



Chapter 287

Violet

“Higher!” Trinity called out.

I adjusted the mirror she had borrowed from one of the huts, angling it just the way she wanted until she hummed in approval. Apparently, the lighting was an important factor, and she had to do her makeup in the right spot.

I waited patiently as she leaned closer to the mirror, dabbing at her cheek, completely focused.

After spending the night in the mountains, we were finally getting ready to head back down again. The others were packing their things, folding blankets, while Trinity was worried about highlighter.

It should've been easy to laugh at her the way I always did, but today it wasn't. I couldn't just stand there and pretend I didn't have a single worry. Not when I knew what today would bring, and just thinking about it again made me sick.

Believe it or not, just the thought of Kylan fucking my brains out all night while someone was going to die today, if that wasn't too rough of a description, felt horrible. I mean, it was great, but now that I was rethinking it, it was just...horrible.

I had been frowning all morning, and I was sure Trinity must've noticed something was off. I could tell by the way her eyes lingered now and then, but she didn't ask. At least, not yet.

After last night, I was sure she would save her questions for when we were down the mountain.



"I didn't mind being here, and I had a great time...I think?" She sighed. "But next time? Definitely no camping for me."

A soft laugh slipped past my lips. "I don't know, I liked it," I told her. Well, mostly, if you erased Thorne, Kayden, and all the other dark mess circling us. I hadn't bonded as much with the witches as I would've liked to, but I could tell the people here were kind.

They were generous for allowing us to help and stay in their territory, and I'm sure they must've wished they had a bit more time with me as well. It was just so hard pretending to be one of them while being surrounded by so many who didn't know.

Earlier, Sora, Trinity, and I had been invited into a kind lady's hut, where she served us breakfast. Lian had joined the others, carrying the last stacks of wood.

The breakfast wasn't anything fancy, but it wasn't about that. It was the woman's kindness and her genuine smile that had gotten to me. I liked that I could see appreciation in all the witches' eyes, because while many made them out to be the devil, that same kindness was something people lacked these days.

"I'm proud of you, Vi," Trinity said suddenly. She smacked her lips together after applying her gloss.

My brows shot up. "Proud?" The word made me feel strange. Was there really anything to be proud of when everything around us was going to shit?

"Yes, proud," Trinity said, closing the gloss. She tilted her head to look at me. "I'm not saying you're perfect."



I chuckled, shaking my head.

"But you said you would do something good, you put your mind to it, and you actually did it," she stated. "That's beautiful."

Her words softened something inside me, and I smiled despite the uncomfortable feeling in my chest. I wasn't perfect, but I was trying. I really was.

"I wish your brother were like that," she muttered under her breath. "I wish he tried something for once."

Dylan?

My eyes widened in shock. She barely had any complaints about him, and everything seemed to be perfectly fine yesterday. Everyone wanted to be like Dylan and Trinity.

"What?" she asked innocently. She twisted her hair into a bun.

"Done!"

Then she walked over and snatched the mirror from me. Trinity was the first to start walking, and it took me a second before I decided to follow her.

"What happened?" I asked, catching up.

"Not a big deal," she said with a dismissive wave of her hand. "I got into a fight with that lame brother of yours."

My heart dropped.

Lame? That he was, but...



"You called him lame, so it is a big deal."

Trinity released a scoff. She seemed to be in such a good mood this morning, so I hadn't even noticed something was off with her as well. I suppose even she and Dylan got into fights. Interesting.

Even with all that was going on, I didn't want to seem like I didn't care about her feelings. It wasn't an excuse to not be a good friend, and, of course, I couldn't help but be a bit curious. "What was it about?"

Trinity huffed, and a loose curl blew into her face. "I just...miss the Dylan who was so ambitious when we first met," she confessed. "Back then, he was ready to become Alpha, ready to prove himself. Now I feel like his only ambition is me, and don't get me wrong, I love it, I love him, but it shouldn't only be me," she said. "I come from a family of leaders. I want him to lead too. I want all that he wants, but I also want him to succeed."

I hummed quietly, nodding. Kylan always took the lead, and I was fine with it most of the time. But I could understand why that would not work for Trinity.

He must really love her to put her above everything else.

"I don't know him like that," I admitted. "But I do know that ever since the two of you found each other, he's been way more bearable." I rolled my eyes.

Trinity let out a long sigh.

"But," I added gently, "I agree he shouldn't dismiss your feelings."

"He said I was being dramatic," she cut in, her nose scrunching. "And I just snapped."



I gulped.

Was Dylan insane?

Trinity shook her head. "I'm not dramatic. I am ambitious, passionate. I want the best for everyone...including his pack, and I get sick and tired of this detached behavior of all the Bloodroses."

I chuckled, lifting a brow at her.

She gasped, then grinned. "No offense!"

"None taken," I smiled back. If I were being honest, I had lived through the same thing with my family. Fergus in particular. When it was time to talk about real problems, they suddenly pretended like they couldn't hear a damn thing. It was easier to look away than face what was right in front of them, and it made me want to scream.

"Do you think I'm being dramatic?" Trinity asked, her tone softer now. "Do you think I should lower my expectations?"

"Lower your expectations?" I nearly gasped. Even I knew Kylan had to one day be the king to this awful kingdom, and I would have no choice but to be queen, so Dylan would manage just fine.

Dylan wasn't an idiot. He was a strategist, always thinking three steps ahead.

What if they faced choices that pulled them apart?

What if the pack was attacked and one of them didn't make it out alive?

So many what ifs...



I took a breath. "I'm in no position to advise anyone, but...I don't think you need to lower your expectations," I gave her my opinion. "I know my brother is trying to protect you, but he is supposed to be Alpha one day. That's the way it's supposed to be."

Her lips curled into a relieved smile, and then she smacked me on the back with such force I almost fell forward.

"What's wrong with you today?" Trinity teased. "You're like a feather, clumsier than usual."

An uncomfortable laugh came out, and my cheeks flushed. No wonder. After the damage Kylan had done yesterday, it was a wonder I could still walk, let alone stand.

Trinity smirked. "I'm glad at least one of us had some good action last night." She bumped my shoulder.

My cheeks burned even more as flashes of last night replayed in my mind. The way Kylan's body had pinned me down, his voice in my ear... but above all, that one line I couldn't stop thinking about.

'I should just mark you.'

He said it so easily, but something about those words felt real, exciting. It wasn't the first time, either. He had said it before, and after, we would both act like it hadn't happened. No questions. No discussion.

Was it some kind of kink for him? Something he had done before with other girls?

I had no idea. What I did know was the way my body had reacted. It shivered, trembled, and responded as if I would've let him do it right then and there.

Commented [Ma1]:



It left me wondering...

What kind of effect would it really have on me? Would it change anything between us, or would I just be the same Violet, only with something permanent carved into my skin?

My steps faltered until I stopped completely. Trinity turned too, her brows lifting. "Violet?"

A nervous lump caught in my throat. "Can I ask you something?"

"Yes," she nodded eagerly. "Of course."

I hesitated, but the words still slipped out. "Don't you think it's weird that Kylan hasn't marked me yet?"



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