

Chapter 483

Violet

Kian...it all led back to him.

Even though I had known, even though I had recognized that voice in my dream, hearing Aelius say his name out loud, that name, made everything feel final.

He was the one who had my parents, and not just him...but that woman, Gloria, as well.

My chest tightened, and I instinctively searched for comfort, brushing my shoulder against Kylan's. He didn't move much, but I felt him press back against me. The others around us looked no less anxious.

"Do you want us to save them?" I asked, my voice barely above a whisper. "Please tell me you have called us here so we can save them. You know where they are, right?"

Aelius never answered. "The Battle of Baelor," he pronounced, raising his head again. "The war between the two Baelors, the war no species will be spared from...is closer than I thought."

He looked over his shoulder at the back of the cave. "There is much I have to explain to you all...but it is better done inside Bloodstone Haven."

Wait, what?

My eyes snapped to Kylan, my mouth wide open. Had he actually invited us into Bloodstone Haven?

A small laugh slipped out of Kylan. I suppose the look on my face was hilarious to him.



Aelius pushed himself up from the floor and started walking toward the dark tunnel at the back of the cave. He didn't wait for anyone. "Come."

We all moved at the same time, scrambling up to follow. "He seems to be in a hurry," Trinity muttered, barely having time to get rid of her empty cup.

"Exactly," Dylan whispered, his eyes narrowed. "Is it even safe?"

"A village full of Soothsayers," Nate whispered back. "What could possibly go wrong?"

He reached out and shoved Dylan in the back, pushing him forward. "Considering Violet was born here," he added, "yes, Dylan. I believe it is safe."

Dylan's eyes shot to mine, and I gave him a small shrug. I felt Kylan's hand slide into mine, and leaned into him as we all started following Aelius into the tunnel.

Eventually, we had caught up with him. The tunnel was completely dark, and we took painfully slow steps.

I moved my fingers and clutched the back of Kylan's jacket with both hands, my feet shuffling because I was scared to trip over something. I gripped him so hard that if I did, I would certainly take him down with me.

Dylan, Nate, and Trinity were somewhere behind us. At least, those were my suspicions. The only thing I could hear was their breathing and their footsteps.

I had been waiting for this moment for so long, and had imagined it about a hundred times. What would it look like today? What would I feel,



and what would I say when I finally walked past the tunnel?

But now...all I could think about were my parents.

I had been laughing, enjoying life a bit too much these past months while they were being held somewhere by Kian and Gloria. They were alive, but not free and maybe even hurt.

Dad was no longer in the running to become the vessel, but Gloria had been after Mom's eyes before. I just had to know they were okay.

I needed to save them, and I needed Aelius to tell me how. Now.

"Grandpa Aelius?"

"Child of Blood."

His voice was calm and patient. It gave me the strength to ask what was on my mind, and I was hopeful for a reaction.

"You said we would talk about the Battle of Baelor...but my parents," I whispered. "Is there a way? Can we get to them? Can we —"

I stopped talking as he let out a long breath. The thing with Aelius was that he didn't need to use words. I knew that sigh was all I would get for now.

'We will save them, Violet,' Lumia promised. 'With or without anyone's permission, we will find out where they are and we will save them.'

I heard the determination in her voice. She must have been especially worried about Lumen.

"Violet," Kylan whispered. "You're shaking."



"Of course I'm shaking, Kylan," I hissed back. "I just found out my parents are...somewhere out there, and now we're walking in pitch black. I can't see anything," I breathed. "I don't know where my hands or my feet are, so yes. I'm shaking!"

I didn't mean to lash out at him, but all of this was just slowly driving me insane.

"Grandpa Aelius...can I call you Grandpa?" Trinity called from behind us.

"Sure," Aelius chuckled.

"Great," Trinity exhaled. "I'm sure this tunnel must be very pretty, but unfortunately we can't see it. I really feel like you guys should invest in some more lights—"

She had barely finished before the tunnel suddenly changed. A bright light appeared through the dark, and it came from the front.

It was Aelius's eyes.

"Sick," Nate admired behind me. "They're like yours, Violet."

"Not quite," Aelius said. He looked over his shoulder, and the light of his eyes caught mine for a second. I dropped my gaze fast and stared at the ground instead until he turned to face the front again.

"Your friend, Violet," he said as we kept walking, "carries the eyes of Adelaide."

"The eyes of...Adelaide?" Nate questioned.

"Yes," Aelius confirmed. "Her mother's eyes are powerful in a way that has not been seen in any Soothsayer of our line in many generations," he explained. "There are things she can do that the rest of us could only



dream of. We knew she was something different the day she was born."

I felt my heart beat faster. If Mom's powerful eyes were not enough to beat Kian, then how could I ever free her?

The worst part was the guilt.

I had used my eyes multiple times before I knew how to use them, which caused cracks in the Veil. I had somehow transferred some of my strength to Kian. I had healed him...

Kylan squeezed my hand. He must've felt the shift in me through the bond. "Just wait it out," he said. "Quit...overthinking like you always do and wait it out. This is not your fault, and Aelius must have a plan. He would never leave her there."

Right...and that's why he left her there for two months.

We walked a bit further until we came to a stop in front of a heavy wooden door. Aelius's eyes faded slightly so he could look at us.

"When we step through this door," he said, his voice firm, "you will follow me, and you will not stop or wander. You will not speak to the villagers, and they will not speak to you," he instructed. "Today is not a day for small talk, greetings, or questions. Do you understand?"

The others nodded silently.

"I understand," I said quickly.

He held my gaze a beat longer than the others. Long enough for me to realize that it was mostly directed toward me.

He had just made clear that whatever was on the other side of this door was not going to feel like a homecoming.



It wasn't a happy visit.

"You will meet them, Child of Blood. Your people will want to meet you... Adelaide and Alaric's daughter," he said, looking me up and down. "You will come here often. You will have plenty of time."

There it was again. Him implying we would be spending plenty of time here. It just really made me believe that he had a plan.

"I understand," I repeated. Could he just open that door already?

At last, Aelius's hand lifted to the door. My chest rose and fell with each breath as I waited in suspense.

"You okay?" Kylan asked under his breath.

I hummed a nod. I didn't have it in me to give him more than that as my eyes were only on the door. First I heard a creak, and then Aelius pushed it open.

Seconds later, my ears filled with voices...

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