

The Warrior's Broken Mate Chapter 111

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As soon as we reached the front of the castle, Luke and our remaining warriors were waiting

for us.

I started walking in a different direction than towards the village where we had been staying and all the warriors quickly fell in line.

"Lyra. Where are we going?" Elias asked.

"Arthur's castle. If he's hiding the warriors, they'll be in the dungeon." I said.

"Are his dungeons strong enough to hold werewolves?" Luke asked.

"They're strong enough to hold anything with magical powers. So I believe they can hold werewolves." I said.

"Do you think he might have fled back there?" Elias asked.

"Honestly, I'm hoping he did." I said. So Elias nodded his head and I heard him crack his knuckles as he fell in line with me ahead of the warriors and we led them to a possible battle

at what remains of Arthur's castle.

"What happened when Morgana did that to you?" Elias asked.

"I got a lot more than I bargained for. By the way, we're not leaving just yet. I only needed her to believe that." I whispered.

"Yeah. I thought so. You'd never leave people in need." He said.

It took a couple of hours to get there and by the time we did, it was already after sundown.

It was a really eerie feeling as we stopped short of the ruins of the once autiful and delicate castle that I stayed in while I was here the first time.

As I took a step closer to the castle Elias grabbed my hand tighter and kept me in place.

"I don't like this." He said.

"I know. But he doesn't have anywhere else to hide such a large amount of people. They have to be under these ruins." I said.

"Do you know how to get down there?" He asked.

"Yeah. But there's a lot of damage. I wasn't here for very long last time." I said.

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+25 Points

"Alright. Luke, take the warriors and search every inch of this building. If you see anything move, kill it." Elias ordered.

So Luke led the warriors inside the castle while they were all in wolf form and Elias and I walked up to it in human form.

We walked inside the front doors and we could see ceilings that had caved in. I stopped for a moment to take in the site before me so I could get my bearings and find out where I needed to go.

Luke was reporting back to us as they were searching the castle and they couldn't see anything.

I looked at Elias and let out a deep breath before we ventured further into the ruins.

The path narrowed, littered with broken statues and shattered banners. Every step echoed.

"Stay close." I warned. "Something's watching us."

We moved carefully, avoiding runes etched into the stones. A low growl from my mate made me freeze. Shadows shifted unnaturally between the ruins.

"Over there." He hissed, pointing to a pile of rubble that seemed... wrong. The stones moved subtly, like they were breathing.

Before I could react, skeletal forms rose from the debris, glowing eyes fixed on us. The king's minions, enchanted beyond death, snarled as they lunged.

"Now!" My mate yelled, and I leapt forward, fangs bared. Shifting in the air as we attacked.

The fight was a blur of teeth, claws, and sparks of magic. One minion swung a jagged weapon, but I twisted, slashing through the air and sending it crashing into a collapsed wall. My mate tore through another, growling with unrestrained fury.

I wasn't sure what was fueling these creatures because Arthur has no magic. But as I managed to rip one of their heads off and threw it across the room, causing it to smash, the rest of the body fell as well.

As soon as we realized that was the way to kill these things, it was easy to get past them all.

When we were sure they were all dead, we shifted back and made our way down to the dungeon. But not before Elias had managed to stop and find me a plain white dress that was more like a night gown and we went downstairs.

As soon as we got down there we heard a whole heap of noises from wolves and people.

Arthur had locked his own people in the dungeons when he took our wolves.

I don't know why I was surprised, but there were so many people locked in this one cell because that's all that was left. It was like one massive cell at the back of the room.

I raised my hand and released dragonfire at the lock, instantly melting it and we were able to open the door and let everyone out.

We got them to the front of the castle and that's when Luke and the other warriors met us out there and we started running from the castle.

We'd already battled skeleton type creatures and I wasn't prepared to see what else there was

inside there.

So we started running along the vast nothingness while Elias and I were still in human form and the wolves couldn't run at full speed.

But that didn't matter because we didn't have far to go.

As soon as I stopped I made sure everyone was behind me and the locals of this realm knew of another place where they would be safe. They swore that they would be safe where they were going so they all bowed to me and thanked me for getting them out of there.

I stood there concentrating as I moved my hand in front of me and a portal opened and the wind became unbearable for a moment.

“Get the warriors back to our world.” I ordered.

“Just them?” Elias asked.

“They can’t help us with what we need to do.” I said.

“We’re not leaving you.” Luke said.

“This isn’t up for debate. Go.” I ordered.

He looked at Elias, and since we both had more information than Luke did, Elias went along with it. He trusted that I knew what I was doing, even if I wasn’t entirely sure myself. So all of our warriors jumped through the portal, their figures fading into the shimmering light, and they were back home to go back to their families again, their faces filled with relief and joy.

As soon as the portal closed, it was eerily quiet in the night. Elias walked beside me, his presence steady and grounding, the only sound our footsteps against the soft earth.

“Do you know what you’re doing?” Elias asked, his voice gentle but probing.

“No. But I can’t risk losing them because of who I am.” I said, my heart tightening at the thought.

“You’re their Queen. They will do whatever you need them to do.” He said, his confidence in me unwavering.

“Exactly. They will die for me, and I know that. But I won’t allow it.” I said, determination flickering in my eyes.

“Where to next?” He asked, tilting his head slightly.

So I turned around and looked back toward the village that we were staying at with Arthur, my mind already racing with plans, knowing that the night held more secrets than we had yet uncovered.

Someone suddenly grabbed me from behind, and a cold, sharp knife pressed against my throat. My breath caught, panic clawing at my chest as adrenaline surged. Elias stepped closer, his growl low and dangerous, like a predator ready to strike. Arthur only pressed the knife harder into my skin, the steel biting sharply, drawing a sting of blood. His eyes glinted with cruel satisfaction, every movement deliberate, proving without words that he wouldn’t hesitate to kill me if Elias dared to intervene. My heart hammering, mind racing for any escape, any move that might save me from this imminent danger.

But then the anger started to set in.

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Standing in this barren landscape with a knife pressed to my throat, I knew there was only one way this was going to end—and it would be in blood. One of us was going to die. Whoever it might be, the outcome seemed inevitable.

Arthur's voice cut through the cold wind. He said he wanted to bleed me dry, but he needed the black witch's body first. My stomach churned at the thought. Hopefully, he wasn't planning to do it here, in the open, without her body that he claimed he needed.

I could feel the knife's cold steel biting into my skin, a sharp reminder of my fragility. The metallic tang of blood—mine—hung thick in the air. Every gust of wind carried it toward me, mingling with the scent of the earth and decay. My heart hammered, a frantic drumbeat that seemed to echo across the desolate plain, and yet, somewhere deep down, a spark of defiance flared. I wouldn't go down without a fight.

"Do you really think you can ruin me and walk away?" Arthur hissed, his voice low and dangerous. Every word vibrated with pure anger. "You survived before... but not this time."

I stayed still, my heart hammering against my ribs. One wrong move, one flinch, and I would be finished. Every muscle in my body was screaming at me to run, to react, but I knew that even the smallest misstep could cost me everything. Arthur was severely unstable now, his eyes darting back and forth with a predator's intensity, and I wasn't sure how I could get out of this without having my throat cut in an instant. He didn't have the raw power that I possessed, yet he was patient, watching and waiting for the exact moment when I was most vulnerable—completely preoccupied with getting everyone else out of here. That moment came, and I felt the cold brush of inevitability. It proved one thing to me: he might be unstable, but his mind was still sharp, calculating, and frighteningly precise. In front of me, Elias let out a low, guttural growl, his eyes glowing in the darkness as his face tightened with tension. The air seemed to thrum with the unspoken threat between us, every second stretching longer than the last, and I could feel the walls closing in around me.

"Let her go." Elias demanded, his voice steady but with a lethal threat.

Arthur just started chuckling in my ear.

"Do you really think you have any leverage right now? One wrong move and I'll kill her." Arthur said.

"If

you kill me now then you know you are never going to get the heart.” I said.

“Oh. I think you underestimate me.” He said, pressing the knife harder into my throat.

I felt the blood trickling down my neck and I let out a little chuckle. As much as I could

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muster with the knife there.

“Be careful. You don’t want to spill too much.” I taunted.

“Baby. Now might not be the time to upset him.” Elias said.

“You should listen to your mate.” Arthur sneered. “You don’t get to tell me how this ends. No one does.” He said through gritted teeth.

I swallowed, forcing myself to stay calm. My senses were heightened—every breath, every movement, every heartbeat around me. I could feel my mate’s tension; he was recoiling on the inside but staying strong on the outside. But I needed a moment—a sliver of control. I let my eyes sweep the space, noting every shadow, every flicker of motion, every subtle shift in the air. My mind raced, calculating, predicting, weighing options, even as my body remained still, poised like a predator. The world had narrowed to this instant, and I clung to it, desperate for clarity, for an edge, for something I could use.

“You think this makes you strong?” I said, keeping my voice steady, “but it only proves you’re desperate.”

The man chuckled darkly. “Desperate? No... I’m precise. I know exactly what I’m doing.”

Elias was getting unsteady on his feet, his movements slightly off balance. A low growl rumbled deep in his chest, vibrating through the air around us. He looked straight into my eyes, and in that gaze, I saw the same thing I always felt whenever I was near Elias—the one unshakable certainty I knew I could rely on. The one thing I knew I would always have, no matter what happened. Trust. Unwavering, solid, and quietly powerful.

We could get through this. Together. No matter what the situation was. Without saying a word we had an understanding that we were going to get through this together.

I then did the only thing I could—I tilted my head back just enough to catch the scent of fear masked beneath his anger. It was faint, almost imperceptible, but it was there. He wanted this to feel like control. He wanted me to flinch.

I didn’t.

“Enough.” Elias stepped closer, his presence heavy in the dark. “Back off. Now.”

The man glanced at him, then at me. For a moment, doubt flickered across his face. Just a split second, but enough.

I took it. With a sharp twist of my wrist and shift of my weight, I knocked him off balance. Elias lunged right away, grabbed his wrist, twisted hard, and ripped the knife from his hand. The blade hit the ground with a loud clatter.

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+25 Points

I was breathing hard, staring at him. His chest rose and fell fast, his eyes blazing with anger -but he wasn't the real danger anymore.

“This isn't over.” Arthur spat, getting to his feet, moving back slowly. “You'll pay for this... all of it.”

Elias' growl deepened as he pulled me behind him. “Not tonight.”

Arthur's

eyes widened as he turned to run from us, but even in human form, we were faster than a normal human.

Elias caught him in only a matter of seconds and grabbed the back of his shirt.

Arthur tried to turn to take a swing at him but Elias' claws protruded and he slashed them across Arthur's neck.

The ground started to soak with Arthur's blood as he gurgled. But once Elias dropped Arthur's body to the ground, he was lifeless and there was no more sound coming from him.

“Are you alright?” Elias asked, looking at my neck.

“Yeah. It's already starting to heal. I can feel it.” I said.

Then, a low hum rolled through the air, vibrating in my chest. Shadows twisted unnaturally around the edge of the clearing, combining into shapes I couldn't fully see. The hairs on the back of my neck stood on end.

“What... is that?” Elias whispered, voice tight with fear and anticipation.

I stiffened, eyes narrowing. "It's not him." I said, voice low. "Something else... something bigger. And it's coming for us."

Before I could ask more, the shadows surged forward, faster than anything I'd ever seen. My senses screamed—this was no ordinary threat. They didn't move like creatures of flesh and bone; they rippled, stretching long and thin before snapping back into shapes that barely resembled human.

And just

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dark around us. Not the natural dark of night, but something as if the air itself

in the trees,

and almost

seem stolen. The wind howled louder

ispers that raised the hairs on the nape older than memory, promising impact, heart hammering against my ribs beginning.

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The shadows moved like liquid, slithering across the uneven ground. Every instinct in me screamed to run, but my legs felt rooted to the spot, heavy and unresponsive. My heart thumped so violently in my chest that I feared it might burst, each beat echoing painfully in my ears. Elias shifted closer, planting himself firmly between me and the threatening darkness. His jaw was tight, his eyes sharp and alert, but I knew, as he did, that he had no real defenses against whatever these creatures were. The air around us seemed to thrum with menace, a cold, vibrating pressure that made my skin crawl.

Elias summoned a fireball in my palm, feeling its searing heat pulse against my skin, and hurled it toward the shadows. It exploded in a sudden blaze of light and heat, sending tendrils of darkness recoiling, though only momentarily. They reformed instantly, flowing back toward us with relentless purpose.

Elias' grip on my wrist tightened, his fingers digging in, and a deep, warning growl rumbled from his throat. I could feel the tension in his body, his readiness to strike even as he knew he was vulnerable. The shadows seemed almost understanding, writhing

and stretching like they were alive, probing, testing, searching for a weakness we hadn't yet shown. My mind raced, trying to calculate our next move, while my chest burned from the adrenaline and fear surging through me

"We ne

His voice was low, tense, sharp.

nt to fight this? They look like shadows!" I yelled.

ave to get out of here before they reach us."

yre too fast." I gasped.

across the

"We'll just have to be faster." He grabbed my hand with his other, and we + plains, away from the castle. Going back inside Arthur's walls was suicide—too many strange, dangerous things waiting there.

Behind us, the shadows flowed and twisted, relentless. I risked a glance back, and my stomach churned. They were chasing us, fast, silent, unstoppable.

I felt the fear twist in my stomach, sharp and relentless, but I refused to show any weakness. I was already showing enough weakness by running from these beasts, enough for them to sense and exploit. My senses started to flare, every sound and shadow amplified, and my wolf was on edge, restless and protective. She was helping me, guiding me, watching the beasts when I couldn't, her presence a steady, grounding force. They weren't mindless. They were organized, calculating, and hunting us with a precision that made my skin crawl. Every

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instinct screamed that escape would not be simple.

A tendril of darkness shot toward us like a whip. I ducked instinctively, feeling it graze my shoulder as I fell to the ground. Elias quickly helped me back to my feet, his eyes wide with alarm as he saw how close they were getting. Pain flared up in my shoulder, sharp and sudden, but it wasn't deep—it was more like a warning, a message that these shadows could hurt in ways beyond physical force. My heart raced, adrenaline pumping through me, and I realized we weren't just facing creatures—we were facing something alive, something that could sense fear and strike at it.

“Keep running.” Elias shouted, swiping his claws at one of the tendrils. His claw tore through the darkness, but it reformed instantly, swirling like smoke around him.

I had never seen anything like this. Not from any realm. This was something different. Something that wasn’t easily controlled or defeated. I knew that much for sure. Every instinct in me screamed that this was dangerous, yet fascinating in a way I couldn’t fully understand. The power that I started to feel radiate around us was something I’d never felt before. Except for when I was creating my own magic. It was powerful, almost overwhelming, like it had a mind of its own, pulsing through the air and making my skin tingle. I could feel its presence pressing against me, testing me.

I felt a surge in my chest, the familiar wolf instincts waking fully. My claws lengthened, my senses sharpened. Every nerve in my body was alert, and I could feel the energy of the shadows—cold, hungry, and ancient, like they had been hunting for centuries. My heart pounded, but it wasn’t fear; it was anticipation.

I stopped Elias from running. It was no use. They were just playing with us, toying with our fear. If they truly wanted us, they would have had us by now. We were simply exhausting ourselves for nothing by fleeing.

So we stopped and turned back to face the creatures chasing us. Instantly they froze too, only a few feet away, their shapes flickering like smoke, waiting, watching, calculating their next move.

Together, we circled, back-to-back, striking at tendrils as they lunged. Every swipe of my claws burned with adrenaline; every growl from my mate sent tremors through the darkness. But the shadows kept coming, relentlessly.

Then, a voice echoed through the air—low, cold, and mocking. “You cannot survive what comes for you.”

I froze, recognizing the tone. It wasn’t Arthur—it was him. Whoever—or whatever—was behind the shadows. A voice that I had heard whispering to me before. A long time ago. A presence that made even the man’s anger seem insignificant.

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Elias growled again, stepping protectively in front of me. “We’ll survive. Together.”

*26 Points?

I nodded, feeling the bond flare between us. With a surge of courage, I leaped forward, claws tearing into a shadow that had reached for my throat. Sparks of energy shot

through me—an instinctual power I hadn't fully controlled before. The shadow hissed and shrieked, recoiling.

Encouraged, Elias roared and lunged at another tendril. The shadows began to falter—but then, from the darkness, a massive shape emerged. Taller than any wolf, its eyes burning red, tendrils writhing like snakes around it.

I held my breath. This wasn't a normal enemy. It was something ancient, a creature born from darkness.

"What the hell is that thing?" Elias asked.

"I've never seen it before. But it's old. Really old." I said.

"What do you mean?" He asked.

"Ancient. Like it's lived here for centuries." I said.

"You can feel that?" He asked.

"I can feel his energy." I said.

The wind howled, whipping the night into a frenzy. I clenched my claws, feeling Elias' presence beside me. "We fight. Or we die." Elias said.

"Elias. I don't know if we can." I said.

"We have to try. He's controlling these animals. If we don't take him out, then we're the ones that are going to die. Think about Grayson. We have to fight." He said.

"That was a low blow." I said

"I know. But it's t

I know will make you fight." He said. "How did you just get

to those

I said.

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The massive shadow beast loomed over us, its form a swirling mass of darkness that seemed almost liquid, yet heavier than any solid thing I had ever touched. Tendrils lashed out like vipers, writhing with a terrifying, unnatural intelligence. Each movement carried the hiss of tearing air, as though reality itself strained against its presence. Its eyes glowed a burning red, twin coals that pierced straight into my chest, igniting a chill that ran all the way to my spine. I could feel my heartbeat hammering in my ears, my breath shallow, my body screaming to flee even as my legs refused to move.

Elias growled, a deep, primal rumble that vibrated in his chest, and he planted himself between the beast and me. His stance was unyielding, muscles coiled like springs, the weight of his resolve pressing against the suffocating aura that threatened to drown us both. "We end this," Elias said, voice fierce, each word cracking with the promise of finality. His teeth bared, eyes blazing with defiance, he looked like a figure carved from stone and fire- unyielding, unstoppable, and ready to clash with the nightmare itself.

I nodded, feeling a surge of wolf instincts wake fully within me. My claws lengthened, sharp and gleaming like forged steel. Fur bristled along my spine, every nerve on high alert, senses sharpening, expanding beyond human limits until I could taste the electric tang of the air and hear the grinding pulse of the beast's essence. We didn't fully shift- not yet- but just enough to let the monster know we weren't defenseless prey.

The shadow beast struck, tendrils whipping with blinding speed. I twisted just in time, letting one lash brush past me while my claws tore through another, sparks of raw, crackling energy bursting from the impact. The shadows hissed and flailed, recoiling only to strike again, their movements like a storm given form. Elias moved like a whirlwind, his strength and precision tearing through clusters of tendrils, his growls echoing like thunder as he forced the monstrous entity back a step, proving we were not so easily consumed.

Then it spoke- a voice low and echoing, mocking and filled with a terrible, ancient malice. You cannot destroy me. I am the darkness that waits in every corner of your fear."

My stomach dropped. This was no ordinary enemy. No mere beast of shadow. This was intelligent, patient, and tied to the man who had attacked me earlier. Somehow, it had been waiting... for me.

Elias snarled, snapping a tendril with a single, punishing swipe. "Whatever you are, you picked the wrong wolves to hunt."

I leapt onto another tendril, claws piercing through its smoky, writhing form. A surge of energy shot through me- electric, raw, untamed, a force I had never felt before. The shadows shrieked and thrashed violently, a storm of darkness swirling around us like a living hurricane, pulling at my fur and dragging at my skin. My muscles burned, yet every strike made me stronger, sharper, more certain. And for a fleeting, shining

moment, I felt alive, unstoppable, as if the wolf inside me had finally claimed its full power, no longer chained but roaring, triumphant and free.

Then, a shocking vision struck me like a bolt of lightning—the true source of the shadows revealed itself in a horrifying instant. I stumbled back, gasping for breath, my chest tightening with fear. Arthur... he had been nothing but a pawn, a mask hiding the real puppet master. The weight of betrayal pressed down on me, heavier than the darkness around us.

And then the face came—blindingly clear in my mind's eye. Someone I had once trusted, someone from the Ash Queen's court: a sorcerer whose ambitions were as boundless as they were ruthless. I could see him now, eyes gleaming with cold intent, weaving his dark schemes to manipulate me, to use me as the key to summon the shadows fully into our realm. My stomach churned, a mix of anger, fear, and disbelief. This wasn't just a fight for survival anymore—it was a battle against someone who had known me, watched me, and planned my downfall all along.

The vision didn't stop with his face. It unfolded like a cruel play: whispered conversations behind silk curtains, charcoal-smudged maps with routes traced in silver, and a ritual circle I recognized from forbidden tomes—one designed to pierce the veil between worlds. I saw my own name inked onto a list, circled in a hand that trembled only with anticipation, not remorse. Memories I'd trusted as true—bonds forged in fire and quiet counsel—fell apart, revealed as carefully staged moments to groom me for the final act. Rage flared hot and immediate; grief followed, slow and hollow. Every shared laugh, every promise felt suddenly fragile, a glass bauble shattered by the revelation. I clenched my fists until my knuckles ached, because standing here, surrounded by writhing shadows, I knew the war had shifted. No more pawns. No more masks. This sorcerer had pulled the strings—and he would pay for underestimating the wolf that now woke inside me.

"They've been feeding off my power all along." I whispered to Elias.

His eyes widened in understanding. "Then we end it here and now."

We fought in perfect unison. My mate pinned one tendril as I struck the others. Sparks of energy danced around us, lighting up the night, the shadows screaming in pain. My claws glowed brighter, fueled by the bond between us—by trust, rage, and survival instinct. The air pulsed with the rhythm of our connection, a heartbeat shared between wolf and wolf, echoing louder than the creature's roars. Every strike we made wasn't just an attack—it was a declaration that we would not fall, that we would protect each other until the last breath. Elias and I fighting together, that was the power I was feeling. That's what was giving me the energy and the power to defeat this creature. To actually hurt it. The beast staggered, and for the first time, I felt victory was not impossible.

My eyes started glowing bright yellow as I attacked, unwavering and unforgiving, each strike aimed with precision at the writhing tendrils. Sparks of dark energy hissed as my

claws tore through them, and the shadows recoiled, screeching in agony. Finally, with a surge of raw strength, I lunged at the core of the shadow mass, my claws piercing the heart of the darkness. A deafening shriek filled the air, reverberating in my bones, as the shadows writhed violently, twisting and contorting before dissipating into nothingness. The heart of the beast crumbled to ash in my hand, warm and fragile, like burning embers fading into silence. I collapsed to my knees, chest heaving, drenched in sweat and trembling from the release of tension and fear. Elias was immediately at my side, his presence grounding me. His strong arms wrapped around me, holding me steady, a quiet reminder that I wasn't alone in the aftermath of the chaos.

"I can feel it." I whispered, voice trembling.

"Feel what?" He asked.

"It hurts." I said, clutching my chest.

"Because we killed it?" Elias asked, confused.

"Yeah." I said.

"Are you going to be alright?" Elias asked as I started breathing a little easier.

"Yeah. I'll be alright. We beat the bastard. That's what matters." I said.

"For now." He said, eyes scanning the dark horizon. "But this isn't over. Whoever sent them... they're still out there. And next time, they won't just send shadows."

I looked up at him, fear and determination burning inside me. "Then we'll be ready."

The wind howled through the empty wasteland, carrying the faint echo of the shadows' shriek... a warning of what was still to come.

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The silence that followed the storm of shadows was deafening. Even the wind seemed to hesitate, as if the world itself was holding its breath. I leaned against Elias, still trembling, but not just from the fight—my mind was a whirl of betrayal, revelation, and the raw, unfiltered rage that came from knowing someone I had trusted had been orchestrating this all along.

"We can't stay here." Elias muttered, his voice low but steady, snapping me out of my spiral. He scanned the horizon, muscles tensed, as if the land itself might erupt with

another threat at any moment. “We need to regroup, heal, and plan our next move. They won’t wait for us to be ready.”

I nodded, swallowing the lump in my throat. Every instinct screamed for vengeance, I didn’t know who against just yet, but I knew he was right. Right now, survival came first. “Where do we even start?” I asked, my voice hoarse.

Elias’s eyes narrowed. “We have to find him—the sorcerer. Whoever he is, he’s behind all of this. If we don’t stop him, there will be more shadows, more chaos, more death... it’ll never end.”

The thought made my stomach twist. The Ash Queen’s court had always been a place of mystery. Never knowing who was there or why they were there. What they were doing for her. I never even heard of her having any allies. But there were always people hanging around that I was unsure about. People that looked like peasants in the village where we were staying with Arthur. People that were staying in the other camps with our warriors. Luke had told us of a few people that our warriors were a little concerned about but it was nothing that they couldn’t handle. They didn’t want us getting involved unless it was absolutely necessary. But now, the true predator was revealed—not a faceless army, not even Arthur, but someone closer, someone who had known our names and used them like knives. I clenched my fists, nails biting into my palms. The wolf in me growled low, a warning that it’dn’t forgotten, hadn’t forgiven.

And I was more sure now than ever that he was from the village that we were staying in. I was pretty sure who he was. The one that was always hanging around. I could sense power in that village but I never knew where it was coming from. Arthur didn’t have any so it had to be someone else in that village.

But this is a strange realm where the simplest of people can have power while the Kings and Queens don’t. Which is why I didn’t really pay too much attention to it.

“First.” Elias said, breaking my thoughts, “we heal. Then we strike. We take the fight to them, before they can strike at us again.”

I felt the bond between us thrum—a pulse that had never been so alive, so intense. The bond wasn’t just connection; it was power. Shared strength. Shared purpose. And in that moment, the rage that had nearly consumed me transformed into something sharper, more focused. A promise.

“I’m ready.” I said, voice steady now, though my heart still pounded. “We take them down. Every last one.”

Elias nodded, and for a brief moment, we simply stood there together, the night sky stretching endlessly above, the remnants of shadow curling like smoke around our feet. Then, as if the world had heard our vow, the first faint glimmer of dawn broke over the horizon, brushing the wasteland in muted gold and crimson.

A new day. A new fight. And for the first time in what felt like an eternity, I felt the stirrings of hope.

But deep in the back of my mind, the warning echoed, relentless and insistent: the sorcerer was waiting. Watching. And when he made his move, it wouldn't be shadows that came for us. It would be everything he had been saving... and we had no idea what that truly meant.

I let out a long, shuddering breath, feeling the last of the adrenaline ebb from my veins.

"We need to find shelter." Elias said.

"There used to be a village in this direction. We can see if it's still there." I said.

"Yeah. Hopefully no one is living there. Everyone around here seems to want us dead." He said.

"Yeah. It seems to be that way, doesn't it?" I said as we started walking.

"Alright. So, do you know how to find this sorcerer?" He asked.

"No. But I have a feeling that he'll find us." I said.

"Probably. And then what?" Elias asked.

"We have to find the heart of the realm." I said.

"What? Are you serious? That's why we stayed? Lyra, you know that if you absorb that power then you can't go home." Elias said, grabbing my arm and stopping me from walking.

"I know. Which is why I'm not going to. But I know that there's more to this than I realize. I know that I can do something to help the realm otherwise I wouldn't be here." I said.

"What do you have in mind?" He asked.

"I don't know. But whatever it is, I will be going home with you." I promise. So Elias grabbed my hand and we started walking again trying to find where this village used to be.

When it finally came into view, we approached it with caution and we checked every hut to make sure that it was empty. And once we were sure that it was, we found the least destroyed one that still had a bed in it.

"This feels too good to be true." Elias said, laying down.

"I know. You get some rest." I said.

"What are you going to do?" He asked.

"We can't both sleep at the same time. You know that. We don't know when he's going to attack. So, you get some rest and I'll be sitting here waiting." I said, pulling out my quiver and I sat on a chair.

I started looking at the arrows that I had left, and a sinking feeling hit me—I was running out of them faster than I had expected. I knew that I always had weapons attached to my hands whenever my claws came out, which offered some reassurance, but I still preferred having a backup, just in case. With that in mind, I got up carefully and began walking around the hut, examining the arrows and considering what I could do with them to make the most of what I had.

I could tell that Elias didn't really want to go to sleep while I was still sitting up and moving around, his eyes flicking toward me every so often, but it didn't really matter. He passed out pretty quickly anyway, and that allowed me to quietly stand at the door of the hut, alert and watchful, scanning the empty plains and making sure nothing—or no one—was sneaking up on us.

My stomach started rumbling, telling me that I was long overdue for food, and my mouth felt painfully dry. But this village only had one water supply, and it looked completely dried up, cracked and lifeless under the harsh sun. I had no choice but to stand here and wait until we were on the move again before I could even think about satisfying my hunger. I forced myself to ignore it, to push the thought away. Instead, I focused on the dangers that surely awaited us ahead, letting images of snarling beasts and hidden traps occupy my mind. Thinking about those threats distracted me almost immediately, and the pangs of hunger receded, at least for the moment, under the weight of looming peril.

The Warrior's Broken Mate Chapter 116

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The first light of dawn crept through the cracks in the hut, spilling across the floor in thin, jagged lines that seemed almost alive. Shadows stretched long and sharp, reaching out like fingers trying to pull me back into the darkness I'd barely escaped. The sun was climbing higher, beating down on the land and testing my patience with every passing minute.

I stayed in the doorway, tense, eyes glued to the horizon where the endless plains looked calm and perfect—but I knew better. The air was heavy and quiet, but my instincts screamed that the calm was fake. Danger was out there somewhere, waiting, watching, and I could feel it tracking my every move.

I glanced over at Elias who was still fast asleep and unaware of anything that I was feeling right now. He looked peaceful. I didn't want to disturb that right now. Not by something that wasn't even here. Although, he knew not to ignore what I was feeling. No matter how little it was. I still couldn't bring myself to wake him up and have him deal with this s**t along with me.

I started wondering why Arthur and the Ash Queen had never mentioned this sorcerer before. He's obviously played a big part in everything that's happened around here, shaping events from the shadows. Even if the Ash Queen claims that she did it, it didn't feel right. He could be working with her, or maybe he has his own plans that none of us can see. I don't know. I've already learned that there's only one person in this realm I could truly trust, and he was asleep, only a few feet away from me, unaware of my growing unease.

Hours slipped by, though I wasn't keeping count. My stomach growled again, louder this time, but I barely noticed. My hands itched to move—to extend my claws, grab an arrow—anything to protect us if the sorcerer's shadow showed up earlier than expected. The quiet around me felt almost alive, like it was holding its breath.

Then, a flicker at the edge of the plains caught my eye, too deliberate to be a trick. My heart jumped, hammering in my chest as adrenaline surged through me. I froze, muscles tight, hand inching up to signal Elias without a sound. But he was still asleep.

The figure came into view, moving slow but like he knew exactly where he was going. Dust kicked up behind him, but his steps were careful, almost like he was gliding over the dirt. There was something about the way he moved that made my skin crawl. I knew instantly—this wasn't just a normal person. Danger came in all sorts of forms, but this... this was different.

I slipped outside quietly, staying in the shadow of the doorway. "Who's there?" I said, keeping my voice steady but low enough not to give myself away.

He stopped and tilted his head, staring at the hut. Didn't say a word, but I could feel the chill of him, creeping around me like smoke. My claws itched, my heart was racing—but I didn't move. One wrong step and it could be over.

Then, like it was nothing, he spoke. "I've been looking for you."

A shiver ran through my bond with Elias, a silent warning that this was way closer than I thought. Even without looking back, I knew he was awake, ready to jump at a moment's notice.

"You've been meddling in things far beyond your understanding," the man continued, moving closer. Each step was precise. "And yet... here you are. So predictable."

I clenched my fists, holding back a growl. “We’re not afraid of you.” My voice shook slightly, betraying the tension in my chest. He knew how to put fear into someone without touching them.

A smirk curved his lips. “Fear isn’t my tool. Patience is. Observation. And when the time comes...” His eyes flicked toward the horizon, where the remnants of the shadow storm lingered like a warning, “...everything you’ve built, everything you think you protect, will fall.”

My claws shot out instinctively, cutting the air. The figure only laughed softly, a whisper carried by the wind. “I don’t even need to move a hand. You will bring this upon yourself. And I will watch.”

Before I could react further, he turned and began walking away, leaving a chilling emptiness behind. The plains seemed to exhale, but the tension didn’t leave my shoulders.

I stepped forward, noticing signs I hadn’t seen before. His tracks were almost too light to touch the ground, yet they pressed into the earth as if walking like anyone else did. And the air around him felt colder, carrying a faint hum that made my skin tingle.

I closed my eyes for a moment, letting my pulse slow. Elias’s hand touch my shoulder. “He’s testing us.” Elias said quietly. “But we’re not ready. We can’t fight him if we don’t know how to beat him.”

A strange vision flickered before my eyes—a shadowy storm, twisting shapes moving like living things, reaching into villages and forests alike. I saw people frozen in fear, caught in a grip they couldn’t escape, their faces twisted in silent screams. Shadows coiled around trees, climbed walls, and slithered along streets, as if the world itself was bending under some dark will. And at the center, the sorcerer’s face, calm and cold, watching with eyes that seemed to pierce right through me, judging, calculating. My stomach churned violently, and I stumbled slightly, catching myself on the hut’s frame. It wasn’t even this realm that I recognised. It was another, strange and distant, yet terrifyingly real, as if I had glimpsed a nightmare lurking just beyond my own world.

“He’s not going to stop. We have to stop him.” I said, adamantly.

“And we will.” Elias said, his voice sharp and determined. “And then he’ll realize he’s messing with the wrong people.”

I nodded, trying to push down the fear that stuck to me like the shadow that just disappeared in front of me. My quiver felt lighter—not because I had fewer arrows, but because of what was coming. This hunt wasn’t just about staying alive anymore. It was about getting even.

I took one last look across the plains, feeling the pull of something unknown. The sorcerer was out there. Watching. Waiting. And I had a promise to keep—not just to Elias, but to this whole world.

A flicker in the distance caught my eye—like the air itself was bending. Something moved, almost invisible but deliberate, like the plains themselves obeyed him. The wind shifted weirdly, carrying faint whispers of power I couldn't fully understand, but strong enough to make my skin tingle.

And then, barely there, I felt it—a touch on the edge of my thoughts, a pull like a shadow stretching toward me. He was moving closer, testing boundaries, shaping what we would see and fear before the first blow. The hunt wasn't just coming. It was already beginning.

I let the wolf inside me rise, coiled and ready. The world felt sharper now—the wind, a whisper of warning, the distant rustle of dirt and debris, a possible harbinger, every shadow a question yet to be answered. Somewhere beyond the horizon, the storm stirred again, slow and deliberate, and I knew the sorcerer's next move was already in motion.

A flicker caught my eye—a shadow in the shadow, almost imperceptible—but it vanished before I could identify it. A faint whisper brushed against the edges of my thoughts, promising that this was only the first layer of what was to come.

And I smiled, sharp and feral, letting the thrill of the hunt and the danger mingle, knowing that the plains were no longer empty.