

Chapter 14

Astrea didn't know what she expected from him. Did she really think a rogue would leave a naked woman alone in the bathroom? She knew better than that. And he... he knew exactly what he was doing, waltzing in here shirtless and covered in his stupid tattoos, knowing that she would have to look at him one way or another. She glanced at the king and found him staring shamelessly, eyes greedily devouring every inch of her exposed wet skin.

"How dare you?" She demanded, her whole body shaking from anger.

"It's my space," Fenrir replied calmly and strolled inside.

"So?" She arched her brow.

"So, I want a bath too."

"Wait for your turn then!" The Dragony was appalled.

"It's the desert, Astrea. Water supplies are limited, and we have to economise the little we've got."

"Isn't the point of being the king that you can have two baths during a day if you wish to?" she taunted, overwhelmed with his proximity.

"You've met the wrong kind of king if that's what you're thinking," Fenrir sat at the other end of the bronze bathtub, eyes locked with hers as if he wasn't interested in anything else but her gaze. As if she wasn't naked and vulnerable before him.

"I've actually met two outstanding ones." Astrea decided not to be intimidated and moved through the water, closer to him, resting her head on her arms on the bathtub's edge.

"Menace, are you taunting me?" he asked bluntly, and her lips curled into a smile.

"Are you taunting me?" she tilted her head a bit more, and his eyes grazed over her delicate neck.

"What if I am?" Fenrir leaned lower so that his hot breath tickled her wet skin as their scents intertwined together, creating something else, something entirely new.

He wanted to touch her, taste her, take her. Right here. Right now. Until she begged him to stop, but he knew better than to push her. She was the love of his life, but he was practically a stranger to her.

"Then you are playing with the wrong girl!" Her sweet smile turned into a vicious one as she rose from the bath, water drops rolling down her silky skin like shimmering falling stars.

He took her in, afraid to move. Knowing that when he did, she would find a way to escape him again, and he wouldn't stop her.

"If you think you scare me or intimidate me, think again Fenrir!" She dared him, her chin raised high. "And if you want your bath back, be my guest!"

She stepped out of it as gracefully as she could, but her wet feet betrayed her causing her to slip and almost fall, bringing Fenrir out of his daze.

Astrea felt him getting closer and was ready to ght him if she had to. However, a soft white towel was wrapped around her, to her surprise.

"So that you don't tempt my men by walking naked around the fortress," he explained with a chuckle, making the blood rush to her cheeks. "If they touch you, they die. Don't cause unnecessary deaths, Astrea. Have some mercy on us rogues."

He was mocking her, and she turned to glare at him, unable to come up with a snarky response as he carefully adjusted the towel to cover her. After he barged in on her bathing and she stood before his eyes wearing nothing, this wasn't the outcome she'd expected.

"Oh, my, Astrea, you seem so shocked," the corners of Fenrir's lips turned upwards as he was enjoying the moment, "It's almost as if you thought I was some kind of animal that was going to devour you!"

Moon Goddess, she hated him right now.

"Just because you didn't devour me doesn't mean that--"

A laugh rumbled in his chest.

"Make no mistake, I would be happy to," he gave her a knowing grin. "I'd make you c'm on my ngers in that bath rst, and then after getting you out, my tongue would make you scream my name so loudly that they would hear you back in the South. Then I'd take you against every f'cking surface in this tower as many times as you could take, which I assume would be many. You seem like a strong one--"

She released a shaking breath, and that made him chuckle.

"But," he furrowed his brows, his facial expression getting darker.

She wanted to ask, 'But what?' Yet didn't do it, so as not to seem desperate to him. She would hate that. She hated him because none of this was logical or according to her plan. He broke her every mould.

"It may come as a shock to you, but I only sleep with women who have feelings for me," he announced, making her lips part once again.

He wasn't serious, was he?

"Are you for real?" A snort escaped her.

"Yes, Astrea, I am." He brushed a strand of silver locks behind her ear, creating a wave of goosebumps. "The moment I see it in your eyes, you are mine."

She shivered. Not because it was cold, but because his words reached something deep inside her, and that was a completely new and undened emotion that she wasn't sure how to decipher yet.

Leave before we embarrass ourselves further!" Nova insisted, breaking the train of her disarrayed thoughts.

Escape it is! Astrea conrmed and tried to push the rogue, who was too close to her, away.

"In your dreams, Fenrir!" she hissed.

"Speaking about dreams!" he pulled her closer by her waist, dipping his face into her wet hair, and trailing his nose over her collarbone. "That love bite looks exactly like the one I left on you in my dream."

She gasped, her hand instantly reaching for her marking spot. So much had happened that it completely slipped her mind.

Astrea's eyes darted to the mirror on the opposite wall, and to her relief, no hickey was gracing her skin anymore.

However...

"Yeah," Fenrir scoffed, "nothing there. It's funny, though, that you knew exactly where it was supposed to be."

"Don't feel so special. We are not sharing dreams." She knew she had fallen for his trap, but she wasn't going to admit it. "This is where you were staring!"

"If you say so." He was unable to hide his grin, and it annoyed her even more.

"I am too tired for this!" Astrea muttered and rushed to leave the room, not bothering to pick up the clothes she had left in there. The towel was big enough to cover her, and she needed to leave as soon as possible.

Never in her whole career was she so close to failure on every single level. Fenrir was out-playing her, and she had to regroup.

"Astrea?" Devoss greeted her at the exit, but she brushed past him, storming toward her room.

Devoss, who had changed again and was wearing purple now, went up, knowing that Fenrir wouldn't be too happy with another visitor. His privacy was already invaded beyond belief, and he was surprised that the Rogue King was still tolerating them all.

He found his friend still in the bathroom, sitting on the edge of the bathtub that Devoss had personally lled in an effort to bring the couple closer.

"That bad?" he asked and was immediately pinned to the wall with Fenrir's large hand wrapped against his neck.

"Do this again, and I will make you regret our deal!"

The deity released him, and Devoss coughed, grasping his throat.

"A simple thank you would do next time!" he grunted and watched the Wolf God breathing heavily next to the only window in the room. "I'm sorry, okay? Bash told me who she is to you, and I wanted to help."

"This is not how it works," Fenrir exhaled loudly. "It-- I should have stayed away."

"Let's agree to disagree," Devoss commented. "I can see you two working out just ne. You just need to--"

"Dev, seriously, leave me alone!" Fenrir interrupted, not in the mood for the fox's lecture. What would he know about any of this?

"Fine," Devoss sighed in defeat. "Sorry if I overstepped. Let's talk later."

He left just as he was asked, leaving Fenrir in solitude.

Only it didn't give him the peace he sought anymore. Not like it used to.

Astrea's presence changed everything, taking this peace he managed to nd after so long and crushing it.

The memories were now ooding his brain, invading his mind. He wouldn't be able to have peace anymore now that the box he had hidden them all in was opened again.

Thousands of years have passed, but he remembered the rst day he met her as if it was yesterday.

The skies of Asgard were the perfect shade of azure when Tyr threw Fenrir to the ground, raising a large cloud of dust around them. Letting the young wolf regain his breath and the remnants of his dignity, he circled him with a smile curving his lips.

Fenrir groaned, and his mentor chuckled in response.

"You are off of your game today, boy! It's as if I've taught you nothing!"

Fenrir clenched his jaw, feeling his ribs falling back into place, regeneration still in progress. He didn't let another sound escape, so as not to humiliate himself in front of his one and only friend. Especially since he wasn't going to let it end this way.

"Are you sure?" he chuckled and kicked his mentor in the knee, making him trip and fall right next to him, suddenly feeling better about himself. "I remember that the battle is not over until the opponent is dead or has admitted his defeat. Maybe I am just waiting for the right moment!"

The smile dropped from Tyr's face, and the change did not escape Fenrir. He'd learned to read the room early on, knowing that he was not loved here in Asgard. Just tolerated on the good days.

"You are upset. Is it because of our guests? The ones who are arriving today? Do you know what all this is about?" he asked, curious and hoping to nd out at least a little something. It was rare for Asgard to have visitors from outside of their realm.

No one was telling him anything as usual, which only spiked his interest. It must have been kept a secret for a very good reason.

Tyr sat up, dusting himself off, still panting slightly after sparring.

"Yeah, I don't think it's a good idea," Tyr confessed.

"Why not?" Fenrir taunted, eager to learn what he could.

His mentor studied his face briey and then forced a careless empty laugh.

"Don't get these things into your head, boy," Tyr slapped his back. "Trust me, it's going to be long and boring, and you are lucky--"

"I know," Fenrir stood up. He was lucky he wasn't invited. This was how it worked for him.

The thunder rumbled despite not a single cloud present in the sky.

"I think that means it's time for me to go," Tyr mused, giving him that look he hated. A mixture of pity, worry and regret.

"Yeah, I have a business to attend to tonight, too," the wolf grinned, to which his friend huffed a small laugh.

"Good," Tyr nodded, probably thinking he would spend the night with some maiden in his bedroom. "Tomorrow. Here. Same time."

His friend left him in a rush, and Fenrir had to return to his chambers to clean up and be ready before night fell. His little secret was probably what excited him the most lately.

His home was at the very top of the mountain, close to the main palace, but slightly lower and much less pompous. However, the position came with its perks, giving him the best view of the realm all the way to the gates.

He was on his way out when the portal arch in the central garden started glowing, and he heard screams and cheers of excitement as Asgardians surrounded their guests who had just arrived. Fenrir couldn't see them clearly because of the crowds greeting them, leaving him to wonder again what the whole deal was about. They usually despised everyone who wasn't from here.

He was about to give up and leave when he noticed something shimmering in between the heads of his family members.

Shimmering like stars themselves...