

## Chapter 43

### IVY

Kyson hovers above me. Despite staring right into the eyes of the true Lycan King, despite his weight pressing down on me and his scary exterior, I somehow know he would never harm me.

His hands are gentle, and his tone of voice is calm, though also sounds rougher; it reassures everything in me that made me fear him. My life could end at any time, but I don't fear death from the man-turned-beast above me.

No, I can't see myself ever fearing him; I know it's because he doesn't want me to. He allows me to have that trust in him because he could ideally end me.

Some instinctual part of me calls out to him, to ruin or to love, yet the tenderness of his touch assures me it is just that: tenderness and love. It seems impossible to feel so much for someone after such a short time, or maybe I am naïve in thinking it is love and I'm not merely an object to him.

Yet he calms my anxiety, and the content feeling of finally being home when around him made me roll onto my stomach when he asked.

King Kyson is home. In whatever way I could have him, I want him. Whether it's at his feet or by his side, I would take it. Home is something I had never felt. Even with my parents, it never existed.

A sense of safety and belonging was never felt with them, either. I am a stranger to my own existence and place in this world.

I always thought Abbie was my home, my safe place, and she is. However, now I wonder, if only for a while, if home could be with my King.

As I am lost in the sleepy thought, the King moves above me and his chest rumbles against my back. I loved the noises he made, loved what he calls the calling. It feels familiar and like it is mine alone.

Kyson presses his face into my neck and sniffs at me. His whiskers and fur tickle, a rough contrast against my skin, and I tuck my chin, feeling his tongue lick a line across my shoulder blade.

His tongue traces the lines that mar my flesh. A tingling sensation and warmth spread across it, and I feel the tissue closing. The jagged edges sewing together again. It's like the last remnants of my old life are closing, the hole over my heart that I thought would never close, filling in.

After all this time, a spot left gaping from abuse and rejection, of neglect and hopelessness, didn't ache like it used to.

The pain fades away with the memory of the countless times my skin was branded while my stomach twists with my desire to dream of better things.

What if I loved and lost it?

Though how do you love when you've never known it? Sure, my parents loved me and cuddled me, but for so long, all I've felt is pain. Warm hugs turned to whips and chains that restrained my life. Could I break the mold they forced me into, break the chains that held me back? Take back a life that was beaten out of me and suppressed for so long?

I am not sure, but I am determined to find out, even if it is only brief and ends badly, I can own those moments. I'll never know until I try.

For once, I will trust the words spoken, the intention behind them. For once, I will let myself feel free, even if only fleetingly. So I remain still, except when his tongue traces down my ribs, his whiskers and fur tickling.

Only then do I squirm and cringe away. The pain fades quickly, turning to desire. Despite my mind being structured to believe the worst, my heart is set, and my body is willing to be his, and his only.

His tongue feels hot and wet as it glides across my ribs once more. The moment he finishes, I know by the sound of his bones realigning before

I feel his bare skin press against mine; the rise and fall of his chest as his breathing falls in time with mine.

The King presses himself against me, his thighs pressing against mine, and his erection digs into my lower back. He purrs, the sound bringing forth my own as his nose trails across my cheek. He kisses the side of my mouth before nipping at my ear, and I feel the slickness between my thighs.

The foreign feeling of desire that only he can bring forth, a desire I anticipated and feared because despite my body craving something it has no idea how to explain. It feels right. How had I not noticed it before, the complete feeling he induces, like a half to another, making me feel whole, as the pieces of the puzzle aligned in perfect synchronization.

He groans, and I shiver at the sound. Goosebumps emerge on my flesh as he flicks my ear with his tongue.

“As much as I want to remain here and ravage your body, we have to leave,” he whispers, flicking my ear again. Despite my brain trying to override the sound from escaping past my lips, my whine is audible.

The King chuckles. “I promise later, Ivy. When we get back home, you can have me all to yourself, but we must leave,” he whispers, pecking my cheek.

His weight lifts off me and the chill of the room drifts over my skin with him gone. I roll onto my side and sit up while the King retrieves his boxers off the floor.

“How much further is it?” I ask him.

“Couple of hours, you can sleep in the car,” he says while placing a suitcase beside me. He opens it before grabbing the other, which he got his pants out of.

“Are you going to get dressed?” he asks, and I look in the suitcase. All the clothes are brand new, and I look at him, wondering when he had time to get them.