

# Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 111

Maximus pulled me into his room and immediately brought me to his bed. He sat us both down and I curled into him. My heart was still erratically beating in my chest as I choked on my breath. Maximus ran a hand down my spine, soothing me slightly but not enough that I stopped wheezing.

We sat in silence, save for my huffs and heaves, for a few moments. It could've been an hour or five minutes. I didn't know how long it was taking for time to pass. Finally, Maximus sucked in a breath and spoke.

“What happened?”

My lip quivered but I kept my face neutral. My hand went up to wipe a stray tear on my cheek. “Nothing,” | murmured.

“Clearly it wasn't,” Max replied, stern but tender. “You came to my room apologizing and I have to wonder what exactly for and what brought it on.”

My eyes fluttered shut. Could I really tell him all my secrets? If he was my fated mate, I should be able to trust him, right? I sucked in another breath but then Mona burst through my thoughts.

The truth doesn't have to whole, she said. Half-truths are better than deceptions.

I bit my lip. She wasn't wrong. There were some secrets I wanted to keep. But some I could let go. I grabbed Maximus's hand.

“I've been keeping a lot of secrets,” I whispered. Maximus's eyebrows immediately furrowed.

“What do you mean?”

I sighed again and squeezed his hand harder. “About who I am,” I murmured. “Some of them I can't tell you. I won't tell you for your own safety and mine. But others,” I blew out the breath I didn't know I was holding. Then I turned to face Maximus. Our eyes met and my chest ached a little more.

“Others I've been selfish in keeping.”

Maximus looked back at me. He frowned slightly. His hand resumed trailing up and down my spine. Then, he shook his head.

“Whatever you can tell me,” He said. “I'll listen. And whatever you can't, I'll wait until I can and I'll listen then.”

I'm your fated mate, Zora. I trust you above anyone else."

I brought my bottom lip between my teeth and nodded. It was reassuring but made me feel guilty all the same. I squeezed his hand once more, eyes slamming shut as I fought to have the courage to speak.

"The other day," my voice came out in a squeak. "When I mentioned multiple fated mates."

Maximus nodded. "You did."

I choked on my voice before it came out. "It's true. I have multiple."

Maximus was silent. I felt his hand slowly slide out of mine and land in his lap. I pried my eyes open, focusing on his face. His eyes were darting all over the floor like he was trying to process everything. Then he looked back up at me.

"I think... I think I knew that," he said. I pulled back slightly.

"What?"

Maximus shifted in his seat. "Well at Mate Ball," he started. "Your bond with Thorne was awakened. Wolves don't usually have two mates. Not unless their first mate dies. I knew it then that you had more than one."

I paused. His thinking was rational. But how was I supposed to tell him that I had two more in addition to the broken bond with Thorne? My head started spinning again. Did I really want to do this?

A fated mate will respect you above all else, Mona added.

It is your decision to tell him or not. But know he will respect your decision.

I looked back at Maximus. Then, I let the words ghost out before I had a chance to chicken out again.

"But what if there were more?"

"More?!" Maximus eyes popped out of his head. "Zora, that's completely unheard of. You know how rare a firstfated mate bond is let alone a second"

"I know, I know," I murmured, cutting him off. "Trust me, I know I'm an anomaly."

Max frowned again. "I don't understand."

"Truthfully," I huffed. "Neither do I. But I know for certain. I have four fated mates."

Maximus's eyes bulged again, color draining from his skin.

His gold eyes fix on mine. "Four?" He said slowly, as if the word was foreign to him. I nodded back. He sat back and stared at his floor again. He repeated the number again, as if trying to wrap his brain around it. Then his eyes went wide. He snapped them back to me.

"Thorne. Me. Lunerly and Kairos!?"

I gave him a weak smile. "Surprise?"

"Gods be damned," Maximus hissed before standing up.

He started pacing across the width of his dorm room. His hand went to his forehead, thumb and fore finger pressing into his temples. Then he looked back at me.

"But you haven't - I'm the only -"

"Yes," I said, cheeks heating up. "You're the only one I've been...intimate with."

"Okay," Maximus nodded, eyes still wide and darting around as he processed. Then he jerked his head back to me. "Lunerly."

I sighed. "He's opposed to completing the bond. I think he's worried I'll end up like his last fated mate."

"Zahara," Max breathed. "The Queen's sister."

I nodded once. Maximus continued to process what I'd just told him. Then, he turned bitter. His mouth curled up into a scowl.

"Lunerly's marrying Bella," he snapped. Again, I nodded.

"Again," I started. "Thinks he'll hurt me."

"How fucking selfish," Maximus spat. I blinked at him.

"Wait, what?" I said.

"You were mad I was leading him

along and now you're mad he's not allowing himself to be with me?"

"Well, I didn't know your... situation before," Max said, pacing resuming. "But now knowing what I do know, my ultimatum still stands."

“What?” I squeaked.

Maximus paused his neurotic pacing to shake his head at me. “You don’t understand, Zora,” he said. “In the cases in the past where wolves have had multiple fated mates, if the bonds aren’t complete between the center and her other mates, everyone suffers. If you don’t consummate the bond with Lunerly, you and I will feel the repercussions. That is, if we don’t break it.”

Well, fuck.

No one had mentioned that.

“It’s so rare that no one teaches it,” Maximus said, as if hearing my inner thoughts. “Only a handful of wolves in history have had more than one fated mate. But they all felt it. Their powers draining from their body until they consummated all their bonds. Then a spike in power when they did.”

Double fuck.

“How does that have anything to do with your ultimatum?” I pressed. “You said either him or you. That doesn’t make sense anymore seeing as your both my fated mates.”

Maximus shook his head. “I can’t be bonded to you if you don’t bond him and Kairos,” Maximus said softly. “It’ll kill us both. As much as I care about you, I won’t let them suck us dry. The safest way to go about it if you can’t complete all of the bonds, is to break them.”

My heart fell out of my ass. Maximus would break our bond? My entire body was screaming in protest at that thought. So much so, that I left Maximus’s bed to press my hands to his chest. I shook my head violently.

“No,” I whispered. “No, don’t.”

“It hurts me too,” Maximus murmured. “But I won’t let myself be the reason you’re in danger.”

“No!” I said again. “Then we won’t. I’ll – I’ll do it with Kairos and Valentin, he’ll – he’ll come around and-”

“And if you don’t have all of us,” he said softly. “Some of us will suffer. And you’ll suffer the worst.”

I stepped back. “So that’s it?” I asked, angry. “All or nothing?” “All or nothing,” Maximus said.

I couldn't process anything at that moment. I simply shook my head at him and went for the door. What was it with these men thinking they were saving me by hurting me over helping me?

## Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 112

I stumbled back into my room and Loren was at her desk.

She immediately stood up as I walked in. She launched herself at me and I sighed into the hug, allowing my body to finally relax.

"I'm so sorry!" Loren sputtered. "I knew I should've stopped talking but I couldn't and I\_ "

"I'm sorry," I said back cutting off her rambling. "I left so quickly. I didn't explain. I just - "

Loren dragged me over to sit us both in our desk chairs.

Her hand rubbed up my back, just as Maximus had moments ago. Moments before he dropped a bomb on me.

"I'm a bit overwhelmed," I murmured with a humorless laugh.

Loren snorted in response. "I wish I blamed you but unfortunately, I don't," she said. "What happened?"

"I just—" I paused and lifted my head to look her in the eye. "I just felt so upset at how much I was keeping from you."

My voice broke at the end. Loren's face dropped slightly from its normal smile. Her hand kept rubbing at my back, urging me to go on.

"And Maximus," I murmured, eyes slipping shut. "You both have been so supportive and I've lied and lied and lied. But some things, I'm keeping for your safety and some things I'm keeping for my own."

My eyes slipped open and I watched as Loren nodded. I gnawed at my lower lip and took a shaky breath before I finished. My hand went to fiddle with the end of my braid.

"I promise, I'll tell you everything I can," I murmured. "And the stuff I can't, just know that | trust you. But I don't trust other people."

Loren nodded again as I finished. She stroked a hand over my head before throwing herself back into my arms. I let my chest rest against the top of her head for a moment.

We locked ourselves in the embrace. After a beat, Loren pulled back and gave me a soft smile. Her eyes twinkled with swelling tears. I wiped at my own face.

“I trust you,” she said. “And I’m honored you trust me with the information you can give me.”

I snorted. It was all snotty and gross from my crying sessions and the tears I wiped away. “What little I can,” I said. “Speaking of which, did you know that if a bond is unfinished in a person with multiple bonds, it hurts the people in the other one.”

Loren frowned. “What? I guess I don’t know much about multi-fated mates wolves.”

“Me either,” I scratched at my head. “Which is unfortunate given that I’m one of those wolves.” Loren barked a laugh and stood up. She walked back over to her own desk and slung her bookbag over her shoulder.

She jerked her head towards the door.

“Come on,” she said. “Let’s go see what the library has. I was just heading there anyways.”

That was how I found myself at a nearly full library on Sunday night. Nearly everyone was in the library at that moment. Kairos and Petyr were sitting in one corner. He gave me a curt nod in greeting which I returned.

Thorne was tucked into a desk in a dark corner and was clearly sulking. I almost rolled my eyes but then I remembered what Maximus said. All of my bonds had to be consummated. Did that mean I’d have to put things right with Thorne? That was going to require a lot more effort than I had in me. 1

Loren and I walked over to our usual spot. Unfortunately for us, our table was taken by a girl who I’d never seen before. She had blunt, black microbangs. Her hair was tied up in a knot on top of her head. A bunch of silver-looking piercings dotted her face. She had electric red, wide rimmed glasses on. If it wasn’t for her violet eyes, I would’ve thought she was a vampire as her skin was incredibly fair. Chapter 185

I frowned and turned to figure out a plan with Loren. As I looked at her, I saw she was shocked into place. I pinched my eyebrows together and gave her a look. Her jaw was clenched and purple eyes wide. Her skin was almost the color of her white hair. I looked back at the girl and was incredibly confused. She didn’t look threatening at all.

“Loren,” I whispered. “Just cause she has piercings doesn’t mean she’s mean.”

“I know,” Loren snapped back. “Because she’s fucking Ani.”

Ani?

Ani. Ani was the girl that Loren thought was her fated mate.

A smile worked its way onto my lips as I turned around.

Loren squeaked in protest behind me but I completely ignored her. I set my hands on one of the chairs and pulled it back lightly. It skittered on the floor and the dark-haired girl lifted her head to look at me.

“Hi,” I said, all sunshine and rainbows.

“Oh, no, go ahead,” The girl said. Then she turned head and made eye contact with Loren. She smiled, tight lipped but as if she was holding back a grin. “Oh, hi, Loren.”

“Hi, Ani,” Loren said, sheepishly. “You really don’t mind?” Ani gestured to the rest of her empty table. She started pulling most of her books back closer to her. “Not at all.

Sorry, I spread out a bit.”

“I’d do the same,”

“I murmured. “The library is packed.”

Ani hummed and looked around us. “Guess it is,” she said. ”

I’ve been in here all day. I’ve barely noticed.”

I slipped into my seat and Loren followed suit. She was far more stiff as she did and continued to be stiff as she pulled out her notebooks. I tried to not laugh at her. Was I the same way with my fated mates?

“All day?” I asked Ani, trying to make light conversation as Loren acted completely odd. “Semester just started.”

Ani shrugged. “I transferred in at the beginning,” she said.

“From the other Academy. When I got put her last semester after there were disruptions at our own Academy, I found I fit in really well.”

Disruptions? No one had mentioned that Amara and the rest of her classmates came to our school because of disruptions. I made a mental note.

Ani sighed and gestured to her notes. “Seems I under estimated how well I’d do in High Magiks. I’ve been struggling on it since day one.”

I nodded. Then, I got an idea. “You know,” I said, matter-of-factly. “Loren is really good at High Magiks.”

Ani cocked her head and glanced at my blonde friend. “She is?”

Loren glared at me then whispered under her breath. “I am?”

“She sure is,” I said and stood up. I jerked Loren’s chair closer to Ani’s, ignoring the death glare she was sending me. “And it’s good you’re here too. have to go digging for some research so you’ll be able to keep Loren company.”

“Oh,” Ani blinked at me then smiled at me. “I’d love to.”

Her gaze trailed over to Loren and she smiled brighter.

Loren looked like she was going to murder me. I completely ignored her as I stepped back from the table. I wiggled my fingers at Ani.

“Make sure she does her work!” I chided. “And watch my stuff, would you Loren?”

“I’d be delighted,” Loren said; dripping with sarcasm.

I stifled a giggle before | turned and walked over to the librarians desk. I needed to get all the information on multipte fated mates that I could possibly find. I leaned against the desk as I waited for her to come over.

Across the library, Loren had finally turned soft again. Her head was leaning toward Ani’s as the two chatted and laughed. My heart swelled with joy. Loren deserved happiness. Possibly more than I did.

And if I couldn’t give it to her, then she deserved someone who could.

## **Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 113**

The librarian directed me to a corner of the library that was dark and smelled of wet leather. All of the books and tombs around me looked at least a hundred years old. If not more.

“I usually don’t bring students back here,” the librarian stated. “But I’d recently come across a lost tomb and placed it back. I’m sure it will be helpful to you.”

“Thank you,” I murmured, eyes still tracking across the thousands of ancient tombs around me. I wonder how many told the story of my mother. Or my grandmother. I’d have to come back for a leisure read. I was on a mission.

The librarian stopped at the end of the long case of tombs.

She wiggled her fingers as she read across the spines then hummed when she found the one she wanted. She pulled the spine gingerly and it fell into her hands. Although, it didn't actually touch her hands. It floated above them in a haze of purple light. She saw my eyes go wide at the magiks and chuckled.

"This tomb survived both the Enslavement and the Great War," she said. "I'd be doing a terrible job if I let everyone's grubby fingers all over it. The magiks around it preserve the book but still allow it to be read."

"Amazing," I said as she gently floated the book towards me. I lifted my hand as if to pull back the cover and the hazy purple shadows did it for me. I blinked in response.

Magiks were still so new to me. The librarian clearly noticed.

"Your family doesn't use much high magiks, do they?"

I shook my head. "Not while I was around, at least."

The librarian hummed. Then, she swiped her hand over the book. Instantly, all of the strange symbols and letters on the first page shifted and became plain English. I looked up at her and she smiled.

"I assume you don't know ancient wolvish?"

"That would be correct," I snorted. "So this will have information on wolves with multiple fated mates?"

"Yes," she nodded at me. "It should contain all known wolves with two fated mates. Maybe some with three."

"Perfect," I smiled back at her and she took that as her cue to leave. She started back towards her desk, out of the rows and rows of tombs. Before she disappeared, she waved a hand over her shoulder.

"Any of the other book will come out if you focus on them," she called. "And when you're done, just focus on putting them back."

"Thank you!" I chimed. The librarian waved her hand again and then she was gone.

The silence of me and the tomes was brutal. There was a slight hum of the High Magiks used to preserve them but other than that, nothing. Copied from jobnib-com I was almost certain I could hear my own heart beat. I ignored it and held my hand over the book. A page flipped to show erratically scrawled text. I immediately started reading.

Ellis Wolferly, twenty-six years of age as of 1132,

Holy fuck was this book old. I tried to not panic about it and kept reading.

Lady Wolferly bonded her first fated mate at the age of eighteen. Her second fated mate made itself know in the summer of her twenty-fifth year. He'd already chosen a mate that was not Lady Wolfery. Because of this, he refused the fated mate bond. The subsequent break down of both Lady Wolfery and her consort Lord Haymitch occurred over the course of two years. Lady Wolferly and Lord Haymitch both succumbed to their illness before they turned twenty-seven.

The next section detailed their illness in bold bullet points.

Hysteria.

Weakness.

Rage.

Pneumonia.

Delusions.

I swallowed thickly. None of that seemed pleasant in any way. I flipped the next page of the book and came across another name. Widen Lunerly. He must've been a relative of Valentin's. His fate was the same as Ellis's.

One fated mate and another that made itself known later in life. He was twenty when he died. The same symptoms were bulleted below his outcome.

Hysteria.

Weakness.

Rage.

Pneumonia.

Delusions.

I felt the lump in my throat grow larger. Another page flip.

Another victim. Written in bold letters on the bottom, yet again, the symptom.

Hysteria.

Another page. Another victim.

Weakness.

Another.

Delusions.

It took almost twenty pages until reached a page with no symptoms under the story. I sighed, shakily and went about reading.

Edward Swallows, born in 1801, deceased 1966.

Mr. Swallows found his first fated mate at sixteen years of age. Their bond was completed by eighteen. His second fated mate was found when he was twenty. The bond was completed by twenty-two. Mr. Swallows lived for one-hundred-and-seventy-five years total, the average age for a wolf at that time. He did not have any symptoms to show that he had two fated mates. In the case of future wolves with multiple fated mates, it is advised that the bonds be completed.

A spark of hope lit up inside of me. Death wasn't imminent. Was it still there, lurking like my serial killer?

Yes, absolutely. But Edward Swallows gave me hope. I flipped another page and my hope was bashed in with a hammer as I saw another wolf who died of the same causes.

There were a few more success stories but none of the wolves had more than two fated mates. It wasn't until I reached wolves born in the 1900s that I found anything other than success or tragedy.

The wolf's name was Elena Wolfham. Was it a coincidence she was Maximus's relative? Maybe. It also couldn't have been because how was Maximus supposed to know what he did? Unless he was privy to tombs the librarian was privy too. I frowned but continued reading.

Elena Wolfham, born 1945, deceased 2023.

Ms. Wolfham was born during the enslavement period.

Since her magik was subdued, she did not realize her mate was her fated mate until she was forty years of age. It wasn't until the end of the Great War, when her magik was allowed to flow freely, that she realized she had a second fated mate. Her second fated mate was Freeman Penchant, a known abuser and violent war general.

Because of her disdain for Penchant, she did not wish to be bended to him. In the first act of it's kind, Ms. Wolfham broke the fated mate bond between her and Mr. Penchant.

She retained no symptoms but had a life that was much shorter than that of the average wolf. Her life was akin to a human's. Mr. Penchant's life was not effected. He is still alive as of this recording. Ms. Wolfham was announced to have passed due to old age.

i blinked at the words before me. That was what Maximus

- was talking about. He was saying he'd break the bond so that it didn't kill me. Unfortunately for him, his life was about to be chopped in half. My hand went to my mouth as I processed that.

Maximus was willing to break our bond and shorten his life, so that our bond didn't kill me.

I immediately slammed the tomb shut and forced it back onto the shelf with my mind. I darted downstairs and back to where Loren was. She and Ani were completely leaning into one another at the table. I hesitated before running past them and out of the library completely.

I had to find Maximus.

I had to beg him not to break our bond.

## Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 114

Maximus

After Zora had left his room, Maximus had resigned to sulk for the rest of the weekend.

His future with Zora was looking bleak and grey. He couldn't have her unless she had all of her fated mates.

Furthermore, if he was selfish and kept her, he'd wind up killing them both within two years. Nothing was working out for him and he thought he deserved the right to sulk in his misery.

Then, Sunday evening, there was a banging on his door.

He groaned and dragged himself out of bed only to have the person barge into his room as he was getting to his feet. Maximus was about to murder the person when he saw Zora's bright red hair. His murder subsided but, then, he was met with confusion.

"What are you doing?" he said, stern yet soft.

"I read the tombs," Zora said, quickly. "I read them and I think you're crazy if you're going to let me just allow you to break our bond and shorten your life."

Maximus had never been so confused. “Tombs? What are you talking about?”

Zora furrowed her brow. “You haven’t read the tomb?”

“What fucking tomb?” Maximus cried. “I knew that because my parents told me.”

“Parents?” Zora balked. Then her face dropped. “Elena Wolfham.” “Elena Wolfham?” Max said. “What about my grandmother?”

Zora said nothing. She slunk over to the bed where Maximus was still sitting and sat on it. She gave him a look before she sighed.

“Have you ever met your grandmother?”

“Briefly,” Maximus replied. “She died young.”

Zora nodded. “Do you know much about her?”

“I don’t understand the sudden interest in my family line.

“Max,” Zora pleaded. It tugged at all of the bits of his heart that ached for her. Her turned his head to look at her. She offered him a weak smile then ducked her head and continued.

“I went to the library today,” she said. “To research multiple fated mates. Luckily for me, the librarian had just come across a tomb. It detailed all known wolves with multiple mates and their...outcomes.”

“What does this have to do with my grandmother?”

Maximus pressed. “She was in there,” Zora said, quietly. “Your grandmother had multiple fated mates.”

Maximus sunk in on himself as he began to process it.

Then he shook his head. “She couldn’t have,” he protested.

“I never met anyone other than my grandfather. Hell, I don’t even think he was her fated mate.”

“The tomb said he was,” Zora said. “They didn’t know they were fated mates until they broke out of the vampire’s grasps. Then, they realized their bond was one of fated mates. It was then that your grandmother’s second bond showed itself. Apparently, the guy was a dickhead. So, she broke her bond with him. It’s why she died earlier than most wolves. Because of her broken bond.”

Maximus couldn't bring himself to say anything. He sat there, in silence next to Zora. His grandmother had two fated mates. Something so rare and so powerful had touched his family line not once, but twice. And it'd killed his grandmother.

He pinched the bridge of his nose and ducked his head between his knees. A shudder of a breath came out of his mouth. Then he sat back up and looked at his own fated mate.

Her curly red hair was frizzing out of its braid much more than when he'd seen her the evening prior. There was a cut on her lip that was from when Kairos had let the dummy tackle her in training. Her green-gold eyes were shining brightly at him. She looked beautiful.

"If I break our bond," he said, slowly. "I'll die sooner than you. Than, everyone else."

Zora nodded, lip tugged between her teeth. Maximus ran a hand over his head. His hair was getting long. He'd need to buzz it again soon. He looked back at Zora.

"If that means I won't hurt you," Max said, slowly. "Then I'd do it a thousand times over."

Zora immediately scowled. "That was not what I wanted you to say."

"What did you fucking want me to say!" Maximus threw his hand up. "That I'd let both of us die in two years because fucking Lunerly is too much of a cunt to accept his fated mate? Fuck, no."

Zora rose up onto her feet. "So you're going to force us to live without a bond that is so central to our very beings?"

"To keep you alive? Yes." Maximus hissed. He stood up as well, leering over Zora. He felt his nostrils flare slightly. "There's not much I wouldn't do to keep you alive. If shortening my life keeps you here as long as you should be, then that's that."

"You're being irrational," Zora growled.

"The only one being irrational is you," Maximus threw back. There was a beat of the two glaring each other down. Then Max spoke again. "Lunerly has very clearly told you that he doesn't want you," He said, voice low and trying to be soft despite the cutting way he spoke. "Thorne already broke the bond and Kairos has tried to kill you more times than I can count." He shook his head.

"We're doomed."

"Don't say that," Zora begged. "There's never been a wolf with more than two, fated mates. I have four and one already rejected me! We don't know what any of this means!"

“We do!” Max snapped back. “We know that if we stay together, we will die. End of story. We will be driven to madness and die. I refuse to watch that happen to you, Zora. Refuse.”

Zora looked up at him with a plead in her eyes. Maximus turned around so he didn't have to watch her face fall.

“My ultimatum is the same as it was yesterday,” He said, low. “You either get Lunerly to agree to consummate the bond. Or I break ours and take the consequences at hand.

Now please, leave.”

“Max,” Zora called.

Maximus sucked in a breath of air and turned back to look at her. A single tear fell down her cheek. He so desperately wanted to wipe it off her face but he held himself back. If he touched her, he'd never stop.” Goodnight, Zora.”

Tears streamed silently down her face as she pushed past him. She went to his door and opened it. She took one more look at him – one more aching, longing look, then slammed it behind her. Maximus fell back in his bed and stared at his ceiling.

He wondered how many days he could spend in bed before someone started to get worried. He figured then was a perfect time to test it out.

## Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 115

Zora

After my devastating conversation with Maximus, I was a shell of a human. Any hope I had that I could keep all of my fated mates, was gone. I should've known. A happy ending wasn't meant for me.

Monday morning, I dragged my ass out of bed and to training with Valentin. When I arrived at the gym, both Kairos and Maximus were missing. Valentin stood in the low light of the morning, arms crossed over his chest.

Immediately, he could sense something was up with me.

His eyes narrowed in on the dark bags under my own.

“Are you ill?” he said, softly.

I shook my head. “Just sleeping like shit.”

“Just that?”

I gave Valentin a pointed look. His gold eyes bore into me.

I weighed my options in the back of my mind before sighing and reaching up to rub my temples. I dropped my hands back to slap against my thighs.

“This multiple fated mate thing is looking bleak,” I mumbled.

Valentin raised an eyebrow. “How so? You heard what your mother said. She believes the only way to get to the truest form of your power is to consummate all your bonds.”

“I know!” I snapped then shot him a scathing look. “But apparently, not everyone is on board.”

I watched Valentin’s jaw tick. His face was still a mask of indifference. He nodded then looked away from me before murmuring softly.

“I see,”

“Have you known many wolves with multiple fated mate bonds?” I pressed.

Valentin shook his head. “No,” he said. “I only know what (ve read.”

“So, you know what happens when not all of the bonds are completed?”

Valentin snapped his head to look me in the eyes. His mask was wanning into a look of terror. His eyes shifted to dark along the floor.

“And I’ve smelled Wolfham on you,” he mumbled, mainly to himself. His eyes were still rapidly darting across the floor. “Oh, Gods-”

“Yeah,” I snapped. “We’re fucked.”

“Not necessarily,” Valentin jerked back to look at me.”

Wolfham could still sever the bond.”

“And shorten his life?” I scoffed. “No thanks. Plus, I don’t exactly want to get rid of it.”

Valentin’s jaw ticked again. Was he...jealous? The gall of him to be jealous when I’d basically thrown myself at him from the start. I scoffed again and crossed my arms over my chest, turning away with the shake of my head.

“We could do it the other way.”

I whirled around to look back at Valentin.

“What other way?” I snapped

“I could sever the bond,” he said. “Moonraiser and I.

Blythwitch has already done it. Our lives would be shortened but you’d still have Wolfham’s bond.”

I frowned as my chest felt like it’d been cracked in half. He still didn’t want me. He’d never want me. I had to get over him. I shook my head.

“I don’t know if Kairos would,” I murmured.

“Even if Moonraiser doesn’t,” Valentin said. “I could.

Blythwitch and I would suffer but the rest of you would be fine.”

“What about my power?” I protested.

“The prophecy said all my bonds.”

“That’s true,” Valentin mused. “But I have a theory. By severing two of the bonds, your body may be able to take more from the completed bonds. That would be enough to power you.” I threw my hands up. “That makes no fucking sense!” | snapped. “Just bond with me! I can see it in every tick of your jaw. Every time one of the others look at me.

Jealousy is flowing out of you like a river. You’re the problem here!”

Valentin’s nostrils flared. He took one slow step towards me, eyes boring down into mine. I tipped my chin, proud and unafraid. He was being irrational here and I had no choice but to stand my ground. Our chests were so close, they were almost touching as both of us sucked in heaving, breaths. We were close enough that all I needed to do was press up on my toes, and our lips would meet.

But Valentin had other plans.

“I will not,” he snarled. “Allow you to meet the same fate as her. If that means I take myself out of the picture, then so be it. But I will not lose another fated mate, Zora. Even if that means I don’t have one at all.”

I opened my mouth to speak but Valentin turned his back to me as he walked away. He only looked back at me once he was a safe distance away. Even then, his face was schooled back into the mask he wore.

“Now warm up,” he snapped. “I’m making use of this time whether Wolfham and Moonraiser are here or not.”

The entire rest of the morning, my head was spinning, and my body was tense with anger. I tried to take as much of it out on training but in the end, I still entered the locker room with curled fists. I slammed one of them into the lockers. An ear shattering. bang echoed through the room. I stared into the dent I'd just slammed into the metal. Then, I sunk to the bench and threw my head into my hands.

How fucking dare he?

How dare we act jealous and then reject me? As if I couldn't see how I affected him both physically and mentally? The words he'd uttered when he'd saved me from the vampires were ping ponging through my brain.

How dare you hurt my mate!"

I sported. As if he cared about that now.

He will come around, Mona assured in the back of my mind.

I snorted, again. Sure, I said back, bitter and sarcastic. And pigs will fly and monkeys will breathe fire.

Stranger things have happened, Mona mused. I rolled my eyes and completely ignored her.

I grabbed my towel and walked into the shower room. I turned one on and waited until steam filled the room before I stepped under the spray. The hot water burned my skin but it felt nice to match the mental hurt in my head to the physical hurt on my skin.

I pressed my head against the tile underneath the shower head. It was a cool juxtaposition to the heat slamming in between my shoulder blades. I sighed, heavily. Between

Maximus's ultimatum and Valentin's opposition to completing our bond, it was looking like the bond would be a party of two for the future. Unless Maximus gave up on me as well. Then, I'd be alone all over again.

The thought made my hair stand up on my skin, despite the flames firing into my back.

## Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 116

Valentin

Valentin watched Zora storm into the locker room. As soon as she was out of sight, he let his shoulders drop and his back hunch. He palmed his face with a sigh then tipped his head back to look at the ceiling.

What have I done to deserve this? He asked the Gods.

You know what you've done, they replied back in his mind.

He tipped his head back to his chest. He shouldn't have even asked the question. He knew the answer.

He left the gym and started towards his own office. As he pushed out of the gym, the sun was slowly starting to crest over the horizon. Valentin stared at it for a moment, hoping the sun might burn his eyes and cause him to be blind. Maybe then, he wouldn't be cursed by the image of Zora Luna.

She reminded him so much of Zahara. Her hair was the same color. Her smile was the same. Fuck, even the way she said his name was the same way Zahara did.

Valentin's eyes fluttered closed as he remembered his fated mate. Her smell, her laugh, her everything. His mind began to wander. Did Zora smell like Zahara? Did she taste like Zahara?

Valentin's cock stirred in his trousers at the thought. He cursed and adjusted himself discretely before walking a bit faster to his office. Curse the Gods for allowing him to get lost in his own thoughts.

He made his way back to his office and slunk into his chair. Before he could stop himself, his hands were wrenching his trousers open. He pushed all the fabric away and fisted his cock. He moaned as his hand wrapped around himself. He tossed his head back on his chair and worked his wrist over himself.

Fuck the Gods.

Fuck the way they made him.

Fuck them for making him want her so bad.

He worked his hand up and down his shaft, eyes still fluttered closed and head still leaning back. He imagined taking Zora by the hand and leading her to where he was straining his trousers. He imagined teaching her how to make him moan and break and writhe. Then, he imagined spinning her around and shoving himself so deep within her soaking cunt that she cried out.

He would keep pounding her as she screamed so that everyone could hear here. The entire campus would hear her coming on his cock. Especially those fucking smug assholes she was also fated to. Valentin would show them. He'd show them how a true High Alpha fucked his mate.

At that thought, he came all over himself. His seed coated his hand as he grunted out his own released. When his heart finally stopped racing, he looked down at the mess he'd made of himself and sighed. He flicked his wrist and the mess dissipated. He sat up and tucked himself back in his pants before slamming his head on his desk.

He had resigned to wallow in his disgust for the next hour but was pulled from his thoughts when there was a soft rapt on his door. He sat back in his chair and attempted to smooth his hair off his face before catting the visitor in.

To make matters worse, his fiance had decided it was the perfect time to visit him. And she looked pissed.

"What are you doing?" she snapped.

"My job, Bella," he deadpanned. "You know. That thing you told me you'd get when you graduated."

She waved her hand. "I'm busy planning our wedding, Valentin," she snapped. "Something you clearly don't give a fuck about."

"Again," Valentin motioned towards his desk. "I have a job."

"Well I blocked your calendar so no you don't," Bella hissed. She grabbed his hand and yanked him out of his seat. "So let's go."

"Go where?" Valentin protested as she dragged him towards the door.

Bella paused and looked back at him with fire in her eyes. "My wedding dress fitting. Tell me you didn't forget?" An hour later, Valentin Lunerly found himself sitting between two of Bella's friends. Miles upon miles of taffeta and tuille surrounded the three of them as dresses of all shapes and colors took up the tiny room they were put in.

Bella had insisted they go to the best dress maker of all the wolves. She was marrying a High Alpha, after all, and needed to look the part.

She'd tried on a dozen dresses and tried to get Valentin's opinion on each of them. Her friends had "ooh"ed and "aah"ed at every single one of them. But, as she turned to Valentin, her face would immediately fall when she saw his. She'd rush back into the changing room and then they'd do it all over again. By the fifth one, Valentin realized he needed to feign interest or they'd be there all day.

"Vally," Bella's snotty friend, Everly, said. She placed a hand on his bicep. "Will the Queen be joining us for your ceremony?"

"If she can," Valentin answered honestly. He tried his darndest not to cringe at the nickname she'd made for him. "She's quite busy."

“But the other High Alphas will be joining right?” Bella’s other friend, Paige, said. She batted her eyelashes at him.” Surely the single ones at least. Perhaps you could convince them?”

Valentin stared at her for a moment, trying to come up with the words to politely tell her that the Alphas were all mated and none of them wanted her whore-ass anyways.

Luckily for him, Bella chose that moment to come out in the next gown. Both Everly and Paige gasped.

The gown she was wearing was a deep emerald green. It was adorned with gold appliques and beads that made the shape of flowers gently cupping Bella’s chest. The skirt was long and pleated and fanned out into a short train behind her. The lady who was helping them had fixed a gold tiara on Bella’s head. It was made of swirling, beautifully placed flowers that rested gingerly on her head.

She looked stunning.

But Valentin’s mind started to wander. He saw the same beautiful dress but the woman underneath was different.

She was less curvy than Bella and didn’t have her long black hair or tanned skin. This woman’s skin was creamy white and dotted with freckles that made her collar bones jut out. This woman’s hair was a shocking red. He looked up and was met with the green-gold eyes of his dead mate.

Valentin blinked twice to get the image out of his head, to make the woman look like Bella once again. Instead, it shifted and became Zahara’s younger counterpart. He was met with the same green-gold gaze but the person behind it was Zora.

“Well?” she said. “Is this one it?”

Valentin shook his head again and Zora disappeared. He was met with the hopeful glance of Bella. His heart strained in his chest and he bolted from his seat.

“Excuse me,” he murmured as he pushed out of the tiny room. He barreled his way out of the shop and into the street. He only made it a foot from the door before he keeled over and emptied the contents of his stomach onto the street.

He was still sputtering as he stood up. He ran the back of his hand over his mouth and pressed his spine to the wall of the building. Was he really going to go through with the wedding to Bella?

He’d already missed one opportunity to be with the love of his life after the untimely death of Zahara. Was he really going to pass up on happiness with Zora as well?

His heart pounded wildly in his chest as he considered the options.

Then, the door to the shop slammed open and Bella stuck her head out. Her lips were pursed in their permanent scowl. “The fuck are you doing?” she hissed.

“Sorry,” Valentin mumbled. “Bad breakfast.”

Bella rolled her eyes. “Whatever,” she snapped. “Just get back inside I have four more dresses to try on.”

Valentin nodded curtly. He followed Bella back into the shop and tried to keep his mind from wandering back to the red-haired woman in the emerald-green dress.

## Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 117

Zora

As bleak as my future with four fated mates looked, I couldn't give up.

Maybe it was that the vampires were already mobile. I'd heard through the rumor mill there'd been another attack in the village nearby campus. Only this time, they'd taken no prisoners.

Maybe it was that my body ached from want so much! was beginning to lose focus. Any time any of my four fated mates, save for Thorne who I ignored as much as he ignored me, was in the same room as me, I was hot. I fidgeted and squirmed and was generally uncomfortable in their prescience. I'd almost launched myself at Maximus during basics one morning.

Maybe it was that I felt like part of me was missing. I never felt as whole as I did when I was with all three of them. Training with Valentin in the mornings had become my favorite part of the day. Instead of begrudgingly rolling out of bed, I jumped up and found myself almost sprinting to be close to them all.

It was exactly how I'd started the morning I came up with my grand plan to win them all over. As I walked across the campus, covered in melting snow, I figured it out. If I was all fidgety and hot and bothered, there was no way they weren't either. Sure, Maximus and I had already jumped each other's bones and Kairos and I had gotten damn close. But I saw the way their dark eyes tracked me across the gym each morning. They were as insatiable as I was.

If I could manage to seduce Valentin and Kairos into falling for me, I'd have what I wanted. As I walked into the gym, their dark eyes were on me again. I almost laughed, it'd be a piece of cake.

I turned on the charm that morning, making sure I was touching Kairos or Valentin at all points during training.

Maximus let out low growls a few times and even grabbed me by the elbow and told me it wasn't going to work. But I ignored him and continued and work on swaying my hips and touching my fated mates enough that at the end of training, Valentin nearly sprinted from the room. I smirked at myself. It seemed my plan was working.

The next phase was individually giving the men attention.

It started at shifting class, later that day. Kairos was still our teaching assistant. The class had grown slightly in size due to the wolves who'd progressed in their skills.

Now, the class was around ten people. As I broke into the clearing, I frowned at them.

This would make my flirting a little harder.

"Smith," Kairos barked. "You're late."

"Sorry," I said. I tossed my long braid over my shoulder and put on my sultriest smirk. "Beauty takes time."

A few of my old classmates rolled their eyes. The newer ones seemed to be shocked. Kairos growled under his breath but I watched as his pupils blew out over his dark gold eyes.

Bingo.

"We're working on a running shift today," Kairos said."

Follow me to the river."

We wound through the trees until we came across a river, almost as wide as my dorm room. The water was calm but running loud enough that Kairos had to shout over it. He gestured to the river.

"Human legs won't propel you far enough to cross," he yelled. "The goal is to press off your back wolf legs and throw yourself across. I'll demonstrate first."

He stalked back over to where the rest of us were standing. His back was facing me. I watched the ripple of his muscles under his tight shirt. My fingers twitched to touch him to feel the muscle move under my fingers. Just as I was about to, he took off in a sprint.

Kairos got to the bank of the river before his entire body shook with the shift. His back paws dug into the mud touching the water and his auburn wolf launched across the river.

It skittered to a stop on the other side. A few of the students next to me clapped and I resisted the urge to roll my eyes. Suck ups.

Is flirting with High Alpha Moonraiser not “sucking up” as well? Mona mused as she cleaned her paws. Shut up, I threw back. Do you want to become stronger or not?

Mona huffed then darted back off into the back of my mind again. Kairos jumped back over the river, leisurely then shifted back to his human form. He walked over to the rest of us and bracketed his hands on his hips.

“Line up,” he snapped. Everyone shuffled into a line and I found myself at the back of it. Kairos raised an eyebrow but continued.

“I’ll stand here to talk you through the motions,” he said. “Once you get across, shift back and wait there. Then, we’ll cross back.”

All of my classmates nodded. One of the girls in front of me smirked and nudged her friend with her elbow.

“Not the only thing I’d like him to talk me through, huh?”

Jealousy flooded me. “He’s not going to talk to you at all if you don’t make it over the river,” I snapped. “So, I’d focus on that.”

The girl narrowed her eyes at me then turned back around to whisper with her friend. They were probably talking shit about me. I wish I cared.

One by one, the wolves took off and launched themselves over the river. Almost everyone did it seamlessly. The two girls in front of me struggled a little bit and I couldn’t help but bark out a laugh as one of them landed in the water a good foot from the edge of the river.

Kairos jerked his head to look at me, eyebrow raised. I shrugged. “They weren’t focusing on the task,” I said.

“I heard,” Kairos said plainly. “I also heard what you said.”

I cocked my head. “And what did I say, Alpha Moonraiser?”

Kairos’s eyes blew wide for a moment. He dipped his head—so could whisper into the shell of my ear. His breath floated over my body like an aphrodisiac.

“Jealousy looks good on you, mate,” he drawled. A shiver crawled down my spine. “Now, show them how to do it.”

I tipped my chin up and looked Kairos in the eyes. God, I wanted to smother his lips with my own. I bit my tongue to keep myself from doing something stupid. Then, I broke off into a run.

With an ease that was almost comical, I shifted just before my last step across the river. My back paws dug into the mud, just as Kairos's had and I flung myself across. I soared through the air and landed directly in front of the two girls who'd struggled. One was dripping wet. I dropped my head low and let a snarl rip from my throat.

The girls skittered back. I felt another wolf land next to me and turned my head to be met with Kairos's auburn fur. I blinked in surprise when I saw that his wolf was smiling at me.

## Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 118

Class ended and I lingered around while Kairos organized some of the materials we'd been using. He shot me a look but continued to pick up his things. It wasn't until the clearing was empty, only he and I standing there, that he spoke.

"As much as I'd love to pin you to the floor and lick every inch of your skin," he said, casually like he'd been talking about the weather. "I take my position seriously. There's nothing professional about fucking you on the forest floor."

I tried to not let my mind wander into how much I wanted that. I shook my head to clear my thoughts.

"That's not why I'm here,

Kairos raised an eyebrow. "Your running shift was perfect, and you'll be graded as such. Don't worry."

"I need to talk to you about something," I said.

Something, fated mate-y."

Kairos froze. He nodded. I sighed. Here I went.

"I'm sure you've deduced that I have more than one fated mate," I said.

"I knew you fucked Wolfham, if that's what you're trying to say," Kairos snapped back.

These damn wolves and their jealousy. "No. It's not," I threw back. "Well - maybe. I'm fated to both of you. I know the signs. I know what I felt, and I know it's not unheard of."

“Not unheard of, no,” Kairos said. “But highly unusual and usually within families of High Alphas? Yes. Did you suddenly become a High Alpha?”

I shifted, uncomfortably. Here I went again with the lies. “Some non-High Alphas have had two fated mates,” I said, quietly. “I read the tomb on wolves with multiple fated mates. It’s not having two fated mates that’s bad, it’s bad when you don’t do anything about them.”

Kairos threw a bag of supplies down and gave me a pointed look. He crossed his arms over his chest. “I thought I was clear when I said I don’t. Share.”

“Crystal,” I hissed. “But you don’t understand. We have to share. If I don’t consummate all my bonds, the ones that we’re completed will get sick and go mad and die.”

“And I’m supposed to give a fuck if Wolfham dies?”

“He was your friend,” I grit out. “So yes. Coupled with the fact that whatever happens to him, will also happen to me.”

Kairos’s face fell. His bitter façade was crumbling in front of me. He crossed his arms back over his chest and pulled his lip between his teeth, deep in thought. He peered back up at me through his eyelashes. “And the only way to keep you from going insane is to consummate both bonds?” he said.

“Well,” I rubbed at the back of my neck. “You could also break the bond but figured that was-”

“Completely out of the fucking question.”

“Right.”

“So, it’s both or one?” Kairos repeated.

“All or one,” I corrected. “I have three fated mates – well, four. But Thorne already broke his bond. I don’t really know what that means.”

“Three?!” Kairos balked. “You have three fated mates?”

I nodded. “You, Maximus and Valentin.”

“Three fated mates and one of them is Lunerly,” Kairos deadpanned. He shook his head. “Who the fuck are you, Zora Smith?”

I gnawed on my own lip then shrugged. “Just a girl.”

Kairos scoffed. "Sure," he said, all sarcastic. "And you've consummated the bond with Lunerly, too?"

I shifted. "No, he's-

"So I can have you to myself," he cut me off. "If Wolfham breaks his bond."

"Well yes, but-" "It's settled," Kairos cut me off again and went back to packing up the class supplies. "I will fight Wolfham for you. Winner doesn't have to sever their bond and loser does. Then Lunerly severs his and marries that psycho bitch who graduated and I get you alone."

My heart strained in my chest.

"It's not that simple," I said,

quickly. "Anyone who severs the bond won't live as long as a normal wolf. It's a side effect and I - I want all of you.

I need all of you."

I did need them. For my own selfish reasons and the reasons I'd read in my prophecy. If I was supposed to defeat the vampires, I needed the power that came from all four of them. Not just one wolf.

Kairos dropped his supplies again and stalked over to me.

His hand went to grab my chin. I stumbled slightly and my hands pressed against his chest. The electricity that swarmed my body was like a match to a flame, burning me up from the inside out. I couldn't help the whimper that escaped my lips. Kairos's dark eyes loomed down at me.

"You won't need any of them when you're mine," Kairos hissed, half a threat and half a promise. "There is nothing that any of them can do that I can't do better. I will take

•care of you in every way you can imagine. You will come harder on my cock than you would ever do there's. You are mine, Zora. All your secrets and everything in between."

My lips parted slightly. Another noise erupted from deepwithin me. My hands knotted in Kairos's shirt. I pressed my chest into his and felt the rumble start deep within him. His grip on me loosened slightly. His hand snaked around the side of my face and grabbed my neck. Then, he was pulling me towards his all over again.

Our lips clashed in a mess of teeth and tongues.

Immediately, he pried my lips open and sucked me deep into him. His hand was still pressed into my neck, bruising the skin there in a way that sent another jolt of electricity to the space between my legs. Another noise came from me and Kairos swallowed it before going back for more.

I was pliant in his hands, molded to fit what he needed.

My hands went to his hair and tugged and he grunted into me. His hips juttled into mine and I felt the stiffness between them. Everything ached within me to pull him out and impale myself on him. Fuck the professionalism, I'd suck his cock on the forest floor.

Then, as passionate as it was faded into something soft.

Kairos pressed one final kiss to my lips, mouths closed. He pulled back and rested his forehead against mine. Both of our mouths were open, gasping for air. He kissed me once more then dropped his hands from my skin. I whined at the loss and even more when he pushed past me. My hand went to grab him but he was too far away.

"I'll challenge Wolfham tomorrow," he murmured over his shoulder. "Then you will be mine."

I watched as he disappeared into the forest, away from the clearing. I was hot all over again and I'd made absolutely no progress and getting him to agree to share.

If anything, I'd made it worse.

"Motherfucker," I hissed.

I was fucked, yet again.

## Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 119

My mood somehow became worse after my conversation with Kairos. I was hoping it would end in sunshine and rainbows but as soon as he walked away from me, I realized how delusional I was. Everything was a nightmare at that point.

Thorne had rejected me.

Maximus was livid with me and trying to break our bond.

Valentin didn't want me.

And Kairos wanted me so much he was willing to risk having me at all to have me alone.

How had it all become so complicated?

I gave up on my classes for the afternoon and slunk back to my dorm room to wallow in my misery. I was relieved that my room was empty when I got back to it. I threw my book bag on top of my desk. Then, I dragged my feet over to my bed and threw myself into it, face down.

I laid there for long enough that all of my anger boiled up and over. I screamed into my pillows for long enough that my lungs were burning. When I finished, I finally rolled over onto my back.

You know, Mona mused in the back of my mind. It could be worse.

“How?!” I said out loud to the no one in the room. Mona•huffed in the back of my mind.

You could be human.

I grabbed the pillow next to me and slammed it over my face. Then, I screamed again.

Even my inner wolf couldn't understand me. I was on my own. Just when I thought I'd finally met some people who could understand me, I was left on my own yet again. The silence in my room was deafening. For a girl with four fated mates, I'd never felt more alone. I stared at my ceiling in silence for more time than I could count. Then, my stomach growled so loud that it echoed off the walls of my room.

Finally, I slunk out of bed and threw my coat on in favor of some semblance of food. I pushed my way out of my room then out of my building and back into the cold. Maybe I'd eat my feelings instead of sleep through them.

I got about halfway across campus before I was stopped in. my tracks by a large crowd on the campus lawn. There was a fair bit of yelling and calling around them. One of my classmates peeled away from the crowd. She was shaking her head in disbelief. I darted out to stand in front of her. She stopped short, eyes bulging when she realized who it was.

“Smith,” she gasped. “You-what-”

“What's going on?” I said, quickly. The girl pointed over her shoulder. “Moonraiser,” she started. “He grabbed Maximus after class. They started getting in each other's faces and then people started to gather.”

“Kairos?” I breathed. “What—oh, fuck.”

Immediately my brain spun back to a few hours before.

When Kairos had gotteh in my face and told me that he was going to challenge Maximus. I hadn't expected him to actually challenge Maximus.

“Thank you,” I told the girl. She nodded once and went on her way.

I looked back at the crowd. It somehow got bigger in the moment I'd spoken to my classmate. My eyes narrowed in on a head of purple-red hair. I rushed forwards and yanked her back. She spun around and looked me in the eyes.

"Zora," she hissed.

"Meg," I breathed.

I knew I'd recognized the purple-red hair somewhere. Of course, it had to be Maximus's sister. I hadn't seen her since the previous semester. I had a hundred and one questions for her but none were more important than the one prodding at the front of my mind.

"Where's Max?"

"In there," she pointed towards the center of the crowd. "I tried to get through but I couldn't. You have to do something! Moonraiser has gone mad!"

"I-I-" I stammered. "I don't know what to do."

"Moonraiser was claiming that he's your fated mate," Meg shoved me towards the crowd. "He'll listen to you!"

"I can't get past them!" I protested.

"Please, Zora," Meg begged. "You have to help Max." Immediately, my heart ached. I felt the electricity that usually spurred from when I touched Maximus roar through my veins. Then, warmth flooded my skin and radiated off of it. There was a flash of light and then, the crowd had parted in front of me. Everyone was staring back at me with wide eyes.

Maximus and Kairos were in the center of the circle. They were only an inch apart, torn between glaring at one another and taking in the way that I looked. Finally, Maximus did a double take. His face fell as he raked his eyes over my body.

"Zora," he said. "You're glowing."

I looked down at my body and, sure enough, light was pouring out of my skin and creating a halo around me. I gasped and it fizzled away.

I looked back up and met the eyes of both of my fated mates. I stormed forwards, angry again. I jabbed a finger towards Kairos. "The fuck are you doing?"

"What I said I'd do," Kairos snapped.

"He told you?" Maximus cut in.

"Vaguely," I waved a hand. "I didn't think he was going to actually do anything."

I don't play games," Kairos threw at me. He looked back to Maximus. "I said What' | said. You want to be with Zora then you'll have to face me in a challenge."

Maximus looked back at me. His eyes scanned all over my face before he turned back to lock eyes with Kairos. He nodded once.

"I accept,"

"Accept?!" Someone behind me squeaked. I turned and saw that Meg had followed me into the center. "Max-

"I accept," Maximus spat out again. "Drop it Meg."

"This is all ridiculous!" I snapped. "I don't need anyone to fight for me! Can we please talk about this?"

"There's nothing to talk about," Kairos narrowed his eyes at Maximus. "He accepted. Winner gets you."

Then, he turned on his heel and stalked away, shoulders hunched and fists balled. I looked back at Maximus. He shook his head at me and began to walk away. "If this is what it takes, then so be it," Max whispered towards me.

"Max!" Meg called again. He completely ignored her and continued after Kairos. The rest of the crowd slowly followed after them. I looked back at Meg.

"This is happening now!?" I squeaked.

"I guess," Meg looked like she was one second away from bursting into tears. I gently put a hand on her arm, trying to comfort her.

"It's fine," I tried. "They'll bruise each other up a little bit and then this will be over."

Meg's eyes almost popped out of her skull. She shook her head very slowly. "Zora, you don't understand."

"Understand what?" I asked, eyebrows furrowed.

Meg shook her head again. "Zora, when wolves fight for a fated mate," she said, slowly. "They fight to the death."

## **Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 120**

My brain was still processing what Meg had said when my legs took off in a sprint. I raced past the crowd who was filing into the gym. I pushed past people as fast as I could, heart slamming into my rib cage.

I couldn't believe that someone was about to die over me.

Kairos had managed to leave that part of his plans out of what he told me. I couldn't let either of them die.

When I arrived to the gym, another circle had formed.

They all gathered around the raised sparring mat that I had fought Kairos on, only the semester before. I pushed past them all to stand on the edge of the mat. When I looked up at my fated mates, I couldn't help but gasp.

Both Kairos and Maximus were shirtless and standing in sparring stances. Kairos was a thick, rippling force. He screamed before launching himself at Maximus. Maximus managed to defend himself from a few of Kairos's punches. Then, one landed in his jaw.

A sickening crack echoed across the room. Blood splattered out of Maximus's mouth and painted the floor of the gym. Kairos stood back with a smirk on his face as Maximus spit the residual blood out of his mouth. Then, he growled and turned back to his opponent.

He threw himself back at Kairos. He landed a few punches on Kairos's chest. They immediately pinked and became swollen. Kairos grabbed Maximus's wrist and swung Maximus over his head. Maximus landed on the ground with a thud that shook the mat. I expected him to writhe around in pain, but he jumped right up.

We both watched as the smile disappeared from Kairos's face. In a snap second, Maximus was launching himself back at Kairos. He pinned the other Alpha onto the floor.

His fists started slamming into Kairos's face. Each punch sent blood and spit flying into the crowd. It only seemed to fuel them to scream louder.

My heart felt like it was straining to escape. I didn't want Kairos to lose, but I didn't want Maximus to lose either.

Just as I thought that, Kairos threw Maximus off of him.

He pinned Maximus back to the ground and kned him right in the ribs. Then, they began clawing at each other all over again.

I lurched to get up and peel them apart but someone held me back. I turned to see Meg digging her nails into me.

She shook her head.

“They could hurt you,” she said. “It’s not worth it.”

“Not worth it for your brother’s life?” I snapped.

I shook her arm off me. Just as I pushed myself up onto the platform, there was another sickening crunch. My stomach turned in on itself. I slammed my eyes shut to keep myself from looking towards the fight. Another crunch. Curiosity got the best of me and I looked back towards the men. The sound that exploded from my throat was nothing short of animalistic. Maximus was on top of Kairos. I only recognized him because of the tattoo on his chest. The rest of his face was entirely unrecognizable. It was soaked in blood and mottled. Despite that, he still was trying to wrestle Maximus off of him. Max was in no better shape, himself.

Lines of blood were streaming down from his temples. His lips were ruby red as if he’d bitten his tongue off.

Neither of them stopped as I shrieked. The only time they did was when someone finally reached out and ripped Maximus off of Kairos. I gasped for air in relief. Thank the Gods above. I looked over and expected to see a professor

- Valentin even - but what I saw made me freeze.

Thorne Blythwitch was holding Maximus up by his throat.

Maximus was clawing at Thorne’s hands as his legs kicked. His face was becoming white underneath all the blood. Once his hands went limp, Thorne dropped him. He clattered to the floor with a thud. I immediately raced over and pulled his head into my lap.

“You fucking killed him!” I shrieked, hysteric.

“Don’t be so dramatic,” Thorne sneered at me. He gestured to Maximus.

“He’ll be out for a few minutes then he’ll come to.”

I glanced down at Max. Sure enough, his eyelids were beginning to twitch. His eyes started to roll slightly before fluttering open. He coughed violently then let his head roll to the side. I narrowed my eyes back up at Thorne. “Couldn’t help yourself, could you?” I snapped. “Had to make sure Kairos won. He probably doesn’t even want me. bet you both schemed against me

“Shut the fuck up!” Thorne said, finally breaking. His eyes shimmered as he glared down at me. “By some twisted chance, he’s obsessed with you. I stopped this fight in hopes of not letting him embarrass himself further.”

My face fell. “What are you talking about?”

“High Alphas fighting over a common whore?” Thorne hissed. “Its disgusting. Men of such standards dropping themselves to someone who’s not even of nobility.”

I snorted. “You’ve got to be kidding me,” I snapped. “You’re still obsessed with my status?!”

“The lack of? Yes,” Thorne threw back. “But I don’t expect you to get it. You don’t have any respect for our culture.

Make some bullshit accusations about the Princess to get her kicked out.”

“Amara helped kidnapped me!” I gently dropped Maximus to the floor and stood up. I clenched my fists as I looked back at Thorne. “You’re so obsessed with the Princess. You wouldn’t have believed me even if you saw it with your own eyes!”

“Enough!!” Thorne roared. “You’re full of LIES!”

“And what do you have to prove it?” I threw back at him.

” will find where you slipped up,” Thorne snapped. “And you will pay—”

“Pay for being villainized by you!?” I cut him off. “Who’s going to make me pay? You? I’d like to see you try.”

Thorne tipped his chin up at me. His eyes will still flaring with malice. The energy in the room was volatile. Thorne took a step towards me. Then another, I was frozen in place as he leered down at me.

“I may not be able to do anything,” he said. “But the Queen knows it all. And she has some words for you.”

I swallowed thickly. I was sure she did have words for me.

But more so words of encouragement than anything. But Thorne didn’t know that. All he knew was I was some random who came into his world and flipped it on it’s head. I still couldn’t give myself up to him. So I swallowed my pride and looked him dead in the eyes as I said.

“So do it. See if I give a fuck what some Queen has to say.”

The entire room gasped.