

Chapter 524

Violet

I found myself in the forest. The trees moved on their own, rushing past me on both sides. It was a strange feeling. I was standing still, but that didn't stop me from being pulled forward.

It all happened so fast. The speed was even faster than Lumia, and that was something that was hard to beat. The blue of the Marrowrose caught my eye, and that was when my suspicions were confirmed.

It wasn't just any forest.

It was the one Kian and Gloria were keeping my parents in.

This time, there weren't just a few roses either. There were hundreds of them. Maybe even thousands. The thought made me nauseous. What did that mean?

I had no time to think. The cave suddenly appeared in front of me, and just as quickly, I felt a stone fall from above. My head snapped up to the purple ceiling, with gold patterns running through it.

It cracked down the middle, and my heart stopped beating for a second. "No!"

I covered my head with my hands in an attempt to protect myself, but it was already too late. The ceiling crumbled away.

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My eyes flew open, gasps escaping me as my chest rose and fell with each breath. I was back in the hallway.



"Vi!" Trinity called out.

I gasped for air, staring right in front of me where Jorn stood. He rested one hand against the wall, a finger in the air as if he were telling us to wait. His other hand had gone up to his head, and I could tell he was in pain.

That could only mean one thing.

He had also seen it.

"Vi, are you okay?" Trinity repeated.

My breath hitched. "Fine!" I turned my whole body toward Jorn, ready to confront him.

"You saw that, didn't you?"

He gritted his teeth and took another step back.

"I do not know what you're talking about."

Then he turned and started walking again. Fast.

Nope.

Absolutely not.

I hurried after him, with Trinity following close behind.

"What's happening?" she asked, confused.

"So this is the game we're going to play?" I spoke with a half chuckle. I would get to Trinity later.

"I know we are...family, and I know you also recognize this place because



it feels familiar, doesn't it?" I said, louder than I meant to. "You need to tell me what you saw when we touched that painting!"

Jorn's head snapped toward me, his eyes so wide I didn't even know it was possible. He rushed back to me, almost running, with his arm already extended. And when he stood in front of me, he pressed his large hand against my lips.

Then he bent down a little so I could look into his hazel eyes, which were now angry.

"Shut. Up."

Excuse me?

He kept his hand where it was as his eyes flicked once down the hall, then once back the other way, before they came back to me.

"If you have not figured out by now," he hissed, "that every single person around this citadel has been put under some kind of spell, you are even more stupid than I thought you were."

I kept quiet, retracing the route inside my head. The two men who had been waiting for us at the bridge, all those people when we had left the bridge, the Alpha's nosy son fishing for answers...

I glanced sideways at Trinity, Jorn's hand still covering my mouth. Her eyes widened in shock, and she seemed to have caught on.

Then I turned back to Jorn and started humming against his palm.

"So you do know who I am? W - who you are?"

Jorn rolled his eyes. "Violet," Trinity said carefully, "it might not be the best idea to talk about this here."



"I am glad to see all the brains went to Trinity regarding this friendship," Jorn muttered. A short growl rolled out of my throat behind his palm.

I watched as his eyes darted around the hall, and he slowly let go of my mouth. "Follow me," he whispered.

Then he started walking again, and the two of us stayed close behind him. He took a turn at the end of the hall and slowed at the next corner. He leaned around it, scanned both directions, and only kept moving when he had confirmed for himself that there was no one waiting for us.

Shortly after, he stopped in front of a small wooden door I had not even noticed on the way past. He opened it, then stuck his head inside first. Only when he had cleared it did he push it open all the way and shove the two of us in.

He stepped in himself, then shut the door behind him. We stood in a small storage room of some kind. The walls looked thicker. The air was suffocating.

There was just enough space for the three of us to stand without bumping shoulders. Even so, I leaned into Trinity for support.

"So," Jorn said. He drew in a long breath.

"I will say what I have to say. Then we will leave and continue the tour as if this conversation never happened," he announced. "Am I clear?"

Trinity and I looked at each other. We both gave him a small nod.

"The palace has ears," Jorn began. "There is a dark energy lingering inside this place. Something is wrong with everyone we have spoken to since we crossed that bridge. They're all like walking fucking corpses,"



he hissed. "They look at us, but they do not really see us. It's like their eyes aren't theirs anymore."

"Told you," Lumia muttered.

I felt a cold spread through my body. None of it made sense. Jorn's words did, because we had all felt it. The feeling of being watched. The thing that didn't really make sense was what Gloria and Kian would gain from this. Just as it didn't make sense that they would've blocked someone like Grandpa Aelius so badly that those eyes of his hadn't even been able to see this coming.

"Is that why Sterling separated us into groups?" Trinity asked. "He must've known you commanders would feel it the moment you walked in here, right?"

Jorn swallowed. "I noticed quicker than Rochwall did," he muttered. "Who was having himself a little clubhouse gathering back there, discussing the Moon Goddess knows what with you kids!"

"That is not true," I defended. "He had noticed it too. We all did. He told us to be careful."

Jorn clicked his tongue like he didn't quite believe me, and I glared at him. "Do you know who I am?" I asked, curious. I wondered if he would actually answer the question this time.

"I know very well who you are, but that doesn't mean I'm going to worship you," he stated. "Why would I? We might share the same blood, but I am a Lycan."

As expected.

"Then who am I?" I breathed.



Jorn shut his eyes for a second. When he opened them, they pierced through mine. "You are the granddaughter of the late King Eamon, who was the eldest brother of my grandmother. The daughter of the late Crown Prince Alaric and his infamous witch mate, the late High Priestess's daughter, Adelaide."

Late, late, late...

Only they weren't.

Jorn seemed to have known bits and pieces, but not everything. Not too crazy, assuming he had suddenly been dealing with these memories of a place he would most likely only have visited a handful of times after his grandmother mated a Lycan.

Even though the words had come from Jorn, something inside me settled. I had not realized how badly I had needed someone outside our group to say it out loud.

"So...you know I am a witch?"

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