

Chapter 219

Violet

I wasn't sure how it even happened, but somehow, I was the one pushing Kayden's wheelchair.

It was just the two of us, and not even his maid was anywhere to be found. I had expected there to at least be a guard, but that wasn't the case, and it made me that much more anxious. Just how much did Madam Renata trust Kayden to let him take me without any guard?

I held onto the back of his chair too tightly, my palms sweaty as we made our way through the quiet halls. Kayden leaned his head back slightly, just enough for me to see the edge of his smirk. "You don't have to look like I forced you," he said calmly.

I didn't answer.

Because even though I chose to come with him, it didn't feel much like a choice.

He could control the chair himself, I had seen him do it, and he was fast, too. It wasn't like he needed help, so that wasn't what this was about. He didn't want me to push him because he needed me. He wanted it because of what it meant.

Control.

Power.

This little moment where I was behind him, quiet and obedient, hands on the back of his chair, was what made him happy. I should've said no, told him to roll that damn chair himself.



But I didn't, because the truth was that I was being extra careful. Something deep down told me not to make an enemy out of Kayden, but I didn't even think he was trying to be my enemy.

That was what made it confusing.

If so, he wouldn't have protected me in his own strange way.

Right?

"How did you get Madam Renata to agree to this?"

Kayden tilted his head back again. "Why? Shocked?"

"I mean...No," I said honestly. "I guess I should understand because I heard she's close to your mom...but I am still surprised you pulled that off."

The woman didn't even give me a scolding.

Kayden chuckled. "You would be surprised how much people listen when you speak with confidence."

Yes, or when you were the king's favorite. I looked down at the back of his head. His dark hair was loose, hanging over his shoulders. As I pushed him in silence, I couldn't help but wonder what that title meant to him.

He wasn't the crown prince, but he was probably the one who could get away with anything. I couldn't help but wonder, would the king know his golden boy was so interested in the one he despised so much?

"Where are we going, anyway?" I wondered. "You said the mountains, but what's up there?"



Kayden didn't answer right away.

Instead, he tilted his head slightly and looked back at me. "Just...keep pushing," he mumbled.

I nearly stopped walking right then and there, but my fingers stayed curled around the handles of his chair, and I kept going. We exited the halls and stepped into a narrow path between the palace and the gardens.

"Why do I get the feeling," Kayden spoke again after a silence, "that you're not exactly thrilled about the favor I did for you? That you don't want to be around me?"

I gripped the handles tightly. My knuckles whitened.

Favor?

I sucked in a breath. "I don't know what your plan is, Kayden," I said, staring at the path in front of us. "For all I know, you could be trying to kill me."

Kayden let out a sudden laugh. "Kill you?" He frowned. "From this chair? Come on now."

"You hurt your sister from that chair," I reminded him.

The image of the girl who had supposedly called me Wolfie had returned to me once more. She seemed so terrified of him, and I just couldn't shake it off.

Kayden shrugged. "I didn't do anything," he said lightly. "She spilled hot coffee on herself."

Seriously?



He said it so smoothly, like he believed his own lie. It was almost terrifying how easily it came to him, and made me wonder what more this guy could lie about. As Kayden looked back, I just kept looking straight ahead, refusing to meet his gaze.

"What do you want from me?"

My voice was tired, strained—because it was one thing I wanted to know, and he still hadn't given me a clear answer.

"I want us to become close friends," he said. "Because you and I...we're alike, Violet."

I let out a breath, nearly scoffing.

No, we weren't.

"Have you told Kylan I know about your eyes?" he asked, whispering the last part. "I say you haven't...because if you did, Kylan's hand would've already been on my throat by now."

Once again, my fingers tightened around the handles. There he was, drawing his own conclusions...and he was right.

I didn't want to cause any more trouble, and get in Kylan's head more than was necessary.

"You and me," Kayden said, "I want us to hide each other's secrets."

What did that even mean?

What secrets? What did he think he was hiding? What did he mean by you and me? Why did he say it like we were on the same side?



"By the way, you looked very beautiful yesterday," Kayden added. "No wonder Kylan took you back to the greenhouse."

What did he just say?

My stomach twisted in unease, then frustration, then anger.

Was he serious?

I had this strange urge to spin his chair around

and demand to know what exactly he thought he was doing.

Was he seriously watching us?

I frowned. "Are you spying on me?"

Kayden chuckled softly, like I had just said something crazy. "I'm not Fergus Hastings," he said, still smiling. "I just happen to have a nice view from the east wing. I already told you that."

Right. He had.

But it didn't make it better. If anything, it made it worse. Because that meant he chose to look.

"So how did it end?" Kayden asked, sounding too pleased. "Did he walk in on you? Were the two of you already finished? Did you go back to your room to finish it? I need to know everything."

I nearly choked on my own breath.

What?!

This man had lost his mind.



I didn't even respond—just clenched my jaw so tight I thought my teeth might crack. I felt my cheeks flush.

What made him think I would ever talk to him about my sex life?

My thoughts got interrupted by a soft, chittering sound coming from the bushes. Then something fluffy jumped right onto the handle of the chair.

"Jumpie?" I gasped.

She took a comfortable position and locked her big, black eyes onto mine. Her soft gray body pressed against my arm. I hadn't seen her this morning and figured she was probably on a hunt.

Now she wasn't with Kylan, but I supposed I was her second choice.

"Kylan's pet squirrel," Kayden said, with a soft sigh. "I heard her name is Jumper."

I didn't want to hear her name from his mouth. I didn't like the sound of it, and I knew Kylan would not either. "I need one of those," Kayden stated. "A wild pet..."

I wasn't listening anymore. Jumpie chattered and flicked her tail side to side. That's when I realized she was trying to tell me something.

"What is it, Jumpie?" I whispered.

She pushed her head into my sleeve, a soft growl coming from her tiny chest.

"Ooooh," Kayden suddenly sang. "Chrystal is up ahead."

Chrystal...



Was that the thing Jumpie wanted to warn me about?

I looked up, and there she was indeed. Marching toward us with more fury in her face than I had seen that night she had tried to kill me. She was on a mission, and it didn't look too great. Her red hair was tied back, and she had traded in her elegant dress from yesterday for a simple shirt, jeans, and sneakers.

She looked like she had been waiting to see me. Understandable after last night.

But whatever she had planned, I did not have time for this. I turned slightly, ready to push Kayden's wheelchair around and walk back. I didn't care how dumb it looked. I didn't want this. I didn't need this right now.

Not when I had bigger things on my mind.

"Don't do that," Kayden said firmly. "Face her."

Before I could tell him to mind his business, he grabbed the wheels of his chair himself. With a toothy grin, he pushed back, making sure there was no space left between me and Chrystal's path.

Was he insane?

What did he mean, face her?

I didn't even have time to move, because my body wouldn't allow it. Everything was happening too fast, and Chrystal was only getting closer and closer.

"I heard what happened last night," Kayden said, amused. "And this won't be pretty."



"You think?" I snarled back. The thing was—it wasn't even fear anymore. I wasn't scared of Chrystal. Not really. Not after everything she had done to me.

I just didn't want to deal with her.

Don't get me wrong, Chrystal was still a problem, just not one of my top ten problems that needed solving at this moment.

"See that fist going into position?" Kayden said, his tone serious. "She's going to slap you right across the face."

I followed his gaze and saw it, the sudden shift in Chrystal's posture. Her balled fist slowly turned into a flat hand.

She was going to slap me.

Kayden kept talking. "She thinks she has the right to do it because you humiliated her. And she knows I can't help you."

Well...shit.

My mind went black, and I didn't even blink as she came closer. She was only a few steps away when Kayden continued.

"You're going to raise that beautiful hand of yours, let her smack you first, and then you'll hit her ten times harder. Put her back in line, Lettie. Since telling her clearly isn't good enough," Kayden decided. "You are the witch here, Lettie. Do not disappoint."

What?

I barely had time to process it.



Chrystal stood in front of me, her eyes dark and wild. "You disgusting Bloodrose whore!"

Then a sharp sting exploded across my cheek, so fast I couldn't breathe for a second. She had done exactly what Kayden said she would.

But so did I.

I didn't hesitate for a second as my hand moved. It flew across her face with everything I had, and I didn't hold back.

I was pretty sure the sound echoed. That's how hard I had whacked her. Chrystal stumbled back with a loud gasp, clutching her cheek like I had just cracked a bone. Even I had to shake off my hand from the pain of how hard I had hit her.

Kayden chuckled softly. "That's my girl."

Chrystal's eyes went wide. She growled loudly, raising her hand to strike me once more. Only, she never hit me because I grabbed her wrist midair. Then I squeezed it. Hard.

Her eyes flew down to our hands, and she was in total shock. It was clear she couldn't believe I could ever be capable of stopping her, but I did.

And it felt so, so good.

I should've done it before.

"Good job, Lettie," Kayden whispered. "Now twist it. Or maybe if you push her onto the ground, I can roll over her for you."

Jumper squeaked behind me, most likely in agreement with his every word.



I was so close to telling him to shut up, but I didn't. I just kept holding Chrystal's wrist, watching her fight against my grip. Enough is enough.

"Haven't you hurt your family enough already?" I asked calmly.

Her nostrils flared.

"Haven't you hurt Nate enough?"

She stopped fighting, and the mentioning of her brother seemed to make her pause. Even though it lasted only a split second, even her eyes had softened, but then they hardened again.

"Just let it go, Chrystal. It's over."

"Never!" she screamed.

Then she yanked hard, ripping herself free.

"It is not over, you swamp bitch!" A wicked, breathless laugh came from her lips, her shoulders rising and falling with each sound as she backed away slowly. "I will only rest when you're dead! The day you die is the day I'll finally sleep!"

She stormed past me without another word, and I watched her disappear down the path.

That wasn't just an insult.

It was a threat, and for some reason...it did absolutely nothing to me.

Kayden rolled in front of me again, and Jumpie crawled back to the handle. "You do not ever have to worry about your life being in danger, Violet," Kayden said. "And I'll give you my word on that."



I looked down at his smiling face. "You'll protect me?" I asked, chuckling softly. "How?"

"I'll protect anyone against that piece of shit. I'll kill her for you someday. Just watch and see."

"Oh, really?" I cracked a laugh.

Kayden twisted his lips and shrugged. "Do not ever underestimate an ambitious man in a wheelchair." 2

I shook my head, laughing, and started pushing him forward again. He was ridiculous, and worse, he was actually funny. I hated that I found him so damn amusing, but I couldn't help it.

"If you're implying I did something to my sister... which I did not, by the way—what makes you think I won't use every last bit of strength to get out of this chair and make good on my word?"

"Sure, Kayden," I snorted, unimpressed. "Let's just get to this mountain of yours and get it over with."



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