

Chapter 25

KINGSTON

I've been married for all six days and I hate it.

I've only seen my wife twice, but heard her name more than necessary. There have been several complaints about her, some direct, some that I've had to overhear. The staff are having a hard time and I'm having a hard time with the man who forced me into marrying her.

Father moved my inauguration all because I wouldn't take a few days off or take his shining princess on a honeymoon. A honeymoon neither one of us wants. And what's worse is had to find out from Rowan, he couldn't even tell me that to my face.

I'm headed to Alpha Draven's pack to settle some territorial boundaries, his pack has begun to invade mine and is making my people on the south end suffer for their own resources. An ongoing problem that he won't help me solve, and today, if he doesn't back down I will have to step into my inner Dante and apply physical pressure.

On my way from retrieving my new car keys from the office, I run into Danielle. "Alpha Kingston," she greets. "I thought you and Rowan left already."

"No, Rowan is running a few errands but he's almost here so we should be leaving soon."

Danielle nods, "Good luck with Alpha Darven."

"Wait," I clear my throat. "Can you do me a favour?"

"Sure, anything for you." She instantly agrees. "But not a trip with your girlfriend again, my ears are in recovery mode from last time."



"No trips," I say, my words accompanied by a nervous laugh. Audrey can talk anyone's ear off, but telling her to stop talking makes you feel guilty. "I just need— forget it." I shake my head.

"No, Why?"

"It's stupid," I snicker, successfully talking myself out of it. It's about Aeliana, I tried to ignore Aeliana's injury just about as much as she does hurting others but I couldn't. I flinched when I saw her bleeding and call it nothing. I'm not sure if it healed just fine too. "Forget I said anything."

"No," she grabs my arm. "You asked for a favour, so it's nothing. Tell me what you wanted or I'll have Rowan extract it from you and use it as a bedtime story."

"I just wanted to ask that you have someone make sure Aeliana wears shoes around the house."

Her forehead creases, "What?"

"She hurt her foot a few days ago and I had to tend the wound because mother was here," I explain, the memory making me flinch again. "But it's stupid, she's an adult, she can wear shoes, right?"

"Yeah, and no," she shrugs. "If she is used to walking around barefoot in her house that means that she unconsciously does it here too."

"Oh," I pause. The thought hadn't crossed my mind. I didn't consider the possibility of her having grown new habits that I'm not aware of. Another reminder of just how little I know her.

"And it's not stupid," Danielle lets out a light laugh, teasing. "I think it's cute that you worry, she is your mate."

"I'm not worried," I argue, not in the way she makes it out to be. "It's



only so I don't have to deal with injuries like that. I'm a very busy person."

"Of course," Danielle nods, her tone mocking. "But you could have just left her to handle it on her own."

"Mom was there."

"I see," she nods. "Well, how about we hire or assign her a personal assistant or in-house maid as you did for Audrey?"

"No," I repudiate. That's the worst idea. She already tried to fire Tina and Tina works solely for Audrey. "She'll terrorise the poor thing."

"Nobody likes her here, so I guess that wouldn't work still."

"Can I ask you something?" I ask, looking around for anyone listening. "You're home a lot." I trail off.

She nods, "Twenty hours a day or more."

"How has she been?" I ask, my tone casual.

Danielle squeals, her excitement palpable. She has this deluded idea that things could work out between Aeliana and me. "Ouuu, you're worried about her!"

"No," I counter, my voice firm, deceiving. "I meant to ask how she is with people." I swallow, "How are they interacting?"

Danielle laughs, "Right. In that case, I should say I haven't paid attention but it is no secret that your people hate her." She says, her tone low, almost like she pities her. "The staff gossip about her all day, the pack members outside and inside the house do too. But she seems to have a way with pets."



"Pets?" I frown.

Aeliana has never had a pet or expressed the need for one. The closet she ever got to a real pet was a fish and even that disappeared out of nowhere.

"Yeah, my nephew's cat seems to like her." He tells me, "That thing hates everyone and everything but it let her pet it."

"Probably because they're of the same grumpy untamed nature," I snort out a laugh, unable to resist not cracking the joke. Aeliana comes in from the foyer, dressed in the same outfit she had on two days prior, a sports bra so small it makes it hard to look at anything else but the way her breasts are practically suffocating. "Oh speaking of the devil." I smile, nodding over Danielle's shoulder.