

Chapter 18

KINGSTON

Audrey stirs awake on the chair, and her friend Rita keeps fanning her as she comes around. Her eyes flutter open and closed a few times before she can keep them open again. "Are you okay, Audrey?" I ask her, I knew today would be upsetting to see but she insisted on coming despite having been sick the last two days.

She nods, "Yes, babe. I just—"

Mom sighs, her tone wary. "Please don't tell me you got her pregnant."

Pregnant?

"No," I immediately deny it, my eyes flickering between her and Aeliana. Both of them look equally concerned about the possibility but Audrey isn't pregnant. She can't be, but just to be sure, I ask her. "Audrey?"

"You're right," she nods. "I'm not pregnant, Luna Estelle."

Mom lets out a sigh of relief, she doesn't even bother hiding it. "And you should remain so."

"Yes," Audrey's mother seconds. She wasn't keen on attending today but Mom personally invited her and declining the Luna's invite is an insult.

"Well, now that she's conscious again," Damien begins, scratching the back of his head. "We should get going, you know—prep for the after-party."

"You go, I'm not coming." I declare, "I'm not in the mood to party or pretend I'm ecstatic." I simply say.

It's a short answer, an easier answer. Really I can't be around Aeliana another second without losing my mind. Blame it on this bond but from the moment I saw her in her dress, something snapped in me.


"So you're going straight to your honeymoon?" Father asks.

"There will be no honeymoon, I married her, I did what you wanted and that is that. Don't ask me for anything more than necessary."

"Kingston," Audrey tugs at my arm. "Please don't talk to your Uncle Dante in that tone, he'll be offended."

Aeliana rolls her eyes.

Not even her horrible temper takes away from how stunning she looks and I'm infuriated by that. How can someone be so physically unflawed that you forget their intangible flawed attributes the second their eyes meet yours?

Again. Blame it on the matebond. 

I haven't been able to fully focus, not since she practically moaned while holding my hand, not since I tasted her lips again after what felt like a painful eternity.

Aeliana's brother Gareth clears his throat. "Well, umm. We should get going. Congratulations once more, I hope you two are very happy together."

Even I wish that.

But she'll never allow it, she'll never change for the better.

Something flickers in Aeliana's eyes. I know that look, she didn't hear a word of what he said. "Gareth," she calls out, leaning over. "Can you

guys drop me off at home on your way to your house?”

Gareth pauses, eyes wide as he stares around as if looking for something.
“Umm, I don't—”

“What?” she frowns, “I can pay you for gas if that's the issue. I'm literally on your way, it won't break your leg to drop me at home.”

“You can't go home, Aeliana.”

Now, it's her eyes that widen, the same that his did but much more captivating. I have to rise from my seat before anyone can see how that's affecting me.

“You're married now, sweetie.” Mom laughs. “You live at the packhouse —King's packhouse.”

“What?” She gasps. Genuinely shocked, like she didn't expect to or have any plans of staying at the packhouse. It makes me wonder just how it is that her little brain works. Is she pretending the wedding didn't happen?

“No,” she shakes her head. “But I—what? Why?”

“You're married,” her mom says, confused. “Liana baby..”

“What did you think this ceremony was for?” her sister inlaw, Gareth's wife laughs. “You're married now, littlest Sis, that means you're his problem.”

She nods, appearing a little confused still. “But I still have to get my things.”

“We already sent them,” Gamma Hartley informs her. It's true, her things arrived this morning.

Aeliana smiles, wide and fake. "Thank you, father. How thoughtful."