

Chapter 6: Chapter Six

This is bad.

We are not treated well, and they stude us into a room that would not even t my shoes from home. It smells like the essence of wet dog and spoiled sh that were used to wash the oors with. Our ankles are shackled, and we are wearing an out t that would belong perfectly for the set of The Handmaiden's Tale. Not even exaggerating, we are wearing bonnets with long brims to shield our faces and nothing short of a nun's cloak to cover our ripped clothing.

"This is bad," I say, crouching in the corner. There is no room to lie down or stretch our legs, and they told us we should be lucky we are not bunked with the other slaves. Well, I guess I will agree with that assessment. I desperately do not want to be with the other stinky men and watch them stare at us like we're lunch. My ego is not too big to where I can't recognize that this could be much worse. I have an excellent imagination.

"What are you doing?" I glance at Mort in the dim lighting.

"Talking to Peirce." She is typing and blinking.

"On your imaginary computer?"

She hu s. "It's not imaginary, and yes. Pierce is always online, keeping track of us. I'm talking to him about your backstory. Pierce says he is working out references for your amnesia case."

"That's a relief."

Mort nods. "He also says quick thinking on your part. It will t in nicely with the lost princess scenario."

"Yes," I deadpan, "It's starting to sound like a Disney classic already."

Not.

"He is apologizing for the liper attack," she says without looking at me. "And, he will make it up to you. But, Peirce says that the out t he made for you seemed to do the trick."

"How so?"

Mort winks at me.

"What does that mean," I say dryly. "You mean you think Apollo fancied me?"

She giggles. "Oh yea, Apollo liked what he saw."

"You don't think it had anything to do with me being half-naked and any hot-blooded male would do the same? Nothing special about me, per-say."

"Maybe," she says.

I narrow my gaze at her.

"But," she continues, "you're a slave, and Pierce says normally Apollo does not openly show signs of interest, and especially not directed a slave. Through, we don't know for sure, but it's a good sign. Your wardrobe is going to be an obstacle, but nothing Pierce can't handle. He says he has some tricks up his sleeve."

I glance down at my attire. I have no clue how I'm am going to make this work being a slave. I might not ever get a glimpse of Apollo again. And if I do, he will not recognize me in this get-up. That thought makes my tummy turn, imagining all the other girls getting ample time with him.

I shift uncomfortably. "Man, I wonder what the girls will think when they see him."

Drool.

Smacking their faces and jumping up and down like a cartoon character.

Mort glances at me. "I will admit, for a human, he is very striking if you like the Alpha-male-with-gorgeous-hair type. I prefer more of a beta-male, myself."

"He did have gorgeous hair." The bleach-blond mixed with golden locks would be the envy of every California male ever born. Then there is his beautiful skin, not pale like most fair-haired people, which contrasted with his hair so exotically. I want to groan, and his animalistic dark gaze. I feel a wave of jealousy, wondering who will be the rst to kiss him. That would be an experience no girl will forget. A man of his caliber probably ruins every other man for any woman.

I now feel for the poor bachelorette girls when they had to watch the hunky dude kiss all the women. I can say that I feel genuine rage, and I have only caught a glimpse of him. I need to calm down, or this will get very unhealthy.

"Is Apollo even looking for female companionship that's long term?" I ask.

Mort nods. "New development. Yes, his father is very sick and is dying. Apollo will most likely be King very soon and needs a Queen quickly, in fact. This will help us, nally, some good news."

"Oh great, that probably means every girl in the kingdom will be after him." My situation keeps on getting worse. All I need is more competition.

The sound of the door opening made us both jump. Nerves ash though my body when I hear male voices. The rusted metal door opens with a groan, and two large men stand there looking at us with frowns.

"Get up Slaves, we r' in Garthorn!"

The next thirty minutes we're jerked here and there, being placed in a long line of Garthorn Slaves. My ankle shackles almost make me fall, but luckily the guard yelling at me grabs me by the neck, steadying me. It is dark outside and chilly, and the sky ickers with blinding ashes of light, giving it an evil appeal. A shiver licks its way down my spine, feeling nerves crashing my senses. At this point, if I can make it without using all three of my life-lines, I'm winning. The thought of Apollo falling in love with me, seems to drift further and further away.

A large man is shouting something at us that I can't make out, then the line starts to move once again. We are descending from the ship onto a massive draw bridge. A large crowd is present on the dock along with carriages and massive horses. Large pu s of breath are seen as the monstrous black stallions stomp the ground impatiently. I can hear yells and chants, and it sounds like chaos. I raise my head slightly and take in the distant city and castle, and my breath hitches.

Oh wow.

In the darkness, the city re ects deep blues and silvers, giving the whole landscape a daunting appearance. At this point, I feel like I'm way in over my head. Garthorn looks like something out of the Lord of The Rings. Towering buildings disappear into the mist-like clouds with sharp edges and some that end in long spear-like points. As if the buildings were not human-made but carved out of the jagged mountain structures.

Breathtaking

Overwhelming.

I risk a glance to where Apollo stands with his men some distance away from the slaves. My tummy tightens, he looks like a superhero. The lightning from the dark sky ashes behind him, giving his powerful form an unnatural allure. His sapphire cape aps with the gentle wind, and his shiny black armor re ects every vein of lightning.

Apollo's face is a stone mask, carved from granite as if he cares not that the people are chanting his name. I can hear women scream like we are at a boy band concert, for Pete's sake. Talk about looking desperate. Someone should tell these women men like the chase. Not to be chased. He nods to someone in the crowd, and then my heart jumps to life as he points to Mort and me.

I gaze to where he points in the crowd, and it's to a very stern looking woman with men standing behind her. High bun, thin lips, an out t t for an eighteenth-century royal governess.

"That is the headmaster, in charge of the female servants, divisions' one through ve. We call her Headmaster, pretty simple." Mort whispers behind me. "Peirce placed vague memories of us in their brains. So, our story checks out if Apollo should ask, which it looks like he is now." She pauses, "It seems like Apollo is an impatient human. Good thing Peirce is a fast worker."

I'm not sure if I should feel excited or dismayed that the rst thing Apollo does is ask about us. I bit my lip as the severe headmaster bows in front of Apollo, and they're no doubt talking about them. I see the woman glance over in our direction then back to Apollo, nodding.

"You must always keep your head down and do not talk unless you are spoken to. No eye contact what-so-ever," Mort murmurs behind me.

Good to know.

I hear a man yell, and apparently, Apollo has given orders for us to go to them. I feel a jab in my back to start walking towards them who are standing at the base of the draw bridge. My heart is beating so hard it almost hurts. I feel so out of my element, and I hate not being in control. I keep my head down and st my cloak to hide my hands shaking.

We arrive, and all I can see is my feet.

I gasp as the Headmaster grabs my chin, jerking it upwards and rips o my bonnet. My dark hair is a wild curly mass, ipping in all directions. Apparently, my hair dried in a fashion like if I stuck my nger in a light socket.

She is inspecting me to see if I am who I say I am. I can feel eyes on me as she examines every inch of my face, tilting it to the left and right rather aggressively. She jerks my chin to the right again, and my gaze clashes with Apollos'.

I didn't breathe.

Apollo had his hand over his mouth as if in serious thought, his black gaze is zoned in on me, the intensity of his stare scatters my brain waves. It's hard to tell where exactly he is looking due to the darkness of his eyes, but I will guess it's my hair.

And now, my eyes.

He is slightly rubbing his chin as his gaze immobilizes me.

Mercy.

My cheeks heat to boiling point, and I look away, trying to calm the frantic beat of my pulse. Pull it together, woman! I would bet my cards that he saw the reddening of my face even in the dark. Hell, for all I know, the prince is nocturnal. I'm not prepared to deal with a force like him. Maybe the others will have better luck, I feel like a little bug next to a Lion. The two can't relate.

That thought unnerves me.

I look back to the headmaster to see if any recognition lies in her gaze. Come on, Peirce, make her remember! I need out of here STAT.

"Yes, the amnesia girl with the discolored eyes. Level ve, if I'm not mistaken," she says and grabs my wrist to con rm. "Yes, she is one of us."

Thank you, Peirce!

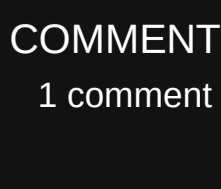
The Headmaster inspects Mort and con rms we both are Garthorn, Sector 5 slaves. I risk a glance at Apollo and bite my lip. I'm such a coward. His expression is unreadable as he stares, and it's starting to draw stares for attention he is showing me.

"Well, then." He murmurs, "Welcome back."

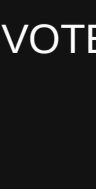
My skin prickles and alarms are ringing in my head. The way he said it didn't seem like a, welcome back, but a, don't get comfortable.

I hear Mort's breathy giggle behind me as we are dragged o .

And this is only day one.



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1 comment



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