



THE TWELVE DATES OF CHRISTMAS

The Monsters Christmas Party



Miranda May &
Kaytie Marie

The Monsters' Christmas Party

Miranda May & Kaytie Marie

Luna Moon Publishing

The Monsters' Christmas Party

Copyright © 2023 by Miranda May and Kaytie Marie

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except as permitted by U.S. copyright law. No part of this book may be used to create, feed, or refine artificial intelligence models, for any purpose, without written permission from the author. For permission requests, contact Luna Moon Publishing at lunamoonpublishingllc@gmail.com.

The story, all names, characters, and incidents portrayed in this production are fictitious. No identification with actual persons (living or deceased), places, buildings, and products is intended or should be inferred.

Published by Luna Moon Publishing

Book Cover by DragonFire Designs

Editing by Weaver Way Author Services

Contents

Dedication

Foreword

Content and Trigger Warnings

New Member Profile

Chapter One

Chapter Two

Chapter Three

Chapter Four

Chapter Five

Chapter Six

Chapter Seven

Chapter Eight

Chapter Nine

Chapter Ten

Chapter Eleven

Chapter Twelve

Chapter Thirteen

Chapter Fourteen

Chapter Fifteen

Chapter Sixteen

Chapter Seventeen

Chapter Eighteen

Chapter Nineteen

Chapter Twenty

Chapter Twenty-one

Chapter Twenty-two

Chapter Twenty-three

Chapter Twenty-four

Chapter Twenty-five

Epilogue

Author's Note

Also By Kaytie Marie

[Also By Miranda May](#)

[About Kaytie Marie](#)

[About Miranda May](#)

[Follow Kaytie Marie](#)

[Follow Miranda May](#)

*For all the rebels that stay true to themselves, no matter what. We hope
you all find peace, joy, and love—just like Laoise!*

Foreword

Hey y'all!!!

Welcome to Kaytie and Miranda's second co-write! Just like with our first co-write, we're so excited to share this story with you. The best thing about the books in the 12 Dates of Christmas shared world is that they can be read individually as standalones, but we definitely recommend you read them all.

If you've already read our first co-write, *A Jolly Christmas Disaster*, then you know that between the two of us, we have four books in the shared world. Because of this, we wrote about four best friends who are featured in one another's books. There will be overlap and some shared scenes between all of the books. While we hope that you'll read all four books, they can be read as standalones. They do not need to be read in publication date, but be aware that the stories of these other women will bleed over into each book and some possible spoilers, though we did try to avoid those. The publication

order of the books is A Jolly Christmas Disaster, The Monsters' Christmas Party, Chloe's Christmas of Cursed Chaos, and Tali's Christmas Revenge.

As always, your mental health is important to us, so we have a list of content & trigger warnings on the next page. These may contain spoilers, so know that if you choose to proceed. Thank you and happy reading!!

Content and Trigger Warnings

As always, if there are any triggers I missed, please let me know by emailing me at mirandamayauthor@gmail.com! This list does include spoilers! Remember, your mental health is the most important thing!

- Apathetic, demanding, and demeaning parents
- Anxiety
- Daddy kink
- DP
- DVP
- Group Sex
- MM

New Member Profile



Welcome to Love -N- Shenanigans, the last dating app you'll ever need.

Your best match (or matches) are just a few clicks away!

Basic Information

Name: *Laoise (Lee-sha) Fitzgerald*

Age: 25

Species: *Unicorn fae*

Job Description: *Being Beautiful? I'm an influencer—a beauty influencer.*

Marital Status: *Single*

Dependents: *None*

Describe yourself using 10 words or less: *I'm amazing, but my family sucks!*

Person who referred you: *Hot barista at the coffee shop.*

Additional Information

Sexual Designation: *Yes, please!! Wait. That's not a designation. Uh... female? Unicorns don't really have the same genders as humans.*

Sexual Orientation: *Monsters. Is that an orientation?*

Are you Monogamous, Swinger, Polyamorous? *ALL the monsters, pretty please!*

Are you willing to date outside of your species? *I'll date any species that isn't fae. Or unicorns. Ugh. The uglier, the better. I need my dates at this party to be the ugliest monsters you can find.*

Hobbies: *Pissing off my parents and hanging with my witches! Trying new beauty products to share with my fans!*

Do you have any kinks you would like to be taken into consideration? *Monster fucking... I'm still not sure if that's a kink, but I'm going with it. Beyond that, I'm pretty open to anything.*

Please describe your perfect partner/partners: *Monsters! All the monsters!*

Additional Notes

Look, full disclosure: my parents are asshole elitists who are throwing some fancy party for all of their fancy friends for Christmas instead of spending time with our family, even though my brother's only home for a couple of weeks between deployments. Oh, and they think they're introducing me to my mate—as if I'd ever let them pick out who I mate with. I don't think so. I'd really like to take the ugliest, baddest, meanest-looking monsters willing to have a fun night and add some chaos to my parents' party. If they happen to be sexy AF when not dripping acidic saliva from their fangs (Gods, I hope that's really a thing!), then I'm definitely up for some private fun after we've ruined the party. But really, I'm looking for a bunch of ugly motherfuckers for one night. One night, with lots of snooty people looking

down their noses at them. I know it doesn't sound like fun...but I can promise I'll be more than happy to make it up to them. To...kiss any wounds they might incur. Three. At least three monsters should do it.

Chapter One



Laoise

Where the hell are those witches?
“There she is!”

Glancing up at the familiar voice, a smile lights up my face. “Oh, finally. I thought I was going to have to be the pathetic girl sitting here all by myself surrounded by empty chairs.”

“Shut up, Laoise. No one would ever think you’re pathetic.” Chloe drops down into the seat beside me, reaching for her coffee.

Tali and Belle find their seats and smile as they each take a quick sip of their coffee. It’s a good thing the four of us always order the same drinks and always sit in the same spots, or someone could’ve been in for a rude awakening.

“Do you want to explain why we had to have an emergency meeting?” Tali asks. “Some of us have actual jobs we have to be at, you know.”

I wave my hand in dismissal. “I said to meet when you were done. I’d rather have to work than deal with my family any day—even with the money that comes along with it.”

“Oh, no. What did they do now?” Belle asks, leaning forward in her chair.

I feel bad every time I complain about my family, considering the way Belle grew up, but I also know Belle would hate that. Plus, if I didn’t complain to my best witches, then who the hell would I complain to?

“I just received an invitation for the Fitzgeralds’ annual Christmas gala.” I toss the invitation into the center of the table.

Chloe grabs it first, shrugging. “And? You get one every year, and you never go.”

“This one had a personal note from my mother. I’ve been informed that my release to the Mortal Realm is coming to an end.”

“Like hell it is.” Chloe snorts as Tali grabs the invitation from her. “Like we’re letting you go back to the Fae Realm and deal with that horrible family of yours.”

“What’s it say, Tali?” Belle asks, trying to read the letter over her shoulder.

“Dearest Laoise.” Tali fake vomits.

“We have allowed you to wander on the Mortal Realm for long enough. Since you have been proven incapable of attaining an appropriate mate, not to mention the fact that you’re not getting any younger, your father and I have taken matters into our own hands. We have found you a wonderful fae suitor. Though he isn’t a unicorn, he is a third son of the Seelie Court’s royal family. Unfortunately, you have ruined your chances with any other unicorn fae. This is the best match we were able to find for you. Since your brother will be home for the holidays as he has leave between deployments, we thought this was the best time to announce your engagement.

“While it would be best if you arrived before Christmas Eve so that you might be able to meet your betrothed, I know this will be asking too much of you. I know you will need to handle your affairs so that you can return to the Fae Realm permanently. This is not a suggestion; it is a command. You will return home, and you will marry Oisín. He shall be a wonderful husband for you, and you will be a part of the royal family. For once in your life, you’ll bring honor to our family name. I cannot believe you have not found a mate at your advanced age. Do you know what the ladies at court have been saying? It is an absolute disgrace.

“We will see you on Christmas Eve, and I expect you to have bells on. The sooner you accept your future, the better it will be for all of us.

“Kisses, Mother.”

“Gods, she is the worst.” Chloe makes a face, staring at the invitation as Tali throws it back down. “You’re obviously not doing what she says, right?”

I laugh. “Hell no. My mother should know better than to try and control me. She’s been trying my entire life, and she has yet to succeed. No, I have a plan. Kind of.”

Tali leans forward, resting her chin on her hand. “Do tell.”

“I’m not sure exactly how to make it happen, but I need to find the most inappropriate dates possible. A harem of monsters would be best. Can you imagine my mother’s face if I walked in with an ogre? Or a giant?” I laugh as my besties stare at me with varying shades of shock and awe. “I just have no idea where I’m supposed to meet a bunch of monsters and convince them to come with me to the most boring Christmas party known to man or beast.”

“I’m sorry to interrupt,” a masculine voice calls from behind me, drawing all four of our attention. “I’m Vincent; you might have seen me here a time or two. I’ve seen you ladies in here quite frequently.”

I eye him for a moment before nodding. “Yeah, I’ve definitely seen you here before.”

In fact, I’ve considered asking him out a time or two. He’s a little on the short side, probably only five-foot-nine, which is an inch shorter than me, but he’s pretty hot with his bad boy tattoos and septum piercing. Not to mention the jet-black hair and piercing blue eyes. Yummm, am I right?

Vincent grins, pulling some cards from his pocket. “We’ve been told to keep an ear out for anyone who might be in need of this, and you, my dear, sound like you’re in great need.”

I take one of the cards from him, frowning at the name across the top. “Love -N- Shenanigans? What is this? I’ve never heard of it.”

“It’s a dating app for both supes and humans—even those that don’t know about the supernatural. Apparently, there have been a high number of people who have been matched to their fated mates.” Vincent shrugs. “I can’t say for sure how accurate that is, but I do know that you can get a date to any event. I’m sure you can even find some monsters on there.”

“Ohhh, this is fabulous. I’ll sign up the moment I get home.” I turn back to the girls. “See, this is meant to be. I can’t wait to see my mother’s face when I roll up with monsters on my arms.”

“Ladies, why don’t you take a card as well? You never know when you might need it.” Vincent lays three cards on the table. “Let me know if there’s anything else I can do for you.”

I hand each of the girls a card, but Chloe just wrinkles up her nose at it. “Yeah, right. With my love life? I’ll probably end up meeting your guys’ mates, not my own.”

“Come on, Chloe. That can’t keep happening. You’ve just had some bad luck. Eventually, you have to meet your own mates, right?” Belle glances between Tali and me, begging us to reassure our friend. Unfortunately, there isn’t much we can do to reassure her. She really does have the worst luck in love.

“I’m really loving your plan, Lee,” Tali jumps in, ready to change the topic, and the rest of us grab onto the new conversation thread. “I wonder just how many monsters they can find you.”

We sit and gab for about an hour before heading our separate ways. I love those girls so much. I don’t know what I’d do without them in my life. They even welcomed me into their coven when they formed it a few years ago—

even though I'm not a witch. I do have my own magic, but it doesn't work the same as theirs. Talk about ride-or-die bitches.

My apartment is only a few blocks away from Serendipity, as are most things in Fort Veyelsa. Sure, it's a small town, and everyone is in everyone else's business, but I wouldn't trade it for the world. There are multiple other small towns in the area that we sometimes venture to, but it's nice to not have to drive everywhere all the time.

Oh! And this would make a fabulous story for my blog and social media. I know my fans would love to hear about the mess I'm in right now. I can follow the process from start to finish. There will be tons of beauty tips I can talk about and new products that'll work perfectly for this.

Take that, Mother. Not only am I going to blow up your carefully laid plans, but you're helping me make money from the "silly job" that I love so much. Talk about a double win. She's never understood what it means to be an influencer and definitely doesn't consider it a real job. If only she knew just how much time I spent on it. After all, this is my brand.

When I make it home, I head straight for my laptop. Since I'm going to be covering this, I'll need to set up my cameras and, of course, record my screen as I'm filling out the profile on their website. It takes me a bit to get everything all setup, but then it's time to record the intro video. I love doing videos, and it's something that my looks are good for. I kind of fell into being an influencer, but now I absolutely love it.

It's also helpful that in this century, it's on trend to have multi-color hair. It allows me to blend in better with the humans that way. Our hair has always been the thing that's been the most challenging for my people to hide, but it's our pride and joy. The colors may vary in tone, but you'll always find a blue or teal, a shade of purple, and a shade of pink. Some people have more of one

color than another, but not me. I've got the perfect bright blend of aqua, hot pink, and orchid purple.

“Hey guys.” I smile into the camera and give a quick wave. “I just want to let you know I have a new adventure for you to join me on. I received the dreaded Christmas party invitation today from my mother. You all know how I feel about both of those topics. Well, she is insisting upon my return to the Fae Realm for the party. Ridiculous, I know.

“Apparently, twenty-five is too old to be unmated, so she's found me a royal fae to mate with. Because obviously, I'm incapable of doing it on my own, and the fact that I'm still unmated is an embarrassment upon my family name. Which, as we all know, isn't true. I have many years ahead of me and don't want to rush it. But I have a plan.

“I was at Serendipity about an hour ago with the girls, and this hot barista, Vincent, was handing out information on this new dating app called Love -N- Shenanigans. Side note, ladies—he truly is delicious and has the whole bad-boy look going for him. So, if you're ever in Fort Veyelsa, make sure to stop by and say hi.

“But, back on topic, It's obvious that Fate has handed me a get-out-of-jail-free card. I'm going to ask for their fiercest, ugliest monsters they have who are willing to deal with a bunch of pretentious jerks for a night. It's brilliant, isn't it? I'm heading to the website now to sign up for it, and we'll begin our adventure.”

Turning back to my computer, I head to the Love -N- Shenanigans website after making sure that the screen recording is going. It's actually pretty easy, though I might overdo it a little on the monster thing. What can I say? I need this to work. I need to convince my parents that I've met my mates and

they're actual monsters. They won't be able to disown me because I'll be mated—even if they disapprove of said mates.

Thinking back on Vincent's words, I wonder if I could actually find my fated mate—or mates. I'm definitely down to have more than one. A unicorn fae with monster mates. Oh, how the courts will talk. Mother thinks it's bad now. I can't wait for the fallout of my plan. I just hope that they have what I'm looking for. This is sure to be the best Christmas yet.

Chapter Two



Aeron

“**Y**eah, take that, asshole,” I yell at the TV screen with a smirk, pressing a button on my controller and booking it from the area. I’m so tired of people being dicks in PVP games, so I’ve taken it upon myself to locate them in game and kill them. It’s nothing more than an inconvenience to them, but maybe it’ll teach them not to be douches to people online if I do it enough times.

I ignore Dáinn when he drops down beside me. He and Tamesis know better than to bother me when I’m in my gaming zone. There have been some epic fights between the three of us when they’ve interrupted me. And when I say fights, I mean blood is spilled, and tears are shed.

I grind my teeth as he continues to bounce on the couch beside me. Obviously, he has a death wish today, but I also know my brother. If I keep ignoring him, this will only get worse. It’s better to exit the game now than have him distract me in the middle of a firefight.

I throw down my headset and controller before turning to him with a glare. “What the fuck is up your ass, puppy? You know better than to bother me while I’m gaming.”

“I know. I know.” Dáinn rolls his eyes, but the grin never leaves his face. “But this is much more important than your video games.”

Unlikely, but I gesture for him to continue. Dáinn is easily excitable, which is why I call him puppy—he reminds me of a lab. Big, full of energy, and only use their brain every once in a while. Is that a terrible thing to say about

my brother—one of my triplets at that? Maybe, but my brothers know I love them. Even when I'm being an asshole.

“Okay, D. Tell me what's so important.”

“We have to wait for Tam.” Dáinn shakes his head like *I'm* the idiot in this situation.

I lean back on the couch and take a deep breath, reminding myself over and over again that I cannot, in fact, kill my brother. Not only would it piss off our parents, but I'd miss the idiot.

Tamesis slumps down beside me on the couch, and I roll my head to the side to look at him. He looks just as excited to be here as I am.

Fucking Dáinn.

“Good. Now that you're both here, I can tell you the news.” Dáinn jumps up and down, clapping his hands.

There's a moment of silence as I turn to focus on the youngest of the three of us. “D...are you going to tell us?”

“Oh, right! Of course.” He shakes his head, and I realize he must've gotten lost in his head with how excited he is right now. “Do you remember me mentioning Love -N- Shenanigans?”

Tamesis grunts beside me, and I'm not sure if he's agreeing or not. I just shake my head. “D, you tell us about a lot of shit. I don't know how you expect us to remember it all.”

His face falls, and I feel like shit. That's not what I wanted. “Right. Love -N- Shenanigans is the new dating site for supernaturals. They let humans on there if they find it as well, but you know how they are. They just think it's all a giant joke.”

“Uh huh...” I gesture for him to get on with it. There's only so much patience I can summon for my brother when he gets like this.

“Anyway, I asked if we should sign up, and since neither of you said no, I signed us up. And we have a match!”

I suck on my teeth, clenching and unclenching my fists as I try to calm down. I’m aware I have anger issues, and I’m working on it, but sometimes...he just makes it so hard. “Just to be clear. You signed all three of us on a dating site, and we’ve matched with someone?”

“The same someone?” Tamesis leans forward to look at our brother, but his words surprise me. He doesn’t seem upset that Dáinn signed us up for the dating site, which is shocking. I would’ve thought he’d be on my side for this one.

“Yes! Isn’t it great? This could be great for us. I know we’ve had trouble in the past finding someone that will take all three of us as lovers, but this could be it. I made a note on each of the profiles that we’re looking for one mate between the three of us.”

Tamesis nods slowly. “Okay.”

“Okay?” I snort. “You’re really just okay with this? With him signing us up and us getting matched with a total stranger?”

Tamesis just shrugs, pissing me off even more. I wish he would talk more. It’s much easier to communicate with someone when they actually speak. But that’s just not my brother.

“Fine,” I say, “Tell me about this match.”

“Her name is Laoise—”

“Lee-sha,” I repeat, sure that I’m butchering her name.

Dáinn nods. “She’s a unicorn fae, and she’s fucking gorgeous, bro. Apparently, her family is real uppity and are trying to pair her off with some royal fae, and she’s having none of it. So, she’s looking for dates to her family’s annual Christmas party.”

“And she knows what we are?” I ask, raising an eyebrow. I know my brother well enough to know he might leave out that information.

“That we’re identical triplets? Of course.” There’s a twinkle in Dáinn’s eyes that tells me he knows what I’m asking for and is playing dumb to piss me off. When all I do is growl at him, he shrugs. “I put on our profiles that we’re hellhounds. I didn’t mention the cerberus. *But* it’s okay. She’s looking for monsters to go with her to the party, and it’s in the Fae Realm. When are we going to get another chance to go to the Fae Realm?”

Tamesis laughs. “She’s looking for monsters? Well, we certainly fill that category well.”

He isn’t wrong.

We live in the Hell Realm, being a type of demon and all. How can you be a hellhound and not live in Hell, right? But we’re not average hellhounds, which are badass on their own. In our family, once every few generations, triplets are born. When that happens, the triplets end up with an additional form beyond that of a hellhound and a human. When the three of us form together, we become a cerberus.

Yes, like the dog that guards hell in all the human stories. Only, there isn’t a cerberus guarding hell. I can promise you that, seeing as there can only be one alive at a time, and there’s no way in hell we’re going to guard hell. Talk about boring as fuck. Though, it does kind of make us a big deal in the Hell Realm. We’re quite popular with the lady demons—until it comes to mating.

While it’s not abnormal for supernaturals to have multiple mates, we’ve been unable to find a woman who is interested in forever with us. Now, I’m totally fine with that, but neither of my brothers feels that way. They want to meet our mate and settle down. Which I get. We’re almost two hundred years old. I’d like to settle down and have some babies at some point, too.

Fuck. I'm going to have to do this, aren't I? I hate admitting that Dáinn actually had a good idea. Not because I'm an asshole, but because he's going to rub it in for *days*. Not that I can say for sure that it's a good idea. After all, she's looking for a date to a party, and we're looking for our forever. This could all go terribly wrong, but I know if I say no that they're both going to be pissed.

"Let me and Tam see the pictures, D."

Dáinn jumps up and down, pulling a laugh from me as he hands me the phone.

Holy shit.

"Holy shit," Tamesis says, speaking my thoughts out loud.

I check my mental shields to make sure they're in place, which they are. People talk about the connection between twins, but they've got nothing on my brothers and me. We do have telepathy and can hear each other's thoughts if we don't keep our shields up. But in this case, I guess it's just the proper response.

The woman in the photos is the most beautiful creature I've ever laid eyes on. I've never met a unicorn fae before, but I've seen photos, and none of those held a candle to her beauty. Her hair is the brightest blue, pink, and purple I've ever seen. It falls in waves over her shoulders and down her back. Her skin is a pale porcelain color that should make her look washed out but pairs so well with her hair. Her eyes are almost the same color as the pink in her hair. And her smile? It lights up her face.

"I think I'm in love," Dáinn says, his voice echoing with wistfulness.

I snort. "You would be."

"I think I might be, too," Tamesis says, eyes wide as he looks up to meet my eyes. "Did I just agree with Dáinn?"

The laughter that spills from me then is full-bodied. “You sure the fuck did.”

Then, the three of us are laughing together. It feels good to have this moment with the two of them. We’ve been spending more and more time apart, and it feels like we’ve been drifting away from one another. A mate would definitely keep us anchored together, and I think it’s something we desperately need.

Damn it.

“You did good, Dáinn.”

My brother’s face lights up at my words, and surprisingly, he doesn’t even rub it in. He just looks between me and Tamesis. “I think this could be it for us; she could be it. I feel it deep down inside. I think she’s more than just a potential mate. I think she’s ours—our fated mate.”

I want to scoff at the idea because if we’ve gone two hundred years without finding our fated mate, then why would she just fall into our lap randomly like this? It doesn’t make any sense.

Glancing at the phone once more, I shrug. It wouldn’t be terrible if she was fated to be ours. To be the one to accept us for what we are. The one to be our center. I haven’t given much thought to meeting our fated mate in the last century or so, but I can feel the hope building inside of me.

Tamesis clears his throat, his eyes darting to the phone to stare at Laoise’s photo once more. “Weirder things have happened, and fate works in mysterious ways and all that shit.”

“Hell, she already has Tam speaking more words in a day, and he hasn’t even met her. I’d definitely say she’s a winner.” I dig my elbow into my brother’s side, giving him a crooked grin.

He rolls his eyes but finds himself smiling—something else I haven’t seen

in a long time. Maybe this really is fate telling us it's our time.

"Asshole," he mutters as he climbs to his feet. "D, send me the login info for the account you created for me, please."

A quick wave of his hand, and he ducks out of our shared living room space, probably heading back to his room. I hand Dáinn's phone back to him.

"Are we just supposed to meet her for the party, or do we get to meet her before then?"

"Definitely before. I already sent her a message, letting her know that we'd love to grab a coffee with her. As soon as I hear back, I'll let both of you know." He hesitates for a moment. "Did I really do good, Aeron, or were you just saying that to make me feel better?"

I reach around him to cup my hand on the back of his head. I lean down until our foreheads touch. "You. Did. Amazing. This is exactly what we needed right now. I don't like the distance that we've had between us in the last few decades."

"Me neither."

I nod. "Good. Send me my login info, too, please. Now, get the fuck out of here so I can shoot some more assholes."

Dáinn laughs when I shove him away from me, knowing I've exceeded my threshold for emotional shit. I can hear him humming as I pull back on my headphones, really hoping that she could be the one. I hate to get my hopes up too high, but if we don't shoot our shot, then what chance do we have?

Chapter Three



Tamesis

My fists fly through the air, too fast for human eyes to see. Luckily, I'm not fighting a human but a demon. They move almost as quickly as me, and it's been a good fight so far. The sad part is I'm not even trying. My mind is too lost on the date we have with Laoise in just a few days.

Ever since Dáinn showed us her picture, I haven't been able to get her off my mind. I've read her profile way too many times to count, and it's kind of embarrassing. But there's just something about her that calls to me. I have no idea what the hell a beauty influencer does, but I'm interested in finding out. I can't decide if it's something I should google before our date or just wait for her to tell me.

I sound like Dáinn right now, the lovesick pup.

The demon sneaks past my guard and punches me in the gut.

"Oof." This is what I get for being distracted while fighting. Shaking my head, I force myself to focus on the fight instead of the woman I can't wait to meet. With all of my focus on the fight, I have the demon knocked out cold within minutes.

Leo slaps me on the back as he jumps up in the ring. "I knew you were toying with him. He shouldn't have stood a chance against you, and yet, he got in a few good hits."

Rolling my eyes, I ignore the greed demon that I honestly can't stand. Unfortunately, he runs these fights, and if I want to fight, then I have to deal with him. He seems to think we're friends. Not that I have any idea how he's

come to that conclusion. I don't talk to him any more than I have to, just like everyone else except my family. But he's got it in his head that we're close, though he doesn't seem to mind that I don't talk much. I think he just wants someone he can talk at.

"Okay, man." Leo rolls his eyes as he slaps an envelope of cash into my hand. "Keep up the stoic, silent stranger act. It doesn't hurt my feelings. I know how much you love me."

About as much as a bug under my shoe.

He starts to say something else, but I spot Dáinn in the crowd and head toward him. It's not often either of my brothers makes it to my fights.

"D?" I ask with raised eyebrows.

Dáinn grins. "That was a great fight, Tam. I thought you were going to let it go on forever, but then, all of the sudden, you just let him have it. It was glorious."

"Why are you here, D?"

"Oh, right! I came to get you so the three of us could go on a run. It's been a while since our hellhounds have run together. Even longer since we've formed the cerberus. I thought we could use the bonding time." Dáinn shrugs as if it's not a big deal, but he forgets I can read him just as well as he can read me. He's desperate to go on a run with us but is afraid we'll tell him no.

How had we fallen this far apart in such a short amount of time? What happened to the time when we were inseparable? Since when is one of us afraid to ask the others to do something with him? I can't even begin to think of the answers to these questions, which tells me we've let it go on for much too long.

"I'd love to run with you, D. Is Aeron waiting for us, or do we still have to ask him?" I slap my brother on the back.

Dáinn has the sense to look abashed as he ducks his head. “I thought it would be easier to convince him if you were with me?”

Throwing my arm over his shoulder, I laugh. “You’re not wrong.”

We head out of the fight hall and head toward our place since that’s where we’re most likely to find our brother. He’s a bit of a gaming addict, and if he’s not working, he’s gaming. Kind of dull if you ask me, but it’s what he loves. As long as he finds joy in it, it doesn’t matter what I think.

I’m not at all surprised when we walk in to find him cursing at the television as his avatar dies. I chuckle at his creative language before going back to thwack him on the back of the head. He jumps in surprise, not having heard us enter since he was too busy yelling over a game.

“Where the hell did you two come from?”

I cock an eyebrow, glancing down at my gym clothes. “Fight night.”

“Damn, is it Saturday already?”

“Unimportant, Aeron. Dáinn wants to go for a run. Let’s go.” I shake my head, already moving back toward the front door.

“I’m busy, assholes,” Aeron grumbles, but he’s already hitting save on the game. It takes him just a minute, and then he’s joining us at the door. “Why are we going for a run?”

Dáinn’s head ducks again, and I realize just how much we’ve isolated ourselves and pushed him away. I don’t know when I started pushing my brothers away, but that stops right now.

“Because our brother, who never asks anything of us, wants to go on a run.” I don’t mean to make my words as cutting as they come out, but I’m not just pissed at myself. I’m also pissed off at Aeron. We’ve both messed up bad enough that we’ve made our brother afraid to ask us to do anything with him.

Aeron holds his hands up in surrender. “I’m happy to go on a run any time

Dáinn wants. Any time, brother. Just tell me when.”

I wonder if Aeron is coming to the same conclusion that I have. There’s no way I’m asking. We might be brothers, but sharing our feelings isn’t something any of us enjoy. Except maybe Dáinn. He’s always been the one to feel the most and the deepest. Something I’ve always known and never considered as the three of us drifted apart. I’m going to need to make a concerted effort to spend more time with both of my brothers but especially Dáinn.

I pull off my shirt without a word, quickly undressing as my brothers do the same. Once we’re naked, we step outside, making sure to lock the door behind us. We keep a spare key tucked away for just this purpose, as there’s no way for us to carry the key in our hellhound forms. All demons have at least two forms, so it’s not abnormal to see someone naked outside their home.

I call forth my hellhound, feeling the magic rush through me as my body reforms. I’m so glad shifting isn’t like in some of the movies and television shows because that looks painful. For us, it’s just a rush of magic, and then we’re hellhounds.

My mouth falls open, my tongue lolling out as I smile—or as close to a smile a hellhound can have. Honestly, it’s probably pretty terrifying. The closest animal I can think of that we resemble is the extinct dire wolf—though much larger. My brothers and I are six-foot-one, and in our hellhound form, we hit above waist level when we’re on all fours. Standing on just our back legs would put up well over eight or nine feet tall, I’m guessing. We do have fur of sorts, though it’s really just shadows and fire woven together. We also have a mouth full of large, sharp teeth that are much scarier than any wolf or dog’s.

We are able to control both the shadows and fire in all of our forms, though it's slightly different in each form. In this form, we can call on the shadows to help us hide or command them to wrap around other creatures, and we breathe fire. It's actually pretty cool.

We ready? Dáinn's voice sounds in my head. This is something we can do in any form because of the cerberus link, but any shifted hellhounds who have formed a pack bond are able to do the same. We're technically a pack, but it was formed upon our birth.

Let's do this thing. Aeron's head nods as he speaks in our minds.

Always a man of few words, I don't even bother to respond and take off at a run. I hear the other two yip behind me and send laughter down our bond.

Cheater. Dáinn's tone is joking, so I know he isn't mad.

No one said I had to wait for you two. I bite back as the pair of them catch up to me easily. It's not like I took off at full speed. I'm just ready to get this show on the road.

As soon as I started running, I knew it had been too long since I'd run as a hellhound, and not just with my brothers. While I am my hellhound, and he is me, he's still kind of an entity of his own? I don't really know how to explain it. I can't speak to him, but I can feel his pleasure at running with the wind in our face and his desire to not wait so long between runs again.

I'm sorry, buddy. It seems I've been letting a lot of things slide lately. It won't happen again.

Am I apologizing to something that's a part of myself? I am. It might be a little bit of a weird thing to do, but I'm okay with that.

You good, brother?

I glance at Dáinn, wondering for a moment if I'd let my thoughts slip through the bond, but I know I didn't. My brother just sees too much

sometimes.

I'm good, Dáinn. Just realizing I've become a little complacent in my life. Something I plan to correct immediately. Thank you for always caring.

Damn, I wish someone cared about how I'm feeling. Aeron tosses in, reminding us that we're on a shared link and he could hear us. ***But I agree, brother. I think this thing with Laoise is the best thing that could've happened to us. We obviously needed a wake-up call.***

At least most of us, I add, tossing my head to look at Dáinn, who gives me a doggy grin of his own before taking off and leaving me and Aeron to catch up.

As soon as we do, all three of us speed up until we're full-on sprinting as we weave our way into the forest that surrounds our town. It's not like the forests in the Earth Realm, as we don't have a sun in the Hell Realm. We have three red moons that appear in the sky throughout the day. One stays in the sky at all times, while the second arrives first thing in the morning. The third joins the other two moons around lunchtime. The two moons that rise each day set within an hour of each other, beginning our night cycle.

Our forests are filled with shadow trees that are shaped like those on Earth but are made of shadows. If you don't have the ability to manipulate shadows, they will often try to screw with you by pulling on your hair and small things like that. They're not malicious, just a little bit mischievous. The three of us dodge the shadows that reach for us, though we could easily command them to leave us be. It's just more fun for us like this.

We break out into a large clearing and come to a stop. We've used this particular clearing ever since we moved out of our parents' house over a century and a half ago. This is where we train our cerberus.

The three of us stand close to one another and call forth the cerberus. As

with shifting into our hellhound form, one minute, we're a hellhound, and the next, we're three souls inside one creature. In the cerberus form, we stand fifteen feet tall, and obviously, we have three heads. We each control one head, but it takes our combined thoughts to move the rest of our body.

Here, there is no hiding thoughts from one another as we're essentially one being. We learned from an early age how to allow our minds to combine to be able to be the cerberus. There were lots of mistakes in the beginning, and I'm sure it was hilarious to watch as we fell over our own feet.

And now that we're one, I'm reminded of what I've been missing. Never again. My brothers are a part of me, and I won't forget it again.

Chapter Four



Quinton

“We sit together, hand in hand, watching the sunset—”
Bang! Bang! Bang!

“Quin, get your ass out here! Your phone has been dinging like fucking crazy!”

Growling, I push pause on the recorder before storming out of the makeshift sound booth in the corner of the shared office. My mind is racing, trying to think about what could have my phone going off since I’m only working on one book right now, and I’m currently recording the last chapter.

Whatever it is better be good, or I’m going to need a reminder as to why I shouldn’t murder my roommate and best friend. Bain is a good guy, but he can be annoying as fuck and has zero respect for my workspace.

“What the fuck, Bain! I’m working!”

The infuriating Surtr just shrugs his shoulders and tosses me my phone before sitting at the breakfast bar separating the living room and kitchen. He has a massive sandwich in front of him. An evil revenge plot enters my mind, and I dash over to the bar and snatch his plate of lunch. Running back to the office with my phone, I hear him cursing and throwing things. Laughing, I slam the door closed and sit at Orion’s desk to check my phone.

There are forty new notifications from Love -N- Shenanigans. I’m really not sure why I even still have this joint account. It’s been months, and we’ve matched exactly three people. All three of them bailed when they realized we didn’t lie about our shifted forms to *seem more interesting* or *get bad guys*

points. I know there is someone out there who will want us for us, but this whole being patient and letting the fates decide things is getting old. I sometimes wonder if we would fare better dating on our own. Then I remember the pact we made when we met and dismiss that idea, too.

Looking through the notifications just makes me feel more uncertain about the whole dating profile thing. So many girls pass on us, and it would be one thing if they just dismissed us, but many of them leave nasty comments about our monsters and the fact that the three of us want to share someone. They say one monster looking for a mate is bad enough, but three is just nasty.

See? Hurtful, mean, spiteful women.

As I scroll to the last two notifications, I sit up straighter in the chair and hold the phone closer to my face. We actually have a match!

Laoise, pronounced Lee-Sha, is a unicorn fae shifter and is looking for a group of monsters to attend a stuffy Christmas party with. As I read her profile, I laugh. The girl is hilarious and completely oblivious to monster culture. She is fucking beautiful, though, and she seems really genuine. I can't stop staring at her profile picture. I see the link to some of her blogs and immediately click it. She has thousands of videos, so I scroll to the top and start watching.

Hours go by as I listen to her beauty tips, complaints about her parents, doting comments about her "coven," and over-the-top commentary about whatever celebrity gossip is hot at the time. She even did a whole segment on books that her friend recommended. I recognize most of the titles, and I even did the audiobooks for some of them. The last one is about her journey into Love -N- Shenanigans.

When I eventually look up from my phone, it's because Orion is home. He is standing over my shoulder, watching the video with me, and I just about

jump out of my damn skin. For such a massive man, he so fucking silent.

“Fuck Orion. Make some noise, man!”

He smirks at me and nods toward the phone with a raised brow. I swear the man says more words with a single look than he has ever spoken out loud. I guess that’s why I love him, though. He doesn’t have to say much to get his point across. Like just now, I know he wants to know why I’m watching a beautiful woman talk about joining a dating website when I should be finishing the last chapter of my book.

“She is our latest match.”

Orion rolls his eyes and turns to walk out of the room. Getting up, I clutch my phone to my chest and chase after him.

“Come on, O. Don’t be like that. She matched us, not the other way around.” He plops onto the couch next to Bain, who pauses his true crime documentary to focus on what we are talking about. “Just look at her profile.”

“Another match with a wicked woman who is going to tear us down?” Bain rolls his eyes, mimicking Orion’s reaction without having seen it. We’ve apparently been friends for too damn long.

“No. Not another wicked woman. Come on, guys. Just give it a chance. If it doesn’t work out, I’ll delete the profile, and we can live like monks, using our hands as our only means for release.”

Orion snorts, and Bain rolls his eyes again. I keep telling him they are going to get stuck like that one day, but he just doesn’t listen to me. Bain is kind of an asshole with an attitude. I don’t blame him for it, though; his whole family is looked down on because of a deal gone bad with his great-grandfather. He is slow to trust, but one of the most loyal people in the world once he is your friend.

Orion is the silent but observant type. He collects details and can quote

anything he hears or sees in perfect detail. It doesn't matter if it is a week from now or years from now; he doesn't forget a damn thing. He graduated as valedictorian for the whole college, and his entire speech was two words long. Thank you. That's it.

I shove the phone toward them, begging with my eyes and bouncing on my toes. The two share a look, and Orion slowly reaches out to take the phone from my hand. Bain leans over the ogre's shoulder so the two of them can look together, and I move around to the back of the couch to watch over their shoulders. I really want this to work. I want them to like her profile as much as I do so that I can message her and ask her out. We've been trying for months, almost a year actually, to find a woman that the three of us can love. I really think this might be the one. The one that is meant for us.

Orion scrolls through her profile, then goes back up to the top and starts again. The second time, he scrolls slower, paying attention to all the details on the page. He clicks on the photo section and looks through each one. Bain points at different sections, and when they read her notes section where she explains what she is looking for, they both chuckle. Eventually, Orion hands the phone back to me and pats the cushion beside him. I slide it into my pocket and hop over the back of the couch, planting my ass beside him.

"Well, I have to admit that I'm interested. She seems hilarious, and she is fucking beautiful." Bain runs a hand through his hair.

Orion nods his head, his eyes focused on the wall behind the television. I've known this man for over twenty years, so I know that he is collecting his thoughts.

"I think we should try, but she doesn't seem to want something permanent. We can't get our hopes up about her being our mate, but we can help get her

out from under her family's thumb. Message her and see if we can meet up and get to know each other."

YES!

They agreed! I'm so excited I dance in my seat, wiggling my ass and pumping my arms in the air. I don't give them any time to take it back. I pull out my phone and start writing the message. I thank her for matching with us and tell her a bit about all three of us. I ask if she wants to meet up sometime, then I pass the phone to the guys for their approval.

Each of them adds or adjusts what I wrote, and when Bain hands it back to me, I read it one more time, then hit send and put the phone down on the table in front of us. For a solid minute, we all just stare at the phone as if it was going to magically give us an answer. Eventually, Bain hits play on his documentary, and Orion gets up and goes to the kitchen, no doubt to start dinner. I sit back on the couch and watch the show with Bain, but I look at my phone every few minutes.

I see Bain and Orion both doing the same thing, and I know they see each and every one of my not-so-subtle glances, but none of us say anything. Orion finishes making beef stew for dinner, and we sit at the table to eat. Any time one of our phones ding, we all turn to look at the coffee table. If I was watching another group of guys watch a phone like we were, I'd laugh at them. But it's me and my friends, and I don't feel like laughing.

"We need to all calm down. She will respond when she is ready, and there isn't anything to do until then." Orion shoves another spoonful of rice and stew in his mouth, then takes a sip of water before continuing. "Quin, after dinner, take your phone to your room and hide it in the closet, then go finish your book so you can get paid. Bain, you need to finish your song since you

are performing this weekend. For the rest of the night, we are going to forget Love -N- Shenanigans.”

Once he is done giving orders, he stands up and takes his bowl to the sink before walking to his room. I know we won't see him for the rest of the night, just like he knows we won't check the phone again until the morning. That is something we agreed on when we started the profile. The three of us are all in this together. We're a family, and right now, that means I won't check the messages without my brothers there.

Getting up, I put my bowl next to Orion's and grab my phone to do as he asked. Bain has the dishes tonight, so once my phone is put away, hidden in a shoe box in the back of the top shelf in my closet, I head to the recording studio to finish the last chapter of the current project. It's been a long month and a half of recording, but the payout once the author is happy with the final results will be worth it. Orion edits the content and formats it so it can be uploaded to all the different audiobook vendors once the author approves it. Together, we make pretty good money and can afford to pay for the house while Bain works on his music.

That's part of the reason we wanted to share a mate. We can take care of someone better together than separately. Now the perfect girl has fallen into our laps, and we just have to make sure we don't screw it all up. Thank gods we have Orion.

Chapter Five



Biran

Budgets, payroll, and Kindle Unlimited royalty splits. This is my life now.

How the hell did this become my world? I love the math and the numbers. I like knowing that my brain is what keeps these authors going long enough to produce another masterpiece. Still, my love for my job doesn't feel like it used to. Something is missing now.

I feel empty and lonely even when I'm in a room full of people.

"Uncle Bi!" A tiny green-haired girl runs into my home office, smiling wide as she jumps into my arms.

"Hey there, Mouse." I wrap my niece up in my arms and lift her off of the floor, spinning her in a circle as she giggles.

When I set her on her feet, she shakes her head and sighs. "Uncle Biran, I'm not a mouse. I'm a basilisk, silly."

Laughter rolls into the room following the click of high-heeled shoes. Brittany pats Brea on the head and smirks at me. "Uncle Bi has trouble remembering what you are because he is so distracted all the time. Don't worry about it. How about you run along and play on Uncle Bi's Xbox while we have a chat."

My niece squeals and runs off out of the room, and I glare at my annoying baby sister. I know why she is here, and I wish that just once she would visit with the sole purpose of seeing me. Brittany always has an agenda, and it shouldn't surprise me, but it still does. As my clutch mate, she wants me to

be as happy as she is, and I can't fault her for that. Not really. Not when I pushed her so hard into the arms of her mates. I guess now it is time for her to return the favor.

"Brother, how are you?"

Sighing, I sit back down in my office chair and watch as she glides her way over and rests her rump on the edge of my desk beside my laptop. "Don't beat around the bush, Brit. What is it you came here to say?"

She tries to fake being hurt, but I glare at her, and the look slides off her face, and a smirk takes over her lips. She never was one to hide her true feelings for long, especially from me.

"You need a mate, Biran. You are a year out from your inheritance vanishing. Mom has tried to extend it, but there is nothing she can do. Grandmother says if you're not mated by Christmas of next year, she is closing your trust fund and taking away the money she gives you."

Brittany looks worried. She is rubbing my arm and watching my face. I've known for a while that my grandmother is going to insist I have a mate. I had hoped that she would let it go when Brittany had Brea, but she didn't. I don't even understand why she wants me mated. It's not like I'll have basilisk offspring like my sister. I'm never going to join a snake nest, and my mate wouldn't lay a clutch. Still, the old lizard is bound and determined to see me mated before I reach one hundred.

"What am I supposed to do, Brit? It's not like there is a Mates "R" Us that I can go and pick out a mate at!" I throw my hands up and look out the window.

"No, but there is something." She sounds a bit hesitant. I cut my eyes back to her and stare. "Don't be mad, brother."

Brittany is smiling, that smile she has had since we were children. The one

that says she knows she is going to be in trouble but is hoping her cuteness will get her out of it. It's the same smile my niece has. I know I'm not going to like what comes out of her mouth next.

“What did you do, Brittany?”

“I signed you up for this dating app that my friend heard about. Supposedly, it is run by the fates, and it has a high rate of matching mates.”

A fucking dating app! What the hell is she thinking? I don't want to let some algorithm decide who is a good match for me. I need to meet them, talk to them, and see if we are even compatible. Dating takes time and attention, not numbers and formulas.

I open my mouth to tell her to shove her dating site up her ass, but she jumps up and slams her hand over my mouth. She is rambling, saying words so fast that they blend together.

“Now, just hear me out! I'm not saying you have to meet anyone or that you will find your match or anything. I just think that it is a place to start. I've even looked at a few profiles of women that I think you will really like.” Slowly, she moves her hand off my mouth and pulls up something on my computer. “Please, brother, just look. Just try. Not for Grandmother or the trust fund; try because I can see how lonely you are, and it hurts me. Try because you are a good man, and you deserve to be happy.”

I keep my mouth shut as I look into my sister's eyes. I can see it. She isn't worried about me losing my inheritance, not really. We all know that I've grown my own wealth working for the publishing company. She isn't pushing me to have a mate because of my grandmother's agenda; she is doing it because I need a mate. And when I really think about it, she is right. I am lonely, and I do want a family.

I wave a hand toward the computer, and Brittany squeals just like her

daughter just did. Excitement has her jumping in place and throwing her arms around my neck as she repeatedly thanks me. Eventually, she calms down and shows me how the website works. Together, we finish setting up my profile and fine-tune the things I'm looking for in a mate. Brittany giggles as I answer questions about what I want in the bedroom and groans when I don't put anything specific down.

Once the profile is done, we go through a few profiles of potential matches. None of them feel right. Brittany gets excited about a witch, but I see her profile says she is looking for a single mate. Snakes are polyamorous by nature, and having a woman to myself may sound great, but I'd miss the camaraderie found in a poly relationship. I don't want to be the only mate a woman has. No one man is enough to fill every need a woman may have. Sure, it can and does work, but too many sacrifices are made by both parties.

There is another woman, an elf, who is looking for multiple mates, but she doesn't want any shifters. There is a wolf shifter, but she is afraid of snakes. A human that doesn't want any children. Profile after profile, we look, and I find something that doesn't work for me. Brea comes in and asks to help, and since she is a big part of my life, I decide to let her.

She climbs on my lap, and we start looking at profiles again. I have to fight to keep a laugh the whole time Brea is looking at the profiles with us because she may be more critical than I am. I see a profile of a witch that I actually like at first glance, but Brea rejects it.

“She is not your mate, Uncle Bi.”

“Yeah? Why not, Mouse?”

“Look at her shirt! It clashes with her shoes, and she didn't even try to make her hair pretty. Plus, she works at a music store, and she doesn't have brothers!”

Before I can argue a case for the witch, the little snake is clicking away from the profile. She scrolls down the list, shaking her head at pictures and scoffing. Brittany and I glance and smile at one another as Brea mumbles under her breath about “the quality of girls on this app” like she is a thirty-year-old woman and not a five-year-old child.

“This one. This is my new aunt.” Brea draws our attention back to the computer as she clicks on a profile.

My heart stops beating as I stare at the picture. Rainbow hair styled beautifully, yet simple. She is smiling wide as she holds a candle in both her hands. I read her profile and find myself laughing out loud at her answers. It doesn't say that she is looking for a mate, but I can work with what she is looking for. My monster may be...well, monstrous, but I was raised in high society and know what is expected at fancy dinner parties. I read more, and I'm pleasantly surprised by all the information she has. Brea is rambling about all her photos, and even Brittany is mumbling about wanting to go check out her blog. I keep getting drawn back to her profile picture.

Every time I look at it, I find something else to like about her. She is stunning, there is no doubt about that, but it's more than just a pretty face. Her eyes seem to dance with joy, even through the computer screen. Her smile is genuine, and it doesn't feel like it's staged. Even though she makes a living with her looks, she still feels real in her pictures. I want to talk to her, find out more about her. I can picture us chatting for hours, and it doesn't feel like I'd get bored. Her profile seems honest.

Brittany clicks the green check before I can even tear my eyes off her picture. I stutter as I gape at my sister. Brea snickers at the look on my face and calls me Uncle Fish. A ding rings out from the computer, and all three of

us snap our attention back to the screen. Laoise messaged me. *Holy shit!* She actually sent me a message.

“What do I do?” I’m not sure who I’m asking exactly.

I know that my face is white, and my eyes feel dry with how wide I’m holding them. With the way I’m acting, you’d think I’ve never been on a date or even talked to a girl before. It’s just that she is so pretty, and this is so sudden. I haven’t had time to process or run the statistics. Hell, I don’t even know what I would say to her.

“You say hello. Talk to her, get to know her, and if it feels right, ask her to coffee. We are leaving, but I want an update before bed tonight, or I will be right back over here tomorrow.” Brittany picks Brea up off my lap, and the two of them kiss the top of my head while I’m still staring at the message on the screen.

I hear the door click shut and listen to Brittany’s heels click down the hall, and I still don’t move to open the message to see what she said. I’m frozen, trapped in my own brain, unsure what to do or say. The ding of a second message is what finally pulls me out of the fog. She said something else, messaged me again. Shit.

I click on the message and immediately smile.

Laoise:

Hi! Thanks for clicking on my profile. I'm excited to get to know you some. A basilisk is like a giant snake, right?

Laoise:

Shit! It's probably rude to ask about your animal form right away, isn't it? I'm sorry.

I have no choice but to answer her now; I don't want her to think she was rude.

Hello. It's not rude at all. A basilisk is a giant snake, but what most people don't realize is that we also have four legs like a lizard. Harry Potter really got it wrong.

She replies right away, and we spend the next hour talking. The more we chat, the more I grow to like her. She is funny and isn't ashamed to ask questions. Eventually, she mentions a date she is going on with a set of roommates and asks if I'd like to join them, and I agree. When we finally get off the chat, it's ten at night, and I have six missed messages from Brittany. I can't stop smiling. I'm going to meet Laoise, the unicorn fae looking to piss off her parents.

Chapter Six



Laoise

Holy shit. That was fast.

I've had my profile up on Love -N- Shenanigans for maybe a day and a half, and already, I have thirty messages. Most of them are from weirdos who found my blog and just want their fifteen minutes of fame, but a few of them seem promising.

First, there are the triplet hellhound brothers who are looking for one mate. They're all cute, and Dáinn is just downright adorable. Tams is sweet, if not a bit awkward over chat, but I haven't heard much of anything from the third brother, Aeron.

I also matched with a profile of three roommates. They all share one profile, so I don't know much about them as individuals, but from what I've learned so far, they all seem really sweet. I got really excited when they asked if we could have coffee later in the week.

Finally, the profile I just matched with, Biran. He is a basilisk shifter, and he is hilarious. We spent an hour chatting last night, and I impulsively asked him to come to the coffee date with the roommates. I know I need to tell the roomies that I invited someone else; I'm just not sure how to bring it up.

I decide to ask the witches and Belle at our coffee date today. The coffee date that I am five minutes late getting to. Shit. I put my hair up in a high pony and grab my phone and purse before rushing out the door.

When I get to the coffee shop, my favorite barista is working again. I run up to him and wrap my arms around his waist.

“Thank you so much for telling me about Love -N- Shenanigans. You, sir, are my hero!”

He pats my back with his one available hand while moving the tray of coffees he’s holding over his head. “No problem. You want your usual?”

I nod and squeeze him one more time before skipping off to our table in the back corner. Tali is smirking and shaking her head at me as I sit, and Belle looks a bit confused.

“Um, what just happened?” Belle’s sweet voice is quiet as always, but I can hear the confusion in her question.

“I have a date with four monsters later this week, all because that man told us about a website that is practically a gold mine.” I smile proudly as the girls all shake their heads.

“I still don’t think this is a good idea. What are you going to do if they cut you off?” Tali twists a napkin in her hand as she stares at me.

Something is off with that witch, but I know better than to ask her about it right now. She will tell us when she is ready, and if she doesn’t, then Chloe will force it out of her. She knows we have her back no matter what.

“So, the website is legit and everything?” Tali asks, finally looking up at me.

“So far so good.”

Belle is quiet, glancing around but not really seeing anything. The roommates are hiding something, but they obviously aren’t ready to talk about it yet. I’ll give them space and let them bring it to the coven when they are ready.

“So, what are you guys doing this week?”

The conversation veers away from the website and onto our normal weekly update. When the coffee is gone, and Tali has to get back to the office, we all

leave together. I head home with my mind still wondering about what is bothering Belle and Tali.

Once I get through the door, my phone pings with messages from the dating app. I can't help the smile on my face when I see two of the triplets and the basilisk have messaged me. I spend a good hour chatting with the guys before hopping on the computer and doing my blog for the day. I have a party to go to with Tali tonight, so I'm doing a "Get Ready With Me" video and chatting about my experience with Love -N- Shenanigans. I gush about how easy the site is to use and how responsive the matches are to messages.

My blog has a live chat feature, and I almost drop my eyeshadow brush when I see a comment from Biran.

SnakeBoi444: I'd like to say that I enjoy the site as well!

VoiceMan23: I love that eyeshadow color! And I agree that the dating website is easy to navigate.

VoiceMan23: Oh, and this is Quin, BTW!

These two are just too fucking cute!

Two of the guys I've been chatting to are currently watching my blog and chatting on a public forum. The only way they could have known I am live is if they followed and subscribed to the blog and turned on notifications. The comments below them are full of women excitedly chatting, asking if these two are some of the matches I've made so far.

My viewers are viciously questioning the guys. Surprisingly, they are taking it very well. Quin is a jokester, sending laughing emojis and funny one-liners when he doesn't want to outright answer a question. Biran is

honest and doesn't seem to shy away from any question. Some of them are downright ridiculous. One viewer asked the guys if they eat meat, and all Biran responded was, "I'm a snake."

When Belle asks them what they do for a living, I'm as surprised as the guys are to learn that they work for the same publishing company.

Of course, Belle immediately starts asking about the authors they work for and the books that Quin has done vocals for. The conversation goes on for a few more minutes while I try to bring the attention back to the smoky-eye look I'm going for.

At one point, I'm laughing so hard I have to put my blush brush down and take a few deep breaths before I can keep going.

"Oh my goodness!" I breathlessly comment to the camera. "You guys have to stop, or I'm in no way going to be ready in time."

My makeup is almost done, so I try to pull attention back to the blog by asking for opinions on how I should wear my hair. Thank the gods for friends because Belle asks what I'm wearing, and the chat immediately gets back on track.

The guys give their opinions but aren't really helpful as Quin keeps asking if I'll try on the three different outfits, and Biran keeps insisting that *everyone looks good in green*. Belle is more helpful, reminding me that one of the dress options is a bit too clubbish for the business party I'm attending tonight and that the high-rise slacks would look amazing with a white button-up blouse tucked in. Quin says that I need killer heels to finish up the look, and Biran says his sister said to go with simple jewelry and my hair straightened.

I finally end up taking all of their suggestions, and the finishing look is both hot and sophisticated. I'm pleased to see that I finished getting ready with ten minutes to spare. Just enough time to close out my blog for the night.

“Okay, viewers!” I smile into the camera. “That is it for tonight! I’ll be posting pics of all the fashion hots and nots. Until next time!”

I give my signature sign-off and shut down the blog with butterflies fluttering in my belly. My unicorn is snorting inside my head. Laughing, I promise to let her run free after the party, and she settles down.

My thoughts turn to Biran and Quin while I wait for Tali to pick me up. They are both hilarious and seem to be a ball of fun. I’m really looking forward to spending more time with them. I know that I initially said I wasn’t looking for something serious, but I can really see myself having a good time with the two of them.

Come on, Lee, don’t get attached to the monsters you haven’t even met in person yet. Hell, Mother may murder them on Christmas.

I know I’m right, but my heart sinks just a bit at the thought.

A knock on my door pulls me out of my downward-spiraling thoughts. Sighing, I grab my clutch and make sure my phone, wallet, keys, and lipstick are safely inside before walking out the door. Tonight is about Tali. I’ll worry about my family and monsters later.

Tali smiles and immediately starts grilling me about the boys on the blog. The whole night is fun. Jason, Tali’s boyfriend of three years, is named partner, and Tali looks so proud. I’m happy she is happy, but I don’t like the way Jason acts toward her after the announcement. I mentally decide I’ll make his life a living hell if he ends up hurting her.

I spend the night marketing my blog to all of Tali’s business friends and take snapshots of men and women who stand out, either for their stylish outfits or the train wrecks they somehow wore out of their houses. Nobody with as much money as this group has should ever come out in a polka-dot dress suit—I’m just saying!

All in all, the night out with Tali is fun. I got to know the people she works with and got some great content for my blog. My mind stayed off of my family for the whole party. Tali got to use her magic when the lights went out due to a power surge, and I loved watching the purple aura that her magic leaves. It's so pretty, and it makes my skin tingle in the most pleasant ways.

When I finally get home and shower, the thoughts I've been pushing away all night finally settle in. My family.

My mother and father are both snobs. In their minds, only unicorn fae are worthy of respect. I've always hated the way they disregard all the other races. That is the whole reason my brother joined the military and the reason I left the Fae Realm as soon as I could.

Now, my insane mother thinks she can set me up with some sort of arranged mating, and I refuse to let it happen. Sure, they may cut me off after I crash the annual Christmas party with a hoard of monsters, but I don't really need their money anyway. The only downside to them cutting me off is not being able to see my brother anymore.

Lorcan has always been my shield. He is the reason I didn't turn into a speciest prick like the rest of my family. He is also the only out gay unicorn in all of the Fae Realm and one of the most decorated officers in the military. As it is, I only get to see him once a year. If my family cuts me off and bans me from the Fae Realm, then I'll never see him again.

Not seeing Lorcan again will break my heart. It may even crush me, but I can't allow her to keep running over my life. I'll do this—bring monsters to the Christmas party, and I'll deal with any consequences that come from it. Even if I'm dying on the inside, I'll get free from my family one way or another.

Chapter Seven



Rory

This was seriously a bad idea.

As I stare at the screen, I shake my head. Signing up for a dating service? It might be my worst idea yet. While I've "matched" to a few people, they have not, in fact, been a match. I thought this site was supposed to be different. It's been touted as the place to meet your fated mate, but so far, that hasn't been the case.

Honestly, it's almost enough to make me give up—again. As a giant/redcap hybrid, it's hard to find anyone willing to date me. Let's just say it's not a hybrid that will probably ever be seen again. I don't like to think of my parents having sex—because who does?—but it's hard to imagine that it's possible.

My mom is the redcap and is under five feet tall in her human form. In her redcap form? Yeah, she's under four feet. Meanwhile, a small giant like my dad is over ten feet tall, and even in his human form, he's over seven feet. I get liking a size difference, but really?

I get men and women alike who are worried about how proportionate I am—the answer is very—and that we won't be sexually compatible. Then there are the ones who think that redcaps are nothing but bloodthirsty assholes. We're not, by the way. It's only during battle that we fall to the bloodlust.

I'm not saying I don't like a bit of blood, but it's not like I'm a vampire or something. But people are assholes, so here I am, giving dating one last shot.

It's my mom's fault. She won't stop hounding me about finding my mate—as if it's that easy. I figured that signing up for Love -N- Shenanigans would shut her up about it. I just didn't realize how much it would be like dating in the real world. I haven't even made it to a date yet.

But now, there's a new profile waiting for me to review. I'm afraid to click on it.

I know, the big bad giant/redcap hybrid is afraid of clicking on a profile. It's absolutely ridiculous. I just don't want to get my hopes up again. Both of my parents would be giving me such shit if they could see me right now. Especially since it's in the middle of the workday.

I'm meant to be doing paperwork for my construction company, but I can't seem to bring myself to do it—the paperwork, I mean. That's why I'm sitting here staring at the stupid dating website. Because it sounded like more fun than doing paperwork.

With a sigh, I click on the profile. My mouth falls open at the sight of the beautiful creature before me. I'm not exaggerating when I say she's the most beautiful woman I've ever seen. How the hell did I get matched with her?

I almost close out her profile without reading it because I know she won't want anything to do with me. But there's something niggling at the back of my brain, telling me I can't—that this is a life-changing moment for me.

Knowing that I'm just setting myself up for more hurt, I decide to check out her profile. A smile spreads across my lips, hope spreading throughout me as I continue to read. Coming to the end, I recognize what the niggling is about.

Laoise Fitzgerald is my fated mate!!! I'm not sure how I'm so positive about this, but I'm fairly certain I am. Somehow, I know she is the woman that's meant for me.

I've found her, and she's even more perfect than I could've ever imagined.

She's only looking for monsters to piss off her parents for a party, but I'm sure that as soon as she realizes we're fated, she'll want more.

Right? Like, who would give up their fated mate?

But anxiety is already creeping up, and I'm wondering if I should even message her. She certainly can't want me, fated or not. This was a bad idea. I shouldn't have done this.

"Hey, boss!"

My head jerks up to find my best friend and foreman, Damon, standing there. He tilts his head as I just stare back at him before pursing his lips. "You're having a panic attack. Come on, Rory, get to your breathing."

Damon moves around and lays his hand on my shoulder, and I force myself to focus on my breathing. Since he caught me early, it should only take the breathing to right myself—hopefully. Once the panic has eased, I slap my hand down on his and squeeze.

"Thanks, Damon. I didn't even realize what was going on." I turn to look up at him, a smile on my face, until I realize he's staring at my screen. "Seriously? Do we need to talk about respecting people's privacy again?"

Damon smirks as he turns his attention to me. "It hasn't stuck yet. I don't know why you think it'll stick now. Who's the babe?"

I consider telling him to shove off and not tell him a thing, but I'd have to tell him eventually. "I think she's my mate."

"That woman? She's way too pretty for your ugly mug." Damon smacks my face with a shake of his head. "Is she a unicorn fae?"

"Ummm, yes. How did you know that?"

He chuckles. "Because I'm from the Fae Realm, and I've met my share of unicorn fae. The hair and eye color give them away every time. They're

usually a bunch of snobs that look down on everyone else, so if she is your mate, then I hope she isn't like that."

"She's not." I shake my head, explaining the situation to him.

"Hell, yes!" Damon slaps a hand down on his thigh. "Why haven't you already messaged her? She sounds like the perfect woman to me."

I shrug, not wanting to tell him I'm afraid, but we've known each other for years. Even without me saying a word, he knows exactly what I'm thinking.

"Hey, man, don't psych yourself out. If she is your fated mate, then she'll accept you just the way you are. If she's not, then you'll help her out with her family. You're the perfect monster for what she's looking for. I wonder if she'll have you shift. No offense man, but you're scary as shit when you shift."

I wrinkle my nose. "Exactly. I don't want her to see me like that."

He laughs, shaking his head. "You don't even know her yet. You don't know how she'll react. At least ask her out on a date. I'm sure she wants to meet you before she brings you to another realm, and based upon that profile, she's wanting to bring multiple monsters. You might as well throw your hat in the ring."

He's probably right. Having a conversation with her won't hurt anything. With a resolute nod, I hit the message button.

Hi, Laoise. I saw that we matched and wanted to say hi. I'd be very interested in attending your parents' party with you if you'd like.

Well, not interested in the party, per se, but with helping you put one over on your parents. It sounds like they need to be put in their place.

Also, I love your name. And you're the prettiest woman I've ever seen.

Gods, why am I so bad at this? Probably the lack of practice.

Damon is snickering behind me, and it takes a lot of willpower to not turn around and deck him right now. It's not my fault I'm so awkward.

"Shut up, asshole. I don't even know why we're friends." Running my hands through my red hair, I move to shut the browser. There's no need for me to sit here waiting for a response from her. Except, when I'm about to close it out, a message comes through from her.

LAOISE

Hi Rory! I've had a surprising number of men who are willing to help me out. It's insane! Though, to be truthful, some of them were absolute creepers.

You're not a creeper, right? You don't seem like a creeper.

I grin, hands already poised to respond.

Not a creeper, but definitely a bit awkward over text. I hope you
don't mind

LAOISE

Not at all. Not that I think you're awkward.

So, I see that you're half-giant and half-redcap. That's...an odd hybrid.

Isn't it ju

This is it. This is when she says she isn't interested. That I scare her. That I disgust her.

LAOISE

Honestly, I love it. I'd kill to see you in your monster form.

Is that rude? It might be rude. But I stand by it.

Laughing, I shake my head.

I don't think it's rude. I'm not sure I want to show you right away
but who knows...maybe one day

LAOISE

I'd like that.

I know this is usually the guy's job, but I'm a strong independent woman, so fuck what society wants us to believe. Would you like to go on a date with me? I've been craving cupcakes, so we could go to The Icing on Top. It would be with some others I matched with as well.

Are you sure

LAOISE

I wouldn't have asked if I wasn't.

Unless you're not actually interested?

I'm definitely interested. I just didn't think you would be.

This is probably when I should mention I've never been on a date before.

LAOISE

Like ever?

A pat on my shoulder surprises me, and I jerk my head around to blink up at Damon. I'd completely forgotten he was here. He just laughs.

"I see you have this all in order. I'm heading out for the day. The last crew has already made it back. You should go home soon."

I nod. "Just as soon as I'm done talking to Laoise."

Turning away from my friend, I explain to Laoise how there's never been anyone who was interested in dating me. Finding someone to sleep with me...that's never been a problem. I know how to pleasure myself and others in the bedroom, but outside of it? I haven't got a clue. I figure she might as well get the whole story before we go out on a date. She needs to know what she's getting into. I don't go too in-depth into my preferred kinks, as that's something we can discuss when we've reached that point in our relationship.

To say I'm surprised that she still wants to go out on a date afterward is putting things mildly. We make plans to meet at the cupcake shop in a few days, and then, if we want, we can grab coffee or something else. I don't even mind that she's inviting others on our date.

I can't wipe the grin off my face as I shut down my computer. This isn't how I was expecting my day to go, but I can't say that I mind. I'm actually really fucking excited.

My first thought is that I should call my mom—yes, I'm a mama's boy, and I don't care who knows it—but I realize that I probably should wait until after our date. I can't be a hundred percent sure she's my mate until I meet her in person. There's no point in getting my mom's hopes up, right?

Just like that, the anxiety begins creeping in once more.

Shit, it seems I need to make an emergency appointment with my therapist. I shoot her a quick message asking if she's got time tonight, and she responds almost immediately that she can do a video visit in two hours.

I know I cut an intimidating figure with my height and bulk, but I dealt with almost debilitating anxiety when I was a teenager. It's something that I outgrew, but every once in a while, something will take me by surprise and send me spiraling. This is just me being proactive and making sure this doesn't become a thing. I might be a little jumpy when I start dealing with anxiety. I guess a part of me is afraid that I'll go back to the way I was as a teen.

But that's the exact reason I have a therapist.

I climb into my truck, knowing that I'm doing the right thing. It's just me taking care of my mental health before I meet Laoise. I really need to take better care of myself anyway. Especially if Laoise really is my mate. If I can't take care of myself, I can't take care of a mate. It really is better to be safe than sorry.

Gods, I can't wait until our date. I just pray that it goes well.

Chapter Eight



Laoise

“Hey, friends.” I smile into the camera, trying to contain both my excitement and my nerves. “Today’s the day. I’m going on my first date. Not only do I have the triplets, but another guy I matched with, too. It’s a little intimidating, but really, if I already have the triplets coming to meet me, what’s one more?”

I laugh at that, shaking my head. A glance down, realizing that there are comments already pouring in. My viewers are the best. All their comments encourage me to go out there and show them how awesome I am or how they’d be dumb not to realize just how amazing I am. I don’t have a problem with self-confidence, but if I did, this would definitely help a girl out.

“Thank you for the kind words. I always love how supportive you are of me. And yes, I’m nervous. How can I not be? But I’m also really excited. Now, today, I’m going to show you how to get a look that works both for day and night. Why? Because my date might be starting early, but if all goes well, who knows? It might turn into a nighttime date, too. It’s better to be prepared for anything.

“Which can be made harder by it being wintertime for me. Always dress for the weather. No matter how hot you look in that mini dress, if you’re going to freeze your little tush off, it’s not worth it.” I wrinkle my nose. “That’s not to say that dresses are a no-no during winter, but it has to be paired right.”

I continue talking through the three outfits I’ve chosen, both showing and telling them what works with it and what doesn’t. Then I go into makeup tips

on how to change your day look to a night look while only carrying the bare minimum with you.

“And now it’s time for me to get dressed before I’m late to my date! Until next time!” I quickly close out the live session with my signature closing and end the video.

I really do need to hurry. I’m meant to be meeting them in about fifteen minutes. I shimmy into my leather pants that hug my every curve before pulling on my over-the-knee-heeled boots. I had them custom-made in the Fae Realm, so they fit perfectly.

The top I pull on is a hot pink lacy camisole that boosts the girls perfectly without ever needing a bra. Over top of that, I pull on a white off-the-shoulder sweater so the straps of the camisole are showing. A pair of large hoop earrings, layered, dangling necklaces, and some bangle bracelets, and I’m good. I toss my hair into a messy high pony, and I’m ready to go.

It’s an effortless look that I can pull off easily, but that I can also dress up with darker makeup, a quick change of jewelry, and losing the sweater. I’ve already tossed everything in my bag, so I grab it and my black leather jacket. Throwing it on, I step outside to discover that it started snowing.

I love the snow, so I head toward the cupcake place with an extra bounce in my step. It’s easy to see the four of them standing outside as I approach. They haven’t noticed me yet, so I take a moment to study them.

Thank goodness the triplets keep their hair different, or I wouldn’t be able to tell them apart. They’re hot as hell and the shortest of the men I’ve been talking to. At six-foot-one, they’re on the tall side for humans, but they’re barely three inches taller than me. In fact, with my heels on, we’re probably going to be the same height.

Dáinn is grinning at something Aeron has just said, lighting up his face.

He's slender, but I've seen pictures of him without a shirt, so I know he's in good shape beneath his clothes. His thick black hair looks as if he's been running his fingers through it, but it always seems to look like that—at least based on the pictures.

Aeron has a cocky grin in place as he runs a hand through his black hair. He's the only one of the three I haven't really talked to before now, and he screams bad boy. I'd like to say I'm immune to a bad boy's charm, but I'm not. Now, if he's an asshole, that could be a problem, but only time will tell. His build is slightly broader than Dáinn's, but not by much.

Meanwhile, their third brother, Tam? He's all bulk and wide shoulders, with his black hair buzzed close to his head. There's a half smile on his face, but his eyes dance with laughter as he watches his brothers. He's the quiet one of the group, but at least he bothered messaging me—unlike Aeron.

Nope, I'm not at all bitter about that.

Forcing my eyes away from the gorgeous triplets, my eyes land on Rory. He's tall—really tall. He told me he's six-foot-eight, but I didn't really know what that looks like. He's leaning against the wall outside the cupcake shop, and even from this distance, I know he's going to tower over me. I'm kind of excited about it since it's not often that I experience that. The downside to being tall.

Rory looks like a giant—no, not the giant he's descended from, but what humans call tall, broad men—and absolutely beautiful. His hair is that classic red that most women pay fortunes trying to recreate that's perfectly styled, and he has a hint of stubble on his face. It's darker than his hair, closer to brown than red. He's watching the triplets with a smirk, and I wonder if he knows they're here to meet me as well.

Watching as he tilts his head as Dáinn speaks animatedly, I realize that, no,

that's not why he's looking at them. He's checking out Dáinn's ass right now, and why is that so fucking hot?

As if he can hear my thoughts, Rory's eyes flicker up to meet mine. He cocks an eyebrow when he realizes I'm frozen on the sidewalk, his smirk only growing. I don't know how, but something tells me he's daring me to call him out on it. Or maybe he's just flirting?

Oh, yeah, big guy? Bring it on. Two can play that game.

I shoot him a wink, sauntering toward the four of them. The triplet's heads jerk up as I approach, and the look in their eyes sends a shiver up my spine. Desire heats all of their gazes, and a glance at Rory shows that he wears the same look.

A girl could get used to this. I give them a finger wave. "Evening, boys. Thanks for meeting me."

"The pleasure is all ours," Rory says. His voice is deep, and it's sexy as hell. When he takes my hand, lifting it to his lips, it's all I can do not to melt into a puddle at his feet. "You're even more beautiful in person."

Before I can respond, he drops my hand so the triplets can step up. Dáinn pulls me into a hug, our bodies snug from our shoulders to our thighs, revealing that he certainly likes the way I look. "I'm so glad you decided to go on a date with us. I've been looking forward to this since we matched."

"So have I," I say as I pull back, patting a hand on his cheek. "Dáinn, right?"

He nods like an excited puppy, and I grin at him. How can I not? I've never met anyone with literal golden retriever vibes until right now, and I kind of love it.

"And who do you think I am?" Aeron's smirking at me again. Does it make me a bad person to want to reach over and slap it off his face?

Yes? Damn, I thought so.

“You? You’re the asshole who thinks he can sweep in on his brothers’ tailcoats without making any effort himself. I’d say it’s nice to meet you, Aeron, but I’m not sure it is. Only time will tell.” The smile I give him is sweet as he gapes at me.

“Buuuuuurn.” Dáinn slaps his brother on the shoulder with a laugh. “She called you out.”

Tamesis grins as he turns to me. “Thank you for that. Aeron doesn’t get put in his place nearly often enough for my tastes.”

“It’s nice to meet you in person, Tam.” He doesn’t seem like a hugger like his brother, so I offer him my hand.

He takes it with a smile, shaking it firmly before releasing me. “It’s a pleasure to meet you as well. And please, feel free to put my brother in his place as often as you’d like.”

Looking between the triplets and Rory, I ask, “Have the four of you met before?”

“Nope, I guess I should’ve guessed that the hot giant was here for you as well.” Dáinn winks, first at me and then at Rory. “I’m Dáinn, the hot triplet.”

Rory chuckles as he takes his hand. “While I’ll admit you are hot, aren’t the three of you identical?”

Dáinn shrugs, not letting go of Rory’s hand. “But I’m the only one that’s into both men and women, soooooo.”

“I’m Rory,” he says with a grin, and I kind of love their flirting. I’m definitely not against it if they’re attracted to one another. It’s one of the few things I love about being a unicorn fae. While they may be judgy as hell about other species, they truly do believe love is love and that it comes in many forms.

“The dickhead behind me is Aeron, and the quiet one is Tamesis or Tam.” Dáinn doesn’t relinquish his hold on the other man’s hand when he tries to pull away, and it just makes Rory’s smile grow wider.

“It’s nice to meet you all.” He lifts his head to nod at Aeron and Tamesis before turning his attention back to Dáinn. “Unfortunately, I don’t think we’ll be able to get on with this date if you keep holding my hand like this.”

Dáinn pouts but releases Rory’s hand. “Spoilsport.”

I just laugh. “So, who’s in the mood for cupcakes? Because I sure am.”

“Hell, yes!” Dáinn pumps his fist in the air. “I love cupcakes and cakes and, really, anything sweet. Thank goodness for hellhound metabolism, am I right?”

“You might want to be careful announcing that out loud,” I advise him with a wince, eyes roaming around to see if anyone might have heard him. “Obviously, in the Hell Realm, you don’t have to be careful about supernatural things, but in the Mortal Realm, you can’t just say that kind of stuff. If a human overheard you, we’d all be in big trouble. For all you know, Rory could be a human.”

Aeron snickers, obviously happy that his brother is the one being chastised and not him this time, before tapping his nose. “Shifter senses. He’s a hybrid of some kind. Definitely at least part giant, but I don’t know the other scent.”

While his words make me feel better, I still need them to understand what’s at stake here. This is the problem with having supes from other realms visiting the Mortal Realm.

“That’s all good and well, but anyone could have been walking by and overheard you. I can’t be sent back to the Fae Realm. I hate it there, and I’d be the one to take the blame—”

“Hey, hey, hey.” Tamesis cups my face, turning my head until I’m looking

at him. “All of our senses are enhanced. Dáinn knew there wasn’t anyone nearby, but I promise we’ll all be careful, okay?”

I nod slowly. “Okay.”

He gives me a reassuring smile as his hand drops away, and I find myself missing his touch. What the hell? Did someone cast a spell on me? How can I miss someone’s touch when I’ve just met them? I think this whole situation with my parents and the betrothal has my stress levels off the chart and it has me reacting in weird ways.

I don’t like it—not one bit.

“Now, didn’t someone say something about cupcakes?” Rory asks, and I shoot him a grateful smile. I’m glad none of them seem too focused on my reactions—which, let’s be real, were major overreactions.

“Yes, please. I need sugar.” I shake my head, willing my dark thoughts away. I want to enjoy my time with them, not spend it thinking about my parents yet again.

Dáinn pushes past Tamesis so he can stand next to me. “I’m going to need you to tell me what’s good. Otherwise, I’m likely to order one of every cupcake.”

“Everything that Nova makes is like heaven. I’ve never tasted a bad cupcake from here before.”

Rory chuckles. “Sounds like we’re going to be getting a ton of cupcakes then.”

Chapter Nine



Dáinn

After cupcakes, we find ourselves at Serendripity. This is the first time I've been to Fort Veyelsa, but I kind of love it here. There are so many supernaturals and humans living in one place. In the Hell Realm, there are very few humans. We've been to the Mortal Realm before, but not often. So, this is a bit odd to me.

Not that I'm really focusing on the others in Laoise's hometown. How can I when this beautiful unicorn fae is sitting across from me talking so animatedly? I'm usually not the quiet one, but I just love listening to her talk.

She's already bringing Tamesis out of his shell. He's said more words in the last hour than combined over the last week, I swear. Okay, that might be a slight exaggeration, but not by much. Plus, she has Aeron practically eating out of the palm of her hand. She'd been right to call him out and then ignore him. Now, he's doing anything he can to get her attention.

"Dáinn?"

My head jerks up to meet Laoise's eyes as she gives me a questioning smile. She obviously asked me something, but I missed it. "I'm sorry. I was just thinking about how much fun I'm having. Best date ever."

She laughs, and it's the most melodic sound ever, entrancing me further. If I didn't know she was a unicorn fae, then I'd think she was a succubus. It's like everyone around her wants to be in her aura. The only other species I've seen be able to do that are the cubi—succubi and incubi. I'm curious whether

that's a unicorn fae thing or just a Laoise thing. Hopefully, I'll find out in a week or so. Because I really hope she picks us—and Rory.

Cause damn, that man is hot.

Laoise giggles again, and I wrinkle my nose. “I missed you talking to me again, didn't I? I'm sorry.”

“It's okay.” She lays her hand on mine. “I was just asking what you like to do for fun. Tamesis fights, Aeron pisses people off, and you?”

“I don't piss people off,” Aeron grumbles, but Laoise just shoots him a look that says she doesn't believe him.

I shrug. “I'm the fun one. Demons invite me to do all kinds of things on the regular. I just do whatever they're all doing, I guess.”

Laoise frowns at that, which I don't understand. “But what do you like to do?”

“I dunno. I enjoy most things.”

“Okay, but what do you like to do for you?”

Now it's my turn to frown because I don't often do things because I want to. I usually just roll with what everyone else wants to do. Except on the rare occasion that I'm alone. “I do like reading smut.”

“Hell, yes!” Laoise bounces in her chair. “I think all men should read smut. One of my best witches, Belle, is obsessed with books. She even works in the indie author community. She's always giving me book recs. Do you have a favorite author?”

Aeron is giving me the side-eye, telling me I should be ashamed of what I just admitted, but I'm not. There's nothing wrong with liking something—even when your brothers tease you about it. Ignoring him, I turn back to Laoise.

“I have a ton of favorites. Mila Sin, Grace McGinty, Merri Bright... I could

list authors for days. What about you?”

And that’s how we fall into talking about indie authors and who we love. When I glance at Rory, I find him grinning at me. My face flushes, and I have to fight myself from ducking my head. “What?”

“You really love reading these books, don’t you? You get really excited when you talk about it.”

I shrug. “Yeah. Maybe.”

He chuckles. “Give me your phone.”

I reach for it without a second thought, handing it over to him before I have time to process the request. “Wait, what? Why?”

“So, I can add my number.” My flush darkens when he shoots me a wink. “I think I need to read some of these books the two of you are talking about. You can steer me in the right direction, can’t you?”

I bite my lip, nodding as I try to hide my smile. Sure, I came here to meet Laoise, and I’m definitely still interested in her, but Rory intrigues me, too. Glancing at Laoise, she’s grinning broadly as she glances between the two of us. When she catches me watching her, she shoots me a thumbs up, and I’m guessing that’s her giving her blessing.

“So, Tam, if I wanted to learn to fight, you’d be the one I’d ask about it, right?” Laoise turns her attention to my brothers, smiling when Tam nods. “Besides pissing people off, what else do you love to do, Aeron?”

“I don’t enjoy pissing people off—”

Tamesis chokes on his coffee, and Aeron sends him a glare but sighs.

“Fine. Maybe I do enjoy pissing people off, but at least all the annoying twats leave me alone.” Aeron grins when that pulls a giggle from Laoise. “I don’t much like people as a whole, so I’d rather avoid them. Usually, I play video games.”

She nods. “I never got into video games, but I’ve heard they’re a lot of fun. Especially if you’re good at them. And Rory, what’s your favorite thing to do?”

“Cooking or baking.” Rory flushes, and I grin up at him. There’s nothing sexier than a man who likes to cook.

“Oh, good. I’m helpless in the kitchen,” she says with a laugh. “So, what do all of you do for a job?”

Rory shrugs his shoulders. “I own a construction company called RedCap Construction. My best friend works as my foreman. We’ve been building it up for the last twenty or so years.”

“So that makes you how old?” I prod.

“Fifty-seven.” Rory cocks an eyebrow as if daring me to say something about his age.

Laoise’s eyes light up. “Oh, good, so you’re a long-living species too. It’s one of the reasons I can’t bring myself to date a human. Fae have such long lives, and if they weren’t my fated mate, then they’d die long before I would. How old are the three of you?”

“We just celebrated our two-hundredth birthday,” I announce proudly.

Rory chuckles. “Damn. You’re cradle robbers.”

That causes all five of us to dissolve into laughter. That’s the thing about supernaturals. Once we hit our age of majority, we stop aging until we’re nearing the end of our lifespan. Well, most of us. I know a lot of the other species age closer to humans, but not us. Residents of the Hell Realm tend to live for closer to a millennium.

“Laoise, when are you going to make your decision about who to bring to the party?” Tamesis asks, eyes jumping between all of us. He really wants her to choose us.

Who the hell am I kidding? We all want her to choose us.

She shrugs. “I’m not a hundred percent sure yet. I do have another date set up in a few days with another four monsters. So far, the eight of you are the only ones I’m considering.”

“And is eight too many?” Aeron asks, trying to act like her answer doesn’t matter, but we’re all hanging onto the edge of our seats as we wait for her answer.

“Not necessarily. It just depends. I promise I’ll let you all know as soon as I’ve finished with my other date. I don’t want to lead anyone on, but I really like all eight of you so far.”

I’m okay with that. I don’t have a problem sharing. I always knew I would have to share with my brothers, and if the woman I fall for has a ton of mates, I know that will make it easier on all of us. More mates means more people to make sure she has everything she wants. It’s as simple as that.

“And that’s okay.” Rory lays his hand on top of hers with a smile. “All any of us want is for you to be happy, I can assure you.”

Tamesis and I quickly agree, and even Aeron grunts.

The smile that lights up her face is everything. Laoise is the most beautiful person I’ve ever seen, and when she smiles? It’s like she lights up the whole damn room. I don’t know how I got lucky enough for her to consider me, but I’m damn glad she did.

“Now, the only question is if your monsters’ are ugly enough and if you’re willing to possibly shift into that form at the party?”

I exchange glances with my brothers before nodding. “We’d be honored to shift so you can see our monsters, but there’s something we should probably tell you.”

She cocks an eyebrow, head tilting to the side. “Oh?”

“We’re not just hellhounds. The three of us are special. We can combine our hellhounds into one creature—a cerberus.”

Her smile just grows, eyes going wide. “No shit?”

“No shit,” Tamesis says with a snort.

She nods slowly. “I definitely want to see that. And you, Rory?”

He shrugs. “If you want to see it, I’m always willing to shift.”

“But where can we do that? This town is crawling with humans.”

Laoise grins. “You just leave that up to me. I have illusion magic.”

Which is how I find myself standing in the courtyard of the luxury apartments Laoise lives in, butt naked and freezing my ass off alongside my brothers. When Rory starts to undress, I let my eyes follow his movements. He’s so fucking hot.

Laoise is trying her best to keep her eyes averted from our naked bodies, but she’s failing miserably. Her eyes go especially wide as she watches Rory undress, causing me to turn my attention back to him. Holy hell. Talk about a monster cock.

I’m practically drooling, my cock growing harder by the second. He strokes his cock once, and my eyes widen. When I lift my head, I see him grinning and glancing between me and Laoise. “Like what you see?”

“Fuck, yes.” I didn’t mean to say that out loud, but it’s out there now.

Laoise laughs. “So do I, but let’s stop talking about cocks. Show me those monsters.”

Rory hesitates for a moment, and I think he’s afraid that we’ll judge him for his monster. But he hasn’t seen our forms yet. He nods to himself before he starts growing—and I’m not talking about his cock this time. He grows taller and wider, his skin taking on a gray hue.

He has to be close to ten feet tall when he stops growing, and as wide as a

car. But that's not the most interesting part of his shift. No, that would be his red hair that has shifted to blood. It runs down his head and over his shoulders. It falls into his face but doesn't seem to hinder his sight.

When Laoise gestures for him to come closer then to kneel, I find myself moving to stand beside her. She reaches up to cup his face, her hand so small against the giant's face. Rory tries to jerk back when the blood begins to leak onto her hand, but she just shakes her head.

"Don't hide yourself from me. Your monster is beautiful."

Rory seems as shocked as I am by her words. No one ever calls monsters beautiful and means it. Except, I think she really means it.

"Why don't you change back, Rory, and the guys can show us their hellhound forms and then their cerberus form."

He does just that as my brothers and I shift. Laoise seems fascinated by the shadows and fire that make up our fur, reaching out to touch it, but we jump back.

We should have told her not to touch, I tell my brothers, and they nod their wolf-like heads.

We'll make sure she knows for next time, Tamesis adds, and my heart soars. There has to be a next time.

Let's do this. She needs to see our cerberus form, Aeron says, and I can tell he's afraid of what she'll think.

I chuckle as we move to stand side-by-side. If she thought a giant-redcap hybrid was beautiful, she's going to love us.

All three of us chuckle as our souls join into the cerberus. Rory and Laoise's eyes widen as we appear before them as a three-headed, fifteen-foot-tall cerberus.

I drop my giant head to rest on the ground before Laoise, and she grins,

reaching up to pat my snout before doing the same to my brothers.

“All four of you are perfect. My family won’t know what to do with you but know that’s not the only reason I want you there. Your monsters are just as beautiful as my unicorn.”

Then she shifts into her unicorn form, prancing around us. She’s beautiful, and she didn’t even have to take off her clothes. I’m jealous as hell, but I love that this beautiful creature thinks that we’re just as beautiful as her.

Chapter Ten



Laoise

My night with the triplets and Rory was amazing. All of their monsters are beautiful and perfect for what I want to take to my parents' party. When we all went our separate ways last night, I was more than happy to see Rory and Dáinn chatting and texting. Aeron is a lot more likable in person, and I'm pleasantly surprised that I do like him as much as I like his brothers.

Now that I've gone out with those four, I'm really excited to meet the roommates and Biran. I messaged them all and asked if we could move up our date to tonight, and surprisingly, they all agreed. I'm lying in bed, wondering what I want to do with them when my phone goes off.

Tali

I need you.

What's u

Tali

Jason left me. I can't go home to Belle; she is far too sweet for my mood right now.

The door is unlocked

That fucking piece of shit

I knew that he was no good when I met him, but for him to treat my girl like this is a step too fucking far. Now I'm wondering if my monsters will be down for some vandalism for our date. We can go to dinner and then go tag his house. But no, that doesn't seem like it'd be fair to the guys, and knowing Tali, she wouldn't want me to either. I guess I'll have to be here for her in any way she'll let me; then, if I see the prick on the street, I can use my magic to make him bald. I'm daydreaming about how to make Jason pay when the bedroom door opens, and Tali throws herself on my bed.

She isn't crying, which is either really good or really bad. She doesn't say anything as we lay there staring at the ceiling together. I want to tell her everything will work out, but I know I wouldn't want a bunch of fake bullshit right now, so I keep it all to myself. I lay there with her and just lend her my silent support until she is ready to talk.

“So, he has that bitch living with him now. After the office party, he texted me and told me not to come over because he was tired; then I was busy spying on your date last night, so I got up and went over there this morning and... It's been three years with him, Lee. What the fuck am I supposed to do now? We were supposed to go to the office Christmas party together, and now he is with her.”

I see the single tear streak down her cheek, but I don't say anything about it. I grab her hand and pull her into my arms. I hold her as more tears roll

down her face, then say something to get her mind off of it.

“You should get on Love -N- Shenanigans and see if you can find someone to go to the party with you. “

“I don’t know, maybe that isn’t the best idea.”

“It’s the perfect idea. Show him that he is the one missing out because you’re a fucking catch. Then, once the party is over, you can spend some time figuring out how to be you for a while.”

“Fine. Come on. Help me make this profile, and then I’ll help you get ready to fuck monsters.”

“I’m not fucking them, you brat!”

We giggle like school girls as I pull my laptop off the desk and open a new profile for Tali to fill out. I’m a bit surprised by her answers, but I don’t say shit. Once her profile is set up, we spend a while surfing through profiles and dismissing a few that pop up for her. I glance at the time and scream.

“Holy shit! I’m supposed to meet the guys at Serendripity in thirty minutes, and I haven’t even showered!”

Tali shoves me off the bed and toward the bathroom before getting up and heading to my closet. I want to tell her that I don’t need her help, but at this point, I really fucking do need all the help I can get.

I take the fastest shower in the history of fae. Then I cheat and use my magic to dry and style my hair before walking naked back to my room. Tali glances at me, looking at my nude body for a second too long before shoving clothes in my hand. She is an angel, I swear. She even picked out underwear for me. I don’t worry about what she chooses as I get dressed. I spend ten minutes doing a basic makeup look and lace up the combat boots Tali picked.

Looking in the mirror, I have to admit that I look cute as fuck. Tali chose a pair of dark blue jeans with rhinestones on the back pockets. She paired them

with a silky black long-sleeve Henley that I tucked in and a black rhinestone belt with a unicorn buckle that Belle got me for my birthday. It's a bit country-chic for my usual taste, but I do look cute.

"Come on, girly, I'll drop you off. Belle is meeting me there anyways. Maybe I'll text Chloe and get us all together to watch your date. Hmm." Tali pulls out her phone, and I know I'll have company at the coffee shop with the guys.

Together, we walk out of my apartment and head to the coffee shop. Belle is waiting outside, chatting to two guys I've never seen before. Chloe is standing there with them as well, staring at the guys and watching their interactions with our innocent friend. Tali chuckles when she sees that Belle has her own dates.

Standing a few feet from my friends and Belle's strangers are my four guys. Biran and Quin are wrestling, apparently trying to put one another in a headlock, but both are laughing too hard to get the upper hand. Orion is leaning against the window watching my friends chat, and Bain is chatting to him as he watches Quin and Biran playing.

I nudge Tali to get her moving, then nod my head at the guys before stepping toward them. Tali and I move in opposite directions, her going to Belle and Chloe, while I head over to the guys. Bain's head snaps up as I walk closer, and he rushes over to me, pulling me into a hug that I didn't expect. Orion makes a noise under his breath, and Bain lets me go, smiling sheepishly at me.

"Sorry, I got excited. I'm just so happy you decided to see us."

I laugh and pull him into a hug. I don't mind being wrapped in his arms at all. He is hot—not just his looks, but his body is hot to touch, and I forgot to

grab a jacket on the way out the door. Biran and Quin separate, and now the other three are making their way over to me and Bain.

“Hello, pretty girl. I must say, I’m a bit disappointed. I got to watch you get ready for your date last night, but you didn’t do a video for us.” Biran’s voice is silky smooth and makes me want to close my eyes and fall asleep.

“You know, I was thinking the same thing, Snake Boy. I feel jipped.” I can see why Quin makes audiobooks for indie-smut authors. If I had a voice like his, I would spend my day as a sex line operator or something like that.

“Leave the girl alone, you two.” Orion’s deep voice leaves no room for argument. I can tell that he is the leader of his motley crew and that he is levelheaded. I already knew that from talking to him, though. “Hello, Laoise. It’s nice to meet you.” He reaches over and wraps his long arms around me and Bain, pulling us both into his chest for a group hug.

Biran and Quin share a look before they engulf the group in their arms, completing the circle of guys around me. Clearly, these four are friendly. I didn’t think Biran knew the roommates until they matched with me, but my heart is beating out of my chest with happiness at how friendly they all are. I really like these guys, just like I like the four from last night, so I want them to all get along.

Eventually, the arms around me fall off, and I’m laughing when Quin and Biran end up wrapped up in a hug alone. “Well, it is nice to meet all of you as well. I really hope you don’t mind, but I think our date may get crashed. My friends are all here, and it seems one of them has a few dates of her own.”

Orion looks over at the five people still standing outside of the coffee shop. Chloe and Tali are whispering back and forth with their eyes flitting between my group and Belle, who is holding hands with the two men. Damn, go

Belle. She seems so shy, but if she is holding their hands, then clearly she likes them and trusts them.

“I don’t mind.” Biran smiles sweetly at me as he takes my hand and pulls me toward the girls. The roommates share a smile between them, then follow close behind. Bain grabs my other hand as we step into the group.

Our arrival has Belle looking up from her dates and smiling shyly at me before her gaze quickly flies over my four guys before dropping to the floor. Quin clicks his tongue before stepping in front of her. The two guys with her tense up, but neither say anything; they just watch my sasquatch closely.

“Hello there.” Belle’s eyes fly to Quin, and a blush settles over her face.

“You’re Quinton, the voice actor who published Indie Hale’s newest audiobook.”

“Good ear. And you are?” He smiles wide at her, and I have to blink away the surge of jealousy I didn’t expect to feel.

“Belle, and these are my dates, Derek and Nick.”

“Nice to meet you all. I’m with Laoise and her other dates, Orion, Bain, and Biran.” He waves his hand toward us and turns to see Chloe and Tali. Both are eyeing him with suspicion and mistrust. “And you two lovely ladies must be Tali and Chloe, the last two members of Laoise’s coven. It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

Neither of the girls says a word or clarify who they are. They nod their heads and continue to watch the group. Orion snaps his fingers and points toward Belle’s dates.

“I thought I recognized you guys. Nick is Nick Darkmere, and Derek is Derek Tinker. You guys did an interview about sixty years ago about being the first of a species. I’m honored to meet you both, truly.”

The guys with Belle look a bit uncomfortable, but they both smile at Orion.

I can't see this little get-together getting any less awkward, so I move the party along.

“Well, I know I need coffee. Let's go inside and find a seat.” I tug Biran and Bain along with me to the door that Chloe is holding open.

Quin and Orion follow behind us, and Belle whispers something to her guys before they fall in line behind Orion. Tali and Chloe bring up the end of the line, and the two girls are whispering back and forth to each other. I'm mortified at the turn the date has taken. I really do like these guys, but I'll be shocked if they want anything to do with me by the end of the night. Just my luck, I know. I guess I do have my hellhounds and redcap hybrid, but a piece of my heart breaks at the thought of not having my sasquatch, basilisk, Surtr, and ogre with me when I go home to see my parents.

Chapter Eleven



Bain

Laoise looks sad all of a sudden.

Now, I'm not a big talker, but because I don't really say much, I notice everything. So, when her mood switches from optimistic and a little awkward to downright sad, I notice. What I don't expect is how sad it makes me. I don't want her to be upset, and I'd go to great lengths to make sure she never looks that way again.

Our group is pretty large walking into Serendripity, so I'm a bit shocked when the barista greets the girls by name and tells them that he added a few tables to their usual spot and had their coffees waiting there. Laoise smiles at the boy, and my Surtr practically spits shadows around him. I lock it down before any can actually escape me, but I do smirk at his strong reaction.

When I first saw her profile, I had a strong feeling that Laoise was my mate, but seeing her in person, touching her, and holding her in my arms...is what let me know for a fact that Laoise is mine. I don't mind sharing her, either. I know my monster; he is protective and possessive, but he can also be a bit standoffish and distant. I think it is bred into him from Surtrs having to survive in the shadow pits of the Hell Realm. No matter what caused it, I'm glad that Laoise has more than just us as her mate.

We all sit down at the table in the back of the room, and Orion takes all of the guys' coffee orders. I don't have to say anything, and neither does Quin because Orion is the one who introduced us to coffee, so he knows exactly how we like it. I'm a bit surprised to see that Biran and Quin take their coffee

that same way. Laoise smiles at that, and a tiny blush that I'm sure everyone else misses peppers her cheeks.

She is so fucking beautiful. I know that Orion said most fae are exceptionally pretty, but I don't think anyone in this world, or any of the next ones, is as beautiful as our little mate. I'm sure she wouldn't be thrilled to be thought of as little, but she definitely is just that. I'm a big man with a big monster, and Laoise, while quite tall for a woman, is tiny compared to me and my brothers.

Yes, I'm including Biran as my brother. He has been at the apartment nearly every day since he and Quin met on Laoise's blog. The two of them hit it off almost immediately, and I get the impression that it may be a bit more than just friendly between them. Not that I mind. I feel like the world would be a much better place if everyone would stop limiting their capacity to give and receive love.

I'm not, however, exactly sure how our mate would feel about her guys intermingling like that. I guess that is a bridge we will have to cross when we get to it. I know I'm not going to broach the subject until one of them does. Though, if I really think about it, I don't see her being the type of person to have a problem with it.

“Bain?”

The sound of Laoise's sweet voice draws me out of my mind, and I flinch when I notice everyone at the large table staring at me. Orion has a soft smile on his lips, one that screams understanding and comfort. I'm not good in large crowds; I get all sweaty and nervous, much like I am now. I can feel every gaze on me, and it's like a spotlight on all my flaws.

Clearing my throat, I move my gaze around the table until they settle on Laoise's pretty pink eyes. She is smiling just as softly as Orion is,

understanding, and a hint of concern burns bright in her gaze as she watches me. I don't feel the same flighty urgency when she is looking at me as I do with other people. I feel like she understands me and is willing to listen, not just make assumptions.

"I'm so sorry; I got a bit lost in my thoughts there."

"No problem. I was just asking what you like to do for fun?"

Oh, well, that is an easy question to answer. "I play guitar. I've booked a few small gigs doing weddings and things like that, but I hope to make it big one day."

"He is amazing!" I jump when Biran is the one who stands up for me and draws the attention away. I sigh in relief as he goes on and on about hearing me play at the house.

My cheeks heat up, and I can't stop the small smile from pulling up the corners of my lips.

The conversation goes on for about an hour before Belle and her dates stand and say they're going to get dinner. Tali's phone dings, and a deep blush makes her tan face even darker. She, too, stands up and excuses herself. Chloe looks around at us and stands as well.

"Well, I sure as fuck am not going to be the third...or sixth wheel, so I'm out too." She leans down and hugs Laoise goodbye. "Call me tomorrow. If you four hurt her, I'll curse not only you but your entire lineage. Have a great night."

None of us can say anything else as we watch the scary little witch walk away. I'm not one to get scared easily, but I have a feeling that Laoise's coven can and will inflict some serious damage if one of them is hurt. I, for one, do not want to find out what two and a half witches and a unicorn fae can do to some poor soul if they feel wronged.

Now that the party is significantly smaller, Laoise moves around so that the five of us are sitting at one table. The same barista from earlier comes over to move the second table and four chairs away. Laoise smiles at him again and thanks him before turning her attention back to us.

“Thanks so much for putting up with my friends. This isn’t exactly how I saw our first date going.” She chuckles nervously, and I can’t help but find her fucking adorable.

“It’s okay, Lee. I had a good time with your friends. Plus, that one guy with the blond hair that Belle had with her was kind of hot in that bad boy type of way.” Quin sips his coffee and glances at his phone as if he didn’t just call another guy hot in front of Laoise.

I hold my breath and wait for Laoise’s response. Surprisingly, she smiles at Quin and nods her head. She spends a good five minutes talking about the guys Belle had with her and how she is surprised Belle seemed so comfortable with them already. I sit back in my chair as my brothers and Laoise talk about the people in her life. I know that Orion, Quin, and I don’t have “people” to talk about, but Biran spends another ten minutes talking about his family.

Once his niece is mentioned, pictures get brought out. I’m sure most guys would be upset about their date being fully focused on one guy, but I quite enjoy talking about Biran’s niece because she is beyond cute, and I’m sure she is going to be a spitfire when she gets older.

“So, I have to ask,” Orion interrupts the conversation when there’s a lull in the topic. “But, your parents’ party is coming up, and I was wondering... Have you met everyone who you want to go with you?”

“Yes, I have a few people I’d like to come with me.”

“And they are?” Quin cuts in.

I hold my breath. I want to be included in the people she wants to travel with her to the Fae Realm, but I also don't want to get my hopes up in case I'm not on the shortlist. I know that she is my fated mate, but I don't think she realizes it yet.

"Well, you four and another four that I went on a date with last night. I'd love to have the eight of you, but I'd like to see you guys shifted." She smiles sheepishly, glancing around the table from under her eyelashes.

This woman is too fucking adorable for her own good. My heart melts a bit every time she speaks. She is just so sweet, and while I'm sure she isn't as innocent as she seems, I know she isn't as stuck up and snooty as her family sounds like they are.

"Of course, I also want the nine of us to spend some time together as well. You know, just to make sure everyone gets along." Now Laoise looks excited. Her eyes are bright, and the smile on her face is one that makes me picture sunny days and the sounds of children laughing.

I'm more than willing to do anything this creature wants me to. I'd go to great lengths to see her smile like this every single day. Judging by the awed expression on my brothers' faces, they agree with me. I don't think there is a single thing that the men around me wouldn't give this girl if she just asked. A simple smile or a bat of her long beautiful eyelashes and the four of us will be putty in her tiny little hands.

"I don't think that will be a problem, Little One," I say. I'm not sure where the nickname came from, but it feels right coming out of my mouth. "Although, I'm not sure where we will be able to shift for you. Especially in town. There are a lot of humans in this little town, and not all of them know about our kind."

I glance around the coffee shop. The only humans in this shop right now are

sitting with someone of supernatural descent. Fort Veyelsa is a safe haven for our kind and humans alike. I may think we will be better off telling humans that we exist, but the powers that be do not agree. So, no matter what I think, I will follow the rules and keep my kind a secret.

“Yeah, well, I have illusion powers, and my apartment building has a rather large square in the middle of our buildings, so we could go there. I know it worked well enough for a cerberus shifter and a giant-redcap hybrid.”

Damn. This girl sure knows how to pick some dangerous friends. Hellhounds alone are pretty badass creatures, but when a triple set is born, they have the power to combine their hounds into one fierce being. The myths around a cerberus shifting unit are legendary; I can only imagine what they can do in real life.

I do wonder how a person becomes a hybrid between a giant and a redcap. I would be willing to bet that he is unmatched in his fighting ability. The bloodlust of a redcap mixed with the size of a giant would be something that not many would be able to defeat on the battlefield. Not to mention, I’m sure he would be very blessed in the pants department.

Shit, I know for a fact that Orion is packing more than the average ogre. Laoise is one lucky girl, that’s for damn sure. I hope she knows what she is getting herself into by agreeing to date the eight of us. She is no doubt going to have more than a handful to deal with in and out of bed. I smile, thinking about our little unicorn going toe to toe with any of our monsters.

“Shit girl, you should have said something sooner. I’m so down to get out of here and strip naked for you.” Quin winks at Laoise and gives her a smile that I’m sure has her panties ready to melt onto the floor.

Biran blushes a bit, and I have to put my fist up to my mouth to stop the chuckle that wants to fight its way out. Yeah, he may not know it, but that

snake has it bad for our sasquatch.

Chapter Twelve



Orion

I have to laugh at the look on Laoise's face when Quin smiles at her. She looks like she is going to spontaneously combust right there in the chair while also seeming to be confused by it at the same time. Quin has that effect on quite a few people, men and women alike. I know that he and Biran have grown very close lately. Quin is very open with his sexuality, but I think that Biran's feelings toward the other man are both new and a little unprecedented.

"Well, are we ready to head out?" I gesture around the table and stand, waving a hand for the others to get up as well. "Maybe after we shift, we can get some dinner."

Laoise smiles and stands up, grabbing her bag off the chair before heading toward the door. Biran is right behind her, his hand on the small of her back. Bain is smirking, his eyes moving between Biran and Quin, who is currently trying to stare at both Laoise's and Biran's asses at the same time. Poor boy, I don't think he even realizes that we can see him doing it. I burst out laughing and clasp my friend on the shoulder.

"You know Quinny, all you have to do is snap your fingers, and that snake will fall into your nest."

"I don't have a nest, you big fool."

I laugh again, shaking my head as I follow Bain out of the coffee shop. "Sure you don't, Quinton. Sure you don't."

We follow Laoise down the street to a large apartment building made up of four buildings arranged in a square shape. The buildings are about ten levels high, and a pristine white stone makes up the walls. Glass doors shine brightly in the fading sun, and a doorman smiles at Laoise as she approaches.

“Good Evening, Lee. I see you have more company tonight.” He glances at the four of us, his eyes taking in every detail of our group. I get the distinct feeling that if we were to do anything to hurt Laoise, we would be getting a visit from the man who guards her home.

I can’t tell exactly what his species is, but I can feel the power radiating off of him. I smile at the man and tip my head in acknowledgment of his not-so-veiled threat. I can respect the old-timer looking out for the pretty girl who lives on her own. Especially when she has come home two days in a row with a group of powerful male shifters.

“Good evening, Marcus. These are some more suitors I found on the dating website I told you about. They are so sweet. We’re going to use the clearing for a bit, then head out to dinner.” Laoise returns his sweet smile as she grabs his hand and squeezes softly.

The man’s smile grows a bit bigger, and a particular light sparkles in his eyes. Bain grumbles in his chest, but I don’t bother. I can see that the man is very fond of our girl. He doesn’t see her in a sexual light, though. I get the impression that he sees her as a daughter of sorts. Maybe he never had a family of his own, and he wants to protect her. Again, I don’t feel threatened by their relationship, whatever it may be. I’m glad she has people in her life who are willing to stand up for her.

Laoise walks through the door he holds open with Quin on her heels. I let Biran and Bain go before me, and as I pass the man, I clap him on his shoulder and give him a quiet thanks. We both know I’m not thanking him

for holding the door. No, I'm thankful that he is watching out for Laoise. A grudging respect fills his red eyes as I walk in, and I smile a little to myself.

We walk through the rich lobby of the apartment building. Everything in this room screams money. The front desk is a marble monstrosity that has a blonde witch smiling from behind it. There are chairs and couches littered around the room; each of them has a black marble table beside it with crystal lamps resting on it. There are gold elevator doors on the back wall that need a code for them to open. I'm not sure if Laoise could afford a place this nice on her own or if she uses her parents' money to be able to stay here, but either way, I'm impressed with the security wrapped in luxury that is her home.

She leads us through the lobby, smiling and waving at everyone she passes. We walk out of a smaller glass door and into a beautiful green courtyard with metal benches placed a few feet apart around a large polished concrete walking trail. There are small trees planted between the benches and a large clear field in the center of it all. The space is so big I imagine my ogre would be able to fit next to Biran's basilisk and not even have to touch him.

Laoise keeps walking until she reaches the bench on the other side of the courtyard. She takes a seat facing the four of us and looks expectantly up at us. I guess we are supposed to start shifting, but now that it's time to show her my monster, I'm nervous. Ogres aren't exactly cute creatures. The higher up the royal hierarchy we are, the uglier and bigger our monsters are. Not that anyone knows this, but I'm next in line for the throne if I ever go home. I don't plan to ever take it, but my monster still reflects my station.

Bain looks just as hesitant as I feel. His Surtr is a terrifying creature, for sure. I've only seen it a few times because Bain is so different from his creature. Not only is his mentality completely opposite from his creature, but his family line has a reputation that he doesn't like to be brought up. His

creature is easily identified because of his grandfather's thirty seconds of fame.

Quinton doesn't have any shame about shifting. His sasquatch is beautiful. Quin shucks off his clothes and shifts without anyone else having to say a thing. His beast is easily eight feet tall with long legs and arms. The hair covering his body is silky and dark brown. His belly has a dusting of white hair over his six-pack abs and muscled pecs. His entire body is nothing but muscles. Sure, he has a thin layer of fat covering the muscles, but it doesn't do anything to hide the bulging shape he proudly displays. Even shifted, he is hung. Nothing is hiding the monstrous cock between his legs. If I were a lesser man, I'd be intimidated by the sight.

Biran apparently doesn't want to be outdone by the hairy man, so he strips and shifts as well. I've never seen him shift before, and it is a sight to behold for sure. His head is bigger than Quin's entire body, and his long body takes up almost the whole courtyard, even coiled as it is now. His scales are a bright neon green color with black stripes crisscrossed down his body. I have to take a second look at the huge rattle on the end of his tail. Most basilisk don't have a rattle, and only the most powerful of the snake breeds have them and can control them.

Laoise gasps, slowly standing before walking closer to the two shifted men. Quin wraps his long arms around her and pulls her to his chest. She squeals out and laughs with Quin. He is lucky to be able to still talk while shifted, though it's deeper than his natural voice, more guttural. He also has a smaller vocabulary, more primitive, just like his thoughts. I always like seeing him shifted.

"You go." Laoise finally tears her gaze off of the giant snake, who is slowly wrapping his body around the sasquatch and the unicorn.

Bain and I share a look between us, both daring the other to go first. I know that he won't want to shift on his own. I have nothing left to lose. She wanted monsters, and I can tell that she really likes Quin's and Biran's shifted forms. I just hope that she likes mine as well.

"Together?" I ask Bain. He swallows hard and nods his head.

We both strip and shift. Bain shoots into the sky. His black and orange body lights up the courtyard with a fiery glow. Smoke and ash fill the sky as magma courses over Bain's body. His horns jut from both sides of his large head, and his long arms drag on the ground. Bain can speak in his shifted form as well, but he has to really focus to get out more than grunts and roars. I stare in fascination as Laoise struggles out of Quin's arms. The big man blinks, clearly battling with his need to hold her and his desire to give her what she wants. Eventually, his desire to make her happy wins out, and he places her gently on her feet.

She makes her way over to Bain and smiles up at him. He leans down low, and she strokes his face softly.

"You're so beautiful." The awe in her voice makes me smile while also making me nervous.

I'm not beautiful while shifted. I'm probably the furthest thing from beautiful a creature can get. Still, if she wants to see me shifted, then I'll shift for her. Taking a deep breath, I shift. I'm not nearly as tall as Bain or Biran, but I'm double the size of Quin's sasquatch. My body is an ugly gray-green color, and it looks like it's made up of dozens of boulders all stacked together. My face is made up of blocky features. My arms are so long they drag on the ground, but my legs are short. My belly is big, but not fat. I have a club as well; my favorite one is made of an elder tree from the Fae Realm. The club itself is magical, but it's also shaped in a way that would bludgeon a

giant to death with a single swing. I know that for a fact because I fought in the war with my brothers many, many years ago.

Laoise smiles at me as well, her free hand coming up to touch my face. Of course, her tiny five-foot-ten frame can't get anywhere close to my face while standing flat-footed on the ground, so I sit on my ass in the courtyard. Biran has somehow snaked his body around all of us. He flexes his strong tail and pulls all of us closer to Laoise. The four of us are touching, and I can feel a vibrating tether form between us all.

"You go," Quin repeats, but his eyes are glued on Laoise. The sasquatch is looking at the woman with a softness I didn't know him to be capable of.

She giggles and shifts. No stripping is required, and I grunt out my disappointment. I know it's crude of me to think like that, but I was rather looking forward to seeing her naked for even just a fraction of a second. I know she tried not to, but I saw her check all of us out when we got naked.

Where Laoise stood is a gorgeous unicorn with a mane and tail the same color as Laoise's hair. Her horn glows like a light has been placed under the spiral and turned on high. She is absolutely majestic. A beauty that only serves to make our forms look even more monstrous than they did before.

Still, no matter how ugly I feel standing next to this creature, I can't stand the thought of not being in her presence. Together, we play in the courtyard. Her unicorn jumps over Biran's tail as we each take turns trying to catch her as she prances around. Eventually, we all shift back, and the guys and I get dressed. Laoise hasn't stopped smiling since she dropped her unicorn form, and I have trouble keeping the smile off my face all through dinner.

Chapter Thirteen



Laoise

“It’s finally time, friends.” I smile into the camera. “Yes, that’s right, it’s time for my parents’ annual Christmas party. Of course, I’m going to be getting ready with all of you. Some of my besties are even stopping by to help me. You’re getting all four of us today! It’s such a treat, right?”

There’s a knock on the door, making my grin grow. “That’s probably them now. I’ll be right back.” I give a wave since I’m doing a live post video currently. I’d already warned all eight of my monsters to stay away from my site today because I didn’t want my look spoiled for them. But my viewers have been on this journey with us from day one, so they want to see my look, too.

I dash over to the door, tossing it open. “Hey, witches!!!”

Chloe rolls her eyes. “Hello to you too, Lee.”

“Are you going to let us inside?” Tali asks with a raised eyebrow that has me giggling as I step back.

“Oops. I might be a little overexcited about tonight. Come in. I already have the camera rolling, so don’t be shy. Stop by and say hey.” I shut the door once they’re all inside. Tali and Chloe head straight for the camera, but Belle hangs back as usual. She’s always the most cautious about going on camera, still afraid that her dad and evil stepmother will hunt her down, even after two years.

Of course, I’d never force her to be on camera. It’s always one hundred percent her choice, but each time, her hesitation seems to last less and less

time. I'm so proud of her and how far she's come in two years.

"Hey there, witches!" Tali drops into my chair, and I can tell her smile isn't completely genuine. I know she's dealing with the whole Jason situation, and we haven't had a whole lot of time to catch up with one another. I need to make a point to ask her about it later, away from the camera.

Chloe leans over to rest her chin on Tali's shoulder. "Who's ready to see Lee transformed into an even more stunning woman tonight? Because let's be real, she's already stunning, but I've seen the dress she chose, and it's hot."

"No spoilers," I call out as I move to stand next to Belle. I drop my voice so it won't be picked up by the camera. "You know you don't have to go on camera if you don't want to."

A smile lights up Belle's face. "I know, but I want to be. I'm not worried about them anymore. They're in my past, and I'm living my life for me now. I won't let them hold me back from doing anything I want with my life. But thank you, Lee. You're the best friend a girl could ask for."

Belle throws herself into Tali's lap, almost sending all three of them to the floor as they laugh.

"The party can start now, ladies, gentlemen, and non-binaries. Belle has entered the chat." Chloe laughs. "But tonight isn't about us, is it? This is all about Laoise and her finally giving her parents the middle finger. Let's get this show on the road."

I can't help but laugh with my friends. I love them so much, and I know I wouldn't be able to stand up to my parents if it wasn't for them. Not to mention how willing they are to go on camera, knowing that this is my livelihood. Everything is just so much better with them here.

Since meeting my eight monsters, I haven't been able to spend as much time with my witches as I would have liked.

Who knew that dating eight men at once was going to take up so much time?

Insert sarcasm here.

But I wouldn't change a damn thing about it. It helps that Rory and the triplets seem to have hit it off and don't mind hanging out as a group. The same seems to apply to Biran, Quinton, Bain, and Orion. One can hope that the two groups will get along just as swimmingly. This was always supposed to be a means to an end—pissing off my parents and letting them know that their hold on me is done—but it's so much more than that. I genuinely like all of them.

I've felt a pull to them since the very beginning, and I'm beginning to wonder if they aren't my fated mates. Crazy, right? Who would've thought that I would match to my fated mates on a dating website? But I really think they are. I've thought about bringing it up with them, but the time never seems right.

I think once we make it through the party, I'll ask them. There's a surefire way to find out if we're mates, but I'd rather we not go that route without speaking with them first. Every species is different, but for unicorn fae, our mate marks appear only after we've shared a cup of water that surrounds one of the ancient Great Fae Trees.

"Earth to Lee," Tali calls out, breaking me from my thoughts.

I wrinkle my nose and shoot them an apologetic smile. I'd like to say this is a one-off, but since meeting my monsters—and they are mine, I'm almost one hundred percent sure—my mind wanders to them often.

"Let me guess," Belle says, a sly smile on her face, "you were thinking about them, weren't you?"

I flush, hating my pale skin at this moment because I know even the

cameras will pick up the blush coloring my cheeks. “Shut up.”

The three of them laugh while I shake my head. “Yeah, yeah, yeah. Laugh it up. Get out of my chair. I need to talk to my other friends about what we’re going to be doing today.”

It takes a few moments for the three of them to get themselves under control before they can clear out. They move to sit on my bed, leaving them in the background of the shot as I return to my seat.

“Today is going to require a lot more preparation than most of my looks. Not only do I want to look good for my dates, but my parents have very high expectations. While I am going to give them the middle finger, I’d rather not listen to my mother complaining the entire night because I don’t look perfect.” I roll my eyes. “As you all know, I have a pretty regular routine I go through, but tonight? This routine is going to blow your mind.”

We get to work, starting with a skincare routine that leaves mine and the girls’ skin glowing—because, of course, they have to go through this torture with me. Then we move on to hair and makeup, chatting between the four of us and my viewers as we go. I love doing videos like this because it lets them feel like they’re a part of the process, like they’re my friends—which, to me, they are.

It takes hours for us to get me ready, and I’d love to call it a day before we’re even finished, but I know I can’t. While I might be dreading seeing my parents, I’m excited about the date with my monsters and that I get to see my brother for the first time in...how long has it been? At least a year, I think.

I sigh as I drop into my chair again, smiling at the camera. “Are your minds blown? I know mine is, and I’m already exhausted. I still have hours ahead of me of boring small talk and dealing with my parents. If I thought I could get away with it, I’d totally record the party so you could see just what I have to

deal with. But that's not possible, so I'll be sure to post about it in the next few days. Are you ready to see the dress? I'm going to duck behind the screen and put it on. Belle's going to help me with it while Tali and Chloe keep you entertained. See you in a few!"

With a quick wave, I head for the dressing screen I have set up for this exact reason. Belle is already waiting for me with the dress in hand. A genuine smile slips over my lips as I take in the dress again. It's absolutely magnificent. I hadn't bought it specifically for the party since I've had it for a few months. When I saw it in the store window, I knew it had to be mine. I had no idea what I was going to wear it for, but I knew I'd find the perfect occasion. I hate wasting it on an event that I'm dreading, but it's honestly perfect for a Christmas party in the Fae Realm. My mother will complain because it came from the Mortal Realm, but beyond that, I know she won't have any complaints.

It's a champagne color that allows the dress to look more demure—though it's still quite racy. It's strapless and fitted to my hips before flaring out into a long train. One side is split nearly to my hip, making it sexier than anything I've ever worn to one of these parties.

Belle holds the dress so I can step into it before she moves behind me, lacing up the back of the dress. The silky material feels like heaven against my skin as I skim my hands down it. The hope is that by having her help me, it's less likely I'll mess up my hair or makeup.

This is not a dress that I can put on or take off on my own. I don't need a bra with this dress since it has built-in cups, so I adjust my breasts until they're sitting perfectly as she cinches the last of the laces and ties it off. I skim my hands down the side of the dress, trying to make sure there aren't

any wrinkles. I probably should have put a mirror back here, but I want my viewers to get the first look alongside me.

“You look stunning, Lee.” Belle snorts. “Who am I kidding? You always look stunning, but this is next level. This dress was made for you.”

“Thanks, Belle. I think so, too. Let’s do the big reveal, yeah?”

I step out from behind the screen with Belle at my heels, and my other two besties gasp as my eyes land on the mirror.

Wow. I guess even I hadn’t realized just how I would look in this dress, all done up for the party. A small smile traces my lips as I think about what the guys’ reactions will be. I’m not sure exactly what time it is, but I know it’s almost time for them to start arriving.

For the first time since receiving that invitation, I’m excited about this party.

“So, friends, what do you think?” I ask, looking into the camera. I can’t read the comments from here, but I can see them flying up my screen from here. “As much as I’d like to keep chatting with all of you, my dates will be here soon. I have to put on the finishing touches so I’m ready when they arrive in…”

“Ten minutes,” Chloe offers.

I laugh. “Ten minutes? Yikes, I’m cutting it closer than I thought. I’ll check out your comments tomorrow and don’t worry, the girls are going to make sure I have plenty of pictures to share with you of me and my dates. Until next time!”

Tali reaches over and stops the recording before focusing on me once more. “They’re going to be eating their tongues when they see you.”

“I hope so.” I can’t seem to stop smiling. “I like them. A lot. This wasn’t what I was expecting when I signed up for Love -N- Shenanigans, but I don’t

even care.”

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen you this excited to be heading to the Fae Realm before,” Chloe offers. “They’re good for you, Lee.”

“All of us deserve to be happy,” Belle says.

“Hell yes, we do!” Tali crows, and we all laugh.

I grab my heels, sliding them onto my feet before accessorizing. I’ve just put on my earrings when my phone rings. Chloe’s the one who grabs it.

“Hello?” She pauses, smiling. “Got it. Thank you, Marcus. We’ll be right down.”

“They’re here, I take it?” At Chloe’s nod, I let out a deep breath. “Then let’s do this thing.”

Chapter Fourteen



Aeron

“I look ridiculous,” I mutter, pulling at the sleeves of my jacket.

Tamesis shakes his head, elbowing me in the side. It’s very clear that I’m annoying him with my constant whining, but not enough to get him to talk. No, he just keeps digging his elbow further and further into my side.

“You don’t look ridiculous. None of us looks ridiculous.” Dáinn grins as he looks between me and Tamesis. “We’re identical, and I know I don’t look ridiculous. Now, can we head inside? I can’t wait to see Rory and meet the other guys.”

I smirk at my brother. “Oh, we all know you can’t wait to see Rory.”

Dáinn flushes a deep red as he glares at me. “Shut up, asshole.”

“Can we just go inside?” Tamesis asks with a sigh, clearly fed up with both of us.

“I’m not the one dragging his feet.” Dáinn shoots me one last glare before spinning on his heel and heading for the door of Laoise’s building.

Tamesis just shakes his head, following our brother. As much as I want to follow the two of them, something keeps my feet firmly planted on the ground. And by something, I really mean my own insecurities. I’ve been doing my best to get to know Laoise, but it’s not as easy for me as it is for Dáinn. Hell, even Tamesis seems to be having an easier time than I am.

I know Laoise is our mate—not a bone in my body would dare deny that—but something is still holding me back from going all in like my brothers. I

even know what it is, but I don't want to admit it to myself, let alone my brothers.

I'm fucking terrified of falling for the unicorn fae.

I've never been one for relationships in the first place. A night in my bed? Absolutely. But I always sent them packing as soon as the sex was over. No cuddling. No talking about ourselves. That I've been saving for my mate, but now that she's here, I'm afraid.

I'm afraid that she won't care about me the way she does about my brothers. I'm worried that she'll reject me and accept them, leaving me alone with a broken bond with my brothers. I'm afraid I'll love her more than she'll love me.

Hell, she has seven other mates—or at least that's what we've been thinking. We haven't met the other four men who are her dates tonight, so we can't be one hundred percent sure they're also her mates. But what are the chances that they're not? If the four of us matched with her and are her mates, it seems most likely that the other four men will be as well.

Eight mates. Who wants or needs that many?

Can Laoise? Or are we all setting ourselves up for heartbreak?

This is what has kept me from letting her in. I know it's pissing off my brothers, but I just don't know what to do.

Plus, Laoise's profile said she wasn't looking for anything serious. She just wanted monsters to attend this stupid party with her. She didn't want mates, and yet, here we are.

This is going to be a disaster.

“Aeron? Bro, are you coming?”

My head snaps up to meet Dáinn's. I don't know what he sees in my eyes, but his face softens as he says something to Tamesis. Then, both of my

brothers are heading back to me since I can't seem to take a step forward.

I want to run.

“What’s going on, Aeron?” Dáinn’s voice is soft, and I fucking hate it. I hate this—all of it.

I shake my head, refusing to meet my brother’s eyes.

Tamesis grunts, and I can’t help but lift my head to glance at him. Understanding is clear on his face, and I hate that, too. “Bro, we can’t stand out here all night.”

“No one is keeping you out here,” I snap, regretting my tone before I’ve even finished. “Fuck, I’m sorry. I don’t know what’s wrong with me.”

Liar.

I don’t know which of my brothers whispered inside my head, but they’re right. My shoulders slump forward.

“I’m afraid.”

The shock is clear on Dáinn’s face. “You? Afraid?”

“Shut up, Dáinn.” Tamesis shoves our brother, rolling his eyes. “At least you can finally admit it. Are you ready to talk to us finally?”

I shrug, staring down at the ground. Of course, I’m not ready to talk to them about this. I never want to talk to them about this—I don’t want to talk to anyone about this—but I also know they’re not going to let it go. Nor should they.

“What if she rejects us? Or just me? I’m kind of an asshole.”

“Kind of?” Dáinn groans, and I glance up to see that Tamesis has buried his elbow in Dáinn’s stomach.

Shaking my head, I chuckle. “She has eight dates for tonight. All she wanted was dates to this party to piss off her parents, and we’re looking for

our mate. We've found our mate, and we haven't told her. What if this isn't what she wants?"

"If you'd taken the time to get to know her like the two of us have, you wouldn't be questioning this so much." Tamesis shakes his head. "But since you're a hard-headed asshole, you've barely spoken to her. She's the sweetest, most compassionate woman I've ever known. She might have started out this journey only looking for dates, but fate obviously had other ideas, didn't she? Just because she wasn't looking doesn't mean that she'll reject us."

I blink at my brother, barely believing how many words he's just strung together. That's Laoise's influence, for sure.

"Though you being an asshole might," Dáinn adds with a grin. "But I don't think we're out of the running yet. She likes you, or she wouldn't keep trying. You just need to put in the effort like the rest of us."

With their words, some of the weight on my chest lifts. I know they're right. I've been holding back because of fear, and I need to get over that. I need to make sure tonight goes off without a hitch if I want her to consider me as a future mate.

I nod my head, a new determination overriding the fear that held me frozen. "Thank the gods I have the two of you, or I would've ruined this already."

"No shit." Dáinn chuckles. "But you never have to worry about that because you'll have the two of us."

I grin at that because he's right. We're an all-or-nothing kind of deal.

"Then let's do this." I'm the first to step forward this time, buoyed by my brothers' presence at my back. I recognize the man working the door, though I can't remember his name.

"Marcus," Dáinn says with a smile and a nod.

Marcus returns the nod. “Good evening, gentlemen. Miss Fitzgerald’s other dates have already arrived and are waiting in the lobby. Go ahead and join them, and I’ll be sure to call her and let her know that you all have arrived.”

“Thank you, Marcus.” I step through the door he holds open for us, my eyes immediately finding Laoise’s other dates.

Seeing Rory with the other four men is very telling. They all stand head and shoulder above the other people moving in and out of the lobby area. With as tall as Laoise is, it’s no real surprise that her mates are some of the biggest men I’ve ever seen. Hell, they make me and my brother seem short, and we’re all six feet tall.

Rory’s face lights up when he sees us—though let’s be real, he only has eyes for Dáinn. It’s cute, and I’m happy that my brother has found someone among Laoise’s other mates. He has more than enough love for two people. Hell, he has enough love for twenty people if that’s what he wanted.

The thought makes me smile because he’s like Laoise in that regard. I can’t believe I’ve been allowing my doubts to eat away at me. She never hesitated over inviting all eight of us to her party. Having eight mates won’t even give her pause. If there’s anyone who can love eight monsters equally, it’s my mate—our mate.

“I’m glad you guys made it,” Rory says as he meets us in the middle of the lobby. “I’ve just been speaking to Laoise’s other dates. They all seem like good guys. I was a little afraid that the three of you had changed your mind. That would’ve made me sad.”

While he’d been speaking to all three of us, his eyes find Dáinn again with his last words. My brother flushes under the larger man’s attention, suddenly flustered.

“Uh...yeah...we...I...”

I chuckle as I step forward, holding out my hand to Rory. “What my brother is trying to say is that I’m the reason we were held up. I was having some troubles dealing with some insecurities, and they had to talk me off of a ledge.”

“I wouldn’t say it was a ledge exactly,” Tamesis offers, and I shake my head.

“I was about to jump off the ledge, taking both of you down with me.” My words are firm as I send them apologies once more in our minds. Their acceptance is immediate, and I’ve never been so thankful for the two of them in my life.

Rory nods. “Sometimes it’s just hard to believe the good things that have come into our life. I understand.”

Once more, his eyes find Dáinn. Dáinn’s eyes widen as he flushes a deeper shade of red. My poor brother has it so freaking bad.

“Thank you, Rory. I appreciate your understanding.”

Tamesis grunts. “Have you all been here long?”

Rory shakes his head. “The four of them arrived a few minutes before me, and I’ve been here for about ten minutes. So not long at all.”

“Good.” Tamesis nods, his eyes falling on the four men standing beyond Rory. They look just as curious about us as we do them.

“Are you ready to meet the other four?” Rory asks, offering his hand to Dáinn.

Dáinn glances at me and Tamesis, before nodding, blushing further as he slides his hand into Rory’s. “We’d love nothing more.”

A smile lights up Rory’s face as he squeezes Dáinn’s hand in his. “I think the eight of us are going to get along famously.”

Rory practically drags Dáinn to the other group of men while Tamesis and I

sit back for a moment.

“He’s good for Dáinn,” Tamesis rumbles.

I find myself nodding. “He is. Dáinn can be a lot for people, so it’s good to see Rory accepting him so easily.”

“Pretty sure it’s more than accepting,” Tamesis says with a chuckle. “He wants to bone our brother.”

I wrinkle my nose at that. “I’m well aware, but I’m not sure it was necessary to say it out loud.”

Tamesis’s booming laughter rings out through the lobby, causing Dáinn to look back at us with a grin. He waves us over before turning back to speak animatedly to the guy in front of him.

“He’s going to win them all over for us before we even get over there.” I shake my head. “Because he won’t have enough time to annoy them.”

Tamesis’s laughter quiets to a chuckle as he slaps his hand on my shoulder. “Well, let’s go see just how well our little brother has won them over, yeah?”

“Yeah. Let’s do that.”

Chapter Fifteen



Tamesis

As we walk over to the other group of men, I keep a hand on Aeron's shoulder. He thinks he's been hiding his fear and worry from me and Dáinn, but he's never been good at shielding us from what he's feeling. Neither of us wanted to push him to talk about it until he was ready, and I was beginning to think he never would. When he'd broken down outside, I was grateful. I didn't want us going into tonight with Aeron's doubts weighing on him so heavily.

He already seems lighter than he had just minutes ago, and I'm thankful for that. But I can also feel him tensing beneath my hand. He's worried about what these other men will think of him—of us. It really is for the best that Dáinn was the first one to meet them. He's always been the friendliest of all of us—the one to make the best first impression.

If these four are Laoise's mates, as me, my brothers, and Rory are, we need to get along. Surely, fate wouldn't put us with another group of men who we have nothing in common with. Well, more in common than us all being monsters. Laoise told us about the others, but looking over at them, I'm not sure I can pick out who is who.

“And these two,” Rory says, gesturing to me and Aeron, “are the other two triplets, Aeron and Tamesis. He prefers to go by Tam, probably because his name is such a mouthful.”

I shrug when he chuckles because he's not wrong.

“This is Quinton.” Rory points to a man who’s the same height as he is, with long, shaggy brown hair and an eyebrow piercing.

“Quin,” the man corrects. “Please call me Quin.”

I nod my head at Quinton, taking his offered hand after he shakes Aeron’s. I have no idea what his species could be, as his human glamour doesn’t hint at it.

Next, Rory introduces us to Orion and Bain. Orion is only a few inches taller than us, but there’s a greenish tint to his skin, and I’m fairly certain those lip piercings are actually tusks. I wrack my brain, trying to remember the species Laoise had told us the other four men were. Oh, right! He must be the ogre. Bain is almost as tall as Quinton and Rory, maybe an inch or so shorter. His hair is a shade of blond, but I don’t know enough about hair colors to know which shade exactly. Once again, I have no idea what his monster might be.

“This is Biran,” Rory offers as he nods toward the last man. “Like me, he was the odd man out since Quin, Orion, and Bain are all roommates.”

Biran is about the same height as Orion and has a shaved head and very distinct green eyes. I narrow my eyes, knowing that his eyes are a clue to what his monster is, but unable to recall what I’m thinking of.

Why can’t I remember the species Laoise told us? Probably because I was too busy getting lost in those beautiful pink eyes of hers.

Yes, I’ll be the first to admit that I’m head over paws for the unicorn fae. She’s perfect for me—for us.

“Okay, not to be that dick...but I’m totally that dick. I have no idea what kind of monsters you all are.” Aeron shrugs as Dáinn and I shoot him a glare. I guess we should be happy he’s being honest. I’m almost a little proud of him.

“Were you not listening when Laoise told us about them?” I ask with a scoff, and he shakes my head.

“No. I was too busy staring at her.” He shrugs again. “I know I should’ve been paying more attention to what she was saying, but we all know I’m a dick.”

It’s Dáinn’s turn to scoff. “No shit.”

Quinton just laughs. “Can’t blame you for that, Aeron. Not to mention, if we’re all Laoise’s mates as I expect we are, we don’t need to start out by lying to one another, right?”

Dáinn shrugs, but even though I’m annoyed with him not remembering, that’s just Aeron. He’s always been self-absorbed. I can’t really expect anything else from him, can I?

“I’m a sasquatch. Orion is an ogre. Bain is a Surtr, and Biran is a basilisk.” Quinton shoots me a quick smile. “And if you forget again, just let me know. I’m happy to remind you.”

Aeron laughs at that, throwing his head back. “I think I like you, Quin. But I’ll try my best not to be that much of a dick.”

Rory just shakes his head, wrapping an arm around Dáinn’s shoulders and whispering something in his ear that has my brother turning bright red. I smile at the sight, loving seeing Dáinn unsure for once in his life.

“Are they…” Quinton leaves the question unasked, but I nod.

“If they’re not yet, they will be. I don’t think I’ve ever seen my brother act like that around anyone—not even Laoise. It’s insane.”

Quinton nods again. “That’s sweet.”

Before I can figure out what to say next, a ding fills the lobby, and all eight of our heads turn in the direction of the elevator.

When an older couple steps out, my shoulders slump. Looking at the others,

I see they've reacted much the same. We've all got it bad for our little mate, don't we?

I drop into an armchair on the periphery of the group, listening as they get to know one another. It's not that I don't want to get to know them, but I'm not sure I know how. Back in the Hell Realm, everyone knew me. They knew who me and my brothers were—what we were. Most of them might have wanted to be friends with us, but they weren't because they feared us. It hasn't lent itself well to making actual friends. The fact that I don't like to talk much probably didn't help.

“Why are you sitting over here all by yourself?” Quinton asks.

I glance up, finding a kind smile on Quinton's face. “I'm not very good at small talk. Or really any kind of talk. I'm not good at peopling.”

“Don't try to think of it as peopling,” he says, his smile growing. “Think of it as getting to know your brothers better. You should be good at that. You already have two of them.”

“Yeah, but we're also telepathically connected.” I snort.

“C'mon, at least give us a chance. I promise we won't bite.”

“I do,” Biran calls over his shoulder, a smirk on his lips. “But only if you ask nicely.”

That sets us all off, laughter filling the lobby. I force myself to stand and follow Quinton over to where Orion and Biran are chatting. I mostly stand there with my hands in my pockets, only answering direct questions. None of them seem put off by it, though, and it makes me think that maybe having seven co-mates might not be such a bad thing.

Another ding fills the room, and when I lift my eyes to the elevator, I forget all about the monsters surrounding me. Because this time, Laoise does step off the elevator. She looks breathtaking.

I'm frozen in my spot, mouth slightly agape as I watch a smile light up her face as she sees the eight of us and makes her way over. Dáinn, of course, is the first one to reach her.

"Damn, Laoise. You're always gorgeous, but tonight? You take my breath away."

Laoise smiles, her cheeks going a bit pink as Dáinn kisses the top of her hand. "You don't look so bad either, Dáinn. In fact, all of you look downright edible."

I duck my head when her eyes scan over each of us, my face flushing. I swipe a hand over my face, trying to figure out what the hell is going on. I don't blush—ever. What magical powers does she possess to have me blushing?

"Don't feel bad," Orion says as he nudges me with his elbow. "I have the same damn reaction to her every time."

I smile because it does make me feel better. I think I'm really going to like this co-mate thing. They'll help round out my sharp edges—something I desperately need.

Laoise makes her way down the line, speaking with each of her monsters in turn. I've ended up at the end of the line, so I'm the last one she stops in front of.

"Hey, Tam."

"Hey, Laoise." I clear my throat, eyes darting at the others. What am I supposed to do now?

Laoise's grin only grows as she reaches out to run her hands over the lapels of my tuxedo. "You look very handsome in a tuxedo. Maybe you should wear them more often."

"Over my dead body." I scoff before realizing how rude I'm being. "Not

that I mind wearing it for the party tonight. It's my pleasure to dress up for you. I just think they're uncomfortable as hell and would rather not wear one."

"I don't know that I've ever heard anyone have such a visceral reaction to a tuxedo before." Laoise leans in like she's sharing a secret. "But I don't blame you. I'd go in leggings and a sweater if I thought I could get away with it. Not that I mind dressing up, but because it would piss off my parents."

Aeron smirks, butting in to tell her, "The good news is that I'm very good at pissing off parents, so I don't think it'll be too hard to make yours angry."

"Excellent. Somehow, I knew you'd be the one that would be the best at that," Laoise calls over her shoulder before shooting me a wink. When she goes to turn back to the others, I stop her with a hand on her wrist.

"I might not be great with words like Dáinn, but you look beautiful tonight—really, every time I see you. And I'm happy to help you stick it to your elitist parents."

Laoise's eyes soften. "Thank you, Tam. I appreciate it."

My eyes widen when she leans in to kiss my cheek, but it lands on the corner of my mouth instead. I can't help myself as I turn my head to brush my lips against hers. It's barely what you'd call a kiss, but she still leans into my body. I want to deepen it, maybe turn it into something more, but I know this isn't the time or place for that.

Laoise's cheeks are flushed when she pulls away, a small smile curling her lips. "Well, that was unexpected."

Shit. Maybe I shouldn't have done that? Perhaps she didn't want to be kissed. Had I just forced myself on her?

"Hey, take a breath for me, Tam." Laoise's hands land back on my chest. "Whatever you're thinking, you can stop. I enjoyed that kiss. It's just that of

the eight of you, I wasn't expecting you to be the first."

I force myself to take a deep breath, wondering when I'd stopped breathing. Laoise beams at me as I continue to force the air in and out of my lungs.

"That's a good boy." Laoise pats my chest as my eyes narrow. She just grins back at me. "Do we need to talk about what just happened?"

Embarrassed, I shake my head. "No, it's fine. I just thought maybe you didn't want me to kiss you, is all."

She laughs. "That's something you don't have to worry about. If I didn't want you to kiss me, you'd know it."

I can feel the others' eyes on me, and I hate it. Laoise must see it written all over my face because she claps her hands, drawing all the attention to her.

"Now that we've all said hello, we should get going. We can only be so late without my mother berating me."

I let the others trail past me until it's just me and Dáinn standing there.

"You good?" he asks, and I just nod.

"I am. I just had a moment."

Dáinn nods. "We all have them. If you want to talk about it later, just let me know."

He trails off after the others, and I just shake my head. Yeah, no. I'll leave the talking about feelings to Dáinn. I'm almost as bad as Aeron when it comes to that.

With a laugh, I follow behind my brother. The asshole knows I'm not going to talk about my feelings.

At least now we're heading for the party where the fun will really begin, and hopefully, everyone will forget about my momentary blunder with Laoise.

Chapter Sixteen



Laoise

Stepping into the Fae Realm, I have to fight back a sigh.

I don't want to be here. Coming to the Fae Realm never ends well for me. I'd almost rather not come back, but since my big brother still lives here, I know I'll have to come back to see him.

Though, with any luck, I won't have to visit my parents anymore after this year. Wouldn't that be heavenly?

"Baby sister!"

I spin when I hear my brother's voice, a grin sliding across my face when I see him. I can only move so fast in my outfit, but I throw myself into his arms as quickly as I can. Clinging to him, I laugh when he spins me in circles.

"I've missed you so much, Lore." I pull back to give him a sad smile. "I wish I could see you more frequently."

"And I, you," he says, glancing over my shoulder. "Would you like to explain why there are eight men glaring at me?"

Glancing over my shoulder, I find that my monsters are, in fact, glaring at my brother. I giggle, shaking my head as I grab Lorcan's hand. "Come. Let me introduce you to my dates. Guys, this is my brother, Lorcan. You can stop with the glaring."

As I quickly run through the introductions, each of my monsters gives me a sheepish look as they shake my brother's hand.

"You brought not one but eight men to our parents' annual Christmas party?" Lorcan snickers. "The very party in which our mother is planning to

announce your betrothal to Oisin?”

“I sure the fuck did, and these aren’t just any men, brother of mine. They’re all monsters, and they’re mine.”

Something settles heavily in my chest at my words, something that feels right. Even if I hadn’t set out for these men to be mine, they are, aren’t they?

Well, shit. Things just got a whole lot more complicated.

Lorcan grins. “This is going to piss off the parents, and I’m so glad I’ll be there to see it. Thank you for waiting until I was here to give them the big fuck you.”

I shrug nonchalantly. “I’m just following in my big brother’s footsteps.”

“I didn’t bring a group of men to my supposed engagement announcement, Lee. They were trying to marry me off to a woman, and I’m just not into them.” He shrugs. “It’s a pretty big difference.”

“Whatever. It was still a fuck you to them, and now you’re living your best life. That’s all I want. They don’t understand why I love the Mortal Realm so much, but that’s my home now—not this realm. It’s time for them to accept that I’m never going to be who or what they want.”

Lorcan loops his arm around my shoulders. “I’m fairly certain this will show them just that. Shit, we’re going to need a bigger carriage. Or more of them. I’ll be back.”

He glances at my men once more before pressing a kiss to my forehead. He pulls a phone from his pocket as he walks away, and I turn back to my monsters.

“Carriages?” Quinton asks, eyebrows raised.

“They like to keep things a little old-fashioned here, or at least keep the looks of it. We use magic carriages like the old ones that used to be drawn by horses. They’re just as fast as cars, but magic fuels and drives them.” I shrug.

“Most fae are elitists, not just the unicorn fae. This is just one more example of it.”

“Huh,” Rory says, seeming to be intrigued by the idea. “I was raised in the Mortal Realm. I wasn’t exactly welcome here, so I guess that tracks.”

“Don’t worry, big guy. I’ve got your back.” I grab his hand in mine, squeezing it as my brother comes back over.

“They’re sending two more carriages. They should be here shortly. Sadly, there isn’t a carriage big enough to carry all of us...” Lorcan trails off, eyes roving over my men. “Especially not when they’re all so big.”

Rolling my eyes, I slap my brother’s stomach. “Knock it off. They’re mine, and you don’t get to look at them like slabs of meat. Only I get to do that.”

I hear snickering behind me as my brother fights his smile. “Yes, ma’am. Would it be alright if you ride just with me? We have so much to catch up on, and once we get to the party, you’re going to be very busy.”

“I’d love to catch up.” Looking over my shoulder, I ask, “Do the eight of you mind splitting up and riding alone?”

“Of course not, Laoise.” Biran nods. “Spend some time with your brother. We’ll be just fine on our own.”

Lorcan stands at attention suddenly, his head tilting to the side. “The carriages are here.”

“Where are they? I don’t see them.” Dáinn’s question is whispered in my ear.

“There’s a clearing nearby. That’s where they will have arrived. Don’t be concerned that you didn’t hear it. Lorcan’s more attuned to fae magic, so he felt them arrive. Even I didn’t notice it.”

My brother offers me his arm. “Shall we?”

“We shall,” I say, linking my arm to his. He leads me down the pathway

and into the clearing, where three large carriages await us. I pause outside of the first one that is very obviously my parents', rolling my eyes. Just like everything else of my parents', my mother has decorated our carriage in the colors of her hair—the same colors that run through mine. “They don't do anything by halves, do they?”

Lorcan snickers. “You act as if things would have changed in the last year. You know our parents—they'll never change.”

“It's just so...ostentatious.” Rolling my eyes again, I turn back to my monsters. “At least yours are normal looking. The ride will take us about an hour to reach my parents' estate.”

With quick goodbyes, we're all climbing into separate carriages. As soon as our carriage begins to move, Lorcan turns to me with wide eyes. “What are you doing, Lee?”

“Whatever the hell I want.” I might say it as if it's no big deal, but I actually care what my brother thinks. He's the only person in my entire race I give a shit about. Whose opinion matters to me.

“You know they're going to cut you off, right?” He runs a hand over his face.

I nod. “I'm aware, but that's fine. I still have my inheritance from our grandparents, and I make good money in the Mortal Realm. Despite what our mother thinks, I have my shit together there. She just doesn't approve of what I do.”

Lorcan nods slowly. “That's all I really care about—that you'll be taken care of. Though with eight mates, I guess you would be even without that.”

“I'm not sure yet if they're my mates, but I think they could be. I want them to be.”

“That's all that matters, little sister. Tell me about them.”

So I do.

“What a variety. Are you planning on having them drop their glamours at the party? Because that would be a sight to see.” Lorcan laughs. “Imagine the drama. The damage. This party is going to be talked about for years. You’re going to be a hero to rebellious unicorn fae everywhere.”

“And you’re really okay with me doing this?” I ask quietly. “You’re not going to hate me.”

Lorcan balks at that, eyes going wide as he gathers me into his arms. “Of course, I’m not. I’m sorry if I let you think that for even a moment. You’re my sister, and I love you. I support you in everything you do. I just wanted to make sure you had a plan before you blew up the party, and you do. Neither of us has ever quite fit the mold our parents created for us, but that’s even more true for you. I tried to fit it the best that I could, even when it made me miserable. But you? You never let them push you around. You always demanded to be seen for who you were and not who they wanted you to be.

“I couldn’t be prouder of what you’ve accomplished. Of the life you’ve created for yourself. Honestly, I’m a little jealous.” He pulls back so I can look up at him. “And a little grateful for your party plans. I’m planning to announce that this is my last tour with the Fae Realms Military Unit. I’m leaving the service, and I think I’m going to relocate to the Mortal Realm for a while. You like Fort Veyelsa, right? Maybe I’ll look into settling there. Nothing would make me happier than being near you.”

For a moment, all I can do is stare at him in surprise. “Seriously? But I thought you loved it.”

“I did until I didn’t. I’m done making myself miserable in an attempt to make our parents happy or proud of me. It’s done me no good. Hell, I almost married a woman, and I’m not even attracted to them.” Lorcan shakes his

head. “I know there’s someone or multiple someones for me out in the world, but I don’t think they’re here in the Fae Realm. Like you, baby sister, I think my future lies in the Mortal Realm.”

“I’m so proud of you, Lorcan.” Throwing my arms around him, I hug him close. “And I’d love nothing more than for you to live in the same realm as me. I don’t know if my small town will be the right fit for you, but The Mortal Realm is massive. I’ll help you find your place there if that’s what you want.”

He lets out a sigh of relief as he hugs me close. “I know I’m older than you, but I really do look up to you, Lee. I’m proud of what you’ve accomplished on your own and of you showing our parents that they can’t push you around anymore. You’re the reason I feel like I can do this. So, thank you for being the best sister in all the realms.”

“Thank you for being the best brother in all the realms.”

With a sigh, we settle back into our seats. A smile slowly makes its way to my lips.

“Mother and Father are going to lose their shit tonight. Between me showing up with a harem of monsters and you resigning your post. They’re going to be the laughing stock of the unicorn fae. It couldn’t happen to better people.”

Lorcan chuckles. “You’re so mean, but you’re also right. It’s time for them to get a reality check. I wish it didn’t have to be like this, but if we don’t make a spectacle, then they’ll just sweep it under the rug.”

“Yeah, I’m not going to let that happen—for either of us.” Nodding, I feel a weight lift off my shoulders.

Not only does my brother approve of my plan, but he’s finally going to pull himself from underneath my parents’ shadow. I’m fairly certain I’ve found

my mates, and I finally get to show my parents that I won't be cowed by them. This really is shaping up to be the best Christmas ever.

Letting my eyes fall to the window, I watch as the realm passes by. While I might hate it here, it really is gorgeous. Colors are brighter here, and magic is so much stronger. I just wish this wasn't something else that my parents ruined for me. I could've been happy in the Fae Realm if my parents hadn't tried to shove their preconceived notions of what a unicorn fae should be down my throat. But if that had happened, then I never would've met my best witches or my monsters. And wouldn't that be the saddest tale of all?

I guess things do happen for a reason. I know that my girls and my monsters were meant to be a part of my life, and if I had to go through hell to get to them, then I'm glad. I would go through anything to have them in my life.

And isn't that just telling?

That I think of my monsters in the same way as the women who I couldn't live my life without. Whether they're my fated mates or not, they're mine. I love the idea of them being fated to be mine, but it's not the most important thing for me to consider.

No, it's so much more important that I love and respect them and that they feel the same way about me. I might not be in love with them yet, but I can feel it coming. Falling in love is a process that I've already started. How I thought I'd be able to find monsters to bring to this party and not care about them, I don't know. Or maybe it's just because these monsters were meant to be mine.

I don't know, but either way, I'm grateful to fate for bringing us together. They are my life. They are my future.

No matter what happens tonight, I'm going to make sure they know how I

feel. I won't let them slip through my fingertips. I'm going to hold tight to them and the love that's slowly building. I won't allow anything, least of all my parents, to come between us.

I feel giddy at my realization, a smile sliding across my face. No matter what else happens tonight, this makes it all worth it.

Chapter Seventeen



Dáinn

I'm practically bouncing inside the carriage as my eyes jump from one window to the other. "Gods, why is it so beautiful here?"

"Beautiful but deadly," Rory corrects, his hand coming down on my thigh and squeezing.

Aeron and Tam exchange a look before both shaking their heads.

"Good luck dealing with him when he gets like this." Aeron shrugs when I glare at him. "What? He should know what he's getting into, little brother. It's not a bad thing how excitable you get about new things and places, but I'm not sure Rory has had a chance to see you quite so manic."

Rory's hand squeezes my leg once more before he reaches for my hand. "I like Dáinn in all his forms—including the manic ones."

"That might be the sweetest thing anyone has ever said to me," I tell him, and I'm sure there are hearts in my eyes as I stare up at him.

Both my brothers gag from where they sit facing us, but I ignore them and keep all of my attention on Rory, who's smiling down at me.

"You're full of life and seem to find joy in anything thrown your way. That's something to appreciate, not rain on," he tells me before his eyes cut to my brothers. "Where would you be right now if Dáinn was more like the two of you? Hmmm?"

I blink up at Rory before turning my attention to my brothers, who are shifting uneasily in their seats.

“We wouldn’t be here if not for Dáinn,” Tamesis admits. “And I do appreciate the way my brother is. He keeps me from falling too far into the darkness that’s my constant companion, but we’ve been with him a lot longer than you have, Rory. One day, he’s going to annoy you with his exuberant amount of energy, and I’ll be right here to say I told you so. I love you, Dáinn. You know that, right? We don’t say these things to hurt you or try to change you. Or at least I don’t. I won’t pretend to speak for our brother.”

For a moment, I can just blink at Tamesis. “That was a lot of words all at once, brother. It always surprises me when you say so much out loud, but it also means that what you’re saying is important to you. I love you as well, Tam. I know I can be a bit much at times and that I annoy you and Aeron, but that doesn’t mean you love me any less.”

“Usually, anyway,” Aeron says with a smirk before his voice fills my head. *I love you, and I wouldn’t want you to change. You’re perfect the way you are.*

“It’s rude to speak into my head when Rory can’t hear,” I inform him as Rory wraps his arm over my shoulders. “But I love you, and you’re perfect the way you are, too. Even when you’re being a know-it-all or a grumpy pants.”

It’s silent for a moment before both of my brothers break out into laughter, Rory and I quickly join them.

“I’ll admit that I’m quite jealous of the relationship the three of you share. I wish I could’ve had a sibling or two, but my parents were unable to conceive after me. Apparently, I was a miracle baby, as their two species aren’t meant to reproduce.” Rory shrugs, leaning down to kiss the top of my head before turning back to my brothers. “You have had more years together and are

obviously close. I just worry that sometimes your words might cut Dáinn deeper than you realize.”

I bite my lip, loving that Rory is standing up for me, but it’s not really his place, is it? If I have a problem with the way my brothers treat me, then I should be the one to say something.

“It has before in the past,” I admit. “But I’m used to it now. I know it’s just your way of showing your love.”

Horror passes over Tamesis and Aeron’s faces.

Aeron shakes his head. “No. That’s not okay. We never want to hurt you. Why wouldn’t you tell us?”

“Because I always knew you would never intentionally hurt me. Sometimes, I just take it personally. That’s on me, not you.” I shrug.

“You’re wrong, Dáinn. That absolutely is on us.” Tamesis turns his attention to Rory. “Thank you for bringing this to our attention. I don’t think our little brother would have ever said anything to us, and we would’ve been hurting him without knowing it. Don’t keep things like this to yourself, D.”

“He’s right, brother. We might be able to speak in one another’s minds, but we can’t read yours. You have to let us know when something is affecting you. We don’t want to mistreat you. I would tell you if something you said hurt me, and I expect you to do the same thing from here on out.” Aeron leans forward, eyes never leaving mine. “Do you understand?”

I nod slowly. “I do. I will. I promise.”

With that settled, my brothers turn to look out the windows, and I lean further into Rory. “Thank you,” I whisper in his ear.

He sends me a crooked grin but says nothing more.

It seems this conversation took more from me than I thought, and my manic state seems to have passed as I turn back to look out the window. I can still

appreciate the beauty of the landscape, but I no longer feel as if I'm bouncing off the walls of the carriage. It seems that Rory has done me two favors today. I will have to find a way to repay him for that. Maybe something that we'll both enjoy?

Chuckling to myself, I realize we've turned off of the main road. Further in the distance, I see houses. "I wonder if we're getting close. I see houses ahead of us."

"We could be." Tamesis leans toward me so he can try to see what I'm seeing before giving up. "It has been nearly an hour."

"What do you think we have in store for us tonight?" Aeron asks, glancing between the rest of us.

Rory chuckles, but there's no joy in the sound. "Nothing good—that I can promise you. But it doesn't matter because we're here to support Laoise. She's here to prove a point to her parents, and we're that point."

"It's a party, and I plan to enjoy myself." I shrug, not looking away from the window. "As for the rest of it, whatever Laoise wants, I'll do it. That's why we're here, isn't it? To help her."

"Of course, it is," Tamesis assures me.

"Then nothing else matters, does it?"

The three of them are silent for a moment before Aeron speaks up. "Dáinn, I think you might be the smartest of all of us."

"Of course, I am." I turn to them with a grin. "My mind just sometimes works against me, and everything comes out all jumbled."

Having said my piece, I turn back to the window as we begin approaching the houses. They're all large and colorful, much like the carriage that Laoise is riding inside with her brother. I think we might have reached the part of the Fae Realm where the unicorn fae resides. Much like the small part of the

realm we've seen, the colors are brighter, and magic almost seems to float heavily in the air. It's unlike anything I've ever seen.

The carriage turns off the road and starts heading toward an estate. The house is massive and set back from the others near it as if they're only there to showcase it. It's easily five stories high. Each story is a different color, all of which match the shades of Laoise's hair perfectly. I noticed earlier that her brother's hair was darker than her own but in the same colors. Since she's the only unicorn fae I've ever met, I figured they all had hair like hers, but now I'm not so sure.

As we near the house, we join a line of garish carriages. It seems the unicorn fae like their colors, though there is some variety to them. It's almost painful to my eyes.

When we reach the front of the line, the door swings open of its own accord. Laoise, Bain, Quinton, Orion, and Biran are waiting alongside Lorcan at the bottom of the staircase that leads up to the house. Rory is the first one out of the carriage, and when he holds his hand out to help me down, I don't bother fighting the smile on my face as I slip my hand into his. Once my feet are firmly on the ground, he links our fingers together before leading us over to Laoise.

Laoise is grinning at us. She lets out a squeal as she throws herself at me, and I wrap my free arm around her waist. "The two of you are so adorable. I'm so glad you're not hiding how you feel here. If there's one thing you don't have to worry about being judged for here, it's who you love. Everything else is up in the air, but this? This is something they'll find joyous."

"I thought we had some parents to piss off," Aeron grouses as he comes to stand at my side. "Why are we standing here still?"

“Don’t be a jackass, Aeron,” Laoise tells him as she pulls away from me, placing her hands on her hips. “There’s plenty of me to go around.”

Lorcan laughs, drawing our attention to him. “This is going to be fabulous. We’re waiting because I need your family names so we can have you announced properly.”

“Family names?” I snort. “You couldn’t say ours even if you wanted to.”

Lorcan looks offended. “I’ll have you know I’m able to speak every language in the Fae Realm as well as four from the Mortal Realm. I’m sure I’ll be able to say it.”

I laugh again. “I’m not from the Fae or Mortal Realms. We’re from the Hell Realm. But if you think you can pronounce it, feel free.”

Our family names are in the demonic tongue, which isn’t something many other species are able to recreate. I say ours as slowly as I can so he has the best chance, but I can see the shock on his face.

“Yeah, I can’t say that. Maybe we should forgo family names and just list species?” Lorcan looks to Laoise for guidance. “Do any of you have any easier-to-pronounce family names?”

Bain shakes his head. “Mine is also in the demonic tongue.”

Orion says something in what I’m guessing is the ogre tongue, and it’s not any easier than my family name. By the time Biran, Rory, and Quinton say their family names, I’m dying of laughter. Lorcan has grown paler and paler as everyone has given him their family name.

“None of those are going to work. I know you’re here to prove a point, but how are we supposed to announce your dates?”

Laoise laughs, moving over to lay her hand on her brother’s arm. “Calm down, Lore. They can just be announced as my future mates with their first names. As long as that’s fine with the eight of you?”

“Are we your future mates?” I ask, hope and desperation running through me. I want her answer to be yes, but I don’t know if she feels quite as strongly as the rest of us. She hasn’t even revealed how unicorn fae know when someone is their fated mate.

Laoise’s face softens as she nods. “It’s a conversation we’ll need to have after the party, but I believe that fate put you all in my path. Regardless of whether you’re my fated mates or not, I choose you. I want this. I want all of you.”

We all stand stock-still for a moment before all eight of us rush at Laoise, who throws her head back as she laughs.

“Yes, yes. I’m very excited as well, but we do need to head inside. We’ll talk more and celebrate later.”

I move back, pulling Rory with me, and slowly, the others back off as well.

Lorcan is grinning down at his sister. “I’m so happy for you, little sister. Let me go let the announcer know what’s coming. There’s about to be a scandal, and I know he’ll enjoy being able to announce it. This is the best night ever, and it’s only just beginning.”

Chapter Eighteen



Tamesis

Watching Laoise's brother walk away, I'm slightly concerned by how much joy he seems to be getting out of this.

Turning back to Laoise, I lift an eyebrow. She giggles, and I have to fight back a smile.

She's already made me and the other seven men surrounding her the happiest men in all the realms when she announced that she wants us beyond her parents' Christmas party. Part of me wishes I didn't know this, though. Mainly because I want to take her and her other mates to an empty room and have each of us rut her, filling her with as much cum as she can hold.

"Don't worry, Tam," her lilting voice assures me. "My brother has news of his own for our parents tonight, and it's not something that they'll like. Not only is he happy for me to have found the men I want to spend the rest of my life with, but he's also grateful that we'll pull some of the heat off of him."

"Hmmm." Bain makes a face. "I don't know if I like that."

Before Laoise can respond, Lorcan appears at the top of the stairs. "They're ready for us."

Laoise slips her arm into the crook of Quinton's arm before waving Biran over. "The two of you may escort me in. The rest of you will be announced at the same time as me, so just follow me down the stairs."

"Down the stairs?" I ask, turning to the others. "But we're going up the stairs."

“I’m sure all will be revealed in time,” Orion says as he starts up the stairs with Bain at his side.

Dáinn laughs. “Rory, would you do me the honor of escorting me?”

“It would be my pleasure.”

I make a face at my youngest brother before gesturing for Aeron to precede me. Our group comes to a stop at the top of the staircase. I peer around the others, who are all taller than me and my brothers—besides Laoise, of course—and see a long hallway stretching out before us. At the end of the hallway stand two men outside of a closed set of double doors that go from floor to ceiling.

I notice the carpet is a bright pink, the walls a bright blue, and the door a lavish gold. It’s way too much on my eyes.

As a group, we head down the hallway with Lorcan leading the way. Laoise, Quinton, and Biran are right behind him, with the rest of us filling in behind them in pairs.

I hear the doors opening before I see them, music and chatter making its way up the hallway to us. There’s a slight pause at the sound of the doors where everyone falls silent, and that’s when a voice booms out. “Sir Lorcan Fitzgerald, Major of the Fae Realms Military Unit.”

Lorcan glances back at us once more before blowing his sister a kiss and stepping through the open doorway. I hear applause and realize this is so different from any of the fancy parties I’ve ever been to. Not that I’ve been to many, but it’s very clear that the Fae and Hell Realms are very different from one another.

“Lady Laoise Fitzgerald and her eight future mates,” the booming voice announces, and I swear I hear laughter in his voice. “Aeron, Bain, Biran, Dáinn, Orion, Quinton, Rory, and Tamesis.”

Laoise steps through the door, head held high as the room falls silent enough that I don't doubt we'd be able to hear a pin drop. We all file in behind her and I find that we're descending another staircase. As Laoise's feet hit the ground, I hear a smattering of applause, but it's clear that everyone in the room is shocked.

"What is the meaning of this?" someone yells, and I watch as a smile blooms on her face as a tall man with hair much like Lorcan's and a petite woman with hair identical to Laoise's steps out of the crowd. "Daughter?"

"Father. Mother. It's wonderful to see you both, and what a festive party you're throwing this year." Her eyes scan the room, her voice easily carrying throughout it since no one else dares to speak. "When I received Mother's invitation, I knew it was time for me to introduce you to my mates. See, Mother, I am capable of finding my own mates."

The woman, I'm assuming is her mom, looks down her nose at all of us before turning her attention to her daughter. When she speaks, her voice is high and nasally—not to mention annoying as hell. "They are not unicorn fae or even fae. They are not appropriate mates."

"You don't get to decide who is and who isn't appropriate. They are who I will be mating with, whether you like it or not." Laoise doesn't raise her voice as she stares down her parents. "I have told you this before, and I will tell you again—for the last time. I will never be the woman you want me to be, but I will be happy. They make me happy, and that should be all you care about. If you can't be happy for me, then that's on you, not me."

"But what I won't allow is for you to make my monsters feel like they're less than you. Because guess what, Mother? Unicorn fae are not the end all, be all. Hell, fae aren't either. But if that's so important to you, you should know that I have one mate that is half redcap. So, he's at least half fae. Does

that make you happy?” Laoise laughs at the horror on her mom’s face as she scans our faces.

I don’t know what she thinks she sees or doesn’t see, but Laoise’s mom scoffs. “None of these men are redcaps. I don’t know why you must be so dramatic. As if you’d marry into a redcap family. Even you wouldn’t sink so low.”

“Sink so low?” This time, when Laoise laughs, it’s a cold sound that I’ve never heard her make. “Do you even hear yourself, Mother? Do you realize how much of a speciesist you and most of the other unicorn fae are? It’s ridiculous. We are not the best species in the world. I wouldn’t even say we make it in the top ten. No matter what all of you think.”

I hear gasps from the crowd at that, and I have to bite back my laughter. Laoise turns around, eyes locking on Rory.

“Rory? If you wouldn’t mind?”

Rory nods, leaning over to kiss my brother before walking through the others to stand at Laoise’s side. No words are passed between them, but Rory begins stripping off his suit, much to her parents’ horror.

“What is he doing?” her dad demands.

“This is a society party. One does not just undress in front of everyone.” Her mom’s eyes are wide, but I don’t miss the way she’s checking out Rory.

Laoise throws her head back as she laughs. “Oh, the pair of you need to learn to let loose every once in a while. There’s no fun in being so dull. As for Rory, he doesn’t want to ruin his suit.”

“Ruin his suit? I don’t understand—” her mother’s tirade is cut off as Rory’s glamour falls away and he reveals his true form.

Both of her parents stare in shock, completely speechless.

“As you can see, Rory is half giant and half redcap. So, as I said, one of my

monsters is part fae.”

Her dad is the first to recover. “You keep saying monsters...”

“Oh? Do I?” Laoise’s smile is wicked. “That’s because they are. My harem is made up of hellhound shifter triplets—yes, they become a cerberus—an ogre, a sasquatch, a basilisk, a Surtr, and, of course, Rory.”

Laoise’s mom shakes her head. “I cannot believe that you’d embarrass us like this. Especially not when Oisín is here. He is in line for the throne.”

A young man with silver hair and pointed ears steps forward. “I’ll never take the throne, as was explained to you on numerous occasions. There are at least a hundred people in line before me if not more. You led me to believe that your daughter was incapable of finding a suitable spouse because of something she was lacking. I won’t repeat the words you said to me out of respect for your lovely daughter.

“Laoise, I’m Oisín. I’m sorry that we’re meeting under these circumstances. It’s quite obvious that not only are you not lacking in any way, but that you have been able to find men who love and adore you. I’m happy for you.” He turns back to her parents, his smile falling away. “As for the two of you, my family will be hearing of this. If you thought you could gain favor with the royal family by marrying into it, you have failed. Not just because this betrothal won’t be moving forward but because of the type of people you are. Even we, as royals, don’t seem to have nearly the amount of elitist attitude of you and yours. The Seelie Court will not condone this, and you will surely find yourself outside of their favor.”

With that, Oisín turns and heads for the stairs, only pausing long enough to send Laoise and her brother, who appeared out of nowhere, a smile.

“Look what you’ve done,” her mom cries, voice echoing around the vast ballroom as whispers begin to spread throughout the crowd. “You’ve ruined

us.”

“No, Mother, you’ve ruined us,” Lorcan cuts her off. “And while we’re making announcements, I’d like to let you know I will be resigning from the Fae Realms Military Unit. This is my last tour, and I will be relocating to the Mortal Realm once it’s completed.”

Their parents stare at Laoise and Lorcan like they’ve never seen them before, but Lorcan just laughs. “Now that you’ve had your fill of drama for the evening, why don’t we get this party going?”

The music immediately starts up once more, and I move down to pull Laoise into my arms. “Are you okay?”

“I’m better than okay,” she says, her smile lighting up her face. “Do you know how long I’ve wanted to say all of that? It’s so freeing.”

“I’m glad, love,” I tell her, pulling her in for a quick kiss.

The crowd has already begun to disperse when Laoise’s mom slinks over and hisses, “I hope you’re happy now. You’ll never get another cent from us. I hope you starve in the Mortal Realm and die alone when your *monsters*,” she says it like it’s a dirty word, “abandon you. You’re not welcome here. You can leave now.”

“You know what? I don’t think I will, Mother. I also don’t need your money. You forget that your parents were kinder than you and Father. They made sure that Lorcan and I would be set up if something like this happened. Plus, I have a job in the Mortal Realm, and it pays better than you ever did. I love it, and I hope you spend the rest of your miserable life missing the two children you had but alienated. Goodbye, Saoirse.”

I laugh as she leads me away, but I can’t help glancing back to find Laoise’s mom looking shell-shocked.

“That was hot,” Dáinn announces loudly, causing all of us to laugh.

Laoise leans into him, kissing him. When she pulls back, they're both flushed, and I love seeing my brother so happy. It seems that Laoise is handing out kisses like they're candy tonight. I'll definitely need to make sure I take advantage of that.

I'm not sure I've ever felt this happy before as a smile blooms across my face. I can't seem to wipe it away, which is unlike me. I rarely smile, but right now there's nothing but happiness filling me. There's no darkness, no rage, no anger. All I feel is love and pride for the woman who has changed my and my brothers' lives.

"I'm proud of you, Lee." Quinton pulls her into his arms. "I know it took a lot for you to stand up to your mom like that."

Laoise shrugs. "It did, but it's really the best feeling in the world. The eight of you don't need to worry about me. I've never been happier. According to my mother, I've already ruined the party, so let's go have some fun, yeah?"

And what else are we to do except follow her deeper into the party? People move away from us as we make our way through the crowd, but I don't care. Let them stew in their bigoted ways. Let them continue their miserable lives but for the nine of us? We're just living our best lives.

Chapter Nineteen



Laoise

I've never felt lighter than I do right now. I hadn't expected to confront my parents right from the get-go, but I'm glad to have it done and over with. They reacted much as I expected them to, but for once, it didn't sting. I don't feel less than. I don't feel disappointment in myself or my parents.

No, I'm too surrounded by love to feel that. I've finally found where I belong in this life, and it helps to minimize the negative feelings I would usually feel after a confrontation with my parents. My men, my monsters, they're what has made the difference. Without them here, I don't doubt that I would've ended up betrothed to Oisín, even though I would have been miserable. More than that, my standing up to my parents allowed my brother to put himself first for the first time in his life. I'm glad that he's leaving the Fae Realm's military if he no longer enjoys it.

All I want for him is to be as happy as I am at this moment.

Speaking of Lorcan, he suddenly appears in front of me, holding out his hand. "May I have this dance, sister of mine?"

I glance back at my men to make sure they'll be all right without me before nodding to my brother. "It would be an honor to dance with the most decorated officer in the Fae Realms Military Unit—even if he's planning to leave the service."

"You're a cheeky little shit, aren't you?" He reaches over to boop me on the nose before grabbing my hand and leading me to the dance floor.

When a new song begins, we move into our positions. I'm thankful that it's an older dance, as I haven't spent long in the Fae Realms in the last few years. I move gracefully through the steps, laughing when my brother spins me around the floor.

When have the two of us ever been allowed to feel this? Not since we were young. I think I can remember one time when my brother and I laughed as we ran around the estate. I must've only been about three, making Lorcan closer to seven. He'd already begun training with our father by then, so I don't know how we managed it, but we had. And what a day we'd had. Laughter had been sparse in our home, as it wasn't deemed appropriate.

To be honest, Lorcan and I regularly partook in events that our parents would have deemed inappropriate—just away from their prying eyes. Earlier in the evening, Lorcan had said how he envied my ability to not conform to our parents' demands, but I did on many occasions. Especially once he left the house. I'm not proud of those decisions, but I really was just a young girl who wanted to be loved by her parents.

Only I've come to learn that my parents aren't capable of loving anyone except themselves. It was a hard lesson to learn, but I'm glad I learned it. I wish I had known it earlier, but that's neither here nor there.

Once the song ends, Lorcan leads me off the dance floor with a smile on both of our lips.

“That was fun. We must do it again later. Not that Mother or Father would approve.” Lorcan winks, but something catches his eye over my shoulder. When I turn to see what he's looking at, I can't figure it out. “Sorry, little sister, there is someone I must go meet.”

And then he's gone, leaving me alone and laughing. I make my way over to the table my men and I had commandeered. I notice that Rory and Dáinn are

missing and turn to the other two hellhound shifters. “Where are your brother and Rory?”

Tamesis just shrugs, pulling me into his lap. I laugh as I throw my arms around his neck but quickly turn my attention to Aeron. “Do you have any idea?”

“Nope. They were here one moment and then gone the next.”

I wrinkle my nose, glancing at the others. “No one has any idea where they went?”

I’m met with shakes of heads and apologetic looks. It’s not that I care if they wander off, but it would be easy to become lost in my childhood home. Not to mention, I wouldn’t put it past my mother to do something to them.

That thought immediately puts a damper on my mood. Tamesis seems to notice and pulls me closer.

“What’s wrong, Laoise?”

“I just worry that one of my parents might do something to endanger them. I don’t like not knowing where all of you are.”

Tamesis hums before Aeron lets out a bark of laughter. “There’s nothing to worry about, babe. I reached out. He’s safe...just busy.”

“Busy?” I frown as I turn to Aeron, and the look on his face makes me flush when I realize what he’s implying. “Really? Where are they?”

“I’m not sure he’ll tell me,” Aeron admits.

“Tell him I want to know,” I demand. If the two of them are off somewhere together, getting busy or whatever, I want to be there too.

Aeron shrugs, laughing a moment later. “He says they’re in a room on this floor. They went out the doors to the left and are a few doors down. There’s a big bed that takes up most of the room.”

I perk up at that, knowing exactly where they are. I jump to my feet, batting

away Tamesis's hands when he tries to pull me back into his lap. "The six of you stay here. I'll be back with our wayward party members shortly."

"Laoise, are you really going to leave us here on our own?" I'd almost say Orion is pouting, but he's not. Not really. But he definitely doesn't want me to leave him again.

I shrug. "They could get lost on their way back. It's easy to do in a house this size. If that happened, then we'd all have to go looking for them, and more people would end up lost. This is just simpler."

Even as the words spill from my lips, I know they don't believe me in the least.

"Yeah, okay. You're probably right," Biran says with a wink, his lips twisting into a smirk. "Have fun."

"I plan to," I call over my shoulder, already moving toward the door Dáinn said they left through. I can't believe that two of my mates-to-be found the room that Lorcan and I dubbed the orgy room. We've never seen our parents use it—thank the gods because, ewww—but this was the house my father grew up in. They never bothered changing any rooms on this floor, which always surprised me, but there were more than a few parties my brother and I weren't invited to. Who knows, maybe they did use it.

Okay, time to get my mind off that train of thought before I puke.

Instead, I let my mind wander to the two men I'm hoping to find in a compromising position. The idea of Dáinn and Rory together is enough for me to rub my thighs together as desire rushes through me. The idea of me being there with them? That just makes me wetter.

Am I really about to interrupt two of my soon-to-be lovers and demand they allow me to join them?

Obviously, I'm not going to demand it of them, but ask them nicely to let

me join? Absolutely.

Plus, would Dáinn have told his brother where I could find them if he didn't want me to find them? I think not.

I've almost made it to the door when my father grabs my arm and drags me out. "You and I need to have a talk, darling daughter of mine."

"Ouch. That hurts." I try to yank my arm out of his grasp, but he just holds on more firmly. "Let me go."

"No, I don't think I will." He pulls me into a room across the hall. "What was that spectacle all about? Why would you embarrass your mother and me like that?"

I scoff as he finally releases my arm, rubbing at where he held me. I'm going to have a bruise for sure. "I'm sorry that being myself embarrasses you, Father. Actually, that's a lie. I'm not sorry. You and Mother are elitist pigs, and you disgust me. I tried playing the role you wanted me to, but it's just not me. Now I'm done trying to be anyone except myself. Don't worry; Mother has already informed me you'll be cutting me off. I don't give a damn. And honestly? I don't care if I ever speak to you again."

Turning away from him, I don't bother waiting around to hear what he has to say. Unfortunately, I only make it a few steps toward the door when his magic wraps around me, freezing me in place. I'm spun around to face him. He stomps over, his face purple with rage.

"I did not say you were excused. You might be acting like a rebellious teenager, but you should know better than that by now. You're an adult, so fucking act like one. You've ruined our party, and you've disgraced us. I expect you to march your little ass back into that ballroom and explain that it was all a prank. You'll need to speak to Oisín and convince him you wish to marry him. I won't allow you to sully this family's name any further."

All I can do is laugh. “Wow. You’ve lost the thread, Cormac.” I smile when he flinches at me using his given name. “I’m not sure which part you misunderstood but let me make myself perfectly clear. I don’t care about the family name, and the person I care about in said family is Lorcan. I don’t care what you and Saoirse think of me. I don’t care if your reputation is in the mud. That’s on the two of you for caring more about appearances than your own children.

“You can’t bully me into doing what you want me to do anymore, Cormac. I’m not scared of you. What are you going to do? Beat me? You’ve never raised a hand to anyone your entire life. It requires too much energy. You’ve already cut me off, and I don’t need your money. I don’t need anything from either of you. You’re both dead to me at this point, so move on. It’s up to you to fix your own reputation. Maybe if you’d loved your children even a little bit, we’d care a little more about what you think or feel.”

I think I’ve shocked him because his hold on his magic slips just long enough for me to free myself and throw mine at him. I push him back and bind his hands. “Now, if you’ll excuse me, I have a party to enjoy.”

A private party for three, but he doesn’t need to know that.

“Goodbye, Cormac. Leave me and Lorcan alone. Neither of us wants anything to do with you or Saoirse.”

I keep a hold of my magic while I exit the room and head for the room where my men are hiding. With my hand on the doorknob, I finally release my magic. My father is going to be pissed, but really, what can he do to me that he hasn’t already done?

Chapter Twenty



Rory

“That looks fun,” Dáinn says as he watches Laoise and Lorcan spinning around on the dance floor, practically bouncing in his seat. “We should do that.”

“As much fun as I’m sure they’re having, do you know the dance? Because I certainly don’t.”

Dáinn’s face falls. “No, I guess not.”

I hate to see him disappointed, so I take his hand in mine. “Come on. Let’s go wander around and see what kind of trouble we can get into.”

“Really?” Dáinn is up and out of his seat before I can blink. I chuckle, turning to let the others know we’re leaving, but they’re all enthralled by Laoise. We’ll likely be back before any of them notice our absence, anyway. I push to my feet and take Dáinn’s offered hand. He’s talking a mile a minute, and I miss half of what he says as I smile down at him. It’s not that I don’t care what he has to say, but more that I just like watching him.

When we come to a door, Dáinn glances up at me. “Wanna see where this leads?”

I turn to look over my shoulder to see if anyone is watching us. “I’m not sure that’s a good idea.”

“Probably not, but you said we should go looking for trouble. This could lead to trouble.” Dáinn looks so excited at the concept that I just nod my head. I reach over to swing the door open, and we both duck into it. We find ourselves in a dimly lit but still elegantly decorated room—even if I’m

growing very tired of these shades of blue, pink, and purple. It's clear that Laoise's mother thinks very highly of herself to decorate the entire house in the same colors as her hair.

But upon closer inspection, I realize these tones are more muted and darker. Interesting.

"I see more doors!" Dáinn drags me down the hallway, throwing open door after door. He barely glances inside before moving onto the next, but when we hit the third door on the left, he steps inside the room instead of continuing on. "I want that bed."

Not wanting anyone to realize that we're somewhere we shouldn't be, I pull the door shut behind us before turning my attention to the bed. It's fucking massive. "Holy shit. Laoise needs that bed. It could easily fit all nine of us."

Dáinn releases my hand and spins around to face me. "Want to test out the bed?"

"What?" I'm sure my disbelief is apparent on my face.

"Well, you stood up for me today and helped my brothers realize they were hurting me without knowing it. I think that deserves to be rewarded."

"I... What?" Even as I stumble over my words, I know what he's implying. "You don't need to do that. I don't need you to say thank you."

Dáinn looks up at me through his eyelashes, a shy smile on his face. "And if I want to?"

My half-hard cock is now at full mast. A groan slips past my lips before I can stop it, and Dáinn's smile only grows. He reaches for my pants, moving slowly so I can say no if he wants, but who in their right mind would say no to this man? Certainly not me.

He flicks the button open and slowly lowers the zipper before shoving my pants down. His eyes go wide when he sees my dick barely constrained by

my boxer briefs.

“Hot damn,” he breathes as he pulls them down, sinking to his knees before me. “I figured you’d be big, but this? This is even better than I imagined.”

I let my shoulders relax at his words. A lot of people have run the moment they’ve seen my thick ten-inch dick. Apparently, it’s too much for them. It’s a fear that I’ll still have to face with Laoise, but at least Dáinn didn’t run away screaming.

He closes his hand around me as he leans forward to lick the pre-cum from the tip. A groan spills from me as his hand moves up and down my length. I have no expectations of him being able to take my whole dick—I’ve yet to meet anyone who could—but I’m looking forward to seeing how much of me he can stuff into his mouth.

Dáinn chuckles. “This is going to be a challenge, but I love a good challenge.”

Then he closes his mouth around me, hollowing out his cheeks. I curse, wrapping my hands in his hair—not to guide him, only to hold on. He slides up and down my cock, taking a little more of me with each pass, moaning around me. My head rolls back, my eyes falling shut as the sensations caused by his warm, wet mouth course through me.

When he pops off of me, I glance down to ask him what’s wrong but find him grinning up at me. “Laoise wants to know where we are. She had Aeron send me a message, and I told him I was busy. I get the feeling he might have implied why I was busy. I think our girl wants to join us if that’s okay with you?”

I’m torn about how to answer. Of course, I want her here. I always want her around, but I don’t want Dáinn to feel like he’s any less important or that we can only have time together when Laoise is with us. Plus, I’m still afraid I’ll

send her running with the size of my dick, but she has to see at some point, doesn't she?

“I don't mind, Dáinn, but she doesn't have to be here if that's not what you want. This was meant to be us spending time together—even if it turned into more than I anticipated.” I chuckle.

“Oh, I definitely want her here, but I appreciate you thinking of my feelings.”

Before I can respond, he's closing his mouth around my cock once more, and for a few moments, I forget all about the woman who's on her way to join us. But only until I hear the door opening, followed by a small gasp that turns into a moan.

“While I'm glad you didn't lock the door, I think I'm going to. I don't want anyone else to see.” Laoise's voice is husky as I glance over my shoulder at her. She licks her lips as she circles us until she can see Dáinn taking my cock like the good boy he is. “Damn, that's even hotter than I thought it would be.”

Dáinn leans back to grin at our girl, his hand stroking along my length. “You want to come help me?”

“Want to? Absolutely, but I don't think I will.” She moves toward the bed, kicking off her shoes before sitting. “I think I want to watch if that's okay with both of you.”

“Fine by me,” I tell her.

Dáinn nods. “I'm good with that too, but only if you get yourself off at the same time.”

She throws her head back as she laughs. “I don't think I'd be able to stop myself if I tried.”

“Take your dress off, Laoise,” I bark as she shifts on the bed.

“I’ll need help with that, big guy. Someone has to help me in and out of this one.”

Dáinn is on his feet before I can offer to help her. Laoise stands, giving him her back so he can lower the zipper. The material pools around her hips, and the only thing holding it up is her hands. She turns back around before she releases the dress, allowing it to fall to the floor.

I bite back a groan as all of her beautiful skin and perky tits are revealed. She’s so fucking gorgeous. Even from here, I can see the wet spot on her panties.

“Panties, too,” I demand. “I want you to sit on the bed with your legs spread and bring your feet up to rest on the edge, so you’re spread out before us.”

“Yes, sir,” she says dryly but does as I ask. She pushes her panties down and kicks them away before arranging herself on the bed as I requested.

My eyes immediately go to her glistening pussy, showing both Dáinn and me how turned on she is just from the little bit she saw of us together.

“Good girl, Laoise. Such a good girl. You’re so fucking hot. Dáinn, on your knees,” I bark again, unable to control myself. My balls are aching, and I need to come.

Dáinn grins at me. “In front of you or her, Daddy?”

With a groan, I squeeze my cock. These two little brats are going to be the death of me. I just know it.

“You know the answer to that,” I tell him. “Now, are you going to be a good boy and get on your knees, or am I going to have to turn your ass red?”

I see both of their eyes light up and swallow. Well, shit. They both like the sound of that. I’m expecting them both to mouth off, but Laoise just bites her lip as Dáinn saunters back over and drops to his knees once more.

“Would it be alright if I got my cock out, Daddy?”

Fuck. Yes. They’re definitely going to kill me.

I cup his face in my hands as I shake my head. “No, D. Daddy will help you take care of that after.”

Dáinn moans, his eyes filled with lust as he nods. “Can I ask something else, then?”

“You can ask,” I say with a nod. Of course, there will be no guarantees that I say yes, but he should know that.

“Will you fuck my face and throat? My gag reflex is practically non-existent, but I want your dick buried so deep inside of my throat that if you were to wrap your hand around it, all you would feel is your cock as you fuck me.”

That was not what I was expecting him to ask. Before I can answer him, Laoise cries out, causing both of us to turn to her. Her fingers trail through her center, dragging her juices up as she circles her clit.

“Please do that. I want to see that. Please.”

I chuckle as my cock twitches, ready to be buried inside of Dáinn’s mouth. “How can I say no when you both ask so nicely?”

Dáinn turns back to me, taking my cock into his mouth and working his way down my length until I hit the back of his throat. He starts to gag, but then I’m slipping down his throat as he swallows around me.

“Fuck,” I curse, my hands weaving through his hair once more. “You better hold on, D. This is going to be hard and fast. Lee, I want you to come before me.”

“Yes, sir,” she cries out, and I know she’s already close. Good, because so am I.

Having given Dáinn his only warning, I pull out before thrusting back into

his mouth. I slide right down his throat and keep going until his nose is pressed against my stomach. A groan spills from me as his throat spasms around me. It's both too much and not enough.

I fuck his mouth in earnest, going hard and fast as I promised. Laoise's whimpers and cries are the best background noise as Dáinn moans and chokes on my cock. Remembering the picture he painted for us, I let one of my hands move to his throat, and sure enough, I can feel myself as I fuck in and out of him. It's too much.

"I'm going to come," I yell, jerking my head to Laoise, who is fucking herself on her fingers while still working her clit. Her eyes go wide when they meet mine, and she comes hard. Then I'm spilling inside of Dáinn's mouth, only feeling a little bad that I didn't ask if he wanted to swallow. It's too late now.

Panting, I slide from between his lips as he gasps to fill his lungs with some much-needed air.

"That was hot," Laoise says from the bed. "At some point, I want you to do that to me too, Daddy."

"Fuck. You two need to stop with the Daddy shit. I don't need to get hard again."

"I mean, I wouldn't complain," Dáinn says with a wink.

I shake my head, helping him to his feet. "Now it's your turn, but I think you should eat our girl out while I go down on you."

"I like the way you think," he says as we step toward Laoise.

Part of me knows we should get back to the party, but I have every intention of tasting both of them before we do so. Hopefully, no one will notice our absence.

Chapter Twenty-one



Aeron

I cross my arms over my chest as I stare out at the dance floor, growing more and more annoyed with each passing moment.

“Don’t be a grump,” Biran tells me, leaning over to slap a hand on my shoulder. “We’ll all get our time with her.”

I take a deep breath before nodding. “I know, but I feel like they’re rubbing it in our face by keeping her away from us for so long.”

“You’re jealous,” Tamesis says, and I shrug. He’s right, and we all know it. That doesn’t mean I want to admit it. No, I’d much rather punch both of my brothers in the face.

Quinton snorts. “We’re all jealous. We also don’t really know anyone here, and since they’re all avoiding us like the plague... I’m with Aeron on this one.”

Bain grunts. “Same.”

Orion laughs, shaking his head. “Being grumps about it isn’t going to make them come back any faster.”

“Whatever.”

Am I pouting? Maybe.

I’m definitely jealous, but I want to see my girl—our girl. I want to hold her in my arms and spin her around the dance floor, even if I don’t know any of these dances. Hell, I don’t even like dancing, but I saw the way her face lit up when she was dancing with her brother. I want her to look at me like that.

That might make me pathetic, but I can’t find it in myself to care.

After hearing her say that she chooses us, regardless of whether we're fated or not—we are, I have no doubts about that—has done something to me. I need to claim her, make her mine. I know that's the hellhound side of me, and usually, I have no problems dealing with that side of myself. But he's pushing at me hard. He wants her to be ours before we leave this realm, which doesn't seem like the best of ideas.

It's not that I don't want to mate her, to claim her as my own. I do, but I want it to be special. It may sound weird, but I always thought that me and my brothers would claim her together. Yet, Dáinn's off doing gods knows what to her with Rory.

Don't get me wrong. I'm so fucking happy that my brother has Rory, but I don't like that he's having his first experience with our mate without Tamesis and me.

I want to be with them, too.

My head snaps up to meet Tamesis's eyes.

It should be the three of us, I send back to him, and he nods.

Our brother knows that. He wouldn't do it without us. Trust him. He's a part of us, and he knows what we all want.

I sigh, hoping that he's right. I can't be sure, only because I don't know if I'd be able to hold back if it was me in that room with her. I guess only time will tell.

“Sorry that took so long,” Laoise says, appearing out of nowhere and dropping into my lap. “Would you believe that my dad pulled me aside as I was leaving the room to tell me I needed to fix this? Like, I give a shit about his reputation. Asshole.”

I sniff, growling at the scent of her arousal, my brother and Rory on her. She turns her head slowly, eyes wide.

“Is there a particular reason you’re growling at me?”

I can’t answer her as I continue to growl under my breath, my eyes finding Dáinn. He holds up his hands in surrender.

We didn’t, brother. I only went down on her. I would never. Not without you and Tam.

Laoise glances between the two of us as my growl cuts off. “What have I told the three of you about talking to one another in your heads? It’s unfair to everyone else.”

“I’m sorry, Lee.” I brush my nose against her neck. I need to cover her with my scent—that should make my hellhound happy. I wrap my arms around her, rubbing myself against as much of her as I can.

Dáinn finishes for me when I find myself unable to speak again. “It’s just a little disagreement between brothers. Nothing to worry about. We just didn’t want to air it all out in the middle of the party.”

Laoise nods before laughing as she wiggles in my arms. “Are you scent-marking me?”

I grunt. “Maybe. Do you have a problem with that?”

“No, I guess not.” She settles back in my arms, and I feel the hellhound fall away.

This is so stupid. I can’t allow him to control me like this, but it seems like my control is fraying at the edges.

“So, what’s the plan?” Biran asks, meeting my eyes for a moment with a nod before focusing back on the woman in my arms.

Laoise hums. “The plan for what?”

“For the party,” Quinton says with a laugh. “Did your boys take such good care of you that your brain still isn’t online?”

Laoise flushes but lifts her chin. “They took exceptional care of me, thank

you very much.”

Tamesis snorts. “Can we go back to talk about your dad grabbing you? Am I the only one concerned by that?”

“No. I definitely find that concerning,” Orion offers.

My arms tighten around her, realizing I’d been so focused on her scent that I hadn’t really paid attention to what she was saying.

“It was nothing. He thought he could intimidate me into doing what he wanted, just like he always has.” Laoise waves her hand in their direction as if she can wave away their concerns.

Another growl spills from me when I see the marks on her arm. Grasping her arm gently, I turn it so I can look at them. They’re already bruising. “This doesn’t look like nothing. Was this your dad, or do I have to kick Dáinn’s and Rory’s asses?”

“That was my dad. He dragged me to a room before using his magic to hold me in place.” She holds up her hand when we all begin to speak at once. “It’s fine. I handled it. He won’t try that again.”

“He sure as fuck won’t,” I grumble, unable to keep the growl from my voice. “Because you’re not going anywhere on your own while we’re in this house. You’ll take one of us with you wherever you go?”

She laughs. “Even to the bathroom? That should make for a fun time.”

“I don’t give a fuck what you’re doing. We’re not going to let you be in danger.”

Laoise turns around, her face going serious as she lays her hands on either side of my face. “Okay, Aeron. I’ll make sure I’m not alone, but maybe you can ask your hellhound to stop trying to press forward? Unless you want him to shred your clothes, so you have to walk around naked for the rest of the night.”

The worst part of her statement? I didn't even realize he was pushing at me again. Fuck.

Come on, asshole. I know you're freaking out—so am I—but this isn't the way to handle it.

I can practically hear his annoyance with me, but he does stop pushing forward. I let out a sigh.

“I'm sorry, Laoise. He's riding me hard tonight. He doesn't like that you're in what he perceives as somewhere dangerous.”

She pats my chest. “I understand, and I appreciate his concern, but I know how to take care of myself. Plus, none of you are going to let anything happen to me.”

There are grumbles of agreement around the table, and Laoise smiles as she looks around the table.

“See? I'm perfectly safe. As for the plan, we're going to enjoy ourselves. My parents' chef is amazing, so I definitely recommend that we grab some food. Then maybe we can do some dancing. I'd say we could mingle, but the only person worth knowing here is my brother, and you already met him.”

“Remind me why we're even still here?” I grumble.

Cool it, brother. Tamesis glares at me. ***You're being too much of an asshole.***

I am an asshole, I tell him with a shrug. ***I don't know why you thought I wouldn't be.***

Dáinn snorts. ***I'm pretty sure it's embedded in your DNA. Don't worry, we won't ever forget. But maybe lay off a bit.***

Our girl doesn't need you growling in her ear all night, Tamesis adds, and I know he's right.

“Sorry,” I mumble against Laoise's back. “I'm trying, I swear.”

“It’s fine, Aeron. You’re an asshole. We all know this and understand.” She giggles as she tries to stand up, but I refuse to release my hold. “Aeron, you have to share. There’s eight of you and only one of me.”

“I can fix that,” I tell her, eyes narrowing on the other guys. Obviously, I’m joking—mostly.

Laoise sinks her heel into my toes, and I wince, letting her go. She spins around, hands on her hips, as she stares down at me. “You better be joking.”

“Of course, I’m joking. Don’t worry, I don’t support monster-on-monster violence.”

She’s fighting back a smile as she tries to stand her ground, but she eventually loses the battle. She laughs with her whole body, the sound mesmerizing as her head falls back. Heads turn in her direction, unable to resist the lure of her laughter. I smirk, cocking an eyebrow as I stare down at the men whose attention she’s drawn. She’s ours, assholes. You can’t have her. Look all you want, but you’ll never have her.

“You’re damn lucky you’re funny and cute,” she finally manages to say, leaning over to brush her lips across mine. “Now, let’s get some food.”

I jump to my feet, stopping her from plowing into the crowd. “Why don’t you sit here with Tam? Dáinn and I will make plates for the two of you. That way, we don’t lose our table.”

Laoise looks like she wants to argue with me but eventually nods and lowers herself into Tamesis’s lap.

You owe me one, buddy, I sent his way as I join the others to find ourselves from food. I chuckle when all he sends me back is an image of him flipping me off.

I really could’ve asked her to stay with anyone, but I chose my brother because she’d already sat in my lap while Dáinn had gotten up close and

personal with her cunt. If I was feeling left out, then so was he. It's up to all of us to make sure no one feels left out. We're a team, after all.

But there was no way I was going to have Laoise lead us through the crowd. I can deal with their snarling faces and whispered insults, but I don't want her to have to deal with it. I know she says she wants to enjoy the party, but I just don't see how that will be possible. Not with all of these assholes here. All I want to do is pack us all up and leave the Fae Realm. But that's not what she wants, so I'll just hold my tongue.

"It's disgusting, if you ask me," someone hisses. "How can she be with those beasts?"

Okay. Maybe I won't be holding my tongue.

I turn around, a wicked smile forming on my lips as I stare down at the group of women. They're already starting to inch away before I step closer, leaning down to whisper to them. "It's because we all have big cocks that she loves having inside of her. No matter how many times she takes us, her pussy is still so wet and tight. Unlike your worn-out, overused pussies. You act like you're above us, but don't pretend like you're not imagining fucking me right now."

I shoot them a wink before heading back to the others, all of them standing there with their eyebrows raised. I shrug, smirking. "What? I'm tired of all of these bitches acting like they don't want to fuck us, too. They're all jealous that they couldn't handle one of us, let alone eight of us, like Laoise does. Someone needs to put them in their places."

"Hell yes, they do!" Dáinn holds his fist out to me, and I bump it before pulling him into a headlock and fucking up his hair. "Knock it off, asshole!"

Laughing, I release him before heading for the tables piled full of food. My girl wants food, so I need to get it for her.

Maybe this party isn't the worst thing in the world.

Chapter Twenty-two



Laoise

I may hate just about everything about the Fae Realm and these damn parties, but one thing I'll never get tired of when I come here is the food. Sure, the Mortal Realm has things like pizza and hamburgers, but the fae fruit is succulent, and the swine patties are juicy. There's a flavor profile that fae food has that nothing on earth can touch. Not to mention, the coffee here is divine. Literally, I think they stole heaven's coffee and claimed it for their own. Maybe they just stole a few beans and planted them in fae soil or something, but nothing can beat fae coffee.

I think I'm enjoying watching my mates taste the food more than I'm enjoying the flavor though. Every time one of them takes a bite of something new, they moan and shove it in someone's face for them to try. Even my grumpy Aeron is smiling while he is eating. As much as I don't want to rain on their parade, I'm so over this party.

"I think we've stayed long enough to make our point, don't you?" Eight sets of eyes turn to me, and I smile.

"I figured you'd want to stay later," Aeron grumbles.

I lift a perfectly shaped eyebrow. "Are you saying that you *want* to stay longer?"

"I can assure you, Laoise, that not a single one of us wants to be here longer than necessary," Biran says with a grin. "If you're ready to go, then so are we."

I shoot my basilisk a smile as I rise to my feet. “In that case, let’s get the hell out of here.”

The eight of them stand as one, moving around the table so they can escort me from the room. Quinton offers me his arm, and I take it with no hesitation. Biran moves to stand on my other side while Rory and Dáinn move in front of us to clear the crowd for us. Aeron, Bain, Orion, and Tamesis follow behind us, watching our backs. I’m not sure what they think is going to happen at this party, but I think it’s adorable that they’re trying to keep me safe.

My parents might not like what I’ve done tonight, but they wouldn’t attack me in the middle of a party. Can you imagine the scandal of that? They would never survive it. No, I’ve caused enough drama for the night. They’ll just be happy that the nine of us are leaving.

No one stops us as we exit my childhood home, and I’m surprised to find both of our carriages waiting out front for us.

“It seems someone thought we’d be leaving early or something,” I say with a laugh. “Probably Lorcan.”

Quinton grumbles, and I have to fight back a laugh. “Does it matter why they’re here? Can we ride in just one?”

I shrug. “It’ll be a tight fit, and I’ll likely need to sit in someone’s lap, but I don’t see why not. We’ll take the one not sent by my parents. But there’s somewhere I’d like to take you before we leave the Fae Realm, if you’re okay with that?”

“Anything you want, Lee. Anything at all,” Orion says as he bows his head.

Rolling my eyes, I head for the carriage and gesture for the guys to climb inside. Bain is the last one to enter, but before he does, he scoops me into his

arms and hands me off to Rory, who settles me in his lap. I lean back, sending out my magic to tell the carriage where to head, and then we're off.

I don't know how they're going to respond to where I'm taking them, and I'm equal parts excited and nervous. This might have started out as me trying to find the most unacceptable monsters to bring to my parents' Christmas party, but it quickly moved beyond that. I believe that all eight of these men are my mates, and it's about damn time I confirm it—assuming that's what they want. There's a niggling doubt inside of me that they won't want to mate with me, which is why I'm not telling them where we're going.

Not that I want to force them into a mate bond. I just want to show them that I believe they're my mates by offering the option. Which I'll tell them when we arrive. There are numerous ancient Great Fae trees in the Fae Realm—one in each of the areas where the different species dwell. Not all of the species that dwell in the Fae Realm have to drink the water of the tree to verify their mates, but the waters also have healing properties.

“Where are you taking us, Laoise?” Dáinn asks from beside me, and I shake my head.

“You'll have to wait and see. It's not far, just in the opposite direction of the portal.” I shrug, turning to bury my head in Rory's neck. Never before have I felt so unsure of myself, and I wonder if this is what other people deal with regularly. I swear I came out of the womb with more than my fair share of self-assuredness and self-esteem, but right now, it seems to be escaping me. I think it's because this is such a big deal—a momentous occasion.

The eight of them talk amongst themselves when it becomes clear that I have no intention of joining their conversation. It's not until the carriage comes to a stop on the side of the road that they address me again.

“Lee, why are we stopping on the side of the road?” Tamesis asks.

I sit up and shoot them a tight smile. “We have to walk the rest of the way. It’s an easy walk through the forest and will only take five minutes or so.”

Bain swings the door open and steps down before turning back to grab me from Rory’s arms. I love how they act as if I’m something fragile and precious to them. I’m not exactly a small thing like my witchy friends, and I’m not used to someone making me feel small when compared to them. I love it—a lot.

Once I’m on my feet, I turn to wait for the rest of them to exit the carriage before leading them into the forest.

“Do any of you know how unicorn fae know if someone is their mate?” I ask, glancing over my shoulder to let them know I’m asking all of them.

“No,” Quinton says with a snort. “Like most things involving the unicorn fae, it seems to be a closely guarded secret.”

I roll my eyes, not at Quinton, but because he’s right. Unicorn fae and their nonsense, always thinking they’re better than the other species and withholding information. It’s so dumb. We’re no better than anyone else.

“For us, we require a part of the Fae Realm in order to reveal if we’re mates with someone,” I tell them as we continue to walk. “In each area that a species once called their own, whether they live there now or not, has an ancient Great Fae tree.”

Rory hums his agreement. “I saw the one in the redcaps homelands when my parents brought me here on vacation. There are lots of stories tied to those trees.”

I nod. “There are, and one of those stories includes the unicorn fae.”

We step out of the forest, and there it is—our Great Fae tree. I’m unsure if the other trees have adapted to the species land it grows in or not, but ours certainly has. The Great Fae tree sits inside a lake, the roots planted at the

bottom of the lake as it grows up and out of the water. The bottom of the leaves brush the water and continue upward for another fifty feet or so. The ancient trees are massive. The leaves on our trees are shades of pink, blue, purple, green, red, and yellow—if the color is part of a unicorn fae’s hair, it’s on the leaves. I’ve never ventured to any of the other trees, so I’m unsure if they look the same or not, but ours calls to me.

I can feel the magic of the tree in my chest, calling to me. As the nine of us step closer to the banks of the lake, a calmness settles over me. This is one of the few reasons I regret moving to the Mortal Realm. While there are places of power in that realm, none of them will ever call to me like the tree does. This is my home, after all.

“It’s beautiful,” Orion says as he comes to a stop beside me. “This is the unicorn fae’s Great Fae tree?”

“It is,” I murmur before turning to face my guys. “And it’s only with the water surrounding the tree that a unicorn fae can determine if someone is their mate or not. I believe with my entire heart that the eight of you are my fated mates, but this is the only way to prove it. To find out if someone is our mate, we must drink the water from the same cup. If we are mates, then our marks will appear.”

Aeron’s eyes narrow as he watches me. “And we’re here because...”

“Because I want to wear your mate marks on my skin. If any of you aren’t ready for this step, I understand, and I can always have the water sent to the mortal realm. But I didn’t want to leave the Fae Realm without offering the chance to each of you.”

“Yes,” Biran blurts out, nearly cutting me off. “I don’t want to wait. I know that you’re my mate, and I will carry your mark with pride.”

The others call out their agreement, and I don’t bother to hide my smile.

This right here is what I want with all of them.

“Good, then let’s do this.” I walk toward the edge of the lake, eyes scanning until I find the altar that’s been set up beside it. Atop it sits a cup that we can use—not that there’s anything special about the cup. We can use any cup or even our hands if we need to. This is just easier.

They follow me over to the altar, waiting as I grab the cup and kneel beside the water. The bottom of my dress dips into it, and for the first time ever, I don’t care what happens to my clothes. If it’s ruined for this? That’s something I can be perfectly fine with.

Once I’ve filled the cup, I stand and move back to my monsters. “We’ll need to do this one by one,” I tell them. “I’ll drink from the cup, and then one of you will drink from the cup. Because there are so many of us, it’s likely that each part of the mark will appear as it’s confirmed until our mark is complete. We all know I could never choose between the eight of you, so it’s up to you to decide the order in which you drink from the cup.”

The eight of them glance around at one another for a moment, seeming to carry a conversation with just their eyes before they all nod, and Biran is the first to step forward.

“It would be my pleasure to go first, my love,” he says, bowing his head slightly.

I smile as they form a single file line, moving to their agreed-upon spot without any words or arguments. I don’t know how my monsters have managed to bond so quickly, but you won’t hear me complaining.

I lift the cup to my lips, take a sip of the water and feel the magic rush through me. Offering the cup to Biran, he lifts it to his lips, and I know the exact moment that it hits his tongue. There’s a burning sensation between my tits on my sternum, and I smile. It’s the first of the marks. Each of my

monsters lift their hands to their chests, just over their hearts, and I know they've all received the same mark.

“Aeron, hold the cup, please?”

Biran looks confused as he hands the cup to Aeron, a look that I'm sure only deepens when I give him my back.

“Will you help me out of the dress?”

Biran chuckles. “As much as we'd all like to see you naked, I'm not sure this is the right time.”

I give him a wry smile as I glance at him over my shoulder. “My mark is on my sternum. I cannot see it with this dress on. I'd like to watch as they appear—on me and all of you. Which means all of you need to lose your jackets and shirts.”

Biran doesn't hesitate to help me out of the dress, even helping me step out of it. He picks it up and lays it on the altar before removing his jacket, shirt, and tie.

Turning slowly, I don't bother hiding my body as I stand there in nothing but my panties, having taken off my shoes inside the carriage. Glancing down, I find that two marks have appeared—a phoenix rising from the ashes with a fox at its side. I lift my eyes to Biran's chest and find the same marks on him, but larger. On his chest, the phoenix takes up a large part of the space, with the fox staring up at it. I run my fingers over it, a smile on my face.

“It's beautiful.”

Biran nods as he steps back. “It is, and so are you.”

Aeron steps forward—the marks, like Biran's, are on his chest. He offers me the cup, which I take willingly. As I start to lift the cup to my lips, something stops me. “Tamesis and Dáinn, please join us.”

Aeron smiles as his brothers move to his side, and I return it. Yes, this is how it should be. The three of them are their own people, but they're also a part of one another. It is only together that we can become mates. I take a sip from the cup before handing it to Aeron. He takes a sip before passing it to Tamesis and then to Dáinn. When the water hits his tongue, the burning sensation comes once more.

Only this time, I'm able to watch the marks appear on their chests. Three skulls form behind the phoenix, their eyes locked on it—one is smiling, one frowning, and the last with a neutral face. It's easy to tell which one represents each brother. I run my fingers across each of their marks and smile. I just know that our mating mark is going to be beautiful once it's finished.

Quinton is the next to step forward, a lotus flower appearing at the bottom and slightly to the side of the phoenix. Its petals seem to stretch toward the phoenix-like it's the sun. Once Orion and I drink from the cup, a dove appears just above the skulls. A butterfly appears next to it after Bain, and a dagger lays behind the lotus flower and ends beneath the phoenix's feet after Rory. Fire burns up the length of the dagger to the phoenix, running between the two of them.

Looking down one last time to see my marks, I find the skulls sitting just beneath the phoenix and fox with the dagger behind them. Just beneath that is the lotus flower with the dove perched beside it and the butterfly landing on one of its petals. They're absolutely beautiful.

Once again, something stops me from pulling them closer and celebrating that we're mates.

“Dáinn, Rory, Quinton, and Biran, step forward together.” Once they're standing in front of me, I give them a shy smile. “The magic of the Great Fae

tree wishes to offer the chance to see if you might have another mate besides me. There's no pressure to do so, but the offer is there. If you want to wait, we can bring home some of the water—”

“Yes,” Dáinn says as he reaches for the cup, lifting it to his lips before handing it off to Rory. As the liquid hits his tongue, a lighthouse sprouts up between two of the skulls causing a tear to spill down my cheeks.

Quinton and Biran glance at one another before Biran reaches over to grab the cup, and they both drink from it. Another tear spills over as a rose appears beside the lotus flower for both of them. Finally, I know that we're finished. We are complete, belonging to one another, and that's something we should definitely celebrate.

Chapter Twenty-three



Laoise

My fingers slide into the sides of my panties, slowly lowering them down my body as my mates stare at me. Once they hit the ground, I kick them away with a smile.

“C’mon boys. We’re all mated, and I want to celebrate. We can’t do that if you don’t lose your clothes.”

There’s a moment of silence before they all move to quickly disrobe before all stalking toward me. I step back slowly, a step for a step until Aeron breaks into a run, scooping me into his arms before I reach the water. Darn, I’d been hoping for some water sex. Though, with eight of them, that would be a little difficult. Maybe another day.

I hook my legs over Aeron’s hips, my arms going around his neck. “Well, you caught me. Now what?”

“That depends on you, Lee,” Orion growls as he comes to stand behind me, his chest to my back. “You have eight mates, and I know a dirty girl like you wants to take all of us.”

“Yes,” I hiss, grinding my wet pussy against Aeron’s hard stomach, trailing my juices over him.

Aeron chuckles. “That means you’re going to have to take more than one of us at a time. Do you think you can handle that?”

“Damn straight I can.” I grin, leaning forward until my lips can brush his with each word that leaves my mouth. “I might only have three holes, but I also have two hands. I’ll take as many of you as I can at once.”

“Hell, yes, you will,” Dáinn crows before hissing. “Rory, did you just smack my ass?”

I snicker, burying my head into Aeron’s neck.

“I did, but only to get your attention. After all, I know how much you want Daddy’s dick.”

I lift my head to watch the two of them over Aeron’s shoulder, sighing when Dáinn practically throws himself at Rory. “I want to watch.”

“Oh, baby, you’re going to be much too busy being stuffed full of cocks to watch,” Aeron says with a smirk, but I shake my head.

“I want to watch. I don’t care what you have to do to make it happen, but I will be watching Dáinn taking Daddy’s cock like the good boy he is.”

Dáinn groans, breaking his and Rory’s kiss to turn his head to meet my eyes. “I want to be your good boy. Yours and Daddy’s.”

“I know you do.” I blow him a kiss before turning back to Aeron. “I want to watch.”

Aeron grumbles but nods his head. “I got it. You want to watch. But I’m taking your ass.”

“Sold.” I kiss him once more before turning to take Orion’s lips with mine. When we break apart, I sigh. “Fill the cup with water from the lake. It has healing properties, but I’ve heard it also makes great lube.”

“That makes no sense,” Quinton murmurs, but grabs the cup to fill it.

Aeron steps back so I’m no longer leaning back against Orion before lowering us to the ground. He kneels while I straddle his hips, licking my lips as I stare down at his beautiful cock between us. As much as I’d love to suck it between my lips and down my throat, I need to be filled up with their cocks immediately. I grind my cunt along his length, wetting him with my desire, and he hisses.

“Fucking hell, Laoise. You’re so hot. I can’t wait to bury myself deep inside of you.”

“One cup of lake water,” Quinton says, offering it to me.

I grab it, sinking my hand inside to wet it before grasping Aeron’s cock. His eyes widen as his mouth falls open. “What the fuck? We drank this shit and it didn’t feel this thick then.”

“It’s magic, Aeron. Literal magic. The Great Fae tree provides for all of our needs.” I laugh as I continue to stroke him for a few moments before turning around. “Dip your fingers into the water before you work me open. It won’t take long this way.”

Turning my attention to my other mates, I find Dáinn on his knees with Rory’s fat cock in his mouth. Quinton and Biran aren’t too much further from them as they kiss, stroking one another’s cocks. Hot damn. That’s so fucking hot.

“Someone needs to get over here and let me ride their cock while Aeron stretches me out to take him.”

Orion is on his knees in front of me in an instant. My eyes turn to Tamesis and Bain who both smile.

“I’ll wait til next time, Lee,” Tam says and Bain nods his agreement. “Something tells me you’re going to have a cock in hand before too long.”

I’m not sure what he’s talking about but I just shrug and move forward until I’m hovering over Orion’s cock. I sink down his length as Aeron’s hand lovingly strokes my ass.

“So good,” I cry out, moving without pausing. Up and down I move, rolling my hips as Aeron slides one, then two fingers into my ass coated in the water-lube substance. I lose all sense of movement as pleasure rushes through

me, but Orion picks up where I left off. Each movement of his hips is slow and deep, his cock hitting me in just the right spot.

A whine spills from my lips when Aeron removes his finger, but he quickly replaces it with his cock. Orion holds me still on his dick, allowing me to focus on the sensation of Aeron filling me up. Once he's fully seated, I feel like I'm going to explode if they don't start moving—only to be distracted by a long, low groan.

My head whips to the side to find Dáinn standing just inches from me, his head resting on Rory's shoulder. Rory's hands are gripping Dáinn's hips as he fucks into his ass. I bite my lip as Orion and Aeron curse.

"She certainly likes that," Aeron says with a laugh. "Although having my brother's dick that close to my face is slightly disturbing."

"You're clamping down on us so hard, Lee." Orion's hand comes up to push my hair from my face. "Do you like watching them?"

I nod. "Sooooo much."

Rory chuckles. "Don't worry, Aeron. His dick won't be in your face for long. Baby girl, open your mouth for Daddy."

There's no hesitation as I drop my mouth open.

"Such a good girl," he purrs before turning to Orion. "Would you have an issue with Dáinn resting his arm on your shoulder? He's going to need help staying standing, I'm afraid."

"Nah, man. It's all good. Not a question I expected to be asked while we were fucking." Orion laughs, shaking his head.

Rory takes Dáinn's hand, placing it on Orion's shoulder. "Hold on, baby boy."

Dáinn whimpers but nods. Rory reaches around, stroking Dáinn cock before feeding it to me. I moan around his length, loving that all three holes

are filled. This is the dream.

That's the last thought I have before everyone starts moving. Aeron and Orion alternate thrusts while Rory fucks Dáinn's cock down my throat. My eyes fall shut as I lean my head back further to make it easier to take Dáinn deeper. Then I just let myself feel.

Feel the stretch of being filled with two cocks. Feel the sway of two bodies on either side of me. Feel the way my clit grinds against Orion's pelvis with each pass. Feel the way that Dáinn's length threatens to choke me. Feel the power behind Rory's thrusts.

Five bodies intertwined as we all seek our releases. Moving together and apart. Rocking and rolling. There's no beginning or end to the five of us—we are one.

My orgasm hits me out of nowhere as I scream around the cock in my mouth. Dáinn's hand lands on the back of my head as he curses, spilling into my mouth. I swallow greedily as I undulate between Aeron and Orion. I feel them growing harder inside of me as my cunt attempts to milk them of their cum. Orion is the next to come with Aeron and then Rory following quickly behind.

I slump in their arms, Dáinn slipping from my mouth. Rory pulls him to the ground, wrapping an arm around him and holding him close. Aftershocks rush through me as Orion lifts me off of Aeron's dick, holding me to him. Cum slips from my ass and cunt, drenching Orion's cock and thighs.

“Holy shit,” I pant. “We're definitely going to have to do that again.”

Tamesis snorts. “Lee, what are you talking about? You're about to do it again right now.”

I perk up at that, grinning as I look over at the others. Quinton and Biran are kissing, though they're keeping their hands to themselves. Bain shoots me

a wink, and Tamesis helps me dismount Orion. My legs are wobbly, and I would've hit the ground on more than one occasion if not for Tamesis's help. I drop to my knees beside my kissing boys with a grin on my face.

"Fuck me?" I ask, and they break apart, both blinking at me as if they don't understand my question. "I want you to use those cocks on me. If you're feeling up to it, I've always wanted to have two cocks in my cunt."

"Motherfucker," someone behind me curses, but I keep my attention on Quinton and Biran.

Biran shakes his head, trying to clear his shock away, I think. "Yes. I definitely want to do that."

"Excellent." I glance back at Tamesis and Bain. "One of you can have my mouth and the other my hand."

There's more cursing from my mates, and I giggle again. It seems that they like hearing me talk about sex. Or maybe it's just because they weren't expecting it. I don't know which, but I like it.

I push Quinton onto his back, climbing onto him and sliding down his cock. He curses as his hands land on my hips.

"A little warning next time, please?" He shakes his head when I try to move. "Nope. You're going to sit still for a minute so I don't come right now."

Leaning forward, I kiss him. When his hips buck off the ground, pushing his cock deeper into me, I break our kiss and glance over my shoulder. "Biran, grab the cup of water. Lube up your dick and get it inside of me."

"Here." Tamesis hands the cup to Biran as he kneels beside me. "I'm going to fuck your face while the two of them fuck your wet cunt. Bain is going to fuck your hand and then come all over you. How does that sound?"

My pussy pulses as my mouth falls open on a sigh. "Yes, please."

Tamesis guides his dick between my lips as Biran begins to push his lubed up cock into my pussy alongside Quinton. The four of us moan together, and I can only imagine what it must feel like for Quinton's and Biran's cocks to be rubbing together inside of me. I come hard, the orgasm hitting me out of nowhere and leaving me screaming. I must squirt because I can feel liquid rushing from me and Biran slides in completely.

Bain grabs my hand, closing it around his length with his hand wrapped around mine. True to Tamesis's word, he fucks my mouth as Bain fucks my hand. Quinton and Biran move separately and then together, fucking me hard and fast. It won't take much more for me to come again. I'm already teetering on the edge, too many sensations rushing through me at once.

Then someone's fingers find my clit and sends me straight over the edge, starting a ripple of orgasms. I clamp down hard on the dicks inside of me, groaning as Tamesis hits me deep in my throat. His fingers wrap around my throat as Bain picks up his pace. I drag Quinton and Biran over the edge with me, both of them bucking into me as their cocks pulse, filling me with their hot cum.

Tamesis's hand moves from my throat to my hair as he pulls out of my mouth and jerks my head back. He lets out a long groan as he strokes his cock. spurts of cum shoot from the tip and splash onto my tits.

"Good idea," Bain grunts before jerking his cock from my hand. With a few strokes, he comes on my tits and face. I lick my lips with a smile. It's the only part of my body I feel like I have control over right now.

Tamesis releases his hold on my hair, helping me to lay my head on Quinton's chest as Biran pulls out. Cum spills from me and onto Quinton's legs and he huffs.

"Yeah, we're going to the lake, Lee. We both need to get cleaned up."

“Mmmmkay,” I murmur against his chest as he slips from me as well. My eyes fall shut, and I’m lifted off of Quinton. “That was amazing, Laoise. Thank you,” Biran murmurs against my ear and I giggle.

“Did you just thank me for sex?”

He chuckles. “More like the experience, but I guess kind of—in a way.”

I don’t bother opening my eyes as we step into the lake, the water the perfect temperature as it touches me. I’m passed to another set of arms while someone cleans me up, but I don’t have the energy to find out who’s doing what. Instead, I drift in and out of consciousness until I’m laid on the ground, somehow dry. Two bodies push in on my sides, and I allow myself this moment to just enjoy my mates.

Yes, we need to return to the Mortal Realm, but that can wait for a little while. For now, I just want to soak up their warmth and rest. Celebrating by climbing on my mates’ dicks is exhausting, but so satisfying.

A little nap won’t hurt anything, certainly.

Chapter Twenty-four



Laoise

“Oh, gods! My eyes!”

I startle at the sound of my brother's voice. Glancing over my shoulder, I find he's turned his back on us. I wiggle in Biran and Quinton's hold until they release me.

“Get dressed,” I hiss, jumping to my feet and running over to the altar so I can pull my dress back on. Once I have it in place, I realize I need help and sigh.

“I've got you,” Aeron murmurs, his fingers making quick work of getting my dress closed once more.

I turn around to brush a kiss against his lips, my hand landing on his mate mark and sending a lick of fire through all of us.

“Oops,” I giggle. “Lorcan, we're dressed now.”

Lorcan spins around, getting an eye full of my mates' chests. He blinks before shaking his head, turning to me, and winking. “You've gotten yourself a whole slew of hot mates, haven't you?”

I cross to him, throwing my arms around him and holding him close. “I have. They're all mine, and I've never been happier.”

“I'm happy for you, little sister.” Lorcan brushes his lips to the top of my head. “Though I could've done without walking up on all of you stark naked. Who has sex beside the Great Fae tree out in the open like this?”

I giggle again, swatting at his chest. “A lot of people, actually. I'm surprised you haven't heard the stories.”

He grins. “Oh, I’ve heard the stories. I just wanted to embarrass the nine of you.”

“Well, I, for one, am *not* embarrassed,” Dáinn supplies as he moves up to stand beside me. “This was amazing. I didn’t know having sex in sacred places would be so...magic-filled?”

I bite my lip, turning my head to look up at Lorcan with wide eyes. He doesn’t have nearly the restraint I do and bursts into laughter. Unable to hold mine any longer, I join him until all of us are laughing.

“Gods, that feels good,” Lorcan says with a sigh. “I want you to know I sent in my resignation, and I’ll be heading to the Mortal Realm in the new year.”

“Really?” I squeal, throwing my arms around his neck. “That’s amazing. You can totally stay at my apartment because we’re going to have to find a house. I don’t think any of our houses are big enough for all of us.”

“Actually,” Biran says thoughtfully. “I think my house would work. It might be a little tight right now, but we can get contractors out first thing tomorrow. We can get them to add on more rooms and even design them how we’d like. I’ve got the land, and there’s enough room for us for now. If we’re willing to pay extra, I can almost guarantee they can have it ready for New Year’s Eve.”

A grin lights up my face. “Seriously? That would be amazing. Maybe tomorrow we can all head to your place so we can get the ball rolling? I’m so excited.”

“Come on, little sister. Let me escort you and your mates back to the portal, yeah?”

“We’re not separating,” Rory growls, causing Lorcan to hold his hands up in surrender.

“I’m cool with that. We can all squeeze into one carriage if that’s what you want. I’ll just send the other back to our parents’ place.”

“Here that, mate?” Rory throws his arm over Dáinn’s shoulders. “Looks like you get to ride in my lap.”

Dáinn grins. “Sounds dirty.”

“Nope. Nuh-uh. Nothing dirty happening in the carriage while I’m there, okay?” Lorcan’s face flushes and I have to bite my lip to keep from laughing again. This is going to be a fun ride to the portal, that’s for sure.



Witches, do you have time for a video ca

CHLOE

Should be fine. I can take a break from what I'm doing.

TALI

Give me 5.

BELLE

Yup, I'll head to the other room so the boys won't bother me.

I love that you're calling them boys when they're practical
ancie

BELLE

Shut up.

With a snort, I lie back on the couch. Once Lorcan dropped us off at the portal, my monsters escorted me home before going their separate directions. Everyone decided to head home so they could pack up some of their stuff. Starting tomorrow, the nine of us will be sharing a house. I can barely believe this is where I'm at in my life. It's only been a few weeks, and here I am happily mated.

If someone had told me two months ago that this is where I'd be, I would've laughed at him. But obviously, Fate decided to bless me with a plethora of monsters—and therefore monster cocks—all at once. I guess Love -N- Shenanigans is exactly what it is. After all, my best witches have also found their men from the site as well.

My phone begins to ring, pulling me from my thoughts. I hit the answer button, finding Tali's, Chloe's, and Belle's faces waiting for me.

“Hey, best witches,” I say softly, a smile curling the corners of my mouth. “Thanks for making time for me.”

“We'll always make time for you, Lee. You know that.” Tali's smile is soft, and I'm glad to see her happy. Things have been rough for her lately, and she definitely deserves the happily ever after that's coming her way.

Chloe nods her agreement. “Sooooo... What did you want to chat about? I can't be on here for long. We're supposed to leave in thirty minutes or so. We got a lead on the lightning stone we need for the ritual.”

“How's that going?” I ask. Even though I've had my own shit going on, I can't forget that she's still cursed and is currently hunting down ingredients for a ritual that will summon the god that cursed her and her mates in their first life.

Chloe makes a face. “It’s going slowly, but we’re getting it. I don’t know why this nymph wants to meet us in the middle of the night, but if it gets us the stone, then we’re going to do it. But enough about me.”

“Yeah, Lee. We know you just got home from your parents’ party. How was it? Was it terrible? It had to have been, right?” Belle frowns.

“It did, but I also let them know I was done. I’ve been disowned, and Lorcan is moving here in the new year. Our parents are pissed, but we’re both so happy.” I glance down before lifting my eyes to my friends once more. “I took them to the Great Fae tree.”

Belle gasps. “You didn’t? Really?”

I nod. “I did.”

“Show us,” Chloe hoots, and I laugh.

“Okay, okay. I’m going to have to flash you my tits, so make sure none of your mates are going to come for me, Chloe.”

Chloe laughs. “They’ll be fine. Although I can invite them into the room so they can enjoy the view with me if you want.”

I shake my head. “Absolutely not. My monsters would be pissed.”

“Okay, enough delaying. Show us your mate marks!” Tali is grinning from ear to ear. I love how happy they are for me—just like I am for them.

I pop my phone into the selfie stick I sometimes use for my videos, setting it down as I allow my bathrobe to fall away. As soon as my arms are free, I pick up the stick and proudly show off not just my mate marks but my tits too. It’s not like they haven’t seen it before.

“They’re beautiful,” Belle breathes. “I wish we got mate marks.”

“Same,” Chloe says, shaking her head. “Those are breathtaking.”

Tali nods her agreement. “Do you have a picture of the guys’ marks?”

“I do. Let me just get dressed again, and then I’ll send a picture to you.”

I set the stick down once more, grabbing my sweater from the back of the couch where I left it, and yank it over my head. Grabbing my phone from the stick, I return to lying on the sofa as I search my phone for the picture. “Okay, sent. There’s three. One with the mark they all have and then one from Biran and Rory. Biran and Quinton are mates, and so are Rory and Dáinn. And can I tell you how hot it is to watch two of your mates fuck? I mean, dammmmn.”

“Oh, I know exactly what you’re talking about,” Chloe says, waving a hand in front of her face.

“Did they both…” Belle trails off, her face turning pink.

“No. Just Rory and Dáinn. This is Quinton’s first foray into being with a man, so they’re taking it slow.”

“That is too cute,” Belle says with a squeal. “I love it so much. There’s just so much love in the air, and it makes me so happy.”

All three of us express our agreement before Chloe winces. “I hate to do this, but I’ve gotta go. We’re heading out now.”

“No worries, Clo. I should get some sleep anyway. Oh! I forgot to tell you! We’re all moving into Biran’s place tomorrow, and he’s got contractors coming out to meet us so we can add onto his house.”

“That’s amazing, Lee.” Chloe’s smile tells me just how happy she is for me, even as her eyes fill with tears. “I’m so glad you found your monsters. You deserve it and so much more. All of you do.”

Tali scoffs. “All four of us deserve it. I’m just glad we’re finally getting what we deserve. I love all of you. I’m going to go pass out now. Bye!”

We all say our goodnights, and I barely manage to pull myself off the couch and toward my bedroom. I’m barely able to keep my eyes open as I strip down and climb into bed. It seems I’m more tired than I thought I was, but

what an amazing day I've had. I can't wait to see what tomorrow has to bring.

Chapter Twenty-five



Laoise

“Of,” I say, jerking awake. My eyes immediately go to Tali, who is sitting on the air mattress between me and Chloe.

“Seriously?” Chloe groans, lifting an eyebrow.

“Merry Christmas!!!” Tali grins at the two of us.

“Ugh, Tali, that was so not cool,” I groan as I sit up. Gods only know what time it is. I have zero intention of waking up early. Had I known that was what Tali had in mind, I might have refused to join them. No, that’s not true at. But I might have gone to bed earlier.

“There better be coffee.” Chloe makes grabby hands as Tali reaches over to grab a steaming cup off the table. “Thank the gods.”

I take the cup that Tali offers me as Chloe takes a long drink of hers, humming in joy.

“So, Lee...” Tali grins. “What are the chances of me convincing you to make pancakes?”

Of course, that’s why she came to wake us up. She didn’t want to have to make breakfast. Not that I can blame her; my pancakes are not to be missed. I roll my eyes as I climb off the mattress. “You’re lucky I love you.”

“I love you, too,” Tali calls over her shoulder as I head for the kitchen. The two of them don’t immediately follow, and I wonder what they’re talking about before shrugging. If I really want to know, I’ll ask them when they finally make it to the kitchen with me.

I pull out everything I need and get to work. When I hear Tali and Chloe join me, I shoot them a grin over my shoulder before turning back to watch the pancakes. I don't want to burn them, after all.

"What about presents? When are we exchanging gifts?" Chloe asks.

"Not 'til Belle gets up," Tali says, and I can practically feel Chloe's pout without turning around.

"If we have to be up, then so does she, Tali. You can't play favorites."

Tali's voice softens. "I'm not. She's just been stressing out about hosting Christmas dinner tonight. I wanted to let her sleep in a little."

"Well, she has. I'm going to wake her up." Chloe laughs as Tali tries to stop her but easily dodges her to head for Belle's room.

I flip the last of the pancakes onto the waiting plate and take off after them, thankful for my long legs when Tali pushes past Chloe, but I easily pass both of them and throw open Belle's door. Her eyes are wide as I launch myself onto the bed with Tali right behind me. I drop on one side of Belle, wrapping my arm over her waist while Tali goes to her other side and wraps an arm around her shoulders.

Chloe stands at the end of the bed, trying to figure out how she can join us before climbing right up Belle's body until she stops with her chin resting on her folding hands that rest on Belle's chest. "Good morning, Belle. It's Christmas, and Lee made pancakes. Tali said we had to wait for you to get up to open presents, but you were taking too long, so we came in to get you."

Belle starts laughing and sets off the rest of us. She's laughing so hard that she can't breathe, and the bed shakes with her laughter. Tali blows raspberries on her cheek while I grab her phone from her. I'm surprised to see that she was watching a video. I hit play and immediately start snickering. It's a video of Belle's surly mate, Derek, and someone who has to be his

sister dressed in matching pajamas while they belt out “Barbie Girl.” Never have I been more entertained by something.

“Okay, okay, okay! I’m up! Merry Christmas, coven. I’m so glad I get to spend another year with you all.” Belle grins at us, but I can see she’s fighting tears. Belle is definitely a crier. She’ll cry with every strong emotion she has. She’s always felt more and loved harder than any of us. She’s the heart of our group, and I’m glad that they’re happy tears, or I’d be kicking someone’s ass right now.

I shoot a wink at Belle as I climb off the bed, pulling Chloe with me. “Come on, witches! We’ve got gifts to open, then we all need to get ready to see our mates. Plus, we have an awesome fucking dinner party to go to tonight!”

I drag Chloe into the hallway, leaving Tali and Belle to have a moment to themselves. Tali has known Belle the longest, and the fact that she helped her escape the cult her dad married into means that they share a special bond that neither of us has with her. It’s something that could have caused issues with our friendship, but we’ve never let it.

Grinning at Chloe, I start to take off down the hallway, figuring I can beat her to the kitchen. Only, she doesn’t let me get very far. She grabs hold of me, and somehow, we end up in a shoving match as we giggle. Then Chloe ducks under my arm and takes off down the hallway. I launch myself after her, determined to still beat her. Somehow, the sneaky little witch beats me, and I’m pouting.

“You cheated,” I tell her as I move to grab the stack of pancakes and set it on the table.

Chloe shrugs. “Maybe I did, and maybe I didn’t. You don’t have any proof of that.”

She sticks her tongue out at me before grabbing plates from the cabinet and then silverware from the drawer. I grab the syrup options, and we make our way to the table. By the time we sit down, Belle and Tali have joined us and we bite into our food. We're all ravenous, so it doesn't take us long to tear through the pancakes and then make our way to the living room.

Since the beginning of our friendship, we've had a rule of only one gift per person, so we don't spend too much money on one another. I grab my gifts for the three of them from under the tree while they do the same. Once we've distributed all of the gifts, I look between them.

"Whose gift are we opening first?" We've learned to only open one set of gifts at a time in case someone got us all the same thing. Like I have this year.

"Start with mine," Belle urges, so I pick up the beautifully wrapped package as Chloe and Tali do the same.

We tear into the paper and find that she's gotten each of a pair of gloves made of the softest material I've ever felt before.

"What are these made from, Belle? They're gorgeous." I slip my hand inside, my mouth falling open with how warm they are.

"It's reindeer leather, and they're lined with snowshoe hare's fur, plus a warming spell. Jack and Derek helped me make them." Belle ducks her head.

Tali shakes her head. "You *made* these."

She nods slowly. "With my magic...well, and theirs since mine is still wonky half the time. It's no big deal."

"Uh, yes, it is, Belle." Chloe snorts. "You're already doing so well with your magic. Between us and your men, here soon we'll have you casting as if you've been doing this for your entire life."

Belle's lips quirk up at the corners, but she keeps her head ducked, telling

me that we're embarrassing her.

"Okay, do mine next!" I say, clapping my hands together. I grin as they rip open the presents.

"Is this..." Tali's eyes are wide with shock.

"A will 'o wisp? Yes. Yes, it is. We came across them while we were in the Fae Realms. They agreed to remain in the necklaces for one year, so next Christmas, we'll need to release them. But for the next three hundred and sixty-five days, they will bring luck to each of you." I pull mine out of where it's been hiding under my pajama top. "Well, the four of us."

"This is so cool," Belle says in awe, and I'm so glad they love the gifts. I'd been cutting it a little close with not having gifts, but it all worked out as it should.

They all clasp the necklaces around their necks with smiles.

"Let's do mine now." Tali nods toward her gifts, and we tear into them to find gorgeous leather-bound journals.

"I figured we could all use something to write in, but it also has a spell on it that no one else can read what's written inside without your explicit permission."

Chloe laughs. "The three of you got us way cooler gifts than I got but go ahead and open them."

It turns out she's gotten matching shirts that have a unicorn head with the words Best Witches beneath it. Tears shimmer in my eyes as I grin.

"What are you talking about? This is amazing. Thank you for always including me in your coven even if I'm not a witch," I tell them as I reach up to wipe away my tears.

"You are a part of our coven. I don't know why you'd expect anything less," Belle says gently before laughing. "I guess I'm going to need to buy

pants or something so I can wear these.”

That sends us off, laughing so hard we all end up on the ground. This right here is what I’ve wanted for so long. Three best friends who would do anything for me, and that I’d do anything for. Not to mention the eight monsters I have waiting at home. Then tonight, we’re going to spend our first Christmas with one another and all of our mates. Not to mention Derek’s family. It’s going to be a blast—of that, I have no doubt. And it’s just the beginning of long years of new traditions now that we’ve each found our happily ever after.

Best Christmas ever.

Epilogue



Laoise

New Year's Eve

“**T**here you are.”

I startle at Orion's voice, spinning around to see all eight of my mates stepping out onto the balcony with me. “I just needed some air.”

“The countdown is about to start,” Tamesis says as he wraps me in his arms. “There was something we wanted to tell you before we roll into the new year.”

“Oh?” I go up on my toes to kiss him, moaning into his mouth when his tongue brushes against mine.

Biran chuckles. “Now, now. None of that. We have to save that until after our guests leave.”

We decided to host a New Year's Eve party at our place since the contractors were able to get the work completed before tonight. In fact, the balcony we're standing on now is a part of the new expansion. Biran's house already had five bedrooms before the renovations started. For the week that the contractors had used their magic to build our house, we'd jumped from room to room. I was always in the master bedroom, but who joined me varied by day. Quinton and Biran agreed to bunk up, as did Rory and Dáinn. Aeron and Tamesis decided to share a room since it was such a short period of time,

leaving Orion and Bain with their own beds unless they ended up in the master bedroom with me.

The new part of the house has a massive master bedroom for the nine of us to share, plus another nine rooms so we can all have a space that's just our own. I turned mine into a closet/filming room for my blog. I don't need anywhere else to sleep because if I need a night to myself, all I have to do is let my monsters know, and they'll spend the night in their own spaces. The new addition also has a two-story ballroom where we're hosting the party tonight. Two of the walls are floor-to-ceiling windows that allow for the outside to bleed into the inside. Plus, a huge balcony and patio that overlooks the backyard.

Apparently, we own like ten acres of land, which is why Biran offered up his home to us. We'll use the original section of the house for guests when anyone comes to visit. There's also a pool that looks more like a grotto and an in-ground hot tub whose decor matches the pool's. It's almost as impressive as visiting the Fae Realm. Now, if we could just convince some of the creatures from the Fae Realm to come live in our wooded lands, I'd be as happy as a clam.

Frowning, I realize that saying has never made sense to me. Why would a clam be happy?

Finally pulling away from Tam, I focus my attention on my mates. "You wanted to tell me something?"

The eight of them glance between one another before Quinton steps forward. "We just wanted to take a moment to tell you how grateful we are to have you in our lives. While we weren't unhappy, it was clear that there was something missing. I know that some of us could feel ourselves losing our

way in the darkness that can often surround monsters. Most people look down on us and have nothing good to say about any of us.

“We spend our lives amongst our own kind, very rarely venturing far from home. Fort Veyelsa is the first place that any of us have felt accepted. The second time was when we realized that a breathtaking unicorn fae was our mate. Not only did you not care that we were monsters, you reveled in it. You find beauty in what others only find flaws. Like your name suggests, you are our light. You’re the one who has pulled us from the darkness and keeps us going.

“We love you with all of our hearts and cannot wait to spend the rest of our lives showing you just how much you mean to us. Just how much we appreciate that you love and accept us just the way we are. Who knows where we’d be without you by our side, but I know none of us would be nearly as happy. So, thank you, and we love you.”

Tears fill my eyes as each of my mates adds on their own I love you.

“I love all of you, too. Of course, I do. How could I not? You’re all amazing and caring. I’m the lucky one to find eight monsters with hearts of gold who love and cherish me.”

Before anyone can say anything else, the countdown begins inside, and we quickly join in.

“10...9...8...7...6...5...4...3...2...1... Happy new year!!!”

Tamesis is the closest one to me, leaning down to press his lips to mine, but not before I see Rory and Dáinn kiss. Then I’m passed to Bain, getting a glimpse of Quinton and Biran sharing their own smooch. I’m passed from mate to mate, each kiss getting dirtier and dirtier until heat is rolling through me, desire sitting low in my stomach, and my panties are soaked.

When Rory releases me, I stumble for a moment, drunk on their kisses. “I

know you said we had to wait until our guests were gone, but who knows how late they're going to be here. I can't wait that long. Someone better get me to the bedroom and give me my cocks."

"Yes, ma'am," Dáinn murmurs as Rory scoops me into his arms, rushing inside and breaking into a run in his hurry to get to our bedroom.

We're drawing attention from all around the room, but I don't care. I throw my head back and laugh, enjoying this moment. I plan to enjoy every moment and every bit of time I have with my soulmates—my monsters—for as long as we live.

After all, this is my happily ever after, isn't it?

The end.

Author's Note

So what did you think? Are you angry with us for giving unicorn fae Gaelic names that look nothing like they're pronounced? Trust me, we understand, but they're just so pretty. We've had great fun diving into the lives of these four women who are the leads in our stories, and we hope you're enjoying reading them as much as we enjoyed creating them.

Don't forget to check out Belle's, Chloe's, and Tali's stories!! This group of besties were the best thing the two of us came up with. There's just something special about having a group of best friends who always have one another's back. More than the relationships with the female characters and their mates, we loved writing this friendship.

Also, don't forget to check out the rest of the books in the 12 Dates of Christmas series!! We were so lucky to be able to join this fabulous group of authors to tell our stories, and we know you'll love their stories too! Plus, they're all amazing friends of ours, and we love supporting our friends.

As always, thank you to teams, our friends, and our families. But we also want to thank you, as the reader, for picking up this book and giving it a chance.

Also By Kaytie Marie

INFINITY WING MC

A Contemporary MC RH Romance.

Infinity Wing | Book One

New Wing | Book Two

STANDALONES

Good Girl

A DDlg Menage Romance.

Tale of the Sapphire Queen

A RH Paranormal Romance.

Chosen Omega

A RH Paranormal Omegaverse Romance.

The Island of Dark Desires

A Horror Paranormal Standalone.

SHARED WORLD

12 DATES OF CHRISTMAS

A Jolly Christmas Disaster: A Tale of Christmas Chaos

Co-write with Miranda May

Paranormal RH Rom-com Standalone.

The Monsters' Christmas Party

Co-write with Miranda May

Paranormal RH Monster Romance Standalone.

Tali's Christmas Revenge

Paranormal RH Holiday Romance Standalone.

COLLECTIONS

SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Pride

A RH with FF Paranormal Romance.

Also By Miranda May

THE SECRETS OF SORLPHI

A Fae Realms Series.

A Paranormal RH Romance.

Silent Secrets | Book One

Sinful Secret | Book Two

Sinister Secrets | Book Three

HEATED

A series of RH Omegaverse Intertwined Standalones.

Knot My Reality | Book One

Knot Their Reality | Book Two

Knot Her Reality | Book Three (January 27, 2024)

FIVE FAMILIES CONNECTED UNIVERSE

WICKEDLY

Dark Stepbrother Mafia Romance.

Wickedly Obsessed | Prequel (MFM)

Wickedly Depraved (RH)

Them (Coming 2024)

A dark polyam Mafia Romance.

FIGHTING BACK DUET

A dark RH Underground Fighting duet.

Fighting the Darkness | Book One

Finding the Light | Book Two (February 28, 2024)

STANDALONES

The Music That We Make

A Rockstar second chance story with light PNR.

Mistress Mayhem

A dark dystopian RH Vigilante Romance.

ANTHOLOGIES

Personal Demons

Dark PNR/Paranormal stories dealing with mental health issues.

featuring Caged

SHARED WORLD

12 DATES OF CHRISTMAS

A Jolly Christmas Disaster: A Tale of Christmas Chaos

Co-write with Kaytie Marie

Paranormal RH Rom-com Standalone.

The Monsters' Christmas Party

Co-write with Kaytie Marie

Paranormal RH Monster Standalone.

Chloe's Christmas of Cursed Chaos

Paranormal RH/Polyam (MMMFF) Rom-Com Standalone.

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER AUCTION

Sold on Them (October 11, 2024)

Dark RH/Polyam (MMMMF) Auction Romance Standalone.

COLLECTIONS

ST. NICK'S NAUGHTY COLLECTION

12 Days of Revenge

Co-write with Brittany Wright

Dark Mafia RH Christmas Standalone.

About Kaytie Marie

Kaytie Marie is an indie author of RH in multiple sub genres, including: contemporary, paranormal, and horror.

As a mother of three boys, she often has her hands full during the day. So, at night, she spends her time writing as an escape from those demands.

If you would like to check out more works by Kaytie, or learn more about what she's doing now, you can find her here:
<https://linktr.ee/kaytiemarieauthor>

About Miranda May

Miranda is a new author who has been writing since high school, but never considered being published until now. When she discovered reverse harem books, she knew it was time to share her stories. She has plans to write paranormal romance, urban fantasy, omegaverse, and contemporary—all reverse harem/why choose/polyam stories.

Growing up a Navy brat, Miranda has lived in many places. She currently makes her home in Piney Flats, TN with her husband and her two adorable corgis, Luna and Trixie. Don't worry if you've never heard of it, it's a teeny tiny town less than an hour from the Tennessee/Virginia border. When not writing, Miranda spends most of her time reading or playing Dungeons and Dragons like a true geek. She also has an almost unhealthy obsession with corgis—so don't be surprised if she brings them up.

Follow Kaytie Marie

**Please follow me! It's the best way to keep up to date on what I have
going on!**

[Check out my website.](#)

[Check out my LinkTree](#)

[Join my Facebook group, Kaytie's Brats.](#)

[Subscribe to my newsletter.](#)

[Follow me on Amazon.](#)

[Like my Facebook page.](#)

[Follow me on Goodreads.](#)

[Follow me on Bookbub.](#)

[Follow me on Instagram.](#)

[Follow me on TikTok.](#)

[Follow me on Twitter.](#)

Follow Miranda May

**Please follow me! It's the best way to keep up to date on what I have
going on!**

[Check out my website.](#)

[Join my Facebook group, Miranda May's Masquerade.](#)

[Subscribe to my bi-monthly newsletter.](#)

[Follow me on Amazon.](#)

[Like my Facebook page.](#)

[Follow me on Goodreads.](#)

[Follow me on Bookbub.](#)

[Follow me on Instagram.](#)

[Follow me on TikTok.](#)

[Follow me on Threads.](#)

[Follow me on Twitter.](#)