

## Chapter 44

### KYSON

I want to explain more, but when Damian calls through the link that a fight has broken out down the corridor between Trey and Dustin, I have no choice but to sort it out. Leaving the room, I see Dustin punch Trey, knocking him down the stairs, only to chase after him. Damian is trying to separate them when Trey tackles Dustin as he rushes down the steps. Damian grabs the back of Trey's shirt and rips him off Dustin just as Dustin goes to attack him again. My hand wraps around his arm, jerking him back.

"What the fuck is going on here?" I snarl while Trey shrugs off Damian's hand.

"Answer me!" I command.

"I don't want him near the queen. He can't be trusted," Dustin snarls.

"And you can, asshole? You ran off with her and put the queen in danger," Trey spits back at him.

“Yes, it’s also your fault. Azalea wouldn’t have even known where to go if you didn’t show her on her phone!” Dustin growls, taking a step toward him, but my hand falls on his shoulder.

“Is this true?” I ask Trey, who turns his attention to me. He sighs, scratching the back of his neck.

“Yes, My King. But I did not know she would go off after Abbie,” Trey admits.

“And you would let Dustin take full responsibility for what happened?” Damian demands.

“I didn’t run off with her. I would have dragged her back to the room had I known,” Trey defends himself. Damian shakes his head, looking at me.

“You have two seconds to explain yourselves, now,” I say.

“Dustin hates me because he blames me for the trials and keeps sabotaging me every chance. Damian pulled me from her guard because of him,” Trey says before glaring at Dustin.

“Damian didn’t pull you from the guard; I did. There are too many rumors about both of you right now.”

“Yet you stationed him?” Trey scoffs.

“Yes, because he is one of my head guards, and Azalea trusts him even if right now I don’t,” I growl, looking at Dustin. I want to beat him senseless, yet Abbie would probably be dead or worse, still stuck there if they hadn’t gone.

“She was determined to go. Better I went with her than go by herself, My King. You know I would never put her in harm’s way. You know I wouldn’t risk her like that unless I had no choice!” Dustin says, and I growl.

“You had a choice. You could have brought the queen back to her room!” Trey yelled.

“Because that worked. Azalea snuck out on you, and you didn’t even know she was gone,” Dustin retorts and Trey looks away. Damian rubs his temples and shakes his head.

“You are giving me a headache,” Damian growls.

“May I be of some assistance?” Liam says, making all of us jump. He is sitting on the windowsill above the stairs. We all peer up, not one of us noticing he was even there. I pinch my brows, wondering how the heck he even got up there. He jumps down and lands next to Damian on his feet.

“How did you get up there?” Damian asks.

“Ninja skills. I’m as quiet as a mouse and quick and agile as a snake,” he chuckles, I try not to laugh, and I see Dustin trying not to smile at his words. Trey, however, holds a sour expression.

“And why were you up there?” Damian asks.

“My ears were burning, my senses telling me there was information to eavesdrop upon,” he says.

“Are you drunk?” Damian asks. Liam shakes his head, straightening.

“The question you mean, Beta. Are you sober... that would be a never,” Liam giggles.

I roll my eyes and wave him forward, and he straightens himself again like some prim and proper gentleman, though he is a gentleman, either way, sober or drunk. When I think of it, I think his question is correct. I have yet to see him sober since Claire. It makes me briefly wonder if he can function without the liquor, although I know I have a drinking problem, so I can’t really judge.

“What are you proposing?” I ask.

“Well, you still have to go away, My King, to investigate the killings, and I would rather stay behind. I am sick of looking at dead little ones; Uncle Liam is not made for the kiddie horrors, so I volunteer to watch the queen, with Dustin, of course,” Liam says, motioning toward Dustin and sending him a wink. Dustin shakes his head with a snort.

“You want Trey to take your place on my guard?” I ask.

“But I was the Queen’s guard...”

I hold my hand up, shutting off Trey’s protests when Liam stares at me, his eyes glazing over before his voice is in my head.

‘You already know how I feel about the ferret. Dustin is clear about his feelings. What better way to catch a rat than having him by your side, My King? Azalea is safe with me; I don’t care if he is from Landeena. He is hiding something. His switch from hating her to almost stalking her is too sudden, but if I remember correctly, Trey is not under the guard pact!’ Liam says, making me furrow my brows once more.

I glance at Damian, trying to remember when I set the pact, but Liam is right. It was after the fall of King Garret and Queen Tatiana and just before the death of my sister. Trey got here just after her end and earned his way up the ranks.

‘What is it?’ Damian mindlinks.

‘Ask Clarice if Trey was there when Azalea’s food was tampered with,’ I ask him, and he nods, walking off down the stairs.

Turning my attention to Trey and Dustin, I see they’re still glaring at each other.

“Trey, you’re swapping with Liam. Liam will be on guard with you, Dustin,” I tell him, and Dustin nods, heading up the stairs to my room.

“He is a fucking drunk!” Trey accuses, glaring at Liam. I blink, only to find Trey shoved against the wall, Liam’s hand around his throat, and a knife under his chin.

“Watch it, boy, or I will be wearing your skin as a suit. So I’d watch your tongue, talk about me like that again, and I will remove it for you, one of the king’s guards or not. I will show you what a drunk can do and what a pretty suit you would make,” Liam warns, tapping the side of Trey’s face with his knife. Trey swallows and nods quickly.

Liam growls before shoving off him and walking up the steps to his post, while Trey presses his lips in a line, looking away.

“5 AM. We leave in the morning. Be ready,” I tell Trey before turning on my heel.

“Yes, My King,” I hear him answer before walking off. When I reach the top level, Dustin nods at me. I press my lips in a line, turning to face him.

“You are not off the hook. Unfortunately, my punishment for you.”

“I think putting up with me would be punishment enough, don’t you think, My King,” Liam chuckles. I click my tongue, turning back to Dustin.

“It is yet to be decided. Don’t fuck up again.”

“I won’t, My King,” Dustin says, and I nod to them, pushing the door open and going to find my mate. Azalea is sitting on the floor by the fireplace, playing with her tablet and an open book.

“Did you eat?” I ask her, and she nods, pointing to the empty tray on the dresser without looking up from the tablet she was typing away on. I sigh, walking over and grabbing it. Opening the door, I go to hand it to Liam when I notice the pill still sitting on the tray. My heart races a little faster, seeing it sitting beside her empty plate.

“Azalea?” I ask, glancing over my shoulder at her. She peers up from where she is sitting on the floor to stare at me.

“Did you mean to leave that on the tray?” I ask her. She scratches her neck, and I can feel her worry through the bond, and she grows nervous. She is scared of answering but does.

“You said it was my choice. I don’t want to take it,” she says, biting her lip, her eyes on the tray in my hand.

“Liam!” I tell him, and he takes the tray, shutting the door. A giddy feeling rushes through me, knowing she wants kids.

“You know what that means, right?” I ask, walking over to her.

“That I could get pregnant,” Azalea answers and shrugs. “But I also might not be pregnant, so we’ll see.”

I stop beside her, and she stares up at me.

“Are you angry?” she asks.

I shake my head, sit beside her, and pull her on my lap. I am the complete opposite, but I’m worried about how she will take it. Although now, I hold relief.

“No, I didn’t want you to take it, but it wasn’t my choice,” I tell her, kissing her cheek and wrapping my arms around her waist. I bury my



face in her neck, inhaling her scent, and she squirms away from my ticklish stubble.

“What are we reading tonight?” I ask her, kissing my mark on her neck. Azalea shivers, and she holds up the book.

“Treasure Island, you seem to like this one,” I tell her, and she leans back against me while I take the book and open it.

“I have to leave tomorrow, but Dustin will be here with Liam,” I tell her, finding the spot she was up to.

“Can’t I come?” she asks.

“I thought you wanted to see Abbie. Maybe next time,” I tell her. Azalea sighs, but as soon as I mention Abbie, I know I am right in that assumption. Opening the book, I read, stopping now and then to let her try. Her reading has gotten better, and she can identify a few new words by the time I stop.