



Chapter 563

Violet

My legs felt like jelly with every step I took toward the front. I almost felt sorry for myself. I had stood in front of the royal council once, staring at all those faces that were much colder than these people I called family. But back then I had been a nobody.

Just a royal mate...

This was different. Every person watching me had decided I was going to save them, and that burden was much heavier to carry.

I finally stopped walking and immediately wished I hadn't, because now I could clearly see everyone looking at me. Kylan most of all. His eyes hadn't left me once since they found me.

"Uhh..." I started, immediately hating the way I sounded. My hands trembled a little as I looked down at the three sheets I was holding, and I pulled in a deep breath.

I couldn't help but think about the promise I had made to myself in that hut. About the daughter who was supposed to be able to do the impossible too.

That's why I lifted my head. "Okay," I breathed out. I cleared my throat and made myself try again, properly this time.

"I've been going over this for hours," I said. "For most of them, I had it wrong. I kept treating it like this was our chance to prove Aelius wrong and stop the war." I shook my head slowly. "But that's not what this is. The war is coming. That part's already been decided, and nothing I write on a piece of paper is going to change it."

I looked over the crowd for a second as they began to murmur. Dylan nodded his head at me, urging me to continue. "So this isn't about



stopping it," I continued. "It's about buying us time before it gets here and making sure that when it does come, we're not walking into it without the two people who belong here...with us."

It went quiet for a while until an older woman near the front spoke up, her voice careful. "So we do not fight to win?"

"No," I breathed. "We do not."

Confused whispers rippled through the crowd, spreading through every row. "We cannot win," I elaborated further. "Not now...and if we go in there to fight them, we lose. I'm not going to stand up here and give any of you false hope. You deserve better than that from me."

I doubted Gloria and Kian would take it easy on us this time. Sure, Kylan would have Baelor, and we could fight like we had done before, but there was no telling how it would end.

Uneasy looks were being passed around. "Think of it as an ambush. Five minutes," I said. "We go in, we take what we came for, and we leave."

I glanced over at Kylan. His eyes were calm, soft in a way that made it easier for me to continue. I took another look at my notes, scanning them with my eyes.

"Half of you will stay outside the realm, the other half comes with us," I went on. "The elders and children will stay here—"

"But we are all prepared to fight!" a man called out, pride in his voice.

"I know you are," I nodded. "But I'm not prepared to let all of you fight. There's a difference."

Aelius let out a low chuckle from where he stood. Afraid I would lose my confidence, I chose not to look him in the eyes. I stayed focused on the crowd.



"We have the prince, and he has Baelor."

"Like I said," I cut someone off once again. "Kylan is the only one who can enter the cave, so that is his job and will be his only job," I said. "He will go to Alaric, sign the scroll, and make Alaric the Alpha King."

I took a breath, scanning through the people again. "It will let Alaric use the High Command. Which means every wolf out there fighting for those two against their own will is set free. Break the army they've built."

A wave of gasps went through the crowd, and this time, it was impressed looks. Heads turned to one another, smiling. There was hope again. For the first time, I actually felt like they were with me.

I took the time to look over another note. "And then there's still the Marrowrose."

I hadn't forgotten about those strange blue roses that had made Mom weak this whole time. Allowed Gloria to take some of her strength.

"A group will stay down here to help Jason and wait for the injured." I turned my head to him for a second, meeting his soft brown eyes. "A group will fight the wolves until Kylan delivers the scroll, and another group will destroy every Marrowrose they can find so Adelaide can get her strength back."

A light tap drew my attention to the side. I caught Varius watching me from under his hood, and once he had my attention, he spoke. "You truly believe," he began, "that all of this can be done in five minutes?"

I let out a small laugh before I could stop myself.

"You tell me," I said. "You're the Soothsayer."

Varius's lips curled into a smile, and he gave me a small shrug. He lifted his head just enough for me to see him clearly. "My eyes have shown me nothing of it," he said. "But if you believe it can be done, then I believe it



too."

I smiled back at him. It was such a small thing, but every time someone said they believed in me, I felt a new burst of courage. Like Aelius, Varius hadn't exactly been the most comforting man, so hearing it from him meant a lot.

Someone cleared their throat, and a second later, I felt a presence beside me. Aelius. I looked over, but this time, I didn't shrink away from his stern eyes. Surprisingly, there was something behind that stern look that almost looked like joy. It was barely noticeable, but it was there.

And it only lasted for a second. "And if you are not going in for the win," he said slowly, his blue eyes piercing into mine. "then tell me, child. What becomes of Kian and Gloria?"

I swallowed. He wasn't asking because he didn't know. He was asking because he wanted to hear me say it out loud, in front of all of them.

He didn't want me to surprise them or leave a single gap open, and neither did I. This was the hard part. I had already sat with this exact question for hours in that hut and turned it over until my head hurt. I already knew the answer sounded better in my head than it would out loud.

"We let them go."

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