

Chapter 569

Violet

A cold chill crept down my spine. All I could understand from it was that it meant letting Baelor roam around freely. Willingly.

He was still the God of the Underworld who had gone after all of us, and we would just have to sit here and let it happen.

"Do not look like that, child," Varius said, catching my face. "He will not try anything funny," he told me. "He will want to go back inside Kylan's body, and there he will stay."

"And how do you know that?" Kylan asked. He must've also felt confused by all of this. It didn't make much sense.

"Because I felt it yesterday when I looked into you." Varius tilted his head, his eyes piercing through Kylan's chest. "There was a comfort in him that I haven't even felt within Thorne," he shared. "Baelor is most content inside your body now and has already made it his home," he explained. "A creature does not burn down or flee from the house it has chosen to live in."

I let that settle in for a moment. He had made my mate his home.

It should have horrified me...and it did. Yet there was also something reassuring about it. If Baelor valued Kylan, that meant he would really try his best to protect him.

A smile crept onto my face as I thought about Kylan's training, but it faded as soon as I thought about my own. "And after the ritual?" I asked, my eyes wide. "What happens then?"

Aelius gave me a brief smile. "Do not worry yourself," he said. "After that, we begin working on your eyes so that you might learn to lead our people properly and actually know what you are talking about when you

do it."

I nodded eagerly. I never thought the day would come when Aelius would finally teach me how to use them properly. Suddenly, a strange feeling went over me as the temple dimmed without a single word of warning.

It was pitch black for a few seconds until I heard the snaps of Varius's fingers. Candles flickered to life one by one, and small flames came out of them.

I looked around, flustered by how fast it had happened. There was only one candle left unlit, and it was the largest one.

Aelius had already leaned forward, and before I could ask, his hands closed around my arm and Kylan's. "Face each other," he commanded.

Neither of us questioned it, and even if I had wanted to, everything was moving so quickly I wouldn't have had the time to do it anyway.

"Lock your arms like this." His grip was strong as he made me fold my arms around Kylan's wrists and his around mine. I looked into Kylan's eyes and began to feel a bit more at ease as he shot me a calming smile.

"Is this really safe?" I asked. It was now really starting to sink in what we were about to do.

"Who knows," Aelius said, far too casually for my liking. His lips were pressed together as he gave a simple shrug.

I stared at him, eyes wide with shock. "I had no hand in this one," he went on. "And the last time something happened that I had no hand in, our great friend here was manipulated by that very same evil and ended up all the way in those Lyperian mountains." He waved a vague hand. "You all know that part of the history..."

"W-Wait, what?" I stuttered. Varius released a deeply offended huff. I

couldn't help but squeeze Kylan's wrists tighter like it would somehow offer more protection.

"You heard me." Aelius snapped his fingers, and the next second, the only candle left, the largest one, came to life.

"Now focus," he said.

I tried to do just that as I looked into Kylan's brown eyes. It didn't take long before I squinted, waiting for something to happen. Baelor was a shadow who worked fast, right? I bet he couldn't wait for that apology and would reveal himself any second.

My whole body tensed as I braced myself. Just waiting for the moment when the wolves would come forward or we would somehow get swallowed into a dark pit.

But still...nothing.

All I could hear was the soft flicker of the candle between us. We just sat on the cold floor, staring at each other like idiots.

Without warning, I snapped out of it and clicked my tongue. "I don't think it's working," I decided.

A breath slipped past Aelius's lips. "It may have something to do with the fact that it has been all of a few seconds, child," he said dryly.

I opened my mouth, then quickly closed it when I accepted that I couldn't argue with that. Aelius went on. "And it may also have something to do with the fact that all you do, child, is talk." He gestured vaguely at me. "If it's not the prince interrupting the silence, it is you. For once, you simply need to listen."

Varius let out a low grunt of agreement. "I believe that's the first thing we have agreed on all morning."

I dropped my shoulders. "Sorry."

Kylan laughed under his breath, and I gave him a look. "Hey." He gave my wrists a light squeeze. "Just look at me. Only me."

I did what he asked. At least it was easier than looking anywhere else. I had been staring into those dark eyes since the day he first decided he had it out for me. Now, they were the eyes I trusted the most, even more so than my glowing ones.

"Breathe," he said softly.

With his encouragement, I finally managed to take a breath. "We're going to let Lumia and Valerius have this one," he went on, his voice soft. "We don't interfere. We just trust that they'll do the right thing, and we stay out of their way."

I gave him a nod. "And if anything happens," he said, "you'll just have to trust that I've got you. Okay?"

"Okay," I sighed out.

"Same as always. I'm not going anywhere."

With each word that left his mouth, all of it fell away. The candles, Varius and Aelius, that anxious feeling, until there was just Kylan and the soothing sound of his voice.

I finally understood what he had been doing. Our bodies were connected. Not just that, but our souls and our wolves too. Baelor could probably feel everything. My uncertainty, my racing heart, and just how unwelcoming I was being.

And as soon as I was willing to let him in, a deep rumble rolled through the temple, and the stone beneath our feet began to shake.

"Eyes on me," Kylan whispered again. "Are you ready?"

I breathed out slowly and let the last of the tension go. "I'm ready."

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