

Chapter 354

Violet

What do I do?

The question raced in my head over and over. I looked down at my palms, then back up at the shadow beast running toward us.

I got my eyes to glow, great, but what now?

The last time these hands had done anything useful, they'd stopped Chrystal, and I still had no clue how.

Think, Violet.

"What instructions did the Lycan give you?" Aelius asked. His voice was as calm as it could be.

I swallowed, my throat feeling dry. "Go for the tails...the eyes, then the horns."

He let out a quiet hum and took a slow step back with Varius.

What were they doing?

Their eyes shifted from Valerius to me, then to Jason. I wasn't sure if he'd missed the memo, but there was no way we could take down that shadow beast without their help.

Jason stepped forward, his chin raised and eyes determined. He balled his fists, and once he opened them, his hands glowed with a blue light.

"The three of you can take him," Aelius spoke from behind. "I will save my strength for the real problem."

He would what?

My stomach dropped. He was counting on me to handle this, but how was I supposed to do any of this without him? The whole reason I had come here was so I could see how he would take down Baelor. Learn from him, and take it back to the future.

There wasn't much time, and I stared down at my hands again. They were supposed to be steady, but they were shaking so much my vision almost blurred. I couldn't just let Jason and Valerius handle this on their own.

"Glow," I whispered.

A gasp came out as my palms lit up at once. They weren't blue like Jason's but a bright white, identical to my eyes. I couldn't help but let out a soft, surprised laugh.

It had worked.

It actually worked.

'What are you waiting for, Dove?' Valerius growled in my mind. 'Go!'

I turned, startled as I looked into his purple eyes. His deep voice inside my head still shocked me every time.

Breathe...

Just breathe...

I looked around me. Everyone was still giving it their all. Mom and Dad, my friends...

Determined not to fall behind, I locked my eyes on the shadow beast.

If everyone else was fighting, then I needed to be useful too. I needed to do something, anything, to help.

Jason took a step forward. "Follow my lead and—"

I did not wait.

My legs moved on their own as I ran toward the shadow beast before I could even think about it.

"Hah..." Jason let out a stunned breath. "Or just go for it. Whatever you want."

The ground shook as I neared closer, and its arms stretched to grab me, but I dove and slid right under its legs.

When I reached the back, I grabbed the long and heavy black tail and began pulling. It wouldn't budge.

"Come on," I whispered through my teeth.

I grabbed the tail with both hands and lifted my legs, pressing my heels into the shadow's back. A shocked sound tore from my throat, both surprised and terrified that I even had this kind of strength. When I finally had some balance, I leaned back and pulled with everything in me, a rough grunt escaping me.

I could feel the burn in my arms and shoulders, but I couldn't stop. Not now.

Giving it one final pull, the tail tore free, and a burst of black dust followed as the tail scattered like ashes.

"Ow!" I hit the ground flat on my back with a painful thud. I hadn't realized how high up I was until I stared at the shadow beast's back as it

let out a loud screech.

Shit...

To my horror, the beast slowly turned to face me. Its red eyes locked onto me, burning brighter than my own. A shadow hovered over me as the beast raised its enormous claw.

Perhaps deciding to provoke that thing all on my own wasn't exactly the smartest move.

Seeing my life flash in front of me, I held up my glowing hands and covered my eyes, bracing myself for a hit.

Then a loud growl filled the air. It was deeper and stronger than the shadow beast's scream. "Valerius?" I whispered, looking up with wide eyes.

Just when I thought it would be my end, he had saved me. Valerius stood behind the beast, holding the huge creature in a chokehold. His claws dug into the beast's neck, and his gaze locked on mine.

'Quick, eyes!' His voice rang out in my head.

He needed me.

Kylan needed me.

I sucked in a sharp breath and pushed my knees into the soil to steady myself. I was just about to get up when a glowing blue hand wrapped around my wrist.

It was Jason.

He pulled me up with a bright laugh. He looked breathless and excited,

like this was the best thing he had seen all year.

"That was something!" he grinned. "I knew you were fast, but that fast?"

Fast?

I felt a lump down my throat. I had been faster than normal, and speed was never my strength.

Was this also thanks to my eyes?

'Dove!' Valerius called out. He still held the beast in place, his purple eyes narrowing as if he was starting to struggle.

I gasped at Jason. "We need to go for his eyes next," I said quickly.

A smirk reached Jason's lips as the beast roared in Valerius's grip. "I'll do the honors," Jason said. "I can't let you have all the credit."

Within seconds, Jason flicked his wrists, and two sharp, glowing icicles formed in the air. He thrust both forward, and they shot straight through the shadow beast's red eyes. He had done it almost too effortlessly.

The beast let out a scream, twisting and kicking as it tried to break free from Valerius's hold. I stared at Jason in utter shock. Once again, if this was what he could do as a kid, what on earth would he be capable of in our time?

Even Valerius released an impressed growl. 'I suppose I can't embarrass myself by letting the boy show me up.'

The shadow beast kept struggling in his hold, no longer able to see. Valerius used that to his advantage by grabbing a curved horn and ripping it off before it turned into dust.

The beast shrieked, but Valerius didn't stop. He grabbed the other horn and tore it off. Then the beast dropped to the ground, collapsing with a weak groan.

Valerius stepped forward and stomped his heavy paws on its chest again and again until the entire creature burst into dust.

I stood frozen.

Was it over...already?

"That was...Amazing," I breathed.

Valerius hummed, not looking away from the destroyed beast. He stared at the ashes, and a frown formed on his face.

'But far too easy,' he said. 'Something is not right.'

The doubtful tone in his voice made my heart skip a beat. I noticed Jason looking down at his hands and followed his gaze. His light had faded.

I glanced at my hands next. The glow flickered once before fading like his.

That's when I felt the weakness, and it wasn't only my hands. The glow in my eyes vanished as well.

My throat bobbed as I looked toward Aelius and Varius. Just like mine, their glowing eyes flickered and then went out.

What was happening?

It didn't take long to find out, as a sharp laughter came from behind us. When I turned, I saw Esther in the distance, grinning.

Her shoulders shook as her red eyes burned even brighter than before.

Commented [Ma1]:

Commented [Ma2R1]:

Commented [Ma3R1]:

"It was all a trick," I whispered in disbelief. "The shield..."

My eyes shot toward the shield. Little Dylan's glow had already faded, and so had both shields around the children. That thing wanted us to beat him. We had all been played.

"No..." My voice cracked.

Mom and Dad threw themselves forward, covering both children while fighting the ravens. Little Violet's lips trembled, but I could see it in her eyes. She knew.

I didn't know if Aelius was aware this would happen, but that little girl knew, and she was terrified.

"Come with me!" Little Dylan shouted. He grabbed her hand and pulled her with him as they ran behind Aelius and Varius, even though the two we needed most were now powerless.

Esther's shoulders were still shaking. She looked down and began to whisper words.

'My children, I need you to listen to me.'

Aelius...

Jason and I shared a look. He had connected with both of us.

'My eyes have been deceived. The shadow beast has fooled us all,' Aelius continued. 'Baelor wanted it to feed.'

A cold shiver ran up my spine.

Feed, what?

Darkness?

'Our powers are connected. Every bit of magic you used, every ounce of strength you pushed out...the beast absorbed all of it,' Aelius informed. 'When it died, it did not lose the energy, but it transferred it to Baelor, which means he now holds every power you used against it.'

I couldn't breathe. My stomach turned, and the world spun around me.

We didn't weaken that thing. We only made him stronger to the point where we couldn't do anything at all.

How were we supposed to beat Baelor without powers when we could barely stop him with them?

And my friends...

They were still fighting the ravens, but for what?

I heard Valerius roar in anger. He'd heard Aelius, too.

'I have let you have your fun, tease the dove around a bit,' Valerius growled into my mind. 'But it is time to stop playing around, Lumia. We're too old for this.'

I froze.

Lumia?

He was not talking to me.

He was talking to her.

I felt something stir deep inside me, and Lumia let out a lazy yawn, like she was just waking up from a long nap.



'Took you long enough,' Lumia purred. 'I suppose there's no need for an apology now. The shift will punish her more than I ever could.'

The what?

My heart felt like it was pounding out of my chest.

"Wait, Lumia—"

But it was already too late. My body jerked forward as a sharp crack went through my spine. I let out a quiet wince as my vision flickered, and my knees slammed into the ground.

The shift was coming, and this time there was nothing I could do to stop it.