

## Chapter 196

Violet

My heart skipped. I didn't know what to say. Now that she knew I was aware, was this the part where I was supposed to tell the queen she was being unfair? That she was blaming Kylan for every little thing just because it was easier than facing the truth?

Did I even have the right to say that?

"I'm surprised Kylan told you."

Cecilia looked around, making sure no one could hear us. I let out a weak chuckle. "Well...he didn't exactly have a choice."

A slight, curious frown appeared on her face. It was true that he didn't have a choice. He had told us the truth during the Elite team challenge, and it was only because he had to. I could never forget the panic in his eyes as he confessed what he had done to his brother, just for some title.

"I'm sure you've heard a lot of things about me," Cecilia said, "but you have to understand...it was not easy for me."

I felt a cold chill run down my spine. Easy for her? Did she have any idea what Kylan had gone through?

"You don't have to worry," I said before I could stop myself. "Kylan barely spoke of you."

Her face dropped for a second like she didn't expect that.

Cecilia's hand went limp and slowly slipped from mine. She didn't have to say anything, but that look in her eyes said everything I needed to

know. It was a sadness. It had bothered her that Kylan hadn't brought her up.

There was still some love there.

There had to be...

"I want you to know that it hasn't been easy for Kylan either," I said gently, trying to stay respectful. "There is one person who started all of this, and I think you and I both know who that is."

She looked at me, speechless. I knew better than to mention the king's name, but I hoped she knew where I was going with this.

I took a slow breath. I wasn't trying to fight her or get on her bad side. Not after she was one of the few who had shown me any warmth in this place. I just felt the need to stick up for Kylan because he wasn't here to defend himself.

He would've done the same for me.

"Kylan paralyzed his own brother for power," she challenged. Her voice was a bit sharper now. "Do you really not see any problem with that?"

"He told me it wasn't on purpose. And I believe him."

She scoffed lightly. "And yet that poor boy is in a wheelchair. He's either pitied or bullied by everyone for being...different."

Bullied?

"I'm not exactly a fan of Kayden myself, but he doesn't deserve that," she added.

My heart twisted. Thinking about it, it wasn't hard to imagine Kayden getting bullied. He was the 'odd one,' the one that couldn't shift. Just like me...

"Because of his actions," Cecilia went on, her voice low. "His Majesty despises me even more than he already did."

I stayed quiet.

"But since you seem to think you know everything...tell me, what should this mother do about her son?"

I took a breath, hoping my answer wouldn't disappoint her. For me, it was simple.

"My mom passed when I was younger," I told her. "But if she were still here, she would've regretted not trying to make things right with her child. She wouldn't have let pride or anger keep her from speaking to someone she still loves. Because one day, that someone might not be here anymore."

Adelaide, Claire—it was what both of them would've done. Even Sonya, who loved Dylan more than anything...

Cecilia didn't speak. She just looked at me like I had offended her, though those were really not my intentions.

I knew this might not have been the way she wanted it. A nobody, the mate of the son she despised, her little flower, speaking back to her. But she had asked me a question, and I had answered.

She let out a small, awkward chuckle. "Thanks for your insight, Violet." She smiled, but it didn't reach her eyes. Her mouth twitched, like she was holding back words.

"Irina?" she called out.

"Yes, Your Majesty?" I heard from behind.

I turned slightly. It was the same woman who had brought me to the garden earlier. She stepped forward, waiting.

Cecilia glanced at me. "Take my little flower back to her room," she said. "I think she needs some more rest. She is not in the right state of mind."

Not in the right state of mind?

I didn't argue. I just kept my mouth shut and stood up.

"Thank you for the breakfast, Queen Cecilia," I gave her a nod, failing to keep my mouth shut after all. "I want you to know that I appreciate your kindness and do not wish for my answer to complicate things between us."

Cecilia snickered, covering her mouth with her hand. "I am still very fond of you," she said. "But some lessons...some of us have to learn the hard way."

~

Some of us have to learn the hard way...

As Cecilia's lady walked me back to my room and then vanished again, leaving me standing in front of the door, those were the only words I could think about. I knew she was comparing Kylan to the king, and comparing our situation to hers, but it wasn't the same.

Kylan wasn't anything like Elyx.

He didn't rule with fear, or use people, or twist their loyalty to gain more power. Kylan had a heart.

And yes, he was still learning, but he was already a better man than that thing that betrayed Adelaide could ever be.

I knew it wasn't always best to try and fix everything, but it would be nice to make Cecilia see the truth and help the two reunite. Kaelis and Kiora reminded me a lot of Kylan as well, and it would also be nice to see them together.

If only...

Sighing deeply, I stared at the door and the two guards beside it, who stood like statues.

Right at that moment, my phone buzzed. It was a text from Trinity.

'Madam Renata's room in 20 minutes!'

I replied back. 'I'll meet you there!'

'Good. Be on time or we're dead!'

A smile grew on my face. It was so like Trinity to make it sound like a life-or-death mission, but I was afraid this time she wouldn't have been too far off. Though Lyperia was modern, the rules were so outdated, I didn't even want to know what punishment Madam Renata would come up with if we were late.

Once again, I looked at the guards. Then at the double doors. Then back at the guards.

What was the point of going back in, when I was already out?

Was I even allowed to walk these halls alone?

It was just so strange to know that the Bloodroses, the ones that were supposed to keep me company, were here, yet I hadn't seen any of them since yesterday.

Not a call, not a text.

Nothing...

What could they be doing at the moment? Maybe they were still unpacking? Having one of those meetings with the elders of the Lyperian court that needed to happen?

I knew they were talking, that something was being discussed. But I didn't know what. And I didn't know if Kylan was there, part of it, or if he was off doing something completely different.

All I knew was that I missed him.

"Excuse me?"

One of the guards straightened. "Yes, Princess."

That word again.

Princess...

I hated it.

"I was wondering if you have any idea where Prince Kylan might be?"

The guard didn't even blink. "Your Highness' whereabouts are none of our concerns. I'm sorry, Princess," he said in a robotic tone.



"Useless," I muttered under my breath. Annoyed, I let out a soft huff and turned away. There was no plan, no real destination...

As I walked, I glanced at my phone again, wishing there would be something from Kylan. Just one message.

I knew it was early, but still...not even a quick 'Are you okay?' or 'See you at the feast.'

How busy could he have been?

What if he was meeting his potential mistresses?

Or worse. What if he was with her?

His first love.

No, Violet—stop it.

Each thought was worse than the one before it. He was probably just busy. There was so much going on. His royal duties, the king, the feast tonight.

I let out a breath and kept walking, trying to shake it off. But the further I went, the quieter everything became.

At some point, I realized I had no idea where I was anymore. I had walked so far, turned so many corners, passed so many doors that all looked the same, yet nothing looked familiar.

How am I supposed to find my way back in this place?

I came to a slow stop and spun in a small circle.

"Shit," I whispered.

No guards...

No maids...

No one at all...

The halls were completely silent.

Where was I?

My heart beat in my chest, hearing the sound of wheels. Anxiously, I quickly pressed myself behind a wall to hide and held my breath.

When I took a small peek, I saw him.

Kayden...

He moved down the hallway in his wheelchair, one hand resting on the armrest, the other controlling the small remote that guided the chair. He wasn't with the maid who had pushed him yesterday. This time, he was alone.

I felt an uncomfortable pit in my stomach. I didn't know what it was. Perhaps I was still looking for answers about that moment in the hallway, but something about him pulled me in.

There was something that had made me decide to follow him.

I kept a good distance, trying my best to stay quiet with each step as he went from one hallway to another. Eventually, he stopped at a wider space with windows all around. It felt like one of those places where people came to think.

My breath hitched as Kayden stopped in front of the huge window



overlooking the driveway.

His back remained turned to me, and I hesitated to leave, unsure why I had followed him this far. From what I'd heard, he had a lot more on his plate than worrying about my glowing eyes.

Maybe I really was overthinking all of this.

Only a few feet separated us. I stood silently, just watching him. I had almost turned to go when he angled his head and speared me with his dark gaze, the same smirk as yesterday playing on his lips.

"What are you doing in the East Wing?"

SURPRISE GIFT: 100 BONUS FREE FOR YOU

GET IT



Comments



Support



Share