

Ever & Kingsley

written by

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FADE IN:

KINGSLEY, a force to reckon with on the battlefield, trains with several of his fellow knights.

Blocking blow after blow. Moving with agile determination.

A master of his craft.

In the distance, he spots an older man - the village DOCTOR- waiting for someone.

For him.

Kingsley nods to him and signals to the other knights.

EXT. STABLES - DAY

Kingsley is unable to keep still as he and the doctor talk.

Whatever news Kingsley has just received, he isn't taking it lightly.

KINGSLEY  
Are you certain?

DOCTOR  
Yes.

KINGSLEY  
Absolutely?

DOCTOR  
The only way to be truly certain is to carry on as you have been and see how Ever fares.

If looks could kill...

KINGSLEY  
The only way to know if my touch is killing my wife, is to keep touching her? That's your advice?

DOCTOR  
I just meant that there is no way to know for sure. This is a very rare situation and much of what is known about it, was learned upon the death of the patients.

KINGSLEY  
Have you seen it before?  
Personally?

The doctor nods.

DOCTOR  
Once. Many years ago.

KINGSLEY  
And gloves, you're positive they're  
of no use?

DOCTOR  
I'm sorry, Kingsley.

Their silence speaks volumes.

Finally-

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
Shall I break the news to her  
myself?

KINGSLEY  
No. Thank you, though, for coming  
to me instead of Ever. I'll make  
sure you're rewarded handsomely for  
your loyalty.

The doctor places a hand on Kingsley's shoulder - this was never about a reward. He leaves Kingsley to his thoughts.

EXT. KINGSLEY'S ORCHARD - DAY

Several school-age children laugh and play as they gather baskets of fruit.

EVER, thin and sickly, watches in true contentment. The sun is shining. She has an amazing life. There isn't much left in the area of wanting.

She spots one of the smaller children having trouble reaching the fruit and picks the child up.

EVER  
How's that?

From the distance, Kingsley approaches. She puts the child down and meets him.

EVER (CONT'D)  
Hello, dear, you're home early.

She kisses him, causing laughter and playful jeering from the children - allowing Kingsley to end the kiss quickly.

EVER (CONT'D)

All right, kids, off you go.

The children gather their stuff and leave, some stopping to hug Ever.

KINGSLEY

James' wife went into labor, so we decided to cut practice short.

As she links her arm in Kingsley's, he's never been more aware of her skin. He watches her apprehensively as she lays her head on his shoulder.

KINGSLEY (CONT'D)

How are you feeling?

EVER

Tired. The doctor sent over a can of herbs and roots for me to put in my tea.

KINGSLEY

Have you had any yet?

Ever nods.

EVER

I can't wait to get better, just so I can stop drinking that stuff.

She smiles up at him.

EVER (CONT'D)

Walk to the market with me?

KINGSLEY

Shouldn't you be resting?

EVER

No, I should be getting Mary and James a gift. And you're coming with me.

She interlocks her fingers with his - Kingsley hyper-aware of each motion - and pulls him in the direction of the market.

INT. KINGSLEY'S KITCHEN - DAY

Kingsley is helping Ever clean up the mess from breakfast.

She finishes wiping the table then nudges him away from the wash tub so she can take over the dishes.

KINGSLEY  
I'm almost done.

EVER  
Get ready for work.

He hesitantly agrees, continuing the conversation as he pops in and out of the room.

EVER (CONT'D)  
I saw you up last night.

Beat.

EVER (CONT'D)  
How long have you been having trouble sleeping?

KINGSLEY(OS)  
Not long.

EVER  
Do you want to talk about it?

KINGSLEY(OS)  
There's nothing to talk about.

EVER  
I'm serious.

KINGSLEY  
So am I.

She reads his face, sighs, and turns back to the dishes.

EVER  
I think I'll stop in and see Mary today.

KINGSLEY(OS)  
Maybe you should just rest today. Have some more of that tea the doctor gave you.

EVER  
I've been resting for weeks; one trip to my friend's house isn't going to kill me.

KINGSLEY(OS)  
I wish you'd take my advice.

EVER

And I wish you'd stop worrying so much.

Kingsley heads to the door and Ever meets him.

EVER (CONT'D)

Besides, seeing James and Mary with their little one-

She kisses him before leaning against him peacefully.

EVER (CONT'D)

Gets me excited for whenever we start our own family.

KINGSLEY

Me too. See you after work.

He kisses the top of her head and leaves.

EXT. KINGSLEY'S HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Kingsley goes over to the side of the house, pauses unsteadily, then vomits. When he is finished, he kicks dirt over it and leaves.

INT. KINGSLEY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Kingsley is packing for a journey as Ever watches.

EVER

I hate when the king sends you away.

KINGSLEY

It's my job, Ever.

EVER

I know. I still don't like it. I always worry about you.

She hugs him from behind, Kingsley cringing as her arms slide around him.

KINGSLEY

Patrick is going with me and this is just a friendly meeting. There's nothing to worry about.

He breaks free of her arms as he gets something from the other side of the room.

EVER

A friendly meeting between two powerful kingdoms, those always work out wonderfully.

He approaches her, careful to stop, leaving distance between them.

KINGSLEY

I promise I'll be ok. You, on the other hand, need to rest while I'm gone.

She leans to kiss him but he steps back.

KINGSLEY (CONT'D)

I'll see you soon.

He rushes off, leaving Ever confused and alone.

EXT. STABLES - DAY

A few of the knights' wives are waiting anxiously for their husbands' return. Ever, more color in her cheeks than the last time we saw her, awaits Kingsley's return. Unlike the other girls, there is no excitement in her demeanor.

As the women rush to their husbands, Ever approaches coolly, stopping halfway. Kingsley watches the other couples in envy before meeting Ever. She kisses him on the cheek.

Now it's Kingsley's turn to be confused.

EVER

Hello, dear.

INT. GREAT HALL - DAY

The king is having a party with several guests, including a clean-shaven Kingsley, and his knights/their families. James and Mary, young newlyweds, are there with their baby - all the women cooing over it.

Kingsley and Ever stand side by side, though neither is really there. Kingsley turns to speak to Ever but instead hesitates before walking to the other side of the room, where the doctor intercepts him.

DOCTOR

Ever is looking well. It seems as though your trip has answered our question.

They look over at Ever who is now holding James' baby and chatting with her friends.

KINGSLEY  
It would appear that way.

INT. KINGSLEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ever and Kingsley are silently unmaking the bed. Finally, she can take it no longer.

EVER  
Is it true?

KINGSLEY  
Is what true?

EVER  
When did we stop being honest with each other?

He's been caught. He sits on the bed, the room spinning around him.

EVER (CONT'D)  
The king didn't ask you to leave.  
You offered to go. Patrick told Elizabeth all about it.

A sigh of relief.

KINGSLEY  
Sorry.

EVER  
Are you having an affair?

KINGSLEY  
Of course not.

EVER  
Then what's going on lately?

KINGSLEY  
Nothing.

Ever sits beside him and takes his hand.

EVER  
I know things have been rough, but I'm getting better.  
(MORE)



EVER (CONT'D)

Getting whatever this is off of  
your chest isn't going to set me  
back or upset me.

He doesn't meet her eyes.

KINGSLEY

Everything is fine, Ever.

She drops his hand.

EVER

I think it'd be best if you slept  
in the other room tonight.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Kingsley, no longer clean-shaven and instead sporting a three  
to four week beard, is having a wound taken care of by the  
doctor. His fellow knights are still training, except for  
PATRICK.

KINGSLEY

I'm fine. Patrick, it's just a  
little cut.

PATRICK

This has to do with Ever, doesn't  
it?

KINGSLEY

This has nothing to do with Ever.

PATRICK

We grew up together, Kingsley, if  
you're going to lie to me, you're  
going to need to do better than  
that.

KINGSLEY

I appreciate your concern. If I  
need to talk, I'll let you know.

Patrick's disappointing look contradicts the reassuring hand  
he places on Kingsley's shoulder before going back to  
practice.

DOCTOR

If you're having trouble  
concentrating-

KINGSLEY

I'm fine.

DOCTOR

That's not what these stitches say.

Kingsley ignores him.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

You have to tell her what's going on. She may be getting better, but at what price?

KINGSLEY

If I tell her what our love is doing to her, she'll refuse to leave my side. She'll be gone within the month.

DOCTOR

But that's her choice to make.

Kingsley shakes his head in disagreement.

KINGSLEY

It's my job to protect her, no matter what that means for me.

INT. KINGSLEY'S ENTRYWAY - DAY

Kingsley looks out the open door watching as Ever's dad fills his carriage with her things. Ever approaches him, looking the healthiest we've seen so far - though emotionally worn down.

EVER

That's the last of it.

In the BG, Ever's dad places the last item in the carriage, then stands solemnly beside it, waiting for Ever.

Patrick enters from the kitchen with two pints of beer, hiding in a doorway, as Ever and Kingsley stand silent, staring at each other before Ever finally breaks and throws her arms around him.

Kingsley stumbles back from the momentum of Ever's unexpected goodbye and hugs her back loosely, the feeling of her pressed against him both welcoming and nauseating.

Yet instead of shaking her off, he gives in and allows himself to melt into her -

Slowly tightening his grip around her until if he held her any tighter, she'd burst.

Time and death and lies and sacrifice no longer matter. Not in this moment. Finally-

A whisper.

EVER (CONT'D)

We can still work this out.

Back to reality. Kingsley pushes her away.

KINGSLEY

Goodbye, Ever.

She turns to leave, her father meeting her halfway. As the carriage pulls away, Patrick approaches Kingsley and hands him a pint.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

THOMAS, a young squire, and several of the knights are huddled together talking in hushed tones. The conversation seems intense but immediately disperses as Patrick, James, and a rugged-looking Kingsley enter.

He hasn't shaved in months and hasn't had a good night's sleep in longer. (Unless otherwise mentioned, his beard is longer every scene hereafter.)

KINGSLEY

What's going on?

Silence.

No one will meet his eye.

Thomas shifts guiltily. As he does, Kingsley, quickly losing his patience - heads towards him. Patrick stops him and approaches Thomas instead.

PATRICK

Spit it out!

THOMAS

I-I'd rather not say.

Patrick draws his sword. Thomas backs up, Patrick meeting each stride until Thomas is pinned between Patrick/his sword and the bleachers.

PATRICK

Would you like to try that again?

Thomas shifts his eyes from Patrick to Kingsley, then back to Patrick.

THOMAS

Ever is getting remarried. Her mother is making her.

PATRICK

What?

KINGSLEY

What?

THOMAS

My parents are part of the kitchen staff. I overheard them discussing it. I'm sorry, sir.

The knights watch as Kingsley takes in what he's just heard.

After a moment he turns and walks away. Patrick begins to follow him but decides against it.

EXT. KINGSLEY'S YARD - DAY

Kingsley and Patrick are training. Kingsley isn't being reckless, per se, but he is most certainly using this as a way to blow off steam.

PATRICK

I'm not saying you have to stay with her, I just think she should know all the facts.

KINGSLEY

The facts are precisely what I'm trying to keep from her.

PATRICK

And you can handle that? Knowing she's in the arms of another man?

KINGSLEY

At least he'll be able to give her the life I can't.

Kingsley lands the final blow, winning the round.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Kingsley stands at the bottom of the stairs staring up at the church.

It's now or never.

He turns and leaves.

IN. KINGSLEY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kingsley stumbles in, clearly drunk. With skill, formed only through habit, he maneuvers through the house, grabs something to eat, and makes his way back to the living room.

He plops down on the couch and begins eating.

INT. KINGSLEY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kingsley is passed out on the couch, crumbs in his overgrown beard, dried food on his shirt, his body sprawled in a position only a child could get comfortable in. His eyes slowly flutter open, the sunlight already too much for him.

EVER(OS)

You look like a caveman.

Kingsley's eyes pop open and he looks over to find Ever seated on the coffee table near the couch.

EVER (CONT'D)

I know I said you looked good in a beard, but I didn't mean this kind of beard.

He sits up, smoothing his beard out as he makes room on the couch for Ever. She sits at the far end, leaving the entire couch between them. They sit in silence, Kingsley knowing he should say something. Needing to say something - but the words just won't form.

Finally-

EVER (CONT'D)

You should've been honest with me.  
Told me that your touch was killing me.

Kingsley, betrayed by guilt he hadn't realized he had, doesn't meet her eyes and instead looks down at her feet.

EVER (CONT'D)

Leave it to mother to have a  
bloodline curse and never actually  
feel the effects of it.

Then suddenly-

EVER (CONT'D)

Poor father. If he ever needed proof that mother didn't love him...

Ever gets up and heads to the door.

EVER (CONT'D)

I think it's only fair that since father handled most of the moving out, you and Patrick take care of the moving in.

KINGSLEY

What?

EVER

You didn't think I went through with the wedding, did you?

KINGSLEY

But we can't be together. We can't even touch through our clothes. I thought you knew that.

EVER

There's more to being in a relationship than touching, Kingsley. Yeah, I'll miss it, but I'd miss you more.

She leaves.

INT. KINGSLEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ever and a once again, clean-shaven Kingsley are sound asleep; Ever's arm splayed across Kingsley's chest. Her appearance fluctuating, but unless otherwise stated, she still looks sickly.

INT. KINGSLEY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ever and Kingsley dance playfully in front of the fireplace.

Since he can't spin her, she gracefully spins around him, avoiding him perfectly

EVER

See, easy.

EXT. KINGSLEY'S ORCHARD - DAY

Ever, Kingsley, James, Mary, and their young child are spending the day together. Ever is in the tree plucking the most appealing fruits. As she does, her foot slips, causing her to fall from the tree. Kingsley spots it out the corner of his eye and instinctively races to catch her.

James quickly realizes what is about to happen and pushes Kingsley out the way just in time to save Ever.

Both from the fall and from Kingsley's touch.

EXT. STABLES - DAY

Ever, once again looking better than she has in a while, waits alongside Mary and several other knights' wives for their husbands to return. He's clearly been gone a while- if Ever's appearance isn't an obvious sign of it, his beard is.

James eagerly hops off his horse as soon as he spots Mary, and she runs to greet him, wrapping her arms around him in a way that Ever and Kingsley will never again experience.

Instead, Ever and Kingsley greet each other with pained smiles.

INT. KINGSLEY'S KITCHEN - DAY

Kingsley enters the kitchen and spots a pot of food starting to bubble over. He quickly reaches for the lid only to accidentally take Ever's hand instead, as she also has just reached into the frame- hurriedly going for the lid as well.

She quickly pulls her hand away, both contemplating the seriousness of this normally minor action, before going about their day.

INT. KINGSLEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ever and Kingsley are going to bed. After settling in, they lean over to kiss goodnight, before remembering they can't.

INT. KINGSLEY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Kingsley lies in bed watching Ever dress for the day. She slips her dress on before realizing that there is no way she can tie it by herself. As she starts to take it off Kingsley stops her.

KINGSLEY:  
I'll be careful.

She hesitantly agrees.

His fingers ache with longing, this is the most intimate either have been in a long time and there is almost something sensual about it. Still he remains careful to only touch the ties of the dress, and doesn't realize when he accidentally grazes her through her dress.

EXT. JAMES' YARD - DAY

James and Mary are having a get-together with several of the other villagers. Their now toddler-size-child is playing with other children as James and Kingsley look on.

One of the children runs up and tags Kingsley into the game; he is a natural with the children and James is clearly impressed.

INT. CHILD'S ROOM - DAY

Ever, places a sleeping baby in the crib. She watches with a smile on her face as the child sleeps.

EXT. JAMES' YARD - DAY

James watches Kingsley play with the group of children; his look of impressiveness soon becoming a look of pity as Kingsley approaches him laughing.

JAMES  
You would've been a good father,  
Kingsley.

INT. CHILD'S ROOM - DAY

Ever's smile fades into a frown as tears fill her eyes.

KINGSLEY(VO)  
Ever would've been a better mother.

Ever flees the room, breaking into sobs as she collapses against the wall in the empty hallway. The children's laughter from outside drowning out her tears.



INT. KINGSLEY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ever pries a book out of Kingsley's sleeping arms, carefully at first and then with more force, and gently covers him up.

She leans down to kiss his forehead then decides against it.

INT. KINGSLEY'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Kingsley, sound asleep, doesn't notice Ever's several unsuccessful attempts to get comfortable. Giving up and rolling over, she faces him; the light from the window just enough for her to make out his strong features.

She watches his chest rise and fall, before lightly placing her hand on it.

He inhales suddenly - loudly, causing her to pull her hand back quickly, but still, he doesn't stir.

She waits, contemplating, then gently traces his fingers and his palm.

Then, hesitantly-

His lips. Watching him with a mix of guilt and devotion, before-

Leaning down and kissing him.

INT. KINGSLEY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Kingsley stirs some, then with his eyes still closed, confusedly sniffs the air for the familiar smell of Ever's breakfast.

He pulls himself into a sitting position and notices Ever still asleep. It's times like this that make all the hard times worth it.

He watches her sleep for a moment, so still and peaceful.

Too still.

KINGSLEY

Ever?

Reaching out to nudge her, he pauses briefly, hesitantly, before going through with it.

KINGSLEY (CONT'D)

Ever?

He shakes her again. Harder this time.

He leans down, listening to her non-existent breath before pulling her onto his lap.

His hands SHAKING as he strokes her hair. Her face. Her lips.

Reality sinking in with each touch.

He has FAILED.

Tearing his eyes away from her, he takes in the darkness of a world without Ever and stares into the nothingness that is now his life.

FADE OUT.

END