

The Circle

****Elowen POV****

One hour. That's all that was left. Sixty minutes 'til the moon reached her apex and whatever the fuck Morrigan had planned could begin.

I was vibrating. Like, actually vibrating. My whole body buzzed with raw magic, with shifting memories that didn't make sense yet. Faces, voices, a lullaby in a language I didn't know, until I did. Until I remembered.

The SUV was cold, but I was sweating. The strike team gave me a wide-ass berth, and thank the gods for that, because the last thing I needed was someone brushing against me and losing their damn bond just because I tripped into their shoulder.

No one spoke. Not even my mates. Daxon looked like he wanted to jump out of the moving vehicle and tackle the moon just to stop this. Ash was pale and clenched, like he was going to chew through his seatbelt.

I was in the way back. Alone. Just me and Lyssira.

"You good, sunshine?" she asked softly, her tone for once not dripping with sarcasm.

"No. Not even a little," I whispered, my forehead resting against the cool window. Memories were slamming into me now. Like punches to the gut. Like kisses from ghosts. I remembered a silver cradle. A lullaby sung by a woman with flowers in her hair. A deep voice whispering, "She will bring

them back.”

A battle. Screams. Fire raining from the sky. Hands shoving me through a portal as someone screamed my name. I whimpered. Just once. Just enough to feel it leave my throat like a curse.

“You’re doing fine,” Lyssira murmured. “You’re not breaking. You’re remembering.”

The SUV slowed. Gravel crunched. I looked up to see it. The gate. That ancient, iron-wrought thing that felt like it had opinions. It opened for me with a sound like thunder and secrets.

I opened the door and stepped out. Everyone else stayed back, good. If anyone touched me now, I’d scream. The walk felt shorter this time. Or maybe I was just... floating. My feet were touching the earth, but my soul felt loose.

Like a ribbon caught in wind. The trees whispered. My skin sparked. I reached the cottage door. Knocked once. Twice. Three times. The door opened instantly.

Morrigan’s melodic voice called out from somewhere deeper inside. “Come, child. The time has come. Join me in the circle.”

Oh, fuck me sideways. The circle? That never meant anything chill. I squared my shoulders. “I got this,” I whispered to myself. Then to Lyssira, “Right?”

"Bitch, you're the moon's favorite. Act like it."

So I walked inside. Alone. Glowing. Trembling. And ready. The room pulsed with ancient energy.

Morrigan stood at the center of the circle. The chalked lines were glowing with a faint silver blue shimmer. Candles flickered unnaturally, their flames dancing without air, and herbs burned in a bowl, the smoke curling like a serpent. The scent hit me like a slap. It was lavender, bloodroot, and something older, something fae and wild.

"Step in," Morrigan said, her voice deeper now, thick with magic. I didn't hesitate. I stepped into the circle, bare feet landing softly inside the sigils. The second I crossed the threshold, it felt like reality hiccupped. The world shivered.

"Give me your hands," she said, holding hers out.

I placed mine in hers, and it was like touching lightning and cold stone at the same time. Her lips moved in ancient tongue, words older than the hills outside. The smoke twisted, the air snapped, and the Unbinding began.

My mind cracked first. Not in a painful way, more like someone yanked open a locked chest in my soul and dumped every damn thing I ever forgot straight into my bloodstream. I screamed. Not from pain, but from the sheer force of knowing. Memories flooded in, overwhelming me.

And then...she appeared. Selene. The Moon Goddess.

Radiant. Blinding. Terrifying in her gentleness. Her eyes held galaxies, and her hair floated around her like a stormcloud lit from within.

"You are the key," she said, her voice like chimes over thunder. "The bloodline of union. The spark of war. The breath of peace."

Images slammed through me...The shifters and fae standing together on the same battlefield. Lycans shaking hands with vampires. A burned out facility with the Aegis Protocol insignia torn from the walls.

Children, beast, mage and fae, learning side by side.

My mother, bound in chains of light, eyes pleading.

"You must find the creature hunters," Selene whispered. "End them. Burn the Protocol to ash. Unite the species. Lead them to a new era."

"And my mother?" I choked out. Selene's hand cupped my cheek. "If you succeed...you can free her. And perhaps even more."

Then everything imploded. Colors, memories, magic, purpose. I was dragged back to my body, breathless, sobbing, sweat slick and radiant with moonlight. My whole soul felt scrubbed raw and holy. Morrigan released my hands.

"It is done," she said, her voice no longer melodic. Just...sharp. Grounded. Real. I stumbled out of the circle, leaning against the wall, blinking like a

newborn deer high on goddamn prophecy juice.

Then Morrigan smiled. Not sweetly. "You owe me a boon now, Elowen."
My head snapped up.

"Wait, what?"

"The unbinding, the conduit, the ritual, all performed on sacred ground under ancient law. One day, I'll call for payment. One boon. No more, no less."

"You sneaky, manipulative fae touched..."

She laughed. "You'll thank me someday."

I muttered every curse I could think of under my breath. Godsdammit. I had just become the beacon of a fucking prophecy and signed myself into fae debt.

Selene save me. The cottage door clicked shut behind me.

My boots crunched against the gravel path as I stepped back into the moonlight. I felt... different. Not just different, rewritten. Reforged. Like I was both heavier and lighter all at once, made of ancient magic and prophecy and, apparently, fucking favors owed to powerful witches.

I didn't even realize I was crying until the wind kissed my cheeks and cooled the wetness. As I reached the SUV, the strike team immediately snapped to alert, comms crackling. The door swung open and there they

were. Ashrian. Daxon. Lachlan.

All three of them surged forward at once, but stopped just short of touching me, their hands hovering like I was breakable crystal edged with fire. Lachlan's voice was the first, low and hoarse. "Are we allowed tae touch ye, mo ghrá?"

I blinked, still high on divine energy and half drunk on the ritual. "Yeah," I whispered. "You can touch me now."

They didn't wait for a second invitation.

Ash gathered me in first, burying his face in my neck like he needed to make sure I was real. Daxon wrapped his arms around both of us, pressing kisses into my hair and swearing under his breath about killing anyone who made me cry like this. Lachlan came in last, wrapping his strong arms around all of us like a warm damn blanket, his lips brushing my temple.

"Thank the gods," he murmured. "Ye scared the fuckin' soul outta me."

I laughed, a watery, wrecked sound that turned into a sob halfway out. "I think I left my soul in that cottage. I saw everything. The goddess, the prophecy, my mother, I saw it all."

"We'll get her back," Dax growled against my shoulder. "Whatever it takes."

"Aye," Lachlan said, tone fierce and reverent all at once. "We've got ye, Elowen. No matter how big the war is. Ye don't carry it alone."

The Circle



Ash didn't say anything. He just held on tighter. And for a moment, wrapped in their arms, with the moonlight on my back and fate still humming through my skin, I believed it.

I wasn't alone. Not anymore.



Comments



Error Collection