

## Chapter 22

### IVY

The King pats his chest. This man was absurd to have his servant lying on him. He pats his chest again. He wasn't serious! Was he? If anyone walked in, I would be whipped for days if I was caught in this position.

"Ivy," he speaks one word, yet the warning in it makes me do as he wants, and I settle against him. He tugs my head down on his chest, and I can hear his heart's slow, steady rhythm beneath my ear. King Kyson grabs my hand, placing it in the center of his chest before he opens the book.

"Do you want me to read to you?" he asks again. I nod my head, looking at the book. "Good girl," he says, wrapping his arm around me to hold the book open with two hands.

He reads perfectly and never stutters as I used to when trying to read the books in the orphanage. I was forever trying to sound the words out when I read to the children.

The children at the orphanage are allowed in the classes that are taught; they aren't rogues. Rogues are not allowed the privilege of an education. They tried to help teach us, but they weren't the best teachers.

So, listening to the story as he reads it paints a picture in my head so vivid, I could listen to him speak all day; I finally understand his fascination with his books.

He stops when I start yawning, gently placing the book down and rubbing my thigh.

"We can read more tomorrow. You are tired," he states, and I nod against his shoulder before climbing off his lap. I walk toward his door, heading for my room.

I miss Abbie. I haven't seen even a glimpse of her today. She must be worried about me; she always used to worry.

"Ivy, where are you going?" he asks, and I freeze, puzzled by his question, before cursing under my breath. I turn away, realizing he hadn't dismissed me.

"I'm sorry, I thought you meant..." I didn't know what he meant; I was too tired and walked off without permission. Did he ask me to do something? My thoughts are plagued with how Abbie is doing that I'm hardly paying attention to my surroundings.

The King watches me for a second, turning his head to the side, looking me up and down.

"You may go. I will see you at breakfast."

I bow slightly before taking my leave. I rush back to my tiny room, relieved that I am now on my own and don't have to worry about being watched.

Only when I lay down did I realize something— the King's blanket is gone, the one I always found placed in my room whenever I tried to return it. At least, I had assumed it was his. It saddens me. I had grown attached to it for some reason, and the King's lingering scent comforted me.

I sigh and lay down, trying to find a comfortable position when the door opens, and I sit upright. The King walks in with the blanket, and I stand up immediately.

"Remain where you are," he says. What is he doing here? "I had it washed for you," he says, placing the blanket over me. My brows furrow as the floral scent of the soap wafts to my nose. I sniff the blanket and instantly realize it smells different. I shouldn't find that disappointing, but I do.

"You seem upset," he states while observing me, making me realize I forgot he was in the room.

"No, My King. It just smells different—the soap."

He chuckles as if what I said had amused him.

"Different, how?" he asks, stepping further into my tiny room.

"Just different," I lie, not wanting to admit that it doesn't smell like him.

"Hmm, and that is all?" He smiles. I feel my face heat with embarrassment when he suddenly walks out before returning with a pillow.

"I will swap you," he says, making my brows furrow, confused by what he means. He points to the pillow behind me.

"Pardon, sir?"

"Hand me your pillow, Ivy."

Oh gosh, what was he up to now? He could be so bizarre sometimes.

"Ivy?"

I glance at my pillow before grabbing it and holding it to me. I sniff it. Surely, he doesn't want to swap pillows? Mine will stink with the scent of a rogue. I know my smell repulses most wolves. It is what helps separate us, to help identify pack wolves from rogues.

However, for me, everyone just has their own unique scent. I can't differentiate between rogue and pack wolf; to me, everyone just smells different. Abbie always said something was wrong with me because everyone smelled the same to her back at the orphanage, while we were the odd ones that didn't have a pack scent.

"May I?" the King asks before reaching for my pillow tucked in my arms. He takes it before handing me his.

I sniff it involuntarily, only stopping when I hear him laugh softly, and the blood runs to my face at what I did in front of him.

"Don't be embarrassed, Ivy. You have been sleeping with my scent all week," he says as he tugs the corner of my blanket—well, his blanket.

"You knew?" I ask him, confused.

"Who else would keep putting it in your room when you kept returning it?" he says.

I know the thought of him being in here while I slept should have creeped me out, but it didn't, funnily enough. I guess I was getting used to his presence.

"It's called nesting. You are used to my scent. After a while, scents become comforting, familiar; it will get stronger when I..." he pauses.

When he what? What was he going to do to me? Panic fills me, and my heart rate quickens at the possibilities.

"Do you know what nesting is?" he asks. The only thing that comes to mind is a bird nesting its eggs, so his words make no sense. I shake my head.

"They didn't teach you in the orphanage school?"

"We weren't allowed to attend, we had chores, and rogues aren't-" I stop, having spoken too much. The King growls, and my eyes darted to his.

"You should know the basics, at least of Lycan and werewolves, Ivy," the King says. "I will explain later. For now, get some sleep." He moves to the door before he pauses and looks back at me again.

"If my scent fades, just grab another pillow off my bed or help yourself to my shirts, Ivy. You know where everything in my room is."

Huh, what does he mean? Why is he so strange sometimes?

"If it helps you sleep. Or you could always sleep..." he pauses again. Why is he having so much trouble with his words? He never fumbled over his words this much before.

"Never mind, I will see you in the morning," he says quickly, leaving the room. I can vaguely hear him talking to the guard outside through the closed door. I rearrange my bed and place the pillow down. The moment my head hits the pillow, my entire body relaxes as I become cocooned in his scent.