

114 114- Hope And Fear

Phoenix: 1

"You've been through worse, my dear. Don't give up. Not now," Amora's tone was casual as she crossed her leg over the other.

She was sitting on a chair across from me while I was perched on the edge of the bed with Sebastian right next to me. His arm was wrapped loosely around my back, and I could feel his thumb tracing slow circles on my bare shoulder, which was making my skin tingle.

The touch was making it almost next to impossible to focus on what Amora was saying. Just to show the witch that I was listening carefully to every word she was saying, I was nodding absentmindedly.

Amora's gaze suddenly flipped to Sebastian, "You should step out, son," she stated, "I need to talk to her."

Sebastian's arm tightened around me, "No," he said plainly, "I'm not leaving her here."

I pressed my lips together, fighting the sudden urge to laugh.

Really? He was acting like a teenage boy whose

crush wouldn't survive if she stayed with Amora.

The witch gave him a patient look, "This is private. Kind of doctor-patient privacy. I can't talk if someone else is hovering."

He let out a low breath, clearly not happy. He turned to me and then leaned down until his forehead almost touched mine.

"I don't want to go..." His eyes softened for a moment, "If you need me, just call," he whispered.

His lips brushed my temple before he finally pushed himself up and walked out.

I was kinda feeling embarrassed. He never tried to kiss me or touch me so openly in front of anyone.

Except that day in the garden when he had to carry me to the finish line.

Amora's eyes followed him all the way to the door, and when it got shut, she turned back to me, her mouth curving with mischief, "Why didn't you let him kiss you properly?" She chuckled, "Like on your lips?"

My body tensed when I heard her question. What to tell her? I didn't even know her properly.

The mask isn't for you, Phoenix. It's for others.

Kiki spoke in my head.

I stared at Amora, not sure what to say. Slowly, I lifted my hand and touched the edge of my mask.

She didn't break eye contact and kept watching me confidently. It was when I peeled off my mask, I heard her gasp.

"Oh, good Goddess. Who did this to you, Phoenix?" 1

The poor witch took time to recover from the sight her eyes witnessed. She flinched but didn't seem disgusted by my face.

"Nobody ever told you that you need a witch to... treat this?" She had gotten up and was now leaning over to examine my face closely.

"No," I shook my head, "except someone whom I met near the lake," I didn't know what got into me, but I held her hand and asked the million-dollar question, "Is... is there any hope for me, Amora?"

Her fingers curled around my hand as she gave it a little squeeze, "Yes, there is. You know, what's funny, Phoenix?"

I looked at her questioningly.

"According to my magic, yours and my name

rhyme perfectly," she looked down at our intertwined hands, "But the problem is... I don't think... Phoenix and Amora rhyme at all."

My heart missed a beat. In a way, she was right.

Amora and Aurora.

I swallowed and diverted my gaze to the nearby table where a crystal piece was placed. It reminded me of my last night's meeting with Brian.

"Who came to see you last night?" Amora's face suddenly got serious. She had started chanting something under her breath.

"Umm...beta Brian..."

"Hmm. You tell me, Phoenix. Are you willing to go through this test? Because if you want your face back, there is a price you need to pay."

My eyes shot to her face, "Price?"

I freed my hand from her grip and stood up.

"Yeah. Price. You might lose someone you love a lot."

Jai?

"N...No... I can't afford to lose someone... I... can't..." She didn't let me speak and cut me in.

"The good thing is you can save that person quite easily."

My brows knitted together. I knew witches loved talking in riddles.

She swiped her tongue over her dry lips, "The thing is... yes... I can help you get your face back. But for that..." She trailed off.

I raised a brow, "For that?"

"For that, you need to go back in the past and make some corrections," she walked up and stood before me.

"You mean... time travel? Back to my past?"

"Yeah, honey. Past. Whoever threw this curse on you. Just go back and dodge him... or her..." 1

My heart beat accelerated, "Is it that simple?"

"Yeah. My timeline will take you back to when this chemical was thrown at you. And then... You need to go to a place in the past and bring this Power Gem for me." 1

I let out a short laugh.

"So you mean to say I need to visit two places in the past. First, when I got this curse. Second to bring this diamond... or gem... and third?"

She squinted at me, "Of course, third place will be of your own choice."

Right now, this was too much for me.

Going back to my past?

"How long will it take?" I asked her suspiciously.

"Just two minutes. When you go back into the past, it might feel like three days for three instances, but here, in this world, it will be equal to two minutes."

I nodded at her, "I'll let you know, Amora."

Her lips tugged upwards just a little. She raised her hand and cupped my cheek, "You're the Moon Goddess's favorite. You have healing powers. You can see and speak with the dead. And soon... you'll be able to push people with just a motion of your hand." 1

I brought my hands to my eye level and noticed a faint blue glow shimmering from my palms.

"See!" Amora's mouth fell open slightly, "Told you."

It was good that I talked to Amora. I felt light. For the first time in days, I felt happy.

I was about to say something when my phone's ringtone made us jump.

My eyes searched until they landed on my duffel bag in the corner. I walked over and dug through it until I pulled out my phone.

Alpha Blake's name was flashing on the screen.

After receiving the call, I pressed the phone to my ear.

"Phoenix," On the other end, his tone was clipped, leaving no room for argument, "Come to my office. Now!"

"Sure, Alpha," I disconnected the call, and my mouth pulled into a grin when I found Amora looking at me.

"Thank you, Amora." 1

She came closer and held my hands, "That's not a problem... and the voice in your head?"

That wiped the smile off my face. Did Sebastian tell her about it?

"That voice belongs to your wolf, Phoenix. Embrace it. Welcome it," she gave a gentle squeeze to my hands, "Congratulations, my late bloomer. You're about to get your wolf." 2

My heart thudded against my chest, and for the first time in forever, hope and fear tangled so tightly inside me, I couldn't tell which one was stronger.