



Chapter 282

Violet

A small part of me wanted to scream the real thing. That I was a witch, a child of blood...just to watch what would happen. See if the ones who didn't know yet would run, even though we were already sitting in the middle of witches' territory.

"My secret is that I replay things in my head way too much," I ended up saying. "I keep thinking, if I had just said this differently, or done that differently, maybe I wouldn't have made such a mess of things... sometimes I wish I could go back and start all over."

Though it probably wasn't an exciting secret, it was no lie.

Maybe if I listened for once, I wouldn't have been in this mess...

Maybe if I had never gone to Starlight, I wouldn't have put Kylan in this mess...

"But then again," I muttered before I could stop myself, "I never would've met Kylan either."

I searched for Kylan's eyes, and he stared at me with a warm smile. He had become my world, and I didn't know what to do without him anymore. So yes, I did want to go back, but the thought of undoing it, undoing us, even in some imaginary reset, hurt more than anything else.

"The two of you are made for each other," Varius spoke. This time it sounded less like his opinion, and more like something that was always supposed to be. Maybe because it was.

Kylan gazed into my eyes for a while longer, then let out a low chuckle.



I'm sure he must've felt the same. It was something only the two of us could understand.

A harsh scoff from across the circle cut through, and I didn't need to look to know who it came from. Kayden...

"Well, I don't have any secrets!" Trinity spread her arms. "As you can tell, I'm an open book. I can keep secrets, but I don't really have them myself!"

I looked at her with an envious feeling. That was just Trinity. She knew what she wanted, when she wanted it, and how she wanted it. She never second-guessed herself and just had everything planned out.

"Neither do I!" Sora suddenly blurted. "I just wanted to hear everyone else's—"

"Good!" Kylan matched her tone as he stood. He took my hand and pulled me up with him. His grip was strong.

Sora fluttered her eyes. "But Lian—"

"Don't worry about me, Your Highness," Lian shook her head. "I don't have anything to share either."

"Now, if you don't mind," Kylan announced. "Violet and I will be heading back to our tent."

Heat crept up my cheeks as everyone's eyes flicked between us. They all looked confused, but I knew why he did that. He had been bothered by Kayden for the longest, and that scoff just hit the last nerve he had been holding onto.

It wasn't just Kylan who felt annoyed, but I did too. How could I not after



learning he would take a life for me? One I had never asked for?

I let him lead me. Even if I had to walk straight into fire, I would walk with him. We had only taken a few steps when a voice stopped us.

"What about my secret?"

We both turned our heads at the same time.

Kayden sat in his chair with a smirk tugging at his lips. Camille was already behind him again, eager to slip back to his side.

"Do you not want to hear it?" Kayden's eyes darkened. "My secret?"

"Speak," Kylan demanded.

"Then I will," Kayden said. "My secret is that someone dear to me once wronged me, and I was forced to keep quiet about it...But I don't know how long I can keep quiet anymore," he stated. "I've been trying to forgive, I really wanted to, because despite all they have done, I really do love this person...but he keeps fucking me over."

His voice shook with anger, each word hitting sharper than the last. It went so quiet, the only sound was the popping of the fire. Kayden had just attacked him. I wasn't sure if the others had noticed what was going on here, but I was sure they could feel the tension.

Kylan's hand tightened around mine, the way it always did when he was angry and trying to hold himself together. Varius's eyes narrowed, giving Kayden a warning look, but Kayden ignored it.

First in the cavern, now here, and the conflict between the brothers only seemed to be getting worse.



Kylan took one deep exhale, his gaze still fixed on Kayden. "Do you want some advice?" he breathed.

"Yes, please," Kayden said, too quickly.

"If you're pissed at this person, address them properly or shut the hell up about it," Kylan told him. "That's my advice."

Kayden's jaw twitched, but he didn't respond. Maybe that's what made it even worse.

Kylan gave my hand another tug and pulled me away. His steps...or stomps, were loud and angry, and he didn't say a word until we reached the tent.

The second the flap closed behind us, he let go of me and started pacing. His shoulders were tense, jaw locked.

"I keep fucking him over?" His voice roared through the tent. He turned his head and fixed his eyes on me, like I had been the one to throw those words at him, but I knew they weren't meant for me. All that anger belonged to his brother. "Does he not realize how much pain he's put me through as well?"

My heart ached at the sight of him. He hardly ever lost control like this, and it scared me. It wasn't him that I was scared of, but all those feelings he might have been holding back.

"It's moments like these I just want to finish what I started and—"

He stopped himself, his voice breaking. Because he didn't mean it...

Whatever he would say he wished he had done, he didn't mean any of it.



"Are you okay?" I asked softly. I hated seeing him like this. Something deep down told me it wasn't just this.

Sure, it was Kayden, but it also had something to do with that deal he made with the king, or whatever was going to happen with the stone. It felt like everything that happened had been piling up, or maybe he just kept replaying how he shouldn't have gone through with it. Whatever it was he had done.

And then there was the whole thing of us having to be extra cautious with Thorne around.

He just seemed so tense...

Kylan's eyes met mine, and his expression shifted. The storm behind his eyes had calmed, and he forced a smile onto his face as if he didn't want to worry me.

"Violet," he stepped toward me, before trapping my chin between his fingers. Then he pressed a kiss to my head as he wrapped me in his arms.

"I'm fine," he murmured, pulling me tighter against him.

But I knew better...

I pulled back, resting both my hands against his cheek, making him look at me. "No, you're not..."

He sighed. "You're right, I'm not," he admitted, letting his gaze fall to the ground. "But I don't want to bother you. You have more important stuff to worry about."

I shook my head immediately. "You are the important stuff I have to worry about."



And that was a fact. Maybe it was selfish, but I could not let the one steady thing in my life fall apart right now. If he broke, I would help him pick up the pieces, but I could not let him go to pieces in the first place.

I needed him.

"You can tell me anything and I'll listen," I rose onto my toes and pressed a kiss to his nose. All I wanted was to be there for him. He had almost lost control back there, and it was obvious Kayden's words had cut deep.

"Besides," I whispered, brushing his dark hair back from his face, "it's not like I'll be sleeping tonight anyway."

Just the thought of closing one eye made my stomach twist. I was still afraid of Baelor, of the way he had lunged at me inside the Veil, the darkness around him, those red eyes...

I wasn't sure about Thorne, or what he really was, but one thing was certain. As creepy as that raven was, it never gave me the same chills as the shadow inside the Veil.

Kylan released a chuckle, pulling me back to his chest.

"What?" I asked, looking up at him.

"You say you won't sleep," he smiled faintly, "but you'll end up falling asleep anyway."

Heat rushed to my face as I recalled our night on the balcony. It really wasn't my intention to fall asleep, but I couldn't help myself. "That was... that was..." I exhaled, embarrassed and unable to finish.

But then I realized what was happening. This wasn't about me, it was



about him and his feelings. "I do remember one thing."

"What?"

"That you said you would tell me why the beast doesn't deserve a name once we came back from the mountains," I reminded him.

When that same uncomfortable look appeared in his eyes, I just knew it had something to do with him...

"Is it connected to Kayden?" I asked carefully.

He didn't answer, but his face hardened even more. "I said I would tell you after we came back from the mountains."

I patted his chest and walked to the edge of the tent, sitting down on the blanket we had laid out. Once I was settled, I patted the spot beside me. "Since we're stuck here for a few more hours," I began, "I figured you could just tell me right now?"

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