

## Chapter 202

Violet

It had been five minutes...

Five minutes since I had almost died from holding my breath too long.

Five minutes since Kylan told me he loved me.

Which meant five minutes since I had last said a word. It was not that I didn't want to, but I couldn't. It was like someone had taken my tongue and pushed it to the back of my throat.

My body stood still, but inside...everything was spinning.

He loved me...

Kylan loved me...

Was he okay? Did he have such a terrible day that it made him suddenly realize that perhaps I was the best option to love? Did something finally crack inside him?

We had been standing in front of the big door which led to the ballroom for a while now, waiting for our big entrance.

I should've been worried about what was behind those doors. The people, the stares, the judgment...

But I wasn't.

All I could do was look at him.

Kylan stood beside me, staring ahead like he wasn't nervous at all. A



small, calm smile tugged at the corner of his lips. I looked down at our hands, still intertwined.

He said he loved me.

That's what I had wanted...but what now?

Would he keep loving me from a distance?

Would he expect me to really become the queen of Lyperia and be buddy-buddy with a thousand other mistresses?

What now?

Even though I had waited for this moment for so long, I hadn't thought further than that because I didn't expect to actually hear those words from his mouth.

I gave it another go and tried to call out his name. "Kylan?" I said, my voice soft.

As if on cue, he turned his head toward me.

"What does this mean...for us?"

He lifted his brows, and he didn't look like he had the answer. Even worse, it looked like he was still figuring it out at this very moment.

"I don't know yet," he confessed. "I haven't thought that far. I just know what I know."

My chest sank just a little.

I just know what I know?



Then why wasn't he saying it again? He had changed his mind in the past before in under a split second, so there was always that fear. That fear that he would already regret his words. Take them back even.

"You said...that you love me," I reminded him, my voice just above a whisper. I watched him closely as he nodded once.

"Can you say it again?"

He looked at me, and a tiny smirk pulled at his lips. "It again."

As usual, Kylan was being Kylan. I rolled my eyes so hard they nearly went to the back of my head. "You know what I mean."

He let out a soft laugh. It was real and bright, like the one I had grown to love.

"I love you, Violet," he said without a stutter. He sounded so sure of himself, and that's what surprised me. He truly meant it, and it seemed like he had no intention of taking it back.

A smile grew on my lips as my face finally remembered how. Then I said it back, just as sure.

"I love you too."

"I know." He gave my hand a slight squeeze. I looked into his deep brown eyes, still wondering how we were going to do this.

Love each other.

Loving each other didn't seem to be the hard part, but the part that came after.



Our moment was cut short by the sharp sound of a trumpet. A shiver ran through me, and I straightened up so fast I almost stumbled back.

Kylan saved me from disaster by tugging my hand, firm and fast. I shot him a shocked look, which he returned before clicking his tongue.

"As long as you don't make us fall down those stairs," he chuckled.

Wait, stairs?

What stairs?

"His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Kylan of Lyperia," a powerful voice called out behind those big doors, "and the one chosen by the Moon Goddess, the royal mate, Violet Hastings of the Bloodrose!"

The doors burst open.

The bright light from the countless chandeliers caught my eyes, shimmering even more than the dress had. For now, the only thing my eyes could see were the velvet curtains against the high windows of the ballroom.

I tightened my grip on Kylan's hand for support as we stepped forward, my eyes fixed on the floor. We took a few more steps, and there they were.

The stairs...

They were grand, curved, and probably just waiting for me to fall down them. Awed gasps filled the room, but I did not see any faces. I refused to see them for as long as I could.

There were soft murmurs, whispers...too many of them. It drove me mad not knowing what they were about. Me? My dress? Kylan? Our linked



hands?

Or maybe it was better for me not to know.

We took our first steps down the stairs, and so far, so great. As long as I wouldn't look anyone in the eye, all would be just fine.

Just don't look up, Violet.

Don't—

"Look up," Kylan whispered beside me.

I trusted Kylan knew what we were doing, so I did. And the first thing I saw were people. So many people.

People of all ages, dressed in silks and jewels, the most beautiful and biggest dresses, the finest suits. Several standing tall and proud of clear judgment, some of clear admiration, but I wasn't quite sure. I knew one thing, and that was that all eyes were on us.

I looked around in the sea of unfamiliar faces, hoping to find a familiar one. Trinity, The Bloodrose, or even Cecilia and her daughters. I couldn't find them.

"You are allowed to smile," Kylan said quietly.

Once again, I took his advice and forced something onto my lips. It was a small, tight, uncomfortable smile—but it was there.

You know what?

I didn't want to do this.

I didn't want to be here at all...



All I wanted was to pull Kylan to the side and ask him when. When did he fall for me, and was it gradual or sudden? At what point did he know?

But instead, I followed his lead.

One step, then another.

Left foot, right foot.

Don't fall, don't embarrass yourself and the crown prince.

With all those thoughts going through me, I clung to him like my life depended on it. He didn't let go, not even once.

When we finally reached the floor, I exhaled a breath I hadn't realized I was holding. I leaned in closer to him. "What's next?"

A smile was plastered on his lips, but his wasn't tense. It was like this was just another day, like he had done this a million times before already—and he probably had. "Now we receive everyone's gifts and greetings."

Gifts?

But I didn't bring any for them...

Kylan led the way, and I just followed. People gave us space, some bowed and curtsied while some covered their mouths as they whispered. I tore my gaze away and just stared ahead until we eventually ended at the front of the room.

As we reached a small platform, Kylan stepped up first. Then he gave me a gentle smile and a hand.

And just like that, we had officially taken center stage.





Even with Kylan's hand in mine, my heart wouldn't stop pounding. I didn't know what to think, what to expect.

I tried to count the people. One, two, three...no. It was no use, as there were simply too many. These weren't two hundred people. It had to be way more than that.

I drew in a sharp breath and dragged my gaze higher, all the way to the crystal chandelier and then a bit lower again to the balcony.

And then I saw them.

The Bloodroses...

Fergus stood at the front, jaw locked, arms crossed. Beside him stood Dylan, mirroring his dad's posture so perfectly it almost made me crack up. Even his head was tilted just the same, and both their eyes were on me.

Like father, like son.

The others stood behind them with the same cold expression. Only Uncle Ewan had a proud smile on his face. There was no sign of Trinity, and I figured she had to be somewhere else in the crowd.

"Where is your family?" I wondered.

Kylan chuckled. "If you think they would ever shy away from stealing attention just because this is supposed to be our day," he let out a short breath, "then I'm afraid you do not know them yet."

"Oh...okay," I mumbled. I knew Elyx liked the attention, so it didn't seem to be that out of character for him. I bet he had his own big entrance planned.



I shifted side to side, still trying to find the perfect position to absolutely not trip. Before I had found it, Kylan let go of me and slowly trapped my chin between his fingers. 1

His gaze was worried, but his smile so reassuring. "Violet," he spoke. "Look at me."

I did.

For a moment, it felt like it was just the two of us, just like it had been in that room when he told me he loved me.

Kylan's eyes were the only thing that didn't scare me in this room because they felt familiar, calming.

I need you to breathe, he whispered. I knew he would say that. He had been saying that a lot lately. You're safe with me. Always.

And then he leaned in. His lips pressed softly to mine, a kiss that felt like it was meant to calm a storm. His hand slid gently to my cheek, his thumb brushing it lightly, and somehow, I relaxed.

I could hear them. The gasps, the murmurs, even a few claps, but all I could feel was him.

When I pulled back and was instantly met with that same soft smile, the one that could heal my heart over and over again, all my fears and worries faded away.

I was okay.

Well...until I remembered who was watching.

"Shit," I muttered under my breath, snapping my head to the balcony.





Such language at a royal feast was definitely justified as my eyes landed on Fergus and Dylan.

Fergus's eyes almost popped out, and I could've sworn he was ready to jump down at any second.

And Dylan...

Poor Dylan's head was buried in his hands on the railing, his fingers tangled in his hair like he'd just seen something too much to handle. I had lied to him, told him everything between us was just pretend, but that short kiss, filled with so much emotion, said otherwise.

I wasn't sure if he was laughing or crying, maybe even both. What I did know was that I had fucked with his head.

I looked away, focusing on the people who were now beginning to form several lines in front of us. They seemed divided by ranks, some looking more important than others.

We were supposed to receive their greetings, but how was I even supposed to greet them back?

I leaned toward Kylan, who was probably totally unfazed or unaware about Dylan and his breakdown.

"How do I say hi?"

Kylan chuckled. "You lift your chin, open your mouth, and let sound come out. Preferably words."

I snorted at him, my hand quickly covering my face. "Very helpful," I bopped my head. "But I think I can do that."



"Of course you can." Kyran winked, his voice full of quiet encouragement. "I believe you can."

SURPRISE GIFT: 100 BONUS FREE FOR YOU

GET IT



Comments



Support



Share