

Chapter 535

Violet

I squeezed my eyes shut and braced for impact.

The paws were seconds away. I could hear them through the wind. I did not know which one would reach us first, and I did not want to know. I just kept my body pressed hard against Kyran's so it wouldn't hit him.

"Violet!" Lumia roared. "You need to get up and fight!"

"I can't—" The glow from my eyes dimmed as the last of my magic drained from me.

"Do not embarrass me. Fight!"

I couldn't. My body wouldn't allow it, so I did the only thing it could do.

"I'm so sorry," I whispered to the back of Kyran's head. "I'm sorry I couldn't do more."

"No!" Kyran groaned beneath me. His shoulders shook as he used whatever strength he had left and tried to push himself up to get me off, but I pressed him down harder.

He was too weak to fight me. The sound of paws drew closer, and so did the heavy breaths. I took in a breath of my own and counted down the seconds.

I was down to the final three when an unexpected, bone-rattling



growl echoed from above. It was so deep it made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. A massive paw slammed into the dirt, and a shadow fell over us.

I tilted my head up, only to find myself staring at the broad back of an enormous Lycan towering over us. I gasped loudly, my eyes widening with shock.

The Lycan was taller than Rochwall, taller than Jorn, and maybe taller than anything I had ever seen before. His shoulders alone were as wide as at least two Lycans. Fur thick, and a deep silver, with several scars running through it.

When he shifted his weight and glanced his icy eyes over his wide shoulder, teeth bared, I knew exactly who it was.

Sterling...

So it was true. Kylan was right about him. He was so strong that he had managed to push himself through Kian's wind in a matter of seconds. Amazing.

The wolves had stopped running. A rumble came from the biggest one at the front, but none of them moved forward. They did not attack. It was like they knew better than to try.

Kian had lifted his head again, and there was confusion in his red eyes. His head tilted multiple times, his hands still in the air as he controlled the wind. He was studying us. Studying Sterling, but that was it.

What was he doing?



The others spread out in a half-circle, some of them at Sterling's side while others stood at ours. Somehow, they were all still standing and prepared to fight.

How?

When a loud roar cut through the air, I felt my body tremble. The giant Lycan in front of me, Sterling, roared directly at me with drool dripping from his jaw. His eyes were so full of rage I didn't know what to think of it.

Was it really meant for me?

'Won't you look at that?' Lumia chuckled. 'If a limping old man can stand up to whatever this is, who exactly are you to sit here shaking like a leaf, Witchey?' She called me out. 'You said you'd lead this time, did you not?'

I couldn't answer her.

I did say that.

'So lead!'

Her scream tore through my body. My chest rose and fell hard, my throat felt stuck. I could not go back to being that scared little girl. Not after everything I had gone through to get to this point.

I let go of Kylan, dropped down to one knee before digging my finger deep into the soil. When I felt the wet earth under my nails, I closed my eyes.

"They say I share your blood," I whispered. "If I do...Moon Goddess,



please...please help me."

Praying to the Moon Goddess in a situation like this had helped before. Maybe she'd be kind to me again.

For a moment, nothing happened.

Then a wave of warmth spread from the soil to the tips of my fingers until I could feel it travel up my body. My veins burned again, and my eyes started to glow as I opened them. Even brighter than before.

It had worked.

'That's my girl,' Lumia purred.

All the tiredness from before had faded. I felt recharged again. My breath hitched as I turned to Kylan, who was still on his knees.

His hair fell over his face each time he tried to raise his head, and when he finally managed to, his eyes met mine. Still red, but somehow still his. Fully Kylan.

It was hard to see him like this. Weak, tired, and completely drained. I had never seen my Kylan like this before. Not even when I thought I had lost him.

This is what I didn't want.

This is why I didn't want this.

That thing inside him was pulling everything out of him, and I didn't know how to stop it. Determined, I pushed myself up from the ground and let out a sharp breath through my nose. My jaw locked as



I looked past the wolves.

Not only them. Also past Kian. My attention shifted to the witches.

They were standing in a wide circle not far away from us. Gloria had told them to show Kian how it's done, and it seemed like they were trying to do just that. Their hands linked together as they chanted. Esther was leading it. A massive black ball had begun to float in the air, growing larger with each chant.

I didn't know what it was, but it didn't look good. I knew that much.

Esther...she had her powers back. The only one strong enough to do that was Mom. The only explanation as to why she would even think about doing something like that was...Dad. She'd do anything to protect him. Please be okay.

My gaze traveled past the witches, straight to the one who had given the order. Gloria. She stood alone, a cruel smile on her face as she laughed.

Narrowing my eyes, I glared at the dark ball above the witches. I lifted both hands toward it, pulled them back toward myself, then shoved them in Gloria's direction in one swift motion. It was something I had never done before, but it seemed to be working.

It flew through the air, ready to hit her instead, but she ducked before it disappeared. Her laughter had stopped, replaced with a dead glare. That's right.

I stood there, breathing hard, waiting for her to come at me. I wished she would throw something back at me, anger me some more so I



could let it all out. Somehow, my anger had always carried me. It was when I was at my strongest, and I hadn't even reached my limit yet.

Shock went through me as she simply put on another smile and brushed off her sleeve. She stayed exactly where she was, standing behind everyone else.

This woman...she wasn't fighting, wasn't moving...just watching. I wanted to say like a coward, but that wasn't quite right either. She had been stuck inside the Veil for the longest time, so I knew she was hungry for a fight.

Especially one with Adelaide's daughter...

And Kian?

My eyes shifted to him again, watching him across the clearing. All this time, he had been fighting from a distance.

For someone who hated Kylan, he never came too close to him. Not once. He had Baelor's half. The Baelor whom everyone had feared before the Moon Goddess had even created us. I thought he was holding back for another reason, but it all didn't make sense.

Just like those giant red eyes in the sky that he had appeared with. Something felt off.

The wolves were the only ones really doing something, and even they weren't attacking with full force.

The witches chanted once more, but this time I waited. I took in my surroundings and threw my head back to look above me. The wind was still going.



Leaves were spinning, twigs, dirt. It all circled above us in the most unnatural way. I fluttered my eyes as something soft fell onto my nose.

I brought my hand up carefully and pulled it from my skin. It was a petal. Small, oval...blue.

My breath caught in my throat as I brushed it with my fingertip.

Could it be a Marrowrose petal?

My head started spinning as I finally put everything together.

The purple ceiling with the gold patterns cracking above my head that hinted toward the palace. And of course, Jorn's half of it. The 'red-eyed thing' and the woman pulling that same ceiling out of the air with their hands.

It all meant something, and the truth had been right in front of us this whole time.

The first time we had faced Baelor, it had happened in a realm Aelius had created. A field that wasn't really a field. Magic so strong only he had been able to do it.

And if Grandpa Aelius could...so could High Priestess Gloria.

I let out a gasp. There had never been a real cave or cliff in our world. It had all existed within that realm, either beneath our feet or above our heads.

Kylan's eyes were what they were most fixated on, and for a very good reason. Baelor had taken control, and his eyes were made to

see what no other eyes could. If Baelor would allow it, they could be strong enough to look straight through what Gloria had built.

He would know where they were keeping Mom and Dad. Go inside the cave.

They all weren't supposed to be here. That was why Kian never came close to him, and why Gloria stood where she stood. Why Kian said he didn't want to hurt me...

Every second they spent out here was another second the truth could come out.

They wanted to scare us enough to surrender because they could not fight us at full strength.

Not while their magic was already doing this much work.

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