Chapter 7: Chapter Seven

The hallways are towering and forbidding. The grother craftsmanship seems impossible to construct, but I also don't know what kind of technology inhabits this place.

A thrill shoots through me, and even though I am a servant, I will admit that this is still awesome. Seriously, when we go into the room after room, I must make sure my mouth is not hanging open. I feel like I'm staring in my own movie, and all this scenery should be bright green in the large green room. The complex special e ects added later. The walls look like they're made from organic material that reminds me of granite or marble. I don't think a bomb could take out this place. I have so many questions. My curiosity is banging on all cylinders now. But I'm not dumb enough to ask the Headmaster. "These walls are fabulous, what are they made out of?"

Yeah right.

And then, "What's your favorite color? I'm a purple person, myself."

The Headmaster does not strike me as a chatty sort.

With heads lowered, nobody talks—ever. We all follow the Headmaster to our next duties. We have already beaten the carpets in some of the spare bedrooms and replaced all the linens. Apparently, kingdoms from all over come for the Gathorn festivities.

Rumor has it, that grand balls will be held because Prince Apollo needs to nd a dearly betrothed. King Augustus's last ditch effort to see his eldest son married. Mort.com meet earlier that she thought the King's sudden health decline is caused by foul play, and Apollo could be next.

Someone wants the throne, and I would assume they do not want to see Apollo King. Perhaps a younger brother? An uncle? Hard to say. I can't nd out much being a drone, so maybe the other girls are having better luck. Ivy is the spy, and I wonder what dirt she is uncovering being next to the Queen.

The footman caught up with us on our cleaning spree and ran up to the Headmaster. After a few words, the Headmaster claps her hands. "Attention! The house of Gallerion had just arrived, split up into pairs, and see to their needs right away!" Elle points at two girls to my left. "You two go to the queen and the princess immediately."

Gallerion.

Apparently, I'm their lost princess.

"Mort," I whisper as we scurry o to help the royal family.

"Yes?"

"I am assuming Peirce put memories of me in the family of Gallerion?"

"Yes, and it's complicated."

We pass a couple of guards, and I lower my head, not wanting to draw attention. "How is Laura, the princess?"

"She does not have royal blood. The second Queen of Gallerion had an affair without the King knowing." We turn a sharp corner and stop, waiting till the coast is clear. If we are caught talking, I'm assuming there will be hell to pay.

"Go on," I whisper, impatient.

"Your mother Alexandria, had you with the King, Bel De Monte, then she was murdered. She had a sis and was declared that she committed suicide. I do not think that's what happened, and you can probably guess the same. The King remarried Laura's mother, Irena. Irena then had an a air with one of the king's advisers, and I'm not sure which one. But Laura doesn't have royal blood, and I believe whoever disposed of your mother also got rid of you," Mort whispers quickly then glances around.

Oh wow.

Is it weird that I feel pain at not knowing my fake mother? Probably because I never had parents of my own. "I'm placing a bet on Queen Irena, and if I'm right, I am going to bring Ball back down." How dare that woman kill my fake mother!! And sell me to the highest bidder, no doubt. "What did they say happened to the other girl?"

"You were four. Your family picture is still hanging in the Gallerion castle."

"How will they know it's me?"

I'm so confused at this point.

"Your eye color." Mort continues. "Among other proof. We ve DNA test. But you are the only other person to possess snake-eyes besides the lost princess of Gallerion. Your real name, if it gets to that is Ursula."

"Schwalt?"

"I picked it out, Peirce let me."

"That's the name you picked out?" I ask in horror.

She looks genuinely e ended. "It's a beautiful name!"

"Brittni?" I place my hand over her mouth. "You want people to hear us? Fine, it's a lovely name."

We hear voices, and then they fade again.

"Is this what happened? Or is this all made up by Fairy Godmother Inc.?"

Mort nods. "Mostly. The real princess of Gallerion also possessed snake-eyes weirdly enough, but we cursed her name because she ended up dying. So, you can avenge her death. Irena's e an lead to Laura. Sets works it out somehow to where it does not upset the shift in the Universe but twice to it. But everything is pretty dead on."

"I'm starting to see, sort of."

No wonder Peirce and Fairy Godmother were giving me weird looks, my eye color.

Mort is typing and blinking nine. "The plan of action I came up with is to get Laura's DNA. Mid June from maybe s a glass or napkin."

"They have DNA tests?"

"Of course. Gathorn is very advanced. Just no one ever doubted Queen Irena to cheat, leading to an illegitimate child. Or if someone knew I'm sure they were blamed." Mort is still typing. "Peirce just said all players are at Gathorn castle. Update."

A wave of panic hit me. "Elle better leave and go to our duties. That means the house of Mort Gallier just arrived, and the headmaster is probably having a coie!"

...

Another day has passed.

I don't think I have worked so hard in my life.

On my only hour break, I slept hardcore. My body aches, and my feet are still throbbing from going up ights of stairs for hours. I have not seen Apollo since our time on the ship, just that I heard I spotted Chelle from a distance, but I could not say ly, being a slave in all. Must keep our heads down an everted from our betters.

Slaves know our place.

Ivory washes through me upon seeing what given Peirce made for her. It is dazzling emerald green and cream lace, a vision. But she is also on the arm of her soon-to-be-husband. He is a handsome fellow but didn't hold a candle to Apollo Augustus Gathorn, the third. Still, though, she is better o than I am. I feel like all she must do is tell Apollo she dislikes her betrothed and wants out.

Eye-roll.

My plight is quite desolate.

"Get up!" Mort yells in my ear.

"No."

I have no enthusiasm. All hope is lost for me. I just pray someone else gets Apollo over entitled Laura. Barf.

Mort smiles. "We have to go wash up a mess that was made by the royal hounds, mud, and water."

I barely look at her, wondering if she'd trial her mind as well.

"The mess is right next to the drawing-room where Laura is, and I believe Apollo is there with his brothers."

I jump out of bed so fast I think I up-set the gravitational pull of the planet. I must see them out of curiosity, in my defense. We both are power walking towards the main wing of the castle like it's an Olympic race. It takes us fteen minutes, but we arrive in the main hall, the grand entrance.

The hall is gigantic with ceilings so high I can barely see the top of their spectrum. People are everywhere, servants, and royalty in the massive mix. We keep our heads down as I follow Mort toward the dog mess. The grand hall thins out and breaks o into two large rooms, the drawing-room, and the grand library.

They're not very many people down this far, and I immediately spot the muddy mess by a back entrance to the royal kitchen. My heart starts to pound when I hear laughter coming from the drawing-room.

"Look from over here." Mort whispers and jerks her head. "You can see inside."

I get down on my hands and knees and pretend I'm cleaning along with Mort. Don't mind us, just poor little servants. I inch forward and slightly turn my long brim bonnet to the left.

That's when I see Apollo Augustus Gathorn.

I have to say his full name because I don't know him.

Cue pity party.

But greatness that man is handsome. Finely dressed in an all-black dress coat and tight black pants showcasing the thick muscle of his thighs. I keep my mouth shut, so I don't drool. The style is very eighteenth-century Europe but with their own futuristic twist. Apollo's black boots reach up to his knees, and the crisp white shirt is tied together at the neck. The necklace looks like it's weaved from pure gold matching the underbones of his hair.

He smiles at something, and I realize he is leaning up against a large black piano. The color drains from my face as I hear a lovely opera voice drift out of the room.

"I guess we know what talent Laura requested," Mort whispers next to me, rolls her eyes.

A beautiful voice.

Her blond hair is piled up high on her head, and she is wearing a lovely lilac gown. Thanks a lot Pierce, way to make my life miserable. Apollo is watching her, and I can't see his expression. But I can see that Laura is closing her eyes as she hits a high note, making me want to vomit.

"Her breasts are bigger too," Mort con rms to my dismay.

I'm sunk.

"We need a diversion."

My head whips to here. "What?"

Mort looks pissed. "Ohhhh. I hate her agent Leerie."

I glance back and see the plain maid by Laura's side with a smile on her face.

"At this rate, they both will win." She gets up and leaves me, disappearing through to the kitchen. "Moth!" I hiss.

Great.

I start scrubbing the oor in case anyone glances over, my nerves in a jumble.

Minutes later, Mort reappears and throws a piece of meat at me. bits of steak littering my basic gray gown. "What in the hell?" I stare up at her and frown at her wicked smile.

"Trust me."

Panic hits me. "No, Mort! Whatever you're thinking, don't!" I scale.

I suddenly hear dogs, lots of them.

Oh, for the love of everything that's holy.

It happens so fast I don't have time to run, three large and stubbery bloodhounds are tramping me. I scream. I hear fabric ripping from somewhere on my person, and I make out distant shouts to my left. I am covering my head as I'm being crushed by hyper and hungry canines.

I feel a sharp pain on my leg, and I gasp in agony.

Make it stop!

Mort will pay.

Vengeance will be mine.

I scream again as I suddenly feel myself being lifted and my whole body being thrown o killer. Panic rises in my chest as I realize I'm being carried like a sack of potatoes! I hear a loud male's voice yelling something, causing me to tense.

My hair is tangled around my head, preventing me from seeing straight, but I know that voice. My heart leaps to life, and flight sets in. Seconds later, I'm dumped on something hard, and it's not until I can get the hair out of my face does my world come into focus.

Apollo's face is right in front of mine, and his dark eyes widen when we make contact. The impact of his stare feels like someone took a bat to my head. I slowly glance around to see that he carried me into the back entrance of the kitchen. I'm sitting on a table. Apollo's face is line with my chest.

"You," he accuses. He glances past me to all the kitchen sta that is frozen from shock by the incident. "Everyone leave, now. Tell someone to fetch the healer."

Then Apollo leaves!

He leaves me sitting here on the table, and I hear voices talking outside the door. I don't think my pulse has slowed down even a tint from ramming speed. What am I to do? My cheeks stain red in embarrassment. I wince, and I try to move o the table right when Apollo returns.

He points at me. "Don't move."

I freeze.

He comes to stand right in front of me for several seconds, and then his arms brace on either side of me.

Oh. My. Goodness. He. is. Close.

I swallow and try to breathe. "Thanks for saving me."I whisper, not knowing what else to say.

His dark gaze glitters as the light catches them. He says nothing as his stare travels down my neck and lower to my ripped gown. "You're hurt."

"Not bad," I get out, still scared to move.

Apollo's hands move to my torn dress and yanks it open, making me gasp. My thighs are exposed, and my rugby rashes are ripped. I have a gash on the side of my leg, but I am too focused on my exposed thighs. I take steady breaths as I watch Apollo's lower eyes at me, his chest taking a deep breath.

His hand feathers across my knee then higher to my exposed thigh, causing an army of butter so s to take right in the pot of my stomach. "Your skin is soft, perfect." he says almost to himself.

Thank you, Fairy Godmother Inc., for that one. Very grateful for that at this moment because my legs do look killer.

He raises his black gaze, and a shiver runs down my spine. "Amnesia, you say? I had my people investigate your situation further, and I can't nd anything. Why is that?"

I shrug and glance away, not being able to hold his stare. "That's the thing with amnesia, you can't remember."

"Uh-huh." he murmurs and nods. He looks back down to my legs, and I can see his jaw ex Then he pushes both of my thighs, making them open. He hesitates as he spreads my legs and steps in between them bringing us very close. I can't breathe. I feel his head. I can smell the intoxicating scent of him, and it makes me dizzy.

The position is scandalous.

Even for my standards.

But I don't move. I look up at Apollo and narrow my eyes. "You think you can manhandle me because I am a slave?"

At-a-girl.

His face mere inches from mine. "Absolutely. But you should already know that from being a slave." He murmurs back and shifts his weight, hands tightening on my thighs.

I bite my lip as he leans closer. I feel his breath on my jawline. "Maybe I was not a slave beforehand."

Apollo laughs. "I think that's a safe bet."

"You're so sure?"

"Absolutely."

I must erase into this test pronoss thing.

It's time to stop acting like a slave and nd some courage. "Then help me nd out who I am." I o er and force grin, making Apollo raise a brow. "And you should let go of me. Seeing how we both know what I'm am not." I jerk my legs and kick him hard in the stomach.

That shocks him, but I can see something in his black gaze as a dark grin spreads over his lips. There is excitement in his eyes, or possibly something equally as alarming. My heart pounds as he grabs my thighs again. His hands are. "Try that again, and I will leave you restrained," he whispers and leans into his mouth right next to my ear. A part of me cannot comprehend that this has turned sexual, the tension cracking. I feel him grab my hair and pull it back, making my head tilt back, exposing my neck. A thrill shoots through me as I feel him pull my hair harder. His breath is hot, and the slight feel of his lips on my skin unleashes an army of butter so s to take right. "I would watch yourself Angel because I have the power to make your life a living hell."

He lifts back from me and walks to the door without a second glance. He left here, breathing hard, and a smile spreads over my face.

Mort deserves a medal for this one.

I still have a silly smile on my face as the medical help arrives.

Game changer.

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