

Chapter 359

Violet

I didn't dare to look into their eyes, which were still open. Both struggled for breath, and their hands moved across the soil until their fingers found each other.

They knew how this would end, but even so, they held on to each other.

"I-I'm so sorry," I breathed.

The words sounded stupid the moment they left my mouth. Definitely not as I had imagined. They were too small, too useless, too selfish for what I had just done...But I didn't know what else to say. I guess this was the unfortunate price for wanting to play the hero and expecting to save everyone.

This was all my fault.

My gaze slowly moved back and forth between them. Their eyes stayed on me. They couldn't speak. Mom's mouth moved, forming words I couldn't hear. No sound was meant to come out, yet it did. That's how strong she was.

Her lips trembled, and somehow she smiled. "M-My beautiful...girl."

She took one last breath before her eyes closed. There was no warning, nothing. It was not a beautiful death. One where I could at least say goodbye and thank her for everything. It was cruel, ugly, evil, and so unfair...

I couldn't even process what was happening.

Dad exhaled as if he agreed with her words. I didn't. I couldn't.

All my life, I had searched for someone to blame, only to learn it was me who had done this to them. It didn't have to end this way.

A wolf whimpered, and Dad lifted his hand just enough to touch the fur beside him. He didn't have to look to see who it was, and his trembling lips curled as he patted Dylan's wolf.

"Silvar," Dad took a breath. "You...have to...protect—"

His eyes closed before he could finish, and something inside me shattered. I didn't scream or move, but a thousand thoughts rushed through my head. I just knelt there, my hands hovering uselessly over them as if I could somehow turn everything back around and save them.

Everything around me was so quiet, or at least I thought it was, until I heard someone rushing over. It was the younger version of myself who had finally torn free from her cousin's grip.

Her small legs ran across the dirt as fast as they could, with Little Dylan chasing after her in panic.

"Violet, no!"

She didn't listen and dropped to her knees between their bodies. Her eyes were wet, wide, and that little girl was horrified. She wasn't supposed to see this.

"Mommy?"

I pulled my hands back as her hands hovered. She reached for Morn's bloody neck, then for Dad's, but she never touched it. She was too afraid to touch them. She reached for Mom's shoulders instead and shook them hard.

"Mommy?" she said louder, then turned to the other side. "Daddy, wake

up!"

She shook him even harder while sobs escaped her. The sobs quickly turned into loud screams as she carried a pain that was never supposed to belong in such a small body.

"You have to wake up!"

She wrapped her arms around Mom and pounded her fist against her shoulder. Mom's lifeless body shifted as the little girl trembled, crying without end.

Then she looked up at me. Her eyes, full of tears, held so much emotion, but were also empty at the same time. She knew this would happen. She had told me this would happen, but that didn't change anything. She was confused.

"I'm so sorry," I said again. The same useless words. Again.

I owed myself an apology because I had been the one to put myself through that pain. That little girl was doing perfectly fine before I decided to show up here. Even if she had surrendered to Baelor like she had intended to, at least no one else would have to get hurt.

Her eye twitched. "You shouldn't have come here!" she screamed. "I hate you!"

It felt as if someone had stabbed me with a dagger. That's how broken my heart was. Hearing my younger self say she hated herself was unreal, yet here we were...and she was right. She should hate me.

She closed her eyes and pulled the glasses from her face to toss them aside. When she opened her eyes again, they glowed bright. The air moved around her, brushing her hair back, and I could see she was out of

it. None of this was controlled, but pure rage.

The kind of rage I remembered I used to get when I was younger. The one who had pushed Fergus to call me a demon child.

Her palms matched her eyes as she lifted her finger and pointed at me. "Die," she hissed, getting to her feet. "You useless...die!"

My body froze as she lunged for me. Whatever she wanted to do to me, I would let her, because I deserved it.

But before she could reach me, a hand tapped the top of her head, and her body went limp instantly. She fell backward, and Little Dylan caught her in his arms, shock written all over his face.

Varius stood behind them, his hand still raised and his eyes glowing white. He must have gotten his powers back, too.

Little Dylan's eyes snapped toward me, his face twisting with anger. "Fuck you!" He screamed at the top of his lungs. Then he gathered spit in his mouth and spat at my feet.

Silvar stepped between us and showed his fangs at the little boy, who didn't seem to care that it was his own wolf hissing at him. Once again, he gathered spit, but before he could do anything, Varius touched his head, making him collapse beside Little Violet.

"That will do," Varius nodded. I couldn't hold his gaze for long and looked around instead.

The others watched from a respectful distance, along with Valerius, who had also stepped back. Aelius was still on the ground with Jason kneeling beside him, and there was no life in that man's eyes, as if there never had been any.

When I heard a soft whimper, my gaze snapped to Esther's wolf, still lying injured on the ground. Thorne lingered nearby, watching, but Baelor's shadow was gone.

We had failed.

My chest tightened.

What had I done?

I didn't seal Baelor. I killed my parents. I put all my friends' lives in danger for nothing and ruined everything.

The thought hit me so hard it made me dizzy. "Child," Varius said as he stepped closer. "Because of you, brother Aelius is still alive, and you changed fate," he said calmly. "It was a hard sacrifice. You may not understand it now, but you did well. No matter what anyone says, you did well."

I did well?

Was he insane?

I looked back at Esther's wolf again. She lay there broken, barely moving as blood spread across her fur.

Baelor had played me. His words had sounded so sincere, and I was stupid enough to make a deal with the devil. He knew he couldn't win today, so he made me believe he would pull back, and in his defense, he did. Right before telling me that Gloria was even crazier than I thought and had an agenda of her own.

My blood began boiling. I couldn't get to Gloria right now, but I would get to someone.

Someone had to pay for their death, and it could not be just me.

Varius said I had changed fate, and now I would do it again.

I pushed my hands into the soil and dragged myself to my feet. My breathing turned heavy and uneven as I looked at the wolf who had snapped my parents' necks. They would die, and they would die today, by my hand.

'Violet...' Lumia warned.

I didn't answer. I walked toward the wolf on the ground with one single thought in my head.

Kill.

Kill.

Kill.

And no one could stop me. A burning feeling rushed through my veins, and my fists clenched as I tried to use my eyes. But it wasn't just my eyes this time. I felt something crack beneath my skin, a warning of what was coming, but I didn't fight it.

I was in control, and it felt good.

Really good.

Whether it was by me, or Lumia, or anyone else willing to stand with me, Esther would die today. I would make sure of it.

'Violet!' Aelius connected. 'Don't do this, Violet, it's not worth it!'

But it was already too late.

Fur pushed through my skin, and I felt it spread over my arms, my back, my legs. My spine arched as my body changed shape, and then my paws dug into the dirt.

It was different this time. I could feel the glow in my eyes as I shifted and was in full control, even now. This was Lumia's body, but my mind.

I had taken over.

Esther's weak wolf tried to drag herself back, and Thorne circled after one failed attempt to help her back up. It was already too late.

They didn't get to walk away.

Lumia stirred somewhere deep inside, like she wanted to speak, take back control, but she couldn't. She wasn't gone, but she wasn't in charge anymore either. All she was, was a mere shadow in the back of my mind.

This was all me.

I opened my mouth to howl, but no sound came out.

A blinding, white light poured out instead, and then the shadow returned. It traveled straight into my mouth, down my throat, and I felt it settle.

Had I let Baelor inside me?

I didn't fight it, didn't choke or panic, but welcomed it.

Even though the blame still fell on Baelor, I just wanted them dead. They were the ones who hurt Mom and Dad, and if I had to let him in to make it right, so be it.

A deep voice purred. 'I didn't know you could do this, but you just got so much more interesting.' Baelor spoke. 'I can feel your rage, and I will.'

