Chapter 176

Chapter 176 ✓

Violet

Hearing those words come out of Rochwall's mouth felt strange, but amazing.

I didn't care much for the titles or the power. Witch, Princess, Heir to the Common Lands—by now, they were nothing other than words to me.

But the daughter of Adelaide and Alaric…

That got to me. It brought back the same feeling as when Aelius had said it. Hearing those words come from someone who was once close to them felt oddly satisfying, like it had just been confirmed again.

I couldn't hide the slight smile on my lips, and neither could he.

"Did you know—"

"Back then in the library?" I cut in. "No."

He gave a short nod, then kept eyeing me like he was still figuring things out.

"And now you want to know how much I know?" I asked, tilting my head.

"Well…"

"I visited Aelius," I opened up. "And I met Adelaide inside the Veil. She showed me…"

I stopped, already feeling my cheeks glow as the image of Adelaide and '

James' going at it like animals flashed in my mind. Nope, definitely not going through that again.

"Many things," I finished. "She showed me many things."

His eyes widened in shock. "You saw her?"

I responded with a hum.

"And did she say anything about me?"

I slowly shook my head, still keeping my answers short. "No."

Rochwall's face fell. It was hard to read whether he was happy or disappointed. I hoped it was the latter because that would mean he was hoping for forgiveness.

"You said the Veil," he mentioned. "Is that the place she sent all those people into? Is she still there?"

"Yes," I confirmed. "She's there."

"Yes?" He let out a short laugh. "So she's alive? And what about Alaric?"

"He's there too," I said softly.

"Good...That's good."

Rochwall exhaled. He looked relieved, like someone who had just found out they didn't have a hand in killing their best friends.

"That day in the woods..." Rochwall began. "There was this dark thing —"

"Baelor," I answered right away. "The king of the Underworld."

He frowned deeply. "Baelor?" he repeated.

"Yes. That's why they have to stay inside the Veil," I continued. "To keep him there. To stop him from ever getting out."

Rochwall was lost. I could see it in his eyes. It wasn't that crazy. If my calculations were correct, he had just gotten his memory back, and now he'd suddenly heard his friends were still alive, and Baelor isn't some myth.

"Do you want me to explain?"

He stuttered. "P-Please."

I ended up telling Rochwall everything. Well, most of it. For obvious reasons, I left out the part about my eyes, what had happened with Chrystal, the deal with Kylan, and Esther—because she was not a huge threat to me right now.

Now James knew about the Veil, Baelor, and a more PG version of what Adelaide showed me through her eyes, including why they had to stay inside the Veil, and what would happen if they didn't.

Rochwall listened closely, like he was trying to absorb every word to fill in the empty spaces, piecing things together in his head. "So Elyx knew all along..."

"Yes, he did."

"And Kylan?" He snapped his head to look at me. "He does too, I assume? That's why he's been so overprotective."

I glanced at him, feeling slightly overwhelmed. Rochwall had a sharp mind, and from what I understood, he had quite the brain as well. That's

why I couldn't come up with a reason that would justify him blindly following Elyx and betraying Adelaide.

"Now you want to ask me something," Rochwall let out a weak chuckle. " So go ahead. Ask."

I didn't wait a second. "Why did you betray her?" I asked. "You and Jane?"

I watched him stiffen beside me. Then he ran a hand over his face, like just thinking about it wore him out.

"I made a choice," he said. "The wrong one. But the Alpha King and Elyx were involved, and at the time, I didn't know what would happen if I didn't follow their word."

Rochwall looked away. "I want you to know that the moment they began firing at them, I knew I had made the biggest mistake," he admitted. " And after everything came back to me, I've been living with the guilt, the regret...the shame."

"Because Alaric and Adelaide didn't deserve this," I said, my jaw tight. " And if they hadn't gone inside that Veil, Claire and Greg might've also been alive today...and now I have no family left."

I knew I had the other Hastings...barely, but that wasn't the point. Commander or not, it felt good to say what was on my mind for once. Rochwall's eyes looked tired, but I didn't care. He was tired? Well, so was I.

"You're right. You don't have Addy or Alaric," he said quietly. "Or Greg... Claire."

My chest squeezed at the sound of my parents' names. All four of them.

"Your uncle Fergus is not exactly known to be the warmest…so I guess now," he looked at me again, "you'll just have to do with me and Jane."

I stopped in my steps, feeling a shiver through my spine. Rochwall followed, gently placing his hand on my shoulder before giving it the gentlest squeeze. I looked up at him, and he gave me a sympathetic smile. The kind people give when they know they can't fix it but are still desperate enough to try.

I was supposed to hate him.

Because after betraying my parents and having a hand in everything that happened, now he wanted to play the hero.

Yet, I couldn't bring myself to hate him, just like I couldn't bring myself to hate Dylan for his past mistakes.

"Fergus doesn't want me going to Lyperia. You don't seem to mind that much," I began walking again. "Why is that?"

Let's see how much he cared.

"Why not?" he lifted his brow. "I know Kylan is a good and loyal kid. Lyperians aren't easy, you'll have a hard time there, but he will protect you, no matter what."

"But Elyx—" I started.

He shook his head before I could finish.

"Like I said, Kylan is a good and loyal kid," he repeated firmly. "And I don't know if you've got those glowing eyes or—"

"No," I said quickly, shutting him down. That wasn't a part I was ready to

share yet. I had trusted my gut to tell him this much, and that felt right. But past that?

He had still betrayed Adelaide, who he had once loved, which meant he could betray me.

Heck, for all I knew, he'd walk straight to the school board after this conversation and report that there was a witch in school.

"Regardless...your secret is safe with me, Violet."

"Thank you."

As I had observed earlier, Rochwall had a very sharp mind and probably didn't believe me, but he luckily didn't push it.

"I've also read your files again," he changed the topic. "Alpha Fergus requested that we do not allow you to shift during class. Said you've lost control a few times."
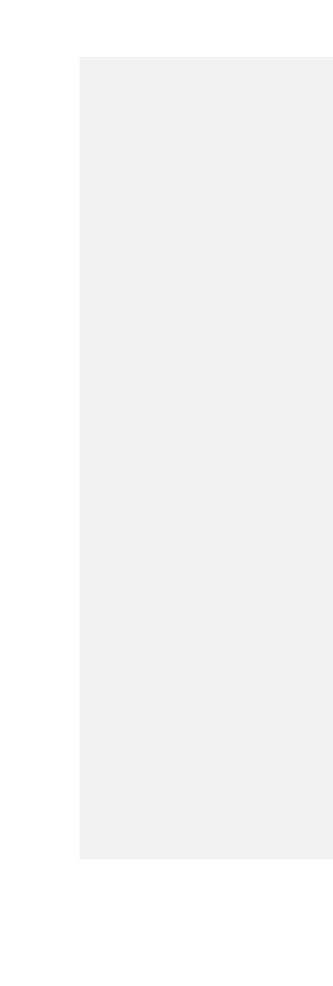
I froze.

He did what?

That was the first time I had ever heard about that request, but it definitely wouldn't be too far-fetched for Fergus.

This had been like this ever since the past. Each time I tried liking that man even a little, he would give me a reason not to. I understood his point, but since this was a school for shifters and all, it would've been nice to hear about this beforehand.

"It's not uncommon for such a powerful being without guidance to lose control over her wolf," Rochwall spoke. "Personally, I disagree."

"So...you think I should learn to control her?" I asked, flustered. " Lumia?"

He smiled gently. "Lumia. That's a beautiful name."

His eyes softened as he looked at me. "Your mother was amazing, Violet. And your father...I can only imagine your true potential."

I laughed under my breath. Right, I could literally only imagine.

"Addy and Al never had the chance to show the world their true power until those last moments outside the Veil. But you? You still can."

I bit my lip. "How?"

He took a slow breath. "I'll make sure you become the strongest shifter this school has ever seen. I'll prepare you for the future."

"What future?" I blinked. "Q–Queen of Lyperia?"

Because as far as I knew, that one was still out of the question.

"No," Rochwall looked right at me, his eyes determined. "Your rightful place as Queen of the Common Lands. High Priestess of the dark witches. The legacy your parents left behind."

I let out a small laugh, more out of disbelief than anything else.

"You have abandoned your people, Violet," Rochwall explained calmly. " Both the Common Lands and the dark witches roam around without leaders. There has to be someone above the Alphas—"

My smile faded. I couldn't bear to listen to any more of his nonsense. Was this how crazy I sounded when I told Kylan my plans?

Commented [Ma1]:

Commented [Ma2R1]:

"Aelius said Lumia is furious with me," I said. "So I doubt she would work with me at all."

I thought back to Aelius' words. My downfall would be my selfishness, and it would lead to consequences I couldn't undo. I'm sure Rochwall had good intentions, but just having this conversation seemed like it was heading in that direction.

Rochwall nodded slowly. Then he drew in a breath. "I'm not going to force you to do anything," he said. "But if you come back from Lyperia and, for any reason, you change your mind...just know I'm here. Jane as well. She's a shifting specialist."

"Yes."

Only, I already knew the truth. I wasn't going to change my mind.

Ever...

"Do you know why I got upset with you today?" Rochwall asked suddenly.

I tried to think. "I'm so sorry Kylan and I missed the picnic you had planned for us—"

"It wasn't that. I was just disappointed and wanted to teach you a lesson."

I stared at him, waiting for an explanation.

"It just bothers me," he breathed, "that you're walking around here like his shadow when you're anything but."

I let out a shy chuckle, lowering my gaze to the ground. He wasn't wrong.

"Kylan's settled," Rochwall stated. "Whether he shows up to training or

not, it doesn't affect him. But you...you've got so much more to prove. You need to be sharp, Violet. Think about your own future, because anything can happen...anything."

I nodded slowly, the weight of it sinking in. Once people found out my true identity, that I was basically rotten from both sides, I highly doubted they would pull me into a hug and sympathize with me.

I'm sure holding me back wasn't Kylan's intention, because if anything, he was the one pushing me to do better. But Rochwall was right. The rules weren't the same for me, and I couldn't afford to slack.

Not when I was still being watched.

"It won't happen again."

"Good." He gave me a faint smile and ruffled my hair gently. "Now get ready for the picnic. And please consider my offer."

Comments	Support	Share