

Chapter 250

Violet

Kylan had spread the blankets out right in the middle of the balcony. The cool night air brushed past while the stars in the sky felt like they were made for just us.

We lay side by side, and my head rested on his chest, which was rising and falling with each steady breath as his eyes were fixed on the sky.

My eyes weren't on the stars. They stayed on Kylan and the soft smile on his face. He was trying so hard to make me feel safe, to make what I had seen in the Veil seem small and far away. But I knew it wasn't, and so did he.

This was a way to keep me safe from my own thoughts, and it was working. "I think I know now," I spoke softly.

"Know what?"

"Why you look up at the stars," I told him. "Because no matter how bad the day is, the stars still show up, and even on the worst day they remind you to breathe."

Kylan nodded slowly, his eyes still fixed on the sky. What he didn't know was that I wasn't really talking about the stars at all.

I was talking about him. He was my star tonight, the one thing that still showed up without me needing to ask him to. I reached up and poked his cheek with my finger, but he didn't even look at me. He was so focused on the sky that it made me smile.

"I didn't know you were this romantic," I teased.



"Neither did I," he replied without looking at me. Then he turned his head, and his eyes widened the moment he noticed how close I was.

"I love you," I said with a smile.

His lips curled. "I love you too, pup."

He suddenly ruffled his hand through my hair, and I squirmed against his chest, trying to get away from his fingers. We stayed like that for a while, laughing and moving around, until he finally let me go.

When things calmed down, he tilted his head and lay on his side. "So... are you ready to talk about your dad? What was he like?"

I let my mind wander back, and even though my memory of the Veil had been dark and terrifying, the memory of Alaric felt warm and happy. "He looks just like me," I began. "His smile was so big and happy, he called me his princess, said he was so proud of me and loved me."

Kylan moved his hand to my shoulder and rubbed it in small circles as I spoke.

I released a breath, letting everything come back to me. "He was taller than I remembered through Mom's eyes," I said. "He looked so kind, and we had the same hair, eyes, basically everything. He said so himself," I laughed at the last part.

I was practically beaming as I spoke, all while Kylan's eyes stayed on me. "I wished I could have hugged him, but I couldn't," my voice faltered. "Adelaide had reached out to him to send me a message, and although I could see him, it was like he wasn't really there."

Kylan's arm tightened around me. "What more?"

"He said he never wanted to abandon me, that he wished we had more



time, and I did too," I said softly. "But he told me we would always be connected through Lumia and Lumen."

Kylan's gaze dropped to my ring, then back to me as he let out a sigh. "So that's why your dad was able to reach you," he concluded. "That's great, Violet!"

It truly was. It meant he had been with me all along, and if I charmed Lumia just a little more, I might even get to see him again.

Dad and possibly Lumen.

Lumen and Lumia...

It was perfect.

A faint smile came to my lips. Our bond was something Baelor couldn't touch. Not today, not ever.

"You know, Lumia was the one who spoke through me at the council today," I said, glancing at him. "When I stood up for the witches, she was pushing me, making me stronger. I haven't felt her in a long time, but she said I was finally worth her time, so...I think that might have something to do with it."

Kylan's brows rose slightly. "That's good," he said quietly. "She should be there for you."

It felt good, better than I expected. It had been a long time since she had truly talked to me, and even though her words were snarky, she said things that mattered. For the first time in a long while, I felt like she was not trying to tear me down but to protect me, and I had missed that feeling.

Kylan reached over and brushed a loose strand of hair from my face,



resting his warm knuckles against my cheek. "I hope Lumia will soon let me in," he murmured.

My lips curved into a small smile, but before I could reply, I heard a tired sigh that wasn't mine, coming from somewhere deep inside.

'Needy prince,' Lumia spoke lazily. 'Tell him to scratch my back, and I'll scratch his!'

A laugh came out of me before I could stop it.

Kylan looked confused. "What?"

"Maybe if you tell me more about your Lycan," I teased, helping Lumia. "She will consider letting you in."

I had barely finished my sentence when a scoff slipped from his lips. "You mean the beast?"

"The beast," I repeated with a little smirk. For a moment, I pictured him just the way I had seen him in my vision. He was massive, fierce, and had the most beautiful purple eyes. Yes, he was aggressive and wild, but I had never feared he would hurt me, not for a moment.

I already trusted him.

I had thought that once we reached Lyperia, his home ground, Kylan would let him out, maybe even take him for a run and let me watch. I had been looking forward to it more than I cared to admit, but nothing had happened yet.

It was strange how we were so closely tied, drawn to each other because of that bond, yet both held back from setting free the very thing that was part of our connection.



"Can I at least know his name?" I asked out of pure curiosity.

Kylan let out a short laugh. "Never."

"Never?" I pushed myself up on an elbow, staring at him with a frown. "Not even the first letter?"

Kylan's expression hardened, and his eyes lost their softness. I could tell he was thinking back to something that still bothered him, maybe the very thing that made him hate 'the beast' in the first place.

"I hate him," Kylan whispered, full of hatred. "And he's not something to boast about. He's not worthy of a name nor a first letter. Not until I can trust him again."

Not until he could trust him again...

Even though I never hated Lumia, I could understand his words. But his hatred ran much deeper than mine ever could.

I grabbed Kylan's hand and studied the anger in his gaze. He had been opening up a lot lately, so I knew the parts he still kept locked away had to be serious. But he had never pushed me, and I would not push him either.

"You don't have to tell me now," I whispered, letting out a yawn as I spoke. I suddenly realized how tired I was, but I couldn't let myself fall asleep. I just couldn't...

What if I would see him again?

Baelor...

Kylan's eyes softened again, and his lips curved into a faint smile. "You're getting tired already," he pointed out. "Go to sleep, Violet."



"I'm not tired," I insisted, though my eyelids grew heavier with each word. I fought hard to keep my eyes open.

Don't fall asleep, Violet...

Don't...

"Go to sleep, Violet," Kylan whispered, brushing a warm kiss against my temple.

I shook my head. "No."

He let out a quiet sigh, trying not to let a smile show. He probably couldn't hold back against my stubbornness for much longer. "We have a long day ahead tomorrow."

"I don't want to sleep," I said again, though my voice betrayed me. Maybe I did.

His eyes stayed on mine. "If you get some rest, I promise I'll tell you everything when we're back from the mountains."

My lashes fluttered. "Tell me...what?"

He smiled a little. "Why the beast doesn't deserve a name."

What...

"You will?" I tried to keep my smile, but it slipped away. The steady sound of his heartbeat began to pull me under.

And that was the last thing I heard before sleep took me.