

Chapter 409

Violet

I ran.

Not as Violet, not as a child of blood.

But as Lumia.

After some convincing, Kylan had led me to a nearby waterfall earlier. We had shifted and continued into the woods.

The shift had come easily this time. There had been no doubt or fear, just the satisfying feeling of my bones stretching, and even now, knowing I could let Lumia out, I felt fully at ease. I felt alive.

The woods were beautiful, and the moon hung high and bright above the trees. Every scent was sharper, every sound clearer, and I loved every second of it.

Lumia howled, unable to hold back anymore because this was the moment she had been waiting for all along. Valerius ran in front of us, still as massive as I remembered him.

It wasn't just us. More wolves moved through the woods, and somehow I felt tied to all of them.

'We can't let him lead, Witchey,' Lumia chuckled. She lowered her body and picked up speed, her paws digging into the soil. We almost tripped over a few fallen branches along the way, but that wasn't important.

She was free.

'I need you to stay behind me, Lumia,' Valerius growled softly as he



looked back at her. 'Please be careful and consider the body we should be protecting.'

The moonlight flickered across Valerius' fur.

'Oh please,' Lumia stretched, and I could hear the amusement in her voice. 'My witch just did the impossible. You do not need to worry about her.'

I couldn't help but laugh to myself, feeling Lumia surge forward. She closed the distance between us and leapt over a fallen branch before cutting him off.

'Is it you or is it that crown prince?' Lumia challenged. 'Because I can't ever remember you of all Lycans to be this boring.'

Valerius growled, entertained. He pushed harder and picked up speed, quickly catching up. Then he bumped his large shoulder into Lumia's, hard.

'Watch out!' I snorted.

Our balance shifted, and then he overtook us, moving past with ease. He slowed just enough to glance back at Lumia, tilting his head slightly.

'I can see your mouth has gotten even bigger,' he rumbled. 'As if it wasn't big enough already.'

They began circling each other between the trees, and despite her size, Lumia wasn't backing down. Valerius lunged forward suddenly, forcing Lumia to leap sideways. She twisted mid-air, landed smoothly, then darted past him again.

Valerius made a frustrated sound and followed. The two were playing, enjoying the woods, and they ran like that for a while.



Some time passed before the trees began to thin again and the sound of water grew stronger. We reached the waterfall where we had started earlier. Water that almost seemed too magical spilled down in a glowing stream, flowing into a clear pool below that shimmered in the moonlight.

Our clothes were still where we had left them, folded neatly beside the rock.

The noise faded until it was quiet. There was no one around us, only Valerius' large frame. A soft, satisfied breath left Lumia as they stood there for a moment, the wind brushing through their fur.

'You are beautiful. The moon does your fur a great kindness,' Valerius said quietly.

Lumia purred. 'It's not just this moon,' she replied. 'I remain beautiful with or without it. Everyone knows that.'

'Yes, yes,' Valerius hummed. 'Of course, Lumia.'

He hadn't expected her to say anything else, but neither had I. If there was one thing Lumia never lacked, it was confidence.

They stepped closer to the water, lowering their heads to look at their reflection in the clear pool.

'I had a wonderful time,' Valerius said.

'Yes,' Lumia replied softly. 'I did too.'

She rubbed her head against Valerius' fur. 'Until we meet again.'

Valerius answered with a quiet howl. 'Until we meet again.'

'It's time for you to take the spotlight again, Witchey,' Lumia sighed. I

felt a gentle pull beneath my skin as my muscles loosened and my bones reshaped.

The feeling, the deep ache in my bones, was just as satisfying as it had been when I first shifted. Before I knew it, I was standing on two feet again. The cool air brushed against my bare skin, but that too felt amazing. Valerius stepped back as well, his massive frame shrinking slowly until Kylan stood in his place.

And soon, it was no longer two wolves by the waterfall, but just us. Violet and Kylan, and both completely bare.

I sucked in a sharp breath that turned into a surprised laugh. Kylan did the same. I suppose we were both in disbelief that this had actually happened. We shifted together, ran together.

And as he stood there several steps away from me, his eyes wandered over my body.

Mine did the same. My gaze shifted from his shoulder to his toned chest, all the way down to the defined planes of his lower stomach.

We had seen each other like this before, but tonight felt different, and it wasn't only the full moon. Everything felt stronger, and it had only intensified after our run.

Though there was space between us, I felt the warmth of his skin, heard the sound of his breathing, nearly lost control from the pull of his scent.

I didn't think. I just moved, my legs carrying me forward until I wrapped my arms around him, pressing myself against his body.

"That was amazing!" I laughed, breathless.

I looked up at him. His eyes held a softness, but they were also dark,



eager, and focused only on me. I felt him press closer against my thighs, and heat rushed through me instantly.

A thousand thoughts went through my mind. I didn't know if I wanted him or to run with him again. All I knew was that I wanted to be with him.

"We should do it again!"

He frowned slightly. "Right now?"

"Yes," I smiled. "Right now!"

Inside me, Lumia let out a low, amused laugh.

'She's finally learning,' she exhaled. 'But what we really need right now is our mate.'

Kylan's brows knitted together. He lifted his large hand and placed it over my forehead. "Are you sure you're okay?" he asked, chuckling lightly.

"Never been better."

I leaned my forehead against his chest and listened to the strong, steady sound of his heartbeat. It was perfect.

And I just wanted more.

More closeness, more warmth, more of him. It was a pull that sat low in my stomach, and I knew it wouldn't disappear unless I did something about it.

"Did you not have fun?"

"I did," he replied, chuckling. "Though Lumia still scares me a little."

"Tell him he doesn't scare me," Lumia scoffed.

I laughed under my breath and let my hand glide slowly down his chest, over the hard lines of muscle. I looked up at him with a small smirk.

His breathing slowed, but his eyes were hungry, watching every movement of my hand.

"I think I need to..." I murmured. My fingers trailed lower, teasing just enough to make his jaw tighten.

His eyes darkened instantly. "You need to what?"

I couldn't help but tease him the same way he had teased me last night. My hand stopped just below where I knew he wanted it most, and Kyran drew in a breath.

"I think I need to...cool down now."

I stepped back slowly, not breaking eye contact. Kyran looked stunned, clearly not expecting the same treatment in return. His breath hitched, and I saw the realization settle in.

I turned and walked toward the water. My eyes were stuck on my own reflection for a few seconds before I finally jumped in, letting the cold hit me all at once.

It was refreshing and exactly what I needed after everything we had just gone through. The water felt like relief, and as I fully went under, I let it take me completely.

When I pushed back up, my hair fell loose around my shoulders. I ran both hands through it, pushing it away from my face as a smile curved across my lips. I should have done that way before.

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My gaze shifted to Kyran, who was still watching me. His expression had completely changed, and I couldn't tell whether he was impressed or offended.

When my eyes dropped, I saw exactly what my little stunt had done to him.

I pouted playfully. "Did I do that to you?"

He chuckled, shaking his head before looking around him. "Do you see anyone else here?" he called out.

Pleased, I extended my hand toward him. As if he were under a trance, Kyran stepped into the water and moved toward me, a small splash following him.

And the space that had existed just seconds ago narrowed.

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