

The Rise Of The King

The Rise Of The King Chapter 16

-Noah-

I take a deep breath in front of the doors to the Council meeting room. They are already gathered in there, expecting me.

I nod at the guards at the door and they open them for me. All of the Council members rise as the doors open and I come in. I make my way to my seat, at the head of the table, and signal for them to seat.

"First order of business," I say, not giving anyone else the chance to speak first. If this is going to work, I have to make it clear that I don't want any opposition, "the search for a wife is over." [Search the website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"Ah! Great news!" One of them exclaims.

"Wonderful, Your Majesty!" Another one says.

"Lady Violet is one lucky woman!" Someone else says.

I look at William, sitting a few seats down to my right. He simply shrugs, not planning on getting involved in this.

"You misunderstand. Lady Violet found her mate in our party, it is Warrior Lucas. She has come back with us to be with him. She bears his mark."

There's a gasp. They're all staring at me in disbelief.

"Well, Your Highness, If I may," one of them rises, "there are so many other Houses ready to offer you a suitable partner, and they have already agreed to host you. I can at least guarantee you that in my House, mate or not, your potential wife would never choose someone over you."

"As I said, the search for a wife is *over.*"

There is a deafening silence in the room. The Council member that had stood up slowly sits back down on his seat, not taking his eyes off of me. There is a mixture of emotions in the air. Shock, confusion... anger.

"With all due respect, Your Highness, that is not your call to make," someone else stands up, it's Caldwell, by far my least favorite Council member, "there is tradition, these Families supported the crown in the time of your father, grandfather, and his father before him, we cannot just decide to change our customs because... why? Because the first candidate found her mate? We

cannot disrespect these Houses in this way."

Many members raise their voices in agreement.

"Or... could it be... this *mate of yours is clouding your judgment, Your Highness? May I remind you she is a simple wolf? She is not suitable to be your mate, much less *Queen,*" he says.

"And who are you to decide if she's suitable for me or not? She is my Goddess chosen *mate,*"

"Your Majesty," Caldwell smiles sardonically, "don't be naïve. Such a thing isn't *really* real, it's just hormones playing their part. You were in unknown territory, severely injured, and this mate of yours saved you... arguably... let's not pretend like this isn't some form of Stockholm syndrome."

Some Council members laugh, others are not so sure that mocking their King is smart.

"Council member Caldwell, as much as I appreciate your... input... if I have to repeat myself a third time, I might have to adjourn this meeting until you can all process what I said." There's a moment of silence as I have clearly insulted their capacity to understand plain words. Caldwell's expression shows he's not pleased, but other than that, he's unreadable. He finally sits down.

"Very well," I say, "I'd appreciate it if you all communicated back with your Houses and passed along the information that my search for a wife is over. It's up to you if you want to upset them by telling them the truth, that I won't be taking in a wife at all."

"I'm sorry, Your Highness, but this can't possibly be the best solution," Council member Alcott says, standing up, "I understand it's unsavory to have to take in a wife while having a mate, you even bear her mark, but this is politics; emotions should be set aside for the greater good!"

"Unsavory? You know what's unsavory*?" I have to reign in my temper, "My Council lying to me, making me believe I was visiting these families *personally* to negotiate the placement of our warriors on their land, while in reality, what was negotiated "behind my back* between this Council and the Families, was that I would take in a wife; something that goes directly against my expressed wishes," I stand up slowly as I continue, "Do you feel that I am a child, Council member Alcott? An *idiot* you can manipulate so easily? They tried to kill my mate, Council member Alcott, with wolf's bane. And do you

realize what would have happened if they had succeeded? I would have killed every living thing within that manor. I would have ended an entire *royal* Family, and I would not have thought twice about it."

I see Alcott shiver at the coldness in my voice. The other Council members have stopped looking me in the eye and are either looking at the table or the exit, just in case.

"Make no mistake. *You* do not tell *me* what to do, you advise me. *That* is the extent of your role here."

I walk away from my seat for a few minutes, giving them space to recover from that aura thing Vera told me about. When I return to the table, no one dares say a word.

"Now, I understand this change of plans comes with complications, so we should address that instead." I say, "For instance. Is there any way to negotiate with the Families protection for their land? It benefits them, it is beyond me why they wouldn't want trained warriors to protect them against rogues."

No one speaks and after a few awkward seconds, William clears his throat.

"If I may, Your Highness, House Cerulean has agreed to host Castle warriors whenever you're ready to send them. Rogues have already pushed the Family to the edge of their territory; they have only a percentage of the farmland they had before, and have lost countless lives guarding what little they have left."

"Very well, I will see that a party is sent," I say.

Council member William bows,

"Thank you, Your Highness."

"Anyone else?" I ask.

Council member Alcott stands up,

"They don't want Castle warriors because they do not trust the Crown, Your Highness. They don't trust *you.* You are uneducated in our ways and traditions, and quite frankly disrespectful to the foundations of this Kingdom. They will not trust someone who disrespects them."

He speaks boldly, but dares not meet my gaze.

"So, their solution is to let rogues take over their land? I may be uneducated, but they are halfwits if that's the case."

"Your Grace! You cannot disrespect our Families like that!" Caldwell yells, indignant.

"Tell me, what would you call it then? They are being offered help, they are refusing said help because I won't marry their daughters and stick to tradition, all the while their wealth significantly diminishes with every rogue attack," I turn to Eli, "what was the percentage of land lost last year alone?"

"Thirty-two percent of all available farmland, twenty-eight percent directly owned by the Families," he says.

"Twenty-eight percent," I repeat, almost as if speaking to myself, "So tell me, Council members, what "would" you call it?"

They all stay quiet again.

"Speak to your Houses. If they refuse help, I will not force them to take it, but I *will* offer all of their servants, staff, soldiers, and farmers a safe haven in our land. These people are being left unprotected because the Families are acting like conceited children. That stops now. They don't have to trust me, they just have to stop being fools. Anyway, it's up to them," I shrug as I stand up, "we'll continue this meeting after lunch."

"But we barely even started. Your High-" Someone protests.

"We've barely even started and you all have bored me already," I say, giving my back to them as I leave, "I'll see you all after lunch."

I leave the room and no one dares say anything else; even if they did, I don't think I would have heard them.

I make my way to the now repurposed King's chambers. Vera had the brilliant idea of turning all of that space into a new clinic, since we refused to move into Alistair's chambers. Even Caleb offered up his Beta wing to be repurposed as he has taken up a Warrior room. Eli also had no intentions of moving into the Beta wing; he decided to stay close to his own, the warriors.

The sweetest scent of vanilla and cinnamon draws my attention; I knew she'd be here.

When I enter the new clinic, Vera is sitting down at the center of the large room that is now being repurposed as an emergency room for incoming cases. She's sitting with a bunch of documents and medicines; she's taking inventory.

Everyone bows their head as I make my way to her. She feels me approaching and raises her head.

"Hey, you! How was the Council meeting?"

"Short," I say, extending my hand to her, "come, I think we both deserve a break."

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Vera immediately takes my hand, not even questioning where we're going. As she rises, the papers that were on her lap fall to the floor; we maneuver carefully through the mountains of paperwork. I take a quick look around and it strikes me that this place seemed a lot more put together before we left.

"What happened here?" I ask her as we make our way to the door.

She turns to look at some of the old healers that are just looming over her all the time; she's giving them the stink eye. "Don't worry, I'll find out soon."

They all scatter, understanding the implicit threat in her tone.

I can't help but chuckle. Seeing her always raises my mood, but moody Vera is hilarious, as long as it's not directed to me.

We make it past the clinic, the Beta chambers, the Council Meeting Room, and the dining room as we head to exit the Castle. "Where are we going?" She finally asks.

"You'll see," I simply say.

When we are exiting the Castle, the guards bow slightly to me, noting that I am leaving without an escort. One of them comes forward a few steps, but I shake my head. I rather have no one with us for this. We walk further away from the Castle, venturing within the forest a few miles until we reach the clearing.

Once there, I proceed to take my clothes off and fold them neatly on the ground. When I turn to look at Vera, she scans me up and down with an eyebrow raised.

"You know, as tempting as this is, I don't think I want mosquito bites on my ass," she says.

I chuckle.

"I like where your mind went, but..."

I quickly shift into my lycan.

Realization dawns on her face and she smiles, quickly removing her clothes and folding them next to mine.

"Finally!" she says.

She closes her eyes and breathes slowly, concentrating.

While to most wolves, or even lycans, her age, the transformation to our beast forms is almost instant, Vera hasn't had much time to bond with her wolf, so it takes her a few seconds to call her forth. Suddenly, I see her begin to transform. I'm always in awe whenever I see her wolf. She looks like a mythical creature, her fur iridescent and changing tones in the sun. Her big white eyes also have a shine to them. My lycan can't help but begin wagging his tail.

We take a step towards her, as she happily taps her paws on the ground, feeling it for the first time in a long time; but as soon as she sees us, she begins running away, playfully.

She runs deeper and deeper within the forest. If Vera in her human form is unnaturally fast, in her wolf form, she's unmatched. The trip to visit the Cerulean House really would've been a lot quicker if she had been able to turn.

We run for maybe ten miles in no time, reaching the destination Vera's wolf likely had in mind; her waterhole.

There are several hidden lakes and waterholes in lycan territory, some of which we aren't even aware of yet. This one seemed to have been hidden from everyone until Vera's wolf found it one time; it's become her favorite place to come to ever since. The waterhole is covered in greenery all around, with large trees surrounding it protectively. Only some rays of the sun are allowed to come through.

With one look my way and without hesitation, she jumps in.

We see her swimming further and further away, enjoying the way the water droplets on her fur makes it seem almost as if she's glowing. She even swims on her back, with her paws resting upwards and her tail wagging underwater.

We wait for her at the shore; lycans and water don't get along very well.

My lycan is looking at his mate, wagging his tail incessantly. Last time this happened, he wagged it so hard it hurt for a week. I had promised he wouldn't get any more face time with her if he kept this up, but this ban on Vera transforming also weighs heavily on him; he misses his mate.

After about half an hour, Vera swims back to us, shaking off the excess water from her fur. When she comes closer to us, my lycan tackles her to the ground to lick off the rest

of the water from every inch of her body. Once he's done, Vera switches back to her human form, and my lycan proceeds to lick her entire face.

"Stop!" She's giggling, trying to push him off but he won't listen.

The past months, it's been harder to control him, especially around Vera. Right now, I have to really concentrate to turn back into my human form. Once I do, I get off of Vera so she can wipe her face.

"I'm sorry about that, he's been harder and harder to control around you. Ever since Alistair tried to have me killed, it's like he has a mind of his own."

"Don't worry about it," Vera says, wiping her face with some water and then coming to sit next

to me.

"I wonder why that is. Both Caleb and Eli have let their lycan take over completely and this has never happened to either of them."

Vera stays quiet for a while.

"You know, your lycan sounds a lot more like a wolf than a lycan," she finally says.

I turn to look at her,

"But I'm a lycan," I say.

I don't mean to sound dismissive, but it's a ridiculous idea for anyone who has seen me turn.

"I mean, how crazy is it really? Your mother was a wolf, one from a very powerful line at that. Us werewolves have a partnership, so to speak, with our wolves. If they don't like something, if they don't agree with something we do, they'll let us know. They have a mind of their own. Lycans on the other hand, are subservient to their human forms."

I stay silent, considering the idea Vera is suggesting.

After a few minutes, it still sounds absurd.

"So, how was the Council meeting?" she asks, breaking the silence.

I sigh.

"Well, I put the whole wife thing to rest," I say.

"How did that go? Any opposition?" She asks sarcastically. Of course, she knew this wasn't going to go over well with the Council.

"Caldwell, as usual. Fortunately, the majority had very little to say."

She frowns.

"Doesn't this seem a little too easy?" she asks, concerned.

"Definitely. Let's just hope the plan we propose will counter any further disagreement. Speaking of which, what happened to the clinic?"

She shakes her head in disbelief. Search The website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"Can you believe those bastards dismantled everything? We were gone for a few days, and they dismantled the entire setup we had been working on for *months* because 'it wasn't working for them' I really... Noah... You might have to bail me out with the Council because I'm sending those rats back home if they pull some shit like this again."

I chuckle.

"You can do whatever you want, V. It's your clinic, you can handle it whichever way you like."

"Thank you for that," she smiles, "I'll have them cleaning toilets by the end of the week, as soon as I find out who the mastermind was."

I smile as she leans onto me.

We stay like this for several minutes, just enjoying each other's company and the beautiful

scenery.

"We should get back," I say after a while.

"Yeah, I have so much work to do still, I might have to pull an all-nighter again."

She stands up and prepares to turn. I stay in my human form to watch her. I usually like spending time with her wolf in my human form; her mere presence is soothing. When she's fully turned, her wolf comes to me, licking my face gently. "I missed you, too," I tell her, rubbing her head gently.

Then, I turn into my lycan so that we can return back to the Castle. This time, we run side by side, with a lot less urgency.

When we get to the clearing, we each turn and put on our clothes.

"Are you ready?" I ask her.

"Yeah," she says, flipping her hair from the collar of her shirt.

I offer my hand to her.

"Let's go, then."

She happily takes my hand and we walk back to the Castle, each dreading the work we have ahead of us.

"Your Highness," Caleb is waiting for us at the Castle entrance.

"Caleb," I nod at him.

"We have been summoned to a Special Session by the Council," he says and I frown.

"What's a Special Session?" Vera asks, looking at Caleb with a worried expression.

"It can mean anything, but we should hurry in, I don't want that weasel Caldwell to get in ahead of us."

Caleb turns and goes into the Castle first, leaving Vera and I behind.

"Good luck," she whispers, rising to her tippy toes and lightly pecking me on the lips.

We're still not used to showing affection in public, much less within the Castle.

She goes in before me, turning directly towards the King's wing, or rather, to the clinic.

I go in shortly after her, taking in a large breath before facing that den of snakes.

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The Rise Of The King Chapter 18

-Vera-

When I walk into the Castle again, I feel a wave of renewed energy. Being able to let my wolf out felt amazing after such a long time; even better that I got to go with Noah. Before entering the new clinic again, I take a deep breath, not at all excited to face all of the work ahead of me.

When I open the doors, most of the papers I was working on have been sorted, as well as the medication, much to my relief. In the middle of it all, I find Charlotte and some of the other girls that volunteered to make this clinic happen. When she sees me, she jumps up and runs to me.

"Oh. Vera! It's so good to have you back!" She says, hugging me tightly.

I hug her back.

"It's good to see you, Charlotte!"

We were only away for a few days, but they were eventful ones, apparently not just for me.

"You have to tell me everything that happened here while I was gone, this place is a mess," I tell

her.

She rolls her eyes,

"You have no idea," she says, "come! Let's have lunch first. I'm starving."

I take a quick glance at the clock, noting it's actually past lunch time. I didn't realize Noah and I had been out this long; we left somewhat early.

She takes my arm and we leave for the dining hall.

"Hey, Charlotte? I was thinking maybe we could have lunch at the garden?"

Her eyes light up. "Sure thing!"

Ever since we took care of Alistair, Charlotte no longer has to hide her garden. In fact, we got rid of the fence that surrounded it and hid it from the outside world, and we have now even extended it to the closest courtyard. Visit JobniB.com to read the complete chapters for free. If you are not reading this novel on JobniB.com, some sentences are incomplete. The flowers and vegetation have taken over most of the stone statues and the fountain in the middle. Many people within the castle have now started to come here in their time off to relax. It's made me think that maybe she should turn all the cold, unwelcoming courtyards in the Castle into gardens.

Once we get our food from the dining hall, we head towards the garden, sitting at the gazebo where we first met.

We start eating in silence, but it doesn't go on for long.

"Is it true you almost killed Lucas's mate?" She asks, a glint of mischief in her eyes.

"Oh Goddess," I say, "where do I even begin? Have you met her?" I ask her.

"I have! She seems nice, but she is absolutely *terrified* of you. Lucas says you almost killed her *and* her mom," she says, taking in a mouthful of fruit.

"But do you know why I almost killed her?"

"No! Nobody wants to say why, that's what's upsetting me!"

I laugh. Of course they don't want anyone to know.

"So, the Council lied. They were sending Noah out to Cerulean House to look for a wife," I say.

"Shut up!" Charlotte says, shocked, "don't tell me... she was..."

"Yup. She was House Cerulean's pick to be Noah's wife. The only way to stop that was for me to challenge her to a duel. If she won, she'd be allowed to become his wife, if I won, she'd have to give up any notions of becoming Queen." She's gaping at me.

"So, she found out Lucas was her mate *after* the fight?"

"She already knew Lucas was her mate before we fought, but we still had to go through with it."

"Oh Goddess, no wonder she's terrified of you. She seems so sweet, I'm surprised they thought she stood a chance against you."

"They even tried to poison me with wolf's bane." I say, taking a sip of my water.

Charlotte's mouth hangs open.

"Yeah, have you met her friend? Cassia? She's a witch," I whisper this last part and Charlotte's eyes go wide, her hand flying to her mouth. "No," she whispers.

Charlotte is one of the only people here that knows for a fact that I'm a witch. It was very hard for her not to suspect after that time at the garden, when the moon peonies called me to them. I also decided to tell her because I'm helping her out in the garden as a way to practice my magic; it would've been very hard to hide it from her then.

"Oh yeah, I don't know how much power she actually has but she's a witch, so they used all kinds of potions and stuff while we were there," I lean a little closer to her, "they even tried using a pheromone perfume so Noah would be attracted to her." Charlotte

bursts out laughing, and so do I. When our fit of giggles is done, she wipes a tear off her eye. [Search the website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"This is too much. No wonder they don't want anyone to know. How to embarrassing."

I sigh.

"I mean, I can't blame them." I say, "they were desperate for the King's favor, and Lucas is just a warrior to them."

"Huh," she says, lost in thought, "you know, it surprised me a little when she turned up with her mark already, it usually takes a little more time. Do you think maybe she did that so her mom couldn't oppose the union? I mean if she's already marked..." "I hadn't thought about that, but knowing her mother, it probably wouldn't have stopped her, anyway. It was Noah who negotiated her coming with us."

"Well, it was nice of him to do that. And it was nice of you not to kill her," we both giggle.

"So, tell me what happened at the clinic, exactly?"

We're both done eating, but we stay a little longer; I missed having a friend to talk to.

"The healers went crazy. Vera. They came in the same day that you left and started dismantling everything. We didn't know what to do so we started putting everything back together but they ran us off, we weren't even allowed inside the clinic." "When you say 'us'..."

"I mean all the women you recruited to train as nurses and healers."

I massage the back of the neck with my hand, tension already building there.

"You've got to be kidding me," I whisper.

"I know they said they'd get in line, but they clearly still feel a certain kind of way about changing their old ways," she says, apologetically.

"It's ok, Charlotte." I comfort her, "change is always difficult."

Behind me, someone clears their throat; Charlotte's eyes fly to the person behind me.

"I better get going, I'll see you later, V," she says, taking her food tray and mine back to the dining hall.

I smile at her and mouth 'thank you' before turning to the person behind me.

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-Vera-

"I'm sorry to interrupt, I - Uhm, was hoping I could get a word with you?" Cassia says.

"Sure, come, sit," I motion to the seat that Charlotte just emptied.

"So, I know it isn't really my place, considering everything that happened back at the manor, but I was hoping you had a... job for me?" Search The website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

I frown and c**k my head to the side at her as she takes a seat in front of me.

"I mean, Jeremy has found his way into the kitchen thanks to Lucas. Apparently with so many new people in the Castle, they needed the help, and that's like, his dream. That's what he did at the manor before well, before everything went to shit. And Violet has decided to train with Lucas because you made it painfully obvious how useless she is in a fight; she wants to make sure she can protect herself. I mean it makes sense considering you didn't even have to turn to your wolf form to defeat a fully turned lycan, I mean *wow*. Where did you learn to fight like that, by the way? Nevermind, point is because I'm a human I don't really have to train, it would be wasting everybody's time, and I obviousIt can't go to the King about this so I was hoping I could talk to you about..." She seems nervous, so before she continues rambling on, I extend my hand to her on the table, palm up. She looks down at my hand doubtfully, but eventually places her palm on mine. I close my eyes, concentrating. I take in a deep breath, and then let it go slowly. I do this about three times until I can feel her energy and anxiety decreasing. When I open my eyes, I notice she had closed hers too. When I sense she's significantly relaxed, I remove my hand from under hers and she opens her eyes. "How did you do that?" She asks.

Perks of being a witch.

"It's a breathing exercise, you seemed nervous," I lie.

It's not entirely false; the breathing does help. But as a witch, I am in tune with people's emotions, and sometimes, I can even influence them a little. It works wonders for cases like these.

"So, Cassia, what would you like to do in the Castle?"

"I - Uhm, I don't know, whatever is useful to you guys."

"What did you do back at the manor?"

"Well, I was a maid, but I see there aren't any here. Everyone kinda looks after themselves, even the King."

"And would you like to be a maid here?"

She stays silent for a while as she stares at her hands on her lap.

"No," she whispers.

I smile.

"So, what would you like to do?"

"Anything that's useful..." she repeats.

"It won't be useful unless it's something you enjoy. What did you want to do when you were younger?"

She stays quiet again.

"I always... I always wanted to be a scholar..." she whispers timidly, "I also love healing. It's why I know my way around plants."

"Was the greenhouse back at Cerulean House yours?"

Her eyes widen slightly as her gaze meets mine.

"How did you...?" She begins, but decides not to question me, "that place was a secret, nobody but Jeremy and I knew about it. It was built by our mom before she... before she passed... it's where I grew most of the herbs and plants I used." "I'm sorry for your loss," I say genuinely, "come with me, I have the perfect job for you."

She hops out of the chair, excited.

"Oh, thank you so much! I promise I won't disappoint you!"

"Don't thank me yet. Two other people have tried to do this job and have quit in under a week."

She doesn't seem fazed at all.

"If I survived Cecil, I can survive anything." she declares.

I chuckle. Honestly, I believe her.

We make our way inside the Castle, passing through the dining hall that is now deserted. Passing through the dining hall and the kitchen reminds me of Jeremy, and thinking of Jeremy reminds me of a question I've had since I met these two. "Cassia, you and Jeremy look nothing alike, are you guys actually brother and sister?"

She blushes as we make our way up the stairs.

"I'm adopted," she says, "our parents found me in the woods, abandoned, and took me in."

I smile at this. So, we really aren't that different after all.

"Your parents seem like good people," I note.

She smiles sadly.

"They were the best."

We walk the rest of the way in silence, considering Cassia is already panting and we aren't even half way. When we get to the large doors that lead to the library, she's very out of breath. She is really out of shape. "Here we are," I say, opening the grand doors to the library.

Unlike the first time I came here, this place is now booming with activity. Different scholars with their assistants have come back from all over lycan territory and have returned this place to its former glory; well, according to Elden. Speaking of whom,

"Vera! My dear wolf, it's good to have you back!" Elden comes to meet me at the door, giving me a quick hug.

Ever since Alistair was taken care of and the scholars were allowed back in the Castle, Elden's mood never seems to sour.

"It's good to see you too!" I say, hugging him back.

He separates from me and sniffs the air briefly, wrinkling his nose.

He smelled her.

"Uh, Elden? Is there a place where we can talk, privately?" I ask as he gazes in the direction of Cassia. I can feel her getting nervous again.

"Sure! Follow me," he says, guiding us to a place in the library that isn't so bright and filled with people.

Once there, we sit at the table furthest from everyone else.

"Even if this is all back to how it was, I wanted to keep a dark corner for myself," he explains.

Of course, he would.

"Elden, this is Cassia, she came back with us from Cerulean Castle and she's friends with Lucas' s mate." I begin to explain, but he interrupts me. "Witch" he eyes her accusingly.

I turn to Cassia and she's already turning pale and gulping nervously.

"Elden, behave." I tell him, "Cassia is not dangerous to us and she would like to be your assistant."

"I what?!"

"She what?!"

They both protest at the same time.

"She has an affinity for plants, but she needs a lot of practice. She would also like to become a scholar some day, and you're the very best. She could learn a lot from you." I say. Cassia is looking between Elden and me erratically, like a prey animal looking at two predators.

After some deliberate silence and sharp glares at Cassia, Elden speaks again,

"Only because it's you." he tells me as he gets up and signals for Cassia to follow him, "come, girl, I have a special lemon tea I'd like you to try!"

He winks at me before disappearing through one of the many halls in the library and I slowly shake my head at him in disbelief. I know exactly what tea he's about to give her.

I stay seated for a few minutes, just making sure I dont hear any gurgling or any signs of distress from Cassia. Then, I get up and head towards the main doors. My job here is done, let's just hope the tea doesnt actually kill her.

I make my way back to the clinic quickly, hoping to finally get some work done; but when I pass by the Council Meeting room, I hear a large commotion inside; more importantly, I "feel" Noah's murderous aura creeping from underneath the large wooden doors.

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-Vera-

I don't know if to stay by the door to see what's happening, or go my own way and wait to hear from Noah what happened during the Special Session.

As I take a step towards the clinic, deciding it's best I don't interfere, Noah's aura becomes even grander and much more violent; it literally stops me in my tracks. I take a look at the guards that stand at the doors of the Council Meeting room, and they look back at me; they're both sweating and fidgeting.

I look towards the doors to the room, sensing someone coming close.

Eli comes bursting in through the doors, looking flustered, a bead of sweat rolling down his forehead.

"You have to get in there, doc," he says, looking rather frightened. "I don't know what's wrong with him. He's going to kill them all if..." he trails off as we both sense him coming through the doors. "Un-fucking-believable," Noah fumes as he explodes through the doors.

The guards look at each other nervously, Eli looks at him with certain apprehension. Behind him, Caleb comes out, tugging at his sweaty shirt collar.

He clears his throat.

"Your Highness, I think it's best we postpone this meeting until we can come up with a plan, I think it's best for all of us to just... go our own separate ways."

"Or we could end this now, you cowards!" Noah yells at the Council from the door, his lycan eyes beginning to swirl in his pupils.

Caleb and Eli turn to look at me and I understand that they want me to calm him down. I step towards him cautiously, remembering he told me his lycan has been more and more volatile lately.

"Noah." I whisper, "come on, let's go."

"NO!" He growls at me.

It's the first time he's ever done that unprovoked.

"Come on," I coax him, placing my hand on his arm, trying to use my magic to calm him like I did with Cassia.

He seems to relax a little, enough to get him away from the Council. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Now that I am close enough to look inside, the Council members seem paralyzed in fear. I can't be sure but one of them looks like he's about to faint. Even Caldwell, of all people, is sweating buckets and eyeing Noah cautiously. Noah closes his eyes and takes a deep breath to help him calm down.

"Caleb, please call Elden to a meeting, he said some time ago that he had an idea of how to prove my parentage."

"Right away, Your Highness," he says, bowing slightly before leaving in the direction to the library.

He's normally not as formal outside of an official setting, but I can see he's still frightened.

Noah nods at the guards, who finally find the nerve to move and shut the doors to the meeting room.

"I'm sorry," he turns to me, "they just have a way of getting under my skin."

"It's okay," I tell him.

I can feel his aura decreasing with every second that passes, until I can't feel it at all.

I sigh a breath of relief and notice that Eli is also beginning to relax behind me.

"Can someone tell me what happened?" I ask after nobody says anything or even dares to move.

"Not here." Noah says, taking my hand and guiding me to a part of the Castle I had never been; the Council's chambers.

We walk past many halls, Eli following closely behind. Finally, we reach a courtyard and Noah stops.

"The Council is challenging my lineage, saying there is in fact no record of Alexander ever having a son, in fact, there isn't even a record of him taking in a mate; meaning that even if I am his son, I was born out of wedlock and I'd be a bastard with no claim to the throne."

"What? And this is all coming up **now**? And what is this obsession with marriage?!" I ask, indignant.

"They didn't want to challenge him before, they wanted to see what he was about first. Personally, I think they believed Noah to be stupid enough to be the perfect puppet." Eli says.

"They let Alistair be King for years*!" I protest, "and he was no puppet!"

"Yes, but Alistair was as corrupt as they are. Noah isn't."

"So now, I either prove that Alexander was in fact my father, or they will officially challenge my claim to the throne."

"What?! But how can they do that?!"

"If they get the majority of the Council to disavow my claim, I will have no option but to step down," Noah says, already sounding defeated.

"All of this because you wouldn't take a stupid wife?" I ask.

"It's not just that, Vera," Noah runs a hand through his hair, "they also want to raise taxes to the common people to make up for the land lost to the rogues; of course, it's collected by the Houses and then passed on to the Castle, Visit JobniB.com to read the complete chapters for free. If you are not reading this novel on JobniB.com, some sentences are incomplete, but they always steal from us; it's evident. But raising the taxes now? When so many people have lost their land and even family members? It's outrageous."

I look at Noah and suddenly realize how tired he is. He's been saying it for a while now, but looking at him rubbing the back of his neck, the deep set dark circles under his eyes and the disheveled hair... all of this is coming at a great cost to him. "Your Highness," Caleb comes into the courtyard, followed by Elden.

"Please, no more formalities, I'm tired of it," he says, pinching the bridge of his nose.

"Noah." Elden begins, "I have a document that indeed proves your birth, but it was never signed officially by King Alexander," he retrieves the document in question, unrolls it, and shows it to us.

"Alex Bellator," I read out loud, "who the hell is Alex Bellator?"

"It's a pseudonym Alexander used when he was younger. He would travel around the entire land with that name when he was a teenager, fighting his way through the territories."

I turn to look at Caleb,

"And he had to sign Noah's birth certificate with his *pseudonym*?!" I ask in disbelief.

"It seemed like the right thing to do at the time, Vera. Nobody could know Noah existed, so this document was really only done as a formality so that then it could be amended, when King Alexander could finally publicly recognize him as his son." I'm furious. So, the only document that could actually prove Noah's parentage, is useless?

"There's something else," Caleb says, "because your mother came from an ancient clan of wolves, I have reason to believe that she did indeed register your birth with her clan. If everything went sideways for you here, at least with that document, you would be recognized as a member of her clan and taken in. She was a very cautious woman."

"And where is this document?" Eli asks.

"I don't know, it wouldn't be here in lycan territory, it would be too dangerous, which means..."

"It has to be in wolf territory," I say.

"Correct," Caleb nods.

Noah lets out a loud, exasperated breath.

"I can't believe this, just when I think we'll be able to catch a break..." he says, trailing off into his thoughts.

"Vera, what do you know about the Gold Moon clan?" Eli asks me, already trying to formulate a plan to get that document.

"They're one of the most powerful clans in all of werewolf history. They have the second largest span of territory in our land, so they're incredibly wealthy. Thriving economy, loved by their people, ruthless when it comes to protecting their territory, though. They don't like outsiders."

"Would you be considered an outsider?" he asks.

"Well..."

Elden interrupts me.

"I'm sorry to interrupt you, Vera, but I think we are failing to see the big picture here. Noah, the Council doesn't give a rat's ass if you are the legit son of Alexander, they don't even care if Alexander married his mate or not; all they care about is not being able to control you. So, whether it's through challenging your lineage, or your status as

a bastard, it doesn't matter, they will find a way to eliminate you." We all stay quiet for a minute or two, not really knowing what the appropriate thing to say is in this situation.

"So, all of this was for nothing?" Noah says, finally sitting down on one of the benches, "you know what? F**k it and f**k *them* then, I never wanted to be King to begin with, I'll give them the stupid crown they so desperately want!"

"Noah, you can't do that. I'm sorry but you heard the plans they have for the people, they'll run this entire Kingdom to the ground! Leave it to the rogues to pick up the scraps. And then who's to say they won't initiate conflict over land with the wolves again? Without you, this entire place crumbles to the ground and us with it!" Eli says.

"I don't give a f**k anymore!" He growls, his aura making its presence known again.

I go to stand behind him, massaging the back of his neck to calm him down.

After a while, Eli speaks,

"Ok, what the fuck is that thing? I didn't want to say anything but it's getting out of control, kid. I couldn't even breathe back at the meeting."

"Vera seems to think my lycan is some sort of hybrid," Noah says, his eyes closed.

They all turn to look at me, expecting an explanation.

"Well, Noah's mom was not only a wolf, but she came from the Gold Moon clan, they have produced some of the strongest Alphas ever known to wolves. This *feeling* seems a lot like a wolf aura, just... stronger." They all stay quiet for a few seconds.

Then, Elden speaks.

"Interesting." he says, "it's not completely outrageous. I'll do some digging."

Elden walks away, not giving us a second look. It's very typical of him.

Noah sighs heavily, finally opening his eyes,

"Ok, let's come up with a plan then."

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