

Chapter 143

Adelaide

Other than the sound of Violet's babbles, everything went quiet. It was as if the world had stopped moving, but only inside this hut.

No one spoke, no one breathed—while outside was chaos. In the distance, we could hear the sounds of shouting, howling, and heartbreaking screams.

The villagers were in danger...

Aelius was the first to move. He stepped forward with a calm expression and pushed Violet into Alaric's arms. "Take the baby," he instructed. "When the time comes, you will know what to do."

"Grandpa—"

I didn't even have time to finish my sentence before he had already walked out the door, leaving me to think about his cryptic words.

My body froze as I looked at Claire, unsure of what would happen. Aelius had always told me Violet would be safe—but how could he be sure? How could he be certain when he would also share his wisdom about how nothing was set in stone?

Not even a Soothsayer could know everything...

Oh my...they were going to kill Violet, I would fail at opening the Veil, and we were all going to die...

"Focus, Addy!" Alaric's voice pulled me back to reality. "We need to get out of here!"

He rushed toward the back door, Claire and I following closely behind, but as soon as we looked out the window—we spotted wolves in the distance. It wasn't many, but enough to do some serious damage.

"Change of plan," Alaric said, closing the blinds with his free hand.

"You know it won't work," Claire told him. "They'll find out where we are."

She was right. Running wasn't an option—not anymore. But there was something else I could try. It was an intense spell that would require a lot of strength, strength I needed to open the Veil—but I had no choice.

We couldn't just go out there and fight, on top of saving Violet and opening the Veil—not yet. I had to buy us some time until I could sense Baelor's energy—just like Grandpa Aelius had told me.

I grabbed Claire and Alaric's shoulders, took a deep breath, and let my eyes glow—hiding everyone's scents. The energy drained from me, but once I looked into Violet's eyes—I pushed through until I succeeded.

"I saw your eyes," Alaric spoke, shocked.

"Yes," I let out a sad chuckle. "I don't really think that matters anymore—does it?"

Claire blinked at me, her mouth slightly open. "Wow," she gasped. That's right, she had never seen "it" before. Suddenly, a gasp escaped from her lips, and her eyes widened in horror. "Your nose..."

"My nose?" I wiped my hand across my face, quickly noticing my fingers were stained with blood. The unfortunate side effect of a spell too powerful—on top of overusing my powers to learn how to control the Veil.

My head began spinning, but I forced myself to stay steady. "It's nothing."

Alaric stepped closer. "Do you need me to take a look?"

"No." I shook my head. "We should come up with a plan. We won't have long, but it'll give us enough time to think about what we're going to do."

Alaric didn't look convinced. "Are you sure—"

"I'm sure," I repeated quickly. "Lock the doors!"

Without hesitation, Alaric handed Violet to me, then locked the back door and shut the blinds while Claire worked the front door. Violet babbled in my arms, but I managed to keep her quiet by rocking her back and forth.

"Please be a good girl for Mommy," I whispered, peeking through the small gap in the curtains. As I stared out of the window, my stomach instantly clenched.

Outside, the villagers were being forced out of their houses and dragged to the center of the square. Elders, men, women, children—and even the saints of the village. They were all being pushed forward like they meant nothing, some even shoved to their knees.

Wolves moved around them in slow circles, growling, their sharp eyes locked onto their prey—waiting to attack if anyone dared resist.

Then, my breath caught as I saw him.

Elyx...

He walked beside the Alpha King. This was the first time I had laid eyes on him, but he seemed like a strong and powerful man. His hair was as blonde as Alaric's, his eyes just as blue—but his gaze was much colder.

It was like there was nothing behind his eyes. No warmth, no emotion—just emptiness.

A cold chill went through my body as I looked at the woman behind them—the one I had been trying to avoid.

Mom...

She was being dragged along with a rope wrapped around her body, restraining her from any movement.

Even though this wasn't a situation to smile about—there was a smirk on her lips, and I knew exactly why.

Gloria was not a stupid woman. She was always one step ahead, always had a plan—the only thing I didn't know was what it was.

"Where is Esther?" I asked, looking at Claire.

She bit her lip before responding with a shrug. "I guess there's no proof she had something to do with Baelor, so..."

When Claire said Mom was a hostage, I had expected Esther to be there—but this changed things. It would've been a whole lot better if I could've dragged that woman inside the Veil as well.

Alaric released a sharp breath, and I turned my head to look at him. He was staring out of the window, face pale, jaw so tight I thought his teeth might crack. His hands were curled into fists as he looked at his dad standing beside Elyx, and a few steps behind them were people from the kingdom, the coven, Lyperians—but most of all, our friends. Jane, James, Greg—even Elyx's friend, Jack.

"I have heard the head of this village is called Aelius—and I demand he come out here!" the Alpha King called out.

A silence fell over the square as no one dared to speak.

"Okay," the Alpha King clapped his hands. One by one, villagers were forced onto their knees—no exceptions made.

Elders, children, they took everyone, heads bowed—execution style.

This was why I could not act recklessly. Not until I had found a way to keep Violet safe.

If he was willing to do this to innocent villagers, I could only imagine what he would do to the ones he was actually after.

"King Elyx," Aelius appeared, calmly. Then he looked at the Alpha King. "And King Eamon...I have been expecting you."

At last, his eyes flickered to Mom. "And Gloria," he greeted. Mom responded with a smug smirk.

"These innocent people," Aelius swept his eyes over his people, who were forced onto their knees. "I think you should let them go."

The Alpha King scoffed. "After you bring me my son—and those two wenchens."

I could hear Alaric's breathing beside me and knew he was seconds away from flying out that door, but I would not allow him.

"Don't," I grabbed his wrist. "It's not time yet. I'm still weak, and I can't feel Baelor yet."

He exhaled sharply but stayed down. I knew Mom would try to do something, I was positive—but when?

"I can't help you," Aelius spoke. "I'm afraid the ones you're looking for are not here."

The Alpha King chortled. "We have come here in peace," he said. "We only need the three, and no one else needs to get hurt. It's as simple as that."

"And the three you plan on killing?" Aelius retorted. "Do they not count as people?"

"K-Killing?" Elyx frowned, snapping his head to the Alpha King. "No. That's not what we agreed upon. You said—"

Elyx was at a loss for words, and as I looked at my friends—I could tell by their faces that they were just as shocked.

They truly didn't know...

"Tell me where they are, or I'll kill the first person," the Alpha King said, looking at the villagers.

"You don't have to do this, Eamon," Elyx tried.

"Listen to the boy, Eamon," Aelius agreed, backing him up. "Violence is not the way."

The Alpha King's eyes darkened as he let out a low chuckle.

"Then I guess I have no choice."

He turned to the villagers, his expression turning even colder.

"Violence it is."

My breath hitched as I saw his gaze fix on Angela—who was kneeling on the floor, held down by two wolves.

It all happened in a flash but, a third wolf lunged forward and ripped her head from her neck.