

Chapter 149

Violet

I gasped for air, my heart pounding in my chest. I'd been in the Veil all this time, but now I found myself back in the caves. Everything was blurry. It was just as dark as I remembered, the only source of light coming from the campfire.

My mind was still spinning as I sat up straight. I couldn't get far because a pair of hands steadied my waist. That familiar touch belonged to Kylan. By now, it had been imprinted in my memory—so much that I could bet my life on it.

"Violet," I heard him whisper in my ear, though my eyes were on Aelius, who didn't seem the least bit surprised by all of this. "Breathe."

Focusing on Kylan's voice, I quickly regained my vision, but my heart was nowhere near at ease.

How could it be?

"No!" I choked out, shaking my head. I turned halfway to look at Kylan, those deep brown eyes staring back at me as if I had just said the worst thing possible. "I have to go back—she was there!"

No reaction.

This time, I tried my luck with Aelius, looking at the man Adelaide had called Grandpa.

He wasn't just her grandfather—he was ours. My real family...

"I think she's still alive!" I told him. "If she's inside the Veil, that means she made it. Mom and Alaric—they're still alive!"

My voice sounded desperate. I didn't need a mirror to know my eyes probably were too. While I felt like I knew Adelaide well enough to call her Mom, Alaric still felt distant to me.

Aelius shifted, his face unreadable. "So, she showed you?"

"She did," I said, my heart still racing. "And I have to get back. I think I can save her—"

"Adelaide and Alaric didn't sacrifice themselves so you could save them," Aelius grumbled, his eyes rolling slightly, like he was mocking me. "If that's all you got from the Veil, then perhaps it was too early for you to come back. The Veil is closed, and the Veil shall remain closed."

My stomach twisted, my hands clenched into my thighs as I glared at him. This man was my grandfather, but when I looked at him, I felt nothing—no warmth, no connection. Through Mom's eyes, he looked so amazing, someone who would bend his own rules, the rules of nature—for family.

I had felt the love he had for her, and I had felt how much she loved him—but it seemed like I wasn't going to receive any of it. Only distance.

"I don't like your tone," Kylan chuckled. He had no idea what we were talking about, whether I was in the wrong or not—but he knew that much.

"No, I get it," I gulped, deciding to let it go. Aelius was an ass, but he was right. Adelaide had shown me that she had sacrificed herself so I could have a better life. Not just her—everyone did, including Alaric...even Claire and Greg.

They had even lost a pup just to save my life.

All of it was so Mom could lock Baelor inside the Veil—and after my little outburst when Chrystal tried to kill me, I may have very well opened a small part of that Veil.

Still, was it wrong for me to want to hold her again?

"Are Mom and Dad...Claire and Greg really dead?"

Aelius' eyes widened slightly in surprise. It was a bold question, but one that needed to be asked. No matter the answer—I would accept it.

Aelius' response was just as honest. "They are," he confirmed. "A few years ago, there was a crack in the Veil. Someone escaped, tried to get to you—but Claire and Greg did everything in their power to protect you."

"Who escaped?" I asked.

"Not important," Aelius hummed. "Time will tell. What is important is that you're safe. For now."

Not important?

Adelaide trusted those two enough to take care of me. I had seen firsthand how Aelius told her I wouldn't be able to stay with him—so it was important. It mattered to me.

"Does my Uncle Fergus know?"

"He knows stuff."

I grew frustrated. "What kind of stuff?"

I hadn't expected any explanation from Aelius, so I decided to let it go for now. I had so many questions, yet I could barely remember anything.

My eyes flickered toward the deeper part of the cave, my chest tightening as I stared into it. This was that cave. The same cave where everything had happened all those years ago. My home.

Aelius squinted at me, like he could sense my thoughts.

"The Children of Blood," I asked. "They're all here, aren't they—?"

Before I could finish, a grip on my shoulders made me turn around, and then a pair of warm hands grabbed my face.

Kylan.

"Can somebody," he breathed, frustrated, "please tell me what is going on?"

My eyes widened as I stared into his questioning gaze. I wanted to tell him everything—but I could hardly remember. The memories were a mess in my head.

What I did know was that I had met him before—both him and Kayden. Back then, I was just a baby. Adelaide had said something about a darkness—and even though I couldn't feel that darkness, I could feel her fears.

I didn't know what that was all about, but it wasn't important now.

Wait...

Adelaide used to do that thing with her fingers. Maybe if I tried hard enough, I could do it too.

I grabbed Kylan's wrists to pull them away from my cheeks. "I want you to see what I saw."

He huffed. "Puppy—"

I didn't give him time to protest. I removed the ring from my finger and pressed that same finger against his forehead, my eyes glowing.

"You might feel a bit dizzy, but don't worry!" I said quickly. Then I repeated the words I had heard Adelaide say. "See through my eyes."

I think that was it.

I waited for him to react—say something, blink, faint—anything to show me it was working, but he didn't. He just sat there, brows furrowed, lips slightly parted as he stared at me like I had completely lost it.

So that wasn't it.

Confused, I let my eyes fade back to normal. The very next second, Kylan slid the ring back onto my finger. He let out an exhausted sigh, shaking his head in disbelief. "Why are you always so fucking weird?" he muttered under his breath, and I was pretty sure it wasn't meant for me to hear.

Aelius hummed in amusement, and my face heated up. "Child?"

"Yes?" I snapped my head toward him, my embarrassment turning into frustration.

"You have never trained your eyes," he said. "Therefore, it is of no use."

I bit my lip, thinking it through. Adelaide had been training her eyes since before she could even walk, her whole childhood dedicated to learning how to use the glow.

Meanwhile, I had just figured out what I was truly capable of.

"As for the ones behind the cave? You'll meet them when you're ready."

I inhaled sharply. "And when is that?"

I couldn't believe there were more people like me, Children of Blood—and I wasn't allowed to meet them.

Aelius didn't respond, his face hardened.

"And do not ever take your ring off again," he warned. "You have already opened the Veil a few times throughout the years. If you do so again—it will only be a matter of time before you release Baelor."

A cold feeling spread through my chest. He had confirmed my suspicions. And apparently it wasn't just once, it was on multiple occasions.

Baelor...

That name alone sent chills down my spine. I could still not believe we were dealing with—

"The God of the Underworld?" Kylan stiffened beside me.

"I'll explain later." My eyes fixed on Aelius. "Please, teach me like you taught Adelaide."

He grunted, looking away. I had no idea what that meant.

"I know you can," I tried again. "So please, teach me—"

"Teach me this, teach me that," Aelius mocked, releasing a big sigh. "If what these old eyes have seen is true, then I must question whether you are worthy to receive such teaching."