

Chapter 46

Violet

By the look on his face, I could tell he didn't believe a single word that left my mouth—and neither did I.

Would I, really?

He chuckled. "Because I see the way you look at him, Violet. And it's not the look you give to someone you're about to reject."

I swallowed, feeling confused by my own thoughts. There was only one look I ever gave him, and that was a hateful one, right?

"I get why you'd want to reject him, though," Nate shrugged as he lowered his gaze. "He has his moments, but he's...complicated. He's not always a good person."

The pain in his voice was obvious. Whatever happened between the two of them had clearly left a scar because Nate was able to see something that even his own brother refused to see.

Kylan was not always a good person.

"What happened between the two of you?" I approached the situation with caution.

Nate smiled softly, looking up to hold my gaze. "I just tried to get him to talk about his feelings, like I always do..."

He drifted into thought, his jaw tightening a bit.

"And then?"

He took a quick breath, continuing as if it was nothing. "And then he called me my father's 'Lunaris-sniffing son' and a 'servant.'"

What?

I bit my lip, struggling to keep myself from laughing. It was horrible, I know—but just the thought of Kylan saying that, with a straight face, was too much for me.

Nate noticed and chuckled. "You can laugh. I laugh about it myself sometimes," he admitted. "Kylan's got a...let's call it a creative way with words."

"I'm not laughing," I defended, though my voice turned high-pitched, and the big smile on my face had already exposed me. "That's actually a really terrible thing to say to someone."

Nate sighed. "Yes."

"But if it helps," I added, grinning, "I told him I'd rather get fucked by his dozen brothers than let him touch me again."

Nate's eyes widened. "Again?"

Heat rushed to my face as I had exposed myself for yet a second time. I turned away, feeling ashamed. "If you ever need someone to talk to," I said, hoping to change the topic. "I'm here."

Nate nudged my shoulder, laughing. "Look at you, trying to change the subject."

"No, I'm not," I pouted. "I mean it—you can talk to me. Always."

He had always been looking out for everyone else—but who was looking out for him? I gave him a warm smile, hoping he could feel that I meant it.

"Thanks," Nate smiled back, stretching out his fist.

I bumped it back. "You're welcome."

"And," he then scratched the back of his neck. "I should probably apologize for my sister?"

I shook my head quickly. "No, you really don't have to—"

"Trust me, I do," Nate stated. "She gets so fucking possessive over Kylan, it's weird..." he trailed off, looking frustrated. "She probably either doesn't suspect anything or does not see you as a real threat yet. Because if she did, you would've been dead by now—"

I raised a hand, cutting him off. "Honestly, let's not go there. If I said what I really think about her, you'd probably kick me out of your room."

Possessive, weird—all of it was nothing new as I had already concluded what kind of person she was, the minute she had told me to stay away from Kylan.

Nate grinned. "Fair point."

A silence fell between us, but it wasn't awkward. It was peaceful, and it felt like we both needed the silence to gather our thoughts for a moment. Glancing at the clock on the wall, I realized it was already past curfew.

"So," I broke the silence with a breath, "if we're not having sex, what are we doing tonight?"

"What do you want to do?" Nate asked.

"We could play a game, watch a movie..." I listed off some ideas. "Or do something easy like share our frustrations about Kylan."

Nate cracked a laugh, only I wasn't joking. "That last one could go all night," he rolled his eyes. "I'd rather keep it at a movie."

"Exactly," I agreed. "Do you have something I can sleep in?"

"Sure," Nate got up before disappearing to his closet.

It felt nice to be here with him. There was no awkwardness, no forceful situation, I didn't have to worry about whether he wanted me here in the first place—because I felt welcome. It wasn't his body I needed, it was his comfort.

When he came back, he tossed a black hoodie my way. I caught it just in time, feeling the warm fabric on the inside.

"My favorite," Nate said. "Treat it with respect."

"Thanks," I beamed, holding it in the air for a second. "I'll make sure to treat it with respect."

Curious, I inspected the hoodie as I went to the bathroom to put it on. It had a symbol of a shield and sword in the center, with the initials 'LRA' stitched in red underneath.

I pulled the oversized hoodie over my head. It was way too big, but it felt nice, and it still smelled a bit like Nate. He always smelled good.

When I walked out again, Nate was already sitting on his bed with a laptop on his lap.

"And?" I called out, spreading my arms. "How do I look?"

Nate turned his head, giving me an amused look. "Like a kid who raided my closet."

"No, I do not!" I gasped, climbing into bed beside him. I didn't feel awkward at all. It was different from that time in Kylan's room. Back then, I was so nervous, I couldn't even breathe.

Even after feeling a bit more comfortable after a while, the nerves had never fully disappeared.

With Nate, there was no reason to be nervous because after canceling our initial plan, I had no expectations.

He was just Nate.

Not my mate, not someone I had kissed before, not someone whose clothes I wanted to rip off—he was nothing more than my teammate and close friend.

I scooted closer to him, resting my head on his shoulder.

"Have you picked one yet?" I murmured, glancing at the movies on his laptop. "What are we watching?"

Nate shook his head, tilting the screen toward me. "I don't know—you tell me."

Casually, he slung one arm over my shoulder, pulling me closer as his curious brown eyes stared into mine.

"Let's see," I said with a shy smile, taking control of the laptop.

Family day had almost turned into a disaster, but somehow, Nate had managed to turn it all around.