



Chapter 308

Violet

The side of Kylan's lips trembled as he forced a smile. "I'm—"

"Don't do that," I cut in quickly.

The words came sharper than intended, but I couldn't take them back. I didn't want him to give me that smile, that shield, to lock me out again while I knew he wasn't himself at the moment.

I leaned closer across the table. "We haven't talked about what happened, and you haven't even asked me why I went with your brother yesterday," I told him. "There's a lot of pain we haven't processed, and I know you went to visit Nate...and that it didn't go well."

Kylan swallowed hard, his throat shifting at the last words. Even hearing about it seemed to be hard for him.

I exhaled. "Although we were still learning, our communication seemed to be getting better," I said. "But with everything that's been going on...it feels like we're slowly moving backwards again."

Kylan dropped his gaze to the table as if it would somehow save him from having this conversation.

"I think we need to discuss this," I pressed softly. "All of it...and then maybe we can move on to the things that also matter," I suggested. "Because you and I both know we can't do that before we talk about how we feel about Nate—"

Suddenly, his chair scraped against the stone floor, and he rose. "I have to go," he said.



"Go and do what?" I chuckled in disbelief. "Prepare for this royal ceremony of yours, the one you won't even tell me about because you refuse to talk about it even though you're the one wanting me to open up all the time?"

That was enough to make him pause. His eyes softened, and for a moment, he didn't seem just tired anymore, but fragile.

"I think we try to protect each other's feelings too much, and it's hurting us," I whispered. "That's why I think you need to sit down so we can talk."

Although it took him a second, he lowered himself back into the chair and scooted closer.

"Do you want to know how I felt," he began, wasting no time, "when I came looking for you yesterday and had to hear from my sister that you went with Kayden?"

"Well?"

My voice cracked, but I held his gaze.

The look in his eyes was sharp. "I wanted to kill him," Kylan said. "Because I knew he didn't give you much of a choice, and I wasn't there to protect you...and he had pushed me to the point where I almost did kill him because I was protecting you, Violet."

My heart twisted. There was this strange feeling of guilt because I knew he would burn the world for me, and that terrified me as much as it made me want to cling to him. Chrystal was enough, but I didn't need a repeat of that ever again.

Someone's life being taken to protect mine...



"And when we did what we..." Kylan hesitated, his eyes darting around the garden. Only when he saw it was safe, he continued. "When we buried the body?"

"Yes?" I whispered.

"I felt like fucking shit. I felt horrible, pathetic for doing what Kayden wanted, and for hurting Nate, but I did not regret a thing," he stated. "Because it's what I had to do to protect you."

How much more could he give up for me before he broke completely?

How could I tell him without sounding like an ungrateful ass that, although I appreciated it, I didn't want it to be like this?

"And the reason I didn't tell you about Nate," he went on, "is because I knew you would feel bad for me, and try to fix it, and I don't want that. I don't want you to worry," he said. "It's the same reason I don't discuss Camille with you either...because all I want to do is protect you."

His eyes bore into mine. "I don't care about my feelings, and don't care to discuss them either. As long as yours are safe, that's enough for me."

"But have you ever thought that you pushing aside your own feelings and refusing to talk about them isn't enough for me?" I wondered. "I really liked the talk we had in the mountains. I enjoyed being there for you, and I know you did too—and that's why...I'm asking you now to stop this."

The hard look on his face faltered, and his eyes searched mine like he didn't know what to do with those words.

And as it went silent, I wondered if I had just asked for the one thing he didn't know how to stop doing. Protecting me...



"When I ask how you're doing," I continued, "don't give me the answer you think I want to hear. I want the real one, even if it's hard. It's not just you...I do the same, and we have to stop this."

Kylan shook his head, releasing a deep sigh. I feared he would close himself off again, but then he spoke. "I'm not doing well at all..."

He let out another sigh. "You are right. I'm not doing well because all I can think of is Nate," he admitted. "How I apologized to him and how he didn't accept it, because it wasn't good enough for him...and I don't know why."

The pain in his eyes as he spoke was heartbreaking, but it was indeed as I suspected.

We were stuck in time, both of us. Neither of us could function properly because Nate was always there in our heads.

I reached across the table and grabbed his hand again, rubbing my thumb across his skin. He was opening himself up, and I could finally help and listen.

"When I hurt Kayden..." Kylan began. "I knelt and begged for forgiveness, and the only thing it did for me was break me further," he said. "I don't know what to do about Nate. I want to focus on other things, but it's like my mind won't fully allow it. Not until this...thing is fixed."

Hearing him like this was hard, but knowing he felt the same was relieving. It wasn't just me, but both of us.

"I feel the same..." I whispered. His eyes widened slightly as if he hadn't expected it.



"I know you had a past with...Her," I said carefully, "so I don't know how you feel regarding that, but I do know we both feel like we've failed Nate," I told him. "And showing up after so many days...it's humiliating. I felt humiliated when Dylan said he visited—"

"Me too," Kyran interrupted. "Me too. That wasn't right."

"I think it might be good if you go again today," I added quickly. "And I'll go with you!"

Kyran shook his head, his lips tight. "I don't know what he wants from me," he said. "But he has made it very clear that he doesn't want to see me again."

I nodded, trying to understand. "How did he react when you held him?" I wondered. "Did he push you away?"

Kyran frowned, confused. "Held...him?"

"Yes," I gave him a nod. "Did he not understand when you told him you would give him as much time as he needed and help him pick himself back up?" I asked, trying to understand.

Kyran blinked, completely baffled this time. "When I...what?"

I facepalmed, groaning into my hand. "What is it exactly that you did over there?" I asked, lowering my hand to look at him.

He smacked his lips and looked around as if searching for an answer. "He asked me to list my apologies for all I've ever done to him, and I did," Kyran exhaled. "But it's just not enough...and I don't know what else he wants from me."

I sat back, my head spinning. Nate must've gone through so much with



Kylan, and as much as I loved him...I think I could understand.

"What do you want?" I asked him gently.

His eyes locked onto mine. "I want him to know that I'm sorry, and that I've been sorry for a long time," Kylan opened up. "That I have always cared, and never stopped caring about him, even when I was too stupid to show it, and that I hate myself for letting it come to this," he said. "I know it might not seem like it, but I would do anything to make it right because Nate isn't just a friend. He's like my brother."

A small smile tugged at my lips despite the heavy words. It was rare for Kylan to say things like that, but he had said it so beautifully. "Then we should go to him today, and you should tell him that," I tried again.

He went quiet.

"I really think we won't be able to put this behind us and move on until —"

"I already told you," Kylan said, his jaw tensed. "He doesn't want to hear it."

"That's a lie," I argued. "When your words come out as sincere as they just did to me...he will want to hear it."

Kylan studied me with an unreadable expression. It was like he didn't quite believe me yet, but desperately wanted to.

"Let's just go today, yes?" I suggested. "You and me?"

For a moment, he just looked at me. His lips parted, then closed again, and his eyes softened.



He didn't say it, but I saw it in his face. He wanted to.

"I get where you're coming from," Kylan breathed, his eyes soft, "but I can't. Not now."

I wanted to tell him, but you have to.

The words were right there on my tongue, but deep down I knew it wouldn't be right. I couldn't force him, and if I pushed him now, I'd be doing exactly what Dylan told me not to.

"Do you really think you'll be able to move on without saying what's on your mind?" I asked quietly.

"Clearly not," he chuckled. "The situation drove me so insane that I began hallucinating about Kayden and that raven with glowing eyes yesterday."

I laughed, but then I realized what he was saying.

Glowing eyes?

My mind snapped back to what Dylan had told me about the dream. The bird with red eyes at midnight.

"What color were his eyes?" I asked carefully.

Kylan chuckled to himself, rubbing the back of his neck. "They were —"

"Violet!"

A bright and familiar voice cut through. I turned around to see Kaelis walking toward us, holding a big pot in her hands.

"Oh, good morning, Kylan!" she said with a smile. "Always good to see

you!”

Kylan gave a short nod, eyeing the pot. “What’s in there?”

“I heard Nate hasn’t been feeling too well,” Kaelis replied brightly, “so I made him his favorite chicken soup, and was just here to ask Violet if she wanted to go with me—”

“You can’t go,” Kylan cut her off coldly.

Kaelis frowned, her brow creasing. “I am going...and you can’t stop me.” She turned back to me, unfazed. “So? Do you want to go with me?”

I glanced at Kylan. He was tense again. His jaw was tight, eyes angry, but if this wasn’t fate, then I didn’t know what was.

“I don’t think you should bother him right now, Kaelis,” Kylan said. “He might not want to see you.”

“Nate is a big boy. If he doesn’t want me there, he can tell me himself, and if he asks me to leave, I’ll leave,” Kaelis said bluntly, lifting her chin. “But he will be seeing me today...with the soup.”

He let out several huffs, probably knowing better than to stop his sister. It was just like the mountains.

“Does the queen know?”

“Yes.” She scrunched her nose at Kylan, making me laugh. She was unaware of everything that had been going on, and his reaction must’ve been strange to her.

“I’ll come with you.” I pushed my chair back and stood. “Are you coming with?” I asked Kylan.



He didn't answer right away. His eyes flickered from me to Kaelis, then to the garden around us. I could see the conflict written all over his face. He really wanted to go, but there was so much pain he wasn't ready to face. The first confrontation must've really gotten to him.

But I really wanted him to go...

Even if Nate wouldn't forgive him, he needed to know he had done everything he could. Only then would he ever be able to move on and focus on what was about to come.

Kylan took a deep breath, then smiled faintly at me. "You go," he said. "And watch Kaelis for me."

"I'm sorry," Kaelis cackled, rolling her eyes. "You're asking who to watch who?"

I felt a wave of disappointment settle in my chest, but I wasn't upset. If he wasn't ready, he simply wasn't ready, and there was nothing I could do about it.

"Okay," I nodded. "But if you change your mind...you know where to find me."



Comments



Support



Share