

Chapter 454

Kylan

With my back against a tree, I kept my eyes on the temple.

I wanted to know what was happening in there. What Violet was doing, what she was thinking, and feeling wasn't enough. I had to see her.

I had to know whether Jorn was going to walk out of that place alive.

Now I was stuck out here without a single piece of information, and it was all because of Mister Sorcerer. A scoff left me.

That Jason had some nerve. Looking me in the eye and putting a hand up to tell me to wait outside like some little boy. That part might've bothered me the most.

Valerius stirred within me and let out a growl.

'Serves you right.'

He was still angry. I had been the one to shove him down and reach for Baelor, the thing that wanted us both dead. In doing so, I had done the exact thing everyone with any sense had warned me about.

We were supposed to be a team, and I had moved on my own. I understood, but he'd have to get over it.

When I finally agreed to Baelor's terms, it wasn't a decision I made lightly. But I knew why I had done it, and who I had done it for. If it came down to it again, and Baelor offered me the same deal, I would

make the same choice all over again.

The worst part was how badly I'd wanted it.

Not the deal. Kian. I wanted my hands around his throat more than I'd wanted to be just Kylan again, and if I hadn't been stopped, I would have let Baelor crush the life out of him without a flicker of regret.

The one before Kian, Kayden, had barely been a person in my eyes, so this version was barely anything at all. Just a puppet. Red eyes and rage.

If the realm Violet had been talking about really was out there somewhere, and if that had limited their powers, then we really owed the Moon Goddess our thanks.

I exhaled and let my head fall back against a tree. My body had nothing left. I was worn out. Every part of me. But there was no point thinking about it, so I didn't.

My eyes drifted to Dylan and Nate, who stood with Rochwall. The three of them wandered around, pretending to look at anything but the temple, but I knew better.

Apparently Jason was good, and despite everything, I had to admit he looked like he knew what he was doing. But Jorn's injury looked serious, and everything was still uncertain. We didn't know yet if we were about to grieve or feel relieved, so all we could do was hold our breath and wait to find out which it would be.

Then the screaming started. It was so loud that it went straight

through the temple walls, and all of us turned toward it at once. A second later, Nate, Dylan, and Rochwall were right beside me.

"That's Jorn!" Rochwall's face had gone tight. I watched all the color drain from it. "What's happening in there?"

"Do not worry yourselves. Jason is an excellent healer," a deep voice said.

Aelius.

He was by himself. Sterling hadn't come with him. His face was too relaxed, unbothered by Jorn's scream somewhere behind us. But when his eyes found mine, he rolled them in annoyance.

Would he know about everything?

The deal, the eyes, the part where I had fully intended to sacrifice myself to prevent wasting any more time?

Of course he would.

That was probably why he was looking at me like that, and why he seemed to like me even less than usual today.

"Are you certain he'll be alright?" Nate pressed.

"Very." Aelius's gaze drifted toward the temple. "Stellan Jorn still has a great deal left to show us. His story is far from over."

He folded his hands over the front of his cloak.

"But the next few hours will be important," he went on. "The shadow may try to rise again while he sleeps. You will stay the night here,

where we can watch him closely, and all of you can rest."

His eyes moved over the rest of us until they landed on me. "Especially you...Your teacher will be here tomorrow," he said. "A bit too late, considering your recklessness, but better late than never, I suppose."

I gave a slow nod. I didn't like hearing it, but I wasn't going to deny it either. Yes, it had been reckless.

I didn't bother asking about the teacher. Whoever it was, I would just have to find out tomorrow. Aelius wasn't going to tell me before he felt like it, so there was no point pushing.

"Where's Principal Sterling?" Dylan asked, looking around.

"He has already been given a hut," Aelius said. "He's settling in with the villagers as we speak."

Of course he was. That man could walk into anywhere and have people fussing over him within an hour. He had a lot to say, and people loved to listen.

"That's faster than you'd ever let Violet settle in," I said sarcastically. I knew for a fact they'd love her, because everyone did. It wasn't that hard.

Aelius's mouth pulled into a half grin.

"Tomorrow," he answered. "The last time you were here, I made her a promise. Tomorrow I keep it."

I folded my arms, then gave him a nod.

"We have a lot to discuss too," Aelius went on. "All of us as a community."

I wondered what he meant by that. It felt strange that things had become so serious he was willing to let the whole village in on everything.

Or maybe this was my fault. I hadn't stuck to the deal I made with Baelor, and that could've cost us the one clear path to the cave. It would make sense for Aelius to start thinking about other ways to reach Adelaide and Alaric.

Aelius flicked his eyes toward the temple. I turned, and Jason came walking out. Jason, who did apparently not owe a shirt.

I looked behind him, my eyes immediately locking on Violet, who came walking out with Trinity. That tight feeling in my chest loosened the second I saw her.

She had a smile on her lips. A big one. That was a good sign.

Violet hurried over to me, her eyes sparkling as they stayed locked on mine. She slipped her soft hand into mine, silently telling me not to worry.

"He'll be okay," she breathed.

"He will be," Jason confirmed. "We'll have to wait until tomorrow, of course, just to be sure, but he'll live."

Nate and Dylan let out relieved chuckles. Rochwall dropped his hands to his knees to take a deep breath before he grabbed Jason and pulled him into a hug.

"You're the real deal, kid." He slapped his back hard. "Thank you!"

Jason laughed, caught off guard. "I just did my job."

"If we're staying the night," Violet said, "we should grab our things from the bus."

"I'll go," Nate stepped up. "Me, Dylan, and Kylan. We'll be quick."

Violet shook her head. She looked up at me, and I met her gaze. "I will go. With Kylan."

I shook my head at her. "You will not be doing anything. You need to rest—"

"We will go," she decided.

She sounded so determined, no one argued or even tried.

I was still trying to figure out why she had offered. Her face revealed nothing, and every emotion I picked up from her was uncertain.

Honestly, I had spent the whole ride, the whole walk down here, bracing myself for the fight I didn't want, already convinced it was coming because I was afraid she'd think I hadn't considered her feelings.

But there wasn't any, and somehow that made me more nervous. I gave her a small, uneasy smile.

Was this it, then? Was I about to get the scolding of my life the second we were alone?

Her lips curved.

"Ready?"

big sale: 100 bonus free fou you

[get it](#)

