



CHICKEN STAR ROCKET PRESENTS

THE ADVENTURES OF WILL & KAT

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THE LOVELL KINGDOM





The
Capital



Renaissance
Tower



Farm
Country



Desert Land



Cherrybrook
Forest



The Golden
Peaks



Islands



Highland
Country



Frosteve
Forest



BlackHearth



Callahaven



Atlas Keep



Bellfay



Hart Care
Facilities



Freyport



Dragon's
Lair



Brightholt



Boundless
Caverns

CHAPTER
01:
INTRO TO
WILL &
KAT



CHAPTER 01

Dear reader,

My name is Will. I have been tasked to take care of Princess Kathrine. This has been my sole task since I was a young lad and her a young lass. It was never an easy task, mind you. Kathrine is many things but docile is certainly not one of them. No, she's kind, passionate, charming, witty...I haven't met anyone like her. She's desperate to help the world and takes a more...hands-on approach. She accomplishes anything she sets her mind to. I am documenting our adventures so that all may know of the good she has done.

We left the capital earlier this week and headed Southwest towards the desert region. We came across a mining village called BlackHearth that was having issues with the dwarf population. The dwarves are striking due to discrimination when it comes to food, manners, pay, and lodging. It blocked off many of the roads and none of the mines were functioning as they should. Kathrine invited the leaders of both respective parties to sit over food and drink. As the future queen, both parties agreed, although somewhat begrudgingly.

In a bar, she presented to them how much the two need each other for economic reasons and how much they could learn from each other culturally. She wrote up a pact where the dwarves wouldn't feel oppressed or under-appreciated and the humans would be able to co-exist and learn with them.

CHAPTER 01

Both parties hastily agreed to the terms and signed the pact. She congratulated them on their mutual agreement, and with thanks from all the townspeople--both human and dwarf alike--we left the town behind us.

Next, we were on our way East to a town called CallaHaven plagued by fungi creatures called Crimini Buttons.

Crimini Buttons are small, no larger than my knee. They aren't harmful, per se, but they travel in packs so it's never just one. As I'm sure you know, Crimini Buttons are attracted to places with rotting, dead things like cemeteries or forests so it's unusual for them to be in a place like CallaHaven.

Upon arrival, there was not a soul in sight except for the Crimini Buttons. It was spooky walking around a place that used to have a thriving life but currently had none. Some Crimini Buttons fled immediately as they detest that which is alive, but some flocked to us. For whatever reason, one really liked Kathrine. It climbed up her pant leg and settled in on her shoulder. She pet its little brown and white speckled head.

"I'm going to call you Buddy because you're my little buddy."

"I thought I was your buddy?"

"Will you will always be my buddy."

We wandered the town looking for any sign of life. She found horse tracks that were old. I found dust about an inch thick looking in from the windows of a house. Since no one around to object we peeked into the houses. No sign of life anywhere. The people didn't seem to leave in a hurry or in distress as everything was neat and orderly like you could move back in at any time. She had an idea to go where the Crimini Buttons population looks the densest. While I was wondering why I didn't think of that, we went to the highest point in the town to better view the Crimini Buttons. After about an hour, it seemed evident to us the Crimini Buttons were gathered around a willow tree in the center of the town.

CHAPTER 01

I dug around the tree with my own will-power and discovered a box of remains for Max: the best dog who ever lived.

In his grave was a note that said he died protecting the town from a werewolf and while he didn't have a single forever family, he did have the whole town as a family who loved him and misses him. We (I) carried the box to the nearby cemetery and put Max to rest. Kathrine sent news via raven that the ghost town, CallaHaven, SouthEast of the palace was inhabitable once more. Buddy went with his kind as they retreated back to where they came from.

As the raven flew away, we set up camp for the night. I caught us some fish in a nearby stream and cooked them by the fire. She set up a shelter for us. She yawned and I told her I would take first watch. This is a pretty normal day for us. Luckily, we didn't encounter anything too intense today. There's no guarantee for tomorrow though. Either way, if I'm with her, I don't think it'll be too bad.

Signed,

Will

CHAPTER
02:
ANOTHER
TOWN OR
TWO



CHAPTER 02

Dear reader,

My name is Will. I have been tasked to take care of Princess Kathrine. This has been my sole task since I was a young lad and her a young lass. Today she asked to read my first letter. Out of embarrassment, I said no. There's no way I can tell her how I feel when I don't think she feels the same...Right! I am documenting our adventures so that all may know of the good she has done. We heard Atlaskeep, a town on a ridge near the Cherrybrook Forest was having issues with terraforming giants and thus went North of CallaHaven to investigate.

Indeed, the creatures had started to tear apart the town. Trees uprooted and stacked. Rocks rearranged into a wall-like structure. The land flattened to meet their needs. The river dammed up. They were trying to establish their own town where one already existed without realizing what they were doing. Many of the town's housing was crushed.

Luckily, the townspeople had evacuated prior to the giant 'attack'. Before they could crush the local authority, I stopped one of them in their tracks by making a lot of noise and shooting a few arrows into the air. This caught their attention. We (she) explained we wish to peacefully exist with them but there is already a town here. The giants apologized and even aided the humans in rebuilding the town they were responsible for destroying. It didn't take very long as they could move a bit quicker on a larger scale than the humans. They promised to be more careful and offered to build alongside the human town. The humans were grateful it was all a misunderstanding. With the thanks of both parties and a toast in our honor, we were merrily on our way.

The next town we visited was BellFay cursed by a witch.

CHAPTER 02

BellFay was due East of the capital, through the Great Peaks, on the edge of Frosteve Forest. Popular for the local covens because a lot of resources for potions grew here. The curse caused sickness in people of all ages and stages of life.

As with many curses, there isn't much you can do once you have the curse. It had multiple stages that ultimately resulted in death. The first stage was cold-like symptoms like headache and fever. The second stage was nausea and personality alterations. The third stage was discoloration of nails, skin, and eyes. The fourth stage was death as a result of the total loss of humanity both for the victims and the people around them.

Kathrine and I searched for the witch suspected to cast the curse, offering to make amends in order to lift the curse. In all her intimidating glory, she appears out of nowhere and says she'll speak to Kathrine but not me, her black dress flaring out in a dramatic fashion. I couldn't just abandon my lady! Not after she...Kathrine told me it was ok. So I waited patiently for them to be done. They talked for such a long time...

When Kathrine came back, she said the witch would lift the curse from the town. The reason for cursing the town was a misunderstanding between the parties involved. She conceded that she overreacted. The townspeople thanked us and the witch gave Kathrine a knowing look. I thought it was weird but I couldn't wait to be out of the town, the witch gave me the creeps.

Tonight we had rabbit with herbs for dinner. Our shelter had a nice soft floor made of moss and hay. Something seemed to be bothering Kathrine so she took first watch. Sometimes, it's better to leave her to her thoughts and let her work things out so I may bring it up if it continues to bother her. As I fell asleep, I watched her expression darken as she gazed into the fire.

CHAPTER 02

I hope tomorrow will be better for her. She deserves to be happy.

Signed,

Will

CHAPTER
03:
HART &
COAST
FOR A
CURE?



CHAPTER 03

Dear reader,

My name is Will. I have been tasked to take care of Princess Kathrine. This has been my sole task since I was a young lad and her a young lass. And let me tell you, I have utterly failed. I don't know how, but my lady is incredibly ill. Over the course of this week, she has been feeling weak in both spirit and body and has just gotten worse and worse. Of course, I rushed her to the nearest doctor. Or at least the best nearest doctor, Dr. Julie Hart, owner and primary physician of Hart Care facilities located south of BellFay.

I have to be certain she is getting the quality care she deserves as the princess of this kingdom. The nurses thought I was crazy. I asked if they needed me to donate blood for a blood transfusion. I asked if she needed any organs and said I'd happily give mine. Good times. Then, I waited patiently in the waiting room. That is if you consider patient pacing back and forth in a state of somewhere between panic and concern and anxiety.

Goodness, reader, you must think I'm a sorry excuse for a knight. Joke's on you, I'm not a knight. Kathrine is the knight. Er-well, she's the one classically trained in combat. All I learned, I learned from her. No, I'm more her pawn, her plaything. Wait, those words have negative connotations so let me make it known: I am more than these to her.

Maybe some more good-hart-ed accurate words would be her best friend.

Now, I just sound arrogant which wasn't my intention either. Words are just not my strong suit today...

When she came out, Dr. Hart said we needed to make a potion out of dragon saliva, phoenix tears, and mermaid blood. Doc must have had something added to her coffee because those ingredients are stupidly rare.

CHAPTER 03

There hasn't been a dragon attack in a while, there are no mermaids in captivity, and Phoenixes are endangered. Dr. Hart suggested maybe some fresh air by the coast would be good for her.

So off to the coast we went. There's a beautiful fishing village called Freyport Southeast of Dr. Hart's office along the coast and we stopped there. It's normally a quieter, tranquil place but not today. Today there was a hoard of people. I asked one of the locals what was going on and they pointed me in the direction of a vendor. At the vendor's station are vials of red liquid. The vendor himself is a pirate. He wore clothes designed to protect him from the sun and light enough they would dry quickly if wet. His hair was long with beads tied with a bandanna to protect his scalp. He had no hook hand or peg leg but he did have a myriad of scars.

Now, piracy is technically illegal but unfortunately, you have to have proof they are a pirate and a pirate on land is unlikely to pirate anything. The pirate's name was Bailey GreyFox and he claimed to be selling mermaid blood. How convenient, maybe Dr. Hart wasn't crazy. We (she) asked for proof it was truly mermaid blood. He said to try a sample, everyone knows mermaid blood tastes like sea salt and vinegar. I try it and it indeed tastes like it. Kat pulls me aside and insists we free the mermaid from no doubt horrendous conditions. I concur. We spend the rest of the day not being suspicious. Her hair glowed in the sunlight and her eyes sparkled with the reflection of the water.

Once night had fallen, we sneakily pursued GreyFox. First, he went to a pub to get absolutely wasted. Then, to a bank to turn in his earnings from the day of trafficking. Finally, he led us to the Desert Oasis. Now, I know little about boats, but it looked like it had a top deck, a mid-deck, and a lower deck.

CHAPTER 03

"If the mermaid is going to be on that boat, she's probably going to be on the lower deck," she said.

She was right, of course. It was a pain to sneak onboard and search every room but make sure not to be seen or heard or there would be a hoard of pirates on us. I can only imagine what they would have done to Kat and I if we were caught. We--ok, she--are semi-famous after all.

After freeing her, the mermaid-whose name I can't pronounce because merpeople dialect is not meant for air breathers--gave us some of her blood as thanks. Mermaids can have natural healing properties if they are in water thus her wound healed rather quickly.

With a flick of her seaweed colored tail, she was gone from our sight, back to the depths below the surface. We stayed in The Captain's Arms inn that night with plenty of food and drink to boot. After all, it's not every day you rescue a mermaid from trafficking and Princess Kathrine comes to visit a Freyport.

Signed,

Will.

CHAPTER
04:
SLAYING
THE
DRAGON



CHAPTER 04

Dear reader,

My name is Will. I have been tasked to take care of Princess Kathrine. This has been my sole task since I was a young lad and her a young lass. And let me tell you, I think I have peaked. Today I killed a dragon BY MYSELF.

But I'm getting ahead of myself about the dragon.

We decided after getting the mermaid blood, our best bet would be to find a dragon's lair in the Golden Peaks and convince one to give us some spit willingly. Kat is great at diplomacy so it should be a piece of cake. The Golden Peaks run vertically through the Eastern part of the kingdom. Dragons country is in the Northernmost part of the Golden Peaks thus we headed Northwest towards the mountains to check out the various caves for signs of dragon life. We found a dormant volcano and sure enough, a dragon was sleeping soundly in a cave near the lava rock. Puffs of smoke rose from his nostrils with every exhale. He must have sensed our presence because one giant yellow, reptilian eye opened lazily.

"Go away," said he.

"Sir, we need some saliva," she said.

"Ah, no."

"We can pay you for it."

"Not interested"

"By order of the crown, we demand you hand over some saliva."

This did not bode well with the dragon. He shooed us away. We came back. Thus we engaged in battle. The princess fought valiantly but was picked up by the dragon and predisposed. So, I slew the dragon SINGLE-HANDEDLY with a stab through his chest and down his underbelly. Heck yea.

CHAPTER 04

"Good job Will," she said.

Acknowledgment of a job well done from the princess? Is it my birthday? But of course, I had to stay cool as I collected the saliva into a vial for our potion.

"Thank you, princess," I said.

Something was bugging me about the dragon. Normally we would have waltzed in, charmed the scales off of the dragon, and gotten the saliva willingly. You know, without the death of a magnificent creature who is sure to have friends. That night, we slept under a tarp near a warm campfire as rain poured from the heavens. I strategically waited until after she ate some food.

"Hey, can we talk about today?"

"What is there to talk about?"

"Well, we killed a dragon today."

"Yes you killed a dragon, I congratulated you. Do you want more praise for saving my life?"

"No! That's not what I meant to say."

"Then what did you mean to say?"

Silence ensued and boy was it uncomfortable. I searched her face much like I was searching for the words to say. Her expression was fierce and intimidating, showing every bit the ruler I can see her being one day, while she waited for my answer to her question. I looked away first.

"I guess what I'm trying to say is...are you ok?"

"Of course, why wouldn't I be?"

"You just seem off these days...I mean--"

I cover my mouth with my hands. Shouldn't have said that. She gives me an inquisitive look. Then...

"You're right, I have been feeling off. I'm sorry for acting a bit more critical and not as diplomatic as usual. I don't know what it is but I appreciate you recognizing it and being willing to talk to me about it. Good night."

CHAPTER 04

“Good night, let me know if there is anything I can do to support you.”

Well, I don't know if that ranks in my top ten best conversations with the princess but it sure was something.

Until next week,

Will

CHAPTER
05:
BRIGHTHOLT
&
THE BLACK
MARKET



CHAPTER 05

Dear reader,

My name is Will. I have been tasked to take care of Princess Kathrine. This has been my sole task since I was a young lad and her a young lass. I woke up this morning and the princess was nowhere to be found! A stranger with pitch-black eyes and hair was at our campsite.

"Good morning Will," she said.

This woman had the voice of my princess...

"Princess?" I ask tentatively.

"Obviously, who else?"

"Sorry princess you just don't look like yourself."

"What do you mean I don't look-- oh my"

She looked at her reflection in the river we were camped by and let out a gasp.

"We need to find the last ingredient to the potion." She says, hastily packing up camp.

We headed southwest towards Brightholt, one of the major cities of the kingdom. By mid-afternoon, we're passing through the iron city gates. We (I) begin to gather all the street knowledge I can ask where the nearest bazaar was or if anyone knew of any phoenix breeders or if the black market was in town. We go to the bazaar which is pretty packed as people are hustling and bustling about to get food and other things.

Vendors are shouting out what they are selling. Dates imported from the coast, jewelry, pottery, clothes, berries. This brings back memories. The princess is looking at some clothes that would look absolutely amazing on her (although that's how I feel about all clothes). I spotted a few people duck into a large building that seemed kind of sketchy. I tap her shoulder and we head inside.

CHAPTER 05

Inside there was a restaurant that had far too few customers for the number of people in the restaurant. Excellent, we've found the entrance to the underground black market. It changes location all the time and relies primarily on word of mouth to enter. You can buy pretty much anything here. Stolen goods, secrets, rarities, slaves...We gave each other a subtle nod, split up, and waited.

A lady built like a gladiator entered the place. She asked to give her compliments to the chef in person and was led to the kitchen. We waited. I went first, asking to pay my compliments to the chef in person. I was led into the kitchen, past all the chefs, and down some stairs. The place housing the black market was dimly lit with some overhead lights. I could hear the auction in the distance. My skin crawled and my legs shook.

"Will? Will!"

The princess was standing in front of me, her hands cradling my face, forcing me to look at her.

"It's ok. You're ok. I'm here."

"Right, sorry, I'm back. Let's go get your phoenix."

We wander the rows looking for a Phoenix staying away from the auction. No luck. With nowhere else left to explore, we head towards the auction. My feet felt heavy with every step going from stall to stall.

"Sold for \$350!"

No Phoenix here. The last stall, directly in front of the auction. A young boy in chains is dragged to the stage. The lady running the stall was small and grandma-like but seemed to have an edge to her. At last, we found the Phoenix breeder.

"Do I hear \$100?"

The princess talks to the breeder. The boy on stage looks like all the life has been sucked out of him. It is a look all slaves master so they can seem complacent, obedient, valuable.

CHAPTER 05

"Sold!--for \$200--to that woman in the back. Please come to collect your new pet."

A woman emerges from the crowd and takes the boy. I see the money exchange hands. The woman and the boy make their way toward me. The princess..?

"Can you stand with my companion here for a few minutes? I need to finish my other business deal."

The boy sits at my feet, not looking at me. His face is dirty but he looks healthy.

"What kind of masters are you?"

Tears well in my eyes. I crouch down to his level acting like I'm going to fix my shoe. I pull up the hem of my pant leg. The boy's eyes widened.

"The best kind," I say, fixing my pant leg.

I motion for him to keep quiet. The princess rejoins us with a covered birdcage. She wipes away my tears and we exit the underground black market. Our first stop: an alley to free the boy from his chains. We feed him and give him a change of clothes. Then we go Northwest to the capital and hand him over to the orphanage.

At least there, he won't be a slave, he'll be able to have friends and an education. The capital's Hope Springs Orphanage has a 98% success rate so far in either adoption or cultivating the youths they raise to be successful in whatever passions they pursue.

We come back to the castle for the first time in a while and head to our rooms to clean up. Then I go to the princess's room and hug her.

"Thank you."

"For what?"

"You didn't have to--and we were there for--"

CHAPTER 05

"When I am queen, it'll be one of the first things I'll tackle. Plus, I remember the day we found you."

"It was the best day of my life."

"Well, I don't know about you, but I'm tired and we have quite a bit to tackle."

My face must have given me away.

"The breeder had no information on how to make the Phoenix cry so starting tomorrow, we research and experiment."

I yawned and headed off to bed. Camping out is fine but there's something about sleeping in your own bed, y'know?

Signed,

Will

CHAPTER
06:
PYRO,
RESEARCH,
AND NEW
LEADS



Dear reader,

My name is Will. I have been tasked to take care of Princess Kathrine. This has been my sole task since I was a young lad and her a young lass. We have been researching phoenixes all week. Pyro, the Phoenix she bought from the black market, has settled in nicely.

For a bird that is stupidly rare, there is a heck of a lot of information on them. What's difficult is that the information can be contradictory at times because of language translations, incomplete texts, etc. I feel like I'm about to lose it if I have to read one more page on the nature of a phoenix.

Over the course of a month, a Phoenix starts as a hatchling, grows to a full-fledged adult, sets itself aflame which destroys the body to ash, and rises from the ashes and the cycle begins anew. When we got her, Pyro was in the hatchling stage and is now a full-fledged adult. She has beautiful red and orange feathers with black and blue tips on her wings and tail. Around her eyes are small black speckles. Honestly, one of the prettiest birds I have ever seen. Pyro has bonded with the princess. She's warm to me too but... every pet has their favorites.

"Please Princess, I need a break," I say giving her the puppy dog look I knew would win her over.

She gets up, Pyro flying from her shoulder, and I follow her. We walk out of the castle's library and into the town. The sun's setting, it was beautiful, filled with oranges, pinks, purples, and yellows. We walk past the museums, the theater, the public gardens, the inn, and the school. All the way to the Clumsy Knight tavern on the outskirts of the capital with Pyro in tow. We walked up the wooden steps, I opened the door for her, grabbed a booth and ordered the house special.

CHAPTER 06

We started talking, laughing, having a good time, the weight of our recent endeavors lifted momentarily from our shoulders.

Since it's on the outskirts of the capital, all sorts come into this bar. Some were shady folks leaning close together talking in hushed voices. Some were drunk folks singing and being rowdy. Others were weary travelers getting a pint before heading to the inn.

A beautiful lady came in from the night and sat at the counter. She ordered a cocktail of some kind that was red and came with an orange peel spiraling off the side. A cowboy came and started talking to her, probably trying to sweet-talk her. He was good-looking I guess but gave me the feeling he was more of an outlaw than a cowboy. I looked back at the princess and she was gone. Maybe she went to the bathroom? That is until I heard her distinct voice.

"Don't drink that."

"Why not, I paid for it didn't I?" She said

"Yes but Romeo here put a potion in it."

"Listen here Miss, someone ought to have taught you to keep your mouth shut." He says coming close to her.

With a battle cry, the princess tackled the man, pinned him to the ground, and started to beat the crap out of him. Her fists were flying, her hair was poofing out, her eyes filled with fury.

"And you," she said, "should learn to respect women."

I don't know why I couldn't move until after she said that. I pulled her off the man, we paid for our tab and left. The beautiful lady ran after us and thanked us, asking if there was anything she could do to help. Her name was Annabell Lee.

"Not unless you know how to make a Phoenix cry," I say.

"I may not, but I've heard of a book hidden in caves north in the highlands that specifically says how to make a Phoenix cry."

We parted ways and headed home.

CHAPTER 06

"Kat, you almost beat that guy half to death."

"Yeah, wasn't it awesome? I saved that girl from a terrible fate!"

"You did but, we could have reported him to the authorities."

"Will, I AM the authorities."

"Not yet officially. But that also doesn't give you the right to beat someone up. You are not above the law. If word got out--"

"Relax, it'll be fine."

And thus we returned to the castle and settled in for the night. Nothing else really happened but hey, at least we have a new lead.

Signed,

Will

CHAPTER
07:
KATHRINE
&
RENAISSANCE
TOWER



CHAPTER 07

Dear reader,

My name is Will. I have been tasked to take care of Princess Kathrine. This has been my sole task since I was a young lad and her a young lass. It's never a good morning when someone is screaming first thing. It's Princess Kathrine, escorted by guards. That's not good.

They drag her kicking and screaming to an enclosed carriage. I hop on because there's no way I'm leaving her side since I know I can't stop what's going on. Pyro is on my shoulder.

We go North through some dense farmland to a clearing at the start of the highland country.

Renaissance Tower, a 25 ft tall stone tower stands here.

The carriage stops and Katherine is dragged inside. We climb the spiral staircase, the guards open the steel barred door, Kathrine is motioned inside, I go in with her, the guards close and lock the door. The room is round with a bed and a barred window overlooking the highlands. A pulley system is attached outside the window so the guards can deliver food, water, and other supplies to the princess. Pyro perches on the bedpost.

"So... I don't want to say I told you so but..Honestly, what did we expect?..." I start to babble on and on utter nonsense about morality and how she should think about her influence and her future.

"Will...Will?...William!"

She grabs the collar of my shirt bringing my face close to hers.

"Focus. I need you to do something."

Kathrine definitely had my attention... and she let go of me. One day I'll...focus!

"I need you to go to the Boundless Caverns and find the book that has the information to make Pyro cry. Then I need you to make the potion. You need to hurry because I'm running out of time."

CHAPTER 07

"What do you mean you're running out of time?"

"Remember when we went to BellFay with the witch and we saved the town from the curse?"

"You didn't."

"It was the only way I could appease her enough to remove it from the town. I didn't know what else to do."

"That's a load of poppycock...You could have told me, we could have persuaded her... something! Well, we can talk about this later. Right now, you get to be a typical princess and I get to be a typical knight."

Kathrine smiled, her teeth looking more fang-like than normal.

"Hurry, this curse removes all traces of my humanity when it's done. Right now I'm apathetic, who knows how I'll be when you get back--that is--if you aren't too late."

I leave Renaissance Tower as fast as I can. I go back to the castle for some supplies like the other potion ingredients and my weapons and my medkit and high tail it out of the capital.

The rest of my week was spent scouring the Boundless Caverns--which are along the coast of the highland country--for the book like a madman. I didn't sleep much. I ate enough to sustain myself but my meals were on the go. If I wasn't panicking, it would have been a beautiful sight. Everything was so green and there was a waterfall...

Do not fret, I found the stupid book. It's called 'How to Make a Phoenix Cry: a Series on Phoenix Care'. It was in the northernmost cave behind a secret wall that I had to solve a cipher to get to. I only found it because it was the only cave with crazy symbols carved into the limestone. All the others were only drawn on, probably to fool the fool crazy enough to pursue the book. There also may or may not have been booby traps. Either way, it wasn't nearly as much fun without Kat.

CHAPTER 07

If you are reading this from the tower, I'm on my way back now and I promise I'm going to save you. Hang in there.

Signed,

Will

CHAPTER
08:
SHE IS A
BEAST
WORTH
SAVING



CHAPTER 08

Dear reader,

My name is Will. I have been tasked to take care of Princess Kathrine. This has been my sole task since I was a young lad and her a young lass. I get back to Renaissance Tower with the guide 'How to Make a Phoenix Cry: a Series on Phoenix Care'. The guards let me up with a quick warning that it might be her time of the month. I suppress my comment about how it's not her time of the month. That would be in two weeks and it wouldn't be my first time supporting her in that season...either way, clearly they have no idea what's going on. I reassured them she would be fine and so would I. They locked me in.

The room was darkening as the sunset with purple and blues. I light a few lanterns and place them strategically around the room. Kat was eyeing me and I didn't like the look in her eye that said she wanted to tear me apart.

Somehow in the week, I've been gone, she's started to look more beast than human. She's covered in black fur, her eyes look more primal, she's sprouted a snout and tail, she's grown to be larger than I in stature which hasn't happened since before puberty.

"You got the book?"

I hold it up. Her expression remains neutral. We read the book together by candlelight but it was a little difficult. She had absolutely no interest in reading the book and was criticizing my reading. First, she couldn't see the pages. Then, it was the way I read then... It all just piled up. It's just the curse I keep telling myself.

According to the guide 'How to Make a Phoenix Cry: a Series on Phoenix Care', Pyro must witness a brave sincere act in order to cry. I don't even know what that means and we are running out of time.

CHAPTER 08

Kat prowls the tower floor pacing back and forth on all fours.

"I don't even know why I bought that stupid bird anyway. I should just eat it."

"You bought it because we are going to cure you."

"Why do you even bother? Don't you see, it's too late for me? That any minute I'll completely give in to these primal instincts and kill you? I'm not worth saving."

"How can you think that? Kat, you are not defined by your curse. You are kind, beautiful, generous, spunky, hardworking, diplomatic, and my best friend. I have loved you since you rescued me 13 years ago. I have continued to love you since then. That doesn't mean you are perfect by any means. You can be bossy and intimidating but your flaws make you all the more human. You have shown me what a wonderful person you are, anyone would be lucky to meet you, nevertheless know you as I do. It has been a privilege to be by your side for all these years, you are going to make a fantastic queen one day. So understand I can't just sit here and listen to you talk that way as if you aren't worth it...because you are."

I can't believe I just said that.

Pyro flies over to me and puts her beak on my cheek. Tears stream down my face. I grab a bottle capturing the Phoenix tears. I look at Kat waiting for a response. Instead, a massive paw with claws swipe towards Pyro and I. I dodge and grab my weapons. I squeeze Pyro out of the tower through the window and into the basket outside. With a snarl, the monster that once was Kat is on the hunt now. She pounces, I dodge. I need to make the potion. I get her to crash into the bed, destroying it. The pillows, blankets, wooden bed frame, and fabric canopy go everywhere. She pauses as though the crash bothered her. I grab some fabric.

CHAPTER 08

Next, I jump on her back. She starts bucking trying to get me off. Then, I wrap the fabric around her neck to hold on. She stands on her hind legs and I jump off as she slams up against the wall. I grab the fabric and tie a knot around her front paws. This slows her down but she's still in hot pursuit. I narrowly dodge her as she slams her head into the wall. I grab another piece of fabric and tie a knot around her back paws and pin the fabric to the floor with a few arrows.

She's growling and snarling in my general direction but I don't have time to dwell on the fact this is the worst response to a confession I can think of, I need to save her life. I grab a bowl and mix the Phoenix tears, dragon saliva, and mermaid blood. The smell is pretty bad, the consistency is worse.

I only have enough of the potion for one shot.

I transfer the potion to a vial while I think of a good way to do this. She has broken free and is especially angry at yours truly. I start running around trying not to die and get some time to think. You'd think the guards would hear what's going on and come help but no.

"Please Kat, I know you're in there. I really don't want to hurt you."

As an inhuman screech came from her, she pounced and I didn't dodge in time. She's got me pinned...well most of me. My sword hand is free. Saliva dripped from her jaws as she hovered over me. It lands on my face. She goes back, the moment before she goes for the kill.

I swing my sword. The snarls stop. I stabbed her through the chest. Tears stream down my face. I quickly moved out from under her. Her body has started to revert back to its original form and I see a flash of her former self in her eyes as she closes them. I position her on her back. I pour the potion down her throat, forcing her to swallow.

CHAPTER 08

The medkit, where is it? There it is. I find bandages and dress her wounds. She has not stirred. I try to check for a pulse but my hands are shaking as the adrenaline catches up with me.

Conveniently at this moment, the guards come in to see me bent over the princess's lifeless body.

"This isn't what it looks like. Well...maybe it is."

"William Chance you are under arrest for at the very least assault and at worst murder and treason. Anything you say can and will be used against you."

I hold my wrists out as the guards place a pair of shackles on my wrists.

One of the guards stays with Kat while the rest get on their horses. I was hooked up to the central guard's horse so I could walk behind with a couple of guards behind me. I swear this trip was shorter when the princess was taken here.

Upon entering the city gates, the people recognized me and I guess word travels fast. Rotten food, mud, and insults were launched at my head. I don't remember receiving this much abuse since leaving my former life.

We passed Hope Springs Orphanage.

"This is how you repay the person who rescued you from a life on the rack? Who gave you a new way to live?"

I don't say anything. What can I say to that? They don't know she's not dead. They don't know...

We pass by the inn and Annabell comes out.

"I thought you were going to help her and that you respected her. Haven't you learned anything?"

Once again, I have nothing to say. I swallow and the shame and guilt and grief go down my throat and settle in my stomach and chest.

CHAPTER 08

We get to the foot of the castle. I'm tired and it's been a long day.

"The king and queen will see you now."

Crap.

I enter the throne room and kneel before the monarchs.

"Will, you are like the son we never had. We want to hear what happened and give you a fair trial. We have been reading your letters and thus have a general idea of what may or may not have happened. That being said, we can't let you roam free while we sort things out. The people would riot. Therefore we sentence you to indefinite jail time in the dungeons."

"Thank you, your majesties."

The guards help me to my feet. They guide me to the dungeons. The barred door of my cell slams shut. It sure is dark down here. I watch the guard walk down the long stretch of the hallway. Well, dear reader, I guess I really failed in my task.

Signed,

Will the convict in the cell at the end of the hall.

CHAPTER
09:
A NEW
MONARCH



CHAPTER 09

Dear reader,

My name is Will. I have been tasked to take care of Princess Kathrine. This has been my sole task since I was a young lad and her a young lass. I ultimately failed. It's been a few years since I've written, sorry. Some of it was partly because I was in jail for three months, six hours, 20 minutes, and 23 seconds with no pen or paper, but who's counting? Certainly not me while I waited for news from a monarch. The other part was how busy it got after I was released.

The monarchs retired, a new monarch was crowned. Mythical people were recognized as a sub-community and leaders were appointed by each species so they could feel represented in the government. The leaders and the monarch met to establish treaties to allow for the Mythicals to feel respected in the communities they are residing in. Ultimately, all the Mythicals agreed the monarch was best suited to rule over all of them. The dragon I killed was given a proper funeral by his kind in the Golden Peaks.

Slavery and trafficking were outlawed. The black market closed but BRIGHTHOLT is busier than ever. No one missed the black market once the monarch offered rare items to be sold in a market with security twice a month.

Pirates are no longer illegal. The monarch also worked something out with the local pirate population: the monarch will pay any registered pirate ship and crew if they go and explore new lands in a respectful way. The pirates get to explore the seven seas and new worlds to their heart's content. The kingdom gets to make new friends and interact with new cultures. Often times the pirates will come back with gifts for the monarch whether books for the ever-growing library or food or other things.

CHAPTER 09

Sometimes foreign places send diplomats to come to learn about us too.

Our citizens are smarter and making smarter decisions which is amazing. The monarch recently opened the Discover Science Center and Laboratory to conduct research and to cultivate the minds raised in education. Hopes Springs Orphanage and Pleasant Valley School has boomed since the abolition of slavery. Logophile Publishing Company opened next to the Great Library and I'm thinking of publishing my letters. The head guard opened the Leonidas Training Center for those who want to join our forces. They offer a wide variety of fitness classes for everyone if you are looking to get in shape too.

In the mountains, a bunch of shepherds has popped up and now they are famous for their wool and fur. For Cake's Sake Bakery opened up recently and their cupcakes are to die for. A few conservationists banded together to create a conservatory for some of the rarer Mythicals and to help out any injured creatures found. They call themselves Pyro Sanctuary after Pyro who is still alive and well. She was rescued shortly after I was imprisoned. Bright Horizon Bank has opened recently because business is booming. In summary, the kingdom and its inhabitants are thriving.

As for me, I have acquired a few new roles. I still get to adventure quite a bit as the companion of the monarch. Also, I was pardoned of all my crimes against the crown which is pretty cool...

Recently, I started dating someone. I wish I had time to talk about her but I need to go. Before I send this off, I can at least tell you her name: Kathrine.

Until next time,

Will

DEDICATION
& LOOKING
TO THE
FUTURE



DEDICATION & LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

This book's dedication is to many people but first and foremost to my mom who read the first draft and my friend who let me read the story aloud to her and gave me the idea to make an audio book. Thank you both for your support, I appreciate you both <3.

Also,--in all technicalities--to my first ex. When he broke up with me, I wrote the love story I wanted to read. The one that is a little cheesy but ultimately ends in happily ever after. I wanted a love story where the princess is not always the damsel in distress, she has her stuff together 95% of the time. Where each of the love interests gets to be wholes who choose to stay together not because they need each other but because they want to. I wanted Will to recognize Kat isn't perfect but to choose to love her all the same.

In the end, Will and Kat save each other which shows they ultimately have each other's backs.

This is the first short story I've finished and am actually content with. All the other short stories I've written were too dark or gritty.

So thank you my first ex for giving me the experience of a relationship and breakup because, without it, I wouldn't have been able to write this story. I didn't love the experience...but who would? (Just to be clear, this story is not a reflection of my ex or the time we spent together. I ultimately wrote this story for myself. Lastly, to you, dear reader. Thank you for reading my book! You've stuck it through until the end and I appreciate it.

DEDICATION & LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As for the future of Will and Kat...I may continue the series with some one-off type adventures. I have lots of ideas and they *could* travel to new lands. I don't know if there will be a continuation or a sequel to this story. I'm open to it but we'll see...

So to the Princess Kathrine's out there, keep kicking butt being a diplomat and use your powers of influence for good. When the curse within you rises, recognize that's not who you are at your core.

To the young William Chances out there, everyone is human, even yourself. You are not bound to the burdens of your past so have courage.

Thank you for reading "The Adventures of Will & Kat" as well as this dedication author's note combo. I appreciate you.



THE END

