

## Chapter 126

Year 4

Adelaide

“One more day, Addy!” Claire squealed, pulling me into a tight hug. “Can you believe it? We’re finally graduating!”

Her eyes sparkled as she pulled back to look at me. Claire had been like this for months, probably because she actually had her life planned out after school.

I opened my mouth to respond, but before I could, she was already barking orders to someone across the gym.

“No, the lights need to be higher!” she pointed out. “We’ve gone through this already, get it together!”

My lips curled, watching the same girl who couldn’t even count to ten a few years back thriving as the head of the school council. Whatever she would end up doing at the Bloodrose, I knew she would be good at it.

“Tonight is going to be perfect, Addy!” She turned back to me. “Don’t you think?”

I nodded, though I couldn’t reach her level of excitement. Even now, my mind was elsewhere. There was the party tonight and graduation tomorrow—but for me, everything still felt far from perfect.

Why?

Because I knew the moment I put on that graduation hat, I would have to face reality. Mom would come for Alaric, and when she did—she would find out the truth, that I had been lying to her for years.

It was not just Mom who I had been lying to. I had been lying to everyone.

Alaric...well, he still didn’t have a clue.

As far as he was concerned, we were both heading to his kingdom after this where I would one day become his queen, regardless of the king’s opinion.

That had been his plan from the very start, and I had just gone along with it because I didn’t want to hurt his feelings.

I thought I had a plan too—a way to stop Baelor. After years of studying spells and rituals, hoping to find a solution—I came to the harsh conclusion that it was not going to work out the way I wanted.

Who was I kidding?

Baelor wasn’t just anyone—he was the God of the Underworld, and if he really wanted to find a way, he would.

What chance did I stand against someone...something like that?

So ultimately, my plan was that I didn’t have a plan. All I could do was sit and watch how everything would play out while continuing to protect Alaric.

As long as I wouldn’t feed him any darkness, Baelor could not fully possess his body.

My head snapped to the door as it opened, and we were met with the loud laughter and voices of the Elite team. My friends...

Greg rushed straight to Claire, lifting her off the ground as she giggled. Jane had somehow ended up on Elyx’s back, laughing as he threatened to drop her. Alaric entered last, walking beside James, and as usual, he was less hectic than the others.

Throughout the year, his calm demeanor had never changed.

I smiled, watching my people. We had all met in our late teens, and now we were all in our early twenties—but at times, they still gave me a headache.

My chest tightened as Alaric smiled back at me, his blue eyes lighting up. With each year that passed, my guilt only grew. He had done me no wrong, and all I had been doing was leading him on.

Once he reached me, he placed his warm hands on my cheeks and kissed me softly. “My princess,” he murmured, resting his head against mine.

I chuckled, pushing him off. “Your Highness,” I said back mockingly.

“Can I steal you away for a bit?”

I glanced at Claire and the others, who were too busy laughing and chatting to notice. “Sure.”

Alaric took my hand, leading me out of the gym. We ended up in the courtyard and sat down on one of the benches. It was quiet, peaceful, and a spot we would often have conversations.

We sat in silence, and after a while, he released a deep breath.

“What is it?” I asked nervously. I didn’t even know why I was nervous because Alaric was perfect...too perfect. He had never disrespected me, raised his voice at me, made fun of me or lied to me—never.

Even when I had turned him down break after break whenever he asked me to travel back home with him, he had never resented me.

“Do you remember what I was like when we first met?” He gazed at me, smiling softly. “I could barely get a sentence out without stuttering, lived sheltered, I was insecure, nothing, nobody—”

“That’s not true—”

“But then I met you,” he continued, placing his hand on top of mine. “You believed in me when I didn’t, you never tried to control me, you never lied to me—and you are my world, Addy.”

I gulped uncomfortably, knowing I did try to control him and did lie to him.

He squeezed my hand. “I can’t wait to take you back to the kingdom with me, to start the rest of our lives together, start a family...”

I followed his gaze as he trailed off, reaching for something inside his pocket. Then he pulled out a small, velvet box. He opened it, revealing a breathtaking silver necklace with a green, shining gem in the center. It carried a great source of energy—I could immediately sense it.

What was he planning to do with it?

“This necklace once belonged to my mother,” Alaric spoke, carefully picking up the piece of jewelry. “She gave it to me before she passed. It’s passed down through generations and carries the power of the Moon Goddess herself.”

“What do you mean by that?”

He smiled, holding the necklace between his fingers. “It’s said that centuries ago, after the Great War, the Moon Goddess herself intervened,” he explained. “She ended the fighting by calling every leader of all the supernatural species together. Each of them—wolves, witches, vampires, fae—anyone you can think of—placed their hands on a stone and united their energies.”

I listened attentively.

“That stone became the Emerald of Harmony,” Alaric said, chuckling afterward. “I don’t know if any of that is true, but I do know that I want you to have it. I know my mother would’ve loved you, so I want you to have a piece of her.”

My throat felt dry, staring at the necklace. I couldn’t accept this. I didn’t deserve something so precious and meaningful after all the lies. Especially not after knowing what it represented.

“Don’t you like it?”

He looked worried, possibly due to the lack of reaction.

“No, I do,” I said quickly. “I love it. It’s beautiful!”

“Good—because it’s yours,” he nodded, satisfied, leaning forward to put the necklace around my neck.

Once it was on, he looked down at it with a wide grin. His fingers reached for the stone. “I know I’ve already said it for today, but I really love you—Addy.”

“I know...and I love you too,” I said, trying to keep my voice steady. I forced myself to stand, not able to bear the moment any longer. “But we should probably get back to the others.”

“We should,” Alaric agreed, following my lead.

I couldn’t help but wonder—when he found out the truth, would he hate me? Could he even hate me when all he ever saw was the good in me?

Whatever the answer, I would find out soon enough...