

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 51

The blurred voices around me stab through the darkness. At first, they're muffled and I can only make out a few words around garbled yelling. I tried to protest. I didn't trust any of those people in that house. I tried to pull out of whoever's grasp I was in. My hands were covered and set back in my lap.

There's another flash and then the voices were louder, more clear. But my vision was still dark as night, keeping me shrouded away.

"You asked me to invite her so you could show her a good time. Tell me this is not what you meant?!"

Alessia. She was angry. Screaming, actually.

"I didn't know this was his plan!" Another voice. Deeper and still familiar yet not one I'd spoken with myself. "He literally just asked me to make sure you invited her. Said it was important."

"Gods fucking damn it, Petyr!" Alessia again. Petyr must have been the lower voice. "Trying to fucking assault her is not showing her a good time. You should be ashamed!"

"I am!" Petyr snapped back. "This is disgusting behavior. In my own bathroom too!"

"Fuck your bathroom!" Alessia shrieked. "This is about more than your fucking bathroom! You're lucky I'm not going to the Headmaster."

There was a pause. The air in the room felt thick with tension and something else. Sweat? Terror?

"You should," Petyr finally said. His voice was softer, almost a whisper. "He was out of line. I don't want him in my house anymore. Let alone my fucking school. He's a disgrace to wolves everywhere."

Alessia scoffed. "Something we finally fucking agree on."

I slipped into the darkness once again. A few muffled voices surrounded me. One was definitely Loren's, shrieking with panic. The words faded in and out of focus. I tried blinking but was met with only darkness. I was vaguely aware of hands up my back and legs. Someone was carrying me.

"—will it wear off? This is horrible," Loren's voice faded in. "I can't believe I let her go somewhere alone. I'm a terrible friend. This is insane. I—"

"Moonbeam," A lower voice. Maximus? He sounded deadly calm. "Panicking about it now isn't going to help. We got her. She just needs to sleep it off."

“So it will wear off?” I could hear the nervousness in her voice. “I’ve only heard of people using wolfsbane on prisoners. You never hear what happens to them after.”

Wolfsbane.

That’s what had made me feel so loopy. I wasn’t drunk; I was drugged.

I knew nothing about wolfsbane other than that it was deadly to humans. I couldn’t imagine what kind of damage it would do to a wolf. I started to panic and stirred in Maximus’s arms. I tried to force words out of my mouth but they came out garbled and slurred.

“Shh,” Maximus adjusted me in his arms. “I’ve got you, love. You’ll be okay.”

It was the last thing I heard before I slipped back into the darkness again.

I felt light piercing my eyelids. I slowly opened my eyes then slammed them back shut when I was blinded by what appeared to be sunlight. I hissed and curled into myself. There was a soft fabric under my head. I burrowed into it. I groaned deeply, trying to remember what happened.

All I remembered was getting drinks with Loren at the party. Then, everything seemed to be a far-off memory. Like a dream I’d forgotten. I groaned again as I felt the pounding sensation in my skull. Was I hungover?

“Easy,” a voice said, softly. “I’ll close the curtains. Your eyes still may be sensitive.”

“Are,” I mumbled into the pillow I’d burrowed myself into. The bright light faded significantly, and I tried to open my eyes again. My lids felt like lead weights over them.

Very, very slowly, my vision came back to me. It started with a mess of shapes, blurred around the edges then melted into colors and shapes I could recognize. I was in a dorm room. A man’s at that, judging by the lack of décor.

There was only one bed, presumably the one I was in, and a dresser. I groaned again as I swept the room. My head continued to throb. There was a person sitting at the desk in the room. Their outline was the only thing I could discern at that point. It was familiar yet still blurry.

“What ‘appened?” I mumbled.

A pause.

“There was an incident,” the voice said. Masculine. Incredibly familiar too. “You’re okay now. You’re safe.”

“Max?” I mumbled. My voice sounded foreign to my ears.

The figure nodded. Slowly, Maximus came into focus. He sat hunched in his desk chair. His face was pale, deep purple bags under his eyes. He looked utterly exhausted. His usually short, cropped hair had grown out a bit. Half of it was sticking up on end as if he had been dragging his hand through it. He gave me a half smile that was laced with nothing but happiness.

“Hi,”

“Hi,” I rasped out. I pushed myself to sit up then groaned as my head started throbbing again. I threw it into my hands. “I feel like I got run over by a bus.”

Maximus didn't laugh. I turned my head to look at him. His smile was completely gone. Suddenly, there was nothing funny about my hangover. I lifted my head and blinked at him.

“What happened?” I asked quietly.

“You were drugged,” Max choked out. “Wolfsbane. While it didn't kill you, it inebriated you enough that you seemed severely drunk.”

I blinked again. “Oh,” I couldn't wrap my head around what was happening. “Then what happened?”

Maximus shifted uncomfortably. His jaw was set, teeth grinding together in rage. I could almost hear the noise from across the room.

“We found you in Petyr's bathroom,” he grit out. “With Stefan Jackell. A second-year alpha.”

I blushed. I was suddenly embarrassed, for some reason. Not that I had any recollection of the moment. But then, it dawned on me. I had no recollection. I had no idea I'd been with him. My heart started beating erratically.

“What did he do to me?” I choked out.

“Nothing,” Maximus said quickly. “I stopped him before anything happened. Jackell was trying to get back at you for Kairos. For some reason, he seemed to think Kairos would approve of such an assault.”

I'd never felt that small in my life. I curled in on myself in my bed. Suddenly, Kairos's threats of death seemed like a better fate than whatever it was that the other Alpha was planning to do to me.

I felt helpless, laying in Maximus's bed. Tears pricked my eyes, but I fought them back. I wouldn't show weakness. I couldn't. They already saw me as weak enough to do whatever it is they were going to do. I drew in a shakey breath.

Maximus immediately jumped up and rushed over to me. He knelt next to the bed and tried to grab my hand in his. I yanked it away.

“Don’t,” I snapped.

Max looked like I’d shot him. “Zora-“

“No!” I yelled back at him. “This is all yours and Kairos’s fault! You both saw me as weak and told the others to capitalize on it. This is all your doing and now you’re trying to comfort me as if it wasn’t!”

Maximus’s frown turned into a snarl. “I didn’t do shit,” he snapped. “I didn’t set the hunt on you. Kairos did. I didn’t send people out to attack you. Kairos did that too. I tried to help you, if you remember.”

He reared back from me, utterly livid. “Furthermore, I would never condone the assault of a woman,” he hissed. “Nor would Kairos, if you were wondering. What Jackell did was of his own regard trying to get in with Kairos’s good graces. I saved you from that dickwad, not let him continue having his way.”

I flinched at the thought. Maximus’s face fell back into a neutral expression. He slowly reached out and grabbed my hand. I’m sorry,” he said softly.

“Thank you,” I bit out. “For saving me. For everything else, the jury is still out.”

Max looked like he was about to say something. He was cut off by a sharp rap on the door. Neither of us moved. I glanced towards the door then back at Max. He held my gaze.

“Fuck off,” he grunted.

The door slammed open and into the wall behind it. I flinched in Max’s bed, grabbing the blankets to cover myself. My eyes nearly popped out of my head as I saw who’d barged in.

Valentin Lunerly, headmaster of Alpha Academy, was seeing me in Maximus’s bed.

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If Valentin had any thoughts of whether or not I’d slept with Maximus, he didn’t show it. Instead, he stared blankly at me.

“Miss Smith,” he addressed me formally. “I didn’t know you were in here. I apologize.”

I could only stare back at him in silence as his eyes bore into mine. Then, he snapped his gaze from me to look at Maximus. “Mr. Wolfham,” he stated. “I believe you a part of the incident last night. The elder Miss Moonbeam notified me of such.” Max nodded curtly and Valentin repeated the action. He sighed deeply. “Then, please, if you would come to my office for a statement.”

“I will after I get Zora back to her room,” Max replied, motioning to where I was, still curled under his covers. Valentin gave a sickly sweet smile. It utterly terrified me. Max, however was unphased.

“I believe Miss Smith lives next door, does she not?” Valentin said. His pressed his lips together, giving Max the most insincere smile I’d ever seen. “I think she can walk herself home.”

Max said nothing to Valentin. They were both stared daggers into each other’s eyes. Then Max slowly turned to me. His harshness dropped completely.

“Is that okay?” he said, softer than the way he looked at Valentin. “I don’t want to leave you alone if you’re not comfortable.” “I’m fine,” I said, barely above a whisper. I looked towards Valentin. “He’s caught right?”

“Yes,” Valentin assured. “Sitting in the campus holding cell as we speak.”

I looked back at Max. “I’ll be fine then,” I gave him a soft smile. “Really.”

Maximus nodded then stood up. He wordlessly followed Valentin out of his room. Before the door slammed shut, he sent me one last look to make sure I was okay. I gave him another forced smile before the door shuddered closed.

As soon as I heard both men walk downstairs, I burst into tears. I threw my body back into Max’s bed and let the sobs overcome me. I had no idea how to process what had happened to me last night. Nor did I know how to process Max’s reaction or Valentin’s oddly protective nature.

None of it made sense. It was all tearing my brain to shreds. I couldn’t believe someone would go as far as to drug me then try to –

I couldn’t finish the sentence. I didn’t want to believe how close to a possibility it could’ve become. I wiped my hand across the bottom of my nose and blotted away my tears. I slunk out of my bed and into the hallway.

When I got into my room, it was empty. I immediately shed myself of the promiscuous outfit that Loren gave me. I went into my bathroom and scrubbed my skin until it was red and raw.

Yet I still felt dirty.

When I emerged, I was wrapped in a hug almost immediately. I gasped but then relaxed when I saw the flurry of white hair under my chin. I burst into tears again.

Loren pulled me over to my desk chair and sat me down, smoothing my hair as she went. She babbled at me as she checked me for injuries.

“I’m so sorry Zora. I thought you were okay and I should’ve known. I should’ve I’m so sorry and I can’t ever forgive myself and thank Gods that Maximus was there and Alessia and I just—”

Then Loren started on her own set of tears and wrapped me back in a bear hug. The two of us sat uncomfortably in my desk chair, crying into each other’s hair for more than I could measure. Finally, I pulled back and laughed, humorlessly.

“I’m still in my towel,” I sniffed.

Loren sniffled too and finally let go of me. “I probably should’ve let you get dressed before I grabbed you.”

“No,” I blotted my tears with the edge of my towel. “I needed it.”

Loren nodded and then left my grasp. She went and grabbed her own chair and pulled it closer to my chair. She held both of my hands in her own.

“How do you feel?”

“Numb,” I replied. “Scared. I don’t even think those words explain it all. I’m just like in shock, I guess.”

“Understandable,” Loren murmured. “Have you spoke with Lunerly yet?”

I shook my head no and Loren gnawed on her lip. “Did anyone tell you what happened?”

“Maximus a little,” I whispered. I paused. “Loren. What did I do wrong?”

“Nothing, love,” she said, running a hand over my head. “You did nothing. Nothing to deserve this and nothing wrong to get to this.”

“What happened?” I asked, slamming my eyes shut. It was if I was trying to hide from the answer.

Loren sighed so deeply, her shoulders rose and fell. “After you went to the bathroom,” she started, voice small. “You were gone for a while. So, I went to look for you. I tried the bathrooms on the main floor first and couldn’t find you anywhere. I saw sissy and asked her to help me. We searched Kairos and Maximus’s bathroom, then we ran into Maximus outside Petyr’s bathroom.”

She stopped for a second, her lip quivering as she fought to not cry. She sniffed once then continued.

“He had Stefan Jackell, that second-year from magiks, against a wall,” she sniffed again. “He was – he was punching him so hard there were dents in the wall. Then we looked on the floor and – and –“

She broke into sobs again. I reached out and grabbed her shoulders. “Hey,” I said, quietly. “I’m okay. I’m here. Maximus said he caught it before anything happened.”

“I – I know,” Loren said, hysteric. “But you we’re so –“

She flinched violently and I rubbed her shoulders again. She cried a bit more before wiping her tears and continuing the story.

“Max picked you up and we took you to Petyr’s room,” she said. “Alessia was furious. Apparently, Jackell had asked Petyr to ask sissy to invite you. She was furious at Petyr, thinking he had something to do with it. But he was in just as much shock as we were.”

I nodded. It was a relief to know that Alessia was watching out for me. It was also a relief that Petyr didn’t hate me as much as I thought he did.

“Maximus took you back to his room,” Loren finished. “He didn’t want to leave you alone. Sissy and I went to wake up Lunerly. He immediately had security grab Jackell. He questioned us for the rest of the night. I only got home just now.”

I hummed. “Thank you,” I whispered. “Really. If you didn’t look for me I don’t—”

I paused. I knew what would have happened had she not looked for me. I licked the front of my teeth then gave her a sad smile. “Just,” I sighed. “Thank you.”

“What are friends for,” Loren whispered back.

I stood up and walked to my closet. I pulled the biggest sweatshirt I could find out and a pair of matching pants. I threw both on then hung my towel. I combed my curls out, frowning when I remembered how beautiful and straight it had looked the night before.

I gave Loren one last suffocating hug before I left the room and headed to Headmaster Lunerly’s office.

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The walk to Valentin’s office was longer and quieter than it’d been before. All of campus seemed to be eerily quiet, as if the entire school was ashamed of last night’s actions. There were a few stragglers out in the early morning, walking home from whatever or wherever they’d

ended up. They looked like zombies. I couldn't help but wonder if they thought I looked like one of them, wrapped in someone else's clothes.

I shuddered at the thought.

I ascended the large stone stairs up to the doors of the admissions building. Given that it was a Sunday morning, the building was empty. The echo of my slippers against the marble floor sent a chill down my spine. I hurried to Valentin's office. I knocked gently before hearing a mumble behind the door. I let myself in and tried to act less skittish than I felt.

Inside was a mess.

There were papers everywhere, some with the official Alpha Academy crest, some with the crest of the Queen. They were scattered all over Valentin's desk with random pamphlets and inserts that had bold words like "Wedding!" and "Perfect!" on them. I tried not to cringe as I saw them.

Valentin sat in the chair behind his desk. His head was in his hands. His usually put together appearance was completely disheveled. His long brown hair was stringy and frizzy. His shirt was unbuttoned down to his sternum, sleeves pushed up and wrinkled as they folded around his elbows. He looked up at me and I saw the deep bags under his eyes.

It was a complete one-eighty from the way he'd appeared that morning in Maximus's room. The usually put together professor seemed to be falling apart. I had to keep my arms pinned at my sides to stop myself from reaching out and touching him.

He needs you, my wolf thought softly.

I needed him, I threw back, though it had not bite. And he made it clear that he didn't want me.

She whined in the back of my mind but then went quiet. It was like she knew we'd been rejected.

Valentin motioned to the chair in front of his desk. I slunk down into it, wrapping my arms around myself in a subconscious effort to try and keep myself safe. Valentin sighed and leaned back in his chair. He pressed his thumb and forefinger into his brow bone.

"What do you remember?" he asked softly.

"Nothing," I replied. "I remember getting a drink then everything else is black."

Valentin nodded then dropped his hand. "Your mother is going to be horrified,"

"I think everyone is," I retorted quietly.

"Agreed," Valentin licked the front of his teeth then sat up. "You had wolfsbane in your body."

"I know," I said. "Maximus told me."

“That seemed to light a fire in Valentin. He sat up straight, flames licking his gold eyes. His entire body went rigid but when he spoke, there was no malice, only words.

“Yes, I assumed something happened between you two,” He shuffled around some of the papers on his desk. “At least one positive from this awful event is you’ve accepted a suitor. Your mother will be pleased to hear that.”

I blinked at him then it hit me. My lips curled back as rage set itself in my bones.

“I didn’t sleep with Maximus,” I snapped. “He took me home from that horrible party and took care of me while the Moonbeams found you. He helped me. Not that any of that is your fucking business anyways.”

Valentin’s jaw twitched. He narrowed his eyes and glared at me. “Watch your tone, Princess,” he snapped. “While I am friends with your mother, I am still the headmaster of this school and deserve to be treated as such.”

“Then treat me like a student,” I bit back. “And not the girl you let walk away from you despite your feelings for her.” Valentin and I stared at one another for a moment. He looked pissed and I knew I wasn’t exactly happy. He had no right to be jealous. He let me walk away from him. He said no. Not me. Furthermore, the fact that he knew I was drugged and still thought I’d crawl into someone else’s bed after ... that happened to me was insinuating something I had no desire to pursue further. Finally, he sat back in his seat with a huff. His hand went to press into his temple like he had a horrible headache. Mine was starting back up.

“Wolfsbane,” he started, then cleared his throat when his word came out raspy. “Is deadly against humans. It’s not as deadly against a wolf, but it will impair all your senses and leave you in a sluggish state where you don’t have much control over your limbs. I’m told it feels a bit like being drunk.”

I nodded, curtly and Valentin continued.

“I don’t know how Jackell procured some as it’s been banned in our country,” he rubbed harder at his head. “But I’ve alerted the authorities about such. And about his—” Valentin’s jaw ticked. “—attempted assault on you. They’ll be by to arrest him in the morning.”

“Arrest him?” I repeated.

Valentin blinked at me. “Is that not an arrestable offense in the human world?”

I shifted. “Yes,” I said slowly. “But shouldn’t there be a trial.”

“What is there to try?” Valentin snapped. “He had wolfsbane in his room, a banned substance in wolf territory. Furthermore, Wolfham broke up his attempt to attack you. The evidence is damning.”

“I guess I don’t know how the judiciary system for wolves works,” I bit out. I was beginning to grow frustrated. Valentin tipped his chin and glared down at me. He set his lips in a hard, thin line and I watched his jaw clenching and unclenching. It was like he was fighting himself to not say something. He stood up and walked around his desk. He put one hand on it then leaned over me.

I shivered with how close he was. Something about me still ached for him.

“There’s a lot you don’t know, Princess,” he whispered. His lips were far from the shell of my ear but I still felt the hair on the back of my neck stand up. My throat arched away from him as the whimper escaped from my throat.

Both of us jolted back in shock. I abruptly stood from my chair. Valentin’s eyes had gone dark. My heart was thudding in my chest as I felt the voice of my wolf in the back of my head.

Go to him, she demanded. He needs you.

“Get out,” Valentin choked out.

I did as I was told, spinning on my heel and pushing out of his office in a flurry. As I left, the door slammed shut. Then, the sound of wood breaking echoed through the empty half of the admissions building.

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 54

The few days after my attack were somber, as expected.

The Monday after, I went to breakfast and was the topic of discussion yet again. Though, this time, everyone seemed to be eyeing me with pained looks instead of menacing glares. I swallowed thickly especially when Loren rubbed my back reassuringly.

I sat at my normal table, glancing out at Kairos’s table. I expected him to be glaring at me but his head was cast down, unflinching and sullen. I ate my breakfast and ran off to classes, hiding in the back of the classrooms the whole day.

Tuesday morning, Thorne approached Loren and I at breakfast. He sat down at our table without a word. Loren stopped speaking mid-sentence to shoot him a look. He ignored it.

“Zora, I-” Thorne started before swallowing. “I’m so sorry.”

He looked at me with earnest regret in his dark gold eyes. I blinked at him, expecting his look of pity to melt away into anger. But it didn’t, he still was sitting there; pale and sad.

“I should’ve been there,” he said, quietly. “I’m your Knight. It’s my job to protect you. I was at the party. It was at my fucking house I mean-“

He stopped himself and shook his head, as if to keep himself from getting worked up. He gently reached across the table and touched the back of my hand.

“I should’ve been there,”

“It’s fine Thorne,” I said softly, withdrawing my hand so he could no longer reach it. Before it got out of his grasp he stood up and caught it. The sudden movement made me flinch.

Thorne let go reluctantly. “Sorry,” he mumbled. “You probably don’t want to be touched.”

I gave him a sad smile then ducked my head back towards my food. Thorne didn’t leave. Then, someone cleared their throat from next to me. I jerked my gaze up to see Maximus standing near the end of the table. His hair was cropped close to his skull again. His eyebrow was raised in question at Thorne.

“Can I help you Blythwitch?” he grunted.

“No, you can’t,” Thorne threw back. “Because I was talking to Zora.”

“Noted,” Maximus said with equally as much malice. He sat down at the table across from Loren. The two of us looked at each other, blinking in surprise. Loren glanced between Thorne and Maximus.

“Wow,” she breathed. “Never thought I’d see more than two people at this table. Now we have four!”

“Three,” Maximus corrected before digging into his breakfast. He gestured vaguely towards our second new table member.” Thorne was just leaving.”

Thorne turned to glare at Maximus but the bigger Alpha didn’t seem to care. He went about himself, spooning his oatmeal into his mouth as if nothing had happened. Thorne let out a grumbling noise of frustration before standing up from the table. He gave me a final pained look.

“I’ll be around if you need me,” he said to me.

Before I could open my mouth to protest, Maximus cut me off.

“She won’t,” He replied. “Thanks though.”

Thorne glared down at Maximus before giving me one last incredulous look. He stalked back to the table where Kairos was sitting. Neither Kairos nor Petyr seemed to acknowledge his return.

I turned towards Maximus with a smug look on my face. “I don’t need you to speak for me,” I snapped.

Maximus shrugged and continued eating. He ignored Loren and I for the rest of breakfast, only interjecting to say goodbye as he finished. After he left, Loren raised her eyebrows at me. I huffed and looked at her.

“What’re you thinking?”

“Awfully protective, don’t ya think?” she mused before shoving her yogurt covered spoon into her mouth.

“He’s just looking out for me,” I mumbled.

Loren hummed in amusement.

The next day, Maximus sat with us at breakfast again. Thorne didn’t bother coming over but I did see him twist his face in anger when he saw Maximus was. It was the same as the day before, minimal conversation unless addressed and he only interjected to say goodbye.

By Thursday, it was the third time Maximus had joined us for breakfast.

When he sat his tray down across from me, I stopped what I was saying to Loren to purse my lips at him. He looked at me like he was waiting for my question.

“So you eating with us every day now?” I asked.

Maximus shrugged, the blasé bastard. “Do you not want me to?”

“I didn’t say that,” I quipped back.

I’d noticed that since Max had started sitting with us, the other students seemed to ignore or avoid me altogether. It was a nice change from the stares or glares. I didn’t mind Maximus sitting with us, if I didn’t suspect there was some weird ulterior motive.

“So what’s the issue?” Maximus continued.

“There isn’t one,” I grit out from my teeth, frustrated as hell. “Just want to know why the sudden change.”

Maximus sat his spoon down to look me directly in the eyes. I’d almost forgot how piercing his stare was. It shook me down to my core.

“You’ve been fucked with enough, don’t you think?” he said, plainly.

I opened and closed my mouth like a fish, unable to speak. “I-“

“I agree,” Maximus dropped his gaze back to his food and continued to eat. He grabbed a grape then held it up to look at me again. “And clearly, your ‘knight’ isn’t doing much about it. So, I’ve stepped in to fill the gaps.”

I scowled at him. “You told me weakness was a plague.”

“It is,” Maximus threw the blueberry in his mouth. His jaw moved as he chewed it, Adam’s apple bobbing as he swallowed. ” So, I’ll start training you this weekend. But until then, I’ll serve as a warning sign.”

He shot me a half smirk, clearly amused with himself. He plucked another grape and popped it in his mouth. The smirk was still burned on his face. He swallowed again then spoke.

“Warning: the dog bites.”

“I do not need some guard dog!” I snapped. “I am perfectly capable of taking care of myself!”

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By Friday, Stephen Jackell had been officially expelled from Alpha Academy.

It sparked a new slew of whispers towards me in the cafeteria. However, as soon as Maximus resumed his seat at mine and Loren’s table, a silence fell over the cafeteria. Maximus ate in silence again and then told me to meet him at the outdoor track at eight the next morning.

When the sun rose on Saturday, both Loren and I were awake. Loren was buzzing with excitement, and I was twitchy with anxiety. What would a training session look like with Maximus? Would I get the same buzzes of electricity I had when we’d sparred before? Or when I’d trained with Valentin?

No, no, I corrected myself. Valentin was my fated mate. No one had two fated mates.

Would it be so wrong if you did? My wolf mused. I completely ignored her.

Loren made sure to dig into the depths of her closet and find something skimpy yet practical. She decided on a strappy sports bra and a matching pair of leggings. The sports bra was exactly that; a bra. I made Loren let me wear my long sleeve over the top of it. I didn’t need more eyes following me across campus.

By seven forty-five, I was dressed and ready to spar. My hair had been slicked back off my head and wound into a tight bun. I did a light jog across the campus to warm up. As the sun finally rose above the trees of the forest, I came across the track.

Maximus, arms crossed over his hulking chest, stood on the outer side of the track. I stopped short of him then walked the rest of the way over. He was wearing sparring gear as well: a pair of grey shorts that hit the middle of his massive thighs and a tight grey long sleeve that stretched over his pecks. It rippled as he dropped his arms.

“Good, you’re warmed up,” he said. “Saves me some time.”

“Are we on a crunch for that?” I asked eyebrow raised. He completely ignored me to go rummage through a bag by his feet. I rolled my eyes and gave him a look. He also ignored that as he stood up and handed me something.

I turned the object in my hand. I recognized it as a resistance band and raised my eyebrows at him.

“Pilates?” I teased. “I didn’t figure you for the type.”

“It’s for your thighs,” he corrected. “The extra resistance will build muscle quicker. Something you clearly need.”

I gasped and sailed my fist into his shoulder. His stupid, massive body barely moved. Instead, he grabbed the resistance band from my hands and crouched down.

“Right foot up,” he instructed.

I blushed at the level of his head before shifting my weight and lifting my foot up. Maximus shimmied the band over my foot. “Left,” he grunted.

I shifted my weight again, still feeling the heat in my cheeks. Maximus slipped the band over my other foot. Then, he tugged the band up until it was met with knees. He then shimmied up to the middle of my thighs. His hands gripped the outside of my thighs as moved it.

The slight electric pulse flowed from his fingers into my legs. I locked my knees to prevent the shudder from flowing through me. Maximus’s eyebrows knitted and he looked up at me from his crouch.

The image was damn near pornographic.

Maximus, on his knees at my feet, holding my legs where an electric pulse was slowly leaking from his fingertips into my bones. He was a hairs breath from my lady bits and looking up at me with those big, dark gold eyes. His lips parted slightly, and I gnawed down on my lip to keep the whimper from escaping. Then, he cleared his throat and the moment was broken.

“Of course,” Maximus stood and grabbed his tray to leave. “I’ll see you tomorrow and let you know what gym I’ve rented.”

“Max-“I warned.

“Have a good day, Zora,” he said before taking off towards the trash. He deposited his garbage and stalked out of the cafeteria. I was left grumbling at my seat. I looked at Loren, who was trying to stifle a grin.

“What?” I groaned.

“Oh, he so totally likes you,” Loren snickered. “Zora Wolfham is a nice name don’t you think?”

I groaned again before slamming my head onto the table.

“Right,” he grunted as he stood up to tower over me once again. I took a step back as did he. He crossed his arms over his chest again. He seemed completely unphased, except I saw the way he was clenching his jaw.

“Right,” I mimicked as a sigh. “So now what?”

“Your legs and core need work. That’s what’s keeping you from holding a stance when you take a punch,” Maximus said.

“How do you know that?” I said, being petulant.

Maximus blinked at me. “I was at your fight with Kairos,” he replied. “I watched you take every hit as if you’d been run over by a pack of wolves.”

I blinked at him. He watched me at the fight. Not Kairos. My heart fluttered a bit.

Pay attention! I screamed at myself.

Or we could ditch this whole thing and do something much more interesting, my wolf mused.

Don’t you have paws to clean or something?

My wolf snickered in response. I ignored her. I looked back at Max. He had one eyebrow raised as if he’d been waiting a while. “Legs,” he repeated. “And core.”

He took another step back and dropped into a squat. “Start with a squat,” he said. He then slowly side stepped, moving horizontally as he held the same stance. “Then move laterally. That’ll strengthen your outer glutes and inner thighs.”

I took the squat stance. Then, I took a sidestep. The resistance band pulled taught across my thighs and dug into the outside of my thighs. Then I stepped my feet back to hips width and the band loosened. However, the strain in my ass and my thighs was intense.

“Fuck,” I hissed.

“Sucks, yeah?” Maximus commented. “Keep going.”

I grumbled a bunch of curses under my breath but kept the sidestep up. Max followed me as we did the entire length of the track. Then he made me go back. By the time we got back to the start, my ass was throbbing.

I huffed and stood up straight when I got back to Max’s bag. Sweat poured down my back. I wrenched the long sleeve off and chucked it to the floor before I turned back to Max. His pupils had dilated and he was staring at me like I was something to eat. I crossed my arms over my chest as I struggled to catch my breath.

“What’s next?” I panted.

“Lunges,” Maximus said. “With the band.”

“Motherfucker,” I said under my breath before starting off in a forward lunge away from Maximus. I could’ve sworn I heard a snort of laughter behind me but when I looked at Max, he was just as emotionless as usual.

When I turned back, I was dying. I almost keeled over with one step and was heaving grunts of air. I glared at Maximus. “Do I have to?”

“Yes,” he said plainly. Then he moved over to me. “And stand up straight. You’re going to throw out your back bent over like that.”

Without even a second thought, one of his hands went to the low of my back as the other one landed near my naval. I was mid lunge as his hands pressed into my skin. The energy was palpable, surging through my skin and up into my brain. I gasped as I felt it. Then, I heard the strange thrummed that tended to come with the electricity around Maximus and I.

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

I tried to ignore it but every bone in my body was screaming for me to look at Maximus. I turned my head slowly and met the piercing dark gold gaze of Maximus Wolfham. The noise started thrumming faster and faster and I couldn’t help but lean towards him.

But then, as quick as it was there, it was gone.

I blinked and Maximus was a good ten feet away from me. He looked far calmer than I felt. But in his eyes, there was a dark emotion that made me shiver.

Lust.

“Just... stand up straight,” he finally said, voice low.

I pushed my shoulders back and finished my lungs. My legs weren't all that was burning by the end of that round of lunges.

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 56

I finished my training with Maximus with no more issues, save for some longing looks from across the track. I wound up actually learning a lot and feeling myself gain some strength. It was so much so that I wound up asking Max if we could make our training regular.

We agreed that my body would need a day to recover. We decided to meet again on Monday morning. With that, I dragged myself back to my room and collapsed in my bed. Loren laughed from across the room in her bed. Then she came over and pressed her head on top of mine. She was only there for a half a second until she made a disgusted noise and shrunk back.

“You are sweaty,” she commented.

“So hard,” I mumbled into my pillow.

“His man bits?”

I aimlessly threw a pillow over my shoulder in the direction of Loren's voice. By her laughter, I could tell it missed her by a mile.

“So he wore you out?” Loren said. I could tell in her voice, she meant it sexually.

I threw myself on my side to glare at her. She laughed again then went and grabbed the pillow. She threw it back at me and I ”oofed” as it hit me in the stomach.

“He wore me out,” I started. “In that he kicked my ass.”

“That's a new kink.”

“Loren-“

“I'm kidding!” Loren threw her hands up in defense. “But it was hard?”

“Very,” I mumbled. “So much so that were taking a break tomorrow. Training resumes Monday.”

“So you’re going back?” Loren asked.

I shrugged. “I learned a lot. Plus, it was definitely working. And Valentin won’t train me anymore. So what’s the harm?”

“Makes sense,” Loren agreed. “Did you feel anything weird?”

I fidgeted. “Kinda,”

Loren’s jaw unhinged. Her slack jaw morphed into a shit-eating grin.

“Tell. Me. Everything.”

So, I did. I recounted each look. Each touch and by the end of my entire story, Loren’s jaw was hitting the floor. She stared at me in shock for a moment when I finished. Then, she shrieked before rolling back in her bed.

“Gods!” She gasped. “Do you think he’s your fated mate!?”

I bit my lip. I hadn’t told Loren that I’d almost had the exact same feelings towards Valentina few weeks ago. The electricity, the weird lub-dub of it all. Everything that made her excited about Maximus made me nervous. How could I have these feelings for two wolves?

Then there was the Thorne of it all. He was supposed to be my fated mate. How was I supposed to get another one after that?

“Maybe,” I said. I tried to sound as confident as possible, but it came out unsure.

“Maybe?” Loren mimicked. “Zora, I don’t think you realize how rare fated mates are.”

I knitted my eyebrows together. “What do you mean? I had Thorne be my fated mate. There’s a whole ball around mates. How does that scream rare?”

“The Mateball is about all mates,” Loren corrected. “It’s a time for chosen mates as well. But fated mates-” she shook her head, incredulous. “They’re a once-in-a-lifetime kind of thing. Just the fact that you’re having these feelings around Max is crazy when you already had been fated to Thorne.”

“Is it wrong?” I said quietly.

“No,” Loren shook her head. “I wouldn’t say wrong. Maybe just extra special. Extra lucky really.”

I gnawed on my lip. Loren stared at me as if she was waiting for me to speak. I couldn't make out any words, in fear I'd lie to my best friend.

"Maybe Max is your second chance," Loren said softly. "I wouldn't shrug that off."

I couldn't bring myself to say anything else. What was so special about me that I deserved a second chance?

We are a Princess, my wolf chimed in. Princesses deserve multiple options.

I thought about that for the rest of the day. When I'd first come to this world, my mother had put four men in front of me and asked me to marry one. Did she know that I would be potentially fated to all of them? Something about it was fishy but I couldn't put my finger on it.

Plus, there was no fucking way I was mated to Kairos.

The man hated me, and I loathed him.

Maximus sat with us at every breakfast that week. I was beginning to enjoy his silent, looming company. So much so that when he was late to breakfast one morning, I started to worry.

However, he eventually showed up looking like he'd just rolled out of bed and complaining that his alarm didn't go off. He even gave a half laugh when Loren made a joke about his appearance. It was very clear something about Maximus was changing, softening him from the hard douche he'd been my first month at Alpha Academy.

I'd also trained with him most afternoons on the outdoor track. The weather had taken a wintery turn so I had no more skin to skin incidents. But there was still that dark, possessive look in his eyes when we'd get too close or I'd bend in a way that was seemingly provocative.

That Friday, he had me doing more resistance work on the outdoor track. The exercises had become easier with repetition, and I could feel my muscles building within me. As I finished, Max held his hand out to me. I knew that look and slid the band off.

"I still have the knee jumps," I protested as I handed him the resistance band.

"We're moving on to combat," Max stated. "I want to see if my theory about your core and legs is true."

"So you're gonna punch me and see if I fall over?" I joked.

Max tilted his head. The teeniest, tiniest smirk worked its way onto his lips. "I'd like you to block them but I understand if you can't. I'm an excellent fighter."

“I’ll see about that,” I teased as I dropped into a defensive stance.

Then Maximus truly laughed. It was like the honey of his eyes had melted into his voice and coated it. It was the most beautiful sound I’d heard in months. I immediately dropped my stance and stared at him. He raised an eyebrow in question.

“What?”

“Your your laugh,” I stuttered.

“What about it?” Max said.

“It’s nice,” My voice was small.

Max stared back at me as he registered my tone. His eyes grew dark as his pupils dilated again. He shook his head, and it was like the façade had breached. Both of us returned to normal.

“Let’s do this off the track,” he said. “In case you fall.”

We both moved over to the patch of dry grass on the side of the track. I dropped back into my defensive stance and Maximus followed. He gave me a curt nod, which I returned, and then started throwing punches.

The first few he threw, I blocked easily. It was after the fourth block that he seemed to realize he wasn’t going hard enough at me and picked up his force. He threw two smaller jabs then sailed his fist towards my shoulder. I wasn’t quick enough to block it so I absorbed all of it with a grunt.

But I didn’t fall down.

I blinked and looked up at Maximus. His lips were set in a hard, unreadable line. Then, he nodded.

“Good,” he said. “Seems like my theory was accurate. Now do it again.”

He continued to sail punches towards me. Unbelievably, I absorbed each one. Though I felt the bruises beginning to blossom on my skin, I stayed standing the entire time.

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 57

Saturday night, Maximus and I met again.

I could hear the roar of a party at Kairos’s house on the other side of campus. It immediately made me anxious. It’d only been two weeks since my incident and the prospect that it could happen again set me on edge.

Maximus clearly noticed it as we sparred that evening. After one particularly brutal swipe of his elbow landed on the high of my cheekbone, I staggered back and pressed my hand to my cheek.

“What’s going on?” he asked, softer than usual. “You blocked that just fine the other day.”

I let my hand drop from my face. The place he’d hit still stung with the force of his bone jamming into mine. I motioned vaguely to the noises in the distance.

“I just let my hand drop and smack against my side. I couldn’t seem to voice how uncomfortable I was in the moment.

Luckily for me, Max seemed to understand. He looked off towards then party then turned back to me. There was a softness in his features that was new.

“He’s not going to hurt you again, Zora,” he said. “I made sure of it.”

“I know I just think-” I huffed and slammed my eyes closed. “Sorry, this is stupid.”

Maximus took a step towards me and grabbed my hand. Electricity surged between us that caused my eyes to snap open. His thumb stroked over the back of my wrist.

“It’s not stupid,” he reassured. His tone was gentle and warm. “I can’t imagine what it must’ve been like. But it won’t happen again. That I can assure you.’

I nodded then kept my eyes locked with Maximus’s. The gentle caring from him was a new thing to me. It was making my heart bloom in ways I couldn’t verbalize and wouldn’t verbalize. I was already feeling weak.

Max dropped my hand and the electricity vanished. “Come on,” he said. “We’re done. Let’s go home.”

“You sure?” I said but inside I was craving the warmth of my bed.

“I’m not going to try and push you right now,” Max said.

I nodded in agreement then went and collected my things before the two of us walked back to our dorm. The walk was silent but inside, my thoughts were screaming.

I’d spent nearly every day of the last week with Maximus. He’d been completely different from what I thought he was. Instead of harsh and bitter, he was soft and intuitive. He was gentle when he needed to be but pushed when he was supposed to. He was taking so much time out of his day to spend training me and I couldn’t help but wonder what he was getting out of it all.

He could tell there was something on my mind as we reached the door to our building. He glanced at me like he was begging me to ask what was on my mind but I kept silent up until we arrived in front of our doors.

I turned and opened my mouth just as he was doing the same.

“Max, I-“

“I know-“

We both stopped. Max motioned for me to continue. I fidgeted my feet on the floor, eyes cast down. There was a long pause as I tried to gather my thoughts.

“I don’t get why you’re helping me,” I finally said. “Or care about me. I’m not anyone important. I was wolfless when I got here. I know your stance on wolfless and I’m just surprised you’d spend so much time with me.”

“You’re not wolfless anymore, are you?” Max said. I lifted my head to meet his gaze. He sighed heavily. “Plus, my stance has changed. You proved that wolfless aren’t as weak as I thought they were. That was all you.”

I blinked at him and furrowed my brows. Max licked the front of his teeth then continued.

“Zora, I don’t believe you know how wonderful you are,” his voice had dropped low as he stared into me. “You’re kind, thoughtful and Hells below are you strong. To see you go through all that you’ve been through and still not give up.” He shook his head. “It’s inspiring.”

He huffed and leaned back a bit, as if he’d realized how close he was. “I know you were fated to Thorne,” he said, slowly. “But the night of Mateball, I felt this pull. Deep in my chest.” He tapped the spot where his heart was and I felt my own flutter in response. eHe s

“It drew me to you,” He finished. “I’ve felt some way about you for a long time. Despite all the things I said just now, I feel indebted to you. You could hate me for my whole life and I’d still feel like you owned me. You may not be mine, Zora, but I am fully and entirely yours.”

I stared at him, heart leaping out of my chest and fingers aching with the need to touch. I’d never felt a want like that before. Every bone in my body was screaming.

Do it, my wolf urged. Show him how he is yours...

I surged forward and closed the gap between us, slamming my lips into his. Immediately, there was lightning exploding in my chest. Max staggered back, shocked but then his arms came down to wrap around my waist and pull me flush to him. More electricity hit every single nerve ending in my body and I felt like I was on fire.

Max finally opened his mouth and I followed suit, stroking him into me with a heat and desire that was so burning that my body was aching. The kiss was rough and hard and had months of yearning and fight behind it. I nipped and sucked and pushed my way into him boldly. He let me, hands gripping my waist as if he was worried I’d slip away.

I felt him moving and pulling us backwards, but I just held on as he lifted me. My legs wrapped around his waist and I pushed myself higher up his body. My face angled down into his, causing a new way for me to press our lips together. My hands cupped his face, burning as they went.

I heard a dorm slam behind us, then my back was pressed against a wall. My ankles were still locked behind Maximus and his hips pressed into me, lighting up every sense inside of me. I whimpered into his mouth and that seemed to make him pause. He pulled back and rested his forehead against mine.

“Tell me to stop,” He groaned before claiming my mouth again. Then he let me go and trailed his mouth down the side of my neck. The sensation had me keening up against him, another wanton whimper escaping my throat.

“Tell me to stop,” he repeated.

The thought of losing the sensations blooming inside me made my nails dig into his shoulders. I couldn't let go. I needed to let the high I'd been riding finally hit an apex. He couldn't leave me. I wouldn't let him.

“Don't,” I begged. “Don't stop, please.”

That was all it took for him to release whatever restraint he'd been holding back.

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 58

We moved from the wall to Maximus's bed in a half a second.

My back was pressed against his comforter and my hands were back on his face. His lips were back on my chest, sucking welts into the space under my collar bones. My hips jolted up into him as a guttural moan escaped me. Max used his own hips to pin me back to the bed. The space in between his legs was hard and warm, his want evident.

He lifted his head for a half a second to wrangle off my shirt, but it wasn't enough. I took the time where his lips weren't attached to my body to wrench off my sports bra as well leaving me bare chested and arching for him again. Max pinned my wrists to the bed and pulled back.

His eyes were dark with a raging need. They roamed over my body, taking in every bit of it before he went back to catch my own gaze.

“Is this okay?” he grunted. “Are you okay?”

“Yes,” I moaned. “More.”

He dove back down and pressed the flat of his tongue into my sternum, licking a stripe all the way down to my hip, where he bit into my skin with his teeth. His hands left my wrists and I pulled his face back up to mine.

His tongue clashed with mine, licking the inside of my mouth then he was gone again. I moaned needily and tried to pull him back up. His face was near my naval, fingers slowly peeling down the fabric of my leggings.

“I have to taste you,” he moaned into my stomach. “I need it.”

“Please,” I begged. The fire inside me was all consuming.

There was a tear of fabric and then my entire lower half was exposed to the air. I was only aware for about two seconds before I felt Max’s hot breath on my core. Then, it was fire.

His mouth touched me and my entire back pressed off the bed in shock. I gasped and tried to push my hips further into Max’s mouth. His arm came down to brace me and pin me to the bed. The same sucking and licking he’d done to my mouth was now on my pussy, teasing and testing to try and find the spot that made me come undone.

He hit the apex of my thighs and I arched, a moan coming from so deep within my chest it felt like my heartbeat. That only encouraged Maximus, making his face burrow further into me. His licking and sucking and swirling was maddening. It sent me into a wanton frenzy I’d never felt before.

Then, I tipped over the edge.

I came hard, with a scream and a twitching convulsion of my hips. It did nothing to deter Maximus as he continued to lap at me as I rolled through one...two orgasms in a matter of minutes. He continued his assault on me until I pulled his head up from me. He pressed an open mouth kiss on the line of my hip then let me pull his body back up so our lips could meet.

The taste of myself on him made me even more wild, bitter and sour. Maximus pulled back so he could look at me, lying on my back with my chest heaving.

“You taste like honey,” he moaned before going back to pepper my neck with kisses.

I dragged his shirt over his shoulders then got frustrated and ripped it at the back. I tore the shreds of fabric off of him as his lips went back to swirl around my sternum. Then, he dipped down and brought one of my nipples into his mouth. He hummed around it and I felt myself driving up the third hill of the night.

“I need-” I panted. But Maximus was already there, helping me shrug him out of his pants and boxers and his cock spring free of its confines.

He was massive.

So much so that I felt my mouth water in anticipation. His hips pressed back into mine, the head of him was lined up to enter me. With one push of his hips, his entire cock was pressed into me. It felt heavenly. It felt right.

“Okay?” Maximus asked, though it sounded like he was in pain.

I nodded and ran my hands down his back before pressing a kiss to his jaw. I lifted my hips up to meet his and we moaned at the same time, soaking in the new angle.

He pulled his hips back then snapped them forward. The coil inside me was wound tighter and tighter with each slap of our skin together.

My hands dug into the divets above his ass, driving his hips to snap into me harder and harder. With each time our hips came flush together, his cock hit the bit of flesh deep inside me that sent pleasure coursing down my toes.

“So good,” Maximus moaned into my neck before biting into the skin there. I let out an animalistic noise of pleasure as the pain of his teeth mixed with the stretch of my pussy around his cock.

He pounded deeper and deeper until I felt like I was going to explode. I grabbed his face and held it against mine as finally, the dam breached and my body flooded with pleasure. Every bit of my body was shaking as Max continued to rut against me. With a final groan, he pulled out of me and spilled himself across my stomach.

He rolled over next to me, utterly spent. My heart was pounding in my chest as I realized what I’d just done.

Fuck. I’d slept with Maximus Wolfham.

I immediately jumped up and started to get dressed. My leggings were in tatters so I grabbed Max’s shorts and pulled them up my body. I felt his hand touch the middle of my back.

“Zora-“

“I have to go,” I said quickly, flinching out of his touch. “This was a mistake. I’m sorry – I-”

“Mistake?” Max snorted in disapproval. “What are you talking about? Tell me I wasn’t the only one who felt that. The electricity?”

“I – I don’t know,” I threw my shirt on over my head and gathered my sports bra in my hands. “I – I can’t.”

“Zora, stop,” Max said, swinging his legs off the bed. “Look at me. Please.”

I stopped and swallowed thickly. Tears were springing in the corners of my eyes. I couldn't believe I'd done that. I'd just self-fulfilled my label as a slut. I turned to look at Max. He looked so confused and my heart ached.

"Don't do this," he said, slowly. "Don't push me away. I know you felt it. We're fated mates."

I shook my head fervently. "We're not," I bit out.

"How is that possible?" Max said. "I felt it. I felt it when you-"

"We're not," I cut him off. "Because Valentin Lunerly is my fated mate."

Max withdrew immediately like I'd burned him. He stared at me, slack jawed. I quickly gathered myself and bolted out his room. I locked my own door behind me and slid to the floor. I pressed my fingers to my lips.

What had I done?

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 59

I couldn't lie still in my bed that night. My mind kept replaying the encounter with Maximus. How had it gotten to that? How had I let my guard down so much? I'd never felt something like that before. The blooming of desire deep within my core.

And his hands, oh his hands.

The way they roamed my body as if to memorize every line. I could still feel them lingering on my rib cage. The rough pads of them tracing under my chest and then up my sternum and over to my aching-

I groaned in response and turned over in my bed. I slowly felt my eyes finally giving into sleep. Just as I closed them, more images and feeling flooded my brain. I dreamt of each of Max's touches.

The way he kissed my inner thighs and center. I tangled my hands in his hair as he tasted me, lapped me up. The feeling of the pressure building deep within me. The overpowering feeling of release. I pulled at the hair under me. But when my eyes fluttered to see who it was, I was holding long, light brown hair. The eyes pinning me down from between my legs were not Maximus's.

They were Valentin Lunerly's.

I jolted awake with a gasp then immediately slammed my hand over my mouth. I cast a glance towards Loren to make sure she was still asleep. She made this weird grunting, snort then rolled over and began snoring again. I dropped my hand, relieved.

I hadn't told her anything about my encounter with Max. When she got back to our room, my tears had already dried up by then. She could tell something happened, but I kept my answers short and changed the subject. She could totally tell but didn't push me on it, which I completely appreciated.

So I was left to my own spiraling thoughts and desires. Even my wolf had been silent during the whole encounter and it's aftermath. I expected her to be sitting in the back of my mind with either a smug smirk and a bitter frown on.

Neither, actually, came her snarky voice in my mind. I couldn't help but roll my eyes.

So what do you think then?

Her damn tail swished. I told you before, it is not so wrong to have two mates.

But it is, I pushed back. You heard both my mother and Loren. No one's ever broken a fated mate bond then turned and found a new mate. Let alone two mates. It's totally not normal.

Which was exactly the opposite of what I needed to be. I need to fly under the radar at the school. I needed to make it through the midterms of my first year then start and finish my second and third years without anyone knowing my true identity. I needed to make it through this stupid school and prove to my mother I didn't need a partner to help me.

Even when those partners were potentially someone I slept with and someone I desperately wanted to sleep with. I pressed my hands to my temples.

Normal is a human term, my wolf chimed in. There is nothing normal about us. We are a legendary powerhouse who can shift between forms. We are sheer magik, Zora.

I need to be a "Normal" wolf then, I said with another slight eye roll. Whatever that means.

You do realize, even your mother and Lunerly do not know what "normal" is for a wolf? My wolf said.

I creased my eyebrows. What do you mean?

Wolves were enslaved for thousands of years, Zora, she replied, giving me a pointed look from the back of my mind. The wolves that are alive now had been suppressed for so long, they had to relearn the ways of their ancestors.

I thought about that for a second. My knowledge of the Pre-War times were low. They tended not to talk about them in my classes, just referring them to the "Dark Times." I did, however,

learn of the few remaining tombs that the resisting wolves (my mother and Valentin) had recovered from the vampire's libraries. The tombs were said to have any and all information on the wolves.

It was the first thing the vampires took from the wolves that started their thousand year enslavement. The tombs had everything the vampires wanted to know to take down the wolves.

But there's nothing in the tombs of multiple mates, I challenged my wolf. Nothing publicly, that is.

The tombs are only the recount of wolves past, my wolf said, eerily in tone. Not the intricacies of all wolves that have ever been.

I blinked at her implication....Are you saying that you've been alive that long?

In some capacity, she answered. Wolves are transferred through bloodlines. I was once the wolf of your great ancestors. Holy shit.

Does my mom know this? I asked, fervently.

She does, my wolf swished her tail. Only the wolves of the royal line carry this knowledge. We made it that way to keep ourselves safe.

Who's we? I pondered.

All of the wolves, she replied. Have you not been paying attention in your magiks classes?

I blinked again. I guess not.

She huffed as if completely annoyed by me. As if I didn't have other more pressing issues than just school work.

We wolves are ancient magiks, she sat down in the back of my mind. Born from the cosmos before times. We made a pact with

a group of the first humans. We were to cohabit their bodies and in return they'd receive the ability to use our shape and everything that came from it. We lived peacefully before the Great Enslavement.

I guessed I should've paid more attention in History of Great Magiks. Wow, I said into the echo chamber of my head. My wolf snorted.

I thought you were supposed to be good at academics, she mused.

I scowled at no one. I am! I protested. But that professor drone on and their voice is so soothing and-

Excuses are for the weak, she said plainly with another tail swish. I ignored the jab.

So you were around before the great enslavement, I said. What does this have to do with me possibly having two fated mates?

My wolf flexed her paws then tilted her head. There was once a great Queen of your line. She had not one, but four fated mates. Both ascended the throne with all of them. She had children with all of them. She ruled with all of them.

Four!? I balked. I could barely stomach two fated mates. Four was batshit crazy.

That is to say, multiple fated mates was not rare, my wolf said. Nor was knowing the names of wolves. Nor harnessing the advanced magiks of wolves. The time before the Great Enslavement was one where wolves and humans were more bound than ever. Their intertwinement was knotted.

She sounded like she was lost in a dream, thinking of better times. I breezed past all that and landed on something that stuck with me.

You have a name?

I do, she said. Calling you my name would be too odd.

But you said we're one? I questioned.

We are, her tail swished impatiently. You are me as I am you. But my name is from the original human I was bonded to. I held it in memory of her passing.

I shifted. So what is it?

Monalunae, she said. But you may call me Mona.

"Mona," I whispered out loud.

As soon as I said it, my eyes began to feel incredibly heavy. I curled deep into my sheets as the sleep hit my eyes.

Goodnight, Zora, Mona said. Dream of many niceties with multiple fated mates.

My dreams came crashing back in right where they left off. My hands were deep in Valentin's hair as he licked and nipped at my pussy. I arched off the bed and felt another set of hands come to my chest. Lips ghosted around my neck. It was like Maximus had formed from the smoke behind me. I keened again, eagerly, before basking in all the glory of having two men at my disposal.

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 60

Maximus

Maximus woke up the next morning unnaturally chipper. He couldn't figure out why. His mate had basically told him she had another one but yet he was still hopeful. Something in his bones and deep in the base of his mind was screaming that Zora was his mate.

He'd never felt that way before. When Zora came underneath him, he felt like his wolf had combusted in the back of his mind. Then his own release set a fire inside of him that he couldn't tame even if he tried. The thrumming of his heart told him that Zora was it for him, the one he'd been searching for.

But, she'd previously been fated to Thorne. It was an uncomfortable thought he tried to ignore as he got ready for the day. He arrived to breakfast to find Zora with her gaze fixed in her food. Loren greeted him as per usual so he assumed Zora had kept their rendezvous to herself for the time being.

The entire breakfast, Maximus felt like he was pulling teeth trying to get Zora to look at him. She would give one word grunts to Loren as answers. She refused to answer any of Maximus's questions. It got to a point where Loren finally slammed her hand on the table, sending Zora's gaze to her.

"Okay, what the heck is up?" She snapped.

Zora gave her a long stare before going back to fidget with her eggs. "Just sick is all."

"So I assume we're not training tonight?" Maximus said plainly with a raised eyebrow.

Zora immediately looked at him. Her gold-green eyes sparkled in the fluorescent light of the cafeteria. Her long red curls were tucked behind her ears. Maximus longed to pull on one again, then grab her jaw and slant her mouth to his.

But he knew that would scare Zora off. So he attacked with a different measure. He needed to have a palpable indifference to everything. That way, she'd get herself worked up thinking he didn't care and would eventually snap and come to him.

"No," she said softly. "I'll be there."

Maximus nodded. "Same as usual," he said before going back to his own breakfast. He felt Zora's eyes peel away from him and twitched at the loss. Her gaze was like fire that fueled his cold heart.

"Right," Zora placed her hands on the table and pushed herself to stand. "I have to get a coffee before History of Magiks. I'll see you in High Magiks right, Loren?"

“Why don’t you have it with us?” Loren tried. “You still have twenty minutes before class.”

Zora gave her a sad smile and shook her head. “I need it to keep me caffeinated during class. But Magiks, yeah?”

“Yeah,” Loren mumbled. Zora grabbed her bag and slung it over her shoulder. She gave Loren one final smile before setting off to dispose of her garbage.

As soon as she was out of ear shot, Loren jabbed Maximus in the shoulder. He missed his mouth with his spoon as a result, flopping eggs into his lap. He turned to stare at Loren. Her scowl was bitter.

“What happened with you two?” She hissed.

“Nothing,” He said as if he didn’t want to chase after Zora and bury himself in her on the main lawn of campus.

Loren tried to jab him again. Maximus barely moved at the impact. Then she stuck her finger in his face.

“You hurt her and I’ll beat the crap out of you!”

Maximus tried to not roll his eyes. Loren was one of the weaker wolves. There was no way in the Hells she was beating anything out of him. He nodded once.

“I know,”

“Good,” Loren said with finality. She turned back and shoved the rest of her waffle in her mouth. A bit of whipped cream ended up on her nose and Maximus had to stifle his laugh in his fist.

Later that night, true to her word, Zora was at their usual spot. She’d beat Maximus to the location and was stretching when he showed up. The sun was nearly set as autumn continued to erupt across campus. Her attire the evening was looser than any other training kit she’d worn before. In fact, Maximus thought he’d seen her shuffling around their dorm in the same trousers and jumper a week prior.

They both engulfed her figure and made her look like a pin shoved into a box the size of a refrigerator. She stood up straight when she saw him crossing the outdoor field. Her hands bracketed her hips.

“What?” She barked.

Max raised an eyebrow at her. “How are you going to train in that?”

Zora looked down at her jumper. “What’s wrong with it?”

“It’s too loose,” Maximus gestured to where the sleeves reached beyond her fingertips. “You’re gonna catch yourself on it.”

Zora scowled at him but before she could answer, a gust of wind whipped her hair across her face. She looked ethereal in that moment. Her red curls were mainly plaited off of her face but a few tendrils were moving across her face. Her gold-green eyes were narrowed at him. She shivered slightly then resumed glaring at him.

“It was the only thing clean,” she snapped. “And it’s fucking cold so deal with it.”

Max knew that was a lie. She had more than enough little training sets in various colors and cuts. She chose to come that way and he couldn’t help but think he knew why.

“Can we make this quick?” Zora added. “I’m shaking.

Max started to rummage through his bag for his equipment. He shrugged. “Sure,” he said. “But it won’t do you much good if it isn’t long enough.”

“I already trained earlier,” Zora said quickly.

Max raised an eyebrow again. “With whom?”

Zora turned beet red and Maximus’s stomach dropped. Lunerly. She was training with Lunerly. He cleared his throat and fully ignored her comment. He dropped the bag at his feet but still held on to two resistance bands.

“We’ll do core then,” he said plainly. “Start with a warm up then launch into the plank progression I showed you last week.” Zora gave him a curt nod before swallowing and running off to do as she’d been instructed. As she came back, Maximus watched her break into her core work. He smiled to himself as he realized that his plan had been working. Her core had been strengthening over the past few sets. So much so that her X-plank was near flawless.

I did that, he thought to himself. Not fucking Lunerly.

“What now?” Zora asked. She stood and brushed her hands on the backs of her pants.

Maximus wordlessly took out a resistance band. “Wrap this around your waist,” he directed. “I’ll hold onto the tails of it as you take off into a sprint. The goal is to not fall over and run ten meters as straight as possible.”

“Sounds easy,” Zora said before wrapping the resistance band around her. She turned around and let the tails of the band hang behind her.

Maximus went to grab one and touched her outer finger. She immediately jumped and shrunk away from him as he did. He smirked to himself and did it again. He loved the effect he had on her. She flinched again. As she went to step away, he pulled back on the resistance band, hard.

Zora stumbled backward and her back collided with Maximus's chest. Feeling her so close made his cock stir in his pants. He immediately sucked in a breath, trying to memorize the scent of her hair. His hands instinctually went to her waist and a pained whimper escaped from between her lips.

Maximus smirked to himself as he ran his nose down the shell of her ear. When he reached her earlobe, he gently tugged it between his teeth, earning another sound from Zora. It was the same exact sound she made as she was writhing in his sheets the night before. He let go of her ear and pressed his face to the side of hers.

"Run," he cooed into her ear. Zora took off immediately, causing Max to grunt as the force of her sprint yanked him out of his stupor.

She sprinted back and forth on the field for so long that on her last run, she finally gave up and fell into the ground in a cacophony of pants. Maximus was also feeling the exercise, huffing as he dropped the bands. He tried to help Zora up but she completely ignored it as she stumbled to her feet.

"What now?" She breathed through pants.

Maximus swallowed to catch his own breath. "Do some of the crunch series and we'll call it a day."

He was desperate to get out of there. He was straining so hard in his pant he'd had to adjust himself so his arousal wouldn't be obvious. He was dying to get home and fist his cock with just the smell of her hair.

Zora finished the crunches as Max gathered his things. The two sprint walked across the campus back to their dorm. Max barely could grunt out a bye as he pushed into his room. In a matter of seconds, his shirt was tumbling to the floor. His trousers were slung low on his hips as a knock came at his door. He groaned and pulled his trouser back up before walking over to wrench the door open.

"What?" He barked.

He barely got the word out before arms were slung around his neck and lips were pressed to his. The warmth started a fire with him and he knew who it was before he could even see her. He wasted no time lifted Zora up so she could lock her ankles around his waist. The door slammed shut and he pressed her back into it, sucking and pressing into her like a starved man.

"I need "Zora gasped between kisses.

Maximus was inside her before his trousers even hit the floor.

