

The Rise Of The King

Read The Rise Of The King Chapter 61

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-Noah-

"I wouldn't do that if I were you," a voice said from behind the tree line.

I turn in the direction of the voice, and to my surprise, Sadira steps out of the woods, followed by her men.

How the f**k did we not hear or smell them coming?

I turn back to my human form, not giving a f**k that I'm still naked.

Sadira eyes me up and down with a seductive smile, which, under the circumstances, makes my blood boil. And yet, I have to reign in my temper.

"Why's that?" I ask.

Her eyes finally meet mine.

"I have scouts everywhere, Your Highness. It's an essential part of our survival; and my scouts would rather lose an arm and a leg than be sent over to that mountain." "Why?" Eli asks next to me.

My warriors and scouts have come to stand behind me in their lycan form. They're unfamiliar with these people and it's better to be ready in case of a fight.

"Well, nine out of ten men simply never come back. They just..." she gestures with her hand in the air, "vanish."

Vanish. There's that word again.

Behind Sadira, I sense movement.

Coming from behind her men, Liam steps around them and towards us, this time without the fear façade.

"There are rumors of witches beyond the mountain range. If that's where they took Vera, you'll definitely need a better plan," he says.

I raise an eyebrow at him.

Isn't he supposed to be undercover?

Almost as if reading my mind, he says,

"I got caught," he shrugs.

Sadira huffs loudly.

"He almost ran after you at the clearing; it's clear to me where his loyalties lie," she rolls her eyes, "but, he also told me everything. I'm very sorry your mate is missing." she says, sincerely. "Thank you." I say, trying to keep this conversation short. I really don't care about any of this, I just need to find Vera and bring her back home safely.

"How do you know what's going on over there if your men are just getting killed?" Caleb asks after a while.

"I said nine out of ten. We have useful information from the ones that have survived," she says, not once taking her eyes off of me.

This is all too good to be true and I have no time waste, so I decide to be straightforward.

"Why are you here?" I ask her bluntly.

"I want to help you. If you want to plan an attack, you can't go in there blind, much less if the rumors are true."

"And what do you want in exchange for this information?" I ask her, doubtful of her intentions.

"I want your Throne," she says forthright with a smile.

Behind me, I can feel everyone's tension like electricity in the air.

"Done." I tell her immediately.

"Noah..." Caleb warns behind me.

"The Kingdom, the throne, the Castle, take it all. I need to find her," I tell her, resolute.

She turns serious for a moment, trying to read me. It doesn't take her long to figure out that I'm being completely serious. Afterall, this is my mate we're talking about. "Let's regroup at that famous Castle of yours then, might as well get to know our future home, right boys?"

Behind her, her men start to howl excitedly. I see Liam noticeable cringe.

"Let's go then." I say, walking a few paces away from everyone in the direction of the Castle.

Everyone follows behind me and when Sadira is close enough, I smirk at her.

"I lied," I tell her and she turns to me looking rather serious, "there isn't actually a throne," I say, turning into my lycan, but not before I see her narrow her eyes at me.

On the run back I think about what I just committed to.

The entire Kingdom. My birth right. Everything Vera and I and everyone else have been working for for the last half a year almost. But if that's her condition, I'll take it. Time is of the essence and, quite frankly, the single most important thing to me is Vera. Without her, life isn't even worth living anymore.

I have the confidence that she's still alive; I can feel it. I just need her to hang on for a bit longer.

Once we approach the Castle, the sun has vanished and I'm in a hurry to get everyone together to plan out a strategy with Sadira's information. Before we even approach the entrance, I'm already making a mental list of the things we'll need.

First of all, we need a map to set up our strategy clearly. While most of our forces march, we'll need an initial scouting party to leave as soon as possible and meet us back halfway to report to us. If what Sadira said is true, we'll need a big enough scouting party to ensure at least one of them comes back alive.

Putting my men at risk like this is not only uncharacteristic of me, but it also really sets a bad precedent. If this were anyone else, I wouldn't even try to rescue them at the cost of so many lives; but Vera is not just anyone.

When I snap out of my thoughts, something grabs my attention before stepping out of the tree line. There are no guards. Not in the perimeter, not at the entrance, and not up in the wall posts. What the fuck is going on?

My lycan's ears perk up, trying to hear anything out of the ordinary; but the only thing not normal is just how quiet it is.

"Watch out!" Someone yells behind me.

Cassia.

Out of the forest surrounding us, right in front of the Castle, an army of lycans come pouring out, attacking us.

The struggle soon follows, with my men launching themselves in front of me to take care of the first wave of attackers.

My heart is beating fast, and even though lycans don't sweat in our best forms, I feel sweaty and feverish. All of the hairs in my body rise and my chest is huffing and puffing with labored breathes. I start shaking. I don't have **time** for all this bullshit.

My blood is boiling just imagining what those witches are doing to Vera, and the longer this goes on, I'm less likely to find her alive.

Then, I feel it coming.

Whatever that **sensation** is that I've been feeling lately looming just below the surface is coming now and I can't stop it.

In fact.

I don't want to stop it.

Not anymore.

I growl inwardly, letting it free.

Then, I see red.

I let out a big, deafening howl into the air, and for a brief second, everyone stops, shaken; even my guys.

Then, quickly, I start ripping through the enemies, one head and limb at a time.

This has never been easier. I'm moving through them as if I can move twice as fast as they can. I'm biting down on their necks, their limbs, their chests, as if they were prey animals. When I swing one in the air, another one quickly follows. All I care about right now is ending this. Now.

Slowly, I notice all of their efforts are now targeted towards putting me down, but it's useless.

I see them coming almost as if they're moving in slow motion. I take them down one by one.

Limb after limb.

Head after head.

Occasionally, I even plunge my arm into their chest, effectively stopping their hearts.

After several minutes. It's finally over.

I have either killed the enemies or frightened them enough so that they won't dare continue the fight; those are the lucky ones.

Once I come to again, everyone is looking at me in terror, even my own warriors; Sadira has her hand over her mouth, shocked and terrified.

I'm breathing heavily from the exertion and my fur feels heavy, no doubt soiled with blood. [Search the website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

I look around me and realize... I really may have overdone it.

The ground around me is littered with bodies, and I'm sure most of them died by my hand. And the truth is, I couldn't care less.

I need to find her.

I turn back to my human form, stepping away from the stunned group of lycans behind me.

When I reach the Castle, the remaining Council members are waiting for me at the entrance, having witnessed the fight; if you can even call it that.

Council member Caldwell is gaping at me, fear evident in the sweat dripping from his forehead.

He stares at the pile of bodies and back at me several times.

"Ah I I..." he stutters.

No one else says a word, too stunned to react. But something inside me, that *thing* I just let

free back there, speaks for me.

"Kneel." I tell him.

"I Wha..." he stutters more.

"Kneel." I tell him, again.

Behind him, every other Council member kneels without a second thought. In a few seconds, my request registers in Caldwell's mind and he, too, kneels.

Beside him, I turn to a man I had never seen before. He looks rough, several scars on his face and arms. He's staring at me defiantly and I come to stand in front of him.

I don't care who he is. I don't care what he's doing here. All I want is for him to...

"Kneel," I tell him.

He gulps.

All the other men here have already complied, even his men from what I can tell.

My lycan begins to swirl in my eyes.

I will not tell him again.

As if reading my thoughts, this man kneels, too.

Once I'm satisfied, I make my way into the Castle, headed straight to our room to quickly clean up and put some clothes on.

Now the real work can begin.

"Vera, please hang on."

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-Vera-

"Ahggg." I scream in pain again as the Witch Mother's knife turns in my leg.

I'm panting and slapping against the restraints that keep me hanging from the ceiling.

We've been at this for hours now; they're pushing me more and more each day that passes. The Witch Mother examines the knife, or rather my blood on the knife, against the fire. "Hmmm..." she says, "let's leave her be for the time being, we'll continue tomorrow."

I'm sweaty and exhausted; in fact, I feel like I'm about to pass out.

These past few days have been just like this. I wake up, Marcus takes me out of my cell and hangs me like an animal on the main room, and the Witch Mother pokes me multiple times with the knife, extracting my blood and magic. Then, either Marcus or Helena take me back to my cell and periodically bring me food and water for the rest of the day. When morning comes, the cycle begins again.

"Mistress, she looks very pale." Helena says as she delicately places glass caps on the jars filled with my blood.

"Yes, I do believe I may have overdone it this time," the Witch Mother muses, uninterested, "we drained her completely of her magic; meaning she may be close to death as it is. Maybe we'll give her a few days to recover." I perk up slightly at this.

Just the motion of trying to lift my head, though, makes me incredibly dizzy.

I'm aware of how much blood they've been taking. It's more than any normal human would bare, or werewolf for that matter, but since I have Noah's healing abilities, they can push me

further; perhaps they don't even know just how far themselves.

I start shaking.

"Marcus," the Witch Mother says.

Marcus approaches the lever on the wall, pulling it and letting me fall to the floor with a big thump!

I continue shaking on the floor.

My body is so numb at this point that I barely even feel the pain of the fall.

When Marcus approaches me and tries to drag me by the chains, he realizes I'm not standing at all and instead, he's just dragging my limp body across the floor. Truth is, I'm even weaker than I was when I first came in. Marcus approaches me, lifting me up and carrying me into my cell.

He places me on the floor, on my back, and carefully removes the hair from my face, putting his palm on my forehead. My eyes are closed in an attempt to fight off a dizzy spell.

"Mistress, I think we have found her limit," he says, removing his hand from my face and wiping it on his shirt.

I feel cold and clammy all over, a clear indication of severe blood loss.

I hear the cell door close and the Witch Mother's whimsical steps approaching.

"Hmm..." she says, "she'll recover, but definitely not for tomorrow," I hear her walk away, anyway, let her rest, we'll work with what we have collected so far. Hopefully it'll be enough for our purposes. For now, that is." "Oh, Mistress! So, then she'll be all yours!" Helena cheers, heading towards the door behind her Queen.

"That's right, my little one," she says. There's an ominous pause, "after this, she'll be all mine," she says and I can almost hear the malicious laugh in her voice.

The doors close behind the three of them, finally leaving me alone.

It takes me several hours to even begin to recover.

Apparently, having my magic extracted like this is even worse than being physically wounded. It's a literal extraction of my 'essence, whatever that means. Noah's healing abilities have gone a long way keeping me alive, but it's not something it can quicken my recovery from.

With each passing hour, I can feel myself drift in and out of consciousness. Occasionally, I even hear either Helena or Marcus come in to bring me food and water; something Harriet doesn't have the luxury of, apparently. "Psst." I hear, eventually.

If I had the energy, I'd roll my eyes.

"Forget it," I whisper.

"You're not eating any of it! It's going to waste."

"What's the point?" I say in a low voice, "didn't you hear her? We'll both be dead in a few day's time."

Harriet huffs.

"*You'll be dead, you mean. It's *you* they want. You're what *everyone* wants," there is heavy resentment in her voice.

"You still don't get it, do you?" I keep my voice low, trying to save my energy, "whatever they have planned for me, needs a blood sacrifice, Harriet. That's literally what that bitch told you, did you not *hear* her?" She remains quiet.

"Goddess, Harriet. What happened to you? You were one of the best female warriors in the Castle, you had a wonderful mate, how the fuck did you turn into *this*? If you hadn't

f****d us over, I would even feel sorry for you." "Weak," she whispers and pauses for a few moments before continuing, "what I had was a weak* mate. He didn't deserve me."

*

"Oh, and you think Alistair was strong? Please," I remark.

"Alistair was *King,*" she says, "Alistair *defeated* the previous King Alexander and *took* the throne. It takes guts to do that kind of thing."

"But you also have to be very stupid to be manipulated by a Witch. Alistair was Mehra's puppet, Harriet. Goddess, I don't even know why I bother with you."

We both remain silent after this, until I hear her stomach growling loudly.

I curse myself, trying my best to sit up.

When I manage to do this, I basically drag myself to the food they placed inside my cell, taking the bread and throwing it into Harriet's cell.

She hurries to it, eating it ravenous desperation.

I look at my plate to see if there's anything else I can throw her way. There's some fruit that doesn't look too appetizing, but under her circumstances, I don't think she'll care.

I throw the over ripe peach and apple to her cell, too.

I regret it immediately.

Just the effort of tossing food a few meters sends me into a dizzy spell again. I have to grab onto the cell rods for support. I close my eyes, leaning into the cell rod, trying my best not to throw up. "What about you?" Harriet says.

"Let's just say I'm not hungry." I tell her, gulping back the urge to vomit.

I try to focus on the coolness of the iron against my face and try to breathe more evenly.

After several moments, I finally feel steady enough to open my eyes again. When I do, I notice Harriet is looking at me concerned. [Search the website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"Are you okay?" She asks.

I 'ugh' loudly and basically crawl back to my spot at the back of the cell and once again, lay on my back.

I lose track of time.

Hours upon hours pass and I again drift in and out of consciousness. I vaguely hear when people shuffle in and out of my cell, but I feel too ill to notice who it is each time.

One day, I even heard the Witch Mother come into my cell; I recognized her by the distinctive smell of dead roses she carries with her.

"She needs a few more days," she says.

I vaguely catch what she said, but, did she say 'few more days?'"

How long have I been in this state?

Minutes have become hours. Hours have become days. I can't seem to keep track of time.

I do feel marginally better as the hours or days pass, but it's definitely not enough. It makes me wonder if the baby is also playing a part in my state. I remember with Sofia's pregnancy, she spent more hours sleepy and tired than not. Thinking of the baby fills my heart with grief.

The longer I'm here, the harder it becomes to think of us getting out of this alive.

With a shaky hand and closed eyes, I lift my hand to my stomach, where Noah's little pup is growing. A silent tear escapes the corner of my eye.

I'm sorry. I tell the baby, "I'm sorry I couldn't protect you.*

My wolf comes to the surface if only just for a moment. It's the first time I've seen her since the Witch Mother began extracting magic from us. She looks even worse than I feel.

She's skinny, weak; I can see her bones. Her eyes are sunken and sad. She's slouched, keeping her head down.

I touch her cheek.

"I know, I tell her, "I know you're trying your best.*

I feel more tears slipping to the cold, stone floor. I can't seem to make them stop.

Suddenly, however, I hear the heavy metal doors open and my hand flies to my side, no longer resting on my stomach. My wolf also retreats, once again using whatever magic she has left to hide the baby's presence. Quickly, I dab the tears from my face as the cell door opens.

I open my eyes just in time to see the Witch Mother poke my arm with her damn knife.

I don't even gasp anymore; I've grown so used to her stupid knife that the pain no longer surprises me.

"She's not healed yet, but it'll do," she says.

I see her eyeing the blood on the knife and there is some spark to it, meaning at least some of my magic is back.

She nods at Marcus and obeying the silent order, he comes in and carries me out of my cell. Visit [Job n i b .com](http://Jobnib.com) to read the complete chapters for free. "Leave her on her feet, I need to have access to her heart," she says, her back turned to me. 'Access to my heart'?

My heartbeat begins to quicken.

Is this it? Is this how it's going to end?

When the Witch Mother turns to me again, I notice she has a much larger knife this time. It's longer and sharper than the extractionem knife from before; it has more reach.

I begin fighting my restraints with every little amount of energy I have. It's a feeble attempt, but it's instinctual.

The Witch Mother comes close to me, putting her hand on my cheek.

"Well, my dear, it's been a pleasure, truly. Words can't express how grateful I am that your path and mine crossed. You truly will be the salvation of Witches. Irony, no?" she says, smiling. She then nods at Helena, who goes into Harriet's cell and drags her out but her hair. "No, please! No!" she begs, but it's no use.

With a quick spell, Helena binds her legs and arms onto the floor, making her immobile.

"Why are you doing this?! Have you not taken enough blood already?!" I yell at her, afraid. I want to delay the inevitable as long as possible.

"Enough blood, yes. In fact, enough to build myself an army," she says.

I freeze.

Build an... army?

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-Vera-

"Build an army?" I ask her, repeating her words to her.

"Well, yes dear, we can't take over the other species without manpower," she says, as if this explanation was obvious.

I remain quiet and she rolls her eyes at my baffled face; it's as if her words registered only mechanically in my brain. I still don't know what she means.

"I might as well," she shrugs, "you'll soon make me truly immortal anyway," she says and I gulp. "my dear, Witches might be arrogant and dismissive of other species, I undoubtedly am guilty of such; but we're not idiots. We learn from our mistakes. Last time, the *traitors* banded with wolves and lycans to bring an end to Witch kind. You see, there was a small faction of *rebels* that no longer believed in our cause; which is ridiculous, of course. Our cause has always been the supremacy of Witches and Warlocks, but all of a sudden, these people just had a problem with it. Apparently, our methods, which they too participated in by the way, became too *unsavory* for them," she turns around, carefully cleaning the large knife. "So, as I said, I've learned from our previous mistakes. Now, with this new revival of our kind, dissenting voices will *not* be tolerated and we *will* eliminate all other species. We'll only keep humans alive, as livestock of course; they're life force isn't much, but they're numerous so they'll do." There's a long silence as I feel a chill creeping up my spine.

She plans to kill *everyone*?

Sofia and her babies.

Dr. Owens.

Violet and the girls.

Lucas, Eli, Elden...

Noah.

I feel tears begin to well up in my eyes. Despite how dehydrated I am, they manage to fall on my cheek.

The Witch Mother turns around, almost as if sensing this.

She comes closer to me with a smile on her face and wipes my tears away with a delicate finger.

"Don't be sad, my child. I'll make sure you don't live long enough to see it," she says, turning and nodding at Helena and Marcus.

Both of them carefully approach the table with the knife, linking their hands together and beginning to chant a spell. Slowly, each lifts up a palm towards the knife to channel their magic. While I'm looking at this scene, the Witch Mother is watching me closely.

She takes her slender fingers and places them below my chin, forcing me to look at her dead in the eyes.

"You know, your eyes seem awfully familiar for some reason. That shade of green..." she muses, lost in thought.

"Mistress," Helena calls.

The Witch Mother stares at me a little while longer and I even manage to narrow my eyes at her in anger, but it does little to nothing to intimidate her.

She lets go of my chin and my face falls; I have no energy to hold it up.

"Very well. Let's proceed," she says, turning around and walking towards Harriet.

My ears begin to buzz a little as the Witch Mother raises her hands over Harriet, chanting a spell

I don't recognize; however, I can feel the power emanating from her. This is the first time I've been in the presence of her magic. She's more powerful than I could've imagined. When she finishes the spell, Harriet is in tears, begging for her life.

The Witch Mother extends her hand towards Helena and she brings her the knife she had been cleaning earlier; the same one Marcus and Helena were chanting over.

"No, please, I beg you. I promise I can be of use to you, Mistress, if you only give me a chance," Harriet says through sobs.

"Mistress, I can bind her lips if you'd prefer," Marcus offers.

"Nonsense," she says, grabbing the knife and hovering it over Harriet, "I like it when they beg," she says.

With one swift and precise movement, the Witch Mother stabs Harriet in the chest. From the location, I know that must've been a clean stab through her heart. The Witch Mother's

maneuver was so swift, though, that Harriet didn't even make a sound as the blade impaled her.

I watch the life drain out of her eyes as the Witch Mother further turns the knife inside her chest, coating it with blood.

The Witch Mother, Helena, and Marcus have their eyes closed as they chant again and again the same phrase, **in nomine tuo facimus hoc sacrificium.**

After a while, the Witch Mother removes the knife from Harriet's chest, letting her body fall limp and bloody to the ground.

I turn away from the scene. As much as I hated Harriet and wanted to kill her myself, I still find myself having mixed feelings about her death.

The Witch Mother holds up the knife with delicacy as it drips with blood. Only it doesn't look like normal blood, it's thick and black as it coats the white blade.

As she approaches me, I begin fighting against the restraints again. At this point, even my wolf has somewhat come up to the surface to grant me any strength she's got left in one last attempt to save ourselves and the baby.

"Stay away from me, you bitch," I hiss as the Witch Mother's careful steps bring her closer and closer to me.

"Marcus," she says unperturbed, completely focused on the task.

Marcus comes forward, ripping my gown at my chest, exposing it completely to her.

Both Helena and Marcus have their heads down in silent chanting; I can't hear what they're saying, but I can hear what the Witch Mother is chanting: **da ei vitam, da mihi lucem illam** over and over again.

Her eyes are completely glazed over as she reaches me, placing the tip of the knife to my chest, directly over my heart.

I start panting and my heart starts beating faster. Whatever her spell is, it's undeniably starting to have an effect on my body. I'm getting even weaker as her chanting gets louder and louder in my head. My limbs go numb. My entire body feels cold and sweat drips down my forehead. I'm slowly losing my vision as everything is starting to become blurry.

This can't be how I go.

This can't be how it ends for us; I still have to get back to Noah.

I close my eyes, trying to come up with something, anything, as a last resort. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

My wolf has come close to me now, putting herself behind me as support. She's no longer protecting the pup. Her complete and undivided attention is on me, on us, trying to save us, for us, for our pup... for our mate.

I feel the tip of the knife begin to break my skin, causing a level of pain I had never experienced before.

I scream in pain and my wolf cringes, too. This not only hurts me, it's hurting her, too.

The knife inches closer to my heart with anguishing slow movements.

And then, out of nowhere, everything goes black.

I can't feel my wolf, I can't feel my pup, I can't even feel the knife penetrating my skin anymore.

My breathing has slowed down, as if I'm no longer in distress. It's an eerie feeling between relief and crippling grief.

There's only one thing that could be happening right now; a truth I'm going to have a hard time accepting.

I close my eyes, which is inconsequential since I can't see anything through the darkness, and let my tears fall to my cheeks with abandon.

This *was* it for me.

I am, without a shadow of a doubt, dead.

But then, a blinding light warms up my face, forcing me to open my eyes.

I blink several times, adjusting to the change in light, and wipe the tears off my eyes.

Is this... is this the afterlife...?

I look around, surprised to find that this place is one I know very well.

Jade Waterfall?

"My child," I hear a warm voice behind me, "I've been waiting for you."

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-Vera-

I turn around, finding Victor Blackwood standing behind me with a warm smile and kind eyes;

eyes that are identical to mine.

"D...dad?" I say, tentatively.

I don't know what's going on, but if I'm here with *him,* I'm definitely dead.

He chuckles, coming closer to me and hugging me.

It takes me a minute to respond, but I hug him back eventually, taking solace in the warmth of his embrace.

"I couldn't do it," I say, swallowing hard to avoid crying again.

He rubs my hair with his hand.

"It's okay, Vera."

"The witches are back," I tell him.

He says nothing; he just keeps rubbing my hair as my face is pressed against his chest.

"They're going to kill everyone," I sob.

"Shh..." he says.

After a few moments, when I've somewhat calmed down, he puts his hands on my shoulders and pushes me gently away from him.

He looks into my eyes.

"It's uncanny." he muses, "you really do have my eyes. Your mother predicted it, you know?"

"My... my mother?" I ask, suddenly my mind drifting away from what's happening in the world of the living.

"Yes," he chuckles, "she somehow knew you'd have my eyes. And her temper, thankfully."

"Where... where is she?" I ask, my heart starting to beat faster.

"Not here," he says with sad eyes, "but, do you want to see what she looked like?"

I nod enthusiastically, completely immersed in whatever afterlife or daydream this might be.

"Come," he says, taking my hand and guiding me into the pool at the end of the waterfall.

It's late at night, the sun isn't shining and there is a New Moon in the sky. For some reason, however, this makes the waterfall, or rather it's rocks, shine with a green brilliance unmatched by anything I've ever seen. It's as if the light emanated directly from millions of crystals within the water. [Search The website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"Take a deep breath," he says and I comply.

He proceeds to submerge us both in the waterfall, guiding me as we swim deep into the pool.

I gasp as we swim further down, met with a view I didn't expect.

So, the legends *were* true. The Jade Waterfall is indeed not comprised entirely of rocks, but rather many, many formations of green crystals within the rocks; emeralds, just like my necklace.

Victor turns around, noting that I'm just floating, marveling at the sight, and signals for me to continue.

Soon, we are within a tunnel, illuminated by the millions of green crystals.

When we reach the end, we can finally come up for air.

To my surprise however, when we emerge, we are not in the forest, in fact, we are directly in front of another pack house; one I do not recognize.

Victor extends his hand to me, helping me out of the pool of water which quickly disappears before my eyes as we emerge from it.

"That's her," he motions towards two teens playing hide and seek at the entrance of the pack house.

I frown.

"She's... she's a teen..." I tell him, lifting up my eyebrow at him.

He puts up his hands defensively.

"Don't hold it against me, I didn't plan for this to happen this way," he says, and then turns to look at the playing lot with a fond smile, "but this is the day I first saw her."

I turn back to look at the teens. They must be around sixteen years old. There's a tall, blonde girl playing with another, more petite brunette.

"You're it!" The blonde girl says, slightly pushing the other girl and dashing off into the distance.

The brunette is about to follow her friend, but something distracts her.

"I knew she was the love of my life right around..." Victor muses.

As if called by name, the brunette whips her head around to examine the tree line; my heart skips several beats.

"That's her," I say without a shadow of a doubt.

She's smaller than I imagined, and yet she has my same frame. Her eyes are kind and her smile is bright. Her long, wavy hair blows gently in the wind as she turns back to look at the forest, her smile dropping slightly. She squints her eyes, which I now notice to be honey colored.

I turn in the direction she's looking, a few meters to our right.

I gasp.

A hooded figure standing right at the tree line is staring right back at her.

I stare between both of them before finally putting the pieces together.

"I remember the wind carrying me that day. I don't know if it was her scent, her essence, her spirit or just... her smile, but the entire cosmos conspired for us to become aware of each other right this day, right this time," Victor says, not being able to take his eyes away from her.

After a few moments, my mother has not moved an inch and neither has my father; they're just staring at each other and I can almost feel their excitement, their fear, their realization, and their connection.

Victor breaks my trance,

"Come," he says, turning away from the scene and walking into the forest.

I follow him until we reach a clearing, another scene suddenly unfolding before my eyes.

"Victor, put me down," she squeals, pure delight in her voice.

I see Victor twirling my mom up in the air in his arms.

Her hair is much shorter now and she seems older.

"She was about your age here. We had finally began dating, unbeknownst to her clan, of course. But we were so, so happy," there's a tint of sadness in his tone and when I turn to look at him, his eyes are glassy. "This is the day we decided to run away together," he continues, not taking his eyes away from the scene.

"What was her name?" I finally ask, wanting to focus on anything other than his sadness.

"Alina Allen," he says.

My head snaps in his direction.

"Did you just say... Allen?"

He chuckles.

"I understand your surprise. She was not actually an Allen, so to speak. She was a descendant of their line, but even from previous generations, her family no longer carried the name. The gene had become too diluted to be considered Allens. I only know because I knew several of her ancestors."

This takes me several moments to process.

"I" I begin, but close my mouth.

"That makes you a descendant of the Allens, too," he tells me and I turn to look at him, "that's why your connection to Sophia is so strong. That's why you two could mind link even without your wolf. You two are related. Distantly, that is, but the Allens have always had strong blood connections."

I frown, letting all of this sink in.

"That's why they had to be the ones to take care of you," he says, "even if they didn't know exactly who you were, they'd naturally feel drawn to caring for you and protecting you."

I turn to him.

"Why couldn't it be you? Why couldn't it be mom?" I ask, suddenly angry at him for all those years I felt abandoned and unwanted. He turns serious.

"Because we knew what was coming, Vera. *I* knew what was coming. When I met your mother, *we* had already crossed paths several hundred years before, and I knew* you were my daughter the instant I laid eyes on you. I didn't know how, I didn't know when, but I also knew *what* you were; even if through a time-leap vision, I could sense your power and I could smell your wolf, and for the first time in my life, I knew real fear."

Time-leap vision? He can't mean... the time I was unconscious back at the pack house? The vision I had with him waiting for a carriage, and the vision I had with him at Jade Waterfall. I knew he had seen me, but how is it possible that he *remembers* me. It was just a vision, after all; I always thought they were like dreams that happened in my head. A vision of a different time.

I gulp.

He continues,

"So, you see, we had to make sure you were protected, we had to make sure that the witches couldn't get to you. That's why I asked my mother and sister to block your magic, hoping it would give you a chance at a real life; a happy life. I even transferred myself into Jade Waterfall to be close to you, to protect you..."

I interrupt him, "You did what?" I ask, bewildered.

"The spell you saw me do at Jade Waterfall transferred my essence to the emeralds within the waterfall. The underwater caves run several hundred miles into every direction, and so do the gemstones. I fussed my spirit, so to speak, with the emeralds, so that I could ward off dark magic from the Allen clan... from you."

My mouth is hanging open, realization dawning on me.

"That's why the forest always felt like home..." I whisper.

He smiles warmly.

"Yes," he says. "I was there for every tumble, every fall, for every time you felt the wind on your face and hair and for every time the forest spoke to you. I was there."

Tears start to fall from my tired eyes.

"I always felt so... alone," I reminisce.

"But never lonely," he says.

I smile at him.

"No, never lonely."

He places his warm hand on my cheek and I lean into the touch; feeling like a heavy burden has been lifted from my heart. His touch **does** feel like home.

Maybe this is what the afterlife is for; for making peace with everything and everyone that once hurt us or made us sad. Making peace with a life cut too short. Making peace with all the what ifs.

I turn to him as his face turns up after a while, his smile falling.

"Well, I guess it's time," he finally says, and suddenly, we are transported back to Jade Waterfall.

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The Rise Of The King Chapter 65

-Vera-

"Time for what?" I ask him, turning to look at the waterfall, or more specifically the gemstones, with newfound understanding. "Is that why it glows like that?" I ask. I have no shortage of questions in my mind for my dad. What happened to my mom? I understand why he couldn't be with me physically, but why couldn't she? "Has anyone ever told you the meaning of your name?"

He interrupts my train of thought. I shake my head.

"Your mother and I couldn't agree on a name, really. Her name, 'Alina,' means 'light', and she truly was that; a source of light for me and everyone who had the pleasure of crossing paths with her, even if only momentarily. She believed that names held power over people, that it somehow manifested what our lives would be," he pauses, laughing a little. "I wanted to name you 'Dina', it means 'warrior of the sea. You see, I'm really a water warlock, everything else, every other skill I learned, was always anchored in the way my magic flowed like water; but she didn't like the connotation it carried with it. She thought it destined you to a life of struggle and fighting. So, she wanted to name you

'Ada', it means 'happy, but it felt too... too simple... you know? Like there had to be more to it. There had to be more to your existence than just being obviously happy when there is so much more to the world and to life. *Just* being happy in a world that has so much more to offer seemed... bland." He pauses for a minute, gauging my reaction, "some people would argue that 'Vera' means 'truth, which is certainly fitting considering what your mere existence as a spirit wolf would mean to the world; how it would reshape our understanding of all species and even the essence of magic itself. Nonetheless, they'd be wrong. 'Vera' means 'faith.' So, even if we both knew the risks you'd be constantly under just by existing, and even if we knew that your life would not always be pretty and happy, we hoped, with every inch of our hearts, that you'd be loved madly and have moments of euphoric bliss in your life; even if not all the time. So, we had faith that despite everything, we'd guarantee you an overall joyous life. But now, I see that your name has an even deeper meaning than that."

He pauses again, taking a moment to stare at me, gauging his next words carefully.

"Vera, you are not dead," he says.

I frown.

"What? But I'm here with you, how can I *not* be dead? Besides, I no longer feel any pain, or my wolf, or my..." I choke, suddenly remembering.

I can't feel my baby either.

"My child, transferring my essence to the gemstones does not mean I died. My physical body may have died, but I just transformed into another plain of existence; my essence, my *being* is still in the emeralds, much like magic is living but not alive." "I don't... I don't understand then... why... why am I here?" I stutter, trying to digest what this

means.

He puts his hands on my cheeks.

"Vera, you are not dead," he repeats for emphasis, "I transferred you here so that I could talk to you, so that I could tell you the truth. So that you could finally wake up."

I frown at him. Surely, I'm still missing something because none of this makes sense. Wake up?

"My child. You can't feel your baby because he is not here, his power is still in the other realm, trying to save you. And you can't feel your wolf because you *are* her. You are no ordinary wolf, Vera, you are a *spirit wolf.* Your spirit and your wolf are one in the same. She is a reflection of you and you are a reflection of her. You are *one in the same.* There is no distinction of where your essence begins and hers ends. Do you understand what I'm saying?" He asks carefully.

Still, dumbfounded, I shake my head.

His tone becomes more urgent.

*

"Vera, your wolf isn't the source of your magic, *you are.* *You* are not a vessel for her magic, you are not a magical conductor. *You are magic itself. There is no difference between the magic that freely flows in nature and yours. The Witch Mother may be intimidating, she may be the most powerful of all of us, but you, my child, have been blessed by the Moon Goddess herself. She knew the mission she'd assigned you centuries before your birth, and she blessed you accordingly." My heart suddenly starts beating faster, making it hard to breathe.

"Do not be afraid, my dear, this will hurt, but I am *always* with you," he turns his eyes to my collarbone, looking at the necklace Dr. Owens gave me. It is made of the emeralds from Jade Waterfall. I clutch it instinctively, understanding.

"Now, wake up, Vera."

"What?"

"Wake up!"

I feel him becoming distant even though he's standing right in front of me. The warmth of his hands on my face slowly dissipates.

"I don't understand!" I yell at him, feeling him slip further and further.

"WAKE UP!" he screams, suddenly pounding his fist on my chest, painfully.

Unexpectedly. I open my eyes and desperately gasp for air, as if I had been submerged in water and deprived of oxygen for a while.

Quickly, everything around me starts to clear up and I finally remember where I am. [SEARCH THE WEBSITE TO ACCESS CHAPTERS OF NOVELS EARLY AND IN THE HIGHEST QUALITY.](#)

The Witch Mother is standing in front of me, holding the knife to my heart with both hands and using all of her strength to try and pierce my heart. Her eyes and expression have turned almost animalistic, with elongated teeth and deep, hollowed eyes; she looks very pale and thin, too, almost like a corpse.

"Mistress! We're under attack!" I hear Marcus yelling from behind me.

"How many?!" Helena asks.

I stare at Helena as well; she too has changed, no longer looking like an innocent child and looking more like an old, old lady.

"It's an entire army! Wolves, lycans, humans, it doesn't make sense!" Marcus yells.

"They're here for her!" The Witch Mother growls, "take care of it! We too have an army!"

I hear Marcus run up the stairs, not closing the door behind him.

"Mistress?!" Helena asks, panicked.

"It's fine! I just need to absorb her magic and I'll take care of them myself," she says, still struggling with the knife.

Helena quickly starts chanting again, her hands clasped together in hushed prayer.

"Aghhhh." the Witch Mother yells, exerting all of her force on the knife, but it won't budge; it won't move past a few centimeters into my chest. "You useless mutt, what are you doing?!"

I'm just staring at her and all of my surroundings. Now, I can see everything so clearly, almost as if I had my wolf's eyes but without turning. I can even see some sheer, iridescence dancing off of the Witch Mother, Helena, and some other objects in this place. I now know that to be their essence, their magic. In contrast, I turn my head towards Harriet, there is nothing emanating from her.

Finally, I turn my full attention to the Witch Mother. She's been so focused on my chest, that she has yet to meet my eyes.

When she feels me staring at her, she finally meets my gaze.

She freezes immediately, her monstrous eyes wide.

"No..." she whispers.

She drops the knife and takes several steps back.

"Helena!" She calls.

Helena looks up, finally noticing what caused her mistress's reaction. She too blanches.

Both of them immediately link hands and start chanting, each holding a palm up to me.

There's buzzing in my ears, but as they chant louder and louder, I can't feel their spell taking any effect on me.

I close my eyes for a brief second, searching for my wolf.

She comes to the surface, and now, I finally understand what my dad was trying to tell me.

I place my hand on her chin as she lowers her forehead to mine, looking and feeling much better.

How could I expect to understand you, when I didn't even understand myself?

She slowly nods. She knew this all along, or rather, deep down, *1* knew this all along; I was

just missing the most important piece, one that my dad just gave me.

Now, I know *who* I am.

I was never a wolf, nor was I a witch.

I am a *spirit wolf.*

Only now, I actually know what that means.

I open my eyes again, zeroing in on the Witch Mother.

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