



Chapter 564

Violet

I squeezed my eyes shut for a moment, bracing myself for the judgement. The disappointment, and for everyone in Bloodstone Haven to decide I had officially lost my mind for standing up here and saying we should just let our enemies walk away.

As I opened my eyes, I was shocked to see nobody was looking at me like that. They were just watching, curious and waiting for me to keep going.

The lump in my throat loosened. After everything I had already told them, they were convinced enough that even this would end up making sense. They had decided to keep believing me.

"I know how it sounds," I said, a relieved smile breaking through. "But this problem isn't going anywhere. It'll keep coming back no matter what we do, so at some point...we have to stop patching it and actually deal with it...for good."

It was so strange to say, especially with half of Baelor being inside of Kylan, possibly listening to every word. He was the enemy. The one who had done the most damage.

But he was also the one who couldn't even control his disobeying half. We were all on the same side for now.

"The day we free Adelaide and Alaric will not be that day," I told them. "Gloria and Kian will attempt to run because that's what they do. If we force a fight, people die for nothing, because they're too strong," I went on. "They'll get away either way, so I'd rather let that happen without letting anyone die."

I waited for a moment to let the words settle. "They will need to build another army. With them going into hiding for some time, we'll have time to actually prepare," I said. "Train, plan, and bring the kingdoms



together.”

The last one was the most important. This was never just our war. It was everyone's, which meant everyone had to do something.

Last time, Mom and Dad, and Bloodstone Haven had to carry all of it alone. My parents had been inside that Veil, holding everything together because they did not have a choice.

Never again...

Aelius gave a simple hum beside me, and I quickly shifted my gaze to my last notes. I read it over quickly, taking in the things I hadn't discussed yet. My heart was still hammering the whole way through it as I still braced for someone to finally speak up and tell me I was crazy.

But enough time passed, and no one did.

“I brought all of my friends with me today,” I said. My eyes went to Trinity, Nate, Dylan, and finally landed on Kylan. He still had the same proud little smirk on his face.

“But I have more than just them. A lot more, and I think every single one of them could be useful to us.”

The rest of the Elite Team.

Yes, Cassian included.

They were combat majors, science majors, strategists, and more healers. There was a lot of talent on that team, and we could use every bit of it.

I wasn't a complete fool. Of course I knew it wouldn't be smart to stand up and start screaming at the whole world that a war was coming. At least, not at this moment.

That would only scare people, stir them up before they were ready. But in my head and in this version where everything went the way I needed it



to, I would tell them. Only the Elite Team for now.

That also meant I had to come clean about my identity, but I was already long past the point where hiding it did anyone good. Mom and Dad would be out soon.

They would claim the throne to the Common Lands as the king and queen, and I would not lie about coming from Adelaide.

Not when I was so honored to be hers, and so proud.

Pleased, I folded the paper in my hand.

"We do it in ten days," I said. "I know all of you were out here working yourselves to the bone today while I sat in a hut with my thoughts." I let out a chuckle. "So tomorrow, I'll work twice as hard to catch up to every one of you. That's a promise."

They looked at one another, exchanging nods of approval.

"Well," Aelius said. "Is that all, then?"

Right then, Lumia let out a slow, satisfied purr.

'That is all,' she said. 'Baelor will get the apology he wants so badly... though I still cannot say what exactly he thinks he is owed for.'

A bright laugh slipped out of me.

"Yes," I nodded at Aelius. "That was it."

I looked into those blue eyes, seeing the corner of his mouth twitch up. He had dropped his gaze so I wouldn't see, but it was already too late. I had made him proud.

Jason took over again. "I hope every one of you intends to follow Violet," he said, shooting me a quick glance. "She knows what she is doing."



Heat rushed to my cheeks. I would often ask myself the question, do i? But this time I was so certain.

"That's it for tonight," Jason continued. "You all worked hard today. Go rest, and take care of your eyes, and we will start again in the morning."

One by one, the whole village got to their feet. Instead of leaving right away, they first walked past me and placed a hand on my shoulder for support.

Something heavy sat in my chest at the kind gesture. I had seriously walked up to the front thinking they'd see I wasn't anything like Mom, but they had been so supportive.

After the villagers left, Kylan reached me with a bright smile. Dylan, Trinity, and Nate trailed behind him.

"Nice speech, Pup," he said, grinning. He balled his fist and ruffled the top of my head while I shoved him off me with a groan.

"So? What did Lumia say?"

By now, Varius, Jason, and Aelius had joined in too. I let out a breath.

"She said she'd do it," I said, still surprised it had actually worked. After all of that, the panic, the crossed-out scraps, the whole day in that hut, Lumia had agreed to apologize.

"It turns out she does know what she's doing."

A voice came from down the path. I whipped my head to the side, instantly recognizing the voice, and my eyes widened.

It was Commander Jorm...

He was walking in one piece, on his own two feet, and looked fully healed. He scrunched up his face and wiped at his jaw, brushing away a few flakes of dried herb that were still stuck there.

His gaze met mine with a slight eye-roll. "Nice words, Hastings," he said, waving his hand in the air.

Still shocked and speechless, I started walking toward him. Slow at first, but I gave up at the last part and ran until I stopped right in front of him. This man should've died a while ago, but he was still here...breathing.

My mouth opened, but nothing came out.

I looked up at him, thinking.

Should I? Should I not?

Then, screw it.

"You're okay!" I threw my arms around him and pressed my head into his chest, already waiting for him to shove me off. But the shove never came. He pulled me in closer instead.

"Unfortunately for me," he chuckled, "I nearly died for you, cousin." 

I looked up at him, my eyes going watery. Not because he had called me cousin, but because I didn't have to carry the guilt of almost losing him anymore.

"You did..."

He let me go and looked around, already scanning his surroundings. "But where is Rochwall?" he asked. "I need to laugh in his face for almost crying like a baby—"

"Your friend and the principal have already returned to the school," Aelius announced. "As the rest of you should."

Kylan pressed himself against my side, his hand slipping into mine.

"And from my understanding," Aelius went on, his eyes settling on me, then Kylan, "I will be seeing the two of you again early in the morning."



I glanced at Varius, who blinked his eyes in response. That was the promise I had made him, after wasting quite some time today.

"Yes," I bopped my head.

"We'll be there too," Dylan said. He looked over at Trinity. "Right, Trin?"

She hummed a nod, though her eyes flicked toward Jason as she did it. "There's still so much more to learn."

Jason chuckled under his breath.

"Nate as well," Dylan added, but Nate had already shaken his head.

"I understand how serious all of this is," he said, squinting. "I really do. But it's an important day tomorrow. A big one."

"I am aware," Aelius said simply. Those were the only words he gave me before he turned and walked away without another word.

Though the two didn't communicate, Varius had also left and parted the other way.

There was a clear and uncomfortable distance, which Jason had also noticed. Same as the rest of us, he looked between them.

"Well." He gave me a helpless shrug and ended up trailing after Aelius.

After he left, I found myself stuck in my head again. "What's happening tomorrow?" I asked.

Kylan looked down at me, a smile tugging at his lips.

"The others are coming," he said. "Remember?"

My brows shot up, and my cheeks started glowing from the embarrassment of having completely forgotten. Goddess, I was an awful friend.



Sora, Lian, Kaelis...

So much had happened that it had slipped my mind entirely. They were coming all the way from Lyperia and didn't have the faintest idea what they were walking into.

Jorn clapped his hands together. "Well, what are we waiting for?" he said. "Let's head back, Elite Team."



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