

Chapter 24

Violet

I stood awkwardly by the door, glancing around Kylan's room. Even if I wanted to run away, it was too late now.

The big clock above his desk already showed it was fifteen minutes past curfew, so that's how long I'd been standing there.

Fifteen minutes.

Kylan went on with his life as if me being in his room past curfew was the most casual thing in the world. It was not surprising, I mean—I'd heard of his reputation and knew for a certain that many girls had been here past curfew.

He had taken off his shirt, cleaned his empty water bottles—took a shower.

All in those fifteen minutes.

"Are your legs broken?" he said as he tossed a towel over a chair. "Do I need to come and carry you—"

"No!" I spoke a little too fast, looking anywhere but his bare chest. Unfortunately, it was just as wet and shiny as that time I had come to his room to reject him.

"I can walk!" I took big steps toward his bed and sat down on the edge. Unsure of what to do with my hands, I placed them in my lap before plastering a forced smile on my lips.

"Okay, maybe this is a bad idea."

He raised a brow, smirking. "Having second thoughts already? You're the one who wanted to come in."

"Well," I begged to differ. "Technically, you dragged me here."

His eyes met mine, and I quickly lowered my head, only to land on the very obvious outline in his grey sweatpants. I didn't want to look like a creep, so I snapped my gaze up again—but my eyes betrayed me, lingering on his well-defined abs.

Flustered, I cleared my throat and decided to settle for the wall behind him instead.

The slight chuckle that escaped his lips as he walked toward his walk-in closet made my embarrassment worse. My palms grew sweaty at the thought that Kylan had noticed me checking him out.

"Why!?" I whispered, squeezing my eyes shut as I tried to erase the memory. Shortly after, I heard footsteps and opened my eyes to watch him step out of the closet with a black shirt in his hand.

"Here, wear this," he tossed it at me, and I caught it just in time.

I stretched out the shirt, carefully inspecting it. Kylan was at least two heads taller than me, so what was just a shirt to him would definitely be a dress on me. I could already imagine how ridiculous I'd look.

"Is this the shirt you give to all the girls that come here?" I asked, half-curious.

Kylan hummed, laughing. "I can assure you, they definitely do not wear shirts in this room."

Knowing exactly what he was implying, I shot him a look of pure disgust before getting up and making my way to his closet. Frustration twisted in my stomach, and Lumia began growling in jealousy.

"Nope," I mumbled, locking her away in the back of my mind. I couldn't give two fucks about who Kylan was fucking, and that damn wolf was not going to mess with my feelings. Not tonight.

I took off my dress, threw it aside—and pulled the oversized shirt over my head before glancing down at myself. The shirt was so big, I was practically swimming in it—but as much as I hated to admit it, I liked the feeling. It smelled like him. Fresh, clean...annoying.

I glanced in the mirror and frowned at the sight of my face, still full of makeup from dinner. My cheeks were flushed, lipstick smudged, and the mascara was starting to bother me.

"Hey! Do you have makeup wipes?" I called out.

"Yes, of course I do!" he yelled back.

I sighed, relieved. "Really?"

"Yes, and I also got a cucumber eye-mask, and if you're feeling fancy tonight—a fizzing bath bomb!"

I groaned, realizing he was being sarcastic. Of course he couldn't respond to my question like a regular person because he wasn't regular.

Ignoring him, I headed to the bathroom, washing my face with water and my hands as best I could.

When I came back out, Kylan was leaning in his chair, his arms casually relaxing on the arm rest. His gaze was fixed on me, and I could feel his eyes slowly trailing up and down until they lingered a little too long on my legs.

Feeling self-conscious under his stare, I tugged at the hem of the shirt, trying to pull it lower—but it was already as low as it could go.

Kylan's eyes flickered, like he suddenly realized I was trying to hide myself—and then we just stared at each other like two idiots. Neither of us said a word, and the only sound was my uneven breathing as I desperately tried to think of something—anything—to make this less uncomfortable.

I did the first thing that came to mind and flicked the leftover water from my wet fingers at his face.

Kylan blinked, wiping the drops off with the back of his hand, staring at me in disbelief. "How old are you?" he asked. "Five?"

He looked down, trying to hide his smile, but I caught it just in time. It was strange—he always looked handsome when he was serious, but when he genuinely smiled, he looked beautiful. Whenever his smile was sincere, a small dimple appeared on the left side near his lips.

I didn't even know how I noticed, and it bothered me that I did. Why was I paying attention to things like that anyway?

My eyes wandered down to his hand, watching as he slid off the silver ring he always wore.

Another strange, irrelevant thing I had been paying attention to.

"So..." I started awkwardly, realizing now that we weren't going back and forth, we had run out of topics.

"Now what?" Kylan asked, raising an eyebrow. He pointed toward his king-sized bed with a smirk. "I'm not sleeping on the floor if that's what you're asking. The bed is big enough."

"Ah, what a gentleman," I muttered, giving him a dismissive blink.

Kylan pulled back his head, offended. "I'm letting you share the bed, and that's more than most would get," he spoke. "I could've thrown you a pillow and told you to figure it out."

I decided not to argue. Prince Kylan had a royal stick so far up his ass, there were just certain things he couldn't understand. There was no point in trying to explain common decency to someone like him.

Instead, I climbed onto the bed, my hands feeling the soft mattress that felt way different from the crap we had to deal with. I let out a little sigh of awe.

"Even your bed feels different. You must sleep like a king in this thing."

Kylan released a knowing breath. "Sure, sleeping—amongst other things, yes."

I wasn't stupid. I knew what he was implying, and just the thought of it made me want to throw up. I scrunched my nose up in disgust, scooting all the way to the left side of the bed and made myself comfortable.

As I watched him slide into bed beside me, completely shirtless, my heartbeat quickened. I had a clear view of his toned muscles, and quickly looked away with warmed cheeks, hoping he wouldn't notice.

There was a clear distance between us, which was a relief—but it didn't make the situation any less nerve-racking.

Kylan grabbed his phone and started scrolling, completely unfazed. Sharing a bed with someone was clearly normal to him, but it was something new to me.

I tended to overthink everything, and even without Lumia's influence. There were so many things to think about, but for some reason my mind went to how it would feel like to run my fingers over his abs, tracing the lines of his muscles.

I shook my head, snapping out of it. What was I even thinking?

"Do you always sleep with your glasses on?"

"M-Me?" I pointed to myself as if there was someone else in the room. "I can't sleep without them. I told you, they're...important."

"You can't even take them off for a second?" Kylan asked, sounding genuinely curious for the first time even though his eyes remained on his phone screen. "So, what? You wash your face with them, shower, sleep, run—everything?"

I gave him a nod.

"What about shifting?" Kylan continued his interrogation.

This was the first time in years someone opened up the topic about my eyes, and I wasn't sure if I was ready to go there yet. Even so, I still answered. "I'm not a big fan of shifting."

Kylan lifted his brows in curiosity, putting his phone down. He placed one arm behind his head and locked his eyes onto mine, waiting for me to continue.

"When I shift, it's not like how it is for others," I explained slowly. "It's...complicated. There's something dark inside of me, something I can't control when I shift."

"A darkness?"

"Yes. It's not always, but sometimes I feel like I don't have control over my body," I told him. "The voices become overwhelming, and I can't block them out—no matter how hard I try. It's why I avoid it whenever I can."

Kylan's gaze was deep and focused as I spoke about my issues. "Don't they have wolf glasses?" He joked, easing the tension.

"I wish there were," I cackled. "If only it were that simple."

His look grew warmer as he kept observing me. I didn't know what he was thinking, but I knew it could be anything.

Back in the woods I thought he pitied me, but maybe he was freaked out.

Who knew?

My memories drifted back to the last time I shifted. It was almost three years ago, on my sixteenth birthday. What was supposed to be a good day turned into a disaster when I did the one thing Dad told me not to do.

I shifted without permission and went into the woods—a silly birthday tradition in our pack. The darkness had taken over so fast, and I couldn't remember half of what happened. I lost control of myself, and of Lumia.

The only thing I knew was that when I came back to myself, I had supposedly almost scratched someone's eyes out. The bullying after that got worse, and so did Dad's resentment.

He said I wasn't made for shifting and that unless I wanted people to force him to lock me in a cage like a wild animal—I should focus on my healing powers.

I felt a sharp pain in my chest, remembering the unforgettable words he said that day.

'You are not a Hastings, and you are not a Bloodrose. You are a demon's child.'

He had apologized the next day, and bought me some expensive books to make up for it, but the words had always stayed with me.

"Have you ever thought about contacts?" Kylan cut through my thoughts after he was done staring at me.

I shot him a sarcastic glance. "Can you invent them for me?"

"No," he laughed, sheepishly. "What lenses do you have in those glasses anyway?"

"Lupyrian stone."

"From my kingdom?" Kylan's eyebrows shot up, and he looked taken aback.

I bobbed my head in response.

"That's very difficult for outsiders to get their hands on. It has been extinct for years," Kylan shared. "How did you get it?"