

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 13

How is he so attractive?

He's literally your bitch mom's BFF. Move on, I threw back at my inner voice.

"A lady never reveals her true age," Valentin teased.

I rolled my eyes at him. "Right so you and my mom fought the vampires?"

"We did. Start on some hamstring stretches," he said. I followed suit and watched as he stood on the side of the track, arms across his chest. "We raised a whole army of wolves. Broke free of the vampires and managed to take a bunch of them down. But they'd weakened us for so long. They were stronger than us and fought back valiantly. It was looking grim for us when your mother started to glow.

"She'd unlocked the power of a True Alpha. It was something that the vampires had suppressed for years. With that power, she managed to lock the Vampire Emperor in the shadow world.

"Wow," I breathed. I turned around and started on a different hamstring stretch, walking back towards Valentin. "The handbooks don't have that part."

"Most wolves know," he said. I frowned. He grimaced slightly. "Most wolves raised by wolves."

"You wanna fill me in on why I didn't get that part of my life?" I said.

Valentin grimaced again. "That's not my story to tell. Switch to hip stretched," he said. I followed his direction and scowled at the same time. "You can speak to your mother about this."

"She won't tell me,, I bit out."For a reason," Valentin said. "There was a prophecy, foretold that eighteen years after the capture of the empire, the Dawn of the wolves would emerge, ushering forth a prosperous period of new wolves."

"I know," I said, swinging my leg across my body to stretch my hip. "I have no idea what that has to do with me."

Valentin set his lips in a thin line. "That's all I can tell you," he said softly. He jutted his chin towards me. "Shoulder stretches."

I rolled my eyes. Leave it to my mother to save all the wolves and then toss me aside. It was classic Victoria. Though I couldn't help but linger on the thought of becoming the

True Alpha. I wondered if I would ever. become that? Would my power ever match that of my mother's?

"So you asked about fated mates," Valentin cleared his throat. It snapped me out of my thoughts. I nodded. He shifted slightly. "That's another part of wolf history. Fated mated were suppressed by the vampires so never became powerful enough to overcome them.

"When your mother defeated them, an influx of fated mates started to meet. Before, only about one percent of all wolves found their fated mate. Now, nearly ten percent do."

"Wow," I breathed. "And fated mates are supposed to allow you to unlock your deep powers?"

Valentin nodded. "Biceps and triceps," I switched over. "Those who don't have a fated mate, chose their mate. But on every full moon, they have the ability to meet their fated mates."

"On a full moon?" I said, eyebrow raised. "How cliché."

Valentin furrowed his brow as if he didn't understand. He continued regardless. "It's only on the fullest moon of the year," he said. "When the most moonlight reaches the earth beneath us. That's what makes them so rare." "Interesting," I swung my arms across my chest then twisted my neck. twice. "And how can wolves tell that they're fated mates?"

"There are signs before a fullest moon," Valentin said. He walked towards the sparring mat where I swiped Maximus with my nails. I begrudgingly followed as Valentin continued. "It's usually extreme attraction. A sense of love at first sight. Synchronized heart beats that both wolves hear loud in their ears. A primal lust."

Well, I hadn't had any of that.

"But in extreme cases," Valentin said. "There's a burning electricity between the two people."

I swallowed thickly, remembering my experience with Maximus.

"Electricity," I repeated, trying to sound unphased.

"So intense," Valentin. "That it feels like you've been burned."

I remembered the feeling of touching Maximus. The deep fire I felt whenever he touched me. I took a shaky breath as I realized.

Maximus may be my fated mate.

Valentin seemed to sense my internal spiral. He frowned at me. I couldn't tell if he was upset or not. "Have you had this feeling with someone?" he asked.

I opened and closed my mouth, unsure of what to say. "No," I decided on. spit it out quickly and cringed at how fast I said it.

Valentin looked at, trying to size up if I was lying or not. He must've ignored it, regardless, as he continued on with the training. He motioned towards the mat and took a defensive stance.

"Right, so this is the stance you want to be in for sparring," his knees were slightly bent and hands held up at about his chest. "It's a good athletic stance that will allow you to make quick moves towards or away from your opponent."

I nodded in agreement and took the stance to mirror him. Slowly, Valentin started to circle me. I followed in the same step pattern, never crossing my legs and making sure to take quick, precise steps.

Valentin nodded in approval.

"Good," he said. "Now try a jab."

I stepped forward with my leg left and threw my right arm at Valentin.

He blocked it effortlessly with his forearm, pushing my fist towards the ground. I grunted at the strain in my shoulder.

"Too slow," he said. "Any of the High Alphas would've caught your wrist and pinned you to the ground. You have to be faster."

I growled in frustration before I went again, this time with my left fist.

Valentin blocked it again, effortlessly. I grunted again before I tried a third time to throw a punch. I sent me right fist at him then immediately followed it with my left. Valentin blocked both, but my second punch threw off his footing."Good," he said. "Surprise and speed is the thing you have going for you. You'll never outmatch a High Alpha in strength."

I threw another double jab then tried a double jab cross. Valentin nodded in approval. We went back and forth for a few moments before I tripped on one of Valentin's particularly tough crosses and landed on my ass. I "oofed" as I went down. Valentin offered a hand to help me stand up.

I batted it away and got to my feet on my own. I resumed the athletic stance and began circling Valentin again. He smirked slightly at me. I tried to ignore the way it warmed my bones.

“So how do I deal with the hunt?” I said, more so to distract myself. “I see you called them off this morning. But that clearly can’t last forever.’

Valentin blocked my first jab. “It’s a temporary solution,” he countered with a high kick to my bicep. I dodged it with a quick step then countered with a rib punch. He blocked that. “The only way you’ll beat the Hunt is to defeat the one who initiated it.”

“Kairos,” I said and threw another jab. Another block. “How do I beat him?”

“With the way your throwing these punches,” Valentin swatted away my next punch and caught me in the elbow with his cross. “You can’t.

But I told your mother I’d mentor you. Being your mentor means helping you thrive at this school. Not just survive.”

I paused and lowered my arms. “You think I can’t beat him?”

“Guard up,” Valentin said. He took the opportunity to swipe at my legs.

I jumped back and resumed my stance. I threw three quick punches towards him, determined to prove I was strong enough.

“I think you can,” Valentin sounded like he hadn’t even shed a bead of sweat yet. “But not at this stance.” I threw another punch. “I think you underestimate me,” I said. I bought my leg high to try and kick him in the chest. Valentin wrapped his hand around my ankle. He smirked at me, dimpling his right cheek.

” think you underestimate a High Alpha,” he said. He twisted my foot, causing me to lose my balance and stumble.

Lyelped as my back hit the ground. However, I seized the opportunity to jam my elbow into his foet. He grunted in pain and his knee went down next to me. I grabbed the top of his shoulders to try and pull him down more. He wound up on top of me in a very precarious position.

His arms bracketed my head. Our faces were so close, I could hear his. shallow breathing into my mouth. His white-gold eyes were magnificent this close up. A strand of his brown hair fell from behind his ear and lingered between us. Without any second thought, I reached up and swiped it behind his ear.

I flinched slightly as I felt the shock of electricity hit the tips of my fingers. Then, a slow building thrum reached my ears. It sounded like two hearts, going in time. Valentin’s pupils dilated, as if he was hearing the same thing. We locked eyes, my gaze boring into the freckles of gold in his irises.

Lub-dub, lub-dub, lub-dub.

The beating continued at a slow thrum. I let my lips part slightly, a warmth spreading over me in an increasing intensity. Suddenly, every bit of me burned to grab Valentin and bring his lips to mine. I felt thirsty for something I couldn't quench. Just as I was about to smother him, the door to the gym banged open.

I squeaked in shock and rolled out from under Valentin. He was up on his feet by the time I looked back at the door. Standing there, looked pissed as all hell, was the dark-haired woman who'd taunted me before Basics. Her long black hair was tied up in a ponytail that wrapped around her waist."Bella," Valentin said. "You're early."

"Glad I am," she snarled. "Or else I'd miss this little show."

She walked across the gym towards Valentin and I. Any sparks between us were gone as I stood and brushed off my shirt. Bella continued towards the two of us.

"Miss Smith," Valentin said quickly. "I'll contact you later in the week • for another session. For now, you're free to leave."

I tried to catch his eye before leaving but he kept his head down. He ran a hand through his hair, brushing it off his face. I remembered how I did that, just moments ago. My cheeks flared with embarrassment.

I walked quickly towards the door to leave. As soon as I was half way there, Bella started hissing at Valentin. I only caught parts of it as I hustled away.

"I can't stand this, Valentin-"

"Bella, please-"

"Don't do that. You need to make a choice. I won't sit around and wait any longer."

I got to the door of the gym and hid behind it, still listening. I heard Valentin heave a sigh.

"I told you I'd handle it," he said, gently. "Why don't you believe me?"

"If you'd seen what I just saw," Bella snapped. "You wouldn't believe yourself."

There was a thud then a breathy sigh. Valentin's voice dropped low enough that I couldn't discern the words. I took off and ran the entire way back to my room. My heart was thudding deep within my chest the entire time.