



Chapter 273

Kylan

None of this made sense, and I didn't want it to make sense. I didn't want to hear anything from that man's mouth.

He had just confirmed that whatever will happen, will happen, and that was enough for me. Who cares about how it would happen if the end were all the same?

"We still don't want to hear it," I decided. "So you can—"

"You might not want to hear it," Violet spoke up. Her voice was clear and sharp, and her eyes bore into mine. "But I do."

I looked at her, surprised. She didn't flinch, didn't look away. I hadn't expected her to speak up like that, but she did, so I had to respect her decision.

"If it's up to us to decide how it happens, I want to hear it," she said, determined. However, I couldn't agree. We weren't even sure whether we could trust him yet.

I took a breath, reminding myself that we were in this together. It wasn't just about what I wanted to do. "Okay," I exhaled. "Okay, we'll listen to him."

"I don't have long," Varius spoke. "He cannot see inside my head at the moment, and when he notices, he will be here."

"Who?" Violet asked quickly. "Is it Tho—"

The name could not leave her lips as Varius pressed his finger to them,



his eyes wide.

"Is that why you're so weak now?" Violet whispered as he pulled his finger away. Varius gave her a weak nod.

"You said you don't have long," I began, my patience gone. "So speak!"

Varius's hand trembled as he pressed against the door to check whether it was really closed. "I will tell you the most important things," he said in a strained voice. "I don't think there's enough time."

He gave us a single nod, then began speaking.

"Whether through your eyes, Violet," he looked at her, then shifted his gaze to me. "Or through your hand on that stone...the Veil will open."

I felt an uncomfortable pit in my stomach, one I was sure Violet must have felt as well. "The Veil will open, darkness will enter, and one of you will be blamed. It was written before either of you was born. Kian will walk because he was always meant to walk, but...whether you stand beside him or against him will be up to yo —"

His words were cut off by a painful groan escaping his throat. "Varius!" Violet steadied him, her hands gripping his shoulders.

Though I was more focused on the story than the man's pain. Kayden would walk again, and the Veil would open.

"Keep talking," I spat.

"If you use your eyes, Violet," Varius breathed, "you will heal them...and they will all curse you for it. And if you choose not to, the stone will call to Kylan no matter what, and he shall take the blame." His eyes flicked to me. "To take the blame for the one you love will mean to restore the



stone, but in order to convince the king to do so, you will pay a price you swore never to pay."

My blood was close to boiling. If what he was saying was true, that meant he intended to throw me under the bus, to somehow save Violet. The plan didn't sound too bad, but he could have asked me instead of making me feel like shit. He could have been honest from the start.

"There wasn't a single price I wouldn't pay to see Violet safe.

"No matter which door you choose...the Veil will open, and Kian rises. Always," Varius said. "And it will be you who heals him, Violet. You who let him walk, by following him to these mountains."

Violet released a gasp, preparing herself to speak, but Varius cut her off with a shake of his head. "Kayden will kill, he will spill blood for you, and then..." he released another groan. "You will betray. Not because you want to, but simply because you must," he told us. "If you choose to betray the devil in the making, one will fall. But if you choose to betray the one you adore, both will rise, but not in the same way."

The devil in the making?

Kayden...

Varius gritted his teeth, leaning half of his weight on Violet and the other on the stick. He was still in very much pain, but it seemed like he had much more to say.

"The two of you will not leave these mountains tonight," his breath hitched. "You may try to leave, but the storm is destined to keep you here ...because it has already been written that the choice regarding the Veil will be made today, and the life will be taken tomorrow."



Violet and I snapped our heads toward each other, but the moment our eyes met, we both looked down. In that moment, I wondered if she knew me well enough to know that the choice had already been made.

I would not let her take the fall for the Veil.

"How much does Kayden know?"

"Kayden doesn't know much, as he is nothing more than a pawn," Varius confessed. "Kayden knows that there would be a Violet who would save the witches...heal him...help him be reborn as Kian...that Baelor would rise again..."

Another groan came from Varius, and Violet gasped, worrying for the man's health.

"He's almost here," Varius whispered.

"Then you better keep going," I said coldly.

Violet, who had wanted to hear so badly in the first place, shot me a cold glare, but Varius nodded his head.

"The king is not here without a reason. The maid...Camille," he said. "Kayden doesn't know this, but I do. She walks with your brother, but she belongs to the king," he revealed. "Everything your brother tells her goes straight to the king...and your brother..." Varius paused. "He tells her everything."

As those words left his mouth, it felt like the ground disappeared beneath me. All I could feel was rage. Why would he tell us, but not Kayden, the one he supposedly adored?

If that was true, it meant the king wasn't as stupid as I made him out to



be. He knew about everything.

He knew about Kayden going to the mountains. He knew that a Violet would be my mate and was probably already well aware the moment he learned her name. He pretended to run to Starlight and act oblivious while he knew that she was aware of her identity, that I was aware...he already knew everything.

Including that his golden boy wasn't his golden boy, and that the mistress he loved hadn't been loyal to him.

The stone...

No wonder he came running the second he had heard I wouldn't be joining the first group.

What was the king doing?

"Why tell us now?" I asked.

Varius lowered his gaze, his shoulders dropping. "I wanted her to use her eyes," he admitted. "But only because that is the way the Dark One preferred to break her. But I knew from the start that it wasn't right, so I always suggested the stone, which would have the same effect for my people. And although a price will have to be paid, it is a better option for both of you."

Violet's brow furrowed. "But you tried to convince me this morning to use my eyes."

"Only because he was listening. But please do not forget that I have tried to give you hints, even with the Dark One present," Varius explained himself. "But I knew you wouldn't use your eyes."



"That price you're talking about?" I cut in. "What will it be?"

Varius ignored me as though he hadn't heard, but I knew better. He heard, but just wouldn't say. He had said a lot of things within the past minute, except for this...

The longer I stared at the old man in front of me, the angrier I got. He somehow wanted us to believe that he suddenly had a change of heart and wanted to help Violet. The old man's words were everywhere at once, and I didn't know if I could trust him at all.

But the things he was saying...

"I care for these people," Varius said. "I would have done anything to bring these mountains back, to claim what was promised to me, and have waited for years. I waited for a Violet to come. But this," his eyes softened as they flicked toward her, "this girl in front of me is Brother Aelius's granddaughter, and this is not the way. This is not my way."

"Aelius? So you do know him?" Violet gasped, then shook her head, as if remembering there wasn't much time. "Please, just tell me. What does he want? You said he's here. Who is he?"

Varius's jaw tightened, and for a long moment, he looked like he might not speak at all, like that was another piece of information he had promised himself not to share. But then he took a soft breath. "He is among us, and he is an old friend who is in need of a vessel."

Then the door burst open...

