

The Last Spirit Wolf

by Elena Norwood

Chapter 59

Vera

TW: infanticide, rape, human sacrifice.

I wake up in the middle of the night, only I don't actually feel awake. When I open my eyes, I'm greeted by my grandmother and aunt in their realm, but it feels different.

Hello Vera, we've been expecting you, says my grandmother.

I look around, noticing this time it's only the three of us. It also feels different. Before, I felt like I was in a dream, this time it feels like I'm actually here. Everything is clearer.

Why does it feel different this time? I ask.

We think it's the mark, my dear. We can't know for sure but there's a real possibility that it has amplified your powers. We also feel more connected to your world, Auntie Eleonor offers.

My hand moves to my mark unconsciously. When I touch it, my mind travels back to Noah and for an instant, I can see him, see us, sleeping peacefully on the cabin's bed.

You are astral projecting, Vera. Now that you bear Noah's mark, it serves as an anchor to him at all times.

I stop touching it and I'm back with my aunt and grandmother. Now that I can see them clearly, my grandmother looks unexpectedly young. I open my mouth to question this, but she laughs.

Darling, we are witches. Aging is optional.

Your power has grown, Vera. It is an unexpected side effect of being marked by your mote... Auntie Eleonor hesitates and looks at her mother, this is uncharted territory. We'll have to figure things out as we go.

What your aunt is trying to say, is that you have to be careful. As your power grows, it will become a beacon to other witches and warlocks, and the ones that remain in your realm are for the most part evil. You will have to be able to defend yourself if it comes to it.

And for that, we will train you in this realm. It's certainly unorthodox, and it's not like in your world, but it will give you an idea how to control your powers,

Both of them share a look.

What is it? I ask

My grandmother hesitates.

I'm sorry, my dear, but first you have to understand what you're really up against.

Without warning, I'm transported back in time, just as I had before. Only this time, it was clearer, just like the other realm. It didn't feel like a dream, it felt like I was actually here.

I'm in a grand castle, it's opulent in its decoration, with crystal images and the highest ceilings I have ever seen. It's very bright, filled with enormous windows and natural light. White marble spreading throughout all of the floors, walls, and columns.

Beginning to walk around, I hear my aunt's voice in my head.

Now that you're more powerful, you have to be careful not to use any magic while you're here. If you do, you might leave a magical imprint which can be tracked across time, even into this realm.

Where am I exactly?

You're in White Castle, home to the Witch Mother.

I read about Witch Mothers before, so I'm not completely clueless.

And what am I doing here, exactly?

You need to learn where you come from. Head to the end of this hall, there's a red door that will glow for you. Enter, but be very careful.

I do as I'm told, walking for a few minutes until I reach the door. I open it carefully. It instantly feels like I shouldn't be here, the hair on my nape rising.

The scene that I'm greeted with here is the opposite of the castle outside. There is no natural light; the descending flight of stairs are only lit by fire lamps placed on the walls. I continue descending, and the more I do, the more intense the smells get; it smells like rot and decay. I have to cover my mouth and nose with my hand to continue; even my eyes are watering.

"No, no please, give me my baby back." I hear a voice coming from my destination, followed by murmurs.

"NO! Why isn't this WORKING?!" Comes screaming from the same direction.

"Please, he's just a baby, he's not at fault, give him back." The initial voice is sobbing.

"Your baby is nothing but a failed experiment."

Then, I hear a loud, telling crunch.

"NO!" says the teary voice, followed by anguished screams.

When I get to the base of the stairs, I realize these are actually dungeons. There is a large space in the middle, with tables, cauldrons, and countless books, surrounded by many cells.

“Witch Mother, we have to let these Lycans go, none of their babies have served your purposes. We’re doing something wrong.”

The one called the Witch Mother takes a look around the cells, which I now see are filled with pregnant women and some very rugged, malnourished men. The smell in here is putrid, it’s hard to imagine anyone being here for extended periods of time.

“Let them go? Even if their babies are useless, it doesn’t mean they are. Bring these two to me.” She points at the cell with the wailing mother and another one to her left.

The people do as they’re told. The Witch Mother takes the wailing mother by the hair and lifts her up in the air; she painfully screams, violently trying to free herself. Swiftly, the Witch Mother slashes her throat, silencing her. Then, she uses her claw like nails to puncture into her chest and remove her heart.

“This could still work. Do not give up brothers and sisters!”

She places the heart into the cauldron and chants a few words, her eyes becoming completely white as the mixture bubbles and fumes,

When she’s done, she takes some of the sticky liquid from the cauldron and puts it in a chalice, handing it to one of the warlocks in the room.

“You know what to do.”

The warlock steps forward and drinks the concoction. Then, he steps close to the other woman, grabbing her forcefully by her hair, dragging her into one of the cells. The woman merely whimpers and whispers, “no, please no, not again.”

I fall to my knees as the woman begins to scream. I still keep my hand on my mouth to make as little noise as possible, remembering that in this state I have to rail in my emotions; but it's incredibly difficult.

The Witch Mother wanted to create a cross between a witch and a Lycan, initially conceptualized as a Spirit Beast, to use as her personal army, but it took them many decades to figure it out.

What you are seeing now, that woman, would become the first mother to the first Spirit Beast, only she wasn't a Lycan; she was a wolf.

The Witch Mother finally realized that the creature she considered inferior, the werewolf, was the answer all along. She would never have her Spirit Beast, but she would have Spirit Wolves.

But this... she had to sacrifice another woman to create the baby she was looking for, I say.

Yes, and that is why letting her continue on would've meant the end for both Lycans and werewolves. You see, both were necessary to create the Witch Mother's creature.

What happened then? How did she stop?

Your father found out what she had been up to the last few decades and realized the perversion of our kind could no longer be ignored.

That's why your father, Vera, began the end of the Age of Witches.