

## Kings Breeder 338

Sold As The Alpha King's Breeder Chapter 338

Chapter 118: The Isles in Ruins

Maeve

Keaton was standing with his arms crossed, peering up at the ceiling of the sprawling foyer of the castle of Poldesse. The ceiling was gone, however, having crumbled away long ago. Vines had taken over the entire area, and the walls were covered in graffiti. I thought it rather artistic, especially the more colorful graffiti with even more colorful language.

Troy, however, was deeply stressed.

"Your dad did this on purpose. He's testing us-" he huffed, kicking pieces of fallen sheetrock as we walked through the remains of the castle.

"What? Was he the one who ripped this place apart?" I said as I ran my fingers along the banister of the wide marble staircase as we started up the stairs.

"No, but he knew how much work was needed when he sent us here-"

"It was a hurricane, roughly fifteen years ago now. Tore the roof right off the castle, just like that," Keaton interjected, snapping his fingers.

"Good Goddess, a hurricane did this?" | gasped, looking around at the destruction.

"It wasn't nearly that bad. Negligence is the cause of this," Troy said curtly, grabbing me by the elbow as he led me over a mass of vines that snaked down a wide, shadowed hallway.

"This is insane," I breathed as the three of us continued our inspection of the castle. It was a huge building, at least twice the size of the castle Drogomor, but in such a state I thought it unlikely we'd be able to live in it any time soon, if at all. Some rooms were definitely livable and had been used in at least the last year or so, but I wasn't sure I wanted the boys there when part of it was in this state of disrepair.

"Did Damian live here?" | asked as we walked through a huge bedroom with glass still in the windows and the wood floors still intact.

"Yeah, he did. Once he left the house Soren used to live in when he was in charge here, apparently, or so I'm told. The northern wing of the castle is in good shape, from what I can tell. But there's no running water or electricity=" Troy began, testing a light switch along the wall. Keaton pursed his lips, his arms still crossed over his chest as he looked out the window to the sea below.

"I say raze the place and start over. It's falling into the sea."

| "I think it's our only option," Troy agreed, but I could tell it wasn't what he wanted to do. He was troubled by the notion

of tearing the castle down, but it went further than us needing a place to live.

“What if we didn’t? What if we mended it?” | asked, looking from Keaton to Troy.

Keaton laughed, but Troy looked at me, his eyes boring into mine.

“It could take us years-”

“This castle has been here for hundreds of years. It’s a landmark, surely. We can’t just tear it down and build some thing new. I know that’s not what you want.”

Troy’s mouth twitched at the corner, fighting back a smile.

There was one problem, however. A problem Lynus had made very, very clear.

“We have absolutely no money,” Keaton protested, then paused, clearing his throat. “Well, I have money, but you don’t-

t-”

“I’m not going to ask you to sell your earrings to help us rebuild the castle, don’t worry,” Troy teased, sitting down on the edge of the bed. A puff of dust came up off the bare mat tress when he sat.

“Romero hid his money somewhere. It’s not in the bank of Avondale. It’s likely not here, in the castle. No one knows where it is.”

11 pha che “But wouldn’t Damian have had access to it, as Alpha?” | asked, crossing the room to inspect the vanity. Old bottles of perfume sat covered in dust, their contents having gone ran cid long ago. I wondered who this room had belonged to, but then thought better of it, knowing of only one woman who could have lived in this castle. Maddalyn.

“I doubt it. Damian had his own sources of income. That’s gone too, likely plundered away by his cronies in his absence. I don’t think he had much, anyway, based on what Carl said about their deal.”

“He did turn a blind eye to the riches in the tomb,” I re minded Troy, “He made such an awful mess of things. If he had taken a moment to inspect the content of those vases, like you said, he would’ve found enough gold to repair the whole of the Isles-” | tapered off as the energy in the room shifted, and turned very slowly from the vanity, catching the silent exchange that passed between Troy and Keaton. “No, absolutely not-”

“It’s not like it’s something we haven’t done before, Maeve,” Keaton said with alacrity, leaning against the wall near the windows. “We know the way, I have that haunted compass on the ship, still. Hell, we could be there and back within a few weeks in this weather.”

“No!” | cried, turning my attention to Troy, who only shrugged. “I-I have an inheritance, I’m sure. We could ask my

dad”

“We’re not asking your father for money, Maeve. This might be part of his territory, but Damian is the one who fucked it up,” Troy said sternly, shaking his head. “This is the only way, and plus, the riches in the tomb will help jumpstart the changes I want to see in the isles; better schools, clinics-”

“I’m going with you, obviously,” I started, my cheeks color ing as panic prickled across my skin.

“No... you’re not. You need to stay here and be Luna. And be with the boys. Keaton and I can handle this.”

I gaped at him, then turned to Keaton, who arched a brow at me in challenge.

“It was your idea, princess,” Keaton said.

“It wasn’t an idea-”

“It was the best idea, and our only option, unless Romero’s fortune falls out of the walls on our way out of here. Do you want to live on the Persephone for the rest of our lives, or do you want a home to live in, with a big, gated garden for the boys to play in?” Troy leaned back, crossing his ankle over his knee.

“One problem out of many;” I sneered, placing my hands on my hips, “is who is going to buy the artifacts you bring back from the tomb.”

“Oh, that’s simple,” Keaton replied, a broad grin on his face. “Tempest.”

“Tempest? The High Priestess?”

“Of course,” Troy added, a similar smile touching his mouth. “The Church wanted the artifacts to begin with, that’s how Tasia and Carl got Grace to betray your father. Tempest will buy them from us, and we won’t undersell, trust me.”

I gaped at them, shaking my head, but I couldn’t deny the look of glee in their eyes. This wasn’t what I meant when I told

Troy I was ready for our next adventure.

“This is the only way, babe.”

I closed my eyes, breathing deeply the dusty, dank air of the decrepit castle, and resigned myself to the fact that Troy and Keaton were right.

“Fine,” I bit out, glaring at both of them.

“Fine, it’s settled. In the meantime, we’ll find somewhere for you ladies and the young princes to live while we’re gone.” Keaton turned to the door, which was hanging off its hinges.

“And where exactly is that going to be? I asked, following Troy and Keaton out of the room. Troy looked over his shoulder at me, a smile touching the corner of his mouth.

“Lynus will explain everything over lunch,” he said, and we left the castle.

The Oceanview neighborhood was like nothing I had ever seen before. Large mansions made of pure marble rose from the palm trees atop a large bluff, which gave the neighborhood its name, giving an expansive view of the turquoise sea.

The mansions were run down, the gardens overgrown and the drive, which hadn’t seen a car driven up the wide, sand colored street in ages, was cracked and split from rich green grasses growing between the splinters in the pavement. It was, nonetheless, a very glamorous place, and people still

lived in the mansions despite their run-down state.

The inhabitants of the neighborhood were the once wealthy elite of the Isles, many of whom had pledged loyalty to Romero at one point in time. But those who were loyal to Romero were very old now, judging by the looks of the man standing at the edge of his property, watching the crew of the Persephone carry our things into our temporary home. The old man narrowed his eyes at me, pointing his cane in a menacing

fashion.

I straightened up a bit, shifting Oliver's weight in my arms as I narrowed my eyes back at him, sizing him up. A man roughly my father's age came bounding out of their house, waving at me apologetically as he leaned to whisper harshly in the ear of the man I assumed was his father.

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Whatever his son said didn't seem to persuade the old man to move on, however. He opened the gate to their garden and started forward, swatting at his son as he slowly reached the street and began to cross it.

I looked around for Troy, who was nowhere to be found. Myla, however, who was going to be living with us while Keaton and Troy went to recover the riches from the tomb, saw the old man and his son approaching and quickly came to my side.

The son stepped past his father and reached the edge of our front garden in a few long strides, bowing his head apologetically.

"I'm Randal Croftworthy," he panted, then tilted his head toward his elderly father, "That's my father, Alfred. He's a mean old man, just a warning. He wants to know what you're doing moving into this house."

"Tell 'em to get lost, or else!" Alfred said in a gravelly voice from the middle of the street. Randal shook his head, shrugging helplessly.

"I'm Maeve, Luna of Poldesse."

"Luna, oh Goddess—" Randal bowed his head, quite taken aback as he lifted it again, meeting my eye. "I am sorry, Luna, for approaching you so casually. We haven't had— haven't had a Luna since I was a young boy, you see. I had heard a new Alpha was coming, the son of Princess Maddalyn, but we—"

"This isn't your house!" barked Alfred as he reached the gate, pointing at me with a gnarled finger.

"Dad, listen—"

"Grandpa! It's too hot for you to be out of the shade!" came a feminine voice from across the street. A young woman with rich brown hair came running, followed by another woman close in age with Randal.

"No, no. Everyone go back to the house!" Randal looked exceedingly embarrassed as he motioned for the two women to go away, but curiosity got the best of them.

I was then introduced to his wife and daughter, one of the four children they shared that lived at the mansion across the street.

Randal sheepishly explained that most of the mansions that were still lived in were multigenerational or housed multiple families who shared resources.

From his conversation, I deduced how bad things in the isles really were. Damian had ruled with an iron fist and rationed basic needs like water so his most loyal followers could have more. Damian had controlled everything, the food, the money, the trade routes.... It had been hell.

No wonder Alfred was still yelling at me as his son tried to reason with him.

These people had been abused for a long, long time.

“What can I do?” | asked, my voice cutting through the frantic chatter of Randal and his family as they tried to calm their patriarch down.

“What can you do?” Randal replied, confused.

“How can I... how can I make things better for you? For your family and the other families of the Isles?”

They all stared at me for a moment, blinking several times. | shifted Oliver in my arms again, bouncing him gently as he started to fuss.

By the time Randal and his family had stopped and taken their leave back across the street, I was sweating, and my head was brimming with a seemingly endless to-do list.

The castle wasn't the only thing in ruins; the Isles were as well.

I finally went into our temporary home and found Troy. He was already packing for his journey through the pass.

Everything felt rushed.

“Troy,” | said softly, laying Oliver down on our bed. Troy broke his gaze from the duffle bag he was packing, looking up at me. “We have a lot of work to do.”