

# Banished With His Heir

## Chapter 4: Ice Queen

When the evening came, everyone went to the White Banquet to have a celebration for the Alpha's mate. Ever since she arrived, all she's done is prepare for parties. I'm not even sure if she does any work around here.

The kitchen worked overtime to create a special feast for them and many of the other White Howlers set up decorations around the place.

After River left, I took a long bath and scrubbed my skin raw until it turned red. After that, I went back to bed and slept for as long as I could. I woke up from the noise.

Even if I haven't moved an inch from my bed since then, I knew what was going on downstairs because I could hear said noise and smell the food from my room.

Honestly, my whole world still felt like it was falling apart, but in a somewhat different sense.

Before River talked to me, I remained hopeful that he would see I still mattered to him and he would keep me in his life as someone special. But after he told me to put everything we had just like a memory, or a part of his life that he was now done with, that emotional pain crept into my heart, building and growing into something relentless.

*"Fuyu, are you there?"* I ask my wolf, trying to find at least one friend in such a lonely world.

*"I'm here."* A small and fleeting smile crossed my face before disappearing.

*"Do you regret it, Fuyu? Do you regret that night when we said yes to him?"*

The question has been running around my mind the whole day, unable to find the answer to it.

I felt Fuyu and her disappointment, her sadness, and her heartbreak. A wolf and their human counterpart may only have one body, but in a way we were also separate beings. Right now though, our hearts were bleeding and breaking as one.

*"I'm not sure I have the answer to that, Keira."*

I tightened my grip on the pillow after hearing her answer. Just last week, River surprised us with the most amazing trip to a secluded hot spring. He found it during one of his further patrols and he made sure no one else knew about it just until we would be able to go there together.

Fuyu and I had the best time of our lives. She spent the morning running in vast spaces with Gray, and I spent the afternoon relaxing in the water with River, then at night we watched the Northern Lights, one of our favorite things to do together during the season.

Fuyu and I believed nothing could get better than this, that meeting River and being with him was the best thing we had done. Now we had no idea how to feel.

Seven rhythmic knocks on the door take me out of my thoughts instantly. It's Zane again. He's done the same knock ever since we were kids.

"Can I come in?" He asks, but I don't have the energy to say anything so I just knock once on the wall loud enough for him to hear it as a yes.

I hear him come in, but he doesn't say anything. I can just feel his presence there, standing by the door as his eyes are on my back.

I take a deep breath and inhale the scent of food, making me slightly turn but not enough for him to see my face.

"Ah yeah, I brought your favorite."

Kjøttkaker. Balls of minced beef, rolled with spices like nutmeg, pepper, and ginger. But not just that, I can smell the potatoes, cabbage stew, and brown sauce.

The first time I had it was when I was five years old. That time, River had started to somewhat get closer to me, but it was this meal that really made me feel like he was open to being friends. He approached me with a plate and told me that it was his favorite and there was no more, but he was willing to share his.

"It was River's favorite," I muttered. "I ate it because he liked it."

"Oh..." Zane said and I could imagine him standing there, plate in his hand, eyes blinking unsure as he tries to think of what to say next.

"But thank you for bringing me food." I added before sighing and finally turning around to face him.

As heartbroken as I was, that won't stop my body from needing food. I've been feeling the rumbling of my stomach for hours now, but chose to ignore it. I don't think I can last any longer so I pushed myself off bed.

"Really, thank you for all of this. I don't think I'd be able to go down and face anyone." I said with a defeated chuckle.

"Ah, sorry I look like shit." Embarrassed, I tried to cover my face with my sleeves as I approached Zane and let my other hand out to take the plate of food from him.

“No, you don’t. I’ve seen worse. Like that time you rolled all the way down to the creek and you swam in mud, basically.” He said with the tiniest bit of a smirk on his lips.

“You promised not to bring that up ever!” I retorted. “Aspen was such an asshole for tripping me.” I huffed before a small chuckle escaped my lips, remembering that incident we had after skipping training.

But after that, stiff silence filled the room again. I shifted uncomfortably, clutching on to the plate tightly.

Zane stepped forward as his light gray eyes remained locked on mine. His shoulder length white blonde hair moved the slightest with the step he took.

I looked down, feeling conscious of how I must look even more horrid with him closer. I was never the conscious type. At least, not usually, but I wasn’t naive. I liked looking the best I could, especially being raised around beautiful white princes and princesses in the Pack. It wasn’t that I was competing with them, it was just that I thought if I looked pretty, I’d feel less out of place.

Ever since Ivy appeared, I felt it even more – that I didn’t belong here.

Zane lifted his hands and gently placed them on my shoulder. With his other hand, he moved it under my chin and slowly pushed it up until I was back to looking him in the eye.

“I know whatever I say won’t really help, and I don’t expect it to, but I just want you to know one thing.”

I blinked at him, waiting for him to continue.

“None of this is on you, Keira. From the first day I met you when we were little, you were a fierce warrior. Tough, unbreakable, and determined. Some things may have changed that you weren’t expecting, but you’re going to get through this because if there’s someone in this world that can turn something bad into something great then it’s you, Keira Akari. Your name literally means the bright light in the dark. Don’t ever forget that.” Zane gives me a heartwarming smile before squeezing my shoulder for a millisecond.

“I’ll let you eat. I’ll be downstairs, but you know where to find me if you need a friend.” He points to his head, specifying our mindlink.

When the door closes and I’m back to being alone, I couldn’t help but smile too. Not a fleeting one, but one that really stuck with me.

Even if it was only for a few seconds, I felt a sense of gratitude and exhilaration. Thanks to Zane, he made me remember who I was. Who Fuyu and I were.

We came here with nothing and we made ourselves into something. This was a shitty thing to happen, but I'm going to keep pushing. Who knows? If River could find his mate then maybe mine was somewhere out there, too, and Ivy can't always treat me like this, right? Someone would have to put a stop to it somehow now that they all know.

That night, I managed to sleep without crying. Though I still had a somewhat heavy heart, I didn't let it bring me down as compared to earlier because I knew that tomorrow was a new day, and with a new day comes a chance to renew myself, to be better, and to do better.

—

The weather was colder in the morning, but the snow had started to slowly melt off, leaving wonky dark and wet spots all around the ground.

Fuyu and I ran fast, the morning breeze seeping through our fur, but this didn't stop us. On the contrary, it rejuvenates us.

This morning I woke up at five thirty, about half an hour earlier from the usual wake up time of everyone in the Castle. Mostly because I wanted to see the sun rise, but more so because I wanted to get breakfast without seeing anyone.

I wasn't ready to face anyone. I knew we all had a good relationship. They've treated me like their family all these years, but I just can't have them looking at me knowing they saw me in such an embarrassing state.

By six o' clock, I had found my spot by the tree where I left my clothes to come back to after mine and Fuyu's run.

With no one else around us, we let ourselves go wild. We run at the speed of light, we brush past trees and leave claw marks. We're unstoppable.

By seven, though we still had energy, I decided to head back anyway. Breakfast would have been finished by the time I get back to the Castle and most of the wolves would be scattered around the area so it would be the perfect time to get back in with less of them seeing me.

“Hey.”

I froze. The voice wasn't like I've heard from the Pack, and the accent was definitely different.

I quickly brushed my hair back behind the large tree, trying my best to fix however I could as it was usually a wavy mess after a run.

“I know you're there,” she spoke again and that's when I managed to figure it out, or who she was.

When I turned around and stepped away from the tree, that was when I saw her.

Ivy Quinn. She was standing with a wide smile, plastered on her face like it was glued to be like that. Her hair was perfectly straight and her eyes twinkled like she had the best twelve hours of sleep last night.

I knew she came here for trouble the second her eyes locked with mine and my body shuddered in fear.

Fuck, I need to get out of here.