

Chapter 276

Violet

The day had been busy as everyone did their best to help wherever they could. It felt good to keep my mind distracted, but the distraction only went that far. The fourth group had arrived, which meant the third group was already packed up and would soon be on their way down.

Varius words were still inside my head, and I couldn't get them out. Would all he had said really be true?

I didn't doubt him.

Not one bit...

Why would he lie?

I sucked in a breath, tilting my head back to look at the sky above. It was still bright, the clouds soft and light, and it didn't look like a storm was coming...because we were still here.

Varius had been clear. Neither Kylan nor I would be leaving these mountains tonight.

I watched as more of the third group began passing by, preparing to head down. Then two strong arms wrapped around me from behind.

My breath stopped for a second as I felt a firm kiss pressed against my cheek. I laughed softly, already knowing who it was before I turned my head.

Kylan.



His chin rested on the top of my head, and his hands traveled to my sides before his lips brushed against my hair again and again. I couldn't stop the quiet giggle that left me.

After he stepped away from the hut to cool down, he was gone for quite a while before he came back. Ever since then, he had been so gentle with me all day, even much softer than usual.

I turned in his arms, pressing my hands against his chest. Though his face was calm, his heartbeat thudded strongly and fast.

As I tilted my face to look at him, he grew a startled expression for a second, but quickly masked it with a sweet smile.

"What are you thinking about?" I asked, though I already knew.

We were probably struggling with the same thoughts. Both of us wanted to say more but were holding back. The reason? Thorne.

After learning Thorne had ears everywhere, we had just both decided not to say anything at all. To move like danger wasn't lurking. But I hadn't forgotten, especially the part about the Veil.

If Kylan thought for even one second that I would let him take the fall, he was wrong. I would use my eyes, no matter what it cost me. He should know that about me by now. I hadn't told him yet, but I would later.

"What are you thinking about?" Kylan threw the question back at me.

I gave him a look, asking if he was serious. He chuckled under his breath. "Never mind," he said. "I think we're both thinking the same."

He pressed his lips to my forehead once more, letting his lips linger there for a moment. Then he pulled back, cupping my cheek to lock his eyes



with mine. "I love you," he whispered.

My heart melted at the words I could never get used to. "I love you so much," he said. "I need you to know that everything I do is because I love you, Violet."

"Yeah, yeah," I muttered, rolling my eyes a little even though my heart was beating too fast. "Me too," I said. "You've already said it like a hundred times today."

It wasn't that I minded. I loved hearing it, and I didn't doubt his love. But it also made me nervous, because I couldn't help wondering if there was a reason he was saying it. What if there was?

What if he had decided I came with too much drama, and it would just be better to distance himself from me while he still could?

I stood on my toes, brushing the back of my hand against his head. "Are you sure you're okay?"

Kylan let out a chuckle as he grabbed my wrist and lowered my hand. He gave me a quick nod, but something about it felt off. Could it be that he was still angry about me telling Varius to speak, even though he had been against it?

It was those nervous brown eyes that gave him away, and I didn't want him to hate me for it.

"Kylan?" I asked softly.

He smiled, lifting his chin. "Turn around."

I blinked, confused, but did as he said. My eyes went wide the second I did, and my thoughts were already occupied with something else.



Fergus was standing right in front of me, smiling.

It was such a strange sight that I almost forgot how to move. It was another thing I still couldn't get used to.

Still, I forced one of my own onto my face that felt a bit too stiff.

"Are you sure you're not coming down with me?" he asked, his tone gentle. Seeing the worried look on his face made me feel bad, but I wanted to protect him, too, in a way. And Dylan, and Trinity...

"Yes, Dad."

"And is it your choice," his gaze sharpened, "or the king's?"

"Mine!"

He studied me for a moment, then nodded. "Okay then. Be safe."

Our eyes met, and we watched each other in silence. Why was he still standing here? Wasn't he going to walk?

Then, to my surprise, he opened his arms and gestured for me to come closer. I let out an awkward laugh, but stepped forward anyway, hugging him back. It was stiff, and somehow both uncomfortable and comfortable at the same time.

The Bloodroses walked past us, glancing over as they headed down. The hug ended as awkwardly as it began, and Fergus stepped back.

"Well," he cleared his throat, "I'll be on my way then."

His eyes shifted to Kylan. "I trust you will take care of my daughter."

"Always," Kylan mumbled before Fergus walked past to join the



Bloodrose.

Next, Dylan passed by and ruffled my hair. "You'll be in good hands because Kylan will look after you," he spoke as if it had already been decided.

"Always," Kylan mumbled again, giving him a small smile.

Trinity stepped up with a bright smile. "I would text you," she stretched out her arms wide. "But it's a dead zone."

I turned to Kylan. "A dead zone...the best place for a sleepover," I said sarcastically.

Kylan let out a short, uncomfortable chuckle, and I bit my lip to keep myself from laughing. Not because I thought any of this was funny, but because I couldn't believe all of this was really happening.

"Huh?" Trinity blinked between us.

"Are you really staying here...sleeping in the mountains?" she asked in disbelief.

"Yes," Kylan and I said at the same time.

I knew exactly why he answered with me...it was because we both had the same thought. If a storm was coming, one we couldn't avoid, it was better we stayed up here than drag it down to the others. Especially since I would soon be using my eyes to heal the ill witches.

I didn't want anyone else to be in danger because of this, and I did not want to challenge Varius's words. If he said we weren't leaving tonight, we were not going to, and that was that.



"But why?" Dylan frowned, his voice careful.

My mouth opened, but no excuse came. "I..."

"We promised some children we would stay for the night," Kylan cut in. Relief washed over me, and I shot him a grateful look.

Trinity's eyes widened. "You can't—"

Dylan covered her mouth with his hand. "Okay," he said quickly, hugging her waist. "The two of you have fun!"

Trinity was still in the midst of protesting when Dylan already started to pull her away. This whole situation was confusing to say the least, because Dylan never gave in this easily. He was the one who usually questioned, pushed, and made sure things were safe. But now...he was backing off without a fight.

"What are they up to?" I whispered to myself.

"You're asking yourself what Trinity and Dylan are up to?" Kylan said quietly beside me. "I think we both know how their night will end."

A laugh escaped me, and I gave his arm a playful slap. "And how do you think ours will end?" I asked. "Stress-coping sex, or both of us trying to succeed in keeping our mou..." I zipped my lips with my hand before I could say something I would regret.

Something Thorne would hear...

Kylan chuckled, his fingers brushing over my waist. "Probably both," he sighed. A smile reached my lips at his comment, but it soon faltered as I caught something ahead of me.



The king was starting to leave with his entourage, and the maid...Camille was pushing Kayden's chair.

As soon as the king turned his head, a pit formed in my stomach. A smirk appeared, and it had reached me first, before he gave me a small nod. For some reason, he looked even more pleased now than when he had first arrived.

Why was he smiling like that? Was it because he saw no hope for the witches?

Was it because he had gotten what he came for...

My thoughts spun, but then something inside me suddenly snapped. I remembered the moment Kylan disappeared earlier. And when he returned, he had been different. He was softer, clingier, kept saying he loved me, that he would do anything for me...

My chest tightened as everything started replaying in slow motion. He went to the king, and made a deal...



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