

## Chapter 33

Aleera POV

"Tobias," I shrieked, dropping my neck when I felt his teeth slice over my flesh. He growled, and his grip on my arms was so hard I thought he was going to break my bones.

I lifted my knee between his legs when I felt his teeth prick into my skin. He groaned and clutched his manhood. The feral snarling growl that left him made my eyes widen, and I shoved him away from me, glancing around and looking for something to use to defend myself. I grabbed the poker for the fireplace and brandished it as a weapon.

"Kalen," I screamed at the top of my lungs. Tobias lunged at me, and I jumped on top of my bed before jumping to the other side.

"Aleera?" Kalen yelled and banged on the door. It was locked when I felt the shudder of a portal opening up. Gosh, how I wish I could do that; it would be handy in a situation like this. Kalen appeared behind him, stepping through it. His eyes were wide as he took in the scene before him. Tobias turned and growled at him before his eyes flicked back to me.

"Tobias, you need to focus on me," Kalen murmured with his hands out like he was trying to cage a wounded animal. Yet Tobias's eyes didn't waver from mine. Almost like he was locked on my scent and in a trance. I had heard of it at school

but had never seen someone blood-crazed before. Every movement I made, he tracked.

Kalen tackled him, but Tobias moved too quickly, and Kalen hit the ground before I was tossed through the air. I didn't even see him grab me, only felt his nails slice into my soft flesh as he yanked on my arm. I smacked into the bathroom door when I felt his teeth slice into my upper arm like a savage as he pounced on me.

My scream echoed off the walls, and I noticed Kalen get up off the floor and shake himself. His head turned in my direction, and I reckon the horror on his face mirrored mine. Kalen rushed over when another portal opened up in my tiny room, and Darius stepped into my room. He quickly assessed what was going on just as Lycus stepped in behind him only seconds later. I grunted when Tobias jerked me forward, his teeth sinking into my shoulder. Lycus growled and shoved Kalen through the portal while Darius gripped Tobias's shoulder and threw him backward. His teeth were torn painfully from my skin, ripping a chunk of my flesh clean off.

Tobias snarled and tried to attack him; Lycus intercepted just as Darius grabbed me, shoving me through the open portal. I gasped at the sudden movement. The air wheezed from my lungs as I fell through it in a new room. I landed on top of Kalen knocking the wind out of him.

The room tilted a little, and I rolled off him and looked at the ceiling, trying to catch my breath as I sucked in deep breaths. He attacked me, and the only thing I could think of was what if

Darius and Lycus hadn't arrived. Or what if Kalen had no magic to portal in. Banging and growls could be heard from the room next door, and I sat up and looked around at my surroundings.

The room was dim; the only light provided came from the lamps that sat on either side of the enormous bed, which had to be the size of two kings.

"Are you alright?" Kalen asked me, and my head whipped in the direction of his voice. Kalen looked me over, and I glanced down to see blood gushing down my arm and spilling onto the black stained floorboards. I nodded, not knowing what to say. I felt cold, freezing and Kalen moved toward me and gripped my arms. My head felt foggy, and my stomach woozy.

"You're shaking," Kalen murmured. You would be, too, if someone tried to eat you, and drain you of your blood. The banging next door slowly stopped when Lycus walked in through the bathroom door.

His hands gripped my arms and the shock must have worn off because I threw up. Lycus looked down at his knees and shirt covered in bile since I had nothing in my stomach. Kalen gripped my hair as I retched when Lycus moved, picking me up. At first, I thought he was about to lose it because I threw up all over him, but instead he scooped me up in one swift movement and walked into the bathroom. My head was spinning, and I was still bleeding profusely. I could feel the blood draining out of me as I fought to remain conscious.

"Take her for a second," Lycus said, his tone was surprisingly



gentle. Kalen took me from Lycus, and I leaned my head heavily against his shoulder when I heard the sound of skin tearing before getting a whiff of Lycus's scent beneath my nose.

"Open your mouth," Lycus said, pressing down on my chin with his thumb. I obeyed too weak to anything else besides trying and hold myself back from retching again. Lycus had pressed his wrist to my lips, the taste of his blood breached the barrier of my lips, and I let my mouth open, allowing his blood to flood into my mouth. I could feel the bite marks healing although, it did nothing for the blood already lost.

The sound of running water told me Lycus had turned the shower on. Seconds passed before I was pressed against his naked chest before the feel of water drenching my face made me gasp as I breathed it in. My eyes flew open, and I jerked in his arms.

"Sorry," He said before sitting down. His back hit the tiles with a thud since he couldn't place his hands down because I was currently wrapped in his arms. I leaned heavily against him, and my eyes fluttered.

"Stay awake, Darius will be in soon," All I wanted to do was sleep, and gosh, I felt cold. Icy cold but also numb, it was an odd sensation to feel. Kalen gripped my face before tapping my cheek but I couldn't keep my eyes open.



## Chapter 34

"Aleera, stay awake for me," Kalen murmured, his voice becoming more and more distant when I felt my clothes being tugged off. My limbs were floppy and Lycus moved me around like a puppet, yet the feeling induced by the blood loss had me not caring about anything as I focused on breathing. It seemed like a mammoth task. One I wasn't sure I wanted to keep forcing because it was too much effort.

A sharp prick in my arm told me someone had jammed a needle in me and yet I couldn't open my heavy eyelids.

"I don't get it? Why does she need blood? Lycus healed her," came a voice.

"She has no magic, Kalen. She might as well be human. She will be fine," Lycus murmured, and their voices grew louder.

"She looks so pale," Kalen worried. Their voices became more explicit as my surroundings returned to me. I had no idea how long I was out for, but I was aware that I was no longer in the shower. Tingles spread up my arms from the fingertips that brushed up them lazily.

"Left some nasty scars, but she is getting some color back," Kalen murmured and I groaned.

"She is waking up," Kalen said. The excitement in his words made my eyes flutter, and I opened them to look at the ceiling. The same ceiling I saw when I fell through the portal. Kalen

hovered above me, looking down at me as he leaned over, pulling my eyelids up and making me blink rapidly.

He sighed before dropping his head onto my collarbone. My hand went to his hair, wanting to reassure him I was fine when I felt the tug in the crook of my elbow. When he lifted his head, I looked at my arm and the line that was in it, giving me blood. I followed the line to find Darius staring at me. He moved, twisting something and cutting it off as he leaned forward. He placed a cotton bud over the canular stuck in my arm before pulling it out.

He said nothing when I looked for the blood bag, only to find the other end of the line attached to him.

"You gave me blood?" I asked groggily. He doesn't answer but yanks the needle from his arm.

"We don't have an infirmary here, not much need for blood here either besides Tobias, so we had to make do, probably not the safest way if you were human," Kalen chuckled, cupping my face in his hands.

"Don't worry, his blood is clean and since we all share the same blood type, no harm done," Kalen shrugged.

"Huh?" I asked groggily before clutching my head.

"We're mates. Don't they teach this stuff in that boarding school you went to? I thought mates and fates were common topics in schools. They even taught us about them in the orphanage," Kalen continued to ramble, and Darius wandered

off, so I turned my attention to Kalen, trying to listen to what he told me. However, I knew it just took me a second to register what he was rambling on about.

"I thought you would know about how the fates chose, our mates though little iffy if you ask me."

"I do know, sorry, you just caught me while out of it," I mumbled.

"Then you tell me, can be memory check of sorts," he chuckled. I rolled my eyes before noticing he was staring at me expectantly. Oh, he was serious. He wanted to know if I indeed understood how the mate bonds work.

"Um," I shake my head. "Ah, they are determined by the time of birth, the position of the moon, and the date," I groaned. Why does my head still hurt?

"Yes, that is why all of us share the same birthday. You are the exception though, since we are all 29 and you are only 24. So, when we were born we were all born at 1.11 am on the 19th of May. You being our keeper didn't appear until 5 years later. Although you share the same time of birth and have the same birthday, all mates share the same birthday. However, when I looked into it, no girls were born on the 19 may the year we were born, which is quite odd if you ask me," He rambled.

"What, no girls were born on that day?" I asked, having not known that.

"Not one, only boys and the three of us were born at the same



time setting our fates, the next turn around for that time was 5 years later, and that was you," I honestly never looked into our bloodlines or fate information, to be honest. I was too busy running from the fate that was bestowed upon me.

"But boys can be keepers," I told him.

"Yes, and most are male. But since you were the only person born on that day time and when the moons lined, we got you, none of us were born with keeper gifts," Kalen chuckled.

"I couldn't have been the only person born, on the 19th of May that year, that seems impossible,"

"You forget that is when the plague hit, it is also when a lot of the Fae lost a mate, and eventually their magic, seeing as the majority of Fates were paired with harmony or white Fae. We just got lucky a lot were forced into a human lifestyle," Kalen told me. I nodded, knowing full well of the effects the plague had. However, his words made me wonder about my mother. She survived the plague, but then Darius told me that there was a second wave making me wonder if that is what killed her.

"When did the second wave hit?" I asked. For some reason, my mind seemed to lock onto that thought.

"Seven years later, you would have just turned seven when it hit. Though it wasn't as bad since those that did survive, which was only a few like Darius's sister," I tried to figure out roughly how old I was, I know it was a couple of days after my seventh birthday, yet I don't remember her falling ill before she died. Her death was sudden. I just remembered coming

into the living room and my father jammed a needle filled with his blood into her heart.

I remembered wondering why he had a random needle of his blood. I thought it strange, but she was sick for a few days afterward, dad wouldn't allow me in the room with her, although I begged, not believing she was ok. A few days later, she just walked out while I was in the living room like nothing had happened. She was different after that. Dying had done something to her; it was an odd memory to have.

With a shake of my head, the memory faded. "Your aura is so dark," Kalen murmured, whisking his fingers around my face.

## Chapter 35

"Reminds me of Darius. His is as black as coal," Kalen chuckled.

"Probably because she is full of my blood and my magic is tainting her, it should wear off in a few hours, but until then," Darius said, coming over to me. He gripped my wrist and clamped something on it. It looked like a silver bangle, and I examined it.

"Until my magic fades out of your system, you wear that," Darius said, and I felt its effects almost instantly as he locked it in place. It sent a shock wave of exhaustion through me like a mood tranquilizer.

"Come on, Darius, was that even necessary? She hadn't even noticed she had magic," Kalen growled. Fuck in my grogginess, I completely forgot though actually absorbing it from his blood in my system was a little harder than me absorbing directly from them by touch.

"Regardless, I won't take the risk,"

"Exactly what do you expect me to do if I had magic? I have no idea where I even am,"

"Open a portal and leave. That is what I expect," I sighed if given a chance again, I would probably do that without question, but I had my phoenix here. Shit! My Phoenix! I sat upright, and Darius growled at me. Lycus sat silently watching



us from the chair next to the fireplace.

I looked around for Tobias before my eyes landed on him sitting in the corner of the room. He must have felt my gaze on him because he lifted his head. My blood drenched his shirt, and once my gaze met his, I couldn't pull it away, locked in a trance as the memory of the savage look on his face came back to haunt me. Tobias looked away as if he was almost regretful of his actions. I was thankful when he did because I couldn't bring myself to look away from him until Darius stepped in my line of vision.

"Kalen, go get her something to eat," Darius told him and Kalen nodded getting up when I noticed I was actually in their bed. How it took so long for that to come to my mind confused me.

Kalen left and my stomach dropped when I found myself left with the three of them. I looked down at my clothes to see I was wearing only a shirt. Vague memories of being placed in the shower flooded my mind and I looked over at Lycus as I tugged the front of the shirt. I leaned down and sniffed it. Kalen's scent was all over it.

"Darius dressed you," Lycus answered the question that came to my mind. I nodded no point crying over them seeing me naked it was already done; I was just glad I was unconscious for that experience.

However, Darius's next words kind of shocked me, and I swallowed my tongue feeling thick in my mouth, and I wanted

no part of it.

"Tobias will need to feed off you until he can control his bloodlust," Darius said before glaring over his shoulder at Tobias on the floor in the corner, his arms over his knees and his head rested on them.

"But,"

"It isn't up for debate, and Lycus or I will be with him when he does until he can control the urge to kill you anyway,"

"Why can't he feed off one of you?" I asked.

"He has been, but unfortunately, you are our keeper and now he has tasted your blood, he will withdraw from it. It's safer if he learns to control it than going cold turkey," Lycus said, also not looking happy about the situation. My eyes glanced over at Tobias, who was now clutching his hair, looking rather stressed out.

Darius followed my line of vision before speaking to him. His tone scolding.

"We asked you earlier if anything was up with you, and you lied,"

"I had it under control," Tobias said.

"Well, could have fooled me. This wouldn't have been an issue if you had told me you were struggling since trying to take the shadows from her; I could have cleansed your blood," Darius snapped furiously.

"I thought I had control," Tobias growled. Darius growled at him and I scooted to the edge of the bed before placing my feet on the ground.

"Where do you think you are going?" Darius said, his head whipping in my direction at my movement.

"I need to pee," I said, pointing to the bathroom door. He nodded, and I got up; vertigo washed over me. I clutched the bedside table as I stumbled before noticing a photo. At first, I thought it was Tobias until I saw an almost identical man beside him in the picture. Was Tobias a twin?

They looked to be the same age, and I swear I had seen him before. I tried to rack my brain for where I had seen him before. My hand moved to pick it up when it was suddenly gone and placed in the drawer. Looking up, I noticed Tobias was beside me, and he was the one that snatched it before I could touch it.

He glared at me, and I looked away before he watched me stagger into the bathroom. An exasperated breath left me as I locked the door only to hear them lock it from their side too. I shook my head before quickly using the toilet. When I was finished, I washed my hands and twisted the doorknob after I unlocked it, only to find it still locked. I sighed with relief.

Obviously, they decided I could remain in my room. The sound of their arguing stopped when they must have heard the door, but I turned on my heel and walked over to the one leading into my room. Just as I stepped inside, I listened to the lock



**click on my bedroom one leading to the hall.**

## Chapter 36

I waited, thinking someone was coming in, but I heard whoever it was moved back to their room. Rubbing my arms at the coldness of the room, I made my way to the fireplace to see if I could light it. Kneeling in front of it, I got a sense of déjà-vu, which sent a shiver down my spine and made me glance at the door.

No one came in and I turned back to the fireplace. I looked for the flint and started trying to get the fire going. Stacking the kindling in and some wood. Just as I was almost about to attempt to light it. I heard the door. My heart skipped a beat as it unlocked, and Kalen stepped inside.

He looked upset as he carried a tray in his hands. The smell of hot food wafted to my nose, and a few seconds later, Darius walked in behind him. He tossed a fireball at the fireplace, and I jumped when it rushed past me before he sat down in the chair.

"Can't she stay in our room just for tonight?" Kalen pouted at him.

"I prefer to be in here," I told Kalen before Darius could answer. Kalen dropped his head and walked over to me while Darius moved to sit on the small armchair in front of the fire. Kalen placed the tray in my lap.

"You should eat," He said, and my stomach growled hungrily a

s I looked down at the plate, which contained vegetables and some steak. Real food, and it smelt delicious. Yet when I went to take the knife off Kalen to dig in, the plate was removed from me along with the knife. I sighed before looking at Darius, who then cut up the meat, and I rolled my eyes and looked over at the fire.

"Seriously, Darius," Kalen whined at him. Darius ignored him before handing the plate back to me but keeping the knife. I took it from him, feeling like a child that I wasn't even allowed to use a knife like an average person. He placed the knife on his lap.

"She could do just as much damage with a damn fork, can't believe," My fork was suddenly plucked from my fingers,

"Thank you for pointing that out," Darius growled at him.

"Darius, I didn't mean for you to take it from her," Kalen snarled.

'Quiet, or you can go back to your room,"

"How do you expect her to eat?"

"It's fine, Kalen; I spent most of my time in the woods anyway, no cutlery there," I told him. Before picking up a piece of broccoli off the plate.

Darius leaned back and closed his eyes while Kalen watched me eat and talked to me. He was very talkative, and I preferred this sunny side of Kalen as he animatedly told me about



different things.

"So you spent most of your time in the woods?" Kalen asked, and Darius scoffed, making me realize he had sat up to listen to our conversation. I plucked another piece of meat off the plate. The sauce making my fingers sticky.

"No, mostly traveling, I was trying to find a human settlement or city to bunker down in,"

"Why a human one?"

"Because I was running out of magic," I answered.

"The man on the footage from the school who was he?" Kalen asked, and I glanced up at him from my plate. His expression darkened, and I could tell I was quite upset over it.

"I didn't know there was footage, but he wasn't boyfriend if that is what you were wondering; I never ran off with anyone, Kalen,"

"Then who was he?" Darius growled angrily, and I jumped at the tone of his voice. Kalen stared at me expectantly, wanting me to answer.

"An acquaintance, I hardly knew him, he was also running from his bonds, I overheard him speaking on the phone in the library to his girlfriend. He wanted to be with her, so he was planning on finding her,"

"So he just helped you escape?" Kalen asked.

"Yes, we needed two people to break the wards, so I offered to help him break them if he gave me a lift into the city, that is all. We parted ways at the bus depot," I told them.

"Then where did you go?"

I shrugged. "I had \$43 and that was it, no money, so I told the bus driver to get me as far as he could heading north,"

"Why north?" Darius asked, and he genuinely sounded curious. I dropped my gaze, knowing my answer would probably anger him.

"Why north Aleera?" Darius's tone of voice is more of a demand than a question. I looked at Kalen, who was studying me.

"I was trying to find a place called Astrid?" That seemed to surprise them as they both looked at each other.

"Have you heard of it?"

"Yes, but we aren't telling you where it is. Why were you looking for it," Darius asked, folding his arms across his chest and sitting back. He looked at Kalen, who sighed, also not offering any answers to where it was.

"Answer the question, or I make Kalen leave," Darius growled. I nibbled on my lip, not willing to say and Kalen looked at Darius.

"Fine, come on, Kalen," Darius said, hopping up. "Aleera, just

answer please; I want to stay," Yet I didn't want my answer to upset him or for him to get the wrong idea.

"Kalen now!" Darius snarled before bending down and gripping his arm.

"Just a little longer, please," Darius glared at him and hauled Kalen to his feet, and the look Kalen gave me broke my heart.

"I was looking for someone," I blurted, and they stopped. Darius turned to look down at me, and Kalen looked at Darius. "She answered, can I stay," Darius' lip pulled up over his upper lip before he sighed and nodded, and Kalen sat down again.



## Chapter 37

Darius watched me for a second before taking his seat.

"Who were you looking for?" Darius asked, and I looked away from him.

"Someone I used to speak to through a chat link online," I answered, rubbing a hand down my face. When I looked up, Darius had leaned forward, bracing his arms on elbows.

"So you were seeing someone?" I shook my head.

"I never met them, I am not sure who they were, but we talked for years from the time my grandmother died,"

"A man?" Darius asked, and I shrugged.

"I am not sure. We became friends. That's all I know, I never met them, or saw them, not even picture I have no idea if they were male or female, could have been anybody,"

"Yet you went looking for them, instead of calling on us," Darius said, leaning back in his seat, he turned his gaze to Kalen.

"What was this person's name?"

"Does it matter?" Darius shrugged. And since they didn't have a name, I didn't see the harm in telling him.

"I only know his login name. It was part of the chat group. We

weren't allowed to use our real names, kind of like a pen pal, HTIARW," I answered.

"You still remember their login credentials?" Kalen asked.

"Well, I spoke to them every day for nearly 4 years and they never changed it, so yes,"

"Why would you go looking for someone on the internet?" Darius asked, his eyes darkening.

"Because the person mentioned if I was ever in Astrid to look for them, I was hoping when I got there I could get access to the internet and track them down, but I never found the place,"

"I gave up after a few years, it wasn't on any map, and I figured they gave me a fake name for that too," I shrugged.

"But you have heard of it, so it must be real?" I asked, wondering if I was indeed sent on a wild goose chase.

"It's not on any maps because it isn't a town or city; it's the name of a place," Kalen answered, and Darius growled at Kalen.

"What sort of place?" I asked but one glare from Darius prohibited him from answering. Kalen looked down at his hands and picked at his nails.

"What about friends, at the boarding school, or from your previous school? Did you keep in touch with them?" Darius asked me. I shook my head.

"Mum mainly homeschooled me. It wasn't until I hit high school that dad convinced her to let me attend a real school that only lasted a few months before they died, and I was shipped off to live with my grandmother," I said. That thought saddened me as I remembered my parents.

"You didn't like my grandmother?"

"Hmm, she was the best. She reminded me of my father, he looked a lot like her, stern like him too, but she was good to me; I miss her," I said, glancing at the fire.

"She died only few months later, she used to visit when I was a kid, never missed a birthday or Christmas, she was the only family I had besides my parents,"

"We looked into your family background, only found your father's side. Your mother's records didn't exist, and we also thought it odd nobody knew her," Kalen said, scratching the back of his neck. I knew no records existed. My father went to great lengths to hide what I was, and that meant getting rid of everything on my mother's bloodline. My brows scrunched together, wondering how he managed it.

"Your father was an important person, worked for the Fae government," Kalen said. Now that surprised me, that I didn't know.

"Really?"

"You didn't know?" Darius asked me. I shook my head. I



thought he was just a businessman; mum told me he worked for the bank?" I answered.

"No, he worked for the dark political party," Darius answered. He was one of the chairmen like my father,"

"Your father worked with mine?"

"Yes, but on opposite sides, though, they hated each other,"

"What did your father do?"

"He was an advocate for white Fae," Now, that shocked me further.

"But your dark Fae," Darius nodded.

"Yes, my father was shocked when he found your father actually had a daughter. You were the best-kept secret. We didn't even know he had a wife, let alone a daughter," Darius answered.

"Hang on, I am still confused as to why your father was an advocate for white-fae being that he was dark,"

"Molly, his stepdaughter," Kalen answered.

"That didn't anger him that your mother had an affair?"

"Oh, it bothered him, but he loved Molly regardless. After she died, he started fighting to have those responsible for the plague brought to justice,"

"Did they get brought to justice?"

"Some were caught and killed, but we never found how the plague originated, only that it was Fae made," Darius told me. I nodded, not wanting to pry too much since he was being civil, and I didn't know how quickly that could change if I asked the wrong question. I picked up another piece of cold meat and plopped it in my mouth.

"I have another question?" Kalen said, and I looked at him.

"Why didn't you try to contact your internet friend before you left to let them know to expect you,"

"Honestly, I panicked. By the time that thought arised, I was already gone,"

"So you never tried to contact him after that?"

"Why do you keep assuming it was man," I said with a click of my tongue.

"Well, I was just assuming,"

"I am pretty sure they were female, or gay either one," I told them.

"Why would you assume that,"

"Because of how they spoke, they seemed pretty gender-neutral,"

"Well, that is stereotyping," Kalen chuckled.

"Yeah, I suppose it is, it doesn't matter now, though. Not like I

will speak to them again,"

"Would you?"

"I mean, if you could?" Darius growled, and I looked over at him. His hands clenched the arms of the chair his knuckles turning white. I swallowed, not bothering to answer.

"Well, if they are gay or female, what does it matter if she spoke to them," Kalen snapped, and Darius seemed to think.

"And you had no other friends?" Kalen asked, pulling my attention back to him. I shook my head.

"So you spent 6 years alone,"

"Bullshit!" Darius scoffed.

"I was doing fine on my own, and yes, Kalen," I answered.

"So you met nobody else,"

"Well, of course I met people along the way, but I mostly stayed away from the cities unless I thought they were human ones. I just never found one,"

"6 years, and you never found one?" Kalen asked incredulously.

"Not one,"

"If you weren't attacked the night we found you, would you have called on us? Eventually?" Kalen asked, and I looked away. I swallowed thickly.



"You wouldn't have, would you?" Darius said.

"Well, what did you expect after you killed my parents,"

"You say that like I am some monster and killed them in cold blood," Darius scoffed.

"You are," I screamed, and he seemed taken aback by my outburst.

Darius glared at me before he leaned forward, and I pulled away from him. "I was fucking protecting you from them,"

"My parents were good parents. I sure as hell didn't need protecting from them,"

"So good they tried to kill their only child,"

"They would never hurt me," I told him, looking away.

"That may have been true before they found out I was your mate," he yelled at me. Darius stood up and gripped Kalen's arm, yanking him to his feet just as the door burst open to the bathroom.

"What's going on," Lycus asked, rushing in.

"Nothing, we were just leaving," Darius said, shoving Kalen toward the bathroom door.

"Wait, what do you mean?" I asked Darius, but he continued walking without so much as a glance back at me before he slammed the bathroom door. 4