

Chapter 80 - The Map

"And they say that a hero can save us, I'm not gonna stand here and wait." - "Hero" by Nickleback

Third Person POV

Within a half-hour, several knocks on the front doors were heard. Neron promptly got up from his seat and when he opened it, chills shot down his spine the moment his eyes met steel grey.

A tall, broad-shouldered man stood dressed in common fashion: a simple black tee with matching pants and knee-high boots yet holding a leather cross bag slung from his right shoulder. Odd choice of fashion in the summertime. His dyed cobalt-blue hair brushed against his eyelashes, shielding half his face in mystery. The man continued to stare straight into Neron's soul.

"Are you Endo?" Neron asked.

"Yes." He answered with a monotonous tone. "Will our staring contest continue, or can I come in?"

The Alpha didn't like him. If this was under different circumstances, he would have Endo booted off his territory, but he was doing this for his mate. For Kiya. It was the only reason this witch was here. Stepping aside, Endo marched through the threshold.

Upon entering the common room, his indifference cracked into a warm smile when his eyes landed on Lyra and Nikolai. "Mr. and Mrs. Guerrero, it's a pleasure to see you both again."

“Likewise, Endo.” Lyra smiled, pulling the man into a hug. “I wish it was under better circumstances.”

Endo’s smile fell. “How long ago were Phoebe and her friend taken?”

“They were taken some time this morning.”

Endo’s eyes moistened. Despite their brief time together, he had grown fond of Phoebe. His heart lurched at the thought of her hurt and hungry. In his head, he made a silent prayer to Goddess Hecate for her protection. “I’ll do my best to locate them.”

“So, what type of witch are you?” Beta Jacqueline asked. “I thought the females are called witches.”

“Witch is a gender-neutral term.” The blue-haired man replied. “May I use this table for my supplies?” He asked the ranked wolves of Zircon Moon. With permission, Endo sank to his knees and began pulling items out of his cross bag.

Candles, herbs, crystals, a large map, and more. A map of Nevada and the surrounding states and lands stood boldly from the tanned, wrinkled parchment. As he silently set up his station, the questions continued coming.

“How did you meet Phoebe?” Came from Darien.

“We met in an occult shop. She was shopping for craft supplies and we chatted. I knew there was something special about her from the moment I looked into her eyes.” Endo looked up briefly. “Only a special witch could have eyes as purple as amethyst.”

“What else do you know about her?” Galen asked.

“I know she’s Goddess Hecate’s avatar. She’s skilled in the darker arts. Not of common darkness, many believe, but of the more controversial

crafts with spirits, ghosts, and necromancy. She's the only one who should practice that craft, for it is forbidden for the rest of witches on this green Earth."

"Why?" Abigail pondered, leaning from her seat to observe the man closely.

"Power is seductive," Endo answered with a grim tone, placing his crystals on the outer edge of the table. "Necromancy holds the power of communicating and potentially raising the dead. That's a power that could easily fall in the wrong hands. We should not disturb the dead unless it's for dire circumstances dictated by Goddess Hecate's avatar. Unfortunately, not all witches follow this sacred rule."

"Then what type are you?"

"Eclectic. I don't home in on a specific craft. Are you all done interrogating me?"

"Endo." Nikolai placed a hand on his shoulder, gently squeezing. "After what they've gone through today, they are wary of newcomers. Two of our own are gone."

"...I apologize." The man nodded, pressing his lips in a fine line. "Forgive me if I came off as rude."

"It's fine. We just want to know if you could locate them women." Anthony assured, kneeling on one knee next to him. "Can you?"

Endo stared at the Alpha of Garnet Moon for a minute. Fragments of color appeared before his grey eyes, vibrant and powerful. Darting his eyes from one person to another, each harbored a swirl of colors telling him a story of their rampant emotions. However, many shades of orange and deep yellow were the common colors he picked out from the group. The witch knitted his eyebrows in concern. "There are bursts of orange

and deep yellow around you all. Feeling worried is an understatement, right?”

Anthony raised an eyebrow. “Wait. You can see color around us?”

Endo nods. “I have synesthesia. It’s helpful when detecting someone’s emotions. In fact,” He looks at everyone. “Most of you have the same colors. However, those two colors are strongest in you, Anthony, and him.” He gestures at Neron. “I see deep green around you as well. You feel guilty about something.”

Neron’s eyes widened in both shock and anger. Shocked that this witch could read him like a book and angry that he felt exposed. Yes, he felt guilty. He felt guilty about losing Kiya. For making her sad before she was taken from him. For not being strong enough to keep her safe.

“It’s not about me.” Neron snapped to gear the conversation away from him. “It’s about Kiya and Phoebe.”

“Nikolai mentioned on the phone that they’ve disappeared without a trace.” Endo tapped his chin in thought as he stared at his map. “What I could do is a locator spell. There are several kinds, but none of the safer ones would work in this situation.”

“Safer ones?” Kwame repeated, but in a questioning tone. “Are you saying that there’s a dangerous locator spell?”

“Yes.” Endo sighed. “We witches do not use often this one for that reason. This type is only used if any other means cannot find the missing person. To my knowledge, a brute who covered his tracks took the women. It left no evidence for you to use. Unfortunately, that calls for this locator spell.”

“What makes it so dangerous?” Ashley asked. “Will someone get hurt?”

The witch shut his eyes, planning his next words. “In normal locator spells, I use a sacred item of the individual. A trinket they hold dear to their heart. I have nothing sacred of Phoebe’s. Does Kiya have a piece of jewelry she treasures?”

“She had that one selenite necklace,” Sapphire answered, tapping her cheek with a finger. “She wore it to stabilize her powers, but Phoebe said it is useless because she awakened. She handed it to Phoebe right before they were kidnapped.”

“Understood. It leaves us with this, then. This locator spell requires a lot of spiritual energy. Instead of an item, I could find the person through a bond.”

“Could a mate bond work in these instances?” Neron asked, ready to jump in and help. “I’m Kiya’s mate.”

“Only if the bond is accepted on both sides. Has Kiya accepted and embraced the mate bond with you?”

Guilty, Neron cast his eyes to the ground. “No, she hasn’t.”

“Then I cannot use an underdeveloped mate bond. That leaves a familial bond. Phoebe has no known family, but does Kiya?”

“Yes,” Steven spoke up. “We’re her biological parents and Raina is her older sister.”

Endo’s eyes scanned the family, from Steven to Ashley, to Raina. His eyes lingered on Raina for a minute, watching the colors surround her in swirls.

“Purple is the color of ambition. You want to help, do you?”

“I do.” Raina nodded, eyes watering. “Kiya is my little sister. I hurt her so much in the past and... I’d do anything for her to forgive me. I don’t

know how she's doing right now, I'm afraid to think about it. I want to bring her home. Just tell me how."

"The spell requires the bond of blood. You and Kiya have a bond only sisters could share. It is weak, but it is enough for the spell. With this enchanted map, I could pinpoint where she is. If she and Phoebe are together, we could save them both."

"Okay." Raina smiled, already optimistic. "But what makes it so dangerous?"

"It's called the bond of blood for a reason. It's going to take a great deal on your part to connect to Kiya, mentally, and spiritually. And I'll need your blood for the map because blood is sacred and holds connections and memories. However, because of the great deal of energy, you'll exert, it could hurt you. There's also a risk of death."

"Absolutely not!" Everyone turned their heads to see Valerian snarling, furious. Emerald shifted to coal black. "I'm not risking my wife for this!"

"Val, I have to do this." Raina stood to face her husband. "It's our only chance of saving my sister."

"Not at the expense of your life! What happens if this thing goes wrong? I need you. Adonis needs you. If I lose you..."

Raina took her mate's hand and squeezed it with reassurance. Her free hand cupped his face, a thump running across his cheek. "I love you. Thank you for standing up for me. But this is Kiya. You know how many times I stayed up, praying to our Moon Goddess for the chance to see her again? To have her near me? I got that chance and now, some evil took her away. I'm not losing my sister again. This is our only option and I'll proudly take part if it means Kiya steps foot in this house again."

Kissing Valerian sweetly on his lips, she watched as black turned back to gentle green. “I’ll be fine. I’m a tough cookie.”

“You are.” Valerian chuckled, rubbing his knuckles against his love’s cheeks. “Be careful.”

“I will.” She then turns to Endo. “I’m ready. Let’s find them.”

It was time to begin the spell. Endo had prepared his station with the needed items. Both the witch and the wolf held hands, ignoring the soft jealous growls from Valerian. Once Endo began the foreign incantation, the atmosphere in the room crackled with mystical energy. The colors of the rainbow were visible to the naked eye, dancing, and twirling. Flames of the candles rose and flickered with the energy of the vibrating crystals.

“Concentrate,” Endo ordered. “Focus your energy on your sister. Use your bond to reach out. Push out stray thoughts for they would break your focus.”

Raina shut her dark eyes, pouring her energy into Kiya. At first, there was nothing. Just black, like a faulty telephone connection. But then she felt it. The tug. The sisterly bond she thought died was there, guiding her to the end. She almost wanted to cry in joy. The more effort she put in, the more sweat was seen on her. She refused to stop, despite the worries of her mate and parents.

After a minute, she got a glimmer of hope. She felt her. She felt her baby sister.

“She’s exhausted,” Raina muttered. “Drained of energy.”

“What else can you feel or see?”

“Everything is dark but...” Raina’s eyebrows knitted together.
“Someone’s holding her?”

“Is it Phoebe?”

“No...it is someone else, and she doesn't like him.”

Forcing an inner beast back is a feat Neron had to do on his own. Onyx nearly sprung forward in a rage at the thought of someone else touching his beloved. His anger was akin to his human's, ready for a rampage.

“Keep holding on, Miss Raina.” Endo let go of her hand and pulled out a pocketknife. “Before you tear my throat out, Mister Valerian, know that while the connection is strong, a drop of blood from Raina would help narrow down Kiya's exact location on this map. If she's within the Tri-state area, we'll be fine.”

“And if she's not?”

“We'll deal with it when the time comes.”

Kwame held his Beta back to prevent him from disrupting the ritual. Everyone watched as Raina's palm was cut. She didn't flinch, but her parents did. Blood dripped onto the parchment, the magic swirling the blood in all areas before concentrating on a specific location.

The center of Nevada, deep in the wilderness.