

Morrigan

Elowen POV

The SUVs slowed to a crawl as we pulled around a bend, and then... "Holy shit," Rylen muttered from the backseat.

The forest parted like it had been sliced open by a dream. Towering pines bowed at the edges of the dirt road, and dead ahead stood a wrought-iron gate that looked like it belonged in a gothic fever dream. Ancient, rusted black with veins of silver etched through it, twisting into runes that shimmered faintly under the dappled light.

"It's giving cursed fairy tale," Taya said, her eyes wide. "Where's the talking mirror?"

"If it offers you an apple, don't eat it," Daxon grunted.

Ashrian leaned forward, studying the runes. "That's no ordinary enchantment. This gate is older than any magic I've seen in centuries. It's... aware."

Before I could ask what the fuck that meant, the SUVs hissed to a stop. We climbed out, boots crunching on gravel, the air thick with magic and mist. Every hair on my body stood on end as I approached the gate. Then, from nowhere, a voice. Disembodied. Female. Smooth as velvet and ancient as dust.

"Elowen Skye Thorne may enter. Alone."

Morrigan



The forest went silent. I blinked. "What now?"

"Like hell," Daxon growled, stepping in front of me.

"No chance," Rylen snapped. "She's not going anywhere without us."

"Over my dead fucking body," Jace added, cracking his knuckles for dramatic effect.

Ash's voice was calm, but lethal. "You will have to kill me first."

Even the stoic strike team bristled. One of them muttered, "Protocol breach. Solo entry denied."

I closed my eyes, counted to three... then lost it.

"Enough!" I shouted. "Everybody, shut the fuck up."

Silence.

I took a breath and turned, hands on my hips. "I'm going. That's the end of this fucking conversation. We knew this might happen. I'm the one cursed. I'm the one she asked for. You wanna fight the witch and her creepy ass magical forest over it? Be my guest, but I'm not dragging anyone else into this."

Ashrian stepped forward and gently touched my forehead. "Then let's make sure you're ready."

His magic was like chilled wine and firelight as it poured through me,

anchoring to my own. Together, we wove a shield of moonlight around my thoughts and lined it with a shell of blood magic so thick it thrummed in my chest like a war drum.

"Nothing gets in," he said. "Not even fear."

The strike team, clearly unhappy, stepped up and handed me a tiny earbud. "Codeword is nachos," the leader said, completely deadpan. "You say it, we're in. No hesitation."

"Nachos," I repeated, smirking. "Got it."

Daxon grumbled something about bullshit magical rules, and Rylen looked like he wanted to punch a tree, but I didn't give them time to argue. I squared my shoulders, gave my mates a firm nod, and turned toward the gate.

"You ready for this, Lyssira?"

"Ready to burn down the forest if that bitch tries anything," she growled. "Let's show her who we are."

The gate creaked open slowly, revealing a path through the forest dappled in silver mist and mossy roots. Flowers I didn't recognize bloomed in glowing purples and blue-hued gold, and the breeze smelled like secrets and old stories.

I walked. Every step buzzed with energy, the kind that made your soul itch. I could feel the forest watching me. Not threatening, just... waiting.

The cottage came into view minutes later. Wyrd Hollow was carved from white stone and blackened wood, vines clinging to the roof like they'd always belonged. Smoke curled lazily from the chimney. The windows flickered with candlelight.

I stepped up to the crooked wooden door and knocked three times, my heart jack hammering. The door creaked open before my knuckles hit the wood again.

"Elowen Skye Thorne," a melodic voice sang out from somewhere inside, soft and strange. "Come in, child. The tea is steeping. I've been expecting you."

Well. Shit. I stepped inside. The door shut behind me with a whisper of wind that sounded too much like a sigh. Not creepy at all. The air inside was... heavy. Not suffocating, more like it had depth. Like every particle had soaked in centuries of magic and mystery and gossip and was now vibrating quietly with secrets.

The entryway was narrow, cluttered with books stacked like towers of Jenga and dried herbs hanging in bundles from the rafters. Candles floated above my head, their flames flickering without smoke, their wax dripping upward into nothing.

Cool cool cool, I thought. I've stepped into a spell jar with furniture.

"Come, girl," the voice called again, softer now. "Bring your sharp tongue and louder heart to the table."

I followed the sound through a curved hallway and into a room that looked like the inside of a grimoire exploded.

A round table sat in the center, carved with intricate runes that shimmered when I stepped closer. Tea steamed in delicate glass cups that were definitely older than America, and beside each sat little saucers of honeycomb, lavender sugar, and what I hoped wasn't dried eyeballs.

And across from me, seated in a throne-like chair carved from silver birch and bone, was Morrigan Lairch. She was... not what I expected.

No wrinkles. No crooked back. No broomstick. She was tall and lithe, wrapped in gossamer layers of black and green, hair the color of raven feathers streaked with frost. Her eyes were silver. Not gray. Silver. Like they'd been poured straight from the moon.

"You don't bow to power," she said, sipping her tea without looking at me. "Good. You were made to break it."

I snorted, folding my arms. "You gonna tell me why you summoned me through a haunted fuckin' forest and made me leave my overprotective entourage at the gate?"

That earned me a slight smile. "I needed to see if you'd come alone. If you trusted yourself." She gestured to the seat across from her. "Sit, vessel."

I flinched. "Don't call me that."

Morrigan



"But you are."

"I'm Elowen. Not some divine mailbox."

Now she looked at me, really looked. And I felt it like a full-body scan from the inside out.

"You are Elowen," she said slowly, "and you are the prophecy incarnate. A child born of two bloodlines who should never have touched. A wolf forged in moonlight. A spark of the divine... hidden for eighteen years under spells and shadows."

I sat. Because my knees were weak and the room was starting to spin. She waved her hand, and a soothing pulse of energy wrapped around me like warm silk.

"I didn't summon you to frighten you," Morrigan said gently. "I summoned you to free you."

I narrowed my eyes. "Free me from what?"

She tilted her head. "From the lie that you are normal. From the spell that silenced half your soul. Your mother asked me to hide you, long ago. And I did. But now it's time you remembered who you are. What you were made for."

My throat felt dry. "So you're just gonna wave a wand and poof, all my memories come back?"

Morrigan



Morrigan laughed. Not cruel. Not kind. Just amused.

"Oh, child. This is no fairy tale. There is no wand. There is only choice, sacrifice... and pain. I can give you the potion that will dissolve the binding spell. But what it unleashes? That will be yours to bear."

I stared at the tea in front of me, steam curling like serpent smoke. "And if I don't?"

"The Aegis Protocol will find you. And next time, there will be no strike team. No Alpha King. No prophecy to save you. Only chains. And silence. And blood."

Lyssira growled in my head. "We are not prey."

No, we weren't. I looked up, my spine straight and my hands steady. "Then let's burn this fuckin' spell off, witch."

Morrigan's eyes gleamed like a midnight blade. "That's what I like to hear."

She stood, sweeping across the room to a tall cabinet covered in locks. With a flick of her fingers, it creaked open, revealing rows of crystal vials, each glowing faintly in different hues.

She chose one. It pulsed silver and red.

"Drink this under the moonlight, when the Moon rises. Tonight. Alone."

I opened my mouth to argue, because of course I wasn't doing anything alone, but she raised a hand.

Morrigan



"It must be you. If anyone touches you while the spell breaks, their bond to you may shatter. Fated mate or not."

My stomach twisted.

"You have six hours. Rest. Prepare. And when the moon reaches its apex... come back."

I took the vial, the weight of it sinking into my palm like fate.

Six hours.

Fuck.



Comments



Error Collection



Share Chapter

