

Chapter 111

Adelaide

“Yes,” I glanced up, looking at him properly for the first time. I mean, I tried—but it was almost distracting. His sharp jawline, perfect cheekbones, and those incredible blue eyes that I bet could draw anyone in.

The thing that struck me the most was the flustered look on his face, like he had never talked to a woman before. It was...cute.

“The witch, right?” he asked hesitantly.

My eyes widened at his blunt question.

He quickly waved his hands, shaking his head. “N-Not that I’ve got any problem with it! I think witches are amazing. Y-You’re all so powerful, and the magic you do is...incredible. I just mean —”

A giggle escaped my lips as he ranted, trying to save himself when he didn’t need to.

This had to be a dream. The Alpha Prince, the son of one of the strongest shifters alive, the future king, a stuttering mess?

“Do you think he’s funny?” James asked, listening in. All it took for him to pay attention to me again—attention I definitely didn’t need—was one giggle. Could he not just mind his own business?

I shrugged at James before looking back at Alaric, who still seemed nervous. “I think he’s cute,” I said softly.

Alaric’s face went red, his nerves somehow looking even worse. His lips parted like he wanted to say something but couldn’t find the words.

“We all do!” Elyx jumped in this time, grinning. “Our virgin prince who still gets tucked in by mommy at night. Gotta love him.”

James burst out laughing, the others around the table who weren’t even in the conversation doing the same.

Alaric shook his head, looking humiliated. “That’s not true,” he said with an almost pleading look that didn’t do much to prove his point.

He looked so innocent, soft, and genuinely good-hearted. What could Mom possibly want with someone like him? Was it even possible to feed darkness to someone this pure?

Why would that even be necessary?

During lunch, Alaric mostly talked to Elyx as I took the time to observe him. Out of everyone, he felt most comfortable around Elyx. His words seemed to come out a lot more easily, he appeared less guarded and didn’t stutter.

I could see what Claire meant with those two being two peas in a pod.

It gave me time to think about the best way to approach him. The aggressive method I used with James and Elyx wasn’t going to work on him.

No, Alaric was different. He was timid, shy, and would possibly shut down if I came on too strong.

Elyx clapped his hands, snapping me out of my thoughts. “A refill for the prince—”

“No, don’t bother,” Alaric shook his head, stopping the servants. “I’ve got legs. I’ll get it myself,” he said, standing up with his glass in hand.

Once again, his way of doing things surprised me. Someone of his status could have everything done for him, yet he chose to do it himself. He was humble, good—and I could tell it wasn’t an act. It was sincere.

He stood alone in the drink corner with no guards, no protection. If anything, this would be my chance to get to him.

Grabbing my glass, I quietly got up from the table as well, trying not to draw too much attention.

When I reached the corner, he was still looking over the options, not noticing my presence.

Standing beside him, I noticed how tall he was. Not only that, but also how toned. His broad shoulders took up quite some space. He looked strong, and I had no doubt he was, but his vibe—his personality—was so different from Elyx or James.

“If you can’t choose,” I said, leaning slightly closer, “you should just go for water. Water is safe.”

Alaric smiled, slightly dipping his head in embarrassment. He didn’t argue, just followed my suggestion and poured himself a glass of water. I watched him as I poured myself a glass of juice.

One of his guards began approaching, but he stuck out his hand, signaling the man to stop. The guard stepped back immediately, bowing his head in respect.

“Is it because of me?” I asked.

Alaric’s expression changed to worry. “No, it’s just...he wants to taste the water for me.”

I blinked, unsure if I heard him right.

This had to be some kind of joke.

“Stupid, right? I know,” he added with an ashamed laugh.

I pursed my lips, shaking my head. “No, you should be cautious. You’re the future Alpha King, right?”

People were out to hurt him. Mom was out to hurt him—and I didn’t know how, but wanting to feed someone with darkness couldn’t be any good.

Alaric’s eyes met mine, and for a moment, we just looked at each other. He made it obvious that he wanted to have this conversation but didn’t know how. I could only imagine the lack of interaction someone of his status had growing up.

Even though I was the daughter of the High Priestess, things for me were different. I followed Mom’s orders, but only hers—and no one else’s. I didn’t have to think about how I presented myself because people weren’t that fond of witches anyway.

I could just be myself.

“It must be exhausting, though,” I said, taking a breath. “Having someone around you twenty-four-seven.”

I had to find out the best way to catch him alone, and I had hoped he would dive more into the subject—and he did.

“Sometimes, but I guess I don’t know any better,” Alaric sighed in response. “I can only really breathe at night. The guards only sleep when I sleep.”

“Really?” I asked, intrigued. “Have you ever snuck out before?”

He chuckled, glancing away. “To do what?”

“To meet a witch tomorrow night at 10 p.m. at the grand oak tree in the woods,” I said, smiling at him.

His brows lifted in curiosity. “Are the gates not closed?”

“No.”

“I-I don’t want any problems with James,” he said.

Of course, he thought I was James’ girl. I had feared this might happen. I still needed James, so I didn’t want to deny anything just yet.

“What do you think will happen between us?” I asked teasingly. “Or...what do you want to happen?”

Alaric laughed shyly, his gaze dropping to the floor. “That’s not what I meant.”

“Well?” I pressed. “Will you be there or not?”

He looked at me for a long moment before nodding. “I will be there.”