

### Chapter 519

Violet

The air got stuck in my throat. My chest rose and fell as I looked around the fog. My hand still held Kylan's, only tighter now, out of fear that he might break.

He felt Baelor's other half...

That meant the cave was here.

Kian was here.

My parents...

Just as another groan escaped Kylan, a strange sensation spread through my body. I was not sure how to describe it or what it meant. Something like adrenaline, or maybe an urge to go toward whatever was calling out to us. Whatever it was, it felt too intense.

Kylan's hand pulled away from mine to grip the side of his head, and I yanked him to a stop right where we stood.

"We are going back," I decided. We could not go on like this anymore. I could not and would not push him further than this. Nothing was worth seeing him go through this pain. Nothing.

I could hear it in his breathing before he even tried to say something. He wanted to tell me he was fine like he always did. But he could barely speak. The pain was visible in his face. His jaw was locked tight and his eyes were squeezed shut. He was holding all of it in.

"Everything okay back there?"

Rochwall's voice boomed through the fog from somewhere up ahead. I opened my mouth, lifting a hand in the air. "Don't!" Kylan breathed against my hair.

How could he just ask me to let it be when I saw he was obviously hurting? I bit my lip, ready to go against his wishes. Kylan took a few short puffs of air through his nose.

His grip on my hand started to loosen, and by the time he opened his eyes again...it was like nothing ever happened. Just like that.

"I asked if everything's okay back here."

Rochwall stepped in front of us, only inches away.

I opened my mouth. Then closed it again.

"I-I—"

I looked at Kylan. His face was relaxed. There was even a smirk on his lips. "Her laces were untied," he said, glancing down at my boots. "You know how clumsy she can get."

A surprised gasp came out of me. Rochwall combed his fingers through his short curls, his eyes moving between the two of us. He did not buy a word of it, but did not try to push it either.

"Keep it moving."

His lips curved into his usual gentle smile as he stepped to the side, holding out a hand for us to pass. He waited there until we did, and even after we had turned I could still feel his gaze on the back of our heads.

I drew in a tensed breath, eyes on Kylan until we had walked far enough that he could not hear us anymore. At least, I hoped that was the case. It

was kind of hard to tell due to all the fog.

"How did you do that?"

He kept his eyes forward. "What if I told you that I didn't?"

My pulse stumbled, my eyes widening in shock. "What do you mean, you didn't?"

"That wasn't me, Violet," Kylan said, his voice low. "I didn't do anything. Neither did Valerius. It just... happened."

I tried to think it through. He had sensed Baelor's other half. He wasn't the one to pull himself out of whatever disaster was waiting to happen, which could only mean one thing.

Kian must've felt it too, and was already far enough that he could control his powers to some degree. Which was expected, and no surprise of course. He had Gloria on his side.

I looked up at him. "The cave must be close," I said. "I think I just heard them...the witches. The ones who were in the Veil."

His brow pulled together. "What did they say?"

"I could not make any of it out." I told him the truth rather than guessing the unknown. It could've been a ritual, a witch chant, pretty much anything.

"The fog," Kylan murmured.

When I looked in front of me, I could see what he was talking about. The thick, white cloud from before was thinning fast. Almost unnaturally.

We had almost reached the bridge. There was a clear path again, and I

could also see the rest of the group up ahead. Since we had paused moments before, Trinity, Nate, and Dylan had already caught up with Sterling and Jorn.

All of them were looking around like they were trying to figure out what had just happened. Dylan shot me a nod, and I gave him one in return.

“What was that?” Nate asked.

Sterling tapped his cane once against the dirt. He turned his head toward us with a smile. “I cannot say I have ever experienced something like that before,” he said. “Perhaps it was the Moon Goddess trying to stop us.”

A soft laugh came from him as his eyes drifted to me. It must’ve been for a reason, but I couldn’t tell why. I only chuckled back and lowered my head. Seconds later, when I lifted it back up, he had already turned around.

This time, I focused on the two large men standing near the head of the bridge. One was on the left side of the path, one on the right.

They were werewolves, just like me. I could tell. After a while, you developed a sense for that sort of thing. I could also tell they weren’t from some small pack up north. Their bodies seemed frozen, as they had not even moved when we walked up.

And I just kept staring at that bridge...

“Your heart is beating fast, Pup,” Kylan mumbled.

I let out a sigh. “It is.”

“You can still turn back.”

I shook my head. "Since you are doing well again, there is no way that is going to happen."

A lazy laugh slipped past his lips as he bumped my shoulder with his body.

Jorn snapped his fingers up ahead and kept going until the whole group of us closed in around him, including Rochwall. We stood right at the front of the bridge.

Now that I could take a good look at it, I took a moment to admire the stone. It looked ancient, yet there wasn't a single crack in sight. Whoever cared for the bridge clearly took their work seriously.

Underneath it, the water was the clearest blue I had ever looked at. It was so clear it almost looked like glass, and just by one look, one could tell it belonged to the Merfolk.

I suddenly got the urge to run. Whether it was across the bridge or away from it so I could get the hell back to the bus was something I couldn't tell yet. Maybe both.

It was a strange feeling, to say the least. Part of me wanted to go, just like I'd said I would. I had to go and find out more about the cave. But there was also a part of me that had suddenly realized how real all of this had become.

"You must be from the Hollowmere Pack," Sterling said to the two men.

Both of them gave him a short nod.

No wonder they looked that strong. I had often heard about them, but was yet to meet one in real life. They were one of the packs that lived on the land between the two waters that led to the palace.

I suppose it was alright to say that after the royal family, they were just

about the closest thing this area had ever had to nobility, since they used to live inside the citadel itself.

Maybe they were somehow related to Dad as well. Who knew?

"We have been expecting you, Sir," one of them said to Sterling. "You are free to pass." Sterling hummed.

"That looks like quite the walk," Nate said, squinting his eyes. "I cannot even see the end of it."

The bridge stretched out into the distance to the point where there was no end in sight. I could still see the palace towers from a far distance, which made me believe Nate might've been right.

"I read it is only about twenty minutes," Dylan said. "If we shifted, it would probably be even shorter."

Trinity's head whipped to him. "Shift? Won't the bridge snap?"

One of the men laughed. "These two bridges have been standing for centuries, girl," he said. "They are made of some of the strongest stone in all of the world."

"They are, but we will walk," Jorn said flatly. Of course he would say that. "Good for the legs."

He had an annoying grin on his face when he said it.

"You will follow me," he continued. "Rochwall stays in the back, and you kids will stay between us at all times. You do not fall ahead, and you do not fall behind."

Trinity, who had moved beside me, let out a quiet sigh. "I don't know how all of you are surviving this team, but that man is ridiculous," she

huffed. "This is starting to feel like the field trips I used to take back home when I was still a child."

A giggle escaped me, and I covered my mouth.

Jorn, who had surely heard, let out a soft growl. Then he took his first step onto the bridge.

Sterling followed. Then Nate, then Dylan, then Trinity. Until it was our turn.

I turned my head up to Kylan and took a nervous breath. My hands were fumbling in front of me. Shaking even. I could feel the sweat through the gloves.

I had done a lot of hard things, lot of crazy things, these past months, but I was not sure I had ever been this scared of any of them.

I had only reached the edge of the bridge before my eyes softened at the two men. My lips curled into a smile, hoping to stretch some time. They didn't seem to care much.

"Miss," one of them said. "Please cross."

I fluttered my eyes.

Kylan let out a scoff behind me.

"You are holding up the line, Pup." His tone was playful. I could feel the smirk in it without even turning around.

I had no time to argue back as he had already pressed his palm to my back and given me a gentle push. A sound came out of me as I stumbled forward.



With Kylan's push, I was forced to move my legs, and it was only a matter of time until both of my boots were standing on the stone of the bridge.

"Twenty minutes," Kylan spoke behind me. His voice was soft. "And after those minutes...you will not regret this."

He was right.

I wouldn't...