Summary

Royalty AU Where Nico and Will are the sons of two powerful kings and are being forced to get married. Will is quickly smitten with the tiny, dark prince. Nico refuses the arranged marriage and absolutely resents gorgeous, tall, goodnatured, kindhearted Prince Will. However, his attempts to be angry are futile because he finds himself warming up to Will. Friendship ensues with Will attempting to romance Nico (with help from the one and only Apollo) and Nico trying to push back their approaching wedding. When a problem arises, Nico and Will are forced to take up leadership to keep the peace and they realize they may be all wrong about their feelings.

Notes

Writing this chapter was a marathon, but I finally finished it. Yay! I'm new to writing fan fiction, so feedback would be greatly appreciated. In the next chapter, there'll be more Will and Nico interactions and we'll see more of the lovely Apollo.
Are Those Wedding Bells I Hear?

Pairing: Nico Di Angelo/Will Solace

Fandom: Percy Jackson and the Olympians/ Heroes of Olympus

Time Frame: N/A

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Are Those Wedding Bells I Hear?

The world was split into twelve major realms after Lord Kronos the Tyrant was killed. The Sky Realm is ruled by Lord Zeus and his wife Lady Hera. The Sea Realm, ruled by Lord Poseidon, exports seafood, ships, and horses. The Underworld or Jewel Realm is ruled by Lord Hades. The Agriculture Realm, ruled by Lady Demeter, cultivates the crops and livestock that sustain the other realms. The Hunting Realm, ruled by Lady Artemis, is composed mainly of forests and wildlife. The Wine Realm, ruled by Lord Dionysus, specializes in winemaking and religious rituals. The War Realm is ruled by Lord Ares, and produces the deadliest warriors and weapons you've ever laid eyes on. The Craft Realm, ruled by Lady Athena, specializes in the arts, mathematics, and battle strategy. The Sun Realm is ruled by Lord Apollo, and produces healers, musicians, poets, and oracles. The Smith Realm, ruled by Lord Hephaestus, produces talented artisans and mechanics. The Trade Realm, nicknamed Land of Thieves, is a large marketplace and tourist destination, and exports athletes. The Realm of Lovers, ruled by Lady Aphrodite, is known for matchmaking, beautiful people, and clothing.

"With all due respect Father, this is an awful idea." Lord Hades was marrying his youngest son off to the son of (the eccentric) Lord Apollo. Prince Nico (as he preferred to be called) stood in his father's throne trying unsuccessfully to plead his case.

"Nicolas." Lord Hades's tone was laced with warning.

"Can't you form some sort of other alliance?"

"No, Nicolas."

"This isn't fair, father."

"Why not? My realm, which will soon be your realm, will gain an influential ally. You will be married to a prosperous young man. That seems fair enough to me."

Lord Hades had a point. "I'm being forced into marriage, and that isn't fair at all."

"It has already been decided Nico."
Prince Nico could tell his father was losing his patience. Unfortunately, so was he. "I refuse to marry some bastard I've never met just because his father's realm will be a powerful ally."

"NICOLAS!" Prince Nico's skinny body shook as his father yelled.

"My apologies, father." That seemed to somewhat calm the Lord's temper.

"William is a wonderful young gentlemen and I'm sure you'll get on great with him. In fact, he'll be visiting with his father, Lord Apollo, next week. I suggest you read up on the Sun Realm so you can make conversation when our guests arrive. Emphasis on the word guests. You will nothing but hospital and polite to Lord Apollo and Prince William. Am I understood?" Lord Hades glared pointedly at his young son, daring him to argue.

"Yes, father."

☼

Nico laid on Hazel's fuffy bed with his head in his hands. "Father refuses to listen to me." Her roomed was tidy and smelled like freshly baked cinnamon rolls.

"Father isn't known for being a listener. Don't be so upset, Nico. You might really like Will. Dad's pretty good with finding us compatible matches. I am engaged to Frank after all."

Nico had to admit she had a point. Frank and Hazel were the happiest couple he knew. "But, I'm being married off solely to gain more political power."

Hazel tilted her head in a sympathy. "You might change your mind after you meet him. I wasn't too happy about being married off to a stranger, especially one from the war realm. But when I started courting Frank, I realized I'd been full of resentment for nothing."

Nico was happy to have Hazel in his life. She was easy to talk to and always reassured him that things would be okay. Plus, she could bake like nobody's business.

A servant knocked on their door to inform them that they had ten minutes to finish dressing and meet their father in the throne room.

"Nico you have to brush your hair! He's going to be here any moment now."

Nico knew better than to argue with Hazel. He halfheartedly ran a hairbrush through his hair, which she promptly took from his hand and brushed his hair with fervor.

"Your suit looks so nice," Hazel gushed. "I can't believe my baby brother is meeting his future husband. You were just born the other day." She sniffled.

"We're only a year apart."

The siblings' banter was interrupted by a knock on the door.

"Hazel?" Frank Zhang's eyes peeped through a small crack in the door.

"Come in, honey." The rest of Frank's six foot eight, muscular body entered the bedroom. "I was just helping Nico get ready. We could really use a male opinion."

Frank smiled politely at Nico, who returned his smile.

"Sit" Hazel commanded Frank, who promptly sat.
"Which part looks better, the left or right side?"

"Um... the left?" Frank's reply was a question.

"No, the right part flatters his overall facial structure."

"Definitely."

Hazel turned back to face Nico. "Now, for your tie I suggest the saphire or emerald...

Nico couldn't take it anymore. "Stop fussing over me Hazel!"

"You need to look presentable for your soon-to-be husband!"

"I don't even want to marry him!"

"You haven't even met him. At least give him a chance to prove himself, Nico."

☼

When Nico and Hazel entered the throne room, Lord Apollo and Prince William were already speaking with Lord Hades. The resemblance between the two was uncanny. While Apollo was taller and tanner than his son, they shared bright blue eyes, blond hair, and perfect smiles.

Lord Hades began with the introductions. "Lord Apollo meet my son, Prince Nicolas."

He extended his hand to shake Lord Apollo's. Instead, Lord Apollo pulled him into an awkward hug.

"Prince Nicolas, this is my son and your soon-to-be co-ruler and lover, Prince William. You can call him Will, though. I think William is much to formal, but his mother insisted." He gestured for Prince William (Will?) to join the conversation.

Prince Nico stared at Prince Will for a moment before awkwardly shaking his hand. The boy was handsome (and tall, so tall) he'd give him that. However, they didn't seem to have much in common.

"Your realm is beautiful, Lord Hades." Even Prince Will's voice was sexy. He was too perfect.

Nico purposely avoided eye contact with him.

"Time like this next year, our sons will be married. We need get started on wedding plans. I'll take care of all the music." Lord Apollo seemed to be the groom, instead of his son.

"My wife and mother-in-law have already started the wedding preparations." Prince Nico already didn't want to get married, and now the two people who knew him the least were in charge of planning his wedding.

Prince Nico and Prince Will stood awkwardly as their fathers discussed their wedding. Neither of them spoke. Neither knew what to say. I know our dads are forcing us to get married, but I think you're handsome wasn't exactly an excellent icebreaker. Awkwardness seemed to consume both princes.

Lord Apollo noticed the tension. "You boys go get to know each other. Practice cosumating your relationship if you must," he chuckled "Just stop standing around like fish out of water."

Prince Nico and Prince Will both blushed and looked equally horrified.
"What Lord Apollo is trying to say is why don't you give Prince Will a tour of the palace? Be back in time for dinner at seven." Lord Hades waved them off.

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Nico led Will out of the throne room, through the garden, up a staircase to a balcony overlooking the palace courtyard. "You've already seen the throne room and the garden, so this is the courtyard." He mentally kicked himself for stating the obvious.

"This realm is quiet. In our courts, music is always played or poetry is read. " Prince Will seemed surprised.

"Our people are polite, but they mind their business and keep to themselves for the most part." Conversing with Prince Will was much easier than Nico thought it would be.

Will nodded. "Prince Nico, tell me a little about yourself."

"I have a hellhound."

Prince Will's eyes widened in a mix of fear and shock. "Does she bite?"

"Not unless I tell her to." Scaring Prince Will delighted Nico more than it should.

"When is your birthday?"

"January twenty-eighth."

"What do you do in your free time? I'm a practicing healer and currently developing some new medicines."

"I'm a deadly swordfighter." After only a few minutes of conversation, Nico concluded Will smiled too damn much.

"Archery is popular in my realm, but I'm terrible at it. To make matters worse, my father is an undefeated archer. I have eleven half siblings, and we are all close. Tell me about your family."

"I have sister named Hazel."

"What's your favorite color?"

"Black"

"That's not a surprise. Do you like kids?"

"No."

"Oh, okay. Do you like to read?"

"Yes."

"What's your favorite food?"

"I don't have one."

"Everyone has a favorite food."

"No."
"In case you haven't noticed, I'm trying to get to know you better. We are marrying in six months." Prince Will sounded delighted, excited even for their upcoming wedding.

"I know," was Nico's reply.

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After returning Prince Will to Lord Apollo and Lord Hades, Nico went on a walk to clear his head. He was met on his way back by a servant who handed him his phone.

"I heard a rumor about you getting married. As your best friend, how come I wasn't told the good news first?" Jason's voice was loud and clear over the phone.

"It's not good news." Nico barely recognized his own voice.

"Is he not treating you well? Do you need me to knock some sense into him?" Jason sounded ready to fight a bitch. He was probably sharpening his sword as they spoke.

"No! It's not like that." Nico wondered if he would still have to marry Will if Jason fought Will. You couldn't marry someone who wasn't alive, and Jason's sword skills were killer.

"Then why aren't you happy?" Jason's voice sounded more thoughtful.

Nico lowered his eyes and stared at the ground beneath him. He'd be lying if he said he resented Will because they were being forced to get married.

Jason voice was soft. "Nico, Percy and Will are different people. Don't push him away just because Percy didn't return your feelings."

Nico let out a breath. His voice was shaky, so he nodded. "Thank you, Jason. You're a good friend."

Jason smiled as he hung up the phone after they said their goodbyes. Nico deserved some happiness.

☼

"You're late, Prince Nicolas." Lord Hades's voice was sharp. "Our guests have been waiting on you."

Prince Nico blushed as everyone turned to look at him. They were sitting around large diamond banquet table encrusted with onyx stones. Lord Hades dined at in the head of the table with Lady Persephone and Lady Demeter on his left, and Hazel and Frank on his right. Lord Apollo (who appreciated that he could see his reflection) sat at the other end with Prince Will on his left. The only empty seat was right next to said prince. The same prince Nico was trying to avoid. Nico had hoped dinner would be an excuse to not have to constantly look at Will. This seating arrangement wouldn't help much at all.

"Have you thought about redecorating? This decor is too gloomy to focus on enjoying a meal." Lady Demeter's voice was just a crisp, and judgemental as he remembered. He was thankful that the attention wasn't on him anymore, though.

"We'll redecorate one of these days. How have you been, Lady Demeter?" His father's voice was strained as he tried to deal with his difficult mother-in-law. Nico thought Lord Hades deserved it after screaming at him.

"How could I be fine when the crops are being killed by pollutants?" Everyone pretended to listen as
she continued to rant about the lack of skillful farmers and the use of pesticides.

Lord Apollo agreed. "I hear what you're saying about the lack of skill these days. Besides myself, we haven't seen a talented poet or archer in my realm for years."

"It's the technology everyone relies on. No one values the fine arts anymore." Lady Demeter sighed.

Persephone spoke up. "Technology is very convenient for us, especially now that I'm running the flower shop and still performing my duties as queen."

Lady Demeter turned to Lord Hades. "Is my daughter even getting time to rest?"

"Of course, mother. This is busy times in the realm, so I've been helping out more."

Lady Demeter didn't look convinced. "No, you aren't fine. You have bags under your eyes for god's sake. If you are being overworked, you are more than welcome to come home with me."

"I know, Mother. I'm not being overworked."

Lord Hades used his most diplomatic voice. "I'd like to get back to dinner, if that's alright with you Lady Demeter."

"Stay out of this. This conversation is between me and my daughter."

"Yes, but it was at a family dinner, with guests present I might add."

Nico turned to look at Will who was watching the scene play out intently and trying to hide his growing smile.

"They'll be part of this family soon enough. Speaking of which, Persephonie and I put together some sample flower arrangements. You boys can look at them tomorrow. Have you decided on a theme?"

Everyone turned to look at Will and Nico. Nico shook his head.

Lady Demeter sighed loudly. "Lord Hades, I thought you were supervising the planning of the boys' wedding. I will have to oversee the wedding planning myself."

Lord Hades narrowed his eyes and spoke. "Will you actually be overseeing the planning or controlling it as you always do?"

"I've never been controlling in my life." Lady Demeter put on her most innocent face.

"Do you not remember Persephone and I's wedding? You practically were the bride and groom. All you needed to do was walk down the aisle."

"Did you not remember your wedding when you were cheating on my daughter?"

Every jaw at the table dropped as the room went silent.

Nico looked over to see Will shaking in an attempt to control his laughter.

Lord Hades' face was terrifyingly stoic as he spoke slowly and sharply. "Our marriage history has no business at this dinner table and you will not bring it up again.‖ He inhaled sharply. "The point of this dinner was to get to know our guests. Lord Apollo, tell us more about yourself."

Lord Apollo grinned at being the center of attention and began talking about his favorite subject,
himself.

Next to Nico, Prince Will rolled his eyes. Over the course of the meal, Will tried to avoid Lord Apollo signaling him to flirt with Prince Nico. Nico was being difficult to say the least, but Will would be lying if he said he didn't like it.

Dinner dragged on.

"We should toast to the new couple!" Everyone raised their glasses as Nico groaned internally. If he couldn't handle this, how would he live through the wedding ceremony. His mental rant was ended by the sound of clinking glasses.

After dinner, Nico wanted nothing more to lay in his bed and pretend he was dead, but his father had other ideas.

"How did it go Nicolas?"

"You were present at dinner."

Lord Hades huffed impatiently. "I mean courting Prince William."

Nico wanted to give a snarky remark and call Will a bastard again, but father was already furious. "He's nicer than I thought."

"I told you." Lord Hades's expression softened. "I know you hate not having a say in your future husband, but one of these days you will be the ruler of the Underworld. Which is not easy, and you'll need someone like William by your side."

Nico nodded and diverted his gaze. He wasn't sure he could handle ruling the Underworld or marriage. It wasn't like he even had a choice in either matters.
"That was the most awful attempt at flirting I have ever witnessed in my life." Lord Apollo glowered down at his son.

"Dad," Will began.

"I'm your father for god's sakes. Flirting is in your genes."

"Dad, I wasn't even that bad."

"William, that was an adomination."

Prince Will rolled his eyes.

"First of all, where was your charm? Did you expect to get in his pants with that stutter? Do you even know what confidence is, Will?"

"I'm sorry I didn't inherit your ego dad."

"I don't have a big ego." He looked surprised by the mere thought. "I'm going to have to teach you how to flirt."

"No." Will knew he could use some pointers, but there's no way in hell they'd come from his dad.

"I can't have you embarrassing me. I'm known for being the best flirt in all of the realms."

That explains why he had twelve children with twelve different women.

"I've been with men too, Will. I know how it works."

What the hell did that even mean?

"Why are you even getting so worked up about this?"

Lord Apollo let out a signature dramatic sigh.

"Will, you need to get him to fall for you, preferably sometime before you walk down the aisle. Seduction is the easiest way to do that."

Will was tired of this conversation. "What are you saying, dad?"

"You know that old saying that goes 'the fastest way to a man's heart is through his penis'? Teenage boys are especially horny, you know this Will."

"What?" Will could barely process the words coming out of his father's mouth right now.

"You've got to charm him, Will. Flatter him. Make him laugh. Serenade him, if you must. Then, you take him home and rock his body until your name is his only coherent thought. Bang him so well that the thought of not being with you for the rest of his life is completely absurd. Simple as that."

Lord Hades awkwardly knocked on Nico's door. He slowly walked over to Nico's bed and gingerly
sat on the edge. He didn't look half as regal as normal.

He let out a deep breath. "Son, it has come to my attention that no one has properly discussed sexual intercourse with you."

Nico opened his mouth to derail this train wreck.

Lord Hades continued on. "We thought it wouldn't be necessary after we learned about your sexual orientation. However, your wedding night is approaching and you'll need to understand how to safely consummate your relationship."

"Father, I'll be fine."

Once again he was ignored. "I wanted to have one of our homosexual servants speak to you. I figured they would be more knowledgeable about the subject than myself."

Nico would've given anything to have this talk with anyone but his father.

Lord Hades kept talking. "Persephone insisted this was a discussion parents should have with their children."

Lord Hades wasn't exactly your average parent. His stare was deadly and his features were hard set no matter what his emotions were. Whereas most parents had an aura of compassion, Lord Hades exuded creepy power.

He paused for a few moments. "Do you have any immediate questions?"

Nico shook his head quickly. He had no desire to prolong this conversation.

Lord Hades cleared his throat and adjusted his collar. "When two males have intercourse, one male is penetrated anally."

Who didn't want to hear their father say that? Nico could see his horrified reflection in the mirror on his walls.

"This is a very painful ordeal. Ample lubrication is a must to prevent tearing."

Nico tried not to choke on his own saliva.

Lord Hades sighed. "The other male thrusts against the male being penetrated's prostate gland, which is very pleasurable for both parties."

He seemed to be reading information from a teleprompter, while staring directly into Nico's eyes.

Lord Hades' voice was monotone as he continued the one-sided conversation. "When a male orgasms, sperm ejects from his penis."

Nico concluded anything (death included) would be better than having this conversation.

"Now, we'll discuss oral sex."

☼

If Nico could have it his way, he'd never see Will again. All this wedding talk was driving him crazy. Not to mention the chat he'd just had with his father. He barely knew Will. He sure as hell didn't love him. However, imagining Will penetrating him wasn't exactly a terrible thought. Will was very
handsome for no reason. He probably helped old ladies cross the street in his free time.

The next morning, he haphazardly threw on his clothes and ran a hand through his bed head. He was being summoned to the Palace Courtyard by Lady Demeter to pick out flower arrangements for the upcoming wedding. By the time he reached the Courtyard, he was a sweating mess. His already rumpled clothes had taken dishleveled to a new level. He hair was wild and his stare was muderous.

In the Courtyard, Will was sitting next to a pile of wedding bouquets wearing a yellow flower crown. Unlike Nico, he looked full of energy, despite the early hour. His clothes were wrinkle free and his normally shaggy hair was neatly combed.

His eyes were bright as he smiled up at Nico's arrival. He greeted the groggy Prince Nico with a cheery "Good Morning."

"Good Morning." His voice sounded as dead as he felt.

Awkwardness lingered in the air between the two.

Lady Demeter caught sight of him and ushered him into a seat opposite Will.

"It's about time!" Demeter gave him one of her signature looks of distain. "We could've started at dawn, but no Mr. Moody over here wants to sleep until dinner time."

Seven in the morning was dinner time? Prince Nico had remind himself murder was illegal before he ended up in the Underworld jail. Then again, if he were incarcerated, would he have to get married?

Will turned to him."How are you?"

"I'm fine." Why does he smile so much? He'll get wrinkles. He had a nice smile, but that wasn't important.

Their forced conversation was put to an end by Demeter (again).

She thrust an oversized bouquet made of white, yellow, and pink flowers toward them. "This bouquet was made entirely of Gerbera Daisies."

Will voiced his opinion first. "It's beautiful."

“Of course it is. I handcrafted it.”

Will's smile faltered. He clearly wasn't used to Demeter's attitude. He had to get used to it because he was marrying her grandson-in-law.

Nico wondered why they would need a bouquet if there was no bride. It would be just like Demeter to make him wear a dress down the aisle. She'd probably tell his dad some bullshit about tradition and he'd let her have her way for the sake of his marriage.

Lady Demeter turned to him expectantly.

“If Will and I haven't established a theme for the wedding, how can we pick the the flower arrangements? They won't correspond with the rest of the decor.”

Will's face as he tried to control his laughter was somewhat adorable.

Lady Demeter narrowed her eyes. “Fine. How about you boys decide on a theme? I'll be back.”
Most people would be thrilled at the prospect of being alone with a gorgeous, 6 foot male.

Normally, so would Nico. But, Will just sitting across from him was stressful.

Will broke the silence. "Do you know what my shirt's made of?"

Why is he asking me about his shirt? How should I know? “Satin?”

“Boyfriend material.” Will giggled.

“Unless you plan on wearing it to the wedding, I don't care.” Nico tried to immitate his dad's cold stare.

Will looked a little dejected.

“Lady Demeter'll be back any second. Do you have any ideas for the theme?”

Will shrugged. Then, he leaned in towards Nico.

“Does your left eye hurt?”

“No, why?”

“You've been looking right all day.”

“Fuck you.”

Chapter End Notes

First, I wanted to say a huge thanks to everyone who left kudos and encouraging comments. Second, I'm so sorry for the long wait guys. I'm probably the slowest writer on this planet.
Nico was getting his hair and makeup done.

Nico didn't like fussing over his appearance, which was evident in the way he let his hair grow out and didn't iron his clothes. Those were the exact reasons Persephone had insisted he be 'groomed' before the big trip. What had Lord Hades done? Agreed to his wife's every demand in attempt to make up for his unfaithfulness, which had produced both Hazel and Nico. What else is new?

It was a tradition in the Underworld that for a week the royal family traveled throughout the realm connecting with the people, a meet and greet of sorts. Talking to large numbers of people already wasn't Nico's cup of tea. But this year, Prince Will and Lord Apollo would be joining them. They were marrying into the royal family after all and this trip would give them a thorough tour of the Underworld. Wasn't that just great?

Nico diligently avoided Will for the past couple of days. He'd changed his eating and sleeping patterns to avoid any possible run-ins with the blonde. Now, they'd be standing side by side ten hours a day and sharing a bedroom. Not like that.

When Will walked in the room lit up, literally. Everyone wanted to get a look at him. Even the servant working on Nico winked when she caught his eye. He flashed that megawatt smile at everyone he passed them.

Finally, he reached Nico's chair. He placed a wet kiss on Prince Nico's cheekbone.

"There's my beautiful fiancé," Will teased. "How are you?"

Nico was about to curse him out, but his father's warning rang in his ears. He pointedly looked straight ahead, ignoring Will.

Soon, he realized that Will wouldn't move until Nico spoke to him. "I'm fine. How are you?"

"I was feeling a little off today, but you definitely turned me on."

No else seemed to hear Will's obvious flirting. Nico's eyes went wide and he tried to look anywhere but at Will.

Much to Nico's relief, Lord Hades and Lady Persephone arrived, with Lady Demeter and Lord Apollo striding in just moments later.

Nico was freed from that prison called a makeup chair to be whisked away to meet Johnathan, their new PR Manager.

Johnathan made the entire family line up. Lord Hades and Lady Persephone stood in the center. Lady Demeter stood next to her daughter, and Lord Apollo stood next to his son, who was on Nico's right. Hazel stood on Nico's left because Frank had gotten out of this family 'trip'. (Nico had never felt more jealous)

He turned towards Will and Nico. "I don't see any chemistry between you too. The crowds know you're getting married. You can't look like strangers who bumped into each other on the bus."

Will slid a tan arm around Nico's waist and pulled him closer. Nico did not look at his muscles. Not even once.
“That’s a better. Shall we get this show on the road?”

Nico was shaking hands with the third crowd of the day when Will leaned into his ear and whispered “You look cold.”

Nico rolled his eyes.

“It’s like four fucking degrees out here. Why wouldn't I be cold?”

“I can warm you up.” He gestured for Nico to come closer.

Nico stood straight up and smacked Will in the arm.

“Fuck off.”

Will pouted. His lips were pale and slightly dry from the cold. He placed a hand on Nico’s bony shoulder.

Nico shook his torso in an attempt to wrench Will’s hand off him. Why is he so warm?

A middle aged woman gave them a dirty look.

“Can I help you?” Nico snapped.

She was taken aback by his outburst, but shook her head and didn’t respond.

Near them, a little girl was sobbing loudly.

Will picked up the little girl and gave her a watermelon lollipop from his coat pocket. He gently rubbed her back until she stopped crying and tracked down her mother.

Nico knew he meant well, but Will was going to get arrested if he kept giving candy to kids he didn’t know. Why did he even keep lollipops in his coat? Who did that?

It didn’t occur to Nico that he would be sharing a room with Will until they arrived at the hotel. Apparently, fiancés didn’t sleep in different rooms unless they were fighting.

He tried pleading his case to his dad, who apologized but didn’t see the importance of this issue.

“Nicolas, we booked the rooms months in advance. Just...enjoy the privacy.”

Did Lord Hades just imply he should hook up with Will?

Nico dealt with this the same way he dealt with all his problems. He avoided it until he had no choice but to address it.

He passed some time by hanging around in Hazel’s room, where Hazel and Persephone were baking. Persephone had gotten along with Hazel, much better than Nico. Maybe it was because Hazel was more of a people person, and shared similar interests with Persephone. After a few hours and a forced conversations with his stepmother, Nico was utterly exhausted.

“You should get some rest Nicholas.” Persephone suggested.
“I can’t.”

“Why not?”

“Will is sleeping in my, well our room.”

Persephone looked slightly confused. “Are you two in some sort of argument?”

“No.”

“So, what's the problem?”

Hazel seemed to understand Nico's predicament. “It's going to be a little awkward, but this is a great time to get to know him better.”

Nico wasn't persuaded.

“Come on, Nico. Give him a chance.”

“Alright, thanks Hazel.” Nico said reluctantly.

“Are we talking about Will?” Persephone asked.

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This was going to be a long night.

When Nico opened the door to their suite, he'd walked in on a naked Will singing Frank Sinatra, his skin and hair still wet from his shower.

Will slowly made eye contact with the flustered son of Hades.

Nico turned on his heel and marched to the bedroom without another word.

After a few moments, Nico heard Will's belt being buckled. The son of Apollo emerged as if nothing had happened.

Neither of them said anything.

“Hazel and Persephone sent some cupcakes for... us.”

Referring to Will and himself as 'us' had felt strange. They weren't an 'us', were they? They were engaged after all, but still...

While Nico was lost in thought, Will sauntered over to where Nico was standing and dragged a finger over the frosting of his cupcake.

Nico stared incredulously at Will. “Did you just?”

Will winked and sucked his finger. “Too much sugar isn't good for you.”

“What are you doing, Will?” Nico was baffled at this point.

“It's called flirting. You’re supposed to flirt back.”

“I don't want to flirt with you.”
“Why not?” Will looked confused.

Nico was struggling to express his feelings in words.

“I'm not romantically interested in you at all.” Nico deadpanned.

Will furrowed his eyebrows. “But, you're marrying me.”

Nico channeled all the rage and resentment he'd been feeling lately.

“I don't want to. I wish I could call off this whole fucking wedding, but my father is forcing me to marry you. Okay?”

“Oh.” Will felt like he'd been punched in the gut.

☼

Nico knew he had a reputation of being heartless. It was partially true after all. He just couldn't shake the guilt he felt when he thought of Will. He really hadn't meant to be so cold. Seeing the tears pool in Will's eyes was the worst. He didn't deserve someone like Nico.

After a while, Nico couldn't stand his own conscience. He distracted himself by studying Will's face in the dim moonlight. Gentle bags under Will's eyes revealed he wasn't nearly as well rested as he seemed. Nico wondered what kept Will up at night, and the answer was Nico.

Why wasn't Will resisting their arranged marriage? It'd never occured to Nico that Will might actually wanted to marry him. How was he supposed to know that?
Boy Problems

Will didn’t even look at Nico for days. He was abnormally silent during meals, only speaking when he was spoken to. His eyes were pink around the rims and the bags under his eyes were more prominent than usual.

Ignoring Nico was the only thing he could do to avoid tearing his hair out. Nico was guarded the moment he met Will. Through persistence and creativity, Will had gotten him to gradually lower the walls he put up. Then, just like that the walls were back up and Nico had shut him out again. Back to square one.

Will was a pretty laidback guy, but trying to court Nico was driving him up a wall. Nico was like a constantly shifting maze. Just when you were exhausted after hitting a million dead ends and finally found a path, it changed and you hit another dead end.

Jake had been nothing like this. Jake had been a mutual crush and all passion and simple. Jake was so easy to talk to that if things weren’t so rocky between them, Will might’ve called him for advice. Maybe Jake still had feelings for him, and maybe just maybe Will wasn’t over him either.

Love was more difficult than archery, and Will wasn’t sure he handle it.

☼

Since Will was giving him the cold shoulder, Nico was forced to sit next to his wonderful stepmother at meals.

Persephone turned to Nico, who she normally didn’t voluntarily speak to.

“I was just speaking to William the other. He’s such a nice young man. You’re very lucky.”

Nico forced a smile.

“I know we don’t have the best relationship and part of that is my fault. I was taking my resentment towards your father out on you. But if you ever need boy advice, I’m always here.”

“Thank you, stepmother.”

“It may not seem like it, but your dad really want you to be happy. He’s not good with feelings, sort of like you. But, his intentions are always good.”

☼

Nico had absolutely no idea what to do, so he called Jason. Who else could he call about boy problems? Percy? He laughed at that while the phone rang.

“Jason, I need some help”

His blonde friend sounded out of breath. “Why? Is something wrong?”

That was an understatement. “I kind of fucked up.”

Jason sounded relieved. “Fucked up, how?”

Nico summarized what he liked to call the Will Situation.
Jason was silent. “Have you tried apologizing?”

Nico wanted to smack him. “How can I do that if he won’t even talk to me?”

After that useless conversation with Jason, Nico decided he needed to let out some steam.

Nico was practicing his swordfighting in the courtyard when Apollo casually threw an arm over his shoulders.“Hey, Neeks”

Nico was surprised. He tried unsuccessfully to shrug Apollo’s arm off. “Can you please not call me that, Lord Apollo?

“You don’t have to be so formal. You’re going to be my son-in-law after all.” He ran his thumb over Nico’s cheekbone and whispered in his ear. “You could’ve been my lover.”

Nico blushed bright red.

“You’re so cute when you’re flustered. How long till you turn eighteen?”

“Lord Apollo!” His voice was shaky.

“I’m sorry. Flirting with my son’s fiancé is a new low, even for me. That’s actually what I came to talk to you about.”

Now Nico was nervous. He knew Lord Apollo was a generally nice (hot) guy, but he was deadly with a bow and arrow.

“Listen, I try to stay out of my kids’ romantic life. But, Will seemed pretty upset yesterday and he slept in my suite, so I assume you guys had a fight.”

“I can explain, Lord Apollo.”

Lord Apollo waved him off. “These things happen all the time. The important thing is that you smooth them out. Will’s a good guy and he inherited more from me than his eye color, if you know what I mean.”

Nico chose to ignore the last part. “I will, Lord Apollo.”

“Don’t look so shaken up, kid. Make up sex is the best kind.” Lord Apollo winked and smiled.

He laughed at Nico’s expression and strutted away. He did have a great butt.

☼

Nico knocked gingerly on the door to Will’s room. He was about to leave when he received no answer, but the door swung open.

“Hey, Nico” said Will dressed in scrubs.

“I’m sorry for saying that Will,” he gushed immediately and thrust the bouquet of roses Persephone gave him at Will.

Will smiled gently and took the flowers.“Thanks. Don’t worry about it.”

“Will, it’s just that my feeling are a mess and I’m not great with words and I really don’t have much experience with relationships and,” Nico rambled.
“Nico, I understand. You don’t want to be forced into getting married. I didn’t realize you don’t hate me personally, you just hate that you have to marry me.”

Nico nodded vigorously. How Will was able to put what he was feeling into words baffled Nico.

“You're not mad at me?”

Will laughed softly. “You're hard to stay mad at.”

Nico didn't know why that made him blush as hard as it did.

“Actually, I was thinking maybe we could be friends. You know that old saying ‘friends make the best lovers.’”

Nico was surprised. “I'd love to be friends...with you.” Nico could always count on himself to be awkward around cute boys.

Will flashed him that trademark smile.

“As your friend, I would like to know if you want to go for some ice cream with me?”

“That sounds great. Except, its close to 10 degrees outside.”

Will glanced out the nearest window. “Point taken”

“We can watch a movie if you’d like.”

Will flashed that megawatt smile. “Great! I'll make hot chocolate.”

☼

“Psst, Nico?”

“Eh..Yes?” He muttered, too sleepy to register someone poking his ribs.

“How do I tie a scarf?” The voice sounded familiar.

“What?” Groggily, he lifted his head up and rubbed his eyes. Nico was suddenly aware that he wasn't in his bed.

Blue eyes peered down at him. Will was standing next to the bed holding a plaid scarf in his hands. “A scarf, how do I tie one?”

Nico did what he did best, sass. “Who doesn't know how to tie a scarf?”

Will rolled his eyes. “Cut me some slack. I've never had to wear one in my life.” He made no effort to stop hovering over Nico.

Nico shuffled into a sitting position and tied the scarf around Will as neck as gently as he could. Up close, he could see the half a dozen freckles on Will’s nose and cheeks. This felt strangely intimate.

He slumped back onto the bed. “That'll keep you from freezing to death.”

“Thanks.” Will turned to finish packing his medical bag.

Nico glanced around him on the bed. “Did I um.. fall asleep here?”
Will looked up. “Yeah. You should of seen how cute you looked when you were asleep. Your lips get all pouty in the morning, it was adorable.”

Nico glared at him. “Puppies are cute. Babies are cute. But, I am not cute.”

Will rolled his eyes. “Whatever you say, darling.”

Nico didn’t have many close friends, but he was pretty sure the wasn’t just friendly behavior. More importantly, he was aware of the fact that he just slept in the same bed as Will, and he wasn’t exactly opposed to it.

“FYI, babies look disturbing during birth. They’re covered in blood and other bodily fluids.” Will shuddered.

☼

Lord Apollo turned to Nico the next morning at breakfast.

“You must of done something right, kid, because Will’s happier than he was before,” he chuckled. “You must of fucked him well.”

Nico was about to ask Lord Apollo what the hell he was talking about, when he realized Will’s scarf could be covering possible hickeys. Not to mention they’d slept in the same room and were both late for breakfast.

He was suddenly aware of the fact that everyone at the breakfast table was staring intently at Nico and Lord Apollo. They heard the entire conversation.

Will’s face was bright red. “Dad!”

He looked at Lord Hades, who looked suspicious (and a little menacing).

“We didn’t... you know...Nico tell them we didn’t.” His voice was frantic.

Everyone at the table gave him a disbelieving look.

Lady Demeter looked offended.

“It’s alright, William.” Lady Persephone tried unsuccessfully to calm Will down.

Will looked pleadingly at Lord Hades and Lady Persephone. “I didn’t deflower your son!”
Lord Apollo was having a party.

He was known for holding extravagant parties and inviting everybody he knew, which was basically everyone. The guest list included dozens of kings, queens, world class artists, and high profile musicians. The celebration would span three days, and each day had a theme. The festivities included a parade, sixty live musicians, and fireworks. Cuisine was ordered from an exclusive, world renown Asian restaurant, and hundreds of butlers were hired for the party. The entire palace was to be decorated with jewels, and guests were to wear gold.

On June 1st, Nico was invited to visit the Sun Realm as an honorary guest.

“I'm sure you'll enjoy the party, son.” Lord Hades said as he read the newspaper. “Make sure to tell Apollo, Phone and I are sorry we couldn't attend.” He took a bite of his bagel.

“I'm not going dad.” Nico wasn't exactly a social butterfly. He had missed Will's happy smile and hearing his laughter all over the palace, but parties were a no in his book.

“Of course you are,” Lord Hades looked up. “This is a great opportunity to visit Will's home and learn about his childhood. Plus, someone needs to represent our realm at Lord Apollo's big shindig.”

Nico looked disbelievingly at his father. Was he seriously going to force Nico to go?

“Nico, you haven't gotten out of the house much lately. Parties are fun.” Persephone offered.

Was she serious? He went to the mailbox just yesterday. This conversation was absurd.

“Remember that we have standards in this family that apply inside and out of the castle.” He looked pointedly at his son. “Behave yourself and don't do anything you'll regret.”

His only regret would be attending the party at all. It was a three day party for god's sakes.

☼

“I know you were invited, Grace. I will go through your mailbox and dig up the letter myself.”

Nobody in their right mind wouldn't invite Lord Zeus's son to a party. Plus, Jason was a sweet guy and easy on the eyes.

“Yeah, but I don't think I'm going.” Jason said over the phone. “I might just go to dinner with Pipes or something.”

“You have to go!” Nico was short of screaming into the phone.

Jason sounded confused. “No, I don't.”

“Fine, will you please come with me? I can't go alone.” Nico hated begging, but it was the only way to persuade Jason.

Jason thought for a moment. “Sure, but why? Isn't Will hosting the party?”

“It's complicated. Will never even mentioned it and, he'll probably be hanging out with his old
friends anyway. You know I hate crowds and I don't want to be all alone. So, please come with me.”

“Like as your date?”

Nico stared at the phone incredulously. “No?”

Jason ignored him. “I've never been on a date with a guy before. We can wear matching ties!”

What? “No.”

“Yes we are. If you want me to be your date, we've got to wear matching ties.”

Nico was tempted to throw the phone. “I don't want you to be my date!”

“You're definitely not getting in my pants with that attitude, mister.”

☼

Lord Apollo had really outdone himself this year. The palace was on the beach, and the view of the sunset meeting the crystal blue waves was picturesque. About a hundred gold lanterns hung from ceiling, each guest had been assigned a personal butler, and the smell of barbeque wafted through the air.

“How are you enjoying the party?” Will asked. He wore a blue polo, white shorts, a gold bracelet, and a shark tooth necklace. He looked so at ease in his home realm, whereas Nico felt completely out of place amongst the bright colors on the beach.

The music was deafeningly loud, there were people everywhere, and he really needed to pee but he didn't know where the bathroom was.

“It's wonderful.”

The silence that followed was uncomfortable.

“Hazel says hello.”

Will nodded.

Lord Apollo strode up to them, already tipsy.

Nico had seen Lord Apollo making out heavily with a guy when he walked in, but now Lord Apollo was holding hands with a pretty brunette, who didn't look older than twenty.

“You don't look like you're having fun on the first day of summer!” His voice was unnecessarily loud. He handed Nico and Will beer bottles. “These should help.”

“Aren't we underage?”

Lord Apollo rolled his eyes. “In your realm. Here, we don't put restrictions on fun.”

Nico looked at Will, who nodded.

Gingerly, he took the bottle and sipped the liquid inside. He gagged and almost spit it out.

Will asked if he was alright and offered him some sort of pastry to get rid of the taste.

Lord Apollo just laughed and patted his shoulder. “First time, kid.”
He looked at Will. “You two have fun. Remember to use protection!”

Nico didn't like being ignored. Will and Jake were apparently on their own fucking planet because Will hadn't even looked in Nico's direction since Jake arrived.

Will had spotted him instantly among the hundreds of people in palace dancing, drinking, talking, or singing. He'd run to give him a big hug and they'd been inseparable ever since.

Jake was tall and tan in a rugged sort of way, like the type of guy who spent all his time outdoors. Seeing him with Will on the beach was irritating Nico. Nico could see all the chemistry between the two. Their interactions weren't awkward like Nico and Will's were.

Will had all but died of laughter at something Jake had just said.

Feeling a little heartbroken and pretty drunk, Nico did what anyone in his place would do. He kissed the muscular blonde next to him.

Jason was surprised to say the least. But that didn't stop him from kissing back and running his hands up and down Nico's side.

Nico didn't understand why Jason was such a good kisser. This must be the reason Piper tolerated him. He was currently sucking on Nico's bottom lip and gods, was that his tongue? It was currently teasing the inside of Nico's mouth.

It dawned on Nico that he was all but straddling his apparently-not-so-straight best friend, who was in a happy relationship, in public.

Nico was about to apologize when they broke apart, but Jason pulled him back in by the waist. He hoped Will got a good look.

Nico woke up in Jason's bed with no idea where his shirt was. Probably still at the beach. It hadn't occurred to him when his tongue was down Jason's throat that this might be awkward in the morning.

Next to him, Jason was snoring in a similar state of undress and snuggled closer.

After a few minutes, Jason woke up a yawn and a stretch. His sky blue eyes settled on Nico's face and he wore a dopey smile. To summarize, he looked adorable.

Nico was obligated to smile back.

Jason gave him a playful poke in the cheek and nuzzled his shoulder.

"Where are my glasses?"

"On the floor, near your shirt. Are those hearts on the boxers in the corner?"

Jason flushed and nuzzled Nico's neck. “Pipes gave them to me.”

Nico had forgot about Jason and Piper, and apparently so had Jason. “Isn't she going to mad?”

“No. She and Reyna kind of... have a thing.”
Nico couldn’t believe his ears. “You’re telling me your girlfriend and your ex do each other on the regular and it doesn’t bother you.”

“Youre relationship isn’t the model of perfection either. Because if it were, you wouldn’t be in my bed.”

“Shut it, Grace.” He did have a point.

“I was supposed to go for a run this morning.” Jason said as he continued to (aggressively) cuddle Nico.
Will was stressed out.

He willed himself to ignore Nico and Jason's public make out session. He wasn't the jealous type, except when it came to Nico he was. But seriously, Jason? He was like the straightest guy ever. Nico had never expressed the slightest urge to make out with him whenever they hung out, but Jason's there two minutes and he's already getting into Nico's pants.

Boy problems were only one of Will's troubles because his dad was acting strange. Stranger, than usual anyway. He'd woken up at an ungodly hour and rushed to visit his oracle. Apollo was somewhat obsessed with prophecies, but he never visited his oracle unless there was a problem. He was normally an open book, but lately he'd been keeping secrets. Will assumed it was his latest affair, but now he wasn't so sure.

Lord Apollo had bags under his eyes as he strode into the palace. “Will, I need you to take over for me in the infirmary.”

Will nodded. “Are you okay, dad?”

Lord Apollo forced a smile. “I'm fine, kid. I just need some rest.”

☼

“I heard a rumor that you went home with Jason Grace.” Hazel said with a laugh.

“I did.”

Hazel's eyes went wide. “What?!”

Nico tried to play it off. “It's not a big deal. Just don't tell father.”

Lord Hades would flip if he found out Nico made out with the son of his biggest rival.

“Why, Nico? I know Jason's handsome and all, but I always thought your relationship was more platonic.”

Nico could imagine Hazel fanning herself upon hearing this scandalous news. “It is.”

Hazel's voice was terrifying firm. “Spill it.”

Nico hung his head in shame. “Will's old friend, Jake, came and they were laughing together the whole night. He didn't even seem to remember I was there anymore. I guess I was jealous and pretty drunk. Jason was a great kisser, though.”

Hazel sighed but her voice was soothing. “Nico, you need to talk things out with Will. Seriously, the basis of a happy relationship is proper communication.”

“I know, but...” He couldn't finish his statement.

“What if Will's heartbroken? You need to acknowledge your mistakes, even if it isn't easy.”

“I know, but Hazel I don't know what or how to feel, anymore. When Will proposed being friends, I thought that was the best idea ever because I didn't have feelings for him. Then last night, when I
saw him having fun with Jake, I was furiously jealous. Later, when I was making out with Jason, I
couldn't stop thinking about Will.”

“Nico, it's obvious you have feelings for him.”

“I can't have a crush, Hazel!”

“You're acting like it's a disease, Nico.”

“Because that's what it feels like, Hazel!”

“It's going to be okay Nico.”

“What if it isn't, Hazel? What if he doesn't like me? What if he moved on to Jake? Where does that
leave me? Heartbroken again.”

“That's exactly what's going to happen if you keep avoiding him.”

☼

Will was resting in his bed after his shift at the infirmary when the door swung open and an irritated
looking Nico walked in.

He looked around Will's room for a minutes. “This isn't the bathroom.”

“Are you alright Nico?” Will asked pulling himself out of his bed. Nico didn't notice his gorgeous
beadhead at all.

Nico glared up at Will. “I'm fine. I'm just got lost. You can go back to your little nap.”

Will ran a finger through his hair and smirked. “You can join me, but you probably won't be sleeping
much.”

Nico's blushed brightly. “Never gonna happen.”

Will smile faltered. “I forgot only Jason's bed is good enough.”

Where was this coming from? “What does Jason have to do with anything?”

“You two were getting pretty hot and heavy yesterday.”

“So?” Nico could not see how that mattered at all.

Angry Will was somewhat terrifying. “So? I invited you to the party as my fiancé and you all but
fuck another guy right in front of my face! We are getting married in four months and what do you
do? Jason, that's what!”

“You were busy with Jake the whole time! You're not fiancé of the year either!”

Everyone in the palace could hear their yelling.

Will looked taken aback. “I wasn't making out with Jake in the middle of the party!”

“That's not what it looked like to me and everyone else on the beach!”

“I'm surprised you could see anything besides Jason's dick!”
Nico proceeded to swear at him in Italian. “I never even saw Jason's dick. We didn't have sex.”

“Oh.”

The next few minutes were like the calm after a storm.

“I'm so sorry, Nico.”

“Were you jealous, Will?” Nico asked gently.

Will sighed. “I'm not proud of it, but seeing you with someone else bothered me like hell.”

Nico nodded. “If it isn't obvious, I got really jealous of you and Jake. I would never do normally do something like that. Jason's a great guy, but I don't have actual feeling for him.”

Will looked up through long eyelashes. “We were just talking, honest.”

Nico nodded. “I was being possessive. You're allowed to talk to other people.”

Will chuckled softly. “I'm not one to talk. I was tempted to shoot Jason with an arrow when he was kissing you.”

Nico shook his head. “And people think I'm the violent one.”

Will laughed. “You're hand movements are pretty violent.”

“I will smack you.”

Will pretended to cower. “No! I'm too pretty.”

Nico rolled his eyes. “Seriously though, where is the bathroom?”

Will laughed that loud laugh of his. Nico couldn't help but crack a smile, too.

Will stood up and held the door open. “Come on, I'll show you. I'll even give you a tour since I'm so nice.”

Will had to resist the urge to run down the hall cheering because he had made Nico di Angelo smile.

☼

Will and Nico ate dinner outside under the stars, mainly so they could avoid Will's teasing siblings.

“What are the laterns for?”

Will gulped. “Michael. He was my older brother. We light them every night in his honor.”

“What happened to him?” Nivo asked softly.

Will took a deep breath. “He was poisoned two years ago.”

“That's terrible.”

A tear rolled down Will's cheek. “Someone poisoned his drink at dinner,” Will's voice broke. “We all watched him die. A family full of healers, but no one could save him.

Nico dabbed Will's fallen tears with a napkin. “Did you ever find out who killed him?”
Will shook his head sadly. “I still can’t picture who would want to kill him. He was so kind and patient and full of compassion. He taught me everything I know about healing, but I couldn’t save him.”

“You’re an amazing healer, Will. I’ve never seen anyone as dedicated to something as you are to healing.”

“I think about that night a lot. It could’ve been any of us, but only Michael’s glass was poisoned. I never thought losing your sibling would be like losing a part of yourself.”

“I know what you mean.”

Will turned to him. “You do?”

“My sister’s name was Bianca. She died two years ago, too. She loved hunting and we’re not sure exactly what happened, but she died of an arrow wound. Gods, there was so much blood.”

He never spoke about her with anyone except Hazel since it happened. “We hold a candlelight vigil every December for her.”

Will looked at him. “Michael died in December, too.”

After a few silent moments, Nico spoke softly. “We can hold a joint ceremony for them every December once we’re married.”

Will started to cry again, though this time his heart was swelling.
“Is this a date?” Nico asked as they slid into a booth at the dinner by the beach.

“What else would you call two people who like each other spending time alone together?” Will teased.

“A perfect opportunity for murder because there are no witnesses.”

Will laughed as he sipped his milkshake.

A few customers and staff members instantly recognized Will's laugh and waved.

“How are you, Hank?”

“Never better, Willie.”

“Did he just call you Willie?”

“Forget you heard it, Nicolas.”

They handed the menus to the waiter, who purposely brushed hands with Nico.

Will's eyes narrowed. “You look lovely today.”

“What romantic teen movie did you get that from? All of them?”

“Hey! Romance movies are great. Do you dislike them because they clash with your punk image?”

“I'm not punk, Will.”

“Whatever you say sweetheart. You are a badboy though.”

“You can be my long haired love interest.”

Will smiled and flipped his hair. “You mean inhumanly attractive love interest. My hair is part of what makes me so attractive.”

“I didn't mean to insult your source of pride and joy.”

“You could say its my golden child.”

“You should be a comedian.”

The waiter set their orders of fries and hamburgers on the table.

“I've considered it, but it would take time away from my band.”

“You're in a band?”

“You didn't know? When we were younger, my dad used to make my siblings and I play instruments and sing. We used to preform for all his friends. It was the most adorable thing you've ever seen.”

“No offense Will, but I've heard you sing. It's...unique.” Nico knew insulting his tour guide wasn't a great idea.
“I’m going to have to examine your ears because they are obviously not functioning properly.”

After a ridiculously long ear examination from Will, a servant bursted in thrusting the phone at Nico.

This time it wasn’t Hazel who called, but his father. “Son, I think you should come home.”

“Why dad? Is something wrong?”

Lord Hades’s voice was a whisper. “Yes, Nico. Something is very wrong and I need you to come home.”

“What is it?”

“The less you know the better. Just. Come. Home.”

“What about Will? Is he in danger?”

“Yes, Nico. And so are you if you stay with him.” Lord Hades was becoming irritated.

“I’m not leaving Will behind.”

“Nico you are most stubborn person I know. He can stay with a friend or something.”

Nico immediately thought of Will staying with Jake and jealousy shot through him.

“Why can’t he stay with us?”

Lord Hades’s voice was sharp. “She is hunting Lord Apollo. Don’t you think bringing him here would make her hunt us too?”

“Who is she?”

“I can’t say Nico.”

“Then I’m not coming home.”

“Damnit Nico! She already killed Bianca and there’s no way in hell I’m letting her kill you too. So bring the boy if you have to just get your ass home!”

There was mass panic at the Sun palace. Servants were running in every direction and the noise level was deafening.

“Where is my father?” Will asked hurriedly.

Several servants shrugged and zoomed past him. They were carrying random bits of furniture, medical supplies, and clothing.

Will ran up to his dad’s office where he spent most of his time when he wasn’t with patients.

“What’s going on dad?” He tried catching his breath.

Lord Apollo clutched the side of his face. “I’m sorry, son.”
“What are you talking about?”

Will looked around at the mess that was his father’s office. Papers and diagrams were strewn everywhere. The blinds were shut and every window was sealed tightly.

“I have to go into hiding and so do you.” Lord Apollo continued to shove several of his belongings hurriedly into a carry on bag.

“What? Dad are you okay?”

“She won’t stop until we’re all dead, Will. Tell the others to pack up.” He was shaking his head like a madman.

“Who is she?” Will paused. “Dad do you need me to call a doctor?”

“I’m not speaking her name!” Lord Apollo yelled.

“You’re a king! You don’t have to run from this unnamed murderous lady.” Will tried to reason with his father.

“Will, you don’t understand.” Lord Apollo’s voice was much softer and sadder.

“Maybe it’s because you’re being as ambiguous as possible.”

“Will, promise me you’ll take care of your siblings. Please, Will. Take care of yourself too. I can’t have her do what she did to Michael again.”

“You told me you didn’t know who killed him!”

Lord Apollo was visibly shaken. “You were young, Will. I didn’t want to get you involved. Please forgive me.”

“My BROTHER died! How could you lie to me?” Will’s anger got the best of him.

“He was my son too.”

“Don’t play the mourning father card when day after his funeral you got drunk and hooked up with everyone in the kingdom.”

“I was a mourning father. That was my coping mechanism.” Lord Apollo gritted his teeth.

“You had a funny way of showing it. You’ve never acted like a father to any of us. We are just the result of your promiscuity.”

Lord Apollo’s voice was terrifyingly low. “You don’t know all I’ve done to protect you, Will.”

“I don’t think it worked because we’re being hunted.” Nico’s sarcasm was rubbing off on him.

“Just do what I asked you to, William.” Lord Apollo brushed past Will and left the room without another word.
Good news: I got a new word processor that is 10x faster than my old one and allows me to write on the go. I also figured out the plot, so chapter quality is improving. Enjoy!

“You wear too much damn yellow,” Nico said as he packed the clothing Will was taking out of his closet into a duffel bag.

“I don't comment on your wardrobe.”

“Not out loud at least.”

Nico took the time to look around Will's room. The walls were brightly painted and there were large windows that let let sunlight into every part of the room. The room was pretty clean for that of a teenage boy, except for the desk in the corner. At least what Nico assumed was a desk because he couldn't see anything under the mound of papers and diagrams.

Will stuck out his tongue as he closed the closet.

“Are you taking all these textbooks?” Nico asked pointing to stacks of books on his desk, the floor, and on his bed.

“They have sentimental value! My dad gave them to me when I was like 10.” He shrugged. “He was so proud I was following in his footsteps.” Will added sadly.

“He's still proud of you.”

“Not after the fight we had.”

“Parents fight with their kids all the time, Will. My dad and I just got into a fight about you staying with us.”

“What do you mean?”

“He wanted me to ditch you and I refused to.”

“Why?”

“Because I can’t keep you safe if you’re in another realm, dumbo.” Nico shrugged.

Will clasped his hands together and smiled into an imaginary camera. “My hero.”

☼

“I'll wait out here,” Nico said.

Will nodded and opened the large door to what his siblings liked to call the 'Apollo Cabin'.

Having to say goodbye to his siblings was breaking Will's heart.
He hugged each one of them twice and made sure had everything they needed.

He attempted to look stern. “Promise me you’ll call when you arrive so I know you're safe.”

“Will, the whole point of going into hiding is not being able to be located or contacted. You know there is a murderous lady after us.”

“I don’t care! You better call or I'll track you down myself and shoot you with one of dad’s gold arrows.”

“Okay, mom. We promise to call.” Austin rolled his eyes.

“I sure hope he gets some dick. It’ll help him relax,” said Cassandra.

“Agreed,” said Aria.

“There are children present!” Will pointed to tiny Abigail, who just turned eight.

“Just try not get pregnant before the wedding or you won't fit in your dress.” Alexander advised.

Will's face turned bright red. “If that maniac lady wasn't trying to kill us all, I'd kill you both.”

They just laughed in reply.

“Seriously though, be safe guys. Alex don't let Abby out of your sight.”

“Sir, yes sir.” Alexander saluted.

“When are we coming home Will?” Abby asked clutching her stuffed animal.

Will kneeled and cupped her cheeks in his palms. “I don't know sweetie. But hopefully soon.”

Abby didn't seem very convinced, but she was comforted by Will's gentleness.

This was why Will sort of hated being the oldest. He was expected to be the leader and he wasn't a leader. Michael had been the oldest and a natural leader. After he died, Will became the oldest and was failing to be the leader Michael was.

“I'm going to miss you guys so much.” Will blinked back tears.

He'd already lost one sibling to that maniac woman, and now she was taking the other ones away from him too.

“We'll miss you too, Will. You nag a lot, but you're still like the best brother ever.”

“Thanks you guys.”

He ruffled their hair for for good measure and hugged them one last time.

He turned to leave. “Will?”

“Yes?”

“Enjoy spending time with your rich Italian sugar daddy!”

“Kayla!”
At exactly midnight, a black car with tinted windows pulled up to the palace.

Will was pretty scared to be quite honest. He wasn't scared of the dark, it just made him uncomfortable. He didn't like not knowing what was lurking in the shadows. Especially now that some mysterious lady wanted he and his entire family dead, Will wasn't feeling too fond of the dark.

Nico on the other hand thrived in the shadows. He wasn't afraid of anything, Will observed, except people. He couldn't understand them and they weren't very nice to him, so he avoided them at all costs.

“Will!” Nico snapped to get his attention. “Let's go.”

“What?! It's dark outside.” Will internally cringed at how much he sounded like a four year old.

“Running away in broad daylight isn't exactly our best option, especially when we have no idea who is out to kill you.”

“Oh.” That made a lot of sense.

Will tried his hardest to be stealthy as they exited the palace. Then, he saw Nico.

“You shouldn't be lifting boxes that heavy!”

“Shh! We are escaping and that is what you're worried about?”

“Sorry, Lou Ellen says I worry too much.”

“She's right.”

Nico loaded Will's boxes into the trunk of the car, while Will pretended not to check out his muscles. He closed the trunk in one swift motion.

Nico opened the car door and slid inside. “Thanks, Jules Albert.”

“Uh, Nico. He looks like a skeleton.” Will whispered as he sat down, leaving a comfortable amount of space between them.

Nico leaned over and whispered in Will's ear. “He is a skeleton.”

Will giggled. “That tickles.”

Nico rolled his eyes, but slid just an inch closer to Will.

“That's...unnatural. Can he speak?” Will's curiosity got the best of him.

Nico nodded and laid his head back against the headrest.

“Does he eat?”

Nico nodded at Will with drowsy eyes.

“How does he breathe if he doesn't have lungs?”

Nico shrugged. “Ask him.”
Will glanced at their driver with a horrified expression. “I'm not doing that.”

Nico was already fast asleep.

Not wanting to engage in awkward small talk with Nico's skeletal chauffeur, Will scooted closer to the small boy and placed Nico’s head on his shoulder.

They arrived at the Underworld Palace sometime in the wee hours of the morning. Sluggishly, they helped or at least tried to help servants carry Will's luggage up the million palace staircases.

Will knew he should unpack, but right now his body was screaming sleep. He was more than willing to oblige, but since this had been last minute no one had bothered to specify the sleeping arrangements.

Nico turned to him and rubbed his eyes. “Umm... do you want to sleep with me?”

“What?”

Nico's face turned red, but he was too tired to care. “Like in my bed.”

“Sure.”

They stumbled carelessly down the hallway to Nico's bedroom. Nico laid down first and closed his tired eyes. He registered the bed dipping under Will's weight.

“WILL NO.” Nico screamed as he felt Will's hands hovering near his stomach.

Will went in for the kill and Nico couldn't contain the fit of giggles that erupted.

“Will... P-Please... I can't take this,” Nico gasped.

Will just smirked down at the panting Nico.

“W-why are you d-doing this to m-me?” He desperately tried to wrench Will's fingers off his skin.

Will shrugged. “I had a feeling you were ticklish.”

“This is t-torture.” Tears were streaming down Nico's cheeks from laughing so hard.

Finally, Will took pity on him and stopped his extended tickle session.

Nico closed his eyes to get some needed sleep.

“I'm a cuddler.” Will whispered in his ear.

Nico made a face but didn't protest when Will scooted closer, wrapped an arm around him, and pulled him closer until they were chest to chest.

“This isn't cuddling this is you squeezing the life out of me.” He murmured sleepily.

“Shh, just enjoy my warmth.”

Will held him in silence for a few moments, cherishing the newfound intimacy.

“Will?” Nico whispered to him in the dark.

“Yes?” Will's voice was raspy above him.
“I'm scared.”

“Me too,” Will replied softly, “But I'm sure we'll be fine.”

Nico was out like a light seconds later.

He knew it was a little creepy but Will marveled at how delicate Nico's features were up close. His lips were soft without the deep frown and his eyelashes were wispy little angel hairs. Holding Nico in his arms just felt so right. He couldn't let some lunatic take this away from him too.
“Are we calling off the wedding?” Lady Demeter asked.

“We have bigger problems than the wedding right now, Lady Demeter.” said Lord Hades.

“I don’t see what all the fuss is about.”

“Someone is attempting to murder the royal family of one of our neighboring realms, who was a great ally of ours. I think that is worthy of some fuss.”

“That was hardly a family. Where was the mother figure? There was no mother figure just a bunch of whores at the palace for a night.”

Will's back stiffened but he remained silent.

“Mother!” Lady Persephone cried. “We have guests.”

“I'm only speaking the truth, Phone. Apollo was a manwhore. He would sleep with anything with a hole.”

Nico glanced at Will, who was showing no emotion except a trace of red on his cheeks.

“That is William's father you are speaking about.” Persephone tried to reason with her mother, Lady Demeter rolled her eyes.

Lord Hades tried to intervene. “My children are present at this table Lady Demeter, so I suggest you watch your tongue.”

“I suggest you make sure William doesn’t take after his father before you let him marry into the family. We can't have two manwhores in the family.” She raised her eyebrows at Lord Hades.

Lord Hades stood up. “Get out. Leave. Now.”

“Excuse me?”

“You heard me. Pack your bags and get out of my realm.”

“Fine. But I'm taking my daughter with me.”

“You aren't taking me anywhere.”

“After all the times he's been unfaithful, you're choosing him over me? I see how it is.”

“I'm not choosing anyone!”

There was nothing Persephone hated more than being stuck in the middle of arguments between her mother and her husband.

Lord Demeter threw the silverware she was holding onto the table with a loud clang as she stomped out of the room.

“My apologies, William” Persephone said. “Speaking about your father in that manner was completely inappropriate.”
“It's alright.” Will replied as politely as he could.

“You're welcome to stay with us as long as you'd like.” Lord Hades offered a tired smile that looked more like a grimace.

“Thank you, Lord Hades.” Will bowed his head in respect.

As he left the room, Lord Hades gave Nico a long look that said **You might want to think twice about getting married, kid.**

☼

Nico sat on the floor of his bedroom typing quickly on his laptop.

Will sat across from him with his nose buried in some medical book.

“Annabeth says there are rumors her realm that Lord Kronos is rising from the dead.” Will gossiped.

Nico looked up. “I don't believe that.”

“Neither do I. Our mystery killer is a female.” Will's voice said *duh.*

After a while, he asked about something he'd noticed. “Do you and Annabeth not get along?”

“Annabeth and I are great friends, Will. Why would you even suggest that?”

“You cringe a little every time someone mentions her and Percy.”

Nico mentally kicked himself. He was supposed to be letting go of all his built up resentment, but apparently he still had some more to work on.

“That's unfortunate.”

Will gave him a strange look but didn't prod.

“Who else could it be?” Will asked as Nico stood up.

“Will, our dads want us to stay out of this.”

“They also lied to us about the circumstances of the deaths of our siblings. Why do we need to obey them? Also, when have you ever listened to anybody?”

“Point taken.” Nico tilted his head.

“Who would want my father dead?”

“A lot of people. Most of them wouldn't turn to murder though.”

Will couldn't help but agree. His dad was an asshole with an ego bigger than all the realms put together.

“When investigating a murder, detectives always start with lovers and immediate family.” Nico stated.

“I have an aunt named Artemis.” Will supplied.
Nico nodded, encouraging him to go on.

“I've seen her like twice and my dad says she leads a group of lesbians. That's all I know.”

Nico typed in the name. “Uh, okay. It's says here, she's a skilled huntress and frequently visits the wilderness.”

It couldn’t be a coincidence that Bianca had died of an arrow wound. Could it?

“That's pretty ambiguous.” was Will’s response. “I don't really see any motives for wanting to kill my father and all his children.”

“What would be a motive for wanting to kill your brother and all your nieces and nephews?”

Nico tried to convince himself not to jump to conclusions.

“I don't have a clue. Can't we just ask your dad who it is?” Will suggested.

Nico's eyes went wide. “Absolutely not. He wouldn't say a word to us.”

Will sighed. “Do you have any other possible suspects?”

“How many of your dads ex lovers can you name?”

“About a dozen or so.”

“There's a start.”

☼

Hazel and Nico sipped hot chocolate across from each other in a tiny café.

“Tell me more about you and Will.”

“He's no Prince Charming, but he's a nice guy.”

“Can you see yourself being...romantically involved with him?”

“I guess so.” He shrugged.

Hazel looked at him suspiciously. “What do you mean you guess so?”

“I'm not sure if we are still getting married because of, you know, the whole situation.” He made finger quotations

“This is the first scandal we've had in forever.” People in the realm are going crazy. The newspapers are publishing all these outlandish conspiracy theories, it's madness.”

“Weren't out births scandals?”

Hazel tilted her head. “No, everyone has children out of wedlock. Except, Lady Hera.”

“How come Persephone and Dad never had any kids together? They've been married for ages.”

Hazel shrugs. “I'm not sure to be honest. After Bianca, Phone says dad was scared of having another baby.”
Nico nodded.

“You look stressed. Are you worried about Will?”

“I'm fine.”

“You know you can tell me if something's bothering you.”

Nico really wanted to tell Hazel what was going on, but he knew getting her involved wasn't safe. He really didn't want to lose his other sister

“I know, Hazel. I know.”

“I'm trying not to prod these days, but you are making it very difficult for me.”

Nico smiled softly. “I keep forgetting I'm your older brother. Sometimes you it feels like I'm the baby sibling.”

Hazel laughed and raised her eyebrows. “You are Will's baby.”

“Hazel can I ask you something?”

Hazel sat up and smiled. “Now this is better. What's on your mind?”

“How'd you know you were over Sammy?”

Hazel's smile faded. “This isn't about Percy is it?”

Nico's shoulders slump. “It's like I'm a hundred percent sure I'm over him and then someone will say something or he'll smile and I just...” He rambled.

Hazel touched his hand. “Things are moving really fast for you right now, Nico. Just don't rush into a relationship until you're ready.”

“You're the best, Hazel.”

“Frank says the same thing every night.”

Nico almost spit out his milkshake. “Hazel!”

“I'm sorry, Nico. What I meant to say was thank you kind brother.”

Nico wasn't listening, he was too busy plotting how he would kill Frank for sleeping with his sister.
Will had been trying to teach Nico how to shoot an arrow for the past two hours.

The Courtyard was empty except for them because the early spring heat was unbearable. Will had decided to drag a protesting Nico outside for some outdoor activity because Bianca's old archery target was still standing in the lush green lawn directly across from the fountain.

The heat was starting to get to Nico. “It's a stupid arrow, why can't it just fly?!”

“You need to be more patient. Here try again.” Will handed him another arrow.

“I-ju-i-it-jus-fuck.” Nico gave up on words and just growled angrily.

“If it makes you feel better, I'm not good at archery either.” Will spoke in his most soothing voice.

“It doesn't.” He turned back to the target and glared at it, as if that would help.

“You must have been fun at Little League.” Will raised his eyebrows.

Nico rolls his eyes. “Do I look like I played sports? No.”

“Your six pack suggests otherwise.” It slips out before Will can even realize what he just said and how creepy it sounded.

Nico rolled his eyes. “When have you even seen my stomach?”

Will turned back to the target. “Back to the arrow, your stance is good, but try rotating the elbow of your bow arm.”

“Answer my question, Solace.”

Will blurted out the first thing that came to mind, which happened to be “Your eyes, so big and chocolate brown, remind me of a delectable baked good.”

Nico put his hands on his hips and let's go of the bow. “Excuse me, Will. First of all, that's not what I asked. Second, what are you saying?”

Will edges backwards until he almost falls into the fountain. “Your sassy remarks warm my heart like a furnace on a cold winter day.”

Nico makes a split second decision and starts sprinting for the other side of the Courtyard, carefully avoiding Persephone's tulips.

Will runs right after him, screaming. “Your hair, so dark, glints with luminescence that matches the sparkle in your eyes!”

Nico covers his ears, doubled over out of breath. “Will, I'm begging. Just stop.”

“How about no?” Will's voice sounds close, but Nico can't hear his footsteps anymore.

Nico realizes what is about to happen a minute too late. Will slams into him from behind and he hits the ground instantly. They roll around on the grass like four year olds for a few minutes.
“What was... the purpose of that?” Nico says trying to push Will off him. Having a hot guy on top of him was totally okay with Nico, but the being pinned to grass littered with insects was not.

Will shrugs. “You weren't appreciating the poetry I spent days writing for you.”

Nico stops moving and cranes his neck to look at Will. “Why'd you write me poetry?”

Will's cheeks go red. “Forget I even said anything.”

Nico sits up on the grass. “Now I'm interested. What convinced you that I would be a good subject for a poem?”

Will shrugs and states at the palace walls. “Who said anything about a poem?”

Nico gives him his most unimpressed expression.

Will puts his hands up in surrender. “Fine!”

Nico looks at him expectantly.

Will looks at the ground and nudges a rock with his shoe. “I...don't actually have a good explanation for that.”

☼

Nico debated knocking on Will's door awkwardly before just pushing the door open. “It's me.”

He finds Will sprawled out on his bed strumming a harp terribly, wearing just a white t-shirt and wave print boxers. Propped up on a bunch of white fluffy pillows, he reminded Nico of a male model in some beach edition of a magazine.

“Howdy Partner.” He strummed the harp.

He's not sure where to start. He just opts to ignore Will's lack of clothes and subpar musical talent. “Uh...Will, I know someone who might be able to help us.”

Will sits up. “That's fantastic.”

“There's a catch.”

Will's shoulders drooped. “Of course. What is it?”

Nico isn't sure how Will will react to this part at all. “They're dead.”

Will furrows his eyebrows together. “So how can they help us?”

Nico has never been good with words. “They were killed by her so they know who she is.”

Will is officially confused. “But dead people can't talk.”

Nico shifts slightly. “Uh... I can communicate with spirits.”

Will's blue eyes go wide and he looks completely baffled. “What? I think I'm missing something here.”

Nico feels uneasiness pooling in his stomach. For someone who claims to not give a fuck about anyone or anything (except Hazel), he sure does give a lot of fucks about what Will thinks of him.
*How does one explain it?* “The same way you can heal people, I can communicate with dead people.”

Will places a hand over his heart as he listens. “Oh my.”

Nico just stares at him awkwardly for a few minutes while Will processes the new information. What does this mean for whatever it is they have? Who wants to date a ghost whisperer/medium?

“So how did you find this spirit?”

“I asked around.” Nico says simply.

“Where?” *Where does one ask for a spirit?*

“The underworld.”

Will gives him a blank look. “There’s an underworld?”

Nico look at him strangely. “Where did you think dead people went?”

Will looks at him sheepishly. “The ground.”

“That’s where their bodies go. Their spirits go to the underworld.”

Will looks out the window by his bed, feeling embarrassed. “All this time I thought it was a nickname for your realm.”

Nico smiles softly. “You precious thing, Will.”

Will faced Nico again and pouts. “Does everyone know this?”

Nico is torn between comforting his friend/maybe more/fiancé and making fun of him. “Ninety-nine percent of people do.”

Will is in shock. “I just can't believe this.”

“I feel like I just blew your mind.”

“You did. My entire life has been a lie.” Will bites his lips and rocks back and forth.

“Will it's not that serious.”

“You don't understand, Nico.”

Nico huffs and resists the urge to roll his eyes.

“Do you wanna go to the chasm tomorrow?” Nico tries to steer conversation back on track.

“The what?”

Nico completely lacks the ability to sugar coat. “It's the cliff between life and death.”

The corners of Will's mouth draw apart sharply and a *sss* sound escapes. “That sounds scary.”

“It really isn't. Plus, That's the only way we'll be able to meet this spirit.”

That was Nico idea of soothing.
Why was Nico currently running around the palace like a madman? He lost his best friend.

He had expected to see Will in the Courtyard, but he wasn't there. He checked Will's room, then the infirmary, but still no Will. He even checked the kitchen and bathroom.

He ran up to a green eyed servant carrying a bouquet of flowers, probably Persephone's latest creation.

“Have you seen, Will?”

“Who?”

“Tall. Tan. Blonde hair blue eyes. Smiles a lot.”

“Never seen him.”

Nico huffed impatiently. “Thanks anyway.”

The only place the hadn't checked was Hazel's room because he didn't want another run in with a naked Hazel and Frank. Maybe Hazel knew where Will was? Was Will worth that risk? He kind of was.

“Will! I've been looking everywhere for you!” Nico was aware of his wild hand gestures, but he didn't care.

“Did you miss me?” Will blew him a kiss and smiled.

Nico glared at him. “You could've told me where you were going.”

Hazel looked at her brother. “I only borrowed your loverboy of for a few minutes. Sheesh.”

Nico pretended he didn't hear that. “What's going on in here anyway?”

Will and Hazel exchanged a look. “Hazel is showing me your baby pictures.”

“Stop right now! How could you, Hazel?”

“C'mon Nico. He's your fiancé He needs to see them.”

Will picked up a picture of Nico dressed like a pirate for Halloween. “Aww, you were so cute.”

Nico crossed his arms and pouted despite his blush. “Shut up, Will.”

“Your cheeks were so chubby.” He pinched Nico's cheeks to make his point.

“Ow, that hurts Will.” Nico rubbed his face.

“Look at this one!” Hazel passed him a picture of four year old Nico eating ice cream in his pajamas.

“Your hair was so curly.” Will ruffled Nico's dark hair that had lost some of it's previous texture.

Hazel smirked, a mischievous glint in her golden eyes. “I remember he couldn't sleep by himself until he was twelve.”

Will's head shot up and the excitement in his voice was unmistakable. “Really?”
Nico tried to defend himself as his secret was exposed. “I was lonely okay?”

“We won't have to worry about that now will we?” She looked from Nico to Will, and back to Nico.

“I'll put him right to sleep,” Will said with a wink.

Nico's cheeks burned. “You two are the worst. I swear!”

Will picked up one from the pile. “What's this one?”

Hazel tilted her head and shuddered. “Our dad had an important guest visiting, so he assigned Nico, Bianca, and I to be the welcome committee. We must of been like five or six, and she gave us the creeps.”

Flashback

“Welcome to the Jewel Realm, Lady Hecate.” chorused Nico, Hazel, and Bianca.

Nico was dressed in a tiny black tuxedo with little skeleton cuff links, and gel in his hair. Bianca and Hazel wore matching frilly dresses, ballet shoes, and black flowers in their hair.

Lady Hecate wore a floor length black lace dress, a matching black veil, and black gloves. She wore dozens of black diamonds on her neck, ears, and hands. Her spiked heels clicked across the tile flooring as she strode across the room with her shoulders back and head held high. The smell of heavy perfume wafted followed her.

Her voice was low and honey-like, but sharp as she leaned down to look at the children. “Aren't you pleasant children?”

“Who is pleasant?” Nico whispered to Bianca, who even though she was only five, knew everything.

“Pleasant means nice, fratellino.”

The energetic boy spoke slowly because one language was hard, but two made his tiny head spin. “Lady Aphro-ditee said we were cute, not please-ant.”

They held a large basket of rose petals, which Bianca and Hazel thrusted toward her. Nico just picked up a handful and gleefully threw them in the air.

She smiled under her veil. “I prefer my flowers wilted.”

“What does wilted mean?” Nico whispered to Bianca.

Lady Hecate answered for her by leaning down whispering harshly. “Dead.”

She laughed when she saw the terrified expression on the children's faces.

The children watched her stride away. Hopefully, daddy would make them hot chocolate when he finished working.

Nico turned to his new sister, who was the most fun person he knew. He attended all of her tea parties even though she made him brush his hair. “Hazeeel, why would people want dead flowers?”

Hazel shrugged. “Grown ups are weird.”
Nico nodded in agreement. Sisters were never ever wrong.
Love Is In the Air

Chapter Summary

This is the longest chapter I've ever written.

Nico was sleeping when he heard a knock on his bedroom door. For a second he thought it was Will, that kid was always early and never knocked.

He was about to throw a pillow, when Lord Hades strode into the room covering his eyes. “Are you decent?”

“Yes father.” Nico didn't know what he'd done to deserve this.

Lord Hades uncovered his eyes and nodded. “I need a favor.”

“I have...plans with Will.” That sounded like a date, but Nico would hardly call going to chasm and communicating with a dead spirit a date.

Lord Hades nodded again. “I understand, but do you think you could reschedule them?”

Nico was stubborn at his best. “They're kind of important.”

“Please son?” Lord Hades had resorted to begging.

“You even haven't told me what you want me to do.”

“I need a package delivered to Lady Aphrodite.”

Nico didn't see the reason for all this fuss. “So mail it.”

“It's precious. It needs to be hand delivered.”

“So why don't you deliver it?” Nico, prior to contrary belief, was not his father's little servant.

Lord Hades wasn't expecting all these questions. “Persephone isn't happy with the idea of me going to the Love Realm without her.”

“She doesn't trust you.” Nico couldn't exactly blame her. His existence was a testament to his dad's unfaithfulness.

“I wouldn't have phrased it that way but yes. Will you?”

Nico tried to think of any possible excuse. “I don't just want to leave Will here by himself.”

“It's not like anyone would harm him here, but I don't see why he couldn't come with you if he wants to.”

Maybe because there's a maniac killer after him? Nico knew the package must be important because his father would say anything to convince him to deliver it.
Nico was tired of this. “Alright I'll do it.”

The grateful look in his father's eyes was new. Lord Hades handed him a small square black box that easily fit into his pocket. The box was sealed airtight, preventing Nico from getting a peek at its contents.

“Thanks... son.” The word sounded foreign to coming out of Lord Hades's mouth. “Tell William I said hello.”

☼

After losing Will for probably the millionth time this week, Nico found him in the palace library of all places.

Will didn't even hear Nico approaching. “Uh, Will?”

Will hissed. “You're too loud!”

Nico was tempted to say he was a prince and Will could kiss his ass, but he decided to hold his tongue so he wouldn't be on his own. He lowered his voice to a tone that resembled a whisper. “Sorry. Will?”

“Yes.” Will's voice was distracted as he browsed the bookshelf.

“There's been a change of plans. My dad needs me to deliver something to Lady Aphrodite for him.”

Will looked up from a book he was reading and wrinkled his nose. “Have fun.”

Nico rolled his eyes. “You're coming with me, so get packing.”

Nico wasn't good with words, didn't we already establish that?

“Are you a romantic?” Despite his snippy comment, Will was secretly pleased.

Once Will had finished packing for the overnight trip, Nico turned to him. “You don't actually have to come if you don't want to.”

“What kind of friend would I be if I let you walk into that alone?”

Friend. Will hated that stupid word so much. He didn't want to be Nico’s friend for crying out loud. He wanted to take him on dates and cuddle him. But Nico was finally letting him in, and Will didn't want to ruin it by pushing him too far.

Maybe Will had a different reason for going to the Love Realm. Sure, lying about his motives was bad, but his intentions themselves were good. It was called the Love Realm for a reason. Maybe, just maybe if the fates were generous, seeing all the couples and matchmaking would awaken something in Nico. Something that would make him want to confess his feelings or lack thereof for Will. However, as Will knew all too well, the fates were never generous, they were cruel.

“I don't see what the big deal is?” In Nico's eyes the Love Realm wasn't all it was cracked to be.

Will shook his head. “Just you wait and see.”

☼

The minute the car had dropped them off at the gates of the Love Realm, Nico knew he'd made a
mistake. The realm represented everything he despised.

The sun was high, the skyline was stunning, and Will couldn't feel more content with Nico by his side.

That was until blue eyed boy with dark hair approached them. He was taller than Nico, obviously fit, and not quite as tan as Will. His skin was clear and his shiny hair had loose curls in it.

“I assume you are Prince Nicholas?” He spoke with an accent Nico would describe as French, even though Nico hadn't heard of anyone speaking French since before Kronos the Tyrant had made languages other than Greek illegal.

“Yes. You can just call me Nico.”

“Hi Nico, I'm Prince Mitchell and I'll be your guide.” He kissed a startled Nico's hand. “It's a pleasure to meet you.”

“I'm Prince William,” interjected an apparently invisible son of Apollo.

“Hi Will.” Mitchell looked at him for approximately half a second before turning back to Nico and smiling. “Shall we get started?”

Nico nodded and Will could make out a faint trace of a blush on his cheeks.

Mitchell lead them through a fragrant rose garden. “We grow all the roses that go into our perfumes here.”

“That's really cool.” *Since when was Nico interested in flowers and perfume?*

Mitchell picked a rose off a nearby bush and placed it in Nico's dark hair.

Nico blushed. “Thank you.”

They were five minutes into the tour and Will felt his blood boiling. Mitchell was being completely obvious in his flirting with Nico. The side smiles, occasionally hand touching, eyelash batting, and even freaking hip wiggling was getting to Will a lot more than he cared to admit. Will had never been a violent person but if Mitchell did not back off Nico soon, Will would end him.

Mitchell lead them down a few cobblestone streets with names Nico couldn't even pronounce that were filled with tiny shops and enthusiastic shoppers. He glanced inside the nearest boutique, and was surprised to see that clothing styles spanning many time periods.

As a whole, the realm had a retro feel. The townhouses and brownstones were painted bright colors, hedges and lawns were groomed, shiny expensive cars were parked in front of every house, and beautiful families were everywhere. Walking through the realm was like walking into magazine. Common civilians could easily be models in the latest designer clothing fresh off a runway.

It was nearly evening when the trio reached what Nico could only describe as the metropolis of all metropolises. Thousands of sky high buildings overlooked the harbor.

“We call this Times Square,” said Mitchell.

“Wow,” was all Nico could say.

Mitchell steered them toward the tallest building that had a pink awning. “This is Love Headquarters.”
Mitchell held the door for Nico. “After you.”

Will almost smacked him upside the head when he saw him checking out Nico’s ass. Only Will was allowed to check out Nico's ass.

The receptionist in the lobby was a pretty girl with long black hair parted in the center and tucked behind her ears, and big brown eyes. Her smile was warm as she beckoned toward them. “Hi I'm Silena, how can I help you?”

Nico felt obligated to smile back. “We're looking for Lady Aphrodite.”

“She’s in a meeting right now, but she'll be out shortly. Feel free to have a makeover in the meantime.” She gestured to map of the building hanging on the wall.

“Makeovers?” Nico felt dread pooling in his stomach.

“Mom insists her guests switch up their appearances before they meet with her.” She laughed at Nico's horrified expression. “It's not that bad, trust me. Take them to the salon Mitch.”

The Hair Salon was on the second floor. The walls were painted white, with large mirrors mounted on them. In front of the mirrors were black leather swivel chairs that gave the room a modern feel. Gold lights dangled from the ceiling. Everything screamed luxurious except for the fact that the employees were sitting on the floor playing cards.

Mitchell cleared his throat at them and looked at Nico apologetically.

The three teenagers on the floor rolled their eyes before casually standing up and stretching.

A Cherokee girl with colorful feathers braided into her chocolate hair smiled at them. Her grudge clothes clashed with the elegant pastel decor and Nico didn't feel like the odd one out for once. “Hey Neeks! Who's this cutie?” He looked at Will.

“Hi Piper. This is Will, my um...fiancé.”

Will was relieved to find out that he was in fact not invisible and Nico actually remembered who he was.

She looked around. “What brings ya here of all places?”

“Dad wanted me to deliver something.” Nico rolled his eyes.

“I forgot to introduce you.” She turned to a blonde girl that looked about fourteen. “This is Lacy. You already met Mitch the Bitch.”

Said bitch rolled his eyes at the nickname. Will was pleased.

“And this is Audrey.” She pointed to a curvy brunette girl that reminded him a little of Reyna.

“Hi Audrey.” Will flashed her a smile in the hopes of making Nico jealous. Nico didn't even notice. She smiled and waved softly.

Nico poked the hardwood flooring with his shoe. “Uh, Silena said we have to get a makeover.”

Nico sat in the salon chair obediently. Piper draped a pink cape over him and leaned his head back to wash his hair.

Mitchell studied Nico in the chair. “I'm thinking a modern quiff.”

“Good thinking little bro.” Piper high fived him before opening a drawer and pulling out scissors.

Nico tried to stay strong through his haircut. His hair was kind of his safety net. It made him unapproachable and didn't draw attention to him. What more could he ask for?

Piper removed a large amount of his hair in record time. She finished him off with a spritz of hairspray. “You're done cupcake.”

Gingerly, he touched the top of his head. He felt...different without his wild hair.

“You look great.” Mitchell beamed at him as Nico stood up.

“William!” Piper called in a faux English accent.

Will plopped into the seat Nico had vacated.

Piper looked at him and tilted her head. “You just need a good trim and your bangs shaped up.”

“But I like my bangs!”

“If you wanna keep your man, you gotta lose the bangs. Plus, you don't have a say in this.”

Will knew better than to argue with someone holding scissors. Will admitted defeated and got settled into the chair when his gaze flickered to where Mitchell was all but holding Nico and running his fingers through his hair.

“Jealous much?” Piper's voice above him caught his attention.

“I'm not jealous!” Will argued.

“You've been staring down my baby brother for the past fifteen minutes, Will. You're jealous.”

Will hung his head in shame. “You're right. I just don't like how he's flirting with Nico. And Nico's not stopping him. It's really bothering me.”

“Besides physical attraction,” Will cringed as she went on. “They have nothing in common, trust me.”

“Nico and I don't have much in common either.” Will pointed out.

“Yes, you guys do.” She looked at him gently as she snipped away at his gold locks.

Will was suspicious now. “How would you know?”

She smiled at him. “We're not called Children of Love for no reason. We can sense the chemistry between people. That's why we're so good at matchmaking.”

Will hadn't considered that. “Oh. Trying to get him to open up has been an uphill battle.”

She gave him a knowing look. “The best things in life take the longest.”

“I guess you're right.” He felt like he could trust Piper.
“I am.” She laughed.

Will smiled at his reflection in the mirror in awe for a moment. “Thanks. I look sexier than before if that's even possible.”

“I think whether or not you get some from Nico will be the judge of that.” She wiggled her eyebrows and winked.

A tall girl in spiked stilettos and a petticoat walked in. “Lady Aphrodite will see you now.”

“See you Pipes.” Will and Nico chorused.

She waved in response.

Mitchell placed a hand on Nico's shoulder and Will had to resist the urge to break it. At least he could heal it, but it wasn't like he would.

Mitchell's smile was dazzling. “It was a pleasure meeting you, Nico.”

“Thank you for the tour. You were a great tour guide. And uh thanks for the hair cut.”

Mitchell turned to him. “You too, Will.”

“Yeah whatever.” Will flipped him off before turning and following Nico out of the hair salon.

☼

Lady Aphrodite's office on the top floor wasn't an office, it was a penthouse suite. Windows replaced the walls and gave a gorgeous view of the ocean and surrounding buildings. A silver projector screen displaying an assortment of fashions designs, probably next season's trends, dangled from the ceiling.

White couches formed a u-shape around the perimeter of the room, and there was a coffee table in the center decorated with several vases and books.

Lady Aphrodite sat on one of the couches and gazed out at the harbor. She wore a black blazer, a pencil skirt, and heels. Lady Aphrodite was the most beautiful woman Nico had ever seen. She was prettier than Hazel, and that was saying something. In a way, she reminded him a lot of Hazel, with her curly hair collected in a sophisticated updo and glowy dark skin.

“She looks like my mom before she was sick,” whispered Will.

Nico gave him a questioning look.

“My mom has long blonde hair and gray eyes. Hopefully you'll meet her soon.” Will said as if that clarified things.

Just as Nico was about to tell Will to get his eyes checked, Lady Aphrodite turned to them, a latte in her hand. “I've been expecting a certain wedding invitation in the mail for weeks now. Have a seat boys.”

They sat on the love seat opposite her, and put as much distance between themselves as possible.

“The wedding is...kind of postponed.” Will tried to explain.


*How should he phrase it? “Uh... A family dilemma.”*
Lady Aphrodite sighed. “Family is something isn't it?"

Will nodded vigorously.

“Well, hopefully that gets sorted out soon. I wouldn't want to miss your wedding.” She smiled at them. “Would you boys care for some pastries?”

Will shook his head politely. “No thank you.”

She gave Nico a once over. “Piper did a good job on you. Don't you agree, Will?”

“Yeah, he looks...” Will couldn't think of the right word.

“Sexy.” Lady Aphrodite finished.

“Yeah.” That was less sexual than the word Will had in mind, but it wasn't the place or the time.

Nico felt completely uncomfortable under her scrutinizing gaze. This was exactly why he liked his old hair. No one paid attention to him. He could barely see them and they sure as hell didn't want to see him. Then he remembered why he was there in the first place.

“Lady Aphrodite, this is from my father.” He handed her the little black box.

She popped the box open with ease, and smiled at the large black diamond. “Tell him I said thank you. It's a beauty, isn't it?”

“Gorgeous.” said Will.

Nico was too busy wondering why his dad had made him go through all this trouble to bring her a diamond to answer.

A servant brought in a platter of colorful drinks in champagne flutes. She placed one in front of both Nico and Will.

Will eyed the glasses suspiciously.

Lady Aphrodite noticed this. “William darling, I'm not trying to poison you.”

“Sorry, Lady Aphrodite. I've just never seen drinks quite like these.” Will smiled politely.

Lady Aphrodite giggled. “Of course not. These are the newest craze in our realm. Try them and see for yourselves.”

Will brought the glass to his lips and hesitantly took a sip. He gagged immediately at the sugary taste. He could feel a headache coming on, but Lady Aphrodite was looking at him expectantly. “These are very...sweet.”

Will was somewhat horrified when he saw that Nico had downed the entire glass and was working on a second. Diabetes immediately came to mind.

He mouthed. “That's a lot of sugar!”

Nico rolled his eyes and continued to drink the frothy liquid.

Lady Aphrodite stood up in all her glory. “If you'll excuse me boys, I have a realm to run and and runways to grace. It was lovely of you to visit, do come again. Au revoir.”
“It was a pleasure meeting you.” Will bowed to her politely.

As soon as she was out of earshot, Will told Nico “Stop! You're going to have a headache.”

Nico shrugged. “I don't care.”

“Yeah, well I'm going to have to deal with your grumpy ass in the morning. So, you're done.”

It wasn't until he forcefully took the glass from Nico that he realized something wasn't right. Nico usually avoided physical contact, but now he seemed to be enjoying it.

He casually placed an arm on Will's shoulder, and poked his cheek.

Will shrugged his arms off and stood. “Let's go to our room. You need to lay down.”

Traveling in between the realms at night wasn't safe, especially for members of the royal families. Thieves and conspiracists thrived at the borders at night.

Nico didn't budge. “Carry me.”

“I'm not carrying you.” Will felt like he was dealing with a two year old, not his fiancé.

Nico pouted. “Why not?”

“Because,” Will started but realized this conversation was going nowhere. Nico wasn't in the best state, and making him walk up all the stairs would exert his body unnecessarily.

He leaned down, gathered Nico in his arms bridal style, and lifted him off the chair. His body groaned with effort. “Gods you're heavy.”

Nico giggled. “I like your arms.”

Will shifted Nico's weight in his arms. “Thanks.”

Nico put his head on Will's chest. “You smell really nice.”

“I shower every now and again.”

After what felt like ages, they reached their hotel room. Will tried to support Nico in one arm long enough to dig through his pocket to find the room key. Eventually he found it and unlocked the door in one swift motion.

Nico giggled. “Daddy.”

Will looked down at him. “Do me a favor and don't ever call me that again.”

Nico nuzzled him. “What should I call you?”

Will decided that he could have a little fun with this. “The incredibly handsome Doctor Solace.”

Since Nico didn't have any actual bodily injuries, Will decided to just let him sleep it off, which turned out to be a mistake.

Nico stood near the end of the bed. “I want to sleep naked.”

Normally, Will would have absolutely no objections to that. But, Nico was under the influence of some drug and Will wasn't about to take advantage of that.
“You have to wear clothes!”

“Why?”

Will didn't have a good answer for that. “Because you have to.”

Nico whined. “But you're the only one that'll see me.”

Will's face went red. “I said you have to put clothes on. End of story.”

Nico giggled. “You're so bossy. I like it.”

Will was trying not to let Nico's flirting get with him worked up, but dear gods it was hard. He tried to seem nonchalant. “That's nice. Now lay down.”

“Yes sir.”

Will climbed into bed on the opposite side of the intoxicated Nico and closed his eyes, ready to drift off.

Nico was on him in a second. He placed his head on Will's shoulder and wrapped his legs around Will's hips. He nuzzled Will's neck and ran his fingers over Will's chest. Will was too stunned to even respond.

“Will,” whispered Nico in the dark. “You have freckles.”

“Yes I do. You can touch them if you'd like.”

Nico moved his head to trace the freckles on Will's shoulder before leaning down and kissing them.

“Nico?”

He lifted his lips off Will to respond. “Yes?”

“What are you doing?”

“Giving you kisses. Duh.”

The drink had taken away all his inhibitions, but not his sass apparently. “Um, why?

“Because I love you.”

Will sighed. “Nico, you need some sleep.”

Nico looked at him with big puppy eyes. “Do you love me, Will?”

Now, Will was worried. “Yes, Nico I do.”

Nico sat up suddenly. “Oh my gosh.”

Will looked at him. “What?”

“You like me and I like you. That's really cool.”

“It is.” Will was really really hoping it was true.

Nico turned to him suddenly, his eyes bright. “Kiss me.”
Now, Will was sure the fates were fucking with him. “What?”


This was the hard part. “I can't do that, Nico.”

Nico looked dejected. “Why?”

“Because I don't want our first kiss to be when you're all...drunk.”

“But I'm not drunk!” Why won't Will kiss him?

“You might as well be.”

“I'm confused.” What did Will mean?

“I'm confused too. Let's just get some sleep. Good night.” He rolled over away from Nico and was about to fall asleep when he heard sniffling.

He turned around and squinted in the dark. “Nico?”

He saw the dark haired boy curled up in a little ball, sobbing face down into the pillow next to him.

Nico di Angelo was crying. And Will had absolutely no idea what to do. Now Will was panicking. Nico had some type of drug in his system, and his hormones and emotions were being easily affected.

He placed a hand on Nico's back and rubbed for a few minutes. “Shhh, don't cry.”

That didn't help at all, so Will lifted Nico gently and held him in his arms. “Why are you crying?”

Nico was heaving at this point. “Y-you don't l-love me.”

Nico di Angelo wasn't going to have another drink in his life and Will would make sure of it.

“I do love you. I do.” He tried using his most comforting voice.

Nico looked up, his brown eyes full of tears. “You do?”

Will kissed his forehead. “Yes. Now do you want me to hold you while we sleep?”

Nico nodded and practically threw himself further into Will's arms. He tucked his head over Will's shoulder. “Goodnight, William.”

He whispered into the boy's hair. “Good night, Nico.”
Here Kitty Kitty

Chapter Summary

Aphrodite's concoction has an unexpected effect on Will, and Nico gets a new pet.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Will.” Nico moaned as his back arched off the bed.

Will kissed along his jaw. “Hmm?” He sucked on the skin where Nico's jaw met his neck and Nico gasped.

Nico tangled his fingers in Will's golden hair. His brown eyes were large in the early morning light.

Will pulled off his shirt in one swift motion and Nico's eyes lit up as he took in the sight. He ran his fingers in ridges of Will's abs. He traced Will's pecks with his fingers and they both giggled.

Will whispered in his ear. “Can I take your clothes off?”

Nico hesitated before looking Will in the eye and nodding.

Will flashed him that bright smile before reaching for the hem of his shirt and tickling his hips.

Nico bursted to giggles. “S-stop it, Will.”

“I didn't know you were ticklish.” Will's voice was demanding as he tickled Nico harder.

“I can't t-take it anymore, Will.”

Will laughed before he realizes what they were doing before. “We're supposed to be making out.”

He threw Nico's bothersome shirt across the room, and kissed down his stomach. The flush on Nico's cheeks is the most adorable thing he's ever seen. “You don't have to be shy.”

Nico rolled his eyes. “It's my first time. Why wouldn't I be shy?”

“Because I'll take great care of you.” Will gave him an assuring look. “Speaking of which, can I?” He gestured to Nico's black boxers.

Nico studied Will's face. “Yes. Just be gentle.”

Will blew him a kiss. “Of course my beloved.”

“Stop.”

Will cocked his eyebrow. “Or what?”

“We'll go back to sleeping.”
Will shut his mouth.

Nico spread his legs. “What are you waiting for?”

“Excuse me?”

Nico rolled his eyes. “Fuck me already Solace.”

“You're so bossy in and out of bed.”

Nico groaned. “You talk too much.”

Will rolled his eyes. “My voice is the only thing as gorgeous as me.” He pulled down Nico's boxers, which joined the pile of clothes in the floor. Nico's cock was perfect. Will ran his finger down the shaft before leaning down and kissing the tip.

Nico screamed and his legs shook slightly.

Will looked up at him with big blue eyes and a Cheshire smile. He hasn't even gotten started yet and Nico was already screaming. His dad would be proud. Okay, that was a weird.

Nico's asshole just looked tight, and Will couldn't wait to feel how tight it was.

Will squirted some lube on his fingers and touched the soft rim before pushing in gently.

Nico shrieked, and Will instantly pulled his finger out. “Sorry, Will. I just wasn't expecting...that.”

Will smiled at him. “Don't worry about it.”

Will's finger entered Nico for the second time and he thrusted in and out. “How does that feel?”

“Like a finger is probing my ass. What is it supposed to feel like?”

Will huffed and added another finger. Nico shifted as Will scissored him.

Will's finger brushed his prostate and Nico screamed.

Nico's breathing was so heavy he could barely speak. “Do that again Will.”

Will rubbed Nico's prostate with both fingers and Nico's back arched off the bed as he screamed for dear life.

“I think you're stretched enough.” When Nico nodded in agreement, Will removed his fingers and laid on top of him.

“Don't crush me.” Nico teased.

“I won't.” Will rolled his eyes. “Although I am sexy enough to kill.”

Nico ran his hands over Will's back muscles as Will lined himself up with Nico's entrance. He pushed in as slowly as possible and tried not to orgasm right there. He peppered Nico's face with kisses when he noticed the dark haired boy wincing. “Give it a minute.”

Will thrusted shallowly a few times to make sure Nico was comfortable before thrusting deeper and deeper into him. Nico's moaning was the only sound he could hear.

“W-will that f-feels g-good.” Will thrusted into him again. “Harder, Will please.”
Will just thrust hard and faster. Nico was too tight for him to last. It was a miracle he even lasted this long.

“I'm g-gonna come!” Nico screamed.

“Me too babe.” Will couldn't even recognize the sound of his voice because it's so deep and raspy now.

The last thing he sees is Nico staring up at him out of breath with his dark hair forming a halo around his head and his cheeks flushed rosy pink.

Will woke up with a start when he felt something wet in his underwear. The first thing he realized was he wasn't in his bed. After he remembered why the walls were covered in hearts and sexual innuendos, he wanted nothing more than his dream to be real. Will wasn't much of a dreamer, but he'd had a wet dream here and there. None of them had been as explicit and, to be honest, amazing as that one though.

In the dark he could make out Nico snoring softly next to him. The dark haired boy looked so innocent snuggled under the sheets that he almost felt bad for dreaming of sleeping with him. Will kissed Nico's forehead in the dark before getting up to change his boxers.

☼

Nico's head hurt like a bitch.

Why? Nico was known for being able to handle his liquor. He would drink alone in his room many times after Bianca passed. He begged Hazel to keep it a secret, but Lord Hades found out anyway. He blamed himself for not being an attentive parent and letting Nico isolate himself, which ultimately led to him developing alcoholism. Nico felt extremely guilty for upsetting everyone and pretty much steered clear of alcohol until his sexuality crisis. Let's not go into that.

“Will?” He groaned. “What did I drink?”

Will gave him a strange look, kind of like he's mentally diagnosing one of his patients. “I'm not sure to be completely honest.”

Will assumed the drink was some sort of concoction that manipulated emotions. Nico had ingested close to 24 ounces of the liquid, and taking his size into account, had probably overdosed. That would explain his overly affectionate behavior and his open professions of love throughout the night.

Nico attempted to get off the bed and clumsily fell off the pink bed with a heart shaped headboard. He shook out his legs and started toward the bathroom when he realized he didn't know where the bathroom was. The gogginess in his head was too distracting to form complete sentences, so he just kept walking. He'd find it eventually.

Will sipped his coffee. “Nico you're just walking in a circle.”

“I'm not.” Nico insisted

Will just tilted his head. “Yes you are.”

Nico threw his hands in the air. “No I'm not!”

“Stop arguing with me.”
Nice covered his ears. “Don't say it.”

“Doctors orders.”

Nico stuck his tongue out. “I don't care.”

“Nico, seriously, are you sure you feel alright?” Will looked concerned.

“I just have a headache, Will. I'm not dying.”

Will gave him a suspicious look. “I don't believe you.”

Nico shrugged. “That's your problem, not mine.”

“I told you not to drink all those drinks, but you didn't want to listen.” Will shook his head.

“Are you finished? You were right okay!” Nico's voice was too loud for the early hour.

Will just smirked. “I'll never be finished.”

Nico just sighed and grimaced. “Do you or do you not have aspirin?”

“I do. Hold on.” Will unzipped his suitcase on the floor next to the bed and pulled out a blue bottle of pills. He handed it to Nico.

Nico just held the bottle in his hand for a minute.

Will looked at him strangely again. “Are you going to take some?”

Nico looked up at him sheepishly. “Do you have any gummies?”

Will looked at him in disbelief. “Seriously? Nico, you're not five years old.”

Nico just looked at Will, then at the bottle, then back at Will. “I don't like medicine okay?”

The glint in Will's eyes made Nico think he had made a grave mistake.

Will just smirked and sat on the velvet red sofa across from the bed. “Come sit on my lap.”

Nico dragged his feet over to the chair and awkwardly lowered himself onto Will's lap. He was perched on Will's knees when he realized just how little clothing separated them. He was only wearing a thin black tee shirt, and Will wore a white tee and tacky sun print boxer shorts. Slowly, he moved back until he was sitting directly on Will's crotch. Will's not so subtle morning wood was poking him in the ass ever so gently. Didn't Will realize Nico was practically straddling him?

Wil gave him a smirk that radiated pure evil. “Since you're acting like a baby, I'm going to have to treat you like a baby.

Nico glared at Will and rolled his eyes. Was he for real?

Will popped the pill container open and shook two into the palm of his hand. “Open your mouth.”

Nico stuck out his tongue then reluctantly opened his mouth and let Will place the pills on his tongue.

“Good boy.” He handed Nico a glass of water. “Swallow it.”
Nico sipped the water and grimaced as he felt the pill travel down his throat.

“You're did so good for me.” He patted Nico’s head. “See, it's not that bad.”

Nico shifted on his lap and he tried to contain a grunt.

While Will was trying to control his body, Nico was bored. “Can I get up?”

“Sure.”

Nico pretended he didn't notice Will staring at his ass as he walked to the bathroom to relieve a little problem of his own.

Those drinks had really messed with him.

☼

Will sat at a table for two, complete with candles, across from Lady Aphrodite.

“It's a pleasure to speak to you William. I don't think we've ever had a chance to sit down and chat.” She tucked her hair behind her ear.

He smiled politely. “It's a pleasure speaking with you Lady Aphrodite.”

“How have you been?”

“Good.”

“That's nice. You are looking more like your father everyday. Speaking of which, how's your dad?”

Will felt dread wash over him. He didn't even know if his dad was still alive. “He's good.”

Lady Aphrodite's eyes lit up and she leaned closer to Will. “Did he ever tell you we used to date?”

Will was surprised. “He never mentioned that.”

Lady Aphrodite sighed in contentment as she reminisced the good old days. “We were the hottest couple ever. The sex was great too. Mhmm.”

Will was a little grossed out. He wasn't sure how to respond to that so he just stayed quiet.

“Tell him I said hello.”

“I will, but um Lady Aphrodite why did you ask to speak with me?”

She sighed. “You kids these days, always in a rush. Tell me William, are you in love with Nico?”

“Lady Aphrodite, that's” He started.

She cut him off. “Answer my question.”

Will gulped. “I think so. He's so adorable and I uh just want to hold him and protect from everything, but he's...distant.”

“He's been through a lot by himself, William. Being in a relationship takes getting used to.”

“But we're not in a relationship.”
“You will be soon enough.” She sounded so confident that they would.

Will wanted a change of subject. "Lady Aphrodite, what was in those drinks?“

Her smile was blinding. “Just some fruit and little something to ignite the spark of romance.”

Will smiled back. “What exactly was it?”

She took a sip from her wine glass. “That's confidential information.”

“Well, what did it do Nico?”

She put down the glass. “It just made him more...honest about his feelings if you will.” Her voice was sweet. “Why? Did you notice something unusual?”

_Hell yes._ He tried to phrase it eloquently. “I um had an interesting dream.”

Aphrodite just smiled knowingly. “Love and lust are closely related.”

Will was confused. “But I only had a sip.”

She just smiled again. “I was hoping that lust would make actually do something to get with Nico.”

Will just looks at her stunned. “You knew?”

Lady Aphrodite laughed. “They call me the goddess of love for a reason.“

Will voiced something that had been bothering him all day. “Did he know what he was saying?”

“It's hard to say for sure, but intoxicated people rarely have grips.”

“Was he telling the truth when he said he loved me?”

She raised her eyebrows. “You can spot the truth just as well as I can.”

Will admitted defeat. “What do I do now?”

“Just take your time, William.”

“Thank you for the advice, Lady Aphrodite.”

“You're very welcome. Would you like some cakes for your trip home?” The look in her eye told him he didn't have a choice.

☼

Will was never taking anything from Lady Aphrodite ever again. The cakes had seemed harmless, but after the drink incident Will was wary of all foods and beverages. That didn't stop him from taking a bite and moaning when the succulent pastries melted in his mouth. They were sweet and moist and fluffy and couldn't possible cause him harm. Will was wrong once again.

Before he knew it, he was slinging his arms over Nico's shoulders and slurring in his ears. “Hey sugar.”

“My name is Nico.” The dark haired boy snapped, then squinted at Will. “Are you okay?”

“I'm great.” Will beamed. “Never better.”
Nico turned back to the bags he was packing. “I think we have everything.”

“Do you want some cake? Lady Aphrodite made it. It tastes so good. You have to try it!”

Will hands him the silver platter with several cakes on it. “That one's lemon and this one is carrot and I think that's chocolate.”

Nico picked the safest looking option and took a hesitant bite. “It is really good!”

Will looked at him and giggled. “You're name is di Angelo and you ate angel cake. Isn't that cannibalism?”

“I'm not an angel. Am I?” Nico wasn't sure.

Will giggled. “You look like one.”

Nico flushed. “That's not true. Angels look...angelic... like you.”

“What do you mean?”

“You look like, I don't know, a good person. People would trust you with their kids and ask you to walk their grandmas across a street or something.”

“I love kids! They're so cute and small. Like you.”

Nico looked at the ground. “I'm not cute.”

Their giggle fest was interrupted by a knock at the door. A brown haired girl stuck her head in the crack in the door. “Your car is here.”

A bellhop approached the two princes offering to carry their luggage.

“Will is super strong. He can do it.” said Nico. Will flexed his biceps as a testimony.

Will insisted on holding every door open for Nico, even the ones that were already open. Nico thought it was the sweetest thing ever.

They stumbled into the elevator with their luggage. Will made a woosh sound once the doors closed and also made the accompanying ding noise when they opened. Nico thought it was the coolest thing ever.

Piper, Lacy, Mitchell, and Silena were waiting for them in the lobby to wish them goodbye.

Piper immediately pulled Nico in for a hug. Due to their height difference, Nico's face was pressed to her bust, which was surprisingly soft. “Have a safe trip.”

At the same time, Will crushed Mitchell in a hug. “I don't really like you, but goodbye.” He released him and pulled a blushing Lacy into a hug.

Piper and Silena just shared a look and suppressed smiles.

“Make sure you come visit again soon!” Piper called after them.

“We will!” Chorused Will and Nico.

They left Love Headquarters feeling ecstatic for no actual reason. They spotted Jules Albert's shiny
black car with tinted windows and an untraceable license plate across the street. It took them a while to cross the street because neither could tell which way traffic was coming, so they ultimately looked both ways and made a run for it.

Nico spotted a small furry animal near the wheel of Jules Albert's car as they approached it. Nico clung to Will's arm. “It's a bunny Will! Look!”

Will approached the bunny, which was actually a kitten, slowly as Nico threw their luggage in the trunk. Will was within petting range when the kitten darted away from him and out of sight.

He sighed as he slid into the back seat with Nico. He put his head in his hands. “Why didn't it like me, Nico? Why? I'm a nice person.”

Nico rubbed his back. “It's okay, Will.”

The black kitten ran in front of the car just as Jules Albert started to pull off.

Nico screamed “JULES STOP!”

Will covered his eyes and prepared for the worst. “YOU'RE GOING TO KILL IT.”

Jules Albert cursed and braked suddenly, jostling both of the back seat passengers. He was about to press the gas pedal when Nico told him to wait. He was confused until he heard a click and the doors opening. He hated this job.

Will jogged around the side of the car and looked under it to see the most adorable kitten ever. The poor thing was trembling and looking up at him with big scared eyes. “Here kitty kitty.” Will reached out to hold it, but the kitten edged away from him.

Nico looked at the kitten with an expression that could be described as smiling without smiling. He kneeled down in front of the car and prayed that Jules Albert wouldn't run him over. He held out his hand to the kitten, who sniffed him before gingerly coming out from under the car. The kitten placed a paw on his leg before looking up at him and allowing Nico to pick it up. Now Nico was smiling as he cradled the kitten in his arms. Will was looking at him in awe.

“Let's go back into car so we can take you home, okay?” Nico felt weird speaking to the kitten as if it would reply, but that's was overshadowed by the fact that an animal actually liked him.

Will held the car door open for Nico. Once they settled inside, Nico placed the kitten between Will and himself. Will touched the kitten's soft black fur gently and stroked it until the kitten relaxed.

Jules Albert didn't have eyes but if he did he'd be glaring at Will and Nico. First they bring an animal in his car without asking for permission. Then, they were giggling like schoolgirls over the littlest things the kitten did and calling each other strange names of affection. Worst of all was that stupid purring sound the kitten kept making. How was he supposed to concentrate on that road with that in his ears every second? He wanted to kick them out of the car so many times, but he knew Lord Hades would kill him and he'd die for the second time. Hopefully his reincarnation wouldn't be as miserable as he was in this life.

It was after dark when they reached the Underworld Palace, and Jules Albert wanted nothing more than that devil kitten out of his vehicle.

Nico stuffed the kitten under his aviator jacket, which forced him to zip up to his chin to avoid catching a draft.
They had hoped to sneak up to Nico's room with being noticed, but Lord Hades intercepted their plan as they stumbled past his office. “How was your trip boys?”

“Pretty.” said Nico

“Really pretty.” said Will.

Lord Hades looked at them blankly. “What?”

Nico laid his head on Will's shoulder and sniffed him.

Lord Hades squinted suspiciously. “Are you boys alright?”

Nico's head shot up. “I'm Nico, not alright.”

Lord Hades glared at Will. “Is he high?”

Will looked around the empty hallway. “Who?”

Lord Hades rubbed his temple with his index finger. “My son, William.”

Will's eyes went wide. “OH MY GODS. My name is William.”

Under Nico's jacket, the kitten meowed loudly.

Lord Hades was pretty sure he heard a cat, which were banned from the Palace due to his extreme allergy. “What was that?”

“It was me!” Nico lied. “Sometimes when I'm tired I meow.”

Lord Hades sighed and gestured to a passing servant. “Take them to their room and make sure they AH-CHOO,” he sneezed. “Don't do anything stupid.”

Chapter End Notes

I'm so sorry for the delay. This week has been hectic and I had writer's block to top it off. I just wanted to say thanks again to everyone who left kudos or comments on this story. It really motivated a stumped writer.
An Unexpected Visitor

Chapter Summary

A new guest arrives at the Underworld and Nico is not too happy about it.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will and Nico were summoned to the throne room for the first time in months.

Lord Hades greeted them with an obviously fake smile. “We have a visitor.”

A boy their age seemed to materialize out of the shadows. He had glossy black hair, a slim build, and an eye patch over his left eye. Nico wasn't one to judge people by their appearances, but this guy gave him the creeps. Will, on the contrary, was intrigued.

Lord Hades gestured to the boy. “This is Ethan Nakamura. Ethan, this is Prince Nico and Prince Will.”

Ethan's expression resembled a smile. “It's a pleasure visiting your realm, Hades.”

Lord Hades's smile was even more strained, and looked plain old creepy. “This is quite an unexpected visit, I must say.”

Ethan looked up at him. “Coming to the Underworld wasn't exactly my idea of a fun weekend.”

Nico was somewhat baffled by Ethan's blatant lack of respect for his father and this realm. Children were taught from birth to address rulers as Lords or Ladies no matter what. Sometimes he had to stop himself from calling his father Lord Hades because he'd get a speech about parents having close relationships with their teens etc.

Lord Hades had enough of dealing with bratty kids today. “He'll be staying with us for a few days. You two show him around, Persephone needs me.” He strode out of the room, and didn't look back.

Why? Nico wondered. To put it simply, there was no reason for Ethan to be here. Who sent him here? What did he want? Many people had migrated to the Underworld after miners struck gold in the 1800s, but this wasn't the 1800s and Ethan didn't look like a gold miner.

The shiny black doors slammed behind Lord Hades, and Nico was suddenly aware of the fact that this was the perfect opportunity for a murder. He wished he had his sword, but someone (Lady Demeter) said it was unfitting for a teenage boy to carry a weapon around because it made him seem "dangerous.” It wasn't his fault his face naturally looked murderous.

Ethan studied the names of dead Underworld officials inscribed on a plaque mounted at the foot of a statue of a bronze harpy. The throne room was similar to all the others he had seen, heavily decorated. An elaborate chandelier hung in the middle of the high ceiling, which was covered in glossy onyx stones. The walls were black as night and adorned with gold embellishments from bottom to top. Plush gray rugs covered the floors, and life sized portraits of the royal family hung on the walls. A large leather black throne with silver swords crossed at the foot was the focal part of the
decor. Ethan was rather impressed with the color scheme.

For once in his life, Nico initiated conversation. “What realm are you from?”

Ethan glared at him. “That's none of your business.”

Nico glared back at him and decided he wasn't striking up conversation with a stranger any time soon. Also, if Ethan didn't wanted a skeleton fist down his throat, he better fucking watch it.

Will stuck his hand out, and Ethan looked him up and down before shaking it. “What's your name?”

“William Solace, er, you can just call me Will.”

“Hello, Will.” He bowed, and for a second Nico was afraid his eye patch was going to fall off.

Will bowed back because it was the polite thing to do, also he was a little scared.

“You're not from around here.” Ethan observed.

Will laughed. “What gave it away?”

Ethan looked Will up and down. “Your eyes. Your clothes. And your laugh.”

Will was at a loss for words. “I'm from the Sun realm.”

Ethan seemed surprised. “I was thinking the Love Realm.”


Ethan noticed, but didn't comment. “Hades said you were going to show me around?”

“We can't, we um have to do something,” said Nico. He didn't even care how transparent his lie was, he wanted to leave.

Will looked at him with a confused expression. “No, we don't.”

“Yes, we do,” hissed Nico.

Will shook his head. “I'm pretty sure we don't.”

While watching the two bicker was amusing, Ethan wasn't here to waste time. “Will can show me around if you're busy, Nico.”

Nico was in no mood to leave Will alone with a stranger, who could potentially harm him. “No, it's fine.”

Will flashed a megawatt smile. “Let's get started!”

☼

Nico gingerly knocked on Will's bedroom door before shuffling into Will's room.

He spotted Will sitting cross legged on an emerald green oriental rug surrounded by dozens of old textbooks and loose papers.

Nico twisted his hands between his back before wiping them on his pants. Why was he so damn
He cleared his throat. “Uh, Will do you want to go to the chasm later? We could like get McDonalds after... if you want.”

Will scratched his head. “Oh snap, I forgot about that...I can't.”

Nico looked at the floor. “What do you mean?”

“Ethan and I were planning to go to lunch. He's going to show me some Japanese healing rituals. That's what I'm researching right now, actually.”

Ethan had been here one day and he was already spending more time with Will than Nico ever had.

Nico felt like he'd been punched. “Oh. That sounds fun.”

Will saw right through him. “Are you sure it's okay if I go?”

“T'm not your father, Will. You can do whatever you want.”

Will spoke softly. “I know that. I just want to know if me hanging out with him bothers you.”

Nico stuck his hands in his pockets. “Why would it bother me?”

Will furrowed his eyebrows. He opened his mouth to say something, but then changed his mind. “I don't know. Maybe you can come with us?”

“No,” said Nico immediately.


Nico wanted to roll his eyes at that. “He gives me bad vibes. He doesn't seem trustworthy.”

“Just because he wears dark clothes and an eye patch? News flash, Nico you probably give people bad vibes too.”

Nico smiled grimly. “Fine. You two have fun later.”

Will sighed. “I didn't mean it like that.”

Nico folded his arms. “I said it was fine, Will.”

“Yes, but...” Will struggled to find the right words. “You aren't always honest about what you're feeling.”

“I bet Ethan's honest about his feelings. Go talk to him then.” Nico stomped to the door like a five year old.

Now, Will knew he fucked up. “Nico!”

Nico turned around and his expression was unreadable. “What?”

“Talk to me,” Will pleaded.

Nico raised an eyebrow. “Weren't you just calling me a liar? Are you going to believe anything I say?”

“No! That's not what I,” he glanced at the clock. “Shit, Ethan's probably ready. When I get back, we're finishing this.”
“We're already finished.” Nico walked out of the room without another word.

It dawned on Will as he rushed to grab his things that Nico had been asking him on a date. And he rejected him. He pined over Nico for weeks and would've given anything to go on a date with him, and he'd just blown his one chance in a matter of minutes.

☼

Ethan reminded Will a lot of Nico. The both looked extremely threatening, but were really softies at heart. They both talked really fast and blushed a little whenever someone looked directly at them. It was adorable, but they'd kill him if he said that. Neither talked much, and Will guessed they didn't like drawing attention to themselves.

Will and Ethan were sprawled out on a red checkered picnic blanket on the damp Underworld grass. The wind was chilly and Will couldn't help but shiver in his shorts and thin blue tee shirt. Ethan didn't seem affected as the wind ruffled through his unzipped army green jacket. Will was tempted to tell Ethan he'd catch a draft, but he seem like a hypocrite because he wasn't wearing a jacket at all.

Unlike Nico, Ethan was brash as hell. He didn't give two shits about being polite. “So, is he like your boyfriend or something?”

Will didn't know how to answer that. “Uh...sort of.”

Ethan raised an eyebrow. “Sort of?”

Will have up trying to explain it and shrugged. “It's complicated.”

Ethan popped a grape in his mouth. “That doesn't sound good.”

“Relationships are tough, ya know?”

Ethan leaned forward. “They don't have to be.”

Will looked at him blankly for a minute. “What do you mean?”

Ethan's gaze was searing hot. “You know what I mean, Will.”

Will's eyes went wide and his cheeks heat up. “A-are you flirting with me?”

Ethan's mouth curled into a smirk. “Do you want me to?”

Will put his hands up in surrender. “I'm confused now.”

He'd enjoyed spending time with Ethan and sure he was cute in a villain sort of way, but Will didn't like him like that.

Ethan rolled his eyes fondly. “You're a precious thing, Will.”

“I'm not a thing!”

Ethan brushed Will's growing bang out of his eyes. “You're right.” He pressed his chapped lips to Will's cheekbone before kissing a line towards his lips.

He was about to go in for it when Will pulled away suddenly. “I can't.” Nico was going to kill him.

Ethan nodded reluctantly. He needed a new strategy.
Since Will was busy doing gods know what with Ethan, Nico decided he was going to have some 
alone time. That lasted for about ten minutes because after having Will talking his ear off for weeks, 
he'd forgotten just how empty being lonely felt.

The kitten seemed to sense his loneliness because it walked over to his desk chair and crawled onto 
his lap. He ran his fingers through the soft fur and the kitten purred in contentment.

The kitten's ears pricked up when it heard a girl's laughter in the hallway.

Nico stood up and poked his head out of the door. “Haze? Come meet my kitten.”

Hazel pushed past him into the room. “When did you get a kitten?”

Nico looked at her sheepishly. “Two days ago.”

Hazel's big sister instincts took over. “You know dad's extremely allergic?”

“Yes, but she was on the side of street, Haze. We couldn't leave her there.” Nico pleaded.

Hazel didn't look all that convinced. “She's cute, I'll give her that. What's her name?”

“Will and I haven't really named her yet.”

Hazel put her hands on her hips. “Why not?”

Nico shrugged. “What should we name her?

The kitten looked up at Hazel before slowly emerging from behind Nico and sniffing her shoe 
gently. The cat seemed content with her scent, and allowed her to caress its soft fur. The kitten 
purred and leaned on Hazel's leg as she ruffled its fur. Hazel leaned down to shake the kitten's paw.

“You could name it Hades to soothe dad's anger once he finds out.”

“Good thinking.” Nico was torn between fearing his father's wrath and not giving two fucks because 
the kitten was so cute.

Hazel and Nico were sitting crossed legged in the floor playing with the kitten when Hazel turned to 
Nico. “Hades's eye are ...enchanting.”

Nico looked at the kitten's neon yellow green eyes. “What do you mean?”

“I don't know. They're mesmerizing, in a hypnotic sort of way. She radiates this...dark energy, it 
reminds me of back when I used to live my mom and she would practice Voodoo in the basement.”

Nico felt bad that he couldn't remember anything about his mother except her name and the fact that 
she spoke Italian.

Hazel looked up at him. “I'm just surprised you kept her. You're not really an animal person.”

Nico thought about that for a moment. “There's something about her that, I don't know, drew me to 
her because I rarely like animals and they rarely like me.”

Hazel wrapped her arms around his lanky torso and squeezed. “I like you.”

Nico buried his head in her shoulder. “I know.” He inhaled the cinnamon scent of her curly hair. “I
Chapter End Notes

I was super excited to see that this fic had over 6,000 hits, and I wanted to thank everyone who took the time to read it. I'm not sure how many chapters there will be in this fic. My original plan was five, then ten, and now I'm thinking maybe thirty? I guess time will tell. Am I the only one who misses Lord Apollo? He was my favorite to write about because he was so unpredictable. Sorry for the rant, I should be working on the outline instead of rambling in the notes.
Almost Love

Hazel and Nico walked down the palace hallways like men on a mission. Their mission was to obtain cat food.

“Don't you think he'll get suspicious when he sees us buying cat litter?” Nico asked as he touched the kitten pressed to his chest under his aviator jacket. How could his father despise something so innocent?

Hazel shrugged. “I think they're making an effort to stay out of our private lives.”

Nico laughed. “I doubt that.”

“Why?”

“They're so nosy. Not having any gossip is probably killing them. Remember when you and Frank went on your first date, and you look across the restaurant to see dad and Persephone sitting there.”

Hazel laughed. “That was awkward.”

“Hey Nico!” Will called from somewhere behind them.

Nico walked faster and prayed he'd blend in with the black curtains.

Hazel turned to him. “He's calling you.”

“I know,” Nico lowered his voice.

Hazel nudged him. “Go talk to him.”

“I don't want to.”

Hazel gave him a stern look.

Nico stopped dead in his tracks and turned to face the energetic blond behind him.

Will was smiling and panting at the same time as he jogged up to Nico. “Hey!”

Nico's posture was rigid as a board. “Hello.”

Will doubled over for a second to catch his breath. “I think I owe you a trip to McDonald's to make up for my shitty behavior yesterday.”

Will didn't miss the way Nico's eyes lit up, but he glanced at the ground quickly. “You hate fast food.”

“Yeah, but I like you so I'll suck it up this one time. So, what do you say?”

“That sounds...like a good idea.”

Will smiled at him. “Things got out of hand too quickly yesterday.”

“Yeah.”

“I really do think you guys would get along though.”
Nico shook his head. “There can only be one dark haired boy in all black.”

Will laughed louder than Nico had ever heard a human laugh before, and instinctively clamped a hand over his mouth and looked around to see if anyone had heard. “That was my ugly laugh, sorry.”

“It wasn't ugly.”

“Yes, it was.”

Nico shook his head. “It was... endearing.”

Hades was bored of being carried around all morning in this kid’s stuffy jacket. She wanted to explore the castle freely and stalk the servants, not be cradled like a human baby. She did the only thing she could to attract attention besides sinking her claws into Nico's pale skin. She could do that at another time. For now she could just *Meow* until that bratty son of Apollo heard.

Will looked at Nico. “Did you just meow?”

“No.”

“So, what did I just hear?”

“Hades.”

“Your dad?”

“No! I didn't get a chance to tell you. Hazel and I named the cat Hades.”

“Why would you name your pet after your father?”

“He's allergic to cats.”

“Oh. Where is she?”

Nico gestured to the lump on his chest.

“You're holding her like she's a baby.”

“I just didn't want to leave her in my room so the house cleaners can find her.”

Will peeped into Nico's jacket. “Where is she? I want to pet her.”

Nico looked around the hallway before cautiously unzipping his jacket, just enough so Will could stick his hand in. Will ran his fingers through the soft fur on the kitten's head before poking its nose. Hades so purred loudly that neither Will nor Nico heard Hazel approach them.

Hazel cleared her throat. “Am I interrupting something?”

Will yanked his hand out of Nico's jacket so quickly a blur of tan skin was all that could be seen. Nico's face was red. “It's not what it looks like!”

Hazel raised her eyebrows at Will. “It looked like you were feeling up my baby brother.”

“I would never!”
Nico turned to Will. “What's that supposed to mean?”

“N-not like that. I would touch you but with your permission and not...in public.”

“Will,” hissed Nico. “My sister is standing right there.”

“I-I, what I'm trying to say is, I would only if you were...fuck.” Will gave up.

Hazel suppressed a smile. Those two were just too cute.

☼

McDonalds was just as awful and fattening as Will remembered. Sitting across from Nico made it a little less awful, but it was still pretty bad. The smell of grease coming from the kitchen was making him nauseous.

Will had to avert his gaze when Nico was devouring two greasy hamburgers with fries and an extra large soda. He shuddered at the thought of how much cholesterol his little angel was consuming.

Will deciding striking up conversation would ease his nausea. “It getting colder again.”

“That's because it's winter.”

“There's no reason for winter to be so cold though.”

“I'm sure you'll survive the winter Will, or maybe the Yetis will get you first.”

Will sipped his water and leaned in slightly. Who ordered water at McDonalds? “Who are they?”

“They're a gang of extremely tall mountain men that hunt and eat humans.”

Will whispered. “Where do they live?”

Nico shrugged. “No one really knows. Some say a cave in the middle of nowhere, but how would they find humans to eat? No one even knows what they look like.”

Will’s expression was a mixture of both fear and skepticism. “Why do I get the feeling I’m being lied to?”

Nico sipped his coke and tried to hide his mischievous grin. “I don't know.”

Now, Will was sure Nico was teasing him, but he made a mental note to Google Yetis later. While he wished they could've been anywhere but McDonald's, he absolutely adored hanging out with Nico. Nico didn't hang out with many people, so Will felt special. He bite his lip before blurting out what was on his mind. “Can I ask about you and Percy?”

Nico tensed visibly and smiled mirthlessly. “He was my first crush and only friend besides Bianca at that time. That's when I figured out that I liked guys, and that spawned a whole nother issue.”

“What do you mean?”

Nico had a hard time expressing the turmoil that plagued his life not too long ago. “I didn't know anyone who was...gay, so I didn't know who to talk to about it. I was like ten, I didn't even understand it. I just knew it was...different.”

“That sucks,” Will's tone is completely serious. “I was about to say your dad, but uh Lord Hades...
doesn't seem like a relationship person.”

Nico chuckled. “Yeah, he wouldn't understand. Persephone and Demeter hated my guts, so they were out too.”

“Why do you say that?”

“I was the product of my father's unfaithfulness, Will. They already didn't want me living in their perfect home, must less bonding with me.”

“Oh.” Will thought about that for a moment. “My dad was never married, so I didn't have to deal with that.”

“Consider yourself lucky.”

Sad Nico was something Will couldn't deal with, so he tried to change the topic. “How'd you get over Percy?”

Nico shrugged and tried to make it easy for himself by pretending Percy never mattered. “I mean I had a crush on him for three years, so it took a while I guess. Eventually, I realized he and Annabeth are madly in love, and I never stood a chance.”

“You should've come to summer camp with us. You would've made so many friends.” Will couldn't help but smile at his memories of camp. The campfire singalongs, bunking with his siblings in the Apollo cabin, the fireworks show, and the Stolls' pranks were the highlights of his year.

“I've never been a people person, Will.” That was a lie. Nico remembered how bubbly he used to be and fondly his Mythomagic obsession. Bianca wasn't a huge fan of the game, but she'd play with him whenever he asked and it made him happy to this day.

Will rolled his eyes. “That's irrelevant. You would've loved it.”

Nico scoffed. “I highly doubt it.”

Will sat up proudly. “I was counselor of the Apollo Cabin.”

“Good job, Will.” Nico's voice dripped sarcasm.

“Everyone loved my singing at campfires,” bragged Will.

Nico almost choked on a French fry. “Really?”

“No, but I looked cute holding a guitar.” Will was hit with realization suddenly. “I almost forgot. There are so many people I have to introduce you to!”

Nico was lost now. “Like who?”

“Cecil, Kayla, Lou Ellen, Austin...” Will rattled off a bunch of names.

Nico already had a close group of friends, and he really didn't see the need for anymore. But, if Will liked them then he figured they must be nice people.

“Where do you want to go after this?” Will asked as they stood to throw away their garbage.

Nico thought for a moment. “We could go see a movie.”
“Sure. But no horror movies.”

Nico rolled his eyes. “Why? Are you afraid?”

“I’m not afraid!” Will bluffed. He wasn't afraid, he was fucking terrified of scary movies. But, he wasn't about to tell Nico that. Especially now that he had to compete with the fearless Percy Jackson. If there was one thing his father had taught him, it was Apollo kids don't lose...at anything.

They ended up watching a romantic comedy that Will adored and Nico despised. A heterosexual couple falls in love, talk about mind blowing.

The minute they stepped out of the movie theater, they spotted Jules Albert. It wasn't difficult considering a skeleton driving a car wasn't exactly easy to miss. They exchanged confused looks.

“You called him?” Will asked.

Nico shook his head.

“So, why is he here?”

“I don't know. I hope everything’s okay at home.”

“I'm sure everything is fine.” Will tried to sound more confident than he was. He'd temporarily forgotten about the maniac woman stalking him, and instantly felt guilty. If Nico lost anymore of his family, it would be because he'd insisted on protecting Will.

Nico reached the car first so he held the door open for Will and smirked. “After you, milady.”

The minute the doors closed, Jules Albert flew down the highway.

“Jules?” Nico needed to know what was going on now.

“Yes, young master.”

Will tried not to think of the dirty implications of that name. He was pretty sure Nico was a bottom though. A loud, bossy bottom, but still a bottom nonetheless.

“Why did you pick us up?”

“Your father sent me because it was after curfew.”

After curfew? It wasn't even five o'clock. Since when did Nico even have a curfew? Wasn't this the same father that was trying to marry him off at fifteen?"

Will looked terrified at the prospect of having angered Lord Hades.

Nico blew air on him. “Relax, Will. He can't exactly ground you.”

“But still.”

“Quit being such a worrywart. You'll get wrinkles.”

Will was about to make a retort about Angels never aging, but Jules Albert braked sharply and he almost flew through the windshield.

The car had just entered the Palace Gates, when Nico spotted something out of the window.
He turned to Will. “Want to see something?”

“Sure.”

Nico whistled to get the driver's attention. “Jules, let us out here.”

“I have specific instructions from your father to escort you to your bedroom young man.”

Nico rolled his eyes. “Stop the car and let us out or we'll jump out.”

Jules huffed angrily, but stopped the car so the back seat passengers could exit.

Nico turned to Will. “Follow me.”

They trekked through rows of every flower imaginable and past statues of nude people who probably looked nothing like their statues. Will never knew gardens could be so complicated. He'd lost count of all the turns they made and couldn't tell his right from his left. He was pretty sure he'd seen that tree about four times, and he didn't even know where Nico was leading him. In all those crime shows Lou Ellen made him watch, the murder would lead their victim to a secretive location like this then kill them. But, if Nico wanted to kill him, Will would've already been six feet under.

Finally, Nico reached his destination, a cave in the corner of the garden hidden by a wall of grape vines and leaves. The inside was bare except for a checkered blanket, some old pictures, and a cold bench.

His voice was strained. “Bianca and I used to play in here all the time, and after she died I came here to isolate myself from everyone.”

Will didn't say anything because he didn't know what to say. Nico didn't show his vulnerable side often, and this was a rare occasion.

“They wanted to get rid of this old thing a couple years ago, so I slept in here for a week. That was the first of my many protests.” Nico chuckled at the memory.

Will couldn't help but smile as he imagined a tiny Nico sleeping a cave to rebel against his parents. “Oh yeah?”

“Yeah. Want to go inside?”

“Sure.”

The inside of the cave was cold, much to Will's chagrin as he sat on the cold cave ground. Nico plumped down next to him and unfolded the blanket. He tried to drape it over them, but given it was made for one and Will's impressive height, it couldn't cover much. They were forced to scoot closer until Nico was practically sitting on Will's lap. Will never thought a cold cave would help him get some.

Nico reached over and grabbed the stack of pictures. “My father gave these to me sometime after Bianca died. You can look at them if you want.” He offered the pictures to Will.

The first ones were of a dark haired boy and girl in their bathing suits chasing each other on the lawn. Nico pointed to the dark haired girl with the long braid. “That's Bianca.”

Will flipped through the pictures carefully. He came upon one of a petite dark haired woman with eyes identical to Nico's. “Is that your mom?”
Nico looked up sadly. “Yeah.”

“You look like her.”

“Really?” Nico’s voice was soft and almost excited as he picked at the loose threads at the end of the blanket.

“You seemed surprised.”

“I never really spent time with her, so to speak. She died when I was young, and I knew Bianca looked like her but I guess I assumed I looked like dad.” Nico buried himself in Will's shoulder.

Will saw another picture, this time Nico was dressed in a little black suit and holding a teddy bear. “You used to be really tan.”

Nico lifted his head off Will's shoulder and craned his neck to look at the picture. His mouth curled in a half smile. “I could've given you a run for your money back then huh?

Will adjusted Nico so the boy wasn't directly on Will's crotch. “I don't know about that.”

They swapped childhood stories for hours as the sun set outside the cave. Who would've known that lying in cold cave would be one of the most romantic nights of Nico's life?

☼

It was after midnight when they returned to the palace, but neither Will nor Nico was ready to go to bed just yet. Instead, they were taking a walk around the palace garden. Nico was 90% sure they'd get a speech from Lord Hades about curfews, and Lady Demeter would chime in with something about young people causing a ruckus all hours of the night, but he didn't care.

The rows of normally vibrant flowers was drenched in dark light and it was magnificent in a comforting way.

They walked in silence, listening to each other's breathing. The air was crisp and leaves crunched under their feet with every step they took. In the moonlight, Nico's pale skin glowed and his chocolate eyes were as bright as the stars. Will would use that in a haiku later.

Nico shivered in the cold, and hoped Will hadn't seen before he got a lecture for not wearing a jacket. Hanging out with your doctor was kind of weird at times.

“Are you cold?”

“I'm fine.” Nico knew Will could hear his teeth chattering.

Will pulled off his gaudy yellow sweater and put it on Nico. It smelt like him, a mixture of old spice and summer. Nico was swimming in the fabric and the sleeves passed his fingertips, but he couldn't complain.

Will giggled. “It looks cute on you.”

Nico tried to downplay the burning on his cheeks. “Everything looks cute on me.”

Will laughed. “I bet I'd look cute on you too.”

Nico closed his mouth. He couldn't argue with that.
Their gazes locked and neither Will nor Nico could look away. For a moment they just stared at each other dumbstruck, before Nico shuffled closer. Will cupped Nico's cheek with his palm and gave him enough time to pull away. When Nico showed no sign of pulling away, Will leaned it for a kiss and they heard a loud crash coming from the Palace.
Will and Nico ran into the Underworld Palace to see several smashed vases lying on the carpet. Tiptoeing around them, they made their way into the living room.

Persephone turned the corner equipped with a vase in hand. “WHO IS SHE?”

Lord Hades looked a deer in headlights. “You're going to wake everyone.”

“I ASKED YOU A QUESTION!”

“Persephone, honey, please calm down.”

“THEN YOU BETTER GIVE ME A DAMN EXPLANATION FOR THESE!” She waved a pair of white lace panties with the word Bride written in black in front of his face.

Will and Nico shared a look that was a mixture of is this seriously happening? and straight people problems.

Lord Hades reached out to touch his wife's shoulder, and he slapped his hand. “DON'T TOUCH ME!”

“Persephone, I don't know who's underwear that is.”

“That's bullshit and you know it!”

“I'm telling you the truth.”

“Sure. The same way you told me truth about Maria and Marie.”

Lord Hades huffed. “I admit I may have not been completely honest with you in the past, but I thought we were turning a new leaf.”

Persephone waved the panties in the air again. “I thought so too, until I saw these.”

“You have to trust me, Phone.”

“I'll trust you when you stop fathering bastard children every other weekend.”

Lord Hades let out a deep breath. “I'm trying here, Phone.”

Lady Persephone put a hand on her hip. “We've been married for thirty years and you've had five affairs and fathered at least three children.”

“What do you mean at least three?”

“That's how many I know of, and knowing you there's probably more on the way.”

Will was trying with all his might to suppress his laughter at the scene unfolding, when he actually got a good look at the underwear. His eyes went wide when he realized those were the panties Cecil and Lou Ellen bought him as an engagement gift.

“Persephone, I kept my promise to you after Nico and you know that.”

Nico was an expert on being unnoticed, but Will on the other hand tripped over the leg of a two
legged table up against the wall.

Lord Hades and Lady Persephone turned to them.

“Where have you two been?” Lord Hades stared daggers at Will, who gulped. “I sent Jules to fetch you and he says you two demanded he drop you off.”

“I can explain,” Will started but fell silent when Lord Hades stepped closer to them.

“What were you doing with our son?”

“Your son,” corrected Lady Persephone.

Lord Hades ignored her. “It’s well after midnight, you two should’ve been home hours ago.”

Will tried to make amends. “It won’t happen again, sir.”

“No, it won’t.”

Lady Persephone turned to Lord Hades. “You just want an excuse to get out of telling me whose underwear this is!”

Lord Hades rubbed his temple. “Persephone, can we finish this later? I need to speak with Nicholas and William.”

Persephone’s eyes blazed with rage Nico had never seen before. The title Queen of Hell seemed rather fitting now. “We’re going to finish this now.”

Will and Nico seized the opportunity to escape. “We should head to bed.”

Nico and Will were halfway to the staircase, when Lord Hades saw them. “You boys better get back here.”

Nico rolled his eyes as they walked slowly to where his father was standing. Lord Hades needed to chill out.

Lord Hades was in a speech mood. “Nico, as I told you a million times, and Will, as you’ve probably heard, royal families have standards to adhere to. The entire realm is looking up to you, and if they see you doing gods know what in the middle of the night, they’ll do the same. And, we can’t have that.”

“We understand, father.” Nico rolled his eyes for the millionth time.

“Persephone and I will discuss your punishment and let you know.”

Persephone glared at him. “The only thing I want to discuss is who these belong to.”

“Persephone, dear, what is going on down here?” Lady Demeter descended the stairs dressed in a bathrobe, slippers, and a shower cap.

Persephone’s mouth curved in a cruel smirk. “Mom, you’ll never guess what a servant put in my laundry.”

Lord Hades knew this wouldn’t end well for him. “On second thought, you two are grounded.”

Nico just looked at him. “Are you seriously going to ground us?”
“Yes. You two are not to leave the premises, do you hear me?”

“Yes, sir.”

Lord Hades spoke quickly. “If I hear that you two disobeyed me, the consequences will be severe. Have I made myself clear?”

Will nodded vigorously, and blinked back tears. Back in kindergarten, he’d always got stars for his good behavior while the other children were on time out. Now he was the one on time out. Mrs. Franklin would be so disappointed in him.

“Good. Now, off to bed.” Lord Hades shooed them.

Once they were in the safety of Nico's room, Will decided to be brave. He had no idea how Nico would react to this. “Um, you'll never guess what.”

“What?”

“Those were my panties that your parents were fighting about.”

Nico choked on his chocolate chip cookie. “You wear panties?”

“I don't wear them like... daily, but I like the way they feel on my skin.”

“Oh.”

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“I'm a little surprised, that's all.”

“Why?”

“You don't strike me a panty type guy that's all.”

“So, you're okay with it?”

Nico shrugged. “It you want to wear them, I don't have a problem.”

He really tried not to think of Will in little lace panties because there's no way he could talk himself out of a boner. He could see all Will's bare tan muscle leading to his glorious hips, covered only by a thin piece of cloth that didn't leave very much to the imagination. So much for avoiding an awkward boner.

Will smiled at him, and Nico laughed suddenly.

“Laughing at people isn't nice,” pouted Will.

“I'm not laughing at you, I just can't believe that whole scenario went down because your underwear got mixed up in the laundry.”

“I kind of feel bad. Your dad is getting blamed for an affair he didn't have.”

Nico out a hand on Will's shoulder. “Will, my dad is sleeping with the Underworld's most well known funeral director for months and everyone's been trying to find a way to tell Persephone for weeks.”
“Oh, okay. Everything worked out then.”

“Yeah, it did. Thanks to you and your panties.”

“Shut up!”

☼

“WILL THERES AN EMERGENCY,” Nico screamed as he ran into Will's room.

Will looked around frantically. “Is someone hurt?”

“I lost our cat!”

Will let out a relieved sigh. “What happened?”

Nico wasn't about to tell Will he'd been cuddling the kitten. It would ruin his reputation. “She was in my room, and when I came back from the bathroom she wasn't there.”

“Okay, she couldn't have gotten far. She's probably around here somewhere.”

Nico looked so shaken up, Will had to hug him, which Nico did not appreciate. After a few minutes of awkward hugging, Will was in search mode. “Alright, where should we start looking?”

“I don't know,” huffed Nico. “If I knew I would've found her by now.”

“If you were a cat where would you be?”

“In the sun? I don't know. I told you that.”

They decided to start looking in Nico's bedroom. Nico opened his closet and took down some hangers to get a good look.

“I don't think I've ever seen so much black in one place, except a funeral.”

“You're supposed to be searching for the cat not running your mouth.”

Will dropped to his knees and peered under the bed. “Nothing here.”

Next, they tried the hallways, which was a bit difficult given the fact that there were servants everywhere.

Will dropped to his knees. “Here kitty kitty.”

“I don't think that's going to work, Will.”

“You don't know for sure though.” Will stuck his tongue out.

A passing servant gave Will a strange look.

Nico decided to try the kitchen. The chef always left some chicken out at night for Hades the kitten, so the kitten was familiar with that part of the palace.

Will opened up the oven, and checked the fridge. Nico opened and closed all the cabinets, and knocked over a bunch of cans in the process. He and Will scrambled to pick up the cans rolling all over the kitchen.
Lord Hades strode into the kitchen. “What are you boys up to?”

“We're cleaning,” lied Nico.

"Why would you be doing that?"

“Will says cleaning is good for the body.”

Will nodded in agreement. Technically he wasn't the one lying, so he didn't feel any guilt.

Lord Hades squinted at them. He knew they were up to something, but he didn't have the energy to interrogate them after trying to fix his crumbling marriage all night.

“We should split up. We can cover more ground like that,” said Nico after Lord Hades left.

Nico searched the basement, while Will scoured the first and second floor for any sign of the black cat. They both returned to Nico's room with no sign of the kitten. Where the hell could it be?

The only place they hadn't checked was Ethan's room, which practically exuded creepiness. His room was small and at the far end of the hallways, practically hidden from sight, how Nico (a shadow expert) did not understand.

They pressed their heads to the cold door. Ethan appeared to be deep in conversation with someone, who they couldn't make out.

The voice was low, almost honey-like. “Did you find out where?”

“No, mistress.”

“Why not?”

“I've been trying, I swear,” Ethan's voice was pleading.

The voice was as sharp as a knife. “I asked you if you were worthy,”

Ethan's voice was unsteady. “I am worthy, your highness.”

“So do it and stop wasting my time.”

“Yes, mistress.”

“If you screw up I will take your other eye.”

The fear in Ethan's voice was obvious. “That won't be necessary mistress.”

Nico and Will shared a somewhat terrified look.

The door opened in one swift motion. Ethan, dressed in camouflage pajamas, looked less than pleased. “What are you two doing here?”

“We lost our cat and thought she might be here.” Will peered into the room to see Hades perched on the dresser, rather embarrassed.

Nico crossed his arms over his chest and faced Ethan. “Who were you talking to?”

“That's none of your business.”
“Why was our cat in your room?”

Ethan had one card left he could play. “I was lonely and this guy kept me company.”

Nico wasn't impressed. “You were talking to our cat?”

Will's eyes instantly grew larger with concern. “You could've talked to us. Nico and I would be glad to keep you company.”

“Well, you don't have to say yes, but I would appreciate it if you could show me around town?”

That gave Nico a bad feeling, but he stayed silent.

Will seemed to instantly brighten up. “Of course!”

Ethan smiled and it was unsettling.

“But, I'm not really from around here, so Nico will have to be our tour guide.” Will gestured to him and the look in Will's eyes told him he didn't have a choice.

Nico was absolutely thrilled.

☼

After a twenty minutes of useless conversation with Ethan, Nico and Will were hanging out in Nico's room.

Will was trying to coax Hades into sleeping on a fluffy, pink pillow, and Hades was clawing at both him and the awful pillow in protest.

Nico just watched the scene unfold from a safe distance on his bed. “You're a terrible parent, Will.”

Will looked absolutely shocked. “How is that possible?”

“She doesn't want to sleep there. Stop forcing her to do what you want her to do.”

“You're the one who lost her. I hope you won't lose our children like that.”

Nico looked at him strangely. “We don't have children.”

“We will eventually.”

Nico just looked at him. “H-how would that,”

Will brushed noses with the kitten. “We can adopt some.”

“Some? As in plural?”

“Of course! I had a bunch of siblings, so it's fair that my child have to suffer the same way I did.”

Will went back to fussing over the kitten.

Nico couldn't think of a proper response to that.
You Lost The Cat Again?

Nico stood up and stretched. He raked a finger through his bed head and brushed his bangs back. He really needed a haircut, but he couldn't part with his hair just yet. The sunlight seeping in through his blinds reminded him of Will, which shook him out of his early morning haze. He showered, brushed his teeth, then spent fifteen minutes fussing over his hair. His bad boy image wasn't as effortless as he made it seem.

Breakfast was uneventful today. Okay Nico was bullshitting, breakfast was always uneventful. But today Will wasn't here and Nico had no one to talk his ear off. He munched on his low fat Wheaties (compliments of Demeter) lost in thought.

Like the answer to Nico's prayers, Will bounded down the stairs all smiles and smelling like heaven. “Morning, sunshine. Funny seeing you up this early.”

Nico rolled his eyes and continued munching on his cereal to hide his growing smile. The bad boy reputation had to be maintained.

Will took a bowl down from the hand carved cabinets and picked up the box of Wheaties and read the nutrition label. Who did that? Nerd.

“This is high in fiber and low in trans fat. Seems like a win-win situation to me.”

Nico snorted. “It tastes like dirt.”

“You mean low fat high fiber dirt.”

Ethan descended the stairs too quietly to be considered human. “Are you ready to go?”

“Let us finish breakfast first. You should eat some too.” Will held out the box of Wheaties.

Ethan shook his head. “I'm fine.”

“Breakfast is the most important meal of the day.”

“I'm fine.” Ethan eyed the cereal box with contempt Nico could relate to.

Jules Albert gave Will near heart attack when he turned to see the skeleton looking through the kitchen window. Jules muttered something Will couldn't understand.

“He asked if we're ready to go,” translated Nico.

Will wasn't sure he wanted to go anymore, and Nico and Ethan shared a look that expressed the laughter without laughing thing they both did.

The trio set out just after ten A.M, which was five hours before Nico normally woke up when Will didn't come banging his door down. Having to choose between sleep and a hot blond was constantly a struggle on Nico’s life.

Jules eyed Ethan suspiciously as he sat in the passengers seat of the car. Ethan didn't seem offended. He was used to it by now.

Will and Nico sat in the backseat rather awkwardly. There was enough room for a person in the space between them. After the whole panties situation, Will couldn't think of a way to strike up small
talk. He blamed his father for his weird kinks.

Nico leaned forward. “You're going to keep silent about this, right Jules?” Technically, Will and Nico were still grounded, but Lord Hades was away on business this weekend.

Jules made what sounded like croaking noises to Will, but Nico understood.

“What did he say?”

“He said my father is his boss, and he's not happy about it, but he'll keep this under wraps.”

Will let out a relieved sigh. Lord Hades was man of his word and if he said he'd end Will, he would. Will didn't want to be ended right now.

Will didn't really like long car rides, so he decided to pass the time by pestering Nico. “Excuse me, Mr. Tour Guide, where is the first stop?”

“The museum.”

“Which museum?”

“The Underworld museum.”

“Where is it?”

“200 Central Park West.”

Will was about to ask another pesky question when Nico leaned forward and spoke to Jules Albert. “Turn here.”

After nearly dying at the hands of a skeleton driver in a crowded parking lot, the trio climbed up the museum steps.

Nico gestured to the grandiose building with a wave of his hand. “This is the museum.”

Will held his camera up to his eyes like an enthusiastic Mom on prom night. “At least look excited!”

Nico forced a smile. “This is the museum!”

“That's kind of creepy.”

“Well, what do you want from me?”

“Enthusiasm.”

“I'm giving you all the enthusiasm I possess in my body.”

Will knew of something he could do that would make Nico very enthusiastic, but he kept it to himself.

Nico started to explain an artifact from an exhibit on the 1700s, when Will interrupted him. “Try speaking in a voice that isn't monotone.”

“Would you like me to sing too?”

“Sure!”
Nico glared at him. “I was being sarcastic.”

“What else is new?”

Nico huffed. “Can I get back to the exhibit?”

“I don't know, can you?”

“Listen here, I will smack you if you interrupt me one more time.”

“Aw, you're an angry history nerd. That's so cute.”

☼

The next day, Ethan spotted them from across the dining hall. “What are you guys up to today?”

“Nico and I were planning to head to the chasm.” Will said it casually, as if the chasm was a local park.

“What's that?”

“The cliff between life and death.”

Ethan took it surprisingly well. “Sounds cool. Could I tag along?”


Ethan raised his eyebrows. “I understand.”

Nico looked at him like he'd grown three heads. “You do?”

“Of course. I don't want to intrude.”

“Thanks.”

Ethan looked at him. “For what?”

“Not intruding?”

“No problem?”

Will was surprised to see the two interacting after looking like they were going to kill each other for weeks. This was a good start.

☼

The chasm was just as creepy as Will expected it to be. He'd thought Nico meant cliff between life and death in the metaphorical sense, but that wasn't the case. The cliff was jagged, and black smoke emerged from the abyss below. Not Will's ideal hangout spot.

In his arms, Hades grew agitated. Bringing a cat to a chasm wasn't exactly a cultural norm, but they couldn't leave him in the castle. They bundled him up in a little scarf and went on their merry way to cliff between life and death.

The strangest thing was when Nico started throwing Happy Meals from McDonalds into the abyss below. Sure, he'd made Will stop at the fast food drive through, but Will assumed he was hungry. Nico needed all the food he could get.
Out of nowhere, Nico called into the chasm. “I'm looking for Luke Castellan.”

In his defense, Will had never seen an actual ghost. He'd assumed they looked like the ghosts on cartoons, but the ghost standing before him look so...real.

Luke was roughly Will's height and somewhat slimmer. He had short blond hair and pale skin. The thing that caught Will's attention however was the scar that ran from his forehead to his chin. Talk about gnarly.

Luke looked pissed off. “Why did you summon me?”

“We need some information.”

“You're Hades's brat, right? Who's this,” he looked in Will's direction. “Another son of Zeus?”

“Son of Apollo,” corrected Will.

“So a grandson of Zeus.”

Will have never thought of himself has related to Lord Zeus because the rulers didn't consider themselves related. Wouldn't that make Nico his great uncle? Will decided to derail this train of thought before he made anymore uncomfortable discoveries.

Luke huffed impatiently. “Well, tell me what you want to know.”

“Who killed you?”


“Because your murderer is still out there.”

“So?”

“She's murdering kids.”

“I don't care about the kids of those corrupt bastards we call rulers.”

“Isn't Lord Hermes your father?”

That was the wrong thing to say. Luke was technically a ghost so he couldn't physically harm them, but the look in his eyes told them he wanted to.

“That bastard is not and never will be my father,” spat Luke. “Do you understand?”

Will thought about his own relationship with his dad. They were closer than most but mostly because Apollo acted as more of an older brother than a father. He didn't really do punishment. He let his kids drink, but due to his occupation as a physician condemned smoking and drugs. That didn't stop him from having a personal stash of drugs.

Nico was running out of patience. “Are you going to help us or not?”

“I won't.”

Seeing all the anger in Luke worried Will. What was it like to hate your own parents?

“Then what are you standing around here for,” deadpanned Nico. He threw a pebble in Luke's
direction and the ghost dissolved.

Nico turned to Will. “He was an ass.”

“No kidding.”

“Where is Hades?”

Will looked around, and didn't see the black kitten anywhere.

They spent half an hour searching for the kitten and ultimately gave up. She either wandered into the forest or fell into the abyss, neither of which were safe places for a kitten to be alone. They sat side by side on a picnic blanket near the cliff thinking about today's shitty events.

Nico was engulfed in thought, and Will desperately wanted to break the ice. “Have you spoken to Bianca's ghost?”

“She chose rebirth,” he said bitterly.

“Will you ever see her again?”

Nico shrugged and dangled his feet over the edge, which gave Will a heart attack. “She won't look the same and probably won't even remember me.”

“You're not an easy person to forget, Nico.”

Nico shrugged again. He was silent for a few moments. “Do you want to speak to Michael?”

Will just looked up at him. “I'm not sure I'm ready to face him.”

“You should. It'll give you closure or at least that's what Persephone says.”

“Will he know who I am?”

“He should.”

“I don't know.”

Nico sighed. “At some point you've got to stop hesitating, Will. Just do it.”

“Ohay, Death Boy show me how.”

Throwing French fries and chicken nuggets off a cliff to commune with his late brother's spirit had to be the strangest thing Will had ever done. Except, deliver a satyr baby. That was something else entirely.

Once Michael's ghost appeared, Nico excused himself. “I'll just wait over there.” He didn't want to intrude.

Will wanted to tell Nico to stay, but he couldn't take his eyes off Michael's ghost. He looked exactly how Will had remembered him, in the same outfit he'd worn when he passed rather than the fancy funeral outfit he'd been buried in.

Michael gave Will that famous smirk. “How have you been little bro?”

“Um, ok I guess.”
“You're almost as tall as me now.”

Will laughed. “I drink my milk.”

“That's good. I heard some rumors down here that you're getting married. Is that true?”

“Sort of.”

Michael gave him a strange look. “It was a yes or no question.”

“I'm engaged to Nico and technically our wedding is in two months, but there is kind of a situation.”

“What's going on?”

“The person who poisoned you is after us. Dad and all of us had to go into hiding. We never found out who it was.”

Michael winced. “How did he handle my death?”

It was weird thinking of Michael as worried about his dad instead of vice versa. “He got drunk daily and hooked up with everyone in sight.” Will chuckled. “At least we have a bunch of new siblings now.”

“I bet everyone's all grown up now.”

Will gave him an approximation of everyone's age.

Michael sat cross legged on the checkered picnic blanket. “So, tell me more about this Nico.”

Will blushed. “He's cute and shy and brave and I really like him and I think he likes me but I'm not sure. He doesn't want to get married.”

“He's nuts. If I wasn't your brother, I would've married you myself.”

Will snorted. “I really missed you.”

“I missed you too little bro. You have to come see me again sometime. Bring the fam.”

“Of course.”

“Being dead isn't half as bad as it sounds.”

“Really?”

“When you're alive you have so much stress but when you die, there's nothing to worry about.”

“I'm sorry, Michael,” blurted Will.

“For what?”

“Not saving you that night.”

If Michael had been human, he would've ruffled Will's hair. “There's nothing you could've done kiddo. Don't beat yourself up for it.”

Tears were streaming down Will's face. “I could've, I should've done something.” He sobbed. “You had your whole life ahead of you as a talented doctor and a husband...You were more of a father
“It’s okay. Don’t cry. Shhh, look I’m okay. Hell, I miss you guys but I’m happy in Elysium.” Even after so long, Will recognized Michael’s "doctor" voice.

After Will calmed down, Michael continued to talk. “I’m really proud of you, Will. You’re a great kid and you’ll be a great healer and possibly king.”

Michael was his idol, and hearing his praise made Will’s heart flutter. Will sniffled. “I’m not going to be king, Michael.”

“We’ll see about that. You already have a pretty prince as a fiancé.” Michael looked Nico up and down.

Will raised his eyebrows. “No way.”

Michael smirked at him. “Surprised you’re not the only gay one in this family?”

Will's eyes were wide. “Yes.”

Michael laughed and it sounded like music to Will's ears. “I have to go, Will. Take care of yourself and tell everyone I said hi.”

“Bye, Michael. Love you.”

“Love you too kiddo.” And like that, he disappeared.

Will blew his nose before walking back to Nico. He felt different.

Nico took in Will's pink rimmed puffy eyes. “Are you alright?”

“Yeah. I feel...lighter. At least I got to say what I wanted to.”

Nico gave him a half smile. “Ready to go?”

He looked at the cliff one last time. “Yeah.”

Nico brushed Will's shoulder as they walked home in silence. Maybe being king wouldn't be so terrible after all.
Chapter Summary

This is going to be little darker than the previous ones. Brace yourself for a #plottwist.

Will knocked on Nico's door in the middle of the night. Nico didn't answer. After knocking for ten minutes straight and receiving no answer, Will opened the door and scanned the bedroom for the dark prince. He didn't see Nico anywhere. Will heard the water running in the bathroom, and assumed Nico was taking a shower. A three A.M bath was strange, but Nico's sleep schedule was completely different from a normal human being's.

So Will waited, and waited, and waited. After nearly an hour had passed, Will felt a sinking feeling in his stomach. He told himself Nico had probably fallen asleep brushing his teeth being the little shit he was. Will stood and walked to the bathroom door. He pressed his ear to the door and listened for a moment. All he heard was running water. He took a deep breath and turned the knob. Immediately water hit his ankle, and he waded through to the middle of the bathroom where the massive tub lay in all this glory. His heart was hammering.

Will screamed when he looked into the bath tub. Nico do Angelo lay perfectly still under a foot of water. The only movement was Nico's long dark hair floating in the water. Will turned off the tap and hauled Nico out of the tub. He screamed for help. He laid Nico down on the floor mat next to the tub and covered his dignity with a towel. Will checked for a pulse, and was equally relieved and terrified when he could just make out the faint beating of heart.

Hazel came running into the bathroom, with Frank not far behind her. “What's going on?” Hazel bursted into tears when she saw Nico's state, but pulled herself together in a matter of seconds. “Is his heart still beating?”

Will nodded.

Frank couldn't stand by idly. “What can I do?”

“Get Lord Hades and tell him to call an ambulance.”

Frank was out the door in seconds.

Hazel pressed her lips to Nico's forehead. “You can't die on me.”

Being a medic, Will was used to situations like these, but they'd never felt this personal. Seeing Nico like this made his heart twist in ways he'd never felt before. He couldn't think of Nico dying. They were supposed to have a big wedding and a bunch of kids and grandkids and travel and go to those goth concerts Nico adored. That couldn't happen if Nico was dead. Will felt a wave of pressure come over him. He couldn't fail Nico now. Even though Michael told him it wasn't his fault, Will knew it was partially his fault Michael had died.

Hazel shook his shoulder. “Don't space out on me, Will. Does he need CPR?”

Will nodded stiffly and took a deep breath. “Pump his chest before I resuscitate him.”
Hazel was tiny and looked delicate, but she had the strength of a wrestler. She pumped hard and fast skillfully, as if she'd done this a million times.

Will tilted Nico's head back and lifted his chin, while pinching Nico's tiny nose. He lowered his head and placed his lips perpendicular to Nico's. He blew air into Nico's mouth five times. No reaction. He blew air in more desperately five more times. Still no reaction. Tears were pricking in his eyes as he continued to blow air into Nico and prayed to whatever gods were out there that he'd live. His first time kissing Nico was performing CPR on his seemingly lifeless body. That would sure make a cute story to tell his grandkids. If he ever had any. It took seventeen breaths before he finally saw Nico's chest rise and fall.

Hazel let out a sob of relief.

Lord Hades came running into the flooded bathroom dressed in silky black pajamas. “Please tell me this is one of you kids' stupid pranks.”

Will would've laughed at Lord Hades's appearance if not for the somber occasion. His hair was sticking up in every direction and he was wearing fluffy black slippers. His expression, however, was completely devoid of humor.

“Hazel and I just performed CPR and he's breathing now.”

Lord Hades nodded briskly. “The ambulance will be here any minute. What happened?”

Will explained how he'd found Nico, while trying to avoid making eye contact with the stoic Lord Hades.

“Why were you coming to his room in the middle of the night?”

Will gulped. He didn't know how to answer that. Part of his brain told him to tell the truth - he wanted to talk to Nico about his talk with Michael. But if he said that, Lord Hades would know they snuck out of the castle. Nico was unconscious so Will doubted Lord Hades would punish him, but still. His other option was to lie to Lord Hades's face, but that went against his instincts and Lord Hades would see right through him. He decided on a half lie half truth. “I couldn't sleep and I knew he'd be up so we could've watched movies or something.”

Lord Hades eyed him suspiciously.

Frank came jogging in breathless. “They're here.”

Stepping aside and watching the paramedics load Nico onto a stretcher was the hardest thing Will had ever had to do. He tried not to think of how many people rolled away in stretchers didn't come back. He watched as Frank wrapped an arm around Hazel's waist, kissed her forehead, and told her everything was going to be okay. Were they really?

Lord Hades turned to them. “I'm going with them. You three should get some rest.”

“There's no way I'm staying here while he's in the hospital!” Will and never seen Hazel so fired up.

“Haze, it's better if you all stay here.”

“Nico wouldn't want us to stay here!”

Lord Hades couldn't argue further. “Get dressed and have Jules drive you there. I'll be back.” Like that, he left.
Ethan felt bad for sneaking out in the middle of a crisis like this. He really did, but it didn't stop him from tying his bootlaces and pulling on his backpack. The minute he pushes the door open and stepped into the cool air, he knew he wouldn't coming back.

The ride to the hospital was silent.

Will busied himself with watching the raindrops roll down the window. It was impossible to think Nico tried to kill himself, wasn't it?

Hazel's soft voice pierced the silence. “I had a bad dream about Nico. I woke up when Will was screaming and our reality is a worse nightmare.”

“What did you dream about?”

“This woman was angry. I couldn't make out her face, because there was a whole bunch of mist around her. She said something about him being too close.

“Too close to what?”

“I don't know.” Hazel looked out of the window. “I just want to know why. I mean I knew he was sad, but I never thought he would...”

Frank rubbed her arm. “I'm sure he'll be fine.”

Will felt a twinge of envy. He wanted Nico to hold him while he cried, but he couldn't exactly do that right now.

Hazel sat up, determination flashing in her eyes. “He better be. Wait till I get a hold of him.”

The hospital was surrounded by news reporters.

Will, Hazel, and Frank, dressed in black hoodies, dodged paparazzi and nosy reporters as they ran for the side entrance to the hospital. They signed in at the front desk, and the receptionist kindly pointed them toward the elevator.

Will felt his heart beating extremely fast as they waited for the elevator. What if he was too late? What if Nico didn't make it? He told himself not to think like that. He was always preaching about the power of positivity, so he should be positive at times like these.

They caught Lord Hades in the middle of a conversation with a frowning middle aged doctor.

“There are no bruises to make us believe he fell.”

“What happened then?”

“It's possible that Nico fell asleep in the tub, but he would've drowned by the time William reached him.”

Lord Hades grit his teeth. “What are you saying?”
“This doesn't seem like an accident.”
“I'm not following.”
“Lord Hades, Nicolas mostly likely tried to drown himself.”
“He would never,” started Lord Hades.
“He has a history of depression and drug and alcohol use. Not a good combination.”
“That was due to the grief caused by his sister passing.”
The doctor raised his eyebrows as if to say *there's another reason.*
“But there was no note!”
“Not everyone leaves a note. When you're in that state the last thing on most people's minds is writing a letter.”
“I can't believe this.”
“It's hard to accept at first, but you got lucky. Now you have to focus on getting Nicolas the help he needs.”

Will heard what the doctor was saying, but he wasn't listening. He instantly felt guilty. He should've done something. He should've said something. Sure, he knew Nico didn't eat much, but he'd never made the connection to Nico being depression.

He paced the hospital lobby for almost an hour.
“You should sit down before you tear out all your hair.”
Will was tempted to say he was fine, but it was obvious he wasn't. He plopped down next to Hazel and Frank.

He took a shaky deep breath. “Do you think he's okay in there?”
“Nico's a strong kid. I'm sure he'll be fine.” Frank was confident and it made Will feel confident.

Will nodded and covered his face with his hands. He made several strangled bear noises before looking up and seeing everyone in the hospital waiting area looking at him. “Sorry,” he muttered sheepishly.

☼

It was around eight the next morning when Nico could have visitors.
“Immediate family only.”
Will just nodded and sunk back into his seat. He felt like shit. He probably looked like it too.

He fell asleep again.

A strong arm shook Will out of his uncomfortable nap in the rigid hospital chairs. Frank handed him a cup of bitter coffee.

Will rubbed the sleep from his eyes. “How is he?”
“Better. They say he'll be able to come home in a few days.”

Will and Frank had never really interacted much, but Will was thankful Frank was here now. Will could see what Hazel saw in Frank. He was quiet and gentle, yet strong.

Frank let out a long sigh. “I hate hospitals.”

“What?”

“For one they all look the same.”

Will couldn’t help but chuckle at that.

“I just remember being twelve and sitting in these seats and a nurse coming out and telling me my mom was dead.”

“That must of been terrible.”

Frank just pursed his lips and agreed.

Will decided to share too. “My mom got sick when I was around six. That's when I started living with my dad in the castle. She wasn't happy about it. She knew he had a whole bunch of other kids and was irresponsible and didn't want me to turn into him. But there wasn't much she could do.”

“Did she recover?”

Will nodded. “Dad made sure she got the best medical care in our realm. It was the first time I've seen him serious about anything.”

“How is he?”

“The same as always,” lied Will. He suddenly remembered the realm where he grew up. Who was running it? Had Lord Apollo left the citizens to fend for themselves when he fled? Just thinking about it have Will a mini headache, or maybe it was the terrible hospital coffee.

☼

Lord Hades and Hazel left Nico's room and joined Frank and Will in the hospital waiting area.

Ten to fifteen minutes later, a young nurse walked up the group reclining. She addressed Lord Hades. “Nico asked to see William.”

Lord Hades nodded and looked at William. It wasn't necessarily a glare, it was just an intense look. Maybe that was his neutral face.

Will pulled himself to his feet and shuffled down the hallway to Nico's hospital room. 203. He traced the number before pushing the door open.

The first thing Nico said to Will when he saw him was “What are you wearing?”

Will turned around and modeled it for him. “Like it?”

Nico looked paler and skinnier than normal, which wasn't good at all. He didn't look like someone who'd just gone through a near death experience, but at the same time he always looked like death.

“Black looks good on you.”
“You'd look even better on me.”
Nico flushed all the way to his toes in his paisley print hospital gown.

“We were all really, really worried about you.”
Nico let out a soft sigh and looked out the window. “I know. I'm sorry.”

“Why'd you do it?”
Nico looked at him absently. “I don't even remember doing anything.”

Will furrowed his brow. “You don't?”
Nico shook his head. “I was asleep in bed and then next thing I know I'm in the hospital.”

Will was confused. “You didn't try to,”
“Kill myself? Is that what everyone thinks happened?” Nico wanted to laugh. Of course they thought he was suicidal.

Will scratched the back of his head. “Well, yeah. The doctor said it didn't look like an accident.”
Nico rolled his eyes. “I'm not suicidal.”

“Oh.”
Nico's eyes scanned the plain walls. “When are they letting me out of this prison?”

Will fixed his wrinkled collar. He was suddenly aware that he might have some dried drool on his cheek. “Not for a while. They still have plenty of tests to run.”

“But, I want to go home.”

“Nico, they need to make sure you're healthy before they let you go home.”

Nico wasn't listening. “Can't you sign me out? Aren't you a doctor or something?”

Will almost stomped his foot. “I'm trained in all branches of medicine and healing, including surgery and birth.”

Nico gave him a deadpanned expression. “Can you sign me out or not?”

“I can, but I won't.”

“I'm desperate. I'll do anything.”

“I'm not endangering our health just so you can go home and listen to your heavy metal music and eat fast food.”

Nico groaned. “I won't eat McDonald's. I'll even kiss you.”

A nurse knocked on the door to signal visiting time was over.

“Don't leave me here with these people, Will.” Nico pleaded.

Will leaned down to give Nico a peck on the cheek, before making his way to the door. “Until we
meet again, my love.”

Nico released a chain of curse words in Italian.

Will turned around instantly. “What was that?”

“I said I'll miss you.” Nico gave him his most innocent smile.

"Don't worry, I'll be back soon." Will winked at him as he left.
Rumors

Chapter Notes

I had a lot of trouble with this chapter because it absolutely refused to be written, not to mention that I was sleep deprived for most of the week. (Courtesy of the American Education System) I really need to dedicate an entire day to just writing because I have ideas for so many unwritten fics right now, not to mention my unfinished fics that I haven't updated since like February. :/

True to his word, Will did come back soon. Soon as in the next day soon. He even brought apple pie he baked himself. How Lady Demeter let him anywhere near the kitchen was a mystery to Nico.

Will set the pie on the nightstand next to Nico's hospital cot. “How are you feeling?”

“Like someone who wants to go home.”

“Besides that.”

“Fine I guess. I can breathe better now.”

“Did they run tests on your lungs?”

Nico shrugged.

“What about your heart? Are they mailing the results home?”

Nico shrugged again.

“I swear you're doing this to me one purpose.”

Nico smirked. “The same way you left me here on purpose?”

“It was for your own good. Your health is my number one priority.”

Nico just huffed and turned toward the window.

“Don't pout.”

“I'm not pouting.”

“Yes, you are.”

Nico bit his bottom lip and shook his head. He didn't pout.

He decided to change the topic. “What have you been up to? Since you can go out into the world freely and all.”

Will rolled his eyes. “Everyone at the Palace is worried about you, especially Lady Persephone and Lady Demeter.”
Nico snorted. “That's a good one. They're probably praying I die off soon.”

“No I'm not!” Nico gestured wildly with his hands. “Lady Demeter has hated my guts since I was in the womb and when something happens to me she suddenly acts like she cares. Save it.”

Will almost felt guilty because didn't know half of what Nico had been through, but was ready to chastise him for speaking his mind. “I didn't mean to upset you.”

Nico sighed. “It's okay. You didn't know.”

The silence that followed was comfortable.

Will leafed through Nico's file, when he thought back to the night he found Nico unconscious in the bathtub. “What did the doctor mean when he said you had past drug and alcohol problems?”

Nico flipped through the hospital's TV channels. “I had drug and alcohol problems.”

“You've done drugs?”

Nico's laugh was dry. “I've done all of them.”

Will's face was a mixture of shock and horror. “Why?”

Nico in the other hand was completely nonchalant. “Mostly out of curiosity and depression.”

“How did you even obtain them?”

“It's not as hard as you think, baby.”

“Drugs are bad for you!”

Nico gave him a deadpanned expression. “Are you serious?”

“They are! You could've developed an addiction.”

Nico rolled his eyes. “It's not a big deal, Will.”

“To you, it isn't. What did your dad say?”

“He told me not to take them anymore, and sent me to a rehab program. He felt like a failure as a father, so from then on he's been keeping close tabs on what I do and what I buy. Hence why I can't go anywhere without Jules Albert.”

“Did he know you were depressed?”

“I'm sure he found out at some point. He made me go to therapy every week after Bianca passed. It was a complete waste of time. I wasn't opening up to some stranger.”

Will sighed. “How come you never told me?”

“It isn't exactly an accomplishment. I wasn't going to brag about it on a date.” Nico was a lot more insecure than he let on. Sure he had the I-Don't-Give-A-Fuck attitude, but secretly he gave a lot of fucks. It was maddening. After Bianca died, he'd felt unimaginable hurt and a void in his life that he still couldn't fill. After Percy broke his heart, he felt excruciating heartbreak, which surprised him the
most because he swore he didn't have a heart.

“I would've understood.”

Nico believed him. “I guess I wasn't ready to talk about it. Sorry.”

Will touched Nico's hand. “Don't apologize for doing things on your terms.”

Blue eyes met dark brown ones and Will had to physically resist leaning down and kissing Nico right there.

Nico's voice pierced Will's internal struggles. “They have Netflix here. What do you want to watch?”

Will shrugged and sat at the foot of Nico's bed. “Whatever you want.”

Nico smiled at him with his eyes. How did Will know? Even though Nico's face stayed neutral, the twinkle that appeared in his eyes when he looked at Will was a smile in its own right. It was good enough for Will.

“Wait, turn it back!”

“You said I could watch whatever I wanted!”

“I changed my mind,” Will smiled wickedly. “Turn it back to channel four.”

Nico did as he was told. “The news? Really? You're not a seventy year old man, Solace.”

“You have to stay updated on what's going on in the world.”

“I don't care what goes on out there.” Nico pouted.

“Shh! I'm watching.” Will didn't miss the glare Nico shot him.

Begrudgingly, Nico laid back on his pillows and focused on the program. A blonde news reporter smiled into the camera for longer than necessary before shuffling her papers.

“We have received word that His Royal Highness, Prince Nicolas di Angelo, Son of Lord Hades is being hospitalized after attempting suicide by drowning. Prince Nicolas has always been extremely private and refused to be interviewed since the death of his sister, Bianca di Angelo. These allegations first appeared in the tabloids on Wednesday, but rumors have been swirling for some time about Prince Nicolas being suicidal. Everyone at Channel Four News wishes Nico a swift recovery. Back to Brian with the weather.”

Nico turned off the television and set the remote down with shaky hands. “How did they?”

Will moved closer to Nico instantly and placed a comforting hand on his shoulder. “It's fine. When Hazel, Frank, and I were coming here there were swarms of reporters outside. Someone on the hospital staff must of told them so they’d leave.”

Nico looked down at his lap. “This what I hate about being a prince. They don't fucking leave me alone for one second. They report everything I do, everywhere I go, everyone I talk to. I'm so sick of it.”

“I know you are,” cooed Will.

“It was the worst when Bianca died. They came up to me in mobs at the funeral to ask me questions
as if I'd lost my bicycle, not my sister.” He paused to take a deep breath. “Sometimes the media treats me like a little kid and freaks out when I hang out with someone they deem a potential love interest, and other times they treat me like some brooding soul in desperate need of company. They need to just let me be for one damn day.”

“I understand what you mean.” Will thought about what he was going to say next carefully. “When Jake and I first started dating, we couldn't go anywhere because the media would follow us around. I tried everything to get them to leave us alone for a while, but sooner or later I grew to accept it. Being a member of the Royal Families means you're not like everyone else and you're every move will be watched.”

Nico rubbed his face. “I wish it wasn't like this. I wish we could just be normal teenagers for once without all the added pressure.”

“I do too, but we don't have a choice. Look on the bright side, Princes get to do all sorts of cool things common folk can't. Plus, our “special” abilities are very useful.”

Nico just let out a huge sigh in response and slumped on the pillows. Life was fucked.

☼

Will had been so preoccupied with Nico's health that he momentarily forgot about Ethan's existence. Oops.

After wandering around like a lost puppy for twenty minutes, Will approached the Front Desk of the Underworld residence.

The receptionist was a petite busty woman with long dark hair and a warm smile. “Hi, I'm Mintha. What's your name sweetie?”

“I'm Will.”

Her voice was chirpy and energetic. “How can I help you, Will?” The only thing perky than her personality was her bust.

“Has anyone seen Ethan? I've been looking for him everywhere.”

She pulled a piece of paper up from a file on her shelf. “According to what I have here, he left.”

Will gripped the desk to steady himself. “When?”

Mintha shrugged as her large eyes scanned the words printed on the paper. “It doesn't say exactly, but I assume it was Tuesday.”

It wasn't a coincidence that Ethan left the day Nico almost drowned, was it?

“Did he say where he was going?”

Mintha cleared her throat. “He never announced he was leaving. Housekeeping just went up to change the sheets in his room, and he and all his belongings were gone.”

Will felt like he'd been punched square in his gut. “Did anyone see him?”

“Someone reported it, but it doesn't say who. Sorry.”

“It's fine. Thank you for all your help.”
Mintha smiled and settled in her chair. “You're very welcome, Will.”

Will didn’t miss the framed picture of Lord Hades and Mintha on the corner of her desk as he turned around.

☼

Nico was in the middle of a pleasant nap, when his phone rang. He ignored it, and tried to continue napping, but the fucker calling him wouldn't let up. He cracked one eye to look at his phone’s flashing screen. Jason. Of course.

He accepted the call and was about to ask Jason what the fuck he wanted, but Jason beat him to it.

“WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED?”

“Gods, Jason you're going to make me deaf.”

“DO YOU KNOW THE PANIC I JUST FELT WHEN I HEARD MY BEST FRIEND WAS IN THE HOSPITAL BECAUSE HE TRIED TO KILL HIMSELF?”

Nico actually felt bad. Jason had always been there for him, through everything in his life from Bianca's death to his sexuality crisis to his boy problems. “I didn't try to kill myself, Jay.”

“That's not what I just heard on the news. Do you know how it feels to have to learn what's going on with your best friend from the news? I had no idea you were suicidal. You could've talked to me about it, Neeks.”

Nico couldn't even be mad at Jason for using that awful nickname. “They got it all wrong. I wasn't trying to kill myself, I passed out in the bath tub.”

Jason was silent for a few minutes. “Are you telling me the truth?”

Nico mentally cringed. Technically, he wasn't being completely honest, but he didn't want to worry Jason more than he already had. “Yes.”

“Are you feeling alright?”

“I'm feeling a lot better.”

“That's good. You had me so worried, Nico.”

Nico hung his head. “I didn't meant to.”

“I know you didn't. You just do sometimes. I can't imagine my life without you, Neeks.”

“I can't imagine life without you either, Jay.”

Jason let out a deep sigh. “I'm going to let you get some rest, but let me hear something else happened to you, Neeks, I will fly down there myself. You better call me later.”


“Bye, Neeks.”

☼

Will was wandering around the Palace (lost because his guide was in the hospital), but enjoying the
view nonetheless. He had nothing to do these days besides visit Nico. Looking out the window at the city skyline, Will thought about his family. He'd always been surrounded by relatives because he simply had so many. He missed his siblings like hell right now. Every time he saw kids playing on the sidewalk or teens hanging out, his heart hurt a little more. He needed their support at times like these.

A sharp knock on the door made Will jerk away from the window.

Mintha sauntered into his room and handed him the phone he'd lost two weeks ago. “You have a phone call from a young lady.”

Will put the phone up to his ear. “Hey, Willie.”

“Who is this?” He mouthed a thank you to Mintha as she left.

“It's only been a month, Will. Don't tell me you can't recognize my voice anymore.”

“Kayla?!”

“The one and only.”

Will gripped the phone. “Is everything alright? Did something happen to dad?”

“No! Gosh, it can't even get a word in with you. I actually have good news.”

“So tell me!”

“Patience grasshopper.”

“Kayla, I swear if you don't tell me now,”

Kayla laughed. “Guess what? We can come home.”

“You're kidding me.”

“I'm not, promise. The police tracked down and arrested all the conspirators.”

“Conspirators?”

“Yeah. Turns out the maniac women was actually a group of devious people.”

“Who people? Give me names.”

“I don't know actually. They're records were clean, and they've been under the radar for years. We would never recognize them. We all have to testify though.”

“Then why did they attempt to murder the royal family?” Will had absolutely no idea what he's say on trial because he had absolutely no idea what was going on.

“The police chief told dad it was all about politics.”

Huh. “It can't be that simple.”

“Just be happy we can go home.”

“I am happy.”
“Where’s your sugar daddy?”

“Nico is in the hospital.”

“What happened?”

Will told her the full story.

Will heard someone’s voice on the other end of the phone. “Dad wants you to come home.”

Will felt a pang in his chest. What was he supposed to say to his father?

“I can’t right now with Nico and stuff.”

“I understand.”

“Give everyone a hug for me please.”

“No probelmo.”

Will wanted to tell her about Michael so badly, but he knew this wasn’t the right time.

“Bye Kayla. Love you.”

“Love you.”

He couldn’t wait to tell Nico.

☼

*Meanwhile In the Sun Realm*

A huge beach barbecue had been hosted in celebration of the return of the Sun Realm’s Royal Family.

Lord Apollo had been casually sipping his third beer when someone caught his eye. A tall, strong man with brown skin and curly hair. He walked across the beach like he owned it, but he had a calming affect to his presence. He was like the embodiment of summer breeze on a hot day. Lord Apollo hopped to his feet, beer bottle still in hand, and started after the man. Getting away from the endless stream of young women who wanted to talk him up everywhere on the beach was difficult, but it didn’t deter him. For a moment he thought he lost the man, when he found him lounging on one of the bar stools.

He was gorgeous from afar, but up close he was perfection. His hair was jet black and his eyes were golden brown. His jawline was strong and his body, dear gods his body was sculpted. His skin was a radiant shade of rich brown that Apollo wouldn’t mind licking this beer off.

Lord Apollo flashed his brightest smile. “Can I get you a beer, babe?”

The man didn’t seem to enjoy being called babe. “No thanks. I’m not much of a drinker.”

“Seems like you came to wrong realm then,” Lord Apollo gestured to the alcohol collection behind the bar containing every type of alcoholic beverage known to man. Life was good when Dionysus owed you favors.

The man looked Apollo up and down. “I don’t think it seems that way at all.”
Apollo raised his eyebrows at the not so subtle flirting, which wasn’t much different from his own style. “I am one of the Sun Realms greatest assets.”

The stranger chuckled, and Apollo felt like a schoolboy with a crush inside. “Your ass is great.”

Lord Apollo felt himself blushing, which felt completely foreign. He couldn’t remember the last time someone had made him flush. Whoever this stranger was, he was good. But Lord Apollo was never one to back down from a challenge. He turned around so the man could have a better look. “Isn’t it?”

The stranger smirked. “You really are as conceited as everyone says you are.”

Normally, Apollo would’ve laughed and agreed. Anyone who looked like this would be conceited. But coming from this stranger, the words stung.

He pretended to be indifferent. “I’m not conceited. It’s not my fault I’m pretty to look at and multitalented.”

The stranger just raised his eyebrows again to say keep telling yourself that. He glanced at his watch. “I should get going now. Thanks for inviting me.”

“Why are you leaving?” Gods, he sounded like an eight year old.

“Work, princess. Some of us work for our livings and don’t complain until our rich daddy gives us a kingdom.”

Lord Apollo was taken aback and rendered completely speechless for a full two minutes.

The stranger just continued paying Apollo no mind and casually putting on his jacket and humming. He turned to walk away.

“Can I at least have your name and number,” blurted Lord Apollo. He mentally scolded himself for sounding so desperate. But he was desperate. Everything about the stranger turned him on, from his hair to his muscles to his attitude. He cleared his throat and maintained his composure. “For...government purposes.”

The stranger chuckled and the rich, deep sound went straight to Apollo’s dick. “I’m Zephyrus, and you don’t need my number because you'll be seeing me again really soon.”
Welcome Home

Chapter Summary

Nico comes home from the hospital, so an impromptu Get Well Nico party is hosted. Also the chapter in which Reyna is the ultimate gay best friend.

Chapter Notes

Finally, an update after like 2 weeks. I'm finally free from school, so I can put more time and energy into writing fanfiction.

Nico was ready to take a nice long nap. He stumbled up the Palace steps, and struggled under the weight of his hospital bags. He refused to let Will carry them, and he wasn't about to go back on his word now. The only thing that kept him going was the thought of how soft and warm his bed was.

He opened the door with some difficulties due to the weight of his bags and the disapproving looks Will was sending his way.

He pushed the door open to find his living room covered in streamers and balloons. Nico looked over to see Percy Jackson, Prince of the Sea, looking like a deer in headlights in a party hat eating potato chips. “Shit, we're late guys. He's already here.”

“Welcome home, Nico!” Chorused Jason, Percy, Piper, Annabeth, Hazel, Frank, Leo, and Reyna.

Nico turned to Will. “You knew about this!”

Will didn't say a word, but the blush on his cheeks gave him away.

“He's the one that organized this whole thing.”

Jason calmly walked up to Nico and crushed him in a hug. “I missed you so much!”

Nico reciprocated the feelings but the words were muffled by Jason’s shirt.

“You look pale.”

“I'm always pale, Jay.”

“I mean paler than usual.” Jason huffed and turned to Will. “He needs sunlight. You need to take him outside.”

“I've been trying to drag him out for weeks, but you know how stubborn he can be.”

Jason looked pointedly at Nico. “Mhhmn.”

“Why do I get the feeling the two of you are conspiring against me?”
The blonds flashed him identical smiles.

Nico wanted to be irritated with them, but he couldn't. He was happy the tension between them had disappeared because it got pretty awkward when your romantic interest and best friend were glaring at each other from across the room.

Nico's thoughts were interrupted by Leo hooking up a microphone. “Shall we get this party started?”

A loud chorus of Yes was drowned out by the defeatingly loud punk music that blasted from the huge speakers mounted on the wall. “This one is for our darling, Nico.”

Nico rolled his eyes at Leo, who was already buzzed.

Percy emerged from the kitchen holding a silver platter. “My mom made Jell-O shots.” The shots were gone before he even set the platter down.

“WHO TOOK THE BLUE ONE? Mom made that one especially for me!” Percy glared around the room until he spotted culprit. “Grace! I will end you!”

Everyone laughed and Jason looked a little too smug for his own good.

Annabeth and Piper were giggly drunks when they approached Nico.

Annabeth nudged him as she eyed Will. “You have good taste.”

Nico laughed. “You too. I heard you and Sally are practically sisters.”

There had been a huge scandal the sea when Lord Poseidon divorced his wife of many years, Amphitrite, for the young, beautiful Sally Jackson. However, Sally had proven herself as an intelligent queen, loyal wife, and dedicated mother. In a way, she became a mother to all the royal heirs. She was never too busy to give advice or just chat. In a lot of ways she reminded Nico of Percy.

“She's amazing. Believe it or not, I'm closer to her than my actual mom.”

“Really?”

“My mom just has all these expectations, you know. I love her, but she's so hard to please. With Sally, I don't have to be perfect. I can just be Annabeth.”

“That's great.” Nico pretended he didn't notice Piper's hand groping Annabeth's bottom.

Annabeth's cheeks grew a tad pinker. “How do you get along with Lord Apollo?”

“He's... interesting and kind of sexual.”

Annabeth laughed. “He's always been.” She leaned in some. “Be careful though. He's pretty harmless, but he's got a big storm coming his way.”

“What do you mean?”

“He's made a lot of enemies. Powerful ones. He needs to watch himself. There's been talk of him being forced to resign.”

“Do you think it would actually happen?”
Annabeth shrugged. “There have been rumors circulating for years. He's never been a strong leader, especially after his son died, but lately he's been extremely flaky and neglectful. All the other rulers have been noticing it. Plus, the economy is close to collapsing.”

“Who would take over the sun realm?”

“Lady Hera's been itching for a realm of her own for decades. If she becomes ruler she won't be able to watch Lord Zeus like a hawk, and he'll be able to have all the affairs he pleases. Seems like a win win situation for him.”

Nico had to admit she was right.

☼

Halfway into the the party, the doorbell rang.

Annabeth raised an eyebrow. “I thought everyone was here.”

“WHO GOES THERE?” screamed Leo in the general direction of the door.

Since Will seemed the most sober, he answered the door.

He was completely stunned to see Kayla, Austen, Cassandra, Alexander, Aria, and Abby and standing outside holding get well cards and flowers. “Are we late?”

Wil gripped the door frame. “What are you guys doing here?”

“We heard there was a party and came to surprise our older brother that we haven't seen for like two months.”

Will lunged forward and pulled each one of them into a tight hug.

“Will, you're crushing me.”

“I don't care. I missed you so much, Kayla.”

He pulled Abby into a hug next. “Look how tall you've gotten.”

“Do you plan on letting us in or should we set up tents on the yard?”

Will thought briefly about what Demeter would do if they even touched her precious yard. “Come on in. Everyone's over here. Abigail stay clear of the booze, but with Percy and Leo here I doubt there's any left.”

☼

Nico was enjoying a minute of alone time since Will was busy with his siblings when Jason and Percy, both already drunk, plopped down on either side of him.

Percy was the most drunk of the two. He threw an arm on Nico's shoulders and his voice was slurred when he asked “Where's your lover boy?”

“He's with his siblings.”

Percy giggled. “My mom said men that are good with kids make the best fathers, remember that. Speaking of which, have you guys had sex yet?”
Nico's face went red. “What?”

“It's a yes or no question, Neeks.”

“Stop calling me that! And not that it's any of your business what Will and I do, we haven't.”

“That sucks. Why not?”

Jason smacked him on the shoulder. “Don't encourage them.”

Percy rolled his eyes and patted Jason's head, much to the blond's dismay. “Sweetie, people have sex. Just because you're a prude doesn't mean everyone else is.”

Jason glared at him. “I'm not a prude!”

“If you say so.”

Jason gave him a wolf stare that would make most people piss their pants. “You're testing my patience.”

“You're just mad because your girlfriend is too busy sleeping with Reyna to sleep with you.”

Jason rolled his eyes. “Annabeth's hooking up with them too.”

“Yes but we still have plenty of mindblowing sex, unlike you and Piper.”

“It must not take much to blow your mind, then.”

Nico was feeling a change in the atmosphere. “Uh guys?”

Percy flashed Jason his cockiest smile. “You probably fuck like a grandma.”

Jason raised his eyebrows. “Is that a challenge?”

“Uh guys? What's going on?”

Jason stood and dragged Percy up with him. “We probably won't be back for a while, so don't wait up for us.”

“Later, Neeks.” Percy threw the hand that wasn't currently roaming Jason's chest up at Nico as the two disappeared upstairs. Something told Nico this would be the first of many times.

☼

Nico found himself being squeezed to death with a facefull of long brown hair. “I missed you, Rey.”

If it was possible, Reyna hugged him harder. “Don't scare me like that again or I'll kill you myself.”

Nico laughed. “I won't.”

Reyna looked him dead in the eye as if daring him to lie. “Is everything alright?”

He nodded. “I'm good. It was an accident.”

She released a content sigh. “That's good to hear.”

“So how have you been?”
She sipped her beer. “Busy.”

Nico looked pointedly in Annabeth and Piper's direction. “I can see that.”

“Does everyone know all the details of my sex life?”

“Yes. You decided to tell Grace of all people.”

Reyna laughed. “He and Percy should be politicians. They know everyone and can talk your ear off for hours.”

Nico nodded in agreement.

“I know you want to ask me something, so go ahead.”

“Are you in love with Annabeth and Piper?”

Reyna tilted her head. “Yes and no. I definitely have romantic feelings for them and vise versa, but our relationship is purely sexual due to the fact that they're in,” she shuddered. “Heterosexual relationships.”

Nico felt himself smiling. “How did you know you liked them?”

“The lust part was pretty obvious, but the love part was tricky. You kind of just know. Why?”

“I don't know what Will and I are. Best friends? Boyfriends? Fiancés?”

“What do you want to be? Talk to Will about it.” Reyna rolled her shoulders back. “Don't feel like you need to label it right away, but you two have been dancing around each other for weeks. It's painful to watch.”

“We have not.”

“Nicolas, you and I both know that isn't true. Stop playing yourself.”

“But it's complicated!”

Reyna didn't look impressed. “No it isn't. He likes you, you like him, but neither of you have the balls to do anything about it.”

Nico was never more thankful for Hazel, who walked over to the couch Nico and Reyna were sitting on with two plates of cake in her hands.

“I baked it myself, so eat up. Especially, you mister.” She handed Nico a huge slice of chocolate cake.

He was about to say he couldn't eat it all, but the looks Hazel and Reyna were giving him told him he didn't have a choice. It was like he had two protective older sisters. Maybe that wasn't such a bad thing given his previous life choices.

☼

The party ended at about 3 A.M, and after hugging each guest goodbye, Nico found himself being escorted to his bed by none other than Will, a mother hen at heart.

“You don't have to put me to bed. I'm not five.” Nico argued as he changed into his Batman
pajamas. They were a gift from Hazel, okay?

“It's protocol.”

“Protocol for what?”

“Just lay down. You must be exhausted from the party.”

“I socialized with over eight people. It's a new record.” Nico cracked a half smile.

“Do you want a snack before bed?”

“No mom, I'm full.” Nico rolled his eyes as he threw his rumpled clothes into the hamper by his door. Nico never knew exactly when, but everyday the servants came in and washed his clothes, dried them, folded them, and put them away. There were days when he never left his room, but his clean laundry was sitting right on his bed. It was kind of frightening.

“I thought you called me daddy.”

“What?”

“Nothing.” Will's smirk radiated pure evil.

“What are you talking about?”

“I said it was nothing.”


“Remember when we went to the Love Realm, and you drank those love potions or whatever they're called.”

Nico had a headache just thinking about it.

“You were drunk and out of your mind and you called me daddy.”

Nico felt his cheeks go hot. “Um...” He ran his fingers over the edge of the duvet he was tucked under. How the fuck was he supposed to explain that?

He felt the bed dip under Will's weight.

“I don't think you crawling into bed with me is exactly protocol.” He looked pointedly in Will's direction.

Next to him, Will chuckled. He was sprawled out on his back looking like a wet dream with his blond hair splayed out on the pillow and wearing a white tank top that wasn't covering much. Nico could clearly see Will's pink nipples, and he wanted to reach over and squeeze one so badly.

Nico forced himself to look away. *Clean thoughts, di Angelo*

Will seemed to read Nico's thoughts, if the smirk on his face was anything to go by. “I only take cash.

Nico's face went red. “Shut up.”

“What? You were thinking about fucking me. I might as well make some money.”
“You are the worst, I swear.”

“If you got naked, I'm sure you'd be moaning something different.”

“Shut up.”

Will stuck his tongue out. “Or what?”

“You'll sleep in your own room.”

“Don't be a party pooper. There's no cute Italians for me to hit on in my room.”

“I will hit you.” Nico flicked his arm.

“I only accept slaps on my ass, thank you.”

“I swear, Solace. You're going to be the death of me.

“Before I was Will and now I'm Solace. I'm deeply hurt, Nico.”

Nico rolled his eyes. “I'm sure you'll survive. Thanks for the party, by the way. I had a lot of fun.”

“I did too. You're face when we walked in was priceless.”

Nico glared at him, but he couldn't hold it for long because a tan hand was brushing his hip bone. He smacked it. “Keep your hands to yourself, Solace.”

“But putting my hands on you is so much more entertaining.”

“Fuck you.”

“You want to? As I said before, I only take cash.”

☼

Nico woke up in the middle of the night with a full bladder. “Will, you're crushing me.”

Will was barely awake. “Shhhh.”

“Seriously, Will. Get off me.”

“No.” Or at least that's what Nico thought he said because Will's face was currently in a pillow.

“You're pinning me to the bed!”

“What's your point?”

“I need to pee.”

Will made no effort to move.

Nico pushed Will's chest. “Why are you doing this?”

Will let out a long sigh and refused to meet his eyes. “You can't get hurt if you can't go anywhere in the middle of the night.”

Nico was touched. “Holding me hostage in my own bed isn't the answer, Will.”
“I know it isn't the answer, but it could be a temporary solution.” Will offered a sheepish smile.

Nico sighed. “I know you're worried, but I can take care of myself, Will.”

Will pressed a kiss to Nico's temple. “I know you can. I just don't want to lose you one day.”

Nico stopped breathing momentarily. “I don't want to lose you either, Will, but my bladder is about to burst.”

Will rolled off Nico, who hobbled to the bathroom like an old man. “Hurry back,” he called after him and he knew he would.
We're Going On a Trip

Chapter Notes

Yes, the title is from the Little Einsteins theme song. This chapter was originally supposed to be two, but for the sake of the plot I made it one. I had a bit of writer's block with this story, but I just imagined the demigods making breakfast and solangelo going to see a musical and Percy/Nico friendship and bam.

Breakfast was an event.

Lord Hades had never seen so many teenagers in his life. He strolled into the kitchen somewhat amazed. The normal chef was replaced with several princes and princesses. Will was frying eggs, Hazel was baking biscuits, Jason was manning the toaster, Percy was on pancake duty, Piper had the waffle iron, Annabeth was brewing coffee, Reyna was squeezing fresh oranges, and Frank was frying bacon. Leo sat at the breakfast table waiting impatiently for his breakfast.

Percy flipped a blue pancake and smiled at him. “Good morning, bro- I mean Lord Hades.”

“Morning, Perseus.” Lord Hades had never been so thankful for Will. Honestly, the kid was underrated.

Hazel beamed up at him. “Did you want something to eat, daddy?”

Frank turned around, looking confused. “I thought we were all eating later.”

The kitchen went completely silent, save for Percy cackling and accidentally dropping a blue pancake.

Nico and Jason shared a look of pure shock.

Frank gulped as Lord Hades turned around. His icy stare bored into Frank's skin.

“Uh... Frank?”

Lord Hades turned his icy glare on Jason and snapped at him. “What is it?

“The bacon's burning.”

Frank silently thanked heaven and retreated to the other side of the kitchen with the pan of crispy bacon.

After that breakfast went by as smoothly as possible given there were ten teenagers sitting at the table.

Nico actually made conversation for once in his life. “How’s Calypso?”

Leo yawned. “She's a lesbian.”

Nico choked on his pancake and Will patted his back softly. “I thought you guys were dating.”
Leo looked pointedly at Piper. “I did too, but apparently she was more interested in Piper than me.”
Piper stuck her tongue out at Leo. “You can't blame her. Look at these tits.”
“You do have really nice boobs,” said Hazel.
“Aw, thanks, Haze.”
Reyna looked amused. “I think Annabeth and I are obligated to agree.”
Annabeth looked up from the book when Reyna elbowed her in the stomach. “Hmm?”
Piper winked at them. “Right, Neeks?”
Nico looked up suddenly. “Yeah, they're uh...perky? How do you describe a boob?”
“You could say they're soft,” offered Jason.
“Bouncy,” suggested Percy.
Frank looked like he wanted to say something, but Nico shut him up with one look. He'd corrupted Hazel's innocence.
Piper took the opportunity to gloat about her victory. “See Leo, Nico's gay as fuck and even he agrees.”
Leo rolled his eyes at her just as Lady Persephone strolled in like a summer's breeze, her soft curls flowing behind her.
“Hi, Lady Persephone,” greeted Jason. Everyone else half heartedly muttered something similar.
“Hi, sweetheart. You've gotten so tall, Jason.”
Jason smiled politely. “Thank you.”
“Has anyone seen my husband?”
Nico pointed to the garden. “Dad just left.”
“Thank you, Nicolas.”
Percy snorted and Nico threw a sausage at his head. “Is something funny, Perseus?”
Lady Persephone looked amused. “Now that we've all agreed Piper has great boobs, who's going to clean up the mess in my kitchen?”
Everyone was out the door in a heartbeat.

☼

Everyone was leaving that afternoon, and Nico found himself seriously dreading it. He didn't mind being alone with Will, and sure his friends could be annoying as fuck sometimes, but they really cared about him. They'd been there when Bianca passed, they even threw him a party when he got out of the hospital.
The words were out of his mouth before he could stop them. “I'm going to to miss you guys.”
Leo looked at him in shock. “Did you hit your head, Neeks?”

“On second thought, I won't miss you, Valdez.”

“That's cold.”

Piper rolled her eyes and pulled Nico into a hug. “Ignore him.”

Reyna grabbed him next and he buried himself in her arms. “I'm so proud of you.”

“Thanks, Rey. I'm going to miss you so much.”

“You'll be seeing me very soon, don't worry.”

He didn't even have time to ponder what she meant because Jason squeezed him tight. “Bye, Neeks. Be good.”

“You too.”

“I'm always a good boy.”

“I'm not even going to comment.”

Jason laughed and let him go. “Make sure you keep me updated.”

“On what?”

“What's going on. If you think for a second I won't fly down here, you're mistaken.”

“Okay, Jay.”

Jason scanned the small crowd for Will and beckoned him over.

“Jason?”

“Hey, Will. I assume you passed second grade, so you know what no-no zones are.”

Nico covered his face. “Jason, please don't do this.”

“If I hear you touched Nico in one of his no-no zones, I will beat you up then I'll call Reyna and she'll beat you up too. I don't think you want that, do you?”

Will shook his head.

Jason smiled. “Okay good. I'm glad we had this talk. If you'll excuse me, I have to find Piper before she starts having another threesome.”

Will look at Nico for some sort of explanation and Nico just shrugged. “He thinks he's my dad sometimes.”

Annabeth and Percy come over last, as usual, and Nico hugged Annabeth briefly before wishing her good luck on her exams.

Percy looked offended. “What am I chopped liver?”

Nico sighed and rolled his eyes, but he wrapped an arm around the green eyed idiot.
Percy whispered in his ear. “Have fun with your boy toy.”

Nico turned red. “Same to you.”

Percy just gave him the innocent seal eyes. “What do you mean?”

“Jason's sporting some interesting bruises.”

“He probably injured himself again, the idiot.”

“I'm sure he did.”

“Sure, Perce.”

“If you ever need anything, come to the Sea.”

Nico nodded and watched as everyone got into the limo and blew kisses.

He was joined by Hazel, Frank, and Will on the front steps to wave goodbye. Will not so subtly grabbed Nico's hand when they were out of eyesight and squeezed.

The limo erupted in cheers as it pulled off and Nico responded with an elegant flip of his middle finger.

☼

The next two weeks were blur to Will. Between making sure Nico wasn't exerting himself and daily Skype calls with his siblings, he didn't have a minute for himself, and he couldn't say he minded. He loved being surrounded by the people he cared about. The only issue was he found himself feeling more and more homesick. The Underworld was nice, especially because of the cute Prince that lived here, but it wasn't home. He voiced his concern to Kayla, who all but demanded he come home. At first he wasn't sure about the whole thing, because of Michael and his dad. He didn't feel like he really wanted to deal with that yet, but he knew if he stayed in the dreary Underworld for another day he'd snap. He hadn't seen the sun in days, so he wasn't in the best place mentally.

He decided to talk to Nico about it when they were cuddled up in Nico's room watching some sort of murder mystery Will had lost interest in twenty minutes ago. He did, however, like hearing Nico's snarky commentary.

“Do you want to take a trip home with me? Your doctor said you're healthy enough for travel.”

Nico snorted and ate some popcorn. “What does he know? He was the one that put me on those damn pain meds!”

Will couldn't help but smile at the memory. “You were pretty hilarious stumbling everywhere and yelling at plants.”

“I'm happy you find my pain amusing, Will.”

“I really do. So what do you say?”

“You haven't given me the full details yet.”

“What details?”

“What exactly are we going to do there?”
Will shrugged. They could anything really given that both the Sun Realm's laws and Lord Apollo weren't very strict. “We could get drunk and party.”

Nico snorted. “You're fucking with me.”

“I'd love to be.”

“Shut up!”

“Seriously though, Dad wants you to come visit and I there's so many places I want to show you. You've been to the castle, but other than that you haven't seen much of the realm.”

Nico nodded, weighing his options.

“I can teach you how to surf!”

“I don't even know how to swim.”

“What if some freak accident happens and you end up in the middle of the ocean?”

“I'll drown because the water and I don't agree.”

“You had a crush on Percy Jackson.”

For a second Will thought he went too far, but when the corners of Nico's mouth turned upward and he couldn't help but smile himself.

“Keyword is had.” Nico offered his flirtiest smile. “I have a crush on someone else now.”

“I'll take that as a yes to the trip?”

Nico stared at the floorboards. “Yeah. Count me in.”

☼

Nico was a little slow in the mornings.

Without coffee, his mind was mush. So of course he didn't notice when Will grabbed their flight tickets and loaded their luggage into Jules's car. It wasn't until they pulled up to the airport that he realized they weren't driving to the Sun Realm.

He felt like the air had been knocked out of his lungs. “We're flying?!”

“Yeah. You said you'd flown before.”

“Yes, but...”

“What's wrong?”

Nico didn't reply. He just stared at the plane as if he was willing it to destroy itself.

“Are you afraid of flying?”

Nico nodded and swallowed.

Will's blue eyes were full of concern. “Do you think you can do it?”
“Yeah.” No, he couldn't. He could already see his mother waving to him, her long dark hair blowing in the wind as she boarded her plane. It would be the last flight of her life and the last time he'd ever see her.

Will's voice shook him out of his thoughts. “Are you sure?”

“I'll be fine.”

The went through airport security and baggage claim without incident, save for Nico having to remove his belt before going through the metal detectors and his pants falling down halfway through.

It wasn't until they were seated that the surrealness of the moment hit him. He was currently in a plane that was going to ascend into the hell they called the sky. “H-how long is this flight?”

“How long is this flight?”

Nico gulped and fanned himself with the book he'd brought.

Will had guilt plastered all over his face. “I feel terrible for putting you through this.”

“You didn't know.”

“A good fiancé would've known.”

Nico patted Will's shoulder. “I'll be fine.”

It only took five minutes into takeoff before he began to hyperventilate. “I can't do this. I can't do this.”

“Shh. It'll be okay. I'll be here the entire time.”

Nico buried his face in his palms and beads of sweat trickled down his face. He felt completely overwhelmed with fear, anger, and grief. He bit his lips and tried to hold back sobs, but his body was out of his own control.

Will's voice was calming and commanding at the same time, forcing him to focus. “Take a deep breath.”

Nico did as he was told, focusing on inhaling and exhaling rather than the fact that he was ascending into hell called the sky.

“Do you want to hold my hand?”

Nico nodded quickly and grabbed Will's larger hand in his own. He intertwined their fingers and squeezed so tight it hurt, trying to reassure himself more than anyone.

“Do you want something to drink?”

Nico shook his head.

“It might make you feel better.”

“The only thing that's going to make me feel better is getting the hell off this plane.”

He instantly regretted it when he saw the guilt in Will's eyes. “Yeah, I'm kind of thirsty.”
Will ushered the stewardess over.
She smiled brightly at Will, and Nico had to resist the urge to attack her. “What can I get you?”
“Can we drink alcohol on this flight?”
“We're going to the Sun Realm. You can have whatever you want, honey.”
Will wanted to laugh. “Okay great. Can we have two cherry cokes and a shot of whiskey?”
“Coming right up.”
Will handed a Cherry Coke and the whiskey shot to Nico, who looked at him blankly.
“It'll ease your nerves.”
Nico looked uncertain, but what was the worst that could happen? He threw the shot back in one fluid motion and downed the entire Cherry Coke to get rid of the awful taste.
He giggled when he saw Will looking at him in amazement.
Against his better judgement, he snuggled up to Will and placed his head on Will's shoulder. Will carded his fingers through Nico's hair and before he knew it, he was drifting off.
He didn't dream.
He woke up to Will shaking him gently. “Wake up, babe.”
If Nico hadn't been confused and drooling all over himself he would've snapped at Will for calling him that. “Whasysff.”
“Get up, we're here.”
Nico was beyond thrilled. “It's over?”
Will chuckled. “Yeah.”
Nico was up and out of his seat in a heartbeat. He all but ran off the plane and through the baggage claim and airport security.
Will's siblings came to pick them up from the airport, holding a sign for Willy.
“They think they're funny.”
“Don't be so grouchy, Willy.”
“I shouldn't have given you that liquor.” Will was barely finished speaking before he was mobbed by his siblings.
Nico stood awkwardly on the side waiting for them to finish their teary reunion.
Once they were out of the airport, Will had to hold Nico's hand (and all the luggage) to keep him from kissing the ground.

☼

The Sun Realm was too damn bright.
Nico regretted not packing sunglasses because there was no way the constant squint he was wearing could be attractive.

Will, on the other hand, looked more alive than ever. His blond hair was practically glowing and his skin looked tan and healthy in the sunlight. His eyes and smile were bright, sort of like they were reflecting the sunlight. Nico had never felt more sexually attracted to anyone, not even Perry Johnson and his stupidly green eyes.

They rode to the castle in true Apollo fashion, a shiny Lamborghini with the top down. Will passed the time by pointing out landmarks and restaurants they passed. He looked so happy, Nico couldn't help but smile back.

The castle was glorious in its own right. When they pulled up to it, Nico almost forgot to breathe. The mansion itself was white and framed by large palm trees. It was located right on the beach, complete with crystal clear blue water.

Will smiled when he saw Nico staring. “Do you mind sharing a room with me?”

“Does that constitute sharing a bed?”

“Only if you want it to.”

“I can't deal with you sometimes. Yeah, it's fine.”

Kayla cleared her throat. “I'm sorry I have to interrupt your lover's quarrel or whatever the hell that was, but it's only right that we start off this vacation with a tour of the palace.”

The palace was twice as big as it looked on the outside. The tan wood floors, the white walls, and the large windows that opened right over the ocean at sunset made Nico feel like he was in paradise. There were a few gaudy lives of furniture, like a cheetah print couch, that Kayla said Apollo picked out himself.

All the rooms in the palace were luxurious, there was no doubt about it, but that wasn't what caught Nico's attention. This was the fourth bedroom he'd seen where the ceiling fan was accessorized with various types of panties and several boxers. “You hang underwear on the ceiling fan?”

Will looked somewhat uncomfortable. “Uh...yeah. It's kind of a tradition here. Whenever you hook up with someone, you hang their underwear on the fan. I'm not sure who started it.”

“That's kind of gross.”

Will shrugged. “Soon people'll be seeing yours up there.”

Nico turned red at the mere thought. “Not anytime soon, they won't.”

Austin gave Will a pat on the shoulder. “Did you just cockblock yourself? Good job.”

Will smacked his hand. “Shut up.”

“Can you two at least try to be professional,” scolded Kayla.

Will rolled his eyes. “Our next stop is the music room.”

The music room was more of a music hall in size. An entire concert orchestra and the audience could probably fit in there. Large windows let enough sunlight to power the entire world and cool ocean breeze in.
Kayla eyed the dark haired boy silently observing everyone in the corner. “Do you play any instruments, Nico?”

Nico looked up suddenly. “I used to play the piano when I was really young.”

Will looked surprised. “You never told me you played the piano.”

Nico shrugged. “I learned when I was really young, but I didn't stick with it.”

Will grinned. “This is so perfect. Play something for me.”

Nico shook his head. “No way.”

“Why not?”

“I haven't played in years.”

Will didn't see how that was a problem. “So?”

“What do you mean so? I'll probably sound awful.”

“I don't care. I absolutely adore piano music.”

“Then play some.”

“I told you. I suck at music.”

“I still don't believe that.”

“C'mon. Please?”

“No.”

“Pretty please with a cherry on top?”

“Fine!” Nico rolled his eyes, but he stretched and sat down at the shiny black piano. “I'm only doing this to prove I still can.”

Will was transfixed on Nico, the way his fingers danced over the keys and the soft, calm expression on his face. The melody was familiar, but Will didn't have a clue what it was and he didn't fucking care.

When Nico finished, his eyes fluttered open and his hands were in his lap. He looked like an emo porcelain doll.

“That was really beautiful.”

“You know it wasn't, Solace. I told you I was rusty.”

“I still think it was great.”

“Why?”

“Because you're beautiful and everything you do is beautiful.”

Nico turned red and hastily got off the piano stool. He marched to the other side of the room and looked anywhere but at Will.
“Get a room, you two!”

Will stuck his tongue out. “We have a room.”

☼

Will was aimlessly wandering through the garden when he was ambushed by Kayla and Austin. “Will?” “Yes?” “Can we borrow your lover boy for the afternoon?” He folded his arms. “Why?” “Because we want to get to know him better.” She smiled. Will squinted suspiciously at her. “You do?” “Yes, we do.” “I don't trust you.” Will was very tempted to say no. “C'mon Will! We literally know nothing about him besides his name.” “That's not true. You know his hair color, eye color, and that he likes to wear black.” Kayla gave him her puppy eyes. “Please, Will?” “Fine! Just don't embarrass me.” “As your siblings, it's our job to embarrass you.” “I mean it Kayla!” Kayla laughed. “So we can't show him your baby pictures?” “No!” “What about that video of your first grade talent show when you sang Britney Spears?” Will tried to imitate Nico's glare. “You better not.” “Can we at least show him your diary from middle school?” “I swear, I will hurt you.” Kayla and Austin just cackled and wiped tears from their eyes. “Seriously though, what do you guys plan on doing.” Kayla's smile was downright evil. “We can't tell you that.” She must've inherited Apollo's gift of speed because she was gone in the blink of an eye.
Waking up to a bunch of blondes is most people's dream come true, for Nico it was the exact opposite.

He gripped the sheets. “How’d you guys get in here?”

Kayla shrugged. “That's not important. Did you have a nice nap?”

“What do you want?”

“To spend some time with you.”

“Why?”

“Because we want to get to know the man in Will's life.”

“You're kidding me right? Please tell me this is some elaborate prank.”

“It's not. So get moving!

“Where are we going?”

“For a trip down memory lane.”

“What?”

“Just get dressed and meet us outside. Unlike Will, I have no desire to see your skull print boxers.”

Nico wondered how he'd ended up in this situation as he pulled on his pants.

He found Kayla and Austin talking to green eyed girl he didn't recognize near the fountain of Apollo. Yes, he had his own fountain. It was a life sized marble statue of him in all his naked glory wading up to his ankles in clear blue water.

Kayla smiled and waved Nico over. “This is Lou Ellen and Cecil, two of Will's best friends.”

He'd never been good at introductions. “I'm Nico.”

“We've heard a lot about you.”

“Like what?”

“Like how you're eyes sparkle like the moon in the midnight sky and you've got a perky little ass. I have to say, he's been right so far.”

Nico turned bright red. “I'm going to kill him.”

“With kisses?”

“I knew this was a bad idea from the start.”

Austin honked the horn of his black convertible. “Just get in the car.”

Nico was sandwiched between Cecil and Lou Ellen, but he was very jealous Apollo let his kids drive themselves places. “Where are we going?”

“Will's favorite restaurant.”
The restaurant was called Jubilee's and it was in the middle of nowhere. It was a glorified beach shack, complete with a snow cone machine and music posters on the walls.

Cecil laughed when they pulled up. “I haven’t been here in forever.”

Lou Ellen took in the colorful surfboards tacked on the walls and the new flooring. “They really fixed this place up, huh?”

“It looks good,” said Kayla.

“Table for eight, please.”

The restaurant was more of beachside dinner, in Nico's opinion, and they were seated in no time.

“So, Nico, tell us a little about yourself.”

Nico hadn't expected to be the center of attention the minute they sat down, but what could he do. “I'm from the Underworld. I like swords. My father and Lord Apollo hooked Will and I up to strengthen the bonds between our realms.”

Kayla wasted no time before pouncing. “Are you guys dating or what?”

“Oh...it's complicated.”

“It doesn't seem complicated. You like him, he definitely likes you back. I don't see what the issue is.”


Kayla watched him warily. “I didn't mean to intimidate you Nico, I'm just very protective of my brother. I want to make sure you actually care about him and I won't have to hunt you down with my bow and arrow.”

Nico nodded. “I understand.”

“You do?”

“I have a sister. When suitors first started attempting to court her, I literally chased them away with my sword. It didn't help that most of them were like a foot taller than me.”

Cecil snorted. “You're funny, di Angelo. I didn't expect you to be the type to make jokes.”

“Will's been rubbing off on me.” Nico turned red when he realized what he'd just said. “I didn't mean it like that!”

This had to be one of the most mortifying experiences in his life. The entire table was in hysterics and his face was redder than the surfboard on the wall. This is was exactly why he didn't socialize.

“Sure,” said Cassandra once she finally caught her breath.

Alexander covered his ears. “TMI, dude.”

“For real. It's none of our business what Will does in his free time.”

Nico was never more thankful for the shirtless waiter, who came over to take their orders.
Cecil had an evil look in his eyes. "We should tell him all the embarrassing stories we can remember."

Kayla immediately launched into story. "When he was in the second grade, he won a pet goldfish at the fair and he loved it so much. He'd feed it every two hours. He even talked to it. Then like two days later, he got back from school to find it dead in the tank. We had to have a little funeral for it. He cried everyday for a month. I think it still bothers him."

"Remember that time Will fell off the monkey bars on the playground and we called an ambulance. We thought he was going to die and we were panicking so much and then he just gets up and walks it off."

"One time dad left him in charge of babysitting us and he was taking it so seriously and annoying the shit out of us. We decided to prank him by lighting firecrackers in the kitchen. We almost set the entire castle on fire. He never let us forget it."

"In the seventh grade he had this like hipster faze. He started listening to all this indie music and wearing scarves all the time and he carried this chunky Polaroid camera everywhere. I can't count how many times he made us stop whatever we were doing so he could capture the," Aria made air quotations with her fingers. "Moments that could change our lives forever."

Nico could barely eat his burger and French fries because he was laughing so hard.

"Don't tell him we told you."

"He'd be so mad at us."

Nico sipped his coke and thought of his sun baby. "I can't see Will getting angry."

"It doesn't happen often, but when it does beware."

"He punched a kid out for calling me fat one time. You don't understand, Will's usually a serious pacifist and he just smashed up this kids face."

Nico was impressed. "Oh shit."

Daphne glared at him. "Watch your language!"

Kayla rolled her eyes. "Don't mind her. She's on this clean living plan that includes clean eating, sleeping, and thinking."

"I've never heard of it."

"No one has."

The waiter, whose name was Brad, came back to the table to see how everyone was doing.

"Watch this," whispered Lou Ellen. Nico'd taken a liking to her over the course of the meal.

"Does anyone need anything," asked Brad.

Austin flashed a panty dropping smile at the waiter. "Your number would be nice."

Brad smiled back. "I'm afraid that's not part of my job. Need anything else?"

Austin sighed loudly. "I have a question."
Brad raised his eyebrows. “Well what is it?”

“Can I have you number?”

“It depends on how well you tip. I have to get back to work.”

When Brad walked away, the entire table, except Nico, erupted in snickers.

He looked around somewhat cluelessly. “I don't understand.”

“It's this game we play. Basically wherever we go, whoever's turn it is has to flirt with someone. It can be anyone, regardless of age and gender.”

“So you like flirt with strangers?”

“Yeah. It's good practice.”

“For what?”

“When you meet that special someone that you want to marry and have a billion kids with. So in your case, Will.”

“Will and I can't have kids.”

“That's what you think.”

Nico looked at him blankly. “I have no idea what you're talking about and I don't want to find out.”

They left Jubilee’s around 9, and Austin did in fact get Brad's number, thought the subtle hints about Austin being a prince may have played a role in that. All in all, it was fun night and Nico got to know Will's siblings. They weren't as bad as Will made them out of to be.

☼

Nico was about to go to sleep, when Will came bursting into his, well their, room.

“Did you pack a suit?”

It was part of the royalty dress code. “Yeah. Why?”

“They're showing a musical at the Apollo Theater tonight, and dad invited us to go see it.”

“I don't like musicals.”

“That's a lie and you know it. Everyone likes musicals.”

“Which musical is it?”

“You'll have to find out when you get there.”

“You're the worst.”

“We're wearing matching ties.” Will handed him a yellow sun print tie.

“Nope. I'm not wearing that monstrosity.”

Will pouted. “C'mon. It'll be so cute.”
Nico shook his head and tried to block Will out.

Will batted his eyelashes. “Please please please.”

Nico couldn't take it anymore. “Fine, I'll wear it.”

Will beamed at him and Nico would've sold his soul so Will would look at him like that again.

He reluctantly took the neon tie from Will and disappeared into the bathroom to tame his unruly mane. Honestly, when it came to hair he'd gotten the short end of the stick. Bianca had had lush, soft hair that curled slightly at the ends. His hair didn't even have a definite texture. He grabbed a comb and set to work. Twenty minutes and copious amounts of gel later, he looked somewhat presentable.

That was how Nico found himself walking into the Apollo Theater on Will's arm, feeling nothing but butterflies in his stomach.

The theater was absolutely magnificent. There were over 1500 velvet seats surrounding the largest stage Nico had ever seen. The combination of the bright lights and the atmosphere made Nico feel like he'd stepped into a movie.

Apollo was the guest of honor, so he was seated in the front row, next to a gorgeous man Will had never seen before. Watching his father laugh and talk with the stranger as he and Nico walked over to them was somewhat strange for Will. He wanted his father to be happy, but he'd long given up the hope of his father settling down. Apollo just wasn't the marriage type. Given what some people (read: Jason and Thalia) went through with their step parents, he considered himself pretty lucky in that respect.

Will was practically bouncing off his seat before the show began. He thumbed through the playbook with absolute glee. “I haven't seen this one in forever!

When the curtain went up, Nico couldn't help singing along. “These are a few of my favorite things!”

Will smirked. “I never thought Nico di Angelo would be singing along to The Sound of Music.”

“Shut up! It's Hazel's favorite, not mine.”

Will's breath ghosted over Nico's ear. “What's your favorite?”

“Wicked,” he muttered sheepishly.

After the show, Apollo and his hot as fuck date came strolled over to where Nico and Will were seated.

Apollo clapped Will on the shoulder fondly. “How'd you like the show?”

“It was amazing.”

Apollos leaned over and whispered in Nico's ear. “You look stunning, bye the way.”

“T-thank you.” He was completely melting under Lord Apollo's megawatt smile.

Next to Apollo, Zephyros cleared his throat.

“Oh! I almost forgot to introduce you. Will, Nico meet Zephyros. He's a...friend of mine.”
Will raised his eyebrows. Apollo had plenty of fuck buddies, evident in his number of children, but he never introduced them to his kids.

Zephyros had kind eyes. “You look just like your father.”

Will aimed for a polite smile, but it looked more strained than anything. “It's nice to meet you.”

“Likewise.” Zephyros turned to Nico. “It's nice to see you again. You've gotten taller. Tell Phone we need to catch up sometime.”

“I'll let her know.”

Lord Apollo was very pleased. “It really is small world, isn't it?”

Will had to physically refrain from bursting into song. He didn't want to be that person, but like... he was that type of person. Once a theater kid, always a theater kid.

“We should get going, Zeph promised me amazing sex.”

“TMI, dad. I don't need to know what goes on with your... lower regions.”

“This penis created you, Will. It's the circle of life.”

Will opened his mouth and stared. “Are you drunk?”

Lord Apollo winked. “A little. This place has an amazing bar. You guys should check it out.”

Will tried to hide how badly he wanted to cringe. “Thanks, dad.”

☼

Will and Nico were dangling their feet off the golden bar stools they were seated on. The bar's decor was somewhat gaudy and Will immediately knew that was why his father liked it so much.

“You're dad looks happy.”

Will snorted. “He's always happy.”

“Yeah but he looks... I don't know...in love?”

Will snorted so hard his nose hurt. “My dad isn't the love kind. He's all for big, expensive romantic gestures, but when it comes down to it he doesn't love anyone but himself.”

Nico raised his eyebrows at Will's sharp words. He knew better than to pry, especially when Will looked like he was about to cry.

Will tapped his fingers on the bar to the rhythm of whatever shitty music they were playing. “How'd know him?”

“Who Zephyros?”

“Yeah him.”

Nico took a swing of his beer. “He's a friend of Persephone's. They talk about flowers and shit.”

Will giggled.
“What? Do I have something in my hair?”

“You said flowers and shit.”


“This bar is shit. We need to get out of here.” Will handed him his jacket.

“You're just upset because that cougar tried to get in your pants.”

“She was at least fifty. That's illegal.”

Nico couldn't argue with the law.

The taxi ride back to the castle was filled with sexual tension, neither party knew how to address. There's something about being squished into the backseat of a cab with the boy you like that gets the sex drive going.

Will walked Nico back to his room.

“You didn't have to do this, you know.”

“I know.” Will wasn't sure if he should make a move or not. Did this qualify as a first date? He brought Nico's hand to his lips and kissed Nico's knuckles. “I had a lot of fun tonight.”

Nico's eyes nearly bugged out of his head. “Me too.”

“Um... good night? I don't know what I'm supposed to say here.”

Nico tried sound composed by snorting, but the redness in his cheeks gave him away. “Goodnight, Will.”

Will smiled at him before turning to walk away.

Nivo looked at him strangely. “Where are you going?”

“To my room... unless you wanted me to come to bed with you.”

“You have to. You realize we're sleeping in the same room right?”

Will smacked his forehead with his palm. “I'm a complete idiot when I'm drunk.”

Nico couldn't help but smile. “I agree.”
Fun In The Sun

Chapter Notes

I'm trying to get back into this story. My goal was to have it finished by the end of summer, but I don't know how well that'll work out ;/

Nico felt deliciously warm when he woke up.

He found himself being spooned by Will-the-human-furnace, whose arm was thrown around Nico's waist and his morning wood was pressed to his behind. Nico buried his face in the pillow and opted to ignore their current position, until Will started shaking him like a sugar high toddler.

“Wake up sleepyhead. We're going surfing!”

“Mhmsff.”

“What?”

Nico lifted his head off the pillow and squinted at him. “I never agreed to go anywhere with you.”

“It'll be fun.”

“I'm not getting off the this bed.”

Will's arm traveled a bit lower. “You could probably use a cold shower.”

Nico leaned back slightly, applying pressuring right on Will's hard on. “I could say the same about you.”

Will was suspiciously quiet for the next half hour.

“It'll be lunch time by the time you get up,” whined Will.

“What's your point?”

"My point is you need to get up now."

"In that case, fuck your point."

"My point is getting more action than I am, this is sad."

Nico rolled his eyes and made a show of slamming his head on the pillow they were sharing and closing his eyes.

Will brushed the hair on Nico's forehead with his fingers. “You know I never realized you didn't snore.”

“I don’t?” Percy and Jason told him he sounded like a garbage truck when he snored last time they had a sleepover.
“No. You made these cute little breathy sounds.” Will did his best imitation of one.

Nico buried his face in the pillow and tried to act nonchalant. “Why were you even watching me sleep?”

“Because you took forever to wake up.”

“Why do we have to leave so early in the first place?”

“So my siblings won't try to tag along.”

"Why can't they come?" They probably knew how to surf pretty well.

Will looked at him like he has lost his mind. "Because we'll never get a minute of privacy."

"Why do we need privacy on a beach?"

Will winked. "You'll see."

Nico was about ask him what the hell he meant by that when Will ripped the sheets off both their bodies and ran to the bathroom before Nico could chase him.

☼

Nico stomped down the stairs to find Will wearing an offensively yellow apron and armed with a spatula. "What do you want for breakfast, honey bun?"

"Bacon."

"I'm not going to sit here and let you damage your arteries."

"..."

Will opened a cabinet and pulled out a box of instant oatmeal. "How about some oatmeal?"

Nico glared. "I want bacon. And coffee."

"How about some oatmeal?"

"Give me some fucking bacon and coffee or I swear to the gods I will piss in your house plants!"

"You really aren't a morning person, damn."

"I don't smell any bacon frying!"

"That's because you're going to eat oatmeal. Now sit down before I come over there."

Nico slumped into a wooden chair at the tiny breakfast table. Will smiled as he placed a steaming bowl of oatmeal down in front of Nico. "Doesn't this look delicious?"

Nico stabbed it with his spoon. "What are those?"

"Berries. They're delicious and good for you."

"I don't eat berries."

"Well, you're going to start today."
"I'm not eating berries. I won't. I refuse."

"Eat the stinking berries!"

"No."

Will grabbed the spoon. "If you want to act like a baby, I'll treat you like one. Open up."

Nico clamped his mouth shut.

Will sighed like an exhausted parent and prodded Nico's lips with the spoon until he reluctantly opened his mouth and ate a scoop of oatmeal. "Was that so hard?"

Nico swallowed. "It went against everything I stand for."

Will rolled his eyes and started to munch happily on his own bowl of oatmeal.

After breakfast, Will made sure their bags were packed. "Ready?"

"Yeah."

Will untied his apron and grabbed his keys. "Great! Wait for me on the porch."

For once in his life, Nico did as he was told. He sat on the porch, shielding his face from the sun and praying to die a painless death when Will pulled up in a light blue convertible. He leaned his head out of the window and blew a kiss. "Come take a ride in my car, sugar."

"I didn't know you had a car."

"Yeah. It was a sixteenth birthday present. Hop in."

Nico forced himself to look straight ahead as they drove off because Will looked hot as fuck holding the steering wheel, and a boner and swim trunks weren't a good combination. The tank top Will was wearing showed off his arms (he had to lift, there was no other way) and his nipples. It was always the nipples that did it for Nico. His hair was wavy and messy, and his blue eyes were covered by a pair of sunglasses.

Nico tried his hardest not to think of how good Will looked in that suit. Nico had been short of tearing it off him last night. The dark fabric clung to him in all the right places. Nico had been so tempted to suck him off right there in the theater.

The only thing was Will drove like a grandma. He was in no rush at all and always stopped to let people cross the street, even if there were no people at the crosswalk. It was starting to drive Nico crazy. "You realize there's a gas pedal right?"

"Do you know how many accidents happen in per year because of speeding?"

Nico shook his head.

"A fucking lot. So I'm not taking any chances."

"But you're not even remotely close to the speed limit."

"I don't understand why you're in such a hurry anyway."

"Because the beach closes at ten PM. At this rate we'll be there at eleven."
"If you don't like the way I drive you're free to walk, honey bunches."

"Don't call me that."

Will stick out his tongue. "We're here!"

Nico hated the beach the minute he saw it. He'd never been a beach person. The ocean was too damn loud, people were everywhere, and there was sand in his ass no matter what.

Will, on the other hand, looked like a kid in a candy store.

Nico was trying not to be self conscious as he lugged their bags on the hot sand, but seriously there were a million swimsuit clad girls and guys prancing around on this beach with their six pack abs and perfect hair. This wasn't a damn hollister ad.

There was one man that caught his eye particular. He reminded him of an older and hornier Apollo, complete with skin tight white briefs.

Will waved at him. “That's Ganymede, one of my dad's good friends. He owns a really popular smoothie shop.”

“He's also Jason's dad's boyfriend.”

“You're kidding me.”

"Nope."

Will lifted his shades to look at Nico. "I never knew Lord Zuzu swung both ways.”

Will's eyes had no right to be that distracting. “Zuzu?”

“It sounds cooler than Zeus.”

“I was like ten when Jason and I walked in on them...”

“Oh my gosh.” Will's eyes were shining. “Is Lord Jupiter's dick really as big as he says it is?”

“I didn't get a great look because Jason was dragging me out of there so quickly, but I do remember seeing a substantial amount of flesh.”

Will giggled. “Dick flesh.”

“You're supposed to be the mature one.”

Will stuck his tongue out. "Where do you want to sit?"

Nico scanned the beach warily. "Close to the lifeguards, I guess."

"Afraid you'll drown?"

Nico rolled his eyes and stabbed the umbrella in the sand.

Will spread out a blanket and plopped down under the umbrella. “Do you need me to rub sunscreen on you?”

“I can do it myself.”
Will raised an eyebrow. “You can?”

Nico hung his head. “Fine. Rub me down.”

“You don't know how long I've been waiting for you to say those words.”

“Ew. There are children at this beach, Will.”

“How do you think they were made?”

“That's none of my business.”

Will opened the bottle and spread his legs. "Come here, sugar baby.”

Nico sighed and reluctantly say between Will's thighs. He looked around to make sure no one saw them as he took off his shirt. “Will, I'm pretty sure this is a sex position.”

"Hush, you." Will squirted some of the sunscreen onto Nico's back and started by running his palms over Nico's shoulders and rubbing the knots out. As he massaged Nico's back, his hands gradually moved lower and lower until they were touching the top of his swim trunks. He handed the bottle to Nico. “Can you do me?”

Clean thoughts di Angelo “Sure.”

Will stood up and pulled his tank top over his head, basking in sunlight for a minute before facing Nico. He was absolutely gorgeous, there was no other way for Nico to put it. Will skin was glowing and his eyes were bright and this hair was all curly. Don't get Nico started on that torso. Those tan muscles were what Nico's wet dreams were made of.

Nico hesitantly took the sunscreen from Will and squirted some out. He warmed it up between his hands then pressed his palm flat against Will's back and Will sighed. Nico tried to keep calm as he smoothed the cream over Will's back muscles. He counted the freckles that were scattered along Will's shoulders, seven, before rubbing the cream on Will's lower back and trying to ignore the tingling sensation where their skin met.

Will, on the other hand, was embracing it, if his giggles were anything to go by.

"You're enjoying this a little too much.”

"Thanks." Will shrugged as Nico tossed the bottle in his bag. "Ready to surf?"

"I guess."

"Can you look anymore unenthusiastic?"

"Would you like me to run into the water singing? Would that be enthusiastic enough for you?"

"You're not being a nice boy right now."

"Are you going to put me on time out?"

Will's eyes glinted. "No, I'll just ban you from eating McDonald's.”

"You can't do that.”

"Let's try again. Ready to surf?”
"Actually I have to pee, so I'm just gonna...go find a bathroom." Nico started walking in the direction of the shops when he went flying into the sand.

Will looked down at him smugly. "Not so fast."

Nico tried not to freak about the fact that Will was lying on him in public. "Get off me!"

☼

They were donning gray wetsuits and carrying their boards to shore when Nico wasn't sure he wanted to do this anymore. He could barely walk on the wet sand without cringing, and by definition the ocean was wetter than even the wettest sand.

"The water looks rough." That was the understatement of the century. The waves were slamming into the rocks were enough force to kill a man, and Nico knew a thing or two about how to kill a man.

Will didn't see the problem as he waded into the water. "The tides are high today, but I'm sure we'll be fine."

Nico experimentally stuck a toe in and jumped almost a foot into the air. "It's cold!"

Will couldn't help but laugh. "Did you expect it to be hot?"

"I'd touch my heart, if I wanted to freeze my ass off."

"It's not even that cold."

"Yes, it is."

"Are you sure you aren't afraid of the water?"

"I'm not! It's just...drowning sounds painful."

"Do you want me to buy you some floaties?"

"Haha. Very funny."

"I'm being serious. They sell them at the same shop where we rented the boards."

"In that case...yes."

"I'll be right back. Don't miss me too much." Will blew a sloppy kiss, and no, Nico did not look at his butt in that wetsuit as he turned around, nope.

Will returned with a pair of pink floaties and a shit eating grin. "R.I.P your punk image."

☼

They were on the way back from the beach when Will was struck with an idea. "You know how I want you to meet my mom?"

Nico turned around to look at him. "You do?"

"Yeah. She lives right around here. I'm sure we can stop in and say hi."

Nico shook his head. "I don't think that's a good idea."
“Why not?”
“Because.”

“Because what?”

“Because I don't want to!” Nico took a deep breath. “Let me phrase that better. I'm sure she's a nice lady, but like meeting someone's parent is a big step and I don't even know anything about her.”

"You've met my dad. I met your dad. I don't see how this is any different." Will smiled at him. “She'll love you.”

“Sure. I look like death itself but yeah she'll love me.”

Will patted him on the back. “That's the spirit!”

“It was sarcasm.”

“Her house is five minutes away, so we're going.”

“Why can't we go another day when I'm not sunburned and covered in sand?”

"And cranky? We should stop at the drugstore and get you a pregnancy test."

Nico sucked his teeth. "Just drive the damn car."

Will pulled up in front of a white two family home that looked extremely normal, so Nico assumed Will's mother was not a serial killer.

Nico had never felt as anxious as he did when they were waiting in front of the door. What if she didn't like him? What if she told her son Nico was a bad influence? What if she thought they were too different?

Will's mother was a tall woman with pale blond hair and pale blue eyes. She squeezed Will to death in a hug before pulling Nico close too. “It's great to finally meet you. Will won't stop gushing about you.”

Will's cheeks flushed. “Mom!”

Nico offered his most polite smile. “It's very nice to meet you also, Ms. Solace.”

"There's no need to be so formal, sweetie. Call me Diane."

"It's very nice to meet you, Diane."

"Much better. Don't be strangers, come on in." She ushered them into the house.

Diane's home was cozy. Her furniture was mismatched and the entire house smelt like tea, but Nico liked it. It had an odd charm to it.

Nico eyed a wall decorated with range of impressive achievements, and Diane answered his question before he had time to ask it with a knowing smile. “I used to be a model, but I'm a paramedic now.”

"That must make for an impressive resume." Gods, he sounded more awkward than his father.
Diane laughed it off. "You betcha." She gestured to a kitchen table made for three. "Sit."

After handing them both a glass of green tea, Diane sat across from them. “So, what have you two been up to?”

“We attempted to go surfing this morning, but somebody fell off their board and almost drowned.”

“I told you I couldn't swim.”

"You two fight like an old married couple," noted Diane, amusement twinkling in her eyes.

"That's not true, mom.”

Diane sat up straight. “So...will I have to give you guys the Talk?”

Will shook his head immediately. “No. That won't be necessary.”

Diane tilted her head to the side. “Well, have you had sex yet?”

Will and Nico immediately shook their heads. "No!"

“Are you telling me the truth?”

Will groaned. “Yes, mom! You're embarrassing me!”

“William, we both know your father is by far the most embarrassing parent.”

Nico wondered if this what his mother was like when she was alive, playful and down to earth.

Will sighed dramatically. “Coming here was an awful idea.”

"Hush. So Nico," Diane sipped her tea. "I don't know much about you besides what Will's told me."

"What did he say about me?"

"He called you devastatingly handsome and said your skinny jeans are unholy."

Nico turned to Will. "Unholy?"

Will averted his gaze. "I have absolutely no memory of saying anything like that."

"Anyway," continued Diane. "What do you like to do in your free time?"

Will placed a hand on Nico's knee, and Nico slapped it. "I play the p-piano, do a little bit of sword fighting, and um read a lot.”

"Those are all lovely, hobbies."

"Thank y-you." Will's hand brushed up Nico's thigh and his knee immediately jerked and hit the table, causing the entire thing to rattle.

Diane's eyes wide with concern. “Are you alright, sweetheart?”

Nico swallowed thickly and attempted to smile. “I'm perfectly fine.”

"You look a little flushed." She touched his forehead. "Will, you should give him some ibuprofen.”
Will smiled innocently at his mom. "I'll take care of it."

♫

They left Will's mom's house around six and traffic on the way back to the palace was heavy. Will tried not to be annoyed with the other drivers. It wasn't their fault they were trying to go the same direction he was. “Want to play a game?”

Nico was staring at the sea of cars outside the window. “Sure. What are we playing?”

“We could play truth or dare.”

“In a car?”

“The car isn't really moving though.” Will straightened up in the driver's seat. “I'll go first! Truth or dare.”

“Truth.”

“Who was your first kiss?”

“Jason.”

“Really?”

Nico nodded.

“I thought he was straight.”

“He's bi.”

That explained a lot. “So tell me about the kiss.”

“We were like ten and Hazel made us watch a romance movie and there was a whole bunch of people kissing and stuff so we decided to try it.”

"Was it good?"

Nico shook his head. "Neither of us had a clue what we were doing and there was too much saliva exchanged."

"That's too bad."

“My turn. Truth or dare?”

“I'm a badass, so dare.”

“I dare you to be quiet for the rest of the ride.”

“You can't do that!"

“Why not?”

“Because it's my car.”

"Fine. I dare you to pick truth."
"That's cheating!"
"Really?"
"Fine. Truth."
"What's your middle name?"
"I don't have one. Truth or dare."
"Truth."
"How big is your penis?"
"Oh my gods!"
Will laughed so hard it sounded like a cackle. "Y-you should've seen your face!"
"..."
"Are you going to answer or?"
"I'm not answering that. Ask something else."
"Hmmm. Oh, I know! Do you like me?"
"You're okay I guess. Seven out of ten."
"Seven?! I'm at least a nine and a half."
"That's debatable."
"Excuse me?"
"With clothes you're a seven. Without clothes, however, you have the potential to be a ten out of ten."
"I like the way you think. Maybe I should take off my clothes so you can tap into that potential."
"Yes, for scientific purposes."
Will snorted. "I'm always a slut for science."

After inching along the highway for roughly three hours, they reached the cause of traffic, a violent mob surrounding the palace.

There were at least two hundred protesters chanting and throwing bottles and/or rocks at the palace windows. Security guards, easily identified in their bright yellow uniforms, were trying unsuccessfully to tame the crowd with threats and pepper spray.

Will's eyes were wide as he took in the destruction of his home. "What the hell is it this time?"
"Looks like a protest."
"Protest of what?"
"I have no idea. Should we call the police?"
“What can they do?”

“My siblings are probably inside!”

“I hope nobody tries to burn it down.”

Will set his jaw. “We have to get inside and make sure they're okay.”

Nico nodded. "How are we going to get in? The front entrance is obviously off limits. Going through the side would be too obvious. Is there a back entrance?"

Will looked distressed. "It's kind of like a rickety old deck balcony on one of the upper floors.

"Seems like our best option. Now we just have to get around the crowd." 

"Can't we just tell them to back the fuck up?"

"You'd die before you even finished that sentence. Some people might even be armed."

"What are they trying to do anyway?"

"Probably vandalism. Maybe robbery. Assault isn't off the table though."

"Where should I park?"

"A couple blocks away. This is a nice car; I'd hate to see it wrecked."

Will parked the car roughly seven blocks away from the palace on a side street that seemed pretty safe. "You and me both. Are you always this morbid?"

Nico smiled and the glint in his eyes was almost frightening. "Only before something exciting happens. Ready to break into your own house?"

☼

Inside the palace was completely quiet, except for a single television playing the news.

Will was still wheezing from all the climbing he did. Granted Nico had done most of the work, but still.

Nico was reaching for the remote to shut it off when something the news anchor said caught his interest and he turned it up instead. “Lord Apollo of the Sun Realm is being accused of being involved in a sexual relationship with a minor. If this accusation is true, Lord Apollo could face fifteen years in jail for statutory rape and be dethroned."

Will took a shaky breath. "No..."

"He has not been taken into police custody."

Nico turned off the television, and looked over at Will, who seemed a few breaths away from fainting. "I can't believe this."

"Sit down."

Will sat on the couch wordlessly and buried his face in his palm. "I want to say he wouldn't do something like that but..."
Nico rubbed his back. "Shh. You can talk to him about it when he gets here. Let's go check on your siblings."

No one was hurt, thank gods, and after what seemed like an eternity to Will, but was probably an hour or two, Lord Apollo came bursting in the palace doors looking like a mess. "Will, I'm so glad you're here."

Nico took that as his cue to leave and stood up. "I'll give you two some privacy."

Will waited until Nico was completely out of earshot to resume the conversation. "What the hell dad?!"

“Will, I know I haven't been the best dad, but please you have to listen."

Will didn't have the patience to listen to one of his father's speeches right now. "Did you sleep with a kid or not?"

"Will, you know I'm not like that."

“You've flirted with Nico plenty times.”

“Yes, but you know I wouldn't do anything.”

“Are you sure about that?”

“Of course I'm sure. I've always made sure I had full consent and that my partner was over eighteen before I did anything.”

“I honestly don't know what to believe.”

“You sound like your mother.”

“Before or after you cheated on her?”

“Who told you about that?”

Will was pretty level headed, but at some point even he'd had enough. "That's what you're upset about! The fact that someone told me, not the fact that you hurt someone you claimed to love."

"Will, I've made a lot of mistakes, but"

“Yeah, no kidding!"

"Just listen to me. I did love,”

"Bullshit."

Lord Apollo's mouth opened in surprise.

"Did you sleep with a minor or not?"

"I don't know."

"What do you mean you don't know?"

"I don't always remember, you know."
"Are you kidding me? You just said you always made sure your partner was over eighteen!"

"When I was sober! I don't know what happened when I was drunk."

"Suppose you get arrested now. Who's going to take care of the realm and your family? Izzy's only five and the only thing she'll remember about her dad is him getting arrested."

Apollo sucked in a breath. "I'm hoping things don't come to that."

"And what if they do?"

Lord Apollo threw his hands up dramatically. "Then I'll figure something out, sheesh." He plopped down on the couch next to Will and pouted. "I think Zeph is gonna break up with me when he hears about all this."

Was he serious right now? This man had absolutely no concept of priorities. "You're kidding me right?"

Apollo sniffled. "Nope."

Sometimes Will honestly felt like he was the parent. "I wouldn't want to date a statutory rapist either."

☼

Nico wasn't one to snoop, which was why he excused himself, but that didn't mean he wasn't going to be informed though. He logged onto Will's laptop and searched for **Lord Apollo scandal**. In an instant there were dozens of news articles and tabloid pictures at his fingertips, some of which were dated back to 1976.

The first article wasn't much help. It more or less repeated what the news said, but it didn't give any additional specifics.

The next article was from a tabloid, and described Lord Apollo had paid his statutory rape victim's family a million dollars to keep quiet. *Unlikely*, thought Nico.

That was until he saw the name and the picture clear as day: **Ethan Nakamura**
I Won't Blackout

Chapter Notes

This was supposed to be out on Thursday, but late is my middle name. Don't propose to me, I'll be like twenty minutes late to our wedding.

Also, this chapter is much shorter than the previous ones because it wasn't in my original outline but I think it bridges the gap between chapter 21 and chapter 23 without slowing down the plot significantly.

The title is from Blackout by Breathe Carolina, but I've never actually listened to the song I just thought it fit this chapter.

Things at the palace were tense. Even the houseplants seemed to be on edge.

The riots had gone on for two days straight. Stores were looted. Two government buildings were burned to the ground in the middle of the night. Hospitals sponsored by Lord Apollo were vandalized, *We don't support predators* was a popular slogan. By the time law enforcement had diffused the crowds and tamed the riots, the entire front of the palace had been trashed and there were seven cases of death.

Everyone blamed Apollo. The news. His kids. The other rulers.

The dinner table was covered in newspaper articles that slammed Apollo and painted him as a rich party boy. *How Do We Know He's Not Molesting His Kids?*” asked the tabloid sitting on top of the pile.

The first thing Nico when he walked into the kitchen saw was Lord Apollo, strumming his guitar absently to a sad tune Nico had never heard before. He looked (and smelled) like a hippie, wearing what appeared to be yesterday's rumpled clothes paired with shaggy, greasy hair and no shoes.

"Hey." Lord Apollo looked at him, with sunken eyes and strummed another sad guitar chord.

"You should eat something."

Lord Apollo shook his head. "I don't have an appetite."

"What's wrong?" That had to be the stupidest question Nico had ever asked.

"My life is falling apart, Nico. My children hate me, my family hates me, the other rules hate him, the media hates me, Zeph hates me. Everybody hates Apollo."

Nico handed Apollo an apple. "Food makes everything better."

"Can food fix the mess that is my life? I don't think so."

Nico was never one to lie when he didn't need to, but Apollo seemed to be in need of comfort. Nico awkwardly patted Apollo's shoulder and hoped it came across as compassionate, and not creepy. "I'm sure it'll all work out."
Will felt like a wound up toy soldier as he missed the target for the nineteenth time. He was about to snap the arrow clean in half when he started to feel hot. Not *it's a sunny day hot*, it was more *I'm about to burst into flames* hot. Will closed his eyes and blew on his scorching hot palms. He was ninety nine percent sure he put on sunscreen before leaving the palace. Besides the extreme wave of heat, Will felt energized, but more of a sugar high type of energy. If he opened his eyes he might pass out right on the grass. He tried to focus when he heard a piercing scream.

His eyes flew open to find Lou Ellen lying on the grass clutching her arm.

Will ran over to her. "What happened?"

Lou Ellen's eyes were wide. "Y-you burned me."

"What?"

Lou Ellen's voice was shaky. "You started literally glowing and I look up and you're just getting brighter and brighter and then you kind of manipulated the light and it just shot out of your hands and hit me as I was getting read to shoot. Next thing I know my arm feels like it's burning off."

"I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry."

"It's okay, Will."

Will touched her arm lightly. "Does it hurt?"

Lou winced and yanked her arm away from him. "Of course it hurts."

"Here let me heal it."

"Just stop touching it!"

"I'm so sorry, Lou."

"Just hurry up and heal me, sunshine."

Treating the burn wasn't much different than treating a really bad case of sunburn and Will was finished in less than ten minutes. "I really am sorry."

Lou nodded. "You need to calm down, Will."

"I know."

"I mean it. You're going to lose it if you keep this up. You should go lay down and try to relax some."

"But,"

"No buts. Forget about all that scandal crap and go take a nap. You need some rest."

"I will. But there's something I need to do first."

Will called a meeting and by the time Will got to the "Apollo Cabin", all his siblings were already
The minute he walked in Kayla ambushed him. "Will, you okay?"

Will knew he looked a mess, but he couldn't bring himself to care. There was too much on his plate right now. "I'm fine."

"So, what's up?"

Will bounced on the heels of his feet nervously. "I'm not really sure how to say this."

Austin raised an eyebrow. "Will, are you coming out? We know you're gay. You're engaged to a boy after all." The entire room snickered.

Will laughed grimly with them. "It's about, Michael."

The room went silent.

Aria's voice was unsteady. "What about him?"

"I talked to him." Will took in their faces. "I know what you're thinking, Will that's crazy, but,"

Austin cut in. "He's dead, Will."

"I know. Just hear me out okay?"

They nodded reluctantly, but Will didn't miss the concerned looks Austin shot Kayla.

He took a deep breath before launching into the story about the chasm. "So what do you guys think?"

Will's question was greeted with more unnerving silence. He looked around. "Say something... please."

Kayla's expression was unreadable. "Will, have you been getting enough sleep?"

Will wanted to flung himself out the nearest window and scream. "I'm serious!"

They must have seen the crazed look in Will's eyes because Austin cleared his throat. "I'm happy he's happy I guess."

Daphne looked around uncertainly. "We really didn't know him the way you knew him, but he deserves a peaceful afterlife."

Cassandra smiled at Will gently. "It's good you got some closure. You um took his death harder than anyone else I think."

Alex studied the beanbag chair he was sitting on. "I'm kind of surprised he remembers us."

"Maybe after all this madness is over we can all visit him," offered Kayla.

Will nodded and let out a relieved breath. "I'm sure he'd like that."

Will felt dead on his feet by the time he got to his room. He made a beeline for his bed and all but threw himself on it.
Nico was seated in the swivel chair at the computer desk and beckoned him over. "Will, look at this article."

"I don't want to see it."

"Fine. I'll read it to you. It says,"

"I don't care what it says!"

Nico rolled his eyes. "Calm down."

"I am calm!"

"So why are you yelling?"

"Because it's a free country, okay?"

"Just because you're mad at your dad doesn't mean you should ignore everything that goes on in the case and take your anger out on me. Honestly, do you want your dad to go to jail?"

"You're defending him!"

"I'm not defending him, Will, but this whole situation looks pretty damn sketchy to me."

"Nico, you don't understand the things my father has done. You and everyone else on this fucking planet only see the happy go lucky, handsome Apollo, not the selfish, narcissistic monster he really is." People told Will how much he was like his father at least twice daily, and he swore the gods if he heard it one more time.

"You expect me to understand all that, but you've never once said anything about it."

"Because you're an excellent communicator, right?"

"At least I don't walk around preaching to everyone about," Nico did his best imitation of Will's voice. "Talking out their feelings when you don't even do it."

"That's rich coming from you, since last time I checked you're the king of brooding!"

"Ouch. That one really stung, Will. This isn't first grade, okay?" Nico made a wild hand gesture. "I'm not a damn mind reader. You magically expect me to know what's going on in that head of yours, but you don't say how you're feeling ever."

"I could say the exact same thing about you!"

Nico rolled his eyes. "Congratulations on that A plus comeback."

Will grabbed the nearest pillow and flung it at Nico's face. "You're an asshole, do you know that?"

Nico snorted. "Because, you know everything right? I don't know why we bother sending kids to school. They should just come to you."

"And you're a hypocrite who doesn't give two shits about anyone but himself!" Will snorted. "Maybe that's why you get along with my dad so well."

"Go fuck yourself." Nico stood up and marched over to the closet they were sharing. He shrugged on his leather jacket and was lacing up his boots when Will realized Nico was getting dressed to
leave.

Will eyed him warily. "Where are you going?"

No answer.

Will tried again, a little louder this time. "Where are you going?"

Nico growled at him and made his way to the bedroom door. "Why do you fucking care?"

Will blocked him from opening the door. "Where are you going?!"

Nico brushed past him. "As far away from you as I can get."

☼

Will shot awake, covered in sweat and heart racing. He focused on steadying his shaky breath and getting his heart rate under control before even attempting to process what he'd just dreamt. He'd been having dreams lately, awful ones. Most featured someone he loved dying a rather gruesome death, that he could've prevented if he had got to them on time or was a better healer. He'd been avoiding sleep lately in the hope that he wouldn't have to to deal with the dreams and everything else that was going on, and he was getting more and more irritated over little things that shouldn't matter.

Will had another issue. He was terrified of the dark and it seemed to be clinging to every fiber of his being right now. He needed light. Light comforted him. Will had been of those kids who needed to sleep with a nightlight on every night until he was fourteen. If fact he still had it in his sock drawer for nights like these. But he couldn't bring himself to get out of bed to get it.

He could use some comfort right now. "Nico?"

No answer.

Will started to panic. Was Nico drowning in the bathtub again?

Then it all came back to him. The screaming, the hurt look in Nico's eyes, the anger Will hadn't known he had in him, and the emptiness that had remained long after Nico had left.

Will felt so guilty.

There was a knock on his bedroom door and Will grabbed his alarm clock off his nightstand and brandished it like a weapon. "Who is it?"

"Kayla. Can I come in?"

Will let out a breath of relief. "Yeah." He pressed the switch on the lamp on his nightstand, and it didn't turn on. He should've changed the bulb before he went to sleep.

Kayla was dressed in her nightgown, her hair was braided, and Will couldn't miss the bags under her eyes if he tried. Hell, he probably had matching ones. "Is Nico in here?"

Will shook his head and swallowed. "He left. Why?"

"We're in the middle of a blackout, Will. Didn't you notice?"

Will shook his head. "I was sleeping. Is it just us or?"
"Every single realm."

Will almost fell off his bed. "How in the hell did that happen?"

"Nobody knows. Everyone just lost power and all the local electricity companies are saying they can't do anything about it until morning."

"But we won't need light in the morning."

"Exactly." Kayla rubbed her temple. "Did Nico say where he was going?"

Will shook his head.

"I hope he's okay out there."

Will felt dread pooling in his gut. "Why?"

"There's nothing but chaos. It's really dangerous out there. Criminals are just running wild. Most of the other realms have shut down the borders and declared a lockdown because of how high the crime rate shot in a few hours."

"Did we?"

Kayla shook her head. "Dad's too busy wallowing in self pity to actually rule, we established that a long time ago."

Will felt like he was going to throw up. "If something happens to Nico, it's going to be my fault."

Kayla squeezed his shoulder. "Don't think like that, Will. Nico's a big boy. He can take care of himself."

"Lord Hades is going to skin me alive if something happens to his son." Will bit his lip to hold back the stream of tears threatening spill. "Why were you looking for him anyway?"

Kayla sighed. "Dad's acting a bit paranoid about the shadows. He said he's been having dreams again. The ones he had before Michael died."

Will exhaled through his nose. "I've been having dreams too."

"For how long?"

Will cradled his head in his palms. "About a week, I dunno."

"Why didn't you tell anyone?"

"I just assumed it was from stress and me worrying about every little thing."

"You still should've said something, Will."

"I know."

"You could've at least told Nico. Why'd he leave anyway?"

Will studied his bedsheets. "We had an argument."

"Oh."
Will blew his nose loudly. "I think I fucked up for good, Kayla."

"You're human, Will. You're allowed to make mistakes

"I still shouldn't have taken it out on him. I said a whole bunch of things I didn't mean and now he's gone and it's not safe out there,"

Kayla pulled Will into a tight hug. "Shhh. It's okay, Will."

"That's not true!"

Kayla pulled back to look Will in the eye. "I get it, Will. Everything that could've possibly went wrong, went wrong. But guess what? There's nothing we can do about that. You've spent your whole life blaming yourself for things that are out of your control and because of that you start stressing about the things you can control until you can't even breathe properly. You try so hard to live up to everyone else's expectations and be there for everyone, and you need to stop before you end up hurting yourself in the process."

☼

On the other side of the palace a figure sat slumped over the bar fast asleep.

Another figure approached the sleeping man, resisting the urge to roll his eyes, and turned on his phone flashlight. Of course Apollo was feeling sorry for himself.

Apollo squinted up. "Lord Hermes?"

"The one and the only."

"Nice of you to visit brother."

Lord Hermes rolled his eyes. "I'm here to deliver a message."

"And what would that be?"

"Father is holding a council."

"But we've already met for the solstice."

"I think it's fairly obvious why we're meeting this time."

"Is it?"

"Unless you're absolutely dense, and in that case maybe father shouldn't have given you a realm."

Apollo snorted. "I see you're not above kicking a man when he's down."

"And I see mother dearest was right when she said you'd be the worst ruler since Kronos."

"That's delightful."

Hermes rolled his eyes. "I'll be on my way now. Some of us actually have realms to rule and children to care for."

"You did an excellent job of caring for Luke."

Lord Hermes's eyes narrowed until they were barely slits. "Because you were a perfect parent to
Michael and Lee? That's why they're still alive today, right? At least I decided to change my ways."

Lord Hermes's cell phone buzzed again and he waved to Apollo."Toodles."

In a flash, he was gone and the light went with him.
The moment to fight, the moment to fight, To fight, to fight, to fight

Chapter Notes

This is supposed to be up yesterday, but as I said before: I'm trash.

This is one of the most important chapters in the entire story. In hindsight I probably should've had this beta'd, but it's a little late for that now.

The title is from This is War by Thirty Seconds to Mars

Warnings: a little bit of gore, but not much

The ride to the Sky Realm was exasperating.

Apollo kept fussing with the radio station every minute, their driver looked half awake, and Will felt uncomfortable in his long gold robes. There was a metallic sun over his left nipple for gods sakes.

Kayla seemed much more at ease, reclining casually in the limo, but the worried glances she threw in Apollo's direction suggested otherwise.

Will couldn't help be worried too. (He'd been told he was a worrywart by ninety percent of his family) But this wasn't a routine council to talk about the state of the economy, this council would decide the fate of the Sun Realm and its ruling family. And Will was a part of that family. Where were they going to go?

Will couldn't help but notice how empty the limo felt without Nico. He'd never admit it, but he missed Nico's snarky commentary about the limo's obnoxious yellow color and how much Will resembled a banana in his robes. Will took a long breath and stared out of the window as they approached the gates of the Sky Realm.

The Sky was possibly the most beautiful of all the Olympian realms, but none of the rulers would ever admit it. For years the Sky Realm resembled American suburbs in the fifties, with white picket fences and baseball games. But times changed and the Sky changed with them. Seemingly overnight, the sky went from suburbs and white picket fences to skyscrapers and bustling subways.

The "Throne Room" was the size of an entire skyscraper floor and resembled an office with a large oval table at the center and windows that stretched from the ceiling to the carpet. Behind the oval table and thrones were rows of black velvet seats, where the attending princes and princesses were to sit and observe the council.

It was custom that each ruler bring their eldest two children to sit in at the meeting as a way to prepare them for the ascension to the throne.

Jason gave Will a formal handshake as a greeting at the door, which was odd since Jason had all but threatened him during their last encounter, but he didn't stay to chat because Reyna and Frank were making their way in.

Will didn't miss the annoyed looks people threw their way as he, Apollo, and Kayla entered the
Will spotted Annabeth, Piper, and Percy in the crowd.

Lord Apollo took his seat at the table, and Will and Kayla waved at their friends on the way to their seats.

Hazel looked gorgeous with her long black robes flowing behind her and bouncy curls as she approached Will. "Where is Nico?"

Honestly, Will should've expected the question. Will immediately decided it's not in his best interest to lie to Hazel, especially when she there's a protective glint in her eyes. That doesn't mean his throat doesn't tighten as he tries to get the words out. "We had an argument and he left... in the middle of the blackout."

Hazel's smile fades. "You should've called us."

"I assumed he went home or something."

Hazel shook her head. "We haven't heard a peep from him."

Will lowered his head. "I'm sorry."

Hazel nodded gravely. "Have you tried looking for him?"

"I have no idea where he would be and there was so much going on and yeah. Excuses, excuses"

"You can't find him if he doesn't want to be found."

"Why do you say that?"

Hazel smiled sadly. "This isn't the first time Nico's run away. He has a tendency to run from his problems."

That gave Will some hope. "Do you think he'll come back?"

Hazel shrugged. "If he wants to."

Will's always been a pretty transparent person, and Hazel can practically feel the guilt rolling off him in waves. "It's okay, Will. He probably just needs some time to cool off."

"You're probably right."

Hazel smiled. "I'm always right."

Will glanced around the room, where everyone was taking their seats. His eyes landed on Nico's unoccupied seat and his throat tightened. "We should probably sit down."

Hazel nodded. "I'll see you later, Will."

"See you later."

Will made a dash for his seat next to Kayla and slumped into it just as Lord Zeus and Lady Hera strode in arm in arm. "Welcome, everyone!"

A deep voice came over the sound system. "Everyone please rise for the singing of the national
Will and his siblings had been trained to sing the national anthem since they were out of the womb, but now couldn't bring himself to even sing the first line.

After the anthem, Lord Zeus surveyed the room. "Please be seated." When everyone was seated he continued. "Thank you all for attending. Shall we begin?"

Everyone more or less nodded. The sooner this was over the better.

"Olympus has long been a great nation in every respect and as rulers it is our duty to carry on that legacy and pass it on to our children. Ruling Olympus is a team effort, hence the reason we have realms. But if one member of the team in failing, the entire team suffers the consequences. No matter how self sufficient we claim our realms are, if one realm goes down we all go down."

Jason and Percy lost interest in the meeting pretty quickly, and apparently they didn't know how to fucking whisper because half the room was hearing their debate on the importance of sporks.

"It has come to all of our attention that Apollo has not been adequately performing his duties, and because of that the Sun Realm is suffering the consequences. The economy is unstable and violence is breaking out all across the realm, as you can see in this clip." Lord Zeus pressed a button and a blank projector screen descended from the ceiling. He cleared his throat. "Athena, how do I get it to play?"

Lady Athena rolled her eyes. "You have to turn it on, dad."

Lord Zeus pressed a few random buttons. "How do I do that?"

"Press the button on the top."

"Oh, okay. There we go." The clip was raw footage of the riots outside that palace that destroyed the front of the palace and ended with seven people dead. "The reason for much of this violence is the news of a recent scandal, where Apollo is being accused of having a sexual relationship with a minor. This kind of behavior is absolutely unacceptable."

Lord Poseidon wasn't impressed. "Wasn't there a case of you dating an underage girl a couple years ago?"

Lord Zeus dismissed him. "That has nothing to do with what we're discussing today. Please refrain from commenting until the end."

Lord Poseidon made a tsk tsk sound. "I guess the apple doesn't fall from the tree in this case."

Lord Zeus continued his obviously rehearsed speech. "Apollo does have a history of reckless behavior and has committed several felonies. He was charged with marijuana possession in 2006,"

"It was medical!"

"He's received four hundred and thirty nine speeding tickets in the past four years,"

"I'm a fast driver!"

"He's also engaged in sexually promiscuous behavior that has produced several illegitimate children,"

"I inherited your genes, what do you expect?"
Lady Hera's smile was tight. "Stop interrupting your father, Apollo. Have a little respect."

Lord Zeus continued. "We have two options. We can let Apollo run the Sun Realm to the ground or we can strip him of his royal status. Everyone in favor of Apollo being dethroned say I and state why."

Lady Hera smiled. "I. As rulers, we have to set certain standards for our citizens. If Apollo is engaging in this sort of immoral behavior, many of his citizens, not to mention his children, will follow his example and we'll end up with a realm full of druggies and illegitimate children."

Lady Athena went next. "I. The Sun Realm's economy is plunging by the minute, and it's going take all of us down with it. As of right now, the Sun Realm is simply a parasite living off all of the other realms."

Most surprisingly of all, Lord Ares voluntarily participated in the council's discussion. "I. Apollo's gotten way too many chances. If the rest of us fucked up and neglected our duties as often as he did, we'd be living in cardboard boxes."

Will tried not to cringe. They had a pretty strong case against Apollo.

Lord Hades folded his hands, his lips set in a thin line. "Who would replace Apollo?"

Lady Hera perked up. "I'm certainly qualified to rule."

Lord Zeus tried to suppress him smile. "Well I suppose a test run would be our best,"

"EVERYONE GET DOWN!" Gunmen came bursting through the large oak doors of the council.

Will dropped to the floor and covered his head with a nearby seat cushion. He took deep breaths. *In and Out*

The sound of bullets rang out. Will risked a glance at the gunmen, who were dressed in all black and wore masks that covered their faces. "Nobody move!"

A woman dressed in a black lace dress and a matching veil sauntered into the room after the gunmen. She reminded Will of a bride from hell as she stood at the head of the table with a hand on her hip. "So we meet again."

Lord Zeus stood on shaky legs, fingers curling around the weapon under his robes. "Who are you and what do you want?!"

The woman purred sweetly. "Don't you remember me, honey?"

Lord Zeus narrowed his eyes. "Who. Are. You?"

"I'm hurt you don't remember me, Zeusie. We shared so many passionate nights." The Lady in black smiled when she heard Hera's indignant growl. "You even promised to make me queen. A promise you didn't keep. So now you have to die."

*That escalated quickly.*

Two gunmen stood behind Lord Zeus, their rifles pointed at his head.

The Lady in Black seemed pleased to watch him squirm. "Children, don't make promises you can't keep."
Four gunmen paced the room with their weapons drawn, daring someone to attack. Two more gunmen stood next to the Lady, her personal bodyguards, Will supposed.

One of the gunmen was shorter than the rest. His mask covered his entire face, except dark eyes and a sliver of pale skin under his eyebrows. He caught Will staring and Will immediately dropped lower onto the floor.

He risked sneaking a glance at the gunman on the Lady's left. His mask was drawn up all the way to his tiny eyes or eye, as Will should say. Will could just make out the edge of an eyepatch over one eye.

Will felt his stomach drop. The reasonable part of his brain told him there were plenty of people who wore eyepatches in the world, but there was something strikingly familiar about those eyes. He remembered those eyes getting closer and closer until the boy they belonged to tried to kiss Will.

"Apollo's going to die first. He scorned me not once, but twice." At her command, there was an rifle pressed to Apollo's temple.

Will wasn't exactly his father's biggest fan, but that didn't mean he wanted his father executed. Will didn't hate him that much. Not yet, anyway.

Will felt helpless. The same helplessness he felt when Michael had died and Will had failed to save him. But there was nothing Will could do right now. Well... But there was a chance it wouldn't work at all.

Kayla's eyes were wide with fear next to him.

He concentrated with all his might on the sliver of sunlight coming in through the windows. He felt beads of sweat run down his forehead from that effort alone. He felt like he was burning up again.

Will focused on controlling the light. He couldn't just walk over and grip it, so he improvised. He imagined the light as an extension of his arm. He aimed the ray of white hot light at the gunmen on either side of Apollo and released it.

There was a loud sizzle, and they dropped to the floor like rag dolls, their guns skidding halfway across the floor.

Another gunman stood on the oval table, his gun pointed in Will's direction. "Who did that?"

Will tried not to tremble. All the gunman had to do was pull that trigger and he was dead. Will happened to like living quite a bit, thank you very much.

He locked eyes with Kayla. She mouthed something to him, but Will couldn't decipher what it was.

The Lady in Black growled at the gunman. "Bring me the children of Apollo now."

Will said his final prayers and screwed his eyes shut, hoping for a swift death.

Nothing happened. Slowly, Will peeled his eyes open to see the gunmen frozen in place.

The Lady's patience was wearing thin. "Today, please."

Nothing happened.

The Lady in Black narrowed her eyes and murmured a spell.
The gunmen began to move animatedly. They levitated a foot off the ground and their spines began to bend, and bend, and bend until their forms were unnatural. Their bodies convulsed in pain as the sound of bones cracking became louder and louder.

Will had seen a lot of horrible things happen to human body, being a medic and all, but that had to be one of the most gruesome.

The Lady didn't seem affected at all. She let them scream in agony for close to ten minutes before reversing the levitation spell and watching them fall. Their skulls split with a loud crack.

A sense of horror filled the entire room. If she would torture her own henchmen like that, Will didn't want to imagine what she'd do to them.

Lady Athena stood up casually. "Hecate, I expected to hear from you much sooner."

Lord Zeus turned so fast he might have whiplash. "Hecate? Expected what?"

Lady Athena rolled her eyes. "I didn't think you were dedicated enough to succeed...until you started murdering children."

The Lady Hecate seemed taken back by Athena figuring out her identity, but she didn't let it show. "All's fair in love and war."

Lady Athena's face was set, her eyes calculating. "This is war you can't win."

Hecate's smile was borderline predatory. "Doesn't look that way to me."

Lady Athena struck so quickly Hecate didn't even have time to say boo.

Hecate wasn't going down without a fight though. She pulled a blade, probably six feet in length, out of thin air and charged.

Lady Athena was gifted in war, but that didn't necessarily mean hand to hand combat, especially when her opponent was using spells at every opportunity.

Lady Hecate glared at her remaining gunman from where she was maneuvering out of Athena's vice like grip. "Why the hell are you just standing around?!

The four gunmen began to tremble. Scratch that, the floor began to tremble. A hole opened up in the floor and swallowed the patrolling gunmen whole, their rifles still in arms.

Lady Hecate murmured something under her breath and Will was hit with a wave of drowsiness. He felt lightheaded. He couldn't register anything that was going on around him. Sounds were blending into one another. Will's vision was dimming. He could make out shapes and blurry colors, but not much else. Smoke. He smelt smoke.

BANG

Will's head snapped up. Someone was hurt, he could feel it.

He scanned the room, until he could just make out Hecate clutching the her chest.

The shorter gunman pulled his mask off and Nico? There was no way that mop of unruly hair couldn't belong to Nico. Will's brain short circuited. *Nico was working for Hecate?*

In an instant, Ethan's blade was pressed to the back of Nico's neck. "Move a muscle, di Angelo."
Nico pulled his sword out of the shadows.

They struggled for what seemed like an eternity. The sound of swords clashing filled the room. Ethan struck, Nico deflected, Nico struck, Ethan deflected.

The tension the room was thick enough to cut. Will felt panic rising in his throat. If Nico made a single misstep, Ethan wouldn't hesitate to cut his head clean off.

Nico's hair was matted to his forehead and he was heaving for breath. He wasn't moving as quickly as before. He was struggling to dodge Ethan's blows. All black probably wasn't ideal for sword fighting.

Will's heart was hammering in his chest.

Ethan stumbled for a fraction of second and Nico struck him square in the chest with the speed of a serpent. Ethan released a bloodcurdling scream. With his last ounce of strength, he drove his blade as far as it would go into Nico's shoulder. He collapsed not a second later from his own injury, his blood flowing freely on Lady Hera's favorite rug.

Nico was also rapidly losing consciousness. Apollo ran forward and applied pressure to the wound as best he could.

"Somebody call the police!"

Will didn't have to to look to know Nico might probably wouldn't make it. He was losing too much blood and the knife pierced too close to his spine. Will felt so fucking useless, watching as they loaded Nico onto the stretcher.

It takes seven police officers to arrest Hecate, even with a bullet wound, and about fifteen (plus Lord Hades and Frank) to restrain Hazel from climbing into the ambulance with her brother.

Chapter End Notes

This was by far the hardest chapter to write because I've never written anything close to a fight scene. If you guys have any tips for action scenes please share 'em.

Also, I'm thinking about writing a one shot about Frazil's wedding because I was really looking forward to it but it doesn't fit in the plot of this story. Let me know what you think.
The next two days are absolute madness.

The police detain and interrogate several suspects supposedly involved in the conspiracy, but can't find enough evidence to prosecute them.

Nico's shoulder required twelve stitches, and he hadn't been fully conscious in the last seventy-two hours. The doctors warned Lord Hades that he might be slipping into a coma, and there wasn't much they could do about it. To make matters worse, no one is allowed to visit his hospital room until the police have finished their investigation on his involvement with Hecate and his role in Ethan's death.

The roads are completely closed off to prevent any of Hecate's accomplices from escaping, but it also means no one can travel home. All the leaders and their children staying in one place, no matter how big said place is, is a recipe for disaster.

Lord Poseidon and Lord Zeus were having a screaming match in the Sky Palace's kitchen, not far from where most of the family was gathered to eat dinner. Lady Hera insisted that they have an actual family dinner, but that all went up in flames the minute Lord Zeus sat down.

"THIS IS YOUR FAULT!"

"MY FAULT? BECAUSE I'M THE ONLY RULER RIGHT?"

"OF COURSE YOU WOULD HAVE AN AFFAIR WITH HER."

"BECAUSE YOU'VE NEVER HAD AN AFFAIR RIGHT?!"

Lady Sally wasn't impressed. "Posie, you should eat something."

"Just a second, honey." Lord Poseidon turned back to his brother. "HOW COULD YOU BE SO FUCKING IRRESPONSIBLE?!"

Lord Hades massaged his temples from where he was seated at the table. "Can you two go one day without arguing?"

Lord Zeus glared at him. "Can you shut up?"

Lord Hades stood up. "Excuse me? At least I wasn't the one sleeping with Hecate."

"Well you're son was working for her, so..."

Lord Hades looked like he'd been slapped. "That was a low blow, even for you. My son saved your ass! If my son hadn't been risking his life, you would've have two bullets in your brain! Honestly, I
would preferred you that way."

Everyone at the table could feel the tension shift into something more dangerous.

Lord Poseidon cleared his throat. "I have dinner to eat, so I'll just be going..."

Lord Dionysus plopped down on the couch next to Will, late as usual. "They're going at it again? What is this? The fifth time this hour."

Will nodded. "Were they always like this?"

Lord Dionysus shrugged. "More or less. Father and Uncle Po have always been at each other's necks. Their sons are at at each other's necks too, but a little differently. Usually Uncle Hades is the mediator but sometimes he and father get into it really badly."

Will let out a defeated sigh. "How's Pollo?"

Lord Dionysus only had one son, Pollux, since Hecate had offed Castor two years back. Pollux and Will saw each other pretty frequently when they were younger and they had to accompany their fathers on business, but rarely nowadays.

"Pollux is good. I think he was shaken up when he realized Hecate was the one that you know."

"Tell him we have to catch up sometime."

Lord Dionysus ruffled his hair. "You and Pollo would've been a cute couple, but you have a thing for the bad boys huh?" He laughed at Will expression. "Sweetie, I invented gay sex."

Will fought the blush trying to make its way to his cheeks. "Is he seeing anyone?"

Lord Dionysus chuckled. "He and a certain son of Hermes have been sneaking around for quite sometime now. He thinks I don't know."

"That's...interesting."

Lord Dionysus laughed. "It's pretty awkward considering they're half second cousins, but I'm not one to judge."

"Uh..."

☼

When Lady Hera created the sleeping arrangements, she put all the princes and princesses on one floor.

"They're the future rulers, not to mention family. They need to bond with each other. Kids these days can't even have a proper conversation because of those cell phones. With the Facepage and the Snapbook and all that nonsense," had been her reasoning.

In short, Will felt bad for Jason.

Speaking of Jason, he and Percy were right across the hall from Will and Kayla. Will didn't mind at first because they were his friends by association and he could've been neighbors with worse people cough cough Octavian.

That was until the banging started.
Will had been buried under his covers, about to drift off when he felt his entire bed shake. He shot up immediately, assuming that there had been an earthquake or something.

The next bang was accompanied by a scream, not of terror or pain, but of pleasure. Will dropped his head back onto his pillow and rolled his eyes. Who the hell would think now was a good time to have sex?. Will tried to fall asleep, but apparently someone wanted it Harder! Gods right there! You're so fucking hot Jay

Will's eyes shot open. Jason was a pretty common name, yes, but that voice could only belong to one person.

Will grabbed his bathrobe and slippers, and shuffled down the hall to the suite right across from his.

"Yes, please! Faster! You're making me so wet!"

Will knocked on the door and then threw it open. "What the hell are you two doing at this, ?"

Will's jaw dropped when he looked at the bed. Jason was on top of Percy, well technically inside him from what Will could see and they were both naked as the day they were born.

Jason had the decency to look embarrassed, but Percy just rolled his eyes. "Isn't it obvious?"

It took Will five minutes to get his mouth working. "People are trying to sleep."

Percy ran his fingers over Jason's sculpted chest, and Will had to tear his eyes away. "And?"

"So you two need to cut it out."

Percy squeezed Jason's nipple. "But we were just about to go for round three!"

Will glared at him. "At least try to be quiet."

Jason smirked. "Percy couldn't be quiet if his life depended on it."

"That's because you hit my prostate like your life depends on it."

Will put his hands up in surrender. "Too much information."

Percy rolled his eyes. "Like you and Nico don't do the exact same thing."

"Nico and I have never even kissed."

Percy's jaw dropped. "What the fuck are you guys waiting for? A miracle?"

Jason slapped Percy's butt. "Don't encourage them to do bad things!"

Percy and Will both looked at Jason.

Jason sighed. "They should go at their own pace. " His eyes darkened a couple shades. "I swear to the gods if you force Nico into doing anything I will cut off your dick and feed it to Reyna's dogs."

Will's eyes went wide. "I-I would never..."

Percy shoved Jason lightly. "You're scaring him, Jay."

Jason looked a little too pleased with himself. "Good."
Will gulped and glanced at the clock. "It's getting late. I'm going to bed now. Good night...Please don't have sex again." Will shut the door as fast as he could.

"No promises!"

On his trek back down the hall, Will realized all the doors looked the exact same, probably because of Lady Hera's love of uniformity or some shit like that, and he was hit with a wave of panic. Where was he? How long had he been walking?

Will squinted as he walked past rooms 230, 231, 232, trying to remember what the hell his room number was. He patted his pockets for his phone to call Kayla, who was probably fast asleep, but they were empty. He banged his head on the floral print wallpaper. He was so stupid sometimes. Why would anyone let him operate on them when he couldn't even remember three damn numbers? It was too frickin late for this.

He knocked quietly on the closest door and prayed it was his room. He'd hate to wake up someone for no good reason.

The last person he expected to open the door was Lady Sally. Even half asleep, she was a sight to behold. Her long black curls were pulled up in a ponytail and her big blue eyes were focused right on him. Her skin had a bronzy glow and her smile was bright, even at the late hour.

"This isn't my room. I'm so sorry," blurted Will.

Lady Sally suppressed a smile. "No, but you're welcome to come in."

Will shook his head. "I don't want to intrude, Lady Sally."

"Just call me Sally, and it's fine." She beamed at him, displaying the dimples in her cheeks.

Will blushed and smiled back. "Why are you up at this time of night?"

Sally raised an eyebrow. "Why are you up at this time of night?"

"Percy and Jason were...having a little too much fun and I went to tell them to cut it out and then I got lost."

Sally smiled knowingly at him. "They keep Posie and I up every night at the Palace. I guess Percy inherited more from his father than his eye color. You'd never believe the things I've walked in on at the palace."

"Um...I didn't think you knew about them."

"I know everything that happens in Percy's life." She offered him a tray of cupcakes. "Vanilla or chocolate?"

"Chocolate please."

Sally and Percy had the same mischievous smile. "Sit, make yourself comfortable."

Will moved one of the throw pillows on the couch and sat down next to her. "These cupcakes are delicious. Did you bake them yourself?"

Sally nodded and offered Will another. "It's an old family recipe."

After had stuffed his face with cupcakes, he decided he might as well partake in some conversation.
"How'd you and Lord Poseidon meet?"

Sally didn't look offended, thank the gods. "Every year the Sea Realm has a huge banquet sort of thing, and everyone who isn't invited desperately wishes they were. I came home from work one day to see an invitation on my doorstep, and I was so confused because I wasn't remotely close to an aristocrat. I didn't even plan on going, but my friends begged me to, and I caved. It's a fancy party, why not? I get to the banquet and I was having a nice time talking to everyone. Then in the middle of the banquet, I'm trying to find the bathroom and I turn around and guess who I bump into? Lord Poseidon. Then he spills an entire glass of champagne on my dress. He took me out to dinner as an apology and at the end of the night he told me that he invited me because I was the lifeguard at his favorite beach and he thought I looked like a mermaid."

Will tried not to squeal. "That's so romantic!"

Sally smiled. "How did you and Nico meet?"

"Daddy and Lord Hades set us up."

"I'm not usually a fan of arranged marriages, but I have to say you were a good match."

"You don't like arranged marriages?"

"I don't like the idea of not marrying for love and not having a say in your future spouse. I'd never want Percy to marry someone he didn't even like just so the Sea could have another ally."

"Can I tell you something?"

She set down the tray, her blue eyes full of concern. "Sure. What's on your mind, sweetie?"

Will sighed and stared at the carpet. "I'm just worried about Nico."

Sally sighed sadly. "The doctors said he didn't look good but I'm sure he'll pull through. Nico's a strong boy."

"Even if he does make it...he's not going to like me."

Sally tilted her head. "Why do you say that?"

"We had an argument and it escalated and then he left in the middle of the blackout. The next time I saw him was during the council when he was fighting Ethan and then he passed out and I didn't even have a chance to smooth things over."

"Every couple fights, Will. It's natural."

"I just feel like I could've done something. He's in really bad condition."

Will knew that Nico might not make it. He'd known from the moment Lord Hades and Hazel asked him to take a walk with them, their eyes empty. Will knew he loved Nico. He didn't know if Nico felt the same. He wouldn't be surprised if Nico didn't. But he might never find out because while Will was sitting on Sally's couch, Nico was slipping further and further into a coma. Will wanted to do something; he wasn't an idle person, but what could he do now? He was always too late. He wished he'd told Nico how he felt before he left that night. He wished he hadn't snapped at him for trying to help. He hoped someone would love Nico properly, better than Will ever could.

Sally squeezed Will's hand. "Everyone would've done something differently in hindsight. I wouldn't
have let Posie, Perce, and Ty go at all. But nobody knew she was going to attack. Don't feel guilty for something you can't control."

Will nodded. "Thank you...for everything."

Sally opened her mouth to reply when the sound of a baby wailing and screaming came from the bedroom. She smiled apologetically at Will. "I'll be right back."

She returned cradling a dark haired bundle in her arms. "Percy was such a good baby. This girl is so fussy, hmmm."

Will was shocked. "I didn't know you had a daughter."

Sally smiled as she rocked the baby. "You obviously haven't been reading the newspapers. Posie's been wanting another one for ages, he loves having little ones running around, so we thought why not."

Will shook his head. "What's her name?"

"Emma."

"How old is she?"

"Six months."

"Can I hold her?"

"Of course."

Will couldn't help but smile at the baby girl. "She looks just like you."

"She better after five hours of labor."

Will giggled. "How was Poseidon during the birth?"

Sally rolled her eyes fondly. "You'd think he was the one giving birth the way he was wheezing and fainting. He's no good in situations like that."

Baby Emma booped Will on the nose and giggled softly.

Will brushed a dark curl out of her eyes. "She's so cute. I want to have a baby. Well, adopt one. Giving birth is just no. I don't even have the parts."

Sally chuckled. "Making children is plenty of fun, but delivering them, not so much."

Will scrunched up his face. "Ew."

"You're just as immature as Percy."

"Parents making sex jokes is weird!"

It was well past two A.M. when Will called Kayla to let him in and hugged Sally and baby Emma goodbye. He was tempted to stuff the cutie under his robe and take her with him, but she refused to part with her mother.

As he was leaving Will was hit with a realization. "How come you and Lord Poseidon are staying on
this floor?"

"Posie and his brother staying on the same floor is a disaster waiting to happen. Plus we can keep a closer eye on Percy down here."

"Oh. Good night and thanks again."

Sally smiled warmly. "You're very welcome sweetheart, anytime."

☼

Lady Hera called the first ever Olympian family meeting bright and early the next morning.

The entire family, half awake, piled into the living room and tried their best to look interested.

Lord Hephaestus's morning voice was groggy. "What are we supposed to be doing at this hour?"

Lady Hera's smile grew even wider. "We're having a family meeting!"

There was a collective groan.

Lord Hermes was dressed in a pair of emoji print pajama pants. "Why are we doing this?"

Lady Hera clapped her hands together happily. "So we can bond! The entire Hecate issue got me thinking. Conspirators want us to be divided, therefore we need to get so close that no one can get between us."

Octavian was angry, as usual. "How come Percy and Jason don't have to be here?"

Lady Hera frowned. "I summoned the entire family."

Prince Eros hummed in approval. "I'd rather be getting laid than be here."

Lady Hera's brow furrowed. "What are you implying?"

Lord Dionysus huffed. "Jason and Percy are having sex upstairs while we sit here and listen to you try to play Martha Stewart."

Lady Hera gasped and placed a hand over her heart. "My Jason would never..."

Everyone snorted.

Lady Hera turned to her husband. "Zu, tell me it's not true...please."

Lord Zeus tore his eyes away from Lady Aphrodite's bust long enough to shrug at his wife. "Who Jason chooses to sleep with is none of my business."

Lord Poseidon shook his head. "That's because you're a neglectful father."

Lord Zeus's head whipped around so fast several people heard his neck crack. "I'm a neglectful father?!

Lord Poseidon looked at his nails. "That's what I just said. Are you losing your hearing now?"

Lady Hera looked like her husband had just died. "Jason is having sexual intercourse w-with Percy?"
Lord Ares was one hundred percent done with this family. "Yes! Are you hard of hearing too?"

"But Jason's not a homosexual!"

Lady Athena looked up from her book. "Did you know, statistically, that fifty percent of the people in this room have had at least one gay experience?"

Lady Aphrodite spoke up. "It's probably more like seventy-five percent given the history of this family."

Lady Hera had a Sphygmomanometer on one arm. "My heart is too frail for this! This meeting is officially over."

"Thank the gods," cried every member of the family as they filed out of the living room.

"Sorry we're late!" Jason and Percy limped down the stairs fifteen minutes later.

Jason looked around at the empty living room. "Where is everyone?"

Percy shrugged. "Let's go back upstairs. You owe me a rim job."

☼

Will wanted to cry tears of relief when he was finally able to call his siblings. "Thank the gods you guys are okay!"

"Thank the gods you're okay!"

"What happened?"

In the days following Hecate's attack, Will learned that she hadn't just attacked the members of the Olympic council she'd sent additional troops for their remaining family.

"They just swarmed the palace and put a bullet through anything that moved. We're so lucky Zeph got to us in time."

Will felt like a weight had been lifted off his shoulders. "Did anyone get hurt?"

"No. Speaking of hurt, we're so sorry about Nico."

"Yeah." Will didn't trust his voice to say anymore.

"He's gonna pull through."

Will took a bite of his salad. "I hope so." His voice broke. "He can't die on me."

"Don't think like that Will."

"I'm just trying to be realistic."

"How's dad?"

"I haven't seen him since the conference. He's probably begging Lady Hera to convince Lord Zeus not to dethrone him."

"Typical. How's Kay?"
"She's fine. Kayla's a trooper."

"And everyone else?"

"Lord Poseidon, Lord Zeus and Lord Hades are arguing, as usual. Percy and Jason are having sex. Everyone's pretty much doing their own thing for the most part."

"It sounds like a madhouse."

"It is! And Lady Hera sees it as the perfect opportunity to have a family meeting and some family bonding time. I want to come home so badly."

"Nico needs you. And dad needs you to hold it down while he's getting his life together."

"I don't think I can do it anymore. I'm falling apart!"

Will had never been this stressed in his life. He felt like everyone was depending on him, and he couldn't meet their expectations.

"You're problem is you don't know what you're capable of. You doubt yourself too much."

Will stabbed his salad miserably.

"We have to go eat dinner. Stay strong, Will."

Will blew a kiss. "Love you guys. Tell Zeph I said thank you."

"We will. Love you too."

☼

Normally burial arrangements were left to the family of the deceased, but Ethan was special case because 1) He was a criminal and 2) He didn't have any family.

Will's heart broke a little when he heard that. Will didn't even want to think about not having a family to turn to. Maybe if Ethan had had someone to care for him he wouldn't have turned to Hecate.

Ethan's funeral was short. There was no eulogy because no one knew enough to about him to write one, so after a few hymns he was laid to rest in a simple grave.

**Ethan Nakamura**

**A Troubled Soul**

Will placed the flowers on the grave gently. "You tried to kill my boyfriend, but I think he'd want me to give these to you anyway.

Rain drops made a pitter patter sound as the bounced off the gray tombstone. "I was being honest when I said I wanted to be your friend."

Will kneeled in the damp grass. "You didn't have to turn to her, you know. We would've take you in. But you don't take charity, huh?" Will studied the tombstone. It looked just like every other one, unlike the complex boy with larger than life dreams that was buried under it. "You never did tell me what happened to your eye."

Will stood after a few minutes and brushed off his pants. "I guess this is goodbye then. Maybe in another life we can be friends."
Will left the graveyard and didn’t look back.

Chapter End Notes

Comments make my day :)
Courting Death

Chapter Summary

In which Will breaks the law to see his beloved.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Morning Doctor!"

Will adjusted his scrubs and waved. "Morning!"

"Doctor" Solace stopped at the front desk, and prayed those drama classes he’d taken would pay off. "I'm so sorry to bother you, but I'm looking for Mr. Di Angel or something like that."

The receptionist was a balding middle aged man. "Mr. Di Angelo?"

Doctor Solace nodded.

"He's in room 456."

"Thank you so much. Have a great day."

The receptionist didn't look up. "You too, doctor."

Room 456 was at the very top of the hospital. There was a police officer seated in front of the door, and Will was equal parts relieved and annoyed. Relived that one of Hecate's henchmen wouldn't be able to come and finish the job, but annoyed that he wouldn't be able to gain access easily.

Doctor Solace smiled. "Good morning, officer."

The officer eyed him warily. "Morning. Why are you here?"

"I'm here to check up on Mr. di Angelo."

The officer squinted and sipped his coffee. "I haven't seen you before."

"I just started working here recently." Will didn't even want to think about the jail time he could face for lying to an officer.

"Why would they let a new doctor operate on the most high profile patient in this hospital?"

"I'm not a new doctor. I've been working with the scapula for years. I recently moved here from the Sun Realm."

The officer still looked suspicious, but he unlocked the door anyway.

"Doctor" Solace smiled politely. "Thank you, sir."

The officer grumbled. "Just do your thing and get out. Fast."
He reminded himself that technically he could be arrested for breaking into Nico's hospital room and he didn't even have the excuse of being immediate family.

Will tried not to scream when he saw Nico lying on the bed. His eyes were closed and he lay perfectly still. His sickly pale skin and thin frame resembled that of a corpse.

Will walked over to him and touched his cold forehead. "Hey babe," he whispered.

Nico didn't answer, and Will had been dumb to expect him to.

Will checked Nico's vitals, and tried to swallow the bitter taste in his mouth. "Are they treating you well over here?"

Will sat down next to the bed and took one of Nico's bony hands in his. "Is your shoulder healing properly?

Will's shoulder sagged. "Can you even hear me? Yes? No? Maybe so?"

Will brushed some hair away from Nico's forehead. "Everyone misses you. I miss you."

"I broke like three laws to come see you."

"Please wake up."

Nico didn't move a muscle.

Will checked for an increased heart rate or any sign that he was affected by Will's presence. Nothing.

He glanced at the clock on the wall and sighed. Five more minutes never hurt anybody.

Will wiped the last of the tears from his eyes and blew his nose before he stood up.

"See you soon, buttercup."

He spared one more long look at Nico before opening the door and stepping outside.

"I think you'll have to come with us."

"Doctor" Solace looked up suddenly to see three police officers standing in front him. He shook his head. "There's been a misunderstanding."

The officer in the middle rolled his eyes and he handcuffed Will's hand behind his back. "Keep telling yourself that."

"You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be held against you."

Will was tempted to say Nico, but this wasn't the time nor the place.

The officers led him to the parking lot where a shiny police car was parked and loaded him into the backseat.

☼

Sitting in a jail cell was something Will never thought he'd do. He'd been a model citizen up until this point. It gave him plenty of time, however, to reflect on his previous life choices and the privacy to cry as many times as he needed to.
Will stared at the gravel in the parking lot as he walked. "Thanks for bailing me out, dad."

Lord Apollo opened the car door and climbed inside. "You're welcome."

Will stared at the vintage dashboard. "I'm really sorry."

"People make mistakes, Will." Apollo chuckled sadly. "Here I was thinking you'd have to bail me out of jail."

"The charges against you are dropped?"

Lord Apollo sighed sadly. "Ethan's dead, so he can't press them. But it's never going to go away."

Will didn't know what to say.

"You looked a lot like me when your mother got sick just now."

Will made a face. "You visited her when she was sick?"

Lord Apollo nodded. "Everyday." He glanced at Will out of the corner of his eyes. "I'm not as heartless as you think I am."

Will stared out the window in favor of replying.

"You and I are pretty alike, Will, whether you want to hear it or not. We fall in love hard. We'd do anything for the people we care about because we're afraid of being lonely."

Will swallowed the bitter taste in his mouth. "I don't want to end up like you."

"Gee thanks."

Will exhaled. "I don't want to have a bunch of one night stands and be middle aged and unmarried."

"Neither do I."

"Do why do you do it?"

"Because I'm lonely."

"Are you and Zeph still together or?"

Lord Apollo's grip on the steering wheel tighten ever so slightly. "It's complicated, but we're working it out."

"Oh. He did put his life on the line to save your kids, just throwing it in there."

"He's a good guy."

"Can you see yourself in a relationship with him?"

"I can see myself with everyone I date. I think they're going to be one and we'll be in love forever every single time. Things don't always work out the way I want them to every single time."

"So you stopped trying to even have relationships And Zeph didn't appreciate being a casual fuck."

"Yeah. He's the first person to ever tell me that he doesn't need me and he'd probably be better off without me and all my issues."
Will was impressed. "You need someone who doesn't constantly stroke your ego." His voice softened. "Do you love him?"

Lord Apollo nodded.

"Does he love you?"

Lord Apollo nodded reluctantly. "It's only a matter of time before everything falls apart though."

"Why do you say that? It's like you want your relationship to fail."

Lord Apollo leaned back against his seat. "After so many failed attempts at love, you give up."

"I'm sure the right person'll come along."

Lord Apollo smiled sadly. "You're still young, Will. You've only experienced the pleasant aspects of love."

"What do you mean?"

Apollo sighed. "Sometimes you let the right person go. Or you cheat on them...Or sometimes they die on you."

Will tried not to think about the guilt he'd feel if Nico died. "You're a lot sadder than you let on."

Lord Apollo parked the car and turned off the engine. "You can hide a lot with a smile."

☼

The borders are opened the next day and everyone was itching to be as far from the Sky as possible. Except Will. He knew Nico's affections weren't a game to be won, but going home without him felt an awful lot like losing.

Nico was being transferred to a hospital in the Underworld, so he could be closer to Hazel and his father if he woke up. If.

Will's pity party at the bar was interrupted by a smooth voice. "You look so much like your father, it's unsettling."

Will snorted and looked Zeph up and down. "I get that a lot."

Zeph's light brown eyes were filled with compassion. "Why are you moping all alone?"

Will sipped his beer and gestured to the seat next to him. "Want to mope with me?"

Zeph shrugged and grabbed a beer from the bar. "Sure. What's the occasion?"

Will laid his head on the bar. "Nico's in a coma like state."

Zeph raised his eyebrows. "That's rough."

Will looked up sadly. "I feel so lonely."

Zeph stroked his back until he stopped sniffling. "Loneliness is a part of life, kiddo."

"How's dad? Did he hear back from Lord Zeus?"
Zeph shook his head. "Things are a mess on Olympus right now. This is my first day off since the attack."

"What's going on?"

"Word of Lord Zeus's affair with Hecate got out and now the tabloids are digging up every ugly family secret they can find. And there's plenty. People are even calling for Lord Zeus to be tried for treason because he slept with the enemy and even aided her."

"Do you think that's true?"

Zeph leaned back. "I could get fired and arrested for saying, but why not? Every rumor has a seed of truth in it."

"You think he purposely sabotaged everyone?"

"Will, let me tell you something. Sometimes men think with their penises, and the consequences are disastrous. This is one of those times."

Will couldn't help but smile.

"He probably didn't think she was going to attack anyone because you never look at someone and think they're going to shoot up a school."

Will nodded. "True."

"If he was bedding her, she probably had access to classified information, security plans, etc. He probably bedded her more than once too because she knew the palace well enough to sneak her heavily armed accomplices in, past security and the built in metal detectors."

"That's crazy."

Zeph chuckled. "If I learned anything in this line of work, it's avoid politics."

"Cheers to that."

Will had always loved routine. It reduced the amount of things that could go wrong and optimized his productivity. But lately doing the same thing everyday started to feel dull. Wake up, infirmary, eat, archery, sleep, repeat.

It had been three weeks after the attack when Will got a call. "WILL GUESS WHAT?"

Will clutched the phone. "Hazel?"

"IT'S NICO."

"He's okay?"

"He woke up in the middle of the night."

Will sobbed tears of relief.

"He's been asking about you."
Will wiped his eyes. "Really?"

"Mmmhm. He wanted to know if you were hurt. We told him you were fine."

Will's heart was threatening to explode. "Can I come see him?"

"The police didn't even want to let dad and I in. They've been questioning him from dusk till dawn, but I don't think he's going to serve any jail time."

"Is he going to be able to go home soon?"

"The Doctors said two weeks. You should come see him when he gets out."

"Definitely."

☼

Easier said than done. Will's siblings had all but refused to let him out of their sight, much less on a plane to the Underworld, and Lord Apollo had given him a look that said I told you so.

Nico had been home for less than a day and the atmosphere at the palace had changed drastically. It no longer seemed so empty and cold. He was staying in his old bedroom so he could be close to Hazel while remaining independent, much to Lord Hades's chagrin.

Will felt like an intruder, as he stood in the doorway, looking at where Nico was laying on his bed, propped up on about fifteen pillows and giggling at something Hazel had said.

It's now or never. Will cleared his throat. "Hi."

Nico looked over at him, startled. "Hey."

Hazel smiled at him. "Come on in, Will. I'll give you two some privacy."

Will spoke up when Hazel left. "You uh did really good...with your sword."

"Thanks. You too."

Will snorted. "I didn't do anything."

"You tried to heal me...I remember that much."

"Keyword: tried." Will dropped into the seat next to the bed. "You gave us quite the scare when you collapsed."

"I'm just happy I didn't die."

"I'm happy you didn't die too." Will couldn't meet Nico's eyes. "I'm sorry...for everything...you were just trying to help and I was acting like a pissbaby."

Nico giggled at word pissbaby, despite the seriousness of the moment. "I'm sorry too."

Will felt lighter after apologizing, but there was still something nagging him. "How'd you know?"

"About Hecate?"

Will nodded. "How'd you know she was planning to attack?"
"I heard things in the Underworld and I did some investigating of my own. It took a while for me to track her troops down and even longer to infiltrate them."

Will didn't even bother trying to disguise the awe in his voice. "You're like a double agent."

Nico snorted.

"I guess you were right about Ethan after all."

Nico smiled sadly. "I learned to trust my instincts... I didn't want to kill him, but I had to."

"Yeah. You did the right thing."

Nico nodded. "I hope so..."

"I went to his funeral."

"You would."

Will pouted. "What's that supposed to mean?"

Nico tilted his head. "You're a good person, through and through. Your sense of righteousness always wins out."

Will blushed and started at the black curtains until the silence was unbearable. "Were you the one who shot Hecate?"

Nico sighed. "Yeah. She was going to bomb the entire palace."

"Oh my god." Will's eyes went wide. "How?"

"The bomb was planted right in the living room. The button to set it off was in Ethan's jacket. He was supposed to press it as soon as her troops got out."

Will shook his head. "That's something else. It makes me feel a lot less guilty about the fact that she was executed last week."

Nico nodded. "Hazel told me."

"It was for the best, I think."

Nico looked surprised. "I'd never thought you'd say killing someone was for the best."

"I'm a lot more complex than you think, buttercup."

Nico covered his smile with a yawn. "Again with the stupid nicknames."

Will couldn't help but feel enamored just looking at Nico. Gods, he had it bad. "I missed you."

Nico raised an eyebrow. "Really?"

"Yes." Will wiped his clammy hands on his pants and stood next to the bed. "I-I like you, Nico. As more than a friend. I just...it's so hard to say this right. I guess I just can't see myself without you. I want to be with you."

Will tries not to panic when he doesn't hear a reply. When he looks up there's a bony hand on his chest and Nico's on his tiptoes. Will drops the roll of gauze in his hands in favor of wrapping his
arms around Nico's waist and pulling him close.

The kiss is chaste and makes Will tingle down to his toes. Nico's lips are warm and inviting and everything Will could ever hope for. He can't help but smile against Nico's lips.

"You're cold," is the first thing Will says when they break for air.

Nico laughed against Will lips. "Guess you'll have to warm me up."

☼

Will paced outside the large oak door and straightened his already crisp dress shirt for the millionth time.

Mintha opened the door with a smile. "Lord Hades will see you now."

Will bowed and took his seat in front of the thrones. "Hello, Lord Hades and Lady Persephone."

Lady Persephone smiled. "How are you?"

"I'm doing well. And yourself?"

"I'm fine, thanks for asking, unlike some one." She looked pointedly at her husband.

Lord Hades ignored her jab and cleared his throat. "What brings you to the Underworld?"

Will gulped. "I'm asking for your permission to court Nico, since our engagement was done away with."

Lord Hades eyed him warily. "The terms of your engagement have been changed, but it still stands for the most part."

"Oh."

"Can I ask you some questions, William?"

Will gulped. "Of course, sir."

"What are your intentions with my son?"

Love and affection? Maybe a little sex? Or a lot of sex, depending on if Nico wore those skinny jeans again. "To court him."

"Do you see marriage in your immediate future?"

Not exactly. "Possibly."

"You don't sound very sure."

"Nico and I are still young. We have plenty of time ahead of us before marriage."

"Nico has some time, but you not so much."

Was that supposed to be an insult? "What do you mean?"

Lord Hades shook his head and waved dismissively. "Nothing, nothing." Lord Hades looked Will in the eye. "I love my son dearly, Will, and I'm giving you my permission. Don't make me regret it."
Will nodded vigorously "Thank you, your highness. I won't."

Lord Hades nodded. "Very well. You're dismissed."

Will stood and bowed politely before fucking sprinting out of the room.

Will's watched enough Romance movies to last a lifetime; he should be able to plan a nice date with ease. His dad was Apollo for fucks sake, big romantic gestures were in his genes.

Nico looked gorgeous in his black V-neck and trademark dark jeans, with a black and white flannel shirt tied around his waist as he sat in the passengers seat. "Where are we going?"

Will smiled and shrugged. "You'll find out when we get there."

"Why do you keep doing that?"

"It adds an element of mystery."

"Fuck you and your mystery."

Will slapped his hand. "Stop touching my radio!"

Nico glared at him."This station is garbage."

"You're face is garbage."

Nico snorted. "That's not what you were saying last night."

Will's cheeks burned. "Shut up!"

They pulled into the bowling alley parking lot about twelve minutes later, and Nico could barely contain his excitement. "You're taking me bowling?"

"Yep." The competitive gleam in Will's eyes was dangerous. "Get ready to lose."

Nico's smirk was borderline predatory. "In your dreams, Solace."

Will blew a kiss. "Every night, baby."

"Ew!"

They rented ugly bowling shoes and a lane at the front desk. After gorging themselves on pizza, greasy French fries, and bubbly soda, they attempted to bowl.

Will went first and nearly dropped a ten pound bowling ball on his foot, much to Nico's amusement. He knocked down nine out of the ten pins. "Beat that!"

"Gladly." Nico smiled as he reached for a and stood in front of the lane. The view of his ass in those skinny jeans was heavenly and Will may or may not have snapped a quick photo on his phone for masturbation purposes.

While Will was ogling his ass, Nico scored a perfect strike. The little shit had the nerve to wink at Will."Your turn."

The night progressed with Nico bowling strike after strike and Will trying desperately to catch up.
After the third game, Will surrendered. "You're like freakishly good at this."

Nico's eyes softened. "Bianca and I used to stay at the Lotus Casino a lot when dad was on business because Persephone didn't want us in the palace, and they had this huge bowling alley and arcade."

Will couldn't think of an answer worthy of what Nico had just shared with him so he pulled Nico close and pressed kisses to his forehead, eyelids, nose and finally his mouth. Kissing in the middle of a bowling alley was something Will would definitely recommend, especially when the old couple next to you looks scandalized.

The ride home was quiet.

Nico saw blue eyes glancing at him in the rear view mirror for the hundredth time. "Do I have something on my face? You've been staring at me all night."

Will's cheeks burned. "Sorry! I just can't believe you're here...with me."

"You're such a sap!"

Will looked at him, and the adoration Nico saw in his eyes made his heart soar. "I mean it! I was really really really close to losing you."

Nico's blush extended from the tips of his ears to his chest. "There's no where I'd rather be than with you."

"And you call me a sap!"

Chapter End Notes

Finally!
I missed writing this.

Will and Nico were twenty minutes late to breakfast. “It’s not what it looks like.”

Lady Demeter clicked her tongue and shook her head. "Young people these days."

Will scanned the table. “Dad? What are you doing here?”

Lord Apollo sipped his coffee. “Morning, son.”

Lord Hades turned to Lord Apollo. "Did you tell him?"

Lord Apollo shook his head. "He was rather busy last night."

Will cringed. *Leave it up to Apollo to tell everybody his business. “Tell me what?”*

“Do you want to do it or should I?”

“You can do whatever you want.”

Will was horrified. “Ew, dad!”

The corners of Lord Hades’s mouth curved upwards. “We can discuss that later.”

It was Nico's turn to be shocked. “Dad?” *Maybe the apple didn’t fall so far from the tree after all.*

Lord Hades chuckled at Demeter’s expression. “Back to the original topic. William, you're father has something he wants to discuss with you.” Lord Hades looked pointedly at his son. "Nico, you should go for a walk or something."

Nico nodded and grabbed his plate. "I'll just be...upstairs."

Will squeezed his hand and whispered. “Please don’t leave me with them."

“Ciao, bello.” Nico winked and disappeared.

Will sat down awkwardly. "So um what did you have to tell me?"

Lord Apollo straightened up in his seat. "You know how father and Lady Hera were deciding whether or not to strip me of my royal status? Well, I’ve decided to abdicate my authority, but that leads to the question of who will take over the Sun Realm in my absence."

Will didn't like where this was going. "Yeah."

"Well, they’ve decided it's best to keep the Sun Realm in this bloodline and named you my successor."
"What do you mean?"

"You’re the new ruler of the Sun Realm, Will."

Will blinked owlishly. "What?"

"You're my heir, Will. It was only a matter of time."

Will shook his head. "I’m sorry, but I can’t."

"Why?

"I'm not ready. I-I don't know how to be a ruler,"

Apollo touched Will’s shoulder. “You’re gonna do great, kiddo. You’ve just got to believe in yourself. Besides, you don’t really have a choice.”

“Thanks, dad.” Will looked at his father, really looked at him for a minute. “Are you okay?”

Apollo smiled, but it didn’t reach his eyes. “Why wouldn’t I be?”

“I don't know…” Will shifted and lowered his voice. “You got dethroned and now your own son is replacing you.”

“You’re not a replacement for me, Will. You’ve got to do your own thing. You can’t live your entire life trying to be like your parents.”

“That means a lot.” Will scratched the hardwood of the breakfast table with his nails. “What are you going to do now that you don’t have to rule?”

Apollo rolled his shoulders back. “Well, technically I’m going to have to be your royal advisor because you’re underage, but Zeph and I were thinking about getting married.”

Will’s eyes nearly fell out of his head. “What?”

Apollo shrugged. “Not too soon, but definitely in the future.” He smiled knowingly. “You might have to start looking into a wedding soon too.”

☼

Will found Nico sitting on the Palace roof with his legs dangling off the edge. “How’d it go, hot shot?”

Will’s eyes were wide. “T-they want me to be k-king.” Will squinted when Nico didn’t react. "You knew about this?!"

Nico yawned and nodded. "Father told me yesterday."

"And you never thought to tell me?"

Nico shrugged. "That would’ve ruined the surprise."

“Fuck the surprise! You should’ve told me.”

“Sorry.” Will paced back and forth. “Are you okay?”

Will was running a hand through his messy golden strands. ‘I’m going to be king...I’m going to be
“Calm down.”

“What do you mean, calm down?!”

Nico placed his arms on Will’s shoulders and squeezed. “You’re going to be great.”

Will shook his head and didn’t meet Nico’s gaze. “Nico, I’m not like you. I’m not a leader or a fighter.”

“You don’t have to be a fighter, Will. You’re compassionate and kind and you genuinely care about people. You think just because someone is good at stabbing people, they’ll be a better ruler than you?”

“No...”

“Exactly.”

Will pulled him into a deep kiss. “Thank you...for everything. I don’t know where I’d be without you.”

“Probably bald.” Nico chuckled into the crook of Will’s neck.

“Hey! You and your constant need to pull my hair is the reason for that.”

Nico pressed a chaste kiss to Will’s lips. “Deal with it.”

☼

Nico pursed his lips. “Excuse me, that dress is a little short, missy.”

Hazel laughed as she combed her bouncy curls. “Frank said he liked it.”

There was a knock on the dressing room door. “His Majesty asked for you.”

Hazel’s gold eyes glinted. “Try not to mess up your clothes before the ceremony. Demeter’ll kill you if you show up all wrinkly and stained.”

“Hazel!”

Hazel batted her eyelashes innocently. “I’m just giving you some sisterly advice.”

Nico finished putting on his watch and shoved his hands in his pockets. “I’m gonna go see what he wants. Try not to injure yourself before I get back.”

“Yes, Ms. Solace.” Hazel cackled. “Try not to come back pregnant.”

Nico stuck out his tongue. “No promises!”

Will’s room was two floor above theirs and the door unlocked. Nico stuck his head in. “Will?”

Will was being attending by four servant girls, each fussing over a different part of his suit. “Nico? Come in.”

“Why’d you call for me?”
Will thanked the servant girls and attempted to politely dismiss them. He turned to face Nico. “How do I look? Tell me the truth.”

Nico leaned against the doorframe, smiling like the smug bastard he was. "You look hot."

“Really?” Will glanced at himself in the full length mirror on the wall. “I’m so scared.”

“What?”

“It’s going to be real. I’m going to be king and I’m going to have to be responsible for an entire realm and people are going to depend on me to make decisions that affect millions of people and I’m,”

Nico shut him up with a kiss. “Stop. You’re going to be amazing. Now hush.”

Will kissed him back and Nico ran his fingers through Will’s silky blond tresses.

“You’re going to mess up my hair,” muttered Will when they broke apart.

Nico flashed him a sorry, not sorry smile. “You know you love it.”

Will huffed a laugh against Nico’s lips before pulling away.

“Ready, tiger?”

Will groaned. “Ready as I’ll ever be. Can’t we just stay here and make out instead?”

“As much as I’d love that, you have a coronation to attend.” Nico grabbed Will’s hand and squeezed.

“Better?”

Will smiled at him. "Much."

☼

The coronation ceremony was extravagant.

The Palace Hall had been completely decked out. The magnificent windows were thrown open to let in as much light as possible, and the cream colored walls were adorned with Sun emblems and Sunflowers, courtesy of Lady Demeter. A large feast was being prepared in the Banquet Hall, which could hold thousands, in Will’s honor. The thought made his head spin.

The Twelve Olympians and their respective spouses sat in the first row, trying their hardest not to argue. The princes and princesses sat in the chairs behind their parents in front of a slew of reporters, each trying to get the perfect shot. The thought of his every move being photographed would have made Will cringe if he hadn’t spotted his mother sitting a few pews away from them. She beamed at him, and Will returned the smile easily. If anyone deserved the luxuries of being the mother of the king, it was her. Will had promised he’d take care of her when he was seven years old, and now he actually could.

Will wiped his sweaty palms on the hem of his golden robe and paced the room for the millionth time.

Lord Apollo stuck his head in the doorway. “Ready, kiddo?”

“I feel like I’m going to throw up.”
Apollo pressed a kiss to Will’s forehead and squeezed his shoulder. “You’re gonna do great, Will. You’re probably the only ruler I know who isn’t looking forward to his own coronation. Besides, I’m sure Nico’ll have a very special gift for you afterwards.”

Will swallowed thickly and nodded. “Let’s just get this over with.”

“William Solace, heir of the royal line of Apollo, we hereby declare you the King and Highest Ruler of the Sun Realm on this Eleventh Day of October.”

Will smiled graciously as Apollo placed the heavy crown on his head and beamed proudly at his son.

“Would you like to say a few words, Your Highness?”

It took Will a few minutes to realize the Oracle was talking to him. “Um...sure.” He turned so his body was facing the audience, rather than the altar. “Thank you all for believing in me and trusting me with this responsibility. You won’t be disappointed.”

The room erupted in applause, except for Lady Hera, and Will thought maybe, just maybe he might not be so bad at this King thing after all.

☼

There was nothing the Olympians loved more than a party.

The Palace Gardens were also completely decked out. Music blasted from speakers no one could see and twinkling lights were strung along the branches of every potted plant.

Will couldn't help but feel a burst of pride because it was all for him. He was standing near the fountain of Apollo and gazing at his reflection in the azul blue water when someone slung an arm around his waist. “Hola, Your Majesty,” slurred Percy.

“Hey, Percy.”

Percy swayed to the music. “Want to dance with me?”

“Why aren’t you dancing with Annabeth?”

“Because lesbianism.”

“That doesn’t make any sense.”

Percy shrugged and continued to sway, his movements getting more unbalanced by the minute. “Neither does life.”

Will’s resolve cracked. “I’ll dance with you.” Percy beamed and stepped closer to Will, wrapping his arms around Will’s neck.

Halfway into the song, Percy giggled and rested his head on Will’s shoulder, which was a little awkward because they were the same height. “You’re a good dancer. No wonder Nico likes you so much.”

Will smiled into Percy’s hair, inhaling his beachy scent. “You’re not that bad yourself.”

Percy pulled away after the song ended. “’M tired.”

“Come, let’s find Jason.”
Percy’s eyes lit up. “I like Jason.”

Jason wasn’t that hard to track down given that he was six feet tall and as uncoordinated as a baby giraffe when he danced. Percy and Jason immediately embraced each other when Will and Percy got close enough for them to.

“I missed you, bro.”

“I missed you more, bro.

“I’m just gonna...go.” Percy and Jason didn’t even notice Will leave.

There was one other person who might know where Nico was, but she absolutely terrified Will. “Reyna?”

Reyna detached her lips from Piper’s neck. “Hmmn?”

“Have you seen, Nico?” Reyna shook her head and went back to Piper’s hickey.

After wandering around and chatting with old friends, Will spotted a dark haired prince swaying to the music by himself and wrapped his arms around Nico from behind. "Can I have this dance?"

Nico shook his head and laughed. "I don't dance in public, Your majesty."

Will pouted and batted his eyelashes. "But I'm the king!"

Nico set down his glass of wine. "Fine! But if you step on my foot, I'm done."

The first song was slow.

Will groaned and stumbled. “Stop trying to lead, damnit.”

Nico laughed. “You’re just jealous of my skills.”

A song or two later, Will lowered the hands on Nico's waist and groped his ass.

Nico raised an eyebrow. “Excuse me Your Majesty.”

Will squeezed Nico’s ass harder and grinned wickedly. “A king does as he pleases.”

“I'll let you do as you please with me.” Nico leaned up and captured Will’s lips in a playful kiss. He ran his hands down Will’s chest, his fingers trailing dangerously close to Will’s crotch. Will arched into the touch and Nico laughed. "A king shouldn't be acting indecently in public."

“Fuck off.”

Nico flashed him a mischievous smile. "What do you say we ditch this party and I show you what a real after party looks like.”

"Ditching my party to have sex is highly inappropriate." Will giggled. "Let's do it."

☼

They barely made it to Will’s room before Nico slammed him against the door and attacked his lips. Will had kissed a couple people here and there, but none of them compared to Nico. His kisses were just like his personality - powerful, rough, and kind of sweet. He bit Will’s lower lip and his tongue
explored Will's mouth like he owned it, but he cupped Will's cheeks with his palm and rubbed their noses together when they broke apart.

Will pulled away to press kisses to Nico's jaw and down the column of his neck, earning him a giggle. "That tickles."

Will rolled his eyes and blew a raspberry into the crook of Nico's neck. "You're so immature."

Nico snorted and pulled Will in for a bruising kiss by the collar of his shirt. He buried his hands in Will's hair and pulled whenever Will did that thing he liked with his tongue. Will arms wound themselves around Nico's waist as Will explored the strip of pale skin exposed by Nico's shirt.

Nico moaned softly at the contact and the sound went straight to Will's groin. His fingers found the flesh of Nico's butt and alternated between kneading and pinching. "Mhmm."

Nico was mewling and pulling Will's hair painfully hard at this point, and if Will hadn't been turned on before he sure as hell was now.

“Can I blow you?” Will barely registered the question until Nico sunk to his knees and Oh.

Will’s voice was unsteady. “Nico?”

Nico looked up at him with those big brown eyes as he unzipped Will's pants. “Yes, Your Majesty?”

Will swallowed thickly. “You don’t have to.”

“I know that.” Nico blew hot breath on Will’s clothed erection. “Do you want me to?”

“Yes.” Gods, yes he wanted Nico to touch him.

Nico ran his fingers over the waistband of Will’s boxers and murmured lowly. “I didn’t quite catch that.”

“I said yes!”

Nico laughed and pulled Will’s boxers down in one swift motion. Will's erection sprung free and almost hit Nico on the cheek. Will was mortified, but Nico just chuckled. “Eager are we?” He licked a slow stripe from the base of Will’s cock to his tip and pressed the tip of his tongue to Will's slit before pulling off.

Above him, Will groaned. “Stop teasing.”

Nico slowly licked the underside of Will’s cock and hummed. His eyes twinkled with mirth.

“Better?”

Will swore in lieu of a response, his eyes pleading. “Please, Nico?”

Instead of replying, Nico bent his head and took Will's entire dick into his mouth. Will tried not to come on the spot as he experienced the warm wet heaven that was Nico’s mouth. His hands clawed in Nico’s hair and gripped the silky black strands for dear life. “Fuckkk.”

There was nothing in Nico’s eyes except mirth as he took in Will’s wrecked appearance, his pace never slowing as he bobbed his head up and down Will's shaft achingly slowly. He pulled off Will to catch his breath and busied himself by kitten-licking Will's balls. He scraped his teeth along one of Will’s sacs then the other and soothed it which another lick of his sinful tongue.
Nico deepthrooted Will for the third time when Will felt his balls draw up and his breath catch in his throat. “I’m gonna,” gasped Will.

Nico hummed around his cock in response, and that was all it took to send Will over the edge. His entire body convulsed with pleasure as his orgasm hit him full force. His eyes nearly rolled back into his head and and he saw nothing but white for thirty seconds.

Nico swallowed Will’s cum without a moment of hesitation and licked his lips. “You taste good.”

Will slid down the door and slumped next to Nico wordlessly.

“Good?” Will turned his head to look at Nico. At first he thought Nico was being cocky, but then he saw the earnest look in Nico’s brown eyes.

Will smiled. “That was the best blow job ever.” He glanced at the tent in Nico’s pants. “Do you want me to...?”

Nico blushed, and Will couldn’t believe his eyes. Was this the same Nico that had just sucked his dick not a minute ago?

“Actually I was wondering if,” Nico looked up shyly. “If you could fuck me.”

Will choked on his saliva. “What?”

Nico’s blush spread down his neck and chest. “You don’t have to.”

“I’d love to...just give me a minute to get it up again.”

☼

Nico knew he shouldn't feel this shy. It was just Will. He knew Will wouldn’t judge him for having scars and being a bit on the thinner side, but still. He was naked, as in no clothes. Nude. Commando. Bare.

He ran his finger over the cap of the bottle of lube and didn’t meet Will’s eyes. “Should I prep myself or?”

Will took the bottle of lube from him and shook his head. “You just lay down and look pretty.”

Nico rolled his eyes and blushed, but did as he was told.

Will took a minute to admire how gorgeous Nico looked with his thighs spread and his dark hair framing his face like a halo. “You’re so beautiful.”

"Shut up!” Nico raised an eyebrow. "Are you gonna stand there all night or are you going to something?"

Will smirked. “I’m going to make you cum so hard you’ll think you died and went to heaven.” He peppered Nico’s face with kisses, then traveled down his neck and chest. He tweaked one of Nico’s nipples and bit the other until Nico’s back was arching off the bed in the most lewd manner. His lips traveled all the way down to Nico’s belly button. He pressed kisses to Nico’s bony hip bones and pointedly ignored his erection. Instead, he kneeled between Nico’s spread legs and kissed him playfully. Will teased Nico’s inner thigh with his thumb and smirked when Nico whined against his lips.

Nico tensed when Will pressed a finger to his entrance. Will kissed his temple. “I’ll be gentle.”
Nico didn’t reply, but his smile was grateful.

“Try to relax for me.”

Nico nodded and closed his eyes, focusing on relaxing his lower body as Will coated his rim and Will’s fingers with cold lube. “I don’t think you need that much lube, Will.”

“I’m just making sure I don’t hurt you.” Will inserted three fingers this time, and curled them.

“Besides, wet’s a good look on you.”

“Shit.” Nico’s cock twitched and his breath hitched as Will fingered him faster and faster, his walls clenching down on Will’s fingers. He spread his legs wider, giving Will more access to him.

Will hummed. “You like that?”


Will chuckled and rubbed Nico’s prostate. “You want me to make you come, princess?”

Nico threw his head back as Will’s fingers assaulted his prostate. “Y-yes!” His thighs were trembling. “Will.”

“Alright, alright.” Will slowly extracted his fingers from Nico’s hole, but not without tickling his rim first. He leaned over Nico’s body and grabbed a condom from the nightstand. He tore the gold packet open with his teeth, winked, and then rolled it on in one fluid motion. He lubed his cock and stroked it twice, his eyes never straying from Nico’s face. “Ready, princess?”

Nico nodded eagerly to hide his hesitation. Will was big, there was no other way to put it and Nico almost knew for a fact he wouldn’t be able to take it all.

Will draped his body over Nico again, resting on his elbows, and the head of his cock brushed Nico’s entrance. Nico shivered.

“I’m gonna push in, okay?” Will blue eyes searched Nico’s face for any reluctance.

Nico pinched Will’s butt. “Just do it already.”

“Patience grasshopper.” The head of Will’s cock penetrated Nico’s hole, and Will took a deep breath to keep from coming on the spot. “How d-do you feel?”

Nico scrunched up his nose. “You’re really thick.”

“That’s just the head.” Will smirked, and then his expression softened. “Are you sure you want me to go in the rest of the way?”

Nico couldn’t help himself. He leaned upwards and captured Will’s lips in a kiss. He nodded when they broke apart.

Will flashed him a goofy smile, and inch by delicious inch he slid in until. Now he really had to focus on not coming because Nico was wet and so tight, dear gods.

It took Nico a couple minutes to get used to having something in there. At first he felt like he was being split in two because Will’s base was stretching his rim beyond repair, but after a few minutes the pain subsided. He shifted slightly. “You can move now.”

Will rolled his hips softly and moaned. He pulled out gently and slid back in. "I-is this okay?"
Underneath him, Nico shivered. “Harder.”

Will pulled out almost all the way and slammed back into Nico. “Like that?”

Nico swallowed hard and nodded. “Fuck me like you mean it.”

Will brushed his bangs back as he pulled out again and he was determined to give Nico the best orgasm of his life. Will pistoned his hips in and out of Nico so fast you could hear the sound of flesh slapping flesh for miles. Nico writhed under him and was reciting what sounded like an Italian prayer with a couple of *fucks* and *Wills* thrown in.

Nico cock was leaking all over the sheets and Will could tell by his belly twitches that he was close. Nico reached between their bodies to stroke his cock and Will slapped his hand. "If you want to come, ask for it."

“Can I come?” Nico let out a whine. “Please let me come, Will. Please.”

Will reached between them and stroked Nico cock, his cock still mercilessly pounding Nico’s prostate. After two strokes, Nico screamed and his entire body trembled from the force of his orgasm. His pupils were blown wide and cum painted Will’s hand white. His walls clenched down on Will’s cock and after one thrust Will was spilling inside him.

Nico gasped as he came down from his orgasm, Will right behind him. They cuddled silently in the afterglow because *holy shit, that just happened*, sneaking glances at each other every now and then.

“I should probably pull out now, babe.” Will could barely recognize his own voice it was so deep.

Nico nodded and tried not to feel empty as Will’s cock slid out of him.

Will disposed of the condom and cleaned them up. “That was so...amazing.” He pressed a kiss to Nico’s nose. “You’re amazing.”

Nico closed the space between their lips and hummed. “You’re more amazing.”

“You’re the amazingest.”

Nico snorted. “Amazingest isn’t a word, loser.”

“Not yet. They’ll have to add it to the dictionary after talking to you.”

Nico blushed. “Shut up.”
Confess your love for me

Chapter Notes

Guess who's not dead? I'd say me but honestly school is crushing my soul.

Anyway, I hope 2016 has been good to you guys so far and I'm sorry (not really) for not updating this story for 3.5 months. I had pretty bad writer's block with this story for sooo long.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Hi.”

Nico giggles. He can’t help it. “Hey.”

“Are we seriously watching the Golden Girls?”

“Shh.”

Will checked his phone notifications and groaned. “I have to go.”

Nico’s dark eyes were fixed on the screen. “Go where?”

“Some official meeting.”

“Boo-ring. Stay with me.” Nico looks adorable cuddled up in the fluffy white duvet.

Will felt more conflicted than he had in his entire life. “This could be really important, babe.”

Nico pouted. “I’ll make you chocolate chip pancakes.”

“They’re going to kill me if I blow off my very first meeting as king.”

Nico whispered in Will’s ear. “I’ll blow you if you blow off the meeting.”

“That’s unfair and you know it.”

Nico pressed sloppy kisses to the side of Will’s neck and his jaw.

Will held his ground. He resisted Nico’s temptation for a solid minute before his back arched and he tossed his phone across the room.

Nico smiled into the crook of Will’s neck. “I always get my way, Will. I figured you’d catch on by now.”

Nico’s smug smirk evaporated as Will rolled them over and he was pinned to the bed under Will.

“I think you’re forgetting who’s in charge here.”

Nico glared up a Will defiantly. “What makes you think that you're in charge?”
“I mean I am the king.”

Nico trailed his fingers up Will’s chest and smiled when a blush crept up his neck and chest. He pressed kisses to Will’s jawline. “So?”

“So you have to obey me.”

Nico rolled his eyes. Will was pathetic really. He didn't seem to realize just how easy he was to bend under Nico’s will. “Make me.”

Will looked at Nico for a minute, his pupils blown wide.

Nico smirked and kissed Will roughly, reminding him exactly who belonged to who. Nico tangled a hand in Will’s bed head, pulling roughly at the golden strands. Will melted under nico’s touch and then his fucking phone rang.

They ignored the shrill ringing until Nico couldn’t take it anymore. He shoved Will’s chest. “Turn that shit off and then get back here.”

Will pouted as he untangled himself from Nico’s cuddly limbs and nearly fell over in an attempt to stand. “My ass feels like its going to fall off.”

Nico smirked. “Good. Now tell whoever’s calling you they can go straight to hell.”

It took Will nearly five minutes to find his phone in the pile of clothes he’d carelessly thrown on the flooring the heat of the previous night. He groaned. “It's my dad. He's probably pissed at me for ditching yesterday.”

Nico snorted. “Will's about to yelled at by his daddy.”

Will flipped him off as he dialed Apollo’s number.

“Will is that you?” Apollo's voice was muffled, like he was intentionally trying to be quiet for once in his life.

“Yeah, dad, it's me. Why'd you call?”

“The meeting Will! You have to be here now”

“I have a really bad headache.”

“That's too bad. Kings don't get days off, Will.”

Will dragged a hand down his face and rubbed his eyes tiredly. “Fine! I'll be there in fifteen. Please don't kill me.”

Apollo didn't sound angry anymore, and Will was relieved. “No promises. Hurry up.”

Nico didn't look annoyed when Will shot him an apologetic smile before dashing into the shower, which Will considered a success.

☼

The members of the Royal Cabinet only looked a little peeved when Will arrived, looking substantially less hungover than he felt.
It's nice of you to join us, sire.

Will smiled. “I'm happy to be here.”

A woman in a pinstripe suit cleared her throat. “If you're finished exchanging pleasantries, I'd like to get down to business. Now Your Highness, I'm aware than you have been in office for less than twenty four hours so you may be feeling quite overwhelmed by this whole process. We're here to guide you as much as you'll allow us to and serve as middlemen between the citizens and yourself.”

Will nodded. “I appreciate it.”

Pin stripes suit smiled, only for a second. “Thank you, sire. I'm sure you're wondering why we've gathered here, and the answer is because according to ancient customs, you need a co-ruler.”

Will furrowed his brow. “But dad didn't have a co-ruler.”

A small bald man spoke up. “It's best that you don't follow in your father's example, sire, if you intend to gain favorability with the people especially in times like this. The people want stability and security after the attacks.”

“So you're saying, having more than one ruler looks better in the public eye? Would one of my siblings rule with me?”

“That's not quite it, sire. We're saying you need to get married, preferably soon.”

Will choked on his own saliva. “I'm only 17!”

The Cabinet wasn't impressed.

Pin Striped Suit sighed. “That's not too young to wed, William. The people want a leader who is responsible, and a married leader looks much more responsible and family oriented than a seventeen year old party boy who spends tax money on cocaine.”

“I would never do something like that!”

“That's the same thing your father said. We're asking you to do this because it's what's best for you in the long term if you don't wish to be forced to resign like your daddy dearest.”

Will took a deep breath. He and Apollo hasn't seen eye to eye on many occasions, but he thought Apollo was receiving a lot more shit than he deserved.

Pin Striped Suit clicked her pen and scribbled something down. “So what do you say, William? This is entirely up to you.”

Will was dumbfounded. Yes, he loved Nico and he could see himself settling down with Nico a few years into the future, but right now seemed suddenly, too sudden. Was Nico even the settling down type? Will honestly didn't know how he'd react if Will proposed period, much less so soon. “Do I need to get married so soon?”

Pin Striped Suit looked at Will like he was stupid. “Yes. Following traditional customs will do you a world of good. Have you not seen the mess your father made trying to do his own thing?”

Will swallowed. She was acting as if this was as easy as agreeing to go get ice cream after school.

“You were engaged to Nico di Angelo for a period before the scandal emerged and all that craziness ensued. Correct?”
Will nodded.

“Are you still on speaking terms with Prince Nico?”

Will wanted to snort. Just a few hours ago, Nico di Angelo was having a very intimate conversation with Will’s dick. “You could say that…”

Pin Striped Suit seemed pleased. “Excellent. Then it is decided, you will propose to Prince di Angelo, preferably sometime in the next two days. We will begin making arrangements for the wedding immediately. This meeting is adjourned.”

The Cabinet filed out of the room, leaving Will alone with his thoughts. There was so much that could go wrong. Nico could say no, scratch that Nico would probably say no.

Will decided he needed help, a lot of it.

☼

Hazel was bouncing in delight when he told her.

She squeezed Will’s arm and beamed up him. “This is so perfect!” Her golden eyes glowed. “How are you going to propose?”

Will fanned himself with a napkin, because good gods it was hot. “I have absolutely no idea. I know nothing about proposals.”

Hazel didn't seemed deterred. “That's not an issue. Just go with something simple and traditional, Nico’ll love it. I mean he'll love it anyway because he loves you, but still…”

Will chewed his scone thoughtfully. “I'm definitely not going to do anything extravagant or public because Nico would hate it. I want it to be sweet, you know? Like I want it to feel like we're getting married early because we're two crazy teenagers in love and not because we're Royal and we have to.”

Hazel nodded enthusiastically. “Nico's going to be happy no matter what you do.”

Will took a sip of his iced tea miserably. “Do you think he'd say no?”

Hazel laughed. “Stop being such a worrywart. Nico's a diva, I won't deny it, but he'd never refuse to marry you Will. You don't seem to see it, Nico'd be willing to go to hell and back if you asked.”

Will blushed until he matched the color of the roses on her sundress. “I really hope so.”

Hazel shook her head fondly, sending her chocolatey curls flying. “The two of you are too cute I swear.”

☼

Nico didn’t know what was going on - okay he sort of did. Everyone was being weird. The entire palace was buzzing with nervous energy.

By the mid afternoon, Nico had had enough. The kitchen staff erupted into giggles the minute he walked in and even his father was giving him weird looks. To make it worse, he hadn’t seen Will all day.

It wasn’t until he went downstairs for dinner after sparring like mad with Percy and Jason, that his
blonde bundle of joy came into view.

The entire dining room was decorated with scented candles, flowers, and rose petals. Will sat at one of two prepared seats in the middle of the large glass table.

“Where is everyone?”

Will flushed. “I kicked them out so we could have a date.”

Nico raised an eyebrow as he took the seat across from Will. “That’s...interesting. You never told me what happened at the meeting earlier.”

Will flushed again. “I’ll fill you in later, let’s just enjoy dinner for now.”

Nico was officially really fucking confused. Even Will, who couldn’t lie if his life depended on it and was probably the biggest gossip in all of the realms, was acting all strange and secretive. He cut a piece of his steak and chewed, trying to avoid Will’s pointed gaze. “Is everything ok?”

Will answered immediately. “Why wouldn’t it be?”

“You just seem a little on edge.”

Will sighed deeply. “I might as well spit it out, right?”

Nico nodded.

Will studied the flowers in the vase on the table carefully. “So uh at the meeting I went to yesterday, they talked about how single rulers appear a lot less trustworthy than rulers in stable relationships and after my father’s unstable reign the people probably won’t trust me,”

“Slow down, Will!” Nico found Will’s rambling endearing, but not when he desperately needed to know what was going on.

“Sorry.” Will looked down at his empty plate. “So basically they want me to get married.”

Nico felt his stomach drop. This wasn’t fucking fair. “What?”

Will nodded. “And there’s no one I’d rather spend the rest of my life with than you.” He stood up and walked around the table until he was standing in front of Nico, then got on one knee. “Nico di Angelo, prince of the Underworld, will you marry me?”

Nico was shocked. He sat there gaping at Will for two minutes.

Will was trying not to panic. “You don’t have to say yes, like I’d completely understanding that you don’t want to get married so soon or you feel like you’re too young or you’re not that serious about me…”

Nico rose to his feet slowly before nodding shakily. “I-I’d love to marry you.”

Will slipped a thin gold ring around Nico’s finger, and enveloped him in a hug. “I love you so much.”

Nico buried his face in Will’s shoulder and inhaled the smell of his cologne. “I love you too.”

Will pulled back so he could stare up into Nico’s big brown eyes. “You’re the best thing that’s ever happened to me and I was so scared you were going to say no.”
Nico closed the distance between their lips. “I could never say no to you, sunbaby.”

Chapter End Notes

If you guys can't already tell, this story is coming to a close soon :(  
But in other words, it's almost a year old!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!