

## Chapter 45

Violet

I sat on Nate's bed, nervously fumbling with my hands as I waited for him. As soon as we arrived, he had disappeared to the bathroom with the promise to be back soon.

Now it had already been several minutes too many as I stared at the closed door, wondering if it was too late to run out of here.

I exhaled, closing my eyes for a second.

No, Violet.

You want this—you want him.

After calming down a bit, I let my eyes wander around his room for the first time. It had the same layout as Kylan's, only a bit smaller, and the colors brighter and warmer. Their rooms showed a perfect contrast in their personalities.

For a second, I wondered if maybe he was just as nervous as I was, hiding in the bathroom—but then I chuckled to myself.

No way. Nate had quite the reputation, and he wouldn't get nervous over this. I was probably just nothing more than a number to him.

I felt an awful lump in my throat, thinking about the reason why I was doing this. At first I made myself believe that it was mostly because I was ready, and a little bit because of Kylan—but now I was starting to believe it could be the other way around.

Kylan had bothered me by doing the bare minimum—so much that I decided on the spot to lose my virginity to Nate tonight.

Would I have made that same decision if he hadn't kissed Chrystal in front of me?

Before I could even process it fully, Nate walked out of the bathroom, wearing some black sweatpants and a simple white shirt. He brushed his hand through his hair, leaning against the door with a smile as his eyes were fixed on me.

I blinked, trying not to stare at him like an idiot—but I couldn't help myself. Even as he made his way to the bed, and sat beside me, leaving a big gap between the two of us—my gaze still lingered.

The heat rose to my cheeks, thinking about what would happen next. The room was so quiet, yet I could barely hear the sound of our breathing.

Wait...was he nervous?

Nate tapped his fingers on his knees. "So," he said, breaking the silence.

"So," I replied, feeling my face heat up even more.

In my mind, I quickly listed the reasons why this could either rock my world, or make me want to leave it.

Reasons for:

Nate genuinely cared about me.

He was one of the only ones who bothered to ask how I was actually holding up.

I felt safe around him, trusted him.

I was desperate for someone to make me feel like Kylan did.

Reasons against:

Lumia would possibly rip me from the inside.

He was one of my closest friends.

If either one of us caught feelings, things could go terribly wrong.

Deep down, I knew I wasn't doing this for myself, but as a reaction to these unresolved feelings for...him.

I would be using Nate, in the hopes it would piss off Kylan, and he definitely didn't deserve any of that.

Despite how much I hated to admit it, the reasons against—especially the last one—definitely outweighed the reasons for, meaning there was only one conclusion.

This could not happen, not tonight—not ever.

I released a huff and then burst into laughter, burying my face in my hands. What the hell was I even thinking?

Nate looked over, confused. "What? Why are you laughing?" he asked, frowning.

I shook my head, still smiling. "Because...this is a really bad idea."

A chuckle escaped from Nate's lips—a relieved chuckle. It was enough proof that also he felt uncomfortable with this whole thing. "I'm glad we're on the same page," he spoke, softly.

Now more relaxed, both of us shared a laugh.

"So...you didn't want to take my virginity?" I asked, feeling somewhat insecure. I knew why I didn't want it, but what was his reason? Especially after agreeing to it.

"D-Don't get me wrong," Nate stammered. "It's not that I don't want to—you're beautiful—I mean, look at you."

His words made me smile, and my heart fluttered a bit. I didn't know if he fully meant it, but hearing him say those words meant a lot.

"It's just," Nate began, "I don't want to get in between you and Kylan or whatever you two have going on—no matter how much I hate him at the moment."

My face flushed once more. I hadn't expected him to drop Kylan's name like that, and I was certain Kylan, who was too embarrassed, hadn't told him anything—so how much had he picked up on just by watching us?

Did I make it that obvious, and most importantly, was he the only one who had noticed?

At a loss for words, I simply stared at him. My mouth opened, desperate to say anything to deny his accusation, but nothing came out.

"The only reason I even agreed to it in the first place," Nate continued, "was to get under Kylan's skin...and that's unfair to both of you," he confessed. "I care about the two of you too much to use you like that."

A small smile tugged at my lips. "One of the reasons you crossed my mind was because I wanted to get under Kylan's skin too—so I guess we both planned on using each other."

He chuckled, nodding as we both just looked at each other. At the end, we both couldn't proceed due to the guilt of using each other.

"So you and Kylan—"

"He's my mate." I let out a heavy sigh, deciding it was pointless to keep it a secret. If Kylan wasn't planning on telling Nate, fine, but I was done hiding it. "We found out at the Starlight festival."

Nate's expression hadn't changed in the slightest. "I figured that much," he responded. "He gets...different whenever he's around you."

If it was the same kind of different Kayden talked about—the angry kind, then I didn't want any part of it.

"He's too embarrassed to tell anyone about me," I said, frustrated. "But he's made it pretty clear he's not going to accept my rejection or reject me, at least not now."

Nate's eyebrows shot up. "You rejected him?"

"Of course I did," I replied, not missing a beat. "And I would do it again and again, if he'd let me."

"Would you really?" Nate countered.