

Chapter 493

Violet

This time I was already inside the cave.

There was no Veil, no fall, only darkness, and it threw me off for a second. That was until Dylan's voice and his words from earlier repeated in my head.

Do something...

My jaw locked with determination, and I turned through the darkness until my eyes landed on the opening where those red eyes had appeared last time.

The last time, I had almost walked further, but this time I knew I couldn't do that. It hurt knowing that if I could just walk a little further, I might see exactly where Mom and Dad were being held. But I knew I couldn't do anything to help them. Not without my powers.

And Kylan's instructions had been very clear. He wanted me outside of the cave.

I raised my hands carefully, just in case, and started walking backwards. The tunnel was much darker than the one leading to Bloodstone Haven, and I didn't even know that was possible.

But just walking here, I could tell that this was not it. All of this felt wrong. Something moved across the floor near my feet, but I refused to look down as I did not want to know.

I just kept walking until the darkness disappeared and the light returned. My face tightened as I took in the smell of pine around me and noticed I was outside again.



There had been no warning, no transition. The cave was like a curtain, and there was no in between.

It had clearly been manipulated with some kind of magic. It didn't make any sense.

Worse than the cave, was actually believing that I would somehow find out the location. Everything was crowded with tall trees, so high I could barely see the sky. The forest went on in every direction with not a single path in sight.

Even if I ran for dear life until the candles flickered out, I doubted I would find anything that told me where I was.

I shook my head.

No...

Don't come back with nothing.

Don't be a loser.

'Lumia?' I felt her stir within me, begging for attention.

'That cave is not normal,' she said, 'It felt...I wasn't even there with you in it. Our connection was gone.'

I could feel the fear, and that terrified me more than anything. 'Did you feel it the last time too?' I asked her. 'In the nightmares?'

'I wasn't sure back then,' she confessed. 'This time I'm feeling everything more intensely, so we have to watch out.'

My throat bobbed as I looked at the tall trees again. The cave wasn't safe, the forest wasn't either.



What was this place?

'Is that why you didn't connect to Lumen the last time?' I asked softly. 'Not because you didn't want to...but because you couldn't, and didn't want to freak me out.'

She stayed quiet for a while, then sighed. It was a clear answer.

I huffed, staring at the trees, only to walk toward them anyway. It wasn't like standing here was doing me any good, and to be honest, anything seemed to be safer than those caves.

There was no clear plan as to where I was walking. I just needed to move.

'Oh no, wise wolf,' Lumia said in a mocking voice. 'How about I just ignore you like I always do and keep walking and putting us in danger, because my name is Vio—'

'I don't want to wake up and tell them I failed,' I said, irritated.

She let out an annoyed roar as I pushed my way through the trees, hoping to find something.

'Do you know where we are?' I asked her.

'If I did, Violet, I would have surely told you,' Lumia said. 'I'm not that cruel.'

Well, it was Lumia, so one could never know.

A flash of blue caught my eye through the trees up ahead. It was so small I had barely noticed it, but it was something. And if it led to a cliff, then maybe I could see where we were.

'Should we shift?'



'I'm not running.'

'What?' I gasped. 'What do you mean, you're not running?'

'I need to save my energy for the race tomorrow,' Lumia suddenly decided.

A surprised cackle popped out of me before I could stop it. Brave of her to think we would actually be running tomorrow.

'You should leave the way you came, Violet,' Lumia said more seriously this time. 'We shouldn't mess with what we don't know.'

I took in her advice. It definitely wouldn't be smart to try and return while shifted. We had no idea how this area reacted outside of the woods, and I didn't know what would happen if I woke up during the shift.

The way I had come in was the safe way out.

I got a bit hopeful as the blue patch grew a bit bigger, and I quickened my pace. 'Do you think he can actually do it?' I asked. 'Kylan? That he can actually control that thing inside of him and go against Baelor?'

'Of course he can!' Lumia said immediately. 'He is our Kylan. He is going to give it everything he has, knowing it can save Adelaide and Alaric.'

I blew out a breath. It was that word, everything, that scared me at times. Usually when that word came into play, it led to a sacrifice. Mom and Dad gave their everything, and look where it had gotten them?

'Oh, so we are team vessel now?'

'Never said that,' Lumia argued. 'I still believe it's stupid.'

As I kept walking, I pushed branches and twigs out of my way. I had



hoped to find an opening by now, but for some reason it only seemed to be getting worse, and the patch of blue had almost disappeared as well.

'This place is in the middle of nowhere,' I said, frustrated. 'We are never going to find it.'

Lumia sighed. 'High Priestess Gloria has already failed once,' she began. 'She would do anything not to fail again, and she has had plenty of years to think about what her next steps would be.'

Yes...

And that was the disadvantage of being inside that Veil for too many years. She had become even more powerful.

My breath hitched as something cracked between the trees up ahead, and I paused mid-step.

That wasn't me...

Shit...

'Someone's here,' Lumia warned. 'Not a breath, Violet.'

My breath came in fast, and I closed my eyes to think. I felt my pulse up in my throat, and was suddenly very aware that I was alone out here in an unfamiliar place, with no powers and no way to fight back if whatever was coming wanted to find me.

'I believe they are able to see you, but can't pick up scent in here,' Lumia said quickly. 'As long as you stay still, you'll be fine.'

Her words were meant to calm me, but my heart only began beating faster as the footsteps got closer.



I gasped and ducked behind the nearest tree.

What if I could die here?

I was just joking about the race. Of course I would rather run than die in a nightmare.

My hands trembled against the bark as I peeked from behind the tree. I tried to control my breathing by picking one point in front of me to focus on.

The first thing my eyes saw was roses in front of my feet. They weren't like any rose I had ever seen before, which was odd since I practically knew every single one. Perks of being a Bloodrose.

The roses were royal blue, layered with black petals in between. The edges were white and almost glowing.

My eyes narrowed at them as I leaned a little to get a better look, yet nothing about them rang a bell.

Stop, Violet.

Those roses aren't important right now.

The footsteps came again, until someone appeared in the barely visible clearing. Their back was turned to me, but I could see they were wearing a dark blue cloak.

So there were actually people here...

When the strange figure turned around, everything in me locked up and my throat went dry. As the hood slid back, my eyes followed the familiar red streaks and traveled all the way down to those red eyes.



It wasn't just anyone...

A shaky breath left my lips. He was looking up at the sky. His chin tilted back and the hood fell off all the way.

It was Kian...

He looked miserable.

I winced as a sharp pain hit me in the chest, and pressed my fingers against it. What was this?

Though I was in pain, my eyes stayed on Kian. I watched as something trailed down his face. They were tears, but not just any tears. Thick, red tears.

That's when I realized I could feel all of it. His pain, his anger, that uncontrollable, pure rage. He was angry at the world. But underneath it all was that emotion that made my heart ache.

Emptiness...

It scared me.

It scared me so much my own eyes filled up, and I didn't know why. I wasn't supposed to cry for that monster. I didn't want to. I didn't even know why my body was reacting this way, but it did.

I let out a sniff, the sound louder than I meant it to be, making his head snap in my direction.

Fuck.

Those dangerous red eyes scanned the trees, but he had not spotted me. Kian started walking toward the tree I was hiding behind with careful



steps, and I didn't know what to do. My heart was beating so hard I was sure he would hear it.

Why did I have to be so stupid and walk into the forest?

Why couldn't I just listen to Lumia?

Or better yet, Dylan?

I closed my eyes, accepting my fate.

Even so, I dared say a small prayer.

Moon Goddess, please help me...

~

I jolted awake with a loud gasp, and found myself back in Nate's room, in the circle.

"Violet?"

Kylan's arms were wrapped around me. He had me pressed against his chest, supporting my head with one hand. Trinity, Dylan, and Nate blew out the last candles in a hurry.

They must've sensed something was wrong and had pulled me out.

"Violet?" Kylan repeated, shaking my body. "Are you okay?"

Startled, I looked up at him. "No, no," I shook my head. "I think we...the flower!"

He frowned. "What?"

"I need paper and a pen," I instructed, sitting up straight. "Quick."