



Chapter 269

Violet

Kylan started laughing so loud for a second that I almost forgot where we were. He wasn't wrong to laugh because it was indeed hilarious. In what world would Kylan and the king ever hold hands to save the witches?

Just the thought of it was enough for a small laugh to escape from my lips as well.

"Are you serious right now?" he asked, still half-laughing as his eyes landed on Varius. He gave him a serious nod and didn't look insulted in the slightest.

Kylan shook his head in disbelief. "I don't want to say I'm anything like that man," he said, "but if you expected the king and me to resurrect the stone...you've been betting on the wrong people."

Kayden let out a loud sigh, looking at Varius. "I told you this would happen," he said. "I told you he would react like this."

Varius lifted a hand to silence him, and Kayden listened. All eyes were on Kylan as it seemed like he had much more to say.

"If I tell you that I won't let Violet use her eyes, what makes you think I would ever ask the king of all people to take part in some ritual you've cooked up?" Kylan called him out. "A ritual that's probably just meant to make your people stronger so you can continue whatever you've been doing and attack us. Isn't that what this is really about?"

Kylan wasn't beating around the bush anymore. His words weren't cruel, but direct. Just the truth as he saw it. But I didn't agree. I decided to keep my mouth shut because, in my opinion, Varius seemed sincere. I did

believe he wanted to help those witches.

Varius chuckled softly. His eyes were warm and kind. "I can swear to you, on Kayden's life, who I hold very dear, that that is not what I want."

Kylan's jaw tightened. "Kayden, Kayden," he muttered under his breath. His eyes traveled to Kayden. "Would that even matter if he will be reborn as Kian?"

A scoff came from Kayden. He tilted his head with the faintest smirk on his face.

"I do not control what Thorne whispers to others, Crown Prince," Varius said. His tone stayed calm. "I only want to help my people."

Kylan's eyes narrowed as if that would somehow make him see through him. Varius tapped his stick lightly against the ground. "Come with me."

Kylan seemed a bit hesitant, but this time I did do something. I pulled his hand, urging him to walk. Even if this idea was more hopeless than the first, he could at least make it seem like he was willing to listen.

"Let's just go with him," I whispered, pleadingly.

"See what he has to say."

Varius heard me and gave a grateful smile. Kylan's gaze softened, and he let out a single breath through his nose. "Sure, why not?" he said, his voice dripping with sarcasm.

Kayden had already rolled himself beside Varius, and the two entered the cavern. Kylan and I followed. As we stepped inside, cool air met us right away. The walls were rough and uneven, with sharp rocks poking out, shining here and there when the light touched them. The ground was



cracked and broken, scattered with small puddles that reflected the glow ahead with every step we took.

Aside from the occasional sound of Varius's stick tapping against the stone, the cavern was silent.

"Stay close to me, Violet," Kylan spoke. We were already holding hands, and he hadn't let go for a second, so I wasn't sure how much closer he wanted me.

We walked a little further in, and then I saw it. My breath caught in my throat.

There was a shallow pool of water, and in the center stood a stone holding a giant blue crystal. Its light flickered like a fire trying to stay alive, and just by looking at it I couldn't tell how much longer it would last.

"Wow," I breathed, amazed. "It looks beautiful."

"Stay back, Violet!" Kylan growled softly.

"Do not fear the root," Varius said with a nod toward him. He tapped his stick once against the stone floor, then took another step forward. "This is what is left of the Lyperian stone. Dead to most eyes, useless...but not entirely gone."

I swallowed hard, staring at the one thing that somehow managed to control my eyes. The glasses, the ring...if it weren't for the stone, I wouldn't have gotten this far. Even now, it felt like something was pulling me toward it.

Kylan's eyes stayed fixed on Varius. Kayden rolled closer to the stone, and a smirk spread across his face. "Beautiful, isn't it?" he said calmly. "



"The root of the Lyperian stone."

The light flickered again, wilder and brighter this time. It was as if it knew we had arrived.

"I will give you some backstory," Varius said. His stick tapped against the stone floor as he slowly made his way toward the crystal before circling it.

"As you may know, every clan has its own stone, each tied to its land in the Lycan kingdom, and its people," he began. "Aevanor's rests under water and belongs to the water clans, Elarin's is buried in the deepest ice and belongs to the ice clans, but Lyperia..." He paused, taking a deep breath. "The witches here have nothing left. No protection, no balance... only this stone that does nothing for us."

Kayden leaned back in his chair, his eyes full of concern. "And that's why our people look half-dead," he added. "The stone and your eyes...they're almost like the same!"

He said it again.

Our people...

Varius nodded once, ignoring his interruption. "The stone acts as a filter, a channel. It regulates the flow of magic so it does not overwhelm them."

His words stuck with me and circled in my head. I thought of the way my eyes burned when they took over, the way it felt like I had no control over them. The stone made me strong enough to control my powers, so I could only imagine what kind of effect an unstable stone might have on them.

Kylan scoffed under his breath, clearly unimpressed.

"Then why can't I use another stone to control my eyes?" I couldn't help



but wonder. "Why do I need the Lyperian stone?"

Varius's gaze settled on me. "Our line of the children of blood came from the Lyperian mountains. Many moved to the common lands long ago, but our origin is here. It is only the Lyperian stone that can master those rare eyes you cannot control."

Though it was a lot to process, his words almost made sense. Aelius hadn't gone that far in explaining, and I'm sure he had done so for his reasons, but Varius didn't seem to hold anything back. Now did not seem like the right time, but there was so much more I wanted to ask him.

If we were from the same line, would he know Aelius? Why had Aelius never mentioned a Varius or these mountains?

But then again, when did Aelius ever say something clear?

"Well," Kylan sighed. He raised his brows for a second. "Since Violet won't be using her eyes, and I won't be wasting my time on this stone, I have a third option for you," he nodded. "Take your people, and go."



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