

Chapter 542

Violet

The High Command?

I lifted a brow at the unfamiliar term

"I have," Rochwall immediately answered. "The High Command is when the Alpha King issues an order for the Alpha and its pack to obey," he said. "They can't refuse it, not if it comes from the crown." His jaw tightened. "It's a forbidden practice...abuse of power, but it exists."

"Correct," Sterling said.

Kylan shifted beside me. "So you think it wasn't only Gloria?"

Sterling gave a small shrug. "I think it's worth considering."

My mind started turning it over. If it was the High Command, then someone with a claim to the Common Lands throne was behind those wolves. And the only person I could think of who fit that...

Eamon.

Was Eamon working with Gloria? And if he was, was he inside that cave, or did he have the privilege of staying outside? No. That was a stupid theory, because otherwise he would've been there and ended everything all at once.

"That doesn't make sense," I said slowly. "The Alpha King hates Gloria... always has."

"He does." Sterling nodded. "But he still loves Alaric...if you can even call



it love." He tilted his head. "People will make unlikely alliances for the ones they love. I would not rule it out."

It made me think...

Esther had gotten her powers back, and I already concluded the only one strong enough to do that was Mom. She had also possibly been feeding Gloria her power.

Now Eamon, possibly working with the High Priestess he despised.

Mom and Eamon had nothing in common except for their love for Dad. I knew I had thought about it before, and so had Aelius, but the thought of everything leading back to exactly that made it so much worse.

With Baelor's power Kian had been forced to restrain for the sake of the realm, Alpha King Eamon and Mom's eyes, how far would that woman go? How far could she go?

"So what would it take to wake the wolves up?" I asked. "To break whatever's holding them."

"The High Command has to be undone," Sterling started. "And it needs to happen quickly. Because if Gloria manages to take control of every pack, the Lycans will be forced to fight the werewolves," he said. "For all we know, she might be going to the Bloodrose next—"

"No," I shook my head. I didn't want to believe it or hear any more. That wouldn't happen. I'd make sure of it.

Who would be next on her list?

The vampire king on Prison Island, and the other witches who do know how to behave?



"How do we undo it? Is that what the scroll is for?"

Sterling tapped the scroll against his palm.

"This must reach your father, Alaric," he stated. "Only he will be able to stop it. For it to take effect, he must activate it with a blood print," he explained. "The scroll needs three. One is Alpha King Eamon's, which is already on it. The second is his, the third is one of a high-ranking elder, and the fourth is one of a royal who stands above him."

Technically, the third didn't have to be a problem, but the fourth was the one I worried about most.

Someone above him...

For now, Elyx was rotting in a dungeon somewhere, and even if he wasn't, I was convinced that he wouldn't help us or Dad if his life depended on it. He could say whatever he wanted, but he hated my parents.

Then there were also two other Lycan kingdoms out there, but they had no reason to lift a finger for us, including Kylan. Even so, they were too far to reach.

"That all sounds very nice," I huffed out. "But where exactly are we supposed to find a royal like that?"

Sterling's eyes drifted slightly. I followed them until they landed on the person beside me. The one person I hadn't even thought to look at.

Kylan.

"A Lycan crown prince stands above the Alpha crown prince," Sterling sighed with a smile, "and we happen to have one sitting on this bus."



The bus suddenly made a sound and came to a stop. Jorn let out a groan as his body jerked forward, and it was the first sound he'd made in a minute.

"Looks like we're here," Sterling said.

I turned my head to look over my shoulder when I heard the bus door open. Not long after, I heard footsteps as Dylan and Trinity made their way to the back. Trinity rushed the last few steps before quickly dropping to her knees at Jorn's side.

Her eyes went from the wound to my hands, checking my work. "You need to hold on. We're almost there." She pressed her palm against his forehead for a second. She looked worried. More than usual, and it broke my heart.

"Ah." Sterling smiled faintly. "Have you two heard about the scroll?" he asked.

"You talk at about volume one hundred, old man." Dylan frowned. "Even if we didn't want to, we would have."

His eyes dropped to Jorn. "How's he doing?"

"I've managed to keep it under control," I said. "It's looking good for now."

The cut hadn't sealed. Nowhere close, but the poison had stopped spreading. The black veins had yet to return, and the smoke that had been leaking out of him was barely there.

I pulled my palms back from the wound, and the second I did, my head started spinning and my vision blurred. Hands caught me by the shoulders before I could fully process it.



"You did good."

It was Kylan. I looked up at him and gave him a soft smile as he stared down at me with one in return.

I had been so locked onto that wound, so focused on holding it back, that I never once stopped to feel how much it had drained me. Now that I had let go, I was feeling the impact of it.

Trinity took over without a word. "He went out again right before we reached the bus," she said, treating the wound. "We don't have long and need to move fast. I noticed it spreads quicker when he's out."

The walk toward the cave wasn't exactly an easy one. My mind was already working overtime to come up with a solution.

"So when my mom kidnapped my dad," I started, "she built a sled and dragged him through the woods to—"

"Forget about it." Jom's voice rang out. It was weak but stern, and obviously non-negotiable. "I would rather let Rochwall carry me like a bride again than let you kids drag me around the forest on some sledge."

Well, he still hadn't lost his spirit.

That was good.

I looked over at Rochwall and lifted my brows with a shrug.

"So be it." Rochwall showed his teeth. "How long do we have, Trinity?"

"Can you run?" she asked.

"I can shift."



I shook my head. "No shifting," I decided. "It makes the people in the caves nervous. Most haven't seen or heard a wolf in a long time, and the last time they did...as you know yourself, it didn't end well."

"Right," Rochwall mumbled. He didn't need the reminder. He had been there. "Running it is, then."

When it was decided, Trinity pulled her palms back. Rochwall crouched down in front of Jorn, and with Nate's help, they got Jorn's arms over his shoulders and lifted him onto his back. Jorn hissed out in pain until he was as settled as he could be.

Kylan's hand stayed on my shoulder. "Are you going to be able to walk?"

I tilted my head, narrowing my eyes at him. "Do you want to drag me around on a sled?" That got a laugh out of him.

"We'd better get going," Rochwall said, bouncing Jorn up higher onto his back before turning for the door. "We do not want to return to Starlight with two bodies."



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