

Chapter 293

Violet

Kayden began laughing, loud and cruel laughter. He didn't even look at me anymore, but a Chrystal lying in Nate's arms while he screamed and bawled his eyes out.

A shiver went through my body.

Not because of the screams, but because Kayden was right. She couldn't speak now...which meant she couldn't expose me.

The thought should have comforted me, but it didn't. It only made me feel sick because I didn't know what was wrong with me. All of this...it wasn't supposed to be this normal. Feel this normal.

And I finally understood why Kylan had kept quiet and hadn't interfered at all. From the moment Chrystal called me a witch, threatened to tell everyone, he knew what had to be done. People could be controlled, but not her. She had always been too reckless, too...Chrystal.

For that simple reason, she simply couldn't live.

I swallowed hard. What had I even been thinking, trying to save her? It wasn't just me I had to think about, but my family and their reputation as well.

I heard soft sobs right beside me, and didn't even have to look to know who it belonged to. But I still did.

It was Sora.

She had really tried, and then this happened. Her heart was far too



sensitive for all of this, and that was coming from me. I should have expected she wouldn't be able to handle the weight of it, and that's why I hated myself for getting others involved.

The sound cut off when she scrambled to her feet and ran straight into Lian's arms. Lian caught her, comforting her friend, but as I glanced around I could still not see the same emotion from the others.

Trinity was already beside Dylan, both of them just standing there, blinking at the scene with no real feeling on their faces, no trace of remorse.

Camille still stood at a distance, her eyes glued to the ground, but her body trembling. Maybe because she hated being a part of this, or maybe because she now knew what Kayden was capable of and what might be awaiting her. Who knew?

I flinched as I felt a sudden hand on my shoulder. Kylan.

"Violet," he said. I reached for his arm and raised myself from the ground. When I looked up at him, his gaze was softer than it had been this whole time.

"Are you—"

"I'm okay," I cut him off. Too quickly.

He had a habit of asking me that question ten times a day, as if one of these times I might actually break. And I had a habit of always giving him the same answer, because I had to be. There was no time to not be 'okay.'

"I lost control, and I lost the ring," I whispered. "I lost the...Nate—"

"Leave him," Kylan instructed. His hand tightened around my wrist,



stopping me. He had known Nate all his life, which was why I decided to trust his words.

Let Nate mourn in peace until we figure out how the hell to move on from this.

To the left of us, Kayden burst into another fit of laughter, almost choking. "Let this be a life lesson," he raised his voice, "that when you say you'll do something, don't just say it but—finish the damn job!"

He began to laugh even harder. His eyes were wild, grin wide, and his body shook from the laughter. He had completely lost it.

"Did she seriously think we were going to let her live," he wheezed through the laughter, "after she threatened to expose our Lettie?"

He cackled loudly, the sound making my skin crawl. Thorne landed on his back, then bent down, knocking his beak softly against Kayden's head as if he were laughing with him.

They were twisted...

Both of them...

But so were we...

My stomach dropped again. Chrystal was gone, Nate was broken, and Kayden...Kayden was laughing like the whole thing was some kind of joke.

"Yes, I killed her," Kayden stated. "And if anyone has a problem with it or with Lettie being a witch, you'll either die by my hand...or Kylan's...or maybe Dylan's?" He tilted his head, looking at the two before his eyes landed on mine. "Or maybe Lettie? She gave me a head-start—"



"Shut up!" Kylan yelled.

"Shut up?" Kayden chuckled. He leaned on his elbows, enjoying everything. "Just make sure you keep those two paper dolls and that Beta of yours under control, or we'll have to shut them up instead."

Kylan glanced toward Lian and Sora. His eyes were hard, and in that moment, I truly feared he might do something to them. Anything to keep my identity a secret.

I looked at my two ladies. Lian's jaw was tight, and there was no hint of fear in her face. But Sora's face was still wet with tears, and she didn't know where to look.

"They won't say anything," I whispered. At least I hope they wouldn't, and even if they would, I would not let anyone hurt them. Chrystal was Chrystal, but it could not be that people had to die to keep me safe.

That was absurd.

Who was I?

Kylan's fingers curled around my hand, and he squeezed. "I know," he said. "I know."

If anything, it was Kayden who should've been worried about Camille. She still stood there with her head lowered, looking all innocent, but I knew better than that.

Nate was still hunched over Chrystal, sobbing hard, his hands covered in blood. His breath came in broken gasps, and there were no words to describe the amount of sadness his eyes carried. Poor Nate...

A loud huff left Kayden's mouth, and my eyes flicked back to him. He



frowned, then smirked, like he was about to give another cruel lesson. "You can look at him with those innocent eyes all you want, but don't pretend, Kylan," Kayden began. "Don't think for a second I didn't see you plan to deal with her before she even hit the ground," he said. "You would never have let her walk away, because that's who you are, Kylan. That's who we are. You and I...we're the same."

Kylan shook his head. "We're not the same," he said, his voice loud and clear.

"Nope, maybe not. You would've gone for her back, and I went for the heart," Kayden continued. "She said she was going to expose her, so every one of us wanted her gone," he said. "If it wasn't me, it would've been you. If not you, Dylan. If not Dylan...Trinity. I just took the hit for the team—"

"What team?" Kylan spat. "There is no team."

That's also what I wanted to know...what team?

But what I wanted to know even more than that was why there was so much truth to Kayden's words.

I wanted to hate his guts, I should have...but Varius had already said this would happen. And Kayden had a point. It could've been anyone...

I found the courage to look at Nate again, still holding on to Chrystal. He didn't care how loud he cried because in that moment, all he cared about was his sister. I felt so sorry for him. I just didn't want him to go through this...I just hated that it had to be Chrystal.

"You can stop crying now, Nate," Kayden exhaled. "The bitch is already dead, and she won't be coming back. Thankfully."



Kayden had been so quiet yesterday and today, but now he couldn't stop running his mouth. He just kept going, and going...

Nate closed his eyes and sniffed.

Kayden continued, "No one will miss her, buddy," he said. "People don't exactly sit around thinking, 'I wonder what that red lobster is up to.' No one cares about your sister, Nate," he shrugged on the ground. "The only one who cares is your mother...but just like her dead daughter, she is also a worthless skank —"

"I will kill you!" Something inside of Nate snapped. He shoved himself to his feet, lunged at Kayden, and grabbed him by the collar before his fists hammered Kayden's face, over and over. I would have sworn he had never had that kind of fury in him, but he would not stop, even as Kayden's blood soaked his hands.

I looked at Kylan, but he didn't move to stop Nate. No one did.

"Let him," he said quietly. "Just let him get it out."

My eyes shot back to Kayden, who was cackling through every hit. "That's right," he provoked him. "Beat me up, and be a Beta for once!"

He grinned like none of it fazed him, and it only pushed Nate harder. Nate kept throwing blows until his arm shook and his breath caught.

Eventually, he stumbled back, and as he moved toward Chrystal's lifeless body, it seemed he was carried by grief and rage. With a loud yell, he pulled the pink dagger from her chest, then slowly turned to Kayden.

I had never seen him like this...

The calm, sweet Nate I knew.



This was pure pain, and all I wanted was to take it from him, to carry it for him.

"Come on!" Kayden yelled on his back. "Do it, stab me! Kill me if you dare because I am not afraid to die!"

Nate quickened his pace and lunged at him with the dagger in his hand. For the first time since all of this began, Kylan jumped in. He moved behind Nate and forced his hands behind his shoulders.

"That's enough," Kylan said.

Kayden's laughter was still in the background as Nate twisted his body, trying to wrench free, but Kylan wouldn't let him. "Don't ruin your life like this!" Kylan said. "It's enough!"

"No!" Nate fought for a breath. I understood he wanted his revenge, really, but Chrystal was no sweetheart either, and she really deserved to...

I closed my eyes for a second.

No, Violet...

"I'm done here," Nate muttered. He dropped the dagger, and Kylan released him. Then he moved toward Chrystal's body.

"W-what are you doing?" Dylan breathed.

"Where are you going?" Kylan added.

Nate didn't look at them. "I'm taking my sister back home."

Kayden's laugh cracked through the silence. "And say what?" He sneered. "That I killed her after Violet stabbed her with her magical



powers?"

He sighed deeply. "Because you know they'll find out, don't you? There will be an investigation, truth potion for everyone, and we'll also be forced to come clean about how the great Beta of Lyperia let his addict son near the crown prince, which will either get your family executed or, if the court is generous, will let you join us to our little trip to Prison Island, because me and Lettie sure as hell aren't going down alone." He chuckled at the last part. "How does that sound?"

My stomach turned as the images appeared inside my head. The truth potion, prison, executions...and just the thought was unbearable.

Nate's head snapped toward Kylan, but Kylan only lowered his own. That was when I knew Kylan wasn't going to let him leave.

Then Nate's gaze shifted to me, and my heart beat out my chest. I couldn't move, couldn't breathe, and all I could feel was guilt. Suffocating guilt.

I couldn't read his eyes. They weren't filled with anger, but also not with the softness I was used to. There was something colder, and he looked at me as if there were only one question on his mind.

Why did you have to ruin my life?

And I had no answer...

Kayden released a breath. "Or," he said, "we deal with this here, bury the body, no investigation, no truth potion, no questions, and everyone moves on. Easy, clean."