

Chapter 113

Adelaide

It was a simple yes, no—question. One I hoped she would answer.

Esther's lips curled into a small, smile. "What makes you say so?"

"For starters, that ridiculous source of power I feel coming from you," I said, crossing my arms. "That's not normal for a shifter."

"Incredible," her breath hitched in surprise. "You are the High Priestess daughter, and a child of blood indeed," she said. "Not even your fellow witches could sense it, but you can."

She stood straight, opening the door to her office. "Get in," she gestured with her hands.

I waited for a moment. There was still some time left before I would meet Alaric—so why not?

As soon as I entered Esther's office, she closed the door behind me.

"So you are a witch?" I tried again, needing a clear answer. "A dark witch I assume?"

I scanned the clean and neat office with my eyes. The place one worked said a lot about a person, and I could tell this was a woman who liked control—hence her reaction when I called her out.

"I guess there's no reason to deny it when you can sense it," Esther said, taking a seat behind her desk. "So yes, I am."

I sat across from her, folding my arms before leaning back in the chair. Knowing she was possibly the one spilling every tiny detail to Mom, bothered me enough to cross my legs on her desk.

Just to trigger her, and the faint flicker in her eyes showed I did.

"I tend to keep my witch side to myself," Esther recovered, forcing a smile. "And I would like to request you help me keep it a secret."

I tilted my head slightly. "Like you've been keeping it a secret that my mom has you watching me?"

Esther chuckled, her eyes studying me with a curiosity. "You are something. You remind me of her...Gloria."

I frowned. Gloria? How close were the two for her to address her by her first name?

"Anyway, it's almost curfew, and you look all pretty and dressed up," Esther said, and I knew what she was trying to do. She was trying to regain at least a bit of control back.

I gave her a sharp look, not denying nor confirming anything.

She laughed softly. "Tell you what—I let you do whatever you're planning, and you won't tell your mom that you found out about me."

"Deal."

"She's just worried, you know," Esther spoke. "She has good intentions."

I rolled my eyes so hard it almost hurt. "Yeah, right. She's a control freak."

Mom couldn't last a damn day without thinking anyone would turn on her, including her own daughter.

Esther probably didn't know any better because Mom had a way of justifying her control by calling it 'care' or 'concern', though it never felt like either.

"Why don't you want anyone to know you're a witch?"

"It keeps things exciting," Esther rubbed her hands, showing her teeth.

That woman was strange, and I didn't know if I could fully trust her—but I liked her energy. She wasn't boring, and that was good enough for me.

"Do you know what I'm really here for?" I asked, wondering if she knew about Alaric. If she was well-acquainted enough to call Mom by her first name, she had to.

Would Mom have told her the one thing she didn't share with me? Why she wanted me to feed the Alpha Prince with darkness?

Esther shrugged. "I follow your Mom's orders, I know what you're here for—and making sure you know what you're here for is my only concern."

"So, you're just like everyone else," I squinted my eyes.

"Your mom asked me to be her eyes, and I know who I'm dealing with," Esther responded. "And your mother's wrath is not something anyone would want to experience. I think you know that."

Oh, I knew.

Whenever things would not go her way, she would go beyond crazy—and crazy didn't even begin to cover it.

"How are you holding up at Starlight, Adelaide?"

"Fine," I sighed. "School has never been a problem for me."

"You do seem like the smart type," Esther cracked a laugh. "So whatever you're planning tonight, I think you know to behave. The last thing we need is you tearing down the school or for me to explain to your mom why she needs to come here for a school visit."

"Behave," I scrunched my nose, feeling offended. "I know how to behave—"

"Your dirty shoes are on my desk, Adelaide," Esther's lips twitched as she tried to contain her smile.

I raised my hands in surrender before removing them from her desk.

Tear down the school?

How could she even think I was capable of tearing down the school?

Unless...

"You know, don't you?" I asked, looking directly at her. "About my eyes?"

Esther's calm expression was all the answer I needed. The thought of her knowing made my stomach twist. I had never heard of this woman in my life, Mom had barely told anyone about them, including the village elders—but Esther knew?

What was it with this woman, and why was she that powerful?

"Like I said, I'm your mom's eyes," Esther lips curled into a faint smile. "Just like you felt my energy, I felt yours. And let me tell you, I have never in my life felt anything like it."

I stayed silent, taking in her words.

"You...these powers," Esther spoke in awe. "You are destined for great things. For the witches, for our kind—and you don't even know yet what you're truly capable of."

I turned my head, trying not to think too much about her words. Mom had said similar things before, but I hated those words—because with those words came expectations.

"Principal Sterling has been talking about creating an Elite team—a special force to protect the school," Esther continued. "It's still in progress, but he's serious about it."

"Is he?" I turned to face her again.

"He is," she said with a nod. "I told him I would find students to join, and since you seem to have a sharp eye for people—maybe you can help."

I eyed her strangely. "I barely know anyone, why would you want my..." My voice trailed off.

She wasn't just asking for help. She was looking out for me, trying to make my task easier by letting me choose the students.

"Sure," I said finally.

Esther grabbed a pen and paper from her desk. "Alright, spill."

"James," I spoke, immediately. "He's the star student, after all."

She wrote his name down as she glanced at me. "He was the first person Sterling recommended as Captain. He seems important to you."

"He is," I confirmed. "At least for now. I'll need him for a while longer."

Esther chuckled, and I could tell she saw right through me.

"And who else?"

"Jane...I don't know her last name, but I need her around James."

Her brows lifted slightly as she wrote the name down. "You got it all planned out, don't you?" She muttered under her breath.

She was right. I did.

Once I was done with James, I would want him off my back, and there was no better option than the mate he rejected. I wasn't a big fan of this Moon Goddess, but if she said those two belonged together—I would make sure those two would eventually end up together. I would be us all a big favor.

"Claire Hastings and her mate Greg," I added.

Esther hummed in a smile, writing down their names. "They are good people."

I knew they were, and that's why I needed them at my side. Perhaps it was a bit selfish, but Claire kept me grounded.

"Elyx of Lyperia," I said the next name.

"As expected," Esther spoke, writing down his name. "I believe you and I share the same vision."

I thought of Alaric and how comfortable he seemed around Elyx. The only reason why Alaric had probably agreed to meet up with me was because of him—he trusted his friend's judgement—and I would be needing more of that.

As long as Elyx wanted me around, Alaric would want me around.

"And the last one..." I shot her a sarcastic glance. "I think you know who."

Esther's hand froze as a smug smile appeared. "Alpha Prince Alaric—the chosen one, the vessel. I already wrote him down."

"The chosen one?" I repeated, confused. "The vessel?"

Esther grew a surprised expression on her face. "She didn't tell you," she whispered to herself.

"What do you know—"

"Now that I have your confirmation, I'll pull every string I possibly can to convince the royal court to let him join this team," Esther said. It was clear she was trying to change the subject, and she succeeded.

"Now, it won't be as easy as Elyx of Lyperia—but I can do it."

Of course she could.

I doubted she would want to disappoint the High Priestess, so I was sure she would work something out.

"Is that who you're on your way to meet?" Esther questioned, her eyes burning through mine. "The Alpha prince?"

"Yes, him. I can't do what I'm supposed to do without building a bond first—it doesn't work like that," I told her, my mind still elsewhere. "You just called him the chosen one, the vessel. What did you mean by that?"

Esther gulped, thinking of an answer while I narrowed my eyes at her.

"Vessel of who? Vessel of what?"

I held her gaze, waiting for an answer I knew I wasn't going to get. Mom didn't tell me, so neither would one of her followers.

What was she making me do?

Esther's lips curled into a crooked smile. "I think it's time for you to go," she said, nodding toward the clock. It was almost ten. "You wouldn't want to be late."

"No," I breathed, getting up. "I don't."

Whatever it was, she wasn't going to tell me—but I would find out eventually.

For now, I had a prince to meet.