



Virgo Queen

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Category: Fantasy

Description: I'm the Little Red Riding Hood of the dark witch academy.

Am I crazy for trusting the wolves?

I'm the last remaining innocent at the Icarus Academy. Powerless, friendless, and vulnerable to the warlock bullies who terrorize my college. Even though I'm First Girl on the Dean's List, resourceful and smart, I need to hide my flightless wings and secret Light Fae heritage just to survive.

I've never felt more alone.

Until Icelandic mafia warlock Draco Mars and his Cajun werewolf boyfriend Jean-Emilien offer to take me under their cruel protection in exchange for my innocence. I never meant to surrender my heart.

When our secret bargain exposes my hidden powers in a dangerous showdown with my enemies, can this Little Red Riding Hood dare to trust the wolves, shed my innocent good girl disguise, and finally learn to fly?

Or will the wolves turn on me and eat me alive?

One-click for an intense dark witch adult academy why choose paranormal romance novella that delivers bully vs. bookworm forbidden heat, steamy group interactions, possessive males, a hot Cajun werewolf, M/M encounters, all swords crossed, a tough guy mafia hero who falls first, a scrappy innocent heroine who never has to choose, and enough heat to set your Academy uniform on fire.

This spicy novella is part of the Dark Witch Academy series but is written to be enjoyed as a standalone. It was previously published in the Beyond the Veil anthology.

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I must literally be the last remaining virgin in the whole Icarus Academy.

The reason I say this is because I've already blundered into two couples—and now a throuple—feverishly making out in the shadows of the dormitory stairs in my residential college.

Wow.

That's... actually happening. Two guys and a girl.

Like an actual menage.

They're blocking the stairs and they're distracting. But I just keep going and mosey right on past. I've got someplace I need to be tonight.

"Sorry, guys. Don't mind me," I mumble as I edge around the amorous throuple.

"Sod off, McSnicker. We're busy here." One guy surfaces from that triple sex sandwich barely long enough to lob a discarded bra (regulation Academy uniform, meaning virginal white lace) in my general direction.

When I duck to avoid getting hit in the face by flying lingerie, I almost take a nosedive down the stairs.

"Geez Louise," I grumble, teetering on the edge of disaster on my too-long legs in my borrowed platform heels. "Already own plenty of those, thanks. I have a whole drawer full upstairs."

Not that anyone notices what I'm wearing.

Not even for my special night.

My classmates have already returned to their three-way.

Invisibility is an extinct magical trait in all four arcane races (plus the two hidden species the others don't know about) that comprise the witching world. Magical traits are genetic, and therefore inherited, like we learn in Science of Witchcraft class our freshman year here at the witch academy.

But I don't need any special DNA to slip past unnoticed in this Academy.

Totally unacknowledged in any way after the whole bra incident, I steady my wobbly steps, avert my eyes politely—like the good girl I am—and tiptoe past the half-naked threesome who are now panting and groping (they're a girl from my dorm and two guys from our rival college I barely know). There's barely room to squeeze past on the twisty haunted house staircase that plunges from the student dorm in Villa Hadrian—that's the name of our residential college—down to the spooky basement.

Somehow, I make it work. I have to.

In typical Mallory McSnicker fashion, I'm already late.

Late to my own birthday bash.

Given my general McSnicker clumsiness (which is one inherited trait I could've done without), it's definitely not a smart idea to hurry down these corkscrew stairs in the dark. The ancient treads are worn with age and barely lit by the occasional rusted branch of candelabra sticking out from the shredded ruin of the blood red Victorian-era True Blood Fangtasia wallpaper.

But I hurry anyway.

It's easier to camouflage the fact that I'm the tallest, skinniest girl in the whole school when I'm wearing the plaid skirt and blazer and saddle shoes stipulated in the Academy Codex. Tonight I'm a lot more conspicuous (at least in theory) teetering along in these glittery platform heels and a sparkly silver party dress that barely hits mid-thigh on my giraffe-like legs.

In this getup, I'll be lucky if I don't break a leg before I even manage to show for my own birthday bash. Despite the fact that I'm tempting fate, I rest a hand on the wall for stability—because everything in this Academy is ancient, and the banister rotted away decades ago—and pick up my pace till I'm trotting (unsteadily) down the stairs.

The metallic grind of axe-murder metal, mingled with a snarl of youthful voices and an occasional girly squeal, floats up from the dark cavern of the dorm basement.

Firelight flickers from the battered oil drums we use for illumination down there. Facets of light dance against the ruined wallpaper and make my dress sparkle like fairy dust in the darkness.

I pause to let myself savor the magic of this moment.

Just for a sec.

I'm no wicked telepath like my classmate Ronin Pendragon, I'm pretty much a nonentity in the magical superpowers department. But the whole school's excitement pulses from the basement like a beating heart. We're not supposed to be partying down there, in the unsafe and basically condemned medieval dungeon basement—which is also rumored to be haunted.

Not on a school night.

Especially right before midterms.

But my dorm mates will seize any excuse for a party, and I'm First Girl on the Dean's List. The resident, apple-polishing good girl.

In other words, a faculty favorite.

That's why my classmates figured Mistress Agrippina (our rule-enforcing headmistress) would turn a blind eye.

I've never had a real birthday party before. My kind doesn't celebrate them. So it feels really magical to be getting one now. Even if my birthday's just an excuse for an unsanctioned party, I'm allowed to let myself enjoy it.

I'll soak up every magical second of this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Caught up in the floaty euphoria of sex pheromones and anticipation wafting up the stairs, I descend like I'm dreaming.

As I wobble my way down in my borrowed heels, the unruly cloud of carrot curls I can never seem to tame rises from my bare shoulders and starts to frizz and float in the psychic charge I'm generating.

Tonight's the night, McSnicker, I tell myself like a mantra, trying in vain to tame my rebellious curls. It's your twentieth birthday. It's a real party. You're at least gonna get a real kiss.

Because I refuse to count as real kisses those sloppy, totally underwhelming fumbles in the broom closet with Cletus, my equally awkward third cousin, when we were both a pimply fourteen.

All that distraction and commotion below, plus the reek of cheap beer and salsa, and the need to concentrate on my rickety footing on these stairs, are all reasons why my typically acute secret senses fail me tonight.

Right when I need them most.

That's when I blunder around the bend like the same complete social disaster I always am—

And walk straight into the two guys I've been crushing on for literally my entire sophomore year. Who are, themselves, making out on the stairs.

With each other.

I practically run into Draco Mars' broad back before I pull up short with a thunderous gasp. My heart jams up against my lungs and hammers so hard it practically makes the whole house vibrate. Dizzy with the dark spice of Mogadon pheromones flooding the air and the adrenaline rush of my own endorphins, I grope blindly toward the wall for balance.

Draco's Icelandic and he's a big guy, like the tallest guy at Icarus (but his colossal build is only one of the reasons I'm crushing). However, I'm currently standing above him on the stairs. That vantage gives me a total view, past his pale blond head and those muscled shoulders encased in a worn black tee that looks soft as suede, of my other crush.

Jean-Emilien Labête, the Cajun, who goes by Jae.

The werewolf.

(Which I mean literally, because shifter.)

Ohmygosh.

I can't even believe what I'm seeing.

Jae's, like, going down on Draco. Right here on the school stairs!

No one else in the whole Academy even knows those two are together. Clearly, they've been keeping their whole thing secret.

But I've been watching these two particular guys like a creeper all semester, and it's hard to hide stuff from someone like me, so I kinda guessed.

Due to the angle, I can't see much past Draco's powerful frame, beyond his big hands threaded through the mass of dreadlocks and beads and juju Jae likes to twist into his long black hair. I do have a direct view of Jae's hungry hands, which are cupping Draco's always impressive ass (an ass that's even more impressive now, encased in black leather, than when he's wearing his Academy uni). Jae's fingers are kneading and his curvy black claws are out, sharp and deadly as box cutters. Which totally gives me a shiver that runs all the way down my spine to my tailbone.

Underneath my sparkly dress and virginal panties, a sudden flood of tingly heat almost makes me moan.

I suck in a lungful of air and reel under a head-spinning hit of juniper and bergamot—that's Draco, he's part of the Mogadon race, so it's a genetic trait that he scents. Underneath that truckload of come-get-me biochemicals he's pumping out, my enhanced senses pick up the dark green aroma of patchouli and moss and fertile New Orleans soil. The shifters scent too, and that verdant spice is drifting from Jae's sleek braids and amber skin.

Normal humans—even normal witches—wouldn't hear a thing under the staccato

grind of death metal rising from the basement.

But I'm not normal.

So I can hear Jae's wolf whining, feral with need, all low in his throat, as he... wow... literally gives Draco a blow job. Right here on our dormitory stairs.

Now this, I gotta see.

I mean, it is my birthday, remember? I don't expect any actual presents, but this is the exact gift I want.

I'm standing on tiptoe and teetering in my platform heels, breathless with wonder and straining like anything to see over Draco Mars' shoulder, when the Iclander's raspy voice rubs against my heightened senses like sandpaper.

"You just watching, First Girl, or you wanna join?"

Heat races into my cheeks on a horrified gasp. I practically burst into flames on the spot. I literally wish I could melt and just sink through the stairs.

I'm, like, a peeping Tom. A peeping Thomasina.

I'm busted.

Geez Louise. Draco hasn't even turned his sexy head. But he's a really strong warlock, so clearly he senses I'm here.

With a soft curse, Jae's head thrusts into view next to Draco's leather-clad hip. The Cajun's languid eyes, rimmed in black liner, flame like pools of golden honey.

“Happy birthday, chere .” Jae pauses—for me to react, I guess—but that’s not happening. His lush mouth curls in a lazy grin. “Ah, cat got your tongue, oui ?”

Come on, McSnicker. Say something. You can do this. I swallow hard, suck in my breath, and open my mouth.

But now Draco is turning. He’s turning , which (ohmygosh!) brings his fully erect dick—all flushed and shiny with Jae’s saliva—right into my line of sight.

That’s the first dick I’ve ever seen—as in, literally the first one—except the full frontal in that vintage art flick *A Room With A View* , which wasn’t even sexual.

And Draco Mars... he’s... wow.

Just wow.

His thick shaft, jutting straight out between corded thighs in a pale thatch of pubic hair, under the ripply flex of six-pack abs and the slashing vee of his Adonis belt, he’s, like, monumental .

He’s so girthy and so long I can’t even imagine how Jae’s managing to fit that much of Draco in his mouth.

Yep. Speech is officially beyond me.

My face flames hotter, all the way to my hairline, which paired with my flaming hair probably makes me look like a tomato on stilts.

Great.

So I literally do the only thing I can think of. I drag my fascinated stare away from

the combustible vision of Draco's massive boner that's guaranteed to be blazoned on my brain forever. Then I bolt past those two, with their sexy smirks and their knowing eyes, for the public refuge of the party in the basement.

Which—between my borrowed footwear, my flustered mortification, and my general lack of coordination—really isn't a smart move. Even for a smarty-pants like me.

Because of course I miss my footing on these twisty ancient stairs.

My arms windmill for balance, but there's nothing to grab. The jagged tunnel of the staircase, sharp with stony angles that can shatter skulls and break bones, opens under my desperate feet.

With a startled yelp and a spurt of terror, I fall.

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Chapter Two Draco

Getting head from Jean-Emilien is one of my favorite things in life.

I swear, the little demon brims with more trouble and mischief than Loki. But the hot suck of his mouth wrapped around my cock is a fucking experience that's not to be missed.

I'm close—real close—to shooting my load down the little imp's throat. Just the way he loves it. So I'm none too keen on him getting interrupted—from whatever asshole's clumping down the stairs behind me—in mid-suck.

Anyone who tries prying his mouth off my dick right now is gonna get their face shoved through a wall.

When my head fills with the soft fresh scent of spring rain and honeysuckle, my spike of testosterone-fueled aggression melts in a hot rush of anticipation.

I've never stood as close to sweet, shy, sexy Mallory McSnicker—the wide-eyed, sharp as scissors, wicked smart First Girl on the Dean's List—as I'm standing right now. This unattainable girl I've been lusting after from a distance, like some horny Icelandic stallion caught downwind from a mare in heat, from the moment I caught the first whiff of all that sweet First Girl innocence at freshman orientation.

Mallory .

She may be innocent.

But she definitely likes to watch.

Last year, she liked to watch Ronin Pendragon, the way everyone of any gender around here watches that guy, and I was so jealous I woulda ripped his fucking dick off if he ever looked back. This year, she likes to watch Jean-Emilien, which I obviously can't blame her for. Lately, it seems like maybe she even likes to watch me.

But she's skittish as a reindeer in hunting season.

At the first hint of any attention I ever try to show her, she always bolts.

Like she's bolting right now.

After I opened my horny fucking mouth and invited her to join us. Like, the words literally just came outta me on their own.

Then, of course, Jae makes it worse with that smart mouth and that sexy smirk that sends heat rushing into Mallory's pretty face. She's a true redhead, with flaming copper hair, skin like milk, and a smattering of nutmeg freckles running across the bridge of her pert nose. When her gray eyes fly wide and her lush mouth pops open, I know she's gonna bolt.

Again.

Except she misses her footing on the stairs.

Her slim graceful legs, those legs of hers that go on for miles, get all tangled up in the glittery disco platform shoes she's rocking.

Now, with a yelp and a scramble that comes up short, she's fucking falling.

Jean-Emilien hisses in alarm, abandons my cock completely, and leaps after her tumbling form in a feral scramble. But even his wolf won't be fast enough to catch her.

"Helvitis," I mutter, and flex my telekinesis like a muscle.

I'm the strongest warlock in my clan, so no one ever fucks with me, for reasons . Reasons that go way beyond my unsavory family business and my notorious last name. Now my Mogadon witchcraft lashes out like a bullwhip. I wrap my arcane power around Mallory's supple waist and arrest her plummet in mid-tumble.

A surprised little squeak slips outta her.

But she's smart enough not to struggle. She goes totally still in my grip, like she's not even breathing, suspended five meters over the stairs by the invisible fist of my power.

I'm human (all rumors to the contrary) and I'm male.

So I seize my moment to appreciate the view.

Mallory's long and elegant as a racehorse, all slim thoroughbred lines and soft creamy skin under the silvery sparkle of her party dress. Her mane of fiery curls floats gently around her outstretched limbs in the psychic charge of my witchcraft. Normally, she's all buttoned up in the prim blouses and blazers of her Academy uni. But that sexy dress she's wearing tonight bares her long legs and the delicate jut of her shoulders and the smooth plane of her upper back and...

...an exquisite gray-and-black tattoo. That impressive piece of custom ink spreads across her shoulders and spirals down her spine to vanish under her tease of a dress.

Angel wings.

So detailed and vivid. Those shimmery feathers, the exact shade of molten lead, look ready to sprout from her skin and take flight.

Fuck.

Me.

Little Miss Mallory's been hiding all that ink under her modest schoolgirl uni. Definitely makes me wonder what other secrets she might be hiding.

That concept triggers all my savage hunting instincts.

Suddenly the primitive arctic hunter in me is burning to track her. Trap her. Claim her. Uncover her wings and her secrets and her needs—all those hidden, sweaty, late-night needs she's afraid are way too filthy ever to share. Expose every centimeter of her delectable body. One fascinating mystery at a time.

“Hey, amou .” Jean-Emilien's soft voice, all husky with sex, drags me out of my trance. “Think you can let the girl down now, oui?”

Down. Right. Fuck.

She's still suspended in my predatory grip.

With a casual twist, I grunt and ease my prey upright so she's vertical, then I lower her feet to the stairs. Once she's good and steady, I make myself unflex my telekinetic muscle and release her with a growl of protest.

Cuz releasing her is the last thing I wanna do.

Ever.

“Uh, wow, thanks. That was... impressive.” The girl sounds breathless, like you’d expect after she just barely avoided breaking every bone in her perfect body on those wicked stairs.

She smooths her sparkly dress and shakes back her flaming hair with a cute little grimace. Her enormous eyes veer straight to my boner—because of course I’m standing here on the public stairs like a pervert with my dick hanging out. Her breath hitches in on a shocked hiccup. Her teeth sink hard into the plump curve of her lower lip.

I watch with complete fucking fixation as her cheeks pinken right up. A sudden flood of her sweet rain-and-honeysuckle fragrance perfumes the air.

I had my suspicions before, but I was never sure.

Now I am.

I’d bet my Harley that girl’s a complete innocent. Innocent as the pagan goddess Gefjun from my native land.

But that sudden whiff of scent tells me Little Miss Innocent is also... curious.

About me .

A potent hit of juniper and bergamot smacks my senses like a freight train. That’s my mating scent, laced with Jean-Emilien’s feral fragrance and enough of my own Mogadon pheromones to make all three of us horny.

As if we weren’t already all sexed up as fuck.

“Do not run,” I tell her gruffly, before the chick bolts again. “You’ll break your neck in those fucking shoes.”

“Oh, um, right.” She seems to be having trouble taking her eyes off my dick. I’m already right on the edge from Jean-Emilien sucking me off like a goddamn porn star with his filthy hot mouth.

Now, under Mallory’s fascinated gaze, Mr. Happy swells proudly.

Great.

I clear my throat and start tucking my junk away before I embarrass myself. Very clearly, Jean-Emilien will need to finish me off later. I don’t wear briefs under my leather, and this is one of the times that sucks. Grimly I wrestle my zipper shut over my raging boner and almost catch my pubes in the thing.

With my dick now under wraps (and bitterly protesting the entire decision), Mallory’s gaze lifts shyly to my face, lips parted and eyes wide.

For a breath, I hold her complete attention. Her gray eyes shimmer and flash an eerie silver in the twilight.

An unexpected tingle raises goosebumps down my arms. For a heartbeat, my hunting instinct whispers, Not human.

Shit. I’m losing my goddamn mind over this girl. Magically and socially, she’s a nobody. She’s nothing. A total nonentity. Her lackluster witching world pedigree couldn’t be any more pedestrian.

But whatever she is or isn’t, I want her.

Then her stare swerves to Jae.

Poised two stairs below me with his lithe frame caught in a crouch, beaded braids streaming around his lean hungry face and hot amber eyes, my guy stares back at her with equal fascination.

In the awkward silence, the soundtrack skips in the basement. The tune morphs from some Eurotrash shit to the perky beat of Katy Perry's Birthday.

"Ah, sounds like they're calling you, oui? You got your fais do do downstairs." Jean-Emilien's voice thickens. "Unless, maybe, you want to stay?"

A snarl of anticipation rumbles from my chest. That primal sound—or more likely the offer we've now both given her—seems to shatter whatever trippy spell she's under.

"Okay," she says, and my heart stops beating.

Then she rushes ahead. "I mean, thanks for the offer, but you don't have to be so polite. I, uh, wouldn't horn in on your thing, three's a crowd and all that. So, um, bye."

I'm still trying to sift through that geyser of words so I can decide which of her several mistaken assumptions to tackle first when she bolts downstairs in a long-legged scramble and a flash of silver sparkles.

Again.

"Fokk," I grumble as she vanishes around the bend. "That went well."

Jae flexes his fingers to retract his wicked claws and stares after her with burning eyes. "So we just gonna let her go then, amou?"

“What do you think? Clearly, she couldn’t be less interested. She’s been avoiding us all semester. And she literally just ran away from us twice.” Even to myself, I sound disgruntled and surly as fuck.

Jean-Emilien has Valyrian recessives, which makes him part telepath, and his bloodthirsty shifter instincts are totally feral. Those are instincts I’ve learned to respect. And trust.

So when my guy talks, I listen.

“Ah, that just means she wants us to chase, oui?” His fangs descend and his wolf eyes fire with golden heat. “You like to chase, Draco. The chase, she’s what you live for. And me, I was born and bred to hunt.”

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“Happy sweet sixteen, McSnicker.” Last year, when we were both freshmen, Ronin Pendragon’s lazy grin would have turned my knees to quivering blobs of jelly.

Even now when I’m completely over him, my former crush looks edible, with a yard of silky black hair spilling around his wicked face.

I’m still so unsettled from everything that just went down on the stairs (including the combustible sight of Draco Mars’ erection, ohmygosh, a hundred percent full frontal for which I was definitely not prepared, that’s why I almost broke my neck!) Consequently, I barely even notice Ronin’s powerful frame, poured into butt-hugging pants and a silky button-down shirt that’s open halfway down his chest to reveal the flaming black dragon inked into his golden skin.

“So, I’m actually twenty.” I focus on Ronin’s words instead of his chest and scare up a wry grin. “But thanks? I mean, for coming to my birthday party.”

“Anytime, love.” He’s not flirting (much), because he talks like that to everyone.

Besides, he’s already turning away from me to toss a gift-wrapped present—too pretty to have been wrapped by anyone other than his new girlfriend—carelessly toward the gift table with the rest of my birthday loot.

Maybe that’s why I never got anywhere with this guy all freshman year, when I was secretly crushing? Because he thought I was fifteen at the time?

Figures.

Those bitchy witches from our rival house at Villa Tiberius say I have the body of a twelve-year-old and hair like carrots. With my frizz and my freckles and my general deficiency in the witchcraft department, I'm the Little Orphan Annie of the Icarus Academy (only taller and with a higher GPA).

But I'm not going to ruin my special night with a pity party.

Not when I'm standing right next to a whole table piled high with actual wrapped presents, which came as another magical surprise (even if a bunch of those presents are repurposed or flat-out gag gifts, because we're on an island in the Med, hidden behind magical wards, and the supply plane only flies in once a month).

Anyway, I've already had the birthday gift of a lifetime, haven't I?

I watched Jae Labête giving head to Draco Mars.

My gaze drifts away from the forever unattainable Ronin, past his teal-haired punk rock girlfriend Zara who's adding her own contribution to my gift table and admiring my birthday haul, to the bootleg bar. Back in the last century, between the two Witching World Wars, there used to be a speakeasy down here (centuries after the dungeon was retired). Faded Art Deco frescoes and peeling Prohibition-era posters still cling to the rough stone walls.

Near a flaming oil drum, backlit by a cluster of burning candles under a cobwebby rafter, a jaw-dropping male silhouette catches my eye. Thick arms crossed over broad chest, tight hips sheathed in leather, shitkicker boots spread wide in challenge. Firelight turns a spiky crown of Icelandic hair to silver.

Draco.

That warlock is keeping his distance, thank goodness. But he and Jae followed me

right down here. (I mean, they had to be coming to the party anyway of course, but my race's survival instincts are really well honed, and it felt like they followed me.)

Now, even with the light behind him so I can't see his face, it feels like Draco's watching.

And maybe even scowling.

At Ronin.

Does he think I spilled the beans and told Ronin what I saw on the stairs? About their secret relationship which, for whatever reason, Draco and Jae seem determined to keep anyone else from discovering?

Because why else would Draco be watching me?

Suddenly I'm overheated in the middle of this crowded basement, overwhelmed by the waves of sweaty heat rising from the dance floor where half my classmates are writhing in a really X-rated way to the grinding beat. My ears aren't pointed (luckily, for hiding purposes) thanks to my mixed blood, but I still have enhanced senses. A staccato barrage of death-metal music batters my hyper-acute eardrums. A forest of blazing candles, dripping ribbons of melted wax over every available surface, wavers in my telescopic vision.

Most of the normals can't smell it, but the musk of my classmates' sweat and their miasma of mating scents mingles with the metallic tang of old blood and suffering soaked into these ancient stones.

Despite all this sensory overload, it's the feel of Draco Mars' glacier-blue gaze sliding down my body, so exposed and unprotected in this borrowed dress, that's making me shiver like I'm spiking a fever.

If that warlock's so worried about me spilling his secrets, given his dark reputation and mafia kin, I wonder what he's capable of doing to keep me silent.

That worry just makes me shiver harder.

Jae Labête slinks up beside Draco like a hunting wolf, beaded braids slithering around his lean frame, a tangle of amulets winking against his tawny chest. Jae's lost his shirt somewhere... and his shoes... so the firelight laps the dusky nubs of his nipples and the tight ripple of his ribs and the taut plane of his abs.

That feral Cajun is another sight that makes my mouth go dry.

Especially when he slips a longneck beer into Draco's waiting hand, then trains those golden wolf eyes on me.

You can run, chere. A molten tenor voice, soft with Cajun vowels, drizzles through my mind like honey. We want you to run, oui ? Tonight, Draco and me, we hunt.

Geez Louise. I'm no telepath of any kind, so I have to be imagining that voice in my head.

Right?

It's winter on this island and bitterly cold, but suddenly I'm sweating in this muggy heat. It's steamy as a swamp down here in this basement. All those rainwater cisterns in the Roman-era grottoes off the main cavern make the air humid. I can almost smell the mossy green scent of Louisiana bayou—

“Hey, Mal, you okay?” A warm voice (this time a real one) dispels the intense electrical charge I feel building between me and those two guys like a summer storm.

I blink, tear my gaze away from the snare of Jae's hungry stare, and look into the concerned turquoise eyes of my most famous (or infamous) classmate.

Zara Gemini.

She's the future queen of the whole witching world, and she knows a lot about electricity herself, because she's a lightning witch. She's way stronger than me, even if she's barely got a handle on all her scary power. She'll be the first Gemini queen we've ever had, the queen who's supposed to reverse this slow slide to extinction the witching races are facing. She'll replace the current Aquarius queen who's old and childless and who pretends the witching world isn't failing, but who's still reluctant as heck to step down.

Here's the thing about Zara. She's... unconventional. Without even meaning to, she's polarized this entire Academy. Divided us all right down the middle into two warring camps.

Her allies and her enemies.

Half this school—especially those evil witches in Villa Tiberius who are glaring at her from the bar, all fanatically loyal to the Aquarius queen—they burn to see Zara dead.

But Zara's always been nice to me, the way no Aquarius never was, and I like her.

So I summon a smile just to keep my friend from worrying. "Oh, sorry, Zara. Yeah, I'm good. Just, um, a little warm."

"Not surprised. Kinda toasty down here. In more ways than one, right?" Zara's absolutely gorgeous, all soft curves and lush lips, like a punk rock version of Marilyn Monroe poured into electric blue latex, with lightning bolt earrings flashing platinum

in her ears.

She's gorgeous and she's famous.

But she's never been snooty.

Now our future queen glances toward Draco and Jae with her teal brows lifted. Then, with a mischievous grin, she slips me a plastic cup filled with the fruity rum punch they're serving at the bar.

"Here," she says dryly. "You look like you need this way more than me."

I don't drink much, but the cup is beaded with moisture and deliciously cool in my sweaty palm, the contents chinking with big cubes of ice. So I take a grateful gulp. The tropical sweetness of pineapple and a tart hit of lime, edged with the bite of rum, slides down my dry throat in a cold slick that makes me hum with appreciation.

Right before I sputter and cough, like the lightweight I am.

Guess that drink's more potent than it tastes.

"Whoa there, careful." Zara kindly rescues my drink before I spill all over my borrowed dress, which I appreciate.

But she's distracted herself.

Not by Draco and Jae... who are, for some unknown and deeply unsettling reason, still watching me... but by her own guys.

Our witching world queens are polyamorous.

So Zara's been building her harem.

She's only got two of her guys here tonight. One is Ronin—collectively known across this Academy as Sir One and Done (because he'd never go back for seconds) till Zara came along. Once those two met, his bisexual manwhore party days were over. He fell in love and joined her polycule within a matter of hours. Now he channels his legendary libido so he's only with them.

Zara and her guys.

The five of them, they're all exclusive.

The other guy in her entourage tonight is our brand-new resident dragon shifter—the Russian, Maxim Rasputin—who's been causing so many problems for the Dean and who pretty much terrifies the whole school. Now it looks like Maxim might be joining Zara's harem too. He's lurking behind her looking sinister, with his long blond hair swept back from his cruel Slavic face, his flaming eyes and slitted pupils fixed on Zara with an unwavering focus that makes the guy look like an obsessed stalker or a serial killer.

Maxim has barely even looked at me all night (which I'm definitely not complaining about, because having Draco and Jae both weirdly fixated on me is more than enough to cope with).

But I notice Zara isn't protesting that dragon's possessive hand, planted solidly on her waist.

Now Ronin prowls up alongside, tucks a familiar hand into the dragon's jeans pocket (right over Max's tight dragon butt), then loops his other arm around Zara. Maxim firms up his grip on Zara and slides a sidelong look at Ronin that smolders with heat. Suddenly the air is acrid with the cindery brimstone mating scent of aroused dragon.

Wow.

That dragon's only just enrolled. He snuck after Zara through the magical wards to get here. But, very clearly, if these three aren't already together, they're really close to hooking up.

"Enjoy your special night, Hufflepuff." Ronin gives me another of his sexy grins, but it's glaringly obvious I'm not the focus of his attention. "Mind if we take our queen off your hands for a bit then?"

"For your information, Ronin, I'm a Gryffindor. Don't let the last name fool you." Firmly I turn my gaze away from my former crush and give Zara a wistful smile. "Have fun, you two. Or, should I say, you three? Or five?" (Because she's also here with the girls from her house—Dez and Racetrack, those two are already dancing—and I'm not sure who's with who.)

I hesitate, because the air in here's bristly with aggression and hostility and I feel like I should warn her. But Zara's way more of a badass than I could ever hope to be. She can take care of herself. She probably doesn't need my warning.

Still, I decide to warn her anyway.

"Just be careful tonight, okay?" I say softly. "I mean it. That Tiberius gang's sharpening their knives."

Maxim's slitted pupils narrow and he growls in a way I find petrifying. He's really scary in his dragon form, so I'm worried about setting him off.

But Zara only rolls her pretty eyes at his alpha dragon drama and hands me my drink.

"Thanks, Mal. Enjoy yourself tonight. We definitely plan to." Zara wraps her arms

around Ronin's neck and the three of them ease onto the dance floor.

I cradle my cup in both hands and sip while I watch them over the rim. On the crowded floor, Zara and Ronin sway in unison with their eyes locked on each other, her arms raised overhead and curvy hips swiveling, Ronin's hands wrapped possessively around her ass. Maxim sidles up behind Ronin, looking skittish and furtive, and mutters something in his ear.

Whatever Ronin says back is apparently just the thing. The dragon relaxes and nuzzles his face into Ronin's neck, scenting him and sucking a hickey into his skin.

Clearly approving that entire arrangement, Zara hooks a leg around Ronin and basically starts dry-humping him, right there on the dance floor, while he holds her steady and rocks into her.

Then Maxim slides his hands around Ronin's waist, and—holy cow!—unzips Ronin's fly.

Suddenly I realize it's distinctly possible I'm going to see two dicks in one night. Tonight's going to be an honest-to-God red letter night. I can hardly wait to write about it in my diary.

Even if I don't get that special first kiss I'm longing for.

I'm so absorbed watching all this (which probably makes me some kind of voyeur, but after all, they're doing it right in public) that I've been guzzling my rum punch without even noticing. I've just realized my cup is empty and my head is swimming when a familiar hit of Mogadon pheromones, spiced with juniper and bergamot, makes my skin tighten and my pulse spike.

Even as a guttural Icelandic mutter hits my ear from behind. "Like to watch, don't

you, hjartfólginn ?”

I suck in a startled breath and drop my cup, which is thankfully empty, or I’d make a huge mess. Before I can catch my breath, two big hands close around my waist and spin me hard away from the heated scene that’s unfolding on the dance floor.

I’m a tall girl, but I still need to tip back my head and look way up to meet Draco’s intense ice-blue glare. A deep furrow digs between his brows. His square jaw is clenched so hard the sinews stand out in his corded neck.

For some reason, very clearly, he’s agitated.

Even pissed.

At me.

But, gosh, I haven’t even done anything. I’d never tell Ronin, or anyone else, Draco’s secret.

My heart leaps into my throat and lodges in my esophagus like a peach pit. My pulse flutters in my veins like a trapped butterfly.

Simultaneously a lean sinewy body, fragrant with moss and patchouli, slinks up behind me. A warm feral breath skids across the back of my neck and hisses in my ear.

Jae Labête .

That shifter isn’t even touching me. Still, somehow, I sense that his werewolf—a rare and dangerous breed I’ve never seen before—is perilously close to rising. Goosebumps race down my arms and my heartbeat trips.

These two warned me to run. They warned me. Now it's too late.

I didn't believe their warning.

Now I'm trapped.

“I suggest you forget about watching that fucking Pendragon,” the Iclander snarls down at me, “before I rip that asshole's dick off. Don't you want to find out firsthand, Mallory McSnicker, how it feels having two guys like us all to yourself?”

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“Wow. That... that’s... quite an offer.” Ah, how breathless she sounds, this sweet prey my wolf and my lover have trapped between us.

Me, I don’t dare to touch her. Not yet. Not until I am certain my loup-garou is contained.

He is wickedness incarnate, the werewolf, this accursed beast who shares my skin. And the innocent scent of spring rain and honeysuckle floating from Mallory’s copper curls and milky skin...

That scent. Intoxicating.

She is driving my wolf to madness.

Then there is the moon. Tomorrow, she is full. This time for me, and for all these frail mortal souls around me, is most dangerous.

So I lurk behind sweet Mallory and I stare at the alluring angel’s wings tattooed in black and silver, spread across her delicate shoulders, as though she will take flight.

If I am not careful, this angel will fly away.

My werewolf snarls and lunges in vicious protest at the very thought. Fighting for control of my beast, my mortal will weakened by the waxing moon, I clench my fists until they burn. The joints of my fingers extend until the bones crack. Evil claws sprout from my fingertips and slice into my palms. Ribbons of my own hot blood trickle through my grip to splatter my bare feet.

While behind her I strain to contain my monster, Mallory gazes up at Draco's scowling face and says cautiously, "Are you joking?"

Draco's ferocious scowl deepens. "Do I look like I'm joking?"

"Chere, he never jokes," I murmur, while my werewolf flexes his claws with hunger. "Believe me."

"Well." Mallory sucks in a sharp breath, then announces with firmness, "Thanks for the offer. I, uh, appreciate it. But it's really not necessary."

We are necessary! My wolf gnashes his terrible teeth and howls.

Draco glares down at this innocent creature and growls like a bear. "Don't bother denying it. You've been making moon eyes at that fucking Pendragon since we were freshmen."

"Moon eyes?" she repeats.

Draco jerks his chin in a curt nod. "He chose someone else. He and that mannfjandi dragon are not for you."

"You mean Maxim?" she blurts.

"Like I said," my Draco repeats, with stubbornness.

"Gosh, I never even thought about Maxim that way." Poor Mallory, she sounds bemused. "Have you seen that dragon when he's shifted? He scares the heck out of m—"

"But you thought about Pendragon, didn't you." Now Draco looks even more

forbidding. “ Helvitis. I knew it. He’s totally fucking wrong for your harem.”

“My harem ?” Now Mallory sounds like she is choking. She hugs her elbows and her shoulders rise. It’s a defensive posture, this, which I find most intriguing.

“Yeah, but I’m... not a queen?” Her voice climbs an octave and her words spill out in a rush. “So I don’t have a harem.”

“Yet.” His big hands tighten on her little waist. Now, transfixed by his forbidding glare, she freezes in his grasp. “But you’re obviously looking.”

“Oh my gosh, I am not. I’m not shopping for a harem. I’m not a queen, okay?” Mallory sounds much more defensive, anxious, even fearful than this conversation warrants. My hunting instincts stir and my hackles rise. I swear, there is something she is hiding.

Still, she is fixated on the wrong thing.

Ah, Draco. Clearly, my amou is going about this entire hunt the wrong way. Discreetly I wipe my bleeding palms on my jeans (not for the first time, oui ? My beast, he is hard on my clothes.) With care, I curl my clawed hands over Draco’s, so we are both holding our prey. My wolf flexes his talons in her ribs until she gasps.

While my beast rages and snarls in the cage of my skin, I lean forward to breathe my words in her ear.

“Our Draco, you make him jealous, chere. He wishes to be Ronin.”

“Uh... you mean he wants to be with Zara ?” Her head jerks toward the heaving tangle of bodies on the dance floor, where the Gemini queen and her two lovers are writhing half-naked against the wall, and clearly preparing to fuck. “No offense or

anything, Draco. But I don't think you're top of mind for her."

Ah, poor bébé. Her feelings are betrayed in her tone.

Our sweet Mallory, she misunderstood what I meant to say. She loves her friend, the Gemini girl, yet she fears no lover will ever see her—Mallory—where she hides in the shadows. She believes Draco, like all these other blind and witless fools, has overlooked her shy bookish beauty, eclipsed by the flamboyant Gemini queen.

Now she is hurt. But she pretends not to show it.

Me, I'm part telepath, so she cannot hide from me.

Or the monster who shares my skin.

My gaze lifts to Draco's. This sort of candor, it is hard for him. So I nod to encourage him. He grimaces at my expectant face, then locks his arctic stare on the waiting Mallory.

"Fokk," Draco grumbles. "I don't give a single shit about Zara. We wanna be with you tonight, Mallory. Jean-Emilien and me both."

Her delicate frame arcs with an electric sizzle of awareness. Trapped between us, held captive in our hands, Mallory trembles like a deer in a snare. Then her psychic channels flood with a sudden heady rush of anticipation and arousal. She drenches the air with the sweet scent of honeysuckle.

My nostrils flare wide to drink in her sweetness. My werewolf bares his horrible teeth and slavers. He yearns to hunt and chase and fuck. Her scent is ambrosia. Her cunt is dripping.

Beneath her pretty dress, she is soaked.

She is soaked for both of us.

She is so wet I can nearly taste her.

Then, for some reason I can't grasp, her head droops and her shoulders slump.

“Look.” Under our hands, her ribs deflate in a dejected sigh. “If this is about what I saw on the stairs, you honestly don't need to worry. I won't tell a soul, okay? You don't have to, you know, pretend you're into me—”

“Ah, but who is pretending?” I lower my head to nuzzle the soft skin stretched over her fragile shoulder. At the first brush of contact, she shivers and gasps—a broken, vulnerable sound that makes my loup-garou's vicious fangs plunge from my palate in a rush.

I am startled, me, that already he is so well prepared to give her his mating bite. Oui, the moon is nearly full. But it's more than the moon that drives him. His ceaseless feral mutter fills my mind.

Ours she is ours claim our mate—

Now I'm wary. Even alarmed. I know he wishes to give Draco our mating bite, but our accursed venom is far too potent. If I should ever weaken and give my beast full sway, even a warlock as powerful as Draco would be doomed.

As I am doomed.

Cursed to share body and soul with the wolf.

Yet there is no other woman my loup-garou has ever wished to claim in this way.

I must be careful, so careful, never to lose control.

For her sake.

Carefully I burrow into Mallory's fiery hair and nuzzle the velvety skin of her neck. She tastes like strawberries and cream and innocence. She smells like rain and honey. Her silky curls tickle my closed lids. Her pulse leaps and skips against my lips.

"W-wait a minute," she whispers. Ah, her voice, how it trembles. "Are you saying... do you actually want... me?"

"Chere," I say gruffly against her skin, through the envenomed menace of my fangs, "my wolf, he is feral with wanting you. This is why I told you to run, oui? But now, it is too late."

"No, wait, do you mean...?" She does not seem able to finish.

In response, I suck a vicious love bite into the tender crook where her neck meets her shoulder.

"Jae—" Around the sound of my name on her innocent lips, her desperate whisper splinters and breaks.

"Mallory," my loup-garou snarls, rabid with need. "My sweet. I am saying you are mine. Ours. I am saying you should have fled. By staying, you sealed your fate. Now I am saying—you belong to us."

My clawed hands curl around her hips and spread, hard and claiming, over her soft belly and fertile womb. My cock swells against my zipper. I arch my swelling heat

into the tender curve of her derrière . Her soft trapped whimper slips out.

She is trembling desperately—how else?—under the threat of my claws and the press of my fangs and especially the jut of my hungry cock, shoved crudely against her luscious bottom.

But of course, she is trembling.

I am a monster lurking at her back.

I am shirtless and barefoot and sweating and all but mindless with rut. Surely I will ruin her pretty dress and her fresh unspoiled innocence with my need and my violence.

I will ruin her.

But the moon, she is nearly full, the frantic music shrieks in my ears like a damned soul, and the air is thick with Mogadon pheromones. Ah, that Gemini queen and her mates, they are fucking against the wall. Ronin is bucking savagely into Zara, with her legs locked around his waist and his pants loose around his hips, the queen's ripe breasts are spilling from her latex, and that Russian dragon is lurking and angling for his turn.

The witching queen's heat is sending this whole house spiraling into a mating rut.

Trapped between my amou and me, Mallory's pale body squirms against my raging shaft in a way that makes my dick weep. I bite harder into the tender curve of her neck, not hard enough to break the skin and administer my wicked venom... not quite. I growl, deep and savage, in my chest.

Softly, so softly, her hands close over mine.

Over my wicked four-jointed fingers and disemboweling claws that are flexing into her helpless belly and shredding her sparkly dress.

With gentle wonder, her fingers trace over mine. Her careful touch follows every gnarl and knot of my twisted hands without fear or disgust or flinching. Where another woman would weep and beg and even scream for mercy, she is silent.

She does not protest.

“Draco, she is willing,” my beast slavers with my voice, harsh and guttural. “Take her with me, amou . Take her now.”

My lover tears his fascinated gaze from her face where she lists, half-swooning against my shoulder, to give me one of his fierce Viking glares. I grin up at him through my fangs.

Finally, Draco gives Mallory what I have sensed all along she is craving. Roughly he says, “Hjartfólgin .”

In his northern tongue, he is calling her... his secret heart. This is the same endearment he uses (sometimes, in private) for me.

Then, with a suddenness that makes her gasp, he drags her roughly up on tiptoe against his big body and swoops down to claim her in a brutal kiss.

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Wow.

So this is a kiss.

I have to admit, this entire experience is so definitely worth waiting for.

I'm wobbling on tiptoe with my boobs and torso crushed against Draco Mars' broad chest, my chunky platform heels barely grazing the floor, my fists desperately clutching his broad shoulders and suede-soft shirt for balance, and an entire arsenal of Fourth of July fireworks exploding in my head.

I don't even understand why he's kissing me right now. I mean, I'm... me. And he's... him.

But whatever his rationale, I'll take it.

Forget about my third cousin Cletus in the broom closet when we were clumsy kids. This is a first kiss. A kiss to blow all my virginal schoolgirl first kiss dreams to smithereens.

Despite the tether of Draco's arm wrapped around my waist and the bulwark of his strong body holding me up, I'm drowning in this kiss. He's really sure of himself (which is good, since I have no idea what I'm doing at this end). He tastes... bracing, like high-octane gin and crisp Iceland air. And his tongue, oh my gosh, his tongue is literally right there . A slick lick of heat, stroking mine in a way that makes my tummy flutter and my heart hammer. Liquid fire spreads across my shoulders and spills across my back, like my useless wings are trying to break free from my skin.

But tonight I'm not thinking about my inadequacies or my failures or my freakishly useless wings.

My nipples are tight and tingly (which I hope isn't blatantly obvious since I ditched my Academy bra for this dress). A hot ache pulses, slow and heavy, between my thighs. My entire body feels slick and sticky with warmth.

Every slow thrust of Draco's tongue in my mouth is like a Roman candle, lobbing gout of fire into the vast sky of my sexual ignorance. My eyes are closed and I've forgotten how to even breathe. But a soft moan rises from my throat like a whine.

A sudden hit of juniper and bergamot fills my nose and almost takes the top of my head off.

Whoa.

That's Draco too, his Mogadon mating scent, laced with feel-good pheromones and come-get-me biochemicals that stoke the fire tingling down my spine. Heat glows and pulses between my legs like a live coal.

Clueless but curious, I graze his tongue gently with mine. Our tongues twine in a tentative lick.

Draco unleashes a rumbling growl against my lips that sounds hungry but encouraging. Jae snarls in my ear like a predator.

So I do it again. I rise up on tiptoe and lick into the slick liquored welcome of Draco Mars' kiss.

"Ah, oui..." A feral whisper breathes in my ear, even as Jae's vicious hands steady me and push me into the kiss from behind. "Take what you need from us, bébé."

I can't even believe I have Jae Labête's lean feral heat pressed against my back. He's half shifted, judging by the clawed hands curving around my hips and the heavy rasp of his breath in my ear. His narrow hips press into my butt. The tensile heat of his erection, jutting hot and thick against the seam of my thighs from behind...

Just... wow.

Jae's obvious boner—and the totally confident way he owns it—makes my girly parts clench around that hot ache in my empty core.

I guess I should be scared of the big bad wolf lurking behind me. Everyone else in the whole Academy is terrified of him. They say he can't control his werewolf, his loup-garou, especially when the moon's full (like it almost is tonight).

Me? I'm powerless.

I'm Little Red Riding Hood, lost in the woods.

The unique magic of my species—the trait we're known for in the lore—has never manifested in my mixed-blood DNA. In the witching world hierarchy, my magical mediocrity makes me a nobody.

Still, somehow, I know Jae won't hurt me.

Am I crazy for trusting him—trusting both of them—trusting the two scariest guys in my whole residential college?

Am I crazy for trusting the wolves?

Even if I am crazy, I want these two and what they seem to be offering. I want every shiver and pulse and gasp of pleasure they can wring out of me. I whimper and

squirm against them, between them, wanting both of them so much closer.

Geez, my heart is beating so hard. The drumbeat of my own pulse feels like wings beating under my skin.

“Tell us you want this, you,” Jae growls, thick and guttural, into the nape of my neck—right over the tips of my tattoo. “Before it’s too late. Before we go too far. We aren’t quite the beasts rumor makes us to be, chere. ”

Even Draco stops kissing me to wait for my answer. His warm breath fans my lips. I open my eyes for a peek and find his arctic blue gaze burning into me.

“You want us to stop?” Draco rumbles ominously. “Better tell us now, First Girl.”

Here’s my first chance—maybe my last chance—to regain control. If I wanted that.

But I don’t

Trapped between the two of them, my whole body is melting. I don’t want time to think. I don’t want less of these unprecedented sensations I’ve never felt before. I’m twenty years old, I’m finally starting to live outside the covers of my Academy textbooks and my secret stash of spicy romantasy novels.

I don’t want less.

I want more .

Faced with my silence, Draco’s pale brows furrow and his eyes narrow. “Well?”

“No,” I blurt.

Jae hisses and Draco growls.

Geez. Way to go with that silver tongue, McSnicker.

My bottled-up words spill out in a rush. “I mean, no, don’t stop. I want this. With you. I want both of you.”

Jae’s breath gusts against my neck and his clawed hands recoil. For a second, I’m really afraid I’ve said the absolute wrong thing. Then, with a wolfish snarl, Jae’s lithe frame twists toward the gift table. With a careless sweep of his arm, he pushes my birthday presents roughly to one side.

Without warning, Draco tightens his grip on my waist and boosts me effortlessly into the air. I squeak and clutch his shoulders. He deposits me on the table, my long legs and platform heels dangling off the edge, sparkly skirt riding up around my thighs.

I bite my lip and peek up at this monumental guy looming over me. He’s such a beautiful man, pale as a vampire, with his silver hair and his Nordic face and his ruthless lips all ruddy and warm from our kiss. He’s like Spike from Buffy the Vampire Slayer. No, actually, he’s more Alexander Skarsgård—the Eric Northman of the Icarus Academy.

And me?

I’m definitely no stake-wielding Buffy. I’m as wide-eyed and hapless as Sookie in True Blood.

Draco’s ice-blue eyes sweep down my body, spread before him on the table among the colorful scatter of my birthday gifts like a midnight buffet. His lids drop and his gaze hoods.

“Fokk.” He nudges his big frame between my skinny knees and circles my ankles in his hard hands like manacles. “These shoes are a menace.”

“Ah, leave them on her, amou ,” Jae purrs like a swamp panther. He crawls onto the table behind me, braids slithering loose around his bare shoulders. “With legs like that, she’s a vision, oui ?”

When we were growing up, Cousin Cletus used to call me a giraffe. (Until my overprotective big brother made him stop.) My height has always made me stick out, which isn’t a good thing when you’re an endangered species whose literal survival depends on hiding.

Suffice it to say, I’m not used to anyone calling me a vision .

I release Draco’s shoulders to give my skirt a covert tug, just to make sure my prim Academy panties stay discreetly covered. Draco lets loose a snarl that sounds like a protest. But it’s hard to hear (even with my enhanced senses) over the low throbbing beat that’s pulsing from the battery-powered ’80s-era boombox grinding out something sexy and vulgar from Nine Inch Nails in the corner.

A hasty glance around the basement tells me I don’t need to worry about drawing attention I don’t want.

Because literally no one is watching.

Zara and Ronin are half-naked and sex-drunk from screwing, and that Russian dragon Maxim is dragging them both into the privacy of the psychedelic den with the lava lamps where my dorm mates like to sneak off to smoke weed and make out. (I never do, partly because I’ve never had anyone to make out with. Plus any kind of drug use is against the Academy Codex and a conduct infraction.)

As First Girl on the Dean's List, I've always been a model of deportment.

Until tonight.

Zara's roomies, Dez and Racetrack, are wrapped in each other's arms, making out like crazy up against the bar. Normally the sapphic spice between those two girls (plus my own situation) would be garnering some attention.

But not tonight.

Right now, my House Hadrian dorm mates are all hooking up in various pairings on the scruffy couches and bean bags scattered around the fringes of the dance floor. I catch flashes of discarded clothes, some random boobs and butts, someone's hot pink lace lingerie draped over a low-hanging rafter. The pockets of darkness in this shadowy dungeon offer the illusion of privacy. But the flaming oil drums and clusters of candles shed a ruddy light over the whole scene like the fires of Hell.

And—holy cow—most of that Tiberius crowd are having a literal orgy on the dance floor. Those witches and warlocks from our rival house are a writhing tangle of limbs and torsos, sweaty skin and sexed-up faces and thrusting hips.

Oh my gosh. My eyes must be sticking out of my head on stalks trying to drink in all that action.

Crap.

It must be Zara, our sexed-up queen, who's setting the vibe in here. I wonder if maybe she's going into heat. A witching queen's superheats, especially if she's a shifter and powerful like Zara, can be enough to trigger her whole court.

I wonder if maybe we're all on the edge of a mating rut.

Anyway, it's safe to conclude no one notices me spread out over this table—Mallory McSnicker, the birthday girl, the last remaining virgin in the Icarus Academy—having her first-ever three-way.

Not to mention her first-ever hookup.

Of any kind.

When Jae's clawed hands slide up my back, the last awkward flicker of my self-consciousness dissolves. My clenched shoulders loosen and my chest lifts as I breathe in deep. His primal scent of patchouli and bayou fills my head. His talons trace the span of tattooed wings across my shoulders, then sweep my long hair to one side. Goosebumps cascade down my arms and I shiver under his touch. All my skittish awareness anchors in my body.

On the way my skin tingles when he drags his wicked fangs down my neck.

On the way he licks along my jugular and kisses my racing pulse.

On the sharp slice of his talons through the fragile spaghetti straps of my borrowed dress.

"Hey." Barely in time to prevent a major wardrobe malfunction, I clasp an arm over my practically nonexistent boobs to hold the bodice in place. "Easy on the dress, okay? It isn't mine."

"I'll buy you another." Draco smirks down at me, like the rich Scandinavian mob boss enforcer the Mars clan males have always been. "Shit, I'll buy you a dozen. Better than those plaid skirts and baggy cardigans you try to hide behind."

I don't try to hide.

I'm better at hiding than anyone I know. I have to be.

Hiding is how I stay safe.

But I'm distracted (in the best possible way) when Draco reaches a brawny arm overhead and peels off his shirt in a single rough pull.

Whoa.

My eyes skim over the broad flex of his shoulders, down the smooth plane of his chest and the hard ripple of his abs, to the obscene way his leather pants hug his hips. The thick bulge of his erection shoves against his zipper in a way that sends heat flooding up my neck to my hairline.

Great. Now I'm blushing.

Of course I'm blushing. It's the curse of having a redhead's fair complexion.

"Now I really wanna know what you're thinkin'," Draco says gruffly.

I bite my lip and shake my head so hard my curls bounce. My stare skitters around for a safe place to land and settles on the nautical North Star compass tattoo inked into the pale skin over his left pec, right over his heart.

That's his mafia tat.

Draco Mars is a made man.

The whole school knows it. But that infamous piece of stylized ink confirms every dangerous rumor.

He follows my gaze to the tat. Then the open heat blazing in his face kind of shuts.

“ Helvítis, ” he mutters. “It’s just ink. I won’t hurt you, Mallory.”

It isn’t just ink. The Mars clan has Viking blood. If the rumors are true, a Mars man kills to earn the clan ink.

But I do believe he won’t hurt me.

Knowing he’s so deadly?

For some screwed-up reason, that makes me feel safe.

“Ah, let him see you, chere ,” Jae coaxes in my ear. The hot brand of his lips against my neck makes me shiver. His savage claws tickle my waist through my falling-down dress. “Let both of us see you, oui? ”

We shouldn’t be doing this. For sure.

I mean—not here.

But we’re not supposed to invite guys into the girls’ wing upstairs (or vice versa) either. That’s why literally the whole school (minus the faculty, all thankfully absent) is screwing down here. The air is thick with Mogadon pheromones and shifter mating scent and a musky tang I’m pretty sure is semen.

Both Jae and Draco are pumping out plenty of their own scent. And the wallop of their mingled essence against my hyped-up senses is making my head spin.

I feel like I’m watching someone else, pinned and spread on this table between them, with my skirt riding up my thighs and my dress slipping off my shoulders.

At the same time, I've never felt more aware of my own body.

I stare up at Draco's hungry face, breathe into the eager flex of Jae's claws around my waist. Then I suck in a huge breath and just...

...let my bodice drop.

I mean, if these two guys are going to reject me for my flaws, better just get it over with. Before my heart gets any more involved.

With both of them.

The sparkly fabric slithers down my tummy and pools over my hips. So I'm protecting that much of myself, at least.

Draco's scorching gaze shoots straight to my small boobs.

Under his scrutiny, my face flames and my whole body braces for more of the criticism I've gotten my whole life (over my skinny frame and white skin and ridiculous profusion of freckles) from the elite East Coast prep schools my dirt-poor parents always relied on scholarships for me to attend.

Under his breath, Draco mutters something incomprehensible.

Probably something about my freckles.

Which truly do spread everywhere .

"I, uh, don't speak Icelandic." Already mortified, I dive for my fallen dress.

"Hjartfólgin." He repeats the phrase and circles my wrists in his big hands to stop me.

“It means... my... hidden heart.”

In response, my own heart gives a hard thump.

When the bad boy of the whole school drops to his knees between my spread thighs and gazes up at me, his chiseled face blazing with need, I pretty much stop breathing.

“Give him a chance, you,” Jae breathes in my ear. The ear is an erogenous zone for my kind, even if I didn’t inherit the pointy tips, and my body ripples in a delicious shiver.

Slowly, almost... reverently, Draco’s rough palms span my ribs, then slide up my torso to cup my boobs.

Okay. Maybe the golden sprinkle of nutmeg freckles over my pale skin doesn’t bother him there .

I’m really sensitive there, and my tiny pink nipples are already so stiff they’re aching. Now they peak against his callused hands. He rumbles in pleasure and thumbs my nipples. Sensation spreads outward from his touch like ripples in a pond.

I guess he doesn’t mind then? I mean, the fact that I’m flat-chested... and freckled... miraculously doesn’t seem like a turnoff for this one guy.

My teeth sink hard into my lower lip. I arch into the caress and my head falls back against Jae’s sinewy shoulder. My face turns toward this wolf at my back and our mouths meet in a slow sucking kiss.

If Draco Mars is ice, then Jae Labête is fire.

He tastes like wolf, all dark and smoky, with a tongue like sin. Knowing this mouth

of his was just wrapped around Draco's dick only makes me hotter. I wonder whether Jae finished him off—the way he's clearly done before—after I interrupted them on the stairs.

Ah, chere , you naughty girl, you. The velvety purr of Jae's voice fills my head.

I forgot he's a telepath, he has the gene that encodes for that, because he's never spoken that way to me.

“If you want to know the truth,” he whispers against my breathless lips, “we didn't finish on the stairs. We were waiting for you.”

My heavy eyelids lift to meet the liquid honey of Jae's Cajun stare. His eyes are wolf eyes, almond-shaped and slanted, definitely wilder and more yellow than they were before.

But I'm not afraid of him.

Slowly I twine an arm around his neck, his sleek beaded braids swinging around his face. My other hand threads gently through Draco's spiky hair, where he kneels between my thighs, to draw him closer.

Draco's warm hands are still stroking the small slopes of my boobs, and I'm tingly and shivery all over. My nipples are so tight they're tingling. When the warm suction of Draco's mouth closes over one sensitive peak, an aching cry spills out of me.

With everything else going down in this basement, like the boom box and the orgy, I'm barely audible.

But these two are so tuned into me right now that they hear every sound.

Jae pounces on my open mouth and devours me in a kiss that's deep enough to let me feel his fangs, the wolfish incisors that sprout from his palate, pressing into my lip. Draco's hands slide up my inner thighs and splay my legs wide for him. Cool basement air hits the damp gusset of my panties.

Draco's thumbs slide along the edge of the soaked silk. Holy cow, I feel so exposed. That flimsy scrap is clinging to my girly parts, and the musky note of my own intimate scent joins the miasma of mating scents we're all pumping out.

When I squirm under his touch and moan into Jae's kiss, Draco's touch skates over the silk that clings to my plump folds, then grazes the swollen nub of my clit.

A tiny grenade of pleasure explodes in my core. I yelp and arch into that hot ache, my heeled shoes scrabbling to find purchase on the table. Without meaning to, my teeth sink into Jae's lip.

My bite triggers his wolf.

Or maybe it's everything else the three of us are doing on this table that triggers him.

Jae breaks our kiss to throw his head back in a long lupine howl that soars about the music's low bass throb. That howl sends chills cascading down my spine. Roughly he drags my back against his chest, clawed hands wrapping around my boobs from behind. The scrape of his talons against my nipples shoots straight to my already stimulated clit.

At the same time, Draco strokes my hard little bud through my soaked panties without mercy. Waves of pleasure ripple through me. My head falls back against Jae's sweat-slick shoulder and my mouth falls open. The basement's fire-streaked darkness swirls around me, candles blazing like comets against my blurred vision.

My entire back burns against Jae's sinewy frame. My tattooed wings flutter against my skin like they yearn to rise and spread.

When Draco's hands hook around my panties and drag them down my legs, it's simultaneously a shock and the natural next act in this play we're enacting. My pussy is slick and pulsing with a hunger that demands to be sated.

Still, from habit, I wiggle around so my dress falls over the carrot patch of pubic hair between my legs (because I've heard enough about that, too, in my prep school girls' locker room after gym class). When my undies snag around my clunky shoe, my face flames with embarrassment. Here I am, wearing my regulation uniform silk-and-cotton schoolgirl panties to this unsanctioned orgy I seem to have stumbled into.

But Draco seems inflamed by the entire setup. He frees my panties with a deft twist, presses them to his face, and breathes in deep. His eyes close and his forehead knots.

Holy wow.

The Eric Northman of the Icarus Academy is sniffing my soaked panties.

Then his electric blue eyes flash open.

Over my splayed body, our gazes lock. I'm all flushed and undone, my mouth is open, and I can barely breathe. His stare narrows on Jae's hands cradling my breasts. In his arctic eyes, cobalt flames ignite like northern lights.

Then his gaze narrows on the scrap of sparkly dress still wrapped around my hips.

"Fair warning, Mallory," Draco says thickly. The sound of my name—and the warning—on his lips makes my pulse skip. "Lose the dress. Or we'll tear it off you."

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Source Creation Date: August 4, 2025, 10:44 am

The First Girl on the Dean's List is a virgin.

All these months, while she spied on the two of us from afar and ran like a rabbit every time we tried to close the distance, I've thought Mallory McSnicker must be the biggest fucking tease in this whole Academy. A minx in a schoolgirl's uniform.

Trouble with a capital T.

Now, seeing the way her gray eyes widen and her soft mouth falls open at that threat I just voiced, I sniff out a whiff of the actual truth.

That's my sneaking suspicion from earlier, now totally confirmed.

She's not a tease. She's an innocent.

A true innocent.

That truth blasts through my bullshit like a bolt of Thor's lightning.

Very clearly, we have no business fooling around with a girl like this.

But one glance at Jean-Emilien tells me louder than words that he's lost in his wolf. He's pinning Mallory's graceful body against his sexy frame with one arm and ripping his own trousers to shreds with the other. His yellow eyes flame in the darkness and his wicked fangs are bared and dripping.

He's not the only one whose mouth is watering.

All the gods know, I'm no saint. I'm not even Christian.

After all the fucked-up shit I've done to protect the Mars clan and our family business, I'm not a nice guy.

And the incendiary sight of those two I'm so into, all wrapped up in each other's bodies, with Mallory's sweet strawberry nipples calling my name and her creamy thighs spilling wide in invitation and that scatter of nutmeg freckles across her pretty titties I can't wait to taste...

Fokk.

There's no way I'm stopping.

I'm still clutching her white silk panties in my fist like a psycho. The perfume of her arousal fills my head like a drug. I can practically taste her sweet honey in the back of my throat.

The thought of stopping now, the way I know we all should, turns me as savage as Jean-Emilien's wolf.

While I wrestle with my instincts and the grossly neglected and underdeveloped muscle that passes for my conscience, Mallory gazes up at me with her wide eyes shining like silver lamps.

Then her tongue slips out to trace the full curve of her lower lip.

Oh, Loki.

She's actually thinking about it.

She's thinking about what I told her to do.

"Okay," she says suddenly. "That's a yes."

Elation roars through me like an avalanche. Over her silky shoulder, Jae gives me a fierce grin of triumph.

Then Mallory's innocent gaze drops to the boner trapped behind my zipper.

"It's a yes—on one condition." She sucks in a visible breath. "You go first, Draco."

With a mighty heave, I pin my better angels to the mat and grapple them into submission.

She's consenting.

I'm not a fool. I have a nose. I know her friend, the Gemini queen, is in heat. Know Mallory's been breathing in the biochemical drug of Gemini pheromones all night, and that shit's potent as heroin. Clearly this whole school's lost and spiraling in a mating rut.

But Mallory's sober, sharp, smart, and capable as a damn brain surgeon—and she just consented.

That means we're doing this.

We'll take care of her.

And with Jean-Emilien running moon-mad and already half-shifted to his wicked wolf, that means I'll take care of both of them.

I lock onto Mallory's shimmering stare and drag down my zipper.

For the second time tonight, Mr. Happy emerges into view. This time, he's not going down without a fight.

My dick's been hard as tungsten all night. First Jae sucked me off, but he didn't fucking finish. Then, like everyone else in this joint, I've been breathing in hits of Gemini pheromones—and pumping out plenty of my own—all night. Now I've got sweet Mallory McSnicker, spreadeagled between me and my homeboy in a pile of birthday gifts, shyly willing to take on both of us.

Helvitis . I feel like the birthday boy myself.

Not that I'd know what that feels like.

Magnus Mars doesn't believe in coddling his sons. To him, we're hired muscle. Instant violence.

We're murder with a pulse.

Fiercely I shove that dysfunctional family shit into the dark closet in my brain (crowded in there, but I make it work) and lock the door.

When Mallory gets her first real look at my thick boner, her lush lips pop open in astonishment. Unlike earlier on the stairs, she takes her time looking. Thank fuck, she makes every remaining thought in my gods-damned skull evaporate

“Um... wow.” She clears her throat. A pretty blush washes up her neck and floods her creamy skin. Her throat ripples as she swallows. “That's... you're... something.”

What she means is, I have a monster cock.

Her honest appreciation just makes the thing swell fuller, till my shaft juts before me through my gaping zipper like a medieval battering ram.

Jean-Emilien skulks behind her like the monster he is, crouched on the table, naked and erect as fuck. He's not telepathic in this form—at least, he doesn't project words—so I warn him to stay put with a stern look.

If we're doing this for real, it needs to be Mallory's choice.

Jean-Emilien gives me and my eager cock a heated look, then buries his face in the side of her neck. Wolf ears are sprouting through his braids, and I know from experience his pelt will sprout next. Now it's my turn to swallow at the sight of his cruel hands and black talons claiming her breasts and tormenting her pink nipples.

She winds one arm around his neck, arches her elegant spine, and leans into him. Gods, she's so damn trusting. Her soft touch visibly gentles his savage beast.

I wrap a fist around my aching dick in a long slow pull and watch her eyes lighten from slate to quicksilver.

Yeah, nothing about this girl is... ordinary. She's not like the rest of us—whatever she is. But that's her business and not mine, you feel me?

“Your turn,” I say roughly.

Looking dazed, she fumbles for the sparkly swath of dress that's clinging to her hips. Jae snarls a warning into her neck and shreds the flimsy fabric with a single vicious swipe.

Our First Girl voices an adorable little squeak of dismay. I vaguely recall she said something about the dress being borrowed.

Sorry about that, sweetheart. Too late to save the thing now.

The important thing is, she doesn't resist.

The fabric falls away to expose the flawless moon-pale plane of her belly, the delicate jut of her hips, and the flaming lick of bush between her thighs.

Fuck. Me.

That triangle of fiery curls is drenched.

She's fucking soaked for us.

A hoarse groan rips outta me. I'm staring at her bush like I'm demented. Understandably, she squirms under my wild-eyed stare and presses her thighs together.

I'm having none of it.

"Never hide from us, hjartfólginn," I say thickly.

"I'm not hiding from you ." She shakes her head fiercely, but her face is rosy with embarrassment. "I'm just... hiding. From the inevitable commentary on the burning bush."

I level the basement with my blackest scowl. Because if anyone else (like that fucking Pendragon) is seeing her like this—much less commenting—I'll gouge their mannfjandi eyes out.

It's not like I haven't done it before.

But Zara and her sexed-up guys are gone. Still holed up in the den fucking, I guess, and likely not emerging anyone soon. In fact, most of the student body is basically lost in one huge orgy. In the flickering light of the flaming oil drums, the entire dance floor is a writhing pile of nudity.

A nasty handful of Tiberius kids are slinking for the exit in a furtive way that sets my battle-honed instincts immediately on edge. But I'm not a hall monitor, true? Whatever mischief the school bullies are brewing, they're showing zero fucks of interest in Mallory.

Except for those few—who are clearly leaving—I'm literally the only dude in the joint who's even wearing pants.

Any rate, no one's giving our impending threesome a flicker of attention.

That means Mallory's hiding from us .

Jae and me.

Clearly reaching the same conclusion and finding that shit as unacceptable as I do, Jean-Emilien growls in protest and drags her hard against his front. I can't see his dick from this angle, but I'm willing to bet he's dripping for her. Probably making a mess out of the back of her.

His yellow wolf eyes lift to mine, urging me to speak.

For both of us.

“No reason to hide,” I say gruffly, squeezing my own dick in a futile effort to calm myself down. “Mallory, I swear to gods. You're fucking perfect.”

Her expressive face flickers between wonder and doubt. She's always been guarded, way more than you'd expect given her grades and her Dean's List status, but she's also guileless. Right now, her face is open and trusting. She wants to believe me.

Guess I'll just need to convince her.

I drop to my knees with a growl, stop fisting my dick long enough to spread her thighs wide and expose the glistening pink folds of the prettiest pussy I've ever seen, then dive in for a taste.

Her alluring scent of spice and sweetness rises from her soaked snatch and envelops me like a net.

She's a feast fit for the gods.

And I'm fucking famished.

I drag my tongue down her soaked virgin slit in a long hungry lick.

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Source Creation Date: August 4, 2025, 10:44 am

The first swipe of Draco's tongue over that throbbing ache of craving at my core hits me like a jumper cable's been wired to my clit.

Holy wow.

I'm so sensitive there right now.

I'm pretty sure I've already had my first orgasm, just from Draco fingering me through my panties, while Jae rubbed his sinewy body and hard dick against my back.

Now, clearly, I'm about to have another.

I'm vaguely self-conscious about being so wet down there (is that normal? Or just one more way I'm a freak?) And I'm kind of worried about how I smell down there (isn't that a turnoff?) Plus I'm wondering if maybe I should have douched or something (but how could I possibly have known anything like this would happen?!)

Then the hot sweep of Draco's tongue laps over the inner folds of my vulva. My empty core ripples and clenches in a hard spasm of need.

Good grief. That's it.

I need to be... filled .

Right now.

And Jae, who's wrapped around me so tightly from behind like maybe he's afraid for

me to see him, and who's clearly wolfing out back there and possibly a little self-conscious about his whole shifter thing, he needs to fill me.

I mean, he needs to be the one who fills me first. Because I know, on a deep level, what it's like to feel awkward and freakish and excluded.

He's part of this. Us. To the extent there is an "us".

I don't want him feeling left out.

Just when I'm starting to get all up in my head thinking and worrying, Draco thrusts his tongue deep into my aching hole. With a shudder of need, my hips rise into his touch. I clench hard around his probing tongue.

Geez Louise.

Draco Mars' tongue feels amazing inside me. Triggering that tight pulsing ripple in my core. I thread a hand through his spiky hair and press hard against his head to hold him against that surging heat.

A deep moan rumbles through his big body. He drags my legs over his massive shoulders, spreads me wide with his strong hands so I can't escape, and buries his whole face in my bush.

My eyes roll back in my head on a breathless whimper. A tingling rush of elation and excitement sweeps up my legs and centers in my clit.

Desperately I reach back for Jae, because he needs to be part of this too. I won't let him hang back.

Jae dives in with a growl. Our mouths meet in a fangy werewolf kiss that just sucks

the soul out of me.

My hands fumble blindly through his sleek braids to find the furry ears poking through his hair. They twitch under my touch (so cute!) and he whines into my kiss.

I'm no telepath, but Jae's projecting a wordless spray of primal emotions all over the basement. He's barely holding off his full shift—for my sake.

It's a paradox, but it's powerful.

All that monumental effort he's investing, just so I won't freak out, makes me feel cherished and protected and safe.

I surface from the dark spice of his kiss and gaze around the party with stars swimming in my eyes. Wow, it's Orgy City on the dance floor. Draped facedown over the bar, some lucky girl's getting pounded from behind, while she's simultaneously giving voracious head to someone else (which is a three-way choreography that definitely gets me thinking).

Plus a bunch of that Tiberius crowd, specifically those thugs from our rival college who bully me the worst, they're all leaving.

Good riddance.

I'm definitely not sorry to see them go.

Besides, no one can even see the key parts of me in this chaotic darkness, with Jae's arms wrapped around me from behind, his braids streaming over my shoulder, and Draco's face buried in my bush.

Obviously, we'll all get detention if our headmistress finds us down here. Maybe

suspension at worst—which would be bad enough, coming right before midterms. But the Dean can hardly expel all of us...

Can she?

I should be quietly setting an example for others. Not only because of where I sit on the Dean's List, but because of what I am.

Wings or no wings.

That's what my mom always says.

But tonight, no one's watching. My anonymity sets me free.

Under the play of Draco's tongue against my clit, all that fire pooling and pulsing in my core shoots up my spine and spreads across my shoulders. My useless wings flutter and spread against my skin like they're trying to open.

But that's a dream I gave up years ago—

Then Draco sucks my clit into his mouth like a lollipop. That second orgasm hits me like a freight train. I writhe against the suction of his determined mouth and arch my back in a shrill scream.

"Ohmygosh, Draco !" Tears of pleasure spill down my hot cheeks. Stars swim before my eyes.

Jae pins me brutally in place and sucks a vicious love bite into my neck.

While the deafening roar of my climax recedes, Jae presses his lips to the stinging place he just marked in what feels like an apologetic kiss.

Draco lifts his head, looking sex-drunk and satisfied, and drags his tongue slowly along his glistening lower lip.

“Time to be... honest now... oui ?” Rusty with disuse and obvious effort, Jae’s voice rasps in my ear. “Are we your first time, you?”

While I blink away my tears and try to pull my thoroughly scattered wits together enough to answer, the Cajun’s already tortured voice drops an octave. “Are we your first mates?”

My heart beats wildly.

He doesn’t mean mates in the harem sense, I remind myself in a desperate rush. We’ve already established that I’m not a queen (my deficiency in the wings department is the nail in that coffin, even if my kind weren’t in hiding.) So I’m not building a harem.

That’s just the way wolf shifters think and talk.

About... mates.

They’re both staring at me, both these guys, all broody and intense. So I clear my throat and answer vaguely. “Uh, yeah, this is a first-time thing for me.”

I’m not touching that word— mates —with a ten-foot pole. Jae clearly never meant for me to take it literally.

“ Helvitis. A virgin. I knew it.” Draco unwraps one brawny arm from my thigh, leaving my ankles crossed behind his head, and rubs his face roughly like he’s trying to think. “Shit. We don’t wanna hurt you, Mallory.”

A rush of gratitude makes my eyes prickle and blur with a fresh flood of tears. I mean, how many guys at this late stage of the game would even hesitate?

“You won’t,” I rush to assure both of them, because I definitely don’t want them to stop. That possibility distresses me a lot more than any first-time jitters. “I rode ponies in 4-H all through grade school, so I think my hymen is history. And I’m not some fragile flower. I honestly think I’ll be okay.”

“Nothing to do with being fragile. You fucking need protection .” Draco scowls ferociously down at both of us. “In all the ways. And we ain’t packing condoms on us. Jae and me, we weren’t exactly planning for this shit to go down, you feel me?”

Silently I fill in the blanks around that sentence.

I’ve been watching these two on the sly for a really long time. I haven’t seen either one of them with anyone else. I think what they have is special. Even if they’re keeping it quiet, they’re exclusive. Yet, for some reason, they’re willing to let me into their special thing.

I mean, just for tonight.

Obviously.

I have no idea why I’m even on their radar, but I’m definitely not about to let this once-in-a-lifetime chance escape me.

“I won’t get pregnant. I have my own protection,” I blurt out, because it’s true. I like to be prepared for all situations. I’ve been on the Pill for months, due to a combination of convenience (to regulate my wildly irregular periods) and incredibly wishful thinking on my part.

I mean, I don't want to stay the last remaining virgin at the Icarus Academy forever. If the opportunity ever arises, I don't want the lack of birth control to be what stops me.

Like it's about to do now.

"Anyway," I add, because they're both still hesitating, "I can't catch mortal diseases."

Then I almost choke on my own tongue. Geez Louise, where is my brain tonight?

"I mean, um, assuming the two of you are clean," I finish awkwardly. "Because I am."

"For fuck's sake. We're fucking clean." Draco gives my flustered face a suspicious look. "It's just been the two of us for... a while."

Looks like I was right about their relationship.

They're committed.

Even if, for whatever reason, they don't want anyone else to know.

My kind truly isn't vulnerable to mortal pathogens, but I obviously can't go into that. I take in the confusion furrowing Draco's brow, the mounting suspicion icing his arctic eyes, and know I need to act fast if I want to keep these two with me tonight.

Hastily I unwrap my legs from around Draco's neck, scramble forward onto my hands and knees, shake my mane of flyaway curls down my back to get them out of the way, and peer over my shoulder at Jae's lean lurking presence.

"Is this how you do it?" I swallow hard to moisten my dry throat. "Doggie style?"

Heck, I have to be crazy.

I'm deliberately teasing Jean-Emilien Labête, the guy everyone says is the only purebred Cajun loup-garou east of the Atlantic Ocean, on the night before the full moon.

The wolf in question drops right to his hands and knees behind me and bares his fangs in a snarl.

“ Hel .” Draco's hard hands close over mine to pin me in place (which seems like a promising sign, even if it's totally at odds with his words). “ Mallory . You don't know what you're playing with here.”

I give him an upward look. This new position rewards me with the jaw-dropping full frontal of Draco Mars, cut and chiseled, all tight waist and bulging biceps and massive shoulders, with the oil-drum firelight blazing behind him. Jutting between his meaty thighs, his thick dick is straining, flushed ruddy, with fluid gathering at the tip and a big vein throbbing along the underside. I suddenly wonder how he'd taste if I licked him there.

Maybe it's time to find out?

“Sure I do,” I say hoarsely, staring wide-eyed at this mouthwatering temptation. Should I just lick it like an ice cream cone? Or wrap my mouth around it like a popsicle?

Draco plants his hands on his hips and scowls down at me. He looks skeptical, but his eyes are blazing with cobalt heat.

At a guess? He likes seeing me on my knees for him.

“I know what I’m doing,” I say as assertively as possible. “I’m First Girl on the Dean’s List, remember?”

“This isn’t something—you learn—in a textbook,” Jae says hoarsely through his fangs. His hot breath puffs against my spine. Clearly his vocal cords are shifting, he can barely form words, but he’s making his best effort.

A nervous giggle hiccups out of me. “Clearly you don’t know what I’ve been reading.”

Draco’s hands clench hard over mine.

“Last warning, hjartfólginn,” the Iclander says in a subterranean growl. “We’re not playing here, true? There’s no coming back from this. If you don’t stop this shit now, Jean-Emilien and me, we’ll mark you and claim you and make you ours. We’ll fuck you so hard you’ll be feeling us for a week. After we stake our claim, no other warlock in this Academy’s ever gonna have a chance with you.”

My head’s spinning so fast I can’t think straight. He can’t really mean what it sounds like, that they’re asserting some sort of claim on me that lasts longer than tonight.

That has to be his dick talking.

Right?

For like the hundredth time, I caution myself to be careful. I can’t let myself fall for these two.

But Draco is offering to fuck me. That much seems pretty clear.

And since that’s exactly what I want too...

I clear my throat, suck in my breath, and chirp, “Good.”

Then, for good measure, I spread my knees and angle my hips so Jae can get a good sniff.

I want this. I really want this—with both of them. I need them to know that beyond any doubt.

Holy cow, I’m totally exposed back there. Burning bush and all.

After tonight, I’ll probably never be able to look either of these guys in the face again.

But, oh my gosh, I’m soaked. I’m still so needy. I’m all worked up from Draco’s mouth on my clit and Jae’s claws and fingers working my nipples. For some reason that doesn’t even make logical sense, exposing myself like this to both of them (not to mention anyone else who might be watching) is just making me hotter.

If these two guys don’t finish what they started, I’m honestly afraid I’m going to cry.

As I arch my back and spread my thighs to give him a good look, Jae’s yellow eyes narrow on my exposed snatch. His pupils dilate and his nostrils flare. His naked chest, hard and gleaming with sweat, swells as he breathes me in deep.

Then, with a snarl, the werewolf pounces.

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Source Creation Date: August 4, 2025, 10:44 am

My wolf, he is rising.

He is surging from the cellar, buried deep in my soul, where I keep my dark side chained and dungeoned.

My wicked beast is lunging for that fiery lick of curls, dripping with sex and taunting us, between Mallory's virginal thighs. My taloned hands engulf the pale rounds of her derrière and drag her toward me.

"Le Bon Dieu save you," I mutter, deep and guttural in my chest. Her innocent scent of rain and honeysuckle floods my senses, mingled with the primal musk of sex.

Dimly I hear Draco, my amou—the powerful mate I would openly acknowledge as my alpha, if only he were wolf—he is commanding me sternly to wait.

But Mallory herself, she is all invitation, arching her back and pressing her ass into my loins. Her tattooed wings pulse and shimmer against her skin like silver.

At this moment, my loup-garou, my terrible wolf, he owns my cock. At the base of my shaft, my knot is swelling purple with need.

I fist my knot hard to hold him back, him, because this girl—she is not ready to be knotted.

But no force under Heaven can stop me from pressing my dick against the slick folds of Mallory's divine pussy. No force can stop me from working my swollen cockhead into the hot tight suck of her hole.

I mean to be careful, eh? But Mallory is gasping and moaning and nestling her sweet derrière into my pelvis.

And my wicked wolf, he is lust incarnate.

A jolt of raw lust coils at the base of my spine. My shoulders bunch, my quads tighten, my hips surge forward of their own accord. Her tight pussy envelops me... ah, inch by inch, she is exquisite, this is torment... while I rein in my beast until I groan with effort.

Pinned in my terrible clutches, Mallory quivers like a trapped bird. Her cunt, her sweet koko, ripples and pulses around my demanding length. I forge forward until my knot lodges against her pussy. (Even that, my wicked beast demands. How he burns to knot her!) But my fist, wrapped firmly around the throbbing bulb of flesh at my base, protects her tender flesh from this final assault.

Under the invasion, she remains very still—still and trembling—but slowly, her head turns. Her wide eyes, glowing like pools of mercury, lock on mine. Her thick lashes flutter.

“Oh, Jae,” she moans, low and husky. “Oh my God.”

Every cell in my body sings with triumph. My head falls back in a long possessive howl.

When my vision clears, there is Draco, standing before us with his thick zozo jutting proudly before him and his cold face blazing with our shared need.

“That’s it,” Draco says thickly, encouraging both of us. He cradles her head and strokes her fiery curls. “You’re taking his big cock so good, little girl. You’re gonna make him blow. He’s gonna fill your sweet pussy with his cum.”

Then my amou gives me a look of stern warning that makes my balls clench. Grimly he orders, “No knot tonight, yeah? We save that shit for later.”

Now my wolf howls in protest. I bare my fangs at my alpha, but he is right to protect her. For Mallory’s sake, I grip my knot harder and restrain my wolf to slow shallow strokes.

Ah, this girl, she was made for fucking.

So responsive.

Every rough downstroke, every slap of our hips colliding, wrings another breathless moan from her virginal lips.

When Draco’s gaze returns to her, his harsh face softens. Just as his cold mafia heart has softened for this girl. “You wanna come for the two of us, don’t you, hjartfólginn?”

“Yes.” From her hands and knees while I drive into her from behind, she gazes up at him like the sweet girl she is. “I want all of him. But I want all of you too, Draco.”

Then this innocent creature leans forward to drop a sweet kiss on the head of Draco’s straining dick.

His brow furrows and his jaw knots. His hands clench around her head until his knuckles whiten. “Mallory— fokk— I can’t—”

“It’s okay,” she says softly. “You won’t hurt me.”

When she laps at his thick dick like a kitten lapping cream, a harsh Icelandic curse rips from his lips.

Yet he's helpless to resist her, her shy licks that paint his cock with her pretty tongue, the gentle way she kisses and nuzzles his cockhead with curious lips.

Ah, she is made for this. Made to please us.

Gripped by a powerful compulsion to claim this wild skittish creature, my own thrusts quicken. Every slap of my hips against her sweet ass nudges her mouth a few centimeters deeper onto Draco's dick.

Finally, his big hands wrap around her head to guide her.

To coax her to take more of him.

She softens and yields to him, ah, so beautifully. Just as she yields to me. With every thrust, her exquisite cunt ripples and tightens around my aching shaft. Truly, I will not long survive this delicious torment. My wolf and I, we will fill her with our seed until it spills down her thighs. My alpha will fill her sweet schoolgirl mouth until his spend runs down her chin.

Draco and me, we have never shared another.

Always, he is sweating with fear that his mafia enemies will view anyone he loves as a weakness to be exploited. Remarkable, this, the way he claims this vulnerable, powerless, friendless girl. The way he claims her as his, now, before half the school.

Even when the Gemini queen's heat has driven us all mindless with mating rut, this act of claiming will not go unremarked or unnoticed by our enemies.

For his enemies are mine.

Now, they will also be Mallory's.

She is spitted and pinned between us, her tight koko is milking my dick. She is gripping Draco's powerful thighs for balance, head bobbing obediently under his firm grip as he fists her soft curls.

She's taking both of us.

Pleasing both of us.

Taking her own pleasure from us in return.

Draco's eyes, cobalt and icy as glaciers, lock with mine. The sight of me driving brutally into her from behind brings ruddy color rising in the hard planes of his face.

"Amou," I hiss through my fangs. My wolf whines under our alpha's brutal stare and yields.

Draco snarls in satisfaction and lunges to kiss me. He is fearless of my fangs, his ruthless mouth and slick tongue still potent from the liquor of his homeland—the flask of aquavit in his discarded trousers.

"Hjartfólgin," he whispers, tender and secret, against my eager mouth. My hidden heart.

I sigh and moan for him.

My heart swells with all the love for this man he will never let me voice. My fist tightens around my knot and my balls tingle.

Dieu , I am so close to coming.

While we fall into this consuming kiss, I knead Mallory's pretty derrière with my

cruel hands and fight not to mark her. My wolf lunges and strains against my will that chains him.

At last, Draco breaks our kiss. He cradles her diligent head and groans, “ Hel , such a good girl. You ready to come for us, First Girl?”

When she shivers and moans between us, he says gruffly, “Good. Touch yourself. Stroke that sweet pussy and let us see.”

This, I cannot endure.

My knot swells and my dick spasms. When Mallory’s innocent hand sneaks between her thighs, when her divine koko milks my dick like an udder, the last link of my hard-fought control is shattered.

I can hold back no longer.

I fling back my head and howl. My climax roars through me like a hurricane.

My cock kicks and floods her virgin hole—this girl we are both claiming, ours, she is ours—with jet after jet of hot seed. In the fire-streaked darkness, the feathers inked across her delicate shoulders flutter and spread.

Her sweet breathless cries are muffled by Draco’s cock, stuffed halfway down her throat. Her hand is still pressed between her thighs. Me, I’m not certain she even knows how to pleasure herself.

But there is no doubt she is taking her pleasure.

From both of us.

This awkward duckling, she has become a swan.

My heart swells and my soul sings with possessive pride for her. She is ours.

Mallory.

Only when both of us—Mallory and myself—are trembling and mindless with ecstasy does my amou finally take his own powerful release. Draco's back arches, his chest swells, his fists clench. His mouth opens in a primal yell that punches through the throbbing beat of the boombox and the chorus of cries rising from the orgy.

His hips punch forward to flood our girl's mouth and throat with his own abundant tribute.

She takes him like a goddess, like she was born to do nothing else. She clings to him for balance but swallows him down, without choking or struggling. She yields to him, to me, to us— so perfectly.

Ah, this girl. She is perfect.

She is perfect for both of us.

I am lost in her, lost in him, lost in this spellbound moment of discovery the three of us are sharing, when my wolfish senses recoil from the sharp chemical stink of kerosene. Under the din of music, I discern the jarring crash of shattered glass.

My instincts prickles in a frisson of unease.

This is something that should not be.

The door to the basement den bursts open so violently it slams into the wall. Dimly I

recall this is the room where the Gemini queen and her mates have vanished.

Ronin Pendragon erupts into view, mother-naked, black hair swirling around muscled shoulders, his tall silhouette edged in a hectic flicker of light. A blast of cold outdoor air and the powdery scent of falling snow spill from the room behind him. Fingers of oily smoke wind around his body. Ronin looks wildly around the oblivious tangle of the sex-drunk party.

Across the width of the basement, his desperate stare locks with mine. Over the grinding music, he bellows, "Fire!"

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Source Creation Date: August 4, 2025, 10:44 am

The raw note of crisis in Ronin's bellow changes everything.

One second, I'm floating in a sea of endorphins and Mogadon pheromones, with my rational First Girl mind totally blown and my poor defenseless heart a quivering blob of jelly. My stretched, stuffed, and no longer virginal vag is pulsing around the last electrifying spasms of Jae's incredible dick, buried deep inside me and still spurting jets of liquid heat.

Simultaneously, I'm slowly backing off Draco's shaft (which is somehow still hard, even after he definitely came in my mouth) while placing little licks and kisses all along his length so he doesn't feel totally abandoned. But he came a lot (which I loved!) and I swallowed all that, and I just need a little breather to process everything that's happened.

I mean, mission accomplished, right? I'm no longer the last remaining virgin at the Icarus Academy.

I've lost my unwanted innocence.

Finally.

Too bad I might also have lost my heart in the process.

That's when Ronin's urgent shout of "Fire!" shreds my floaty haze of euphoria—and the looming threat of heartbreak—to ribbons.

A startled sputter of yells and curses, peppering the air around the dance floor and the

mangy couches, tells me the school orgy is ruined.

In a blink, Draco snarls one of those incomprehensible Icelandic oaths. Suddenly his mind-blowing cock is gone, because he's stuffing himself roughly into his discarded leather pants. Jae slides out of me like greased lightning, pausing just long enough to steady me on my wobbly knees as I sway on the gift table, so I don't fall over.

The second Jae pulls out, a warm flood of shifter semen spills down my thighs.

Gosh, that's embarrassing.

It's Sploosh City down there.

That spectacle is apparently diverting for Jae, who gives a low velvety purr of satisfaction. He dives in for a hard sniff and a long lick up my inner thigh—lapping up our mingled juices—that wrings out of me a breathless squeak.

Geez Louise, McSnicker. Great way to sound like a cartoon mouse in front of these two totally hot guys you just boinked—

“Head in the game, Jean-Emilien,” Draco grinds out. “Get our girl dressed and stay with her. I’m goin’ in there with Pendragon.”

Our girl?

I guess Draco's trying to be nice to me, you know, since his dick was just in my mouth?

My heart gives a painful ping of disappointment. But I have to be smart about this. The three of us just hooked up at an orgy.

It's not like this is true love.

I mean, at least, not for them.

Jae growls in agreement, assesses the mounting pandemonium with a single sharp glance, then leaps for a pair of pants I don't even think are his—because I dimly recall he shredded his (along with my whole dress).

Draco tosses his shirt and my panties in my direction, then shoulders brutally through the crowd after Ronin.

I blink through the haze of rapidly thickening smoke (plus a few threatening tears) that's already burning my eyes and stinging my lungs. Ronin's diving back into the den. At least the visual impact of glimpsing my former crush—the reigning hottie of the Icarus Academy—spectacularly naked is greatly reduced, since I'm now totally fixated on Jae and Draco instead.

More worrying is the way the lurid flare of fire from the den is growing. Fingers of smoke curl through the open door and creep along the ceiling like wraiths.

A sudden stab of fear for Zara (and Maxim, who's also still in there) steals my breath. I slide my legs into my panties at warp speed and just ignore—as best I can—the cum-sticky mess Jae left behind down there.

Gosh, I'm a disaster. Practically naked, hair a riotous mane of curls spiraling in every direction, with kiss-swollen lips and werewolf cum dripping down my bare thighs. Honestly, I couldn't look less like a proper First Girl if I tried. If our headmistress ever sees me like this, she'll probably have an apoplexy.

Then I'll get clapped in detention until I'm ninety.

But right now, a conduct infraction is the least of my worries.

My naked classmates are scattering every which way, some frantically searching for their clothes, others running right outside into the snow without coats or shoes. A few airheads scramble up the stairs into the main domus, shrieking in a blind panic.

I grimace in exasperation as I drop Draco's oversized tee shirt over my head. That warlock is way bigger than I am, so the soft fabric falls to mid-thigh, even on my giraffe-like legs. Plus, bonus, the shirt totally smells like him. His bracing and now familiar scent of juniper and bergamot envelops me like a hug.

The way he took care of me—took care of both of us—and kept us all safe? Just the thought of that gruff Nordic giant, with his mafia ink and scary rep, charging off into danger to protect us?

This reminder of Draco's strength and his nearness is a definite comfort in this emergency.

The reason I'm exasperated is because literally no one's following the protocol we've practiced (repeatedly) in the school fire drill. That drill's really important, because some of our students can actually summon fire, and we've had accidents before at this academy.

Of course I know the fire protocol forwards and backwards, because I'm not only the First Girl. I'm also a hall monitor.

Now Draco too has vanished into the den—with the fire—and there's no sign of Zara or the others coming out, which is really worrying. Next to me, Jae's swearing a blue streak in Cajun French and struggling to retract his claws and belting someone's pants (which are clearly way too big on him) around his lean hips.

He's reining himself in. Getting his wolf under control.

But it's taking him a while.

Since no one else is following the fire protocol (which exists for a reason, darn it), I bolt for the fire alarm mounted on the wall. The device is geriatric, but one of my hall monitor duties is keeping the safety gear in this domus in working order.

I flip back the plastic cover and pull the lever.

The bone-rattling ring-a-ling of the fire alarm fills the air.

That bell is critical, because we have Mistress Aggie asleep and a few diligent students cramming for midterms upstairs. Everyone who's not actively fighting the fire (which definitely includes my eighty-year-old asthmatic headmistress) needs to get out and stay out until this situation is contained.

What's also important is that the bell is supposed to be the cue for designated students to form a fire brigade. Because we don't have an actual fire department on this enchanted and mostly uninhabited island, hidden behind magical wards, in the middle of the ocean.

Jae hovers at my side, still shirtless, literally swimming in some other guy's belted-on pants like a clown suit. By now, his wolf ears and fangs have retracted, so he's fully human.

Not gonna lie, he's a welcome sight.

His beaded braids stream in disarray around his taut shoulders and alert face.

But he's one of the only people in this basement who's not totally panicking.

His sinewy arms engulf my shoulders in a quick hug. I'm still (ridiculously) feeling too shy and uncertain to give him a full body hug in return. I mean, it's not like he's my actual boyfriend or anything.

I need to be careful and not get confused.

Awkwardly I raise my hands to grip his arms in a steady squeeze.

"Mallory, chere ." In the smoky pandemonium of this basement, his golden eyes burn with concern. "We need to get out of this firetrap, oui? "

"No, actually, the fire brigade needs to fight the fire," I say as calmly as possible. "If we can't contain it, that's when we leave. I'm on the brigade and I'm deputizing you. Come with me."

His brow furrows and his mouth opens, but I don't give him a chance to protest. I wrap my fingers around his hand and tow him with me toward the bar where the fire extinguisher is kept.

Due to the thickening smoke and generally poor lighting down here, it's getting really hard to see. In my platform heels, I stumble over something and almost go down.

Cue my trademark McSnicker clumsiness.

The last thing we need, on top of everything else, is me breaking an ankle and adding a medical emergency to this crisis.

"Careful, chere." Thank goodness Jae's right there, gripping my arm to steady me against his wiry strength. "These shoes, they're a menace, oui ?"

"You may have a point." Giving his hovering frame a wry look, I grip his arm for

balance, toe out of my sparkly shoes, and gather them in one hand so no one else trips over them. Then we both pad barefoot across the gnarly floor, sticky with the residue from generations of keggers and other excesses, (ick) to the abandoned bar.

Fortunately, the fire extinguisher is right where it should be, mounted behind the bar and clearly marked. I march over to the clunky red cylinder, wrestle it down from the wall, and spin toward the fiery den with purpose.

“Fout tonè!” Jae pulls me to a hard stop, puts himself between me and the fire, and bares his teeth at me in a grimace.

“I have literally no idea what that means,” I tell him as patiently as possible. “But I’m a hall monitor and I need to fight the fire. You can relax, okay? I know how to use this equipment. I’m trained for this.”

We’re eye to eye, toe to toe, almost mouth to mouth. Since I’m the tallest girl at the Icarus Academy, we’re basically the same height. I’m facing down the last purebred Cajun werewolf east of the Greenwich Mean Line.

Now my shifter—I mean, the shifter, because he’s definitely not mine— gives me a ferocious scowl. “Are you crazy, you? Me, I’m not letting you anywhere near that fire.”

I hug the extinguisher tightly to my chest. “It’s my responsibility. That means I have to do it. Besides, Zara’s in there, and Ronin, and Draco—”

“Ah, merde .” He huffs out a breath and snatches the extinguisher right out of my arms. “I’ll go. You stay here where it’s safe, oui? ”

“Do you even know how to use that?” I give him a dubious look, because he’s never drilled with the fire brigade like I have. “It’s P.A.S.S. Pull, aim, squeeze, and

sweep—”

“Mallory.” He shakes his head and looks for a second like he’s fighting a smile. “Me, I’ll manage. You wait for me here. Yes?”

I’m reluctant to leave him to it, but clearly, his mind is made up. Anyway, there’s more I can do, and the important thing is to get that extinguisher into action as soon as possible.

Realizing that he’s actually waiting for me to agree, I sigh and tell him, “Go!”

Deftly he shifts the extinguisher to one arm, sweeps me up against his lithe torso with the other, and claims my mouth in a hard hot kiss that makes me tingle.

I’m still gasping with surprise when he releases me just as suddenly and whirls away.

Then he’s off like a greyhound at the races (not that I’ve ever seen that, I’m an animal lover, so the entire sport is distressing). My whole body hums with the sizzle of that electric kiss I totally wasn’t expecting.

Was that, I don’t know, a goodbye kiss? A polite thank you for the hookup we just had?

I can’t let myself believe it means anything more. Otherwise, I’m headed straight for the Heartbreak Hotel.

Pulling myself together, I pivot back to the bar. Unfortunately, we don’t have running water down here, because of the whole medieval dungeon thing.

But we do have a huge bucket full of ice and longneck beers just waiting to be pressed into service.

That bucket's way too heavy for me to lift, but I only need to tip it over. There's an extremely sketchy speakeasy-era rug lying right here. Soaked with water, that big rug will smother any blaze short of the Great Chicago Fire.

Moving as quickly as possible while the fire alarm rings merrily, the smoke continues to thicken until it makes me cough, and the last panicky students scatter into the night, I pull out the remaining longnecks and set them safely aside.

When there's only ice left inside, I strain to tip the big bucket.

I'm not a particularly strong person, I'm kind of a wimp, and it's hard to work with my eyes watering and my lungs burning from the acrid sting of smoke. I hunker down near the floor where the smoke is thinner.

But I'm determined as heck.

Draco, Jae, Zara, Ronin, even Max the dragon shifter need my help.

When I finally manage to tip the bucket, sending a bone-chilling cascade of ice and melted water over my bare feet to saturate the rug, a thrill of satisfaction rushes through me.

I give a happy little hop, the rug squishing underfoot, and exclaim, "Yay!"

Finally, I'm making progress.

Now if I can only get someone to help me drag this sopping wet rug to the fire—

The night splits under the rumble of a deep bronze bellow. I shoot to my full height with a cry. That's a Jurassic Park -like sound I've heard before, we all have, cowering at midnight in our dorm room beds with the blankets pulled over our heads.

To be precise, that roar is the sound of the witching world's last fully manifested male dragon shifter—Maxim Rasputin—in a towering rage.

Wow.

I guess Max is airborne. In dragon form.

There's a window in the den, or at least, there used to be. That has to be how he's escaped—

A second scream soars over Max's and makes the night air quiver. Higher pitched, more melodic, less tyrannosaur, more Hogwarts phoenix. That's a dragon too, has to be (because there's no such thing as a phoenix in my witching world textbooks).

But there's only one other dragon shifter on this entire island...

"Zara!" I gasp and spin toward the outside door. Clearly she's airborne too, also in dragon form. That den window is definitely history, and maybe the other guys—including my two—are using it to get out.

Except I'm pretty sure Draco and Jae would never leave me behind in a burning building. They've been weirdly protective, both of them, since our threesome—

Another dragon scream almost splits my skull.

Ouch .

That scream is shrill with rage, punctuated by a flare of ultraviolet lightning that lights up the night like a nuclear blast.

Oh my gosh, that's Zara for sure. The Gemini queen is famously (or infamously) both

a lightning witch and a lightning dragon.

Clearly, she's in real distress.

I spare one last agonized look toward the den, where an industrial-grade hiss and the reek of chemicals tell me someone's at least figured out how to use the extinguisher.

Attaboy, Jae. Thanks for not letting me down.

Then I sprint for the outdoors.

I need help anyway. With the rug. So I need to deputize someone from the actual fire brigade to help.

And I really need to understand what's going down out there with Zara.

As I burst through the door, an icy fist of winter air encases me like a Compulsion spell. I gasp and dive back inside just long enough to snatch someone's discarded parka from the pile on the nearest couch. It's not regulation Academy uniform, but I'll deal with the conduct infraction if it comes. Someone's left a pair of moon boots tossed in the corner, so I cram my big feet into those too.

Then I burst back out (clumping like a lumberjack in my borrowed boots and parka) and gaze into the starry sky.

This far from civilization, the constellations glitter like diamonds, and the moon's swollen orb hovers close enough to touch. A massive black dragon hammers across the vast arc of sky, wings fully extended and jaws gaping, with a column of crimson fire pouring through his fangs.

That terrifying sight is Maxim.

He's plummeting from the sky after a scatter of those Tiberius kids, who I suddenly realize are responsible for the tongues of crimson fire licking from our shattered den window. One of those morons is still clutching a lit Molotov cocktail, which is clearly how this whole mess started.

I should've known.

My Tiberius bullies are allies of the last queen. The Aquarius queen. Who doesn't want to step down for her Gemini successor. Very clearly, those Aquarius idiots just tried to take out Zara.

I say tried, because the small teal dragon streaking like a furious arrow after Max is definitely Zara.

And she is clearly furious. At her own guy. Even while I watch, she coughs up a bolt of purple lightning that arcs over Max's horned head.

For an eyblink, I'm confused. Then I get it.

She's just fired a warning shot at her flying T. rex of a suitor. To keep him from roasting her bullies to a crisp.

Zara's a badass. But she's also soft-hearted.

Too bad Max isn't into the concept of restraint.

That alpha dragon is in a flaming fury. Someone just tried to kill his queen. So I seriously doubt any warning shot will deter him.

Screaming in terror, the Tiberius gang scrambles onto the rocky cliff below our domus that plunges down to the sea. One guy lobbs his Molotov cocktail wildly

toward Max, which just inflames that dragon more.

Holy cow. The dragon's not listening to Zara, like, at all .

He tilts his wings, angles his massive body for another pass, and almost splits my eardrums with a bellow of rage.

Hidden in the shadows against the leaning bulk of our domus , right above the dangerous plunge of the cliff, a furtive flicker of movement snares my gaze. Like I said before, my kind have enhanced senses, and we're used to being hunted.

That's the only reason I even see that big oaf—Lev Uranus, the absolute worst of my bullies from Villa Tiberius—hoisting a loaded crossbow toward the sky.

Geez Louise.

That thing looks lethal. It's the size of a small catapult. And it's loaded for bear.

I mean dragon.

Lev isn't gunning for Max, who's totally fixated on the gang of miscreants scrambling down the cliff. Roaring like blazes, Max doesn't even see the real threat.

Lev is aiming his crossbow at Zara .

His faction's rival queen. While Zara herself is winging furiously after Max and completely distracted trying to keep her new boo from going Game of Thrones medieval and roasting the rest of those bullies to a crisp.

I glance hastily all around me, looking for help.

Yep, help would be good right now.

But there's no Mistress Aggie or Master Aries (our resident disciplinarian and another of Zara's alphas) anywhere in sight. Jae and Draco and Ronin are all still inside, battling the blaze. My fellow captain of the fire brigade, First Boy Neo Mercury, is normally a reliable ally (and another of Zara's harem). But Neo isn't even here tonight. He's probably back at his dorm, cramming for midterms.

So, clearly, it's up to me.

Mallory McSnicker, class geek, to the rescue.

Lev Uranus, who's big as an orc and about as intelligent, steadies the crossbow against his hulking shoulder and squints along the wicked bolt at Zara.

I square my own shoulders and march right over there, bare legged in the snow, swimming in my puffy parka and moon boots.

Time to interrupt the cycle of violence.

"Hey, you!" I use my hall monitor voice, the one that makes the freshmen nervous. "Knock it off, Uranus. Having a weapon like that on school grounds is a violation of the Academy Codex."

Lev lowers the crossbow a hair and lumbers around to face me. When he finally works out who's challenging him, the slack look on his thick features hardens into meanness.

"Mind your own business, McSnicker," he snarls.

Crap. Of course, that big lug isn't afraid of me. He raises the crossbow, steadies it on

his shoulder, and takes aim. Zara's zipping straight toward us, trying to get between Max and his targets.

Lev's going to get a clean shot.

"Don't even think about ignoring me." I'm clumsier than usual in these moon boots, but I break into a clunky run—straight toward my horrible bully. "I'm reporting you to the Dean, Lev Uranus!"

That's the worst threat I can think of, because the Dean is much scarier than Mistress Aggie.

But my threat only seems to annoy my bully.

"You freak." He scowls and swings around to retarget that crossbow—straight at me. "Maybe I'll do the school a solid. No one'll even miss a skinny, spotty, know-it-all nobody like you."

I'm never graceful, even under the best of circumstances. Encumbered by this snow gear, I'm even slower than usual. There's no way I can reach Lev in time.

But I can still buy crucial seconds for Zara.

Because, with my enhanced eyesight, I can see there's only one arrow notched in Lev's flight groove. If he fires at me, he'll need to reload. And I bet that takes time.

"Take your best shot, Uranus," I yell at top volume (because a little help would still be good). "I dare you."

Lumbering along at my fastest run, I pump my arms with effort and churn through the snow toward my bully on a burst of adrenaline and fear fueled by anger.

How dare this jerk threaten my friend?

This time I'm not running away and hiding.

Even if it kills me.

Like Lev just said, I'm a nobody. I'm a joke. I'm a freak who can't even claim my power.

But I can still make a difference.

By now I'm two yards away from the guy, way too close for him to miss. In what seems like slow motion, Lev's sausage-like finger tightens on the trigger.

Right next to his ear, a blur of motion explodes through the window with a howl of wolfish rage.

Oh my gosh. That's Jae.

Leaping to my defense.

He's shifting from man to werewolf in midair.

Bestial and snarling, sprouting fur and claws and barely bipedal, Jae collides with Lev's big body at full force.

Under the bone-crunching impact, my bully yells in surprise and rage. The crossbow bolt discharges with a hum. The bolt thunks harmlessly into the side of the domus .

Propelled by the blind fury of Jae's maddened werewolf, the two guys fly sideways through the air. The crossbow spins out of reach to one side. On the jumble of rocks

at the cliff's edge, slippery with snow and ice, I glimpse a confused scramble and thrash of limbs as those two locked bodies tussle for advantage.

Then...

With a savage snarl and a bloodcurdling scream...

They fall.

I'm already moving.

I think I never stopped.

I'm tearing the encumbering parka from my shoulders. Slipping and struggling over the ice-rimed rocks. My back and shoulders blaze with fiery heat. I catch a wild glimpse of two figures pinwheeling through the air below. Lev is screaming in an endless spiral of raw terror.

But Jae falls in fatalistic silence.

Plummeting toward certain death on the jagged rocks.

Somewhere far above, two dragons are locked together, entangled in their own desperate struggle. I can't spare a second to look, but I already know there's no one close enough to help. No one to save my wolf. No one but me.

And suddenly, I realize, I can .

Millenia of instinct, the cell-deep heritage of my hidden species, hurl me over the cliff after my wolf like a falling star.

I fling myself into open air, launched and propelled by the atomic flash of revelation that I'm more than Mallory McSnicker, ugly duckling and class joke, First Girl on the Dean's List.

I'm Aurora Artemis Aurelius, Eagle of the Air, Queen of the Light-Born Fae.

I've always been uncrowned and unacknowledged by my kind because I'm half-mortal. I've never been able to summon my wings. So my Light Fae kin wrote me off as a dud, a freak, a wingless wonder.

And the mortals don't even know I exist.

The Seelie—the Light Fae—we hide among the mortals for a reason. As a species, we're hunted and all but extinct.

Now, in this soul-searing crucible of need and crisis, the skin of my back splits down my spine. My arms sweep wide. My shoulders flex and spread. In an explosion of pewter and silver, feathers burst from my tattooed flesh and unfurl in a powerful sweep of wings.

My chest vibrates with a primal scream of elation that bursts from my lungs and blasts through the night like a trumpet.

As I plummet through the icy air to save my falling love, I finally claim my power.

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Source Creation Date: August 4, 2025, 10:44 am

I'm alone in the den, spraying the last dregs of extinguishing foam over the smoking remains of that Molotov cocktail those Tiberius meatheads lobbed through the window at Zara.

That's when I feel Jean-Emilien falling.

He's a strong telepath and we're closely bonded. Even if he's still fiercely resisting a mating bite, on account of that whole misogynistic belief he harbors that he and his breed are monsters.

If anyone in this place is a monster, that'd be the stone-cold killer standing right here in my shitkicker boots.

I've spilled so much blood for the Mars family business in my short but violent life, I'll never wash that shit off.

Now, as my guy's possessive rage floods through every synapse—the mindless, wordless, helpless rage of his wolf—my entire body clenches in shock.

For fuck's sake, he just ducked outta here a minute ago to check on Mallory. How is this even happening?

He's fucking falling from the high cliff behind the domus .

He's falling to his death .

Yet his dominant emotion is a vicious sense of satisfaction that his mate's hated

enemy—Mallory's enemy—is falling to his own death right alongside.

A raw curse punches from my diaphragm and rips outta my lungs.

I fling the extinguisher aside and hurl myself headfirst through the open window into the moonlit night. I land in a tight roll to let a snowdrift absorb the impact of my big body hitting the ground. Ice crystals burn and abrade my naked torso, but that doesn't matter. I'm already flowing to my feet—

Just in time to see Mallory throw herself off the cliff and vanish.

My chest splits wide in a primitive roar of anguish.

Both my mates—a label I don't stop to question— both my mates are falling.

Howling like a banshee, I pound the final meters through the snow to the cliff. Even though I know in my bones it's already too late.

Far below, three distant figures pinwheel through the air. One is irrelevant—at a guess, one of our arsonists, so good riddance.

Then my Jae.

Then Mallory.

Except...

Mallory isn't falling.

She's fucking flying .

With the prettiest pair of silver wings you ever saw sprouting from her slim back, an incongruous pair of bright blue moon boots capping her long legs, and the rag of my torn shirt fluttering bravely around her elegant frame, she's plummeting after Jae like an avenging angel. She's arrowing through the night in a dive that makes the wind scream around her.

I fall to my knees, clench snow in my anguished fists, and watch with my heart jammed all the way up against my tonsils.

They're way outta range of my telekinesis. Still, my psychic senses labor and strain.

Oh gods of my fathers, they're so close to those jagged rocks.

Please, Odin, I know I ain't a praying man. Know I don't deserve shit.

But if I ever needed your help...

With a scream of elation that spirals over the churn and snarl of fighting dragons somewhere over my head, Mallory snatches Jean-Emilien out of free fall into her arms and twists in a graceful spiral. Together they soar upward, just short of the silver sea. Powerful wings thrash the air as they climb.

That other guy—the one Jae loathes with a red hatred—he's still screaming when he hits the rocks.

I barely even notice.

What's another death to a butcher like me?

Every cell in my body is straining toward my mates. Those two, precious, fragile souls. The cherished bodies of my loves.

Jae's sinewy frame wraps tight around Mallory, clinging in a way that doesn't hinder the steady beat of her wings. His dark braids and her fiery curls unravel through the air in a banner of ink and copper.

Her mighty wings beat in time with my heart.

Shit's going down behind me that I'm barely tracking. The bone-rattling ring-a-ling of the fire alarm falls mercifully silent. Those two dragons are down. Now there's a whole Shakespearean drama with the Gemini queen and her harem—everyone alive and breathing, but arguing like blazes—playing out on the open ground in front of our domus. The entire school seems to be gathered there, mesmerized by the shitshow.

The cutting voice of Vasili Romanov—Zara's dominant alpha, who was MIA till now—slices through the night like a javelin.

I normally keep a wary eye on that snake whenever he's around. He's a nasty piece of work, that Romanov warlock, always has been. (And they call me psycho?) Suffice it to say, even I give that one a wide berth.

Right now, I don't even look at him.

My entire being is riveted on my mates.

Mallory angles her flight away from the soap opera playing out on our front porch. In breathless silence, she soars toward the dark tangle of forest that lurks behind our domus. That's a strategic choice. A Mallory choice. A smart choice that keeps her invisible to the bystanders out front.

In fact, I get the very strong sense she doesn't wanna be noticed.

At all.

Of course, that *modus operandi* , when you're Mallory McSnicker, is nothing new.

I break into a jog along the cliff and beeline toward the forest like I'm pulled on a towline. I'm only wearing my shitkickers and a pair of leather pants, but I'm *íslendingar* , for Freyja's sake. I can handle this mild Mediterranean winter.

I gain the concealment of the trees right as Mallory spirals through a low sweeping descent and alights on an open patch of earth. The minute their feet hit the ground, Jean-Emilien scrambles out of her arms, then whirls around to face her.

"Mallory, chere... " he breathes, more or less human, but husky with shock. "You... how...?"

I don't bother with the hey how are ya 's. I shove roughly through a tangle of skeletal branches right into the grove, throw my arms tight around both of them, and drag them hard against my chest with a growl. I breathe in deep and fill my lungs with their familiar scents of patchouli and moss and soft spring rain. Jae's half-naked form is sandwiched between us like an accordion.

Fokk, we're all half-naked.

My ripped shirt barely clings to Mallory's front. Under my desperate hands, both my mates are icy to the touch, shivering with adrenaline and nerves. I'm determined to protect the hell outta both of them.

The downy softness of Mallory's wings tickles my arms. Over Jean-Emilien's bent head (because he's scenting her neck and hair with protective fervor), her wary eyes meet mine.

By starlight, those wide eyes of hers aren't gray anymore. They're pure silver.

Just like her wings.

"Hjartfólgín. What are you?" I breathe, gently, like she's a sparrow I could startle into flight.

"No one can ever know," she says, just as softly. Her shimmering gaze searches my face like a spotlight. "I mean it."

"Ah, chere ." Jae stops frantically scenting her neck long enough to voice a breathless chuckle. "Who will we tell? Who would ever believe, oui ?"

"I know how to keep a secret," I say gruffly, because isn't that the truth. "Pretty sure right now the whole school's one hundred percent focused on the fighting dragons in our front yard."

"Right." She sighs. "Dragon shifters in a rage beat my new power-of-flight parlor trick hands down. But it's nothing Zara can't handle."

Mallory's wings fold gently against her back. With a rustle, the feathers melt into the tattooed skin of her back and vanish.

Her entire body sags with exhaustion. Now the adrenaline rush is easing, she's crashing hard. Jean-Emilien too.

He almost fucking died.

If he did, he woulda taken my heart with him.

My arms clench around both of them, biceps flexing, until Mallory squeaks. I know

I'm crushing them, but I physically can't bring myself to ease up.

Hel. I coulda lost them. I came so fucking close to losing them.

Jae shifts his weight so he can wrap one arm around me and one around Mallory. After a careful pause, her delicate limbs fold hesitantly around both of us.

Clearly, she's afraid we're gonna push her away.

Like that's happening.

Ever.

But we'll deal with our whole relationship—because the three of us definitely have one, whatever the fuck she's thinking—later.

Gently, so I don't scare her off, I lay my big hand against her cold cheek. Under the flush of wind and excitement, nutmeg freckles dust her petal-soft skin.

I wanna kiss every one of them. This girl—this shy, smart, skittish creature, whatever she is—she's mine.

Ours .

It's the three of us now.

“What are you?” I repeat, before I lose my soul forever in her silver gaze.

“So, uh, that's kinda complicated.” She shuffles awkwardly in her moon boots. “I'm half mortal—just plain old witching race, my dad's clan Virgo, but with close to zero witchcraft. I'm also half Seelie, from my mom. She's pureblooded Light Fae.

Because the Fae... we're a thing."

"Fae, as in fairies?" I stare at her in raw disbelief. "Fuck. Me."

"We're a lost species. We're in the lore." Her shoulders lift in a meek shrug. "We've actually been hiding, camouflaged in plain sight among the normals for, like, a thousand years? Because the Dark Fae, the Unseelie, they're our mortal enemies. So they hunt us—"

Jean-Emilien bares his white teeth in a wolfish growl. "No one is ever hunting you or hurting you again on our watch, you."

"Well, that's the thing." Uncomfortably she shifts in our arms. My chest contracts with worry. Mallory's no íslendingar, and my girl's getting cold.

I'll smuggle them both into the domus, where it's nice and warm, in a sec.

I say smuggle, because they're both spending the night (and every night from now on) in my room and nowhere else, Academy Codex be damned.

"Go on," I urge, to keep our girl talking.

She bites her lip and glances around like she's afraid of being overheard. Jean-Emilien and I both tighten our grip and hold her safe in our shared embrace.

"Pretty sure the Dark Fae will be hunting me specifically," she confides at last, with an apologetic look at both of us, like she's really sorry to be such a bother. "The Dark Fae King stole my big brother Ash—the Seelie Prince—like, years ago. Straight up kidnapped him. Just whisked him away to Avalon. That's the Unseelie Realm. Ever since Ash vanished, my parents have been totally obsessed with keeping me hidden."

“Bon bagay,” Jean-Emilien murmurs in total awe. “The Fae. They’re real.”

I’m right there with him.

“Oh, we’re real all right.” Mal’s teeth sink into her soft lower lip. “Now that I’m coming into my power, I guess, I’ll be a whole lot harder to hide. And now that we know I’m apparently not a complete failure in the Light Fae magic department, there’s a much greater risk that the Unseelie will find me.”

Jae growls low and fierce in his chest. A meathead like me, I’m slower on the uptake. So I’m still piecing this shit together.

“If your brother’s the Seelie Prince,” I say slowly, “then...”

“Yeah,” she finishes in a whisper. “I’m royalty. The Seelie crown is matrilineal. It passes from mom to daughter, as long as the heir manifests the power. Otherwise there’s a whole ritual that happens—you know, to crown someone else. But there aren’t many of us left, we’re almost extinct, and I’m the only daughter of our house. So there hasn’t been a crowning since my mom. Now that I’ve claimed my wings—because tonight’s the first time I’ve ever flown—I think they’ll crown me .”

Her eyes lock on mine and cling, like my gaze is all that’s holding her up. I squeeze both of them, both my precious mates, into my chest till my arms ache.

And just wait for the rest.

Finally she pulls in a slow shaking breath. “As soon as the Seelie find out what’s happened, they’ll crown me, whether that’s what I want or not. I’ll be the Light Fae Queen. That’s when the Unseelie will come.”

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For the first time in forever, I finally feel warm.

Sometime during the night, I finally stopped shivering.

I'm pretty sure that's completely due to the fact that I'm smothered under an actual bearskin fur, tucked between Draco Mars and Jean-Emilien Labête, in Draco's narrow dorm room bunk. The three of us are literally pressed together like sardines in a tin.

Not that I'm complaining.

The fire Draco built last night behind the old-fashioned grate is still banked and glowing gently in the silver dawn. That heat is a reliable bulwark against the relentless winter cold that seeps through the thick stone walls of our ancient domus—the same deadly chill that froze the marrow in my bones when I flew.

Pearly light seeps through the leaded-glass panes of a tall arched window. That light chases the last shadows to hide behind the looming armoire where Draco stashes his uniforms and cross-country skis. Night still clusters in the cobwebby corners under the vaulted ceiling. More shadows skulk behind the antique study carrel with its inkpot and sloping lid.

That study nook is a fixture that's gathering major dust and looks sadly neglected. Everyone knows Draco never turns in his homework and consequently his grades at this Academy are in the toilet. Master Aries rebukes him regularly in class for not making an effort—to no effect. Jae follows a different class schedule and he's pretty secretive, but I've gathered his GPA also isn't stellar.

Suffice it to say, neither one of my two guys is on the Dean's List.

At least that's one solid way I can help them, in exchange for them helping me last night. These two are about to acquire a student tutor who's fully committed to their academic success.

Me.

But getting them through their midterms with a B average (my new goal for the coming week) is a task for later.

Right now, after last night's excitement, I bet I'm the only person in this entire domus who's even awake.

I mean, it's Saturday, so we're allowed to sleep in. Probably no one will even stumble into our communal medieval-era kitchen for coffee until Jae—who's on the Saturday breakfast roster—pads downstairs to whip up a pot of cafe au lait and a tray of fresh beignets, lavishly dusted with powdered sugar.

That's the Saturday tradition for our residential college. And it's a yummy one.

Speaking of yummy...

Still feeling sluggish and sleepy—which isn't typical for my kind in the morning, the Light Fae are early risers—I squirm under the coil of Draco's bare muscled arm, wrapped firmly around my waist from behind, like it's been all night. Then I lay a hesitant hand on Jae's sinewy shoulder in front of me. Fierce shifter heat radiates from the werewolf's tawny skin. He's curled on his side, but he's facing me. Under a scatter of beaded braids, his predatory face is soft with sleep.

I want to trace his high cheekbones and the elegant line of his nose. I want to nuzzle his lush lips, parted in slumber to show his wolfish incisors.

As this vision of kissing him whispers through me, a delicious shiver coasts over my skin and heats my face in a toasty blush.

That werewolf was inside me last night.

My thighs are still sticky from his seed, because neither one of these guys was even remotely willing to tolerate the idea of me taking a bath that would wash their scent off me.

Just another reminder that, thanks to this guy—the only Cajun werewolf east of the Greenwich Mean Line—and the glowering Nordic bad boy breathing heavily in his sleep behind me, I'm no longer the last remaining virgin at the Icarus Academy.

Nor are they acting like two guys who plan to let me wiggle out of our temporary arrangement anytime soon.

I can still hardly wrap my head around that concept.

Get a grip, McSnicker. Is it so hard to believe you're a novelty to them? Just enjoy it while it lasts. Probably won't be long. Now is not the time to freak out.

Right. First things first.

I need to get up before someone finds me. Mistress Aggie's a stickler for old-fashioned standards, so our house rules are a little Victorian.

That means I'm definitely not supposed to be here in the guys' wing.

I pull in a careful breath and start the process of extracting my body—swimming in my panties and another of Draco's borrowed tee shirts that exudes his bracing bergamot-and-juniper fragrance—out from under the plushy bearskin and the weight of my host's brawny arm

“Don’t even think of moving,” Draco growls into the back of my neck.

I suck in a gasp and freeze. Feeling sheepish and guilty as heck, because I was just in the process of ghosting him. And his boyfriend.

I gaze apologetically at Jae’s still sleeping face.

“I need to sneak out of here before the house wakes up,” I whisper.

Instead, Draco’s arm tightens around my waist and drags me back against his massive body with a sexy growl of protest.

Geez Louise.

The Eric Northman of the Icarus Academy is barely wearing a snug pair of briefs (which I have the feeling he only donned before bed for my sake, because he definitely wasn’t wearing any before I sucked him off last night). And the raw impact of those powerful slabs of muscle across his broad chest and hard abs and bulging thighs, all pressed against my back, is monumental.

Not to mention the jut of his increasingly interested dick. Which is currently nudging my backside.

We haven’t officially had sex—I mean, except oral sex, which we definitely had plenty of. But I don’t get the sense he intends to tolerate that official state of affairs between us much longer.

Especially when his big palm eases up my torso to wrap around my boob. Under his purposeful touch, my nipple tingles and rises and presses against the cotton layer of shirt between us.

His breath hitches in my ear.

I gasp and squirm, which only pushes my tushie harder into his boner. Before I can bite it back, a helpless little moan slips out of me.

“Hel,” he groans, thick and raspy, into my tumbled mess of hair. “You feel so good, Mallory. I swear to fuck, you have the most perfect tits.”

I snort out a surprised laugh, because I’m not what anyone would ever call well-endowed. I heard it a million times from the mean girls in the locker room at my sucky prep school. My butt is too skinny and my boobs are too small.

But what little curviness I have, the bad boy of the Mars clan mafia seems to be thoroughly enjoying.

“I have to get up,” I repeat firmly, for both our sakes. “If a hall monitor finds me in the guys’ wing, I’ll get thrown in detention.”

“Mallory. The only hall monitor who even gives a shit is you.” Draco’s big body quivers against my back.

I have the strong suspicion he’s fighting not to laugh.

“And what about Jae?” I demand, indignant about this hilarity over my completely legitimate concerns, but still extremely distracted by the way Draco’s kneading my boob and the thought of what else might be coming. “Jae has to make beignets.”

“Fuck the beignets,” Jae mumbles without opening his eyes. “Merde , what a night, eh?”

Against my back, Draco’s laughter subsides. Reluctantly he releases my boob (to my secret disappointment) and pushes up to sit. The lush brown bearskin pools around his hips in a very distracting way.

I roll onto my back and peer up at my host, appreciating the whole effect of his washboard abs and thick biceps and broad shoulders bunching under smooth Nordic skin. Not to mention the silver hair and glacial smolder I secretly think of as the Alexander Skarsgård effect.

The spiky North Star of the Mars clan tattoo glowers against his pec.

“You’re right about one thing, Mal,” Draco says abruptly. “You do need to hide. No one can know you’ve come into your power. That includes your kin.”

A prickle of alertness tiptoes through me. He’s talking about both the Seelie and the Unseelie, which is the other hidden race. The Unseelie—the Dark Fae—they don’t hide among the normals like my kind. The Dark Fae lurk behind a magical portal in the parallel realm of Avalon.

But the Dark Fae King... he knows how to pass through. That’s how he stole my brother Ash.

I push up to sit beside Draco and hug my bony knees tightly to my chest.

“Yeah, well I’m not planning to issue a press release on the Witching News Network,” I say dryly, trying to reassure myself as much as anyone. “I keep reminding myself we don’t have internet behind Academy wards and all our electronics are crap. Right now, no one knows about my wings except the two of you.”

“And that’s the way it will stay, oui ?” Jae snarls and rolls lithely onto his hands and knees in the furs. He slept naked and he’s already half aroused, his dusky cock rising from a nest of wiry curls, so the effect is extra distracting.

Focus, First Girl, I remind myself firmly. You need a plan if you want to survive.

“That’s right,” Draco says gruffly. “Keep this shit outta your letters home, Mal, you feel me? Keep it off the landline when you call your folks.”

I’ve already made up my mind to that.

I’m not about to tolerate getting yanked out of school halfway through my sophomore year and crowned, which is the first thing that would happen. So I lift a brow and draw my fingers across my lips to mime that I’m zipping my trap.

Draco studies me intently, clearly weighing my resolve, then dips his chin in a businesslike nod. “Good. That’s dope. Jean-Emilien and me, we’ll keep your secrets. We’ll protect you, Mallory. Same way you protected us last night.”

A sense of warmth and security (which is probably stupid, since I still barely know them) floods through me like a fever and makes my whole body tingle. My frizzy curls crackle around my shoulders. My wings ripple and flex against my back.

I gaze up at Draco’s looming frame and try to figure out when exactly I decided to trust him. Trust both of them.

Not only with my life and my secrets.

But with my heart.

Clearly picking up what I’m putting down, like the wickedly gifted telepath he is, Jae purrs like a swamp panther and crawls forward to straddle my hips. I can’t feel much of his anatomy with the bearskin between us. But he cradles my upturned face between his hard hands and stares fiercely into my eyes with his amber gaze. His bayou scent of patchouli and moss swamps my senses.

“You saved my life, you,” he breathes, all fixated and intense. “It’s like my amou told you last night. It’s the three of us now, chere. Your enemies, if they come, they are

ours to kill. You won't get rid of us."

"Lucky for me, I don't want to get rid of you," I say lightly. Because right now, that's my truth, and I've decided to own it. "But protecting me from my enemies... that's something else. That's actually asking a lot for the two of you to take on."

"Who's asking, hjartfólgin?" Draco snorts. "Shit's decided, you feel me?" His pale brows furrow in an uncertain frown. "Unless, uh, you're not into the two of us?"

There's my escape hatch from this unconventional relationship popping open. If I wanted one.

The thing is... I don't.

Besides, if I really am going to be queen of my kind someday—Queen of the Light-Born Fae—then I'll eventually need a harem.

But it's definitely early days for that kind of thinking.

So it's my turn to snort. "Yeah, no. I'm into you. Both of you. After last night, pretty much the whole school knows we're a thing."

Draco's worried brow smooths out. His lids lower and he sweeps my sleep-rumpled body, swimming in his own shirt, with a slow possessive stare that shimmers like the northern lights.

"Bon bagay ." Jae bares his fangs in a fierce werewolf grin. "Your bullies, they are history. Or I swear, my wolf, he will gnaw on their bones."

"Geez, no gnawing." I manage a wry grin for both of them. "Pretty sure, with you two looming over me, every bully in the school will back right off. Or at least, if they don't, I guess now I can fly away."

Actually, with my wings manifesting and my power emerging the way I'm experiencing, the Academy bullies now seem like the least of my concerns.

But even my lurking girlhood fear of getting stolen away in the night by the Dark Fae seems like a distant worry for a later time. With Draco Mars shifting around to situate himself behind me and settle me snugly between his spread knees, and Jae Labête crouching over both of us to exchange slow hot kisses with both Draco and me...

Oh my gosh.

These sweet, sultry, fangy kisses make my whole body melt in a goopy puddle of affection and arousal.

Yep. That right there's the feeling.

The feeling of me falling for these two.

Hard.

And maybe that feeling is enhanced by Jae's Valyrian telepath DNA kicking in. Because I have the strongest, strangest sense that both these bad boys are falling for me too.

I don't have any remaining room for doubt.

These two guys together will ruin me.

Me. Mallory McSnicker. First Girl on the Dean's List. Secret Queen of the Light-Born Fae. And one third of the newest polycule to roil the still waters of the witch academy.

Jae lifts his mouth from my tingling lips and grins into my dazed stare.

After a kiss like that, I need to reach down deep to find my resolve and reclaim my academic sense of duty.

But, somehow, I manage.

“I... can’t stay in bed with you two all day.” Do I even sound convincing? “I need to study... we all do... for midterms.”

“It’s early yet. Study later. Stay here with Draco a little longer, oui ?” my wolf breathes, low and husky. “I’ll bring both of you café au lait and beignets in bed.”

I’m smart enough to know when I’m facing a fight I can’t win.

“Okay. Wow. Guess that’s an offer I can’t refuse.” I settle back into the bulwark of Draco’s solid warmth with a sigh.

Admittedly, I’m not really trying to refuse.

I’m Little Red Riding Hood, I’m in bed with the big bad wolves, and I’m well and truly caught.

I guess this is my life now.

Time enough after breakfast... and whatever else... to coax these two with me to one of my all-time favorite hangouts—the converted choir loft that houses the school’s gothic library—so the three of us can study for our witch academy midterms.

Together.