

B. LOVE PRESENTS

MEELDAU

*You
Promise*

YOU PROMISE

A PARANORMAL ROMANCE

MEL DAU

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*To the promises that keep us whole because those who make
them are genuine in carrying them out.*

TO DADDY:

DADDY

I miss you. That seems like enough to express all of my
feelings today.

PROLOGUE

*K*ara Odinsdottir

“I don’t want to do anything today but relax and not be needed,” I whined to my best friend, Rota, or Ro, as she preferred to be called.

Today was my twenty-first birthday, and as the only Valkyrie that was a daughter of Odin, I was getting a lot of unwanted attention. Not only was I the only Valkyrie daughter of Odin, thanks to my mother, Prima, but I was the youngest of Odin’s and the only daughter. It was not easy being the little sister of Thor. That was all I was going to say. Tyr, my other brother, was not much of an issue. For me, anyway. There were mixed feelings about my existence among Asgardians because of who my mother was. My mother, Prima, was the most powerful Valkyrie there was. She was as beautiful as she was powerful, so in my mind, it was not too far-fetched that my father would bed her. Being that I was a Valkyrie, many of Asgard felt there was no need for me to have a goddess status since I would eventually have the power to choose souls who would go to Valhalla to prepare for the final war of the world. I would admit that was a lot of power for one person to have. As a Valkyrie mixed with a god’s blood, that made me a unique individual.

“You know that is not going to be possible today. I think it’s lovely that you think it is, though,” Ro teased.

I rolled my eyes because I knew she was right. Ro was three years older than me, and like all Valkyries, we started our official duties on our twenty-first birthdays. I begged my

mother since I was eighteen to excuse me from these duties. She thought it would not be wise to show favoritism toward me as it may bring discord among the others. They already had adverse feelings about me being a daughter of Odin, as if I could help that fact. Ro and I had been friends since she came to live with my family when I was nine and she was twelve years old. We lived with my mother in housing within the palace gates, but I had a place in my father's palace. I chose to stay at my mother's home because of my closeness to Ro. When she turned twenty-one, I felt like I never saw her because of her new duties. I cherished the times when we were able to just relax and enjoy the beauty of Asgard.

"Maybe we could go somewhere that Mother can't find me," I suggested.

Ro fell over in laughter at my idea. I knew it was silly, but I desperately wanted to get out of these duties. I guess I would just enjoy the rest of my day until duty called. I leaned over and fed my raven, Mora, a grape.

LATER IN THE EVENING...

Hearing footsteps, I knew it was my mother. She had a very distinctive step that was light but, in the same breath, powerful. She commanded any dwelling she stepped into. I loved my mother dearly; however, I sometimes hated that she seemed to put her duties before everything and everyone. I was in my bed with my head under the covers. I did not want to leave these glorious sheets.

"I know you are not sleeping, so save us both the time and dramatics. Get up," she sternly spoke.

I huffed, but I dared not do as she said. Pulling the covers back, I looked at my mother in her full glory and armor. She was such a beautiful woman, and I took on her looks, as well as her voluptuous body. Many said it was my mother's voluptuousness that seduced my father, and her chocolate skin was the icing on the cake. There were not too many Valkyries

that were shaped like my mother and me. I didn't know where we got it from. I sat up in my bed and looked at her for a beat.

"Yes, Mother. I'm awake. What is it that I can do for you?" I snidely questioned.

My mother chuckled as she sat next to me on my bed to fuss over my hair. I looked at her while she smiled. It was no secret I was my mother's pride and joy. She never thought she would bear a child, but fate saw otherwise.

"I see now that you are officially an adult, you feel you can get slick at the tongue with your mother." She bumped my shoulder. "Get dressed in your armor. Your father has requested your presence."

I nearly fell jumping from my bed. She laughed at my enthusiasm. I loved my father, but the nature of who he was caused me not to see him as often as I would like. I knew my father loved me, but I also knew there was favoritism toward my brothers. I didn't fault him for this, because when I was in his presence, it was all about me, so to know that he requested my presence meant everything. My mother left me to get ready, and I moved quickly to do so.

After I was fully dressed, I left my mother's home with my ushers to go see my father. I loved the palace and the time I did spend there.

When I got into the palace, I was immediately taken to the throne room, where my father waited for me. Outside of the closed throne room doors stood two of my father's guards. One guard in particular, Vog, had a liking of me since I was seventeen. He was not much older than me at twenty-three, but he was simply not my type. His arrogance was not warranted, as the only reason he was in his current position was because of his father's laurels. His father, Isgaut, was my father's most-trusted advisor. With that fact, Vog tended to do things that were out of protocol for guards, as I knew he was about to do now.

When I got close, he relaxed his at-ease position. "Hey, Kara. You're looking sexy today."

I cut my eyes over to him, then said, "Shouldn't you be standing at attention instead of talking to me?"

He scoffed at my words. I moved past him and pushed the doors to the throne room open. I smiled at my father sitting on his throne looking like the epitome of power that he was.

"Father," I enthusiastically greeted.

My father stood and stepped down from his throne to allow me to come into his arms. I always loved his hugs.

"Daughter, you are becoming more and more beautiful as time passes," he complimented.

"Thank you."

He looked at me in my full armor and gave me a full smile. "Are you prepared for your first quest to bring a noble, warrior soul to Valhalla?"

I wanted to roll my eyes, but I would never disrespect my father in that manner.

"Yes, Father, I am. Will I have to do this alone?"

I already didn't want to do this quest, and if I would have to do it alone, it would add insult to injury in my mind. I tried to stay as far away from the duty details as I could, so I never took notice to how these things worked.

My father smiled while he walked back toward his throne to take his seat. Once he was seated, he said, "No, you will not have to do this alone."

He waved his hands at the guards that were standing at the side door. On cue, they opened the large doors. My heart nearly jumped out of my body at the sight of my best friend. She had a sneaky smirk on her face, letting me know that she must have known for some time that she would be my guide. When she got close to me, I jumped like a little girl to give her a hug. She laughed at my childish antics.

My father's voice interrupted my joy. "Happy birthday, my love."

I bowed my head to him, then was pulled out of the throne room through the side door by Ro.

“I can’t believe you didn’t tell me,” I exclaimed to her.

She chuckled then said, “If you think I was going to give up the opportunity to see your face of surprise when you found out, then, friend, you don’t know me.”

Something about doing this first quest with my best friend had me ready to go. We walked back to my house, where my mother awaited us. Her smile was bright, and for the first time since earlier, so was mine.

“I take it you approve of your guide,” she asked.

I had no words, so I just threw my arms around her. She embraced me back before kissing my forehead. After our hug, she walked over to the cabinet in the corner of the room. When she walked back to me, she was carrying a jewelry box of sorts. I watched as she opened the box and revealed one of the most-beautiful amulets I had ever seen. It was a beautiful mixture of teal, pink, purple, green, and gray, which were all favorite colors of mine.

“I had this made for you when you turned one. Your father blessed this with a special magic that no other Valkyrie, even I, has,” she confirmed as she placed the amulet around my neck.

I was in awe of the beauty of the piece. I looked up to my best friend, and she was smiling with misty eyes.

“What is it for, Mother?” I questioned.

My mother gently smiled. “This, my love, is for your protection as well as your travel. By tapping twice, it will take you where your mind tells it you need to go. You have been in combat training since you were six years old, so you are ready.”

She was right. I had been learning how to protect myself against adversaries since I was younger. As a Valkyrie, we were responsible for the safe travel and peace of the souls that we brought to Valhalla. I got excited about my new duties to come. I didn’t think it would happen, but it did.

“Mother, how will I know when it is time for a soul to come?” I asked.

Another glowing smile came from her. “It will call out to your soul when the time comes.”

I nodded my head in understanding, then asked, “It’s like a soul cue?”

Ro and my mother erupted into laughter.

“I never thought of it like that, but I guess that is a justifiable thought,” my mother responded.

Just as she said that, I felt this desire to be somewhere. It was the most-unique feeling I had ever experienced before. I looked between my mother and best friend, who both were smiling.

Ro stepped to me, grabbed my hand, then said, “That is the call, best friend. Are you ready?”

I nervously nodded my head before my mother gave me a final hug. Ro and I double tapped our amulets at the same time. When we did, a sort of portal opened, and I could see through to the other side. I could tell it was Earth from the pictures I had seen in books.

I looked to my best friend. “We don’t have to go via the Bifrost?”

She shook her head, then responded, “Valkyries are the only ones that are not required to travel via the Bifrost when we are on official business.”

Official business? I wasn’t sure if me wanting to visit Earth on my leisure was official business, but I would find a way to make it so.

We both stepped through the portal, and it closed immediately behind us. We were now in an alley between two buildings. I looked down at our attire and knew we would stick out like a sore thumb. Ro must have seen my confusion because it was met with her laughter.

“Do you know why we wear this armor?” she questioned me.

I shook my head.

“Because it has a special charm on it that was placed there by your father himself to ensure we are only seen to those who are meant to see us. We travel the different lands under a veil.”

Now that was interesting, to say the least. “We are invisible?”

“You can say that.”

Pow!

Pow!

Pow!

Pow!

Pow!

The sound caused me to jump slightly. “What was that?”

“That was a gun. It is a weapon that human beings use,” Ro explained.

There it was again, that yearning to be somewhere. Without saying anything, I walked in the direction of the gun sound. When we came out of the alley, I looked to my right and saw a man laying on the ground. I gasped and ran toward him but was stopped by Ro.

“It is not time yet,” she solemnly said.

“It’s not time for what?” I exclaimed.

He was laying on the ground dying, and we were just watching. It was the most-painful thing to watch, and I was not sure if I could just stand by and do so. I slowly walked toward the man. The closer I was to him, the more my soul felt a pull to him. Just as we reached him, I witnessed him take his last breath. There was no one in the streets, and I felt sad that he had died alone. Just after that thought, like magic, his soul sat up from his physical body.

“Wh... Wh... What happened?” he asked, confused.

He was the most-beautiful man I had ever seen. His soul was gorgeous. Before I could speak, it was like a play reel of his life played before my eyes. I stumbled back at it because it was overwhelming. Ro was right there behind me to make sure I didn't fall. I quickly got myself together, then spoke.

"I am Kara, and I've come to take you to Valhalla, where all worthy warriors go."

His face contorted before he said, "Take me to Val-what?"

I wanted to chuckle, but I refrained. "Valhalla. It is where mighty warriors' souls go."

He shook his head. "You must have me confused. I'm not a warrior. I'm just a nigga trying to live his life right out here in this fucked-up world."

Ro stepped forward. "Your time for living is up on Earth."

Ro looked behind him, causing him to look back himself. That was when he finally saw his physical body. The shock was shown all over his face, and then a deep sadness fell over him. His sadness tore at my heart. From the reels of his life, I could tell he had been through a lot in his life. He was not a perfect man, but he strived to be a better person. There were so many times he could have continued on the wrong path, but he didn't.

"Damn, when a dude tries to do right, others just fuck with you," he said.

He looked to the left of him, and I followed his line of sight. We were standing outside of a shop of some sort. I wasn't sure what it was, though.

"Is this yours?" I asked him.

Ro came close to my ear and said, "Kara, we need to speed this up before people come along. That sound in the distance is what they call an ambulance. They are more than likely coming here."

I shunned her with my hand as I waited for a reply from the soul.

“Yeah. This my shit. I opened this corner store a few years ago. It was my fifth business, but I see a nigga can’t have shit without someone trying to come for him,” he finally responded.

His use of the word “nigga” was throwing me off because I had never heard it before. I wasn’t sure what it was, but I really didn’t have time to ask. I would ask Ro later. There was this yearning for his soul, but it didn’t feel like my first yearning. It was different now.

I turned to Ro and asked, “What if I don’t want to take his soul?”

She tilted her head, then returned my question with a question. “What do you mean you don’t want his soul?”

“I mean, can’t I like just give it back to him? Do we have that power?” I asked.

I looked over to him, and he was still staring at his shop.

“Kara, I don’t think you should do that. It is not allowed,” she informed.

All I heard in what she said was that we did, in fact, have the power to do it. “How do I do it?”

Ro’s eyes bucked. “Kara, did you hear me?”

I shrugged and said, “Who is going to know? Are you going to tell on me?”

She shook her head.

“Well, show me how,” I demanded.

I turned back to the soul. “I can tell there is a lot more living you need to do. You are a mighty man, and I think you deserve a second chance.”

The sound of the ambulance was getting closer. The soul looked at me with confusion, but before he could speak, I did as Ro instructed. I placed my hand over his heart and gave it a push. Like magic, once again, his soul took its place back into his physical body. When he gasped for air, I jumped. I went to move toward him, but Ro stopped me.

“No, he must not see you. Your soul is connected to his. We have to go, now.”

Just as she said that, this white and red moving object came toward us. Ro grabbed my hand, and we moved away from the man who was laying on the ground still gasping for air.

I pulled away, then said, “I want to make sure he will be okay.”

Ro took my hand and said, “Once you give a soul back, it will not die from the series of event that led it there. He will be fine.”

After a final look, we disappeared into the alley we came from. Before we could tap our amulet, I felt another pulling.

“I think there is another soul calling,” I told her.

“Good, let’s go. Now you can never tell anyone about this. I am not sure what the consequences might be, but I don’t want to find out,” she warned.

I nodded my head, and we both double tapped our amulets. The next soul was on Earth as well but in a different location. As I stepped through the portal, all I could think about was the soul we just left. The minute I was away from it, I felt like there was a hole in my soul.

How could that be?

For the rest of the evening, we carried five souls to Valhalla. Two were my soul yearns, and three were Ro’s. Watching Ro work had me in awe, and I knew I wanted to be the best Valkyrie I could be. I would learn as much as I could and all the while hoped I ran into the one soul that immediately captured my heart.

JEDEDIAH COLLIVER

*F*ive Years Later...

I moved around the last furnished apartment I had to inspect before the new resident moved in. Four years ago, I bought two apartment complexes off this man who had a significant gambling debt. He was not making the money potential he could have, because his gambling issues, mixed with his drug issues, made him a slumlord. Both complexes had one hundred units and were in prime locations. One was close to College of Charleston, and the other was close to the air force base. He was so desperate to get cash that he sold me both properties for one hundred fifty thousand dollars. When he took my offer, I knew he was truly a fucking crackhead. It took me over a year and about three hundred thousand per building to renovate and get them up to code. Once everything was done, I was able to market the complex next to College of Charleston as luxury student apartments. There were one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments that were all furnished. The pricing was per room, not apartment, unless someone was getting a one-bedroom, which had a market rate of eighteen hundred dollars a month. The rent included lights and water. In my two- and three-bedroom apartments, the rooms went for nine hundred eighty dollars a month. The complex had great amenities, including two pools, a full-service gym, car wash, basketball court, and dog park. Dude was sitting on a gold mine and didn't even realize it. I was near capacity before the apartments officially opened.

“This looks good,” I complimented our interior designer.

Unlike most of the college-type apartment living, I had different décor options. I didn't want the students to feel like they were living in a dorm apartment they had to pay for out of pocket. There were six different design layouts residents could pick from. I put a lot of effort into making my apartments better than any around, and my bank account thanked me.

When I was younger, I was in the streets heavy, and unlike most young ass dope boys, I made good on my money. When I saved up my first hundred thousand, I took that shit straight to Washington-Smith Brokerage Firm. They helped me invest, and I also took a class on stock trading that they hosted. That gave me a lot of knowledge and power to control my own investments. I started investing when I was eighteen, and by the time I was twenty-one, I was a millionaire off investments alone.

"I'm happy you like it, Mr. Colliver, and if there is anything else I can do, please don't hesitate to ask," Sherry spoke.

She moved close to me, pressing the front of her body against mine. Fucking her was pleasurable, but she clearly was more attached to it than I was. I took a slight step back because I wasn't into people in my space unless I put them there.

"The next time I need you, I will let you know," I confirmed.

With that, I headed toward the door, opened it, and waited for her to exit the apartment. I locked the door, then headed down the stairs. I needed to go pick my little girl up from school since it was my weekend. My baby girl, Kae, was my entire life. At four years old, she was a very rambunctious little girl. Her mother, Kaeya, and I were together when I was a teenager, into my adulthood, but broke up soon after I got shot. I almost died, but someone or something saw fit to allow me to live. From the moment I woke up in the hospital, I knew I had to make every moment count. Kaeya was supportive at first, but after a couple of months of rehabilitation, she folded, leaving a nigga high and dry. We broke up, and she moved on to the next nigga with a bag. One night of alcohol and regrets

brought us together on some horny shit. Kae was conceived that night, and although I didn't regret my baby girl, I regretted Kaeya being her mother. Time had changed her, and she became this superficial female I was unfamiliar with. When Kae was born, I took care of everything, and she wanted for nothing. Imagine my surprise when my baby was a little over a year old and I was served with a child support order. Her mother let her hood rat ass friends get in her ear and convince her she would get more from me on child support. She was awarded a mere fifteen hundred a month, which was nothing compared to what I was supplying her with before. I was paying her rent, the car note on her Benz, and extra shit that she claimed they needed. After the child support was finalized, I kindly took the Benz I bought her and replaced it with a brand-new Honda Accord. She was livid, but as her child's father, it was only my responsibility to make sure she had transportation. The Benz was a luxury. I also told her to get a job because I would not be paying her rent any longer.

Pulling up to the school, I saw my baby girl standing on the sidewalk with her teacher in the car rider lane. My baby's chocolate skin stood out amongst the other students. I appreciated the care that her mother put into our daughter when she was there. Kaeya could get distracted from motherhood easily when it came to new dick and a bag. My daughter was not her only child, just her oldest.

"Daddy," Kae exclaimed as she tried to pull away from her teacher to get to my truck.

I got out of the truck to help her get inside. I loved big boy toys, so my Ram truck was nothing to play with.

"Hey, daddy's baby! Did you have a good day in school?"

She pulled her book bag off her back and opened the big section to pull something out.

"Look, Daddy!"

She pushed a paper up toward my face. I took it out of her hand and read it to see that it was a rock star award. I smiled at my baby.

“Ah shoot! You’re a rock star, Kae?” I asked.

She placed her petite hands on her hips and nodded. “I sure am, Daddy, and rock stars deserve ice cream with sprinkles.”

I twisted up my lips, causing her to laugh. Her teacher joined in on the laughter.

“Well, Mr. Colliver, I guess you better get to the ice cream and sprinkles,” Ms. Jackson teased.

I got Kae in the truck and settled, then we were off to get some ice cream. My baby girl loved fucking sprinkles. It was not a real dessert if there were not sprinkles involved. We sat in the [Ye Old Fashion Ice Cream Parlor](#) while she ate her ice cream after I made her eat a hot dog first.

“Daddy, can I come live with you?” Kae asked me abruptly.

I tilted my head to her question because one, it was random, and two, why did she suddenly want to live with me?

“Baby girl, you know I would love for you to live with me, but why don’t you want to live with your momma?”

She shrugged her little shoulders and put a spoonful of ice cream in her mouth.

I took the bowl and slid it toward me. “Kae, remember daddy always said to use your words.”

She gave me a little huff. “I don’t think Mommy’s new boyfriend likes me.”

That was news to me because I wasn’t aware that Kaeya had a new boyfriend. The last dude she was fucking with was her son’s father—well, at least to my knowledge. I didn’t really concern myself with her personal life as long as it didn’t negatively affect my daughter.

“Why do you think he doesn’t like you? What is his name?” I calmly questioned.

She shifted in her seat, then said, “His name is Anthony. When he is around, Mommy is mean to me, and she makes me stay in my room. I have a lot of toys in my room, but I still get

bored being in there all day. He told Mommy I was spoiled and she needs to beat me.”

I felt the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. I swore I was not beat for dodging a murder rap, but God knew I would for my little girl.

“Kae, I’m going to ask you something, and I need you to tell me the truth, okay?”

She nodded.

“Has he ever hit you or touched you like grandma showed you no one was supposed to?” I asked.

I held my breath in anticipation of her answer.

“He pops me sometimes, but that’s it,” she answered.

I had to calm myself because I didn’t want to scare her. I’d be damned if another nigga popped my daughter when I didn’t even pop my daughter. For Kaeya to even allow this nigga to touch her was a problem for me all the way around. I slid her ice cream back in front of her so she could continue eating. I pulled my phone out to shoot my right hand man a text.

Me: Aye, dude, I need you to take a ride wit’ me.

Ju: Say less. I’m at the spot.

After baby girl was finished with her ice cream, I got her back out to my truck. I let her know I was going to take her to her granny’s house so I could get a surprise for her. All she heard was *granny* and *surprise*, and I was an afterthought. After I dropped her off, I headed to my gas station on the River Avenue. I knew my right, Ju, would be there. This gas station was kind of a hangout because of the barbershop that was next door. Ju dapped up some people when he saw me pull up, then got in my truck.

“What up wit’ you, my boy?” he asked.

“Man, Kae just told a nigga that her mama boyfriend be popping her and shit,” I revealed.

Judas had been my best friend since we were young boys playing in the sandbox. He was a bit of a wildcard, but he was

my brother for life. He was real messed up when I got shot because he was in Columbia doing a bid. He got out a year after everything went down. We bonded over our names both being from the Bible, even though he hated his name, hence him going by Ju.

Ju shifted in his seat and asked, “What boyfriend is this?”

I shrugged to his question because his guess was as good as mine. Ju reached in his waistband and pulled out his gun. *This nigga!*

“What you doing, nigga?” I asked.

With a shrug, he said, “Nigga like to pop my niece, so I’m going to pop his ass with my gun. It seems fair to me.”

I laughed at his seriousness. “We not about to kill this nigga. I’m gonna have a word with Kaeya and, if need be, put hands on that nigga.

Ju sucked his teeth with attitude. “Then what the fuck I need to be there for? You know my talking is limited.”

I ignored him as we pulled up to Kaeya’s house. I knew she was home, seeing her Honda in the driveway. There was also a Dodge Charger, which I assumed was her dude’s car. I pulled in the driveway and turned my truck off. I wasted no time hopping down and heading to the door. Ju was right behind me. I knocked, and the door immediately swung open. This nigga was in basketball shorts with no shirt on like he ran shit.

“Aye, where is Kaeya?” I asked but still pushed past him into the house.

“Nigga, what the fuck you doing walking up in my shit?” dude asked.

I ignored him as I watched Kaeya sashay down the hall, tying her robe onto her naked body. She made sure I got a full glimpse of her nakedness before closing the robe. All I could do was shake my head at her boldness.

“What the fuck is going on?” Kaeya yelled coming from the hallway.

Kaeya was a funny individual. She was the type of person that did just enough as a mother to not be neglectful but, in all honesty, had no business being a mother.

“Why the fuck are y’all even here, and where is Kae?” she yelled.

I moved and stood in front of her. “Fuck all that! You let this nigga put his hands on my daughter?”

She rolled her eyes and said, “I knew that little spoiled ass girl would run and act like he beat her ass. All he did was pop her since she wouldn’t go to bed like he told her.”

I looked at her with squinted eyes because she could not have possibly just heard the words coming out of her own mouth. I looked back at Ju.

He shook his head and said, “I told you way back when that the girl was a dummy. When I saw her coming out that special ed class, I knew she was slow.”

I wanted to laugh because this nigga had absolutely no manners. What was even more comical was her dude was just standing there. I would be damned if anybody ran up in my shit and I not be about some action. The dudes these days were weak as fuck.

“Shut the fuck up, Ju! God, I can’t stand your ass,” she fussed.

They had always been at odds with each other. Shit was crazy. I looked back at her dude, who was mean mugging me, but his ass was on silent.

I turned back to Kaeya and said, “Why the fuck is this nigga instructing my daughter to do any-fucking-thing? You think it’s cool to let another nigga put hands on your daughter when I don’t even do that shit?”

She sucked her teeth before she said, “That’s you not wanting to discipline her. I told you a while ago she was too spoiled. She thinks the world revolves around her little ass.”

I stepped closer to her and through gritted teeth I said, “The world does fucking revolve around her little ass. You

would be wise to remember that shit.”

“Aye, you need to get out my girl’s face,” her dude finally spoke up.

I turned to look at this fuck ass nigga. I had to turn my nose up at him in disgust. I moved toward him. We were somewhat evenly matched with my height being six feet, two inches, and he looked to be around the same. Kaeya definitely had a type, and it seemed to be anything that reminded her of me.

“Maybe you have more sense than my stupid ass baby mama. Now, what in your rabid ass mind made you think it was alright to put your hands on my child?” I questioned.

I glanced over at Ju, who had made himself comfortable sitting on the couch and flipping through the television channels. One thing about Ju, he was not going to exert too much energy unless it was necessary. I turned my attention back to dude.

“Look, man, I didn’t even pop her hard that time—”

I cut him off at that point.

“This isn’t the first time you hit my daughter?” I asked him with my eyes planted on Kaeya.

She was shifting nervously because she already knew I was about to be with all the shits. She quickly moved in front of her man. That was a smart move since she knew I wouldn’t touch her.

She placed her hand on my chest. I looked at her hand and back up at her face, causing her to remove it.

“Jedediah, you are always overreacting. I’m highly offended that you think I would allow anyone to hurt our child. I take excellent care of my children, and you know that,” she quipped.

I chuckled at her insistence on her excellent care of her children. If you were looking from the outside in, then yes, you would think the same. She dressed them in the designer

clothes, kept them clean, and all the basics, but she was lacking in other areas. She used her kids like accessories.

“Look, I don’t want any issues, man. I won’t pop or discipline her anymore. I just didn’t want her stressing her mother out with her being pregnant and shit,” her dude announced.

Ju started laughing and said, “I can’t believe niggas really be getting you pregnant. You need a ‘bad mom’ sign stamped on your ass. Dude, you just ruined your whole life.”

“Fuck you, Ju! What y’all both can do is get the fuck out of my house!” she yelled.

I shook my head again with a laugh. That was literally all I could do with that woman. “I’m gonna keep Kae for a little while so you can keep your stress down.”

She was about to object, but her man spoke up before you could. “That would help, man. I just don’t want her to lose my seed because of stress. It won’t be for that long.”

I looked at Kaeya to see if she agreed, and she just looked at me. That girl was something else, and I now saw why her son’s father snatched his ass up six months ago. He and I were cool and had people in the same circles. I wanted her to say something, so I stood there and looked at her.

She crossed her arms over her stomach and said, “This pregnancy has been hard, so I need to be as relaxed as possible. I miscarried about seven months ago, and I don’t want that to happen again.”

I nodded my head, gave her condolences for her loss, then walked around them. When I got to the door, I made sure I let her know that she could come scoop Kae anytime she wanted.

Once Ju and I were back in my truck, I sat there for a minute until my thoughts were interrupted by Ju.

“I still would have beat his fucking ass,” he said.

I chuckled. “What for when I know it was an easy win? I got my daughter now, so the nigga won’t be around her.”

“Always the diplomat,” he said with a chuckle.

I wasn't beat for extra shit, and with Kaeya trying to secure her bag, it worked in my favor of getting my daughter full time. I would call that a win in my book.

A MONTH AND A HALF LATER...

I loved having my baby girl with me full time. My mother loved it even more. Kaeya lived in North Charleston, but I built my house in Mount Pleasant in a neighborhood called Greenhill. I grew up there, and when the white folks came in trying to gentrify, my neighbors were not having it. We held on to our neighborhood, and I was proud that we did. I built my mother a new home first, then I bought the lot from our next-door neighbor who wanted to retire in Florida. I built my house there, then fenced in our backyards together as one and had a pool installed. Since she wasn't staying with her mother any longer, I decided to enroll her into a school closer to my house. She was finishing up her second week there. I pulled up to her school and got out of the car so I could go get her from the after-school program she was in. I walked into the gym where they had the students and immediately saw my baby girl playing with some of the other little girls. She was happy, and that was all I cared about.

“Mr. Colliver!”

I turned around to see Kae's teacher, Miss Spellman, and another chick. I tilted my head toward the other chick because I was trying to place her. It was like I knew her or some shit. She was short compared to me with a sexy ass body. I quickly snapped out of my daze.

“What's up?” I responded.

“I wanted to introduce you to one of our new teacher's assistance, Kara. She started last week.”

Kara. Why does that name sound so familiar? I extended my hand to her, and she took it. When our hands connected, there was this electrical spark that caused both of us to pull our hands back. I just looked at her.

“Daddy,” my daughter screamed from the side of me.

I turned to pick her up and hug her. “Hey, baby girl. Were you good today?”

She nodded her head. “Daddy, this Kara. She’s my new friend.”

I smirked at her new friend. “Really? Is she?”

“Yep! She fixed my hair when that mean girl pulled out my hair bows,” she confirmed.

Kara stepped forward and said, “I hope you don’t mind. She was so upset about it, and I wanted to bring back her happiness.”

I smiled at her words and more at her accent. It seemed to be European with a twist of island. It was weird as hell. “Nah, not a problem at all. Hell, I might have to have you do her hair more often.”

She smiled, then told Kae bye. I started moving toward the door with Kae in my arms. When we got to the door, I took a final look back at Kara. I was surprised to see she was looking at me intensely. There was something about that girl. I just couldn’t put my finger on it.

KARA

*T*wo Months Earlier...

“You really think your father will allow this?” Ro asked with concern.

She had been getting on my nerves all day about my plan to ask father if I could move to another domain. By domain, I meant Earth. I absolutely loved it there. Over the years since the first time I was there for my first soul, I had been back multiple times. Most times were for a soul, but two out of five times were not. Ro didn't necessarily approve of these trips, but it never stopped her from tagging along with my mischief.

“Ro, you worry too much. I have been the epitome of a great Valkyrie. I even started teaching at the school when father suggested I gave Vog a chance. The least, and I do mean very least, he can do is allow me some freedom at this point. I'm twenty-six! I am far from the little girl that everyone wants me to remain,” I fussed.

After a lot of persistence when I was twenty-two, my father convinced me to allow Vog to court me. My father wanted me to marry badly, but there was no one I was interested in. My soul belonged to someone else. Vog and I courted for three years before I decided enough was enough. He clearly was more interested in sowing his oats rather than being faithful. It was obvious that the women he was bedding allowed it to have something to hold over my head. All of Asgard knew we were courting, but to some women, that was of no regard. There was no way they were enjoying it based on my own personal experience, but that was another subject altogether.

Ro chuckled. "You didn't have to allow Vog to court you."

I rolled my eyes as we walked to the palace. I didn't think my request was too far-fetched since there were in fact other Valkyries that lived on Earth. I simply wanted to be among the number to live there as well. When we got to the palace, I became quickly annoyed at the sight of Vog. Since I ended our time together, he had not been my biggest fan. He claimed I embarrassed him in front of his family because the night I discontinued our relationship, he planned to ask for my hand in marriage. It was comical for him to think I would ever marry a man like him. Vog was standing among some of the other guards, and I walked past, hoping he would keep to his conversation.

"Hi, Kara. You look beautiful today," he complimented.

I huffed under my breath before turning to him to speak. "Thank you, Vog."

He stepped from the group and approached me. "Can we talk for a brief moment?"

I looked toward Ro, but she was off flirting with the other guards. I nodded, and we stepped a little further away from the group. I already knew what he wanted to talk about, and I would be glad when the day came that I left Asgard for Earth. I wouldn't have to have this conversation any longer.

"Kara, first, I wanted to know how you were?"

I rolled my eyes. "I'm great, Vog. How can I help you?"

He sighed before he said, "You don't have to be so short with me. There was a time when you loved me."

My face contorted into a displeased expression. I stood there racking my brain, trying to remember a time I told Vog I loved him. Men with oversized egos tended to hear what they desired.

"Vog, I don't recall those emotions being displayed by me. You must have me confused with one of your many conquests. Again, I ask, how can I help you?" I asked with attitude.

He was standing in the way of my desired future with this simpleton conversation.

“Why don’t we give it another try? I was young and not ready for a commitment. I have grown, and I am ready to be committed to only you,” he declared.

I crossed my arms over my bosom. He could not be serious right now. During the time we were courting, two of the women he bedded bore his sons, and another bore his daughter after we separated. Why would I ever want to be with a person who would be so disrespectful as to not only cheat, but have a child with another?

“There is no way in this world, or another, I would ever consider giving us another chance. My soul belongs to another, so it would be a waste of both of our time,” I professed.

It was the first time I had mentioned out loud that my soul belonged to another. Anger quickly flashed across Vog’s face.

“Who is this man that your soul belongs to? I will challenge him for your soul,” he spewed.

I threw my hands to the air. “I don’t have time for this. I am on my way to see my father.”

I walked around him while he continued to speak words I continued to ignore. I called out to Ro to follow me, and she left her conversation to join me as I entered the doors of the palace.

“He wanted another chance, huh?” Ro asked with a smirk as we walked.

I gave her a knowing look but didn’t see the need to respond with words. The throne room doors were open since my father was expecting me. I smiled as I approached my father on his throne. Both Ro and I bowed in his honor.

“Father.”

He stood up and stepped down from his throne to greet me. “Daughter, you become more beautiful as the moments pass.”

I blushed at his comment as I thanked him. He greeted Ro and complimented her beauty as well. We spoke for a few minutes about Valkyrie business, then he asked what I had come to see him for. I cleared my throat so I could lay out my request.

“Father, I would like to relocate to Earth. I have done wonderful work as a Valkyrie. However, I am not happy here on Asgard. I want to start a new life on Earth,” I said.

My father didn’t speak. He just looked at me, so I felt the need to continue.

“I’ve already been in communication with Jayala, who has set up a job for me at her school, as well as a place for me to build a home.”

My father shifted in his seat and said, “It seems like you have fully thought this plan out, as well as prepped as if I would grant your request. I see those years teaching the youth of Asgard has worked to your advantage.”

Six months after I started my Valkyrie duties, I asked to teach at the school here in Asgard. I had been teaching ever since, and I honestly love it. Jayala was an older Valkyrie that has lived on Earth for more than thirty years. When a Valkyrie or Asgardian made the decision to move to another world or realm, their identify was completely set up if approved by King Odin. With the king’s approval, Jayala moved to Earth as Jayala Spellman and started an educational establishment for children. Mount Pleasant Academy was a private school that was very successful in the city of Mount Pleasant, South Carolina on Earth. Jayala and my mother were best friends, so she was like a second mother to me. On one of my many business trips to Earth, I stopped and talked to her about my move, and she was supportive.

“Yes, Father, I have used all of my resources to ensure that my relocation would be successful and leave you less worry. This is something I really want. Of course, I would still fulfill my Valkyrie duties,” I assured.

My father nodded his head and said, “I will allow it. However, you will not be going alone.”

My eyes narrowed as the first thought was that he was going to send me with Vog as an attempt to get us to rekindle a fire that was truly never there to begin with. I held my breath waiting for his next words.

He continued. "You will relocate with Rota."

I glanced over to my best friend, and it was clear this was a surprise to her as well. I hadn't talked to Ro about coming with me, so I wasn't sure if she would want to.

She cleared her throat. "Sire, I am not sure what I would do on Earth outside of my Valkyrie duties."

My father gave a slight nod with a smirk. "You seem to have a talent of making women beautiful."

I smiled because he was right. Ro did many of the Asgardian women's hair. She had this shampoo and conditioner she made that could make anyone's hair grow substantially in six months. I never once thought about her moving with me and doing hair on Earth.

"Ro, he is right. You are gifted," I exclaimed.

She shook her head in doubt. "That is here on Asgard with Asgardians who know me. I have no presence on Earth."

My father laughed. "I'm sure you will make a way. I will be sure to put out notice to the Asgardians in your area of Earth that you are there. They will surely be happy that you are. Word will soon move among the others of your gifts."

I smiled at my father's encouragement in my best friend's gift. We talked for a while longer, confirming all the plans. I was so excited that he agreed to my relocation and was even more ecstatic that Ro would be accompanying me. We walked out of the palace, seeing Vog and his entourage were still there. I didn't want to talk about this around them, so we made our way to my domain. Once we got there, I stood in the middle of my living quarters in a bit of shock.

Ro moved in front of me with a silly smile on her face. "I guess we're moving to Earth."

We both started screaming. I was ready for this new adventure and more than anything, my soul, I was ready to be closer to its love.

BACK TO THE PRESENT...

He was so gorgeous and even more so up close. Over the years since I gave his soul back, I had been back to check in on him. He had not wasted his second chance, which gave me a sense of pride knowing that I made the right decision. I started last week working with Jayala, and I loved the kids. They were a little testier than the children in Asgard, but it was nothing I couldn't handle. I had only been back to check on him twice over the years, so him having a daughter was a surprise to me. She was absolutely beautiful. When the door finally closed behind him and Kae, I looked at Jayala, who was gawking at me.

“What?” I asked.

She shook her head. “Don't ‘what’ me, little girl. Now it makes sense why, of all the places on Earth, you wanted to come to Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. I told Prima I didn't understand why you wanted to come here over the other places you could have gone. She was sure it was because of me and my school, but I called bullshit. There are many more Valkyries with schools in much hyper cities. Now I see why.”

I tried to hide my smile because I didn't want her to know that she had found me out without even trying. I lifted my head and replied, “I don't know what you're talking about.”

I made sure I walked away so the conversation would end. The children's parents started arriving to pick them up from the aftercare program, and I was waiting for Ro to pick me up. We came to Earth a month and a half ago, and she wasted no time getting her driver's license and a car. I had not been as lucky. As a gift, my mother bought her a brand-new Hyundai Sonata. After saying goodbye to Jayala and the rest of my co-workers, I walked outside, where Ro was waiting for me.

“Hey, best friend,” she exclaimed from the car window.

I smiled wide at her. She started working in a shop braiding hair and was loving what she was doing. We both handled our Valkyrie duties, if we had any, at night. Ro and I were roommates, which she loved since neither of us were responsible for bills. It was a *daughter of Odin* perk. I got in the car, and we were on our way to our house. My father built us a nice three-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bath home. It had all the bells and whistles that the people on Earth desired. My co-worker, Beth-Ann, said our house looked like something from a Chip and Joanne episode. I was not sure who they were, but apparently, they had a nice home.

“Hey. How was work today?” I asked

“It was good. I got in five heads amazingly.”

I wasn’t surprised by that, because she was in the shop as early as five in the morning sometimes. Jayala picked me up for work all this week. I was practicing my driving, so hopefully, I would be able to get my license soon. I did get my permit a week after I got here. I never knew Ro had one already, which was surprising.

“You’re so amazing,” I boasted.

She smiled, then asked, “How was your day, miss teacher’s assistant?”

I couldn’t even go any further into the conversation without letting her know my biggest piece of amazing news.

“I finally saw him today!”

She looked at me with confusion for a split second, then her eyes lit up. She was the only one that knew of the true love my soul had for Jedediah. It was like there was an anchor, and I couldn’t let it be.

“Did you speak to him?” Ro asked.

I told her about the little mean girl that messed with his daughter all the time and that I had redone her hair when I got messed up. His daughter was the sweetest, most-adorable little girl, but she got picked on a lot. I was picked on because of

my chocolate skin in Asgard. There was an assumption that my skin would be lighter because of my father. It became such an issue that people told him he should doubt himself as my father, but he never did. My mother's virtue spoke for itself.

When we got to our home, I was ready to cook dinner. I had been craving lamb chops for a week now. Apparently, here on Earth, lamb was some sort of special occasion food while on Asgard, it was the same equivalent as eating chicken here. Where my father placed our home, there was enough land for a small farm, and I was heavily considering starting one. *Lamb was expensive here.*

Since I had been here, I had gotten attached to these cooking shows. I especially loved all things Gordon Ramsey. He was a bit rude, but his dishes were immaculate.

I prepped dinner and put it in the oven before heading to the shower. Just as I was heading upstairs to my room, Ro was coming down.

“Hey, one of my new clients told me about a car show and cookout they are having in her neighborhood, and she invited me. I think we should go,” she suggested.

“Are you going to show your car?” I didn't really understand what a car show was, but based on the context clues, I guessed since she had a car, she should show it.

She laughed. “No! My car is not nearly cool enough to show anyone. I'm going to make sure you're straight as far as what you are going to wear because you will not embarrass me.”

“Hey, no fair! I dress fine,” I defended.

“No, you still dress like you are under the tight rule of dear old daddy. I have something for that,” she said as she walked away.

I would think she had been here longer than I had, but that was not the case. She did, however, subscribe to any and everything that gave her a glimpse into the culture here. She knew the fashion, music, lingo, and anything that would make her seem as if she were here forever. I shook my head and

moved forward with taking my shower. I didn't want to risk overcooking my lamb chops, so my time was limited.

CAR SHOW...

I wanted to kick Ro's ass! Yes, I said ass, and I tried not to curse. She took it upon herself to order me outfits from this place called Shein. She ordered them a while ago, according to her, for herself, but seeing as we were practically the same size, she gifted them to me. The shorts were not something I would ever choose to wear. They were covering all my bottom, but they drew unnecessary attention. Ro thought it would be a good idea to have a cooler of water in her car so we didn't have to drink from anyone at the car show. I couldn't walk through the grocer without a man stopping us to ask for our phone number. Speaking of phones, I hated them. Why would anyone want someone to have that much access to them? Ro said I didn't have to answer the calls, but then, that would be rude. I guess it didn't matter in my case since I only had two numbers in mine.

"Kara, you look fine," Ro assured as we got out of the car.

I looked down and had to admit that I did look good. I just felt uncomfortable. My shorts were pink, matching the sneakers, or Js, as Ro called them, and my top was white with pink writing on it. I looked around the car show and admired how kid friendly it was. There were these huge house looking things that kids were jumping up and down in. There was a place where other kids were blowing bubbles. The food smelled amazing, and I felt my stomach grumbling for some.

"There she is," Ro's voice grabbed my attention.

She pointed toward a female who I assumed was her client. We walked in that direction, and I felt multiple eyes on me. I made sure to keep my eyes forward. I was not a shy person, per se, but I had never entertained the company of a man outside of Vog. That was a complete waste of my time. I heard from other Asgardians who lived on Earth, or visited

frequently, that men here were different than the men on Asgard. There were clearly a lot more in variety from what I had seen thus far.

“Hey, Ro! I’m so happy you could make it,” the female spoke.

Ro smiled her signature smile while giving the girl a hug. “Hey, Shan! This is my sis, Kara.”

I greeted her, and we started talking about trivial things. She told me this car show was put on yearly in this neighborhood. Greenhill had grown into a community that many wanted to take a chunk out of, but one of the guys in the neighborhood that grew up there was not going for it. As she continued to talk about the neighborhood, I smiled at all the unity among the people.

“Kara!”

I turned suddenly to the little voice that yelled out my name. It was Kae. I was overjoyed to see her.

“Kae, what are you doing here?” I questioned.

She jumped in my arms as I lowered myself to her level. “This is my daddy’s cookout. Come on, let’s jump.”

Before I could say another word, she had pulled me with her toward the big house thing. She told me I had to take off my shoes before I got in. When we climbed in, it was like walking on air. I took Kae’s hand, and we started jumping together. It was so much fun. Before I knew it, all the other children had gathered around and were jumping with us. Just as quickly as the children had gathered, so had an audience on the outside of the big house, causing me to remember what I was wearing.

I shimmied my way out of the house back to the ground. As I was putting on my shoes, a voice stopped me in my tracks.

“Looks like you were having the time of your life in there.”

JEDEDIAH

I saw her the moment her fine ass stepped foot out of the car. What was crazier was I felt her as she was pulling up, which was why I looked in that direction. I'd been organizing this car show and cookout for five years now. All the proceeds went to the beautification of the neighborhood. We worked with a for us-by-us mentality in Greenhill. I learned a long time ago that I couldn't just talk about action; I had to be about that action I was talking about. I had to apply pressure. When I heard they—and by they, I meant them white folks—were trying to move in, I refused to let that happen. With the assistance of a couple heavy hitters in the neighborhood, we rounded up the residents. We had consultants from Washington-Smith Brokerage Firm to come in and give embellishments on credit, land ownership, and everything we needed to maintain the power in our neighborhood. This car show was a part of that plan. In Greenhill, we forbade the sale of drugs and all that shit. Were there dope boys in the neighborhood? Of course. Did they sell in Greenhill? Absolutely not. Some would look down on that, saying they rather ruin others' neighborhoods. I said they could call it what they wanted, but that shit wasn't welcome here.

The school Kae went to sat not far from Greenhill, making it a prime location for our community. It was a private school. However, the headmaster, Jayala Spellman, took vouchers from our neighborhood, as well as gave steep discounts. Mount Pleasant Academy had been ranked number one in the state for test scores for as long as I could remember. There was

a waiting list for entry, but I had a little plug to get my baby in there without a wait. The school offered different after-school programs, including art, dance, karate, swimming, and financial wellness. Kae did all that shit. When Miss Spellman introduced me to Kara, I was taken by her beauty. It felt like I knew her, and I wanted badly to know her. Kae liking her was icing on the cake. On the way home, I let Kae talk her head off about Kara to get the four-year-old inside scoop on her.

“You ain’t shit for sending Kae over there on some sneaky link shit,” Ju joked.

Fuck that. You damn right I got Kae and told her that Kara was here. Her little face lit up, and that was all it took. Their asses got in that bouncy house, getting everyone’s attention. I felt like a damn high school boy who couldn’t control his dick from getting hard watching her ass jump up and down. I had to think about my baby mother, and that shit deflated instantly. She jumped with my baby, as well as the rest of the kids, for a few minutes, then climbed out. *She’s so damn beautiful.*

“Looks like you were having the time of your life in there.” I hovered over her as she put her Js on.

I smiled inwardly to her freezing up to my voice. I took a note of the effect I had on her. That would come in handy down the line, hopefully. She finished with her sneakers, then stood to her full height, which deemed her short compared to my six feet, two inches.

“Oh, Mr. Colliver, hi!”

I chuckled. “You can call me Jedediah.”

She looked down at her feet, causing her braids to fall forward. I used my hand to move them out her face. When she looked up at me, it felt like I could see everything I wanted to be for her in her eyes. *Was a nigga really contemplating love at first sight?*

“Kae said this was your car show and cookout.”

I shook my head slightly before saying, “I organized it for the community, but it is not mine. It is something I do every year for my community.”

Her smile lit up the already-brightened day.

“Well, it is really nice. I love this big house thing. I want one for my backyard to jump in,” she said.

I tilted my head for two reasons. Her over interest in this kiddy ass bouncy house and her accent. It was clear she was from nowhere around these parts. I wanted to know more about her because she was different from any female I had ever met. I knew here was not the place to do that, and ironically, I thought this lame ass bouncy house was my way in.

“If you like that, then you would love jumping on a trampoline,” I boasted.

As if it were a perfectly rehearsed play, Kae appeared at my side with excitement. “Yes! You can come with me and Daddy to jump on the trampoline! It is so much fun,” she screamed.

I swore she was getting all the cookies and ice cream she wanted tonight for being my perfect little wing-girl. I could see the apprehensiveness in Kara’s face, so I knew I had to close the deal.

“Come on. Let me and Kae take you on a Sunday funday date tomorrow. Show you our city,” I requested.

Kae added on the pleases and begging face that I knew she wouldn’t be able to resist.

“Okay, okay! We can do the Sunday funday thing tomorrow,” Kara finally agreed, making Kae jump up and down.

We exchanged numbers and made plans for me to pick her up around eleven in the morning. She let me know she was going to find her sister, and Kae’s ass left with her. I walked back over to my homeboys, making a beeline straight to Greg, or “Hustleman”, as he was known.

“My dude, I don’t care how much it cost. I need a big ass trampoline delivered and set up in my backyard no later than one tomorrow afternoon,” I demanded.

He arched his brow but made a promise to get it for me. Ju just shook his head, but I put my hand up before he could say shit. I didn't want to hear it. He knew when I had my eyes on something or someone, I was going to do the necessary to make it happen. Right now, I was trying to find Kae a stepmama.

SUNDAY FUNDAY...

They don't call Greg "Hustleman" for any reason. He was knocking on my door at nine this morning with a crew to put the trampoline up in my backyard. We found the perfect place that was on my side of the yard and far enough away from the pool. Kae's ass was so excited because we usually went to the trampoline park on Sundays, but now, we had a park in our own backyard. I had to convince her not to mention to Kara that we just got the trampoline. The plan for today was to go to a matinee movie, then lunch, then back to the house for jumping fun. Kae was more excited than I was about our little date.

"Daddy, is it time to go pick up Miss Kara?" Kae asked as she came running in the kitchen where I stood looking at some bills.

"Yes, baby. Let's go."

I let her dress herself today, and I was quickly regretting that choice, but I was going to let my baby be great in her tutu. I made sure she had shorts under it before we left the house. Kara had a house back in Remley's Point. I didn't even realize there was available land back here, but clearly, there was because her house was sitting on acres. I was not sure if it was all hers, but damn. The minute the car stopped, Kae had taken herself out of her harness in the booster seat. She opened the door and ran to the front door. I just shook my head. The door opened, and I almost choked on my own spit.

"Uncle Ju, what are you doing here?" Kae asked, jumping into his arms.

I looked at this nigga wearing a smirk and shook my fucking head. I couldn't even say I was surprised, because I saw him eyeing Kara's sister the minute she got out of the car, too. He thought I missed the part when he told the homies she was off limits.

"Hey, Kae Bae! I'm here with Ro making sure her pipes work." He threw out a joke that I wanted to punch him in his face for.

"Shut up, Judas," Ro said from behind him.

My eyes widened to hearing her call him by his government. He hated that shit. He turned around, pulled her into him with Kae still in his arms, and said something into her ear, causing her to laugh. I felt like I was in an alternate reality. He put Kae down while she asked for Kara.

"Here I am."

Her voice was soft and angelic almost, but in the same breath, it made my dick jump. Kae and Kara did their excited greeting, and we were on our way. I gave Ju a look, letting him know we would talk about that shit later. I opened the door for her, and her scent also had my shit jumping. *What the fuck is up with this girl?* When I got in the car, Kae was already talking her mouth off. My little baby could talk.

"I like your car," Kara complimented.

I smiled and thanked her. I kept it simple today, riding in my Dodge Charger. Kae could be messy as fuck, so this was our go-out car. We headed to the movie theater to watch *Cruella*. I hoped this shit didn't scare the shit out of my baby, but she wanted to see it. Kae was talking to Kara about the movie, and it was as if Kara had no knowledge of it.

"Where are you from?" I asked her.

She looked at me and with a straight face said, "Europe."

I nodded and decided to stick a pin in that shit. She was vague for a reason, but I wouldn't worry about that now.

"You have any kids or a boyfriend?"

She giggled. “Oh, no! I don’t have any children or a suiter... I mean a boyfriend.”

I was cool with that. We made it to the theater, and I let her and Kae ball out at the concession stand. I needed to open a damn movie theater because it was straight buffoonery how much money I spent on snacks just now. I didn’t think we would have to go to damn lunch. I had to bribe Kae to let me sit next to Kara, but I got what I wanted in the end.

By the end of the movie, both of their asses were sleeping on me. Kae was sitting on my lap while Kara was leaned over in the crease of my arm. They probably were on a sugar crash from all that shit they consumed.

I felt like this was more of a Kae and Kara date, but I wasn’t tripping. I was about to wear Kae’s ass out on this trampoline and have Kara to myself for the rest of the night. The ladies decided instead of going out to lunch to order food at the house so they could enjoy jumping longer. This trampoline was going to be a nigga’s golden fucking ticket. We got to my house a little before three in the afternoon. Kae immediately dragged Kara out to the trampoline. I watched from my back sliding door as they climbed on it and started jumping.

“You must really like this one. You never bring females around Kae.” My mother’s voice scared me.

“Dang, Ma!”

I looked toward her house, and she was sitting in her work shack sowing a sweetgrass basket. I had this work shack built for her a couple of years ago. She liked working outside, so I wanted to make sure she had a shaded area to do her work in. My mother was a beautiful woman, and I always admired her strength. My father died when I was six in a work-related accident. However, we were okay financially with his pension and social security.

“Don’t ‘dang, Ma’ me. Where you get this one from?” she questioned.

“You make it sound like I’m out here just handling people’s daughters. If you must know, she’s Kae’s teacher’s assistant.”

My mother stopped sowing and looked over to the trampoline where the girls were jumping. She gave a slight smile, then said, “You better not mess that girl over. If she starts treating my grandbaby badly, I’m beating both of y’all’s asses.”

I shook my head and let her know it was nothing like that. I walked over to where the girls were, and they convinced me to climb my grown ass up to jump with them. I couldn’t even lie; I had fun with them. We jumped for about thirty minutes before getting down. My mother was still outside working and watching. I think she was doing more watching than working, but that was another story. I decided to introduce them since they were in the same space.

“Kara, this is my mother, Beth.”

My mother stood and pulled Kara into a hug. My mother did the most sometimes, but I let her live.

“Kara, you are such a beautiful girl,” my mother adored.

Kara blushed. “Thank you. I love your basket. Did you make it?”

My mother nodded. Kae jumped her little ass in the conversation, which I normally would have shunned.

“Grandma is showing me how to make them. She can show you, too,” she excitedly proclaimed.

Before I knew what was happening, I was sent to get an extra chair for Kara while Kae sat in her chair that was already there. My mother started showing her how to sow a basket. *Everyone trying to steal my girl. Shit!* I took that time to go in my house and call this nigga Ju on FaceTime to see what was up with him.

“What it do?” he answered.

I noticed immediately that his ass was not in any place I was familiar with based on the background.

“Where the hell you at, man?”

He chuckled. “I’m minding my business just like you’re doing. How shit going wit’ lil’ bit?”

I inwardly chuckled because I knew more than likely he was still at Kara’s house with her sister. Ju did not believe in wasting time, much like myself. The only difference was Ju sometimes had a bad case of the stick and move.

“It’s cool. She’s outside with Mama and Kae learning how to sow a basket,” I informed.

Ju threw his head back. “What Mama Beth said?”

“She told me not to mess her over and told Kara she was a beautiful girl.”

He stood from the seat he was sitting in, then called out, “Ro! We need to go get fitted.”

A few seconds later, a second voice entered the conversation. “Judas, why are you so loud? What are you talking about?”

He laughed at her playful attitude before saying, “Jed and Kara gonna get married. Beth said so.”

My eyes bugged out. “When the fuck did my mama say that shit?”

He was tripping for real. I wouldn’t deny that she more than likely would be Mrs. Colliver if she played this shit right, but right now, nah.

Ju looked at me through the screen while Ro laughed in the background. “Mama Beth didn’t tell that girl to take her hot ass on, so I know it’s real.”

Ro told him to shut up, and she walked off. When she did, I took the liberty to ask why she received the free range to call him by his government. He moved out of the house to what looked like the back porch.

He got close into the phone, then in a whisper said, “Nigga, I think she crazier than me. God done sent me my

fucking match. She can call me whatever the fuck she wants. Plus, you hear how that shit rolls off her tongue.”

I laughed at this man’s facial expression because he was dead ass serious. We talked until I heard my back door open.

“Daddy, look what Kara did,” Kae rang out.

I looked down at the small basket in her hand with admiration. I didn’t think I was talking on the phone for that long, but looking at my phone, I was talking to Ju for an hour. Damn, she sowed this basket quick for a first timer. It was a simple basket, but that made it nonetheless beautiful. Kara came through the door with a smile on her face.

“I see you are a fast learner,” I said to her.

She smiled with a bat of her eyes. “Your mother is a great teacher. I will admit, I had some experience just with a different kind of basket weaving.”

“Really? You will have to tell me and Kae more over pizza and ice cream.”

That brought a roar of excitement from Kae, as well as Kara. I loved how playful she was with my daughter. It was unfortunate that Kae’s mother was not like that. She treated our daughter like a Birkin. If she matched with her outfit, then it was cool.

I ordered DoorDash from my baby’s favorite spot, [A Dough Re Mi Pizza](#).

Kae’s ass didn’t even make it to the ice cream before she was knocked out. I got her squared away in her bed, then made my way back to my den where Kara was. She looked nervous as fuck. Ju sent me a text while we were eating to let me know he was staying at their place again.

“Ju is staying at y’all’s place again,” I told her.

Kara vigorously shook her head. “I will stay here.”

I could not control my laughter at her response. “Dang, it was that bad last night?”

She laughed. “Your friend howls when he is overly excited.”

My eyes bucked, and I knew I would never let his ass live that shit down. I sat on the couch next to her and turned the television on.

“What do you want to watch?”

K A R A

I didn't know what I wanted to watch. I want to watch him, but that seemed like it would be inappropriate to say. Today was the greatest day I had had here on Earth so far, and it was all with my soul mate. He didn't know he was my soul mate, but I knew it. Kae was just a joy to be around, and I loved everything about being around her and Jedediah.

"You can pick the entertainment while I use the restroom," I said.

I got up before he could say anything as I rushed to his lavatory. When I got inside, I closed the door followed by locking it. I pulled out my phone and called Ro.

"Why are you calling me when you have a fine man in your face?" she said after she answered.

I rolled my eyes. "Ro, what am I supposed to do?"

"Kara, you are of a woman's age. If you like him, do what you would like," she told me.

Ro had always been more of a freer spirit than I had ever been. She was well-versed in knowing herself sexually, and I sometimes wished I could be as free. I never wanted judgment. That was why I allowed Vog to do a lot of the things he did. I'd rather stay with him than be known as promiscuous. To Asgardians, as the daughter of Odin, having more than one lover was just that.

"I do like him a lot. You know he is my—"

She cut me off and said, “Soul mate. Yes, I know. If he is truly your soul mate, then nothing you do will turn him from you. Now, go so I can find out if Ju is my soul mate. I already know he is my mate.”

I laughed, then washed my hands as if I had relieved myself. I walked back into the room that Jedediah sat in and took a seat next to him.

“Did you have a nice talk with Ro in the bathroom?” he questioned.

My mouth dropped to his question. *How did he know I was talking to Ro? Ju!*

“Tell Ju to mind is business,” I said with a laugh.

He returned my laugh with the comment, “Ro is his current business, and you are impeding on that business when you call her.”

I gave him a slight shoulder bump, making him laugh again. We started watching a movie that I could not tell you the name of, but what I did know was the intimacy scenes were getting me overworked. I started shifting in my seat from the tingling between my legs. I knew he noticed by the side-eye he continued to give me.

“You okay over there?” he asked.

“I am just fine,” I responded with a slight attitude.

I wasn’t upset with him, but I was more upset that I knew I was, in fact, not fine. His hand moved to my bare leg, causing me to curse wearing shorts again today. That spark was there, but this time, I didn’t pull away.

“I’ve wanted to do something since the moment I saw you at my daughter’s school.”

I nervously looked to him, giving him my undivided attention. “What is that?”

“I’ve wanted to taste your lips,” he confessed.

My face contorted slightly at the thought of him wanting to eat my lips. *Is that a common thing here on Earth?* I tried not

to act shocked at his request, but I was a little scared of how that would feel. I like my lips.

With confusion and an ounce of fear, I asked, “You want to eat my lips?”

Now it was his face’s turn to contort. “What? No! I want to do this.”

He placed his lips on mine, giving me a clear understanding of what he meant. *I like tasting lips!* His lips tasted like heaven, and I did not want to stop. He pulled away for just enough time to mount me on his lap. We continued our heated display of affection with him using his strength to raise us from the couch and walk us up the stairs. His build and height were the epitome of what a mighty warrior would be, and I understood why his soul was once beckoned to Valhalla. We entered a room that was clearly his sleeping place. He laid me on his bed, causing us to part bodies. He took his shirt off to show his toned body, encouraging the heat between my legs to intensify. I sat up to allow him to remove my shirt. I turned my back to him, climbing forward on the bed while showing off my back artwork. I positioned myself on my legs while still having my back facing him. I turned to look at him. He had secured his bottom lip between his teeth with a devilish smirk. I unlatched my brassiere, allowing it to fall to the bed.

“I hope you are prepared for what I’m about to do to your sexy ass,” he said in a low tone.

“You promise?”

I always found there was a power in being a sexual person. I may have had only one suiter, but I knew the power within my flower. He neared me, extended his arm out grabbing me and pulling me to him. I let out a light giggle at his aggression. Our lips locked together again while he unbuttoned my shorts. He sucked on my neck with my head thrown back in complete satisfaction. We worked my way out of my shorts before he laid me back on his bed again. He climbed between my legs, and I prepared from him to enter me.

“Jedediah,” I exclaimed to the feeling of his mouth on my precious flower.

This was a satisfaction I had never experienced in all my experiences with Vog. It was looked down upon when men in Asgard placed their mouth in forbidden places. The women who allowed them to do so were just as unrighteous. At this moment, they could condemn me to hell with how amazing this felt. The way his used his tongue to caress the petals of my flower caused my body to shiver.

“You like that shit?” he taunted me sexually.

I nodded before I said, “Yes... Please don’t stop.

He smiled into my middle, lifted his head, then said, “I’m about to take your soul.”

Little did he know, he owned my soul a long time ago. His tongue majestically took my willing soul for the next ten minutes. Just when I thought the best was over, he lifted his body and entered me. Filling me completely, I decided I wanted control of the next set of actions. I used my lower body strength to flip him over. *Thank the gods for defense training.*

“Damn, babe,” he said in surprise.

I smirked as my body moved in a clockward motion. I made sure to enclose my flower at the twelve-o’clock, three-o’clock, six-o’clock, and nine-o’clock hours. This required a lot of control, and it proved to drive him crazy. His strong hands gripped my hips, then moved to my back, pulling me down to him. My motion changed from the classic clock to an up-and-down motion. He moaned into my lips, bringing the eruption of my first release. I had never had a release that I didn’t give myself. This was a joyous feeling.

“Your shit is fucking lethal. Your ass is stuck like fuck now,” he said.

I looked at him past his eyes into his soul. “You promise?”

“You fucking right,” he said before crashing his lips onto mine.

For the rest of the night, we explored each other’s bodies for all our pleasurable spot. I believe we found most of them.

THE NEXT MORNING...

I felt kisses on my back as I awoke from my slumber. I didn't want to open my eyes from fear that the feeling would go away or worse, be an illusion. I didn't want to wake up and realize everything that happened last night was not true.

I heard a manly chuckle. "Are you going to wake up?"

"If I wake up, you will stop. I don't want you to stop," I whined.

Just as I was about to roll over to face him, there was a little knock at the door. *Oh, gosh!* I immediately jumped out of the bed and ran to the bathroom. I did not want Kae to see me laying naked in her father's bed. I heard Jedediah laughing while he told Kae to come in. Her first question was if he was going to put her on the bus for school. *School! It's Monday!* He told her he would and shooed her to get ready for school. There was a light knock on the bathroom door.

I burst out of the door in all my nakedness. "I'm going to be late for work."

I had never been late, and I wanted to cry. I raced around the room, grabbing my things while Jedediah sat on the bed watching me. I couldn't find my phone to call Jayala.

"You looking for this?" Jedediah asked as he held my phone up.

"Yes. I need to call Jayala."

He stood, pulled me to him, and placed a kiss on my forehead. "Calm down. She called earlier, and I told her you were here. She told me to tell you to take the day."

My eyes widened before I said, "Take the day? I've only been there a couple of weeks. I can't take the day. The other teachers already think I get special treatment."

He simply shrugged. "They are just going to have to think that because today you are with me. I'm about to put Kae on

the bus, then we can go to your house so you can get some clothes for breakfast.”

He left the room, not giving me any further options. I picked up my phone he had placed on the bed to confirm by text that Jayala really did tell me to stay home. She did! I made the only other call I could think to make.

“Yes, Kara,” Ro answered after the third ring.

“Why do you sound annoyed with me?”

I didn’t like her tone, but I knew she had no malice behind it.

She chuckled. “Why are you once again calling me when I know you are still with Jed?”

“He is putting Kae on the bus right now. We are about to come to the house so I can get clothes,” I told her.

She let me know she already knew. She and Ju were at the house waiting on us because we were all going to breakfast together. I saw everyone liked to make plans for me.

“Is your back okay?” she eventually asked.

I was confused by her question. She just laughed when I asked for clarity. We talked for a few more minutes before we ended the call.

Jedediah strolled back in the room to let me know he was going to jump in the shower, then we would leave. He gave me a passionate kiss before going into the bathroom. I decided to take the time to go on the back porch and enjoy the morning air. It was something I did often in Asgard but have not been able to here because of my work schedule. I sat down in the lounge chair on his back porch and took in a deep breath.

“Still here, I see,” a voice said behind me.

I turned to see Mrs. Beth. Her soul reminded me a lot of my mother’s. One gift that was embedded in the Valkyrie was the ability to see pure souls, as well as not so pure. While I had been on Earth, I had come upon some of the most-sinister souls I had ever encountered.

“Yes, ma’am. I hope that is okay.”

I would never want to do anything that was deemed inappropriate to her. The manner in actions were different here than they were on Asgard. There were actions that were done here that I would never think to do home, and in the same regard, vice versa.

Mrs. Beth nodded her head before she said, “You and my son are grown. Just remember what I told you yesterday.”

Yesterday, while she was teaching me how she sows baskets, she told me to always remember to love myself more than I loved anyone else, even her son. I thought that was great advice, and I planned to adhere to it.

“Yes, ma’am. I will. I see you start sowing early.”

I moved over to where she was sitting, picked up a starter circle, and started sowing. There was a calming feeling when I was using my hands to create something. We talked as we sowed. She made me miss my mother. However, she also slightly filled that void. I made the decision to move to Earth, so I had to deal with all that came with that.

“I leave you by yourself for a few minutes, and my mother steals you away again,” Jedediah said after making his appearance.

Mrs. Beth laughed, then joked, “Don’t be mad that she likes me more than you.”

We talked about what we were going to be doing for the day for a few minutes, then Jedediah and I were on our way. We spent the rest of the morning and early afternoon together. He checked on his many businesses and showed me around town. I told him I thought it wouldn’t be a good idea for us to be together when he went to pick up Kae. He wanted to see me tonight, but I had other plans.

MUCH LATER THAT NIGHT...

Ro and I were in full armor on a joint mission for four souls. For the short time I had been here, I had taken a notice to the unnecessary violence that occurred here. There were so many souls that could have more time here on Earth, but the violence ran rampant.

“Seems like you and Ju are friendly,” I commented to Ro while we waited for the soul call.

She rolled her eyes. “Ju is crazy, but he’s my kind of crazy. I can tell he is used to women who allow him to have his way with their hearts and minds. He knows that is not something he can do with me. I think that turns him on.”

I laughed at her logic. From what I had seen from the men here, she was right about how they thought. They were not much different from the men in Asgard. Men were men, regardless of the realm they resided in. Vog did what he did because the women, including me, allowed him to. When we were in our relationship, he couldn’t give less care to how I felt, and it showed. The moment I didn’t care and let him go, I suddenly became more desirable to him. By that time, it was too late.

“You think it’s something that will be substantial?” I asked.

She shrugged. “Forget about Ju. What is going on with you and Jed? Did you let that man handle that flower?”

I snickered at the thought of the amazement of last night. “He trimmed it, watered it, and repotted it.”

“Okay, I hear you talking about watering. Did you guys use protection?”

I tilted my head, not sure of what she meant.

“Kara, here they have these things called condoms, and they prevent your womb from being filled. You can also go on what they call birth control,” she informed me.

I nodded my head. “I drank the tea.”

There is a tea the women of Asgard drink after intimacy when we do not want our womb to be filled. I lived on that tea

during the times I was with Vog. I would have died if I had to have an offspring of Vog's.

Ro shook her head. "I don't know if it will work, because it's Earth. It works differently, but that tea does not work the same here. We need to get you what they call a morning after pill as soon as possible. You either need to do birth control or condoms. Condoms also protect you from what they call STDs here."

"What is an STD?" I asked, totally lost. There were just certain things we did not have to deal with on Asgard.

She laughed. "It's diseases that can be passed from having intimacy with a person if they are not clean, per se."

My eyes enlarged, and I felt vomit wanting to rise. That was the nastiest thing I had ever in my life heard. Suddenly, I got nervous about my intimacy with Jedediah last night. I didn't know all that I knew right now last night.

My soul felt the pull, and I knew it was time. Ro knew the same as she looked at me. Being that we both resided here now, there was a special rule that we did not deal with souls within a certain radius of our homestead. It could be upsetting to get to know someone here and at some point, be called to deliver their soul to Valhalla. We double tapped our amulet for the portal to open. It was time to do what we were destined to do so we could return back to our homestead to do what we loved to do.

JEDEDIAH

“*I*t was a pleasure doing business with you, Mr. Colliver and Mr. Singleton,” my banker said as he shook my hand.

Ju and I just closed on a car lot. We had been working on this for a while, and it finally came to fruition. I’m not talking about some rinky-dink car lot, either. We were going to be taking over a reputable car lot, where the owners got into some tax evasion trouble. After the government did all their razzle dazzle, we were able to buy it from the estate for peanuts. This was a major move for two black boys from Greenhill.

“Thank you for making this work for us.”

We walked out of the bank looking and feeling like the bosses we were. I was building a legacy for my daughter and any other children I would have after her. She was already a little millionaire, but I would never tell her mother that shit. I had it tucked away in a trust for my baby, and every month, a proceed of all my businesses profits went to that trust.

“What you about to do, man?” Ju asked.

It was the middle of the week, and I hadn’t spent any real time with Kara, which was bothering the fuck out of me. I saw her when I went to pick my baby up from school, but it was like she was avoiding a nigga. I didn’t like that shit at all. She was out here doing a good deed in a bad fashion by putting that pussy on me like she did, then not talking to me. We couldn’t have that. Kae’s mother was picking her up from school today to spend some time with her since she had *free*

time. It saddened me how shit had turned, and she was really catering to this nigga she was with.

“I’m about to go slide to Kara’s job and see what the fuck is up with her,” I told him.

Ju chuckled, making me feel some kind of way. Let me find out he’d been pillow talking about me and mine.

“Yeah, you should do that. I think she misses you,” he joked.

I shunned him while I climbed in my truck. I had already put a bird in Ro’s ear to not pick Kara up from work. I drove to the school and waited until she came out. I was in my truck, so I knew she wouldn’t notice me straightaway. When she finally did come out, I admired her attire. Her fitted jeans and cardigan paired with a fresh pair of Vans fit her personality. She had her braids on top of her head in a bun style with a pair of earrings shaped in the continent of Africa. Her whole style was fly as fuck. She was looking around with confusion. I decided to say something when she pulled her phone out.

“Who you looking for?” I startled her.

She looked like a deer in headlights, making me laugh. I took my hands out of my slack pockets, leaned off my truck, and approached her. I could smell her want for me, and it smelled good. It was interesting because that was the first time I had ever felt so in tune with a woman’s body.

“Jedediah, what are you doing here?”

She was the only one outside of my mother that called me by my full government name. I didn’t mind it because it felt right.

“I’m here to take you with me to dinner then to chill with me for the evening,” I let her know.

She looked around again but stepped toward me. I pulled her to me, placed my lips on hers, then lightly smacked her ass. She let out a little gasp before looking behind her. Once we were in my truck, I asked her if she liked barbeque. She told me she had never really had it, so I took her to this little spot that my homeboy owned. One thing I loved about this girl

was she did not give a fuck about being in front of a man; she was going to eat. She fucked her ribs up and mine. I was smart this time, making sure we stopped at her house first so she could get some clothes for work tomorrow. At this point, I didn't give a fuck about Kae seeing her at the house. She was going to be mine.

“That food was so good. I bet the lamb I make would taste amazing with some of that sauce on it,” she said.

I looked over at her for a second while I drove. “I have never had lamb. You're going to have to make it for me.”

She turned in her seat toward me with a wide smile. “Oh, Jedidiah, it's so glorious. I will definitely make you and Kae some soon. I grew up on lamb. Have you ever had a shepherd's pie?”

I shook my head. “I heard of it but never had it.”

She bounced back in her seat to face the front. “That is how I will introduce you and Kae to lamb.”

When we got to my house, she headed to the shower to wash her day off. I needed to do the same, and I didn't see the need to waste any water. I took my clothes off, opened the shower door, and walked in behind her. She jumped to the feel of my hands.

“What are you doing?” she asked.

“I wanted to take a shower with you.”

I kissed her neck. She had this tattoo that covered her entire back that was sexy as fuck. I had never seen a set of angel wings as vibrant as the ones on her back. It was like the tattoo lifted off her back in a 3D nature. I didn't like the way her body was tensing.

“You okay, Kara?” I asked.

I would never want to go further than she would want to go.

With meek voice, she asked, “Do you have any STDs?”

That stopped me dead in my tracks. I paused for a second to ask myself the question in my head. “No, I am STD free. Do you have any STDs?”

She spun around quickly before saying, “Oh, no! I got on these pill things yesterday so you can’t fill my womb... I mean, get me pregnant.”

I chuckled at her wording and her trying to correct it. Clearly, this was an issue for her, so instead of trying to have sex, I’d rather chill tonight, then tomorrow, we both could go get tested. I washed her, and she returned the sentiment. Once our shower was finished, we found ourselves in the den, relaxed on the couch. I always wanted her to feel safe in every way with me. I was happy to hear she was on birth control pills so I wouldn’t *fill her womb*.

“Are you upset that I asked about the STD thing?” she nervously asked.

“Not at all. I just want you to know without a shadow of a doubt that my shit is clean. I’m going to be in you often because you’re going to be mine,” I declared.

One thing about me that could be seen as a double-edged sword was I didn’t believe in wasting time. A lot of people preferred to get to know someone first, then lock down a relationship. To me, that was a waste of time. If I met you and your spirit spoke to me, I wanted to lock that shit down. We could get to know each other as time went along. When you get to know someone without locking shit down, that could imply you could also be getting to know someone else. Call me what you want, but that was not alright with me. I made my desire clear early on as I just had with Kara.

“You want me to be yours?” she asked with a slight smile.

I smirked, then said, “Yes, I want you to be mine.”

With a nonchalant shrug, she said, “Okay then. It is so. I am yours.”

See what I mean about her wording? My babe told me she wanted to watch some show called *Kitchen Nightmare*, so I found it on Hulu. Around seven o’clock, I saw Kaeya’s car

pull into my driveway. I unlocked the door remotely as I normally did for Kae but was surprised to see her mother getting out of the car. I stood to my feet as the front door opened. My den was right off the front door, so Kae saw Kara immediately.

“Kara!”

Kara stood and scooped Kae up in her arms. A few seconds later, a pregnant Kaeya came through the door. I could tell by her facial expression that this may not be a nice conversation. Kara must have noticed it as well because she asked Kae if she wanted to jump on the trampoline. Of course, baby girl was for it, so they left the room.

“You feel comfortable having some bitch around my baby? Wait, isn’t that the little teacher bitch from her school?” she questioned.

Bitches were funny, and yes, I called her a bitch. There was a clear difference between a woman and a bitch. How was she going to even split her lips to say something about who I had around my daughter when she had multiple men around her? Her son’s father, who she was not even with anymore, was not the first. “First, my woman is far from a bitch—”

“Woman?” she cut me off.

“You heard me correctly the first time. Kara is her name, and that is how she will be addressed. She will be around Kae, and that is not up for debate. Last I checked, your new baby daddy doesn’t even want my daughter around. If you feel this will be an issue, we can always go to the white man.”

I was not about to play with her about my daughter. She had already given me legal primary custody a month after Kae started living with me, so she was flexing for no reason. Kaeya could play all day, but she knew the lifestyle she lived, niggas provided.

She looked at me with venom in her eyes before she spat out, “She better not hurt my daughter. I’m going to tell her bye.”

I followed her outside to the back door, not surprised that Kae and Kara were sitting with my mother sowing a basket.

“Kae, come here and give me a hug so I can go,” Kaeya demanded.

Ah shit! My mother stopped sowing her basket to turn her head swiftly in Kaeya’s direction.

“You don’t see any other people out here, little girl?” she asked.

I never got why she played with my mother. My mother had literally put hands on her in the past. Beth could not stand Kaeya. That should have been red flag number one to leave her alone.

“Oh, sorry, Mrs. Beth. I was in a rush. How you doing?” she finally said.

My mother turned her head and didn’t even respond, making me chuckle. How was she going to tell the girl to speak but didn’t speak back? Kara stood from her seat and walked toward me. I pulled her into me, putting her back to my front. I needed Kaeya to know this was not a play situation.

“Hi, I’m Kara. I saw you earlier when you picked up Kae from school,” she softly spoke.

I knew Kaeya wanted to say something out of the way, so my facial expression gave her a subtle reminder.

“Yes, how are you? Congratulations on your newfound relationship with my daughter’s father,” she slickly said.

Like she didn’t miss a beat, Kara responded, “Oh, thank you. He is amazing, but you know that. Congratulations on your new little one coming. Do you know what you’re having?”

I could see the anger written over Kaeya’s face that her mission had not been accomplished with getting under my babe’s skin.

“No, my man wants it to be a surprise.”

Kara nodded, then wished her a healthy pregnancy. She excused herself to walk back over to my mother and where Kae had taken her original place. I walked Kaeya out, and she stopped short of the door.

“I came in to ask you a question. I got a notice from child support that my support is going to be cut off,” she said.

“Okay, what is your question?” I asked.

With her hand on her hip, she asked, “Why did I get it?”

“Kaeya, you can’t seriously be asking me that question. Kae lives with me now, so I know you didn’t think you were going to continue to keep getting money for her.”

I saw the smoke coming from her ears. “Jedediah, what am I supposed to do for money?”

I shrugged. “My responsibility is to take care of my daughter. All that other shit you have going on is above me now.”

“Kae could come live with me then,” she requested.

I laughed at her foolishness. “Since you aren’t getting a check, you want her back? If that is what it is, you know what to do.”

She huffed, then stormed out. I heard footsteps behind me as I closed the door. The feel of her arms around me brought me peace. She spoke to my soul, and my soul loved that.

“Are you alright?” she softly asked.

I turned, looked down at her, then said, “I am now.”

I leaned down to taste her lips, and like always, I felt that undeniable spark.

FIVE MONTHS LATER...

“What I tell you about that, Kara?” I growled in her ear as I stroked her from behind.

I had been fucking her off and on all night since Kae was spending the night with her mother. In the last five months, it felt like we have been together for years. We just fucking got each other. I felt her heart, spirit, and soul just as much as she felt mine. We moved as a unit, and that shit turned me on. On top of all of that, she took excellent care of Kae.

“Babe, pull out a little bit,” she requested.

I smirked at her ask. This dick had been hitting different ever since her ass found out I filled her womb. Her ass was not good at taking pills at fucking all. She was only ten weeks. People would think I would have been upset about the pregnancy, but I felt the opposite. I felt like this shit was destiny, and I was ready to lock our shit down even further. I pulled back to let her live a little bit, but I didn’t slack on the stroke.

“I love you, Kara,” I professed.

She looked behind her with that sexy ass smirk that I loved. “You promise?”

Every time she asked me that shit my dick got harder, sometimes to the point of physical pain. One thing about my babe was she was serious about her little me time. We didn’t spend every night together, and at first, I thought that shit was suspect, but then I grew to appreciate it. Now that she was pregnant, she wanted to stay under me, which I dug. We hadn’t told Kae yet. We were waiting for Kara to at least be fifteen weeks when we were closer to knowing what we were having.

“I fucking promise. For life, Kara.”

I would give this fucking girl my life, and I meant that shit from the depth of my soul. I pulled out, leaned down, and wrapped my lips around her flower from behind. She was going to sleep good for the rest of the night.

A MONTH AND A HALF LATER...

“Aye! My nigga about to have a little nigga,” Ju rejoiced as I walked into the barbershop next to my spot on the river.

We found out this morning at our doctor’s appointment that Kara was having my son, and I was ecstatic. Ju and Ro demanded to be a part of the experience, so we had them on FaceTime. Everyone celebrated with me and Ju by dapping me up and promising baby gifts. Ju talked about some diaper party he was planning for me, and they were all invited. I sat in my barber’s seat so I could get my shit lined up. Kara went to work for the rest of the day. I was happy we knew what we are having because we could not hide this shit from Kae much longer. It was obvious my babe was pregnant, but Kae thought she was getting fat because they ate a lot of ice cream and sprinkles.

Everyone in the shop started talking about the shit that popped off last week. The niggas that tried to kill me all those years ago got popped last week when they tried to rob someone else. While we were talking, a customer came in, asking if there was any availability. Another barber was almost finished, so he was told to wait.

“Are you going to name your son a junior,” my barber asked.

“Fuck yeah I am.”

The customer sitting not too far away looked up from the magazine and said, “Oh, you’re having a baby? Congratulations. I have three heirs.”

I nodded my head at him. It was not uncommon for niggas to jump in conversations in the shop, but this nigga looked out of place.

“Yeah, I’m excited. To think all this shit would have never come to pass if I had died when those bitch niggas tried to rob me,” I reminisced.

“Wow, how long ago was that?” the customer asked.

I told him it was over five years ago. He finally got in the chair to get these hideous locs he had cut off. I was still in the

chair chilling by the time he was finished. On the way out, he congratulated me again.

“Thanks, man. What’s your name?”

He looked at me with a smile and responded, “Vog.”

VOG

Three Weeks Earlier...

King Odin allowing Kara to leave for Earth completely derailed my plan for the throne. Odinsons had no desire to rule, so I wanted it for myself. The only way in was to wed Kara. My father, Isgaut, had convinced her father to convince Kara to give me a chance, but I messed it up. Well, I didn't know if I would say I messed it up. It was more that she did not know her place as a woman. A place of a woman was not to be concerned with the affairs of her mate. She should take care of the homestead, and Kara being a Valkyrie gave her feigned authority that she never truly had. Her being the only daughter of Odin also had her with a feeling of entitlement. That was why I roamed. Kara thought being with me was of no reward, so I pleased women who did.

"Vog, why is your mind not on me while I am pleasuring you?" Lasa complained.

I recently started dealing with her, and I was quickly thinking it was not a decision worth making. She was the only other Valkyrie I had ever dealt with outside of Kara. I needed Lasa to be my ears on what Kara was doing on Earth. Kara was Odin's perfection who could do no wrong to the point that he neglected to have her watched. I knew better.

"My mind is here with you," I lied.

She was attempting to pleasure me orally but was horrible at it. Oral pleasure was not something widely done here on Asgard, but I required it. Another reason Kara was not cutting

it for me was because she refused. None of that should have mattered; however, with the objective at hand to sit on the throne. Lasa began her oral pleasure again, which at this point, I wanted to end. Before I could say anything, my door flew open. Lasa jumped up to cover herself while I moved at a more lackadaisical speed.

“Father, what brings you here to my domain?” I asked, annoyed.

My father turned his nose up at the sight in front of me. “I prayed for a different son, but clearly, the gods wanted me cursed.”

From the moment I emerged from my mother’s womb, I was never enough. It started with her dying during my birth. He had always and would always blame me for that. From that point, it was always something. Getting to the throne was the only thing we agreed on. My father had always envied Odin, but he masked it extremely well.

“You could be blessed and not realize it because you are blinded by a throne that can never be yours,” I snapped back.

I spoke freely in front of Lasa because she had been promised a lead place on my harem.

“If you were to not be blinded by the likes of loose women, we would not have to go to great lengths for the throne. Kara would be here on your arm with your heir instead of these other useless women,” he complained.

Lasa huffed as she wrapped a robe around her naked body.

“Everyone hangs their dreams and morals on Kara while she lives on Earth as a loose woman,” she said, looking to my father.

I grimaced. “Envy green is not your shade, my dear love. Kara is a lot of things, but a loose woman she will never be.”

I had clearly offended her sensibilities.

She covered her breasts with her arms. “Well, while you two reverence her on Asgard, she lives on Earth as another man’s mate, and her womb is filled with his heir. A man whose

soul should have been in Valhalla, but she saw it fit to give his soul back to him.”

Her words angered me. I moved to her, grabbing her throat, lifting her off her feet.

“Your lies will be the death of you. Who has circulated such lies that you feel the need to share?” I bellowed.

She tried to talk, but my hand prevented her from doing so. I released her, allowing her to catch her breath. Once she did, she stepped back and talked.

“I saw it with my own eyes. The first night of her duties, I wanted to witness the daughter of Odin take her first soul, but she did not. Now, she lives as his mate and will have his heir. I promise you can go see yourself,” she confirmed.

She was not making sense in my logic. “Why would you hold this information until now?”

“I knew at some point it would be needed,” she quipped.

I ran her from my domain, still angered at the thought of Kara being with another. Is this who she spoke of all that time ago about having her soul? I paced the floor, thinking about her allowing him to fill her womb when I had tried many times.

“Son, you need to focus. This could be our way in,” my father’s voice broke into my thoughts.

I stopped pacing, looked at him, and inquired, “How? She is with another!”

“Exactly, son! Think! This will certainly shame Odin’s throne, and he will not have that. All we have to do is deliver this news to him,” he said.

My father and I sat, plotting the perfect plan that would have Kara back on my arm and eventually, me sitting on the throne.

BACK TO THE PRESENT...

Our plan had worked, and my father reported the information back to King Odin, who was infuriated with the news. He sent me and another to investigate, and it was just as Lasa said. She was living happily with this man that should not be alive. I took a risk by going into the groomer's shop where he was, but I needed to talk to the man who could get Kara to do something I could not. He spoke about her womb with arrogance with the other men in the shop. I did not like it, but I maintained my composure. Kara had not lost any of her beauty from what I had observed. Carrying an heir had, in some way, deemed her even more elegant, but I was slow to admit that, as it was not my heir she carried. I took only a week and a half to understand the lure of Earth. I thought the women on Asgard were beautiful, but the women on Earth were of another type of beauty. Some of their moral compasses also seemed as if they could be more easily swayed than the women of Asgard. It took very little for them to offer oral satisfaction. I knew I would be taking many more trips here, regardless of my impending marriage to Kara.

I was back at the palace to report to the king. Entering the throne room, he sat there in all his power as if he was untouchable. My father stood at his side with a slight smirk on his face.

“Vog, come! Tell me what has come of my daughter,” he demanded.

I moved to the throne and bowed first in vain reverence. “It is true, Sire. The soul of a man that should have been a warrior of Valhalla is now her mate. She is carrying his heir.”

He slammed his fist down on his throne seat and sent for Heimdall. Heimdall guarded the rainbow bridge called Bifrost.

“Yes, Sire?” Heimdall appeared moments later.

“I will be traveling to Earth with Isgaut and Vog. Please prepare my passage,” he instructed.

Heimdall bowed, then left us. My father gave me a slight smile, and for once, it seemed as if I had pleased him. Let the

plan come together.

K A R A

“G irl, this is the last soul I am going to let you get with me. There is no way we can hide that belly anymore,” Ro fussed.

I had been keeping up with my Valkyrie duties while I was pregnant, but I would admit that I was exhausted afterward. The next day, I would go to work, and Jayala would allow me to nap with the children. I finally got my license, with the help of Jedediah, three months ago, so I could move around more freely. He allowed me to go to his car lot to pick any car I wanted. I picked a brand-new Toyota Camry. I generally drove Kae and myself to his house, where I would let her play. Mama Beth would then come take her so I could get more rest. I always made sure dinner was fixed for my loves.

I laughed. “You don’t have to tell me twice. I would rather be with Jedediah at night, anyway. Mother has already given me permission to end my duties for now.”

My mother knew of my pregnancy but did not know the complete details around who Jedediah was. She was so excited about being a grandmother that I didn’t think she cared. Having a son was a dream come true. I would have been fine with a little girl, but there was something about having a male heir to men. Ro and I were finished with our duties for the night and heading back to our homestead to rest. The souls we took tonight saddened me because they were a part of an accidental tragedy. They would be great warriors, however, as they were men of honor trying to save the lives of others. We tapped our amulets to return home, and the portal opened in

our living room. We climbed through, being immediately shocked at the sight.

“Father!”

Ro bowed immediately and said, “Sire.”

My father, Vog, and his father were standing in my home. I didn’t understand what was happening.

“Daughter. Come closer so I can get a better look at you,” he requested.

I cautiously moved toward him with my arms in front of me, blocking the view of my middle section. When I was in front of my father, my eyes locked with Vog, and the devilish smirk rubbed me the wrong way. My father took my face in his hands, placing a kiss on my forehead. Before I could move back, he moved one of his hands to my hardened belly.

“It is true what I have been told. You have shamed me,” he declared.

A tear slipped from my eye. “No, Father. I would never shame you.”

My father stepped back from me with a look of disgust that I had never seen before. “You have filled your womb with an heir of a soul that should be of Valhalla.”

The shock showed clearly on my face to him knowing that news. The rest of my tears joined the initial tear.

“Father, our souls are mates. I just could not allow him to leave me. I love him, and he me,” I proclaimed.

“That was not a decision of yours to make,” his voice roared, shaking the walls.

I dropped my head in slight shame, but I lifted it just as fast. I should not be shamed for the action I took to secure my happiness with my soul mate.

I wiped my face, looked my father squarely in the face, and said, “I will be with my soul mate, and I will have his heir.”

I felt Ro's hand on my arm to calm me. I was sure no one had ever spoken to the king in this manner, but enough was enough. I moved to Earth for this very reason—to be free of his rule.

“You will do no such thing. You will return to Asgard, marry Vog, and you two will raise that bastard child as one. The people of Asgard will never know of your indiscretions,” he demanded.

I cringed to his mention of me marrying Vog and was disrespected at the notion of my child being a bastard. He had me fucked up.

I stepped forward with fire in my eyes. “I will do no such thing.”

My father gave me a smirk and in an eerie voice, said, “You will, or I will take your soul mate's soul myself. If I take his soul, Valhalla is not where it will be going.”

I looked at him, past his eyes, and into his soul to see if he was telling the truth, and my heart broke to know that he was. He would take the only person that brought me happiness for his own selfish pride. Then, he would further that torture by having me stand on the arm of a man that was not worthy of me. That man had disrespected me in more ways than one, but for the sake of the throne, it was all forgiven.

“Why are you doing this?” I directed toward Vog.

I knew this was not the works of my father. This had Vog written all over it, but I was so uncertain of his motive. The way he roamed, there was no way this is love. Obsession, maybe, but not love.

He looked to me and in an arrogant voice, demanded, “You should get your things so we can make the journey back to Asgard.”

I wanted to kill him with my bare hands. I turned on the heel of my foot to head to my sleeping place. I slammed the door behind me, but it quickly opened with Ro coming in.

“How would he know about Jedediah? It was only us,” she questioned.

I looked at her with a tearstained face. “I have no idea.”

She hugged me tightly and said in my ear, “I will find out what is going on. I need you to go and stall.”

I looked at her with a disheartened soul. “What about Jedediah and Kae? I can’t be without them.”

“I know, I know. I will come up with something, but to save his soul, you must leave,” she urged.

I knew she was right, but it hurt, nonetheless. We hugged tightly again before we exited the room. When I walked to the living room, Vog grabbed my hand, earning him a swift slap to the face.

“Do not touch me. Never touch me,” I growled.

He chuckled. “That is fine. As you know, I have a variety of others to touch. I rather not bother with a wilted flower.”

THREE DAYS LATER...

I sat at the side of Vog during an engagement party that I did not want to be at. This entire thing was a bunch of bullshit. Ever since we returned three days ago, he had acted as if he was the new crowned king. I felt like that was his underlining motive, but I couldn’t be so sure. The crown rightfully belonged to me, so yes, he could potentially be king, but I would rule. My mother was livid with my father and did not mince words when she let him know. It had been three days since I had felt, smelled, heard, or seen my soul mate. I knew he was worried sick, and I dreading what he thought of me. I felt horrible to just leave, but I would not gamble with his soul.

“Smile, my love. We are being watched,” Vog leaned over and whispered in my ear.

I look at him with defiance and responded, “Fuck them people.”

Anger flashed. “You have been on Earth too long. I will have to tame you again.”

Ro was not in attendance, which saddened me, but I knew she was trying to find out how our secret had gotten out. She was also trying to maintain control of Jedediah, who although I was not near him, I could feel his soul yearning for me. Our souls were intertwined, and there was now no denying of that fact. The longer I was without him, the more I felt my soul dying.

I don't know how or when, but I will be with you again, my love. I promise.

JEDEDIAH

Somebody was going to have to tell me something, or I was fucking something up. Kara's ass didn't come home three days ago. I hadn't seen or heard from her since. Kae said she hadn't been to school, and when I asked Jayala, her ass was talking about she went home. *She went home with my son in her? Without telling a nigga? Nah!* Ro's ass had been hiding her ass from me and Ju, so that was a whole different type of situation. I decided since I couldn't catch Ro's ass during the day, I was going to catch her ass in the dead of the fucking night.

"I swear if she pops up in this bitch with another nigga, I'm catching two bodies tonight," Ju fussed.

We were sitting in Ro and Kara's living room like we belonged there. No, I didn't have a key to her house, because I didn't need one. She was over at my house most of the time. We straight broke in their shit, which made me think to talk to her about security when I did find her sneaky ass.

"I'm not even worried about Kara being on some shit like that, but I do know when I find her, I'm dragging her ass back until she has my son. If she wants to leave, she can, but my son stays," I stamped.

I looked at my watch. It was going on two in the morning, and she hadn't gotten home yet. Ju made his ass comfortable on the couch, snoring like a bear. I leaned my head back, thinking about Kara. I missed the fuck out of her. I was more worried than I was upset about the situation because I knew in my soul she had no reason to just up and leave. I continued to

think about shit, and before I knew it, I had drifted off to sleep myself.

The fuck? I squinted my eyes to a light. When I finally opened my eyes completely, Ro was standing in front of me with some *Xena the Mighty Warrior* outfit on. I threw a pillow at Ju who was still snoring and shit. He woke up as soon as the pillow hit his face.

“What the fuck, nigga?” he fussed.

He looked toward Ro, then jumped up. “Where the hell your ass been? What the fuck you got on?”

“Ju, I told your ass about breaking in my house when I’m not home,” she argued back.

“Well, ya ass should have been home!”

All this shit was nice, but it was not helping me find out where my woman was.

“Ro, fuck all that shit. Where is Kara?” I aggressively questioned.

Her stoic features dissolved, causing my heart to drop. *Was something wrong with Kara... with my son?* I stood there, waiting for an answer, hoping she knew I was not leaving without one. Ju was near the couch sounding crazy having a conversation with his damn self because neither me nor Ro were listening to his simple ass.

“She was forced to go home,” Ro finally said.

I looked at her with a blank expression, then asked, “What the fuck do you mean she was forced to go home? She’s pregnant with my son!”

Ro lifted her hands in a surrender gesture. “I know, I know, but what she did was to save your soul.”

Ju sucked his teeth. “So she a lil’ Jesus around here now? The fuck.”

In unison, Ro and I said, “Ju, shut up!”

He put his hand on his chest and dropped his mouth in fake shock. “I’m here, trying to help you find your little family, but

I see my help is not needed. I'm going back to fucking sleep."

He lay back on the couch with his back to us talking under his breath. I looked at Ro and wondered how the hell she dealt with that nigga.

"Run this soul shit by me and be clear because you sound crazy."

She took a seat in the single chair in her living room. I noticed Ju had turned his nosy ass back over so he could listen too.

"Kara and I are not from here," she said.

"No shit," Ju mumbled.

She shot a look at this nigga so fast, and I wanted to laugh at how quickly he conformed. Yeah, she matched his crazy.

She turned her attention back to me. "What I mean, for more clarity, is we are not from this realm. We are from a place called Asgard."

I looked at her like she was talking a foreign language to me.

Ju stood from his seat. "Man, let's go. She on some meth-head talk, and we trying to find your wife. Bitch, this is not a Marvel movie, and lose my number. You're crazier than I thought! Around here playing dress-up and shit."

My mind was so fucked up that when Ju walked out of the door, I couldn't think to do anything else but follow him. I didn't know what to do with the bullshit she just said. I needed a minute to regroup and address that shit later. The entire way to my house, Ju fussed and cussed about how crazy Ro was. He claimed to never fuck with her again, but I knew depending on how this shit played out, he would be right there. It was five in the morning, so I left Kae at my mother's house. I hadn't slept any in three days, and my body felt like it was about to give out on me. I just needed a shower and a couple of hours so I could fucking start this shit all over again. Maybe I would wake up and it all be a bad dream. Kara would be laying next to me with her belly poking me in my back. We hadn't even fucking told Kae she was pregnant yet.

I stayed in the shower until the water was ice cold, then got out. I lay in the bed, and her smell overtook me. I legit wanted to fucking cry. *Where the fuck was my girl and son?* Sleep wasted no time finding me.

WHAT THE FUCK? I LOOKED AROUND AND NOTICED I WAS standing outside of my store downtown. I looked to the side of me, and there was a car I recognized to be mine. The only thing was, I didn't own this car anymore. I got rid of this car after I was shot years ago. I was confused as hell about why I was here.

"Nigga, give me all ya shit," a voice yelled from behind me.

I spun around and was face-to-face with the two little bitch ass niggas that robbed me years ago. They were holding guns to my face. It felt like some kind of déjà vu that I didn't want to be in.

"Lil' nigga, fuck you," I bellowed back.

Before I knew it, I felt five blows to my body, and I was in excruciating pain. If this was a dream or some shit, why the fuck did this shit still hurt so bad? I felt myself on the ground helpless while these niggas picked my pockets. The youth these days were definitely fucked up. I lay there thinking about all the shit I wanted to do. Wait! This was before Kae. What about my baby? It was an overwhelming feeling to know that I was at an event in the past, but I still had all the knowledge about my present, or was it the future? I was confused as fuck. Suddenly, I felt a weird pull on me, and now I was standing again. I looked down at my body. I wasn't bleeding anymore. I look forward. It was Kara.

"I am Kara, and I've come to take you to Valhalla, where all worthy warriors go."

My face contorted before I said, "Take me to Val-what?"

Because I have known her for as long as I have, I could tell she wanted to laugh.

She responded, "Valhalla. It is where mighty warriors' souls go."

I shook my head. "You must have me confused. I'm not a warrior. I'm just a nigga trying to live his life right out here in this fucked-up world."

Ro was standing next to her. She came forward and said, "Your time for living is up on Earth."

Yeah, both were on some other shit. I thought about all the things I wanted to do and felt stressed like fuck. Kara asked me about my store, and I was lost because she knew this was my shit. She had been here multiple time, but I answered, remembering this was some déjà vu shit. She and Ro started to have this conversation among themselves. I was too busy trying to understand what the fuck was going on.

Kara turned back to me and said, "I can tell there is a lot more living you need to do. You are a mighty man, and I think you deserve a second chance."

She took the palms of her hands and pushed them into my chest where my heart was.

I GASPED AS I SHOT UP IN THE BED DRENCHED IN SWEAT. WHAT the fuck was that shit? I sat there and thought about the dream. *Nah, I need answers now.* I looked over to the clock, noticing that I had only been sleeping for two hours. I climbed out of bed, grabbed my keys, and rushed to my truck.

I broke just about every traffic law to get to Kara and Ro's house. I pulled up at their house so fast I knocked over their mailbox. They said they weren't from here, so their asses probably didn't get mail any-damn-way.

I banged on the front door less than four times before Ro opened the door.

“I figured you would be back,” she said as she moved to the side to let me in.

I moved into the living room, sat on the couch, and asked, “Did you do something to me?”

Ro shook her head. “I asked the gods to show you what you needed to see.”

I chuckled. “I saw what I saw, but I don’t understand the shit. What did Kara do to me?”

Ro sat in the chair, gathering my undivided attention.

“That night many years ago, you were supposed to die here on Earth, and your soul should have been delivered to Valhalla. You were Kara’s first soul, and she fell in love with your soul. She just couldn’t take it, so she gave it back to you. That had never been done,” she said.

This was a lot of information, and I still was none the wiser.

“Let’s take a step back. What the fuck are you and her?” I asked.

She chuckled. “We are Valkyries. Have you ever heard of our kind?”

I thought about her question, and it triggered my high school mythology class. “You mean the warrior women who King Odin are over or some shit?”

She nodded. “There is a little more to it than that, but hopefully Kara will be able to tell you. What you need to know is Kara is a very special Valkyrie because King Odin is her father.”

I dropped my head because this shit sounded like a fucking fairy tale comic book type of shit.

“You realize this shit sounds crazy as fuck? You are sitting here telling me the woman I love and the mother of my son, is a princess,” I said.

Ro nodded before saying, “I realize it sounds crazy, but it makes it nonetheless true.”

I heard a noise coming from the back of the house, making me pull my gun that I always kept on me. Ro shook her head and sat back.

“It’s nobody but Ju,” she confirmed.

Sure enough, Ju came from the back hallway with his shit pulled, too. *The fuck is he doing here?*

“Nigga, you was about to get popped,” he fussed.

I looked at him and put my shit up. “How when my truck is right out front?”

Ju put his gun up and said, “I always park in the back, so I didn’t see what was going on in the front.”

Ro continued to watch our exchange before she said, “I thought you told me to lose your number because I was crazy, but here you are, still breaking in my house.”

This nigga went in the kitchen, came out with a small bottle of orange juice, then sat on the couch like he belonged. “Man, you know I didn’t mean that shit. I just had to get used to knowing I was fucking different-realm pussy. I mean, I’m a bad nigga, but I didn’t know I could pull other-realm pussy.”

I tried so hard not to laugh, but I think God knew I needed that fucking laugh right now because all this shit was so surreal. Ro got up from the couch, picked up a pillow, and threw it at him. She even had a slight smile on her face.

Let me get back on track. “You said last night that she was forced to go home. By who and why?” I asked.

Ro returned to her seat, took a breath, and said, “Vog found out about you somehow, and her father feels she disgraced his throne. The only remedy he saw fit was for her to come back and marry Vog.”

I turned my back to her, walked to the wall, and punched a hole in it. *What the fuck was this marriage shit? Wait!*

I spun around fast as fuck. “Who the fuck is Vog to Kara for them to be getting married?”

“They were in a relationship for three years at one point,” Ro confirmed.

Ju tilted his head. “Vog... Why does that name sound familiar?”

I looked at him with tight eyes. “That’s that weird ass nigga that was in the shop the day we found out we were having a boy.”

Shit was not making sense to me. I knew something about that nigga was off in my soul. I sat down on the couch.

“Kara said she didn’t have any kids,” I said, remembering.

Ro’s face tightened. “She doesn’t.”

I looked up to her in confusion. “That nigga said he had three children.”

“And he does, but not with Kara. He is a fan of passing his seeds around to those unworthy of it. He, however, was not worthy of Kara, hence them not having any children,” she said.

I nodded my head. I leaned back on the couch thinking what my next move would be. I didn’t give a fuck where Kara was; I wanted my woman and my son. There was no way she was marrying a nigga unless his name was Jedediah Colliver.

“I’m saying, how we get to that bitch so we can get my sis-in-law and nephew?” Ju shot up and asked.

I smiled at my brother being about that action, like he always was. I stood from my seat and looked at Ro waiting for an answer. She had an expression of disbelief.

“You want to go to Asgard and challenge King Odin?” she incredulously asked.

“That nigga don’t mean shit to me. All I know is he has my fucking girl and my son. He can suck a dick for all I care,” I roared.

Ro put her hands up. “Okay, okay. Wait here for a minute, and I mean wait here.”

She gave Ju a stern look before walking toward the back of the house.

“Can you believe this shit, man?” I asked Ju.

He shrugged. “I don’t put shit past anything or anyone. We can all agree there are things in this world and outside of this world that are beyond our understanding. Most people will believe there is a higher power. Who am I to say this is not in the grand scheme of all of that?”

I thought about what he said, and he had a point. We both sat there quiet in our thoughts until Ro came from the back. She was followed by another woman that I had never seen before, but she resembled my babe.

“Jedediah and Judas, this is Prima. She is Kara’s mother and the head Valkyrie,” she introduced.

Suddenly, my hands were sweaty. I saw where Kara got her beauty from. I didn’t know what to say, and I could tell she knew that.

“This is the man that has captured my daughter’s soul as his own,” she said as she embraced me.

Her hug warmed my insides in a motherly way. When we pulled away, there was a tear in her eye.

“Your daughter actually took my soul, but she gave it back, so we will call it even,” I joked.

Her mother chuckled. “Yes, I was very surprised to hear that my daughter did that, but I can’t say I am upset about it. What she is enduring now, however, has me infuriated. She is betrothed to an idiot of a boy because of greed and envy.”

“I have been trying to find the root of it all, but I haven’t been able to,” Ro said.

Prima gave a smirk. “Oh, I have that information. The one thing about jealousy is it will always show itself. You just have to sit back and watch for it.”

“Lead the way, Miss Kara’s Mama,” Ju burst out.

Prima looked at Ju with a smile. “You are just as rambunctious as Kara said you were.”

Prima told us what we needed to know about going into Asgard. We would be going into her domain, which I assumed meant house, then she would go retrieve Kara. She said it was important that we stayed in her house. We agreed, resulting in her touching a necklace around her neck. A circle opened in the middle of the damn living room, making me want to damn near shit on myself.

Ju stepped back before saying, “We’re going to be able to get back, right?”

Prima laughed. “You will be returned.”

I looked at Ju, he looked at me, and we shrugged. It was time to get my babe back.

KARA

I had a bunch of women I barely knew around, some who had fucked Vog, planning a wedding I didn't want to have. They were planning it and arguing as if it were them that was getting married. I let them have at it while I sat on the lounge as I looked out of the window, rubbed my belly, ate, and fed Mora grapes. I missed her while I was on Earth. I decided not to take her because I thought it would be weird to have a raven bird as a pet. If I got to go back, I would definitely bring her with me.

"Kara, I think this color flatters your skin tone," Lasa said.

I looked away from the window to the fabric that she was holding up. Lasa was what Ju called a "sack chaser". The sack she was currently chasing was Vog's, but she didn't think I knew. I couldn't believe they didn't think I would know. Unfortunately, Father thought it was wise to keep a leash on me, so I was staying in the palace, as well as Vog. We were not staying in the same room or side of the palace, but I saw them.

"Praise the gods you don't get paid to think," I retorted back.

Her face tightened before she said, "I have been nothing but respectful to you—"

I cut her off. "Where is Vog so you can go suck his dick?"

"Kara," Vog roared from the door.

I never used such foul language before going to Earth, but now, I was as bad as Ju, if not worse. I didn't give a fuck. They took me from my soul mate. Everyone could literally

kiss my ass. My soul ached for him, and being around here, watching Vog act as if he loved me, was sickening. I stood from my lounge and move past them both to return to my quarters. Vog tightly grabbed my arm before I could move any further.

“You will apologize for your disrespect,” he demanded.

I laughed in his face. “The day I apologize to one of your whores is the day I will admit you have good dick. We both know that is a lie, so fuck both of you.”

I never saw his hand coming toward my face. The hit had enough force that I landed on the floor. I immediately protected my son.

“If you ever touch my daughter again, I will kill you myself,” my mother’s voice rang out.

I looked up to see my mother with a dagger to Vog’s throat. He looked terrified and like the nothing of a man that he was. Ro helped me off the floor, and I hugged her tightly. I had not seen her since I left Earth.

“Prima, there is no need for this. Your daughter must be tamed,” Vog enlightened.

My mother laughed before digging the dagger into his neck. Blood started to trickle.

She said, “Animals are tamed. Perhaps I should tame you since you are a dog.”

“Mother,” I called out.

The rage was evident in her eyes, and I didn’t want her to do anything that would be detrimental. My mother looked at me with softened eyes. I loved the protection and love my mother gave me. It was the same I intended to give my son.

My mother moved from Vog, looked at Ro, then instructed, “Take her to her quarters to get her items. She will stay with me.” She looked at Vog. “You will never put your hands on my child again. If there is an issue, have King Odin come to me himself.”

Ro pulled me to my quarters. I packed some things but not a lot since I had items at my mother's place. When we walked back in the main room, where the women, my mother, and Vog were, they were all looking at my mother like she was crazy. My mother, however, was looking at Lasa with so much hatred. *I don't know what that is about.*

"Let's go," my mother directed.

She didn't have to tell me twice. I left the palace with my mother and Ro holding both of their hands tightly. I felt like I was being rescued from a beautiful hell. My mother's house was less than a ten-minute walk from the palace. We arrived at my mother's home, and she instructed me to go into my room to rest. I could use a little nap. I went to my room, removed my clothes, and climbed in my bed. I rubbed my belly at the feel of my son's kick.

"I know, baby. I promise to get you back to your father. Somehow."

Sleep found me quickly.

I FELT A HAND ON MY BELLY, BUT FOR SOME REASON, IT DID NOT make me feel uncomfortable. It made me feel more comfort than I had felt in the past few days. I stretched before opening my eyes. After seeing who was before me, I closed my eyes tightly. It couldn't be. I must have still been dreaming.

"If I open my eyes, will you still be there?" I asked.

His voice was low when he said, "I guess you're going to have to open them to see."

I slowly opened my eyes, and there he was. *Jedediah!* I didn't feel myself throw myself into his arms. He held me tightly with so much love that I felt relief.

"You came for me! I thought you would hate me," I cried into his neck.

He rubbed my hair to calm me down. “I will always come for you, Kara.”

I removed my face from his neck and looked to him. “You promise?”

He kissed my lips then said, “With every ounce of my soul.”

I returned my lips to his, deepening the kiss. He lifted me and placed me on the bed. I was already undressed since his son made me hotter than normal when sleeping. He watched me as he took his clothes off, and I massaged my already-perspiring flower. He climbed on the bed, causing me to spread my legs in anticipation of him. I could tell he missed me by the flick of his tongue caressing my flower. Both of his hands found their way to my breasts to play with my enlarged nipples. We discovered early that was a way to take me to the brink of my sanity.

“It feels so good,” I moaned.

He feasted on my flower for a little longer before I told him to stop. I learned a while ago from Ro and her client, Shan, the art of oral pleasure. I didn’t waste time as I took him all into my mouth.

“Fuck, Kara,” he grunted.

I had to be quick about this because ever since we found out I was pregnant, he only let me go so far when it came to orally pleasing him. I thoroughly enjoyed pleasing him. I sucked with urgency while I massaged my nipples. I felt him starting to pull back. I knew he was about to release but did not desire to, at least in my mouth. He helped me to my feet, then laid me on my side on the edge of the bed. My bed’s height was the perfect position for him to penetrate my flower. Sex with Jedediah was an art of perfection. It was a painter stroking his brush on a canvas ever so gently, but he knew the exact times to apply enough pressure to create texture. My canvas thanked him.

“I love you, Jedediah,” I said.

He looked at me. “You promise?”

“With every ounce of my soul,” I replied.

FOUR DAYS LATER...

I wanted to stay in my mother’s house forever with Jedediah, but I knew that was not realistic. Jedediah had Kae on Earth, and I had to deal with the marriage that would not be happening. My mother took him back two days ago to see Kae to tell her that he was coming to get me. She told him not to come back without me. That warmed my heart. I talked to my mother and Ro, who let me know they found out it was Lasa who told my little secret. I would love to kill her for more reasons than one. She had not been fond of me since we were children for reasons unknown.

“I can’t just walk into the palace with Jedediah and tell father I am not marrying Vog. They will try to kill him,” I worried.

Ju paced side to side with a bowl of lamb stew in his hand. He had literally been eating lamb the entire time he had been here. I was not sure if he and Ro were in a committed relationship, but their actions said yes. If I asked them, they would tell me they were just “chilling”.

“Why the fuck can’t we? I don’t know about Jed, but I brought my strap. I’ll shoot they asses,” Ju quipped.

I slapped my forehead with my hand, then shook my head. He was serious, and I learned soon after meeting him once he had a thought, that was it. We had been talking about how we were going to handle telling my father that I would not be marrying Vog as he had hoped. Tonight, there was another function at the palace to celebrate our engagement... or sham of one. At our first function, my father was not present, but he was throwing this function. All of Asgard was sure to be in attendance. My mother walked into the room that we were sitting in with two warrior outfits.

“Why you all sat around trying to come up with a plan, I actually acted on one,” she said with a roll of her eyes.

That was so my mother. We sat and listened to her plan of how the evening would go. After she finished talking, we had smiles on our faces. Ju was more excited about wearing the warrior outfit. I was excited because hopefully, after tonight, I would be free to love my soul mate without restrictions.

ENGAGEMENT PARTY...

Tonight was the first time I had seen Vog since he placed his hands on me. He continued to look at me with a side-eye, and I was sure it was because I was smiling. I was genuinely happy, but it had nothing to do with him. My father watched us as he sat on his throne with Isgaut sitting next to him. My mother and Ro sat close to my side, as they should be. I looked over to my right, and all of Vog's whores were at a table together. I could do nothing but laugh inwardly at the desperation of these women. Lasa was at the head of the table, as if she held rank, which was comical because the mother of his children looked at her with more hate than they did me. They knew I didn't want him. I looked to the far back of the room where the guards stood, and my eyes locked with Jedediah, who gave me a wink. I blushed with no remorse.

Vog leaned over to my ear and said, "You seem to have a sudden new attitude. May I ask what brought it on?"

I looked at him with a smirk before saying, "I can guarantee you that it wasn't you. We can start there. Having days without having to be around you will lighten any real woman's spirit. Also, I see a light that you will never see."

He looked at me suspiciously before grabbing my thigh under the table tightly. I ground my teeth.

"If you embarrass me tonight, I shall be sure that you never forget the error of your ways," he growled in my ear.

I removed his hand from my leg, then grabbed his tiny jewels, causing him to lean forward on the table in anguish.

“Touch me again, and I will kill you my-fucking-self, bitch,” I said with in a calm tone.

I released him, and he looked at me with a look I had never seen. *Is that fear?* Ro always told me if you show a man just the right amount of crazy, he would never get out of hand. Just as he got himself together, my father stood from his throne, garnering the silence of the room.

“Tonight, we celebrate an auspicious occasion. The union of my daughter, Kara, and my most-trusted advisor’s heir, Vog. These two were destined to be together, and the stars have finally aligned. I am proud of the love that has grown between the two that will birth the first grand heir to this throne,” he spoke with pride.

I could not believe the pure bullshit that was coming out of his mouth. This was the same man that called my unborn son a bastard not too long ago. He continued with his bullshit, and Vog had a tight grip on my hand atop the table. He knew he had to hold it tight, or I just might slap his stupid ass. My father finished his speech, and my mother stood. Her beauty surpassed all the women in attendance. Many women envied my mother and father’s relationship. Some found it improper as my father’s wife had passed well before I was born. My mother had always been close to him as the leader of the Valkyries, so it was natural for her to be there during his grieving.

“To King Odin,” my mother said.

Everyone raised their glasses in unison, then toasted the king.

She continued, “Tonight is auspicious as the king said but for a very different reason. Today, our daughter will establish her freedom from a man whose goal, in union with his father, is to overthrow the throne.”

The gasps in the room were loud. Isgaut jumped from his seat with the same urgency that Vog did.

Isgaut stepped forward, then, with anger, spouted, “Stop spitting fallacies from your wretched mouth.”

My father roared, “Silence!”

The room volume went to zero immediately. My father looked between all of us but showed my mother deference. The anger on Isgaut’s face made it clear that that decision angered him.

“Prima, speak,” my father demanded.

My mother bowed to my father, giving him a sexy smile. I almost wanted gag at the thought of them still bedding each other.

“King, treachery has occurred right under your nose. A plot was birthed years ago for your throne through a fraudulent marriage. It would have come to fruition if Vog here was able to keep to himself,” she said.

Vog moved from behind the table where we sat at. “The only treachery is having a daughter that went against the oath of being a Valkyrie and bedded a soul that should be a warrior of Valhalla. I tried to save her from that shame, and this is the thanks I get,” he roared.

“And just how did you find out about my bedding of a soul?” I asked from my seat with my eyes squared on Lasa.

She wiggled in her seat uncomfortably. If I could fly across the room and stab her in her heart, I would. I held my composure because there was a bigger outcome at hand. My happiness was on the line. My father looked to Vog.

“How did you find out about this act? Isgaut, it is you that told me of this. Tell me who is your informer,” my father demanded.

Isgaut cleared his throat before nervously letting out, “Lasa saw the deed with her own eyes.”

All eyes moved to Lasa, whose face reddened in embarrassment. She stood from her seat with her hands crossed in front of her.

“I saw on the day of Kara’s first call of duty that she gave a soul back to a man that should have died,” she proclaimed.

My father tilted his head, then asked, “That was many moons ago. Why would this information be divulged now? What is your motive?”

She looked around with nervousness. My father waved his hands for the guards to move in toward her, and her fear became realized.

“I told Isgaut and Vog because Kara is not worthy to be on the arm of Vog. She is not worthy of the throne. I knew if I told them, you would force her to marry Vog, and he would get the throne like him and his father wanted,” she screamed out.

Isgaut rushed from his seat and slapped Lasa to the ground. “You whore! You have had too much of my son in your mouth that his juices have corrupted your sense of being.”

My eyes widened to his words of disrespect. I saw where Vog got his liking to placing his hands on women. The apple didn’t fall far from the tree. Lasa sat on the floor, clutching her cheek with tears running down her face.

I took the time to finally stand from my seat to address my father. He looked at me with love in his eyes.

“Father, in your rush to hide a shame that was none, you have unknowingly uncovered another. Your longtime, most-trusted advisor has always had a play to get his way to your throne. Their plan was always to use me to get to your throne, and your pride was about to allow it,” I sympathetically said.

My father’s eyes softened. He continued to look between me, my mother, and those who had plotted to betray him. I moved to walk closer to my father but was unable to. Vog grabbed me by my neck.

“I knew you were not worth—”

He was cut off by the fist of Jedediah. When Vog landed on the floor, Jedediah did not stop there. He continued his brutal beating of Vog. Ju stood behind him, pulling the gun that I didn’t realize he even had on him.

“Any one of you ass people come near my bro, and you will see how we handle shit on Earth,” Ju yelled.

The guards looked to my father for guidance. I yelled Jedediah's name, causing him to stop his assault to come back to the current reality. He moved from Vog, came over to me, and examined my neck.

“Are you okay?” he asked.

“Yes.”

He placed a kiss on my forehead. My father watched what was going on around him. He watched the care that Jedediah gave to me. He instructed the guard to cease Vog and Isgaut.

“Sir, you will believe this woman over your most-trusted advisor?” Isgaut asked.

King Odin smirked. “Isgaut what you fail to realize is I have always been wiser than you gave me credit for. This plan of yours was never something that was foreign to me. I just wanted to see how far you would allow it to go. Prima has always been my most-valued advisor.”

Isgaut looked at my mother with confusion, and I couldn't lie; I was confused as well. What did he mean that my mother was his most-valued advisor?

My father continued as the people of Asgard looked on in surprise. “Years before my dear Kara was even thought of, it was Prima who told me to hold you close to me because one day, you would surely betray me. I needed you close so I could watch you without reserve. Your son is a vile human, and you really thought I would allow my daughter to wed such a man?”

Isgaut lowered his head, then lifted it to say, “Sire, it was Vog that wanted your throne. I tried to warn him that it would bring him certain death.”

“Damn, your daddy threw your ass all the way under the bus, started that hoe up, and ran your ass over,” Ju blurted out.

We all looked at him. This man was a special case. Sometimes I didn't know if that was a good or a bad thing.

“My bad, king dude,” he apologized.

I knew he meant no disrespect, but I still lightly slapped his arm.

Vog looked at his father. “You hate me so much that you would lead me to a death to save yourself? Your only way to the throne was through me by way of Kara. If I am to die, you shall hang next to me.”

My father shunned them both, telling the guards to take them away with Lasa. She started screaming as if her part in the plan was forgivable. *I guess she should have picked a better dick to suck.* He also told the other guards to clear the room. It took a several minutes for the room to be cleared. Once everyone had left, only my mother, father, Ro, Jedediah, Ju, and I remained. My father moved to me slowly. I released Jedediah’s hand to move toward him as well.

“Daughter, I apologize for allowing this to go as far as it has with you being harmed. I needed to ensure that all parts were in place before I was able to enact my plan to have them removed,” he said, then placed a kiss on my forehead. “Now, show me to your soul mate.”

I bowed my head with a tear in my eye. I walked over to Jedediah. “Father, this is Jedediah, my soul mate. Jedediah, this is my father, King Odin of Asgard.”

Jedediah slightly bowed. “It is a pleasure to meet you, sir.”

“It is an honor to meet the man whose soul was so pure that my daughter wanted to keep it for herself,” he complimented.

“So I just don’t get an introduction,” Ju whispered to Ro but loud enough to be heard.

My father laughed. “It would be a dishonor to not meet you.”

Ju threw his arms up. “Finally someone who understand my worth. It is nice to meet you, Mr. King. I like this palace you have here. I need something like this on Earth.”

My father laughed. For the rest of the night, we talked and laughed. My father and mother got to know Jedediah, as well as our future plans. He was approving of me returning to Earth. However, once my son was born, he did want us to return for a celebration. We agreed.

As Jedediah, Ju, and my father drank wine and laughed, I watched with a smile. They were enjoying each other's company.

I leaned over to my mother. "You had an inside to all of this all along, huh?"

My mother kissed my cheek. "Always trust your mother, love."

JEDEDIAH

Three Days Later...

Today was our last day on Asgard, and I was going to miss it. This realm was absolutely beautiful, especially at night. The sky lit up in many arrays of colors. It reminded me of Van Gogh's *Starry Night* painting but with more colors. Every day, her father showered us with gifts. I wanted Kae to see this place, but I knew she was too young to understand. Ju suggested getting her to go to sleep, then traveling here, and telling her she slept on the plane. I did think that could work but was going to wait until after we had our son to try it.

"So do Valkyries only take the souls of men?" I asked Kara as we lay in the bed after a lovemaking session.

She giggled. "No. We take the souls of women also to either become Valkyries as well or be the caretakers to the warriors of Valhalla."

I knew she tired of me asking questions, but I wanted to know the ins and outs of her being a Valkyrie. I was just a country nigga from Greenhill, but my woman was from another realm out of this world. If I didn't see it for myself, I would think all of them were smoking meth. Hell, I was wondering if they slipped me some on the low.

"How do you know which souls to take? I mean, like I'm not going to say I wasn't worthy, but I've done some fuck shit in life. What made my soul worthy?" I asked.

She took a minute before she answered the question. “No person is perfect. We all make mistakes. Valkyries can see the pureness of souls. Your soul, regardless of what you deemed fucked that you have done, had this light that could not be ignored. I knew you were too special, even for Valhalla.”

That shit she said made me feel good as hell. I knew the work she did was important, and it made me love her even more. We lay in the bed together to rest before we made the journey back to Earth. I thanked God this all worked out because it would have been a travesty to have to air Asgard out.

BACK ON EARTH...

We opened the portal to return in Kara and Ro’s home. I was happy to be back home. I missed my Kae. We both wasted no time gathering up a few of Kara’s things, climbing in my truck, and getting to my house. Kae was at my mother’s house, but she saw my truck pull up.

“Daddy,” she screamed as she ran out of the house.

I climbed out of my truck, closing the door so she wouldn’t see Kara. I picked her up and hugged her. She pulled away from me, then twisted up her face.

“Daddy, I’m happy to see you, but I told you not to come back without Kara,” she said.

I laughed at her little mean ass while signaling with one of my hands for Kara to get out of the truck. Kara stepped out of the truck, then came around the front of it.

“Kara!”

She climbed out of my arms, ran to Kara, and wrapped her arms around her middle. I smiled at the genuine happiness of them both.

“Hey, pretty girl. I missed you,” Kara exclaimed.

Kae pulled back. “Whoa, Kara. You been eating a lot of ice cream and sprinkles.”

I laughed, then stopped when Kara gave me a death stare. I moved close to the both of them, then squatted to Kae’s height.

“Baby girl, Kara is not eating ice cream and sprinkles. She is going to have your little brother,” I told her.

She looked between the two of us before a smile emerged on her face. “I’m going to be a big sister!”

I knew she would be excited, but that reaction took me by surprise, since technically she already was a big sister.

Kara said, “Yes, you are.”

“Where did you go?” Kae questioned.

Kara looked at me, then back to Kae before she said, “I went to see my mother and father.”

A light shined in my baby girl’s eyes. “Will I get to see your mommy and daddy?”

That was definitely the question of the day. I let Kae know we would talk about that after her brother got here. We all went into my mother’s house and for the rest of the day, had family time. My mother was excited to see Kara. They went off and had a conversation of their own that took a long time. When they returned, I could tell they had the Valkyrie and Asgard talk. Kara came over to me, sat next to me, and placed a kiss on my lips. I couldn’t ignore this sadness that seemed to be on Kara.

“Babe, are you okay?” I questioned.

She nodded with an apprehensive smile. “I’m fine, my love.”

She looked to my mother, and for some reason, I didn’t feel like that was the full truth.

My beautiful son was born a month and a half ago. If Kae was the light of my heart, then Jedediah Junior was the pride of it. A lot had changed in the months leading up to my son, but today was a joyous celebration. We were all back in Asgard to celebrate the birth of our son. By everyone, that included my mother and Kae. We used the sleeping trick that Ju had mentioned months earlier, and it seemed to work. She thought we are somewhere in Europe. She was ecstatic and surprised to learn that Kara was a real-life princess. The people of Asgard treated my daughter as if she were also a princess since she was my daughter. Kara and I married when she was eight months pregnant, so by marriage, my daughter was indeed a princess of Asgard. King Odin welcomed her and all of her five-year-old questions. My mother and Prima hit it off like best friends, which made me happy.

“Your son is a bright light on Asgard,” King Odin said to me as he held his grandson.

I smiled at the love he had for my son. I wished like fuck that my father was here to see this. I was six when my father died, but he was my hero. James Colliver was the man in my eyes. He was a firefighter that was tragically killed while trying to save lives.

I smiled and replied, “He is the light of my world, along with my daughter.”

The king looked over to where my daughter was playing with other children of Asgard. She looked beautiful in her royal garments that were placed on her. I felt her before I saw her. Kara wrapped her arms around my neck from behind and kissed my cheek.

“Hi, husband. I wanted to check on the three men in my life,” she smiled as she spoke.

The king spoke, “I believe your son is hungry and smells the nectar of his mother close.”

My son was wiggling in his arms in the direction of his mother. She moved in front of me and sat on my lap after grabbing our son from her father. My son had enhanced certain physical features of my wife that I thoroughly appreciated. She

took a covering and placed our son under it so he could eat. I didn't know why she did that, because our son was nosy as hell. Like I knew he would, he pulled that damn covering right down. He sucked on one breast with his hand on the other over her clothes.

“My son is so mannish,” I joked.

The king stepped down to move to the table that Prima and my mother were sitting at. It had become obvious in the months that Prima and the king had in some way rekindled a relationship. I saw Queen in her future, but I was going to keep my thoughts to myself.

“Kara, come get your girl before I accidentally hug her neck,” Ju immediately said as he approached.

I laughed at his dismay. Kara did as well.

“What did she do now, Ju?” Kara asked with annoyance.

He huffed, then said, “Her ass is over there crying over some grapes. She wants red but has green.”

Kara chuckled then said in a matter-of-fact tone, “Then get her red grapes.”

He looked at Kara like she had bumped her head. “Get her red grapes? Are you serious? You know what? This is what I get for getting her ass pregnant. Y'all happy asses had me on some fairy-tale shit, so I got this crazy ass girl pregnant.”

Kara and I both laughed. Ro was almost six months pregnant and giving Ju hell. They were officially in a relationship with a deep love, but both of their asses were crazy as fuck.

“Ju, did you get my grapes?” Ro came over with a slight waddle.

The gods had blessed them with twins. Ju had his back turned to Ro, but he took a deep breath before putting on a smile and turning around. That was how I knew he loved her because of his ability to filter for her.

“I am getting them for you now, babe. I wanted to make sure I got enough for you,” he told her.

Her face brightened, and she kissed his lips. The smile on his face told me a lot. I was happy for my boy. He and Ro spent more of their time in Asgard than they did on Earth. He really loved it here, so they split their time.

“Alright, y’all done hogged my grandson for long enough. Give him here,” my mother demanded.

Kara stood, and I stood behind her. She handed me our son while my mother sat in the chair that I was sitting in. I gave my son over to her, and she loved over him. Two months after we returned back from Asgard, my life was flipped upside down with the announcement of my mother’s cancer diagnosis. I was devastated. She tried chemotherapy but decided soon after that it was not what she wanted. I wanted to fight her on that decision, but it was Kara that made me understand the quality of life that she wanted to have. To keep a close eye on her, we moved her into our home.

“He looks like your father. Your father was such a handsome man,” my mother said.

My mom and dad grew up together and were together since they were twelve. After my father died, my mother never entertained another man to my knowledge. To this day, she still wore her wedding ring and told people she was married. That was a different level of loyalty than I had ever seen.

Kara came to me, wrapped her arms around me, and said, “This is all I could ever ask for. My family being happy, and my soul being filled.”

I looked down at her, past her eyes, and into her soul to see the purity of her love for me. She was truly my soul mate, and I thanked her for not counting it robbery to save my soul just for her.

“I love you until the end of time, then I will love you for another eternity,” I professed.

She smiled and asked, “You promise?”

“With my entire soul.”

EPILOGUE

*K*ara

Two Months Later...

These past two months had been tough for my family with Mama Beth's health declining. I was still teaching at the school and taking care of my Valkyrie duties. Tonight, however, was a very special mission that my mother was accompanying me on. I made a promise almost a year ago that I had to fulfill tonight. I had asked Ro and Ju to watch both of our children while Jedediah and I had some alone time with Mama Beth. I tried my hardest to prepare Jedediah for this, but how do you prepare someone for something like this?

"Jedediah, babe, it's almost time," I told him as he sat at his mother's bedside.

His mother chose to do in-home hospice because she wanted to be around family. My mother was there with me and Jedediah to comfort us, as well as Beth. They had gotten extremely close.

Tears slipped from Jedediah's eyes. "Mama, I know you're tired, and it's okay to go. I don't want you to hurt anymore."

My heart swelled at his words and selflessness. Months ago, when we returned home and I told Mama Beth about me being a Valkyrie, she told me about her cancer. She also made me promise that if her soul was going to be taken that I would be the one to take it. Normally, this is something that would be frowned upon, but because of who she was, King Odin approved. Beth's breathing became shallow, and I knew it was

almost time. Jedediah kissed her forehead and whispered something in her ear. After, he kissed my lips.

“I will take care of your mama,” I guaranteed.

He gave me a slight smile then, like always, asked, “You promise?”

“With my entire soul.”

He left the room a few seconds later. My mother stood beside me as Mama Beth took her last breath. I let the tear fall freely because I would miss her in the Earthly realm. I knew this would be a definite pain for Kae as well. Her soul sat up out of her physical body, and she looked toward me.

“Well, I thought that would hurt, but it didn’t. That’s a good thing,” she said.

I smiled. “Are you ready? We have a very special place for your soul that I think will fulfill you for all of your afterlife.”

She nodded, then stood to her feet. My mother opened the portal, and we all entered it. Valhalla was a beautiful place, and I loved coming here when it was time to deliver a soul. When souls entered Valhalla, they were aged to a time when they were at their prime if they were older in age on Earth. I smiled as I looked at a younger version of Mama Beth.

“Mama, let me find out you was a fox,” I exclaimed.

She looked in the river that we walked aside in surprise. “Oh, my, I haven’t looked this good since I was in my early twenties.”

We continued to walk so we could escort her to where she would reside while here in Valhalla.

“Will I be a Valkyrie like you two, or will I be a caregiver?” Beth asked.

My mother smiled before she said, “The King thought it wise that you have a hybrid role. You will train to be a Valkyrie, but you will also be a caregiver to a warrior.”

We got to the domain that we intended to get to. I entered and made our presence known. Suddenly, a voice could be

heard from the back of the domain.

“It’s about time! I have been here for too long to not have a —” The male stopped in his tracks as he came into sight.

“James,” Beth said.

He stood there, looking at her for a moment before he moved close to her. He touched her face, then kissed her lips before he said, “My dear, Beth.”

King Odin found it worthy that James and Beth’s souls be reunited, and we thought that was a fine idea.

When they finished their kiss, Beth said, “Your son said he loves you and misses you.”

I smiled at that message as that must have been what he whispered in her ear before leaving the room. I watched them interact and prayed that my and Jedediah’s relationship would be as blessed.

A soul love was a pure love that was constant and unconditional. It extended past time and place. I loved Jedediah past the physical. His soul was mine, and mine his. I would love his soul purely, forever.

I promise.

The End