

Chapter 246

Violet

Nate wasn't aware, so his question came out sounding gentle and innocent, but it still hit something deep in me.

It wasn't his fault that he didn't know the truth, or that I couldn't tell him the reason I cared so much was because I was one of them. Well, not exactly, but enough that I felt their suffering as my own.

It wasn't really personal. It was just another way to keep myself safe, and when Kylan suggested it, I agreed. It hurt because Nate was one of the few people I trusted, and yet here I was, still holding back something so big. Kylan's eyes pierced into mine, but I didn't know what it meant. I didn't know if he was encouraging me to make my own decision or to make the smart decision. I had a pretty good sense that while he trusted Nate enough to come with us to the mountains, he didn't trust him enough to handle the truth about my identity.

Nate shifted a bit, desperate to meet my gaze. "Well?"

I released a gulp, but quickly played it off with a light smile. "I care for the witches because I didn't grow up Lyperian," I said, raising my brows playfully. "I'm a sympathetic person, and emotions matter to me."

It was the easiest answer I could give, and it was partly true. Because even if I wasn't a witch, I would've fought just as hard for those in the mountains.

Kylan let out a low chuckle and joined us again, his shoulder bumping Nate in the process. "Do you hear that, Kylan?" Nate laughed, nudging him right back. "The Bloodrose is talking about emotions."

"Yes, she is," Kylan said, shooting me a wink. "I don't know who she thinks she is."

I rolled my eyes with a grin and let the two of them have their fun. I had already had mine today, and I was in a good mood.

But not as good as Nate. When I looked at him, I couldn't help but notice it again, just like I had earlier in the hallway. It wasn't the way he dressed or how his hair fell just right, but how peaceful he looked, like nothing in the world could bother him.

Not even the news of me being a witch, my terrifying glowing eyes or the news of that woman who I still couldn't believe was my grandmother being Baelor's biggest worshipper.

"How do you feel about witches, Nate?" I blurted.

There was a beat of silence, and when I glanced at Kylan, he was already looking at me with that soft, sad expression. Because he knew me. He knew I wasn't really asking for Nate's opinion, but searching for reassurance. Trying to convince myself that Nate wouldn't hate me, and maybe deep down, I thought Kylan was just trying to protect my feelings.

I didn't even realize I was holding my breath until Nate made a sound as he looked away for a second. "I've never met a witch," he said. "My dad always taught me to respect everyone, even the vampires, and I try...but I don't know if I can separate dark witches from Baelor in my head or if I could ever respect anyone who stood with him," he said with a shrug. "But that doesn't mean they don't deserve rights or that I wouldn't stand behind someone who does what's right."

Kylan and I shared a quiet laugh. We didn't need to say anything to know we were thinking the same thing. Nate claiming he had never met a witch

when one was standing right in front of him was just hilarious.

It was a good thing I could still laugh, because even that vague answer was better than what I had feared. I wasn't a Baelor follower, so at least I was in the clear.

I gave Nate's chest two quick pats with a grin. "So we can expect to see you tomorrow?"

"Yes!" He matched my grin. "I'll even carry you up those mountains if Kylan won't!"

I let out a laugh, shaking my head at the image of it. Nate glanced at Kylan. "I just volunteered to carry her her, Kylan, and you haven't killed me yet?" he commented. "You're quiet today."

"I'm always quiet," Kylan replied simply.

However, Nate wasn't wrong. Kylan was quiet at the moment, and part of me wondered if his silence came from the guilt of keeping Nate out of it.

"If you say so," Nate said, not pressing further. He never did. That was one thing I liked about him. He just let things be.

"I have to go now," Kylan said after a moment of silence. "There's a lot to prepare for tomorrow."

My smile faded. I knew there was still a lot to be done since everything was short notice, and that we would already be spending the whole day together in the mountains tomorrow. I also knew that he was the crown prince and there were just certain things he had to do, but I still didn't want him to disappear so soon.

He had already warned me beforehand that we would not spend much

time together, but I missed him already.

“Don’t go,” I pouted. “Or I’ll come with and help you!”

“And spend a day with the king?” Kylan shot me an uneasy glance. He stepped closer and reached out until his warm hands cradled my cheeks. “I don’t want that,” he said gently. “You let the prince do his prince duties, and you will relax, sit back, take a good rest, and wait for me tonight.”

His words made my heart flutter, because even now, after I had already given him more work than he could probably handle, he was still looking after me and my health.

“What will happen tonight?” Nate flashed a sly smile, curiosity dripping from his tone.

Kylan frowned. “Wouldn’t you like to know?”

I laughed under my breath as Nate pulled a disgusted face, finally realizing, and muttered something I couldn’t quite hear. Kylan turned to Nate. “You will stay here today,” he instructed, looking back and forth between the two of us. “Take care of her for me.”

Nate nodded without hesitation. “You can count on me.”

Before Kylan left, he pressed one last kiss to my cheek. “No Madam Renata, and tomorrow will be a long day, so make sure she rests!” he called to Nate as he pointed at him like he was making a threat.

I kept my eyes on the door long after it closed, my heart sinking a little once he was gone. I really wished he would have stayed a bit longer.

“I don’t even see Madam Renata today,” I mumbled. Only when I heard

the echoes of my own voice did I realize the chamber was empty except for Nate and me. As I looked around, the space suddenly felt much bigger.

My eyes scanned the empty seats, and just like that, the weight of what I had just done came crashing down all at once.

Dear Goddess I had just made a fool out of myself.

“Don’t!” Nate’s voice pulled me back. “You did great!”

I had no time to overthink it as he had already slung his arm over my shoulder, leading me toward the exit. “Let’s get out of here,” he decided. “And please, say we’re not going somewhere that involves needles and thread.” 

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