

# Chapter 1

## CELINE

The water is so calm in the mornings as it rolls in unto the beach. The sky a perfect shade of orange and purples as the sun comes up unto the left of me, over the ocean in the distance. It rises slowly, the bright light already starting to heat the earth once more.

It reminds of Lee, my Fire element, and what he said to me not long ago. About how the burning sun sets in the ocean for the night, and the water cools it—giving the earth a few hours of peace before it rises from the ocean again to heat the land. It has been days since I have felt his touch, our new bond, and I know it was time to return.

The breeze is coming from the direction of the sun is already turning warm. The wind touches everything, but he hasn't reached my waters yet. I am starting to long for Lindon also, my Wind element, and the connection I seek with him. Lee calls him seduction, and he is. How his winds touch my skin, sends sparks of electric currents all down into my body. It makes me crave the bond we need to form all the more.

But I can't forget Brier, my Water element, who is hurting. I have to find a way for us to join and to heal the pain inside of him. The pain Lee had caused him of which I wasn't even sure of yet. How damaged is he? I need to see him again so we can bond also, and he can find his powers once more.

Tate, my Earth element, has taken me away from all of them. I have cherished the few days we have been together and know we needed them. I realize now that our bond hadn't completed before as it currently is.

I have seen and felt the animal inside him. There is possessiveness that he has, and the animals fuel an animal hunger inside me also. It has been hard for him to share me with the others. Going against his nature was a sacrifice he made for me, and I love him for it. I love him more than anything, I think, at times. The connection I have with his animals is surreal, and I love making them purr.

He feeds me the fruit he makes, and it is the sweetest, most delicious substance on earth. I have ridden his animals in more forms than just one. His horse is so loyal and sure never letting me fall. The wolf takes me deep in the tropical forest on an adventure. The cougar that fed and hunted for me and purred as he lies beside me. But his favorite animal of mine was himself and a mixture of them all.

We have spent most of our days making love in his nest. He is both gentle and demanding in loving me. The beast inside shows itself a few times, and when it does, it makes me so much hotter for him. He has been ashamed of how he takes me sometimes. When the animals take control of him wanting their satisfactions, I don't mind as I want them all. Even when he bites me, I feel myself come to a climax so fast from the heat of its mark. He tries to keep control, but I long to feel those fangs of his sink into me and try to entice him more often than not into letting go.

Still, he isn't enough as my hunger is growing for the others. I have claimed only two of my elements, and it was time, I connected with the other two. I need them all, the sacrifice calling to me more than ever since bonding with Lee and now finishing my bond with Tate. It was time to go back to them. I need to complete the calling of the sacrifice.

I sigh as I feel the heat of the sun touching my body. Lee is on my mind this morning, and I feel the call for his touch. The fire inside me that is still burning from introducing him into my sacrifice still needs taming, and only he can put it out for any amount of time. Tate settles it, but it always flames up again. His powers are not strong enough because earth is a minor element. Lee was a major element like me, and I need one or the other for full relief.

Jacob, the Water element, Brier's cousin, had helped me through the sacrifice. He can cool me down even better than Tate, and we don't even have a bond. Brier should be the one to do that for me. If only I can heal him and we can bond, then I felt the fire inside me could be gone.

Jacob had almost taken Brier's place during the sacrifice as my Water element. Lee had shown up just in time, saving us from having to bond. Jacob was helpful, and I was attracted to his powers just as I was with Brier. When he kissed me that last day to cool me off, I had wanted more. It is wrong to want him when I have Brier, I tell myself. Brier is mine, and Jacob isn't. Brier is who I need.

Standing up, I walk into the ocean, the water moves around me, but doesn't push me with its force. It is welcoming, the connection I have with it strong even without my powers. One day I will swim and become a part of it, just like Jacob. How can he breathe and swim in it so fast? I have seen his powers, and it makes me long for mine even more.

I hear a splash in the water, and I am not alone any longer. The merman appears in front of me that had swum with Jacob and me not too many days ago. I had kissed him, not for pleasure but out of kindness. He is a lonely creature, I can see, and I wonder why when he seems to have a family.

"Hello," I say to him even though I'm not sure if he understands me. He comes closer, his gaze roaming over me. I have forgotten that I was naked until just then, but I don't try and hide now. His kind didn't cover themselves anyways, and it is too late for me to do so. "Where are your sisters?"

He doesn't answer, but I didn't expect him to. He lifts a hand and runs it along my arm. His touch doesn't scare me. I think he is just curious. Jacob has told me that he and his sisters have never interacted with a woman before me. That even though they were massive creatures, they were kind.

Something about him doesn't seem right, though. Like he didn't belong to the water. I don't know why I get this vibe from him, but it is there.

He comes closer and runs his hands through my hair, sliding it between his web fingers. He lifts it to his face and smells it. I watch him as he watches me, not sure what he wants, but I feel a connection with this merman. It's odd but I think there is something special about him.

He touches my face, bringing his close to mine and kisses my lips gently before pulling back. I see the pain in his eyes, and a tear runs down his cheek.

"Hey!" a shout from behind us, and we jump apart. The merman takes off seeing Tate behind me as he walks up to me. "Was that a merman?"

I smile at his look of astonishment and turn to watch the merman disappear in the water. Tate wraps me in his arms as I turn to him and say, "Yes, it was a merman. I met him a few days ago, along with his two sisters."

"And why did he kiss you?" Tate asks, pulling back as I try to kiss him.

"I think he is curious is all. Jacob says he has never been around a woman beside me."

"You're not thinking of taking him as a lover, also, are you?" Tate says, not looking too pleased.

“No, I am not.” I laugh at him. “I think I have enough of those.”

“Then why did you let him kiss you?”

“Because...I am curious about him. He is so beautiful, but he doesn't seem to belong here. I have a feeling he is lonely and sad about something.”

“He feels a familiarity with you. My ability to speak with animals shows me his feelings even though he is a water creature.” Tate tells me.

“What does he feel?” I ask, not thinking before Tate my could sense something from him.

“A longing for a woman.” He says. “Not for you but for someone who looks like you. Someone from his past.”

“Wow,” I say, smiling. Still, I wondered who the merman could have known and longed for.

“Are you hungry?” Tate asks me. “I have some fruit for us.”

“Yes. I am,” I say as I walk with him back onto the beach. We move to our nest, where Tate offers me a wide range of fruits. I pick the grapefruit, loving the sweetness of all his fruit, but this one the most.

We don't talk much as we feed each other. Pretty soon, we are squirting and rubbing the fruit over each other's bodies. Things start to heat up, and before I know it, we are coming to a passionate climax once more.

We lay in our nest, our bodies intertwined together as he kisses my shoulders and neck. I feel complete, the fire at bay, and the love of my life beside me. I drift off but awaken when Tate sits up and splits open another grapefruit. He offers me a piece, and I take it, sitting up too.

He is watching me as I bite into it, and I wonder what he is thinking.

“Why are you watching me so intently?”

“I like watching you eat the things I make for you.” He says with a smile. “It makes me think of all the fruit I will grow for you as you grow our child.”

I like the sound of that. Him feeding me as I grow round with our child. “And what about when it is Lindon's child that grows inside me? Will you still feed me the riches of your fruit?”

“You know, I will.” He says as he takes another bite. “I will always take care of you.”

“You do that so well.” I slide over unto his lap loving how he feels against my skin and how he purrs in his contentment. “Sara said I would know when I conceive. I'm not carrying a child yet, Tate. Would you like to try again?”

His hands glide down my back as he asks, “Are you full?”

“Not yet,” I say as I lean forward and kiss him softly.

“I mean with food, woman.” I like how he wants to tend to my needs. Tate was a provider, and he gave everything to me. His animals demanded him to take care of his mate as he puts me even above himself. I understand it is his nature to do so, but still, it is going to take me a little time to get used to it.

His powers invoked a need inside me also. They want me to let him lead and for me to follow. There is a need I feel for me to allow him to do so. I think that it may become a problem for us one day in the future. Because I am to be queen one day, and I will have to be the leader. I have no desire to make him follow me, though. If anything, I want him as my king.

“You fill my hunger, now fill my desires.” I kiss him, and he kisses me back as he lowers himself back on the ground pulls me over him.

In the last few days, I have seen two sides to Tate, making love to me. The soft side where he is gentle and sweet, taking me slow and bringing out all the pleasure in a way that makes me weep at times. I feel so loved in his arms—the need for us to be together as we love each other body and soul.

He also gets more aggressive at times, when the animals inside call to him to claim me. He doesn't hurt me, but there is a force that drives the passion not for just him but for me too. I am attracted to the animal inside him, the beast he calls it, and he is ashamed of its needs. But I am not. I crave his beast, liking when it knots me to him, his bite that sends a heat into my blood. I like drawing it out of him and hear his roar.

I raise and take his hard length in my hands and guide it to my body. Our eyes are connected as he slides easily inside me. I move on top of him, and I feel him restraining himself as I take possession of our lovemaking.

It wasn't as easy for him to let me lead now that the beast inside of him has come out. They like to control our needs, but Tate is ignoring them, giving me what I want instead. I don't want him to hide the beasts and draw them out as I grind myself on him. Still, he denies the call of the beasts, but I hear them growling in his voice. I know what he needs.

“Mate me.” I give the demand knowing he wants to go harder and deeper into me. I want him to take control, to feel his power.

He rolls with me in his arms, and comes above me, driving harder. He is letting his animals out not being able to contain them any longer. I relish in the call of them, their need driving ours. I hear the rumble in his chest as he moves faster, his knot starting to swell at the base and trying to push inside me. He holds it back as he always does.

“Knot me.” I plead to feel him locked inside.

“No.” His husky voice refuses.

“Please, Tate. You know what my body needs.”

He does, and I groan as a little pain comes from being stretched so. But it is quick, and the slight discomfort turns over into a pleasure of fulfillment as he strokes it now inside me. As we come, his teeth rack over my shoulder, but he refuses to bite me. I want it too, but don't push him. He still isn't comfortable with the beasts that drive our lovemaking sometimes. He doesn't like hurting me and doesn't see that I crave his bite. I want to feel the possession by him and his beast completely.

I am about to come, and I need the bite. To drive the point of my need, I reach up and bite Tate on his shoulder. He roars as he pushes hard in me, and I see his fangs appear just before Tate lowers them to my soft shoulder, and he sinks them into my flesh.

This warmth spreads through my body, not like the heat of the fire, but like a warm bath relaxing every muscle in my body. A warmth that causes sensations from our connection that can't be matched by another. I am his, and he is mine. The bite confirmed that for both of us and we both hit our climax.

“Why do you like it so, if you know it is going to hurt?” He asks me later as he is locked inside me still. He rained kisses over my lips and shoulder as he licks at my wound, healing it.

“A good pain,” I look at him and smile. “You need to stop holding back Tate from them. It is your nature, and I love every part of it.”

“But you are not an Earth element. I don't like treating you like some animal in heat.”

“I am in heat.” I chuckle at his statement even as I touch his face. “I told you, Love. Your powers affect me. I need what you feel whether it is you knotting me or biting me. Yes, there is some pain from it at times, but I don't feel complete without it.”

“I know you have told me, but I feel the beasts inside of me, and they are so strong.” He says softly. “I've lost control already with them when I lost you. I don't want to lose control while I am with you.”

“I promise, you’re not going to lose me again,” knowing he feared me disappearing on him again. “Never again.”

“Never again,” he whispers as he kisses me. We still have some issues to work out, but I have faith we will get there. Being separated from each other had an enormous cause and effect, that left us both with a need to be close to each other. It isn’t just his problem, but mine too. Now that our bond is complete, there is our obligation to one another not to be apart.

“It is time we return to the others.”

“I know.” He sighs as he holds me. “I feel the longing inside of you for them all. Besides, we still need to get you to the kingdom to break the curse if the queen will.”

“Don’t remind me that I will have to see her soon. I dread it so.”

“She breaks the curse; it will be your place to take the throne. You will rule your kingdom as you should have been doing for years now.” He says. “The kingdom needs a water queen, not a fire queen. It has suffered in her rule.”

“That life feels lost to me now. It has been so long since I have been around ordinary people. People who don’t see me as a monster.”

“I think it will become natural for you again. Besides, I will be there for you as I was before.”

“Yes, but taking the crown, I will also have to take a Water element as a husband. I don’t see Brier accepting that role easily.”

“Yes, Brier.” He says and tenses up. I feel the change in his body and turn slightly to look at him.

“I will have to take him as our king, Tate. I’m sorry it can’t be you.”

“I know that I can only be the second husband with your rule, Celine. But I feel like the first.”

“You are.” I pull away and turn to him, touching his stubby face. “You’re everything to me, Tate. You have always been the first in everything for me. My first friend, my first love, and my first husband.”

“It’s hard for me to accept the others, but I do so because I love you so much.” He kisses my lips softly as his hands run over my ass, pulling me closer. “I am still going to have to adjust having them around us. Now that our bond is complete, it will be a force I am constantly going to have to battle with.”

“It’s hard for you, I know, but we can do this. As long as you are with me, I know we can do anything.”

He smiles at me, “Me too. I love you.”

“I love you.” I kiss him passionately, showing him just how much I do love him, and he responds with the same passion, but he pulls back.

“Don’t go running to Lee when we get back,” Tate warns me. “I know you will want to, but the beast is not going to like it. I think it will be safer if you don’t touch him until after you’re out of my view.”

“What about Lindon and Brier?” I ask him. I felt a need for Lee even now in Tate’s arms. He was my husband now also and just as I crave Tate, I did Lee also. I was thankful at least that Tate understands that.

“I don’t know how I will react to them also. But I am not angry at them as I am Lee.”

“You will give him a chance like you said, right?”

“I am going to try. That is all I can promise. But it is going to take time for the beast to settle into it.”

“Thank you.”

We have fought over this several times in the last days. Tate has finally given in to letting Lee be a part of our bonds, but he didn’t have control of the beast inside him. I am going to have to be careful around him with Lee and the others.

“We should get ready to head back.” I slip from his arms. “How about we bath first, though.”

“As long as I get to wash you.” He says with a smile as he stands up and pulls me up beside him. “It is I who made you such a mess anyway.”

We walk up into the little spring of water, and Tate sits me down on a rock beside it. He kneels in front of me, spreading my thighs as he laps cold water over my sensitive folds with his hands. I lean back on my hands, allowing him to touch me as he likes, looking at me as he wants. Closing my eyes, I enjoy the feel of his light cherishes.

I feel him place his face between them, his tongue running over my thigh and look down at him.

“Tate. We just finished.”

“I can’t help it. You look so inviting.” He says, kissing me a little harder.

“We are never going to leave if you keep doing that.” Not liking that I have to push him back. His kisses there drive me into a frenzy, making me lose my mind. If there is one thing that Tate excelled in lovemaking, it is the way he kisses me between my legs.

“Okay fine.” He says with a sigh and backs away. His manhood is already starting to stand up, and I want to reach for it myself.

I like kissing him there. I love feeling his smooth flesh in my mouth, stroking it. He tastes like milky cream. Several times I have tried to bring the knot out with my mouth but haven’t been successful. I want to see what it looks like, how big did it get, but it seems that it is only something that happens when he is inside me. Still, I plan to keep trying, and hopefully, one day, I will.

We wash up and head back to the beach. We have nothing with us besides the clothes on our backs. Tate gives me a grapefruit as he walks over to his nest. I watch as he takes it apart.

“What are you doing?”

“I don’t want to leave our nest for other animals.” He says, still pulling it down and destroying it. I am a little sad to see it go. It is strange what he does, but I get a sense it is primal. Once he is done, he turns back to me and asks, “So what animal would you like to ride back on?”

Oh yes, that is a good question. “What kind of beast are you feeling today?”

“Honestly, going back, I feel more like a dragon, but that will not be safe.” He tells me.

“I will take the wolf then since he seems to be my favorite,” I say, messing with his hair. Tate’s wolf was massive in size, mostly white on the underbelly but dark browns on the top. He is big enough for me to ride and have a firm grip too.

“I knew you liked him best,” Tate says with a smile. “He is the one closest to my heart.”

“Then, I guess that is why I like him best,” I let him go as he moves back from me. He raises his hands and the shimmering light forms as it starts to swirl around him like magic. I watch as he takes the wolf form, his body moves quickly into another angle as his body bends and he goes down on all four. The clothing he has on disappears as fur grows from his skin. When he changes back into a man, his clothes reappear just as he was before. I haven’t asked him about that yet, and now it was too late again as the swirling light fades away, leaving his wolf form for me.

“You’re so beautiful,” I walk up to him and touching his nose. He rubs himself against me before laying on the sand and offers me his back.

I slip a leg over him, mounting the beast he is, liking the feel of him between my legs even in this form. I lean forward to his ear.

“I like riding you in more ways than one.”

He growls at me in warning, but it only turns me on more.

I laugh at him and say, “next time we make love, I get to stay on top.”

He shakes his head as he stands up. Oh, yes, I look forward to riding him next time. And I had plans to see about getting that knot out so I can have a look at it also.

## Chapter 2

Tate and I travel for a good while before I try to call to Lee with my mind. I don't know how close we have to be for him to read my thoughts, but I hope he is close enough to hear me. I don't want us to have a confrontation in front of the whole village. It isn't every day they have all the elements, mighty powerful ones, in their space. It isn't like I have had a positive effect on them.

A while later, I see four figures walking toward us as Tate slows down and stops. We are a good way from the village as I climb off Tate's back, and he shifts back to his human form. I see Lindon walking towards us. He has some clothing in his hand, and I smile, happy that he has thought to bring me some.

My clothes haven't been in the best condition since Tate, and I rode away. I have my torn shirt tied around me under my breasts well covered, but my stomach was still showing. My wrap-around skirt fairs better but is stiff with no soap to wash it the other day.

The others stay back, giving us a little distance, but my eyes are on Lindon as he walks with confidence to us. *Gods, he looks good.* His white shirt clings to him in the breeze, and his hair flows behind him in waves. He is tall, slender, and sure, making my pulse race a little faster.

"Take it slow, Celine," Tate warns, touching my arm. "I don't think I will have too much problem with Lindon. It is with Lee I worry about."

"I know," I bite my lip and a little frustrated at him. I know he couldn't help it, but I have a strong urge to kiss that sexy smile Lindon has on his face. I want to touch them all. It's like my body is going into heat for them. I feel a tingling in my limbs, the sensation of wind blowing fire around me. I have wanted Lindon for so long, and yet we have waited. The friendship we have built is vital to me. But something about Lindon is fragile, and I didn't want to do anything to harm him. Having him in my life is a gift, and I treasure it. I want all of him, but I didn't think he was ready for that yet.

"Wow," Lindon says as he stops a few feet from us. "Cherry, you are beautiful. I mean before when I saw you...I saw a change but now...you look radiant."

I'm sure I am turning red at his compliment. Out of them all, I feel the most beautiful in Lindon's eyes. As the Wind element, he has the power of seduction, and although he has not used it on me, I can feel his natural temptation when his eyes are on me.

"Thank you," I whisper, wanting so desperately to go to him. "Are those for me?"

"Yes," he says, snapping out of his gaze and holds the cloths out to Tate. Lindon's eyes swing back to me even as he speaks to Tate, "I have some for you also, Tate."

"Thank you." Tate steps forward and takes the clothes. Lindon and I can't seem to help ourselves as we continue to stare at each other. *Gods, the light seems to radiate around him.* "Celine, why don't you give Lindon a warm welcome you both deserve. I'm okay with it, I swear."

I don't hesitate to move forward, reaching up and taking Lindon in a huge hug. He feels so good I can't help the moan that escapes being in his warmth. A breeze flows around us, touching my body even through my clothes, and I know it is him. He fills a cool breeze in my center and rests there.

That is something I am discovering the more I am around them. Since bonding with Tate and Lee, my senses of my waters flow differently now. When I lived at the convent, there were no other elements around. My waters went dormant inside without someone like me. They would have woken up on my eighteenth birthday, if my sister hadn't cursed me, and lock them away. I hate her for taking them away from me. But if she hadn't, would I have ever met Lindon? I didn't think so.

Lindon sighs as he buries his face in my neck and hair. I feel him inhale my scent, and it reminds me of the first time we met when he breathed for me. It was the first time I had contact with another element in so long and the sensations of being touched by him, had sparked this desire I have for him. "You smell like fruit."

Maybe I did smell a little of fruit from Tate and our earlier play. I feel Lindon's lips lightly touch my sensitive skin along my neck and shiver with excitement as I cling to him harder. "Taste good, too."

"Okay, Lindon." Tate breaks in, and reluctantly, mine and Lindon's moment fades back to reality and what is going on. "Anything more than a hug right now is going to have to wait until I am not around."

"Still fighting those animal urges?" Lindon asks as he pulls away from me, looking longingly down my body like he wanted to taste more of it. "Cherry, you still look way too tempting in these ragged clothes. I take it Tate wasn't too rough on you."

"No, he wasn't," I say and feel myself turning red, gauging from the heat that rushes to my face. "How are Brier and Lee doing?"

"They have been keeping their distance from each other," Lindon informs us. "Lee moved into another hut on the other side of the village, and I have been staying with him. I figured once you two got back, Tate and you might want to stay at Brier's hut. He said he would stay with his aunt and Jacob."

"Thanks, but we can't stay long," Tate says. "We need to get Celine to her kingdom as we had planned. We have already taken to long."

"Yes, we do. Why don't you both change, and we will all try and sit down and talk about it," Lindon says as Tate hands me my clothes. "You wouldn't need a hand with those, would you, Cherry?"

"No, she doesn't," Tate growls at him. "Why don't you go warn the others to watch their distance, and we will join you all shortly."

"Okay!" Lindon exclaims and chuckles as he backs away. "Try taming that alpha a little more, Cherry. Or else it is going to be hell for the rest of us."

I give a soft laugh as I watch him go and turn to Tate. "He's right. You're going to have to try a little harder. He teases you on purpose, and you know this."

"I said I would try to control my urges," he assures me. "I was fine with Lindon, and you just now; its just...he is seduction and has a way with you."

"Tate." I take the time to wrap my arms around him. "He doesn't have your nature. I am drawn to that also."

"You are?" He wraps an arm around me. "Tell me how so."

"Well, I like the love we have and the way it makes me feel I am complete when we are together." I lean into him, nuzzling his neck. "I like the animals and how protective they are with me."

"Go on."

“I love how you are so gentle and take your time,” I say, running kisses up his neck. “And I love how you lose your control at other times.”

“I think I am about to now,” he says, pulling my face up to his and kissing me hard. His arms tighten around me, and he deepens the kiss before he pulls back. “Okay, we can’t do this now. Not when I am about to face Lee and what he did.”

“Later then,” I say, slipping from his arms.

“Let us go over here and change,” he says, pulling me to the tree line of the jungle. Lindon brought me a pair of pants with a white shirt. I slip them on, feeling how snug they fit but liking the freedom of movement they allow. It felt good to be in a pair of pants once more.

Suddenly, there is a swat on my backside, and I screech as I face Tate. “I am going to kick Lindon’s ass for bringing you those tight pants. He knows how I would react to them.”

“Well, I like them, and you’re going to have to get used to it now and then.” I hit him in the arm.

He growls and reaches for me, but I jump out of his grasp and run back on the beach, laughing. He joins me, and we walk down the beach to where the others are waiting. All play slips away as things become severe again.

Lindon and Lee are standing together; neither of them says a word as they watch us walk toward them. My heart is racing, thinking of how they are both mine. Lindon and I have not yet bonded, but I know our time is coming.

Memories of my time with Lee only a few nights ago is still fresh in my mind. Tate may have tried to force those memories away as many times as he loved me, but they are there. My connection with Lee and our bond was completed that night—making him first in that way. He took me in every way imaginable that night, cooling me from the heat of the sacrifice. I can barely contain myself from rushing to him. Remembering is making me hot and the fire returning in a rush to my core so fast, and strong I wince from it.

“Celine?” Tate says from beside me, feeling my hand tighten on his.

“I’m fine,” I say, not averting my gaze from Lee. He is moving towards me, his eyes locked on mine. I see the determination in them and the anger at Tate for taking me away from him.

*Lee, I have missed you, but you have to stay back for now. I know he can hear me, or else they wouldn’t have all met us out here. We will have some time later, I promise. I...I need you.*

He looks perplexed for a moment but stops. His gaze turns to anger as he looks at Tate.

*Please try and be civil with Tate. He is still a little wild.*

*I will show him wild for taking you away.*

I am shocked; I just heard his thoughts. I haven’t ever heard him before, but I am now.

*Please just give him a little time. I don’t want you two fighting over me.* I please to him, and his gaze turns back to me.

*Only, for now, my little Chaos. You don’t understand the hell I have been through.*

Does he know I hear him? Is he responding to me or just thinking about it?

I look over to Brier, who is with his cousin Jacob. I don’t understand why he is here, but I make myself focus on Brier. He looks stern and hard as usual. I wonder what he may be thinking of having Lee, his brother here. Things were not good between them, and I am not sure if they ever will be.

I wonder where Alice may be. Why is she not coming out with them? They brought Jacob, but if anyone didn’t belong, it is him.

Tate stops as we get closer, and we all form a full circle. No one speaks, but all eyes glance around and end on me. I guess it is my place to start talking but I don't have a clue what to say.

"Uhm...I know not everyone here is happy that I have taken Lee into our sacrifice," My pulse racing as I look around to them all before I look back to Lee. "In the time I spent with him, I came to realize how much he needed me and how important he was to me. I will not apologize for what I know is best."

Brier is the first to speak. "It is your call, Princess. Who you take to your bed is your right."

"Which I am hoping you will take me to next, by the way," Lindon says with a sideways, seductive smile. His teasing causes the fire to flare inside me again.

"Chaos, are you okay?" Lee asks, seeing my pain and steps forward. He must know they are all affecting me. I haven't been around them all at once like this, and my blood is boiling. I want to wrap my arms around each of them. To kiss their lips and feel their hands on me. But that is all going to have to wait.

"I am fine for now," I tell him, hoping he will stay calm for now. I need him to cool the fire inside me, but I am afraid if I go to him, Tate will not be able to control himself. "Tate has been taking good care of me. We came to realize our bond hadn't completed before, but it is now. He is a little protective of me at this moment."

*Gods, she is burning up. How long can she take this torture?* I am reading his thoughts loud and clear, and it is obvious he is worried about me. My heart aches a little more for him.

"Meaning, the animal inside me has claimed Celine in every way as mine," Tate informs them, and Lee turns to him. "He is not inclined to share, but I am trying. I think I need a little time still, so if you could all keep from touching Celine with me around, it will be for the best right now."

"So, I can't touch my wife even though she needs me?" Lee says, looking at Tate hard now in anger. "She is hot, and you can't cool her enough, even as we speak."

"I'm fine, Lee," I say, trying to calm him. *Please don't push him right now.*

*He needs to be pushed!*

"You dare to touch her right now, I just might shift and bite your hand off," Tate says, not backing down from Lee.

"Okay, you two, cool it," Brier steps in, and I am grateful. "We need to make haste and get to the kingdom and the queen. We can't do that until we have a plan, and not all of us can go."

"What do you mean we all can't go?" I ask him, surprised by this. As far as I knew, we all will be going, just as I need them all.

"Meaning the queen, your sister, wants him dead and me to do it."

"We know you can't kill me. The sister can plan it all she wants...don't mean it will take place." Lee says to Brier.

"Doesn't mean I can't," Tate says and growls at him. These three men are not going to make this any easier. I had to get control of all of them.

"No one is killing anybody," I say, placing my hand on Tate's chest and push him back. I have to keep a grip on him, or else he was going to attack Lee. It was one thing to say he would try; it was much harder with his beast being right in front of him. "Lee has to go with us. I can't leave without him. Not with this fire inside of me."

"We have come up with a solution for that," Brier says. "Lee will stay here until you have met with the queen, and she has broken the curse. He will then join you. Jacob will go with you to make sure you stay cool."

I look at Jacob, who has been quiet this whole time. He shuffles on his feet, looking uncomfortable at me. Why is he even here? He's not my element. He has no right to be making plans with us.

"No. I don't need a substitute when I have you four," I look away from Jacob and back to Brier. "I have been thinking about this hard, and if I am to take the crown, then we need to work on healing your powers."

"I will be staying here, Princess. I will not let Lee stay here otherwise." Brier says, crossing his arms.

"Lee is coming with me, and so are you." I step forward, having had enough of Brier and his attitude toward Lee and me. "I am tired of being separated from any of you, and I will not allow it any longer."

"Stop looking at her like that," Tate says from behind me.

"Like what?" Lee asks him.

At the same time, Brier is talking with me. "He can't go because the queen expects him to be dead. And I'm not going back and leaving him here with my people."

"But you must go. I need you, Brier, more than ever. You can't keep pushing me away!" I hear Tate and Lee in the background, but I am so mad at Brier right now for making plans without me, I can barely see straight.

"You think I am going to be yours after you have taken him?" He points at Lee, and I flinch. Everyone else falls silent. I deserved that and knew it was coming.

"I know you lost your powers because of something Lee did, but that doesn't mean they cannot be healed. The only way we are ever going to know is if you two will settle your differences."

"The only thing I want from him is to stay out of my life." He steps towards me, and Tate is by my side in a flash, his low growl warning Brier to back off. He does, turning to look back at me. "If that includes you, then so be it."

The air leaves me in a rush, and I hear Tate whine beside me like he is feeling my pain. Brier turns to walk away, and Lee is on him, his fist slamming into Brier's jaw. Tate reacts instantly, pulling me back and out of danger. The others give the two brothers some room.

Brier touches his lip, where it is bleeding down his chin. He looks to Lee and shakes his head, not believing Lee had done that.

"This is between us. Not her." Lee says as he circles Brier. "You've wanted this for days now. Come on, big brother. Let me have it."

"I would love to," Brier tells him as he moves around also. Both look like they are ready to kill each other as their hands clenched in front of them. "but if you use your powers on me, I'm not sure what mine will do. Nothing good for anyone, I'm sure you can imagine. Since you destroyed them."

"Who says I need my powers to kick your ass," Lee says. I want to stop them but knew I shouldn't. It was always going to come to this with them.

Brier must have taken Lee at his word because he attacks. He runs into Lee's middle; they both go sprawling in the sand. Brier slams his fist into Lee's side. Lee hits him back in the face again with enough force to knock him off. The next second, they are both rolling onto their feet. Brier attacks again, this time swinging at Lee's face. Lee ducks, punches Brier in the stomach once, twice, but Brier lands a blow to his face, knocking him away.

Back and forth they go landing hits, dodging blows, twisting around each other. The sand kicks up around them, flying all around. Tate pulls me back even more. Lindon and Jacob stay closer to them, ready to separate them if possible. But I don't see either of them letting up.

“You're just like him, as I am my father,” Brier says after they both come back up off the ground, and they take a moment for air. Both are bleeding, their faces, and hands. I want this to be over, but it doesn't look like it will end anytime soon. “Fighting over the same woman. Just like they did over our mother.”

“Your father let mine have her,” Lee says to him. “Just as you are.”

Brier charges at Lee with a roar, and the ground starts shaking. He shoves into Lee as they both go sprawling into the sand.

“Stop them!” Tate shouts, even as he is pulling me back.

“No!” I fight at Tate to get away, but he has me locked in his arms. “Lee!”

The ground cracks all around us, with Tate and me just outside the area. I watch as sand falls inwards and then a massive explosion as liquid fire shoots out straight up in the air.

I scream.