

Chapter 233

Violet

My heart dropped the second the question hit me. I knew I gave him very good reasons to believe so, but he really thought I trusted Kayden over him. Kayden...

He still didn't yell, didn't storm off, but just stared into my eyes as he asked questions he feared he already knew the answer to. That's the part that broke me.

The thing I had broken wasn't just some stupid rule or his promise. It was his trust, and there was one thing I needed to clear up. Not because he clearly didn't want to talk before whatever this was, was handled, but because I owed it to him.

"I do trust you," I whispered. My voice felt dry and tight.

He didn't say anything. All he did was give me that observing look again. The one where he tried searching every corner of my face, looking for lies.

And as he kept staring at me, a thousand thoughts were in my mind. Thoughts I couldn't help because that was just the way I functioned.

Was he going to decide I wasn't trustworthy, and take back his love?

Does he hate me?

I wouldn't want anyone to hate me, especially him. The thought that lingered in the back of my mind made it too hard to breathe. My hand pressed against my chest as I tried to calm myself, but nothing worked. It was the same feeling I'd had that unfortunate day...

"Violet?"

I felt Kyran's finger brush softly against my cheek. "Breathe," he said quietly. "We're just talking. And I'm giving you the chance to explain yourself. That's all."

I closed my eyes and took one deep breath, his voice grounding me like it always did. When I opened my eyes again, I felt a bit more at ease, but my heart still pounded.

"It wasn't about trust," I said. "It was about fear."

"And what were you afraid of?" Kyran held my gaze. "I just want to understand."

He wanted to understand something even I couldn't understand...

"I've always been terrified of messing things up. Of making things worse because that's what I do, and it's what I've done my whole life." I looked down at my hands, too embarrassed to meet his eyes. "And I was scared that if I told you about what happened, you would look at me differently... realize I'm not as smart as you...a waste of your time."

"Never—" Kyran's voice cut through. "After all we've been through to get to this point, you could never be a waste of my time."

"I know, and I'm so sorry," I apologized once more. "I didn't go to the mountains because I trust Kayden. I went because when he said he knew about my eyes, I didn't want to make it worse. I didn't want to bother you with it."

I raised my head, reached out, and took his hand, holding it tightly in both of mine. Several breaths escaped from my lips as I waited for him to pull away, but he didn't.

"I thought that if I didn't tell you," I continued, "then as long as you didn't know...I could still be the best version of Violet for you. The one you deserve to love," I swallowed. "And I know I'm not there yet, but I'm still trying to figure out how to not lose your love. I'm still figuring out how to be perfect."

Kylan's eyes stayed locked on mine, but this time they had softened a bit. There was something I had just said that had reached him.

I didn't know which part, whether it was good or bad, but I just kept going. "I made a mistake not telling you. I should've come straight to you, and I see that now, and I will never ever do that again. I hope you can find it in your heart to forgive me...keep loving me."

Kylan gave my hand a gentle squeeze.

"I still love you," he said, his voice steady. "That would never change. Even if you had told me that same day, I would've still loved you."

My eyes burned. It was everything I hoped to hear, but it still hurt because I had hurt him.

"I think you know I'm not perfect either, so I would never ask you to be perfect," Kylan said gently. "I'm only asking you to be real with me. I'm only asking you not to lie to me."

I froze. Then I slowly let go of his hand and placed mine in my lap. "I know," I whispered. "And I really am sorry."

People usually got mad at me. Yelled, made me feel small, kind of like Commander Jorn had been doing. That's why sitting here with Kylan, hearing him talk to me like this...it was good, but also felt strange. I wasn't used to it.

"I don't want this to become a thing between us," he said after a pause. "Where I have to doubt if we're on the same page...or wonder what else you're hiding."

I shook my head fast. "Me neither!"

Kylan gave a small nod, and his fingers began brushing through my hair. "I'm just wondering," he sighed. "If I ever made you feel like you couldn't come to me with anything."

Even though it was hard, he seemed willing to have a serious conversation, so I told him the truth. Because there really was something that held me back.

"I was going to tell you, but then you said something about me being smart for not letting my eyes glow again, and that you couldn't handle any more disaster," I exhaled. "And at the feast you also said you didn't want me to make a mistake...which isn't an excuse, of course."

Kylan's hand had stopped brushing my hair halfway, and when I was finished he pulled back slightly. He still didn't look angry. Just crushed and defeated, and I knew he was doubting himself.

"That's what stopped you?" he asked. "You didn't come to me because I made a few comments?"

He looked away for a moment, shaking his head once like he couldn't quite believe it. "I need you to trust me, but at the same time, I need to know I can trust you too, Violet. That you'll come to me, call me out if you have to, even when I say the wrong thing."

I swallowed hard and nodded. "I understand," I said. "And I promise...from now on, I'll tell you everything."

It did feel good to let it all out, to talk it out. "I'm sorry," I apologized yet again, leaning my head against his shoulder. Soon after, he wrapped his arm around me and pulled me straight into his chest. I melted into the hug instantly.

He kissed the top of my head. "I'll deal with Kayden right away," he whispered. "And you don't ever need to worry about him again."

His voice sounded determined, but I hadn't told him just so he could go fight Kayden. This wasn't only about that, and that was not my priority right now. For now, I cared about those witches in the mountains.

We could deal with Kayden later.

Kylan let go of me and pushed himself up from the bed, but I stood with him. "Where are you going?"

His back was already turned against me. "I told you," he said without looking at me. "I'm going to deal with Kayden."

He began walking toward the door.

"No, wait," I stopped him. "What about those witches?"

"The..." Kylan's back moved as he took a deep breath, then he turned to face me. His eyes fluttered as he spoke. "The witches?"

I stared at him, wondering if he had even heard a word of what I just said. Eventually, he gave a small nod, like he had just remembered. "Right. The witches."

"I'm serious, Kylan. You can't forget about them," I said. "I know Kayden plays a part in this, but there are people who need help, and that has nothing to do with him. I can't turn my back on them."

Kylan moved his jaw like he wanted to say something, but nothing came out.

"He said he'll go back in two days," I told him. "And I won't use my eyes, but maybe there's another way."

Kylan looked tense, and the muscles in his face tightened again. I didn't need to look inside his head to know there was only one person on his mind. Kayden.

"What do you think?" I asked softly.

His head was raised as he stared at me for a long time.

He stared at me for a long time, eyes dark. "I feel bad they're suffering," he exhaled. "But since it involves Kayden...I need time. I have to analyze the situation first, and figure out how to approach this," he said. "We can't just go storming into the mountains and help people who may or may not be who they say they are."

No...don't say it.

Please don't say what Kayden said you would say...

My heart started racing again. I didn't want to hear it, and I almost raised my hands to my ears like a child just so I didn't have to. But then he said it anyway.

"But I will do something about it," he shrugged. "You have my word."

Those were not the words I wanted to hear. I had expected something like 'we'll help them or we'll go together, and deal with Kayden later.'

Not this. A promise to do something...eventually, possibly after those

people would already be dead.

My stomach dropped as Kylan walked away, and I was about to let him, but then I remembered our conversation. He wanted me to be honest, so I would do just that.

"Wait!" I called out. His hands paused on the handle, and he spun his head to look at me. His eyes were so dark. He was already in whatever mode he was in, and he had already said what he was going to do. He was going to deal with Kayden. Probably make things worse.

"I want you to do something about it right now," I spoke up. "And it cannot wait."



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