

Chapter 140

Adelaide

While everyone was inside, talking and catching up, I found myself sitting in the corner, watching Violet as she tried to crawl on a plaid. Even though my focus should've been on Violet and Violet only—it wasn't.

It was on Elyx...

Not because I wanted to, but because he was staring at me with those dark eyes. Neither of us had to say a word to feel the tension, and I knew what my problem was—but what was his?

I couldn't stop thinking about it. About how he...they...would betray me, and most importantly—why?

If he truly didn't trust me, if he was really against me—then why would he bring his children here?

Just like that, my gaze shifted to the two toddlers. Kayden, who still had his arms wrapped around Elyx's legs, and Kylan, who stood with his arms crossed, mimicking his dad's gaze.

I had to admit, for a two-year-old, he had an attitude that was way too advanced. One could tell he was already trying to be like Elyx, but it was cute.

I gave him a small wave to grab his attention, then patted my lap, inviting him over. Kylan didn't move at first. Instead, he looked up at Elyx as if he was asking for permission.

Only when Elyx gave him a nod and a small nudge did Kylan finally walk toward me—somehow trying to keep himself steady on his two tiny legs. It was too adorable. As soon as he reached me, I stuck out my hands and wrapped my arms around his small body.

"Hey," I said softly. "It's really nice to meet you, Kylan."

Kylan responded with a weak grunt and a tiny eye roll.

"You are just too cute," I cooed, playfully poking his tummy. His face turned pink, and he quickly looked down.

So he did get shy...

"Baby?" A small voice suddenly spoke behind him. It was Kayden who had joined us, his big brown eyes flickering between me and Kylan. I took a quick glance at Elyx, who was talking to the others, leaving me alone with his sons.

"Yes, baby," I answered. "Her name is Violet. Do you want to see her?"

Kayden hummed, and I picked up Violet from the floor. She squealed in protest, waving her fists around as I settled her on my lap. Seconds later, both boys knelt in front of her, their expressions filled with awe.

As I studied them carefully, I could tell that they really did look like Elyx. They had his face, his eyes—but Kayden's hair was slightly lighter than Kylan's, and I could tell from one glance that while he was shy at first, he was probably a bit brighter in energy as well.

"She no walk?" Kayden squinted, inspecting Violet.

I shook my head, giggling at his sentence.

He tapped his chin. "Talk?"

I shook my head again.

Kayden frowned, almost looking offended. "But why?"

"She's a baby," I explained with a soft laugh. "She'll walk and talk when she's bigger."

Kayden's face lit up. "Like me?"

"Yes, like you."

"I like walking," a grin spread across his face.

I let out a sigh. "I'm sure you do."

He released another hum, then reached out to slip his tiny finger between Violet's hand. "So chubby!" he cheered, wiggling it. As expected, Violet giggled, kicking her feet.

I smiled, feeling bittersweet. It was a nice moment, seeing them together like this. My daughter, and the two sons of the guy I once called my best friend. I named his children, he named mine—but none of that would matter.

Unfortunately, I knew it wouldn't last.

They wouldn't even remember each other.

Kylan, who had been very quiet, tilted his head as he studied Violet like she was some strange creature.

"Do you like her?" I asked.

"No, not really." Kylan shook his head without hesitation. "She's loud."

I let out a chuckle. "You should hear her when she's hungry."

I hadn't even noticed that Kylan walked to the back to tickle Violet's feet until she let out a burst of loud giggles. His expression changed as he gasped with wide eyes. "Feet is tiny!"

He then lifted it to his nose and sniffed, scrunching his face. "Stinky!"

Kayden joined him and leaned forward to do the same—only to react exactly like his brother. I burst out laughing, shaking my head. These two were definitely something.

"Violet, kiss?" Kayden suddenly wobbled toward Violet's head, Kylan following right behind him. He watched closely as Kayden leaned down and pressed a soft kiss to Violet's forehead.

"She likes me!" Kayden giggled. Kylan huffed, pushing him aside before doing the same. Once he pulled back, he looked at me with those curious eyes again.

"Violet?" he asked.

I smiled. "Yes, Violet."

My heart was full watching them. Other than Violet, I didn't have much experience with children—but there was just something about these two, something I couldn't quite put my finger on. They were just toddlers, innocent to all the evil around them, sweet—but still, I found myself wondering...

What would they grow up to be?

"Boys," I called gently. "Come here."

Both of them listened without hesitation, and I reached out, grabbing each of their small hands in mine while balancing Violet in my lap. Since I was pretty sure I wouldn't be seeing them again, I was willing to go against my own rule and look into their future—the two boys I named.

Closing my eyes, I let my energy flow through them. Before I could get anywhere, a sudden darkness shot through my veins. It wasn't just regular darkness—it was unlike anything I had ever felt before, beyond explanation, so strong it made my breath hitch in my throat.

My chest tightened, my eyes flew open, and I released their hands instantly.

What...was that?

Was it darkness or power?

Both boys blinked at me, unaware of what had just happened. I covered my worries with a smile, but deep down, I knew that whatever it was, it wasn't normal—it wasn't right.

The only thing I knew was that it was indeed a stupid move, and I wouldn't do it again. I didn't care what it meant, didn't care if it was supposed to be some kind of warning or a glimpse into their future—but I had bigger things to worry about.

If one of these boys—maybe even both—were destined to die, or to become monsters, or whatever the hell I just felt—then so be it.

That would be years from now, and right now, they were just children.

Right now, they were just two little boys who were amazed with my Violet.

"The two of you have been very kind to Violet," I praised them, patting their small heads before pulling them into a hug.

Whatever that thing was, I had to stop thinking about it—because it had terrified the crap out of me.

"So?" A sweet voice broke through my thoughts. "What's your verdict?"

My eyes followed Claire as she lowered herself onto the floor, joining us. "Are they just as terrible as their dad, or—"

"Just one," I said before she could finish. "At least...I think. I'm not sure yet."

Claire's smile faded, replaced with a look of worry. "Which one?" She glanced at the boys. "It's him, isn't it?"

She looked at Kylan, but I tried to play it off with a laugh and shook my head. "It doesn't matter."

Both boys decided they were done with Violet and suddenly took off running back to Elyx.

"Daddy!" Kayden called out. He had reached him first, and Elyx instantly scooped him up with a proud look on his face.

He didn't even glance at Kylan, who held his distance—something I had noticed he had been doing a lot. It was like there was a clear barrier between the two.

Claire sighed, watching it all play out. "I mean, it must be him," she said. "Elyx doesn't even care about the poor kid. How could he ever learn how to love if he's never received it?"

I barely listened. It wasn't my business, and I had heavier things on my mind. I knew Violet would be loved, Aelius told me—and that was more than enough for me.

"It shouldn't come as a surprise," Claire continued, shifting closer. "One is his mate's, the other is his favorite mistress's—"

"So, when is your pup coming?" I cut her off before she could finish.

Whatever she had to say about Elyx and the poor women he mistreated in the palace—I really did not want to hear it.

Claire's lips curled into a soft smile. "Should be anytime now."

"Anytime," I repeated, exhaling. "I hope I get to experience it."

The corners of Claire's lips twitched before her face went pale, the color draining with each second. She stared at me with a dead expression, like I had just said something terrible.

Something was wrong, and I knew it had to do with the betrayal.

"Claire, are you okay?"