

Chapter 521

Violet

All Rochwall could do was stare at me. He did not blink, did not move. His brows were still drawn. It was like his body didn't know how to process the news yet, same with his brain.

I waited.

I suppose we all waited, and didn't really know what for. Any reaction would do. Anything was going to be better than him just standing there in the middle of the square looking at me like I had just told him the craziest thing in the world, which it probably was to him.

He took a breath. "Good to know."

Huh?

That was...unexpected.

The group threw glances at each other, and I knew for a fact that we were all thinking the same. Rochwall clicked his tongue and started walking again, leaving the rest of us standing there for a second before we decided to follow him.

I let go of Kylan and hurried a little to catch up. They were right behind me. "G-Good to know?" I stuttered.

"Yes." Rochwall did not look at me as he answered. "I assume everyone got out of that Veil, correct?"

I cleared my throat but did not say anything. Somehow him not getting an answer felt better than telling him the truth. Because yes, it was good news that mom and dad were breathing the same air as us, but so were the others.

Rochwall had experienced them, fought alongside them, or whatever we could call it. I did not. I had only experienced it through mom's eyes.

His face pulled together. "Including that thing, am I right?" he asked, his voice hoarse. "He also got out."

I glanced sideways at Kylan, who had somehow slipped his fingers between mine again. He gave me the smallest shake of his head. I couldn't and wouldn't tell him too much, and I was glad we could agree on that.

Rochwall was not asking about the half of Baelor inside him. He did not even know about that yet, and I wasn't even sure if he was aware of there being two halves. What I was sure about was that hint of disgust as he refused to say its name.

He had a lot to process already without me adding the rest of it.

"Where are your parents?"

"That...is what we have been trying to figure out."

"And?" He knitted his brows. "What do you know?"

His tone had shifted. He was not the kind and playful commander anymore. There was this fight in him. I had never actually seen him this serious before. Not even that time Kylan and I showed up late to practice.

"We know they are being held in a cave somewhere," I started. "And we know—"

"Who is keeping them, Violet?" He cut me off. "Is it the High Priestess? The Alpha King?"

He had whispered their titles so softly, I could barely hear him. I let out a small sigh and shrugged.

"For now, all that matters is that we find them. And—"

"And that is why you asked me all those questions on the bus," he concluded, cutting me off once more. He was slowly putting two and two together.

I nodded. He let out a slow breath through his nose. "Does the Soothsayer know?"

"Ye—"

"Of course he knows," Rochwall rubbed his temples. "He always knew everything."

A small smile pulled at the corner of my mouth. That was the way everyone described him. He always knew everything. Except for this one thing...

"D-Does he not know where they are?" His eyes grew wider.

I shook my head.

"And what about Sterling?" he asked. "Does he know about you?"

I glanced ahead at Sterling's back. He was too many steps in front of us now, but we could still hear his cane tapping the stone.

"He seems to remember," I said softly. "I believe...the reason why he has come to this place is because he remembers."

"I knew there was a reason..." Rochwall whispered to himself.

My eyes landed on Jorn, who was keeping up with Sterling at a steady pace. I did not say anything about him. There was not much to say because I had only discovered just now that we were family...kind of. The rest I hadn't figured out yet.

As if he could feel eyes burning into his back, Jorn turned his head over his shoulder. "Rochwall!" he called out. His voice almost echoed through the space, his eyes sharp. "Stop discussing the weather with those kids."



"You are slowing us down!"

Trinity released a loud gasp, and then her mouth dropped. "You really shouldn't let him talk to you like that!" She pointed, her finger sticking out. Rochwall chuckled under his breath.

Kylan tilted his head toward her. "I do not think those are his biggest worries right now, Trin." He had a light grin on his face. I got a small sense of relief. After everything that had happened, those two seemed to have repaired their...friendship? Those two had always been like that.

Trinity pulled a face. "Fair."

"Commander?" Kylan said, focusing on Rochwall now. "I believe it might be better to find another moment, perhaps back at the academy, to talk about this," he said. "I do not know if it is safe here."

Rochwall let his eyes drift around, a suspicious glance plastered on his face. He must have felt it too. The same uncomfortable thing I had been feeling since we first stepped off the bridge:

It was like someone was watching us, and it was not the guards spaced out between the paths.

He gave a nod so small it was barely visible. "You're right."

I already knew what the first thing would be that he would do once we got back to Starlight. Though his initial reaction hadn't shown it much, the news had shocked him. Now, with every passing second, he was probably thinking of a thousand questions he wanted answers to.

"If something were to happen," Nate jumped in, "and one of us... possibly Violet or Kylan, has to break loose from the group to take care of it...would you be able to cover for us?"

Rochwall did not even wait a second. "Yes." His voice was steady. His eyes went from me to Kylan. "Whatever the two of you need to do to get



them back...do it. I would personally hand in my commander badge if it meant bringing them back. I would give my life, and I mean it."

I knew he meant it...for now. Until he'd learn about what Kylan had been hiding inside him, and what needed to happen for Mom and Dad to return safely. Rochwall called all of us his children, but his bond with Kylan was special. Unlike Elyx, he really cared.

"I won't be getting them back today," I told him honestly. His face fell a little. "But when that day comes, and it will come, I'm happy to know we can count on you."

"Always."

After a few more steps, the stone under our feet changed again. So did the color, turning into a clear white. I looked down at my feet as we walked into the wide-open courtyard.

When I lifted my head, I could finally see the one thing I had been dreaming about.

The palace.

My head tipped back until it couldn't anymore, and my neck started to ache. My eyes scanned a large tower that I was sure could even reach the Moon Goddess if it wanted to.

The sight of the palace left me speechless. All of us.

"Wow," I breathed.

Kylan let out a low chuckle beside me.

"Wow indeed," he breathed. "This is...different."

I looked back down, turning my head to him.

He was still looking up. Still in awe.



A Lyperian crown prince. Born and raised inside a palace of his own, and this was what had made him catch his breath. I believed it might have been a record for today, but once again, a sense of pride washed over me.

The crazy part was that I hadn't even grown up here.

A guard at the top of the steps gave Sterling a stiff nod, and Sterling immediately started walking. The rest of us automatically followed.

I held onto Kylan as we made our way up the steps. They were made of the same pale stone, polished and spotless. I almost felt the need to take off my muddy boots.

It looked so clean. It was beautiful, but at the same time also very unbearable. Sure, I had to keep in mind that the palace was almost like a ghost palace, but if this was also the way it had been decades ago, I could understand what Rochwall had been trying to tell me about Dad on the bus.

How a place like this could get lonely at times.

A heavy breath left me as my eyes traveled up the large pole, all the way to the flag at its top.

It was dark purple at the edges and pale cream in the center, with a gold star right in the middle. There was writing under it.

'Common Lands.'

I knew this flag...

Everyone did, technically. I bet we had all seen it in a book at some point, but nobody had ever really paid attention to it.

Why would they? It was the long-forgotten flag of the royal family that did not really exist anymore. Nowadays, most people only ever cared about the emblem of their own pack.



Except, this wasn't just a flag to me. This had been Dad's flag. This was my...

'Be careful, Witchey,' Lumia yawned. 'There is a bad energy inside this palace. I can sense it.'



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