

### Chapter 346

Violet

Mom closed her eyes for a moment. Her lips moved a little, like she was choosing her next words carefully. When she opened them again, they were just as frightened as they had been before.

Not much had changed, and seeing that expression on her face made me wonder if that was what everyone else saw whenever I broke.

That same helplessness.

But how could I blame her?

She had seen Baelor before, experienced his wrath, and that was not something one could simply recover from. I still couldn't sleep without seeing those red eyes and that shadow in every corner of my mind.

If I couldn't function at just a memory...how must it have been for her?

"At first I was so happy to see you alive, but..." Mom began, her eyes worried. "Did something happen in the future?"

I was at a loss for words. This was the part where I was probably supposed to say that something would happen. Something bad.

But I couldn't, and we all knew I couldn't.

Kylan took over the conversation, sliding his hand across the table to grab Mom's. "Claire?" he said gently.

She looked up as if she had forgotten where she was, and let out a small gulp. "Yes?" Her voice trembled.



"We don't have much time," Kylan said. "Or answers at the moment, but we do have some questions about Little Violet."

Mom swallowed hard. "I'm aware."

Kylan leaned forward. "Do you know what your daughter has been up to?"

Her eyes darted to mine, confused. "My daughter?"

"Not me, but her," I explained. "There's so much I can't remember—"

"Did something happen to our memories in the future?" Mom asked, squinting. She let out a sigh and a soft laugh. "I'm sorry, please talk."

There it was again...

Our.

Her eyes bored into mine, searching for answers. She loved studying people through their eyes, so she had to sense something was off by now. Right?

"She knows things no child should have to know, and that's why you got her the glasses," I said. "Can you tell me what you know?"

Asking these questions sounded so strange. Because they were about me. I was Violet, yet I wasn't...

Mom exhaled. "She used to get these...nightmares about a raven, except they weren't really nightmares," she nodded. "They were glimpses of what happened, what might happen. Things none of us could make sense of yet, and sometimes..."



Her voice broke. "Sometimes the words that came out of her mouth didn't seem like her own."

My stomach sank.

What words? What did I say?

Mom's eyes were apologetic, and I knew whatever was about to leave her mouth next couldn't be any good. Was Little Violet really evil? Did I have a hand in all of this?

"I'm sorry, Violet."

"No, tell me," I told her. "Please."

Mom closed her eyes and took a breath. "The prophecies we could handle. We know they run in the blood, and that she has inherited something old, something powerful, but still so beautiful."

I listened to her words and felt a warm feeling in my chest. There weren't many who would refer to those powers as beautiful, but it meant a lot to me that she did.

"I have never feared her witch side, but when your little girl starts talking about hurting people...destroying, burning, feeding people darkness, Greg and I knew that there was a possibility that something might've happened to the Veil."

She looked into my eyes. "Do you know what the Veil is?"

"Yes."

"Good."



Kylan and I exchanged a long look. My mind wasn't on the Veil but on everything she had just told me, and embarrassment crept in knowing they had all heard it. Hurting, destroying, burning...

"I said that?"

Mom shook her head. "You did, but it wasn't you...dad and I know it wasn't you because you're like an angel, Violet."

That's what they wanted to believe, but it was not like that. I was no angel, and after what we had done to Chrystal, I could never be.

"There's a lot my daughter has been keeping from us, and she refuses to tell, so I went to visit a soothsayer I knew would help her no matter what," Mom shared. "He told us to bring Lyperian stone, spoke over it, made the glasses...and then the nightmares eased."

My heart jumped.

Aelius had spoken over the stone, which meant the same thing must've happened with the ring. It was blessed by a soothsayer.

"The soothsayer...was it Grandpa Aelius?"

Although I already knew the answer, I just needed some confirmation.

Despite everything, Mom's face lit up. "You know his name. You must know him pretty well then."

My breath caught as I realized the mistake I had made, and Kylan nudged my leg under the table, warning me to be careful.

Mom pretended not to notice and straightened. "He had agreed to meet with me after many years and said that a dark soul had managed to



escape from the Veil, and that something big was coming.”

“Did he come alone?”

“No,” she said. “He brought an old friend—another soothsayer, and a boy I had once met at Bloodstone Haven,” she explained. “He’s as powerful as you, likes to talk a lot, Aelius took him under his wing, and he even brought her candy.”

The tiniest smile touched her mouth while only one thought ran through my mind. That boy had to be Jason.

“They didn’t stay long,” Mom continued. “They did something to the swamps, to keep evil out, and told us not to tell anyone, so we didn’t, and —” she broke off and took a quick breath. “He told us to keep her inside every full moon, which is when the shield breaks —”

“The full moon will be tonight,” I finished, shaking my head. “Only...she won’t stay inside when she’s supposed to.”

Mom widened her eyes. “W-What do you mean?”

My heart ached. I wasn’t sure how to say it without scaring her even more, but I owed her honesty.

“Baelor will come for her tonight, and when his plan fails, he’ll return in the future,” I said. “Something bad will happen in the future. Something that already happened here in the past,” I spoke. “And for some reason, because of that something that happened here in the past, I’ve lost some of my memories.”

Mom gave me a nod. “I believe you.”

A relieved chuckle came out. “I think the person who gave me the box of



ashes did it so I could keep the younger version of myself safe, so she would survive and wait for me so we can finally stop him in the future," I said. "But we can't do it alone. We need help."

"Aelius's help?" Claire stared at me. "And you were going to hurt...her, so he would reveal himself?"

"I—" I couldn't even finish.

Because yes, we were going to hurt Little Violet to get to Aelius until Kylan had stopped us. Silence filled the room, and Mom looked down for a second.

What could she be thinking about?

How much she hated older Violet for trying to hurt Little Violet?

Perhaps about taking Little Violet and running away from all of this?

Then suddenly, she stood straight.

"How strong are you?" she asked.

I fluttered my eyes at her. "What?"

"Are you strong enough not to cry?" Her voice was soft but steady.

"I—I don't know," I admitted, not quite sure whether I understood the question. It became much clearer when Mom opened one arm.

It was as if my body moved on its own as I got out of the chair. How could I not when she had opened her arm to me?

"Violet," Kylan warned. I felt his hand reach for mine, but before he could hold me, I stepped aside and rushed straight into Mom's arms.

Commented [Ma1]:



The hug broke me in ways I never expected, but no tears escaped. Mom held me tight, and I closed my eyes to enjoy the moment. It felt like years of longing all found their way into that one embrace.

"Violet," her breath brushed my ear. "I won't be able to hug you like this in the future, will I?"

My whole body stiffened. "I..."

Did she just ask me if she was going to die?

She let out a breath and smoothed a hand over my hair just like she used to when I was a child. "As long as it's for you, to keep you safe, I don't care about what happens to me," she whispered so only I could hear. "Dad and I made our friends a promise, and we'll honor it to my last breath. As long as you're safe, then I can live with whatever comes next."

The hardest part was that I knew she would say that. She had always been like that.

"Can you do something for me?"

"Yes," I breathed. "Anything."

"When your dad walks through that door," Mom said, "please don't look at him the same way you've been looking at me."

I pulled back just enough to meet her eyes. "What do you mean?"

A sad smile appeared on her lips. "Like we're strangers...or maybe like this is the last time you'll ever see me. I'm not sure yet."

Her words cut through me, but I was determined not to cry. Not to ruin it for everyone else. Mom believed I was strong enough not to cry.



I opened my mouth to speak, but then the door opened, and all heads turned. It was Dad...

He walked in carrying a basket in his hands. As soon as his eyes landed on me, everything fell from his grip, and a bunch of apples hit the floor.

"You're back!" he gasped, a bit too joyfully. "With more friends, just like Violet had said."

A slow, warm smile rose on my lips. "I'm back...Dad."



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