



428 Only You 2

Eve 1

The knock on the door drew me out of the thoughts I had been lost in. Before I could rise, Elliot had already sprung to his feet and raced to the door. He opened it, and Montegue's frame filled the doorway, a wide smile on his face as he peered down at his grandson.

"Why, hello there," he greeted, reaching out so Elliot could take his hand, which he did. "You look ready to meet her." He remarked lightly before his gaze lifted to meet mine. "You look like a proper prince."

Elliot flushed, hiding his smile behind his hand, his eyes darting up to me, waiting for me to add my own compliment.

I grinned softly, nodding. "You are always adorable, but today your cuteness is exponential."

He flushed even more, swinging one foot.

Dressed in a formal traditional royal ensemble, a dark, tailored green that made his eyes gleam, he was the most adorable child in the world. But

I was probably biased—because he was mine.

He tampered with the nerves knotting my gut, just enough to ease me, even as Montegue and I met each other's eyes.

His face took on that soft, adoring expression, but there was a serious edge to his voice as he spoke. "The High Gamma will soon be arriving," he supplied. "How are you feeling?" he asked, closing the distance between us with Elliot in tow.

There were no words that could accurately describe the sensations wreaking havoc inside me at that moment.

Gooseflesh prickled along my arms, my hands were clammy, my stomach churned, and my heart felt like it had risen into my throat. That was how it felt to stand on the verge of meeting the head of Obsidian's military. The commander of the Gamma force.

After almost six months of being wound tight by challenge after challenge in the Obsidian Tower, I was utterly and completely unprepared to come face to face with yet another character in this unraveling story. 2

If not for the Obsidian Council that I had forced



myself into—and having tasted the venom of their politics, the sting of their suspicion, and the bitter weight of their expectations—I might have already folded under the pressure. But still... this was different.

This was the High Gamma.

Not another scheming Alpha with silver-coated lies. Not a bureaucrat too fat on their own influence to notice the rot beneath them. This was the hand of Obsidian's will. The commander of the Gammas. The shadow that enforced law and order in this Tower and beyond. A person whose word was iron among the ranks.

A person only beneath the Alpha and his Beta.

I swallowed hard, realizing my palms were trembling.

But even though it felt like I had a live wire under my skin, I knew we needed them. For my plans to work, I needed military input. This was war, after all.

Montegue must have noticed, because he squeezed Elliot's shoulder and tilted his head slightly at me, as though offering silent reassurance. His smile had thinned, though—it was no longer the soft doting of a grandfather,



but the sharp patience of a man who knew what was about to enter the room could change everything.

Elliot looked up at me, concern flickering in those wide green eyes that always undid me. "Mummy?" he whispered softly, his voice only for me.

I forced a smile that felt steadier than I was. I crouched to smooth a hand down his sleeve, straightening the already-perfect cuff. "I'm alright," I lied. "You just look so handsome it's stealing my breath."

That made him grin again, shy but luminous, and he leaned into me for a quick hug.

I was not afraid—not exactly. I was exhilarated, even as dread coiled in me. I had the backing of the pack leaders now, so what came next would either secure us completely—giving us the leash we needed over the precarious situation—or toss everything back into chaos.

Darius would be watching for a slip-up, for a traitor willing to negotiate, a double agent willing to cripple us from the inside. I needed these men on my side—assured, aligned, and on top of everything—as we awaited Hades' and



Kael's return.

I held onto Elliot tighter than I should have, because the knock came again.

This time, heavier. More certain.

Montegue's eyes flicked toward the door. His smile was gone completely now, his expression carved into something unreadable. "It is time." 1

The air thickened. My heart climbed higher into my throat.

The High Gamma had arrived.

I made my way to the door, only for a light hand to settle on my shoulder.

I turned to Montegue.

My stomach flipped as I took in his glossy gaze, eyes welling with tears. "Monte..." I grabbed for his shoulders, panicking.

He smiled at me, and only then did I realize how much I now towered over him. He was more hunched than I remembered. Or perhaps I had simply never noticed.

He accepted my hand, his quivering on my shoulder. "You are so beautiful, Evie," he muttered, emotion coloring his tone. 1



I stood stunned, his words settling hard and heavy in my chest.

A tear slipped down his cheek, but he didn't bother wiping it away. "I am so proud of you, of just how much you've grown. I was so afraid when I read the letter. After all the years of spinning through the hassles of this court, of sharpening wisdom and wielding intelligence..." He chuckled faintly to himself. "It no longer mattered. I saw the end of Obsidian in an instant. Maybe it had always been there. When fear takes root, it drowns out everything else. For years, I feared the end of Obsidian—feared that Malrik Valmont's schemes would outlive us, that we would end as our mother, Elysia, did. That one day, the war would finally claim us all."

I let him speak, wary of breaking down with him.

"When there is fear, it seems to dwarf every other thing." His smile widened, trembling at the edges. "But you..." his voice broke, "...you saw through our foes. You read them to filth. I've lived long enough to know one truth in this damned world we're all fighting to survive in—" his grip on my shoulder tightened with reassurance, "Evie... if Obsidian is to endure, it will be because of you." 3

