

Chapter 231

Violet

I didn't say anything at first.

Mostly because...I didn't know how to answer.

Kylan was watching me. He looked calm, patient, but I could tell by his expression that he was trying to figure out if I even knew what was going on.

And honestly? I didn't.

I didn't know when it changed.

Or how we suddenly got there.

Or why Kayden started calling me by that name.

I shifted a little, thinking maybe something would come to mind if I just gave it a second. But nothing did. Nothing I could explain, at least.

Kylan didn't push. He just kept looking at me until I let out a long sigh.

"That's a really good question," I agreed.

He let out a soft chuckle. "Right?"

His finger moved to my chin, and he forced me to look up into those eyes that suddenly looked warm again.

"That's what I've been trying to figure out," I said, smiling.

"So, do I tell him to stop calling you that, or will you?" Kylan asked. He

cupped my cheek and leaned in, pressing his lips to mine. Soft, quick kisses, one after another. "I really don't like him calling you that."

Well, we were on the same page about that one.

Wait until he heard he called me beautiful, on top of all the other mess I still had to tell him about.

I glanced to the side and caught the others watching. Dylan had his arm around Trinity's waist and looked content. Nate still wore the same smile he had this morning. And my ladies, which still sounded weird in my head, stood quietly behind Trinity.

Wait...

Dylan looked...content?

"Why is Dylan not frowning?" I whispered against Kylan's lips. "And what were you and Fergus doing in one car? I'm confused."

Fergus leaned against the car at a distance and gave a small nod with a faint smile. I grew even more confused when Kylan returned the nod. Then Fergus turned and headed toward the palace.

Yes, this was terrifying.

Fergus was smiling? Why was he smiling?

"Your dad and I had a great talk and came to an understanding," Kylan said softly, nudging my shoulder with his. "I think he'll soon want to talk to you himself...but you should know he's not going anywhere."

"And you know what?" A soft smile came from his lips. "He's actually kind of...decent."

My heart skipped as it finally hit me. Kylan had talked to Fergus, and somehow managed to break through that impossible shield. Kylan wasn't much of a talker, and it couldn't have been easy, but he had done it ...for me.

"Violet," Kylan said, brushing a strand of hair behind my ear. I stared into his eyes. "I know some scars can't be fixed, but he understands where I stand now...with you. And I hope things will start to get better from here."

For a split second, my heart melted, but then it started to thud in my chest. He had done something for me, but what had I ever done for him, besides lie over and over again? He tried to fix whatever was left of my bond with my family, while I went off and took a stroll with his brother...

"I also have a lot to tell you!" I began. "It's really important...something I forgot to tell you about."

Behind us, I heard the others approaching. Dylan and Nate, Trinity, Lian, and Sora.

Kylan leaned closer, his brows pulled together. "Is it bad?"

This was exactly what I did not want to do. Worry him. I shook my head fast. "No. Not at all!"

"But you just said it was something you forgot to tell me about, Violet," he said, looking at me suspiciously. "Is it about Kayden?"

I felt something twist in my stomach. His voice was calm, but I knew him too well in these situations. He was already trying to put the pieces together. His gaze hardened in an instant. "He did something to you, didn't he?" Kylan hissed through clenched teeth. "I swear, I'll kill him."

He started to walk off, but I grabbed his wrist fast.

"Wait—"

"Everything okay?" Dylan asked.

As they reached us, Dylan's arm rested over Trinity's shoulder. Both of them looked at us like they were dying to join the conversation.

Kylan shot Dylan something that was supposed to look like a quick smile.

"Yes. Everything is fine!"

Dylan's eyes met mine. The grin I planted on my face was so wide my jaw almost hurt. There was no need to worry Dylan too. Not when whatever Kylan had said to him and Fergus seemed to make him relax a little.

He looked calmer, more grounded, and I didn't want to take that from him. "Is this about that Kayden guy? Did he hurt you, Violet?"

"No, it's nothing!"

"Good," he said.

Just behind them, I saw Lian and Sora standing a few steps back. Until now, those two had always kept a polite distance, always quiet. If they stayed that way, I probably wouldn't even notice they were there for the rest of the time.

"So," Nate said, joining the group. He flashed his charming smile. The same one that, crazily enough, made me swoon the first time we met. That was the day he helped me find my way through Starlight. "Who's going to wrap their arms around me?" he asked playfully.

Whatever bonding time those four had today, it really seemed to have

done something for Nate as well.

Both Dylan and Trinity didn't hesitate to open their free arms to pull him into their hug. A laugh escaped from Nate's lips. It was loud, happy, real... and undeniably one of the better moments of the day.

I glanced at Kylan, expecting him to smile too, but his eyes were focused on me so intently that I had to look away. He was still analyzing the situation, and if he could've read my mind, he definitely would have.

"Since we're free from Madam Renata's clutches for the day, we should all spend some time together," Trinity said, turning to us while still hugging the two. Her voice was strained from the tight squeeze, and I couldn't help but laugh.

"Dylan mentioned something about Kylan, herbal tea, and wood carving?"

"Wood carving?" I asked, surprised, laughing as I looked at Kylan. "You?"

I couldn't even picture it. He didn't exactly scream creative type, and I was pretty sure he would be terrible at it. Now it made perfect sense why the stiff Hastings duo had been smiling. Wood carving and herbal tea were right up their alley. How did they even end up doing something like that?

But when I realized Kylan wasn't laughing, my own smile started to fade.

"You should go," Kylan said, his brows furrowed. "Violet was just about to tell me something, but we will catch up with you later."

His tone left no room for argument. He wanted answers, and he wanted them now.

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It wasn't long before I sat at the edge of the bed with my hands on my lap. It almost brought me back to the days I prepared myself as a child for the scolding that hadn't come yet—but I knew it would.

I just didn't know when, and maybe that was the worst part. The waiting.

I wasn't going to play the victim. I knew I deserved it.

For the past five minutes, Kylan had done nothing but pace back and forth. One hand dragged through his hair while the other rubbed over his jaw like he was trying to make sense of something I hadn't even told him yet.

If this was how he reacted just to me saying there was something I hadn't told him yet, I wasn't sure I wanted to see his face when he actually found out what it was.

My eyes shifted to the bag he had brought in with him when we entered the room. It was still near the door, closed tight. What was even in that? Did it have to do with the wood carving he had done today? Or maybe some herbal teas?

No.

I shook my head and looked away, letting my gaze drop to my lap. It didn't matter. That was not important right now.

Kylan was.

He kept pacing for a while longer. Then, suddenly, he stopped. His eyes locked onto mine. "That thing you 'forgot' to tell me about," he said.

I blinked slowly. Forgot?

Right, that's what I told him...

I said it only to make him feel better, to make him think I hadn't hidden it on purpose. But I knew that wouldn't be the end of it. Kylan was smarter than that.

He took a few steps closer, and I straightened automatically. My pulse quickened, and my fingers tightened in my lap. Kylan didn't speak right away. He looked down at me, and I looked back with guilty eyes.

"Did you actually forget, Violet?" he asked, squinting his eyes. "Or...did you just not tell me?"

His face shifted as the second part left his mouth. He seemed disappointed and already knew the answer. He just most likely didn't want to believe it. My lips parted, quivered, but nothing came out.

"I'm not angry," he added quickly, holding up one hand. "I just want to understand what's going on in your head."

I wasn't sure I even knew what was going on in my head. All I knew was that it was loud. A mess. Too much...

"I was going to tell..." I said finally. "Really."

He held my gaze, studying my face to see if I was telling the truth. I tried to look as honest as I felt, because I was. He didn't look away, not until he was sure. Then he let out a breath and gave a small nod. "Okay."

Kylan sat down beside me, eyes still on mine. He didn't look away, not even for a second. His arm brushed mine. "Violet?"

"Yes?"

His voice was gentle. "The thing you...forgot to tell me about. It's about Kayden, isn't it?"


I fluttered my eyes. My heart skipped a beat.

"What?"

He was speaking gently, but I could tell it still bothered him. Even though his eyes were soft, his jaw was tight. I knew he was holding something in.

And the moment he said Kayden's name, I knew he had figured it out.

He had been quiet for a while, pacing back and forth to think it through, and then he connected the dots just like that. I couldn't help but wonder if he would've figured it out on his own eventually. He had always been good at figuring things out. That was Kylan...

"Your eyes," he said quietly, like he didn't really need me to confirm it. "Kayden saw them glow, and now he's been bothering you. That's what this is about." 



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