

Sold as the Alpha King's Breeder

Chapter 225



Chapter 5 Aaron in Her Bedroom

Thadn't been prepared for this. None of it

I sat in my bed with my knees pressed against my chest, watching the light from the adjacent room, Aaron's room, spill into mine I hadn't curled up with a frilly romance novel like usual I had raged, attempting to push the heavy wardrobe against the shared door, unsuccessfully of course, and surrendered to turning off all the lights and slipping into bed, silent as a mouse And then I watched, sometimes holding my breath as an occasional silent shadow broke through the light visible beneath the door. He had crossed the room several times, the scraping sound of a dresser drawer being opened or the thump of a door closing the only sounds in what felt like the entire castle

Gemma tried to explain the reasoning behind removing the lock from the door. Horace had thought it would allow for privacy, less stress, and easier access for higher levels of success.

"There's no ceremony for this, Maeve! Not like with... with female breeders. The maids won't come and bathe you. He won't be escorted in. This is... up to you."

"This is ridiculous," I had replied, then I'd went into my room. I felt exposed knowing he was right next door, so close, with only a door between us.

But as much as I detested it, I understood the lack of ceremony and the strangely casual approach to the situation. I was not a lowly breeder sold to an Alpha as an object, something to control and then discard. I was a future Luna. I was the heir to my mother's title of White Queen. It would be me who held the entire Eastern Territory in the palm of my hand.

And the child I would produce would inherit it all of Valoria.

Gemma was right. It was up to me. Aaron was, in this situation, my subject. He was here for me to use. And, just like my father before me, I had an obligation to my pack to do exactly that.

I looked up as he turned off the lights in his room. My room was suddenly shrouded in complete darkness, the only light the pale glow of the moon dancing against the rapidly moving clouds.

I finally fell asleep to the sound of the curtains wafting in the stiff, humid breeze coming from the open window, too tired to get up and close it. The heat of the night lulled me into a deep, dreamless sleep...

A crash, then a shatter. I heard the shared door swing open and bounce against the wall, Aaron's voice ringing in my ears.

I threw the covers off and swung my legs out of bed, but Aaron grabbed me by the ankle just before my feet touched the carpet. He tossed me back against the mattress with force, then turned to the shattered window where a storm of epic proportions was raging just outside.

Thunder echoed around the room, shaking the scattering of hairpins and cosmetics sitting idle on my vanity. I saw the glass-covered carpet when lightning split the sky in two, a vibrant blue glow lighting up the room for a single second, He turned his gaze from the window, looking at me, his face drawn in deep lines of concern. "Are you okay?"

"Yeah. I'm alright." Another clap of thunder burst through the room and I screamed, unable to stop myself. The air was electric; the downy hairs on my arms standing straight on end as the lightning's glow filled the room with an eerie blue haze once again

He extended his hand to me, and I took it, gingerly stepping down onto the carpet. "There's no glass over here." His voice was drowned out by another boom, then another. I flinched each time, but he squeezed my hand, leading me through the shared door and into his room, where his window was still intact.

"Go back to sleep," he demanded, pulling on a faded denim jacket that had been draped over one of the high-back yellow armchairs near the empty hearth.

"Where are you going?"

"To make sure everyone's alright."

I nodded, shaken, and sat down on the edge of his bed. He went to the door to the hallway and flipped the light switch several times, glancing back at me with a look that told me he was concerned about leaving me alone, in the dark The power was out.

"I'll be fine," I whispered, trying to make myself believe it.

He nodded once, then disappeared through the door, leaving it slightly ajar.

I crawled over the bed on my hands and knees, curling into the space where he had been sleeping. I pulled the covers up to my chin, closing my eyes against the repeated blue glow of the lightning and sheets of rain slamming into the castle.

The bed smelled like him, and I was instantly comforted. His scent was like damp earth and green things, with a hint of musk. And something else, I realized, as I pulled the covers over my head to drown out the incessant claps of thunder.

I had never been to a beach, not one with soft sand and clear blue water. Whatever this scent was, well, it was exactly what I imagined being there would feel like. He smelled like heat, like the sun warming the wood on one of those great wooden ships from the fairytales my father told me. He smelled like the sun-beaten canvas of the sails and the salty spray of the ocean.

I must have fallen asleep eventually. I opened my eyes to the sun warming the bed around me. I had fallen asleep with the sheets over my head, but someone had pulled them down and tucked them around my body while I slept

I was alone; the space next to me in bed still made and cool to the touch. Aaron hadn't been back. At least, he hadn't slept here. I left the bed and opened the shared door. My room was extremely dark, with no light seeping through the broken window whatsoever. Someone had fixed a piece of plywood over the window sometime in the early morning, nailing it in place. I had slept through it all.

"These old windows... I'm surprised it took this long for something like this to happen. I've been hounding the Alpha to have them replaced for years," Jeb, the live-in handyman, glanced at me over his shoulder as he lifted a sheet of plywood over a shattered window in the kitchen as one of his associates screwed it in place. "Hounded your father about it too, Miss Maeve."

I shrugged, smiling softly to myself. Obviously replacing the centuries-old windows in the castle with double-pane glass was the last thing on my dad's mind during his time as Alpha.

Jeb and his crew began to pick up their tools, murmuring to each other as they did so. I turned to Gemma, who was watching them work with deep-set dark circles beneath her eyes. "Did you sleep at all?" I asked.

She shook her head, her green eyes glossed over from lack of sleep.

"Where is everyone?"

"Everyone's cleaning up. The servant's hall in the attic got the worst of the damage. We're on our own for breakfast," she said, yawning.

"I'm not that hungry-"

"Me neither," she said shortly, crossing her arms over her chest. "The Three Musketeers went into town to access the damage there." She was talking about Ernest and his Beta, as well as Horace. She shook her head, giving me a half smile. "I don't know what they think they can do on their own."

"And Aaron? Did he go with them?" I asked, not meaning to say it out loud. I blushed, turning away from Gemma and pretending to be invested in what Jeb's crew were doing as they began to assess the damage to the dining hall.

"I haven't seen him since last night. He was the one who got the servants out of the attic before the roof started to leak." She waved her hand, a strange look lining her face.

"He... my window shattered. He got me out of my room."

"Do you. do you remember him well? From before?" she asked suddenly, uncrossing her arms and picking at her sleeve. "He just... I remember him. I was twenty when his family visited Winter Forest, I thought I'd remember him well. you know? He looks and sounds nothing like-"

"It was a decade ago, Gem," I said firmly.

"Still, something just feels...off. Do you not feel it too? He's the guy you met in the market, isn't he?"

I looked at her, my heart dropping into my stomach. "He is. I didn't know-"

"See? Something's not adding up."

"I don't want to think about it right now," I breathed, looking down at my sneakers. I was dressed in the same jeans I wore yesterday and a loose, white chambray shirt. I hadn't bothered to brush my hair. It was tied in a large bun on the very top of my head.

Gemma looked away from me, glancing down at the watch on her wrist. "I've gotta go. Stay close by today, okay? I heard Mirage is a mess. I asked one of the warriors to check in on Myla for you."

I nodded my thanks, watching her walk briskly into the dining hall. I turned on my heel, then walked through a different door that led into a tight corridor that opened up to the kitchen garden and made my way outside.

The air was warm and humid, the clouds still hanging low and moving swiftly. Pockets of sun danced along the rolling fields, the once dry, yellow grass now heavy with moisture, the long blades bent from last night's downpour.

I walked, not paying attention to where I was going. The rain had bent the tall grass in a way that revealed the wolf trails that wound through the fields, the narrow trail systems leading up in the far distance where the forest began. I followed one trail, enjoying the heavy smell of rain and cool mist on my face.

The fog was thick as I reached the crest of a hill, and I couldn't see the ground beneath my feet as I descended into the swirling gray. I could see a group of buildings in the distance, a small outcrop of abandoned barns and sheds. The faded gray wood of the buildings melted into the fog that danced around them and the moss-covered roofs blended in with the deep green of the forest beyond.

Nature had reclaimed the buildings. The forest looked as though it was reaching out, pulling the buildings back into its depths. I felt a chill run up my spine as I neared. It was an eerie place, so entirely quiet and empty.

But as I came near I heard a rustling sound, and then someone came into view between the cracked and rotten boards of one of the dilapidated sheds. I stopped walking and crouched in the grass, watching the figure move like a ghost behind the boards.

I caught a glimpse of dark hair as the figure bent down, one long, tanned arm reaching toward the ground.

"Aaron?" I called out, standing to my full height. He hadn't heard me, apparently. I walked over to the shed, stumbling over the scattered, moss-covered stone bricks that were hidden in the tall grass. "Aaron!" I called again, and this time he did hear me, his head popping up over the boards.

"What are you doing out here?" he snapped.

I stopped walking abruptly, surprised by his tone. "...walking?"

"Walking? Alone?"

"Uh, yeah? What's the matter?"

He was pale, his eyes creasing into slits as he stuffed something into the pocket of his jacket. I couldn't see what it was he had been holding, the action blocked from view by the half-wall of rotten planks. "You shouldn't be out here by yourself. You're going to get snatched by a rogue."

"There's no rogues this close to Mirage," I said, shaking my head. I stepped closer to the building, watching my step as the fog rolled over the stone bricks.

"You can't possibly know that for sure." He stepped out of the shed, stopping at the threshold. "Plus, this place is dangerous. It's falling to pieces."

"Well, you're here, aren't you?" I stepped forward again. He held out his hand in a gesture to stop,

"Seriously Maeve, get out of here."

"Why?"

"Because I said so!" He was angry; I could feel it.

"Why are you upset? Do you own this shed, Aaron?"

"No, but

**? want to look inside!"

"Get back!" He blocked the entrance, his hands pressing into what was left of the doorframe. I could see the corner of a piece of paper sticking out of his jacket pocket, flapping in the breeze,

"What is that? In your pocket?"

"None of your business," he growled, narrowing his eyes at me. "If you don't back away from this building right now-"

A cracking sound made us both jump, and he leaped out of the way just as the walls gave way, falling inward and splitting into pieces as it hit the ground.

"You see?" he said angrily, stomping over to where I was standing. He gripped me by the upper arm and yanked me backward away from the shed.

"Let go of me! Who do you think you are?" I dug in my heels as he pulled me away from the buildings and back into the tall grass, struggling against his strength. I abruptly let my legs go limp, which caused him to stumble, my dead-weight pulling him into the grass.

"What are you, a toddler? Get up, we're going back."

"Let go of my arm!" I screamed, reaching up to grab his jacket. I pulled him further into the grass until he lost his balance completely. He crashed into me, crushing me with his weight. "Get off!" I choked, pushing him to the side. He rolled off, the both of us laying on our backs in the wet grass.

The piece of paper that had been in his pocket lay between us on the ground.

I reached for it, but he caught my hand, squeezing so hard I could feel my bones scraping together. He snatched the paper up with his other hand, putting it back in his pocket and rose, his face red with fury.

"What is it, Aaron? Do you have a secret lover, or something?" I scrambled to my feet, my clothes damp and heavy from the wet grass. He was staring at me so intensely it made my chest tighten with anticipation for whatever fight was coming next. My fingers throbbled where he had squeezed my hand.

He stepped forward, closing the distance between us. A chill ran up my spine as he reached down, running his hand along my jaw.

What are you going to do?" I taunted. "Break my neck?"

He grabbed the back of my neck, holding me there while he looked deep into my eyes. I opened my mouth to taunt him further, but I was interrupted by his sudden urge to nip, his lips hot and urgent.

His tongue ran along my lower lip, and I opened my mouth to him, my body relaxing into his chest as he wrapped his arms around me.

But then he pushed me away, hard, and I stumbled backward and fell flat on my bottom. He turned around and stomped away, disappearing into the tall grass.