



Chapter 25

Darian called for the frumpy old lady to show me around and she did, though with a scowl deeper than her wrinkles.

She was clear to mention the parts of the house that were too good for my presence, such as the king's office, his bedroom, the meeting hall and then she opted to disclose that the attached building was much more suitable for people like me.

She opened the door to my new room. The immediate smell of chlorine hit my face followed by a strong whiff of rubbing alcohol. It was like they had scrubbed every inch of the room with strong chemicals, either to mask my scent and make it sure it didn't stick to anything or they were trying to mask someone else's.

Perhaps there was a girl here before me. I couldn't imagine I was the first to be chosen as his mate after his wife's death years ago.

She grunted behind me and eagerly let out a warning.

"Be as little as possible and maybe you'll live to see your next birthday,"

I turned around and watched her shrinking lips press together in a thin line.

I saw now that she had a name tag.

'Mrs. Smith'

How original.

She was staring at me like she tried to see into my soul and I couldn't tell if it was because I was new or if it was something else but this lady did not



like me.

"Stay out of his way." She snarled.

"Gladly," I countered, about to turn and grab my bags that had been placed in the room when Mrs. Smith's hand connected with my cheek. Her chunky metal ring stabbed into my flesh and blood ran in a path down the side of my face. My head twisted to the side and the burn throbbed all throughout the side of my face.

I looked at her in shock, unable to hide it.

"Do not disrespect the king in front of me," she seethed, her lip pulled back over her teeth showing the black stains.

I stood in silence and gawked at her.

What were the rules - and how was I expected to follow them if I didn't have any guidelines?

But of course that question was about to be answered for me.

"Someone will come get you in fifteen minutes and take you to your disciplinarian class,"

"My what?" I asked.

"If you are to stand next to the king and walk the palace halls then you are expected to behave accordingly. Mr Bates will teach you just that," Mrs. Smith scanned me from top to bottom, she flicked her tongue over her lips like a snake and groaned when she turned to leave.

I unpacked the little things I had time for and noticed that they had been thorough when taking my things from my parents house. It wouldn't



surprise me if my mother packed these bags the day of the Hunt and sat by the door waiting for someone to come and get them.

I wondered what their reaction was when they found out it was the king who had marked me.

I felt the anxiety washing over me when I saw my mom's face light up at the news that her daughter had been marked by the Lycan King. That's all they would hear, Hazel was chosen by the king. Nobody would hear about the pain or the sacrifice or the disciplinarian classes. Whatever the hell those were.

The knock on the door that pulled my attention would most likely explain it to me.

When I opened the door I was met with a woman in her fifties, younger than Mrs. Smith and with a kinder appearance.

"I'm Miss Elise. I'm here to escort you to your class," she said formally with a sweet velvet voice.

We walked down the hall without saying a word to each other and I took the time to look at everything that we passed in the big hallways.

The art and the architecture were immaculate. How some walls bent in large arches when going from hallway to hallway.

There were framed pictures where the person's face looked blurry, unlike the others that were meticulously detailed.

I stopped and walked closer to get a better look and my heart dropped into my stomach when I saw that it wasn't dust or bad pixels; someone had burnt the face of the photo.

"Some things are not to be spoken of."

I jumped from the startle when Miss Elise spoke from up close as she stood looking over my shoulder.

"We should go, we don't want you to be late," she turned her head swiftly but not before I saw the tremor on her face.

She walked at a fast pace with her hands clasped in front of her body and didn't say another word as we crossed the bridge onto the attached building. I saw names and titles on some of the lesser-maintained doors. This was where the help lived. It dawned on me now that this was why Mrs. Smith said it more suited for me, in a place where rank was everything she viewed me as many steps below the king.

After two turns in a much less decorated hallway, we stood in front of a black door.

Miss Elise turned the knob and let the door fall open whilst remaining outside.

She visibly gulped, her eye twitched when she looked at me and she lowered her head.

"Good luck," she whispered.

Walking in I saw a man dressed in black and he stood tall in front of a mirror that covered the entire wall.

He held a cane in one hand and slowly spun it as he faced me.

"Close the door," he ordered with a grim look stretching across his face.