

Chapter 525

Jorn lifted a single brow.

"That part is nothing new." A mocking scoff slipped past his throat. "I have known about that since you fell to the ground like a useless sack of potatoes during your first Elite training session," he said.

"As the most unusual, oddest student in a room full of full-blooded shifters, you stick out like a sore thumb, Hastings. You are not that subtle."

I felt my cheeks glow, and I didn't really know how to respond. It was almost the same as what Queen Cecilia had told me, which meant I really needed to work on being more...wolf-like.

"What I do not know," Jorn went on, "is why some of these memories have suddenly come back to me." His brows knitted together, and I could see the frustration behind his eyes. "Memories of what my grandmother used to tell me about this place. Memories of me as a boy, visiting it," he said. "And none of those memories line up with the story we have all heard. The stories she told me, and that have been written in the books."

"Which is the Alpha King going mad and slaughtering his own people," Trinity finished.

Jorn held up his hands, a thin smile forming on his lips.

"The king I have started to remember loved his people," he shared. "He loved his son with all of his heart, and would never have laid a finger on either of them...The king I remember had been looking for his son for years after your mother took him away from him."

My lips already parted, ready to defend Mom, but that wasn't necessary.



"Which I assume did not play out exactly like that," Jorn said in the same breath, lifting a finger. "But that is not important right now. Neither are the huge chunks I am missing."

The king loved his son?

Yeah, right...

It was kind of hard to believe that the king who had set Elyx loose on Mom, the mate Dad loved with all he had, and on me, his own granddaughter, loved anyone more than himself.

"But how did you know she was—" Trinity started.

Jorn shook his head sharply. "I do not know anything, Trinity." His voice sounded stressed and tired, like he had been bottling all of this up and could finally let it out. "The only thing I know is that we should not have come here."

He glanced at the door. "I hinted at my knowledge earlier, hoping you'd be smart enough to put two and two together and not dare ask me out loud," he said. "But the truth is that other than that, I do not know what the fuck is going on. Whatever it is, all of you seem to have come here with a purpose."

My face paled as he continued. "Rochwall, Sterling, you kids, and I do not know if all of you are fucking with me and in on this together—"

"We are not—"

"I do not care." He cut me off, his eyes locking onto mine. His hands were in the air. "The only thing I care about is getting all of you back home safely. That is it," he said. He let out a puff, then dragged his hands through his hair.



I had never seen him like this. If anything, Jorm struck me as the kind of person who would tell us we knew what we had signed up for when we joined the Elite Team and that we had to be prepared for any outcome.

Goddess, he would've probably lost it if I had told him my parents were still alive. I wasn't even going to start on my eyes.

My eyes moved to Trinity, who was already looking at me. Her lips curled into an uncomfortable laugh, and I could practically read her mind. She did not have to say anything for me to understand what she was thinking, and she was right.

He was one of us now. Whether he wanted to be or not.

"So anyway...what did you see?" Trinity asked nonchalantly. "When the two of you touched just now?"

Jorm breathed out heavily, muttering something I could not catch. "I saw a...thing, with red eyes," he said. "I couldn't fully make out his face, but he was standing beside a woman." He squeezed his eyes shut as if he were trying to remember. "The two of them were doing some kind of evil work in the air with their hands, and whatever they pulled out of it turned into a purple ceiling with gold patterns. That was it."

A small gasp slipped out of me. Trinity looked at me wide-eyed. "Is that also what you saw, Vi?" she asked.

It wasn't...

I didn't know how it was possible, but Jorm must've seen the very first part of the vision. The part right before mine had even started.

We had seen two halves of the same thing.

"The energy was too dark for us to be messing with it, Hastings," Jorm



said firmly. Even so, I could tell he was still a bit interested.

"I do not mind you being a witch...but the thing you've done with the magic? You must never do that again."

"But I did not do anything!" A shocked laugh almost left me.

"It really was you," he said, nodding. "I know what magic looks like, Hastings. I'm not stupid."

I gulped. Was it me, though? Or had it been Mom? Trying to send me a message through any way possible?

I fluttered my eyes at him. "You and Sterling talk," I said. "Do you know what it is he came here to retrieve?"

Maybe it had something to do with that. Maybe Sterling was here because, just like us, he was thinking of a way to help them. To help Kylan, so he could get to them.

Jorn shook his head. "I am not entertaining this any longer," he stated. "I do not want anything to do with whatever kind of witchcraft you and the rest of them have gotten yourselves tangled up in," he went on. "My priority is getting all of you home in one piece. That is all this is for me—"

Suddenly, footsteps echoed out in the hall and stopped right in front of the door. Jorn's whole body stiffened. He lifted one finger to his lips and aggressively shushed the two of us before either of us could even open our mouths to react.

His other hand reached for the doorknob in case he had to hold it closed.

"This conversation is over for now," he said softly.



He gave us each one more sharp look. Then he turned the doorknob slowly while pushing the door open.

He stepped out first, and we followed. There were already two guards standing directly across from us in the hall, staring us down shamelessly. They had been waiting for us.

As I looked at them, I felt an uncomfortable pit form in my stomach. Now I could see what Jorm had meant.

They were looking at us, but more so past us. Their eyes had this emptiness that was hard to explain. They weren't even blinking. Just standing there, watching...

Even the Lyperian guards had shown more personality. There was something deeply wrong with this place.

I forced a small smile at them, but neither of them returned it. "Just keep walking," Jorm instructed, his voice barely above a whisper.

He forced himself between me and Trinity, gently pushing us forward. We walked past them and headed back down the hall.

But the uncomfortable feeling I had been carrying with me ever since we stepped off the bridge had not left. It had doubled.

Mom and Dad were close. I could feel they were close, but I still felt like I had nothing. So now I was counting on Kylan.

Perhaps he could get something useful out of Sterling, and hopefully he would be willing to talk.

Because we almost had to leave, and we were running out of time.