

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 16

I let my jaw fall slack. How did he figure it out? Instead of allowing me to say anything, Valentin stepped in front of me. He narrowed his eyes at Maximus.

“Don’t be absurd, Wolfham,” he said, sternly. “Miss Smith is without a wolf. I am only assisting her in attempting to coax it out.”

He looked over his shoulder at me and widened his eyes. Play along, he was saying. Though I doubt Maximus would believe anything I had to say.

“Right,” Maximus snorted. “Good luck with that.”

“Watch your tone, Wolfham,” Valentin snarled. “May I remind you that you’re barging into a private session? Shall I punish you with a detention?”

“Professor,” Maximus apologized. I could sense no remorse in his tone. “It’s half past eight. Basics is to begin in an hour. I reserve the hour before Basics each day.”

Valentin and I jerked our heads towards the large clock at the back of the room. Sure enough, we’d been training for almost two hours. The time had gone by so fast that neither of us had noticed.

Valentin nodded to himself once. “Very well,” he said. “Miss Smith, you are dismissed.” He started off towards the exit at a quicker pace than normal. I followed quickly after him. I needed to know what the hell happened before Maximus walked in.

He darted out of the door just as I was passing Maximus. I felt a tug on my hand and was jolted backwards. I turned towards my assailant but I already knew it was Maximus. I felt the slow electricity warm its way into my arm from his fingers. His beady gold eyes were boring into mine. “You’d do best to stay away from Professor Lunerly,” he snapped.

I yanked my hand but his grip was firm. Damn his strength. I narrowed my eyes at him. “Why? Jealous?”

“No, but I fear you will be,” Maximus said.

“What are you talking about?” I hissed. Then I remembered the last time we trained together. “Oh Bella? I don’t know seems like they were on the fritz”

“What?” Maximus cut me off, face twisted in confusion. “No, Professor Lunerly is a High Alpha. He’s one of the High Alpha Princess’s marriage candidates.”

I stared at him in shock. I was supposed to wed a professor? Let alone by mother’s best friend? My mouth opened and closed like a fish.

Maximus sensed my shock and worked his mouth into a sneer.

“Surprised?” he snapped. “Whatever he’s told you is a lie. He’s not interesting in anything about you. He’s could be King. Getting involved with him will lead you nowhere.”

I finally had enough of Maximus’s bullshit. I ripped my arm from his grasp. My skin burned from the contact. I glared at him before I started to walk away.

“I hope he’s the King,

“I snapped. “He sure as hell would be a better king than you.”

Maximus said nothing as I left the gym. I saw Valentin’s outline walking across the campus, towards the admissions building. I broke into a sprint to catch up to him. I was surprised at how much energy I had left after a whole training session.

I skidded to a stop in front of him, cutting him off and making him jump in surprise. He stood blankly in front of me, eyebrows knitted together. Anger coursed through me.

“What the fuck?” I snapped.

Valentin blinked. “Pardon?”

“Why didn’t you tell me you my fourth marriage candidate?”

Valentin sighed and pushed his hair off his head. “I assume Mr.

Wolfham told you,”

“Maximus told me the princess is supposed to marry you,” I said sharply. Then I dropped my voice to a whisper yell. “Unbeknownst to him, I am that fucking princess!”

“I should’ve known none of those idiots would keep their mouths shut,” Valentin said. He sounded exhausted. “Look, Zora, I have no intentions of making you my bride.”

I bristled. Firstly, that he said my name again. It sounded so elegant on his lips. Secondly, that he said it so casually.

“Why not?” I snapped. I didn’t know if I should’ve been offended.

Valentin’s lips set in a thin line. He looked off behind me then sighed before bringing his white-gold eyes back to mine.

“Your mother chose me as a potential candidate before you were even born,” he said softly. “She did it as a favor to me. She said I’d been instrumental in overthrowing the

vampires. She wanted me to reap the benefits. As the rest of the High Alpha packs would be doing.

However, I was the last of my pack. The only one able to ascend the throne. I agreed out of respect for your mother. But I never tended to accept.”

“So, all the helping me? Training me?” I snapped. “Is for what?

Funesies?”

“Funesies? Zora, no,” Valentin shook his head again. “You’re my best friend’s daughter. My queen’s daughter. I care for you and want you to succeed.” He locked eyes with me and shook his head again. “But I am not the one who you will marry. Nor should I be

I bit down on my lip, hard, to keep the tears from welling in my eyes.

For the first time since someone told me I had to get married, I finally felt hopeful. Valentin was kind, gentle and helpful. He was nothing like the others. But he didn’t want me. The rejection felt like a bucket of ice water had been dumped over my head.

Once again, I felt hopeless.

I dropped my head to the floor and wrapped my arms around me.

Valentin’s hand twitched slightly, as if meant to touch me. But he let it, fall back to his side instead of reaching out,

“I’m sorry,” he said softly. He walked passed me and up the stairs of the admissions building.

My head was going a mile a minute. His touches, his voice. The way wed just felt in the gym.

The gym.

All the various signs that Valentin had told me about fated mates. The electricity, the overconsuming lust. The thrumming in the back of my head. It was perfectly in time with my own heartbeat. It couldn’t have been possible but now knew, that it very much was.

I whipped around. “Wait!” I shouted up the stairs. Valentin stopped and glanced over his shoulder at me. I made sure to lock my eyes with him.

I gestured to the gym with my hand.

“So, that,” I said, voice shaking. “Meant nothing to you? Meant nothing to either of us?” Valentin looked away from me. He licked the front of his teeth before he shook his head.

“You didn’t hear,” I continued, still shaky. “Your heartbeat moving in time with mine?” Valentin snapped his gaze back to mine. His pupils had dilated, swelling with something as he looked at me. His bottom lip twitched once before he looked back down at the floor again.

“Get to class, Miss Smith,” he whispered before he turned on his heel and walked away from me. Then, I was alone once again.