

Chapter 9: Chapter Nine

I opened a can of worms and didn't even know it.

What Apollo did for me has never happened before, so, in other words, this is big news. A slave is nothing, especially not to the crown Prince of Garthorn. I feel eyes on me, whispers as I pass servants and prolonged stares.

I'm washed and cleaned, smelling of fresh soap, not the horrors of the dungeon. But I am not naive enough to think that I could not end up back there. I've dressed in my essential slave attire once again, and being lead to a smaller library on the west wing. They will not tell me much, but all I know is that someone of importance wished to speak to me. My hands are clammy, and a feeling of dread consumes me.

Mort is not permitted to come with me, so the little butter fly uttering about is her. I must fight a smile despite my situation because I see her fly straight into the glass of a massive Grandfather Clock. Not sure how she didn't see that, but practice makes perfect, I suppose. I'll be sure to tell her that, then have to escape her sight immediately.

This library is very masculine, not like the Grand Garthorn Library, which is adorned with silver and sapphire splendor. This is decorated with rich woods and dark marble that catches the glowing light and illuminates the two-story library. I wonder if this is Apollo's study. I am seated on a somewhat oversized leather couch and left by myself. I take a steadying breath and tell myself everything will be okay. Five minutes pass as I watch Mort utter over the large desk in the corner. Maybe she sees something?

She manifests as herself and peers over a letter on his desk.

"Mort!" I hiss. "You're going to get caught!"

She glances up. "I will only be here a second, chill."

"Chill?!"

"I see a letter from the House of Galleon," she continues with narrowed eyes. "It's a thank you letter and prospects of joining the Garthorn house with Galleon."

I stand up.

"They're offering Laura as his potential betrothed in so many words," Mort confirms my fears.

"Do you think he is entertaining it?"

"It's the only thing on his desk."

"Maybe this is not his desk."

"It is."

I take a breath. "You don't know."

Mort frowns at me. "You know another Apollo Augustus Garthorn?"

The sound of footsteps approaches the door, and Mort instantly morphs into her signature white butterfly. I sit down and swallow the lump in my throat and will my hand to stop shaking.

A woman walks in, followed by guards wearing scarlet-red. This is not Garthorn colors, so I'm making a wild guess that this is Galleon. The lady is older but still quite beautiful. Her golden hair piled high with a red and silver crown. Her elaborate gown flows around her like she is an Egyptian queen wearing gold and crimson. Then it dawns on me.

This is Queen Irena.

My pulse jumps to life.

"Forgive me for keeping you waiting," she says and motions her guards to leave. I pick up on her sarcastic note, for I'm not that dumb to think a Queen is sorry for anything. Especially keeping a slave waiting.

I'm immediately on guard.

I keep my head down, and my mouth shut.

"I asked you here out of pure curiosity," she laughs. "I heard of this slave who is creating quite the commotion."

I say nothing and bite my lip, not sure where this is going.

I hear her walk towards me as she sits in the chair opposite me. Her skirts are taking up most of the couch. "You may look at me, slave."

I raise my head and stare into frigid cold eyes. The blue is the color of the polar ice caps, devoid of all warmth what-so-ever. I can see the wrinkles around her mouth and eyes, and her neck tells me she is most likely in her fifties.

"I see that your eye color is shocking," she narrows her gaze at me. "I hope you can imagine my surprise upon hearing a simple slave possessed discolored eyes."

"Why is that a shock if you do not mind me asking?" I ask quietly and genuinely curious.

She laughs like I said the funniest thing ever. "I forget that slaves do not know much about worldly things. Well, my husband, the King of Galleon, lost his daughter long ago. She was said to be the only one to possess this rare eye color, you see. The King was devastated, calling all witches and sorcerers that no one shall possess that rare eye color again. Ridiculous if you ask me, but that's what he wanted. That uniqueness was saved for his poor precious daughter."

"What happened to his daughter?" I stare at her, wondering what the witch really did.

"That does not concern someone like you. But, if you must know, she died at a very young age. Stolen in the middle of the night never to be seen again. Later her shoes were found drifting in the Galleon Great Lake, the very lake her mother jumped to her death. It's all very tragic and a very touchy subject." She tilted her head at me. "In Galleon, there have been many who have claimed to be the missing princess, faking the eye color and such. Some even going to great lengths to involve the dark arts to change the eye color."

I think about that, noting this has very similar happenings to Anastasia. Weird, though, that the movie is my favorite Disney movie. I wonder if Anastasia is originally a Fairy Godmother tale. I will ask Mort when I get a chance.

"I assure you this is my natural eye color," I narrow my gaze at her. Queen Irena arches a brow and thins her lips. "I also do not remember my past, having hit my head, resulting in amnesia." I hold her gaze, my implication is evident.

She looks as though I slapped her in the face. "Do you dare to imply you could be my stepchild? Because if you are, you are overstepping your bounds slave. My husband's late daughter is deceased, and I will make your life a living hell if you do not back off." She leans forward. "I see that you have a face that some men might find desirable, and I can also see now why you are trying to ensnare the actions of Prince Apollo, which I find laughable. If anything, he is only interested in a quick toss, and I might say you are in the wrong profession then. As a prostitute, you can make a lot of money," she laughs and smooths out her skirts. "You are very bold if you aim to escape slavery and con your way into my family, you have another thing coming. You do not know what you're up against if I catch wind of anything to do with my husband's late daughter. Do I make myself clear, slave?" Her face is flushed with rage.

I keep my anger in check, sounds like the witch needs to get laid more than I do. The grumpy old coon.

Oh, wait, she is by the king's adviser.

How could I forget that juicy little tidbit?

"Very clear," I continue, "though I do at least want to conduct a DNA test if I can get approval from the Garthorn Royal family, seeing how I answer to them, not you. And, I know Prince Apollo is curious about my origins as well, so I don't think this will be a problem. There will be no deceit." I smile.

"His Grace is now out with my daughter, Princess Laura of Galleon. I believe that she will soon become your queen, so I would watch your ignorant mouth, you slave! I will have a word with Apollo about your request and express my displeasure. You will not want to offend the King of Galleon and start a war with the House of Garthorn? After we have been allies for so long?"

I keep my mouth shut.

Hard ball.

She stands, and before she leaves and says, "Apollo is falling in love with my daughter, and if I catch wind of your boldness, I will not show you mercy."

I take a large breath when I hear the heavy door shut.

Mort is now in human form. "Blackmail. She is nervous, that is obvious."

I stand and glance at the seat Queen Irena just occupied. "If the king sends out her in delity, what happens?"

"She will be beheaded."

I thought I would be able to see Apollo again, but I am wrong. Mort believes he is keeping his distance because of all the rumors. Earlier I was questioned by Apollo's advisers, and I asked if I could get a DNA test. I never received a clear response, which was disheartening. But at least I am not placed back in the dungeon. I am cleared for now to do my regular responsibilities, clean and clean some more. The Headmaster gives me the worst jobs, I swear. I really would like the fight her. Put on some boxing gloves and have at it.

I walk alone because the Headmaster wanted to borrow Mort and another slave to clean the central chimney. She had no choice but to go, which makes me nervous being by myself. I have my life-lines, which makes me feel a little better. I keep walking down the long busy hallway, keeping my head down.

I barely glance up, and I nearly gasp.

Apollo is talking to what looks like high ranking officials. He looks powerful like he just came from riding his mighty stallion. His hair is wild and up in a man bun, but not in a metro-sexual way. Like a ninja warrior way or a samurai master. Apollo seems to be out of breath and is having a heated conversation. They must have come in from outside. He shakes his head and puts his hands on his hips right as he glances at me.

I yank my head down and turn a corner as fast as I can. My heart is pounding. I am not sure if he saw me, but my heart beats anyways. I'm also not sure why I don't want to see him, maybe deep down he intimidates me to crazy levels. My whole body tenses when I hear footsteps behind me; they sound heavy and fast.

I turn another corner, and thankfully it's empty, without prying eyes seeing me almost run. That would look very suspicious. As I walk at a reckless pace, I hear the footsteps still behind me. I take a deep breath.

It could be anyone.

The footsteps are closer, and I have no choice but to glance behind me. My eyes widen when I see Apollo with a grin on his face.

"Angel, there is no way you're out walking me," he says and catches me by the shoulder and spins me around.

I gaze up into his graveyard eyes, and my tummy starts doing back ips. Apollo tilts his head at me as his eyes search my face. "How are you?" he says in a soft and very sexy way.

His voice is like melted chocolate, the hottest thing I have ever heard.

"That good?" he grins.

I shake my head and glance away. "I am doing much better, thank you."

"Good," he says before he yanks me into a room and shuts the door. I can't move or talk when he puts both his muscled arms on either side of me. He stares at me for a second and smiles again like he is genuinely happy to see me. "You smell nice," he winks.

This boyish side of him is going to be my undoing.

"Trust me, he smells better. I blush and look down. "Yes, I'm sure my fragrance is much better now than the last time you saw me."

He makes a sound. "Trying to pinpoint you in this get-up is exhausting. You all look the same," he hushes then rips off my hat making me yelp. My black hair falls down my back, and our eyes clash. Has he been looking for me then? My cheeks heat.

The air changes, and the boyish light in his gaze turns into something primal. No one should trust a gaze that dark, and I can almost feel their intensity. His eyes lower to my lips then back up. His chest is rising and falling, and his jaw is tensed like he is trying to hold back.

"What are you thinking?" I whisper, almost feeling scared.

"You don't want to know, Angel," he rasps and lowers his head to my neck. I quickly inhale from the shock as I feel his hot lips move over my skin.

Mercy!

My eyes close, and my head falls back, unable to process what's happening. Is he sick in the head?! He must take that as a green light because in the next second, he picks me up and is pressing me harder into the door, hungrily kissing my neck and jaw-line. I moan, and I wrap my arms around his neck, wanting more of everything. I arch into him, feeling a massive surge of raw desire. This is insane and unexpected.

The crush of his delicious meane makes the pulse in my next jump as if electrocuted. The delicious feel of his mouth as they move over my lips makes my head spin. His lips are hot and aggressive, taking every breath that I have.

"Open," he rasps into my mouth.

I open, and his tongue thrusts into mine, Apollo is taking over this kiss forcefully. He is drinking me and sucking my lips like a starved man in search of water. I barely have time to breathe as his mouth devours mine. I feel his hand in my hair, pushing my head closer to his assault, his tongue plunging into my mouth repeatedly.

I have never in my life been kissed like this. With so much lust and passion, heated fever.

I gasp as if I feel him yank my head back with my hair and his mouth trails hot kisses down my neck, I feel his teeth like he wants to bite me. Then I hear him curse, not wanting to rip my conservative gown. I can feel the urgency, impatience, irritation. There is something wild in him that thrills me beyond measure. He lifts me higher and starts kissing me through my clothing.

His hand grips my breast through the material, making my toes tingle, and a hiss escapes my lips. This getting out of hand in a hurry. I cannot even see straight at this point. My brain can't even compute what is happening to be. Apollo is whispering things that I can't make out over our rushed breathing. Then his mouth closes over my nipple, and I can feel the heat of his breath through the clothing.

Frustrated, he starts kissing my neck again as he raises my skirts. My pulse is pounding in my lady parts, and I feel like a wild animal. He groans again in my neck as he nuzzles the skin of my thighs. He shifts me in his arms, so his free hand has better access.

"Angel," he pants.

I think I moan when his hand brushes over me there. My clothing still a nuisance.

Then the unthinkable.

Voices.

I can see the pain and anger in his face as he drops me, his chest still rising fast. I hear female voices mixed with male ones. It's a group.

We cannot be caught.

Apollo grabs my face before he leaves, his breath fanning mine. "You're mine Angel," he declares, not caring what I had to say about it. It is scandalous to hear something like that from Apollo and me being a slave. "I want more," he says with a wicked wink then leaves.

I put my hand on my forehead and take steady breaths. What on Earth just happened? Apollo just made it to second base with me, is what happened. I bite my lip to make sure I'm not dreaming again.

I want more, he said

I place a hand on my trembling lips and expel a harsh breath.

Down the rabbit hole, I go.