

Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 9

“How long does the hunt last?” I said.

“Until they catch you,” Loren replied. “Last year’s hunt was long. Four days, I think?”

I rubbed my eyes and threw my body back in my bed. This was going to suck. I turned back to Loren and found she had done the same. She gave me a sad smile.

“It wouldn’t be so bad to just submit to them, would it?”

I turned away from her and stared at the ceiling. It would be when it came out that I was the Princess. Victoria would be embarrassed and I cannot imagine how humiliated Kairos and Maximus would be. The thought of their rage made me shudder.

Additionally, I couldn’t let them win. Every bone in my body was telling me that submitting would be the worst way to start the year. Maybe it was my royal blood that detested being someone’s bitch so much.

Maybe it was just the thought of giving Maximus and Kairos the satisfaction of knowing they were better than me.

I looked back at Loren. Her purple eyes were wide with hope. I couldn’t bring myself to let her down. I looked back at the ceiling.

“Yeah, it wouldn’t,” I mumbled.

We didn’t speak the rest of the night. Loren slowly drifted to sleep around midnight. I stayed up later, my brain running over the seven hundred different ways I could try and not be hunted. I thought of just staying in my room for the duration of my time at Alpha Academy. That kind of defeated the point of being there, however.

Then I thought of just running until I left this place. Leaving it far behind and just returning to my old life. I figured that Victoria would find me again, somehow. She managed to find my final orphanagewhen I’d been tossed across the country multiple times.

My only hope was to try and become stronger in the comfort of my dorm room. I would wake up the next day and start on the workouts I’d done in high school. for track. Push-ups, sit ups, bicep curls with whatever of Loren’s skincare products I could borrow. That way, no one could attack me but I could still become stronger.

If only I had a wolf, the voice in my head said

If you had a wolf you wouldn't be in this fucking mess, idiot. I threw back with an involuntary eyeroll. You'd probably have kicked Maximus's ass and never run into Kairos.

True, my inner voice mused. But this could be fun!

I ignored her. This was not fun.

Sleep finally came for me at around two in the morning. It made my alarm at eight even worse. I ripped the sheets off my bed. Loren wasn't in her bed. I frowned. She'd been here yesterday before Basics. Had she already ditched me?

Regardless, it was the perfect time for me to start enacting my plan. I turned on my music, loud enough to get me pumped up but low enough that no one would complain. I put on an old sports bra and some spandex. They were my old high school colors, brown and blue, and looked ridiculous with my bright red hair. Luckily, I wasn't wearing it for fashion.

I started with some light stretching then tore into muscle building exercises. I pushed my body hard enough that I began to feel the slick of sweat build on my skin. It dripped from my forehead onto the pink carpet Loren had set up before my arrival. I hoped it was washable.

I was almost done with my final exercise, squat jumps, when there was a loud banging against my door. I flinched at the noise and quickly turned off my music. I wiped the sweat from my upper lip before tentatively pulling the door open.

It was none other than Maximus. Of course.

"The fuck are you doing in there?" he snapped. "Running elephants through a circuit?"

"I'm training," I threw back. I wasn't even mad that he interrupted me. I wanted him to know I was getting stronger.

"Clearly," his eyes scanned my entire body. Immediately, I was uncomfortable with how little clothing I was wearing. I crossed my arms over my midsection. Maximus rolled his eyes.

"You're disturbing my rest," he continued.

"The big bad wolf isn't up early training?" I raised an eyebrow then fake pouted. "Coach would be so disappointed."

"Coach would tell me that rest is the most important part of training," Maximus gritted out. I could tell he was trying to not throttle me. "So stop stomping around and let me sleep."

“It’s my room,” I snapped back. “I can do what I want in it. Or are you suddenly the dorm manager too?”

Maximus gave me a look that said he was exactly that. I threw my hands up and let out a noise of frustration.

“Fine,” I bit out. “I’ll go on a run or something.”

I went to push past him but Maximus threw an arm out to stop me. I let out a low huff and motioned for him to move. He didn’t budge.

“Move!”

“You’ll be hunted as soon as your scent gets across campus,” he said.

“As if you give a fuck,” I hissed. “I don’t,” Max quipped back.

“So, move,”

At that point I shoved his chest. As soon as my hands hit him, a wave of electricity washed over me. It was the same kind that happened when he first ran me over. He stumbed back in shock rather than my force.

His hands were clutching his chest. He stared at me in utter disbelief.

“What the fuck?” I hissed. My hand felt like it’d been burned.

“Impossible,” was the first word that was uttered out of Maximus’s mouth. Then he surged forward again and held me in both hands by the biceps.

His eyes searched mind endlessly. The electricity returned. This time, it was a dull hum in my arms rather than the pinching heat that my hands were still recovering from. I found myself getting lost in the color of his eyes.

They’d shifted from their normal honey gold to a lighter gold. They were still barreling through me when I heard a gasp. I looked over Maximus’s shoulder to see Loren. I immediately wrenched myself from Maximus’s grasp. He stepped back and nearly ran over Loren in the process.

Her face was shiny with sweat like mine. She wore a similar set to me, but in bright pink. Her white-blonde hair was tied up in a tight bun.

Clearly, we’d had the same idea about training this morning. But I was the idiot who pissed Maximus off in doing so.

“Max!” Loren said brightly. “I didn’t expect to see you this early.”

Maximus grunted. “I had to bring Miss Smith something,” he said. He pulled out a notebook from seemingly nowhere. I hadn’t even noticed it the whole time he was attacking me for being loud.

He extended it to me. I took it gingerly, as if the electricity that came from when we touched might transfer through the paper. I turned it over in my hands. “Student Handbook” was written across the front of it.