

Chapter 108

Adelaide

“No one?” he called out, looking around again. “That’s right!” He laughed loudly. “I’m Elyx, future king of Lyperia—no one can beat me!”

I let out a chuckle, not being able to listen to his bullshit any longer. Then I stepped forward. “I can!”

Elyx’s eyes snapped to me, his grin vanishing for just a second, but then it appeared again.

“Addy?” James whispered as he leaned in closer. His tone sounded worried, but his expression was amused.

“Too bad I don’t fight women,” Elyx dropped his shoulders.

“Is it that?” I pouted, dipping my head to the side. “Or are you afraid of witches?”

The way his jaw twitched made me remember the way Claire had described him. He was like the guys at the fountain, only worse.

He laughed out loud, looking at his followers who forcefully joined him in the laughter. “I must admire your courage, witch,” Elyx pointed out. He turned his attention to James. “Is this your girl?”

James opened his mouth, probably to answer, but Elyx cut him off with a dismissive wave of his hand.

“Tell you what, witch,” he continued. “If you promise to keep your broomstick to yourself—I’ll promise to knock you down gently.”

The crowd’s laughter grew louder, and this time, my jaw tightened. I didn’t know how far I could push things with this prince, but one thing was certain—I didn’t tolerate disrespect or embarrassment. That kind of thing never sat well with me.

I already had the High Priestess walking all over me, and she was going to be the first and the last.

“And if you make sure to behave, I might give you and your friends a dog treat afterward,” I shot back, smiling.

The laughter stopped, and Elyx’s eyes narrowed in surprise. “You’ve got some mouth on you…”

“Adelaide,” I replied, standing my ground.

“Adelaide,” he repeated, gesturing me to step into the circle. “Let’s go.”

James touched my arm gently. “You don’t have to do this.”

I glanced at him, unbothered. “I know.”

Without hesitation, I stepped into the circle. My heart raced—not with fear, but with excitement. One of the guys tossed me a stick identical to Elyx’s, and I caught it with one hand.

“My broomstick,” I cracked a joke, holding it up.

At least it managed to get a laugh out of Elyx. He began circling me, his cocky grin never leaving his lips.

The crowd around us had gone silent, their eyes glued to the circle as if they couldn’t believe this was happening. Everyone waited in anticipation.

“I’ll give you one last chance to back out, witch,” Elyx said, rolling his shoulders like he was warming up for something big. “You’ve got guts, but I don’t want to embarrass you too much.”

Yes, probably. I was a witch, and I didn’t even know how to fight properly—but I’d kicked plenty of boys’ asses back in the village, so that had to count for something.

I smirked, swinging the stick around. “Worried I’ll bruise that oversized ego of yours?”

Elyx gasped in laughter, clearly enjoying the banter. “Oh, you’ll regret that.”

The guy who claimed he didn’t fight women lunged first, moving with the speed of someone who had probably been training every single day.

I dodged his strike just in time and swung the stick toward his knee, but he blocked it with ease.

“Not bad,” he said, sounding almost impressed. “For a witch.”

“Not bad yourself,” I shot back. “For a dog.”

That did it for him. His expression darkened, and he came at me harder this time, his movements faster and more aggressive, as if he really intended to hurt me—or at least teach me a lesson.

I managed to dodge a few of his punches, but it didn’t take long before he humbled me by tackling me to the ground.

I barely had time to recover before he had me pinned to the ground, his weight hovering over me. Elyx’s dark eyes locked onto mine as he gripped my wrists and leaned down, his face just inches from mine.

“Looks like I win,” he said, a smug grin spreading across his face.

“Looks like it, but I don’t mind you being on top of me,” I said, fluttering my eyes at him. My fingers trailed to his biceps, tracing a soft line. “You’re so strong and handsome.”

Just like James, he was a man, a Lycan, and far too overconfident—so it would work.

Elyx eyed me with a flustered expression, loosening his grip, and that was all I needed.

And that was all I needed.

I brought my knee up, kicking him in the balls, the most vulnerable spot I could think of.

“Fuck, fuck, fuck!” Elyx yelped out in pain, clutching his groin. The crowd gasped, then burst into laughter as I quickly rolled on top of him, pinning his arms to the ground and pressing the stick against his throat.

He swallowed hard, his eyes locking onto mine.

“Do you surrender, ‘unbeatable’ Elyx?” I asked, smirking as I looked down at him.

His face was red, either from pain or embarrassment—perhaps both. His eyes glared at me, and just as I started to wonder if I had gone too far, he chuckled. “I surrender,” he said, shaking his head in disbelief.

I got up from the ground, extending a hand to help him up. He seemed to hesitate for a moment, but then took it.

“I don’t respect a lot of people or remember a lot of names,” he muttered, brushing dirt off his pants. “But you got my respect, Adelaide.”

I teased him with a weak curtsy, my eyes never leaving his. “I’m honored, Your Highness,” I said. “Validation from the Lycan prince is all I ever dreamed of.”

A slight smile tugged at his lips, but at least he kept his mouth shut.

As I turned to leave the circle, something caught my eye—a guy peeking through one of the windows, watching the training grounds. He was surrounded by four guards. His blond, almost golden hair that fell just above his shoulders glowed in the sunlight, and his piercing blue eyes locked onto mine in an instant.

This guy was the most handsome I had seen by far. Not just in Starlight, but maybe my entire life.

I tried to tear my eyes away from his slightly tanned face, but I couldn’t.

Even worse, my heart started racing.

What was happening to me?

My breath hitched.

It’s him.

It had to be him.

Alaric.