

Chapter 155

Violet

I stared down at the mat, sweat nearly dripping from my forehead as I did another push-up. One wouldn't have guessed it, but Commander Jorn ran across the training hall, clapping his hands and yelling like always.

Strangely enough, I could almost keep up with everyone today. Almost!

If I wasn't so sore and tired from yesterday, I probably could've given it my all. It was too bad my arms felt like jelly—and to make matters worse, my brain couldn't focus with all his yelling.

I know Adelaide would've pushed through, but I also knew that I definitely didn't see the old Elite team do any of these exercises when I was in the Veil. The training days in the past were definitely easier than this.

I changed the position of my hands, stumbling a bit—and then a soft fist suddenly connected with my back. It was Commander's...of course.

It was just a little touch, but it was enough to make me drop flat to the mat.

"Ow!" I muttered, grabbing my nose as I managed to sit up. It hurt like crazy, but I took a breath, trying not to overreact as I blinked through the stinging pain.

Laughter filled the hall.

It wasn't mean laughter though, not like before. This time, it didn't feel like everyone was against me.

I cursed internally as Commander Jorm knelt in front of me, his annoying grin already making me regret even thinking about sitting up. He moved closer, looked at me with squinting eyes, then held his fingers close together, only leaving a small space between them.

“You were this close, Hastings!” he said. “This close. I was just about to praise you.”

Yeah, right.

He saw I was about to succeed and had to find a quick way to drop me to the floor so he could punish me.

“What am I going to do with you, Hastings?” he clicked his tongue.

I sighed, shaking my head. “Hopefully stop bullying me,” I then mumbled before I could stop myself.

“What did you just say?”

“I said I hope you’ll stop bullying me, sir.”

This time, it wasn’t laughter that filled the room, but gasps instead—as if no one believed words like that could ever come from my mouth. But I had enough.

Jorm arched his brow. “Excuse me?”

I sat up straighter. “You always have something to say about me. You shout at me more than anyone else—like I’m not trying, when I’ve been breaking my back since day one,” I snapped. “And now, when I can finally keep up, you still find something to pick on...”

Just when I thought I was finished, my mouth opened again. “I know you

don't want me on your team, and I know you're trying to get rid of me—but I'm staying. And if you can't take it, then you should leave.”

Commander Jorn was speechless, but the look on his face said plenty. He looked as if he was about to shoot fire from his nostrils.

I could feel my heart racing, my body heating up—and it was definitely not from the push-ups. The ring on my finger started to burn against my skin, pushing me to hide my hand behind my back. Forcing myself to stay calm, I gripped the mat behind me.

I knew the ring was protecting me, but without it, my eyes would've probably lit up like a disco ball by now.

“She didn't mean it. She's tired, Commander!” Kylan spoke, suddenly scooting beside me.

Yes, I was tired—tired of his crap.

Kylan covered my hand with his, and that's when the burning feeling went away.

“Violet had a long night.”

“I bet she did,” Commander Jorn hummed. “I bet both of you did.”

The room burst into laughter again, and my face turned red. I knew exactly what he was implying, and I hated him for it. I hated everything about this man.

“You know how this goes, Captain,” Jorn addressed Kylan, putting extra pressure on the title like he was trying to remind him of something. “We've already been here too many times.”

Kylan simply exhaled.

Jorn crossed his arms. “Laps for Hastings, or she sits out and the team runs her laps for her inst—actually, never mind. Laps for Hastings!”

“No, she’s not running laps!” Kylan said. His words came out strong and clear.

Everyone turned their heads so fast I swore I could hear it. Kylan was a lot of things, but despite being the heir to Lyperia, he had never raised his voice at his superiors before—and had always remained respectful.

Jorn gave Kylan a daring look, once again left speechless.

“I just told you she can’t do it,” Kylan said, his tone dropping a bit. It was still just as sharp. “Commander,” he added, “...and the team will not be running her laps either.”

Jorn’s face turned red—angry red.

“Then you will go outside now and run her laps. But someone will run them.”

His tone with Kylan wasn’t as rough as it had been with me.

“How about you do it?” I said without thinking. I didn’t know what was happening to me—or my mouth—but I couldn’t hold myself back, although I knew it probably would’ve been best for everyone’s sake.

Jorn stared at me, his fist balled by his sides, and I stared right back, mirroring his gaze. I knew he was only glaring at me to scare me, but it didn’t work. I had seen too many dark things already—like the King of the Underworld. I was left for death a few days ago—nothing scared me anymore.

“You know what?” Commander Jorn said after a long pause. He twisted his lips and held out his hands like an uneven scale. “Captain, Elite member, prince, student, boyfriend, girlfriend...Lyperian mistress.”

The last one was uncalled for...

“I think the two of you are still figuring things out—clearly both a bit overwhelmed—and forgot that that is no way to speak to your commander...I’ll let it pass this time.”

A few muffled laughs filled the room.

“Training is over!” Jorn shouted. He got up rather fast, then stormed away, affected by everything that just went down.

People around us started getting up as well, chatting and making their way out. I stayed on the mat, still feeling a little pissed as I rubbed my nose.

“Look at me,” Kylan crouched in front of me. He gently grabbed my face and tilted it to the side, inspecting my nose.

“Is it still pretty?” I chuckled softly, breaking the tension. “Or is it crooked?”

He didn’t laugh.

Instead, he let out a frustrated breath and looked at me with his piercing gaze. “You can’t lose control, Violet,” he whispered, voice low. “Not like that. And especially not in front of Commander Jorn.”

He was serious—by now I knew he only used my name like that when he was really, really serious.

"I know," I said, just above a whisper. I was not going to lie—lashing out at Jorn felt good. Only, I wasn't quite sure why I did it. It was like something inside of me just snapped, and only after speaking my mind did I feel at ease again.

"Knowing is easy. It's what you decide to do with that knowledge," Kylan spoke softly, brushing my cheek with the back of his fingers.

He was right. I couldn't argue with that. I didn't even want to think about what would happen if I lost it in front of everyone and had to explain my glowing eyes.

But it was easy for him to say when he wasn't the one feeling it.

"Are you hurt?"

"No."

His lips curled slightly as he patted my cheek, and I couldn't help it—I melted into his gaze. He might be annoying at times, but he was always there for me. Always.

"Good."

—

After training I cleaned up in the locker room showers, threw on some fresh clothes, then left. When I stepped out, I spotted Dylan, Nate, and Kylan standing together, talking.

As I walked over, Kylan's eyes immediately met mine.

"I was just asking Dylan about where that big mouth of yours suddenly came from," Nate said. He sounded normal, and his eyes weren't as red

anymore. Hopefully, that meant the Lunar is had worn off a little.

"I didn't mean to lash out like that," I said, looking between the two of them. "It was wrong of me."

"I think you had every right," Nate shrugged. "That guy's had it out for you since day one. I kind of get it."

Before we could dive more into the subject, Kylan cut in. "I have a few more classes," he said. "So you're staying with Dylan, and you will not leave his side."

Okay?

I frowned for a second, ready to start an argument—but I was too exhausted. Commander Jorn had already sucked all the life out of me, and I was not talking about the training, but the person.

"Yes, sure."

Kylan seemed pleasingly surprised, as if he had expected me to fight back. He rested his hand on my waist for a moment and gave it a squeeze. "Be good," he said. Then he walked off with Nate by his side.

Kylan and Nate...

Those two were quite the combo. One minute they were friends, then they weren't. Since he was bound to be by Kylan's side just like his dad was stuck to the king, both of them didn't have much choice either way.

Nate glanced back and waved. I raised my hand in return, then waited in silence until they were out of sight and I was completely left alone with Dylan.

“So,” I sighed. “I assume we’re having lunch with Trin?”

He nodded, and I followed him as he began walking in silence. We didn’t speak, but I could tell something was on his mind. It was his breathing—the way he inhaled, then exhaled, like he was about to say something, only to close his mouth again, like he was still deciding whether to do it or not.

I let out a laugh. “If you’ve got something to say, just say it.”

He widened his eyes as he looked at me, then took a short breath. “Okay,” he said. “I don’t like the way he’s ordering you around, and I don’t like anything about this ‘mate bond’ of yours.”

I looked ahead and frowned a little. Did he even have his own opinion? Or was this just Uncle Fergus’s voice in his head, telling him how horrible this pairing was from the start?

Because considering the circumstances, I could actually understand Uncle Fergus’ reasonings—but Dylan was completely out of the loop. There was no reason for him to be so heavily against it.

“I thought you and Kylan were friends.”

“We are,” Dylan answered quickly. “But that doesn’t mean I want to see you locked away in Lyperia or heartbroken over their idiotic rules.”

I hummed. “I survived the Bloodrose. I’ll survive the Lyperians.”

What he didn’t know was that it would just be for a few years, and I would be perfectly fine. What was the worst that could happen besides getting my heart broken by someone who had already made his intentions very clear?

Dylan glanced at me from the side. "If you believe Lyperia is anything close to the Bloodrose pack, then I'm afraid you're in for a surprise."

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