

Chapter 51

Violet

Same as last time, I looked at my reflection in the mirror as I adjusted my training gear one last time. No matter how many times I looked at it, it still felt strange, like it didn't quite belong on my body. Classes for the day were over, meaning it was time for training.

I grabbed the hair tie from my wrist before pulling my hair up in a ponytail. Just as I finished, two girls from the team walked past. They shot me a small smile, then whispered something as they walked out.

Today was day two of the whispers, and I didn't know what in the world made me think that the whispers would stop. I wasn't used to this kind of attention, and it still left me feeling uneasy.

I truly had no idea Nate was that popular.

Taking a deep breath, I stepped out of the locker room and into the training hall. My heart made a quick jump as I remembered what I'd heard about today's commander, Jorn. I had overheard the combat girls calling him a living nightmare, and they were tough—so I knew they weren't lying.

Then there was Nate who had also confirmed that the other commanders were ruthless.

Everyone was already inside, stretching and chatting. My eyes fell on Dylan, who was sitting with his friends. He gave me a nod and a small smile as he caught me staring at him, and I gave him one in return.

He hadn't bothered me yet about the whole situation, and deep down, I hoped it was because he hadn't heard about it—but I knew that was most likely not the case.

Something told me he sure had his opinion, but kept it to himself because we had only just started talking again.

It could also be that he had discussed it with Trinity, and she told him it was nothing more than a baseless rumor.

Whatever it was, I was glad he wasn't bothering me about it.

Kylan and Nate were somewhere in the back, deep in conversation. Well, Nate was talking, and Kylan couldn't wait until I looked in his direction so he could stare at me with the coldest look I had ever seen.

His gaze was different than before, even darker than I ever thought was possible—and it even made my skin prickle.

Did he know?

Of course he knew—he must've heard.

But did he care? Because looking at his face made me want to believe that he did.

I teared my gaze away, spotting an empty mat behind the two. As I walked toward the mat, I made sure to keep my gaze on the floor to avoid any unnecessary attention.

All I wanted right now, was to be invisible.

I held back my breath as I walked past the two, but then I heard a cheerful voice.

“Good evening, Vivi!” Nate ended his talk with Kylan.

With a racing heart, I turned around and looked at Nate who sat on a mat with an innocent smile plastered on his lips, as if he wasn't the reason half the school knew my name.

“Good evening, Nate.”

Part of me wanted to choke him.

Part of me wanted to squeeze his cheeks.

But a bigger part of me wanted to get away from Kylan's glare, so I continued my pace—but before I could take another step, a hand gripped my wrist, forcing me to stop.

I spun around, only to see Kylan still glaring at me. He loosened his grip, letting me go, then he lifted a brow. “Evening,” he spoke before clearing his throat.

Stunned, I flickered my eyes for a second. He was actually talking to me?

After all he had done, all he had said, he was talking to me?

“Evening,” I responded, not having it in my heart to walk past him. He seemed surprised that I said something back, and his dark eyes studied me.

Out of the corner of my eye, I noticed Nate. He had this stupid smile on his face, watching us both like this was all part of some plan.

Was he seriously trying to play matchmaker now?

Because if he was, he was wasting his time.

I didn't want anything from Kylan, all I wanted was for him to stay the hell away from me.

I wanted to hate him from a distance, not from up close—and I was certain it was the same for him.

“Sit,” Nate patted the mat.

Before I could process what I was doing, I followed his command and dropped down to the floor as Kylan released a grunt, clearly not amused that I had joined them.

So I was good enough to greet him, but not good enough to sit with him.

Nate nudged me, playfully. “So, how's my hoodie doing?”

I couldn't help but smile a little as a mischievous grin appeared on his face.

He was really determined to get on Kylan's nerve, so was I—but Miss Popular Guy could've warned me about his fangirls a bit earlier.

“Your hoodie is doing great!” I said, sighing.

He chuckled, shrugging. “Tried to warn you.”

I gave him a ‘you know better,’ look. His words were bullshit, he knew exactly what would happen once I had walked out that door wearing his hoodie.

“If I knew it would've gotten this much attention, I would've left naked.”

Nate laughed, leaning closer. “Oh, that would've gotten you a lot more attention—trust me.”

“Really? How would you know?” I smirked.

A low, irritated growl, interrupted our moment. “Yes, how would he know?” Kylan spoke out loud.

I had nearly forgotten he was even there, and only now it hit me how bad it sounded. I had practically implied Nate had seen me naked. Once again, Nate knew what he was doing, and he was really pushing it.

Kylan's jaw tightened as he gave me a sharp stare. “Good to hear you've got no problem working those legs, you'll need it,” he snarled. “Today's training will be hard, and we don't need you holding back the group.”

He got up and strode away as I rolled my eyes.

Petty, much?

Nate laughed beside me, and I shot him another look. “Seriously, what the hell have you done?”

He ruffled my hair, smirking. “Just helped us both out a bit.”

“Oh, really? By making the whole school look at me?”

“It's not a big deal, Beautiful,” he spoke. “You got your revenge, and you'll get your guy.”

“I don't even want him!” I whispered, trying to keep my voice down. “The only thing I want is for him to either accept my rejection, or reject him myself. I don't want to be anywhere near that guy!”

Nate yawned, stretching his arms. “If you don't want him, then why are you always so worked up about him?”

He got up and left before giving me the time to answer. It was a good thing he did because I wasn't quite sure how to respond to that.

‘If you don't want him, then why are you always so worked up about him?’

He didn't know what he was talking about, and you know what? His words weren't making any sense.

He didn't want him either, but he got worked up about him, too. It wasn't just me.

“Hey, why are you weaklings still sitting!”

A man with a loud voice entered the room, or more so jumped because his energy was unmatched. He clapped his hands once, and everyone, including me, snapped to their feet in unison.

I looked around, quickly mirroring everyone's stance as we made five rows. Unfortunately, I stood in front.

The blonde, tall, intimidating-looking man, who was wearing training gear, was definitely not Rochwall—but Commander Jorn, and he looked like he meant business.

“Good evening, recruits!” he barked, his voice loud enough to fill the whole academy if he wanted to.

“Good evening, sir!” everyone shouted back, although I kept my mouth shut. Instead, I looked behind me, glancing nervously at the others who all appeared to be in some sort of trance.

What did I get myself into? I had always been frightened of these type of ‘leaders’ and back home, I was glad enough I wasn't training to become a warrior so I could avoid them.

A snap of a finger made me turn my head again, and I felt Commander Jorn's sharp gaze settling on me. My stomach dropped as I prayed to the Moon Goddess that he wouldn't address me.

“You!” he called out. I froze.

“M-Me?” My voice trembled.

His expression hardened as he stepped closer, and I could almost feel his breath in my face.

“I'm looking at you, am I not?”

Great. Just great. The heat of embarrassment rose to my cheeks.

I could sense that this would be a training straight from hell, and in a matter of seconds, this man had just made me his target...