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His eyebrows raise in what appears to be his shock before he nods once, leaning back and closing his eyes.

"Try to rest before we arrive. You'll need your strength once you enter the maze." he chuckles darkly, and my fellow cave dwellers whimper and sob harder. I suck in a breath and press my lips in a line, why must the fates always challenge me. Was merely surviving not enough of a challenge?

I've heard of the Maze Games from Grandmother. The maze is a barbaric ritual my grandmother told me about, a sport for them. It's where people were taken to be slaughtered. The Lycans would give humans a false sense of hope that they could live and be set free if they could make it through the night and leave the maze alive, telling them they would be set free and pardoned of their deaths or offered jobs within the Kingdom.

Yet despite that, I take his words and follow his instructions. Closing my eyes, I try to rest. Knowing it is my only chance of making it out of the Maze Games alive, though even I have doubts about my ability to make it out of the Maze of death. My grandmother told me it wasn't a typical Maze, but one filled with death traps and savage monsters.

It is the screeching of tires and the jolt I am given when the truck lurches to a stop that wakes me from my nap, I wouldn't call it actual sleep because my mind is restless. My eyes snap open seconds later to the screams of the girl who was tossed in here with me. Her feet drag on the pebbled ground as she is hauled off the truck by her hair, her legs flailing out while her hands clutch his hands, trying to relieve the pain of his grip.

He shoves the door open and tosses her onto the asphalt, she scrambles to her feet and takes off. She barely makes it four steps when she is caught and dragged back. Another Lycan male climbs aboard the truck hauling the three young men she is huddled with off. They don't put up much of a fight, knowing it is pointless.

"Only two girls, that is all you found?" Comes an angry voice, making me peer over to where it came from. I see a man wearing a red robe, jewels hanging off it, and his graying hair rustles in the cool breeze. Peering past him, I see a huge castle made entirely of Granite, with several huge turrets and dome windows.

Hedges and roses fill the gardens surrounding it and crawling vines creep up the walls, with blossoming purple flowers. The sound of trickling water catches my attention and I turn looking out directly out to find a magnificent fountain, in the center of the marble fountain stands a man and woman, along with three boys and by the crowns on their heads I know they must represent the King and his family, and the three boys standing in front of them must be the sons the King spoke of.

I stare in awe, it is far more exquisite than the ones I have seen in the picture books my grandmother managed to acquire over the years.

"Yes sir, the rest were far too old to be of any good to the kingdom."

"No, it's fine, Malachi. Just put them with the other three and—" the man who is clearly in charge of our kidnap turns to look at the men. He waves a hand dismissively at them. "Find someone to put them to their workstations."

Instantly the girl is separated from them, and her screams ring out loudly as she is dragged off; the men are led in the opposite direction. "I thought you said there were two," the man states.

"Yes, my king, the other is still in the back," This Malachi person assures his King. The King's eyes find mine, and he tilts his head to the side. "Her calmness is a little unnerving," the King states, watching me. "And clearly she lacks manners, too. She should know better, even being human, about meeting a King's gaze."

"You are not my King," I speak the words I am supposed to only think. He scoffs, a smile gracing his lips as his eyebrows raises almost into his disappearing wispy hairline.

His guard and my captor climb into the back of the truck to untie my hands, and I twist my wrists, rubbing them. Not wanting to be shoved off, I move to the edge and jump down to the ground, relieved to be able to flex my limbs and stretch my back.

"My, my, she is a peculiar one. It will be interesting to see how long she lasts in the games," the King huffs. "Just as the others, my king, no one ever survives the games," his guard tells him, seizing my arm in his tight grip. "She hardly seems noncompliant. Why is she tied up? The others not," the King inquires.

"Because this one knows how to use her hands, she caught me by surprise," Malachi tells him. Now that seems to pique the King's interest. "Very peculiar indeed," he says.

"Well, then, hopefully, she does survive the games. I think she would be interesting to see if she can keep the Kings in line," The King chuckles.

"Sir?" the guard asks.

The King waves him off. "I have added a twist to the games this year. I can't decide on my successor, and they won't agree either." I watch the old man, curious to retrieve any information about what may be in store when I am chucked into this maze of death.

"I don't understand, my King."

"I have changed things up. My sons will take part whether they like it or not. If any of them survive till morning, I am sending them in to hunt them. Whoever grabs their future bride first will win the high Kingdom," Now that shocks me, bride? Does he really think any of us would agree to marry his monster sons, and I would hardly cause a prize worth fighting?

"But no one ever survives," Malachi adds, tugging me after him toward the back of the castle. My feet crunch on the rocks.

"I'm hoping this year will be different. The kingdoms rely on a new king, and I can't choose. This gives them all an equal chance."

"And when they die in the maze, my King."

"So pessimistic, Malachi. Have you no faith in the human race at all?" Malachi glances down at me. He snorts a laugh.

"No!" he laughs, and the King chuckles. "Maybe I will only put them through one test instead of the three this year."

"Your sons won't like that," Malachi tells the key as I follow, listening intently.

"They don't have to. They want my decision, and this is how I will come to it. I am still King, and they will obey." The king states, and Malachi nods his head once.

"Now, prepare her, and tell my staff I will watch from the CCTV in my chamber, Malachi. I am much too tired tonight to stay out late. I guess I will see the results of the maze by morning or sooner—" The King turns to glance at me. "If they don't survive—- although, I feel this one may surprise us," he adds before turning and walking off back toward the stairs leading to the magnificent castle.