

Chapter 465

Kylan

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Two months ago

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I tried to breathe through it, but I couldn't. The shadow was halfway inside, suffocating me. It was the same feeling I had already felt once before, but a thousand times worse.

The power was too much, too dark...

My body was just about to give out, but then I felt Valerius.

He surged forward, pushing through me with everything he had, and took over. I caught a glimpse of his purple eyes in the reflection of the blood moon, and the choking stopped.

Suddenly, I could breathe again.

I could focus, and somewhere in that focus, I managed to control the darkness. The shadow continued traveling through me.

I felt it in my veins, in my bones, and in my soul. Everything was on fire as my skin and my chest burned. As the shadow spread further, it felt as if I was being torn apart from the inside, but I could take it this time.

It was all because of Valerius.

I felt the final impact through my beating heart, and then it stopped. Thorne's red eyes, my purple eyes...



Startled, I released him from my hands. He flew up immediately and landed on my shoulder, refusing to let go.

Was this it?

My eyes squinted as I looked around, trying to see whether anything had changed, but I couldn't feel much. Better yet, I couldn't feel anything.

'Did it work?'

Valerius let out a short laugh. 'I told you I would protect you, Crown Prince,' he spoke. 'And as long as I am there to protect you, you do not have anything to worry about.'

'And what happens if you won't be able to protect me?' I asked curiously. It was not like I wanted to find out, but it would be better to be prepared. Just in case.

'If you lose control,' Valerius breathed. 'This will be your fate.'

Out of nowhere, a sharp pain shot through my skull. I groaned and grabbed my head with both hands, squeezing my eyes shut. The pain was throbbing and blinding.

So this was what would happen...

'Can you feel it?' a dark voice whispered. Baelor's voice. 'What we could be together if you would let me take charge?'

I planted my hands on my knees as I doubled over, breathing heavily. My senses were different. Much sharper.

I could hear so many voices in my head, I did not know who they belonged to. Laughter, anger, sorrow. I could smell things from miles away and even feel the pulse of the earth beneath my feet.



'That's enough, Valerius!' I called out. 'Valerius!'

He did not respond. If anything, he had pushed further, and flashes appeared behind my eyes.

The first thing I saw was a woman dressed in all white. Her hair was long, pale as snow, flowing behind her as she fought against something. A shadow with horns and burning red eyes.

I looked down at my hands, noticing I was the shadow.

Baelor...

Were these his memories?

My surroundings shifted. Multiple times. There were more faces, Valerius, Lumia, more battles, and it seemed to be centuries of them. My mind was traveling through time in a span of seconds, and I did not know where it would stop.

They were all fighting the same shadow.

Baelor.

And it continued until we reached her.

Adelaide...

I knew what she looked like from when she first appeared in my dream and from when she later led me to Violet to save her.

She stood beside a man with hair and eyes as bright as Violet's.

Alaric...

The two of them stood together, facing a huge crowd, but I could not see

clearly. I was watching from above, and as I drifted closer, the image shifted again.

This time, I was not seeing through Baelor's eyes. I could not tell whose view it was either. I was standing on a battlefield, and across from me stood Kayden.

No...Kian.

Everything around us was empty and dark. Both of our eyes glowed red. We stood a few feet apart. Kian raised his hands, and the ground beneath us started to shake.

Panic shot through me as Violet suddenly ran out in front of me. Her eyes glowed white, her hair lifted into the air, and she raised her hands. Kian's red hair began to glow. Then he pushed his hands forward.

No.

No, no, no...

'Kylan,' Valerius's voice cut through. 'Now you know why you must not let him out. He wants to show you how powerful you can be.'

I inhaled sharply. The flashes disappeared, and the visions faded. The pain in my head was also fading.

'What was that?' I breathed.

'That was Baelor,' Valerius explained. 'You did well, but this is only the beginning. If you will not be of any use to him, he will want to get out. Every day, you must keep him contained. The moment you let your guard down, he will try to break free.'

'And what if we fail?'

'We will not. Your body is capable, a gift from your mother,' he said. 'You would do anything to keep Violet safe, even this. The Soothsayer saw a different path and chose you for this very reason.' Valerius let out a soft roar. 'You will not fail because you love.'

A gift from my mother?

I frowned. He had to mean her strength, her body, the way she had survived pain that would have killed anyone. But if that was what made me capable...then how could Kian carry the vessel?

'Go back and rest,' Valerius instructed. 'Your body will need it.'

I had not thought about my body again before he mentioned it. My legs were still weak and my head slightly spinning. Though I expected it now had something to do with those strange images.

My eyes went to Thorne, who was still perched on my shoulder. His eyes were dark again, and he was calm. Like nothing had ever happened.

"I wanted to let you go," I huffed. "But it seems like you will be staying with me for a while longer."

Thorne let out a soft caw and pressed his head against my neck. Probably his way of saying he did not mind.

The walk back to the dorms felt longer than it should have. I could not stop thinking about that thing inside my body. I trusted Valerius fully. We had reached that point where I could trust him, but there was still a small bit of doubt curling in the back of my mind.

Not about him.

About those visions. Kian...



Were they even visions at all?

I did not know how far into the future I had seen, but one thing was certain. Kian would succeed in getting Baelor's other half, and that meant we were in serious trouble.

What was he up to right now?

And where did that leave the Veil?

So many thoughts kept spinning through me.

By the time I reached my room, the blood moon had already faded to a dull glow. I pushed the door open quietly, careful not to wake her.

Violet.

My eyes found her right away. She was curled up in my bed, her blonde hair spread across my pillow.

Thorne flew off my shoulder and made his way into his open cage. Jumpie stirred at once, letting out a small chirp at the sight of him.

Of course she had sensed I was gone. She always did.

Would she know I had something other than Valerius inside me?

A soft breath slipped out of me as I leaned against the door, watching Violet sleep. A quiet snore came from her lips, and I could not help but smile.

She looked so peaceful...

So unaware of what I had just done.

And seeing her like that reminded me of why I had done it. I just wanted



her to be okay. She had been waking up a lot during the night, and I pretended not to notice because I did not want to pressure her into talking.

I knew she was the kind of person who talked when she was ready, and I was okay with that. I was the same, and she knew it. Whether we could keep being like this or whether this was the kind of communication we would have to work on down the line, only time would tell.

I walked over to the bed and climbed in as carefully as possible. When I pushed her to the side to make room, she let out a small groan in response. Then her legs wrapped around me tightly.

Well...

It turned out she was not asleep after all.

"If you ever leave me alone during that scary blood moon again," she mumbled against my chest, "I will kill you."

Her voice was as sweet as honey, even with the threat attached to it. I chuckled and pulled her closer against my body, wrapping my arms fully around her.

She fit so perfectly.

Always did.

"Where were you?" she murmured.

Valerius was right. She had not noticed.

I hummed, thinking about everything I wanted to say. Everything I could not say.



I really wanted to, and I would someday...just not now.

"I was here, Pup," I whispered, kissing the top of her head instead. "I was here the whole time, and I will always be here."

She took a satisfied breath. A few seconds later, she drifted back to sleep like the moment had never happened.

It was true...

I would always be there for her.

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