

## Chapter 72

I had one word in my mind. F\*\*k.

The way he stumbled to get out of the bed made me scramble upright. His eyes were blown wide when he looked at me.

Looking down at my hands, I saw they were shiny. It wasn't sweat or an outer manifestation of inner radiance. It was light. My skin had a coat of light all around it.

I asked the goddess for magic because I didn't expect her to give it to me. It was also because I wanted something my mother had lost and it was the first thing that came to my mind. I didn't pause to consider how Valens would react to me having magic.

"I have something to tell you," I said to him. He nodded, his eyes fixated on me while he kept his distance.

"You definitely have something to tell me," he replied.

The light on my skin intensified when I opened my mouth to blurt things out to him. It started as a soft glow but as I watched, the soft glow brightened and brightened, turning me into a gigantic lightbulb. I closed my eyes against the burning glare of the light.

My eyes opened when I felt a sharp prick on my side but I snapped it shut when light almost blinded me. I felt another pr!ck. Then another, and another, until it felt like every inch of my skin was being pierced. The stings went deeper, moving past my skin to puncture my internal organs.

“Hey, hey, breathe,” I cracked open my eyes a fraction through the mild pain and major discomfort of what felt like laying on a bed of little thorns. Valens was holding me, his expression taut.

Taking his advice, my lungs stretched in a breath that promptly seized when it aggravated the stings. My mouth opened in a gasp that my instincts tried to curtail to avoid the pierces of pain.

My body went lax almost as if I was boneless. I sagged into Valens’ arms, losing control of every part of my body. I could not even keep my eyes closed. They opened but I saw nothing past the blinding light surrounding me.

“Stay with me,” Valens’ voice called. In that state, his voice sounded strange and from another room. “I am calling a doctor. Stay with me, little moon.”

I had no control over any part of my body. Something slithered through me; a snake of light torching my insides and pushing pinpricks of pain into my system. I wanted to tell Valens not to bother calling a doctor. I wanted to tell him that this would stop as suddenly as it had come. But I lacked control over my mouth to help speak the words.

Just like a shift, I knew what to expect with this. Even during our first shifts, we could tell how to go about it. We knew what to let go of and what to hold on to for a successful first shift. This was due to our wolves. It may be our first shift but our wolves had ingrained knowledge of life past that they used to guide us through a shift. It was the same with the spread of light through my body.

I knew from the first glance that it was the birth of magic; the one the goddess promised me. I’d been waiting for it ever since, not knowing how it would manifest but once I saw the glow on my skin, it felt almost natural for magic to awaken like this. It was as if my body was born prepared to accommodate the energy dancing softly through me,

piercing into me via the pinpricks. Like the knowledge of a first shift, my body knew what to do.

“Aysel? Little moon, please say something.” Valens sounded distraught. I’d never heard him sound so broken before.

The glow around me dimmed. The pins pricking into me from everywhere slowly died down, one after the other. With the same stillness before an orgasm, my body stopped and I bolted upright.

“Ow!” I held my forehead which had smacked into Valens’ jaw when I suddenly sat upright.

“Goddess! What is happening, Sagira?” Valens pulled me back to him, pushing my face into his neck and burying his face in mine. “Don’t do that –“ He pulled away, holding me at arm’s length as his eyes roamed and assessed my body. “What just happened to you?” It interested me that his eyes were red, bloodshot as if he was intoxicated- or had been crying.

“Magic.” I pulled the bedcovers around me, covering my nakedness.

“What do you mean magic? There are no witches left,” he said, his brows furrowed and his eyes looking stunned. “There are no witches left,” he repeated in a bid to assure himself.

There should be no witches left because he actively hunted them down and the goddess aided him without him knowing. There should be no witches yet here I was, humming with magic.

“It’s a gift,” I told him. “A gift from the goddess.” I could feel him pulling away even though he was still on the bed with me, kneeling. “You are pulling away from me,” I said without thought, my wolf mirroring the despair I read on his face.

“I – no.” He pushed his hand into his hair, pushing the overgrown strands back. “I’m not pulling away from you, Sagira, but –“ He cut himself off, sitting back, his legs underneath him. “Why would the

goddess give you magic? Of all things?” He drew out his words. What I heard was ‘Why would you ask for magic of all things?’

“She –“ I paused. I’d resigned myself to never telling him about my mother, or identifying with the person that cursed him to wander for so many years.

I pushed the thought to the back of my mind but a part of me had agreed that there was no reason for him to know because it would serve no purpose besides from putting a wedge between a relationship we were still trying to build. Yet I realized now that there was no way I could explain away my sudden magical gift. There was no way I could hide it either. From the foreign hum in my body, the new energy coursing through me, I knew it could be volatile.

“My mother ah – She had latent magic.” I watched him carefully, noting the smallest detail in his demeanor. He froze when I mentioned my mother being a magician. “She served the goddess faithfully. In return, the goddess gave me her magic for me to feel closer to her and as an apology for – for our child.” My hand went to my stomach. His eyes followed the gesture and they softened. But his posture remained stiff.

“What was your mother’s name?” My heart beat faster. Did he suspect? Had he made the connection? Should I lie?

“Miriam,” I blurted out. My mouth supplied the truth before I could think of a lie. Would he recognize the name? His face turned pensive for a minute as he mulled over the name. Did he have a directory of my great-grandmother’s family names?

“Did you know her?” I asked when the silence and his pensive gaze stretched for too long.

“How could I have known your mother? I was cursed a hundred and four years ago.”

Right!

My mother should not have existed at that time. Except she had. I didn't want to tell him this but I may have aroused his suspicion with that last question.

"You're right. I'm being silly."

"You are not silly," he reprimanded automatically. Then he sighed. "This is a lot for me to take in."

"I know." Silence stretched after that. The hum in my veins grew louder but he could not hear them. Only I felt the changes happening in my body.

"I need a run." He got out of bed, pushing his hair back again. His jeans hung low on his h\*\*s as he stood, his mind distracted. "I have to wrap my head around this."

"I understand." The door closed before I got the words out. I fell back into bed. Tears fell from my eyes and dripped into my ears.

I hadn't expected him to be thrilled about a magical mate. He hated being reminded of his past. I asked for magic and made myself a constant reminder of his tragedy. I chose to identify with the very people he hated.

Maybe he was right. I wanted to punish him the way I felt he had punished me. I'd never even thought of that! Could I have asked for magic just to spite him?

"I am sorry." He came back into the room and I wiped my eyes frantically. He was gone less than two minutes.

"You've been apologizing a lot frequently." I smiled, desperate to lighten the mood. "You aren't going for a run anymore?"

"I am apologizing because I keep hurting you." He got into bed with me. "I am not going on a run. I don't want you to ever feel like I am pulling away from you or abandoning you."

“It’s okay if you need space to work through things,” I said even though I was secretly glad that he came back. For a second there, it felt as if I had run him off. I hated the sight of him turning his back on me. The feeling sucked.

“No, no space.” He leaned into me. “I – I don’t like magic but it shouldn’t matter if you are blessed with magic. You are my mate and I love you. Magic shouldn’t –“

“You – you what?” My heart raced from my throat, my hands trembling.

“I have never said that out loud, have I?” His smile was sheepish when he raised his head to mine.