

Chapter 81

Temperance

The atmosphere is intoxicating. Everywhere I turn, a rainbow of colors, sounds, and smells flood my senses. Bright lights dance in the setting sky, illuminating the laughter and joy of children and adults alike. There's so much happening around me that I momentarily forget my unease about being here without Eziah. I feel out of place among his family, an outsider trying to fit in.

I wince slightly as a child screams with glee nearby. The blaring of the carnival is starting to overwhelm me — the clanking of the rides, the chatter of families, the distant hum of music. It's a sensory overload, and my anxiety ratchets up a notch.

Suddenly, a hand thrusts a giant stick of pink fluff into my view. Jonah stands before me, a grin plastered on his face. “Try this!” he exclaims excitedly.

Confused, I look at the fluffy substance. Beside me, Lucas chuckles. Holding up his own.

“It's fairy floss,” he demonstrates by taking a big bite from the side. Following his lead, I hesitantly try a piece. Sweetness explodes in my mouth, making my eyes widen at its sugary taste.

“See?” Lucas says with a smile, and I nod eagerly.

Lucas's enthusiasm is infectious when he reaches out, and tugs on my hand, pulling me towards a towering ride. Lucas tugs at my hand, pointing

towards a towering structure in the distance, his eyes wide with excitement.

“Come on! Let's go on that one!” he exclaims, already pulling me towards it. Behind him, Casey's eyes gleam with anticipation.

I raise my gaze to the ferris wheel. Memories rush back — a day out with my father, the world shrinking beneath us, the elation of feeling on top of everything. Though I was so young, the sensation of looking down at the world as if everyone were just tiny ants is hard to forget.

“I think I'd like to try it,” I admit, my voice tinged with excitement. Nova and Shadow both encourage me, excited to feel me excited for once. Jonah, however, shakes his head. “Not me,” he confesses. “I don't do heights.”

Marabella chimes in, “And you won't catch me on that thing, either.”

“I'll go with the kids.” Their shocked expressions make me chuckle. But before I know it, Lucas and Casey are dragging me to the line, their enthusiasm infectious.

From the top of the ferris wheel, the city looks magical. As the ferris wheel moves, I listen to the kids pointing out landmarks and chatting about the view. The euphoria of it all has me grinning ear to ear.

Once our feet touch solid ground again. But that serenity doesn't last. Our next stop is the haunted house. It's dimly lit and eerie, with cobwebs hanging from the corners and distorted mirrors reflecting our distorted figures. My heart races with each jump scare, but Lucas finds it all hilarious.

Exiting the haunted house, we're met with an unexpected surprise — Casey has disappeared. Panic grips me as I race back in, only to have her jump out at me from behind a curtain, her laughter echoing in the dimness at her prank that nearly gave me a heart attack.

Despite my earlier reservations, I find myself laughing and agreeing to being yanked and pulled from ride to ride, and I find it easier being with the kids. They're happy and don't require much conversation, they talk enough that I find I barely get a word in. Jonah and the others stay behind, and Marabella leads Corina to the teacups. After going back on the ferris wheel one last time.

Afternoon tea follows, or maybe dinner. The sun is quickly disappearing now, and I would have thought Eziah would have been back by now. Marabella did explain how time moves quickly in the Moon Goddess realm, yet slow in the underworld, but none of that makes sense to me. We gather around a picnic table, everyone snacking on hot dogs and soda, discussing the plans for the next ride. . As Rose heads to the restroom with Casey, I get up needing to use the bathroom too.

We make our way to the huge amenities block. It has an entry and exit at the other end and is a long row of sinks on one wall and stalls on the other. The bathroom's echo amplifies every sound. I'm finishing up when Rose's voice drifts over, mentioning her aversion to heights and wondering if Casen might take Casey on the ferris wheel because he has been hounding her all afternoon to go with him.

As I finish up, Rose's voice floats over, "Could you pass me some toilet paper?" I oblige and then quickly button up my jeans.

The sound of a door. "Casey, don't run off, I'll be right out," Rose calls out, when

I hear the delighted squeal of "Daddy!" catches my attention. Emerging from the stall, my eyes find Casen. But...

Something's off. His clothes are different, his demeanor.

"There's Daddy's princess," he says, scooping her up.

As realization dawns. "*His voice!*" Shadow calls in my head, and it takes me a second to remember Casen is a twin! I sniff the air, but I don't find

Casen's scent, though they're very similar. Rose steps out of the stall and shrieks. My eyes dart around, taking in the situation, and my blood runs cold.

“Vince...” Rose's voice is trembling as she holds out her arms for her daughter.

“Give me Casey,” Vince raises an eyebrow at her. Casey looks from Vince to Rose, confused.

“Na, I think I'll keep her,” Vince tells her, and my heart beats frantically in my chest. Casey reaches out to Rose while Shadow screams in my head to do something, yet I'm paralyzed by fear and shock.

“Please, Vince. Give me my daughter,” Rose says, edging closer.

Vince smiles sadistically, the action sending a chill down my spine when his eyes move to behind us. “Just in time,” Vince chuckles when my heart drops. The scent of Satish fills the air; a scent I thought I'd never have to endure again. The atmosphere grows tense with dread.

Spinning around, Satish slowly walks into the room a sadistic smirk on his face lunges at Rose, as she goes to do the same thing, his hand collides with her head and sends her crashing against the wall. Her body slumps, and I stare in shock at what to do when Shadow takes over, eyes glint with fury.

A rush of adrenaline hits as Satish charges at me next. Shadow's instincts kick in, and we fight back, biting and clawing. Like so many times before, I let her have the reins, knowing she is our only chance. Yet, he's too strong, overpowering us with ease.

A chilling grip tightens around my neck, cutting off my air supply.

Desperate, I mentally scream out for Eziah, but my connection to him is tenuous at best, only having managed to use the mindlink a couple of times. My vision narrows, the edges growing hazy. My last awareness is

the sound of gunshots and screams from outside, followed by Satish's cold voice whispering in my ear.

“Did you miss me, sis?”

Then darkness consumes me.

Chapter 82

Marabella

Stepping into the dimly lit bathroom, I sing out to Rose and Temperance, wondering if they are still here. “Are you all still in...?” my words cut off abruptly.

“Vince?!” I stammer in shock. The sight before me is enough to stop any mother's heart. Rose lies sprawled, unmoving. And Temperance is barely hanging on, a desperate light flickering in her eyes, while Casey is thrashing in Vince's arms, screaming for her mother. My power surges, protective and lethal. Behind me, my kids are oblivious to the danger, but not for long.

Satish's dark figure stands upright, turning in my direction, eyes filled with cruel intent. As a mother, instinct takes over, and I shove my kids behind me, letting out a growl that would freeze any man's blood.

Satish steps forward, his silhouette shadowy against the stark white tiles. A smirk playing on his lips, he looks at me as if I am a mere obstacle. I have faced many people before, but none so brazen. Being a dark Gemini, I assume this will be over quickly. I am gravely mistaken. “Lucas, take your sister,” I tell my son.

“But mom?”

“Lucas — now! Get to your father!” I scream at him.

Launching myself at him, my dark magic swirling around my fingers, I aim to touch him, to let the deadly force of my powers consume him.

As our bodies collide, the narrow confines of the bathroom reverberate with the sound of our clash, tiles cracking and shattering under the sheer force of our powers.

To my shock, my touch, which should have been an instant death sentence, barely phased him. He recoils momentarily, his eyes widening in surprise, but then he lunges back with a growl, and I am horrified to witness his power flaring. Power that rivals my own, it shouldn't be possible. How is it possible?

I duck and weave, dodging swings, the energy pulses he throws my way along with his relentless advances.

“What are you?!” I spit out, my eyes narrowing in suspicion and confusion as he evaded every blow my shadows delivered.

His sadistic grin widens. “Surprised, Marabella? You should be!”

My dark magic intensifies, a vortex of shadows forming around us. I conjure chains made of pure darkness, attempting to bind him, immobilize him. But he slashes through them as if they were mere paper.

“You can't defeat me with mere shadows!” he taunts, his voice dripping with malice.

Every move he makes is laced with precision and deadly intent, as if he knows my next steps. At one point, I manage to land a solid punch on his chest, the power of my blow sending him crashing into a stall. But to my astonishment, he rises rapidly, healing before my very eyes. What should have killed him merely stuns him temporarily. He stands, the tendrils of my magic squirming beneath his skin, dissipating.

Desperation edges my voice. “How are you resisting my touch? What the fuck are you?!”

His laughter echoes chillingly. “More than you could ever fathom, dear Marabella!”

The confined space of the bathroom becomes a battleground of colliding forces, dark magic clashing with something else—something I can't quite identify. Each powerful strike from him forces me back, my confidence

waning with every failed attempt to bring him down while also trying to protect Rose, Temperance, and Casey, who I am yet to get near.

Finally, a powerful blow sends me crashing against the wall, my vision blurring. The taste of blood fills my mouth, and the world starts to tilt. I can hear the distant screams of children, the wailing of people, outside the bathroom, their voices filled with fear and panic. The weight of my failing strength bears down on me.

“Marabella, get up!” Kora screams at me before forcing all her energy behind me.

My dark magic lashes out, trying to end him. But he counters, healing rapidly from every wound I inflict.

I gasp, blood splattering as our bodies twist and clash.

He grins sadistically, red eyes glinting. “Octavians aren't built like they used to be.”

Every strike he lands feels calculated, aimed to incapacitate but not kill. When he tackles me, my head hits a toilet bowl, the resounding *crack* of my head echoes around me and my ears ring. I feel his teeth sink into my neck, and I scream. My hands claw at his face trying to get him off, one thumb hooking into his eye socket, yet I feel the strange poison flooding my system from his bite. Kora screams in my head, feeling it too as my body tries to burn it out.

Satish snarls angrily, the gooeyness of his eyes drenching my thumb when he jerks away, slamming my head back into the toilet bowl.

Suddenly, a wave of dizziness washes over me. The world starts to dim as I feel myself hoisted over Satish's shoulder, Temperance's weight on his other side. Grogginess weighs my eyelids down while Kora screams in my head, trying to force control.

As clarity returns, I find myself still slung over Satish's shoulder, the muted sounds of a roaring fight surround us. I try to twist, to get free, but his grip is ironclad.

Outside, it's pure chaos. Reaper wolves are everywhere, the scent of blood and smoke fills the air, along with piercing screams from every direction.

Jonah is screaming in my head trying to find me when I hear his voice come through loudly. "Marabella, where is Lucas?!" My heart nearly stops at his words.

The grim sound of a van door opening reaches my ears, followed by the unsettling thud of Temperance being tossed inside. Lucas's piercing scream breaks through the noise. I attempt to move, but everything is so hazy and my limbs are heavy.

Satish grunts and I am dropped off his shoulder when I see Lucas smashing his fists against Satish. "Leave my mummy alone!" he wails and screams. Lucas's scream pierces the air, and I force my head up, only to meet the cold eyes of Satish as he grabs Lucas, tossing him into the van.

Chapter 83

Marabella

Kora awakens within me with a roar, forcing a shift. But before she can attack, a shot pierces the air, and the searing pain steals our breath. As my vision adjusts, Vince's face comes into focus.

The ferocity of Satish's shout reverberates through the night, clawing at my already frayed senses. "WHAT THE FUCK, VINCE? I needed her!" he screams as Kora is forced to shift back. I clutch my stomach, pulling my hand back, it is drenched with blood, and my eyes go to Vince, who is holding a gun. Casey is screaming her head off from the front of the van and Lucas from the back. Vince shoves him back in when he tries to escape.

Vince's voice cuts back sharply, filled with a cold, calculated rage. "The boy is Octavian! Just take him as your test subject!"

The world around me swirls, my blood spilling onto the ground as I bleed profusely, but the image of Lucas's terrified eyes anchors me. An indescribable surge of fury fills every fiber of my being, overpowering the intense pain and dizziness when Satish growls, climbing in the back of the van and slamming the door shut.

"No!" I gasp, forcing myself to my feet when I am sprayed with rocks as the tires spin, not finding traction.

Desperately, my hand shoots out, clutching the rough metal handle of the van. As the tires screech, I pull myself upwards, trying to summon every ounce of mine and Kora's strength. But before I can fully hoist myself, a violent force meets my face – Satish's fist, as he rips open the door and

punches me. The world turns into a sickening whirlwind as I'm flung from the moving vehicle, feeling the harsh scrape of asphalt against my skin.

Bruises form and pain seeps into every inch of my body as I roll across the asphalt, but the thought of Lucas trapped inside that van forces me to my feet.

Jonah's voice intrudes upon my thoughts, a sharp contrast to the growing numbness. It's frantic, filled with a raw panic that mirrors my own. "MARABELLA! I can't find Lucas! Only Corina!"

Gasping, I manage to send back a desperate whisper through our mindlink. "He has Lucas!" I choke out.

Jonah's desperate pleas echo in my mind, the sound cutting through the thick haze that threatens to pull me under. My vision blurs, but the sight of the retreating van sharpens every maternal instinct within me. Driven by sheer determination, I tap into my dark powers.

The ground below quakes and trembles, as it ruptures. Vehicles around me crumple like discarded toys, creating a barrier, blocking the van's way as I hurl every ounce of strength behind it, throwing the vehicle and cutting off the street they were about to turn down.

The van screeches to a stop and I clutch my knees, gasping, the car reverse hitting another car as it is forced to turn back the only other road beside me.

"Don't fail me now, shadows!" I yell as I harness them again, willing them to block the other road.

Suddenly, the car screeches to a stop, and Satish bursts out of the van, rage evident in every line of his face. Summoning every ounce of strength left in me, I lunge the shadows at him. But my energy is ebbing, and my aim is off. The sight that greets me before I crumble to my knees, my lifeblood spilling onto the ground around me. Satish, his menacing silhouette looming large, hand raised.

“Get to Lucas, Jonah! Satish has him!” I murmur through the mindlink only to lock eyes with Satish stalking toward me with a snarl.

“Should have stayed down, bitch!” he snarls. The resounding bang fills my ears. I feel like I've been punched in the chest, the force knocking me backward, and the next I see the stairs glistening through the smoke-filled haze of the sky. Jonah howls somewhere, and I hear the car screech away.

Jonah's howl, a sound filled with raw anguish, slices through the night. But even as chaos reigns, a familiar touch caresses my consciousness – Kyan.

A smile slips onto my face, feeling him. I know Kyan will burn everything in his path for our son. I know he'll show Satish the nightmare he's awakened. Oh, how Kaif will make the skies bleed and the earth tremble for me.

“Marabella!” The mindlink opens and my eyes flutter.

“Baby, where are you?!”

I feel Kaif take over as he tugs on the bond for my location.

“Marabella?!” Kaif and Jonah scream in my head.

I push on the mindlink, which reluctantly opens, but I know I can't hold it open for long as I bleed out.

Kaif's essence floods our bond, trying to pull me back from the edge. But my strength is slipping away, and my thoughts scatter, fleeting and elusive. “Ensure he screams Kaif!” I manage only to hear Kaif's roar in my head.

“No!” His feral snarl replays in my head, and the last sensation that anchors me are the desperate cries of both Kaif, Kyan, and Jonah.

The overwhelming darkness creeps in, pushing everything else out. Kaif's and Jonah's voices are fading, replaced by sheer and utter silence.

Chapter 84

Eziah

As the Mnemosyne pulls us into the depths of the past, the present becomes a distant echo. I suddenly find myself immersed in an era before our kind had been sculpted by our maker. Before the actions which led to the destruction of so many lives and the creation of so many more. It's startling to realize how the stories we've been told—our history—can be so skewed. Over time, narratives evolve, shaped and contorted by the biases and motives of those who tell them. Just as two witnesses of the same event recount it differently, history too has multiple facets. There are always two perspectives, and then there's the truth. Everything is now challenging the very foundations of what I once believed. However, one thing is clear. Celeste isn't the innocent she portrayed herself to be.

What started with deception, turned to jealousy, and now I am realizing that jealousy was the cataclysm that forged the war. It both started and ended in jealousy. Sure, Hades should have told her, but from his perspective, he was done with his old life, content to be with his mate, yet still loved his kids.

But I think he is right in his thinking, that she would have rejected him. Celeste, being a demigoddess, was partly ruled by emotion. Emotion and power are a combination that can turn deadly fast, that's one thing I know for certain. Emotion affects logic, and sometimes becomes blinding. It's like watching two bad divorces unfold simultaneously. Yet, Celeste, attacking the very kids he kept hidden, started a war no one could fathom.

It started with Celeste's attack on his son. Then Hades attacked Celeste's village. Hades's manipulation of the villagers, forged the creation of monsters that had no business being created.

In turn, Celeste and her coven attempt a spell to defend their village from the wolves. However, the spell goes awry, turning them into Lycans, rather than controlling the wolves as intended and making themselves stronger. That event marks the creation of the Lycans.

Then Celeste sent Bain to look for his daughter, while Hades tried to destroy the very monsters he created. Bain hunts the girl down and is injured where he meets Seline. Hades is determined to take his daughter, Luna, back to protect her from Celeste. He loses her when Celeste binds her own daughter to Kaif via a mate bond.

It's a domino effect, one pin falls, and they just keep falling, affecting everyone and everything, including both Hades and Bain. Bain, once healed, returns back to the village a few months later to find Celeste mated Luna to Kaif, even though she had originally been promised to Bain, causing the rift between the brothers. Bain then confronts Kaif. They have a falling out, and Bain goes back to the kingdom to be with Seline.

Celeste, wanting to kill Hades, then tries to steal his twins' powers, killing one and forging the power, unknowingly creating the first Gemini. Then, despite Celeste's efforts, Hades manages to take Luna away from Kaif, creating a rift and instigating a deep hatred between them. So Celeste goes looking for Bain once again to help Celeste locate Stellara. This vision just makes things worse. She should have stopped, given up, but she couldn't see past her rage long enough to see the destruction her anger had created.

The vision shifts once more, carrying me into the depths of a moonlit night. I stand amidst a dense forest, where the ancient trees seem to whisper secrets to the moon above. In the distance, the mournful howls of wolves echo, creating an eerie, spine tingling sound that reverberates through the woods.

Celeste, a striking cloaked figure in the darkness, emerges from the shadows of the trees. Her eyes, illuminated by an inner fire, scan the

surroundings with an unwavering intensity. She is a huntress on a mission—a mission driven by the loss of her daughter, accompanied by a burning hatred.

Her long hair cascades like a waterfall of midnight, a stark contrast to the pale luminescence of her skin. Dressed in a flowing gown that seems to blend seamlessly with the night, she moves with a grace that defies the laws of mortal existence.

In her hand, Celeste clutches a parchment—a raw sketch of a younger version of Stellara.

Celeste's steps are deliberate, guided by a sense of purpose that burns brighter than any moonbeam. She navigates the forest with an otherworldly ease, her path illuminated by an otherworldly glow that seems to emanate from the moon as if it is guiding her.

As she moves deeper into the heart of the forest, the air grows thick with anticipation. The distant howls of wolves serve as a haunting reminder of the danger that lurks in the shadows, yet nothing is more dangerous than the woman walking unflinchingly through a forest without weapons or protection.

A soft rustling in the underbrush captures Celeste's attention—a subtle disturbance at night. She narrows her eyes, senses heightened, and follows the sound with the precision of a seasoned hunter. Her steps are as silent as the passing breeze.

The forest seems to come alive around her, each tree and blade of grass reacting to her steps as if she burns the very ground she stands on.

And then, through a curtain of leaves and moonlight, to a quaint dwelling nestled amidst the wilderness. Celeste might as well be a ghost in the night as she peers in a window. Inside, an old woman and a Lycan male stand, oblivious to the impending danger. Stellara, the elusive woman Celeste has been hunting for a year since Hades took Luna, stands among them.

Celeste, her eyes gleaming, materializes within the room. The old woman and the Lycan male turn. The man who is one of Celeste's creations, a betrayer to her coven. He pulls Stellara behind him, their expressions shifting from surprise to dread. They sense the aura of a force beyond mortal comprehension, and the man turns in horror to look at Stellara. "Run!" he screams at her before turning and attacking Celeste. Stellara takes off, running for the back of the house.

Before more words can be exchanged, Celeste acts with the swiftness of a predator. Her power, born of ancient magic, surges forth. The room trembles as her incantation unfolds—a dance of darkness and light.

Chapter 85

Eziah

Instantly, the Lycan male is injured, and the old woman is dead, their lives extinguished like the dying embers of a fire. Celeste kicks the man, making sure he is dead, only he groans in pain. She clicks her tongue but wanders off looking for Stellara. The vision ripples, and I find myself staring at Stellara's back as she rummages around in a drawer. I want to see what she is doing when Celeste kicks the door open. Stellara spins around to face Celeste.

“What did I ever do to you?” Stellara begs Celeste. Celeste, though, just watches. “Your father took my daughter, you will help me get her back.”

“I will do no such thing, she is better off without you!” Stellara screams. Celeste twists her hand, and the man in the tiny living room screams out in pain. Stellara gasps, and her hands go to her mouth.

“Funny, the very monster your father didn't want my Luna marrying, you are hiding with. Does Daddy know you betrayed him?” Celeste asks, twisting her hand again, and the man in the other room screams. Stellara holds her hands out.

“No, no. Don't kill him, please,” Stellara begs. “I'll come with you,” she promises.

“Interesting, you love him?” No response. “You love my abomination?” Celeste asks. Stellara shakes her head.

“No, but he was a weapon to use against you.”

Celeste laughs. “A weapon? How so? I created him, I can end him,” she reminds Stellara and tosses a bracelet at her.

“He was supposed to warn us when your Lycans came for us,” Stellara tells her.

“Well, he isn't very good at his job, but then again I am not a Lycan, so there is that. Maybe he didn't betray me as I first thought.” Celeste seems thoughtful. “And the woman?” Celeste asks.

“She owns this place, I was just hiding here,” Stellara admits.

“Oh, well, oops. Not to worry, and what should I do with my Lycan betrayer, since I have no purpose for him.” Stellara falters, a gasp escaping her. “Clearly you do. Does your father know you fell in love with one of my monsters?” Celeste asks. Stellara looks away from her.

“Interesting, you seem to have your mother's touch when it comes to taming and creating the wild. Seems you tamed one of my beasts. Let's not test if you both share the same connection to the dead, not yet at least,” Celeste warns her.

“Now put that on, I don't want any surprises,” Celeste tells her, pointing to the bracelet at her feet. Stellara picks it and gasps, falling to her knees. Celeste tilts her head. “Put it on, or I'll kill your little bodyguard,” Celeste warns.

Stellara glares up at her, but she does as she is told. “Now, grab a coat, it's cold out,” Celeste tells her before turning on her heel and walking out. “You have two minutes, or I burn this place to the ground, and make you listen to him burn alive.”

Stellara then gets to her feet, grabbing a cloak off the hook by the window before moving toward the drawers. She opens the drawer a crack, and I gasp at what I see. A baby girl, wrapped in a blanket. So that man isn't a runaway Lycan but her mate.

“I already lost your twin, I won't lose you too,” she whispers, brushing the cheek of the baby who has managed to sleep through all the drama. Stellara looks out the window at the forest, and I can tell by the look on

her face that she knows she won't live to see her daughter again. But she swallows that down and smiles fondly at her baby and closes the drawer. She then walks back out, holding back the tears when she notices the old woman dead. Her husband clutches at her dress.

“Now Stellara, time is nearing, Moon phases come and go, you don't want to witness what I'll do to him if I miss this one,” Celeste warns. Stellara looks down at the man who clutches her dress. Celeste walks out the door when I see Stellara cup the man's face, her eyes glaze over and only then do I notice she can get in his head. The man clutches her arm, but Stellara rips his hand away.

Stellara then walks out, following Celeste, and she opens a portal back home while I am forced to watch the Lycan man drag himself to the bedroom where he retrieves his daughter. In the next vision, I watch the man enter a church, which I find a little odd, but would also be a perfect place to hide her. Celeste would not be combing through human churches or orphanages looking for a werewolf, that would be the place she would least suspect she'd be. He leaves his daughter in a basket, fearing Celeste coming for her. I watch as he kisses her little head. “I have to find your mommy, but you'll be safe here so I can find you later on,” he tells the bundled-up baby that stares up at him with wide eyes.

One pink, one blue.

He places a note in the basket and I read the writing. *'Novalie Violet Stellara'* at the bottom of the note says he'd be back for her. Only he doesn't. He is killed by Celeste when he returns to the coven for Stellara, only to learn she was sacrificed to create the daggers.

As I watch the vision of the daggers being created, the last piece of the puzzle falls into place for me. Temperance is a descendant.

“Of Hades,” Kaif finishes for me as we watch the vision of the daggers being created.

“But what is—” I try to ask when I feel the water surrounding me ripple violently.

“Kaif?” I call out when suddenly, pain explodes through my skull, making me scream and turning the placid water violent. I can hear Dominic's voice as the vision flickers when suddenly water fills my lungs and I gasp, choking as I am forced out of the Mnemosyne when Kaif screams. The sound is blood-curdling. Dazed, I blink the water out of my eyes to find I am in the shallows, Dominic, clutching us. The place seems to shake like an earthquake. “What is going on?” I sputter.

“No, idea,” Dominic murmurs, and I get to my feet only to collapse to my knees, pain coursing through me from Temperance, but that isn't all. It takes me a second to recognize the pain and my head turns to look at Kyan who is as pale as a ghost.

“Marabella?” Kyan murmurs, almost as if stunned.

“No!” I gasp. “What's going on?” Dominic panics when Kyan gets to his feet, and Kaif bursts from beneath his skin and takes off running.

Dominic pulls me to my feet and I stagger forward. I shake my head, forcing the pain away. I take off running after Kaif, Dominic hot on my heels demanding to know what is going on when we eventually come to the cage Kaif lived in between lives. Kaif is touching the walls, feeling around. “Where is the portal?” I ask Kaif.

Kaif frantically tries to conjure magic to open the portal. “Why can't you open it?” I ask him, desperation rising in my tone.

“I don't know, I... I... I've only ever closed it,” Kaif murmurs, my brows furrow.

“No, I've seen you open it.”

Kaif shakes his head. “It wasn't me, I thought it was me, I can close it once in here. But I can't open it. I've never been able to open it, or I would have come back to kill Hades, it was one of Hades's fail safe, how didn't I see

this before?" Kaif says, looking around frantically. Dominic steps forward, raising his hands.

"If you didn't open it, then how the heck are we here?" I ask when it suddenly hits me.

"Lucas," I murmur, remembering Kyan questioning him about it being open before we came down here. Lucas can open a portal here, but how?

"We can open it. The Octavian manor is sacred, the resting place for thousands of dead witches. We can open it, we just need to access their magic," Dominic says. Pain explodes in my chest, I clutch it yet as I pull my hand away, it comes back with shadows. Dominic stares at me bewildered.

"You're bleeding shadows," Dominic states as I stare down at the reddish shadows, my lungs rattling with each breath, as pain explodes throughout my body.

"Marabella," Dominic murmurs when Kaif speaks, his voice full of anguish.

"Marabella. Baby, where are you?" I hear Kaif ask, and cold dread slivers over me when Kyan screams. My vision darkens while Kaif loses it and the entire place begins to shake violently.