

Chapter 124

Adelaide

“Don’t roll your eyes at me, Adelaide,” Mom snapped. For some reason, she always seemed to have an extra set of eyes in the back of her head.

I sighed, dropping my gaze. “I’m sorry, Mom.”

“What did I tell you about looking down?” she said, making me snap my head back up again.

Now forced to meet her eyes, I couldn’t do anything else but look at the woman in front of me. The monster who birthed me...

People often said we looked alike. We had the same long dark hair, the same brown eyes—but that’s also where the similarity ended. While I wasn’t usually looking for friends, I had the ability to be warm and approachable. But that woman was like a fucking block of ice.

There was no heart, no feelings—nothing. It was too odd, even for a witch.

“Come here,” she commanded, and I could tell it wasn’t up for debate.

I gulped as I stepped out of the bed, wearing nothing but my oversized sweatshirt that barely covered my panties. Even though she told me not to, my eyes dropped to the floor as I made my way over to her.

She was only here because she wanted answers, not because she cared—it was all for her own agenda. If not for my eyes, I would’ve been of no importance to her.

Mom wasted no time before wrapping her cold hand around my throat and tilting my head to the side.

“Let me see your neck,” she said, pressing her fingers against my skin.

“Good... very good,” she murmured, satisfied. “We are not animals, Adelaide—so you can’t let him mark you. You can’t give him that power.”

“I know, Mom,” I chuckled nervously, trying to break the tension while pulling back my head. However, she didn’t laugh.

“You, silly, silly—where,” she said in a mocking tone. “I can’t believe you’re finally putting that pretty face and body of yours to good use. It turns out you do have something other than those eyes.”

My blood boiled, but my lips were glued together. I couldn’t do anything, even if I wanted to. She wasn’t just my mom, she was the High Priestess—the one who could turn everyone against me in less than a second, and I hated it. I hated how much power she had over me, everybody—and most of all, I hated how terrified I still was of her.

Yes...terrified.

She needed my eyes, the same eyes that could destroy her if I tried hard enough—yet I still feared that woman.

This was the moment I should’ve told her the truth—that I wasn’t going to help her bring back Baelor. But I was too much of a coward to do so.

If anyone saw me like this, they would laugh at me. The fearless Adelaide, too scared to speak to her own mom. Unfortunately, this was what trauma did to a person and what I had to grow up around.

“Why won’t you look at me!” Mom raised her voice, slightly frustrated.

I trembled as I slowly raised my head to meet her gaze. Anything so she wouldn’t have to ask again.

She lifted her hand to touch my cheek, and I winced, preparing for the impact. It never came. Instead, she began caressing it softly as if she felt sorry for me.

“Do you follow that Moon Goddess of theirs now?”

“No.”

“Good.” She lowered her voice. “Are you scared of me?” she asked, her expression almost worried.

I shook my head quickly, trying to convince her. “No.”

Then I felt a painful burn on my cheek.

She had slapped me...

I yelped, covering the spot as tears pricked the corners of my eyes. This was what she would always do, what she was good at. Manipulating people.

“You’re right, you’re not scared,” she said. “Because if you were, you would’ve told me what you were up to. Instead, I have to hear about it from Esther—who you’ve been harassing about my plans.”

Bullshit.

I hadn’t harassed anyone.

Come on, do something, Adelaide...don’t just stand there.

“How does this work? Can he feel it—that I hit you?” A smirk reached her lips before she brushed my hair behind my ear. She pouted playfully, “Do you think he’ll try to run in here to protect you?”

A shiver ran down my spine at the pleased look on her face, like this was all some kind of game or experiment to her.

“How is he doing—my vessel?” she then asked, not waiting for a response to her first question.

“G-Good,” I stammered. I finally released the breath I had been holding when she pulled her fingers away, but then they brushed just beneath my eye, making me flinch again.

“Does anyone know about our eyes?”

I quickly shook my head. “No, Mom.”

Her eyes narrowed. She knew I was lying. “I mean, Esther does...Alaric does—”

“Because that’s how you feed him darkness,” she cut me off. “I understand that, sweetheart—but those are the only ones who are allowed to know. Do you get that?”

“Yes, Mom.”

“That dirty Alpha King wouldn’t lift one ass cheek from that chair to meet you,” Mom said coldly. “Mate or not, you’re irrelevant to him. He has no intentions of letting you near that throne, and as far as he’s concerned, I have no intention of letting a daughter of mine near those animals.”

She sounded so repulsed, it made my chest ache. Alaric loved me, he wanted me, I wanted him—so why was it a problem? Shouldn’t we both be with someone we truly desired without our parents getting in the way?

Mom’s face lit up with excitement. She cupped my face tightly, her grip almost painful. “Four years,” she grinned. “You have four years to prepare our vessel so we can bring back the rightful heir to all the thrones.”

My stomach twisted, and I felt dizzy. Four years to prepare Alaric’s body for Baelor—and she didn’t care what it would cost him, or me.

I wouldn’t allow it.

No matter what, I wouldn’t.

“And,” she added, “since you are supposedly his mate, you will rule at Baelor’s side when he enters his new body.”

No...

This wasn’t even part of her initial plan. She had completely lost it.

“Can I count on you, sweetheart, or will you disappoint your mom who has cared for you all your life?” she whispered, narrowing her eyes.

I nodded quickly, even though all I wanted was to scream. Agreeing with her was the only way to get her off my back for now.

Even though I didn’t have the guts to speak up against her today, I did know one thing—I wasn’t going to betray Alaric.

I would never turn on him...my mate.

I would protect him, just like he had vowed to protect me.

Fuck, they made me sick to my stomach. All of them...

I would destroy Baelor, the Alpha King, and Mom if I had to—and anyone else who thought they could keep me and Alaric apart—and I had four more years to figure out exactly how to make it happen.