

Chapter 26

KYSON

I have no idea what came over me; I almost attacked her. Her heat is still intense despite her no longer suffering its effects. I didn't mean to snap at her, but I would have bent her over my desk if she didn't leave. It takes twenty minutes before I calm down enough to shift back. Back in my human form, I snatch the bottle of whiskey off the lamp table and swig from it.

"You idiot, are you trying to get yourself killed!" I snap at Damian.

"I'm sorry, I thought you had control, or I wouldn't have grabbed her."

I click my tongue and curse, shaking my head while tipping the bottle to my lips.

"Just let me explain to her," Damian says, and I shake my head.

“No, I want her to give herself to me when she wants to, not because she feels forced because my life is at risk,” I tell him.

“Kyson?”

“The injection only lasts two days. We have some leeway. Azalea will change her mind,” I tell him, not so sure whether she will.

“And if she doesn’t?”

I bite the inside of my lip. “She will.”

“If she doesn’t, I’ll tell her,” Damian snarls, and I growl at him.

“You die, then what? You let her live with that guilt. No one can protect her the way you do, Kyson. Think this through.”

“I don’t want her to feel obligated to mate with me,” I tell him.

“And I won’t let you die, and neither will she!” he snaps. Damian tosses me some pants and a shirt. Realizing I’m still naked I take them, slipping them on and doing up the buttons.

“We should leave. I want to get back before tomorrow.”

“We shouldn’t go, not while you’re like this...”

“And that is precisely why we are going. I am struggling to hold myself back. Now grab the keys. We are leaving,” I tell him, seizing my wallet off the desk and stuffing it into my pocket. I push the doors open and walk out toward the front of the castle. I need to get away from her for a little while, just until I get these urges under control.

However, when I reach the door, I stumble, vertigo washing over me, and the room tilts and slants, making me stumble. My hand goes out, catching myself on the wall as my vision begins to tunnel. “Kyson?” Damian worries.

A cold sweat causes sweat to bead on the back of my neck. Thankfully, Damian grips my upper arm, I blink, trying to force the effects away.

“We should stay,” he murmurs, but I shake his hand off. “I’m fine, we will be gone only twelve hours max, plenty of time, and by the time we get back, the medication should be nearly worn off,” I tell him. Damian growls disapprovingly but says nothing as we walk out.

“Gannon is on his way back. He should be here before we get back,” Damian assures me.

An hour has passed when I hear a knock on the door. I look toward it before hearing the handle twist, but they do not open it.

“My Queen?” Trey calls out from the other side of the door. I stick my lip between my teeth as I get to my feet and walk over to the door. I twist the lock and crack it open to peer out the door.

“Clarice said to bring you down to have afternoon tea. The king doesn’t trust anyone to bring your food to you, so you will sit with Clarice,” Trey tells me, and I nod, slipping out the door. I follow behind him as he leads me toward the kitchen. Once I step in, I see Clarice has some sandwiches made and she smiles warmly at me before wiping her hands on her blue apron.

“I have got everything out. You can see it all sealed,” she says, pointing to the jams and spreads, and I nod before grabbing a butter knife. Clarice hands Trey a salad sandwich while I make myself a jam one.

“I know the jam is probably not what you had in mind, but Kyson doesn’t want you eating anything unless he or Damian prepared it,” Clarice tells me, and I nod before taking a bite of my sandwich. I start packing the spread and bread away while Clarice fusses that I shouldn’t be cleaning. I ignore her before we all stand in awkward silence. Clarice continues to glance at Trey, and so do I after what Dustin told me. He must have noticed the tension because he swallows down a bite of the sandwich Clarice made him.

“What? Do I have food on my face?”

Shaking my head, I turn my attention to Clarice, who also seems a little stiff.

“Want to help me outside?” Clarice asks. Smiling, I nod. Anything is better than wasting away in the room.

“The king wants her to remain in her room,” Trey says with a shrug.

“I will deal with the king. He has no reason to worry,” Clarice chimes in before I have a chance to say anything.

“Yeah, I told Damian that when I took over from Dustin. Not like she can drive on out of here to go after her friend,” Trey chuckles. Clarice’s eyebrows furrow at his words, and so do mine.

“I can’t drive,” I tell him.

“Exactly, and there is only one way out, which is to drive out the front gates. Unless you use the back exit, but no one goes down there, the road is too rough,” he laughs.

Clarice sets her sandwich down on her plate and places a hand on her hip. “What? Are you trying to give her ideas?” she asks, raising an eyebrow at him.

“What? No, of course not, and she said it herself, she can’t drive. Besides, there are guards at the front gate. She would never get past them. I am just saying he is worrying for no reason!” Trey says, sighing heavily.

The tension in the room becomes thick between them as they stare at each other. “Is everything okay?” Trey asks, glancing at us before he sighs.

“Is this about me taking over for Dustin? I swear I had nothing to do with that. I get you don’t like me, but I would never place you in harm’s way, My Queen. Dustin and I just have history,” Trey says, and I pinch my brows.

“Pardon?” I ask.

“Ah, I probably shouldn’t say, I know you’re close with Dustin, and I don’t like gossip.”

“Well, you can’t say that and not say it now, can you?” Clarice says.

Trey glances between us both and rolls his eyes.

“Dustin used to have a thing for me, and I turned him down.” He shrugs like it’s no big deal. “Not because I don’t like Dustin, but I’m straight,” he says, pointing to himself.

“Anyway, we had the competitor trials last spring for the guard position. Dustin blamed me for sabotaging him by setting the clock back, so he missed the trials and didn’t make the cut,” Trey says.

“Ah, yes, I remember that caused quite a stir.”

“Well, did you?” I ask him.

“What? No, of course not. He forgot to put his phone on daylight savings time. He slept through the trial, somehow I got blamed for it because his phone was near me.”

“What are the trials for?” I ask Clarice.

“Just a competitor thing between the guards, makes them compete each year for ranking within the Royal Guard,” Clarice clarifies.

“Yeah, I don’t understand why he blamed me. Nobody could beat his track time anyway from the year before or any of his scores, so his job was never in jeopardy,” Trey shrugs.

“He holds the record?” I ask.

“Yeah, there is a reason he is your personal guard. He even beat Damian’s record one year. Damian got it back, obviously, but it still shocked everyone. Especially with Damian’s Beta genes,” Trey states.

I chuckle, happy for Dustin. Although I never pictured Dustin to be so competitive; then again, he looks like he lives in a gym and is the most observant out of all the guards I have. Also, the most protective. Interesting.

“Want to help me garden?” Clarice asks. I nod excitedly, grabbing my plate and placing it in the sink.

“Is she alright with you for a few minutes? I want to go use the bathroom,” Trey asks Clarice.

“Of course,” Clarice says. She leads me outside. We spend the afternoon gardening, all while my thoughts remain troubled, fixed on Abbie. When it is getting dark, Trey leads me back to my room. Once again, Abbie never calls. All I keep thinking about is that back exit Trey mentioned. Rummaging around the room, I find some maps and try to read them, chewing my lip. I glance at the door, wondering if I can trick Trey into showing me on the map.