

## Chapter 345

Violet

Minutes passed, and still no words were exchanged.

We all sat around the same wooden table of my childhood home, where we had sat with Dad the first time we came here. Except now, dad wasn't the one sitting on the opposite side of me, but mom, and Little Violet had been sent upstairs.

Mom just kept staring at all of us, but every time her gaze reached me, she lingered for just a little longer, like she was still trying to come to terms with the fact that I was really her. Violet.

There was so much to ask, and so much to explain. Almost too much, and so little time. But I suppose for now it would just be for the best to let her process all of this. At least, that's what it looked like Kylan was doing, and for now, we all followed his lead.

Mom finally exhaled, puffing out a breath as if she had been holding it for too long.

"Alright," she said. "Let me try."

Try what?

She pointed her chin at Dylan. "You are my precious nephew, Dyllie," she said. "You are like a mini Fergus, so there's no question about that."

Dylan's cheeks flushed. "Thanks, I guess?" he mumbled. "Aunt Claire..."

A knot formed in my stomach. I had almost forgotten how close he had been to them...both mom and dad. Mom and Dylan used to go back and



forth all the time, and she loved bothering him while he loved the attention. I was sure it felt just as good for him to call her Aunt Claire as it had felt for me to call her Mom.

He had been so strong this whole time, but since this was mom, this was probably harder on him than he let on.

Mom looked to Trinity next.

"His mate?" she asked softly. "Our future Luna?"

The word 'our' brought shivers down my spine. She had said it so confidently without knowing she wouldn't be able to experience it. Dylan beamed, and Trinity smiled warmly.

"Trinity Richard," she said, extending her hand. She began to pull back, unsure, but Mom caught her hand and shook it.

"Don't be unfamiliar. I'm your aunt, right?"

Trinity hummed, her voice high-pitched, while Mom narrowed her eyes playfully. "Are you by chance...related to Alpha Clarence Richard and Luna Ayana?"

"Do you know my parents?" Trinity's eyes lit up.

"I know of them," Claire responded. "And I know that all of us Hastings, must be very, very happy with you in the future. A daughter of a big pack as our future Luna."

She took her time as her eyes slid to Lian, who stared back without blinking, the way she always did.

"I traveled to Lyperia not too long ago," Mom began. "Saw this little girl,



around Violet's age, the general's granddaughter, sparring outside with her brothers. I stopped to watch because she was just simply amazing, but it wasn't her skills that stuck with me...but her eyes," she said.

Lian lifted her brow, waiting for her to explain.

"I think eyes are special," Mom said, looking around the table. "They tell the truth, even in those who don't speak much, and the crazy thing about them is that they rarely change."

Lian cracked a small, rare smile. "It seems like you know everyone," she said. "My name is Lian."

"The general's granddaughter?"

"My grandpa is..." Lian spoke softly. "Yes."

Mom let out a warm, almost relieved laugh as she focused on the next person. Nate.

My stomach twisted with anxiety as I realized Kylan would be next, and then me...

For some reason, it was much easier not to look her in the eye when things were still unsure, but now?

How was I going to not look my own mother in the eye while she was so eager to learn about us?

Nate had a big smile on his face, one that hadn't left ever since we'd arrived.

"Jack's son, and I know that because I can't forget the smile of the kind boy who held my hand and led me to the throne room," Claire said,



returning the smile. "Nate Wyrmsbane."

A flattered sound escaped Nate. I had often wondered what he must have been like as a child, but he was always so sincere that I doubted he had changed much. This story only confirmed it.

"Your father is a good man, way too kind for this world. He has always treated me kindly at school and continues to do so to this day," she shared. "He often speaks of you and your sister, Chrystal, and how much the two of you mean to him."

My head turned to Nate, and so did Kylan's. I couldn't help but worry about how he would take that, hearing her name, but his smile didn't leave his face.

"He's still amazing, and so is your daughter," Nate said, his eyes searching mine. Claire's lips twitched, fighting an even bigger smile.

"And you have a beautiful home by the way," Nate added. "It's almost up there with your beauty."

Nate flashed her a charming grin. Kylan and I released a scoff at the same time, while Mom pressed her hand against her cheeks. "Thank you, that's so kind of you!"

Nate really did flirt with anything that breathed, as did Trinity, who had complimented Dad's eyes, but that was why everyone ended up loving them. They were charming.

Mom patted her cheeks a few more times as her eyes moved to Kylan. "And you are the prince?"

Kylan gave her a small nod.



"Crown...prince?"

He bopped his head again. A deep and relieved breath slipped past mom's lips. "Good news that you are the crown prince, but bad news that..."

That Elyx is still alive? Even through that smile, I could still see the hatred in her eyes, which was something really strange for Mom.

Little Violet was wearing those glasses, but she must've really, really hated him.

"Unfortunately," Kylan said flatly, reading her mind.

Claire chuckled before shaking her head in disbelief. "Who would've guessed Elyx's son would one day become my son-in-law, and my beautiful daughter...I know I shouldn't ask too much about the future, and I'm not going to ask how the king feels about that, or how we feel about that, but seeing the two of you sitting here, and together..."

My pulse fastened as she turned her attention to me, and just like that, a pair of beautiful blue eyes locked on mine again. "That means you will make it. That the Moon Goddess guided us, protected us...and that's all I ever wanted."

Us...

Her eyes began to water, but no tears fell. "I want to hold you, hug you... thank you for making it all the way to..."

"Eighteen," I whispered, keeping strong. "Almost nineteen."

"Eighteen, almost nineteen..." she repeated. "And without those glasses, too? That's incredible, Violet."





She shook her head as if she still couldn't believe it. "I won't cry because then you'll cry, and I know all of you came through the box of ashes," she exhaled, her voice shaky. "So I won't. I guess you'll just have to hug mom in the future instead."

My throat closed up, and my feelings were all over the place. She had no idea of what would become of her. She expected me to hug her in the future, and...she knew about the box?

I felt a warm hand on top of mine and knew it belonged to Kylan. He didn't have to tell me to breathe this time, because I already knew I had to keep it together.

Considering all we had gone through, all we would go through, this reunion seemed incredibly restrained, knowing that we were both trying to control ourselves.

But what else could we do?

I took a deep breath. If she knew about the box, what else did she know?

"What do you know?" I asked.

Claire's brows lifted. "You seem to be in a hurry," she tilted her head. "I don't know how much I can share, so why don't you start by telling me what you know?"

Right. That made sense.

"Sure," I nodded slowly. "I know that I'm half witch and heir to the Common Lands," I began. "I know about Adelaide and Alaric, and—"

"That I'm not your...mom?"



Claire's voice was calm, as if she had already accepted it. A sad, broken smile touched her lips. One that broke something inside me as well, because that was not what I wanted to discuss.

My heart dropped. "No, no!" I shook my head firmly. "You are my mom. You and Dad are my parents. I didn't come here to argue about that, and I don't care what anyone says," I stated, my voice clear. "That will never change, and that's really not relevant at this moment."

Claire's expression softened, but it wasn't the truth. That really was the least of my worries. It wasn't like they had lied to me, and it wasn't like they ever had a real choice. They were my parents, and they would always be my parents. I had doubted my place as a Hastings and a Bloodrose for a little while, but not because of them. From the moment I learned the truth, I never felt anything different. I never blamed them or anyone else for keeping that part from me. Ever.

If Kylan could have a hundred moms, then I was allowed to have three moms and three dads.

"Then what are you here for?" Claire asked quietly. "With all your friends ..."

"I think you already know," I met her eyes. "I came here for Baelor."

It seemed as if something had hit her the moment that name slipped past my lips.

The color drained from her face, and her fingers curled around the edges of the table like she needed something to hold on to. Her body trembled as if she were remembering something she had spent years trying to forget. Trying to prevent.



She looked terrified. Truly terrified.

"No..." Her voice barely came out. "Please...no."

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