12/17/2021 Theme: Mistletoe (Owen & Karina 17)

-KARINA-

"Our lives depend upon it."

Grandmother's biscuits, Grandad's aftershave, hay and horse manure. Scent is strongly tied to memory. As my nose was already buried in Owen's neck, I tested this theory.

Sweat, I expected. Nutmeg, not so much.

Sniff.

A bonfire. Pine trees. Stolen kisses. A ring.

How had I forgotten my fiancé? His new beard tickled my lips. Remembrance overflowed as he deepened the kiss.

We'd followed the instructions in his great-grandfather's journal to open the portal, and then, I got scared. I feared he was gone forever…until he wasn't.

"The Master summoned me," I whispered in a breath. "He must have wiped my…"

"Later."

Too soon, Owen growled and shook his hair. "What, Kili?"

"Excuse me? Who's…"

We tumbled backwards as the wall behind me turned to air. Owen spun me on top to cushion the impact.

"Oof!"

"Finally." It was the voice from before…only this time, I knew the source. I hastened to the pedestal, drawn by the glow of the sapphire-blue stone.

"The Element of Seren. We found it!"

"You are not alone," it said, dimming its light. "Your companion is not welcome."

"Where is that music coming from?" Owen asked, coming alongside. Was the voice meant only for me?

"The Element." Eager to complete my mission, I reached for the stone. Owen grabbed my wrist.

"Stop! Let me."

"Do not let him touch me, Karina," the Element warned. I shoved myself between them too late. Owen's fingers brushed the surface, and those familiar eyes grew distant. He drew his dagger.

"Owen, what are you doing?"

The point glowed blue in Seren's Light. Like Velcro, my tongue stuck to the roof of my mouth.

"I am in the service of the Faerie Queen, and I'm going to kill you, Huntress."

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FFM is on break! Tune in every Friday until the end of the year. The rest: my Highlights or my website on The Art of Shorts page (link in bio).

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