

Chapter 200

Kylan

I stood by the window, my arms crossed as I looked down at the guests making their way inside. Everyone was dressed to impress and had traveled from far away only to do one thing.

To judge.

That was the only thing these people were good at.

But I didn't care about any of it.

All I cared for was her.

My Puppy.

My Violet.

Yesterday turned into a late night, and today started way too early. The king was doing everything he could to keep me away from her, and it was working. For someone who despised her with every bone in his body, he was very generous to celebrate her arrival.

He gave away land, made personal visits, even promised to deliver some of the feast invitations himself—and I had to be there for all of it. On top of that, I had to sit through every single court meeting, and there had never been so many before.

I did manage to get a glimpse of Puppy, sleeping in my bed, all curled up, soft and warm. But having her in my bed wasn't nearly enough. I needed more. I needed to hear her voice again, hold her in my arms, make sure she was alright. Touch her.

I did know what she had been up to these past days.

I heard from Nate, who heard from Dylan, who heard from Trinity. Fittings, history lessons, etiquette lessons—even breakfast with the queen, Kaelis, and Kiora, who had apparently fallen for her charm. There were even whispers that Madam Renata, who was known for having no heart, was starting to like her too.

But that didn't surprise me...

Puppy was just that likable. That was the thing. She had this way of pulling people in and didn't even have to try. She was just a fresh breath of air—kind, quiet, too beautiful.

It was too easy to fall in love with her. And every time she smiled, every time she blushed and tried to hide it by looking down, every time she got nervous and started rambling about things no one else cared about but me, I fell for her a little more.

There was only one reason I couldn't wait to get to this feast, and that was so I could hold her again.

Other than that, it was just another day at court.

Sure, this one might've been a little louder, a little bigger. But it wasn't anything new. Celebrations in this place were as common as breathing.

When you had over thirty siblings, there was always something going on.

A birthday? Party.

Someone's first shift? Party.

Marking ceremony? Party.

A new birth? Party.

Someone coming home from a break? Party.

It was ridiculous.

Even just standing here in this room, waiting to make the same big entrance I had done so many times before, felt ridiculous. I leaned a little closer to the window, watching another line of black cars pull in. It was the olive green flag of Aevenor that caught my eye, the Lycan Kingdom from the east.

The cars came to a stop, and King Tavi stepped out. The man was known to be strong, but not the smartest. Believe it or not, even our king had more brains than him. His chest puffed forward, neck stiff from the weight of that embarrassing amount of gold resting on him. He shook hands with a few of the elder Typerians who were welcoming him.

And behind him was Halden.

His heir.

Or he was supposed to be.

Halden was about the same age as me, I think—though I wasn't completely sure. He looked like he had been dragged here, bored out of his mind and half-dead. His dark curls hung low over his face, covering his eyes so much I was surprised he could still see. He barely even looked up as he trailed behind his father.

I shook my head disapprovingly. He was just too weak to one day lead a kingdom. I didn't have much with Aevenor or its people, but I knew Rochwall and Jane came from there, and they didn't look half that fragile.

I let out a small chuckle under my breath.

If Halden was next in line to rule Aevenor, they were in for a disaster. See, now that was a king who should've taken himself a few mistresses, perhaps to spread out the odds a little.

I shook the thought off and stepped back from the glass.

What was I doing?

Why did I care?

Looking out the window like I had nothing better to do? I was starting to look like Kayden.

I was about to turn away when I heard the soft click of the door behind me. I didn't need to see. I already knew who it was. She was here.

My Violet.

My chest tightened immediately, and I wasn't sure whether I hated or loved the feeling. Not having control over my emotions felt dangerous.

I used to think people were soft when they said love could do strange things to you, but they weren't wrong.

Because why were my palms getting sweaty, and why couldn't I move?

The door shut again, and I stayed at the window like an idiot. Because I knew the moment I would turn around, I would've been done for.

Still, I could not keep standing here like a fool.

That's why I braced myself, swallowed hard, then turned.

And...fuck.

There she was.

And there was just no way in hell I would be letting her walk into that feast in that dress.

Everything paused as she stood across the room. Her gown sparkled in a beautiful shade of blue, tight at the waist, low at the shoulders, the neckline dipping just enough to make it impossible not to look, though I had to admit I didn't even try.

I could already picture how they would look at her tonight. The stares, the whispers, the nobles and their sons.

My hands curled into fists at my sides.

Nope, unacceptable. What the hell was Madam Renata thinking?

That dress had to come off. Now.

But it wasn't just the dress. It was everything. It was that shy smile, like she didn't know the damage she was doing to me. How dangerous she was. And that just by standing there, she was the most powerful creature alive.

Her face lit up. "Kylan!"

My heart jumped at the way she said my name. I hid my nerves behind a straight face. "Pup."

She smiled wider, picked up the sides of her dress, and started running to me.

"Careful!" I warned, stepping forward, my hands already reaching out. It was a good thing I did, because she tripped. I managed to catch her just in time, my hands locking around her wrists.

Now...

Now would've been the perfect moment, the perfect excuse, to get her out of this cursed dress before I lost my mind.

I chuckled, tightening my grip. "You are so clumsy."

She threw me an annoyed pout. "I knew you'd say that."

"Yes," I raised a brow. "But are you sure you don't want to change? Something else, something less—"

"No, I'm good."

Shit.

I clenched my teeth so hard it hurt.

She wasn't good.

She was perfect. Too perfect. And if she walked into that feast in that dress, there was a good chance I might end the night with blood on my hands.

Violet huffed, loud and dramatic, probably wondering why I had yet to give her her well-deserved compliment. I knew she loved them, despite not being able to take them. What I didn't know was if it would be all that smart to encourage the dress.

"Where is Jumper?"

"Somewhere," I responded dryly, still trying to process everything.

"I see we're matching," Violet giggled, slapping my shoulder.

I looked down at the blue suit they had forced me into. It was the same shade. A royal crest was pinned on the right side, while a gold rose was in my pocket. The Lyperian colors.

I'm sure they had their fun little ideas when Violet chose the blue dress, and I had to give them credit, but did it really have to be that dress?

"You look good," she fluttered her eyelids. Sure, she meant it, but now she expected something in return. All I wanted was to rip that dress off her. Not because of lust, but because I wanted to protect her.

She really didn't need anyone else looking at her, and especially not Lyperians.

"You look really really good," she kept staring, still waiting for a compliment.

And while my heart told me to tell the truth, that she was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen, my brain told me to sabotage the dress. Say something stupid, like, you should've gone for the pink.

I opened my mouth.

"You should've g..."

But then I looked at her again, and I couldn't lie.

"Violet," I said, defeated. "You look perfect." 1