
Chapter 12

I lifted my hand, signaling to Wolfgang to stay quiet. The chatter outside our tent was growing louder.

His fangs were already bared, his body tense and ready to spring into action.

But we couldn't afford to be reckless. Not when we knew they weren't thinking straight.

"Calm down," I whispered into his ear. "Hand me the antidote. I'll sneak out the back and follow them. I'll use the scent evaporator to stay hidden."

"There's no way I'm letting you do that."

"Letting me?" I sputtered, my voice rising a notch. "Did I ask for your permission?"

"I'm still your alpha."

"And I'm your luna. We're equals in this relationship. And I can handle this better than you stomping around and causing a scene."

He looked taken aback by my blunt words, but there was no time for niceties. We had to administer the antidote and get back to the pack mansion.

And we had to do it quickly.

"Fine," he finally grumbled, his teeth clenched. "Do what you want, but if you're not back in ten minutes, I'm coming after you and taking down whoever gets in my way."

I fought the urge to stick my tongue out at him and instead sprayed myself with Eleanor's scent masking potion.

It would keep me hidden for the next twenty minutes.

Wolfgang handed me a vial filled with a blood-red liquid. The sight of it sent a shiver down my spine.

"Be careful, Rory."

I nodded and slipped out the back of the tent. The witches had gathered in front, and many were heading towards a cluster of trees not far from us.

I moved as quietly as I could, hiding behind a thicket of bushes and getting close to their circle. My heart pounded in my chest, each beat as loud as my breaths.

"I could have sworn I smelled wolves," a witch with bright green hair said. "We should burn this place down."

"I'm not in the mood for your drama, Agatha," another one retorted. "And I'm hungry. Mildew, when's dinner?"

That's when I noticed the cauldron bubbling nearby. But the witch watching over it was too alert.

I needed a distraction.

"Rhea," I called to my wolf. *"Help me out. What can I do?"*

"Are you serious, Rory? You're an alchemist! Use your elemental magic!"

I could have kicked myself. How could I forget that?

Gathering my courage, I raised my hands and summoned a gust of north wind. It came, cold and strong.

I focused my energy, manipulating the wind until it grew dark and ominous.

"Blow hard, enough to startle them, but not enough to drive them away."

At my command, the gust swept towards the witches, knocking off their hats and causing a few to scream.

The witch watching the cauldron was distracted. Seizing the opportunity, I quickly poured the antidote into the pot. It smelled like chicken and cabbage stew. Not bad for a bunch of witches.

I headed back to the tent, relief washing over me. But there was one problem.

If the antidote didn't work, we'd be trapped in the tent until we had to fight.

Wolfgang was about to step out when I ran into him.

"I told you I could handle it." I rolled my eyes at him. "You should trust me more."

"Sorry." He shuffled his feet, looking sheepish. "I was worried."

We moved to the north end of the tent and listened for the witches.

They were settling down for dinner.

"This tastes weird," one of them said.

"Hey, Mildew, did you forget the salt?"

"I most certainly did not," she snapped back.

I held Wolfgang's hand, holding my breath.



"Wait." One of them spoke. "Did I eat too much?"

"You didn't."

"I— What's happening to us, sister?"

Wolfgang let out a breath.

"P...poison thistle." A witch screamed. "I remember now. That's what he used, that rogue wolf hunter!"

It was time. Before Wolfgang could stop me, I jumped out of the tent.

"Rory!" I yelled, rushing after her. I wasn't about to let her face the witches alone!

But the witches weren't attacking. They just stared at her, confusion in their eyes.

"Who are you?" one of them asked.

"I'm the one who put the antidote in your dinner. Sorry it messed with the taste." She stood tall. "Wendell has been poisoning you."

"I knew it," the witch from earlier said. "Poison thistle and nightshade."

Aurora nodded, catching her breath. "We have more antidote. We can give it to you and help you recover."

The witches were listening intently now.

"All I ask is that you come back to our pack mansion and help us. We're under attack by Wendell and his hunters. We need your strength."

"What's in it for us? Will you withhold the antidote if we refuse?"

Aurora tossed our entire stock of antidote to them. I almost shouted in protest but held back.

"That's yours," she said. "I wouldn't keep it from you. You deserve to heal. I just want you to know that if—if you help us—you'll never suffer at the hands of wolves again. Not as long as I'm here."

There was a moment of silence.

The woman who seemed to be in charge of the group finally broke the silence. "We'll reach your mansion by sunset, pup. You should head out now. Protect your home."

Aurora spun around.

"There's no time to lose."

"There's no time to lose."

We shifted forms and sprinted towards our home, our heartbeats echoing the distant, ominous rumble of war drums.

In the distance, I could see the glow of amber lights. Fire.

We had to pick up the pace. War had arrived.



