

Chapter 13

KYSON

I pace outside the small infirmary; the doctor kicked me out because I was becoming aggressive as they poked, prodded, and jabbed her with needles.

Dustin is inside with her because I feel like wringing the doctor's neck every time she cries out. Especially since he shoved a tube down her throat to pump her stomach, and she woke up abruptly. It caused me to shift and grab the man. Seeing the frantic look on her face pushed me over the edge. She kept slipping in and out of consciousness and freaking out each time she came to.

“Any news yet?” Damian asks as I pace out in front of the door. I growl and shake my head as he approaches.

Damian sighs. “They locked you out?”

I nod, too angry to answer when the brown door suddenly opens, and the pack doctor from the small town outside the castle gates walks out. He scrubs his hand down his face and through his mud-brown hair. The

doctor watches me warily, straightening his white coat before he steps closer to Damian. His eyes glaze over as he mindlinks my Beta. He is clearly frightened while I am in my Lycan form; however, I am focused and in control. So it irritates me that he addressed Damian first when she is my mate.

“Are you sure?” Damian asks him.

“Positive, her blood work showed it, and so did her stomach contents.”

I snarl, making Doctor Rick jump. He hides behind my Beta, his eyes wide with terror.

“What’s wrong with her?” I demand. Dr. Rick hands me her paperwork with shaky hands, and I snatch it, staring at it, but it looks gibberish to me.

“Fucking answer, me,” I snarl, shaking the papers at him, commanding him.

“She has ingested poison. We found it in her system, My King,” he stutters.

“Poison? Someone poisoned my mate?” I ask, startled. I wasn’t expecting that to be the answer.

“Kyson, calm down and keep your head,” Damian snaps at me, and I glare at him. How could he say that when someone tried to poison his queen?

“What sort of poison?” Damian asks.

“Water hemlock and wolfsbane are in her system. You should check who is working in the kitchens or, more importantly, with the queen’s food. I sent Dustin up earlier to check your food, My King. Your food was untouched, but the fruit bowl had traces of both plants in it. Azalea was targeted specifically,” Doctor Rick tells me.

“I want all the kitchen staff to be in the kitchen within ten minutes. Send all of my guards to wake them and bring them down; no one is to be unaccounted for,” I tell Damian.

“I will send out the alert,” Damian says, and I watch his eyes glaze over as he mindlinks our men.

“Is she awake?” I ask, turning my attention to the doctor.

“No, My King. We have given her something to counteract the poison. She should be fine within a couple of hours,” the doctor tells me.

“Tell Dustin to remain with her until I return,” I tell him, stalking off toward the kitchen where everyone will be meeting. I am absolutely furious, and I now have a traitor among my staff, one who has tried to

hurt Azalea. Now I have to figure out who is overseeing her food. They will pay.

Clarice is the first to walk in, rubbing her eyes and dressed in her floral nightgown. Her hair is in rollers; she yawns before flicking the lights on and jumping when she notices me standing in the kitchen center, leaning against one of the steel tables.

My anger refuses to let me shift back, and I can see she is startled by my presence but regains her composure quickly. All the guards were warned not to tell the kitchen staff about the meeting. Damian quickly marks her name off as he steps in with the folder containing a list of the kitchen employees, but Clarice is far from a suspect. I trust Clarice with my life and Azalea's, but she will be able to tell me who cooked our meals tonight and who was stationed on since she handled the kitchen rosters.

“My King? What is this about?” she asks, staring at me worriedly, trying to fight the yawn I see taking over her. She fails to contain it and covers her mouth, yawning loudly.

Damian waves her forward to speak with her while I watch the thirty kitchen staff members file into the room wearing pajamas, looking confused and dazed at the late-night wake-up call. They all line up, the room filling up quickly

My personal guard is stationed by all entrances, blocking the exits. They speak among themselves in hush whispers, trying to figure out what is going on.

“Who was responsible for cooking the king and queen’s meals tonight?”

“Me, always me, Beta Damian. I don’t let anyone else cook for them. Why?” Clarice asks.

“Azalea’s food was poisoned, and we don’t think it was the first time. She was sick also on the night of her shift, they found water hemlock and wolfsbane in her system.”

“Is she alright?” Clarice asks, becoming instantly alert, and her eyes flick in my direction, the fear on her face is palpable, and her eyes are glassy as if she is holding back tears.

“Yes, but we need to know who was in the kitchen when you were cooking, who had access to her food,” Damian explains. She nods, looking worried.

“Only eight of us,” she answers quickly.

“Point them out for me,” Damian tells her, and she grabs the staff schedule off the wall, which has everyone’s timesheets. She points out everyone, and I let Damian interview them while the others stand around nervously before I command them one by one to answer. I’m hoping to weed out any liars, but we find none. Besides Clarice and Azalea’s guards, no one has gone near her food. I turn to Clarice, since she is the only one I have not commanded to answer. She sighs.