

This is payback for him bullying me the first time we met.

During dinner, as Ace and I stepped into the dining hall, everyone stopped talking and stared at Ace. I, on the other hand, avoided everyone's gaze as I made my way to my seat beside Fred. Better be safe than sorry.

Ace noticed that they were staring at him, but proceeded to sit beside Nate, who was biting his lips to prevent himself from laughing. The King and queen kept on smiling while the twins didn't hold back and laughed hysterically. Fred covered his laugh with a cough. "Did you do that?" Fred whispered to me.

As an answer, I smiled cheekily at him and he laughed. "Nice." The twins said from beside Fred and gave me a thumbs up.

When the servants arrived to bring us our food the one who served Ace gasped and almost dropped the plate. "What?" Ace asked. "Is there something on my face? You kept staring at it." you can hear the annoyance in them.

"Y-your highness. What an...interesting change of image you have there." said the servant.

I know that my life is ticking away like a clock every second that pa**ed.

"What are you talking about?" Ace asked, confused.

The servants held out a plate and showed Ace's reflection to it. Ace abruptly stood up and grabbed the plate and examined my handy work.

"How?" Then he turned to me, fury in his eyes and he gritted his teeth. I smiled at him. "You!" He screamed at me.

I gasped. "Me!"

"Why you!" As Ace began to reach for me. All of us, except the king and queen who acted as if this was normal, stood up. Nate pulled Ace back to prevent him from killing me while Fred shoved me behind his back. "I think this is the right time for you to return to your room." He said as he tried to talk some sense back to Ace as the twins e*****ed me.

The scene with Nate, Fred, and Ace somehow reminded me of a meme with two ladies and a cat.

"Nice handy work." One of the twins said and laughed as he walked beside me. The other was at my other side. "But don't do that to us tomorrow or we'll cry." I laughed as I and the twins ran away from the dining hall, where Ace was shouting something about ways to kill me.

Well, he started it. I was just giving him a taste of his own medicine.

At least I don't have to see him tomorrow, because I'll have lessons with the twins on that day. Though I couldn't imagine what kind of lesson it would be.

Chapter 13 Double Trouble

Back pain. I feel like an old lady

Today was my training with the twin Princes about how to walk and act properly. They were a little strict, which really surprised me. I thought that this training today would end up becoming a game, but no, they are serious. Dead serious. We are currently in a huge dressing. Dan and Ren were both standing beside me as they watched. One of them, Dan, walked to the front and examined me. I countered his look with my glare. They actually put on name tags for me to easily tell them apart.

"Don't slouch," Ren said as he straightened my back once again. I gritted my teeth as I felt a sting on my back for straining it too much. We've been doing this for

hours and I can't even feel my back anymore. How can the royals do this all the time? That explains why the prince and princesses from storybooks would usually sneak out of the castle.

The twins seem like they were having fun every time I get frustrated and would often laugh at my bad posture. It makes me feel bad and angry at the same time. I was getting frustrated that I started calling them with the wrong names on purpose. "Oopsie!! Sorry, Dan." I said. Ren's face twitched when I called him Dan.

"My name is Ren and not Dan! I thought you already knew who is who."

To be honest, I can slightly tell them apart. Both with the help of their name tags and the other for their mannerism.

I gasped. "Oh did I? I must have forgotten." I looked at Dan for help with my puppy dog eyes. He seemed to back away a little. Probably wanting to avoid being involved with the two of us. "Ren, Dan is being mean again," I complained to him.

Ren groaned in frustration. "This means war," he said while Dan gave me an evil smile and said. "Hmm...I think we should put a book on her head."

On reflexes, I screamed. "Oh heck no!"

The twins are evil.

"Relax, this will help you to keep your posture on and to keep you busy," Dan reared me and muttered the last part more to himself as he placed a book on top of my head. The book felt heavy on my head as the weight pressed. It was a thick leather-bound book. It seemed old because the pages were already yellow.

"Now try walking while balancing that book on your head," Ren commanded. I did what they told me to and walked while balancing the book on my head. I was doing pretty good, but the only problem was that I looked like a drunken old geezer when I walked.

The boy's facepalm at me. Well good for them.

"Princess...not to be rude or anything but you lack grace." Dan commented, "Chest out, stomach in, and b*** out." I did what he told me to.

Just for the sake of annoying them, I exaggerated by putting my chest out and my b*** out too much, making me look like a duck. To add a little more twist, I made a duck face at them.

Dan's facepalmed at me as Ren went to a drawer at the far side of the room. I looked at him curiously as he brought something long and sparkly. Ren dusted them off first and walked in front of me, raising the things that he took.

I gasped and stared at it in horror.

High heels. Emphasis on the high. There's a reason why it was one letter away from spelling Hell.

"I think this would help you to walk properly," Ren said and bent down in front of him as if he would put it on.

"You're kidding me!" I screamed and removed my foot from his reach. Sure, the shoes are shiny and pretty but it's too high! I think it's at least 4 inches tall. I can't even walk with a good posture and they expect me to wear them?

Ren sighed and looked at me with tired eyes.

Am I really that difficult to teach?

"Rose, please. I promise you that it will help."

"No. You guys are just making fun of me." I said stubbornly and crossed my arms over my chest and smirked at him.

"Rose," he said warningly and gripped the shoes. I hope he will break them.

"Ren." I mocked in the same tone as his and smirked as he let out an exasperated sigh and ran a hand through his hair brown locks. He bit his lips and looked at Dan beside him and jerked his head towards me.

Before I could a**ess the situation, Dan threw me over his shoulder and I yelped.

From my view over here, I can see Dan's b***. It was pretty.

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I pounded on Dan's back and screamed at him to let me go. My attacks were futile because he didn't even flinch or say anything, in fact, he was laughing. It didn't take long until he set me on the couch. He moved behind it and grabbed my shoulders to prevent me from escaping as Ren went in front of me again. He grabbed my foot and removed my flats and replaced them with heels. I tried to kick them away but Ren stopped my foot from doing so as he gripped them. I flinched at how tight he was holding them.

"Ren, let go! Let go of my foot!" I tried again but man was he strong. I gasped when I saw that he had moved his face in front of me. His face was too close for my liking as he looked at me with serious eyes, no hint of flirting like they used to. His breathing was hot against my skin making me shrink back. This was the difference between them. Although both of them are goofy in general, Ren's mood can easily switch into a serious one. Dan tends to lay back a lot and let his older brother handle things.

"Rose, if you want this lesson to be over with then please cooperate." His eyes told me that he doesn't want any funny business.

"And," I jumped in surprise when Dan, from behind me, lowered his head so he could whisper in my ear. His breath tickled my neck making shivers run down my spine. "If you don't want us to get angry then you'll do as we say. Get it?" he said.

I just nodded my head. Who knew that these two had a different side of them? I swallowed hard as they helped me up. I gripped at their hands as I tried to balance on my footing.

When I raised my head, the first thing that went into my mind was: Man! I like the view from up here.

I'm going on a trip. I'm going on a trip. I'm going on a trip.

"Rose, don't spread your legs that far apart. You look like you're ready to pee." Dan commented, attempting to lighten the mood. I suspect that my face looked like I was an animal giving birth.

"Please don't let me go," I said nervously as I continued to grip their hands in fear that I might fall. I had always been a clutz, so heels were a big no for me. Wearing heels for me is like learning how to ride a bike. Sure I can handle an inch tall heels but not 4 inches.

They raised their eyebrows at me. “I’m guessing you don’t wear these types of shoes that often?”

I glared at Ren. “No. It’s more like I NEVER wear them.” I snapped. Okay, I may be a little overdramatic on this but still! “If I’m gonna break my neck on this I’ll make sure to visit you guys in the afterlife. I’ll curse you that the only pairs of shoes that you guys will be wearing are heels.” I threatened.

Ren flinched while Dan laughed. “Relax princess. Those are just shoes. Try straightening your back. It might help.” I did what he told me to. Dan nodded in approval. “Good, now try taking a small step forward.” I stepped my right foot in front of me while still holding their hands.

Whhhoooooopppppp!!!!

I almost made a complete split when I took my first step. Luckily I was holding their hands. They pulled me up. “He said to take a small step forward!! That was a huge step!!” Ren said.

I gave him an annoyed look. “I was! Taking a small step I mean. I just wanted to practice my gymnastics. Apparently, I still need a lot of work to do.”

Ren raised his eyebrow in confusion. “What’s gymnastics?”

I mentally facepalmed when I remembered that they don’t know about those kinds of stuff. “Nothing. Forget I said anything.”

I continued with practicing walking while holding their hands. They would often give some really helpful tips. “Hey, you’re doing great!” Dan commented. Okay, I think I found another difference between them. Dan is nicer and gentler than Ren.

I grinned as I continued to walk with the twins still holding my hand. A minute later and they placed the book once again on top of my head. The book fell twice from my head before I learned to balance it without dancing. Oftentimes I would purposely drop it, earning glares from both the twins.

“Okay, I think you’ve gotten the hang of it.” Ren smiled contentedly as he looked at me. When I saw his smile I immediately smiled back. Well, I guess his goofy self is back.

“I think it’s alright to let go of your hand now.” I looked at Dan as he started to loosen his hold from mine. I gripped it back, catching Dan off guard.

“W-wait a minute! Do you want me to trip?!” Although I said it seriously the two just laughed.

Ren placed his other hand on my shoulder. “Don’t worry princess. If you fall, we’ll be here to surely catch you.” He said while trying to hide the smile that still lingered on his face. I’m guessing that he finds my situation funny.

Well, good for him.

“Okay Rose, we’ll let you go now. Okay?” Dan asked me and I nodded. I took a deep breath as they slowly removed their grip from my hands, leaving me. They moved back a little to give me some space.

Just one step at a time. They’re just shoes. But tripping is painful!

Taking a deep breath I put one foot in front of the other as I started to walk at a slow pace. Book still on my head. I feel like a baby taking her first step. Before I knew it, I was already walking at a normal pace. I started to grin at myself. I can hear Dan and Ren’s approval behind me in each step that I took. What can I say? I’m so awesome that I have two princes as my fans behind me.

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If my best friend was here I would be shouting at her like: Look at me! I’m walking on heels! She would probably be clapping while wiping tears of joy from her face.

I felt a little giddy that I abruptly turned around to twins. Once I turned, my heel broke and I lost my balance.

“Rose!”

“Princess!”

I placed my hands together and prayed. If I fall it’s all THEIR fault.

I closed my eyes as I waited for my fall. At that time I wished that if reincarnation was real, then I would become a boy so I wouldn't have to wear heels for the rest of my life.

But I didn't feel the ground. Instead, I felt strong muscular arms gripping me and preventing me from the fall. When I opened my eyes, I saw a pair of beautiful brown orbs staring back at me.

What is this?? A cliché Disney Princess story!?

Ren smiled warmly at me as he panted. "You okay?" I just nodded my head. His smile seemed to grow larger on his face as he said, "See? I told you that I'll catch you." He boasted.

Arrogant prince.

His scent entered my nostrils and that's when I noticed the small space between us. "Ren, I'm glad that you kept your promise, but could you help me up now? I can't move properly in this situation."

Ren seemed surprised and it seemed that he had just noticed a gap between us. His face turned a little red as he coughed and said, "Um yeah, of course." He pulled me up with him and picked the fallen book from the ground.

"Sorry, Ren. Are you hurt?" I reached out to touch his shoulder. A sudden sting startled me. It felt like I was being electrocuted for a second. "What was that?" I asked.

"What was what?" He asked.

"You didn't feel it?" I asked. He shook his head. He didn't say anything after that as I felt another hand on me. It was Dan having a worried expression on his face while occasionally having a hidden smirk for Ren.

"Are you okay?" He asked.

I smiled at him and gave him a thumbs up. "Yep."

He nodded. "Good. You can take a break for now. You can take off the shoes."

I didn't waste any time as I bent down and removed the shoes. Throwing them to the side as if I had no care for them, which I don't. The ground seemed to comfort me as I fully felt the whole floor with my foot. I didn't even bother to look for my flats as I raced to the sofa. "Flat ground! Flat ground!" I rejoiced and ran barefooted.

I wonder how some of these girls were able to bear wearing those heels. What a pain. I started to stretch my legs on the sofa not caring about manners any more.

I saw Dan watching me as I made myself comfortable to where I am sitting. I stuck my tongue out at him. He smiled and waved at me. He approached his twin. I watched as the two exchanged some words and noticed that Ren's face looked confused, while Dan had a weird look on his face.

He kept wiggling his eyes at his brother, which annoyed Ren. "Cut that out, Dan. It's really annoying." Dan continued to dance his eyebrows at him. "Oh really? Why would this bother you?" He asked innocently. He returned his gaze to me, who was watching them curiously.

Ren furrowed his eyebrows and messed his hair up. "I think I'm gonna go out for a while to get some fresh air."

Dan was still smirking as he looked at the door that Ren had just disappeared to. When Dan turned in my direction, I immediately feigned sleeping in case he would say that the break time is over. I felt the couch move so I could only guess that Dan was now sitting beside me.

"Come on Princess. I know you're awake."

I didn't move. "Really Princess. I know you're awake with the way your feet dance." I sneaked a peek at my foot to see if it really was dancing. It wasn't. "No, it's not," I said.

"So you really are awake!" Dan said with a huge grin on his face. It made me frown.

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Damn it!

Dan decided to poke my cheek. “Aww. Come on. I didn’t mean to trick you. In fact, I didn’t even know that you’ll fall for it. It’s such a simple trick!” He snorted at that.

I slapped his hand back and pouted. “What do you want now, Dan? I want to rest. Go to the other chair.” I said as I lowered my foot to the ground and pushed him off MY couch.

This time it was Dan who pouted. “Aw, but it’ll be so lonely alone.” He said with complete puppy eyes and all “And besides,” he scooted over and wrapped an arm over my shoulders and pulled me towards him. “I wouldn’t be able to cuddle with a beautiful princess now can I?” He flashed me a seductive smile that would make any girl melt in a puddle on the ground.

These prices are insane!

I grabbed his arm and removed it from my shoulders. “Save your flirting for girls who care. And besides, you wouldn’t be sitting alone for that long when Ren gets back.” I said. “By the way, where did Ren go anyway?”

His lips seemed to quirk up at my words. “Somewhere. Maybe outside.” He rubbed his chin with the quirky smile on his face. “But I think that it’ll take some time for him to come back.”

I raised an eyebrow at him. “And why is that?”

He tilted his head so he was facing the ceiling, smirking. “My brother is smart but can be an idiot in some categories in life.” He said. “Please be patient with us, sister.” He said and winked.

Sister?

This guy is seriously confusing me. “Dan please try and talk with some sense to it cause you really are difficult to understand.”

He chuckled at my words and turned his head so he was facing me. “Oh, you are such a little cutie! You two are perfect.” He pinched my cheek as he cooed.

“Ow!” I slapped his hand away and I ma**age my cheek. “That hurts you know!?”

He started to laugh. "Sorry about that Princess. I just don't have any self-control. You're just too cute." He said dramatically.

"Well stay away from me if you can't control yourself," I said bitterly as I continued to massage my aching cheek. "That really hurts."

"I'm sorry." He said apologetically. "So, do you know anything about wolves?"

"Why the sudden question?"

"Nothing. Just asking questions for fun and relaxation. Also a time for us to bond." He batted his eyes at me innocently.

I moved farther back to the opposite side of the couch and grabbed one of the heels on the floor. I pointed the pointy heel at him. "What's relaxing for me is not talking. And I'm having this weird feeling that you are up to something."

He smirked. "You know, wolves are pretty loyal."

"And I should care why? Is this part of our lesson?"

"Maybe?"

I stared at him. "You know, you twins are weird, but you alone can be really weird."

"You are too." He said and smirked in delight when he saw me frown. "You know. I think I'll just go outside to get my brother." He started to get up.

"Oh yippie. That's great. Please take all the time you need." I said jokingly.

Dan laughed. "By the way Princess, wolves mate forever. When a wolf finds its mate, it will know. Sort of." I stared at his retreating back. He paused just at the door and gave me a side glance. "Just remember that. For future reference." He winked and then he was gone.

Why are we talking about wolves again?

Chapter 14 Sibling Fight

Dan is a very weird individual. That I can conclude. It wasn't that long until they left that I decided to do a little stretching. I jumped off of the couch and did a few hops in place. I wore my flats again and decided to take a little stroll.

The twins were allowed to leave so why can't I? I'll return soon anyway.

I went out of the room and was deciding on which way I was supposed to go when I heard voices. It was coming from my right. Curiously, I followed the sound. Then, just as I was about to turn to a corner, I stopped. The twins were in the middle of the hallway talking. On reflex, I quickly moved back so I wouldn't be spotted.

By now, it would be the best and wise decision to return, but they seem to be in a serious conversation. Maybe I should stay and listen?

"So, how do you feel right now?" Dan was asking his brother with a very wide and teasing grin.

"I'm fine. Just finished getting some fresh air and some thinking."

"Rose is beautiful, isn't she?" He asked as he leaned on the wall beside the window.

They are talking about me, right? The same Rose that they are calling beautiful? Well, maybe I am. I blushed in embarra**ment but continued to listen.

"Yes, she is." Ren agreed. "She is beautiful despite her jungle girl att**ude."

Gee. Thanks. A compliment and an insult. Wow.

When I looked at Dan he was smiling. His eyes seemed to sparkle and he nodded his head in excitement. "Really?! And do you feel something when you see her?" He continued to press on.

"Uhh....yes." Ren seemed uncomfortable.

"Really?!" His smile seemed to grow bigger.

I nodded my head. “Yes. Why else would I consider her as our sister if I don’t feel anything? Right?”

“...”

I was crying tears of joy. The twins like me so much, that they consider me as their sister!?

Dan, though, seemed disappointed at his brother. Ren stared at him with a confused expression then I watched the expression on his face turn into anger. “What? What did I do?!” Ren asked. He just pouted at him and started to turn his back and said, “Idiot.”

“Wait! What do you mean?!” Ren even his pace to his brother, who was now headed in my direction. Dan just ignored him as he continued to walk. “Come on brother. Talk to me!”

“No. Find out yourself, stupid.”

“What? Why wouldn’t you just tell me why you’re upset? Brother tell me! Why are you ignoring me?”

“Cause you’re stupid!” He said and left him there, confused.

“Brother! Come on. What did I do?”

“Shut up”

“But-”

“No. Shut your mouth.”

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“Brother!”

It’s time for me to go back. I gathered my skirt up and heard a few gasps from the maids when I exposed my legs. Geez, I forgot about their manners here.

I bolted for the room. Once I came in, a maid was just serving my lunch on the table. She had a confused look on her face, but I simply placed a finger to my lips. “Shh,” I said. She simply nodded, bowed, and made her exit.

I sat at the table with my lunch on a tray and started to fill my stomach with yummy delight. It was good. I started eating a bit fast to make it seem like I was in the room the whole time eating when Ren and Dan arrived. I could only guess that the twins haven't settled their disputes because they didn't say anything to each other. It wasn't until the lessons started again that I wish I did something to help them make up.

"Rose! Straighten your back!" Ren ordered.

"No Rose! Chin up and face me! Don't listen to him." Dan argued.

I was really confused about who to follow. And I have to be the unlucky person to be in the middle of this... Why are they even fighting?

"Rose! You'll wear these pairs of heels again." Ren brought out the shoes that I was wearing earlier.

I started to reach towards them when Dan shouted. "No, Rose! Wear these!" Dan brought out another pair of heels which I think is higher. It made me stare at it in horror.

"Brother are you crazy?! She almost fell back then with just these heels and you're making her wear an even higher one?" Ren asked his brother in disbelief.

"She was able to walk on those heels. It's time for her to go to the next level idiot!" Dan told his brother.

"Now who are you calling an idiot, idiot?"

"You are, idiot!"

By then they were arguing. Their voices rose in every insult.

Oh boy...

"What's your problem with me anyway? Why are you so mad at me all of a sudden?!" Ren shouted at his brother.

"That is for ME to know and for YOU to find out!" Dan answered back.

"ALRIGHT! Stop this right now." I screamed. I can't take this anymore!

They seemed surprised at my outburst as they looked at me. “You guys want me to wear heels?! Fine!” As soon as those words left my mouth, both the twins started to shove the heels that they were holding towards me.

“Take this one, Rose!”

“No! This one!”

I waved both shoes off with my hand. “Hey back off!” I said. “I’m gonna get another pair of heels,” I muttered and marched towards the closet in my frustration. I heard the boys shouting at me, “Don’t spread your legs apart when you walk!!”

“Shut up!!” I growled at them.

As soon as I got my pair of heels, shorter this time, the training continued.

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“Rose, walk with me.”

“No me!”

“Rose! Wear this!”

“Don’t listen to him! Wear these instead!”

“Why are you always disagreeing with me?! Huh?!” Ren asked through gritted teeth as he closed the gap between them.

“Cause you’re stupid and an idiot. That’s why.” Dan said with no emotion at all. Completely unaffected by Ren’s rage.

I better stop them before it worsens. “Uhh...guys. Break it up.” I got in between them as I gently pushed them apart. They were still bickering and I was about to punch them in the face when Dan held my curl fist in his hands.

“A Princess does not punch, but a slap.” He said. “Allow me to show you the proper way of slapping someone.” He pulled a white glove from his pocket and slapped Ren’s face. It hit with a smack.

“Hey!” Ren complained as he clutched his slapped cheek. I slapped my hand to my mouth as I laughed.

“Cool!” I said. “Can I try it?” Dan grinned down at me and winked.

“Why of course. Anything for the lovely Princess.” He said as he offered me the glove. I took it.

“Hey wait a minute. That’s the men’s way of-”

SMACK!

I giggled at the impact. Cool.

“Rose!” Ren growled at me and glared at his brother, who started to chuckle. Ren took the glove from me and slapped his brother next.

“Hey!” Dan glared at his brother.

“You started it! And don’t you dare teach Rose how to slap!”

Oh boy. I was pretty sure that I was supposed to stop them...

“Alright let’s be serious now and stop this,” I said as I broke them apart once again.

Dan huffed at his brother and held my hand which was resting on his chest. He kissed it which surprised me and made Ren twitch. I saw Dan smirking at his brother before he faced me. “My deepest apology my Princess. Does it really bother you when we fight?”

If Dan won’t stop being this ridiculous, then I might fight him myself.

“Yes because whenever you guys fight you bring it on to ME!” I said in a ‘duh’ tone.

“Forgive me, Princess. Come. We shall practice somewhere else and leave this man be.” He jerked his head towards Ren as he started to pull me away.

I knew it. This guy was really up to something.

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We were about to leave the room when I felt a tug on my other arm. “And where do you intend to take her?” Ren asked his brother, not letting go of my arm. I looked at both of them in alarm.

Oh please don’t play tug-of-war. Oh please oh please oh please. I chanted in my mind.

Dan scoffed at his brother. “Somewhere away from you,” he said as he tugged at my other hand.

Dan, please don’t start tugging!!

Ren tugged at my arm next. “You are not taking her anywhere but in this room.” His tone of voice was laced with finality.

“Just because you’re the eldest doesn’t mean I have to follow your orders,” Dan said as he pulled me towards him again.

Ren’s face turned into a scowl at his brother’s words. “I’m not gonna repeat myself, Dan. You are not going anywhere with her without me and that is final.” He said with authority and once again pulled me towards him.

“Oh my my my. Why do you care so much, Ren? Does it really bother you where I take Rose with me? ALL ALONE?” With that said, Dan was able to pull me off of Ren’s hold. I was about to thank him for relieving me of their mini tug-of-war thing, but then he crushed me to his chest so hard that my air was cut off.

I’m gonna lie if I tell you that Dan stinks because he doesn’t. In fact, he smells really nice. I’m gonna stop talking about this now.

“Of course it bothers me! Who knows what you’ll do to her.” Ren accused his brother. At those words, Dan gasped dramatically. “Are you telling me that I’ll do something to her when we’re alone? Oh brother you’re still stupid.”

I pounded on Dan’s chest not because I wanted him to stop arguing with Ren but because I needed to breathe or else I might see the afterlife very soon. I don’t care if you guys kill each other but don’t drag me!

“Then what are you gonna do? Huh?!”

“Tsk tsk tsk. We’ll proceed to train of course! What? Do you think that I’ll do SOMETHING to her?”

“N-No! W-what are you talking about?”

“Oh my. What a dirty little mind you have there brother.”

I was finally able to gather enough strength as I punched Dan on the gut. He doubled over as he clutched his stomach and groaned in pain. I was able to get away from him as I gasped for air. Actually, both of us gasped for air.

I greedily breathed the air and filled my lungs.

“Rose are you okay?” Ren asked in concern as he reached out for me.

“Hey, what about me?” Dan asked when he was finally able to recover from my punch. Man does punching him hurt. I kind of felt his abs when I punched him. Man those things are hard. Luckily I punch like a man but it didn’t prevent my hand from throbbing.

Stupid abs.

“You deserve it, brother,” Ren said to his brother in anger.

“Huh. Now, why are you so angry? It’s not like I did something to you.” Dan said c***ily.

“Shut up! Rose is training with me. Right, Rose?”

“No, she will not be training with someone as stupid as you. Isn’t that right, Rose?” Dan asked. By now they were coming closer to me, offering their hand. I stepped back a little in fear of them.

Chapter 15 N@rnia

“Rose!”

Which one?

“Rose?”

Which one?!

“ROSE!!!”

A surge of anger washed over me. “SHUT UP!” I screamed at them. I a**ume that my scream had startled them because they had backed away and gave me a fearful look. I glared at both of them.

“If you guys wanted to fight, then could you please count me out?! If you wanna kill each other, then be my guest!! Just...just don’t drag me!!” They were about to say something but I held a finger up, silencing them. “Until you guys sort things out...I’ll be on that couch. Waiting.” I said as I turned my back on them and sat on the couch.

The twins didn’t move from their spot. They were just standing there and having a glaring contest.

“This is all your fault!” Ren accused his brother after a minute.

“Me? Now, why is it my fault?! If you just let us go then none of this would have happened!” Dan said to his brother. Disbelief in his voice that his brother had accused him.

I facepalmed at them. These guys are a lot of work. For once, I thank my lucky stars that my younger sister is only seven years old, whose name is Stella. At least I wouldn’t have to experience that sibling war that the twins are currently having.

What am I gonna do with them?! They are still bickering and throwing insults at each other.

Alright, Rose time to use your brain. You have to think of a way to forcibly make them up. But how?

If only I could lock them in a small room together they might make up. I looked around the room, scanning. My eyes then settle to the large closet in front of me.

While the boys were still arguing about who’s a fault it is, I got up and examined the closet. It was made of wood, painted white, with a lock on it. It was huge if it weren’t for the shoes which were piled on the floor of it.

I started to clear all of the shoes and threw them aside. I guess you could consider this as my revenge on the shoes. Once I cleared the closet from all the shoes, I examined the space and looked back at the twins as I estimated it. Perfect fit.

Now I just have to trick them in. How?

I pulled the closet doors wide open as I let out a gasp. "OH MY GOSH! THE PORTAL TO N@RNIA IS OPEN!" I screamed.

The boys stopped what they were doing as they gave me a confused look. "What's N@rnia?" They asked at the same time.

"...." I mentally facepalmed at my epic fail moment.

Duh! How can they know N@rnia? It's not like they're reading them, much less watched it.

Oh well, I started it now so why not continue?

"Uhh... never mind! Just look at it! There's a magical portal. Look!" I pointed at the inside of the closet.

They didn't move and just stared at me as if I had lost my mind.

"Just get over here!" Something snapped at me back then so I didn't notice that I was already shouting. That seemed to startle the boys as well since they immediately ran to my side to check the inside of the closet.

"Where's the portal that you're talking about?" Ren asked as he crouched down to look.

"I don't see anything," Dan said and moved some of the clothes out of the way to look.

"It's there. Just keep searching." I said. "Oh look! There it is!" I pointed to the inside of the closet.

"Where?!" They both asked.

"At the end! See? Go and look for it!" I told them. If their stupidity has reached a whole new level, then this is it.

When they started to crawl inside the closet, I immediately pushed them farther inside as I closed the door and turned the lock.

s***ers!

“Welcome to N@RNIA!” I cheered.

“Ahh....so this is N@rnia. It’s a little dark in here...” Dan said in amazement. Idiot.

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“Rose? Rose! Let us out!” I could hear Ren shouting from the other side. “You open this door right now or you’ll be in a heap of trouble once I get out.” Ren threatened.

“Sorry. Until you guys sort things out you ain’t leaving this closet.”

“ROSE!!”

I smirked and happily walked towards the couch that I was sitting on a while ago.

“Move your b***, Dan!”

“Ow! Hey this is my side of the line! You move.”

I could hear both of them pushing each other inside.

“Stupid!”

“Moron!”

“Your mom must have had a rotten brain cause apparently you inherited it!”

“Stupid!!! We have the same mother.”

“Will you two shut up?! If you guys don’t have anything good to say, then don’t say anything at all.” I shouted to them. At those words, the boys had silenced.

Wow, I guess they really don’t have anything good to say.

5 minutes have pa**ed and still, they didn’t say a word.

“Anytime now guys,” I said boredly as I lay down on the couch.

“I don’t have anything good to say so I won’t say anything at all,” Ren said stubbornly.

“Neither do I.” Dan agreed.

Man do I need to do something or else I might break.

I scanned the room for something. ANYTHING to keep me sane. This silence is driving me crazy!

I marched to the closet as I knocked on it. Alright. Enough games. Time to help them make up

“Who’s there?” Ren asked boredly from the other side.

“Stupid. Who else could it be?” I said.

Dan snorted at that. “See? Even Rose thinks you’re an idiot–OW! Hey!”

“Daniel and Renevier Rutledge!!” I called them warningly. They fell silent and I could have heard them gulp loudly.

Huh. I think full names here also means you’re in trouble.

“If you guys won’t make up right now I’m gonna call the Queen and tell her to bust your b***s off!” I threatened.

No reply

I sighed tiredly. “You guys really aren’t going to make up right now are you?”

“Yes.” Both said stubbornly.

Are they always like this when they fight?

“Alright, fine. Stay there until dinners are over. I’m gonna go outside for a while and leave you two be.” I got up from where I was crouching. “When I get back I expect you two to have sorted things out already. Ciao!”

I’m not really gonna leave them alone. I’m just gonna pretend that I’m going out for a while since I figured that they might be a little shy with me around. I marched towards the door and opened it then closed it to make it look like I left.

After that, I tiptoed heading to the closet, and leaned in. I didn't really hear them talking. It took them a moment before Ren broke the silence thickening between them.

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“Hey.”

I have to bite my tongue so I wouldn't shout at him and say ‘ARE YOU KIDDING ME?! IT TOOK YOU A MINUTE JUST TO SAY A SINGLE WORD?!’

“Dan is not available right now. Please talk to him again after you settled your stupidity” Dan said. I facepalmed at Dan. Shame on him. And I thought he was a tad bit mature.

Ren sighed tiredly. “Dan please? You can't just ignore me forever. We're brothers after all.”

“...”

Oh, come on Dan!

“Dan. Please. I miss talking to my brother without the fighting part.” Ren pleaded. “I don't know what I did to make you hate me and I hope that you'll forgive me,” Ren said. Even though Ren said all of those things, Dan still didn't answer.

“You know, fighting with you really hurts and bothers me. This is the longest that we fought. Usually, we would immediately make up even without words of apology.” Ren sighed as if remembering some memories. “We don't fight that much too so I guess we're not used to letting our pride go and be the first to forgive each other.” Ren laughed without the humor in it. “As men and as siblings, we value that pride. I too value that.” He said. “But if I have to let that pride go and say the most honest apology that I could muster. I would. Just so you could forgive me. Dan, I give you my deepest apology. Will you forgive me?”

I slap a hand to my mouth so I wouldn't weep at his words.

That was wonderful, Ren!

I heard someone sniffing from the other side.

“Dan? Dan are you okay? Hey, are you crying?” Ren asked worriedly.

Dan sniffed once more before saying, “No. These are sweats. It’s too hot in here.” Dan said, but you could tell that it was a lie. “And besides, brother. I forgive you. You don’t have to give me that speech of yours.”

Ren snorted. “Sorry. I just thought that you needed it. Knowing you, it needs to be done. Besides, I’m the eldest. I have to be the considerate one. So are we okay now?”

“Of course we are. Besides, I miss my brother too.”

“Thank you, brother.” I smiled at that because finally the two of them made up. Now isn’t that nice? At least I won’t be tortured anymore. “By the way, can I ask you a question?” Ren asked.

“Sure. Shoot it.”

“Why were you so upset with me?” I leaned in. They don’t judge. I wanna know the reason for their argument too.

I could hear Dan smirking. “Like I said before. That’s for me to know and for you to find out. Don’t worry, you’ll figure it out sooner or later.” Ren whined at that but was silenced by Dan. “Besides, Princess Rose is currently listening to this. We wouldn’t want her to know, right?”

Crap. How did they know?

Oh well since they did makeup why not release them already?

I whipped the silly little tears from my eyes, Curse Ren and his words, and unlocked the closet. I threw it wide open and saw Dan smirking at me and Ren gapping at me. Ren pointed a shaky finger in my direction. “Y-you were listening?”

I nodded my head. “Yep.”

“H-how long?”

I thought about it for a moment. “Hmmm....from the very start.” I grinned down at Ren.

“You heard everything?” He asked.

I nodded again. “Uh huh. Everything. Word per word.”

Ren’s cheeks flamed in embarrassment while Dan had to slap a hand to his mouth to keep himself from laughing. I stared at Dan confusedly. “How did you know that I was listening?”

Dan stopped from laughing but the humor was still in his eyes. “I just figured it out from the start when you leaned in, the door rattled a little.” He said. “Oh and I could see your shadow by the way.”

I pouted at him. “Aw, man.”

Both the twins got up from the closet as dusted themselves off. “Locking us into a closet. That was pretty mean, Princess.” Ren commented as he grabbed his coat from the rack and placed it on and stretched his muscles. It was the coat that I was playing with earlier.

“Yes. For that, I think she deserves a punishment no?” Dan said to his brother and they both grinned at each other before turning to me.

“Err...but I did it to help you guys! At least be thankful!” I was slowly backing away towards the door by now. Each one took a menacing step towards me.

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“Yes we are thankful,” Ren said as Dan continued. “But a punishment for that crime is needed.”

“Um...I don’t think that what I did was a crime.” I said more of a question than a statement.

They both shook their heads. “No, it’s not. But for us it is.” As soon as they said that I quickly grabbed the heels that were on the floor and threw it at them.

“Hey!”

“Ow! That’s dangerous, Rose!”

“Ha! If you knew that those are dangerous, then why would you let me wear those deadly weapons.” I ran towards the door.

The boys were hot on my heels. I threw it open and ran outside as fast as my feet could carry me.

Luckily I was wearing my flats again.

I wasn't watching where I was going so I ended up bumping into someone, and that someone was Fred who had caught me before I could fall. He was with Nate and Ace.

Fred gave me a confused look as if wondering what I was doing. "Are you all right?" He asked.

I have to keep myself from stuttering in front of him. "Y-yes," I said. "Um...what are you guys doing here?" Okay, that was rude to ask. If anything, Fred didn't mind it.

"Well, since you guys are a tad bit late for dinner, we figured to pick you guys up." He said. Ace snorted at him. "Sorry, we have to force Ace to come too." He corrected me.

"Why are you out of breath?" Nate asked me as he examined my face.

"I-I..."

"ROSE!" At the sound of the twins' voice, I acted fast and was behind Fred and Nate as I pointed towards the twins. "They are after me!"

Fred, Nate, and Ace followed the direction that my finger was pointing and looked at Ren and Dan, who were slightly shocked to see the others as well. Ren and Dan were gaping at them while Fred and Nate gave them a disapproving look. The twins laughed nervously. "Um...we were just playing. Right, Rose?" Ren looked at me for help which I replied by sticking my tongue out at them. They frowned at that.

Fred and Nate chuckled at my behavior. "You boys are gonna be in a heap of trouble," Fred said more of a joke, but the twins thought he was serious, and fear flashed in their eyes. "I'm kidding," Fred said after seeing the nervousness in their eyes. The twins sighed in relief knowing that Fred was joking.

"Are we done here? If yes, then let's go. The king and Queen are waiting." Said Ace in annoyance.

Nate only chuckled at him. “I hate to say it but Ace is right. Let’s go guys.”

We nodded as we walked together to the dining hall. I was walking between Nate and Fred since I figured that Ace still has a grudge against me and the twins wanted to have some revenge too. Ace still has a bit of doodle on his face. I guess the ink was pretty strong.

I peeked from Fred’s side to look at Ace. “Hey, Ace.”

He didn’t answer.

“Oh, I’m sorry, PRINCE Ace?”

This time he did look at me but with annoyance. “What?”

I smirked at him. “Nice look. I think that mustache really suits you, but I prefer it if you have shaved it for dinner.” If Fred wasn’t between us I might have been killed by Ace already. He had to stop Ace from charging at me as we all laughed, except for Ace.

“I’m gonna kill her.” Ace mumbled to himself.

I snorted at that.

Oh boy. I think I needed an e***** all the time whenever I walked into this castle.

“Hey by the way boys. Why do you smell of wood?” Nate asked the twins who were beside them.

“Oh. We just had a trip to Marnia.” Dan answered.

“Marnia?” Nate asked in confusion. The twins and I looked at each other and we laughed.

“Yes.”

Chapter 16 Red Haired Flirt

I was jumping on the clouds and enjoying my freedom. The clouds then suddenly turn into those soft mushy cotton candies. I squealed in delight as I flopped down and hugged the sweet candy goodness.

This is heaven, I thought.

I was enjoying my life when suddenly, it started to rain making the cotton candy dissolve. And since I'm floating on one right now...

I started to sprint away from the rain cloud. Wait...a cloud raining on another cloud? That's weird. The thunder started to roar, but instead of the normal BOOM, it decided to call my name.

“ROSE!!”

Lightning suddenly strikes in front of me, making me fall off the grounder cloud. The rain cloud was approaching me, but I couldn't move. I was frozen to the spot from fear and shock. When I looked up, there was a shadow of a man in front of me. I couldn't decipher the face of the man. Heck, I couldn't even see from the darkness of the rain cloud.

I muffled a scream when the man suddenly reached out to me. To make it creepier, he was calling my name. “Rose”. I started to scream and tried to slap his hands away from me as he shook me back and forth.

“Rose”

“ROSE!”

My eyes jerked open, only to be met by two green orbs staring at me. I recognize those eyes. Those eyes would only belong to Nate, whose face is currently above mine making me see the red specks in his eyes.

“Well good morning Princess,” He said, complete with a smile and all. On reflexes, I screamed and slapped him across the cheek. My palm connected his cheek with a loud smack. My hands throbbed from the impact, which made me sit up and clutch my hand.

“OW!! WHAT THE HECK?!” Both of us screamed.

“Why'd you slap me?” Nate asked while clutching his cheek.

“Cause you startled me!” I snapped at him. One thing to know about me is that I am not a morning person. I grunted as I rubbed my aching palm. “And why do you have such a hard cheek!? What is that made of? Rock?”

At that, Nate's lips twitch in the tiniest smile that he could. "It hurts huh?" he said with pride as if he was amused that slapping him hurts.

I glared at him. How dare he smile knowing that he injured my palm. Well technically it's my fault, but hello? He's the one with a hard face!

"Of course it does. Try slapping yourself to see if it hurts or not." I said, not easing my glare at him. He rubbed his chin as if he was thinking about it.

"Nope. Sorry. I'm not gonna damage my face by doing that cause I'm pretty sure that my slap is stronger than you, babe. And besides, your slap hurts too you know." He made a pouty face at me and pointed towards his said cheek. "Now go and kiss it to make it better."

I ignored him as I pulled the sheets over me, ready to take my sleep once again. "What are you doing here, Nate? Can't you see that I was in the middle of my sleep?" I yawned to prove my point, but Nate didn't move away from my bed. He was still sitting on the edge of it. Even though my bed is a queen-sized one, I still prefer to have full space for myself. Call me selfish but that's just me.

"Oh. I'm sorry to disturb your beautiful rest. I'm guessing the twins must have exhausted you yesterday?" He asked.

"Tell me about it," I said as I fixed my pillow. "Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going back to dreamland since I was RUDELY interrupted earlier." I emphasize the word 'rudely' just so he could get my point before I gave him one of my sweet-fake smiles. "Bye, Nate." I then covered myself with the covers.

"Woah Woah Woah. Not so fast, little love." Nate tried to pull the covers away from me but I held on to it. Not wanting to lose my comfort zone, which is currently this bed. If you thought that Nate had stopped bugging me about waking up, then you are definitely wrong. He's really pushy as he started to shake me back and forth. "It's time for your training with me. Now, don't you want to have quality time with me?"

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"No."

"Aw come on." He whined in such a very cute tone that would make you want to pinch his cheeks as you would with a child, but I am so not touching his cheek

again. I threw the covers off of my head and looked at Nate. His eyes sparkled with hope as I did so, but was immediately crushed when I stuck my tongue out at him and covered my head with the sheets again.

“I knew hanging out with the twins was bad for you,” he muttered under his breath, which made me snicker. I can see why the twins like to make fun of Nate now. “Come on, Rose. Get up or I’m gonna cry.” He threatened.

“That’s nice.”

I felt the bed dipped a little at his weight and heard him whisper in my ear. “If you won’t get up now within 5 seconds, I’m going to tell Prince Fred that since you didn’t have your lesson with me that you’re canceling your cla** with him tomorrow too.” He said in his most seductive yet threatening tone. I flinched

Wait. Did he just say what I think he said?

Nate must have felt me flinch when he said. “Fred is a nice guy. I think he’ll understand.” I could tell that he was enjoying this and I could picture him smiling through the covers. “What do you say? Either way. I’m fine with it. But Prince Charming on the other hand...”

Don’t move, Rose. Don’t let him fool you. It’s probably a trick, I thought but I quickly perished it when Nate started to count.

“5”

“...”

“I’m being serious here, Rose. 4.”

“...”

“Still nothing? 3-”

I threw the covers away and made sure to toss them at Nate as I scrambled to my feet. “I’m up! I’m up!” I screamed as I arranged my nightgown and made a beeline to the bathroom. It didn’t help my mood when I heard Nate chuckled outside of the bathroom. The maids were there as usual to help me.

“DON’T TAKE TOO LONG, SWEETHEART!!!” He yelled, which made me hate him now.

30 minutes later, I made sure to take that long, I got out of the tub and put a bathrobe around me. After making sure that the robe is now secured around me, I got out of the room and headed to my closet.

“Ohhhh nice. Very nice. I should come here more often.”

My heart nearly jumped out of my chest when I saw Nate lying on bed and looking at me with approval. I pulled the bathrobe tightly around me and I screamed.

“Nate, what are you still doing here?!”

“I was waiting for you and-”

“Please e***** this stranger out,” I asked one of the maids as I pointed towards the door.

“Prince, right this way.” The maid said, showing him the way out of the room. He gave me a sad look as if he was pleading for me to let him stay. He tried that for at least 5 seconds before accepting the fact that I would NEVER let him stay and watch me get dressed.

“Fine. But just so you know. You can wear that robe on our training.” He winked then wiggled his eyes at me.

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“NATE!”

“Alright alright. I’m going.” He got up from the bed and stuffed his hands in his pocket grumpily. I made sure not to leave my eyes off of him as I watched him leave, but when he pa**ed me he muttered, “Killjoy.” I almost laughed at his childish behavior but no. I mustn’t cause he’s a pervert. He left the door with a dramatic ‘humph’ before closing it behind him.

I shook my head as I scanned the closet for something to wear. I decided to go for a mint colored-long sleeved dress that ends just below the knees. I wore my flats since we’re just practicing the proper etiquette. I checked myself in the mirror.

“Thank you!” I told the maids when I left the room.

I saw Nate leaning on the wall probably waiting for me. When he saw me, he pouted in that cute way that would make girls swoon. “I prefer you wearing a little bit more revealing.” He glared at my dress as if it would melt under his gaze.

“Sorry, Nate. I’m not taking any chances with you around.” I smirked at him.

He huffed. “Fine. Let’s go.” He offered me his arm, which I took. We started to walk down the halls. I let Nate guide me through since I know that he’s more familiar with this place more than I do.

While we were walking, we suddenly stopped and scratched his head.

“What’s wrong?” I asked worriedly.

He then began to scratch his cheek in embarra**ment. “Umm.....I think we went the wrong way.” He laughed nervously after that.

My jaw dropped at his confession. I take it back. He doesn’t know his way around this castle. The b*****. And I even let this guy with no sense of direction lead me!

“Nate!”

“Umm....oh! I think it’s this way.” He started to pull me to another room.

“Hmmm.....yep. This is it, love.” He said and pulled me forward as he opened the door to a room. It had nothing in it except for a single round table and some long tables at the side with white cloths over it. Roses were placed on vases on top of the tables, making them look elegant and presentable.

I stared at the setting in awe. “Wow, Nate. You really took some time preparing this place.”

“Of course. Anything for my beautiful Princess.” He winked at me. “So, do I kiss?” He bit his lips and made a seductive face at me.

“No”

“My heart can’t take any more rejection.” He put his hands to his heart to prove his point.

I smirked at Nate and shrugged my shoulders. “Oh poor you.” I let go of his arm and started to walk to the table to examine the roses and daffodils on the vase. When I looked up to Nate, he was starring at me for quite a long time, not saying anything.

Finally, he spoke. “Am I not good-looking?” He asked.

I raised an eyebrow in confusion at him. What is this freak talking about? “All girls can’t be interested in you, Nate. Just accept the fact that someone might be better than you.”

Nate gasped dramatically. “Is it because of this Fred guy?” He asked in a fake angry tone which made me laugh. “It’s him isn’t it?!” He said in a tone that boyfriends would use when they are jealous. But his acting was very sloppy.

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I decided to join in humohumor. I placed a hand to my chest as I said with all the fake sincerity that I had. “Oh, Nate. I’m so sorry. It’s not me, it’s you.” Wait. wasn’t that the other way around?

“It’s the cape isn’t it?” He looked back towards his cape which was hanging onto his back.

“That and the ridiculous look on your face.”

“What face? This s**y little thing?” He raised an eyebrow and puckered his face in a s**y pose. I laughed harder if that was even possible. “Alright. Time to get serious and start this training.” He clapped his hands and rubbed them together in excitement.

“Nate, you’re the only one who’s fooling around you know,” I said after I caught my breath. I whipped the exes tears away from my eyes.

“True, but I know that you loved it.” He said as he went towards me. He moved the chair in front of the table back and motioned for me to sit in a gentleman-like gesture. I sat while I watched Nate delicately arranging the utensils in front of me. He picked up the smallest sp*** of the group and showed it to me. “This here is a teasp***. It’s used to stir tea or coffee.” He said and placed it back on the table. His finger glided to another one just beside the teasp***. This time, he took a sp*** that is in between the size of a normal sp*** and a teasp***. “This is the

dessert sp***. This is used for eating desserts. Its size is larger than the teasp*** so don't mistake it as one. Okay?"

"Noted," I confirmed.

He picked up another one which is of normal size this time. "Now this is our regular sp***." He said. "I don't think I need to explain what this is used for since you probably know it, right?" He looked at me for confirmation which I gave a nod to.

Something that I noticed while Nate was explaining is that he always makes sure that you understand what he's talking about. And the way that he talks to you gives you that vibe that you could easily ask him for anything without him snapping at you.

Unlike a certain PRINCE that I know of.

Nate continued to explain the dos and don'ts in eating. Like – don't lean your elbows on the table, don't chew loudly, don't stuff yourself, don't slouch, don't burp in front of the table, say 'excuse me' when you're leaving the table, and even your eating pace with the others so you'll finish the same time as them. Nate also showed me the proper ways on how to use the knife and how to properly hold the sp***s.

"Now you see? This is the proper way to cut. You use your knife to cut through so we could avoid the flying meats." He teased. I pouted at him as I remembered the time when I attempted to cut the meat and a piece of it went flying towards Ace's plate.

"Forget about it!" I was too flustered to make up an excuse about that time.

He chuckled at my childlike behavior and patted my head. "Oh sure, love. Whatever you say. But just remember that if you needed an a**istant to cut your food for you, you know who to ask." He winked.

Just as I was about to say a smart comment, we heard a knock at the door. Nate stood up and walked towards it and opened one of the large double doors of the room. He smiled at the person behind it before nodding his head and opening the door wide. As soon as he opened it, a bunch of servants came rushing in holding a tray of what I a**ume is something edible. Smells of freshly cooked meat wafted

in the room making me drool and my stomach screaming in protest, reminded me that I forgot to eat my breakfast thanks to a certain someone.

The servants piled the trays on the long tables at the side and arranged them. They moved in perfect sync as if they had done this a bunch of times already, which I'm probably thinking that they did. A minute later and they were done. As soon as they disappeared behind the doors, I was left with Nate and the delicious smell of the food a few feet in front of me.

I saw Nate smile from the corner of my eyes as he looked at me with amusement as I drooled. He strode towards me and offered me his hand and pulled me up to my feet. He handed me a plate and led me to the table. "Let's start our lesson. Now come on and fill your plate. Remember what I said." He said and nodded for me to start. I didn't waste any time as I filled my plate, ready to feed my growling stomach.

By the time that I was done, you couldn't see a vacant space on my plate anymore. All was covered with mashed potatoes, beef, a slice of pork, and many more. I looked at my plate in approval and satisfaction.

I'm pretty sure that this would do the trick, I thought.

As I was about to head to my table, Nate stood in front of me, stopping me from moving further. He looked at my plate and shook his head in disapproval. I gave him a look. "Um, Nate? I'm about to eat lunch now so can you please move?"

"This won't do." He said, still looking at my plate.

Chapter 17 Proper Table But No Manners

"What do you mean?" I asked with a confused look on my face and a tint of an annoyance since he's blocking my way to heaven right now. Before I could protest at him, he took my plate out of my hand.

"Hey!"

"This plate is too full. I told you to only take what you can eat and not to fill your plate." He said and eyed the plate with distaste.

"Give it back!" I yelled as I reached for it, but he held it over his head making it harder for me to reach it. "Nate! What's the deal?!"

He didn't respond to me and pointed to the table once again. "Go get another plate and fill it up. This time don't stuff it all up." He ordered. My jaw dropped at him.

He can't be serious right?

"But what about-"

"Start filling your plate up or else you won't get anything to eat." He said with finality.

"Ugh!" I glared at him as I stomped my way to the table and grabbed a new plate. I started to fill it in, but this time I only put some small portions in it. Nate came to my side and examined my plate.

"Mmhm. That'll do." He said in approval. "Now you can go and eat your lunch now." He ushered me to the table. I didn't move and looked at my poorly filled plate.

This won't do.

I looked at the tray beside me. Nate saw me and gave me a warning look. "No. Don't even think about it." He warned. I gave him my best pleading look and even went as far as biting my lip.

"Please? I'm so hungry. I didn't eat my breakfast this morning." I pleaded.

"Aw. Really?" I nodded. My mind was cheering in the thought that Nate might feel sorry for me and let me add more to my plate. "I'm sorry darling but I can't do that." At those words, my hope was completely crushed.

I started to feign crying. Nate looked surprised at me and I could tell that he was confused about what to do with me. "I-I just....want something to...e-eat."

"Err....umm....W-why don't you go to your table and eat what you have? It might help." He said and looked away from me as he said it.

I started to hiccup for more effect. "I-I'm gonna tell everyone what a big bully you are for starving a girl like me. I'll make sure to tell the twins to tell Fred to tell the Queen to tell the King to tell the-"

"N-No! Don't do that!"

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“To tell your mom to tell your dad-”

“Fine! Just a little so shut up!!” He said in an annoyed voice, but you could tell that he was about to lose it. Heck, he might want to kill me right now.

I lifted my eyes at him. “Really?” I asked. His response was a weak nod, telling me that he was either forced to say that or was unsure of his answer. I took that as my signal and grinned widely at him. All my acting completely vanished as I cheered.

“Thanks, Natie poo!” I squealed and added the food to my plate before I hopped towards the table. I sat on the chair happily and licked my lips in anticipation.

Nate joined me at the table with his own plate. I grabbed her sp*** and fork and was about to dig in when he cleared his throat loudly. “Ehem!”

I stared back at myself in confusion. “What?” I asked. “You’re not gonna take my food now, are you?” I made a protective circle around my plate.

He chuckled. “No, sweetheart but I think you are forgetting something.” When I tilted my head in confusion yet again, he turned his gaze at the napkin at the side of my plate to give me a hint. My mouth formed an ‘O’ in understanding.

I gave him a sheepish smile as I dr***d the napkin on my lap before I started to devour the food, but when I saw him giving her a disapproving look I eased my pace in eating.

“I can’t see the reason why the boys were a tad bit stressed when they trained you. You’re very cooperative.” He commented.

“Yeah...” I looked away guiltily. “I wonder why.”

A few minutes later and he got bored so I started to flirt with him again. “You know Rose? I’m kinda hungry. Aren’t you gonna share?” he said and gave me a pouty look.

“No,” I said flatly. Suddenly, he became very quiet. I looked at him to see that he was staring at his plate blankly. “Nate?” I called out. No response.

I tried again. Louder this time. “NATE!!”

He snapped my attention back at me. A moment later and he smirked.

“Are you okay?” I asked.

“Huh? Yes, I’m fine. Why’d you ask?”

“You kept on staring at space for quite a while now. I was worried that you might not be feeling ill.” His smile widened. “Aww. You do care!” He exclaimed. “Don’t worry about me, love. Knowing that you care, makes me feel better in an instant.”

“Okay,” I shrugged.

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“What? That’s it! That’s your reaction!?” This girl amazes me all the time.

“Oh and, Nate?” His head perked up. “Please stop calling me with strange nicknames. You sound like a creep.”

“Aw...but that’ll be boring if I don’t call you something, love.” He said. “Oh, and by the way, you got a little something on your upper lip.” He reached out and tried to wipe it away with his thumb. I flinched at the gesture before moving out of his reach. Then I used my napkin to wipe the dirt off my face.

“Are you really not attracted to my face?”

I snapped my eyes at him. “What?” That was such a random question.

“Sorry, let me rephrase it. Is something wrong with the way I look?” I asked again. This time, she understood it.

“Oh.” I set the napkin back on the table. “Hmm. I think I already told you that your attitude bothers me.”

“Yes, you said that but why?” I pressed on and leaned on the table.

I thought about it for quite a while before saying. “I hate flirts.” Nate started laughing.

“What’s so funny?” I asked him. He’s going crazy. Should I leave?

When he was finally able to catch his breath, he rearranged his posture and wiped some tears from his eyes. “You said that you hated flirts. That’s not enough of a reason you know. There must be something more, right?” He said and rested his chin on his knuckles.

“Hmm...” I put a finger to my chin as I thought about it. “I think what I’m really looking for is his personality.”

“Oh really? Then why are you talking to me right now? I thought you hated flirts.”

“Actually. You’re not that bad. Sure, you annoy me to my core with your stupid nicknames, but I don’t think that flirting really is your game.” I noticed that Nate isn’t like any other flirts out there. It’s because he always has this look of doubt in his eyes like he is unsure of what he’s doing. “While you were explaining some stuff to me a while ago you didn’t flirt with me or call me with strange nicknames. I think that side of you is the real you...I think.”

He scoffed. “Really huh.”

“Yes. Really, Nate.” I insisted. “Any woman would be lucky to have you.”

“Ha! Woman. I don’t even think that I’ll be able to settle down with one. They would either ditch me or find a new lover.”

Wow. So bitter

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“How can you say that, you idiot! You can settle down if you want to.” I stopped. “Why are we even talking about settling down?”

He grinned. “Because I am 20 and I do not have a fiancé yet.”

“Nate,” I warned him since I know where this conversation was headed.

“Why don’t you marry me instead? That way I can really settle down.” He smirked.

“You know what? I think I’m gonna go and get some dessert.” I began to stand up.

“Oh great. Get me some choco-”

“You have two hands and two legs so why don’t you get them yourself.” I retorted.

“You also have them too so why not get me some.” He answered back and smirked when I marched towards the dessert table and mumbled some profanities along the way. I heard him chuckled as I continued to mumble about what a big jerk he is. I faintly saw him dr*** something at the back of his chair.

“Nate! What kind of dessert do you want!? Hurry up or I might change my mind!”

“I’ll get one of each!” He said. I clicked my tongue together before getting another plate and filling it up. A few seconds later and I was back with two plates. I dropped his plate in front of him and grumpily sat in my chair. He laughed a little.

And just like what he had taught me, I took the dessert sp*** and started to eat. I heard him tsk. “Smaller bites.” He said and reached out and started to wipe the chocolate off of my face again, this time I didn’t move away since I was busy eating. The desserts are so good. The chocolate simply melts in your mouth.

“There.” He said after wiping it all off. I grinned at him and muttered thanks before shoving another bite into my mouth.

“Hey, Nate. If you’re just gonna sit there and stare at me, then I might as well eat your plate of desserts.” I said. He chuckled at my comment.

“No way. I haven’t eaten anything yet and you’re gonna take this away from me? Not fair!” He whined.

He kept staring at me as we ate. “Am I doing something wrong?” I asked. He looked at me and smirked. “Stop looking at me like that, Nate. You look like an old pervert.”

“What? This face? An old pervert? Love, I think something is wrong with your vision there. And I prefer you to call me a YOUNG pervert.” He said. They rolled her eyes at me and continued to eat.

“Seriously, Nate! Eat your food you creep!” I threw my napkin at him, which I easily dodged. He laughed.

Chapter 18 Cape of Doom

I leaned on the table in front of me as I poked the remains of my unfinished food. Don't get me wrong, I like the food but I think my stomach doesn't have enough space for them which is a shame.

“Rose, I'm gonna leave you for a bit, okay? I just have some things to handle first.” Nate stood up from his seat in front of me and wiped his mouth with his napkin before setting it on the table. “You be good now while I'm gone, okay?” He looked at me as if begging me to stay put. He probably thinks that I'll wander off somewhere while he's not around.

I can't blame him. Somehow I see a pattern wherein they leave me for a second and trouble seems to appear.

In response to his request, I mocked a salute. “Yes sir! Take all the time you need.” I said. Nate gave me one of those uncertain looks of his before he left the room but not before giving me a warning look before he left the room.

As soon as the door closed behind him, I fist-pumped the air and shouted a “YES!”. Immediately, the door opened once again and Nate's head appeared behind the door. “Excuse me?” He's asked with his eyebrow raised.

I gave him a sheepish smile and an innocent look. Not wanting to make it obvious. “Nothing. Have fun!”

He pointed a finger at me and gave me a warning look. “I'm warning you. Behave.” with that, he once again disappeared behind the doors.

What am I? A dog?

I grinned evilly as I thought of ditching this place and going for a hike. Oh yeah!

I stood up rather quickly and, in the process, bumped the table and caused my own plate of dessert to fall on the floor, staining it with chocolate.

Oh *\$%^&*!!

“Nate is gonna kill me!!” I whispered to myself, now in panic mode. See what I mean when I say trouble follows me?

What to do? What to do?

Look for something to wipe it off! Yes! That's it!

I scanned my surroundings for something big to wipe it clean. My eyes landed on the fabric at the back of Nate's chair. It was green and silky.

And it was the perfect rag for this mess!!

I reached out and grabbed the fabric and started to wipe the floor clean as fast as I could. Who knows how many minutes/hours I have when Nate comes back?

I wiped the fabric back and forth, making sure the floor is all clean and sparkly once again. When I was already satisfied the floor was once again clean, I threw the fabric on the sofa at the side. Just in time though, because Nate just came back. I quickly stood up from the floor and hid my hands behind my back.

Yes, probably not the best move for the innocent look.

"What were you doing?" Nate asked suspiciously.

"Nothing suspicious. I promise." I said and added a sweet smile to it. LIAR!

"Okay," Nate said uncertainly. "Did you have enough rest? Are you ready for the next lesson?" He asked. Instead of answering, I gave him a nod.

Throughout the whole afternoon, Nate just taught me how to respond and act when there's a guest and how to talk to them properly. He told me that when someone asks me a question and when my mouth is still full, I would either nod, if the question is a yes or no, or swallow my food first before answering.

"Aren't you tired of this practice?" I asked.

"What?" Nate asked in confusion.

I gestured towards the table. "This. Isn't it very tiring to always have to do this? Be polite and act like a lady/gentleman?"

Nate stared at me for a moment before he chuckled in amusement. "When you put it that way, I guess. But when you have lived through all your life doing this then I guess it's pretty normal."

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“Well, that s***s for me then,” I muttered under my breath pretty low for a human ear, but I guess it wasn’t as low as I suspected since Nate started to chuckle.

“I guess you’ll just have to get used to it then, right?” Nate smiled, but not his usual flirty smile but one of pure amus****t. He got up from his chair and went to the dinner table and picked up a plate as he started to fill it in. When he came back, he set down a huge slice of steak in front of me. “Get your knife and fork and start practicing on how to cut.” He ordered.

“What? But didn’t you already see me cutting my steak when I was eating my lunch?”

“You could have fooled me. I saw you using your fingers while you were cutting it. You even stabbed it multiple times while I wasn’t looking. That’s called cheating, you know?”

“Darn! And I thought that you really weren’t looking.” I muttered. I knew I should have brought some scissors!

“It’s not that I wasn’t looking. I just did it on purpose since you were having a hard time eating so I just made an exemption.” He smirked as he said it. “Now go and start cutting.”

I let out an exasperated sigh as I grabbed my fork and knife on the table and started to cut through the meat. Not a moment later and I was already stabbing it in frustration. Nate, on the other hand, was busy laughing his b*** off at my frustration.

Nate whipped some tears from his eyes before he spoke. “I could watch you all day and won’t get enough of it.”

“Aha ha. Very funny. Glad to know that you’re enjoying seeing me struggle.”

“Indeed I am.” Nate chuckled once more. “But that’s because you’re doing it all wrong. That meat is already dead. No need to kill it a second time. And besides, I already showed you how to do it, but apparently, you were not listening, am I right?”

I didn't say anything and instead faced my now murdered steak. I did pay attention, but it's easier said than done.

"Hold the steak with your fork then use the knife to cut through it at an angle. Move your knife back and forth to slice through it neatly. Don't stab it. No stabbing on the tables. You'll scare your table mates." He instructed.

I rolled my eyes at him and started to follow his instruction and moved my knife back and forth.

"Good. And gently push your knife to the steak," he said.

"Good. Now gently push your knife to the steak." I mocked and earned a playful glare from Nate as I did what he said. Not a second later and I successfully sliced the meat. "I did it!" I cheered and raised the fork with a slice of meat on it and wiggled it in front of Nate, showing it to him. "Ha! I did it! Lowisimos! I did it!"

"Yeah yeah." Nate waved his hand at me. "So you had cut it. That's good but you mustn't wave it to a person as if it's a weapon." He smirked and watched me with amus****t.

"Who cares?! Now I'm gonna have a taste of this victory!" I was about to put the slice of meat towards my mouth when Nate stopped my hand from doing so. He gave me one of those adorable smiles.

"Aren't you gonna share your victory? I was the one who told you the technique."

No one is stealing my food.

"No. This is MINE. I cut it. Go and cut your own. Now shoo!" Using both of my hands, I pulled the fork towards me, fighting against Nate's strong grip.

"Oh no, you won't! Not if you're not gonna share!" Now Nate was using both of his hands as well as he fought for that piece of meat on the fork.

All these for that piece of meat...

"It's mine!" I screamed and started to pull it towards me. If ever, I think Nate was going easy on me since he was pretty much enjoying himself. In fact, he was laughing.

Going to my last resort, I bit his fist.

“Ow!” Nate flinched but didn’t loosen his grip. Instead, he also bit my fist hand but a little gently.

“Eww! Nate.” I glared at him.

“What? You bit me first!” He whined.

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“But that doesn’t mean that you also have to bite me!”

“Then what am I supposed to do then?”

“Nothing! Just let go of my food damn it!” I pulled at the sp*** with all my might, but the b***** was too strong.

“Let me share your victory too!”

“Are we really fighting for just this piece of meat?”

“Hey. I’m just going with the flow over here,” he said as if he just realized what we were doing just now.

A few minutes later Nate and I decided to just share the meat. He said that since neither one of us likes to give in, they might as well part it in half. After all the silly drama of ours, we decided to continue our lesson. But after a while, Nate got carried away and started to tell me some funny stories during his experiences at parties.

“So there was this guy who was drinking his wine at the table while I was telling a story, I think he was Duke from another family.” He started. “As you might know, I really hate it when someone does that to me, you know? Doing other things instead of paying attention to me.”

I scoffed at him. “In love with yourself much?”

“Hey, if you’re as good-looking as me then you won’t be surprised.” He defended. “Anyways, while he was drinking, I decided to take that opportunity as I said, ‘The more you talk, the thicker your double chin becomes’.”

I gasped. “You didn’t! That is rude.”

He grinned at my reaction. “Oh yes, I did. And let me tell you that he choked on his wine that time. It was really funny. Everyone from our table was laughing, except for the man of course.”

I laughed at that. “Obviously. So what did he do? Did he punch you or something?”

“Do I look like the person who’ll let someone ruin his face? NO.” He said in a duh tone. “And besides, before he could do anything to me, I told him that I was just kidding.”

“And? What did he say?” I asked, suddenly interested.

“Well, he didn’t say anything but I could tell that he was pissed off at me.” He shrugged as if it really doesn’t matter to him.

“And he still is pissed off at me whenever we meet.”

I burst out laughing. Well duh. Who wouldn’t be pissed at what he just said? As I was laughing my b*** off, one of the two double doors suddenly opened, and in came both Dan and Ren. They had their arms crossed and were raising their eyebrows at us, a perfect mirror of each other. “What’s going on?” They asked.

Nate got up and wiped his hands on his lap as he faced the twins. “Nothing. We were just talking. Is all.” He said, then he eyes the two sus***iously. “What are you guys doing here?”

“The Queen asked us to fetch you two. It’s almost time for dinner.” Ren said, still eyeing Nate. While Dan was grinning at me and waving. “Hello, Princess!”

“Hey.” I waved back.

“Come on, Rose. Let’s go. You two can go ahead. We’ll be right there.” Nate said to the twins. While Dan was happily whistling while walking towards the door, Ren had an annoyed look on his face as they left. As soon as they left, Nate had a

confused look on his face and eyed the back of the chair. He scratched his head and started to look for something. “Have you seen a green cloth here somewhere?” He asked.

I started to think back and then remembered something. “Oh, It’s on that sofa over there,” I said and pointed towards it. Nate followed my finger and a sigh of relief appeared on his lips. He walked towards it, picked the cloth up, and started to tie it around him with the golden chains on it.

My jaw dropped as I watched Nate tying the cloth around the collar of his suit.

That was Nate’s cape!?! I used a Prince’s cape as a rag! I murdered it. No wonder it was too pretty in the first place!!

“What’s wrong, Rose? You look pale.” Nate asked as he looked at my face, which was probably pale as he said.

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“Huh? I’m fine! Nothings wrong! What? Do you see something wrong? Nothing right? So why are you asking me!? I did nothing wrong!!!” Okay, I may have sounded a little defensive there but I wasn’t thinking clearly.

Nate gave me a weird look. “Okay?”

After that, Nate and I walked to the dining hall. The whole time Nate kept trying to open up a conversation with me but I would just keep my mouth shut. Not allowing the conversation to flow in case I’ll mention the cape thing.

And to my defense. It is their fault for wearing capes! I mean, why would they wear those? They’re not Superman or Batman anyways. Got my point there?

It’s not my fault!

“Are you really okay?”

“Yeah.”

“Why aren’t you talking?”

“Sure.”

“Are you even listening?”

“That’s cool.”

“I’m a virgin.”

“Great.”

Nate threw his hands up in the air in frustration. “I give up!!”

“Yeah...sure.”

Nate didn’t say anything after that and instead, focused on finding our way to the dining hall. As we entered the room, I immediately made my way and sat beside Dan and Ren. I know for sure that these two would protect me. Nate sat beside Fred, which I was thankful for because I know that he would be able to stop Nate from jumping at me WHEN he finds out.

Dan and Ren gave me curious glances as I sat quietly on my chair with my back straight and cutting my meat on the plate. I took a sneak peek at Nate who was doing the same. The cape on his shoulders had chocolate stains on it, which was really obvious. Fred seemed to notice it too and tried his best not to stare. The twins only noticed it when they saw me looking at Nate with a nervous look. They followed my gaze and almost burst out laughing until I stepped on their foot. A sign to tell them to keep their mouths shut.

I was on my best behavior to distract them from Nate’s cape.

Look at me. I am an angel. A very well-mannered angelic princess!

“Why Rose. It seems that you’re doing well on your lesson with Nate.” The queen commented as she watched me applying the proper etiquette on eating. “Good job, Nate.” The Queen praised him before her eyes darted on Nate’s cape. Her mouth opened to comment on it but I pa**ed her a plate of salad. “Eat.” I told her with a tight smile that says ‘don’t even mention it. The queen shut her mouth and went back to eating.

I almost sighed in relief, but then Ace went to the room. “Your highness, I’m sorry I’m late. I had a lot of-” he stopped and looked at Nate’s back. “Nate, what happened to your cape?”

As soon as Ace said that, the twins burst out laughing while I screamed.

“What do you mean what’s wrong with my cape? It’s perfectly-” Nate stopped in mid-sentence when he saw the chocolate stain on his cape by his shoulders. His jaw dropped as he detached it from his back and examined the damage I had inflicted on it. “This was my favorite cape...”

I took that time as I slowly got up from my chair and made my exit like a ninja. I even crawled on the floor!

“ROSE!!”

“I’m sorry!” I yelled back as I covered my face in embarra**ment and fear.

Chapter 19 Dance with A Charm

Today was my dancing lesson with Prince Fred and I wanted to wear something light.

Hmm...which dress would suit me better?

Lime or turquoise blue? I don’t have time for this. I have to get dressed and fix my hair like a normal human being. I cannot embarra** myself again. I already did with the last four of them.’

I reached out and s*****ed the blue one and the maids helped me get dressed. I checked myself in the mirror and found it satisfying. The dress compliments my blue eyes perfectly.

Someone knocked at my door and I hurriedly went towards it. Nope. I am not excited. I opened the door and revealed Fred in all his majestic glory in his suit.

Now, this is a sight to behold. I shook the thoughts out of my head as soon as they appeared.

He smiled, adding a sparkle to his already hot image. “Morning.”

Why am I suddenly seeing flowers?

“Morning.” I nodded back at him. Why do these guys look like models anyway? It’s so unrealistic!

“You look nice today, Princess.” He complimented making my cheeks flush in embarrassment. Why was it so easy to hate Ace, to feel annoyed with the twins and Nate? But so hard to do it on Fred? Maybe fact that he was the only one with a gentle ambiance with him.

“Thanks” was all I managed to say.

You have to admit that he really looked good. “Uhm...are you okay? he asked. giving me a weird look.

“Why do you ask?”

“Your face. It looks like you have murderous intent.” Do I really look like that? I suddenly became conscious and shook my head as I grabbed Fred’s arm and started to pull him. “Come on. Let’s go.”

I heard him chuckle as I dragged him away. Damn. How embarrassing. Why do I have to be so weird?

Fred started to offer his arm to me. I linked mine with him and he started to lead the way.

I hope I can manage this lesson without getting too flustered. Or cause any more trouble.

Fred led me to a large ballroom like the one that you see in fairy tales. Multiple chandeliers hang from the roof that lightens the room giving it a golden glow. I feel like I’m inside the castle in Beauty and The Beast. But this time, I am the beast and this prince is the beauty. My face is probably as pretty as his b***.

Near one of the floor-to-ceiling windows stood five men holding some instruments. They all nodded at me and Fred as we entered the room. Is there some kind of concert? I looked at Fred and saw him looking at me too.

“What?” I asked.

“Nothing. You just look like a lost pup.” Then he started to chuckle.

Is he laughing at me? I frowned.

“So what now?” I asked him as soon as he was done laughing at me. He looked 100 times better when he laughed, but of course, I know my limits. This is all a part of the Queen’s plan.

Well...a little late for that I guess.

“Sorry.” He said and composed himself and grinned at the men holding the instruments. He nodded at them and soon, they started to play. The music was slow and melodic. The kind that soothes your mind and helps you relax. Imagine that you are mad with someone and then you heard a song and it easily takes your bad mood away

.

From the corner of my eyes, I saw Fred approaching me and offered a hand to me. I only looked at his palm. I know that he wanted me to take it, but I decided to play dumb and raised a questioning eyebrow at him. “What am I supposed to do with it?” I asked and still didn’t take his hand.

“You take it. Because today I am going to teach you how to dance.” I was caught off guard when he was the one who took my hand because I didn’t even make a move to take it. He slowly took hold of my right hand and placed my left hand on his shoulder, then he placed his right hand on my hip which startled me. I was uncomfortable with how little the space was between us that I took little steps back, but he pulled me back afterward. “Rose, don’t move too far from me.” He said and held me in place.

“F-fine. Just get on with it.” I said and looked away. I could feel his stare and his breath on my cheeks.

“Why? Are you uncomfortable?” He looked worried.

“No, I’m not.” I defended myself. “I’m just making sure that you won’t get too comfortable with this. Who knows?”

He laughed. “Too late I guess.”

“Excuse me?”

He gave me a side unsure smile. I guess he’s a bit worried about my state. “Setting that aside. Let us start. You really don’t have to do anything here. You just have to

follow me.” He said and adjusted my hold on his shoulder, which became loose, and elevated his right arm so it was level with his shoulder. His right hand was on my back. “In dancing, the male is always the one who leads. The female just has to follow. If I step my right foot forward, you step back with your left. Do the mirror of me.” I only nodded as a response to him.

Taking that as a response, he took one step forward and I did the same using my left. Resulting in me stepping on his right foot. “Ow,” He said and I immediately took my foot off of his and muttered a low ‘oops’.

“That’s okay.” He said. “Let’s try again.” Then he stepped his right foot forward again. This time, I made sure to step back with my left.

“Okay. That’s it. Now I’m gonna do the same with my left. Just try to follow me and you’ll soon get it.”

“Okay,” I said. I sounded a little skeptical.

For one hour and a half, we practiced. And the majority of those times was me stepping on his foot. It’s as if his face wasn’t enough of a distraction and here he goes adding a smile that seems to summon those imaginary flowers.

What’s with those!?

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I keep looking away. Fred raised a hand to the musicians to signal them to stop. The music died. He then led me to a chair to sit. “Let’s have a break for a while.” He said then turned his back to wipe the sweat off of his forehead and went to the band. He said something to them that made them leave the room. Probably telling them to have a break too. Once the band left, he didn’t acknowledge my presence or even bothered to speak to me as he stood there by the window and gazed at the scenery outside.

It made me wonder if he was pissed off at me for repeatedly stepping on him?

I started drumming my feet absentmindedly to a tune back from Earth. Without thinking, I started humming the tune. “That’s a nice song. Did you compose it yourself?” I jumped back. Fred now stood beside me. His eyes regarded me curiously.

“No. It’s a song back in my world.” I said.

“It’s unique. And you sing pretty well.”

“I hardly call that singing.”

“I’m curious. Does dancing exist in your world?”

“They do.” I laughed. His question sounds silly. “Although we don’t usually do the dances that you do. There are all sorts of dancing. You can dance in groups, pairs, or solo.”

I saw Fred’s eyes sparkled with interest. “Tell me, what form of dance do you do?”

“Um...” I hesitated. I rarely dance. And when I do, I do it while taking a shower. “Well, I sort of did a group and a pair dance. But only because our school requires it.”

“A school?”

“An inst**ution where kids and teens like me go to learn.”

“Interesting concept. The people in your world seem smart.”

I laughed nervously. “Yeah...I must be from a different planet then.” I mumbled.

Fred seems to sense my discomfort and thankfully change the topic. “So, you’ve done a pair dance?”

“Yeah. During prom.”

“What’s a prom?” he asked. Looking confused. Great. Now how am I supposed to tell him what a prom is?

“Um...let’s see.” I rubbed my chin as if I have an imaginary mustache as I think for the right words to say. “It’s some sort of event where...teenagers gather to socialize. The males would wear tuxedos while the females would wear dresses.”

He smiled. “I’m interested in the dances that involve a partner in your world. Can you teach me? Maybe that way I’ll know your style and find a better way to teach you our style.”

I looked away because I only know how to do those cha moves when in a pair dance. I tried to imagine Fred dancing the cha-cha and I have to stop myself from laughing. “Oh my God,” I whispered.

“Is there a problem?” Fred tilted his head to the side. Fred would do good in a waltz, but I don’t think that dancing the cha would suit his image.

I averted my gaze yet again. Should I? I have to admit that I also want to see what he would do. Pursing my lips to hide my grin, I got up. “Okay.” My voice cracked.

“Are you sure? You’re shaking, Rose.”

“Of course!”

Fred and I went back to the center of the room. “Uh...let us resume the position we did earlier,” I instructed. He followed and took my left hand then placed his right hand at my back. “Alright, Fred. this time, follow my lead. I’ll count.”

I started to count. “Fred, step your right foot forward, tap it shortly two times and then step it back again,” I said. He nodded and followed my instruction. It was a little awkward at first so I showed him how to do the stepping.

“Now do the same with your left foot, but this time tap back two times then a step forward.” I bit my lips at how robotic he looks with the movement.

“Keep up with me Fred. The steps are just the same.” Fred nodded and focused his eyes on mine. “Okay.” I saw him struggle a bit, but he was slowly starting to get it. “Um, this is actually both a solo and a pair dance,” I admitted. “And I really can’t remember what the other steps are, maybe you can just add to it. Either way, what we did was the base of that dance.”

Fred chuckled. “As I said, your world is interesting.”

We basically did the steps over and over again. Before I knew it, it was Fred who was leading the dance. He laughed a melodic one. “Well, this is fun. I thought at first that this would be hard.”

“What are you talking about? You practically mastered it. You’re even leading the dance right now.” That comment brought a smile to his face. “Well, that’s because I have a good trainer.” He said proudly, making me look away in embarra**ment.

The dance ended and we paused. He gave me a smile which I avoided. I was about to let go when Fred gestured to a song from the musicians.

The sound of the violin once again filled the room. It was sweet and slow. Elegant and alluring. But the emotion in it seemed off.

Fred pulled me towards him with an amused expression. "I think it's time for me to teach you again."

"O-okay." I stuttered. We swayed to the music. Fred led the dance as I struggled to keep up with him. All the time he was looking at me while I looked at anywhere but him. He sighed. "Rose, you should look at your partner when you dance."

"No" I frowned. I lowkey miss our cha session. Fred sprouts fewer imaginary flowers when he's struggling.

Every time Fred takes a step towards me, I would quickly back up. "Remember what I told you? Don't put too much space between you and your partner." He said and pulled me back towards him when he noticed that I created a new space between us again.

Don't put too much space between you and your partner! I swear he was so close that I could feel his breathing. "I kind of like this song. What is it called?" I asked in a desperate attempt to fill in the awkward situation.

"Setting Valley." He answered. When I looked up, I saw him smile. "It's an original. Composed by myself."

"Really? I didn't know you can write a song."

"I do. I gave a copy of the musician earlier. I thought it would be perfect."

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"The song is amazing, Prince Fred. Is there anything that you can't do?" I asked in admiration. "The tune is just right. I slow down so that it helps me coordinate with the dance but..." I trailed off.

"But?" I pursed my lips in hesitation. Fred gave me an encouraging smile. "Go on. You can tell me."

Fred led us in a circle as we explored the room while still holding on to each other as we danced. For some reason, I think his steps are getting wider and wider. That's why I also widened my steps so as not to be that close to him.

I even think that this is the reason why we were able to consume the room as we danced. I even glanced at him as soon as I realized what he was doing.

"The song. Why is it lonely?"

"Really?" He suddenly twirled me, which was weird since the step was off the tune.

"Really."

"Must be your imagination." He twirled me again.

"Do we really have to do the twirl this much?" I asked. Feeling dizzy all of the sudden.

"Nope. I just find it amusing that you're actually quite flexible and cooperative." He chuckled.

I frowned and looked away. This jerk.

"You're not looking at me and moving away. Why?"

"..." I feel like puking all of a sudden.

"Rose?"

"Nothing."

"Come on. tell me why."

"Shut up."

"Come on. You can tell me!" He whined, which was so out of character for him.

"You're so annoying!" I feel sick. And even though Fred was charming, we weren't helping my current situation. "Fine! You're b*** ugly."

Wait. What did I just say?

I gasped in horror as I realized what I said and turned to look at him. He looked shocked and sad. “Really?” He looked like a puppy. His eyes dropped. “I’m that ugly?”

“What!?! You actually believe what I said?” Guilt was creeping in.

“I’m sorry. You may not look at me.” He dropped his head and his bangs covered his eyes. Still, he was being professional seeing as how we were still dancing.

“No! I didn’t mean it that way. You’re handsome. Really handsome!” I insisted. I bent my head down to look at his face. In return, he looked away. I couldn’t see his expression. “In fact, you’re more handsome than the rest of the princes! Really really good-looking. If you were in my world, you would be a model.” I showered him with compliments.

I cursed at how sensitive these guys are with their looks. I called him ugly once and now he’s acting like this.

I heard him snort.

“Fred?”

A melancholic laugh echoed in the room. There was a small pause as Fred laughed. And I swear that I saw sunflowers blooming and rained all over him.

WTF. Is wrong with this world that is making me see things?!

I stood there frozen and I kept seeing flower petals.

“I’m so sorry. You looked really adorable.” He apologized while wiping tears from his face. Then he leaned in close. “Sorry I avoided your gaze. Can you see me now?”

It was a sudden movement that I got caught off guard. I took a quick step back and tripped on my other foot. I closed my eyes and waited for my fall. But that didn’t happen as I felt Fred’s hand on my backing, pulling me back to him.

I dared to sneak a peek and saw him looking at me with a tiny smirk on his face.

“Are you alright?” He looked at me worriedly.

I frowned and waved my hand over his head. Fred gave me a weird look.
“Something there?”

“Flowers,” I said the words as if I were cursing. “I’m making sure that they won’t appear.”

“Flowers?” He asked as he pulled me up.

“Yes,” I said seriously. Good. It didn’t appear.

“Are you sure you’re okay?”

We suddenly ended up in a slow dance as the music almost come to an end.

“As long as I don’t see them damn flowers again,” I said through gritted teeth. He laughed but didn’t ask about them again.

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The song finally ended and we did a short curtsey. Fred smiled when the song ended. “Very nice, Princess Rose. As your tutor, I’m very proud. Not once did you step on my foot?”

Then it dawned on me. I was dancing!?

Fred looked up as if he was thinking. “Although you still need a LOT of improvement when it comes to eye contact and space.” He came to me and messed my hair up. “Rest for a while, Princess. Wouldn’t want you to trip again and see those flowers now, don’t we?” He said and laughed again when I started to waved my hands at his sides when I saw a ray of sunshine where the flowers usually appear.

“I think it is time for you to rest.” He said and guided me back to where I was resting before. But I stopped when something caught my eye. I stared at the window. Without thinking, I headed for the window and looked at the scenery behind it. It was a garden!

I heard Fred walking towards me and paused. “Do you want to go out?” I stiffen and looked at him with wide eyes.

Did he just...

I could tell that my face was red. “W-What did you just say?” I asked. He pointed at the window, specifically to the garden, and asked me again. “Outside. Do you want to come with me there?” he asked me and smiled.

Finally, my mind seemed to process what he said. “Oh. I thought you said – never mind.” I shook her head. “Sure. I’ll come.”

Of course. He meant literally. I slapped a hand to my face for being so ridiculous. I should get a hold of myself. I wouldn’t want to be a pawn of the queen, right?

“Out of curiosity. What were you thinking earlier?” He asked.

“Nothing! Let’s go.” I yelled and quickly made my way to the door. Behind me, I heard him chuckle.

Once we were out in the garden, I couldn’t help but notice a slight pain in my ankle. Did I sprain it?

“Hey, what’s wrong with you?” He looked worried.

Great. Why can’t I get through one day without causing any problems? Poor Fred had to be involved with this too. I shook my head in response and smiled at him.

“Nothing,” I said and began to walk. On the way to the small garden pavilion, I forced myself to walk as normally as I could and keep a straight face.

Of all the reasons to sprain my ankle, it has to be while I was dancing. And I wasn’t even wearing really high heels. Only an inch high. How embarra**ing.

I suddenly felt a presence behind me. Without any warning, I was swooped off of my feet. I let out a yelp as Prince Fred carried me. He didn’t say anything or even joked with me as he walked towards the pavilion at the center of the garden. He sat me on one of the rails surrounding the pavilion and removed one of my shoes with the swollen ankle. It was my first time seeing it. It wasn’t that bad? At least that’s what I think.

“Your ankle is swollen. You even have a small cut.”

“Seriously, Fred. I’m okay.”

“Why didn’t you say you were hurt?”

“Overreacting much? It doesn’t hurt that bad.”

He raised a brow and poked my ankle. “Ow! Fred.”

He chuckled. “I thought it didn’t hurt?” I only let out a ‘humph’ and looked away. There’s no one to blame but my own clumsiness. I wonder how long would it heal?

“Just leave it alone.” I insisted and tried to move my foot away.

“It looks like it hurts.” He said and gently touched the swollen skin. Fred was still looking at my foot. He looked so focused for some reason. Well, I have no idea why he would bother about it that much. It will take some time to heal, but it will heal on its own.

It was embarra**ing though. He was still looking at it. “Let go?”

“No.” He said firmly. “Just stay still.”

“I said I am fine.” I snapped. I want out of this awkward situation. I don’t want anyone to see us.

“I said stay still.” He insisted.

I grumbled in frustration at how stubborn he was. Stupid Prince. All of them are stupid. I might as well throw a bomb at them. Ace is a big arrogant jerk. The twins are a pain in the b***. Nate is a flirt. Fred is too nice. The Queen is crazy and the King couldn’t do a thing about it. I sighed

Wait. Speaking of Fred, he suddenly turned quiet. What is he doing with my foot anyway?

“Yo, what are you doing?” I look down at him.

He looked up at me and smiled. “Nothing.” He simply said.

I was about to ask him again when we heard Nate calling out to us. “Fred! Rose!” He said and came running to us. He paused when he saw Fred holding my foot and the two of them had a short starrng contest before Nate broke up and looked at me.

“The Queen wanted to talk to us inside. She told me to call the both of you.”

Now, what does the crazy queen want? Now?

I smiled at him. “Okie Dokie. Wait up.” I jumped down from where I was sitting. When I landed, I couldn’t help but notice that the pain from my foot wasn’t there anymore. Surprised, I looked at Fred for an explanation but he only smiled and offered me his arm. I took it after I put on my shoes. We followed Nate to the castle.

While we were walking, I couldn’t help but think of what Fred had done to my foot. I was sure that I had a small cut at the back.

Something was definitely wrong.

Chapter 20 Silent Conversations

Nate was leading us into the castle. Fred was still beside me, not looking nor talking to me. He was just looking straight.

I still can’t get my mind off of what happened earlier. How was he able to heal my foot?

I swear it was pretty swollen and it hurts to walk. Wheels were turning inside my head until we came to a stop in front of the entrance of the castle. I noticed that Nate had also stopped. He took a deep breath before he let it out. Something was bothering him.

As if reading my mind, Nate looked back at us and smiled at me. “You go on ahead, Rose. I have to speak with Prince Fred first. The Queen and the others are expecting you at the dining area. I assume that you know your way there?” he asked.

I looked from Nate then to Fred, who only gave me a nod. “Um...sure. But don’t take too long guys.” I said uncertainty.

That made Nate smirk. “Miss me already? Don’t worry. I’ll be sure to sit by your side later.” Nate then winked. Hearing his flirty self again made me relax a little, but it didn’t stop me from frowning at him, which made Fred laugh at our exchange.

“That’s great. I’ll be sure to reserve you a seat beside me.” I said sarcastically and stuck my tongue out childishly at him before I left. Those two have some important matters to discuss. Might as well leave those two to settle it here.

MEANWHILE

Prince Nathaniel waited for Rose to leave and out of earshot before facing Prince Fred. He wasn’t even bothered by the look that Nathaniel was giving him. Nathaniel knows and he saw what he did a while back and he wasn’t happy about it.

“Fred, did you just use your magic?” He asked him. The blonde-haired prince didn’t give him a response immediately, which only made him furious. Of all the things that he hates is when they ignore him especially when they are the ones who did something. “Fred answer me!”

Fred seemed to have sensed his mood because he let out a sigh before answering. “Yes.”

“Why? Didn’t we talk about this? We wouldn’t reveal anything until we are certain that she won’t freak out.”

“It’s not like I revealed who I was to her. Besides, she already knows that the Queen is a Fae. What makes us so different?” he asks.

“You know why. She’s only a human. Their kind has a different image from our kind. She has to be ready before we can expose our true identity. You of all people should have known that!” He nearly yelled at him, but then lowered his voice in case Rose was still nearby.

Fred didn’t seem to appreciate his outburst because his fist started to clench. Sparks running along his arms. “I know that! But she was hurt. What do you want me to do? Let her walk in while limping? It looked like she was in pain. She even tried to hide it.” He looked away as he whispered the last part as if he was recalling a memory.

“You could have called us first!” He argued.

“Well I’m sorry but what’s done is done. We couldn’t take that back anymore. Unless you want me to erase her memory of it.”

Nathaniel was suddenly tense at what he said and couldn't help but let out a warning hiss at him. "Don't you dare?" He wouldn't let him use his magic to erase Rose's memory. Magic is unpredictable if you are not experienced in using it. It could wipe out all of your memory. Even worse, you'll go crazy. They all know that.

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The spark on Fred's arm died. He shook his head tiredly. When he looked up, Nate saw that he had a ghost of a smile on his lips. "Don't worry about it. I wouldn't do that to her," he said and walked past him and into the castle. Nate could only stare at his back for a few seconds before he followed the other prince.

Everyone was already seated when Fred and Nate arrived. They seemed to be awfully quiet as they sat on the chair opposite of Rose.

Ren and Dan were beside her while Ace was sitting beside Ren. Once everyone was all settled, the Queen started to talk. "Now that we are all here, I would like to make some announcements. A week from now, we will be having a ball."

Why will there be a ball? Is there a tournament here? And what kind of ball? A basketball or a volleyball ball? Rose wondered.

As if hearing her thoughts, Nate was the one who asked. "Pardon me, your highness. But may I ask what the ball is for?"

The Queen smiled approvingly at him. "We are celebrating the arrival of our new family in this castle." Her eyes then landed on Rose. As well as the others. Now they were all looking at her. "It would be the perfect opportunity to introduce you to the other rulers of other kingdoms and to officially introduce the king candidates."

The twins, Nate, and Fred all tense when the Queen said this.

"B-But your majesty-" Ren stopped when he saw Rose looking at him. Instead, he only focused his eyes on the Queen as if having a silent conversation with her. Ren moved his face so Rose couldn't see how his eyes glowered and locked gazes with the queen

'She's a human, your majesty. What would the others do if they find out about this?' Being a new generation of wolves, who was blessed by the lunar light, the

twins can telepathically communicate with other supernatural races. As long as they have eye contact with the opposite party that is.

The Queen sighed. "So you already knew? All of you?" She asked and looked at every one of the princes. They all nodded at her. The queen only smiled. "Oh well, this makes it easier for me then. Perhaps if you guys help her understand then I might give you an explanation." Every second that pa**es, Rose becomes more and more confused.

What the heck are they talking about? She wondered.

There was a slight pressure on her shoulder. She looked to her right and saw Dan giving her an apologetic smile. "Don't mind them. They're having crazy people conversation," he whispered the last part so only the two of them could hear. She couldn't help but giggle.

He reached out and placed several meals on her plate. "Eat up while Nate isn't looking," he whispered and she smiled at him. He knows that she couldn't stuff her plate like what she's doing now when Nate is nearby.

Dan really doesn't like where this conversation is going. Rose doesn't even know what they are and here goes the Queen, throwing a ball full of other supernatural beings.

Ren, Fred, Nate, Ace, and Dan all agreed that they wouldn't reveal who and what they are to Rose yet. Even though she acts as if she's alright, Ren and Dan could still smell her fear and uncertainty. They know that Fred and Nate know of that too. As for Ace, they think he can read it through her face. Dan can tell that she's still freaked out of all this magic and fairies. She doesn't need to add them to add to her bucket list.

Looking at Ren, he could tell that he's talking to the Queen through his mind. He doesn't want Rose to hear anything of what he's saying. And neither does he.

He couldn't help but notice the puzzled look on Rose's face right now. She looked so confused and left out that he decided to entertain her so she couldn't listen to the conversation that they were having.

"Hey. How's the training going with you and Fred?" He asked her. She nearly choked on her food. He panicked and slapped her back gently. He grabbed his

gla** of water and offered it to her. All the while, listening to the conversation as Rose took the water from him.

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“I don’t want to be rude, your highness. But don’t you think that it’s too early to throw a ball? Knowing that Rose -” Fred was cut off when the Queen waved her hand. I looked at the King at the End of the table. No one seems to mind him though.

“Nonsense. It will be the perfect time for a ball. I trust that all of you will be able to explain all of this to her before the time comes. Consider this as a part of the test for the throne. Plus, we don’t have much of a choice. The other factions are demanding the official king candidates to be announced. If we don’t have a ball, then the factions will get restless and might spread unwanted rumors. Having a ball will reduce that risk and avoid unwanted visitors, who would use that excuse to visit.” said the Queen. He couldn’t help but feel anger towards her. He knows that she’s the Queen but she acts as if this was all a game. Especially when Rose is involved. The queen sighed tiredly. “If only I could do more, but it seems that we are being pushed to a corner. I never expected things to get out of hand this fast. The least I could do is also announce my adoption of Rose. At least a fake adoption to filter out the rumors of her.”

Of course, the princes know that rumors aren’t easily dismissed with her adoption. But at least it can potentially avoid most of the bad rumors.

“Thanks.” He snapped my attention back to Rose. who seemed to have recovered. He took the gla** of water from her and set it down on the table. He rubs her back just in case.

For his brother, he’ll take care of Rose.

‘Ren, please be careful of your choice of words. Remember that I only have Rose distracted, but it doesn’t prevent her from hearing things. Knowing her, she’ll jump to conclusions.’ He spoke through our link.

‘I know that!’ Ren snapped. ‘Why do you think that I use the Alpha link on the Queen to tell her this?!’

‘Chill out. I’m just reminding you.’

Dan looked around the table to see that all of them, except Rose who kept on eating, seemed a bit tense. After a moment of silence, the Queen had finally spoken.

“Well now that it is settled, I want everyone’s attention now. Including you, Rose.” Said the Queen.

Rose stopped eating. When she looked up, Dan couldn’t suppress his grin. Her mouth was stuffed with food making her look like a chipmunk. Nate glared at her in disapproval.

“Hmm?” That was all she managed to say.

“Starting tomorrow, your training will be intense. You’ll train with the five of them. You’ll spend the morning with Ace, Spend lunch with Nate, And divide the afternoon with the twins and Fred.” the Queen said gleefully as if the idea excited her.

Rose swallowed her food and stared agape at the Queen.

Dan silently counted.

3

2

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“YOU WANT ME TO WHAT!?” Rose yelled and stood up while slamming the table with such force that it caused it to rattle.

Oh well. There goes our fun dinner night.

“Rose be reason-”

“You should be the one who’s reasonable!” Rose-cut the Queen off before she could even manage to say anything. Of all the people that Dan knows, he thinks that Rose is the only one who could do that. “One day for each of them is already enough! Now you want me to spend each day with all of them?! This is...” She paused and rubbed her eyes. Ren looked up at her. They could smell the tears that

she's desperately hiding. "Aren't you controlling my life too much?" She whispered.

Ouch. Does that mean that she doesn't want to spend any day with us? Dan thought

"No offense to the princes." She added quickly before facing the Queen once again. The Queen only shook her head. "I'm going to let your insult pass because I can understand that you are upset."

"Upset is an understatement. I'm furious, thanks for asking." Rose had her head down the entire time as she spoke. She took a deep breath before her eyes met the Queen. "I'm done eating," she said and made a mocking curtsy at the Queen before stomping out.

The Queen sighed sadly. "At least she now knows how to curtsy."

ROSE

Who does she think she is?! My mom?! I would rather have a cow as a mom. Why does she always control my life? It's not like I'm from this world or anything. Nor do I intend on staying.

After dinner, I stomped towards my room and slammed the door shut behind me. I walk towards my vanity table and watch the magical ball that the Queen gave me. The white mist has increased but it's still not close to being full yet. I cursed.

How long will it be until it's full?

I looked at it sadly. I sighed and laid down on my bed for a few minutes. After that, I decided to take a shower first and put on some clean clothes. I tried to fall asleep but my brain wouldn't let me.

I decided to visit the library to look for books that I could read. When I got there, I started to search the shelves. The library was huge and full of books so it took me some time to actually find something interesting to read. I settle for an old leather-bound book with golden details at the side. I didn't bother to read the title. In my situation, you wouldn't be so picky about books. And somehow, the smell of it was comforting.

After I got what I needed, I headed back to my room and laid there with the book on my lap. I started to read the words but my mind couldn't seem to process anything. I was still pissed at the Queen. The bubbling range of emotion was disrupting my concentration.

I read the same line over and over again, trying to make something out of it but it was no use. Finally deciding that reading wouldn't help, I just closed my eyes. I didn't even notice that I had already gone to sleep.

Chapter 21 Princess to Prisoner

The moment I woke up, my body felt heavy. I woke up earlier than I intended to.

I wanted to go back to sleep, but my brain won't let me. So I just stayed in bed and only moved when the maids came in to assist. After I had taken a shower and put on some clean clothes, the maids lined up and bowed.

"Princess, we'll be going now. Please call us if you need any more assistance."

"Sure," I responded.

I walked to my bed when I accidentally stepped on something. I almost tripped and fell. Since I was in a pretty bad mood, I almost threw it out of the window in anger. Luckily, I caught sight of it just in time before I threw it out. It was the book that I was trying to read yesterday. It was pretty heavy that I decided to sit on my bed and placed the book on my lap. I traced the golden details of the book and it seemed to radiate life.

But I guess it's just my imagination.

I opened the book as I began to read. This time, my mind was slightly cleared that I was able to comprehend the words.

Decades ago, in the kingdom of Thalia. A kind King and a loving Queen dwelled over the land. Everyone was content and happy. That was until they angered the gods. It was a day where the kingdom's freshly harvested crops were washed out by a great flood. Almost all of the food was washed away and only a few were left, leaving the citizens of Thalia weak with starvation.

The king decided to divide the remaining food among the citizens. Unfortunately, with the little of what they have and the large population of his kingdom, the food

wasn't even enough to last for 2 days. Hunger led to desperation and greed. The people started to sin. They started to steal and kill. So many lives were lost and so much blood was shed. The war lasted for 3 days, it was declared as the Dark Hours, the day where the people were driven mad because of hunger and the blackened sand that was caused by the dried blood and ashes of its citizens.

One day, the King had had enough of the blood spills that he had banished all that was unworthy. Since then, a lot of the people fled the kingdom and lived in separate groups. There, they faced many challenges and have adapted to the wild to survive.

One group has decided to become one with the animals. They studied and imitated their hunting forms and acted like animals. They were the very first Were people. The second group wandered far into the woods. They have food but water. Their thirst lasted for a week before one of them had decided to drink the blood of an animal, thus making them the first vampires.

The third group was the wisest. They planted their crops for their living and relied on nature for their daily needs. They gave respect to nature as if it were alive. Soon the spirits of the forest had acknowledged them and given them powers. They became the first elves.

The Fourth decided to work on alchemy. They believe that the magic from their world can be learned through the use of symbols and languages. Through years of studying alchemy and the elements, the people finally learned how to use it. That was how the warlocks and witches came to.

The Fifth discovered a mountain full of mythical creatures. Creatures forming bonds –

Blah blah blah and the list of supernatural beings went on and on. Explaining how they became this and that. How this happened and that. I yawned and flipped to another page, where the actual story begins. I'll come back and read the rest of the races later.

As years went by, each species had adopted and had become more civilized. Not long enough that they had built their separate kingdom. Magic had bloomed –

I was still in the middle of reading when the door suddenly burst open. I looked up angrily at the one who had to disturb my reading. "What do you want, PRINCE Ace?" I glared at him from my book.

Ace – Oh excuse me – PRINCE Ace only glared back at me as if he wanted to skin me alive. “You do realize that I have been waiting in the library for 2 hours. Then I came to find you here reading?”

I only shrugged at him as if it was nothing. “Well, what does it look like I’m doing? Now go along and find someone to play with. I’m busy.” I waved him off. “Shoo!!”

“We.Have.Training.” Ace said through gritted teeth.

“I know,” I said. My eyes were still glued to the book.

“And?”

“And I don’t care,” I said and finally looked up at him. “I’m not going to do any more of that training crap. No one can boss me around.”

“No.” He said.

“No what? Dude, please be specific when you talk. You’re not a kid.” I said then rubbed my chin as if I was thinking. “Although you do have anger issues. Let me guess. You’re in one of your moods. Is it your time of the month?”

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Ace walked straight towards me and hauled me up off the bed, almost making me fall in the process. “Hey! What’s wrong with you. I know you like me that much but I don’t like you, okay? Might as well say it right here to make things clear.” I said sarcastically, then pulled my arm out of his grasp. Ace only rolled his eyes at me before his attention was shifted to the book that I was reading.

He froze.

“Um, yahoo! Earth to Mr. Pain here. Are you there?” I waved my hand in front of his face. Trying to catch his attention. “Hey. I didn’t hurt your feelings that bad when I rejected you, RI-”

“How far have you read?” Ace grabbed me by my shoulders and looked straight into my eyes.

“It’s called research-”

“I’m serious. How far have you read?” His tone was laced with annoyance.

“And seriously, Ace. When will you stop cutting me off-”

“Rose!” Now with the screaming.

Sheesh! I think no girl will be able to stand this guy’s attitude. He’ll end up alone....in the dumpster. Dead.

I pointed at the page of the book where I have stopped. Ace finally released me from his hold. He grabbed the book and started to read it before he shut it.

“Hey. I was supposed to read that! I haven’t even memorized the page!” I whined and tried to grab the book away from him but he moved it away. “Did you at least memorize the page number!?”

“Stay here and wait for me.” He ordered. And now he’s giving me orders? Who does he think he is? A prince?

...Well, that was ironic and a stupid thing for me to think.

But that doesn’t give him the right to order me around. “Why should I listen to you? H-E-L-L-O I am not from this world. I live in a free country so you can’t boss this girl around.” I pointed to myself. “So if you’ll excuse me, I’ll be going to get my breakfast now.” I flipped my hair back in an attempt to be annoying. Of course, I know that everything that I do always annoys him. Or better yet, everyone annoys him.

Before I could even reach the door, Ace grabbed my hand and pulled me back. He walked towards the door and slammed it shut.

Talk about ladies first.

I ran towards the door and tried to twist the knob only to find it locked.

What the!?

I knock loudly on the door. “YOU STUPID SON OF A JERK!! UNLOCK THIS DOOR!!”

Well, this is funny. I’m knocking from the inside of my room?

“Stay!” Ace barked and I heard his footsteps getting farther and farther.

Why does he keep treating me like a dog!?

“What!?! No! Let me out. At least bring me something to eat! Ace!”

10 Minutes have pa**ed and I was still trying to break the door. I even threw my desk at it and was now hitting the doorknob with my chair.

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The cardio that I’m doing right now is making me hungrier by the minute.

“Stupid...Prince...I’ll...Kill...You.” I grumbled as I continued hitting the door with the chair. “I’ll be sure to hang you to a post with your royal cape and expose your royal underwear so everyone can see that pride of yours! ARGH!!”

The chair isn’t working! I knew I should have used the mahogany one, but it was too heavy.

“ARRRRGHH!!!” I angrily marched to my dresser and grabbed all of the brushes and makeups that I saw and started to throw them against the wall. The makeup broke and s***tered messily on the floor after they hit. It left a lot of stains on both the door and the floor.

The door suddenly burst open and the 5 princes came. A box of powder came flying towards Nate’s face but he easily caught it.

Cool reflexes. I applaud him for that, temporarily forgetting about my situation.

Nate smirked proudly while holding the box of powder. As he strode towards the room, he immediately slipped because of the messed-up powders on the floor from the other product. Luckily, he was able to catch himself and avoid further humiliation.

I slapped at hand to my mouth to cover my giggle. Unfortunately, he saw it and scowled at me.

I looked behind him to see Ace standing there with the rest. My blood started to boil at the sight of him and I grabbed my hairbrush and attempted to tackle him. Unfortunately, the twins stopped me.

“Well if it isn’t, PRINCE Ace. Nice to see you again after you lock me up in this room with no food and water! Do you know that breakfast is the most important meal of the day?!” I looked at the princes. “And did you even bring something to eat!?” I struggled against the twin’s grip, but it was futile.

“I could cook you right now but I don’t want your blood in my veins. I’ll puke. And you probably think that I’m overreacting but I’m not. I’m a human for crying out loud! If I don’t get any food then what will I dispose of after that!?” I slumped against their hold and continued to grumble.

“Woah Woah. Slow down, b***ercup. Is it that bad?” Dan asks with a laugh.

“He locked me up in this room! No food. No water.”

“You almost hit a guy because of that?” Ren turned to the side and laughed.

“What do you mean almost?” I challenged him. I swung my foot up sending my shoe flying towards Ace. Very unfortunately, he slapped it away like a bug. “Okay then. Almost it is.”

The twins started laughing. I gasped. These b*****s must not have experienced hunger. After all, they are a bunch of spoiled princes. Well lucky for them.

“It’s not just that. He almost choked me.” They all stopped laughing. The shock was written on their faces. Slowly, they turned their head to Ace who looked confused at the moment. Well, he almost did when he grabbed me by the collar earlier and not so gently pulled me back. I was being dramatic here.

“Ace, Is that true?” Fred gave him a look.

“I figured he’d snap,” Nate mumbled.

Ace glared at me for accusing him. I stuck my tongue out at him.

“You all know she spouts a lot of bullsh*t. I did no such thing.” He said while glaring at me.

I gave a dramatic gasp. “So now you deny your actions a while ago? Just to keep that clean image of yours?”

“Why would I even choke you when I could snap your neck.” Ace said coldly.

Yikes. No need to go that far.

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Feeling insecure, I touched my neck. “You monster,” I mumbled. I felt a hand on my shoulder and I looked up to see the oh-so-glorious-freakishly-handsome Prince Fred. “Rose, we came here to tell you something. Can this argument that you have with Ace wait?” He was giving me an expectant look as if pleading with me.

“PRINCE Ace.” Ace corrected him.

“R-Right. Sorry.”

“Okay.” I nodded. Fred led me to sit on the edge of my bed. I looked back at Ace and stuck my tongue out at him.

If looks could kill I’d be dead.

The rest of the prince stood behind Fred. He came down to his knees in front of me and stared.

I’m getting married!?

I mentally slapped and dismissed the thought. No way is he going to do just that. He’s a prince and I’m an alien...? Well I am from a different world after all, right? And besides, I’m still 17 and not legally old enough to get married.

But I am from a different world with different rules. Who knows?

He’s gonna propose!

Where’s the ring? I want diamonds!!

Fred sighed and grabbed my hand. “Rose, what I’m – I mean we’re about to tell you.....it’s kind of complicated-”

“I do!”

“What?” He asked.

“What?” I followed.

Fred laughed a little when our conversation was headed elsewhere. “What I was trying to say a while ago was...” Fred’s eyes seemed to travel at every one of the boys. Having a silent conversation with them. I raised an eyebrow at him as I waited.

“Are you hungry?” Fred finished and politely grinned at me.

“FRED!!!” Nate and the twins screamed making me flinch at the noise.

“Oh. Is that it?” I was a bit disappointed. “Yes. I am starving.” I admitted. Fred pulled me up on my feet. He was about to lead the way when Nate grabbed my arm and made me face him. He was looking at me. All serious and no hint of flirting.

Fred grabbed his hand that was holding my arm.

“Nate-” Nate swatted his hand away from his and glanced at Fred.

“I think this is the right time to tell her, Fred. She has read the book and I think that since she’s living here with us then she has the right to know.” Nate said.

“Right to know about what?” I asked. Making Nate turn his attention back at me. His red hair falling covering his eyes when he looked down.

Finally, he raised his eyes to meet mine again. His green eyes danced as they held a secret. “I’m a vampire.”

Chapter 22 Five Supernaturals and I

Edward?

I started to laugh. “I have to admit. I almost believed you back there.” I hit his forehead. “You sounded so serious.”

Nate narrowed his gaze and leaned forward. His eyes did not leave mine for a second. “I’m not lying.”

I rolled my eyes.

“Yeah. And I’m a mermaid. Watch me flip my tail.” I scoffed.

“I thought she was human!” The twins sounded surprised. Ace hit them over their heads at their stupidity.

“He’s telling you the truth.” I turned my head to look at Fred. Curious was I since he started to take sides with Nate on his jokes. I only raised an eyebrow at Fred, then turned to Nate accusingly and glared.

“What did you feed him?” I crossed my arms and stared straight at Nate.

“I didn’t feed them anything! I’m just telling you the truth. Believe me.” Nate said.

“Oh yeah? Then what are you guys then if Nate is a vampire?”

“Dan and I are wolves,” Ren answered. “Fred is a warlock and Ace is an Elf.”

Santa’s helper says what?

I roamed my eyes at every one of them. They all have the same hard look on their faces as if they wanted to take a dump. That was why I couldn’t stop the laughter that erupted from me. I backed away and sat on my bed as I continued to laugh. Tears had formed in my eyes so I started to wipe them away with my finger. When I looked up, they still had the same look on their faces.

Wiping the last tear from my eyes I grinned at them. “As fun as that was I think we have had enough jokes for this morning.”

“You still think we’re joking?” This time, it was PRINCE Ace who spoke. It was the first time that he had spoken since he came back to my room.

“Why else would you tell me such stories?”

“Because it’s the truth.” I was caught off guard when Fred had taken the spot to speak. “Remember yesterday when you had a sprain on your foot?” He asked.

I raised an eyebrow at him, wondering where this was going. “Yeah. But I could be imagining it. Nothing is there now.”

Lies. I felt the pain of it yesterday.

“That’s because I healed it.” I stopped and tried to process what Fred had just said. Healed it? As in first aid? Is he a red cross in training? Well, if they have one in this world.

Ren looked at Nate with a tired look. “I think she needs proof.” Nate nodded at Ren before looking back at me. He gave me a smirk. He moved in a blur that my eyes couldn’t seem to follow. He moved so fast that I had to blink several times to make sure that I was seeing right. I gasped in surprise when Nate had his face close to mine.

But that was not the reason that made me uncomfortable.

It was his teeth. They were sharper and elongated. Pointed like needles that could easily pierce your skin.

I saw Nate leaning down and exposed his fangs. “Still don’t believe me?” He whispered.

Out of curiosity, I poked Nate’s exposed fangs.

Making sure that he was not bluffing. Sure enough, it was real.

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And that’s where I lost my consciousness.

I woke up with a start. I was in my room, lying on my bed. I brushed the hair that had fallen on my face and looked around. The princes were standing by my bed staring at me. I gave each of them a curious glance as I took their appearances. I don’t have to be a detective to know that something has changed on their features.

I first looked at Ren and Dan who both have snouts like a wolf. “My, what big nose you have.” I suddenly said as I eyed them.

Oh and is it me or do my voice just echo?

“The better to smell you, my love.” Both said at the same time. I raised an eyebrow at them before I turned to Nate.

Creepy

“My what big teeth you have,” I commented as I examined his canine teeth.

“The better to eat you, my love.” Nate flashed me his sharpened canine teeth which sent shivers down my spine. Making me look at Fred next.

“My what pretty eyes you have,” I said to Fred as I looked at his bright blue eyes which were now glowing.

“The better to see you, my love.” Fred then winked at me. Which is more of an action that Nate would do and not Fred.

Something is wrong here. I turned my gaze to the last prince.

Ace

“My what big ears you have.” I eyed Ace’s ears. They became longer and sharper making his features more fine and detailed.

“The better to hear you, my love.” Ace smiled at me.

Ace smiled.

Which only leads to one thing. This is not real. Ace never smiles at all. And I am pretty sure that he won’t be smiling after I made that comment about his ears.

He’ll kill me for that.

And saying ‘my love?’ This is fake!

I looked up at Ace again. He was still smiling. A pure and genuine smile added more charm to his features. Wait what was I thinking? Oh right.

GET ME OUT OF HERE!!!

.

.

“Rose! Wake up.”

My eyes flew open and were met by Nate's green ones. "Why are you always the one who awakens me in my slumber?" I mumbled and wiped a hand across my face.

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Nate chuckled. "That's because I want you to see something beautiful when you wake up."

"Then hide your face next time." I rolled my eyes and sat up. Just like in my dream, the princes were standing by my bed. The only difference is that they looked normal. No snouts, no fangs, no sparkly blue eyes, and no sharp and pointy ears.

But just to be sure.

"What big nose you two have," I said to both Dan and Ren. Immediately, they both turned and examined each other's faces.

I turned to Nate. "What big teeth you have."

"What?" Nate suddenly used his tongue to feel his teeth if they have, indeed, sharpened. Shrugging, I turned to Fred.

"What beautiful eyes you have."

Fred suddenly looked taken aback by my comment. "Why thank you...?"

Can't someone give me a proper answer so I can confirm that this is the real world? I turned to the last prince who was crossing his arms and looking at me. I gulped.

I am counting on you, Ace.

"What....big ears you have?"

Ace's eyes suddenly narrowed and became a murderous look. "You wanna die?" he said through gritted teeth. But despite Ace's treat I have managed to throw my arms into the air and cheer. I may look a little crazy but at least it was confirmed that I am in the real world.

Thank you, PRINCE Ace!

“It’s real! It’s real!” Then I stopped. Suddenly remembering something very important before I passed out. I froze and my gaze wandered at the princes.

It’s real

This world.

It’s all real.

I started to scream again. This time in terror. “It’s all real!” I started to crawl on my bed and hid behind the sheets.

“You think this news about us not being human has affected her?” I heard Ren whispering to Dan.

“I don’t know. I hope not.” Dan whispered back.

“I think she’s just upset?” Nate wondered.

“No one asks you, fangy!” Ren and Dan both said, resulting in more bickering from the two sides. I guess the whole story about werewolves and vampires not liking each other is, in fact, real.

“Hey princess!” The twins suddenly popped up beside my bed while I was deep in thought.

Wolves

These two are wolves.

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“Eek!” I screamed and threw a pillow at them. It hit them both on the head. Ren and Dan playfully feigned death.

“You guys are not helping,” Nate grumbled as he fixed his coat. He glared at the twins who only stuck their tongues out at him and made funny faces. As if a switch was flipped, Nate’s eyebrow began to twitch in annoyance. When the twins didn’t stop, Nate rolled his sleeves up and dived at the twins.

I stared at them when Fred suddenly approached me. “Are you okay?” He had a concerned look on his face. A typical Frederick look.

I didn't give him a proper answer right away.

A Warlock.

Fred's a warlock

The room became silent. For the very first time since I came to this world, I was speechless. I still have no idea what to make of their revelations. Sure, I took the queen's confession that she was a fairy the first time, but that was it. Only a fairy.

Not wolves

Not vampires

Not warlocks

Not elves

If these boys are princes, then the kingdom that they're ruling must be full of their...kind? Or species. Whatever you call them.

I quickly imagined Ren and Dan's kingdom full of furballs running around the castle. Smelling each other's b***s as a greeting and running around the palace trying to catch their tail. Well, that is creepy and disgusting, but a little cute in a perverted way. I imagine Nate and his people sharpening their fangs before they sleep instead of brushing them. Drinking blood from a champagne gla**. Which made me wonder if they have a blood factory? Yuck. Fred making some kind of potion for spells. Probably something that involves shiny and sparkly liquids. Zapping someone's b*** and healing injured animals. Now I'm just picturing Fred doing all those stuff. And Ace, well.....doing what elves do. Gardening?

Realizing that I was not answering, Nate and hesitantly kneeled in front of me and held my hand. His eyes bore into mine and told me he was sorry. Despite being a vampire/bloods***er/leech/flirt he was warm. "Hey. It's okay." He said. "You're frightened and shocked. We understand that. But I want you to know that, despite our nature, we wouldn't harm you or even inflict pain. I don't know what kind of books you read in your world to have a different perspective of us. We have some hints of what it is in your books in the human world. According to Ace--"

PRINCE Ace immediately glared at Nate. Making him roll his eyes.

“Excuse me. According to PRINCE Ace, he told us that most of the time, your kind considered us as evil and vicious.” Nate frowned at that and continued to circle his thumb on the back of my palm. “I dare to disagree. You’re a family here, Rose. You’re safe with us. And as long as you’re with us nothing bad will happen to you.”

“I think you need to rest. Have this day away from your training,” announced Fred. “Nate and I will talk to the queen. Rest well, princess. I will have the maids to deliver your meal.”

Nate then leaned down and kissed my forehead. I flinched. I may be sulking but I still prefer having my bubble!

Nate must have noticed this because he gave me a sad smile before he and the others stood to leave. Ace looked back at me once before he and the others disappeared from my room.

Great. So now I’m in a supernatural world after all. There might be some other species out there far more dangerous. And I’m just a human, which makes me at the bottom of the food chain. But they haven’t done anything that could harm me, right?

My meals were delivered to my room. Both breakfast and lunch and later on was dinner. It was kind of lonely to eat alone, but I also want some privacy and to feel secure in my room so I guess that’s just fine.

It was getting late outside judging from the color of the sky. I slumped on my bed and I started to think. Then I noticed that they left the book that I was reading earlier. I remembered the look on Ace’s face when he saw the book. The way he reacted and locked me up in my room to get the others. That was when they started to reveal their true selves. Maybe – just maybe – this book is some sort of history book? If it is then it could tell me everything that I needed to know about this world and what I’m about to face.

Getting up from my bed, I walked towards my table and reached for a chair. I sat down and flipped the book to the table of contents.

Now what? I ask myself

Now you look for a solution to your problem.

Chapter 23 Rose Riding Hood

My eyes darted towards the gla** ball at the other table. The little mist of magic winking at me from time to time. I blinked at it once. Twice.

Hold it. I think I remember reading something about that crystal orb.

I quickly flipped through the pages until I landed on the page that I wanted. I started to read it silently. I was pretty sure that I had read something about the orb. But I haven't had the time to process it when I was rudely interrupted by the PRINCE.

My eyes went wide as the information made sense to me. I was right. I did read something about two orbs. One was light and one was dark. The light one is kept hidden in the Kingdom of Thalia. Its twin, the dark one, is kept at another greater kingdom called Tereu.

From what I have read, these two orbs both possess great magic. And I have a hunch that if it is true then the other orb can bring me back. a**uming that its power was not consumed, unlike the light one over here.

But before I could do that, I have to see if this is true. I have to ask someone about this.

And I know just the right person to ask.

I silently walked inside the library. The huge door creaked as I opened it. "Hello?" I called out. My voice echoed in the large room.

"Why are you here?" My eyes darted to a part of the room which was lit by lamps. There was a small coffee table and some couch around it. Sitting with his back to me, probably reading a book, is his royal highness, PRINCE Ace.

I sat on one of the couches in front of him and watched him read. I was waiting for him to put the book down so I could talk to him. I placed the book that I was holding on my lap and waited patiently.

Fortunately, I didn't get to wait that long because, after a few seconds, he sets the book down on the table without a sound.

“I assume that you’re not here for the lesson.” Ace said and finally looked at me. “What is it? I can see that you want to ask me something.”

“If I ask you, Will you tell me the truth?” I asked.

Ace took some time before he answered. “That depends on your question.”

I sighed. I guess I have to go to the safer route where he won’t suspect a thing. “Is everything that this book says is real?” I asked and raised the book so that he could see.

Ace stared at me in the eyes before he stared at the book. “Why do you want to know?”

“Hey. I asked you first, okay?”

Ace frowned. “Shut up. I ask you why you wanted to know if it’s real or not.”

I huffed and wiped a hand across my face. “No particular reason,” I answered. Ace didn’t seem to be entirely convinced. He only narrowed his eyes at me in suspicion. “I don’t believe you.” He finally said. “If I know, you must have read something that triggered your interest. Last time I checked, you don’t even care about the history of this kingdom.”

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I suddenly got irritated. This conversation was taking a lot longer than I wanted it to be. “Look here, your royal highness. I came to you to seek an answer. It’s a simple yes or no question.” I was suddenly aware that my voice had risen.

Ace didn’t falter and countered me with his pissed-off glare. “I’m trying to be nice, okay? I kept my temper in check just for today because I figured that you are having a hard time with all these.” Ace took a deep breath and massaged the bridge of his nose.

“You left the book earlier in my room.”

“Prince Fred left it. Not me.”

“Can’t you just tell me? At least I am trying my best to learn.”

He gave me a skeptical look. “Yes. That’s the history of our world.” He confirmed.

Hope suddenly burned inside of me. It's real. Everything in the book is real. I can go home. assuming that the dark orb can help me. But I don't want to ask that question to Ace. He might suspect something.

"Is that all that you wanted to ask me?" Ace asked. Not looking at me when he noticed that I was still sitting there.

I looked at Ace and debated whether to ask him or not. "Um..."

Ace raised an eyebrow at me. "What?" He asked. And not in a very welcoming sort of tone.

"Um...are you an Elf?" I decided not to ask my real question. Who knows? He might figure out my plan and tell the others. And besides, it's not every day you get to meet an elf. I mean, what do they do? I could just read from the book but it's better to just ask a real elf, right?

Ace frowned at my question. "Yes, I am."

I pursed my lips. "Don't offensively take this but, why aren't your ears pointy?" I said then made some gestures with my hands to my ears. I know what you're thinking. It's a rude question to ask. But as far as I know, elves have pointy ears and are short, right? Well according to the image of Santa's helpers in kids' books.

Looking at Ace, he was anything but. He was tall and his ears didn't seem to be pointed. But the book did say that they have sharp and pointy ears and that elves have a good sense of humor. Well if this is his way of showing a good sense of humor then I don't find it funny.

In addition, they are strikingly gorgeous. Oh yes, Ace is gorgeous. But I prefer to drop dead gorgeous.....literally in my case.

Try and get to know the guy, you'll see what I mean.

Unexpectedly, Ace didn't give me a death threat. It was like it didn't bother him. Or maybe he's just extending his patience a little bit. "That's because I'm not using magic." He said.

"Magic!? What kind of magic?! Show me!" I suddenly got excited. My eyes are probably shining right now as I looked at Ace. Expecting him to do something...magical?

“No. I’m not going to use my magic for show.”

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“Aw. You’re no fun. Come on. Show me!!” I urged.

This time, Ace suddenly looked irritated. “Just read that book if you want to know.”

“But it doesn’t say anything! It only says that as time goes by, the elves gain elemental gifts. And that only the royals have unique gifts passed down from generation to generation. It wasn’t written what those unique gifts are so how am I supposed to guess? You’re a royal so you must have a unique gift.”

“I’m good with words. That’s my gift.” Ace said plainly.

“That’s just a skill. I mean the gift as in your magic. You know. The sparkle and zapping kind of thing.” I made an act of the zapping part with my fingers and looked at him. “That is how it works, right?”

“As I said before. I’m not using it for show.” He said.

“So you do have one!” I beamed. “If you don’t want to show me but at least tell me.” I insisted.

Ace only ran a hand through his hair before he picked the book that he left on the table and started to read again. “That’s for me to know and for you to find out.”

That line sure is popular with the princes.

“That’s not fair!! I want to know. Please.”

“Good night, Rose.” I can tell that Ace is getting pissed every minute at me. Why is he so sensitive about his gift?

“Come on. I won’t tell.” I pleaded.

This time, Ace let out an irritated sigh. I can tell that his patience is slowly draining. “Go to your room and just read the damn book! I don’t care if you can’t sleep because of your curiosity about my powers. It’s not my problem. Grab your book and leave. You’ve been nothing but a burden to all of us!” He breathed. “Do you know how much trouble we are all in because of you? Why can’t you just go

back to your world? Do you enjoy playing princess that much and pretending that your life is perfect? You're no princess. The queen simply picked you up from your world and dumped you here. Know your place!"

I sat there silently as I carefully swallowed his words. "It's not like I was given a choice to be here in the first place," I mumbled. Grabbing the book, I stood up. Well, I may be curious but I am not stupid enough to just sit here and have Santa's helper give me a scolding. "You may be a prince, but you are not deserving of that t**le."

Ace gave me a menacing glare. I glared back before leaving the library. I got the information that I needed. There's no reason for me to stay and chat.

I hurriedly ran back to my room. Now that I was a little sure that there's a way out of this world without waiting for the damn crystal ball to recharge, I quickly opened the book and tore the drawing of a map on the first page. It was old and I don't know if it's still accurate, but it was my only bet. I place it in my dress pocket for safekeeping.

I opened my closet and brought all of the dresses out and tied them together to make a make-shift rope. I used all my experience in knot tying and making sure that the knot was tightly secured. Of course, I couldn't just die in my search for the other orb, right? That would have been pointless.

Once I was done, I checked my handy work and went to the balcony. I tied one end of my make-shift rope on the railing and grabbed the other end. I pulled at it a couple of times to make sure that it was safe. All the while, I couldn't help but feel a bit nervous since I haven't done this kind of escape route. I have only watched it in movies. There is no guarantee the fabrics would hold. Well, I'm not saying that I'm heavy or anything.

Gripping tightly on the other end of the rope, I glanced back at my room and to the light orb on my table. I frowned and stuck my tongue out in its direction before diving at the balcony.

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It probably wasn't the best idea that I ever had since I was on the 2nd floor after all. And since this was a castle, well, the 2nd floor isn't that low from the ground.

“Sweet Mother of Donkey milk!!” I cursed and quickly tightened my hold on the fabric. Luckily it was too short to reach the bottom, but enough for me to reach my leg out on the ground. I sighed in relief.

“Well, that wasn’t so bad,” I said to myself. I spoke too soon when the knot on the fabric that I was holding came loose, making me land on my b***. The fabric that I was gripping fell on my head. I groaned and grabbed the fabric that was covering my face and examined it.

It wasn’t a dress at all but a hood. A red hood to be exact.

I laughed silently at how ironic that was. I just had a dream earlier that I was red riding hood. Not to mention that I was living with two werewolves. With a shake of my head, I dr***d the hood over my shoulder and tied the ribbon to secure it on me.

I fished out the map in my skirt pocket and examined the map. Using the light of the moon to see the intricate drawings on the paper. Then I looked at what was ahead of me, nothing but trees that might be full of creatures lurking in the dark. Then I looked behind me, the castle in its white and gold glory.

I quickly asked myself if going out and searching was probably the best thing for me. It was, after all, a history book. Who knows? The other orb might not exist anymore. Am I willing to take that chance?

Do you know how much trouble we are all in because of you? Why can’t you just go back to your world? Do you enjoy playing princess that much and pretending that your life is perfect? You’re no princess. The queen simply picked you up from your world and dumped you here. Know your place!

His words were true. I should know my place in this world. I am a human. I do not belong here. But even though his words hurt me enough to make me hate all of them, I couldn’t. I have a few nice memories here. I received kindness and shelter in this place. Sure it wasn’t perfect, but the people somehow made it bearable. I will surely miss them if I’m successful in returning. Right now, I was thinking of leaving them a note, but I figured that it was too late.

With a final intake of breath, I set off into the unknown. Fully determined to search for the other kingdom that possesses the other orb. Just thinking about another way out of this mess and finally be back in my world made me smile.

I'll finally be home with my family. Soon.

Meanwhile

Deep within the forest, a small wolf awoke from its slumber. It felt a familiar presence far into the woods. It shook its fur to dust off the dust from the ruins where it was sleeping. It didn't know how long it was sleeping the whole time for the place to be in ruins like this.

It looked at the place sadly. It used to be a lively place...

Then the presence hit it again. Its nose immediately sniffed the air. It smelled nothing, but the pull it felt somehow felt familiar. Its tail started to wag in delight when it realized something.

Master!

It let out a small howl. Finally! He must meet his master.

It gave the ruins one final look before setting off.

Chapter 24 One Person Missing

BACK IN THE PALACE

The next morning, princes have all gathered around the dining area waiting as the servants prepare their food. They were currently the only ones around the table, which they wondered. The King and Queen are always punctual. Rose isn't there either. It didn't help the mood without a jolly girl gulping down every food within her reach.

Well, Ren and Dan are jolly but more annoyingly.

Once they sat down a servant approached one of them, Fred, and handed him a letter. It came from the king and the queen.

Saying his gratitude to the servant, he opened the letter.

It seems as if they left for an important visit to a friend from another kingdom.

He looked up and noticed the princes were watching him. He assumes that they are wondering what the letter says. He cleared his throat. "Gentlemen, the king,

and the Queen are out for a visit to their friend. She's leaving me in charge for the meantime." He fought the frown that was trying to form in his face. He hates taking charges. Everyone is always looking up to him. It's pressuring. He thought it was a bit weird for him to be having those thoughts since he is fighting for the throne and all.

But seriously, why can't they ask Nate or Ace to take charge? Or even Dan and Ren?

He looked at the twins who were clapping their hands joyously at the king and queen's absence.

Okay, maybe not the twins.

The twins both looked at Fred. "Why do they always leave Prince Fred in charge?" They both asked the same question that he was asking himself.

Until now, he couldn't help but wonder how they always say the same things at the same time. Is that a twin thing or an Alpha thing? He wondered what would happen if he had a twin to finish his every sentence.

Weird.

But it sounds fun!

Nate snorted at the twins' protest. "That's because the king and Queen are so smart as to not let you two be in charge. We all know what would happen when you two got the reins." The twins both glared at Nate, who seemed oblivious to the twins' glare – that or he's just pretending not to notice. Which didn't help since the two seemed to snap.

Crap. Another fight is about to break loose if he won't do something.

Think Fred!

"Prince Ren, Prince Dan. Why don't the both of you go and fetch Rose? Breakfast is about to be served and it's almost time for her training with Ace." Just as he expected, the frowns from both of their faces vanished and was replaced by a grin. Their eyes sparkled as the both of them got up and made a salute.

“Our pleasure, your highness!” And they were off before he could even have the time to take back what he just said. Knowing them, they might pull some sort of trick on her before e*****ing her.

At the corner of my eyes, he saw Nate giving me an unsure look. “Prince Fred, are you sure that it is wise to call her now?” He thought about what Nate had said.

He’s right. Rose might still be shaken from their little revelation yesterday. She might not like the idea of two werewolves giving her a wake-up call. She might even freak out and scream bloody murder.

He nodded. This is why he hates being in charge. He takes the blame if anything goes wrong in the end. “I think that the sooner she’ll get to spend more time with us, the easier she’ll accept what we are.” That was what he said.

Nate nodded. “Yes. I know that. But I wasn’t referring to that.”

“Oh? Then what are you referring to, Prince Nate?” I asked in curiosity.

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“From spending time with her, I have learned that she’s not a morning person.” Nate chuckled. “Just imagine what she’ll do to the twins when they try to wake her up.”

Fred laughed. Nate is telling the truth. Right now, he can just imagine himself being the one waking her up for breakfast. He can just picture her glaring sleepily at him and yelling, “What the heck, ugly! Leave me alone.”

He chuckled. He hopes she’ll get back to her cheery self as soon as possible. It’s only been yesterday and they already miss her unruly and refreshing personality. Fred thought about finishing the song that he was composing. He figured that Rose might want to hear it.

“Princes Fred?”

It seems as if the song was stuck to his head and the notes kept on replaying on his mind. He even practiced playing it on the piano yesterday thinking she would be delighted to hear it.

“Prince Fred!”

He was suddenly snapped out of his reverie. Nate had been calling his name while he was daydreaming. Oh wait, that wasn't a daydream! It's called memory recalling.

"Yes?" He asked.

"You were staring at space for a while. Is everything alright?"

He nodded. "Of course. I just had a little thought." He glanced at Ace who was eating silently beside Nate. He didn't even notice that the food was already served.

What the heck is wrong with you, Fred? He thought to himself.

"Prince Fred! Prince Fred!" Before he had the chance to taste the food, they heard the twins screaming. Nate and Fred chuckled while Ace kept on eating. That guy seriously lacks socialization. He's not even joining the conversation.

But back to the matter at hand.

What did Rose do to make the twins scared out of their wits? He was eager to know.

The twins came into the dining area. Once Nate and Fred had a good look at the twins, their laughter died and even Ace stopped eating as he paid more attention to them. Both were out of breath and panic was in their eyes. They were breathing heavily.

His heart sank and he got up from his chair. "What happened?"

"Y-you see....we were knocking on Rose's door and trying to call her out."

"And when no one answered, Dan and I decided to go in and check her."

"When we came in, we immediately noticed that her scent was gone."

"We started to look for her in her room, but when we came to her balcony, we noticed that it was open."

"And not just that. She tied her clothes together so she could use them to climb down! Who knew she was smart!" By this comment, Ren smacked the back of Dan's head. He would have found it funny if the situation was different.

“Rose is gone?” As soon as the words left his mouth, it sounded more real. The twins nodded. By the now, Ace and Nate were out of chairs as they followed him when he started to run to Rose’s room. He wants to see it for himself.

If those two are joking around then he will seriously turn them into frogs! Scratch that. He will curse them into frogs until someone kisses them!

I hope they’re joking. Please let this not be real.

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As soon as he reached her room, he noticed that her closet was empty. The book that held the history of the kingdom was on her desk and opened to a certain page. He didn’t bother to check it since he immediately went to the balcony. Just as the twins have said, there was a makeshift rope that she used to climb down.

He heard someone curse behind me. He turned to see that the rest of the princes were able to catch up. Fred got up from his position and made his way to the princes.

“We need to find her.” He turned towards the twins. “Can you track her down through her scent?” Like wolves, they have a very sensitive nose so they can probably track her down.

Surprisingly, they shook their heads. “We tried, Prince Fred.”

“But the scent stopped as soon as we reached the bottom of her balcony.”

He quickly grunted and closed his eyes to collect himself. After 10 seconds, he let out a sigh. “That’s okay. I’ll try tracking her with my magic.” He said. “Prince Ace, hand me her hairbrush over there.” Fred pointed at the large white vanity table, where Ace was currently leaning on. He reached out behind him; grabbed the hairbrush and handed it to me. I couldn’t help but notice that his eyes suddenly shifted to the book on her table. He then frowned at it.

He didn’t bother to ask what it was about as he took the brush from him.

Fred studied the hairbrush until he was able to find a piece of her hair. He pulled it out and held it to his palm. He pulled out a small ounce of magic and pictured Rose in his mind; all the while trying to recall the word for the tracking spell.

“El’ Reos zigreir.” He whispered the words. Sparks flew from his palm and into the piece of hair. Suddenly, the piece of hair started to float and turned into a golden light.

“Alright! Way to go, Prince Fred!” Dan cheered.

They all ignored him as they watched the light floating towards the balcony. Without having second thoughts, they followed. The light stopped and then floated downwards and then...

...it just vanished.

“No!” Nate hissed and hit the railing with his fist in frustration. If it wasn’t made of fine material, he’s afraid that Nate would have broken it by now with his vampire strength. “Damn it!” he cursed.

“I don’t understand.” Fred shook his head in confusion.

The light was supposed to lead them to Rose. It wasn’t supposed to just vanish.

“A cloak,” Nate mumbled. Still glaring at the spot where my magic has vanished.

“What do you mean?” Ren asked.

Nate pointed below the balcony before looking at us. “Ren and Dan said that when they tried to track her down with her scent, they stopped just below this balcony. And when Fred cast the tracking spell it also led us to the same place. It means that when she has reached the bottom, she must have used something to hide her presence and prevent us from tracking her down.”

Nate was on to something. He could tell. And Fred had a feeling what he was about to say.

“She’s cloaked.”

Fred’s sus***ion was confirmed when Nate nodded. A cloak is a special type of hood made by powerful warlocks. It conceals you so that no one can track you down. Not a vampire, not a werewolf, and not a warlock. It has been used by royals when they are hiding. The only flaw is that you can only conceal your scent and such from magic. But you can still be seen. It just keeps you from being tracked.

Dan shook his head. “But how? She doesn’t even know that kind of stuff!”

“Maybe she has just figured it out somehow,” Nate said in the middle of thinking. “Or the queen might have told her.”

Fred shook my head in frustration. “Enough with this. We have to go look for her.” He proposed and called one of the servants who was just pa**ing by. “Tell the guards to prepare our horses!” The girl nodded and ran. Hopefully to deliver my order to the guards.

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“All of you.” Fred then directed to the princes. “Meet me in the stables in 5 minutes!”

He quickly headed to his room. Not even bothering to look back to see if the other princes have left to do the same. He doesn’t need anything in his room but his sword. He’s not sure if he would use this but he’s not taking any chances.

They are in a supernatural world after all, and Rose is only a human. She might encounter some problems. Or worse. piss off a rogue that is capable of ripping her throat out.

He spotted his sword beside his bed and grabbed it. He quickly ran out as fast as he could and headed towards the stables. He could already see that the servants have already prepared their horses.

Surprisingly, Ace was the first one to have arrived. Like him, Ace also carried his weapon. His bow was slung over his shoulder. Ace may be good in sword fighting but archery is more likely his style. The bow was made of a special elven metal. Its edge is sharp and, if he wills it to, it can be broken in two and be used as a double sword.

He spotted his horse just beside his and made my way to it. The stable boy then backed away to give me the reins, which he gratefully took and quickly jumped to ride his steed. “Where are they?” He asked Ace, who was now on his horse.

He shrugged. “I don’t know. But if they’re not here in two minutes, we’ll go ahead.” If it were some other time, he would have been shocked since Prince Ace is eager to find Rose.

Then he was suddenly locked with a pair of wolves.

“Now that isn’t very nice you know.”

“Yeah. Considering that we took this time to shift.”

Voices spoke in his mind. Nate came into his view with a determined look on his face as he rode his horse. But he wasn’t the one who spoke. It was the two brown wolves in front of us. One has a huge star-like shaped mark covering its face while the other has a white-like sock on one of its front legs. They were not like any ordinary wolves.

They were bigger and stronger.

“Ren? Dan? Why did you shift?” He asked curiously. It was their first time seeing the princes in their wolf form.

Both the wolves snorted at him. “We’ll be faster this way.”

“And our senses will be heightened. Which means the greater chance of finding Rose.”

Well, that made sense. He thought that they were just showing off.

“Alright.” He nodded and told them the plan.

“We’ll split up into two groups. Dan and I will try and head to go look in the town while Ace, Nate, and Ren will try and search the forest.”

“Why do Dan and I have to be apart?” Asked the wolf with the white star on its face, he assumed it was Ren, and snorted in his wolf form. He was not happy about the arrangement that Fred proposed. It’s either he doesn’t want to be parted with his twin or he doesn’t want to spend time looking for Rose with Nate and Ace at his side.

“You and Dan have this alpha connection – or is that a twin thing? Never mind. What I’m trying to say is that we can communicate with each other through you and Dan. That way we can exchange some information regarding Rose’s whereabouts.”

“It only works on a limited distance. We’ll be sure to inform you when we’re out of each other’s reach.”

The twins let out a huff but agreed otherwise. Fred glanced at Nate and Ace and nodded at them. He pulled the reins of his horse to change courses. “Don’t stop looking until we find her.” He ordered and gestured at Dan to ready himself. Dan nodded.

Fred let my horse gallop towards the direction of the town. Dan, being a wolf, ran ahead of him.

