

## Chapter 68

Violet

He didn't want me to get lost?

To be honest, it was understandable. He was the one who had taken me outside the gates, so at the moment—he was the one responsible for me.

I swallowed hard, my face growing hotter.

Wake up, Violet—this was not some romantic outing. The guy isn't even into you like that, doesn't even want you as his mate.

"Right," I mumbled softly, automatically squeezing his hand. We started walking again, and I bit the inside of my cheek to stop myself from smiling like an idiot, imagining what it could've been like if he didn't resent the Moon Goddess' wishes.

As we walked further into the market, my eyes darted from one stall to the next. There was so much I wanted to do, that my mind was spinning. When I saw something I couldn't ignore, I stopped in my steps, pulling Kylan with me.

"What?" he mumbled softly.

My finger pointed to the small jewelry stand, leading to a shop inside. There was a big sign that read 'handmade jewelry,' and I just felt it calling me to come inside.

"Cute bracelets for a cute lady," the elf in front of the stand called out, flashing me a charming smile.

I furrowed my brows, trying not to look at his pointy ears before turning to Kylan. He rolled his eyes, unimpressed, but the grip on my hand tightened, making it clear that he had no intentions to check it out.

"Let's not stop for stupid bracelets," he whispered so soft that only I could hear.

"Come on, just one look!" the man urged, using big gestures to lure us in.

"Of course!" I decided for myself. I tugged Kylan's hand, pulling him toward the stand as he let out a deep sigh.

"I'll be quick, I promise!"

Kylan let go of my hand, giving me the chance to take a better look at the jewelry. The one thing that grabbed my attention the most was the uniquely handcrafted bracelets, lining the stand.

They were beautiful, some of the most breathtaking things I had ever seen in my life, and I knew I wouldn't be able to find anything like them back home in our dull village.

Two bracelets in particular caught my eye. One was a silver chain with tiny moon-shaped charms, and the other was a thin braided bracelet with a small lycan-shaped pendant hanging from it.

Unable to make a choice, I grabbed the two from the stand and held them up in the air, squinting my eyes.

One reminded me of myself, but the other one reminded me of...him.

"How much are these?"

The elf smiled. "Two for fifty, but for you—half the price."

"I'll take it!" I responded enthusiastically, handing them to the man. As he put them in a bag, I already reached for my wallet to pull out some money, but just as I stuck out my hand—another one moved faster than mine.

Kylan...

He handed the elf a few bills before I could even blink. "Keep the change," he said, unbothered.

The elf's eyes lit up. "Thank you, sir. That's very generous of you—have a nice day!"

He gave us a quick nod and turned away, but stopped halfway to glance back at us with a grin. "The two of you make a good-looking couple, by the way!"

Well, that was awkward.

Carefully, I shifted my eyes to Kylan to watch his reaction. He didn't do anything, not even blinked. Instead, he took my wallet from my hand, closed it, and slipped it back into my bag as if nothing had happened. Then, he grabbed my hand again, pulling me along.

As always, he was too confusing.

One second, he was avoiding me like the plague, and the next, he was buying me bracelets, holding my hand, and taking in words about us being a couple as if it was nothing.

"You didn't have to do that," I said softly, still processing everything. "I have money...probably not as much as you but—"

"You were taking too long," Kylan spoke, his tone dry.

"I can pay you back," I offered, not wanting to take advantage of him.

Kylan shook his head, brushing it off. "Don't worry about it."

"No," I insisted. "I'll pay you back—"

"Fine!" Kylan's lips twitched a bit, and I knew he was wishing for me to shut up. "You can pay me back later. Happy?"

I smiled, satisfied. "Yes."

We kept walking, our hands still intertwined. Every now and then, I looked down, barely believing that he was still holding on so tightly. His touch felt nice—safe, protective.

I was supposed to be annoyed at his mixed reactions, yet I found myself smiling—feeling like the luckiest girl in the world, all because of a bracelet and his hand in mine.

A young blonde boy standing in front of a dark red tent caught my eye. "The soothsayer knows all—the soothsayer knows all—come and hear about your future!" he called out, waving his hand dramatically.

I gasped loudly, repeatedly slapping Kylan's chest. "I've never seen a soothsayer before!"

Soothsayers were rare. They were mysterious beings, even stronger than warlocks and witches—who possessed the power to look into someone's fate and future.

Growing up, Mom used to tell me lots of stories about sayers who had predicted the biggest disasters before they even took place, but were never allowed to reveal everything, as meddling with someone's destiny could disrupt the natural order of the world.

"Only twenty today for a session! Come, don't miss your chance!" the boy shouted again.

"Kylan!" I called out, excited. "You can barely find them anywhere these days—we have to go!"

Kylan sighed, shaking his head. "There's a reason why the tent is empty," he muttered. "It's probably a scammer."

I bit my lip. "Yes, but what if it isn't?"

Before he could respond, I let go of his hand and rushed toward the boy, hearing a deep sigh right behind me. Regardless of Kylan's opinion, I was going to see the soothsayer.

"I want to go!" I told the boy, reaching for my wallet—but once again, Kylan had already acted before I could. "Keep the change," he said flatly, handing the boy money.

"Thanks, sir," the boy replied.

"I'll pay you back later," I told Kylan as we walked to the tent. "Really!"

"You better," Kylan replied, smirking faintly.

Excited, I stepped into the tent. Kylan followed closely behind, and it was a good thing he did—because once everything got dark, I suddenly wasn't feeling so tough anymore. The air was filled with the scent of herbs, and the only source of light came from the flickering lanterns placed on the floor and a small candle on the table in the center of the tent.

Behind the wooden table sat an old man, the soothsayer.

His face was mostly hidden by the cap of his robe, and I could only see his dry lips, smirking slightly. His hand, just as dry, rested on the table as he tilted his head to look at us.

What eyes? Don't ask me.

Giving it a second thought, perhaps this was a bit creepy. The soothsayer looked intimidating, and the energy in the tent felt suffocating. Maybe this wasn't such a good idea after all.

Knowing my future wasn't something to mess around with, and especially not if I would hear some crap about having three more months to live.

Hesitantly, I took a step back, bumping into Kylan who steadied me with his hands on my shoulders. Feeling his touch, I instantly felt a bit more at ease.

"You don't have to go through with this," he murmured softly. His voice was so gentle, and for a moment, I considered leaving.

Before I could decide, the sage scratched the table with his fingernails, leaving an awful sound. His lips curled into a wider grin, forcing us to look at his nearly black teeth.

"Sit, child of my blood," a dark, rasping voice spoke. "I already sensed your presence."