

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 101

“Sorry Printer – Miss Smith?”

I gave him a soft smile. “Thank you,” I sighed again. “I think I’d like to stay outside a little longer, if that’s okay?”

“Of course,” Bubba said. “I’ll bring your bag to your room then stand by.”

“Thank you,” I said, softly.

Bubba grunted back at me before dragging my bag into the dorm and letting the door slam shut behind him. I couldn’t help but sigh again. I looked out on the campus lawn.

It was fairly late, almost eleven, so most of the students had retired for the evening. The January winds were light and breezy that night, gently whipping the top layer of fresh snow up into the air and around my face. I burrowed my face further into my scarf and walked further into the lawn. My boots crunched on the bottom layer of old snow.

I walked across the lawn and wound up in the center of it, once again. I tipped my head back and looked into the stars. Part of me hoped maybe, just maybe, there would be some sort of instructions. Maybe a manual to tell me how I was supposed to still remind incognito, juggle four men who we’re trying to win me over and not fail all my classes.

To my chagrin, there was nothing in the sky besides a few stray snowflakes. I cupped my hand and watched as one hit my skin and melted into it. I bit my lip and watched the water seep into my skin.

Someone cleared their throat next to me and I immediately snapped my head up. My claws jerked out of my hands immediately and I dropped into a defensive stance. A snarl escaped my lips.

The person held their hands up and then dropped them with a half snort of a laugh. “Déjà vu?” he said.

I blew out the breath I didn’t know I’d been holding and stood up straight. “I’ll say,” I grumbled. “You need to stop sneaking up on me.”

“You’d think that you’d be more aware of your surroundings, given the recent events,” The man said, plainly. It didn’t sound malicious, but I knew better. I narrowed my eyes at him.

“What do you want, Kairos?”

Kairos Moonraiser ran a hand through his hair. It was shaggy enough that it curled around his ears. His face was framed in auburn. The freckles on his skin had become more pronounced since I'd last seen him. I figured he'd spent the holiday somewhere warm as his skin had a sunny hue to it. Above his freckles, his dark gold eyes were wide and intense. Just like every other Alpha on campus.

"Is it wrong of me to check that you're okay?" he mumbled.

"Not wrong. Just weird," I replied, still on edge. "You saw me leave campus, completely fine."

"Then I didn't see you for two weeks," Kairos said, plainly.

I paused then sighed for the millionth time that night. "

Your point?"

"Our last challenge is in a few days," He mumbled

"It is,"

"My offer still stands,"

I snapped my head to look at him. His face was soft. The only hardness was in his eyes. I licked the front of my teeth in thought. I turned back to look up at the sky.

"No," I finally said.

"No?" Kairos repeated. "Zora, come on-"

"No," I repeated and turned back to look at him. "You've been trying to get me off of campus since I started here. I beat you once. I can beat you twice. I deserve to be here.

And I'll be damned if you don't let me prove it."

I started to walk past him, but he caught my arm and jerked me back. I whirled around and landed pressed to his broad chest. His eyes were staring down at me with this violent intensity. The blacks of his pupils were steadily growing wider. I watched as he wet his lower lip then parted them. Something deep and intense flared in my stomach. It was enough that I shook myself out of his grasp and jerked away. I gave him one more look before I turned on my heel and walked back to my dorm.

Kairos

Kairos watched as Zora walked away from him. He could see the heat rising off her back in the cold of the night. He knew she'd felt it too, the raw desire licking up her spine.

He groaned and tipped his head back. It was very much like the last position she'd left him in. Once again, she was walking away from him.

He was going to kiss her.

He really wanted to.

Maybe it was the way she looked under the dim

- moonlight. Maybe it was the way her smell had him by the throat. Maybe it was the way her narrowed gaze and lips curled in distaste made his dick so hard—

Maybe it was some sort of cosmic punishment for his previous wrong doings.

But he really, really wanted to kiss her.

He watched as the door to her build slammed shut across the campus lawn and groaned again. He was no closer to getting Zora on his good side than he was the last time he saw her. He was going to apologize for it all and tell her that he thought they were mates. But then fucking Maximus was there and Lunerly and then the Gods damned Queen herself. And Kairos was cast aside again.

He let out a noise of frustration and ran his hand down his face. Kairos wasn't used to people not giving a shit about him. He was the center of attention at all points in his life.

His father, his family, his girls. They all gave a shit about him.

Until Zora.

Zora Smith didn't give one singular fuck if he wanted her.

She was still worried about the target he'd painted on her back, the first day she'd arrived on campus. It was a valid concern, but Kairos had tried twice by then, to call off the final fight. Zora was the one to say no.

Plus, there were the other wolves trying to claim they were here fated mate. It made Kairos's face twist with disgust. He scoffed and shoved his hands in his pockets, resigned to spend the rest of his evening alone in his house.

He briefly, on the walk back, thought about storming Zora's dorm and barging into Maximus's room and challenging him. But, he knew there was no way Zora would approve of that. Plus, he didn't really want to fight his friend. Even if Maximus was the one Zora had chosen to bed.

Valentin Lunerly, however, was an entirely different opponent.

Kairos wanted to shred the man. He'd contemplated going after Amara on his own when he'd seen her wandering into the forest. But, he knew that Alpha Academy's Headmaster was a great deal stronger than he was. Even if the guy was a bit of a cunt.

So, he'd gone to Lunerly with his information. Kairos remembered the man's face as soon as he'd mentioned Zora. It was like all color had drained from his face. The panic that ensued told Kairos all he needed to know about Lunerly's relationship with Zora. It had been confirmed when he heard Lunerly snapping about his mate mid battle with the vampires.

So, two additional men were in competition for Zora with him. Something about it seemed wrong. He'd never heard of a wolf having so many fated mates. Lunerly was a High Alpha. He knew the signs of a fated mate well. But, maybe Maximus was misreading the signs? Kairos brushed that thought out of his head as quickly as it came in. If Maximus's signs were anything like his own, it was hard to dispute that they weren't real.

The electricity.

The beating of their hearts together.

The lust.

Kairos scoffed at the last one as he walked up the steps into his house. He could smell Maximus all over Zora that one day in the woods. They had for sure fucked. It was probably why it'd sent him into such a rage. Zora was supposed to be his. Not fucking Wolfham's. The house was empty as Kairos moved inside. Thorne and Petyr didn't have classes on Monday. They weren't supposed to be back on campus until the following night.

Kairos was alone in his big house. He walked upstairs and into his room. He contemplated stopping outside for a smoke but decided against it.

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 102

When he arrived to his room, he shrugged his jacket off and tossed it on the ground before falling into his bed. He sighed heavily and scrubbed at his face with his hands. He desperately needed someone to talk to. Though, none of his friends knew anything about the matter at hand. For God's sake, Thorne had severed his fated mate bond. And Petyr was so loved up all he'd do is wax on poetically about Alessia.

Grumbling, Kairos turned over and palmed the landline sitting on his nightstand. He turned the phone over in his hands before giving up and dialing the only number he knew. It picked up on the second ring, a gruff voice grunting through the line.

“What? What is it? Are you safe?”

“Dad, I’m fine,” Kairos sighed. “I just was calling to say hi.”

”Hi?” Atlas Moonraiser sneered. “Gods be damned, kid. I thought something was wrong.”

“Sorry, sorry,” Kairos rubbed at his face again. “I just – I needed to talk to someone.”

Atlas cleared his throat. “Yeah. Yeah. ‘Course. What is it?”

Kairos groaned. This was a mistake. His father, as much as he tried, was not a warm and fuzzy kind of guy. Kairos vividly remembered the uncomfortable talk they’d had about fated mates as he turned sixteen. How his father had almost choked when Kairos had asked about consummating the bond.

Now, he was trying to ask his father about the same thing.

And he expected Atlas to be helpful? He didn’t know why he thought the call was a good idea.

“S’nothing,” Kairos mumbled. “Nevermind.”

“Clearly, something is bothering you,” Atlas said. “Though I don’t know why you didn’t bring it up when we were together yesterday. Had to use the bloody emergency phone-”

“Yep, yep, sorry,” Kairos cut his father off. “Don’t use the emergency phone to say hi. Got it. Noted.”

Atlas sighed. Kairos could hear himself in his father across the line. “What is it son?”

Kairos looked up at the ceiling and mimicked his father’s deep sigh. He slapped a hand on his face and pinched the bridge of his nose. Finally, he said it.

“I think ‘ve found her.”

“Her?” Atlas repeated, shocked. “Bloody fucking hell, boy!

Don’t sound so excited about it!”

Kairos rolled his eyes. “It’s complicated,” he said.”

Remember the wolfless I told you about?”

“Fuck me,” Atlas laughed. Course she’d be that girl.

That’s a wee bit of irony, yeah?””She’s not anymore,” Kairos continued. “But she still fucking hates me. I tried to call off the last fight in our challenge and she didn’t let me. Something about proving herself to me.”

“Bit romantic, I’d say,”

“Dad-”

“Aye, aye,” Atlas replied. “Only kidding. But, if you truly believe this lass is your fated mate, she’ll come round.”

There’s something to be said about wolves who are destined to be together. No matter how the relationship starts, it’ll end the way it’s supposed to. Always has and always will be. Even when the vampires suppressed our magiks, we still wound up with the people we were meant to be with.”

“Like you and mum,” Kairos said.

“Aye,” Atlas agreed. He paused for a second, clearly lost in a memory. Kairos hummed before speaking.

“I miss her too, Dad,”

“Aye,” Atlas sighed. “But my point still stands. If it’s meant to be, it’ll be.”

“Right,” Kairos mumbled.

“Go to bed, son,” Atlas said. “Start the day with a new mindset. She’ll come around.”

“Goodnight. Thanks for talking,” Kairos said again. “And sorry for using the emergency phone.”

“Despite the fact it gave me a heart attack, I like hearing from you bay,” Atlas sighed again. “Goodnight, son.”

“Night,” Kairos said. He put the emergency phone back on the receiver and rolled back to stare at his ceiling. He hoped the next day would be more promising.

Especially with regards to Zora Smith.

Zora

I spent my first week back on campus blissfully normal.

Well, as normal as one could be as a hidden wolf Princess with five fated mates, who’d been kidnapped and – oh. I was also supposed to save the world from the vampires.

Totally, normal.

The one thing that surely didn't change after my kidnapping was people still were talking about me. The murmurs when I walked by crowds on campus were ever present. It was if people had suddenly realized that maybe I was someone special. For the vampires to kidnap me, I wasn't just a wolfless nobody. I was someone.

The thought terrified me.

I still didn't want anyone to know I was the Princess. The knowledge that vampires had returned for "unknown" reasons was not mine to share. Didn't mean I wanted it shared. In fact, I sat in the auditorium where Valentin announced it and felt the color drain from my face.

The entire crowd gasped and cried in shock. Loren sat next to me, gnawing on her fingers like she was about to let it slip as to what they'd done. Then Valentin just announced it to the world who had been kidnapped. Loren made a squeaking noise so violent that everyone whipped their heads to look at us. Then they started to talk.

On Wednesday, Basics started up again. Loren and I made our way across the campus, murmurless and ready to tackle the day. Bubba trailed behind us as hidden as he could possibly be at his size. We marched into the gym late, as everyone seemed to be set up before us. As expected, Kairos, Maximus and Thorne were still the TAs in Basics. They stood up front and pierced Loren and I with their gazes.

Unexpectedly, Coach picked me to demonstrate instead of them.

"What?" I said, blankly.

"You heard me Smith," Coach barked out. He gestured to the sparring mat in the front of the crowd. "I've seen your kicks. You're the best in the class, besides Wolfham. So, get up there."

I paused for a second. Everyone's eyes were on me but the ones I felt the most were the ones next to coach.

Maximus's honey gold and Kairos's deep gold were pinned on me. I slowly walked up to the sparring mat and I felt their gazes burning me.

I dropped into my stance and threw the jumping spin kick that Maximus had taught me at the end of the last

semester. I landed and my feet hit the mat. A sound echoed off the walls of the silent gym. When I turned back to look at Coach. He's nodding. I quickly glance at Maximus and Kairos. They're both staring at me with blown out pupils. Kairos's jaw is clenched.

"Good," Coach mumbles. "Very good. Alright now, pair up."

Smith, you're with Wolfham."

I jerked my head to glance at Maximus. His eyes were still pinned on me with this voracious intensity. I nodded to him once and waited until the rest of the class paired up and went off to their own mats. Loren squeezed my shoulder before she went off with some female Alpha.

I met Maximus's eyes once again and tried to ignore the sinking feeling in my gut.

I hadn't spoken to him since he'd left me with my mother in the infirmary after my attack. Something about that seemed like a problem. Especially since the last person he saw me with was someone he didn't want me hanging out with; Valentin.

As we walked to our mat there was a thick tension floating through the air. Maximus said nothing as we stood on our mat. He quietly dropped into his sparring stance. I huffed out a breath before I spoke.

"How was your break?" my voice creaked and cracked awkwardly.

Maximus blinked at me before he took the time to show who really was the best at kicks. He spun his heel so close to my face that I felt a gust of air ghost over my nose as I dodged it. I grunted and threw my body back.

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 103

"That good, huh?" I mumbled before I retaliated.

I threw my fist in his direction. He dodged it easily then threw another one back at me. I jerked to avoid it then threw my palm up to block him. Despite being stronger than I used to be, I still didn't absorb Maximus's punch well. I grunted as I staggered back. He didn't seem to care as he threw another kick at me.

"Fucking hell, Max," I snapped. "Give me a break."

He then threw another punch which I swatted away. In turn, I threw a punch back at him, nailing him in the underside of the jaw and sending him tripping over his feet.

"Shit, sorry!" I said, rushing forwards to try and apologize.

But it seemed Maximus had no intentions of accepting as he swiped my feet out from under me. I landed on my back.

He was immediately on top of me, pressing my wrists into the mat with his big hands. I struggled slightly before giving up. He had me pinned. Instead, I fixed him with a malicious glare.

“The fuck is your problem?” I hissed.

“You!” Max spat back, quiet enough that only the two of us could hear but with a violent intensity. “You are my fucking problem, Zora. You nearly get kidnapped by vampires, barely say a word to me in the infirmary then disappear for the two weeks of break. Are you fucking kidding me?”

“I don’t have a phone”

“I don’t give a shit,” Max seethed. He pressed my wrists further into the mat. “I do give a shit about the fact that when I went to find a way to contact you, Lunerly had scrubbed your record clean. What does he know that! don’t?”

“Nothing!” I tried but I watched Maximus’s eyes narrow at me. He leaned down close enough that his breath tickled the shell of my ear. I couldn’t help myself as I arched up into his chest, feeling the electricity that usually showed up when we touched, surging through my skin. Maximus clearly felt it too, his pupils blowing wide.

I want to wait for you to decide,” he whispered. “But the secrets that I don’t know and Lunerly does is making it hard for me to believe that you haven’t already made choice.”

I shook my head fervently. “I haven’t,” I breathed.”

Maximus, please. I feel something for you. I need you.”

Maximus brought his face even closer to my ear. A whimper escaped my lips as I pressed further into him. I could feel his smile against the shell of my ear. It immediately dropped before he spoke.

“Then, show me.” At once, all of his weight was off of me, and he was back on his feet. I laid on the ground, heart slamming into my ribcage as I tried to regain composure from the position he’d put me in. A snicker came from the corner of the mat.

I jerked my head up to see Kairos and one of his cronies looking down at me.

The other alpha snorted at me. “Looks like you’ve got the third challenge in bag, huh?”

Kairos didn’t say anything. He just stared down at me, eyes wide as possessive. I watched his fist clench and unclench, along with his jaw. He licked the front of his teeth before he jerked to look at his friend.

“Guess I do,” he bit out. He gave me another glance then looked at Maximus. “Try not to fuck her in the middle of class, Wolfham.”

Max let out a low growl and then immediately was yanking me up to my feet. I stumbled into his chest. We both tracked Kairos as he and the other Alpha walked away from us.

The tension between Kairos and Maximus was almost as strong as the electricity between Maximus and I.

As soon as Kairos removed his gaze, Maximus dropped me and was back to his harsh demeanor. I frowned at him but he ignored it.

“Again,” he barked before launching a bunch of hits at me.

Back to normal.

I guess.

The Saturday of the first week of classes was the final challenge in my series of fights with Kairos. Bubba vehemently tried to stop me from fighting. But I had to do it. I had to finish the series and show the campus, and Kairos, I was worthy of their respect. Bubba grumbled when he walked me to the gym and left me in the locker room.

I could hear the roar of the crowd outside of the locker room. It was the loudest it’d sounded yet and I knew why.

The campus was divided on who would be winning. It was all anyone talked about the rest of the week after Basics.

Some thought I was a sure to win, given how I’d thrown Kairos off so much in our last fight. Others saw my display in Basics and thought I was sure to lose.

Whispers seemed to chase me around campus. Not that they didn’t before, but this semester, they were slightly more positive. One of the Alphas in my class had even come up to me with his friends and wished me luck. I couldn’t help but notice the blush spreading across his cheeks. As he left, I looked across the cafeteria to see that Maximus had crushed his can of water into aluminum foil.

His face was murderous.

I ignored it.

I didn’t need his distraction before the fight. In fact, I’d avoided all of my fated mates the whole week. I hadn’t gone to training with Valentin and Thorne hated me enough to keep his distance. I didn’t need the drama that surrounded them.

I needed to beat Kairos.

I heaved a sigh and finished lacing up my sneakers. I ran my thumb over the smear of blood that Kairos had punched out of my nose. It had oxidized into a dark brown.

That person, the one who'd first fought Kairos, she seemed so far away from the person I'd become. I tapped the mark before standing up and making my way.

Apparently, Kairos had chosen the exact same time as me to make his entrance. As such, we both emerged from the locker rooms at the same time. The crowd went wild.

Kairos, however, seemed unphased. I huffed and tried to storm up to the mat. His legs were too long, though and he caught up to me.

"Still time to stop this," he murmured, so only I could hear.

I scoffed. "You wish."

Kairos stopped short and I stopped with him, brows creasing. The crowd was still roaring around us as he stared at me. I felt a twinge in my chest and brought my hand up to rub at it. Kairos's eyes went wide then he snapped his gaze back up to mine.

"I do," he said, softly. "I do wish."

I stared at him for a moment before scowling again. I turned on my heel and marched up to the stairs to the stage. In the middle, this time, was Maximus. I balked slightly at him before I took my place on his right. I didn't expect him to be here. Let alone, commanding the fight. I opened my mouth to speak, but by the glance he shot at me, I gave up. My jaw slammed back shut.

Had he given up on me?

Kairos marched up the stairs, face still set in an impassive line. He stood on the other side of Maximus, looking at me. He seemed at peace, odd considering we were about to claw each other to pieces again.

Maximus raised a hand to cull the crowd. The noise died down immediately. Maximus looked at me, then Kairos, then spoke.

"This is the final round of the challenge," he stated. The crowd cheered before dying back down as he raised his hand again. "All sparring techniques are for use," he said. "A knockout results in an automatic win. Fighters, take your positions."

I dropped into my stance and continued to glare at Kairos.

His face was still plain and his stance was loose, wrists not tight enough and legs not bent enough. I smirked.

This was going to be easy.

“Begin!” Maximus said, dropping his raised hand. Then, the crowd started. Maximus scurried backwards and I started to circle Kairos. He tracked me in the circle I stalked him in. I was trying to figure out how best to hurt him first. The ribs? Maybe a kick to the head would do it. I was known for my kicks.

Just as I was about to make my first strike, Kairos did the unbelievable. It was so shocking, the entire gym was gasping.

He took a knee.

He held my eyes as he did it. Then, when his knee hit the ground, he bowed this head. He bowed his fucking head.

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 104

NO! Mona howled in my head. I ignored her, completely incredulous. He was giving up. He was letting me win. I wouldn't have it.

“Get up!” I barked.

“I concede,” Kairos stated, plain as ever.

“Get the fuck up!” I snapped again, sounding hysteric.

“You concede?!” Maximus was back on the mat, staring incredulously at Kairos.

“Fuck you!” I snarled. “Get up! Fight me goddamn it!”

“No,” Kairos said. “I refuse.”

I jerked my head to look at Maximus. He too, looked like he was losing his mind. His eyes darted back and forth between Kairos and I then finally out to the audience. My heart heaved in my chest.

“Smith wins.”

The crowd was incredulous. Cheers and screams of protest overlapped and collided in my ears. Behind me, a crowd of people came up. They shook me and clapped me on the shoulders before enveloping me in a pack. All the while, I kept my eyes affixed on Kairos. He slowly rose and walked calmly back to the locker room.

Rage flared hot and fiery inside me. It engulfed my skin and I felt the heat radiating off me. The people swarmed around me jerked away from me as if I were on fire myself.

It left me the perfect line to the men's locker room. I stormed in there, vaguely aware that Loren and Maximus were calling after me. But, none of it mattered.

I slammed the door open and saw Kairos standing in the middle, locker half open. At the noise of the door slamming against the wall, he turned over his shoulder to look at me. His face was still a mask, lighting the fire in me more. I stormed over with the force of a thousand suns.

"How dare you!?" I screeched, slamming his back against the locker as I shoved his chest. "How fucking dare you!?"

"I conceded," Kairos grit out from between his teeth. "I let you win. I gave you what you wanted. And you're mad at me?"

I slammed my fist against his chest, earning a grunt from him. "It wasn't yours to give!" I spat. "It was mine to take and you took that from me! Again!"

"Stop it," Kairos snapped.

His one hand wrapped around my wrist and the fire inside me seemed to be fueled by his touch. My other fist still was slamming into his chest. I started to feel hot, angry tears welling in my eyes.

"You took it from me!" I shrieked. "I was supposed to ruin you. To show you and everyone at this stupid fucking school that I wasn't a nobody. And you took the opportunity from me! You fucking asshole!"

"Zora—"

Kairos tried to placate me but I could hear the anger behind his tone. It was a warning. My fire licked higher up my skin. If he didn't want to fight me in front of the school then I'd fight him in the locker room. But I deserved a fight.

"I hate you!" I cried, becoming more hysteric as the moment passed. "I hate you and this fucking school and fucking hate being a wolf and the stupid wolf politics"

I rambled on aimlessly, tears now springing out of my eyes and onto my burning cheeks. My fist was still trying to pound Kairos into submission as he wrestled it away from him. I was so angry and felt so hot all at the same time. I needed to get it out. I felt like I was going to erupt if I kept my anger in anymore.

"Zora—"

Kairos tried again to calm me down but wound up pissing me off more when his other hand captured my free wrist and pinned it to his chest. More fire, curling into my brain and poisoning it.

“I hate you!” I repeated. “I hate you, I hate you, I hate you

I could’ve gone on until the end of time. But Kairos surprised me more than he already had that day. I expected him to punch me. To kick or hit me back. Or to swat me away like I was an annoying bug. He hated me. I hated him. It had been that way since I’d gotten to the school. It was our normal.

What wasn’t our normal, was the softness he’d shown me.

It was confusing enough that I pushed it out of my mind. It was some tactic of his. But that was all changed in the moment he cut me off of my incessant comments about how much I despised him.

Because instead of hitting me, Kairos Moonraiser dropped his head to meet mine and press our lips together so abruptly that I burst into flames.

Kissing Kairos felt like licking fire.

Everything about the way that his lips pressed into mine was like a match being lit up. The way he wrapped his hands around my wrists, the way his hips were pressing into mine. It all lit me up.

So, it shouldn’t have been a surprise that I burst into flames. Yet it shocked me, and the man holding me. He jerked back as if I’d scorched him and stared at me as the flames licked my chin. Just as fast as they came on, they were out. Kairos’s eyes searching mine frantically. I could tell he was trying to figure out if the fire that burst out of my skin was defensive or excitement.

Instead of asking, he kissed me again.

I couldn’t help but moan into his mouth. He tasted like smoke and pine and I felt like I was driven mad with it.

Another tuft of flames came from my hands and scorched the shirt on his back. Kairos didn’t seem to care. He ripped it off and went back to claiming my mouth.

The feeling of his bare chest against mine almost brought the fire back for the third time. I wriggled my own shirt up so our skins could press together. I whimpered with desire.

Kairos’s hands cupped the underside of my ass then I was airborne. He whirled me around, our lips not parting for a second, and pinned me to the locker. The clattering of my back against the metal of the lockers only made me groan more. Kairos took the opportunity to work his tongue into my open mouth.

I nipped and sucked at it as his hands kneaded into the backs of my thighs. His hips pressed into me, a hardness growing between his legs that felt like heaven when he

ground it into my core. I moaned again, our lips slipping apart but never leaving each other. Kairos licked and sucked down the side of my neck as my hands clawed into his back. The lust and fire coursing through me was maddening.

Kissing Kairos felt like hellfire.

Wait.

I was kissing Kairos.

Kairos.

“Stop,” I squeaked, barely above a whisper. Kairos continued to assault my neck with his mouth. His reached my collar bone and stuck his tongue into the divet of it, causing my hips to buck against his.

Bond with him, Mona cooed in the back of my mind. Allow yourself to be whole.

But it was Kairos under me, not Maximus. Not Valentin.

Something felt... wrong.

“Stop,” I tried again.

Kairos lifted his head with a hum. His eyes were hooded and dark, caked in the same lust I felt deep within my stomach. I shoved his shoulders gently. He didn't move.

“Stop!” cried.

Instantly, he dropped me. I landed on the bench under the Lockers with a thud. I yelped as I landed. Kairos threw his back against the set of lockers across from me. We stared at each other, chests heaving and eyes dark. I watched his chest rise and fall, feeling the want burn up and through my throat again. I had to get away from him, before I did something stupid.

I swallowed my breath before getting up and darting out of the locker room. I briefly heard Kairos calling my name but ignored the tugging in my chest to go back and see him. I burst out of the locker room. A crowd was beginning to form as the students tumbled out of the gym from the fight. I ignored their cheers and kept running.

The cold winter air bit through my bare skin and chilled any fire still in me.

Kairos Moonraiser and I had made out.

Furthermore, Kairos Moonraiser was one of my fated mates. That made the four candidates that my mother had picked for me last summer, my four mates. Anger coursed through me again. Did she know?

“Fuck,” I hissed as I kept running. My destination was set in my mind. As the giant Admissions building came into view, I pushed my legs harder to my destination. She knew.

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 105

She fucking knew.

I darted up the stairs and to the office I had become so familiar with. I didn't even bother with knocking. Luckily, the only person in the office was its owner, Valentin. He startled as I slammed his door against the wall then slammed it back shut again.

“Zora? What's wrong?” His eyes searched mine then dropped to my body. “Did someone set you on fire?”

“Call her,” I snapped. “Call my mother, now.”

Valentin slowly picked up the phone on his desk. He didn't dial at all before holding it up his ear. His eyes were still roaming over my body, presumably at the tatters of cloth that used to be my training outfit.

“Victoria,” he said into the phone. He looked down then back up at me. “Zora's here.”

Then, he wordlessly handed me the phone. I yanked it to me and stood in front of Valentin's desk. Immediately, Victoria's words were fluttering through my ears.

“Zora? What's wrong?”

“You knew,” I snapped.

A beat.

“What?”

You knew all four of the sons of high alphas were my fated mated, didn't you?”

Victoria sighed. “I had a hunch. It wasn't confirmed-”

“So, you allowed me to come to this school, to pretend like I wouldn't be married off anyways,” I snapped. I sputtered as my anger flustered my words. “To some – some assholes that my body has decided I'm enamored with!”

“Zora,” Victoria said, calm. “That’s not how fated mates work. It isn’t your body. It’s the fates. You’d fall for them regardless of a bond-”

“Its bullshit!” I snapped. Valentin tensed across the desk from me. I wish I cared. “You knew, didn’t you?”

Victoria paused again. The anger within me was so big that my heart hammered against my chest. Then, my mother sighed and all my anger exploded.

“How dare you not tell me!”

“I didn’t have confirmation-”

“This is bullshit! I’m just your puppet, aren’t I?”

“Zora-”

“You’re using me for me power!”

“ENOUGH!”

My mother’s voice roared through the phone. Both Valentin and I shrunk in ourselves. It wasn’t just my mother speaking. It was the Alpha Queen Luna demanding us to step down. I huffed a breath of air out of my nose. I heard Victoria sigh over the line. Somehow, I felt like I won by riling her up.

“There is another part of the prophecy,” she murmured.

“You told me the prophecy,” I snapped. “I saw it.”

“You saw it as I wanted you to see it,” my mother murmured. “Lines were missing.”

“What lines?” My heart hammered out of my chest.

“Born of royalty, bound to five, the collision of dark and light,” My mother recited.

“I know that,” I grit out. “What are the new lines?”

“The day that the circle is complete, the bestower of new feats,” My mother finally said.

I knit my eyebrows together. “What does that mean?” I snapped.

“Your bonds,” Victoria said slowly. “You must consummate them to gain the powers you need to defeat the vampires.”

“Consummate,”

I blinked then turned to look at Valentin. He was as white as a ghost, his jaw clenched hard enough I could hear his teeth grinding. He slowly sat back in his chair, attempting to relax but looking as tense as ever. I let the word roll around in my head for a moment, trying to grasp what had been revealed to me.

I believe the humans use the word 'fuck', Came Mona from the bowels of my mind.

I felt all the blood rush from my face. I had to sleep with each of my fated mates. had to engage in some sort of wicked, wolf polyamory or else we'd be subject to being brought back to slaves.

"Fuck," I breathed into the phone.

"Exactly," my mother sighed. "You have to fuck."

I didn't sleep that much that night.

I was torn between the embarrassment of having to talk about sex with my mother, the shock of her telling me I should sleep with four different men, and the guttural anger at not having a choice of if I wanted to do so.

I slammed my hands over my face for the hundredth time as I tried to find a way out of his mess. I pushed my face into my pillow and groaned so Loren wouldn't hear me.

Not that she could, over the sound of her snoring.

Stomped my pillow over my head. Somehow, after hours of tossing and turning, I fell asleep. I still felt like shit the next morning when I woke up at the ass-crack of dawn for training with Valentin.

We may have talked about fucking, but that didn't stop our morning sessions! Oh, no. That would never stop as long as I was the vampire-slaying-wolf-savior.

I made sure to drag my feet to leave my dorm.

Maximus was waiting for me in the hall, arms across his chest like a disappointed mother. Someone should've told him I already had one of those. I gingerly closed my door behind me and raised my eyebrows at him. He scoffed before turning and walking out of our building. I followed him across the lawn to the gym. Neither of us spoke the entire time. Unfortunately for me, my mind was filled with thoughts of the last time we'd "consummated" our bond. I walked into the locker room all hot and bothered. It was confirmed by the way I noticed steam surrounding me. I huffed and dunked my head under the ice-cold shower.

When I emerged with soaking wet hair, Maximus and Thorne looked at me like I was a basket case. Valentin, who seemed to have mind-reading abilities, just stared at me with intense eyes. He shook his head before addressing all of us.

“Today we’re going to do something different,” he said.”

We’re going to have you all fight as a team.”

Thorne scoffed. “A team? You expected the feral dog that is Smith to be to fight with two sons of High Alphas? Good luck.”

“Watch it,” Maximus growled under his breath.

Valentin gave Thorne a smile laced with poison. “You’ll be fighting with a High Alpha too.

This set Maximus off. He jerked his head to glare at Valentin. “You’re fighting with us?” he snapped. “Why?

And who will we be fighting against?”

Valentin lifted his hand into the air then swished it. Eight large sparring dummies, the kind made from sand, floated into the air then circled the four of us. Maximus and Thorne looked annoyed; Valentin looked smug. I was still in awe of the magiks that Valentin seemed to be able to control.

“These dummies are trained in vampire fighting style,” Valentin said. “They’ve taken my studies on vampire techniques and adapted their own skillsets to meet them.

It’s the best case we have on replicating how a vampire fights.”

He walked over to me and stood back facing me. Then, he Lifted his hand a second time and flicked his wrist. Slowly, all eight of the dummies started to wobble towards us in a rhythmic way. Valentin dropped into a stance in front of me. Maximus and Thorne, flanking my sides, tentatively did the same.

Valentin turned over his shoulder to look at us. I didn’t miss the slight smirk on his lips. “Communication is key!” he shouted. “Trust one another and trust Zora. That is how we take these things down.”

“Fucking creepy,” Thorne mumbled next to me.

“Stop bitching and take them down then,” Maximus snapped before he lunged at one of the dummies.

All at once, they attacked us. I watched Valentin strike the first one, skittering it away from and the other others. He then slammed his hand forwards and knocked it even

further back with some telekinetic magiks. I was too busy staring at it to notice another one had charged at me.

I immediately whipped my leg around and sunk my heel into the spot in between its shoulder and head. I grunted as made contact, not expecting how hard those things were. I jumped to my other foot and swung the one previously on the ground up to hit the thing right in the stomach. With the full force of my lower body, I shoved it backwards. It hit the wall on opposite side of the gym and fell limp to the floor.

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 106

One down.

I turned back and saw that Maximus had also tossed his dummy across the gym. Thorne was grappling with his on the floor. Max smirked as he walked over, picked the dummy off Thorne like it was nothing, and tossed it to land on top of his first attacker. Thorne rolled over and looked pissed.

“I had it!” he snapped.

“I wouldn’t describe it that way,” Maximus hummed.

Another dummy came charging at the men, looking a bit like an overgrown toddler. Maximus threw his hand out at the last moment and punched it away from Thorne, who turned to growl at Max in response.

“Back off Wolfham!” he snapped.

“Some knight you are,” Max snorted. “Can’t even keep a bag of sand from taking you down.”

Thorne shoved Max in the chest. “Fuck you, mate!”

Max shoved him back, sending Thorne stumbling off the mat. Then Maximus turned and kicked another dummy in the head before tossing it to the mat and punching the thing right where it should have a face. By that point, Thorne was on his feet again and charged Maximus. He tackled the taller wolf to the floor and the two landed in a pile of limbs next to the dummy. They scrambled to get the upper hand on one another, not necessarily landing punches, but grabbing at shirts and hair to prove dominance.

I watched Valentin turn over his shoulder from where he was fighting two more dummies to look at him. He scowled. “Gods above,” he hissed. He used his magiks again to make one of the dummies snap in half at its waist. Then he slammed his elbow into the back of the dummy’s head.

It was hot as fuck.

was stuck staring at him as he marched over to where the two other wolves were rolling on the floor. He pushed his palm towards them and Maximus flew off from where he was strangling Thorne into the gym mat. Then, Valentin ripped Thorne up to his feet by the back of his shirt, scowling the whole time.

“Is your problem with Wolfham really bigger than defending your mark?” he snapped. “Get it together!”

As if he suddenly remembered I existed, Thorne whipped his head to look at me. Then his eyes blew wide. He and Valentin both started for me, but it was too late. A weight slammed into my side, knocking the air from my lungs and sending me toppling to the floor with whatever attacked me. I was pancaked to the floor.

“Help,” I squeaked.

Then, the weight was lifted. I looked up and Valentin had his palm outstretched again. Behind me, a dummy was flying through the air. I huffed and got myself to my feet.

Valentin looked pissed. He turned to glare at Maximus and Thorne.

“Whatever the fuck is going on here,” he snapped at them.

They both blanched, shocked to hear the put-together headmaster cursing and snapping at them. “It should not take precedence over watching your mark. You both let Zora get hit. It’s entire unacceptable. Dismissed!”

Maximus and Thorne both looked towards me. Max had the dignity to look apologetic. Thorne just looked angry.

They both left the gym. The doors clattered to a close and then Valentin turned one me.

“Why are your fated mates trying to kill each other?” he hissed. “Are you trying to set yourself up for failure?”

“They don’t know about the prophecy,” I said back. “They still don’t know I’m the Princess.”

Valentin let out a puff of air and dropped his arms to smack at his sides.

“You haven’t told them?”

I shook my head.

Valentin looked incredulous, shaking his head back at me.

“It’d make this a hell of a lot easier if you did. They’re going to learn eventually, you know?”

“I know,” I snapped. “But I’d like to think they still like me for me, not my title.” “They’ll like you regardless,” Valentin snapped. “The fated mates thing does that.”

“Then why don’t you like me?” I threw back.

He paused for a beat before turning to look at me. His eyes and tone held all the same anger. “It’s not about me liking you,” he hissed. “It’s about protecting you from me.

It’ll do you good to remind yourself of that once in a while.”

With that, he stormed out of the gym and I was once again, alone.

After Valentin’s outburst, he barely spoke during training the rest of the week. When he did, it was to correct my form or to keep Maximus and Thorne from ripping each other apart. The two loathed each other and spent most of our training sessions making snide remarks at one another. Never me and never Valentin. Something about us was off limits.

It made the last days of the second week of classes utterly exhausting. So much so that when it got to Saturday, I let myself sleep in until half past ten before dragging myself and Loren to the library to study. It was hard trying to do so. My mind kept drifting to my fated mates. I didn’t know how I was supposed to sleep with all of them.

Maximus I had at least already done the deed with. As much as my mind didn’t want to recognize the sexual activities we’d partaken in across campus, it made my life a little easier. The problem with Maximus was he wasn’t into sharing and I didn’t exactly blame him.

I didn’t really want to be shared.

Well, maybe.

Valentin seemed okay with the idea of sharing but was too busy putting himself down to build the bond up between us. He’d told me the story of the war. Nothing about his actions made him seem like the monster he thought he was. Sure, he lost my aunt but that wasn’t his fault. He was the only one who knew my true situation. Yet, he would not allow me any closer to him than arm’s length.

Which was different than Thorne, who seemed to follow me around like a shadow.

But Thorne broke our bond. He wanted nothing to do with me that wasn’t his “duty” or whatever. He confirmed that by sneering at me as he and Petyr walked through the library. I lost Kairos’s anger but gained Thorne’s anger.

Who would've thought?

Which left me with Kairos. Kairos who hated my guts when I first arrived on campus as a wolfless human. Who tried to kill me because I was wolfless and then continued to make my life hell up regardless that I got a wolf. That was, of course, up until a week ago when he'd stepped down from our fight then fucking kissed me.

I huffed and blew my stray hair out of my face. Loren seemed to notice the sudden change in my mood. She jerked her head up to look at me and frowned.

"What's on your mind?"

"Just thinking about of—" I gestured vaguely to the table where Thorne and Petyr were sitting. "Them. And what it means."

Loren nodded and set down her pen. "Well now, it's almost like four, isn't it?"

I put my index finger to my lips and shushed her, eyes darting back to Thorne's table. I'd told Loren about my kiss with Kairos when I'd gotten back to my room. She was aware of most of my secrets at that point. Except for the big "savior of the wolves" one.

"Yes," I said under my breath. "Not that it makes it any easier."

"Have you talked to him?" Loren said.

I twisted my face in disgust. "Kairos? Hell no," I scoffed. "I'm not entirely convinced that the whole thing was some rouse to piss me off and keep me from showing my Strength."

"He was the one who told Lunerly he thought you were in trouble," Loren mused. She shook her head. "You should've seen him, Zora. He looked distraught when he was standing outside our door. I don't think I could replicate his look if I tried. And that's not because I'm a bad actor; he truly cares about you."

I grumbled under my breath and leaned back in my chair. I dropped my pen dramatically and crossed my arms over my chest. Loren watched me as I chewed the inside of my cheek, lost in thought.

For all of the things Valentin and my professors explained about fated mates, I was still wary. I was half convinced that none of these men actually liked me and it was some of the old ancient magiks making them feel that way.

Immediately after I thought it, I felt Mona rolling her eyes in the back of my mind. You know that's not how it works, she drawled.

So you're telling me, even without these weird signs that we were fated, we still would've fallen in love? I scoffed out loud. Good try. It's all magiks. These people dispise me.

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 107

Have you asked them? Mona pointed out, swishing her tail.

I grumbled under my breath again and looked back at Loren, who was raising her eyebrows. I sighed and rested my elbows on the table, throwing my head into my hands.

“I mean, what am I suppose to do? Go on a date with Kairos?” I sputtered.

Loren only shrugged. “It wouldn’t hurt to just talk to him.”

I groaned and slammed my hands over my eyes. I huffed a breath then slammed my palms to our table and stood up.

“Fine,” I said. “I’ll go to his house now.”

“It’s a Saturday?” Loren said. “He’s probably hammered.”

“Great,” I shrugged my backpack up onto my shoulders.”

Maybe he’ll be less guarded.”

I snuck out of Thorne’s gaze and left the library. It was pretty close to Kairos’s house so it only took me fifteen minutes to get there. I looked down at my watch as I arrived to a house glowing with blue and pink lights. A dull thrum was coming from the inside. It was almost midnight. I huffed one more breath, mainly to psych myself up, before I walked into the party.

The house was set up much like it was at the other parties that had been hosted there. Although, this time, there was far less people. The music was still obnoxiously loud and the entire room smelled like spilt beer. Everyone turned and watched me walk in, looking entirely out of place holding my backpack to my shoulders and wearing a ratty grey hoodie.

I walked through the place, following deep, booming laughter and wound up in the kitchen. Kairos was in between two of his buddies who were laughing like they’d heard the funniest joke in the world. Kairos, himself, looked miserable. He caught my eye as soon as I walked in and straightened up.

“Smith,” he greeted, plainly.

His buddies immediately stopped laughing and smirked at each other. Then they looked at me and my heart dropped to my toes.

“Can I-” I started.

“Yeah,” Kairos pushed off the counter he was leaning against and walked past me. He jerked his head and I followed along sheepishly, hands clenching at my backpack straps.

He led me upstairs and into his room. He held the door open and I stepped in. He shut the door gingerly behind himself and then it was just the two of us. The muffled noise of the party was making the floor jerk.

Suddenly, I was a bundle of nerves. I cracked my knuckles to distract myself. I glanced up and met Kairos’s eyes. Immediately, fire licked my tower stomach again.

“Nice room,” I threw out. I mentally smacked myself for sounding so stupid.

Kairos looked around and shrugged. “S’fine.”

“So, um,” I started. “I-”

“Where’s your entourage?” Kairos cut me off.

I stared at him. “Sorry?”

“Wolfham? Blythwitch?” Kairos mused before sitting on his bed. “Shocked they didn’t come to defend you from the big bad wolf.”

“I can hold my own,” I said back, voice gaining its strength.

“Not that you let me show you.”

Kairos jerked his head up from staring at his feet. We lock eyes for a moment, the wordless statement of anger, yet a truce that lingered between us. I let out the breath of air I didn’t know I was holding in.

“The other day,” I murmured. “What happened between us.”

“You’re my fated mate,” Kairos said matter of factly. I stared at him for another moment. Finally, he just shrugged. “I know it. You know it. There’s nothing to discuss.”

“There is, I protested. “I have Maximus and Thorne and_” Kairos stood up abruptly. He stalked over and crowded me into the corner. I gasped, my heart coming up to my throat. Then my back hit the wall, my backpack digging into my back. Kairos was back to leering down at me with hungry eyes.

“Let’s get this straight, Smith,” he said, voice barely above a whisper. It started the fire within me once again. “I don’t share. You are mine and mine alone to claim. Whatever you had with Wolfham, is not my business. Whatever you do now, is with me.”

I whimpered and it seemed to light up the bond between us. Next thing I knew, Kairos's mouth was on mine and we were tumbling towards his bed.

Thorne

Thorne was bitter as he trudged across campus. He seemed to have lost Zora Smith and she'd slipped out of the library when he was distracted. He'd cursed Petyr out when he'd noticed and bolted out of the library to try and catch her.

As he stepped into the cold night, he was met with the silent nothingness of the snow falling. He cursed again and resigned to give up for the night. The bitterness that swept across him was not a new feeling, but one he'd come to terms with as he became a Knight of Zora Smith.

He was bitter that he'd been assigned to her. He was bitter that she was someone the queen deemed deserving of a knight. He was, unfortunately, bitter that he'd broken the fated mate bond between them. Finally, he was bitter that Zora had gotten his betrothed kicked off campus.

When he'd been that Amara would be going to a rehab facility in London, he was appalled. Not that Amara had gotten herself addicted to something, that was up her alley. He was more so appalled that someone had exposed her addiction. And to vampire blood, of all things?

None of it made sense.

"Fucking Smith," he grumbled to himself as he got back to his house. He cursed again when he heard the dull booming of music coming from his house. Of course, Kairos had thrown a party in the hours he'd been at the library. Maybe it'll dislodge the stick up his arse, Thorne thought to himself with a roll of his eyes.

His friend had been....odd, recently.

Ever since the second time he fought Smith, he'd been different. More reserved and less angry. It was so unusual that it was more terrifying than when the Moonraiser heir was actually angry.

Then, he'd gone and just given up the final challenge to Smith. As if it wasn't something that he'd been talking about for the entire first semester. He wanted to ruin Zora Smith and then suddenly, he was quietly indifferent.

Thorne had never been more confused by his friend.

He pushed into his house with the thought lingering on his mind. He looked around and saw it was much quieter of a party than he or his house were used to hosting.

Several people lingered on the couches in their front room. There were a few female alphas sitting in the laps of the male alphas and gingerly stroking down their chests. The music was loud but the party was rather subdued.

Thorne b-lined to the kitchen to get himself a beer. He walked in to see two of Kairos's friends from up North in the kitchen. They were snickering to themselves as they sipped their beer. Thorne jerked open the fridge and began shuffling to find his own beer. "Oi, Blywitch,"

Thorne lazily turned to see who'd called him. One of Kairos's friends was staring at him. He had this hungry look in his eye that set the hair on Thorne's arms up. He slowly closed the fridge, beer in hand.

"Yeah?"

The other man nudged his friend then leaned in close to Thorne. "Guess who we just saw go upstairs with Moonraiser?"

"Who?" Thorne was bored as he sipped his beer.

"Fucking Smith," the Alpha cackled, nudging his friend. "

Isn't that wild?"

"Think he's gonna show her a beating," His friend wiggled his eyebrows. "In bed?"

He started to mimic fucking the ghost in front of him.

Both other Alphas cackled along. Thorne felt like he'd been dunked in ice water. He schooled his face to not show it, scowling at the other Alphas.

"Don't be daft," he snapped. "He'd never fuck someone like that."

"Don't know, mate," the second Alpha snorted. He shared a look with his friend then looked back at Thorne. "They seemed pretty friendly."

"More friendly than him and the Princess?" the first chimed in.

"Wait, what?" Thorne blinked. "What about him and the Princess?"

The other two shared a look again. The first one huffed a breath and clapped a hand on Thorne's shoulder. "Listen, bruv," he started, feigned like he cared about Thorne. "It's hard not being the son of a High Alpha. We get it. You need to get it. The princess was never gonna choose you."

The other Alpha snickered. Thorne saw red.

He yanked the Alpha's hand off his shoulder with a snarl. " Fuck you," he snapped before he turned and stalked out of the room. He heard more cackles behind him and he did his best to ignore them.

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 108

He was suddenly even more angry than he was before. He stormed up the stair of his house and threw his bag in his room before slamming the door shut. He sulked down to his bed and threw his head in his hands. The vibration of the bass from the party felt like a migraine.

Thorne had known he wasn't a High Alpha from the moment he stepped into his primary school and was told he was less than. Now, it was being thrown back in his face again. His greatest goal was unachievable because of his fucking name.

The name of a dead man.

Thorne took a steadying breath. As he did, he heard a bang come from across the hall. He frowned. Then he remembered what Kairos's friends had said.

Zora was in his room.

Suddenly, he got up and wrench his door open. He burst across the hall and did the same to Kairos's room, not pausing to knock. The door slammed into the wall and Thorne had to hold the wolf inside him in as he took in the scene.

Kairos and Zora were both on the bed in a tangle of bare limbs. Their shirts were tossed onto the floor. The strap of Zora's red lacy bra was half-way down her arm. Their lips were locked in a kiss so hot that the air in the room got thick."What the fuck?!" Thorne snapped.

Zora yelped and Kairos sprung from where he was pinning her down. She rolled off the backside of Kairos's bed and stood up, shoving her stray strap back up her arm. Her sweatpants were hung low on her waist, as if someone was in the process of taking them off. She wrapped her arms around herself and glanced down at the floor.

"What do you want, Blythwitch?" Kairos snapped, all of his old self showing.

"What are you doing with her!?" Thorne hissed. He watched as Zora scrambled around the bed to pick up her discarded hoodie and cover herself. Kairos just stood there, bare-chested, belt un-done and the Moonraiser fire in his eyes.

"None of your damn business," Kairos snapped back.

“Kairos, don’t,” Zora said, gently pressing her arm to where his bicep was threatening to escape his skin.

Thorne immediately panicked.

“Don’t ‘don’t him you fucking whore!” He roared.

Both Kairos and Zora froze. They pierced Thorne with the same sneering glare. He didn’t stop.

“What sort of fucking siren are you, Smith?” He snapped.” You seduce Wolfham and now Moonraiser? Are you trying to fuck your way to the top?””Shut the fuck up, Thorne,” Kairos growled.

“No, I won’t,” Thorne threw back. “She’s manipulating you.

Just like she manipulated the Headmaster and the Queen to get the Princess thrown off campus.”

Zora narrowed her eyes and took a step towards Thorne.” Amara was addicted to vampire blood,” she spat. “And tried to get me killed. She deserves what she got.”

“Liar!” Thorne roared.

“Back off Blythwitch,” Kairos snapped. “I was there. I saw it”

“Let him bitch. He’s always quick to brush me off,” Zora said over her shoulder, eyes still locked with Thorne’s. She tipped her head to the side. “Aren’t you, fated mate?”

Her eyes flashed with something, and Thorne staggered backwards. He opened his mouth to speak but Zora surged forward, steaming with anger.

“You’re a shitty fucking Knight, Thorne,” she snapped.” You didn’t notice I left the library. Then you come in, pointing fingers and calling my a liar-”

“I didn’t-”

“You did,” Zora stepped in again, cutting Thorne off and glaring up at him. She cocked her head again. “I don’t want a shitty knight making things worse for me. Consider yourself demoted.”

“What!?” Thorne bristled. “You can’t demote me. You’re not the fucking queen-

Zora tipped her chin up and immediately Thorne stopped talking. She had the pulsating air of power radiating off of her. He felt it in his bones. The two stared at each other for a moment before Zora waved a hand at him.

“Don’t bother coming to training,” she snapped. “You won’t be needed.”

Thorne snarled at her but dropped it as he saw Kairos step behind Zora. His eyes were menacing. Thorne swallowed thickly then threw the door open and walked back to his own room, slamming his door shut. His eyes

Fuck her, he thought. I don’t need the bullshit title of Knight. Not when I’m supposed to be the King Consort.

Shell see. They’ll all see. see.

Zora

After my make out with Kairos, and subsequent screaming at Thorne, I didn’t know what I expected come training on Monday morning. I’d barked the training location and time at Kairos before I’d bolted out of his room but I didn’t expect him to show up.

However, when he popped his head out of the locker room, I couldn’t help the swelling of my heart my chest.

He’d come. He’d actually come. Maximus noticed as well and immediately turned to look at the Headmaster.

“No,” he snapped. “Fuck no. Absolutely not. Absolutely the fuck not. Is she insane? Are you-”

“Language, Wolfham,” Valentin drawled, as if he were exhausted. “Miss Smith has asked that Mr. Moonraiser take Mr. Blythwitch’s place. I will allow it, for now.”

I could tell by his grumbling that he wasn’t exactly happy with our new attendee as well. I’d mentioned it that morning before Maximus had shown up and he’d just blinked at me. Now, he was a little bit more resistant to the idea.

“Kairos and I have...” I paused. “A connection. I think it’d be a good idea to use that as protection.”

Maximus crossed his arms over his chest and raised an eyebrow. “And Thorne? Your knight?” “He’s been relieved of his duties,” I mumbled. I glanced up at Valentin. He also had a raised eyebrow, apparently unaware. I shook my head at him and he simply blew out a breath of air before dropping it.

Maximus, however, was beside himself. He threw his arms up in protest. “You can’t just dump your knight! You need him for protection!”

“You saying I’m not as strong as Blythwitch?” Kairos mused with a smirk. He pressed a hand to his chest. “You wound me, brother.”

“em not your fucking brother,” Maximus snarled.

“Alright, alright,” Valentin cut him off. He ran his hand over his face. “Gods above, I was hoping we wouldn’t have a repeat of last week, but it almost seems inevitable at this point.”

He dropped his hand and looked at me. I gave him a sheepish smile, entire aware of how the two wolves next to me were glaring at each other over my head. Valentin sighed.

“Right,” he huffed. “Since Moonraiser is more adept than Blythwitch at fighting, we’ll have to re-assess how we stance ourselves.”

He stepped across the mat, only a few feet in front of me and looked at Maximus. He pointed to my left. “Wolfham, you’ll flank Smith’s right side. Moonraiser, the left.”Chapter 179

“I used to flank her left,” Maximus protested. “You know her blind spot there causes her to be weak on that side.

“Hey!” I pretested.

Valentin gave Maximus a weak smile. “Luckily for Smith, she has two sides that need to be covered. Plus, Moonraiser is stronger than you. It’s better for Smith’s left because it’s her non-dominant hand. Moonraiser should be able to bridge the gap there.”

“Excuse me!” I protested again.

Twent ignored again as the three men dropped into position. Valentin gave me a look before turning his back to me and also dropping into a stance. I immediately blushed despite myself. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Maximus tracking it up my cheeks. I ignored him as Valentin had ignored me.

“Same thing as last week,” Valentin said. Instantly, all the dummies we’d tossed across the gym we’re floating again.

Their weird, thumb-y bodies suspended in air.” Moonraiser, goal is protect Smith and subdue the threat.”

Kairos snorted. “Easy,”

I could feel Maximus rolling his eyes. Valentin ignored all of us and flicked a hand. The dummies landed on their legs and started towards us.

“Begin!” Valentin called.

The dummies started loafing over to us. Kairos

immediately sprung from my side and tackled one of them to the floor. There was a wide gap between him and Maximus that one of the other dummies took to try and stifle me. I threw a kick and it sailed backward.

“Idiot!” Maximus snapped. “You just left a huge gap. If these things were any faster they would’ve had the upper hand!”

“Calm down, lover boy,” Kairos grumbled. He kned the one I kicked in its stomach and it crumpled to the floor.” Your girlfriend can handle herself.”

At the word “girlfriend”, Valentin’s head whipped around to stare at me. His eyebrows were furrowed in confusion.

As he was staring at me, he missed the dummy charging him like a bull in a china shop.

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 109

“Fuck, watch out!” I hissed before I threw a spin kick. My foot skimmed Valentin’s cheek and slammed into the dummy’s head, knocking him off kilter. Valentin, once out of his daze, used his heel to bring the dummy to its knees.

“Smith!” Kairos called out.

I spun back towards his voice and was met with the faceless dummy. I jabbed into its shoulder and then went for its chest. It blocked me easily and I blinked before trying again. Clearly, Valentin had turned up the difficulty level this week. It took a few more punches before I could get my leg free to kick it away.

I looked back at my group and saw that, once again, Kairos had darted across the circle and tackled the dummy out from under Maximus, who looked pissed. He scoffed at Kairos.

“Stop showing off and be a team player!” he snapped.

“I am,” Kairos said leisurely as he got off the dummy. He shrugged. “My teammate was struggling so I helped him out.”

“Fuck off,” Maximus hissed back.

“Um, guys,” I murmured as I realized three dummies were closing in on me. “Can we save the testosterone contest for after?” “Not again,” Valentin groaned as he realized what was happening.

I ducked past a few of the strikes from the dummies but was completely blind-sided as one dove at me from my left and tackled me to the ground. I grunted, the dummy weight heavy on me as I slammed again the mat. It immediately became dead weight and then

slowly lifted off of me. I sucked in a giant breath of air, letting my lungs-expand from where they'd been compressed. Then, Kairos's head was over me.

"Alright?" he murmured. He stuck his hand out.

I nodded once then grabbed his hand. Electricity sparked up between us and he yanked me to my feet. Instinctually, I curled into his body, my hand coming up to press on his chest. He looked down at me with wide pupils and those dangerously, dark gold eyes. Behind me, I heard a humorless chuckle.

immediately stopped touching Kairos, the electricity leaving my body. I turned around and was met with the smug expression of Maximus. He narrowed his eyes at me.

"So, you're leading two of them on now?" he snapped."

That's not fair is it."

"Max," I started but he cut me off.

"No, Zora," he shook his head, face holding more hurt than anger. He locked eyes with me. "I am your fated mate. I know you feel it. Why are you torturing me like this?" I held my hands up. "I can explain-"

"What makes you so sure?" Kairos snapped over my shoulder. "And who the fuck else is she talking to?"

Maximus set his lips in a thin line, eyes darting to Valentin then back to me and Kairos. Behind me, I heard Kairos growl. I immediately spun around and pressed my hands to his chest.

"Stop it!" I cried. "Is it really so wrong of me to have multiple fated mates?"

"Not wrong," Kairos grunted

"But highly unusual," Maximus finished for him. "You need to stop fooling yourself into thinking you have multiple.

You have a choice to make."

I glanced at Valentin, hoping he would chime in and help me out. He was staring at the place where my hand met Kairos's chest. His jaw was clenched, eyes pin-pricks of black in the gold. He lifted his head and met my gaze.

"Multiple fated mates is possible," he said. "But don't delude yourself into thinking I am one of those. I am your headmaster and I have no intentions of courting Miss Smith in any way."

My heart broke in my chest at his comment. I let my hand fall off Kairos's chest. Valentin's eyes returned to normal, his jaw unclenching. I almost wanted to call him on his bullshit. I opened my mouth to do so and was cut off by Max.

"Well, I don't share what's mine," he said, a softness about that told me how upset he was. "The choice is yours to make."

He turned and walked off the mat and into the locker room. Kairos glanced at me, his eyes repeating what Maximus said and took off into the locker room as well. I whipped around to fight with Valentin but I found him to be missing.

I was getting used to being alone in the gym at that point.

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 110

The next evening, I was feeling no better at my current situation and Loren could tell. Was it because I'd been swirling my cereal in the same pattern for the whole hour? Perhaps. But I'd like to think it was because Loren was a wonderful friend.

"Do you...want to talk about it?" she asked as my spoon skimmed past another soggy cheerio. I shrugged.

"Don't know what there's to chat about," I huffed. "All of my fated mates hate me."

"Zora," Loren said, plainly. "You have like four. How can they all hate you?"

I looked at her with a raised eyebrow. Then, I held up one finger.

"Maximus thinks I'm leading him or Valentin along—"

I held up a second finger.

"—Valentin is still marrying Bella and wants nothing to do with me—"

I held up a third finger.

"—Thorne hates me so much he broke our bond—"

One more finger.

"—and Kairos is...I don't even know honestly," I mumbled. I dropped my hand back to push my cheerios around again.

"Not a single one likes me."

Loren shifted uncomfortably. “Sound like Kairos has promise!”

I fixed her with a scathing look. She shrunk back in her seat. I sighed and dropped my spoon to rub at my eyes.

“Sorry,” I grumbled. “I didn’t mean that. There’s a lot going on.”

“I’m not shocked you’re stressed,” Loren said with a shrug. “I’d be stressed too if I showed up to school, didn’t know I was a wolf then turned out to have four fated mates. Your parents must’ve been special.”

I shifted in my seat.

“Yeah,” I murmured. “Maybe.”

“Ooh!” Loren bubbled up in her seat. “I bet Headmaster

Lunerly knows!”

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“Well, he knows like everyone. I’m sure he can go through the records and find the wolves who gave you up!”

I rolled my shoulders back. Part of me thought that may be my way out. Loren wanted to poke and I didn’t have the wherewithal to stop her from doing so. If she poked enough, she’d figure it out. Or would she?

“Dunno,” I mumbled. “I don’t think I really care. mean my parents left me. Should I care about them?” “True,” Loren mused. “But maybe it would make things less confusing. Especially about the four fated mates thing. Like why do you have so many?”

Because we are the savior of the wolves, Mona stated proudly. I bristled, shaking my head to clear Mona’s voice from it. I didn’t want Loren to know that. Well, I did but I didn’t.

“I-Loren it’s fine,”

But Loren had fuel to her fire and kept going in the overly excited way of hers. She was practically vibrating in her seat.

“Or, or,” she started. “Maybe you’re parents were like, wolf spies and they sent you away to protect you so you wouldn’t grow up to be a spy and then they liked died in duty ya know? So they like meant to come get you but then couldn’t because they passed. Oh wow, that’s morbid. I’m sorry – maybe not. Maybe they died in the war cause like, a lot of people died in the war and that’s why! think you should go to Lunerly because sissy says he knows like everyone and-”

“Loren,” I barked, breaking her out of her spiral. “I don’t care.”

She blinked at me. “Not even a little?”

“-ugh,” I threw my head in my hands.

I was getting tired of trying to hide my secrets. I kept forgetting who knew what and who was supposed to know what. Part of me knew this was my own fault. I was the one who said I didn’t want anyone to know I was the princess. I was the one who said I’d enroll in Alpha Academy. I didn’t know why the fuck I was still even here!

All that was in my future was bedding the same men I’d been pushed upon the previous summer.

All those thoughts were swirling in my head like an oncoming hurricane and I could tell Loren none of it. She was, somehow, the best friend I ever had knew nothing about me. A spike of anxiety rose in me and suddenly, it felt very hard to breathe.

Loren frowned. “You okay? You’re breathing reeeeeeal heavily.”

“Fine,” I choked out and tried to finish off my bowl of cereal.

Loren didn’t speak for a beat, frown still etched into her skin. She peaked up at me from under her eyelashes.

Then, she sighed and spoke.

“You know, don’t you?” she whispered. “Who you’re parents are? Who you are?”

The last question sent me over the edge. My breathing got shallow and it felt like the entire dining hall was starting to spin. I abruptly stood up from my seat. The metal on the floor sounded like nails on a chalkboard. The whole time, my eyes stayed locked on Loren.” “-I have to go,” I murmured before I took off towards the door.

I was vaguely aware of Loren calling after me but the only sound in my ears was my own breathing and the erratic beat of my heart. The cold air swarmed me as soon as I stepped out on campus. It was dark by then and there was nothing comforting about the silence or the darkness of the campus.

I just kept thinking about Loren.

Loren who’d been by my side through everything. She rarely asked questioned and when she did, they were respectable and kind and genuine. And I just lied right back to her face. Then, I thought about my lies to Maximus and Kairos and how they didn’t know who I was but wanted me regardless. And Valentin who didn’t want me but still helped me.

My life was a mess and I was at the helm of every bit of it.

From being at that damn school to getting captured by the vampires and back. They were all my fault. I started wheezing at that moment, my breath coming out haggard and dry.

I bolted across campus, my pulse still thudding in my ears. I ran directly to my dorm room, throwing the door open and stumbling up the stairs like I was drunk. I passed my room and immediately went to the door next to mine. I slammed my fist against the door, still trying to catch up to my breathing. When Maximus opened the door he looked pissed until he looked at my face. His eyes wandered all over it before locking on my eyes.

"I'm so sorry," I whimpered before launching into tears.

Maximus immediately took me into his arms and pulled me into his room. The door slammed shut and my body began to shake with the sobs I'd been putting off for months.