

## Chapter 425

Violet

"But—"

"We thought so too!" Alaric's grin widened. "After all these years?" he finished.

"I thought—"

"We saw everything," he said, cutting me off as his hands began moving. "We fought so hard to hold everything together, and at one point we almost lost it entirely, but then—"

He gestured toward me dramatically, his eyes sparkling with excitement. "I still can't believe it," he continued, laughing. "My daughter who is strong enough to have sealed half of Baelor. The reason we're reunited after all these years, that we can travel through the levels for the first time, that the tear in the Veil is sealed, stronger than ever, and it's all because of those beautiful eyes," he said. "I think I might be the proudest father alive...I still can't believe the Moon Goddess has blessed me with an amazing mate, amazing daughter," he whispered the last part.

Adelaide elbowed him lightly in the side. "Come on, Al," she said with a small laugh. "I know you're excited, but let her talk."

He glanced down for a second, but the huge grin on his face didn't disappear. "I'm sorry. Go on."

I swallowed softly, still processing all the information. "That's all I wanted to know."

Relief washed over me. I hadn't broken anything or ruined it. They were okay. The Veil was okay.

"I was so scared," I admitted. "I thought I hurt you somehow."

Both of them reacted instantly, denying it as quickly as they could. "No, no, don't you ever say that again," Adelaide said, placing her hands on my shoulders once more.

Alaric did the same. "Princess," he said firmly. "You keep making us proud every single day, and the reason why we've never lost fate is because of you!"

His eyes softened. "You have brought us so much joy already. You could never hurt us. Ever."

A warmth spread through my chest. Their love was so strong they genuinely believed I could do no wrong, and I wasn't sure if that was a good thing or a bad thing. I doubted it would be this way had they been outside the Veil.

Even then, I accepted their love. All of it. I could breathe properly again.

But the relief only lasted a moment as I suddenly remembered why I was here. There were matters to take care of before the trial, and it could not wait.

My thoughts snapped back to reality. I looked at Adelaide, suddenly unsure how to even begin the conversation.

There were too many questions, too many things I didn't understand, and I still didn't know how much they could actually see from the Veil.

I knew they knew about the sealing, and that they had felt me do it, but did they know everything?

Would my reckless actions be enough for them to be disappointed after all?

I bit my lip nervously, thinking about how to explain all of this. Adelaide's expression softened as she watched me struggle to find the words.

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"He took it to bring us back," she said, her voice soft. "And he knows only you can do it."

My eyes fluttered. She had answered before I had even asked.

"What?" I said, confused. Alaric frowned, just as puzzled, but Adelaide didn't look at him. Her kind eyes stayed on me. My heart began to beat faster.

"Elyx? He needs the box of ashes," she explained calmly. "To make you travel back in time...and bring us back."

Bring them back...

My pulse quickened, and the thought of a kind of hope I didn't want to admit was there, and it made my mind spin. The idea alone made my head whirl. Seeing them again outside the Veil, walking, living, laughing ... 1

But something about the way Adelaide said it made that hope twist into something uneasy, and I didn't know which question to ask first.

How did she know what the king wanted, and why could they not come back?

My voice came out barely above a whisper, but I had to know. I had to be sure.

“Bring you back...where?”

Alaric’s eyes were fixed on her now too, looking just as perplexed. “Yes,” he said slowly. “Bring us back where exactly?”

Adelaide let out a small sigh as she reached for my hand. The moment our fingers touched, warmth spread through me instantly.

It was so comforting that I had the strange urge to hold on forever and never let go. “Do you know who took the box?” I asked.


She seemed to know everything, so perhaps...

When Adelaide closed her eyes, I finally understood she hadn’t just taken my hand for comfort. She was also in need of answers.

I watched her in awe, seeing her work effortlessly. I knew she was probably doing something insane like diving into my thoughts or reading my mind, and the craziest part was that I didn’t mind it at all. I just let her.

A thought had suddenly occurred to me, and a strange sense of pride bloomed inside me. The woman I was staring at, my beautiful mother, was a full witch and perhaps the most powerful one.

I could hardly believe this was the part of me I had once been embarrassed about. Not Adelaide of course, but being half whatever I was.

Out of the corner of my eye, I caught Alaric staring at her. Despite the situation and the questions he must have had as well, there was a big smile plastered across his lips. He seemed so proud of her. 

“Rules are rules, and I can’t say much,” Adelaide said, opening her eyes again. “But I am allowed to guide you, so I will tell you that Elyx is not a

good person. He is very good at manipulating people.”

Her thumb brushed slowly over my hand, and her gaze met mine. “It’s very important that you don’t fall for it, Violet.”

Her expression softened with sympathy. “Our good friend Elyx,” she continued, “is skilled enough to twist even the kindest heart if he tries hard enough.”

Her gaze lingered on me, and I knew there was so much more she wanted to tell, but simply wasn’t allowed to.

I was also well aware that King Elyx was a mastermind at manipulating people, but would it really be that bad to just give him what he wanted?

If they could come back...

He would get off my back, I would be happy, and we could be a real family.

Right?

“Not our friend, by the way,” Alaric said, clearing his throat.

I let out a small laugh. “Yes, dad,” I said. “I figured that much.”

Alaric’s eyes lit up at the word dad, but then his expression hardened. More serious than I had ever seen him.

“I wouldn’t mind getting out of here,” he said, his jaw tight. “I’ve been waiting years to get my hands on Elyx.”

For?

That was a threat.

One of his eyes twitched slightly, making it obvious that the hatred there ran deep. The king did really fuck him over, and I could very well understand that kind of anger didn't just fade with time.

I suppose I wouldn't tell him about the picture Elyx kept of him...

"I might have to do what he asks of me. He locked up my friends and we all have to go to trial," I said instead. "He's basically accused me of... witchcraft, threatened to expose my identity."

Adelaide let out a chuckle. "He won't do that."

"How do you know?" I wondered. "If I don't help him with that box, he might not have anything to lose."

Adelaide released a breath. "Kylan."

I blinked. "What about him?"

"It might not look like it," she said gently. "But Elyx loves his son."

What?

Her eyes softened slightly. "He loves having him close, but most of all, he sees a true king in him."

She squeezed my hand. "He knows Kylan hates him, but he wouldn't do something that severe if it meant losing him completely. Kylan is allowed to hate him, but not too much."

So he was even manipulating Kylan...

I had never thought about it that way, but her words made sense. Kylan had accepted a lot, but the king exposing my identity would be where he

would draw the line, and he had made that clear.

"Then what is he doing?"

"The guilt for what he has done to me and your mom has been eating him alive, and he doesn't know what to do with it."

Alaric stepped forward slightly. "I've known Elyx for a long time," he said, lowering his voice. "I'm familiar with his tactics, and I know he's trying to scare you into doing what he wants because that's who he is," he concluded. "And regarding your friends...just to prove his point, yes, he might sacrifice one to show you just how serious he is."

A bitter chuckle left him. I felt my body stiffen, realizing he had already decided who his sacrifice would be.

"Nate..."

But I wasn't willing to sacrifice him...

No way.

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