

## Chapter 440

Day 2

Violet

Varius's words were strong and clear.

You are no king of mine.

It went so quiet for a moment that it felt like the entire courtroom held its breath. That was until one of the guards gripped the back of Varius's neck, his lips pressing together as he pushed him with force.

"You will bow to your king!"

My heart ached for Varius. The witches looked down, not able to bear the sight of it. But the king watched with a smirk plastered on his face, just long enough until he had decided he was satisfied.

"Leave him!"

The guard froze for half a second before releasing Varius immediately, stepping back as if nothing had happened. A mocking laugh came from the king.

"I will not beg to be your king," he said. "Because the last thing I would ever want...is to be king to a kind who gather in secrecy, performing rituals to i-infect this world with their...Lord Baelor."

He had barely said the name and the crowd already reacted, showing their outrage by erupting into angry murmurs.

My chest clenched hard, my pulse quickening as the king's gaze cut through the chaos and landed directly on me. "Yes, you have heard me,"



he said, his voice rising. "On the night of the full moon, during my daughter's howl, these individuals were gathered together, chanting into the darkness, begging their devil to spread his influence across our kingdom!"

The murmurs continued while my body stiffened as I didn't know what to make of it. I turned my head, catching the puzzled look in Kylan's eyes as they flicked toward me.

I gave a small shrug, showing him I was just as confused.

Was the king really saying that the chants that night, the ones I heard with Gloria, had come from them?

But why?

Why would they help her?

"Silence!"

The king shouted, and the people followed his command. Right at that moment, the doors opened once more, but no one seemed to have noticed. I did, and I was sure Kylan did too.

It was Kayden...

He moved so quickly it would've been hard to notice him if I hadn't been looking. His jaw was tight, his expression dark and irritated.

Would he have been with Lady Mona?

The thought barely had time to settle before the king continued. "Witches of the mountains. The charges brought before you today," he announced, "are for the use of dark magic, conspiracy, and endangerment of this kingdom."



He then eyed Varius. "And as their leader, as the one responsible for these people, it will be you who will have to take the punishment with them. Now, how do you plead?"

It went silent. Varius, still restrained, moved his gaze across the room, searching until it found me. It felt as if everything else faded as I tried to read the look on his face.

What was it?

Did he want to apologize, deny...

I squinted my eyes to get a better look. Why couldn't he just do that thing where he would slip into my mind and communicate?

He had given us the box, told us about Baelor, Kayden. He was on our side. There had to be an explanation for all of this.

He gave me a small nod that was barely noticeable. I did not have enough time to understand what it meant, as he had already turned back to the king.

His expression sharpened despite the weakness in his body.

"Guilty," he pronounced.

My heart dropped.

No...

No, what was he saying?

My eyes looked everywhere. From Kayden, who was so shocked he had to hold the wall for support, to the king, who hadn't expected him to plead guilty, to Kylan, who looked equally as startled.



Varius continued. "It is true," he said, his voice strong, "that a small number of my people have...engaged in practices they should not have. As their leader, the responsibility is mine. I failed to prevent it."

A strange sense of relief washed over me. He hadn't been directly involved, and that was great, but it didn't last long. My eyes drifted to the witches behind him.

They had been involved, and I didn't know what to think. It suddenly made sense why only a small group had been taken.

They had made a mistake.

I knew that. But I didn't want it to end like this. Why did Varius have to pay? All he had to do was deny it, protect them the way a leader should, so why wasn't he?

The king let out a loud laugh, clapping his hands together. "Remarkable!" he called out. "A soothsayer who takes responsibility. How refreshing!"

His smile widened. "It seems day two will be a short one after all."

I doubted this was part of his plan or what he was even after, but everything was falling right into his hands. Varius pleaded guilty, which meant the king could use that against me.

His intentions were clear.

'Open the box, and I'll spare them.'

"Tell me," he said, looking down at Varius, "if you were me...what would you do?"

Varius responded right away, as he had already thought of the answer. "If



I were you," he said, "I would sentence them all to death."

What?

A roar of approval rose from the crowd.

"For actions that threaten the balance of this world."

Why was Varius doing this?

"He really does have a death wish," Kylan muttered under his breath.

The corner of the king's lips widened. He didn't have to do much, Varius was already doing it for him. "And what about the Hastings girl?" he cackled.

The Hastings...me?

Every gaze in the room snapped toward me at once, and heat crept up my cheeks.

"The king has a point!" someone shouted.

"I don't know what you mean," Varius said calmly. "The girl has nothing to do with this."

The king chuckled. "Does she not?" he asked. "The royal mate who stood in this very room, advocating for these...individuals."

He gestured toward the witches. "Allowing them to be nurtured back to health so they could regain their strength," he argued. "Is she not at least partly responsible?"

If he really needed my help, he had a nice way of showing it.

Voices started rising again, and whispers spread. It wasn't hard for the



king to get people on his side because many of them had been brainwashed.

“Kylan—”

“Stay calm.”

My hands felt cold despite his grip.

I took a deep breath, trying to control my breathing as I stared ahead. He was doing this to get at me. I couldn't show him how this affected me.

From the corner of my eye, I saw movement.

Fergus...

Please don't do anything stupid.

He stepped forward aggressively, his face nearly red with anger. Someone from our pack tried to stop him, but he shrugged them away.

“Hey, Elyx!” he shouted, his voice cutting through the noise.

My heart dropped.

No...

The king opened his mouth, pointing at himself with a look of mock disbelief. “Elyx?” he repeated, his voice deeper than usual. “Me?”

Fergus didn't stop. “My daughter—”

Kylan was already on his feet, cutting him off before he could say another word. “You will keep her out of it. This is ridiculous,” Kylan said. His voice was calm, but still loud enough for everyone to hear him, and the noise quickly died down again.



His gaze locked onto the king. "You and I are the ones who brought the Lyperian stone back to life," he stated. "We are the reason they even have access to that level of power again."

Kylan's eyes settled on me for a moment. "So if anyone is responsible for the witches regaining strength...it's us. Not the soothsayer, and not her."

