Marriage. A unique bond between two people. A bond that only grows stronger and could last a lifetime. A promise to stay. A life long commitment which is to be filled with love romance intimacy bliss joy, hope, and also pain, hardships and the struggle with understanding one's partner. It is a sacred covenant made with each other and God Marriage is a life journey that only ends with death. Not only is the bond physical, but also emotional and spiritual. It is beautiful. It is selfless. It is an honor. It is a calling. A new begining. A new life Marriages are also the fountainheads of families. Creating little ones that grow up to fulfill their callings in becoming something greater than themselves, contributing to society and to be a part of the Third Person's POV "I do." He said confidently. "I do." She uttered the words out with raw emotion. A promise that she would never break He pulled her close, placing one hand gently behind her neck and the

Chapter 51

Here's another chapter guys. Whoaaa, the longest I've ever written. Excuse the grammar mistakes but feel free to correct me

That's all. God bless you guys and have a wonderful day ahead

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"I wanted to stay longer but the Alpha King advised against it. He said that since both of us have met and connected, we won't be able to stay away from each other for too long. He also said something about

"I'll be leaving in five days Aeval." Her voice trembled. That's when I looked away and whimpered. That's when the tears poured out. I

"Aeval, no. Please don't cry. Hey." She came forward and hugged me.

"Oh gosh, you're leaving," I breathe in. My breaths grew heavy as I

"Please don't cry little sister. It's not forever. We can always visit each other. We'll even plan out the dates if you want." She spoke to me like how anyone would speak to a child. I hiccuped as I nodded. She always took care of us like a mother. Back in Red Kingdom, whenever I tried to recall anything about my past or my parents, my brain would immediately picture Tonya. She was the one a er Alex. I buried my face in my hands as I cried. What would I do without her? I

"Aeval, sweetie, look at me." I shook my head and wept. She grabbed both my hands and moved them away from my face. "Look. At. Me. You don't think I'm going to miss you? Do you honestly think I am ready for a new life? I'm scared as hell Aeval. This is so unexpected for me." I sni ed as more tears streamed down my face. Yesterday, I was trying to be strong for her and today I was being a crybaby.

a heat thing. I don't remember that part."

accepted reality. She was going to go too.

didn't think she would leave so soon.

"It's pai-" I sni ed again and looked down.

understand that me leaving is necessary."

"It's painful......to let you go." I whimpered and hugged her. "It's hurts me to leave you too. I'm going to miss you the most," she sni  $\,$  ed. "However, a er the long conversation I had with the Beta, I

She hugged everyone. Kyle first, then India, Bethany and Alex. Kyle decided to stay until Tonya le . He will be returning to Red Kingdom in less than an hour. Alex teared up a bit but he managed to give her an encouraging smile. They all smiled, laughed and wished her good fortune. I tried to smile too. It hurt but I smiled. I was happy. Truly happy for her. She had an awe some, understanding soulmate and  $% \left( 1\right) =\left( 1\right) \left( 1\right) =\left( 1\right) \left( 1\right) \left($ she was stepping into the next stage of her life. I was proud too. It only hurt because I wasn't going to see her very o en anymore.

"Look at you, with those pu y eyes. What did I tell you last night young lady?" she playfully scolded me. I laughed through my tears and gave her one last hug. Breaking apart, she cupped my face. "I already made the visiting dates." She beamed at me with her

Sitting on the grass not far from the main gardens, I busied my hands by picking up wildflowers. My favorite blue cloak was spread around

I tried to stop my mind from wandering too much but it was no use. I

Both were living their lives and I should be feeling ecstatic about it but I yearn for their presence. I even dream about them at night. Missing them made me remember our years spent together in Red Kingdom. Our small family and the small village. Life was dangerous

Before I could stop myself, I remembered all the fun I had with her and then all of a sudden, like an explosion she was smiling down at

Soon, I felt a presence behind me. Strong arms wrapped themselves around my small frame and I was pulled back to a hard chest. Prince

"I hate to see those red, swollen eyes, Little Flower. I hated it even when I used to be the cause of it. Now it pains me to see you like this  $% \left\{ 1,2,\ldots ,n\right\}$ 

"I know. I am happy and I will get used to their absence." He kissed the side of my head. "You're speaking as if they're dead. You can visit-

"It's not the same. I just....I'm so used to having them around. Even in the castle, even when I was alone separated from the others, I knew they were always there. Now, it's di erent....but it's okay. I'll be okay

"I know you will, you're strong Little Flower. However, it doesn't seem

"I've been around for a long time I guess?" I sco ed at that. Of course. "My mind dri ed o to Henri." His hold on me immediately tightened. He went still. I turned around and looked up at him, only to see a hard look on his face. His lips were set in a thin line while he glared at the ground. Dark blue veins were already beginning to spread across

"Are you alright?" I carefully asked while I placed my hand on his

"Don't know. I was thinking about my family and then....you know," I

"You just miss them a lot right now. Don't forget you still have your brother, Bethany and India. They've been wanting to talk to you for  $% \left\{ 1\right\} =\left\{ 1\right\}$ 

"Hey, there's nothing to be sorry about. They all understand. Your

"You can think about her you know, but don't venture too deep into those thoughts Little Flower. If you want, talk to someone about it.

"Phoenix, don't worry so much. I just thought about my family so I

"That's all?" I let out a heavy breath and rested my head on his chest. No.I still wondered why she hated me and I have tried to be angry with her. I tried to hate her back but I simply couldn't. Maybe because some part of me still loved her. I couldn't hate her and if I can't hate her, it's harder for me to understand why she did whatever she did. Phoenix was right. Thinking about Henri didn't bring out the best of  $% \left\{ 1,2,...,n\right\}$ things. In order for me not to think so much about her, I had to let

So I looked up at the sky and wished the very best for my loved ones.

I prayed that Tonya delight herself with her new life in White Winters

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I also prayed for Henri's soul and tried to forgive her. It was everything but easy and to completely do so, takes time. A lot of it. Hopefully, I would find the strength to do it someday. I also hope that I would be strong enough to let go of all the horrible memories and

For that, The Dark Prince was always at my side, helping me. At the particular thought, I felt the grass warm my bare feet. I felt the cool breeze caress my body. A huge weight was li ed o of me and

Phewwwww, that's all for now. Share your thoughts

Continue to next part

I prayed that Kyle enjoy his job in Red Kingdom.

experiences I had in the castle and it's dungeons.

a er a long time, I smiled up at Phoenix.

He replied by kissing me so ly on my lips.

Till next time.

Phoenix joined me on the grass and sat me on his lap

"I miss them that's all." I whispered and wiped my eyes. "Is that the only reason? They're doing what they want with their lives. Moving on. I promise you, that Blondie and your sister wouldn't  $% \left( 1\right) =\left( 1\right) \left( 1\right) \left($ want you crying for them. They would want you to be happy for

and not know the reason behind your tears."

with the changes, I will.'

his arms

"Yeah, thanks.' "Okay."

shrugged.

like they were the only reason for your tears." "You always seem to know. How?"

chest. He shook his head and calmed himself

"Why did you start thinking about her?"

 $some\ time\ now\ but\ you\ keep\ yourself\ is olated.$ "I know. I should apologize to them."

parents are a little worried but the rest, they get it."

Just don't dive too deep-"

thought about her that's all."

everything go and move on.

Land.

I felt a single drop of tear hit the back of my hand.

"Okay we'll stick to them Tonya." I whispered.

couldn't stop missing Tonya and Kyle.

but we all had each other. The five of us. Five. Two sisters and two brothers.

"It's what Aeval?"

Five days later.

reddening eyes.

me.

Two sisters.

The knife. The dungeons. The darkness.

Silence.

me while I begged for help.

"I knew I'd find you here." "I just want to be alone for a while." "I le you're alone for a week. No more." "Just go...away. I'll come back in a while."

couldn't hold it in. I never could.

I cried harder. Five days?

"So, how long."

if you see any.

world.

leave

other on her hip. She held on to his shoulders as they kissed lovingly in the middle of the great aisle. Prince Alexander Fay Sindrion Celeste and now, Princess Bethany Hope were o icially bonded in holy matrimony. Everyone cheered inside the sacred nine hundred year old cathedral in Golden Haven. Even the Bishop and his assistants looked ecstatic to see the young, happy couple before them. The celebration was grand and joyous. The wedding bells were so loud that they rang throughout the entire kingdom. Speaking of grand, Prince Alexander had called in the finest tailors to ensure Bethany got her dream dress. It was an o shoulder A-line gown, with floral lace on the edge of her skirts. The same lace design was used for the half sleeves that came to her elbows and also the train of her gorgeous dress. Bethany looked breathtaking with bold makeup and a simple transparent veil. Her golden tiara gave the final touch of her princess look Prince Alexander was of course dressed in his finest clothes. Just like his bride, he wore all white. White slacks, white shirt, white vest and over it a white blazer made for a royal fae. On the upper le side of his blazer, there was a golden spiral design representing the Core of Life. It was the symbol of their beloved kingdom. Gold covered the tip of his sleeves as well. He looked admirable as his crown rested proudly on his head. The young fae princess couldn't help but tear up during the ceremony and it did not go unnoticed by the Dark Prince. He kept his eyes on his Little Flower the entire time, not bothering to concentrate on the ceremony. To him, Aeval was his focal point. She had him mesmerized with her plain yet elegant pastel pink bridesmaid gown. He didn't blink when she walked down the aisle with a bouquet of pink flowers. Tonya had walked in front of her and India behind her, as the maid of honor. He didn't care nor did he bother to glance at the bride. He didn't get emotional at all and he was rather annoyed at the number of people who were constantly shedding tears and sni ling during the entire ceremony. It was noisy and disturbing to him. His Little Flower was the only reason why he attended the wedding. If it weren't for her, he wouldn't have turned his head for a second. Shaking his thoughts away, he was glad that it was finally over Everyone was happy, everyone was clearing out, he couldn't wait to His eyes followed her to the entrance of the massive cathedral where they all had a photo session. 'I just have to leave now so no one-"Prince Phoenix!" Fuck! He screamed in his head as Princess Aeval disrupted his escape

plan. Changing his irritated facial expression as quickly as possible he "Join us for a picture!" she waved at him. Once she so boldly did that, everyone decided to follow her action like puppets. His parents included. Prince Zenas and his Esmie laughed at his misery while they waited for him to join them. "Please smile. Just this once. Then you can go back enjoying your solidarity, I promise." The young fae princess almost begged him. He just grumbled to himself and when the time came, he forced a smile at the camera. When he looked back at her, his Little Flower was beaming at him.

"Happy now?" "Extremely. You sure you don't want to come to the reception?" "Trust me, I've never been more sure about anything." "Alright then. I'll save you some food.' "You're not mad?" he asked half expecting an argument for not wanting to attend her brother's wedding dinne "No. I don't want you sitting there and regretting every second of it. You must want to attend it and if you don't, that's quite alright. I am already pleased that you made it for the wedding." She giggled. "Aeval!! Hurry!! I want to be there early!!" She jumped at the voice and looked apologetically at the prince "See you later tonight or tomorrow morning. Blondie is getting impatient." She laughed and signaled for Kyle to give her a minute. "I think he doesn't know that his seat is already reserved. Anyhow, I have to get going," the prince took her gently by the waist, bringing her close to him "I want a goodbye kiss....if that's alright," the princess immediately blushed and she felt her ears heat up. The Prince feeling amused, li ed her chin up. "Your answer, princess? Looking deeply into each others eyes, she shyly nodded. The blonde haired boy groaned loudly at their open display of a ection. Kyle then felt another presence beside him. Looking down he noticed Prince Timothy gaping at the duo not far from them. He  $\,$ immediately closed the young vampire's eyes. "Aeval!! Enough!!" They broke apart with the Dark Prince giving Kyle a deadly glare. The dinner was filled with embarrassing stories, emotional speeches and most of all vigorous and energetic dancing. Bethany did not leave the dance floor a er she ate dinner. She simply didn't want to  $% \left\{ 1\right\} =\left\{ 1\right$ stop dancing. In that process, she pulled whoever she could onto the dance floor to join her in doing some crazy dance moves. Princess Aeval laughed and danced with her beloved friends enjoying the night with them. It was mostly her side of the family as Beth didn't have any family members le The fae princess remembered her friend being a little down at the very thought but Aeval did not let that bring down Bethany's spirits. She recalled how her father had stepped in and decided to walk Bethany down the aisle. The girl was beyond shocked and dumbstruck by it. To think that the king himself was going to walk her down the aisle. That was something she never imagined. He was going to be her father-in-law but it still shocked her to the bone. She also wasn't prepared to be called Princess Bethany Hope but it happened. Her crowning ceremony took place a week before the

said swinging his arm over his dear sister's shoulder.

smirked, winking at her. indoors and it was night time "It won't happen anytime soon and...."

from each other. Like magnets. Oh my gosh!!"

Princess Aeval smiled at how far all of them had come. She always had hope, the burning will to survive no matter what the odds were She knew humans had little to no chance of survival in Red Kingdom but she still had hope. For her and her group. She wanted to live Now, looking back, every obstacle was worth it. They all made it. Despite the pain, torture and hardships, they all survived. "Wow, you really shouldn't be crying during Alex's dinner party." Kyle "It's not like that," she sni ed. "I'm just so, very happy for them. I feel like my heart is going to explode. I mean look at them. Look at how beautiful they are." She placed her hand on her chest and rested her "Very soon, we'll see you on the dance floor with a somebody. I say soon because of that heated make out session earlier today." Kyle "Can't wait lil' sis!" he laughed and took a huge gulp of his cocktail. Just realizing what he meant, the princess blushed hard, her cheeks turning into a deep shade of red. She was grateful that they were "Uh huh, yeah it will. Mark my words. Both of you just can't stay away

"Listen to me Aeval!" "Alright, stop shouting." "Magnets!!!" "You already said that." she tried to calm him down.

"What?!" Princess Aeval panicked at his sudden high pitched voice. "Magnets!!" he laughed out loud again. She understood that her weirdo brother was just drunk and began to lead him to a chair. "No, no. You and Darky. Both of you are magnets. Sticking to each other because, hey opposites attract!!" He laughed again, Her face heated up at what Kyle said but he was half right. She and the Dark Prince didn't have any similarities. Their natures were worlds apart vet there was something constantly pulling them together. "Get it Aeval? You're light, he's Darky. Light and dark. Dark and light. One attracting the other," he threw his head up and started laughing again. This time, the married couple looked over at them from the dance floor. The princess gave them a sheepish grin while Kyle continued laughing his lungs out. She turned back to Kyle but didn't say a word. Maybe because she

couldn't say he was wrong about any of it. "Come on let's get you to bed." "Noooooooooooo!!" the boy yelled at his sister. "I wanna dance!" He pouted like a five year old. Then he looked over Aeval's shoulder and squinted his eyes, "Hey why is Tonya running?" "Wh..what are you babbling about now?" "Far behind you, silly. Lookie there. Oh, don't look, she's striding towards us. Yayyy! Faster sistaaa!" the princess rolled her eyes and signaled for a waiter to give Kyle some food. At least then, he would be eating instead of shouting. 'Where the heck is Timothy?she questioned herself then she

**Princess Aeval Florentine's POV** little too hard to be calm wrong. I know something is wrong! and I could feel her burning up.

abruptly turned around. Like Kyle, she too squinted her eyes and noticed a very distraught Tonya coming towards them. "Tonya? What happened? Are you okay?" her forehead was covered in sweat and she looked frightened. My worry intensified as I took her "Tonya, talk to me." I could see how she struggled to force a smile. "Hey, nothing serious okay. I'm not well and I want to go back to the castle. Please can you just help we with the transport?" she tried a "Tonya whatever you're trying, it's not working. Tell me what's "Everything is fine. I just had some stomach issues just now, I threw up. I have a headache and I wanna go back." I touched her forehead "Oh my, come with me." I quickly took her towards the entrance of the wedding hall. "Aeval, you have to stay here. Don't come back with "Aeval!! This is your brother's wedding dinner. Stay. It's just a bloody fever, I'll take some medicine and sleep. You stay here," she was pleading now. Sensing that she was definitely hiding something, my worry grew. I closed my eyes for a moment. Then looking at her, I held her shoulders. "I won't stay. Not until you tell me what happened. If anyone had hurt you, I swear I will show th-

me " "Are you crazy?!" "Quit being violent, little sister. It...it doesn't suit you," now she sounded weak. "Please ask them for a ride. Hurry." What the heck was happening to her?! "Tonya, what. Happened?" Muttering to herself, she abruptly stared "There was this guy okay!!" she burst out unexpectedly. "His presence really made me uncomfortable. He had this weird aura around him and now I don't feel good. That's all. You shouldn't be worried. You stay here and don't forget that your need to take care of him," she said looking at Kyle from the entrance where we stood. He was stuing his face with cake and every time he swallowed, he would sing along to the song that was currently playing. "Aeval I need to go now. Please," she said sounding frantic and desperate. Letting out a heavy breath, I nodded at her. I understood what she wanted but I couldn't just stay here and pretend to have fun while she was in a state of panic.

"I need a ride back to the castle. Immediately." I ordered the guard. Seconds later, there was a car waiting for us. "You stay. Don't come with me." "What-" tomorrow, I promise you that." "Tonya did he hurt you?" I asked dreading the possibilities. "No, no. He didn't. It was his presence itself. I can't explain it. I just want to go back, to be alone and rest. Can you please allow me that?" I looked worriedly at her and reluctantly I nodded. I then signaled for "Timothy?! Timothy?! Where are you?" I called out to the young vampire prince as I walked around the hectic hall. All the dierent beings were either dancing, drinking or having loud conversations with each other. All in all, everyone was enjoying themselves. Everyone except me and Tonya now. Where is that kid?!

"Whoa, sweetheart, are you alright there?" "Prince Z..Zenas?" he was having a conversation with the Alpha King and a few young girls. "One and only. Why the unhappy face? It doesn't suit you, beautiful." I scrunched up my nose as he repeated a bit of what Tonya said earlier. "Have you seen your little brother? I need him for a while." "Tim? I'm not sure. He was looking for that Kyle dude. Then he made some friends and now I guess he's playing with them. I'm sure he'll start looking for Kyle again.' "Well, I need him now. Kyle is drunk and I can't leave him alone." "He'll be fine princess. Many of us are drunk. Look at us, we're fine aren't we?" Alpha Silvian said casually. He missed the part where Kyle was human. Alcohol tolerance wasn't the same for all the beings.

"Why would he be alone when he has you, beautiful?" I wanted to roll my eyes at Prince Zenas' name calling. "I have to go back to the castle. I have some things to do." I said "Things to do? On your brother's wedding day? Just can't stay away from Phoenix huh? Aren't they adorable Alpha?" Prince Zenas threw his head back and laughed. His actions were followed by the three girls who stood close to him. It wasn't even that funny. Just when I was about to turn around, the alpha king stopped me. He noticed my seriousness. Thank heavens for that "Don't worry princess, Zenas will take care of Kyle. You go do whatever is needed. Careful though. Shall I send anyone to accompany you?" "Thank you so much Alpha Silvian. That won't be necessary. I will be fine." I said in appreciation and ran towards the entrance. Once I was out in the open, I released my wings, and they spread themselves out. I flapped them as hard as I could and took o into the sky.

Surprisingly, I saw Prince Phoenix patiently waiting at the entrance of the castle as I landed gracefully on the ground. "I knew you wouldn't take long." He eyed me carefully. "How did you know? You saw Tonya?" I asked breathlessly as we walked through the giant doors. Phoenix immediately cupped my face and inspected me all over. "What-" "You're not hurt right? You don't sound good. Tonya didn't look good when she came here so what's going on? Was the dinner that depressing?" he cocked his head to the side. I gently pushed him back and gave him a look. "The celebration is going great. It's just that Tonya isn't feeling too well. I'm worried about her but she refuses to give me a proper explanation and she is adamant about wanting to be le alone." I complained as I paced back and forth. "She's in her room, and she's sobbing." I widened my eyes at Phoenix. "What? I can hear her."

"I have to go see her. This isn't like her, I mean Tonya has never acted this way," I can't leave her alone and she can't chase me outturned to leave but again I was stopped. Phoenix held my wrist and turned "Wait, did she say anything? About what happened, anything at all?" thinking back I recalled a few things. "She did say it was a guy. He gave out an unexplainable aura and it just shook her up. I asked if he had done anything to hurt her but she said no and it was his presence It sounded weird saying it out loud. When I looked closely at Phoenix, I saw that he was staring hard at the ground, thinking. Seconds later, he loosened up as if he realized

something. "Phoenix what is it?" "I think you should go see your friend. She doesn't need to be alone." He put on a blank face and didn't answer my actual question. I spotted a maidservant nearby and called out to her. "Yes, Your Highnesses?" she bowed to us. "I know it's late but please make some hot chicken soup and bring it to Tonya's room. It's two doors away from my chambers. Thank you." "Yes, of course Your Highness," she bowed again and headed towards "Alright, I'll go see her now," I pinched the bridge of my nose. I hope it was nothing too serious. "Don't stress yourself, Little Flower. How about I wait outside her door and when she's calm enough, I'll join you inside her room." "Okay. That would be nice." With that, both of us walked towards Tonya's room, A er a couple of so knocks, she opened the door knowing it was me. Once I was inside I closed the door and sat with her on the bed. "Tonya?" She looked at me with teary, red eyes. I couldn't take it anymore, I crushed her in a hug and let her cry some more

bed.

"Sshh, you're okay, you're safe now." I cooed so ly and rubbed her back. We stayed like that for some time and once she felt better, Tonya laid on my lap and pulled her knees up. I was playing with her hair when the maidservant entered the room with a tray "Thank you." I nodded at the woman. Glancing towards the open door, I beckoned for Phoenix to come inside. The servant bowed and le, closing the door on her way out The moment Phoenix entered, my dear sister immediately tried to sit up but I assured her that it was alright. He sat on the chair near the "Damn it, I feel so stupid for crying so much," she blurted out with her stu ed nose, "There, blow," I said handing her the whole tissue box. "And it's not stupid Tonya. It's better to let it out." "I know but I don't even get what the hell happened. One minute everything was fine and the next this feeling took over," she blew her nose and sni ed. "It's going to be fine." I reassured her. "You said it was due to a guy." Phoenix spoke. Tonya stilled and looked at me. "Don't be upset. Maybe he knows what to do. We don't know much about this," I shrugged at her. She sighed and slowly sat up, resting her head on my shoulder. "Yes it was your highness." "Well, what did he look like?" "Um, I didn't observe too much as I just wanted to get away from him." "You must remember something." "Okay, um, he was tall, well built like a soldier. He had dark brown hair and that's all I remember about him." "You just described more than half of all the guys," Phoenix muttered "Anything else you remember? Like who he was with or what he was doing?" Tonya went quiet, trying to remember. "Oh, oh wait. He was always with that werewolf leader. The alpha king. They were talking a lot before he came to me." Phoenix looked at her knowingly. "You might be talking about his beta." "Beta Iker Noah?" I asked him.

"Yes. Anyways it's nothing serious. You should get some sleep." A er letting me know that he'd be waiting in the hall, he le "Here, drink the soup. It will warm you up," she obediently drank. "He definitely knows more than whatever he said." She looked at me "Well, if it is something else, we'll get a call. So, I'm sure it's not anything bad. Rest now, I'll come by first thing in the morning. A er clearing the tray and tucking her in, I le her to sleep. "Alright what was it really?" I crossed my arms and stared at Phoenix What was he hiding? "You look like an angry little rabbit. Quite adorable I would say," he chuckled.

"Not funny." "A little." "I'm guessing you didn't bring me back any food?" I threw my hands up and groaned. "Alright. Angry little flower." He said highly amused. I strode over and

"Look, she said she was taken over by unexplainable emotions due to a guy. She also said that the man didn't do anything and it was his vibe that scared her away. The man she was talking about is a werewolf. What do you think happened?" "He was a scary looking werewolf?" "Are you being serious?" "No. I think I know where you're getting at." I visibly winched. If whatever Phoenix was saying is true, Tonya is going to freak the hell out. "She's his mate, isn't she?" I hesitantly asked. "Yeap, prepare for visitors tomorrow." "But there's another ceremony tomorrow. Bethany needs to present

herself to the Core of Life." "For? "She's human and Alex is an immortal. She needs to drink from the Core. "I thought no one can get close to the core except for the guardians. Even they can't touch the water for too long. Apparently, only you can not only touch it but also submerge yourself into it. Did I mention how cool my Little Flower is?" He gazed at me. I became self

conscious at once. "Thanks for that but this is dierent. Once a person is presented, all the creatures living in the haven will inspect the individual and look deep inside them. Once they approve, the whole haven and the core will grant the guardians strength for them to take one chalice full of the golden water and allow the specific individual to drink from it.' "To obtain immortality."

"Yes. So you see, many of us will not be in the castle." "Iker Noah won't care. He'll come for her." "She is going to freak out. Can't you tell him to come the day a er tomorrow? When everyone will actually be here? Please, give her time to at least prepare." I pleaded. "I'll try but no promises. You must understand, if what we think is true, he will inform your father. We are all in King Sindrion's land and she is currently residing in his castle. He won't call me." I held my head and tried to think straight. "Don't worry-We were interrupted by a castle guard. "Your Highnesses, the Alpha King and his Beta are here."

"She's resting. Please let her." I said so ly but my soothing voice did nothing to calm the beta's nerves. "She is mine. Let me talk to her." "I know that and you belong to her too. It's just that tonight has been a little overwhelming for her and we just got her to sleep. All I ask is for you to give her some time. "Time?! You have no idea what you are saying-"

"Watch that tone Iker Noah. You're talking to the fae princess now.

You stand in her lands." The Dark Prince stepped in front of me, obviously not liking the beta's tone. "I apologize princess but you don't understand what this means for me. A second mate is a rare and precious gi from the goddess. She stood before me like an angel but one second she was there and the next she was gone." I looked at the beta and understood his distress. Mates were extremely precious to werewolves. Their mate bonds run deeper than any relationship the other beings have with one another. "I understand how you feel Beta Iker. I really do but just give my sister one night. I'll explain this to her tomorrow during the day then you can come by in the evening." "But-" "I'm sorry but this is an order. Tonya will freak out when I tell her and she needs time to let it sink in. So, come by tomorrow evening," My eyes did not waver from the beta's hard stare. I felt protective over my sister. She needed me and her well-being was most important The Alpha king stared at me with a ghost of a smile. He didn't get upset with me going against his Beta but instead he seemed to be somewhat impressed. With an unsatisfied spirit, Beta Iker Noah turned around angrily and le the hall. I thought he was going to break something on his way out. Alpha Silvian then looked at us. "Well, he took it better than most werewolves. Trust me on that. Even I am impressed to see such selfcontrol. So see you guys tomorrow then," he winked at us and le I dropped on the couch behind me and held my head. What a night? "Was I horrible to him?" "Not really. I wanted to burn his tongue out so in terms of actions I think you were really nice. Plus, you're hot when you use your given authority." Phoenix smirked at me. My face heated up for the hundredth time that day and I felt tingles all over my body. "So I'm going to dig into the kitchen since you didn't bring me my

"I'll make you something." "That's alright I can make a simple meal Little Flower. Are you hungry? "You sure? Now I feel bad. I could have brought something home." "Don't be. My turn to look a er your every need. Come on, are you "A little." I sheepishly answered and followed him into the kitchen. I didn't understand why but a big part of me enjoyed watching him move around the kitchen. I found it.....attractive. "No, no, no!' "I think it's a yes." I tried to be as careful as possible with my words but it didn't have the e ect I wanted. Tonya was breathing hard now and it wasn't a pleasant sight. "Tonya please sit down. I know it's a lot to take in." "No you don't! A lot to take in?!!" I winched and took a step back. "A lot to take in?!! He is going to take me away from everyone I know!! From everyone I love! I was just freed from the chains that had me

bound in Red Kingdom!! Now I'm getting a set of new chains that's going to bind me to him and his people!!" she burst out. I remained quiet as she continued yelling. Maybe she was partly right, I didn't know how this was going to turn out. Whatever she said was true. She  $\,$ was going to be taken to a foreign land where she will be living among strangers. To her, it was happening all over again. Just like how we were taken for the monthly collection but what made that  $% \left( 1\right) =\left( 1\right) \left( 1\right)$ bearable was, we found each other and we had each other's backs. This was dierent. This was a lot scarier. Tonya was going to be alone and she will be forced to adapt to their lifestyle. "You're right. I don't know what's going to happen and I shouldn't pretend like I do. I'm sorry. I'm sorry this is happening. I am sorry that you're made to feel this way." She let out a shaky breath and sat next to me. "I shouldn't have yelled at you but I really, really need to get it out." "I know you do." I nudged her shoulder and smiled at her "I guess I'm scared Aeval. Scared of my extremely unpredictable future. I'm not going to be around many humans. I'm not even going to White Winters Land as a normal person. I'm going there as the beta's mate. You know what that means? Do you know how much they're going to expect from me?" She sighed and buried her head in her hands. I could feel the stress and the anxiety that she was going through. I cupped her face and made her look at me.

"I may not know much about the lives of werewolves but I do know you Tonya. The thing is, you can choose how you react to all of this. You can choose how you want to be as a leader. Let the Beta know what kind of a person you are. You don't have to bend to everyone's will. You can still be you. The strong, feisty, independent woman who was practically my second mother when we lived together. Show him that side of you. You don't take crap from anyone Tonya. You know more about life than most people do and that makes you a strong woman fit for an alpha.' The stress lines on her forehead slowly disappeared. "You....you really believe that?" she shakily whispered. "Yes I do without a doubt." I said, hugging her tightly. "You're the strongest person I know Aeval and I have no idea what I'm going to do without my pillar of strength. Now, I can truly see why. I can see why he's fallen head over heels for you little sister," she whispered while holding on to me. We broke apart and I stared at her puzzled. Tonya, I'm just-" "You're one of a kind and you will make one hell of a queen someday," she cut me o and gave me a heart warming smile "I...I don't know what to say. I appreciate your confidence in me Tonya. Thank you for that but are you feeling better now? "Much better." "Great now show him whose-" Just as I was going to say something important there was someone knocking the door.

"Me." India. I strode over to the door and pulled it open. To my surprise it wasn't only India. Behind her, stood and extremely impatient beta. "Look, I felt uneasy just now which means she's uneasy so I just came to check on her." His eyes traveled behind me at least a dozen times "I had to bring him here Aeval. He wasn't gonna leave. Sorry." India muttered and looked apologetically at Tonya. I glanced over my allowing the Beta inside. She gave me a tight nod. "Okay we'll be downstairs then," I opened the door wider and beta Iker gave me a bow before entering. "Come on India," I took her hand and we le the two mates alone. "Just so you know he's a really nice guy." India stated as we walked down the stairs. "I'm glad to hear that. You think he'll take good care of her? I mean we don't really know him and she's going to move so "When did you become such a mama bear?! I like it! You better act like this when I find my man." "India!" "I know, I know." She laughed. "He seems like a decent werewolf Aeval. He is caring and sweet but also head strong and tough when he needs to be. He'll take good care of her and she'll do the same for him. They're mates. If he hurts her, he hurts himself.'

"Hey how do you know so much about him?" "We fought together on the battlefield and we became friends ever since. So trust me on this. He's a good one." I crushed her in a tight hug. I couldn't contain both my joy and relief. "Can't breathe, let go." "You made me feel a whole lot better India. I was so worried for her." "Alright then, you calm now mama bear?" "I think so. Where are you going?" "To teach Rexamus some new tricks." "You and that horse." "Hey, you have your flowers and your prince and I have my horse buddy. Come with me." "I do not spend so much time with him." I muttered looking away.

"Mm hmm. Whatever you say princess. Now come on, you'll love Rexamus." With that she pulled me with her. I couldn't believe I was going to play with her horse instead of waiting for Bethany outside the Core just like everyone else. I was going to get a ear-full from my parents. I mean even if I went now it would be too late because the ceremony was most probably coming to an end. That night when everyone came back, I did get shot with question a er question from both my parents. They both scolded continuously without any pause in between. Wasn't breathing important to them? guess not because they kept going. I didn't know my parents could talk so much in such a short time. They even repeated the same questions, refusing to listen to what I had to say. Why weren't you there? What were you doing? What were you thinking? Did you forget you are a princess now? "Stop!!" I exploded. "Tonya needed me okay!! She just found out that she's the Beta's mate so I was with her most of the time! I had to take care of her!" I covered my ears and ran out of my father's study. I couldn't take people yelling in general. It was ten times worse when

people were yelling at me. I refused to look back even when they called my name. I needed to be alone. So. I flew straight to the gardens not caring about the chilling night "What are you guys doing here?" "We're always out here princess." "You have pretty hair." "And pretty eyes."

"I can say the same to all of you," I murmured to all the five pixies that surrounded me. Two of them played with my hair, one sat on my shoulder and the other two made themselves comfortable on my lap as I was sitting on the ground under a huge tree. "Not feeling good princess?" the one on my shoulder asked. I think his name was Grendon. There were hundreds of them in the gardens itself so it was di icult to keep track of their names. "I am fine, thank you. Just needed some quiet time." "Okay we'll keep quiet but we'd also love to keep you company if

that's permitted Your Highness." "I would love that thank you Grendon." The little fellow looked at me astonished. Then he gaped at all the rest with wide eyes. "She knows my name." I don't know how long I was under the tree but a er some time I felt myself being li ed o the ground. I also heard voices. One was scolding the other. I tried to wake up but it was dicicult. short while. "Wher-"Sshh, it's okay. You can sleep." "Hmmm." I snuggled wanting to absorb more heat. I was then laid down on something so . My bed. A er much e ort, I pried my eyes open. "I told you to sleep.' "Phoenix?" my voice sounded hoarse. "Before you decide to sleep on dirt outside in the cold, do remember that you have a warm bed and a big room." He said displeased. "I didn't mean to fall asleep and don't scold me for that, I've had enough of that for today." I mumbled the last part. I really didn't like being scolded. It felt awful. My shoulders slumped as I recalled the last conversation I had with my parents. Phoenix must have sensed my drooping spirits because the next thing I knew, I was wrapped in his arms. "You were freezing out there Little Flower. You could have gotten really sick you know that?" he said so ly. "Yeah. Thank you for bringing me in." I said sleepily.

f being moved. My chi

"Rest now." "Any news about Tonya and Beta Iker?" "You want to hear it now? We can talk tomorrow you know?" "You already woke me up." I shrugged and looked at him expectantly. He sighed and took a seat on the chair near my bed. "They are doing quite well. They seem to be warming up to each other." He ended without much reaction. "What?!"

"My Little Flower, they're mates. They already have an unbreakable bond. This is quite normal." "Oh. So...so they'll be leaving soon?" "No.'

"I guess she'll talk to you about it tomorrow. She did seem happy earlier." He said getting up from his seat. "Sleep now," he walked over to me and kissed my forehead. Then he kissed the tip of my nose and my cheek. "I want to kiss every part of you." he murmured against my ear. I instantly blushed and looked at my trembling fingers. His presence alone had an e ect on me. His voice, even more. He gently pushed me back until my head touched the pillows. Once he tucked me in, he kissed my forehead again and

le a er turning the lights o . "Hey wake up. Pssst. Come on Aeval."

"Instead of shouting at me and trying to put me in my place, he simply gave me a tender smile and tucked my hair behind my ear.

"I know what's coming," I whispered. "When will you leave?" she

'I know how you feel about this Tonya and I know you won't believe  $\,$ me but I love you. You are my other half so that means you're a part of me. We are two souls that are connected. You my precious girl, are my mate. I would never hurt you. I know this is all too much to take in and you need time, I understand that.' He just listened as I spoke my heart out. I even cursed him a few times! The funny thing was, the more I spoke to him the more I  $\,$ connected with him. I know it sounds crazy but there's no other explanation. With him, I just feel complete and whole. Like we were made for each other and we were meant to find each other. One other weird thing, his scent drives me nuts Aeval." "It's not weird. It's a werewolf thing Tonya." I giggled at her. She was so in love. "Really? Okay so I'm not a creep." She smiled and looked at me.

away my freedom forever. Not being able to contain my thoughts about him, I told him how I felt about the whole situation. I expected him to get really mad for the language I used and the blatant disrespect I had towards him." She chuckled and looked at the

"No, now. Come on." "What?" I grumbled and rubbed my eyes with the back of my hand. "I wanna sleep." Before I could lay down again, someone grabbed my arms. This horrible person was none other than Tonya. "Yes. Don't you wanna hear what happened?" Everything came crashing back. Wedding. Distraught looking Tonya. Scared Tonya Angry Tonya. Anxious Beta. I slapped my cheeks lightly and blinked my eyes awake. "Yes, yes I want to know." "Are you awake? Here drink some water." I finished the water quickly and stared at her expectantly. At first she smiled. Then she stared at her lap with a faraway look. Her smile slowly vanished as she looked at me again. "Hey it's alright. You can tell me." "We had a long talk yesterday. At first I despised him for crashing into my life. I saw him as a threat and a person who was going to take