

STEPHANIE FAZIO

**THE
CHOSEN
UNION**

THE FOUNT BOOK 3



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PROLOGUE

BREAKING NEWS. Aircraft carrier sunk off the Gulf of Mexico.

**Alien attack! Residents fear for their lives as blue lightning and tidal waves pummel Corpus Christi.*

**Exclusive interview with Texas farmers who fought the aliens, coming up after this commercial break.*

**US Navy mobilized to strike back.*

**Watch out, aliens. You messed with Texas.*

The reporter adjusted her microphone and did a quick check to ensure her makeup wasn't melting in the brutal Texas heat. There was a slight tremor in her hand as she reviewed her notes once more. She nodded to her cameraman.

"Good evening," she began. "Right now, we're following reports of an alien invasion.

"It happened just after six in the evening, local time here in Texas. The situation is still developing, but we already have reports of at least twenty deaths."

The reporter took a breath as the camera shifted to a young woman with badly-bleached curls and a neon swimsuit cover.

"I'm here with Emma Parks, who was on a nearby party cruise for her sister's bachelorette party. Emma, can you tell us what you saw?"

"It was nuts." Emma bent down until her lips almost brushed the mic. "It was, like, a really nice day, but then we saw tons of lightning. I don't know where it came from.

"Then, the waves got huge. Like *huge*. There were all these people jumping off that giant military boat and swimming. And then the boat just sunk. I've never seen anything more terrifying." She widened her eyes for the camera. And then she popped her gum.

"Wow, thanks for that, Emma." The reporter walked to the end of the pier, where a still-dripping wet soldier was huddled under an emergency foil blanket.

"Next, we'll hear from Petty Officer Jonathan Zuke, who managed to escape the sinking aircraft carrier and swim to shore. Petty Officer Zuke, can you tell us what you experienced?"

Zuke cleared his throat. "Yes, ma'am. I was doin' ship preservation on the hanger deck when those...people showed up." He shivered, making the foil blanket crinkle. "I ain't never seen nothin' like it before. They looked like humans, but they had weapons that...glowed blue. And they just moved so fast." He swallowed, his eyes darting around. "I saw one of 'em disappear into thin air...like magic."

He blinked several times, like he was doubting his own sanity. He cast another glance over at the frothing water, which was all that remained of the aircraft carrier.

Sirens wailed and helicopters buzzed.

"Petty Officer Zuke, have you ever heard of an aircraft carrier sinking like this?"

"No, ma'am." The man shook his head slowly. "A ship that big should never have sunk."

At that moment, the farmer who had been waiting for his turn to be interviewed stepped in front of the camera.

"It was goddamn alien magic, that's what it was!" he yelled.

Wincing at the curse, the reporter turned her attention on the farmer.

"We're hearing from—"

“I tried to tell ya’ll,” the farmer drawled, plucking the toothpick out of his mouth and pointing it at the camera. “I fought the aliens myself. They can’t be killed by reg’lar guns, and they’re gonna take over. We gotta fight. We gotta kill ’em before they kill us. We gotta save ’merica!”

“Rescue crews are on the scene now,” the reporter cut in. “We hope to have a casualty report soon. In the meantime, authorities are asking locals to stay indoors while they search for survivors and answers.

“Now, we’ll hear from some extraterrestrial linguists who are standing by to find out what the aliens want.”

Already, all of the major news networks were gathering expert witnesses to try to explain the inexplicable.

Mechanical engineers had diagrams and blueprints that proved how an aircraft carrier shouldn’t be able to sink so quickly. Meteorologists were discussing the impossible weather patterns in the area immediately surrounding the aircraft carrier. Scientists were brought on air to debate the possibility of a solar flare or other natural phenomenon that might provide insight into these strange occurrences.

Psychiatrists and grief counselors were on standby for the witnesses and survivors.

Alien enthusiasts were already crowding the pier. They held signs that said, “Come in Peace” and “Welcome to Earth.”

The surrounding roads were clogged with vehicles going and coming. Homeland Security elevated the country’s terrorist alert level to red.

By the day’s end, all of the speculation, terror, and excitement boiled down to a single, irrefutable fact. Aliens were real. And they had come to Earth.

CHAPTER 1

ADDY

Addy was choking on blood and tears. The coppery tang mixed with salty wetness. The air was warm, but she felt so cold. Crushed seashells bit into her knees as the water lapped at her soaked sneakers.

She hardly noticed.

She looked down at the blackened flesh over Tol's heart. Smoke was still wisping up from the sticky mess of melted fabric, burnt skin, and blood.

So much blood.

Addy couldn't understand how he was the one with that hideous wound, when it felt like her insides were the ones being shredded. It was like someone had reached inside her and ripped out her heart.

Her sobs tore through the quiet.

"Tol." His name croaked out of her. Her throat felt like it was lined with jagged glass.

He was still inhumanly beautiful, despite his wounds. There was a gash across his forehead and his lip was split.

She touched his cheek, leaving behind two streaks of fresh blood. Addy had been gripping her shears so tightly they'd cut into her flesh.

"My Tol."

Why did you do it? she wanted to scream at him.

She knew the answer. The Supernal had been about to kill her. Tol had taken the blow that was meant for her. He'd done it because he loved her the same way she loved him.

Some part of her mind was aware of the helicopter landing nearby. It sent sand spraying all around her. She was aware of the deafening roar of the rotor. She heard her friends' voices and cries as they surrounded her.

Addy didn't look at them. Their words were a meaningless drone. All she saw was Tol.

She lay her head down on him...carefully, like she was afraid of making his wounds worse.

It didn't matter now. Nothing mattered anymore. Tol was gone.

Surrounded by the sickly scent of charred flesh and fresh blood, Addy wept.

Wait.

Addy's breath caught as she felt a faint tremor beneath her cheek. A few seconds later, she saw a barely-visible flutter at his throat.

Tol was alive.

"He's breathing!" she screeched in a voice that was unrecognizable. She didn't look away from Tol. "Nira, Gerth, someone!"

Nira fell to her knees beside Addy and started ripping Tol's shirt away. She brushed her fingers down the skin on either side of his gaping wound. Tol didn't shiver or flinch. He didn't react at all.

Nira reached for Tol's wrist and felt for a pulse.

"See?!" Addy demanded, clutching Nira's arm and giving the other girl a shake. "He's alive. You just have to do something. Bandage him...or...." *Something.*

"Ads, no one could survive that."

Addy felt Fred's hands on her shoulders. She heard the apology in his voice. She ignored him.

"You're a doctor," Addy begged Nira. "He's still breathing. There has to be something you can do."

"I—" Nira looked down at Tol. "The only explanation that makes sense is that Tol's connection to Olivia must be keeping him alive."

"If that's true, then what does he need to heal?" Addy asked Nira.

Her mind was racing. Tol was alive, and that meant all she had to do was keep him that way.

A tear slid down Nira's face, but Addy wasn't interested in grieving anymore. All she cared about now were solutions.

"The wound was created with the Supernal's magic," Nira whispered. "So Source might be able to heal him. Maybe."

Addy turned from side to side. Gerth was crouching beside her. His chest heaved from his silent sobs.

"Source," Addy commanded. "Who has some?"

It had gotten dark out some time ago, but their Hazes illuminated the despair on everyone's faces. Nira, Gerth, and Jaxon shook their heads.

"Here." A vial—Erikir's—was tossed through the air.

Addy caught it one-handed, unstopped the vial, and poured the entirety of its contents between Tol's lips. Nira tipped Tol's head up, making sure none of the precious liquid escaped.

Everyone went silent as they watched the liquid pass down Tol's throat.

One second passed. Two. Three.

Tol's Haze flickered back to life. It was dim, but it was there. Addy knew she wasn't imagining the way the wound over his heart closed up just a little.

A ragged cry escaped from Addy.

"It's working," Nira breathed.

"More," Addy shouted, holding out a hand behind her without tearing her eyes away from Tol.

When no vial was placed on her palm, she looked around. The expressions on her friends' faces told her everything she needed to know. There was no more Source.

Jaxon didn't have a necklace, and Fred wouldn't have one. Erikir's was lying beside her in the sand, empty. Gerth and Nira....

Addy looked at their vials. They were mostly empty, but they hadn't been filled with Source. The red stain from Addy's own blood coated the clear walls of the vial.

Her blood.

Addy dug the point of her garden shears into the smooth skin at her wrist.

"Ads, what the hell are you doin'?" Fred gasped.

"I have Source in my blood." *And Tol can have it all.*

"You can't." Gerth's voice was as raw as her own. "Even if it worked, you'd contaminate him. He wouldn't be able to blood marry you or anyone else."

"Like I care about that now," Addy snarled.

“You can’t,” Gerth said again, his gaze fixed on Addy as tears slid down his cheeks. “Once Tol is...gone...Erikir will be the Chosen prince. He’ll be able to do the blood marriage.” Gerth scrubbed a hand across his red eyes. “But if Tol ingests your blood and lives, no one will be able to fulfill the Celestial’s pronouncement. Our people will be doomed.”

Addy didn’t care. This was Tol’s life.

Blood welled to the surface of her wrist.

Gerth grabbed her arm.

“Don’t,” he said, his voice hollow. “This is the only way to save our people.”

“By letting him die?” Addy’s voice cracked.

Gerth’s tears were falling faster, but he nodded. “Tol wouldn’t trade his life for everyone else’s immortality.”

Addy knew Gerth was right. Tol might have been willing to do almost anything for a future with her, but he wouldn’t be willing to sacrifice his people’s lives. He cared deeply about them and saw it as his responsibility to save them. If she took away his people’s future, he’d never forgive her.

And yet, the thought of spending eternity without Tol was too horrible to even consider. She had barely wrapped her mind around her own immortality, but the thought of living it without Tol was unbearable.

Her shoulders shook with the emotions she couldn’t contain. She tipped her head back and screamed.

“Let him go,” Gerth choked. “We have to let him go.”

He’s right, her brain said.

Her heart rebelled.

“I can’t.”

Addy cared about Tol’s people, but compared to his life, they were nothing.

She wrenched her wrist out of Gerth’s grip and held it over Tol’s lips.

“No.” Nira shoved Addy. The blood gathering on Addy’s wrist dripped onto the sand. “My aunts’ lives depend on the blood marriage. All of our people are depending on the blood marriage.”

“Tol wouldn’t want this,” Gerth whispered.

He and Tol were as much like brothers as Addy and Livy were sisters. She knew his heart was breaking just like hers.

“Do it, Addy.” The words came from Erikir. He was behind her, and she turned to him for the first time. His eyes were red, and tears were tracking through the dirt streaked across his face.

Horror washed over Addy anew when she caught sight of her twin in Erikir’s arms. Addy had been so focused on Tol, she hadn’t even thought about Livy.

Livy looked so small in Erikir’s arms. Her face was drained of color. Her Haze was dim, but it was there. Addy could see the tiny flutter of her eyelashes.

Addy turned her attention back to Tol. For her, there simply wasn’t a choice. This was the man Addy loved most in the world—in any world. She would sacrifice anything for him. Even if it meant the deaths of hundreds. Even if Tol would never forgive her.

“Addy, no,” Gerth begged.

“Don’t try to stop me,” Addy told Gerth in a savage voice. She spared Nira a glance. “Same for you.”

She blocked out Gerth's hoarse shouts and Nira's shrieking curses. Fred wrapped his arms around Nira, holding her as she reached out to claw at Addy with her long nails. Jaxon hauled Gerth back as he continued to plead with her.

Calming the tremor in her hand, Addy gouged a deeper hole in her skin. Then, she lowered her wrist to Tol's lips.

CHAPTER 2

TOL

Gods, he hurt.

Tol's throat was raw. His chest was on fire. His body spasmed as he coughed.

"Tol?"

He blinked against the light of her Haze. Her sunset hair hung like a curtain as she knelt over him. Her green eyes were full of pain and fear. She looked haunted.

"Addy." It came out as a whisper.

The moment he spoke her name, all of his memories came rushing back.

He remembered fighting the Forsaken on the aircraft carrier's deck. He remembered the ball of magic he and Olivia had been creating to end the Supernal. He remembered abandoning their weapon when he realized the Supernal was about to kill Addy.

The blue lightning bolt. Falling over the edge of the ship. Blackness.

The sun had been setting before. Now, it was completely dark. Tol had no idea how much time had passed.

"How am I alive?"

Addy was crying. Her whole body shook as she covered her face with her hands.

"I'm sorry," she sobbed. "Tol, I had to. I'm sorry."

Seeing her in so much agony gutted him. All that mattered was fixing whatever it was that was tearing her apart. He could get his answers later.

"It's okay." He reached up, wincing at how the motion made his chest feel like it was being torn open. He brushed his fingers across her cheek. "Everything's going to be okay."

He had no idea what kind of miracle had kept the Supernal's magic—and his fall from the top deck of the aircraft carrier—from killing him. He wouldn't question it now, though. He was alive, and he had Addy. They'd sort everything else out. Together.

He felt his chest knitting back together. The pain was still there, but it was bearable. When he glanced down, he saw his bloody and burnt shirt had been torn down the center. There was an ugly zig-zagging wound over his heart, but it wasn't as bad as it should have been. He winced at the memory of that lightning bolt entering his flesh.

How was he alive?

He wasn't just alive. The pain was seeping out of his wound, and the heavy fog was lifting from his mind.

"Addy." Tol reached for her.

"I'm so sorry," she said again. Her whole body was convulsing with the force of her crying. Tol had never seen her like this.

"Don't be sorry," he told his beautiful, blood-spattered warrior goddess. "Kiss me."

The whole world spun, but somehow, he managed to sit up. He leaned heavily on his prosthesis, which was as mangled and broken as the rest of him. The fingers were melted and warped.

His parents wouldn't be pleased.

“Mate.”

Tol felt a grin split his battered face at the sound of Gerth’s voice.

“I’m alright,” he said. But when he met Gerth’s eyes, they were as full of misery as Addy’s.

Something about all of this wasn’t right. Tol’s brain was too muddled to make sense of it, but as he looked from Addy to Gerth to Nira, he knew something terrible had happened.

“What’s wrong?” he asked, his whole body tensing.

No one answered. He studied Addy more carefully.

“You’re hurt,” he said, reaching for her. The fingers of her left hand were crooked and swollen. Fresh blood was streaming down her forearm.

She flinched away from him.

“I had to,” Addy said. She had stopped crying, but she had a faraway look that was somehow worse. She looked empty.

“Someone tell me what in the two hells is going on,” Tol ordered.

Jaxon was the one who finally spoke. “You were going to die, so Addy used her blood to bring you back to life.”

Tol blinked. He let the words rattle around in his skull for several seconds. He let their meaning settle in.

He looked at the gash on Addy’s forearm. He wiped a hand over his lips and stared down at his fingers. They were red with blood. *Addy’s blood.*

A cold knot of dread settled in the pit of his stomach. He forgot about the fiery pain in his chest. He forgot about his other wounds.

Tol stared at Addy as horror gripped his chest.

He’d drunk her blood, and that meant he couldn’t blood marry. He wouldn’t be able to do his part to save the Chosen. So long as he lived, his people would die.

“How could you?”

Addy wrapped her arms around herself. “I couldn’t lose you,” she whispered.

“No.” Tol shook his head as the impossible truth sunk in.

Giving his life for Addy was one thing. But letting the rest of his people die because of his love for her? No.

She’d betrayed him. She’d done it out of love, but she’d put him in an impossible position.

No, not impossible.

There was still a way for Tol to salvage this disaster.

The thought of taking his own life had him fighting down a surge of nausea. He hadn’t thought twice about taking a death blow meant for Addy. But slashing open his own veins and watching his life drain out into the sand....

Could he do it?

He had to.

“Give me those.” Tol held out his hand for the only weapon in sight—Addy’s shears.

Addy’s eyes bulged when she understood what he meant to do. She scrambled back, but he wrapped an arm around her, drawing her to him. She didn’t resist his hold, but she kept her hands fisted around her shears.

“I love you,” she cried, burying her face against his neck. “Please don’t do this.”

A thickness filled Tol’s throat.

“I love you, too,” he told her.

Gods, it was the truth. He wanted to spend an eternity loving her.

That was when he remembered.

“Olivia,” he said, as yet another horrible truth came rushing back to him.

The bullet heading for Erikir...Olivia stopping time...Olivia using the Celestial’s magic to push the bullet off course.

Olivia choosing to become the Celestial’s Fount. For eternity.

Tol swallowed. Then, he met Addy’s heartbroken gaze.

“Your sister chose to keep the Celestial’s powers to save Erikir’s life. Even if you hadn’t...done what you did...we would never be together.”

The look on Addy’s face mirrored his despair.

They all turned to look at Olivia. She was still unconscious, but her lips were moving as she twitched restlessly in whatever dream held her in its grasp. Her face was white as a sheet.

“When I’m gone, Erikir will be the heir to the Chosen throne,” Tol said. He kept his eyes fixed on the ground so he wouldn’t have to see Addy’s expression. “He and Olivia will be able to have the blood marriage and save our people.” He forced himself to meet Addy’s stare. “But to do that, I need to be dead.”

“Please,” Addy whispered.

“Don’t do this,” Erikir told him. “We’ll figure something out.”

Tol barely spared his cousin a glance. He wasn’t interested in prolonging the inevitable.

“Tol.” Gerth’s voice broke.

When Tol looked at him, he saw the truth reflected on Gerth’s face. If there was any other option, Gerth would have thought of it. The tears he saw in his best mate’s eyes confirmed what Tol already knew. The only path forward for his people began with Tol’s death.

They both turned to Jaxon, who held out one of his half-moon blades in offering to Tol.

Addy lunged for the weapon, but Tol was closer to Jaxon.

“I will Influence you,” Tol warned her before she could grab the weapon.

“I need you,” Addy gasped. “I can’t live without you.”

“You can.” Tol’s voice broke. His strength was failing him, and if he didn’t do this soon, he’d lose his nerve.

“You know me.” He ducked his head until she met his gaze. “You know I can’t live like this. Not when it means the rest of my people will die.”

“We’ll figure something out,” Addy said. “We’ll—”

“There is nothing else.” He pulled her closer. “I made my choice, and I’m not sorry for it. I’m glad I got time to say goodbye.”

He pressed his lips to hers, keeping the weapon behind him where she wouldn’t be able to take it. She tasted like blood and tears.

He broke the kiss.

“Look away,” he whispered.

His hand shook only a little as he raised the half-moon blade. In one quick move, he slashed it across his throat.

CHAPTER 3

OLIVIA

Addy's scream ripped through the quiet, shocking Olivia into wakefulness.

Her twin was hurt. Olivia had to help her. Except, when she tried to move, a heavy grogginess fought to drag her back down into oblivion.

As Olivia's body lay in unconsciousness, her mind had been filled with the Celestial's voice. She didn't know how much time had passed.

Olivia felt wrong. No, not wrong...she felt like something was missing.

"Olivia."

She opened her eyes to see Erikir. It was his arms cradling her, his warmth surrounding her.

"Gods," he said on a ragged sigh. "You're alright. I was so worried—"

Addy screamed again. The sound was filled with such agony that Olivia thought her own heart would break.

Too weak to stand, Olivia freed herself from Erikir's arms and crawled to her sister. She didn't care how pathetic it looked. All she cared about was that her twin was suffering.

She got to Addy just as Tol was pushing himself upright. He was kneeling on the sand and holding one of Jaxon's blades in his right hand. Blood dripped from the sharpened edge of the blade and disappeared into the sand. A muffled cry escaped Olivia's lips when her eyes found the source of the blood. There was a long slash across Tol's neck.

As she watched in dumbstruck panic, the skin around his wound sealed back together.

Was she hallucinating? Was all of this some vision instead of reality?

"What the hells?" Tol's voice was raspy and thin.

With a jolt, Olivia understood the emptiness she hadn't been able to pinpoint before. Tol was no longer in her head. She couldn't hear his thoughts or sense his emotions.

"Oh gods." Nira covered her face with her hands as an anguished sound tore through her.

"You're still alive." Gerth reached out a tentative hand toward Tol before pulling it back. "You're alive."

Addy, who had her arms wrapped around her torso like she was trying to warm herself, seemed beyond words.

"How is this possible?" Tol demanded.

"Addy's blood," Gerth said in a hoarse voice. "It's stronger than pure Source. That, combined with your strength as the Chosen prince, must be why you can't..." he trailed off.

...die.

Olivia heard the unspoken word in her mind. More thoughts filled her head. They were coming from Gerth and Nira, whose emotions were a whirlwind of grief and terror.

...can't blood marry the Fount if he's contaminated with Addy's blood.

...if Tol can't die, the rest of our people will.

Their thoughts struck Olivia with the force of a physical blow. She remembered the choice she'd made. She recalled how, in her moment of greatest need, she'd kept the Celestial's powers to save Erikir's life rather than transfer them to Addy. That meant that she could never relinquish her role as the Fount, and that she would need to blood marry the Chosen prince in order to save his people.

Not his people, she reminded herself. Her people.

The Chosen were hers now, because she was the Fount. The Chosen were hers to protect. They were hers to save.

She had felt a strange protectiveness over the Chosen growing inside her over the past weeks. Now that she had fully embraced the Celestial's powers, those feelings were stronger than ever before.

"I have to die." A cornered wild animal look filled Tol's eyes. "It's the only way."

Tol glanced down at the wound in his chest, the one that should have killed him. It looked painful rather than life-threatening.

"What do I do?" he whispered. For some reason, Tol's panicked gaze found Olivia's. Olivia felt tears burn her throat.

The vision she'd seen over and over for the last few weeks, of Addy sobbing on a shore, was playing out before her. Olivia had done everything she could to give Addy and Tol the happiness they deserved. In the end, none of it had mattered. Olivia had chosen to become the Fount for eternity.

"Maybe there's another way," Olivia said, almost to herself.

"Haven't you done enough?" Addy snapped, her green eyes blazing with anger and betrayal. "If you hadn't wasted your magic on the weasel," she glared daggers at Erikir before turning back to Olivia, "we wouldn't be in this position right now."

Olivia flinched back. Her sister had never spoken to her that way before. Addy had never before looked at Olivia with something like loathing.

Olivia wanted to shrink into an invisible ball. *I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry!* she wanted to chant. There was no point in apologizing for something she couldn't undo—wouldn't undo, even if she could.

Her stomach turned over.

She couldn't stand that she had caused the broken look on her sister's face. And yet, she'd made the only decision she could make.

There had to be some way to fix this.

Olivia forced herself to meet Addy's challenging stare. "If we talk to the Celestial, maybe—"

"We don't have time for more guesswork," Tol said, his voice heavy with defeat. "Our people are out of time."

"We may not need to guess," Olivia said, her confidence rising as her strength returned.

She closed her eyes and let her consciousness sink back into the place it had been a few minutes ago.

Before, she never would have been able to reach out across worlds and connect with another mind. But everything was different now. She was no longer the timid, cautious girl who retreated to quiet corners with a book. She was the savior of the Chosen race. She wouldn't fail them.

As soon as she needed her magic, it was there. The rippling, colorful strands organized themselves in her mind. A narrow beam of light took shape in the distance. *Celestial?* she thought.

Fount.

A surge of strength went through her at the sound of the Celestial's voice. It was like a kind of homecoming. Something inside Olivia sighed in relief.

We were just wondering....

Minutes later, she opened her eyes.

"Livy?" Addy asked. She was clutching her garden shears with so much force her fingers had gone white.

Olivia looked at Tol, whose gaze was boring into her.

"There might be a way for you to..." Olivia paused, trying to bring the Celestial's exact words to the surface, "purify your blood."

She didn't say what was aching obvious to all of them. The Celestial hadn't been clear on the price Tol would need to pay to remove all traces of Addy from his blood. Whatever it was, it might very well destroy him.

Olivia continued, "The Celestial said if this is what you want, you have to go to Vitaquias and bargain directly with the gods."

It sounded like such a pathetic offering.

Why couldn't my life have been the price needed for Addy and Tol's happiness?

Olivia forced out the rest of the words, even though they felt like hot coals burrowing into her chest. "The Celestial said that if you can convince the gods to purge your blood, then you'll be able to blood marry...me."

For several seconds, no one spoke.

"I'm sorry, Olivia," Tol said roughly. Disgust twisted his mouth, and even though Olivia knew it wasn't revulsion at her, it made her want to shrink away from him. "I know you don't want this any more than I do."

Olivia let out a jagged sigh. "It's the price we have to pay for saving our people, right?" She forced a brave expression on her face.

Tol didn't look at her when he asked, "If I can...purge my blood, will you agree to bind yourself to me?"

Olivia had to resist the absurd impulse to laugh. She'd never imagined what it would feel like to be proposed to, but if she had, she wouldn't have pictured this. Tol looked like he'd rather die than be with her.

"Yes," she said simply, because there was nothing else to say.

"I have to do this," Tol told Addy. There was apology and desperation in his voice. "I vowed to save my people, and I couldn't live with myself if I failed them."

"Let me come to Vitaquias with you," Addy said in a whisper.

Tol shook his head. "It'll only make things harder, in the end."

Olivia's heart twisted.

She glanced at Erikir. The anger he usually hid behind was nowhere to be seen. He looked like he was going to be sick.

Whatever she'd had with Erikir no longer mattered. Just as Tol was distancing himself from Addy, Olivia needed to accept the consequences of her decision. She couldn't let herself think about what might have been between her and Erikir if she'd been free to love whomever she chose.

All at once, Olivia's thoughts slid away. Everything around her disappeared.

“Liv?” Fred called from somewhere far away. “Your eyes are turning silver....”

She felt the black veil being pulled over her sight. And then she was inside a vision.

She had never been to London, but she recognized Big Ben and Westminster Abbey. Both were on fire.

People were running through the streets, choking on ash and smoke as they tried to outpace the flames. Some of them managed to escape onto side streets that were spared from the fire’s path. Others weren’t so lucky.

The fire ravishing the city wasn’t a natural one. The flames were blue.

Olivia could feel their heat filling the air. The hoses being used to fight the flames were useless. When the fire caught on one of the firemen’s suits, it burned right through the fabric.

Olivia heard the man’s screams as clear as if she were standing right beside him. The flames ate away at his protective gear until his skin was on fire. The blue flames licked at his skin, devouring his body. His shriek turned spine-chilling as the fire ravaged his vocal cords.

Olivia could barely stand to look, but she couldn’t turn away. She was rooted in place as the jets of water pummeling the flames went right through the fire without lessening its impact.

Another shout turned her attention away from the fireman for only a second. By the time she turned back, there was nothing more than a pile of smoking ashes where a man had once stood.

Olivia threw herself into the fray, trying to help...trying to save. But she wasn’t really there, and her reaching hands passed through the people as if she herself was smoke.

“Run!” she cried, even though they already were, and no one could hear her, anyway.

Laughter rang through the air. The sound was familiar and raised the hairs on the back of Olivia’s neck. The Supernal, as tall as some of the buildings he had set aflame, hovered over the city. His entire body pulsed with the same blue glow as the fire that was devouring London. Balls of fire appeared on his palms. He threw them down at the people below, chuckling when the bursts of fire exploded and turned people—entire families—into smoking corpses.

Olivia stumbled out of the vision on a gasp.

“Are you alright?” Erikir’s steady hold on her was all that kept her on her feet. She could still feel the flames’ heat on her skin.

“What did you see?” Jaxon asked as he replaced his blade in the scabbard across his back.

“London,” she managed, her throat still thick with the memory of ashes. “It was burning.”

Her heart was pounding a fearsome rhythm. There was something she needed to understand about this vision...something beyond the horrendous images she’d seen.

“When?” Gerth demanded. “How much time do we have?”

Her stomach dropped out. She realized what it was that had bothered her so much about this vision.

When she had a vision of the future, the image had a kind of fuzziness around the edges. The one she’d just had was perfectly clear.

That meant everything she’d seen had already happened.

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