

## Chapter 225

Kylan

Those words cut deep.

Not just you, but any Lyperian.

The silence stretched as all I could hear was the scraping of wood. It hit me harder than I wanted to admit, but I understood—I really did.

Just a while ago, I was one of those Lyperians Violet would rather stay away from.

But it was all much deeper than that. Fergus had experienced what the king had done to Claire. He was the reason she had lost her child, and perhaps because of the Veil breach situation, her life as well.

At the same time, many could also sense the way Lyperians felt about witches. One good example of that was the ones in the mountains, who no one would bat an eye at, and didn't care enough to worry whether they were all breathing or not.

Alpha Fergus wasn't just being cold for no reason. He thought he was protecting Violet the best way he could, even though it was twisted.

It was so hard to have this conversation without saying what I wanted to say. Because I did want to say that Violet and I were both aware that she was a hybrid, and that I didn't care because I would give my life for her. I would do anything for her.

A slow sigh came out. "How do you expect me to trust Violet in the hands of a man who claims to be her father," I answered with grace, "but doesn't care enough to protect her?"



Fergus stopped carving. The tool in his hand dropped to the table with a soft thud, and he looked me in the eye, but I didn't turn away.

Why would I? It was the truth, was it not?

"I'm not asking for your permission to keep Violet here," I explained. "Because I will. She is my mate. I'm just giving you a chance to work this out...so you can be there for your daughter."

Fergus's lips parted, but all he did was swallow hard.

I turned my eyes to Dylan. "You too, Dylan," I said. "You know who I am. You know how I feel about Violet, and all I'm asking is for you to accept what would be best for her."

Dylan froze, the tool stuck in the air as a deep sigh left his chest. Only Nate was carving, even humming in the process like he didn't hear a damn thing—while I knew he did. The situation was most likely just too awkward for him.

Fergus began carving again. "I know I haven't been the best father," he said, not looking at me. "But I'm trying, and everything I've ever done for Violet was to protect her."

I slightly tilted my head, watching him work. I had really expected him to say something else to justify his ridiculous point, but there was nothing.

"She has looked very uncomfortable, and has barely said a word to the Bloodrose since you all got here," I pointed out. "Not to you, not to Dylan, not to any of them."

I looked between the two of them, waiting to see which one would speak up first, but neither of them did.



"Beta Ewan is the only one walking around the palace with a smile on his face—"

"Do not compare me to that fool!" Fergus snapped before I could even finish. "And don't push this on the Bloodrose," he added. "I told them to stay away from her. I thought if she felt the distance, she would come to her senses. I thought she would realize how dangerous this bond is. That it's not worth it."

I let out a small laugh, not even having the energy left to mock the situation. I was just tired, and wanted to get it over with.

My attention shifted to Dylan, and once he caught my gaze, he lifted his brows at me for a second, but said nothing.

"Dylan, you study strategy," I called him out. "Yet somehow, letting the Bloodrose ignore Violet, when all of you have been doing that her entire life seemed like a good plan to you?"

Dylan took a quiet breath and went back to carving his heart. Fergus clenched his teeth. Both knew I was right.

"I'm not supposed to be the one giving you this advice," I continued. "But maybe take it from someone who's been running from his own home since he was old enough to walk."

They both looked up.

"If you're trying to show Violet that the best place for her is the Bloodrose, then maybe you should treat her better and make her realize she has a pack waiting for her back home, one she can trust and count on."

Fergus scoffed, muttering something under his breath.



Surprisingly enough, Dylan tapped his shoulder. "Dad, just listen to him."

For a moment, Fergus's glare was aimed at him. Then it landed on me. But at least he was listening.

"It didn't take long to convince Violet to stay with me," I said, thinking back to the moment. "And it should have, because I was asking her to eventually leave behind the only home she ever knew. But even then, that wasn't what scared her most."

"She wasn't worried about leaving her pack... she was worried she wasn't good enough to stand beside me. That's how much the Bloodrose took from her. You took her confidence, her sense of worth, and made her believe she wasn't deserving of love."

I'll never forget the way her eyes lit up when I told her I loved her. I felt her pain and joy because I hadn't heard those words in years either. But things were very different in my case. I wasn't always easy to love, and I made peace with that. But Violet?

She was too easy to love, and she hadn't done anything wrong for anyone to make her believe otherwise.

That's what broke me the most. That someone like her could be surrounded by people who claimed to care and still walk around feeling like she didn't deserve anything good. She was so convinced there was no need for her to have any expectations because they didn't stand up for her when it mattered the most.

Not even her own father.

Even King Elyx had shown more emotion once. He had never said he



loved me, but I remembered something in particular from when I was twelve years old. One of the high lord's sons made some comment about me being the bastard of another man, questioning my royal blood.

The king didn't let it go. He told the lord that if his son ever spoke again, he would wipe out their entire bloodline by sunrise.

It was messed up. But still, he did something.

Puzzled, I stared at the two Hastings, who were still on mute. I started to wonder how much I would have to say for them to finally speak. Or if this was just going to be one of those one-sided conversations.

"It's good to know Violet could cry in your arms when you took away her frog once," I tried once more. "But I need you to ask yourself why she doesn't feel safe crying into your arms now."

Yet again, I waited for a response, but there was still nothing. They just refused to speak.

I could tell Dylan was willing to listen, because if not, he would've opened that big mouth of his a long time ago. But Alpha Fergus was starting to get on my nerves. He had come all this way. Sat down with me, shared his disgusting tea with me, carved wood with me, and it was not because he had to. It was because, deep down, some part of him wanted to fix things with Violet.

He stayed in Lyperia because of that. So why wasn't he trying?

I let out a slow breath through my nose, reminding myself not to raise my voice. I wasn't going to be the Kylan that man expected me to be. No. I didn't care if we had to sit here carving all damn day, but one way or another, I would crack this man by the end of it.





Suddenly, Nate let out the deepest breath.

"I know this isn't my business," he said quietly. "And honestly, I don't even know why I'm here in the first place."

Nate glanced at me as he said it, then back to Fergus. "But I do know Violet needs you," he spoke. "You're right. She is special, and too trusting and too kind...But I will tell you something as someone who wants what's best for her, just like you do."

Fergus let out a low growl, but Nate wasn't fazed. He just continued.

"She needs her family's support," Nate stated. "She needs the Bloodrose behind her. Everyone here at court came with support because that's just the way Lyperia works."

He wasn't wrong. That was the way it worked, even with the mistresses. One could pull out one of the fourteen, ask what kind of family they came from, and you would know right away how they earned their place at court.

"Violet showed up at this palace with no one. No counsel, no pack support, no family support. Just a last name and Kylan's heart," Nate's expression hardened as he faced the two. "And sometimes, that just isn't enough. I get that you are only trying to protect her, but what you're doing just isn't enough."

I blinked in surprise, and shock washed over me. Not because I disagreed, but because I never expected Nate to get involved.

He was a good talker, just like Jack, and if anyone could get through to a Bloodrose, it would make sense for it to be him.

I shot him a grateful glance. He shrugged like it didn't matter, but it did.



Especially after how much he had been struggling lately, but he still showed up when I needed him.

There was also a big chance that for someone like Nate, the idea of having no father's support probably didn't make sense. I wasn't sure if Jack ever suspected anything about Nate's addiction, but that never changed how much he showed up for Nate.

After seeing how things were between me and the king, and knowing how much he cared about Violet, I figured Nate just couldn't stay quiet anymore. He had had enough.

"I've known Kylan my whole life, and he has good intentions!" Nate stood up for me. "He's the kind of guy who barely says ten sentences in a day. But today he's said a lot more than that... to you. So I kindly ask that you listen."

I nodded my head at Nate's perfectly chosen words. "What he said," I agreed.

With Nate speaking up, too, Fergus's carving turned a little rougher. The words had clearly struck a chord, because he finally opened his mouth, ready to speak.



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