

The Hidden Princess At All-Boys Alpha Academy Chapter 551

Midnight takes a step closer to Ben, her eyes on him, sufficiently distracted. “Can we have meat?”

“You can have whatever kind of meat you want,” Ben says, grinning at her. “And cakes too – all kinds of desert.”

For a moment Jesse’s heart aches because...well, Midnight’s whole world just got turned upside down, it makes sense that she’s afraid. But it’s a little bit horrible how sufficiently she’s distracted from that trauma by the simple offer of food.

He determines, inwardly, to make sure this girl is never, ever hungry again. Not a day in her life.

“How?” Midnight says, looking around. “Do you...cook in the big fireplace?”

“Actually,” Ben says, grinning at her. “See that door across the room, built into the wall?”

He points at the dumbwaiter over by Rafe’s bed and Midnight’s eyes flash to it. She nods.

“That’s a magic door,” Ben whispers. “Come on, I’ll show you how it works.”

Midnight’s eyes fly wide and then excitement takes her expression.

“Go,” Elias murmurs to Jesse, clapping him on the shoulder for a moment and giving him a steady smile. “We’ll ensure that she’s safe.”

“She’s in good hands,” Pippa says, laughing a little as Ben and Midnight reach the dumbwaiter and he opens it, demonstrating its current empty state before he hands her a pad of paper from Rafe’s desk, telling her to write down anything she wants on it.

“Thank you,” Jesse says quietly to the pair of them, already turning towards the door, a hand on his heart. “Seriously, thanks.”

“She’s a good girl,” Pippa says, giving him a happy smile and a steady nod, more comfortable with him than he’s seen her yet. “And she’s lucky to have you.”

Jesse sighs. “I hope that continues to be true. You two please eat as well – my mother and my aunt will never forgive me if I didn’t feed my guests, especially a pregnant guest.” The pair laugh a little and Jesse give them a little bow before he strides for the door, signaling all of the ambassadors to follow. “Come on! Let’s go find the Captain. And a phone.”

Mark looks worriedly between Rafe and the human girl as the trio sits in a small formal living room outside a conference room in which Dominic and Roger are meeting with their council. Ella and Hank sit in arm chairs on the far side of the coffee table, talking lightly, but Mark's eyes continue to return anxiously to his brother. Because Rafe is usually so easy with guests and small talk – it's practically his job, as crown prince – and today he's just being...weird.

Ella and Hank chat amiably over cups of tea about the goings-on of the war, Ella's worries about her missing daughters, and Hanks continued investigations into the Community in the North. Mark doesn't listen to it much – honestly, it's either stuff he's heard before or nothing that he's interested in. Instead he just...watches Rafe.

Rafe, who sits with his shoulders hunched and his jaw clenched, staring determinedly at his cold cup of tea on the coffee table.

Why? Why is he being...such a freak? Mark sighs, because if Rafe is sick or something then Mark is well aware that it's his job to entertain Maryam. And there's absolutely nothing less that he wants to do in the world – first because chatting about acceptable nothings is his least favorite way to spend his time.

And second because Maryam is...

Well. Unpleasant is the kindest word that comes to Mark's mind, but he hastily searches for another one, because that's rude. She's...challenging. Complicated. Willful.

"If you actually gave a crap about any of your citizens in the north," Maryam snaps out, interrupting the Queen. "You'd arrest all of those horrible Community wolves in an instant. The atrocities they're committing against their own people and the effects they're having on the surrounding communities is abominable."

Hank sighs and slumps back into his chair, raising a hand to his forehead.

Ella flicks her eyes immediately to the young woman, fighting a smile. "If we can find proof of their crimes, Maryam," she says quietly, "then I will certainly do just that. But I won't jail my own citizens on hunch and rumor."

"So what?" Maryam asks, leaning forward a little, her mouth drawn into a serious line, her large dark eyes flashing. "You're just going to let them continue to wantonly rape and pillage the countryside simply because you don't have proof of "

"Maryam," Hank growls, his eyes closed, clearly sick of a behavior and an argument he's encountered before.

The Hidden Princess At All-Boys Alpha Academy Chapter 552

“It’s all of this Alpha bullshit!” Maryam nearly shouts, casting out a frustrated hand. “An entire culture of men who believe that because they’re physically bigger, and stronger, and can shift into the body of a lethal predator that it gives them the right to go out into the outlying towns and take what they want from them!? It’s ”

“Is that what Alphas really think?” Ella asks, her interruption smooth and calm, her own steady command slicing neatly through Maryam’s louder voice.

“Do not misinterpret me, highness,” Maryam replies, a bit between her teeth. “The issue is not with the men themselves, but with the ideology in which Alpha wolves are raised.”

“Well, you have two Alphas here,” Ella says, gesturing towards Mark and Rafe. “Why don’t you ask them what their own impulses are? What rights they believe they have to claim our bodies and possessions simply because either of them could kill any of the rest of us with barely an effort?”

Rafe sighs long and slow through his nose as he closes his eyes.

Mark sits straight and looks around, worried. Because he...very much does not want to enter this debate. Not that he’d ever – ever – have the impulse to rape or maim or hurt anyone ever – and certainly not because he’s stronger. He just...kind of has the feeling that Maryam would eat him for breakfast, logically, were he ever to attempt to go toe to toe with her in a battle of wits.

Silence reins in the room for a moment as Maryam looks at the two young Alphas on the couch, her eyes slipping over them, the haughty upward tilt of her chin suggesting that she is unimpressed. “Well, these two certainly seem to fit the reputation for being strong and silent,” she says, her voice a condescending coo.

A little growl rumbles in Rafe’s chest as he slowly opens his eyes and turns them on the girl he now knows to be his mate. 1 She raises an eyebrow at him, daring him to take her on.

Inwardly, Rafe’s wolf leaps excitedly at the challenge, but he grabs his wolf’s fur tight in his hand, forcing him to calm down. “Your own rather...tame Alpha sons aside,” Maryam continues, turning away from Mark and Rafe in a clear dismissal that makes Rafe’s wolf howl with rage and want as she focuses again on the Queen. “The issue is one of education. Your administration has suffered the growth of a cult in its northern climes which tells powerful young men not only that their Alpha bodies give them dominion over their world and community, but further gives them no critical education by which they might begin to rethink that education. It’s incredibly dangerous, highness – and forgive

me, but while you and your family are resting peacefully in your palace? Your northern citizens – particularly the humans – are suffering from the results of that educational neglect.”

Ella flashes her teeth, just a for moment. “I’d urge you to consider that we are not necessarily resting in comfort, young lady – especially as two of my daughters have been kidnapped by foes who, by my understanding, do far less for the rights of the common people than my mate and I.”

Maryam clenches her jaw for a moment, hating to concede a point, but then nods sharply. Just once.

“That aside,” Ella continues, smiling a little at the girl and then turning her attention back to Hank. “Her point is well made. Do you consider that further education would help to fix the issues we’re having in the North?”

“My daughter is as passionate as she is impetuous,” Hank says on a sigh, shifting his gaze to glare at his daughter, who doesn’t budge an inch. “She over-states her argument because she’s pissed off and wishes to be right. At the detriment to her argument, she has grossly over-simplified the problem.”

Maryam’s mouth pops open with an appalled little squeak that has Rafe’s wolf howling and turning in an eager circle.

She’s so cute, his wolf huffs. Look how pretty she is when she’s mad – oh my god – oh my GOD – she’s so great – move closer. What can we say to piss her off? I want to see her all squeaky again –

Rafe groans inwardly and again grabs his wolf by the scruff, urging him to calm the hell down.

“I am not over-simplifying,” Maryam says, pressing a hand to her chest.

“You are,” Hank replies, dry, glaring hard at her. “And while I will tolerate you being rude and obnoxious to your host and your sovereign, as it is your right to make an absolute fool out of yourself if you wish it, Maryam – I will not tolerate a poorly constructed argument. I educated you better than that.”

The Hidden Princess At All-Boys Alpha Academy Chapter 553

Maryam scowls and clenches her jaw, leaning back against the cushions of the couch and glaring down at her knees. Rafe raises his eyebrows, surprised. Because of all things, he didn't think it would be the accusation of a poorly made argument that stopped Maryam in her tracks.

God, but Hank's intellectual family is...very different than his own.

But Maryam...she's his family now, right?

...Right?

Rafe takes a moment, while Maryam is distracted in her anger, to study this girl – his mate. His mate. God, how had he never known it before?

Because it's not the first time they've met – no, Maryam and her little sister were fairly frequent visitors to the palace when they were children, always accompanying their parents when Hank and Sarah came down to the city. Rafe and the other Sinclair children had always played with them, but...well. They really always had seemed so incredibly delicate –

And it's not even that they were girls – Ariel and Juniper could always keep up in a way that Maryam and Annabell couldn't. Their human bodies simply weren't as responsive and strong as a wolf's. They had done their best to adjust the games, but... well, they were kids. It had been hard to be fair.

Once, even, Jesse had been attempting to play a prank on Maryam and she fallen hard on her knees, scraping them deeply. She had burst into tears. Rafe had helped Maryam to her feet and done his best to comfort her, but she hadn't spoken to him – to any of them for the rest of her trip.

Rafe turns his head to the side realizing that...actually, that that's maybe the last time he talked to Maryam...ever. God, has it really been that long?

He wouldn't be surprised if her apparent hatred for Alphas had started on that very day. God damn Jesse, being too rough.

"If I could have a minute, Ella?" Hank asks, his tone becoming even more serious and drawing Rafe's attention back to the present. Rafe refocuses his gaze to the doctor as Hank begins to push himself up out of his chair. "I wanted to have a conversation with you about Jackson."

"Jacks?" Ella says, going a bit still in her chair, her teacup balanced primly on its saucer. "What...what's wrong with Jacks?" "Nothing's wrong with Jacks," Hank says with a shrug, getting to his feet. "Is he here? There have been some...developments, in the Community. He asked me to do some research for him and it's yielded some rather strange results."

“What results?” Ella asks, fascinated, hastily putting her teacup down and getting to her feet, looking at Hank with a mix of shock and interest. “Jackson’s not here – he’s...well, he’s rather on a solo mission, trying to get Ariel back.”

“More Alpha macho bullshit,” Maryam grumbles. “One guy, alone, thinking he’s the whole solution to the problem and doesn’t need any help.”

“Are you...are you talking about Jackson?” Mark asks her, a big smile spreading across his face.

Maryam shifts her gaze to Mark. “If he’s the one on the solo mission to defy an entire nation and get the captive princess, then yes, I am.”

“Oh man,” Mark says, shaking his head at the girl. “I mean, I get all of your Alpha hate for the vast majority of guys out there. But Jacks? The world’s sweetest guy, Alpha or not?” Mark laughs. “You’re going to have to adjust your algorithm for that one, Maryam. Jacks is huge and powerful but he has the least ego of anyone I’ve ever met.”

Maryam just rolls her eyes like she doubts it and looks away.

“Do you have any idea of when Jackson will be back?” Hank asks, grimacing a little. Rafe frowns, turning his eyes away from his brother and his mate, focusing again on Hank. Because the man looks...very anxious to tell Jackson his news.

What the hell could be so pressing?

“I’m sorry,” Ella says, stepping closer to Hank. “We have no idea -”

“Highness!” a page shouts, bursting through the door, a phone held high in his hand. “Highness, oh, please!”

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The Hidden Princess At All-Boys Alpha Academy Chapter 554

Rafe is instantly on his feet, a snarl ripping from his lips as he crosses the room in a few strides and places himself between the intruder and his mother, tucking her back behind him. The page quails a bit at the sight of the fierce prince, his canines extended.

“See?” Maryam says, her voice pitched somewhere between pissed off and dry. “Was that necessary? The poor guy’s just letting her know that there’s a phone call.”

“Thank you, Meatball,” Ella murmurs fondly, patting Rafe on the arm. “But I think I’m okay.”

Maryam bursts into laughter and Rafe blushes a deep red, tucking his fangs away and hating that nickname more than he ever has in his life.

“Please, highness,” the page says, stepping forward and holding the phone out to the Queen with a shaking hand. “You...want to take this call.”

“All right,” Ella says, her eyes wide and her voice anxious as she reaches for the phone. Mark gets to his feet, everyone’s eyes on the queen as she says a soft hello into the receiver.

A moment later Ella smacks a hand to her mouth, her eyes filling with tears.

“Mom!” Rafe gasps, stepping closer to his mother, reaching for her. “What’s wrong!?”

But for once Ella ignores her favorite, dropping the phone to her chest and whipping her head to the side towards the doors behind which Roger and Dominic consult with their advisors.

“Roger!” Ella shouts, her voice loud and desperate, ringing out in the room. “Roger, come quick!”

Rafe’s face pales as his mother turns back to him, a huge smile bursting across her face as she bursts into tears. “Rafe, go get Cora – right now –” she murmurs, lifting the receiver again to her ear. “Here, Jesse,” Ella says, her voice shaking. “Here comes your father right now –”

A little moan of relief escapes Rafe’s lips as the doors to the conference room burst open and Dominic and Roger stride through, looking alert but wary.

Rafe lingers only for a second before he forces himself to turn and rush from the room. Because his mother is right. If Jesse is on the phone, safe, and back in this world?

He has to tell Cora and all of the ducklings too. Right now.

Jackson finishes putting up the tent in record time as I light a little fire for us. That, of course, takes very little effort too – just a moment of holding Jackson’s hand as I concentrate on the little pile of sticks that I’ve gathered and it bursts into flames.

It’s not much, I think, as I lean forward towards it and wrap my arms around my knees. But, then again, I don’t think we’ll be staying up very late. And I have other intentions regarding how I plan to keep warm.

“Here,” Jackson says, settling in next to me and passing me four granola bars.

I balk a little. “You want me to eat four granola bars!?”

He frowns at me like he doesn’t understand why that’s such a ridiculous request.

“Jackson,” I growl, dropping the food in my lap for a moment. “You had food this entire time? And you didn’t eat?”

He shrugs, looking down at the little fire. “I wasn’t hungry.”

I snarl, giving him an ineffective shove that makes him grin.

“Fine, I was hungry, but I was saving it for you.”

“Jackson,” I sigh, my shoulders slumping as I look up at him. “You risk being just...a little bit too chivalrous here. If we’re about a day from the border between here and Moon Valley, surely I don’t need four granola bars -”

He laughs and nudges me. “Eat your fill, tiny. You can have the rest in the morning.”

I squawk in protest, picking up the food and shoving it at him too, clearly implying that he must have some as well, but he just laughs and pushes it gently back towards me.

“Would you please just let me take care of you?” he says quietly, shaking his head.

I break a little under that incredibly kind plea. I mean, who can continue to protest in the face of such a sweet, heartfelt request?

“Fine,” I grumble, moodily unwrapping one and taking a big petulant bite. I have to stifle my moan at the taste, because it’s the kind with the peanut butter and the chocolate mixed in. And mom, knowing that it’s my favorite, packed it for me. Tears spring to my eyes at the thought of that – of mom worrying about me, and picking out a snack she knew I’d like, and packing it in Jackson’s bag because she knew he’d find me.

“Is it really that good?” Jackson asks, his voice baffled.

The Hidden Princess At All-Boys Alpha Academy Chapter 555

I turn and look up in his face to see him staring a little aghast at the tears in my eyes, and I burst out laughing, offering it to him. “Take a bite and see.”

He does as I bid, taking the world’s smallest bite, and then slowly begins to chew. “I mean it’s good, Ariel, but...”

I laugh again, harder this time, and scootch closer to my mate, leaning against him as I finish my meager little dinner.

I fight hard against sleep as the minutes slip past, talking lightly with my mate about how great it will be to get home. But even as I struggle, my eyes start to slip shut.

“Come on, Tiny,” Jackson murmurs, “time for you to rest.”

Despite my protests, Jackson gathers me into his arms as he stands, kicking some dirt on my little fire. And then he carries me over to the tent, sitting down just inside and then laying back, taking me with him so that I sprawl over his torso. I snuggle closer, deeply

happy with my face pressed to his chest – my favorite sleeping spot, and one which I’ve missed so much since I’ve been away.

Jackson sighs contentedly too, drifting an idle hand up and down my back as he takes the thin blanket and pulls it over both of

us.

I look up at him with a smile and then glance down over the length of my body and his, wondering how the hell that blanket is supposed to be big enough. But when I see Jackson’s feet hanging out of the tent, the blanket ending somewhere around his knees, I burst into laughter again.

“Jacks!” I say, sitting up a little. “Why didn’t you make mom give you a bigger tent!?”

“I would have,” he murmurs, pressing a hand firm against my back, wanting me to lay down again. “If I’d known how big this one was before she packed it – ”

“How did you stay warm!?” I gasp, ignoring his hand and sitting up further, appalled, my legs falling to either side of his body so that I straddle his stomach.

“I didn’t,” he replies, dry, grinning up at me. “But come on, Ari – lay down – I’m warm enough for one more night.”

I smile down at him and bite my lip, considering my choices. Because, I mean, I am very tired.

But...

He’s just so gorgeous. And he’s not wearing a shirt. And I’ve spent a very long time worrying about the nation, and plotting how to escape, and missing the feel of his body next to mine –

And quite suddenly, I do not want to sleep. Not at all.

My hands move to the back of my silly Atalaxian dress, starting to undo the buttons there that fasten the collar high on my neck.

Jackson takes a deep breath and runs a hand up the length of my side, a little unable to resist even as he turns his eyes away.” Ariel, you need to sleep...”

“I’ll sleep tomorrow,” I say, playful and cheerful, tugging next at the zipper that runs all the way down the length of my back. “Ariel,” he sighs, shaking his head. “You’re injured, and exhausted, and your body really needs the -”

His words cut off with a muffled groan as I shift myself backwards across his body, settling my ass over his hips instead of his stomach, pressing against the thick, hard length of his cock, which betrays his real feelings about what he wants me to do right now.

“Like I said,” I murmur, my voice pitched low as I push the dress over my shoulders and down my arms, shoving it off my wrists and then reaching up to pull my stupid Atalaxian bra up over my head, tossing it to the side. “I’ll sleep tomorrow.”

Jackson turns his head to the side, pressing his eyes shut, stubborn in his determination to do the ‘right thing’ – let me sleep, and heal.

“Oh, come on, Jackson,” I say quietly, grinning, enjoying myself as I lean forward, letting my hair swing forward over my shoulders. Softly I cover his left hand with my right, tugging it gently so that it slides up my side, guiding it until his hand cups my breast in his palm. “Touch me.”

Jackson’s willpower crumples like a tin can.

He moves in a flash, a wicked snarl filling the tent as he grabs me to him, turning me over and pressing my body down into our little sleeping mat as he seals his mouth to mine. I press myself hard against my mate, my hand slipping down his body to grip his thick cock in my hand. I moan as I feel it slide against my palm.

The Hidden Princess At All-Boys Alpha Academy Chapter 556

Jackson’s mouth is hard against mine and I yield to him immediately, wanting him to take control, to take me any way he wants. Even as I kiss him back, meeting him at every pulse of my heart with my lips and my tongue, I consider that this is very different from our first time – when Jackson was slow and patient and deliberate.

No, this time I can tell that Jackson is a little lost in his want of me – and I absolutely love it.

A shudder passes through my body as Jackson snarls, moving his mouth from mine, pressing first his lips and then his tongue and then his teeth to my neck, dragging the sharp points of his canines there. He lifts his body for just a moment to shove hard at my stupid dress, pushing it down over my hips and my ass until it comes to settle somewhere down over my knees.

But we're both too lost to care as my mate presses the length of his body to mine again, the feel of his warm skin bare against mine torturous and wonderful all at once. I groan, my head falling to the side as Jackson dips his head lower, kissing the dip of my throat and then my breast, his tongue licking hard and flat once over my nipple before he returns his face to mine, a palm flat on my cheek turning my head back so that he can kiss me again and again.

I lose sense of myself quickly, forgetting that I'm a Princess, that I have any responsibility at all. Any sense of who I am or who I was, my past and my future, just flies away. I'm only concerned here and now with the feel of Jackson pressing me down into this mat, a burning fucking flame searing me at every inch where his skin meets mine.

God, fuck but I want him. Right fucking now.

I jerk my knee up to the side, wanting to wrap my leg around his waist – his back –

But I snarl when something gets in my way.

"Fucking dress," I growl, putting a hand against Jackson's shoulder and giving a little shove as I look down, glaring hard at the mess of fabric.

Jackson turns on his side, allowing me the space I need even as he turns his attention and his mouth again to my neck in a way that makes my eyes want to flutter shut. But, quite determined, I sit up and untangle my legs from all the fabric, tossing it aside.

"Where is your underwear?" Jackson asks, a hand on my hip. I turn to see him frowning down at my naked hips.

"Atalaxian women don't wear it!" I say, turning to him as my hands move fast to his own pants, my fingers working fast at his belt. "I know, right? You'd think that with such a conservative culture -"

His hand covers mine and a steady growl silences me, making me turn my eyes up to him. I grin for a second as the growl resonates through his chest, as he makes quick work of unbuckling his belt and sliding what remains of his clothes over and away from his fairly perfect ass. Because while Jackson would never, ever tell me to stop talking if I wanted to discuss something...

The way he's looking at me now, with that intense blue gaze, that steady set to his jaw?

The way his hand slides possessively around my waist and across my naked back?

Yes, please shut up, my wolf snaps in my soul, vicious.

Smiling, I obey his request and her demand to delay this conversation for another time.

Jackson smirks at me, taking my chin in his palm and again returning his mouth to mine, kissing me deeply and again wiping all thoughts from my brain.

My knee raises again to that place it wants to be up and over Jackson's hips, but my mate surprises me by turning and pulling me with him so that I'm straddled fully over his hips, his body sitting half up so that he can still kiss me. I moan into his mouth as I arch my lower back, pressing myself more fully against him. His hand slips down over my body, grasping a palmful of my ass and using it as leverage to pull me tighter.

I start to pant at that, wanting more – more of Jackson hard against me, more of him not bothering to be gentle, taking what he wants.

“Please,” I beg, pulling my face away just an inch, my heart racing. “Please, Jacks.”

He snarls, soft, and then lays back, using the hand still on my ass to pull me with him, his other hand moving down to grasp the base of his cock, repositioning it so that I can feel the hard press of its head right at my slick core. I moan, my eyes shutting, my hips moving me backwards onto Jackson's cock, sliding it an inch inside of me.

“God, fuck, Ariel,” he groans.

My eyes open just a little to see Jackson with his head tilted back, his neck exposed, completely undone by the feel of being inside of me even just this little bit.

The Hidden Princess At All-Boys Alpha Academy Chapter 557

And I...like that. I like that very much.

I slide my hips back further, watching his face even as I shudder to feel him press another inch or two inside – a tight fit, especially at this angle. Jacks groans again, his eyes opening to meet mine as I sit up a little, taking control and slowly, inch by inch, lowering myself down onto the thick, hard length of Jackson's cock.

I moan as I take him deeper, the noise loud and a little obscene, my head falling back and my eyes fluttering shut as I take about eight inches. Because – god – the sensation – even as Jackson stretches my inner walls, my pussy pulses against him, wanting more. My hips move forward, aching for more even as I feel so completely full that I'm not sure I can take another inch –

Even though that I know that there is...well, that there's way more than an inch still to go...

“More,” Jackson growls, wrapping a firm hand around my hip, the other reaching up to capture my breast.

I gasp a little, working hard to concentrate on anything but the feeling of Jackson’s dick filling up every inch of me as I look down at him, trying to understand what he means.

“More, Luna,” he snarls, pulling gently on that hip, urging me down. “You’re going to take the whole thing.”

I moan, squeaky and soft, letting my head tilt back again as I do my best to obey my Alpha – sinking another inch lower, my hips starting to pulse back and forth against him, wanting the friction, wanting to feel him again and again hit that spot deep inside of me –

“All of it,” Jackson growls, an order.

Again, I obey, my knees spreading wide to the side as I sink lower onto my mate’s cock, which I can feel pulsing with need inside of me. Little gasping breaths fall from my mouth as my body tenses, as release coils low in my stomach, tighter and tighter, urging me on. I slip lower, taking every inch of my mate deep inside me, hoping it feels as good to him as it does to

me –

But also thinking that’s kind of impossible –

Because this feels...this feels –

Oh, god, fuck – I have no words for it, they’re all wiped away –

But even that final thought is wiped from my mind a moment later when Jackson, finally fully seated within me, flexes his hips and presses even deeper, his hands firm around my hips, pulling me down onto him and pressing that thick, hard dick fast against that secret spot with one solid, steady thrust.

I pant as I break, hard and heavy, my entire body clenching as I tilt my head back, a loud and steady moan breaking from my lips as that coiling tension rips apart and starts to cascade all that well-wound energy throughout my entire being. My hips pulse hard against Jackson, as waves of sensation chase each other, arching through my core and echoing out through my limbs, hard and gripping at first and then fading to delicate tingles.

When I finally come back to myself, my breath gasping out in little squeaks, my heart pounding, I’m a little surprised to find Jackson’s arms wrapped loose around me, that he’s somehow found a way to sit up while still fully inside me and is holding me through it, even through the little tiny aftershocks.

I huff a little, catching my breath, tucking my head beneath his chin and leaning hard against him as my breath barely starts to come back.

Jackson murmurs sweet things to me, stroking his hand down my back again and again as my heartrate comes back to normal. I let myself relax, settling more fully against him, my eyes falling half shut. God, I need – I need a minute, to put the remnants of my soul back together...

Like seriously, fuck...that should...that should maybe be illegal...

Jackson is too powerful. Yes, the world is very lucky that I've taken him off the dating market – he would have too much control over womankind –

“Oh no, little mate,” Jackson murmurs, his hand flattening against my back.

I go a bit still and then lift my head to peer into his face. “What?”

Slowly he shakes his head, smirking at me, and slides that hand down my tingling back to grasp my very sensitive ass, giving it a light smack that makes me gasp, and then shift in surprise, and then gasp again when I realize of course that Jackson is still inside of me.

And that he's still rock hard.

“Again, mate,” he orders, shifting his hips to press again into me, just a little bit. “I'm not nearly finished with you. Not until you do that at least once more.”

The Hidden Princess At All-Boys Alpha Academy Chapter 558

I groan a little, resting my forehead against Jackson's shoulder as he slowly begins to move within me again. “Jacks,” I whisper, shaking my head a bit. “I don't know if I can.”

“I'll stop if you want me to,” he murmurs, his big hands stroking long and slow over my sensitive skin, rocking me lightly as he begins to barely, gently, press himself more deeply into me again and again. His hand cups my cheek, turning my face to him, and I stare at him with hazy, half-lidded eyes. “But I don't think you want me to stop. And I think you can do it again.”

I stare at him for a moment as my body slowly starts to respond, that pleasure starting to coil again, even through the loose and languid set of my muscles from the first orgasm – even through my exhaustion –

I nod, meaning it – wanting it –

God, but I could fuck him every moment for the rest of my life and not miss anything else, anything at all. I reach up and wrap my arms around his neck, ceding him complete control. Whatever he wants, I'll do after all, it's only ever been a good decision when I just let Jackson take charge.

“Good girl,” Jackson murmurs, pressing a warm kiss to my mouth before wrapping his arms tighter around me, pressing me close to his body as he first turns and then lays me out with my back flat against our little sleeping mat.

And then, Jackson proceeds to take his time.

It starts with slow movements, the roll of his hips as he presses that seriously amazing cock into me again and again, kissing me deeply as he does, the slow, loving movements letting me adjust to the size of him, to this new angle. It takes a few minutes for me to return to where I was at the start of all of this, for my body to wake up, to want him with the same fervency that I had before I broke the first time.

But Jackson is patient, his hands and his mouth moving over me slow and rich, waking me up, reminding me of how much I want him and why.

Jackson licks that special spot on my neck – his spot – as I again loop my leg up over his hip, whispering his name, begging him for more. And my Jacks responds, pressing himself into me harder now that I've shown him I'm ready. His movements are steadily rougher and faster until his hips slam hard against me, until Jackson loses himself to the rhythm, to the need.

My body raises itself against his to accept every pounding inch of him as Jackson fucks me down hard into the thin mat – and a little part of me is surprised to discover that I fucking love it. I never thought I'd want a lover to pound himself into me like this, to fuck me silly, to wrap my hair in his fist and tug it hard, baring my neck –

But here I am, begging for more, whispering for him to fuck me harder, raising my hips so that my Alpha can slam himself into me just the way I want him to –

Just the way he wants to –

My Alpha, completely mine –

Jackson snarls, his thrusts rough and harsh, bringing me as close to release as I know he is. I turn my head to the side, baring my neck to him, and I feel the coarse growl of his desire resonate throughout his chest as much as I hear it. He lowers his mouth to that spot on my neck even as he continues to thrust again and again.

But even as I feel the sharp press of his canines against my skin, even as I can feel how much he wants to, he hesitates.

Please, I beg, mind-to-mind, because my mouth can't do anything right now except pant, my breath wild and fast as I raise myself again and again to meet him. Please, Jacks.

No words come back, just emotions – the way we used to communicate at the start of all of this. Hesitation, and the worried wonder if I'm too tired, if my body can handle it after such a complicated day –

But I snarl roughly too, shoving all of those hesitations away, my hand flying to the back of his neck and pressing his mouth closer against my throat.

Because I want it. Right fucking now.

I want my true mate's mark, finally and forever.

Jackson snarls again but stops asking questions, giving that favorite point on my neck one last loving lick before he bares his fangs and sinks them deep into my flesh.

My head rolls back as my mate marks me and I cry out as I shudder, breaking again and again for him as I feel an insane rush of emotions, of change.

The Hidden Princess At All-Boys Alpha Academy Chapter 559

My wolf howls with happiness and pride even as pain arcs through me – but I don't experience it as pain – I don't know how to explain the delicious, sharp rush of sensation as my skin breaks, as Jackson claims me, as his magic floods my body and makes me feel rich and vivid and real.

His teeth press once, deeper, and I feel Jackson's body tense and shudder as he breaks for me in turn. I mew a little, my hips pressing up against him, wanting him deeper as I feel the warm rush of him coming inside of me, the thick hot press of it as his body goes still, every single one of his muscles tense. Something feral and possessive comes over me then and I, too, snarl, my canines extending as I lean forward and sink them deep into the skin and muscle of Jackson's chest, just over his heart, marking him in turn.

Because he is mine – absolutely mine. And even if I carry two other marks that are not his, Jackson will be the only man to ever carry mine.

I pant as Jackson pulls back, his tongue moving once steadily – lovingly – over his mark on my neck before he wraps his arms around me as he falls to his side, taking me with him.

I cuddle close, still panting, my body exhausted and my heart full as I press my body tight against my mate.

It takes me a minute to come back to myself, to catch my breath fully, to smile when I realize that my wolf and Jackson's are likewise curled together in my soul, happy and content and dedicated. That she, too, has a new mark on her neck to match my own.

When I lift my head to peer into my mate's face, I find his eyes already on me, sweet and happy and concerned.

"Are you all right?" he murmurs, stroking a hand down over my cheek.

I laugh a little, completely blissful. "Jackson," I murmur, swatting at his arm. "You know I'm fine."

He whines a little, deep in his throat, his eyes moving to my neck. "It's gotta hurt."

"You have one too," I murmur, my hand moving up to lovingly cover the mark I gave him.

"Yeah, but I'm tough," he murmurs, cuddling me close.

I laugh, snarling playfully and pretending to be mad. "I'm tough! Don't try to pretend you don't know that I'm tough."

"No, you're precious," he murmurs, wrapping me up in his arms and cradling me to his chest. "And delicate and tender. You just think you're super tough, which makes you very dangerous to love. Brave little delicate gorgeous girl."

"Say I'm tough," I snarl, feeling very ferocious.

"All right," he murmurs, petting my hair and smirking at me. "You're tough, tiny little mate. Very tough."

"Are you happy?" I whisper, unable to stop smiling, beaming up into his face.

"Yup," he says, letting his eyes drift shut, a tiny smile on his lips.

I burst out laughing, wiggling discontentedly in his arms, wanting a little more than that.

But my mate – he's never been one for big speeches, has he?

So instead he simply opens his heart to me, letting me feel everything down the bond. How incredibly much he loves me, how content and steady it makes him feel to know that

I carry his mark, how touched and proud he is to carry mine. How he can't wait for every day of the rest of our lives, and how he pretty much has no intention of letting me leave his side ever again. And, of course, of getting us our own room at school. So we can do this a hundred thousand more times.

"Nooo," I moan, cuddling closer to him. "I want the nook!"

"Then we'll kick those other two out," he murmurs, pressing a kiss to my hair.

"Okay," I say, cheerful, sufficiently mollified. Jackson hums his agreement and I press my cheek to his chest, perfectly happy and – quite frankly – incredibly tired.

"I love you, Ariel," Jackson whispers a few minutes later, just as both of us are drifting off to a very peaceful sleep. "I'm very in love with you. And I'm going to be for a long time. Probably forever."

I murmur something that barely pretends to be words as I drift off to sleep myself, passing every single ounce of my love down the bond to my sweet forever mate.

Just so he knows that I feel precisely, every inch, the same.

The Hidden Princess At All-Boys Alpha Academy Chapter 560

Just past midnight, Rafe stands with his adult family on the roof of the palace, everyone's face turned up to the sky and towards the steady pounding of chopper blades they can barely hear in the distance. A steady hum of excitement runs between them all. Roger and Cora in particular stand with their expressions rapt, his arms around her shoulders, her leaning against his chest.

But still, despite his excitement to see his cousin – his best friend – Rafe's wolf keeps nipping at him inside, urging him to go back downstairs, to find the human girl, to grab her and mark her immediately.

Rafe growls a little, the sound rumbling in his throat, frustrated with his wolf for being so ridiculous and impractical. Ariel said it was like this but god – he didn't realize how annoying it would be.

"You okay, baby?" Ella asks, reaching up and brushing her fingertips against her eldest son's short dark hair. "You haven't been...yourself today."

Rafe glances to the side to see his mother looking at him curiously. His dad stands on Ella's other side, listening but pretending he is not. Rafe smirks even as he sighs, appreciating their concern, even if he's not ready to tell anyone at all what he discovered.

After all, Maryam herself doesn't know. He watched her all day for some sort of sign, but she either ignored him or treated him with disdain. But how could she know? She doesn't have a wolf.

"I'm okay," Rafe says, turning his face back up to the sky where the chopper is quickly approaching. "Just...lots of changes, right? Jesse coming back from another world, with a mate of all things. We didn't leave things on the best terms but...god, I hope he knows that none of that matters anymore. And Ariel is still missing, Junie too. It's..." he shakes his head. "A lot."

"I know, sugar," Ella says, leaning against her son and resting her head against his arm. "But...piece by piece, we'll figure it all out. We always do."

Rafe nods down to his mother and gives her a tense smile and then, like the rest of the family, watches as the helicopter begins to land.

The phone call with Jesse had been short and strange. Rafe had been disappointed when Roger had hung up with his son before Rafe or even Cora got a chance to talk with him – but apparently, Jesse had been in a rush to get everything settled.

And then the strange demands that he made – to send a train to the Academy to pick up twenty ambassadors as well as a helicopter for Jesse, Ben, and three rather anonymous guests, one of which is the mate who kidnapped Jesse and swiped Daphne across the face with her claws?

And his request that all of his siblings be left at home for a few hours, just until they got settled? I mean, they had complied with it all and Mark is at Cora and Roger's house babysitting the ducklings, but...

What...what are they all in for tonight? What the hell is inside that helicopter that needs that kind of preparation?

The helicopter finally settles down, the blades beginning to slow, and Rafe takes a step forward, eager to have a reason to turn his thoughts away from Maryam and desperate to know who the hell is inside.

The door opens and Rafe's face breaks into a smile when Ben steps out first. Ben's face bursts into a grin and he waves before putting a hand up to help a very pretty, very pregnant young woman step out. Rafe's eyebrows go up at this, taking in her rich but very conservative gown, realizing that she's an Atalaxian and likely a high-ranking one.

The answer of her identity comes a moment later when she's followed out of the helicopter by a dark-haired Alpha who Rafe knows from Midwinter, when he was here. Elias – Prince of Atalaxia and now the heir to the throne, if rumors and Jesse's report are to be believed.

The Atalaxian Prince bows deeply to the King and Queen of Moon Valley and then takes his Luna's hand- or at least, that's what Rafe assumes she is – and leads her forward. Rafe frowns a little to see Ben moving closely at their side because...when the hell did he have time to get close to Atalaxian royalty?

But there's no time to consider it when another tall figure appears at the door of the helicopter, stepping out of it with a cheerful smile deliberately pasted to his face. But Rafe has no time to truly consider Jesse's expression, his eyes moving immediately to the little figure bundled up in his arms and balanced on one hip, shadows streaming off of her like dry ice as she tucks her face tight against Jesse's shoulder.