

Chapter 128

Storm Bringers

The human sycophant in Xavier's grasp began to cackle and hack with a craze Xavier had never before witnessed. Snarling, he let go of his grip on the man, satisfied with the sick thud he made down below.

Xavier made his way back to his party through the treetops, all the while casting around intent on finding a break in the fighting a way to get his crew to relative safety. But everywhere, as far as the eye could see, was blocked by a swarm of claws and gunfire. The path to the cars, the way back toward the prison, all gone.

Shit.

He dropped down and retook his place in the formation but stayed in his half-formed state.

"How's it looking, Michaels?" Liam gritted out as he booted a Wolf away from him long enough for another from their team to use their enhanced strength to knock the wayward female over the head. She slumped to the ground, unconscious but still alive.

"Not. Good." Xavier spat. "There is no way out."

For a moment, Liam's jaw clenched, and his eyes slid shut in defeat. But, like the fighter he was, he brought his rifle back up and kept shooting. Beside him, Dylan did the same. And so did the rest of the males and females that made up their small stand.

Because that was what it meant to lead. They'd stood for something, a cause greater than themselves. And they'd die fighting for it. On your left, Wolf.

Xavier's head shot up as a feminine voice rang out inside of his mind.

Don't shoot us.

His eyes darted to the left and saw purple flashes begin to spark from nothing. As he watched, the sparks grew into five blinding white doorways into nothingness, a single figure coming into view and stepping from each. Half a dozen guns spun toward the intrusion.

"Hold!" Xavier shouted.

Time and space surrounding their immediate area seemed to slow to a crawl as the shadowy forms solidified into five women, the center of whom had raven dark hair and a tawny complexion.

"Who do we need to kill, Wolf?" She demanded, the voice the same as the one in his head.

"Humans," he said, unsure of the good it would do. Five more bodies, even witchy ones, wouldn't make a dent in this madness. "Spare the Wolves. They are...in pain."

No sooner had the words left his mouth than the three central witches' eyes begin to glow, morphing between a purple and blue so bright it appeared white-hot. The air around them began to crackle, and an unseen force began to blow, kicking up debris and swirling it around their figures.

As one, the three witches threw their heads back and brought their hands together, releasing a pulse of energy that seemed to suck the energy from the air around them. The world around them rumbled, and out of absolutely nowhere, the entire visible sky darkened with black storm clouds, jagged purple and blue bolts of lightning slinging between them.

The very earth seemed to hold its breath as the women brought their hands together with a CRACK! The tension gathered high above suddenly broke

all at once, sending hundreds of bolts of lightning crashing around them. Screams of agony filled the woods as the anarchist threat was snuffed out in a reign of heavenly fire.

The lightning hadn't fully retreated before the remaining two witches repeated the process, but instead of the crackle of ozone and static, their magic was punctuated by a rush of wind. Together, they slammed their hands together, and a huge funnel of air swept around the battlefield. Xavier could hardly comprehend what he witnessed as the Wolves collapsed in droves, the cyclone stealing the very oxygen from their lungs and sending them crashing unconscious to the ground below.

As if it had never been, the lightning and the gale-force winds disappeared, leaving the sky as sunny and crystalline as it had been before five women appeared from thin air and made nature their bitch.

From either side of him, rifles drooped and fell to the forest floor from shock-numbed fingers. No one said a word, still too thrown by what the actual fuck they'd witnessed. First the prison break, then this display of...unfathomable power. Now he understood why so many Wolves were wary of witches.

But, if Xavier was being honest, wary didn't nearly cover it.

He had never seen such a display of power, had no idea that witches were capable of so much.

The dark-haired leader stepped forward and waved. She was a little paler than she had been upon her first arrival but looked remarkably unphased by the massive amounts of energy she'd just channeled.

"You're welcome," she said. "The name's Marnie. I'm a friend of Ava's."

Dylan let out a scoff that quickly morphed into a disbelieving bark of laughter, "Of fucking course you are. Ava would make friends who could incinerate a small army. The girl has absolutely no sense and too fucking many people skills!" The witch cracked a grin so cocky it rivaled any of Dylan's and looked the blonde male up and down, "Accurate. On both accounts."

Xavier saw Dylan go still, and it was no doubt in thanks to years of being a swaggering prick that kept the male from going slack-jawed. But the vibe of fear bordering on revulsion and intense lust he felt pulse through the male was something else.

With a Herculean effort, Xavier shook off his own shock enough to step forward.

"On behalf of my team, we really appreciate the assist. We can't thank you enough. My name is Xavier Michaels," he said and stuck out his hand for her to shake, only to be surprised to find it covered in dark fur and tipped in claws. Well, this is a first. He had never been so shaken that he'd

forgotten what form he was in before. Before he could retract it, she grasped it and shook, her hazel eyes meeting his without an ounce of fear.

"I know exactly who you are, Xavier," she said, and just so in a way that conveyed - intentionally, he was sure that her words were deceptively simple. "You're Ava's mate."

His eyes narrowed as he instinctively went on the defensive, "She told you that?"

The witch slowly shook her head, her intense gaze seemingly seeing straight through him, "She didn't have to."

"You were in my mind earlier," he stated. "Have you been inside of hers?"

Again, the witch shook her head, "I haven't had to peer inside her thoughts, hun. I've peered inside of her destiny."

When no one around him appeared put off by her unsettling words, at first, he thought that she'd pitched her words so low that only he could hear. It wasn't until she'd walked off that he realized that her lips hadn't been moving. "Well, it's been fun! We haven't had an MCE in decades," she sighed.

"What is an MCE?" Liam asked, his voice conveying what Xavier felt was the appropriate amount of aversion.

One of the other witches piped up for the first time, "Mass Casualty Event."

Goddess...

"And fun as this was, we don't particularly care to be here when," Marnie gestured to the dozens of still-unconscious Wolves surrounding them. "They wake up."

The air began to crackle as the witches summoned their power once again, but before they could open their portals, Dylan stepped forward.

"Wait," he called. "You know who these people were, don't you?"

Marnie only leveled him with her uncanny hazel gaze and waited.

"Renegade vigilantes bent on seeing to the end of super naturals. Period. They don't care who," he said. "And the reason we were here in the first place? Trying to stop an army of terrorists from taking over the Alliance." "Okay...."

"We've been living in chaos for the last five months, fighting just to get by. Trying to save innocent lives. Where have you and your people been this entire time? This is your fight, too."

The witch cocked her head to the side, eyes narrowed, "What are you getting at?"

Xavier and Liam shared a look, wondering the same. It wasn't like Dylan to get so...involved. "Stay," the blonde male said. "Help us win the Alliance back from the bastards like these."

Marnie scoffed, derision heavy in her tone, "Witches care nothing for Alliance affairs. Your people want nothing to do with us, and that's exactly how we like it."

She waved a hand, and another blindingly bright portal appeared. The witch turned to leave but paused abruptly. Her head cocked to the side as if she were listening, and when she was finished, she rolled her eyes and grimaced. Her portal snapped out of existence as the witches behind her all nodded as if accepting their own silent orders. Without a word, they all began making their way toward the prison, hands gently swaying at their sides as wisps of light trickled and spread across the slumbering Wolves.

"What are you doing?" Xavier demanded.

Marnie threw him an irritated look over her shoulder, "Keeping them asleep. We might be staying but hauling around a bunch of pony-sized dogs is on you."

"Staying?" Dylan prompted.

"Yes," she hissed. "You all need a new safe house, don't you?"

Liam's brow furrowed, "How did you-?"

Marnie's arm flung out in the direction of the now-empty prison, "Have at it!"