

Chapter 568

Violet

By the time we passed through the tunnels and stepped out into Bloodstone Haven, the whole place was already awake and moving.

Several villagers shot us smiles and greeted us warmly as they walked back and forth. I assumed the others were probably already working, preparing their eyes.

I turned my head and stared at the back of the Soothsayer who had also welcomed us the first time after we had left the tunnels. He was a serious man who hadn't wasted any time on small talk and just told us we needed to follow him.

Now he was leading us to the temples. Kylan, Trinity and me.

I looked up at the hills again as we went further, and as expected, they were filled with villagers. Both from Bloodstone Haven and the Lyperian mountains. I watched in awe.

It was so silent as they sat on the ground, legs crossed and eyes shut.

"I wonder what they're doing," I whispered.

Kylan chuckled beside me. "Who knows."

"Meditating," Trinity muttered. "Dylan told me they spent all of yesterday staring into their glowing eyes, apparently," she said. "I believe it was something about doing it the right way benefiting all of them because the eyes carry a lot of strength."

My brow lifted in confusion. It was still unclear to me, but exactly for that reason, I needed to receive Aelius's promised training. That was something that would benefit me.

Up ahead, a figure moved along the hills with his hands clasped behind his back. A smile crept onto my face as I stared at the guy who watched over everything with a calm expression.

Jason.

He looked too comfortable in his new role already, leading the villagers through all of it like he had been doing it for years.

Trinity spotted him too, and I felt her light up beside me. "Okay, I'm going," she announced, already walking away from us. "Have fun with the...apology?" She shot us a questioning look like she wasn't even sure herself.

Neither were we.

But with Kylan's training starting, I assumed that would be today as well.

A soft smile escaped me as she bumped Jason's shoulder, completely dismissing how calm he had been just now.

When the Soothsayer with the long white beard cleared his throat, I faced forward again. We had almost reached the temples now. Which meant we had almost reached Varius.

I turned and studied Kylan's face as we walked, looking for any sign of unease. And I didn't know whether I was imagining it, but the tightness from yesterday, including the stiff shoulders, seemed to have faded.

"Are you nervous?" I asked.

Today he would actually reach for Baelor. Well, I suppose both of us would. We would connect and let our wolves apologize to the same thing we had tried to push down.

To my surprise, Kylan shook his head. "Not really," he said. "It feels different now that I know what he actually wants...so no." He shrugged.

"Good," I said, glancing up at him.

"And how do you feel about your sister running straight past you to throw herself at Nate?" I asked, fighting a smile. "The one time you stand with your arms right open, and she just completely runs past you—"

"Don't," Kylan scoffed. "I don't even want to think about those two. I've got enough on my plate today without picturing my little sister and my brother..."

He swallowed his words, and I let out another chuckle at the disgusted look on his face. Right then, we came to a stop. We stood in front of the same temple from yesterday.

The one that worked best against dark energy, and where we had heard that our wolves owed Baelor an apology. According to him...

The Soothsayer who had guided us gave us one last nod, then turned and walked off without another word. The two of us were left standing at the entrance.

We both turned our heads, shared a look, then laughed under our breaths. What now?

"You go first," I said.

Kylan lifted a brow at me for a moment. He stepped through, and I followed right behind him.

The moment we were inside, my breath got stuck in my throat. I had only expected to see Varius, but it wasn't just him. Aelius was also there, and the two of them sat side by side on the floor. Though neither of them looked too happy about it.

Their eyes were fixed on the opening, and just from that, I knew for certain that whatever had been happening in this temple before we

walked in had been deeply, painfully awkward.

"Uh..." I managed. "Good morning?"

"Sit," Aelius said, going straight to business. "Both of you."

Kylan and I dropped straight to the ground at the same time. It was so fast it was almost like he'd cast a spell to put us there.

"This," Aelius said, his eyes going back and forth between the two of us, "is not bright and early in the morning."

Well...I had done my best. Perhaps we should've taken the car after all so it would've spared us all of this.

"Sorry." I bit my lip. "We walked, and we came as fast as we could. I promise!"

I expected him to say, "Do not worry about it," but instead, he gave me a stern look that made me want to disappear.

I quickly realized he was in a strict mood today. Which meant less joking, more working.

I glanced at Kylan and caught him rolling his eyes, clearly bothered by the whole thing, as he was with anything else that would often leave Grandpa Aelius's mouth.

"They needed their rest," Varius said, coming to our defense. "Yesterday was a long day, and it will only get harder from here. What we are about to do takes a great deal of energy. I would rather have them here with their strength fully restored."

What were we about to do?

Aelius glared at Varius. "These are not the Lyperian mountains," he said mockingly. Varius went quiet, but Aelius kept speaking. "This is not a place where men can lie around all day doing nothing, waiting for either

the light or the darkness to save them while people die around them for nothing."

Varius couldn't hold back anymore, and a low growl rolled out of him. I froze, my eyes darting nervously between the two of them.

I was starting to get the feeling that this wasn't about me and Kylan at all. This was about whatever had been dragging on between them, and we had just happened to get here at the wrong time and sit down right in the middle of it.

"So," I said carefully, trying to shift the topic. "What exactly are we doing today?"

Varius pulled his attention off Aelius. "The first thing that must happen," he began explaining, "is Lumia and Valerius offering their apology to Baelor. Nothing else can begin until that is done."

I felt Kylan shift beside me and saw his eyes glancing around the temple. "And how's that supposed to work?" he asked.

"Do we shift? Are you going to force me in some circle and wait around until my eyes go red?" He let out a small, dry laugh.

"No shifting," Aelius put him straight. "Not in Bloodstone Haven."

Varius took over. "The two of you will enter a ritual where your wolves come forward and Baelor's shadow rises to meet them. Just enough for the three of them to speak."