

## Chapter 41

Ivy

I awake to whispers reaching my ears. Groggily rolling over, I look toward Kyson who is standing by the door. Beta Damian's scent wafts to me, so I know he must be in the room. Stretching, my back cracks as I yawn. That was the best sleep I had had in days, waking up and feeling rested. Sitting up, I notice the king has the jewelry box in his hands, and I tilt my head better to listen to what they are speaking about.

“Find me anything on Azalea, everything you can find,” Kyson says to Damian, his tone urgent and serious. I pinch my brows together, wondering what he wants with a child who has been long dead. My stomach drops, wondering what he's trying to dig up.

Is he looking for more reasons to hate me?

“Something isn’t right, and she...” Kyson shakes his head. “Something doesn’t add up,” he tells Beta Damian, glancing over his shoulder at me. Beta Damian takes the box from him.

“I’ll see what I can find out,” Damian tells him, and the king nods before shutting the door. He turns to face me before wandering over to the coffee table and retrieving a tray of food and placing it on my lap. I stare down at the steak and salad before he grabs his own tray and comes to sit by me.

“What was that about?” I ask casually as he takes his seat.

“I need him to look into something, eat your lunch,” he says before cutting into his steak. His steak is bleeding while mine looks a bit more well done. My mouth salivates hungrily, my belly rumbling. Though I am a little shocked to learn, it is already the middle of the day. I cut into my steak and pop a piece into my mouth. The hunger instantly dies down, no longer wanting to eat as I force myself to chew and swallow. The king watches me curiously as I try not to be rude and spit the meat out onto the plate. Forcing it down is like trying to swallow an apple whole as it lodges in my throat.

“Can I call Abbie?” I ask him, and he nods.

“After you eat,” he says, inclining his head toward the plate. I scrunch my nose up at it. Ever since finding out he is my mate, I swear my taste buds have changed. Stuff I usually like no longer holds any appeal to me. Everything feels different, yet I still haven’t shifted. It makes me wonder if all these changes were really for the better.

“I’m not hungry,” I say, placing the plate on the bedside table, and I move to get up. Kyson growls in response, cutting a piece off his own steak before offering the fork to me, holding it to my lips. The same thing happens; my mouth waters instantly, making me wonder why his food smells different. It is hardly cooked, if you could call it cooked at all, more like seared on either side and practically raw. Yet I open my mouth and almost moan at the taste, my appetite coming back despite tasting the blood filling my mouth as I chew. How odd, I think. I had never enjoyed raw meat in the past.

Reaching for my plate, the king places it on his lap before giving me his. “Eat,” he says, tapping my plate with the fork. I furrow my brows as I look at the plate. Kyson also looks rather disgusted by my own well-done steak, but says nothing other than encouraging me to keep eating.

“All of it,” the king says when he finishes his, leaving only the salad. The steak is huge, and I am struggling to eat the entire thing after getting through half of it. I force another mouthful

down, my stomach full but my tastebuds savoring the taste. I watch the king pull his phone from his pocket and scroll through it.

“I can’t eat anymore,” I say while trying to cut through another. Kyson looks up from his screen before staring at the half-eaten steak and sighs.

“You hardly ate anything yesterday. Eat half of it, and then you can call her,” he says, and I glare at him. A growl emanates from me, and he arches an eyebrow at me.

“Ivy!”

“I will eat two more pieces. I can’t eat much more. You will make me sick,” I snap at him.

“Three.”

“One!” I retort and he sighs.

“Fine, two more mouthfuls then,” he growls, turning his attention back to the phone. I quickly eat, wanting to speak to Abbie. It feels like a lifetime ago since I heard her voice, the

longest we've ever gone without speaking. When I finish, I snatch the phone from his grip. He growls at me but takes my plate, setting it back on the tray and placing it out the door before coming back to sit by me, staring over my shoulder as I scroll through the letter A's. Yet some of the names have similar spelling which confused me.

"No, back up," the king says, clicking on her name for me. "You can video call her."

"What's that?" I ask, listening to the phone ring. He takes it from me, pressing a button, and the screen changes, and I can see myself on the screen.

"Now, you will be able to see her if she can figure out how to turn her camera on. Gannon did show her, so hopefully she remembers," Kyson says. The phone rings, and I glance at Kyson, who sits up. He dials her number again, before passing it back to me.

When she doesn't answer again, he takes the phone from me, leaning against the headboard. He opens something else on his phone and types away. I peer over to see what he is doing, watching as he types quickly.

“I messaged her mate,” Kyson says, before patting the spot between his legs, wanting me to sit there.

“What did you say?” I ask him.

“Come, I will show you,” he says, and I roll my eyes but crawl into his lap. He presses his lips to my shoulder and pulls up his messages.