

## Chapter 15

### ABBIE

Two days have passed, and I have hardly been able to talk to Ivy. I've only seen her in small intervals, here and there when we pass each other in the corridors. The King kept her ridiculously busy and spending so much time in these quarters by myself is incredibly boring. The men on this floor are hardly here, and I find myself wishing they were so that I would have something to clean. My days are becoming repetitive and blurring into one. Mopping floors that are never dirty or wiping non-existent dust from chandeliers and lamps. There is only so much one can tolerate and looking at the walls while listening to the emptiness of the place is beginning to bother me.

Filling my mop bucket, I drop in some cleaning chemicals and grab my mop. I struggle under the weight of the sloshing water as I make my way from the laundry, passing Clarice in the kitchens, who is busy making lunches, and out to the foyer. Water sloshes over the sides, spilling onto the floors. I curse as I set the bucket down and use the mop to clean up the mess I just made on the steps.

With a groan, I reach for the bucket, but only a hand grabs it for me; I have no idea where he came from and didn't even hear him sneak up the steps behind me. He grabs the bucket without a word and starts walking up the steps. He says nothing, and I glance at Gannon, who

doesn't even look back and continues carrying the heavy bucket to his quarters. Once we step inside the guard quarters he sets it down on the top step and keeps walking.

"Thank you," I call after him, but he doesn't even acknowledge me, instead just keeps walking toward his bedroom. I watch him slip into his room and close the door. With a sigh, I start scrubbing the clean floors. I don't see him come back out of his room, and the floor is so quiet I am sure he must have slipped past at some point. Clarice eventually sends lunch up with Ester. She has blonde hair, and her servant's uniform is far too tight. Sometimes when she bends over, I can see her ass cheeks poking out from the bottom. I think it is a little inappropriate given how many men lurk around here, though they don't seem to mind her half-clad body and her boobs busting out her uniform.

She thrusts a plated sandwich at me. "Here, I haven't got all damn day. Some of us have real work to do," she snaps. Well isn't she a joy to be around, I think. I set my dust brush down and reach for the sandwich when she drops the plate. I don't understand what her problem is. It is clear she doesn't like Ivy and me. The entire castle heard about her ranting and raving about Ivy taking her job. Yet I have done nothing to her personally. The plate shatters on the ground, and she huffs, checking her nails. I shake my head and bend down to start cleaning it up when she speaks.

"Fucking clumsy half-breeds! Seriously get it together," she snaps, sashaying her hips as she walks off. I sigh, grabbing the dustpan and broom to clean up the broken glass, choosing to ignore her. It isn't worth the argument and even I know better than to speak back to authority. And her being a Lycan, she holds more status than I can ever dream of.

"Ester!" A booming voice growls behind me, making the woman stop. Her entire body tenses as she reaches the stairs.

Footsteps behind me make me peek over my shoulder to see who it is. So I am startled to see that Gannon is still up here. I for sure thought he had snuck out when I returned the mop bucket to the laundry. His footsteps stop, and I peer up at him to find his imposing body standing beside me. Instinctively, I shy away from his anger and swallow, dropping my gaze back to the task at hand.

"Yes, Gannon," Ester purrs in a sickly sweet voice. I roll my eyes, and it is clear that the woman is a power-hungry whiny brat. I pick up the ruined sandwich, dumping it in my little bucket before grabbing the dust broom when it is snatched from my hand, making me jump. He grabs my arm and hauls me upright and I look up to find him holding it.

"Clean it up," Gannon growls at her. The order rolling off his tongue makes my knees buckle, but his grip on my arm keeps me upright as my legs threaten to go out under his command. Gannon holds the dust broom out to Ester, and I gasp. Ester pins me with a glare that threatens to burn me before pursing her lips.

Yet even Ester doesn't appear stupid enough to challenge this man. Instead, she stalks forward and snatches it from him before bending down to clean up the broken glass. Her ass cheeks poke out from under her skirt, and Gannon growls menacingly, making me look at him to

see him look away from her. His grip on my arm tightens as he pulls me away from her.

"And fucking find a longer dress. No one wants to see your ugly ass on display," Gannon snarls at Ester as he pulls me toward the stairs. I swallow, wondering if I am in trouble because he still hasn't let my arm go. Was he taking me to Clarice to tell her about my clumsiness? Or maybe about me and Ester not getting along? Unease pools in my stomach as he trudges down the steps.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to," I tell him when he stops abruptly on the steps. He looks at me and seems to realize he is still holding my arm.

"Sorry," he mutters, letting me go. I stand awkwardly while his eyes run the length of me before his gaze settles back on mine.

"You shouldn't let her speak to you like that. Ester can be a bitch, but she holds no more authority in this castle than any other servant, so don't put up with it, or she will walk all over you," he warns, and I glance back up the stairs. Did he not realize I am only a werewolf? She definitely holds more authority than me and could rip me to shreds. I am not stupid enough to cause confrontation, especially with a Lycan.

"Come on," he says, and my brows furrow, but I don't move. I am stationed to remain in the Beta's quarters.

"Now, Abbie," Gannon calls as he steps down a few steps.

"But I have to."

"I said now, come on," he says, stopping and looking at me expectantly. I chew my lip, wondering where he is taking me, but I know better than to refuse. I follow him, and he leads me to the kitchens. He gives me a nudge through the doors ahead of him, where Clarice looks up at me and smiles brightly.

"Finished already, dear," she smiles before her brows furrow when Gannon comes up behind me. Her eyes widen, and Clarice wipes her hands on the tea towel she is using.

"Gannon, Love. I am sure whatever she did," Clarice quickly defends me, but he says nothing. Instead, he steps past me and walks toward the pantry. Clarice rushes over to me. "You didn't go into any of the forbidden areas?" she whispers, and I shake my head when he returns with bread and condiments. He points to a stool beside him.

"Abbie, sit!" he says, and Clarice and I look at him and then at each other. She quickly nudges me to do what he asked. My hands shake as I use the bench to climb up onto the high stool. I sit there playing with my fingers.

"Is everything alright, son?" Clarice asks, touching his shoulder.

"Fine, ma," he says to her, pulling bread out of the bag when Ester comes in, dumping the dustpan and broom in the cleaning cupboard with an audible huff. Gannon growls at her and she glares at him.

"You can finish mopping the entire floor and take Abbie's duties for the day," Gannon says to her without looking up from making his sandwich. Ester growls, but he doesn't even glance at her.

"Either that or I will make you shovel shit with Peter in the stables, Ester, so choose," Gannon says, and she huffs but storms out. Clarice looks after her and glances between Gannon and me.

I shrug, unsure what to make of it when Gannon sets a BLT sandwich in front of me, cutting it in half and then cutting his own.

"Eat," he says, tapping the plate. I peek at Clarice and she nods to me telling me it is okay while Gannon takes the other stool beside me, eating his own sandwich.