

## Chapter 36 Her Death Sentence

ELIANA.

I sat on the living room chair, still reeling in the aftermath of everything that had just happened before me. It was hard to not get shaken up, and even harder to watch Denver wrap Cary's pale lifeless body up into a bag. He dragged it up the basement and across the room until he got outside.

A tear dropped down my cheek when my Nana inched closer to me.

"I didn't want her to die" There was a crack in my voice and a nod which she gave back to me. "I know" Nana whispered.

"She didn't have to. Her only offense was being compelled."

"She was trying to kill you" My Grandma seared through her lips. Denver had said exactly those words to me. He even had to scream it into my ears repeatedly for it to register in my brain. That, and the whole curse thing was just a lot to unpack.

"It was either you or her..." Denver had fastened his grip around my wrist. I remember how I quivered earlier, letting my eyes on Cary's body across the cold basement floor with a stick that went into her back and through her chest.

Her skin had almost immediately withered, turning into an ash-gray color. He had closed her eyelids because her eyes turned black too. It was like her blood immediately dried upon her death, like every supernatural.

"And of course I chose you, without regret, I'd do it over again if I had to. I wasn't kidding when I said I was going to protect you..."

"But who's going to protect people like her?" My voice had cracked.

"It's unfortunate."

"It's unfortunate" My Nana repeated in the present moment. Her hands fell to my shoulders, squeezing them tightly. "It's unfortunate that things happened the way they did. But Carys tried to kill her, she was never going to stop until she had killed you" She added.

"And she was going to die anyway. If not now, then Elyndra was going to finish up the job." That name sent a chill up my spine. Elyndra, the Mother of all Witches, the one who sought my blood herself for the ritual.

The one who wanted me sacrificed.

I gulped a hard lump down my throat as my Nana pulled away.

"Elyndra already stamped her death certificate the moment she was compelled. That's what's unfair" She continued. My lashes fluttered for a moment. "Don't you think she would be able to feel that Carys is dead?"

"That we killed her?" Fear crept into my eyes.

"Oh she will." Nana replied with certainty. I could tell she was just as shaken up, she was only way better at hiding it. Denver walked in through the door after only God knew where he disposed off the body.

"She will?" I echoed.

"Of course, Elyndra would have known by now." He grunted. "She should think of it as a little present or a warning, whichever one she pleases. But there is no way in this world where I let the Witches again" He added.

"Denver, you're only starting a war" I replied and he shrugged.

"Didn't you hear what Carys said? They started the war the moment a bounty was placed on your head. And I don't mind killing all of them just like I killed Carys" I looked up at him with disbelief in my eyes.

"Do you not understand, Eliana?" She raised his voice.

"Why don't you stop looking at me like I'm the monster when I clearly wanted to save her too..." He paused. "I'm sorry for the way she died but I'm not sorry about for protecting you. And before Elyndra sends another Witch my way, she would think twice" Denver pressed his lips together. I fell quiet.

"Oh Elyndra won't send another Witch," It was my Nana who interrupted.

"She just might come herself." Both our eyes fell back on her. "From what we know which is that she's beyond desperate to destroy the curse, we can only expect her to act that way too..."

"Why do you know so much about these things?" I softly asked Nana and she scoffed lightly from her lips. "Because I've been around for so long my child..." "So you've met Elyndra?" Denver asked.

Nana folded her arms across her chest with her lips sealed into each other and a hard lump slipping down her throat.

"All I can say is that she's not someone to mess with. She'll fight tooth and nail and to death to get whatever she wants" Nama replied. Denver and I both exchanged glances.

"Then it'll be me who finally stood her," He gritted through his teeth.

"You're going to have to be a lot stronger than that," He walked towards the door where he came to a halt but his eyes never left me. "Because there's going to be a lot more bloodshed" As soon as he closed the door, it shook a little bit.

But it was the dawning reminder that I needed. I wasn't in Tombsdale anymore, I was in Oakland where things like these were normal. And apparently, Balls too.

"Wow, someone had a rough night," Ivan walked in right after Denver and relief washed over my face as I looked up at him. Honestly, I was just glad to see someone else.

While I stood up from the chair, it didn't take him so long to sense that something was off.

"Looks like everyone had a rough night huh" He teased. "Well for me, I was just told that I needed to be sacrificed for a century-long curse to be lifted and bonus, we just also killed a Witch!" I could've told him.

But even after an hour, there was still so much to unpack.

My Grandma nodded at him in her wheelchair and Ivan blew raspberry from his lips. He first went to her to dish out her morning medications but I could sense even before he said anything else that something was off with him too.

"Well, I'd hate to be the bearer of even more bad news" He hissed.

Oh not again...What had Jaxon done this time?!

"It's about your stepbrother" Ivan added and I wasn't wrong to have thought about him first. I felt my shoulders drop and my stomach too. He had been playing it safe since he found out I was back by keeping away, and planning whatever he had up his sleeves silently.

I'm sure safe wasn't the right word because silence from someone like Jaxon was never a blessing. It was never a relief, in fact it meant the exact opposite. Danger. Threat.

I folded my arms, giving the floor to Ivan.

"There's the Ball tonight," He started. I had almost forgotten that it was October, which meant about two parties here in Oakland, one of which was the infamous Masquerade Ball to celebrate Halloween—the one night in a year when we supernaturals could truly be ourselves.

It was always fun when I was a kid. Not because I went out or anything but because everyone did which meant I had the entire PackHouse to myself. I'd never been to one of these things but I sensed that tonight was probably going to be my first night.

"The Masquerade Ball" Nana echoed. Ivan nodded.

"I wish that was all,"

"Jaxon is planning something—That when everyone goes out for the party, your father will be taken away from the Pack chambers" I arched my brows in shock.

"But that's his home?"

"He's also planning to announce himself as Alpha to the rest of the Pack tonight..." My heart dropped. "But dad isn't dead yet?" I yelled. "We've been giving him the serum for a while now and he's showing progress. He can't do this...Jaxon can't do this" I stuttered.

"He can,"

"It's Pack tradition that one can't announce the title until its predecessor is gone" I gritted through my teeth and Ivan folded his arms. "Why exactly do you think he's trying to get rid of your father?" Ivan asked.

"By kidnapping him?" I turned to my Grandmother.

"That's simply unacceptable. He's trying to do exactly what he did with me. By putting your dad away, the rest of the Pack would be convinced of his death and then nothing would stop Jaxon anymore" Nana continued and for a moment, there was a piercing sound that rang through my ears.

"Eliana," Ivan reached for my hands. I forced myself back to reality.

"But er can stop him...you and Denver can stop him tonight. There's never been a more right time to challenge him for Alpha. That way, he would know that you're mated. The whole Pack would know too that you are back here" The thought forced my heart into my throat.

"And what about my Dad?" I softly asked.

"We'll have to find a way to get him out of there. It's no longer safe, the moment we lose him, that's it" Nana replied and our eyes met when I turned back at her. "What are you suggesting?" I asked.

"We get to him before they do, and we take him." Ivan answered.

"We're kidnapping him too?"

"It's for his own safety. I can handle that, there's not going to be that many people there anyway" He shrugged. "And what about your safety?" I questioned Ivan. His lips lined in a smirk.

"It's not just about me anymore. When I eavesdropped and heard Jaxon's plans for when he becomes Alpha, I realized that we're all in danger. It's about every single one of our Pack members. If I don't stand now for what is right, there won't be anything left of Blood House once this is over" Ivan's speech jerked a few tears into my eyes.

Nervousness crept into my heart as I quivered my hands.

"Are you sure this could work—Denver and I, tonight?" I breathed out.

"You're waging a war as his opposition, of course it won't be easy but one thing I know," Ivan inched closer to me. "—it's that the entire Pack would be behind you no matter what. We've seen that Jaxon and his whole family are evil, your father has too and I know it sounds ironic—"

"But you're the only one who can save us now, Eliana" Ivan said. The pressure thrusted through my veins and I swallowed a lump down my throat. "He's not wasting any more time, he wants to act now, so we must act faster..." Ivan added.

"What's going on?" Denver's voice echoed from the door and all our eyes darted to him in an instant. His arms fell beside him as an arch came between his brows. There was a sudden charge of courage inside of me as I kicked my feet forward.

"Let's go over the plan again, shall we?" I turned to Ivan and with a smirk still across his lips, he nodded. And so we went over the plan again and Denver wasn't even hesitant to finally take on Jaxon.

This was the moment we'd been waiting for—tonight.

Jaxon may have thought he was being sneaky, planning in the secret but now that we knew what was up his sleeves, it was an advantage. I never said it was going to be an easy fight because then again, the biggest mistake one can ever make is underestimating that son of a bitch.

"Fine. Let's do it" Denver nodded, clenching his teeth. We circled one another, exchanging callous glares. "Let's do it" I echoed.

"Tonight is the night we finally change everything." Ivan concluded.