

## Chapter 6 Thalia

At the entrance of the castle stood the queen and the servants, probably waiting for our arrival. I saw a man, maybe in his 40's, standing beside the queen. I'm guessing it's the king. Is that her king?

"Like it?" Prince Nate asked beside me as I marveled at the place.

"Uh hu." I just nodded my head. "Are we gonna stay here?" I asked.

Dan got off the carriage. "Yep. Welcome to the Kingdom of Thalia." Just as he said that Ren added. "The kingdom of magic."

Yea right. It does look magical.

I'm in love. For a brief moment, I even thought about wanting to live here. I raised a hand and slapped myself.

No. I shouldn't be blinded by the fanciness of the place.

"Here, let me help you down." Prince Fred said and helped me down on my feet. They guided me through the stone floor and up to the door.

"So, how do you find your NEW home?" The queen asked. A smile tugging on her lips when I didn't answer and instead, surveyed the surrounding with my eyes.

"I-" I started but the queen cut me off.

"Never mind. Dinner's almost ready. We have to dress you up. Ladies," the queen snapped her finger to the servants. "Bring her to her room and dress her up for dinner."

"Yes, my queen." The servants said at the same time.

When she said dress, that's when the spell of the castle broke. "Wait," I took a step back and almost fell off the stairs if Ren hadn't caught me. He helped me set my footing again. "What do you mean by getting DRESS?!?!?"

The Queen and the servants had evil looks on their faces. I gulped. I don't mind wearing shorts, but dresses are a different story.

"When you said dress, you didn't mean...." I trailed off, knowing that the queen fully understood what I was about to say.

"Oh yes." With a single motion of the queen's hand, the servants tried to grab me, but I was fast.

I hid behind Ren since he was near me and used him as a wall between the servants. Since there were at least 5 of them, they got past Ren easily. A servant grabbed my cape and pulled it. I almost choked, but I untie it and the servant fell.

"No!"

I ran to Nate next and hid behind him. "Sir Nate, you said that you were my knight in shining armor, right? Then do something and save me!!"

Nate had an amused look on his face. "As you wish, princess." He caught me off guard when he carried me bridal style. "I'll save you from the eyes of these men by giving you to these ladies to be dressed PROPERLY."

"What?!"

Instead of answering, he just winked and approached the servants.

"Oh Prince Nathaniel, thank you!" The girls sighed dreamily.

I flail wildly "Traitor!" I accused.

He pretended to be hurt by putting a hand to his heart. "My love, how you broke my heart."

"Look! A pretty lady." I pointed behind him.

"Where?!— Umf!" When he looked behind him, I took the chance to get away but not before stomping on his foot. Serves him right.

I ran to Prince Fred next. "Prince Fred! You said that you're my Prince Charming, right? Help me!"

Prince Fred smiled. "Yes, Princess. I am your Prince Charming"

I sighed in relief.

"And Prince Charming would like to see his Princess in a dress." With that, he grabbed my arm.

I squeaked and elbowed him. "Umf!" He released his hold.

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I grabbed Dan and Ren next. "As my servants, I order you to protect me!"

"What do you think Ren?" Dan asked his brother.

"I don't know. But I do want to see her in a dress." Ren said.

"You know? You're right. It might be interesting." With that said. The two took hold of my arm and pushed me to the servants. "Traitors!" I yelled as the servants took me away. When I looked behind me, I saw them waving at me with a smile on their faces.

b\*\*\*\*\*s, I'll get you guys for this. And here I thought we all formed a mutual sense of respect for one another!

The servants lead me to a room on the second floor. They brought me to a rather large room with a twin-size bed with curtains falling from it. The floor was made of the red carpet. There was also a door that leads to a terrace. There was a large closet on the far side of the wall facing my bed.

A vanity table was beside it.

The servants locked the door and pushed me into the bathroom and cleaned me until the dirt and the smell of horses were gone.

Once I was done, I was wrapped in a bathrobe and was asked to sit on the bed while they shuffled the bag full of dresses, probably the one that the queen bought earlier. While they were busy shuffling for dresses, I grabbed my fallen shorts and tank and folded them neatly, and hid them under my pillow. In case of emergency.

They finally brought out a floor-length gown.

It was sky blue with ruffles on the neck. It was long-sleeved which made me hate it even more since I know that it'll be hot.

"No," I said.

"Princess you have to wear this." said the servant who was holding the dress.

I ignored the Princess t\*\*le. "Make me!" I challenge myself.

She sighed. "Girls, you know what to do." The servants approached me and suddenly I was cornered on my bed.

"Mommy?" I whimpered

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They won this time. They had managed to make me wear the dress. But I swear if they didn't gang up on me, I could have taken them. They also made me wear heels, but I don't mind though. The heels were only an inch or two tall.

"Time for your hair and makeup!"

"What?! Look, I agreed-" I started but was cut off.

"-forced" corrected the servant.

"-to wear this dress and these shoes, but don't make me wear those make-up!"

"Princess, you have to. Every princess should be presentable every time!"

"I said no!"

The door swung open and the queen came in and closed the door behind her. "What's going on here?"

"My Lady, she-"

"I'm not wearing it!" I pointed to the table where the makeup was set.

The queen sighed. "It's just make-up, dear." She approached the table and grabbed the face powder and brush. "Come here."

"Get. Away. From. Me" I warned. Either she didn't hear it or she was stubborn.

"It'll be quick" she promised and took another step closer. I grabbed one of my shoes and raised it in the air like a sword. "You have to get through me first."

"Fine." She pointed her finger at a chair and a ribbon. They began to float in the air and tied me to the chair. "What the hell was that!? What is happening!?"

Things floated in the air!

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"You didn't say that I couldn't use magic, right?"

"Girl, who cares!? Do it again?" I was being silly right now for being attracted to her magic show. If I could clap then I would have already.

"No. We need to get ready."

5 minutes later, there was make-up on my face. They were kind enough to make it light. Now, there was a rosy blush on my cheek, brown eyeshadow was applied, and n\*\*\* pink lipstick. My hair was in a neat bun with loose curls to the side.

"There, now don't you look CIVILIZE?" The queen teased.

I glared at her and forgot the fact that I just saw things floating. I did not have the energy to do anything else. My mind is becoming a mess. I bit my lips unconsciously.

"Don't do that. You'll eat your lipstick." She grabbed my arm and hauled me up. "Enough, we have wasted a good 5 minutes. We should go. Now"

"It was your fault for wasting those five minutes. If only you didn't busy yourself with applying to make up on me then we could have gotten there

earlier." I grumbled. "Stupid another world, stupid makeups, stupid castle, and stupid dresses."

"Well, if only you'd cooperate then we could have gotten there earlier, no?"

"Whatever." I let it slide since I was hungry. Seriously, do princesses need to look like this every day? What a pain.

As we were going down the stairs. I saw that the princes were also dressed nicely. The twins were wearing blue long-sleeved shirts and pants. There are some kinds of gold patches on their shoulders. Nate was well suited with his maroon-colored tuxedo with a white shirt underneath. At the back, his red tux formed a 'W'. Ace was dressed in black, which made me wonder if he took my advice. It was b\*\*\*oned down with gold lines going down vertically. Fred was dressed opposite Ace. He looked good with white. It made his hair even lighter. There were also gold lines that designed his long-sleeved b\*\*\*on-down attire. He looks good. Their eyes were focused on us once we were halfway down the stairs. The four of them smiled while Ace just stared at me with a blank expression.

Once we reached the end of the stairs, Nate approached and nodded at the queen. "Wow!" He exclaimed while looking at me. "This is not good for my heart."

"Why?" I wondered. A little worried that he may have heart problems.

"You're too cute." he winked at me.

"I feel like my hand might slip and I'll punch someone," I said sweetly.

The twins got in between us and glared at Nate. "You've been taking advantage of our princess now, Nate."

I gapped at them. Our princess!?

Ren on the other hand faces me. A soft smile on his lips. "You look beautiful today, Princess. I was glad that we handed you over to the servants." He winked just like Nate. Are they all flirt?

I snapped my fingers. "Which reminds me," I said and pulled Ren's ear. "This is your punishment for handing me to the enemy earlier!"

“Ow! Why am I the only one punished?!” Ren whined.

“Cause you’re the one who reminded me,” I said with a deadpan expression.

“Sorry. Remind me to never remind you again. Okay?”

“If I do that then I am basically reminding myself.”

Prince Fred approached me next. “You look more beautiful than this morning. The dress suits you well.” He complimented me.

Am I seeing things? Or is he beginning to sparkle? Very lightly, I waved at the air around us to shoo the pesky sparkles away. Nope. Still there.

“Aw, come on, Fred. Stop using your charms on her.” Dan pouted.

“Enough with the chit-chat. Let’s eat.” The queen walked to the table and sat on the seat beside the King. Prince Ren pulled my seat for me, which was really sweet.

I sat between Ren and Dan while the beast(Ace) sat in front of me. So it was a glaring contest between us. Nate sat beside Ren while Fred sat beside Ace. The food was served. It seemed that our menu for today is mash potato and chicken with tons of gravy and ribs.

After saying a silent prayer I was about to dig in when I had a little problem. A pile of sp\*\*\*s of all sizes was lined up beside me. Great, which utensil should I use now?

I peeked at Prince Fred and saw him using the fork in the middle of the set of eating utensils.

Just as I was about to reach it. Ren stopped me and took a table napkin that I didn’t notice right beside my plate and placed it on my lap.

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“You should always place it there in case you’ll drop something and ruin your dress.” He said politely.

“Thank you,” I said and started to cut the meat but it was too hard. When I tried to force it to tear, a piece of meat went flying and onto Ace’s plate. He was surprised by the magical meat and searched for the culprit.

Oops

I gently placed the knife and fork down and pretended to be interested in my surroundings. Beside me, I heard Prince Dan chuckle softly. Glad to see him amused.

“Here, let me help.” He grabbed my knife and fork and he cut the meat into smaller pieces.

After finishing cutting the meat, he proceeded to eat his dinner. “Thanks” I whispered to him. It was embarrassing how I seem to be the only one with poor table manners.

Ren though decided to tease me by getting my spaghetti and feeding me a spaghetti full of mashed potato. “Here baby, say ahhh.”

“Knock it off.” Even though I was offended by that gesture, I chuckled. “I’m not a child.”

“She’s right, Ren,” Nate added. “She’s not a baby, she’s a BABE” he added with a wink.

Hang on my dear sweet fist. Please do not punch him.

“Rose dear,” the queen called. I snap my attention to her. She was beaming when she gestured to the King. “This here is your ‘uncle’ Luke.” The king smiled at me. “Well, it’s so nice to finally meet you, my dear.” He said and dab the napkin through his stubble.

“Sup, ‘uncle’.” That was all I said. So the King is also a part of this...

“My, you need a lot of work Rose.” The queen clicked her tongue and eyed my messy plate. I frowned and formed a protective circle around my plate.

“Dan could help you with the proper table etiquette, but I prefer Nate to help you with that.” She looked at Nate for his approval.



Nate nodded his head. "I'd be happy to."

"As for your dance lessons, I would like to ask this favor of you, Prince Fred."

"Of course, your Grace."

"Say what?!" I exclaimed. "Why do I need dance lessons for?!" I asked and shoved another slice of meat into my mouth. This is delicious!

"Every princess must know how to dance," she said.

"Nu-uh!" I said stubbornly.

She tsked again "Oh we better do something about that language of yours. Ren, Dan, I would like you to teach her how to behave like one, okay?"

"Yes, your highness," the twins said at the same time. I was uncertain by the queen's choice. I mean, the twins? Teaching me about behavior??

Even though my mouth was full of meat, I still laughed. Really? The twins? If I know better, we're like the three stooges.

The queen must have noticed my uneasiness. "Don't worry, Rose. Even though they don't behave well in front of us, they are well mannered when it comes to guessing." She assured me.

"As for the history and the background of this kingdom, I would like to ask this of you, Ace."

No...

"Yes, your grace." From the way he said it, he wasn't as happy about it as me.

"Well, now that it's settled," the queen grabbed her fork and knife. "Let's eat!!"

After dinner, we all went in our separate ways. The servants guided me to my room. The princes could have e\*\*\*\*\*ed me, but the queen told(ORDERED) them to rest.

I was too happy for the day to be over that I didn't even think about changing. I yawned loudly before I lay down on the bed. As I fell asleep, I dreamed of another castle.

A castle that was smaller and different from this one. One where the people were walking alongside with animals.

## Chapter 7 It's Not A Dream

I woke up feeling heavy and hot. My face felt sloppy so I wiped the back of my hand across my face. When I brought it back I saw a hint of makeup. I cursed when I remembered that I had slept with both the dress and the makeup on. I also noticed that I was in a foreign room. I panicked and threw the covers away.

Great, so it wasn't a dream after all.

What are my parents doing right now? Are they worried? Did they call the police or even a search party? What about my friend Jen? Is she worried? Did they think that I ran away?

I really wished that this was a dream. The time when I helped that old woman outside of the store, I didn't expect that this would be my reward for being a Good Samaritan. I just have the worst luck in the world.

I hauled myself up using my elbows and groaned in pain as I felt a sting on my neck. I guess I slept on the wrong side of the bed.

I did a little stretch. It felt good to the muscles. I walked to my balcony glass door and separated the curtains that covered it. Quickly, the early morning light brushed my skin giving me a welcoming heat, and quickly brightened up the room. I opened the door and went to the balcony. It gave an overview of a grassy land filled with different kinds of flowers with rich colors. I enjoyed the soothing fragrance that is provided. It helped me to gather my thoughts.

I wonder if there's some sort of key out of this world. Perhaps I could ask the Queen about that later.

Once I was thought, I decided to go and take a shower first since I probably look horrible with the makeup still on. With each step, I took it felt so weird. Maybe this is how it feels when you're not used to the place you are in.

"Good morning, Princess." I jumped as soon as I noticed a maid standing by my bed.

My jaw dropped and I pointed a finger at her. "H-How long have you been there? Why didn't I notice you?"

She said nothing and clapped her hand. Immediately, more maids entered the room and assisted me to the bathroom just like yesterday. The bathroom was huge. It was white and the floors were tiled. I took a dip, actually, they tossed me for being uncooperative, in the lavender-filled tub and quickly relaxed at the wariness of the water.

Surely someone had filled this before I could have awoken since everything here was already prepared. From the tub to the shampoos and towels. I wish I had a rubber ducky, not that I ever had one.

I spent the rest of my 30 minutes there, playing with the bubbles since I was bored. None of the maids were willing to talk to me and were busy scrubbing my back. Once we were done, they wrapped me in a bathrobe.

On my bed, I saw a yellow dress laid out. Its sleeve was a little puffy on the shoulder and the rest of it was elegantly straight up to the wrist. It was made of smooth material. It was long but I don't think it's that long that it'll reach the bottom. I glared at it murderously.

On top of it was a note. The handwriting was in a neat cursive form.

Hello there my little niece!

I have prepared a dress for you! Isn't it cute?! You should be thankful.

~Elizabeth

I stared at the note in disbelief. This Queen is crazy if she thinks that I'll thank her for a dress!!

Well, I don't have to worry about the dress since I do have my clothes from yesterday. Good thing that I hid it so I would have a backup. I don't even care if it stinks or not. I'll just pour some perfume on it.

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Throwing the note aside. I reached for the pillow where I had hidden my clothes from yesterday. When I lifted the pillow I didn't see my clothes but instead, I saw another note.

Frowning, I read it.

If you honestly think that I would allow you to wear these then think again. You're wearing that dress and that's final.

I crumpled the note in my hand. I can't believe this! It was the only backup clothing I have! And she added an insult at the end!

Out of anger I kicked the side of the bed and winced in pain as my foot collided with the hardwood. "Urgh!" I growled in frustration. Not only was my clothes stolen but my feet hurt.

She plays this game well.

Now I have no choice but to put the dress on. It wasn't horrible or anything. In fact, it fits me well and was comfortable to move with, but I'm still against wearing these kinds of clothing. I found my ballet flats under the bed. I was thankful that the Queen didn't take them.

The maids helped me put the dress on and guided me out of my room for breakfast.

As I was making my way to the door, I found yet another note. What is with her and notes?!

I plucked it out and read it. Already guessing that it was bad news since the two notes before gave me nothing but depression. And I was right.

Your training with the Princes starts today. They will plan your schedule by the way. Good luck and have fun.

"I hate the Queen." I hissed under my breath as I crumpled the paper in my fist and threw it across the room. What is she blabbering about training? What is this? The military?

She didn't say anything about this. Unless it was the training to become a princess?

We went out of my room and made our way to the kitchen. The castle was huge both from the outside and inside. The ceilings were high and lit by various and expensive-looking chandeliers. Thousands of rooms could fit hundreds of people.

You can easily get lost in this castle, but lucky for me that the maid was e\*\*\*\*\*ing me. I went inside the kitchen and was greeted by the more maids, who all don't plan on telling me their names.

"Good morning, Princess." One maid greeted me. I gave her a nod and greeted her back. Being called Princess was a little weird for me since I always act unlady-like. She led me to a table and served me my meal. My mouth watered at the sight of eggs, bacon, and bread.

"Princess, if you need anything. Just ask me." She said.

"Why won't any of the maids talk to me?" I asked. No response. "Okay never mind. Thank you." I said.

She smiled and before she left she said, "Enjoy your breakfast, Princess."

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I don't really want to be called a Princess, but I guess I have no choice since the Queen insisted on it. It makes me wonder though. Why does she need someone like me to choose a Prince when she can just choose them by herself?

Somehow I have a feeling that there's another reason why she brought me here. Well, according to the novels and some webtoons that I read, these 'other world' scenarios only happen when you're dead or reincarnated. Either way, the reason why the protagonists were taken were never revealed.

I dismissed the thought as I began to dig in my food. Literally. I don't want to waste good food by thinking of things that'll make my headache. I am not much of a thinker after all. The food was delicious even though it was so plain. Maybe I was hungry.

As I fed the last bite of my breakfast to my mouth, that's when I heard them. I tensed.

"Where do you think Princess Rose is?" I heard Fred asked.

"I don't know, maybe she's in her room?" This time, it was one of the twins.

"No, she's not in there. I checked." Prince Nate inserted.

"You went to her room?! Nate, we really have to keep a close eye on you in case you'll do something to our Princess." it was the other twin.

"Hey! Just because I love women doesn't mean that I'll take advantage of her! What do you take me for??" Nate defended. Obviously hurt.

"Get it over with. Let's just eat our breakfast and worry about it later." Ace said.

I stiffened. I suddenly remembered the queen saying something about my training and how the princes will decide a schedule for me. I don't know why but my gut tells me to hide.

I am not ready for this.

As their footsteps had gotten closer, I got up and hid behind the curtains, which was a stupid idea, but it is easier to make my way to the exit if I keep following it.

I heard chairs being pulled out and greetings from the maids were exchanged. I was about to leave when I heard them talking. Out of curiosity, I listened and peaked.

"You know, we were supposed to make a schedule for her training today." One of the twins said as he sliced his food. Even with his slightly wet hair he still looks stunning. Now I'm being a creep.

“True, we have to decide who will go first.” The other twin agreed and looked expectantly to his fellow Princes.

“I think I should go first since table manners are important,” Nate said while putting food inside his mouth.

“No way.” The twins said bluntly. Which made Nate choke on his food. He covered his mouth with his fist as he coughed and reached for a gla\*\* of water. He took several sips from it before wiping his wet lips with a table napkin. Wow, fancy.

“Why not?” Nate whined while Fred chuckled. Nate looked at Fred with a disbelief expression on his face. “Fred, not you too.”

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Fred shrugged his shoulders. “Sorry, Nate. The twins do have a point. I’d say that I should go first since dancing is not a simple task.”

“I think it’s a good idea after we go first.” One of the twins said. When both Nate and Fred started to protest, Dan cut them off by adding, “Making her a Princess is a lot of work to do and dancing needs proper posture, which we will be teaching her. Right, Ace?”

“Yeah, okay.” Ace said as he placed a slice into his mouth. Not joining the conversation or much less cared. He was also reading a book.

“What? You’re not even gonna fight for a place, Ace? Hey! That rhymed!” one of the twins yelled earning an annoyed face from Ace before he swallowed his food.

“I don’t care if I go last. Fighting for it seems worthless and besides, we will still get our time teaching that pain in a b\*\*\* of a Princess.”

Why does this guy hate me so much?

“Better watch your words with her, Ace. The tongue is sharper than a weapon. Even though you didn’t hurt her physically, you can still hurt her emotionally.” Nate warned while the twins glared at him.

“Besides, Ace.” Fred added “She’s a girl. Very delicate with their feelings. I don’t even know what she had done to you to deserve your hate.”

I don’t even know if I should feel insulted in this conversation or not. And most importantly, I don’t even know why I am eavesdropping!

“So says the Princes.” Ace mocked. “Fine, you don’t have to repeat it. I got the point.” I think Ace needs another slap with my foot

“Ignore him. Let’s just do something progressive like making the schedule for the training. Any suggestions on how to make the sequence?”

“Oh, I know! Let’s play a game.” Nate suddenly suggested. All the attention was on him now. I was curious too so I leaned in a bit.

My dumb self even thought of joining.

“What game?” Fred asked slightly worried since it’s Nate after all. The twins though, seemed pretty excited while Ace seemed busy eating and would occasionally raise his head to give them an annoyed look.

“Whoever catches the Princess first shall be the first one and can have the whole day with her tomorrow. The second can have the next day, so on and so forth.”

“Fine by me.” Fred leaned on his chair contentedly.

“Alright!” The twins shouted in glee.

I was leaning too much and I slipped. “Hick!” I suddenly blurted out. I quickly covered my mouth with my hand when I had realized what I had done. I just revealed my presence. All heads turned to me. I waved awkwardly. “H-hey. Good morning.” I squeaked and got up. Slowly, I felt my way to the exit while keeping my gaze on them. “Lovely day! Sorry for disturbing you. Please continue with your fancy way of eating.” I laughed nervously and grabbed a random vase to cover my face.

## Chapter 8 Cat and Mice inside the Castle

“Good morning, Princess Rose.” They said in unison. Now, why on Earth are they being creepy?



And...UGH! I really hate being called a princess!

“By any chance. Have you heard what we were talking about just now?” One twin asked curiously while batting his lashes at me innocently.

“Of course not. Because that is rude. And...not nice.” I avoided their gaze. I was not that good at lying.

“Something tells me that she did hear us.” Ren sang, having an evil glint in his eyes as he communicated with his brother with his eyes. Nate and Fred were quick to notice this and suddenly, all heads turned to me again.

Only one thought screamed in my mind: Run.

Picking up my dress, I ran. I could hear the boys shuffling and the sounds of footsteps echoing inside. I made swift turns, not knowing where to go but as long as I can get away from them.

A thought suddenly occurred to me. Why was I running when I was already aware that the queen intends for me to have my training since yesterday? I know that I wasn't ready for the training but that isn't enough of a reason to run away. Maybe it's the thought of being chased that triggered a sort of reaction from me to run.

I stopped running when I put a good distance between us and put both my hands on my knees as I tried to catch my breath. With the size of this castle, it's easy to lose them. And it's easy for me to say that I too am lost.

“Great,” I muttered.

I continued to walk. Each time admiring the beautiful views from the floor to ceiling windows. Each window has a red curtain at the sides. It feels like you're walking in a Disney movie castle. The floor was made of white marble. Many stands held a flower vase with different flowers from it giving the castle a wonderful aroma. I'm guessing that they change the flowers every day and use the flowers from the garden outside my room. It's like there's magic involved in growing the flowers since the other flowers were not meant to bloom in this season.

From the ache on both of my feet, I'm guessing that I have walked for a long time. I even think that I have toured only a half of this castle. I also

remembered some places, which would be helpful shortly in case I need to hide for emergencies.

I went straight and saw that up ahead, there are two ways which I needed to choose from, three if you consider going straight. I was deciding on whether I should go to the right, left or the straight one, when not one, but two Princes emerge from both sides.

Ren and Dan both stopped to look at each other, panting, before shaking their heads. I'm guessing that they haven't seen me yet, which I am currently standing at least 20 feet away from them.

No place to hide so I covered my face with my hands as if it would help. Why doesn't my brain work at the best of the time!?

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They were about to turn when their heads snapped in my direction. A bright grin plastered on their faces as they composed their posture.

"Hello there, Princess!" One greeted me while the other gave me a boyish smirk. "Going somewhere?"

"Princess? I am the castle ghost. I am not a p-princess." I stuttered. They began to advance at me slowly as a predator would to a prey. And I don't want to be the prey. "Actually," I said as I slowly took a step backward. "I'm kinda busy today and I guess you guys are too so let's just call this a day, Okay? You do your thing, I'll do my thing. It's a win-win. What do you say?" I offered.

One of them shook his head while the other was the one who talked. "Actually, you are our thing so we can't call it a day as you say." He paused. "Hey, it rhymed!"

I hate running...I should just give up.

I took long strides backward to keep a lot of distance between me and the Princes. One of them shook his head. "I think she's going to run away any minute now, brother. That means that we will have to chase her again." Ren nodded his head in agreement. "I know. The only problem is that there is a rule that says 'no running in the castle'." Then he had a mischievous

grin on his face before he added. "But I don't consider this running, I call this chasing." He smiled that evil smile of his.

That was all I needed as I ran to the way that I came from and away from the brothers. Both were now hot on my heels.

"Better run fast Princess cause we're catching up pretty fast!" Dan called and his voice was dangerously close. He's taunting me.

"Jerks!" I called back and ran faster and almost tripped on my foot but quickly regained balance.

One of them blew in my ear. I screamed and ran faster if that was even possible. I heard both of them crackling with laughter behind me and I stopped in my tracks. Both of them clutching their stomachs from laughing. What I saw in front of me made my blood boil.

They were toying with me.

Out of anger, I took both of my shoes off and aimed each one to their heads. Unfortunately, they caught each one with their hand. Now each twin was holding one pair of my shoes.

Dan smiled again. "You know, Ren. I think we should return this to her." He said, indicating my shoe which they now have in their hands.

"I think you're right. It's only proper for a gentleman like us to give this to her personally." Ren winked.

"You can have it! As a token of my hatred." I hissed and ran again. This time, not looking back. "Damn it!"

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"Language!!" They both shouted, amused clear in their voice.

"Shut up!" I yelled. I always wanted a prince to chase me while holding one of my shoes in his hands as he carefully put it on my foot and lived happily ever after in a castle. You know, all those cliché love story things. But never did I dream to have two of those Princes chasing me and me running away from them in a castle. Plus running around barefooted.

Why can't I be transported to a place with decent princes!?

I was busy fussing with my dreams that I didn't notice that both Fred and Nate were walking far ahead of me. I prayed that they wouldn't look here, but I guess that this isn't my lucky day since they just turned in my direction. They both grinned and made their way in the direction.

"Princess!" Nate and Fred called.

oh @\$%^&\*()!!!

I stopped as I realized that I was completely trapped. Behind me were the twins and in front of me were Nate and Fred.

Since I don't really have a choice right now, the only thing I did was stop and pray. The next thing I knew was Dan and Ren crashing into Fred and Nate when they tried to dodge me. Both sides crashing to the ground with a thud.

I take it back. Luck was still on my side. "Hallelujah!!" I screamed and clapped my hands in delight. Not wasting any more time I ran in the opposite direction. The boys were just getting on their feet when they saw me running and went after me. Since I was barefooted, I can now run faster without slipping.

When I turned to the right, I went inside the room that I saw first and locked it behind me. I leaned against it while covering my mouth with both of my hands as I listened for them outside. My heart pounded in my chest. I could hear their voices and footsteps, then they were gone.

I sighed in relief. I thank God for my awesome luck. I guess I survived this day without the training. I hope the Queen will know of this. I would surely rub it on her face.

Someone cleared their throat which startled me. I gave out a loud squeak and dropped to the ground.

"Spare me, please! I just don't want to go to the training. I just wanna go home! Please kill the Queen and not me." I begged. I don't know what came up to me when I said this.

“Easy child. It’s just me. And why would I kill my beloved wife?” I raised my eyes and was met with yellow orbs that stared back at me. I let out the breath that I didn’t notice that I was holding.

“Oh. It’s just you ‘uncle’.” I said as I rolled my eyes. King or not, he’s still a part of this plan that I really have no idea. He was sitting on a chair with a wooden table in front of him. To his right were large bookshelves and to his left was a table with a bottle of wine on top of it and a painting on the wall.

## ADVERTISEMENT

The King chuckled, wrinkles showing on his forehead. “You amuse me, child. No one has ever rolled their eyes at me or told me to kill my wife for fear that they may lose their head.”

“So am I gonna lose my head now?” I raise an eyebrow at him. He didn’t seem like the king who would do that.

He shook his head, amusement still lingered on his face. “No.” he paused and looked at my form which is still by the door. “By the way, child. Who are you hiding from?”

“If I tell you, will you promise not to give me away?” I looked at his eyes so I would know that he wouldn’t be lying. I can always tell if a person is lying by just looking through their eyes. I don’t know but their eyes would twitch if they do.

The King shrugged. “Depends on the reason.” When he saw my expression he took it back. “Okay, I promise I won’t.”

I saw that truth in his eyes and decided to tell him. “I was hiding from the Princes.”

The King had a confused look on his face, probably wondering why I would do such a thing. “Well, why are you hiding then? They didn’t do anything inappropriate, did they?”

I shook my head. “No, that’s not it. I don’t know if you know of this but did you remember what the Queen said yesterday about my training to be a Princess?” I asked.

The King nodded. "Yeah, good luck with that." He muttered to himself but it was loud enough that I could hear it.

I pointed a finger at him. "I'm going to pretend that I didn't hear that." He raised both hands as if in surrender. "Anyway, the princes are playing a game of catch to see who goes first. Guess who's the prey?" I exclaimed.

"You?" The King gasped dramatically. "And is that the reason why you're running? Wouldn't it be better if you just let them catch you and get it over with?" He looked at me with pity but I could still see the hint of a grin.

"Oh shut up! The least you can do is help your lovely niece." I joked. His smile lowered a little and he looked to the side as if thinking of something. Guilt was present in his eyes. "Actually, I didn't know. I just expected this. It seems that she has made her move pretty fast." He said so low that I couldn't almost hear it.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

The King jumped in his seat. He probably didn't mean for me to hear it. "Nothing." His eyes twitched. He's lying.

## Chapter 9 PRINCE or a Therapist

I narrowed my gaze at the king. "I don't know what to say, my King, but you're hiding something, aren't you?"

He looks like he's debating on whether he would tell me or not. Then he sighed. "I guess that you have the right to know. But you must not interrupt me when I explain. And please keep your voice low, she might hear us."

"Okay? Know what?"

"Do you ever wonder why the Queen would need someone to choose the future King instead of picking one by herself?" He asked.

"Since the beginning of all this," I admitted.

He nodded and placed both his elbows on top of the table and intertwined them and placed his head on top of it. "Well, that was just an excuse for the real reason."

“I knew it!” I grinned in excitement. “Do I get a special task? Like do I have to defeat someone with my otherworldly powers?”

“I-” He paused. “I do not know what you are saying, but I do believe that even though Thalia is not as peaceful as we would like it to be, we sure aren’t at war to ‘defeat’ our enemy.” He explained.

I slumped on the ground. So I don’t get any powers then. “So for what special reason was, I called here for?”

“In this world, my wife has the power to open a portal to your world. Since the Queen can go back and forth between the two worlds, she has become fond of your world-.....what do you call that? Oh! Yes! Romance stories. After each story’s endings, she would always complain that the people’s lives don’t end in books, it should always carry on, so she thought of something. She would make a real-life love story in this castle. One that she would be able to see how it will grow, from the beginning to the end. And guess who are the characters? You and the Princes that you are hiding from.” He ended. His eyes are now on me. Waiting for my reaction.

It took me a second to process his words. When they finally made sense, something just snapped in me. My blood boiled at this information as I just realized something.

“What?!” I shouted, not caring if the Princes would hear my screams.

The King raised both hands in front of him, trying to calm me down. “Shhh! Calm down. She might hear us!” He whispered.

“Calm down?! So I was dragged to this place to become a character for her romance fantasy and not to be a hero with superpowers!?” My reason for being angry was petty.

“I’m serious, she might hear you!”

“Then let her hear me! I am not a pawn.” I didn’t know what I did, but I remember grabbing one of the books from the shelf to steady myself. I pulled it off, attempting to throw it against the room.

“Not that!” The King yelled.



Too late I had already pulled it, but it didn't come off, instead, I heard a soft click and the shelf started to part. Both sides moved sideways revealing another room. On the couch sat the Queen. Her head turned in my direction as she paused what she was reading. "Rose, if you'll do a rampage, then you could at least have done it outside. I could hear your screams but your words were jumbled."

My fist clenched at my sides while the King's facepalmed and said "See? I told you she could hear us!" So this is what he meant when he said that she could hear us.

## ADVERTISEMENT

My eyes were still glued on the person sitting on the couch so casually as if she had got no care in the world. She sighed. "If you have nothing to say then-"

"You!" I shouted. My temper rises at an extremely dangerous level. She took my life away, my family, and my friends and brought me to a place so foreign to me so that I could be someone that I don't want to be. To be a part of her stupid ideas.

Her face scrunched up in confusion. Looking at me as if I had gone crazy. "Me?"

"This!" I gestured at my dress and the place. "Everything! Did you take me to this place just to be what? A part of your silly role-playing fantasy!!" My fist was clenched so tight that my knuckles had gone white.

The Queen's eyes had bulged out. "You know? How?" Her eyes landed on her husband, who shrugged. She nodded her head, understanding. "Ahh, I see..."

"That's it? That's all you have to say?!" I was trying to keep my cool so I wouldn't choke her. "You took me here for a petty reason! If it were something dire I might have considered it but playing for a romance role? Go find another girl!"

"I wouldn't just pick any girl. Your heart truly desired to escape your world."



“Listen to me. Bringing me here to grant me a wish and expecting a romance to bloom in front of you are two different things!” I yelled. “Ah damn it! Of all the genres you picked romance. I hope you’ll get abducted by aliens so they will experiment on your brain for having a poor taste!”

I heard the Queen whisper to her husband. “What’s an alien?” Before I burst out of the room. Blindly running away. I don’t care if the Princes will catch me. I just want to be alone.

I ran. My feet are now cold against the marbled floor. My vision is getting blurry from anger. I wish a hole would just swallow me. Anything to leave this heck of a place. I want to go home.

“Romance my b\*\*\*!” I grumbled.

Did I really want to escape my original world? Maybe, but not to become a pawn for someone else’s fantasy of romance. Well, at least I now know that reason why I am here. Unlike the other heroines in the novels that I read.

I stopped in front of one of the doors. Library, I read. I want to go to the library. It had always been my sacred place of comfort. The smell of old pages always comforted me. Even better since I wanted to be alone. I figured no one would be in here. I opened the door and went inside. The smell of old leather did comfort me. It reminded me of home. I closed the door behind me and I slumped onto the ground. Bringing my knees to my chest as I started to sulk and grumble some curses.

I would do anything to make their lives miserable. I would make them hate me until they will be forced to kick me out of here. The queen will not get what she wants. I am just not the right girl for this. I never liked the romance.

But I do admire pretty faces.

“If you’re done, can you please get up? It’s an unsightly sight for a Princess.”

Startled, I quickly lifted my head and saw that on one of the couches in the center of the library, sat Ace holding an open book. Probably in the middle of reading. He didn’t look at me when he spoke. He continued to read. His back pressed against the sofa. His face was so calm as he read.

“What are you doing here?” I asked.

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“Correction, what are you doing here?” He didn’t even bother to look up from the book that he is reading. I guess that he would rather read than talk to me.

I didn’t answer his question at first. Not knowing if I should tell him or not. I finally settled on the safest route. “I just wanted to be alone,” I muttered honestly.

“Why?” He asked. Eyes still glued to the book.

I glared daggers at him. How simple was it to look at a person while she’s talking? “What’s it to you?” I said bitterly as I rocked back and forth on the floor.

“If you want to mope then at least sit on that couch over there.” he pointed to a couch across from him while holding the book in the other hand. “It’s better than sitting on the floor. It’s cold.”

I ignored him and continued to rock back and forth. Not even bothering to give him a glance or an answer. This is silly.

The silence was growing thick, which I welcomed until he let out a sigh and closed the book that he was reading. He finally looked up and glanced at me. “You’re not gonna listen to me are you?”

I continued to rock while I avoided his gaze. I can tell that he was pissed at me for ignoring him. Serves his royal b\*\*\*.

With a swift move, he put his book down on the couch and walked in my direction, and stopped just in front of me. He kneeled until his eyes were leveled with mine. “You are a stubborn girl. Come on, get up.” He ordered while tugging at my arm.

I narrowed my eyes at him and pulled my arm away. “And you’re a heartless self-centered royal jerk!” I stayed where I was still glaring at him.

“Well, you left me no choice then.” With a quick movement, he threw me on his shoulder. I yelped in surprise.

“Let me go!!” I screamed and kicked while I pounded on his back.

“Ow! Stop screaming. It hurts to the ears.” He rubbed his ear and winced as I continued to scream. “Quite! This is a library so shut up!” He hissed, shouting himself.

“Ace-”

“That’s PRINCE Ace for you!” He cut me off.

I just rolled my eyes even though he can’t see me. Why should I? I can call him whatever I want. “Whatever. I know you’re a jerk but will you please put me down?! You’re like a creep! Put me down! Now.” I continued to pound on his back.

“As you wish, Princess.” With just a flick of his arms, I was thrown on a leather couch with a thud. I bounced once and almost fell if I hadn’t grabbed on the back. I glared at him as he made his way to the couch that he was sitting on a while ago, which was across from me. He grabbed the book that he was reading and placed them on his lap as he stared at me with a raised eyebrow. Probably wondering why I was glaring at him.

“So, want to talk about it?” He finally asked.

## Chapter 10 Touch Move

I stopped laughing. My eyes went wide in surprise. I saw him smirk at me at my gaping face. “H-How did you.....know?”

He shrugged his shoulders as if it were obvious. “Well, it was pretty obvious from the way you dressed and the way you act. Plus the nonsense that the Queen is blabbering about training you like a Princess. Everyone knows that a princess is already trained in their childhood days.”

My mouth formed an ‘O’. “So who else knows?” I asked.

He thought for a moment. “All the Princes know.”

“Crap.”

“By the way,” He shifted on his seat. “Since I had caught you first that means that you and I will have our training tomorrow.”

“Double crap!”

“Oh, shut up. You’re not the only one who’s in agony you know. It’s all your fault.”

I raised my head and glared daggers at him. “My fault?!”

“Yes, if you had just sat on the couch as I asked you to, then I wouldn’t have to carry you and make contact!” Our voices were already rising.

What the hell is this? Touch move!?

“Excuse me but if you just minded your own business, then none of this would have happened!”

“What am I supposed to do?! Leave you there on the floor? Fine! Next time I’ll let you freeze to death on the spot!”

“Get off your high horse. Freezing to death just by sitting on the floor isn’t possible!”

“Not yet. But I hope you’re the first one!”

“Fine!” I spat

“Fine!” He spat back. He raised his hands in surrender as he got up. “You know what? Just meet me here in the morning. I’m leaving for today.”

Not wanting to be left alone I followed. He stopped and his head turned to me. “Why are you following?”

“I’m leaving too.”

“No! I’m leaving first. You stay here.” He ordered, not wanting me to tag along.

“No way! I’m leaving too.” I started to make my way around him but he stopped me.

“Stay!” He ordered.

“What am I? A dog? Move!” I pushed.

“I said I was leaving first! Don’t cut in!”

“Who are you? My mom? Move!” I pushed harder but he was too strong. We wrestled like that until both of us finally gave up. “Alright alright! Well, go out together!” He growled. He walked to the double doors and opened with. He turned to me and jerked his head. A gesture that meant to get my b\*\*\* out of here before he changes his mind. I quickly got out with a victorious smirk.

He closed the door behind him and gave me a murderous glare. Wow, if looks could kill I would be dead.

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“Now get out of my sight before I might do something that I might regret.”

“What? You’re going to be nice? Eww!”

“Don’t get ahead of yourself.” He started to leave when his eyes lowered to my bare feet. He raised his eyebrow. “Where’re your shoes?”

“Err...” I hesitated. Where are they? I remember throwing them at the twins...

“Princess!!” To my far left, I heard the twins calling me. Each of them holding a shoe. Yep, my shoes are with them alright.

Ace turned his attention to the two, his eyes focusing on my shoes in their hands. Understanding flashed in his face as the answer to his question appeared in front of him. A smile found its way to his lips. “I’ll be on my way now. Good luck and don’t forget about tomorrow.” With that, he exited as the twins approached, panting.

“W-where...have you...been?” One panted while the other continued for his brother. “We...have been...looking everywhere!”

“I was hiding,” I said.

“Where?” Twin one asked, finally recovered.

“Someplace where you two aren’t.”

Twin one suddenly became interested in the floor and pouted. Twin two saved his brother from his embarrass\*\*ment when he decided to ask, “Was that Ace?” He looked in the direction that Ace just went.

I nodded my head. “Yep, he was just leaving”. Twin two pouted. “Does that mean that he’s first?”

I sighed. “Unfortunately, yes”

Twin one decided to step up. “Well, at least we’re the second. Are we?”

“Yes.” I nodded. Acting as I’ll cooperate with the training.

“Good.” Both Princes went on their knees as they offered me my shoe. “My lady, can we?” Ren asked.

“No. Leave it there on the floor,” I said with a deadpan face.

But it would seem as if the twins are deaf. Deaf twin two took my foot and placed the shoe on my foot. Deaf twin one did the same after.

Both stood up in perfect synchronization, perks of being a twin I guess. They both have big smiles on their faces as they bowed. “We will be expecting your time the day after tomorrow princess.” Said twin two. “Until then take care and have a pleasant day.” They winked and left.

I made my way around the castle, wanting to return to my room. I was pa\*\*ing one of the floor-to-ceiling windows when, suddenly, the curtains opened and Nate startled me by blocking my way. “Found you!”

“The \$-?\$&@€[€\+[^]€81!1!!!!!!” I yelped when I was startled.

Nate gave me a funny look. “What was that?”

I coughed and cleared my throat. "You scared me!"

"Oops, sorry." He gave me an apologetic smile. "By the way, has anyone caught you yet?" He asked.

What am I? "Yes. Two actually. Ace was first, then followed by the twins." I said.

Disappointment flashed in his eyes. It was quick when he pouted. "Cheeky that Ace is and I thought I was the first. Well, at least I was not last." He shrugged. "So, see you after two days?"

## ADVERTISEMENT

"Can do anything about it?"

"Of course you can! No one can resist this charm!" He pointed to his face as he flashed me a smile that would make boys run of their money.

"Please! I've seen better." At least in movies.

"Really?" He fake gasped. "Oh well, but none of them is as lucky as me to be in front of a beautiful lady such as yourself." He winked before leaving me with a flushed face. "See you around Princess!" He called, then he was gone.

"Stupid Princes and their flirty attitude. And this stupid castle with their stupid queen." I muttered as I turned right in the direction of my room. It took me a while to get there because of the size of this castle.

When I finally reached the floor to my room, I saw Prince Fred leaning against the door. His blond hair slightly covers his closed eyes. His head was lowered and his arms were crossed over his chest. He looked so charming. Was he waiting for me?

I made my way towards him, careful not to make a sound. His breathing was even. I think he's asleep. I leaned in to see if he was really asleep and couldn't help but notice the way his hair would fall to his eyes when he is leaning down, his long lashes, his high cheekbones, strong jaw, sharp nose, and the way that his mouth would move as he slept.

I feel like such a creep.

Oh and he smells so good! Kinda like pine cones. His eyes fluttered open and stared into my gray ones.

I gasped in surprise as I backed away.

Fred covered his mouth as he yawned and rubbed his eyes before he looked at me. From the look on his face, he probably just noticed me. "Hmm? Princess, how long were you standing there?" He asked.

"I-I-I.....I just got here!" I stuttered, feeling relieved that he didn't ask what I was doing.

Fred noticed where he was leaning and abruptly straightened himself up. "I'm sorry. Was I blocking your way?" He asked. "I was just waiting for your arrival."

Oh right. The princes and their stupid games with a castle and a stupid queen.

I laughed nervously as I tucked a strand of hair behind my ear as gulped. "Sorry, but the boys beat you to it. You were the last..." I said.

He surprised me by laughing. "Well, I guess that waiting for you here instead of looking for you was a bad idea. Oh well, you know what they say 'save the best for last.'" He bowed, then gave me a grin. "Until then, Princess. Have a good day." with that he left. Leaving me staring at his retreating back.

He's handsome.

I opened my door and walked in while banging the door closed. I walked like a zombie towards my bed and slumped against it. I bounced once before the bed settled. I grabbed a pillow and buried my face in it.

"Getting comfy?"

"Shi-" I quickly sat up on my bed.

"None of that language dear."



I glared at her. Grabbed my shoe and aimed at her threateningly. "What do you want?" The Queen sat on a chair at the far left of my room. A book in her hand. She shut it when she turned to me. Sadness in her eyes. She seemed to have aged a day. "Look, Rose. I didn't know....and I'm sorry."

Did I hear her right? She's apologizing? Grab a wall, the world is about to end. I scoffed at her. "If you're truly sorry, then the least you can do is send me back."

She shook her head. "That I cannot do."

"Why?" I asked. Suddenly feeling tired.

## ADVERTISEMENT

"The magic that brought you here...weeeeelllll it isn't ready yet." She smiled innocently.

"What do you mean by that? What isn't ready?"

As an answer, she brought out a clear fist-size crystal orb. Something was thick and swirling inside of it like black smoke or mist. I stared at it dumbfoundedly. "What is that?"

"This is the thing that brought you here."

I gapped "Really? I remember it being a flat paper and not an orb."

She rolled her eyes. "Honey, you remember that I'm a fairy with magic, right? I used some of my magic to morph this thing to look like a charm."

My mouth formed into an 'o'. For some reason I guess I now truly believe that I really am from a different world and that the queen is a fairy. And that I have no magic and I am not a heroine to save this world from a demon lord.

I waved my hand at her. "I don't care about the details. I only want to know when that thing will be ready to take me back home." So I can sulk and cry that I was taken to a different world as a romance protagonist.

The Queen scratched her head and avoided looking at me. A sure sign that it was bad. "I don't want to disappoint you, but I...don't know...."

"What?!"

"Now watch your blood pressure, my dear. I heard that it's not good-"

"What do you mean that you don't know? Explain. Now!" I demanded. I was pretty close to throwing my shoe at her.

"This magic is unpredictable. The amount of magic required to bring a human to our side depends on the amount of baggage they have. By baggage I mean emotional but sometimes it could be because of blood. In your case, you completely drained it. We have to wait until the mist will be gone. You will know if it will be fully charged when the ball turns into a solid ocean blue and would radiate a brilliant light. When that happens you can decide if you would stay or leave. Until then you're stuck." She explained.

"Can you at least-"

"I can't give you powers either. Zero magic means zero."

"When that thing will be ready, I would surely leave this heck of a place," I said.

A ghost of a smile appeared on her lips. "You wouldn't know that."

"Oh I know and my decision is final."

She shrugged. "Hmm....we'll see about that in the future, won't we? After all, with all the handsome Princes in this castle, you might change your mind." She winked, got up, and left the room closing the door behind her.

I sighed.

I yelped when the door opened once again and the Queen's head peaked out. "Oh, By the way, I searched the word alien in Merriam – Webster Dictionary." With a flick of her wrist, an iPad appeared. "It says-"

"Get out!!" I threw a pillow at the door and she was gone. Sheesh!!! Give the person some rest!!

Dinner was served to me that night as I was reading the book that Ace had lent me. I just sat there on the bed. What does she mean by me changing my mind? She's still up with her plan?! The nerve. No worries. For now, I will 'cooperate' with her.

I'll take the lesson. I'll try to know more about this world as much as I can. For now, all I know is that I am in a different realm and only the queen can bring me back. It's a realm where princes and princesses exist. Okay, I think this much I can handle.

Until I can return home that is.

Chapter 11 A lesson with Ace –

"Will you stop doing that?" Ace asked me, pretty annoyed if I do say so myself.

We're currently at the library for my first lesson: History and the important people of each kingdom.

He kept on talking and explaining things. Continuously, if I might add. I was sleepy and uninterested. Who can blame me? And why do I even have to learn their history? Whenever I tried to sleep this off, he would snap his fingers in front of my face. So I ended up doodling on a piece of paper to entertain myself. Oftentimes I would blankly stare at the ceiling and unconsciously make faces that cause him to get distracted. Steams would have appeared from his ears because of how pissed off he was. I think he prevented himself from punching me so much that his knuckles had gone white.

I am trying to listen to what he's saying but all the terms that he is using make it hard for me to understand!

"It's obvious that you hate me and it is no secret that I also dislike you, so why can't we just agree to drop this lesson?" I said as I batted my eyes at him innocently.

"Not gonna happen." He said as he opened a book. "This is a part of your lesson. So you'll have to learn it."

“Nothing you even say makes any sense to me.” I slumped on my seat. He didn’t bother to look up this time as he read something from a leather-bound book. His jaw clenched in annoyance, his black hair falling as he bent his head slightly forward to read in silence.

“Then I guess you need to try harder.”

I pouted. “Easy for you to say. You were born here. I was born waaaay over there.” Feeling disappointed, I started whistling.

“You are an annoying Princess!”

“Why thank you.”

His head perked up and gave me an annoyed look. “That wasn’t a compliment.”

“For me, it is,” I said and began to get comfy on the couch. I haven’t gotten much sleep since yesterday that my eyes started to close on their own. Not even a minute later and he was shaking me awake.

“No sleeping during cla\*\* hours.” He said and continued to shake me. I tried to ignore him but I was getting dizzy from his shaking. My head bobbing back and forth.

Can’t this guy leave me alone?

I reached out and slapped his hand away. “Go away,” I said as I buried my face on the couch. A minute later and I heard a sound. I took a peek and I saw Ace holding a bag of cookies. He smirked when he saw that I was staring at it. “Now you’re awake?”

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“No, I’m not.” I blushed and looked away.

He started shaking the bag of cookies drawing my eyes at them again.

“These are cookies baked by a well-known baker in Thalia. His bakery is so famous that countless dukes and even royals come to Thalia just to buy these.”

I stared at him. "You're bluffing, aren't you? The 'baker' is actually the chef of this castle."

There was a long pause.

Ace suddenly cleared his throat. "Of course not. Why would you even think of that?"

I raised an eyebrow at him. "Are you taking me for a fool? You said that he is famous. Naturally, he would be hired by a nearby royal, which would be the king and queen."

He stared at me. "What?" I asked.

"You actually got the name of this kingdom right. That's a first."

"I did!?" I gasped. "Wow, I am actually smarter than I thought. I could become a scholar."

"Now what is the name of the kingdom that was destroyed in the year 455? Specifically 10 years ago."

"You guys are in the year 465!?"

Ace frowned. "I asked you a question."

"In case you haven't noticed, I was already surprised by the current year and now you are asking me for the name of a ruined kingdom? I don't know! Hogwarts!?"

"You're hopeless! You didn't even get that right."

"I'm trying here!"

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"I said try harder!" He was yelling now.

"Well maybe if you can speak in a language I can understand then it might not be difficult! Back in my world, we have presidents and vice presidents. Only a few countries have royalty these days."

“Then what are you? A plebian?”

“I’m a student who doesn’t even bother to do my homework and you expect me to learn this world’s history? Sir, I bid you good luck.”

He sighed and turned back. He didn’t even bother to look at me as he said that. He just went back to the couch opposite of mine and sat down. He sighed and ran a hand through his hair. A sign of his frustration. He then grabbed a book and started to read. “Self-study from now on.”

I frowned. “Hey, Ace.” He didn’t look at me as I called for his name. I wanted to ask him something.

Maybe he didn’t hear me?

“Excuse me, Ace? Yooahoo!!” I waved my hands for him to notice me.

He continued to flip through a book. Pretending not to hear when it was pretty obvious that I was calling him. I know he heard me. My voice was already loud enough. Why is he not answering?

Oh I see

“PRINCE Ace?” This time he looked up and gave me a questionable glance. “Yes?” He asked.

)/@ @33&&/-&

Stupid-Arrogant-Royal-Pain-in-the-b\*\*\*!!!

I clenched my fist at my sides because of my annoyance towards the prince in front of me. I forced myself to smile despite his att\*\*ude. “Can I ask you a question?”

“No.” He went back to reading.

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I’m gonna kill this Prince.

“Why are you so grumpy?” I asked. Patience slowly faded. He didn’t even answer my question and proceeded to read. I might go wolf on him now and tear him limb from limb! Hopefully.

“There are things that you must learn in this kingdom. You must first learn the ranks and positions in each kingdom so you can know your place. As you might know, the king ranks the highest. Followed by the Queen, then the Prince and Princess.” His lips moved as he talked. His eyes were glued to what he was reading.

This guy is really serious about this.

My gaze darted to the bag of cookies on the table. I silently made my way towards it.

“Are you listening, Princess?” He looked up from the book that he was reading. He raised a questioning eyebrow at me. Face a mask of seriousness as he looked at me. I don’t need to be a mind reader to know that he didn’t appreciate my lack of interest.

“I...uh....yes,” I said and hid the cookies behind me.

“Oh really?” He asked. Not buying my answer to his question. He folded his fingers in front of him and placed his chin on top. “What did I just say just now?” He raised an eyebrow at me.

“Easy.....’What did I just say just now?’.” I said. I know that wasn’t what he meant, but that was the only thing I could think of.

“Your sarcasm always shows up in times like these. Let’s be serious now and answer my question properly.” His tone was dead serious. If I answer with another sarcasm, it might be my last. A small smile found its way to his lips when he saw my speechless form. He straightened up.

“You were really not listening.”

“You know what? I should go upstairs and look for more books to read. Probably a dictionary so I can understand some of the words that you are saying and not purely historical. Be right back!” I lied. I only ran upstairs to eat the cookies I stole.

It took me a while to get back as I made sure to finish all the cookies and leave no traces of crumbs on my face. I took a random book with me that if Ace ever asks, I'll have proof. And if the book is now the right one then I'll just pretend to be ignorant.

At least that was the plan, but when I came down, he was nowhere to be found. I looked around the library to find him. He must have left somewhere. I sat on the couch once again and closed my eyes to take a little break.

## Chapter 12 – I mean PRINCE Ace

I woke up feeling rejuvenated. The dreams that I just had were awesome! I was floating in a cloud of cotton candy, Prince Ace was my servant and I finally told him how I feel. That he is emo wanna be punk.

I felt great after saying it. Speaking of Ace. I wonder where he is. Is he back?

My eyes scanned my surroundings until I found him at the door, talking to someone outside. Maybe it was a servant? He was only wearing a white long-sleeved undershirt that was tucked in his pants. It framed his muscular body well.

He said a quick thank you and closed the door. When he saw me, he gave me a tight smile that would make me cringe in fear.

What did I do now?

“Had a nice dream, Princess?” He asked. His lip was twitching as he forced a smile at me. Maybe he was angry that I had fallen asleep during his absence.

“Actually, I had a wonderful dream.” In my dream, I saw my family and my friends there. I felt at home and content.

His jaw clenched even tighter as he jerked his head towards the door  
“Come on. The others are waiting. Lunch is ready.” He held the door open, waiting for me.



I sat up and felt a soft material fall from my shoulder. I picked it up, it was Ace's dark blue coat. It made me wonder what it was doing here with me.

Did he not see me sleeping and simply threw his coat there? How rude.

I made my way to the door, the coat in one hand as I brushed my hair with the other. I gave him his coat back when I reached the door. "Thank you." I was meant to say it sarcastically but stopped myself since I don't want to add more fuel to his already annoying form. We walked towards the dining room side by side. Neither of us said a word. I was afraid to make a sound for fear of him. He was releasing some sort of dark aura that can really eat you alive.

"Tell me," I jumped at the sound of his voice. "What were you dreaming?" He tried so hard to give me a friendly smile, which failed miserably since it looked more like a grimace. It could make anyone cry and pee themselves.

I put a little bit of space between us since I was getting scared of this Ace. It was as if he was pissed or something. "Why do you want to know?" I asked nervously.

"No reason. I just thought that you owe me that much since I let you sleep." He said. I thank my lucky stars when we reached the dining hall. Everyone was already seated and waiting for us. I sat beside Nate and sighed relief when Ace sat across from me and beside Fred. We began to eat and I made sure that this time, I had placed a table napkin on my lap. I began to stuff food in my mouth as Fred asked Ace about how our training is going. Ace glared at me as he muttered a reply. "Terrific."

I grinned at him with my mouth full of food. I heard Nate tsk beside me. "You should not stuff food in your mouth like that. And don't slouch." Nate said and chuckled when he saw me glaring at him.

"Not turn to teach yet so let me have this short freedom," I said as I shoved another sp\*\*\* full in my mouth. Nate continued to chuckle and tucked a piece of strand behind my ear.

"Nate, keep your hands off already," Dan complained while his brother, Ren, pouted. "Yeah, Nate. Don't tint her purity with your impure hands."

Nate moved up to my hair and dusted it. Torn pieces of paper fell from my hair. "Your hair has a lot of paper." He said.

My eyes widened and looked at Ace, who only stared at me and went back to eating. That jerk! It was definitely him!

Nate's attention went back to the twins for their previous comment. They stuck their tongue out at Nate. If this were an anime, Nate would have an angry mark on his head. Nate gripped his fork rather tightly. "I could stab you guys now and end this mess." He said as he forced a smile.

"Your highness." One of the twins said without any emotion like he was bored or something while the other continued in the same tone. "Nate is threatening our lives with a fork."

"Oh come now you boys. Don't start a fight now." King Luke said and shook his head at the boys. "Honestly."

The twins tsk at Nate three times. "Now look what you did Nate." One twin said. "You made the king angry." The other continued. It's amazing how the two of them know what the other one wants to say. I wonder if I had a twin...could be fun.

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Nate stood up and chased the twins as they hid behind Fred. "Now you boys. Settle down." Fred said to them as he tried to separate Nate and the twins. "The Princess is looking so please be on your best behavior."

So they have to be on their best behavior when I'm here?

Well, I wanna see some action so I devoured my meal faster. After that I got my table napkin and wiped it to my mouth and got up, leaving the dining hall. "I'm done," I said.

At the corner of my eyes, I saw Nate smirking at the twins and ran around the table to get them. The twins and Nate ended up running around the table while Fred tried to stop them. So this is how the Princes behave when the rest are out. Interesting. Just like children.

I made my way to the library when I saw that Ace had also gotten up from his seat.

Oh no, I don't want to have a lesson with him yet! Especially when he's in a bad mood.

I briskly walked to the library since running around when your stomach is full is not good for you. Ace also noticed what I was doing and increased his speed. Too bad for him that I had gotten to the library first and locked the door behind me.

I heard him knock outside.

"Who's there?" I asked even though I know that it was him.

"Don't play dumb with me. I know you know that it's me." He growled.

I wonder if he's related to a wolf or something. Growling like that.

"Open the door!" He screamed.

"Sorry, but the library is closed for today so please come back later." I walked back to my couch and with my pleasure, I saw a book that I wanted to read since I finished reading the first book.

"Rose, you open this door right now." He shouted. Voice rising from every word.

"Quiet! We're in the library." I said and grabbed the book while sitting on the couch and reading it. He didn't say anything anymore. I just heard his groan in frustration and heard the door rattle. I guess he was leaning on it.

Three minutes later and I heard him try to talk to me again in a much gentler tone. "Princess, please open the door so we can begin the lesson."

I smirked as I flipped onto another page and shifted my position so my stomach was laying flat on the couch. "Nope."

I heard him mutter some profanities before he quieted again. After a few minutes he tried again, this time his voice was laced with warning and

authority. "Princess, you open this door right now you hear?!" He said as he banged the door.

"The princess is currently not around. Please try again later." I heard him kick the door and shout some curses.

I have no idea where I found the courage to act as I do now, but it is somewhat relaxing.

I was just one page away when the door was banged loudly making me jump. "Open this damn door or I'll break it open!"

Wow. What a temper.

I ignored him and finished my reading. Just as I finished, I heard him bang the door repeatedly as if he was hitting it with his shoulder. He probably was.

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I set the book down and walked to the door. Now we wouldn't want it to break, do we? The door was already rattling on its hinges. When I opened the door, Ace almost fell to the ground but immediately balanced himself. I slapped a hand to my mouth to keep myself from laughing. I watched as he composed himself and glared daggers at me.

If looks could kill I'd be dead a hundred times already.

"Stupid, Princess." He muttered as he made his way to his seat. I followed.

"Thank you, kind sir. But please don't call me a Princess anymore." I said and sat down.

He raised an eyebrow at me. "Why?"

"I don't like to be called a Princess. It gets on my nerves." I shuddered. My mistake when I said that got on my nerves when I saw him smirk.

"If you hate it so much, then all the more reason to call you a Princess."

I knew this was coming when I said that. I have to watch my words from now on cause he might use them against me again. "Now, let's begin." He

declared. When he saw how unenthusiastic I was. He sighed. "What? Are you gonna sleep again?" He asked.

I shook my head. "No, I won't. But I might since things like these aren't my thing. If I can't sleep, then my consciousness might fly to somewhere else."

"Now that is a problem." I watched him as he rubbed his chin and thought for a moment. "What if I will just make a story out of it? Will that work?"

I have to say that I was impressed with Ace for his way of thinking. "It might."

"Alright so, once upon a time-" He started.

"Oh, not that crap again," I muttered and noticed him staring at me. I quickly covered my mouth with my hands. "Crap! Sorry. Please continue."

"So there was this Prince, who had two older sisters. One day, the eldest was asked by another prince from a different kingdom to marry him. Since she accepts she had no choice but to leave the throne to the second eldest sister.

The Prince had a friend, a duke. A duke is another royal, but not like the king and queen. Their sons and daughters are the ones who will take the throne if there aren't any heirs to another kingdom. They are also good candidates when the king is looking for someone to be betrothed to his son/daughter too. Dukes for males and Duchess for females."

"Like the queen and the king? They don't have an heir so does that mean that you and the boys are Dukes? Wait for no. You guys said you're princes. This is confusing." I asked. Afraid of the consequences since I just interrupted him. Surprisingly, he didn't go all Hulk on me and answered calmly. "No. The princes and I are born of royal blood from a different kingdom. We are real Princes...we just don't know what has gotten into the queen picking us instead of a neighboring Duke.

"So." Ace continued. "The prince's friend fell in love with his sister and again asked her hand in marriage. The Duke now becomes the new king and the sister becomes the new Queen. You see, when your rank is higher, your husband/wife's rank will also become the same level as yours."

“What happens to the Prince?” I asked.

“He remains a prince. If his friend and his sister, who is currently the king and queen die with no heir, then he succeeds to the throne.” He said flatly. He continued to explain to me something by making a storyline out of it. Even though he wasn’t good at it, he still forced himself for the sake of my learning.

I was surprised that I had learned a lot in such a short time. Ace was a good teacher if I do say so myself. “I want to say that it’s awesome, but the sword thing?” I said.

“Well, that’s the rules so we have to deal with it.” Ace looked out of the window to see that the light was still shining outside. “Seems like we finished early and had some more time.” I noticed that his eyes weren’t purely black, they were a dark shade of blue when hit by light. They are just so dark that you would mistake them as black.

I grinned. “Well, how about I’ll tell you something of my world?” I said and started to tell him how much we had improved. I told him about cars, airplanes, and other transportation rides. I also explained to him that we don’t use gold coins anymore and that our medium of exchange now is in the form of a dollar. He was leaning on his seat the whole time. He would often make comments like: “You guys use a piece of metal to take you to places?”, “You exchange valuables for a piece of paper?”, “How can a metal bird fly?”

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As I finished explaining things to him, he fell asleep.

And he goes all Hulk on me when I sleep.

I grabbed the book that he was holding and placed it on the table. His bangs were covering his eyes so I brushed them away with my hand. His skin is too smooth. I have to admit that he’s cute despite the monster-like attitude that he possesses. His lips are a beautiful shade of pink and he smells so good. I placed a hand on his cheek as I leaned closer.....

.....then used my other hand to grab a pen and draw on his face.

I draw circles around his eyes and draw a mustache above and below his lips. I also drew stars on his left cheek. On his forehead, I wrote. "Kick me."

I smirked as I placed the pen back on the table.

This is payback for him bullying me the first time we met.

During dinner, as Ace and I stepped into the dining hall, everyone stopped talking and starred at Ace. I, on the other hand, avoided everyone's gaze as I made my way to my seat beside Fred. Better be safe than sorry.

Ace noticed that they were staring at him, but proceeded to sit beside Nate, who was biting his lips to prevent himself from laughing. The King and queen kept on smiling while the twins didn't hold back and laughed hysterically. Fred covered his laugh with a cough. "Did you do that?" Fred whispered to me.

As an answer, I smiled cheekily at him and he laughed. "Nice." The twins said from beside Fred and gave me a thumbs up.

When the servants arrived to bring us our food the one who served Ace gasped and almost dropped the plate. "What?" Ace asked. "Is there something on my face? You kept staring at it." you can hear the annoyance in them.

"Y-your highness. What an...interesting change of image you have there." said the servant.

I know that my life is ticking away like a clock every second that pa\*\*ed.

"What are you talking about?" Ace asked, confused.

The servants held out a plate and showed Ace's reflection to it. Ace abruptly stood up and grabbed the plate and examined my handy work.

"How?" Then he turned to me, fury in his eyes and he gritted his teeth. I smiled at him. "You!" He screamed at me.

I gasped. "Me!"



“Why you!” As Ace began to reach for me. All of us, except the king and queen who acted as if this was normal, stood up. Nate pulled Ace back to prevent him from killing me while Fred shoved me behind his back. “I think this is the right time for you to return to your room.” He said as he tried to talk some sense back to Ace as the twins e\*\*\*\*\*ed me.

The scene with Nate, Fred, and Ace somehow reminded me of a meme with two ladies and a cat.

“Nice handy work.” One of the twins said and laughed as he walked beside me. The other was at my other side. “But don’t do that to us tomorrow or we’ll cry.” I laughed as I and the twins ran away from the dining hall, where Ace was shouting something about ways to kill me.

Well, he started it. I was just giving him a taste of his own medicine.

At least I don’t have to see him tomorrow, because I’ll have lessons with the twins on that day. Though I couldn’t imagine what kind of lesson it would be.

## Chapter 13 Double Trouble

Back pain. I feel like an old lady

Today was my training with the twin Princes about how to walk and act properly. They were a little strict, which really surprised me. I thought that this training today would end up becoming a game, but no, they are serious. Dead serious. We are currently in a huge dressing. Dan and Ren were both standing beside me as they watched. One of them, Dan, walked to the front and examined me. I countered his look with my glare. They actually put on name tags for me to easily tell them apart.

“Don’t slouch,” Ren said as he straightened my back once again. I gritted my teeth as I felt a sting on my back for straining it too much. We’ve been doing this for hours and I can’t even feel my back anymore. How can the royals do this all the time? That explains why the prince and princesses from storybooks would usually sneak out of the castle.

The twins seem like they were having fun every time I get frustrated and would often laugh at my bad posture. It makes me feel bad and angry at the same time. I was getting frustrated that I started calling them with the



wrong names on purpose. "Oopsie!! Sorry, Dan." I said. Ren's face twitched when I called him Dan.

"My name is Ren and not Dan! I thought you already knew who is who."

To be honest, I can slightly tell them apart. Both with the help of their name tags and the other for their mannerism.

I gasped. "Oh did I? I must have forgotten." I looked at Dan for help with my puppy dog eyes. He seemed to back away a little. Probably wanting to avoid being involved with the two of us. "Ren, Dan is being mean again," I complained to him.

Ren groaned in frustration. "This means war," he said while Dan gave me an evil smile and said. "Hmm...I think we should put a book on her head."

On reflexes, I screamed. "Oh heck no!"

The twins are evil.

"Relax, this will help you to keep your posture on and to keep you busy," Dan reassured me and muttered the last part more to himself as he placed a book on top of my head. The book felt heavy on my head as the weight pressed. It was a thick leather-bound book. It seemed old because the pages were already yellow.

"Now try walking while balancing that book on your head," Ren commanded. I did what they told me to and walked while balancing the book on my head. I was doing pretty good, but the only problem was that I looked like a drunken old geezer when I walked.

The boy's facepalm at me. Well good for them.

"Princess...not to be rude or anything but you lack grace." Dan commented, "Chest out, stomach in, and b\*\*\* out." I did what he told me to.

Just for the sake of annoying them, I exaggerated by putting my chest out and my b\*\*\* out too much, making me look like a duck. To add a little more twist, I made a duck face at them.

Dan's facepalmed at me as Ren went to a drawer at the far side of the room. I looked at him curiously as he brought something long and sparkly. Ren dusted them off first and walked in front of me, raising the things that he took.

I gasped and stared at it in horror.

High heels. Emphasis on the high. There's a reason why it was one letter away from spelling Hell.

"I think this would help you to walk properly," Ren said and bent down in front of him as if he would put it on.

"You're kidding me!" I screamed and removed my foot from his reach. Sure, the shoes are shiny and pretty but it's too high! I think it's at least 4 inches tall. I can't even walk with a good posture and they expect me to wear them?

Ren sighed and looked at me with tired eyes.

Am I really that difficult to teach?

"Rose, please. I promise you that it will help."

"No. You guys are just making fun of me." I said stubbornly and crossed my arms over my chest and smirked at him.

"Rose," he said warningly and gripped the shoes. I hope he will break them.

"Ren." I mocked in the same tone as his and smirked as he let out an exasperated sigh and ran a hand through his hair brown locks. He bit his lips and looked at Dan beside him and jerked his head towards me.

Before I could a\*\*ess the situation, Dan threw me over his shoulder and I yelped.

From my view over here, I can see Dan's b\*\*\*. It was pretty.

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I pounded on Dan's back and screamed at him to let me go. My attacks were futile because he didn't even flinch or say anything, in fact, he was

laughing. It didn't take long until he set me on the couch. He moved behind it and grabbed my shoulders to prevent me from escaping as Ren went in front of me again. He grabbed my foot and removed my flats and replaced them with heels. I tried to kick them away but Ren stopped my foot from doing so as he gripped them. I flinched at how tight he was holding them.

"Ren, let go! Let go of my foot!" I tried again but man was he strong. I gasped when I saw that he had moved his face in front of me. His face was too close for my liking as he looked at me with serious eyes, no hint of flirting like they used to. His breathing was hot against my skin making me shrink back. This was the difference between them. Although both of them are goofy in general, Ren's mood can easily switch into a serious one. Dan tends to lay back a lot and let his older brother handle things.

"Rose, if you want this lesson to be over with then please cooperate." His eyes told me that he doesn't want any funny business.

"And," I jumped in surprise when Dan, from behind me, lowered his head so he could whisper in my ear. His breath tickled my neck making shivers run down my spine. "If you don't want us to get angry then you'll do as we say. Get it?" he said.

I just nodded my head. Who knew that these two had a different side of them? I swallowed hard as they helped me up. I gripped at their hands as I tried to balance on my footing.

When I raised my head, the first thing that went into my mind was: Man! I like the view from up here.

I'm going on a trip. I'm going on a trip. I'm going on a trip.

"Rose, don't spread your legs that far apart. You look like you're ready to pee." Dan commented, attempting to lighten the mood. I suspect that my face looked like I was an animal giving birth.

"Please don't let me go," I said nervously as I continued to grip their hands in fear that I might fall. I had always been a clutz, so heels were a big no for me. Wearing heels for me is like learning how to ride a bike. Sure I can handle an inch tall heels but not 4 inches.

They raised their eyebrows at me. "I'm guessing you don't wear these types of shoes that often?"

I glared at Ren. "No. It's more like I NEVER wear them." I snapped. Okay, I may be a little overdramatic on this but still! "If I'm gonna break my neck on this I'll make sure to visit you guys in the afterlife. I'll curse you that the only pairs of shoes that you guys will be wearing are heels." I threatened.

Ren flinched while Dan laughed. "Relax princess. Those are just shoes. Try straightening your back. It might help." I did what he told me to. Dan nodded in approval. "Good, now try taking a small step forward." I stepped my right foot in front of me while still holding their hands.

Whhhooooooooopppppp!!!!

I almost made a complete split when I took my first step. Luckily I was holding their hands. They pulled me up. "He said to take a small step forward!! That was a huge step!!" Ren said.

I gave him an annoyed look. "I was! Taking a small step I mean. I just wanted to practice my gymnastics. Apparently, I still need a lot of work to do."

Ren raised his eyebrow in confusion. "What's gymnastics?"

I mentally facepalmed when I remembered that they don't know about those kinds of stuff. "Nothing. Forget I said anything."

I continued with practicing walking while holding their hands. They would often give some really helpful tips. "Hey, you're doing great!" Dan commented. Okay, I think I found another difference between them. Dan is nicer and gentler than Ren.

I grinned as I continued to walk with the twins still holding my hand. A minute later and they placed the book once again on top of my head. The book fell twice from my head before I learned to balance it without dancing. Oftentimes I would purposely drop it, earning glares from both the twins.

"Okay, I think you've gotten the hang of it." Ren smiled contentedly as he looked at me. When I saw his smile I immediately smiled back. Well, I guess his goofy self is back.

“I think it’s alright to let go of your hand now.” I looked at Dan as he started to loosen his hold from mine. I gripped it back, catching Dan off guard.

“W-wait a minute! Do you want me to trip?!” Although I said it seriously the two just laughed.

Ren placed his other hand on my shoulder. “Don’t worry princess. If you fall, we’ll be here to surely catch you.” He said while trying to hide the smile that still lingered on his face. I’m guessing that he finds my situation funny.

Well, good for him.

“Okay Rose, we’ll let you go now. Okay?” Dan asked me and I nodded. I took a deep breath as they slowly removed their grip from my hands, leaving me. They moved back a little to give me some space.

Just one step at a time. They’re just shoes. But tripping is painful!

Taking a deep breath I put one foot in front of the other as I started to walk at a slow pace. Book still on my head. I feel like a baby taking her first step. Before I knew it, I was already walking at a normal pace. I started to grin at myself. I can hear Dan and Ren’s approval behind me in each step that I took. What can I say? I’m so awesome that I have two princes as my fans behind me.

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If my best friend was here I would be shouting at her like: Look at me! I’m walking on heels! She would probably be clapping while wiping tears of joy from her face.

I felt a little giddy that I abruptly turned around to twins. Once I turned, my heel broke and I lost my balance.

“Rose!”

“Princess!”

I placed my hands together and prayed. If I fall it’s all THEIR fault.

I closed my eyes as I waited for my fall. At that time I wished that if reincarnation was real, then I would become a boy so I wouldn't have to wear heels for the rest of my life.

But I didn't feel the ground. Instead, I felt strong muscular arms gripping me and preventing me from the fall. When I opened my eyes, I saw a pair of beautiful brown orbs staring back at me.

What is this?? A cliché Disney Princess story!?

Ren smiled warmly at me as he panted. "You okay?" I just nodded my head. His smile seemed to grow larger on his face as he said, "See? I told you that I'll catch you." He boasted.

Arrogant prince.

His scent entered my nostrils and that's when I noticed the small space between us. "Ren, I'm glad that you kept your promise, but could you help me up now? I can't move properly in this situation."

Ren seemed surprised and it seemed that he had just noticed a gap between us. His face turned a little red as he coughed and said, "Um yeah, of course." He pulled me up with him and picked the fallen book from the ground.

"Sorry, Ren. Are you hurt?" I reached out to touch his shoulder. A sudden sting startled me. It felt like I was being electrocuted for a second. "What was that?" I asked.

"What was what?" He asked.

"You didn't feel it?" I asked. He shook his head. He didn't say anything after that as I felt another hand on me. It was Dan having a worried expression on his face while occasionally having a hidden smirk for Ren.

"Are you okay?" He asked.

I smiled at him and gave him a thumbs up. "Yep."

He nodded. "Good. You can take a break for now. You can take off the shoes."

I didn't waste any time as I bent down and removed the shoes. Throwing them to the side as if I had no care for them, which I don't. The ground seemed to comfort me as I fully felt the whole floor with my foot. I didn't even bother to look for my flats as I raced to the sofa. "Flat ground! Flat ground!" I rejoiced and ran barefooted.

I wonder how some of these girls were able to bear wearing those heels. What a pain. I started to stretch my legs on the sofa not caring about manners any more.

I saw Dan watching me as I made myself comfortable to where I am sitting. I stuck my tongue out at him. He smiled and waved at me. He approached his twin. I watched as the two exchanged some words and noticed that Ren's face looked confused, while Dan had a weird look on his face.

He kept wiggling his eyes at his brother, which annoyed Ren. "Cut that out, Dan. It's really annoying." Dan continued to dance his eyebrows at him. "Oh really? Why would this bother you?" He asked innocently. He returned his gaze to me, who was watching them curiously.

Ren furrowed his eyebrows and messed his hair up. "I think I'm gonna go out for a while to get some fresh air."

Dan was still smirking as he looked at the door that Ren had just disappeared to. When Dan turned in my direction, I immediately feigned sleeping in case he would say that the break time is over. I felt the couch move so I could only guess that Dan was now sitting beside me.

"Come on Princess. I know you're awake."

I didn't move. "Really Princess. I know you're awake with the way your feet dance." I sneaked a peek at my foot to see if it really was dancing. It wasn't. "No, it's not," I said.

"So you really are awake!" Dan said with a huge grin on his face. It made me frown.

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Damn it!

Dan decided to poke my cheek. "Aww. Come on. I didn't mean to trick you. In fact, I didn't even know that you'll fall for it. It's such a simple trick!" He snorted at that.

I slapped his hand back and pouted. "What do you want now, Dan? I want to rest. Go to the other chair." I said as I lowered my foot to the ground and pushed him off MY couch.

This time it was Dan who pouted. "Aw, but it'll be so lonely alone." He said with complete puppy eyes and all "And besides," he scooted over and wrapped an arm over my shoulders and pulled me towards him. "I wouldn't be able to cuddle with a beautiful princess now can I?" He flashed me a seductive smile that would make any girl melt in a puddle on the ground.

These prices are insane!

I grabbed his arm and removed it from my shoulders. "Save your flirting for girls who care. And besides, you wouldn't be sitting alone for that long when Ren gets back." I said. "By the way, where did Ren go anyway?"

His lips seemed to quirk up at my words. "Somewhere. Maybe outside." He rubbed his chin with the quirky smile on his face. "But I think that it'll take some time for him to come back."

I raised an eyebrow at him. "And why is that?"

He tilted his head so he was facing the ceiling, smirking. "My brother is smart but can be an idiot in some categories in life." He said. "Please be patient with us, sister." He said and winked.

Sister?

This guy is seriously confusing me. "Dan please try and talk with some sense to it cause you really are difficult to understand."

He chuckled at my words and turned his head so he was facing me. "Oh, you are such a little cutie! You two are perfect." He pinched my cheek as he cooed.

"Ow!" I slapped his hand away and I ma\*\*age my cheek. "That hurts you know!?"



He started to laugh. "Sorry about that Princess. I just don't have any self-control. You're just too cute." He said dramatically.

"Well stay away from me if you can't control yourself," I said bitterly as I continued to massage my aching cheek. "That really hurts."

"I'm sorry." He said apologetically. "So, do you know anything about wolves?"

"Why the sudden question?"

"Nothing. Just asking questions for fun and relaxation. Also a time for us to bond." He batted his eyes at me innocently.

I moved farther back to the opposite side of the couch and grabbed one of the heels on the floor. I pointed the pointy heel at him. "What's relaxing for me is not talking. And I'm having this weird feeling that you are up to something."

He smirked. "You know, wolves are pretty loyal."

"And I should care why? Is this part of our lesson?"

"Maybe?"

I stared at him. "You know, you twins are weird, but you alone can be really weird."

"You are too." He said and smirked in delight when he saw me frown. "You know. I think I'll just go outside to get my brother." He started to get up.

"Oh yippie. That's great. Please take all the time you need." I said jokingly.

Dan laughed. "By the way Princess, wolves mate forever. When a wolf finds its mate, it will know. Sort of." I stared at his retreating back. He paused just at the door and gave me a side glance. "Just remember that. For future reference." He winked and then he was gone.

Why are we talking about wolves again?

## Chapter 14 Sibling Fight

Dan is a very weird individual. That I can conclude. It wasn't that long until they left that I decided to do a little stretching. I jumped off of the couch and did a few hops in place. I wore my flats again and decided to take a little stroll.

The twins were allowed to leave so why can't I? I'll return soon anyway.

I went out of the room and was deciding on which way I was supposed to go when I heard voices. It was coming from my right. Curiously, I followed the sound. Then, just as I was about to turn to a corner, I stopped. The twins were in the middle of the hallway talking. On reflex, I quickly moved back so I wouldn't be spotted.

By now, it would be the best and wise decision to return, but they seem to be in a serious conversation. Maybe I should stay and listen?

"So, how do you feel right now?" Dan was asking his brother with a very wide and teasing grin.

"I'm fine. Just finished getting some fresh air and some thinking."

"Rose is beautiful, isn't she?" He asked as he leaned on the wall beside the window.

They are talking about me, right? The same Rose that they are calling beautiful? Well, maybe I am. I blushed in embarrassment but continued to listen.

"Yes, she is." Ren agreed. "She is beautiful despite her jungle girl attitude."

Gee. Thanks. A compliment and an insult. Wow.

When I looked at Dan he was smiling. His eyes seemed to sparkle and he nodded his head in excitement. "Really?! And do you feel something when you see her?" He continued to press on.

"Uhh....yes." Ren seemed uncomfortable.

"Really?!" His smile seemed to grow bigger.

I nodded my head. "Yes. Why else would I consider her as our sister if I don't feel anything? Right?"

"..."

I was crying tears of joy. The twins like me so much, that they consider me as their sister!?

Dan, though, seemed disappointed at his brother. Ren stared at him with a confused expression then I watched the expression on his face turn into anger. "What? What did I do?!" Ren asked. He just pouted at him and started to turn his back and said, "Idiot."

"Wait! What do you mean?!" Ren even his pace to his brother, who was now headed in my direction. Dan just ignored him as he continued to walk. "Come on brother. Talk to me!"

"No. Find out yourself, stupid."

"What? Why wouldn't you just tell me why you're upset? Brother tell me! Why are you ignoring me?"

"Cause you're stupid!" He said and left him there, confused.

"Brother! Come on. What did I do?"

"Shut up"

"But-"

"No. Shut your mouth."

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"Brother!"

It's time for me to go back. I gathered my skirt up and heard a few gasps from the maids when I exposed my legs. Geez, I forgot about their manners here.

I bolted for the room. Once I came in, a maid was just serving my lunch on the table. She had a confused look on her face, but I simply placed a finger to my lips. "Shh," I said. She simply nodded, bowed, and made her exit.

I sat at the table with my lunch on a tray and started to fill my stomach with yummy delight. It was good. I started eating a bit fast to make it seem like I was in the room the whole time eating when Ren and Dan arrived. I could only guess that the twins haven't settled their disputes because they didn't say anything to each other. It wasn't until the lessons started again that I wish I did something to help them make up.

"Rose! Straighten your back!" Ren ordered.

"No Rose! Chin up and face me! Don't listen to him." Dan argued.

I was really confused about who to follow. And I have to be the unlucky person to be in the middle of this...Why are they even fighting?

"Rose! You'll wear these pairs of heels again." Ren brought out the shoes that I was wearing earlier.

I started to reach towards them when Dan shouted. "No, Rose! Wear these!" Dan brought out another pair of heels which I think is higher. It made me stare at it in horror.

"Brother are you crazy?! She almost fell back then with just these heels and you're making her wear an even higher one?" Ren asked his brother in disbelief.

"She was able to walk on those heels. It's time for her to go to the next level idiot!" Dan told his brother.

"Now who are you calling an idiot, idiot?"

"You are, idiot!"

By then they were arguing. Their voices rose in every insult.

Oh boy...

“What’s your problem with me anyway? Why are you so mad at me all of a sudden?!” Ren shouted at his brother.

“That is for ME to know and for YOU to find out!” Dan answered back.

“ALRIGHT! Stop this right now.” I screamed. I can’t take this anymore!

They seemed surprised at my outburst as they looked at me. “You guys want me to wear heels?! Fine!” As soon as those words left my mouth, both the twins started to shove the heels that they were holding towards me.

“Take this one, Rose!”

“No! This one!”

I waved both shoes off with my hand. “Hey back off!” I said. “I’m gonna get another pair of heels,” I muttered and marched towards the closet in my frustration. I heard the boys shouting at me, “Don’t spread your legs apart when you walk!!”

“Shut up!!” I growled at them.

As soon as I got my pair of heels, shorter this time, the training continued.

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“Rose, walk with me.”

“No me!”

“Rose! Wear this!”

“Don’t listen to him! Wear these instead!”

“Why are you always disagreeing with me?! Huh?!” Ren asked through gritted teeth as he closed the gap between them.

“Cause you’re stupid and an idiot. That’s why.” Dan said with no emotion at all. Completely unaffected by Ren’s rage.

I better stop them before it worsens. “Uhh...guys. Break it up.” I got in between them as I gently pushed them apart. They were still bickering and

I was about to punch them in the face when Dan held my curl fist in his hands.

“A Princess does not punch, but a slap.” He said. “Allow me to show you the proper way of slapping someone.” He pulled a white glove from his pocket and slapped Ren’s face. It hit with a smack.

“Hey!” Ren complained as he clutched his slapped cheek. I slapped my hand to my mouth as I laughed.

“Cool!” I said. “Can I try it?” Dan grinned down at me and winked.

“Why of course. Anything for the lovely Princess.” He said as he offered me the glove. I took it.

“Hey wait a minute. That’s the men’s way of-”

SMACK!

I giggled at the impact. Cool.

“Rose!” Ren growled at me and glared at his brother, who started to chuckle. Ren took the glove from me and slapped his brother next.

“Hey!” Dan glared at his brother.

“You started it! And don’t you dare teach Rose how to slap!”

Oh boy. I was pretty sure that I was supposed to stop them...

“Alright let’s be serious now and stop this,” I said as I broke them apart once again.

Dan huffed at his brother and held my hand which was resting on his chest. He kissed it which surprised me and made Ren twitch. I saw Dan smirking at his brother before he faced me. “My deepest apology my Princess. Does it really bother you when we fight?”

If Dan won’t stop being this ridiculous, then I might fight him myself.

“Yes because whenever you guys fight you bring it on to ME!” I said in a ‘duh’ tone.

“Forgive me, Princess. Come. We shall practice somewhere else and leave this man be.” He jerked his head towards Ren as he started to pull me away.

I knew it. This guy was really up to something.

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We were about to leave the room when I felt a tug on my other arm. “And where do you intend to take her?” Ren asked his brother, not letting go of my arm. I looked at both of them in alarm.

Oh please don’t play tug-of-war. Oh please oh please oh please. I chanted in my mind.

Dan scoffed at his brother. “Somewhere away from you,” he said as he tugged at my other hand.

Dan, please don’t start tugging!!

Ren tugged at my arm next. “You are not taking her anywhere but in this room.” His tone of voice was laced with finality.

“Just because you’re the eldest doesn’t mean I have to follow your orders,” Dan said as he pulled me towards him again.

Ren’s face turned into a scowl at his brother’s words. “I’m not gonna repeat myself, Dan. You are not going anywhere with her without me and that is final.” He said with authority and once again pulled me towards him.

“Oh my my my. Why do you care so much, Ren? Does it really bother you where I take Rose with me? ALL ALONE?” With that said, Dan was able to pull me off of Ren’s hold. I was about to thank him for relieving me of their mini tug-of-war thing, but then he crushed me to his chest so hard that my air was cut off.

I’m gonna lie if I tell you that Dan stinks because he doesn’t. In fact, he smells really nice. I’m gonna stop talking about this now.

“Of course it bothers me! Who knows what you’ll do to her.” Ren accused his brother. At those words, Dan gasped dramatically. “Are you telling me

that I'll do something to her when we're alone? Oh brother you're still stupid."

I pounded on Dan's chest not because I wanted him to stop arguing with Ren but because I needed to breathe or else I might see the afterlife very soon. I don't care if you guys kill each other but don't drag me!

"Then what are you gonna do? Huh?!"

"Tsk tsk tsk. We'll proceed to train of course! What? Do you think that I'll do SOMETHING to her?"

"N-No! W-what are you talking about?"

"Oh my. What a dirty little mind you have there brother."

I was finally able to gather enough strength as I punched Dan on the gut. He doubled over as he clutched his stomach and groaned in pain. I was able to get away from him as I gasped for air. Actually, both of us gasped for air.

I greedily breathed the air and filled my lungs.

"Rose are you okay?" Ren asked in concern as he reached out for me.

"Hey, what about me?" Dan asked when he was finally able to recover from my punch. Man does punching him hurt. I kind of felt his abs when I punched him. Man those things are hard. Luckily I punch like a man but it didn't prevent my hand from throbbing.

Stupid abs.

"You deserve it, brother," Ren said to his brother in anger.

"Huh. Now, why are you so angry? It's not like I did something to you." Dan said c\*\*\*ily.

"Shut up! Rose is training with me. Right, Rose?"

"No, she will not be training with someone as stupid as you. Isn't that right, Rose?" Dan asked. By now they were coming closer to me, offering their hand. I stepped back a little in fear of them.



## Chapter 15 N@rnia

“Rose!”

Which one?

“Rose?”

Which one?!

“ROSE!!!”

A surge of anger washed over me. “SHUT UP!” I screamed at them. I assume that my scream had startled them because they had backed away and gave me a fearful look. I glared at both of them.

“If you guys wanted to fight, then could you please count me out?! If you wanna kill each other, then be my guest!! Just...just don't drag me!!” They were about to say something but I held a finger up, silencing them. “Until you guys sort things out...I'll be on that couch. Waiting.” I said as I turned my back on them and sat on the couch.

The twins didn't move from their spot. They were just standing there and having a glaring contest.

“This is all your fault!” Ren accused his brother after a minute.

“Me? Now, why is it my fault?! If you just let us go then none of this would have happened!” Dan said to his brother. Disbelief in his voice that his brother had accused him.

I facepalmed at them. These guys are a lot of work. For once, I thank my lucky stars that my younger sister is only seven years old, whose name is Stella. At least I wouldn't have to experience that sibling war that the twins are currently having.

What am I gonna do with them?! They are still bickering and throwing insults at each other.

Alright, Rose time to use your brain. You have to think of a way to forcibly make them up. But how?

If only I could lock them in a small room together they might make up. I looked around the room, scanning. My eyes then settle to the large closet in front of me.

While the boys were still arguing about who's a fault it is, I got up and examined the closet. It was made of wood, painted white, with a lock on it. It was huge if it weren't for the shoes which were piled on the floor of it.

I started to clear all of the shoes and threw them aside. I guess you could consider this as my revenge on the shoes. Once I cleared the closet from all the shoes, I examined the space and looked back at the twins as I estimated it. Perfect fit.

Now I just have to trick them in. How?

I pulled the closet doors wide open as I let out a gasp. "OH MY GOSH! THE PORTAL TO N@RNIA IS OPEN!" I screamed.

The boys stopped what they were doing as they gave me a confused look. "What's N@rnia?" They asked at the same time.

"...." I mentally facepalmed at my epic fail moment.

Duh! How can they know N@rnia? It's not like they're reading them, much less watched it.

Oh well, I started it now so why not continue?

"Uhh... never mind! Just look at it! There's a magical portal. Look!" I pointed at the inside of the closet.

They didn't move and just stared at me as if I had lost my mind.

"Just get over here!" Something snapped at me back then so I didn't notice that I was already shouting. That seemed to startle the boys as well since they immediately ran to my side to check the inside of the closet.

"Where's the portal that you're talking about?" Ren asked as he crouched down to look.

"I don't see anything," Dan said and moved some of the clothes out of the way to look.

"It's there. Just keep searching." I said. "Oh look! There it is!" I pointed to the inside of the closet.

"Where?!" They both asked.

"At the end! See? Go and look for it!" I told them. If their stupidity has reached a whole new level, then this is it.

When they started to crawl inside the closet, I immediately pushed them farther inside as I closed the door and turned the lock.

s\*\*\*ers!

"Welcome to N@RNIA!" I cheered.

"Ahh....so this is N@rnia. It's a little dark in here..." Dan said in amazement. Idiot.

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"Rose? Rose! Let us out!" I could hear Ren shouting from the other side. "You open this door right now or you'll be in a heap of trouble once I get out." Ren threatened.

"Sorry. Until you guys sort things out you ain't leaving this closet."

"ROSE!!"

I smirked and happily walked towards the couch that I was sitting on a while ago.

"Move your b\*\*\*, Dan!"

"Ow! Hey this is my side of the line! You move."

I could hear both of them pushing each other inside.

"Stupid!"

“Moron!”

“Your mom must have had a rotten brain cause apparently you inherited it!”

“Stupid!!! We have the same mother.”

“Will you two shut up?! If you guys don’t have anything good to say, then don’t say anything at all.” I shouted to them. At those words, the boys had silenced.

Wow, I guess they really don’t have anything good to say.

5 minutes have pa\*\*ed and still, they didn’t say a word.

“Anytime now guys,” I said boredly as I lay down on the couch.

“I don’t have anything good to say so I won’t say anything at all,” Ren said stubbornly.

“Neither do I.” Dan agreed.

Man do I need to do something or else I might break.

I scanned the room for something. ANYTHING to keep me sane. This silence is driving me crazy!

I marched to the closet as I knocked on it. Alright. Enough games. Time to help them make up

“Who’s there?” Ren asked boredly from the other side.

“Stupid. Who else could it be?” I said.

Dan snorted at that. “See? Even Rose thinks you’re an idiot–OW! Hey!”

“Daniel and Renevier Rutledge!!” I called them warningly. They fell silent and I could have heard them gulp loudly.

Huh. I think full names here also means you’re in trouble.

“If you guys won’t make up right now I’m gonna call the Queen and tell her to bust your b\*\*\*s off!” I threatened.

No reply

I sighed tiredly. “You guys really aren’t going to make up right now are you?”

“Yes.” Both said stubbornly.

Are they always like this when they fight?

“Alright, fine. Stay there until dinners are over. I’m gonna go outside for a while and leave you two be.” I got up from where I was crouching. “When I get back I expect you two to have sorted things out already. Ciao!”

I’m not really gonna leave them alone. I’m just gonna pretend that I’m going out for a while since I figured that they might be a little shy with me around. I marched towards the door and opened it then closed it to make it look like I left.

After that, I tiptoed heading to the closet, and leaned in. I didn’t really hear them talking. It took them a moment before Ren broke the silence thickening between them.

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“Hey.”

I have to bite my tongue so I wouldn’t shout at him and say ‘ARE YOU KIDDING ME?! IT TOOK YOU A MINUTE JUST TO SAY A SINGLE WORD?!’

“Dan is not available right now. Please talk to him again after you settled your stupidity” Dan said. I facepalmed at Dan. Shame on him. And I thought he was a tad bit mature.

Ren sighed tiredly. “Dan please? You can’t just ignore me forever. We’re brothers after all.”

“ . . . ”

Oh, come on Dan!

“Dan. Please. I miss talking to my brother without the fighting part.” Ren pleaded. “I don’t know what I did to make you hate me and I hope that you’ll forgive me,” Ren said. Even though Ren said all of those things, Dan still didn’t answer.

“You know, fighting with you really hurts and bothers me. This is the longest that we fought. Usually, we would immediately make up even without words of apology.” Ren sighed as if remembering some memories. “We don’t fight that much too so I guess we’re not used to letting our pride go and be the first to forgive each other.” Ren laughed without the humor in it. “As men and as siblings, we value that pride. I too value that.” He said. “But if I have to let that pride go and say the most honest apology that I could muster. I would. Just so you could forgive me. Dan, I give you my deepest apology. Will you forgive me?”

I slap a hand to my mouth so I wouldn’t weep at his words.

That was wonderful, Ren!

I heard someone sniffing from the other side.

“Dan? Dan are you okay? Hey, are you crying?” Ren asked worriedly.

Dan sniffed once more before saying, “No. These are sweats. It’s too hot in here.” Dan said, but you could tell that it was a lie. “And besides, brother. I forgive you. You don’t have to give me that speech of yours.”

Ren snorted. “Sorry. I just thought that you needed it. Knowing you, it needs to be done. Besides, I’m the eldest. I have to be the considerate one. So are we okay now?”

“Of course we are. Besides, I miss my brother too.”

“Thank you, brother.” I smiled at that because finally the two of them made up. Now isn’t that nice? At least I won’t be tortured anymore. “By the way, can I ask you a question?” Ren asked.

“Sure. Shoot it.”

“Why were you so upset with me?” I leaned in. They don’t judge. I wanna know the reason for their argument too.

I could hear Dan smirking. "Like I said before. That's for me to know and for you to find out. Don't worry, you'll figure it out sooner or later." Ren whined at that but was silenced by Dan. "Besides, Princess Rose is currently listening to this. We wouldn't want her to know, right?"

Crap. How did they know?

Oh well since they did makeup why not release them already?

I whipped the silly little tears from my eyes, Curse Ren and his words, and unlocked the closet. I threw it wide open and saw Dan smirking at me and Ren gapping at me. Ren pointed a shaky finger in my direction. "Y-you were listening?"

I nodded my head. "Yep."

"H-how long?"

I thought about it for a moment. "Hmmm...from the very start." I grinned down at Ren.

"You heard everything?" He asked.

I nodded again. "Uh huh. Everything. Word per word."

Ren's cheeks flamed in embarra\*\*ment while Dan had to slap a hand to his mouth to keep himself from laughing. I stared at Dan confusedly. "How did you know that I was listening?"

Dan stopped from laughing but the humor was still in his eyes. "I just figured it out from the start when you leaned in, the door rattled a little." He said. "Oh and I could see your shadow by the way."

I pouted at him. "Aw, man."

Both the twins got up from the closet as dusted themselves off. "Locking us into a closet. That was pretty mean, Princess." Ren commented as he grabbed his coat from the rack and placed it on and stretched his muscles. It was the coat that I was playing with earlier.

“Yes. For that, I think she deserves a punishment no?” Dan said to his brother and they both grinned at each other before turning to me.

“Err...but I did it to help you guys! At least be thankful!” I was slowly backing away towards the door by now. Each one took a menacing step towards me.

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“Yes we are thankful,” Ren said as Dan continued. “But a punishment for that crime is needed.”

“Um...I don’t think that what I did was a crime.” I said more of a question than a statement.

They both shook their heads. “No, it’s not. But for us it is.” As soon as they said that I quickly grabbed the heels that were on the floor and threw it at them.

“Hey!”

“Ow! That’s dangerous, Rose!”

“Ha! If you knew that those are dangerous, then why would you let me wear those deadly weapons.” I ran towards the door.

The boys were hot on my heels. I threw it open and ran outside as fast as my feet could carry me.

Luckily I was wearing my flats again.

I wasn’t watching where I was going so I ended up bumping into someone, and that someone was Fred who had caught me before I could fall. He was with Nate and Ace.

Fred gave me a confused look as if wondering what I was doing. “Are you all right?” He asked.

I have to keep myself from stuttering in front of him. “Y-yes,” I said. “Um...what are you guys doing here?” Okay, that was rude to ask. If anything, Fred didn’t mind it.



“Well, since you guys are a tad bit late for dinner, we figured to pick you guys up.” He said. Ace snorted at him. “Sorry, we have to force Ace to come too.” He corrected me.

“Why are you out of breath?” Nate asked me as he examined my face.

“|-|...”

“ROSE!” At the sound of the twins’ voice, I acted fast and was behind Fred and Nate as I pointed towards the twins. “They are after me!”

Fred, Nate, and Ace followed the direction that my finger was pointing and looked at Ren and Dan, who were slightly shocked to see the others as well. Ren and Dan were gaping at them while Fred and Nate gave them a disapproving look. The twins laughed nervously. “Um...we were just playing. Right, Rose?” Ren looked at me for help which I replied by sticking my tongue out at them. They frowned at that.

Fred and Nate chuckled at my behavior. “You boys are gonna be in a heap of trouble,” Fred said more of a joke, but the twins thought he was serious, and fear flashed in their eyes. “I’m kidding,” Fred said after seeing the nervousness in their eyes. The twins sighed in relief knowing that Fred was joking.

“Are we done here? If yes, then let’s go. The king and Queen are waiting.” Said Ace in annoyance.

Nate only chuckled at him. “I hate to say it but Ace is right. Let’s go guys.”

We nodded as we walked together to the dining hall. I was walking between Nate and Fred since I figured that Ace still has a grudge against me and the twins wanted to have some revenge too. Ace still has a bit of doodle on his face. I guess the ink was pretty strong.

I peeked from Fred’s side to look at Ace. “Hey, Ace.”

He didn’t answer.

“Oh, I’m sorry, PRINCE Ace?”

This time he did look at me but with annoyance. “What?”

I smirked at him. "Nice look. I think that mustache really suits you, but I prefer it if you have shaved it for dinner." If Fred wasn't between us I might have been killed by Ace already. He had to stop Ace from charging at me as we all laughed, except for Ace.

"I'm gonna kill her." Ace mumbled to himself.

I snorted at that.

Oh boy. I think I needed an e\*\*\*\*\* all the time whenever I walked into this castle.

"Hey by the way boys. Why do you smell of wood?" Nate asked the twins who were beside them.

"Oh. We just had a trip to Marnia." Dan answered.

"Marnia?" Nate asked in confusion. The twins and I looked at each other and we laughed.

"Yes."

## Chapter 16 Red Haired Flirt

I was jumping on the clouds and enjoying my freedom. The clouds then suddenly turn into those soft mushy cotton candies. I squealed in delight as I flopped down and hugged the sweet candy goodness.

This is heaven, I thought.

I was enjoying my life when suddenly, it started to rain making the cotton candy dissolve. And since I'm floating on one right now...

I started to sprint away from the rain cloud. Wait...a cloud raining on another cloud? That's weird. The thunder started to roar, but instead of the normal BOOM, it decided to call my name.

"ROSE!!"

Lightning suddenly strikes in front of me, making me fall off the grounder cloud. The rain cloud was approaching me, but I couldn't move. I was

frozen to the spot from fear and shock. When I looked up, there was a shadow of a man in front of me. I couldn't decipher the face of the man. Heck, I couldn't even see from the darkness of the rain cloud.

I muffled a scream when the man suddenly reached out to me. To make it creepier, he was calling my name. "Rose". I started to scream and tried to slap his hands away from me as he shook me back and forth.

"Rose"

"ROSE!"

My eyes jerked open, only to be met by two green orbs staring at me. I recognize those eyes. Those eyes would only belong to Nate, whose face is currently above mine making me see the red specks in his eyes.

"Well good morning Princess," He said, complete with a smile and all. On reflexes, I screamed and slapped him across the cheek. My palm connected his cheek with a loud smack. My hands throbbed from the impact, which made me sit up and clutch my hand.

"OW!! WHAT THE HECK?!" Both of us screamed.

"Why'd you slap me?" Nate asked while clutching his cheek.

"Cause you startled me!" I snapped at him. One thing to know about me is that I am not a morning person. I grunted as I rubbed my aching palm. "And why do you have such a hard cheek!? What is that made of? Rock?"

At that, Nate's lips twitch in the tiniest smile that he could. "It hurts huh?" he said with pride as if he was amused that slapping him hurts.

I glared at him. How dare he smile knowing that he injured my palm. Well technically it's my fault, but hello? He's the one with a hard face!

"Of course it does. Try slapping yourself to see if it hurts or not." I said, not easing my glare at him. He rubbed his chin as if he was thinking about it.

"Nope. Sorry. I'm not gonna damage my face by doing that cause I'm pretty sure that my slap is stronger than you, babe. And besides, your slap hurts

too you know.” He made a pouty face at me and pointed towards his said cheek. “Now go and kiss it to make it better.”

I ignored him as I pulled the sheets over me, ready to take my sleep once again. “What are you doing here, Nate? Can’t you see that I was in the middle of my sleep?” I yawned to prove my point, but Nate didn’t move away from my bed. He was still sitting on the edge of it. Even though my bed is a queen-sized one, I still prefer to have full space for myself. Call me selfish but that’s just me.

“Oh. I’m sorry to disturb your beautiful rest. I’m guessing the twins must have exhausted you yesterday?” He asked.

“Tell me about it,” I said as I fixed my pillow. “Now if you’ll excuse me, I’m going back to dreamland since I was RUDELY interrupted earlier.” I emphasize the word ‘rudely’ just so he could get my point before I gave him one of my sweet-fake smiles. “Bye, Nate.” I then covered myself with the covers.

“Woah Woah Woah. Not so fast, little love.” Nate tried to pull the covers away from me but I held on to it. Not wanting to lose my comfort zone, which is currently this bed. If you thought that Nate had stopped bugging me about waking up, then you are definitely wrong. He’s really pushy as he started to shake me back and forth. “It’s time for your training with me. Now, don’t you want to have quality time with me?”

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“No.”

“Aw come on.” He whined in such a very cute tone that would make you want to pinch his cheeks as you would with a child, but I am so not touching his cheek again. I threw the covers off of my head and looked at Nate. His eyes sparkled with hope as I did so, but was immediately crushed when I stuck my tongue out at him and covered my head with the sheets again.

“I knew hanging out with the twins was bad for you,” he muttered under his breath, which made me snicker. I can see why the twins like to make fun of Nate now. “Come on, Rose. Get up or I’m gonna cry.” He threatened.

“That’s nice.”

I felt the bed dipped a little at his weight and heard him whisper in my ear. “If you won’t get up now within 5 seconds, I’m going to tell Prince Fred that since you didn’t have your lesson with me that you’re canceling your cla\*\* with him tomorrow too.” He said in his most seductive yet threatening tone. I flinched

Wait. Did he just say what I think he said?

Nate must have felt me flinch when he said. “Fred is a nice guy. I think he’ll understand.” I could tell that he was enjoying this and I could picture him smiling through the covers. “What do you say? Either way. I’m fine with it. But Prince Charming on the other hand...”

Don’t move, Rose. Don’t let him fool you. It’s probably a trick, I thought but I quickly perished it when Nate started to count.

“5”

“ . . . ”

“I’m being serious here, Rose. 4.”

“ . . . ”

“Still nothing? 3-”

I threw the covers away and made sure to toss them at Nate as I scrambled to my feet. “I’m up! I’m up!” I screamed as I arranged my nightgown and made a beeline to the bathroom. It didn’t help my mood when I heard Nate chuckled outside of the bathroom. The maids were there as usual to help me.

“DON’T TAKE TOO LONG, SWEETHEART!!!” He yelled, which made me hate him now.

30 minutes later, I made sure to take that long, I got out of the tub and put a bathrobe around me. After making sure that the robe is now secured around me, I got out of the room and headed to my closet.

“Ohhhh nice. Very nice. I should come here more often.”

My heart nearly jumped out of my chest when I saw Nate lying on bed and looking at me with approval. I pulled the bathrobe tightly around me and I screamed. “Nate, what are you still doing here?!”

“I was waiting for you and-”

“Please e\*\*\*\*\* this stranger out,” I asked one of the maids as I pointed towards the door.

“Prince, right this way.” The maid said, showing him the way out of the room. He gave me a sad look as if he was pleading for me to let him stay. He tried that for at least 5 seconds before accepting the fact that I would NEVER let him stay and watch me get dressed.

“Fine. But just so you know. You can wear that robe on our training.” He winked then wiggled his eyes at me.

## ADVERTISEMENT

“NATE!”

“Alright alright. I’m going.” He got up from the bed and stuffed his hands in his pocket grumpily. I made sure not to leave my eyes off of him as I watched him leave, but when he pa\*\*ed me he muttered, “Killjoy.” I almost laughed at his childish behavior but no. I mustn’t cause he’s a pervert. He left the door with a dramatic ‘humph’ before closing it behind him.

I shook my head as I scanned the closet for something to wear. I decided to go for a mint colored-long sleeved dress that ends just below the knees. I wore my flats since we’re just practicing the proper etiquette. I checked myself in the mirror.

“Thank you!” I told the maids when I left the room.

I saw Nate leaning on the wall probably waiting for me. When he saw me, he pouted in that cute way that would make girls swoon. “I prefer you wearing a little bit more revealing.” He glared at my dress as if it would melt under his gaze.

“Sorry, Nate. I’m not taking any chances with you around.” I smirked at him.

He huffed. “Fine. Let’s go.” He offered me his arm, which I took. We started to walk down the halls. I let Nate guide me through since I know that he’s more familiar with this place more than I do.

While we were walking, we suddenly stopped and scratched his head.

“What’s wrong?” I asked worriedly.

He then began to scratch his cheek in embarrassment. “Umm.....I think we went the wrong way.” He laughed nervously after that.

My jaw dropped at his confession. I take it back. He doesn’t know his way around this castle. The b\*\*\*\*\*. And I even let this guy with no sense of direction lead me!

“Nate!”

“Umm....oh! I think it’s this way.” He started to pull me to another room.

“Hmmm.....yep. This is it, love.” He said and pulled me forward as he opened the door to a room. It had nothing in it except for a single round table and some long tables at the side with white cloths over it. Roses were placed on vases on top of the tables, making them look elegant and presentable.

I stared at the setting in awe. “Wow, Nate. You really took some time preparing this place.”

“Of course. Anything for my beautiful Princess.” He winked at me. “So, do I kiss?” He bit his lips and made a seductive face at me.

“No”

“My heart can’t take any more rejection.” He put his hands to his heart to prove his point.

I smirked at Nate and shrugged my shoulders. “Oh poor you.” I let go of his arm and started to walk to the table to examine the roses and daffodils on the vase. When I looked up to Nate, he was staring at me for quite a long time, not saying anything.

Finally, he spoke. "Am I not good-looking?" He asked.

I raised an eyebrow in confusion at him. What is this freak talking about? "All girls can't be interested in you, Nate. Just accept the fact that someone might be better than you."

Nate gasped dramatically. "Is it because of this Fred guy?" He asked in a fake angry tone which made me laugh. "It's him isn't it?!" He said in a tone that boyfriends would use when they are jealous. But his acting was very sloppy.

## ADVERTISEMENT

I decided to join in humohumor. I placed a hand to my chest as I said with all the fake sincerity that I had. "Oh, Nate. I'm so sorry. It's not me, it's you." Wait. wasn't that the other way around?

"It's the cape isn't it?" He looked back towards his cape which was hanging onto his back.

"That and the ridiculous look on your face."

"What face? This s\*\*y little thing?" He raised an eyebrow and puckered his face in a s\*\*y pose. I laughed harder if that was even possible. "Alright. Time to get serious and start this training." He clapped his hands and rubbed them together in excitement.

"Nate, you're the only one who's fooling around you know," I said after I caught my breath. I whipped the exes tears away from my eyes.

"True, but I know that you loved it." He said as he went towards me. He moved the chair in front of the table back and motioned for me to sit in a gentleman-like gesture. I sat while I watched Nate delicately arranging the utensils in front of me. He picked up the smallest sp\*\*\* of the group and showed it to me. "This here is a teasp\*\*\*. It's used to stir tea or coffee." He said and placed it back on the table. His finger glided to another one just beside the teasp\*\*\*. This time, he took a sp\*\*\* that is in between the size of a normal sp\*\*\* and a teasp\*\*\*. "This is the dessert sp\*\*\*. This is used for eating desserts. Its size is larger than the teasp\*\*\* so don't mistake it as one. Okay?"



“Noted,” I confirmed.

He picked up another one which is of normal size this time. “Now this is our regular sp\*\*\*.” He said. “I don’t think I need to explain what this is used for since you probably know it, right?” He looked at me for confirmation which I gave a nod to.

Something that I noticed while Nate was explaining is that he always makes sure that you understand what he’s talking about. And the way that he talks to you gives you that vibe that you could easily ask him for anything without him snapping at you.

Unlike a certain PRINCE that I know of.

Nate continued to explain the dos and don’ts in eating. Like – don’t lean your elbows on the table, don’t chew loudly, don’t stuff yourself, don’t slouch, don’t burp in front of the table, say ‘excuse me’ when you’re leaving the table, and even your eating pace with the others so you’ll finish the same time as them. Nate also showed me the proper ways on how to use the knife and how to properly hold the sp\*\*\*s.

“Now you see? This is the proper way to cut. You use your knife to cut through so we could avoid the flying meats.” He teased. I pouted at him as I remembered the time when I attempted to cut the meat and a piece of it went flying towards Ace’s plate.

“Forget about it!” I was too flustered to make up an excuse about that time.

He chuckled at my childlike behavior and patted my head. “Oh sure, love. Whatever you say. But just remember that if you needed an a\*\*istant to cut your food for you, you know who to ask.” He winked.

Just as I was about to say a smart comment, we heard a knock at the door. Nate stood up and walked towards it and opened one of the large double doors of the room. He smiled at the person behind it before nodding his head and opening the door wide. As soon as he opened it, a bunch of servants came rushing in holding a tray of what I a\*\*ume is something edible. Smells of freshly cooked meat wafted in the room making me drool and my stomach screaming in protest, reminded me that I forgot to eat my breakfast thanks to a certain someone.

The servants piled the trays on the long tables at the side and arranged them. They moved in perfect sync as if they had done this a bunch of times already, which I'm probably thinking that they did. A minute later and they were done. As soon as they disappeared behind the doors, I was left with Nate and the delicious smell of the food a few feet in front of me.

I saw Nate smile from the corner of my eyes as he looked at me with amus\*\*\*\*t as I drooled. He strode towards me and offered me his hand and pulled me up to my feet. He handed me a plate and led me to the table. "Let's start our lesson. Now come on and fill your plate. Remember what I said." He said and nodded for me to start. I didn't waste any time as I filled my plate, ready to feed my growling stomach.

By the time that I was done, you couldn't see a vacant space on my plate anymore. All was covered with mashed potatoes, beef, a slice of pork, and many more. I looked at my plate in approval and satisfaction.

I'm pretty sure that this would do the trick, I thought.

As I was about to head to my table, Nate stood in front of me, stopping me from moving further. He looked at my plate and shook his head in disapproval. I gave him a look. "Um, Nate? I'm about to eat lunch now so can you please move?"

"This won't do." He said, still looking at my plate.

## Chapter 17 Proper Table But No Manners

"What do you mean?" I asked with a confused look on my face and a tint of an annoyance since he's blocking my way to heaven right now. Before I could protest at him, he took my plate out of my hand.

"Hey!"

"This plate is too full. I told you to only take what you can eat and not to fill your plate." He said and eyed the plate with distaste.

"Give it back!" I yelled as I reached for it, but he held it over his head making it harder for me to reach it. "Nate! What's the deal?!"

He didn't respond to me and pointed to the table once again. "Go get another plate and fill it up. This time don't stuff it all up." He ordered. My jaw dropped at him.

He can't be serious right?

"But what about-"

"Start filling your plate up or else you won't get anything to eat." He said with finality.

"Ugh!" I glared at him as I stomped my way to the table and grabbed a new plate. I started to fill it in, but this time I only put some small portions in it. Nate came to my side and examined my plate.

"Mhm. That'll do." He said in approval. "Now you can go and eat your lunch now." He ushered me to the table. I didn't move and looked at my poorly filled plate.

This won't do.

I looked at the tray beside me. Nate saw me and gave me a warning look. "No. Don't even think about it." He warned. I gave him my best pleading look and even went as far as biting my lip.

"Please? I'm so hungry. I didn't eat my breakfast this morning." I pleaded.

"Aw. Really?" I nodded. My mind was cheering in the thought that Nate might feel sorry for me and let me add more to my plate. "I'm sorry darling but I can't do that." At those words, my hope was completely crushed.

I started to feign crying. Nate looked surprised at me and I could tell that he was confused about what to do with me. "I-I just...want something to...e-eat."

"Err...umm.....W-why don't you go to your table and eat what you have? It might help." He said and looked away from me as he said it.

I started to hiccup for more effect. "I-I'm gonna tell everyone what a big bully you are for starving a girl like me. I'll make sure to tell the twins to tell Fred to tell the Queen to tell the King to tell the-

“N-No! Don’t do that!”

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“To tell your mom to tell your dad-”

“Fine! Just a little so shut up!!” He said in an annoyed voice, but you could tell that he was about to lose it. Heck, he might want to kill me right now.

I lifted my eyes at him. “Really?” I asked. His response was a weak nod, telling me that he was either forced to say that or was unsure of his answer. I took that as my signal and grinned widely at him. All my acting completely vanished as I cheered.

“Thanks, Natie poo!” I squealed and added the food to my plate before I hopped towards the table. I sat on the chair happily and licked my lips in anticipation.

Nate joined me at the table with his own plate. I grabbed her sp\*\*\* and fork and was about to dig in when he cleared his throat loudly. “Ehem!”

I stared back at myself in confusion. “What?” I asked. “You’re not gonna take my food now, are you?” I made a protective circle around my plate.

He chuckled. “No, sweetheart but I think you are forgetting something.” When I tilted my head in confusion yet again, he turned his gaze at the napkin at the side of my plate to give me a hint. My mouth formed an ‘O’ in understanding.

I gave him a sheepish smile as I dr\*\*\*d the napkin on my lap before I started to devour the food, but when I saw him giving her a disapproving look I eased my pace in eating.

“I can’t see the reason why the boys were a tad bit stressed when they trained you. You’re very cooperative.” He commented.

“Yeah...” I looked away guiltily. “I wonder why.”

A few minutes later and he got bored so I started to flirt with him again. “You know Rose? I’m kinda hungry. Aren’t you gonna share?” he said and gave me a pouty look.

“No,” I said flatly. Suddenly, he became very quiet. I looked at him to see that he was staring at his plate blankly. “Nate?” I called out. No response.

I tried again. Louder this time. “NATE!!”

He snapped my attention back at me. A moment later and he smirked.

“Are you okay?” I asked.

“Huh? Yes, I’m fine. Why’d you ask?”

“You kept on staring at space for quite a while now. I was worried that you might not be feeling ill.” His smile widened. “Aww. You do care!” He exclaimed. “Don’t worry about me, love. Knowing that you care, makes me feel better in an instant.”

“Okay,” I shrugged.

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“What? That’s it! That’s your reaction!?” This girl amazes me all the time.

“Oh and, Nate?” His head perked up. “Please stop calling me with strange nicknames. You sound like a creep.”

“Aw....but that’ll be boring if I don’t call you something, love.” He said. “Oh, and by the way, you got a little something on your upper lip.” He reached out and tried to wipe it away with his thumb. I flinched at the gesture before moving out of his reach. Then I used my napkin to wipe the dirt off my face.

“Are you really not attracted to my face?”

I snapped my eyes at him. “What?” That was such a random question.

“Sorry, let me rephrase it. Is something wrong with the way I look?” I asked again. This time, she understood it.

“Oh.” I set the napkin back on the table. “Hmm. I think I already told you that your attitude bothers me.”

“Yes, you said that but why?” I pressed on and leaned on the table.

I thought about it for quite a while before saying. "I hate flirts." Nate started laughing.

"What's so funny?" I asked him. He's going crazy. Should I leave?

When he was finally able to catch his breath, he rearranged his posture and wiped some tears from his eyes. "You said that you hated flirts. That's not enough of a reason you know. There must be something more, right?" He said and rested his chin on his knuckles.

"Hmm..." I put a finger to my chin as I thought about it. "I think what I'm really looking for is his personality."

"Oh really? Then why are you talking to me right now? I thought you hated flirts."

"Actually. You're not that bad. Sure, you annoy me to my core with your stupid nicknames, but I don't think that flirting really is your game." I noticed that Nate isn't like any other flirts out there. It's because he always has this look of doubt in his eyes like he is unsure of what he's doing. "While you were explaining some stuff to me a while ago you didn't flirt with me or call me with strange nicknames. I think that side of you is the real you...I think."

He scoffed. "Really huh."

"Yes. Really, Nate." I insisted. "Any woman would be lucky to have you."

"Ha! Woman. I don't even think that I'll be able to settle down with one. They would either ditch me or find a new lover."

Wow. So bitter

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"How can you say that, you idiot! You can settle down if you want to." I stopped. "Why are we even talking about settling down?"

He grinned. "Because I am 20 and I do not have a fiancé yet."

"Nate," I warned him since I know where this conversation was headed.

“Why don’t you marry me instead? That way I can really settle down.” He smirked.

“You know what? I think I’m gonna go and get some dessert.” I began to stand up.

“Oh great. Get me some choco-”

“You have two hands and two legs so why don’t you get them yourself.” I retorted.

“You also have them too so why not get me some.” He answered back and smirked when I marched towards the dessert table and mumbled some profanities along the way. I heard him chuckle as I continued to mumble about what a big jerk he is. I faintly saw him drink something at the back of his chair.

“Nate! What kind of dessert do you want!? Hurry up or I might change my mind!”

“I’ll get one of each!” He said. I clicked my tongue together before getting another plate and filling it up. A few seconds later and I was back with two plates. I dropped his plate in front of him and grumpily sat in my chair. He laughed a little.

And just like what he had taught me, I took the dessert spoon and started to eat. I heard him tsk. “Smaller bites.” He said and reached out and started to wipe the chocolate off of my face again, this time I didn’t move away since I was busy eating. The desserts are so good. The chocolate simply melts in your mouth.

“There.” He said after wiping it all off. I grinned at him and muttered thanks before shoving another bite into my mouth.

“Hey, Nate. If you’re just gonna sit there and stare at me, then I might as well eat your plate of desserts.” I said. He chuckled at my comment.

“No way. I haven’t eaten anything yet and you’re gonna take this away from me? Not fair!” He whined.

He kept staring at me as we ate. "Am I doing something wrong?" I asked. He looked at me and smirked. "Stop looking at me like that, Nate. You look like an old pervert."

"What? This face? An old pervert? Love, I think something is wrong with your vision there. And I prefer you to call me a YOUNG pervert." He said. They rolled her eyes at me and continued to eat.

"Seriously, Nate! Eat your food you creep!" I threw my napkin at him, which I easily dodged. He laughed.

## Chapter 18 Cape of Doom

I leaned on the table in front of me as I poked the remains of my unfinished food. Don't get me wrong, I like the food but I think my stomach doesn't have enough space for them which is a shame.

"Rose, I'm gonna leave you for a bit, okay? I just have some things to handle first." Nate stood up from his seat in front of me and wiped his mouth with his napkin before setting it on the table. "You be good now while I'm gone, okay?" He looked at me as if begging me to stay put. He probably thinks that I'll wander off somewhere while he's not around.

I can't blame him. Somehow I see a pattern wherein they leave me for a second and trouble seems to appear.

In response to his request, I mocked a salute. "Yes sir! Take all the time you need." I said. Nate gave me one of those uncertain looks of his before he left the room but not before giving me a warning look before he left the room.

As soon as the door closed behind him, I fist-pumped the air and shouted a "YES!". Immediately, the door opened once again and Nate's head appeared behind the door. "Excuse me?" He's asked with his eyebrow raised.

I gave him a sheepish smile and an innocent look. Not wanting to make it obvious. "Nothing. Have fun!"

He pointed a finger at me and gave me a warning look. "I'm warning you. Behave." with that, he once again disappeared behind the doors.



What am I? A dog?

I grinned evilly as I thought of ditching this place and going for a hike. Oh yeah!

I stood up rather quickly and, in the process, bumped the table and caused my own plate of dessert to fall on the floor, staining it with chocolate.

Oh \*\$%^&\*!!

“Nate is gonna kill me!!” I whispered to myself, now in panic mode. See what I mean when I say trouble follows me?

What to do? What to do?

Look for something to wipe it off! Yes! That’s it!

I scanned my surroundings for something big to wipe it clean. My eyes landed on the fabric at the back of Nate’s chair. It was green and silky.

And it was the perfect rag for this mess!!

I reached out and grabbed the fabric and started to wipe the floor clean as fast as I could. Who knows how many minutes/hours I have when Nate comes back?

I wiped the fabric back and forth, making sure the floor is all clean and sparkly once again. When I was already satisfied the floor was once again clean, I threw the fabric on the sofa at the side. Just in time though, because Nate just came back. I quickly stood up from the floor and hid my hands behind my back.

Yes, probably not the best move for the innocent look.

“What were you doing?” Nate asked sus\*\*\*iously.

“Nothing sus\*\*\*ious. I promise.” I said and added a sweet smile to it. LIAR!

“Okay,” Nate said uncertainly. “Did you have enough rest? Are you ready for the next lesson?” He asked. Instead of answering, I gave him a nod.

Throughout the whole afternoon, Nate just taught me how to respond and act when there's a guest and how to talk to them properly. He told me that when someone asks me a question and when my mouth is still full, I would either nod, if the question is a yes or no, or swallow my food first before answering.

"Aren't you tired of this practice?" I asked.

"What?" Nate asked in confusion.

I gestured towards the table. "This. Isn't it very tiring to always have to do this? Be polite and act like a lady/gentleman?"

Nate stared at me for a moment before he chuckled in amusement. "When you put it that way, I guess. But when you have lived through all your life doing this then I guess it's pretty normal."

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"Well, that sucks for me then," I muttered under my breath pretty low for a human ear, but I guess it wasn't as low as I suspected since Nate started to chuckle.

"I guess you'll just have to get used to it then, right?" Nate smiled, but not his usual flirty smile but one of pure amusement. He got up from his chair and went to the dinner table and picked up a plate as he started to fill it in. When he came back, he set down a huge slice of steak in front of me. "Get your knife and fork and start practicing on how to cut." He ordered.

"What? But didn't you already see me cutting my steak when I was eating my lunch?"

"You could have fooled me. I saw you using your fingers while you were cutting it. You even stabbed it multiple times while I wasn't looking. That's called cheating, you know?"

"Darn! And I thought that you really weren't looking." I muttered. I knew I should have brought some scissors!

“It’s not that I wasn’t looking. I just did it on purpose since you were having a hard time eating so I just made an exemption.” He smirked as he said it. “Now go and start cutting.”

I let out an exasperated sigh as I grabbed my fork and knife on the table and started to cut through the meat. Not a moment later and I was already stabbing it in frustration. Nate, on the other hand, was busy laughing his b\*\*\* off at my frustration.

Nate whipped some tears from his eyes before he spoke. “I could watch you all day and won’t get enough of it.”

“Aha ha. Very funny. Glad to know that you’re enjoying seeing me struggle.”

“Indeed I am.” Nate chuckled once more. “But that’s because you’re doing it all wrong. That meat is already dead. No need to kill it a second time. And besides, I already showed you how to do it, but apparently, you were not listening, am I right?”

I didn’t say anything and instead faced my now murdered steak. I did pay attention, but it’s easier said than done.

“Hold the steak with your fork then use the knife to cut through it at an angle. Move your knife back and forth to slice through it neatly. Don’t stab it. No stabbing on the tables. You’ll scare your table mates.” He instructed.

I rolled my eyes at him and started to follow his instruction and moved my knife back and forth.

“Good. And gently push your knife to the steak,” he said.

“Good. Now gently push your knife to the steak.” I mocked and earned a playful glare from Nate as I did what he said. Not a second later and I successfully sliced the meat. “I did it!” I cheered and raised the fork with a slice of meat on it and wiggled it in front of Nate, showing it to him. “Ha! I did it! Lowisimos! I did it!”

“Yeah yeah.” Nate waved his hand at me. “So you had cut it. That’s good but you mustn’t wave it to a person as if it’s a weapon.” He smirked and watched me with amus\*\*\*\*t.

“Who cares?! Now I’m gonna have a taste of this victory!” I was about to put the slice of meat towards my mouth when Nate stopped my hand from doing so. He gave me one of those adorable smiles.

“Aren’t you gonna share your victory? I was the one who told you the technique.”

No one is stealing my food.

“No. This is MINE. I cut it. Go and cut your own. Now shoo!” Using both of my hands, I pulled the fork towards me, fighting against Nate’s strong grip.

“Oh no, you won’t! Not if you’re not gonna share!” Now Nate was using both of his hands as well as he fought for that piece of meat on the fork.

All these for that piece of meat...

“It’s mine!” I screamed and started to pull it towards me. If ever, I think Nate was going easy on me since he was pretty much enjoying himself. In fact, he was laughing.

Going to my last resort, I bit his fist.

“Ow!” Nate flinched but didn’t loosen his grip. Instead, he also bit my fist hand but a little gently.

“Eww! Nate.” I glared at him.

“What? You bit me first!” He whined.

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“But that doesn’t mean that you also have to bite me!”

“Then what am I supposed to do then?”

“Nothing! Just let go of my food damn it!” I pulled at the sp\*\*\* with all my might, but the b\*\*\*\*\* was too strong.

“Let me share your victory too!”

“Are we really fighting for just this piece of meat?”

“Hey. I’m just going with the flow over here,” he said as if he just realized what we were doing just now.

\*\*\*

A few minutes later Nate and I decided to just share the meat. He said that since neither one of us likes to give in, they might as well part it in half. After all the silly drama of ours, we decided to continue our lesson. But after a while, Nate got carried away and started to tell me some funny stories during his experiences at parties.

“So there was this guy who was drinking his wine at the table while I was telling a story, I think he was Duke from another family.” He started. “As you might know, I really hate it when someone does that to me, you know? Doing other things instead of paying attention to me.”

I scoffed at him. “In love with yourself much?”

“Hey, if you’re as good-looking as me then you won’t be surprised.” He defended. “Anyways, while he was drinking, I decided to take that opportunity as I said, ‘The more you talk, the thicker your double chin becomes’.”

I gasped. “You didn’t! That is rude.”

He grinned at my reaction. “Oh yes, I did. And let me tell you that he choked on his wine that time. It was really funny. Everyone from our table was laughing, except for the man of course.”

I laughed at that. “Obviously. So what did he do? Did he punch you or something?”

“Do I look like the person who’ll let someone ruin his face? NO.” He said in a duh tone. “And besides, before he could do anything to me, I told him that I was just kidding.”

“And? What did he say?” I asked, suddenly interested.

“Well, he didn’t say anything but I could tell that he was pissed off at me.” He shrugged as if it really doesn’t matter to him.

“And he still is pissed off at me whenever we meet.”

I burst out laughing. Well duh. Who wouldn't be pissed at what he just said? As I was laughing my b\*\*\* off, one of the two double doors suddenly opened, and in came both Dan and Ren. They had their arms crossed and were raising their eyebrows at us, a perfect mirror of each other. “What's going on?” They asked.

Nate got up and wiped his hands on his lap as he faced the twins. “Nothing. We were just talking. Is all.” He said, then he eyes the two sus\*\*\*iously. “What are you guys doing here?”

“The Queen asked us to fetch you two. It's almost time for dinner.” Ren said, still eyeing Nate. While Dan was grinning at me and waving. “Hello, Princess!”

“Hey.” I waved back.

“Come on, Rose. Let's go. You two can go ahead. We'll be right there.” Nate said to the twins. While Dan was happily whistling while walking towards the door, Ren had an annoyed look on his face as they left. As soon as they left, Nate had a confused look on his face and eyed the back of the chair. He scratched his head and started to look for something. “Have you seen a green cloth here somewhere?” He asked.

I started to think back and then remembered something. “Oh, It's on that sofa over there,” I said and pointed towards it. Nate followed my finger and a sigh of relief appeared on his lips. He walked towards it, picked the cloth up, and started to tie it around him with the golden chains on it.

My jaw dropped as I watched Nate tying the cloth around the collar of his suit.

That was Nate's cape!? I used a Prince's cape as a rag! I murdered it. No wonder it was too pretty in the first place!!

“What's wrong, Rose? You look pale.” Nate asked as he looked at my face, which was probably pale as he said.

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“Huh? I’m fine! Nothings wrong! What? Do you see something wrong? Nothing right? So why are you asking me!? I did nothing wrong!!!” Okay, I may have sounded a little defensive there but I wasn’t thinking clearly.

Nate gave me a weird look. “Okay?”

After that, Nate and I walked to the dining hall. The whole time Nate kept trying to open up a conversation with me but I would just keep my mouth shut. Not allowing the conversation to flow in case I’ll mention the cape thing.

And to my defense. It is their fault for wearing capes! I mean, why would they wear those? They’re not Superman or Batman anyways. Got my point there?

It’s not my fault!

“Are you really okay?”

“Yeah.”

“Why aren’t you talking?”

“Sure.”

“Are you even listening?”

“That’s cool.”

“I’m a virgin.”

“Great.”

Nate threw his hands up in the air in frustration. “I give up!!”

“Yeah...sure.”

Nate didn’t say anything after that and instead, focused on finding our way to the dining hall. As we entered the room, I immediately made my way and sat beside Dan and Ren. I know for sure that these two would protect me. Nate sat beside Fred, which I was thankful for because I know that he would be able to stop Nate from jumping at me WHEN he finds out.

Dan and Ren gave me curious glances as I sat quietly on my chair with my back straight and cutting my meat on the plate. I took a sneak peek at Nate who was doing the same. The cape on his shoulders had chocolate stains on it, which was really obvious. Fred seemed to notice it too and tried his best not to stare. The twins only noticed it when they saw me looking at Nate with a nervous look. They followed my gaze and almost burst out laughing until I stepped on their foot. A sign to tell them to keep their mouths shut.

I was on my best behavior to distract them from Nate's cape.

Look at me. I am an angel. A very well-mannered angelic princess!

"Why Rose. It seems that you're doing well on your lesson with Nate." The queen commented as she watched me applying the proper etiquette on eating. "Good job, Nate." The Queen praised him before her eyes darted on Nate's cape. Her mouth opened to comment on it but I pa\*\*ed her a plate of salad. "Eat." I told her with a tight smile that says 'don't even mention it. The queen shut her mouth and went back to eating.

I almost sighed in relief, but then Ace went to the room. "Your highness, I'm sorry I'm late. I had a lot of-" he stopped and looked at Nate's back. "Nate, what happened to your cape?"

As soon as Ace said that, the twins burst out laughing while I screamed.

"What do you mean what's wrong with my cape? It's perfectly-" Nate stopped in mid-sentence when he saw the chocolate stain on his cape by his shoulders. His jaw dropped as he detached it from his back and examined the damage I had inflicted on it. "This was my favorite cape..."

I took that time as I slowly got up from my chair and made my exit like a ninja. I even crawled on the floor!

"ROSE!!"

"I'm sorry!" I yelled back as I covered my face in embarra\*\*ment and fear.



## Chapter 19 Dance with A Charm

Today was my dancing lesson with Prince Fred and I wanted to wear something light.

Hmm...which dress would suit me better?

Lime or turquoise blue? I don't have time for this. I have to get dressed and fix my hair like a normal human being. I cannot embarrass\*\* myself again. I already did with the last four of them.'

I reached out and s\*\*\*\*\*ed the blue one and the maids helped me get dressed. I checked myself in the mirror and found it satisfying. The dress compliments my blue eyes perfectly.

Someone knocked at my door and I hurriedly went towards it. Nope. I am not excited. I opened the door and revealed Fred in all his majestic glory in his suit.

Now, this is a sight to behold. I shook the thoughts out of my head as soon as they appeared.

He smiled, adding a sparkle to his already hot image. "Morning."

Why am I suddenly seeing flowers?

"Morning." I nodded back at him. Why do these guys look like models anyway? It's so unrealistic!

"You look nice today, Princess." He complimented making my cheeks flush in embarrass\*\*ment. Why was it so easy to hate Ace, to feel annoyed with the twins and Nate? But so hard to do it on Fred? Maybe fact that he was the only one with a gentle ambience with him.

"Thanks" was all I managed to say.

You have to admit that he really looked good. "Uhm...are you okay? he asked. giving me a weird look.

"Why do you ask?"

“Your face. It looks like you have murderous intent.” Do I really look like that? I suddenly became conscious and shook my head as I grabbed Fred’s arm and started to pull him. “Come on. Let’s go.”

I heard him chuckle as I dragged him away. Damn. How embarrassing. Why do I have to be so weird?

Fred started to offer his arm to me. I linked mine with him and he started to lead the way.

I hope I can manage this lesson without getting too flustered. Or cause any more trouble.

\*\*\*

Fred led me to a large ballroom like the one that you see in fairy tales. Multiple chandeliers hang from the roof that lightens the room giving it a golden glow. I feel like I’m inside the castle in Beauty and The Beast. But this time, I am the beast and this prince is the beauty. My face is probably as pretty as his b\*\*\*.

Near one of the floor-to-ceiling windows stood five men holding some instruments. They all nodded at me and Fred as we entered the room. Is there some kind of concert? I looked at Fred and saw him looking at me too.

“What?” I asked.

“Nothing. You just look like a lost pup.” Then he started to chuckle.

Is he laughing at me? I frowned.

“So what now?” I asked him as soon as he was done laughing at me. He looked 100 times better when he laughed, but of course, I know my limits. This is all a part of the Queen’s plan.

Well...a little late for that I guess.

“Sorry.” He said and composed himself and grinned at the men holding the instruments. He nodded at them and soon, they started to play. The music was slow and melodic. The kind that soothes your mind and helps you

relax. Imagine that you are mad with someone and then you heard a song and it easily takes your bad mood away

From the corner of my eyes, I saw Fred approaching me and offered a hand to me. I only looked at his palm. I know that he wanted me to take it, but I decided to play dumb and raised a questioning eyebrow at him. "What am I supposed to do with it?" I asked and still didn't take his hand.

"You take it. Because today I am going to teach you how to dance." I was caught off guard when he was the one who took my hand because I didn't even make a move to take it. He slowly took hold of my right hand and placed my left hand on his shoulder, then he placed his right hand on my hip which startled me. I was uncomfortable with how little the space was between us that I took little steps back, but he pulled me back afterward. "Rose, don't move too far from me." He said and held me in place.

"F-fine. Just get on with it." I said and looked away. I could feel his stare and his breath on my cheeks.

"Why? Are you uncomfortable?" He looked worried.

"No, I'm not." I defended myself. "I'm just making sure that you won't get too comfortable with this. Who knows?"

He laughed. "Too late I guess."

"Excuse me?"

He gave me a side unsure smile. I guess he's a bit worried about my state. "Setting that aside. Let us start. You really don't have to do anything here. You just have to follow me." He said and adjusted my hold on his shoulder, which became loose, and elevated his right arm so it was level with his shoulder. His right hand was on my back. "In dancing, the male is always the one who leads. The female just has to follow. If I step my right foot forward, you step back with your left. Do the mirror of me." I only nodded as a response to him.

Taking that as a response, he took one step forward and I did the same using my left. Resulting in me stepping on his right foot. "Ow," He said and I immediately took my foot off of his and muttered a low 'oops'.

"That's okay." He said. "Let's try again." Then he stepped his right foot forward again. This time, I made sure to step back with my left.

"Okay. That's it. Now I'm gonna do the same with my left. Just try to follow me and you'll soon get it."

"Okay," I said. I sounded a little skeptical.

For one hour and a half, we practiced. And the majority of those times was me stepping on his foot. It's as if his face wasn't enough of a distraction and here he goes adding a smile that seems to summon those imaginary flowers.

What's with those!?

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I keep looking away. Fred raised a hand to the musicians to signal them to stop. The music died. He then led me to a chair to sit. "Let's have a break for a while." He said then turned his back to wipe the sweat off of his forehead and went to the band. He said something to them that made them leave the room. Probably telling them to have a break too. Once the band left, he didn't acknowledge my presence or even bothered to speak to me as he stood there by the window and gazed at the scenery outside.

It made me wonder if he was pissed off at me for repeatedly stepping on him?

I started drumming my feet absentmindedly to a tune back from Earth. Without thinking, I started humming the tune. "That's a nice song. Did you compose it yourself?" I jumped back. Fred now stood beside me. His eyes regarded me curiously.

"No. It's a song back in my world." I said.

"It's unique. And you sing pretty well."

“I hardly call that singing.”

“I’m curious. Does dancing exist in your world?”

“They do.” I laughed. His question sounds silly. “Although we don’t usually do the dances that you do. There are all sorts of dancing. You can dance in groups, pairs, or solo.”

I saw Fred’s eyes sparkled with interest. “Tell me, what form of dance do you do?”

“Um...” I hesitated. I rarely dance. And when I do, I do it while taking a shower. “Well, I sort of did a group and a pair dance. But only because our school requires it.”

“A school?”

“An inst\*\*ution where kids and teens like me go to learn.”

“Interesting concept. The people in your world seem smart.”

I laughed nervously. “Yeah...I must be from a different planet then.” I mumbled.

Fred seems to sense my discomfort and thankfully change the topic. “So, you’ve done a pair dance?”

“Yeah. During prom.”

“What’s a prom?” he asked. Looking confused. Great. Now how am I supposed to tell him what a prom is?

“Um...let’s see.” I rubbed my chin as if I have an imaginary mustache as I think for the right words to say. “It’s some sort of event where...teenagers gather to socialize. The males would wear tuxedos while the females would wear dresses.”

He smiled. “I’m interested in the dances that involve a partner in your world. Can you teach me? Maybe that way I’ll know your style and find a better way to teach you our style.”

I looked away because I only know how to do those cha moves when in a pair dance. I tried to imagine Fred dancing the cha-cha and I have to stop myself from laughing. "Oh my God," I whispered.

"Is there a problem?" Fred tilted his head to the side. Fred would do good in a waltz, but I don't think that dancing the cha would suit his image.

I averted my gaze yet again. Should I? I have to admit that I also want to see what he would do. Pursing my lips to hide my grin, I got up. "Okay." My voice cracked.

"Are you sure? You're shaking, Rose."

"Of course!"

Fred and I went back to the center of the room. "Uh...let us resume the position we did earlier," I instructed. He followed and took my left hand then placed his right hand at my back. "Alright, Fred. this time, follow my lead. I'll count."

I started to count. "Fred, step your right foot forward, tap it shortly two times and then step it back again," I said. He nodded and followed my instruction. It was a little awkward at first so I showed him how to do the stepping.

"Now do the same with your left foot, but this time tap back two times then a step forward." I bit my lips at how robotic he looks with the movement.

"Keep up with me Fred. The steps are just the same." Fred nodded and focused his eyes on mine. "Okay." I saw him struggle a bit, but he was slowly starting to get it. "Um, this is actually both a solo and a pair dance," I admitted. "And I really can't remember what the other steps are, maybe you can just add to it. Either way, what we did was the base of that dance."

Fred chuckled. "As I said, your world is interesting."

We basically did the steps over and over again. Before I knew it, it was Fred who was leading the dance. He laughed a melodic one. "Well, this is fun. I thought at first that this would be hard."

"What are you talking about? You practically mastered it. You're even leading the dance right now." That comment brought a smile to his face.

“Well, that’s because I have a good trainer.” He said proudly, making me look away in embarrassment.

The dance ended and we paused. He gave me a smile which I avoided. I was about to let go when Fred gestured to a song from the musicians.

The sound of the violin once again filled the room. It was sweet and slow. Elegant and alluring. But the emotion in it seemed off.

Fred pulled me towards him with an amused expression. “I think it’s time for me to teach you again.”

“O-okay.” I stuttered. We swayed to the music. Fred led the dance as I struggled to keep up with him. All the time he was looking at me while I looked at anywhere but him. He sighed. “Rose, you should look at your partner when you dance.”

“No” I frowned. I lowkey miss our cha session. Fred sprouts fewer imaginary flowers when he’s struggling.

Every time Fred takes a step towards me, I would quickly back up. “Remember what I told you? Don’t put too much space between you and your partner.” He said and pulled me back towards him when he noticed that I created a new space between us again.

Don’t put too much space between you and your partner! I swear he was so close that I could feel his breathing. “I kind of like this song. What is it called?” I asked in a desperate attempt to fill in the awkward situation.

“Setting Valley.” He answered. When I looked up, I saw him smile. “It’s an original. Composed by myself.”

“Really? I didn’t know you can write a song.”

“I do. I gave a copy of the musician earlier. I thought it would be perfect.”

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“The song is amazing, Prince Fred. Is there anything that you can’t do?” I asked in admiration. “The tune is just right. I slow down so that it helps me coordinate with the dance but…” I trailed off.

“But?” I pursed my lips in hesitation. Fred gave me an encouraging smile.  
“Go on. You can tell me.”

Fred led us in a circle as we explored the room while still holding on to each other as we danced. For some reason, I think his steps are getting wider and wider. That’s why I also widened my steps so as not to be that close to him.

I even think that this is the reason why we were able to consume the room as we danced. I even glanced at him as soon as I realized what he was doing.

“The song. Why is it lonely?”

“Really?” He suddenly twirled me, which was weird since the step was off the tune.

“Really.”

“Must be your imagination.” He twirled me again.

“Do we really have to do the twirl this much?” I asked. Feeling dizzy all of the sudden.

“Nope. I just find it amusing that you’re actually quite flexible and cooperative.” He chuckled.

I frowned and looked away. This jerk.

“You’re not looking at me and moving away. Why?”

“...” I feel like puking all of a sudden.

“Rose?”

“Nothing.”

“Come on. tell me why.”

“Shut up.”



“Come on. You can tell me!” He whined, which was so out of character for him.

“You’re so annoying!” I feel sick. And even though Fred was charming, we weren’t helping my current situation. “Fine! You’re b\*\*\* ugly.”

Wait. What did I just say?

I gasped in horror as I realized what I said and turned to look at him. He looked shocked and sad. “Really?” He looked like a puppy. His eyes dropped. “I’m that ugly?”

“What!?! You actually believe what I said?” Guilt was creeping in.

“I’m sorry. You may not look at me.” He dropped his head and his bangs covered his eyes. Still, he was being professional seeing as how we were still dancing.

“No! I didn’t mean it that way. You’re handsome. Really handsome!” I insisted. I bent my head down to look at his face. In return, he looked away. I couldn’t see his expression. “In fact, you’re more handsome than the rest of the princes! Really really good-looking. If you were in my world, you would be a model.” I showered him with compliments.

I cursed at how sensitive these guys are with their looks. I called him ugly once and now he’s acting like this.

I heard him snort.

“Fred?”

A melancholic laugh echoed in the room. There was a small pause as Fred laughed. And I swear that I saw sunflowers blooming and rained all over him.

WTF. Is wrong with this world that is making me see things?!

I stood there frozen and I kept seeing flower petals.

“I’m so sorry. You looked really adorable.” He apologized while wiping tears from his face. Then he leaned in close. “Sorry I avoided your gaze. Can you see me now?”

It was a sudden movement that I got caught off guard. I took a quick step back and tripped on my other foot. I closed my eyes and waited for my fall. But that didn’t happen as I felt Fred’s hand on my backing, pulling me back to him.

I dared to sneak a peek and saw him looking at me with a tiny smirk on his face.

“Are you alright?” He looked at me worriedly.

I frowned and waved my hand over his head. Fred gave me a weird look. “Something there?”

“Flowers,” I said the words as if I were cursing. “I’m making sure that they won’t appear.”

“Flowers?” He asked as he pulled me up.

“Yes,” I said seriously. Good. It didn’t appear.

“Are you sure you’re okay?”

We suddenly ended up in a slow dance as the music almost come to an end.

“As long as I don’t see them damn flowers again,” I said through gritted teeth. He laughed but didn’t ask about them again.

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The song finally ended and we did a short curtsy. Fred smiled when the song ended. “Very nice, Princess Rose. As your tutor, I’m very proud. Not once did you step on my foot?”

Then it dawned on me. I was dancing!?

Fred looked up as if he was thinking. “Although you still need a LOT of improvement when it comes to eye contact and space.” He came to me

and messed my hair up. "Rest for a while, Princess. Wouldn't want you to trip again and see those flowers now, don't we?" He said and laughed again when I started to wave my hands at his sides when I saw a ray of sunshine where the flowers usually appear.

"I think it is time for you to rest." He said and guided me back to where I was resting before. But I stopped when something caught my eye. I stared at the window. Without thinking, I headed for the window and looked at the scenery behind it. It was a garden!

I heard Fred walking towards me and paused. "Do you want to go out?" I stiffen and looked at him with wide eyes.

Did he just...

I could tell that my face was red. "W-What did you just say?" I asked. He pointed at the window, specifically to the garden, and asked me again. "Outside. Do you want to come with me there?" he asked me and smiled.

Finally, my mind seemed to process what he said. "Oh. I thought you said – never mind." I shook her head. "Sure. I'll come."

Of course. He meant literally. I slapped a hand to my face for being so ridiculous. I should get a hold of myself. I wouldn't want to be a pawn of the queen, right?

"Out of curiosity. What were you thinking earlier?" He asked.

"Nothing! Let's go." I yelled and quickly made my way to the door. Behind me, I heard him chuckle.

\*\*\*

Once we were out in the garden, I couldn't help but notice a slight pain in my ankle. Did I sprain it?

"Hey, what's wrong with you?" He looked worried.

Great. Why can't I get through one day without causing any problems? Poor Fred had to be involved with this too. I shook my head in response and smiled at him.

“Nothing,” I said and began to walk. On the way to the small garden pavilion, I forced myself to walk as normally as I could and keep a straight face.

Of all the reasons to sprain my ankle, it has to be while I was dancing. And I wasn't even wearing really high heels. Only an inch high. How embarrassing.

I suddenly felt a presence behind me. Without any warning, I was swooped off of my feet. I let out a yelp as Prince Fred carried me. He didn't say anything or even joked with me as he walked towards the pavilion at the center of the garden. He sat me on one of the rails surrounding the pavilion and removed one of my shoes with the swollen ankle. It was my first time seeing it. It wasn't that bad? At least that's what I think.

“Your ankle is swollen. You even have a small cut.”

“Seriously, Fred. I'm okay.”

“Why didn't you say you were hurt?”

“Overreacting much? It doesn't hurt that bad.”

He raised a brow and poked my ankle. “Ow! Fred.”

He chuckled. “I thought it didn't hurt?” I only let out a ‘humph’ and looked away. There's no one to blame but my own clumsiness. I wonder how long would it heal?

“Just leave it alone.” I insisted and tried to move my foot away.

“It looks like it hurts.” He said and gently touched the swollen skin. Fred was still looking at my food. He looked so focused for some reason. Well, I have no idea why he would bother about it that much. It will take some time to heal, but it will heal on its own.

It was embarrassing though. He was still looking at it. “Let go?”

“No.” He said firmly. “Just stay still.”

"I said I am fine." I snapped. I want out of this awkward situation. I don't want anyone to see us.

"I said stay still." He insisted.

I grumbled in frustration at how stubborn he was. Stupid Prince. All of them are stupid. I might as well throw a bomb at them. Ace is a big arrogant jerk. The twins are a pain in the b\*\*\*. Nate is a flirt. Fred is too nice. The Queen is crazy and the King couldn't do a thing about it. I sighed

Wait. Speaking of Fred, he suddenly turned quiet. What is he doing with my foot anyway?

"Yo, what are you doing?" I look down at him.

He looked up at me and smiled. "Nothing." He simply said.

I was about to ask him again when we heard Nate calling out to us. "Fred! Rose!" He said and came running to us. He paused when he saw Fred holding my foot and the two of them had a short staring contest before Nate broke up and looked at me.

"The Queen wanted to talk to us inside. She told me to call the both of you."

Now, what does the crazy queen want? Now?

I smiled at him. "Okie Dokie. Wait up." I jumped down from where I was sitting. When I landed, I couldn't help but notice that the pain from my foot wasn't there anymore. Surprised, I looked at Fred for an explanation but he only smiled and offered me his arm. I took it after I put on my shoes. We followed Nate to the castle.

While we were walking, I couldn't help but think of what Fred had done to my foot. I was sure that I had a small cut at the back.

Something was definitely wrong.

## Chapter 20 Silent Conversations

Nate was leading us into the castle. Fred was still beside me, not looking nor talking to me. He was just looking straight.

I still can't get my mind off of what happened earlier. How was he able to heal my foot?

I swear it was pretty swollen and it hurts to walk. Wheels were turning inside my head until we came to a stop in front of the entrance of the castle. I noticed that Nate had also stopped. He took a deep breath before he let it out. Something was bothering him.

As if reading my mind, Nate looked back at us and smiled at me. "You go on ahead, Rose. I have to speak with Prince Fred first. The Queen and the others are expecting you at the dining area. I assume that you know your way there?" he asked.

I looked from Nate then to Fred, who only gave me a nod. "Um...sure. But don't take too long guys." I said uncertainty.

That made Nate smirk. "Miss me already? Don't worry. I'll be sure to sit by your side later." Nate then winked. Hearing his flirty self again made me relax a little, but it didn't stop me from frowning at him, which made Fred laugh at our exchange.

"That's great. I'll be sure to reserve you a seat beside me." I said sarcastically and stuck my tongue out childishly at him before I left. Those two have some important matters to discuss. Might as well leave those two to settle it here.

\*\*\*MEANWHILE\*\*\*

Prince Nathaniel waited for Rose to leave and out of earshot before facing Prince Fred. He wasn't even bothered by the look that Nathaniel was giving him. Nathaniel knows and he saw what he did a while back and he wasn't happy about it.

"Fred, did you just use your magic?" He asked him. The blonde-haired prince didn't give him a response immediately, which only made him furious. Of all the things that he hates is when they ignore him especially when they are the ones who did something. "Fred answer me!"

Fred seemed to have sensed his mood because he let out a sigh before answering. "Yes."

“Why? Didn’t we talk about this? We wouldn’t reveal anything until we are certain that she won’t freak out.”

“It’s not like I revealed who I was to her. Besides, she already knows that the Queen is a Fae. What makes us so different?” he asks.

“You know why. She’s only a human. Their kind has a different image from our kind. She has to be ready before we can expose our true identity. You of all people should have known that!” He nearly yelled at him, but then lowered his voice in case Rose was still nearby.

Fred didn’t seem to appreciate his outburst because his fist started to clench. Sparks running along his arms. “I know that! But she was hurt. What do you want me to do? Let her walk in while limping? It looked like she was in pain. She even tried to hide it.” He looked away as he whispered the last part as if he was recalling a memory.

“You could have called us first!” He argued.

“Well I’m sorry but what’s done is done. We couldn’t take that back anymore. Unless you want me to erase her memory of it.”

Nathaniel was suddenly tense at what he said and couldn’t help but let out a warning hiss at him. “Don’t you dare?” He wouldn’t let him use his magic to erase Rose’s memory. Magic is unpredictable if you are not experienced in using it. It could wipe out all of your memory. Even worse, you’ll go crazy. They all know that.

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The spark on Fred’s arm died. He shook his head tiredly. When he looked up, Nate saw that he had a ghost of a smile on his lips. “Don’t worry about it. I wouldn’t do that to her,” he said and walked past him and into the castle. Nate could only stare at his back for a few seconds before he followed the other prince.

Everyone was already seated when Fred and Nate arrived. They seemed to be awfully quiet as they sat on the chair opposite of Rose.

Ren and Dan were beside her while Ace was sitting beside Ren. Once everyone was all settled, the Queen started to talk. “Now that we are all

here, I would like to make some announcements. A week from now, we will be having a ball.”

Why will there be a ball? Is there a tournament here? And what kind of ball? A basketball or a volleyball ball? Rose wondered.

As if hearing her thoughts, Nate was the one who asked. “Pardon me, your highness. But may I ask what the ball is for?”

The Queen smiled approvingly at him. “We are celebrating the arrival of our new family in this castle.” Her eyes then landed on Rose. As well as the others. Now they were all looking at her. “It would be the perfect opportunity to introduce you to the other rulers of other kingdoms and to officially introduce the king candidates.”

The twins, Nate, and Fred all tense when the Queen said this.

“B-But your majesty-” Ren stopped when he saw Rose looking at him. Instead, he only focused his eyes on the Queen as if having a silent conversation with her. Ren moved his face so Rose couldn’t see how his eyes glowered and locked gazes with the queen

‘She’s a human, your majesty. What would the others do if they find out about this?’ Being a new generation of wolves, who was blessed by the lunar light, the twins can telepathically communicate with other supernatural races. As long as they have eye contact with the opposite party that is.

The Queen sighed. “So you already knew? All of you?” She asked and looked at every one of the princes. They all nodded at her. The queen only smiled. “Oh well, this makes it easier for me then. Perhaps if you guys help her understand then I might give you an explanation.” Every second that pa\*\*es, Rose becomes more and more confused.

What the heck are they talking about? She wondered.

There was a slight pressure on her shoulder. She looked to her right and saw Dan giving her an apologetic smile. “Don’t mind them. They’re having crazy people conversation,” he whispered the last part so only the two of them could hear. She couldn’t help but giggle.



He reached out and placed several meals on her plate. "Eat up while Nate isn't looking," he whispered and she smiled at him. He knows that she couldn't stuff her plate like what she's doing now when Nate is nearby.

Dan really doesn't like where this conversation is going. Rose doesn't even know what they are and here goes the Queen, throwing a ball full of other supernatural beings.

Ren, Fred, Nate, Ace, and Dan all agreed that they wouldn't reveal who and what they are to Rose yet. Even though she acts as if she's alright, Ren and Dan could still smell her fear and uncertainty. They know that Fred and Nate know of that too. As for Ace, they think he can read it through her face. Dan can tell that she's still freaked out of all this magic and fairies. She doesn't need to add them to add to her bucket list.

Looking at Ren, he could tell that he's talking to the Queen through his mind. He doesn't want Rose to hear anything of what he's saying. And neither does he.

He couldn't help but notice the puzzled look on Rose's face right now. She looked so confused and left out that he decided to entertain her so she couldn't listen to the conversation that they were having.

"Hey. How's the training going with you and Fred?" He asked her. She nearly choked on her food. He panicked and slapped her back gently. He grabbed his gla\*\* of water and offered it to her. All the while, listening to the conversation as Rose took the water from him.

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"I don't want to be rude, your highness. But don't you think that it's too early to throw a ball? Knowing that Rose -" Fred was cut off when the Queen waved her hand. I looked at the King at the End of the table. No one seems to mind him though.

"Nonsense. It will be the perfect time for a ball. I trust that all of you will be able to explain all of this to her before the time comes. Consider this as a part of the test for the throne. Plus, we don't have much of a choice. The other factions are demanding the official king candidates to be announced. If we don't have a ball, then the factions will get restless and might spread unwanted rumors. Having a ball will reduce that risk and avoid unwanted

visitors, who would use that excuse to visit.” said the Queen. He couldn’t help but feel anger towards her. He knows that she’s the Queen but she acts as if this was all a game. Especially when Rose is involved. The queen sighed tiredly. “If only I could do more, but it seems that we are being pushed to a corner. I never expected things to get out of hand this fast. The least I could do is also announce my adoption of Rose. At least a fake adoption to filter out the rumors of her.”

Of course, the princes know that rumors aren’t easily dismissed with her adoption. But at least it can potentially avoid most of the bad rumors.

“Thanks.” He snapped my attention back to Rose. who seemed to have recovered. He took the gla\*\* of water from her and set it down on the table. He rubs her back just in case.

For his brother, he’ll take care of Rose.

‘Ren, please be careful of your choice of words. Remember that I only have Rose distracted, but it doesn’t prevent her from hearing things. Knowing her, she’ll jump to conclusions.’ He spoke through our link.

‘I know that!’ Ren snapped. ‘Why do you think that I use the Alpha link on the Queen to tell her this?!’

‘Chill out. I’m just reminding you.’

Dan looked around the table to see that all of them, except Rose who kept on eating, seemed a bit tense. After a moment of silence, the Queen had finally spoken.

“Well now that it is settled, I want everyone’s attention now. Including you, Rose.” Said the Queen.

Rose stopped eating. When she looked up, Dan couldn’t suppress his grin. Her mouth was stuffed with food making her look like a chipmunk. Nate glared at her in disapproval.

“Hmm?” That was all she managed to say.

“Starting tomorrow, your training will be intense. You’ll train with the five of them. You’ll spend the morning with Ace, Spend lunch with Nate, And

divide the afternoon with the twins and Fred.” the Queen said gleefully as if the idea excited her.

Rose swallowed her food and stared agape at the Queen.

Dan silently counted.

3

2

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“YOU WANT ME TO WHAT!?” Rose yelled and stood up while slamming the table with such force that it caused it to rattle.

Oh well. There goes our fun dinner night.

“Rose be reason-”

“You should be the one who’s reasonable!” Rose-cut the Queen off before she could even manage to say anything. Of all the people that Dan knows, he thinks that Rose is the only one who could do that. “One day for each of them is already enough! Now you want me to spend each day with all of them?! This is...” She paused and rubbed her eyes. Ren looked up at her. They could smell the tears that she’s desperately hiding. “Aren’t you controlling my life too much?” She whispered.

Ouch. Does that mean that she doesn’t want to spend any day with us?  
Dan thought

“No offense to the princes.” She added quickly before facing the Queen once again. The Queen only shook her head. “I’m going to let your insult pa\*\* because I can understand that you are upset.”

“Upset is an understatement. I’m furious, thanks for asking.” Rose had her head down the entire time as she spoke. She took a deep breath before her eyes met the Queen. “I’m done eating,” she said and made a mocking curtsy at the Queen before stomping out.

The Queen sighed sadly. "At least she now knows how to curtsy."

\*\*\*ROSE\*\*\*

Who does she think she is?! My mom?! I would rather have a cow as a mom. Why does she always control my life? It's not like I'm from this world or anything. Nor do I intend on staying.

After dinner, I stomped towards my room and slammed the door shut behind me. I walk towards my vanity table and watch the magical ball that the Queen gave me. The white mist has increased but it's still not close to being full yet. I cursed.

How long will it be until it's full?

I looked at it sadly. I sighed and laid down on my bed for a few minutes. After that, I decided to take a shower first and put on some clean clothes. I tried to fall asleep but my brain wouldn't let me.

I decided to visit the library to look for books that I could read. When I got there, I started to search the shelves. The library was huge and full of books so it took me some time to actually find something interesting to read. I settle for an old leather-bound book with golden details at the side. I didn't bother to read the title. In my situation, you wouldn't be so picky about books. And somehow, the smell of it was comforting.

After I got what I needed, I headed back to my room and laid there with the book on my lap. I started to read the words but my mind couldn't seem to process anything. I was still pissed at the Queen. The bubbling range of emotion was disrupting my concentration.

I read the same line over and over again, trying to make something out of it but it was no use. Finally deciding that reading wouldn't help, I just closed my eyes. I didn't even notice that I had already gone to sleep.

Chapter 21 Princess to Prisoner

The moment I woke up, my body felt heavy. I woke up earlier than I intended to.

I wanted to go back to sleep, but my brain won't let me. So I just stayed in bed and only moved when the maids came in to assist. After I had taken a shower and put on some clean clothes, the maids lined up and bowed.

"Princess, we'll be going now. Please call us if you need any more assistance."

"Sure," I responded.

I walked to my bed when I accidentally stepped on something. I almost tripped and fell. Since I was in a pretty bad mood, I almost threw it out of the window in anger. Luckily, I caught sight of it just in time before I threw it out. It was the book that I was trying to read yesterday. It was pretty heavy that I decided to sit on my bed and placed the book on my lap. I traced the golden details of the book and it seemed to radiate life.

But I guess it's just my imagination.

I opened the book as I began to read. This time, my mind was slightly cleared that I was able to comprehend the words.

Decades ago, in the kingdom of Thalia. A kind King and a loving Queen dwelled over the land. Everyone was content and happy. That was until they angered the gods. It was a day where the kingdom's freshly harvested crops were washed out by a great flood. Almost all of the food was washed away and only a few were left, leaving the citizens of Thalia weak with starvation.

The king decided to divide the remaining food among the citizens. Unfortunately, with the little of what they have and the large population of his kingdom, the food wasn't even enough to last for 2 days. Hunger led to desperation and greed. The people started to sin. They started to steal and kill. So many lives were lost and so much blood was shed. The war lasted for 3 days, it was declared as the Dark Hours, the day where the people were driven mad because of hunger and the blackened sand that was caused by the dried blood and ashes of its citizens.

One day, the King had had enough of the blood spills that he had banished all that was unworthy. Since then, a lot of the people fled the kingdom and lived in separate groups. There, they faced many challenges and have adapted to the wild to survive.

One group has decided to become one with the animals. They studied and imitated their hunting forms and acted like animals. They were the very first Were people. The second group wandered far into the woods. They have food but water. Their thirst lasted for a week before one of them had decided to drink the blood of an animal, thus making them the first vampires.

The third group was the wisest. They planted their crops for their living and relied on nature for their daily needs. They gave respect to nature as if it were alive. Soon the spirits of the forest had acknowledged them and given them powers. They became the first elves.

The Fourth decided to work on alchemy. They believe that the magic from their world can be learned through the use of symbols and languages. Through years of studying alchemy and the elements, the people finally learned how to use it. That was how the warlocks and witches came to.

The Fifth discovered a mountain full of mythical creatures. Creatures forming bonds –

Blah blah blah and the list of supernatural beings went on and on. Explaining how they became this and that. How this happened and that. I yawned and flipped to another page, where the actual story begins. I'll come back and read the rest of the races later.

As years went by, each species had adopted and had become more civilized. Not long enough that they had built their separate kingdom. Magic had bloomed –

I was still in the middle of reading when the door suddenly burst open. I looked up angrily at the one who had to disturb my reading. "What do you want, PRINCE Ace?" I glared at him from my book.

Ace – Oh excuse me – PRINCE Ace only glared back at me as if he wanted to skin me alive. "You do realize that I have been waiting in the library for 2 hours. Then I came to find you here reading?"

I only shrugged at him as if it was nothing. "Well, what does it look like I'm doing? Now go along and find someone to play with. I'm busy." I waved him off. "Shoo!!"

“We.Have.Training.” Ace said through gritted teeth.

“I know,” I said. My eyes were still glued to the book.

“And?”

“And I don’t care,” I said and finally looked up at him. “I’m not going to do any more of that training crap. No one can boss me around.”

“No.” He said.

“No what? Dude, please be specific when you talk. You’re not a kid.” I said then rubbed my chin as if I was thinking. “Although you do have anger issues. Let me guess. You’re in one of your moods. Is it your time of the month?”

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Ace walked straight towards me and hauled me up off the bed, almost making me fall in the process. “Hey! What’s wrong with you. I know you like me that much but I don’t like you, okay? Might as well say it right here to make things clear.” I said sarcastically, then pulled my arm out of his grasp. Ace only rolled his eyes at me before his attention was shifted to the book that I was reading.

He froze.

“Um, yahoo! Earth to Mr. Pain here. Are you there?” I waved my hand in front of his face. Trying to catch his attention. “Hey. I didn’t hurt your feelings that bad when I rejected you, RI-”

“How far have you read?” Ace grabbed me by my shoulders and looked straight into my eyes.

“It’s called research-”

“I’m serious. How far have you read?” His tone was laced with annoyance.

“And seriously, Ace. When will you stop cutting me off-”

“Rose!” Now with the screaming.



Sheesh! I think no girl will be able to stand this guy's attitude. He'll end up alone...in the dumpster. Dead.

I pointed at the page of the book where I have stopped. Ace finally released me from his hold. He grabbed the book and started to read it before he shut it.

"Hey. I was supposed to read that! I haven't even memorized the page!" I whined and tried to grab the book away from him but he moved it away. "Did you at least memorize the page number!?"

"Stay here and wait for me." He ordered. And now he's giving me orders? Who does he think he is? A prince?

...Well, that was ironic and a stupid thing for me to think.

But that doesn't give him the right to order me around. "Why should I listen to you? H-E-L-L-O I am not from this world. I live in a free country so you can't boss this girl around." I pointed to myself. "So if you'll excuse me, I'll be going to get my breakfast now." I flipped my hair back in an attempt to be annoying. Of course, I know that everything that I do always annoys him. Or better yet, everyone annoys him.

Before I could even reach the door, Ace grabbed my hand and pulled me back. He walked towards the door and slammed it shut.

Talk about ladies first.

I ran towards the door and tried to twist the knob only to find it locked.

What the!?

I knock loudly on the door. "YOU STUPID SON OF A JERK!! UNLOCK THIS DOOR!!"

Well, this is funny. I'm knocking from the inside of my room?

"Stay!" Ace barked and I heard his footsteps getting farther and farther.

Why does he keep treating me like a dog!?

"What!?! No! Let me out. At least bring me something to eat! Ace!"



\*\*\*

10 Minutes have pa\*\*ed and I was still trying to break the door. I even threw my desk at it and was now hitting the doorknob with my chair.

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The cardio that I'm doing right now is making me hungrier by the minute.

"Stupid...Prince...I'll...Kill...You." I grumbled as I continued hitting the door with the chair. "I'll be sure to hang you to a post with your royal cape and expose your royal underwear so everyone can see that pride of yours! ARGH!!"

The chair isn't working! I knew I should have used the mahogany one, but it was too heavy.

"ARRRRRGHH!!!" I angrily marched to my dresser and grabbed all of the brushes and makeups that I saw and started to throw them against the wall. The makeup broke and s\*\*\*tered messily on the floor after they hit. It left a lot of stains on both the door and the floor.

The door suddenly burst open and the 5 princes came. A box of powder came flying towards Nate's face but he easily caught it.

Cool reflexes. I applaud him for that, temporarily forgetting about my situation.

Nate smirked proudly while holding the box of powder. As he strode towards the room, he immediately slipped because of the messed-up powders on the floor from the other product. Luckily, he was able to catch himself and avoid further humiliation.

I slapped at hand to my mouth to cover my giggle. Unfortunately, he saw it and scowled at me.

I looked behind him to see Ace standing there with the rest. My blood started to boil at the sight of him and I grabbed my hairbrush and attempted to tackle him. Unfortunately, the twins stopped me.

“Well if it isn’t, PRINCE Ace. Nice to see you again after you lock me up in this room with no food and water! Do you know that breakfast is the most important meal of the day?!” I looked at the princes. “And did you even bring something to eat!?” I struggled against the twin’s grip, but it was futile.

“I could cook you right now but I don’t want your blood in my veins. I’ll puke. And you probably think that I’m overreacting but I’m not. I’m a human for crying out loud! If I don’t get any food then what will I dispose of after that!?” I slumped against their hold and continued to grumble.

“Woah Woah. Slow down, b\*\*\*ercup. Is it that bad?” Dan asks with a laugh.

“He locked me up in this room! No food. No water.”

“You almost hit a guy because of that?” Ren turned to the side and laughed.

“What do you mean almost?” I challenged him. I swung my foot up sending my shoe flying towards Ace. Very unfortunately, he slapped it away like a bug. “Okay then. Almost it is.”

The twins started laughing. I gasped. These b\*\*\*\*\*s must not have experienced hunger. After all, they are a bunch of spoiled princes. Well lucky for them.

“It’s not just that. He almost choked me.” They all stopped laughing. The shock was written on their faces. Slowly, they turned their head to Ace who looked confused at the moment. Well, he almost did when he grabbed me by the collar earlier and not so gently pulled me back. I was being dramatic here.

“Ace, Is that true?” Fred gave him a look.

“I figured he’d snap,” Nate mumbled.

Ace glared at me for accusing him. I stuck my tongue out at him.

“You all know she spouts a lot of bullsh\*t. I did no such thing.” He said while glaring at me.

I gave a dramatic gasp. "So now you deny your actions a while ago? Just to keep that clean image of yours?"

"Why would I even choke you when I could snap your neck." Ace said coldly.

Yikes. No need to go that far.

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Feeling insecure, I touched my neck. "You monster," I mumbled. I felt a hand on my shoulder and I looked up to see the oh-so-glorious-freakishly-handsome Prince Fred. "Rose, we came here to tell you something. Can this argument that you have with Ace wait?" He was giving me an expectant look as if pleading with me.

"PRINCE Ace." Ace corrected him.

"R-Right. Sorry."

"Okay." I nodded. Fred led me to sit on the edge of my bed. I looked back at Ace and stuck my tongue out at him.

If looks could kill I'd be dead.

The rest of the prince stood behind Fred. He came down to his knees in front of me and stared.

I'm getting married!?

I mentally slapped and dismissed the thought. No way is he going to do just that. He's a prince and I'm an alien...? Well I am from a different world after all, right? And besides, I'm still 17 and not legally old enough to get married.

But I am from a different world with different rules. Who knows?

He's gonna propose!

Where's the ring? I want diamonds!!

Fred sighed and grabbed my hand. "Rose, what I'm – I mean we're about to tell you.....it's kind of complicated-

"I do!"

"What?" He asked.

"What?" I followed.

Fred laughed a little when our conversation was headed elsewhere. "What I was trying to say a while ago was..." Fred's eyes seemed to travel at every one of the boys. Having a silent conversation with them. I raised an eyebrow at him as I waited.

"Are you hungry?" Fred finished and politely grinned at me.

"FRED!!!" Nate and the twins screamed making me flinch at the noise.

"Oh. Is that it?" I was a bit disappointed. "Yes. I am starving." I admitted. Fred pulled me up on my feet. He was about to lead the way when Nate grabbed my arm and made me face him. He was looking at me. All serious and no hint of flirting.

Fred grabbed his hand that was holding my arm.

"Nate-" Nate swatted his hand away from his and glanced at Fred.

"I think this is the right time to tell her, Fred. She has read the book and I think that since she's living here with us then she has the right to know." Nate said.

"Right to know about what?" I asked. Making Nate turn his attention back at me. His red hair falling covering his eyes when he looked down.

Finally, he raised his eyes to meet mine again. His green eyes danced as they held a secret. "I'm a vampire."

Chapter 22 Five Supernaturals and I

Edward?

I started to laugh. "I have to admit. I almost believed you back there." I hit his forehead. "You sounded so serious."

Nate narrowed his gaze and leaned forward. His eyes did not leave mine for a second. "I'm not lying."

I rolled my eyes.

"Yeah. And I'm a mermaid. Watch me flip my tail." I scoffed.

"I thought she was human!" The twins sounded surprised. Ace hit them over their heads at their stupidity.

"He's telling you the truth." I turned my head to look at Fred. Curious was I since he started to take sides with Nate on his jokes. I only raised an eyebrow at Fred, then turned to Nate accusingly and glared.

"What did you feed him?" I crossed my arms and stared straight at Nate.

"I didn't feed them anything! I'm just telling you the truth. Believe me." Nate said.

"Oh yeah? Then what are you guys then if Nate is a vampire?"

"Dan and I are wolves," Ren answered. "Fred is a warlock and Ace is an Elf."

Santa's helper says what?

I roamed my eyes at every one of them. They all have the same hard look on their faces as if they wanted to take a dump. That was why I couldn't stop the laughter that erupted from me. I backed away and sat on my bed as I continued to laugh. Tears had formed in my eyes so I started to wipe them away with my finger. When I looked up, they still had the same look on their faces.

Wiping the last tear from my eyes I grinned at them. "As fun as that was I think we have had enough jokes for this morning."

"You still think we're joking?" This time, it was PRINCE Ace who spoke. It was the first time that he had spoken since he came back to my room.

“Why else would you tell me such stories?”

“Because it’s the truth.” I was caught off guard when Fred had taken the spot to speak. “Remember yesterday when you had a sprain on your foot?” He asked.

I raised an eyebrow at him, wondering where this was going. “Yeah. But I could be imagining it. Nothing is there now.”

Lies. I felt the pain of it yesterday.

“That’s because I healed it.” I stopped and tried to process what Fred had just said. Healed it? As in first aid? Is he a red cross in training? Well, if they have one in this world.

Ren looked at Nate with a tired look. “I think she needs proof.” Nate nodded at Ren before looking back at me. He gave me a smirk. He moved in a blur that my eyes couldn’t seem to follow. He moved so fast that I had to blink several times to make sure that I was seeing right. I gasped in surprise when Nate had his face close to mine.

But that was not the reason that made me uncomfortable.

It was his teeth. They were sharper and elongated. Pointed like needles that could easily pierce your skin.

I saw Nate leaning down and exposed his fangs. “Still don’t believe me?” He whispered.

Out of curiosity, I poked Nate’s exposed fangs.

Making sure that he was not bluffing. Sure enough, it was real.

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And that’s where I lost my consciousness.

\*\*\*

I woke up with a start. I was in my room, lying on my bed. I brushed the hair that had fallen on my face and looked around. The princes were standing by my bed staring at me. I gave each of them a curious glance as I took

their appearances. I don't have to be a detective to know that something has changed on their features.

I first looked at Ren and Dan who both have snouts like a wolf. "My, what big nose you have." I suddenly said as I eyed them.

Oh and is it me or do my voice just echo?

"The better to smell you, my love." Both said at the same time. I raised an eyebrow at them before I turned to Nate.

Creepy

"My what big teeth you have," I commented as I examined his canine teeth.

"The better to eat you, my love." Nate flashed me his sharpened canine teeth which sent shivers down my spine. Making me look at Fred next.

"My what pretty eyes you have," I said to Fred as I looked at his bright blue eyes which were now glowing.

"The better to see you, my love." Fred then winked at me. Which is more of an action that Nate would do and not Fred.

Something is wrong here. I turned my gaze to the last prince.

Ace

"My what big ears you have." I eyed Ace's ears. They became longer and sharper making his features more fine and detailed.

"The better to hear you, my love." Ace smiled at me.

Ace smiled.

Which only leads to one thing. This is not real. Ace never smiles at all. And I am pretty sure that he won't be smiling after I made that comment about his ears.

He'll kill me for that.

And saying 'my love?' This is fake!

I looked up at Ace again. He was still smiling. A pure and genuine smile added more charm to his features. Wait what was I thinking? Oh right.

GET ME OUT OF HERE!!!

.

.

“Rose! Wake up.”

My eyes flew open and were met by Nate’s green ones. “Why are you always the one who awakens me in my slumber?” I mumbled and wiped a hand across my face.

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Nate chuckled. “That’s because I want you to see something beautiful when you wake up.”

“Then hide your face next time.” I rolled my eyes and sat up. Just like in my dream, the princes were standing by my bed. The only difference is that they looked normal. No snouts, no fangs, no sparkly blue eyes, and no sharp and pointy ears.

But just to be sure.

“What big nose you two have,” I said to both Dan and Ren. Immediately, they both turned and examined each other’s faces.

I turned to Nate. “What big teeth you have.”

“What?” Nate suddenly used his tongue to feel his teeth if they have, indeed, sharpened. Shrugging, I turned to Fred.

“What beautiful eyes you have.”

Fred suddenly looked taken aback by my comment. “Why thank you...?”

Can’t someone give me a proper answer so I can confirm that this is the real world? I turned to the last prince who was crossing his arms and looking at me. I gulped.



I am counting on you, Ace.

“What...big ears you have?”

Ace’s eyes suddenly narrowed and became a murderous look. “You wanna die?” he said through gritted teeth. But despite Ace’s treat I have managed to throw my arms into the air and cheer. I may look a little crazy but at least it was confirmed that I am in the real world.

Thank you, PRINCE Ace!

“It’s real! It’s real!” Then I stopped. Suddenly remembering something very important before I pa\*\*ed out. I froze and my gaze wandered at the princes.

It’s real

This world.

It’s all real.

I started to scream again. This time in terror. “It’s all real!” I started to crawl on my bed and hid behind the sheets.

“You think this news about us not being human has affected her?” I heard Ren whispering to Dan.

“I don’t know. I hope not.” Dan whispered back.

“I think she’s just upset?” Nate wondered.

“No one asks you, fangy!” Ren and Dan both said, resulting in more bickering from the two sides. I guess the whole story about werewolves and vampires not liking each other is, in fact, real.

“Hey princess!” The twins suddenly popped up beside my bed while I was deep in thought.

Wolves

These two are wolves.

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“Eek!” I screamed and threw a pillow at them. It hit them both on the head. Ren and Dan playfully feigned death.

“You guys are not helping,” Nate grumbled as he fixed his coat. He glared at the twins who only stuck their tongues out at him and made funny faces. As if a switch was flipped, Nate’s eyebrow began to twitch in annoyance. When the twins didn’t stop, Nate rolled his sleeves up and dived at the twins.

I stared at them when Fred suddenly approached me. “Are you okay?” He had a concerned look on his face. A typical Frederick look.

I didn’t give him a proper answer right away.

A Warlock.

Fred’s a warlock

The room became silent. For the very first time since I came to this world, I was speechless. I still have no idea what to make of their revelations. Sure, I took the queen’s confession that she was a fairy the first time, but that was it. Only a fairy.

Not wolves

Not vampires

Not warlocks

Not elves

If these boys are princes, then the kingdom that they’re ruling must be full of their...kind? Or species. Whatever you call them.

I quickly imagined Ren and Dan’s kingdom full of furballs running around the castle. Smelling each other’s b\*\*\*s as a greeting and running around the palace trying to catch their tail. Well, that is creepy and disgusting, but a little cute in a perverted way. I imagine Nate and his people sharpening their fangs before they sleep instead of brushing them. Drinking blood from a champagne gla\*\*. Which made me wonder if they have a blood factory? Yuck. Fred making some kind of potion for spells. Probably something that

involves shiny and sparkly liquids. Zapping someone's b\*\*\* and healing injured animals. Now I'm just picturing Fred doing all those stuff. And Ace, well.....doing what elves do. Gardening?

Realizing that I was not answering, Nate and hesitantly kneeled in front of me and held my hand. His eyes bore into mine and told me he was sorry. Despite being a vampire/bloods\*\*\*er/leech/flirt he was warm. "Hey. It's okay." He said. "You're frightened and shocked. We understand that. But I want you to know that, despite our nature, we wouldn't harm you or even inflict pain. I don't know what kind of books you read in your world to have a different perspective of us. We have some hints of what it is in your books in the human world. According to Ace-"

PRINCE Ace immediately glared at Nate. Making him roll his eyes.

"Excuse me. According to PRINCE Ace, he told us that most of the time, your kind considered us as evil and vicious." Nate frowned at that and continued to circle his thumb on the back of my palm. "I dare to disagree. You're a family here, Rose. You're safe with us. And as long as you're with us nothing bad will happen to you."

"I think you need to rest. Have this day away from your training," announced Fred. "Nate and I will talk to the queen. Rest well, princess. I will have the maids to deliver your meal."

Nate then leaned down and kissed my forehead. I flinched. I may be sulking but I still prefer having my bubble!

Nate must have noticed this because he gave me a sad smile before he and the others stood to leave. Ace looked back at me once before he and the others disappeared from my room.

Great. So now I'm in a supernatural world after all. There might be some other species out there far more dangerous. And I'm just a human, which makes me at the bottom of the food chain. But they haven't done anything that could harm me, right?

My meals were delivered to my room. Both breakfast and lunch and later on was dinner. It was kind of lonely to eat alone, but I also want some privacy and to feel secure in my room so I guess that's just fine.

It was getting late outside judging from the color of the sky. I slumped on my bed and I started to think. Then I noticed that they left the book that I was reading earlier. I remembered the look on Ace's face when he saw the book. The way he reacted and locked me up in my room to get the others. That was when they started to reveal their true selves. Maybe – just maybe – this book is some sort of history book? If it is then it could tell me everything that I needed to know about this world and what I'm about to face.

Getting up from my bed, I walked towards my table and reached for a chair. I sat down and flipped the book to the table of contents.

Now what? I ask myself

Now you look for a solution to your problem.

### Chapter 23 Rose Riding Hood

My eyes darted towards the gla\*\* ball at the other table. The little mist of magic winking at me from time to time. I blinked at it once. Twice.

Hold it. I think I remember reading something about that crystal orb.

I quickly flipped through the pages until I landed on the page that I wanted. I started to read it silently. I was pretty sure that I had read something about the orb. But I haven't had the time to process it when I was rudely interrupted by the PRINCE.

My eyes went wide as the information made sense to me. I was right. I did read something about two orbs. One was light and one was dark. The light one is kept hidden in the Kingdom of Thalia. Its twin, the dark one, is kept at another greater kingdom called Tereu.

From what I have read, these two orbs both possess great magic. And I have a hunch that if it is true then the other orb can bring me back. a\*\*uming that its power was not consumed, unlike the light one over here.

But before I could do that, I have to see if this is true. I have to ask someone about this.

And I know just the right person to ask.

\*\*\*

I silently walked inside the library. The huge door creaked as I opened it. "Hello?" I called out. My voice echoed in the large room.

"Why are you here?" My eyes darted to a part of the room which was lit by lamps. There was a small coffee table and some couch around it. Sitting with his back to me, probably reading a book, is his royal highness, PRINCE Ace.

I sat on one of the couches in front of him and watched him read. I was waiting for him to put the book down so I could talk to him. I placed the book that I was holding on my lap and waited patiently.

Fortunately, I didn't get to wait that long because, after a few seconds, he sets the book down on the table without a sound.

"I assume that you're not here for the lesson." Ace said and finally looked at me. "What is it? I can see that you want to ask me something."

"If I ask you, Will you tell me the truth?" I asked.

Ace took some time before he answered. "That depends on your question."

I sighed. I guess I have to go to the safer route where he won't suspect a thing. "Is everything that this book says is real?" I asked and raised the book so that he could see.

Ace stared at me in the eyes before he stared at the book. "Why do you want to know?"

"Hey. I asked you first, okay?"

Ace frowned. "Shut up. I ask you why you wanted to know if it's real or not."

I huffed and wiped a hand across my face. "No particular reason," I answered. Ace didn't seem to be entirely convinced. He only narrowed his eyes at me in suspicion. "I don't believe you." He finally said. "If I know, you must have read something that triggered your interest. Last time I checked, you don't even care about the history of this kingdom."

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I suddenly got irritated. This conversation was taking a lot longer than I wanted it to be. "Look here, your royal highness. I came to you to seek an answer. It's a simple yes or no question." I was suddenly aware that my voice had risen.

Ace didn't falter and countered me with his pissed-off glare. "I'm trying to be nice, okay? I kept my temper in check just for today because I figured that you are having a hard time with all these." Ace took a deep breath and mangled the bridge of his nose.

"You left the book earlier in my room."

"Prince Fred left it. Not me."

"Can't you just tell me? At least I am trying my best to learn."

He gave me a skeptical look. "Yes. That's the history of our world." He confirmed.

Hope suddenly burned inside of me. It's real. Everything in the book is real. I can go home, assuming that the dark orb can help me. But I don't want to ask that question to Ace. He might suspect something.

"Is that all that you wanted to ask me?" Ace asked. Not looking at me when he noticed that I was still sitting there.

I looked at Ace and debated whether to ask him or not. "Um..."

Ace raised an eyebrow at me. "What?" He asked. And not in a very welcoming sort of tone.

"Um...are you an Elf?" I decided not to ask my real question. Who knows? He might figure out my plan and tell the others. And besides, it's not every day you get to meet an elf. I mean, what do they do? I could just read from the book but it's better to just ask a real elf, right?

Ace frowned at my question. "Yes, I am."

I pursed my lips. "Don't offensively take this but, why aren't your ears pointy?" I said then made some gestures with my hands to my ears. I know what you're thinking. It's a rude question to ask. But as far as I know, elves have pointy ears and are short, right? Well according to the image of Santa's helpers in kids' books.

Looking at Ace, he was anything but. He was tall and his ears didn't seem to be pointed. But the book did say that they have sharp and pointy ears and that elves have a good sense of humor. Well if this is his way of showing a good sense of humor then I don't find it funny.

In addition, they are strikingly gorgeous. Oh yes, Ace is gorgeous. But I prefer to drop dead gorgeous.....literally in my case.

Try and get to know the guy, you'll see what I mean.

Unexpectedly, Ace didn't give me a death threat. It was like it didn't bother him. Or maybe he's just extending his patience a little bit. "That's because I'm not using magic." He said.

"Magic!? What kind of magic?! Show me!" I suddenly got excited. My eyes are probably shining right now as I looked at Ace. Expecting him to do something...magical?

"No. I'm not going to use my magic for show."

## ADVERTISEMENT

"Aw. You're no fun. Come on. Show me!!" I urged.

This time, Ace suddenly looked irritated. "Just read that book if you want to know."

"But it doesn't say anything! It only says that as time goes by, the elves gain elemental gifts. And that only the royals have unique gifts passed down from generation to generation. It wasn't written what those unique gifts are so how am I supposed to guess? You're a royal so you must have a unique gift."

"I'm good with words. That's my gift." Ace said plainly.

“That’s just a skill. I mean the gift as in your magic. You know. The sparkle and zapping kind of thing.” I made an act of the zapping part with my fingers and looked at him. “That is how it works, right?”

“As I said before. I’m not using it for show.” He said.

“So you do have one!” I beamed. “If you don’t want to show me but at least tell me.” I insisted.

Ace only ran a hand through his hair before he picked the book that he left on the table and started to read again. “That’s for me to know and for you to find out.”

That line sure is popular with the princes.

“That’s not fair!! I want to know. Please.”

“Good night, Rose.” I can tell that Ace is getting pissed every minute at me. Why is he so sensitive about his gift?

“Come on. I won’t tell.” I pleaded.

This time, Ace let out an irritated sigh. I can tell that his patience is slowly draining. “Go to your room and just read the damn book! I don’t care if you can’t sleep because of your curiosity about my powers. It’s not my problem. Grab your book and leave. You’ve been nothing but a burden to all of us!” He breathed. “Do you know how much trouble we are all in because of you? Why can’t you just go back to your world? Do you enjoy playing princess that much and pretending that your life is perfect? You’re no princess. The queen simply picked you up from your world and dumped you here. Know your place!”

I sat there silently as I carefully swallowed his words. “It’s not like I was given a choice to be here in the first place,” I mumbled. Grabbing the book, I stood up. Well, I may be curious but I am not stupid enough to just sit here and have Santa’s helper give me a scolding. “You may be a prince, but you are not deserving of that t\*\*le.”

Ace gave me a menacing glare. I glared back before leaving the library. I got the information that I needed. There’s no reason for me to stay and chat.



I hurriedly ran back to my room. Now that I was a little sure that there's a way out of this world without waiting for the damn crystal ball to recharge, I quickly opened the book and tore the drawing of a map on the first page. It was old and I don't know if it's still accurate, but it was my only bet. I place it in my dress pocket for safekeeping.

I opened my closet and brought all of the dresses out and tied them together to make a make-shift rope. I used all my experience in knot tying and making sure that the knot was tightly secured. Of course, I couldn't just die in my search for the other orb, right? That would have been pointless.

Once I was done, I checked my handy work and went to the balcony. I tied one end of my make-shift rope on the railing and grabbed the other end. I pulled at it a couple of times to make sure that it was safe. All the while, I couldn't help but feel a bit nervous since I haven't done this kind of escape route. I have only watched it in movies. There is no guarantee the fabrics would hold. Well, I'm not saying that I'm heavy or anything.

Gripping tightly on the other end of the rope, I glanced back at my room and to the light orb on my table. I frowned and stuck my tongue out in its direction before diving at the balcony.

## ADVERTISEMENT

It probably wasn't the best idea that I ever had since I was on the 2nd floor after all. And since this was a castle, well, the 2nd floor isn't that low from the ground.

"Sweet Mother of Donkey milk!!" I cursed and quickly tightened my hold on the fabric. Luckily it was too short to reach the bottom, but enough for me to reach my leg out on the ground. I sighed in relief.

"Well, that wasn't so bad," I said to myself. I spoke too soon when the knot on the fabric that I was holding came loose, making me land on my b\*\*\*. The fabric that I was gripping fell on my head. I groaned and grabbed the fabric that was covering my face and examined it.

It wasn't a dress at all but a hood. A red hood to be exact.

I laughed silently at how ironic that was. I just had a dream earlier that I was red riding hood. Not to mention that I was living with two werewolves.

With a shake of my head, I dr\*\*\*d the hood over my shoulder and tied the ribbon to secure it on me.

I fished out the map in my skirt pocket and examined the map. Using the light of the moon to see the intricate drawings on the paper. Then I looked at what was ahead of me, nothing but trees that might be full of creatures lurking in the dark. Then I looked behind me, the castle in its white and gold glory.

I quickly asked myself if going out and searching was probably the best thing for me. It was, after all, a history book. Who knows? The other orb might not exist anymore. Am I willing to take that chance?

Do you know how much trouble we are all in because of you? Why can't you just go back to your world? Do you enjoy playing princess that much and pretending that your life is perfect? You're no princess. The queen simply picked you up from your world and dumped you here. Know your place!

His words were true. I should know my place in this world. I am a human. I do not belong here. But even though his words hurt me enough to make me hate all of them, I couldn't. I have a few nice memories here. I received kindness and shelter in this place. Sure it wasn't perfect, but the people somehow made it bearable. I will surely miss them if I'm successful in returning. Right now, I was thinking of leaving them a note, but I figured that it was too late.

With a final intake of breath, I set off into the unknown. Fully determined to search for the other kingdom that possesses the other orb. Just thinking about another way out of this mess and finally be back in my world made me smile.

I'll finally be home with my family. Soon.

\*\*\*Meanwhile\*\*\*

Deep within the forest, a small wolf awoke from its slumber. It felt a familiar presence far into the woods. It shook its fur to dust off the dust from the ruins where it was sleeping. It didn't know how long it was sleeping the whole time for the place to be in ruins like this.

It looked at the place sadly. It used to be a lively place...

Then the presence hit it again. Its nose immediately sniffed the air. It smelled nothing, but the pull it felt somehow felt familiar. Its tail started to wag in delight when it realized something.

Master!

It let out a small howl. Finally! He must meet his master.

It gave the ruins one final look before setting off.

## Chapter 24 One Person Missing

**\*\*BACK IN THE PALACE\*\***

The next morning, princes have all gathered around the dining area waiting as the servants prepare their food. They were currently the only ones around the table, which they wondered. The King and Queen are always punctual. Rose isn't there either. It didn't help the mood without a jolly girl gulping down every food within her reach.

Well, Ren and Dan are jolly but more annoyingly.

Once they sat down a servant approached one of them, Fred, and handed him a letter. It came from the king and the queen.

Saying his gratitude to the servant, he opened the letter.

It seems as if they left for an important visit to a friend from another kingdom.

He looked up and noticed the princes were watching him. He assumes that they are wondering what the letter says. He cleared his throat. "Gentlemen, the king, and the Queen are out for a visit to their friend. She's leaving me in charge for the meantime." He fought the frown that was trying to form in his face. He hates taking charges. Everyone is always looking up to him. It's pressuring. He thought it was a bit weird for him to be having those thoughts since he is fighting for the throne and all.

But seriously, why can't they ask Nate or Ace to take charge? Or even Dan and Ren?

He looked at the twins who were clapping their hands joyously at the king and queen's absence.

Okay, maybe not the twins.

The twins both looked at Fred. "Why do they always leave Prince Fred in charge?" They both asked the same question that he was asking himself.

Until now, he couldn't help but wonder how they always say the same things at the same time. Is that a twin thing or an Alpha thing? He wondered what would happen if he had a twin to finish his every sentence.

Weird.

But it sounds fun!

Nate snorted at the twins' protest. "That's because the king and Queen are so smart as to not let you two be in charge. We all know what would happen when you two got the reins." The twins both glared at Nate, who seemed oblivious to the twins' glare – that or he's just pretending not to notice. Which didn't help since the two seemed to snap.

Crap. Another fight is about to break loose if he won't do something.

Think Fred!

"Prince Ren, Prince Dan. Why don't the both of you go and fetch Rose? Breakfast is about to be served and it's almost time for her training with Ace." Just as he expected, the frown from both of their faces vanished and was replaced by a grin. Their eyes sparkled as the both of them got up and made a salute.

"Our pleasure, your highness!" And they were off before he could even have the time to take back what he just said. Knowing them, they might pull some sort of trick on her before e\*\*\*\*\*ing her.

At the corner of my eyes, he saw Nate giving me an unsure look. "Prince Fred, are you sure that it is wise to call her now?" He thought about what Nate had said.

He's right. Rose might still be shaken from their little revelation yesterday. She might not like the idea of two werewolves giving her a wake-up call. She might even freak out and scream bloody murder.

He nodded. This is why he hates being in charge. He takes the blame if anything goes wrong in the end. "I think that the sooner she'll get to spend more time with us, the easier she'll accept what we are." That was what he said.

Nate nodded. "Yes. I know that. But I wasn't referring to that."

"Oh? Then what are you referring to, Prince Nate?" I asked in curiosity.

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"From spending time with her, I have learned that she's not a morning person." Nate chuckled. "Just imagine what she'll do to the twins when they try to wake her up."

Fred laughed. Nate is telling the truth. Right now, he can just imagine himself being the one waking her up for breakfast. He can just picture her glaring sleepily at him and yelling, "What the heck, ugly! Leave me alone."

He chuckled. He hopes she'll get back to her cheery self as soon as possible. It's only been yesterday and they already miss her unruly and refreshing personality. Fred thought about finishing the song that he was composing. He figured that Rose might want to hear it.

"Princes Fred?"

It seems as if the song was stuck to his head and the notes kept on replaying on his mind. He even practiced playing it on the piano yesterday thinking she would be delighted to hear it.

"Prince Fred!"

He was suddenly snapped out of his reverie. Nate had been calling his name while he was daydreaming. Oh wait, that wasn't a daydream! It's called memory recalling.

"Yes?" He asked.

"You were staring at space for a while. Is everything alright?"

He nodded. "Of course. I just had a little thought." He glanced at Ace who was eating silently beside Nate. He didn't even notice that the food was already served.

What the heck is wrong with you, Fred? He thought to himself.

"Prince Fred! Prince Fred!" Before he had the chance to taste the food, they heard the twins screaming. Nate and Fred chuckled while Ace kept on eating. That guy seriously lacks socialization. He's not even joining the conversation.

But back to the matter at hand.

What did Rose do to make the twins scared out of their wits? He was eager to know.

The twins came into the dining area. Once Nate and Fred had a good look at the twins, their laughter died and even Ace stopped eating as he paid more attention to them. Both were out of breath and panic was in their eyes. They were breathing heavily.

His heart sank and he got up from his chair. "What happened?"

"Y-you see....we were knocking on Rose's door and trying to call her out."

"And when no one answered, Dan and I decided to go in and check her."

"When we came in, we immediately noticed that her scent was gone."

"We started to look for her in her room, but when we came to her balcony, we noticed that it was open."

"And not just that. She tied her clothes together so she could use them to climb down! Who knew she was smart!" By this comment, Ren smacked

the back of Dan's head. He would have found it funny if the situation was different.

"Rose is gone?" As soon as the words left his mouth, it sounded more real. The twins nodded. By the now, Ace and Nate were out of chairs as they followed him when he started to run to Rose's room. He wants to see it for himself.

If those two are joking around then he will seriously turn them into frogs! Scratch that. He will curse them into frogs until someone kisses them!

I hope they're joking. Please let this not be real.

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As soon as he reached her room, he noticed that her closet was empty. The book that held the history of the kingdom was on her desk and opened to a certain page. He didn't bother to check it since he immediately went to the balcony. Just as the twins have said, there was a makeshift rope that she used to climb down.

He heard someone curse behind me. He turned to see that the rest of the princes were able to catch up. Fred got up from his position and made his way to the princes.

"We need to find her." He turned towards the twins. "Can you track her down through her scent?" Like wolves, they have a very sensitive nose so they can probably track her down.

Surprisingly, they shook their heads. "We tried, Prince Fred."

"But the scent stopped as soon as we reached the bottom of her balcony."

He quickly grunted and closed his eyes to collect himself. After 10 seconds, he let out a sigh. "That's okay. I'll try tracking her with my magic." He said. "Prince Ace, hand me her hairbrush over there." Fred pointed at the large white vanity table, where Ace was currently leaning on. He reached out behind him; grabbed the hairbrush and handed it to me. I couldn't help but notice that his eyes suddenly shifted to the book on her table. He then frowned at it.

He didn't bother to ask what it was about as he took the brush from him.

Fred studied the hairbrush until he was able to find a piece of her hair. He pulled it out and held it to his palm. He pulled out a small ounce of magic and pictured Rose in his mind; all the while trying to recall the word for the tracking spell.

"El' Reos zigreir." He whispered the words. Sparks flew from his palm and into the piece of hair. Suddenly, the piece of hair started to float and turned into a golden light.

"Alright! Way to go, Prince Fred!" Dan cheered.

They all ignored him as they watched the light floating towards the balcony. Without having second thoughts, they followed. The light stopped and then floated downwards and then...

...it just vanished.

"No!" Nate hissed and hit the railing with his fist in frustration. If it wasn't made of fine material, he's afraid that Nate would have broken it by now with his vampire strength. "Damn it!" he cursed.

"I don't understand." Fred shook his head in confusion.

The light was supposed to lead them to Rose. It wasn't supposed to just vanish.

"A cloak," Nate mumbled. Still glaring at the spot where my magic has vanished.

"What do you mean?" Ren asked.

Nate pointed below the balcony before looking at us. "Ren and Dan said that when they tried to track her down with her scent, they stopped just below this balcony. And when Fred cast the tracking spell it also led us to the same place. It means that when she has reached the bottom, she must have used something to hide her presence and prevent us from tracking her down."



Nate was on to something. He could tell. And Fred had a feeling what he was about to say.

“She’s cloaked.”

Fred’s sus<sup>\*\*\*</sup>ion was confirmed when Nate nodded. A cloak is a special type of hood made by powerful warlocks. It conceals you so that no one can track you down. Not a vampire, not a werewolf, and not a warlock. It has been used by royals when they are hiding. The only flaw is that you can only conceal your scent and such from magic. But you can still be seen. It just keeps you from being tracked.

Dan shook his head. “But how? She doesn’t even know that kind of stuff!”

“Maybe she has just figured it out somehow,” Nate said in the middle of thinking. “Or the queen might have told her.”

Fred shook my head in frustration. “Enough with this. We have to go look for her.” He proposed and called one of the servants who was just pa<sup>\*\*</sup>ing by. “Tell the guards to prepare our horses!” The girl nodded and ran. Hopefully to deliver my order to the guards.

## ADVERTISEMENT

“All of you.” Fred then directed to the princes. “Meet me in the stables in 5 minutes!”

He quickly headed to his room. Not even bothering to look back to see if the other princes have left to do the same. He doesn’t need anything in his room but his sword. He’s not sure if he would use this but he’s not taking any chances.

They are in a supernatural world after all, and Rose is only a human. She might encounter some problems. Or worse. piss off a rogue that is capable of ripping her throat out.

He spotted his sword beside his bed and grabbed it. He quickly ran out as fast as he could and headed towards the stables. He could already see that the servants have already prepared their horses.

Surprisingly, Ace was the first one to have arrived. Like him, Ace also carried his weapon. His bow was slung over his shoulder. Ace may be good in sword fighting but archery is more likely his style. The bow was made of a special elven metal. Its edge is sharp and, if he wills it to, it can be broken in two and be used as a double sword.

He spotted his horse just beside his and made my way to it. The stable boy then backed away to give me the reins, which he gratefully took and quickly jumped to ride his steed. "Where are they?" He asked Ace, who was now on his horse.

He shrugged. "I don't know. But if they're not here in two minutes, we'll go ahead." If it were some other time, he would have been shocked since Prince Ace is eager to find Rose.

Then he was suddenly locked with a pair of wolves.

"Now that isn't very nice you know."

"Yeah. Considering that we took this time to shift."

Voices spoke in his mind. Nate came into his view with a determined look on his face as he rode his horse. But he wasn't the one who spoke. It was the two brown wolves in front of us. One has a huge star-like shaped mark covering its face while the other has a white-like sock on one of its front legs. They were not like any ordinary wolves.

They were bigger and stronger.

"Ren? Dan? Why did you shift?" He asked curiously. It was their first time seeing the princes in their wolf form.

Both the wolves snorted at him. "We'll be faster this way."

"And our senses will be heightened. Which means the greater chance of finding Rose."

Well, that made sense. He thought that they were just showing off.

"Alright." He nodded and told them the plan.

“We’ll split up into two groups. Dan and I will try and head to go look in the town while Ace, Nate, and Ren will try and search the forest.”

“Why do Dan and I have to be apart?” Asked the wolf with the white star on its face, he assumed it was Ren, and snorted in his wolf form. He was not happy about the arrangement that Fred proposed. It’s either he doesn’t want to be parted with his twin or he doesn’t want to spend time looking for Rose with Nate and Ace at his side.

“You and Dan have this alpha connection – or is that a twin thing? Never mind. What I’m trying to say is that we can communicate with each other through you and Dan. That way we can exchange some information regarding Rose’s whereabouts.”

“It only works on a limited distance. We’ll be sure to inform you when we’re out of each other’s reach.”

The twins let out a huff but agreed otherwise. Fred glanced at Nate and Ace and nodded at them. He pulled the reins of his horse to change courses. “Don’t stop looking until we find her.” He ordered and gestured at Dan to ready himself. Dan nodded.

Fred let my horse gallop towards the direction of the town. Dan, being a wolf, ran ahead of him.

## Chapter 25 Arguments

“Excuse me, sir. Have you seen a girl with blonde hair and about this tall?” Fred raised his hand to his nose to show Rose’s height. The old shopkeeper shook his head.

“I haven’t seen that girl of ‘yers, Prince Fred. I’m sorry.” The man then gave them an apologetic look before proceeding to do his work.

His face fell as he said his thanks. Prince Dan, still in wolf form, let out a sigh.

“If Rose is here in this town, she must still be wearing the cloak because I couldn’t get a whiff of her scent.” He winced. Fred gave Dan an apologetic glance. He wanted to find Rose as much and he did.

“We’ll find her.” He said. But it was more to convince himself than to convince him. Luckily, it did the trick when Dan wagged his tail and let out a toothy grin.

“Yeah. I hope so,” he said. “But what if Rose isn’t here in this town?”

Now that is a question that he had long considered after hours of asking the town’s people. “I don’t know. Let’s just hope that Ace, Nate, and Ren can find her.” He said honestly.

“Me too.” Dan then looked to the side with an annoyed expression on his face. Well, as much annoyed look that a wolf could portray. He followed Dan’s gaze to see a group of teenage girls looking at them with admiration.

“Being in wolf form increases our sense of hearing,” Dan grunted and flopped his ears. “And I am not enjoying my perks as a werewolf when I can hear the gossips from those girls over there.”

This suddenly sparked his interest. “Is it about Rose?”

Dan then rolled his eyes at his question. “Psh! No. These girls are talking about us.”

Fred raised an eyebrow in question. “What is it about us?”

“It’s just that we are so dreamy and perfect and blah blah blah. They wanted to marry us and have our kids as much as we want. Oh! And don’t forget that they’re still arguing about whether I’m Ren or Dan.” Dan let out a low growl in annoyance. “Here’s what they sound. ‘Holy Thalia!! Isn’t Prince Fred soooo dreamy and wonderful!?!?! \*Squeal\*. He’s so handsome!! And look at his eyes!! You can drown in them any second!!

Oh.My.Gosh!!!\*Squeals\* And Prince Ren/Dan in wolf form. So hot!! It’s a once-in-a-lifetime! \*Squeals\*. Just think how soft his furs will be!! \*Squeals\* He looks soooo cool!! Is he naked right now? He is right? \*Squeals\*. But seriously....is he Prince Ren or Dan?” Dan imitated the girl’s voice in his mind. Dan then rolled his eyes after that.

Despite the thought of Rose’s whereabouts, he laughed. “So which Prince are you? Dan or Ren?” He joked and patted his head.

Dan didn't seem to find this funny when he snapped at his hand. Luckily, Fred was able to pull his hand back. "Shut up." He growled and glared at Fred. His ears then began to twitch as he averted his gaze to the ground in concentration.

Finally, his head perked up with an angry look in them before he dashed towards the girls and snarled at them. The ladies all shrieked in terror and caught the people's attention.

Fred panicked and ran after Dan, who was still snarling at the girls who were now cowering in fear. He quickly pulled Dan back. He had to put all of his strength into pulling the large brown wolf.

"What the heck, Dan? I know you're upset but do you have to snarl at them?" He gave him a disapproving look.

Dan shook his head and turned to me with a frown on his face. "It's not that! These b\*\*\*\*es just said something about Rose." He then turned and growled at the girls who quickly shrieked and backed away. One of them even tripped and fell.

"Dan!" He yelled and stepped between him and the girls. They were already starting a commotion here. He doesn't want the people to look at them badly for their behavior. And he's pretty sure that this news will be brought to the Queen. "Tell me what they said about Rose." He quickly said to distract him.

He let out a breath to his nose and gave me an irritated look. "They were hoping that we would never find her." A low growl escaped from his snout.

## ADVERTISEMENT

He frowned. Not because of Dan's behavior, but because of what he heard. "Why?"

"They hate her for seducing us. No – scratch that – they despise her because they think that she has seduced us all. It's a very low reason."

He recalled the time when they brought Rose in this town once. It was the day when they found her unconscious on a field. That day, the queen had

brought us to the town to a\*\*ist her to shop. They were confused at first why she wanted them to a\*\*ist her when she had servants at her disposal.

But now. He knows why. And he was glad to have come and a\*\*isted the queen.

Dan is right. It was a low reason for them. But unlike Dan, he doesn't want to go all wolf on these ladies. It seems that his temper is short when he's in wolf form. "Are you sure that it's what they said?"

"I don't know. Who has the enhanced hearing between us? You? Of course, I'm sure! Ask them yourself!"

He rolled his eyes at Dan's att\*\*ude and turned to face the ladies. He offered them a smile to calm them down and to show them that he meant no harm.

For now.

"My friend here," He pointed at Dan. "Prince Dan, told me something disturbing. So I wanted to ask you myself if it's true or not. Will you answer me honestly?". Their eyes shifted from one another before they finally nodded. "Prince Dan told me that he overheard you girls saying that you wanted Rose's demise?"

The girls fell completely silent. One, he a\*\*umes is a witch, has sparks flying up and down her arm.

"Is it true?" He asked once again. Finally, one of them dared to answer.

"Y-yes, your highness." She looked at the ground in shame. Beside me, Dan let out a growl.

"She's a Were! I can't believe that one of our people would even dare to say those things!" said Dan. He hit his head as a warning to shut up before he looked at them once again. This time, he was giving them a disapproving look.

"Rose is a beautiful and kind girl. Whatever is your issue with her, I suggest that you drop it. She's the king's niece. A princess and yet you're badmouthing her? She's a part of their family and if you love your king and

queen then you will respect her.” He began to face the crowd that had formed around them. “All of you should respect her. And if we hear another rumor that threatens her life, rest assured that you’ll have to face us. Right now, our princess Rose is missing. I don’t require you to help us. We want you to volunteer for yourselves if you care. If any of you has any information regarding her whereabouts, then we would deeply appreciate it and will be in debt to you.” He said. “That will be all. Thank you.” He nodded at them as they went their separate ways. Except for the girls who were still looking at us.

“Your highness?” One of them spoke. Dan and Fred looked at her. She was a petite girl with her black hair in a fine braid. “Why are you looking for the princess? Was she kidnapped or something?”

Dan and Fred quickly looked at each other. “You don’t have to know.” Fred snapped. “We’ll be taking our leave now.” He nodded at them. Dan and Fred were about to turn their backs when the girls suddenly called on them.

“Your highness!” Both princes turned to them. “We’re sorry.” They then bow their head. Once again, Dan and Fred looked at each other.

“You are a witch, right? If I even hear you badmouthing her again I’ll do more than just banning you from our kingdom. You may stay in Thalia, but you will no longer be welcomed in Hazel.” He said and then we left to try our luck in another part of the town.

“Nice work back there.” Dan snorted.

He shrugged. “I just did what I have to do. And I don’t appreciate their point of view towards Rose.”

## ADVERTISEMENT

“No. I want to talk about that.” Dan chuckled. Wait. Chuckled? Can wolves do that? “What I mean is that you just gained more admirers than you already have.” Dan gestured his head to the side.

Fred followed his gaze to see the women were still looking at them. When they saw him, they quickly squealed.



Despite the incident earlier, he couldn't help but laugh. "Well, not all of them are my fans. It seems that a handful of them are into short-tempered werewolves." Fred tilted my head to the side where the girls were gazing at Dan. And believe it or not, there are a few oldies too.

Dan frowned when he saw what he was pointing at. He laughed harder when he saw the old ones were blushing when Dan faced their way. But some of the girls did squeal a little.

"Don't get me started, Prince Fred!! And stop laughing!! It's not funny!! Let's just go to the southern part and look for Rose. I SAID QUIT IT, PRINCE FRED!!!!!"

\*\*\*Meanwhile\*\*\*\*

Ace and the others have been searching for hours now and they still have no clue as to where that annoying little brat might be.

I swear. I will kill that girl.

The other b\*\*\*\*\*s there with him aren't helping either. All this time they kept on blaming each other regarding Rose's disappearance.

"If you hadn't shown her your fangs then she wouldn't have run off!"

"Well excuse me but who said to show her some proof!"

"I did. But I didn't instruct you to scare her with it!"

"Well, what if she ran away because she had had enough of you and Dan!"

"Shut up you two." He grumbled. If anything, they just continued to fight as if he hadn't said anything.

"Us? Please. She was probably freaked out by your continuous flirting!"

"Guys." Ace tried again.

"Those were harmless. At least they made her laugh!"

He finally decided that words won't break them apart so he took his bow and two arrows then shot at them. It was just a warning shot wherein the



feather of the bows just brushed their neck. They both paused and gave him a terrifying look.

“The next one will be at your throats.” He warned. “If you guys would just blame each other, then do it elsewhere!! Or better yet, argue through your minds and don’t share the alpha link to me when you argue!”

Both swallowed hard. They then made their way on each side of him so couldn’t argue anymore.

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Well finally!

As they continued their search, he couldn’t help but notice the silence thickening. Great, having these two argue for almost an hour had made him not used to this silence.

“Ren,” he called the brown wolf.

“Have you heard anything from Fred and Dan?”

Ren didn’t speak for a bit. He guesses that he’s now talking to his brother.

“Dan said that the town’s people didn’t see anyone last night. He said that they will keep one searching. Fred got some of the people to help them look.”

He looked at the sky and cursed. They were running out of time. They have at least a few hours left before the sun will set.

Stupid little wench!! Where are you?!

And his head hurts. He can’t think clearly and he wasn’t sure why but for some reason it seems as if he has to remember something.

“Are you okay, Prince Ace?” Nate asked beside him and gave me a curious glance. Now, what does this freak want?

“Fine.” He said before turning back to Ren. “Tell Fred our location and ask him to come. We have to think this through if we want some a\*\*urance that we could find her.” He told the dog.

What? Wolves are part dogs so I have the right to call him that. Plus, he is very pissed.

That's all because of these idiots, including Fred and Dan, who are so eager to find the princess without thinking it through. Idiots indeed. They didn't even bother to search Rose's room in case she might have left something that could give us a clue as to where she had gone to.

Pain once again swallowed his head. Why does his head hurt?

"Fred said to wait here. They'll arrive in five minutes." Ren informed them and shifted his gaze at him for further orders. So what? The leader hat is on him now?

"Fine. Settle your horse, Nate. Let's wait for them here." Nate nodded as he climbed down from his horse at the same time as Ace did. Ace pulled his horse by the reins and tied it to a tree. He then sat on a fallen tree trunk. Nate only leaned on the tree in front of him.

He can tell that he wanted to go and search for Rose on his right now since he was tapping on his foot impatiently.

Ren was worse though. He kept on pacing back and forth in my wolf form. Oftentimes, he would sniff the air in hopes of getting a scent of Rose. When he doesn't get any, he would growl in frustration and would continue his pacing.

Looking at these two makes him have another wave of headache. He quickly clutched his head and closed his eyes to ease the pain.

What is wrong with me? It's like I have to remember something really important but I couldn't recall what it is. He thought.

## Chapter 26 The Elven Magic

"This is stupid. We should have never told her about us. I wish we could have waited a little more." Nate suddenly said and ran a hand through his hair.

"Oh really? Why haven't I thought of that?" Ren said sarcastically and snorted. Nate, not in the mood, suddenly glared at him. "Don't act as if you

have no part in this, Rutledge. The moment that we found an opening to tell her the truth, you and Dan were equally as eager as we are.”

Here they go again. Should he shoot another arrow towards them? And why does Ren keep on sharing his alpha link with him?

“That’s because we thought that Rose might have put two and two together when she read the damn book!” Ren countered with a growl.

As soon as the words came out of Ren’s mouth – he means alpha link.

The headache faded and the memories of last night started to surface for some unknown reason. He was in the library with Rose. It was the time wherein she asked me about the book and my elf form.

But the look on her face when he confirmed that the information in the book is real, something was sparkling in her eyes. It was hope.

And then the open page of the book earlier before they left the room. It was open and a certain page was ripped out of it. And that certain page is the map of the kingdom.

She must have read something from the book. He just knows it. And that certain something made her desperate to sneak out of the castle to go and look for it. Just what is that something that gives her hope?

He doesn’t know anything about her. What could have given her hope? For all he knows, her only wish is to leave this place. And to leave this place, she has to use the white orb, which is currently short of magic. Then it suddenly dawned on him.

Oh crap!

Of course! How can he be such an idiot?

All she wanted was to go back home. Unfortunately, she couldn’t because of the lack of magic from the orb. But what if there is another way to take her back home? Another way out of this mess?

He had read something about it. It’s magic similar to the white orb that the kingdom of Thalia poses. It’s a black orb. Magic similar yet dangerous. It’s

full of forbidden magic. It was made by a witch who wanted to resurrect the dead for the sake of reviving her dead lover. Unfortunately, everything went wrong and she ended up reviving every dead supernatural and unleashing them in our world. It broke the balance of nature. As a result, the door of the dead opened. Every supernatural who was dead came on a rampage. They started to kill everyone in sight. It was a ma\*\*acre. To stop it, a group of witches and warlocks alike grouped to create the white orb to close the gate once and for all. And to send the dead back in the other world.

To make it short; Is the black orb bad? YES!!!

And who is stupid enough to go and look for it? THE IDIOTIC FAKE PRINCESS!!

He just realized her situation after their meeting in the library last night when they suggested that Rose returns to her world for her safety. Then the Queen finally told them about Rose's situation and why she couldn't send her back.

If she is looking for the dark orb then they have to find her sooner. And the last he heard it was in the kingdom of Tereau. Which is not good news either.

Ever heard of the Seelie and Unseelie? The two kingdoms are just like that.

Well the Seelie, in our dictionary, is the Kingdom of Thalia. The Unseelie, on the other hand, is the Kingdom of Terra. It means that in every world, there is good and bad. In their world, the separation is evident between Thalie and Tereau.

The Kingdom of Tereau is bad news. They are full of rogues who oppose the ruling of the Kingdom of Thalia. They are ruled by a king who wants them gone. You could say that he can be a villain.

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But back to the matter at hand...HOW CAN THAT IDIOT STILL WANT TO GO THERE!?!

She'll be killed on sight! Who knows how far she's gone by now?

Sometimes her idiocy makes him want to slap his palm to his face.

And worse of all? He hadn't thought of this possibility sooner! This is his fault anyway. He figured that there was something sus<sup>\*\*\*</sup>ious about Rose yesterday, but he ignored it. he should have been more sensitive.

"I'll go and have a little walk. Find me when they arrive." He told them and got up from my spot and headed deeper into the forest where he can think clearly.

They have to find her now! But how would they know which road she took? She's cloaked!

Dan, Ren, and Fred are useless. Even Nate and I!

He punched the tree beside him in frustration. "I'm useless! My brain and skills are the only ones that I have and I can't use them!" He cursed and leaned his head on the tree and closed his eyes, then he felt something. Magic. He could feel it. The tree was vibrating and was whispering to him. It was calling to him. Telling him to just let go. It wants him to use his dying magic.

The magic that he despised and wanted to kill. The magic that took his freedom away.

Just because it was believed to have vanished along with the first and original elves.

He opened his eyes and stared at the tree in wonder. He wanted to get rid of his magic because his mother and father always kept him hidden. They treat him like he's someone special. They wouldn't even let him play with his two older brothers. They never let him out of their sight. He couldn't leave the house without a guard to watch his back. If he disappeared even a second from them, they would freak out. All because he possesses the gift bestowed upon to first elves.

For all they know, those kinds of magic should be dead by now.

That is why his mother and father are very strict when it comes to him. Once, his brother sneaked him out to play by the lake with them. When their parents found out about this, they had punished his two idiotic

brothers by making them kneel in salt. You might think that they hated him after that, but no. They just laughed it off and made jokes about who has the largest gashes on them. Despite how stupid and annoying they are, it kind of hurt him to see them punished.

So I decided that he doesn't want his gifts anymore.

He has had enough of being locked up. His parents told him that it was for his good. What if the people found out, Someone might attempt to kill him in fear of his powers or even take him so they can make use of them. Killing his power is not an easy process. For us elves, to kill your magic, you must not use it for 10 years. By killing your magic, you are also rid of your identity as an elf. Through the years, an elf's ears would slowly smooth en and would lose their edginess when its powers are about to die.

He hasn't used him in 9 years. That's why the shape of his ears is not that visible anymore.

He stared at his hands in wonder. He can't find Rose, but his magic surely can. But is he willing to throw those 9 years away just to look for that annoying little brat?

Heck no.

But he wouldn't be able to live with the guilt.

From the distance, he could faintly hear the hooves of a horse galloping in the distance. It was probably Fred and Dan.

From the sound of it, Fred was getting frustrated as he asked Nate if they found anything yet. Great. The Rose-searching team is complete.

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He stared at the sky. Two hours left before the sun would start to sink.

He closed his eyes and took a deep breath as he made his final decision. That girl is in deep sh\*t for putting him through all this!

He placed his palm on the tree and closed his eyes. He let himself in with the forest. Before, this was easy, but since he hasn't used his magic in 9

years, he was having a hard time with it. And don't forget that it was dying too.

It took him a while before he was finally able to tap in with the forest. The trees began to rustle without any wind. He could feel his ears starting to reshape themselves. He could even picture it coming back to its true form.

He started to picture Rose in his mind: Idiotic face, stupid, and annoying.

He didn't get a response

He let out a curse. Maybe he's not doing it right. Maybe he should just picture Rose in my mind.....

He tried again. This time, he pictured Rose's face. Her features lighting up as she let out a grin. Her greyish-blue eyes sparkling with energy and her ash-blonde hair framing her face.

In other words: Hideous!

A second later and he felt himself being pulled – or at least his consciousness. The forest was showing him the way through their eyes. I was traveling from tree to tree in fast forward until I was finally able to spot a familiar blonde in a red hood through the eyes of a deer.

She was cursing when her foot got stuck in the mud.

How stupid can she get?

“Damn it!! Don't they have boots in this place!? I could seriously use one. Curse you all supernaturals for still living in a Disney world! Barbie would have been so much better.” She mumbled and tried to pull her foot out. When she finally got her foot out she fell to the ground. But one of her shoes was still left in the mud. She let out a frustrated sigh and faced the forest. “Seriously? Oh, come on!! I don't have time to play Cinderella!! I just wanted to go home! Is that too much to ask?” He snorted at her stupidity.

Well, at least now he knows her whereabouts and the knowledge that she is safe.

The vision started to blur and he was now seeing through the eyes of a hawk. He was flying. He could see Rose from where he was looking.

But that wasn't all.

A few distances from her are some rogues who are headed in her way. They were both muscular and bulky. One of them has a huge scar running along his cheeks while the other one, shirtless, has long scars starting from the neck to the waist. He didn't have to see their marks to know that they are rogues. He cursed.

This isn't good.

It's not that he's worried about them tainting her or something. But there was a very foreign present lurking in the shadows. And it's not another rogue. He's sure of that.

With a final burst of energy, he willed the forest to cover Rose for a while. It's one of the perks of having ancient powers. You can control the forest and the earth.

After that, he quickly ran in the direction of the other princes.

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They were standing in a circle and talking about some places where Rose could have gone to. They paused once he arrived.

Dan and Ren tilted their head to the side as he looked at him while Nate's jaw dropped.

"Prince Ace," Fred started as he gave a curious look. "What happened to your ears? I thought you said that your powers are dead."

His hands slowly traced the outline of his ears. It was true. They have become pointed and a bit longer. The true identity of an elf. A reminder that he has just tossed away those 9 years of the long wait.

"They're back." That was all he said. "But it doesn't matter. I know where she is now."



Nate seemed to have finally snapped back to reality. "Really? How?"

He asked. He once again stared at my ears. He is asking about his powers.

He shook my head. "I said it doesn't matter! Rose is about to bump into some rogues. If we don't hurry then who knows what will happen to her."

He said. Ren and Dan quickly growl while Nate and Fred have a frown on their faces.

"Then tell us where she is." Said Fred. If he wasn't a prince, he would have kicked his face by now.

How dare he order me around! I'm a prince!!

Oh yeah. So is he.

He ignored Fred and went to Ren and Dan, who were still in their wolf form. "Use your alpha link with me to see Rose's whereabouts. Tap into my mind. Quickly." He ordered them. Werewolves are way faster than horses and any vampire. If anyone could get to Rose quickly, it would be these two. He felt the link of the two in his head and let them tap into the part where he had seen Rose and the rogues. A snarl escaped from their lips.

Without another word, they quickly dashed into the forest, which he assumed was the way to Rose.

Nate, Fred, and Ace looked at each other and nodded before they all climbed on their horses to follow them. He could tell that Nate and Fred still have some suspicion about how he was able to find Rose. For all he knows, they might have probably started guessing some common elven magic. But his gift is unique. He can see through the eyes of the forest and animals. He can even command them if he wishes to.

Well too bad for them. My magic is older than the ones they're thinking. He thought.

All they know is that his magic has returned. All because of some stupid search of a damn princess whom he will skin alive once they find her.

He climbed onto the saddle and positioned himself there. He noticed something different so he looked to his side. There, the once rotten part of

the tree was now revived. It was once again green and good as new. To taunt him more of his resurrected powers, a few flowers started to bloom.

Great. Just great! Years of containing his mana suddenly went down the drain and are now becoming unstable. He gritted his teeth and forced the magic in. His body tensed at the pressure of his unstable magic. It was lashing at him from the inside.

He forced his mind to focus. There's nothing that he can do about it now. What's done is done.

He'll have to deal with the consequences later.

## Chapter 27 Beast Men

"Take that you evil mosquito!" There was a loud smack as I slapped my arm. Who would have thought that they still have mosquitoes in this world? I thought that the only bloodsuckers in this world are the vampires.

I growled in frustration when I didn't hit it. This isn't my day. Who the heck even said that having a field trip to the other part of the kingdom would be so tiring? Stupid movies and fiction for giving us fall interpretation when we hear the word adventure. Sure, in fiction, when the main character would venture out into the woods, she would experience all sorts of fun adventures and get to be super cool for being resourceful.

In reality? It stinks! The kind of adventure that I was hoping for is a disaster. I kept on tripping and falling. My dress is ruined and I'm hungry. I lost a shoe and now mosquitoes are after me.

Stupid woods.

I want to find a lake to clean up and drink. I'm thirsty. Someone, please give me water.

I continued to walk – drag – myself. I pulled out the map that I tore from the book and began to read it. Every time that I get deeper into the forest, I always check the map to make sure that I won't get lost. For the past hours, I always know where to go. But now, I'm not so sure.

I was pretty sure that I saw a path here before but now it's gone. It's as if the forest itself has somehow moved or something. If it did, I wouldn't be surprised considering that this is a magical world after all.

But I also have this strange feeling. Like someone was watching me, which is creeping me out. The hairs on the back of my neck stood as I felt a pair of eyes staring at me. I don't know why I have this feeling but I somehow do.

Reluctantly, I turned. There, I saw a white rabbit by the bush staring at me. Its white fur stands out making it more visible. Its b\*\*\*\*\* eyes – still staring at me – are creeping me out. And I couldn't help but feel that behind those black beady eyes of a rabbit, someone is behind them.

I tilted my head to the side and the rabbit followed my movement. Okay, you have to admit that the rabbit is kind of cute. But it's still creepy at some point. I started to turn around and leave. Once I was a few steps away, I dared to look back and saw that the rabbit's eyes were still following me. For a second, it just stayed there. Then, as if it was sleeping, it shook its head and rubbed its face before hopping off somewhere.

That's weird. I thought as I continued to walk away.

My stomach kept on making a sound as I walked. I'm hungry. I feel like I'm in the hunger games. Literally. My throat is dry and the sun isn't helping with my mood either. My dress gets ruined every few seconds as it gets caught on a tree branch. My hood, on the other hand, is pretty much good as new. I don't know why but it doesn't get stained no matter what dirt would cling to it. It must be because of its material or something. How I wish that this dress that I'm wearing is made of the same material as the red hood.

My knees started to hurt from the continued walks so I decided to take a rest. I slump down on the ground and lean against a tree for its shade. I sighed and took out the piece of paper with the map on it. This doesn't make any sense. I was sure that I've been keeping tabs on my tracks. How can I end up lost?

Maybe this map was a little too old to be of use.

In my frustration, I crumpled the map and tossed it aside. Then I buried my face in my hands. I'm not gonna cry. I'm not a cry baby. I'll think of away. Yes, I will.

I groaned. "But that's easier said than done if I have a full stomach," I whined and now buried my face in my arms.

I want food!! Where the heck do the main characters in the movies get something to eat?

Something then brushed my arm and I turned to look-glared at the animal(literally) that nudged me. It was a reindeer with fully developed horns. Its black doe eyes were staring at me. For only a second its eyes had changed to a navy blue color, which was kind of familiar in a disturbing way.

The reindeer then ducked its head and a bunch of fruits fell off of its horn onto my lap. One of the fruits had thorns on it and pricked my skin.

"PANCAKES!" I yelled in pain and glared at the reindeer. "I appreciate the food delivering service but do you have to pick fruit with thorns? And more importantly, drop it on my lap?"

The reindeer snorted and rolled its eyes at me.

"But um, thanks," I mumbled gratefully. If this deer is a human with dark hair and navy blue eyes, I would have thought that this is Ace in front of me.

Without further adieu, I started to eat. The reindeer decided to stay and watch me, which was very creepy if you ask me. It was sitting at a corner and would occasionally glance at me or clean its fur. And because that animal was starting to scare me, I ate my food as fast as I could and started to stand up. Once I did, the deer decided to stand too.

Now, this is this thing that just turned creepy to a whole new level. I sat again and the deer followed. Hmmm...

I stood and the deer stood too.

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I think I'm getting some sort of pattern here. First, it was the rabbit. Now, it was the deer. Is it possible that the animals here are like me?

"Aww, if you guys like me that much then why didn't you just approach me? Well obviously since you can't talk." I started to approach the deer so I could pet him. Immediately, its eyes turned from black to navy blue once again and glared at me. But still, I didn't let that bother me as I reached my hand out until I touched its head and started to pet him.

"Awe. You're so cute!" I cooed as I continued to pet him. The deer suddenly frowned and hit me with its head causing me to fall on the ground. My b\*\*\* hurt from the impact and this time, I was the one who glared at the deer. It was currently shaking its head as if it was in a daze.

Once it has settled, its eyes are now back to their black ones. When it saw me, it got startled and ran away into the forest.

Right. I should have thought of this before.

Weird World = Weird animals. Period.

I should stop goofing around and start to look for my way out of this forest. I think I can now manage to travel after having a good – if not satisfying – meal.

I got up and dusted my dress as I prepared to travel again. But first things first; I need a drink. Despite eating the fruits, my throat still craves water. And I think I might have seen a river here somewhere.

I started to head south – or is it North? – from where I was. I kept heading that way until I saw something sparkling up ahead. It was a river, glistening in the sunlight like diamonds. I was standing there like an idiot as I gape at it. It was unlike the river in our world.

It was...clean and it looks so fresh and unpolluted. Seeing the river made me gulp down in thirst and my feet just started to move towards it.

Halfway there, I was suddenly blocked by the same deer that headb\*\*\*ed me earlier. It was as if it was preventing me from getting closer to the river.

"You again? What do you want?" I glared at the deer.

The deer snorted and aimed its horn towards me as if it was warning me not to take another step forward.

“What? You’re going to headb\*\*\* me again? Well in your smelly doe face!!” I yelled and started to head towards the river but the deer blocked me once again and positioned its horn at my face.

And now I’m pissed.

Believe it or not, I grabbed the deer by its horns and started to push it back. The deer too had started to push me back.

I can’t believe I am doing this!

“Stupid deer! What’s your problem anyway?! It’s not like it’s your freaking river!” I pushed the deer back with all my might but to no avail.

This deer is freaking heavy!

Well, I’m kind of stupid for challenging an animal anyway. But it’s not my fault! I just wanted to have a drink at the river! Is that wrong?

An idea suddenly formed in my mind making me smile evilly at the deer as it continued to push me back. It doesn’t seem to have an interest in hurting me though. I guess it doesn’t want me near the river. But I’m thirsty!

With one hand, I removed my hood from my shoulder and drew it at the deer’s face. The deer then stopped pushing me as it busied itself with taking the hood off of its face.

I took that chance as I sprinted past it and headed towards the water. Once I was there, I started to wash my face first to freshen it up. My face was starting to disgust me anyway. After that, I rinsed my hands and scooped up some water with my palms as I drank. The water was so fresh, unlike anything I have tasted before. Our water supply in our world cannot compare to the water in the river here. It was clean and pure.

A snap of a twig brought me out of my admiration to the water as I looked up.

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“Well well well. What do we have here? A royal.”

\*\*\*MEANWHILE\*\*\*

Ren and Dan’s paws pounded the ground as they took off. Their fur swaying to the air around them as they ran.

‘Keep up, Dan!’

Ren barked at him. Dan panted as he tried to keep up with him. He knows that it isn’t fair for him to take out his frustration on his brother, but every second only increased his bubbling tension and eagerness to find Rose. According to Ace, Rose is somewhere deep within the forest and dangerously close to meeting two rouges. Their best chance is finding that lake.

Stupid girl. Why would she even run away? Did they treat her badly or does she hate them? Whatever the reason is, they aren’t as bad as the people from the Kingdom of Terra.

Stupid. Stupid. Stupid! Just thinking about what’ll happen to Rose after she encounters the rouges.

What will be left of her after that...

Ren’s hackles raised the meat image. Nothing will happen to her. They won’t allow it.

‘We’ll make it, Ren. Stop worrying and slow down. You’re increasing your speed again.’

‘No we won’t.’ He said.’ With the pace that we’re heading, Rose must have bumped into them already. We need to hurry.’

‘True that, but if you keep that up, then you won’t have the energy to fight to protect Rose or even yourselves.’

‘Screw about my safety.’

‘No, Ren. Screw you. You’ll die in the hands of those rouges without even fighting. I’m telling you not to slow down but to not push yourself.’

He growled.

‘Ren!’

‘Fine! Alright, you bossy little brother. He rolled his eyes. Sometimes I wonder who’s the eldest am\*\*\* us. You act as if you are older.’

Dan then let out a toothy grin while Ren grunted and sniffed the air. Hoping against hope that they would get a whiff of her scent. None. Rose was still cloaked. His wolf feels blind to not being able to sniff her out. He can say the same to his brother.

‘But I’m just wondering... .’ Dan suddenly wondered so Ren looked at him.

‘What is it?’

‘How did A- I mean – PRINCE Ace managed to locate her?’

Now that Dan has mentioned it, he suddenly got curious. But he didn’t let that get to him. He knows his priority at the moment.

‘Who knows? For all, we know he must have blackmailed a pixie to locate her or something. But let’s leave that topic for some other time. Right now we have to find Rose first.’

‘Agreed.’

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There was a moment of silence between them as they continued their pursuit for Rose. They were taking too long and Ren even considered running off ahead. They both know that when it comes to running, Ren is always the winner.

He’s not boasting or anything. Just expressing the facts.

‘Ren!!’

‘What?’ He asked. Did he somehow read his mind?

‘Sniff the air.’



'Why?' He asked dumbly. 'You didn't fart did you?'

'Just do it!'

Dan growled in frustration which caught him completely off guard. He rarely snaps unless it's important or he hears something that he doesn't like. So to say, Dan is the calm one between the twins.

He did what Dan asked him to and sniffed the air. His nose then caught a fairly familiar scent. A trace of lavender mixed with rose petals entered his line of smell. He looked at Dan in both surprise and fear.

'Rose.'

Dan nodded. Confirming his guess. But why can they sniff her now? Isn't she cloaked? What does this mean? But wait. If they can sniff her now, then the rogues must have sniffed her already. They do not doubt that they have. Those two rogues are

Were people too. Their people.

'Damn it!' He cursed and started to run faster.

'Ren!' Dan called beside him as he tried to keep up.

'Don't you Ren me, Dan! Don't you know what this means? The rogues must have sniffed her out already!'

I know. That's why I'm telling you to go on ahead. Dan nodded at him in encouragement. Now he's fairly torn on what he should do. He never left his brother behind. That is why he is always urging him to keep up. When he's going against a fight, which might be sooner or later, he'll always have Dan beside him as his backup or the other way around. He can't just leave him. Not when he needs him.

As if reading his mind, Dan rolled his eyes as he snored.

'Go on, Ren. Trust me, you can handle this. I'll catch up in a few seconds. I promise.'

'But –'

There was a scream. Rose's scream to be exact. His hackles rose as he snarled in the direction of the scream. By now, his eyes must have started to narrow themselves in anger.

'Go, Ren!! Trust your wolf. I believe it's eager to tear those rouge's limbs apart.' Dan winked at him and ushered him using his snout.

He nodded. 'Make sure to catch up or else.'

Ren warned as he ran. The forest passes by in a series of blurs and he has to squint his eyes to see. Rose's scent was getting stronger. And the closer he gets, he can smell two foreign scents.

'They better not touch her or else. I will rip them to shreds.'

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### Chapter 28 Dogs vs Cats

In front of me were two muscle builders. Well not really. They have the looks but the scars on their faces made them look...well you know. Like a gangster.

One of them was bald with a few scars on his body and face. He would have been handsome if it weren't for the few missing teeth. I wonder where his teeth are. And beside him is a brunette. He was very muscular. It's like 100% of his body is made out of muscles. He was also full of scars. One of them was connected to his lips making it look like his lips were sewn. Creepy.

They were both grinning at me as they looked at me up and down. I frowned and crossed my arms over my chest.

Perverts.

"So. What's a royal doing here? You're far from home, aren't cha?" Baldy said, still grinning. I suddenly have this urge to count his remaining tooth.

"Um...not really," I said hesitantly.

"Well, what are you doing here then?" Brunette asked.

I hesitated. Should I tell them? Well, it can't be all bad. Maybe I should try asking them. After all, beggars can't be choosers, right?

"I'm looking for the Kingdom of Tereau," I said. Both men looked at each other in confusion before shifting their gazes back at me.

"What's a royal from the Kingdom of Thalia having business with the Kingdom of Tereau?"

"That's my business," I said. "But hey, what do you mean by a royal?"

Baldy gave me a surprised look as if I was stupid for not knowing that or something. They must have assumed that I am from their world, which I am not. Mind you.

"Well.....a royal is from a royal family. We just thought that you're a royal because of your dress, even though it's covered in mud." Baldy then pointed at my dress before giving me a look. "You are a royal, right? Or are we mistaken?"

I thought about my option. I mean, I did come – escaped – from the royal family, right? Is being a royal an advantage or a disadvantage for me? I mean, if I say that I am a royal then they might help me, but if I say that I am not, then I might be in some sort of trouble. So I decided to take the first choice.

I held up my chin in confidence as I said, "Yes. I'm a royal. In fact. I'm the niece of Queen Elizabeth."

The two then have a creepy grin on their faces as they whispered to each other. "Blah blah blah King Fergus Blah blah blah Promoted whisper."

"Yeah, whisper King Fergus be happy to whisper blah blah Prince Kellar whisper."

"Um...excuse me?"

Both of them suddenly came into attention and had the widest grin – not to mention creepy – on their faces. "So you are headed to the Kingdom of Tereau, am I correct?" Said, brunette guy.

“Yes...”

“Then we’ll take you there.” I looked at baldy who offered and couldn’t help but narrow my eyes at them suspiciously.

“No thank you. Just giving me the directions that I needed would be enough.”

“Naw. What kind of gentlemen would we be if we leave you without an escort? You’re a royal after all.” The brunette guy suddenly grabbed my wrist tightly and it made me flinch.

“Hey! Let me go.” I tried to pull my hand, but the more I pulled the tighter he held it.

“Come on them, Princess. We shall take you to the Kingdom of Tereau.” Baldy then started to come forward.

“I said I can go there myself without a chaperone you creeps! Let me go!” They laughed at my futile attempts as I punched the brunette guy on his chest.

“She punches like a bug.” Brunette commented, making both him and baldy laugh.

Punch like a bug?

In my anger, I bit his hand that was holding me. He let out a yelp as he released my hand. Baldy tried to reach for me then, but I swung my foot up and kicked his manhood. Once the brunette was able to recover, he backhanded me across the cheek making me fly. I landed on the ground with a thump and clutched my aching cheek. It was too painful that my eyes started to water and I felt dizzy.

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“HOW DARE YOU BIT ME!!” Brunette guy growled inhumanly. When I looked up, I saw that his eyes had changed into narrow cat-like slits. Baldy was once again on his feet, but his face was more like a cat’s than a human’s. I shivered.

The brunette guy started to walk towards me so I grabbed the nearest tree branch and hit him with it. He was able to block it. He grabbed the tree branch and tossed it into the river. Now leaving me weaponless. I looked at the guy and screamed as soon as he grabbed me by my collar and tossed me to the ground once again. But not before I threw sand at his eyes.

“YOU LITTLE B\*\*\*H!!” With one final roar, the brunette guy and baldy dropped to the ground in all four. There was a snapping of bones and in no time, there was a lion in front of me and a cougar behind it.

I screamed in terror at the sight in front of me.

I scrambled to my feet in an attempt to run away from them. In my attempt, the Lion grabbed a hold of my dressmaking me fall to the ground again while the cougar managed to block my escape by jumping in front of me.

I'm doomed. I have never been this scared in my entire life. Looking at the eyes of the cougar, I can slowly see my life in its hands. I'm going to die.

I closed my eyes as I waited for them to snap at me. If I'm going to die then I don't want it to be as scary as it is now. I can feel the lion putting its paws behind my back and pushing me towards the ground.

Then I heard it. A howl. It came somewhere from the forest. I couldn't tell.

Just then, the weight on my back was gone and replaced by a series of snarls and growls. I got curious and dared to take a peak. Beside me, I saw a huge wolf taking down the lion. The wolf scratched the lion on the face. The lion let out a roar and jumped onto its back and bit its neck. The wolf didn't falter as it ran towards a tree and hit its back to the tree along with the lion.

The wolf was able to detach the lion from its back and was now biting through its neck. From the looks of it, the wolf was intent on killing. Its eyes were full of hatred.

A cat-like snarling brought me back to my problem. The cougar was still there in front of me, ready to attack. I let out a yelp and I back away from it. It let out a final growl and jumped at me, but it was then tackled by the same wolf. It gave a warning growl to the cougar as it stood in front of me. Blocking my view from the two cat predators. It had a few scratches and

bite marks on one of its front paws and its face. The lion was back on its feet and stood beside the cougar. It glared at the lion before shifting its gaze back at me. I shivered and hid behind the wolf.

I don't know why but for some reason I felt comfortable with this wolf. It seems familiar and I feel safe with its presence.

The wolf let out a loud growl at the two werecats as it stood its ground. The werecats then let out their roar. It was like they were conversing with each other. The cougar then leaped off to the ground and headed towards the wolf. The wolf, with its massive paws, hit the cougar and sent it to the side without even moving from its spot. The lion then took that chance as it charged at the wolf. They both rolled on the ground and the wolf then kicked the lion off of it. The wolf shook its head as if it was dizzy before giving me a head gesture to stay back. I did and backed away to the nearest tree.

How did my situation even come to this?

By now, as the two Weres were busy killing each other, the cougar was sneakily walking towards the wolf's back. Once I realized what it was about to do, I screamed. "NO!!"

The cougar leaped to its feet as it opened its jaws, ready to snap at the wolf's bare neck. Just as it was about to, another wolf came out of the forest and tackled the cougar away from the first wolf. Both are pretty similar to each other but this one had a white sock-like print to one of its front paws. The first wolf was finally able to separate itself from the lion and stood by the new wolf. It gave it a side glance as it snorted at it. The new wolf only let out a toothy grin and wagged its tail. For a second, it looked at me and winked before turning back to its enemy. Could wolves wink or is it my imagination?

By now, it was a battle between werewolves and werecats. The two wolves then took turns in attacking the werecats. One would take offense and the other as the defense. They were in perfect sync and the werecats couldn't keep up with them. In no time, the werecats realized that they were gonna lose the fight so they fled. The wolf, the first one, made a move to chase them but the other wolf blocked its way and gestured its head to me.

The first wolf turned and met my eyes. Its eyes then softened. All intent on killing is now gone. The two started to head on my way and I shrink back in fear. They both stopped from advancing as if sensing my fear. But the first wolf started to walk towards me again, this time, with its head bowed and its tail lowered. It approached me slowly as if it didn't want to scare me.

Once it did, it raised its head and looked at me in the eyes.

'Rose, it's me. Ren.'

A voice said from my head. It was Ren's voice. I started to search the forest trying to find its source, but I found none. By now, the second wolf was beside the first and wagging its tail at me.

'We're here, princess.'

And now Dan's voice is in my head. I searched the forest again. "Ren? Dan? Where are you?"

'In front of you, Princess.' Ren's voice said.

I looked at my front and found no one but the two wolves.

Wait. Two wolves...Ren and Dan.....their voices.....

"Ha...HA! I think I'm going crazy since I keep hearing Ren and Dan's voices. And to think that they are the two wolves in front of me. That can't be it. Haha!"

I turned towards the second wolf who was nudging me with its snout. It was frowning. "Yep. You're crazy alright. We are two talking werewolves here to ruin your world. Sounds good, right?" it said. I stared at the wolf in shock. And that does it.

I fainted.

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And as I fell, I felt something smooth catch me.

\*\*\*WITH THE TWINS\*\*\*

As Rose started to fall, Ren jumped in front of her to catch her.

Dan, his wolf form, was dying in laughter at her reason for fainting.

THWACK!

‘Ow!!’

Ren hit his brother on the head with one of his large paws.

‘Do you have to scare her like that?’ Ren asked in an annoyed tone.

Dan grinned at him and wagged his tail. ‘By scarring her do you mean the part where I opened my mouth and spoke in her mind at the same time?’

‘Yes! Now, look what you’ve done.’

‘Oh yes. I’m looking.’ He said and batted his wolf lashes. ‘And I’m feeling the chills. You know.’

‘Oh shut up. I’ll give you chills once I dump some ice cubes in your pants once we get back home. Now help me carry her.’ Ren said and gestured at the limp body Rose.

‘Ohhh... the playful Ren is back! Welcome back, big bro!!’

Of course, being the good and supportive sibling that he is, he laid on the ground dramatically. ‘Ow ow ow!! My back hurts! Ouch. That damn cougar gave me a few bruises and bite marks. And to think that we are both males for him to give me a bite mark. Ugh!! I’m too handsome for my good.’ Dan sighed.

Ren then snorted and his brother, who was now rolling on the ground. ‘If anyone should have a say about bite marks then it should be me. I have more bite marks than you. That means I’m better looking than you.’

‘In your dreams. Your face is my b\*\*\*!’

‘You have a nice b\*\*\* then.’ Ren grinned and carefully shifted Rose to his back.

‘Ah haha. Good one smart guy. I’ll get you back for that later.’



Dan hid a grin as he followed them.

‘By the way, Dan. You were late. Why is that?’ Ren suddenly asked.

Dan let out a dramatic gasp. ‘You accused me of being late? Well sorry. It’s just that you were so fast that you left me behind.’

‘I was that fast?’

‘Yeah. You just heard Rose and you went whoosh!!’

‘Really huh? Just admit it that you’re getting slow, brother.’

‘Maybe? I don’t know.’ Dan shrugged.

Well here’s the thing. Dan was able to catch up with Ren just in time for the fight. But he just hid behind the forest and let his brother take the enemies down. Why? To impress the lady of course! He did say that he was the supportive brother, right?

Ren was handling it well, He was about to kill the werelion. But hearing Rose yelping made him stop and attack the cougar instead.

Tsk tsk tsk. He should have finished the werelion fast. No dear me. I have a dumb brother. Dan thought.

‘Come on, Dan. You slowpoke.’ And now Ren is boasting his speed.

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Tch! b\*\*\*\*\*. If only you knew the sacrifice I made for you. Plus, I am not the one who’s slow around here. Dan smirked as he pocketed his thoughts. Good for nothing b\*\*\*\*\* ~!!

‘Dan? What’s with your face? You look creepy. Wipe it off.’ Ren made a face at him.

‘Nothing Bastar – I mean, brother.’

Oh crap. Did he say that out loud? No! Don’t kill me, Ren!! He still has some fangirls who love him~

Lucky for him that Rose took that time to mumble something. "Sweet potato deer salad. Take that you stupid deer...mmm."

Ren and Dan looked at each other. There was a pause between them before they started to laugh.

'What the heck is a potato deer salad!?!' Ren said in between laughs.

'Beats me. You ask a deer.'

"Deer..."

'Ow!!' Ren jumped and let out a whimper.

'What is it, Ren?' Dan's wolf suddenly got into full alert.

'Rose bit me! She bit me!!'

Dan rolled on the floor as he laughed out. 'Now That's a love bite.'

'A what?'

'Nothing. Let's just get her home. I believed our little princess is hungry.'

'Agreed. Let's go before she eats me alive and mutter something about wolf potato salad instead.'

Dan watched as his brother gently fixed Rose onto his back. He was really careful not to touch her now swollen cheek, which he just now noticed. No wonder Ren had a killer intent before. They hurt her, that was why Ren wasn't able to control himself by attacking the enemy. If he would have seen that bruise earlier then he might have attacked the b\*\*\*\*\*s instead of hiding.

Just looking at how Ren carried Rose made him want to step back and let them have their moment.

Nah!! It's payback time.

Dan grinned at Ren and started to sprint past them.

'Dan? Dan!! Get back here! Wait for us!!' Ren called. He can faintly hear him going to a slow jog.

'Try to keep up you slowpoke!'

\*\*\*In the Forest\*\*\*

He was a little late. He couldn't meet his master. It was watching a pair of wolves carrying his master. It whimpered sadly. His master was also unconscious. It was wary of them. It couldn't trust other races with its presence.

It looked in the direction where the rogues went and growled. Someday, those rogues will pay for harming his master.

The little wolf let out a small grunt as it shifted the weight of the red cloak in its mouth. It was certain that it belonged to his master and he would deliver it to her without fail. Maybe if he followed the wolves, he'll somehow get a chance to meet with her.

A couple of steps forward and he tripped on the cloak and well.

It might take a while to meet his master after all. He whimpered sadly.

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Chapter 29 Reality Pill

I don't remember what happened the last time I was conscious but my mouth tasted like I ate some fur.

What happened?

I woke up and the first thing that I noticed was the pain in my cheek and neck. Then I noticed that I was lying on a bed. I slowly rubbed the sleep from my eyes and was blinded by the rays of the sun coming from the window.

As soon as I was fully awake and conscious, I took a good look around me. It only confirmed my sus\*\*\*ion that I am once again back in the castle.

Damn.

I heard a light breath to my right and I turned my head to the side and saw someone sitting on a chair just beside my bed. His red hair is framing his eyes like flames when the sunlight hits it. He was holding a paper and was drawing something on it with charcoal.

What is he doing?

I stared at him for a few seconds before I focused on the paper that he was holding, trying to see what he was doing. Nate must have noticed me moving because he stopped and switched his attention back to me afterward.

When he caught my eye, he smiled – but it was more like a beam. His dimples showed as he did so. “Hey, you. You’re awake.” He said and turned his chair so that it was facing my bed. He set down his paper and charcoal on the side table and wiped his hand with his handkerchief.

“Hey,” I said groggily and sat up on my bed. Nate got up and went to the table. He took the pitcher and poured some water into a gla\*\*. He came back and offered me the gla\*\* which I thankfully took and drank. Once I was done, he took the gla\*\* and placed it on the side table along with his paper.

“Thanks.” I forgot how thirsty I was.

“How are you feeling?” He asked me once he was seated back on his chair.

“Aside from feeling like a princess because a prince just served me water? I’m feeling great.” I joked, earning a light laugh from Nate.

“I would gladly serve you water any time.” He winked. I made a disgusted look.

“No.”

Nate threw his head back and laughed. “Ouch,” he said. Then he noticed me making a face. “What? What’s wrong?” He asked me seriously.

“I feel like I was hit by a truck. My whole body hurts.”

“What about your cheek?”

“My cheek? What about it?” As soon as I asked the question, Nate poked my cheek and I felt a twinge of pain. “Ow!!” I quickly slapped Nate’s hand away and glared at him. “What’s the big idea?”

Nate’s expression turned dark. “Rose, what do you remember in the woods before Ren and Dan found you?”

“Huh?”

“How did you get that bruise on your cheek?” He continued to push. “Ren and Dan wouldn’t tell us a thing.”

“Ren and Dan?” I held out a hand to stop him once I noticed that he was about to ask me another question. “All I remember is finding a lake. After that, there were these two huge muscled men who were acting strange once they heard I was a royal and were forced to e\*\*\*\*\* me. When I turned them down, they got pissed and slapped me. I think that’s where I got the bruise.” I touched my cheek while still trying to recall the events that had happened. “I tried to fight them but only managed to piss them off. After that...well.....things got crazy because they suddenly turned into.....into.....OH MY GOSH!!!” I suddenly turned to Nate who was taken by surprise when I suddenly grabbed his shoulder and shook him back and forth.

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“They turned into...into...cats! I mean the large predator ones: A Lion and a cougar. And then...and then...they started to attack me but a wolf came out of nowhere and attacked the lion...after that, another wolf came.”

“Uh-huh. Go on.” Nate just gave me a look as he nodded. He probably thinks I’m going crazy here and I shook him back and forth.

“And then the wolf kicked the cat’s b\*\*\*s....and then....and then....the wolves started talking and...I think that’s it. The next thing I know I’m in this room. No Ren or Dan spotted.”

Nate sighed and gently took my hands from his arms. "Rose, those wolves who 'kicked the cat's b\*\*\*s' are Ren and Dan."

I stared at Nate for a long time before I flick his forehead.

"Hey. What was that for?" He rubbed the part where I had hit him.

"Stop joking around, Nate. People don't turn into wolves, okay?" I patted his head.

"Oh really? Then how do you explain the guys who turned into cats?" He challenged me.

"How can they not?" I was clearly in denial. But I am not going to admit it out loud.

"You are seriously making this conversation more complicated." His face palmed before looking at me. "I'm just gonna let them explain this by themselves later. For now, I'm just glad that you're safe and still yourself."

"Wooo to the hoodoo." I cheered unenthusiastically.

Nate's expression suddenly turned serious. "Rose, can I ask you something?"

"Nope."

"Why did you leave?" He asked even though I just told him no.

"I said no."

"Please, Rose. Tell me."

I pursed my lips when I saw that Nate's eyes had softened into a pleading one. He looked so sorry at that moment that I couldn't help but answer him. "It's not that I hate you guys or anything. I just wanted to go home. When I found out that there might be an alternative way for me to go back.....I just have to grab it. The only problem was that it was in the Kingdom of Tereau and- "

"Wait what did you just say? The Kingdom of Tereau?" Nate had a shocked expression on his face that I couldn't help but wonder.

“Yeah. What about it?”

Nate suddenly grabbed me by the shoulder and looked me in the eye. “Rose, don’t you ever attempt to go there again. Do you understand?”

I gave him a puzzled look. “Why, Nate? What about it?”

“It’s a dangerous place. It’s the kingdom where most of the rogues gather. If they saw you, they wouldn’t hesitate to kill you on the spot. They are an enemy to the Kingdom, Rose. Promise me you won’t go there.”

“But what about-”

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“Promise me.” He said again. His eyes turned hard and serious and his hold on my shoulder tightened. I looked down as I thought about my decision. When I finally decided, I turned to Nate once again.

“Okay. I promise.” I said. “Sorry about running away. I didn’t know.”

Nate started to relax after that. He smiled and then pulled me into a quick embrace, kissed my forehead, and patted my head. “That’s my girl.” He said before he settled back in his seat.

I wiped the kiss-off of my forehead furiously. I glared at him.

That earned a light chuckle from Nate. While I was busy glaring at him, I heard the door open and the other princes came in.

Fred came in first followed by Ren, Dan, and lastly Ace.

“Hey, Prince Nate. Is our Princess awake?” Dan asked. Nate only nodded at him and moved a little so they could see me. When I was in full view, Dan and Ren whooped in glee.

“Welcome home, Princess.” Fred smiled at me.

Home.

I smiled weakly at him. Fred stared at my face for a bit longer before approaching me. Once he was standing at my side, he tucked some of my

hair behind my ears before he held my chin and turned it to the side. Once he did, he gently ran his thumb to my bruise. I flinched. Not from his touch but from the pain I felt on my cheek.

“Beast men can hit it hard.” He mumbled. “Rose, does it still hurt?” He asked. I gave him a look as I slowly nodded.

Besides Fred, Nate let out an annoyed grumble.

“If you’re gonna heal her then do it already.”

Fred only gave him a grin before he returned his gaze to me. “This’ll be quick. Trust me.” He said and placed a hand on my bruised cheek.

“Fred what are you-”

“Shhhh.” He shushed me and started to close his eyes in concentration for who knows what. I felt a cooling sensation where his hand touched my skin. It lasted for only a few seconds before it was gone.

Fred then took his hand from my face and opened his eyes. He looked at my cheek before a smile made its way to his lips. He met my gaze. “How’s that?”

I gave him a questioning look before I touched my cheek. The pain was gone. I tried pressing it but I couldn’t feel a thing. “It’s....gone. The pain is gone.” I looked at Fred for an answer but he just smiled at me and straightened his posture. “How is it gone?”

“Tch!” Ace let out an annoyed tone making us all look at him at the same time. He was giving me a look. Once our eyes met, he wrinkled his nose at me in disgust. In return, I glared at him.

“What are you looking at?” I said to him.

“Nothing. I just can’t believe that an idiot like you exists. It’s quite fascinating.” He said in a bored tone as he continued to stare at me.

Honestly, I am so amazed at how Ace’s words can quickly change my mood.



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“Keep staring at me as that and I will honestly rip your eyeballs out of their sockets you-” And that’s when I notice the difference in his appearance. His ears, which were smooth and human-looking before, are now replaced by pointed ones. “Y-your ears...” I said and pointed at them.

Ace’s eyes suddenly narrowed. “What about them?”

I was still staring at his ears that I had to gulp before I could speak. “You look like an elf,” I said dumbly, earning an eye roll from Ace.

“That’s because I am one.” He reminded me. He let out a sigh as he ran a hand through his hair. Normally, it would hide his ears, but now it made his ears stick out more. “Haven’t you been listening to the things he had said to you before your little ‘run away’ spree?” He let out an annoyed sigh as I mumbled, “Blockhead.”

“Well, I’m sorry if my brain wouldn’t register that kind of information. I mean, where I’m from it’s not normal!”

Ace, leaning on the wall, fixed his posture until he was standing straight. “I think you’ve already seen enough for your brain to register that what you call not normal is, in fact, possible. You’re just in a state of denial.”

“Well, I’m sorry if I don’t live in your world that it is so hard for me to believe!” I finally snapped at him. “You know what? I don’t even get why you’re in here. Did you come here to mock me? Whatever the reason you’re here, I’m pretty sure that ‘worrying about me’ is off your list. So why don’t you just go back to your library and read a book like the little royal loner you are?”

There was an awkward silence in the room as all the princes turned their attention from me to Ace.

Ace’s eyebrow twitched a little before he snorted. “As if I wanted to be here anyway.”

“Same here,” I answered.

He straightened his shirt down before he made his way to the door and disappeared. As soon as the door closed behind him, silence once again filled the room.

I snorted, breaking the awkward silence in the room. "I wonder why he even came here in the first place." At my words, the princes looked at each other. It was like they were communicating with their eyes or something.

Finally, Ren spoke. "Hey, Rose? Do you know how Dan and I found you in the forest?"

"What are you talking about?" I tilted my head to the side.

"The wolves, Rose. We're the wolves that you saw," said Ren and pointed at Dan and himself. I looked from Ren to Dan, then I averted my eyes.

I'm gonna be honest here, as hard as it is for me to say it, Ace is right. Part of believes all the crap that they are talking about, the other half is...well...afraid. I have already seen it with my very own eyes. A man turning into a cat right in front of me.

Tell me, what more proof do I need?

But the idea that a world where supernaturals exist... sounds so wrong on so many different levels that my brain doesn't want to accept it.

I felt a slight movement to my right and I turned to see that Fred had invaded my space and sat at the side of my bed. He held my hand in his and gave me a look. "You believe us, don't you?" The way that his eyes captivated mine felt like he was s\*\*\*ing the truth out of me that my lips started to shiver.

Instead of answering him, I bit my lips and nodded. I felt the tears starting to burst from my eyes that I had to shut them tight. Fred must have sensed this for he pulled me in an embrace and placed a hand on my back in a soothing way. I didn't say anything as I sobbed quietly. "Shh. It's alright, Rose. Everything is alright. We're here."

"I already know the truth," I admitted. "But accepting it would mean that I really can't be with my family for a while. I never ask to be here. I didn't want to be here!" I sobbed.

Everything was quiet. No one spoke. Only the sound of my hushed sobbed can be heard.

### Chapter 30 Misjudgement

My head is still resting on Fred's chest as I clutch his shirt like a baby. I opened my eyes and saw everyone had taken a different position. Nate was now leaning on to a wall while looking at the scenery outside of the window, Ren was also leaning to the wall in front of me and playing at the petals of a flower on one of the flower vases, and Dan was sitting on a chair and rocking it back and forth.

Fred started to stroke my hair. He was looking at me with a smirk. "Did my charms work?"

It took me about a minute to realize what he had just said. Once I realized it, I gave him a frown and smacked him at the chest. "Ow!" He said and feigned hurt. "I take that as a no." I rolled my eyes at him and sat up.

My cheeks flushed in embarra\*\*ment. Did I just cry? "Sorry," I said quietly.

As I lifted my head, I caught Nate's eyes and he smiled. "You don't have to be sorry. We understand what you're going through." He said and his eyes had gone soft. He stood up straighter as he faced me. "But you should always remember that you're safe here."

"We'll protect you as long as you're here," Ren added, making me switch him. "All of us will."

"Same goes for Ace." Inserted Dan, making me give him a confused look. Once he saw my face, he sighed. "When you are cloaked it conceals your presence and smell. Our noses and even Fred's magic can't track you down at the time so we decided to split up and look for you. You have no idea how many towns we went to just to look for you. It took us hours and it was driving us all crazy."

"Excuse me. Cloaked?" I was confused.

The princes stared at me. "Didn't you cloak yourself?"

"No...?" I said. Uncertain of what they were talking about.

“The red hood?” Nate suggested.

“What about it? Is it expensive? Because I kind of threw it at a nosey deer.”

There was a moment of silence.

“Pfft!” Fred snickered beside me and looked away to cover his laugh with his fist. Nate simply did the same while shaking his head. The twins sat there looking dumbfounded.

Suddenly, Ren straightened up. “Hold on. So you mean to say that you had no idea that the cloak can hide your presence?”

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“It can!?” Suddenly I was interested. Then I cursed. “Damn it. And I threw it at a deer. Lucky deer.”

“Why did you even think of wearing it?”

“I thought it was pretty. And it kept me warm.”

Ren facepalmed. “What sheer luck.” Then he collapsed on the floor.

Dan was laughing. “Humans are so mysterious. Lucky for us that Ace was around.”

I tilted my head to the side. “That guy helped?”

Dan held out a hand to shush me. “Let me finish.” He said. “As I was saying, we couldn’t find you anywhere. But Ace...he somehow found a way to find you.”

“He did?” I asked. Are we even talking about the same PRINCE?

Dan thought about it for a moment. When he couldn’t find the right words to say, he looked at Fred for help. Fred nodded at him as he continued Dan’s explanation. “Have you noticed the change in PRINCE Ace’s appearance?”

I looked back at how different Ace had looked before he left the room and nodded. “Yeah. His ears changed. It became longer and sharper.”

Fred nodded at my observation. “Yes. That is the regular appearances of the Elven folks.”

Okay. I’m a bit lost here. “Wait,” I said. “If that was the regular ‘Elven’ look, then didn’t his ears look that way when I first saw him?”

Fred gave me a small smile. “When the ears of an elf become smaller to the point where it resembles a regular ear, it means that his/her powers are dying. You see, an elf can get rid of their powers by not using it for 10 years. By the looks of things, it seems as if Ace hadn’t used his for 9 years now.”

“Killing their power? Are you telling me that Ace was trying to kill his powers?” Fred nodded.

I frowned. “Why?”

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Fred shook his head. “I can’t answer that because I don’t understand the reason behind it either.” He admitted. “But I have a feeling that his powers have something to do with locating you.”

“Ace disappeared on us for a few minutes and when he came back he had information with regards to your whereabouts. And with that information comes with the return of his powers.” Added Ren, who was now crossing his arms over his broad chest as he leaned against the wall. His brown hair covering his eyes as he looked to the side as if he was in deep thought. “After that, he made us – Dan and I – open our alpha link to him. But something about it seems strange.” He then looked at his brother.

Dan nodded in agreement to Ren. “Now that you said it, the image that we got from Ace was pretty clear. It was a top view of the forest. It was like we were flying – no – it was like we were seeing through the eyes of a hawk?” Dan looked at Ren. Ren only shook his head and shrugged.

“That’s odd.” I felt my bed move as Fred shifted his position. He was holding his chin in deep thoughts. “I don’t think that there’s Elven magic that can do that. What do you think, Prince Nate?”

Nate shook his head in dismay. “I don’t know of that either. I haven’t heard an elf possessing that kind of magic. The usual magic that they have is elemental. I heard the Elven royalty inherit unique gifts from their ancestors, but Ace’s magic must be old since I haven’t heard or read about it.”

“Do you think he was a warlock or something?” Dan offered. Ren hit the back of his brother’s head. “He’s an Elf, you idiot.”

“True,” Fred said. “That was no warlock magic. And PRINCE Ace is a pure-blooded elf. Their line has no hint of other supernatural.”

The princes were in deep thought as they tried to figure out Ace’s magic. But for me, I only need to know one thing that keeps on bothering me since this topic was brought. “Hang on for a second,” I said, catching all of their attention. Feeling four sets of eyes on me, I took a deep breath. “Are you guys telling me that, because of Ace, PRINCE Ace, the royal pain in the b\*\*\*, was the reason that you guys found me?”

“And informing us ahead of time that you were about to bump into some rogues? Yes.” Dan said flatly.

My body felt cold as I looked at the other princes for confirmation. I was hoping that they would say no, but all my hopes vanished when they all nodded at once.

I felt my blood had gone from my face. Was Ace that considerate as to sacrifice his years to kill his powers – well at least according to Prince Fred – to locate me? Ace? Does he have a heart?

I suddenly felt guilty. I owe Ace a lot. He was the main reason that they found me. The reason I didn’t become a cat food for two werecats. And after all that he did, I have been a jerk to him. Asked him to leave the room and called him a loner and – maybe – embarra\*\*ed him in front of the other princes? Crap, I was such a b\*tch to him.

There must have been something on my face because Nate suddenly snapped his fingers in front of me. “Are you okay, love? You look pale.”

"I have to look for Ace and apologize!" I suddenly blurted out as I got out of my bed so sudden that Fred almost fell to the ground when I pulled the sheets off.

"Where are you going?" Ren asked.

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"To the place where Ace might be. The library!" I called out to them as I ran towards the door and got out of the room. I was running barefooted, but I didn't care. The floor was pretty clean after all. And I can't just wait it out. One thing that I learned from my mom was that if you're in the wrong, apologize immediately and don't wait it out. Sometimes, it's best to lower your pride a little.

That guy better is in the library or else.

I was so lost in thought as I was thinking of ways on how to apologize that I bump into something. Luckily, it wasn't that hard. "Sorry." I quickly said. I didn't have any time to move when the person in front of me pulled me in an embrace.

"I was so worried! Don't ever run away like that again!" The queen said as she gave me a bone-crushing hug. Despite being all skinny, she was pretty strong that I had to use all my energy to pull away from her.

"Um excuse me but I'm kind of in a hurry and-" I started to say but was immediately cut off.

"Why'd you run away?" She said and held me by the shoulder and looked at me with sad eyes. "Do you know what kind of trouble you would have been to if they hadn't found you?"

Her eyes were full of hurt that I had to look down. "Sorry. I just wanna go home." I told her. "But I guess you already know that."

Elizabeth, the queen, bit her lips as she looked at me with guilt. "I'm sorry." She said and started to drop her hand from my shoulders. "I know I have been wrong but please, don't go to the Kingdom of Terra. Just wait it out and the orb will fully charge."

“And then what?”

“And then you can use its powers to go home.”

I bit my lips as I looked at her. “Is there no other way?” She shook her head. Going to the King of Tereau is not an option either. But what about my family and friends in the other world? Well, I guess they just have to wait. I sighed. “Okay. I understand. But promise me that when it charges, you will help me go back.”

The queen only nodded at me. “I promise. Just don’t run off like that again. I will give you anything. Heck, you can even cancel the ball and everything.” She said.

A ball? What the heck is that?! Never mind. I have to go and look for Ace first.

“I’ll think about it. Right now, I have to go to the library.” I quickly said as I ran past her.

## Chapter 31 Small Talks

I ran and ran, turned from corner to corner, and went to the point where I cursed this damn castle for being so big. I mean, what the heck? Why would they need a bigger castle if only a few people were living here, right?

I finally arrived at the library. I gulped hard before I entered. The door let out a loud creak as I entered. The windows were all open, letting the sunlight the whole library. “Hello?” I called out. My voice echoed in the room. I took hesitant steps as I looked at my surroundings. Trying to see if I could find his royal highness.

My gaze fell onto the usual couch where Ace would have been. Sitting there on the couch with a book in hand. But when I came there, there was no sign of Ace.

He has to be here!! Or else, I wouldn’t know any other place to look for him.

I decided to try and walk around in case I might find him. I sneaked a peek at each place between the bookshelves in hopes that he might be there



looking for a nice book, but he wasn't. "Where the heck could he be?" I wondered out loud.

As if on cue, something hard hit me on the head. "Ow!!" I clutch my head and look down at the object that had fallen. It was a hard leather-bound book. No wonder it hurts.

With a hand still on my head, I picked it up and wondered how the heck did this book get here?

"Looking for something?" My body tensed at the sound of the voice. I don't know what to feel when I heard his voice. Excitement? Fear? Annoyance?

I looked up only to find the person whom I came for in this place. He was on the second floor of the library, leaning on the balcony and looking down at me. His black hair falling and shadowing his face. Now with his elongated ear, he looked so different.

Crap.

I started to open my mouth but no sound came out and I stood there looking like a fish.

What am I going to say again?

When I didn't speak, Ace only raised an eyebrow at me before he decided that I wasn't worth his time and started to leave.

"Wait!" I called out to him. With the book still in my arms, I hurriedly ran towards the stairs and to the second floor. I saw him by one of the shelves. He was looking at me and studying me as I came to him panting.

"What?" His voice still has its rudeness in them that makes me want to slam the book to his face. But I didn't, instead, I gave him a sweet smile as I politely handed him the book. Trust me, it's hard to do this when you're facing his gaze right now.

"You dropped this," I said and offered him the book.

He raised an eyebrow at me. "I threw it at you. Why would you give it back to me? Tch." He said and quickly s\*\*\*\*\*ed the book from me.

“What do you mean?” I asked.

He shook his head. “Nothing. I was just having some sort of experiment to see how hard an idiot’s skull can be. Turns out. It’s pretty hard. The edge even got damage.” He started to ma\*\*age the said spot with his thumb.

“You dropped the book on purpose?”

“Yep.”

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Please...Just this once. Give me the patience to deal with this.

Instead of wrapping my hands around his neck and throwing him off the balcony while shouting insults about elves, I simply gave him a tight smile. “Oh really? That’s cool.” I said and added a little laugh to which he responded with a grimace.

“Please stop smiling. You look like an idiot.” He said and started to place the book on one of the shelves.

I, on the other hand, am fuming with anger. Why does he make it so hard for me to apologize?!

Once he finished placing the book, he turned to me. Since he doesn’t want me to smile, I just lift the corners of my lips in which he just rolled his eyes. “Ugly cow.” I heard him say.

I can’t take this any longer. “What’s your problem? Why are you such a jerk? Can’t you see that I’m trying to be nice here?!” I burst out.

He slammed the bookshelf behind me and studied me before he turned his eyes back to the shelves. “Nope. You don’t look like it.”

I swear. This guy makes me wanna pull my hair out. “Uh huh. And I don’t look like someone who has ears as if they were being pulled by a fishhook.”

Ace stopped scanning the book as he turned to glare at me. “At least I wasn’t stupid enough to faint when a werewolf speaks in my mind.”

“Did you just call me stupid, Santa’s helper?”

“I did, you stupid blonde.”

“Gosh! You’re so...annoying! Why can’t you just be nice?”

“I was given a mouth and a tongue for a reason. And that is to tell you that you’re an ugly cow whose face looks as if it was dipped in wolf sh\*t.”

“Well, it’s better than having pointy ears. I swear if I have a ring with me right now then I might throw it at your ears.”

Ace frowned at me. “Did you just come here to pick a fight? Because I am not in the mood for one.” He said and started to walk away from me.

I mentally slapped myself for almost forgetting the main reason that I was here. I’m supposed to apologize to this jerk for what I did earlier, but he was making it hard for me to do so. “W-Wait!” I called out to him. He stopped and turned his head to the side.

“What now?” Annoyance was evident in his tone as he said it.

I tried to look for the right words but I couldn’t find any. So I just looked at him as my tongue-tied. “I-I....”

Ace sighed. “Look. If you wanna say something then say it. Might as well get this over with.”

“I’m sorry!” I blurted out quickly. Ace must have not prepared himself for this because he looked slightly taken aback and turned around so he could fully face me.

“What?” His face looked as if he was confused, which would have been adorable if he’s not giving me that look. It was as if he was doubting my sincerity.

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Taking a deep breath. I tried again. “Look, I heard everything from the princes. They said that you were the one who found me in the price for the return of your ‘power’.” I made air quotes in the air. “a\*\*uming you were trying to kill it?”

“Tch.” Ace averted his eyes from me and looked to the side. “It couldn’t be avoided.” He mumbled. “Besides, I didn’t do it for you. Don’t get ahead of yourself. The thought of saving you disgusts me.” He said as he took a book from one of its shelves before flipping its pages. He didn’t say anything more as he examined the book.

I, on the other hand, was fidgeting. I mean, did he take my apology or what? “Um....Ace-”

“PRINCE.” He corrected me.

I rolled my eyes. “PRINCE Ace, what now? Do you accept my apology?” I asked nervously. Ace paused for a second. Looked at me before saying a simple flat, “No.”

I sighed. Well, I should have expected that from the very beginning. “Well, if you wouldn’t take my apology, then can I at least say thank you?” Ace took a deep breath before shutting the book close and faced me. He studied my face for a moment then an unexpected thing happened. The corner of his mouth lifted.

“Sure.”

A man of few words. That’s all I can say about Ace right now. I mean PRINCE Ace.

Well, at least he accepted my thanks. Feeling a bit better, I offered him a little smile as I started to turn my back to him. “Hey.” Ace called me. I suddenly stopped and looked at Ace and gave him a questioning look. “Have you met with the queen yet? I believe that she’s worried about you.”

Where that question came from, I don’t know. “Yeah. I met her while I was heading here. Why?”

Ace shook his head. “Just curious. What did she say?”

I thought back to my encounter with the queen and shrugged. “Nothing. She just made me promise not to run off again.”

“And you said yes.” He said it not like a question, but a fact. Like something I should have said. Which I did.

I nodded. "Yeah."

"Is that all that she said? I assume that with this situation she might cancel the ball." He pointed out.

A ball? Oh yeah. The stupid formal dance. How could I forget?

I thought about it for a while until I finally recalled what the queen had told me before I left. "Uh...not quite," I said. Causing Ace to raise one of his eyebrows in question. "What I meant was, I was given the choice whether to continue the ball or not."

Ace stared at me for a long time before he finally asked the question that even I hadn't bothered to ask myself until now. "So, what now? Are you gonna say yes?"

"I don't know. it wouldn't make much of a difference even if I agree to it, right? I'd still be here. Away from my home." My voice faltered a little as I mentioned home. And Ace, being the jerk that he was, rolled his eyes at me as if seeing me in this position sickens him.

With a book in hand, he walked and stood in front of me and completely towering over my height. "Like what you said, your choice won't make a difference whether you go or not."

"Your point?"

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"Why don't you enjoy your stay here instead of just moping around and doing nothing. It's not like this will last forever." He said before he went by me and headed for the stairs. He paused at the edge of the stairs as he turned to me. "And if you do decide to stay, then learn to embrace the truth." His words carried a sort of message that I hadn't thought of before. He's got a point. Whatever I do here, as long as the orb hasn't recharged, I can't leave so why don't I just enjoy it?

I ran after Ace, he was already heading down the stairs when I stood in front of him. He raised his eyebrow at me as I blocked his way. "Thank you." I beamed at him before I ran down the stairs and out of the library.

Before I fully closed the doors behind me, I caught a glimpse of Ace's confused-looking face, which then turned into a disgusted look.

As expected of PRINCE Ace.

A smile was plastered on my face as I leaned against the library door. It seems as if a part of the worries in my mind had cleared up. A question that I hadn't thought about was answered. Staying here in this world was not one of my options. But it's pretty clear how welcome I am in this castle so why not just stay here and live with them for a while and experience what it is like to live in this world?

Embrace the truth.

Having those thoughts in my mind, I decided to go look for the queen so I could tell her of my decision. As I retracted myself from the wall a question suddenly popped into my head. Which way is headed to the queen?

\*\*\*Meanwhile\*\*\*

It took a while but he was finally here. He finally found the place where his master was staying. The little wolf dropped the cloak as it panted. It wasn't easy slipping past the guards. Nor was it easy to find his way through the vast garden without being distracted.

It was already nighttime. His master must be asleep by now.

A tall figure emerged from the castle. The wolf suddenly tensed up and moved to hide in the bushes. The man looked troubled as he read a letter. His blonde hair glimmered in the moonlight.

The wolf sniffed the air. This guy is a warlock.

His slight movement rattled the bushes. "Who's there?" The blonde man asked. The wolf suddenly panicked and ran away, leaving the cloak behind. He immediately stopped and hid behind a rock to go back for the cloak. Too late.

The blonde man was headed his way but stopped short when he found the cloak. The man picked it up in wonder and gazed into the empty forest. "How did-"

“Prince Fred.” A second man appeared. This guy has dark hair and pointy ears. When the man saw what the blonde was holding, he frowned. “Why do you have that?”

“I just found it lying on the ground. What are you doing here?”

“I felt a foreign presence here. But I can’t tell what it is.”

He’s an Elf. The wolf thought. Suddenly it felt a weak tugging at his consciousness.

“I can feel it but I can’t control it.” The Elf mumbled to himself.

The wolf whimpered. He had to leave. There’s an Elf with a dangerous power around. He was sad that he couldn’t see his master yet, but at the same time, he couldn’t let himself get caught.

He’ll meet with his master. One way or another.

## Chapter 32 Routine for a Week

The next day, I woke up and changed into some clean clothes. The queen came into my room to discuss some matters regarding my stay.

“So I have to pretend to be your real niece who comes from another country?” I raised an eyebrow at her.

“Unfortunately, yes.” She said and looked at me apologetically. “It seems that your presence has caused some rumors.”

“What rumors?”

“That you’re a mistress is a mistress.”

“What the f-” I cursed at the absurdity of it.

“Ah-ah!” The queen chastised. “None of that foul behavior.” She said. “So anyway, the story will be like this. You’re a princess from another country with 7 older sisters and 8 older brothers.”

I stared at her. “Lady? That story alone is bull-” The queen glared at me. “bulldozing my imagination. I mean, that’s a lot of siblings.”

“Just play along!” The queen huffed. “So because you always feel crowded in your home, you decided to move in with me and become my adoptive daughter.”

“So what will happen to the princes? I thought that they were here because you have no heir. Now that you adopted me then...”

“Oh, you will still choose. Think of them as your ‘marriage’ candidates.”

“What!?”

“Not for real. When you leave we still need the next ruler. It’s just all ‘pretend’.” She says.

“I-” I started. I rubbed my eyes at how ridiculous this is. “From your niece from a foreign country to become your adoptive daughter. Wow. Amazing. Truly.” I said sarcastically.

The queen must not have heard my sarcasm because she seemed oblivious. “I know, right? No one would question such a fine tale!”

I gave her a look. Is she for real?

I couldn’t help but be glad when someone knocked on my door.

“Why can’t you be punctual!?”

Judging from the scream, it was PRINCE with all the capitals.

“Oh, dear.” The queen gasped. “I must have taken quite a lot of your time. You should head out now.”

An idea suddenly formed in my mind and I grinned. “Auntie-mom.” I smiled sweetly. “Why don’t we go out together?”

The queen seemed touched at my offer that I felt a bit guilty.

I said a bit.

Together we went for the door and I made sure that she went out first. As I opened the door, we saw that PRINCE Ace was about to knock one again, but paused when he saw the queen.



His mouth was hanging open and I couldn't help but snicker in delight. Serves him right. "Your highness I-" He started. I waved at him to get his attention. When finally looked, I gave him a teasing grin and stuck my tongue out. Then I pointed at the queen and made a slicing gesture through my neck and pointed at him. You dead.

He glared before looking back at the queen and bowed his head. "Forgive me for my rudeness."

"Off with his head!" I declared. Both the Queen and Ace gave me a look. "What?"

"Honey, we are not barbarians. We are civilized." The queen said. Civilized? Yeah, right. Says the one who kidnapped me. "Prince Ace, it is alright. And thank you for being serious about Rose's education. I know that it isn't easy."

"Indeed it isn't. Her attention span is below average."

"Hey!" I protested.

"Thank you again. And please do your best. As for the matter regarding the ball...?" The Queen gave me a side glance to confirm my participation. "It would be troublesome if you don't want to, but we'll manage-"

"Yeah yeah. I'm going. Might as well see what a real ball looks like." I said nonchalantly.

"Great!" The Queen clapped her hands in delight. "Have fun with your training, darling!" He waved us goodbye before she walked away.

"Come on." Ace said and started walking in the other direction. I followed him hesitantly. He's not retaliating? This is new.

"Today you'll study about all the important names in each kingdom. That includes the Dukes and Duchess along with their heir. Later I will give you a quiz. Rest assured that everything will be reported to the queen."

So this is his retaliation. Not fair.

\*\*\*

The lesson with Ace was brutal and I thanked my schedule that I only have a few hours with him. He made me memorize a lot of names. He would even give me surprise quizzes by showing me small paintings of the Dukes and Duchess and ask me for their names.

I, of course, having forgotten their names, gave them new ones. He wasn't happy about it and made me study them again and again. If I were still a kid, then this would be child abuse.

I got out of the library, feeling like my soul just left my body. Do I have to come here again? Because I don't want to.

"Hi, princess!"

"We're here to e\*\*\*\*\* you."

Oh great. The twins are here.

"Hey," I told them weakly.

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The twins gave me a look of worry. "Wow. What's wrong with you?"

"I'm tired." I groaned. "I think I used up all of my brain cells for the day," I mumbled.

"Rose?" It was Nate. He looked at me worriedly.

Why are we all gathered outside of the library like this?

"Hey." I greeted him. "Can I skip the twins and head for our lessons? I wanna eat." I said. The twins frowned at my proposal. Nate just laughed.

"I wish we could. I wouldn't mind it." He winked. "Unfortunately, I have to speak with the queen on some matters. I just came here to inform the twins to e\*\*\*\*\* you to your new room. Queen's orders."

"What?" I must be hearing things.

"You have been transferred to a new room on the 3rd floor."

I stared at him in wonder. "Transferred? Why?"

"There are two reasons." He started, "One, your room is a complete mess. Second, so we can keep an eye on you."

I don't have to be a genius to know that my room was a mess after all the things that I threw the other day just to make a makeshift rope. But what does he mean when he says that they can have a close eye on me?

As if reading my mind the Ren answered. "It's not like we don't trust you, okay? We are just looking out for your safety."

"Same floor as you guys? Even him?" I jerk my thumb towards the library. where a dragon slumbers.

"You better believe it." Said Nate as he leaned at the back. "But unfortunately, you're on the opposite wing. We're in the west while you're in the east."

I must have looked troubled because Dan quickly spoke. "If you're worried about Nate doing something to you then you don't have to worry. These wolves can take him." He said and hit his chest with his fist. Nate glared at the twins as they glared at him.

Nate glared at the twins and shook his head. "I would love to stay and chat, but I better go now so I can be back in time for our lesson. You guys better be nice to her. She's tired." Nate said to the twins

Ren rolled his eyes at Nate before turning his head in my direction. He grinned and wiggled his eyebrows. "Shall we, my lady?" He mockingly offered his arm to me and spoke in a deep matured voice.

I grinned. "Why of course, good sir," I said in a really bad accent as I mockingly took his arm. Dan came to my other side and offered me his arm as well, which I took. As if on cue, we all turned to the East wing and marched.

"Great. Just a few days in the castle and they already made her as one of them." Nate mumbled behind us.

Once we were at the East wing we stopped. "So which way to my room?" I asked.

"Before that, we want to show you something," Dan said and grinned.

I gave him an uncertain look. "Okay...lead the way then."

Dan and Ren nodded as they walked beside me. We walked straight for a few moments before they turned to a corner and finally stopped in front of a door. Dan turned the knob and opened the door wide as he took a side step. "After you." He said and stopped Ren from coming in once he took a step forward. "Woah there, brother. Have you ever heard of the saying 'ladies first? Where are your manners?'" He gave Ren a disapproving look before turning his gaze to me. "Rose, forgive my imbecile of a brother. Forget that this ever happened because it would ruin our reputation as gentlemen. Now." Dan turned his gaze back to his brother. "If you'll excuse me. We have a lady waiting here."

Ren only rolled his eyes at Dan as he made a way for me to pass. Before I could fully pass Ren, he made a mocking face to Dan that only I could see that we started laughing.

"What was that all about?" Dan asked.

"Nothing." Ren and I said in unison.

The room – or should I say a giant walk-in closet – was very big and was filled with gigantic closets and shelves that hang different assortments of dresses, accessories, shoes, etc. Heck, this room is thrice as big as my old room. And I'm talking about the room that I have here in the palace. It was like a library, but instead of books, it held clothing.

I stood in awe as I admired the place while Ren and Dan were busy looking for something. And by the looks of it, they were arguing about which pair to take.

After a couple of minutes, they were back with a pair of pink flat shoes.

Why does this scene seem so familiar?

I gasped in delight. So they do have flats in this world!

They placed the shoes on the floor and helped me wear them. After that, I gave them a look. "Why is this room full of clothing items?"

"That's because it is a closet." Said Dan, confirming something that I already expected. "This room is stored with clothes for guests. Every palace has one." My jaw dropped. All these items for guests?! They sure do put a lot of hospitality on their guests.

Boy if I was one of them then I would never leave. But I left. Once.

"Alright, enough gaping and let's go." Ren ushered us out of the room and we started walking again. As we were walking, We happen to pa\*\* by one of the many large windows of the castle and got a nice view of the sky. It was a beautiful day for a walk. I just wanted to go out and breathe in some fresh air.

One thing I like about this world is that the air is fresh and unpolluted. The air is always cold even under the glaring sun. I love how this world is thriving without destroying anything. I guess being on a break from technology is good. I don't crave for wifi that much now.

"Tonight's a full moon." He said. Ren looked up and nodded.

"Yeah. Can't wait for our night run." Ren then stretched his arm out as if he was warming his muscles up for a run.

Meanwhile, I only look at both of them in confusion. "Why are guys taking a night run? Can't you just do it in the morning? You know, before the sun rises?"

Ren and Dan both looked at each other and laughed. Did I say something funny?

"I think you got it all wrong." Ren shook his head as he laughed.

"When Ren says taking a night run, we didn't mean in our human form," Dan explained.

Not in their human form? Does that mean..."Are you guys saying that you guys are gonna run in...your dog forms?"

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As soon as they heard the word 'dog' they stopped laughing and glared at me. "Werewolves. Not dogs." Dan corrected. "And don't ever call us dogs," Ren added.

By the looks on their faces, they were pretty much offended.

Hm...

"But aren't wolves in the dog family?"

"Yes, but wolves are more cooler and powerful than dogs." Argued Ren.

"Wolves have sharp teeth, right?"

They nodded.

"They have furs."

A nod again.

"Have sensitive noses and ears."

They nodded again.

"They howl."

A nod.

I grinned. "Dogs do those things too." I have to bite my lips to keep myself from laughing because the looks on their faces and their reactions were just hilarious.

"WE'RE NOT DOGS!!"

"WE'RE WEREWOLVES AND ALPHAS FOR THAT MATTER!!"

"Oh, okay." I shrugged. "So fetching my shoes for me today and during my second day here in the palace have nothing to do with it?" They gave me a murderous look as I continued laughing.

“No!” Said Ren grumpily.

“Well, that’s a snappy answer,” I said.

Dan ‘hmped’. “And to think that this is our thanks for saving you the other day in the woods.

“Well, you can thank Ace for helping you navigate. Or else you’ll get lost and turn into a WHERE-wolf.” I burst out laughing while the twins gave me a dead-panned look before they looked at each other.

“I say we leave her here and her jokes about werewolves.” Offered Dan to Ren.

“Yeah, agree.” Ren nodded and they both turned their back to me and started to walk away. I stared at their backs for a few minutes thinking that they were joking and would eventually come back. But when they were already a few distances away, that’s when I figured that they were gonna leave me here.

“Yes!” I silently cheered. Now I can walk to the garden! But I forgot the way there. Then I saw the window in front of me. I opened it and started to climb out when someone pulled me back.

“Hey!” I protested.

“We were pouting!” Ren said.

“You were supposed to console us!” Dan continued.

“So? Not my problem.”

“Do you hear that, Dan?”

“Nope. I didn’t hear anything.”

“You’ve got to be kidding me!!” I whined.

“Oh, what was that?” Ren feigned hearing. “That doesn’t sound like an apology.”

“I wasn’t apologizing!”

“Even so, we have a lesson. And one of the lessons is to use a door and not a window.” Ren said.

“You royals are so...proper.”

“Exactly.” They both said at the same time and grinned at me. I gave them me ‘oh come on look’ as I let out an exasperated sigh.

“Uh uh. That’s not very lady-like, princess.” Said Ren and earned a glare from me.

“Oh, I have a joke.” Dan inserted. “What do you call a person who bites a werewolf while sleeping?” I don’t know why but Ren burst out laughing as soon as the question escaped Dan’s mouth.

I raised an eyebrow at Dan. Curiosity eating my head. Why is Ren laughing? “What?”

A corner of Dan’s lips moves into a smirk. “Easy. You.” If possible, Ren laughed harder while I stood there looking confused.

“I don’t get it.”

Since Ren was too busy laughing, Dan answered me. “Well, my lady. If you haven’t recalled, Ren and I were the ones who rescued you. Not only did we fight the rogues, but we were also the ones who brought you back.” He said. “Ren here was the one who carried you on his back in his wolf form. And while you were sleeping, you bit him.”

What did he say? Did I bit Ren?

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I shifted my gaze to Ren who finally calmed a little. He met my gaze and he shrugged. “It’s true. You bit me here- ” He pointed to his right shoulder ” – while muttering something about a deer potato salad.”

A deer potato salad. I seem to recall having a dream about eating one of those after my encounter with a deer. But when I bit it, it tasted like....fur.

Furr



My eyes went wide at the sudden realization as I looked from Ren to Dan. Both have a smirk on them. And just with that smirk, I could tell that everything they say is true. I gave them an embarra\*\*ed look. "I-I'm so sorry. It was all the deer's fault!"

"What deer?"

"Never mind," I muttered, pursed my lips, and shifted on my feet.

"Um....thank you, by the way, for....you know.....saving me from the kitties-

"

"Werecats." Dan corrected.

I rolled my eyes at him. "Would you mind? I'm trying to say thank you." Dan raised his hands in surrender and gestured for me to continue. "As I was saying...thank you both. And sorry for the trouble that I made."

"And?"

I raised an eyebrow at Ren. "And what?"

"And no more wolf jokes."

I sighed. "Fine. Just lead the way to my room." I said in defeat. The twins nodded at me in approval as they led the way. I followed suit as they led me up a set of stairs.

"So, Rose," Dan said after a moment of silence. "Since you're going to the ball, any idea on who would you pick as an e\*\*\*\*\*?"

I looked at Dan. "An e\*\*\*\*\*?"

Dan facepalmed. "Oh, I forgot. You're new to this 'ball thing.'" He quoted and turned towards me. "The Queen may not have informed you about this, but the ball is all for you."

"For me?" I asked. Slightly taken aback.

"Yes. Consider it as some sort of welcoming party," he said. To my right, Ren was listening intently to Dan. "So since you're the star of this party, you must enter with an e\*\*\*\*\*."

I didn't say anything after that. I stared at Dan not knowing what to do next.

Dan rolled his eyes at me. "Rose? I was asking you if you have already decided on who your e\*\*\*\*\* will be. Any person in mind?"

I made an 'O' with my mouth to show him I understood. "I don't."

He grinned and met his brother's eyes for a second before turning it back to me. "Good. Why not take Ren here as an e\*\*\*\*\*?"

He motioned to his brother at my right.

"What?"

I swear that wasn't me who reacted. It was all Ren. If anyone should be reacting then it should be me.

But instead, I just stared at Dan as if he grew another head.

We turned to the right after climbing up the set of stairs.

"Why me and not you?" Ren questioned his brother.

"Because I am not you so it has to be you!" As if on cue, Ren and I both funnily looked at Dan. Can anyone make sense of what Dan had just said? Because it seriously sounded like blah blah to me.

Dan rolled his eyes at the both of us. "Kids," he muttered. "Okay. So how about this. Why don't we ask Rose if she's okay with you as an e\*\*\*\*\*?"

"Girl you're talking about is right beside you." I inserted.

Ren looked as if he was thinking about it. "I don't know, Dan." He shrugged.

This time, Dan shifted his gaze to me and finally noticed my existence. Great! "So how about it, Rose? My brother as an e\*\*\*\*\*? He's a great deal! He's a gentleman and he knows all about the ball and has experience on how to e\*\*\*\*\* a lady. Plus, who doesn't want the strong werewolf as an e\*\*\*\*\*? They are good for being a bodyguard."

"Brother, you're making me sound like an item and not a person."

Nope. He just made you sound like you're a man-w\*\*\*\*.

Dan ignored Ren as he looked at me. "What do you say?"

I shrugged. "Sounds good," I said and turned to Ren. "You okay with that?"

Ren met my gaze and immediately turned away. "I guess so," he answered. I swear I was looking at Ren, but I could have sworn that I saw Dan doing a fist pump at the corner of my eye.

Maybe it was just my imagination.

We finally stopped in front of a huge double door. "This is it. Your room," said Dan and quickly cleared his throat. "So.....is it final? Ren is your e\*\*\*\*\* then?"

Ren and I looked at each other and nodded before I returned my gaze to Dan. "I guess so."

Dan beamed widely. "Great!"

Why is he so happy?

Chapter 33 A Request

I looked at Ren again. "So, e\*\*\*\*\*. Be sure to fetch me at the ball, okay?" I smirked as it took the twins at least 3 seconds to realize that I just made another werewolf joke.

Once the twins realized what I had just said, they both frowned. Their faces are a mirror of each other's expressions. It's amazing how they can be alike and different at the same time.

Ren suddenly smirked at me and nudged his brother. As if reading his mind, Dan smirked too. Ren looked at me. "Okay, Rose. Keep up with your jokes. But don't go out on the balcony at night when the wolf howls or you'll fall asleep."

I gave Ren a confused look. "Is that a riddle or a joke?"

"Both." He said.

I just shrugged as I now turned the doorknob and opened one of the doors of my door – if that makes any sense. I first took a tentative step and stopped as I took in the sight of my room. It was huge – with a capital H. It was twice the size of my old room in this palace. I have two large windows on the side and in between them is a huge gla\*\* double door that leads to the balcony. To my far left is a vanity table – bigger than my last – and two meters to its right is a white floral designed rectangular drawers with a bunch of flowers held in a vase on top of it. At the center of the room is a white furry carpet that contradicts the golden-colored tiles of the room. Pretty much the common colors in the room are white and gold. To my left is a Queen sized bed with two side tables on each side. I even have a mini lounge!

“We’ll have your lesson in here,” Dan said.

“In my room?”

“Yeah. What of it?” Ren asked. “It’s bigger than the room we were using.”

Now that he mentions it...

“Can my lesson for today be, how to sleep properly without getting a stiff neck?” I asked hopefully.

“No.” The twins said at the same time.

\*\*\*

After the twins left my new room, I felt like taking a nap. They were better ladies than I am. They know how to act properly and, believe it or not, know how to use the right words that would please the nobles.

I buried my face on my new pillow. “If you please. It would be my honor. The pleasure is all mine.” I mocked the lessons that I just learned from the twins.

“The way you talk is like a noble already, but your tone is lacking.”

I tiredly turned towards Prince Nate, who was now standing in the middle of my room. “Should I even bother to ask how you got in here without knocking?”

“I came in just as the twins came out.” He said.

“Figures.”

Without looking at me, Nate headed for the door and opened it. A few maids came in to bring us our food. There was a small tea area in my room that was set aside by the twin for our lesson. Nate gestured for them to put it back in the middle. “I hope you don’t mind if we start our lesson,” Nate says as soon as the maids left.

“I’m hungry anyway,” I said as I got up. I sat on the chair that Nate pulled back for me. Today we were having soup and some pasta. I waited for Nate to sit before grabbing the napkin on the table and placing it on my lap.

“Very good,” Nate commented.

“Hey, Nate? I want to ask you something.”

“What is it?”

“I don’t exactly mind getting ignored by the maids, but why doesn’t the queen have an e\*\*\*\*\*? Or, what would you call it? Ladies, who serve her?”

Nate seemed confused. “What do you mean?”

“Don’t royal people have people following them to serve them better?”

“No?” Nate wrinkled his nose. “Is that what the royals do in your world? They sound lazy. We were usually trained to be independent. We would only call for servants when we need them. I don’t know what humans in your world do, but here royals should learn how to take care of themselves so we wouldn’t be spoiled.”

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“Well, that does make sense,” I said as I grabbed the sp\*\*\* with the larger head as I tasted the soup.

Nate seemed pleased. “Since you asked me a question, may I ask one in return?”

“You may.” My eyes widened when I said that unconsciously.

“Wow!” Nate gleamed and gave me a small clap. “The twins did a good job!” He chuckled. I grabbed a forked and pointed it at him. He raised his hands in surrender.

“What do you want to ask?”

Nate rubbed his chin. “What do humans picture us as vampires in your world?”

I tried to think of any facts about vampires from the movies. Probably the most common one. “Hmmm...that vampires are corpses that have sharp teeth, cold skin, drinks blood, and can’t stand in the sunlight.”

Nate furrowed his eyebrows at the last part of my sentence. “Your books got most of the facts though, but I think that you guys have mixed us up with the undead.”

“Undead?” I asked. Is he talking about zombies?

“Undead.” He confirmed. “They are the vampires who can’t stand being in the sunlight.”

I gave him a look as I tried to swallow his words. “Wait.” I held up a finger. “Are you saying that there are other vampire breeds called the undead? You know, back in my world, the undead are referred to as zombies.”

“Zombies?”

“Dead people coming to life and eating other people. The only way to kill them is by shooting their brain.”

“That is disgusting.” Nate wrinkled his nose as he stopped eating his pasta. “And no. All the vampires are of the same breed. I’m one of the living, a vampire who can stand in the sunlight and drinks animal blood to live. The undead, on the other hand, is the vampires that your book is talking about. They’re dead. When a living vampire kills by draining the blood out of another supernatural, they die and are cursed to live in the shadows. They can’t stand going out in the sun or they will dry. The only thing keeping them alive is by drinking supernatural blood.”

I stared at Nate as I absorbed the new information that he just threw at me. So basically, their zombies are dead vampires coming to life. While Earth zombies are humans coming to life. Well, humans don't exist in this world so I guess their laws are very different.

Well, it's not like zombies exist in my world in the first place.

"So what happens to the undead then? Do they also drink the good vampire's blood?" I asked.

The corner of Nate's mouth is curved. "Interested, are we?" I glared at him. "Well, when a 'good vampire' becomes a 'bad vampire', we banish them from the kingdom. Now, they mostly live in the Kingdom of Tereau as their refuge. And yes, they do drink our blood. All types of supernatural blood."

I took in a deep breath. "Okay then. There are good vampires and bad vampires. Bad wolves and good wolves. What else? Grumpy old trolls?"

Nate looked to the side and shrugged. "You could say that. The world is vast."

I groaned and clutched my head as if the information that I was gathering was too much for my brain. Or maybe it was too much.

"It's weird you know?" He said as he looked at his untouched meal. "A few days ago, you were pretty much freaked out about the supernatural world. Now, it seems as if you're considering them. It's fascinating how much has changed in only a few days."

I only shrugged at Nate. "Well, I just kind of learned to accept it since...you know. I'm staying and all." For some reason, my voice seemed to become lower as I spoke.

He let out a short laugh. "I can't say I'm not happy about that, but just take it slow, okay? No rush. We're here to help you." He said and looked away as he spoke the next words. "And I'm glad that you're staying."

As if my lips have a mind of their own. It spoke. "Yeah. Me too."

Nate and I continued to eat. It was amazing how little he corrected my table manners this time. I enjoyed Nate's lesson a lot since it was the most 'chill'

one out of all the lessons I am scheduled for. I would love to be in Fred's class, to be honest, but comparing Nate and Fred's lessons well...I prefer to just sit and eat.

I'm sorry Prince Fred. You're still the best prince out there.

Once the lesson was done, Nate called for the servants to clean up.

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He started to turn around as walked towards the door. When he was already in front of it, he paused as he turned to me. A small grin was plastered on his face. "I was about to ask you, you know."

I tilted my head to the side in confusion. "Just ask away."

"I was about to ask you if you'd like me to be your e\*\*\*\*\*." He shrugged. "But I guess Ren beat me to it. But that's okay. I'll try again next time." He gave me a wink before he left. Making me wonder how he knew about it.

Once the door closed, a maid approached me and handed me a scrolling canvas before she left. Out of curiosity, I unrolled it. What I saw there made me gasp. It was a sketch of me sleeping. The sketch was finely detailed as it followed the curve and outline of my face, hair, and dress. Whoever had made this has a skill in the art.

Then my eyes darted towards the bottom right of the paper where the note was written in cursive.

## The Runaway Princess

I chuckled at the title. I ran my thumb gently over the sketch. When I pulled it back my thumb was stained with charcoal. And my mind quickly had a mini flashback of someone holding this paper and gliding a charcoal pen over it while I was laying down on a bed.

Nate.

For some unknown reason, I smiled. I never really thought that Nate could draw or that he would be giving me a sketch.



“Oh crap. I’m gonna be late.” I muttered as I placed the sketch on my side table and went out of my room.

“Rose?” A voice suddenly said behind me, making me jump a little in surprise. I turn around only to see Prince Fred looking down on me. “I came here to get you. And,” He raised his hand to show me the red cloak. “to return this to you.”

“I thought I lost it! Did you go back and get it?”

“I found it in the garden,” Fred said. Unsure of what he just said.

“Does it come with a magic to return to its owner?” I asked in wonder as I took the cloak and carefully folded it.

“It does since it would cause a conflict with its current magic.”

“Thanks,” I told him. “Can you wait here while I put this in my room?” I asked. Fred nodded. I quickly returned to my room and threw the cloak on my bed. I’ll...fix that later.

When I returned I smiled at the sight of Fred. “How’d it go with the others?” He asked to change the subject.

I shrugged. “Well, Ace was pretty strict, the twins were brutal, and Nate was pretty nice and chill.”

“Figures.” He said and composed himself. “I hope you’ll like my lessons like you do with prince Nathaniel.”

I beamed at him. I was biased toward him from the start. “I’m sure I will.”

Fred chuckled and offered me his hand. I looped my arm around him and we made our way to the ballroom. “You’re not gonna take your decision back, are you?” Fred gave me a look as he asked the question. We were already in the ballroom and headed towards the center where we first practiced dancing.

“What decision?”

“The ball.”

“No. Why?”

He smiled at me before turning his attention back in front of him. “Good. So now I will ask you a favor that I have been itching to ask.”

“What is it?”

“Save me for your last dance?”

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My throat went dry at his words. It was like I had forgotten how to speak. My ears couldn't believe what they had just heard. For a few seconds, I stared at Prince Fred and waited for him to say something like, ‘Just kidding’ and laugh at my face, but he didn't. Instead, his face was a mask of seriousness. But being the girl who had countless fallen for his jokes, I didn't buy it.

“You're kidding, right?”

“Who says I'm kidding?” He countered. I studied Fred for a long time. He wasn't kidding?

“So what do you say, Princess Rose?”

“Don't call me a princess.”

“Well, I have to say something to get your attention.” He smiled at me playfully.

I thought about it for a moment. “Well...”

Fred noticed my hesitation. For just a few seconds, I saw the disappointment in his eyes as we descended from the stairs, but it had gone quickly as was replaced with a smile which he directed at me.

He is serious, isn't he?

“Sorry. Forget what I-”

“Alright.”

He must have been caught off guard at my response for he suddenly stopped walking just to look at me. There was a surprised look on his face as he studied me. His jaw dropped for a few seconds before he recovered. "Are you sure? Because if you don't want to then you can just tell me."

I looked at him. "What? Now you want me to tell you no?"

"No." I raised an eyebrow. Realizing what he had just said, he immediately corrected himself. "What I meant was.....I'd be happy to be your last dance for the night but-"

I held my palm up to shut him up. "You want me to go to the dance with you and I said yes. That's it. No need for explanation. This conversation is getting confusing the more alibis we give."

There was a ghost of a smile on his face as he closed his eyes and slowly shook his head. "As you wish, princess." He said in a low voice that I wouldn't have heard it if I weren't so close to him.

"I don't get why the way you call me princess seems like you are teasing for some reason."

He let out a small chuckle as we started dancing. Instantly, the music played.

Throughout the whole time, I was glaring at Fred as I tried to keep eye contact.

Fred chuckled. "I guess this is the closest thing to an eye contact as we can get."

"Sorry," I admitted.

"It's alright. The ball starts in a week so we have plenty of time to fix your...glare."

"Haha. Very funny."

\*\*\*In the Garden\*\*\*

The little wolf kept hidden in the shade to avoid the glaring sun. He would often venture out into the woods to hunt and drink. But he would always go back to be close to her.

The little wolf whimpered as he saw his master dancing with the blonde man from before. He wanted to meet with his master and bond with her. But the blonde man took the cloak and now he has no way to approach her. But he saw his master seemed happy, so he doesn't mind.

He would just continue to watch over her until the time is right for them to meet.

### Chapter 34 Calm Before the Storm

The past week has been a wreck. My training had been intense since we had to make use of our remaining time for them to prepare me for the ball. I'm not even kidding when I say that the princes may have pushed me to my limit.

Ace – I mean – PRINCE Ace had made me read a book about the culture of every supernatural type there is. And let me tell you that you can't count them with your fingers. It wasn't really hard because the topic was kind of interesting.

Ren and Dan? I can't say they were that patient though because one time I kept on slouching my back and walked like a freaking drunken person and they kind of...freaked out? The one where they cover their eyes and let out a scream and dropped to the floor for an hour. I'm not even kidding. And they would only get up when I make things right. But most of the time, we're just relaxed. Like not-doing-anything sort of relaxing. They said that I could just wing it when the time comes.

Well, Nate is one of the patient princes I know, but that doesn't mean that he is my favorite teacher. Every day we would always have our lunch together and each day the food being delivered gets fewer and fewer. Nate says that it is mandatory so I wouldn't gain much weight. But despite that, I am proud to say that I don't make meat fly anymore.

And lastly is Fred. He's my last instructor every day for the past week. He's always so patient and very considerate. He taught me the most common dances performed at a ball. He taught me the trick of how to pretend to

have eye contact with your partner and how to avoid stepping on their foot while dancing. Most of the time, our training would only last for 30 minutes or an hour because he would always take me to the gardens so I can relax with my training. And I won't lie when I say that my heart would always pound in my chest. He truly is the best one.

Now as I woke up from my bed and on the day of the ball, I noticed that I wasn't alone in my room. I sat up and rubbed the sleep from my eyes so I could see the intruders. Once I did, I took a good look at my intruders and frowned. In front of me are the Queen and 3 new maids.

"What's going on?" I asked in confusion and suddenly felt the need to pull the covers closer. The Queen beamed.

"My dear, let me introduce you to Yen, Keela, and Cherry." She gestured towards the three maids behind her. Yen is a pet\*\*e girl with red hair. She looks about 25. Keela looks about 30 yrs old. She has medium-length black hair. As for Cherry, she's probably the eldest with her brown hair streaked with gray and some wrinkles of aging on her face.

I nodded at them in greeting. "Hey."

They smiled and did a little bow in respect. From what I learned from Ace, they do that as a sign of respect for a royal. The Queen smiled at me.

"Good. Now that the introduction is over. I guess it's time for us to get back to work."

"Work?"

"My dear, they will be in charge of preparing you for the ball. Now get up so they can get started." She came to the side of my bed and tried to pull the covers out.

"Wait!" I held a hand out while the other tried to hold the blanket over me. I glance at the window. The sun is still bright. "Isn't the ball tonight?"

"Yes, it is. That is why we have a lot of work to do." The Queen said. "We have to exfoliate your skin, treat your hair to a beautiful glow, give you a milk bath, and many more!"

I gave the Queen a horrified look. "What is this? A spa? I don't need to get pampered! It's just a ball. Let's throw a dress at me and I'll be ready to go."

The Queen tsked. "In your world that might be the case, but in this world, you have to follow my rules." She turned her head back towards the maids and gestured towards me. "Go on, ladies. Do your job." She commanded. Before I even have the time to react, the maids advances towards me, ripped my blanket, and hauled me up from my bed.

"Miss, please raise your arms so we can take your clothes off," Yen said politely.

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I let out a horrified gasp. "Take my clothes off?! Are you kidding me?! It's too early." I practically yelled and crossed my arms over my chest in insecurity. "I'll pay you. Just-." I joked. I hadn't even finished my sentence when Cherry swiftly pulled my clothes off and left me in underwear. I screamed.

"Holy crap! What the heck, lady?!" I glared at Cherry.

"I'm sorry, princess, but we don't have time for chitter-chatter. Our job is to help you get ready." Cherry turned to nod at Keela.

"Get her in the tub."

Keela reached out to grab me but I moved away. "No! I won't go anywhere with you guys. It's too early. Let me sleep." I stood my ground stubbornly and felt a bit proud for doing so.

Knock knock knock

"Princess? Are you alright?" Fred's voice came from the other side of the door. "I heard you scream and would like to check up on you."

I stood frozen. I looked at the door, then to my fallen nightgown before looking back at the door. Shiz! He couldn't see me like this!

At the corner of my eyes, I saw the Queen grinning evilly at me. "You sure you don't want to follow them to the tub?" I frowned at her and didn't answer.

She sighed. "Fine. I guess you can just stand there while I answer the doo-"

I let out a nervous laugh and looked at Keela. "Lead the way to the tub, my trusty friend!"

\*\*\*

The whole day I was in the care of the three ladies. They scrubbed my skin until a new one appeared, dipped me in a tub of milk, combed my hair until it was fine and smooth, scrubbed my feet, etc. I won't lie, it was pretty relaxing and weird at the same time. I wasn't used to this sort of treatment so I tend to react to it most of the time. I mean, come on, having breakfast and lunch served to you for the whole day while pampering you?

Heaven.

So 30 minutes before the ball, I was already ready and dressed. My make-up was light. My eyes have a hint of gold and bronze colored glow and are winged with black coal. I had a pinkish glow on my cheek and my cheekbones were finely contoured.

My lips have a natural pinkish color. As for my hair, it was tied into a braided bun with loose ringlets of curls hanging just at the side of my head. There was a white jewel at the front and center of my hair near my forehead. It has two chains decorated with jewels that they clasped at the back of my bun and giving me an image of elegance.

My dress was so beautiful. Probably the best one I have ever seen. It hugged my waist pretty nicely and was gold in color. The shoulder was made of sheer gold cloth that hangs elegantly and reveals my shoulders bare. The bottom resembles the shape of a petal and it continues down just at the floor. My shoes, although hidden by the dress, were also gold and are 3 inches tall. Probably the smallest they would allow me to wear.

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“You look pretty good, miss.” Yen commented. I stopped looking in the mirror as I turned to face her. My cheeks turning pink in embarrassment.

“Well, it’s all thanks to you guys.” I smiled at them and pursed my lips as I looked back at my reflection in the mirror. Okay, I don’t wanna sound vain but, I look so beautiful – not that I don’t know that already. I tilted my chin up as I watched my reflection. “Oh my my my. What a beautiful person!” I said and suddenly laughed like a lunatic.

The queen looked at me like she wanted to dump a bucket of water on me. “My dear, I don’t want to ruin this romantic moment you have with the mirror but we must be going. Your esteemed, Prince Renevier Rutledge, is here.” The Queen said smiling at the mirror where I could see her. I frowned at her for disturbing my peace.

With one final look, I turned around and stood straight. I followed the Queen out. My shoes kicked the hem of my dress as a sort of trick that the twins taught me so I wouldn’t trip while walking. She led me out of my room door and towards the stairs where I could just see twins standing and leaning onto the railing. Ren and Dan both wore the same navy blue button-up-collarless polo. They have some sort of ruffled tie and golden shoulder cuffs. The only difference? Ren was wearing a red cape pinned by the cuffs.

The queen stopped and looked at me. Her face filled with pride as she touched my shoulder in a motherly affection. “Look at how you’ve become. You’re like a princess now.” She said. Since I didn’t know how to reply I smiled at her. She pursed her lips and moved a stray hair from my face. “Tonight, I shall introduce you as my adoptive daughter from a foreign land. I’ll tell them that I took you in as my daughter. Even if you don’t like it, please just pretend we’re a family. As much as possible if they ask about your race, you smile and go to the princes. They know what to do. Never walk alone.”

I smiled warmly at the queen. “I’ll keep that in mind,” I said. She patted me on the cheek, said thank you, and continued to move.

Dan was stretching his arms out while Ren was blowing his messy brown hair off of his face when we came into their view. Dan was the one who saw us first. He grinned brightly at me and elbowed his brother rather harshly in the ribs without looking and he immediately straightened up. Ren



let out a grunt and glared at his brother until he saw me. His glare was now replaced with a shock.

Dan chuckled. "You look so beautiful tonight." He said in a rather awkward and deep fake accent voice and wiggled his eyebrows.

I pulled my hand away and looked him in the eye in mock flirtation as I tilted my chin up. "And you look ravishing tonight, my good sir," I said in a very high pitch accent. There was silence as we stared at each other. A second later and we burst out laughing.

"Gross! Don't ever do that again." Dan said, still laughing and clutching his stomach.

"Me? You're the one who did it first. And with a weird accent might I add."

"That's the accent of a fake gentleman." He winked. "And you'll be seeing a lot of that tonight."

I hit Dan in the shoulder and laughed. He looked back behind him and beamed at his brother. "Ren, get your b\*\*\* over here you useless idiotic twin! You're not called an e\*\*\*\*\* if you just stand there." he chided him.

Ren ignored his brother and started to walk towards us. Well, at least that's what I thought because he just walked past us as if he was looking for something. He turned back and tapped me on the shoulder. "Excuse me, but have you seen a pet\*\*e-looking girl, who acts like a man and talks like a man? She has dirty blonde hair that looks like a bird's nest," he said before looking at me and studying my face. "Oh wait! That's you?!" He slapped a hand to his mouth in surprise.

I frowned at him and punched his shoulder. Ren and Dan laughed. Damn those hard muscles.

Ren rubbed the part where I hit him. "What? I was complimenting you." He said. "And stop it with the violence woman!"

"Oh haha, Ren. Telling a girl that she's practically a man with unruly hair is a compliment? I think you forgot to teach me that during our lessons." I crossed my arms over my chest.

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Ren took out an imaginary pencil and pretended to scribble on his hand. "Let me just put that up on the list."

"Well, as fun as watching you kids here, I think I must excuse myself and head towards the reception area where the guests are." The Queen said. And I honestly forgot that she was still there. "Ren, I want you to take her downstairs with the others in two minutes."

"Yes, your highness." the Queen nodded at Ren in approval before she left.

"Why two minutes?" I asked Dan the moment he came to us.

"Well, dear princess, the Queen meant that in two minutes we should fill you up with the needed information on what to do," Dan said.

"And what we're gonna do is head downstairs and meet with the other princes, then we will enter the ball with them taking the lead. We will follow a few steps behind them as a sort of silent introduction." Continued Ren. "Now, shall we?" he offered me his arm. I took it and let him lead me down the stairs. Dan, following just beside me and kept on grinning from time to time for some unknown reason.

I was busy lifting the side of my dress to minimize the contact of the hem to my foot so I wouldn't trip – another trick they taught me. Ren was walking at a slow pace waiting for me, which I was thankful for. We reached the second floor and Ren and Dan led me to a hallway and headed towards the two large double doors that would lead us to the ball.

If you guys are wondering why the ball is located on the 2nd floor and not the 1st floor, then I can answer that. The ball is indeed on the first floor but there is also a door headed to the second floor, which we are about to use. Behind the double doors is a set of stairs leading to the first floor. They told me that they only use it for introducing the host, which is me. They said it would be the perfect way for people to know who I am.

We spotted the other princes standing just in front of the double doors. It seems as if they were waiting. When they saw us Fred and Nate immediately smiled – as for the other PRINCE, don't expect a smile from him because let's face it, the guy hardly smiled.

Fred was wearing a red shirt underneath a white coat. It was a simple coat with a long back and a 'W' shape at the back. Although it was simple, I can say that Fred knows how to bring a simple outfit to look good and formal with his blonde hair and how he moves with it.

Nate was wearing a white coat with a bunch of fancy folds and a gray b\*\*\*on-less coat. Its side was decorated with golden beads that made some swirling patterns. His red hair was finely brushed back.

As for PRINCE Ace, he was wearing an army green shirt made of a sweater-like material that seemed to sparkle and had a round scarf hanging loosely on his neck. Over the shirt was a gray vest and a jet-black coat that b\*\*\*ons halfway up. Even though his outfit seemed ridiculous and sounded weird, he looked really good especially when his hair was carefully brushed back just right and showing his perfectly defined ears that I now got used to.

Fred came and offered me a hand, which Dan then slapped. "Hate to break it to you, Fred, but can't you see Rose already has an e\*\*\*\*\*?" Dan's annoyed tone confused me.

Did he and Fred fight?

But instead of backing away, Fred only smiled and nodded at Dan. "Sorry." He said and turned to Ren. "May I?" Ren only nodded at him once and took my hand from his arm and handed it to Fred's outstretched ones. Fred smiles and I almost melted.

He studied my face for a while and he smiled warmly. "You look beautiful, Rose."

Chapter 35 Falling for

I wheezed

OH, SON OF A MOTHERLESS PIG! Fred just complimented me!

"T-" I cleared my throat. "Thank you. You look good as well." I said.

"Really? Phew!" He sighed in relief. "For a second there I thought you might call me ugly again. That's why I spend some time fixing myself up. Good

thing it paid off." He sighed and now, I am fighting the urge to run towards a set of stairs and jump down in happiness.

Just as I was staring dreamily at Fred, Nate took that opportunity and pulled me towards him. He caught me off guard that I tripped and landed on his chest. I heard him chuckle. I pushed myself up and glared at him. "I'll hit you," I warned.

"Woah! The party hasn't started and you now have a sour look on your face." He had an amused look on his face as he looked at me.

"Whose fault do you think it is?"

Nate must have found my outburst rather amusing because he just laughed. "Easy there tiger." He said. "You know I could make you happy."

I crossed my arms over my chest and raised an eyebrow at him. "Really? Are you leaving?"

The twins let out a whistle at my response while Nate just laughed harder. "Where have you been all my life?" He said.

"Hiding from you."

This time, Nate roared in laughter. "Can I just keep you for myself?"

"No. Don't be selfish."

He shrugged and fished something out of his coat. It was a huge red rose. "If I can't keep you, then keep this rose instead." He handed me the rose.

At that moment, the twins both took a step until they were at my side. "Don't take it, Rose. He has another one of those in his coat which he gives to all the girls." Ren warned me. "You might think you're special but it's just Nate. He may have at least 5 of them in there." Added Dan. "Or maybe more."

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Nate glared at the twins. "Okay fine. You got me." Nate pulled his coat off and showed a bouquet of roses. "And for the record, I don't have 5. I have

30 of them.” He said and looked at me and winked. Even though I don’t like what Nate was doing, I giggled at his p\*\*\*\*\* character. Nate broke the stem of the rose that he was holding and walked towards me, pulled out a ribbon, and tied it to my right wrist where I have no jewelry on.

“There. Perfect. A rose for our little Rose.”

I looked at my wrist and tenderly touched the rose before my fingers traveled to the ribbon. I raised my gaze to Nate. “Let me guess, you have at least 50 ribbons with you to tie the roses to every girl you will ever see tonight.”

Nate put his hands into his coat pocket and pursed his lips. “Nope. I only have one ribbon.”

Only one ribbon?

Seeing the dubious look on my face, Nate looked pretty offended. “Hey! No judging! I’m a guy. I don’t bring pretty ribbons with me. As for that ribbon, I just saw it on the floor on my way here.” He said. I just looked at him and nodded my head slowly. “Yeah...right.” I suddenly looked away because I’m pretty sure that Nate might have a sissy fit sooner or later. When I did, my eyes met a set of midnight blue ones. And since this was supposed to be a party, I offered him a small smile of peace.

In that instant, Ace frowned. “Why the heck are you smiling?”

“What?” I asked. Suddenly confused about what I might have done to cause Ace to have another period.

“Just because everyone complimented you doesn’t mean that I have to do the same. I don’t tell lies.” He said and looked away.

My frown at the same time as the rest of the prince seemed to tense up. Probably knowing what was about to come.

I straightened myself up and gave PRINCE Ace a dazzling fake smile. “Well, your highness, since we both are on the same page of not telling lies, can I just say that you look rather ravishing tonight.” I studied him from head to toe. “Your coat completely matches your personality. You know, black. You might wanna hide it. You’re showing too much honesty here.”

Ace only raised an eyebrow at me as if my words hadn't affected him. "You have good eyes for seeing through my honesty." He said. "And I'm afraid that what I had just said will be the only one closer to a compliment that you will ever get because behind that corset and layers of paint, you cannot hide the horror behind that mask. No offense."

I stared at him. My eyebrows twitch. No offense? I'll show him 'no offense!

I raised the dress until it was leveled with my knee and took off one of the heels and attempted to throw it at him when the other princes stopped me. "I am afraid that a pretty face is the only thing that you have for the rest of your life because your sour and bitter personality would probably scare off even dragons. No offense."

"Dragons are dead."

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"They existed!?"

"Rose, please. Just let it go. PRINCE Ace was only joking." Fred said in a voice that I think is supposed to calm me down. He looked back at Ace.

"Right, Prince Ace?"

Ace only stared at him. "Jokes are supposed to be funny, Prince Fred." He said. "Tell me, does it look like I'm laughing?"

"Ace!" All the princes said at the same time while Ace only gave them all an annoyed look and corrected them by saying, "PRINCE."

At that moment, the door leading to the ball suddenly opened and the queen gave us all a look. "What is the name of fairies is going on here? I can hear you from the other side! Is there a problem?" As if it was rehearsed, all of us quickly straightened up and fixed ourselves. Ren took the shoe from my hand and quickly helped me place it back on.

"Yeah. Him." I was being petty and pointed at Ace, who was now showing me his middle finger. To be fair, I also did the same. Ren slapped my hand away.

“Nothing to worry about, your majesty,” Nate said and smiled. The queen studied us for a moment. She looked at us one by one as if expecting us to do something that might contradict Nate’s words. When she saw nothing she only nodded. “Fine. Are you all ready?” We nodded. “Good. Now, wait here until I introduce Rose. Places everyone. Ren, get back to your place. You’re not called an e\*\*\*\*\* for anything!” She said and finally closed the door behind her.

Once the door clicked close, Dan had a victorious look on his face. “That’s exactly what I wanted to tell you right now!” Dan said to his brother. “The queen is awesome!” He beamed.

Ren rolled his eyes at his brother as he grabbed my hand and placed us into our positions like what the others are doing. The princes formed two lines in front of us. Dan and Fred on the left, and Nate and Ace on the right. Ren and I were standing just behind the lines.

I know this seemed pretty stupid but, according to the queen, it would be a nice way to give a little suspense to the guest when we come in and the princes are hiding me and Ren.

“It’s only a matter of time before the queen calls us,” Ren said to me. “I can already hear her calling the attention of the guest in that room so wipe that frown off of your face.”

I looked at him. “Perks of being a werewolf huh? And you seriously can’t blame me. I was in a good mood if the PRINCE of the underworld didn’t open his mouth.”

“Don’t be so hard on him. He’s just in a bad mood.”

“And I’m not?”

He sighed. “Maybe I should tell you this first. PRINCE Ace hates parties.”

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“If he hates it so much then why would he go?”

“You don’t know?” He asked. Surprise is evident in his voice. “I thought that PRINCE Ace had taught you all about it.”



“About what?”

Ren was about to open his mouth to respond when he suddenly tensed up and looked straight. “Alright! The queen gave the signal.” Dan announced and soon, they walked ahead of us and opened the door. Ren looked back at me. “And that’s our cue.” He started to lead me towards the huge double doors. But along the way, I couldn’t help but wonder what he was about to say to me. What does he mean about Ace not teaching me about something?

We soon entered the doors and towards the ballroom. Huge golden and crystal chandeliers hanging from the ceiling and casting a bright golden glow to the room. Soft melodic music was playing in the background giving it an image of something cla\*\*y.

“My royal guests. Tonight, you will meet a special and newly added member of our family. Recently, I’ve visited a cousin of mine from a far-off land.” The queen’s voice faltered a little. “She’s one of the princesses from that kingdom. She’s kind and sweet. But due to some problems, my cousin and I decided that it would be best for her to stay with her. In Thalia.” She said. Wow. I admire how the lies are flowing from the Queen’s mouth.

“Ladies and gentleman, may I introduce to you, Princess Rosalie from the Kingdom of Thalia. e\*\*\*\*ed by Prince Renevier Rutledge along with the other king candidates.” I heard the queen say something to my side. But I wasn’t paying any attention to her, because when the prince marched forward to the stairs, paused at the step.

I got a full view of the room from where I was standing. It was huge. Huge. It was like Disney had puked all over the place. Aside from the gold and crystal chandeliers, the walls were full of floor-to-ceiling windows. Near the side of the stairs was where the orchestra was located and continuing to play some music. Red curtains dr\*\*\*d over it and parted at the center and clipped to the sides. Round tables were placed at the sides and cleared up the center where a huge crowd of men in suits and coats and women in dresses stood.

Ren gave me a small tug and whispered, “Let’s go.” But I didn’t move. Instead, I was frozen to where I was. When Ren noticed that I wasn’t moving, he gave me a worried look. “What’s wrong?”



“I’m nervous,” I said and took notice of the people looking up at us. Ren followed my gaze and a look of understanding came into his eyes.

“Ignore them.”

“Easier said than done. What if I fall? What if I slip on my dress and fall face first?” A thousand scenarios of me doing different ways of embarrassing myself slipped into my mind.

“Hey, relax. Breathe in, breath out.” Said Ren in a calming tone. “You’re not alone in this. I’m here. I won’t let you fall. I’m your e\*\*\*\*\*, remember?” I looked at Ren and studied his face. His gaze suddenly locked into mine. “Don’t you trust me?” His eyes were pure and my mind suddenly told me to trust him.

“I trust you.” As soon as the words left my lips, Ren’s lips curled into a small smile and I let him lead me down the stairs. I was gripping his arm rather tightly. My right hand held the side of my skirt up elegantly as I struggled to keep my chin up to avoid slouching and look down to see where I was stepping. My heart pounded in my chest in anticipation as we neared the bottom. I could feel a hundred pairs of eyes on us as we walked. When we reached the last step, my foot missed a step and I almost fell if Ren’s strong grip hadn’t steadied me so my fall wasn’t that obvious.

## Chapter 36 Socializing

“Thanks,” I whispered to him. He looked down at me and beamed. “We made it.”

The crowd suddenly applauded us as we reached the bottom and the queen’s voice suddenly boomed from the top. “Everyone, this is Princess Rosalie Amber Stan. A new member of the royal family. You will all treat her with the same respect as you have of us.” Said the queen. Soon, the crowd suddenly acted. The royals did a curtsy while the Dukes and Duchess bowed.

“Enjoy the night.” With that, everyone parted. Some gave me smiles before heading off to friends or sitting on tables.

The other princes came down and joined us looking at the crowd. Dan let out a whistle. “Damn, I didn’t expect this many visitors.”

"I agree." Said Fred. "That is why I'm asking you not to whistle since it's inappropriate and anyone might hear you."

"Sorry." Apologized Dan. He then gave me a short glance before his gaze shifted to a few ladies standing at one corner laughing and looking like they were having fun. Well, I recognize the group of girls.

I noticed Dan returning his gaze at me and he grinned. "What do you say we start making friends?" He gestured his head to where the girls are. The other princes followed his head and spotted what Dan was referring to. Nate smiled widely. "I don't think that's a bad idea at all. Let's go!"

Ren looked at Nate suspiciously. "Why do I have the feeling that you wanted us to go there not for the sake of Rose having friends but for something else?"

"You people are so judgmental. Why can't anyone be like Prince Fred?" Nate pointed at Fred.

"Um...thank you for the compliment but I was thinking the same thing as Ren. Sorry." Said Fred and gave a small apologetic smile to Nate. Nate seemed a bit offended by the accusations that he let out a grunt. "Fine!" He looked at me. "It's your call, Princess. Would you like to go there?" He tilted his head towards the girls. I looked past him to where the girls were. They seemed so happy and they all looked so beautiful. They look more like princesses than me.

But hey, if I wanna live here until I can go back home then I might as well learn how to make some friends here. And the first step in doing so is by approaching them.

I looked up at Nate and nodded. "Sure. Let's go." I couldn't help but notice the huge grin on Nate's face as he took the lead in heading towards the ladies' direction. We followed him.

As we neared them, the girls stopped chattering when they noticed us. They slowly faced our direction and waited for us. When we stopped right in front of them, they lowered their heads and greeted us, and caught me completely off guard.

Oh crap. I hope they won't go all formal talking with me. I'm still crappy in that part.

"Good evening, ladies. We came by to say thank you for coming to this party." Said Fred and nodded at the girls. "If you don't mind, may we get your names?" At first, the group of girls were a bit stunned but then proceeded to introduce themselves.

One of the groups of girls was Lady Solace – an elf. You know, like a certain prince we know. She was very pretty and wearing a pretty piercing blue dress the same color as her eyes. Her long dark brown hair was simply gorgeous even though she only wore it in a side braid. She was tall and had a slim figure and unlike Ace, she was always smiling. Well glad to know that not all elves are grumpy. Another female elf in the group is Lady Rebecca. Unlike Lady Solace, her hair was in a lighter shade of brown that I have always wanted and has blonde highlights. She even looked more stunning with her simple lavender-colored dress that seems to fade to change into different colors when hit with light. With her dark blue eyes, it was almost impossible to miss her.

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In the same group, I spotted 3 girls in the Were kingdom. One of them was Lady Kylie. She's a werecat, specifically a black panther. She was so beautiful with her short-sleeved dress that fades to green at the bottom. Her perfect medium-length brown hair was curled and almost hiding her blue eyes that you can't seem to look away from. The second one was Lady Alysha, a werewolf. She wore a royal blue long dress that seemed to flow at the bottom of her feet. Her blue eyes sparkled as she laughed at something that the others were saying. Her long dark brown curly hair swaying elegantly at her back made me envy her. The third one was Lady Honey, also a werewolf. Her peach-colored gown is simple yet she managed to pull it off so that it competed with the other fancy dresses. But one thing that she will surely capture you aside from her flawless wavy brown hair is her purple eyes.

I also spotted a few witches. And no, not the witches like the ones we see in one movie that has wrinkly faces and long noses. These witches are good. They have the same race as my Prince Fred – power and alchemy users. In their kingdom, they call the males warlocks while the women are

called witches. One of the witches in the group is Lady Sabrina. Seeing her in a white dress makes you see how beautiful and different they are from the ugly witches we've seen in movies. Her long dark brown hair was curled at the end and was bouncing elegantly at her back as she walked. Her green eyes focused on the group of girls as they had their conversation. The second witch I spotted was Lady Jay. Her hair has a mixture of black and brown, a beautiful color that matches her mysterious blue eyes, and mint colored dress that has a pretty sweetheart and long sleeves made of a lighter sheer colored mint cloth. The third one was Lady Holly wearing a lime green sleeveless dress. She's so tall that her brown hair seemed a little short despite how long it was. And her eyes were the most special thing about her, watching her closely, I can tell that her eyes change color depending on her mood.

There were also a few Fae folks – fairies. One of them was Lady Alice. A black-haired fairy with piercing blue eyes and a very beautiful matching blue dress that hugs her slim figure perfectly making her stand out.

“Please, no need for formalities. Treat us like we're acquaintances.” Fred said and they all raised their heads to look at us.

“Yeah.” Added Dan and pointed at me. “She hates it. Not to mention she s\*\*\*s.”

“Dan!” I practically screamed at him and slapped his arm in embarrassment when the girls giggled. Great. Now they are going to make fun of me. Dan only looked at me with one of his eyebrows raised. “Um...am I supposed to feel anything?” I love Dan's jokes but right now, I want to kill him. Not only did he embarrass me here but he also gave me a bad impression in front of the Ladies.

“I'll.Kill.You.” I said to him.

“Princess, I'm a werewolf. You can't beat me.”

“Maybe I could help Princess Rose.” One of the girls spoke. It was Lady Honey. She regarded Dan as she spoke. Her eyes darted towards me and she gave me a small smile. “That is...if she wants me to.”

I only blinked at her in surprise while Ren roared in laughter. “You got owned by one of our kind, you stupid fool!” He then looked at Lady Honey

and gave her a thumbs up. “Good job, but I don’t think that that’s how you treat a werewolf prince?”

In that instant, another girl spoke. It was Lady Holly. “Pardon me but I do recall Prince Fred saying that we don’t need formalities and that we should treat you like our acquaintance?”

Someone slap me in the face because I really can’t believe what’s happening right now.

Nate beamed widely and pulled out a rose from his coat and presented it to Lady Holly. “Dear Lady Holly. The way you talked back at the Prince of Muttheads has earned my respect.” Holly hesitantly took the flower from Nate and looked at him worriedly. “Thanks, I don’t think that you should have said that here.”

“Why?”

Instead of answering, Holly looked back and Nate followed her movement to see that the other werewolf girls gave him a deadly look. Realizing his mistake, he quickly corrected himself. “It’s the Prince! I meant Prince Ren and only him!”

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“With all due respect, the prince that you are referring to is also our prince.” Said Lady Kylie with her arms crossed over her chest as she challenged Nate with her gaze. If you think that it’s worse, then think again. Lady Alysha also stepped forward to face Nate. “And if you think that calling him a mutt is funny, then how would you feel if we call you bloods\*\*\*er?” Nate starred at both of them while Ren and Dan let out an amused laugh. Dan then walked beside the two girls and placed an arm on each of their shoulders and smiled brightly at them. “Just so you guys know. I like you! What are your names?” He asked them and they told him their names.

Seriously, Dan? They just introduced themselves!!

Beside me, I saw Fred talking to two elf girls so I decided to come and join him. When Fred noticed me, he smiled and beckoned for me to come. He took my hand and introduced me to the two elf girls. “Rose, I would like you to meet Lady Solace and Lady Rebecca.” He said and both the ladies

curtsied at me while I nod in acknowledgment. Well, even though I already knew their names, introductions are still important as well as first impressions. "Nice to meet you both," I said.

"It's an honor to meet you, Princess Rose," said Lady Solace and she smiled at me. Her voice was soft and soothing. I flinched, not because of her voice but because she called me 'princess'. Boy, I have to get used to other people calling me that from now on.

"You look beautiful." Commented Lady Rebecca that it almost made me blush because of the sincerity in her tone.

"T-Thanks. You both look lovely as well." I said. Fred released his hold from my hand and placed it around my shoulder.

"Princess Rose, they are both from the Kingdom of Tordis."

I looked at Fred for a moment because peeking at Ace just a few behind us who hasn't said a word since. "Oh. So they're like Ace? That explains why they look kinda like him."

At the mention of his name, I saw Ace looking in our direction and frowning at us. "No, they don't look like me. They're not my siblings and surely not my children."

My jaw dropped at his words. Seriously? Does he want to start a fight right here and right now? Well too bad because he's not going to get it. Dan ruined 20% of my good impression of these girls. No way am I letting Ace ruin the remaining 80%. So instead of barking and spitting venom at him, I simply let out a small laugh and faced the two Ladies.

"Don't mind him. He's such a joker." I said to the girls. Yeah. And his face is also a joke.

"I wasn't joking." He said.

I spun around to face Ace. I could feel one of my eyebrows twitching in annoyance. "Of course you are!" I insisted. "You know for a fact that I was referring to your races. You know elves."

Ace let out a sigh of frustration that made me want to choke the air out of him. If anyone should be doing that it should be me! Ace only gave me a look as he said, "So that's what you were saying. Next time, speak clearly so I wouldn't misinterpret your words."

"Oh but I did," I said, still plastering a fake smile on my face. "You're just stupid enough not to get it."

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"If I'm stupid, then I wouldn't be standing there and plastering a fake smile on my face. Wipe it off. It's disgusting."

My fist clenched at my sides. "You know? I take it back. You guys don't look alike."

"Glad you finally notice."

"Because you're immature and scary looking unlike these ladies here." I gestured towards Lady Solace and Lady Rebecca.

Ace rolled his eyes at me and looked away as if he was tired of me. "TSS. It's better than having a face like yours." Words simply can't describe the things that I'm feeling right now. And I badly needed to keep my temper in check. I can't lose my temper in front of these girls.

Someone gently tapped my shoulder and I looked around to see that it was Lady Solace. "Is everything alright, Princess Rose?"

Oh yes. Everything will be alright if you could just give me a sack so I can throw the freak in it and toss it in the ocean. Yeah. That would make me feel better. But I didn't say it. Instead, I smile at her. "Of course. Why wouldn't I be?"

Lady Rebecca gave me a worried look. "You seem like you wanted to kill someone for a moment while you were looking at Prince Ace." She said. I stood there and stared at her for a long time. Wow, that was accurate. I was pretty sure that I kept my expression in check.



I felt someone grabbing a hold of my hand. I turned my head to the side only to find Fred looking at me. "I think it's best if we separate you and Ace for a while. What do you say?" He whispered.

Heck yeah! That was what I wanted to say to him at that moment. But taking not that we still have an audience, I simply nodded and excused myself from the two girls and headed towards Nate, who was talking with the group of witches and fairies. As I was approaching, one of the witches, Lady Jay, spotted me and she smiled. Nate followed her gaze and so did the other. When I arrived, Nate was beaming. "Hey there, Princess. Wanna join us?" Asked Nate.

I shrugged. "Depends. What are you guys up to?"

"Telling things about ourselves." Said Nate and gave me a quick introduction to the ladies. In the group, there was Lady Alice, Lady Sabrina, Lady Jay, Lady Holly, and Lady Honey.

"Nice to meet you all." I nodded at each of them as they greeted me.

"Um...Princess Rose?" I searched for the voice that called my name. It was Lady Sabrina. I smiled at her warmly as she was a bit nervous. "Can I ask you something?" She asked and I nodded. "May I – we – know what's your race?"

## Chapter 37 Ball of the Queen's BS

I stared at her. Wondering why she was asking this all of a sudden.

"It's a secret because her race is rare." Came the reply of Nate and turned to Lady Alice and smiled. "Very rare." He said calmly. At that moment, I found myself admiring Nate for speaking up for me.

Lady Alice beamed at Nate before turning her attention to me. Her eyes sparkled with interest as she asked, "That's amazing."

I felt a hand sneaking at my waist and suddenly, I was pulled towards Nate. I looked up at him and saw him wink. Not the flirtatious wink but more of a 'let me handle this' wink. He returned his gaze to Lady Alice. "She's a rare one so she really can't answer that question at the moment. But



personally? I think she's charming in her way regardless of her race." he said and leaned in to whisper at Lady Alice.

Whatever Nate had said, Lady Alice giggled making me curious.

I grabbed Nate at the back of his coat and pulled him back. "What did you say to her?"

Nate only gave me an innocent smile which made me all the more curious. "Nothing."

"Princess Rose?" I shifted my attention from Nate to Lady Jay who was looking at me hesitantly. And just by looking at her, I could tell that she wanted to ask me something. I smiled at her as I released my hold from Nate. "Yes?"

"Um...if you don't mind me asking, the ladies and I are just a bit curious about..." she hesitated and bit her lips as if what she was about to say was bad. And I feared that it might be some kind of rumor about me or something.

Great, a few minutes in the ball and I'm already the talk of the night.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Well, it's optional whether you answer this or not...but...we're just curious..." She stopped and looked over at Nate before she pulled me towards her and led me to the other ladies and they formed a protective circle around me.

"What's going on? Why are we in a circle? Are we playing a game or something?" I asked as I looked around only to find myself surrounded.

"We just don't want Prince Nate to hear our conversation." Said Lady Honey and looked back towards Nate who was c\*\*\*ing his head to the side as he looked at us.

"Why?"

"Because we wanted to ask you something that only us girls should hear." Added Lady Holly.

“Okay? What is it that you wanted to ask me?”

All the girls smiled at each other and giggled excitedly before looking back at me. Finally, Lady Sabrina spoke. “Who’s your favorite prince?” she asked. Her question caught me off guard that I stared at her as if she grew another head.

“Say what?” Came my reply and scolded myself for saying that because it was formal.

“Living in a castle with 5 handsome and popular princes? Surely you find one of them attractive.” Added Lady Jay.

“I...Uh...” I was out of words and I couldn’t seem to find my tongue. Fangirls. I just know it.

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“Is it Prince Frederick?” Asked Sabrina. “I saw him putting an arm around you earlier while you guys were talking to Lady Rebecca and Lady Solace.” Behind her, I saw the rest of the ladies leaving the other princes to join the conversation. Lady Alysha, Lady Kylie, Lady Solace, and Lady Rebecca joined the circle.

“What about that one twin? We saw you two talking comfortably earlier.” Lady Alysha commented as Lady Kylie added.

“Yeah, the way you two talk seems like you two are well acquainted.” The other ladies then nodded in agreement.

“That’s true, but Prince Renevier is her e\*\*\*\*\*. Surely that could mean something, right?” Inserted Lady Honey making the girls having another argument. “Or was that Prince Dan?”

“So Prince Dan is the one wearing the cape and Prince Renevier is the one without the cape?” Lady Jay asked and looked at me for confirmation.

“P-Prince Ren.” I managed to say despite all the states.

“Did you say, Prince Ren? Are you in familiar terms with him?” One of the girls said and they all squealed excitedly.

“Girls, let’s not forget about Prince Nathaniel. The way he pulled her towards him by the waist when she seemed nervous was pretty cute.” Lady Holly pointed out making a few girls giggle in excitement as they begged Lady Holly for details.

“What about Prince Ace?” Asked Lady Alice making the girls stop and look at her as they processed her words.

“Yeah. They do seem close.” Lady Solace wondered out loud and placed a finger at her chin. Lady Rebecca nodded in agreement with her. “I think so too. They were joking around earlier.” I snapped my attention to the three girls, Solace, Alice, and Rebecca. My jaw-dropping at their words. Are they serious? Do they think we were joking?! We were practically biting each other’s heads off!

I peeked behind them and saw, with dread, that the princes had gathered and were looking at us curiously. At least 4/5 of them are. My gaze quickly went towards Ren, Dan, and Nate. Werewolves and Vampires have sensitive hearing. My heart sank at the sudden realization and I quickly turned towards the girl panicking.

“Ladies, I think we best not discuss this right now not when there is a chance of the princes hearing this conversation,” I told them politely. Hoping against hope that this might also end this discussion. Sadly, it didn’t. Instead, Sabrina, Jay, and Holly smiled at me knowingly.

“We have already thought of that,” Holly said and gave me a comforting smile.

“Yes, Princess. We have put a small amount of magic so they wouldn’t hear our conversation.” Added Jay while Sabrina winked at me and said, “The only thing they will hear is us talking about girly stuff like hairs and makeup.”

I was staring at the three witches with my mouth slightly agape. Amazed at how well they had planned everything. They were beaming at me and waiting for me to say something. “W-What is it?” I asked nervously.

“You haven’t told us your favorite prince! Who is it?”

My eyes darted from one face to another. They were looking at me with full attention as if they wanted to memorize everything I do. I gulp. "I-" I started to say but stopped when I saw Lady Alice looking behind me and her eyes going wide in horror. She quickly nudged the girl beside her, Lady Rebecca, and pointed behind me. Lady Rebecca followed her gaze. Like, Lady Alice, her eyes widened and she made a shushing sound at all of us. Everyone didn't speak then.

I was about to open my mouth to ask them when I figured it out myself when I heard the voice behind me. "Excuse me, ladies." I turned 180 degrees and saw that the princes were now standing there in front of me. Fred nodded at me before looking at all the ladies. "I don't want to interrupt your conversations but the banquet is about to start and Princess Rose is needed to sit with the Queen." Behind me, I heard the ladies permitting him to excuse myself and I wonder if life in this world is always about politeness and proper gestures and crap.

Fred stepped aside as he let Ren offer me his hand. I took it and let him lead me towards the table where the Queen and King are. I heard behind me for one last time as I saw that the ladies were grinning at me wickedly, some are even winking while the others are giggling in the background. I faced front again and thought, for a brief moment, how similar the ladies were with my friends back home. Hmm, I guess this world isn't as different from my world after all.

We found our table. It was round and the King and Queen had already taken their seat and were waiting for us. Ren pulled out a chair for me to sit. The banquet then began and food was served to our table. Wines and other dishes were served. Ren was seated on my left while Nate was seated on my right. As I was eating, I caught his eye and saw him smile approvingly at me as I didn't make a mess of my plate. Minimal chatters could be heard in the room. Soft music played in the background making dinner more appealing. The food was great. Better than the ones I usually have on my regular days here in the palace.

The music then changed. It started to accurately send waves through my skin because I already knew what was coming. The music was all too familiar for me having played it every single day for the past week.

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Men started to rise from their seats. Prince and Dukes that I am about to meet rose from their seats and made their way to the ladies and offered their hands. Fred, Nate, Dan, Ren, and Ace also got up from their seats. Ren shifted his gaze towards me. Offered me a smile and reached out his hand for me to take and let him pull me up. The others did the same and I watched as Fred, Dan, Nate, and Ace approached some ladies and offered them a dance. I saw Fred offering a hand to Lady Sabrina, who was a bit stunned at first but took his offer nonetheless. Nate used his charms and offered Lady Holly a dance in which she accepted. Dan had a smile plastered on his and said something to Lady Solace making her laugh and offering her a dance in which she gladly took.

As for Ace...well....let me tell you that he neither smiles nor talks. He just stood there and stared at Lady Alice making her uncomfortable. Finally, with a sigh, he offered his hand to her with a frown. And by some miracle, Lady Alice accepted his offer either because he was handsome or because she was scared of Ace. I'm betting on the latter part.

"Ready?" I looked up at Ren. Smiled then nodded. "Ready."

One by one, the floor was then filled with dresses flowing around the floor as they swayed to the music. Ren led me to the dance floor and we joined the other in a synchronizing waltz in which I learn is a traditional form of dance. With one hand on his shoulder and one of his hands on my waist, we continued to sway with the others.

"Having fun?" he asked me as we glided through the dance floor. My soft golden gown flowing with each movement and Ren always has to watch himself in case he might step on it.

Ren seemed to frown inwardly as we danced.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"My wolf is grumbling for some reason. I think it's broken."

I chuckled and thought for a moment."Hm, so far so good. Nothing bad has happened." I said and immediately frowned. "Well almost. If you exclude my encounters with Ace."

“It’s PRINCE.” He corrected me and immediately caught himself. Wow, not saying Prince before Ace is getting to us. It’s all that guy’s fault.

I gave Ren a pointed look. “Don’t get me started on the whole PRINCE thing, Ren,” I warned him. He laughed in return. “It’s not even funny!” I blew the stray strand that was covering my face. “Seriously, have you noticed him today? He seems a bit more cranky than usual.”

Ren grinned. “You’re still ignorant of the politics in this world. He doesn’t have a choice.”

My eyebrows drew closer to each other in confusion. “Of course he has!” I argued. “He’s a PRINCE!”

Ren almost choked on his laughter when the words left my mouth. “Princess, just because we’re princes doesn’t mean we have that much freedom.” His gaze darted towards his brother who pretended to weep when Lady Solace accidentally stepped on his foot.

What a loser.

His gaze shifted back to me. “Prince Ace doesn’t have a choice because by not going to the ball, it will mean disrespect and showing dislike towards you.”

“Um, I don’t get you. Ace and I already hated each other. Why would he try to hide it by coming here?”

He looked away and sighed. I feel like it is gonna be hard to explain. “In a ball, every family member must appear to show respect to the host of the ball or towards the person whom it is held for. In this case, since the ball is for you, we are showing you a sign of respect by coming here.”

“But we’re not family members. What does that have to do with anything?”

“But we are living under the same roof. And as the candidates for the next king, we give you our approval the moment we enter the room.” He explained. “And because of that, you earned a huge reputation for getting 5/5.” He grinned. “Congratulations!”

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“Are you telling me that this is like some sort of test?”

“A test if you are deserving to be recognized by these nobles? Yes.”

“I-” Before I could say anything more, it was already time to change partners. Ren gripped my hand and twirled me for the exchange. He twirled me once and handed me to the next guy.

“Don’t you think Princess Rose and Prince Ren look cute together?”

I heard Dan saying something to one of the ladies but I couldn’t quite hear. They both chuckled one last time before switching partners. Dan unconsciously held his hand out to me and I grabbed him.

“What were you guys talking about?” I ask, once Dan and I was in position. Dan looked surprised and looked down at me.

“Oh, you’re my next partner? Interesting. You danced with the same face twice. It must be fate!”

I gave Dan a long and hard look before I glanced at the musicians. “I wonder when the next pair exchange will happen.”

Dan let out a very long and dramatic gasp. “How dare you?” He accused me. “You even blew our cover. Telling the girls that Ren is not wearing a cape. It made it easier for them to distinguish us.”

“I thought you guys want people to recognize you?”

Dan shook his head. “Tsk tsK tsK. I want them to recognize me because of my looks tonight. I want to hear something like ‘Isn’t that twin with the cape more dashing than the one without?’ THAT kind of recognition.”

“Dan... You guys are a mirror of each other. It’s your personalities that differ.”

“You mean I am the more kind and adorable twin?”

“You’re the annoying and insane twin.” I deadpanned.

Dan suddenly slouched his shoulder and let out an insane laugh. “Because I know something that you don’t.” He said in a very creepy voice.

“What do you know?” I rolled my eyes.

Dan let out a menacing laugh. “Oh, Princess. We, beastmen, can imprint on people to become our potential mates. There would be several signs of it for the beastmen. The recipient only needs to accept the sender’s feelings for them to become our mates.”

“Thanks for the trivia?” I said. Unsure what a fool is talking about. Suddenly, the music was changing.

“Oops. Time to change pairs!” Dan called out. “Good timing. The weather here was getting dense. See ya!”

And with that, he aggressively twirled and pushed me away.