

Chapter 56

Jasper

I stared, wide-eyed, at my mate, along with everyone else. We'd reconvened in the living area, with the doors shut, and had Gideon soundproof the room as an extra precaution. Vie had mind-linked me in a state, saying we needed to talk urgently. Of all the things she could have told us, the Moon Goddess's story didn't even make the top ten on my list.

"Poor Celeste..." Tracy wiped her eyes for the hundredth time.

The mood in general was solemn, everyone taking their individual time to process the information Violet had brought us. Eventually, I opened the conversation up with a question.

"So, Jennine was what? Her first choice?"

Vie looked at me. "You mean, before me? I think so."

"What's the end goal?" King asked. "For this Phoebus guy?"

"She said it would mean the end of us all. And I don't think she meant the end of werewolves, specifically. I think he wants to destroy everything Celeste created. The wolves, werebears, werefoxes, witches. Maybe even the vampires, who knows."

"That's so weird." Tracy said. "If he's so jealous, why not just create something of his own? A species of his own children?"

"Maybe he can't." I thought aloud. "Maybe it's not part of his power."

"So, he manipulates the creations of his sister into getting rid of themselves out of spite." Ashwell added.

"Or maybe he's just a prick who gets off on mass genocide." King spat.

"Whatever his motivations, he has to be stopped. This is now way bigger than just a problem with Jennine; Like Celeste said, she's just his puppet this time. But whatever he's planning, we can be sure that she's a main player." Vie pinched the bridge of her nose. "I need to talk my parents."

"I was just thinking the same thing." Gideon agreed. "Shall I?"

"Please." She nodded.

He vanished with a slight pop.

I folded my hands together under my chin, waiting. According to Violet, she'd been with the Goddess for only a little while, but in reality, she'd slept for hours. It was twilight outside, the shadows of the setting sun streaming in through the windows. My eyes followed a bird flitting from tree to tree in the yard, my inner thoughts a jumbled mess. My sole focus right now was trying to figure out how I could protect my family. I was about to have two children, born into a world that would soon be thrown into chaos, and my guts twisted and knotted at the thought.

It wasn't long before Gideon reappeared in the center of the room, holding hands with Dimitri and Lily. Both of them looked somewhat dizzy, settling into the nearest chairs.

"We can't be gone long." Lily told us. "Dad said you have information about Jennine." She said the name like it was poison.

"You might want to call Ben and tell him to look after stuff for a couple hours." I suggested to Dimitri. "This is a lot."

He raised an eyebrow between me and his daughter, but nodded, pulling out his cell.

"Did you find her?" Lily directed the question, Violet.

"No. But we know more than we did."

Dimitri ended the call, leaning back in his seat. "Go ahead." So, for the second time tonight, Violet recounted her meeting with the Goddess,

sparing no detail. Tracy teared up all over again, while the rest of us listened closely to anything we might have missed before. Dimitris expression remained neutral, while his mates displayed various emotions as she listened. When she was done, the room was quiet, save for Tracys sniffles.

"It makes sense now." Dimitri spoke into the silence.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

He glanced at Lily. "Jennine wasn't always the way she is. We grew up, not together, but in the popular clicks you could say. Her parents were once very influential in the pack. She was a sweet girl, very helpful, very happy."

"When did that change?" King asked.

"Around high school. But that happened with most of the girls. Boys too. People change as they grow up; Honestly, I'm sure most people thought her attitude stemmed from her parents, particularly her mother. Why would anyone assume, or even think, that an evil God had anything to do with it?"

"Dad..." Lily looked at Gideon with a strange expression. "You don't think... Bastian...?"

"I've been considering it." He nodded. "But it also might be unfair to assume that every single evil person was influenced by Phoebus. I'd like to believe that Bastian was, but maybe he was just simply evil, of his own freewill." He sighed.

"But we know for sure that Jennine is being influenced." I said. "And that makes her more dangerous than we originally thought."

"Agreed. Who knows if Phoebus decided to give her another gift of his." Ashwell said.

I stood, gathering everyone's attention.

"We need to focus on finding Jennine." I turned to King and Ashwell. "I want our training doubled. I also want you to pull back on border patrol; No point in putting pack members lives at risk. We have the shield up now, so put those men into training with the others. And I want you to put the word out that any women who want to train, have the right to."

"Yes Alpha." They replied in unison.

"Vie, I want you to train with Gideon, as much as your able. You might have different magic, but he can still guide you. Tracy, stay with her. Help me look out for my family."

Both the girls nodded. Violet rubbed circles over her stomach.

"You're talking like you have a plan son." Dimitri said slowly.

"I do."

"Care to fill us in?" Gideon asked.

Starting to pace, I walked them through the theory I had.

"Vie, you said Celeste told you to remember that her daughter died, right? Well, Elsa was a Goddess, wasn't she?"

"It stands to reason." Lily answered the question. "She was born from the Moon Goddess, and her grandmother was also a Goddess."

"But she still died." I stated firmly. "So, that means it's possible. Which means it's also probably possible that Phoebus can be killed too."

"You're right." Ashwell said slowly.

"I can only imagine how hard it's going to be to kill a God." King crossed his arms.

"Our first plan of action is to capture Jennine." I explained. "I'm betting that if she knows we know about Phoebus, he'll know it too. Knowing we know about him, and have general idea about what he's planning might throw him off a little."

"So, to summarize, you want to capture a Dark Witch, tell her we know her grand scheme, and then try to kill her God boss?" Tracy wrinkled her nose. "No offense, Alpha, but that's pretty out there."

"It's better than sitting around and waiting for a war." Lily spoke with authority. Tracy sank back into the sofa.

I looked at the other Alpha present. "Dimitri, I'm going to need you too."

"How can I help?"

"I'm going to need you to help me get in touch with other packs. And, if I remember correctly, you have an old werebear friend?"

He smirked. "He's not going to believe any of this."

"He might. After all, this family has not only a Mother Wolf, but a Midnight wolf too." Violet mirrored her father's smirk.

"I don't suppose anyone knows how to get ahold of the foxes." Gideon looked around. Everyone shook their heads. "Perhaps Alistaire has contacts." He tapped his chin thoughtfully.

"Bring him here, if you can." I said.

For the next hour, we came up with a rough sketch of a plan. Despite sleeping for most of the afternoon, Violet's eyelids started to droop, and Tracy was yawning. Around ten, our group split off, King and Ashwell heading to their respective floors, while Gideon took Dimitri and Lily home. Dimitri was to tell his Beta and Gamma what was happening, as well as fill them in on the plan so far. Everyone had their roles, and the sooner we got started the better.

Taking my mate's hand, we walked through the house until we got to the kitchen. Vie sat at the island, resting her head on the cool marble surface. I pulled varying food items out of the fridge and cupboards, working to make us a light dinner.

"It's crazy, isn't it?" She said quietly. "A few months ago, we were bickering with each other at school. Now we're mates, Alpha and Luna, and preparing to fight a God." She laughed. "Crazy."

I flipped the chicken in the pan, joining in her laugh. "Crazy indeed."

"I'm glad though. Glad I don't have to face it alone. I'm glad I have you."

I looked at her, my face serious. "You'll always have me Vie. No matter what."

She sat up tiredly when I set her plate in front her. We ate in comfortable silence, occasionally glancing at each other. My thoughts drifted back to my conversation with my wolf the other night.

"Ehno."

"Yes?"

"Did you know all this? Is this what you've been talking to Celeste about?"

"No."

I set my fork down. "If you have any information that can help us, I'd really like it if you didn't keep it to yourself."

"I know as much as you do Jasper."

Violet groaning pulled my attention to her.

"What's wrong?" I asked instantly.

"Hala is bugging me to go for a run. But I'm tired." She grumbled.

"I want to go for a run." Ehno piped up.

"She just said she was tired."

"Hala isn't."

I could feel his intention in my head and I rolled my eyes.

"Do you ever not think about sex?"

"It's been forever Jasper." He growled, surprising me. "I want to mark my mate too! I want to complete the bond."

"What are you talking about? Violet and I marked each other, the bond is complete."

He growled again, louder. Pushing forward, Ehno tried to take control; I gripped the countertop to steady myself, shocked by his behavior.

"What is the matter with you?!" I yelled at him.

"I need to mark her Jasper!"

"Not tonight Ehno! In case you didn't notice, we're all stressed. Especially Vie, and-"

He tried to take over again. I pushed back, keeping him at bay by a thread. I couldn't understand where this sudden need came from. Our wolf counterparts marked each other, not out necessity, but more to show other wolves they were taken. But Ehno was acting as if this was life or death, snarling and clawing inside my head.

Violet stood, looking as frazzled as I was. "Hala is insisting we go for a run." She rolled her eyes hugely.

"So is Ehno."

"Let's go. Let them get it out of their systems." She scooped up the dishes, dropping them in the sink. We took the closest exit, the backdoor of the house. Another improvement by Gideon, and fairly convenient. I discarded my shoes by the stone steps leading into the yard, and then my sweater. It was especially bright out tonight, and looking up I saw why. It was a full moon, with not a cloud in the sky. It shone brightly, perfectly round with a white halo glowing around it. The stars around dulled in comparison.

Violet shifted, and I a few seconds later. Ehno instantly forced me back, having more control in this form.

"At least wait 'till you're in the forest!" I sneered at him. The last thing I wanted to have to explain to anyone who happened to look out their window was why my wolf couldn't control himself. If I couldn't have sex in the open, neither could he.

To his credit though, he did manage to get to the trees, but not very far. As soon as the two made it past the first five, Hala crouched, her tail in the air. I turned my attention elsewhere, letting him have his moment, which he was all too eager for. It was a little unsteady at first, Hala was a big wolf after all. The thing that took me off guard was how good it felt; Ehno was in Alpha mode now, the beast coming out. But I felt everything, willingly giving myself over to the pleasure. It had never felt like this before. Our wolves had mated, a few times, but held back on marking. I knew Ehno wanted to, so I assumed it was Hala's decision.

Usually, I would mind my own business, give them a semblance of privacy. Of course, I could feel what he felt, but this was different. This was so much more intense, and I couldn't figure out if it was because they intended to mark each other this time. Eventually, I stopped thinking about it, caught up wholly in the sensations I was feeling. If I didn't know any better, I could have sworn it was me making love to Violet, not Ehno and Hala. As we neared closer, I had an unexpected urge to push forward. Ehno didn't fight me; He invited it. Instead of taking control from him though, I was in a sense merged with him. Seeing through his eyes, moving with him.

Together, as one mind, we went for Hala's marking spot.

A fierce, guttural growl emitted from us as we pierced her skin. Our vision blurred, and then it was blinded by a piercing white light. It was just like what had happened when Violet and I had marked each other. The moment was pure ecstasy, beyond anything I could describe. Hala then stood, practically throwing us off. A second later, she was over us, her teeth exposed. There was pain, and then another wave of bliss. The light around us faded, and she pulled away, licking the blood from mouth.

Ehno shoved me back so suddenly, and forcefully, I was shocked I didn't lose consciousness. My anger flared, my intention to lash out at him. Until I focused on our mate. The words died on my tongue, every thought going blank. Hala stood tall; her head lifted proudly. There was visible golden glow around her, making her black fur shine. She might have even been bigger than before, too. But the thing that stood out the most was the mark on her side. It was no longer white, but a beautiful, brilliant gold, the glow around her only enhancing it. It matched our human marks perfectly.

I had a gut feeling. Following my instincts, I pushed forward again. Ehno let me, and I thought maybe he felt a little smug. Turning my head as far around as I could, I looked at my own fur. There was no glow around me, but, like I had suspected, I now had a mark to match Halas.

"Our bond is different from others." Ehno told me. I couldn't form a reply for him. "And now, it's complete."

Throwing back their heads, our wolves let out joyful howls.