

Chapter 510

Violet

Aelius closed his eyes and exhaled through his nose. "You can trust him."

I also let out a breath at his words. At least that was one less thing to worry about.

"Do you know him, then?" Nate questioned. "Are you acquainted with him?"

"I once was."

Dylan frowned. "How?"

Aelius chuckled. "He came here once. To the caves of Bloodstone Haven."

We all went quiet. What would someone like Sterling do at a place like this? It just didn't make sense.

Luckily, Aelius continued before I could ask further. "He asked me to help him find your parents," Aelius continued, his eyes finding mine. "He knew Adelaide. He knew the perfect student she was, and the woman she had become," he went on. "And he could not, in a million years, believe she had harmed Prince Alaric. So he came here...to me."

My throat felt tight, and I didn't know what to think. I had spent all this time thinking of Sterling as a polite old man with a cane. Now I was trying to picture him walking into the woods alone, looking for Aelius so he could get to the bottom of my parents' disappearance and clear Adelaide's name.

"What did you tell him?" I asked, my voice soft and nervous.



"I could feel his sincerity. So I told him the truth." Aelius surprised me with his answer. He was the one who was always overly cryptic regarding everything. "I told him that Adelaide and Alaric were alive, doing fine. That they were healthy, happy, and taking care of their daughter...Violet."

My throat bobbed, and I squeezed the grass in my hands. That was it. He had recognized my name, and perhaps, the moment Lumia had crossed that line, he knew who I was. It wasn't just because of her appearance.

Aelius's lips curved into a slight smile. "After he had learned of what had happened, he promised me that when the time was right, he would help the Alpha prince take back the throne that had been poisoned by the Alpha King."

A promise...

He had been waiting for a long time, and for all those years, he hadn't even remembered the promise he had made. No wonder he had walked us into his office yesterday and looked at me the way he had.

But then something crossed my mind.

"Aelius," I said. "The trip to the palace...it was planned before yesterday."

That was the only explanation. Sterling did not just decide last week to walk into a place that had been abandoned for decades. He had to have been making plans for it, which meant his memories had already been there for a while.

Aelius's eyes squinted. He stared at the ground between us. "Then who did I feel," he murmured to himself.

"What do you mean?" I asked.



He shook his head. "Nothing. Continue."

It did not look like nothing. He looked like he had just realized something else that had caught him off guard. Could the feeling he had be about someone else instead of Sterling?

Oh Goddess...

Did someone else know who I was?

"The palace," Kylan said. "Will Kian be there? Will the cave be there?"

I felt a lump in my throat. It was something all of us had been wondering, but Kylan was brave enough to say it out loud. Whatever Aelius answered next was going to change everything.

Aelius looked across the group, his blue eyes serious. "You are going to the palace, and you are going to want to do something while you are there," he informed us. "All of you...are going to see things and feel things and want to fix them. I am here to tell you now—"

"So the cave is there—" Kylan started.

"I said, I am here to tell you now!" Aelius's voice rose, and his hand went up to stop him. The whole atmosphere changed.

"The Marrowrose may be there. It may not. Your parents themselves may be there. They may not," he stated. "Whatever you see, you will not act on it." His eyes were on me. Just me. "Pulling at the wrong thread could kill any of you. It could kill Kylan. Do you understand me?"

I nodded immediately. After I gave him the answer he wanted, his eyes darted around the circle. Trinity, Nate, Dylan, until they all bobbed their heads.



But Kylan didn't.

I had no idea what that was about, but I had already decided to behave at the warning that it could kill Kylan.

I looked over at him. His jaw was tight, his brown eyes locked on Aelius. There was a quiet stubbornness in his face that I knew too well. The same look I had seen when they had confronted Elyx several times.

He would do his own thing, and anything to get to Kian. Revenge was heavy on his mind, and he wanted it so badly that nothing Aelius could say was going to fully reach him through that.

I was going to have to watch him at the palace. Whatever he was thinking in the back of his head, I was not going to let him act on it in the spur of the moment.

Yes, I wanted my parents back...but I was willing to wait if that meant keeping Kylan safe.

"Kylan," Aelius warned.

Kylan lifted a single brow as he looked at him. Aelius released a low grunt, then let his eyes glow white for a split second. All of us looked down until they had gone back to normal.

"Every thread you tug will lead to a snap at your disadvantage." His voice deepened. "The wrong one snaps and people will die...the wrong one snaps and the crown prince loses himself to what is inside him...the wrong one snaps and we lose two sets of the eyes of Adelaide before the daughter has even learned how to use her own...the wrong one snaps and the war will be lost."

I breathed.



Two sets...

He meant Mom's and mine. Both of us could be lost in one wrong move.

"You will go to the abandoned palace," Aelius continued, his voice back to normal again. "And you will keep all of this in mind."

A long silence followed. He had terrified all of us to the point that no one dared say anything. I was still trying to put my thoughts back together when Dylan let out a chortle.

Aelius's head tilted. "What is it, boy?"

"Nothing," Dylan said, lifting both hands. Then he glanced at me.

No...

Don't do it, don't do it...

"Actually, no. Not nothing," Dylan exhaled. His eyes pierced through Aelius. "Violet said something the other day, Aelius. About you. And I am starting to believe she was right about everything."

There it was...

I wanted to disappear into the ground. I knew what I had said, but why did he have to drag me into it?

"Ah," Aelius chuckled. "Go on then. I take complaints."

"You don't give us enough information," Dylan told him. "You've been cryptic about everything. Violet has not even met her people yet, and she really wants to."

I quickly looked away but caught him gesturing to himself, Nate, and



Trinity.

"The rest of us don't even really know what we are supposed to be doing here. We are here, but we don't actually have a purpose. We just...tag along," he complained. "And the more this goes on, the more it feels like we should be doing something useful, but you never tell us what. It's getting annoying."

I blew out my cheeks. Kylan chuckled softly beside me, enjoying every second of it. Nate smiled awkwardly and Trinity? I couldn't see her face because she had turned around completely.

"Finished?" Aelius asked him. Then he let out a long breath. As hard as it was to listen to, I couldn't help but secretly praise Dylan for speaking up.

"You will be told what you earn," Aelius stated. "And the one who is coming to teach you has almost reached the end of his journey," he said. "He is almost here. I know you do not feel that you have time...but patience is the key to all of this. You will see."

I eased a little at the mention of the teacher. The one who would help with Kylan's Baelor problem and with my eyes. He was almost here.

"And Child of Blood."

"Huh?" I replied immediately. I was the only Child of Blood here.

"Is it true what the boy said? Do you feel that I have not done enough to connect you with your people?"

Shit.

Shit, shit, shit...



“L..” I started.

“Tell him the truth, Violet,” Kylan spoke beside me. He didn’t bother whispering. It wasn’t like I was scared of Aelius, but ever since he had basically put me on the same line as Dylan and Kylan in terms of disrespect, I wanted to tone it down a notch.

“Uh. Well, I mean, I have...I know you have your reasons, but, I—“

“Very well then!” A small laugh escaped him.

He pushed himself up to his feet and looked down at me with kind eyes. “I suppose I could understand where you are coming from. Perhaps I have been too careful with you.”

He wasn’t angry. He wasn’t offended either.

If anything, I caught a glimpse of a warm grandfather underneath the soothsayer. Just like when I had first entered the caves again.

“Would you all like to see the place where Violet came into this world?”



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