

## Chapter Ten

Ember

"It's not his daughter," I whispered to myself as I sank to the oor. I was watching the king from afar when the little girl ran in and called him uncle. He doesn't have a child with anyone. Mare rubbed up against me, purring.

I knew she wanted me to show myself to him. But I don't know if I can. Does it really matter if she isn't his child? I can't be with him. He is the child of the one person who I hate more than anyone in this world. One I swore to kill.

"I like your kitty," a tiny voice said. I covered my mouth to snue the scream of being caught with Mare. My magic had her coated like a calico. I looked up to see the girl I believed to be his daughter staring at me with big blue eyes. She was even cuter up close.

"Could I please pet her?" she asked me, timidly watching me.

"Of course, you can, sweetie," I smiled, and her face lit up. She kneeled and Mare brushed up against her, purring.

"What's her name?" She questioned as Mare took all the love she could get.

"Mare," I told her.

"Gabby?" I froze when a man's voice called out to her.

"I have to go. I think Nightmare looks better as a black cat. And Ember, your hair is much too blonde," she scrunched up her little nose before waving goodbye to me. I was unable to move as I watched the hallway long after she had gone. I never told her my name, and how the hell did she know Mare was black? Or that her full name was Nightmare.

I jumped when Mare touched my arm with her paw. She was looking up at me with her round gold eyes. I couldn't stop the panic that lled my chest. Would she tell her uncle about me?

I rushed through the rest of my chores today, trying to get back to my room as fast as possible. I didn't want to be around when they came back from wherever they went. I didn't need her pointing me out to her uncle or father. They seem loyal to each other above all else.

I collapsed on my bed when I was nally able to sneak away. How was I going to remain here to execute my plan? But how can I leave when I'm closer than ever to avenging my parents? I have so much more to investigate here and I can't quit. I will never be allowed in the castle again.

I rolled onto my back, grabbing my pillow and I screamed into it. This wasn't the plan. Fate has a cruel way of f\*\*\*\*\*g everything up.

"I understand your frustration, but I still don't think you should judge him because of his parents. He is a good king. He is close with his family and that little girl loves him. He can't be that bad," Mare said. I turned my head to see her sitting beside my head on the bed. She was licking her paw.

"So I abandon my plan and just what, leave? And where are we going to go, Mare?" I retorted. She shrugged her little cat shoulders, still licking her paw.

"f\*\*k, why can't this be easy? The plan was simple. Find out what happened to my parents and kill off that fuckers bloodline. But instead, I found my mate and I can't nd anything about my goddamn parents," I exclaimed, throwing my arm over my eyes.

The next day, I worked hard to get my chores done. I didn't want to be around the king any longer than I had to because my heart called for me to go to him and it was becoming harder and harder to ignore the pain in my chest. Every time he would laugh with his friend Zayden, my heart would twist painfully. I wanted him to look at me like that. Like I was more than just the help. And I was. I was his Queen, but would he accept me or reject me?

The twist in my heart intensified as I thought about his rejection. I had no right to feel this way since I was planning on killing him. I was planning on rejecting him in the worst way, but I was worried about him rejecting me.

"You could do a lot of good as Queen," Mare said in my mind, casually, as I watched my mate and his friend from afar.

I looked down to see her sitting by my feet, looking up at me. I let out a sigh.

"Or he could reject me and I would have to watch him with another."

"Em, he could have had his sister bless him with a mate bond with someone of his choosing, like his other sister, but he hasn't. He's waiting for his mate and that's you." She pointed out. But I couldn't give in. I needed to stay angry at him and his family so I could avenge my own. My parents didn't deserve to die. And since I haven't found any records of them, I knew it was being covered up. I just had to nd where they were hiding the evidence.

I've had a hard life and I know I wasn't worthy of being a queen. I didn't even nish school. I don't have what it takes to be a queen.

"Well, hello handsome," Mare purred. I jumped, looking down at her. A cat was standing in front of her. His fur was white as snow and his deep blue eyes stared into her gold ones. Can familiars have mates? I thought as I watched them.

"Dream, where did you go, buddy?" I heard the king calling. This must be his. I scooped up Mare and hurried away from my mate and his cat. I didn't need him to gure out it was me, his mate.