



Chapter 537

Violet

My hands stayed frozen midair above Jorn, but I let my attention slide to Kylan for a second. There was too much happening all at once, and I didn't know what to do.

Nobody moved.

The witches, wolves...Gloria.

Whatever had just come out of him and given him that strength was ten times more terrifying than Kian. Even he looked stunned, his jaw clenched.

My eyes darted between Jorn, who needed whatever help he could get, and Kylan.

'Kylan?' I reached for our link, but there was nothing.

No pain. No anger. Not even the warmth I'd grown so used to. It was as if every light inside him had been snuffed out.

He took slow, steady steps toward Kian.

'Kylan—'

'Don't bother.' Lumia's voice slipped into my mind. 'He isn't exactly himself right now,' she said. 'Focus on what you can do.'

"Okay." I breathed loudly. Just as my eyes were back on Jorn again, he let out another groan. Smoke began to curl up through his gear. My stomach turned. This was so much worse than an apple.



"Wolves, retreat!" Gloria called out.

Howls followed. I whipped my head around and watched the wolves disappear between the trees again. When Gloria twirled her finger in the air, they all suddenly disappeared. It was just her and the witches now.

But where had those wolves gone?

I didn't have time to think. Footsteps rushed toward me, and then several people dropped to the ground, surrounding Jorn.

Dylan, Nate, and Trinity.

Rochwall had also shifted back and arrived last. His eyes were the most worried, and he was breathing the hardest as he looked down at his friend.

Sterling, who had also shifted, stood at a distance from Kylan and Kian. "Kylan!" he shouted.

Kylan had stopped walking. He and Kian stood only a few feet apart, neither of them doing anything. No attacks or words. Just two pairs of red eyes locked onto each other. They both seemed like they were stuck in some kind of trance.

"What's wrong with him?" Rochwall asked, looking at the wound. I focused on Jorn again. Rochwall's hands slid under Jorn's head while Nate was quick to help support him.

Jorn let out a low grumble. "Oh, n-nothing, James." He forced the words through his teeth. "I'm just...casually chilling. Bleeding out."

It was certainly not the time for his sarcasm.

"Not funny," Trinity scolded. She grabbed the fabric of his gear and pulled, trying to tear it open a little more. Dylan reached over to help her, and together they ripped it open as far as they needed to.

The damage to Jorn's body looked even worse up close.

Worse than I thought.

The cut was deep and long, stretching across his flank. It was growing a small inch with each breath he took, traveling upward. More black blood poured out, and dark smoke came from the wound.

"Violet." Trinity's voice trembled. "This is a shadow wound."

She had seen it too. The shadow wound Jason had taught us about. Like mine, her hands hovered above his body. Her eyes narrowed as she studied the dark smoke.

"You're healers," Rochwall said, looking puzzled. "Heal him."

They all eyed us, waiting for us to do something. I squeezed my eyes shut, exhaling. When I opened them again, I expected everything to make sense...but I still had no idea what to do. This was what separated a leader from everyone else. A leader would've known what to do.

Perhaps I wasn't quite there yet.

"It's not that simple," I said. "Regular healing will make it worse. We would only be feeding energy into the darkness."



Jorn's face twisted in pain as the shadow wound traveled. His back arched slightly off the ground as Rochwall and Nate held him down, making him hiss in agony.

"Stellan!" Rochwall slapped his cheek. "Stay with me!"

"I don't...want to," Jorn coughed. "Been...trying to get rid of you for years now."

"Stop talking!"

Rochwall gave him another slap, then looked up at me. He tried to stay strong, but there was fear in his eyes. Not just his, but all of ours because we had never had to deal with a shadow wound before.

"What can you do for him?"

"We...we can try what we've been taught," I stuttered. My gaze immediately searched for Trinity's.

She let out a soft breath. "We know what to do," Trinity answered for me. "But...neither of us ever succeeded."

A huff escaped me as I stared at the wound again before my gaze drifted to Kylan. There was nothing more I wanted than to get to my feet and run to him, to pull him out of whatever he was trapped in. I forced my focus back to the wound. As much as it hurt, that was what I had to focus on right now. Saving Jorn.

"If we push too hard and use the wrong technique, we could kill him," I swallowed. "We need to get him to Bloodstone Haven...they'll know what to do there." I decided. "It's his only hope."



Trinity sucked in her lips, lowering her gaze.

"I feel like there's something else," Nate said carefully.

"There is." My throat tightened. "The shadow travels to the heart, and it travels fast. Faster than we'll make it to Bloodstone Haven." That had been my first worry, and the reason why I didn't want to act blindly and mess things up.

Trinity didn't hesitate. "This is going to hurt."

Her palms started glowing. Her eyes sharpened as she slammed both hands onto the wound. Jorn screamed. His whole body squirmed against the ground as Rochwall and Nate pinned him down again.

"Wait!" Rochwall barked.

"Leave her." Dylan shook his head. "Chances are he's a dead man anyway. At least this gives him one."

I watched her closely. She was doing exactly as Jason had instructed. Instead of pushing in, she pulled the darkness out of his body. Slow and careful. More black smoke rose from the wound and climbed into the air before fading.

She was doing it.

Not perfectly, not fast, and it certainly wouldn't undo the blow he had taken for me, but it still gave him a fighting chance.

A relieved sound escaped me, and I joined her. I placed my hand next to hers and pulled. It felt much heavier than what I was used to, and



the darkness fought me right away. It was a good thing Jason had already prepared us for that.

A thread of black smoke rose into my palm, thicker than the ones Trinity had managed.

She glanced at my hand, then at hers, then back at mine. "You're making it look easy," she huffed, still pulling. "Good job."

I let out a weak laugh. It definitely wasn't easy. My arm was already aching, but seeing that it was working only made me more determined to keep going.

"We get him stable first," I instructed, not taking my eyes off the wound. "Then carry him to the bus and head for Bloodstone."

"What about your grandmother?" Dylan asked. I caught him glancing at the spot Gloria refused to leave.

"She won't do anything."

"How do you—"

"I'll explain later."

"And what about..." Nate trailed off. I felt an ache in my heart and dared to look away from the wound. Following Nate's gaze, my eyes landed on Kylan. The situation there hadn't changed much.

Kylan and Kian still hadn't moved. Sterling kept calling out his name while keeping his distance. He knew better than to step between whatever this was.



The next second, everything changed. I had barely blinked. One second, Kylan and Kian were having a staredown, and the next, Kylan had moved so fast my eyes couldn't follow him.

He had finally closed the distance, catching even Kian off guard. Kylan's hand wrapped around his throat, then lifted him off the ground. It was unbelievable that this was the same Kylan who could barely stand just moments ago.

That those red eyes doing all of this had been the thing holding him back. Kian tried to fight against him, but it wasn't even close. His boots kicked through the air while his fingers clawed at Kylan's forearm.

Even with all that power inside him, Kylan held him up there like he weighed nothing. His head tilted slightly to the side as he watched him struggle. It was Baelor versus Baelor, and it was clear which half was winning.

Choked sounds came out of Kian, but Kylan didn't make a single one. Kylan's grip was too strong, and it only took a moment for Kian to stop fighting. His head fell back, his arms dropped, and his mouth fell open.

A dark shadow poured out of his mouth, and the red streaks in Kian's hair began to fade. When Kylan opened his mouth, it started traveling toward him, but it fought against the pull like it didn't want to.

I realized what was happening. He wasn't just fighting him. Baelor was taking his half back.

'Violet.' Lumia's voice cut through my head. 'You need to stop him.'



Right now!' There was panic in her voice.

'What is he doing? Tell me.'

'He is taking his half back,' Lumia confirmed. 'He is not ready to take in all of Baelor. His body cannot handle that yet.' Her words came out fast, tumbling over each other. Something odd for Lumia.

'If he pulls the whole thing in, he will not come back from it. Do you understand me? We will lose our mate.'

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