

Chapter 46

Eziah

My heart thunders in my chest, adrenaline racing through my veins. As my mother lunges towards Kaif, I panic and Marabella screams. Instinctively, I tear open a portal, stepping through in search of the only man who has any remote chance of taming her when she loses control like this.

Materializing, I find myself in a conference room, and I spot him immediately. My father stands tall at a large, oval table, surrounded by stunned humans who have leaped to their feet. They stare, mouths agape, at the sudden intrusion into their important meeting. My father looks at me just as stunned.

“Relax everyone, just a bit of magic, not an alien abduction.”

I attempt to calm them, and a few chuckle nervously. “No probes or UFOs here.”

My father, Ezra, looks at them startled, and a rush of concern paints his face. “Eziah?” he turns his attention back to me as I make my way toward him.

“No time, Dad,” I explain quickly, heart pounding. “Mom’s lost it. She needs you.”

Without wasting another second, I grab his arm, wrenching open another portal and shove him through. I step in after him, ensuring to close the

portal for any witnesses, and step through, immediately entering a scene of utter chaos.

Jonah lies unmoving on the floor, Marabella's screams pierce the air, as she fusses over Jonah. Dominic stands his ground, blocking Lucas and Corina, becoming a human werelock shield while Kaif grapples with my mother's wolf form.

It's Maddox, however, who commands the room as he shoves forward, taking over my father's body. He surfaces with an aura of authority, a powerful Alpha's presence that matches my mother. My mother, as if sensing this change in the atmosphere, halts for a split second, her wild eyes catching his.

"Kitty," Maddox's deep voice purrs, and in that short moment, the silence in the room is almost deafening. My mother turns to face us, her eyes wild, ethereal, something out of this world. Like storm clouds clouding her vision as she takes in my father, her eyes flicker oddly. My father steps forward, hands out placating, but she steps back, tilting her head. All eyes are on them, on this volatile reunion of mates.

Then, she reacts. Not with love, but fear. She steps back again, a hint of confusion in her gaze, like she is trying to recognize him. Maddox's approach is cautious. "Easy way or hard way, Kitty. The choice is yours," Maddox warns, her eyes flicker oddly, making me wonder how bad the madness that sometimes consumes her has gotten since I left. This is something else.

The atmosphere is tense as Dominic's voice interrupts, a note of warning in his tone. "Careful, Maddox, this house is charged full of power. She's feeding off it." At the sound of his voice, my mother turns her head, baring her canines at Dominic, but my father growls, pulling her attention back to him.

Maddox purrs at her, and if it wasn't such a serious situation right now, I may have thrown up in my mouth a little. My mother blinks at him and takes one step forward as he reaches a hand out to her.

Time seems to crawl, every heartbeat echoing louder than the last when I hear her voice.

“Eziah?” Temperance says, and everything happens in slow motion, time seems to stop as I see Temperance's aura from my peripheral on the stairs. My mother's magic also notices her presence, locking onto it instantly.

I spin around, only to see Temperance on the stairs. My heart almost stops. Her presence seems to have a gravitational pull on my mother. In a flash, her mania-induced gaze locks onto Temperance.

“No!” The scream is mine, but it's lost in a blaring of shouts and growls. As if drawn by an invisible force, my mother, with madness in her eyes, charges at Temperance. Maddox and I lunge simultaneously, but in our desperation to reach them first, we collide with each other.

Temperance's terrified scream fills the room. A sound that rips through me.

My heart stops as I look up to see my mother has bitten her. Temperance screams, shoving her off. My heart beats like a drum in my chest when my mother staggers back. Her snarl is feral, and I watch the poison of my mother's bite writhe beneath Temperance's skin, my hand moves to grab her as I see Temperance choke, but then so does my mother as she clutches her throat.

My mother staggers back. Her snarl is fierce, but it's a sound of agony rather than aggression.

“Hades,” my mother grumbles, about to lunge at her, but I tackle my mother, her claws raking down my arms, her teeth snapping at my face viciously as she shifts, and I'm suddenly facing a full-blown empowered Gemini Goddess.

My mother stalks toward me, and I scramble back on my hands and knees, seeing my father out of my peripheral vision, running at her just as she lunges at my face. I close my eyes momentarily, bracing for impact. However, the moment she does, Temperance screams and my mother wails.

Suddenly, everything is somehow even more chaotic. The room resonates with a high-pitched scream, so powerful that it physically hurts. I cover my ears, feeling a surge of pain and nausea. The noise is horrendous until I realize she isn't the only one screaming, everyone is. Except me. My mother suddenly stops in midair and crashes to the ground in front of me. As the ear-splitting sound subsides, a deafening silence takes its place. All around, bodies lay motionless on the floor. I look around dazed trying to figure out what was going on.

Barely processing the scene, my gaze lands on Temperance, her chest heaving with ragged breaths. Blood trickles from her nose and down her chin before she too crumbles to the ground, unconscious. Whatever she did, she wiped out everyone when she screamed, or at least I thought so until I hear Lucas's voice up the stairs.

“It’s okay, sissy. They're all asleep. Come, I'll make you that sandwich now.”

I look up, dazed, and find Lucas, my nephew, holding the hand of his even littler sister, who's sucking her thumb. The same children I'd seen moments ago downstairs.

“How did you get up there?” I blurt, wondering if my mind is playing tricks on me. My voice sounds distant to my own ears.

Lucas gives me a mischievous grin, “Not the only one who can portal, I have tricks too, Uncle Ez,” Lucas tells me as he leads his sister down the stairs.

“You portal to the Moon Goddess realm with Grandma?” I ask him, and his brows furrow.

“He can't go there,” Corina says, my little niece who is only three years old, after she finally removes her thumb from her mouth.

I laugh nervously. There has always been something off about my nephew. He elbows her softly, glaring at her. She purses her lips, putting her thumb back in her mouth.

“Do you want your sandwich or not?” Lucas snaps at her. “Lucas!” I snap at him for his tone as I move toward Temperance.

His sister tugs at his shirt. “Is she dead?” Her tiny voice trembles as she points to Temperance. My heart skips a beat, but as I can still feel the bond, I'm somewhat settled.

“No, just asleep,” Lucas assures her before stomping down the steps as Corina goes to follow, I grab her arm.

She seems to ponder this. “She's like Grandma Kitty?”

Lucas starts, probably searching for a way to explain. “No, more like Papa,” he says. “Papa Dom?” she chirps, trying to follow, but I don't let her arm go, which makes her look at me. “Now, Corina,” Lucas calls out.

“Where does your brother go?” I ask her as I hear the kitchen door open and close.

“It's a secret, but Lucas said your girlfriend looks like her,” huh? my brows furrow and I glance down at Temperance.

“Like who?” She shrugs her shoulders. “That's all he said, she looks like the lady from the under—”

“Corina!” Lucas calls, shoving open the door. She jerks out of my grip, and I watch as she scampers off.

The aftermath of the confrontation leaves the room in disarray. Dominic, rising to his feet, assists Marabella, while Maddox cradles my mother in his arms, the look in his eyes a mix of sorrow and relief. Jonah, still unconscious, is helped up by Kaif.

“What the heck just happened,” Dominic says, his voice echoing the thoughts of everyone present.

“Indeed!” Kaif growls, casting a nervous glance at Temperance passed out in my arms.

I nod in agreement. But I can’t stop thinking about what Corina said. Suddenly, Marabella gasps. “Where are the kids?” she blurts in a panic.

“Safe, Lucas is making her sandwich, he portaled them out,” I point to the kitchen.

“Portaled?” Kaif asks, looking at Marabella. I glance between them.

“Lucas can open portals?” Marabella asks, looking at Kaif, or is it Kyan now? It takes me a second to recognize the difference because Kyan's dark aura is just as dark as Kaif's when angry.

“He can portal and didn't tell us?” he growls, stalking toward the kitchen.

“Kyan, don't,” Marabella snaps at him.

“I told you he was up to something the other night; I knew I wasn't imagining things!” he snaps at her, pushing the door to the kitchen open.

Chapter 47

Kyan

The tension in the room is palpable as we all try to make sense of what just happened. My senses are on high alert, and my heart is still racing from the chaotic events that unfolded in a matter of minutes. Temperance lies unconscious in Eziah's arms, her features peaceful despite the turmoil that surrounds her.

Yet something is off with her, I can sense it. I have from the moment she stepped into the manor. Like a ripple through the place. That sort of ripple can only be stirred by Octavian blood, yet she isn't a witch. I'd have sensed that instantly.

I turn my attention to Lucas, who's in the kitchen with Corina. It's baffling to think that he can open portals, a skill that even some seasoned Warlocks struggle with. Marabella and I exchange worried glances, both of us wondering how we missed this crucial detail about our own son.

“Let me talk to him, please,” Marabella pleads, placing her hand on my chest. Glancing down at her, she peers at our son who is making Corina her sandwich, Corina standing on her tippy-toes trying to watch what he is doing with eager eyes. Those two are close, like two peas in a pod. Yet, Corina has no powers that we've noticed.

Sighing heavily, I nod once toward them, and she lets out a breath before standing on her toes, her hands gripping my shoulders. I smirk, watching her try to reach my lips. This woman has no idea how tightly she has me wrapped around her little finger. Her pouty lips jut out, and I see them flicker. One flash of her eyes, and I know exactly what she is thinking.

'You better kiss me, or else.'

“Kiss her, or I will. I am not sleeping next to Jonah, he kicked the crap out of us last time you upset her,” Kaif growls in my head. I roll my eyes at him, and she growls.

“Moron, she thinks you rolled them at her. Fix it, or-”

“Or what, she'll stamp her tiny feet?” I taunt.

“I'm not made for tight places Kyan, I'm not being pummeled against the wall in my sleep by Jonah!” he growls at me.

Wrapping my arm around her waist, I tug her closer, lifting her slightly, so she can brush her lips gently against mine. “Ew, daddy is sucking mom's face off again,” comes a high-pitched shriek from Corina. Marabella snickers. I set her back down just as Lucas passes Corina her sandwich.

“Why doesn't Daddy kiss Dada, but both Dad's kiss Momma?” Corina has been very curious lately. She recently started preschool, learning our family differs slightly from the typical ones.

“Because Momma is an insatiable nympho,” Lucas blurts out.

Stunned, I blink at his words.

“Lucas, why would you say such a thing!” Marabella scolds.

Lucas looks at me, and I want to bleed into the wall and disappear. “Daddy told Dad you are an insatiable nympho, and that it was Dad's turn to tame the beast because he was tired.”

Marabella looks at me with so much venom, I'm surprised she doesn't spit it.

She folds her arms across her chest, popping her hip. “Where did he hear that, Kyan?” she snaps, raising an eyebrow at me.

“He must have overheard Jonah the other night when we were going to bed,” I tell her before shooting a glare at my son.

“Nice save,” Kaif tells me, while our pint-sized mate stares us down with enough fury, I am willing to make Jonah take one for the team.

“Nah, you said—” I shoot Lucas a glare to shut his lips.

“Dada made Daddy flip a coin,” Lucas lies for me.

Marabella glares out at a passed-out Jonah. “He did, did he?”

Lucas shrugs, “Yeah, Dada lost; he had to tame the insatiable nympho.”

“What's a nympho?” Corina says, mispronouncing the word. Marabella and I stumble to explain when Ezra suddenly speaks from behind us.

“It means I've heard far too much about my daughter,” Ezra groans behind me. I glance over my shoulder.

“It's a fairy,” Marabella blurts.

“Like the sandman?” Corina asks excitedly. “Not exactly,” Marabella looks at me for help. Thankfully, my father has enough sense to talk our way out of this very awkward situation.

“Kind of, the sandman puts the sand in your eye to sleep, the nympho removes it, making you stay awake,” he explains this nonsense situation.

“Enough about this sleep thief, your mother, and father need to speak with Lucas,” my father tells her, scooping her up.

As Marabella steps into the kitchen, I can't help but feel a sense of unease. Lucas's newfound ability to open portals is intriguing, but it also raises questions about his potential and the source of this power so early. We've broken the Octavian curse, so he should manifest like any normal witch. Not that there is much normal in my bloodline given our descendants; we are officially in uncharted territory.

Meanwhile, Ezra helps Jonah to his feet, and Eziah continues to cradle Temperance, who remains unconscious in his arms.

I approach Eziah, who is still crouched beside Temperance. His eyes are locked on her, filled with worry and concern. The bond between them is undeniable, and it's clear that he would do anything to protect her.

“Eziah,” I say softly, placing a hand on his shoulder. He turns to look at me, his eyes searching for answers.

“None of this makes sense,” he tells me, and I nod.

I nod, but his gaze never leaves Temperance. “I know, but we also need to find a way to wake her up. She's the only one who can shed light on what she did.”

I take a deep breath, my mind racing with possibilities. The sudden scream that incapacitated everyone in the room was unlike anything I've ever witnessed. It was as if a powerful force had surged through Temperance, affecting everyone in its path. But what did she do exactly that she was able to drop a Moon Goddess?

“Is mom okay?” Eziah asks, looking over at his father as he scoops up Kat. Her aura, once wild and untamed, seems to have calmed down in her slumber.

“She'll be fine. I can feel her. She's probably been shoved into the Moon Goddess realm. I can see her eyelids moving,” Ezra explains.

Chapter 48

Kyan

I check on Eziah, helping him carefully examine Temperance for any signs of harm. Aside from a few scratches on her arms from the fall, there are no significant injuries.

Marabella returns from the kitchen, her expression worried. “Lucas?” I ask her, and she glances back at the kitchen.

“Refused to say anything, said he had no idea what Corina was talking about.”

“He's lying. He's hiding something,” I tell her, and she chews her lip nervously.

“Marabella!” I tell her, and she lifts her gaze to mine.

“Fine, speak to him, but just go easy on him, he seems upset,” she trails off.

“We've told him countless times that if he notices anything strange or feels it is, he is to come to us, not hide from us.”

“He's a child,” she states when my father speaks up from where he is sitting on the steps with Corina.

“Kyan is right, Marabella, he needs to be open about these things, magic can't be taken lightly. He is an Octavian, if he can open portals, we need to know, to protect him,” my father tells her, and she sighs.

I motion for her to step aside, and she casts a nervous glance at the kitchen door. “If he lies?” she asks nervously. Yet, she has nothing to be nervous about, I detest liars, but he is our son. I would never harm our children.

“Then I'll do what my father did when I lied to him about having magic,” I tell her and my father chuckles.

“He made a vase explode, told me that his pet finch did it?” my father offers with a chuckle.

“His finch?” Marabella asks curiously.

“Yep, yet when he made his finch explode, I asked him if the vase did it.” My father laughs, and I shake my head.

“What did you do when you found out he had magic?”

“Showed him mine,” my father answers but she turns her gaze to me.

“Lucas has seen you use magic,” Marabella reminds me like I had forgotten.

“Yes, correct. But he hasn't seen the bad side of my magic.” Marabella looks at my father, who shrugs. “He needed to understand the dangers, I showed him, he never hid his magic after that.”

“He also wet the bed for a solid week after.” I shoot my father a glare at his words.

“Dad!” I tell him. Is he trying to convince her not to let me show him?

“Well, you did?” he shrugs.

“You awoke my dead rabbit, which was rabid,” I scold him.

“Worked, didn't it?” he asks. I shake my head, he knows how panicked Marabella gets, and his words are not helping.

Moving toward the kitchen, Marabella grabs my arm. “You're not going...”

“To raise the dead? No, Ella,” I tell her, kissing her head and opening the door to the kitchen. Stepping inside, I close the door to find Lucas sitting at the table.

“You lied to your mother?” I tell him, and he looks at me. I lean against the counter, folding my arms across my chest.

“Where do you go, Lucas?” I ask him. He says nothing for a while.

“No where,” he finally mutters under his breath while looking at the dining table. Yet, by his aura, I can see he is scared. Whether that is of himself or me, I am unsure.

Moving toward him, I crouch next to him. “Where do you go?” I ask him. He shakes his head, refusing to tell me.

“Magic can be dangerous, Lucas. If you're using magic, you need to tell me, so I can help you control it,” I tell him, brushing his fringe out of the way.

“You'll help me control it?” he whispers, and my brows furrow.

“Of course, why wouldn't I?” Lucas fiddles with his fingers.

“They wouldn't leave me alone,” he whispers, “I didn't mean to do it,” he breaks down, throwing himself in my arms.

“Who?” I ask him, now more confused than ever.

“The shadow people,” he mumbles into my shoulder.

“The ghosts?” I ask him, and he nods against my shoulder. “What did they do?”

“Nothing, I was playing with Corina, she said my eyes went funny, and my voice changed. They were annoying me, the boy, he made me follow him to the altar upstairs, I didn't want to go, but they said they'd take Corina, so I did,” he cries.

“Which boy? Tell me and I will cast them back to the shadow realm,” I tell him.

“The one that made Temperance follow him when she got locked in the room, they wanted to lock me in there too. I couldn't get out, I panicked.”

I pull away, so I could look at him. I am pretty sure I know which of our ancestors he is talking about, he's one of the one's Kaif did not get to in time to save. He thought he had broken the curse, but his mate managed to kill their firstborn. They went on to have another son, and he killed her the moment she gave birth.

“Then what happened?” I ask him.

He snuffles. “I don't know. I blacked out, I woke up in another place.”

“Do you know the place?” I ask him, and he looks away. “Have you gone there again since then?”

“Only when the witches won't leave me alone at night,” he mutters, and my heart skips a beat at his words.

“How many times, Lucas?”

He shrugs. “It's not a dangerous place, it's quiet there, they leave me alone when I'm there,” Lucas tells me.

“I don't like the feel of this, Kyan,” Kaif murmurs in my head. “When I came back, I was back in the room with Corina. She said my voice sounded funny, but I didn't know how I got back,” he tells me.

“But you know how to open the portals now?” I ask him, and he chews his lip before he finally nods.

“Can you take me to where you go?” I ask him and his eyes widen in surprise.

“You want me to show you?” he asks, and I nod.

“I need to know,” I tell him.

“But what if I show you, and you don't let me go back?” he worries.

“If that is the case, that means it's not safe, but I will speak with Papa, and we'll make the ghosts leave you alone,” I tell him.

“Leave him alone, I am casting their translucent asses back to the shadow realm!” Kaif snaps in my head.

Chapter 49

Kyan

“So, can you please show me?” I ask him.

Lucas looks at me hesitantly. “You're really not mad?” he asks.

“I'm disappointed you didn't tell me, but I am not mad,” I assure him when the door opens up and Eziah steps in. “Temperance?” I ask him.

“With my father,” he says, staring at Lucas curiously. Lucas, however, tugs on my shirt.

“He can't come with us. I'm unsure if he can cross unless Kaif comes in his form,” Lucas whispers to me—my brows furrow.

“The shadow realm?” I ask Lucas. He shrugs, so I know he has no idea where he is going.

“He'll be fine. Kaif won't let him get hurt. He'll come forward. He doesn't need me to shift,” I remind him. Lucas nods, and I stand up when Eziah gives me a look as if to ask what is happening.

“Come here,” I wave him forward. I grab his hand.

“Woah, sorry buddy, I'm taken. My sister will skin us both alive if you decide to jump the fence.”

I growl at him as he jerks his hand out of mine as if I just molested him.

“Well, by all means, if you want to step inside my son's portal, being all sunshine and rainbows, shining your beacon light through the darkness, go for it,” I tell him. Eziah ponders my words and looks at Lucas before he snatches my hand.

“So soft, what sort of hand cream do you use?” he snickers.

“Your blood if you don't shut up,” I tell him when Lucas suddenly walks toward the pantry. I watch as he opens the door, but I see nothing out of the ordinary.

“Are you coming?” he asks, looking at us; I glance at Eziah.

“Do you see a portal?” I ask him.

“I see baked beans, some spam, oh Oreos,” he chuckles as we hesitantly step forward, yet as we near it, I feel a draft. “I never saw him use magic,” Eziah whispers. “But I can feel it.”

“Me too,” I tell him when suddenly Lucas steps inside the pantry and disappears. I lurch forward to grab him when I am suddenly sucked into the portal's vortex. Kaif shoves forward instantly when we hit the hard ground.

“Well, clearly you haven't figured out walking through, falling though, that you've mastered,” he groans out.

Yet, the moment I hit the ground, Kaif starts fighting me for control when I am suddenly standing. I don't even have time to see where we are when Kaif takes over completely. He grabs Lucas and twists. He moves me around like a puppet in my own body so quickly that everything is a blur. I see my father standing, staring at the pantry when Kaif shoves Lucas at him. My father catches him, startled, not expecting my son to be thrown at him like a football. Then Kaif blasts the portal with his own magic, and the portal slams shut.

“What the fuck, Kaif,” I snarl as he lets me forward enough to have some control. However, the sound of Eziah choking makes me realize Kaif let him go, and I grab his arm. Lifting my gaze, I find we are in some sort of room.

The walls are made of stone, each torch with an eerie green flame. I can hear and feel the slow movement of each flicker of the fire. It is so quiet

that I can hear the blood pumping through my ears. All of my senses are heightened by the silence, like a living creature that is holding me captive.

“Are we in the shadow realm?” Eziah looks around, confused.

But it is Kaif's voice that comes out of me before I can answer. “No, we're in the underworld.”

Eziah's grip tightens on my hand as he looks around frantically. “What are we doing here?” he whispers, his voice catching in his throat.

“No idea. But whatever he knows about your mate, this must be the place he meant.” Kaif's voice has resonated through my body before, but this feels different. My mind is clear, yet I can feel Kaif's presence almost as if we are two separate beings here, not one.

It's like he's waiting for something, watching for anything to happen.

“Why are we here?” I ask, trying to gain some semblance of control over my body.

“More importantly, why the fuck did Kaif just shut a portal to death's playground?”

“You chose to come,” Kaif reminds me.

“I thought maybe the shadow realm, not the realm of death!”

“Too late for that now. We need to speak with Hades. If Lucas is coming here, that means Hades has been speaking with Lucas, so I want to know why we broke the curse. He has no reason to be speaking with my son,” Kaif answers, his voice low and steady.

“Doesn't Hades hate you?” Eziah questions.

“Don't worry, the feeling is mutual,” Kaif replies.

“And we couldn't just ask him in the mortal realm?” Eziah snaps back.

“Don't be stupid, Eziah,” Kaif retorts. “Do you think we can just make a quick call? No, if we are here, it means Lucas has been called here. You

need permission to access this place. Hades also knows that if I were able to come for him once released from my prison every 12 generations, I would have come back for him. So now I am curious how Lucas found access to this place when I tried to get back here to kill him for centuries and couldn't."

"This is crazy," I mutter, but I know that we don't have much choice.

Kaif starts walking towards a narrow path, and I can feel my legs moving as he takes control. Eziah follows us cautiously, but he doesn't say anything.

"You seem to know your way around?" Eziah mutters as we reach a massive iron gate.

"That's because this place was also my prison," Kaif answers.

Kaif examines the gates, and I feel his hesitation, like he is almost scared to touch them. He grabs the gates. "So strange," he whispers as he pushes it open easily, and the grating sound echoes through the halls. "Something is not right," Kaif mutters, and I can hear his thoughts spinning.

"What is it?" I ask Kaif.

"These gates are never open. I was imprisoned in that room, but the gates never opened, yet they caused horrendous pain when touched." I try to imagine what it was like to be trapped down here. He would have gone mad with the silence and the numbness. This place is like a void.

As we walk down the corridor, a faint light catches my eye. We eventually come to an open room with two huge fireplaces against opposite walls, two large couches arranged around it and several chairs scattered around the room. The walls are painted in rich jewel tones of green and red that catch the reflection of the firelight. Candles have been placed strategically alongside doorways to help illuminate paths through this realm of cloaked darkness.

The air is filled with warmth radiating from both fires glowing along each side wall. Kaif continues to walk through the halls, but we see no one when we come to another room. The walls are decorated intricately with paintings depicting scenes from Greek mythology I've never heard about. At the same time, chandeliers light up the middle space, giving off a warm glow throughout the area. A grand piano sits alongside two armchairs in one corner of this vast chamber.

Golden candelabras illuminate every corner, the flames changing colors. Behind us is an intricately decorated altar covered in symbols depicting birth and death. Sacred texts line the walls alongside frames filled with never-seen artifacts found deep within these cavernous halls hidden away.

“Hades!” Kaif yells out.

“Maybe he went out?” Eziah offers, and Kaif looks at him.

“Where, grocery shopping?” Kaif deadpans. Eziah shrugs.

“Man's gotta eat! And, clearly, no one is here,” Eziah retorts. He is about to say something else when he stops, his eyes peering at the wall behind us. I look to see the giant portrait above the fire.

“Why does she look familiar to me?” Eziah murmurs.

“That is Celeste, the first Moon Goddess,” Kaif answers. I momentarily take in the huge portrait, finally seeing the woman who helped curse my family, only she is different here, younger than in Kaif's memories.

“And that one?” Eziah asks, pointing above the other fireplace.

“Persephone, Hades' first wife,” Kaif answers, and now I'm confused.

“First wife?” Eziah asks the same question I was just thinking.

“Yes, that is why Celeste rejected him. She learned he was married. She came here looking for Hades and met Persephone.”

Chapter 50

Eziah

I watch Kyan and Kaif talk; seeing Kyan but hearing the two voices leave him is so weird. It's almost like he is talking to himself and answering his own questions. Yet, I am baffled at how any of this can link to Temperance.

The underworld is nothing like I ever imagined. It's not the desolate, gloomy place I've read about in mortal stories. It's a realm filled with history and mystery.

"Wait, so Hades had two wives?" I interject, trying to make sense of it all.

Kaif nods. "Yes, Hades was first married to Persephone before he found his mate in Celeste. But when Celeste discovered that Hades was already married to Persephone, she rejected him out of fear and jealousy. That's when Hades sent wolves to her village, hoping to force her to return their daughter and accept him back," Kaif tells me.

I absorb this information, my mind racing with questions. My head spins with the revelation. I had no idea that my family was tied to such ancient and powerful beings. The weight of it all settles on my shoulders.

"What are we doing here, Kaif?" I ask, feeling a mixture of awe and unease in this place.

"We're here to find answers," Kaif replies, his gaze shifting to the grand altar. "If Lucas has been summoned here, it means Hades has been in contact with him. I need to know why. And if there's a way to break the tie he has on my son once and for all."

I glance around the vast room that seems to have no end when I spot a door. Kaif also spots it, and he is suddenly tugging me toward it.

Kaif approaches the door, examining the carvings with intense scrutiny. “He lifts his free hand, his fingers tracing the etching on the door. It appears to be some language, one far too old for me to even recognize.

“What are those?”

“The curse.” His brows furrow for a second.

“You can read that?” I ask, and he nods slowly. “*Duae sorores natae ex ferro et carmine, una vitam affert, altera cecidit,*” Kaif mutters.

“Two sisters born of steel and spell, one brings life, the other hell,” he adds.

“That’s what the witches were repeating with Temperance,” I gasp, staring at the door, wishing I could read whatever it was.

I step closer, my curiosity piqued when Kaif shoves open the door, and we find a room. It’s a bedroom. Two beds are in the room, along with two portraits above each one. I stumble back, confused, when I see a girl that has a startling resemblance to Temperance, down to the eyes; one pink and one blue.

“*In umbras missa et amplexu lunae, duo fata in tempore aeterno ordinantur. Sanguine aeterni, dividimus, vitam finire, vitam dirigere,*” Kaif whispers when he tugs me toward the other bed. This one has a portrait of a teenage boy above the bed.

“Kaif, why does that girl have Temperance’s eyes?” I ask when I notice the boy has the same eyes. Yet Kaif is still muttering in that foreign language.

“*Prima gladius desperationis, in crepusculum perditus, ad confodere sempiternum, solvere pretium. Secunda gladius spei, in diluculo suave lucens, ad coronare deam, patiar potentiam fluere. Duae sorores natae ex ferro et carmine, una vitam affert, altera cecidit. In balance tenetur, in sacrificio, creamus et destruimus in iactu talorum.*”

“Damn it, Kaif, speak English!” I snap when he turns on me and grabs my face in his hands, his eyes completely black and his face twisting, no longer looking like Kyan.

“In shadows cast and the moon’s embrace, two fates align in timeless space. By blood of eternal, we divide, a life to end, a life to guide. The first blade is of despair, twilight’s lost. To smite the ageless, they’ll pay the cost. The second blade is one of hope, in dawn’s soft glow, to crown a goddess, to let power flow. Two sisters born of steel and spell. One brings life, the other falls. In balance held, in sacrifice, we create and destroy in a roll of dice.” Kaif’s eyes are wild as he repeats the words, and he lets me go, stumbling back. A cold rush instantly falls over me, so cold I breathe clouds in the air and begin to choke. Quickly, his hand falls on my shoulder, anchoring me to him with his magic.

“I don’t understand,” I gasp, trying to regain my breath.

“I knew your mate looked familiar; I couldn’t place her at first,” Kaif growls. “What was she thinking?” His growl suddenly turns into a roar.

“Kaif?” I ask worriedly, and he looks at me. I glance at the portraits on the wall above each bed. “Twins, I believe this may be where the Gemini twins originated, not with Celeste, as I thought,” Kaif murmurs.

“I don’t follow,” I say, but Kaif is too busy reading the etchings on the walls. This bedroom reminds me of a shrine. “I thought Luna was Hades’ only child?” I ask.

“I thought the same thing,” Kaif admits, making me look at him.

Moving closer to the portraits, I read the names. The boy’s name was Erobos, and the girl’s was Stellara. That much I can make out, but the writing after it, I can not.

“What’s this saying?” I ask, pointing to the smaller writing on the portrait where their names are.

“Just the origins of their names. Erebus: The god of darkness and shadow. Stellara: meaning star, and the concept of the night sky,” Kaif answers me.

“What did you mean when you said how she could be so stupid?” I ask him.

“I meant Celeste, Stellara, the girl I recognize her,” Kaif admits, looking away, but he doesn’t clarify. Instead, he turns, pulling me out of the room.

“Wait, are you going to explain?” I ask.

“No!” he growls, stalking off. “Aren’t we here for answers, like where is Hades? How do those kids link to the Gemini curse? Why did the ghosts try to kill my mate? What fuck, Kaif! I did not just come to hell for no fucking answers!” I snap at him.

Kaif goes from calm to savage in an instant when he turns on me. “You want answers. Well, I don’t have all of them. I only know what Celeste told me, which appears to not be much!”

“But you recognized that girl. She has the same eyes as Temperance! Don’t bullshit me, Kaif, you know something!” he snarls, looking at the room behind me.

“I can’t say for sure,” he answers. My brows furrow in confusion.

“I don’t think it was Hades that started this curse. After seeing what’s in that room, I don’t think he was the bad one.”

“He cursed his own family!”

“Hades wanted his daughter and his mate. That means he was willing to give up his wife for her, but I think him coming after Luna may have just been the tip of the iceberg, so to speak.”

“How so?”

“Because that girl on the wall? She is the same girl Celeste sacrificed to create the daggers. I think Celeste killed Hades and Persephone’s daughter,” Kaif admits, and I stare at him in horror.

“But the daggers were created after he took Luna,” I remind him. Kaif nods.

“Correct, but I think I know what truly started it. Celeste was mad when she learned Hades was already married. I think she cursed his twins. I think those twins were the first Geminis.”