



Chapter 220

Kylan

Fergus Hastings could not leave.

That was the only thought going through my mind as I marched through the halls toward the guest wing.

There was really no way in hell that I was going to let him leave, because I couldn't bear to see that look on Violet's face if he did.

She could talk about expectations and not caring all she wanted, but I could hear my Violet's voice crack each time she talked about that good-for-nothing man.

I could already imagine her making excuses, because she would probably try to protect people who didn't deserve it.

But not this time.

Not with him.

Because I wouldn't allow it.

I was pretty serious about this trip. Nate had already told the driver to prepare the car and notified the court that all official duties for today were canceled. Now I had to move, and fast, before the king would find out and try to put a stop to it.

Because that's what he wanted.

For the Bloodrose and the Lyperian royals not to interact in any way. It looked like the feeling was pretty mutual, as it also seemed to be what



Fergus wanted.

I reached the guest wing and didn't wait. My fists banged against the door, over and over. It was aggressive, loud, and I wasn't quite in the mood for diplomacy.

Fuck, I felt just as desperate as Nate and Trinity probably felt in the morning.

After a few knocks, the door flung open.

And there he stood.

Alpha Fergus...

He stood tall and proud, like always. His eyes were sharp, and after all I had told him last night, I knew they were meant to intimidate me. Only, I wasn't afraid of him. I gave him that same look in return.

Stone against stone.

He tilted his head. "Prince Kylan."

I didn't return the greeting. "Is your Luna in?"

"No —"

"Good."

I pushed the door open wider and forced myself in. Fergus just stepped back with a sigh, not even attempting to stop me like I thought he would, and I almost stumbled.

The first thing I saw was the open suitcase.



Fully packed.

The second thing I saw was Dylan.

He was standing near the window, staring at me with wide eyes. Seeing Dylan only added to my anger, and it was all because he wasn't the man I expected him to be. For me right now, he was nothing more than a joke.

I took a slow breath to calm myself, but it didn't help much. My eyes went from Dylan back to Alpha Fergus, who had let out another sigh, and I knew I wasn't walking out of this room until I was assured no one would walk out on Violet.

"I know you won't leave," I shifted my attention back to Dylan. "Because you do everything Trinity tells you to. Even if that order goes against your father's."

Dylan scoffed, looking away.

I turned to Fergus. "But you—" My voice came out sharper. "If you walk out on your daughter and let her face everything here alone, which you've actually been doing for years, from my understanding, then you don't deserve to ever be called her father. Or a true Al—"

"I'm not leaving," Fergus said.

I froze, my mouth shutting mid-sentence.

I blinked at him, confused, and for a second, I wasn't sure I heard him right.

"You're...not?" I asked.

Then what the hell was I doing here?



Fergus shook his head. "No. I've thought about it, yes. But Violet is my daughter. And I'm not leaving her alone here. Not with you people. I'm not leaving."

I stared at him for a moment.

You people?

What did I do?

"So you're not leaving," I concluded, a bit calmer now. Dylan walked over to his dad and gave a lazy shrug, like it was no big deal, and I should've seen it coming.

But even if he wasn't leaving, that still didn't change anything. Violet was clearly hurting, and I was going to put a stop to whatever Alpha Fergus' problem this was. He had no idea I knew about Violet, didn't even know she was aware, but I needed to convince him just enough to show him that I would never leave Violet's side.

The words I told him weren't enough, but he hadn't even heard half of how much I loved and would protect the one he called his daughter.

There was still so much more.

"Well...in that case," I frowned, "we're going on a trip today."

Fergus lifted his brow, and so did Dylan, mirroring his dad's expression.

"We leave in thirty minutes," I told them. "You and I are going to have a heart-to-heart about whatever problem you and your son have with me. And when we get back...you're going to stand behind Violet. Behind us."

Fergus took a deep breath. He moved his lips over each other, then



looked into the air with his hands in his pockets. "Sure," he muttered, barely loud enough to hear.

I gave a small, surprised nod. I hadn't expected him to agree at all, and had come here with the idea that the man would leave. Only to learn that he would be staying, and was actually open to making a change.

He seemed relaxed.

Too relaxed...

It made me think that maybe he was starting to regret what happened yesterday, and had already intended to make things right with Violet. That was the only explanation.

"Just give me some time," Fergus said with a dismissive wave of his hand. "I will go on this trip with you, but I need to talk it over with my people."

I furrowed my brows. "Discuss?" I asked, confused. "What's there to discuss?"

"...things."

After all, he was the Alpha. These people would do whatever he told them to do. He had one of the most loyal packs I had ever come across. He just wanted to appear interesting. I was sure of it.

Whatever it could be, I didn't push. "We'll meet downstairs," I informed him. "It's a black car with the Lyperian flag. Thirty minutes."

Fearing he might change his mind, I exited his room. The second I stepped back into the hall, I heard a set of extra footsteps behind me.



I didn't need to look back to know who it was.

I knew it was Dylan.

He was rather fast to catch up, and I felt his presence beside me. "I'm sorry," Dylan mumbled. "For what my dad did yesterday. It was inappropriate and..."

He exhaled. I looked sideways, and Dylan's body was so stiff that I decided to mess with him a bit. "What did he do?" I smirked a little as I kept walking.

I also couldn't help but think about how that conversation even came about. Did he just tell his son and expect Dylan to give him a pat on the shoulder?

'Good job, Dad!'

"He, uh..." Dylan scratched his neck. "That situation at the greenhouse?"

I chuckled.

Even Dylan thought that went too far.

Said a lot.

"Oh, that situation. You mean when I was between your sister's thighs, and that moron burst in to accuse me of hurting her?"

Dylan fluttered his eyelids. "Did you just call my dad, Alpha Fergus, a moron?"

I shrugged my shoulders. "Then what else do I call him?"

"Fair enough," Dylan mumbled. "Anyway, I'm sorry."

Dylan apologized, but not for the thing he should be apologizing for. He should've apologized to Violet for bailing on her when she needed him the most, and if he was going to apologize to me, it should've been for making me out to be some heartless prick. If he just used his brains, he would've realized that, yes, I could be one, but not toward Violet.

Not anymore.

He wasn't even at the greenhouse. "You and Nate need to stop apologizing for people."

Dylan squinted at me. "Nate? What's Nate got to do with any of this—"

"Violet doesn't need the future Alpha of the Bloodrose to decide what's good for her," I cut in, glancing at him. "She is not stupid. She needs her brother to support her decisions. And you need to start being one."

Dylan pressed his lips together. "I am," he finally said. "And as her brother, I want her to come back home so I can protect and take care of her for all those years I failed to do so, right where she belongs. At the Bloodrose."

I huffed through my nose.

Stubborn. Just like her.

"We'll discuss all of that later." I decided to drop it for now. They were open to change, but it was clear they hadn't changed their minds yet. They were still against Violet being here, and the only way for us to work past our issues would be if we were on the same page. All of us.

After some time, we had reached the outside and walked on one of the narrow paths beside the gardens.



"So what is this plan for this trip of yours?" Dylan asked.

I hummed.

Good question.

I hadn't thought that far ahead. I just knew I had to do something to make Fergus see me. Not as the crown prince, the son of the Lyperian monster or a threat. Just as a guy who loved his daughter and didn't want his mate to be on bad terms with her family.

"You tell me," I chuckled. "What does Alpha Fergus like?"

Dylan raised a brow. "Huh?"

"What does he like?" I repeated. "For fun. Hobbies. That sort of thing."

He took a breath. "I don't know. I guess he likes going on runs, hunting, and wood carving. Herbal teas, like most Bloodroses."

Herbal teas?

That's so...Bloodrose.

"I—"

Just as I opened my mouth, someone pushed my shoulder. I turned my head and saw Nate who had caught up to us. "Everything is taken care of with the king," he smiled. "I came up with some excuse, and we've got a few hours before he starts asking questions."

"Nate," I said quickly, "I need you to plan something in the city. Wood-carving and herbal teas."

Nate scrunched his nose. "Wood-carving and...herbal teas?"

"Yes."

He seemed disgusted, but didn't question it any further. "On it."

In all honesty, I would've preferred to just go for a run in the woods, or even a hunt, which I hadn't done in a long time. I preferred something with silence. No talking, no awkwardness because we were both that kind of man. Quiet and private. We at least had that much in common.

But this conversation needed to happen.

We had to talk.

About Violet, and what we wanted for her. More importantly, how were we going to fix this before it broke her completely?

As we continued our walk, I heard the sound of a wheel turning against stone. The sound I would recognize from anywhere. A shiver went down my spine, but I didn't say anything or slow down.

Yet, my eyes couldn't help but flicker toward the narrow path on the right corner, but I didn't see him.

Kayden...

I tried to shake it off and kept walking, but my thoughts drifted back to last night—to the way Kayden had his family wrapped around his finger, made them kneel, pulled the strings like they were puppets. Even Lady Mona seemed off.

The way he had hurt Kahlia to teach her a lesson even harsher than what I had in mind, and how he expected us to buy the story of the hot tea.

Yes, Kayden had always been strange.



But last night was...something else.

It was like he had switched. Or maybe revealed a part of himself we had never seen. A part that wasn't just clever, but cold and dangerous.

I couldn't say I was completely surprised, because I always knew that part was there. Everyone had that part, but I guessed Kayden had just been better at hiding it behind smiles and politeness.

Still, I didn't like that.

Not one bit.

I believed every person had a darkness, and some were just waiting to snap.

Not my Violet. She was an exception.

My Violet had only goodness, and she was perfect.

Kayden hadn't snapped yet, not where anyone could see, but last night, there was something in his eyes that didn't sit right with me. Something dark lingered in him, and I really didn't want it touching anyone else.

Dylan mumbled something beside me, but I was too far in my head to really hear it.

"What did you say?" I glanced at him.

"I said," he tried again, "I just hope something good comes out of this trip. For all of us...for Violet."

"Yes," I said quietly. "I hope so, too."