

Chapter 117

Adelaide

It was early—too early for anyone to be up, but I didn't care. I found myself knocking on Esther's office door, waiting for her to open up.

I hadn't closed a single eye. How could I?

All I could think about was that vision, and it played in my head over and over again.

The way Alaric turned into that thing...

I knew we were dark witches, but had Mom completely lost it? Was she actually attempting to bring back Lord Baelor, the same god of the underworld I had called a myth?

The chaos that would cause would be impossible to fix, especially if he would have access to Alaric's wolf on top of all.

Even though she took her time, the door eventually creaked open, revealing Esther. She stood there with a calm smile. "Good morning, Adelaide," she said. "You're up bright and early."

I didn't have time for her crap, not today. Just like last night, I forced myself into the office before taking an uninvited seat at her desk.

Esther sighed softly, mumbling something under her breath as she closed the door and sat across from me. "Yes?"

"I saw it," I told her. "Mom's plan?"

Esther grabbed a notebook and a pen, then squinted her eyes at me. "How?"

As she opened the book, I quickly closed it again. I wasn't just some thing she could analyze—I was more than that.

"When I touched him," I spoke clearly, forcing her to look at me. "I saw what she's planning. She's going to bring him back, isn't she? Lord Baelor."

Esther's face stayed calm, and that was enough for me to know she knew exactly what I was talking about. Mom really did share everything with her—this random woman over her own daughter.

Perhaps she wasn't sure she could trust me, and if that was it—it was a good call.

"She can't bring him to our world!" I said, leaning forward. "You know she can't."

Esther gave me an insincere, regretful smile. "Adelaide, I need you to calm down," she reached for my hand.

I pulled it back instantly. "I am calm," I snapped.

"Gloria said you would find out yourself when you were ready," Esther began, analyzing the situation again. "Those eyes of yours...they're amazing, Adelaide."

Amazing? Was she still busy pulling this bullshit? Could she not see how serious this was?

No wonder Mom barely told anyone about my eyes. I could only imagine what other crazy stuff people would come up with if they knew what I was capable of.

As a good daughter and the High Priestess's offspring, I had always stood by Mom, always trusted her judgment. But this? This might be where I finally drew the line.

"Since you're only half-witch, you'll be just fine," I said bitterly. "But you do realize that bringing back that thing will give him the ability to control everyone—witches, warlocks, vampires. And Mom? She won't be the High Priestess anymore—"

"But we'll be safe from any threats," Esther interrupted. "The shifters have been trying to wipe us out, Adelaide. We need to secure ourselves."

"By using poor Alaric as a vessel?" I shot back. Not to forget, she was one of them. She was also a shifter.

It was wrong, and deep down, she knew it was wrong. From the moment I had mentioned his name, I could see it in her eyes, which had barely held any emotion until now.

Esther ran out of words, leading to an uncomfortable silence.

"He's a good person," I said, my voice nearly cracking. "A good person I shouldn't be feeding any darkness to—and you know it."

Still, no response.

"You seem to be close to Mom, so I was thinking," I breathed desperately, "maybe you can tell her that she's making a big mistake—"

"I'm afraid I can't do that, Adelaide," Esther's face softened. "Do you know why it has to be him?"

I waited, staring at her.

"A young, powerful, healthy prince," she stated passionately. "A strong shifter, an heir from the closest royal bloodline directly tied to the Moon Goddess—the one who locked Baelor away. It has to be him."

A deep sigh escaped me as I clenched my hands in my lap. This woman was already too far gone, brainwashed by Mom—just like she had done with me all my life. But strangely enough, I still had a conscience.

"It's your destiny and an honor, Adelaide," she continued. "Baelor has chosen you to prepare his vessel for the next four years."

Her words repeated inside my head. My heart thudded against my chest, my throat felt dry, and my mind was racing. Chosen?

Was that the only reason I felt such a strange connection to Alaric?

"The two of you are chosen," Esther nodded, "to lead Lord Baelor back to his rightful place and control our biggest threats."

Alaric was not a threat.

Yes, the Alpha King was known to be a monster. He was not a good man. But the future king? He was not a threat.

I knew how this would turn out, and I didn't need my eyes for that.

First, Baelor would start with the Alpha King's bloodline, then the Lycan kingdoms, and then everyone else—including us. No one would be safe.

I didn't even want to imagine what would happen to the Soothsayers, grandpa Aelius, all of those who possessed the strongest powers.

"Adelaide," Esther tried again, her eyes shining with admiration. "You are the greatest pride of the witches. Everyone is counting on you."

Her words made me feel sick.

Was this really my only purpose?

Was this really what I was meant to be—someone who would prepare the vessel for a demonic thing that shouldn't be let out in the first place?

I clenched my jaw.

No, that wasn't me.

"We didn't expect for you to immediately get to work," Esther said. "But every time your eyes glow, Adelaide, you feed him a bit of your darkness."

I felt my heart sink as the realization set in.

So that was it.

That kiss didn't happen because I was falling for him—it only happened because my body must've pushed me to feed him. Serve Baelor.

The thought made me sick. And believe it or not, simply falling for him would've definitely been the better option.

All it ever was, was lust. Something that was forced upon me.

But if that was really it...then what was his excuse?

"This...everything you do is for the good of the witches," Esther forcefully grabbed my hand, piercing her eyes into mine. "Do you understand that?"

Good of the witches?

Regardless of my connection to Alaric, that didn't change my opinion. There was still no way in hell I was going to feed him any darkness or help bring back Lord Baelor.

Over my dead body.

And if staying away from Alaric—something that wouldn't be much of a problem for me—would prevent me from feeding him, so be it.

For the next four years, I would keep my distance. No touching, no kissing, no glowing eyes—no anything.

I was still unsure about what would happen after those four years, but I would deal with that later. For now, both Mom and Esther could kiss my ass.

"I understand now," I shot Esther a weak smile. "And I know exactly what to do...for the good of the witches."