

Chapter 316

Violet

I jumped from my chair and made my way beside Kylan with the book. He shifted slightly so he could see, his hand brushing mine as he read the words.

'Box of Ashes.'

A chuckle escaped him. "I want to say good job, but you haven't really done anything."

I shared a laugh with him and nudged his shoulder before we both shifted our attention to the book again. My fingers traced the symbols on the page. "It must represent the box," I pointed out to the text below. "I call is to wake up the past, I claim is to face what you call, and I open..."

A gulp left me as I read further.

"That's the dangerous part," Kylan took over. "It breaks the wall between now and then. If you skip the first two, the past will tear you apart, and if you linger too long, the past might claim you."

"So basically, the best thing to do would be to let go of the box," Kylan concluded. "Things could've gone very differently if you had made a mistake last night —"

"But I didn't," I reminded him. "I said the words, and it opened for me."

Kylan exhaled slowly, his eyes scanning the page. "It says right here that it will only open for you with a purpose, so I suppose Varius wanted you to know something."



I knew he was worried, and now had decided in mere seconds that he didn't want me around that box at all, but we had a good talk this morning. It was time to stop protecting me.

If the box was where I had to be to learn something about the past, so be it. "It says here that the Box of Ashes was crafted by the first coven during the Age of Undoing, and magic began to fall apart," I read. "After the witches lost the battle against all kinds, they tried to use the box to manipulate the past, but in doing so, they created a hole between past and present." I continued. "Days repeated, people disappeared, and memories no longer stayed with the right people."

"The Soothsayers stepped in to stop it, and change its purpose to protect the past, not change it. The box is the one that decides where you're going," Kylan said. "But...I don't understand how it got into Varius's hands."

"I don't know either," I shook my head. "But I'm sure it has to do with Ba..." I took a breath, not in the mood to speak his name.

"You don't know how your parents passed, right?"

"No," I said. "I thought it was a rogue, but then I learned it was something out of the Veil..."

It really would've been easier to process if it were just a nameless rogue. It'd hurt the same, but at least that way, I didn't have to bear any guilt. "What if Varius wanted you to see what has escaped the Veil to go after them, who sent them, and why they were taken from you?" Kylan wondered. "I don't think something got out and killed them without reason."

"I don't think so either," I let out a sad chuckle. I knew part of it had to



do with protecting me, just like I knew that if they had never agreed to raise me, they would've still been alive. All of these questions could've just been prevented if Aelius had told me what happened to them from the start, but I suppose this was maybe his way of protecting my feelings.

Being a good grandfather...

Even if Fergus had known, there was no way he would ever tell me because he also believed he was protecting me.

"Thorne is with Kayden now, and was with Varius before him, but who was he with before all of that?" Kyran wondered. "We don't know that."

He was right, we didn't...

And what if that person killed my parents?

"According to this, after the war, the soothsayers locked the box to midnight, when time resets, so only the mind could travel, not the body. That way, no one could change the past again," Kyran read further. "The box reflects the heart of the ones who open it. If the heart breaks, the path inside closes. It only opens for strength, never for sorrow."

"So that's why it sent me back," I whispered. "When I saw my dad...I cried."

How could I not have?

I hadn't seen him in years, and if this was the way it would be, I doubted I could even stay inside longer than a minute. How could I ever look at that man with a blank face?

Kyran's expression softened as his eyes met mine for a moment. "It says there's only one Box of Ashes," he said. "It became a myth over time."



People tried to make replicas, but the real one was apparently never found."

I swallowed hard. "This isn't a replica," I said. "And I'm not crazy...I know what I saw."

Maybe it would've been better if the box had been fake because that would mean that everything I had seen and would see was too.

I let myself think back to my talk to Dylan, and how he had somehow remembered the words I used to scream out in my sleep after seeing some red bird. How was it possible for me not to remember, and what connection did it have to the box?

My breath hitched as something suddenly occurred to me. "You were going to tell me something this morning," I remembered. "I asked you what color Kayden and Thorne's eyes were when you...you know."

Kylan frowned. "They were red."

A chill ran down my spine, and my stomach twisted. This could not be a coincidence.

What if it was a raven...Thorne?

"Remember what I told you about the nightmares Dylan said I used to have?" I began. "There was apparently also a bird...with red eyes."

I waited for Kylan's reaction, but he kept calm. He studied me with intense eyes. "And you can't remember anything at all?"

I shook my head. "No." My throat tightened. "It's all just...gone. But I think you and I both know who this bird is."



He leaned back slightly, his brows drawn. "So you believe you've seen Thorne somewhere along the way, but you can't remember?"

"That's right, I can't," I admitted, quietly. "Now that I think about it... there's not much I can remember from that time at all. It's like someone erased my memories."

"Maybe Adelaide?" Kylan tried.

"I don't know," I said. "I really don't."

I let out a long sigh. "I just hope that we will finally get some answers after midnight, and find out how all of this is connected."

Kylan gave me a weak nod, shutting the book in front of him. "We shouldn't handle it carelessly this time," he said. And by we, I assumed he meant me. He was right, though. I was so eager to open that box, I hadn't even thought about what exactly I was opening.

"When we find out what we're meant to find, we'll get rid of it. For good."

I nodded. "Agreed."

His jaw tightened a little. "I know you asked me to stop protecting you," he said, "but...Can I go in there with you this time?"