

Chapter 107

Adelaide

A loud chirping and tapping against the window forced me out of my sleep. I groaned as the morning light hit me and sat up straight.

Rubbing my eyes, I glanced at the glass and immediately noticed a small bird I recognized from the witch village.

Mom's bird.

It had to be a message from her.

The bonfire kept me up late, and now all I wanted was a long, peaceful rest.

"Shut up!" I hissed, aggressively pulling open the window.

The bird stopped, shaking its body until a small roll of paper fell from its back. I grabbed the note, then shushed the bird away with my hand, making it fly away with just as much noise.

Feeling an uncomfortable knot in my stomach before I even read the words, I unfolded the paper. I doubted Mom would send a message about missing me—that wasn't what we did. We didn't 'miss' each other.

I let my eyes scan over the words.

'Less partying, more focusing. Finish your mission, and don't waste these four years. Your people need you. Don't forget, Mommy is watching you, and she has eyes everywhere.'

A low groan escaped my lips as I crumpled the paper in my hands and tossed it into the bin. That woman couldn't leave me alone for a single day.

She knew about the party, which meant she most likely had someone watching me. Nothing new for her.

Maybe one of the girls?

No, Mom had always been secretive. They wouldn't have known what I was truly here for—she wouldn't have told them.

I squeezed my eyes shut, trying to think about my next move. I knew my people needed me, and I knew these four years weren't a vacation. She didn't need to remind me of that.

All I had to do was get close to Alaric, feed him darkness through my eyes for the next four years, and report back home. She would take it from there.

It was simple.

My mind went back to yesterday. James had promised to introduce me to Elyx today, the so-called Crown Prince of Lyperia. He had even said he would come to my dorm to pick me up.

He would be the last step before I met him... Alaric.

The sound of the front door creaking open snapped me out of my thoughts, and I immediately stepped out of my room.

My lips curled when I saw it was Claire. She was still in the same clothes from last night, her blonde hair a little messy—and her face flustered, like she really didn't want me to see her.

"Oh?" I frowned, my gaze instantly locking onto her neck. There was an unmistakable mark there—mate marks. Claire gasped, raising a hand to cover them, but it was already too late.

I smirked. "The wolf chewed your neck? Good for you."

Claire's face turned pink as she rushed toward me, wrapping her arms around me, lifting me off the ground, and spinning me in the air. "Claire!" I yelped, surprised, not knowing where she had gotten that strength.

She set me down, laughing. "It was perfect," she gushed, her eyes sparkling with excitement. "He is perfect, and last night was amazing, Addy. I've never felt anything like it!"

I chuckled proudly, folding my arms. "I'm sure it was."

"What about you?" Claire beamed. "You and James seemed to be hitting it off."

"We did," I shrugged, twirling a strand of my hair. "He's picking me up soon."

"Do you like him?"

I rolled my eyes, shaking my head. "It's not like that. It's nothing serious."

Not to me anyway.

Claire shrugged her shoulders. "Well, I'll probably be out soon, and I need some rest. Greg wants to see me again."

I laughed softly. "I bet he does."

Claire's smile widened as she she gave me a little wave before disappearing into her room.

Meanwhile, I got ready for the day, and after pacing around for what felt like forever, there was finally a knock at the door.

I opened it, and as expected it was James. Just as I wanted to greet him, he leaned in, pressing his lips against mine. "Adelaide," his dark eyes bored into mine as he slid his hands around my waist.

My stomach fluttered in surprise, seeing how straightforward this guy was—but he had also been like that yesterday. I smiled, giving him a kiss in return, allowing him to hold me like I was something precious.

"You look beautiful today," he murmured against my lips, pulling back just enough to look at me.

I frowned. "And yesterday? And the day before that?"

"Sure," he said, grinning. "And tomorrow, too."

He truly was smitten, but for now, it didn't bother me. It was actually kind of cute and funny to watch.

"Come on," he said, grabbing my hand and leading me down the hall. His arm slid from my waist to my shoulder as we walked, and soon his lips found my neck, brushing softly against my skin with every step.

"You're mine," he whispered, making me giggle. This guy really was something. Were all shifters this possessive?

"Am I?"

He hummed against my neck in response.

A familiar woman, whom I recognized as Esther, leaned against the door of her office. Her arms were folded, and her lips were pursed as she watched us.

The only reason I even noticed her was because, just like last time, I felt an incredible surge of energy radiating from her. Forcing a smile, I rolled my eyes and pointed a finger at James, who was still too absorbed in my neck.

Esther's expression changed into a grin as she shook her head and sent me a wink. Then we walked past her.

"So," I said, shifting my neck to make him stop. "Where is this friend of yours, the Lyperian prince?"

"Training grounds," he mumbled, attacking my neck again.

I ignored him as he led me toward the training grounds, my mind already drifting elsewhere.

If Elyx was anything like Alaric, meeting him would set the tone for the future. I would have to figure out his personality, see how far I could push him, and if it was even possible.

The loud noise of the indoor training grounds hit us as we arrived. James finally removed his lips from my neck and firmly wrapped his arm around my waist.

"That's him," he said, pointing his head to a tall, broad guy standing in the center. He was in the middle of a match, surrounded by five other guys.

It was quite impressive, seeing him move around while knocking each one of them to the ground, effortlessly. He was fast, strong, but mostly aggressive. It made me wonder what kind of beast he could turn into when provoked.

So this was him...

Elyx of Lyperia.

"Who's next!" he growled, spreading his arms wide as he looked around for a challenger. "Will it be you again, Jack?" he said, eyeing one of the guys laying on the floor.

The guy, supposedly Jack—lifted his hands in surrender.

James laughed, shaking his head. "Look at him," he called out. "He's insane!"

Well, his ego was insane.

With squinted eyes, I observed the dark-haired Lycan prince who thought he was untouchable. His grin was wide, and the confidence practically radiated off of him.

He annoyed me...