

Taming Her Beastly Mate Chapter 36

Chapter 36 Bag i

“Ever heard of the saying... put a paper bag over it?” Micah shrugged with a small smile. “If Alexis can’t see his face, then...”

Levi tried to erase the smirk that kept wanting to creep over his face. There was nothing funny about what happened to his daughter. But the idea of the Kraken wearing a paper bag on his head with little holes cut out for his eyes... That part had some humor to it if only his daughter wasn’t hurting. The moment he looked back down at Alexis he felt his heart crushed. His lips pulled down in a frown. She had gone through a disturbing experience, and she needed her mate. He watched as his daughter shook her head and she lifted up her chin in defiance.

“I am not going to let this parlor trick control me. I know it isn’t real. He doesn’t need to cover his face.” Alexis said with a clear voice as she pursed her lips together.

“Lex.” Aken’s voice was gentle as he studied her face. He watched as her eye twitched slightly when she looked at him. She shouldn’t have to force herself. “You don’t need to condition your body to get used to this face. Honestly, it’s the last face I want you to feel at ease around. I don’t mind covering my face when I am around you. It will be for the best.”

Alexis listened to the change in the tone of his voice when he said ‘when he was around her’. She inhaled sharply and closed her eyes. “When you are around me? What does that mean exactly?”

“Lex, I’m still going after Erebus. I also need to check on Terra.” Aken watched as her eyes glared up at him angrily.

“But you promised you would be with me every night...” Alexis squeezed her fingers together as she closed her eyes slowly. “Will you?” She whispered out gently.

“Lex...” Aken sighed and looked down. “I don’t think that is a good idea now. Just hear me out. What if you are half awake and see this face.” He motioned over himself with disgust. “It will terrify you. I could sit with you all night with a bag on my head...”

“But his time would be better spent tracking Erebus down,” Levi said forcefully. “I want to join in on the search too. Enough is enough. If Aken and I join forces...” He frowned and looked down at Rhea and Alexis. “The problem is I don’t want him coming for you if I am not here.”

‘Micah can protect her.’ Aken mind linked to Levi. He watched the deity’s blue eyes look at him with confusion. ‘We have a lot to talk about. But Micah can detect Erebus. And he can hold him off. Alexis still has the necklace and I can get to her instantly if she breaks it.’

‘And I can come to Rhea the moment she summons me...’ Levi glanced over at Micah curiously.

‘Actually, there is something else you need to do. You need to find Gaia and talk to her about Micah. If Shiva is correct, Gaia will know about Micah. I’ll explain more later.’ Aken watched as Levi nodded his head and returned his gaze to Rhea.

“Lex... are you in any pain?” Micah asked and watched as she shook her head.

“I’m fine Micah.” Alexis gave him a weak smile. Sure, physically she was fine. But inwardly she was hurting. Why must everything be so rocky when it came to her being with her mate.

“Rhea, can you speak with Bella? I’m going to go and find the Great Sage. Let’s get this set in motion immediately.” Rhea was struggling to leave Alexis. Lee reached his hand out to her in support. Rhea noticed Aken’s pained expression but knew that he needed to talk with Alexis, and this would give them a moment of privacy.

Micah placed his hand on Alexis’ head. “Want me to make you some of my famous tea?” This was his way of asking her if she needed him to stay with her. Because if she didn’t feel comfortable being alone with Aken he would stay by her side. He would guard her against anyone and that included her mate.

“Thank you, Micah. That sounds great.” Alexis smiled at him in appreciation as he ruffled her hair up. She watched him follow her parents out of the room quietly shutting the door behind him. “Aken...”

“Close your eyes and think of me.” Aken’s voice was soft as he walked over to her. He slid down against the wall and wrapped his arm around her body. He need to hold her and she needed him as well. The light sparks tingled between them and he felt the inward relief from touching her. “I don’t want you to open your eyes. I don’t want that sicko’s face to ever be associated with my comfort. Just listen to my voice and breath in my scent.”

Alexis turned her head, concealing it into his chest keeping her eyes closed. She breathed in his relaxing scent and clenched her fingers around his shirt. “This isn’t fair...”

“We will get through this, my love.”

“I know but...” Alexis sighed as she frowned into his chest. “I finally have you. I’ve been waiting for you for so long.”

“I’m here Lex.” Aken placed his chin on her head and inhaled her scent. His fingers slowly traced over her bare arm sending little tingles on the tips.

“I want to feel your lips too. And you promised me-”

“Not with you seeing Erebus’s face. I won’t have you accidentally looking and seeing his face in such a moment.” Aken squeezed her body tighter. “I’m sorry Lex. I’m so sorry. I know you are hurting. I...” He couldn’t stand it. He was right beside her and couldn’t protect her. Erebus kept getting to the most precious existence in all the universe. He kept failing to protect her.

Alexis felt his fingers dig into her slightly as his voice trailed off. This was the moment she felt the pang of guilt. She could hear the pain in his voice. He was hurting too... he was hurting for her.

The corner of Alexis’ lips curled up as she traced her fingers over his chest. “You know... you could always blindfold me.” She giggled when she heard him choke on his spit.

Aken chuckled and nuzzled his nose into her hair. “My love we will bring the blindfolds in later. But now isn’t the time for them. I want you to see me pleasure you. I want my face ingrained into your mind during those moments. And I want to see the passion in your eyes.”

“I’m sorry Aken. I’m not usually so... well like this. It’s just-”

“Shh. My love, I like you like this. Please be vulnerable around me. Show me all parts of yourself. I want to know when you are hurting. Don’t ever hide it. Let me mend your heart when you need it. You can be strong and fierce just never hide your pain from me.”

“Aken...” Alexis gnawed on her bottom lip. “I’m apprehensive over Erebus.-”

“I’m sorry. I am so sorry I keep failing to protect you. I’ll work harder. I don’t want you to live in fear of him getting to you again-”

Alexis chuckled and shook her head into his chest. “I’m not worried about that. I am worried about you. It seems he is well prepared. He is playing a game now. I am afraid you will fall into his trap that he is cleverly setting up by blinding you with your rage.” She felt the slow rising of his chest as he stayed quiet.

“You don’t need to worry about me. Thank you, my love, for pointing that out to me. You are right. Erebus is trying to provoke me. He is placing down the breadcrumbs for me to follow. It isn’t that I am finding them all of the sudden. It means he is letting me find them.” Aken sighed in irritation. Erebus was very clever, he would give the bastard that. He knew he could trigger Aken by provoking his rage. He would need to change up tactics now. “Thank you for your level thinking. I was letting him lead me around. Tonight, I will stay here. I don’t have to stay in your room, but I’ll keep an eye on things.”

“Please stay in my room. We will work it out. I’ll sleep better with your scent close to me. I’ll wear a sleeping mask. Will that work? That way you can keep your face free.” Alexis listened to the small protesting in his voice so she switched to a dirtier tactic. “I will be really sad if you don’t stay with me.” She listened to his rich chuckle as he leaned his forehead into her hair.

“Are you trying to manipulate me?” Aken was grinning as he moved his nose in her hair. He breathed in her scent as he brushed his lips over her head. He loved her so much. He couldn’t describe the pain he felt that something happened to her under his watch. If something happened to her there would be no point in him existing. As far as he was concerned, his life would forever be connected to her fate.

“I’m just stating facts,” Alexis replied innocently as her lips curled upwards.

There was a slight knock at the door and then it pushed open. Micah walked in holding a cup of steaming tea and a brown paper bag in his other hand.

“I made something for each of you.” Micah grinned as he held up the brown paper bag with a small slit in the front for sight.

“Is it just me... or is he enjoying this?” Aken lifted his head up and frowned, looking at the bag.

“You don’t have to wear that.” Alexis quickly said, but Aken held her head against his chest and with his other hand grabbed the bag.

“It’s for the best, my love.” Aken scowled at the paper bag before he put it over his head. He released Alexis, who finally turned to look at him.

Alexis reached her hand out and laced her fingers with Aken’s. Behind her, she heard a slight snort and glanced back to see Micah’s face completely red as he struggled to hold in his laughter.

“It’s Frodo BAGgins.” Micah belted out loudly through his rolling laughter. “I need a phone. We are going to need pictures of this later. When you two can appreciate the humor.”

Alexis smiled and then turned her head back to Aken. “I can’t wait until this is a memory we can laugh about.” He squeezed her hand and nodded his bag head making Alexis snort.

“Looks like some of us can laugh about it now.” Aken chuckled. They might have a rocky start with all the bumps in their relationship. But Micah was right... one day these moments would become memorable to them. They would laugh about these flashes of their lives. As a deity, Aken knew far too well how short this moment would be compared to their eternity together.

“Say cheese!” Micah chuckled. “Aken you are going to have to give me more to work with.” He listened to the low growl. “Perfect!” He said as he began taking multiple pictures as the brown bagged face man lunged for him.

“Run! It’s the headless horseman!” Micah laughed as he continued to dance backwards and take pictures.

Alexis smiled as she watched Aken chase after Micah. Micah had the right idea. She wouldn’t be sad. She would find a way to just enjoy having Aken around. He was still here with her. She had his voice, his scent, and the heavenly sparks between them. One day, this will be a distant memory. A fun story that she can one day tell her future children about... one day.

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Chapter 37 Sulfur

Titus, Lila, Brian, and Bella were looking at Rhea intently as she finished explaining everything that happened to Alexis. She looked over at Bella meeting with her grey eyes.

“I know it is a lot to ask... Do you think you can try to help, Bella? My Lee is talking to Grandpa Sage about it. He will be the one to train you on what to do.” Rhea watched Bella nod her head without hesitation.

“Of course. This won’t be dangerous at all for me. However, there is risk for Alexis.” Bella watched Rhea nod her head.

“Brian, can you help with her body temperature again?” Rhea watched as a smile spread over his lips.

“I should be able to help her better now that I don’t have a barrier around my inferno.” Brian could see the appreciation in Rhea’s eyes. “How is she?”

“Putting on the brave face like she always does.” Rhea listened to Titus snort.

“Just like her mother. You always acted like you were fine when you were hurting.” Titus gave her a crooked smile and Rhea only shrugged her shoulders.

“I guess she gets it honestly.” Rhea smiled softly. “Cody and Kelsie went to speak with my mother about this. We also wanted to warn them about Erebus since he is threatening my father’s life.” She sighed and shook her head. “Just a normal day for our family.” A wry smile spread over her face. They had to laugh off these moments. There was always some sort of trial their family was going through.

Titus laughed. “Your family always has things to deal with. Remember right after the demon war Wyatt had to leave again to deal with the packs in the north?”

“Yeah, I remember. There was a brutal war with a species called the sheya. I don’t remember all the details but I know it was a big enough problem that the northern packs all joined forces. The Alpha’s council up there reached out to my brother for advice. They had found a werewolf pup at one of the enemy

camps and weren't sure what to do with it." Rhea smiled. "Wyatt went up there and ordered the packs not to kill the baby. And he tasked the largest pack up there with its care... I think it was the Sulfur pack. It's been over twenty years now. I need to ask my brother if he ever heard any more about that situation. I know it was a big mess. And let's not forget Lucy's fiasco with Beryl and Erebus."

"Well, Bella you were bored before right? You will never be bored again." Brian laughed as he flashed her a bright smile.

"I was just wanting people to talk to... but excitement sounds fun too." Bella smiled with a small shrug.

"Were you incredibly lonely?" Lila asked softly.

"Well, no... I mean I had Shiva there." Bella tucked her head down into her shoulders. She didn't want to say anything bad about her life with Shiva. It was just that Shiva wasn't always a big conversationalist. Shiva liked to talk but did not like to listen to others talk. Sometimes Bella just wanted to experience more of the world. "Anyways, I'm ready to start learning what I need to do. I want to help Alexis as fast as I can."

"Thank you so much, Bella." Rhea smiled and motioned for Bella to follow her. Brian also followed them out of the room and Rhea glanced back at him. "You know gramps isn't going to let you stay."

Brian chuckled. "Of course not. I am not you or Alexis, the favored ones." He teased.

"Brian!"

Brian turned his head to see Ryker walking his way with his arm around Raine. He looked back at Bella and Rhea as he contemplated what he would do here.

"Gramps isn't going to let you stay anyways. You know where we will be." Rhea smiled at Brian and watched as his gaze settled on Bella.

"Don't do anything dangerous... please." Brian watched as a sweet smile spread over Bella's face.

“I won’t be doing anything dangerous for me. Though it could probably kill you.” Bella winked at Brian with a sweet giggle.

Brian loved her laugh, her smile... yeah he was loving everything about her. His eyes followed her as she walked away with Rhea. With every passing moment, the pull was getting stronger for him while she remained oblivious to his struggling temptation.

“Who was that?” Ryker asked as he looked at Brian.

Brian finally looked away and turned his attention to Ryker and Raine. “We have a lot to talk about. Let’s head to my office. This needs to be done privately. But I will have a big job for you, Ryker. And I’m hoping I can selfishly ask Raine to help as well.”

“You know I will help you in any way I can.” Raine looked around. “Where are Alexis and Micah? And who was that woman with Aunt Rhea?”

“Like I said we have a lot to talk about.” Brian smiled and nodded for them to follow him. News of his mate couldn’t get out right now. It would be weird for him to bring his fated mate here when he took a chosen mate. This would all need to be kept secret until the time was right.

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Micah bit into an apple as he leaned back into the chair. He looked over at Alexis and Aken on the couch. She was curled up in Aken’s side as he rested his arm around her.

“I have a joke about paper bags.” Micah grinned and then shrugged. “Eh, never mind it is TEARable.” He chuckled as he listened to Aken snort.

“Oh come on that one was funny. Look even Alexis cracked a smile.” Micah sighed as a wry grin formed over his lips. “Why do paper bags never win poker games? Because they always fold.” Micah laughed loudly and nodded his head to Aken. “I’m sorry. I don’t mean anything by it. I actually have a lot of respect for paper bags. One could call me SACreligious.”

Alexis giggled and tilted her head up to look at the still paper bag head. “You don’t have to wear that.”

"I know I don't. I want to. No accidents for you. I'd rather wear this than put a blindfold on you." Aken rubbed his hand over Alexis' side.

"Right. Blindfolds are for the bedroom." Alexis listened to the sharp breath Aken took in as Micah choked on his drink.

"Nope, that one is below the belt. That is nothing like me KRAKEN jokes." Micah held his sides as they rumbled with laughter. "Oh come on even Aken knows that one is funny."

"I'm so sorry I left you alone with him for so long. He is unBEARable." Aken smirked in his paper bag and listened to Micah laughing.

"See that's the spirit!" Micah looked at Aken and then frowned. "I need to make you a mouth hole."

"It's fine for now." Aken wasn't a fan of the paper bag. It was stuffy and very limiting. But it was worth it so that his mate could cling to him like she was. He didn't want to upset her accidentally. If it was going to take a while they may need to figure out a better mask besides a paper bag. For now, it was worth it feeling her warmth next to him. The sweet sparks that tingled between them was comforting.

"Thank you..." Alexis whispered and gripped onto Aken's shirt as she leaned into him. "It would have been really hard for you to leave me right now after... everything." She didn't want to be afraid of Erebus but it was the feeling of being helpless around him. Both times she had met him she wasn't able to fight him off. And after what happened last time she was mildly shaken up. It lit something inside of her though. She felt her feral beast inside of her rage, demanding his blood. She wasn't afraid to fight him she just needed her powers and beasts.

Still, Erebus was crazy. And he has shown he is able to get to her. It was comforting being next to Aken even if she couldn't see his face. She could smell him and feel his heat. She could hear his soothing voice and feel his soft touch. Her beasts needed this and she needed this.

"Lex..." Aken looked through his hole down to her. "I'm sorry I couldn't protect you. Your father needs to tighten his security up here. You know... if you were at my place he couldn't find you. I wonder if it would be better to take you there."

“No,” Alexis said firmly. “What if Erebus thinks I am with you when he can’t find me? And then he will kill someone in my family. I’d rather him get to me than for him to hurt or kill one of them.” Plus Alexis already was trying to work out a plan in her head. The next time Erebus showed his face to her she was going to leave him with a sting of her own.

Aken closed his eyes as his face became terse. It was all hidden behind the paper bag though. In order to fully protect Alexis, he also needed to protect her family. He couldn’t let anything happen to them because he didn’t want her to hurt like that. He knew just how unhinged Erebus was though. If Erebus was threatening to kill one of her family members it would only be a matter of time before he does just that. He needed to find Erebus... and fast. But how? How could he lure Erebus out without using Alexis as bait?

“I’m hungry. Should I bring up dinner?” Micah asked.

“Yeah, I’m hungry too. Although I’m really in the mood for a sack lunch.” Alexis smiled biting her bottom lip. A low groan came from Aken’s chest as Micah winced.

“Your jokes aren’t funny Lex. They ruin my appetite.” Micah shook his head in disgust.

“Funny... it increases my appetite.” Aken peered out through his little opening so he could look at his beautiful mate.

“Keep your tentacles to yourself, Squidward. Not in front of me. I’m getting out of here. I’ll just bring up a tray of food.” Micah quickly descended down the stairs. When he was about half way down he slowed. He balled his hand up into a fist and slammed it against the wall. Erebus had touched his princess again. One too many times. His beast was raging against him. He was trying to control it but it was finally getting away from him. Which was why he volunteered to get food. He needed to calm his head.

Micah slowly took one step at a time as he tried to manage his breathing. His fingers were trembling as his eyes flickered in color. He felt like there was an uncontrollable urge beginning to take over him. He knew this feeling, it has happened before. He needed to stop it before it went out of control.

Micah wanted Erebus’s blood to be spilled. But that wasn’t even enough... he was the one who needed to drain it from his body. He wanted to personally rip

the deity apart and watch the life drain from his eyes. It was only this thought that could soothe him... and it was that he would kill Erebus.

Note:

Remember the Sulfur pack for the future.

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Chapter 38 My Refuge

Ryker rubbed his head and Raine reached her hand out placing it on his arm.

“Are you still getting those headaches?” Brian asked in concern.

“Yes, lately they have been coming more frequently.” Ryker smiled over at Raine and placed his hand over hers. “Don’t worry, I am fine.” He then turned and looked at Brian. “I understand everything. I’ll keep a close eye on Bella for you.”

“How have things been between you two? I see you have given Raine your mark.” Brian watched as a slight blush reached Raine’s cheeks.

“Yes, and we did the acceptance kiss too. I don’t think I am her father’s favorite person.” Ryker chuckled and winked over at Raine. Ryker was fairly certain he heard a quiet growl escape from her father for a split second during the kiss.

“Daddy is fine. He likes to act tough but I think he is relieved that I will be living here where he can watch me. My cousins, Justice and Destiny, have moved away from Uncle Jason and Aunty Jin already. I guess they are both missing their kids and it had my dad worried.” Raine interlaced her fingers with Ryker. “I’d say my dad is very lucky that I have found you. I think he is just worried you will leave if your memory comes back. And...”

“Raine, we talked about this. All of this.” Ryker glanced up at Brian and then smiled back at Raine. “Whatever my life was before is irrelevant – this is my life now. I have promised upon my flame to stay with Brian and be his person. And—” He reached out and cupped her cheek in his hand. “You are my fated mate. If there was someone out there who I was with—” He shook his head. “It

doesn't matter. It's only you, Raine. No one else. It will always be you. I'm not going anywhere. And I will never leave you."

"I did talk to her about this before we decided... before I marked her." Ryker looked back to Brian. "We don't know anything about my past. I don't know if there was someone out there waiting for me. It's a possibility. However, I told Raine that there is no turning back for me. My life is here now and with her." He turned his head and smiled at Raine. "I love you. I'm crazy about you... maybe even obsessively so." He chuckled and shrugged. "I'm bonded to you at such a magnitude that I can't ever be separated from you." He reached up and traced the mark on her neck.

"What if you marked a chosen mate before?" Raine sighed. "I guess sometimes I worry that because I am so happy that something bad is going to happen."

Brian chuckled. "I think that is because those are the stories you grew up hearing from all your relatives. It's okay to relax and be happy Raine. You know Ryker is right, a mark on a fated mate won't fade. And if he had claimed a chosen mate, that mark would have vanished the moment he placed one on you. Our marks are meant to be permanent on our fated mate. If a dragon has marked a fated mate and tries to mark a chosen mate the mark would not stick on the chosen one. A fated mark is more powerful. Besides, if Ryker had someone out there, they haven't come looking for him." He shrugged his shoulders and shook his head. "I would never stop searching for Bella."

"You think I am silly for feeling a bit insecure?" Raine winked an eye closed as she smiled biting her bottom lip.

"Yes. I'm never leaving you, Raine. I told you I would vow it upon my flame." Ryker watched as Raine shook her head.

"No, I don't want that. I don't want you to stay just because you can't leave. I only want you with me if you want it as well. It is important to me. No matter how devastated I would be. I don't want you trapped—" Raine whispered out quietly.

"Raine..." Ryker listened to the snort from Brian, and he turned his head to look at him.

“It would be better for him to be trapped to you, Raine. Because if he ever breaks your heart—” Brian’s eyes met with Ryker as his fire lit up in his eyes, letting him see the fiery promise.

“If I ever hurt her, I’d want you to incinerate me.” Ryker chuckled and then snaked his arm around Raine and pulled her into his side. He leaned his head down in her black curly hair and inhaled her scent. “You are home, Raine. Because of you, my beast is calm. I have to be with you. I’m the one who is worried... that you will want to leave me. I just hope my past isn’t something to tarnish you.”

“Ryker, I don’t care about your past. I just want all of you now and forever.” Raine moved into him as his lips came crashing down on hers. The desperate kiss was full of emotions as their hands wandered over each other.

Brian cleared his throat loudly. “This is um my office. And being I can’t have a taste of my mate right now I am quite jealous.” He chuckled and watched the shocked blushes on both of their faces. They had forgotten about his presence at that moment. Which made him even more jealous. They were so into each other that no one else in the room existed. He couldn’t wait until he could experience this with Bella too.

Ryker kept his focus on Raine’s lips as the two of them panted inches from each other’s mouths. It had been like this since they found out they were mates. He could barely control himself when it came to her. “If you don’t need anything else from me at the moment...”

“Go and get to a soundproof room.” Brian chuckled, shaking his head. He watched as Ryker reached out, lifting Raine in his arms. He carried her out of the office bridal style and disappeared.

Ryker cradled Raine in his chest as he gazed down at her. She blushed under his hungry gaze but kept her eyes focused on his.

“Will you promise me something?” Raine whispered as she lifted her fingers to trace over his lips. He gently kissed her fingers and nodded his head.

“I’ll promise you anything.” Ryker watched as her green eyes stayed glued to him.

“If you ever remember... no matter what it is, will you tell me about it? Even if you think I will be sad or hurt. Promise me you will tell me everything. That

way I won't feel like there is a wall between us." Raine watched a small smile spread over his lips.

"I promise Raine. No matter what, I will tell you. I don't want there to be anything between us. And that includes this annoying fabric on our bodies." Ryker nipped at her finger and pulled it into his mouth. He could smell the arousal from Raine and let out a low growl. "We need to get back to our room... now."

Raine twisted her body up in his arms so that she wrapped her legs around his torso. Her arms moved around his shoulders and her head came to his neck. She ran her tongue over his nape and listened to his low strangled growl as he began to practically run with her.

"Ryker," Raine whispered as she began to nip and tease his sensitive skin. "I'm ready now."

"What? Here in the hall?" Ryker asked not understanding her. I mean if that's what she really wanted... Her sweet giggle filled the air.

"No!" She scolded playfully and nibbled at his ear. "I'm ready to mark you as my own."

Ryker let out a stifled moan as his hands gripped around her tightly. "Gods, Raine that sounds hot as hell."

"I was hesitant before. I felt the need to but couldn't go through with it because..." Raine pulled back as he stopped running. She looked into his eyes as a faint smile spread over his lips. He nodded his head in understanding.

"You were afraid of marking me and me leaving you." Ryker could see the guilt in her eyes.

"The idea terrifies me. I feel nauseous when I think you might have another mate out there somewhere. And the moment you remember you will leave me for your past. That is what held me back." Raine inhaled a deep breath. "I am not going to hold back anymore. I don't want to later regret that I didn't give you every part of me. So that—

so that no matter what I would have given my everything to us."

Ryker slid her body down his front and pushed her back against the wall as his hand rested on her face. His thumb stroked her cheek as he gazed into her green captivating eyes. "We don't know if those memories will ever come back. I don't want you to feel like you are competing with a ghost. I guess we both have some insecurities in this relationship. I'm always worried I don't deserve you. And that something from my past will make you discard me." He leaned his forehead into hers and closed his eyes. "Raine." He breathed out and opened his eyes to look into hers.

"Bind us together in every way possible. Let's drop the insecurities and brace each other for the rest of our lives. Be my partner, my home, my rock, and take my heart. You are my refuge. You are the reason my flame burns and are the future mother of my children." Ryker kissed her nose lightly.

"Let me be the person you trust and depend on the most. I'll keep your secrets and always be by your side. I'll be your shelter that welcomes you with loving arms. I'll share your burdens and lighten your load. I will love you unconditionally and will forever be your family. I promise I won't hold back anymore and will put my trust in us." Raine felt the soft molten lava lips searing hers. He moved against her passionately as they poured all their emotions into the kiss.

This kiss felt different from the ones before. It felt like they had promised their souls together. And somehow it was more than being fated mates. Because what this was... was theirs. It was their promise and connection to each other as a couple. Not just because of the mate pull. It was their bond to mend their gaps.

"I love you, Raine." Ryker panted into her lips.

"I love you, Ryker." Raine squeaked as he lifted her up again, placing her legs around his torso.

"I need you, Raine. In every way possible."

"Hmmm, I wonder where I should mark you... Maybe I need to taste you all over to be sure." Raine whispered and listened to the low growl in approval from Ryker.

"You can mark my whole body. I won't complain." Ryker chuckled as he sprinted to their room. He wasn't sure why, but it felt like a burden was lifted from his shoulders now. For some reason, their promises to each other meant

so much more than being fated mates. Or really it was the combination between their words and being fated mates. But he felt a weight off of his chest and for once he didn't think about his past. Because that didn't change who he was now.

He was Ryker, the dragon loyal to the prince of the West. And the man who was irrevocably in love with Raine.

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Note:

Do we like Ryker and Raine?

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Chapter 39 Micah's Darkness

Alexis watched as Micah began cutting out different shapes on paper bags in her bedroom. Aken had left her to go and speak with her father, Levi. She didn't like the level of secrecy that was going on. Aken told her he would fill her in on everything later. At least the two of them were talking in some manner. She wanted them to end up getting along like the rest of her family. Hopefully, they would get there... eventually.

"Look!" Micah smiled and spread the bags out on Alexis' bed. "We have his mad face, his happy face, his sad face, and here is his Squidward face."

"I see you are having fun." Alexis giggled as she watched an evil grin spread over Micah's face.

"You know. If you say you made these he will definitely wear them." Micah watched as Alexis' mouth dropped open.

"I am not going to tell him that! I feel bad for him having to swallow his dignity like that." Alexis looked at the brown bags on her bed with a frown.

"I guess that shows how much he loves you. Not even pride will stand in his way." Micah gathered the bags together. It took him a while to calm down earlier after everything. He was working hard on keeping his focus on other things... like making paper bag faces for Aken.

“Is it hard for you... with Aken around?” Alexis had been curious how Micah felt about it. He always had instant access to her and soon this wouldn't be the case.

“No. Actually, it is a relief. It is another strong protector for you. Just in case anything ever happens to me I know there is someone more powerful watching over you.” Micah watched as Alexis' head snapped in his direction.

“Why would you say that?” Alexis watched a small smile play on his lips.

“I'm just saying is all. I doubt that a replacement guardian will be as strong as me if something ever happened. I don't need to worry about that now.” Micah shrugged as he looked at Alexis. Her eyes were drilling into him as she studied him.

“Micah...” Alexis whispered out. “Don't leave me... please.” She watched as his eyes widened in shock. “I don't want another guardian. I don't want you to take unnecessary risks. And I swear if you use that damn double-edged sword-”

“Lex.” Micah reached out to her and pulled her body into his. He held her and patted her head. “My job is to protect you. The reason for my existence is to take the sword in your place. I'm not planning to use anything or to go running to my death. But I wouldn't hesitate to exchange my life for yours. Not just because I am your guardian, but because you are my family. I don't have a purpose without you.”

“Don't say such things. You do have a purpose. You have your own life too. If anything, because Aken is my mate you have even more freedom. I understand your job is to protect me but I'm also going to protect you. You aren't just some expendable shield.” Alexis sighed and leaned her head up to look into his blue eyes. “I know you said no but just hear me out... Will you think about taking a mate?”

“No.” Micah shook his head and shrugged.

“Micah, don't be like that.” Alexis furrowed her brows as he smiled at her.

“I don't need a mate. Lex... I don't need a mate to be happy. Besides, Uncle Tristan is right. Mates are a distraction. Look at Jason and Cody. If it was a matter between life or death... Let's say this. Either Kelsie would die, or Rhea would die. You know how painful that decision would be?”

Alexis snorted and rolled her eyes. “Don’t be dumb Micah. Anyone could have those types of choices. Either Aiden dies or Lucy dies, and I have to pick one. Well, neither one of them is my mate and it would still be a devastating decision. And when would that type of scenario ever come up? That is a cop out and you know it.”

“Oh really? Tristan told me Cody was distracted during a battle before because of Kelsie. Then he put himself in a situation where he could no longer fight to protect Rhea. This wouldn’t have happened if he hadn’t taken her as a mate.” Micah raised his brow at Alexis, who clicked her tongue at him.

“Bullshit, Micah. Because whether Kelsie was his mate or not, he would have gone to her aid. Just like you would go to Brian’s aid or Raine’s aid. If they were in danger, you would go to protect them. And Uncle Tristan would do the same things for his friends. It doesn’t have to be a mate.” Alexis didn’t like these made-up scenarios that probably would never happen. Besides, the logic in them wasn’t sound.

“Okay fine. What about the jealousy thing? You will always be my number one priority.” Micah watched as Alexis shook her head.

“Quit grasping at straws Micah. Kelsie and Jin don’t get jealous. And because they are guardians too they feel the same way. Uncle Tristan is not you. His decisions don’t have to be yours. I want you to be happy. All I am saying is just to think about it, okay? And know that I support you. Completely.” Alexis watched his eyes soften in defeat as a quiet chuckle left his lips.

“Well, as of now there are no prospects. There is no one that even makes me second guess my decision. I’m fairly happy but it will be better once Erebus is dead.” A darkness clouded over Micah’s eyes as his mind drifted to the one who touched his princess. And for a second everything went black.

Alexis watched as Micah’s eyes changed. His sweet blue eyes were gone and she was looking into two obsidian orbs. A strange suffocating energy poured out of him as the veins in his arms bulged from his skin. It looked like dark liquid was flowing through his veins as it traveled up his body. Even dark lines began to color his face. Alexis inhaled sharply, ‘Please, not again.’

“Micah? Micah don’t disappear on me. Remember you are the one in control!” Alexis reached out and grabbed onto his bulging arm. “You. Are. In. Control.” Her voice was concise and radiated with power. She glared into the dark orbs and began freezing the darkness traveling through his veins. “You can’t have

him! He is mine.” Her icy voice growled out as she wrapped her energy around Micah.

Alexis felt her chest stinging in pain for Micah. All he did was casually mentioned Erebus’ name, and this happened. Which meant he had been struggling and in pain over what had happened to her. She didn’t even notice his pain and she could kick herself for this. He was always protecting her.

Alexis let her white warm light embrace Micah as she froze his body. She created a layer of ice over him to hold him captive. This is not the first time she had to do this. She encountered this side of Micah a long time ago. Back then she was terrified. She didn’t know what happened to her sweet Micah. She was accidentally injured by a young dragon during training and Micah just snapped. She managed to get him out of sight before anyone saw the change in him. She immediately went to work trying to calm him down. She began to think about the first time this had happened...

Alexis was relieved back then when his eyes returned to his normal blue color. And together they talked about what happened. They decided to keep it a secret because Alexis was afraid her parents would make Micah leave her again. Or worse make her choose a new guardian.

Alexis and Micah did some detailed researching, investigating, and experimenting after that. It took a while, but they were able to come to a very upsetting conclusion. That the dark elves had done something to him during the time they had him. She remembered how he felt. The energy felt evil but yet familiar. There was a darkness that tried to cover the rest of his body like it wanted to take it over. They still didn’t know much about it.

But the second time it happened Alexis was more prepared and really felt the energy. She felt the tainted energy and this time was able to recognize it. Trying to hide the truth from her family she talked to one of the ancient magic weavers. A being that was neither good nor evil. They were neutral and knew both sides of magic and understood the fairy and demon side. She asked her all about fairies and their types of magic. This way her real question wouldn’t seem suspicious.

Alexis asked the weaver if it was possible for a sprite to exist alive within another being. And if it was possible for it to become tainted. The answer she received was gut wrenching. The weaver explained that sprites have the same energy as a djinn. They can give something more power like one did for the Ocean’s Tear by becoming a living sacrifice. But if the sprite is evil, it will

gradually eat away the purities of whatever it has leached onto. What was light would become dark.

Alexis had hoped that as fairy royalty she could command the sprite. However, this didn't appear to be the case. Fairy royalty could keep a sprite suppressed with their magic. But they were not able to command their existence. A corrupt sprite was more like a demon than a fairy at that point. The weaver told her not to worry about such things happening now. After the demon war, this sort of thing was extremely rare.

Alexis asked how you could separate a sprite if it ever happened again. Just in case. The magic weaver had shaken her head sadly and told her that it was a dark art. And that only the dark priestess Kali would know if there was a solution. But when they had encountered such a contaminated creature before the guardians would put it out of its misery.

After Alexis heard this, there was no way she was telling anyone about Micah. This was her deepest secret and greatest fear that she and Micah shared. Because she wouldn't lose Micah. She wouldn't risk what could happen if they found out about him. She was the strongest fairy princess and would use her magic to suppress the sprite inside of Micah...

Alexis stared into the dark eyes of Micah as she struggled to reign the darkness inside of him. Her warm light squeezed around Micah as she pushed it inside of him. Her ice solidified over his lower body holding him in place. She could see the blue beginning to peak through the darkness in his eyes. His dark veins had subsided, and he was returning to her Micah. All of her focus and concentration was on Micah as her hands moved to his temples sending bursts of light and cool into him. All the while she gently cooed to him as she brought him back to her.

Micah closed his eyes and when he opened them they were blue again. Alexis let out the breath she was holding and relaxed. "Micah, there you are." She smiled as she retracted her ice from his lower body. "It was a bit stronger that time. But everything is okay now." She watched as Micah's wide eyes looked behind her. His face became tense as he kept his focus on something.

"What the hell was that?!" An angry voice boomed.

Note:

Here is a little puzzle piece about Micah. There is more to our bear that we will continue to discover.

Taming Her Beastly Mate Chapter 40

Chapter 40 Ultimate Price

“What the hell was that?!” An angry voice boomed.

Alexis would recognize the sound of her father’s angry voice anywhere. She turned her head to see her father and Aken standing there. Her breath shuddered for a second since Aken did not have anything covering his face. She saw Erebus’s angry face and her father was fuming beside him.

“This has happened before?!” Levi growled out lowly as Alexis moved her back into Micah protectively.

“Everything is fine now.” Alexis listened to the snort from her father. While Aken stood there quietly. “When did you both come in here? I didn’t hear a thing.” She looked back at the closed door.

“I set up a crystal in here so I would be alerted if something was wrong. The moment your power surged, I came to check on you. And your father tagged along since we were together.” Aken had his gaze set on Micah as he was trying to study him. Alexis was right he did seem fine now.

“I asked if this had happened before.” Levi’s voice was crisp with a low growl edged into it.

Alexis took in a breath and stood there defiantly. She didn’t want to answer her father.

“It has,” Micah spoke out clearly.

Alexis turned her head upwards and glared at him. “Micah, shush.”

“Lex, we can’t hide this. Besides, I’ve suspected they both already know.” Micah looked between Aken and Levi. He wasn’t naïve enough to think that something like this would go unnoticed by the deities. More than likely they already knew about the sprite but there was something else they knew that he didn’t. Something else they were keeping secret.

“You knew?” Alexis looked up at her father. How could her father have known and never mentioned it to her? Was it because they had planned to get rid of Micah? Over her dead body!

Levi gritted his teeth and narrowed his eyes on Alexis. “The question is how long have you known? How long have you been hiding this from us, Alexis?” Levi shook his head. “I told your mother that once Micah’s bloodlust started to seep out he would need to leave. How long ago?! When did this first happen?!” Levi roared.

Alexis didn’t flinch as she kept her protective stance in front of Micah. “We’ve known for years.” She watched as her father’s eyes bulged open. “But I can suppress it. He won’t go out of control because I will be there by his side helping him. Micah and I are a team.”

“Lex, you can’t suppress this forever. That sprite has been injected with demon blood. Do you realize that the bloodlust will only get stronger? This sprite has been conditioned as one that hungers for death and destruction. It’s best for Micah to stay in Elysium for now.” Levi watched how his daughter looked at him defiantly.

“If Micah goes to Elysium, then I go with him.” Alexis wasn’t going to be parted from Micah. How was it best for Micah to be sent away? Somewhere where she wasn’t there to protect him? Nope. Wasn’t going to happen.

“You said so yourself that Micah won’t hurt Alexis.” Aken turned his head to meet with the angry blue orbs. “Micah can keep Alexis safe. Even if... even if things get out of control, he won’t turn on her, right? This is why we are looking for Kali. We are looking for a solution.”

“The problem is that everyone else could be hurt. Can you even imagine how catastrophic his blind rage could be if left unchecked?” Levi snarled and shook his head.

Alexis looked up at Micah and gave him a faint smile. She placed her hand on his arm. He was staying quiet, but this talk had to be hurting his feelings. “Don’t worry Micah. I’m never leaving you, ever.” She then snapped her head back towards her father. “I’m not going to tolerate you speaking about him like he isn’t in the room. How could you? Micah is family.”

“Alexis,” Levi said and took a step towards his daughter. Aken’s hand immediately shot out and landed on his shoulder. Levi glared at him for a

moment before he sighed. “You don’t have to protect my daughter from me.” His voice was back to his usual composed tone. Aken nodded his head and reluctantly let go of him. Levi smiled at him and nodded his head. Regardless, it was nice to see him protective over Alexis.

Levi turned back to Alexis and walked up to her. He placed his hand on her head and bent down slightly. “Alexis, why didn’t you tell us?” He said in a soft gentle whisper.

Alexis sighed and bit her bottom lip. “I was afraid of what you would do. I didn’t know you knew.” She shook her head and looked down. “I talked to a magic weaver and she said that usually, guardians handled those who had a dark sprite inside of them. They took... care of the problem. I was afraid-”

“Lex.” Levi gave her a sympathetic smile. “I would never hurt Micah unless I had to. Unless he was out of control and hurting everyone... I was suggesting removing him from you for his benefit. You are the trigger that makes him get angry. You are the one who can trigger his bloodlust. It’s for both of your own good that I suggest him going to Elysium. We all love Micah. Could you imagine Micah’s pain if he ended up hurting others? We have to protect him from this.”

Alexis gaped at her father and gnawed on her bottom lip. So what he was saying was for Micah’s benefit. He was worrying about Micah. “I can help calm him down. Oh! And Bella can help calm him down too.”

“I understand what you are saying, Levi. But I need to be with Alexis. Her safety is more important.” Micah couldn’t be away from Alexis at a time like this. Not when Erebus had gotten to her twice already. His job was to protect Alexis and he wasn’t going to let anything get in the way – no matter what!

Aken looked around and saw the stack of paper bags on the bed. He reached out and grabbed one to put on. He suddenly realized he came in without wearing one. He didn’t want to make Alexis uncomfortable any longer than he had to. She didn’t complain but she wouldn’t. He put the bag over his head and looked out through the funny looking holes. Suddenly he heard a snort and glanced over at Micah’s red face. He watched Alexis and Levi turn their heads to look at him as well. Soon their faces turned red and were all rolling in laughter.

“He’s wearing the Squidward face.” Micah cried out as tears fell from his hard laughter.

Levi chuckled and shook his head. "Thanks for the laugh, Aken."

Behind the mask, Aken's face was glowing red. Luckily, it was covered by the obnoxious brown bag he was wearing that he wouldn't take off for Alexis' sake. He watched as Alexis moved past her father and walked up to him. She wrapped her arms around his torso and leaned her head into his chest. He felt her fingers curl into his back as she moved her nose into him. His arms wrapped around her enjoying the sweet tingles she brought him.

"I love you, Aken." Alexis breathed in his scent and let the calmness wash over her. His dignity was taking hit after hit for her benefit. "I'm sorry you have to subject yourself to wearing a paper bag."

Aken smiled and sifted his fingers through her hair. "I'll do anything for you."

"Micah, I know it is hard son, but whatever you do you can't give in to the bloodlust. You can lose yourself forever. I suspect the dark elves had their reasons. It's likely that they want you to become a portal for darkness. They messed up though, not realizing you were a guardian. The fairy magic fights to protect you. And Alexis is also protecting you with her light.

Subconsciously, her light follows you. Rhea is the one who told me about it. She said her light also follows Cody. It is the bond you share." Lee sighed.

"We don't think that even if you get out of control you could ever purposely hurt Alexis because of this connection. But in your rage, you could accidentally hurt her. I'm telling you this because you are a guardian. And a very powerful one. You must suppress the darkness that hungers to get out."

Micah nodded his head. "What else do you know about me? I'm not imagining things, right? There is more than the sprite."

"Right now, we don't know anything. But we suspect there is more. We all have different theories at this point. We are looking for answers though. And this time, I promise, when we have an answer, we will tell you." Levi reached out and put his hand on Micah's shoulder. "Micah, I love you son. I have watched over you and am proud of the man you have grown up to be. You might not have let us adopt you, but we did anyways in our hearts. You are important to me. I want to protect you."

Micah's eyes watered in response as he stood there too choked up to respond. Instead, he pursed his lips together and nodded his head. It was true that Micah had rejected the idea of being adopted. Yet, Levi's words touched him. While he wasn't Levi and Rhea's son, they were two people he cared

about. He loved them too. This, however, also frightened him. What if he ended up becoming the monster and causing them disappointment? Or worse... what if he ended up hurting them. His gaze moved past Levi and met with Alexis'. She was smiling at him warmly. He felt himself respond to her as she gave him a sense of inner strength.

Micah was determined to protect Alexis and her family. If he could sense Erebus, then he could help Aken locate him. Erebus had to be taken care of so that his family would be safe. One way or another, he was going to protect them. He felt his beast stir in agreement as his energy swirled within him. Even his guardian powers were screaming to answer the call.

All guardians had a lethal power at their disposal. But it was a power that claimed their life as well as their opponents. Micah had a bloodthirsty sprite inside of him that could end up hurting others but it also gave him more power. Maybe this was the reason he was Alexis' guardian? It was because he had the power to protect her. He had the power to take down Erebus in exchange for paying the ultimate price.

A trade he would willingly make...

Note:

I haven't decided completely on April's schedule. I'm unsure if I will update 3 times a week or keep up with the daily schedule. I am homeschooling and have to finish up the school year. Until you hear otherwise, expect a daily chapter. If it becomes too hard, then I will alter the schedule.

So... What do you think about how Levi handled the situation?