

Chapter 522

Violet

'What is it?'

'Lumen.'

Lumia was clear. I couldn't gather my thoughts for a moment. Did she mean that he was really here after all? Had she somehow communicated with him?

Before I could dwell on it too much, she had gotten through to me again. 'It's like he has been here recently...but that wouldn't make sense, Witchey, because that would mean...'

I had a pretty good idea of where she was going with this. My eyes carefully drifted across the long line of guards. If that were really the case, it would mean that these people were somehow aware of everything, and that truly wasn't the case.

I didn't want to flatter myself, but I was still the princess of the Common Lands, and if they had known, they surely would've had a reaction.

There was also no way in hell Kian and Gloria would let King Eamon roam around free. He despised Baelor. He had to be a bigger threat to them than Adelaide, and had every reason to want both of them dead the second he had a chance to act on it.

'Can you get through to him?' I asked.

'No. Not from this far,' Lumia answered. Her tone scared me because I already knew what was coming. 'But maybe if you let me shift...' she sang.



I let out a small breath. It must mean a lot to her to run through this land, but I couldn't shift here. And even if I could have, I didn't have the time. We had thirty minutes, and Sterling, who had been walking at a fast pace all day, had now decided to move at a snail's pace. By the time we actually made it inside, we wouldn't have much time left.

'We'll wait it out.'

That was my final answer. A displeased sound came from her, soon forgotten by my breath that caught as the two huge doors at the top of the steps pushed open.

A bright light spilled out from the inside, forcing me to shield my eyes. My breath caught. I relied on Kylan to lead me through, and when it was finally safe to look, I could hardly believe my eyes.

Everything was so clean, so unbelievable it almost looked fake.

The white marble floor, decorated with purple and gold accents, was polished enough that I could see the reflection of our faces. The purple and gold came back everywhere. In the columns, chandeliers, and even the walls.

It wasn't the first time today that the beauty of this land had left us speechless. I heard several gasps behind me.

"Are we allowed to walk in here?" Nate asked quietly.

I thought the same. My first thought when we entered the palace in Lyperia had been that I might ruin the floors, but this was something else entirely.

Even though I knew these people were doing their best, I had prepared myself for dust, broken windows, or anything else that would expose a



place left alone for almost twenty years.

I was wrong.

My throat bobbed as my gaze traveled to the two long staircases in front of us. They curved up to the second floor on either side of the hall, and at the center there was a giant, purple door that looked way too inviting.

A soft hand squeezed my shoulder, making me exhale. "And?" Kylan whispered. "What do you think of home?"

Hearing him ask, something tightened in my chest. This was supposed to be my home, and now these random flashes were occupying my head. Images of little Violet running across these floors, probably doing something mischievous and getting yelled at by Mom for it. She definitely seemed like someone who would call me out for it, while Dad would convince her to let it go.

Perhaps in another world, one where Elyx acted like a person with even the slightest bit of sense, he would have helped them overthrow Gloria from the beginning and never betrayed my parents. I would have known Kylan since childhood, we would have gotten along sooner, and the Moon Goddess's blessing would have united both kingdoms.

What if I had lived my life in this place without ever having to look over my shoulder?

What if?

Instead, I was walking in for the first time at nineteen, with a clock counting down on my parents' lives. So I knew no matter what, I could not fully enjoy it.

The man who had been walking with Sterling, and had led us in, cleared



his throat so loudly it echoed. "Remember. You have no more than thirty minutes," he said. "Unfortunately, that is all I can give you. My father has allowed it out of respect."

I leaned and turned my head, slightly covering my mouth. "Who is that?" I whispered. Was this also a distant cousin?

"The son of the Alpha of one of the inner packs," Dylan whispered back.

"The time is more than enough for what I came here to do," Sterling said, looking completely unfazed. His eyes wandered around the palace, only ending when the long sigh he let out was finally finished.

The other man's brows drew together. "And what is it that you came here to do, exactly?" he asked. "Because as far as I am concerned, my father very rarely allows visits at all."

It looked like Sterling had really done his best getting us in here. He had pulled in a favor from an Alpha who seemed to be respected.

Sterling hummed, not quite answering the question. He gave the man a small smile instead.

Of course, Jorn took a step forward to cover Sterling. His chest pushed out, shoulders pulled back as he tipped his sunglasses down his nose to look at the man.

"What the principal of the greatest shifter academy in this region and a respected Lycan warrior of a noble family came here to do," he spat coldly, "is none of your business, son. With all due respect."

A laugh came from Sterling. "Let's not cause any trouble, Commander." Though I could tell Sterling had a different side to him. One that was secretly enjoying this.



The man lifted both hands in surrender, taking a step back. A weak smile pulled at my lips. An Alpha's son. A future Alpha, and Jorn did not care one bit.

I still didn't like him, found him annoying, but I was starting to understand how a person could end up grateful for him in a room.

Trinity scoffed behind me. "Now that," she whispered, "is the kind of attitude he should be using his energy on. Not on commanders and students."

A laugh slipped out of me, but died instantly when Sterling's eyes snapped toward us.

"Since this might be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the five of you," Sterling began, "I will allow you to explore. In groups."

His grin was wide, teeth visible as if he had just given us the news of a lifetime. "But, sir," Nate chuckled. "I thought we were here to escort—"

"And you have," Sterling interrupted. "I have arrived in one piece, have I not?"

Then he clasped his hands in front of him.

"Well then."

He squinted at us for a second and then started pointing with one finger.

"Dylan and Nate, you will go with Commander Rochwall," he decided. "Trinity and Violet, you will go with Commander Jorn."

Sure. Of course.

Why not?



"What about me?" Kylan asked.

"You are coming with me, Young Prince." Sterling bobbed his head. "You are the squad leader, are you not?"

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