

## Chapter 57

### GANNON

It takes a while for the King to wake up from his drunken stupor, and the moment he does, he reaches for the bottle. I snatch it, needing him to come to his senses, needing his word that he won't hurt her. Which, in turn, would hurt Abbie. He loves Ivy. Everyone in the castle is aware of his affection for the girl, and for once, the castle and everyone in it can finally breathe.

We have all lived through his depression, his anger, and relentless torment. I've watched him destroy himself more times than I can count. None of us want to see him return to that dark place, and I also worry that he will lose his Kingdom if he can't see past who her parents were. This would no doubt divide people.

Kyson reaches forward to snatch the bottle, but I pull it away. "I'll give it to you. First, we need to talk," I tell him. He's far too drunk to cause me any real damage, his eyes bloodshot, and he reeks of liquor.

We still have a couple more hours left before we reach home, and he needs to either get his frustration and anger out now or talk it out. Either one I'm okay with. Everyone back home has prayed for the miracle that the King would find his mate, find someone to help tame him, and bring him back to us, and Ivy is doing that without even knowing it.

"Gannon!" Kyson growls, but I fold the bottle in my arms as I cross them over my chest. He sighs. "Fine, I'll talk, but give me the damn bottle."

I raise an eyebrow at him.

"No, talk first, then, depending on how I feel about your mood afterward; I will decide whether I will return it," I tell him. He presses his lips in a line. He could command me, but I know some piece of him knows he needs me to prevent him from letting the monster inside him out; his father would command anyone and everyone. I don't remember you holding a normal conversation with that man; it was best to steer clear of him and avoid his inevitable wrath.

Even though Kyson respected and loved his father, we all know that's why he hated commanding his men. However, he seems to get a kick from using that and his calling on Ivy. At first, it shocked Damian and me. We both put it down to it being a mate thing and his Alpha instincts to keep her under his control and safe.

One thing I like about him being King is he will give you a chance to answer, only using his command when needed or if you genuinely piss him off. Rarely will you see him use it. He doesn't need to use his aura most of the time because he earned the respect of his people, and they answer truthfully, though sometimes I wonder if he's a little too trusting.

He strives to be a better man than his father, who was a right prick, not that anyone told Kyson that. We dance the line when it comes to mentioning his father. Kyson had always looked up to him, despite him putting so much pressure on his son when he was alive that it almost killed him.

Growing up, he endured his father for his sister's sake so she didn't have to. Once she was gone, I've lost count of the number of times Damian, Liam, and I have had to pull him back from the brink of madness and stop him from ending it, and oh, how he has tried. His sister was his to protect, and he believes he failed her because of Marrissa Talbot, and now he has a constant reminder in his mate.

If I had known this was what Alpha Dean wanted to speak to him about, Damian and I would have covered it up so he never found out. This piece of information isn't needed and will only cause harm. Looking at Kyson, I can tell he wants to hurt Marrissa in the only way he can now, and that is through Ivy. It would've been better for everyone if he never learned of this.

"She isn't her mother," I tell him, and the low growl that leaves him makes me clench my jaw, feeling his aura wash over me.

"Alpha Dean could be lying," I continue when he says nothing.

"What reason would he have to lie?"

"Kyson, you know the pact you had us all make. It may have been years ago, but it hasn't changed. We can't allow you to kill her. We will put you down if you try."

"I'm not stupid, Gannon, I know that. I wouldn't kill her, anyway."

I let out a breath of relief that is very short-lived.

"Because if I did, I would only be killing myself, and that means that bitch won in eradicating the royal families."

I groan. That's not the answer I wanted to hear.

"Let me double-check with Ivy. I don't want you near her until we are sure, and you need to speak to Damian about this. Her safety depends on it," I tell him. His eyes flicker, turning black as coal. His canines slipped out.

"You won't hurt her," I tell him.

"Then what? I can't keep her either; I don't fucking want to look at Marrissa's spawn every damn second."

"Well, you can't keep her locked up in the fucking dungeons; I won't allow it."

"It isn't your choice, she is my mate, and I am fucking King!" he bellows.

"Right now, the only thing you are is a fucking idiot. Now, you need to pull yourself together. You need to see past who her mother was!" I snap at him when he growls, leaning forward on his seat.

His claws slip out, cutting into the leather upholstery, and I curse, knowing what he wants. He wants to forget, wants to drown himself with the bottle, and clearly, I'm not getting anywhere and need to hope Damian gets through to him because I can't.

"Promise me you won't do anything stupid. Promise you won't destroy your bond."

"I can't promise that," he says, and I grit my teeth.

"At least promise to speak with Damian before you do anything you will regret, Kyson. You're upset, and if you break the little trust you have built with her, you will regret it. You don't want to harm her!" I don't finish. He knows what will happen if he tries to kill her. We all took the same pact—a pact he made us take after losing his sister.

A pact that ensures his Queen's safety, no matter the circumstance. If his future mate's life is in danger, we are to choose her over him, every time, no matter what. If it comes to her and him, we take a bullet for her and let him die. We chose to take that pact, and he begged us to take it. That goes for him, too. He tries to kill her, and we will be forced to

put him down to save her. He can order us to stand down. Technically, until he marks her, the pact won't be in full swing, not until his mark lies on her neck. Yet we will still honor it, knowing who she is to him.

"I promise I will speak to Damian first," Kyson tells me, and I suck in a breath of relief.

"You go straight to Damian. I want your word. You won't sneak off to your office. You won't look for her. Give me your word, Kyson, that you will go to him." He's furious, but he also knows I'm right. Damian is his calm place.

Those two are more like brothers who have some strange understanding. Kyson is like my brother, but those two are synced oddly. They are an extension of each other, being raised like brothers, enduring the same torment at the hands of Kyson's father. Damian is also the only one who, if I can't talk him down, Damian usually can.

"Fine, just give me the drink."

"I want to hear you say it."

"I will go straight to Damian, okay."

I sigh before I relent and pass him the bottle. He takes it, and I don't miss the tremble of his hands as he twists off the cap. Usually, that only happens the few times we try to get him sober. It never lasts long before

we give up. His tremors are always terrible, and we hate seeing him like that. The King is an alcoholic, and everyone knows it, yet with Ivy, we see hope because it is apparent he tries not to drink himself into a stupor while with her.