

Chapter 299

Kylan

I had just told him I was sorry for everything, but the look Nate gave me made it clear that those words weren't enough.

He shook his head, unimpressed. "I want you to name it," he stated. "All of it."

My throat went dry, thoughts raced, but none of them came fast enough.

"You're taking too long," Nate muttered before letting out a heavy sigh. "You're not sorry, Kylan. You've just come here to keep me in line, and that's fine, but do not lie to me and tell me you're sorry."

"That's not true," I spoke. "I mean, yes, I suppose I did...but also to apologize."

"After three days?" Nate snapped. "Even Dylan was here two days ago, Dylan—and you show your face after three days?"

I swallowed hard and stayed quiet. There was really no excuse for that. I had known Nate all my life, and I wasn't there for him. At least he was talking, and that was good. I would let him talk, let him get it all out.

His eyes burned into mine. "Do you think an apology will bring her back?" he asked. "Or do you think an apology will make me forget that you let Kayden kill her? That we buried her like she was nothing. Make me lie that Chrystal must've run out again, like she always does when she's upset, while mom tears herself apart, wondering why she hasn't come back? Do you know what that feels like?"

"No, I do not," I answered calmly.



"Do you know what it feels like to realize your own friends don't trust you enough to tell you the truth? To see light glowing from your best friend's hands and look ridiculous because you didn't know—"

"Keep Violet out of this," I cut him off, my voice sharper now.

"How can I?" Nate burst out. "When that secret of hers is the reason why I lost my sister!"

"Because it wasn't her," I stated. "She always wanted to tell you, but I was the one who told her not to...so I suppose I'm sorry for that too, but I still believe it's the right choice. Look at you!"

"Look at me?" Nate's chest rose and fell with each breath. It wasn't supposed to come out like that, and maybe I was being a bit stubborn, but it had been the right decision.

Nate reacted on impulse, and before agreeing to bury Chrystal's body, he wanted to take her back. Even though he said he wouldn't tell, there was always the fear that he would.

"You're a fucking joke, Kylan," Nate breathed.

"You were going to apologize, and you did...but then you turned it back on me again. Because that's what you always do!"

"That's not true," I said, though the denial sounded weak even to my own ears. But he was right. I truly felt sorry, but even now, I was thinking as the Crown Prince instead of the brother he grew up with.

I took a breath, then looked into his eyes. "I'm sorry for being a bad friend and a worse brother since the day we even knew what those words meant," I began. "I'm sorry for never being there for you when I should've been to the point you stopped expecting anything from me at



all. I'm sorry for not talking to you, listening to you, not showing you I gave a damn about what was happening in your life."

Nate scoffed. "Keep talking."

I exhaled. "I'm sorry for what happened to Chrystal, for letting it get that far and getting involved with her in the first place when we were perfectly fine as friends, because if I hadn't...if I hadn't, she would still be alive."

That part was the hardest to admit.

Just because I felt there was no other way, it didn't mean I didn't feel bad or blame myself because I did.

Chrystal had not been the person she once was, but I couldn't just stand there and say we didn't have good times because we did.

Nate paced back and forth. "What else are you sorry for?"

"I'm sorry for putting everything on your shoulders when I should've helped you carry it," I continued. "For acting like the crown excused me from having a heart, from being your friend, and for the way I have been treating you all these years...I am sorry."

Those were the last words to leave my mouth before a silence followed. All I could hear was the sound of Nate's uneven breathing, and it hadn't changed. He was still angry.

"You've apologized," Nate blinked. "But for some reason that apology doesn't move me at all."

I lifted my head slightly. "It does not?"



I wished it did, but at the same time, I knew he would say this. At first, I thought he would eventually understand, but it was much deeper than just understanding. This thing between us wasn't just something that could be fixed in one day, and had been building up for years.

It had never occurred to me that I had been that bad of a friend because I thought he would've said something, but that wasn't his job. It was up to me to notice.

"Do you know why?" Nate spat.

"Yes—"

"Because I can't figure out if it's too late, or too soon for an apology."

Even though I had braced for them, his words still stung. He couldn't have said it any better. I should've apologized a long time ago, and now that this has gotten so far, he didn't want to hear it.

It was about more than just Chrystal.

"If you're worried about me telling anyone about Chrystal or Violet, you don't have to worry," Nate went on. "But If you really knew me as well as you claim, you would know you can trust me. Both of you!"

Nate released a chuckle. "Have I ever done something to you that made you believe I couldn't be trusted?" he asked.

No...because he had never said or done anything to sabotage me. The only issue was the voices I had let crawl into my mind to make me believe that I couldn't trust anyone.

"Have I ever not kept your secret?" Nate slammed his chest. "Did you really think I wouldn't keep Chrystal from telling Violet's?"



I shook my head.

"Then why did you let that monster kill my sister!"

"I know you would've done anything to prevent her from telling...but she was going to tell, Nate," I said quietly. "But I am sorry."

It was just the way it was. Nate had always tried to tell Chrystal not to do something, and she would still do it.

Chrystal was so far gone that she might have done the same as Kayden by forcing Nate to choose between his secret and Violet's.

Nate's eyes burned. "You can shove that sorry up your fucking ass, because I don't accept your apology!"

He stormed toward me with clenched fists, then grabbed me by my jacket and pushed my back against the tree. His face was inches from mine, but I didn't fight him or push him away. I didn't have the right.

I lowered my gaze so I wouldn't have to stare into his red, swollen eyes.

"You had no problem looking at me before," Nate hissed, "so look at me!"

He gave my shoulder a hard push. "I want you to look at me when I tell you this!"

I looked up at him as he wanted. His eyes were red and wet, close to tears. Only this time it wasn't grief, it was rage.

"I will keep my mouth shut, as I always do," Nate said, his voice breaking. "But I do not accept your apology. Do you know what I will do?"



"What?"

The corner of his eye twitched. "I will distance myself from you and this crazy family of yours until the day I can look at you without wanting to stab you in the heart, the same way your brother stabbed my sister."

"That's fine. I respect that," I said, and I meant it. I had once stepped back from this 'crazy family' myself, so I wasn't going to argue about it.

Nate laughed in disbelief, his hand still wrapped around my jacket. "You are not supposed to accept that, Kylan." His eyes burned in mine.

"Then what do you want me to do?" I wondered. I wanted to fix it, I really did. But I had already done the begging, kneeling, and crying before, and look where it had gotten me and Kayden? That would not be it.

"What do I want you to do?" Nate sighed. "Dylan showed more sympathy than you, and he is a Bloodrose—"

"I already said I'm sorry."

Nate growled and raised his fist, ready to swing. I caught his wrist just in time, stopping him. Then I looked him in the eye as I slowly guided his fist down. That was when the tears spilled down his cheeks. "Leave," he said. "Please...just leave."

A deep sigh escaped from my lips as I released him. I did as Nate asked and turned to leave, and as I walked, I heard his voice crack into a loud yell, but I didn't turn back. I just kept walking.

It broke me to leave him like that, but if he wasn't ready to forgive me, I wouldn't force him. I could only wait and carry the consequence of what I had done until he could stand being near me without wanting to stab me for it.

