

Chapter 143

*** Auri's POV ***

I had killed nine of the monsters that Oran kept in the arena beneath the castle. Nine of them, each one as mutilated and grotesque as the next. They were powerful though and it had taken me too long to kill them all. Too long put them all out of their misery as their minds begged me over and over again to do. Uriel had reached out to me and told me that he had the pups and had left the castle. All that was left was the battle Vale and Zeke were currently fighting.

Running as fast as I could, I slid down the hall. I knew the High Council intended that Vale was going to rule inside the castle with them, but I didn't know they had already built the throne room for him. When Vale first mind linked me about the room and that Oran was waiting for them, I wasn't necessarily surprised. He was, if anything, a dramatic asshole.

I stopped in front of two huge doors that were on the north side of the castle. Using my power, I touched the wood and it turned into a pile of wood shavings on the ground. There wasn't time to worry about kicking in the door. Not now. My eyes took in the scene before me. The whole room was broken. There was rubble, broken columns, smashed walls and floors. Banners were torn and ripped, the remnants of a fight that got out of hand. It was quiet, deathly quiet. The fight was over. I was too late.

Tears spilled out as my mind comprehended what I was seeing. Vale was sitting on the throne, Oran at his feet,

kneeling. Oran wasn't moving but he wasn't ash either. Vale must have done something to incapacitate him. Zeke was on the far end of the hall, completely broken but I could hear his heart beating. He was passed out, either from blood loss, pain or just being knocked out.

Knees giving out, I covered my mouth as the sobs as started. As my shoulders began to shake. They echoed in the hall. My Vale, my son, the king sitting on his throne, had a sword jammed into his chest. It pinned him against the back of the chair. His eyes unseeing, no breath, no movement.

Finally, I let it loose. All of it. A scream tore from my throat and the power that I had broke free. The rune dissipating on my back. The only sound was my cry, that echoed with my power. Oran was never Vale's fight. He was mine. My failure. My battle. My revenge. His fathers sin. His fathers failure as well. Again. Again I had lost someone. Lost someone I loved. Again I had not been strong enough.

Grabbing my hair, I pulled, still crying out against the pain. Against knowing my son, my king, would never rise from that throne. Never smile at me and tell me I was being crude or ridiculous. He would never chastise me or ask how to make a recipe. He would never teach my kids what it meant to be a good sibling.

The boy I raised was now in front of me. Going somewhere I couldn't follow. Couldn't be there for him. Tell him how to navigate it. He was leaving behind a mate. Two children. I found myself choking on the words, "It should have been me..."

Once I got the words out, they didn't catch anymore. "It

should have been me!" I screamed from the top of my lungs.

My eyes blazed with the power, the gold fire bursting forth. The golden flames erupting from me. The air got hot as the flames swirled around me. It created a vortex in which encompassed the room. I watched, with tears that evaporated as soon as they hit my cheeks, the walls starting to melt. The stones themselves melting under my fire. Clamping my eyes shut, I curled up into a ball, letting my power explode out of control. I was out of control. This is what my life had become, losing my own son.

'Auri!'

Someone shouted my name but I knew it was in my head. It sounded like Hector but everything was so jumbled, I could barely tell. I sure as hell couldn't answer. One final push, I sent Zeke through a portal, away from here. Away from the pain of his dead mate. Away from everything that I was about to do. He didn't need to be here. This was never his fight. Never his war. It was over now though. I may not have started it, but I sure as hell was going to finish it.

Judgement. They were right. I was judgement. Everything would stop. The scales would be balanced. At the center of it all, my son's sacrifice would not be for nothing. He destroyed the man who created the BloodHunter Coven. Now, his legacy would be remembered as the King who righted the world with his sacrifice.

'Auri, love, reign it in.'

If I could have shouted no, I would have. The words seemed lost in my head. A jumbled mess of anger and pain. Feeling only the heat and the fire burning around me.

Melting it all down. The symbol of the old.

'Auri, please...'

I growled, slamming my fist into the soft malleable stone that was beneath me. My knees sinking into it as it turned more and more liquid.

"Let them all burn. Let it all burn." I repeated over and over. My anger and pain weaving between them.

-

My power started to wain and I didn't know how long it had been but I opened my eyes for the first time. The heat was nearly unbearable. The ground surrounding what used to be the throne room was bright red and orange. It looked like pure magma was pooling around for miles in every direction.

The castle was gone, the forest was gone. Everything was melted into the pool and there was no one visible within the area. Looking up, I adjusted the power I had left. Bringing in the clouds and letting it become a downpour, steam billowed from the earth as the drops cooled it. My hair, drenched from the downpour, fell in my face. The lone standing scene of Oran and Vale was now a deeper darker color. Stumbling to my feet, I took hold of Oran's hair and turned his face up to me. Vale must have only nicked his heart. It explained why he hadn't disappeared and maybe given a few years he would have healed enough to move.

He didn't have a few years. My hands wrapped around his neck, my claws elongating and I snapped it. His body becoming dust and the knife clamoring to the floor. Reaching out, the handle of the sword sticking out of my

son had dulled from a bright red to an orange. I still grasped it with my right hand. I couldn't feel the pain but I could smell my skin burning. Yanking it out of the chair, out of Vale's chest, I reached forward with my left so his body wouldn't fall forward. Throwing the sword away, I pick up Vale's body in my arms. He would not be left here. This place would always be a scar on our history. A scar that would be a constant reminder of how we failed each other as supernatural beings. Vale did no such thing. He deserved a kings burial. One at home, with his pack, with his family and his mate.

My steps were slow as I carried Vale's body over the slightly cooled scorched ground. It shifted underneath me, telling me that the rain only cooled the top layer. It still burned my feet, I'm sure, but still I felt nothing. It took me two hours until, through the steam and rain, I could see the beginning of the forest line. It was raining further out then I had cast it, but I'm sure the heat was creating the perfect storm conditions for thunderhead clouds to gather. I was able to feel the difference in the cool as my feet touched the grass of the forest. There were signs of recent activity and I could hear voices further into the forest, but no sounds of fighting.

My throat felt raw and my voice came out more of a croak, but I knew he would hear me or feel me. I stopped walking in a clearing I had come to know. It was south of the castle but it had a stream going through it. Slowly, I placed Vale's body down, running my hands over his eyes, closing them for the last time.

"Auri! Goddess above!"

Hector's arms wrapped around my shoulders and my hand grasped his arm. He buried his face in my shoulder. I

Chapter 143

could feel his own tears own on my skin. He held me tighter. As we mourned our son, mourned our king.

I took a shaky breath and leaned my head back, looking into the dark grey clouds above the clearing. Speaking seemed like an impossible task. Stringing words together seemed so far away from a function. It was a miracle I was even breathing. All I could feel now was loss. I had failed. The Goddess took our king and another one, halfway across the world, was most likely breathing his first breaths. Right now though, my child, the one I tried to protect, was gone. The weight of my failure crushed me and I fell limp into Hector's arms.



Comments



Vote (22.6K)

