

Chapter 133

Adelaide

It felt as if the world around me had stopped. I softly clutched my chest, trying to steady my breathing. After sacrificing my position as the next High Priestess, I didn't have a whole lot to sacrifice, so I didn't like where this was headed.

"The Veil has layers depending on each threat," Aelius spoke. "The one who creates the Veil is expected to stay inside to keep watch on every layer within the realm."

My heart ached as I realized what he was saying. I would have to give up everything, my freedom, my life...all to keep Alaric, everyone, safe from Baelor.

But it would be worth it, I know it would...

"If that's what it takes to keep Alaric safe," I accept my faith, "then once again—I've already decided."

"That's not all, Adelaide."

There was more? My chest tightened at the mere thought. "Then what is it?" I asked, my voice barely above a whisper.

Aelius tilted his head. "Where do you think your strength comes from?"

I frowned, trying to think. "From my eyes...from all the training I've had since I was a child."

Aelius scrunched his face, not satisfied with my answer. "Not from your mate?"

I froze, knowing he was right. Alaric was my strength, I had often said I wouldn't be able to live without him, I felt stronger with him by my side—and it was all because of that bond.

No...did that mean...

"Grandpa," I said, my tone firm. "Please don't tell me he has to be in that Veil with me."

Deep down I remained hopeful, though I already knew the answer.

Aelius bobbed his head, slowly, confirming my suspicions. "I'm afraid there is no other way."

"What..."

"It seems that although we in Bloodstone Haven do not follow their god, the Moon Goddess—who's had her own encounters with Baelor—paired you to Alaric for a reason," Aelius shared. "It is all connected."

I breathed heavily, clenching my hands in my lap. "So how will it work?" I asked, sarcastically. "I mean me, Mom, Baelor—and Alaric, all in the same Veil?"

"It will not be just them," Aelius stated, adding more fuel to the fire. "It will be anyone trying to interfere with the balance of nature."

I could only look in confusion as Aelius continued speaking. "As long as you will keep Baelor and the prince on different levels—and as long as you keep yourself separated from the prince, all will be well, Adelaide."

"Why can't we be together?"

"Because the Veil requires the Glow for a long amount of time, and your eyes could still feed him darkness."

"No, no—wait," I chuckled, rubbing my temples. It felt as if my head was spinning more and more with each word that left his mouth. "So, you're telling me that we'll be locked in this Veil, forced to sacrifice our love...just to save the world?"

"That's what I'm saying," Aelius said, shamelessly. However, I was not satisfied. This was not how I had envisioned it.

"I don't care about being stuck inside this Veil," I stated. "If it keeps that monster from hurting anyone, then I'll do it. But Alaric—"

"And I don't care what happens to me!" A voice interrupted me, making me look up at the entrance.

It was Alaric. "But I will not let Addy rot away in some Veil—while she has so much more to give to this world. I won't allow it."

"Alaric..." I opened my mouth, but nothing came out. I was prepared to go inside the Veil so he could live, and at the same time he was prepared to do the same for me.

Was this the sacrifice?

I watched as two young children ran circles around him at he at the entrance, and eventually ran off giggling. They must've led him to the temple.

Even in the simplest attire such as the loose shirt and the beige pants he was wearing, I could still see the same fire in Alaric's eyes.

"There has to be a different way," he said, stepping closer.

"D-Did you hear everything?"

"I did.

I supposed this is what he meant when he said I would see him soon. I looked from the smirk on Aelius' lips to Alaric who seemed to be a bit too calm for someone who had just heard all we had just discussed.

"I now know the God of the Underworld is not some kind of myth or a joke," Alaric said, "but I'm sure we can come up with another solution. Something that doesn't require Addy—"

"Then what is the solution?" Aelius cut him off, raising a brow.

"W-Well," Alaric mumbled, digging a hand into his waist as he seemed to be in deep thoughts. "You tell me. You're the Seer."

"I wouldn't refer to myself as a Seer," Aelius corrected him, gesturing to the empty spot on the plaid beside me. "Come, sit young prince."

Alaric cleared his throat while finding the right position to join us on the ground. "Why would you not be a Seer?" He muttered under his breath.

Aelius chuckled softly. "I can choose to see, and I can choose not to. I can father children, I can connect, and I can love. Therefore, I am not a Seer."

An annoyed breath escaped Alaric. "Then what are you?"

I looked between the two of them, my mind still busy with the information about the Veil.

"They call me the Soothsayer, the Oracle, the—"

"That's literally all the same!" Alaric argued, slapping my thigh. "Isn't it, Addy?"

I smiled and shrugged before shooting Aelius a look, telling him to let it go. If there was one thing about Alaric, it was that once he made up his mind, he wouldn't back down. He was just too stubborn.

"You may call me Aelius for now."

"Aelius," Alaric repeated, still trying to find a comfortable position on the plaid.

"My apologies," Aelius said. "If I knew you were coming, I would've prepared a throne for Your Highness."

Alaric appeared to be flustered. "I thought you knew we were coming?"

Even in the midst of all of this, I couldn't help but laugh softly. He was so easy to fool, but that was what made him cute in my eyes. "He's just messing with you," I slapped Alaric's back. "Just ignore. He gets like this sometimes."

"Oh, I get it now," Alaric sang, smirking. "Since you're not a Seer, you're also allowed to make bad jokes."

Aelius let out a genuine laugh, then looked at me with a softened gaze. I knew what it meant—it was his way of showing he approved of Alaric. But did it even matter anymore?

I knew Alaric was a nervous wreck because this was what he did. Whenever a topic got too serious, he would rant about something else—in this case, whether Aelius was or wasn't a Seer.

Something completely irrelevant to what was awaiting us.

It was clear that Aelius could tell as well, but he entertained Alaric just enough to make him feel a bit more at ease. "Young prince?" he called out, catching Alaric's attention. "All I said was that a choice will have to be made, but I never said which choice—because that is not up to me."

"Okay?" Alaric lifted his brow. "So you are doing all of this for something that might or might not happen in the future—"

"No, it will happen," Aelius clarified. "All I'm saying is that I can't choose for Adelaide and neither can you...but you can allow me to prepare her, to prepare both of you for the Veil."

"And why would I allow Adelaide to step foot inside this Veil?" Alaric asked, his tone genuinely curious.

And I was thinking the exact same thing...

Why would I allow Alaric to step foot inside that Veil?

Aelius hummed. "You will not understand now, you might not agree now, but when the time comes—it will all fall into place."

Silence filled the temple.

"Is this what you want, Addy?" Alaric asked, making me look into his eyes. "To leave behind our lives, our friends—to let Aelius prepare us for...this choice?"

I bit my lip, already knowing my answer. I just wasn't sure how to tell him. Of course I would miss our friends. Claire, Greg, James, Jane, Lixie...

And Alaric? I knew how much his family and his people meant to him—but this wasn't about us anymore.

It was about everyone...

"I trust Aelius," I finally spoke, watching Alaric's eyes soften. "I trust you, me, the love between us, and I know that we can settle down here and follow Aelius, just like I know that we can fight against Baelor. I know it's a lot, asking you to trust me and leave everything behind, but—"

"Then we'll do it," Alaric said, the words leaving his mouth just like that. My eyes widened in shock.

"I will not leave you, Addy—and if you trust your grandfather," he glanced at Aelius who carried a faint smile as if he had already knew.

"Then I'll stay here with you, and follow him."