

Chapter 573

Kylan

There was something wrong about sitting in a dark temple and being told to invite the thing that had nearly destroyed me to come closer. Yet that was exactly what Varius made me do.

Shortly after Violet had left, he took a place across from me, folded both hands in his lap and gave me a simple instruction. Show me your eyes.

That was it.

There was no explanation or guidance, just a command.

And I tried by shutting my eyes so hard they started aching. The only problem was that I felt more and more like a complete fool with each passing second because it wasn't working.

No matter how hard I tried, the red wouldn't come out. It didn't make any sense. Baelor wanted an apology, and we had given it to him, so why?

When Varius let out a low hum, I cracked a single eye open and looked at him again. "What?" I growled.

He gave me a shrug. "I was only wondering," he said, "what it is you think you are doing?"

I furrowed my brows, unsure of how to respond to that. What I did know was that I was slowly growing frustrated with all of this.

"What you asked me to do," I said, trying to keep my cool. "You told me to show you my eyes. So I'm trying to show you my eyes."

Varius tilted his head. "And you believe that squeezing them shut and turning purple in the face is going to convince a creature older than this world to come when you call?" A dry chuckle escaped him. "You are impatient, prince," he said. "You always have been, so this doesn't surprise me."

"Then what am I supposed to do?" I asked with the last bit of my patience. "Be clear."

"Baelor is not a dog," Varius explained calmly. "He does not come when you whistle for him, and he is not what you want him to be," he said. "You keep reaching for his power, his eyes, the part of him that causes headaches."

He knew about the headaches?

"But you do not summon Baelor," Varius went on. "You reach him."

"Isn't that the same?"

He shook his head. "No," he said. "To summon is to call it to you and expect it to obey. To reach a thing is to go to it yourself, as an equal, and ask." His eyes held mine. "One is a master calling a servant, and the other is two powers meeting in the middle."

I listened to his words. "Baelor will never be the first," I muttered, coming to the realization. After all, he was far too old and far too proud to come running because I told him to.

"Close your eyes, prince," Varius instructed. I closed them.

"Focus," he said, his voice low. "Find your way in, and you will see what you are looking for. Do not force your way in, but ask."

Ask if I could be inside my own body?

It was a strange suggestion, but I was desperate enough to try it. I listened to Varius and let myself go past all the tension I had been holding until I had reached the center.

And the deeper I went, the more I could feel. I felt Valerius first. I had been feeling him there for years now, that familiar presence at the core of me which I had already gotten used to, so that was nothing new.

But then there was something else. Another presence, sitting just below him. This one felt a bit more uneasy, like it hadn't quite settled in yet.

I let out a chuckle. 'Baelor?' I called out inside my mind.

'Yes?'

His dark voice echoed inside of me. He gave me a response in less than a split second, sounding far too pleased with himself.

'Make my eyes glow,' I told him.

The sound of his laughter spread through me. 'Well, well,' he sang. 'And here I was thinking we could finally make this work,' he said. 'Is that any way to ask a favor of a god?'

I let out a breath through my nose.

Fair point...well, actually not, but it was understandable. Valerius had already made clear what Baelor would be like.

'Would you...' I tried again, forcing the words out as kindly as I could manage, 'Help me make my eyes glow...Please.'

'Now was that so hard?'

Suddenly, the black behind my eyes shifted into a deep red. Baelor's presence pushed forward, and I felt Valerius pull back just enough to let him.

He didn't fight it. He let him come through.

And when Baelor's presence grew stronger, darkness and cold seemed to close in around my whole body.

'Open,' he whispered.

As soon as I did, everything around me sharpened. The stone walls, the flicker of every candle flame, and Varius sitting right in front of me. I could hear his heartbeat, his breaths. I could feel everything.

I had used Baelor's eyes before, but it had never once felt like this. Back then, it had been like being shoved into the back seat of my own body. Like watching through a window while something else took the wheel. I didn't have control over my hands, my voice, nothing.

This time I did. The eyes were borrowed, same as the power that spread through my body, but it was mine. I felt in full control, and there was no headache.

"How are you feeling?" Varius's voice broke through.

A quiet chuckle of disbelief escaped me. "Good."

I turned my gaze and looked into his dark eyes. "That's it," Varius responded. There was an approval in his voice that I hadn't heard before.

"But let's see how long you can hold it before your body decides it's

enough."

I let out a hum, my eyes scanning the temple again before they landed on Varius. "I told you, I feel good," I told him. There was so much power within me, I doubted my body would just give up. There was no way.

"You feel good now," Varius said. "You have his senses now, which means you can reach and feel things you have never experienced before," he continued. "You can feel past these walls, past this haven, all the way to Lyperia, from the queen to the..." His eyes fixed on mine, but he never finished the sentence.

I did know where he wanted to go with that.

The king...

He looked down for a second. "I want you to travel."

"Travel?" I questioned.

"With your eyes," he clarified. "It is not hard. Baelor will guide you."

I squinted my eyes, giving a confused shake of my head.

"Once you close your eyes, you'll understand. And once you can't travel anymore, we know what it takes for you to reach your limit," Varius told me. "But do not travel too far, prince. Do you hear me?"

His eyes widened, showing me he was not joking around. "What you will be doing is not a dream. Everything you will experience is real. Do you understand?"

Eager to finally do something, I immediately closed my eyes. I didn't have to communicate with Baelor for my eyes to experience what Varius

had been talking about.

Though they were closed, it was like I found myself in a different universe. I could still see everything clearly. The temple, the candles, Aelius...

It was my soul that traveled, all the way past the temple. I could see Bloodstone Haven, Violet sitting with Aelius, Trinity working on something that seemed to be herbs. I wished I could've stayed longer, but I didn't know how.

I just kept traveling, everything coming in flashes until I had no idea where I was anymore. By the time it ended, I found myself back in the woods.

Could it be the woods in the Common Lands?

Lyperia?

When I felt Baelor's excitement within me, I believed I was headed in the right direction. I followed the pull and let it drag me faster and faster. Baelor's laughter was in the back of my mind...perhaps my eyes or however this thing worked.

While it had been just me before, I was starting to feel Baelor more and more. It was like this was where he needed to be, and I couldn't have stopped even if I'd wanted to.

"Where are we?" I asked, right before everything went black again. It didn't last long. The darkness tore open, and I could finally see where Baelor's eyes had taken me.

Those eyes had taken me inside the cave...

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I had never been there before. Never seen it. But I could feel a presence pulling at me.

Baelor's other half.

I was inside the realm.



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