

## Mates

Alpha Eric Conners was sitting with his all three of his brothers and their mates Jessica, Shana, and Molly. I watched the couples before me. I wanted the type of love they had. I was positive I could nd it with the fairy princess for some reason. Duke had started to pace in my head. He was anxious about something. He'd been on edge this whole last year, but neither of us knew why. I was surprised when Caleb burst into the room. He quickly announced, "Eric, the fairy princess found the princess!" I smiled then asked, "...And? What did she say about marrying me?" Caleb smiled, "They argued about it, but she's here."

My brothers and I all jumped up out of our seats. They brought her to me already? Shana, Molly, and Jessica's mouths dropped. I managed to speak, "I'm sorry. WHAT? What do you mean she's here? The princess is in the house?" Caleb smiled, enjoying my mild panic. It was rare for me to feel unnerved.

Eventually Caleb said, "The princess got in a ght with her brothers. First, she snuck up on them. She almost took them out from behind with a dagger before recognizing them. She gured out why her brothers had suddenly shown back up in her life and lost it. Rightfully so, in my humble opinion. They told her about the marriage agreement with you, Eric. She already knew who you were. She also knew about the war. She agreed to think about the proposal and asked for her time frame. She became enraged when she heard they already agreed without asking her. She screamed at them that she had no choice but to accept the marriage because if her brothers broke an agreement with you, the Fae would be killed off. She stormed off to her car. Our trackers followed her since we give no shits about where the fairy princess stay. The princess is currently sitting on the trunk of her car on the east side of the territory. She's just staring at the main house. Liam joined them. He said she seems at peace." Liam was our lead warrior.

I was surprised and that didn't happen often. Duke was still anxious. I asked him, "What's wrong with you?" Duke replied, "I don't know... let's go meet our princess. I must just be excited." I spoke out loud, "Well, brothers and your better halves, it's been an intriguing evening. I am going to meet my future wife. I'll see you all later. Caleb, tell Mrs. Blanch to prepare some food and a room. The princess were careless enough to let the princess out of their sight. I do not plan to be so careless." Everyone smiled. Caleb nodded, "Of course." Shana, Molly, and Jessica ran to the window to see if they could get a glimpse of my fairy princess.

I quickly left the room. I shifted once I made it outside. I quickly headed east towards where Caleb said the Princess was. I was barely headed in that direction when I smelled an enticing scent. It smelled strongly of honey and vanilla. I linked Caleb, "What else is out here?" Caleb linked, "Our warriors." I retorted, "No... I've never smelled this scent before." Caleb answered, "I'm sorry. WHAT?! How strong is the smell?" I answered, "Very strong. It's like the area was bathed in honey and vanilla." Caleb asked, "How's Duke acting?" I answered confused, "Weird. He's anxious." Caleb linked, "Son of a bitch." I didn't have time to ask what his deal was because I was getting close to the east border. The smell was getting stronger. It was taking over my senses. I needed to nd the owner of that scent.

Then I saw a yellow Camaro with a stunning angel sitting on top of it. I felt like he was hit by lightning. Duke growled, "MATE!" Unbelievable. Haley Holloran was my mate. That's why everything about her intrigued me. She was mine. My wolf preened in delight that we'd nally found her. Duke linked me, "Mate is beautiful." He wasn't wrong. She was the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen.

At that moment, Haley turned and smiled at me. I was happy she wasn't scared of me. Duke was intimidating. I studied her. She was a bombshell beauty, and I had no intention of ever letting her go. Haley jumped off her car as if a magnetic force pulled her towards me. She reached out and touched my fur. Duke started to purr. I linked him, "Are you purring? I have never heard you purr. This is the moment you choose to purr?" Duke snarled at me, "Shut up. It feels nice." Ridiculous wolf. Haley laughed and her melodic voice lled my ears, "Hi there. I think I'll call you Thor." Duke immediately decided Haley's name was better than his own. He told me, "My name is now Thor. Don't call me Duke again." I linked, "You cannot be serious." Duke said, "Mate said my name is Thor. So now it is... make sure people know that." Oh, for the love of god. Duke growled at me, "I already told Caleb's wolf. They are sending a memo about it." Of course, he did.

Haley continued talking "Maybe I'll be seeing you around here, Thor. Apparently, I am moving in soon." Thor purred in my mind, "Yes, yes, she is. Mate will never leave." Haley smiled at him. She admitted, "I've never met a Werewolf before. You're my rst." She immediately blushed continuing, "WEREWOLF! You're the rst Werewolf I've met. I've read about them though. I'm guessing you have to take me to your Alpha now. I didn't mean to trespass in your territory. I just went for a drive to clear my head. I ended up here without even realizing where I was going. I can't imagine he'll be upset that I'm here though. We are apparently f\*\*\*\*g engaged. We should probably meet face to face."

Well, if my mate wanted to meet me, I'd have to shift. I ran behind a tree not wanted to startle her with being naked. My lead warrior, Liam, handed me shorts. He asked, "Did what I think happen actually just happen?" I smiled admitting, "Yes. Keep it to yourself for now. We can't have the pack link going crazy just yet. I want to see the look on my brother's faces. You should start spreading the word that Duke changed his name to Thor. He's not going to be accepting of anyone calling him by his old name." Liam busted up laughing. Then he said, "Sure thing, Alpha. The Luna is beautiful." I smiled, "Yes, she is. You all feel free to get out of here. I've got her." Liam nodded and left.

When I stepped back out from behind the tree Haley's jaw dropped. She whispered, "You're actually my Thor. Holy shit." I had no idea what that meant. Then she whipped her head around furiously and asked, "Who said that?" If I hadn't had supernatural hearing, I wouldn't have heard her. I asked her, "Who said what, Angel?" Her eyes met mine. She whispered, "Damn... even his voice is sexy." I was trying not to laugh. She might have read about werewolves, but she didn't get to the part about how good our hearing was. That wasn't surprising. Fairies did not have enhanced hearing like other supernatural's. Haley spoke louder, "Someone said 'Mine' when you stepped out from behind the tree. I just don't see anyone else here."

I laughed, "Oh my Angel, that was your fairy side letting you know I'm your mate." Haley stepped forward and grabbed my arm and gasped. I felt like an electric current pulse between us. Her arousal lled the air. She eyed my six pack and tall frame. I couldn't stop my growl, which she misinterpreted. She jumped back and let go thinking my growl was directed at her. She stuttered, "I... I'm sorry. I don't know what came over me. I... just had to touch you. Which is f\*\*\*\*g weird... I have a... that's not important... I'm Haley by the way. You said we are mates... are you sure? My fairy family told me I wouldn't have one. God, this just got so f\*\*\*\*d up. I'm engaged to the Alpha here." I stepped closer to her until she was trapped between me and her car. Her breath caught as I placed my arms on both sides of her, onto the car.

I looked into her eyes and introduced myself, "I am sure you are my mate. Allow me to introduce myself, I'm Alpha Eric Conners, your ancé, and I'm at your service my little mate." Her shock was palpable. She whispered, "WHAT?! No f\*\*\*\*g way! You're who I'm engaged to?!" She touched me again. It was clear on her face she didn't understand why she felt sparks every time we touched. Did they not teach her about mates in Faerie? Why wouldn't they? Just because they told her she wouldn't have one they didn't teach her about them? What did they teach in school?

I was drawn out of my musings by her question, "Why do I feel safe here? Why do I feel like if I don't touch you, I'll die? Like if I leave, I'll be torn in two?" I quickly cupped her face with my hands. Thor was growling at the thought of her leaving. I couldn't let her leave. I whispered, "Oh my Angel, they taught you nothing in Faerie, did they? I recently heard you haven't been there for some time. You feel that way because I am your other half. You are safe with me. You won't die, but touching me is highly recommended, encouraged even. Leaving isn't an option, and I would never let you be torn in two. I am in fact the man you are engaged to."

Haley stuttered, "Wwwhat? I have to leave; I have classes tomorrow! It's nals week, and my dad..." I leaned in and touched my lips to hers. I'd meant it to be a soft kiss, however, I'd been waiting for her for so long. My undoing was when Haley moaned into my mouth. In a split second, I picked her up. Her legs naturally wrapped around my hips. I couldn't stop myself from gyrating into her against the car through our clothes. I was growling with need as she moaned.

My phone rang, breaking our moment. I pulled away from Haley and growled into the phone, "WHAT?" My brother Darrin chuckled on the other end of the phone, "Hello to you too, big brother. Did the rst meeting not go well? I was curious what my future sister-in-law is like. Aren't you back yet? I assumed you'd have her in the room Mrs. Blanch set up already." No, that wouldn't work. I needed her in my room. Thor wasn't going to let me sleep if she wasn't at least next to us. Thor growled, "Damn right. Having her close by but not with us would be torture. I'd growl all night." I growled out loud at my brother, "No, Darrin. I'm not back yet. You will meet your soon to be sister-in-law shortly. Be waiting in the main room." Darrin was in the middle of saying, "Dude, what?" when I hung up.

I studied my mate. She seemed confused and surprised by her own actions of what just transpired between us. She asked, "What... What just happened? I don't... I'm not... I don't do s\*\*t like this." I brushed her hair back from her face. I didn't like her being anxious. I eased her mind, "Little mate, it's perfectly normal. Please do not panic. Let's get back to the house, and you can meet everyone. Afterwards, I can answer any questions you have." Her face told me she was torn. She clearly didn't understand what was happening, but she absolutely didn't want to leave. That was good. I didn't want to scare her. Haley whispered, "I have nals in the morning..." I laughed, cutting her off, "Do not worry, Angel. I will have a pack member get you there. You must not live too far away. Are you going to the university around here?" Haley sighed, "Yes. I live about forty minutes away. I am a psychology major." No wonder Thor had been anxious this last year. It's because she was in the area. I smirked and leaned down to kiss her again.

I was addicted to how my body felt when we touched. Her lips on mine was an amazing feeling. My body felt like it was on re. We lost ourselves in the kiss again. She was shattering my control. When she grabbed onto my hair and pulled me closer to her, a possessive growl ripped through me. I broke our kiss to declare, "MINE!"

Haley looked into my eyes. Thor had taken over and I had no doubt she saw the lust in them. She mused, "No one has ever looked at me the way you do." I growled, "And no one ever will if they want to live. You are mine. I will kill anyone who touches you." Haley looked at me sideways. When she realized I was serious she laughed, "Well, that's a bit extreme. Should you want to adopt that policy for any fairy you see; I could agree with that." I took back over from Thor. I grabbed her keys out of her pocket. I teased her, "Let's get you back to the main house, my little mate."

Haley exclaimed, "Hey! You took my keys. I'm perfectly capable of driving my own damn car. I got here, didn't I?" I simply smirked and got in the car adjusting the drivers' seat. Haley stood outside her car for a few minutes before signing and walking over the passenger side. She got in and the temperature in the car skyrocketed. I knew that being in an enclosed space with your mate was intense, but she didn't.

Haley sounded bewildered when she spoke "You smell like the ocean... I thought it was just the area... somehow. How is that possible?" I smiled and grabbed her hand. She gasped as sparks shot through both of us. I answered her "Mates smell strongly to one another. I smell like the ocean to everyone, but no one smells it as strongly as you do. It helps mates identify each other and feel safe together. Do you like the ocean?" Haley smiled, "I love the ocean. My dad took me there often after sending one of my brothers to nd me when I rst came to this realm. Sitting in the sand listening to the waves was one of the rst times I ever felt safe."

Excuse me? How was she not safe until her father found her? I growled asking her, "Why did you not feel safe? Who is your father? Not even a whisper of who the man is has ever come out of Faerie." Haley struggled. She evasively answered, "I was never safe in Faerie, Alpha Eric. As for my dad, there wasn't a rumor because he wasn't a fairy. Which means no one cared enough to speculate. They just assumed he was a human and lied to my mother about being a supernatural being. Which is ridiculous. How the f\*\*k would a human know about supernatural's?"

I frowned, noticing she didn't answer the question. She didn't appear to trust easily. I knew where to place the blame for that. Fairies. I asked, "What did they do to you, my Angel?" She sat silently and looked out the window. I sighed, "I am not used to waiting for answers, but in this case as you are my mate. You're young and this is all new to you. So, I will wait. You will answer my questions eventually though, little mate. Clearly, your fairy family did not explain how mates work. That's a lot to process. I will let this pass for tonight. I will not be put off for long though, Haley. Please don't call me Alpha... unless it's sexyly in the bedroom. Call me Eric or Thor is acceptable." Haley muttered under breath, "Yeah well you do look like my God of Thunder so that is." I was going to tell her how good my hearing was some day. Right now, it was entertaining to hear her musings.

After a minute Haley told me, "The better question would be what didn't they do to me. My Uncle and cousins beat me. I can't hold my arms out straight; they have a curve to them. My Uncle... did... he..." Haley broke off and tears fell down her face. Her tears disturbed me greatly. I had never cared to see women crying, but this I couldn't stand.

I pulled into the main house and got out of the car. I yanked her out of the car and into my arms. I consoled her, "Little Angel, please do not cry. Your tears disturb me." She sobbed, "You won't want me anymore.... I don't... I can't... I... why do I feel like this? I don't know you... It shouldn't bother me. No one has ever wanted me. I feel like if you don't, I'll die. What the f\*\*k is wrong with me?"

I pulled back so I could look into her eyes. I vowed, "I will destroy everyone who made you feel that way. Nothing you say to me will make me not want you. What did Fabian do to you?" I already knew he beat her. What could be worse? She was a princess. There were lines that could not be crossed. Besides, the man was her uncle. Did he use charms on her?

Tears streamed down her face. Haley tried to look away, but I grabbed her chin and brought her head up. I whispered, "Look at me, little mate." She looked back up into my eyes. I admitted, "I have been waiting for you for over a decade. Werewolves can nd their mates when they turn eighteen. All my brothers found theirs within a year of reaching that milestone. Even my youngest brother. I have waited for you. I have longed for you. I watched them with their mates wanting that for myself. Eventually, I accepted that I would never nd you. So, I sought out a marriage through a treaty for peace with the one woman who has intrigued me since her birth. I will NEVER let you go, little mate. Ever." Haley nodded and wiped her tears.

She looked to the side and whispered, "He sexually abused me for years. It started when I turned six years old. He continued until I nally left after the last time. I was thirteen years old at the time. I swore it wouldn't happen again. I... I had been working on my Fae powers in secret. I was trying to wait for my dad to come get me when I turned sixteen. I just couldn't after my brothers watched my cousins and Uncle beat me that badly again. I couldn't stay anymore. I screamed for Aiden and Arion to help me, but they just stood there. When my uncle told everyone to leave, they did. My brothers left me there with that f\*\*\*\*g monster. He was brutal. He sodomized me, on top of the injuries I'd received from the beating I... I couldn't stay. I left through the portal and came to this realm."

Haley broke down again. I gently kissed her forehead absorbing her words. Thor was enraged. I knew why she was sodomized. Fairies wouldn't have wanted her to have a Fae child since she wasn't a full-blooded Fairy. I couldn't believe her own uncle did that. I couldn't believe it was allowed to happen to my own damn princess. I felt intense rage hearing my mates' story. I wanted to rip them all to pieces for hurting her and causing her pain. I also wanted to know how the f\*\*k they had managed to keep it a secret. I would not have let that go. I would've fought for her; she was a Defenseless child. Other supernatural groups would've stood with us if we'd heard of her treatment.

I had to shove those thoughts aside. Hearing what she knew about her dad meant I had an idea what supernatural race her father was a part of. It was a bombshell. The only race I knew that would leave children until sixteen were the Hackura. They were the protectors of the realms. They were brutal andierce ghters that were trained assassins. The fairies had no idea what they'd done by abusing Haley. The Hackura might not have retaliated on a large scale yet, but I could guarantee they were already gone missing long before we declared war. You do not mess with the Hackura. Everyone knew that.

You could bring a Hackura here to this realm as a guard for a hefty sum of money. I'd lay odds the dad and brother she'd mentioned were Hackura. She likely had more than one sibling on her Hackura side. I had to laugh internally. I had inadvertently made a marriage contract with a girl with a very powerful lineage. Prior to even knowing she was my mate.

Thor muttered, "She also mentioned she had Fae powers." He was right, that was surprising. Partial fairies didn't usually have any. My wolf growled at me for not speaking yet. Thor said, "She will think you don't want her Comfort her. Say something!" I huffed at my wolf, "I am comforting her. I'm holding her. I've got a lot to process." Thor demanded "Say words... any words!"

Fine. I pulled back and lifted her chin so I could see her eyes. I told let my honesty come through my tone, "Haley, I do not blame you for this. It was not your fault. You were an innocent child. Even if you were older no one, male or female, should be held accountable if they were raped. Consent is important for me. I will always want you. I wish your s\*\*\*\*l experience had been consensual prior to us meeting. Your Uncle is a pathetic piece of ith for what he did. If you have a taste for revenge, Hexxus is in our dungeons. Should you want to pay him a visit."

Haley wiped furiously at her tears. She told me, "I swear I'm stronger than this. Eric. I just haven't talked about it in a long time. I'm not that girl anymore. I'm a survivor. It was just the thought that you would turn me away because of what happened." I promised her, "Never, my little mate. You are a survivor. No one will ever harm you again. Should they even try they will meet my wrath. I am not a man people want to cross. As far as your strength, I think it takes strength to cry and let things out. You're now cowering on the oor. You had an emotional response to a tough subject. That doesn't say you're not strong."

Haley calmed down and smiled. I saw the mischiefousness enter her eyes. She snapped her ngers. I stared astonished because her makeup was perfect again. I looked down and noted my chest no longer had black streaks on it from her mascara. Fairy powers indeed. I teased her, "Well little mate, it seems you do have some surprises. Most partial fairies cannot do magic. Then again, they live in the human realm. You're the only one that didn't that I know of." Haley was stunned. She asked, "What? There are other partial fairies? But I thought I was the only one!" I scoffed, "No, little angel. There are many of them running around this realm. Most don't know they have Fae blood. I believe it's the Earth fairies that take human lovers most often. Water fairies have a high number of partials as well. They have many children in this realm."

Haley seemed to be in shock. She asked "This whole time there were others like me? I... I have Earth Fae blood. My mother is both Sky and Earth fairy." I knew that. I started to guide her inside. I told her, "We can introduce you to some partials if you would like, Angel." Haley smiled, "I would really like that." I grabbed her hand. Sparks ew between us. I couldn't keep the smile off my face. I told her, "Let me introduce you to your new extended family, Haley." I opened the door a tad dramatically knowing my brothers were on the other side waiting. I was not disappointed when six faces stared at Haley with their jaws dropped.