

## Chapter 187

Violet

Minutes had passed, but I was still standing around the corner, frozen in place.

I hadn't moved a muscle. Not since Kayden looked right at me with that smirk of his, then rolled away like nothing had happened. Like he hadn't just seen my glowing eyes.

Or maybe he hadn't.

Maybe I had only imagined it, and it was nothing more than a kind smile. 

But what if it wasn't?

A groan escaped my lips as I bumped my forehead against the cold wall, again and again. Maybe if I tried hard enough, I would actually disappear.

"Stupid," I whispered, frustrated.

What the hell had I just done?

What made me think it was okay to let my eyes glow in a palace, of all places?

My head tapped the wall again.

Was I supposed to just act like it didn't happen? Or was I supposed to find Kylan and tell him I had managed to fuck everything up five minutes after stepping into this cursed palace?

That he might as well drop the act and just let me be, because it would only be a matter of time before everyone would find out what I truly am.

That was if Kayden did see me...

"Violet, you stupid, stupid, stupid..."

I froze as a door behind me creaked open. My heart skipped a beat as I turned, patiently waiting for another disaster to happen. It was the door to the room I was supposed to be in, to meet this woman who was supposedly about to ruin my life.

I had expected to see someone, but all I heard was a loud, clear voice. "And if she's not in front of me in ten seconds, I'll make all of you pay!"

Next, a maid came stumbling out. Her face looked pale, tired, and tight with nerves. Her teeth chattered as she scanned the hall with her eyes, but when her gaze landed on mine, she released a relieved breath.

"Princess Violet?" she began walking toward me. She sounded both unsure and hopeful.

"Y-Yes, but I'm not a pr—"

"Dear Goddess, thank you!"

The girl bowed her head quickly, cutting me off. Then, without another word, she rushed forward and gently wrapped her hand around my wrist.

"Come. Please," she whispered, shifting her attention to the open door. "We don't want to make her wait any longer."

I just surrendered myself as she pulled me along, not bothering to put up a fight. She kicked the door all the way open with her foot, then pushed me inside.

This time I was the one to stumble, but managed to catch myself just in

time. My feet were glued to the marble floor as my eyes immediately began darting around the room. Even though it was big, all it was to me was another suffocating white space.

There were also maids present and lots of them. I counted ten in total.

Those poor ten girls, who all seemed to be around my age, were wearing the same black dress with puffed white shoulders. They stood in a neat line, each with the same nervous expression on their faces.

Their hands were clasped in front of them like they had rehearsed it. It was almost the same as the greeting outside, only these maids looked genuinely miserable, and Kylan's siblings seemed...fine.

The maid who had dragged me here rushed to join the line, and that's when I noticed her.

An older, grey-haired woman with her hair pulled tightly into a high bun stood in the middle of the room. Her arms were crossed, gaze sharp like I had just offended her.

There was no doubt in my mind.

That had to be Madam Renata.

"I do not care who you are," she said, her voice cutting through the awkward silence. She didn't look away from my eyes. "Without a mark, you are nothing. A nobody," she spat. "And Madam Renata doesn't wait on nobodies." 1

Her words slapped me right across the chest. Way to embarrass someone. My palms were sweaty as I tried to control myself. The last thing I needed was to let my eyes glow for a second time.

It had suddenly become that much clearer why it was so important for me to have my family or at least a friend around. Because if I had, I doubted she would talk down to me like I didn't matter.

I opened my mouth. "I was —"

"No."

My lips parted again. "I —"

"Ah —"

"I —"

"No!" Renata shouted. "Every time you speak against me, these maids," she gestured toward the group, "they will suffer for your disobedience."

Madam Renata gave me a strict look that said enough. It was way more than enough to shut me right up.

I had never felt anything like it. Not even Kylan at the beginning of Starlight, not even Queen Cecilia, not even Commander Jorm at his angriest could compare.

Madam Renata had already made up her mind about me, patiently waiting for me to prove her right. So I just kept my mouth shut and said nothing.

All I had to do was remind myself that this wouldn't be forever.

All I had to do was survive these two weeks.

With one simple lift of her hand, Renata had managed to make all ten girls step aside like they were afraid to face the consequences if they

didn't.

Once they cleared the space, I looked straight at the short, round platform that stood in the middle of the room, right in front of a big mirror. There were racks of dresses. I couldn't even count them as there were too many.

They were beautiful, undeniably expensive, and came in all colors and styles. The kind Kylan's sisters wore, and something I normally wouldn't even touch. Not because the Bloodrose couldn't afford it or because I didn't find them gorgeous, but because I feared I wouldn't be able to breathe in them.

And yes...

We were well off, but probably couldn't afford it.

Renata's eyes pierced through me again. Her nose scrunched up like she had just smelled something on me.

"I already knew what to expect of you the moment I heard you came from a village," she said coldly. "So I made some preparations."

I didn't even know what to say to that, so I just looked down again at my top, my jeans, and the whitest sneakers I had picked because I thought they would be appropriate. A sudden wave of insecurity hit me, and I pulled up my top even higher.

Kylan really messed up with this one.

He could've warned me...

Renata pointed toward the platform, and I got the message loud and clear. Not wasting a second longer, I hurried and stepped up onto the

circle.

I had barely settled before three more women I hadn't even seen came out of nowhere. They stretched my arms out, wrapped measuring tape around my waist, my chest, my legs. One of them even scribbled something down on a notepad while the others moved like they didn't know how to stop.

I had no clue what was happening. 1

Honestly? I didn't even care.

For now, my biggest worry was Kayden in that hallway, and there was only one question on my mind.

Did he see me or not?

Well, I was lying. There was one more question.

If Cecilia's words were enough for me to lose my cool, and she was someone Kylan actually trusted me with, what else would happen within these two weeks?

No, there were three.

Should I tell Kylan and make him worry, or keep it to myself? He must've had so much on his mind already, and as silly as it sounded, I really didn't want him to think I was that stupid.

"I have fourteen days!" Renata's voice made me flinch.

I looked down at the woman, my arms still stretched out, as she started pacing slowly around the room. "Fourteen days to make you into a proper princess."



The air suddenly grew cold as I felt her presence behind me. "I've turned worse trash into something presentable in two weeks."

Trash?

Did she just call me trash?

I turned my head to glare at her, but didn't get far when I suddenly felt two light taps hit my back. Without thinking, I straightened up, causing a needle to poke into my arm.

"Ow," I mumbled.

"Sorry, princess," the three women spoke in unison.

Before I knew it, Renata was standing in front of me again. "But I've never had to turn a werewolf into a future Lyperian queen in time for the welcoming feast tomorrow night."

Feast?

What feast?

Right, that one feast Kylan hadn't said a word to me about.

I was tempted to ask what would happen at this so-called feast, but then I stopped myself. Nope, I was already feeling frustrated enough, and I wasn't even going to get into it.

Kylan could explain it later. If he survived me not killing him first.

Or maybe he would kill me first if he found out there was a possibility Kayden might've seen my eyes.

"Blue or pink, princess?"

Flustered, I blinked at the woman measuring me, surprised she was even talking to me directly. Her lips curled as she tilted her head. "What do you like most?"

"Don't bother," Madam Renata cut in before I could respond. Her tone was sharp, dismissive. "The dress will be wasted on her. She's just a placeholder."

Breathe, Violet...

It took everything I had not to snap back. I bit the inside of my cheek hard. It was hard to take because she wasn't wrong. I really was nothing more than a placeholder.

The sound of the door bursting open made everyone freeze, followed by loud gasps filling the room. One by one, everyone around me dropped into deep bows, including Madam Renata.

Even I had almost gasped, when I saw the last person I expected.

Kylan...

He stood in the doorway, jaw clenched like he was seconds away from losing it. If his meeting with the king had gone anything like mine with Renata, I didn't blame him.

The second his eyes found mine, all that tension vanished, and a warmth flickered in his expression. "Violet," he breathed, walking forward. He didn't look at anyone else. Just me.

When he reached his hand out, a warmth filled my chest. He really came for me...

I didn't wait a second. I grabbed his hand and stepped right into his arms.



The moment he held me, every bit of anger I had felt just disappeared. I leaned my face against his chest and let myself breathe.

"You're okay," he whispered, just low enough for only me to hear.

"Your Highness," Renata spoke up. She lifted her head slightly as a forced smile pulled at her lips. "It's good to see you've returned—"

"Violet, do you want a blue dress or a pink dress?" Kylan asked loudly.

I blinked up at him, stunned.

He had heard...

He had heard everything.

"Blue," I chuckled, looking right at Madam Renata. "I want a blue dress."


Through her forced grin, there was a clear flash of bitterness in her eyes. I could tell this woman didn't like being put in her place, and hated every second of it.

"She wants a blue dress," Kylan told the same woman who had asked me. His voice was calm but commanding. "So make her a blue dress."

The tiniest smirk appeared on the woman's lips as she nodded, and I could only imagine she loved seeing Madam Renata get put in her place.

Kylan's gaze dropped to mine again, and I stared right back at him. The moment our eyes met, everything else just faded, and I felt my heart flutter even more than it had this morning. It was that familiar feeling only he could bring out in me.

A small smile curved his lips. "Come on, Violet," he said. "Let's get out

of here.” 



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