



Chapter 430

Violet

"I don't know what you're talking about."

I tried to keep my voice just as strong as before, but failed miserably. Everything was shifting, and though I wasn't panicking yet, I was getting pretty close to it.

Elyx looked at me for several seconds, then released a quiet breath through his nose. "It would be better if you simply stopped pretending," he said. "I suggest you reconsider before this reaches the courtroom."

I felt a lump in my throat. "This," he continued, lifting his hand between us, "is the one secret that will stay with me."

He gave me a slight nod. "But I do not appreciate you making me look like a fool...when you've been walking around like a glowing orb with those eyes of yours, almost every day, doing as you please!"

A short laugh escaped at his final words, and my thoughts stumbled over themselves.

A glowing orb?

Almost every day?

That was not true...

One thing closer to the truth was that he had just said he didn't want to expose me, and for some crazy reason I actually believed him. But the confusing part was that one of the charges was witchcraft...

My brows pulled together slightly, and I narrowed my eyes, trying to



piece it together. If that part wasn't about me, then who was it about?

I let out a breath. "You're right," I agreed, the corner of my lips twitching a bit. "We should stop pretending."

He shot me a surprised look like he hadn't expected me to give in that quickly, but neither did I. I didn't have much of a plan anyway, but this certainly wasn't part of it.

Dragging this out wouldn't help anyone, especially since he was the one who had ultimately given me my name. There was no denying this. Not anymore.

Elyx nodded slowly, pleased we had finally reached this point. "We could discuss how we got here," he said, "how I found out about the box..."

He looked down at the box in his hand, then back at me. "But I would rather not waste time," he said. There was almost a strange sparkle in his eye as he spoke. "I'd rather tell you what I want with it."

I felt sick to my stomach as he stepped closer, but I didn't move. Normally, I would have taken a step back without even thinking, but something told me there was just no getting away from this man.

Elyx's gaze lingered on me for a second longer than necessary, then he eyed the box again.

"Since you're aware of everything," he began, "I assume you've met your relative...the Soothsayer."

My heart skipped.

Aelius.

"He must've told you about the terrible mistake that occurred...involving



your parents.”

Terrible mistake?

My anger at the denial of his betrayal quickly faded as I began to realize something. He knew a lot, but he didn't know everything.

He didn't know I had actually seen them.

Spoken to them, or that I had even been in the Veil.

And now that I was aware, he wasn't going to find out either. The less he knew about what I was actually capable of...the better.

His eyes studied my face carefully, waiting for an answer. So I gave him something.

“That's right. He told me all about who you are.”

Elyx hummed softly. “That crazy man doesn't know what he's talking about most of the time. You must have heard the...exaggerated version,” he said, his lips curving. “But yes. Even I make mistakes.”

Exaggerated?

That word didn't sit right.

Not at all.

“That mistake,” he continued, “has weighed on me for years. More than you can imagine.”

His voice softened with regret in a way that almost made me pity him, but I couldn't. Not after knowing he was the reason that all of it happened in the first place. All he had to do was not betray them.



I watched him carefully.

"I don't think I went about it the correct way, and I won't be able to rest," he admitted, "until I undo it."

His eyes lifted back to mine. "That is my only goal," he said. "I want to bring back your parents, and show them that I am not the monster they might think I am."

Bullshit.

"I've done a lot of research throughout the years, and have longed for the box," he said, his grip on it tightening slightly. "I didn't know where it was," he chuckled. "Not until you appeared."

So this was really my fault?

No...

I swallowed, pushing the thoughts away.

"At first, I was opposed to you being with my son," he said, releasing a short laugh. "I thought the Moon Goddess was mocking me for believing I could bring back my old friends..."

His chest moved as he inhaled, exhaled. "But then I got back to my senses and thought...why not?" he said. "I had hopes that you might be able to lead me to the box eventually, but I had no idea that it was right here in my kingdom," he cackled. "And that you...or Kayden would lead me straight to it."

My brain worked overtime. Of course, he hadn't expected it this fast. No one would have.

No one except Varius...



He had seen more than he ever said, and gave me the box for a reason, and part of that reason was so we could learn and experience what it took to beat Baelor.

But then there was this part that confused me. If he knew that the king was looking for the box, that Kayden would end up talking, that everything would spiral into...this.

Then why?

I still didn't doubt him, not for a second.

I was certain Varius was on our side, that he wouldn't risk something so reckless, especially knowing it could send him, send our people, to prison. Because the king was doing all of this just for that box. I just hadn't seen all of Varius's reasons clearly yet.

Elyx's voice pulled me back. "I know you have the means to open it," he said. "And I know you can travel through time. Help me travel through it."

I said nothing, just simply held his gaze.

"You fascinate me," he continued, studying me closely. "Just like Adelaide did...like Alaric did."

My stomach turned. I really didn't like the way he said their names. "And you should be with them," he added, almost softly. "We should be with them."

An annoyed breath escaped me.

"That's my offer," he finished. "Help me, work with me, and everything I've ever done or will do that will make your life...difficult will disappear."



I stared at him. For a second, I genuinely couldn't believe what I was hearing.

Did he really think that my parents would thank him for this?

That they would welcome him back into their lives like nothing had happened?

They would kill him before he could even finish a sentence. Was he really that stupid, or was he simply blinded by his own guilt, perhaps too lost to care?

How about focusing on Kayden instead? He must've known for a long time what he had been up to.

This wasn't about right or wrong.

It was about what he wanted.

I had never planned to help him, not once, and there was nothing he could do or say to make me believe otherwise. I would get everyone out, and I would do so without giving him what he wanted.

I shot him a cold glare. "When you need a witch's help," I said, "the last thing you should do is lock up her kind."

His expression changed, his eyes widened.

"I will not help you," I continued. "Not now. Not ever. You don't get to be selfish, then force me into fixing your mistakes."

A silence fell between us, but his face said a lot. Something in his gaze changed and the full facade had dropped. He was furious, offended, and hadn't expected that answer.



A dark chuckle left him. "I liked you better when you couldn't form a proper sentence," he growled.

"No, you didn't," I replied calmly. "You've always hated me, Your Majesty," I reminded him. "Just like my parents will always hate you."

It was perhaps a bit too much, but it had to be said.

"I see," the king spoke with a frown. "In that case, the trial will last three days," he said. "And I'll make sure to ask you every single day...until you change your mind."

My brows pulled together.

"And if you don't...then we will have to accept that actions have consequences," he said. "The accusations are serious, and someone will have to answer for what has been done."

This was all to be expected. He would try and scare me with the rest, ultimately use Nate as a scapegoat, knowing Kylan and I would not allow that to happen. We had already calculated all of this.

"Guards!"

The doors opened instantly, and several footsteps filled the room.

"The Royal Mate," the king instructed without even looking at me, "take her out of my sight!"

As the guards approached, he stepped closer one last time. So close I could feel his breath. "I can't help but wonder which day you'll crack," he murmured.

I shot him the smallest smile. "Let's see how long you hold on," he added. "Especially when it's not just your life on the line."



Then he turned and walked off, leaving me standing there. For the first time since I had walked in, I released a broken gasp as I pressed my hand against my chest.

All of it was a disaster, and wherever Kylan might be, I hoped he was holding up better than I was.