

Chapter 536

Violet

We could try to make a run for it.

Get everyone back on the bus and come back another time. I would get to the bottom of this. Find out more about this realm and find my way to that cave, and I would find my parents. But I needed Kylan for that, because he was the only one who could get us inside.

I was not willing to risk his health over any of it. Not for a fight neither of us truly wanted today.

My glowing eyes scanned the group until they landed on the giant Lycan dominating the formation. Sterling.

Hoping he'd understand, I tilted my chin toward the path we had come through. The one right behind Kian.

The big Lycan gave me a nod, then looked at the others and let out a loud growl. Trinity understood first. She shifted back quickly, followed by Dylan and Nate. They moved fast and got to Kylan, pulling him up by his shoulders.

He leaned against them, his head still hanging while his eyes were glowing. I just needed him to hold on for a bit longer. I was hopeful that Baelor would finally calm down once we'd leave this place.

Sterling let out another roar, even louder this time and so powerful it made the trees tremble.

It was a signal. Together with Rochwall and Jorn, the three Lycans



lunged forward, crashing into the wolves, sending them flying one after another. They hit them at full speed, trying to clear a path.

Kian looked on with narrowed eyes, his hands still controlling the wind, though it had gotten a bit weaker now. Gloria still hadn't moved, but the grin had faded. She was starting to grow restless.

Esther and the witches were still huddled in their circle, creating another dark orb above their heads. It was already enormous and kept growing larger with every passing second.

I knew they would attack again soon. It would only be a matter of time.

My fist balled at my side as I drew in energy while the others started walking with Kylan. Sterling, Rochwall, and Jorn had already managed to clear part of the path and didn't appear to be having any trouble. They moved like they had done it many times before.

Suddenly, the wind stopped, and all the leaves that had been swirling through the air drifted to the ground. My head snapped to Kian. His red eyes were locked on Kylan as he was being dragged toward the path.

He then lifted his hand again, but this time it wasn't to manipulate the wind. An orb formed above his own palm almost instantly. It was darker than the witches', with red threaded through it, and I knew it came from him.

Baelor.

My eyes darted back and forth, from the witches to Kian. I opened my



palms as my mind began calculating on its own.

Who would send what where, and how hard would I have to hit to break it?

Kian lifted his hand higher while I lifted mine too to match his. My arms were steady, but everything underneath them was not. I was freaking out.

"Now!" Esther shouted.

Then the witches threw at the same time Kian did. Two orbs shot into the air at once. The one Esther led came for me while the one Kian created shot toward Kylian and the group.

I had to react quickly. So I stretched both arms out and managed to stop both of them, catching them midair. My teeth clenched as I already felt the strain against my hands. There was no telling how long this would hold.

"Come on!" Nate shouted. He looked at the orbs, his arm tightening around Kylian's shoulder. "We have to move faster!"

The group started speeding up, mostly due to the Lycans' effort. With Sterling, Rochwall, and Jorn tearing through the last of the wolves in front of them, the path was almost clear now.

Just a little more...

"Violet!" Kian's red eyes bored into mine, pure rage in them. That soft flicker that had been there was gone, replaced by something so ugly I couldn't name. He fought hard to move the orb, and I could feel it in my body. My palms, shoulders, ribs. Everywhere.

My energy was starting to slip, but so was his. I could see he was struggling. One arm was shaking, his jaw tight, and not because of the anger.

Gloria's voice rose through the fog.

"Kian!" she called out. "Retreat!"

Retreat?

A small smile tugged at my lips. So it was true. He couldn't do much, and she didn't want him to use this much power.

My eyes flicked upward for a second. It was barely noticeable, but thin lines had started to form in the sky. Almost like a ceiling starting to give...just like in the vision.

Could that be the realm?

I felt another pull and forced my eyes back down to Kian. He was still not backing down and was pushing with everything he had.

"Kian!" Gloria growled angrily.

But he didn't even turn his head. He panted with anger, sweat running down the side of his face as his hair stuck to his forehead.

He wasn't taking instructions from her anymore.

If I'd let go...he'd hurt Kylan.

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw the others drag Kylan toward the last stretch of the path. Sterling roared once more, throwing several more wolves aside.



They were almost there.

Just hold on, Violet...for Kylan.

For everyone.

My eyes shifted to the witches' orb again. It was moving faster than Kian's. But still, between the two, that one had to be the easier one to break.

My right hand squeezed tightly, and the orb wobbled. When I pushed a bit harder, it shattered into pieces until nothing was left.

Now I could focus all of my energy on the second one. "No!" Esther screamed.

Gloria's voice dominated the field again.

"Witches, retreat!"

An angry sound tore from Esther's throat. Either way, she listened to Gloria and instructed the witches to fall back. She obeyed her.

So why could he not?

I tried to make a fist again, attempting to squeeze the second orb the way I had done before. It wasn't long before I had to accept that this one was just too powerful, and a different kind of energy. One I didn't know how to control yet.

I met Kian's gaze from across the field, both of our arms shaking now. One of us would have to give up eventually, and I refused to let it be me. As long as everyone else wasn't safe, I would hold.



Gloria called out again.

"Kian!"

"Shut up!" he roared back, nearly whipping his head toward her. The deep, unnatural voice told me that this was all Baelor. Red streaks in his hair started to glow again until they burned brighter than his eyes.

"Violet...If you do not want to stop, then I will make you stop!"

Shivers went down my spine as his voice echoed.

He pushed both hands forward at once. The force slammed into me, and that's when I knew I had lost. My elbows dropped, I was forced to step backward, and the glow behind my eyes faded.

I let out a gasp, eyes wide as the orb flew toward me. A ringing sound filled my ears, and suddenly, everything slowed.

Someone screamed my name. I couldn't tell who. Kian's mouth opened as a look of pure horror crossed his face. Kylan's head snapped up as he looked back with the same expression, his jaw dropping in distress. Dylan, Trinity, Nate...everyone.

This is it.

I was finished.

I closed my eyes, already surrendering to whatever came next.

Then a piercing howl tore across the field, and every sound rushed back at once. A gasp escaped me as my eyes flew open. An enormous Lycan stood in front of me. I hadn't even seen where it



came from.

But as soon as I looked up at him, I knew.

Jorn?

The Lycan dropped to his knees, covered my body with his own, and then the impact came. The orb slammed into his back so hard I felt it shudder through him. My side burned, but the worst of it never touched me.

It had hit him...

Jorn hit the dirt beside me with a heavy thud, his massive frame instantly shrinking. His fur pulled in, bones cracked, until he was back in his gear again. On the ground.

"Commander!" I shrieked.

Scrambling to my knees, I immediately crawled toward him. His hand was pressed against his flank as he groaned in pain.

Blood was already seeping through the fabric of his gear. It came out fast, and it was so much. A dark, wet stain that would not stop growing.

What do I do?

I swallowed, my hands already reaching forward to heal. But then I stopped.

His face had gone gray and his breathing came in short, rapid bursts. This was not good.



My hands hovered in the air, slowly noticing that something wasn't quite right.

The blood...

It wasn't red. It was almost...black.

It looked like...

No, no, no...

For a brief second, my mind flashed back to the apple in Jason's class. Jorn had been hit by dark magic. Baelor's magic...and I didn't know how to fix it. I hadn't had enough time to learn.

I tried to gasp, but my throat wouldn't allow me. I could only stare in shock.

"I...I..."

"It's...okay," Jorn breathed.

His eyes were fixed on mine, and a tight but gentle smile tugged at his lips. He was in a lot of pain. I could hear it in his voice.

Yet those eyes held nothing but calm. Like he had done exactly what he came here to do, and that was enough.

Why are you looking at me like that? Don't look at me like that.

Do something, Violet.

Do something. He is going to die.

"You'll be okay," I whispered. "I'll...you'll..."

Jorn nodded. "Just tell...Cordelia—"

"No, you'll tell Professor Jill yourself!" My hands still hovered over his side as the blood kept coming. I didn't even know where to put them.

A sudden growl tore through the air behind me, and the ground began to shake. My gaze snapped toward the sound.

It was not a wolf or a witch...

It was Kylan.

He stood alone in the middle of the path, facing Kian. Trinity, Nate, and Dylan had already reached the ground, staring up at him in shock.

How was this possible?

When his head lifted, I could see his eyes clearly.

They were not the flickering red they had been when he fought to keep Baelor inside. They were just as bright as Kian's now.

"You should not have touched her." 1

