

Lost Wolf Chapter 11 - Tips

Wyn saw movement on the video screen over Blake's shoulder. She stepped forward, covering her mouth. Her eyes widened. She pointed at the screen without making a sound. Blake whirled around. He gasped and stepped closer, bending in front of the screen to get a better look.

"It's her," Wyn finally said.

Wyn collapsed on the couch and crossed her arms. She couldn't take her eyes off the woman on the screen.

Dressed in icy blue robes, she moved as if on mist gathered around her. Her hair was long and straight down her back, as white as the ice that surrounded her. The Snow Queen's full lips were pale blue, and her eyes shone like diamonds. Her face and skin were tight as stone and the color of a pale morning shadow on snow.

"She's beautiful," Wyn said through trembling lips.

"She's a hag," Blake said.

But something about the woman's face and eyes haunted Wyn to her core.

"She murdered my mother in cold blood."

"I can't help but think there's something behind her eyes."

"She stole a thousand years from you," Blake said with a growl.

Wyn had seen the witch from afar. She'd felt her presence and her magic. She'd been on a cliffside, whirling white and blue light, limbs and hair. Wyn had never looked into the woman's eyes. Until now.

The Snow Queen turned her gaze toward the camera as if she knew she was being watched. The witch knelt in front of the flower, her eyes never leaving the camera.

The Snow Queen plucked the delicate bloom and her lips parted. She pressed the flower into her mouth, stem first. As if animated, it dissolved into white light in the witch's mouth.

The Snow Queen's eyes flashed. She rose as if pulled on a string, turned, and glided back through the dark entrance to her ice palace.

Wyn's heart raced.

For the next eight hours, she watched the capture of the Snow Queen on replay, from every angle, repeatedly. She could swear the woman was staring right into her soul.

She heard the distinct chop of helicopter blades in the air as she received a text message from her nephew Bran. "We're coming in for a landing."

"They're here," Wyn said. Blake was folding his laundry.

They pulled on their winter boots and coats and walked out into the snow. The sleek black chopper glided onto her helipad. The side door slid open, and her nephew Bran jumped out.

He was followed by her other nephews, Zeke, Dale, Smoke, and the pilot, Storm. All fine dragons of the Throne of Flames.

After them, six witches piled out of the helicopter. Wyn waved and walked down the salted path to greet them. She met her nephew Bran and shook his hand.

"It's good to see you," she said. "Thank you for your quick response. All of you."

Elle Corvino was the priestess of the powerful coven Wyn had employed to break through the Snow Queen's wards. They had agreed with the mission to end the Snow Queen's ability to spread such powerful curses in the world.

Just as the group was walking toward her house for a debriefing, snowmobile motors buzzed through the air.

A dozen snowmobiles curved around the side of her house near the lake and started toward them. Blake waved and several of the drivers nodded their heads. They pulled up in front of the assembled crowd and dismounted their snowmobiles.

Blake's brother stepped toward him, and the two men gave each other a powerful hug.

"It's good to see you safe. This must be your mate."

"Wyn, this is my brother Rex."

Blake introduced her to his family, and she introduced him to hers. Luna and Elle began to discuss a game plan before the assembly had even found their way indoors.

Wyn had never been so grateful for her spacious, open-concept home as she was now. There were twenty-three people in her two-bedroom house. Blake served everyone drinks while she and Bran addressed the group.

"We have already decided that the Fate Island coven will stay at the house with Luna," Wyn started.

"They will offer support to our magic as we work on breaking the Snow Queen's wards. This will minimize the risk to Luna and her coven," Elle said.

"I don't want any harm coming to my wife. She's carrying our child." Rex covered Luna's round stomach protectively.

Bran continued. "The dragons will fly up with Elle's coven. We will shift and gear up. The witches will immediately begin to dispel the wards."

Wyn pointed to a map on the screen. "Rain has cleared the snow. The wolves will run up along the side of the mountain. By the time you arrive, the wards should be broken."

The wolf brothers nodded.

"We will gather at the entrance, and the wolves can gear up. The Snow Queen will be in the deepest levels of stasis now and can be killed by decapitation. I will deliver the killing blow," Wyn said, pulling her sword off the wall.

"Is this agreeable to all of you?" Bran asked.

Everyone agreed that it was a good plan. Wyn's heart raced. She'd dreamed of this day for so long. She would take the Snow Queen down and end her reign of terror and destruction.

"We have two hours left of deep stasis," Bran said. "We leave now."

Outside, the dragons shifted, and the witches climbed on their backs. Wyn watched Blake and his brothers shifting in the snow. Her pride and love for him burned in her chest.

Elle climbed on Wyn's back, secured with a load of supplies. One by one, the dragons lifted into the air, gliding on air streams up to the top of the mountain.

The wolves started off around the lake, running fast on fleet paws through the snow. Luna's coven had stayed behind, lighting candles and burning incense as they joined hands and chanted for protection and support.

Wyn could feel the magic whirling around her already. Everything had been timed perfectly. This had to work.

In the end, it was in the hands of Fate.

The dragons landed on the snowy peak just outside the Snow Queen's grounds. The witches dismounted and the supplies were unpacked. Wyn slid into her armored winter clothing and fastened her sword belt to her waist.

Wyn and her nephews followed the witches toward the Snow Queen's garden. The coven began chanting and casting spells around themselves and the group.

"Stop." Elle stepped forward.

She and the group raised their hands. Magic beamed from their palms as they dispelled the first ward. Blue light flickered as twilight began to fall.

Elle looked at Wyn and nodded. "We can pass."

The coven walked ahead, stopping every few yards to break another ward. The dragons followed, weapons drawn. Wyn could feel her mate's heart as his paws beat against rock and snow. She could feel his breath panting in his lungs. She said a silent prayer for him, and she knew that he would feel it.

Wyn's group made their way slowly to where the snow flower had grown, the witches removing wards as they went. When they came to the entrance of the palace, the ward breaking became more difficult.

The witches set up their implements. Potions and oils, salts and incense, flame and ash. They worked their magic while Wyn waited for her mate and his pack to arrive.

Just as the witches had broken the first ward, she heard the sound of paws breaking through the underbrush. The pack ran toward the dragons and witches. Her nephews gave the brothers their supplies, and they quickly changed.

The assembled group moved into the entrance tunnel. It led downward into the dark. The dragons and wolves turned on flashlights. Wyn shined her own into the depths.

They progressed slowly, waiting as each ward was broken. Wyn could hear their breaths, feel their heartbeats. Magic swirled around them, sizzling along her skin, through her hair and eyelashes.

She gritted her teeth and gripped the hilt of her sword. Today it would end. She was walking into the depths of her deepest darkness. She would have her revenge today.

The coven broke the final ward, and light spread into a large open tomb. The witches walked through an archway, the dragons right behind them, casting light into the darkness.

A single funerary slab sat at the center of the domed room. On the slab lay the Snow Queen, covered in white and blue cloth. Her body was as still as stone, her breath caught in her lungs.

Wyn stepped forward, foot over foot, cautiously moving toward her target. The others spread out. Blake was right behind her at her side. Wyn observed the woman's youthful cheeks, the tilt of her jaw, the slope of her brow.

Wyn raised her sword, ready to strike. A memory of the woman's eyes, haunted and sad, swept through her mind.

Wyn lowered her sword and shook her head. Blake stepped up beside her, holding a handgun. He raised his gun and pointed it at the sleeping woman.

"No." Bran swept in front of them, his eyes wild in the flashlight.

"What are you doing?" Blake growled. "This witch killed my mother."

"You can't. She's my mate."

Bran turned to her and knelt beside her, his knees on the ground, his hands on her shoulders. Wyn motioned for Blake to stand down.

"He's been bewitched," Wyn said.

She motioned for Elle to come closer. The priestess began to chant a spell of banishing on him.

"This isn't enchantment. She is my mate," Bran roared.

His eyes flashed with wildfire and his sharp teeth descended in his mouth. He brushed a kiss over the Snow Queen's blue lips and then sank his fangs into her neck, releasing the mating venom into her veins.

Wyn gasped in shock at the turn of events.

"Someone stop him," Blake yelled.

"I believe my brother knows when he's found his mate," Storm said.

Wyn watched in shock as her nephew slid his bloodied teeth from the witch's neck.

The Snow Queen sucked in a ragged breath and sat up on her stone slab. Everyone took a step back. Wyn gripped her sword, ready to do what needed to be done.

"She is mine," Bran said, shielding the tiny woman with his massive body.

"The curse. It's broken. It's truly broken." The Snow Queen's soft, melodic voice filled the domed tomb. The witch then wept like a child.

Bran shielded her with his body. The Snow Queen wrapped her arms around him and sank her face into his neck. Tears streamed down her cheeks, wetting his armor.

“My stepmother cursed me with her very last breath, that I should be bound to the snow flower for eternity, killing, cursing, and wreaking havoc with my magic, the gift from my birth mother. I’ve been unable to stop... until now that my fated mate has found me. But how did you find me?” she said, gazing into Bran’s eyes. “It was impossible. I was a prisoner of my own magic. But you... you’ve saved me.”

“I’m taking her away from here.” Bran scooped her up in his arms.

“Wait,” Wyn said.

“I’m free. I’m finally free,” the witch cried.

Bran charged up the tunnel and into the twilight of the world above. Wyn heard his wings echo through the catacombs as he took off and flew away.

Everyone in the tomb was shocked and stunned to silence. Elle began to laugh. Wyn covered her mouth, despite the chuckle she couldn’t hold back.

Wyn shook her head at the absurdity as laughter bellowed all around her. Hysterical mirth erupted from the dark pit inside her. She threw her arms around Blake, and they laughed together. All around them, the party congratulated each other on a job well done.