

Chapter 347

Violet

We had told Dad everything, the same way we had told Mom. About Baelor, the past, the future, and his reaction was calmer than expected.

After all we had said, the only thing he could tell us was that everything would be just fine.

He had said it with the same calm smile that I had never forgotten, but I didn't know whether to be comforted or terrified. He was just so... optimistic. Like, no part of him truly believed anything bad could happen as long as they were there to protect me.

And when his eyes never left mine, I finally understood why Mom didn't want me to look at him the way I had looked at her.

Dad was already so full of warmth, so taken by the thought of another Violet to love, that he didn't even stop for one second to think about what that really meant.

He wasn't thinking about danger, or time, or that they were risking their lives just by raising me—no. All he saw was his little, not so little, girl... back home.

"You knew, didn't you?" Dylan asked. "The last time we were here?"

Dad turned his head, smiling at Dylan. "You look so much like Fergus that even the younger version of yourself was freaked out by it and had figured out what was going on here."

Everyone burst out laughing.

Well...everyone except Mom, Kylan, and Lian.

Mom and Kylan were tense for obvious reasons. And Lian...she just didn't laugh much in general.

Kylan scoffed, folding his arms over the table. "So, will you be able to take us to Aelius or not?"

Dad cracked a laugh, looking at Kylan. "The last time I saw you was years ago. You were still a toddler, and just as serious and grumpy. To think that you turned out to be our princess's mate."

He laughed a bit louder, but when no one joined in, his smile faltered, and his face turned serious. "Right, Aelius," he said, clearing his throat. "Well, the soothsayer doesn't simply show up when you call. He's around, yes, but it doesn't work like that."

"So being kind got us nowhere." Lian tilted her head. "Maybe we should've hurt Little Violet after all."

Greg blinked. "What?" He slightly raised his voice. "I don't know who you think you are, but no one will hurt my daughter—"

"She won't. This girl is Violet's friend," Claire touched his arm, calming him down. Dad's jaw tensed. This was exactly as I remembered him.

Happy, always smiling, but whenever someone threatened to hurt his Violet, he would turn into another person. Kylan made a low sound under his breath and pressed his hand against his head.

"Kylan?" I asked softly. "Are you okay?"

He didn't answer. His fingers stayed pressed to his temple, his brows drawn tight.

"Aelius only appears whenever Violet is in danger," Greg explained. "He's shown up a few times to visit her, but most of the time it's just his voice or shadow—"

"Yes, that won't do today," Kylan said, rising from his chair. He looked around the small house like it had personally offended him. "I'd say let's go get him, but we're working with a tight schedule here, and I highly doubt this wooden shoebox or whatever spell those people used will stop Baelor from getting in, and if Little Violet dies tonight," he went on, lowering his voice, "then my Violet dies tonight. And if that happens..."

Kylan trailed off, jaw clenched. His eyes flickered toward me for only a second before he shook his head, turned, and started walking toward the stairs that led to Little Violet's room.

Everyone rose to their feet at once as all chairs scraped the floor.

"Kylan?" I caught up to him just before he reached the stairs. "What are you d—"

"Violet!" He called out, looking up the stairs.

My hand shot out to grab his arm, but before I could pull him back, I heard a sigh from deep within. One that didn't belong to me.

'Don't.'

That voice...

It was Lurnia.

I pulled my hand back and heard a low, amused sound. It seems my Valerius has finally decided to move and speak some sense into him, Lurnia said. So I will do the same to you, Violet.

My breath caught in my throat as footsteps came from the stairs. Little Violet came down, her tiny hand sliding along the railing as she took baby steps.

She didn't get far, as Dad had already slipped past Kylan and pulled her into his arms. He kissed her head and held her tight, as if she might disappear if he didn't.

Lumia wasn't finished yet. 'She is confused, doesn't know what she's doing or who she's up against, and if you do not get those old men and that powerful kid here, she will sacrifice herself.'

What?

'It's either you or those two, Lumia stated. You will face Baelor tonight, and he will not be alone. You will need help that can match your strength.'

My skin went cold. Little Violet tilted her head to look at Dad. "What's wrong, Daddy?" she asked, pouting. "Did I do something wrong?"

Her voice was soft and innocent, but her eyes said she already knew. She knew exactly what was going on.

"You haven't done anything, princess," he shushed her gently. Mom brushed her hands through Little Violet's hair.

My eyes turned to Kylan. His hands were balled into fists, and he looked ready to break the entire house apart.

What did Valerius tell him?

Then I looked at the others. Dylan, Nate, Trinity, Lian. All stared with wide, confused eyes, probably wondering why Kylan had snapped so

suddenly.

Lumia's voice came through once more. 'Valerius and I were made to destroy Baelor. You should really consider letting me breathe tonight. I deserve some action, don't you think—'

I shut her out instantly.

No.

Not her.

Not tonight.

Would Valerius have told Kylan the same? To let him out so he could help?

I took a breath. "Mom, Dad?"

Mom lifted her head to look at me, and Dad was still holding Little Violet close. "If you trust me," I said slowly, "you will put her...me down."

Dad looked at Mom, who gave him a confident nod. Only then did he lower Little Violet to the floor. Even as they gazed at each other, all I could see was the love they had for that child. For me.

I walked to the little girl and knelt so we were the same height. Then I placed my hands on her small shoulders and stared into a pair of pale blue eyes that mirrored my own.

"Are you going to touch my head again?" she whispered, her voice soft. "I didn't like that the last time."

I nodded. "I know, and I do not want to hurt you, but I have to do this."

She shook her head, biting her lip. "If you call them...they will...all to

protect me," she whispered. "You have to believe me."

Her voice trembled. That was when I knew that Little Violet already knew how the night would end.

I reached for her hand and squeezed it. There were no words I could say, so I focused on her eyes, hoping that the words I wanted to share—the ones I couldn't risk speaking, would reach her the same way I had once heard Varius inside my head.

'If I don't call Grandpa Aelius, then we will die, and Mommy and Daddy made a promise not to let that happen.'

Little Violet gave me the smallest nod and squeezed my hand in return. She had understood every word I had said.

I exhaled, pressing my hand to her forehead just like I had the last time. I didn't even know what I was doing or whether it would work, but all I knew was that I had to try.

The moment I touched her, it felt as if something rushed through my veins. Something stronger than anything my glowing eyes had ever done, and more powerful than anything I had ever felt before.

My eyes took in a space filled with endless white, stretching in every direction. It was just like the Veil, only less terrifying. It seemed like a world made of light instead of shadow.

But where was I?

"Violet? Is that you?"

A voice broke through, and my heart pounded in my ears. I recognized that voice—even without seeing him, I knew.

Commented [Ma1]:

Commented [Ma2R1]:

Grandpa Aelius...

"But that's impossible," I heard him whisper.

Why did he sound so surprised? Unaware?

"I don't know if Baelor has done something to block you from seeing what he's planning," I spoke, not wasting any time. "But I'm in danger, Grandpa, and we need your help."

I had barely finished my sentence before the space cracked. All the light vanished, and I found myself back in the room, my palm pressed against Little Violet's head as everyone watched in anticipation.

Had he pushed me out?

Maybe he didn't believe me. Maybe he didn't want to help, and I had overestimated how much he cared for his granddaughter.

Maybe it wasn't her, but me. What if I had done something wrong—

Then the voice came.

"I'm on my way, Violet."

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