

Chapter 235

Kylan

I needed to walk. If I stayed another second in the room, I would've said something I couldn't take back. Or worse—I would've snapped at her...

My Violet...

Fergus looked me in the eye and made me promise I would never raise my voice at her, and I could not break that promise.

I was furious, but more than that, broken.

She should've told me.

She should've told me from the start.

The second Kayden saw her eyes.

The second he started getting closer.

And I wasn't even going to get started on the mountains. All I ever wanted was to protect her, but she didn't trust me enough to let me.

My steps were hard and loud. Several guards glanced at me, but I didn't care, just as I didn't bother to acknowledge their greetings. I ran my hand through my hair, dragging my fingers across my scalp like it could stop the noise in my head, but it couldn't. Nothing could.

She lied to me, and I hated lies.

I didn't forgive easily. Especially not lies. I never had. It was just how I was. I cut people off the moment they gave me a reason not to trust them. That was how I was raised, and how I survived.

But Violet wasn't just anyone.

She was mine...

And I loved her so much it scared me. Not forgiving her wouldn't have punished her. She would've crumbled thinking she lost me, and I couldn't let her confidence crumble.

I wouldn't have survived watching that. I didn't know how to forget, but I still chose to forgive her. Because not doing it would've broken us both.

That was the hardest part.

My breathing quickened as I managed to get some privacy. I stopped at the end of the hall and leaned against the cold stone wall. I could feel it.

My pulse was too high, and my body too heated.

I knew the beast could feel it too. He was pacing, scratching, itching to come out. Even if I knew I shouldn't let him out, I wanted to. Just for a moment. Just to growl, scream—or at least to destroy something. Anything.

If that thing and I had one thing in common, it was the fear of being left in the dark. But most of all, being second to him...

Kayden.

We had been second to him all our lives.

He knew about my Violet before I found out, and even though there was no way we could've known, it felt like I had failed at protecting her.

It felt like she didn't want me to protect her.

A quiet growl slipped from my lips, and my fist slammed into the wall as I took another breath.

I just didn't understand.

Why didn't my Violet come to me?

Calm down, Kylan.

Frustration burned in my chest as I headed for the stairs and climbed all the way to the western tower. It was the place the queen used to send me and my sisters when everything got too heavy and we needed to calm down.

When Kaelis threw a tantrum so loud it shattered glass, when Kiora lashed out at the maids and started crying afterward, and when I lost control of my claws during training and nearly tore through Eronis,

I didn't think I'd have to go there during my visit to Lyperia. But here I was.

As soon as I reached the top, I pushed the heavy doors open. A cold wind hit my face right away.

It was strong, but I didn't mind. I needed it.

A long sigh slipped out as I walked to the edge and gripped the stone, staring out at the bright sky. My chest rose and fell, and slowly, the beast inside me began to settle.

He was still angry, but at least he wasn't trying to claw his way out anymore. For once, I had space to breathe, to think.

Kayden had known for four years.

That's how long it had been since that night. Since I poisoned him. Since I watched him scream in pain while the beast whispered for me to leave him on the cold ground and run.

Something inside me broke that night. I knew it. But Kayden always acted like nothing broke in him.

Now I knew that wasn't true.

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Now I knew he and Lady Mona had gone up to the mountains in secret, trying to fix something I had ruined. I always thought it was strange that he obeyed the king and never told Lady Mona the full truth, but now I saw why.

Kayden had known about Violet. About her eyes. He had known all along. He waited for years, pushed me toward her at Starlight, acting like it was all for me, but it wasn't. It was for him.

And now, he was pulling her into this. Using her kindness to help those people, knowing she wouldn't say no. But no matter how good it looked, it still served his own goals.

Deep down, I always knew.

Kayden couldn't forgive. Couldn't forget.

He had me fooled for a while, but at the end of the day, he remained one of Lady Mona's little hounds. He made everyone pity him while preaching and talking nonsense about being reborn, changing his name, and whispering prophecy into Violet's ear like he had the right to.

No.

He did not.

I knew he had a plan, and somewhere in that plan, he needed her to use her eyes to glow. I didn't know why yet, but there had to be something.

All I wanted was to drag him by the hair and slam him into the stone ground until he had no choice but to admit what twisted game he was playing with my mate and her kind heart.

But instead of doing any of that, I was being forced to climb the damned mountains beside her. Forced to hand out medicine and watch that kind heart break over people I wasn't even sure deserved her mercy.

Baelor's people...

And I would do it, especially if that meant I could prevent her from using her eyes. I would do it because I loved her. I would do it because I respected her, and I would do it because she asked.

I would do it because she would one day become queen of this kingdom, and unlike the king, I would respect and listen to my queen.

But fuck, I was so angry.

A loud growl ripped from my chest as I let out my anger. I thought I was calm. Maybe I wasn't. I didn't care who heard me, though I was pretty sure someone did.

I hated how powerless I felt. Like no matter what I did, nothing would change.

Just as I was about to yell again, a sharp chuckle came from behind me.

"My poor boy," a familiar voice said.

My whole body froze. My heart stopped. That same feeling from this

morning rushed back...because it was her.

"It seems like both of us had to come here to calm down."

The queen...

I turned right away and found myself face to face with Queen Cecilia. She stood in the doorway with her hands folded in front of her gown. A soft smile rested on her lips, even gentler than I remembered.

"Your Majesty," I gave her a small nod.

"Kylan," she said, raising her brows as she walked in slowly.

I followed every step she took. A lump formed in my throat.

It felt different seeing her like this. Not with a crowd around her, not from a distance. Just her, right in front of me. The last time it was just the two of us, she told me never to speak to her again. And now, after the mess I had just made, her being here only made things more confusing.

"I'll leave," I said, clearing my throat.

"No, you can stay."

She let out a light laugh and stepped beside me. I expected to feel tense when her hands rested on the stone like mine, but I didn't. Maybe because, for once, she actually said she wanted me here. Even if it was something small like this.

She tilted her head and looked at me. There was no cruelty on her face. No judgment. Just calm.

"I know you, Kylan. And I know this kind of hurt doesn't come from

strangers. It comes from someone you love or resent," she remarked. "I assume it's either that brother of yours or my little flower, so I want to know what's been bothering you."

My jaw clenched. "Why would you care?"

I didn't raise my voice, didn't look at her. I just stared straight ahead at the sky. My tone wasn't cruel, but it was cold. Honest.

I didn't want to be disrespectful, but it's the way I felt.

She was silent for a moment before she let out a quiet breath. "Because maybe this failing mother still has something to offer...so please."

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