

## Chapter 348

Violet

I could only hear my own breathing. I didn't know how I'd done it, but it worked...it had actually worked, and Grandpa Aelius answered.

He was coming...

The room stayed frozen as everyone's eyes were still fixed on me. Waiting, searching, hoping I would tell them that I had actually done something.

A sigh left my lips as I removed my hand from Little Violet's head. The little girl released a gasp, running straight to dad and clutching his leg like he was the only safe thing in the world.

"You're alright, princess."

Kylan, whose jaw was still tense, stepped in front of me, as did the others. "And?" he asked, his voice tight. There was this coldness, but I knew it wasn't aimed at me. It was aimed at whatever waited outside this house.

"Were you able to connect with him?" Trinity asked.

The question was meant for me, but it was Little Violet who answered. "Yes," her voice trembled as she squeezed Dad even tighter. "And now they are on their way. They will be here soon."

Mom brushed through her hair. "Who?"

Exactly.

Who?

Was she talking about Aelius, Baelor, or...

"Everyone," Little Violet said. "Everyone, and it is all my fault."

A chill went through me. It was the way she said it that shattered me because she really did believe it was her fault. This was just a child, forced to worry about things no child her age should ever have to worry about.

More than anything, that little girl was just too confused. She was talking about saving those she cared about, feeding others darkness, and I couldn't tell whether she was trying to prevent herself from being good or bad.

I still found it strange. Aelius's eyes could see everything, and he was aware of the danger that was coming, yet he had not known I was here or that tonight would be the night.

At first, I thought it was Baelor's work, that he had blocked him, but what if it wasn't? What if it was her?

Little Violet's voice broke the tense silence.

She blinked her eyes at me. "I don't know what I'm doing. I am so sorry."

"What are you sorry for, Violet?" Greg asked.

Little Violet shook her head. "Everything. I'm so sorry."

This little girl...this younger version of myself...had a strength she didn't even understand yet. Strong enough to connect to a Soothsayer, strong enough for the devil to get involved, but all of these powers were a burden.

My eyes shifted to mom and dad, who were comforting their daughter.

What was the point of all this power if she wouldn't be strong enough to save the two people she loved the most?

I felt a sting behind my eyes, and I forced myself to breathe through it. Whatever happened, whatever she had done or tried to do, she had been a child. I was just a child.

A frightened child who was still afraid of monsters.

A small part of me was almost grateful that I had forgotten all of this. Sure, my childhood had never been perfect, but compared to this...it had been peaceful. I had been spared from remembering how dark things once were.

There was a sudden knock on the door, and the whole room stiffened. Could that be Grandpa Aelius already?

"Don't worry. That's just Dylan, Mommy," Little Violet said. "Aunt Sonya and Uncle Fergus are not here, and you told him to go to us."

Mom's eyes widened. "Please don't get freaked out. She just knows stuff," she sighed, dragging her hands down her face.

I could tell...

So that's how he ended up here.

I looked over at Dylan. His eyes narrowed slightly, like he was trying to remember this exact moment. Dad was already headed for the door.

"Is there no one else who can watch him?" Trinity asked. She had been rather quiet. I knew she was anxious.

I shook my head. "I don't think so," I said softly. "It feels like he's supposed to be here."

It was strange, but ever since we arrived in the past, I had been having these strong feelings, like something inside me was guiding every step. It told me what to do, how to do it, and what moments needed to happen.

"Hi, Uncle Greg!" a voice greeted. Little Dylan burst through the doorway, his grin wide and full of energy. "Mom and Dad left so they told me to stay here for the night!"

I heard a chuckle behind me that I knew belonged to Nate. "Do you see those boots? No way..." he whispered. No doubt, he would tease Dylan about this the second we returned.

The moment Little Dylan noticed our presence, his smile faded. He scoffed under his breath, scanning each of us before resting his stare on Dylan for a bit longer.

"I see you're all back again," he rolled his eyes. "With more...friends."

Mom moved in front of him and dropped to her knees. "Dylan." She gently shook his shoulders. "Why don't you go stay with Uncle Ewan? Or Aunt Sarah? Or...or anyone else for the night?"

Little Dylan fluttered his eyes. "But they're here."

Claire forced a smile. "Then maybe a friend's house? Anyone..."

"No!" Little Violet came running across the room. She threw her arms around his waist, hugging him tightly with no intention of letting go. The boy hugged her back, confused.

"We can't do that, Mommy," she said firmly. "He has to stay here. If he

goes outside...he'll die."

Little Dylan scrunched his face. "L...what?"

Claire's voice shook. "Violet...what did you just say?"

Little Violet released him and folded her tiny arms, staring around the room like she was the only sane one here. "I see lines," she said. "Everyone has a line. His line goes inside, and if he steps outside, a lot of people will die. That's how it works."

The room went silent, and my mind went blank.

Why did that word make me feel like I was back in the mountains?

Dylan, Nate, Trinity, Lian—everyone stared at her, trying to make sense of her words. Even mom and dad couldn't help us this time.

"Here we go again," Kylan breathed. He pressed his head against the wall as if that was the only thing keeping him steady.

Little Dylan looked between us, lost. "Why is she being weird again? What's going on here?"

"Look." Kylan pushed himself off the wall and moved toward Little Violet. His tone was calm but sharp. "You will have to be a bit clearer. What lines?"

Little Violet opened her mouth to speak.

That was when the door creaked open again.

My chest tightened as a familiar figure stepped inside the house.

"The girl is correct. She speaks of the lines of fate," the man said as his

voice drifted out. "And the moment the boy stepped into this house, his has already been marked."

As he walked in, two silhouettes followed closely behind him. Another man. And then a smaller boy.

It was Aelius who had walked in, and Varius and Jason who followed.

They were really here.

All of them.



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