



Chapter 177

Violet

I twirled in front of the mirror, admiring the short, black bouffant dress on my body. I purposely ignored the pile of dresses on my bed because every time I looked at it, I was reminded that we would be leaving for Lyperia tomorrow, and I hadn't even packed yet.

I was supposed to meet Kyran downstairs, as we had agreed to go to the picnic together, but I had already lost track of time.

Who was I trying to impress?

Obviously, him.

Was it pathetic?

Yes, a little, but I didn't care. I liked his little compliments, the way he would lift his brow before he would even consider giving them, because compliments weren't his thing, but then he would end up doing it anyway.

My fingers brushed through my ponytail, and then they moved to pull down the puffed shoulders of the dress just a little.

Satisfied, I gave myself one last nod before turning and walking toward the door. I was about halfway, but then I stopped. Hesitantly, I rushed back to the nearest mirror, then tugged the front of the dress just a bit lower to show more cleavage.

"Come on, Violet," I tilted my head. "What are you even doing?"

Coming back to my senses, I quickly pulled back up.

"Trin, I'm out!"

"Okay, have fun!" she yelled from her room. "Keep an eye on Dylan for me, and make sure he behaves!"

—

I rushed to make my way to the front of the building, where I was supposed to meet up with Kylan.

My heart made a quick jump the second I spotted him from behind, and I stopped to take a quick breath. He looked so casual compared to me.

Dark pants, a simple black shirt. It even made me think that perhaps I had gone too far with this dress and probably looked like a total idiot. It was not too late to turn around and change.

As I was about to turn back around, Kylan had done so instead, and our eyes met. A smile tugged at his lips, confirming my suspicions. See? I looked ridiculous.

I took a breath, then planting a confident smile on my face. Kylan's eyes swept over me slowly as I walked closer. Without saying a word, he reached out and took my hand, gently spinning me around.

I laughed as the skirt of my dress twirled with me. He stopped me by wrapping one arm around my waist from behind and tugged softly on my ponytail with the other.

"So many things I could use this for," he commented, tugging it a bit harder. My head tipped back in the process, and a soft sound escaped from my lips. I felt his breath moving closer to my ear. "And not one of them is appropriate in public."



Before I could process his words, he kissed the corner of my lips, then released me like it was nothing. My heart skipped a beat, and I knew I was probably as red as a tomato. He did it so naturally now, without giving it a second thought. He was doing all these little things like they were normal, but it was not.

At least, it wasn't supposed to be for him...

"You can try it out next time," I beamed, playfully smacking his chest. "We've already missed training because of you, and you still don't know how to stop!"

He rolled his eyes, chuckling. "Neither can you," he said, throwing his arm over my shoulder as we started walking. "You look good, by the way."

I gave a light hum, like I hadn't been waiting for his compliment. "Thanks."

"How did the talk with Rochwall go?"

I glanced up at him. "Well...he remembers."

He stopped for half a second. "He remembers?"

"Yes, he remembers."

His expression tightened. "What did he say, and what did he want from you?"

"He —" I paused, choosing my words carefully. Kyran believed Aelius's word, and the last time I had told him something stupid about pulling my parents out of the Veil, he hadn't liked it. Now Rochwall was talking about helping me train Lumia and restore my so-called legacy,



something Aelius was heavily against.

There was no doubt he would be upset about it, and I wasn't even going to do it, so there was no reason to tell him.

"He apologized," I said, smiling. "And he said he'd look out for me. Keep me safe."

Luckily, Kylan's face relaxed right away. "That's great!" he said.

"Yes," I mumbled. "That is great, but we'll talk about it later. All I want to do now is get to this picnic and go back to sleep. Tomorrow we've got a long day ahead of us."

—

We walked through the woods, his arm still wrapped around my shoulder as he led the way, following the sounds of laughter that grew louder with each step. It was a big change from Rochwall's yelling earlier today. This time, it actually sounded like they were having fun.

Once we finally reached the group, plaids were already spread across the grass, there were several baskets with fresh food, and drinks were being passed.

Everyone was sitting together in a big circle, talking and laughing.

"There they are!"

I followed the direction of the voice and caught Rochwall standing beside a tree with a bottle in his hand. After our talk, he looked like a whole new person, relaxed, calm, the old Rochwall.

I flinched in surprise and stood closer to Kylan as the team began



clapping and cheering like we had just announced something big. Dylan, who leaned against one of the trees, had his arms folded, eyes squinted like he was close to finding something out.

Nervously, I tore my gaze away from him and looked at Kylan, who was just as confused. Not by Dylan, he hadn't noticed that part—but by the cheers. If there was something we had in common, it was that we both hated being the center of attention.

Nate straightened one of the plaids beside him, then patted the spot. "There you go, royalty," he grinned. "A special spot for the future queen and king of Lyperia."

Dylan let out a quiet scoff. One I only caught because I was watching for his reaction. He really wasn't liking any of this.

Kylan squeezed my shoulder, pulling me closer to lead me toward the spot Nate had set for us. He guided me to sit first before settling down beside me.

"Your dress is cute!" Mandy gave me a big thumbs up from across the blanket.

I gave her a small smile and watched as she swung a little wooden stick with chocolate covered strawberries in the air.

"Eat up!"

"No thank you," I declined with a polite smile. "Actually, I don't eat strawberries, and I'm not a big fan of chocolate."

The next thing I knew, I felt a finger under my chin as Kylan gently tilted my head to face him. "Since when?" he asked, narrowing those curious brown eyes.

"Since..." I raised a brow. "The day I was born?"

Dylan released a dramatic sigh and pushed himself from the tree. He walked over and dropped onto the blanket. Then he reached over to grab a sandwich.

"Here you go," he said, passing it to me. "A crispy chicken sandwich. Violet loves those. It's her favorite."

"It is," I gasped, touched he even remembered.

It was a small, irrelevant detail. Back at the Bloodrose, I had been so convinced he wasn't even paying attention to me, but I was wrong.

Kylan leaned forward so he could look at my face. He studied me like I was some kind of puzzle he had missed a piece of. "Crispy chicken sandwich?" he asked, confused. "Your favorite?"

I was just about to answer, but Dylan beat me to it. "Yes. There are a lot of things you don't know about her, Kylan," he snarled.

I heard Kylan inhale, and knew he was not going to let it go this time. Dylan's tone had indeed been a bit too harsh. Desperate to stop whatever altercation from happening, I reached out for the strawberry stick and pushed it into Kylan's hands.

"Here. Jumper likes strawberries, doesn't she?"

"Who's Jumper?" someone asked.

"His pet squirrel!" I replied without thinking.

Although too late, Kylan gave my flank a slight squeeze.

Shit.

Me and my big mouth...

"A squirrel?" Rochwall snickered from the side. "Pets are strictly forbidden at Starlight, so I'm just going to pretend like I didn't hear anything."

The whole group responded with laughter, calling out Kylan for being somewhat cute, while I turned to look at him with clenched teeth. "I'm so, so sorry," I whispered under my breath.

He just chuckled, leaning down to kiss my cheek. "I knew you wanted to get rid of her, but this is a little..."

"No," I denied, whispering. "I love that little, evil thing. I even healed her for you."

"Are you ready to go to Lyperia?" one of the guys called out.

"Ready?" Nate cackled, answering the question that was meant for me. "How can you ask Vivi of all people if she's ready to go to Lyperia?"

The team burst out in full-blown laughter, while I glanced at Rochwall, who had stepped away from the tree with his bottle in his hand.

"My children," he spoke loudly, grabbing everyone's attention. That's what he always called us—his children.

"It's always a bit rocky at the beginning of the year, when new students join the team," he continued. "But those who have joined have adjusted well. I'm glad to see that."

He stepped into the center of the group. "I want to say a few words," he

Commented [Ma1]:



added, his tone sounding slightly more serious.

Everyone quieted down. "To those leaving tomorrow," he began, "you've trained hard, and please don't let it be for nothing. Continue to work on your condition, and come back even stronger."

Then his eyes landed on me and Kylan. "And to the two of you," he said, taking a small breath, "I hope whatever you share is bigger than the influence of the real world outside. Because they will try and tear you apart, and they have succeeded before, isn't that right, Kylan?"

I heard a small, annoyed grunt behind me.

Was he referring to the queen? Kylan's mom?

After those words were spoken, a very uncomfortable silence followed. My skin felt itchy. I didn't know where to look, so I just looked back at Rochwall. "Well anyway, cheers!" he awkwardly said, raising his bottle.

Even though the laughter eventually picked back up, the mood was already ruined. Now all I could do was stare at the trees ahead, hoping for the best once we made it past them.

Everything until now had been a warm-up, because tomorrow, the real game would begin.

This kind of events will not be posted on the current date

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