

Chapter 115

Adelaide

I followed Alaric with my eyes, watching as he walked away, disappearing behind the bush. Not long after, I caught a glimpse of his toned back as he removed his clothes.

My cheeks turned red. His back was turned, but it was almost impossible not to notice how strong it looked—the muscles in his broad shoulders, his powerful arms.

That guy with the killer smile and killer body could probably really kill someone if he really wanted to. After all, he was the Alpha Prince. I was sure Mom had a purpose for him, one that would make sense eventually.

A low growl, followed by the sound of cracking bones, snapped me out of my thoughts. It wasn't a sound I hadn't heard before—but it never failed to amaze me.

Alaric's limbs twisted, his breathing deepened, and his body disappeared between the bushes. Then it went silent.

My jaw dropped as I stepped forward, anticipating the shift.

“Holy shit,” I managed between laughter.

A massive black wolf appeared from behind that same bush. The blue eyes I was familiar with were now red, glowing, and staring directly at me.

He was huge, much bigger than I had imagined, and much bigger than the average wolf. So this was the wolf of the royal bloodline that everyone couldn't stop gushing about—and it didn't disappoint.

The wolf stepped forward, his paws moving slowly as he made his way toward me.

“What the fuck,” I muttered, shaking my head in disbelief.

The wolf stopped in front of me, and my breath hitched. I wasn't scared—no way, I was rarely scared. A strange heat reached my body. The feeling was strange, something I had never felt before and couldn't quite describe.

I giggled as the wolf circled me, brushing his nose against my leg. It was just a simple nudge, but I could feel its strength, just like I had with Esther.

But this didn't make any sense at all. This was not a witch, but a wolf. It wasn't supposed to be like this.

I bent down, my hand steady as I reached out to touch him. He let me, leaning into my touch. His fur was warm, soft, and felt safe.

“You're beautiful,” I praised, running my fingers through his fur as a big smile spread across my face. The wolf responded by nuzzling his snout against my neck, and I couldn't help but laugh as the fur tickled my skin.

“Stop,” I giggled, gently pushing his head—but he wouldn't stop. The wolf was practically glued to my side, and we stayed like that for a while. Just the two of us in the grass, leaning against each other.

It made me forget about everything else. It felt like something out of a fairytale—but deep down, I knew it was far from it.

Despite how good it felt, this was all just part of a bigger plan.

I was close to begging the wolf not to go when he moved back without a warning and made his way back toward the bushes.

My eyes were wide as I forced myself up, the sound from earlier returning. He was shifting again.

I didn't move, my mind still trying to process what I had just seen, along with those strange feelings I felt.

When Alaric stepped out again, fully dressed, I still couldn't move a muscle. After everything he had just shown me, he somehow looked shy—maybe even a little embarrassed.

“Alaric, that was...” I stumbled over my words, too excited to describe it. “Wow, that was the most beautiful thing I've ever seen—and those red eyes?”

He rubbed the back of his neck, his cheeks turning pink. It seemed like something was bothering him.

“You're not in pain, are you?” I asked, worried I might've pushed him too far.

He shook his head. “I'm beyond that stage. It actually feels good.”

“Really?”

“Yes, really.”

He made his way over to me until he stood so close I could hear the sound of his rapid breaths.

“I'm glad you liked it,” he said, studying my gaze. “But now you've got to show me something in return.”

He gently brushed his fingers against my hand, and I lost all control. Then I felt it—the glow.

Shit.

I tried to stop it, but it was already happening. My eyes were glowing, and the small light spreading through the woods was the unfortunate proof of it.

Mortified, I closed my eyes tightly, trying to make it stop—but nothing worked.

It had been years since I had lost control like this, and none of this made sense. What would he even think? He'd be terrified, think I was some kind of freak—and rightfully so.

Taking small breaths, I tried counting down in Latin inside my head, just like Aelius taught me—but still, nothing happened.

I had no choice but to open my eyes and brace myself for disaster. This was the part where he would run.

“Adelaide...” Alaric breathed, his blue eyes locked on mine. Only they weren't terrified. His gaze held something warm, something caring.

“You look breathtaking,” he spoke, mesmerized. “Beautiful. Unreal. Perfect.”

I didn't know what to say, what to think. This was the one thing I had always been cautious about—outsiders seeing my eyes. Mom said it would terrify them, but not him. Not Alaric.

Before I could stop myself, I grabbed his face and kissed him.

He stiffened for a moment, but then his arms wrapped around my waist, pulling me closer as the kiss deepened.

Suddenly, a vision hit me.

Alaric was kneeling on the ground, his hands tied behind his back. The walls and tiles around him looked like those of Starlight.

A dark shadow circled around him, and his body began to shake. His blue eyes flickered to black, then blue—until they stayed black.

Then an evil smirk reached his lips, and a woman stepped forward and knelt before him.

It was Mom.

“Welcome back, Lord Baelor,” she spoke.

I pulled back from the kiss, gasping as the vision ended and the light in my eyes disappeared. Alaric carried a startled expression on his face.

“Adelaide?”

Panicking, I stepped back, my mind spinning as I finally came to understand why Mom sent me here. Why Esther called him the chosen one—the vessel.

Mom was planning to bring back the one I thought was a myth, the one she worshipped—the God of the underworld, Baelor.

She needed my help feeding Alaric darkness because Baelor needed a host, a strong one.

She was planning to kill Alaric.

I didn't know what these feelings for him meant, but I knew one thing—I didn't want him to die. I couldn't let it happen, and I wouldn't allow it.

“Adelaide...” Alaric said again, stepping toward me.

“No!” I stuck out my hands, taking a step back. Turning on my heel, I immediately ran off, leaving him standing alone in the woods.

I didn't look back—I didn't want to look back.

All I wanted was space.