

Chapter 55

Atlas POV

The relief that went through the room after Ava woke up was beyond relief. Well, all of those except the one person who I was just itching to dig my claws into. We went back out into the lobby after Ava asked for privacy, and Adam decided to portal in at that exact time.

"Show her to me!" he demanded. He was the last person I wanted around Ava, though I knew I didn't want the mate to bond with her. It was just my guilt over her getting hurt that was the cause of my concern. Still, she can move on with one of her choices. Just not Adam. It was the fact that she looked like the late Sorena that I knew peaked his interest, as it had peaked mine. The doctor moved to the side to let Adam pass through, but I was in front of him in an instant. He was not getting to her. The room was back to being tense.

"Get out of my way," he growled, but his little growl didn't affect me. Lest he forget, I am still the rightful king of the throne and the strongest.

"Over my dead body, are you going near her?" I told him. Kai's rage was burning and begging to be released, but I was not destroying my hospital. Rynyxon, Samael, Jasmine, and Jessica took sides with me.

"Who are these people in my kingdom?" Adam demanded.

"They are with me. Let's not forget, this kingdom is mine, you fucking traitor." I told him. I could feel the confusion around us, but I was face-to-face with Adam, inches apart. I wanted to rip his throat out, and from the looks of it, so did he. Suddenly, he smirked.

"Your kingdom huh. Well, you've been pretty absent from the kingdom lately. You want my kingdom; you're going to have to take it, Atlas. There is only one way I can see that happening." He said it with a wicked smile still on his face. It was sinister to see my own brother this way.

"Pray tell," I told him sarcastically.

"I call it the Law of Serpent Selis," he said. I paused while hearing Aunt Katrina gasp. Serpent Selis? He couldn't be fucking serious. The law of Serpent Selis was an ancient one. It was a fight in an arena where there were only two laws. One was that you could only fight in human or dragon form. The second is that it was a fight to the death. The fight was not over unless one was declared dead. There was a third rule, however, and it was said that only a certain type of dragon could call on it. Serpent sepsis was usually called when two dragons laid claim to the same thing. I looked him deep in the eye, as I was already calculating the odds of him beating me. We were both raised with the same training methods, though mine was a bit different due to private lessons with Uncle Ellis, who taught me how to control my dragon. I came to my decision.

"What are your terms?" I asked him. His terms would be set in stone if he won.

"If I win Atlas, not only will the kingdom forever belong to me, I will also be claiming that beautiful girl of yours," he said, with an evil glimmer in his eyes. I couldn't stop Kai from roaring through me with a blast of power, which somehow sent Adam flying back and crashing into a wall. It was something new, but I couldn't focus on it. I was trying to reel Kai back in, but Adam just threatened our mate. I could sense how he felt about Ava. I couldn't afford to feel the same.

"How dare you lay claim to my mother? Blessed to me by the Almighty God Typhus himself. Do you crave death that much, brother? I can give it to you right now," his deep voice boomed, likely waking up every patient in the hospital. His hand had found its way to Adam's neck, picking him up and pinning him against the wall. He was going to kill him.

Kai never came forward this way, and part of me wanted to let him do it. Another part of me knew that Adam was right, though. I had been gone for a long time. Our people may not even want me back on the throne. However, the law of Serpent Selis was always respected. Kai coming out surprised Adam, but he was still smiling coyly. I didn't trust it. This could be another trap he was setting up. Not even Adam was that stupid to try anything in front of the whole kingdom.

"What will it be, Kai?" he said. I could feel Kai crushing his neck then and there, and suddenly I reigned forward to get back in control. Not here. Not like this. Somehow, though I could not see her, I could feel Ava watching us. I could feel what she was feeling. She was angry. Not with me. With him. I felt it burn into me, and it edged Kai to keep pushing forward, but I was still holding him.

"I accept," I told him, dropping him to the ground.

"Tomorrow, at midnight. I'm not a heartless king. I'll give you a chance. Father took me away. Spend your last day with your partner. Come tomorrow. She will belong to me," Adam said, standing up and brushing himself off.

"My daughter belongs to no one but herself," Rynyxon said, and he started advancing on him, but Samael growled, and he submitted with his wolf, though I could tell it took some restraint to do so. Samael looked at me. Understanding passed through us both. As a fellow king, he understood the weight that I was carrying, but he also understood the significance of what I had to lose should I die. I, however, will be having a conversation with him later. As I considered the events that would happen, should I die, Ava should be safe. Always. It would be the only good thing I could give her. Adam portaled away, out of sight.

"Who is this idiot that feels the need to claim my sister?" Jasmine asked. I looked at Ellis and Katrina, who were annoyed by the question, but one look from me silenced them. Adam was still a part of the family, after all.

"You can both go. I'll let you know if anything changes," I told them, and they both nodded. One look at Uncle Ellis told me we would be having a very serious discussion later. It was the same one dad gave me whenever I messed up.

"He is my younger brother. He betrayed me and led me to get captured by that demon you killed. The reason behind his betrayal was that he was under the impression that I raped and abused his mate. The truth was, she tried to come onto me, and I basically pushed her out of my room and hurt her feelings. Her name was Sorena." I told them, and sadness overtook me. If only I weren't as harsh as I was with Sorena that night, maybe I could have avoided what happened, not just with me but with their realm as well. Jasmine seemed to sense my feelings.

"What he did would have happened with or without you. You were just caught in the crossfire. Fate led you to your position, so that you would meet my sister," she said, and I nodded.

"Speaking of which..." she started, and her eyes flared purple. Her wolf was in charge. Jessica had already told me about her.

"You've been ignoring our sister for three fucking weeks. Now she may not say it, but I know it has had her in pain, not to mention her dealing with her best friend being kidnapped. Now I don't know what your deal is with her or if you just don't want a mate, but whatever it is, fix your shit. She already has enough to deal with," Lunar said. I had been around wolves before, but the power radiating from her was massive. I was not afraid.

Only in deep appreciation for it. If I died, Ava would be protected by this great power. I could do nothing but nod, though. The truth was, I wanted my mate. Just as much as Kai already does. These last few weeks have been hard trying to ignore the bond

and focus on getting back here when visions of her heart-shaped face and fierce purple eyes keep coming back into my mind.

Most times, I think back to when she was in my arms in the other realm. She was unconscious, and I had just flown her away from the fight. I had practiced enough on the study of witch magic to know she would burn herself out eventually due to the excessive magic she used while fighting. She was stubborn, wanting to go back into the fight, even knowing how weak she was. Kai was growing in my head, telling me to keep her there.

He wanted to know what type of mate we were given, even knowing she was a witch. I tried holding her back. She growled at me, which surprised me. In the kingdom of Draconis, mates of dragons were always submissive, and her defiance angered Kai and me.

"Move," she said. Or I will make you move," she said when I let her go. I had to restrain Kai, who was itching to get out and fly her away, with or without her consent.

"Go and die then," I told her in fury, and I left her in the woods. Had we bonded on the spot, she would have sensed that I never really left. Maybe her wolf knew, though. I watched her get back to the fight as I followed her, using the trees as a cover so as not to be seen. She was not using magic this time. Instead, she was fighting hand-to-hand combat with knives, and it was the most impressive thing I had ever seen. Why did I follow her, though? I knew what she was. Was it just because she saved my life?

Did I feel like I owed her? I wasn't sure what the reason was. All I knew was that while I was lost in my head, my eyes were still focused on the battle, and seeing a demon sneaking up behind her angered me to the core as well as Kai. I came out of the shadows and burned him before he could even reach her. I saw others trying to get to her as well, and I burned them to crisps as well.

"I must keep her safe," Kai said, and I agreed. I felt Kai merging with me, and we were one. I leveled from the ground, channeling our dragon fire through my veins

until they became balls of massive destruction in each hand. My eyes were gone, and smoke filled my sockets instead. It was mid-transition. Something I had learned from Uncle Ellis in our private lessons. As I took out the demons along with Ava, a burst of energy and color came from Jasmine, and all the demons were gone.

I scanned the area, making sure no threats were left. It was clear. I looked down at Ava, who looked beautiful with her battle scars. Her attention was on her sister. However, what Ava really wanted was set into reality, and frustration took over. I could not have her for my mate. Instead, I turned my attention to taking my kingdom back. That's exactly what I planned to do. If Serpent Selis was the only way to do it, then Adam had better start praying because he was going to meet judgment day with Typhus coming tomorrow night. I was certain of it.

Ava took that time to come from where she was. She was wearing a patient's gown. Her brown hair was curly and disheveled, but it didn't look bad. Her eyes were on me. The others were looking back and forth between us.

"Come on, honey, they need time alone," Jessica said, grabbing Rynyxon, who looked at me like it was the opposite of what he wanted but left with her anyway. Samael and Jasmine looked at Ava, who gave them a slight nod, before they both left as well, leaving just Ava and myself in the lobby.