

Chapter 37

AZALEA

My nose tickles as his scent invades my senses. My entire body is overheating, and I'm not sure if the heat is radiating from him or me. His skin is blisteringly hot, while my blood feels like it is boiling and bubbling in my veins. Lifting my head, I find Kyson asleep beneath me. His heady scent makes my mouth water, and everywhere his skin touches, it tingles and buzzes like a live wire is running beneath my skin. My thighs are drenched, and I groan, knowing I am in heat again. But why is Kyson so hot? I wonder. I am about to climb off him and run for the bathroom to take a cold shower when a voice makes me jump.

"Remain where you are. You can't move even if you wanted to," Damian's voice makes me look over my shoulder. A growl escapes me; logically, I know it is Beta Damian, yet my body reacts to the intruder in my den. A den I don't remember building in my sleep. The thin sheet covering me falls slightly, and Damian averts his gaze to the far wall and clears his throat, making me peer down to find myself naked. Why am I naked? And who undressed me? My eyes widen, and I scramble to tug the sheet back to cover myself, only to feel Kyson move under me. No, he doesn't move. I am handcuffed to him, my wrist cuffed to

his. My movement makes Kyson purr in his sleep while I try to figure out what has happened.

I stare at the handcuff before glancing at Damian. “Why am I handcuffed? Did you undress me?” I ask him, and Damian sits back in his wooden chair, which I know is from the small office behind the door on the far wall. He folds his arms across his broad chest.

“Yes, I had no choice. You are in heat! I need to talk to you, and you will listen to me, My Queen,” Damian states, and I can tell he is not going to leave until I hear what he has to say. I roll my eyes and Damian growls.

“Un-cuff me,” I demand, but he presses his lips in a line.

“No!” he says, earning a growl from me. I want to check on Dustin and Abbie. Although I’m not sure if that would be possible because with Kyson’s skin touching mine, I am barely holding it together, wanting nothing more than to roll my hips against him and claim him.

“Listen to me. I have been with the king for as long as I can remember, and he can be a stubborn idiot at times. However, you are also just as stubborn. You put yourself in unnecessary danger and put your life at risk, and that of Dustin,” Damian starts.

I go to protest, but he cuts me off.

“You put my king at risk. Your mate!” he states angrily. I swallow, looking down at Kyson. Feeling guilty, I tug the blanket higher. I go to move off of Kyson when he speaks again.

“Remain where you are. Kyson’s life depends on it. You move, and he can die, and I did not carry him here and undress you for him to drop dead on me now!” Damian snaps, and I freeze.

“What?” I gasp, wondering what he is talking about.

“Kyson asked me not to say anything, but I will not watch him die when you can save him. Both of you are too stubborn to see your flaws or each other’s side. Now you will listen to me,” he snaps.

I can see his frustration clearly by the tight clench of his jaw and how white his knuckles are as the skin stretches over them when he grips the armrest of the wooden chair. Damian is usually calm. Although, right now, he looks murderous, and I am not sure if he wants to murder me or the king, maybe both? So I figure it’s probably best to listen and not piss off the Lycan, who looks like he could snap me in half like a twig.

“I’m listening.”

“About time, My Queen. Now, let’s get one thing straight. Everything I do and don’t do is for yours and the king’s safety, just like me handcuffing you to him is for his safety.”

I sigh, wondering what he is getting at.

“You never grew up among Lycans. You are poorly educated by no fault of your own and very young, so please do not take offense, but there are things you now need to be made aware of so you can understand the meaning of all of this!” he says.

Was this what it is like to be scolded by a teacher? Because I imagine so.

“When Kyson had your heat stopped, it didn’t stop for him. Lycan men suffer the same as women during the heat. Now, why did Kyson stop your heat, Azalea?” Damian asks.

“So I wouldn’t die.”

Damian nods, leaning forward in his chair and bracing his arms on his knees.

“It is the same for Lycan men. You denying him isn’t just killing you; it is killing the king. Male Lycan’s heat cannot be stopped like a woman’s. Just because yours has doesn’t mean it did for him, which is why he is like that,” Damian says, nodding toward Kyson beneath me.

I peer down at him. His skin is scorching, and I feel his heart is racing in his chest. Thumping beneath my palm, resting in the center of his

chest. “Right now, your skin contact is the only thing keeping him from boiling alive, so you will remain in those cuffs until he is better.”

“But that means I will have to mate him. You just said his heat won’t stop, even if mine does.”

“Exactly,” Damian says, his eyes flickering onyx as he swallows before crossing his legs.

“What?” I murmur, horrified.

“I am not asking you to have sex with him, Azalea, but I am not letting you out of those cuffs until you have at least marked him, which will buy him a few more days. His life depends on it, so you need to put your issues aside and save your mate.”

I glance down at Kyson.

“I have watched kings and queens fall from war. I will not watch them fall from something that can be avoided, all because of a lack of communication because both of you are too stubborn to admit when you’re wrong.”

I open my mouth to speak, but he gets up.

“No, you will do this. You need to realize that being queen comes with responsibilities, responsibilities you do not understand, but your king does. You will die without him and him without you. Before you find another excuse, Abbie is fine, Dustin is fine, but your mate is not. He messed up by not believing you about Abbie, but he cannot make up for that mistake if he is dead.” Damian steps closer.

“So it is time for my queen to grow up and take responsibility for her own mistakes. You are both at fault for this, and now you need to fix it before another kingdom falls. Only this time, it would fall because of stubbornness and ego. And that is not worth dying for,” Damian says, storming off toward the door.

“Wait!” I shriek, scrambling to turn to face him without either exposing myself or climbing off Kyson. I only manage to tangle myself in the sheet. However, Damian stops and turns back to face me.

My face heats, and Damian purses his lips impatiently. “You don’t expect me to, um... he is asleep! And I don’t know what to do!”

Damian sighs and glances around, his eyes stopping on the bookcase. “You and Kyson have had sex,” he states, and my face heats at his words.

“No... I...” My face heats.

“Well, um... you...” he stutters for a second. I don’t know who is more mortified at his question, me or him at the idea of him giving me a sex

talk. Thankfully he doesn't give me the birds and the bees talk, our current chat is awkward enough.

Damian sighs. "Don't ignore your instincts. Your body knows what to do. It's a basic instinct. Listen to them. And think of it as sleeping beauty, you know that story?" he asks, and I nod. Kyson has read that and a few other princess books, one that even had a frog in it.

"Good, think of him as sleeping beastly then, but mark him instead of kissing him, though you can do that, too. Just make sure you mark him first. It will help him heal enough to complete the other part."

"So I only have to mark him, and he will wake up?"

"Maybe not right away, eventually, once his temperature goes down and the effects abate," he tells me, and I sigh, gazing down at Kyson. My anger toward him is not worth his life; Damian is right about that. I hear the door click shut and lock as he leaves.

Readjusting myself, I sit up, untangling the sheet, my legs straddling his waist, yet his arm is dead weight and heavy as I move. Using my free hand, I turn his face to the side before feeling my mark on my neck, wondering if it matters where I mark him. I have two marks from him and can feel they overlap each other, so I figure anywhere between the neck and shoulder must be OK. My gums tingle just at the mere thought of marking him.

His bare chest is inviting, and I want to run my tongue over it. Mark him first, I try to remind myself, shaking my head. I kind of wish Damian was still here. It is easier to keep my thoughts straight and fight the urges rolling over me.

Leaning down, his chest brushes against mine, making my skin electrify, and I moan at the feeling as it races toward the apex of my legs. I sniff his neck, his scent making my mouth water, and I feel my canines elongate when I run my tongue over his marking spot. My canines buzz as they graze his flesh and prick his skin. The moment his blood touches my tongue, I sink them into his neck. I intended to be gentle; however, my body has a mind of its own as I feel them slide through muscle and tissue before bottoming out when I bite him like a damn animal.

I briefly think I did it wrong when I am smashed with his aura and essence. I feel it roll over every inch of me, filling every atom and making every nerve come alive. My pupils dilate and expand, blowing wider and clearer. The feeling of him is bleeding into me, his life force moving through me and connecting to mine. It makes me gasp and choke on his blood as it fills my mouth.

My entire body buzzes and warms as our bond is forged and sealed. A sense of wholeness envelops me. I pull my teeth from his neck, running my tongue over his mark, and he shivers but does not wake. With a sigh, I lay down on him, burying my face in his neck and inhaling his scent. Please wake up.