

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 14

The rest of the day went by pretty smoothly. Whatever Valentin did held off the wolves for the rest of my day. I went to sleep thinking maybe my first week wouldn't be so terrible.

That thought left my mind on the fourth day of school, a Thursday, when Loren and I were walking to Introduction to High Magicks. It was the only class we had together and Loren was buzzing with excitement.

“High Magicks are so fun!” she squealed. “Unless you're not a High Wolf. Then it's kind of a tease.” I frowned and Loren followed. But then her smile reappeared. “Maybe you're some magick High super-secret.

Alpha!”

Maybe,” I mumbled.

Entirely, my inner voice protested. I ignored her. I looked across the campus. People were seemingly ignoring Loren and I. It felt nice to be a shadow instead of a target. That was, of course, until a blonde wolf jutted into my vision. Her gold eyes were pierced on me.

It was the same wolf who'd cornered me on the first day of the hunt. It looked like she was on the prowl again. Her little posse was close behind her. I nudged Loren and we both picked up pace a little. The wolves followed and soon, all of us were running across campus towards the Magicks building. Loren and I burst through the doors and slammed them behind us.

We heard several snarls from outside. I sighed heavily. Guess the Valentin Lunerly protections were gone.

“Um, Zora,” Loren said. I lifted my head slowly and gasped at what I saw.

My picture was littered around the hall. I don't know how someone found my high school yearbook photo but they did. It was me with pigtails and braces. Wide eyed and smiling. However, the photos on the wall had giant, red “X”s through them. It was if someone had placed a bounty on me and was advertising it across campus.

“Kairos,” I spat. I marched down the hall and into the classroom. Loren scurried behind me, protesting.

“Zora, let's be rational!” she said.

“There is no rationality to this man,” snapped back at her. “Why should I afford him the same behavior?”

I scanned the classroom and sure enough, there he was. In the highest level of the atrium sat Kairos. He was surrounded by Maxius, Thorne, Peytr and another wolf who I hadn't met yet. He was burly with dark red hair and piercing brown-gold eyes.

Ignoring Loren, I marched up to the steps of the atrium and affixed myself right in front of him. I placed my hands on my hips and glared down at him. Kairos seemed to not notice until Petr nudged him gently.

He rolled his neck to look at me, seemingly bored yet annoyed at my presence. He snapped the gum in between his teeth and I thought that it made the same noise as if I snapped his stupid, pretty neck.

"Yes?" he drawled. He snapped his gum again.

"Don't 'yes' me, you asshole," I hissed. Maximus looked up at me as if I shot Kairos. Thorne seemed utterly indifferent. So much for my knight-in-no-armor. I didn't care, I kept going. "I don't know where the fuck you got that picture of me but ! demand you take it down!"

"Demand?" Maximus snapped. "Who crowned you princess?"

Apparently, your ancestors, my inner voice said.

You are the least helpful in these situations, I replied. You know that right? I could've sworn my inner voice shrugged.

And here I was thinking you'd finally come to apologize," Kairos said.

"Apologize?!" My voice cracked with anger. "You almost beat me half to death! You have half the school running around like feral animals trying to kill me. What the fuck should I apologize for?*

"That's the future king you're talking to," Peytr chimed in.

"If the princess chooses him," I threw back. I turned to glare at Kairos. "I doubt she'd want someone this pathetic."

Peytr and the other wolf "ooh"ed then stopped when Kairos turned to glare at them. Slowly, Kairos stood up from his seat. He spat his gum off to the side. It narrowly missed another young wolf. He stood above me and glared down at me with these deep, gold eyes. I tried to not let my fear work its way up my throat. I stood strong and glared back.

"I want this to end," I said sternly. "If I need to kick your ass to do so, I will."

"Kick my ass?" Kairos snorted a laugh. "Good luck, pup."

I cocked my head to the side. "So you don't accept my challenge?"

"It will be anything but a 'challenge'," Maximus mocked from behind

Kairos. "You're wolfless. Kairos is a High Alpha. You're an idiot to fight him."

"Well I'm doing it," I snapped. I looked back at Kairos. "I challenge you to a sparring match. Best two out of three. First round is in two weeks.

If I win, you call off this stupid hunting game and you do one thing for me."

"And when I win?" Kairos said, cocky as ever. "You finally stop being a bitch, and take the knee to the rightful king."

A growl worked its way up my throat. There was no way that was happening. I grit my teeth together and forced out the word. "Fine."

Kairos smirked and took his seat back between Thorne and Maximus. "

See you there, pup."

I turned and stomped back down to where Loren was sitting. Her eyes were wide in fear. I took the seat next to her just as the Professor was walking in the door.

"What did you just agree to?" she whispered.

"Probably my death," I whispered back, honestly, "But at least I'll go out with a bang."

That night, after classes, I snuck off to the gym. Valentin had sent me a note with the code to the lock outside. It was in case I wanted to practice while he was busy. I stayed in the gym for three hours.

I tried, and failed, the run again. But this time, I was closer to the fifteen laps than I was before. Then, exhausted yet burning with anger, I spent the next hour throwing punch after punch at a boxing dummy.

The last thirty minutes, I worked on strengthening my core to be able to absorb the punches better. I had to be quick and sturdy on my feet. I knew if Kairos punched me in my current shape, I'd fly across the room.

In the end, I locked up the gym around eleven thirty. I pulled my hoodie over my head and quickly walked back to my dorm. My eyes kept scanning the area for the blonde wolf with the vendetta against me.

Several times, a stray howl sent me into a half sprint.

I finally got back to the dorm just as someone else was. They also had a hoodie up and pulled it down when they got to the door. The cropped black hair was all I needed to see to know it was Maximus. He leaned against the outside of the dorm, foot propped in the door and waiting for me.

I rolled my eyes when I finally reached him. "I have my own key, you know."

"I know," he replied. "Just wanted to make sure you didn't pass out on my steps again."

I blinked twice. "You were there for that?"

"I was the one who caught you and stopped your head from bouncing off the concrete," he snorted. "You're welcome, by the way."

"My breath caught in my throat. I thought Valentin had caught me. I looked back up at Maximus.

This certainly made things interesting.