

Chapter 125

Year 3

Adelaide

"The Veil, also known as a special portal that can only be created by the eyes of a Seer. Once such a portal is opened..."

Before I could read further, I felt a firm hand on my shoulder. A gasp left my mouth before I slammed the book shut.

Knowing who the hand belonged to, I quickly turned around, facing Alaric, who stood behind me with a grin on his face.

"What's with the look?" he chuckled, leaning down to kiss the side of my neck. I flinched, feeling his lips on the same spot where he had marked me last year. After making up every reason as to why it wouldn't be a good idea, I came to the conclusion that there really wasn't one.

Maybe one—and that reason was Mom. An argument with Mom during the semester break had eventually pushed me to do it, and I did not regret my decision.

As far as Mom and Esther were concerned, I was still preparing her chosen vessel—feeding him darkness—but that wasn't true. I mostly spent my days in the library, desperately searching for a way to sabotage Mom's plans.

My heart was still the same, and nothing could change that.

"What were you reading?" Alaric asked, reaching for the book.

He opened it in a swift motion, but I managed to quickly shut it again before clutching it to my chest. "It's not important," I said, trying to sound casual.

It was in fact important—perhaps one of the most important items in my possession nowadays. Over the past few years, I had secretly been studying ways to prevent something from happening without having to kill anyone.

Despite reading so many books, I didn't have a clear plan yet.

As for Alaric's question? I couldn't answer him.

How could I ever tell him that I was searching for a way to stop him from becoming the God of the Underworld's vessel?

"Always so secretive," Alaric whispered, planting his soft lips on mine. One look in his eyes almost made me forget what I had been doing, but one second later, I felt the same guilt I had been carrying for years.

Out of everyone, Mom just had to choose the one with the purest heart...

"We're all waiting for you," Alaric said, his face brightening as he pulled me from my seat. "And you know James eats like a pig, so I came to get you before he finishes all the food."

"I know," I sighed, managing to put the book in my backpack.

Once a week, the Elite team members would meet up on our day off and have lunch together. It had become a tradition due to Elyx, but nowadays, it felt more like a burden. Time was valuable, and so was the one year I still had left.

Alaric wrapped his arm around my waist as we walked. "Seriously," I warned him, "if I have to hear one more thing about Elyx's third baby or his million mistresses—"

"I know," Alaric agreed, laughing loudly.

"If you hold him down, I'll cut that 'thing' off myself," I said in a serious tone. Don't get me wrong, I was happy things for Elyx were working out the Lyperian way, but it was very difficult to hear about those poor women who couldn't see what was right in front of them.

All they were to Lyperia were products to carry the future king's heirs—and all he did was brag about it.

"Whatever you say, babe," Alaric cracked up. "You know I got your back, always."

A goofy smile appeared on my lips at the sound of his addictive laughter.

Alaric had changed so much over the years, and luckily none of it was darkness. I wouldn't allow it.

The shy, stuttering prince I met all those years ago when we were only eighteen, was long gone. Today he was someone who had grown confident, bold, and talkative—to the point we would sometimes beg him to shut up.

At the same time, he had still managed to keep his bright spark and his kindness. He was still as accepting as ever.

I wasn't a werewolf.

I couldn't shift, couldn't do their mind-link thing, and couldn't always keep my emotions in check—but none of that mattered to him.

Just letting him mark me had already made our bond so much stronger, and it was only growing day by day.

"I haven't told you yet today, but I love you, Ads," Alaric said, meeting my eyes.

"And I love you more," I replied without hesitation. I loved the way his grin widened and his face lit up whenever I said it back.

The first time I said it to him was in our second year, at the same spot we had shared our first kiss. It was an unexpected moment, and I didn't have to think much before saying it back. For so long, I had no idea what love truly meant—but in that moment, as I looked into his eyes, I realized that I did love him and had loved him from the first time we met.

Considering all the secrets and lies, I wasn't sure if I deserved his love—but he made me feel like I did.

~

As soon as Alaric and I walked into the room, we were met with loud cheers and warm smiles.

"Addy, you're here!" James called out.

Jane rushed over with a piece of cake in her hands, then shoved it into my mouth. "Where were you?"

I opened my mouth to speak, but Claire beat me to it. "In the library, of course!" she answered. "Where else would she be nowadays?"

I rolled my eyes, smiling. She was one to talk, especially since she was always in the library too, studying like her life depended on it.

Alaric and I sat down on the opposite side of James, who rested his arm over the back of Jane's chair as she sat back down again.

He shot me a small wink, which I gave in return.

The two of them weren't officially together, but after taking my advice, James had slowly gotten to know her. The two had grown closer, and it had changed Jane a lot.

She was part of the group, more approachable, and no longer sat in a corner, giving me dead stares.

Looking at everyone around the table brought a warm feeling to my heart. After all the time we spent together—in and outside of school, like our monthly trips, the mischief we got into during nights, and the small missions we completed as part of the Elite Team—they had become my best friends. Every single one of them.

It didn't matter that we came from different worlds or different upbringings. Somehow, we just clicked, and they were like the family I never really had.

My friendship with Claire was still going strong. I had even stayed over at the Bloodrose a few times. Her dad was too kind, accepting—they all were, except for her older brother, Fergus, who thought I was a bad influence and a pain in the ass. Still, he was alright, I guess.

The group burst out laughing at something Elyx said, pulling me out of my thoughts. He seemed to be leading the conversation like always, and even though I didn't hear half of it—I knew he must've been bragging about something, most likely himself.

The two of us had a love-hate relationship. We teased each other a lot—but no one else was allowed to mess with him, and I'm sure he felt the same about me. We were like eternal allies.

All of this felt nice.

Too nice...

But even through my smiles, a knot always seemed to tighten in my chest. The only reason they accepted me was because they didn't know the truth about what I had planned to do when I first came to Starlight.

I had often found myself wondering what would happen if they were to find out.

How fast would they turn their backs on me?

"Addy!" Elyx looked at me.

"Lixie!" I blinked, realizing everyone was looking at me.

"He was talking about a dream he had about violets yesterday," Alaric explained, nudging my shoulder, "and now he's decided our first baby should be named Violet."

I started laughing but quickly stopped when I realized no one else was. Elyx raised his brow, like my joy offended him.

Kids had always been a funny concept to me, mainly because they scared me. Aside from that, that was the last thing on my mind right now. My only worry at the moment was Alaric, and how I would prevent him from becoming a vessel.

"Violet," I nodded, playing along. "Sure, but what if it's a boy?"

"Still Violet," Elyx declared confidently, earning a laugh from Greg. Claire slapped his shoulder, whispering at him to stop.

"I didn't know you were a witch too, but if your dream says it's Violet—then Violet it is," I said, holding back a laugh of my own.

Elyx hummed, leaning back in his chair with a proud smile. "I hope you realize it's an honor," he said. "Not everyone gets the privilege of having a name chosen by the future king of Lyperia."

A warm smile tugged at my lips. "Then I will honor it."

"And now you owe me a name," Elyx decided, reaching for my hands across the table.

"You know I can't do that," I said, shaking my head.

Ever since he knew what I was capable of, he always tried to convince me to look into his future. He just couldn't understand that those of us with the gift had an unspoken rule not to.

The future was not set in stone, and even the smallest peek could backfire. I was never a big believer in that until I experienced the vision of Baelor entering Alaric's body.

After that, I learned to control my prophecies, knowing I couldn't handle it if I ever saw something dark or negative again—especially about one of my friends.

Only Alaric knew the true power behind my eyes, and even he didn't know the full extent. All he knew was that they could glow, and that was it.

"If she doesn't want to, she doesn't want to," Alaric jumped to my defense.

"What he said. Stop bothering her, Elyx," James agreed.

I took a breath, already regretting my next words. "No, that's not it," I said. "If he really wants me, I can do it."

"Great!" Elyx squeezed my hand, unable to read the room that had fallen silent. "Do it, then!"

Still unsure, I closed my eyes and focused, letting the energy run through my veins. Seconds later, a symbol of two half moons appeared in my mind, followed by some numbers and two clear names.

"You will have two sons next year," I said, opening my eyes. "Both born on the same day. Make sure you name them Kayden and Kylan, in that order."

As I pulled my hands away, I glanced around, waiting for anyone to say something—but other than Elyx, who had a wide grin on his face, they just all gave me that look. I knew they loved me, but I also knew stuff like this freaked them out.

Other than Elyx, none of them ever asked me to peek into their futures.

"Two more...my little freak," Elyx chortled. "Holy shit, Alaric—your girl is a creep!"

I could feel Alaric's clenched fist under the table and quickly placed my hand over it. Even though the two were best friends, I knew it got to him when Elyx acted like this—but it had never really bothered me anymore.

"I have a question," I changed the subject, attempting to lift the spirits again. "I want to know...I think we all want to know," I spoke, gesturing around the table, "why you need like ten thousand kids again."

Claire giggled, burying her face in Greg's chest as Greg chuckled. "I'd like to hear this one too."

"It's called planning ahead," Elyx grinned proudly. "It secures our position on the throne, and with all the lands we have—there are a lot of roles to fill."

As he continued his rant about his future plans, they all focused on Elyx again and continued their conversation like nothing happened.

"Are you okay?" Alaric whispered beside me, leaning in closer.

"I'm fine," I forced a smile.

But was I really? Not even close.

The topic of the future had been especially sensitive to me lately because, while they could all sit here and dream about their futures, I still wasn't sure what mine had in store.

And I only had one more year to figure it out...