

### Chapter 338

Kylan

Jack knelt silently before the spot where we had laid Chrystal to rest, his knees pressing into the dirt.

His shoulders were tense; no words left his mouth, and watching him there...I just wish that it didn't have to be this way. I really did.

I still didn't regret anything, but even I knew that a father shouldn't have to kneel in front of some random pile of soil to say goodbye.

It was hard to get an image of what was going through his mind, but I could guess. Someone like Jack? He would most likely replay every moment he had thought he'd failed her because he always wanted the best for everyone.

Wondering if he could've saved her, and possibly going over their last conversation where she might've wronged him because she often tended to do so.

He sucked in a broken breath and dropped his head. Then there were soft sniffs, like he himself couldn't believe he was crying.

I looked at Nate beside me, prepared to catch him, but there was no need for that. Not anymore. He kept himself collected as his eyes were steady and glued to his father's back.

I had known Jack my entire life, and knew he carried more of a heart than the king ever would, but I had never, ever—seen that man cry. He was crying, and we all had a hand in it.

“He used to think he could fix her, and at some point...he just stopped



trying," Nate exhaled.

"Dad makes it seem like he doesn't have more questions," he said. "But I know he does."

That was Beta Jack.

Always trying to be the kind one, not overstep, just let things be...

"Then we'll give him the answers just like we all agreed."

Nate agreed, nodding his head. "I'll tell him what happened," he said. "He deserves to know."

"I'll do it—"

Nate lifted a hand, stopping me before I could even take a step. His eyes met mine, and I could tell this was not up for debate. "I will tell him," Nate argued, releasing a light chuckle. "You're a bit...cold, which I understand, but I'm not sure if that's what he needs right now."

A frown appeared on my face.

Cold?

My eyes followed Nate as he approached Jack and placed his hand on his shoulder. He crouched down beside him, and I stood too far away to hear exactly what was being said, but close enough to still catch his sniffles.

It made me accept that maybe this part wasn't mine. I had helped Nate with the hardest part, but now it was time to step back. This was a moment for the Wyrnsbanes, and I knew Jack didn't need my shadow looming over him while he heard the truth of how he lost his daughter.



So I turned and walked, just far enough to give them space.

A short path through the trees led me back toward the mountain trail. With each step I took, my mind kept replaying everything again. Kayden, Chrystal's death, the way we buried her, and it was all too much and too fast.

Then my thoughts drifted to Little Violet and her words about the ring, the one in the dark, pointing the way.

If it was really about Jack, then why was everything still so uncertain? What if I had been mistaken about all of this, and it would once again lead to nothing?

I looked up at the sky, exhaling.

"I can't remember the last time I prayed to the Moon Goddess...or to anyone," I muttered. "But if someone is there, and if the ring really is important to protect Violet...then lead me to it."

As soon as the last words left my mouth, a sharp ringing shot through my ears. I hissed, clutching it as a small source of light appeared from the distance, flickering like it was waiting for me to follow it.

'You do not ask 'anyone' for things, you idiot!' a voice growled from within. It was Valerius.

Suddenly, the light pulsed again, and I hesitated for a moment. Was I supposed to follow it or not?

What if it was a trap, one Little Violet knew about?

'Either follow the light, or let me out, you prick!' Valerius snarled. 'Do something!'



I rolled my eyes and shut him out, refusing to let him take control just because he was feeling dramatic today. He had been behaving lately, staying in his lane, so why now?

The light moved, slowly drifting up the path, and this time I followed. Every time I got close, the light slid a little further, and in that moment, I did not care about anything else other than following that light. If I were being lured somewhere, so be it, but if there was even a chance that this could lead to me keeping Violet safe, I would walk straight off the mountain if I had to.

Finally, the light lowered. It dimmed and dropped to the ground right in front of me. Shocked, I knelt to look at a shiny little object, and there it was. The ring.

The one she lost on this mountain the night everything changed.

“No way,” I chuckled, a short breath escaping me. I picked up the ring, just to make sure, and a laugh of disbelief escaped me. It turned out Little Violet wasn’t playing with us after all.

Who would’ve thought?

Violet must’ve lost it on her way down.

I stood up and looked at the sky again. Whether it was gratefulness or relief, the ring was back, which meant it was at least one less thing to think about. “Thank you,” I said quietly. “To whoever did that.”

I closed my hand around the ring, squeezing it tight with no intentions to lose it this time. Then I began making my way down the path again.

Just as I had reached the location, I saw Nate and Jack emerging from the woods again.



I slowed my steps until we both came to a halt. Jack's eyes locked onto mine, but I wasn't quite able to read them. Nate stood right behind him.

I couldn't tell if their conversation had gone well. If Jack had taken it the way Nate promised he would, and if he truly had no issue with Violet being a witch.

A part of me braced because he had every right to be angry. To blame me for leading on his daughter and entertaining the king's wishes, while I knew I could never love her. And that maybe if I had told her from the start, she would've never bothered with Violet.

If I had a daughter and this was the ending she met after wasting so much time running after someone, I would've thrown a few punches too. Possibly even more than that.

Jack marched toward me. My jaw tightened, and I lifted my chin.

Just get it over with, I thought.

It would be a pain I could understand, though it wouldn't help him get over it. He stepped closer...close enough that I felt his breath on my collarbone.

I swallowed, preparing for impact, but it wasn't his fist I felt. Instead, it was two strong arms wrapped around me.

My body stiffened instantly, and I held back my breath. My hands froze at my sides as I was still trying to process that Jack was holding me like I was worth holding after what I had done to him.

What was he doing?