

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 18

My heart thudded in my chest. Did he know who I truly was? Was he telling me that through dark eyes and a locked jaw. I had to come up with something and fast. I shoved his chest. Then, I panicked when I remembered what usually happened when I touched him.

But there was no electricity this time. Even more surprising, my shove managed to push Maximus away from me and the tree. He looked at me with wide eyes, full of the same surprise I was feeling. He rubbed at his chest.

“Don’t mess around with me,

” I said, softly. “Your jokes aren’t funny.”

“They’re supposed to be,” Maximus said. He still was rubbing at his chest. It was if he was trying to convince himself that he was joking.

We both knew that he was somewhat serious.

I started towards the exit of the forest. I half expected Maximus to chase me. But he stood there, hand still on his chest, staring off absently. I took that as my chance to take off. I left him in the forest as I continued my run.

The whole time I ran back to campus, I couldn’t help but think about how complicated this mate stuff was. I decided then that I didn’t care about it. I couldn’t care about it. I had far bigger pressing issues. Like Kairos trying to kill me for one.

I didn’t have time to fall for any man, let alone wonder if one of them was falling for me. I kept my head down the entire rest of my run back to my dorm. I tried to flush away the images of all the golden eyes I’d seen locked on me today.

I managed a quick shower and core workout before I went to Basics.

Because I hadn’t passed the run, most of my training was focused on speed and endurance. Everyone else was focused on strength and sparring but Coach kept me on the track, running laps and trying to slim down my pace.

At the end of the class, I didn’t feel as exhausted as I thought I would’ve been, given the immense amount of training I had done that morning. But I sure as shit was hungry. I walked to the cafeteria myself as Loren had a second-year class after Basics that I wasn’t able to attend.

I kept my head down in the cafeteria and sat as far away from Kairos * and his henchmen as possible. I did see them looking across their table at me a few times, but I quickly averted my gaze.

As I was returning my tray, I felt a light hand on my shoulder. I whipped around, dropping into the stance Valentin had taught me. The woman standing in front of me held her hands up.

“Woah, woah!” she said. “I come in peace, promise.”

I stood back up straight. “Sorry,” I said, walking away so everyone else could deposit their trays. “Force of habit.”

The girl laughed. She had dark, curly hair. Her curls were much sleeker than my unruly red ones. I figured they were probably fake, woven into her hair rather than waking up with them. She had similar shiny purple eyes to Loren. Hers were more blue purple than true purple. She smiled light at me.

“Zora, right?” she said. “I’m Megra. But you can call me Meg. You ran third string behind me for the Run.”

“Oh,” I said. “Hi.”

“Hi,” Meg laughed. “I just wanted to say I’m really impressed by you.”

“Oh?” I said, again. I started towards the door, hoping that Meg wouldn’t follow me out into campus. Something about her threw me off. It felt forced. Unfortunately, she kept walking with me. She held the door open for me and I ducked outside.

“Yeah,” Meg continued. “I mean you’re the first wolfless I’ve seen come that close to finishing the run. Were you an athlete in the human world?”

“Sort of,” I mumbled. God, why couldn’t she take the hint.

“That’s cool!” she said. Again, so forced and so fake. “Well, I just wanted to let you know that we were having a get together before Mateball. If you wanna come hang just let me know!”

I stopped and furrowed my brows. “Mateball?”

Meg stopped as well. She smacked her hand to her face. “Shit, sorry,” she said. “I should’ve figured you didn’t know what Mateball was.

“Didn’t you grow up in the human world as well.”

“I did,” I replied, tentative as to what her point was.

“Right,” Meg went on. “So Mateball happens on the night of the fullest moon. This year, it happens to be at the beginning of the semester. It’s the time where everyone dresses up and attends the dance to try and find their fated mate, you know what that is right?”

My face fell. Great. More mate bullshit. I nodded once.

“It’s really important,” Meg expressed. “Further more, it’s really fun!

Sometimes the older guys slip a little booze into the punch then it really gets the party going.”

I cringed. Sounded awful. “Yeah,” I said pushing past Meg. “No thanks.”

I started to leave when Meg stepped in front of me. She gave me a knowing smirk. “You know,” she said, as if she knew something I didn’t.

“I see the way Maximus Wolfham looks at you.” “Like he wants to kill me?” I humorlessly-laughed. “Don’t tell me you think that’s flirting?”

“No, no,” Meg shook her head. “But really, he’s made eyes at you when you’re not looking. He was staring at you all morning at Basics.”

Yeah cause we finally had enough strength to push him off me and he felt threatened, My inner voice said. rignored her. She really needed to learn to shut up.

“I don’t think-”

“He’s never brought anyone to the Mateball,” Meg cut me off. “Just saying, maybe you could be his first?”

I shook my head at her. “Isn’t he like in the running to become King?” | said. “Why the hell would he give anyone else attention?”

Meg shrugged. She looked down at her perfectly manicured nails. ” don’t know,” she said. She looked up at me again with that stupid knowing smirk. “Maybe he’s looking for a bit of fun.”

“Not to be rude,” I said sharply. I started to walk away. “But I think your overanalyzing this.”

“I think you’re under analyzing,” Meg drawled. I paused in my walk and turned back to narrow my eyes at her.

“I don’t know what your goal is here,” I sneered. “But I will not be going to the Mateball with some as arrogant and pretentious as Maximus Wolfham. The guy is a total dick and not someone I’d like to associate with.”

Meg burst into laughter. She turned her shoulders to face the doors of the cafeteria. It was right as Maximus was leaving.

“Oh, brother,” she called. My blood ran cold. She turned back to me with a sick smirk. It was the same one I’d seen on Maximus’s face earlier. “I have some terrible news for you.”

Maximus

Maximus heard his name being called as soon as he left the cafeteria.

He thought it was one of the younger guys, trying to get his attention to do something stupid. He was surprised to see his sister standing in front of me.

With Zora.

His mood immediately turned sour. She’d left him in the forest a few hours ago, after sending her first into his chest and sending a bolt of electricity across his body. She, though seemed unphased. It left him with more questions than he had answers.

Seeing her standing there, in her little shorts and her baggy tee shirt, red curls wild around her face, he couldn’t help but feel angrier. Why was he attracted to such a mess of a wolf?

More so, a wolfless wolf.

He walked towards Zora and Meg. Just as he was about to approach them, Zora whispered something then stomped away. Max stopped with a sigh in front of Meg.

“What now?” he said as he rubbed the bridge of his nose.

“She thought I was fucking with her,” Meg stated, matter of factly. “I tried to test the waters and see if she’d go to the Mateball with you.”

“Why the fuck would you do that?” Maximus growled. “I told you to stay out of it.”

Meg turned and crossed her arms across her chest stubbornly. “I’m trying to help, you know,” she snapped. “Maybe if been kinder to her in the beginning, instead of acting your vendetta against the wolfless, you wouldn’t be in the situation.” “How was I supposed to know,” Max gritted from his teeth. “That she was going to be my fated mate.”

Meg shrugged. She patted her brother on the shoulder gently before walking off. “Figure it out, baby brother,” she drawled. “Lest you ruin your chance at happiness, again.”

Maximus growled at her as she walked away. He felt the wolf within him pushing at his bones, wanting him to shift and hunt. He ignored it and turned back towards where Zora

had walked off. She was still stomping away back toward her dorm – their dorm. He considered following her but gave up.

He ran a hand through his hair and sighed again. He looked up at the sky and pleaded to the Gods to help him make things right with Zora.

The first time he'd been shocked by her, he was appalled. Disgusted even. He had spent his entire adult life bringing the wolfless down. He had a goal. It was one he promised to his eldest brother, Morrigan, as he went through countless surgeries and physical therapy to recover his missing arm.

Destroy all wolfless.

He'd spent the rest of the day trying to convince himself that there had to be a mistake. There was no way a wolfless could have been his fated mate. He was the strongest third year at the Academy. And she, well, she was nothing.

But then, she touched him again and he touched her. And their heartbeats were thrumming in his head like a warning bell. He had to recognize that she was his fated mate. That's why he followed her out in the woods that morning, to tell her so and try and convince her he wasn't all that bad.

Instead, he wound up looking like an idiot with his dick in his hand after she gave him a surprise punch. He sighed again and broke out of his angry daydreams. He had to prove to Zora that he was worthy of being his fated mate.

Fuck whomever the Princess he was supposed to be married to was.

He had a chance at being with the one who could make him happiest, and strongest. The Queen would have to be understanding.

He needed to get Zora to go to Mateball with him.

But he'd never invited a girl to anything, let alone Mateball. The girls + he'd dated had all thrown themselves at him, concerned only with his title of Son of the High Alpha. He wracked his brain as to which of his friends he could go to advice for.

Peytr was his first option but Peytr was a dick. He treated women like objects. Maximus had no desire to treat anyone like that, let alone his fated mate.

Thorne was the next option but Thorne cared about little about women.

He'd had less girls around than Maximus. Thorne was more concerned with Magicks and History books than girls.

His final option was Kairos. It was, arguably, the worst option. Kairos loathed Zora. They were supposed to be battling it out on the sparring mat in a few weeks. But Kairos was always asking girls on dates or to events. If Maximus could make sure that Kairos never found out his date was Zora, asking for Kairos's advice may have been worth it.

With yet another sigh, Max cursed the Gods one last time before taking off towards Kairos's room.

Kairos lived by himself in a house that Petr, Thorne and Maximus rented behind the gym. It was an old house that Kairos's grandfather had purchased when his first grandchild attended Alpha Academy.

Kairos was the last to go through the school. It was a no brainer than he and his friends would take the house for their tenure.