



Chapter 249

Violet

"What king?" Kylan's brows pulled together, still searching for answers. His hands rested on my shoulders, his gaze fixed on mine. "Were you just inside the Veil, Violet?"

I heard every word, but I couldn't focus. I couldn't even find my voice.

"The night has crowned its king," I whispered. The words didn't feel like mine. They slipped out without my choice. "And soon he will come for all of us."

I stared ahead, my thoughts spinning too fast to catch.

"Come for who? Everyone in the Veil...us?" Kylan pulled me against his chest, holding me tight. "Who did you see?"

I swallowed hard. "Alaric...Adelaide...Baelor." My voice grew small at the last name. Just saying it made my skin crawl, and the image I had seen burned behind my eyes again. Red eyes in the dark, the way he came for me...

How was I ever supposed to close my eyes again?

Kylan pulled back just enough to grab my hand. His gaze dropped to my ring, studying it like he was looking for something. "The ring is still on your finger," he murmured.

I looked up at him, trying to sort through everything in my head.

Do not betray him...

Adelaide's voice was still so clear. But who was she talking about?



It couldn't be Kylan. I had promised myself I would never betray him again, and I meant to keep that promise.

His fingers brushed my cheek. His touch was soft, steady, and he didn't push for more. He just waited, patient as always. I wanted to tell him everything. I wanted to tell him because he always knew how to say the right thing, and because keeping it inside felt like it might crush me.

"I'll tell you," I sighed.

And I did. I told him about Alaric, Adelaide, her warning, the figure floating in the sky, and the red-eyed raven. Every detail.

The more I spoke, the more I accepted it had all been real. I had never remembered anything so clearly, and I had never feared anything as much as I feared that look in Baelor's eyes.

Kylan stayed close the whole time, his arms around me, his eyes never leaving mine. Nothing I said seemed to scare him, and he took in every word.

When I finished, we sat in silence. I could tell he had a lot to think about, and so did I. "Do you have any questions?" I asked.

He hummed softly, then nodded. "There's one thing I want to know."

"Yes?"

I wasn't sure if I could give him an answer, but I would try. He pressed his lips to my hair. "Are you okay?"

Warmth spread through me. As expected of Kylan, after everything I told him that was his question. I repeated the question in my head, then broke out laughing. "I don't know!"



I started giggling, and Kylan's eyes narrowed slightly like he was checking if I had lost my mind. I wasn't laughing because it was funny. None of this was funny. I just couldn't believe my life had turned into this.

I had met my father and looked into the eyes of darkness itself in the same night. What were the odds?

"I mean, all of this is a little insane, right?"

Kylan gave a small chuckle, letting out a slow sigh. "The person Adelaide was talking about...it must have been Kayden, right? Did you recognize the figure?"

"No, I couldn't see his face." I shook my head. "But I saw a raven. I think it was Thorne, so it had to be him."

Kylan nodded, and I nodded too, though something still didn't feel right. "I just don't understand why I would ever betray him," I said. Even the words felt strange in my mouth.

Kayden was unstable, and like Trinity said, I didn't want him as a friend or an enemy. Everything pointed to him. It was obvious, but I just couldn't see the point of me betraying him.

"Do you think he'll feel betrayed because I told him I won't use my eyes?" I asked Kylan.

Kylan gazed into my eyes. "Is that what you told him today?" he asked. "That you won't use them?"

I thought back to my talk with Kayden. He hadn't shouted or lost control. He only said it was the only way, and when I disagreed, he told me he would trust my judgment. None of it had felt like he was feeding me what I wished to hear, and that was the complicated part.



Who was Kayden?

"I don't think it works like that, Violet," Kylan said. "Betrayal would mean you didn't tell him, but you did, so that's not it."

I drew in a slow breath. "So that means it's something that still needs to happen," I mumbled, thinking it through. "Something that will push him into being reborn as...Kian. Something I'll end up pushing him to do."

Just the thought made me gasp in fear. I never wanted to be the cause of something bad for anyone.

For a moment, I just sat there in silence, letting my thoughts swirl. I couldn't stop wondering if I had overstepped with the mountains and maybe pushed too hard, too soon. If this so-called betrayal Adelaide warned me about had something to do with the witches. If not, then why else would she show me now?

"I still want to help those witches," I told Kylan, "but I can't help but think that maybe you were right, and this wasn't the way."

I shot him a small, sad smile. "Not that it would matter now. Everything has already been prepared."

Kylan moved his fingers under my chin, tilting my face toward his before pressing the lightest kiss against my lips. That was his answer.

He didn't say I was wrong, which to me meant he agreed. It was no surprise because he had never been the one pushing to help those witches anyway.

"Can I ask you something?" I stared into his soft eyes.

He smiled faintly. "Always."



"What would you do in this situation?"

"What would I do?" Kylan pulled back just slightly. His brow furrowed as he answered. "Nothing."

Nothing?

I looked at him in disbelief. Of all people, I had thought he would have the answer because he always did.

"You said Adelaide told you it's too late," he replied calmly, "which means whatever is going to happen will already happen, and the future has been set. The best thing you can do is not try to prevent it. Sometimes trying only makes it worse, so you just...do you, Violet."

I blinked at him. Kylan had been through a lot with his mom, Kayden, and the king, so I was sure he had his reasons. Still, I didn't know whether to feel comforted or even more uneasy.

"Even if it means Baelor and...everyone else breaking out of the Veil? Even if it means Kayden could turn into...that Kian thing?" I asked, just to be sure. I had really expected a different answer.

Kylan gave a small shrug, like those possibilities didn't scare him the same way they did me. "You asked for my advice. I gave it to you," he chuckled lightly. "But I also know you're Violet...and Violet does whatever Violet wants to do."

He wiggled his brows playfully, and I laughed, though I felt a tightness in my chest. There was something about hearing him say that, about him knowing me that well, that made me feel sorry. I also couldn't help but wonder if my lies had contributed to that answer.

Aelius had called me selfish before, and maybe it was because my



selfishness would be the very thing that led to all of this, no matter how much I tried to prevent it.

This time, as I stared into Kylan's eyes, I saw the exhaustion behind them and wondered if even now I had been selfish. He seemed tired, worn out, and I didn't know whether it was because of all he had done today or because of me.

What was I even implying, saying maybe it wasn't a good idea after all, after he had gotten me a spot to speak in front of the council and spent the entire day preparing for tomorrow.

"I didn't even ask you how your day went!" I said, drastically changed my tone.

Kylan shook his head. "It's not about me right now," he smiled. "It's about you, and..."

Baelor...

My mind drifted instantly to the dark one. Those bloodshot red eyes that were out for hunger was the last thing I wanted to think about, but one of the only things I could think of.

I glanced up at Kylan and caught him looking at me. I could tell by his gaze that I didn't need to explain any further because he could see the fear on my face.

"Why are you not asking about him?" I asked quietly. "Don't you have questions?"

Kylan released a breath, slipped a hand behind my head, then pressed a soft kiss to my forehead. "I do, but it's simple," Kylan said. "You don't want to talk about him right now, so we won't."



As I glanced into his brown eyes, there were no words to explain how grateful I was for him. He wasn't trying to drag the words out of me. He simply let me speak when I was ready.

"We're not sleeping tonight, are we?" he asked, squinting.

Well, I didn't know it was a 'we' thing, but I wasn't sleeping tonight. There was no way, and I didn't think my body would even allow it. Not now. I let out a short chuckle. "You look tired. You should sleep. I'll be fine."

"So we're not sleeping tonight," Kylan decided for me. He didn't even consider my words.

"Is there something you do want to talk about?" he asked, nudging my shoulder lightly. "Like your dad, Alaric?"

A sincere smile appeared on my lips. Alaric was definitely one of the highlights of the veil. His warmth, the way he said Princess like it was the easiest truth in the world...

We really deserved more time, and something deep down told me we would get it. There was just something about his reassuring words that made me believe so.

"We can talk about him," I grinned. There was so much I wanted to share. About Alaric, his kind words, Lumen...

"Great!" Kylan let go of me and got up without warning. Puzzled, I watched as he went around the room, gathering all the blankets and pillows he could find.

"What are you doing?" I laughed, confused.

He did not answer right away. Instead, he walked to the balcony doors,



pushed them open, and revealed the beautiful night view. His hands were still full as he glanced back at me and motioned with his head for me to follow.

My eyes narrowed. "So we're...sleeping outside?"

He smirked. "Have you ever tried sleeping under the stars before?"

I shook my head. Kylan's eyebrows shot up, and he gave me a dramatic gasp as if I had just offended him. "But you're a Bloodrose?"

A surprised laugh slipped out.

"Trust me," Kylan said. "It's the best. I'll tell you why while we're out there, and you can tell me everything about your dad. I want to hear it all."

I knew exactly what he was doing. He was protecting me in his own way like he had done before. He had this quiet skill of making me feel good without making it too obvious, and it was one of the many things on my list of why I fell for him. He was not just asking about Alaric, he was making me forget, even if just for a little while.

I got up with a smile and headed to the balcony, trying to let the thought of Baelor fade for now.