

# Chapter 6

The estate that greeted me was beyond anything I had ever seen, a grand marvel nestled in rolling green landscapes, draped in the cascading blooms of roses and ivy. Luxurious patios, intricate balustrades, and dramatic staircases adorned its alabaster structure, sprawling so vast that the encircling woods seemed a distant frame. But beneath its awe-inspiring beauty lay an unsettling silence, an eerie stillness that hinted at the magical force keeping this land perpetually in spring, a stark contrast to the bleak world I had left behind.

As I approached the towering estate house, my captor—a faerie of formidable presence—led the way with the ease of someone returning to a familiar haunt. The doors swung open upon his approach, silently welcoming us into its opulent embrace. Inside, the spectacle of wealth and grandeur continued—marble floors, a sweeping staircase, doors leading to mysteries untold. Yet, despite its elegance, an undeniable air of menace lingered, reminding me of my precarious position in this faerie domain.

Pushing aside my swirling thoughts of escape, I found myself ushered into a dining hall where opulence met the surreal—an array of food so abundant and inviting, yet forbidden by every tale of old warning against faerie enchantments. My captor, transformed from beast to a golden-haired man donning an exotic mask, beckoned me to eat, his demeanor a complex mix of hospitality and underlying threat. It was a gesture of mercy or a cruel jest, I couldn't tell. His company was joined by another High Fae, Lucien, his appearance as striking as his disdain was apparent. Their conversation, laced with references to a grim event my hands had unwittingly authored, revealed my role in a tragic fate that had befallen one of their own, Andras.

Lucien's scorn was palpable, his words sharpening the air between us with the weight of accusation and barely concealed contempt. Yet, amidst this hostile welcome, a strategy unfolded in my mind: compliance mingled with an observant silence, awaiting a chance for escape. Regardless of their intentions, these faeries, for now, saw fit to grant me a semblance of guest rights, not prisoner's chains—allowing me a glimpse into their world of lethal beauty and intricate hierarchies.

Led away by Alis, a servant whose demeanor softened the rigid atmosphere left by the faeries' exchange, I was taken to quarters that spoke of luxury I had never known. The lavish care extended towards my accommodation, grooming, and dress did little to ease the deep-seated awareness of my vulnerability in this faerie realm. Despite the outward calm of my surroundings, the serene gardens, and the absence of open hostility, the undercurrents of danger were palpable, whispering of the precarious balance in which I found myself—a mortal amid the High Fae, navigating a path threaded with unpredictability and the shadow of unseen threats.