

Negotiations

Six years Later

The fairies had been at war with the werewolves for two years. The fairies were losing decisively even though no battle had been fought. The royal family had never once fought the werewolves. Their numbers were decreasing at a drastic rate. Any fairy who set foot in the human realm died or was captured. Prince Aiden had finally had enough of his uncle and Mother avoiding the problem. That's what brought Prince Aiden and Prince Arion Holloran to the negotiation table on behalf of their mother, Queen Alania of Faerie.

Alpha Eric Connors watched on his surveillance feed as the fairy princes walked into his home. They were being led by my second in command. My Beta, Caleb. When Prince Aiden and Prince Arion entered the war room their eyes widened as they took in my family. I was proud of my brothers and the strong pack we had built. They first looked at my brother Alpha Jackson, then Alpha Harold, finally my youngest brother Alpha Darrin. After getting a good look at them their eyes drifted to my allies. Alpha Steven McDermont, Alpha David Harold, Former Alpha Frank Daniels in place of his son, Alpha Chase Daniels, who was training in Europe, Alpha Nick Kyle, and Alpha Lucas Lyons.

I knew my reputation preceded me with the fairy princes. Their eyes reflected anger when they looked at me. I couldn't be bothered to care. At thirty-two years old, it was said that since I had not found my mate, I'd grown cold and hard. Maybe I had. I had goals for this meeting though, and that was to gain a wife. One that I had wanted for quite some time. I knew I was handsome. I was six foot five inches tall with blonde hair and blue eyes. Many women threw themselves at me, even a few men. I blankly gestured to two empty chairs for the princes to sit in. They took their seats, and we sat in silence. I had thought they would start this conversation off. It appeared that was not the case.

Finally, I broke the silence, "You fairies requested this meeting. I suggest you start offering something. Or at minimum, tell us why you wanted to talk." Prince Aiden leaned forward. He spoke, "We want peace. This war has gone on long enough. The Fae desire to travel between Faerie and this realm without fear. We want our people to be free here." The arrogant bastard. I threw my head back and laughed. I pointed out, "You fairies picked this fight. What are you offering us to end it? In case you didn't notice, we are winning." Aiden and Arion looked at one another. Prince Aiden asked, "What would it take?" I looked at my brothers and allies. We had discussed this. Each one of them nodded. I answered, "A marriage alliance."

The princes were clearly stunned. Jackson used our mind link to speak to me. He said, "They didn't see that coming." I snorted, "We didn't think they would." Prince Aiden exclaimed, "What?! You want a fairy wife?! No! No fairy would agree to marry you. Our numbers are depleting. We need our females!" I had been prepared for his refusal. So, I was not deterred.

I smiled sinisterly "Ah, but I did not ask for a full-blooded fairy, did I? Do you not have a Princess who is not a partial fairy? The rumor is she is to be married off for the betterment of your people. I would say that puts my request in the lead. I need an heir, but I have not found my mate. I cannot take a werewolf bride; in case I do run across my fated mate. If you give your sister to me in marriage and she produces an heir that would satisfy our terms. We will have no quarrel with fairies any longer. It would allow the Fae to be free here, as you said. If you refuse, then you will have to lock yourselves away in your realm, because you would never be free here again."

The fairy princes looked at each other. It was clear on their faces they did not know how I knew about their sister. It was true that few rumors escaped Faerie about the young partial princess; however, I liked to know things. I couldn't deny I was intrigued by Princess Haley. Ever since her birth announcement went out. I intentionally sought out rumors about her, but they didn't need to know that.

Prince Arion finally asked, "Why do you think we would give our sister to you, Alpha Eric? You are the one who declared war. You have spilled the most blood of our people. You are ruthless, and our sister is timid." My brothers smirked proudly at me. I'd defended my pack and that was my job. The princes knew full well I had every right to declare war. I'd do it all over again if I had to.

My brother Darrin Connors spoke, " Everyone knows the Fae are elitist about their blood. Do you even like your sister? She's only a partial fairy which is lesser than you in your eyes and the eyes of your people. Here she would be respected. As the Luna and wife of my brother, she would be treated better than she probably is there among your people." When Arion and Aiden stiffened, I knew my brother had hit a sore spot. So, the young princess was mistreated. My wolf, Duke, growled murderously in my head. I found myself enraged that someone would mistreat my princess. Her beauty was rumored to be out of this world, even when she was a child. Despite my best efforts all whispers about her ceased six years ago.

Prince Arion evasively answered Jackson's question, "Our sister is a Princess, not some common fairy." Fairies couldn't lie, but they could evade. Prince Arion's answer was confirmation to us. My brother Jackson snorted, "But no full-blooded fairy wants her. Correct? The rumors have been rampant since she was born the only reason she was not killed as a child is because Queen Alaina loved her. The prevailing rumor is that people only cared about your sister because she held the title of princess. Which meant she could be married off to strengthen the position

of Faerie. We are offering you a way to end a war and strengthen your kingdom with such a marriage."

Prince Aiden turned red with anger. He yelled, "NO ONE WOULD'VE KILLED MY SISTER!" Interesting. It seemed the princes did care for their sister in a way. Prince Arion grabbed his brother's hand. Prince Arion asked, "How long do we have to decide?" Prince Aiden turned to him stunned. I knew I had them. I spoke frankly, "We leave this table with a verbal agreement, or the bloodshed continues. I believe you two are acquainted with some prisoners in our dungeons. Hexxus is one of them. He shouts quite frequently that he is your cousin. Agree that your sister is to be my wife, or he will die next."

Everyone knew that Hexxus was Fabian Holloran's son. The princes couldn't allow him to die. Fabian was a prick, but the rumor was his nephews desperately wanted their uncle's approval. They both sighed in defeat. I linked Jackson, "It's sad how easy that was." Jackson snorted, "The war lasted longer than we thought. We were sure they would be at the table sooner." That was true. It was uncharacteristic of the peace, love, and harmony Queen, Alania, to allow her people to be slaughtered.

Prince Aiden stood and stretched out his hand to me. He agreed, "Alright, as Princes' of Faerie, Arion and I agree to your terms. Our sister, Princess Haley Holloran, will wed Alpha Eric Connors to end this war." I stood and shook Prince Aiden's hand. I decided to drop my next condition now that he had agreed. I said, "Fabulous. The wedding will take place in two weeks in my territory." Prince Arion squeaked his reply, "Two weeks?!" My face went to stone along with my tone, "Yes, two weeks. If you do not return by then with your sister, my agreed upon bride; then your cousin will be sent to you in pieces."

Prince Aiden hissed, "You'll have my sister as your bride. Just do not harm our cousin." They turned to leave. Prince Aiden turned back and said, "I want your word that you will not harm my sister." I growled, "My reputation may be that I am ruthless, but I have never harmed anyone innocent. I would not hurt my wife." Prince Aiden nodded. Prince Arion grabbed him and dragged him from the room before he could say anything else.

I told my brother, "Turn on the sound for our surveillance cameras." Jackson smiled. We watched the fairy brothers stare at each other in shock. I told my Beta, "Go observe them in case we miss something." Caleb said, "Of course." He left to follow them from the shadows. We had superior hearing to fairies. Caleb wouldn't have to get too close to them to hear, and they wouldn't know he was listening.

Prince Aiden spoke first "We haven't found Haley in six years, Arion. To be fair, we didn't try that hard but still. The paper trail ended with some doctor. We have had no leads since then. How the hell are we going to find her in two weeks?! And

what do we even say? Hello little sister, it's been a while nice to see you. By the way, you must marry Alpha Eric Connors; or we all die." Prince Arion shrugged, "Hopefully she doesn't know who he is or about his reputation. He gave you his word that he won't harm her. She's quiet and un-fairy like. This life here might be better for her. We know Haley loves Mother. She loved taking care of the babies in Faerie; she wouldn't want them to die." Prince Aiden sighed, "She's not as quiet as you think, brother. She might hold out until Hexxus is killed. You know with everything he did to her; I wouldn't save him if I was her. Uncle Fabian is still alive as well, and she must hate him. We do not know who she has become in these six years away from Faerie and us."

We watched in shock. Prince Aiden exclaimed, "I loathe that those werewolves are right. Haley would be treated better here than in Faerie." Arion sighed, "It is odd how that stings. It's accurate though, she would be treated far better here. We can use that to our advantage when we find her. Surely, she would much rather remain here with Alpha Eric than return with us. She ran away from Faerie for a reason. It's not like she wants to come home. You know we are going to have to use a charm to locate her. All our attempts to pop to her over the years failed. She's our blood, we can do it."

Prince Aiden admitted defeat, "We have no choice. We have to get her to agree for our people." Prince Arion looked down at his feet, "Maybe if we had defended her at least once we would have a better shot. Hopefully, she's still in this realm. We will have to delay going home until we find her." Prince Aiden sighed, "We will stay. We will find her, brother. The charm will work quickly. Convincing Haley to get married in two weeks to save Hexxus and our people will be the challenge." Prince Arion said, "Maybe we don't bring up saving Hexxus. Just our people... us and mother. She loves us." Prince Aiden sighed, "The fairy goddess, Azoney, only knows why, but you are right." They began to cast their charm to find their sister. They showed no indication they knew Caleb stood in the shadows, listening to their entire conversation along with us.

Finders Keepers

Eric's wolf was seething with rage. I was barely containing him from tearing the room apart after what we just learned. Caleb returned to the room. I hissed, "Report," Caleb winced, "I'm sure you heard them, but they cast a charm to find their sister. She ran away six years ago. Not that it's surprising, but you were right. Princess Haley had been mistreated in Faerie for being a partial fairy. Her brothers were distraught that they never defended her, and now have to track her down for a marriage proposal that their survival hinges on."

I snorted. Jackson said, "I personally cannot believe they talked about this much out in the open. In our territory. They must have been in shock. The princes are not dumb men." Harold snorted, "They barely made it out of the damn door before they were talking. No wonder rumors about her stopped. She left. Smart girl." I stood and paced. I was trying to calm Duke down. He snarled in my head, "I want them to bleed!"

Alpha Steven spoke, "We could try to locate the Princess, Alpha Eric. If the Princes are unable to convince her to marry for peace; we could bring the girl here to you. If all she ever wanted was acceptance, your pack could show her that along with ours. Her mother is the Queen, and it has been said she adores her daughter. If we made her daughter happy that would garner goodwill. Plus, the Queen would know where her daughter was. Clearly, she doesn't now. She would have to be grateful to us. Even if we kill her nephew."

Jackson countered, "According to the Princes, they think Haley might hold out until Hexxus is dead. Along with their uncle, Fabian." I spoke, "Bring Hexxus here to me. Caleb, make sure the fairy princes are followed. If the Princess refuses to marry me, we will go with Alpha Steven's plan to bring her here. We can speak to her ourselves." Caleb smiled, "I already have men following them, Eric." I nodded to him. He quickly left and went to bring Hexxus up from the dungeons.

A few minutes later, Caleb shoved Hexxus, shackled in iron, into the seat his cousin Prince Aiden had recently vacated. My wolf growled at the man who dared harm our chosen bride. I glared at him and offered a greeting, "Hello Hexxus. I have good news. Your cousins were just here. A treaty has been arranged. I will be marrying your cousin, Princess Haley, in two weeks. Which means you will be released. Unless of course your family does not deliver Princess Haley to me. Then I get to send you to them. In pieces." Hexxus visibly paled at the mention of Princess Haley. He finally spoke, "You... you mean my life is in the hands of that abomination?!" All the werewolves in the room started growling. Hexxus shrank back into his chair. I demanded an answer when I spoke, "Why would you call her that?" Hexxus snorted, "Because it's what she is. An abomination. She is only a

partial fairy. She should never have been allowed to draw breath. She was conceived by magic not a concupiscence. She shouldn't exist."

Alpha Lucas Lyons was disgusted. He joined the conversation, "She is a Princess. Her standing is higher than yours by birth alone. This is the fairy's problem! You look down on everyone and everything. Apparently even family." Hexxus smirked, "Oh, you just wait until you meet the abomination..." He trailed off and went pale. My brother, Darrin, enjoyed Hexxus' discomfort. Jackson linked me, "I think our prisoner just realized no one knows where his cousin is."

Former Alpha Frank Daniels spoke, "Is there a problem, Hexxus?" Hexxus glared at him. He stammered, "No... she... why? Why would you want her, Alpha Eric? Isn't she a little young for you? She's only nineteen years old after all. Aren't you thirty-two or something?" I growled menacingly. Hexxus shrank back again. He was pathetic. I spoke, "She's a Princess, and I need an heir. I have no mate. You correctly surmised I am thirty-two years old. We are not humans. Your people want an end to this war. What problem could you possibly have with your cousin marrying me? She would be out of Faerie, and away from you. Which would be a good thing, since you clearly hate her. I've known a century old fairy to have a relationship with a thirty-year-old so you cannot possibly care about our age difference either." Hexxus lowered his head and admitted, "That's true...."

Darrin taunted, "So, your life is in Princess Haley's hands. I hope she likes you more than you like her." Hexxus' head snapped up. He hadn't realized that. He stammered, "Wwwwhat?" Darrin continued smirking, enjoying the fairy's confusion. Harold commented, "Princess Haley does have to agree and show up to save your pathetic life." Hexxus forced his eyes shut and sighed.

My wolf enjoyed that, and so did I. I asked, "Do you think that will be a problem, Hexxus? You don't seem to think your cousin will save you. Not to be egotistical, but I am quite a catch. I am powerful, handsome, and quite wealthy." Hexxus looked defeated. "I guess we will find out if she will or not. The abomination has never been interested in any man, Alpha Eric. She's meek, timid, pathetic, and weak. You'd be wise to have her provide you an heir, and never let her be seen. As far as saving me, I'm sure my father will convince her. He's always had his ways." I growled in anger. I hissed, "Get him the FUCK out of here before I rip his head off!" Caleb quickly grabbed Hexxus and returned him to the dungeon. I sat back in my chair. I'd give Princess Haley the life she deserved.

Haley POV

Haley Holloran had returned to the human realm a year ago. I'd spent most of my time in my dad's realm. Ironically, my father was a King. His full title was King Titus Cambridge of the Hackura. For five years I'd thrived with my father's people and my family there. I was no longer a weak little girl. I had nine half-brothers on

that side of my family. All of whom loved and accepted me. My father loved me fiercely, and his wife was lovely. She made me miss my mother, but Veronica Cambridge had become much more than my stepmother. She was my mom. My mother showed some affection, but it wasn't the same as the affection Veronica showed me.

My brothers trained me how to fight with my fists and weapons. Now, I was a fierce fighter. My father's people were feared and brought to the human realm as protectors at great cost. They could come here anytime they liked, but for others to bring them cost a large fee. I was lost in thoughts of my family when something inside me told me to stop.

I had just arrived at my apartment after my college classes concluded for the day. I was being paranoid because my brothers and dad were all out on missions. They'd all gone dark, and I missed talking to them. I tried to shake the strange feeling off, but I was on high alert. The closer I got to my apartment door. I sensed two people were inside. They were fairies. Great this was just what I needed. It has been six years. Couldn't they just stay the fuck away? I pulled out my dagger from my shoe. A trick my Hackura brothers had taught me. I went around to the fire escape of the building to enter my apartment. I silently opened the window and entered the room. I stopped staring in shock at the two people who were here to see me. It was Aiden and Arion. Shock filled me that of all the people to come looking for me, it was them. Unable to stop myself I spoke up, "What in the actual fuck are you two doing here?"

Aiden and Arion whirled around to see me standing behind them. Their eyes widened on my weapon. They each looked as if they wanted to hug me but refrained. Aiden spoke first, "Haley, you look beautiful. You... look just like our mother." Arion echoed him, "Truly sister, you are stunning. Still short as ever. I was worried you'd grown taller, and we missed it." That actually made me smile. I'd enjoyed their teasing when I was little. Sadly, they weren't wrong. I was short for a fairy. I was only five-foot three. I had curves though. My figure was slender, with an hourglass figure, my bust was a generous size C. Thankfully, all the workouts with my dad's side of the family gave me that apple shaped butt. I looked good.

I stared at them in confusion. I said, "It took you six years to show up, and that's what you say. You tracked me down to say I looked good and didn't get taller? Well, thanks guys, I guess. It was nice to see you, but I've got homework to do. I also have dinner to eat." Aiden cleared his throat admitting, "To be honest, we wanted to pop to you as soon as you left. When we read your letter, we thought you deserved to be left alone by us. We have tried to pop to you a few times, but we were unable to get to you. Why Haley? Why didn't you tell us what Uncle Fabian was doing to you?" He looked sincere. I shrugged my shoulders, "You wouldn't have done anything. He always said you wouldn't believe me. That you

would believe him over me. He was right. He always was. Besides, why would you give a damn? You knew he beat me, and you did nothing to stop him." Arion and Aiden clearly wanted to protest, but they both knew that I was right. They had allowed me to be beaten.

Eventually Arion replied, "We would've believed you, Haley. If you had said something, no one would have doubted you. You cannot lie. Uncle Fabian would've had to evade. It would've been obvious." I sighed, knowing they would've have doubted me. Uncle Fabian would've convinced them as a partial fairy, I might be able to lie. Then he would've made my life hell. I told them, "We will just have to agree to disagree, brothers. While I am glad to see that neither of you have died in the war with the werewolves; I would like to know why you're here. It's not to comment on my appearance and we all know it."

Both Arion and Aiden's jaw hit the floor. Arion yelled in disbelief, "You know about the war?!" I scoffed, "Every damn person in the supernatural world knows about the ridiculous war the earth fairies started. I've had to avoid werewolves while I've been here. Most leave me alone though since I'm just a partial." It hit me. Marriage was often the way peace was reached in Faerie's history. I yelled, "OH MY GOD! You're here because you need me! You need a marriage to seal the treaty! YOU GUYS ARE SUCH ASSHOLES!" Aiden cut me off, "We are your brothers, Haley. I know we have a lot to make up for, but... Hexxus' life is on the line. Along with our people. Mother misses you. It's as if a piece of her has been missing for six years. We want to make up everything we let happen to you."

I glared at him. He finally admitted, "You aren't wrong though. We are here because Alpha Eric Connors brought a marriage proposal. He is specifically requesting your hand." I gaped at them yelling, "Alpha Eric Connors?!" I knew who he was. I was in his territory for a reason. My father knew he kept this area safe. Alpha Eric was a fair man. Arion nodded, "Yes. Haley, we know he has a reputation, but he could keep you safe. You would be his wife and Luna. You wouldn't have to come home to Faerie with us. You could remain here in this realm. Aiden secured the Alpha wolf's word that he would not harm you." I was actually touched by that gesture on Aiden's part. I whispered, "You did?" Aiden said, "Of course. You are my sister. I do not wish for you to be unhappy."

I'd longed for him to say those words to me for so long. After thinking it over I scoffed again, "And you guys wouldn't have to give him a full-blooded fairy female. You are truly unbelievable." Arion and Aiden fell silent. My words were obviously true, but it didn't make it hurt less. Aiden spoke, "He asked for you. We did not offer you as an option, I swear. Please Haley, for our people." I glared at them, "Our people? What a joke. They are your people. Your people hate me. Now, you all want me to save your asses. I'll consider marrying Alpha Eric to save you all. That's the best you're getting from me right now." I'd have to talk to my dad. Honestly, I had no fucking clue what to do. I couldn't let Arion or Aiden be

hurt. It seemed like a forgone conclusion that I would be getting married to an Alpha.

I took a breath. My dad would know what to do. I asked, "When do you guys need a decision?" Arion and Aiden exchanged a sharp glance and winced. Aiden said, "The wedding is taking place in two weeks on Alpha Eric's pack lands." My anger exploded. I felt the concern of my dad's family. We had a connection and could feel each other's emotions. I quickly controlled my feelings through our bond. I closed my eyes and took deep breaths so my brothers wouldn't see my eyes blazing gold. It would give me away. They would know my other half, and it might be petty of me; however, I wasn't ready for them to know I wasn't human at all.

I yelled at them, "WHAT? YOU ALREADY AGREED?! Without even asking me?" Aiden sighed, "We had to Haley. If we didn't agree, then and there they were going to torture and kill Hexxus." I rolled my eyes lamenting, "Oh and what a damn tragedy that would be! You cannot be serious! This is ridiculous! Is anyone with fairy blood capable of not ruining my god damn life?" Arion and Aiden sighed.

Arion said, "Just let us know soon, Haley." We stood in silence while I tried to contain my anger. Arion asked, "Can we stay here in your apartment while we wait for your answer? We don't have anywhere to stay. We'd like to stay in this realm with you." I yelled, "UNFUCKINGBELIEVABLE! The two of you know as well as I do that, I can't say no. You already agreed! If you back out of a verbal agreement with Alpha Eric Connors the Fae will cease to exist. He would slaughter you all! He'd probably find a way into Faerie when you closed yourself away because he's that damn determined. You cannot just give your word to a man like him and back down. You are truly the worst family ever. As for your request, yes. You can stay here. I'm going out!"

I stormed out of the room. I was furious. I vaguely noticed some werewolves outside my apartment, but I didn't really pay attention to them. I slammed into my car. I revved the engine to life and drove on autopilot. When I stopped the car, I realized I'd driven to the outskirts of Alpha Eric's home. My dad had made me memorize this location in case I ever needed to come to the Alpha for help. The irony of that was not lost on me in this moment. I snorted as I looked at my soon to be home thanks to my foolish fairy brothers. I got out of my car and sat on the trunk. I oddly felt at peace here... One might even say, I felt at home. How odd.