

## 5 princes and I By Kiraran Chapter 26 - 30

### Chapter 31 Small Talks

I ran and ran, turned from corner to corner, and went to the point where I cursed this damn castle for being so big. I mean, what the heck? Why would they need a bigger castle if only a few people were living here, right?

I finally arrived at the library. I gulped hard before I entered. The door let out a loud creak as I entered. The windows were all open, letting the sunlight the whole library. "Hello?" I called out. My voice echoed in the room. I took hesitant steps as I looked at my surroundings. Trying to see if I could find his royal highness.

My gaze fell onto the usual couch where Ace would have been. Sitting there on the couch with a book in hand. But when I came there, there was no sign of Ace.

He has to be here!! Or else, I wouldn't know any other place to look for him.

I decided to try and walk around in case I might find him. I sneaked a peek at each place between the bookshelves in hopes that he might be there looking for a nice book, but he wasn't. "Where the heck could he be?" I wondered out loud.

As if on cue, something hard hit me on the head. "Ow!!" I clutch my head and look down at the object that had fallen. It was a hard leather-bound book. No wonder it hurts.

With a hand still on my head, I picked it up and wondered how the heck did this book get here?

"Looking for something?" My body tensed at the sound of the voice. I don't know what to feel when I heard his voice. Excitement? Fear? Annoyance?

I looked up only to find the person whom I came for in this place. He was on the second floor of the library, leaning on the balcony and looking down at me. His black hair falling and shadowing his face. Now with his elongated ear, he looked so different.

Crap.

I started to open my mouth but no sound came out and I stood there looking like a fish.

What am I going to say again?

When I didn't speak, Ace only raised an eyebrow at me before he decided that I wasn't worth his time and started to leave.

“Wait!” I called out to him. With the book still in my arms, I hurriedly ran towards the stairs and to the second floor. I saw him by one of the shelves. He was looking at me and studying me as I came to him panting.

“What?” His voice still has its rudeness in them that makes me want to slam the book to his face. But I didn’t, instead, I gave him a sweet smile as I politely handed him the book. Trust me, it’s hard to do this when you’re facing his gaze right now.

“You dropped this,” I said and offered him the book.

He raised an eyebrow at me. “I threw it at you. Why would you give it back to me? Tch.” He said and quickly s\*\*\*\*\*ed the book from me.

“What do you mean?” I asked.

He shook his head. “Nothing. I was just having some sort of experiment to see how hard an idiot’s skull can be. Turns out. It’s pretty hard. The edge even got damage.” He started to ma\*\*age the said spot with his thumb.

“You dropped the book on purpose?”

“Yep.”

## ADVERTISEMENT

Please...Just this once. Give me the patience to deal with this.

Instead of wrapping my hands around his neck and throwing him off the balcony while shouting insults about elves, I simply gave him a tight smile. “Oh really? That’s cool.” I said and added a little laugh to which he responded with a grimace.

“Please stop smiling. You look like an idiot.” He said and started to place the book on one of the shelves.

I, on the other hand, am fuming with anger. Why does he make it so hard for me to apologize?!

Once he finished placing the book, he turned to me. Since he doesn’t want me to smile, I just lift the corners of my lips in which he just rolled his eyes. “Ugly cow.” I heard him say.

I can’t take this any longer. “What’s your problem? Why are you such a jerk? Can’t you see that I’m trying to be nice here?!” I burst out.

He slammed the bookshelf behind me and studied me before he turned his eyes back to the shelves. “Nope. You don’t look like it.”

I swear. This guy makes me wanna pull my hair out. “Uh huh. And I don’t look like someone who has ears as if they were being pulled by a fishhook.”

Ace stopped scanning the book as he turned to glare at me. “At least I wasn’t stupid enough to faint when a werewolf speaks in my mind.”

“Did you just call me stupid, Santa’s helper?”

“I did, you stupid blonde.”

“Gosh! You’re so...annoying! Why can’t you just be nice?”

“I was given a mouth and a tongue for a reason. And that is to tell you that you’re an ugly cow whose face looks as if it was dipped in wolf sh\*t.”

“Well, it’s better than having pointy ears. I swear if I have a ring with me right now then I might throw it at your ears.”

Ace frowned at me. “Did you just come here to pick a fight? Because I am not in the mood for one.” He said and started to walk away from me.

I mentally slapped myself for almost forgetting the main reason that I was here. I’m supposed to apologize to this jerk for what I did earlier, but he was making it hard for me to do so. “W-Wait!” I called out to him. He stopped and turned his head to the side.

“What now?” Annoyance was evident in his tone as he said it.

I tried to look for the right words but I couldn’t find any. So I just looked at him as my tongue-tied. “I-I....”

Ace sighed. “Look. If you wanna say something then say it. Might as well get this over with.”

“I’m sorry!” I blurted out quickly. Ace must have not prepared himself for this because he looked slightly taken aback and turned around so he could fully face me.

“What?” His face looked as if he was confused, which would have been adorable if he’s not giving me that look. It was as if he was doubting my sincerity.

## ADVERTISEMENT

Taking a deep breath. I tried again. “Look, I heard everything from the princes. They said that you were the one who found me in the price for the return of your ‘power’.” I made air quotes in the air. “a\*\*uming you were trying to kill it?”

"Tch." Ace averted his eyes from me and looked to the side. "It couldn't be avoided." He mumbled. "Besides, I didn't do it for you. Don't get ahead of yourself. The thought of saving you disgusts me." He said as he took a book from one of its shelves before flipping its pages. He didn't say anything more as he examined the book.

I, on the other hand, was fidgeting. I mean, did he take my apology or what?

"Um....Ace-

"PRINCE." He corrected me.

I rolled my eyes. "PRINCE Ace, what now? Do you accept my apology?" I asked nervously. Ace paused for a second. Looked at me before saying a simple flat, "No."

I sighed. Well, I should have expected that from the very beginning. "Well, if you wouldn't take my apology, then can I at least say thank you?" Ace took a deep breath before shutting the book close and faced me. He studied my face for a moment then an unexpected thing happened. The corner of his mouth lifted.

"Sure."

A man of few words. That's all I can say about Ace right now. I mean PRINCE Ace.

Well, at least he accepted my thanks. Feeling a bit better, I offered him a little smile as I started to turn my back to him. "Hey." Ace called me. I suddenly stopped and looked at Ace and gave him a questioning look. "Have you met with the queen yet? I believe that she's worried about you."

Where that question came from, I don't know. "Yeah. I met her while I was heading here. Why?"

Ace shook his head. "Just curious. What did she say?"

I thought back to my encounter with the queen and shrugged. "Nothing. She just made me promise not to run off again."

"And you said yes." He said it not like a question, but a fact. Like something I should have said. Which I did.

I nodded. "Yeah."

"Is that all that she said? I assume that with this situation she might cancel the ball." He pointed out.

A ball? Oh yeah. The stupid formal dance. How could I forget?

I thought about it for a while until I finally recalled what the queen had told me before I left. "Uh....not quite," I said. Causing Ace to raise one of his eyebrows in question. "What I meant was, I was given the choice whether to continue the ball or not."

Ace stared at me for a long time before he finally asked the question that even I hadn't bothered to ask myself until now. "So, what now? Are you gonna say yes?"

"I don't know. it wouldn't make much of a difference even if I agree to it, right? I'd still be here. Away from my home." My voice faltered a little as I mentioned home. And Ace, being the jerk that he was, rolled his eyes at me as if seeing me in this position sickens him.

With a book in hand, he walked and stood in front of me and completely towering over my height. "Like what you said, your choice won't make a difference whether you go or not."

"Your point?"

## ADVERTISEMENT

"Why don't you enjoy your stay here instead of just moping around and doing nothing. It's not like this will last forever." He said before he went by me and headed for the stairs. He paused at the edge of the stairs as he turned to me. "And if you do decide to stay, then learn to embrace the truth." His words carried a sort of message that I hadn't thought of before. He's got a point. Whatever I do here, as long as the orb hasn't recharged, I can't leave so why don't I just enjoy it?

I ran after Ace, he was already heading down the stairs when I stood in front of him. He raised his eyebrow at me as I blocked his way. "Thank you." I beamed at him before I ran down the stairs and out of the library. Before I fully closed the doors behind me, I caught a glimpse of Ace's confused-looking face, which then turned into a disgusted look.

As expected of PRINCE Ace.

A smile was plastered on my face as I leaned against the library door. It seems as if a part of the worries in my mind had cleared up. A question that I hadn't thought about was answered. Staying here in this world was not one of my options. But it's pretty clear how welcome I am in this castle so why not just stay here and live with them for a while and experience what it is like to live in this world?

Embrace the truth.

Having those thoughts in my mind, I decided to go look for the queen so I could tell her of my decision. As I retracted myself from the wall a question suddenly popped into my head. Which way is headed to the queen?

\*\*\*Meanwhile\*\*\*

It took a while but he was finally here. He finally found the place where his master was staying. The little wolf dropped the cloak as it panted. It wasn't easy slipping past the guards. Nor was it easy to find his way through the vast garden without being distracted.

It was already nighttime. His master must be asleep by now.

A tall figure emerged from the castle. The wolf suddenly tensed up and moved to hide in the bushes. The man looked troubled as he read a letter. His blonde hair glimmered in the moonlight.

The wolf sniffed the air. This guy is a warlock.

His slight movement rattled the bushes. "Who's there?" The blonde man asked. The wolf suddenly panicked and ran away, leaving the cloak behind. He immediately stopped and hid behind a rock to go back for the cloak. Too late.

The blonde man was headed his way but stopped short when he found the cloak. The man picked it up in wonder and gazed into the empty forest. "How did-

"Prince Fred." A second man appeared. This guy has dark hair and pointy ears. When the man saw what the blonde was holding, he frowned. "Why do you have that?"

"I just found it lying on the ground. What are you doing here?"

"I felt a foreign presence here. But I can't tell what it is."

He's an Elf. The wolf thought. Suddenly it felt a weak tugging at his consciousness.

"I can feel it but I can't control it." The Elf mumbled to himself.

The wolf whimpered. He had to leave. There's an Elf with a dangerous power around. He was sad that he couldn't see his master yet, but at the same time, he couldn't let himself get caught.

He'll meet with his master. One way or another.

Chapter 32 Routine for a Week

The next day, I woke up and changed into some clean clothes. The queen came into my room to discuss some matters regarding my stay.

"So I have to pretend to be your real niece who comes from another country?" I raised an eyebrow at her.

“Unfortunately, yes.” She said and looked at me apologetically. “It seems that your presence has caused some rumors.”

“What rumors?”

“That you’re a mistress is a mistress.”

“What the f-” I cursed at the absurdity of it.

“Ah-ah!” The queen chastised. “None of that foul behavior.” She said. “So anyway, the story will be like this. You’re a princess from another country with 7 older sisters and 8 older brothers.”

I stared at her. “Lady? That story alone is bull-” The queen glared at me. “bulldozing my imagination. I mean, that’s a lot of siblings.”

“Just play along!” The queen huffed. “So because you always feel crowded in your home, you decided to move in with me and become my adoptive daughter.”

“So what will happen to the princes? I thought that they were here because you have no heir. Now that you adopted me then...”

“Oh, you will still choose. Think of them as your ‘marriage’ candidates.”

“What!?”

“Not for real. When you leave we still need the next ruler. It’s just all ‘pretend’.” She says.

“I-” I started. I rubbed my eyes at how ridiculous this is. “From your niece from a foreign country to become your adoptive daughter. Wow. Amazing. Truly.” I said sarcastically.

The queen must not have heard my sarcasm because she seemed oblivious. “I know, right? No one would question such a fine tale!”

I gave her a look. Is she for real?

I couldn’t help but be glad when someone knocked on my door.

“Why can’t you be punctual!?”

Judging from the scream, it was PRINCE with all the capitals.

“Oh, dear.” The queen gasped. “I must have taken quite a lot of your time. You should head out now.”

An idea suddenly formed in my mind and I grinned. "Auntie-mom." I smiled sweetly. "Why don't we go out together?"

The queen seemed touched at my offer that I felt a bit guilty.

I said a bit.

Together we went for the door and I made sure that she went out first. As I opened the door, we saw that PRINCE Ace was about to knock one again, but paused when he saw the queen.

His mouth was hanging open and I couldn't help but snicker in delight. Serves him right. "Your highness I-" He started. I waved at him to get his attention. When finally looked, I gave him a teasing grin and stuck my tongue out. Then I pointed at the queen and made a slicing gesture through my neck and pointed at him. You dead.

He glared before looking back at the queen and bowed his head. "Forgive me for my rudeness."

"Off with his head!" I declared. Both the Queen and Ace gave me a look. "What?"

"Honey, we are not barbarians. We are civilized." The queen said. Civilized? Yeah, right. Says the one who kidnapped me. "Prince Ace, it is alright. And thank you for being serious about Rose's education. I know that it isn't easy."

"Indeed it isn't. Her attention span is below average."

"Hey!" I protested.

"Thank you again. And please do your best. As for the matter regarding the ball...?" The Queen gave me a side glance to confirm my participation. "It would be troublesome if you don't want to, but we'll manage-"

"Yeah yeah. I'm going. Might as well see what a real ball looks like." I said nonchalantly.

"Great!" The Queen clapped her hands in delight. "Have fun with your training, darling!" He waved us goodbye before she walked away.

"Come on." Ace said and started walking in the other direction. I followed him hesitantly. He's not retaliating? This is new.

"Today you'll study about all the important names in each kingdom. That includes the Dukes and Duchess along with their heir. Later I will give you a quiz. Rest assured that everything will be reported to the queen."

So this is his retaliation. Not fair.

\*\*\*

The lesson with Ace was brutal and I thanked my schedule that I only have a few hours with him. He made me memorize a lot of names. He would even give me surprise quizzes by showing me small paintings of the Dukes and Duchess and ask me for their names.

I, of course, having forgotten their names, gave them new ones. He wasn't happy about it and made me study them again and again. If I were still a kid, then this would be child abuse.

I got out of the library, feeling like my soul just left my body. Do I have to come here again? Because I don't want to.

"Hi, princess!"

"We're here to e\*\*\*\*\* you."

Oh great. The twins are here.

"Hey," I told them weakly.

ADVERTISEMENT

The twins gave me a look of worry. "Wow. What's wrong with you?"

"I'm tired." I groaned. "I think I used up all of my brain cells for the day," I mumbled.

"Rose?" It was Nate. He looked at me worriedly.

Why are we all gathered outside of the library like this?

"Hey." I greeted him. "Can I skip the twins and head for our lessons? I wanna eat." I said. The twins frowned at my proposal. Nate just laughed.

"I wish we could. I wouldn't mind it." He winked. "Unfortunately, I have to speak with the queen on some matters. I just came here to inform the twins to e\*\*\*\*\* you to your new room. Queen's orders."

"What?" I must be hearing things.

"You have been transferred to a new room on the 3rd floor."

I stared at him in wonder. "Transferred? Why?"

“There are two reasons.” He started, “One, your room is a complete mess. Second, so we can keep an eye on you.”

I don't have to be a genius to know that my room was a mess after all the things that I threw the other day just to make a makeshift rope. But what does he mean when he says that they can have a close eye on me?

As if reading my mind the Ren answered. “It's not like we don't trust you, okay? We are just looking out for your safety.”

“Same floor as you guys? Even him?” I jerk my thumb towards the library. where a dragon slumbers.

“You better believe it.” Said Nate as he leaned at the back. “But unfortunately, you're on the opposite wing. We're in the west while you're in the east.”

I must have looked troubled because Dan quickly spoke. “If you're worried about Nate doing something to you then you don't have to worry. These wolves can take him.” He said and hit his chest with his fist. Nate glared at the twins as they glared at him.

Nate glared at the twins and shook his head. “I would love to stay and chat, but I better go now so I can be back in time for our lesson. You guys better be nice to her. She's tired.” Nate said to the twins

Ren rolled his eyes at Nate before turning his head in my direction. He grinned and wiggled his eyebrows. “Shall we, my lady?” He mockingly offered his arm to me and spoke in a deep matured voice.

I grinned. “Why of course, good sir,” I said in a really bad accent as I mockingly took his arm. Dan came to my other side and offered me his arm as well, which I took. As if on cue, we all turned to the East wing and marched.

“Great. Just a few days in the castle and they already made her as one of them.” Nate mumbled behind us.

Once we were at the East wing we stopped. “So which way to my room?” I asked.

“Before that, we want to show you something,” Dan said and grinned.

I gave him an uncertain look. “Okay...lead the way then.”

Dan and Ren nodded as they walked beside me. We walked straight for a few moments before they turned to a corner and finally stopped in front of a door. Dan turned the knob and opened the door wide as he took a side step. “After you.” He said and stopped Ren from coming in once he took a step forward. “Woah there, brother. Have you ever heard of the saying 'ladies first? Where are your manners?’” He gave Ren a disapproving look

before turning his gaze to me. “Rose, forgive my imbecile of a brother. Forget that this ever happened because it would ruin our reputation as gentlemen. Now.” Dan turned his gaze back to his brother. “If you’ll excuse me. We have a lady waiting here.”

Ren only rolled his eyes at Dan as he made a way for me to pass. Before I could fully pass Ren, he made a mocking face to Dan that only I could see that we started laughing.

“What was that all about?” Dan asked.

“Nothing.” Ren and I said in unison.

The room – or should I say a giant walk-in closet – was very big and was filled with gigantic closets and shelves that hang different assortments of dresses, accessories, shoes, etc. Heck, this room is thrice as big as my old room. And I’m talking about the room that I have here in the palace. It was like a library, but instead of books, it held clothing.

I stood in awe as I admired the place while Ren and Dan were busy looking for something. And by the looks of it, they were arguing about which pair to take.

After a couple of minutes, they were back with a pair of pink flat shoes.

Why does this scene seem so familiar?

I gasped in delight. So they do have flats in this world!

They placed the shoes on the floor and helped me wear them. After that, I gave them a look. “Why is this room full of clothing items?”

“That’s because it is a closet.” Said Dan, confirming something that I already expected. “This room is stored with clothes for guests. Every palace has one.” My jaw dropped. All these items for guests?! They sure do put a lot of hospitality on their guests.

Boy if I was one of them then I would never leave. But I left. Once.

“Alright, enough gaping and let’s go.” Ren ushered us out of the room and we started walking again. As we were walking, We happen to pass by one of the many large windows of the castle and got a nice view of the sky. It was a beautiful day for a walk. I just wanted to go out and breathe in some fresh air.

One thing I like about this world is that the air is fresh and unpolluted. The air is always cold even under the glaring sun. I love how this world is thriving without destroying anything. I guess being on a break from technology is good. I don’t crave for wifi that much now.

“Tonight’s a full moon.” He said. Ren looked up and nodded.

“Yeah. Can’t wait for our night run.” Ren then stretched his arm out as if he was warming his muscles up for a run.

Meanwhile, I only look at both of them in confusion. “Why are guys taking a night run? Can’t you just do it in the morning? You know, before the sun rises?”

Ren and Dan both looked at each other and laughed. Did I say something funny?

“I think you got it all wrong.” Ren shook his head as he laughed.

“When Ren says taking a night run, we didn’t mean in our human form,” Dan explained.

Not in their human form? Does that mean...“Are you guys saying that you guys are gonna run in...your dog forms?”

#### ADVERTISEMENT

As soon as they heard the word ‘dog’ they stopped laughing and glared at me. “Werewolves. Not dogs.” Dan corrected. “And don’t ever call us dogs,” Ren added.

By the looks on their faces, they were pretty much offended.

Hm...

“But aren’t wolves in the dog family?”

“Yes, but wolves are more cooler and powerful than dogs.” Argued Ren.

“Wolves have sharp teeth, right?”

They nodded.

“They have furs.”

A nod again.

“Have sensitive noses and ears.”

They nodded again.

“They howl.”

A nod.

I grinned. "Dogs do those things too." I have to bite my lips to keep myself from laughing because the looks on their faces and their reactions were just hilarious.

"WE'RE NOT DOGS!!"

"WE'RE WEREWOLVES AND ALPHAS FOR THAT MATTER!!"

"Oh, okay." I shrugged. "So fetching my shoes for me today and during my second day here in the palace have nothing to do with it?" They gave me a murderous look as I continued laughing.

"No!" Said Ren grumpily.

"Well, that's a snappy answer," I said.

Dan 'hmphe'd'. "And to think that this is our thanks for saving you the other day in the woods.

"Well, you can thank Ace for helping you navigate. Or else you'll get lost and turn into a WHERE-wolf." I burst out laughing while the twins gave me a dead-panned look before they looked at each other.

"I say we leave her here and her jokes about werewolves." Offered Dan to Ren.

"Yeah, agree." Ren nodded and they both turned their back to me and started to walk away. I stared at their backs for a few minutes thinking that they were joking and would eventually come back. But when they were already a few distances away, that's when I figured that they were gonna leave me here.

"Yes!" I silently cheered. Now I can walk to the garden! But I forgot the way there. Then I saw the window in front of me. I opened it and started to climb out when someone pulled me back.

"Hey!" I protested.

"We were pouting!" Ren said.

"You were supposed to console us!" Dan continued.

"So? Not my problem."

"Do you hear that, Dan?"

"Nope. I didn't hear anything."

"You've got to be kidding me!!" I whined.

“Oh, what was that?” Ren feigned hearing. “That doesn’t sound like an apology.”

“I wasn’t apologizing!”

“Even so, we have a lesson. And one of the lessons is to use a door and not a window.” Ren said.

“You royals are so...proper.”

“Exactly.” They both said at the same time and grinned at me. I gave them me ‘oh come on look’ as I let out an exasperated sigh.

“Uh uh. That’s not very lady-like, princess.” Said Ren and earned a glare from me.

“Oh, I have a joke.” Dan inserted. “What do you call a person who bites a werewolf while sleeping?” I don’t know why but Ren burst out laughing as soon as the question escaped Dan’s mouth.

I raised an eyebrow at Dan. Curiosity eating my head. Why is Ren laughing? “What?”

A corner of Dan’s lips moves into a smirk. “Easy. You.” If possible, Ren laughed harder while I stood there looking confused.

“I don’t get it.”

Since Ren was too busy laughing, Dan answered me. “Well, my lady. If you haven’t recalled, Ren and I were the ones who rescued you. Not only did we fight the rogues, but we were also the ones who brought you back.” He said. “Ren here was the one who carried you on his back in his wolf form. And while you were sleeping, you bit him.”

What did he say? Did I bit Ren?

## ADVERTISEMENT

I shifted my gaze to Ren who finally calmed a little. He met my gaze and he shrugged. “It’s true. You bit me here- ” He pointed to his right shoulder ” – while muttering something about a deer potato salad.”

A deer potato salad. I seem to recall having a dream about eating one of those after my encounter with a deer. But when I bit it, it tasted like.....fur.

Furr

My eyes went wide at the sudden realization as I looked from Ren to Dan. Both have a smirk on them. And just with that smirk, I could tell that everything they say is true. I gave them an embarra\*\*ed look. “I-I’m so sorry. It was all the deer’s fault!”

“What deer?”

“Never mind,” I muttered, pursed my lips, and shifted on my feet. “Um....thank you, by the way, for....you know.....saving me from the kitties-”

“Werecats.” Dan corrected.

I rolled my eyes at him. “Would you mind? I’m trying to say thank you.” Dan raised his hands in surrender and gestured for me to continue. “As I was saying...thank you both. And sorry for the trouble that I made.”

“And?”

I raised an eyebrow at Ren. “And what?”

“And no more wolf jokes.”

I sighed. “Fine. Just lead the way to my room.” I said in defeat. The twins nodded at me in approval as they led the way. I followed suit as they led me up a set of stairs.

“So, Rose,” Dan said after a moment of silence. “Since you’re going to the ball, any idea on who would you pick as an e\*\*\*\*\*?”

I looked at Dan. “An e\*\*\*\*\*?”

Dan facepalmed. “Oh, I forgot. You’re new to this ‘ball thing.’” He quoted and turned towards me. “The Queen may not have informed you about this, but the ball is all for you.”

“For me?” I asked. Slightly taken aback.

“Yes. Consider it as some sort of welcoming party,” he said. To my right, Ren was listening intently to Dan. “So since you’re the star of this party, you must enter with an e\*\*\*\*\*.”

I didn’t say anything after that. I stared at Dan not knowing what to do next.

Dan rolled his eyes at me. “Rose? I was asking you if you have already decided on who your e\*\*\*\*\* will be. Any person in mind?”

I made an ‘O’ with my mouth to show him I understood. “I don’t.”

He grinned and met his brother’s eyes for a second before turning it back to me. “Good. Why not take Ren here as an e\*\*\*\*\*?”

He motioned to his brother at my right.

“What?”

I swear that wasn't me who reacted. It was all Ren. If anyone should be reacting then it should be me.

But instead, I just stared at Dan as if he grew another head.

We turned to the right after climbing up the set of stairs.

“Why me and not you?” Ren questioned his brother.

“Because I am not you so it has to be you!” As if on cue, Ren and I both funnily looked at Dan. Can anyone make sense of what Dan had just said? Because it seriously sounded like blah blah to me.

Dan rolled his eyes at the both of us. “Kids,” he muttered. “Okay. So how about this. Why don't we ask Rose if she's okay with you as an e\*\*\*\*\*?”

“Girl you're talking about is right beside you.” I inserted.

Ren looked as if he was thinking about it. “I don't know, Dan.” He shrugged.

This time, Dan shifted his gaze to me and finally noticed my existence. Great! “So how about it, Rose? My brother as an e\*\*\*\*\*? He's a great deal! He's a gentleman and he knows all about the ball and has experience on how to e\*\*\*\*\* a lady. Plus, who doesn't want the strong werewolf as an e\*\*\*\*\*? They are good for being a bodyguard.”

“Brother, you're making me sound like an item and not a person.”

Nope. He just made you sound like you're a man-w\*\*\*\*.

Dan ignored Ren as he looked at me. “What do you say?”

I shrugged. “Sounds good,” I said and turned to Ren. “You okay with that?”

Ren met my gaze and immediately turned away. “I guess so,” he answered. I swear I was looking at Ren, but I could have sworn that I saw Dan doing a fist pump at the corner of my eye.

Maybe it was just my imagination.

We finally stopped in front of a huge double door. “This is it. Your room,” said Dan and quickly cleared his throat. “So.....is it final? Ren is your e\*\*\*\*\* then?”

Ren and I looked at each other and nodded before I returned my gaze to Dan. “I guess so.”

Dan beamed widely. "Great!"

Why is he so happy?

### Chapter 33 A Request

I looked at Ren again. "So, e\*\*\*\*. Be sure to fetch me at the ball, okay?" I smirked as it took the twins at least 3 seconds to realize that I just made another werewolf joke.

Once the twins realized what I had just said, they both frowned. Their faces are a mirror of each other's expressions. It's amazing how they can be alike and different at the same time.

Ren suddenly smirked at me and nudged his brother. As if reading his mind, Dan smirked too. Ren looked at me. "Okay, Rose. Keep up with your jokes. But don't go out on the balcony at night when the wolf howls or you'll fall asleep."

I gave Ren a confused look. "Is that a riddle or a joke?"

"Both." He said.

I just shrugged as I now turned the doorknob and opened one of the doors of my door – if that makes any sense. I first took a tentative step and stopped as I took in the sight of my room. It was huge – with a capital H. It was twice the size of my old room in this palace. I have two large windows on the side and in between them is a huge gla\*\* double door that leads to the balcony. To my far left is a vanity table – bigger than my last – and two meters to its right is a white floral designed rectangular drawers with a bunch of flowers held in a vase on top of it. At the center of the room is a white furry carpet that contradicts the golden-colored tiles of the room. Pretty much the common colors in the room are white and gold. To my left is a Queen sized bed with two side tables on each side. I even have a mini lounge!

"We'll have your lesson in here," Dan said.

"In my room?"

"Yeah. What of it?" Ren asked. "It's bigger than the room we were using."

Now that he mentions it...

"Can my lesson for today be, how to sleep properly without getting a stiff neck?" I asked hopefully.

"No." The twins said at the same time.

\*\*\*

After the twins left my new room, I felt like taking a nap. They were better ladies than I am. They know how to act properly and, believe it or not, know how to use the right words that would please the nobles.

I buried my face on my new pillow. "If you please. It would be my honor. The pleasure is all mine." I mocked the lessons that I just learned from the twins.

"The way you talk is like a noble already, but your tone is lacking."

I tiredly turned towards Prince Nate, who was now standing in the middle of my room. "Should I even bother to ask how you got in here without knocking?"

"I came in just as the twins came out." He said.

"Figures."

Without looking at me, Nate headed for the door and opened it. A few maids came in to bring us our food. There was a small tea area in my room that was set aside by the twin for our lesson. Nate gestured for them to put it back in the middle. "I hope you don't mind if we start our lesson," Nate says as soon as the maids left.

"I'm hungry anyway," I said as I got up. I sat on the chair that Nate pulled back for me. Today we were having soup and some pasta. I waited for Nate to sit before grabbing the napkin on the table and placing it on my lap.

"Very good," Nate commented.

"Hey, Nate? I want to ask you something."

"What is it?"

"I don't exactly mind getting ignored by the maids, but why doesn't the queen have an e\*\*\*\*\*? Or, what would you call it? Ladies, who serve her?"

Nate seemed confused. "What do you mean?"

"Don't royal people have people following them to serve them better?"

"No?" Nate wrinkled his nose. "Is that what the royals do in your world? They sound lazy. We were usually trained to be independent. We would only call for servants when we need them. I don't know what humans in your world do, but here royals should learn how to take care of themselves so we wouldn't be spoiled."

ADVERTISEMENT

"Well, that does make sense," I said as I grabbed the sp\*\*\* with the larger head as I tasted the soup.

Nate seemed pleased. "Since you asked me a question, may I ask one in return?"

"You may." My eyes widened when I said that unconsciously.

"Wow!" Nate gleamed and gave me a small clap. "The twins did a good job!" He chuckled. I grabbed a forked and pointed it at him. He raised his hands in surrender.

"What do you want to ask?"

Nate rubbed his chin. "What do humans picture us as vampires in your world?"

I tried to think of any facts about vampires from the movies. Probably the most common one. "Hmmm...that vampires are corpses that have sharp teeth, cold skin, drinks blood, and can't stand in the sunlight."

Nate furrowed his eyebrows at the last part of my sentence. "Your books got most of the facts though, but I think that you guys have mixed us up with the undead."

"Undead?" I asked. Is he talking about zombies?

"Undead." He confirmed. "They are the vampires who can't stand being in the sunlight."

I gave him a look as I tried to swallow his words. "Wait." I held up a finger. "Are you saying that there are other vampire breeds called the undead? You know, back in my world, the undead are referred to as zombies."

"Zombies?"

"Dead people coming to life and eating other people. The only way to kill them is by shooting their brain."

"That is disgusting." Nate wrinkled his nose as he stopped eating his pasta. "And no. All the vampires are of the same breed. I'm one of the living, a vampire who can stand in the sunlight and drinks animal blood to live. The undead, on the other hand, is the vampires that your book is talking about. They're dead. When a living vampire kills by draining the blood out of another supernatural, they die and are cursed to live in the shadows. They can't stand going out in the sun or they will dry. The only thing keeping them alive is by drinking supernatural blood."

I stared at Nate as I absorbed the new information that he just threw at me. So basically, their zombies are dead vampires coming to life. While Earth zombies are humans coming to life. Well, humans don't exist in this world so I guess their laws are very different.

Well, it's not like zombies exist in my world in the first place.

"So what happens to the undead then? Do they also drink the good vampire's blood?" I asked.

The corner of Nate's mouth is curved. "Interested, are we?" I glared at him. "Well, when a 'good vampire' becomes a 'bad vampire', we banish them from the kingdom. Now, they mostly live in the Kingdom of Tereau as their refuge. And yes, they do drink our blood. All types of supernatural blood."

I took in a deep breath. "Okay then. There are good vampires and bad vampires. Bad wolves and good wolves. What else? Grumpy old trolls?"

Nate looked to the side and shrugged. "You could say that. The world is vast."

I groaned and clutched my head as if the information that I was gathering was too much for my brain. Or maybe it was too much.

"It's weird you know?" He said as he looked at his untouched meal. "A few days ago, you were pretty much freaked out about the supernatural world. Now, it seems as if you're considering them. It's fascinating how much has changed in only a few days."

I only shrugged at Nate. "Well, I just kind of learned to accept it since...you know. I'm staying and all." For some reason, my voice seemed to become lower as I spoke.

He let out a short laugh. "I can't say I'm not happy about that, but just take it slow, okay? No rush. We're here to help you." He said and looked away as he spoke the next words. "And I'm glad that you're staying."

As if my lips have a mind of their own. It spoke. "Yeah. Me too."

Nate and I continued to eat. It was amazing how little he corrected my table manners this time. I enjoyed Nate's lesson a lot since it was the most 'chill' one out of all the lessons I am scheduled for. I would love to be in Fred's cla\*\*, to be honest, but comparing Nate and Fred's lessons well...I prefer to just sit and eat.

I'm sorry Prince Fred. You're still the best prince out there.

Once the lesson was done, Nate called for the servants to clean up.

## ADVERTISEMENT

He started to turn around as walked towards the door. When he was already in front of it, he paused as he turned to me. A small grin was plastered on his face. "I was about to ask you, you know."

I tilted my head to the side in confusion. "Just ask away."

"I was about to ask you if you'd like me to be your e\*\*\*\*." He shrugged. "But I guess Ren beat me to it. But that's okay. I'll try again next time." He gave me a wink before he left. Making me wonder how he knew about it.

Once the door closed, a maid approached me and handed me a scrolling canvas before she left. Out of curiosity, I unrolled it. What I saw there made me gasp. It was a sketch of me sleeping. The sketch was finely detailed as it followed the curve and outline of my face, hair, and dress. Whoever had made this has a skill in the art.

Then my eyes darted towards the bottom right of the paper where the note was written in cursive.

The Runaway Princess

I chuckled at the t\*\*le. I ran my thumb gently over the sketch. When I pulled it back my thumb was stained with charcoal. And my mind quickly had a mini flashback of someone holding this paper and gliding a charcoal pen over it while I was laying down on a bed.

Nate.

For some unknown reason, I smiled. I never really thought that Nate could draw or that he would be giving me a sketch.

"Oh crap. I'm gonna be late." I muttered as I placed the sketch on my side table and went out of my room.

"Rose?" A voice suddenly said behind me, making me jump a little in surprise. I turn around only to see Prince Fred looking down on me. "I came here to get you. And," He raised his hand to show me the red cloak. "to return this to you."

"I thought I lost it! Did you go back and get it?"

"I found it in the garden," Fred said. Unsure of what he just said.

"Does it come with a magic to return to its owner?" I asked in wonder as I took the cloak and carefully folded it.

"It does since it would cause a conflict with its current magic."

"Thanks," I told him. "Can you wait here while I put this in my room?" I asked. Fred nodded. I quickly returned to my room and threw the cloak on my bed. I'll...fix that later.

When I returned I smiled at the sight of Fred. "How'd it go with the others?" He asked to change the subject.

I shrugged. "Well, Ace was pretty strict, the twins were brutal, and Nate was pretty nice and chill."

"Figures." He said and composed himself. "I hope you'll like my lessons like you do with prince Nathaniel."

I beamed at him. I was biased toward him from the start. "I'm sure I will."

Fred chuckled and offered me his hand. I looped my arm around him and we made our way to the ballroom. "You're not gonna take your decision back, are you?" Fred gave me a look as he asked the question. We were already in the ballroom and headed towards the center where we first practiced dancing.

"What decision?"

"The ball."

"No. Why?"

He smiled at me before turning his attention back in front of him. "Good. So now I will ask you a favor that I have been itching to ask."

"What is it?"

"Save me for your last dance?"

ADVERTISEMENT

My throat went dry at his words. It was like I had forgotten how to speak. My ears couldn't believe what they had just heard. For a few seconds, I stared at Prince Fred and waited for him to say something like, 'Just kidding' and laugh at my face, but he didn't. Instead, his face was a mask of seriousness. But being the girl who had countless fallen for his jokes, I didn't buy it.

"You're kidding, right?"

"Who says I'm kidding?" He countered. I studied Fred for a long time. He wasn't kidding?

"So what do you say, Princess Rose?"

"Don't call me a princess."

“Well, I have to say something to get your attention.” He smiled at me playfully.

I thought about it for a moment. “Well...”

Fred noticed my hesitation. For just a few seconds, I saw the disappointment in his eyes as we descended from the stairs, but it had gone quickly as was replaced with a smile which he directed at me.

He is serious, isn't he?

“Sorry. Forget what I-”

“Alright.”

He must have been caught off guard at my response for he suddenly stopped walking just to look at me. There was a surprised look on his face as he studied me. His jaw dropped for a few seconds before he recovered. “Are you sure? Because if you don't want to then you can just tell me.”

I looked at him. “What? Now you want me to tell you no?”

“No.” I raised an eyebrow. Realizing what he had just said, he immediately corrected himself. “What I meant was.....I'd be happy to be your last dance for the night but-”

I held my palm up to shut him up. “You want me to go to the dance with you and I said yes. That's it. No need for explanation. This conversation is getting confusing the more alibis we give.”

There was a ghost of a smile on his face as he closed his eyes and slowly shook his head. “As you wish, princess.” He said in a low voice that I wouldn't have heard it if I weren't so close to him.

“I don't get why the way you call me princess seems like you are teasing for some reason.”

He let out a small chuckle as we started dancing. Instantly, the music played.

Throughout the whole time, I was glaring at Fred as I tried to keep eye contact.

Fred chuckled. “I guess this is the closest thing to an eye contact as we can get.”

“Sorry,” I admitted.

“It's alright. The ball starts in a week so we have plenty of time to fix your...glare.”

“Haha. Very funny.”

\*\*\*In the Garden\*\*\*

The little wolf kept hidden in the shade to avoid the glaring sun. He would often venture out into the woods to hunt and drink. But he would always go back to be close to her.

The little wolf whimpered as he saw his master dancing with the blonde man from before. He wanted to meet with his master and bond with her. But the blonde man took the cloak and now he has no way to approach her. But he saw his master seemed happy, so he doesn't mind.

He would just continue to watch over her until the time is right for them to meet.

### Chapter 34 Calm Before the Storm

The past week has been a wreck. My training had been intense since we had to make use of our remaining time for them to prepare me for the ball. I'm not even kidding when I say that the princes may have pushed me to my limit.

Ace – I mean – PRINCE Ace had made me read a book about the culture of every supernatural type there is. And let me tell you that you can't count them with your fingers. It wasn't really hard because the topic was kind of interesting.

Ren and Dan? I can't say they were that patient though because one time I kept on slouching my back and walked like a freaking drunken person and they kind of....freaked out? The one where they cover their eyes and let out a scream and dropped to the floor for an hour. I'm not even kidding. And they would only get up when I make things right. But most of the time, we're just relaxed. Like not-doing-anything sort of relaxing. They said that I could just wing it when the time comes.

Well, Nate is one of the patient princes I know, but that doesn't mean that he is my favorite teacher. Every day we would always have our lunch together and each day the food being delivered gets fewer and fewer. Nate says that it is mandatory so I wouldn't gain much weight. But despite that, I am proud to say that I don't make meat fly anymore.

And lastly is Fred. He's my last instructor every day for the past week. He's always so patient and very considerate. He taught me the most common dances performed at a ball. He taught me the trick of how to pretend to have eye contact with your partner and how to avoid stepping on their foot while dancing. Most of the time, our training would only last for 30 minutes or an hour because he would always take me to the gardens so I can relax with my training. And I won't lie when I say that my heart would always pound in my chest. He truly is the best one.

Now as I woke up from my bed and on the day of the ball, I noticed that I wasn't alone in my room. I sat up and rubbed the sleep from my eyes so I could see the intruders. Once

I did, I took a good look at my intruders and frowned. In front of me are the Queen and 3 new maids.

“What’s going on?” I asked in confusion and suddenly felt the need to pull the covers closer. The Queen beamed.

“My dear, let me introduce you to Yen, Keela, and Cherry.” She gestured towards the three maids behind her. Yen is a petite girl with red hair. She looks about 25. Keela looks about 30 yrs old. She has medium-length black hair. As for Cherry, she’s probably the eldest with her brown hair streaked with gray and some wrinkles of aging on her face.

I nodded at them in greeting. “Hey.”

They smiled and did a little bow in respect. From what I learned from Ace, they do that as a sign of respect for a royal. The Queen smiled at me. “Good. Now that the introduction is over. I guess it’s time for us to get back to work.”

“Work?”

“My dear, they will be in charge of preparing you for the ball. Now get up so they can get started.” She came to the side of my bed and tried to pull the covers out.

“Wait!” I held a hand out while the other tried to hold the blanket over me. I glance at the window. The sun is still bright. “Isn’t the ball tonight?”

“Yes, it is. That is why we have a lot of work to do.” The Queen said. “We have to exfoliate your skin, treat your hair to a beautiful glow, give you a milk bath, and many more!”

I gave the Queen a horrified look. “What is this? A spa? I don’t need to get pampered! It’s just a ball. Let’s throw a dress at me and I’ll be ready to go.”

The Queen tsked. “In your world that might be the case, but in this world, you have to follow my rules.” She turned her head back towards the maids and gestured towards me. “Go on, ladies. Do your job.” She commanded. Before I even have the time to react, the maids advances towards me, ripped my blanket, and hauled me up from my bed.

“Miss, please raise your arms so we can take your clothes off,” Yen said politely.

## ADVERTISEMENT

I let out a horrified gasp. “Take my clothes off?! Are you kidding me?! It’s too early.” I practically yelled and crossed my arms over my chest in insecurity. “I’ll pay you. Just-.” I joked. I hadn’t even finished my sentence when Cherry swiftly pulled my clothes off and left me in underwear. I screamed.

“Holy crap! What the heck, lady?!” I glared at Cherry.

“I’m sorry, princess, but we don’t have time for chitter-chat. Our job is to help you get ready.” Cherry turned to nod at Keela.

“Get her in the tub.”

Keela reached out to grab me but I moved away. “No! I won’t go anywhere with you guys. It’s too early. Let me sleep.” I stood my ground stubbornly and felt a bit proud for doing so.

Knock knock knock

“Princess? Are you alright?” Fred’s voice came from the other side of the door. “I heard you scream and would like to check up on you.”

I stood frozen. I looked at the door, then to my fallen nightgown before looking back at the door. Shiz! He couldn’t see me like this!

At the corner of my eyes, I saw the Queen grinning evilly at me. “You sure you don’t want to follow them to the tub?” I frowned at her and didn’t answer.

She sighed. “Fine. I guess you can just stand there while I answer the doo-”

I let out a nervous laugh and looked at Keela. “Lead the way to the tub, my trusty friend!”

\*\*\*

The whole day I was in the care of the three ladies. They scrubbed my skin until a new one appeared, dipped me in a tub of milk, combed my hair until it was fine and smooth, scrubbed my feet, etc. I won’t lie, it was pretty relaxing and weird at the same time. I wasn’t used to this sort of treatment so I tend to react to it most of the time. I mean, come on, having breakfast and lunch served to you for the whole day while pampering you?

Heaven.

So 30 minutes before the ball, I was already ready and dressed. My make-up was light. My eyes have a hint of gold and bronze colored glow and are winged with black coal. I had a pinkish glow on my cheek and my cheekbones were finely contoured.

My lips have a natural pinkish color. As for my hair, it was tied into a braided bun with loose ringlets of curls hanging just at the side of my head. There was a white jewel at the front and center of my hair near my forehead. It has two chains decorated with jewels that they clasped at the back of my bun and giving me an image of elegance.

My dress was so beautiful. Probably the best one I have ever seen. It hugged my waist pretty nicely and was gold in color. The shoulder was made of sheer gold cloth that hangs elegantly and reveals my shoulders bare. The bottom resembles the shape of a petal and it continues down just at the floor. My shoes, although hidden by the dress, were also gold and are 3 inches tall. Probably the smallest they would allow me to wear.

## ADVERTISEMENT

“You look pretty good, miss.” Yen commented. I stopped looking in the mirror as I turned to face her. My cheeks turning pink in embarrassment.

“Well, it’s all thanks to you guys.” I smiled at them and pursed my lips as I looked back at my reflection in the mirror. Okay, I don’t wanna sound vain but, I look so beautiful – not that I don’t know that already. I tilted my chin up as I watched my reflection. “Oh my my my. What a beautiful person!” I said and suddenly laughed like a lunatic.

The queen looked at me like she wanted to dump a bucket of water on me. “My dear, I don’t want to ruin this romantic moment you have with the mirror but we must be going. Your e\*\*\*\*\*, Prince Renevier Rutledge, is here.” The Queen said smiling at the mirror where I could see her. I frowned at her for disturbing my peace.

With one final look, I turned around and stood straight. I followed the Queen out. My shoes kicked the hem of my dress as a sort of trick that the twins taught me so I wouldn’t trip while walking. She led me out of my room door and towards the stairs where I could just see twins standing and leaning onto the railing. Ren and Dan both wore the same navy blue b\*\*\*on-up-collarless polo. They have some sort of ruffled tie and golden shoulder cuffs. The only difference? Ren was wearing a red cape pinned by the cuffs.

The queen stopped and looked at me. Her face filled with pride as she touched my shoulder in a motherly affection. “Look at how you’ve become. You’re like a princess now.” She said. Since I didn’t know how to reply I smiled at her. She pursed her lips and moved a stray hair from my face. “Tonight, I shall introduce you as my adoptive daughter from a foreign land. I’ll tell them that I took you in as my daughter. Even if you don’t like it, please just pretend we’re a family. As much as possible if they ask about your race, you smile and go to the princes. They know what to do. Never walk alone.”

I smiled warmly at the queen. “I’ll keep that in mind,” I said. She patted me on the cheek, said thank you, and continued to move.

Dan was stretching his arms out while Ren was blowing his messy brown hair off of his face when we came into their view. Dan was the one who saw us first. He grinned brightly at me and elbowed his brother rather harshly in the ribs without looking and he immediately straightened up. Ren let out a grunt and glared at his brother until he saw me. His glare was now replaced with a shock.

Dan chuckled. "You look so beautiful tonight." He said in a rather awkward and deep fake accent voice and wiggled his eyebrows.

I pulled my hand away and looked him in the eye in mock flirtation as I tilted my chin up. "And you look ravishing tonight, my good sir," I said in a very high pitch accent. There was silence as we stared at each other. A second later and we burst out laughing.

"Gross! Don't ever do that again." Dan said, still laughing and clutching his stomach.

"Me? You're the one who did it first. And with a weird accent might I add."

"That's the accent of a fake gentleman." He winked. "And you'll be seeing a lot of that tonight."

I hit Dan in the shoulder and laughed. He looked back behind him and beamed at his brother. "Ren, get your b\*\*\* over here you useless idiotic twin! You're not called an e\*\*\*\*\* if you just stand there." he chided him.

Ren ignored his brother and started to walk towards us. Well, at least that's what I thought because he just walked past us as if he was looking for something. He turned back and tapped me on the shoulder. "Excuse me, but have you seen a pet\*\*e-looking girl, who acts like a man and talks like a man? She has dirty blonde hair that looks like a bird's nest," he said before looking at me and studying my face. "Oh wait! That's you?!" He slapped a hand to his mouth in surprise.

I frowned at him and punched his shoulder. Ren and Dan laughed. Damn those hard muscles.

Ren rubbed the part where I hit him. "What? I was complimenting you." He said. "And stop it with the violence woman!"

"Oh haha, Ren. Telling a girl that she's practically a man with unruly hair is a compliment? I think you forgot to teach me that during our lessons." I crossed my arms over my chest.

## ADVERTISEMENT

Ren took out an imaginary pencil and pretended to scribble on his hand. "Let me just put that up on the list."

"Well, as fun as watching you kids here, I think I must excuse myself and head towards the reception area where the guests are." The Queen said. And I honestly forgot that she was still there. "Ren, I want you to take her downstairs with the others in two minutes."

"Yes, your highness." the Queen nodded at Ren in approval before she left.

“Why two minutes?” I asked Dan the moment he came to us.

“Well, dear princess, the Queen meant that in two minutes we should fill you up with the needed information on what to do,” Dan said.

“And what we’re gonna do is head downstairs and meet with the other princes, then we will enter the ball with them taking the lead. We will follow a few steps behind them as a sort of silent introduction.” Continued Ren. “Now, shall we?” he offered me his arm. I took it and let him lead me down the stairs. Dan, following just beside me and kept on grinning from time to time for some unknown reason.

I was busy lifting the side of my dress to minimize the contact of the hem to my foot so I wouldn’t trip – another trick they taught me. Ren was walking at a slow pace waiting for me, which I was thankful for. We reached the second floor and Ren and Dan led me to a hallway and headed towards the two large double doors that would lead us to the ball.

If you guys are wondering why the ball is located on the 2nd floor and not the 1st floor, then I can answer that. The ball is indeed on the first floor but there is also a door headed to the second floor, which we are about to use. Behind the double doors is a set of stairs leading to the first floor. They told me that they only use it for introducing the host, which is me. They said it would be the perfect way for people to know who I am.

We spotted the other princes standing just in front of the double doors. It seems as if they were waiting. When they saw us Fred and Nate immediately smiled – as for the other PRINCE, don’t expect a smile from him because let’s face it, the guy hardly smiled.

Fred was wearing a red shirt underneath a white coat. It was a simple coat with a long back and a ‘W’ shape at the back. Although it was simple, I can say that Fred knows how to bring a simple outfit to look good and formal with his blonde hair and how he moves with it.

Nate was wearing a white coat with a bunch of fancy folds and a gray b\*\*\*on-less coat. Its side was decorated with golden beads that made some swirling patterns. His red hair was finely brushed back.

As for PRINCE Ace, he was wearing an army green shirt made of a sweater-like material that seemed to sparkle and had a round scarf hanging loosely on his neck. Over the shirt was a gray vest and a jet-black coat that b\*\*\*ons halfway up. Even though his outfit seemed ridiculous and sounded weird, he looked really good especially when his hair was carefully brushed back just right and showing his perfectly defined ears that I now got used to.

Fred came and offered me a hand, which Dan then slapped. “Hate to break it to you, Fred, but can’t you see Rose already has an e\*\*\*\*\*?” Dan’s annoyed tone confused me.

Did he and Fred fight?

But instead of backing away, Fred only smiled and nodded at Dan. "Sorry." He said and turned to Ren. "May I?" Ren only nodded at him once and took my hand from his arm and handed it to Fred's outstretched ones. Fred smiles and I almost melted.

He studied my face for a while and he smiled warmly. "You look beautiful, Rose."

Chapter 35 Falling for

I wheezed

OH, SON OF A MOTHERLESS PIG! Fred just complimented me!

"T-" I cleared my throat. "Thank you. You look good as well." I said.

"Really? Phew!" He sighed in relief. "For a second there I thought you might call me ugly again. That's why I spend some time fixing myself up. Good thing it paid off." He sighed and now, I am fighting the urge to run towards a set of stairs and jump down in happiness.

Just as I was staring dreamily at Fred, Nate took that opportunity and pulled me towards him. He caught me off guard that I tripped and landed on his chest. I heard him chuckle. I pushed myself up and glared at him. "I'll hit you," I warned.

"Woah! The party hasn't started and you now have a sour look on your face." He had an amused look on his face as he looked at me.

"Whose fault do you think it is?"

Nate must have found my outburst rather amusing because he just laughed. "Easy there tiger." He said. "You know I could make you happy."

I crossed my arms over my chest and raised an eyebrow at him. "Really? Are you leaving?"

The twins let out a whistle at my response while Nate just laughed harder. "Where have you been all my life?" He said.

"Hiding from you."

This time, Nate roared in laughter. "Can I just keep you for myself?"

"No. Don't be selfish."

He shrugged and fished something out of his coat. It was a huge red rose. "If I can't keep you, then keep this rose instead." He handed me the rose.

At that moment, the twins both took a step until they were at my side. "Don't take it, Rose. He has another one of those in his coat which he gives to all the girls." Ren warned me. "You might think you're special but it's just Nate. He may have at least 5 of them in there." Added Dan. "Or maybe more."

## ADVERTISEMENT

Nate glared at the twins. "Okay fine. You got me." Nate pulled his coat off and showed a bouquet of roses. "And for the record, I don't have 5. I have 30 of them." He said and looked at me and winked. Even though I don't like what Nate was doing, I giggled at his p\*\*\*\*\* character. Nate broke the stem of the rose that he was holding and walked towards me, pulled out a ribbon, and tied it to my right wrist where I have no jewelry on.

"There. Perfect. A rose for our little Rose."

I looked at my wrist and tenderly touched the rose before my fingers traveled to the ribbon. I raised my gaze to Nate. "Let me guess, you have at least 50 ribbons with you to tie the roses to every girl you will ever see tonight."

Nate put his hands into his coat pocket and pursed his lips. "Nope. I only have one ribbon."

Only one ribbon?

Seeing the dubious look on my face, Nate looked pretty offended. "Hey! No judging! I'm a guy. I don't bring pretty ribbons with me. As for that ribbon, I just saw it on the floor on my way here." He said. I just looked at him and nodded my head slowly. "Yeah...right." I suddenly looked away because I'm pretty sure that Nate might have a sissy fit sooner or later. When I did, my eyes met a set of midnight blue ones. And since this was supposed to be a party, I offered him a small smile of peace.

In that instant, Ace frowned. "Why the heck are you smiling?"

"What?" I asked. Suddenly confused about what I might have done to cause Ace to have another period.

"Just because everyone complimented you doesn't mean that I have to do the same. I don't tell lies." He said and looked away.

My frown at the same time as the rest of the prince seemed to tense up. Probably knowing what was about to come.

I straightened myself up and gave PRINCE Ace a dazzling fake smile. "Well, your highness, since we both are on the same page of not telling lies, can I just say that you look rather ravishing tonight." I studied him from head to toe. "Your coat completely matches your personality. You know, black. You might wanna hide it. You're showing too much honesty here."

Ace only raised an eyebrow at me as if my words hadn't affected him. "You have good eyes for seeing through my honesty." He said. "And I'm afraid that what I had just said will be the only one closer to a compliment that you will ever get because behind that corset and layers of paint, you cannot hide the horror behind that mask. No offense."

I stared at him. My eyebrows twitch. No offense? I'll show him 'no offense!

I raised the dress until it was leveled with my knee and took off one of the heels and attempted to throw it at him when the other princes stopped me. "I am afraid that a pretty face is the only thing that you have for the rest of your life because your sour and bitter personality would probably scare off even dragons. No offense."

"Dragons are dead."

ADVERTISEMENT

"They existed!?"

"Rose, please. Just let it go. PRINCE Ace was only joking." Fred said in a voice that I think is supposed to calm me down. He looked back at Ace. "Right, Prince Ace?"

Ace only stared at him. "Jokes are supposed to be funny, Prince Fred." He said. "Tell me, does it look like I'm laughing?"

"Ace!" All the princes said at the same time while Ace only gave them all an annoyed look and corrected them by saying, "PRINCE."

At that moment, the door leading to the ball suddenly opened and the queen gave us all a look. "What is the name of fairies is going on here? I can hear you from the other side! Is there a problem?" As if it was rehearsed, all of us quickly straightened up and fixed ourselves. Ren took the shoe from my hand and quickly helped me place it back on.

"Yeah. Him." I was being petty and pointed at Ace, who was now showing me his middle finger. To be fair, I also did the same. Ren slapped my hand away.

"Nothing to worry about, your majesty," Nate said and smiled. The queen studied us for a moment. She looked at us one by one as if expecting us to do something that might contradict Nate's words. When she saw nothing she only nodded. "Fine. Are you all ready?" We nodded. "Good. Now, wait here until I introduce Rose. Places everyone."

Ren, get back to your place. You're not called an e\*\*\*\*\* for anything!' She said and finally closed the door behind her.

Once the door clicked close, Dan had a victorious look on his face. "That's exactly what I wanted to tell you right now!" Dan said to his brother. "The queen is awesome!" He beamed.

Ren rolled his eyes at his brother as he grabbed my hand and placed us into our positions like what the others are doing. The princes formed two lines in front of us. Dan and Fred on the left, and Nate and Ace on the right. Ren and I were standing just behind the lines.

I know this seemed pretty stupid but, according to the queen, it would be a nice way to give a little suspense to the guest when we come in and the princes are hiding me and Ren.

"It's only a matter of time before the queen calls us," Ren said to me. "I can already hear her calling the attention of the guest in that room so wipe that frown off of your face."

I looked at him. "Perks of being a werewolf huh? And you seriously can't blame me. I was in a good mood if the PRINCE of the underworld didn't open his mouth."

"Don't be so hard on him. He's just in a bad mood."

"And I'm not?"

He sighed. "Maybe I should tell you this first. PRINCE Ace hates parties."

ADVERTISEMENT

"If he hates it so much then why would he go?"

"You don't know?" He asked. Surprise is evident in his voice. "I thought that PRINCE Ace had taught you all about it."

"About what?"

Ren was about to open his mouth to respond when he suddenly tensed up and looked straight. "Alright! The queen gave the signal." Dan announced and soon, they walked ahead of us and opened the door. Ren looked back at me. "And that's our cue." He started to lead me towards the huge double doors. But along the way, I couldn't help but wonder what he was about to say to me. What does he mean about Ace not teaching me about something?

We soon entered the doors and towards the ballroom. Huge golden and crystal chandeliers hanging from the ceiling and casting a bright golden glow to the room. Soft melodic music was playing in the background giving it an image of something classy.

“My royal guests. Tonight, you will meet a special and newly added member of our family. Recently, I’ve visited a cousin of mine from a far-off land.” The queen’s voice faltered a little. “She’s one of the princesses from that kingdom. She’s kind and sweet. But due to some problems, my cousin and I decided that it would be best for her to stay with her. In Thalia.” She said. Wow. I admire how the lies are flowing from the Queen’s mouth.

“Ladies and gentleman, may I introduce to you, Princess Rosalie from the Kingdom of Thalia. escorted by Prince Renevier Rutledge along with the other king candidates.” I heard the queen say something to my side. But I wasn’t paying any attention to her, because when the prince marched forward to the stairs, paused at the step.

I got a full view of the room from where I was standing. It was huge. Huge. It was like Disney had puked all over the place. Aside from the gold and crystal chandeliers, the walls were full of floor-to-ceiling windows. Near the side of the stairs was where the orchestra was located and continuing to play some music. Red curtains draped over it and parted at the center and clipped to the sides. Round tables were placed at the sides and cleared up the center where a huge crowd of men in suits and coats and women in dresses stood.

Ren gave me a small tug and whispered, “Let’s go.” But I didn’t move. Instead, I was frozen to where I was. When Ren noticed that I wasn’t moving, he gave me a worried look. “What’s wrong?”

“I’m nervous,” I said and took notice of the people looking up at us. Ren followed my gaze and a look of understanding came into his eyes.

“Ignore them.”

“Easier said than done. What if I fall? What if I slip on my dress and fall face first?” A thousand scenarios of me doing different ways of embarrassing myself slipped into my mind.

“Hey, relax. Breathe in, breath out.” Said Ren in a calming tone. “You’re not alone in this. I’m here. I won’t let you fall. I’m your escort, remember?” I looked at Ren and studied his face. His gaze suddenly locked into mine. “Don’t you trust me?” His eyes were pure and my mind suddenly told me to trust him.

“I trust you.” As soon as the words left my lips, Ren’s lips curled into a small smile and I let him lead me down the stairs. I was gripping his arm rather tightly. My right hand held the side of my skirt up elegantly as I struggled to keep my chin up to avoid slouching and look down to see where I was stepping. My heart pounded in my chest in

anticipation as we neared the bottom. I could feel a hundred pairs of eyes on us as we walked. When we reached the last step, my foot missed a step and I almost fell if Ren's strong grip hadn't steadied me so my fall wasn't that obvious.