

The Warrior's Broken Mate Chapter 91

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Elias POV

I was sprawled across my bed, an empty vodka bottle lying next to me on the mattress, when pounding erupted on my bedroom door.

I ignored it, staring blankly at the ceiling, until the door slammed open. Luke stood in the doorway, his new mate Emory hovering just behind him.

"Get out," I muttered, rolling onto my side so I didn't have to look at them.

"Elias, you need to get your ass out of this bed," Luke barked. His voice carried the tone of command, but I didn't move. I didn't have the energy, and I sure as hell didn't have anything to say to him.

"Alpha," Luke pushed, his voice hardening, "you need to get up. This pack is depending on you. They need their leader."

"Their Queen is dead," I said flatly.

"You don't know that," Luke shot back, his voice rising in frustration.

"She's been gone for two and a half months," I snapped, still not looking at him. "She would've come back to me by now. She's dead."

"Maybe she just can't find a way back," Emory interjected quietly. "We've been researching how to open a portal and we've come up completely empty. Maybe... maybe she can't figure it

out either."

"I didn't ask for your opinion," I bit out, cutting her off.

"Alpha. The people need you," Luke said again, quieter this time, almost pleading.

But I just dragged the blanket up over my head, shutting them out completely.

I heard them whisper something to each other before their footsteps retreated and the door

closed behind them.

Finally, I sat up, swinging my legs over the side of the bed.

The fading sunlight filtering through the window told me the sun was setting. Soon, the pack would be heading out for the evening run—a tradition Luke had started. He said it was good for bonding, especially for the members who had joined us after I killed their former Alpha. A way to bring everyone together, to strengthen the pack.

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I wouldn't know. I'd never been to one. But it didn't matter; I was glad they'd all be gone soon.

I stood and walked to the wardrobe. All of Lyra's clothes still hung inside, untouched. I reached out and ran my fingers along the fabric, breathing in her scent.

The familiar smell stabbed straight through my chest, shattering me into pieces all over again.

I knew I was torturing myself, but her scent—lingering in this room, on these clothes—was the only thing keeping me the slightest bit sane. Even if everyone else believed I'd completely

lost it.

Crossing the room, I stopped by the window and looked down at the gathering below. The entire pack was assembling for the dinner before the run, their voices carrying upward in laughter and chatter.

I was glad they were enjoying themselves. I didn't expect them to stop living just because Lyra was gone.

But that didn't mean I had to join them.

I sank into the chair beneath the window, the same one Lyra loved to curl up in with a book, and reached for the framed photo on the table beside it.

It was from her sixteenth birthday—the first picture I had of her looking healthy, genuinely smiling at the camera.

She was so damn beautiful.

I stared at her face and felt my throat tighten. I couldn't understand how the Moon Goddess could place something so breathtaking on this earth, only to rip her away from me so easily.

It didn't feel fair at all.

I guess my faith in the Moon Goddess was completely gone at this point.

"No Alpha tonight?" Rowan asked quietly.

"No. He still won't come out of his room," Luke replied with a heavy sigh.

"Well, can you really blame him? That's what every decent mate feels when they lose their other half," Rowan said softly. "Mine didn't... but then again, he did order my death."

"I've known him my entire life," Luke said, running a hand through his hair. "I hate seeing him like this. I wish there was something I could do."

"There isn't," Rowan said matter-of-factly. "Not in this kind of situation. Nothing you say or do

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will make him want to come back to the land of the living."

Claim

"She's right," Corbin added. "When my mother died, my father was destroyed. Mates handle it differently, but Alpha Elias has chosen to shut himself away. My father did the same for a while... but then he started lashing out, losing control. He beat me more than once and came close to killing me a couple of times. It wasn't really him; it was the grief consuming him."

"Yeah, I get that it's hard when you lose a mate," Luke admitted, his voice low. "But I've never seen it firsthand before. I just... I don't know what to do. He's my best friend."

"You just need to give him time. As much time as he needs," Rowan said gently.

That was the last straw. I'd had enough of listening to them talk about me like I was some lost cause.

I got up, yanked open my bedroom door, and walked out without a word.

Downstairs, I headed straight to the wine cellar and grabbed another bottle of vodka. I ripped the lid off and drank straight from the bottle, not even stopping to breathe.

When I was done, I made my way back upstairs and slipped out the back door.

Everyone else was on the other side of the castle, gathered for the pack dinner. They wouldn't even know I was out here. It was too far away for them to hear me, just as I couldn't hear

them.

I leaned against the low stone wall overlooking the massive 100-foot drop down to the ocean. I stayed there until the last drop of vodka was gone.

Then I let the empty bottle fall from my hand. I watched it plummet all the way down, shattering into pieces on the jagged rocks below.

Straightening up, I looked back at the castle... and then back at the endless ocean.

I knew what needed to be done.

I couldn't keep living like this.

I refused to keep living like this.

It was killing me slowly, and I wasn't going to let it.

If I was going out, it would be on my own terms.

Everyone knew that about me.

I took off my watch and the necklace with the shark tooth Lyra had given me and set them carefully on the table near the castle wall.

Then I climbed up onto the brick wall.

Claim

I took a few deep breaths, inhaling the salty sea air and feeling the cool breeze brush against my skin.

I looked down.

And just as I was about to take that final step off the wall, something slammed hard into me, knocking the breath from my lungs and dragging me backward, away from the edge, and onto the stone patio.

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Just as I was trying to regain my composure from being slammed onto the cold stone patio, I growled low in my chest and jumped to my feet, ready to tear into whoever had stopped me from finally escaping this prison I'd been living in.

But when I turned, the words froze in my throat.

There was a figure lying on her side a few feet away, her long blonde hair falling across her face as she faced away from me.

"Lyra," I breathed, almost disbelieving my own voice.

She slowly turned her face toward me, her piercing blue eyes catching the moonlight and locking on mine.

I dropped to my knees beside her and pulled her into my arms, holding her so tightly I was afraid I might hurt her. My hands roamed frantically over her back, her hair, the side of her face—desperate to convince myself she was real.

"Is it really you?" My voice cracked.

"Of course it's me," she whispered.

She started to get up, but I noticed she was struggling. And that's when I saw it—her swollen

stomach.

"Oh my god," I muttered.

"How long have I been gone?" she asked, her voice barely above a whisper.

"You... you don't know?" I said, shocked.

"Time moved a lot slower in that world," she explained. "This stomach got this big in a matter of days."

"Holy s**t," I whispered. "You've been gone for two and a half months."

I reached up and gently cupped her face again, needing to touch her one more time to make sure she wasn't a cruel hallucination. I had convinced myself she was dead. I had believed it so fully that this moment felt unreal.

Then I couldn't hold back. I pulled her against me and kissed her—hard. Passionate, desperate, almost feral. I poured every ounce of pain and longing from the past two and a half months into that kiss, gripping her like I'd never let go again.

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She was here. She was really here.

Claim

The distant sound of wolves howling carried through the trees, but I wasn't ready to share her with anyone else yet. I grabbed her hand and led her quickly off the patio and back inside the

house.

We went upstairs to our room, and Lyra stopped, her eyes widening slightly as she took in the

sight.

"Everything's here," she murmured.

"Of course it is," I said quietly.

I hadn't changed a thing. Our room looked exactly the same as the day she'd left. I couldn't bear to throw away even the smallest piece of her.

She sat down on the edge of the bed, and I immediately sat beside her, taking her hand in mine and holding it like a lifeline. I couldn't let go. I was terrified she'd vanish again.

"I really don't know what to say right now," I admitted, my voice low.

"Neither do I," she said softly. "I was just so focused on getting back here."

"I know what you mean," I said, squeezing her hand.

Her eyes drifted around the room, and I saw the flicker of realization as she took in the empty alcohol bottles littering the floor and nightstands.

“So that’s why you didn’t feel me the moment I came back to this realm,” she said quietly.

The weight of her words hit me like a punch. She was right. I should have felt her the second she stepped through that portal. But I hadn’t.

Because I’d drowned myself in so much alcohol, I’d numbed the bond completely.

“I’m sorry. I’m so, so sorry. I should have known. I should have been there for you,” I whispered, guilt heavy in my voice.

“Stop. None of this is your fault. And I will never, ever blame you,” she said softly.

“I know you won’t,” I murmured, but it didn’t make the weight on my chest any lighter. I reached out, gently touching her stomach, and froze when I felt a sudden kick against my hand.

“Oh my god... that’s incredible,” I said, my voice full of awe.

“Yeah, it is,” she said with a small smile. “It just... it all happened so fast for me.”

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“We need to get you to a doctor,” I said, panic starting to rise in me. “We have to make sure everything’s alright—not just with the baby, but with you too-”

“Elias,” she interrupted firmly, placing her hand on mine. “Calm down. We’ll do all of that. But right now, I just want to be with you. I’m not going anywhere, okay? So please... just breathe.”

“You’re right,” I said, forcing myself to calm down. “Honestly, I don’t even want to share you with anyone yet.”

“Elias,” she said softly, her eyes searching mine. “What were you doing out there?”

I swallowed hard. “I couldn’t feel you. I didn’t know where you were... and I’d convinced myself you were dead.”

Her expression shifted with understanding. “I was afraid of that. I was in such a rush to get back here. I knew time moved slower in that world, which meant you were here suffering for much longer than I was. I knew you’d probably think I was gone. I didn’t waste a second after I killed the witch—I didn’t stop until I found a way back.”

I leaned forward and kissed her again, deeper this time, and felt her arms wrap tightly around my neck. She clung to me as if she needed my closeness just as badly as I needed hers.

“You have to tell me everything that happened over there,” I said against her lips.

“I will,” she whispered. “But not right now.”

I lay back on the bed, pulling her down with me so her head rested on my chest. My hand moved slowly up and down her back, trying to soothe her, though I could tell there was more she wasn’t saying.

I had a sinking feeling that whatever she’d been through had been unbearable. She said she’d only been there for about a week, but with time moving slower, I knew it had been far longer for me.

The alcohol was wearing off, and for the first time in months, I could feel her through our bond. It was the most incredible feeling in the world... except for the strange undercurrent in her emotions. Something about her stomach.

I could sense it, and I could also feel her power now—it was so much stronger than before she left.

“Lyra...” I began carefully,

“Don’t,” she interrupted quickly. “Please... I just want to forget about it.”

“Was it that bad?” I asked softly.

“You really have no idea,” she said, her voice breaking just a little. “I’m home now, Elias. Can we just... enjoy this? We’re going to have a baby. We’re going to be a family.”

I kissed the top of her head gently. “Alright,” I said. “It’s forgotten about.”

She looked up at me and kissed me, and I held her as tightly as I could, silently promising myself that nothing would ever take her from me again.

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Lyra POV

The moment I stepped through the portal, I felt it—this was home.

I emerged in the same spot where I had vanished into the other realm, and I didn't need to think twice about where to go. I knew the way back to the castle like the back of my hand.

I started running, my pace slower than I remembered because of the weight of my swollen stomach, but I didn't care. That uneasy, gut-wrenching feeling in my chest was getting stronger by the second, and it pushed me to move faster, harder.

Elias was in trouble. I could feel it.

When I finally reached the castle, I saw the wolves racing into the forest for their pack run, but Elias wasn't with them. He was still here. I followed the pull of his scent and the dread flooding my chest, rounding the corner to the patio—just in time to see him standing on the edge, ready to jump.

I didn't think, I just moved. I launched myself through the air and tackled him backward, both of us crashing painfully onto the stone floor. It wasn't a soft landing, and I winced as I hit the ground.

For a moment, I couldn't move, just gasping for air. Then I heard Elias stand, heard his shocked intake of breath.

I pushed myself up, meeting his eyes. All the color drained from his face as he stared at me

like I was a hallucination.

Neither of us knew what to say.

Later, back in our bedroom, it still felt the same—awkward silence, but not because we didn't want to talk. We just didn't know where to start. All we knew, deep down, was that we couldn't ever let something like this happen again. Neither of us could survive it.

I'd held myself together while I was gone because I believed I'd make it back to him. But Elias ... he hadn't had that assurance. He had been living in this world without me for over two months, thinking I was dead. I'd only been without him for a week. Seeing him standing on that patio had terrified me because I knew—I knew—if I had been even a few minutes later, I would've lost him forever.

The next morning, I woke up in my own bed, wrapped in Elias's arms. It was like a dream come true. For both of us.

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We lay there quietly, simply savoring each other's presence, until someone started pounding on the door.

"That'll be Luke," Elias muttered.

I glanced at him and smiled softly before slipping out of bed. I padded to the door and yanked it open in one quick motion. Luke stood there, mid-knock, his eyes widening as he registered who was standing in front of him.

"Hey, Luke... what's the matter? You look like you've just seen a ghost," I teased.

Elias started laughing behind me.

"What the f**k?" Luke blurted out, staring at me in disbelief.

"She found her way back last night," Elias said as he walked up behind me, wrapping his arms around my waist.

"Queen Lyra... I don't believe it. You're actually here," Luke said, his voice full of awe.

"You want to hug me, don't you?" I asked, grinning.

"I'm allowed to. I have a mate now," he said, gesturing to the woman standing next to him.

"Alright, I'm going to want to hear all about that," I said with a raised brow.

"Absolutely," Luke said as he leaned forward and hugged me tightly.

"I think we should go downstairs and let everyone else see that I'm back," I said.

"Yeah," Elias agreed. "I suppose it's time. I can't keep you all to myself any longer."

Luke stepped back, eyeing me more closely. "One question. Are you... pregnant?"

I couldn't help but laugh. "Yeah," I said.

"Wow," he muttered, shaking his head. "This is just getting weirder and weirder."

Elias and I headed down the stairs, and by then all the significant people in our lives had already been summoned to the castle. They were waiting together in one of the living rooms, gathered there before I made my appearance.

They all stood frozen for what felt like forever, just staring at me, before the room erupted with shouting, tears, and embraces. Everyone was overwhelmed with happiness to have me back. I honestly hadn't believed that I would be missed to this extent, but it turned out I was wrong. And I was so thankful to be proven wrong.

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Claim

Stephanie was the last to arrive, and she dashed straight toward me, wrapping her arms around me so tightly that she refused to let go. She kept telling me how much she had missed me and how much we needed to catch up on. The moment she noticed my stomach, that became the only thing she wanted to talk about.

She immediately claimed the title of my baby's godmother and had already begun planning a baby shower, along with all the things I would need for the baby's arrival. She even started discussing how one of the upstairs rooms would be transformed into a nursery.

I had to stop her, telling her to wait because I first needed to see a doctor to find out exactly how far along I was.

Not long after, Rowan stepped into the room.

She had already been told I was back, and I could clearly see she had been eager to see me. But when I left, our relationship hadn't been on the best terms.

"I'm truly glad to see you again, Queen Lyra," Rowan said.

"I'm really glad to see you too, mom," I replied. Her eyes shot up to meet mine the second I called her "mom." No one had been expecting that. I may have only been gone for a week, but during that time I learned there are people in this world who truly care about me.

She had made a huge mistake by not returning for me when I was a baby, and she was well aware of that. There was nothing she could do now to erase it.

But that didn't mean we had to let it define the rest of our lives, especially now that I was going to become a mother myself. Rowan deserved the chance to know her grandchild.

"Alright. Everything is arranged," Stephanie said as she walked back into the room.

"Arranged for what?" I asked.

"For your welcome home celebration. I've let everyone know, and they'll all be here tonight," Stephanie answered. I glanced over at Elias, who was trying very hard not to laugh.

"It's also formal. So, you two have to wear suits," Stephanie added. I smirked at Elias the instant his grin vanished when he heard that part.

That night, the entire castle ballroom was filled with everyone from the village that surrounded the castle. I stood at the top of the staircase wearing a floor-length, dark blue chiffon gown that flowed comfortably around my growing belly. The bodice was low cut between my breasts and encrusted with shimmering diamantes, yet it still managed to look both elegant and modest. On my feet were silver high heels.

Elias offered me his arm as we stood together at the top of the staircase.

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The doors finally opened, and we stepped out onto the landing overlooking the crowded ballroom while the announcer waited to the side.

"May I present Queen Lyra and King Elias," the announcer declared.

Claim

I turned to Elias with a smile before we began descending the staircase, greeted by hundreds of cheerful faces below us. They clapped and cheered as we made our first entrance together as King and Queen.

THE END

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EPILOGUE

We reached the hospital in no time once my contractions started, and it was obvious Elias was losing his composure. Honestly, his panic was driving me up the wall.

I was rushed straight into a birthing suite prepared especially for me. It was a private room stocked with every possible luxury—things I hadn't requested but everyone insisted on arranging anyway. Elias only wanted the very best for me and our baby.

As soon as we arrived, the doctor came in to check me over and told us this baby clearly couldn't wait. He predicted the labor wouldn't last long at all.

By the time it was time to push, Elias was really starting to grate on my nerves.

"Come on, sweetheart, you've got this," Elias encouraged.

"Oh, really? Like I even have a damn choice right now?" I snapped at him.

"It's fine, I know you're just saying that because of the pain," he tried to reassure me.

"No, it's not the pain talking! You're annoying me—stop touching me and shut up! That's how I ended up in this situation to begin with!" I shouted back. He immediately let go of me but stayed firmly at my side.

"Alright, your majesty, when the next contraction hits, I'll need you to push," the doctor instructed firmly.

As the next wave rolled through me, I leaned forward and gave it every bit of strength I had.

Twenty minutes later, the baby's head finally appeared, and the doctor announced the words Elias had been praying for.

"It's a boy," he declared.

I collapsed back onto the bed, panting for breath. Once Elias cut the cord, the nurse placed the tiny bundle in my arms, wrapped securely in a blanket.

"He's huge," I breathed, staring down at him. He was definitely bigger than most newborns I'd

ever seen.

"That's because he's an Alpha. He's going to grow up strong," Elias said softly, leaning close

to us.

He kissed my forehead gently, and by then I had calmed down completely. I didn't want him any further than arm's reach. He sat down on the edge of the bed, watching both me and the

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baby while I just gazed down at the little life in my arms.

"Do you already have a name in mind?" the nurse asked.

"Oh, shoot, I guess we should probably decide on one," I muttered, making her laugh.

"There's no rush, take your time," she said kindly.

"What name do you think fits him?" I asked Elias.

"I honestly don't know," he admitted.

"It has to be strong, something fitting for an Alpha," I said.

"Well, we're absolutely not naming him after either of our fathers," Elias added quickly.

"Not a chance," I replied.

"So what do you think we should call him?" he asked me.

"I've always loved the name Grayson, but I'm not sure it sounds powerful enough for an Alpha," I confessed.

Claim

"He'll make it strong himself. Grayson is perfect," Elias said with certainty. I glanced up at him, and he leaned down to kiss me.

"It's perfect," I agreed softly.

A little later, I handed Grayson to Elias and went to take a shower to clean up. Meanwhile, the nurses freshened the room, changed the sheets, and cleared away the mess, since I'd be staying there for the remainder of my hospital stay. Elias would be staying with me as well.

Thankfully, every bed in the hospital was a double, which was only because wolves recovered more quickly when their mates were nearby.

When I stepped out of the shower, I felt fresh and renewed, and the bed had been remade. I climbed back into it, and it was time to try feeding Grayson for the first time.

It was both awkward and exciting. I had to ask a nurse to help me because most of them tended to forget I was only sixteen.

No one doubted I would be a capable mother, but I was still very young. I was already a Queen and now the mother of a child.

Everything had happened much faster than we had planned, but honestly, I wouldn't have wanted it any other way.

We only stayed in the hospital for a few days before heading home, and while we'd been away, Stephanie had finished decorating the nursery. It was right next to our room, and it was flawless—exactly the sort of space a young prince deserved.

"Thank you so much for doing all this. You really didn't have to," I told her sincerely.

"I know, but I wanted to. There was no way I was letting Prince Grayson come home to a half-finished nursery," she replied.

"It's absolutely perfect. Thank you," I said again.

"Damn it," Elias muttered beside me.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"There's trouble at the barrier. I need to go deal with it. You stay here with Grayson, I'll handle it," he said, kissing me quickly before rushing out.

"So, tell me just how overprotective is Alpha Elias these days?" Stephanie asked with a grin.

"Extremely. He doesn't want me doing anything that might harm me and insists I focus on bonding with the baby. He won't even let me handle pack matters while Grayson is this little and so dependent on me," I explained.

"And are you actually going to follow those rules?" she asked curiously.

"I'm not sure yet," I admitted.

I changed Grayson's diaper, fed him, and tucked him into his crib.

Then I went downstairs with the baby monitor to grab something to eat, but I could hear Elias's voice carrying from the conference room as he interrogated someone.

The other voice sounded oddly familiar, so I pushed open the door completely and saw Elias and Luke standing there with several warriors, questioning a man dressed in peculiar clothing. Clothing I recognized.

“Arthur,” I gasped. He turned in his chair to look at me.

“Lyra, thank goodness. I had no idea how I was going to track you down,” he said, getting to

his feet.

“You know each other?” Elias asked suspiciously.

“He’s from the other realm. He’s the one who helped me defeat Mia and get back home. What’s happening now?” I demanded.

“We’re in serious trouble. Mia’s half–sister lost her mind after you left. She’s killing everyone

she can find. We need your help,” Arthur said grimly.

“Her half–sister?” Elias questioned.

“Morgana,” I confirmed. He gave me a strange look. “Just trust me—it’s true. And yes, this man really is King Arthur,” I added.

“She’s already destroyed my castle and my Kingdom. She’ll wipe out the entire realm if we don’t stop her. I need you to return with me,” he urged.

looked at Elias, then back at Arthur.

This was yet another mess I had created—and one I was now responsible for cleaning up.

Kylie K

Hey guys, I've got a couple other books for you to check out. I hope you like them as much as this book. When The Moon Calls You Home Moonlight In Chains

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PART THREE – CHAPTER 95

As soon as I got everything settled in the house and Stephanie was taking care of the baby Elias and I were able to sit down with Arthur and find out everything that has happened in

Avalon since I left.

He explained the whole situation as nothing short of horrific, painting a picture so grim that it was hard to believe it was the same place I once knew. The realm that I had walked through, full of light, laughter, and life, was gone. In its place lay nothing but ruin. The forests that used to sing with the sound of birds and rustling leaves had been reduced to blackened stumps, their ashes scattered by a relentless wind. Villages that once bustled with people and color were nothing more than hollow shells, crumbling under the weight of silence. The air itself seemed poisoned, heavy with despair, and the sky was a dull gray that refused to let the sun break through. What had once been a thriving realm now resembled a vast, lifeless wasteland, stripped of all hope.

Creatures were being killed all over the place and Morgana's dragons, what was left of them, were making her presence known and that she was the one to be feared.

I didn't think there was anyone worse than the black witch, but I was obviously wrong.

"Lyra. We need you to come back to Avalon. I need your help." Arthur said, voice flat with

urgency.

"Wait. The last time she went there she couldn't find her way back." Elias folded his arms, every word a barricade.

"She can get back now." Arthur snapped. "She learned the routes. She knows the portals."

"No. I don't care about routes." Elias shot back. "It's reckless. Have you forgotten we've just had a baby? Grayson needs her here – now. Not lost in some place where time runs on a different clock."

"I understand that." Arthur said, but the patience in his voice was paper-thin. "Time moves differently there. Days and weeks aren't the same."

"And what if one day there equals a year here?" Elias pressed, voice rising. "If she goes, she could miss Grayson's whole childhood. That's not 'a risk' – that's abandonment."

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“Morgana is furious because Lyra left.” Arthur barked. “She wanted to finish Lyra herself and when Lyra vanished, Morgana tore my realm apart.” His fist slammed into the chair; fury replaced reason.

“So because your realm got wrecked, we should hand Lyra over?” Elias exploded.
“She’s not

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your saviour, Arthur. She isn’t some one–person solution you can ransom to fix what you

broke.”

“Is she only mine then?” Arthur shot back, incredulity cutting sharp. “Is she only here to save

you and

wolves? To be your handy champion when things go wrong?”

your

“She’s here to protect this realm.” Elias said. “Not to prop up your crown. Not to be sacrificed on the altar of your guilt.”

“She started this.” Arthur’s voice was cold now, the blame a razor. “She crossed into my world, killed the witch, the queen—left me to finish Morgana after she murdered her sister.

She walked into it.”

“And you expect me to swallow that you can handle Morgana without her?” Elias’s stare was blunt, accusatory. “You want to drag Lyra back because you can’t—because you’re out of options.”

“What are you implying?” Arthur demanded.

Elias didn’t soften. “I’ve seen you look at her since you arrived. Don’t pretend it’s only duty. Don’t pretend there isn’t more tangled in your reasons.”

Arthur’s face went slack; he looked away. I met Elias’s eyes when he turned to me.

“Lyra.” He said.

“His guards told me he’s falling in love with me.” I answered, steady and deliberate. “But I made it clear – I’m coming home to you.” I didn’t flinch. I wouldn’t lie to Elias, not about this.

Arthur looked at me like I had betrayed him by telling Elias the truth.

“Morgana’s dangerous enough to wipe out the whole realm.” I said. “I started it – I killed her dragon and her sister. She told me she’d take our baby in return. That’s how unhinged she is. I can’t just leave them like that.”

“Then I’m coming with you.” Elias said.

“I expected you to.”

“We’re not leaving empty-handed.” He went on. “We’ll take an army and go after her

“Grayson-“I began.

“I know. I don’t want to be away long either.” Elias said.

– fast.”

“He’s a newborn. He needs me now.” I said, louder. “If you want to go straightaway, Arthur, you can – but we won’t rush off until we’ve planned this properly.”

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Arthur snapped, “My whole realm could fall while you’re hesitating.”

“Time moves differently there.” I replied firmly. “A few weeks here is only a day or two in Avalon. Morgana already took a long time to do the damage she did

she’s not going to destroy everything in forty-eight hours. We’ll prepare and move when we can do it right.”

I saw Elias smirking at Arthur and Arthur didn’t look too pleased. But he wasn’t going to argue.

I was the Queen in this world and I wasn't going to be swayed into doing anything I didn't

want to.

I just had a baby and he had to be my main priority. Right now, that's where my focus was. But we were also going to gather the army and get them ready to fight whatever we had to

battle over there.

They weren't prepared for the types of creatures that we were going to encounter which meant I was going to have to train them myself.

That was something else that I don't think I was ready for. But I knew Elias would be there to help me, as long as I explained everything to him beforehand.

We got a worker to set up a room for Arthur and he went to get settled in while I went back upstairs to Grayson's room.

Stephanie asked if everything was alright and I told her that I would explain everything to her

later.

After she left I sat on the floor next to Grayson's cot, just watching him sleep.

Elias sat behind me and I leaned against his chest while I was trying to run everything over in my head.

"What are we facing here?" Elias asked.

"Warlocks. Werebears, but they're on our side. I hope. Dragons, Giants if there are any left. Luga, he is in charge of a clan of sphinx-like creatures. I killed a lot of them when they attacked Arthur's castle, but I don't know if I got all of them. There's probably a lot of things in that realm that have joined Morgana because I hurt their kind." I explained.

"You've never told me what happened there." He said.

"I never thought I'd have to. I guess that was just wishful thinking." I said.

I leaned my head back on Elias and I started going through everything. From the second I arrived at Avalon until the second I left. Every creature I encountered and ally I made.

He sat back on the floor, his arms crossed tightly around my waist, and just listened to me. I could see in his eyes that he was hoping—maybe even silently begging—that I would hurry up and finish the story, to finally bring it all to a close. But the truth was, there was always another detail, another memory that clawed its way to the surface, demanding to be spoken

aloud.

So I kept talking, and he kept sitting there, silent and patient on the outside. Yet, beneath that calm exterior, I could sense the storm brewing. Every word I spoke seemed to gnaw at him, piece by piece. His jaw tightened, his shoulders stiffened, and though he tried to mask it, I knew he was getting pissed off—angry not at me, but at the weight of everything I had gone through.

And more than that, I could see the nervousness creeping into him. It was in the way his eyes shifted when I mentioned certain names, or how his fingers tapped restlessly against my stomach when I described the wasteland. He wasn't just angry; he was afraid. Afraid because he knew that we weren't done with this nightmare. Afraid because going back there wasn't just a possibility—it was a certainty.

The Warrior's Broken Mate Chapter 96

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When Grayson woke up Elias was the one that got up and got him out of his cot. He started rocking him around the room and I sat on the floor watching them.

He took Grayson to the window and looked out at the view for a minute, even though Grayson couldn't see it. He was just wanting to spend some time with Grayson. That was obvious.

But he needed to change his nappy and I sat in the chair in the corner of the room when Elias handed him to me and I started feeding him.

"I better get going. I have to start looking through the list of warriors that we have." Elias said.

"Get Luke to help. And someone else. There are a lot of warriors around here." I said.

"I know. They keep growing." He said.

"I mean, we've got warriors from every pack at our disposal." I said.

"I never thought of it like that." He said.

“They’ll come if we ask them to. But right now, I think we should keep it in house. Try and keep it to the ones that are already here. Your warrior pack and the royal guard.” I said.

“Alright. I’ll start looking.” He said. So he kissed me gently before he left the room and I sat there feeding Grayson while staring into his sweet little face.

There was a knock at the door and Stephanie slowly opened it.

“Hey. Come on in.” I said.

“Are you sure? I didn’t know you were feeding.” She said.

“I’m sure. It’s fine.” I said.

“Alright. Elias said that there’s some crap going on. It’s not good.” She said walking inside and sitting on the other chair in the room.

“No. It’s not good. Stephanie, I need you to promise me something.” I said.

“Anything.” She said.

“Elias and I have to go away for a little while. I need you to take care of Grayson. Protect him with your life and if we don’t come back, make sure he knows about us.” I said.

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“You’re starting to scare me.” She said.

Claim

“Yeah. I’m pretty scared too. For the first time in a long time, I didn’t think it was possible. But

I am scared. Not for me or Elias. I’m scared for Grayson.” I said.

“You’re going back there, aren’t you?” She asked.

“We have to. But we’re taking an army and Morgana isn’t going to get away with what she’s doing.” I said.

“How long will you be gone?” She asked.

“I have no idea. But I am leaving Grayson with you. Please, promise me that you will protect him?” I asked.

“Of course I promise. He’s my little man too, don’t forget.” She said and I chuckled.

“He’s lucky to have you.” I said.

“Just make sure that you come back so I don’t have to tell him about you.” She said.

“I’m gonna do my best.” I said.

“He’s the prince. If you and Elias don’t come back, then that could cause problems here.” She

said.

“I know. Which is why we are going to leave the most loyal of royal guards here. They will help protect him until he’s old enough to take over. No one is taking the throne from him. Not like they did from me and my mother.” I said.

“Will Rowan be here as well?” She asked.

“Yeah. I’ll talk to her later about this.” I said.

“Alright. I really don’t want you to go back there.” She said.

“Me either. But I have to finish what I started.” I said.

Stephanie stayed in the nursery with me until Grayson went back to sleep and I put him in the cot and grabbed the baby monitor.

I took it with me as we headed downstairs and Elias had Luke in the conference room with files scattered all over the table.

“I’ve already contacted my pack. They’re ready whenever we are.” Elias said.

“I knew we could count on them.” I said.

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Claim

"These are the warriors from all the other packs that surround us and the royal guards."
Elias

said.

"We're leaving the strongest royal guards here." I said.

"Why? Doesn't it make sense to take them?" Luke asked.

"No. They're staying here to protect Grayson. If we don't come back, there could be trouble here. People trying to take the throne for themselves. That's not happening to my son." I

demanded.

"Okay. Not a problem." Elias said, grabbing another file.

"So, Lyra, what's it like having two Kings totally in love with you?" Luke smirked, looking far too pleased with himself.

I shot him a glare, then glanced at Elias, who was suddenly fascinated with hiding behind a

file.

"Jealous much?" I teased.

Luke grinned. "Are you kidding? I'd love to have two Queens fighting over me."

Elias lowered the file just enough to give him the weirdest look, and I burst out laughing.

"That... sounded way worse than you think." I gasped between giggles.

Luke turned red. "You know what I meant!"

"Not sure anyone else did." Stephanie chimed in with a grin. "You've always been a bit of a mystery, Luke."

"Shut up! I have not!" Luke protested, but his blush gave him away.

"Did I miss something?" Arthur asked, walking into the room.

"No. Nothing much at all. Just trying to figure out what s****I orientation our Beta is." I said.

“Shut up.” Luke yelled and I started laughing again.

“Is this really necessary? Shouldn’t we be focusing on saving my realm?” Arthur asked.

“Lighten up, will you?” Stephanie said, rolling her eyes.

“How many people do we have?” Arthur asked again.

“A few. We’re still looking for more. We’re taking as many as possible without leaving our castle open to attack—or our son vulnerable.” Elias snapped.

“I get that this is different for you now.” Arthur said. “Last time you were pregnant in Avalon. Now you’ve got a baby. You’ve got another life to think about. I get it. But I have a lot of lives to consider, too.”

“You said she’s already attacked most of the realm. How do we know anyone’s even left?”

Luke asked.

“There are survivors.” Arthur said firmly. “Camps, people in hiding. My soldiers are getting as many to safety as possible and patrolling for others. I know people are still alive, and that’s why we’re doing this.”

“Do you really think Avalon can be rebuilt, or is the realm lost?” I asked.

“I don’t know.” He admitted.

“Then why keep people there?” I pressed. “Why are we making this an attack mission against Morgana instead of a rescue mission for your people?”

“Would you take your people to a strange realm?” He asked.

“If it meant they wouldn’t be hunted or killed, yes.” I said.

“I can’t do that.” He said.

“Arthur... your castle is gone. You don’t even have a home.” I said.

“I don’t care. We’re not leaving the realm. We’ll figure it out after she’s dead.” He snapped.

“That’s fine.” Elias said. “But if it looks like it’s too dangerous, I’ll be ordering our people back through the portal. You’ll be on your own.”

“You already said you’d help me.” Arthur said.

"I did." Elias said, his voice hard. "But Lyra just suggested a solution and you completely shut it down. You wouldn't even consider it. If you're going to act like that, you don't need our help -and you don't deserve it. We're not going there just to serve your ego because Morgana took over your kingdom."

Arthur looked at me, then Elias, then the others. He lowered his head and shook it.

"I thought you were meant to be a Queen." He said, causing Elias to growl at him.

"I am a Queen—a practical one." I said. He turned and walked out.

"Why are we even helping that asshole?" Elias muttered.

"Because we have to." I said.

"I mean what I said. If it looks like we'll be wiped out, we leave." Elias said.

"I know." I said, sitting back at the table.

"Has he ever had a Queen or anything like that?" Stephanie asked.

"I don't know. Why?"

"If he hasn't, and he's ruled alone, it might explain why he doesn't get you two agreeing on things. He's used to having the final say. That's probably what he expected from you, Lyra." Stephanie said.

I looked at Elias.

"That makes sense." I admitted.

"Yeah, but it doesn't change anything." He said.

"I know." I said.

I sat at the table in the dining room helping look through the files and we started organising them into different piles of potentials to come with us and ones that we wanted to stay at home.

The Warrior's Broken Mate Chapter 97

The Warrior's Broken Mate Chapter 97

It was a restless night with Grayson that night but Elias got up as often as possible to help me with whatever it was that he could help me with.

When the sun finally started rising in the morning I was asleep sitting up in the chair in Grayson's room with my hand in the cot. I had obviously fallen asleep while trying to get him back to sleep. But I was woken up by Elias gently shaking me.

"Hey, that can't be too comfortable. Why don't you go back to bed and I'll keep an eye on him." Elias suggested. But I leaned forward and I turned to look out the window.

"No. It's alright. I should stay up now. We've got a lot of work to do today." I said.

"That can wait. You don't need to worry about it. I've got things covered." He said.

"It's alright. Let's just go and get this s**t sorted." I said, grabbing the baby monitor and I slowly got out of the chair before walking out of the room.

"You're really stiff and sore." Elias said, watching me walk down the hallway.

"Yeah. That chair isn't too comfortable to sleep in." I said.

When we got downstairs the kitchen staff saw that we were awake so they started making breakfast immediately.

Elias cleared off the table so we were able to eat breakfast and we sat there while I was thinking about everything.

"Are you sure you're ready for this? To go back there?" He asked.

"Yeah. I'm sure. I've been there before." I said.

"I know you have. That doesn't mean anything. It's different there now. It's going to be harder.

"He said.

"I promise. I'll be fine." I said.

"Not in this state." He said.

Arthur walked into the room practically glowing, and it made my stomach twist. I couldn't stand that kind of cheerfulness—not this morning.

When breakfast was set down in front of us, I kept my head down and ate in silence. The others weren't speaking either; the air was thick with everything they weren't saying. Their hostility toward each other sat between us like another plate on the table, impossible to

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ignore.

Claim

I was too drained to step in, too tired to care—so I just let the silence grind on, every second heavier than the last.

As soon as I finished breakfast I went to the living room where all the files had been placed and Grayson started crying. So Elias went upstairs to get him.

He changed his nappy and clothes before he brought him downstairs to me.

I had to feed him again while I was looking through the files but as soon as I was finished I put him in the rocker right next to me and I laid down on the couch with a file in my hands.

It didn't take long for me to pass out on the couch with the file on me. But of course I wasn't that lucky.

I heard some people running through the house towards the front door so I got up and went out to the front terrace where Elias was standing with Luke and Stephanie and I looked down the stairs to see a bunch of people that I had never seen before.

One of them walked up the stairs towards us, and stopped right in front of where we were.

"I am Alpha Isaac. We have heard of the mission that our King and Queen are about to depart on and many Alpha's have come together to give their services." Alpha Isaac announced.

"What are you talking about?" Elias asked.

"We've all come, bringing our strongest warriors. They have volunteered to join you on your quest so that you can return safely." Alpha Isaac said.

Elias turned around to look at me and I was standing there in shock, looking at all the Alpha standing at the bottom of the stairs with their warriors behind them.

There were hundreds of them and even though we wanted to take many with us, that was way too many. We wouldn't be able to hide and too many people would be exposed and would get hurt if they all came with us.

I wasn't sure what to do since they had come all this way, offering to help us. I didn't want to send them away.

"Would you excuse us for a minute?" Elias asked.

So he turned around and walked just inside the house with me.

"That's too many people. We can't take that many or they'll die." I said.

"I know. What are we going to do?" Elias asked. So I sat there thinking about it for a minute.

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"Well, what they are doing is honorable. I don't want to throw that back in their faces. We need more people here to protect the castle and Grayson when we leave." I said.

"Alright. How do we decide who comes and who stays?" Elias asked. So I stood there thinking about it for a moment before I came up with a solution.

"Alpha trials." I said.

"What?" He asked.

"Alpha trials. We put them all under Alpha command one at a time and we find out who it most worthy to come with us and who is more suitable to stay here." I said.

"Yeah. We can do that." He said.

Claim

So Elias and I went back outside and we walked downstairs with Alpha Isaac and explained the situation to them. The two different duties that we needed fulfilled and they all seemed keen to take on either one of them. So we proposed the interrogations and no one opposed it. They were willing to go along with it and we all agreed.

The trials would begin that day. We needed to leave as soon as possible. We'd already been putting it off for too long. We need to get back there before there's nothing left and everyone is dead. Everything hinged on them, and only once they were done would we

make up our minds. Until then, the air itself seemed to hum with expectation, stretched thin with waiting.

The men moved with quiet efficiency, setting up camp in the clearing just beyond the castle walls. Tents rose like a small forest of canvas, fires were lit against the gathering dusk, and the smell of smoke drifted on the wind. Their voices carried low, steady, as though none of them wanted to disturb the uneasy calm before what was to come. The clearing became a living thing—shadows shifting, steel glinting, the presence of men who knew tomorrow could change everything.

Arthur came down to see what was happening, curiosity written all over him, and for once he seemed at a loss for words. He stood at the edge of the chaos, watching the werewolves move as one—the raw sound of loyalty. I could see it in his face: he was more than impressed. He was astonished. Maybe even envious.

Because that's what struck him most—not the violence itself, but the unity. How loyal we were to one another. The good ones anyway. How we didn't hesitate to throw ourselves into the fight for what we believe in. No second-guessing. No betrayal simmering just beneath the surface. Just instinct, devotion, and the code that bound us.

I told him then, plainly, that werewolves are different from his people. We're bound to each other, not just by blood, but by choice. We live our lives by a code, and we don't break it when it becomes inconvenient. It's who we are.

Maybe he should think about that. Maybe, if he carried that truth back with him, it would stop his people from constantly tearing each other apart. If he truly calls himself the King of his land, then he should act like one. A king who cannot hold his people together isn't a king at all.

I let the words hang there, sharp and heavy, watching to see if they would cut him or change him.

The Warrior's Broken Mate Chapter 98

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It took a long time to get through the warriors' interrogations but we managed to sort out the ones that would be going with us and the ones that would be staying behind.

And the following morning was when we finally decided to make a move towards the other realm. Once everything was decided, we ate, got some rest and finished making our plans for the following day.

The warriors said goodbye to their families that they had brought with them.

I don't think anyone got too much sleep that night, but as the sun began to rise, it was time to get up and we had to start getting ready.

All of the warriors were going to stay in wolf form the whole time they were in the other realm, but we weren't going to. We were going to be in human form. It would be easier for us to talk to Arthur and talk to others that might still be alive over there.

We said goodbye to everyone that we knew and Arthur started leading up towards the portal that he came through. The one that he knew was far enough away from Morgana that we could all get through easily enough.

"I need more detail about Avalon." I said. "You called it a wasteland. What remains of the

forests and the villages?"

"Some forested areas still stand." Arthur replied. "Most villages are in ruins. Many people were killed when Morgana attacked, but a significant number escaped before their villages were destroyed. Those survivors are now scattered."

"How many creatures survived?" I asked.

"I don't know." Arthur said. "When Morgana began her assault they fled. I couldn't determine casualty figures. You killed many of the attackers while you were there, but I can't account for the benevolent creatures—if any survived, they're likely hiding."

"No dragons?" I asked.

"None that I've seen." He answered.

"And where is Morgana living now?" I asked.

"Her residence is intact." Arthur said. "It's heavily protected by a cloaking spell."

"A cloaking spell?" Elias asked.

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"She can observe the outside, but we cannot see her or her home." I explained.

"Her castle." Arthur added.

"Whatever." I said.

Claim

"When we reach her stronghold we need to locate as many survivors as possible and bring them to safety." Arthur said.

"If any are still alive, they've probably already sought refuge." I replied.

"There's something else." Arthur continued. "The black witch is buried beside Mia at Morgana's castle. The locals call her the Ash Queen now."

"So Morgana is the Ash Queen, and both Mia and the black witch are interred at her estate. Why does that matter?" I asked.

"She is furious that you killed them." Arthur said.

"The three were related." I said.

"They were sisters." Arthur explained. "Same father, different mothers—though the mothers were related to each other as well. It's complicated."

"Not especially." I said. "Their father was cruel and corrupt and a pig."

"Why tell us where the black witch is buried? What's the significance?" Elias asked.

"I believe the Ash Queen may be attempting to find a means to resurrect her." Arthur said.

"Is resurrection possible?" Elias asked.

"No. Don't you watch movies?" I replied. "If it were, something would go disastrously wrong. No amount of legitimate magic can truly bring the dead back. Think of the risks and unintended consequences."

"So she can't succeed." Elias said.

"Not in the literal sense." I said. "But if she believes she can, she will be distracted. That preoccupation could be an operational advantage for us."

Arthur took us to the same place where he had come through the portal and I turned to make sure that everyone was ready. I got a chorus of voices floating through my head as they all agreed that they were so I nodded to Arthur and he started moving his hands in a counter clockwise direction and a portal opened up.

Arthur stepped through first and then Elias and myself.

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Claim

Everyone followed us through and I looked around at what used to have beautiful forests everywhere but now had nothing. It was hardened black ground beneath us, not even dirt or

sand.

I turned in circles looking for anything that I might recognise but there was nothing.

“Alright warriors. You know what to do. Don’t go too far that you’re out of range of the mind link, but check it out. Make sure everything is secure and yell if you run into trouble.” Elias

ordered them.

“I really don’t think we needed this many warriors.” Arthur said as the wolves started to run off into different directions in their groups.

“And I wasn’t taking any chances with my mate being here. She was in danger the second she crossed through the portal.” Elias glared at Arthur.

“Can we please just start moving? I don’t like standing here like sitting ducks.” I said.

“There’s a large village up ahead. Maybe Elias can take these warriors to that village and check it out. See if there are any survivors there.” Arthur said. But Elias growled at Arthur.

“And what do you plan we do?” I asked.

“I think we need to make our way to the Ash Queens castle.” Arthur said.

“You said it yourself, she can see us coming but we can’t even see her castle.” I said.

“I know. But I think with both of our magic, we might be able to get through the barrier.”

Arthur said.

“The whole point of bringing the warriors was for back up when we meet up with the Ash Queen. There’s no way in hell you are taking Lyra to the castle by herself.” Elias demanded.

Arthur stared at him for a moment before he turned to look at me.

I looked back at both of them. The look on their faces. And it was a pretty easy decision to

make.

“So, you said the village is this way?” I asked, pointing south and I started walking towards the village.

I felt the happiness that Elias felt when I decided to go with him, but he doesn’t know the reason why I chose to go with him.

Arthur would never suggest that we march into that castle on our own. It was reckless, borderline suicidal. Everyone knew the fortress was steeped in shadows, a nest of traps and

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twisted magic that bent to the Ash Queen’s will. To set foot inside her stronghold was to hand her the battlefield on a silver platter, and Arthur—of all people—was too clever, too cautious, to ever risk that. And yet here he was, determined to go straight to her gates.

Claim

If he truly meant to save this realm, then why in all the goddess’ names was he willing to play directly into her hands? There was no reason for him to face her there—none, except folly or desperation. He needed to draw her out, to force her to fight where she wasn’t in control, where the ground beneath her feet wasn’t infused with her power. That was strategy. That was survival. Anybody with a grain of sense could see it.

So why couldn’t he? Or worse—why wouldn’t he?

A chill twisted in my gut, sharper than fear, heavier than doubt. Something was wrong. I couldn’t name it yet, couldn’t put shape or reason to the unease gnawing at me, but it was there, pulsing like a bruise just beneath the skin. Something I didn’t trust. Something I didn’t like. And something I knew—deep down, with an urgency that set my pulse racing—I had to uncover before we sank any deeper into this so-called quest. Because once we passed a certain point, once we were locked inside the Ash Queen’s web, there would be no turning

back.

Elias caught up to me and held my hand so I would look at him, the look on his face said everything. Arthur was up to something. He didn't tell us everything that we needed to know. Which I fully agreed with.

The Warrior's Broken Mate Chapter 99

The Warrior's Broken Mate Chapter 99

The village was mostly destroyed roofs caved in, walls torn open. A battlefield.

We searched every building. No one. Until Elias stepped out and an arrow nearly hit him, embedding in the hut.

I rushed to him, and people poured from the buildings. A familiar voice called orders.

"Kronos," I breathed. He pushed through the crowd, stopping in shock before me.

"Lyra. You're here." Kronos said, shocked as he lowered his bow and arrow.

"Arthur said you needed help." I replied.

He hugged me, but Elias growled and stepped between us.

"Kronos, this is Elias. Elias, Arthur's guard, Kronos." I said.

"He doesn't touch you again." Elias snapped.

"I did warn you about possessive mates." I said.

"I didn't know it was that bad." Kronos admitted.

"Why did you attack?" I asked.

"We saw those creatures." He said.

"Werewolves. They're with us. Spread the word – more survivors are out there and our wolves are looking for them. The wolves aren't going to hurt them." I instructed.

"You two. Go to the other camps." Kronos ordered two of his men. So they ran back from where they came from, a small forest that was still standing beyond the village and got on

their horses and took off.

"So, you're here to save the day. How do you plan on doing that?" Kronos asked.

"No idea. I needed to come here and see how bad everything was first." I said.

"It's worse than you thought, isn't it?" He asked.

"A hell of a lot worse." I said.

"Well, we need to start preparing. It's going to be nightfall soon. It gets really cold here at night and we can't survive without a fire." Kronos said.

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"Her people will see a fire." I said.

"Exactly." He said.

Claim

His people dispersed to set up camp, stretching a canopy over the village to hide the firelight. They secured the sides, cloaking the place from view. I was surprised we'd walked straight in -it could've been a trap. There was no food cooking, which made me wonder if one of our wolves had been their prey. The wolves patrolled the perimeter while I stared toward the ruins of Arthur's castle, its faint glimmer still visible. Arthur sat by the fire with Kronos, speaking in hushed tones. He kept glancing at me. I couldn't catch their words, but for once, even a werewolf whispered well.

I felt Elias approach, and before I could turn, he was behind me, his arms wrapping around my waist as I stared out into the endless darkness.

"Do you feel that same worry I'm feeling?" He whispered, his breath warm against my ear.

"Yeah." I murmured. "We'll see what happens tomorrow. If it doesn't sit right, we leave."

"I'm glad we think alike." He said softly.

"I didn't come here to be tricked into something that could hurt you, me, or our pack." I admitted.

"I know." He replied, pressing closer. "If he's scheming, he's damn good at it."

"He's a King. Lying comes naturally to them." I said, a hint of bitterness in my voice.

“Really?” he asked, raising an eyebrow.

“Did I say werewolf King?” I teased.

“Nice save.” He said, and I chuckled against him.

“Our warriors will be up all night. We should rest.” I suggested.

“Yeah. Me too.” He said. “I found a hut that’s not too ruined. Already claimed it.”

“Perfect.” I said, turning into him, feeling the warmth of his body against mine.

So Elias took my hand and we walked through the village to the hut that he found and as soon as we walked inside I saw that everything was still in this hut. Including a mattress and blankets.

They obviously weren’t clean, but it was cold and it would help us stay warm for the night.

As soon as Elias laid down he pulled me down beside him and pulled me close to his chest.

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Claim

It was almost like he was afraid that I was going to disappear during the night or something. He had a tight grip on me, but I wasn’t complaining.

I never felt safer than when I was in Elias’ arms in bed.

The forest lay like a wound beneath the sky – the trees standing proud and green, unaware of the ruin that would come. I was looking at it as if remembering a life I hadn’t yet lived, when Morgana’s shadow fell over me. She was close enough that I could smell smoke and something darker beneath it: iron and old blood.

I turned. Where nothing had been, a dark castle now rose towers like black teeth, banners | didn’t know. It wasn’t Arthur’s. It didn’t belong to anyone I knew.

Morgana’s face twisted, small and furious. I hissed, “I’ll deal with her when the time comes.”

“She’s a problem,” she spat. “Lyra has linked with Arthur. If they join forces-” Her fist cut the air. “They can destroy us all.”

“Would you two stop yelling? You’re giving me a headache,” Mia said softly, rising as if the argument were a guest to be ignored.

“And what do you propose?” Morgana sneered.

Mia’s calm smile was unsettling. “You’re the mother of dragons. Set them loose – Arthur and Lyra won’t be heard of again.”

A guard burst into the courtyard, panic on his face. “Ma’am... you have to come. They’re coming. They’ll destroy the castle. We’re outnumbered.”

“No interruptions,” I barked, my voice steady for them, even if hollow to me.

“Go take care of them. Stall them until I get there.” I told Morgana and Mia, and the moment the order left my mouth they were gone, running like two predators through the dark corridors. The castle swallowed them.

I walked to the balcony because one always looks over the land before a storm. Because old rituals comforted me. Because I wanted to see who would be first – Arthur with his stubborn jaw, Lyra with her stubborn heart, the two of them like a single dangerous thing.

There was no one yet. Wind combed the trees. A far-off bell tolled once and then not again.

I wandered into the castle on a foot that felt slightly foreign. The stone smelled of rain, of herbs, of iron. I passed tapestries that moved like breathing things. A sudden, ridiculous thought how little time I had taken to make sure my lipstick was perfect before battle –

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pulled me toward a mirror.

I stopped.

Glass. Frame carved with thorns. And the woman in the glass was not me.

—

Claim

She stared with eyes like coal; her lashes were long, knife-sliced shadows. Her cheekbones cut the light. Her lips my lips – were painted a colour that felt wrong on my tongue. For a breath I thought she would blink and the joke would be over. The mirror did not lie.

I – not I – the black witch looked back. And behind her eyes, something moved. Memory, maybe. Or the residue of a life I had not lived.

—

Panic struck like a hand at my ribs. I raised my fingers to my face and they did not tremble. The nails were longer, tipped with a darkness that caught the light. When I laughed a sound I did not recognize the laugh came out low and amused, not mine but not entirely foreign

either.

—

Warmth flooded me then, not the warmth of sunlight but the searing, humming hunger of

power.

I tasted it

—

—

sweet, coppery, familiar and stomach sank. I tried to summon my own

memories, but a film muffled them. The black witch's thoughts bled through, brushing the edges of my life until I didn't know where I ended and she began.

I should have resisted, ripped her from me, shouted my truth.

Outside, the forest exhaled. A name I loved echoed beyond the trees, and the castle's bells tolled – not warning, but summons.

I touched my lips. They were cold. The black witch's smile curved up, and for the first time since the mirror, something like laughter – but not mine – escaped.

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I jolted awake really suddenly and Elias jumped as well, sitting up to see what was happening

around the hut.

He saw me shaking, breathing hard, and pulled me close, holding me tight.

“It’s alright. You’re safe. It was just a bad dream.” Elias whispered.

Safe now, maybe. But what the hell was that? I’d been inside the black witch’s body. This

wasn’t just a nightmare – it was something far worse.

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The Warrior’s Broken Mate Chapter 100

I wasn’t able to get back to sleep that night. My mind kept replaying every tense word from earlier. I lay there, rigid, listening to the quiet rhythm of Elias’s breathing beside me. Even in sleep, he seemed alert, each inhale and exhale steady and controlled, a reminder of the unshakable presence he carried.

The room was still cloaked in darkness, but faint streaks of light began creeping through the cracks in the walls as the first hints of dawn approached. The silence was broken slowly, almost reverently, by the distant sounds of life outside. Footsteps shuffled across the camp, the creak of leather straps, the low murmur of voices coordinating. They were preparing, I realized—preparing to hide the camp from prying eyes during the day, to make it vanish beneath the forest as though it had never existed at all.

I kept my eyes open, heart restless, tracing the shadows that shifted with the rising light. Each movement outside felt amplified, every small sound dragging me further from sleep, anchoring me to the quiet tension of the morning. The camp was alive already, and I felt like a stranger in its rhythm, suspended between the night’s lingering unease and the day’s

inevitable action.

I guessed this was a daily routine. The careful, quiet preparations, the subtle movements that made the camp seem almost alive in its concealment—this had to happen every day. I couldn’t stay cooped up any longer. Carefully, I swung my legs over the side of the bed and pushed myself upright, muscles stiff from lying awake. The cool morning air from the cracked window brushed against my skin, but it wasn’t enough. I needed more.

I stepped outside, letting the soft light of dawn wash over me, and immediately felt the camp's pulse. People were moving everywhere, tending to tents, rearranging supplies, whispering instructions. The clatter of tools, the shuffle of feet on the soft earth, the occasional muted laughter—all blended into a rhythm of quiet efficiency. The world outside seemed to move faster than the stillness inside, and I felt strangely both out of place and

drawn into it.

And then I noticed movement closer, deliberate and fluid. One of the wolves, tall and sleek, padded toward me. Its amber eyes locked onto mine, curiosity and recognition flickering in their depths. Its presence was calming and unnerving all at once, a reminder that even in this chaos, there were creatures bound to me, connected to me in ways humans could never

understand.

"Report, ma'am. No activity during the night. If they know that we're here, they aren't making a move on us." The wolf mind—linked me, its voice calm and steady in my head. I felt the connection like a thread running between us, unspoken but clear, carrying more than words

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ever could—alertness, loyalty, even a trace of pride.

Claim

"Thank you." I replied, my thoughts careful and deliberate. "Get some rest. Let someone else take over. We'll be moving out shortly."

The wolf gave a small, almost imperceptible nod, then turned and padded silently toward the edge of the woods near the village. I watched him disappear among the trees, his movements purposeful, a shadow among shadows, until he found a secluded spot to camp. There, he could rest while the rest of the camp continued its work, preparing for the day and maintaining the careful illusion of peace.

Even as I observed him, I felt a strange sense of reassurance. The wolf's presence, even at a distance, reminded me that we weren't alone. The camp buzzed around me, but the quiet thread of connection to him made it feel anchored, like we were all part of a larger rhythm— an unseen current of vigilance, loyalty, and readiness that stretched through every living thing

here.

“Lyra. How did you sleep?” Arthur asked, walking up behind me.

“Yeah. Pretty good.” I said.

“Really? I thought I heard some strange noises coming from that hut last night.” He said.

“Arthur. If you want to keep your sanity then I suggest you don’t listen to what goes on in our bedroom at night time.” I smirked.

“Right. Well, it sounded like a nightmare.” He said.

“Maybe you should just pay attention to yourself sleeping and not us.” I said.

“Will do. Anyway, I was thinking that we could try and get to the castle today.” He said.

So I turned around to look at him fully with a curious look on my face.

“Why are you so desperate to storm her castle?!” I snapped, my voice trembling with barely-contained fury. “It’s a death sentence. If we want even a slim chance of beating her, we need to lure her out—drag her away from her walls, away from her comfort zone. Anywhere else, we might stand a chance!”

“I know.” He said, his jaw tight. “But it’s not that simple. She never leaves. She has others do her dirty work. But with our combined powers, we can sneak in. Cloak ourselves. No one else can do it.”

I threw my hands up, frustration cutting through me like a blade. “And once we get there? What then? Do you know the castle’s layout? Do you know where she’ll be? How many guards, how many traps, how many—dragons she might have hidden behind her magic? Do

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you know anything about the place?!”

Claim

“We need to find out. The only way is if just the two of us go. Not all of us.” He said, his voice calm, deliberate.

I narrowed my eyes. "Do you have some secret connection to the Ash Queen or the black witch that you're not telling me?"

"What? No. I have no connection to that b***h. And I don't want one." He snapped.

"Well, something's off." I said, my voice rising. "There's something you're hiding, and it's making me question if I should even be here!"

"Don't leave." He said quickly, almost pleading. "Maybe there are things I didn't tell you—but nothing you couldn't already figure out."

"Like what?" I pressed, voice sharp.

"Like the werebears." He said, hesitation creeping in. "They're all gone. Wiped out. They were ...good to you. Kind to you."

"That's because they recognized me as one of them. A werewolf." I said, jaw tight.

"I know that." He said, sighing. "But as for the rest... I don't know what you're planning. I

needed you here to kill the Ash Queen—but she never leaves her castle. The only way to reach her is inside her domain. And it's cloaked. We're the only ones who can get in."

"So you

didn't tell me any of this back home because you thought I wouldn't come?" I hissed, anger sparking in my chest.

"Yeah." He admitted, almost sheepishly.

"You do know we have ways to make her come out. Ways that don't involve sneaking into her death trap alone. I brought warriors because I knew we'd need them." I snapped, pointing at the gathered fighters.

"You brought too many. They'll draw attention!" Arthur barked, frustration cracking his voice.

"Arthur." I said, stepping closer, voice icy, "I've been fighting all my life. Believe it or not, I've gotten good at it. Not that I'm bragging—but I know exactly what I'm doing."

"Yeah. The Black Witch said the same thing—and now she's dead." He said with a bitter laugh.

"I'm the one who killed her." I shot back, teeth clenched. "While you were back in your castle twiddling your thumbs!"

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“What the hell is that supposed to mean?” He asked, incredulous.

Claim

“Even when your own realm was on the brink, I was out here fighting for it! Not you. So don’t you dare tell me I don’t know how to fight or what I’m doing!” I spat, anger blazing.

“Lyra, now is our chance.” He said, voice tense, trying to regain control. “We can get in before anyone notices we’re gone. We can scout the place.”

“No.” I said firmly, shaking my head. “I’m not going alone. That’s why I brought protection. The warriors. We will find another way to draw her out. But we are not going to her castle.”

“You need to see reason...” Arthur said, stepping forward and grabbing my hands.

“And you need to understand.” Elias growled from the doorway, his voice low and dangerous, “that she’s not going to that f*****g castle.”

Arthur froze, his hands dropping as Elias strode toward us, his posture radiating a silent but lethal warning: stay away from her.

It was more obvious now than ever that Arthur was after something. He needed to get me inside that castle for a reason that he wasn’t telling us. And it was going to cause a massive problem here.

I knew that this place was in danger. But I never imagined that King Arthur could be at the heart of the danger.