

Olive Branches

Haley went to the ground in relief the second she was through the portal. It felt different in this realm than in Faerie. It felt like safety. Like I made it. I kept repeating to myself, “You are home now. He’s dead, Fabian is dead.” I turned and saw Alpha Tucker doing the same thing I was. I saw a tear drop from his eye. I turned my back to give him privacy. I knew exactly how he felt. Well, except he knew a loving family was waiting for him out here. Ready to welcome him home.

When I came through the portal the first time, I had no idea if my dad’s family would accept me. I also didn’t know where the fuck they were. I just knew I was finally free. I shared a look with Bexley. I saw that we were both haunted by ghosts in the place we had both grown up. I gave her a weak smile that she echoed. Liam tightened his hand around her waist.

We popped everyone back. I just wanted to go lie down. I already knew my parents weren’t going to bring the triplets to us tonight. Call it a feeling based on what they probably felt from me while I was in Faerie. I missed my babies desperately, but I knew I needed to get it together for them. Right now, I wasn’t anywhere close to together.

I was told to eat. We ate didn’t we? I swear I ate. My clothes were a little looser than normal. Shit. Mrs. Blanch was right. I’d lost weight and I hadn’t eaten much. I did even realize I’d slipped back into that habit in Faerie. I followed Mrs. Blanch into the kitchen.

I linked Dr. Lindsey, “Hello, Dr. Lindsey.” Lindsey answered, “Hello, Luna.” I told her, “I think I need to set up an appointment with your office. Probably a regular thing.” She replied, “I was going to speak with you tomorrow about doing just that. I wanted to check in with you, you’ve been going through a lot. I know you have your partial fairy training tomorrow so that’s out. The day after works for me in the morning. We can make it a standing bi-weekly appointment. We can adjust it if we need to do have a weekly session.” I sighed, “Thank you, Lindsey. That sounds good.”

Mrs. Blanch handed me a tray. An actual tray of food instead of a plate. It had pasta, pizza, breadsticks, garlic bread, salad, and a brownie. I smiled and told her, “Thank you Mrs. Blanch.” She quietly said, “I’ll always be here for you. I know things have been strained here for you lately and I also know it isn’t your fault. I’m sure it’s overwhelming given everything going on in your life. You always have Mrs. Blanch here for you. Do you hear me?” I nodded. I told her, “You really are a treasure, Mrs. Blanch.” She smiled at me warmly.

Molly came slowly into the kitchen. I smiled at her. I said, "Molly! I've been meaning to thank you." Molly startled asking, "Thank me?" I nodded, "Yes, even injured you fought Masium to protect me and the triplets. You almost had him too. If he hadn't used fairy hijinks on your ass, you'd have won. I wanted to see if you still wanted to train together with me. If we had started, I think you'd have kicked his ass." Molly's jaw dropped and she didn't say anything.

I kept eating my food. Molly gathered herself and slowly said, "You... Yes, I want to train with you. Do you really think I would've beaten him? What are fairy hijinks?" I nodded, "I can't lie. You would've fucking won. I can tell you what to look for when fighting a fairy. You would've known he was about to use his powers and been more prepared for it. How about we start tomorrow at six in the morning? The guys have their run then anyway. I know Eric has been missing it because of me." Then I added, "Marcus always called me using my powers in a fight, fairy hijinks, I like it." Molly nodded, "Six tomorrow... that's great. Thank you, Haley. Fairy hijinks... I like it too. That sounds just like something Marcus would say." I laughed and told her, "Oh, don't thank me. I had tough teachers; I've been told I am a hard ass in training." Molly laughed, "I'm looking forward to it." I smiled and ate the rest of my food. Molly quickly left.

After a while it was just me and Mrs. Blanch. I asked her, "Would you trust them again?" Mrs. Blanch sighed, "I want to say yes, but the truth is... no. I would not blindly trust them again. I assume we are speaking in terms of if I were you?" I nodded. Mrs. Blanch smiled and continued, "You opened up to them. I don't think you do that often. My Eric can push past your walls, and so can your brothers. Those women can as well. Molly has started. She made a gesture, and you've responded. That's a small step, Haley. They have an uphill battle to fight. That was a bed they made themselves. You have the right to your feelings, and to guard your heart. You aren't catty or bitter in your exchanges with them. If you were we'd have a different conversation. Let them prove themselves to you."

She paused and said, "No, make them prove themselves to you. Broken trust doesn't repair overnight. Even for those of us with pasts that are not dark as yours. It's on them to repair what's done. You have to listen to yourself to know when you can trust them with your heart again. If you can't, then you keep doing what you're doing. Being nice and living harmoniously in this house. Leading the pack together. I think you will get there with them again though, because of how you love my Eric. Also, because it's who you are. Fabian might have tried to leave you jaded and scar you as a child. He didn't want you to be the loving woman you are, but he failed. He just made you a little scared and guarded. You have a lot of love and trust inside you. You don't have to give it to those who haven't earned it."

I tilted my head. At least I had one ally here now. Mrs. Blanch wasn't done yet though, "The girls should earn your trust back. I think in time they will. They are good people, my girls; but they were wrong with their choices and actions. I know

my girls and they will make things right. My friend Cassandra... she's honestly a tougher case to crack. She doesn't like to be wrong, and it's VERY hard for her to admit when she has been. She has had some... dealings in her past that make things difficult. I just hope she can overcome it all. As for you, you just don't close yourself off to the possibility for a different type of relationship with them. Whether that's a year from now or a decade the timetable is yours."

I smiled. I wondered what Cassandra's issues could be. I told Mrs. Blanch sincerely, "Thank you for understanding. I know how important they are to you." Mrs. Blanch nodded and said, "As you are. You could've had Eric throw Cassandra out of the house, along with the other girls and his brothers. There are other places they could live in the territory besides this house. You had the power to do that, but you didn't. You have the power to keep them from seeing the triplets, but you don't. You have my Eric wrapped around your little finger. You don't use that to cause a rift where they opened a crack in their relationship with him. You tried to repair it. You kept that crack from opening and letting the ceiling fall through, and you didn't HAVE to. You have handled the situation with a maturity and grace beyond your years. Don't let anyone tell you differently. I am very proud of you, my little fairy. So is my Eric."

Mrs. Blanch looked away then added, "I don't even know if they realize they cracked at the foundation of their relationship with him by manipulating him. I told you once and I'll tell you again; my Eric is a hard man. They don't realize they hurt him by taking a shot at you, and he won't tell them. But they will eventually see that. I'm sure Jackson already does. Anyway, as things stand Eric will be thrilled you offering to train Molly, just as she was. Jackson will be a mixed bag. He will be excited but worried. He forgets Molly is not a delicate flower sometimes. All Alpha's have that problem with their Luna's."

I was confused. I said, "I wouldn't call her reaction anywhere near thrilled. I mean she seemed a little excited. We had talked about training, a long damn time ago though." Mrs. Blanch smiled, "You offered an olive branch to her. She had to leave the room so she could go squeal with delight. By simply being yourself and who you are, you make people here happy. Just keep being who you are. Remember those fairies might have tried to take who you are from you at your core; they failed. You just have a few walls people need to break down. Anyone worthy of you will take the time. If they don't... then they are not worth your time." With that she left me in the kitchen alone to digest her words.

I downed a Dr. Pepper as other pack members came into the kitchen. They were talking about money and couples. I was stunned to find out money was the cause of the demise of many relationships. According to these guys, it seemed communication about money was key to keeping a relationship strong. My heart was pounding because Eric and I had never discussed money. One warrior joked

he was getting his brother a book called 'relationships for dummies.' I might need that overnighted. I didn't want anything to come between Eric and me.

I went to find him but quickly realized this moment needed to be about the Thomas' reuniting with their son. I couldn't imagine being freed from King Damon and not being in Eric's arms moments later. Or feeling the presence of my family nearby. We were friendly faces, but Tucker needed to see those that mattered most to him. I offered immediately to pop to Tucker's family and bring them back to see him, their gratitude was thick in their voice as they accepted.

Dylan Frost smiled at me when I appeared in their office. My lion smiled as well. Dylan taunted Eric by teasing me. I muted the phone and told him, "Another time Dylan. We are allies. Eric and my lion seem to be rather good friends. Not to mention the primal possessive sex I'd get from my mate if he saw someone feeding me grapes would be totally fucking worth the growls he'd throw our way." I winked at him and unmuted the phone.

The Thomas' stared at me with their jaws on the floor. Lucas laughed. Dylan whispered, "Is it any wonder why I love her so?" I quickly grabbed the Thomas family. Dylan winked as Lucas shoved an elbow into Dylan's rib who winced. I popped out of their office.

The second I popped back to Eric's war room they were running to Tucker. I couldn't hold back my smile as I watched their reunion. Pride for Aiden filled me. He had done a good thing here for this family and I couldn't wait to tell him. I wrapped my arms around Eric from behind and he immediately put his hands on my forearms.

Eric gave me the rundown on the triplets return. I was right. Caleb mentioned Megan and Masium. I made a mental note that I needed to go speak with them both. I had to say goodbye to Masium, and I needed to make sure Megan was ok.

Marcus pulled out a pink scrapbook. I recognized it. My mother had pictures of me in it as a child. Nostalgia over our nice moments roared through my mind as I flipped through the pages smiling. I felt Marcus' gaze on me and lifted my eyes seeing conflict in his own. I felt our bond. He was uneasy. I frowned. Then it hit me. He didn't just find a scrapbook and it was burdening him wondering if he should tell me what else he discovered. I sighed and decided I needed to know. Marcus' eyes filled with pity and relief as he nodded and slid over several files. I opened the first one and my heart dropped as I read the title.

Harvesting Egg and Sperm Full fairy fertility - A study by Fabian Holloran

I felt instant guilt over the relief I felt knowing I was not part of this experiment. Then I read that he had actually used eggs and sperm to conceive children. Oh my

god! Those poor babies! They were just test subject to him. I kept reading and my anger skyrocketed. The fairy babies weren't with their parents. He was keeping them in a house locked away in Faerie. They were alone. That fucking bastard!

Why did the massive shit storm that was the last several months refuse to fucking end? Why did my mother give this to me? Aiden would have handled this. Why did she hide this from him? I grabbed a file and read through it quickly. I did not find the answer I wanted on the list of successful babies Fabian had created. I briefly thought mother didn't want Aiden to know because Fabian had used Lucinda to have a child with someone else. Nothing I'd found so far supported that, thank the gods. So, what the fuck was my mother thinking? I had to do something about this. There were children suffering right now. I knew how they felt. Alone, unwanted, and unloved. Even before I was a mother, I would not let this stand. I had to call my brother. Aiden would fix this.

I was so annoyed this moment was being changed for Aiden and myself. I just wanted to have an actual conversation where we could share our pain because we were going through the loss together but no. Fairy fuckery was getting in the way... afuckingain. I explained what was going on. Aiden was understandably upset.

I kept reading files desperate to find the answers I wanted. Then I found it. My heart was pounding in my chest. The reason why my mother hid this from Aiden was right here in front of my face in black and white. I had new questions plaguing my mind now. Why would she keep this from Aiden? My nephew. Aiden and Lucinda's son was in the orphanage. Son of a bitch!

This was bad. Aiden was going to be hurt by this information. I never wanted him to feel like I did about our mother. I was about to add to his pain tenfold. I managed to explain as my eyes slid over the numbers on my other nieces and nephews. Arion had three daughters and two sons. My brother would've rejoiced! Arion loved children. Even Masium and Hexxus had a lot of children. I can't imagine they knew because for all their faults they'd wanted children. Masium wouldn't have shut up about it, especially his sons.

Aiden was pissed when he popped to me. He asked me rapidly, Hhoj could Zre Kent Sefre (How could she do this?)” I told him, “Za Trellesh Sintra Ioul Za Wer Iofde asking myself Uise same question (I don't know brother I have been asking myself the same question).” Aiden fumed, “Did Za dondon deserve Ze Sintra Za had Tem son? Lucinda Uy beside herself with joy Den worry Sewq our Zenten Yecksta. Zre Uy distraught Za... Taku Yuit betrayal from them ever end Sewq us Eqsad Ioup (Did I not deserve to know I had a son? Lucinda is beside herself with joy and worry for our baby boy. She is distraught I... Does the betrayal from them ever end for us little sister?)”

I sighed and answered, “Fren course Zu did, Zu tyu an amazing father. Bre's leektl months old, Zu will Wer many more moments with Yim. Za Er sorry Sewq those Zu Den Lucinda can't bebppl back, Beckta Zu can find Yim Ioul. Bring Yim Denk faerie will decjoice, Den Dinko can our family. Sefre Uy Tem good thing brought about by Uise darkness our Gensh brought Trew our lives” (Of course you did, you are an amazing father. He's six months old, you will have many more moments with him. I am sorry for those months you and Lucinda can't get back, but you can find him brother. Bring him home; Faerie will rejoice, and so can our family. This is a good thing brought about by the darkness our uncle brought all our lives).”

I saw a new determination to find his son. I helped Aiden come up with a plan. I knew his mind was clouded with worry for his son. Once the plan was made, Aiden leaned down and kissed my forehead. He whispered, “Zu tyu amazing, Zu tyu our princess Den Qweta Trellesh deserve Zu. Za will find them Eqsad Ioup, they will Sintra Saigal in their lives. Many familjustyi will decjoice tonight with their new Eqsad ones. Qweta will sar them through Sefre time. Za mucha saigal Ioup (You are amazing, you are our princess and we don't deserve you. I will find them little sister; they will know love in their lives. Many families will rejoice tonight with their new little ones. We will help them through this time. I love you sister).” I smiled telling him, “Za mucha saigal yuz (I love you too).” He smiled and popped away to find the children.

I was upset my mother expected me to keep this from Aiden. To keep this from my brother and the rest of those fairies would make me as cruel and heartless as Fabian had been. I couldn't do that! I need air. I needed to run. I left the room quickly.

My phone rang the second I closed the door. I answered without looking, “Hello?” Marcious delightedly said, “Hello, little cousin. My Maribella is looking forward to seeing you tomorrow.” I sighed, “As I am. Have you talked to Aiden?” Marcious laughed, “I did just spend the last several days with him. Of course, I spoke to him.” I ground my teeth, “I meant in the last few damn minutes?”

Marcious sighed, “No, why do I feel like something happened?” I sighed, “Because it did. Fabian un-shockingly conducted ANOTHER sick fucking experiment. There are fairy children in an orphanage unattended. I gave the files to Aiden; the water fairies have children coming to them. Aiden is going to find them; you should help him.” Marcious coughed, “Of course I will help. Maribella is so excited to see you again.” I was about to respond when he hung up. I sighed.

I was torn between running to get these feelings out and going to find Megan or seeing Masium. I made my decision and turned towards the dungeons. The warriors let me pass without a word. I walked down the stairs heading towards the cell where Masium was being held. I stopped short and realized I underestimated Megan and her anger. Masium had sores and warts all over him now. I started to laugh. I couldn't help it. He was so vain this had to be torturing his very being.

Masium's head whipped up and then fell. He uttered, "Hello, cousin." I answered angrily, "Hello, cousin. Why? Tell me why Masium? I know you wanted power that's fucking obvious. Why include Arion?" Pain laced in my voice. Masium looked up with tears in his eyes. He told me, "I didn't think he would die. I loved him; you know that. He... was not himself lately." I looked away and whispered, "I loved him too. Even though he repeatedly betrayed me. I cannot save you; I don't even want to at this point. You took so much from me, first as a child and then you added taking my own damn brother from me. You drove him to this. I saved you both and like an addict to chaos you fucking came back."

Masium laughed, "It's like a moth to a flame, cousin." I groaned, "OH COME ON! A moth goes to a light not a fire. That is ridiculous. Whatever, this realm's sayings are ridiculous! You still haven't answered me. Why Masium? Why did you and your father use Arion?" Masium smiled sadly, "My father did it because he knew Arion saw him as a father figure. He convinced him it was right to hand you over for our people. That the vampire wouldn't harm you too badly once you were the docile girl we all knew again." I snorted, "I wondered why Arion was screaming I wasn't supposed to be harmed. He obviously didn't think to elicit Fabian's word to not harm me his damn self."

Masium agreed, "No he didn't. Arion believed my father to be rehabilitated in that area. I used him because my brother was gone. My father had powerful friends. Powerful people want things, Haley. Some are us aren't born with choices. Despite what you think, I consider both Aiden and Arion to be brothers. Aiden always had his head on straight and couldn't be swayed. Do you even understand how powerful you are, cousin? You belong with us." I laughed. I couldn't help it. I laughed so hard I had tears pouring out of my eyes before I gathered myself.

I asked him, "Are you fucking serious? I was with you for my entire childhood. You made my life hell. You didn't want me then, but suddenly you find I possess fairy powers and I belong with you." Masium sighed, "We didn't know." I was over that excuse.

I told him, "I can't stop them from whatever they are going to do, but you did help me after I was whipped. I won't have you die when I owe you. So, here's my gift to you: decturn Ze Uyla original form let Freetra Meerseta Kekkel decstored (Return to your original form let my cousin be restored)." Masium's warts and sores went away.

He touched his face and smiled, "A brief reprieve, I'm sure. Thankfully, your wolf cannot give me warts. Thank you, cousin. It's more than I expected from you." I snorted, "That was always your damn problem, you know. You didn't ever consider me in anything. You underestimate me. All fairies do. I can only imagine what my mate and family are going to do to you. As someone who was tortured

and abused, my heart hurts for you. You live on though. Just know that. Goodbye.” Masium whispered, “Goodbye.”

Since Blade was with me, I quickly walked out of the dungeons. I hit the top of the stairs and decided I needed to run. I turned to my side and said, “Blade.” He stepped forward into the light. I asked him, “Are you ready to run?” He nodded and we took off.

The second I was out the door; I was practically possessed. My feet were pounding on the pavement. I quickly veered off into the woods. I ran until I ended up on the opposite side of the lake of the chapel and sank to my knees. I was unable to keep the tears at bay any longer. I sobbed and cursed. I hit the ground with my hands.

My mother was dead. She was really gone. My stupid brother was really gone. I’ve got fairy problems popping up like a bad case of acne. My cousin was going to die. I didn’t even know why that bothered me on any level. Masium’s one act of kindness didn’t make him worthy of my sympathy. A smaller voice in my head told me it’s because he was family. Despite the people they were and the pain they caused me; they were family. Then there was guilt because no matter what any of my Hackura brothers have done to me... I would never allow them to die. I would go down into the fires of hell for them, but I wouldn’t spare my fairy brother or cousin.

I could possibly convince Eric to spare Masium pain, and just kill him. I was mad at him though. I was mad about my childhood. Confused at his statements about not having choices. Masium took time away from me that I thought I had with Arion. I thought we could’ve at least had a conversation before I had to kill him. All these thoughts were swirling in my mind. I began to see why people thought I was a bad person. I finally calmed down and stopped crying.

Blade spoke, “Princess feels much.” I turned and said, “Princess is a bad person.” Blade scoffed, “Princess not bad. Princess has big heart; too big. Care too much. Blade kills anyone who calls Princess bad.” I smiled then frowned. I whispered, “I could stop Eric from torturing Masium.” Blade laughed, “No.” I looked at him curiously, “Sure I could.” He shook his head from side to side, “No, wolf do much for Princess. Not that. Not now.” I sighed, “Not now?” He nodded and simply said, “Ask wolf.” I sighed, “Alright, let’s run back.” We ran back to the house and came in and we walked upstairs.

I got into the shower. I let the water run over me for a while before I stepped out. I knew Eric was in our room, I felt him there. We talked. My family was worried. I sighed, knowing all of my Hackura brothers were worried if Marcus was. I hadn’t meant to worry them; I was just trying to survive. I tried to explain it to him, but it was hard. That’s just how I had to be there, it was conditioning, and it was a survival instinct. Alive or dead those were Fabian’s lands. He was everywhere to

me even though I saw him die. Combined with the fact that we were there in part because I killed my brother, allowing my uncle to be killed led to my mother's death. I felt extreme guilt that Aiden told everyone how Arion died at my hand so I would finally have their respect. They would be envious of my powers, but with those very powers I killed a traitor to the crown. They finally accepted me as their princess. The irony was enough to choke on.

Then the orphanage shit happened. Arion and mother are dead, but they just pile onto the secrets we discovered left behind in their chaotic wake.

I was sick of the fairy issues. I was pissed. Fabian could've let his successes be known. He would've been their damn hero. If Aiden found any siblings of Bexley's, I'll set Fabian's body on fire in the Hackura realm. My aunt didn't need to die if he had this going while she lived. We talked about things discovered. I cringed knowing my family had watched the ports. I should've looked for them in my room. I hadn't been thinking clearly there.

Neither of us were clear headed right now. Understanding hit me like a freight train. This is what Blade meant. This is why I couldn't convince Eric to kill Masium without torturing him first. Masium was on those videos, and they'd seen it. I sighed wondering if I was still a bad person because I hadn't planned to ask either way. We talked about everything from therapy to how I felt there. I even brought up money which our bond told me amused him. I told him my plans for the money, but I was open to his input.

We talked a little more about it. Honestly, my mind went to being excited to seeing Maribella again. I wanted to check up on the girls I'd saved when I had left. I just didn't want to endanger them. Now, I would finally see her again. If I found her, I could find the rest. We understood each other better than anyone else could. We went through the same shit. There's just something different about talking to someone who has gone through it as opposed to someone who can't comprehend it happening, because they didn't endure it.

We talked about a few more things before I decided I'd had enough talking. I wanted to feel my mate inside me. He was more than happy to oblige for hours. I fell asleep with a satisfied grin on my face.

I bolted straight up in bed cursing because my nightmares were back, "Shit." I looked at the clock. It was five in the morning. Clearly going back to Faerie had unearthed my buried memories from the recesses of my mind.

Eric jolted up at the same time I did. I sighed and told him, "Go back to sleep. It was just a bad dream." He blinked several times and rubbed his face. He told me, "No, I'm up. Are you ok?" I nodded admitting, "Just memories hitting me. I'll be

ok.” He looked at me and kissed my forehead. We sat in silence just holding each other.

I knew I needed to tell him a few things. I quickly blurted out, “I saw Masium before my run yesterday.” Eric stiffened asking, “Why?” I sighed, “To ask why he used Arion and to say goodbye. I couldn’t let him die owing him. I undid what Megan did to him. Physically anyway.”

Eric incredulity couldn’t be missed in his tone, “Owing him? How could you possibly owe him?” I grimaced knowing he wouldn’t understand. I explained, “He applied an ointment to my back after Fabian whipped me. He stopped him from continuing to rip my back to shreds by saying he needed his help getting ready to keep the sun up. He could’ve done it alone and left me to suffer. He was working with Arion and Aiden to bring me home if I couldn’t bring the enclosure charm down. Well, they didn’t know that I was doing that, but you get what I’m saying.”

Eric was silent for several moments. I could feel his anger and frustration in the bond. He said, “You think that after everything I saw him do to you on those tapes, and I know he did more than what I saw, those few actions in Damon’s home put you in his debt? The columns are much more skewed in your favor.” I shrugged admitting “Fairies don’t see it that way. Either way now it’s handled. Do your worst.” Eric smiled slyly, “I don’t think you have any idea what that is.” I snorted admitting, “Ok, maybe not, but you do. I know Bjourn’s worst Eric. It doesn’t bother me one damn bit.”

Eric smiled and kissed me hard. He entered me quickly. I was soaking wet for him already. My scream was covered by his mouth. I wrapped my legs around his back, pulling him deeper inside me. I screamed out his name as my orgasm gripped me. Eric growled as my walls clamped around him and came himself. We laid there staring lovingly into each other’s eyes.

He slowly pulled out of me and kissed my lips. He begrudgingly said, “I’ve got to get ready for my run.” I smiled, “I’ve got to get ready for my training session with Molly.” That caused him to freeze mid step. He asked “What? Training? With Molly? Molly Connors?” I snorted, “Yes, Molly Connors. You know, our sister in law? She’d asked if I would train with her after my fight with Vanessa. We talked about it yesterday and agreed to meet while you men are on your runs. Our first session is today.” A slow smile spread across his face.

He hugged me and whispered, “You have no idea what that means to me or her.” I smiled and gave him a kiss. I stepped back from his embrace and snapped myself into my outfit for the day. Eric groaned asking, “How am I supposed to leave when you look like that?” I laughed and looked down at my outfit. I had on a light purple top that was tight and tied in the middle just above my belly button. My yoga pants were multicolored.

I questioningly answered him, “You have to run, and I have to meet Molly?” Eric looked at his watch. He spoke in a commanding tone, “We have fifteen minutes. Snap your pants off. Now.” I was instantly wet from his tone. I snapped my pants off. Eric smirked and continued, “Turn around and put your stomach down onto the bed.” I nodded growing wetter with each command. I shivered when I felt him close to me. He slapped my ass and I groaned. He growled and I felt his finger enter me. He huskily said, “I always forget, Angel how turned on you get when I’m in charge giving commands.”

I groaned and pushed back against his finger. He pulled his finger out. His dick was inside me before I could protest. He grabbed my hips and slammed into me thrusting harder with each move. I couldn’t get enough; I was screaming his name in minutes enjoying my orgasm. He was pounding into me from behind. He growled and his legs stiffened as he came inside me. He was breathing heavily.

He pulled out quickly. I snapped both of us back into clothes. He growled and kissed me hard. He admitted, “You make me want to lock you up, and do this all day long.” I smiled, “I’d fucking love that. Let’s do that soon.” Eric pulled me flush against him and ground his hips into me. I couldn’t help but smirk, he was hard again. Eric promised, “Soon, little mate.” He kissed me then left the room sprinting. I laughed out loud. The man forgot I could’ve popped him outside.

I shrugged and popped to the gym. I found Molly already warming up. I joined her on the track and we ran two miles together. Once we stopped I said, “Good morning, Molly.” She replied in kind, “Good morning, Haley.” I quickly got to training, “Ok, you already know the basics of fighting. I think we should jump into watching for when a fairy is going to pull fairy hijinks on your ass. If you want, I can teach you other moves if a fairy forces you to shift like they did to Cassandra.” She nodded, “That sounds good.” I instructed her, “Watch my hands and my eyes. Fairies usually make a move with their hands before a power is coming. To practice, let’s have you come at me to fight. I will use a fairy power. Watch for the tells, so you are prepared.” She nodded.

We quickly began. I was impressed. Molly was actually a really good fighter. I wasn’t too surprised since she was Jackson’s mate. Mrs. Blanch might have a point though. Jackson acted like Molly was some fragile flower to protect sometimes. He was wrong. She was a badass. After about an hour and half we ended our session. She had made great progress. She could defeat a non-royal fairy after this session alone. I was confident in that.

Molly told me smiling, “That was a lot of fun, Haley.” I smiled, “It was. You did really well. You caught on really quickly. You’re a great fighter.” Molly proudly told me, “I am a Beta’s daughter. My brother is the Beta of our neighboring pack. My other brothers are pack warriors. They are off on a mission. They don’t like being tied down. They are always looking for excitement, those two. I was taught

to fight from a young age, and I helped train all my brothers and my sister. I'm the oldest." I told her, "It shows. I was impressed. You've got some badass skills, Molly Connors." She smiled as we walked to the house together.

We were laughing as we walked into the kitchen to see the shocked faces of Cassandra and Jessica. Surprisingly, Shana wasn't with them. I waved hello to them and turned around. I smiled when I saw Megan sitting at the table.

I quickly sat down by her exclaiming, "I was going to come find you this morning. How are you doing?" Megan frowned, "I feel better after doing horrible things to Masium. Not as much as I thought I would though. Arion's still gone, and I'm still pregnant." I promised her, "We will help you. Lisa is in a coven near here. I'm sure she could put in a good word for you to join it if you want. If she's there, they can't all be witch bitches. You can stay here with us until you want to leave, Megan." She got up and gave me a hug. She whispered, "The world really doesn't deserve someone like you, Haley. Especially not the fairies."

Bjourn entered the room carrying EJ. He said, "There we agree witch friend of my sisters." I squealed and took EJ out of his hands. I practically yelled, "HI BABY!" EJ cooed at me as Eric came into the room with his brothers. Bjourn snorted and mocked me, "Hello, big brother. Nice to see you." I smiled at him and said, "Hi, Bjourn." He kissed my forehead and sat down.

I noticed Eric had Alexander in his arms already. My dad came in holding Cassie. My mom was just behind him. I excitedly greeted them, "Good morning everyone! Thanks for watching them mom and dad." My dad nodded, "Anytime. They were a dream to watch. Especially with that conjuring themselves a bottle skill. I wish the boys had that ability when they were little." My mom snorted, "Oh, YOU wish huh? I recall someone had kingly duties a lot. I was the one doing the early morning feedings with the boys. You did do a few times, but all they boys except Ubbe were such momma's boys. Even when your father did go in to feed them...They fussed until I joined him." My dad admitted, "Right you are, my dear."

I looked around and was surprised to see the rest of my brothers except for Logan had come. I quickly remembered Eric mentioned they were coming for Masium's torture. I also knew when they had started one of my brothers was designated to go take Logan's place at home so he could come here and have his turn. My dad turned to me, "I'd like to have a word later this evening, princess." I quickly agreed, "Of course dad."

Eric and I went upstairs with the triplets and played for about ten minutes before we put them down for their naps. I grabbed the monitor and kissed him. When we pulled away Eric muttered, "It's crazy how much I missed them." I smiled, "I know. I missed them so damn much." He went back to work.

I popped to the lake and groaned. I asked, "Farrin, dear god why are you here?" He smiled and mockingly responded, "Someone gave Aiden a list of people who had fairy children magically pop up, curtesy of your recently departed sick uncle. So, you get me today. Plus, I signed up for a lot of sessions." I snorted, "Of fucking course you did." Trixie popped beside me. She blushed, "Hi Farrin." Farrin actually smiled. Ok... weird but whatever.

I walked away. I heard someone say, "So, I hear we are cousins." I turned squealing, "Maribella!" She smiled and ran and hugged me. Happy tears were shed by both of us. I pulled back admitting, "I didn't think I'd ever see you again!" Maribella said sadly, "I didn't think you'd live through what they were doing to you for me to see you again." I shrugged, "I'm a fucking survivor." Maribella laughed, "So, I've heard, cousin of mine. So, I've heard. I see you're married too. Congratulations. Your ring is very pretty." I smiled, "I am married, Eric is great! I love the ring he got me. What about you? Is there anyone special in your life?"

Maribella smiled sadly, "There was someone for a time, but we drifted apart." I shrugged, "Well you're only twenty-four. You've got a lot of damn time." Maribella smiled, "That I do. Apparently, more than I thought after learning the basics of being a partial fairy." I nodded, "Yup. Fairy lifespan and all." We talked about other things until a few more people got there. Once everyone showed up we got started. I could tell the water fairy here today, who I've never met, was impressed by Maribella's skills. Farrin was shamelessly flirting with Trixie. Trixie was blushing and seemed to be enjoying it, so I didn't say anything.

Trixie came over to me on a break. She gently asked, "Are you ok? Aiden told me about Arion." I sighed and evaded her question, "Are you ok, Trixie?" She laughed, "Deflection much? I am perfectly fine. I didn't really know him. Nor did I like him when I met him. He seemed... a little scattered and broken. You gave my life new meaning; Arion was nothing to me really."

I opened up since she did. I told her, "I'm staying busy. It hurts that Arion betrayed me again. It really fucking hurts that he's gone and that I am the reason why." Trixie touch my hand gently and offered, "If you need to talk; I've got you fairy princess." I teasingly told her, "Technically, you are fire fairy duchess." Trixie snorted, "That's just fucking weird." I laughed and we got back to the lesson.

Once the lesson was completed, the girl here for the water fairies walked over and tried to hug me. I stepped back quickly. She pulled back and explained, "I mean you no harm, princess. I'm Tarith. My sister was one of those that was told about her child. She's been trying for fifty years with her mate to have a child. Now, they have the cutest little girl. She just turned one and everyone's adjusting to this new life they have with her in it. You have no idea what you've done letting all these couples know about their babies. It's horrible what Fabian did having them locked away. Everyone would have rejoiced in his success if he'd shared."

I nodded, “Fabian was an evil fairy Not to mention a really bad fucking person. At least Aiden can use the research to work with the healers on helping couples moving forward. He will have the couples be part of the process instead of hiding the babies away.” Tarith smiled, “I always liked you. I’m glad everyone does now too.” I raised an eyebrow.

Tarith explained, “Water fairies have never looked down on partial fairies. Everyone thought you were this meek, timid little thing, but I didn’t. I saw you one day being abused by Masium and Hexxus. I saw that you were being smart and cunning. You were hiding that you could fight back, just like a fairy. I saw that you weren’t weak and you had moments where your mask would slip. You’d smart off to them. I always knew this girl before me now was the real you. I knew the version we saw was fake. You survived. Now everyone knows you are a worthy princess. They are all eating proverbial crow.” Now I was lost.

I asked, “Crow? Why would they eat crow?” She laughed and popped away. What the fuck? I turned and spotted my cousin. Maribella wasn’t far away and was suppressing a smile. I asked her, “Why the fuck would anyone eat a crow?” She laughed explaining, “It’s an expression.” I groaned, “No, I’m fucking done with those. Do you want to come up to the house to eat lunch? You can meet my triplets.”

Maribella gaped asking, “You have children too?” I nodded, “They are newborns.” She studied me, “You look fairly well rested.” I laughed, “Fairy children sleep eight to twelve hours at night. They conjure a bottle when they get hungry.” She smiled broadly, “Well, I guess should I meet Mr. Right, I have that on the pro column for babies.” We laughed and linked arms and walked towards the kitchen.

I felt Eric was in the kitchen from our bond. I quickly told Maribella, “You get to meet my husband too!” She smiled then asked, “What’s that smell? It’s like pine, just like a Christmas tree.” I didn’t smell anything but Eric’s scent. I shrugged, “Who knows what Mrs. Blanch has whipped up.”

When we walked into the kitchen, I heard Maribella gasp. I turned to look at her as I heard a growl of, “MINE!” You could practically taste the astonishment in the room. I turned to see Tucker moving at an inhuman speed towards Maribella. She smiled and gave me a wink before he engulfed her in a hug. They inhaled each other's scent.

I looked at Eric who looked surprised but happy. Tucker’s family looked confused. Maribella teased Tucker, “What the hell took you so long? I thought my mate didn’t exist or got hit by a bus or something.” Tucker explained, “You are my second chance mate. My first mate tricked me after we rejected each other saying she was in danger. I rushed to her aide, and she sold me to a fairy.” Maribella went stock still. She whispered, “What fairy?” He smiled, “Don’t worry. I like the

princess over there, and she's the guy's niece. Well, technically I was given to her cousin, who gave me to his fucked up dad."

Maribella gasped and stepped back She loudly exclaimed, "It happened to you too?" Tucker growled, "Too? What?" He looked at me. I rapidly explained, "This is my cousin, Maribella. She was experimented on by Fabian. Like you. Not like me." Maribella nodded, "Haley saved me." He took her back in his arms. After a few moments he introduced himself, "I'm Tucker. Haley saved me too. We seem to have a lot in common." He kissed her.

Eric cleared his throat, "Uh, there is no mating in the kitchen. Mrs. Blanch will hit you with her roller pin." Tucker nodded and began to drag her away. Maribella called over her shoulder, "Haley, I'll meet everyone later." I laughed, "I completely understand. I'm so damn happy for you!" I shouted so she could hear as Tucker sprinted away with her.

Eric laughed and put his arms around me. He whispered, "Now Lucas is going to badger you every time you find a cousin. He's going to want to meet them" I snorted, "He does keep asking if I have a sister; I should've said I have unmated cousins."

I heard the triplets making noise and popped to them. They all had bottles, so I snapped them into the fairy contraption with them on my chest Then popped back to the kitchen with Eric. Immediately the triplets were taken from me by Nathan, Cassandra, and Molly.

Mrs. Blanch put a plate in front of me. She winked at me, "Eat, please." I smiled at her. Cassandra asked timidly, "Haley, would you mind if we watched them until their nap?" I didn't make a face, but I wanted to. I really wanted to spend time with my babies. I could see in Cassandra's face she really wanted to spend time with them too. I told her, "Sure, I might join you for a bit. I've missed their little faces. Can you also watch them tomorrow morning? I have an appointment with Lindsey." Cassandra smiled and quickly accepted, "Of course!"

I ate my food and looked up to see my dad had slipped into the room. I greeted him, "Hi, Dad." He smiled, "Hello, Princess. If you're done eating you can pop us to your treehouse." I nodded and grabbed a Dr. Pepper. I planted a kiss on Mrs. Blanch's cheek. I told her sincerely, "Thank you for everything you do for me, Mrs. Blanch." She smiled and looked a little surprised.

I grabbed my dad's hand and popped away. I told my dad, "I'm surprised. It's not that late, and you're already done with Masium." My dad chuckled admitting, "I'm not done. Masium will be blood eagled before I am done. Your brothers are taking turns right now. Evin is using the vat you asked him to get." I laughed, "Oh god. I

forgot I asked for that.” My dad nodded, “They feel a little better. I wanted to talk to you to tell you how sorry I am. I failed you as a father.”

I quickly stopped him, “What? No! Dad, you are the best dad I could’ve asked for! You’ve shown me nothing but love. You gave me brothers who love me unconditionally. You gave me a mom who showed me what a real relationship between mother and daughter looks like. You gave me a safe place. You sent Marcus to get me as soon as you felt my pain.” My dad looked away then whispered, “I should’ve felt your pain the whole time. I don’t know how I didn’t. Especially from what we saw on those videos.” I sucked in a breath; I had hoped they would never question why they never felt me.

I sat down and asked, “Did you see the bracelet on my wrist in those videos?” My dad’s gaze eyes narrowed. He nodded, “Yes.” I sighed, “It was an experiment of Fabian’s. You know fairies can sense others’ pain. Specifically, their sorrow. He couldn’t let me walk around with my family sensing that; he had it suppress it. I don’t think he knew it was affecting my bond with you guys when he put it on me, because he didn’t know you were my dad. I ripped it off before I left. That’s why I had a really bad burn on my wrist. It wasn’t meant to come off.” My dad’s face darkened.

He looked away and admitted, “There are many days I am upset Fabian is already dead. You know I love you dearly, princess. I think you are the strongest of my children.” My eyes went wide at his admission. There was no way. My dad explained, “Of course you didn’t know I felt that way. Your brothers do, and they agree. They grew up privileged and they know it. I should’ve taken you from Alaina. I should’ve given into Veronica. She desperately wanted to raise you. All rumors we had heard were that your mother loved you and was taking care of you. You grew up far from privileged, but you were always strong. I have a question that has haunted me for six years.”

I asked, “What is it?” My dad cringed and asked, “Did you ever try to kill yourself?” I gave him a hug. When I pulled back, I looked in his eyes and answered him honestly, “No, I didn’t. I thought about it a few times. Especially after the first time I was raped. I couldn’t do it, though, because I just wanted to meet you so badly. I saw how all the other fairy children’s parents were doting and loving with them. I just desperately clung to the hope that I would meet my own dad that he would be that for me. Luckily for me, you guys found me. You’ve shown me a love that’s much deeper and more meaningful than the love I saw. You and mom have shown me what a functional relationship looks like with communication and respect. People keep telling me I have a kind heart, but you guys brought that back out. I was a numb shell of myself before I met you guys. I saw many full blooded fairies suffering knowing I could help them, but I never did. I helped those girls I thought were human but are really partial fairies; that’s all I did though. You guys gave me time. You loved me even when I was silent, and

you desperately wanted me to talk back to you. I know it really fucking hurt you guys to see me like that.”

I kept going, “I know it hurt you guys that I wasn’t able to talk around you comfortably. You sat next to me on a beach every day for two hours not expecting me to talk back for months. You guys let me open up at my pace and you all put me back together. All of you. Dad, you were everything I dreamed of and more. I never dared to dream of having loving brothers who would do anything for me. I never dreamed of a mom more loving towards me than my mother. I had hoped you would love me, and you gave me that dad. You never failed me, ever. I love you, daddy.” I gave him another hug.

I could feel his tears on the back of my neck. He lovingly said, “Oh, my princess. I love you so much. I just feel like more comes out about your time away from us when you were with those bastards. It’s tearing me apart inside.” I cried, “Dad, no. It wasn’t your fault. I know you guys are making them pay now that I gave Bjourn a list. I wasn’t ready to face it all back then. If it helps you guys, then it helps me. Plus, it’s really fucking nice to know they aren’t going to pop up causing me to have a panic attack. Or threaten my kids.” He nodded.

We just held each other for a long time. Eventually he said, “You’ll need to speak to your brothers as well. They are reeling from the videos we saw. Compounded by the news we keep getting. Your iron vat idea is quite popular in our realm right now.” I laughed, “Evin ordered more than one for me?” He nodded, “Your mate has a few now. Though he told them they should get barrels. Now, Evin is all about that. Bjourn is salivating for a new toy.” I thought about it. I snorted, “Sure, a barrel is smaller. A fairy couldn’t escape the iron that way. A vat they have a chance I suppose. My mate is really fucking smart.” I popped us back to the house, and we both went to see the triplets.