

# **Claimed And Marked By Her Stepbrother Mates**

## **- Chapter 31-Mr. Rune Nightmare**

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##### **Helanie:**

I don't remember waking up to such happiness before. My mother had a radiant smile on her lips as she gently roused me from sleep.

"Your dad and I have been waiting for you at the breakfast table. He made your favorite banana pancakes," she said, walking over to the large closet to pick out a dress for me. But something felt off.

Her face.

Why did she look like a stranger? I couldn't recall ever seeing this face before, but deep inside, I knew this was supposed to be my mother.

"What are you thinking about?" she asked, likely noticing me lost in thought.

"Did you change your hairstyle or makeup?" I asked as I got out of bed, moving toward her and cupping her face in my hands.

Her smile was so warm and comforting. Yet, the strange feeling of not recognizing her face was unsettling. She was so loving and kind, and I didn't want to hurt her feelings by asking anything foolish.

"You noticed?" she said, touching her hair and smiling. At that moment, I realized the issue wasn't with her--it was with me.

She seemed fine. Maybe I just woke up on the wrong side of the bed. I gave her a smile and nodded.

"Anyway, your ball gown has arrived. You're going to look stunning. Just take a shower, and then I'll let the makeup artist in," my mother said, patting my shoulder as she walked away. But then she paused, turned back, and held my arms, looking deep into my eyes. "You will never be sad. My sweet daughter, you will never cry for your mother's embrace again."

I didn't fully understand what she meant, but hearing those words felt like the answer to my deepest wish. An overwhelming urge to cry swept over me. But before I could release the tears, a knock at the door interrupted us.

"Oh, that must be your stylist. The Alpha King must be very impatient. He's been sending gifts and jewels for you since this morning. This ball is going to be the best thing that's ever happened to you," my mother said. She was right. I needed to get ready--Alpha King would be waiting for our first dance together.

If my memory serves me correctly, I felt the mate bond with him sometime last year, and we've been together ever since.

He had expressed his desire to make me his Luna Queen, and I had accepted it. However, it wasn't like a clear memory--just something I knew, as if it were a fact stored in the back of my mind.

After my mom left, I stepped into the bathroom, and the moment I caught my reflection in the mirror, my entire body began to tremble.

This wasn't some innocent, "Oh, look, I'm so beautiful" kind of surprise. Nor was it the horror of discovering a pimple on such a big day.

It was something far worse.

"My hair!" I gasped, staring in disbelief. What had happened to my platinum blonde hair? It was black now. But I was blonde--at least, I thought I was.

I shook my head in confusion before deciding to take a shower. Maybe I was losing my mind from the stress of today's event.

My life was perfect. I had maids and servants always ready to serve me. People adored me. My brother and sister were like my best friends. Sometimes it felt like I was living in a dream. How could anyone's life be this perfect?

I was the most cherished Royal--the Beta's daughter, loved deeply by everyone. After slipping into the stunning golden gown, I stepped out of the bathroom to greet the makeup artist and stylist the Alpha King had sent from the royal mansion.

They prepared me as if I were a princess.

I felt complete.

My heart raced as I looked at myself in the mirror.

"Look at you! I hope all evil eyes stay far away," my mother said, entering the room with my father, both of them beaming with pride.

"Mom," I turned toward her, holding a thick, curly strand of hair in my hand, showing it to her.

"Why is it black? Wasn't I a blonde?" I asked, and that's when everything seemed to freeze. Both my parents stiffened, and even my sister, who was about to enter the room, stopped mid-step, not moving an inch.

"Guys?" I questioned, taking a cautious step back to observe them.

"Huh?" And then, just like that, everyone started moving again, leaving me utterly confused.

"You all froze, like--" I couldn't even find the right word to describe what had just happened.

"Let's go. The Alpha King is waiting for you," my mother quickly smiled again, taking my hand and leading me outside as if nothing had happened.

I didn't want to linger either. My mate was waiting for me at the royal hall, and he had sent his Lamborghini to escort us. The whole protocol felt grand and dignified.

My brother couldn't stop talking about how I was the best sister he could ever ask for.

When we arrived at the royal hall, the chauffeur was there to assist us. As I walked through the crowd, people smiled at me. The soft, tantalizing music set the perfect mood.

The hall was beautifully lit, and in the center stood my mate.

He wore an all-white suit, his smile radiant. His jet-black hair was neatly styled with gel, and his striking blue eyes were fixed on me from across the room. He was tall and broad, clearly muscular, but I couldn't tell too much about his abs under the suit. He was The Alpha King Rune Nightmare.

I shook myself out of my daze, realizing this wasn't the first time I was meeting him. Of course, he had abs, and he was the best mate I could have ever hoped for. He treated me perfectly and always took care of me.

He extended his hand for me to take, and without a second thought, I stepped forward and placed my hand in his.

His touch was unexpectedly cold, despite him being such a warm person.

"My beautiful Helanie," his voice echoed through the hall. Everyone fell silent as he spoke, even the music stopped.

"My mate!" he added, pulling me into his chest. I giggled softly as his arm wrapped around my back, his other hand still holding mine.

The music resumed, and we began to dance. Everyone stood around us, watching in silence.

There were a few moments when something felt slightly eerie--nothing major, just the fact that everyone wore the same kind of smile, and they barely blinked.

"Eyes on me," my mate whispered, and my gaze instantly shifted to him, as if I had no choice.

But strangely, it didn't bother me that much.

We continued dancing until some commotion interrupted our peace. That's when the smiles around us began to fade.

My mate stepped back slightly and said, "Forgive me, my love. It seems we have an uninvited guest trying to steal you from me."

His voice held a subtle hint of aggression as he looked over my shoulder. I turned to follow his gaze.

There he was--a tall man dressed in black pants and a matching shirt, his eyes locked on me as he declared, "I am here to take my stepsister back home."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 32-The Most Hated She-Wolf**

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**Kaye:**

"Now what do we do?" Maximus asked Norman, who had been pacing restlessly, clearly struggling to come up with a plan.

He had been doing this anxious pacing for over ten minutes, and that was never a good sign. When Norman runs out of ideas, it usually means we're in deep trouble.

"Okay, here's the plan," Norman finally stopped, his expression a mix of anxiety and forced confidence. "We can just tell our dad that we found her like that," he explained, as if convinced no one would question us if she went missing.

"Did she ever mention anyone who might come looking for her or start investigating where she was when she smelled this rose?" Norman asked, turning to Maximus. Maximus went silent for a moment, then slowly raised his head and shook it.

"From what I gathered, she's pretty much on her own. She doesn't have anyone," he replied.

"Good—," Norman started to say, but I quickly shook my head.

"I'm the one who brought the rose here. They're kept locked away for a reason, never meant to be around people. I was supposed to take care of everything, and I'm the one who messed up. How can I just lie about it and then go back to working with herbs like I wasn't reckless enough to land this girl in a dream prison?" I unfolded my arms and let out a frustrated, almost desperate, complaint.

"But it wasn't your fault. She shouldn't have been snooping around," Norman defended me immediately. He would never hesitate to stand up for me or any of his brothers. He was always on our side, no matter what.

"She didn't know. It was my responsibility to safeguard that rose," I snapped, stepping away from him, needing some space. Maximus looked just as worried. This entire mess was because of me. A nagging thought started to take hold—what if I really am irresponsible?

I can't seem to handle my responsibilities without dragging everyone else into trouble.

I have a problem or maybe I'm the problem.

"Kaye! Calm down. Don't blame yourself," Maximus stepped forward and hugged me tightly. I couldn't even bring myself to return the hug, the guilt weighing too heavily on me. The fact that he was still comforting me, even after I had messed up so royally, made me want to crawl into a hole and disappear.

"I need to get her back," I muttered, nodding to myself as I began to gather my resolve. I was pulling myself together, ready to take action.

"So what are you saying? Speak clearly," Norman demanded, noticing the shift in my expression. Maximus released me from the hug and both of them watched my face, waiting.

"There's a way to enter the same dream as the dreamer. If I get the same rose, tie our hands together, and—" before I could finish, Norman was already shaking his head, and

Maximus was throwing his hands over his head, his body rocking back and forth in protest.

"Stop right there. I'm not letting you go into that dream and get stuck with her," Norman cut in sharply, his voice firm. I knew he'd object. He was completely against this idea and would never let me attempt something so reckless.

"You get where I'm coming from, right, Maximus?" I turned to him, searching his face for some support, hoping for just one person to be on my side.

"I'm sorry, but I agree with Norman. You know how to enter the dream, sure—but not how to bring her back. What if you get trapped in there too?" Maximus stepped back, aligning himself with Norman. Both of them were adamant, and I realized it was going to take a lot of convincing to get through to them.

"You're not understanding," I sighed, exhaustion creeping into my voice and etched across my face.

"I understand that you want to fix this, but Kaye, it's a suicide mission," Norman countered, his tone softening just slightly. "Why would I let you go to save someone that, frankly, I don't think anyone even wants back?"

His words shocked me. I had always seen him as protective of us, and it hit me how much he had distanced himself from the rest of the world.

"Don't look at me like that. We both know the truth," Norman continued, his voice cold. "Her own mother kicked her out. Why? Because a mother knows her child. She probably saw right through her. That girl only came back for the luxuries, not because she cared about anyone. Her father doesn't want her home either. No one's been looking for her. Doesn't that tell you something about what kind of person she is?"

His explanation made me sigh deeply.

He wasn't wrong.

"Yeah, she told me no one wants her and that she has nowhere to go," Maximus added, his voice low.

"It's not even about her anymore. I'm not thinking of her as my stepsister, but as someone who should have been protected from the rose. I gather these roses every few months to make sure no one falls victim to them—and now I've brought one right to her?!" The guilt weighed heavily on me. I couldn't live with the thought that a girl was trapped in a dream prison because of my carelessness.

"I get it, but it still doesn't justify risking your life. You have no idea if you'll make it out alive, so let's drop that idea for good," Norman sighed, rubbing his face in frustration.

"Okay, listen—," Norman placed a hand on my shoulder, his voice softening, "I'll go talk to Emmet, our walking encyclopedia, see if he knows anything useful." He paused, meeting my eyes to make sure I was actually paying attention.

"And in the meantime, make sure you two stay here and don't breathe a word of this to anyone," he pointed at Maximus, then gave my shoulder a reassuring pat. It was clear he wasn't going to let me go through with my plan, which is why I stopped pushing.

"Okay?" Norman asked again, stepping back to look at both of us, gauging our reactions.

"Okay, I guess," I mumbled, barely audible. Norman continued walking backward, maintaining eye contact with me until he finally broke it, turning to glance at Maximus.

"Maximus, come with me for a moment," he gestured at him, then turned and headed out. Helanie was still sound asleep, looking as if she was caught in a peaceful dream.

As they walked away, I clutched the brown envelope tightly in my hand. Inside, there was one more rose. I knew Norman was giving Maximus instructions to keep an eye on me, to make sure I didn't do anything reckless. After their conversation, Maximus returned while Norman disappeared out of the garage.

"Okay, let's wait for Norman. How about I pour you some wine? It'll help you relax a little," Maximus said, walking over to a chair in the corner after grabbing a bottle of wine and two glasses in his other hand, patting the empty seat next to him. But I had already made up my mind.

"I'm doing it," I declared, without hesitation.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 33-Crazy Dynamic!**

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**Kaye:**

I knew I had to repeat myself, even louder this time, and explain to my brother the plan that had been brewing in my mind all along.

"I'm going into the Dream Prison," I repeated, noticing how clueless my brother seemed.

"Huh?" He tilted his head, slowly standing up and setting the bottle and glasses aside as he walked toward me again. I knew he would try to stop me, but I was determined to go through with it.

It was my responsibility to keep these cursed roses away from my people, and instead, I had failed miserably.

"I'm doing it," I said more firmly this time. He shook his head in response, his expression hardening.

"You've lost your mind. I won't allow this. Norman trusted me with this duty. He knew the moment he left, you'd try to convince me too. So no! I'm not letting it happen," he said sternly, coming closer, standing right in front of me as if daring me to try and head toward the bed to begin the dream-travel process.

"Maximus! If you respect my decision, you'll let me do this. I need to go in there and bring her out—" I was tired of the back-and-forth. I was an adult capable of making my own choices. The mere thought of someone suffering because of me was unbearable. How on earth did Norman expect me to go on living as if nothing had happened?

"No! Are you serious? You don't even know how it works," Maximus argued, standing so close as if to block any attempt I might make to lie down. Then his eyes fell on the envelope I was holding, and he realized what he had to stop me.

He tried to snatch the envelope from my hand, but I quickly hid it behind my back. I needed to speak to him first.

"I know how to get in there and bring someone out, okay?" The moment I said it, his jaw dropped.

"Then why have you never brought anyone out before?" he asked, genuinely curious. He knew how protective I was of these victims—whether from herbs, cursed plants, or otherwise. It made sense that I'd have jumped in to save them if I could.

"Because they didn't have their roses with them when they were taken. She does. She has her rose, and I'll have mine in hand. I just need you to keep an eye on us and make sure no one steals the roses," I said confidently, even though deep down, I wasn't entirely sure how I'd manage to rescue her. All I had was what I'd read in the old texts.

"First, explain how!" he insisted, ready to seize the envelope if I didn't start talking.

"By breaking the haze and waking her up inside her dream. I need to do it quickly, or she'll lose touch with reality and become part of the dream world forever," I explained, recalling the account of someone who had allegedly escaped the Dream World. I wasn't sure who this person was, as the book never mentioned a name. It only described the experience of leaving the Dream Prison.



"Please, do you not trust me?" I was starting to worry that if we kept arguing, we might lose Helanie to the Dream Prison forever.

"Norman is going to kill me for this," Maximus muttered. "But fine, if you're that certain, I'll let you go in. Just know this: if you don't come out, I swear I'll jump in and stay there with you forever." He finally relented, as I had expected. Despite our constant bickering, we were close—closer than anyone else.

Our dynamic was unique. With Norman, we always tried to be on our best behavior. He was more like a father than an older brother. Whenever we were in trouble—any kind of trouble—we knew we could count on Norman. We were his top priority.

With Emmet, though, things were different. He often made us feel judged. He'd scold us first and then offer help, and even then, he wasn't as reliable. Once he started drinking, he'd forget about everyone, and we'd have to take care of him.

But Maximus and I? We were a mess together. We were everything Norman and Emmet weren't. Maximus was Dad's favorite, and even when we got into trouble together, I'd end up taking the blame.

So, the decision was made. I pulled out the rose and walked over to the bed.

"Bring me a purple ribbon," I instructed Maximus, who still looked confused and worried.

"You think I keep ribbons lying around here?" he tried to joke, searching for something to ease the tension before sighing in resignation.

"I've got a purple tie. Will that work?" he asked, holding up a tie.

"Yeah, that'll do," I said, reaching out for it.

He handed me the tie, and I climbed onto the bed after taking off my shoes. I took Helanie's cold hand in mine. As soon as our hands touched, I felt something strange. Her skin was so soft, and even though it was cold, there was a subtle comfort in her touch.

"Feeling a bit awkward lying next to your stepsister?" Maximus teased, snapping me back to reality. I forced a grunt, pretending not to be distracted by the fact that I was, indeed, lying next to my 'stepsister.'

"What? No!" I quickly replied.

"She's not my sister or even my stepsister," I muttered inwardly, as I quickly tied the purple tie around her wrist and let her hand fall limp beside her.

Her touch had shaken my sense of reality.

I lay down next to her awkwardly, feeling Maximus hovering over me as he secured the other end of the tie to my wrist. The tension between us was palpable, though neither of us said anything.

Then, I brought the rose to my nose, inhaling its delicate, intoxicating scent. A wave of drowsiness washed over me.

It felt strange—yet somehow familiar.

Before I knew it, I was slipping into sleep. And the next thing I know, I am gaining awareness in a whole different environment.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 34-Her Dream Man Vs Her Stepbrother**

### **Chapter 34: 34-Her Dream Man Vs Her Stepbrother**

**Kaye:**

"Hey, who are you?" I heard someone speaking right in my ear, making me wince slightly as I struggled to open my eyes.

"Hey, don't you know black isn't allowed?" A woman shouted, and I finally snapped into full awareness. I jolted up as if waking from the dead and looked around at the crowd, all gasping, dressed entirely in white.

They all looked like some kind of AI characters—almost as if they had been hand-drawn. Each of them wore the same expression, like one person's emotions were copied across the others. If one appeared worried, the others mirrored the concern instantly. I didn't need to think twice; I knew exactly where I was.

I was in the perfect dream of Helanie.

"Who are you?" A woman holding a white umbrella asked, her eyes scanning me from head to toe.

"I—uh—I'm here for Helanie," I stammered. The moment her name left my lips, I watched them smile, placing their hands on their hearts.

"Oh, our sweet Helanie? Why are you looking for our beautiful child?" An elderly woman spoke kindly, nodding her head as she used such affectionate words for Helanie.

"Do you... know her?" I asked, unsure of how things worked here. I had learned a lot about this dream world. Yet, aside from one person—who many still called a myth—no one had ever escaped this prison of dreams.

"Of course we do. She's marrying our king tomorrow. We all know her well," the woman looked almost offended by my question.

"Can you take me to her?" Her statement terrified me. Marrying? Who was she marrying? And what kind of dream was this?

Did she want everyone to love her? Well, she could have just started acting nice and responsible in the real world. She didn't need a dream prison to have her perfect life.

"Why? Why would we take you to her? She is pure—so sweet, and a virgin. Why would we take you, dressed in such dark clothes, to her?" A man stepped forward, clearly displeased that I even mentioned Helanie's name.

"Because I'm her stepbrother," I blurted out, realizing I needed to respond quickly before they turned on me. I knew nothing about these people or what kind of power they might have.

"Oh? Her stepbrother? That's strange. But we're heading to her special dance with the king. If you'd like, you can join us. I'm sure the king will know what to do with you." The old lady's smile was blatantly fake.

But she couldn't fool me.

I knew full well they were taking me to this so-called king, and I had a bad feeling about him. I rose from the spot where I had landed and began walking behind them. They turned occasionally to cast quick, suspicious glances at me, whispering among themselves as we moved.

Before long, we arrived at a grand hall where everyone stood around watching a couple dancing. And that's when the alarm bells started going off in my mind.

As I stepped inside, the crowd parted, creating a path for me. They looked at me like they might tear me apart, but my gaze settled on the woman in a golden dress. She was the only one wearing a color other than white. And that's when my heart began to race uncontrollably.

Even though her hair was now black, Helanie was still unmistakable.

Her eyes sparkled, wide and vibrant, and her lips were fuller, tinted with a deep red. She had rounder cheeks, but her sharp jawline made her stand out from everyone else.

I had to take a deep breath and shift my focus to the man standing beside her as I announced, "I'm here to take my stepsister back home."

I noticed a confused look on Helanie's face, as if she had no idea what was going on. At this point, I began to wonder if the person who had been labeled a myth wasn't lying after all.

That mythical person claimed to have escaped the dream prison, saying that the dream reflected something deeply desired in real life. They spoke of a master in the dream, someone who wanted to manipulate the victim into accepting him as their ruler. And perhaps that's how the victim would remain trapped forever.

"You cannot be her stepbrother. Her mother is married to her father, and they live happily ever after. There is no stepson," the man spoke in a sharp accent, one that was hard to place.

I glanced over at the people he referred to as her parents, and sure enough, they weren't her real parents. They were just random people who looked nothing like her actual mother—or, likely, her father either.

"I don't know... I just know she's my stepsister," I quickly adjusted my tone to sound as confused as possible.

If I wanted to save her, I had to make her hate this dream world and want to return to reality. But the way she stood next to this man, she had never seemed happier.

That was not a good sign.

The man looked over at Helanie, whose gaze was fixed on me, making me uncomfortable. Why was she staring at me so intently?

The man then cleared his throat and smiled. "Well, welcome. I assume you've come from a different place?" He tilted his body slightly to the left, leaning on one leg as he waited for my response.

I nodded, and only then did he smile with relief. "Well, you'll need to take off that black shirt first. We have some strict rules here. We don't allow dark clothing. They remind us of darker times," he said, gesturing with his hands as he spoke.

From his words, it was clear he wanted me to forget where I had come from.

"Okay," I agreed, forcing a weak smile.

"The dance was wonderful, my love. I think you should head home now and rest. You'll need to prepare for the wedding in the morning," the man said softly, holding Helanie's hands with care.

"And Mrs. Niles, why don't you take this gentleman home and give him some of your husband's white clothes?" The man addressed Helanie's supposed "mother."

"Of course, Alpha King Rune," the woman bowed to him, though the strange look they exchanged didn't sit well with me.

I realized I might be running out of time. This man was the alpha king in Helanie's perfect life, and like a master in someone else's dream. His ultimate goal was to make her submit to him completely.

In Helanie's case, marrying her would be the final step in controlling her.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 35-The Inappropriate Stepbrother**

### **Chapter 35: 35-The Inappropriate Stepbrother**

#### **Helanie:**

Something about this guy claiming to be my stepbrother just didn't sit right with me. I kept glancing over at my mother and then at my father while I sat in the passenger seat. My new, mysterious stepbrother sat in the backseat.

We were driving back home in our own car, and my mother had insisted that I sit up front with my father.

"Why did you call yourself her stepbrother?" I heard my mother ask the guy named Kaye, which is how he had introduced himself to us.

"I don't know. Did I?" he responded.

"Kaye! You must have forgotten. You're her real brother. Your father and I gave you away because we didn't have the means to take care of a child when you were born. You've been living with my sister, but you always visit us," my mother explained. The moment she said that, a memory of him visiting us resurfaced.

However, I still felt a strange, heavy unease with him being in the car. I steadily turned my neck to pass a quick glance and instead stared at my mother as she quickly moved in front of him. Her hair got in the way.

Two beautiful purple roses rocking her hairstyle.

Wait! She had one rose earlier, where did the second one come from? Did she pick it up from the venue? My mom was very particular about the rose in her hair. But now she has two.

"Oh right. I remember now. Wait! How did I forget?" Kaye suddenly straightened up, startling me with how tall he was.

"Or were you just playing a prank on us?" my father asked, and that's when the three of them started laughing. I thought maybe I should laugh too.

So, I did.

But I had missed the funny part. I was trying hard to recall more memories of him, but nothing concrete came to mind—nothing that I could picture clearly when I closed my eyes.

When we arrived home, my mother made sure to walk me to my bedroom. "Listen, don't leave your room until morning. It's bad luck for a bride to talk to anyone before the wedding. Now, go to bed so we can wake up early in the morning," she said, stroking my hair lovingly before closing my bedroom door.

I heard a click from outside and realized she was serious about these customs. I didn't mind; I felt so happy being cared for like this.

After taking off my dress and slipping into a white nightgown, I stood in front of the mirror, staring at my reflection.

And just like before, I felt strangely unfamiliar to myself.

Was I just nervous because of the wedding? My dad had mentioned that my mom felt the same way when she was getting married to him.

Shaking off the thoughts, I turned to leave my bedroom but froze when I saw someone sitting on my bed, the window to my room wide open.

I swear, if I hadn't felt so secure and content in my life, I would've screamed at the top of my lungs. But I didn't.

However, I stormed over to the bed to make sure I wasn't seeing things incorrectly. My brother Kaye was sitting there, head tilted, holding a book I had been reading.

"The Perfect Life of Helanie? Seriously, who wrote a book about you?" His voice dripped with jealousy.

Yes, that's exactly what it was—he was envious of my perfect life and how everyone adored me.

"Why are you even here? And don't touch my stuff with your hands!" I snapped, snatching the book out of his grip and placing it back on the nightstand, glaring at him.

"That's it?" he asked, and I frowned at him.

"That's your dream? People aim for greatness, and all you want is to be loved? So the others were right about you. You want to be treated like a princess, to have everything revolve around you." I had no idea what he was talking about. What others? Was he referring to my brother Sullivan?

"You and Sullivan are jealous of me because everyone cares about me—" As I started to rant, he suddenly stood up and grabbed my wrist, twisting my arms behind my back and shoving me against the wall.

He did it so effortlessly and shamelessly that I forgot to scream. But as the shock settled, I realized how close his face was to mine.

"What the hell are you doing? I'm going to scream," I hissed, warning him.

"Do it, and I'll silence you," he hissed back, his face inching even closer.

"You'll need to let go of my hands to do that," I muttered, trying to lean away from him, attempting to avoid the awkward proximity.

"There are other ways I can silence you," his eyes darted to my lips before he quickly looked up. For a moment, I swear he even surprised himself because he gulped and hurriedly added, "I'm not here to argue with you."

I was still shocked by his comment.

"You're here to make your sister uncomfortable? How could you even joke about something so disgusting?" I snapped, justifiably furious.

How dare he touch me like that? It was completely inappropriate.

"We're not siblings," he muttered under his breath.

"What the hell are you talking about? Why are you trying to convince me that we're not related?" A shiver ran up my spine as he narrowed his eyes at me and groaned.

"It's not like that. I'm here to bring you back to the real world. You're trapped in some ridiculous fantasy that's going to consume you," he said, his tone growing more intense.

I couldn't let him keep ranting.

"Fantasy? This is my world! What are you even talking about? Did you come here to ruin my wedding or something?" I grimaced as he rolled his eyes, leaning so close that we were practically breathing the same air.

"Helanie! You sniffed that stupid purple rose and ended up here. Did you forget? You've been working for my brother Maximus, and I caught you." The moment he said that name, a shudder went through my body.

It was a new name, but something about it deeply unsettled me. Kaye noticed my reaction and nodded aggressively.

"That's it. I have to say things from the real world to break you free from this dream," he said, a wide grin spreading across his face as he started spouting the most outrageous things.

"Remember? You went to live with your mother, and she kicked you out. You had nowhere to go. You said you left your father too. You wanted to join the academy, but you didn't have any money—" He made me close my eyes, and what I felt on my cheek next stunned me.

Tears.

I hadn't cried out of sadness in years.

"Helanie! Wake up before that man consumes you like he has consumed all his other victims," Kaye shook me, forcing me to open my eyes.

And that's when I gave him a small nod.

"Good. Now, tell me, what do you remember?" He finally let go of my hands and stepped back, waiting for me to agree with him.

But instead, I calmly and steadily said, "That I need to call for help."

Before he could understand what I meant, I started screaming at the top of my lungs, "HELP! HE'S HURTING ME!"

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.



## Chapter 36-Jealous Much?

### Chapter 36: 36-Jealous Much?

**Helanie:**

I watched his face turn red and then lose its color as he yelled back at me while covering my mouth with his hand. "What are you doing?"

The moment we heard footsteps approaching my bedroom, Kaye grabbed my arm and started pulling me towards the window.

"Stop it," he grunted as I shook my head, trying to kick him away.

"I am not going without you; do you understand me?" he hissed, leaning closer to my face. When I attempted to resist further, he seized the small knife from the food platter and held it against my neck, shocking me with his hostility. He then removed his hand from my mouth. I was stunned, feeling the sharp blade against my skin. My heart raced in my throat, my veins pulsating. Yet he looked so calm, as if he had done this before.

"Now shut up," he warned me through his piercing gaze.

"Are you going to kill me?" My breath hitched, and my eyes formed tears of fright. I had such a perfect life until now. Why did he have to come here and ruin my night before the wedding?

"Come with me, and I will spare your life," he hissed, forcing me out of the window. He then continued to throw me over his shoulder and jumped down.

It was all happening so quickly and abruptly that I truly thought I was dreaming. He put me down but only to grab my arm and start sprinting into the darkness. My heart was pounding so hard, and I was too afraid to resist and risk getting stabbed.

I did hear my parents open the door to my room and call out for me, so I had a little confidence that my parents would find me. Or they would contact my mate and let him know what happened very soon.

Once we were deep in the woods and engulfed by darkness, he finally pushed me onto the ground and stood on top of me, his legs spread over my stomach.

"Now, if you make one more noise—" he waved the knife in my face, his massive body hunched over mine. I nodded shakily, showing obedience. He finally stepped back, and I sat up, my hands resting on the ground behind me.

"What do you want from me? Are you going to kill me?" I asked, choking on my own tears.

"No! And stop it—this is not you. You don't even cry when people kick you out of their homes or when they humiliate you. This you—this is pathetic," he had so much animosity in his voice that I began to wonder if maybe he had lost his mind.

"I am me, Helanie. There is no other version of me; why do you keep saying that?" I asked in a low murmur.

"Helanie! You are trapped in this crazy dream world because you—you sniffed that purple rose. This is not real; this is a dream prison, and if you don't get out in time, you will be stuck here forever. And let me tell you something: you will not be happy. You saw those people that you called your parents? I recognized them." He was driving me to the brink of madness now. He looked so tall and ripped, huffing like a beast.

Everything he said went over my head, but it was also one heck of a terrifying claim.

"They were once the main leads in their own dream prison. The master—the alpha king, in your case—showed them this beautiful vision of a perfect life before he consumed them. Now, they aren't even living their own dream. They become a part of whoever comes here. Do you want to be forgotten and become a side character in someone else's perfect dream world?" he yelled, shaking his head angrily at me.

"Now tell me—do you not think this isn't your mother? Do you not remember your mother? Your father? We brothers—we gave you a hard time and kicked you out. But then you still clung around because that is who you are. You are competitive and stubborn and very annoying. You want to get whatever you desire, and you do it no matter how many people are trying to stop you. But this one—the one who just wants to be praised—is not the real you." He knelt down before me, maintaining deep eye contact.

I kept staring at his face until I had a flashback of something very terrifying: my mother grabbing my arm and kicking me out of her house. It shuddered through my body and made Kaye examine me closely.

"You remember something," he commented.

"If it's true—how do you think you are going to break me free from this dream prison?" Since I was beginning to feel very misplaced, I tried to give him a chance. It wasn't a lie that I felt odd about my mother. If this lady was my mother, then who was the one from my flashback?

I had only memories of this place, but I had flashbacks of the ones Kaye was telling me about.

"That—I think if you remember something or everything, you would be able to come back home," he scratched the back of his neck, and I frowned.

"Okay, then remind me," I said, sitting with support from the ground.

"Okay—m," he nodded slightly and then took a deep breath. "You don't look exactly like this in the real world. I mean, you have platinum blonde hair."

The minute he said that, my body was covered in goosebumps. This was the exact thought I had whenever I stared at myself in the mirror.

"I remember myself with blonde hair," I smiled widely, and his face broke into a grin before he smiled too.

"Okay, keep going. You were—um—umm—" He looked around, making me wonder why he didn't remember anything himself.

"Shit—I never spent time with you. I don't know you. I just know you were working in the garage for Maximus when you smelled that rose—" His voice faded as I had a distant memory of that day.

"Ohhhh—I remember—I remember—" I jumped up, getting on my feet, and he followed suit. He looked so happy and excited that I had remembered something. "I remember Maximus!"

"Huh?"

"I remember him. We had this amazing conversation when we washed his car—he was so sweet and flirtatious that I was like, 'Whoa! I am your stepsister, dude!'" I laughed, not realizing the depth of my words, but Kaye didn't seem very pleased for some reason.

I thought he wanted me to remember.

"He flirted with you, and he's the one you remember?" Kaye looked quite displeased.

"You mentioned him, so I remembered him." My excitement faded because I guessed that wasn't a good sign.

"Okay, sure," he uttered, his hands on his waist and looking away.

"But why are we not going back home?" I asked him, and he looked around at the lights appearing brighter.

The commotion started to approach us. It was pack members looking for us, searching for the bride-to-be.

"Shit!" Kaye hissed. "I think we are left with only one option. I have to kiss you!"

My heart dropped in my chest when he cupped my face in his hands out of the blue.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 37-My Stepsister Is My Broken Mate

### Chapter 37: 37-My Stepsister Is My Broken Mate

**Kaye:**

It just felt right. I thought if I reminded her about her real life, she would wake up, but then I realized it wouldn't be that easy. Getting out like that would be too easy. But what's not easy is to find someone to kiss, someone who is not under the hypnosis of that crazy Mr. Rune. That's when I remembered something my foolish brothers had told me when I was a kid. They would tell me these fairytale stories of how the sleeping princess wakes up after a kiss. I wasn't Helanie's prince charming but a kiss might do.

"Kiss her!"

If I kissed her, she would awaken, like some Disney tale. I wasn't entirely convinced, but there was nothing else I could do.

I cupped her face and watched as shock registered in her expression. I didn't want to do this. I had never even considered kissing my stepsister-to-be. And Helanie!

Never!

She was irritating and reminded me of her gold-digging mother. It's women like these who ruin homes for women like my mother.

But right now, I had to close my eyes and do the right thing. Before she could even protest, I pressed my lips against hers.

I thought it would be a quick kiss. Our lips would meet, and before I knew it, the torture would be over. But the moment my lips tasted hers, something switched inside me.

I felt my body heating up, urges rising. My hands held her face tightly; her skin was soft and smooth, like butter.

Instead of breaking the kiss, I found my head tilting and parted my lips just enough to take in her upper lip. That's when I felt a push from her. She had placed her hands on my chest and pushed me away, breaking the kiss.

The awkwardness made me look down, my gaze shifting to the side.

"What the heck was that?" she hissed, wiping her lips clean in a panic.

I wondered what had happened to me.

How had I ended up acting so desperate?

The fact that I never wanted to touch her but ended up holding on made me feel even more embarrassed.

"I told you that might be the way," I groaned, clearing my throat to appear confident. If I acted guilty, it would confirm my shame.

"Yeah, but a peck would have been enough," she mumbled, her mouth barely moving, then she began to look around.

"It didn't work," she said, staring at me, her hands now on her hips.

"Or maybe you've made me lose my mind too. I'm such an idiot for thinking this isn't the real world. You're crazy, and you're driving me crazy—" she hissed, already turning to leave. I had this one chance to make her see the truth, and I screwed it up.

"You had a rough life," I called out, watching her slow down.

The warriors and pack members had passed us, oblivious to our presence in the woods.

But it wouldn't be long before they found us.

"What did you say?" She turned around to face me.

"You weren't just kicked out by your mother; I believe your father never loved you either," I murmured, something I had previously thought was a lie.

But seeing her desperate need for love made me wonder if part of what she had said about her life was indeed true.

"And—you don't even have a wolf. Not a mate or a lover either. You don't have a shelter or any money—there's no one who—" I paused when I noticed tears beginning to form in her eyes. Well, I'm not the kind to make a girl cry, but damn! I had to do it now.

"You were lonely," I added, and soon a tear rolled down her cheek.

"And I'm sure nobody is even looking for you," I continued, watching as her face began to change color. It took me a moment to realize her hair was changing color.

We stood facing each other, the full moon shining above us.

"You—" I fell silent when she closed her eyes, only to open them again with a sniffle.

"I remember everything," of course she did.

Her hair had now turned platinum blonde. Maybe now we could find a way out of here. She buried her face in her hands and started sobbing, causing me to tilt my head and zone out. I thought she would be grateful to wake up from a dream that had imprisoned her.

"Don't worry, we will find a way to get out of here," I told her, taking a steady, deep breath.

Instead of responding, she simply shook her head.

"Okay, you know what? Very soon, they're going to come looking for us. We need to escape before Rune finds you and marks you as his forever," I urged, glancing around and listening as the crowd drew closer once again.

One of these times, they would discover us. The only reason they hadn't yet was, my best guess, the darkness. Mr. Rune didn't like the shadows. He fooled everyone with light and promised a good dream world to make them stay.

"Let's go; we need to hide somewhere else," I said, expecting her to follow me. Instead, she finally uncovered her face and looked me in the eyes.

"No!" Her voice was soft and gentle as she dismissed me.

"What do you mean by no?" I inquired, furrowing my brow.

"My real life sucked. I—I don't ever want to feel that way in my body," her words sent goosebumps coursing through me.

"Your body? What do you mean? Are you upset because you didn't have a wolf?" I was trying to understand her purpose for wanting to stay here, where she wasn't even promised a happily ever after. The minute Mr. Rune marked her, her story would end, and she would become a side character.

"No! I hated everything. Especially how I felt after that night. I don't ever want to look at myself in the mirror and see that victim of abuse—and—" she paused, her words enough to shake the ground beneath my feet.

"I don't ever want anyone to touch me again. So I'd rather stay here and disappear—" It couldn't be. She was saying things that were horrifying.

"No! I am not going to let you ruin yourself," I reached for her hand, and the moment I did, I heard something so terrifying that I instinctively gasped and stepped back.

But the voice echoed through my head again.

"Mate!"

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 38-Save Me, My Stepbrother**

### **Chapter 38: 38-Save Me, My Stepbrother**

#### **Helanie:**

A twisted pain in my chest widened my eyes. Kaye was staring at me as well, looking as shocked as I felt.

Did he hear it too?

Did I just feel the mate bond with him?

But why and how? I had already found my mate, and it was his brother, my other stepbrother. What kind of twisted game was the Moon Goddess playing with me?

I now remembered everything. And yet I didn't want to leave. I told him enough, and that was because my real life was full of misery.

But now this—it just confirmed I shouldn't return. The Moon Goddess was on a mission to make me apologize to her. And he fucking kissed me. I kissed my stepbrother. But is it okay if I think of it as just a dream?

The moon goddess is playing with me.

That had to be it. Why else would she make the people who were going to be my stepbrothers my mates?

Not only that, but they also hated me.

"They are here," and then we broke out of the trance once the loud noises approached us. In that moment, I realized they had caught us.

Or specifically, Kaye.

The warriors arrived and tried to grab Kaye's arm, but he punched one of them in the face. Both of them landed on the ground when he kicked them too, but then many others arrived from behind them.

The entire pack house had now surrounded us.

My mother was among them, wearing her perfect hairstyle, but she looked shocked when she reached me.

"Your hair—" she gasped, covering her mouth with her hands.

"You— you come to my home and try to take away what belongs to me." I felt a long arm wrap around my body, sending goosebumps across my skin.

It was Rune.

I slowly and shakily turned my back to look at him. He wasn't as charming as I had thought before when I was under his control.

But now that I could see his true self, he was terrifying. His hair was wet, and his smirk was extremely creepy.

"Helanie! Come on. How can you want to live here?" The desperation in Kaye's voice was different than before we felt the mate bond.

I gulped at the urgency in his eyes. He had come here for me, whatever the reason, and I was grateful for it.

"She is not coming with you. She would much rather have a perfect life here than suffer in your world," Rune said with a smile, shaking me as he kept his arm wrapped around me, holding me close to him.

"Helanie! I won't leave until you come with me." Kaye extended his hand, and Rune's nails pierced my skin, his grip tightening around my arm, evidence that he wasn't happy about it.

"What made you think you could escape? You came here to ruin my perfect world. You are going to stay here forever. There is no exit. And as for your wolf—I've decided you don't have a wolf in my world," Rune snapped his fingers, and Kaye dropped to his knees. My body flinched, and I swear Rune noticed it because he turned his head to me.



"How about we go away? Huh? Have the perfect ending for you—an ending you wouldn't get in the real world. There's no end there; only one issue resolves, and another pops up. But here, you get a happy ending, and then it's over," he smirked as if that were enough to convince me.

But I was already convinced, wasn't I?

As he started to drag me away, I felt my body freeze. That night when Altan didn't stick around to protect me, I realized I had no one. But then Kaye came here to bring me back.

I was shocked.

I didn't care what compelled him to come here; his dedication to doing the right thing twisted my heart.

I should be doing the right thing too.

"My happiness is not in finding a happy ending," I suddenly stopped and murmured, making Rune lower his head to watch my face. "My happy ending is to go back to the real world and punish those who have wronged me."

With that, I suddenly landed a punch on Rune's face. He barely moved but looked offended. However, my knuckles hurt.

"How dare you!" My mother, who was kind and sweet, lunged at me to slap me. I had let my other mother hurt my feelings, so I wouldn't let this one abuse me.

I grabbed her hand and kicked her in the stomach, causing Rune to let out a growl.

"That's it. Take them away! I will tear them both apart!" Rune yelled, and his body began to emit darkness.

Finally, he was revealing his true self. This place was not a dream nor heaven; it was a nightmare.

"Come on!" Kaye shook me as I watched and turned my neck back to see Rune's neck growing, his head becoming one of those creepy things with wide eyes and an even wider smile.

His people began snickering and stepped out of the way. His neck wiggled and moved in quick motions. It suddenly lunged at me, but Kaye picked me up and tossed me to the side, saving me.

The others were now just standing in a circle to make sure we couldn't leave.

"You cannot escape me," Rune said with a maniacal grin.

His head seemed like a wrecking ball, coming at us. Every time it tried to attack, Kaye would save me.

He was quick and strong, able to lift me as if I were a feather.

"Ughhh! Hiding behind your stepbrother?" Rune stretched his neck up to the sky, his voice booming from above. "So it was all true about you. You're just a pathetic loser. If I were there that night, I would have done the same and even worse to you than what those alphas did. And after I was done with you, I would have made sure to discard your body and kill you."

His words made the crowd laugh, sending tremors of fear through me.

"Don't let him get to your head!" Kaye yelled, holding my hand and preparing to dodge the next attack.

"Aww, poor Helanie. Or maybe you wanted that to happen. You wanted someone to attack you and feel nice and good."

It was definitely not a dream world; it had become my nightmare when I raised my head and saw a flashback of that night.

I could no longer move or defend myself.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 39-Our Messy Stepsister**

### **Chapter 39: 39-Our Messy Stepsister**

#### **Maximus:**

I was deeply concerned for my brother. I kept pacing around, wondering if I had made a mistake by letting him go after her. What if he was mistaken about the way out of the dream prison? I kept blaming myself for trying to do good for her. If I hadn't hired her, my brother would be here with me today. My eyes landed on Helanie's neck, and I groaned.

Helanie was fast asleep, her breaths slow and steady, but I couldn't stop staring at the pendant around her neck. It caught the faintest glimmer of light, an unusual symbol etched into the metal that I had never seen before. What on earth was it? I moved in closer, careful not to trip and land on top of her, my heart racing as I tried to get a better look. The design appeared old, almost ancient, as if she couldn't have purchased it from a local store. Slowly, I pulled out my phone, snapping a picture of it. The screen's glow illuminated the pendant's peculiar details, sending a shiver through me. I needed to find out what this thing was.

"What are you thinking?" my wolf snapped me out of it and asked, but I avoided him, shoving my phone back into my pants pocket. I had been at odds with my wolf for a long time—maybe ever since he had awakened and disappointed me. He felt like a curse, someone who didn't care about my feelings. He would do what he wanted and get me in trouble.

"Really? When did I do that?" Xim was clueless, and sometimes I felt like I was being too harsh on him. I wanted to accuse him, to blame him. But he was as much a victim as I was.

"Sorry, I—did it again," I sighed, apologizing for mistreating him once more.

"It's alright. I can sense your anxiety," he murmured.

I couldn't stop pacing. The room felt too small, the walls pressing in on me with every step. Shadows pooled in the corners, stretching out with the flicker of the dim lamp, but I couldn't focus on anything except the pounding in my chest. I had messed up. I could feel it in the pit of my stomach, a cold knot of regret twisting tighter with each breath.

"I should have stopped him, or it should have been me going in there," I muttered, unsure of where it was. Kaye was responsible for learning about herbs and cursed plants. The air felt thick, as if I were suffocating under the weight of it all.

"He wouldn't have stopped. He sounded like he knew what he was talking about," Xim tried to console me, but I shook my head once again.

"I can't shake off this feeling. If he knew what he was talking about, why is it taking him so long?" I anxiously ran my hands through my hair when I heard someone arrive in the garage.

I hastily rushed out of the room to check on whoever had arrived. My mouth dried up and closed when I saw Norman enter the garage with a book in his hands.

"Here, I only found this. Emmet gave it to me," he said, placing the book on the table and waiting for me to get closer. I nodded, lowering my head and sneakily closing the door behind the sleeping beauty, and then strode toward the table. I didn't think he would return so soon.

"Where is Kaye? Ask him to come here. I need to know something from him," Norman demanded, hunching over the table with his hands on either side of the open book. I took my time, steadily reaching him. All the while coming up with excuses in my head. Norman would not be happy to find out I let Kaye do the crazy thing. He gave me one job—one job and I didn't do it.

"Umm, he left," I shrugged, while he steadily turned his head and raised it, his body still hunched over and towering over the book. His eyes hinted at giving me a second chance for my response. I could either take my words back or keep lying to him.

"Huh? What are you talking about? How could he leave? He was talking about all the potential and doing the right things—where did he go?" Of course, knowing Norman, I should have realized he would not be easy to persuade. He was asking all sorts of questions, and I was quickly making up lies in my head. But my throat keep drying up and I had to clear it everytime I started speaking.

"Ehm! He couldn't sit around waiting for you to come up with something. He decided to look into the details of the rose himself." Wow! I was getting good at lying. This wouldn't be the first time I had deceived my brothers. I always did this to my father and everyone else. But today, I felt guilty. It wasn't just about my life; it was about my brother's.

"Maximus! What are you hiding?" Just when I thought I had him fooled, he slammed the book shut and straightened his back, facing me. Norman had taken care of me since I was a child, so obviously he could see right through me.

"Nothing—I'm just worried. What if Kaye couldn't find anything, or your research didn't turn out well, or Kaye couldn't bring her back—" I shut up when I realized I was talking too much.

"Maximus, what have you two done?" He pushed me aside, not even letting me stop him, and ran toward the room. I knew there was nothing I could do anymore. He burst into the room while I stayed back. I was too scared to see his reaction.

After a few seconds, he came out, looking furious and breathing heavily.

"Why? Why wouldn't you two listen to me?" he yelled, coming at me.

"He told me he knew what he was doing." I instantly backed down from the fury of my brother. It wasn't that I was afraid of him; I respected him immensely. He had always been there for me and had done so much for me. I didn't want to see the disappointment in his eyes.

"Well, let me tell you something: he didn't know anything. There is not a single book that can confirm how one can escape from there. That man who escaped never explained the full truth because nobody remembers how they got out," Norman shouted, his voice causing my heart to flip inside my chest.

"That person is probably not even real. A myth!" Norman hissed, looking so desperately worn out.

"What do we do now?" I hastily followed him as he went back inside to glare at Helanie.

"It's all because of her. Her arrival has ruined our perfect world." His glare was so intense that I feared he would destroy the rose in her hand, ensuring there was no way she could ever return.

"Kaye said he wouldn't come back if he couldn't bring her," I quickly added before he did something reckless and got Kaye stuck there if he wasn't already trapped.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 40-True Love Saved The Day?**

### **Chapter 40: 40-True Love Saved The Day?**

#### **Helanie:**

"Helanie!" Kaye held my hand, trying to pull me away, but I couldn't feel my legs anymore. My vision blurred from tears as Kaye wrapped his arms around my body to carry me. I could sense his strength, yet he still struggled to move me from my spot.

"Ahahahaha!" Rune's laughter echoed through the air, his head disappearing into the clouds.

"Kill them!" As my false mother yelled, I found Kaye standing before me, placing his hand on my chest.

"You will not let them win; you are my mate. Together, we are stronger than they can imagine." His warm hand slipped beneath my shirt to touch my skin, resting over my heart.

"Ahhh!" I gasped, waking up.

"Ugh!" Rune yelled, attacking us again. Kaye raised his head to assess the situation, then carried me and rolled us both onto the ground, saving us once more. I caught a glimpse of Rune's head submerged in the earth before he rose again. He would take a few moments to calm down before launching another assault.

I struggled to look away from the damage Rune's head caused to the ground. And once I did look away, I found Kaye staring at my face.

My body was connected to his, my hands on his chest. I was breathing on his face when I noticed my pendant touching his lips. Just the thought of his soft lips touching anything that belonged to me caused a shiver to run down my spine.

"Get him away from her!" Rune screamed as he charged his strength. I was lying on top of Kaye when the guards arrived, grabbing my arms to pull me away from him.

They broke our intense eye contact, taking me away from Kaye as he held onto my hand.

I watched his hand slip through my skin, unable to hold on. It all happened in slow motion until Kaye's fingers brushed against mine and I was finally snatched away from him.

"Ugh!" Kaye groaned when they grasped his arms too. They clung to him, surrounding him—many against one. As they pulled me away, I watched Rune shift his focus to Kaye. He was going to attack him. I looked around at my fake family until I noticed something I had overlooked before.

Not overlooked in the sense that it hadn't intrigued me until now.

My mother was the only one with roses in her hair. It had been just one when I first woke up here, but it changed to two out of the blue in the middle of my dance with Rune when Kaye arrived.

And then it clicked.

These were the exact type of roses that we had to sniffle from in order to wake up in this messed up dream prison.

"Kaye! I know how we can escape this nightmare!" I yelled, making him turn his face toward me with great effort as the guards held him, attempting to chain him. He fought with every ounce of strength he had at that moment.

It made sense why he couldn't transition. This was Rune's world, a dream world. Nothing here was real, so when Rune decided to make Kaye a wolfless creature, he took away his wolf.

"How—," Kaye yelled.

"Try to get away from them and reach me," I shouted, hissing at my false mother, who was digging her nails into my skin.

"Got it," Kaye replied, landing a punch on the guard's face, causing him to tumble back. He then effortlessly kicked the one in front and headbutted another who tried to hold him. Even without his werewolf abilities here, he was still capable of fighting them off.

"How could you even be on his side? He comes from the scary world where you were so unhappy," my mother was screaming at me, her eyes filled with anger and rage.

As Kaye battled the others, I ran toward my mother. She looked petrified as I grabbed her by the hair.

"Get her away from me! Is this how you treat your mother?" Her voice was entirely different now—high-pitched and nasty.

I managed to grab the roses from her hair and then rushed toward Kaye, who was now set free.

"What is it?" Kaye asked, his eyes shifting to the roses.

"Maybe this is our way out?" I suggested, holding up the flowers. He studied my face and then took the rose from my hand, leaving me with one.

A loud growl erupted in the air, piercing through and slicing the wind as Rune prepared to attack us again.

However, this time, all his people came at us. They had their hands on us, ensuring we didn't move a muscle.

"This is our only chance," Kaye uttered while his eyes remained locked on mine.

As soon as we stretched our necks back and looked at the wrecking-ball-like head coming down at us with full force and speed, we both tore apart the roses in our hands.

We waited for something to happen, but we were still there, and the head was descending toward us. I had never felt so scared for my life before. We closed our eyes, my hands on his chest and his arms around my waist.

I guess that was it.

And then sand fell on us, drawing us closer together.

"Ahhhh!" I gasped, sitting up in bed and breathing heavily like a bull.

"They're back—!" Maximus yelled, jumping up and down as he ran toward Kaye.

I quickly turned my head to make sure he was okay, and sure enough, Kaye sat in his bed, smiling at his brothers.

"You idiot!" Norman exclaimed, his muscles bulging until he saw Kaye wake up. He rushed to the other side as well, helping Kaye get out of bed and then joining in a group hug.

I watched them in silence, slowly realizing that the dream had indeed been beautiful. If only it weren't just a dream.

I don't want to believe it's just a dream.

I slowly got up from the bed while the brothers exchanged details. Then Norman turned to me.

"You!" he grunted, striding briskly toward my side of the bed and grabbing my arm tightly.

"You are going to stay away from my brothers. You almost made me lose my brother." He didn't stop dragging me along, and his siblings didn't protest either.

Why would they?

They all hated me. I didn't fight back, and soon he had taken me to the exit, where he pushed me so hard that I almost fell.

But I didn't.

I was saved by a pair of strong hands and a very familiar scent. It was the most comforting and beautiful aroma I had ever encountered. The man helped me regain my balance, and the moment I did, I came face-to-face with his handsome features.

His gray eyes were peering at me through thick eyelashes, and his bushy eyebrows were furrowed.

"Emmet, let her go. You took her side and let her participate. Do you know what she did? She almost got Kaye killed," Norman exaggerated, making me close my eyes to take a deep breath because I was definitely going to defend myself against his false accusations, whether he liked it or not.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.



