



FENRIR

SPEED DATING WITH THE
DEPIZEPS OF THE UNDERWORLD

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

REBEKAH R. GANIERE

FENRIR

SPEED DATING WITH THE DENIZENS OF THE
UNDERWORLD

BOOK TWENTY-NINE



REBEKAH R. GANIERE

CONTENTS

[Fenrir](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Chapter 17](#)

[Chapter 18](#)

[Chapter 19](#)

[Chapter 20](#)

[Epilogue](#)

[Watch for the other books](#)

[Read More from Rebekah](#)

[Also By Rebekah](#)

[About Rebekah R. Ganiere](#)

FENRIR

SPEED DATING WITH THE DENIZENS OF THE UNDERWORLD

BOOK TWENTY-NINE

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REBEKAH R. GANIERE

ISBN: 978-1-77357-547-6

978-1-77357-546-9

978-1-77357-545-2

PUBLISHED BY NAUGHTY NIGHTS PRESS LLC

COVER ART BY SILVANA G. SÁNCHEZ

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THANK YOU FOR RESPECTING THE HARD WORK OF THIS AUTHOR.

AMZ

FENRIR

He's lonely, angry, and broken—and she was born to heal him.

Fenrir, Norse God of the wolves, is broken. Tortured, outcast, used, and betrayed, he has no one and nothing to live for... until he goes to one of the Underworld speed dating events at the DeLux Café and meets the one person made just for him—his fated mate.

Grace was born out of a union between the Moon Goddess Luna and her father, the Alpha of her pack. But while her adoptive mother lays dying on her sick bed, she makes Grace promise to leave their pack and search for her destiny in the Underworld.

Can Grace help Fenrir heal enough to see that he is worthy of love?

Can Fenrir protect Grace from the evils that are searching for her?

Or are they both doomed to succumb to their fates?

Fenrir is book twenty-nine in the Speed Dating with the Denizens of the Underworld shared world, featuring a broken Norse God, a hybrid wolf/Goddess shifter, and more.

CHAPTER 1



GRACE HELD HER MOTHER'S HAND AND BOWED HER HEAD TO their joined fingers. Her mother squeezed her hand tight and took a ragged breath. Grace raised her tear-stung eyes and fought to be strong.

The scent of death filled the bedroom stronger than it had in the past two months, and Grace knew Fay's time drew near. What she didn't understand was why. Why was her mother sick? Why was her life being cut short by disease? She couldn't put the pieces together to figure it out. Shifters didn't get sick. Not even a cold. So getting cancer was unheard of. Grace wondered if it had been because Fay's mate had left when she'd adopted Grace as her own, but no one would speak of what had happened between them. So she didn't think that was it. Besides, that had been over twenty years ago.

Fay took a wheezy breath and smiled at Grace. "It's time, my Goddess child. Call them in."

Grace fought to hold back more tears. She didn't know what her mother wanted to tell the elders. But she also knew that they would follow her mother's wishes, whatever it was. When Fay's mate, Grace's biological father, the Alpha of their pack, had disappeared, Fay took charge. Being an Alpha herself, she had held the pack together. Under her rule, they had thrived.

Even though everyone knew Fay wasn't Grace's biological mother, they had accepted Grace as their own. They'd treated Grace with both love and respect. She'd always thought it was because Grace was the former Alpha's daughter, but then Fay

had told her the truth of her birth. Grace's mother hadn't just been another shifter female that her father had cheated with. It had been the Moon Goddess Luna herself. And unable to bear her children, Fay had happily accepted the gift of Grace from the Goddess. It had been Fay's mate, Grace's father, who hadn't been able to deal with the results of his infidelity.

"Grace, your destiny lies far from these woods," Fay had said. "You must go before it's too late."

Grace shook her head. "I won't leave you."

Fay brushed the hair from Grace's face. "My sweet Goddess child. You have been the light of my life, but you and I both know this is not where you belong. You cannot remain here after I'm gone. Your light and power are reserved for someone of far nobler birth than any of the males here. Not to mention that you aren't like the rest of us. You are different. You know what I speak of."

Grace did know. It was the reason she'd never shifted in front of anyone but her mom. Why she never ran with the pack. Why she never partook in the mating rituals. She was no normal shifter.

"Go. Please. Promise me. Promise you will go far away and find the person you were meant for."

Fay squeezed Grace's hand so tight Grace had been afraid it would break. It surprised Grace how much strength her mother had left in her hands. It had been a week since she'd been able to hold utensils to feed herself.

"But... where will I find someone like that?"

"The Underworld. Go to the Underworld. Someone there is waiting for you. The Goddess told me."

Fay never called the Moon Goddess Grace's mother. She only ever referred to her as the Goddess. Grace wondered if it was out of respect or possibly because saying it would remind Fay that Grace wasn't her child by blood. Either way, it didn't matter to Grace. As far as she was concerned, Fay was her mother. The only one she'd ever known.

Grace scrunched up her face. “What? What is the Underworld? Is it a bar? A city?”

Fay shook her head. “The Underworld. Lucifer, Hades, Hel, The Underworld. You’ll find an entrance in Los Angeles. The Goddess will guide you where you need to go. Follow her guidance. I did the best I could for you. She gave me a gift I never thought I would ever have. But your time has come. You have a destiny to fulfill. One that I knew would take you from me sooner or later. I wish...” She took in a ragged breath. “I wish we had more time.”

Grace fought to understand Fay’s words. Underworld? Lucifer? Los Angeles? Destiny? She didn’t understand.

“Go,” said Fay. “Go now before I do. He will come as soon as I’m gone. This is the only way to keep you safe.”

Grace shook her head. “Safe from who?”

The Alpha gold tinge overtook Fay’s eyes, and though her alpha commands had never worked on Grace, she’d always respected what it meant. It meant business.

“I command you to go now. I command you to leave and seek out the Underworld. Don’t stop until you get there. Until you are safe.” Fay’s voice came out stronger than it had in months. The wave of command pushed through Grace, and though it didn’t compel her to do what her mother wanted, Grace knew that disobeying would disrespect the woman who had loved, raised, and protected her.

Tears flowed from Grace’s eyes. “Please don’t send me away yet,” Grace whispered. “Please, Mom.”

Tears flooded Fay’s eyes, but the gold in her gaze blazed brighter.

Grace hugged her mom tight, remembering the wonderful times they’d shared. Learning to love reading. Learning to make wild berry jam from scratch. How to raise bees. How to hunt and run with the pack - even though she was never allowed to shift with them. Her love of old western movies. Nights looking up at the stars and talking about the stories of the Moon Goddess. Helping the pack. Playing with the pups.

All of it. A beautiful life. A privileged life. And now it was ending. She was being sent away. Fay said it was for her own safety. Her destiny. But what destiny? And who was she being kept safe from?

Fay let go and pulled her hands away. “Go, Moon Child. Live your life. Find happiness. Live well.”

Grace opened her mouth to speak, but no words came out.

The door behind them opened, and Old Robin walked in. Though a good twenty years older than her mother, Robin had always been her mother’s best friend.

“Take her,” Fay said.

Robin strode forward and lifted Grace to her feet. For only being five foot two and no more than a hundred pounds, Robin retained the strength of a wolf in their youth.

“Come,” said Robin. “It’s time.”

“But-” There was so much more Grace wanted to say, but she didn’t get the chance. Instead, Robin ushered her out the door. Grabbed the two packed suitcases and nudged Grace to the back door with them.

Robin plopped the bags in the backseat of an old muscle car and opened the driver’s side door for Grace.

Grace looked back at the log cabin she’d grown up in.

Robin pulled her into a hug and then bent Grace’s head to kiss it. “It has been an honor to know you, Goddess child.”

Grace blinked. No one had ever called her that before besides her mom. She hadn’t even known Fay had told Robin. She’d made Grace swear not to tell anyone.

“Live well.” Robin pulled a piece of paper from her pocket and pushed it into Grace’s hand before helping Grace into the driver’s seat, putting her seatbelt on her, and then closing the door.

“Go,” said Robin. “Love and live.”

Grace stared at Robin wanting nothing more than to run back in the cabin to her mother. But she turned the car on

instead. The engine roared to life, and she looked to the dirt drive heading away from the house. The road that would take her out of her woods. Out of her town. Out of her state. And into the unknown. She looked at the piece of paper in her hand, which read three words.

The Raven Weaver.

CHAPTER 2



FENRIR SAT IN THE DARK FRONT ROOM WAITING. IT WAS WHAT he'd been doing for the last three hours. Waiting. Just waiting. Minutes ticked by, and he continued to stay in the plush gray seat, staring straight at the front door. The clock on the mantle struck midnight, and he knew it wouldn't be much longer.

The faint sound of voices and music trickled out of the bedroom down the hallway, and the light barely reached the small foyer just ten yards from where he waited. Wouldn't have mattered if it was pitch in the apartment; his wolf senses would have been able to see the front door anyway. Not to mention hearing the footsteps as they approached and the scent of anyone within a hundred yards of the door. That's what came from being the werewolf god, he supposed. Not that he'd ever appreciated his baser instincts and talents. Honestly, they'd never brought him anything but misery and pain, but this was his life, and he was used to it, even if he didn't enjoy it.

For thousands of years, he'd been treated as little more than a beast. A tool to be used. By his father, by Odin, and by the Guardians. And those who didn't use him despised him. Only his sister Hel and, more recently, his father Loki, had taken to trying and helping him see there was more to himself than just the beast. Even so, they, too, weren't exempt from calling on him when they needed dirty work done. Especially his dad. And even they had never looked at him without fear. No one had. No one except his baby sister Freyette, but she didn't count yet. And it almost broke him knowing that someday he would look at him like that. That there would

come a day when she would grow scared of him for one reason or another.

As a child, he'd tried to get people to stop looking at him like he was a monster. But even if they said they didn't fear him, the stench clung to them. The scent of burnt chocolate. Bitter and wrong. There was no hiding the fear. Never had been. He'd always been able to see it in people's faces. Hear it in their voices. And smell it on their skin.

Over the years, those things had gotten lighter on those who had known him longest, but it hadn't gone away completely. But tonight, he was going to enjoy that smell. Revel in that acrid burnt smell.

A car pulled up to the building, and Fenrir's beast perked up.

Sports car. A BMW, maybe, but more likely a Porsche.

He waited as someone closed the car door softly as if trying not to be heard. He sniffed the air. Finally, his prey had arrived.

Fenrir relaxed back into his seat. A minute passed, and another. The hallway floor creaked as someone approached the door.

Metal scraped metal, and then the front door lock clicked slowly open. Fenrir's beast paced inside its cage, wanting to be let loose.

Don't worry. I'll let you have your fun if he doesn't behave.

The bottom lock slid open, and the knob turned. A shadow fell across the floor as the hallway lights spilled in. A short, lean figure in a navy blue suit slid inside the apartment and closed the door behind himself, being sure to lock the door.

Good. Harder for him to escape.

Fenrir almost laughed. He was sure that was exactly why the guy had locked the door. So that the person he thought was in the apartment wouldn't be able to escape him. Too bad she wasn't there.

The man moved into the dim hallway light and listened for a moment. He stepped onto the carpet, and Fenrir flicked on the lamp beside him. The man jumped and swung Fenrir's direction, his eyes wide and confused. In his gloved hands, the man held a revolver. He pointed it at Fenrir.

"Who the hell are you?"

"Melissa isn't here," Fenrir replied.

The man looked down the hall toward the bedroom and back at Fenrir.

"What is this?" he demanded.

Fenrir sighed. "This is you not heeding the order of protection she got against you. This is you not understanding that when she left and traveled halfway across the country to get away, it meant she was done with all your abusive shit. This is you not being able to read; apparently, when you got the anonymous texts warning you that if you came near her again or tried to hurt or threaten her, there would be consequences. Those texts were from me, by the way."

He raised the gun. "Where is she?"

Fenrir snorted. "Do you think I sat here for three hours waiting for you to show so I could tell you where she is? This is how this is going to go, Garrett. You are going to leave her alone. No, more than that. You are going to forget all about her. And if you can show us that you can do that for the next year at the very least, we will let you live. That means no calls. No texts. No showing up at her place of work. No harassing her family or friends. No hiring PIs and off-duty detectives to find her. No, dragging her into court over bullshit you say she stole from you. Nothing. You do that, you live. You don't. Well..."

Garrett cocked the hammer back. "I could just kill you now, and no one would give a crap. You broke into her apartment. You could be a burglar."

Fenrir sighed and shook his head. "All right. We'll do this your way."

Before the man could blink, Fenrir leapt across the room, wrenched the gun from the man's hand, breaking it. Fenrir kicked him in the back and sent him flying across the room and crashing into the chair Fenrir had just exited.

The man cried out as Fenrir broke the handle from the gun and tossed the two pieces in opposite directions.

The man rolled over, cradling his broken hand, and tried to back away from Fenrir.

Fenrir stalked over and loomed over the man. The scent of fear and urine filled Fenrir's nostrils, and he snarled.

Garrett had pissed himself. How cute.

Fenrir crouched next to him and straightened Garrett's tie. "I understand that you are considered a big deal in the human world. Lots of trust fund money. Important family name. Tons of people who follow your every move on social media. But I don't give a fig for any of that. And the people I work for, well, they don't either. And they, the people I work for, have more money and more influence than you can even begin to dream of. So here's how this is going to go. You are going to forget Melissa, as I said before. And if you do, like a good little human. We will let you live, but if you don't, we won't. We will drag you somewhere no one will find you, and we will kill you slowly. Painfully. Probably over the course of weeks or months. Then, we will take your body and put it somewhere that Lucifer himself doesn't even go. Do you understand?"

Garrett nodded vigorously.

"Good." Fenrir patted him on the head. "And just so you know I'm serious, and so you don't forget our little conversation, I'm going to give you something to remember me by, okay?"

Before Garrett could croak out an answer, Fenrir let his beast emerge. His eyes went yellow, and his fangs and claws elongated.

Garrett screamed, and Fenrir's beast howled in delight. He loved it when they screamed.



“IT’S DONE,” Fenrir said into his cell phone as he wiped the blood from the back of his hand onto his athletic shorts.

“Good,” said Loki. “Do we need a cleanup crew?”

“Yup. I made a mess that I’m sure will scare your client into prolonged nightmares.”

“I’m on it.” There was a pause. “Thank you for taking care of that for me. I know you don’t like doing it, but my client really has been through a lot with that guy and-”

“Not a problem.” It was a problem, of course. Fenrir was tired of being the monster, but as he’d been told so many times over the centuries, everyone had their role to play.

“Where are you headed now?”

“Home.” Fenrir opened the door to his 1967 Mustang and slid inside, making the seat groan with his weight.

“Why don’t you come over? Val is making dinner believe it or not, and Freyette-”

“Thanks, I’m good.” Just the sound of his baby sister’s name was enough to almost make him want to go over to Loki and Val’s. Ever since Val and his dad had gotten together, his dad had seemed happy for the first time ever. And after baby Freyette was born, Fenrir started to see a side of his father that he’d never experienced himself as a child or young man. Hel, he’d never seen that side of his father ever. It made Fenrir both happy for baby Freyette but also a tad jealous at the lack of love he himself had experienced. Being around the baby sister, he’d come to love and adore was bittersweet.

Loki sighed. “You really need to get out. You need to make friends or go on a date or... something.”

Fenrir squeezed his eyes shut. Not again. Why couldn’t Loki get it through his gigantic head that Fenrir wasn’t the kind to make friends? That he didn’t date? That he was destined to be alone. Forever.

“I do go out,” Fenrir said. “I do jobs. I go to the fight club. I workout. Even the word has the word *out* in it.”

Loki chuckled, and it made Fenrir smile despite himself.

“I need a shower,” Fenrir said, trying to hint at hanging up.

Loki sighed. “The money will be in your account in an hour. Get some sleep and then... try getting a hobby or something, ok?”

“Sure.” As if that would happen.

There was a pause for a second, and Fenrir was about to hang up when he realized Loki was still on the line.

“I worry about you, son,” Loki finally said.

Son? Son. Fenrir could count on both hands the number of times he’d heard his dad call him son. The word struck a bolt straight through him.

“I want you to find someone. I want you to find happiness. I want...” Loki didn’t need to say the last words for Fenrir to know what he meant. He wanted Fenrir to let go of the past and move forward.

But how did someone move past a history of abuse, hate, and shame? Therapy? Meds? No thanks. Not his style.

“Have a good night. Tell Val I say hi and kiss Freyette for me.”

Before Loki could say anything more, Fenrir hung up. He roared his Mustang to life and listened to the engine’s rumble. He let the rumble vibrate through him and then turned on the radio. He was wound up. How could his father calling him ‘son’ and being kind get him so emotional? He had no idea. But he needed an outlet, and the fight club wasn’t going to do it for him tonight. There was only one way he could calm down enough to get any sleep that night: drive. And the only place to drive was down at the Demon Drag Races.

Fenrir’s beast’s roar mimicked that of his engine. If he couldn’t run, the drag races were his second favorite thing.

CHAPTER 3



“LOKI, YOU HAVE TO DO SOMETHING,” SAID VAL.

Loki looked up from where he cradled his sleeping baby daughter to where she chopped vegetables. “What do you want me to do? I can’t force him to get a life.”

Val glared at him. “Loki.”

“That’s not what I mean, lover. I just mean... we’ve all been through stuff. There comes a point when we’ve all had to learn to try and put it behind us and move on. Fenrir doesn’t seem to want to do that.”

“Maybe he doesn’t know how. You and I have been put through a lot by your family in the past, but Fenrir? He’s still going through it. Have you seen anyone embrace him? Take him out to do something? Try to include him in anything besides doing their dirty work?”

“Val, that’s not fair-”

She held up her hand. “Family dinner night doesn’t count because it’s with all the people who caused his trauma to begin with. Think about it. He’s been beaten. Abused. Called a monster and a beast. Fearing his strength and telling him his whole life that he was evil, Odin decided to bind him to a rock. And the only person who could get close enough to Fenrir to do it was his best and only friend Tyr. His best friend even betrayed him. Then he was gagged with a sword and left there until Ragnarök when he escaped.”

Loki chuckled. “Wow. You sound like you feel bad for him.”

Val stopped chopping. “I do feel bad for him and angry for what he has endured at the hands of Odin and the rest of your family.”

Loki stared at her. “All right. What should I do?”

“I don’t know. You’re his father. You should do something to help him.”

“You tell me what to do, and I’ll do it.”

She stared at him for a moment. “Really? That’s what you want? You want me to just solve the problem for you?”

“Why not? You are very good at problem-solving.” He threw her a sexy smile.

Val rolled her eyes and went back to chopping. “Sorry. That smile won’t work on me. Neither am I flattered by the hollow words meant to take the responsibility off you and put it on me. He’s your son. For once, think about him and what he needs, and then try to help find a solution instead of having someone else do it for you. You said when Freyette was born that you were going to step up. Well, don’t just step up for her; step up for your other kids too. Starting with Fenrir.”

“What he needs is a mate and a family. I had hoped that him doing that calendar thing might bring some women to his door, but he chickened out.”

“You and I both know that he would never do it. I don’t even know why you signed him up for it in the first place.” She shook her head. “You need to help him find someone. Someone serious. Someone real.”

Loki sighed and looked down at his daughter. “Well, since he won’t go out with anyone, I might suggest we only have one choice then, don’t we, Freyette?” He kissed his daughter’s forehead. “We’re just going to have to send him to the speed dating event tomorrow.” He looked over at Val and winked. “He won’t get as lucky as I did, but maybe Aphrodite will work her magic and find him someone almost as good.”

Val rolled her eyes. “If you are going to try and flatter me into getting naked with you, I suggest you not use our daughter to help you do it.”

CHAPTER 4



GRACE SIGHED WITH RELIEF AS SHE SET DOWN HER LAST TRAY for the night and untied her apron. She'd been working at Odin's place for six months, and as much as she enjoyed the atmosphere and the people she worked with, she left every night exhausted and alone.

She'd done exactly what her mom had told her to do. She'd found The Raven Weaver. She'd met Frigg and been introduced to Odin. She'd found a place to live with some... interesting roommates. She'd gotten a job. But she had yet to find the destiny Fay had spoken of. Unless her destiny consisted of opening a library because she'd bought enough books from Váli's bookstore, she was sure she was single-handedly keeping him in business.

She'd tried going to Frigg's bar several times, but it hadn't been for her. The moment she'd started getting hit on, she'd taken off and gone home. It wasn't that she was scared of them... it had been something else. Something she couldn't explain. She'd just known that it wasn't right. Ever since arriving in the Underworld, she'd felt a pull toward something, but she'd not understood what that pull was. There had been times when she felt the pull stronger than ever. A pull telling her to walk down a particular street. Or to look a certain way. A couple of times, she'd felt it almost overwhelmingly while working, but every single time nothing had been out of the ordinary when she looked around. And the feeling had faded almost as quickly as it had come on.

Several times she'd wondered if it could have been her mother, the Moon Goddess, but her gut had told her that what pulled on her wasn't her birth mother. It was something or someone else.

Grace walked to the back room. Several of her roommates and other servers chatted and touched up their makeup and hair in the long, full-length mirrors.

"Hey, Grace," said her roommate Vivian.

"Hi, Viv." Grace reached for her coat.

"How were your tips tonight?"

Grace shrugged. "Same as always, decent."

One of her other roommates named Brigeeta, giggled. "See, Grace, that's why you should let me bite you and make you a vampire. Then you can compel those demons to give you better tips."

Grace chuckled and shook her head. "Thanks, but I'm good."

Her roommates, Brigeeta and Vivian, had offered to make her a vampire when she'd gotten to the Underworld, but she'd declined. They'd said something about the fact that since they were descended from Incubus demons, they could change her from a werewolf to a vampire. Grace was pretty sure that the Moon Goddess as her mother outweighed their drops of Incubus bloodline.

"What kind of sup are you again?" asked Brigeeta.

"She's a shifter, duh. How many times has she told us that?" said Vivian, rolling her eyes. "I swear, girl, you have no brains at all. Are you sure you aren't a zombie instead of a vampire?"

Brigeeta smacked Vivian's arm, and Vivian smeared the lipstick she was applying. Brigeeta squeaked as Vivian rounded on her, her eyes flashing red, and she bared her fangs.

"I'm sorry," said Brigeeta. "I didn't mean to."

Brigeeta, Vivian, and the other vampire girls had been friends for almost a century, but the look on Vivian's face was murderous.

"What are you guys getting so dolled up for?" Grace pulled on her coat.

Brigeeta giggled and turned to Grace. "It's speed dating night at DeLux Café."

Grace smiled, glad she could ease the tension in the air. "Sounds fun."

Brigeeta squealed again and grabbed Grace's hands. "You have to come with us. You have to. It's so much fun. You get to meet all kinds of different guys. And even if you don't find your fated mate, we usually find at least someone to spend the night with."

"Thanks, but I don't do the one-night stand thing." To be honest, Grace had never done any night-stand thing. She was still a virgin.

"I've told you before, it doesn't have to be like that," said Vivian. "It's just a good way to get out and meet some guys. See if you are compatible or even find the one meant for you. DeLux prides itself on being able to find the perfect person for everyone. It doesn't always happen right away, but for plenty of Underworlders, it's happened for sure."

If Grace was being honest, the idea of a speed dating event intrigued her. It had since the first time they'd invited her, but she'd just never felt... ready to try something like that. It had taken her at least four months to get over the fact that her mom was dead, and she now lived in the Underworld and worked for Odin. The Odin. Not to mention that the guys who left her tips were usually demons, vampires, fallen angels, demigods, and more. But for some reason, this time, the idea tugged at her like a small child asking her to go somewhere with them. Grace bit her lip. She didn't want to just go home and rewatch the million K-dramas she'd become addicted to in the past months or read another of the fifty books in her TBR pile.

"Okay," she said without thinking.

“Really?” said Brigeeta and Vivian together. “Wahoo! Party time!”

Vivian looked over Grace, strode forward, and set down Grace’s handbag. “You are going to have a blast. But first, we must do something about your wardrobe and makeup.”

Grace looked down at her t-shirt and jeans. “What’s wrong with my outfit?”

Vivian snorted and looked at Brigeeta. “Find her something.”

Brigeeta broke into a huge smile and took off. “Wahoo! Dressing room time.”

“Wait,” said Grace. “The dressing room? As in, the dressing room for the dancers?”

A Cheshire cat smile stretched over Vivian’s face as she pulled a chair from the vanity and plopped Grace into it. “That’s the one.”

This wasn’t good. Not good at all. If she were lucky, Brigeeta would find a skirt long enough to cover her ass and a shirt big enough to cover her boobs, and that was about all. If she wasn’t lucky... well, Grace might as well go to the speed dating event in her underwear because that would cover more.

Grace wasn’t sure if she should be mortified or grateful. While the outfit Brigeeta had brought her covered more than she had been afraid it might, it didn’t cover nearly enough of her to make her comfortable.

Grace had always known she had a nice figure. A bit on the curvy side, but she’d always liked that about herself. She’d never fancied herself as one of those kale and water dieting waifs. She preferred her meals big and full of meat. She tugged at the hem of the mini dress, but that only served to pull down the top half making her D-cup breasts pop out a bit more.

Yup. Not near enough to make her comfortable. Even her wolf spirit side seemed uncomfortable with the arrangement, which was ironic because her spirit side’s favorite time was when Grace walked around her room naked.

Brigeeta grabbed Grace's arm and hopped up and down in her mile-high heels. "Oh my gosh, you are going to love this. I can't wait to see if tonight is my night to meet the man I was meant to be with forever." Brigeeta tripped over a cobblestone, and it took both Vivian and Grace to keep her from face-planting.

"What do you do if you don't find someone?" Grace asked. She had no interest in wasting time with men she knew weren't meant for her.

"Oh, I always find someone to have fun with." She winked at Grace and flashed her fangs.

Grace didn't want to think about what Brigeeta considered 'fun'. More than a half dozen times since they'd become roommates, Grace had come home to find Brigeeta, and her most recent boy snack hadn't made it past the front room or, worse, the kitchen before beginning the feeding frenzy. Thank the Goddess Vivian was a bit more discreet with her conquests.

"Come on," said Viv. "Don't scare the girl. This is her first time. Just try to relax. Talk to people. At the very least, you might make a new friend or learn something new about what you are looking for or what you don't want. Think of it as a game. A place to hone your flirting skills."

Flirting? Grace didn't know the first thing about flirting. And to be honest, she was pretty sure she would be about as good at flirting as she would at trying to fly. Wasn't going to happen.

"Here we are!" Brigeeta announced with a twirl and a giggle.

Grace's gut clenched as she took in DeLux Café. The sounds of soft music and chatter floated out the front door. The scents of dozens of beings assaulted her. Vampires, shifters of varying species, demons, fae, gods, and more. Her mouth dried, and suddenly, she wasn't sure she wanted to go inside.

Viv slipped her arm into Grace's and squeezed Grace's hand. "It's gonna be fine. Forget everything we said and be

yourself. It doesn't matter if you don't meet anyone. Just give it a try, okay?"

Grace glanced up into Viv's face. The genuine smile on Viv's blood-red lips made Grace relax a fraction. She swallowed hard and nodded.

Just be herself. She could do that, right? What was so hard about sitting at a table and conversing with a dozen guys? She'd done the same thing standing up and waiting tables at Odin's. What was so different this time? Except for the fact that she wore practically nothing except a pound of makeup and a gallon of hairspray?

She could do it. It was just for an hour, right? And besides, she'd told herself she didn't want to just go back to her house and read about other women getting their happily ever afters. She'd come to the Underworld to make a life for herself, and staying hidden in her house wasn't living. It was existing, and if that had been her plan, she might as well have stayed with her pack.

The slight pull she'd felt previously tugged at her and told her she needed to go inside. Grace reached out and opened the door. "Let's do this."



FENRIR STOOD across the street from DeLux Café wondering for the millionth time why he'd caved and told his dad he would finally go to it. What had he been thinking? Speed dating? What was that going to do for him? He rubbed his hands over his scruffy face and groaned.

For close to an hour, he'd watched men and women walk into the Café. Some excited. Some cocky. Some terrified. But for himself... he had no idea how he felt about it, except to know that he did not want to go in.

He'd not socialized with anyone in... ever? Not since Tyr... Only recently had he started attending the family dinners. And even then, he stayed only as long as he had to before taking off. Being around other people was...

uncomfortable. He never knew what to say or do or anything. On top of that, he knew he made the others uncomfortable. They never said anything, but they didn't have to. He smelled it, heard it, and saw it on them.

“You know, when you agreed to go to DeLux, I actually meant that you needed to go inside, not just lurk across the street.”

Fenrir growled and glanced sideways at where Loki emerged from the shadows of the building he leaned against.

Loki looked at his watch. “There's only a few minutes left before it starts. Are you going to go in?”

Fenrir didn't answer. He continued to stare at the building lit up in reds and pinks. Even from across the street, Fenrir could hear the people inside. The glasses clinking. Smell the bodies, the perfumes, and colognes. Just thinking of surrounding himself with it all had his beast pacing.

“I can hold your hand as you cross the street, walk you in, and give you a lollipop for being a good boy if you want.” Loki chuckled.

“Screw you.”

“Sorry.” Loki grew serious and laid his hand on Fenrir's shoulder.

The contact made Fenrir want to bite Loki's hand off.

“Fenrir. I want you to find happiness. To find peace. This is the first step to doing that.”

“Did Val tell you to say that?”

The silence stretched out between them, and Fenrir blew out a breath, letting his father's words sink in.

“You need to do this,” Loki said. “Please. Will you do this?”

Suck. Fenrir hated it when his dad asked him to do things. He'd never been able to say no to Loki. A fact that was abundantly clear since he was standing across the street from

DeLux Café dressed up, freshly showered, and looking like a total idiot.

Fenrir blew out a harsh breath and lurched forward before he could rethink what he was doing. His boots clomped on the asphalt as he stomped toward the entrance to a torturous hour in hell. One hour. It was only one hour. Then he could tell Loki he'd done it and get his dad off his back for at least another year.

It was simple. Go in. Sit at tables. Say a few words. Let the timers run out, and then get the hell out of there. One hour. He could do it for one hour without killing anyone, couldn't he?

CHAPTER 5



GRACE FIDGETED IN HER CHAIR. SHE PULLED AT THE HEM OF her skirt, trying to get it to cover her mid-thigh at least. She blew out a breath and took a sip of her fourth flute of champagne. She glanced around the room, which looked entirely too romantic. The scents being pumped into the air tickled her nose and made her even more nervous. Everything about the interior of DeLux Café had been made to relax beings and make them get more in the social mood, but it all set Grace on edge. Mostly because it wasn't real. She wasn't like the other beings at the dating event. She was the daughter of a Goddess and a shifter as well. Both of those facts had her spirit side twitchy. She didn't like the idea of possibly being duped into pairing with someone she wasn't meant to be with.

Stop. She told herself. This is just for fun. Think of it like her own personal K-drama. She was the awkward project girl that the popular girls dragged along with them to show off to others. It was ok. She was just playing a role. She could do that. She would sit at the table, talk to people, and then go home. Tomorrow she would go to work, and it would give her something to connect with Vivian, Brigeeta, and the others about. Maybe that was good enough. She could use the speed dating experience just to make friends. Heck, maybe if she had a good enough story to tell them, they might even invite her along to do something different. Not vampire stuff, but maybe like, girly stuff. She'd never had girl friends to do things with before. It could be fun.

In that moment, Grace decided she would give the speed dating a real shot. She would do what she could to have a good

time because, in the end, it wasn't about finding a mate. It was about making new friends – or getting closer to the ones she already had. And that was something she realized she desperately wanted.

A bell rang, and Grace almost jumped out of her seat. Slowly men began looking around the tables to find the one they were meant to start with. Grace watched them with nervous anticipation. Finally, a sizeable blue-skinned man glanced her way and headed straight for her table. Grace looked away as her nerve got the better of her. She picked at the little glittery hearts strewn across her table and then took a long drink of her champagne and didn't look up again until he yanked out the chair across her and plopped into it.

He chuckled as Grace jolted at his sudden movement. “Skittish little thing, aren't you?”

Grace glanced up into his deep red eyes. “No. Not particularly.”

He reached across and touched her hand, running his long thick fingers over her knuckles. “It's okay. I like them timid.”

Grace slid her hand out of his reach, and her spirit side snarled. She didn't like being touched without permission.

“I'm Aolf,” he said. “I'm a crossroad demon.”

Grace looked up at him. “What's a crossroad demon?”

“When people want to make a deal with the devil, I'm the one that shows up and makes the deal.”

She nodded. “But why are you called a crossroad demon?”

He shrugged. “Humans got this weird idea that deals can only be made at a crossroad at the corner of a cemetery. So they call me a crossroad demon.”

“But it's not true?”

He shook his head. “Honestly, if you know the right words and the right offering, you could make a deal with me while on the toilet if you wanted. Lucifer isn't picky about where people are when they sell him their souls.”

Grace nodded.

“What about you? Are you a vampire?”

Grace shook her head vehemently. “No. Not at all.”

He looked at her quizzically. “Oh. Sorry. I saw you come in with Viv and her gang, so I just figured.”

“I’m a shifter,” she lied. Well, technically, it wasn’t a lie. She did shift.

He nodded. “Nice. And what do you do?”

“I’m a waitress.”

He seemed to mull that over for a moment. “So you pretty much live like a human.”

She shrugged. “I guess.”

“But you live in the underworld?”

She nodded.

“Why?”

“I just felt drawn here for some reason.” She had no interest in lying to people about why she was there, but so far, she hadn’t told anyone that the Moon Goddess was her birth mother, and she wasn’t about to start with a guy she was supposed to spend 120 seconds talking to.

“Interesting.”

The bell rang for them to change places, and Grace couldn’t help but be relieved.

As Aolf stood and wished her good luck, she realized he hadn’t even asked her name.

Grace looked up at the clock. Two minutes down, fifty-eight to go.

There were only fifteen minutes left to Grace’s relief. She’d met two more demons, a handful of vampires, two demigods, and an incubus. By the end of it, she’d had several offers to meet up afterward for a party, or a drink, or maybe just some company, but each offer had left her more agitated than the last.

When her next date sat at the table, she didn't know if she'd even be capable of small talk. As the chair slid out on the other side of the table, a scent hit her so strongly that her breath caught. A spicy scent like oranges, pepper, and cinnamon flooded her. The scent swirled inside her warming her all over and making her body tingle. Her hands shook as she swallowed hard and breathed in again. Her agitation drifted away, and she breathed in the heavenly scent. He smelled like the special citrus wassail that Fay made every Christmas. The scent made her relax. He smelled like hope. Like joy. Like... home.

Grace's heart thundered, and she finally lifted her gaze from her hands. A black Metallica t-shirt stretched to the point of bursting over the broadest chest she'd ever seen. Forearms like tree limbs rested on the small table, looking like their sheer weight could crumble it. Her gaze drifted to thick, corded, and bunched biceps that sported several ancient-looking scars. Shoulders wide enough to rival that of a giant lead to a thick neck, stubbly chiseled chin, high cheekbones to die for, and then to a pair of deep-set golden eyes that glowed from within.

Grace couldn't move. Couldn't speak. Couldn't breathe as she took in his hard, ruggedly fierce face. His expression was a mask she couldn't penetrate. He was the most handsome and terrifying man she'd ever seen, and something about his intense gaze and domineering aura made her want to be cocooned in his solid arms and run from him at the same time. They stared at each other. Neither speaking. But her body and spirit roiled inside. Wanting things. Needing things. Desiring things that she'd never wanted, needed, or desired before in her entire life.

The room seemed to drift away, and suddenly all she could hear was his heartbeat thundering. Rapid and strong and completely in time with her own. What the hell was happening?

She tried to form words but had no idea what to say or ask. It was strange how, even though neither said a word, they didn't need to. As if their bodies and spirits were having the

only conversation that was needed. A conversation that she could neither understand nor comprehend.

“Who are you?” he finally asked in a deep gravelly voice that shot straight through her and made her want to melt from the heat of it.

Grace blinked several times. “I... I’m Grace.”

“Grace.” He said her name like he was tasting a fine wine. Swishing it around to see how it tasted and if he approved.

Her stomach quivered as his intense gaze never left hers, and he said her name a second time. Savoring it and committing it to memory. The sound trickled down to her core and made her entire body tingle with anticipation.

What the hell was that?

The desire to howl made her bite the inside of her cheek to keep from doing it. Her spirit side went into overdrive, and she dropped her hands into her lap to keep him from seeing her nails lengthen and white hair begin to sprout on her arms.

She swallowed, trying to bring her senses to heel. “What... what’s your name?” she asked, trying to focus on something other than whatever was happening inside her.

He stared at her unblinkingly. “Fenrir.”

A shiver ran over her. Fenrir? As in the Wolf God Fenrir? No. It couldn’t be. It wasn’t possible, was it? Of course it was! Hell, she worked for Odin!

“Fenrir,” she repeated.

The glow in his eyes intensified, and he let out a shuddered breath before closing his eyes. “Say it again,” he whispered.

Her cheeks heated, but she couldn’t help herself. “Fenrir.”

A look of utter bliss overtook his features, and a moan escaped him so intimate that she had to fan herself. An ache started in her thighs and traversed up to her core making her body pulsate. Stop, stop, stop! She told herself. But her body and spirit refused to listen. Every fiber of her lit up like Time Square, and she couldn’t make it stop.

She squeezed her thighs together to find both them and her panties slick. She jumped to her feet, tipping her chair over.

His eyes flew open, and he pinned her with his gaze. He didn't say anything, but the Alpha command in his gaze told her to stop, and she did for the first time ever.

How could he do that? Pin her with a look and make her obey? No one had ever been able to do that to her before. The thought sent a wave of intrigue and desire rippling through her. She liked the idea that he might be able to dominate her. And damn, did she want to submit to him.

Images invaded her mind. Images of his massive, hard body looming over her. Kissing her. Touching her. Taking her. Making her submit.

Her core clenched, and she bit the inside of her cheek hard enough to draw blood to keep herself from jumping into his arms and attacking him.

Enough! You are the daughter of the Moon Goddess. You are not some bitch in heat.

Embarrassment flooded her, and she glanced around. She needed to get out. To get some air. To understand what was happening to her. "I... I... I have to go."

Fenrir rose, blocking out the entire café behind him with his giant form.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

"I... nothing I just..." Just what? *I just suddenly want to strip off the little I'm wearing so you can take me on the table?* She got the feeling that was not what she should say.

She was no longer in control of herself, and it terrified her. Something was happening. Something between them. Something she didn't understand. Just being near him was driving her insane. Her body was ready to throw itself on him of its own accord.

Fenrir moved slowly around the table as if trying not to startle her. He reached out, and the moment his calloused palm

skimmed down her bare arm, fireworks lit up inside her, and heat pulsed inside her like she'd stepped into an inferno.

Fenrir's gaze never left her face as he moved so close that her large breasts smashed against his hard-packed chest. She clenched her fists to keep from grabbing his shirt and assaulting his lips as he bent in to sniff her.

Grace froze as her body betrayed her, and the scent of her arousal met her nose.

Crap. Crap. Crap. What was wrong with her? She'd never wanted a man before. And sure as hell had never had one rile her up so much with a simple trail of his fingers. Not that she'd ever let a man touch her before. She'd kissed Toby Macintyre once, and it hadn't done a thing for her. But this. The mere contact between them had her ready to drop to her knees and bare her ass to him.

"Hey," someone called. "No touching. This isn't that part of the date. It's speed dating, the talking part only. It's not speed makeout."

Others around them chuckled, and mortification rained down on Grace. Could everyone smell and sense what was going on with her? The spell cocooning them popped like a balloon, and a sudden rush of embarrassment washed over her.

Fenrir looked at the man and growled. "Shut it."

The moment his gaze broke from hers, Grace did the only thing she could think of. She turned and raced out of the café.

CHAPTER 6



FENRIR GLARED AT THE MAN WHO'D TOLD HIM TO GET AWAY from Grace, and when he turned back to her, she was gone. All except for her scent. The scent of jasmine, rain, and musk. Her musk. Her most intimate smell. The smell that was her at her core. A scent he wanted to bathe in for the rest of his life.

Fenrir glanced around just in time to see her slip off her heels and duck out the door.

Noooooooooooooooooo! His beast bellowed.

Fenrir tore off to the exit, tossing tables and chairs out of his way. He couldn't let her go. He needed to find out more about her. Aphrodite and Eve yelled at him as he went, but he didn't stop. Couldn't stop. He needed to find her. Had to find her.

He burst out of the café and sniffed the air, but her scent had disappeared. He ran to the middle of the street and sniffed. Nothing.

He whipped his head in both directions. It wasn't possible. How could he not smell her? He could smell anything. Track someone for a hundred miles. And she'd just been there. It wasn't possible. Her scent, that beautifully heavenly scent. He would remember it for as long as he lived.

Panic lit inside him. In the thousand years since his birth, he'd never once met a female who affected him the way she had. And he'd never once met a grown woman who hadn't looked at him in fear. Her large dark eyes had been full of wonder, confusion, and even lust, but not fear. Not one ounce

of it. And her scent... there'd not even been a hint of the burnt chocolate that usually drowned out a woman's natural aroma. No, her scent had remained the same. In fact, it had grown stronger as he'd neared her. Perfect. Sweet and savory, and enough to make him almost blow out of his jeans. It had taken every ounce of restraint to keep from stripping off his shirt and covering her with it so no one else looked at her. Or worse, throwing her over his shoulder and running out of DeLux.

Fenrir turned in a circle hoping to spot her, smell her, hear her, something. But there was nothing. It wasn't possible. He was Fenrir, god of the wolves. How was it possible he couldn't find the slightest trace of her?

His fangs lengthened, and his nails and hair began sprouting all over his body as his beast fought to be released. He needed her. She was his one. His fated mate. He didn't know how he knew it. Maybe it was how she'd not shown an ounce of fear at the sight of him like every other female whose table he'd sat at. Or perhaps it was just her scent that had beckoned him into almost bursting through his jeans right there. But most likely, it was his beast who had clawed so hard at Fenrir's chest to be let out that Fenrir wasn't sure out he wasn't bleeding internally from the onslaught.

Rage and loss pounded through him, making him want to wreak destruction on everything around him. He needed her. Grace. *His* Grace. The one who, despite his having lost all hope, he had finally found.

He yanked on his hair as every ounce of her consumed his thoughts. Her beautiful dark cinnamon eyes invaded him. Looking at him with curiosity and acceptance. Her soft skin like velvet. The huskiness of her voice as she'd said his name. Her long tousled blonde curls that had cascaded over her shoulders like a golden waterfall. He had no idea why she'd worn pounds of makeup or a dress that had made him want to rip the eyes out of everyone who could see her, but it didn't matter. She could wear nothing or a potato sack for all he cared as long as she was his.

His body shook with anger, making him want to find her all the more, but when he scanned the area, there was still no

shred of information he could glean.

He roared into the night.

“Fenrir!”

He turned to see his father drop a bag and rush to his side. Loki looked over him. “What’s wrong? What happened?”

Fenrir’s entire body rolled with waves of rage as he battled with his beast fighting to keep control and not shift and wreak havoc on the Underworld. Lucifer had been benevolent by allowing them sanctuary there, but he wouldn’t take kindly to having his kingdom dismantled by one hormonal wolf god.

Loki looked around the street and then at the Café. “Fen, tell me what happened.”

A spark lit inside Fenrir, pulling him back from the brink. It’d been a thousand years since he’d heard his nickname.

“I...” He tried to form words. “Female... Inside... Grace...” He couldn’t think straight.

“A woman? You met a woman?”

Fenrir managed a slight nod as his beast’s agitation soared once more.

Loki processed his words. “Grace? Her name was Grace?”

Fenrir whined, and his gaze finally connected with Loki’s. “I... need her.”

A soft smile grew across Loki’s face, and he stepped forward, and for the second time Fenrir could remember, Loki hugged him.

In that instant, Fenrir was a youth again. Tyr had just tricked him into being chained, and he’d bitten Tyr’s hand off. He’d fought against the chains trying to break them or force them from his body, but it hadn’t worked. He’d roared and fought as Frigg had cradled Tyr’s arm, tending to it. Váli and Vidar dragged the chains backward toward a rock where he was to be tied.

Thundered crashed above them, and Odin materialized in front of Fenrir.

Thor stood looking on, Mjolnir at his side. Heimdall pointed his sword directly at Fenrir's heart.

"I haven't done anything," Fenrir cried. "It was an accident. Tyr, tell them I didn't mean it."

Fenrir's gaze traveled to Tyr. His best friend. His only friend. The only one who'd talked to him. Spent time with him. The one who'd taught him to fight and defend himself. The one who'd taught him about the stars and the heavens.

Tyr looked to Fenrir, his complexion pale. "I know you didn't, my friend. I know."

"See," Fenrir pleaded. "It was not my fault. Why are you doing this?"

"Because you are a beast! Monster. You are an abomination. I should destroy you now instead of chaining you to this boulder," Odin boomed, and thunder crashed again.

Fenrir's stomach plummeted.

Odin held out his hand, and his spear dropped from the sky. He pointed it at Fenrir and rushed forward. Fenrir fought harder against the chains. Just as the spear should have pierced him, it didn't. The spear stopped.

Everyone went silent as Loki materialized in front of Fenrir.

"Father," Fenrir choked out.

Loki's twin blades clashed against Odin's spear, tossing it aside. Odin's eyes narrowed.

"That's my son," Loki said. "And you will not kill him."

"I am the God of gods. Who are you to tell me what to do, Loki?"

"You may be the proclaimed God of gods, but I am older than even you, Odin Borr's son. And I say you will not murder my son, Fenrir."

Odin reached out for his spear to return to him. "You know the prophecy. You know what has been said about him. If he lives, he will destroy us all. Even you."

“If that is his fate, so be it. Who are you to change it? You know that never works. What will be will be. It is the way we have always done things. If you try to alter his fate now, who knows what calamity you will bring down upon us.”

“Are you willing to bear the consequences of what he might do?”

“I knew the prophesy the day he was born. I didn’t kill him then, and you will not now. The fates will decide the future for my son, not you.”

Fenrir’s heart raced as the two gods faced off. He’d never seen his father stand up to Odin before. Usually, his father bided his time and got his revenge from a distance. But this time, Loki was there. Right there. Standing between Fenrir and Odin’s wrath.

“I should run you both through for everything you’ve done to us. You and your three abominable spawn.”

In a blink, Loki’s form morphed and grew to over seven feet tall. His skin color deepened until he was entirely blue, and smooth velvety horns protruded from his forehead and folded backward over his shiny black hair.

“I am up for the challenge if you are,” Loki boomed. “I was born before you were even a twitch in your father’s groin.”

Thor and Heimdall took a step forward, but Odin stopped them. His eyes moved to Fenrir and then back to Loki.

“Very well. He may live. But his sins are upon your head, Loki Farbauti’s son.”

“His sins always have been,” Loki replied.

Odin disappeared as Loki turned and looked down on Fenrir with diamond-colored eyes.

“Thank you,” said Fenrir. “Thank you, Father.”

Loki walked forward, and his expression saddened. He flipped his blades away and then pulled Fenrir into a hug.

Though Fenrir couldn't hug him back, the coolness of his father's skin bled through Fenrir's torn shirt. Tears formed in Fenrir's eyes. It was the most tenderness he'd ever experienced in his life.

"I am so sorry, my son. But this is for your own safety and the safety of the rest of us." Loki stepped back and nodded.

Panic filled Fenrir. "Father... Father... please. Don't do this. I won't hurt anyone. I promise I won't."

Váli and Vidar pulled him backward. Fenrir's legs gave out, and they dragged him across the ground toward the giant boulder. His pants ripped, and then the flesh on his knees. His beast roared at the pain wanting to be released, but Fenrir denied him.

"Please," Fenrir begged. "Please don't leave me here."

Váli and Vidar secured him to the rock, then Váli kicked him in the ribs. "Be grateful you don't have acid pouring on your head the way your father used to."

Vidar pulled a blade from his back and pointed the tip at Fenrir's throat, leaning on it just enough that a stream of blood flowed down Fenrir's neck to his chest. "I should kill you for what you did to Tyr. And if you touch one hair on my father Odin's head, I will kill you, Fenrir."

"That's enough," Tyr called. "Leave him be, Vidar. The deed is done."

Tyr had been more of a father to him than Loki ever had, and even he was leaving Fenrir to die.

The gods walked off the mountain one by one and disappeared, leaving only Loki and Fenrir.

"How can you leave me here?" Fenrir yelled. "You yourself were tied to a rock by Odin. You know what this feels like. How can you do this to me?"

Loki turned to him sadly. "I'll make it up to you someday, Fen. I promise. One day I will make it up to you, and you will forgive me."

Fenrir's mind shifted back to the present as Loki hugged him. Anger and pain bubbled inside him at the memories, but he pushed them down.

"Find her," said Fenrir. "You find Grace for me, and I'll forgive you for the past."

Loki stepped back and looked at Fenrir, his expression serious, his gaze intensifying to completely silver.

They stood without speaking for several moments, and then Loki nodded. "*Heit-strengja*."

Fenrir's eyes widened. *Heit-strengja*? Loki was willing to make the ancient sacred oath to help him? His chest tightened.

"I accept," Fenrir growled.

Loki nodded and looked around. "We don't have a pig to make the oath over and sacrifice later, but how about a beer?"

Fenrir's beast remained agitated. He wanted to find Grace, bite Grace, mate Grace.

Fenrir swallowed hard. With how Grace had reacted to him touching and sniffing her, Fenrir knew he would need to go slow. It was possible she didn't even understand what was blossoming between them; after all, they'd just met. Yes, she'd had a physical reaction to him. But that had been more animalistic than emotional. He needed to connect with her emotionally first. If he could win the woman, the rest would come naturally.

Besides, if it was possible to finally heal the old wounds between him and his father, he needed to deal with that first. After all, it was something he'd been trying to accomplish for the last hundred years since being in the underworld.

Fenrir finally nodded. "A beer."

Loki smiled and clapped Fenrir on the shoulder. "I think you could use a few more than one. And while we drink, you can tell me everything you remember about your Grace so I can find her for you."

His Grace. That part was absolutely right. Another image of her luscious curvy body sparked in his mind making his

pants suddenly too tight.

Fenrir coughed and fell in step with Loki as they headed down the street. “That’s not going to be a problem,” he said. “I remember everything. Every last detail.”

CHAPTER 7



GRACE TOOK A DEEP BREATH BEFORE WALKING INTO ODIN'S place. She'd gotten less than an hour's sleep. Her mind and spirit had spent the entire night replaying the interaction with Fenrir as well as every touch, look, feeling, and thought. And damn, the thoughts had gotten hot. Like, sheet gripping, toe-curling, making a girl want to strip naked and wear out the batteries of every personal pleasure device in the Underworld, hot. At one point, she was pretty sure she'd melted into the sheets and was nothing more than a puddle of goo.

To say that Fenrir, God of Wolves, was handsome was an understatement. He was... well... a god. Dark hair. Intense eyes. Chiseled, everything. Arms big enough to crush a giant. All of it. It was a shifter female's wet dream, and damn if he wasn't hers. There was only one problem... he was a god. And she was just her. Yes, technically, she was a demigod, child of a Goddess, but even so, she was mortal. Wasn't she? No one knew for sure. Would she live a human span of life? Or longer? Or was she immortal? Was Fenrir the reason she'd come to the Underworld? Or was her body finally waking up to the fact that sexy men existed? A million more questions bombarded her like a tidal wave.

Grace grabbed her head. "Shut up!"

"Who shut up?"

Grace spun around to find Brigeeta behind her.

Her cheeks flushed. "Oh, uh... no one. Just my wolf spirit being weird."

Brigeeta nodded, and Vivian entered, spotted Grace, and raced to her, taking Grace's hands in her own.

"Oh my gosh, are you okay?"

Grace looked between Brigeeta and Grace. "Uh, yeah. I'm good. Why?"

Oh no! Had they heard her tossing, turning, and moaning all night?

"Brigeeta told me you rushed out last night after that creep. Fenrir sat at your table and then tried to make out with you. And when I got home, your door was locked."

Grace slipped her hands from Vivian's as anger bubbled up inside her. Fenrir wasn't a creep.

"What are you talking about?"

"You were sitting there with him, and then you backed away, and he tried to like kiss you or something. Devlin at my table saw it and said something," said Brigeeta.

"No." Grace shook her head. "It wasn't like that. He isn't like that. He was just sniffing me."

Brigeeta and Vivian wrinkled their noses.

"It's a wolf thing. And he wasn't a creep. Why would you say that?" Her words came out a bit too defensively.

"I didn't mean, creep," said Brigeeta. "I meant creepy. He was being creepy."

"He's always creepy," said Vivian. "And that's saying a lot considering I'm a Vampire, and I'm saying it."

"Yeah, whenever he comes in here, he just sits at the bar alone, drinks, and stares. He doesn't talk to anyone. Doesn't laugh. Doesn't do anything but just sit there and watch everyone." Brigeeta shivered. "It's weird."

"Maybe he's shy," Grace said too forcefully.

Vivian burst out laughing. "A Norse god? Shy? You have to be kidding. Even if you read all the myths and stories about

him, he's seriously messed up. Being tied to a rock for eons. Biting off the hand of his only friend."

"Not to mention being hated by all the gods for being prophesied to be the one who will kill them all."

Vivian nodded. "And when he comes in, sometimes he smells so strongly of blood."

"Like he's murdering people."

Grace held up her hands. "Stop it. Do either of you actually know him? Have you ever talked to him?"

"Did you talk to him?" asked Vivian, opening her eyes wide. "Or did he just stare at you?"

Brigeeta laughed.

"We... uh... well, he asked me my name." Okay, so maybe they hadn't really talked, but somehow Grace felt as if they'd said volumes to each other. At least their bodies and wolf selves had.

"Well, if you aren't scared of him, he didn't try to kiss you, and you don't think he's a creep; why did you run out?" asked Brigeeta.

Grace swallowed hard. "I... uh... well... it's hard to explain. I just..." Just what? Was so turned on by him that it freaked her out? She couldn't tell them that.

A smile crept across Brigeeta's lips. "You like him."

Vivian's eyes popped wide. "No. Tell me you don't. Please, Grace."

"Why? What would be so bad about me liking him? I mean, he's hotter than Lucifer, and he smells amazing. And those eyes..." His face drifted into her mind. "And muscles. All those muscles." Grace snapped her mouth shut, afraid she might start drooling.

Vivian shook her shoulders. "Grace. Please. Stay away from him. If all the Norse gods fear him and keep their distance, that should tell you something."

Grace's patience snapped, and she was about to tell Vivian off when there was a knock on the locker room door. "You gals come here to chat all day, or are you gonna serve some customers?" Odin called.

Vivian let go of Grace, and Grace grabbed her apron and tied it around herself. She headed for the door, angry and irritated. She liked Viv and Brigeeta, but their dislike for Fenrir had her ready to tear out their throats. Nothing had ever made her feel that way before. Not even the time a male had made fun of her for developing so early and had called her a midget corgi butt.

As she opened the door, it dawned on her. She didn't like people insulting Fenrir.

Crap! How was this possible? She'd spent less than two minutes with the man at a speed dating event, and already she and her spirit side were ready to tear the head off anyone who spoke badly about him. If she was that protective of him after two minutes, what would happen if she spent longer with him?

He set off her imagination. He set off her hormones. And now he was setting off her protective instincts.

Grace sighed. *This was bad. So very bad.*



FENRIR WOKE up and blinked several times. Where the hell was he? The scent of pancakes hit him, along with eggs and meat. His stomach grumbled. He peered around to find himself in Loki's penthouse.

He grabbed his head. What the hell had happened the night before? Memories rushed back. Grace. He'd met Grace. Loki had found him in the street, calmed him down, and promised to find Grace. Then they'd gone to Odin's, where he'd drunk enough to kill a fire giant. From there, things got fuzzy, but he assumed Loki had brought him home, where he now hung half on half off the couch.

Footsteps padded softly toward him, and he squinted into the light to see Val bring over a large tray and set it on the coffee table.

“He would have put you into bed, but it took everything he had just to get you here and on the couch without waking up Freyette.”

Fenrir groaned. “Sorry, Val.”

She chuckled. “Trust me. If you had woken up Freyette, it would have been your dad who cared for her. I would have just continued to sleep through it, like you.” She chuckled and touched his shoulder. “You doing ok?”

He nodded and sat up, but his head pounded from the alcohol. Somewhere between turning eight hundred and a thousand years old, alcohol started affecting him differently. Though it left his system pretty fast, the lingering effects did not.

“Where’s Loki?” He grabbed the glass of water off the tray and chugged it.

“Going to fulfill his vow to you.”

Fenrir almost choked. “He told you about that?”

“Of course. We share everything. And trust me, there is no better way to get your dad to do something than to tell me. I seem to have a way of making him do just about anything I want done.” Her eyes sparkled. “It’s kind of nice.”

Fenrir smiled. “Very true. I’ve never seen him so quick to want to make someone happy before.” He looked over the tray of food. “You didn’t have to do all this.”

She shrugged. “What else am I going to do? Freyette isn’t up yet. We have a maid to clean. I don’t have anyone to battle. No mandatory training. No job. The least I can do is learn to make food that isn’t burnt, too spicy, or raw in the middle. I’m still working on that last one, so you’ve been warned.”

Fenrir picked up a pancake, folded it, and shoved it in his mouth. “Well, you got the pancakes right.” He gave her a

thumbs up. “And I’d be happy to spar with you if you ever need a partner.”

She picked up a napkin and handed it to him, and he wiped his mouth.

“Thanks. I’ll keep that in mind. Right now, I’m just trying to get used to this post-baby body of mine. When I am ready, though, I’ll let you right now.”

He nodded and went to grab another pancake, but Val coughed, and he stopped. Picking up a fork and knife, he cut it in half and then shoved it in his mouth.

She laughed. “You’re a work in progress, Fen, but you are definitely more teachable than your dad.”

There it was again. That nickname.

A cry came from down the hall, and Val sighed. “The boss is awake.”

Fenrir stood. “Let me get her.”

Val’s eyebrows drew together. “Really?”

A pang of anxiety shot through him. “If you don’t trust me to, that’s ok, I don’t-”

Val laid her hand on his arm. “Fenrir, you are her big brother. Of course I trust you. It’s only that she is just waking up, so she probably needs to be changed.”

Fenrir shrugged. “How hard can it be?”

A smile slid across Val’s face. “You know what? Go right ahead and get her royal wiggleness.”

Val chuckled as she returned to the kitchen, putting dishes and pans into the sink.

He stared at her for a moment and then started down the hall where Freyette had begun to cry.

Freyette was a baby. How hard could it be to change her diaper?

TWENTY MINUTES LATER, Fenrir walked into the front room, where Val sat sipping a cup of coffee.

Freyette smiled up at him and cooed as she tugged on his sideburns. Fenrir wasn't sure what his face looked like, but from the giggles that Val tried to hide, he could tell he looked pretty bad.

Val set down her cup. "You know the powder goes on her butt, not your face, right?"

Fenrir snorted. "Tell this little snake that." He handed Freyette over to Val and rubbed at his face, noticing a sticky tab from a destroyed diaper hanging from his elbow.

"How many did you rip?" Val asked.

Fenrir shrugged and tossed the sticky piece in the trash. "Maybe three or four."

Val cocked an eyebrow at him.

"Twelve."

She burst out laughing. "Well, then, you are on par with your dad in that department."

Fenrir shook his head. "I never knew a baby could turn over and crawl away that fast."

"I'm just waiting to see if she gets your dad's teleporting abilities. Then we are in real trouble."

Fenrir's eyes widened. "I never thought of that."

Val nodded. "The terrors of a mother with the god of mischief for her husband."

Fair enough.

Val handed Freyette a bottle and then turned back to Fenrir. "The food is cold now, sorry. But it probably doesn't matter anyway. Loki called. He found some info for you."

Fenrir's head snapped up from where he was wiping diaper ointment from his t-shirt. He'd found her? Fenrir looked to the door.

“It’s fine. You can go. But might I suggest you stop by your place first and clean up? You smell like a mead distillery and look like a feral band of baby powder demons has attacked you.”

Fenrir nodded and then gave Val a one-armed hug before kissing Freyette on the head. “Thank you for the food. Sorry, I didn’t get to eat it all.”

She shrugged. “No biggie.”

“It was perfect, though.” Fenrir looked at the plate and then quickly took the eggs and sausage patties, piled them between two pancakes, and shoved them in his mouth.

Val shook her head. “Next time you stop by, we are totally working on your manners.”

Fenrir gulped down the orange juice and gave her two thumbs up before jogging to the door.

Loki had found her. He’d found Grace.

Fenrir opened the front door to his small house. The door creaked on its hinges as he forced it open. He stepped inside and turned on the light before closing the door.

He’d bought the small one-bedroom house from a demon who’d gotten married and needed a bigger place over fifty years prior. In the fifty years he’d lived there, he’d done as little as possible to fix the place. It wasn’t his home; it was just a place to lay his head at night, shower, and change clothes when needed. But he didn’t let it get run down, either.

A howl sounded from the living room, and Fenrir walked in and smiled. There, lying on a full-sized doggie lounge, was his only friend, Layla. She lifted her pure white head, jumped off the chaise lounge, and leapt on him.

Fenrir chuckled and caught the wolf midair. “Hey girl, did you miss me?” He ruffled her fur and kissed her cheek. “Are you hungry? You probably need to go out, don’t you?”

Layla woofed, and Fenrir set her on the ground. She trotted to the kitchen, and Fenrir followed after. She sat and waited for him as he walked to the back door and opened it. Layla

looked up at him expectantly. He'd trained her ever since he'd rescued her from a troop of demons who had slaughtered her entire pack for sport. She'd been dirty, skinny, and completely alone. So he'd brought her home with him and had nursed her back to health. She hadn't even been with him a month before he started training her. At first, it had been just to see if he could, but soon he'd decided to try and find her limits. When she turned one, they'd started her real training. Together they'd spent two years tracking down every last demon who had killed her family and had slaughtered them in return.

"Rachaibh." The moment he gave her release command, she bounded out the door and raced around the enclosed yard. Then he walked to the small refrigerator and pulled it open. Inside sat stacks of steak, prime rib, filet mignon, and a six-pack of beer.

He pulled one of the steaks from the fridge and tossed it into the sterling silver bowl on the floor. Layla's head lifted from the grass, and she sniffed the air before racing back to the door and sitting, staring at her food bowl.

Fenrir looked at her for a moment and then smiled. *"Ith."*

Layla grabbed the steak and ripped it apart while he filled up her water bowl with a cold bottle of water from the fridge.

He then went to the cabinet, picked two new chew toys, and tossed them on her bed as he headed to his room to shower.

He stripped off his clothes and cast them into the hamper next to the king-sized bed he'd never used. He'd spent so long sleeping chained to the damned bolder that he'd never been able to sleep in a bed comfortably unless totally drunk.

Fenrir stepped into the shower naked and turned on the water, letting the frigid spray pelt his skin before it warmed. Then he lathered himself up, and as he was about to rinse off, Grace's face floated into view.

Beautiful long, rich blonde hair with golden highlights. Curves that pushed out and sucked in to create the perfect hourglass. Hips ready to be hung on to. Plump, pouty lips

begging for a kiss. And soft deep colored eyes that threatened to swallow him whole.

Fenrir couldn't stop himself from stroking his length at the thought of her. He envisioned her without all the makeup and wet hair from being with him in the shower. Her soft fingers wrapped around him, touching him, tempting him.

It didn't take more than a minute before he climaxed. He leaned on the shower wall and hung his head in his hands. Why had he done that? It was so disrespectful to her. Someone like Grace didn't deserve to have a monster like him thinking of her like that. But somehow, he couldn't help it. He'd met her less than twenty-four hours ago, and still, he couldn't help how she made both him and his beast feel.

Needy. Protective. Hungry.

Maybe... maybe it would be better if he tried to forget her. To leave her to her simple life and not taint her with his evilness.

Pictures flashed into his mind of things he'd done for both his father and the Three Guardians Security firm. The people beaten, tortured, and murdered. Yes, he'd done all of it for a good reason, but still, the other gods never did it themselves. Never got their hands dirty. Whenever someone needed to be taught a lesson, asked for information, or made to disappear, it was Fenrir's job to make that happen. Not his father's. Not Tyr's. Not Vidar. Not Hermódr. Only him. Only he was monster enough to do what needed to be done.

His phone rang in the other room where he'd forgotten to take it out of his jeans pocket again.

Fenrir took a shuddered breath and stepped out of the shower. He walked naked to his jeans and grabbed his phone.

“What?”

Loki chuckled. “I thought you would have been more cheerful, considering I have news about your mystery lady. Hel, I thought you'd have been here the moment Val mentioned it to you.”

“You took me to your place, not mine. Layla needed to go out and to be fed.”

At that moment, Layla trotted into the room with a new stuffed octopus and jumped up on Fenrir’s bed before beginning to lick it.

He was about to tell her to get off the bed, but at least someone got us out of it. Besides, the guilt from having left her alone so long made him feel he owed her at least a few minutes on it.

“Right. I forget about her. Sorry. Anyway, her name is Grace Thomson, and she works at Odin’s place.”

Fenrir growled, thinking of Grace dancing at Odin’s. Wearing less than she had the night before. Men leering at her. Wanting her. Throwing money at her.

“Easy. She’s not a dancer. She’s a waitress.”

A waitress. He’d still seen how waitresses could be treated by the demigods, vampires, demons, and more that visited the place. Though he was glad she didn’t have to deal with customers as a dancer, being a waitress didn’t make him feel more at ease.

Fenrir strode to his dresser and pulled out a vintage Def Leppard t-shirt. “Thank you for helping me. Your vow is fulfilled. I forgive you.” He went to hang up his phone.

“Wait. That’s it?”

Fenrir picked up a pair of jeans from where he’d thrown them a few days prior. He sniffed them and wracked his brain, trying to remember what he’d told Loki he had expected the night before. “You said you would find her. I said I would forgive you if you did. You did it. Vow fulfilled.”

Silence stretched over the line for a minute. “Just like that. You forgive me for everything that’s happened in the last thousand years?”

Fenrir slid his jeans up his thighs and thought about it momentarily. Honestly? No. He didn’t. But he would. Loki

had fulfilled his part of the promise. Now it was up to Fenrir to do the same.

“Fen, I don’t expect you to just forgive me like that. I didn’t even have to do much to find her. It wasn’t hard at all. But I would like you to at least try to forgive me. Not now. Not all at once. That won’t work, and it wouldn’t be honest. But just... try. And when you are ready, I’ll be here. And I’ll wait. I’ve waited this long.”

Fenrir’s throat squeezed. Well, what the hell did he say to that?

“Okay,” he finally managed. “I’ll try.”

“Good. But before you go there to see her, I need you to do something for me.”

“What?” Fenrir barely paid attention as he tried to button his jeans.

Loki sighed. “I have a client. A woman. She’s...”

Fenrir stopped listening to the details as his gut clenched. “Send me the address and details,” he cut in.

Loki stayed silent for a minute. “Thank you.”

Fenrir shut off his phone and looked down. No reason to put on clean clothes to beat the shit out of someone. He grabbed a black t-shirt and a pair of cargo pants from his hamper and smelled them - even though he knew they wouldn’t smell since he only ever wore clothes once before washing them.

He’d do the favor for his dad, and then he’d change and go see Grace.

He looked at the text on his phone with the details. *Man. Beat his wife. She’s in a coma. Here’s the address.*

Fenrir pulled on his pants as his beast rose and snarled. He shoved his phone in his pocket, slid on his steel-toed boots, and stomped to the kitchen. He whistled, and Layla trotted in, octopus still in her mouth. She stared at him momentarily, then dropped the octopus and nudged him with her nose, leaning her body against his. Fenrir didn’t know how she knew when

he was about to do something he didn't want to, but she always had.

He rubbed her ears. "Don't worry, girl. I'm not gonna die and let you starve here alone. I can't die until I teach you how to open the fridge by yourself and pour yourself water." He chuckled, and his thoughts turned to Grace once more. "Maybe I'll have someone for you to meet with me soon. You have to be nice to her, okay? Because... I think she might actually be meant for me. But if you didn't like her, that would be a deal breaker. So I really need you to like her. Okay?"

Layla sat and licked his face, making Fenrir smile. "Okay, enough of that. You have fun with your toys, and I'll be back in an hour to change clothes. Promise."

And he did promise. Because in an hour and fifteen minutes, Fenrir wanted to be walking through the door of Odin's place. He wouldn't let anyone or anything mess with his plans of seeing Grace again. Seeing her and making her his.

CHAPTER 8



GRACE LOOKED AT THE CLOCK. SHE'D BEEN AT WORK FOR almost four hours. She blinked. That couldn't be right. Sure enough, the clock read two p.m.

She shook her head. She barely remembered anyone she'd met or served because Fenrir had consumed her thoughts.

Her friend's words had rattled around in her mind until she could no longer stand them, and then she had been forced to excuse herself for a bathroom break. She'd locked herself in a stall and prayed to her mother, the Moon Goddess, to please help her understand what was happening to her.

As usual, her mother hadn't replied. But she'd felt calmer after those few moments, and just as she'd started to leave the bathroom, Vivian and Brigeeta had rushed in. Vivian just barely hit the toilet before throwing up, splashing red liquid everywhere. It hadn't taken Grace's wolf sense of smell to know that Vivian was throwing up blood.

"Is she okay?" Grace asked.

Brigeeta looked up from where she was holding Vivian's hair out of the toilet. "Yeah, she'll be fine. She just had some bad blood."

"Bad blood?"

Brigeeta chuckled. "I told her not to bring home that pestilence demon from the Speed Dating event last night, but she wouldn't listen. They never have good blood." Brigeeta shook her head.

“He was hot,” Vivian choked out from inside the toilet bowl. “And he said he was clean. I believed him.”

It had been at that moment that Grace had decided Vivian wasn't a good judge of character and that no matter what she or Brigeeta or anyone else said about Fenrir, she wasn't going to make a decision about him until she found out for herself.

She opened the door to the bathroom to the sounds of Vivian puking again and got back to work. Her thoughts of Fenrir had consisted strictly of his intense eyes, strong jaw, heavenly scent, and hard body that she was pretty sure could have been used as basketball court material.

She walked to the bar, and Odin pushed a tray of drinks her way. She knew she should be terrified of the Norse god, but somehow, she wasn't. It surprised her, but she assumed being the daughter of a Goddess herself had given her some kind of immunity to fear of other immortals. It was the mortals that scared her, if she was being honest. They were so much more intense. Always trying to prove themselves and take, take, take. She knew immortals could be like that too, but honestly, she'd not experienced that with even one of the gods or demigods she'd run into in the Underworld. Especially the Norse gods. They may be cocky, but she'd not found a conniving or mean one amongst them.

Grace walked her tray to the table and handed the drinks to her patrons.

“Here you go, guys.” She smiled.

One of the regulars gripped her wrist lightly, and she turned back. He threw her a pointed tooth smile.

“When are you going to give in and marry me?” he asked.

Grace laughed. He'd asked her that a dozen times over the past months.

She slid her wrist from his grip and patted his shoulder. “When you can shift into a wolf and both outrun me and best me in a wrestling match.”

His buddies laughed heartily.

“That’s never gonna happen,” one said.

“You have a better chance of Lucifer promoting you to general of the army than have that happen,” said another.

The demon chuckled and winked at Grace. “You never know. It could happen.”

She snorted. “Well, when it does, you let me know.”

She turned from the table and stepped toward another one when she stopped, and the hairs on her neck stood up. Her spirit woke up so suddenly that weird sensation passed through her. Like an electric wire had attached to every fiber of her body.

She turned slowly to find Fenrir standing at the bar staring directly at her. Was that it? Was he it? That feeling she’d felt so many times while at Odin’s? Had Fenrir been in the bar those times?

His gaze bore into her, and she wasn’t sure if she should go to him or run out the back door.

“Grace?” Odin beckoned her over.

Her feet felt like lead as she moved toward the two gods. She was still a good twenty feet away when Fenrir’s scent invaded her, making her mouth water to lick him to see if he tasted like oranges.

Stop that! Her cheeks flushed.

Again, he wore a heavy metal band t-shirt and low-slung jeans. Rings adorned his fingers that she hadn’t noticed before, and several earrings ran up his earlobes. But it was his hair that surprised her the most. He’d pulled it back in a bun, and she saw for the first time that the sides of his head were shaved short. Underneath the short hair just above his right ear, a deep jagged scar marred his scalp, running upward and disappearing into his long hair.

She growled, wanting to know who had hurt Fenrir.

Seriously? The dude is forever old. It could have been anyone.

The thought made Grace almost gasp. How the freak old even was Fenrir?

By the time reached the bar, she was hugging her tray so tight she feared she might crush it.

“Grace,” said Odin. “This is Fenrir. I think you two met last night at the Speed Dating event?”

Grace nodded, her throat so dry she couldn’t even swallow air if she’d tried.

“He’d like to speak with you,” Odin said.

Grace broke her gaze from Fenrir for the first time and looked at Odin. “I... uh... my break isn’t for another hour.”

Odin waved her off. “You can take it now.”

She looked back at Fenrir, who stood completely still, not moving an inch, like a living rock and roll god. In that moment, she pictured him holding an electric guitar and smashing it on the stage for thousands of adoring fans.

Grace’s skin flushed, and she nodded. “Let me just... uh... my purse-”

“You don’t need it,” Fenrir said, his voice rumbling like thunder even though it didn’t seem like he was yelling.

“Why don’t you take her downstairs?” Odin offered. “Take my room. No one will bother you.”

Fenrir looked to Odin and inclined his head. “Thank you.”

“I’ll send down some food.”

Fenrir looked back to Grace. She fumbled with her apron, trying to untie it, and in the process, dropped the tray to the floor. Before she could bend over and pick it up, Fenrir grabbed it and set it on the bar.

Embarrassed, she finally got off the apron and shoved it under the bar.

Fenrir held out his hand to her, and she looked at it for a moment before slipping her fingers into his. His large,

calloused hand wrapped gently but firmly around hers, sending a shiver through her body.

Neither spoke as he led her through room after room to a set of stairs she'd never noticed. He pulled her down them and then down a series of cement hallways until they came to a grand set of heavy wooden carved doors.

He reached out, and a ripple of magic traversed the door and faded away as he turned the large branch-shaped handle of one of the doors and pushed it open. He stepped to the side, and she walked under his arm into the space beyond.

She stopped in the middle of the main room and took everything in. It was like an expensive suite in a hotel, only with a completely Norse feel to it. Heavy wooden night tables and a wardrobe stood on one side. Moss-green walls cocooned the place like a deep forest. The sounds of running water sounded from somewhere she couldn't pinpoint. And a massive solid gold bed sat awaiting the Norse god of gods.

"What... what is this place?" she asked. Surely it couldn't be Odin's home. She expected him to have something much larger.

"You know about the fight club, right?"

She nodded. She'd heard of the arena where fighters could air their grievances with each other, take out their frustrations, or simply fight for some extra cash.

"This is one of the recovery rooms. But this one is just for Odin." Fenrir crossed his brawny arms over his enormous chest and leaned against the heavy oak table.

"Are... are they all like this?"

Fenrir shook his head. "They are all different. They're nice, but only a few are as nice as this."

"You mean there are other rooms with solid gold beds big enough for elephants?"

A whisper of a smile crossed his face. "Nope. That is a specialty reserved for just Odin's room."

She nodded, and the two stared at each other for a long minute.

“Why did you wear so much makeup last night?” he asked.

The question caught her off guard. “Uh... my roommates did my makeup and hair.”

“But the dress was yours?” he asked, looking her up and down.

She fought the urge to cover her bare middle. “No. Brigeeta found it in the dancer’s dressing room.”

“Do you dress like that often?”

“Never.” She barely got the word out.

“I like you better this way.”

“What way?”

“Covered and natural.”

Covered? He called a midriff and poofy short skirt covered? “Well, then you’ll probably be even more pleased to know that I only wear this because it’s my uniform. If I have any say in what I’m wearing, I prefer a shirt that covers my entire torso and jeans.”

He nodded as if mollified.

“How did you find me?” she asked.

“Would you rather I hadn’t?”

She shook her head. “I didn’t mean it like that. I just meant... well, it’s not like I gave you my number or anything. And I know you didn’t follow me home.”

“I couldn’t find your scent.”

She nodded. Ah, yes. A gift from her birth mother. She was able to conceal her physical form, but only at night and only while the moonlight shone down.

He studied her for a moment. She wanted to go to him and rub the creases out of his forehead and force him to relax.

“Why couldn’t I smell you? I can smell everyone.”

Grace swallowed. "I... I don't know," she lied.

Something crossed his face as if he could tell she'd lied to him, and in an instant, he stood less than six inches from her. He towered over her, and her heart thundered, but in her stomach, butterflies wooshed around in a giant tornado.

He peered down at her. "You aren't scared of me." It wasn't a question.

"Should I be?"

"You ran from me. I thought it might have been because I frightened you."

She shook her head.

He searched her face as if looking for something specific. "Why did you leave?"

"I... I had to go," she whispered.

His eyes narrowed, and he lifted a hand to her cheek but didn't touch it. "That's the second time you've lied in sixty seconds. I don't like it. I don't like lies."

Her brow crinkled. "How do you know I'm lying?"

"My father is the god of lies. Being able to tell when people are lying is in my nature."

She thought for a moment. She didn't want him to think she was a liar. "I left because I was scared."

"But not of me?"

She shook her head, and his palm finally cupped her cheek. The warmth of his calloused skin scratched her face and contrasted with the cool metal of his rings. She didn't pull away, and just like the night before, he leaned in and sniffed her neck.

A strange rumbling sound emanated from him, almost like a lion's purr but deeper and more intense. The very sound of it made her relax and reach for him. She rested her hands on his chest, and his muscles quaked beneath her palms. The rumble grew stronger, and he pulled his face from her neck and looked into her eyes.

“What are you? No one has ever made me feel... Not in a thousand years... What is it about you that makes me...” It was as if he couldn’t seem to get his words out.

“Makes you what?” she asked breathlessly.

“Makes me want to do this.”

Without warning, his lips met hers. Fireworks exploded inside her, and her spirit howled in delight. Without thinking, Grace fisted her hands in his t-shirt and pulled him closer. His hands moved around her crushing her against him. She parted her lips and swiped her tongue over his bottom lip, unsure she was doing it right. She’d never kissed someone before, but with Fenrir, she wanted to. She wanted to kiss him and so much more.

The rumble sounded in his chest again, and Fenrir parted his lips and allowed her tongue to tangle with his. At first, he didn’t do anything, but after a moment, he met her tongue with his own and flicked at it.

Minutes passed as their light fluttery kisses turned into something deeper. Needier. More urgent. Fenrir’s hands roamed her back, stroking her through her shirt, and Grace found herself exploring his exposed skin. She ran her hands up his bare arms feeling every muscle and scar. Then she ran them down his chest to his stomach, feeling the stacked muscles through his shirt. Damn, he could give Ares a run for his money.

Grace didn’t know long they stood in the middle of the room kissing, but when a knock sounded on the door and Fenrir pulled away, they were both panting. Grace’s body screamed for his touch and the feel of his naked skin on hers.

“What?” Fenrir called his eyes still on her.

“Food.”

“Leave it.”

The sound of a tray hitting the floor and footsteps walking away sounded through the door.

“I... I’m sorry,” said Fenrir. “I got carried away.”

Grace shook her head. “No. It’s my fault. I’m the one who... well... wanted it. I don’t want you to think I do that a lot or anything I don’t. I mean, I never do. Like, as in, I’ve never kissed a man before. Not like that, I mean. Or a girl or anything. I’ve never...” She threw her hands over her face, more embarrassed than she had been in her entire life. No. Not embarrassed. Mortified. She was utterly and totally mortified. Why could she suddenly not seem to shut up? An Adonis like him had probably been with dozens of women. Hundreds. And here she was, babbling like a middle schooler with her first crush.

Fenrir pried her fingers from her face that she was pretty sure resembled a tomato.

He laced his fingers into hers. “I’ve never kissed a woman before either. Or a guy.”

Grace couldn’t help but laugh. “You don’t have to say that to make me feel better.”

His eyebrows slammed together. “I told you I hate lying.”

She blinked several times, trying to process his words. “But surely you’ve... you know... had sex before.”

He swallowed hard, and a strange expression crossed his rugged features. “No.”

No? What did he mean, no?

“No? As in... you’ve never had sex? Not once? Not even in... wolf form?”

“Not with anyone. In any form.”

She opened her mouth but then closed it again.

“This surprises you,” he said.

She nodded. “You’re a thousand years old. Haven’t you ever loved someone?”

He shook his head.

Her chest constricted, and sadness wracked her. A thousand years and never once had he been in love. Or even

just had sex with someone for companionship or comfort. Or hell for need.

Grace turned her face and kissed his knuckles. The scent of blood tickled her nose, and she looked at his hand. She gasped and gripped his fingers.

“Your hand. What happened?”

Fenrir looked at it and pulled his hand away, shame marring his face. “It’s nothing. It’ll heal within the hour.”

Grace reached for his hand, but he put it behind his back.

Anger flared inside her, and she growled. “I want to see.”

He slowly pulled his hand from behind his back and held it out to her.

Grace’s mouth fell open. All five of his knuckles were split open and scabbed. She grabbed his other hand. The other was the same, except that two of his fingernails were split down to the bed.

“Fenrir!”

“It happens all the time.”

“All the time?” She stared up at him. “What do you mean all the time?”

“I... It comes with the territory.”

“What territory? Cage fighting?”

Fenrir looked away. “Something like that.”

Grace growled and pulled his face back, forcing him to look at her. “I want you to tell me. I want you to tell me everything,” she said soothingly.

CHAPTER 9



FENRIR'S MIND CLASHED WITH HIS BEAST. HIS BEAST TOLD HIM to tell her. That she was the one. She'd hear him, and she wouldn't run away. But his mind screamed at him not to tell her. That he was a monster and the moment she found out the truth about him she'd run horrified to the other end of the world to escape him.

"Fenrir," Grace said sternly.

It surprised him how strong she was. Even for a shifter, she was exceptionally strong. She'd pulled his chin back to her with ease as if he'd been a child.

He licked his lips. He wanted to tell her. To trust her. But he'd just found her. Hell, he'd just kissed her. What would happen to him if she couldn't handle it? He didn't know if he could live if she looked at him with those beautiful eyes and told him everyone had been right. That he really was a monster who deserved to be alone.

"Fenrir, you have two choices," she said. "You can tell me why your knuckles look like this, or we can just chalk this up to an amazing first kiss story and go our separate ways. It's up to you."

He opened his mouth, but nothing came out. He couldn't. He couldn't tell her the things he did for work. The people he hurt. The way part of him enjoyed it. He couldn't. Not her. Not with her looking at him like that.

She nodded and dropped his hand. "It's ok. I understand. We don't really know each other anyway." She headed toward

the door and had just pulled it open when he rushed up behind her, pressing his body against hers and flattening her against the wood.

His body exploded with need as he came in contact with her lush, soft curves again. He wanted nothing more than to grab her luscious hips and wrap himself in her warm velvetiness. A whine escaped him.

He caged her against the door with his body, and she tried to turn to look at him, but he placed his hand on her hip, stopping her.

“No,” he said. “I can’t have you look at me.”

“Okay,” she stammered.

He pressed his forehead into her hair and breathed in deep. If this was his last moment with her, he wanted to remember her scent. Wanted to bottle it and keep it with him forever. Reminding him of why he couldn’t have nice things. Why he didn’t deserve good things. Because he wasn’t good.

“I... hurt someone today,” he said, closing his eyes.

He listened, but her heartbeat didn’t quicken, and her breathing remained even.

“Do you do this often?” she asked.

He scrunched his face up tight. He needed to tell her. Needed her to understand. “When I’m asked.”

“Who asks you to?”

“My father. Other gods. People who need help.”

A moment passed.

“So, you only hurt people who deserve it?”

“Yes.”

Silence.

He breathed her in again, his gut tightening and his beast whining. He fought the urge to spin her around and see what her eyes held.

Her hand reached back, and she found his. “Do you ever kill anyone?” she asked in a small voice.

He held his breath. “Yes.”

“Do you like it?”

What the hell? Why did she have to ask him that?

“Sometimes.” He barely got the word out. He’d never told another soul. Not anyone. But he felt compelled to tell her everything. Let her look inside him. See what he never showed anyone, and beg her to accept him anyway.

When she said nothing, he stepped away and released her hand. “I understand if you want to go. Trust me, I disgust myself.”

Grace turned and looked at him. Several expressions played over her face, and then something unexpected happened. Her eyes turned golden. Alpha golden.

Fenrir was about to ask about it when she marched past him and into the bathroom. She rummaged in the cabinets for a minute and then returned with a bottle, some cotton pads, and some ointment. She motioned for him to sit on the bed.

Fenrir did what she wanted without protest. She sat next to him, opened the bottle of peroxide, and dabbed it on the cotton pads.

She hadn’t left. She was taking care of him. Tending to him. And though he didn’t need it because the cuts were already almost healed, he didn’t stop her.

“Tell me about the person you hurt today,” she said without looking up.

His beast shifted uneasily. There was no going back now. He needed her to see what he was. He needed her to know what she was getting into if she gave him a chance. “What do you want to know?”

“Who was he?” She dabbed at his knuckles.

“I... I don’t know his name. His soon-to-be ex-wife is a client of my dad’s. He put her in a coma. She will most likely

never walk again. He threw her down a flight of stairs to make the beating look like it had happened when she fell.”

Grace nodded, lifted his hand, and blew lightly on his knuckles until they were dry.

The sensation shot straight to his groin, and he fought the urge to jump from the bed and shield her from his animalistic nature.

“I take it the police couldn’t prove what he did?” She looked up at him.

“They can now. I got a confession out of him.”

She opened a tube of ointment and brushed it lightly over his scabs with her fingertips. “But won’t his confession be considered coerced?”

“I drove him to the police station. He ran inside and spilled everything. They do that a lot. The minute they see what I really am, they’re willing to tell the police everything just to be kept safe.”

Grace wiped her fingers on one of the cotton pads and looked up at him again. She nodded. “Then you did the right thing.”

Fenrir blinked. He couldn’t have just heard her right. “W...what?”

“You brought a woman abuser and potential murderer to justice. That’s something that even the government can rarely do.”

“I don’t understand.” He honestly didn’t. Her words just didn’t make sense to him. How could anyone, especially someone as sweet as Grace, believe that what he did was good?

She sighed and cupped his cheek. “Fenrir. I cannot say hurting people is a good thing, but it can be a necessary thing. You most likely saved another woman from being abused like his soon-to-be ex-wife. Do I wish you didn’t have to resort to those things? Of course I do. But I am not naïve. I know that sometimes the only way to end violence is with violence.

Especially when it is in the defense of someone who cannot stand up for themselves.”

Fenrir tried to wrap his mind around her words, but in the time that it took him to even begin to understand what was happening, she stood, pushed herself between his legs, wrapped her arms around him, and kissed him.

Fenrir grabbed onto her, clinging to her. It wasn't true. It couldn't be true. Could it? Could she really not see him as a monster?

Grace broke the kiss and looked at him. “My mother is the Moon Goddess. It's why you couldn't track me last night. I have this way of not being found if I don't want to be. I can't explain it, I never could, but there it is. That's the truth.”

“Wait... you're the daughter of the Moon Goddess?”

“Yes. The Goddess Luna. It's a long story, but to make it simple. My adoptive mom, Fay, wanted a child. She was an alpha and my father's fated mate. He was the alpha of our pack. Fay couldn't have kids. So she prayed to Mother Luna to help her have a child. My Goddess mother, being the generous immortal she was, slept with my father and then offered me to my adoptive mother since she couldn't raise me myself with me being half-mortal. Mom Fay agreed. Mother Luna told my mom that someday I would need to leave and fulfill my destiny. Fay agreed to let me go when the time came. When Fay told her mate, my father, about me, he freaked out and left before I was even a week old.”

So her biological father had cheated on his fated mate with the Moon Goddess and then had run when he found out about Grace? What a betraying bastard.

“And your adoptive mom, Fay?” he asked.

“She raised me as her own. She was the best a girl could ask for. She kept my lineage a secret because she never wanted me to be used or taken against my will because of who my biological mother is. She died seven months ago and told me I had to come to the underworld.”

Fenrir didn't know what to say. "Your adoptive mom, Fay, sounds like an amazing woman."

"You have no idea. Since she, too, was an alpha, she took over the pack when my dad ran. She kept them together and focused. With her loving care, they flourished."

Grace's stomach growled, and she grabbed it. "I'm sorry. I guess talking about myself and making out makes me hungry."

As if on cue, Fenrir's stomach growled as well.

They both laughed.

"Would you like to sit and eat?" he asked.

Grace nodded and walked to the table.

Fenrir stood from the bed and walked to the door. She'd accepted him. She'd really accepted him. At least initially. Now he just needed to show her that he was meant for her in every way she needed someone.

He smiled as he pulled the door open and picked up the tray of food. Now there was only one thing left to do. Convince her that she was meant to be his mate.

CHAPTER 10



AFTER THEY'D EATEN, GRACE LOOKED AT HER PHONE AND sprung to her feet.

“Oh my gosh! I have to get back to work. I've been gone for over an hour and a half.”

Fenrir stood. “Okay.”

She suddenly felt strange and unsure of what to do. Should she hug him? Shake his hand? Kiss him again?

She licked her lips, and before she could think on it too long, Fenrir closed the distance between them and pressed his lips to hers. Grace's body took over once again, and she leaned into him. She didn't want to leave him. She wanted to stay and continue to feel his strong arms around her, his lips on hers, his hips pressed into hers.

His tongue mingled with hers, and she smashed into him harder. He growled deep in his chest, making Grace want to roll over submissively. A soft mewling sound escaped Grace's lips. Fenrir dug his fingers into her hair and drew her against him until their bodies were completely flush. His fangs lengthened, and she slid her tongue over their tips as they filled both her mouth and his. She reached around him and grabbed his tight rear. He broke the kiss and dragged his fangs down her neck.

The sensation shot straight to her core, and she skewered her lengthening nails into his buttocks.

He nipped at her playfully, his fangs grazing her skin as he kissed and sucked on her throat. Grace's body began to pulse

with a need she'd never felt. An ache deep inside her like a mixture of cramps and something else. A need to touch him. To feel him. To be filled by him.

“What... what are you doing to me?” Fenrir moaned, rubbing his hard erection into her belly. “It’s like my brain has stopped working, and my animalistic instincts have taken over completely. It scares and fascinates me.” He cupped her face. “You scare me.”

“What do you mean?” she panted.

“We’ve only just met but... I feel like if I’m without you, I will die.”

Grace swallowed hard. She felt exactly the same, but how was it possible? They hadn’t even known each other for twelve hours, and yet something inside told her that if she had to give him up now, her spirit would never join with another. Was it possible he was the one? The one her mom, had told her was her destiny. Her... fated mate?

“I... I don’t understand. I’ve never wanted a man before. Never craved a man’s touch so badly before. We barely know each other, but I feel like...” She couldn’t say the words.

Fenrir laid his forehead against hers. “Will you come somewhere with me tonight?”

“Where?”

He blew out a low breath. “My family has a monthly dinner, and they expect me to be there.”

She thought for a moment. “You mean your dad and siblings?”

He shook his head. “Odin, Frigg, and all the other Norse gods will be there.”

She tried to keep the surprise off her face. He considered them family? The idea hit her straight in the gut. The people who’d done unspeakable things to him because they were afraid of him. Those were the people he considered family?

“What time?”

His eyes opened, and he pulled his head from hers. “Seven.”

She nodded. “What should I wear?”

“Anything. It doesn’t matter.”

“Really? So I could wear what I wore last night?”

“Only if you want me to kill every male at the dinner.”

She chuckled. “What are you wearing?”

He looked down. “This.”

She nodded. “Okay. Where do you live? I’ll meet you there.”

He shook his head suddenly. “No... uh... I mean... I should pick you up, right?”

His tone told her he didn’t want her to see his place. “Right. Sorry.”

They stood silently for a moment longer before he kissed her once more. “Thank you for coming. I know this is all quick, but...”

But what? He thought, what she thought? That it was possible they were fated mates? Her spirit self sure as hell thought so.

She backed away from him, but he continued to hold her hand. “I’ll see you at six-thirty then.”

He nodded and shoved his hands into his pockets. “Wait. Where do you live?”

She walked back to him, pulled his phone from his pocket, and typed in her address. Then she typed in her phone number and let her cell ring once before hanging up and handing it back to him.

Fenrir looked at it, and a small smile twitched his lips.

“What?” she asked.

He looked at her and showed her his phone screen. “Now I know where you live and your phone number. You can’t get away from me.”

She widened her eyes playfully. “I didn’t think of that. Hmm... maybe I need to take that back.”

She lunged for the phone, but he held it over his head with one hand and wrapped the other around her waist, tugging her into him.

She sucked in a sharp breath and rested her palm on his chest.

He bent his head and nuzzled her neck planting soft kisses on her skin. “I won’t let you go, little Goddess.”

Her stomach fluttered, and his words shot straight to her core. *Goddess*. She’d not been called that in months. “I don’t think I want you to,” she breathed.

His fangs grazed her neck, and he moved to kiss her, but she pushed against his chest and backed away.

“If you kiss me again, I have a feeling I’m not going back to work today, and I have bills to pay, so that’s not an option.” She continued to back toward the door until she bumped into it. “I’ll see you tonight.”

“Six thirty.”

She nodded.

“I’ll be there.”

She fought the cheesy urge to let him know she would be waiting for him. But she sure as hell would be.



FENRIR WATCHED Grace disappear out the door and then sighed. His beast whined and urged him to go after her, but as much as he wanted to, he couldn’t. She had a job and a life, and he couldn’t interrupt all that just because his beast wanted to mate her and make love to her until neither of them could walk.

Instead, he dialed his father.

Loki picked up on the second ring. “Fenrir. You okay?”

“Yeah,” he said.

“I heard that Rod Hailey turned himself in and confessed to hurting his wife.”

Fenrir looked down at his knuckles that had healed completely, remembering the soft caress of Grace’s lips on them. “Good.”

“I’ll send the money to your account.”

Fenrir wanted to say something else but stopped himself. “Thank you for finding Grace.”

“Have you seen her?”

Fenrir knew that Loki’s asking was only for show. He had no doubt that as soon as Fenrir had been out of earshot, Odin had called Loki to ensure Grace would be safe with him.

“Would it be okay for me to bring her to the family dinner?”

“Of course.”

Fenrir could practically hear the smile in his father’s voice.

“Thank you,” was all Fenrir could manage.

“Well, then, I look forward to meeting her tonight.”

Fenrir nodded. “Yeah.” Suddenly Fenrir began to second-guess his idea of bringing her. What if the others tried to hit on her? Fenrir wasn’t sure he could control himself if that happened. Hell, someone could be up there at Odin’s, hitting on her at that very moment.

His beast snarled.

“Fen?”

Fenrir’s attention snapped back to the phone. “Yeah... uh... we’ll see you tonight.”

Silence filled the line for a moment.

“Are you okay?” Loki asked.

“Yes. No.” Fenrir sat on the bed and rubbed his forehead. “I have no idea.”

“Why don’t we talk about it tonight, okay?”

Fenrir nodded. “Sure.”

“See you then, Son.”

“Bye, Dad.” Fenrir hung up the phone and threw his hands over his eyes. It barely even registered that he’d called Loki dad because he was too busy with the visions of Grace being hit on by every male in the bar.

“Stop,” Fenrir told himself. “You’ll drive yourself crazy again. Get a hold of yourself.”

Grace’s face floated into his mind. Memories of her soft yet needy lips on his. Her hands on his body. Her warm belly pressed against his stone-stiff erection.

Fenrir groaned. Damn. He’d almost lost it with her. Lost all control. Laid her on the bed and stripped her bare so he could taste every delicious inch of her. He needed her. Wanted her. In his arms. In his bed. In his heart.

Fenrir growled and jumped from the bed. He needed to cool down. If he didn’t, who knew what he would do...

He looked to the bathroom, stripped off his clothes, stepped under the cold shower spray, and grabbed his length once more. Every stroke of his hand brought him closer to the edge, but it was his mind that he was trying to calm most. Her eyes. Her mouth. Her hands. He wanted to claim them all as his, lock her away just for him, and keep her forever.

As Fenrir climaxed to the sight of Grace’s face for the third time, he moaned and cursed himself. He was so screwed. So damn screwed.

CHAPTER 11



GRACE FELT FENRIR'S ARRIVAL BEFORE HE RANG THE doorbell. She raced down the stairs to keep Vivian or Brigeeta from answering the door. She pulled the door open as he lifted his hand to knock. His eyes widened as she stood before him, breathing hard.

“Hey,” she said unsuccessfully, trying to sound normal.

His eyebrows scrunched together as he looked her up and down. “Hi.”

She gave him a wide smile but immediately pulled it back when one of his eyebrows cocked skyward.

“Who is it?” Vivian called from the other room.

Grace glanced over her shoulder, grabbed her jacket off the hook by the door, and then shut it before either of her roommates could see. “Going out. Be back later,” she called. “Ready?” she asked, stepping onto the porch and linking her arm with his.

Fenrir looked down at her and then at the door and back again. Her gut clenched.

“What’s going on?” he asked.

She gave him a smile. “Nothing. I’m just excited to go.”

His nostrils flared, and he crossed his arms over his button-down shirt. She realized he wasn’t wearing what he said he would. He was dressed more business casual than rocker god. A dark button-down shirt mostly covered the Pink Floyd t-shirt from earlier in the day. She followed the thin pinstripes of

the shirt down to his trim waist and the heavy black leather studded belt that sat there.

“Grace?”

Her gaze shot back to his. *Damn*. Dating a godlike lie detector was not going to be easy. Especially since she'd spent her entire life having to lie about who she was. Lying was something she'd become accustomed to.

She groaned inwardly. “I don't want my roommates' opinions on us.”

“They don't like me,” he said flatly.

She stepped forward and set her hand on his forearm. “They don't know you. Besides, I don't need their opinions on what I'm wearing, my makeup, hair, or hair or... everything.”

He relaxed a fraction, and slowly his gaze slid over her body. “What's wrong with what you are wearing?”

She looked down. She wasn't super dressy in her oversized magenta flowy silk blouse and black leggings paired with black flats, but she didn't think she looked bad. She looked at him.

“I like this much more than the mini chocolate bar wrapper-sized dress you wore last night. Not that you didn't look amazing in it, it's just I don't know that I would be able to control myself if you were wearing something like that again.”

She snickered. “That was all, Brigeeta. The make-up and hair were all Vivian. This is me. Just me.”

He reached out and touched her face. “I'm glad to see you, just you. You're much too beautiful to smear your face with all that fake colorful gunk.”

She laughed. “Wow. Make-up is gunk, huh? I'll try to remember that.”

He leaned in close and nipped her earlobe. “I mean it. I don't want you to wear that stuff when you're with me. And no fake fruity sprays, either. I don't want anything to dilute the heavenly scent that is you.”

Grace moaned as he kissed her neck and then looked deep into her eyes.

“Tell me you won’t be fake with me.”

She nodded. “I couldn’t if I wanted to, could I?”

He kissed her lightly, and it took everything inside her to keep from pulling him into an all-out make-out session again. Better yet, pull him up to her room and strip him naked- her roommates be damned! Hell knew she’d heard them enough times with their various one-night stands.

Fenrir pulled his lips from hers and threaded her hand in his. “Come on,” he said. “Let’s get this over with.”

Over with? Sadness filled Grace. That’s how he felt about his family. He didn’t want to be with them. The dinner was an obligation he wanted to just get over with. Suddenly Grace wasn’t as sure she should have agreed to go so readily, but then her spirit took over. Yes. She most definitely should go. Fenrir needed someone who was on his side. And there was no way in hell she would let them treat him as anything but what he was - a god.



FENRIR’S AGITATION grew with every step he took closer to Loki’s building. As if sensing his tension, Grace leaned into him and rubbed the back of his hand with her thumb.

He looked down at her, and she leaned her head on his shoulder as they walked to the front door of the large white marble building. He punched in the code, and it buzzed open.

Once inside the elevator, even Grace’s presence couldn’t stop his beast from pacing. Since being chained to the rock, his beast had never been able to relax with the other gods. They had caged his beast with their magical chains, and it had been his beast that had gone insane far sooner than Fenrir had himself.

“Hey.” Grace pulled Fenrir’s face to hers. “You got this. And if anyone tries anything, they’ll have to deal with me.”

He couldn't help the snort that escaped him. He doubted very highly that even with how strong Grace was, she'd be any match for his family members.

She pulled his lips to hers, and he drank her in. Her soft body brushed against his, and he couldn't help but reach down and squeeze her bouncy round-backside.

Bad idea.

The moment he did, his erection kicked so hard he thought it would rip his jeans. His beast roared to life, wanting to bite, mate, and make her his.

The door rang and then opened. He pulled away from her quickly but then realized he had a problem. A big problem. A big, erect problem. Right in the front of his pants.

He placed his hands over his groin in an effort to hide it. Grace looked down and then back up at him. He would have been mortified if it hadn't been for the fact that the smile and sweet blush that painted her face were only exceeded by the scent of her arousal that wafted off her making him want her all the more.

"Here." She wrapped her arms around his waist, pressing her ample breasts into his stomach.

He coughed and fought not to grab her. "I don't think that's gonna help, Love."

She untucked his dress shirt and pulled it down over his hips and groin.

She examined her handy work. "That should work. Well, that and me walking in front of you."

No way in hell would he let her walk in front of him. He wanted her nowhere but beside or behind him in case of danger.

The doors began to close, and Grace jumped out of the elevator. Fenrir growled and grabbed her arm, pulling her to him as he stepped out and scanned the hallway. He knew no one could get onto his father's penthouse floor unless Loki

allowed them. Even so, he didn't like thinking that something could happen to Grace because she got out first.

“Fenrir, I'm a big girl. I've been getting out of elevators myself without being attacked by mechanical gnomes for a while now.”

He looked down at her. Mechanical gnomes? The twinkle in her eyes told him she was attempting to joke with him. But it didn't work.

When he'd ensured no unwelcomed guests were there, he walked the few steps to the front door and rang the bell.

Inside, people laughed and chatted. His hold on Grace's hand intensified, and she kissed his arm lightly.

“Relax. I'm the one who's supposed to be protecting you, remember?”

He gave her a tight smile.

Heavy footsteps clunked to the door, and when it opened, he came face to face with the one man he'd dreaded more than any other for close to a thousand years. Tyr. Norse god of war. His boss and the one person he regretted most ever letting into his life.

Tyr looked over Fenrir and then Grace. He noticed them touching, and Fenrir growled, pulling Tyr's attention back to Fenrir's face.

Grace held out her hand. “Hi. I'm Grace.”

“Tyr.” Tyr held out his hand to shake, and Fenrir growled.

Grace turned and placed her hand on his chest. She looked into his eyes, and the soothing expression on her face instantly calmed his beast.

Holy shit! How had she done that?

Fenrir rubbed his thumb over the back of her hand and took a breath. She turned and smiled at Tyr but didn't offer her hand again.

“It's a pleasure to meet you, Tyr,” she said.

Tyr looked between her and Fenrir with a strange expression. “The pleasure is all mine.” He waved them in with his prosthetic, metal hand.

Fenrir fought the urge to pull her close as Tyr stepped out of the way and let them in but stopped himself. He’d been the one to ask her to come. He never should have brought her if he hadn’t been willing to let her meet the family.

“Tyr is head of the security company I work for,” said Fenrir as they walked through the door.

Fenrir breathed as he got farther away from Tyr’s suffocating aura.

He and Grace walked into the front room of his father’s penthouse. Where it used to be decorated in creams and whites, it was now decorated in stronger tones. Varying shades of blacks, grays, and blues. Dotted with brighter colors from Freyette’s toys, blankets, and accessories.

All around, the other gods laughed, talked, and snacked. They noticed him and Grace one by one, and the chatter died down.

A growl wound in his gut, and he wanted to haul Grace over his shoulder and jump from the balcony.

“That’s Vidar,” Fenrir pointed to a large man covered in tattoos. “And that’s Hermódr.” He pointed to the man next to Vidar. “They own the security company with Tyr.”

Grace nodded. “Who is that?” She motioned to a dark-haired god with eyes like the moon.

“That’s Hödr. He’s blind. He owns a music shop. Records, CDs, and stuff. But he also has an affinity for instruments. He can help people find instruments completely in tune with their auras.”

“Wow. That’s interesting.”

“Fenrir.” A tall man wearing glasses with strawberry blond hair walked up and clapped Fenrir on the shoulder. “How are you?”

Fenrir nodded and then motioned to Grace. “Váli, this is Grace. Grace, this is Váli. He owns a bookstore and is a professor at a university topside. And our all-around resident know-it-all.”

Grace chuckled and shook Váli’s hand. “Yes. We’ve met many times.”

“Haven’t seen you this week. Has your appetite for books finally begun to be fulfilled?” Váli asked.

Grace chuckled. “I’ve been a bit... preoccupied. But don’t worry; you will see me soon.”

Váli nodded. “I hope so. I got an entire new section of books I think you might like.”

“Brother.” Hel stepped out of the shadows.

Though she wore her black armor and her face held not even a smidgeon of happiness, he could not help the relief that flooded him at the sight of her.

“Sister.”

Grace stiffened against him, and he rubbed her arm.

Hel looked at Grace. “Father told me you were bringing someone. He didn’t tell me you’d be bringing someone so... special.”

Fenrir wondered how Hel knew Grace meant a lot to him, but then he’d never been good at hiding things from her. Plus, he’d wondered if she’d inherited some of Loki’s psychic abilities on more than one occasion, but he’d never asked. Mostly because he didn’t want to know.

“Ah! My children.” Loki advanced on them, carrying Freyette. She squirmed and reached for Fenrir the moment she spotted him.

Freyette leaned away from their father, and Fenrir caught her in both hands before she nose-dived to the floor.

“I will try very hard not to take offense at how she loves her older brother more than her dad.”

Hel snorted. “Can you blame her?”

Freyette tugged on Fenrir's sideburns and giggled as she smooshed her squishy face into his and drooled on his chin.

Grace looked on with a curious expression on her face.

"This is my little sister, Freyette," said Fenrir.

Grace reached up and stroked Freyette's golden head. "She's adorable."

"And this is my father, Loki." Fenrir nodded.

Loki held out his hand to Grace, and she shook it.

"It's lovely to meet you, my dear. I've heard quite a bit about you." Loki gave her a large smile.

"You have?" Grace glanced up at Fenrir.

Fenrir hoped Loki didn't say anything more. Mostly because he couldn't recall everything he'd told his dad while in a drunken stupor.

Loki winked. "Only good things, I promise."

Hel rolled her eyes. "Yuck. Do you have to flatter everyone?"

Loki looked genuinely surprised. "It's not flattery, Daughter if it's true."

Hel shook her head. "I need a drink." She looked to Fenrir. "I'm around if you need me."

Fenrir nodded.

Hel stalked away as Val approached with a tray of small meatballs.

"Hello," said Val. "You must be Grace."

Grace nodded and smiled. A wave of anxiety wafted off Grace, and Fenrir pulled her into his side.

"I'm Val. Better half of this joker and mother of that little angel."

Fenrir couldn't help but chuckle.

Loki feigned hurt. "Me? What did I do?"

“What have you not done?” Val retorted.

“Your place is beautiful,” said Grace. “I really like your couch especially. I’ve always wanted a black couch.”

Val nodded. “It’s much more practical to have a black couch with a baby instead of a white one.”

“I agree,” said Grace.

Val looked pointedly at Loki. “See. I’m not the only one who thinks black is better than white.”

“I never said white was better than black. I simply said they are equally hard to get baby spit up out of.”

Val and Loki began to bicker, and Grace giggled before turning to Fenrir. She smiled up at him with an affection that made him want to kiss her right there in front of everyone.

“I never realized there were so many of you,” said Grace. “I guess I need to brush up on my Norse god history.”

Fenrir chuckled. “This isn’t all of us, actually. Baldur isn’t here tonight, and neither is Heimdall.”

“I met him. Heimdall. I met him at Frigg’s when I first arrived. He’s the one who showed me through the portal. But I don’t think I know who Baldur is.”

He looked from her to Freyette and suddenly wanted nothing more than to take her home, make love to her, fill her with his seed, and spend his days with her and their young.

“Fenrir.”

He looked up at Loki.

“Let’s go out on the balcony and have a beer.”

Fenrir looked at Grace. “I... uh...”

She patted his arm. “It’s okay. Go. I’ll play with Freyette.”

He wanted to object, but he didn’t. Instead, he nodded and handed Freyette to Grace.

Fenrir went out into the warm night air with Loki and looked over his shoulder. Grace settled in the middle of the

front room on a baby blanket. She pulled over a basket of toys and sat them in front of Freyette.

Loki handed him a mug that had previously not been in his hand.

Fenrir took it and sipped the Valhalla ale without taking his eyes from Grace.

“How is it going?” Loki asked.

Fenrir’s gaze flicked to him and back to Grace. “I... I don’t know what is happening to me.”

Loki chuckled. “I would have thought it was obvious. You found your mate.”

Fenrir glanced at his father again. “How can you know that? You’ve only just met her.”

Loki snorted. “Even Hödr, who has been blind for over a thousand years, could see that she is your mate. Fen, you’ve never even looked at a woman before, and now it’s all I can do to get you to keep your eyes off her for thirty seconds so we can chat.”

“I... I don’t want anyone to hurt her.” At that moment, Thor and his wife Sutrelle introduced themselves. Followed by Váli and Hermódr.

Fenrir took a step forward, but Loki grabbed his arm.

“Easy. They are just saying hello. They aren’t going to do anything.”

“Why not?” Fenrir asked. “She’s the most beautiful creature in the world. And they like to bed, beautiful creatures. What’s to say they won’t try to bed her too?”

“Well, for one thing, they know she came with you.”

“That makes no difference.”

“And for another thing, I warned them that if they tried anything with her, I’d cast a glamour spell on them that made them look like dung trolls for the next hundred years.”

Fenrir looked at his father for the first time to see if his words were true.

Loki smiled, and Fenrir couldn't help but chuckle. His father really was trying to help.

Eventually, Tyr made his way over to Grace, followed soon after by Hermódr and Vidar.

Fenrir snarled, and his beast leaped to the surface.

“Easy, son,” said Loki.

“Why is it so hard with Tyr?” Fenrir growled. “I know he forgave me for biting his hand off, but I just can't seem to forgive him for his betrayal.”

“He knew at the time that his injury or death was a possibility. It's why he forgave you so easily. He made that choice beforehand. But you did not choose what happened to you. You were a victim. Forgiveness is harder in those situations.”

He'd never thought of it like that before.

They watched Grace for several minutes.

“She fits in like she was made to be one of us,” Loki finally said.

“That's because she was.”

Loki's eyebrows drew together. “What do you mean?”

Guilt slapped Fenrir. He wasn't supposed to say anything about her being the daughter of the Moon Goddess Luna.

“Oh... uh... nothing. I just meant that I think you're right. It does feel like that.” He sipped his ale and watched Grace as she smiled politely at Tyr, Hermódr, and Vidar but seemed no more interested in any of them than she had been of Hel. Polite, not interested.

“So, have you taken her for a run yet?”

Fenrir stiffened. “You know I don't run.”

Loki sighed. “How many times have I told you that your wolf side-”

“Beast side.”

“Wolf side,” Loki pressed. “Is nothing to be ashamed of. He is part of you, and if you and Grace plan on being together for a while, you will have to show him to her sooner or later.”

Fenrir thought about Loki’s words for a minute. “You know to be honest, for a shifter, Grace doesn’t seem to have many shifter tendencies. And she’s not mentioned we go on a run together or that we let our... inner animals meet.”

He wasn’t sure what that meant. Usually, once shifters found the one they might want to be with, they let their animals meet soon after to ensure they were on board with the union. But Grace hadn’t even suggested they let their inner animals meet. Did that mean she wasn’t sure she wanted to pursue a relationship with him?

Fenrir felt Loki watching him, and he shifted his position and swigged the rest of his ale. It immediately refilled, and he downed that mug before setting it down.

“Fen, if I might make a suggestion.”

Fenrir shrugged.

“If you want Grace to be part of your life, I suggest upgrading your housing situation?”

The idea caught him by surprise. “What do you mean?”

“Where you live doesn’t give off the most romantic vibes. It’s been a great bachelor’s house and huge dog house for Layla, but as for bringing a woman home? Not so much.” Loki produced a set of keys. “Here. Take these. It’s not as grand as this place, but it’s nice. I’ve never used it. It was gifted to me by a client with no cash to pay their bill.”

“In the Underworld?”

Loki nodded. “Consider it a gift from me to you. A... way to help you move forward in your new life and to help you shed the skin of your past.”

Fenrir looked at the keys. His dad was giving him a place to live. Loki had never given him a place to live before. Not even when he was born did he live with Loki.

“I don’t know what to say,” said Fenrir.

“Say yes,” Loki replied. “If not for me and not for you, then say yes for Val and Freyette.”

Fenrir blinked several times. “I don’t understand.”

Loki clapped him on the shoulder. “Let’s eat, and then I’ll explain.”

Loki opened the door back into the front room, and Grace looked up and smiled at Fenrir as if she’d sensed him. Remembered suddenly how at Odin’s place she’d turned and looked directly at him, and again when he’d gone to knock on her door, she was already opening it. Was it a coincidence? Or was it something more? He filed it away to ask her later.

He shoved the keys into his pocket. Loki was right. Grace would deserve much better than just some tiny house on the edge of the Underworld. She deserved something like the penthouse he stood in. A palace. A Valhalla of her own. He strode toward Grace. She slipped her fingers in his and squeezed.

“All good?”

He wrapped his arms around her tightly and kissed the top of her head. Her scent of jasmine and rain washed over him, calming him once more.

He only wished he could do the same for her.

CHAPTER 12



GRACE TRIED TO CALM HERSELF AND HAVE A GOOD TIME AS she sat with the group of Norse gods, eating and talking, but Fenrir's apparent discomfort and agitation had her on edge. She couldn't imagine being surrounded by people who had wished her dead for over half her life. Eating with them. Being forced to make small talk and forget everything they'd ever done to you. If she'd been Fenrir, she probably would have snapped and told them all exactly what she thought of them. His ability for restraint was something she admired greatly.

"Can I get you more food?" Fenrir asked when she set down her fork and knife.

Grace smiled and shook her head. "I've had two steaks. I think I'm good."

Fenrir glanced around the table. "Do you want potatoes, or salad, or anything?"

She squeezed his hand under the table. "I'm good. Really. The food was amazing, and I've had my fill."

He searched her face as if looking for something.

"Fen, if I was hungry, I'd eat more."

Seemingly satisfied with her answer, he returned to the plate of food he'd barely touched.

"Aren't you hungry?" she asked.

Fenrir nodded. "I am but... I'd prefer to eat in private tonight."

Grace's gut clenched. He'd been so alone, so isolated, for far too long.

"Well, why don't we leave then?" she suggested.

He looked at her.

"If you're hungry and you don't feel comfortable, we should go. I wish you'd said something earlier. Now I feel bad for eating so much when you were suffering."

He shook his head. "I liked seeing you eat."

Her eyebrows scrunched together. "Really?"

He nodded. "I liked that I could bring you here and feed you, even if it was food provided by someone else."

At that moment, she wanted to take Fenrir back to her bedroom and feed him by hand. To slide small amounts of meat into his mouth and watch as he savored every bite. To share dessert with him. To even drip hot fudge sauce down his rigid torso and lick it off inch by inch.

"Are you okay?" Fenrir asked, breaking through her fantasy.

Grace coughed, and her cheeks flushed. What the hell was getting into her? They were a family gathering.

"Yes," she said hoarsely.

Fenrir's gaze raked her face, and something inside tugged at her. Warmth flooded her core, and a slight pulsation started at her most sensitive spot. Fenrir's eyebrows drew together as he sniffed the air.

The urge to tackle him and kiss him right there almost overtook her. Fenrir moved closer to her, inhaling deeply.

Grace couldn't help the small sound that emanated from her throat at his nearness. His eyes brightened, and he moved closer still. His hand slid into her lap and rested between her thighs.

Grace swallowed hard, holding back a moan of pleasure as the small pulses in her core grew steadily stronger.

“What’s happening?” she whispered.

Fenrir shook his head but never took his eyes from hers.

She gripped his hand and slowly pushed it higher. She needed him to touch her. Needed to feel him touch her. To relieve whatever was building inside her. What he was making build inside her.

Fenrir’s hand tensed, and his eyes flashed as she slid his hand even higher. His large fingers sat just at the juncture of her thigh. He watched her with an intensity she’d never seen. A low growl built in his chest, and he softly moved one finger to the apex between her thighs. The contact of his finger on the fabric there almost sent her bolting out of her chair. She gripped his hand, and he softly swirled his finger against the material again.

Grace bit her lip so hard she drew blood. Her core pulsed harder. Wanting him. Needing him.

He took his thumb and wiped the tiny drop of blood from her lip before looking at it and then sucking it into his mouth.

Grace’s restraint broke at the sight. “We should go,” she whispered.

Fenrir nodded and stood. He gripped her hand so tight she feared he might break it. Together they started for the exit, her mind fogged with need, her body humming with desire.

“Fenrir?” Val questioned. “Where are you going?”

“Fen?” Loki called. “Valkyrie is speaking to you. You’re being rude.”

Fenrir stopped, his breathing harsh. He looked at her and then over his shoulder at Loki.

“I... I need to go.”

Val looked at Loki pleadingly and stood.

“But we have an announcement,” said Loki.

“Don’t go,” said Tyr. “Stay. Eat with us.”

“Yeah,” said Hödr. “I haven’t even gotten to meet your friend yet.”

“We were planning to head down to the races afterward,” offered Váli. “You should both come. Show Grace what you can do in that car of yours.”

Fenrir shook his head. “Later.” He took a step toward the door.

“No,” Loki commanded. “Not later.”

Fenrir stopped. He looked down at Grace, conflicted, and then at his father.

Anger replaced need inside Grace as her spirit self snarled in anger. She didn’t like Loki ordering Fenrir around.

“We thank you for dinner, Lord Loki, but Fenrir said it’s time for us to leave, and so, it’s time for us to leave.” She looked at him hard and then tugged on Fenrir’s hand.

The look of total adoration in Fenrir’s eyes made Grace’s heart melt, and she wondered if he’d ever stood up to his father.

“Please,” Val pleaded. “We would like for Fenrir to stay. It won’t take long. Just a few minutes. Then you can go.”

Grace looked at Loki, who seemed irritated by Grace’s words but admiring at the same time.

All the other gods looked on, waiting to see what would happen. Odin watched her with particular interest. She’d barely even noticed her boss sitting at the other end of the table the entire time, and she suddenly wondered if her sharp words might cost her her job. Not that she couldn’t find another job easily, but still. She didn’t want to be on the wrong side of both Loki and Odin.

She looked up at Fenrir and squeezed his hand. “It’s up to you. Do you want to stay?”

“No. But... If Val asked, then I should.”

Again Grace didn’t like Fenrir being guilted into doing something he didn’t want to, but in the end, it had to be his

decision. It was his family, after all.

“Then we’ll stay if that is what you choose. Not what you feel obligated to do, but what you choose for yourself.”

Fenrir nodded and headed back to the table. And this time, she didn’t have to move Fenrir’s hand. He automatically rested it where it had been before, starting right where they had left off. His thumb rubbed slowly back and forth across her sensitive nub, and Grace rested her own hand inside Fenrir’s thigh, squeezing lightly as the sensations inside her grew more intense. Damn, if he made her first climax come while sitting at a dinner table, she was going to torture him later.

“So,” said Hel. “What’s this all about? What’s your big announcement?”

Loki smiled and looked around the table. Val picked up Freyette from her high chair, and the couple stood together.

Hel groaned. “Oh no. Please don’t tell us you’re having another child.”

A dagger appeared out of the air, and Loki hurled it Hel’s direction. She flicked it away with the back of her hand, and it lodged itself in a pillar nearby before disappearing as quickly as it had appeared.

So Fenrir wasn’t the only one who had daddy issues in the family. It made Grace wonder just how close the Norse gods were.

“No,” Loki said. “We are not having another child, yet.”

“No, we aren’t.” Val looked at him pointedly.

“Yet,” Loki repeated with a grin.

The two shared a look, and Val shook her head.

Val didn’t want more kids? Grace couldn’t imagine having only one child. She wanted a whole brood of children. Boys and girls. She looked at Fenrir and wondered what it would be like to bear his children. To carry them in her belly and feel them grow inside her. To feel his strong hands on her stomach as their child kicked inside her.

He would be a fantastic father. A father unlike the one either of them had. The way he acted with Freyette made that perfectly clear. She imagined him on the floor with their children. Wrestling. Laughing. Playing.

Fenrir stroked her with two fingers, and she let out a small gasp, pinching the inside of his thigh before moving her hand between his legs.

He smiled down at her, and her breath caught. It took every ounce of restraint she had not to climb on top of him right there.

“We have given it much thought and have decided that we want an extra layer of protection for our daughter if something should happen to us,” Loki said, breaking through Grace’s haze.

Fenrir’s grip on Grace’s thigh tightened a fraction.

“We would like for Fenrir, Son of Loki, and Freyette’s older brother, to be godfather and guardian to Freyette,” said Val.

Fenrir’s grip went slack on Grace’s leg, and his fingers stopped moving. Every eye went to him, and a tense silence formed around the group.

A moment passed, and then another.

“Thank the gods,” Hel finally said. “I was terrified you would task me with raising the little thing. I can’t even stand adults, let alone children.”

A snort escaped someone and then a laugh from another. Soon the entire table erupted in laughter, followed by applause.

Grace smiled at Fenrir, and he looked at her, confusion playing over his features.

“Say yes,” she urged. “Tell them you will protect your little sister.”

“I will protect her,” he said. “I’ll protect her with my life.”

A loud cheer sounded around the table, and then mugs of ale appeared out of nowhere. Everyone grabbed a mug and began clinking them together.

Grace picked up the mug in front of her and sipped it. She'd never been a beer drinker and now was no exception, but in light of what had just been bestowed on Fenrir, she had to join in.

Fenrir raised his mug to his lips as if in a daze. He looked down at Grace, and she smiled at him.

"They couldn't have picked a better man," she said. And she meant every word. With Fenrir as her protector, no one would ever dare harm a hair on the girl's head. And Goddess help any man who broke the poor girl's heart.



THE OTHER GODS came around one by one and clapped Fenrir on the back. They congratulated him and talked to him, and treated him like he was one of their own. Even Odin.

The feeling made him uneasy, yet he craved it all the same. All he'd ever wanted was to belong. To join in. To be part of the family. And now it seemed he was.

Once more, Vidar, Tyr, and Hermódr invited him and Grace to hang out for the evening, but Fenrir wasn't ready.

Hödr approached him with his dog Rolo. Fenrir bent and pet Rolo and spoke for several minutes about how Rolo and Hödr were doing and if there was anything Hödr needed help with.

Fenrir watched Grace as she spoke with Sutrelle and Frigg, and Meili. They smiled and laughed like Grace had always been a part of their group. It made Fenrir happy to know that Grace was so well-liked.

"She's lovely," said Tyr.

Fenrir stiffened where he stood near the door, watching her.

Tyr ambled closer to Fenrir. “I can tell you care for her a great deal.”

Fenrir ground his teeth together.

“I’m happy for you.” Tyr set his hand on Fenrir’s shoulder, and Fenrir fought the urge to shove it off. “Loki said you are working on forgiving him.”

Fenrir took a deep breath, knowing where the conversation was headed.

“I’d like to get to the point where you could do the same with me.”

They stood for a long minute, and Tyr’s hand dropped away.

Tyr sighed. “Maybe it’s time I settle down myself.”

Fenrir finally looked at him. He’d never seen Tyr with a woman. He knew Tyr had been with women. Lots of women. Human women. Demigods. Everything in between. When you were the Norse god of war, you tended to get a lot of women. But Fenrir had never seen him with anyone special.

“Maybe it would be good for you,” Fenrir said finally. “And the others as well.”

Tyr looked at Fenrir. It was the most Fenrir had said to Tyr in a hundred years. He wasn’t sure why he’d said it, but he meant it. If they all found happiness, maybe they would all move on and heal.

CHAPTER 13



FENRIR WALKED GRACE TO HER FRONT DOOR. HE'D BEEN unusually quiet on their way back, but she'd decided not to pry. He'd tell her when he was ready. She couldn't imagine all of the emotions and feelings racing through him. The night had been beautiful, yet she could also feel his pain.

They stepped up on the porch. All the lights were off inside, and Grace took it as a sign that her roommates were out clubbing somewhere. The idea made her heart flutter and her gut clench as she remembered the feel of Fenrir's feathered touch on her core under the table. She'd never felt anything so amazing before.

She came to a stop outside the door and turned to him. "Do you want to come inside for a bit?"

He looked at the door and then at her. "Do you think your roommates would be all right with it?"

"They aren't home. All the lights are out."

He looked at her for a moment and then advanced on her, backing her into the front door. He slid his hand up her arm until it tangled in her hair at the base of her neck.

He leaned in and sniffed her neck, making her quake. "I liked how you smelled tonight," he said. "At the table. When you let me touch you through your leggings, I loved how you smelled. It was why I couldn't eat anything. I was afraid I would scarf it down, turn my attention to you, and attack you right then and there."

“I liked how it felt when you touched me,” she whispered. Damn. When had she become that bold?

Their eyes connected, and he slid his free hand slowly down her stomach to her core.

Grace sucked in a sharp breath as his thumb found her sensitive nub and rolled over it as it had before.

“You like it when I do that?” His words came out as mere curiosity. No vibrato. No goading. Mere interest.

“Yes,” she panted.

He rolled his thumb over her again, and she yanked his lips to hers.

“Fenrir.” She kissed him hard.

Lips smacking. Teeth clashing. Tongues mingling.

He rubbed over her nub again, and she shuddered. The thrum in her core from earlier pulsed again like a drum.

“Fenrir. Come inside,” she panted between kisses.

“Are you sure?” he asked.

“I want you, Fenrir. I need to feel you inside me, and I’d rather it was in a private room than out here on the porch for anyone to see.”

He breathed heavily, and his eyes grew anxious. “I... I don’t know...”

She palmed his length and slid her hand up and down. He groaned and grabbed onto a piece of the door jamb behind her, cracking it in two.

“I don’t know either,” she said. “But I’m pretty sure we can figure it out.”

“Grace I... I don’t want to hurt you.”

“Why would you hurt me?”

“I told you I’ve never... and I just don’t know if I’ll be able to control myself. The things you do to me. The way you have me feeling inside. It’s like I want to devour you and make

love to you at the same time. You make my beast rage inside me. He wants to touch you. To feel you. To-

“Why do you call him beast?” she asked.

“Because that’s what he is.”

She touched his cheek. “He’s a part of you. A protective, strong, judicial part of you. And you, Fenrir, are not a beast. Neither is he.”

He opened his mouth to speak but then shut it again and shook his head. “How do you do that?”

“What?”

“Say things I’ve needed someone to tell me my entire life? Things I prayed so long for someone to say to me that I finally gave up hoping for. Things that even I didn’t know I needed to hear.”

She wanted to tell him that it was because she was meant for him. That it was because she was meant to be his. That it was because he was her destiny. Instead, she kissed him soft.

“Because you require the truth of me. So I tell it to you.”

Fenrir licked his lips, and trepidation flashed across his features. “Do you... want to go on a run with me?”

A cold wash of fear traversed Grace’s body. “Right now?” She tried to keep her voice even. “I mean, if that’s what you want, I just... thought we had other things on our minds. Why? Do you want to go on a run?”

Fay’s words floated back to her. “...*you aren’t like the rest of us. You are different. You know what I speak of...*”

He looked at her strangely and then kissed her forehead. Over her eyelids. Down her nose. Across her chin. And down to her throat. “No. I have no interest in running right now.”

His fingers stroked her again through her leggings, and she grabbed onto his shoulders, allowing the contact and unable to think of anything else.

He nipped and licked her throat.

Grace moaned, and he nipped her harder, his fingers rubbing her through the thin fabric.

She grabbed onto his shoulders harder as her nails and fangs lengthened. “Fen-” She couldn’t get his name out before a shudder gripped her as a building sensation settled in her core.

She let out a mewl as she sucked in short quick breaths.

“Fen, yes. I... can’t...” Her words came out incoherent, and she had no idea what she was saying as she felt his fangs lengthen and scrap the skin below her ear. Simultaneously, he pressed down on her nub, and her world exploded. Her body pulled taut, and her spine snapped backward, arching her chest into his. He pinned her against the door with his hip as his hand and lips worked her body into a fevered pitch.

She cried out, and then his lips were on hers, clamping down on her mouth as a small scream erupted.

Her legs trembled, and she wrapped her arms around his neck tight, hanging on as shockwaves of pleasure ripped through her. As her climax relaxed, so did her body.

But even as the waves of pleasure crested and slowed, the ache in her core began again. It wasn’t enough. She needed him inside her.

“Inside,” she rasped.

His eyes glowed golden in the moonlight.

“Yes,” he replied. “I need to be inside you.”

Grace spun around and whipped the door open. Heat and need tugged them both up the stairs. When they reached the landing, Fenrir spun her around and lifted her off the floor. She wrapped her legs around his waist and kissed him again.

He backed her into the wall and pinned her there as he nipped down the side of her neck and over her collarbone. Grace raked her hands through his hair as he teased her breasts through her blouse.

“Which room,” he growled.

Grace looked around the hallway, trying to remember where she was. The right. Hers was the door on the right.

“Behind you,” she panted.

Fenrir kissed her again, his lips hot and needy. He turned and walked them into her bedroom. Grace dropped to her feet and backed up a pace, trying to catch her breath.

Fenrir stalked toward her, but she raised her hand to stop him.

“Wait.”

He stopped and shook his head. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to-”

She stepped up to him and pressed a finger to his lips. “Wait,” she said again. She laced her fingers in his and walked him to her bed. Pushing on his shoulders, she made him sit on the edge. The queen-sized mattress groaned under his weight but held. He looked up at her, his eyes alight with desire. She ran her fingers down to the hem of her blouse and pulled it over her head. Fenrir reached out to touch her but stopped him. She unclasped her bra and dropped it to the floor. It’d barely hit the rug before he wrapped his arms around her and buried his face in her breasts. She raked her nails down his back as he suckled her into his mouth.

The thrumming inside her grew with each suck, flick, and tease of his mouth.

She reached behind him and gripped the edge of his t-shirt. Pulling it over his head, she tossed it across the room, pushed him back on the bed, and straddled his hips. She licked down his torso, tasting every salty inch of his rigid muscles. He moaned, whined, and bucked his hips against her core, making her want him all the more.

“Grace.”

She reached the waistband of his jeans and undid the button and zipper. He dragged her back up his body and flipped her onto her back. His vast frame blocked out the ceiling as he dove in and kissed her hard. His hand moved down her body and rubbed her again through her pants.

Shockwaves of pleasure shot through her, and she grabbed his rear and pulled his hips into hers. For several minutes they did nothing more but kiss while allowing their skin to caress each other. But when Grace felt she could wait no longer, she pushed Fenrir's jeans down around his hips and traced her fingers up his length.

Her eyes widened. Though she couldn't see his erection, she sure as hell felt it. She'd not even felt half of his girth when she'd stroked him through his pants at the table.

Fenrir shuddered and growled low in his chest. She stroked him gently, barely able to get her hand to close around him.

His head dropped to hers. "Grace."

He barely got her name out, but the sound of it on his lips made her smile. She may not know precisely what she was doing, but he seemed to like it.

She stroked him again, and he groaned as his mouth dropped to her shoulder and he nipped her skin.

"I... I need to feel you," he said. "To be inside you."

He fumbled, getting his pants off as she slid off her leggings. Fenrir grabbed them and flung them to the floor. He poised above her and parted her thighs with his. He pressed against her entrance, but she grabbed his arm.

Trepidation coursed through her. "Fen... I... I've never... You're so big."

As if reading her fears, he swooped in, kissed her gently, and ran his fingers between her folds. Grace arched into his touch as her body grew slick. He'd rubbed her through her leggings not ten minutes before, but even so, it didn't compare to the feel of his hands on her bare skin.

He slipped one large finger inside her, stretching her. He worked his finger in and out of her as she gripped him tighter.

"Fen, I need you."

His gaze connected with hers. "Are you sure?"

No. But her body wanted him just the same. She nodded.

He pulled back his hand, lined himself up with her entrance, and pressed inside her.

Grace bit her lip as his extreme bulk spread her wider than she thought possible. Pain shot inside her, and she bit her lip harder.

“Oh, my gods, Grace. You are so tight. You feel so...”

Fenrir pushed further in, and something tore inside her. She let out a silent scream as he continued to push onward. A tear leaked from her eye, and when he'd seated himself fully inside her, he lifted his head to look at her.

His eyes went from bliss to terror in an instant. “Grace?”

He started to pull out, but she stopped him.

“It's okay. I just... I need time to adjust. You're just much bigger than I had anticipated.”

He shook his head. “No. This is wrong. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, Grace. We should have waited. I should have waited.”

She cupped his face and forced him to look at her. “Fen. I wanted this as much as you.”

“We should stop.”

“Do you want to stop?”

His expression went from terrified to conflicted. “I... I don't want to hurt you.”

“Pain is inevitable in life. It's pleasure that makes the pain worth it.”

Fenrir pulled out, and when he went to pull her into his arms, he sniffed and then let out a whine as he looked down.

“Grace, you're bleeding.” He jumped from the bed. “I hurt you. I made you bleed. I am an animal.” He shook his head. “A monster. All I do is destroy. It's all I'm good for. I should never have done this.”

Grace's heart crushed inward. “Fen, stop.”

He paced back and forth, hitting himself in the head.

Her spirit self called out to him. Grace rose painfully from her bed and went to him, grabbing his hands.

“Fen. Stop. Stop.”

He refused to look her in the eye.

“Fenrir, look at me.”

He refused to for a moment longer, and then his tormented gaze connected with her.

“Fen. The blood is nothing. It always happens the first time.”

He shook his head. “I hurt you. I broke you. I break everything.”

Grace wrapped her arms around his middle and held him tight. “Listen to me. I wouldn’t lie to you. I’m telling you this is natural.”

“You’re in pain.”

She nodded. “Yes. There is some pain, but it’s okay. I’m okay.”

He searched her face, and a whine escaped him as he cupped her cheeks. “I should kill myself for hurting you.”

“Don’t talk like that. This was our first time. It didn’t work as well as we had hoped. But there’s time to keep trying. Besides, there are other things we can do.”

“Other things?”

Grace smiled and led Fenrir back toward her bed. For a moment, she thought she’d succeeded in calming him, but the moment she let go of his hand to lay down, he shook his head and grabbed his pants, pulling them on.

He reached for his shirt. “I... I can’t.”

“Fen. Don’t go,” she pleaded. “Don’t run from me. Stay. Please. I need you.”

He whined, then his eyes traveled to a dark spot lower on the bed. She looked down at the bloodstain on her comforter and knew it was useless.

“I’m no good for you, Grace. You are an angel. A Goddess of moonlight, and I don’t deserve you. I don’t deserve good things. I’m nothing more than a beast.” And without another word, he raced from her room.

“Fenrir!” she shouted.

Grace followed him to her doorway in time to see him jump over the balcony to the lower floor, open the front door, and run out into the night.

She stared at the spot he’d been moments before, her spirit side telling her to follow him. But she couldn’t.

Her first time. It was her first time having sex, and she’d chased the man off.

A tear leaked from her eye, and her heart broke for Fenrir. She wished more than anything that she could kill every one of the Norse gods who had ever told him he was a beast.

CHAPTER 14



FENRIR HOLED UP IN HIS HOUSE FOR TWO DAYS WANTING TO flog himself for hurting Grace. He'd wanted her more than he'd ever wanted anything in his life. Even so, he should have known he wouldn't be able to have her without ruining things. He always ruined things.

His phone rang for the dozenth time in two days, but he didn't answer. He lay on the floor of his room with his arm over his eyes, replaying every moment with her. Her touch. Her taste. The feel of completeness when buried inside her. The fight to control every instinct inside him that told him to bite and claim her right there. All of it. From the look in her eyes to the sound of her moans to the tear that streaked her cheek when he realized he was hurting her.

A bang sounded on his front door, but he didn't move. Whomever it was could just go the hell away.

Layla whined and lifted her head from his shoulder.

Again a loud bang reverberated through his small house. Layla went to stand, but Fenrir commanded her to stay put, and she plopped right back down.

The third time the banging fell on the door, the person didn't wait for him to answer. They simply opened the door and strode inside. The scent hit him before the sound of his name did.

"Fenrir! Fen! Where are you?" Loki yelled.

Fenrir groaned. He couldn't see his dad. He couldn't.

Fenrir's phone rang again, and Loki's footsteps stalked down the short hallway to his bedroom. Fenrir didn't look at his father as he entered the room.

Layla lifted her head toward Loki and growled but didn't move. She knew not to disobey a command.

"Fenrir. I've been calling you for two days. What the hell is going on?"

Fenrir sucked in a shallow breath but didn't answer.

For a minute, Loki didn't say anything, and then Fenrir heard him sit on the bed. "Fen. What happened? What is going on?"

Again Fenrir didn't answer. How did he tell his father that he was indeed the monster everyone thought him to be?

"That's it. I'm calling Odin to get Grace over here."

Fenrir shot to his feet, grabbed Loki's phone, and smashed it against the wall. "Don't get Grace. Don't."

Loki stared at him for a moment. Cocked an eyebrow and then snapped his fingers. His shattered phone reformed itself and returned to Loki's outstretched palm.

"First of all, why? And second, please do not throw my electronics like a toddler who hasn't gotten his way."

Fenrir closed his eyes and threw his hands over his face. His gut twisted, and he let out a low whine.

"I... we... after dinner. I took her home, and we..."

"You took her home, and you, what?"

Fenrir looked at his father. Was Loki going to make him spell it out?

Loki's eyes widened. "You made love."

"Yes. No." Fenrir blew out a breath and sat on the bed, hanging his head in his hands. "It was a mess. Literally. I hurt her. There was blood. She was crying..."

Loki sat his hand on Fenrir's shoulder. "Okay. Slow down. Take a breath. What happened exactly?"

Fenrir couldn't believe he was about to discuss the most humiliating moment of his life with his father, which happened to involve the first time he'd ever had sex. His father. King of bedding women.

Fenrir stared at the floor. "We went to her room and started kissing. And she took off her shirt. And I started to kiss her."

Loki waved his hand. "I get the idea. Get to the part where you hurt her. What did you do exactly? Did you bite her? Did your wolf take over? Were you too rough?"

Fenrir shook his head. "I tried to be gentle. I tried to go slow, but it didn't work. She's just so small. So soft. So much more fragile than I had expected. She was beautiful and exquisite, and I..."

"Ok, so when did she start crying? Did she tell you to stop?"

"No. She didn't want me to stop. She said it would be fine. That the blood was normal. But... it couldn't have been. I saw her tears. I know I hurt her."

Loki wrapped an arm around Fenrir's shoulders. "Ahhhh... got it. Grace was a virgin."

"We both were." The words came out before Fenrir realized what he'd said.

"Wait, what?"

Humiliation rained down on him like acid as he looked at Loki and nodded.

"Come on," said Loki. "Let's get out of this room and have a drink."

Loki led him into the kitchen, where they sat at the small table, and Loki produced two shot glasses and a bottle of whiskey. He poured a small drink for himself but poured the glass full for Fenrir. Fenrir drank it, and Loki immediately poured him a second, which Fenrir also downed.

Loki finally sat across from Fenrir. "Okay. Fen. You're over a thousand years old, and you're telling me that you've never had sex. Not once?"

“There was no one I ever felt like wanting to be with. Besides, it’s kind of hard to be turned on by someone whose very scent betrays the fact that they are, in truth, utterly terrified of you.”

Loki blew out a breath, and his eye clouded with emotion. “Fen, I... I had no idea.” His voice steeled. “I should have. I should have tried to do more. To help you more. I am so very sorry, Son.”

The emotion in Loki’s voice was so strong that it chipped away at the walls of anger and resentment Fenrir had built against his father.

“Okay. Well. You are definitely too old for the birds and the bees talk. And it is obviously too late for it as well. You know about sex. What you may not know is that human women, even demigod women, have a sort of barrier inside them, and when they have sex for the first time, it breaks. Sometimes there is pain. Sometimes there’s blood. Grace wasn’t lying to you. It was natural.”

“I don’t want it to happen again. I don’t want to hurt her. But I want her so badly. She’s my one. My mate. I can feel it. These last two days without her have been an agony I’ve never known. Not even when chained to the rock.” Fenrir looked at his whiskey glass. Damn. The stuff had loosened his tongue more than he’d anticipated.

Loki nodded. “Grace is considerably smaller than you, but there are things you can do to help her relax. There won’t be pain from that stupid barrier anymore. That’s gone. But you are considerably larger than she is, so you’ll need to help her loosen up a bit.”

“Can you tell me what to do?”

Loki smiled and poured Fenrir another drink. “I can do better.” He conjured a book out of thin air and placed it on the table before Fenrir. “I can show you pictures.”

FENRIR STARED at the door of Odin’s place and blew out a breath. He could do this. He needed to do this. Maybe going to

see Grace at her place of work wasn't the best idea, but he thought showing up on the doorstep of two vampires and a werewolf might actually be potentially more dangerous to his health than trying to approach her in public.

He pulled open the door and allowed the scents of the bar to wash over him before scanning for Grace. He didn't see her, and his gut clenched. He headed to the bar, and the bartender walked over.

“What can I get you?”

“Uh... I'm looking for a waitress. Her name is Grace.”

He nodded. “She's working a private party in the back tonight.”

“Which room?”

“The purple room.”

Fenrir nodded and headed for the back.

“Like I said, it's a private party,” the bartender called.

“It's fine. I won't interrupt.”

The bartender looked like he might say something more, but instead, he licked his lips and walked to a phone.

Fenrir didn't have much time before Odin got wind of him being there. He jogged across the room to a back hallway lined with doors. One of the doors opened, and a waitress wearing little more than a bikini exited. She smiled at him as they passed each other, and he continued down the hall. His gut clenched tight, and his beast growled, thinking of Grace wearing something like that in front of other men. Or anyone, really. Male or female.

He stopped outside the large party room and stared at the door, listening and sniffing the air. A dozen men, several women, and Grace were beyond. His beast paced.

He just needed to see her. To talk to her. To explain. That's it. He just needed to see her. If she turned him away, it was no more than he deserved. Even so, he needed her to hear him out

at best, and at worst, he needed to make sure she was really okay.



GRACE PLACED another round of beers on the oval table one by one as the dancers at the front of the room moved in time with the music. She didn't judge them for what they did. They seemed to thoroughly enjoy the attention and dancing with hardly anything on. She personally would never be able to do something like that for an audience. Well... maybe she could for an audience of one. Just one.

She set the glass of beer down a little too hard as she thought of Fenrir, and the stein cracked, and beer flowed out. The man in the seat jumped backward to avoid being spilled on.

"I'm so sorry," said Grace. "Sometimes I don't know my own strength."

The group of vampires had been relatively well-behaved for the last two hours. Sure, some of them had gotten a bit handsy at one point or another, but that was par for the course. Grace had laughed it off both times and teased them about not wanting to upset her boyfriend, a big bad shifter. Luckily for her, they hadn't known whether or not to believe her, so they'd opted for settling down instead of pushing her.

Grace set down her tray, pulled the towel from her apron, and began wiping furiously at the spilled beer.

"Damn, Woman," said the vampire. "How freaking strong are you? I thought those things were pretty much indestructible."

Grace chuckled, mopped the rest of the beer onto her tray, and set the cracked mug on there. "I'm so sorry. I'll get you another free beer."

"Dammit! You got it on me," said the vampire next to her.

Grace looked over to see several small spots on the male's shirt.

“I am sorry.” Grace attempted to wipe his shirt.

He pushed her away. “Do you know how much this shirt cost?”

Grace growled and forced a smile on her face as the vampire swayed slightly. She’d tried to keep her distance from the moment she’d laid eyes on him. Something about him had been wrong from the moment she’d walked into the room and asked to take their orders.

“Again, I am so sorry. Let me get some soda water to clean it out. And a free round for everyone.”

The rest of the group whooped and cheered.

Grace turned to go, but the man grabbed her wrist. Her spirit self snarled.

“No,” he said. “You’re gonna either buy me a new shirt or pay me some other way.”

The man who’d stood laughed. “Come on, Jershon, let the girl go. She didn’t mean to.”

The man’s eyes turned red, and his fangs descended into his mouth. “What’s it going to be, sweetheart? Are you going to pay in cash or blood?”

Laughter sounded around the table, and Grace looked at the dancers, who glanced at each other nervously. One of them slid out a hidden panel in the back of the room.

Grace was in no mood to be messed with. She’d lost her virginity two days prior, and since then, she’d not heard a peep from the immortal god who was supposed to be her mate. The ache in her core had grown from dull to almost full-blown cramps in the past twenty-four hours. And she was pretty sure that if she didn’t have real sex with Fenrir sometime soon, her entire uterus would explode.

Even so, Grace continued to keep her smile and voice even. “I won’t give you anything unless you let go of me.”

His grip tightened on her wrist further. “I’ll let go when I say it’s time to let go. And you will give me what I tell you to give me when I tell you to give it to me.”

He jerked her in close, and her tray crashed to the ground.

Great. More to clean up.

Her spirit self snarled and rose inside of her. Grace's blood pumped harder as her fangs descended into her mouth. He looked at her, startled for a moment, and then smiled.

"A female alpha shifter. I've never had alpha before."

"Dude. Let the girl go before we get kicked out," said one of the other guys. "You know whose club this is?"

"I don't care," said the male. "I'm not letting go until I'm paid."

He leaned into her throat, and Grace's patience snapped.

She grabbed him by the hair, letting her nails lengthen. "You really don't want to do that."

"Yeah. And who is going to stop me? You? I don't think so. Do you know how old I am?"

"From how you act, I would say you are newly turned."

"Bitch." He raised his hand to strike her, but Grace grabbed it mid-air and shook her head.

"You really are an asshole." Grace squeezed his wrist in her grip, and after a moment, the bone shattered.

The vampire cried out and backhanded Grace with his free hand.

A roar sounded from the doorway, and Grace didn't need to see him to know who it was. She'd never heard his wolf before, but she knew him instinctively. The timber of his call. The rage. The pain.

Grace moved to stop Fenrir, but she halted at the sight of him. Hair sprouted over his limbs and face. His teeth were elongated and razor-sharp. His eyes had turned completely black, and his nails were the size of scissor blades. The part that hit her the most was that he was still on two feet. He hadn't completely shifted to wolf form.

The vampire looked over his shoulder too late. Fenrir had leaped over the large wooden table, knocking glasses and food in every direction. He grabbed the vampire by the throat and flung him into the far wall like a straw scarecrow.

“I warned you, guys, that my boyfriend was a badass werewolf,” she yelled.

The other vampires jumped to their friend’s defense and attacked, but Fenrir was too strong, and the rage in his eyes told Grace everything she needed to know. There was about to be a bloodbath.

“Fen!” she shouted. “Don’t!”

But he didn’t hear her. The vampires came at him and attacked as a group.

Suddenly a raven flew into the room and landed atop one of the hanging Edison lights. He squawked, but no one seemed to notice him except for Grace.

Grace’s spirit roared in rage, and she jumped into the fray. Grabbing the first vampire by the shoulders, she tossed him off Fenrir as Fenrir grabbed another and ripped his arm out of its socket, dislocating it. The man screamed and dropped to the ground. A vampire bit Fenrir’s neck and Fenrir lifted him above his head before dropping him to the floor and stomping on his face. Fenrir’s t-shirt split as his form morphed and grew larger.

Holy Hel! How big was Fenrir’s wolf? Not good. This was not good. She was getting fired for sure.

“Fen!” Grace yelled his name again. “Stop. I got this.”

Two vampires scrambled out of the room as the one who had attacked Grace got up off the floor and dove for Fenrir, his broken arm wholly healed. Fenrir swiped with his claws and slashed the vampire’s chest open. He staggered backward, and Fenrir advanced, slashing him again and again. Blood splashed the walls and the ceiling, the smell making Grace’s stomach roil.

The remaining dancers screamed and raced off the stage.

“Fen, stop!” Grace shouted above the music.

The vampire whose beer she’d spilled emerged from one of the corners and brandished a knife. He raced at Fenrir, but Grace got there first, and the blade lodged between her shoulder blades. The metal burned and seared her skin. She cried out as she spun in a circle, trying to dislodge it.

Fenrir roared as if he’d been struck himself and turned. He grabbed Grace as she crumpled to the floor.

Suddenly, thunder crackled in the room. The vampire’s eyes widened, and then he lit up like a Mardi Gras float before his skin went black and turned to ash.

Odin stood where the vampire had been, a spear in hand and a raven on his shoulder.

The vampire who had initially attacked Grace slid backward across the floor, bleeding profusely. Odin advanced on him and held his spear over his head. His eyes flashed with lightning, and he brought down the spear in an arc of glowing light. Her assailant turned and crumbled like a burnt cookie.

Fenrir yanked the knife from Grace’s back and tossed it across the room. He sniffed her back and whined.

She sucked in a ragged breath as the pain shot down her arm and across her chest.

Odin turned to the other vampires who were trying to scamper to the door. “Tell your friends that if I see them again, I’ll be able to use what’s left of them to barbecue ribs at my next family cookout.”

The vampires raced from the room, and Odin looked around the rest of the mess. Music still blared from a speaker in the corner. Odin slung his spear at it, and the speaker exploded into a million pieces and went quiet.

Fenrir licked her skin and rocked her back and forth. His pitch-black eyes wild and unfocused. Thick, long, black fur still clung to his enlarged form, and his fangs had grown even longer. If she had been anyone else, the sight of him would have probably terrified her, but as it was, it didn’t. He didn’t. All she felt was love. Love and concern.

She reached up with her good hand and touched his cheek. “Fen. It’s not too bad. I have a tolerance for silver.”

He didn’t reply.

Odin walked over slowly, but Fenrir roared and pushed her behind him as he stood between her and Odin.

“Fen, it’s okay.” She’d begun to sweat as the poison moved across her back and up her shoulders. “I’m okay.”

Fenrir and Odin looked at each other, but neither moved.

“Grace,” said Odin. “The girls told me what happened. I never should have let those assholes have a private party. I take full responsibility. I apologize.”

“Don’t be silly. You weren’t the one who attacked me.” She tried to manage a smile. “I’m just sorry that your room got ruined.”

Odin waved her off. “That’s what deposits are for. And luckily, I’ve got every single one of their credit cards on file.” He looked at Fenrir and licked his lips. “Fenrir. May I check her wound?”

Grace got the feeling from Odin’s stiff wording that he wasn’t used to asking for permission to do anything.

Fenrir growled, and his gaze locked on Odin. Odin’s eyes flashed briefly, but he calmed the storm in his eyes.

“I need to see how bad it is.”

Fenrir looked back at her, his eyes raging and unfocused.

She reached for him. “Let, Lord Odin, look please, Fen. I can’t see the wound from this angle.”

Fenrir looked conflicted, and then he stepped aside. She grabbed his soft furry arm as Odin lifted the back of her uniform shirt and checked the wound.

Grace winced as Odin’s fingers prodded the wound, and Fenrir lunged for Odin. The raven on Odin’s shoulder and the one on the light swooped down and flapped their wings in Fenrir’s face. He swatted them away, and out of nowhere, a

giant black wolf appeared and bared its teeth at Fenrir. Fenrir swung toward the animal and roared.

Nope. She would not be the reason that Fenrir or Odin's familiars were killed.

"Fen, stop!" she commanded. She had never used her alpha command before, but it seemed to work because Fenrir's gaze connected with hers, and he stepped back.

"Hugin. Muninn." Odin waved his hand, and the raven's settled on his shoulders. "Freki, *socraich*."

The wolf growled at Fenrir once more and then backed into the shadows.

"I'll get Frigg," said Odin. "Fenrir, take her to my room downstairs."

Fenrir stepped between her and Odin again.

"I'll be fine," said Grace. "I heal quick."

"That knife was silver, daughter. You will need a healer."

She nodded to Odin. "I am aware. Silver doesn't affect me for long. I have a sort of tolerance for it. I just need to lie down for a bit, and I'll be as good as before. Would it be alright if I took the rest of the shift off?"

Odin snorted. "Take the rest of the weekend. Hell, take a month if you want. Paid, of course. And let me know if you need anything else covered. Food. Medicine. Anything."

Grace nodded. "Thank you."

Behind them, the door smashed open, and Vivian and Brigeeta rushed in, fangs bared.

"Where are they?" Vivian yelled. "Let me at those bastards."

"I'll show them what it's like to mess with our roomie," said Brigeeta.

Odin looked up and stood. "Thank you, ladies, but we have it handled."

The two scanned the room, and their gazes landed on Fenrir and Grace.

“Did they stab you?” Vivian demanded, stalking forward. “Motherfreakers! I’m going to sniff them out and rip them apart.”

Surprisingly Fenrir didn’t growl at her as she approached.

“No,” said Odin. “I will deal with them. You two, please just get this place cleaned up.” At that moment, the remnants of the speaker fell off the wall and crashed to the floor.

Odin held out his hand, and his spear flew back to him.

Vivian looked at him for a moment and then relaxed. “Of course, Boss.”

He looked at Fenrir. “Can you get Grace home, or do you need help?”

Fenrir growled, looking completely feral with his pitch-black eyes and hair whipping around him.

A look of concern crossed Odin’s face. “I’ll call Loki.”

“He’s at the bar,” said Brigeeta. “He came in about five minutes ago.”

Odin nodded and headed out the door.

Brigeeta looked from Fenrir to Grace. “Are you okay?” she asked tentatively.

Grace waved them off and threw them a tight smile as exhaustion settled over her as the silver poison entered her chest and limbs.

“I just need a nap.”

The two women watched Grace and Fenrir, and Grace realized that she’d been clutching Fenrir’s hand.

No one moved for a minute until the door burst inward, again. Grace wondered if she would ever get used to people simply walking into rooms after the day’s events.

Loki scanned the scene and then made his way to Grace and Fenrir.

“Fenrir.” Loki touched Fenrir’s shoulder.

Fenrir snarled and bared his teeth, but Loki didn’t flinch.

“Fenrir,” he said again. “Take Grace to the apartment.”

Fenrir’s gaze cleared a bit, and his fangs retracted.

“Take her to the apartment, Fen. Get her somewhere safe.”

Fenrir looked down at Grace, and when he did, his gaze returned to its natural golden color. He looked at Loki and nodded once before standing with Grace in his arms and heading for the door.

His strong arms enveloped her, but the softness of his fur tickled her skin. He didn’t meet her eye, but his determined gaze stayed on the path before them. She rested her head on his shredded t-shirt, which smelled of blood and sweat.

Vivian and Brigeeta had to jump out of the way as Fenrir stalked past them and headed out of the room.

Grace hung onto Fenrir with her good arm as he stormed through the bar area. Customers looked on wide-eyed and backed away. She could only imagine what they were thinking.

Vampires running out. Now Fenrir, covered in blood, carrying her out of the bar. She got the feeling it wasn’t a common occurrence in Odin’s place. At least, she’d not seen anything like it in the six months she’d been working there.

Once on the street, Fenrir turned left and took off at a sprint. Grace jostled up and down as he whisked her to safety.

TWENTY MINUTES LATER, they stopped in front of a tall luxury building. Fenrir hadn’t even broken into a sweat as he’s run the entire way. The doorman looked at them and then pulled the door open. Fenrir stalked to the elevator and pushed the button. It opened immediately, and he stepped inside. He pushed a button for the top floor and waited as the doors slid closed. He still hadn’t said a word to her, and Grace wasn’t sure what to say herself. She looked at him through the elevator’s reflective surfaces. His face and shirt with splattered

with blood. His shirt sleeve had been ripped open, revealing his muscular bicep. A slash on his cheek had already closed and scabbed over.

The door opened, and Fenrir stepped into the hallway. He shifted her into just one arm as if she weighed no more than his baby sister and dug in his pocket before producing a set of keys.

He unlocked the door and stepped inside. The door swung shut behind them cocooning them in total darkness. He fumbled on the wall and hit a light switch that turned on a light in the hallway and another for the room beyond. He looked around, turned left, and headed through the living room area.

Inside the bedroom lay a large deep blue bed big enough for at least six people. He walked to the bed and laid her on it before turning in a circle and spotting the bathroom. He strode inside, and the lights switched on automatically. He stopped momentarily and looked around as if trying to see who had turned on the lights. Then he grabbed a towel and turned on the water in the sink.

Grace sat up with a slight wince, the majority of the poisoning already having left her system, and watched as he saw himself in the mirror. He blinked several times, ripped off his shirt, and threw it to the floor. He took the towel, ran it over his face and neck, and then washed his hands before ringing it out and walking back to her. Without a word, he sat beside her on the bed and gently peeled back the fabric from her wound. He dabbed it with the washcloth. The skin itched like a three-day-old scab, but it no longer hurt.

“I’m sorry,” he said quietly.

She laid her hand atop his and waited until he looked at her. “Stop apologizing for things that aren’t your fault. If you want to apologize to me for something, apologize for running out of my room and not contacting me for two days.”

His eyebrows drew together. “I... I didn’t know what to say.”

“That may be true, but it doesn’t change the fact that you and I had sex, albeit not very long sex, but we at least tried, and then you just vanished. I didn’t know if I was going to see you again. I didn’t know if you’d hurt yourself. I didn’t know how to even get a hold of you. It’s not like I have your address or phone number or anything.”

Fenrir opened his mouth, closed it again, and then tried a second time. “I... I’m sorry. I just... when I saw the blood and your pain, I just-”

She grabbed his chin with her good hand. “I get it. I understand why you ran. I do. But you can’t do that, Fen. Not from me. Not if you want there to be something between us. Do you understand? You cannot run from me. You have to stay. You have to let me in. It’s the only way you and I will ever work. I’m not a fragile little doll. You aren’t going to break me. I’m tougher than I look.”

He looked down at her wound and whined. “You took this hit for me.”

She nodded. “Yeah. I did. And I’m still here. I may not be as strong, fast, or badass as you, but that doesn’t mean I am weak either.”

He searched her face. “When I saw that monster touching you, I lost it.”

She smiled. “And I love that you did that for me. That you protected me. Saved me.”

He blinked several times. “You... you didn’t find me revolting?”

“Why would I find you revolting?”

“Because I’m a monster.”

“No. They were the monsters. You were my hero.” She pulled his mouth to hers and kissed him softly. “I don’t care how long it takes. I don’t care how many times I have to tell you. One day you will believe me, Fenrir Loki’s son. One day you will believe that you are not the monster you have always thought yourself to be.”

He looked at her. “No one has ever taken a hit for me before. No one has ever given me a second chance before, either.”

“Well, I’m not no one.”

He cupped her cheek. “No. You aren’t. You’re mine.”

Her chest squeezed. There it was. The truth. Bold and plain. Neither of them may understand it. Hell, neither of them may have expected it, but that didn’t change the truth of it. He was who she had been waiting for. He was the one her mom had told her to find. He was the pull that had dragged her to the Underworld. He was her mate.

She nodded. “Yes,” she whispered. “And you are mine.”

He swooped in and kissed her hard. She wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled him over her. His hands roamed her skin as she skated her nails down his back.

His hand moved roughly over one breast, kneading it before pinching her nipple and making her moan.

He kissed down the side of her throat to the tops of her breasts. He pulled her shirt down and swirled his tongue around one nipple, making her core heat. She dug her nails into his back and arched into him.

“Fen. I need you to touch me.”

He chuckled and continued to suckle her. “I am touching you. Can’t you feel it?”

He bit her breast, and she bucked against him.

“Not there.”

He playfully nipped her skin again.

The agony of the throbbing sensation crescendoed. She took his hand and pushed it down between her bare legs. Fenrir growled as she pushed his hand up her short ruffle skirt and pressed his palm against her core through her panties.

He gripped her wrist lightly and raised her arm over her head. The look he gave her was one of such dominance and control that it made her whine in submission.

“I am in charge here, little Goddess.”

All she could manage was a nod as a wave of pure lust shot straight through her.

Slowly Fenrir lowered his hand back to her skin. He started at her breasts. Cupping it and pinching them and making her pant with need. She craned her neck to kiss him, but he pulled back and pinched her nipple harder.

Grace gasped.

“Who is in charge?” he asked.

Grace’s breath came out somewhere between a pant and a sigh. “You are.”

He kissed the tip of her nose and then retreated so he was looking at her again.

He circled her breast with his fingers, softly feeling each in turn. Then he moved his hand down her abdomen. Tracing her belly button with his large calloused hand. He dipped in and kissed her. Strong and slow. Letting his tongue pull her attention as he kissed her over and over.

Minutes passed, and Grace groaned with irritation. She needed him. Wanted him.

Fenrir slowly slid his hand over her skirt and pushed it up her thighs. He stroked one thigh and then the other before pressing his hand around her waist and squeezing her rear. His large hand massaged her flesh, and he broke the kiss to look at her again.

His eyes blazed with desire and need, and she wondered where his sudden strength and confidence had come from.

“Fen-”

He kissed her.

When he pulled away, she tried a second time. “Fen-”

Again he stopped her with a kiss. “Who is in charge here?”

Grace whined. “You. But-”

He kissed her again, and she growled. Fenrir chuckled and then gazed at her.

Fine. If that was how he was going to play it. Two could play this game. Grace gave up fighting and instead allowed her own hands to roam. She slid them down his abdomen to the front of his pants. Softly she slid her hand over his length, lightly rubbing him through his jeans. His body twitched and bucked against her palm, but his eyes gave nothing away.

He traced his hand down the inside of her thigh and then back up to the edge of her panties. He pushed them aside and slid one finger up and down her wet folds.

Grace bit her cheek and held herself back from calling his name. She continued to stroke him through his jeans as he lazily traced the lines of her most intimate parts. Touching and teasing her until her body teetered on the edge.

Her breath came in and out in shallow gasps as she fought against the sensations pulsing through her.

Fenrir hooked a finger around the waistband of her underwear and slid it down several inches. She raised her hips, making it easier for him to get them off. He stood and dropped them to the floor before undoing his belt buckle and dropping his pants. He wore nothing underneath, and the sight of his fantastic body made Grace growl with hunger.

She stripped off her blouse and went to slide off her skirt when Fenrir stopped her.

“No. Not yet.”

Not yet? What the hell did he mean, not yet?

Fenrir stood at the edge of the bed and ran his hand down between her breasts, and pressed her lightly back onto the bed. Grace looked up at the ceiling as Fenrir dragged her hips to the edge of the bed and knelt in front of her.

What was he doing?

He lifted the skirt and pushed her knees wide. Then he dropped his head and kissed the back of her knee.

Grace gasped and bucked her hips. He reached up and pressed her against the bed with a firm hand. Sliding his hand over her skin, he caressed her breast, kissed her thigh to her hip, and slowly slid his mouth down over her sensitive nub and licked her.

Grace grabbed the bedspread and gripped it so tight she thought she'd tear holes in it.

Fenrir hooked an arm around her thigh and pulled her leg over his shoulder as he dove in and licked every inch of her.

Grace gripped his hair and pressed herself tighter against his mouth.

He growled, and then his purring sound vibrated through her making her body relax and thrum with even more need.

“You taste like Valhalla itself,” Fenrir growled.

She couldn't respond as his mouth wiped away any trace of coherent thought.

“You, little Goddess, were born to be mine.”

Grace clutched his hair tighter as he sucked her nub between his teeth and bit it just hard enough to send tendrils of pleasure shooting through her.

“Fen-” His name caught in her throat as he slid his hand from her breast to the nub between her thighs and rolled his thumb over it. He licked her up and down and then slid his tongue inside her before rolling and pinching her nub again.

Sensations she'd never known shot through her so rapidly she could barely register them all. And then suddenly, she felt it again. That edge that her body waited on. The one that she was scared to fall over. The one that promised pleasure like she'd never known. She held back, but Fenrir refused to leave her standing there.

He licked and sucked at her skin, and finally, as he slid his thumb inside her, Grace fell apart. She screamed his name, crying out over and over.

When her body calmed, and she could finally breathe again, Fenrir rose from the floor, and she yanked him on top of

her, pulling his lips to hers.

She kissed him so hard their teeth clashed. Rolling him on his back, she straddled his hips.

“Grace-”

She pressed her fingers to his lips. “My turn.”

He didn’t say anything as she slid one of her fingers into his mouth, and he sucked it. She pulled her finger from his mouth and trailed it down his body before pulling her frilly skirt off.

“Do you trust me,” she asked.

Doubt flickered in Fenrir’s eyes.

She leaned in and kissed him. “I won’t hurt you, and we can stop any time you want. Understand?”

Fenrir nodded.

“Do you trust me?” she asked again.

“Yes,” Fenrir whispered.

She kissed him and smiled. “Good. Because you aren’t the only one who did a little studying over the last two days.”

Grace slid from the bed and looked around the room. She spotted a closet and walked to it. She pulled the doors open and scanned the enormous room filled with racks and racks of immaculate suits, all color-coordinated and spaced precisely two inches apart.

Her gaze landed on a set of drawers, and she walked to them, pulling them open one by one until she found what she was looking for. She scanned the ties and removed a black one and a red one before closing the drawer.

She held the ties in her hand and walked back to the bed. Fenrir hadn’t moved from where she’d left him sprawled. All six foot four glorious inches of him. Hard, scarred, and waiting.

She let the ties unroll in her hands and hang in front of her.

Interest turned to fear in Fenrir's eyes as he realized what she wanted. She climbed on top of him and set the ties on his chest. Slowly she drifted the silk across his skin. Back and forth, she moved them like lazy snakes, allowing him time to relax.

Fenrir's breathing came out labored, and she touched his face.

"Look at me," she said softly.

He did, and his eyes glowed brightly. His beast close to the surface.

"I am not going to hurt you, Fen." She tugged on one end of one of the ties and let the silk slide down his torso. "This is fabric. Just fabric. Not magic. Not chains. Fabric. You can break this any time you want."

The glow in his eyes intensified, and she waited, sliding the fabric up his limbs. Across his face. Down his throat. And all the while, her eyes never left his.

"Do you trust me, Fen?" she asked again.

His gaze remained conflicted, but his words came out stronger than she'd anticipated. "I don't know."

She nodded. That was fair.

"But I want to."

She slid her hand up his right arm and then back down again. She lifted it into her lap and slowly wound the black tie around his wrist. He opened and closed his hand, flexing against the fabric.

"That's right," she said. "Feel the fabric. It's soft. Easily broken."

She tied off the tie and stroked his hand, lacing her fingers in his and then up his arm and down again. "Remember, it's like you said, you're in charge. Not me."

Fenrir stared at the tie on his wrist and flexed against it again before looking at her.

"Is that okay?" she asked.

“Yes,” he whispered.

Grace took his hand in hers and raised it above his head. He gripped her rear with his free hand and kissed the inside of her thigh as she tied his hand to the headboard.

She stayed there for a minute and slowly kissed across the fist he'd formed. She released his pinky from his balled fist and sucked it into her mouth. Fenrir's grip tightened on her rear, and he slid down enough to be able to draw her to his mouth and lick her again.

Grace grabbed the headboard as he pulled her hips into his face. He swirled his tongue against her core, and she wanted to explode all over again. His licks grew greedy, and she noticed his tied hand relaxed.

Almost ready to climax again, she pulled away from his mouth and grabbed his free hand. Fenrir stared at her, waiting.

“Touch me,” she commanded.

Fenrir took his free hand and trickled it down her body. He stopped at her entrance, and she lifted off him and grabbed the headboard. She kissed his tied hand again as he slid one finger inside her.

The feel of his finger made her bite down on his knuckles. He cupped her face with his tied hand and slid another finger inside her. Grace moaned and moved her hips back and forth on his hand. He pressed his fingers in and out of her, and she dropped her cheek to his tied hand. He cupped her face and sucked one of her breasts into his mouth.

She rode his fingers, allowing them to stretch and fill her. Her rhythm became more frantic, and he slid a third finger inside her.

She grabbed the headboard with one hand and laced her fingers in his restrained hand.

“Fen,” she could barely get his name out before another climax rolled through her.

Fenrir purred against her breast as he bit down on her nipple, making her climax climb even higher. When she

stopped shaking, she dropped onto Fenrir's chest, where he wrapped an arm around her body and held her close.

His heart pounded, and the scent of his arousal filled her nose. She needed to satisfy him as well. Grace pushed off his chest and kissed him.

“Are you ready?” she asked.

“Ready for what?”

She entwined her fingers with his and slid the second tie over his free wrist. She watched his face as she slowly wrapped it around his wrist. Trepidation stained his gaze.

She traced her fingers over his palm and squeezed his hand tight.

“Are you okay?”

Fenrir nodded, but she could tell he was fighting his anxiety. Slowly she pulled his hand over his head and tied it to the headboard.

Fenrir flexed his hands and pulled momentarily against the restraints, but she brought her mouth to his and distracted him.

“You're okay,” she soothed. “I'm not going to hurt you.”

He flexed again, and she ran her hands up and down his arms as she kissed him again. She broke their kiss when he relaxed against the bed and kissed down the side of his neck. He groaned as she kissed lower over his chest and down his stomach.

His abs quaked as she moved lower, and then the headboard groaned. She looked up as he watched her, his hands gripping the headboard, making it creak.

She kissed his hip and allowed her hand to slide down between his legs and cup his soft sack.

Fenrir threw his head back. “Grace.”

She ran her hand up his length to his head. “Do you want me to stop?”

“Oh gods no,” he panted.

She slid her hand up and down his length as her other hand cupped and massaged him.

She gave Fenrir a moment to ensure he was okay and then opened her mouth and swirled her tongue over his silky skin.

The headboard cracked as he bucked his hips and panted. “Grace. I need you. I need to be inside you.”

She licked down his length before slipping his head into her mouth and sucking.

The headboard cracked again, and one of Fenrir’s hands threaded into her hair, gripping her tight.

“Grace.”

Not yet. Grace licked around his length, pulling him in and out of her mouth, sucking and teasing him.

He panted her name again, gripped her hair tight, and pulled her up to crash his lips on hers. With a tearing sound, he freed his second hand and wrapped his arm around her, rolling her on her back.

She reached down between them and stroked him.

“I want you,” she said.

Fenrir’s eyes darkened, but she slowly led him to her entrance and rubbed his head back and forth through her folds.

“You won’t hurt me. I’m ready this time.”

He held back, but she pushed his head into her entrance, and he groaned.

“Fenrir.” She cupped his cheek. “Make love to me.”

His gaze went fully golden, and he swooped down and kissed her before shifting his hips and sliding into her deeper.

She kept her gaze locked on his and nodded. He pushed further inside, and she bit her lip.

His eyes clouded, but she reassured him. “It doesn’t hurt. It feels good. I just want more.”

With a solid but slow thrust of his hips, he seated inside her. Grace threw her head back and panted as he stretched her

to the point of bursting.

Fenrir waited, but she wiggled underneath him, and he pulled back and then rolled into her again.

Fenrir waited, and the agony in her core coiled tight, and she finally realized what it was, what she needed from him.

“Fen. I need you. I need all of you. I need your knot. Please,” she begged. She ran her hand down his chest, needing him to do something before she imploded.

Fenrir dropped onto one elbow and pulled his hips back before entering her again.

“Are you sure?” he asked.

Grace gripped his shoulders as he slid out and back into her again.

“Yes. I’m sure. I need it. I’ve needed it ever since the first night we met,” she said. “I need your knot inside me. Filling me.”

Fenrir kissed her and did as she asked. Starting slow, he ground his hips into hers, pulling back only to circle his hips and enter her again. She claimed his lips, and soon his rhythm increased. Once again, her climax coiled inside her.

“Fenrir,” she moaned, biting lightly on his chest.

“Grace.”

She stroked his face. “Let go, Fenrir. Let go.”

He growled and thrust harder. Soon the friction between them grew until she couldn’t hold out any longer. Fenrir roared, and Grace shattered around him at the same time.

He called her name over and over, and then he thrust one final time and filled her. Her body clamped down involuntarily, and then she felt it. He swelled inside her, and the agony that had built inside her shattered and disappeared as his warm seed filled her completely. Suddenly he dropped his mouth to her shoulder and bit her. For a moment, neither moved, and it was as if time had stopped.

Grace's spirit self howled at the contact, but Grace froze. She blinked several times as the purring started again in Fenrir's chest, soothing and calming her. Only this time, it didn't. It couldn't because she was too preoccupied to concentrate on the sound.

Her heart raced, and her body hummed. He'd broken the skin. He'd marked her as his. Her spirit wanted her to bite him. Claim him. Finish the bond and make him hers. Her fangs descended into her mouth, but she stopped herself. She couldn't. Not until she talked to him about it. Not until she was sure. Until he was sure.

Everything was happening so fast.

Fenrir dropped on top of her, his knot still filling her, his purring caressing her soul and calling out to her. Her own private lullaby. A sound made just for her, his fated mate.

Suddenly Fenrir kissed her shoulder and propped himself up on an elbow. He stroked her cheek and down the side of her throat, where his eyes widened as he looked at her, the spot he'd bitten her. His eyes darkened, and tears filled his eyes.

"Grace... I... I..."

Neither of them spoke. He tried to roll off her, but they were still joined. Shame marred his features, and he turned his face away from her.

"No." She grabbed his arm.

He looked at her.

"No," she said again. "You do not run. Not from me. Especially not now. Not that there is anywhere you can go at the moment since we are literally joined at the hips."

He didn't even smirk.

"You get it, don't you? You realize what you did."

He nodded.

"This is permanent. So, you don't get to just pull away and run from it. That may be how you are used to doing things, but you can't run from this. I am freaking the hell out right now,

wanting to bite you back. You don't get to run and hide the feelings and urges running through me, do you understand? We need to talk about this."

Fenrir's eyes went dark and then back to its normal color. Too many emotions to process flashed across his features, and after what seemed like an hour, he blew out a breath and nodded.

"Okay," he finally said. "You're right. But you need to understand. For a thousand years, I've done everything wrong. And those wrongs have been followed by pain, physical and emotional. Running is all I know."

Grace's chest squeezed. "I don't want to hurt you, Fen. I want to love you. To erase all the bad you've been put through and start a future with you that makes you forget those things ever happened. Promise me. Promise you won't run from me. You won't run from us. Because I know we haven't known each other long, and I can't explain why but from the moment I saw you, I knew I belonged to you, and you belonged to me. And if you left now..."

"It would be worse than being chained to a rock for hundreds of years."

Grace paused. "Uh, I was going to say it would be worse than death. But yes, that is pretty accurate."

She kissed him, and for a second, he didn't respond, but then he cupped her cheek, and his lips crushed against hers. A minute passed before they both came up for air.

"Promise," she whispered.

Fenrir stroked her cheek. "I promise."

She looked at him seriously. "So, did you mean it when you bit me? Is this what you want? For me to be your mate? It's okay if it was just the heat of passion, not that we can change it, but I need to know whether you meant it or if it was an accident. Because that will determine what I do next."

He pushed the hair gently from her face. "I meant it. I want you to be mine because I became yours the moment I first saw you."

She smiled and touched his cheek. It was all she needed to know. She kissed him softly and then licked his sinewy neck. “And I was yours from the moment I was born.”

Her fangs descended, and Grace bit into the side of his neck. Fenrir wrapped her in his arms and moaned. The minute his blood hit her tongue, Grace was bombarded with images. *His birth, his childhood, Tyr, Loki, Hel, Odin, Vidar, all of them were there. The shunnings, the tauntings, the whippings and abuse, the betrayal, the chaining, Ragnarök.* It was all there. Every last memory. The pain, the loneliness, the thoughts of suicide. Tears dripped from Grace’s eyes. She retracted her fangs and gulped down a huge breath, Fenrir continued to hold her close, and neither of them moved as his memories continued to swirl in her brain. How could he have endured that much? How had he survived all these centuries?

When Grace finally looked at him, his eyes pleaded with her not to reject him. He wiped the tears from her eyes.

“I am so sorry,” she croaked.

He smiled at her. “Don’t be. The past is the past. I have everything I’ve ever wanted and dreamed of with you right here.”

She swooped in and kissed him. He returned her kiss. She needed him. Needed to show him that he was no longer alone.

This. This was what she’d been waiting for. What she’d been searching for her entire life.

Him.

Fenrir. Norse god of wolves.

Her mate.

There was only one thing left for them to do. The thing that Grace feared more than anything she’d ever dealt with before. She and Fenrir needed to go on a run together. A run where his wolf would either accept or reject her spirit self. Potentially shattering her heart forever.

CHAPTER 15



FENRIR AND GRACE STAYED WRAPPED UP TOGETHER FOR MOST of the remainder of the weekend. The following morning he said he had to leave to take care of something, and when she pressed him for details, he told her he had a wolf named Layla.

“You have a wolf? As a pet?”

“I rescued her from some demon scum who slaughtered her pack for fun.”

Grace watched him for a moment. “Did you slaughter them back?”

He nodded and pulled on a shirt. “We did it together.” He grabbed his keys and kissed her on the head. “I won’t be long. And I’ll bring food when I come back.”

“Why don’t you bring Layla with you?” she asked.

He stopped. “Are you serious?”

She shrugged. “Of course I’m serious. If she’s a part of your life, she’s also a part of mine. Besides, it’s not fair to leave her alone while you and I are here.”

A tender smile planted on his face, and he walked back to her and kissed her softly. “You really are amazing. You know that?”

She shrugged. “Yeah.”

He laughed. Really laughed. His eyes crinkled, and his smile grew wider than she’d ever seen. The sight made her breath catch.

She threw her arms around his neck. “I love your smile.”

He smiled again. “You do? It’s not too toothy?”

She shook her head. “What does that even mean? Too toothy? Everyone has teeth. That’s stupid.”

He rubbed his whiskers on her neck. “I love your smile too.”

“You do?” she asked innocently. Grace sat on the bed and ran her hands across his hips. “I think I have a pretty great smile too.” She undid his belt buckle. “But to be honest, there are other things I have recently discovered enjoy doing with my lips.”

She slid down the zipper of his jeans, and his gaze intensified. She slipped her hand inside his jeans, and Fenrir groaned.

“Little Goddess, what are you doing?”

She opened her eyes wide and smiled at him before kissing the tip of his erection. “Making you smile more.”

As she glided her lips over him, Fenrir grabbed her hair and moaned. “I... I need to feed Layla.”

She smiled. “Don’t worry; I’m sure this won’t take long.”

MONDAY MORNING GRACE woke up in Fenrir’s arms with Layla stretched out at the bottom of their bed. He’d initially not wanted Layla there, but Grace had snuck her up there when he wasn’t looking.

She finally looked at her phone to find dozens of texts from her roommates as well as Odin’s assistant asking when she would be returning to work.

“I don’t want you to work there anymore,” Fenrir said.

Grace traced the long crisscrossing chain scars on his chest. “As much as I love spending time in your bed, I do need to do something else as well.”

He trailed his fingers up her arm. “Our bed. This is our bed, not my bed. I never slept in it before being here with you.”

She smiled. “Our bed.”

“So, what do you want to do? Tell me, and I’ll make it happen.”

Grace laughed. “Anything? Really? What if I said I wanted to attend Stanford University and become a lawyer?”

He shrugged. “I’d make it happen.”

She stared at him for a moment. “You know I believe you. Though I have no clue where we would come up with that kind of money.”

He looked at her thoughtfully. “Grace, I have more money than we could spend in a lifetime. If you wanted a house in every country in the world, I would buy them for you, and then we would spend the rest of our lives traveling from house to house, and still, there would be money left over.”

Her jaw dropped. “You’re serious.”

“I’ve been around a long time. And my father is a very shrewd businessman. He pretty much controls the investment portfolios for every Norse god down here. None of us are hurting.”

Grace’s mind swirled. She’d never had money, and she couldn’t imagine having so much money that you could literally burn it in a fire pit, and that wouldn’t even cramp your style.

Fenrir studied her for a moment. “Does that make you uncomfortable? Knowing I have that much money? I’ll give it to you if you want. I barely touch it. I have never needed it. If you want it-”

Grace wrapped her arms around him. “I don’t want your money, Fen. I just... I’ve never had money before, and to think you have so much is strange.”

He rolled her over and poised above her kissing down her throat. “What’s something you’ve always wanted that you

never had the money to buy?”

She tried to think as her body heated at his touch. “I don’t know. I guess I’ve always really wanted a pony.”

He stopped kissing her. “Like a real pony?”

“Yeah. Not a horse. They’re too big, but I’ve always wanted a little pony.”

They stared at each other, and then she burst out laughing.

“You’re joking?”

She nodded, laughing harder at his perplexed expression.

“So you don’t want a pony?”

“Of course, I don’t want a pony. What would I do with a pony? Where would I even keep it?”

He shrugged. “Thor built a small stable in the back of his bike shop for his goats. If you wanted a pony, I’d figure something out.”

She looked around the bedroom. “I’m pretty sure ponies and penthouses don’t go together.”

“We can live somewhere else. This isn’t really my place anyway. Loki bought it for me.”

She stopped breathing. *We?* Did he say, *we?*

“Did I scare you away?” he asked. “As you’ve said, this thing between us is quick. Even so, I have no life moving forward without you.”

She smiled. “I feel the same.”

He kissed her softly. “So, do I need to find a place with a barn for a pony, then?”

She shook her head and chuckled. “How about we keep it simple and stay here for a while.”

“I guess we could do that. But I still want to get you something you’ve always wanted.”

Her cheeks heated a bit as she remembered the one childhood wish she’d always dreamed of.

“What?” he asked.

She bit her lip. “Well, if I’m being honest, there is one thing I’ve always wanted to do.”

“Tell me.”

Suddenly it felt silly.

“Nothing you say will change how I feel about you. Unless you say something like you’ve always had a thing for my dad, or you’ve always had a fantasy three-way with Thor or something.”

She smacked his chest. “What? No! Eww... I’m not into pretty boys, sorry. I like mine scarred, furry, and tattooed.”

He smiled. “So you don’t want me to wax my nether regions?”

“Not unless you want me to stop having sex with you.”

“Definitely not.” He kissed her hard. “So tell me. What is it I can give you?”

“I’ve... I’ve always really wanted to go to Disneyland.”

His thick brows scrunched together. “The amusement park?”

She nodded. “I know it’s childish, but they say it’s the happiest place on Earth, and I was raised on Disney movies, DVDs, and VHS tapes, and I’ve always wanted to go.”

He kissed her forehead. “Then I’ll take you. Tomorrow.”

“We don’t have to go tomorrow. But, soon.”

“Why not tomorrow? I’m not doing anything tomorrow. Are you?”

“I have work.”

“Odin told you to take a month off if you wanted. I’ll tell him we’re going on a trip.”

Her heartbeat quickened. “Really?”

“I know it’s hard for you because you haven’t been alive as long as I have, but you will realize pretty quick that time

doesn't mean the same thing to us as it does to mortals. We have an unlimited supply which makes us relax more about things like work."

Grace bit her lip. "But... I don't have an unlimited supply or time."

Fenrir shook his head. "We don't know that. Your mother is a Goddess. Children of gods and Goddesses tend to live a pretty long time, even if they aren't given a title of a god."

Did that mean she might live for thousands of years too? The idea overwhelmed Grace. What would she do with all that time on her hands?

Fenrir used his thumbs to relax the muscles in her forehead. "Whoa. Don't think about that one too hard. You might burst something."

She smacked his hand away. "Ha ha."

He cupped her cheek. "I mean it. Don't think about that now and what all it means; it is a lot to take in. Let's just get through now. I don't want to live in the past or the future. I want to live every moment, right here where we are, with you."

Grace nodded and smiled.

He kissed her forehead. "I'll make reservations for a hotel and get tickets for a week, but we can stay as long as you want. Or after we can fly around the world and visit every Disney park there is."

"Really?" Excitement rolled around inside her, and she kissed him. "Thank you." She kissed him again. "What about you? What is something you've always wanted but never had? Whatever it is, you tell me, and we'll get it or do it."

Fenrir stared at her for a moment, and his expression grew serious.

"Come on," she said. "You made me tell you. Whatever it is, I won't laugh. What do you want?"

"A home," he finally said.

Grace's heart squeezed so tight she couldn't breathe. She tried to swallow down the memories of his life that choked her. She grabbed onto him and held him tight, forcing herself to get her bearings.

"Then we'll have to get you that," she said.

He squeezed her tight and nuzzled her neck. Home. A word she had wanted for herself ever since she'd been a child. Yes, Fay had made a home for her and raised her, but something had always been missing. She'd never been able to put her finger on what it was. She'd thought it might have been her father, or maybe it had been her birth mother. Either way, she'd always felt a hole inside her. A hole that Fenrir had filled.

"Okay." He rolled off her and hopped to his feet, giving her a full shot of his tight round rear and large wolf back tattoo. "I need to figure out a hotel, tickets, and everything for us."

"Go?" she said.

"I... I don't have a computer, so I need to get a computer and get my debit and credit cards from Loki to buy stuff."

"Wow. You've never even used a debit card?"

"Yeah, it must sound stupid, but my dad's always handled everything."

In so many ways, he was like a child. How could no one have ever helped him with things like using a debit card or even getting a computer?

He got dressed quickly. "Okay. I'm gonna go home and grab a bag of clothes and make some arrangements for Layla with Hödr, and then I'll meet you back here after work. You get a laptop, and we work on getting the stuff we need together when I'm back."

"Hödr? He's the blind one, right?"

Fenrir nodded. "Yeah. He has a seeing-eye dog that I trained for him. Rolo and Layla were inseparable when I had

them both. We still get them together once a month for some doggy play time.”

Grace couldn't help the huge grin that spread across her face. For all of his gruff exterior, Fenrir was a giant teddy bear. He was going to make a great dad one day.

He rubbed his neck and looked at the floor. “You must think I'm an idiot. I don't even have a computer.”

“What? Of course not. Why would I think that? I'm sure there are a million things you can do that I have no clue about. Does that make me an idiot?”

“No.”

“Exactly. Until six months ago, I'd never used a debit card before, either. I'd never lived in my own place or had a job I was paid for. I'd never even been in a bar before I got here. So in a way, we're the same. We've both been sheltered in our own ways. But maybe that's one of the reasons we're so good for each other. Not only can we help each other learn the things we need to know, but we can explore the world and life together. Experiencing things together for the first time.”

Fenrir smiled. “I'd like that.”

“Me too.”

She stood and kissed his cheek before walking around the bedroom, looking for her underwear. “So I'll meet you back here later.”

“Are you sure? I can take you back to your place.”

She shook her head. “I'm good.”

His phone rang. He walked to the nightstand and lifted it.

He sighed.

“You okay?” she asked.

“Yeah. It's Tyr.”

She pulled her shirt on. “Well, tell him you can't help him because we are going on vacation.”

Fenrir looked at his phone.

“Fen.”

He looked up at her. “You don’t have to answer him. You don’t owe him anything. You are your own person. And they are going to have to learn to deal without you. You don’t want to keep doing their grunt work for them, and I don’t want you to keep doing things that make you uncomfortable. If you want to take a job from them to help someone, I support you. But if you don’t want to, don’t. Like you said, you don’t need the money.”

Fenrir nodded and shoved his phone into his pocket.

Grace smiled, and as she bent over to pull on her pants, he kissed her neck from behind.

“Thank you,” he said.

She turned to him and buttoned her pants. “For what?”

“For being exactly what I’ve been searching for my entire life.”

She laughed. “Well, ditto.”

He kissed her hard. “I mean it. Now that I have you, I don’t know what I would do if I lost you.”

She smiled. “Then it’s a good thing I’m not going anywhere.”

GRACE ENTERED Odin’s place thirty minutes later and stopped at the bar. She opened her mouth to tell Odin she needed a new uniform shirt when he smiled at her.

“Frigg needs some help at her place if you are up for it. There’s been a large influx of refugees that have shown up suddenly, and she is trying to help them all find places to stay and get settled,” said Odin. “She asked if you’d mind helping out. I told her I could spare a couple of people to help with logistics.”

Grace nodded. “Of course.”

How sad that a whole group of people were fleeing to the Underworld. She knew what it felt like to be a refugee, but a

whole group? She wondered what had happened.

“By the way. I’m fine with you taking off for a few more days,” said Odin. “Your welcome to any time; just let me know.”

She nodded. “Thank you. That’s very kind.”

He looked at her for a minute, conflicted. “What I did to Fenrir was wrong. If I can help make it right, even in some small way, I want to try. And you seem to be just what he’s needed for a long time. So, you tell me what I can do, and if it is in my power, I’ll do it.”

His genuine words struck Grace in the heart. “Thank you, Lord Odin.”

Odin chuckled, revealing a handsome smile and brilliant white teeth. “It’s just Odin now. The only thing I Lord over here is this bar. Now get going over to Frigg’s. She really does need help.”

Grace waved and headed for the door. She looked back over her shoulder at Odin. The more she got to know the Norse gods, the more she realized they were nothing like she’d imagined they’d be. Especially Odin. Tanned and muscular, with long white hair and light eyes, he appeared to be a retired biker. If older guys had been her thing, she definitely would have had a crush on him.

She pushed open the exit door and laughed. She already did have a thing for older guys, she realized. Just older furrrier guys.

GRACE WALKED DOWN to Frigg’s bar, The Raven Weaver, and as she approached, the chaos inside reached her ears. The door opened, and several patrons walked out, shaking their heads.

“Guess we’ll head to Odin’s tonight,” said one.

“Maybe for the rest of the week,” said another. “I doubt they’re gonna get all those people a place to go in just one night.”

The men passed Grace and whistled, but she paid them no mind as she continued to the front door. Dozens of smells hit her as she pushed through patrons crowded everywhere. Beer, brimstone, blood, wolves, wood, fire, too many scents to register. Something woodsy and familiar hit her nose, but just as soon as she smelled it, the scent was covered up by the scent of damp clothes. She made her way through the crowd to the bar, where she could faintly hear Frigg talking.

When Grace squeezed past a minotaur, Frigg spotted her, her face lit up.

“Oh, thank the All Mother you are here,” Frigg said. “They are talking so fast I’m not sure what’s happening. But now that you’re here, you can help me sort it out. I’ll start to get the beds ready downstairs in my emergency inn.”

“Okay. Is there a place you want me to start?” Grace placed her bag behind the counter.

Frigg shrugged. “Talk to any of them. They’ve all been asking for you.”

Grace frowned. “Me?”

“Grace!”

She turned at the sound of her name, and as the regular patrons moved out of the way, she finally saw them. The refugee group took up half the bar. At least fifty of her pack members sat on the left side of the room, occupying booths, tables, and even on the floor. One of the pack elders stood, and she walked toward him, trying to understand why they were there.

“Moon Goddess child,” he said with a bow.

Grace’s skin heated, and her chest squeezed at the name. Only her mom Fay had ever called her that. Fay, Fenrir, and... Robin. She scanned the group for Robin. If Aldard was calling her that in front of the rest of the pack, it could only mean one thing, they all knew the truth about her. As she looked around at their faces, she saw the truth of it in their eyes.

“Elder Aldard.” She inclined her head. “What’s happened? Why are you here?”

“It’s your father. He’s returned. He returned to become alpha of the pack once more and started demanding to know where you were. When no one spoke up, he got... angry.”

“What?” Grace’s heart beat so loud she could feel the blood pumping in her ears. Her father had returned. He’d waited for Fay to die, only then to return? But... why?

Grace looked around the group. “Robin. Where is Robin? I need to speak to her.”

Aldard shook his head.

Tears spilled into Grace’s eyes. “She’s dead?”

“No. She’s been injured, though, and she’s being tended to by a healer somewhere here. There was nothing we could do. Your father brought others with him. Others like him. Rogues who had nowhere else to go. They took over the lands. They took everything. We are no match for them.”

Robin. Robin was hurt... Her father was looking for her... The question was, why? Had he missed her? Had Fay kept him away all those years? Questions swirled in her mind leaving her both elated and terrified.

Her father had returned, and he was looking for her.

Grace’s gaze connected with Aldard’s. “You all stay here. Frigg and the others will help you until I return. I’ll go, and I’ll talk to him and fix everything. It’ll be fine. Everything will be fine.”

Grace turned and pushed back through the crowd toward the door. Her father had returned, and he wanted her.

“Wait! Grace!” Aldard called after her, but she just kept moving.

Her father had returned, and he was looking for her.

Finally.



FENRIR SET the computer store bag down on Loki's desk. "Now what?"

Loki took the laptop out and plugged it in. For the next twenty minutes, he set up the laptop and showed Fenrir how to use the internet. He helped Fenrir buy tickets for Disneyland and find a hotel to stay at that had a special breakfast with a bunch of the characters from Disney. To Fenrir's surprise, the prospect of giving Grace what she wanted most made him happier than he had ever imagined he could be.

After all the details were confirmed, Loki ordered them lunch.

"So Disneyland, huh?" said Loki. "I never saw you as an amusement park kind of guy."

Fenrir shrugged. "I've never been, so how would I know? Besides, it isn't for me; it's what Grace wants."

Loki studied Fenrir for a minute as he took a huge bite of his sandwich. "You love her."

Fenrir didn't answer.

Loki smiled. "I'm glad. She's right for you. The changes in you this last week or so have brought me a lot of joy. I know you and I are still working on things, but I'm glad you finally found the one you were meant to be with. It's been too long."

Fenrir didn't know what to say. He and his father had never had a meaningful discussion about anything before, and seeing Loki get all heartfelt about his life made Fenrir uncomfortable.

"If it's okay with you, Grace and I will stay in the apartment until we decide where to be permanently."

"Of course. I gave it to you. It's yours. Stay as long as you want or as little as you want. It's your choice."

Fenrir nodded and stuffed a handful of fries in his mouth.

"Have you introduced her to Layla?"

Fenrir rolled his eyes and snorted. "She lets Layla sleep on the bed."

Loki chuckled. “So it’s going well with them, then.”

Fenrir shook his head. “There have been moments in the past couple of days that I have felt like the odd man out in the relationship.”

Loki let out a bark of laughter. “Wait until you have a daughter. Then you’ll be in real trouble.”

Memories of Grace’s words floated back to him. She’d said she wanted to make a home with him, for him. Not that she was willing to live in a house with him, but she wanted to make a home. A place that was his and hers. His chest squeezed.

“I should tell you I’m done doing dirty work for the Guardians. If you have a serious problem that you or the Guardians can’t handle, I’ll help, but I can’t be the one you guys call on anymore just to hurt and maim people into compliance. I don’t want to be that man anymore. I want to be better.”

Fenrir held Loki’s gaze longer than he ever had in his entire life. He needed his dad to know that he was serious.

Finally, Loki nodded. “I respect that. I do have something I thought maybe you could help me with, though.”

Fenrir growled. “Did you not just hear me? I literally just said-”

“I heard you. This favor isn’t anything like what you used to do. It’s something I think you might like, and I already know you’re good at it.”

Fenrir was skeptical, but his curiosity won out. “What is it?”

“Remember Jamy? The woman whose husband put her in the hospital a few weeks ago?”

“I remember her husband,” he said carefully.

“Right. Jamy has a lot of trauma from everything he put her through. And she’s decided to get a dog for protection but also companionship. When her ex put her in the hospital, he broke her back. She is going to need help getting around.”

“I can imagine. If I remember right, her chances of ever walking again were slim.”

Loki nodded. “She won’t be out of the hospital for about another month or so, and I thought that maybe in the time she’s in there, you would consider helping her find a dog and training it the way you trained Layla and Hödr’s dog.”

A dog trainer? He’d never thought of that before. Layla had been easy to train because she’d been so eager to please. Hödr’s dog had been more challenging because he needed his dog to see for him. But training Rolo had been both fun and rewarding. Was it possible he could do that as a job?

“I think I’d like that,” he finally said.

Loki smiled. “It would be good for you and for the people you help. Since you have a special affinity for canines, I think you’d be perfect for pairing up dogs and owners and helping them forge a much-needed bond. As well as giving them the training that their human or supernatural counterpart requires.”

Fenrir’s mind began to whirl. “I’d have to do some studying up, and I’d need to see her home and interview her. Get a feel for her personality as well as what her limitations will be.”

“Sounds like a great game plan.”

Fenrir nodded as he made mental notes of everything he’d need to do.

“I know she can’t afford much,” said Loki.

Fenrir waved him off. “I wouldn’t do it for money. I’d do it to help people and help the animals. I’ll only train rescues. I won’t buy some fancy-bred dog when so many out there are in need. Plus, when you rescue a dog, they know it, and their bond with their owners is stronger, in my opinion.”

“Any way you want to run your business is up to you. I can help you find clients, but the rest is all your choice.”

His choice. His business. Something of his own. Like Grace.

Fenrir smiled. *Grace.*

Just thinking of her made him stop. Something had changed between them. They'd been able to feel each other since their bonding had happened. The moment he'd bitten her, and all her memories had flooded him, a connection had formed. Almost like him and his beast. They were always aware of each other. Where they were in the apartment. What they were thinking. Not telepathy, really, more of a merging of their souls.

It was strange but comforting knowing that she was there. Knowing he was no longer alone. That he'd never be alone again. And he was pretty sure it would be the only thing to keep him sane while she worked at Odin's place. Not that she'd need to do that anymore. If he did start a training business, she could help him with that.

He reached out through the connection expecting it to be moderately faint since she was at Odin's, but it wasn't.

"What's wrong?" Loki asked.

Fenrir shook his head. "I'm not sure."

He reached for Grace again, but the connection was weak as if she was far away. A chill washed over him as he realized she was no longer in the underworld.

His beast growled, and panic lit in Fenrir's chest.

He reached into his pocket, but his phone wasn't there. He looked at Loki's desk, but again, no phone. "My phone's missing."

Loki pointed to the couch where Fenrir had been sitting when he arrived. "I forgot to tell you that you received a bunch of notifications when you were gone. You're quite popular."

Fenrir walked to the couch where his coat and phone sat. His gut twisted as he reached for it. Only three people had his number. Loki, Tyr, and Grace.

He picked up the phone and pushed the button. He'd missed a dozen calls from Grace and several texts.

He pulled up the texts.

My pack is in the Underworld! My father has returned! He wants to see me! Headed up to see him. Be back tonight. Tomorrow at the latest, hopefully. Love you.

Fenrir's wolf snarled. Grace hadn't talked much about her pack, but he'd seen them in her memories. He read the messages three more times.

"Problem?"

Fenrir looked at Loki. "I don't know."

"What's going on?"

"Grace said her old pack is all here in the underworld and that her father has returned, so she had to head up to her packlands."

"Do you know where that is?"

"Somewhere north of Bakersfield. But... she was supposed to be at work. They wouldn't all be at Odin's. So where would she have seen them?"

The idea left Fenrir uneasy. Entire packs didn't just appear in the Underworld unless something catastrophic happened. Their packlands went back hundreds of years, sometimes more. They wouldn't just give them up and move away so easily.

Something wasn't right.

"Maybe Odin knows." Loki pulled out his phone and dialed.

Fenrir waited, unease settling inside him with every second that passed.

"Hey. It's Loki. Did Grace make it to work today? Fenrir's Grace?" Loki looked at Fenrir and nodded. "I see. Okay. Thanks." He hung up the phone. "Grace was asked to help out Frigg. She had a bunch of refugees show up, apparently."

Fenrir grabbed his coat and headed for the door.

"I'll come too," Loki offered.

Fenrir thought about stopping him, but at the last minute, he didn't.

CHAPTER 16



GRACE PULLED UP TO THE EDGE OF CAMP AND TURNED OFF HER car's engine. She could hardly believe it had been so long since she'd been there. It felt like she'd run to the Underworld just weeks before. But then everything before meeting Fenrir was just a blur.

She scanned the camp. Lights lit up the insides of every house she could see, but no one was outside. Not that there were any of her pack members left. But from how Aldard had spoken, he'd made it seem like rogues had overrun the place.

She rolled down her window a fraction and sniffed the air. The pungent aroma of male wolves was more than present, but there was something oddly soothing about it. She sniffed again and was sure she'd never smelled the males before, and yet... there was something familiar about them.

She listened for any talking or howls but heard nothing. She'd spent hours practicing what she would say when she finally met her father, but none of it seemed adequate. How did you put twenty years of loss and curiosity into a few sentences?

She pulled out her phone and looked at it. She'd had spotty cell coverage since she'd left Los Angeles, but that hadn't stopped her from leaving a dozen messages and texts for Fenrir. Though she couldn't be sure any of them had gone through. She had no idea how cell coverage between the realms worked. Part of her thought she should have brought him along, but he was working on things of his own at the moment, and she needed to let him do it.

Grace tried his number, but there was no connection. Growing up, she'd never had a phone, and neither had anyone else she knew, so it made sense there wouldn't be any signal. She shoved her phone in her pocket and reached out through their strange bond. She got the sense that he was out there but nothing else. That alone comforted her. They hadn't talked about the new bond, but she got the feeling that if something terrible happened to him, she would know no matter how many dimensions away from each other they were.

Grace got out of the car. The door creaked as she opened it, and in the stillness of the forest, it sounded as loud as a hawk's screech.

She closed the door and waited, listening and sniffing the air. Again nothing moved, making her gut twist. Maybe the males were on a run.

Grace zipped up her hoodie and headed for the firepit in the middle of camp. They lit the fire for pack meetings and get-togethers. If the fire was lit on a non-meeting day, it was to help any newcomers or visitors to guide them back to camp.

She walked to a smaller cabin on the very edge of the pack lands. The light was on, but no one was inside when she looked through the window.

An eerie sensation settled over the village.

Grace rounded to the front of the house and looked down the path between the homes of the lower pack members. She sniffed the air, and the scent of smoke and burning meat filled the air. She could just see the flicker of the firepit in the middle of the town square clearing. Maybe they were eating.

She strode down the path separating the two sides of the camp and swallowed hard. Her father. She was going to meet her father. She'd never seen a photo of him, but she knew exactly what he smelled like.

He smelled like the cigarettes that permeated every inch of Fay's house. But it was more than the cigarettes. She'd know his scent because when she'd been little, she dreamed of him coming back to her and Fay and apologizing for what he'd

done. On those nights, she'd hugged the one flannel shirt she'd found buried behind the washer in the laundry room one time when she'd been playing hide and seek. For a moment, she wondered what had happened to his flannel.

As the smell of smoke grew stronger, voices met her ears. She was about thirty yards away when the first male realized she was there. He turned and sniffed the air. He rose from where he sat on a log, dropping whatever he ate into the dirt. Quickly others rose as well. A dozen males, maybe more. Finally, the one who had first noticed her lifted his head and howled.

Tension hung thickly between her and the males, but it didn't stop her from continuing forward. She stopped less than ten feet from them and waved.

"Hello."

None of them moved a muscle.

Had they never seen a female before?

A minute passed, and Grace scanned the men. All of them looked her age or younger. When she sniffed the air, she caught their scents, and again, they seemed familiar.

The door to the house she'd grown up in opened, and a considerable figure shadowed the doorway. She stepped forward, but when all the males hit the dirt and bowed, she stopped.

The figure stood in the doorway, and a shiver ran up her spine as she felt his eyes on her. Suddenly they glowed golden from within the depth of his face, and she felt the demand of his alpha for her to bend her knee as well, but unlike all the others, his command did little more than sound like a suggestion.

"Father," she finally said. "I heard you've been looking for me. I can't tell you how happy-"

Within a heartbeat, he stood less than a foot from her, towering over her, his face expressionless, and his gaze looked neither kind nor welcoming.

Something was off. “Father-”

“Don’t call me that,” he commanded.

A chill swept through her.

Aldard had said he’d been looking for her. But suddenly, she wondered why.

“But... you are my father,” she said, confused.

“No. I am the man whose seed spawned you, nothing more. They are my children. My sons.” He motioned to the males around the fire.

Grace swallowed hard. That was it. The familiar scent. The feeling of belonging. They were her brothers. All of them. They all had a sliver of her father’s scent. Damn, he’d been busy when he’d abandoned them.

“Is that why you didn’t want me? Because I wasn’t born a male?” she asked.

His eyes narrowed, and he stared at her for a long minute. “I left because you should never have been born. What your mother did to get me to lay with her was... And Fay. My beautiful Fay. She betrayed me, and for what? For you?” He shook his head.

Grace tried to understand his words, but they didn’t make sense. “What do you mean what my mother did? You had an affair with my Goddess mother, and I was the result.”

Her father roared into the sky, but Grace didn’t flinch. “Had an affair. Is that what Fay told you?” He shook his head. “Fay and the Goddess tricked me. They made me think the Moon Goddess was Fay. She looked like her. Moved like her. Smelled like her. Everything about her was my Fay. But she wasn’t my Fay. She was your mother. Moon Goddess, my ass. The Bitch Goddess of Lies is what she is. And you are no better.”

His words were a slap to the face that had her head whirling. He hadn’t meant to sleep with her mother, the Goddess? Fay and her mother had tricked him? Her gut twisted so hard she felt she might vomit. She had no words.

He'd been duped. More than tricked. He'd been violated. Tears rushed to Grace's eyes.

He snorted. "Don't waste your tears on me, abomination. Save them for yourself. You're gonna need them."

"If you don't want me, why are you looking for me?" Her words barely came out a whisper.

Before she could move, he grabbed her and plunged a needle into her arm.

She jerked away and looked at where he'd stuck her. Inky blackness spread up her arm and down to her hand. Silver.

He whistled, and two large males grabbed her arms and pinned them behind her.

"What is this? What are you doing?" she demanded.

He moved close enough that their noses touched. "What I've waited for since you were dropped into my fated mate's arms, and she chose you over me. I will use you as bait to get your bitch mother to show herself. And then I'm going to kill you both."

Grace struggled against her brothers. Not hard enough to get away, but just enough to assess their strength.

"Why didn't you come for me before? Why now?"

"Because to kill you, I would have first had to kill Fay, and she might have betrayed me and chosen you, but she was still my fated mate, and my wolf still loves her. He would never have let me. But she's gone now. And it's just you, me, and your mother." He motioned for the other males to move her to the big rock in the center of the encampment. The one they had used when someone in the pack needed to be punished.

"Don't do this," she pleaded. "I'm sorry for what happened to you. I had no idea, but that wasn't me. I didn't do those things. If you want to be the alpha of the pack, be the alpha. I'll leave. I'll leave, and you will never see me again."

Two more males walked to the boulder and pulled down the silver shackles hammered into the rock face. She let them cuff her without complaint and waited even as the silver

burned into her skin, making it sizzle continuously. She'd toyed with the cuffs once when she was young and found that they burned her but that she healed so quickly the burns did little more than irritate her skin, unlike normal shifters who, when in constant contact with silver long enough, would burn down to the bone.

Grace didn't want to hurt them. She didn't want to hurt any of them. Ironically, her brothers were being used just as her father and alpha had. Her father was hurt, betrayed, and victimized. She couldn't imagine how that felt, but she had no intention of adding to his pain.

"Please," Grace said again. "Don't do this. If you get to know me, maybe you'll see--"

He gave out a bark of mirthless laughter. "You think that after all this time, I'm just going to let you go? After all the waiting. The planning. The studying."

"I... I really don't want any of you to get hurt," she pleaded.

"At the slightest snap of my fingers, every one of my sons would line up to defile you without so much as a second thought. And with all that silver running through your veins, there wouldn't be a thing you could do about it."

Grace's throat dried, and her head whirled. All those nights she'd dreamt about her father, she'd never once thought he'd be like this. She'd imagined him as sad for his betrayal of Fay. Embarrassed. Maybe even repentant. That he would come back to them one day and apologize. He'd stick around while he and Fay tried to put things back together between them. That he'd step up and be an alpha again for the pack and take some of the load off Fay. But this man... the man that stood before her... he was nothing like the man she'd imagined. This man was bitter with hatred and fueled by the thought of revenge. She looked around the group of half-brothers. How many women had her father slept with to get them all? Had he cared for any of their mothers, or had he just used them to build himself an army?

Her father pulled a long knife from the back of his waistband and walked toward her. "I can promise you one thing. I will make this as painless as possible. Not that it will be painless, but I will try to make it quick. No underhanded cuts to parts of your body that will hurt but not be fatal. I want revenge, but I'm not a sadist. So rest easy knowing that *I* will not draw this out. How long you suffer will be up to your mother." He stopped in front of her.

"You don't want to do this. Believe me. You really don't. I'm giving you a chance to walk away. I'm giving all of you a chance to live long, peaceful lives. Find mates. Have children. If you try to do this, I promise none of that will happen. You will all die here tonight."

"My boys and I are ready to die for me to be able to exact revenge."

He raised the knife to her throat, and she grabbed onto the silver chains at her wrists. He stared at her, and for the first time she saw it, he wasn't just angry; he was insane. What Fay and her mother had done to him. The betrayal. It had broken him. She'd heard before how breaking the bond between fated mates could cause insanity, but she'd never seen it before. But standing there, looking into his eyes, she saw it. She wondered if something happened to Fenrir if she would go insane.

Fenrir. Grace reached through their bond again. This time she felt something more substantial. He was agitated. Upset. Something wasn't right.

A trickle of fear raced through her, not for herself, but for Fenrir. She needed to get to him.

Her father moved the silver knife down her arm leaving a long blister in its wake, which healed almost as quickly. He traced it over her shoulder and then ripped the collar of her shirt open, exposing both her skin and her lacy bra.

His eyes widened, and he stopped moving.

"You've been marked," he said. "You have a mate."

"Yes."

“It was recently. In the past month or less.” His words weren’t a question.

Conflict settled in his eyes momentarily, and then it was gone.

“He’ll be better off without you. It will hurt, but he will get over it and find someone else.” He sounded as if he was trying to convince himself more than anything.

Anger bubbled inside Grace, and she chuckled. “Believe me, he won’t find someone else, and if you kill me, he will find you, whether in this world or the next.”

Again her father looked conflicted, and Grace saw her chance. A way to get him to stop. A way to save him as well as all her half-brothers.

“And when he does find you,” she continued. “You will beg for him to end your existence permanently. Because he is not the kind of man who forgives or forgets.”

Her father licked his lips, his eyes never leaving her mating mark.

Minutes passed, and finally he said, “Then we will have something else in common.” Her father tipped the knife downward, pressed the point of the blade down behind her collarbone, and wedged it into the fleshy part of her shoulder.

She knew what he meant to do. He was going to sever her arm, rendering it useless.

He poised to press down the knife when her spirit side cried out for her to do something. Just as he brought down the knife, Grace yanked on the silver restraint and broke it from the rock before spinning out of his way.

Her father fell forward, and the blade struck the rock instead of her. For a moment he looked stunned, and then he looked at her. She stared at him and pulled on the other silver restraints, breaking them free from the rock.

Her father roared in anger. “You’re immune to silver.”

She shrugged and smashed the cuffs against the rock, breaking them and pulling them off.

“And you’re strong. Very strong.”

“Like I said, leave before you all die.”

Her father howled, and in a flash, all of the males in the camp shifted into wolf form.

“Bring her down!” he shouted.

Before her brothers could move, Grace waved her hand at them. “Shift,” she commanded.

In an instant, they all shifted back to human form and looked at each other in shock.

She waved her hand at them again. “You are no longer allowed to shift into wolf form.” Then she turned to her father. “And neither are you.”

He growled, and his skin rippled, but nothing happened. Again he tried but could not shift.

“What is this?” he demanded. “What have you done to me?”

She shook her head. “You didn’t want to listen, and I don’t want to kill you, so, I compelled you instead.”

“I’m an alpha. I answer to no one. No one can compel me.”

“No one, alpha or lower, can compel you to do something. But I’m not only an alpha, father. I’m an alpha and a demigod. Therefore I can compel you to do whatever I want.”

Her father roared and rushed forward.

CHAPTER 17



AS SOON AS FENRIR OPENED THE DOOR TO FRIGG'S PLACE, HE smelled them. Shifters. He scanned the room, but the only people he saw were underworlders. He stalked to the bar and asked for Frigg.

"She's downstairs," said the bartender. "She's been working on settling everyone for a couple of hours now."

"They're shifters?"

The bartender nodded.

Fenrir and Loki walked to the backroom. They opened a door and headed down steep stone steps to an all-natural mossy forest floor. The space opened up at the bottom of the stairs into one enormous round room. The walls were tree trunks with thick knotted roots covered in little pink and yellow flowers. Dozens of white cotton tents had been set up in a circle around the edge of the room. One wall of the room was covered in a giant rock waterfall which fed into a small river just inside the ring of tents. Golden fish swam lazily to and fro through the current and the plants beneath. In the center of the room sat a roaring campfire in a stone pit. And around the pit sat dozens of pale green lounge chairs. And in the chairs sat people. Many people.

Frigg was just handing a woman white sheets and towels when she spotted Fenrir and headed over.

"Fenrir. Loki. I am assuming you aren't here to help make up cots."

One by one, the shifters had begun to notice Fenrir, and they stilled and quieted.

“Is this Grace’s pack?” he asked.

Frigg nodded. “Yes. From what I understand, there was some kind of hostile takeover. There’s a new alpha, and they ran.”

Hostile takeover? They ran? That was not what Grace’s text had said at all. A chill ran over him.

“Who is in charge?”

An older shifter stood from his chair. “I am,” he said. “Or rather, I should say, you are.”

Fenrir had never been around shifters before besides Grace. But from how they looked at him and then got down on one knee and bowed, they could tell he wasn’t a mere shifter.

“What’s your name?” Fenrir called.

“Aldard, my lord.”

My lord? No. Nope. Not even.

“Aldard, what happened with your pack?”

“It’s rather a long story, my lord. You see, Grace’s mother Fay was married to a man who-”

“I know all about Grace’s parentage. What happened?” Fenrir fought to keep his control.

“Her father returned with a group of rogues and retook our pack and our lands about a month ago. He was looking for Grace. He became cruel and violent when we refused to tell him where she was. We were able to get away, but there were still a few left that we couldn’t get out. Other elders, he’s been keeping prisoner. Grace learned of this, and she left.”

Fenrir growled. “She went to face off with him?”

Aldard cleared his throat. “Well... uh... I tried to tell her, but she was so excited about meeting her father that she impulsively took off.”

“And none of you went with her? None of you tried to stop her?”

The pack stared at the ground.

Grace. His Grace had gone off to defend a group of people unwilling to fight for themselves.

“Where did she go?” Loki asked.

“Are packlands are north of Bakersfield by about fifty miles.”

Loki strode forward and pulled out his phone. “Show me.”

“It’s fine,” said Fenrir. “I know right where they are.”

Loki looked at him, confused for a second, and then nodded.

Fenrir dialed Grace’s number for the fourth time. It went straight to voicemail. His beast roared in frustration. He reached out to her through their connection. She was angry. Angry and scared.

He needed to get to her.

“When did she leave?” Fenrir demanded.

“About a while ago. I’m not quite sure,” said Frigg.

Dammit. Even if he ran flat out in wolf form, it would still take him a minimum of an hour and a half to get there.

“I can get us there,” said Loki.

Fenrir hated flying. He hated teleportation more, but since Loki didn’t know exactly where they were going, he couldn’t do that. So flying it was. He had no choice.

Suddenly pain seared Fenrir’s wrists. He looked down, and there was nothing there.

Grace. Someone was hurting Grace.

Fenrir roared, and his fangs elongated.

“What’s the matter?” Loki asked.

“Grace. Someone is hurting her.”

Loki stared at him for a moment, and then his eyebrows raised. “You two have mated.”

Fenrir sucked in several deep breaths and nodded. “It just happened a couple of days ago. We’re trying to figure things out. We weren’t ready to tell anyone.”

Loki touched his shoulder. “You don’t have to explain. I understand.”

“Take me,” Fenrir growled, trying to keep his beast under his skin where he belonged.

Loki nodded, and with a snap of his fingers, his outfit changed into his classic sleek black armor.

Several of the shifters gasped and backed away.

“Should I call Odin and the others?” asked Frigg.

Loki shook his head. “We got this.”

The shifters murmured amongst themselves.

“Climb on,” said Loki.

Fenrir stared at him. “What?”

“Unless you want me to carry you in my arms like a baby, you’ll need to climb on my back, son.”

Fenrir shook his head. “This is ridiculous. I’m twice your size.”

“Are you saying your old man isn’t strong enough?”

Fenrir opened his mouth to respond and then blew out a breath. “No. I’m saying we are going to look ridiculous.”

CHAPTER 18



GRACE DODGED HER FATHER, AND HE RACED PAST HER. HE swung around and rushed her again, but she stepped out of the way again.

“I’m not going to let you kill my mother,” she said. “And I won’t let you use me as bait either.”

Her father breathed hard several feet away. “You may be fast and strong, but you can’t take us all.”

Her father howled, and every one of the males rushed forward, surrounding her.

Grace raised her hand, but someone tackled her from behind before she could speak. The air whooshed from her lungs as she hit the ground, face-first. Her temple smacked the dirt, sending a jolt through her neck. Her eyes blurred briefly, and she fought to clear her vision.

“Gag!” her father yelled.

There was a ripping sound, and as she struggled against numerous hands to get to her feet, a piece of warm cloth was shoved in her mouth. She choked on it and tried to breathe through her nose, catching the taste of sweat and dirt.

Not good. This was not good.

Grace fought against the men pinning her to the ground, but someone stabbed his knee into her spine, making her yelp. They wrenched her hands behind her back and bound them.

She turned her head from side to side, trying to see around her, but all she could make out was dozen male bodies and a

large set of boots moving toward her.

Panic lit within her. She'd never had to fight, so she had no idea how to escape the situation. The boots stopped inches from her face, and then her father knelt next to her and pulled the gag from her mouth.

“Remove your compulsion from my boys.”

Grace spat on the ground and tried to clear the taste from her mouth.

Her father grabbed her hair and yanked her head back. “Release them!”

Someone ground his knee deeper into her back, and she grunted.

“Let me go, and I will.”

Her father released her head. “I can just as easily cut you on the ground. Besides, when you're dead, your compulsion will die with you.” Then without pretense, he stabbed her right between her throat and shoulder.

Grace screamed, and the fabric was shoved back into her mouth, where she gagged and choked as tears swelled in her eyes. Pain shot through her entire body, and warm blood flowed down her neck and pooled by her head.

Her spirit self burst forward, and white hair sprouted on Grace's arms.

Shit. The burn of the dagger seeped into her bones as her father stood, leaving the metal embedded into her flesh.

She reached out through her connection to Fenrir.

Fen! I need you!

She was sure he wouldn't hear her, but it didn't stop her from calling out for him anyway. She couldn't hold back the shakes that took over her body as tears leaked down her face and mixed with the blood and dirt near her head.

“Now we wait,” he said. “It shouldn't take long if the Goddess believes you are truly in danger of dying. After all, she is a mother, right? Mother's instincts and all that bull.”

Grace's head began to fuzz over as more blood pooled around her head. Her father pushed her hair from her face and peered into her eyes.

"Losing consciousness?" He pulled back her ripped shirt and looked at the wound. "Yeah. You'll lose a bit of blood. Not enough to kill you, but you probably have two or three minutes before you pass out."

Grace tried to think but couldn't seem to make her mind concentrate on her situation.

Her entire life, she'd wanted a father. She'd hoped night after night that he would return. She'd spent so many hours praying to her mother to bring him back. She finally realized it wasn't because she had missed anything in her life, but because she knew Fay missed him. Memories surfaced.

Fay crying. Talking to Robin in hushed whispers. Others looking at Fay with a mixture of sadness and anxiety. The way every once in a while, Fay would set the table with three plates instead of two and then seem to remember something and put the third place setting away. And most of all, how Fay never changed a single thing about the house. She'd even just closed the door to her father's room and not touched it. Once a year near Grace's birthday, she would find the door open a crack when she got back from school, and she'd find Fay sitting in the chair at his desk, just staring out the window.

Grace's chest squeezed. Would that happen to Fenrir if she died? Would he go to her room in the house with Brigeeta and Vivian, sit on her bed, and stare out the window?

No. She wouldn't let that happen. Couldn't let that happen. He'd already been through too much.

Fury bubbled inside Grace. She refused to be slaughtered like a pig in a butcher shop. Her spirit self rose even closer to the surface, and her nails turned into talons.

No. Not yet.

Grace let her eyes flutter shut and relaxed all her muscles. She evened out her breathing and stayed motionless for several minutes.

Suddenly someone ground the knife deeper, causing pain to shoot through her once more, but she didn't move.

The fingers pulled away, and more blood pooled down by her ear.

“She's out,” said her father. “It won't be long now. Let's prepare. You all know your orders.”

The pairs of hands holding her down released her, and the knee in her back moved away.

Grace continued to lay and wait as the footsteps moved away from her. She opened her eyes a fraction enough to see her brothers dragging something near the fire. She took a deep breath and moved ever so slightly to ensure nothing had been broken in her body. Her legs ached, and her back hurt, but there wasn't any real damage besides possibly a few bruises.

She reached out for Fenrir again and was surprised to find that the connection was stronger. He was closer. Much closer. The thought gave her strength. She needed to get up. She needed to hide until he could get there. She wasn't a weak damsel in distress, but she wasn't a fighter either, and with her injury, she needed to just stay alive until Fenrir could find her. And once he did, the best thing she could do was stay out of his way.

She waited for the right moment, and when she couldn't see her father anywhere, and the other males seemed to be busy with whatever they were doing, she slowly pulled her knees in close and took a deep breath.

Her spirit legs were faster and more powerful than her human-formed legs, so she let her legs lengthen, and her feet rip through her shoes.

It's now or never.

Without waiting a minute, she leapt to her feet and tore off toward the trees.

“She's escaping!” someone called.

“Grab her!” yelled her father.

Grace stumbled as she headed between two of the houses. The blade twisted, and she cried out but refused to go down. Getting caught meant death.

Keep going. She had to keep going.

CHAPTER 19



LOKI DROPPED TO THE GROUND AT THE FOREST'S EDGE, AND Fenrir jumped off his back.

Loki looked at him and cocked an eyebrow.

“We are never, and I mean never, talking about that ever,” said Fenrir.

A slight smirk played across Loki's lips, and he drew his fingers across them like he was zipping them shut.

Fenrir was not ready to admit he'd clung to his dad like a scared baby monkey. He was not ready to admit that he'd screamed like a banshee at one point, thinking he was slipping off. And he was absolutely not prepared to admit that on more than one occasion, he begged and even bribed Loki to try and get him to put Fenrir down. Nope. As far as he was concerned, what happened while flying stayed right there in the air.

“Do you know where she is?” Loki asked.

Fenrir gulped in a huge cleansing breath and pushed the terror of using his dad as a flying surfboard to the back of his mind. He closed his eyes and concentrated on his link to Grace. He'd just felt her terror when a scream rang out, and his eyes shot open.

“Grace!” Fenrir's clothing shredded as he released his beast. Dozens of male shifter scents invaded him, but he pushed them aside and focused on her. It took a fraction of a second to catch her jasmine scent, only this time, the scent of burnt chocolate and blood accompanied it.

Fenrir roared. Loki's twin blades flipped out of the air and into his hands.

"Go get her, Son."

Fenrir nodded and tore into the woods. He dropped to all fours and raced through the trees. Sniffing and listening as he went, he caught the sounds of dozens of footsteps stomping around in the woods.

"Where is she?" a male called.

"She can't have gotten far," called another.

"Find her!" a deep voice boomed.

"I'll go left," Loki said, and before Fenrir could reply, his father leapt over a rock and bounded off a tree.

Fenrir sniffed again, but Grace's scent had vanished. She was hiding. Good.

"I think I see-" A man in his twenties ran straight at Fenrir but stopped short at the sight of him. His eyes widened.

"You see her?" Another man who looked identical to the first stopped and followed his twin's gaze.

Fenrir growled and drew up on two legs. The men bumped into each other as they backed up.

"What the hell is that?" The first asked.

The second man raised his hands and pointed a shotgun straight at Fenrir. He pulled the trigger, and Fenrir roared. He dodged the buckshot, but several pellets caught his thigh, and Fenrir leaped at both men simultaneously. He knocked them both to the ground, and the shotgun went off again next to Fenrir's head, causing his hearing to go dead in that ear.

He didn't wait. He didn't hesitate. He didn't flinch. Instead, he crushed one of the twin's windpipe, while ripping out the second's throat. Blood splashed his face and chest, and Fenrir stood.

More yelling sounded several yards away. Without waiting, he tore off to find his next set of victims.



GRACE GULPED down a huge breath and looked around the edge of the tree trunk. Her heart beat so loud she wondered if her father and his sons could hear it. Her heartbeat was probably the only thing she couldn't mask.

She swallowed hard and slid down the tree slowly, careful not to bump the dagger stuck in her shoulder. Though the dagger hadn't killed her like it would have normal shifters, it was weakening her by the minute. She had to remove it. She crouched on the ground and lowered her wrists under her rear. Her arm screamed at her, and her wrists pulled against her restraints. She tried to slide her arms under her hips, but they'd been tied too tight.

A gunshot rang out somewhere in the forest, and she sucked in a sharp breath.

Fenrir!

Grace got back to her feet, trying to think.

Think. Think. Think.

She stopped and looked down, shaking her head. She needed to keep her wits about her if she wanted to get herself and Fenrir out alive.

She pulled on her spirit self and allowed her arms to lengthen. Down and down and down they stretched as white fur rose from her pores. When they reached the optimal length, she crouched again and easily slipped her arms under her bum and down her legs.

She sucked in several deep breaths as her body shook and broke out in a sweat. Too long. The knife had been in too long and too deep. She was a thousand times more exhausted than she had been when being stabbed at Odin's.

Once her hands were in front of her, Grace yanked the dagger from her shoulder and dropped it to the dirt before kicking it away. Her limbs shook with pain, and she felt like she'd just done ten thousand push-ups.

A scream of terror sounded to her left, and then the ground shook as something big hit a tree nearby.

Fen!

Grace managed to get back to her feet. She pulled at her restraints, but she'd already used up every ounce of strength she had.

She gulped in air, wanting to find him. But she knew her best way of living through the evening was to stay out of his way.

She just prayed that when it was all over, Fenrir wouldn't hate her for what he'd had to do to save her stupid, naive ass.

A crunch of footsteps sounded next to her, and Grace turned to look around and came face to face with one of her brothers.

He smiled. "Father has been looking for you."



FENRIR TORE the limbs from a man and tossed his torso into a tree before running to a giant boulder, leaping over it, and pinning another man to the ground before he could fire a shot at Loki. Fenrir snarled at the man, whose eyes widened in terror just before Fenrir ripped his throat out.

He turned his head as Loki slashed through a man's chest and then beheaded him.

Loki looked over at Fenrir, his breathing heavy. "I haven't been in a battle in too long. I think I might be getting slow."

Fenrir snorted in response.

Loki wiped his forehead with the back of his sleeve, smearing it with blood. "How many of these guys are there? We've killed what? Twenty? Twenty-five of them? There can't be many more."

Fenrir sniffed the air. "There are four left. And one of them is her father," he said thickly.

Loki nodded. "Have you caught her scent yet?"

Fenrir shook his head, just a scream rang out.

"Fenrir!"

Grace!

Fenrir roared and took off toward the sound. He'd not gotten far when he caught it, her scent and the scent of her blood.

Again she cried out his name, and he turned left. Loki was at his side, keeping pace. Just as she shouted his name a third time, the sound was cut off, and Fenrir's whole body shuddered.

No. Please, Odin, no. Don't let her be gone. Don't let her die. I'll do anything. Anything.

Fenrir and Loki approached the edge of the trees, and several houses came into view.

As he raced around the side of one of the houses, a brilliant white light flashed ahead, pushing him and Loki backward. Fenrir tumbled away and slammed into a tree. Dazed, he rolled back to his feet and started forward again. Despite the flash of light diminishing, it was as if a giant hand pressed against him, keeping him back. He pushed against the invisible opposition and moved forward, following his bond with Grace. Nothing would keep him from his mate. Nothing.

Loki grabbed onto Fenrir's shoulder as he, too, moved forward. "You owe me a beer after this."

Fenrir growled, and together, they made it to the edge of the house and then little by little, the resistance eased, and by the time he saw Grace, the barrier was gone altogether.

Four men, three young and one older, stood several feet from Grace, who knelt on the ground, her arms and legs covered in white fur, dirt, and blood.

Fenrir growled, and all eyes moved to him.

Grace looked up, her eyes glassy and unfocused. Thick blood dripped down her torso, mingled with black ooze. Silver

poison.

“Fenrir,” she whispered. She tried getting to her feet, but her legs trembled, and she dropped back to the ground.

Fenrir sprinted forward. A foot from her, one of the men stepped in his path, but with a swipe of his paw, Fenrir knocked the man away and sent him flying through the front door of a house.

Fenrir scooped Grace into his arms. She clung to him with her good arm, and her claws dug into his fur.

“I knew you’d come. I knew you’d find me.” She buried her face into his chest, and Fenrir nuzzled her head, allowing their connection to flow through him.

He’d found her. She was alive. She was safe. She was his.

Grace’s father moved a fraction, but before he could do anything, Loki appeared behind him and held a glowing blade to his throat.

“I wouldn’t do that,” Loki announced.

Grace’s father growled, making Loki chuckle.

“Let me rephrase; I wouldn’t do that unless you want my son to rip you limb from limb. Which I can’t promise he won’t do anyway. You know how wolves can be about their mates. And my son has waited a thousand years to find his.”

Fenrir looked up at Grace’s father. His ineffectual alpha gaze glared down at Fenrir. It was strange. If Fenrir had seen the man on the street, he wouldn’t have given him a second glance. He wasn’t large. He wasn’t imposing. His aura wasn’t even relatively strong. So what was it about him that had caused so many women to sleep with him and give him children? Not only the scents of each male but the resemblance to Grace had told him immediately that they were related to her. But it was more than evident that the resemblance between these males and Grace was DNA based only.

Fenrir kissed the top of Grace’s head and stood. He walked toward the men and circled them as Loki stepped away. He

sniffed them each in turn and growled when he got to the last.

“You touched my mate.” Without another word, Fenrir raked his claws across the man’s throat, and the male dropped to his knees, coughing and choking on his own blood before it painted the ground.

One of the other males snarled and turned on Fenrir. Fenrir killed him as well without another thought.

“Stop!” Grace’s father ordered.

Fenrir rounded the man and loomed over him as every instinct told him to disembowel the man in front of his two remaining sons.

“Do you know who I am?” Fenrir demanded.

Grace’s father looked up at him but didn’t speak.

“I am Fenrir Loki’s son. Norse god of the wolves.”

Her father shrugged. “I’m not Norse.”

“It doesn’t matter whether you are Norse, American, or Korean,” said Loki. “We no longer discriminate.”

Fenrir’s hands clenched and unclenched. He wanted to wipe the smug look off the man forever. But he had to hold back. This was no mere shifter or mortal alpha. He was Grace’s father. Whatever was done next had to be her decision.

Fenrir turned to Grace, who propped herself up against a large boulder.

“What do you want?” he growled.



GRACE KNEW what Fenrir was asking. He wanted to know what she wanted. She stared at him for a moment. Her mate. His enormous eight-foot frame towered over her father and brothers. How had she not realized why Fenrir called himself a monster sooner? Fenrir wasn’t a shifter. He wasn’t a wolf. He was a god. A wolf god. A werewolf. And though his dark black fur covered his enlarged frame, she would have known

him in a sea of other werewolves. Her Fenrir. Her mate. Staring at his hardpacked, muscular body, she finally understood why she was meant for him. Why he was her destiny. A destiny that her father and brothers wanted to rob them both of.

Grace looked at her two remaining brothers and her father. What did she want? She wanted them dead. All of them. She wanted their bones to litter the ground of her packlands as a reminder of what happened when people betrayed those they were supposed to love most. As a testament to every shifter everywhere that Fenrir, the god of the wolves, was a god to be feared and respected. That she, his mate, would not tolerate betrayal. But... that wasn't who she was, and it wasn't what Fenrir wanted.

She blew out a harsh breath. However, making them live the rest of their lives without the ability to shift was worse than death. Making them live like humans. Not allowing them to live or associate with any pack for the rest of their lives.

On the other hand, if she let them live, her father would never stop trying to get at her and her mother. Her remaining two brothers, however...

Grace's gaze connected with Fenrir's. She stood and strode forward. Looking at her father, she outstretched her hand.

"From this day forward, I will not look for you. I will neither dream of you nor think of you in any way. You will die in my memories, and I will move forward to live a long, well-loved life. You, however, will think of me every day. Every hour. Every minute. Because from this day forward, you will never shift again. You will be shunned from every pack and shifter you encounter. You will be branded a traitor to our race. You will be a blight on the shifter world and are hereby condemned to living the rest of your life as a human."

Her father roared and lunged at Grace, but Fenrir caught him by the throat and lifted him off his feet.

"Do it," her father growled. "Kill me. Kill me now, or I will find her and kill her with my bare hands."

Fenrir's claws squeezed into her father's throat and yanked his close. "If you come for her, I won't just kill you I will make you suffer. I will give you to my sister Hel and in her realm, I can spend thousands of years making you pay. Pay in ways you never imagined you could suffer. And I don't just mean physical pain. I will break your mind in ways you didn't know were possible. And then I will leave you for a day, a year, ten, you won't know. All you will know is that little by little, you will begin to heal. And then, just when you start to think it's over and that I've forgotten you, I will come back, and we will begin all over again. Over and over and over forever."

Grace swallowed hard. She did not doubt that Fenrir meant it. She saw a glimmer of actual fear in her father's eyes for the first time.

Grace touched Fenrir's warm arm and nodded to him. Fenrir set her father back on his feet, but instead of letting go of him, Fenrir lengthened one talon and dug into her father's chest. He sliced easily through her father's shirt and gouged deep into his skin, flaying it open.

Grace watched as Fenrir carved the letter F into her father's torso and then tossed him to the ground.

"Just in case you need a reminder of who I am."

Her father clutched his chest as rivulets of blood streamed down his body.

Grace looked at her brothers. "Go," she said. "Go and spread the word of what happened here. Be sure to keep your distance from our father because I'm sure you don't want my mate to have to hunt you down."

The brothers looked at each other and nodded before turning to leave.

"However," Grace said, making them turn back. "If you ever find yourselves truly remorseful for what you tried to do, you may come to me, and I will reverse my compulsion."

Surprise crossed their faces, and then they turned and walked off into the trees.

Loki stepped forward, grabbed her father by the collar, and dragged him the opposite direction.

“I think my son did a pretty good job of telling you what he would do to you if you came for Grace; now it’s my turn to enlighten you as to what I, Loki, god of mischief, will do if you come after my new daughter in law Grace, or my son, Fenrir.”

Grace watched them go until Loki’s words trailed off. “Does your dad always have to have the last word?”

Fenrir snorted. “Always.”

She nodded and looked up into Fenrir’s face. She spotted several small holes in his thigh, and she spread the fur apart to look at them.

Fenrir gripped her wrist. “Don’t.”

“Don’t what?” She didn’t understand.

He turned his head away. “Don’t... look at my beast.”

“Beast?” She turned his chin, forcing him to look at her. Her gut clenched, and she took a deep breath. She stepped away from him and focused on her spirit self. Grace closed her eyes as her transformation took over. Her legs elongated, and her arms. The nails on her hand thickened and curled. Fur sprouted all over her body, and her teeth lengthened past her chin. The entire thing took less than a minute, but she kept her eyes closed nonetheless. One person. Only one person had ever seen her in her spirit form.

Her heart hammered in her chest, and slowly, she opened her eyes and looked at Fenrir.



FENRIR STARED AT GRACE. She stood about a foot shorter than he did. Her fur white as moonlight. Her golden alpha eyes gleamed in the dark.

His heartbeat hammered, but he couldn’t take a breath. It wasn’t possible. She couldn’t be... like him. Grace was like

him. She wasn't a wolf. She was a werewolf.

Fear crossed her features, and Fenrir reached to touch her face, but she grabbed his hand, stopping him.

“Am I a monster? A beast?” she asked thickly behind her elongated teeth.

“You... you are beautiful.”

She smiled and cupped his hand to her cheek before lifting her palm to his cheek. “So are you, Fenrir, werewolf god.”

Fenrir swooped down and kissed her hard. Their teeth clashed as their tongues swirled together.

It started small, a tiny spark, no bigger than a match strike. But within seconds, his chest burned, and their connection solidified. He could feel her, taste her, smell her. Every part of her. Every particle reached out and merged with his. It was like being in his body and her body simultaneously, and the love that poured out of her made tears form in his eyes. Love for him. For them. For the future.

He broke the kiss and stared at her. She wiped the tears from his eyes.

“You're mine, Fenrir. I chose you. Today. Tomorrow. Forever.”

Fenrir's chest squeezed until he thought he might pass out. “You are mine, Grace. I chose you. Yesterday. Tomorrow. Forever.”

CHAPTER 20



GRACE SLEPT FOR TWO DAYS WITH FENRIR AND LAYLA watching over her. He made sure she stayed hydrated and fought every second to keep from staring at her wounds to make sure they were healing. He'd laid at her side the entire time, holding her and purring in a low rumble that seemed to comfort her.

By the third day, he was awakened to her hands on his body. Relief flooded him, and the purring began again, but when her fingers traced down his torso to his hip, his purring turned to a growl.

He'd barely gotten his eyes open before her mouth was on his chest. She licked over one of his nipples and then playfully bit it.

He chuckled. "I take it you're feeling better."

She answered by licking up his throat and then kissing him hard. Her scent rose around him, and he caught a slight change in her. A warm spicy note that had him completely hard the moment he smelled it.

He growled and pulled her flush against him as she deepened the kiss. He moved his hand between her legs to find her hot and wet. The sensation almost had him climaxing on her stomach.

Her most intimate parts felt... different. Swollen and quivering.

She mewled as he touched her and rubbed against his hand hard.

“Grace-”

“I need you, Fen. I need you now.” She didn’t wait for permission and instead straddled his hips and slid down on him in a hard push.

Fenrir grabbed her hips and growled as she seated herself fully on him. Her head fell back, and she moaned.

Her heat and wetness engulfed him, and her scent grew stronger, encircling him and making him want and need only one thing- her.

Fenrir rocked his hips against her as she slid over his length. “Grace... I... I can’t hold out. You’re so hot. So tight. I-”

Grace leaned in and kissed him so hard his lip split open from her teeth.

“Screw me, Fen. I need you to screw me. Hard.”

Fenrir’s beast roared and didn’t need to be told twice.

Fenrir flipped her over and drove into her. Grace cried out and then stared at him with her golden gaze.

“Harder. More.”

Fenrir willingly obliged. He lifted her leg over his shoulder as she plowed into her. Her cries of pleasure built higher with every thrust, and her scent grew stronger. Soon they were slapping together so hard and fast that Fenrir gripped her hips to piston inside her faster.

Grace growled and then cried out as her body arched off the bed. His body pulled tight, and heat burned up his legs and settled in his groin as he exploded into her. He pulled her tight against him as his knot swelled and locked in place. Her hot velvety walls clamped down around him even as their climaxes continued.

Fenrir roared as she called his name over and over. When her body relaxed onto the bed, he fell on top of her sated.

Grace smiled and hummed as she wrapped her arms around him.

“Mmmmm... I hope this is how we wake up every morning,” she said sleepily.

Fenrir chuckled. “I could get used to it.”

She kissed him. “Me too.”

She pushed several dark strands of hair out of his eyes and stared at him with hooded eyes. Her face was flush, but it wasn't just from their lovemaking. He felt her forehead and then her cheek.

“Are you feeling okay?” He inspected her shoulder where she'd been stabbed, but the wound had healed, and the scar was no longer discolored.

“I feel... I don't know. I can't explain it except to say that I feel horny.”

He smiled. “Trust me, I am happy for you to be horny any time, little Goddess, but you feel different. Smell different.”

“Smell like what?”

He shook his head. “I don't know. Just... amazing. It's like everything about you is amped up to a thousand. Even your privates are swollen and wetter and tighter.”

“Really?” Her eyebrows drew together, and she kissed him. “Is that a complaint?”

Fenrir looked down at their joined bodies. “Does it seem like I'm complaining?”

She laughed.

He rolled on his back, pulling her onto his chest. Fenrir had no idea how long they lay that way, but soon they drifted off to sleep.

When Fenrir woke later, Grace was already on top of him.

“I need you. I... I can't stand it.”

Her legs burned where she straddled him.

“Grace are you okay?” he asked.

She slid down on him and began rocking before he could even move.

“Oh gods, Fen. You feel so good. I need you again. I need your knot. Please, Fen.”

Fear trickled down Fenrir’s spine. Her entire body was slick with sweat, and her skin hot to the touch. Even so, her body called out to his, and he couldn’t deny her. He wanted her, and he wanted to give her anything she asked for.

“Take what you need, Grace. I’ll give you all of it.”

She moaned and rocked on his hips, but soon, her moans of pleasure turned to agitation, and she shook her head and slid off him.

Fenrir sat up and laid his hands on her shoulder. “Tell me. Tell me what you need.”

Grace looked at him and shook her head before covering her face.

Fenrir’s beast called out to her, and Fenrir reached through the connection to her.

No. No. He couldn’t. It wasn’t right.

“Fen,” she moaned. “I need you. I need you to...”

Fenrir lifted her chin. “Show me, baby. Show me what you need from me.”

Grace stared at him, unsure for a minute, and then slowly got on all fours before him.

“I need you deeper,” she whispered.

Desire rippled through Fenrir as he took in her curvy backside. His body pulsed with need, and he grew so hard it hurt.

He ran his hand up her spine and knelt behind her. Her wetness dripped over his hand as he touched her, and he groaned as her scent invaded him again.

“Please, Fen. It hurts.”

“I don’t want to hurt you,” he said.

She shook her head. “You’re the only one who can stop it. Make it stop.”

Fenrir touched her warm slick skin, and she cried out.

The pain building inside him made him lurch forward. There was only one way to sate them both.

Fenrir didn't need to do more than line himself up with her entrance because the moment she felt him, she slammed backward, impaling herself on him.

Fenrir's entire body rolled with pleasure, and Grace cried out before leaning forward on her elbows and slamming back again.

The sounds of ecstasy pouring from her shot Fenrir into action. He gripped her hips hard, digging into her fleshy hip bones.

"Yes," she called. "Take me, Fen."

Fenrir lurched forward and slammed into her. The ache in his groin subsided momentarily and then built again until he slid inside her once more.

"Faster, Fen. Faster."

Fenrir lost all control as he bucked his hips into her hard and fast, making her entire body jiggle. He flattened his chest against her back and wrapped an arm around her grabbing her breast and pinching her nipple.

She panted his name, and he tweaked her nipple again, slamming into her repeatedly until he felt her walls clamp down, and she screamed.

Fenrir's body burst apart like never before as he climaxed so hard every muscle in his body cramped.

Seconds turned to minutes as both felt wave after wave of pure pleasure. Finally, after what seemed like hours, the climax subsided to nothing more than small heat waves, and he collapsed on top of her.

Grace wrapped her arm around his back and trailed her fingers over his rear.

"Fen," she finally said.

He kissed the dip of her throat. "Yes, my love."

“I... I think I might be in heat.”

Fenrir laughed. Really laughed. He laughed so hard that tears formed in his eyes. Then he kissed her neck again. “Yes, little Goddess. I would most definitely say that is the case.”



FOR THE NEXT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, Grace got more sex than sleep. And by the time her fever had finally broken, they were both so exhausted that she didn't have the energy to even walk to the bathroom. So she'd crawled.

The following morning when she'd woken, Fenrir came in dressed and carrying several bags of food.

He set them all on the bed and spread the feast before her. She picked a breakfast burrito and dove into it. After scarfing it down, she chugged a full glass of orange juice and then a bottle of water. When she reached for her third muffin, Fenrir pulled the remaining food away.

“You're going to make yourself sick if you eat anymore,” he said. “You need to slow down.”

“I don't want to slow down. I feel like I haven't eaten in days.”

“That's because you haven't.”

Fenrir shoved the remaining items back into one of the bags and set it on the floor.

Grace grumbled, making Fenrir chuckle.

He pulled her into his arms and laid down with her. “You need to rest. Being in heat is no joke. Especially after fighting off silver poisoning twice in one week.”

Grace breathed in his orange-cinnamon smell and sighed. As her stomach rolled and gurgled from the sudden onslaught of sustenance, she snuggled into Fenrir's arms.

Fenrir began purring, and she couldn't help but relax into him and close her eyes.

His fingers tangled in her hair and stroked her head lightly.
“Can I ask you something?”

“Of course,” she said.

“Did you see that bright light flash back at your camp?”

Her eyes opened again. “Yes.”

“Was... was that your mother?”

Memories floated back into view.

Her brother dragging her to the camp. Her father looming over her with a gun in his hand. The hammer cocking back on the gun, and then a flash of light so bright it knocked her brothers and father away from her and sent the gun flying in the air and out of sight. The men had been dazed for a minute and had just regained their bearings and started toward her again when Fenrir and Loki had appeared. And beyond them, leaning against a tree, a figure.

“No,” she said. “It wasn’t her. She didn’t come for me after all. After everything my father did to try and make her appear, she didn’t.”

“Then who saved you?” he asked.

She looked up at him, confused. “You did. You are my hero. You saved me, Fen.”

“Me?”

She propped up on an elbow. “Yes, you. You came for me. You protected me. You saved me.”

He thought about her words for a minute. “Okay. That’s true, but, if it wasn’t your mother who produced the light, who was it?”

She cocked her head to the side. “Didn’t you see him? You ran right past him.”

“Who? Who was it?”

“Odin. It was Odin.”

EPILOGUE



FENRIR PULLED AT THE COLLAR OF HIS DRESS SHIRT. HE HAD never dressed up in a suit and tie in his life. But Grace had insisted. And when Grace insisted, he obeyed.

He looked at himself in the mirror and blew out a breath before tugging on the tie.

Grace slid up behind him and wrapped her arms around his chest. “You look good enough to eat.”

Fenrir smiled and spun to face her. “Oh really?”

She nodded, and a glint of mischief twinkled in her eyes.

“I thought we had people coming over.”

She nodded. “We do, but not for an hour.”

“What about the food and decorations?”

“Done. Frigg and Meili helped. But they’re gone now to get ready themselves.”

Fenrir smiled and ran his hand down over Grace’s swollen belly. It had been two months since she’d gone into heat, and in that time, they’d found out that they were expecting. From her size, they knew it was more than one baby. And with how many times they’d made love those first couple of weeks, he was surprised they weren’t expecting an entire litter of cubs.

Grace slid her hand down the front of his dress shirt to his slacks. “I could get used to seeing you dress up.”

“Like a talking monkey?”

She kissed him hard. “Like a sexy, powerful, billionaire, wolf god.”

Fenrir purred. He liked the sound of that.

He leaned down to kiss her and instead swooped her into his arms and lifted her onto the bathroom countertop. Stepping between her legs, he slid his hand up her flowy maxi dress to find she wasn't wearing any underwear.

Fenrir growled. “You were going to go commando to our family announcement party?”

She unzipped his slacks. “You go everywhere commando.”

“Yeah, but wearing that dress makes it easy access for anyone to slide up behind you and take you.”

She smirked. “Or in front. I'm not picky.”

Fenrir pulled her hips to the counter's edge and growled as he claimed her mouth with his.



GRACE WAS JUST PULLING her hair into a ponytail when the doorbell to their apartment rang.

Fenrir squeezed her rear and kissed her neck before leaving the bathroom to answer the door.

She stared in the mirror, barely able to recognize the woman she was now and the girl who had run from her pack less than a year ago. She stared at herself for a moment, and then her chest squeezed, and tears flooded her eyes. She wished Fay could have been there to see who she had become.

“I did it, Mom,” she whispered. “I fulfilled my destiny. I've become who I was meant to be. I hope I made you proud.” She paused and lifted her eyes to the ceiling. “And you as well, Mother.”

Grace was so proud of Fenrir and how welcoming he'd been to everyone at their gathering. He'd even shook Tyr's hand and had spoken a few words to him before walking away.

Fenrir hadn't seen the look on Tyr's face, but Grace had, and his happiness had gone straight to her heart. She needed to try and find ways to encourage that healing between Tyr and Fenrir. She felt Tyr needed the friendship just as much as Fen did.

They'd all eaten and chatted and laughed. Unlike the formal dinner at Loki's place, this had been more relaxed and social. Even Hel seemed to enjoy herself being there. And as the evening wound down, Grace squeezed Fenrir's knee, and he nodded to her before standing near the fireplace.

"Uh... Grace and I have something we would like to say." The fear in his eyes and the tremble in his voice made Grace think he was giving a speech on Mount Olympus.

Everyone quieted, and Fenrir held his hand out to Grace. She stood and joined him.

"Well... as you all know, Grace and I have... well we..."

"Mated," Loki finished.

Everyone chuckled, and Fenrir's cheeks heated.

"Yeah. And with that, she uh, well, she-"

"We're pregnant," Grace finished.

Everyone cheered and clapped.

"Yeah, so, we needed to find a wolf doctor, but since she's already showing, we are pretty sure we're expecting twins," Fenrir finished.

"Triplets," said a low voice from the back.

Everyone froze.

"Www... what?" Fenrir asked.

Everyone's gaze turned around, and Grace spotted Heimdall leaning against the island in the kitchen, drinking a beer.

When he noticed everyone's eyes on him, he stopped drinking.

"What did you say?" Fenrir repeated.

Heimdall looked at his beer, flustered, and then set it on the counter.

“Heim,” said Frigg. “Did you just... Did you tell them something you weren’t supposed to?”

Heimdall licked his lips and scanned the room.

“Heimdall?” Frigg said again.

“Okay, why are you all looking at me like that?” he said. “Once. One time in what? Two thousand years? I slipped up one time in two thousand years and tell someone something I’m not supposed to, and you all look at me like I’ve lost my damn mind. And let’s be honest here, it’s not like they weren’t going to find out in the next couple of weeks anyway. And this is why we are here anyway, isn’t it? To celebrate them having a baby. It’s not like they didn’t even know she was pregnant. And you all know I am susceptible to Odin’s private stock of ale. It’s why I never drink it. But Frigg, you told me to be nice and join in this time, and I did, and so honestly, it’s not my fault. It’s the ale’s fault. And all of your faults for making me drink it.”

He stared at them all and pointed at them in turn, and Grace couldn’t help the giggle that bubbled up inside her.

Heimdall looked at her, and as her giggles grew louder, everyone else also turned to her.

Soon her giggles had turned into full-blown laughter.

“Grace?” Fenrir asked.

Grace laughed even harder. “Triplets. We are having triplets. Three babies. Three. At one time.”

Grace’s laughter grew harder, and she grabbed her stomach as her muscles cramped.

“Are you okay? What’s wrong? Is it the babies?” Fenrir’s look of fear did nothing to stop her from laughing harder.

Tears streamed from her eyes at his distress though nothing was funny about the situation.

“Get her some water,” Fenrir yelled. “Grace, come sit down.” He led her to the couch, and people moved out of her way as he sat her down.

“Maybe she needs to cool down,” Loki offered. He produced a fan out of thin air and handed it to Fenrir, who immediately began waving it at her.

“Prop up her feet,” Tyr offered.

Vidar snorted. “Why? Does that stop the giggles?”

Tyr shrugged. “How the hell should I know?”

“You two are utterly worthless.” Frigg pushed the men out of the way and held out a glass of water. “Here, sweetie, drink this.”

Grace just waved Frigg away, and her laughter continued.

Three. They were having three babies.

Fenrir was so screwed.



ODIN STOOD out on the balcony of Fenrir’s apartment, watching everyone fawn over Grace, who was taking Heimdall’s news much better than Fenrir.

He chuckled, remembering when Thor’s imminent arrival had been announced. He couldn’t imagine three Thors. Or three of any of his kids, to be honest.

A shiver coursed his spine, and a ray of moonlight hit the floor next to him.

Odin didn’t turn to look but instead continued to watch the scene inside as a soft hand landed on Odin’s shoulder like a butterfly.

“He did well,” said the woman.

Odin nodded. “He did.”

Silence stretched between them.

“You helped him,” she said.

Odin's gaze slid sideways to the beautiful Goddess, who was the exact older replica of Grace.

"He prayed. I answered." She smelled of wind and freedom. For as long as he'd known the Moon Goddess, he'd never figured out how she could smell of those two things.

"You did a good thing here. A good thing for Fenrir and you. You made amends."

Odin stared at Fenrir and the rest of his family. He'd been wrong to think he could change fate by chaining Fenrir up all those years ago. And in leaving the boy there, he'd broken him in ways he hadn't imagined possible. Not even Loki had been that broken when he'd tied him up.

"How can I repay you for what you did?" he asked. "For what you gave. For what you lost."

Luna shrugged. "I lost nothing. I was there with her every moment of her life. Every step. Every breath. And in giving birth to her, I was able to help heal another god. Together we brought Fenrir back to who he always should have been. He found his mate. He fell in love. He saved her from an evil man. And in doing so, he became a hero. You helped him become that hero, even though he will never know it was you. He will never thank you. And he may never forgive you. You are a good man. You should be proud, Odin All-Father."

Odin turned and looked into the beautiful yet semi-transparent face of the Moon Goddess Luna. Proud? He had nothing to be proud of. This one good deed could never make up for the thousands of wrong choices he had made as Odin, King of the Norse Gods.

"I thank you again for helping me right this wrong," Odin replied. "If there is ever anything I can do for you in return. I am in your debt."

Luna smiled and removed her hand from his shoulder. Her form began to dissolve as a cloud passed across the moon, cloaking it in shadow.

"Congratulations, by the way," said Odin.

Luna stopped. "For what?"

“Your daughter is pregnant.”

Luna smiled, and her form brightened. “A grandchild. That is worth congrats. Thank you. I will enjoy watching my grandchild grow and flourish.”

Odin laughed. “She’s pregnant with triplets, according to Heimdall.”

Luna nodded. “Well, she is a fertility Goddess.”

Luna began to disappear again as her last words floated to Odin. “You might want to let them know that. That is if you don’t want to let them end up with more children than you have.” A soft tinkle of laughter made Odin smile as she and the moonlight vanished completely.

More kids than even he had? Odin chuckled. That might be nice. Maybe for once in his lifetime, he’d lose the title of the God of Lust.

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ABOUT REBEKAH R. GANIERE

Rebekah is a *USA Today* Bestselling Author and Award Winning, Emmy Nominated Screenwriter/Producer. Her debut novel *Dead Awakenings*, hit the bestseller list on release day. She has won several awards in both writing and screenwriting. Books in her popular fairytale retelling series *Fairelle* have won many awards, including Best Fantasy Series of 2014 from the Paranormal Romance Guild.

In her spare time, when she isn't writing, you can find her teaching all over the US and online- Rebekah has been a guest speaker and panelist at Comic Cons and conventions all over the US- Cosplaying, Playing D&D or Video Games, or hanging out with her Four kids, Neurotic German Shepherd, Five Noisy Guinea Pigs, and Adorable but reserved Rosy Boa.