



Chapter 136

Chapter 136

There was a prick in my mind. I tried to ignore it but after another two, I peeled my eyes open. It was still dark outside but you could smell the wet dew of the forest. Looking next to me, Vale was passed out, his arm slung across my chest. He was still naked and snoring into the pillows. He must have cleaned me off while I was passed out because there was no trace of any cum on me. I did have a blanket thrown over my lower half while he was just butt naked on top of them.

'I need to speak with you.'

I froze, Auri's mind link coming through clear. Looking at Vale, he obviously wasn't being woken up as well. Slowly, I slipped out from under his arm and tossed a blanket over his legs and butt. It would be a bit embarrassing if someone ended up waking him up and he was laying there butt ass naked. Creeping over to our duffle bags, I pulled out new boxers, jeans, and a shirt, slipping them on before quietly making my way out of the tent.

The forest looked magical. A thick layer of fog covered the ground and there wasn't any light coming from canopy above. I'm not sure what time it was but thinking it was morning seemed like a stretch. Looking around, I didn't see Auri anywhere.

'Walk past my tent on the right side, and continue walking.'

Her voice filled my head and I followed her directions. It was similar to when I had found her walking through the forest on my early morning run but this seemed a bit eerier. I also felt a bit of foreboding as well. The feelings



Chapter 136

that Vale distracted me from last night simmered now in the pit of my stomach.

The walk was quiet and there weren't even any animals out at this time. There were a couple chips and hisses from the surrounding insects but nothing that felt lifelike. It always astounded me just how far she could mind link. I knew if I kept walking this way, eventually I'd run into the fey who were camped on this side of the forest. However, I didn't get far enough to see. Auri was leaning against a tree, her eyes closed, and her hands were behind her back.

"Auri..."

She smiled and her eyes looked up at me. "I wonder when you stopped calling me mom."

I smiled. "I don't know. It seems...inappropriate now."

Auri hummed but didn't ask why I thought that or that I should change back. I was glad. I didn't mean it as an offense, more that I just thought she deserved more respect. That her name held a weight that 'Mom' just didn't have. Not anymore. She didn't have a title but her name was already that. Mom just seemed like it wasn't everything that she was and somehow inadequate. Trying to voice all that though would sound silly and probably come out all kinds of wrong.

"Walk with me."

She held out her arm and I looped mine with hers. We walked north, in the direction of Oran's forces and the High Council castle. For a long time, neither of us said anything. The sounds of the insects and the occasional twig that broke under our steps was the only thing that filled the silence. It was obvious she wasn't trying to be sneaky.



Chapter T36

This wasn't some clandestine mission to take out everyone before everyone woke up. Though, that definitely seemed like something she would do. We only walked; a slow but steady pace.

It wasn't until there was a break in the trees did we diverge from the path we were walking together. There were ruins within the forest. It probably used to be a larger area that didn't have trees but they were so old that the forest had already taken back the space. There were only about three or four columns that were still standing and even they had chunks missing out of them. Others were broken in pieces around. It looked like there were stairs to a platform that the columns were surrounding but most of it had been lost. A remnant of stairs were left and a small piece of the platform remained.

Auri slipped her arm out from mine and walked into the clearing. She touched one of the columns gently before walking over the stairs and stepping up it, onto the platform, and looking around the clearing. The moss and grass had grown over most of it but when I brushed over the pillar, I was shocked at how cold it was.

"Marble?"

She nodded. "It was an old palace. Many many many years ago, the fey had a palace here on this plane. It was a place that all supernatural beings were welcome. Even humans that stumbled upon it were happily received. It did start a rumor that the forest was stealing people away because no human wanted to go back home after getting a taste of what the fey could offer."

I looked around. "Is this all that is left?"

"Sadly, yes. There was a war. Many feared the fey and the

Chapter 136

powers they possessed. They wanted to take the power, enslave the fey, and have them kneel before them."

"Vampires?"

Auri smiled at me. "Vampires, werewolves, even some humans which possessed powers, or what are known as witches now." She jumped down softly from the platform. "It was before the time of Alpha Kings and Vampire Kings. It was before territories lines and things as domestic as cities or homes. The battle destroyed all of the marble palace and the fey, not wanting to fight or hurt another supernatural beings, fell back into their own realm. They have stayed there now for thousands of years."

Looking around, I couldn't figure what she was trying to say. "I...don't understand..."

She chuckled. "I'm stalling, Zeke. I'm sorry."

"Oh."

I turned to look at her. She was still this younger version of herself that was kind of off-putting but the tears that streamed down her face were that of someone who knew pain. My eyes tried to search for the source of pain but all I saw was her staring back at me, struggling to smile.

"Auri?"

"I never meant to be gone for so long in the fey realm this last time. I helped them rebuild their magic barriers by getting rid of some of the built up magic in me. It works to their advantage and they don't feel so bad sharing their runes with a werewolf."

I smiled, trying to help her to smile as well. "I mean, you are part fey right? Doesn't that count for something?"

Chapter 136

The laugh that came out of her drove a stake into my heart. "Yes, I have the eyes of their Queen. Uriel's wife and lover of over one hundred years. The woman who came to this spot and said it was time that the fey come back to our realm. She was fighting to come back and she was captured by Oran. Her eyes were extracted from her and then shoved into my sockets."

It was almost instinctive that I stepped back away from her; from the bitterness of her words. I touched the column, the cold marble giving me a sense of something solid in their feeling of everything, including Auri, being magical.

"Auri...I..."

She let out an exasperated sigh. "I'm sorry. This isn't easy for me. All of this. I wish I could say I was prepared. That I've been through enough that I could weather this with grace and poise but I'm a fucking mess." This time her smile seemed genuine. "You have no idea how terrible of a place I was just with the simple shit when I was in my twenties. That war fucked me up fifty ways to hell and all I wanted to do was spare my children from being in the same position."

"And here we are." I offered her and she snorted.

"And here we fucking are." Auri shook her head. "I wanted my kids to be happy. To live long lives. To find their mates and have kids of their own. To not know the pain it is to shoulder a war. To see death around you knowing this was your doing. That it was your fault."

My eyes filled with tears as the pain tore through her very words. Her fingers brushed the marble, much like mine

Chapter 136

had. Auri's eyes were looking at the marble, tears streaming down her face.

"Auri...just..."

Her body froze, as though it had become a statue next to the marble; eyes glazed over as the tears fell slowly from her eyes. "There is a sweet little fey, her name is Idu. She always came to play with the kids when we went into their main city." She took a moment, not a single movement outside of her lips moving. "She is adorable but she struggles just like Herr. Herr is gifted in so many ways that I know when she gets to be a teenage we are going have some real issues."

The tips of her fingers curled into the moss on the marble. "Idu can see the future. Well, more like feel the future. She can't see glimpses, but she can feel shifts in the magic. It's hard to explain really but she came to me while I was helping build up the barrier. Her mother brought her. Apparently she was hysterical and was trying to get me for a few months but I hadn't come through."

I didn't dare interrupt her now.

"She said...she said she had a feeling. That our fate lines were crossing and moving. She tried to explain it to me and she broke down in tears. I didn't know how to help. So, what I did was open my mind to her. I told her to show me what she felt. Not to explain it in words because that wasn't how her power worked."

Auri's amber eyes rose to meet mine, the intensity of the look forced me not to blink. "Zeke...Vale is going to die. He's going to die and it's going to here, in this battle. He's going to die and there isn't anything I can do to stop it."