

Mated to the Werewolf King

Door of Destiny

Special?

I could hear the word crashing through my brain.

"You told her she was special?" I questioned Tessa as she sat across from me.

I couldn't believe my ears. The Priestess had thought it was a good idea to tell Belle, the prized bounty of the underworld, that she was special?

Leave it to a witch to mess up even the simplest of plans.

"You saw it yourself. Denying it will do no good," Tessa said, with a trace of annoyance in her voice.

Rage coursed through my blood, but with it came an unsettling understanding.

It had not been Tessa that pushed Belle away. I knew it had been me...

"Calm yourself, King," Tessa warned. "Anger won't help you now. We need to work together to find her."

It was the first time she had sounded genuine since we arrived. If I pushed, maybe I could get more information.

I need more.

"Tell me again about this door that you saw," she inquired.

My mind was a blur, but I did my best to recount everything that happened.

How Belle had seen me with Daisy, her racing down the hall with a sudden speed I could not match, and the magical door that closed the moment I burst into the room.

Then, it disappeared right before my eyes.

Tessa looked at me with genuine wonder. Something flashed behind her gaze, and I knew she understood more than she was letting on.

"Tell me what you did with her, or I will bring this entire place down!" I said with a growl. "And you know I can."

"But you won't," she assured me.

Her blunt response caught me off-guard. I tried to find a retort, but my anger pushed the words away.

"You came to us for help. You need us in order to find Annabelle. And we have no reason to not help. It is in all of our best interests that we do so, and quickly."

Praise the Moon Goddess! For the first time, Tessa was actually making sense.

"So, bring back the door, and let's go find her!" I urged, with hope rising in my voice.

"My dear Keith, there was never any door there," she said simply.

I could feel my mouth hanging open, struck dumb by the comment.

Maybe there wasn't a door there now, but I had seen one. How else could she have gone?

"What the hell does that mean? You don't believe me? I'm not lying. I'm not crazy. I saw it with my own eyes!"

"You are not crazy. I believe you truly saw the door. But we did not place it there, and it cannot be opened. Not by anyone here," she said.

Her babbling wasn't making sense. Now, I was beginning to wonder who was really the crazy one!

Even with my bewildered eyes staring at her, she continued.

"That door you saw is the Door of Destiny. It was placed there by the Moon Goddess and cannot be opened or closed unless it is ordained by fate."

"How do you know this?" I asked, doubtful.

Tessa looked at me with a heaviness I had not seen from any Priestess.

Her eyes revealed years of pent-up sadness that spilled into the room as we sat looking at one another.

"I know this because it has happened before. The Door of Destiny has showed itself to us only one other time. That was the last time I saw my daughter, Shea."

Tessa's voice faltered and her eyes looked away.

Her words settled on my shoulders with a weight I did not think I could bear. Yet it was something she lived with every day for the rest of her life.

And the life of a witch was something that did not easily fade.

Tessa's composure was stunning. Why couldn't I show such self-restraint when matters were delicate?

I could hear Belle's comment from earlier.

Not everything can be defeated with strength and brute force.

So, why was it the only thing I had ever used?

Tessa continued with her tale.

"I searched everywhere for her. We all did. I even gave the Moon Goddess my blood as a sacrifice for Shea's safe return. As a last resort, I brought my brother Tannon to help with the search. His powers as a warlock are immense and incomparable."

Her eyes looked away from mine. A tear glistened in her eye but did not fall down her cheek.

That steely composure once again...

"But even he could not help her," she said sadly.

Finally, she looked at me, and I could take it no longer. I stood and flexed every muscle in my body, hoping the strain would ease my tension.

It didn't work.

"So, I guess you're telling me it's over, then?" I asked, feeling the anger rise up my throat. I could taste it in my mouth, acidic like bile.

"No. We waited too long for Shea, thinking time was all we needed. When the search began, it was too late.

"But Belle has only just disappeared. If you can get to Tannon, there is still a chance we can find her."

"If I can get to Tannon?" I repeated. This didn't sound good. "Where exactly is he?"

Tessa stood from her chair, holding herself with a posture only a witch could possess.

"My brother can be found in the Alps. But I must warn you, it will not be easy."

I couldn't help but laugh. Nothing was ever easy...

"This journey has only just begun, Werewolf King. Annabelle has followed hers. Now, it is time for you to follow your own destiny."

I couldn't tell where the door had taken me. Darkness, that friend I had grown to know, overtook me once the door shut.

With a slow creep, light began to fill the darkness. But it wasn't natural. Something about the glow made it feel as if I were in a dream.

The haze moved with a life of its own. Like a fresh mist blowing through the land, I allowed it to engulf me.

Blowing wind pulled at the strands of my hair. I followed the sensation and soon found myself standing in a giant meadow.

An unseen sun threw its light from above, causing the meadow to glow.

But this couldn't be real. It must be a dream! The most realistic dream I'd ever felt.

It was almost refreshing.

This meadow's unending beauty was capped off with a lake in the middle of everything. The breeze I followed earlier was now gone.

The lake's water sat as still as the rocks on its shore.

I moved toward the water, suddenly thirsty. If there was going to be a chance to refresh myself, it had to be now.

As I approached, I noticed something new.

Something shocking.

A shadow was floating over the water. I rubbed my eyes. The shadow looked to be in the form of a small child, hovering inches over the center of the lake.

It felt my presence. I could sense it watching me, studying. The head of the shadow child—if head was the right word—cocked to the side.

"You have come," it called out to me in an otherworldly yet childlike voice.

I looked around out of instinct even though I knew I was alone. Something inside told me to move closer, but the water held me at bay.

"I don't know where I am," I told it.

Maybe it could show me the way.

"You are here," it assured me.

Well, that was pretty evident.

It continued, "It is destined that you will be mated."

My ears pricked at the sound of that word.

Mated.

I had been in such disarray I'd nearly forgotten what had pushed me here.

I could see Keith on top of that witch and my blood began to boil. I held down my anger by taking a deep breath.

"Who will be my mate?"

Please. My body longs to hear the name of the man who had captured me.

Who pushed me into his dungeon and then somehow managed to win me over time and again with his touch.

His look.

His smell.

"You will be mated to a great king," the shadow child said.

The pace of my beating heart picked up. So, the prophecy wasn't a lie! If I would be mated to a king, that could mean only one thing, couldn't it?

"A king. Do you mean Keith?" I asked urgently.

The shadow child nodded its head.

I was so close to the answer. I could almost taste the monster's tongue on mine.

If I ever saw him again, I would hold him close, never let his scent leave my body.

Then, the shadow began to shake its head.

"Or the Demon King... Or the Vampire King... Whichever marks you first."

My heart sank into the pit of my stomach. I turned away from the child and could see something on the horizon.

It was black against the glowing light of the sky. The darkness came closer, and it became clear that what I was seeing were more shadows.

Their presence was great. As they approached, the glow from the sun began to fade, turning day to night.

I soon realized the cloud in the sky was made up of shadows, just like the child on the water.

And those shadows were flying right for me!

All of my hopes sank like a stone to the bottom of the lake.

"Run," the shadow child said.

The words had barely reached my ears before I did just that.

My body lurched backward as my feet churned, trying to carry me to a place I could hide.

I sprinted toward the dense trees as the looming shadow closed in overhead.