

Chapter 6

Abbie

I am up early before the sun has even risen fully. I am anxious and want to sneak down and see Ivy, so I can bring her something to eat. I wonder how her first shift went. Getting dressed quickly in my maid's uniform, I open the door to find Liam standing next to my door, playing a game on his phone. His fingers jab hard at the screen while he curses at it. He must be losing, I think, rolling my eyes.

Shaking my head, I step past him, and he follows with his head down, focused on his game.

"Stupid game," he growls as he follows me downstairs to the kitchens.

"What are you playing?" I ask, not really caring, but if I have to listen to him curse his phone out, it would be nice to know what he is cursing about. I wait for him to answer as he starts stabbing his phone viciously with his finger.

“A cake-building game,” he tells me, and I pull a face at that. With the crazy finger poking and cursing, I assumed he was playing some killing or shooting game.

“A cake-building game, cake like you eat?” I ask, wondering if it is code for something else.

“Yep, making this stupid pink unicorn thing, but the sprinkles are going too fast, and the placement is wrong. It deducted more damn points,” he snaps before looking at me, and he grabs my arm, making me stop. He looks me over from head to toe, and I step back from him, not liking how he is eyeing me.

“Have you got a phone?” he asks, and I roll my eyes as I continue walking into the kitchens. “Of course you don’t,” he mutters as I shake my head and step into the kitchen. “Ah, she has one,” he states as he turns to Clarice.

“Momsy, oh dear, Momsy?” he calls in a sugary sweet voice as he moves toward Clarice’s station with a practiced, boyish energy. She lifts her gaze and raises an eyebrow at him as he skips over to her.

“Yes, Liam?” Clarice yawns tiredly, looking like she had no sleep at all.

He stops next to her bench, drops an elbow onto it, and places his chin on his hand, batting his lashes at her.

“Can I borrow your phone?” he asks, and she sighs, giving him a pointed look.

“What’s wrong with yours?” she asks, pointing to it in his hand.

“Nothing, but I need to download a game on yours so that you can send me your coins.”

“You want my phone for a game?” she repeats, pulling it from her apron pocket. She eyes him suspiciously while he giggles like a schoolgirl. She hands it to him, and he lights up as if all his Christmases come at once.

“You better not be using it for porn like last time. Damn near gave me a heart attack when I opened my browser to see what you’re into,” she scolds.

“I promise.” He offers her his pinky. She smiles and chuckles before grabbing his face and squeezing his cheeks, making him have fish lips.

“I’m serious, I want my phone back.”

He wiggles his squashed lips at her, and she laughs, letting him go. “I am just downloading a game so that I can send myself some sprinkles,” Liam tells her, unlocking her phone as if he had done it a million times before. Clarice raises an eyebrow at him.

“Sprinkles?” she asks him, and he nods, focused on her phone. Clarice looks at me, and I shrug. It is so weird seeing how carefree she is with Liam like he is her ray of sunshine. She messes his hair lovingly, returning to her duties.

Liam sits on a stool by the counter, and I set to work making Ivy and Gannon some breakfast so that I can take it down to them. It is the perfect excuse to go there. The king surely doesn’t intend for her to starve.

When I am done, Clarice finds me a picnic basket, and I leave Liam with Clarice, rushing out the doors toward the main foyer area to see a commotion.

A loud roar rings out from down the corridor, and I see Ester running stark naked from the king's office. My stomach sinks as she rushes toward me, clutching her clothes in her hands, just as Damian steps out from the stairwell further up. He grabs Ester by the arm and shakes the woman with a sneer on his face.

His eyes run up the length of her, making him growl loudly at her state of undress. He shoves her away before both his hands hit the door of the king's office. He then slams the door shut with a loud bang. I gasp as Ester runs out the castle doors. And I turn to find Dustin glaring toward the doors she ran through, along with half the kitchen staff who have rushed out to see what the commotion is.

"He wouldn't have, would he? Ivy, she's..." I stutter, tears burning my eyes on behalf of my best friend. Surely, the king didn't kick his mate out to be with the likes of her. If he has done so, then boy have I misjudged the king. Dustin growls before storming off, and I turn to find Clarice with a murderous glare on her face.

She presses her lips in a line before her eyes go to mine. They soften a little before she gasps. "Come on, you go down there like that, and Ivy will know something is wrong," she tells me. I peer down at the picnic basket in my hands, and nod.

Ivy is hurting enough, and she can read me like a book. It will only hurt her more if I go down there crying about what I saw. Plus, I'm sure she'll find a way to make me tell her. So reluctantly, I follow Clarice, knowing she is right.

Liam is waiting by the kitchen doors when she walks toward them, and Clarice stops beside him.

"Find out what happened for me; I swear if the king..." she doesn't finish. "He did, and I will whip him myself," she growls, striding past him. Liam watches her go before gripping my shoulder when I go to pass him.

"Chin up, love. I know the king. He is being a dickhead, but he isn't unfaithful. It is nearly impossible for one to cheat on their mate. At least for us Lycans, anyway," he tells me before strolling off toward the guards at the end of the hall.

Stepping into the kitchen, I find the staff are all murmuring about the king. I listen, trying to calm my racing heart.

"She is always all over him, though I thought he learned after the last time," a cook named Sheri tells Amanda, who sighs heavily.

“Enough, ladies, we will find out. You know the king is on edge after the news he received last night,” Clarice says, cutting the ladies off.

“What news?” I ask Clarice curiously, but it is Sheri who answers.

“Another family was found, and more children by the river,” she explains with a grim expression on her face.

“How old were they?” I ask, horrified that more rogues were killed.

“A few around our queen’s age, and some young ones, about five or six years old, and an elderly woman,” Clarice answers before she sniffles.