

Chapter 300

Violet

"This is it!" Kaelis squealed.

She twirled in front of the mirrors like nothing else mattered anymore. A smile was planted on my lips, but what I really wanted was to press my hands over my eyes until it all ended.

This day, these dark thoughts inside me hide, Lyperia...all of it.

We had gone to a boutique in the city, and for the entire time, it felt like I had stepped straight into someone else's family day.

"You look beautiful," Cecilia admired while Kiora adjusted the dress. My eyes landed on Elyx, who sat right across from me in a special chair they had brought out. There was a smirk on his lips, and every part of me burned with the urge to get up and leave, but I didn't. I stayed where I was and looked back at him.

"He is going to lose his mind," Kaelis squealed again, spinning.

Who?

Curious, I tilted my head and scanned my eyes over the dress. I had thought mine for the feast had been too much, but this one was just... even more. It glimmered as much as her smile, and I could only imagine what it would look like under the moonlight.

"She looks pretty, doesn't she, Violet?" Kiora asked suddenly.

I froze as every eye turned to me at once. Kaelis's eyes were hopeful, Cecilia's smile warned me not to say the wrong thing, and Elyx just



smirked wider.

"You look great, Kaelis," I said, giving her a nod.

The two sisters shared a hug, and then a sincere smile reached my lips, one I didn't have to fake. But as fast as it came, it faded as my mind traveled to the one who had lost his sister. Nate.

Kylan had gone to see him and hadn't told me about it. If I had known, I would've joined so we could've figured out what to say together. What would they even talk about?

Chrystal?

Me?

I shook my head. No, of course not. There was no reason to discuss me or my powers when he was possibly still mourning. Suddenly, I felt a lump in my throat.

Could he be using Lunaris again?

For some reason, Kaelis and Kiora let out some more squeals, but it was more than I could handle. My emotions were scattered, all over the place, and I had to take a breath.

"Excuse me," I murmured, but no one seemed to hear.

I got up anyway, stepping away from the mirrors to go to the empty jewelry section tucked in the corner. As I turned around, I pressed my back against the counter and closed my eyes for a second.

My breath came too fast, and when I looked down at my hand, I couldn't help but look at my empty finger where the ring should've been.



Only, there was nothing to twist this time.

"Breathe," I whispered to myself. I stepped away from the counter and tried again, closing my eyes, but it still wasn't working.

Then a hand landed on my shoulder. I jumped and turned.

It was the king...

His smirk was still there, but his gaze was definitely not as warm as Kylan's. I could tell he was trying, but I didn't want him to try. He made my skin crawl, and all I wanted was to chop off his head.

No, Violet...

"Tell me," he said, the smile never leaving his face, "did you think the dress was that ugly?"

I felt an uncomfortable pit in my stomach. "No, Your Majesty," I said softly, though I did not stutter.

He tilted his head, watching me. "Then do you feel uncomfortable with me around? Do you hate me?"

The way he had said it was so strange. He seemed too happy to be asking me that question, like he wanted me to admit that I did hate him, and that he did succeed in getting under my skin.

What if I were to tell him?

That I saw everything through Mom's eyes, and hate was too small a word for what I felt. That yes, I hated him as much as I hated Chrystal, and I wished his son would snap again one day and kill him too.



No, Violet...

I exhaled and kept my mouth shut. The king's eyes searched for an answer, and when he didn't get one, he reached up and brushed a strand of hair behind my ear.

My breath hitched, and I quickly turned my head away.

He released a chuckle. "I suppose I did hate you at first," he spoke without shame. It was so obvious he was enjoying this moment. "But that speech of yours...that mouth of yours is so dangerous it impressed me...reminded me of someone, and that's when I knew I had to accept you aren't going anywhere."

He chuckled, like that made everything better. "That said, I hope you understand I can't exactly allow you to...well...ruin Lyperia," he shrugged. "I believe you are aware of my plans for Kylan and what has happened for us to get to that point. The witches will heal, the deal has been made, and you seem like a smart girl who wouldn't interfere."

His words made my blood boil again. Had he come all the way here to rub it in my face that Kylan would have a mistress, and I would just have to deal with it?

My hands curled at my sides, and my lips pulled into a weak smile. Any answer here could be used like a weapon, and I really didn't want to start something.

"Anyway," the king said, waving his hand, "I came here because I want to give you something—"

I was just about to take another step back, but then he took my hand. He turned me around gently before brushing my hair aside again. Then I felt



something against my collarbone.

It was a necklace.

A small stone hung from the chain, the same as the one from my lost ring. "I saw you in the garden yesterday and noticed you weren't wearing it," he said. "Like I told you, I don't think you're a stupid girl, so I guessed you must have lost it."

He gave a short laugh. "Though I suppose losing something that important does make you a little stupid, does it not?"

Just keep it together, and breathe...

Poor Kaelis thought her dad had joined us because he cared. But all he really cared about was keeping everything under control, me included.

"There!" he said. "A little gift. Consider it...protection, and guess what? You do not need to thank me."

I turned to face him again. For a moment something settled in my chest, like my blood had stopped boiling. But nothing else changed. I still wanted him dead right this very second, and the necklace didn't fix that.

I guess it didn't have the same effect as the ring...

"This once belonged to my mother. It is not pure Lyperian stone, but it's close enough," he said, as if that made it more important. "I will need it back one day, of course, but you can borrow it for now."

Borrow?

There was nothing I wanted from this man, not even to borrow. This time I studied him, watching as his eyes slid to my finger. He hadn't spoken



the words, but what he meant was clear enough. I had to keep my witch side under control.

I didn't know why he would want that, which only made me think he was still plotting something.

"I appreciate the gesture, but I can't accept your necklace, Your Majesty," I said, lifting a hand to pull the chain away.

He grabbed my wrist before I could, his grip gentle. "You will be wearing the necklace," he commanded. "And that is not up for debate."

I gulped. All I wanted was to yank my arm away, throw the necklace at him, and shout that I didn't need his charity, but I couldn't. He was still the king.

"Why are you doing this?" I asked. None of this made sense. He hated me.

A deep breath escaped him. "I am protecting Kylan," he smirked. "And no matter what Kylan might've told you about me, I have always protected my heir."

"And the mistress?" I retorted, unable to hold myself back any longer.

"To protect Kylan," he said immediately. "It's not to bully you or because I want to ruin what the two of you have, although I do not approve of you, but it is to protect Kylan."

"Why?" I pushed.

Everything he said was ridiculous, and I knew it was just more bullshit. All this man ever did was destroy, so it was strange to hear him claim he was protecting Kylan by only giving him more stress. If I hadn't seen through Mom's eyes, he might have fooled me, but he had been like this



even before Kylan was born.

Elyx wasn't a hero, and he cared for no one but himself.

"I've been growing a lot of mold over these decades, and it's time to scrape some of that off," he said. "For now, I'll let you be, Hastings." He gave a small nod and a smile. "Like I said, I'm not your biggest fan...but you're interesting enough to keep around."

For now?

What was that supposed to mean?

Before I could even think of a response, a voice cut through. "Is everything okay here?"

Cecilia walked up beside me with a soft smile, and just having her there was enough to calm me. She was much easier to be around than the king.

"We're fine," I answered.

Her eyes moved from my face to the necklace, and then a frown appeared.

"She lost her ring," Elyx began. "So I let her borrow my mother's necklace."

Cecilia's eyes widened. "You always keep that thing locked away," she said. "I'm surprised you even have it with you."

The king hummed in reply. The fact that he gave me something that seemed far too important for him to simply hand over made me feel more uneasy.

Cecilia's eyes narrowed. "So everything is okay here? You weren't



bothering her with any of your uncomfortable questions or controversial opinions?"

The king threw back his head and laughed.

"My Queen. You have always been the one with the uncomfortable questions, and controversial opinions."

He took her hand, pressing his lips to her knuckles. "We are having a good day, but do not test me. Know your place, and do not ruin it."

Then he walked away. My heart ached for Cecilia because I couldn't understand how he could speak to her like that, but she didn't seem to mind. Her eyes followed him, and a soft smile touched her lips. It was sad to think she was probably used to being brushed aside for no reason other than him not wanting anyone to answer back.

"Are you okay, sweetheart?" Cecilia asked. "You've been so quiet today."

"I'm always quiet," I said, reaching for her hand. I gave her a light squeeze, and her fingers curled back around mine. "But thank you for asking."

Her presence made me feel safe, but Elyx's words clung to me. He said he was scraping off mold...But I wasn't sure who he had meant, because there had been quite a lot of mold around there. Himself included.