

The Lycan King's Hybrid Queen - Chapter 21[1,944 words]

Lyric

I ran from the castle as fast as my legs would carry me. As soon as I hit the tree line at the forest's edge, I leap and shift mid-air. For the first time in five years, Aspen runs free.

I want to run and never stop. I feel so devastated by the things Harmony said. She's never spoken to me like that before, and it blindsided me.

All I have ever done is try to look out for her. I had no idea she resented me so much. I know I'm over the top sometimes, and I do order her around. But I never did that because I thought I was in charge; I did it to protect her. It never occurred to me that I was pushing Harmony too far.

When we came here, and I questioned Harmony about her relationship with Theo, I was confused. I didn't understand how she found things so easy or why she wanted a man to touch her. I know everyone is different, and I should have trusted her judgment. I should have because I'm beginning to understand how easy it is to fall for your mate.

I had no idea Harmony suffered nightmares. But I felt the emotions of them when she yelled at me. I can't read minds, but I can read emotions, which tell me what's going on with my sister. I keep that fact to myself the way I keep my ability to die and return from the dead to myself. Some things shouldn't be public knowledge.

Goddess, I'm a terrible sister. I should have been there for Harmony, to comfort her when she was afraid. But I needed to work on myself too. I thought she'd be okay with her mate; I thought she was getting to know him and that she was happy. I should have known she needed me, but she blocked her sadness from me. I never thought Harmony, of all people, would turn on me.

This hurts so much, and I don't know how to make things right between us. Harmony is right; I am selfish. If I'd gone with Astro all those years ago, our parents and aunt would still be alive, and Harmony wouldn't have suffered as she did. Now she's pregnant, and I must ensure nothing happens to her or the baby.

Thane will be upset with me, but we haven't completed the mating process, so he should be fine. I can't tell him what I'm about to do; he'd stop me. I don't want to hurt anybody, but the only way to put right what went wrong all those years ago is to agree with Astro's terms and leave with him.

But why does the thought of leaving Thane hurt so much?

They say you protect the ones you love. Sometimes that means doing things you wish you didn't have to. Life with Astro would be hell, but it's nothing I haven't lived through before. I'm a survivor and strong, so I'll be just fine in the Fairy Realm. Of course, I've never been there, so I

don't know what it will be like. All I know is what my mother told Harmony and me at bedtime. Mom would tuck us in and tell us stories of her homeland.

'Now, my little fairy wolves, She'd say while sitting in a chair between our beds, facing us. She'd hold our hands and smile, so otherworldly beautiful she was. 'I come from a place far away, where trees come in colors of green, white, and blue.

'Horses are plenty, and fireflies too. Lakes and waterfalls, extravagant boats, and houses litter the land. There's also a palace, two hundred rooms strong. Everyone dresses in clothes so fancy, the likes of which have never been seen. Though every realm has tried to replicate them for thousands of years. In the palace lives a beautiful princess named Emori.

'Your sister!' I would gasp. Mom had told us about Emori many times.

Mom would smile and say, 'That's right, pumpkin, my little sister. Emori, Emily, and I were once as close as you and Harmony!

'Wow, Mommy,' Harmony stared wide-eyed. 'That's a lot.

'Very much so,' Mother nodded. 'One day, when it's safe, I will take you both to Valnor to meet Emori. She will love you so much!

'Just like Aunt Emily?' I asked.

'That's right, my baby, just like Aunt Emily. Now, close your eyes and follow the stars to that special place in your heart where you will always find me.'

Oh, Mommy, I miss you so much.

If I could have just one more moment with my mom, I'd tell her 'thank you! She gave her life for me, and the only way I know how to repay her is by taking care of Harmony.

Harmony neither wants nor needs that from me. Now I don't know where I stand. Deep down, I know Harmony feared what I'd say about her being marked and pregnant. That hurts because she should never be scared to tell me anything.

Yes, I was shocked and a bit worried that Theo had forced Harmony. But I didn't mean to think that way, and Harmony had every right to be angry with me about that. It's natural to stand up for one's mate, and wanting her baby isn't wrong either. But am I so wrong to think everything has moved too quickly?

I know Harmony, and I are different people, but I haven't let go of my distrust for people. Harmony has always been more trusting than I am. Not all men are the same, and it's clear, even to me, that Theo loves Harmony. She will be just fine once I'm gone, and she won't have to worry about me upsetting her anymore. The last thing my sister needs while pregnant is stress, which is all I will bring her.

'You don't think running off with Astro will stress Harmony?' Aspen asks while lying down in front of the lake's edge.

'I know, Aspen, but I'm so confused right now. I don't know what to do for the best.

I look at Aspen's reflection in the water and smile. It's been too long since I saw my wolf, and I have missed her so much. We've been together since I was fourteen, aside from those few months when I couldn't reach her. 'Leaving with Astro is not what's best, Lyric. Astro doesn't just want you as his bride; there's something more going on. You have powers and abilities most would kill for, and a Fairy King could easily take them from you.

"In order to do that, Astro would have to mate with you. Once he has, the things he will put you through to gain your powers would be the worst kind of torture, Lyric.'

I groan because I know Aspen is correct in what she's saying. Going with Astro would be the worst decision in the world. There's no telling what he would do to my family, regardless of promising many times that he won't hurt those I love if I became his. I don't trust the Fairy King and never will.

But what else am I to do?

'You can stop acting like a petulant child, for one!' Aspen snaps while sitting back on her ass next to this beautiful lake, miles away from the castle. 'So Harmony snapped at you for the first time in her life, but you're a grown woman, suck it up! She just mated and was marked by a Royal Lycan, so she's no longer an Omega, Lyric.

'I thought that was a myth?'

Aspen chuckles. 'No, it's true that once a Royal Lycan marks his mate, they will gain the same rank as their Royal mate. So you see, Harmony is now a Beta.

'But I'm an Alpha!'

'And you are her sister! Harmony finally stood up to you, and though it hurt you, Harmony needed to let go of those thoughts. She loves you more than anything, Lyric, but you need to step back. You don't need to...

'I get it, okay? I don't need to worry because Harmony can take care of herself and has Theo by her side. It doesn't mean I'll ever stop protecting her!

'No one is asking you to, just to know when enough is enough. Now, no more thoughts about going with Astro. I'd never allow it anyway!

'I don't want to go with him. I wasn't thinking straight, Aspen. What Harmony said hurt me like nothing ever has. I thought she wanted me gone.

'You stupid bitch, Aspen sighs. 'Of course, she doesn't want you gone. Harmony was letting off steam, which bothered you because she's never done that before. Though some of what she said was true, Harmony didn't mean what she said about you going with Astro. Goddess, Lyric, Harmony would rather die than watch you leave with that pig. Myla is begging me to go back. She's afraid we've left for good.

I sigh and close my eyes. I don't want to go back yet; all I want is to hide in the back of Aspen's mind. She can keep control for a while because I just want some peace.

"The white wolf," Someone gasps behind us.

Aspen turns her head and growls.

I thought it might have been Thane. I know he was following me and that he's not too far away right now; I can smell his scent. But he's being a good mate and giving me time to clear my head. Though I'm not sure what he'll do about this random man approaching me. I should warn the guy that Thane is near and will tear him apart, but I can't in wolf form.

"How is this possible?" The tall, well-built, God-like man in front of us asks himself.

The man has long, wavy hair that falls past his shoulders and blue eyes, the likes of which I've never seen before. They're so pale! He's unbelievably good-looking, even with the silver scar that runs from the top of his right eyebrow to the top of his cheek. He's only wearing jeans, no shoes, no shirt, and he's carrying a sword.

Aspen's ear flatten against her head as she bares her teeth. Thane has yet to make a move, and I wonder if that means this man isn't a threat.

"Shh," The man slowly crouches down, one hand held out in surrender while placing his sword on the grass as a show of peace. "I mean you no harm. What's a beautiful wolf like you doing in Lycan territory?"

Aspen sits back on her hind legs, understanding this man means us no harm. Aspen tips her head to the side and studies the man before us. Of course, she can't answer him; werewolves can't speak in wolf form as Lycans can. Wolves communicate through the mind link, but only with those that share a connection, such as pack mates.

"I wonder where you came from. Do you even know what you are?"

He's referring to Aspen's snow-white fur. After my first transformation at fourteen, Dad made me hide my wolf from others. He said people would hunt me down, but I wasn't sure why; I just did as he said. Though I was allowed to transform in front of my parents and sister. Mom used her magic to hide me from prying eyes.

"Will you shift?" The man turns around, grabs something a few feet away, and walks toward me. He drops the shirt in front of Aspen and then turns around, respectfully giving us privacy to shift.

I do shift and put on the long shirt. "You can turn around now."

He does, opens his mouth to say something, but I don't hear his words. I don't hear anything, but I feel the agony of an arrow piercing my skin as it hits me in the chest.

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"NO!"

I saw the arrow flying through the air before I could stop it. I was six feet away from Lyric, my Lycan pushing me to get to my mate. I would have taken that arrow for her, but I wasn't quick enough, and it hit her straight in the chest. I catch her in my arms as she falls. "Oh, f.uck. Lyric, keep your eyes open, baby, please."

"Tha..." She's trying to say my name but coughs up blood, and my heart sinks.

"Don't you dare leave me, Lyric." I press a kiss on her clammy head. "I love you."

"Thane," I look at my brother, Tyler, as he crouches beside me. "It came down so fast I couldn't stop it. Sh.it, I didn't even see it until it was too late. I've sent guards to look for the shooter."

I don't answer him; I lift Lyric into my arms as gently as possible. The arrow still sticks out of her chest, so I must move carefully. I could lose her any second, especially if I jolt that thing. 'We are not going to lose her!'

'She has an arrow through her chest, Jagger! It's so close to her heart; I'm not sure it hasn't pierced it!'

'I can see that! Just get her to the infirmary!'

I cut Jagger off because I don't have time for his shit. Goddess, I don't know what the fuck happened. One minute, I'm watching Lyric from my position behind a tree, talking to my brother; the next, she's dying in my fucking arms! I didn't even know Tyler was home; he hadn't mind linked to let me know he was back. I wouldn't have known until he walked into the castle if I hadn't seen him approaching Lyric. That could have been any time, knowing Tyler. "Do you know this girl?"

I don't look at Tyler as he walks beside me. Running would get to the infirmary much faster, but I'm scared I'll injure Lyric further if I do. Though I'm walking with purpose, much quicker than a human would, I'm worried we won't make it in time. "She's my mate," I answer.

"Wow, I see. You could have let me know you'd found your mate, Thane."

"I would have if you ever called home."

When Tyler is away, he rarely calls to let us know how he's doing. I don't know how many times I've told the man to keep in touch. But he only does so when it's of importance.

"Did you know she was the white wolf?"

I didn't know that before today because I hadn't seen Lyric shift. When I chased after her earlier, I was shocked to see her wolf's coloring. There are many tales of the white wolf and many people who want her for their own. The white wolf apparently brings good luck and has many powers and abilities most would love to utilize. She'd be the jewel in anyone's crown, the winner in any war.

I have to keep this to myself for as long as I can. Tyler won't say anything either; I'll make sure of that.

"Yes, and keep it to yourself, Tyler."

He huffs but doesn't answer.

I walk faster, finally reaching the castle. I'm fucking terrified that speedwalking has caused Lyric more damage. Her eyes are closed, and she's fucking gray.

'We're losing her!'

'I know, Jagger!'

"Lyric!"

Great, that's all I need right now, Lyric's sister and her histrionics.

'Theo, remove your mate.

Harmony is now screaming and shouting about removing the arrow from Lyric's chest. Anybody would think Harmony wanted Lyric dead! Removing the arrow without medical assistance will kill my mate!

I ignore the stupid bitch and finally reach the infirmary. I lay Lyric down, and the doctors rush around the room, working on saving Lyric's life. They better save her!

"My King, you really need to wait outside. We need the room to work on Lyric."

I growl loudly enough to shake the room.

Who the hell does Dale think he is to tell me to leave?

"Thane!" Tyler grabs my arm. "Calm down. Think of your mate, she needs help, and Dale needs to do his job."

I know Tyler is right, but Jagger wants to be by Lyric's side, and so do I. It's our natural instinct to protect our mate, but we failed.

Lyric had only run a mile or so. I followed but stayed back, allowing her a few minutes to clear her head. Maybe if I hadn't, none of this would have happened.

Reluctantly, I follow Tyler to the waiting room; my heart is pounding the entire time. I have to keep it together, but I can feel myself about to lose it. Lyric and I haven't marked one another, but our bond is strong. I can feel the bond flickering; Lyric's light is going out, she's dying, and I can do nothing to stop it.

"My wee boy!" I let my mother hug me in a daze, but I don't hug her back. I don't know what she's doing here, but I guess Tyler mind-linked her.

I can't think straight, and I don't feel like I'm here. My mind is on nothing but Lyric, her smile, her strength, and her fears. We haven't known each other long enough, and now I'll never get to know the amazing woman she was. 'She's not dead, Thane!'

'Yet.' I mumble quietly, causing Jagger to whimper.

When a Lycan loses his mate to death, he'll either allow the mate bond to take him or it will weaken him for a hundred years. Death is usually for those who have marked their mate. I haven't, plus I'm the highest-ranking Lycan there is, so death probably won't take me. That's not to say losing Lyric won't destroy me. I already love her more than I could say.

How the hell would she survive an arrow through the chest?

Who the fuck even fired the damn thing?

"Tyler?"

"Yes, big brother. I'm right here."

I drag my eyes away from the floor and look at him. "Did you order the guards to look for the shooter?"

"Yes, I told you before."

He did?

I don't remember what he told me before. My mind is all over the place.

"Our best is out there now looking. They'll get back to me as soon as they have any information. I've ordered everyone to go through me or Theo. You need to be with Lyric, so royal duties can wait."

I don't have the energy to answer him, so I nod my head.

Tyler is one of if not my best warrior. If there's anyone I trust more than Tyler besides Theo and Blaze, I've never met them.

"Has the doctor said anything?"

I'm not sure who my mother is talking to, but I don't answer her. I can't seem to bring myself to speak. All I can do is pray repeatedly that my mate comes through this. Goddess knows I would do anything asked of me if only Lyric wakes up. 'Lyric, if you can hear me, hang on, baby. Please don't let go; I just found you and can't lose you now. I love you, by Fenrir, I love you!

I close my eyes and lean my head back against the wall behind me.

How did it come to this?

Who would even want to hurt Lyric?

Hardly anyone here even knows Lyric, and I had yet to introduce her officially. Lyric should be celebrating with Harmony. We should be throwing a party for my brother and his mate for their mating and pregnancy. Lyric should be choosing her coronation dress, and my mother should be helping her learn all that's required of a Queen.

We're supposed to be organizing a huge celebration and touring the city so our people can meet Lyric before she's crowned. Goddess, there are so many things we're supposed to be doing right now.

"Thane," I open my eyes when Theo says my name. His mate heads towards the door leading to Lyric's room.

"What the hell do you think you're doing?" Harmony can't go in there while the doctors are still working on my mate.

"I need to see my sister..."

"NO!" I bellow, startling the girl and stopping her from entering that room. "You've done enough for one day. Get the fuck away from that door!"

"But I..."

"No," I push off the wall and stalk towards her. "You're going nowhere near Lyric. You made it damn clear that you didn't give a sh.it about her when you told her to go to Astro!"

Harmony sobs while Theo wraps his arm around her shoulders. He shoots me a look of disgust, but I bare my fangs, shocking him. I don't care who he is; I'm on a knife's edge here. Anything could tip me over it, and Jagger is scratching in my mind, desperate to go on a killing spree. "She's my sister. I love her, and I didn't mean what I said."

"I don't give a sh.it! You," I point to Theo. "Get your mate the fuck out of here before I do something I won't regret!"

'You would regret it, and so would I, especially if Lyric lives!

'She will live...

'Thane, I'm sorry!' Comes the broken whisper of my mate through the mate bond.

Then I feel the mate bond crack even further. I rub my chest with my fist. Pain, as I've never felt, rips through me. Someone grabs my arm, but my eyes are stinging, so I can't see who it is.

Dale walks out of the double door, which hides my mate within, pulling at his hair. "King Thane,"

"Where's Lyric? How is she?"

"We've worked really hard to save her. We had to break the arrow carefully so we could work on Lyric. However, we couldn't remove it fully; the arrowhead was buried too deep. I feared removing it without surgery would kill Lyric. Sadly, not removing it would do the same thing."

"So you're going to remove it?"

Dale sighs, and I narrow my eyes.

What is he not telling me?

"The arrowhead is solid silver, and the poison has flooded Lyric's system. We tried to counteract the effects while prepping Lyric for surgery,"

"Get to the point!" I yell, scared of what Dale is trying to tell me.

Sadness fills his eyes as he admits, "I'm sorry, my King, but Lyric has passed away."

The Lycan King's Hybrid Queen - Chapter 23[1,510 words]

Lyric

Where the hell am I?

Why is everything so bright white?

There is literally nothing as far as the eye can see. Even if there was, everything is so bright it blends from one thing to the next.

It's funny because it reminds me of the scene in Harry Potter-the scene where Harry meets the spirit of Dumbledore in a very bright white Kings Cross Station.

I look down at myself. I'm wearing a flowing white dress that hits the floor, with long sleeves. I'm barefoot, and my long hair is curled and flowing down my back and around my shoulders. What in the world?

I don't understand where I am or how I got here. I remember being shot in the chest with a silver arrow. Some cowardly motherfucker hid in the shadows and shot me!

What the fuck?

I remember Thane catching me as I fell, the fear in his eyes, and my inability to speak to him. But I remember nothing after he told me he loved me. What a time to die!

Perhaps he said those words because he knew I was dying. Maybe he said he loved me because he didn't want me to go, and my last memory be of that arrow or Harmony's harsh words. Whatever Thane's reasons, I smile at the memory. But it fades just as fast, and a frown forms. I should have woken up by now; that's what usually happens. What if I can't get back to Thane?

What if I'm really dead this time?

What if the curse is finally broken?

What if this is it, and I never wake up again?

What will happen to Thane?

'Aspen? Are you there? Can you hear me?'

Of course, my wolf doesn't answer. But then, I didn't really expect her to; I can't feel her with me any longer. If I am dead, then I've lost my wolf, and that hurts. Every time I've died before this, I woke up within a second, two minutes max. I was never dead long enough to end up in a place like this - whatever this place is. Does Harmony know I'm dead yet?

Of course, my sister knows about the curse upon me. So I can only imagine her confusion that I haven't woken up.

I continue walking forward, going nowhere. I doubt I'd know if I was getting anywhere when the scene never changes. All of this white is giving me a headache, and that's not something shifters get. Wonderful! "Hello?!" I call, but all that comes back to me is my own voice echoing the same word.

How the hell am I supposed to get out of here?

My chest hurts thinking about Thane and what he must be going through. Even I know that losing one's mate is the worst kind of pain there is.

Oh, Goddess, I never got to experience what life would have been like had we completed the mate bond. Many said that if Thane and I completed the process, we'd be stronger together. The fight against Astro wouldn't have been so hard because the two of us would fight as one.

I let my fears dictate my life when I should have embraced our bond wholeheartedly. But I was scared that I'd lose Thane if I got too close. I couldn't bear the thought of falling for him and him be taken from me.

How could I stand that agony?

"Part of living is losing, my daring."

I look around myself, frantically searching for the voice and who it belongs to.

"Who's there?!"

"Two people who have missed you very much."

I spin on the spot, and my mouth drops in shock. I slam my hands over my mouth as tears fall from my eyes. "Mommy? Daddy?"

My beautiful mother nods her head, and my father smiles. So many emotions rush through me as I run to them. Mom catches me in her arms, and Dad strokes the back of my head as I sob.

Oh, Goddess, I have missed them so much! I know I'm only seeing them because I'm dead, but this means everything.

"Mommy, Daddy, thank you. Thank you."

"You have nothing to thank us for," Dad says as he continues to stroke the back of my head.

I lift away from Mom and look at my parents, standing side by side, arm in arm. "I do; you died because of me, saving my life."

"No, baby girl," Mom cups my face and smiles. Her white hair softly moves in the invisible wind, reminding me so much of Harmony. "We didn't die because of you; we died for you. Any parent who loves their child would have done the same as we did. We love you so much, Lyric, you and Harmony."

"We know what happened with Lennix." I look at Dad, and the anger flashing in his eyes. "My sweet little girl, I am so sorry for all you suffered."

I smile and take Dad's hand in mine. None of what happened to my sister and me was Dad's fault; he couldn't have predicted the lengths that man would go to for revenge.

"It wasn't your fault, Dad. Lennix lost his mind when Emily and their child died. My mate made Lennix pay with his life for what he did to Harmony and me."

"Your mate, the Lycan King." Mom giggles. "He is a good man, even if most fear him."

I narrow my eyes. "How do you know?"

"We know everything, Lyric," Dad tells me.

"But how?"

"We're always with you, Lyric."

"We never left you," Mom continues.

"Things are about to get very tough for you, my daughter." I lean into my dad's touch when he cups the cheek; Mom just let go of. "Astro will reappear when you least expect it, so always expect it. Never let your guard down, Lyric. Also, put your faith in your mate, for he is your other half."

I sigh and nod my head. Everyone keeps telling me the same thing as if it's that easy. But then, maybe it is.

"When the time comes, Harmony and her child must be hidden. They have to be kept safe because Astro will kill them, Lyric, there is no doubt about that. You must stop that from happening, Lyric. Because if you don't and Harmony dies, all hell will break loose. Theo's Lycan will go on a rampage, and nothing will stop him. Astro will be the least of your worries if Theo loses himself."

"But, Mommy, how will I know the right time?"

I'm capable of many things, but I can't see the future.

"You'll just know." She smiles kindly.

I nod because there's no point banging on about something to which I won't get more answers.

"Is Aunt Emily here with you?" I'm curious to know where Emily is and if she's okay.

"Right now," Mom sighs. "She's in the underworld with Hades."

"What? Why?"

What the fuck?

Emily was a good soul; she doesn't deserve to be in the underworld! Having her soul tortured for no reason doesn't sit well with me!

"Shh," Dad hushes me. "She's not there for what you might think."

"Then, what is she there for?" I blink back the tears in my eyes.

My parents share a look before Mom tells me, "Emily wanted to make sure Lennix's soul got what it deserved. Your Aunt loved you and your sister as if you were her own girls. What Lennix did to both of you filled Emily with hate. It took time to calm her, though Selene granted Emily's wish to watch his t*****e."

Wow. I don't even know what to say to that. Not that Lennix deserves anything less. But I don't wish to have my Aunt's soul tainted by such a thing. However, it's her choice and none of my business.

I look around myself before asking, "Where am I? What is this place?"

"We're in a quiet place inside your mind." Mom answers. "You brought our spirits here because you needed us."

I can do that?

I guess it makes sense, even if it doesn't.

"Why am I here? Why haven't I woken up this time? Did the curse break, and I'm really dead?"

I know I just bombarded my parents with questions, but they came tumbling out of me.

Dad tucks my hair behind my right ear. "It seems the arrow was not removed from your chest. You will not wake until it is. You must know that the King believes you are dead, and no one is permitted to touch you.

"If your sister doesn't get to you soon, the Royal Family will give you a Lycan's funeral. You will be burned to ash on a high pyre."

My eyes widen, and I shudder.

"You'd come back eventually, but there's no telling if your mate will survive before that happens."

"Then how am I supposed to get back?"

My heart is breaking for Thane and all he must be going through. I wish there was some way I could get through to him and tell him to remove the arrow. Everything would be okay then because we'd be together again. "You can't," Mom smiles sadly. "Eventually, the arrow will be removed. Your body will need to be prepared for the funeral, and hopefully, that doesn't take long. Until then, we wait." We wait.

'Harmony, if you can hear me, please hurry!

The Lycan King's Hybrid Queen - Chapter 24[1,796 words]

Harmony

"It's been three days, Theo." I bite my lower lip while pacing the floor.

Lyric died three days ago, and Thane hasn't left her side. Lyric hasn't been moved from the infirmary, and no one is allowed near her. Thane hasn't heeded Dale's warning about decomposition, and he won't let the nurses clean and ready her body for burning. No funeral has been organized, and the death of the Queen hasn't been made public knowledge. No one outside the family and a few trusted members of staff know what's happened. Moria said that Thane's mate dying has weakened him, and all sorts of enemies would come out of the woodwork if they found out. No one wants that. Even though Theo and Tyler would fight to the death, keeping the enemies at bay wouldn't be easy without Thane.

Thane hasn't once thought about anyone else but himself during all of this. He won't allow me to say Goodbye to my sister, and I'm fast losing patience. All I need is a moment with Lyric's body, and I can bring her back. The arrowhead hasn't been removed. I know it hasn't because Lyric would have woken by now if it had.

I can't even tell anybody what I know because no one is ever around. I've barely seen Theo because he's taken on Thane's royal duties. I have explained to my mate about Lyric's curse. Theo believed me because he had no reason not to, though he was skeptical at first. Theo tried to speak with Thane, but he said Thane didn't seem to hear him. The King is lost, and no one can get through to him.

Goddess, I don't know what to do. Every time I go to the infirmary, I'm marched away by a guard or even Tyler. I tried to tell Tyler what I knew, but he thought grief had sent me crazy. Theo spoke with Tyler, and finally, he was on our side. Tyler said he'd see what he could do to get me into Lyric's room. But with Thane not budging from her side, who knows if I'll ever get to bring her back.

What the hell will happen to my sister if I don't bring her out of this?

Okay, she'll come back eventually - if that damn arrow is removed.

But what if it isn't?

What if Thane goes insane and buries himself somewhere with Lyric's body?

That's extreme, but one never knows what a grieving Lycan will do to be with the mate he thinks is dead. The way Thane is going, I'm scared that thought could become very real.

I'm so stressed that I can't think straight. I can't eat, but I think that has more to do with my pregnancy. I had thought that being a werewolf, I'd be pregnant for four months, but Anna, the baby Doctor here, said that as I'm pregnant with a Royal Lycan, I'll be carrying no more than ten weeks.

I wasn't expecting such a short pregnancy. I'm already a week pregnant, and nine weeks will fly by. Goddess, Anna said I could even have the baby by six weeks gestation. I could have my baby within the next five weeks!

Sh.it, I haven't got anything ready. There's so much to sort, and I don't have time to deal with it all. I can't even think about the baby's birth until I bring my sister back. I have to save Lyric because I'm terrified of what could happen to her the longer this goes on. Lyric has never been dead three days before, and I grow more fearful with every second.

I have to tell myself there won't be a funeral; it won't get that far. Once Thane allows the nurses to clean Lyric's body, the arrow will be removed, and Lyric will awaken. That might scare the nurses to death, though. However, I don't know what, if any, damage Lyric might be left with.

"I know," Theo sighs.

Theo has been working so hard the past few days. Stepping in for the King, trying to help me get to Lyric, and making sure his family is okay, he's barely slept. I can see how badly all of this is affecting him.

"I'm so sorry, baby. I'm doing my best."

My face softens. I stop pacing and reach for my mate, and he rests his forehead against mine.

"Theo, I know you are, but you're doing too much. You're running around after everyone, making sure they're okay, but who's looking after you?"

Theo lifts his head, smiles, and cups my face in his large hand. "My baby, you don't need to worry about me."

"Of course, I worry about you, Theo; you hardly sleep."

"What about you? You don't sleep or eat, Harmony. I can't have you getting sick." He lays his hand on my tiny baby bump. I can't believe I have one already! "We have to keep you healthy for this little one. But I know that won't happen until Lyric is awake." Theo pulls me into his arms. I rest my head on his chest and breathe in the scent that is all Theo's.

"This will all be over soon, Theo; then we can get back to normal. We just need to get into the infirmary."

I narrow my eyes as Theo pulls away from me and grabs my hand. "Tyler just mind linked. Mom managed to get Thane to leave Lyric, but he won't be gone long. He went to shower and change; then he'd be back."

"Is he letting Dale and the others clean the body?"

Theo shakes his head. "Tyler said Thane wouldn't let anyone in the room. He left Tyler guarding Lyric on the order that no one goes near her. We have no more than fifteen minutes, Harmony."

"I only need one."

Theo and I make our way to the infirmary through the secret passageways. We do so because we don't want to bump into Thane or anyone else, for that matter. I can't afford to have anyone stop me this time. I won't leave my sister locked in a death sleep. 'What if this doesn't work, Harmony?' Myla whimpers inside my mind.

My wolf is missing Aspen as much as I'm missing Lyric. We've never been away from them for this long before.

'It will work, Myla. Have faith, my darling best friend. Our sisters will be home with us very soon.

'I trust you, Harmony. Thank you!

Theo pulls me behind him at the side of the infirmary building. The infirmary is located to the south of the castle, so through the secret passageways, we have to cross a courtyard to reach it. Theo doesn't want us to be seen, which is why we're plastered to the wall like ninjas in the night. Even though Theo is in charge in Thane's stead, every warrior, guard, and staff member will inform Thane if they see us here. Goddess knows what Thane would do to us, but it wouldn't be anything good.

I hope Tyler has a plan to get us in, or all of this was a big fat waste of time. Goddess, it can't go wrong because I don't think I could take any more stress.

"How are we going to get past those two?" I tip my head at the two massive warriors guarding the infirmary entrance. There is no way either of us will get past the two of them.

"Just give it a minute, Harm. Tyler will sort something out."

The seconds ticking by are like hours to my mind. I drop my head back against the wall in hope and frustration. I look up to the sky and take a deep, shaky breath.

Goddess, please, help me get to my sister. Please, I beg you.

"They're leaving."

I look past Theo. He's right, they're walking away, and I wonder what Tyler said to make that happen. My heart is hammering with anxiety and excitement.

With my hand in his, Theo pulls me across the courtyard as fast as possible. His head swings side to side, back and forth, making sure no one is watching or even around to stop us. I'm so nervous;

my stomach feels like it's falling out of my a*s! Finally, we make our way through the front doors, where Tyler is waiting for us. I take a much-needed breath and will my heart to calm down.

"Hurry up; we don't have long." Tyler leads us to Lyric's room, stopping outside the doors. "No one is permitted to enter the room, not even the medical staff. Thane has threatened everyone with death if they defy him."

I know all of this!

"I just need to see Lyric for one moment." My voice is like a plea to my own ears. Tyler sighs. "Tyler, what would you do if that was your sister in there? Would you listen to everyone else and walk away? Or would you do whatever it took to bring her back, even if that meant defying her mate's wishes?"

He looks at me for a moment. "I'd do exactly what you're doing."

"Thank you."

Tyler looks at Theo. "You're positive, without any doubt, that what you told me is possible? Because if I let Harmony do this and it doesn't work, Thane will kill us all, Theo, and you know that."

My eyes move between Theo and Tyler, and I pray Theo doesn't doubt me.

"I believe my mate one hundred percent, Tyler."

Thank Goddess!

Tyler smiles. "Then let's get this over with."

Tyler opens the doors, and I take a deep breath before making my way inside. I clasp my hand over my mouth and swallow back a sob. I can't stop the tear from falling from my eye, though.

Lyric is lying in a bed, a sheet covering her body but tucked under her naked arms. I can see where the arrow is stuck in her chest above her heart. She's so white, and there are bluish veins across her body, showing signs of decomposition. Lyric's once-vibrant hair is limp, her eyes are closed, and her lips are blue.

I make my way over to my sister. Reaching out, I take her cold hand in mine. I don't have time to stand here and cry, but the thought that this could have been very real hurts so much. If Lyric had actually died and Thane kept her from me, I never would have got to say Goodbye to the other half of me - my identical twin.

How could he be so cruel?

Doesn't Thane care what this would have done to me?

I can't think about that now, so I don't. I place a kiss on Lyric's cold forehead, and with my free hand, I reach over, wrap my fingers around the wooden stump, take a deep breath, and pull with all my might.

"Sh.it," Someone hisses behind me while I jump back just in time for Lyric to bolt upright, gasping for air.

"Lyric," I whisper right before she looks at me.

"Thank f.uck!"

The Lycan King's Hybrid Queen - Chapter 25[2,876 words]

Lyric

One minute I'm wandering around where I landed after saying Goodbye to my parents; the next, I'm being sucked through something that felt like the eye of a needle!

I look around the room, blinking, trying to get my bearings. Hospital. Naked, wearing nothing but a sheet. Great!

How long was I out?

I touch my chest where I was shot. It's healing fast, my skin has its natural glow as my color rushes back, and my hair is glossy again. Huh, that was fast.

"Lyric!"

I turn my head and smile at Harmony. With my hand holding the sheet against my body, I swing my legs over the edge of the bed. I feel stiff, meaning I've been in one position for a while.

"Harmony," I reach for my sister with my free hand, and she rushes into my arms. I don't care about what she said before; I know she didn't mean it. She's my other half, and a few harsh words would never have me turning away from her. Harmony's arms wrap around my neck, and she sobs. "I'm so sorry it took so long."

"It's not your fault. You came for me when you could."

I notice Theo and the guy from the forest over Harmony's shoulder. Both men have their mouths hanging open in shock. I don't know why the guy from the forest is here, but it's clear Harmony convinced him and Theo to help her. Goddess knows how she managed that. "How long was I out?"

Harmony pulls away from me and sighs. "Three days."

Three days!?

What the hell?

"I'm so sorry, Lyric. I tried to get to you the moment Thane brought you here. But when Dale said you'd passed away, Thane forbade anyone from entering the room. I knew the arrow had to be removed, or you wouldn't wake. I tried to get to you; I swear I did. Goddess, I'm so sorry for what I said before. I didn't mean it, Lyric."

I smile at my sister. "I know you didn't. It's okay, Harm."

"Thane was so broken, Lyric. He wouldn't leave your side or let anyone near you. He wouldn't listen when I tried to tell him the truth. I felt like I was banging my head against a brick wall!

"I told Theo, and he spoke to Tyler. They helped me, and Moira finally got Thane to shower. The three of us took the chance to break in, and..." I take her hand, cutting her off. If I didn't, Harmony would have gone on and on.

"You got to me, and that's all that matters. Thank you." I look over her shoulder at forest guy. "So, you're Tyler." He tips his head. "It's nice to finally meet you."

Tyler bows. "My Queen, it's nice to see you back."

"Theo."

"Lyric." Theo smiles slightly.

I shouldn't be too hard on Theo; he's not so bad. He's my brother-in-law now. Harmony loves him, and he loves her. They're having a baby, plus he's my mate's brother. My mate... "Where's Thane?"

"As I said, Moira forced him to return to your chambers to shower and change. He said he'd be fifteen minutes but hasn't returned yet."

I nod my head at Harmony. "I need to go to him."

"He should be back any moment."

I shake my head at Tyler. I'm not going to wait; I need to see Thane now.

"Here." Harmony removes her oversized green plaid shirt and hands it to me. I take it, satisfied she's wearing a cami top and not showing her bra.

Theo and Tyler turn around, allowing me to stand and slip on the shirt. I button it up, thankful it hits my knees. I'm not wearing underwear, and I'd hate for anyone to see something they shouldn't. I slip my hands under my long hair and pull it from my shirt. "Are you sure you don't want to wait for him?"

I shake my head at Harmony. "No. I want to go to him now."

Harmony smiles slightly while nodding her head.

I walk out of the room ahead of everyone. Dale's eyes widen when he spots me, shock written all over his face. It must be like seeing a ghost, but I don't stop to say anything. Theo speaks to Dale, but I don't acknowledge his words because I just don't care. There's only one person on my mind, and it isn't the damn doctor.

'Thane?' I call his name through the mind link. However, it feels like there's a block, and I can't get through.

"Did Thane block the mind link?" I ask no one in particular. My bare feet slap against the concrete as I walk with purpose.

"Yeah," Tyler answers. "He got sick and tired of people contacting him, so he cut the link off. But that was the day you... died. He hasn't spoken or opened the link since."

I nod, but I don't answer. I don't need to; I only need to get to Thane; he needs me. I can't imagine what my mate has been going through these past three days, thinking I was dead.

If I'd told Thane about the curse, he'd have known what to do immediately, and none of this would have happened.

Goddess, what if he doesn't forgive me for this?

I wouldn't blame him if he didn't; it would be no more than I deserve. But it would kill me because I realize I love him and don't want to hurt him.

I'm not going to keep second-guessing myself. I don't want to live in the past; I want a future with Thane. I want what Harmony has with Theo; closeness, love, and family. I know there's hell to come with Astro; he won't just give up. But with Thane by my side, I know we'd have the best chance at defeating the Fairy King.

'He needs us. Aspen mumbles in my mind. She's been quiet since we woke up, but that's nothing new.

'I know, Aspen. I'm going to make everything better. Thane will never have to fear us dying and leaving him again!

The closer I get to our chambers, the louder Jagger's roars and Thane's screams become.

"Thane Ronan Knight, you open this door right now!" Moira shouts while thumping the door. The poor woman looks exhausted. Defeated, she stops banging on the door and sobs.

"Mom?" She looks at Theo and tries to smile. He sighs and wraps his arms around her.

"I can't get through to him, Theo. I can't bear it; I'm losing my baby before my eyes..." Moira spots me standing to the side of her. Her mouth drops open in shock as her eyes widen. "I'm seeing things."

"No," Tyler strokes his mother's back. "It's a long story, and Theo and I will explain everything. But I think Lyric should get in there and talk to Thane before he destroys the whole castle."

"Yes, of course," Moira shakes her head as if shaking away the shock.

I hug Harmony, then take a deep breath. I'm scared of what I'll find on the other side of the door. It's locked, but I will still gain entrance. I hover my hand over the lock, and it clicks. I ignore the gasps behind me; I unlocked a door; I didn't bring anyone back from the dead!

'Don't be a b.itch!' Aspen snaps. 'These people aren't used to someone like you - someone who can return from the dead. Besides that, read minds and emotions, tell if someone is lying, and manipulate metal!'

'These Lycans can read minds and emotions. Thane can tell when someone is lying, and I only can because I'm part Fairy!

'Look, just be quiet, I need to deal with Thane, and I don't want you banging on while I do. He needs my undivided attention, Aspen.'

She doesn't answer, thankfully.

You're wondering why, if I could manipulate metal, didn't I remove the lock off the collar I wore?

Aren't you?

Well, the collar and lock were silver. I'm a wolf, and silver blocks our powers, meaning I couldn't remove them from my neck.

Simple, right?

Also, damn annoying.

Anyway, back to Thane.

I walk into the room and close the door behind me. My eyebrows raise in shock at the state of the room. Every piece of furniture is torn and overturned, and ornaments are smashed, as are the windows in the French doors that lead to our balcony. Claw marks trail deep and long across the wall to the left, cutting right through the paintings that hang there. It looks as though Jagger and Thane went crazy in here!

Oh, Thane.

My heart breaks. Thane literally destroyed the place in his grief. I make my way to the bedroom, and it's just as bad and trashed as everywhere else. Jagger and Thane certainly left their mark; everything will need replacing. I'll worry about that later.

I step around the shattered glass and reach my disheveled mate. Thane is on his knees, ass back against his heels, arms by his sides, and his head down. He's naked, his hair hangs all over the place, covering his face, and his body heaves with every breath. My lip quivers, and I wipe a tear from my eye.

"Thane?" He doesn't look up or even acknowledge that he heard me. So I step closer and crouch down in front of him. "I'm so sorry, Thane."

"You're not real," He mumbles. "You're dead. You left me."

"No, baby. I'm not dead, and I would never leave you if I had a choice. Okay, I was dead for a while there. Goddess, I should have told you about the curse. If I had, you would have known to remove the arrow. If you had, I would have woken up right away. I'm so sorry, Thane. Please forgive me. Please, look at me."

He won't look at me, so I lay my hand on his cheek and force his head up. I can't stop the tears from falling when I see how red his eyes are. He's been crying hard, and I know he's in pain because of me.

Knowing I mean so much to him warms my soul. It's more than the mate bond; I know it is because I feel it deep in my bones.

"I feel you," Thane holds his hand over mine on his cheek and leans into my touch for a second. "But I don't believe you're really there. How could you be?"

"I'm cursed, Thane. I can die, but I don't stay dead, and I don't know why it happens; it just does. I was dead for a while this time because of the arrow."

I shuffle closer until our knees touch. "I will explain everything soon, I promise. But right now, please believe I'm really here. Because I am, Thane, I'm right here in front of you, and I'll never leave you again."

Thane stares at me, eyes darting from side to side. It's as though he's remembering everything about me. Fresh tears fall from his eyes as he takes my face between his hands and leans his forehead against mine. "Lyric," He sobs my name. "My baby. You're really here?"

"I'm really here, my love."

Gently, Thane's lips hit mine, and I melt into him. Wrapping my arms around his neck, I pull myself onto his lap, straddling his waist. He groans into my mouth while wrapping his arms tightly around my waist, pulling me as close as possible to his hot body. "Thane," The moan-like whine that escapes me doesn't go unnoticed.

Thane smirks against my mouth. He knows what he's doing to me, how wet he's making me just from his kisses. The fact his rock-hard e.rection is pressed against my p.ussy isn't helping.

I don't know why I feel so horny all of a sudden. It's probably inappropriate, but I don't care; I know what I want, and I'm going to take it.

"I've missed you so much, Lyric."

"I missed you too, Thane. You will never know how much I've missed you. Being parted from you made me realize I never want to be again. You're my mate, Thane, and that means everything."

I wipe the stray tears from his eyes as he smiles at me, relief evident. I can't stop myself; I smash my mouth against his, grinding against him while moaning wantonly.

"Lyric," He groans a warning against my lips as if in pain.

"Please," I whisper. I'm so wet I can feel it coating his cock. "I want you inside me."

"But,"

"Don't think," I cut him off. "Just make us one, Thane."

He growls and tears my shirt open. I gasp at the ferocity of it as the buttons scatter across the room. I don't think on it; I help Thane pull the shirt off my body.

He looks me up and down, eyes widening, and I feel his c.ock grow even harder against my p.ussy.

How is that possible?

Thane's mouth latches onto my right breast, and my eyes roll to the back of my head. I lift my hips and take his d.ick in my hand. Holy fuck, he's massive! And I mean long and thick. He may kill me with that thing, but I don't care; I want to feel him inside me, and I won't wait. "Lyric, f.uck. Please don't tease me."

I want to taste him, but we have forever to try foreplay. Right now, this is nothing more than animalistic sex, filled with the need to know we're both real.

I line him up with my opening, and with his hands on my hips, guiding me, I impale myself on his c.ock. I'm so wet that he fills me on the first thrust, and I scream at the invasion.

I take a moment, eyes closed, and allow my body to get used to him inside me. Goddess, I've never felt anything like this. Okay, the only thing I have to compare this with is Yuri and Lennix. Though they weren't small men, what they did was not consensual, and it hurt every time. Here, now, with Thane, this is what s*x is supposed to feel like - perfect.

Thane's hands are all over me, his mouth is attacking my breasts, and I can't stop my hips from moving! I wrap my hands around his head, holding him to my chest. He clutches my shoulders from the back, pulling me down on him with each hard thrust. I can't keep up with him, my body is wound tight, and I can feel an o.rgasm coiling in my stomach.

"Thane, I can't..."

He thrusts even harder, and I cum so hard my back arches. My eyes roll, and I can't breathe! I haven't even come down from my high, and Thane is laying me on the ground.

I feel him brush something away from my head before he kisses me deep and long. I wrap my legs around his waist and squeeze, causing him to hiss.

Thane's thrusts are short and sharp, and I can't help screaming. I don't understand what's happening to my body. Every nerve ending feels tight to the point of tearing. My heart is thumping too hard, and my senses are all on high alert.

The muscles in Thane's back bunch under my fingertips as he fucks me so fast and hard I can do nothing but go with it. My gums ache, my canines drop, and the urge to mark is unbearable.

"Thane!" I sob a little, and he kisses me softly.

"It's okay, baby. Mark me, please."

Everything will change if I mark Thane. He'll want to mark me in return, and... My mind goes blank. I grab his hair, pull his head to the side, and sink my teeth into the skin that joins his neck and shoulder. His blood fills my throat, and I can feel every emotion my mate feels. It's immense!

I let go of his neck and lick the mark, sealing the wound. Without warning, Thane pushes my head to the side and bites me. My eyes widen, and I scream and cum simultaneously, so hard, Thane releases my neck, yells, and cums deep inside of me.

I close my eyes, and we both thud against each other as Thane licks my mate mark. Thane pulls out of me, causing me to hiss. He then lies on his side next to me, head propped on his hand and looking at me.

I look at him and smile.

"I can't believe you're really here." He touches my face with his fingertips. "I need to know everything, Lyric; I never want to go through something like that again. Losing you means I lose myself."

I nod my head. "I'll tell you everything, I promise. Once we have this place cleaned up, anyway." I chuckle while Thane looks around the room.

"I guess I finally lost it walking into this room. Your scent was all over the suite, and I couldn't take it. But you're here now, even if I don't fully understand it."

"After what we just did, you still don't believe I'm here?" I laugh when he rolls his eyes with a smile on his face.

"I love you, Lyric, with all that I am," Thane admits quietly, and a tear falls from my eye.

I know most mates fall in love; it's natural. But Thane and I didn't mate right away, and I know it's more than the mate bond between us. Even if it wasn't, I don't care. The Moon Goddess paired Thane and me, and I will be forever grateful. No matter who my mate is away from this place or what he has to do to keep order, he is mine.

"I love you, too."

The Lycan King's Hybrid Queen - Chapter 26[1,833 words]

Emori

"Brother, please."

"She mated with him!" Astro bellows so loudly the whole palace shakes. No doubt, everyone in the kingdom felt his anger.

"Brother, you knew it would happen once she found him."

"She wasn't supposed to allow him to mark her! She marked him! After everything I put in place to prevent this..."

Astro's crazy wide eyes dart all over the place. He has evil in mind, but that's nothing new. Astro flicks his long dark hair over his shoulder, and his intricate crown glistens in the sunlight bleeding through the open window, blinding me momentarily.

I'd sigh out loud, so sick of this life if I thought, for one second, it wouldn't get me beaten. Astro is hardly the easiest of men, and it doesn't matter that I am his younger sister; he wouldn't think twice about killing me. If I step out of line in any way, Astro will make me pay. He's done it before, and being locked in chains and beaten like a criminal is not where I wish to be again.

He killed my older sisters without batting an eyelid. I had to grieve for them privately because Astro made me promise that Emily and Elena meant nothing to me. They deserved what they got for going against him. But the truth was, they meant everything to me. There was a time when I believed Astro. I accepted his lies about Emily and Elena turning their backs on Valnor and their heritage. My sisters mated with wolves; something frowned upon in Valnor. Fairies do not mate outside their own species by order of the King. My parents were killed many years ago when I was but a small child. Astro took over the kingdom, and everything changed for the worse.

I initially tried to fight Astro, telling him that no one could resist the mate bond. It's rare Faires even have mates, so finding one is special and should be cherished. Only a few of my kin ever leave Valnor, and it's rare to never one finds their mate here. That's why the Pairing System is so important in Valnor.

The Pairing System was implemented by my grandfather six thousand years ago. Once every ten months, every female fairy old enough to participate will have their name entered into a polling box. The King will pick out names and pair them with eligible males. It is none negotiable, and whoever you're paired with, you're stuck with, with no exceptions. I've never been entered, thankfully. I would never go through with it if I were; I'd run and never look back.

I believe every person has the right to choose whom to love, but Astro has other ideas. Love doesn't come into it, so he says. He struck me to the ground for daring to speak out and told me to learn my place before it was too late.

Astro then filled my head with lies about Emily and Elena hating me. He said that's why they left and didn't take me with them. They had their mates now, and they had no room for me. I hated the two of them for so long. I believed what Astro told me because he'd invaded my mind, never giving me any reprieve.

Deep down, I knew Emily and Elena would never forget about me. We were always so close, even though they were many years my senior. I looked through old notes and diaries my sisters left behind and read about their love for me. It wasn't long before the hatred dissipated, and I wanted nothing more than to find them. Astro no longer had a hold over my mind, but I couldn't let him know that until the time was right.

I wasn't aware of what Astro forced my sisters to promise so they could leave. But I've been helping him with his plans ever since. Against my will, I might add.

But I do what I do because I must protect my mate, a man I met on one of my trips to the human realm. I was there on Astro's orders with some of our warriors. We'd been sent there to bring back a rogue fairy, wanted for crimes against the crown. I wasn't aware of those crimes; Astro never gave much information, but as part of the Royal Guard, it was my duty to return the prisoner.

After securing the rogue fairy in magical binds, I chose to walk through the forest before leaving. Being a woodland fairy, I wanted to be close to nature in a different realm, to see green instead of multicolors.

There, I met the most beautiful man I had ever seen. He wasn't Fairy Folk; that much was obvious. He had collar length, dark, wavy hair, a muscled physique, and eyes so light; they mesmerized me for a moment. He was wearing strange clothing, but he carried a sword, which told me he was a warrior of some sort.

He looked at me and gave me a stunning smile before he said, 'Mate!' He came towards me, wrapping his arm around my waist and pulling me against his hard body. A gasp escaped me as he kissed me with a passion I didn't know was possible. How could it be that I should have a mate?

One who was outside of Valnor just as my sister's mates were?

I could not help but melt into him. I wrapped my arms around his neck and pressed myself closer still. I could feel his erection against my pubic bone, and I whimpered.

He growled lowly, and like ice water dropping on my head, I pushed him away from me. The man was a wolf, and I knew I could not mate with him. Interspecies mating is not allowed in Valnor, but not much is. I knew Astro would never let me leave Valnor permanently, and a wolf in our realm wouldn't survive long.

How could Fate be so cruel as to hand me a mate I could never be with?

The man before me stole my first kiss, but nothing more could come of that. The man whose name I never got, nor did I give him mine, tried to persuade me to stay with him. I wanted to take his hand and let him lead me to safety. But I knew it could never be, for we would never be safe. Astro would find me and kill my mate when he did.

The man tried to stop me from leaving, and I did the only thing I knew would push him away. I attacked him, leaving him passed out on the ground, before fleeing the scene.

I don't know what became of my mate, but I like to believe he still lives. I like to think he's still out there somewhere. I pray that he moved on and found love. One hundred and twenty years is a long time to be without one's mate, and he wouldn't have waited for me because we could never be together. I want him to be loved; he deserves that much.

I never told anybody about him because I was scared of what Astro would have done had he found out. My mate was the only thing that was truly mine, even though he never has been. I had to and still have to protect him from my brother. That's why I hide my emotions from Astro, never letting him know I even have a heart.

The truth is, I resented my sisters when they left because they did what I could not so many years previously. I became harder-hearted, learned to hide my emotions from people, and did whatever Astro told me. I did not wish to anger him, though he usually takes his anger out on me. Sometimes, I wonder, even pray, that he'll kill me and I'll be free from this miserable life.

My brother went postal when Astro's spy sent word today that Lyric had mated with the Lycan King. His plans to mate with our niece went up in smoke. All the times he tried to force Lyric's hand so she'd return willingly backfired. He killed our sisters, believing Lyric would be so grief-stricken she'd follow him back to Valnor.

That didn't happen, and Astro has been planning his next move for six years. With Lyric mated to the King, there's no way Astro will ever get her here, never mind make her his bride.

I don't know what will happen next, but it won't be anything good. Astro being angry is never a good thing, and I wish there were some way I could help my niece. Somewhere inside of me, there is love for my brother. But Emily and Elena were my world, and I will if I can protect my nieces.

"I thought twisting that stupid Alpha's mind would be enough!"

I step closer to his throne, which he's now sitting on, biting his fist. "What are you talking about, Astro? What did you do to Lennix?"

Astro looks at me and laughs hysterically. I hate when he does that because what he has to tell me will make my stomach turn.

"I made that useless b.astard use those girls for his own sick pleasure. I put thoughts in his mind that they were to blame for Emily's death. Though, I made sure he wouldn't hurt Lyric as much as Harmony. He could do what he wanted with the spare." Spare, that's what he's always called Harmony.

My stomach turns over at Astro's confession. I should have known he'd done something to Lennix. He wouldn't have been a man I'd choose to spend my life with, but he loved Emily and wouldn't have done the things he did without influence.

I must make Astro believe I don't care what happened to Lyric and Harmony. If he thinks that I do, it won't be good for me. My brother is a deranged monster, but I never thought he'd use his magic to corrupt a man into r**e and t*****e.

"I thought all the torture and abuse would be enough to scare Lyric into rejecting her mate. I didn't think she'd even find him, but some idiot sent for the Lycan King, and here we are.

"How did I not foresee this? If I had, I would have ended the b.astard before he ever set eyes on what's mine!"

Astro huffs and rolls his eyes.

"I underestimated that girl, but then I hadn't banked on her being rescued from that place. After everything that happened to her, she jumped right into bed with that dog! But," He claps his hands, his demeanor changing suddenly. He stands and swishes his robe behind him. "No matter. You're going to fix everything, Emori."

"And how am I meant to do that?"

What the hell does Astro have in mind this time?

"You're going to the human realm. You'll parade as a maid, gain entrance to the castle, and do it by any means possible. Hide what you are with one of those potions of yours, and then..."

I swallow hard because I don't like where this is going.

"And then?"

"You're going to kill the King."

The Lycan King's Hybrid Queen - Chapter 27[2,432 words]

Thane

"I cannot believe none of you saw anything!" I slam my fist down on the oak table, causing most to startle.

I called a meeting with some of my high-ranking warriors to find out if anyone knew anything about who shot Lyric. But it seems not one person knows a damn thing!

I've been away from duty for almost two weeks. Three days I spent grieving my mate, only for her to walk into our room alive and well. It took a few minutes for me to realize she was sitting in front of me, and even then, I didn't fully believe it. Though I tried to fight the need to claim Lyric, we mated and marked one another. But she made it clear that she was ready and wouldn't wait a moment longer. I gave in because I needed to feel her against my body. I needed to know she was real, not my imagination playing tricks on me.

Mating with Lyric caused her to go into rapid heat. Goddess, I could barely keep up with her! Lyric's heat lasted an entire week, and it took us an additional two days to recover. Those two days were magical; every moment was perfect.

Lyric opened up and told me everything about her past, though I suspect she kept some details of her captivity to herself. I didn't push for answers because she'll let me know when she's ready and not a moment sooner.

Lyric spoke of her curse and the abilities she possesses. My mate could die but not stay dead, which shocked me. I'd never heard of such a thing in my life.

We bathed together, laughed as we watched movies she liked, and she had no problem with me holding her. Lyric dying for those three days and me grieving her brought us closer than I ever imagined we would be. It shouldn't have taken something like Lyric being shot for that to happen, but it is what it is. Lyric is still closed off with most, but not me.

I managed to pull myself away from Lyric this morning. I had to get back to work, Theo had been standing in for me, and he looked exhausted. Being King seems easy from the outside; everyone thinks the King sits on his throne while everyone else does his dirty work. It is anything but in reality. Being King means long hours, little sleep, and plenty of stress. This is why a king needs his Queen, his second and third, to help share the load.

"My King," Elard, a tall man with short red hair and an iron fist, speaks. "As soon as Prince Tyler ordered us to search, we did. No one has rested for the past two weeks."

"He's right." Blaze sighs while sitting forward in his chair and leaning his arms on the table. "I had people searching all over Lykos and beyond for the shooter. There was no sign of anything out of the ordinary. Whoever they were, they fled the moment they shot Lyric. But..." Blaze sighs and locks eyes with Tyler.

Tyler. It's been years since he was home this long. My brother prefers to live in his cabin on the forest's edge. Two miles doesn't sound like a long way, but it can be for my mother when Tyler doesn't come home for weeks on end, let alone stay here. Tyler should have been my third, but he never wanted the position, so he handed it over to Blaze. Tyler never told me why he suddenly changed his mind when it was all he talked about as a child. But I assumed it had something to do with the attack that left him scarred.

To scar a Lycan permanently, magic would have to be involved. With our immense healing abilities, scarring is not something that happens easily. Of course, there are ways to injure a Lycan that will leave a mark. But as I said, it would have to involve magic to be long-lasting.

Much like Tyler, Blaze also bears scars that will last a lifetime. The wounds across Blaze's chest took some healing; they were so vast. Like Tyler, Blaze would never say what happened to him,

who attacked him, or why. I never gave it much thought; both men are warriors, and battle scars occur. I assumed if they got them elsewhere, they would have told me.

As my third, Blaze is in charge of the Royal Warriors, but Tyler is his second. I allowed Tyler the position because he excels at what he does. For over one hundred years, Tyler has kept this kingdom safe. I trust my brother with my life, as I trust Theo and Blaze. But the looks Tyler and Blaze share tell me something more is happening.

"What is it you're not telling me? Blaze? Tyler?"

The other six high-ranking warriors around the table avert their eyes. They know what's going on, but they won't say anything. They will only speak out when their commanding officer has permitted them.

It's Tyler who speaks. "I don't believe whoever shot Lyric was aiming for her. I think they were after me."

I narrow my eyes.

Could that be true?

That the shooter was looking to kill my brother?

But why?

It makes as much sense as why anybody would want to kill Lyric - none! Then again, it makes more sense that Tyler was the target.

For one: no one in Lykos knew what Lyric looked like, apart from household staff. None of them would have hurt Lyric. I vetted each member myself, and I trusted them. Though I will question them all to ensure I don't have a traitor in the mix. Secondly: Tyler is a warrior. Over the years, he's dealt with many criminals. Their friends or family could want retribution, and any of them could have wanted revenge. If that's the case, we will have to check everyone in the damn city.

"A few weeks ago," Blaze shifts in his seat. "Tyler executed a man for treason."

"Okay?"

Execution is not unusual, though I would prefer someone else to be the executioner. Tyler took it upon himself to take that role. Killing is second nature to Lycans, but Tyler is utterly numb to it now.

"The Lycan he executed was Darren Morris. Remember, I told you?"

I snarl at the mention of that asshole's name. Son of a bitch stalked Starr, then cornered her one day, intending to force himself upon her. Of course, Starr could take care of herself, and she threw the idiot ten feet away from her and right into Tyler's hands. The information was immediately brought to me, and I barely stopped Tyler from killing Darren then and there. I had the man locked up, but he was released when Starr claimed he was harmless. He was infatuated with her, but that didn't mean he needed to die. He was released after two months on the understanding he would stay away from my sister.

He did stay away from her - for three days before he was up to his old tricks. Darren Morris never learned, and Tyler lost his s.hit and killed him unlawfully. No one will be killed without my permission unless there is no other choice. Darren should have been brought to me if he wasn't trying to kill Starr, which he wasn't. Tyler can't stand men who force themselves on women, and as Starr is our sister, Tyler's Lycan lost control.

I couldn't even be angry with Tyler about what he'd done. I couldn't because I would have done the same in Tyler's situation. I probably would have done worse, actually. "What about it?"

"His brother," Tyler scrubs his hands over his face. "He vowed to kill me. I thought nothing of it; it's nothing I've never heard before. Being an executioner means I get death threats at least five times a day." He shrugs.

He's not wrong; people throw all sorts of threats around when their loved ones are put to death for their crimes. Grief makes people stupid and loose-lipped. Of course, I don't personally hear those words being thrown around. No one would dare; even grieving people don't want to be killed by the King.

However, that doesn't stop those who work for me from telling me everything. I have those families watched for a few days to ensure they don't do anything stupid. But it seems I wasn't vigilant enough. Slacking caused some fucker to try and kill my brother, but he missed and killed my mate! If Lyric hadn't woken up by the time this information reached me, no one would have been safe!

I take a deep breath and look at Blaze. "Have the whole family brought in for questioning." Blaze tips his head, letting me know he'll see to it personally. "The rest of you, keep a close watch on anyone close to the Morris'. You know how stupid friends can be." "Yes, my King," Callen answers.

"Anyone acting strangely, bring them in immediately. You're all dismissed. Tyler, Blaze, not you."

Once the door closes behind my warriors, I take a deep breath.

"Everything okay?"

I nod at Tyler. "More than. I just want to make sure you both keep an extra eye out. I can't have eyes on Lyric all the time, but I can't bear the thought of anything happening to her again."

"We will, brother; you have my word."

"I can't believe you're mated." Blaze chuckles.

His smile fades, and he runs his fingers through his unruly hair. Theo and I being mated must be driving him nuts. Many years ago, Blaze found his mate. He doesn't know I'm aware of this, but Theo knew and told me. Theo witnessed the elation when Blaze found his other half and the grief when they walked away from my cousin.

Losing his mate should have weakened Blaze. Instead, Balze pushed himself to be stronger, making him the Lycan I see before me. Theo didn't tell me who Blaze's mate was because my brother didn't know. Theo surmised that Blaze's mate was not from Lykos. I always wondered why Blaze never confided in me. We've always been close, but he kept everything to himself. I also wondered why Blaze never went looking for his mate. Any man who hadn't been rejected, and Blaze wasn't verbally, would have. Whatever, it's Blaze's choice and none of my business.

"I'm glad Lyric came around and that she's okay." Tyler smiles. "I can't believe she can't stay dead. What's that all about?"

"Some curse." I shrug. "I have people looking into that and her heritage. I'm not sure if someone put the curse on Lyric or if she was born with it. Either way, I'm sure it comes from her fairy side."

"Makes sense." Tyler nods, then rolls his neck. "I've never known a wolf to reawaken every time they die."

"And she's died a total of seven times." Tyler and Blaze's eyes widen. "Yeah. Lyric was five when it first happened. She fell out of a tree, broke her neck, and then woke up after her neck snapped back in place. She's been burned to death, had her throat slit, been strangled, repeatedly stabbed, frozen, and shot with an arrow."

"Maybe somebody should lock her in a padded room for her own protection."

I narrow my eyes at Blaze, who laughs. I know he's joking, but he's not funny!

"Burned to death? Frozen?" Tyler looks horrified, but I was, too, when I heard.

"Yeah." I rub the back of my neck. "When Lyric was eight, she and some of the other kids from her pack were playing near a lake. It was winter, and the lake had frozen over. They'd been warned not to go near it, but you know what kids are like?" Both nod and Blaze chuckles.

"The other kids dared Lyric to walk across that ice. It cracked, and she was pulled under. By the time the adults pulled her out, she was dead.

"While the kids were screaming in fear, Lyric's mother patiently waited for Lyric to wake. A moment later, heat filled Lyric's body, and she woke up.

"The fire thing?" Neither man takes his eyes off me as I explain what Lyric told me.

At age eleven, Lyric was attacked by a rogue wolf. Lyric hadn't come into her powers yet, and couldn't stop the monster from hurting her. He didn't sexually assault Lyric but toyed with and scared her.

Once he'd had his fun, he tied Lyric to a nearby tree, covered her in gasoline, and set her alight. Lyric vividly remembers her pain as that fire tore her skin from her body. She remembers the

maniacal laughter that left the rogue, her father's roar of rage as he tore the rogue apart. Then there was nothing until she woke up two minutes after the fire was put out.

Her parents had believed there was no coming back from burning to death. But as soon as the fire was out, Lyric's charred body regenerated before their eyes. They once again had their daughter back.

I believe everything Lyric told me about the curse. But it's all so surreal. I'm looking into the curse, but it's a blessing to me. It is because it means my baby is immortal, and we'll have forever to love one another.

"Goddess," Blaze hisses. "Thank Fenrir, Lyric has this curse."

"It's more like a superpower." Tyler rolls his eyes playfully. "At least Astro won't be able to kill Lyric when he turns up."

"He doesn't want her dead, Ty."

I take a sip of my water to clear my dry throat before I answer. "Blaze is right. Astro wants Lyric as his bride, and for all we know, he put the curse on her in the first place. What better way to make sure his prize can never leave him?"

"I hadn't thought of that, Thane." Tyler sighs and runs his hand through his long hair. "But that means he could kill you to get to Lyric."

"We won't let that happen, Ty." Blaze shakes his head. "We'll do whatever it takes to protect you, Thane."

"I'm not worried about me; I can take care of myself. I need your assurance that, along with Theo, if anything happens to me, you'll take care of the family, including Lyric."

"Of course, you know you don't have to ask."

"You're our King," Tyler holds my gaze. "Not only that, you're my brother. I would do anything you asked of me, Thane, you, and Lyric."

I smile at my brother. I can trust Tyler and Blaze as much as I can trust Theo. I trust they'll protect Lyric when I can't.

I open my mouth to speak when my throat starts to close. My eyes widen as I clutch my neck, gagging like my throat has been cut. Everything is turning black...

"Thane!"

The Lycan King's Hybrid Queen - Chapter 28[1,937 words]

Lyric

"Is that really necessary?"

"Duh." Starr playfully rolls her eyes at Harmony. "We have to go shopping. Lyric needs a dress, which can only be bought or made to order from Marco's." "What's Marco's?"

"I'll forgive you that question because you're new here."

I shake my head at Starr. She's so extra. I can barely contain the laughter trying to escape me.

"We also need to get you a dress." Isla points at Harmony while spooning more food into her daughter's mouth.

"Yeah, but we need to make sure it's something adjustable. Because the way you're growing..."
"Starr!" Isla snaps with raised eyebrows.

I shift in my seat at the dining table. Listening to Starr and Isla bicker reminds me of being home in Black Water Pack. There was always someone bickering, especially if they were siblings. Tracey and Gina come to mind. They were foster children of our Gamma, and though he loved them dearly, the sisters couldn't stop themselves from arguing over the smallest things. Dad said it was their age, thirteen and fourteen, and they'd grow out of it. I never did find out if that was true. But looking at Starr and Isla, one hundred and thirty-two years between them, I doubt it.

Though Starr could learn some tact, it is pretty apparent that Harmony's pregnancy is progressing rapidly. I almost couldn't believe my eyes when I walked into the dining hall this morning. I did a double take because she looks eight months gone! How is that possible when she's three weeks pregnant?

Moira saw the look on my face, chuckled, and told me it was perfectly normal with Lycan pregnancies, even more so with Royals.

I pointed out that Harmony is not a Lycan. Moira smiled and said Wolves are pregnant for sixteen weeks, and Fairies are pregnant for four weeks. Hybrid fairies and wolves usually carry for ten weeks, just as Lycans do, though it's not a guarantee. With Lycans being pregnant for a minimum of six weeks, the math means Harmony should be pregnant for around thirteen weeks. You'll get the correct math for half the pregnancy rate of each species. As she's mated with a Royal Lycan, she'll carry as Lycans do.

Moira lost me at math because that is not my strong point. None of it made any sense to me anyway, and even less when Moira said she doubts Harmony will carry past six weeks. If that's the case, Harmony will have her baby in three weeks' time.

It took me a moment to realize Moira mentioned Harmony being part fairy. My sister saw the look on my face, and she mind-linked me to let me know she'd told the family what we were. She said they were understanding and they wouldn't mention anything to anyone. I hope not because I can't deal with the people of Lykos turning on me just yet.

"Never point out how big a pregnant woman is getting." Isla snaps.

"It's not like you were much smaller." Starr laughs at the open-mouthed expression on Isla's face.

I smile while shaking my head. Starr is a b.itch in the best way. I really like her, and I don't like many people.

"Are you saying I was fat!?"

Harmony looks at me while pulling her white top over her baby bump. She didn't need to, but she's nervous.

'You're not fat, Harm. I tell her through the mind link. 'Starr wasn't calling you fat, babe. She's young and has never been pregnant. She'll have children one day, then she'll swell up, and you can call her fat!

Harmony laughs loudly at my words, causing everyone to turn and stare. Harmony bites her lower lip, trying to quell the laughter.

"Isla," She looks at Starr. "I'm not saying you were fat, nor that Harmony is. Have you ever met a fat shifter? No? That's because there aren't any. With our super fast metabolism, it's not possible to be fat. I just meant that being pregnant..." "Quit while you're ahead." I laugh.

Starr looks at me and laughs. "Sorry, I don't know when to shut up sometimes."

"Lyric?"

I turn and look at Esme. She's a beautiful little girl, and I love that she isn't trying to grow up too fast. Many girls these days do when they should be enjoying their childhood.

Esme is very much a pink, frilly, and glittery kind of girl. She's wearing a pink dress with darker pink tights and white shoes, and her hair is in two braids at the side of her head.

She twists in her seat at the dining table. Goddess, she's so short her feet don't touch the ground!

"What is it, sweetheart?"

"Well," Esme twists her fingers nervously. "I wondered if I could go shopping with you? It's okay if you say no; I just..." Everyone is looking at Esme as she bites the inside of her cheek. It's sweet that she wants to spend time with me.

"Of course, you may come." I crouch down in front of Esme and take her hands in mine. "Don't be afraid to speak up for what you want, Esme. It's good to let people know what you want and how you feel."

I expected Esme to say something in response. But instead, she smiles and wraps her arms around my neck. I startle for a second because I do not like to be touched! Harmony's eyes widen, and her mouth opens as if to say something. I shake my head slightly, letting Harmony know that everything is okay.

The touch of others, unless I initiate it, scared me. It always has, ever since the rogue attacked me and burned me to death. I was okay with my parents and sister touching me, anyone else, and I freaked out.

However, as I wrap my arms around this little girl, I don't cringe. In fact, I breathe her in with a smile on my face. There is something so innocent and perfect about Esme, and I get such a sense of peace from her that it warms my soul. "Thank you," Esme mumbles in my ear.

"You don't need to thank me, Esme." We break apart, and I take her hands in mine. "You are a very beautiful, kind, and sweet girl. Never lose that, and never forget that you are strong, Esme. You have so many people who love you and will always be there for you. Just as I will always be there for you. Always remember that."

Esme giggles while nodding her head vigorously.

"What a wonderful thing to say." I look at Moira as I get to my feet. She's smiling at me, so I smile back. "Thank you." She mouths.

I didn't do it to be thanked. I see something special in Esme, and I know she has it in her to be tougher than she comes across. Esme is eleven, so being a kid is all she needs right now. But one day soon, she'll need to reach for that strength and show the world she isn't to be messed with.

"So," I look at the others in the room, Harmony, Starr, and Isla. "When are we going dress shopping?"

"Yay!" Starr jumps up and down, clapping like a spasticated seal.

"Well," Isla lifts Ivy from her highchair. "Mom will be giving you lessons ASAP to help get you ready to officially become Queen."

"Yeah, and there's a lot to learn." Starr nods. "Did Thane set a date for Lyric's coronation?"

"Two weeks," Moira nods. I'm not shocked because Thane already let me know this morning. "There is much to do in that time. Dress shopping, I suggest you do it next week. By then, Lyric will be well underway with our customs and traditions. Also, it will help Harmony with sizing."

"Sounds good." Harmony smiles. "Does she have to wear white?"

I laugh as Moira, Starr, and Isla unanimously say, "Yes."

I stare at them, eyes wide.

"It's tradition," Moira tells me. "Thane will also be wearing white, Lyric. It symbolizes purity within your mateship."

"Which doesn't make any sense because everything knows you've been at it like bunnies. What's pure about that?!"

"Starr!" While Moira tells Starr off for her comment, I rub my throat. I can barely swallow the lump in my throat. I can feel the air leaving my lungs.

What the fuck is happening?

"Lyric?" Harmony grabs my arm, but I shake my head. "Lyric, what is it?"

"I... can't breathe," I say that, but the feeling passes as quickly as it came, and I take a much-needed breath.

'Lyric, that wasn't our pain.

'What are you talking about, Aspen?'

'Thane.'

I bolt from the room, running with the speed of my wolf to get to my mate. The girls are following me, I can sense them, but I continue until I reach the meeting room. The door slams against the wall, my eyes locking instantly on Thane. He's sprawled on the floor, Blaze and Tyler crouched down on either side of him.

"Thane!" I push Blaze out of the way, lean down and press my forehead to my mates. "Wake up. Don't you dare leave me!"

"He's gone, Lyric," Tyler tells me softly. Moira screams behind me, and Starr and Isla are crying.

This is bullshit; Thane isn't dead. He was perfectly fine and healthy this morning. Lycans don't die of natural causes, and it doesn't look like he was attacked.

So what's going on?

I lift my head. "What the hell happened?"

"He was poisoned." I hear Blaze say.

"What?" Moira gasps as she drops to her knees above Thane's head. "How the fuck did that happen?"

Thane doesn't look dead, just sleeping. Though I can't sense his heartbeat.

'Aspen, can you reach Jagger?'

'No. I tried, but he's gone. What will we do?' Aspen sobs in my mind. I can't answer her because I'm struck dumb.

"It seems someone poisoned Thane's water. How? We don't know, but it could only have been someone on kitchen duty. Few have access to the kitchen today."

Tyler explains how he's already got Callen on the case, and we'll soon have our culprit. If there's anyone who can find whoever did this, it's Callen.

What fucking good does that do me now?

My mate.

I lay my head on his chest and close my eyes.

Why is this happening?

Haven't Thane and I been through enough lately?

Mom and Dad said that Thane and I would be stronger together. I thought that meant we'd have a life long enough to fight Astro. I thought we'd become parents when it was all over. I wanted...

My eyes open wide. Thane's chest just raised under my cheek, and I swear, I heard his heartbeat. I'm not imagining this; I know I'm not.

The gasps from all around me are deafening as Thane's arms wrap around me. He pulls me tightly against his big body and kisses my head.

"Why are we lying on the floor?"

I chuckle, lift and look at Thane. Tears fall from my eyes as he cups my cheek.

"The fuck?" A male gasps.

"Thane," I kiss him, and he smiles against my mouth. "I thought I'd lost you. You died." I pull away from him, clamber to my knees, and pull Thane into a sitting position by his hands. I take his face between my hands. "How is this possible? You were dead, Thane." "What?" He looks as confused as I feel. "What are you talking about?" Thane looks around the room, seeing his mother and siblings staring at him in shock. "Blaze?" Thane gets to his feet, dragging me with him.

"Your water was poisoned. Don't you remember grabbing your throat and gasping for air?" Thane nods. "Well, you died, Thane."

"Lyric felt everything," Moira tells my mate, who looks at me with concern in his eyes. "She ran in here, lay on your chest, then you woke up."

"It worked." Comes a gasp from the doorway.

All eyes turn to the retreating figure.

"Get her!"

The Lycan King's Hybrid Queen - Chapter 29[1,543 words]

Emori

S.hit!

I shouldn't have spoken out loud! Now, I'm being chased like a criminal, but I guess that's what I am now. I did poison the King, after all. Yes, it killed him, but he reawakened just as I'd hoped.

Coming here and gaining employment was easier than I thought it would be. I made sure to mask my fairy scent and kept out of the Royals' way. Spiking the King's water was simple, and I wasn't worried the warriors would drink any. Marsha, the head kitchen maid, said the King wouldn't drink from the same jug as anyone else. Well, his family, but only at dinner. The two members of the King's family there today would be treated as warriors. Long story short, only the King would be drinking poisoned water. I didn't do it for Astro; I'll never do anything for him again. I did it for my niece because she doesn't deserve the hell Astro will bring here. I know Astro will kill me for defying him, but I'd rather die than do his bidding.

My heart melted when I got here, being with the Lycans, seeing Harmony, the image of Elena, looking so happy and pregnant. I hadn't seen Lyric, but I knew I'd never hurt her. I also knew I needed to...

"Gotcha!"

I scream as someone grabs me around the waist, lifting me off my feet. They spin around, and now I'm facing the King, a bunch of men, and a handful of women.

My eyes lock with the raven-haired beauty ready to slaughter me where I stand.

Lyric.

"Who the hell are you?" She demands. She's so angry I can almost see the steam coming out of her nose!

I open my mouth to say something, but the words seem to be stuck in my throat. I can't tell Lyric who I really am; she'd want me dead even more than she does now. It doesn't matter what I do from here on in; my life is forfeit. Whether it be in the hands of these Lycans or my brother, I will not make it through the week.

The King's hand wraps tightly around my throat, lifting me out of the other man's arms and off the ground. My legs kick out of their own accord while my hands claw at the King's hand. I cannot

breathe! I could use my fairy powers to make him let go, but a figure over the King's shoulder renders me immobile.

My mate.

What is he doing here?

Am I seeing things?

Is the lack of oxygen causing hallucinations?

My heart beats harder inside my chest, and my mate's eyes widen in recognition. He sees me, but the anger in his eyes tells me he will not help me. My mate doesn't care if the King kills me, and it's all my own fault.

I should have approached the King when I arrived and told him everything. I should have been honest and not played this game. Shame on me for being so stupid.

"My mate asked you a question. I suggest you answer it before I crush your throat, Witch!"

"I'm...not a...witch." I gasp with each word.

"I don't give a s.hit what you are. You killed me, and now," He chuckles while pulling me closer, and in my ear, he whispers, "You're going to feel pain like you've never felt before. You'll be begging for death by the time I'm done with you."

I'm not afraid of pain; I've endured more than my share over the years. But as I look at my mate, a tear falls from my eye. He's clearly a warrior from the uniform he's wearing. But I had no idea he'd be here.

How was I to know he worked for the Lycan King?

"Take her to the dungeon." The King literally throws me into the arms of a man built like a mountain. "Let the guards know she's to be treated as a class-A prisoner."

"Yes, my King."

What the hell is a class-A prisoner?

It didn't take me long to find out; I was thrown in a cell, stripped to my underwear, and hooked up to the ceiling like a dead pig by my wrists. Of course, I tried to use my magic to stop those men from torturing me. But they laughed and told me to save my breath; the whole building was protected. No magic of any kind would work here. Locked in this new hell, I am as useless as a human.

"Careful," My tormentor laughs. "You don't want to slip off that little box. You'll pop those tiny shoulders out of place."

I whimper while dancing on my tiptoes, trying with all my might to stay standing. With my eyes covered and my mouth gagged, I can't see what's happening around me, nor can I call for help. Not that yelling will save me; no one cares that I'm here. No one will rescue me from this.

Astro will be wondering where I am by now. I'm unsure how long I've been down here, but it feels like months. I've definitely missed checking in with my brother, and I'm scared he'll send his minions to look for me. I don't want that because I don't want Lyric and her family to be hurt in any way.

The sting of the whip across my back has my muscles clenching as I try my hardest to stay standing. One tiny slip, and I'll drop from the box and break my shoulders.

The laughter coming from all around me has me wishing I could snap each neck! I don't know how many are out there, but they take turns hurting me, humiliating me.

The King nor Lyric have been down here. No member of the Royal Family has. My mate hasn't come to see me, and I thought he would, even if it was to reject me. I thought he'd have questions, but I guess not.

"She's hot." A man mumbles in my ear. "Even with all the cuts and welts." He slides his hands around my body, slides a knife into my bra straps, cutting them away, and I sob behind the gag. He then grabs my naked breasts in his big hands. I try yanking away from him. "Hush." He mocks.

A frustrated scream rips from my throat, and tears fall from my eyes. I can take physical pain, but being s.exually assaulted, I can't bear it. These men enjoy touching me s.exually. Because I fought back the first time and injured one of their men, they hooked me up like this. I have endured unwanted hands on me ever since.

"Her t.its are so soft."

"You shouldn't be playing with the traitor like that. She tried to kill our King."

"Who cares, Johnny? Everybody has been having fun with her for days. This Witch is nothing! She deserves everything she gets. Plus, our Queen has ordered the bi.tches execution for tomorrow. Why shouldn't we have a little fun before then? It's not like she can tell anyone, and who would believe her if she did?"

I am to be executed tomorrow. At least I'll be put out of my misery. But I have to tell Lyric the truth before she takes my life. I need to warn her about what Astro has planned, and I have to tell her the reason I killed her mate. I need Lyric to know everything. But how will I do that?

How can I make Lyric listen?

I scream again behind the gag when someone else's hand grabs my right leg and wraps it around their waist.

"Don't worry; this will only hurt a lot." He laughs loudly, and my body and mind fill with despair.

"Is she wet?" The man behind me asks his rapist friend, who now has his hand inside my panties, touching me in a way no man ever has before.

"No. But what does that matter?"

"It doesn't. So, how are we doing this? One at a time? Or both together?"

Why is this happening to me?

My body fills with disgust, and I hate that I'm in no position to stop them. However, it doesn't deter me from using my legs to crush the bastard's waist.

He hisses and grabs the back of my head with one hand and my throat with the other. He pulls me closer and chuckles in my ear. "Do your worst, baby girl; I like the fight. I think we'll take you in the same hole at the same time."

No!

I scream behind the gag, my body twisting and my head shaking from side to side. I want to die already!

I hear the unbuckling of belts and feel my panties being moved to the side. This is how I'll lose the virginity I have kept intact for two hundred years to two rapist guards of the Lycan King right before I'm put to death. Haven't I been tortured enough? Update by FindNovel.net

As the man in front lines his penis with my opening, a colossal howl rents the air, shaking the room and my body. The guards are ripped away from me, and I smell blood in the air.

As I begin to lose consciousness, someone unhooks me, throws a blanket over me, and lifts me in their arms. Maybe I'm already dead, and this is me joining the afterlife.

Perhaps I'm finally dead because there is no coming back without the gift I bestowed upon Lyric and now...her mate.

The Lycan King's Hybrid Queen - Chapter 30[1,731 words]

I stare at the scene before me in shock. When Callen mind linked me, yelling The Witch had killed a handful of my men and escaped, I was confused. There's no way she could have escaped!

Reports had been brought to me about her t*****e. My guards had put the woman through things most wouldn't have survived. However, they made sure to keep her alive because Lyric wanted The Witch executed tomorrow. Tomorrow morning at dawn, The Witch was to be burned at the stake. I was shocked when Lyric said that. She knows firsthand what being burned alive feels like.

Lyric told me, 'Exactly. That bi.tch tried - did kill you. If you hadn't come back, I would have lost you. She deserves everything she gets.' I couldn't argue with that because the woman did want me dead. Lyric's first official order as Queen was execution. As the woman wouldn't give her name, everyone refers to her as 'The Witch. It could have been worse, I suppose. There are many names I could think of for her.

My eyes scan the cell The Witch was kept in. Body parts are strewn all over the place, and there is so much blood my senses are being overridden by it.

"Where the hell were you when this happened?"

Dave, one of the fifteen dungeon guards left, looks at me. "My King, I was doing my rounds in block B," Dave is head of all three dungeon blocks, A, B, and C, so doing rounds is normal. "When I returned, the prisoner was gone, and," He waves his hand toward the mess in the cell. "I don't know how it would have been physically possible for The Witch to do this. All the t*****e she'd been through... I don't get it." "What the hell are you getting at?"

"I think somebody helped the girl escape. There is no other explanation."

Anger floods my veins. It seems I have a traitor working for me. Somebody is going to die!

"Get this sh.it cleaned up, and I'll have the families informed. Also, get me the camera footage for this cell. I'll find out myself what really happened." "Yes, my King."

I walk out of that place, filled with anger. I need a shower to remove the stench from my nose and throat!

After showering and changing into a gray suit, I make my way to my office. I called a meeting with Blaze and Theo; Tyler is away right now, or he'd be here too. I want Theo and Blaze to witness what's on the memory stick Dave gave me.

I can't believe this is happening. It's mere days until my and Lyric's public ceremony and my mate's coronation. I should be preparing for that the way Lyric is right now. She's with my mother, learning all she needs to know about becoming Queen. Tomorrow is supposed to be The Witch's execution, and then Lyric was to go dress shopping with my sisters and her own. When Lyric finds out The Witch is gone, she'll hit the roof.

I grab a water bottle from the small fridge beside my desk. I refuse to drink anything that has yet to be inspected beforehand, including checking if bottled water has been tampered with. The Witch may have been caught, even if she's escaped now, but my trust in people has all but been depleted. I'll get over it in time.

Lyric believes I'm now like her because I can't stay dead. But I have my doubts because it's possible it was a one-off. The only way to find out if it's permanent is to die again, and I don't fancy that. What if I don't wake up?

I'm not ready to die yet, so there's no way I'll try dying again for some time. I have the elders looking into Lyric's curse and why I died and returned. Elder Matthews said he'd never heard of such a thing, but he wouldn't stop until he had an answer for me. Goddess knows how long it will take, but I hope not too long.

I knock back half the bottle of water before Theo walks into the room.

"Blaze not here yet?" I shake my head at Theo's stupid question. He can blatantly see Blaze isn't here! "That's odd," Theo sits in front of my desk. "Blaze is usually the first one here."

It is strange that Blaze has yet to arrive; he's never late. Though he's probably busy doing his job, which is what he's paid for. I sent him a mind link letting him know The Witch had escaped. Blaze will be briefing his troops, so he can be forgiven for his tardiness. With Blaze on the case, we'll have The Witch in custody in no time.

Five minutes later, Blaze walks into the room, closes the door behind him, and takes a seat beside Theo. "Sorry, I'm late."

"Where were you?"

Blaze raises his eyebrow at Theo. "I had business to attend to. Besides, it's a one-off."

"No need to explain." I wave away his words. "I didn't call you here for that."

"What did you call us here for?"

"Well," I grab the memory stick from my desk's top drawer and hold it up for them to see. "This is why I called you here, Theo. Footage of the dungeon and The Witch's cell. We're going to watch this and find out just how The Witch got out of there. Dave reckons someone released her because she was too injured to help herself."

Theo nods as though he agrees, and Blaze sits emotionless as always.

I open my laptop, load the footage, and set the computer so we can all see. I press play and watch four days of sheer torture put upon The Witch, skipping through most of it. I don't need to see every damn moment.

I skip to the end, and my eyes narrow and then widen. Johnny and Lou were about to rape The Witch! Yes, the woman poisoned me, wanted me dead, and she should have died for her crimes.

But r**e?

No!

I do not condone that sh.it. No matter the crime, rape is never acceptable.

Then I see a figure, covered from head to toe in black, a mask, cloak, and gloves. They made sure not one part of their body was showing; they didn't want to be recognized. The howl is somewhat familiar, but I can't pinpoint who it belongs to.

I watch as whoever the figure is tears Johnny and Lou to pieces. Kyle, Sid, and Marc rush toward the figure in black, but nothing could have saved them from the person's wrath. All five men are dead in under a minute.

The figure, which I'm assuming is a man from how they hold themselves, looks at the damage in the room for a second or two. He then turns and unhooks The Witch from her restraints. He grabs the blanket from the cell cot, throws it over The Witch, then lifts her bridal style and runs out of there with a speed I didn't know was possible.

What the fuck?

"What the hell was that?" Theo huffs as I slam the lid shut on my laptop. "That told us nothing."

"It told us that whoever that was knew the layout of the dungeons. They also knew The Witch. Why else would they help her?"

Blaze looks at me and shrugs. "Could be someone who used to work here. The only other people who know the layout of the dungeons are those who work or worked down there, your most trusted warriors, you, me, Theo, Tyler, and Uncle Ronan." "Well, I can rule you out, Theo, Tyler, and Dad. None of you would do something like that. The others will need to be questioned, though."

"I thought we'd updated our security systems?"

Theo is correct. Security was updated six months ago, and CCTV, audio, and alarms were all top of the range. If not, I, another trusted member, should have been notified. We weren't, which means it could only have been one of them. I didn't let The Witch out; Theo, Blaze, and Tyler wouldn't have. So one of the high-ranking warriors or guards it is.

"We did," I admit. "Which means it's someone we know. I didn't get anything from looking at the person, though something about them seemed familiar."

"Yes, like the way they held themselves." Blaze narrows his eyes as if he'd just had an epiphany.

"Blaze, what are you thinking?"

"I'm not sure yet, Thane. I'll let you know as soon as I can."

I nod. "In the meantime, Theo, bring everyone privy to the dungeon's info. I want them all in my office within the hour."

"Not waiting until tomorrow, then?"

Theo laughs, but I narrow my eyes at him. I'm in no mood for humor today; he should know that!

"Okay," Theo holds his hands up in surrender. "Not in the mood to laugh."

"No, Theo, I am not in the mood! I want that damn Witch caught before she gets too far!"

"Highly unlikely." Blaze scoffs. "They did a real number on her, Thane. It wouldn't surprise me if she's lying in the forest dying. Plus, I think we should question every guard. I don't want to think badly of every person working down there. But I never had Johnny and Lou down as rapists either, and now I don't know who to trust. "What if those two have done this more than once? What if a few of them have? Whatever crime a person committed, Grandfather would never have allowed r**e."

"I don't allow it!" I slam my fist on the desk. Ba.stard!

"Blaze wasn't suggesting you do, Thane."

"I was making a point. I'm sorry if you took it the wrong way."

'You need to chill out.'

'Don't start with me, Jagger. I'm not in the damn mood!'

'You need to get laid; it would make you a much nicer person.'

'Oh, fuck off!'

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Maybe Jagger is right, but I won't tell him that. I'd love nothing more than to sink myself into Lyric's tight, hot body, but I can't neglect my duties right now. I need to find The Witch; she's the only one who can give me the answers I seek. I'll find her if it kills me. 'Then you'll just wake up again. Jagger laughs inside my head.

I roll my eyes and ignore my Lycan.

"Just round up those who need questioning and get them here."

Theo and Blaze leave to do as I asked. I need to find Lyric and let her know what's happened. Goddess, she's going to lose it!