Fit For A King

I couldn't tell what hurt more: the searing pain of the wolfsbane that still burned my skin, or the fact I couldn't seem to remember anything.

With each passing face, I felt more and more lost in a sea of strangers.

Everyone treated me with kindness, but I could still sense their tension when I walked by.

As if I were someone who should be feared…

The Werewolf King who could barely even remember his name, much less how to rule from a throne.

It made me think back to being trapped in the cell, tortured by that arrogant prick Samuel. He had met a demise that was justi ed by his lies and deceit.

But if the stories I'd been told were correct, there were many more out there waiting to do the same to us…

Belle had kept her distance since the battle. I didn't blame her for wanting space, but I couldn't lie to myself about my feelings.

When Zena kissed me, it sparked a sensation I had not anticipated. After so much loss, her passionate kisses revived my weary bones.

Zena stayed attached to my hip the entire run home even though she knew I couldn't remember her. By the time we arrived back to the castle, Belle had all but disappeared.

Something told me it was her I wanted to be around, but I couldn't understand why I cared so much for a hybrid species.

Belle wasn't one of us, yet her spirit was truer to the werewolf form than anyone cared to admit.

When we nal entered the castle, I was overthrown by the smell of delicious food. Freshly baked bread, roasted lamb, and hints of apple pie were calling my name.

Every room I passed jolted something within me that felt like déjà vu.

The people inside were real enough, but they were as strange to me as a riddle from a dream.

I was shown to my bedroom and immediately went to the shower.

ROAR!

The hot water burned every open lash on my back. I wanted to stop the never-ending pain but I knew the wounds needed to be cleaned before healing.

Finally nished, I limped to the bed and fell onto my face. The clean sheets felt like heaven against my naked skin.

I heard a noise and was taken aback when I noticed Zena standing in the doorway.

She had recently showered as well. I could smell the freshness of her skin and the scent of perfume in the air.

She walked to me and held out a small jar of balm.

"I thought you might need some help," she said, opening the jar.

Her hands touched the wounds and it lled me with re. But the balm was soothing and quickly quelled the pain.

"Do you remember this place?" Zena asked, breaking me from my thoughts.

"Vaguely," I said. Her ngers gently massaged the lacerations, leaving no cut untouched.

"It's alright, my King. Give it time, and you'll remember." Zena smiled as she kissed me on the cheek. "I'll make sure you do."

I waited for him to say something, but he never did.

The ride back to his castle was nearly unbearable, but we made it back without incident, and that was all I cared about.

Everything that had happened in the Vampire Kingdom felt like a blur.

Al nal, I wandered down the halls, greeted by the other wolves who were no longer sure of whether I was their future queen or just Belle.

I missed being just Belle. *Just a regular part of my family's wolf pack where I was neither treated as royalty or an object to be passed around.*

Would anything ever be normal again?

I wandered o to the empty throne room and took a seat.

The throne itself was big enough to t both Keith and I on it. It was made from stone and was cold to the touch.

I'd imagined my throne would have been to his right.

I sighed and rested my arms, feeling the entire throne as I tilted my head back and closed my eyes.

A familiar, awful voice called out from the recesses of my mind.

Surely, you deserve better than the likes of him.

I shook Samuel's voice from my head, but the point had already been made. If Keith kept treating me like some second-rate item, why should I stay?

Though the Vampire King was a cruel deceiver, I couldn't deny his logic.

Keith may *never* regain his memory.

And even if he were to, it couldn't take away all the things I remembered.

All the hurt he initially put me through…

The door to the throne room opened, causing me to jump.

"Moon Goddess… you scared me!" I said.

Xavier smiled at me and bowed slightly. "You're allowed to be in here, Belle, don't worry."

I took my seat back on the throne.

As the door behind him closed, he approached me like he would a queen.

"It must not be easy for you, seeing him like this."

"No," I said, tracing my hand along the armrest, feeling its rough texture. "I imagine it's not easy for anyone."

"I tried to tell Zena to lay o him, but if it has to do with Keith, she'll completely ignore everything I say," Xavier sighed.

"Maybe it's for the best…" I said. "If she makes him happy, then why should I care?"

"Belle, you know as well as anyone, that's not true. You make him the happiest we've ever seen. He just doesn't remember that now."

"What if he never does?" I shouted.

Xavier took a deep breath, gathering his thoughts. "If anyone could bring his memories back now, it would be you."

"I know that," I said with sadness, "but I'm beginning to wonder how much I want to."

With that, I leapt o the throne and rushed out of the room, leaving Xavier shocked in my wake.

I pushed my legs as fast as they would take me down the wide corridors, following one after the other, until I found myself outside Keith's room.

The door was open, so I looked inside and nearly screamed.

Keith was lying on the bed as Zena rubbed the wounds on his back.

From the look on his face, it was the best thing that had happened to him in quite a while.

I pushed myself against the wall, hoping they hadn't seen me. Judging by the lack of reaction, I had managed to go unnoticed.

My heartbeat quickened, and I could feel that familiar burn boiling in my blood.

I tried to think of what to do next and could only envision my body alight in blue ame, burning down the room and all inside.

But I knew better than that and took several breaths to calm down.

That was it.

I knew what I had to do.

I wanted to see my family—*needed* to see my family. No predetermined fate would stop me.

I would leave tonight, while the entire castle slept, and never look back.

I woke up in the middle of the night from a nightmare that replayed my torture in the vampire kingdom.

It was one of the few memories I had, so it seemed tting it would be lled with horror.

There was something else that gnawed at my stomach, telling me all was not okay.

I turned over and glazed at Zena as she slept next to me.

She'd been all over me last night with her sexual advances.

It was hard to resist them, but I had been so tired that all we managed to do before I fell asleep was kiss.

What was wrong with me?

Slowly, so as to not awaken her, I got out of bed. I knew I needed sleep, but my mind would not let me rest.

I left the room, feeling cold as I wandered through the castle, hoping to trigger at least one small memory.

I traced my hands along the walls, willing them to tell me the stories I knew they possessed.

After a few turns, I found myself outside Belle's door. I knew from her scent that this room was hers, even if the smell was faint and fading.

I wanted to open the door and look inside to see her face, just to know if I still felt the same pull I had every other time.

I decided against it and let my feet guide me away.

Soon, I found myself standing inside a large room. From the scent and the look of it, this was my throne room.

I moved to it and sat down, feeling the cold stone on my skin.

There was a faint vibration that started in my feet and moved through the rest of my body.

I could feel that I had sat in this seat many times before, and as I rubbed my hands along the armrests, I felt an overwhelming feeling of comfort.

"There you are!" a voice managed to whisper.

I looked to the door and saw Zena standing there. Her hips swayed back and forth as she approached me.

Before I could say anything, she'd found my body.

"Zena, not now, I'm too tired," I said weakly.

"Give it a few seconds and you won't be," she whispered in my ear.

She managed to straddle me, and the force of her kisses nearly took my breath away.

I tried to stand, but she used her hips to push me back down.

As much as I wanted to say no, I could feel my body saying otherwise.

Zena noticed it, too, and grazed her ngers over my shaft, an arming emotions I had wanted to suppress.

She kissed my neck softly, sending chills up my spine.

The heat from her body was overwhelming, and I found my ngers returning the favor.

She moaned into my mouth with pleasure as our lips refused to separate.

I put my hands on her hips and pulled her closer to me, feeling her hips begin to slowly grind into mine.

She was fully clothed, but it wouldn't take long for one of us to simply rip away her pants.

She kept grinding as our lips remained locked. Back and forth, faster and harder.

I didn't want her to ever stop.

Our bodies wanted so badly to become one that I had nearly forgotten the vibrations from earlier.

I could feel them again, and this time, could separate my lust for Zena and the pulsing that had begun when I nst sat down on the throne.

FLASH!

I'm in a cave watching Belle become engulfed in an incredible blue ame…

Zena kept grinding as her kisses moved down my chin and onto my neck…

FLASH!

Belle is running away from me. When I enter the same room, she suddenly disappears through an unfamiliar door…

Zena tried to whisper sweet nothings into my ear, but her voice was silent…

FLASH!

Belle rises out of the encroaching ames, levitating before my eyes…

Zena ripped o her pants and grabbed hold of my erect shaft…

FLASH!

Belle's beautiful eyes looking into mine. Mark me…

Her words jolted my body with a spasm.

I rose to my feet, knocking Zena to the ground.

"BELLE!" I shouted, as everything from my memory came oding back to me.

But that familiar pull was no longer there. It was *completely* gone, and I knew what it meant.

Belle was no longer in my castle. She was gone.