

Sold as the Alpha King's Breeder

Chapter 240



Chapter 20: Just Like Your Mother

Troy-Three Nights Ago

"Troy. So, you came."

As if I had a choice. Romero was the whole reason I was in this place, trying not to get struck by lightning or drown in the unrelenting humidity while Aaron was stranded on a beach in the Isles of Denali, enjoying a cool drink and tanning his nearly translucent skin on the soft, white sand.

I eyed Romero coolly as he neared, his cane tapping against the stone floor with each slow step in my direction.

"You look like your mother," he said with a strange, slightly menacing smile. I bit the inside of my lip to stop myself from saying anything, willing myself to have a filter for the first time in my life. "But I understand that you wouldn't know her, would you?"

I swallowed, tucking my hands in my pockets.

"Ah, yes. That's what I thought." Romero finally reached the bars, sitting down on a stool. The action took most of his strength, and he was quiet for a moment as his heavy breathing returned to normal. "You know I've been up here for twenty years, Troy?"

I nodded, once, watching the man as he coughed into his fist.

"Ah, yes. Twenty years in this tower. Almost longer than that Alpha below us has been alive, did you know that? I'm sure you assumed he wasn't the man that put me here, no, that was Talon. The half-wit's father. Ethan's Beta. Of course, King James was still in power then." He looked away from me toward the landing of the stairs, snickering. "Ethan. Ha! Tell me, have you seen his girl? The daughter, what was her name... Maeve? Say, does she look like her mother? Do you know who I'm talking about?"

"She looks like Ethan, Romero," I said bluntly, color rising in my cheeks at the mention of Maeve's name. In truth, I only knew what Ethan looked like from the handful of portraits I had seen scattered around the castle, but the resemblance was uncanny. Maeve was her father's daughter, the fair version of her father's dark and brooding characteristics.

"Ah, so he speaks more than one word at a time," he laughed, a dry choking sound that made the hair on my arms stand on end. "I was told you didn't start talking until you were five years."

"I didn't have much to say," I growled, struggling to maintain my composure. I hadn't needed to say much as a child, anyway, having grown up bouncing from island to island in the Isles, working on the ships for the pack of Poldesse that crept through the waters like ghosts in the mist. I was one of many orphaned or abandoned boys absorbed by the pack and used like workhorses.

But I was different. I had Alpha blood. I was a descendant of Romero. My mother was his daughter, Madalynn.

He chuckled. "So she looks like Ethan, eh? How unfortunate for the girl. Her mother was a real beauty at one time. Ethan's breeder, she was." He paused, his beady blue eyes creasing with mirth. "And a sl*t."

I was taken aback by this comment and narrowed my eyes on him. "What are you talking about?"

He didn't answer.

Romero peered at me through the bars, his eyes cloudy with age. I wondered briefly if he could see very well at all now. "When do they come? The reinforcements?"

"A month, give or take," I said shortly, watching his face fall and his eyes narrow.

"Ha! Damian has lost his grip on those wolves, hasn't he? Insolent sod."

"You realize what you asked of us, right? How difficult it will be to get you out of Valoria?" I sneered, stepping forward. I had heard of Romero, and had known we shared blood. That's why I had been sent to Valoria when word of Ethan's plans for the future of his family's hold on Valoria trickled down through the trade route. His daughter was being used to bring forth a new heir, the breeder a man from his new alliance with the Red Lakes pack.

Aaron, that little bastard, the man who had been so willing to divulge a wealth of knowledge about Maeve's family and their whereabouts but failed to mention a massive injury he acquired in Maeve's presence. That missing piece had almost blown my mission.

"Damian needs me, Troy, in more ways than one."

I was surprised by this comment. Damian had been the Alpha of Poldesse for decades. He had been doing a fine job of it, too. He was a fair leader, but this Romero? Something behind his eyes rubbed me the wrong way.

"Oh, he didn't tell you, did he?" He laughed, a shrill sound that echoed off the stone walls. "Tell me, what is your mission, exactly?"

"I-" I paused, watching as the man's face stretched into a huge, sinister grin. "I'm here to facilitate your release. I'm acting as a spy for Poldesse."

"Horace is the spy, boy!" He threw his head back in laughter, showcasing his white, straight teeth. He was in good health for a man of his age, especially for an ancient man who had been held captive in a dusty, cobweb-covered tower for two decades. He was being taken care of here.

He stopped laughing abruptly, narrowing his eyes at me. Menace flashed behind them as he stretched his mouth into another wide, deranged smile. "You're here to be a breeder for the girl."

"Well, yeah. That's my cover."

"No, Troy. You need to be successful. We need to break the chain. We must ensure that the child has your blood. My blood. The child will be our heir."

I felt myself pale. I knew there was a chance I'd have to sleep with Maeve if the reinforcements didn't show up in time to cause their planned chaos and free Romero from his tower. I had been looking forward to it, actually, my skin prickling with warmth at the thought of her smooth skin and full lips, the way her breasts filled the fabric of her cream-colored blouse that I had stained with charcoal only hours earlier.

But in the event I had to fulfill the duties of a breeder, I planned on doing everything I could to prevent a pregnancy from happening.

"Why?" I asked, stepping toward the bars. "What need do you have of an heir? Damian is the Alpha now."

"Damien is only Alpha in name, you fool. Don't you see? Have you not been told of Rosalie and her witch blood? The same blood that swims through the veins of her child? Maeve has the same powers. The same powers we need."

"Healing powers? Why? So we can mend scratches and broken limbs--"

"There's more to it. There's so much more to it."

"I will not allow her to get preg—"

He held his hands up to interrupt me, his eyes narrowed into slits. "Don't let her trap you with her powers of seduction, boy. That witch has no feelings for you outside of her own gains.

She thinks you're Aaron, does she not? What will happen when she finds out the truth--"

"She won't. I'll be long gone by then. So will you--"

He laughed, gripping the bars with both hands. "Oh, Troy, my child. My heir. You are just as stupid as your mother."

I stepped away from him, hands clenched into fists at my sides. "Tell me everything!" I hissed, shaking with fury.

"Do you realize how easily I could be freed from this tower, Troy? Horace has the very key to my prison. He's been the advisor to the half-wit Alpha for ten years, ten years I could've been free of this place. Do you know why I remain? Why I rot away in the tower?" He let go of the bars and reached down, his back cracking as he groped in the dim light for his cane. He rose to his full height, leaning on the cane for support. "Ethan. Ethan is the reason. He and that whore unraveled my plans and destroyed my kingdom. He was supposed to be your father, did you know that? He was supposed to marry your mother and bind our packs together. But he chose the breeder and their spawn."

"What does this have to do with Maeve? Why wait for your freedom until now?"

"Because!" he sneered, pointing to me with his cane before bringing it back down with a thundering clap. "I wanted Rosalie. I wanted access to her powers. She was the key, you see, to a fortune beyond anything you could ever imagine. A treasure beyond the scope of our world--"

"You're mad! You've lost your damn mind-" "Her blood can open doors, Troy. I lost my chance with Rosalie. But they had a girl child. The next White Queen. She is my key now. And the child she births will fertilize our family tree, paving the way for wolves more powerful than you can possibly imagine--"

"You're delusional--"

"And oh, you are no mere breeder my boy. No. When the reinforcements come and rid the pack of Ethan's stain, putting Poldesse on its rightful throne... well, you will be my heir. You will rule as Alpha."

"You're going to wipe out pack Drogomor," I said, my voice falling flat as my cheeks began to warm with a mingled sense of fury and desperation. "This was the plan all along, to wipe them out, to kill Ernest and his court--"

He nodded, his teeth glimmering in the yellow light.

I stepped forward, my head bent and shoulders squared. "Ernest and Maeve are innocent, Romero."

"Maybe, but it's of no consequence to me. Ernest must die. So must Rowan, Ethan's son. Once word of my escape and take over of Drogomor is circulated, Ethan and his son will come to rescue their precious Maeve. They will never return to the North. I will bury their bones beneath the castle. I will make Maeve watch."

"And what of her? Will you kill her like you so stupidly plan to do with the rest of the pack? You're planning on starting a war, Romero!"

"Yes..." he smiled, his thin lips stretching over his teeth, "a war we will win... unlike last time. Everything will be mine."

This man was deranged, totally and completely out of his mind. I would be talking to Horace about this. I needed to get a letter to Damian as soon as possible.

"I won't do this," I said, turning away from him and taking a step toward the door.

"Oh, poor little Maeve, then."

"What do you mean?"

"I'm sure she'd rather have you between her legs than myself." He sat on the edge of his bed, setting his cane on the mattress. "Although I can't say I wouldn't enjoy her screams--"

"You won't lay a hand on her!" I screamed, rounding on him. If we weren't separated by the bars, I would have reached out and wrapped my hands around his throat, snapping his neck.

"Then do your job," he spat, eyes glowing yellow in the candlelight.

"What's going to happen to her?" I said, watching his face twist with mirth.

"The same thing that should have happened to her mother. Once the child is born, I'll have no use for her. She'll be disposed of."

"I won't let that happen!"

"Then you'll meet the same fate, Troy. You don't have a choice."

Troy-The Library

"We can go north, Maeve. North across the tundra. No one knows what's on the other side. I could... I could take you home. Where you'd be-where you'd be safe."

The words I had said to her as I pressed her against the wall in the alleyway the night before still rang in my ears. I should have just done it, whether with her willingness or by force. I should have picked her up and ran, stealing through the night until we reached the port and tossed her on a ship. I would have. I really would have done it, if we hadn't been interrupted and my strength hadn't been needed elsewhere. I had already been reeling from too much drink, my already weak filter totally useless as I begged between kisses to run.

I couldn't let that happen again. I wouldn't let myself take advantage of her. I would be her breeder in name only. And if I had to touch her, well, no child would come forth from our union. I would die before I let Romero get his hands on her baby.

Our baby.

I rolled off the couch, my head pounding and mouth dry. It was late morning, the sun beating through the windows and casting low shadows on the long, dusty carpets. It smelled strongly of leather and ink in the library, the intense heat of the day seemingly melting the ink from the pages of the thousands of books that lined the walls.

I folded the blanket that had been draped over my body sometime in the early morning, setting it gently on the end of the couch and left the quiet confines of the library, my feet tapping on the stone pavers in the hallway as I made my way back to my room. I was sore from the fight, my bare chest bruised and my nose feeling stuffed up and slightly throbbing.

"Healing powers, huh?" I said under my breath. Maeve must have forgotten she had them, because she definitely didn't offer me any assistance.

I sniffed, reaching up to wipe dried blood from my nose when Horace appeared in front of me. "Jeez!" I stammered, jumping backward as he practically floated out of a shadowed doorway like a ghost. "Can you make some noise every once in a while?"

"She's ready. Go to her tonight. Do your duty," Horace said dryly, as though what he was telling me to do was like telling me to brush my teeth or give me directions to the nearest pub.

"You knew all along, didn't you?"

Horace only looked at me, his beady black eyes totally expressionless.

"Does Damian know about this plot? To start a war, to kill off the Drogomor families and take over the pack?"

Again, no answer. He looked me up and down, his eyes settling back on mine with a chilling intensity.

"If you don't comply with Romero's demands, Maeve will meet an unimaginable end, Troy."

He disappeared as quickly as he had come, and I stood alone in the corridor once more.