## Chapter 404

Violet

They all stared at me like I had lost my mind. Possibly, because I had just admitted that the Veil would crack and was smiling about it.

Their faces were filled with disbelief and confusion because they didn't understand yet. How could they? They hadn't heard what I had heard, hadn't felt it the way I did.

Mom and Dad were doing their best.

They were fighting to keep the Veil intact. There had been determination in Adelaide's voice, and Alaric would always have her back. Those two never feared because they knew what was at stake and were holding the Veil with everything they had.

"We don't have much of a choice," I said, my voice steady as I looked around the circle. "My parents...we have to trust them. They know what they're doing, and they're fighting really hard right now."

For a second, no one spoke, but then Dylan laughed. It was a short chortle as he dragged a hand through his hair. He began pacing, and the calm finally cracked.

"How can you be so...so casual about this?" he spat, turning back to me.

"I will do the sealing with ease, and my parents will hold the Veil down, and then we can all go back to living our lives as normal," I spoke without a pause.

"There are dangerous people inside that Veil, Violet," Dylan reminded me. "And what do you mean, with ease? That soothsayer almost died doing the sealing, Violet!"

"Aelius," I corrected. "My grandpa Aelius, and I know that."

It was a known fact that didn't need to be said. My eyes flicked to Kylan. His expression didn't change much, and the steadiness was still there, but even then, I could see the look behind it. Dylan's words had landed somewhere deep. Somewhere he hadn't wanted to look, and that was the last thing we needed at the moment.

My jaw tightened as I looked at each of them, one by one. We were heading in the right direction before Dylan decided to plant doubt into everyone.

"Nothing is going to happen to me," I said firmly. "I'll be fine."

Dylan stopped pacing. "There it is again," he said just above a whisper. " How do you know that?"

He was doing the same thing he had done after we had come back from the Box of Ashes. He always tried to be the responsible one until suddenly he wasn't anymore. His eye for detail could be crucial at times, but it could also work against him.

Trinity reached out to him, placing her hand on his shoulder and rubbing it gently. "Hey," she said softly. "What are you doing?"

"Using my head this time."

Using his head...

If this went wrong, if I did die, it wouldn't just be a loss. It would be something Dylan would have to carry.

Not just as my brother, but as the future Alpha of the Bloodrose. He would be the one explaining to the pack why he had let this happen, why he had stood by and allowed me to take this risk, and why, on top of that, the

Veil had opened and released all evil into the world.

"I know Aelius almost died," I began. "But that won't happen to me."

"What makes you say that?"

I shrugged. "My eyes might not be as polished as his, but they're—"

"Thank you, there you go," Dylan chuckled, dropping his arm. "Not as polished as his, which means the Veil might fully crack, and—"

"There is no other option!" Kylan snapped.

Dylan's eyes hardened, and the two glared at each other, both visibly irritated.

"We can keep going and going, but this isn't exactly going anywhere because it's getting exhausting, and we have already discussed this," Kylan said. "We already decided as a group and accepted that there is no other choice. Even if we tried to fight or shift, it would still come down to this. So I don't know what the problem is."

He exhaled through his nose but failed to calm himself. "She just said she can do it, and now you're planting doubt in everyone's heads, and it's fucking pissing me off!"

Dylan growled. "So you'll take responsibility?"

"I'll be taking the biggest responsibility. You know that," Kylan sneered.

"For Violet or for Kayden?" Dylan frowned. "Because I'm starting to believe this is less about keeping Violet safe and more about making sure Kayden doesn't become stronger than you."

"That's bullshit."

As the two went at it, the cage rattled harder. Thorne...whatever this thing was between Kylan and Dylan, he was clearly enjoying it. It was almost as if he liked the tension, fed on it.

"I only care about Violet. She is my mate, and everything I do is for her," Kylan said, his voice soft. "You of all people should know that, Dylan."

And he did know that.

Dylan's worries came out of nowhere, and that was the strange thing. I believed Kylan and had seen time and time again how hard he had tried to protect me.

He turned, opening his hands slightly as he looked around the group. "If any of you had a problem with this, you should have spoken up earlier," he stated. "Violet will do the sealing, and if anyone has changed their mind at the last second or doesn't want to be here while she does it...now is the time to leave."

He dropped his arms and was met with silence.

Dylan let out a quiet chuckle under his breath, shaking his head, and the cage began to shake again.

Kylan's gaze shifted to Sora. Her arms were wrapped around her body, but even then, she held his gaze, showing him she wasn't going anywhere.

She might have impressed him when she hit Kayden over the head, but we all knew he meant her.

He gave her a nod. "Good."

He gestured for everyone to move in again, and the circle closed.

"Violet."

Kylan stood in front of me, his thumbs gently pressing against my collarbones. Despite the chaos around us, his touch had a calming effect on me. "You will be okay."

He bopped his head as if there were no other option, then gently pushed me back a step, repositioning me where he wanted me.

"Someone needs to stand opposite Violet," he said, looking at the cage. " And hold Thorne's beak open."

My eyes went back to the cage. "I won't be able to do it," Kylan said. "I need to stay near her. Just in case—"

"I'll do it!"

Sora's voice cut through loudly.

"No," Lian said immediately.

"Yes," Sora shot back.

"Why do you have to be so stubborn?" Lian tensed. "Why can't you just shut up for once?"

"How about we all shut up?" Nate snapped.

Suddenly, the cage shuddered again.

"Stop arguing!"

The second everyone froze, the cage eased enough to make me believe I was right.

I swallowed. "I don't know how it's possible," I continued, keeping my

eyes on the cage, "but that thing is feeding off this, and turning us against each other."

Silence fell over the group.

"It's trying to push us apart," I explained. "So we'll lose focus."

"She's right," Kylan agreed. He tilted his head slightly, studying Sora. I knew that look.

He was measuring the risks, calculating outcomes, and probably thinking the same as everyone else. Sora was the smallest, the least physically imposing, and a nervous wreck.

The one who wouldn't be able to know what to do if Baelor lost control. If any of us shifted, things might've been different. She was still a Lycan, after all, but like this?

I felt bad for admitting it because I hadn't exactly been a standout either, but out of all of us, she was the weakest one here.

"She'll do it," Kylan declared.

Though she wouldn't have to do much, this was still the most dangerous role. If Baelor succeeded, Sora would be the first to feel responsible.

Still, she didn't flinch. A fire I had never seen before lit her eyes as she walked backward until she stood a few feet away from me, following Kylan's silent instructions. I caught the worry in Lian's eyes, but that's all she could do. Worry.

Nate made his way to the cage and lifted it. Then he brought it to Sora and carefully placed it in front of her.

"We won't have long," Kylan said. "The moment Baelor reveals himself,

we will have to move quickly. This should not take any longer than a minute. There is no room for mistakes."

No room for mistakes...

The words sank deep.

'You are that witch's daughter,' a voice purred inside me.

Lumia...

'And that witch knows no fear. Neither should you.'

I took a deep breath, watching Kylan position everyone like pieces on a board. Nate and Liam to one side, and Dylan and Trinity to the other. He had created an oval, with me and Sora at opposite ends.

I drew in a breath.

Would it be enough?

That was the big question. I would create a shield around us, of course. Just like Aelius, just like Adelaide, but could I manage my strength like that? Even Adelaide struggled with the shield because it required that much power.

I had to find a way to make it easier for myself.

Suddenly, a thought hit me.

What if instead of making the shield, I split some power between us like Jason had done when he had given Little Dylan just enough to protect himself?

My pulse quickened.

If I could do that…

If I could give them each something, then I could fully focus on the sealing, and it would be easier. Safer.

"Come closer."

No one hesitated, and they all moved in. "Hold hands," I added.

Kylan frowned. "Violet…what are you doing?"

"Trust me," I said, meeting his eyes. "I know what I'm doing…I think."

One by one, we all reached for each other and linked our fingers. I shook my head slightly when Sora spread hers. "Not you," I said gently. "You'll just have to trust me."

The corner of Sora's lips trembled, but she stayed where she was. The rest of them held on while Kylan gave me a silent look, asking me to explain myself.

"I'm going to try to give all of you some of my power," I began. "I don't know if it'll work, but if we can hold an open shield, Baelor can come straight through, and I can seal him…fast."

My eyes went back to Sora. "He still has to enter Thorne," I told her. "So I can't shield you, but you need to trust me completely. I won't let you get hurt."

Sora's brows pulled together, fear flashing across her face for just a second. "I trust you, Violet," she said. "Fully."

I exhaled, then closed my eyes.

When I opened them, I felt it.

The glow.

The same power spread through my veins, but it wasn't as violent or overwhelming like it used to be. I guess it was safe to say I was actually starting to get used to the feeling.

"I'll try," I whispered.

I inhaled deeply.

Please, Moon Goddess.

Do not embarrass me now.