

## Chapter 501

Violet

About twenty minutes had passed since I started running, and I could feel it everywhere. My legs, and the uncomfortable feeling in my ribs.

My breath came out ragged, but it didn't stop me from holding on. There was no slowing down because every time I did, Lurnia made sure I knew it.

'Almost there!'

An excited gasp left me when I finally saw the end of the trees and the bright light of a small clearing. When I spotted the large stone wall marking the turnaround, my excitement only grew.

Just as I burst out of the trees, a loud roar tore through the clearing. So powerful it made me stop in my tracks. I only had half a second to see it before it disappeared down the path beside me, already heading back.

But one second had been enough. It was a massive dark gray she-wolf, easily twice my size. Not as big as Kylan or Nate. Or even Kaelis. But still big enough to give me goosebumps. And it was fast.

It was Sienna.

'Why are we standing still?' Lurnia growled. 'Touch the stone and go!'

Why...

I looked to the side of me. Wes had also finally arrived, and he was the second person I had to deal with. There was not a drop of sweat on his face, and as expected, he seemed too relaxed to be doing all of this.

His eyes fluttered to me as he shot me a quick, flustered look.



"That...You..." He pointed his finger toward the woods, lifting a single brow. "You didn't kill Cas, did you?" He grinned.

I would've loved to joke back, but I needed his good heart, and I needed it now. While we were both still on two legs and I could still talk to him.

"You do not exactly look like a man planning to win this thing," I said, still catching my breath.

We let out a small laugh before scratching his head.

"I would rather stay out of whatever mess Cas and Sienna have got going on between them," he said.

"I see..."

He looked around the clearing, then back the way we had come.

"You want something from me," he concluded.

I breathed in, grateful he got the hint. There was no time for the long version, so I rushed toward him and grabbed both of his hands. Desperation filled my eyes while his green ones stared back at me with curiosity.

"Can you do something for me?" I asked.

His lips parted, but nothing came out. Just a nod.

"I know this race does not mean anything to you," I rushed out. "But it means something to me...A lot, actually, and way more than I can explain to you right now."

His eyes widened a little.



"So I need you to let me have it," I said softly.

"Anything else?"

"Yes," I breathed. "I need you to check on Cassian for me. I kicked him in the knee, and he is somewhere back there on the ground hurting, and I feel awful about it."

For a second, Wes just looked at me.

"Probably deserved," he said, smirking. "But I got you. Don't worry."

"Really?" I asked excitedly.

"Yes, now go!"

Wes let out a laugh and dragged me toward the stone. His other hand slapped my back. Together, we ran the last part and hit our hands against the stone.

I spun to go back, but Wes's voice stopped me.

"Violet."

"Yes?"

The smile was still on his lips. Softer now.

"I like seeing you like this. I think we all want to see you like this," he said. "Anyway, please. Go and win this thing."

I nodded at him, then took off. I didn't take the path I had stolen from Cassian but went straight for Sienna's. As soon as I saw the huge prints of the Lycan's paws in the dirt, I knew there was no time to waste.

'Are you ready, Lumia?'



'I am always ready,' she said dramatically. 'I was starting to think you weren't ready because we're running a race here, and you just stopped to have a tea party with Mister Charming over there—'

'Okay, Lumia!'

She was quick to take over. Thanks to the Elite team gear, the shift came easily. One second I was running, and the next, it wasn't my own legs hitting the ground anymore.

Lumia took off through the trees. The pace didn't feel like anything we had ever done before, and the trees blurred on both sides. The wind brushed her fur so hard it felt like we were flying.

'I am sorry,' I said to her. 'We have a lot of catching up to do.'

'Do not apologize, Violet,' she said back. 'You did everything you could in there, and you did great. You managed your energy exactly the way I needed you to. That is why I get to run like this right now.'

Then she pushed faster.

I knew we could be fast, but this was a whole other thing. This was not normal. We were not normal.

This was what a werewolf of royal blood could actually do. I had spent my whole life thinking the small wolf in me was just the witch half throwing things off, that I was somehow only half of what other wolves were.

Lumia had already proved me wrong, but this carrying me through this forest right now was not half of what I expected, and my expectations were already high.

This was something I had not even met yet.



I could only imagine what Dad's wolf could do. If this was Lumia, then who was Lumen? Undoubtedly something the world had not seen in a very long time.

'I will go easy on your friend,' Lumia said. 'Though I would not count on Lycans to do the same. They are known to be aggressive when they know they are losing.'

'Just make sure we get to her first,' I chuckled.

Lumia let out the loudest roar I had ever heard come out of her. I was certain the sound tore through the woods, all the way through the gates of Starlight, and everyone must've heard.

I did not know how she had any more in her, but she did. Her paws went up another speed, and I enjoyed everything about it. It felt good. I felt so alive.

Why had we not done it like this before?

The thudding ahead of us started getting closer, and my focus returned.

'Lumia,' I warned. 'She is close.'

'I know.'

Right then, the dark gray Lycan came into view, a low growl rolling out of its chest. It felt like a warning.

Stay away.

But it was one that wouldn't work on Lumia. She fought hard to close the gap, and when we ran beside her, she threw herself against the Lycan's side, making it stumble.



The size difference was definitely not even close. Not by a long shot. The Lycan was so much bigger than us. She slammed her furry leg right into our side.

Just like that, they were even.

It could've gone on for a while, but it didn't. Instead, it turned into a fair race.

We both ran with everything we had, side by side while matching each other's strides. The trees thinned around us, and at that point, we were going so fast I almost did not have time to register what I was seeing.

All I could register were the screams and cheers growing louder, along with the finish line rushing closer. The Lycan's paws stayed right beside ours, and when we leaped for the finish, I knew it could've been anyone's race.

I just hoped it was ours...