

Chapter 6

Peter

What the hell did I just see?

Never had I ever seen such brutality before in my life as I did inside that shop. *The rapists were one thing, but this? This was a slaughter!* And the men who had their throats cut right in front me where knights, men who had sworn an oath to protect the weak and uphold the law. They weren't some group of thieves trying to steal gold from a woman in a dark alley, yet they were given the same treatment. A feeling of dread had taken place in my belly and I felt as though I were about to throw up.

I followed closely behind Dante and we passed a few rows of houses, looking for the southern gate. Nobody was around, so there was no threat of being seen. Of course, I had my new disguise on, so my anxiety was a little relieved. But, if we did run into other people, would it work? My reflection back at the shop, I had to admit, looked like a completely different person. Even I couldn't smell my original scent anymore and could only smell the ferret-scented perfume that Pan had rubbed into my fur. *At least this stuff won't come off that easy.*

Soon, we found the southern gate and walked through it, leaving Tynas behind us. Slowly, we diverged from the road and trees engulfed us in safety once again. The leaves reflected sunlight down at us, making them seem greener than usual.

"When does it snow around here?" I asked, trying to forget the massacre back in Pan's store.

"Usually around the beginning November," Dante answered me. "It typically thaws once February starts,"

"That's funny. I thought it always snowed up here,"

"No," Dante replied with a hint of amusement. "It only snows year-round in the Fanged Peaks and Owl's Overwatch,"

"Will we have to go to the Iron Pass?"

"No. We'll have to walk through snow, but we don't need to go to the Iron Pass. We might have to stop in Ansil, if I need more bullets. That's where Pan's sister, Rhona, is,"

We had walked for a few more moments before Dante placed a firm hand on my shoulder, pulling me to a quick stop.

"All right," Dante announced. "Time to put your rope back on,"

I didn't protest or kick Dante in the crotch as he got down on one knee to pull his rope out of his knapsack. No more than a few seconds later, we were moving again, only now my hands and new gloves were strung together by rope.

"Hey," I said, as plants brushed against the legs of my trousers with gentle leaves. "How come you never told me you were gay?"

"Who said I was gay?"

"Back there!" I said. "You were flirting with Pan!"

The wolf brushed my comment away. "That wasn't flirting. That was just Pan humping my leg,"

"You didn't tell him to stop!"

Dante scratched behind his ear as I drifted to his right side, tilting my head back so I could look up at his face. "Pan is one of those guys you have to treat...*carefully*. I also have to be extra careful since I buy my bullets from him and his sister,"

"He could have been more polite," I said. "I'm actually surprised he didn't take off his trousers right then and there,"

"If you don't like Pan," Dante laughed, "then you're really going to hate his sister,"

"Why?" I wondered. "Is she as big of a perv as he is?"

"Let's just say that she's not a people person,"

"So... Bitchy?"

"Yeah,"

I groaned. "Great,"

We must have walked a million miles before the sun was nearly beginning to set. While Dante said we had only gone one mile, my aching paws and I didn't believe him.

"I'm going hunting," Dante said, when we found a place to stop for the night.

"Okay," I said, as I plopped down to watch Dante tie my wrists to the trunk of a tree and tie my muzzle closed with rope. After he was done, I watched the wolf trot off into the trees, pulling his bow from his back, just before disappearing into the darkness. When he had returned a little while later, Dante was carrying a dead quail, which we shared after he untied my muzzle.

Once we had finished eating our cooked quail, neither of us spoke for a few seconds. Instead, the crickets chirped their nightly songs and a fire crackled between us.

"So," I broke the ever-growing awkward silence.

"So," Dante repeated.

"So, you never answered my question,"

A look of confusion sprouted on the wolf's face and his ears twitched.

"You know?" I tried to remind him. "About being gay? How come you never told me? Then again, I guess it should have been obvious. After all, you did tie me up the first time we met,"

Dante shook his head. "I'm not gay,"

"Sure," I agreed, sarcastically. "And white's my natural color,"

He still wouldn't budge. "You never give up, do you?"

"Come on, Dante! What straight guy would flirt with somebody like Pan, who's so obviously gay?"

Dante grew quiet.

"Fine. If you think you're straight, then how many women have you slept with? How many women have even loved? Has there ever even been a girl that caught your eye? Now, how many times have you noticed some hot guy in a tavern? Maybe it was his eyes or his ass, but something about him got you going. Have you ever gotten drunk and slept with another man? I bet you have. Don't say you aren't gay. I've been surrounded my straight men all my life and you don't talk, act or even remind me of them,"

Dante glanced down at the fire for a brief moment and then looked back up at me. A smile was now stretched across his muzzle. "Who said I was straight?"

"You did! Earlier when I-"

"I only said that I wasn't gay," Dante explained, "not that I was straight,"

Silence once again filled the bristling night air between us. Even the fire seemed to cease its crackling.

"You're..." I whispered, "bi?"

Dante gave me a small nod.

"Huh," I said and looked into the flames through the space between my boots.

"Surprised?" Dante asked, his voice beaming with amusement.

"Yeah," I said. "I was so sure you were gay, though,"

The wolf stretched out his legs and leaned back against his tree, his grin completely gone now. "You shouldn't assume something like that. Nobody should. A gay person should know better, especially since you're the ones who are always getting labeled,"

I swallowed to clear my throat and spoke once again. "I've never met someone that was bi,"

"Well," Dante said, "now you can say that you have,"

"Do you mind if I," I said and paused for a moment, "ask you a question?"

Dante's brown and blue eyes blinked as he thought for a moment. He then shrugged. "No,"

"What's it like? Liking guys and girls, I mean. Do you like girls one day and guys the next?"

"No," Dante chuckled. "I like them both about the same amount everyday,"

"Have you...been with both of them?" I dared to ask.

"Yes," he answered. "Not at the same time, if that's what you're asking. But I have slept with men and women. They were all prostitutes, of course,"

I smiled and laughed, feeling the tension in the air beginning to finally vanish. "Look at us, two princes talking about our sexualities around a fire,"

"I'm not a prince," Dante muttered, his tone now serious and stern.

"Come on!" I said. "You can tell me you like to sleep with men and women, but you won't tell me which Family you're from?"

Silently, Dante rose and walked around the fire towards me, rope gag in hand. Once he stood over me, the wolf lowered himself and reached for my muzzle.

"I'll find out eventually!" I told him. "You can't hide it forev-"

My words ceased as bone-dry rope tied my muzzle tightly shut.

Dante, after he finished tying me up for the night, drearily walked back to his spot on the other side of the fire. He sat down and I began to close my eyes to finally go to sleep after such a long day. Suddenly, I caught something in Dante's eyes as he stared into the fire, something that I only saw for a quick moment before my eyes were met with blackness. That was enough time for me to catch it. Dante's eyes held something that must have lurked in the very depths of his soul in order for it to take such a hold on his face like that, something I understood far too well myself.

Pain.