



Chapter 310

Violet

His voice cracked slightly, and as I stared into his eyes, I could tell that they were red. An obvious sign of the Lunaris.

Kaelis was right there, but he wasn't looking at her. He was looking at me.

"Where's Kylan?"

"He's not here," I said quickly.

A crooked chuckle came to his lips. "Of course not."

It was almost like he had wanted him to be here. I couldn't speak, and just kept looking at him, dazed and unsure of what to do next.

What had he been doing?

What had kept him busy?

And then, there it was. Another set of footsteps came from the stairs. Same as Kaelis, I looked up, and saw a girl. I recognized her immediately. She was one of the girls from Starlight, but we had never spoken. She must've been one of the handful of students who had traveled back to Lyperia for the feast.

Nate's face changed right away, like he was embarrassed to have been caught. "Violet," the girl said warmly as she reached the bottom of the stairs. "We meet again!"

"Yes..." I managed, blinking fast. My mind went blank because I couldn't



remember her name.

So this was how he had been dealing with his pain. Lunar is and whatever else came down his path...

The girl turned to Kaelis next, smiling sweetly. "And you're Prince Kylan's little sister, right?"

Kaelis, who had been silent this whole time, released a loud scoff. "I've been eighteen for a few months now," she snarled.

The girl chuckled lightly, leaning closer to pinch Kaelis's cheek, but Kaelis stepped back just in time, keeping her composure.

"Cute."

Unfazed, the girl turned toward Nate, smiling faintly. "That was fun. I think you know where to find me, handsome," she whispered.

Well...

Nate mumbled something under his breath, his hand sliding into his pocket. The girl brushed her hand along his shoulder as she passed, then disappeared through the doors.

"That is...that was..." Nate's eyes darted back to me. He looked like he owed me an explanation, but I didn't need one. I didn't want one because I wasn't here to tell him who he could and couldn't sleep around with.

I just wanted him to be okay...

Kaelis moved between us, and this time Nate's eyes filled with unease.

"Who was that?" Kaelis asked, her voice sharp.



"No one," Nate said.

"So you're telling me that I'm seeing ghosts now?" Kaelis challenged. "And Violet too?"

He chuckled, lowering his gaze. I couldn't help but laugh too. At least she managed to make him smile. That was a good thing.

"Good choice. She's pretty," Kaelis shrugged. "Almost as pretty as yours truly, don't you think?"

Nate hummed in response.

"They said you weren't doing well," Kaelis continued, "so I made you a big pot of chicken soup and carried it all the way here to cheer you up." She huffed, crossing her arms. "If I knew you were seeking a different kind of medicine, I would've been here before her."

Nate released another laugh, and the tension in the room cracked just a little. "Don't say weird things," he said, giving her shoulder a slight push.

"I appreciate you checking up on me," he looked between us, "Both of you."

Kaelis shifted her weight, and in that moment, I realized how much Nate's acknowledgment meant to her. "The soup must be getting cold," she said. "I'll warm it for you, okay?"

Nate nodded once. "Sure."

Kaelis didn't wait for a second and had already stepped out to where she had left the pot, shutting the door behind her. I had really kept in mind that maybe he wouldn't want to see us at all and would yell at us to get



lost. Me for being directly involved, and Kaelis just for being Kylan's sister.

But it wasn't like that...

Even as our eyes met, I saw a faint spark of life in his eyes. They were tired, but warm.

"Vivi..." he greeted again.

"Nate," I whispered back.

The hall went quiet again as we both waited. This time, I knew what I wanted to say...What I had to say. But I also wanted to give him space to speak if he needed to.

My heart began to beat faster as I took a deep breath, ready to break the silence. "Kylan is—" I started, but stopped when I saw the way Nate's jaw tightened.

"I don't care," he said flatly. "You're here."

I nodded quickly, lowering my gaze. Maybe it wasn't the best time to mention Kylan. I guess a part of me just wanted to take the chance to put in a good word, even though Dylan warned me not to.

I didn't know why, but everything suddenly hit me all at once. The fear of seeing Nate now that he knew I was a hybrid, the guilt, the exhaustion... everything came crashing down at once. My throat tightened, and before I could blink my feelings away, a tear slipped down my cheek.

I wanted him to know that I was so sorry...for everything. For being too late, for saying the wrong things, for not knowing what to do when he needed us most.



But no words came out. Nate wasn't an idiot. He knew I was sorry, and I also knew he didn't want to hear it.

Instead, I just stepped forward and fell into his arms. He stiffened at first, but after a few seconds, he relaxed and wrapped his arms around me.

"I think we can both agree that I haven't been a good friend, right?" I murmured, burying my head in his chest.

Nate pulled back slightly, just enough to look at me. There was a small smile on his lips. "Yes. I think we can," he said. "But at least I don't have to tell you."

Even though my heart was meant to shatter, it felt at ease. He wasn't lying to make me feel better, he was being honest. I pressed my head against his chest again, clutching him tighter.

After hearing how far gone he was, I really thought he would've kicked me out by now.

But it wasn't like that at all. He didn't push me away, and if anything, he pulled me in closer.

When I finally pulled back, I wiped the single tear that had managed to escape from my eyes. "Can we talk someplace privately?" I dared, asking. "There's something I have to say."

I had barely finished my sentence before Nate took my hand and led me toward a back door. We stepped outside for a bit, and made our way over to some stone steps. He sat on one of them while I sat across from him.

I squinted, looking again at his red, puffy eyes. I missed that beautiful honey brown, though it was hard to see now. He looked so tired, like he hadn't slept in days, and I couldn't blame him.



I'd had a hard time too, but in the end, he was the one who lost his sister.

Kaelis would probably finish warming the soup any minute, and I knew this was my only chance to speak. "I want you to know," I began, my voice soft, "that I didn't enjoy doing any of the things we've done, and that I never meant to lie to you about who I am."

He didn't interrupt, just tilted his head slightly, listening the way he always had.

"I've always wanted to tell you everything," I continued, my voice trembling. "Because you've been nothing but a good friend to me from the day we met. You were my first friend at Starlight, and I owe you the truth."

He gave a small nod.

"Me showing up here days too late, after everything we've been through because I didn't know what to say...that's something I can't excuse, and you didn't deserve that," I went on. "I know I should've come sooner, and I should've said all this then, but I was scared of saying the wrong thing."

Nate looked at me. "I needed to hear that," he said. "There is still a lot I don't understand, but I don't hate you, Violet."

"You don't hate me..." I repeated. I should've felt relief, but instead, I just felt guilty. Guilty that he was so quick to forgive me just for the sake of me being Violet. Did I even deserve it?

"This thing between Kylan and me has got nothing to do with you," Nate shook his head. "It already started long before you came into our lives."

I nodded slowly, listening. "I was angry at first," he admitted, his eyes

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flicking toward the garden. "But I had time to think last night. To really think..."

"And what did you think about?" I asked softly.

Nate drew a long breath. "I was thinking about Chrystal," he began. "And the way she chose her own fate, even until the very last second when you still tried to save her."

His hand curled into a fist in his lap. "It hurts because I know she wasn't perfect, but no matter what anyone says, she was still my sister, and I don't agree with what that monster has done to her."

He let out a breath. "It hurts just as much to know that if she had walked away that day...it would've either been her or you."

My lips parted, but I didn't speak. There was nothing I could say to make his pain any less.

A chuckle escaped him. "And then I was thinking," he shook his head. "that either I'm the worst brother or she was the worst sister because I know that if it ever came down to it, I would choose you above my own blood," he said. "That's how close we've gotten. That's how much you mean to me. How much you get me...more than she ever could."

He gave a weak laugh. "I don't give a shit about you being...whatever you are, and even if you were a vampire, I would still love you as a friend because I only care about what I see in front of me, and that's you, Violet."

I didn't deserve the kind of love and loyalty he gave so freely...

Nate looked at me, his eyes full of warmth and exhaustion. "I trust you so much," he said. "But you don't seem to trust me in return, and that...that



hurt.”

“I didn’t want to hurt you.”

He nodded slowly. “And I can see that.” His gaze softened even more. “I can see it in your eyes. You’ve always been sincere.” He looked down. “That’s why I’m not angry with you. No matter what words I might’ve said in the woods.”

I think I understood now. Why things between him and Kylan were still broken. Nate had looked into Kylan’s eyes the same way he looked into mine, and he hadn’t seen sincerity. Maybe he had seen guilt, pity, pain... but not the kind of truth he needed.

“Do you want to talk about your sister?”

His head lifted, but his eyes didn’t meet mine. “No.”

“Your parents?”

He chuckled under his breath, looking down at his hands again. “No.”

Perhaps those pills he had been using...

“Why not?” I pressed softly.

“Because if I have to talk about my parents, I have to talk about how I’ve been lying to them, and if I talk about her, I have to pretend she was a good person...while we both know she wasn’t,” he managed to get out. “She wanted you dead.”

I had nothing else to add to that.

“Is it strange that I don’t want to talk about that?” Nate asked.



"No." I shook my head. "But you can also talk about the good memories," I offered. "It doesn't have to be the bad ones."

He gave a small, sad smile. "I've been trying," he admitted. "I think about the good memories, and then the bad ones just...overthrow them, and it happens every time."

I let out a sigh and reached over to place my hand on his arm. His muscles were tense, and not even a reassuring smile could stop it.

"Nate!" A voice rang out.

Nate groaned softly, tilting his head back. "There she goes again."

I couldn't help but laugh. "I'm sorry for not stopping her," I said. "She seemed so excited to bring you soup."

"It's fine. Kaelis is just Kaelis," he rubbed the back of his neck. "I know she means well."

"Nate!" she called again, louder this time.

Nate reached out his hand to me, and I accepted. He caressed his finger over my thumb with a warm smile and a nod that told me we were okay.

"I'll tell you one of these days when you're ready to hear it," I spoke as we walked. "About me...everything."