

Chapter 56

Ava POV

After hearing the deep growls, I got out of bed to see what the problem was. I could feel myself healing as well when I took notice; it was not hurting as much to move. The questions I was going to ask Rose were still heavy in my mind, but I would have time. I felt myself healing, but it was strange. This healing felt different than what I was used to.

"I'm not healing you. You're healing yourself. Or something else is healing you." My wolf told me, which left me confused. I had never been able to do this without a spell before. I kept walking, staying out of sight of anyone, as I heard my name and felt the air was tense. I could hear Atlas arguing with someone else. I listened to everything that was going on. Atlas' brother, Adam, was trying to claim me. What the fuck? I could hear my wolf growling in my head as well. She, too, did not like the idea of another man laying claim to us. I heard him challenge him to a serpent sepi. Why did the sound of that send chills through me? Apparently, their kingdom and I were the prize. I felt like there was more to this challenge.

"Do any of you know what that is?" I linked Jasmine, Samael, and Dad.

"It's a fight for submission," dad answered back.

"How do you know this?" Jasmine said in the link.

"Because this is the realm I met Ava's mother in," dad said. "I lived here for a time with her, before Ava was born." That made sense, considering what I had just seen. So, it was true. It was all true. My anger soared through me as I looked at Rose, who was avoiding eye contact as well as listening to her boys. So much sadness was shown in her face that I couldn't even bear to scold her right now. Instead, I walked up to a small glass window where I saw Atlas about to kill Adam right there on the spot, and for a brief moment, I wanted him too. Or my wolf did. I wasn't sure, but he held back. I watched as Adam opened up a portal, giving Atlas a day to spend with me. Something about the black aura that hung around Adam didn't sit right with me as he left. Wait. Since when can I see auras? That, too, was something I could only do with a spell. I walked in, sure that even Atlas knew I was here somehow. We could feel each other somehow. I was still wondering how the hell that was even possible, given that he had been avoiding me. All eyes turned to me, but mine were on Atlas. It was time we talked.

"Go home. I will be spending some time with Atlas." I linked my family.

"You were here for less than a second and were stabbed. Leaving you here is the last thing I want to do," dad said in the link. I looked at Samael and Jasmine for help, hoping they would understand. They nodded.

"She stays. Send a message when you're ready to come back. You know the spell," Samael said, causing dad to get annoyed and walk out with Jessica.

"Link me first if anything happens. There is a reason I left this place," dad said through our personal family link before stepping through the portal Jasmine and Samael created. After everyone was gone, it was pure silence. My eyes finally met my friends. His silver ones were captivating, but it was not time to talk about them. I started to speak but ended up tongue-tied. He took his eyes off me and started walking through the double doors I came through, looking back and motioning for me to follow him. We ended up back in my room. My doctor was still there, and my clothes that were once destroyed looked to be fixed up as good as new. They were laid out on the bed for me. Rose was also in the room but disappeared as well. She knew I needed this. Atlas turned the opposite way as I got dressed, but my wolf was

sending naughty thoughts into my head, and it annoyed me. We were clearly not at that kind of stage. I cleared my throat, signaling I was dressed. He sat in the chair, near the bed. I sat down on the bed. We both looked at each other. Neither one of us really knew what to say to the other. He broke the awkward silence.

"You should be in bed resting," he said, with his eyes towards my chest. I knew he was still seeing that blade as if it were still through me.

"I feel rested enough," I told him. "Besides, I'm healed up." That seemed to peak his interest, as he just looked at me curiously. It felt naked, and I didn't care for it.

"What?" I asked, half annoyed, half trying not to blush under his gaze. He smirked. Cocky, I see.

"The mud they gave you was from our lake. It has healing abilities, but not for any other creatures than dragons. So, to hear you say you are healed makes me wonder how someone with no dragon has dragon healing abilities,' he said. That question kind of blew me away. I had no idea. As far as I knew, I was an angel witch, though my dad didn't think I knew I was part angel. I had always known. Technically, I am a tribrid, given the fact that a wolf was forced upon me. Thank the goddess; she did not let me die and let me keep my powers. I pondered his question before shrugging my shoulders.

"I don't know, to be honest," I said, not really sure what to reply to. He looked at me as if studying me, and a faint aura of blue was around him. It was beautiful. It was silent for a while.

"Ava, I am sorry I have not been in contact with you these last few weeks, but it was not done with bad intentions, I promise," he said, looking into my eyes. His words struck a chord as the stress of the last few weeks came back to me.

"Save your apologies. You have your reasons, and I'm sure they are good reasons. But it was not fair to me. You could not have bonded me to you at least," I told him, annoyed. He sighed and looked away.

"My dragon Kai bonded you to me; that night, your dream walked into my dreams. The force of it knocked you down," he said. Holy shit. So that's how I feel. I never understood what made me fall back that night.

"So, he forces a bond on me, knowing your feelings as well? Are you both intentionally trying to hurt me?" I asked him. His gaze looked up at me suddenly. His eyes were golden, and his voice was deeper.

"I would never hurt you," he said, and at that moment, I knew it was Kai in control. I could feel my wolf's giddiness for him.

"You linked us, knowing Atlas does not want me. He will reject me soon. Why would you do that?" I demanded to know.

"Atlas does want you. His reasons for saying he does not are stupid but logical in their own right. You will have to ask him why. I, however, do want you. I've wanted you from the moment you rescued us. Make sure you don't forget that, mate," he said before retreating back into Atlas. A pair of gray eyes avoided my gaze following that. He then looked at me before standing up.

"Finish getting yourself together. I'll be outside. There is something I want to show you," he said before leaving the room. Rose chose that moment to appear back in the room.

"Your questions for me can be answered later. What happened in the past is done and cannot be changed, but your future still can. Find me when you've gotten your answers from Atlas, and then I will tell you my story," she said before disappearing again. I walked into the bathroom and took my clothes off. I looked at the shower. It was just what I needed. The bathroom already had feminine products in it, and they all smelled wonderful. After I got out of the shower, a scan was done on me from a device on the sink. Suddenly, a folded pair of jeans and a purple t-shirt were on the toilet seat. Along with some sneakers that are exactly my size. Well, that was something you don't see every day.

I got dressed in the clothes, and they fit me perfectly. I put my old clothes in a bag that was on the sink as well. I brushed and blow-dried my hair. My curls bounced back, looking healthier than ever. I had to take that shampoo I used back home with me, I noted to myself.

After I figured I was presentable enough, I went out of my room and back into the lobby, only to see Atlas waiting there. He took me in when he saw me, and I swear I heard him growl, but maybe I imagined it. He held out his hand, and I took it. We walked in silence as he led me from the hospital out the front door, and I was mesmerized by the sight in front of me. I had seen this castle from far away in visions, but it was closer now. Much closer, and it stood taller than I could ever have thought. Its black stone was breathtaking. I looked at the red sky, with streaks of yellow clouds in it. Looking closer, though, I could see specks of orange. It was like a never-ending sunset, which just so happened to be my favorite time of day.

"Stand back," he said, and I did. In an instant, he transformed into his dragon. Nothing in this realm was as beautiful as his dragon was. He stood tall and proud, with his eyes golden all over. His wings were almost as long as his body as they gently brushed the ground. His spikes were perfectly placed. To anyone else, he would be terrifying. To me. He was perfect. He put his giant head down and looked up. I realized he was signaling for me to climb up. I grabbed his spikes, careful not to injure myself as I climbed up. He didn't seem to mind. As soon as I was on top, I wrapped my arms around him for support.

"Hold tight," I heard Atlas say in my mind, and he took off. Flying was not new to me, but flying on a dragon at an increasing speed was in its own league. As fast as we were going, I could still see the beautiful realm below and its people. Suddenly, we were coming down near the lake of my visions. On the other side of the lake is where I saw the border. Once he landed, he changed back to his human form, and his clothes remained intact. I had only been able to see Jasmine and Samael do the same thing. "Since when can you link me?" I asked him.

"Since Kai taught me how just now," he said, though I felt like he was not being truthful.

"I don't like being lied to," I told him, to which he nodded.

"I could link you ever since the bond was established, but I have not. I nodded at the revelation, although it hurt to hear it. I gazed out at the lake.

"This is Azure Lake. It is a lake blessed by our God, Typhus, for its healing abilities. It is where the mud to heal you came from," he explained, and I nodded. I looked over the beautiful lake with its flowers surrounding it. Now is as good a time as any. I braced myself for the impact of my next question, as I figured it would turn hostile. I looked him directly in the eye.

"Tell me, Atlas, why do you not want me?"