

Chapter 82

Violet

Even the warm water couldn't prevent my body from the cold that reached through my veins.

No...

It couldn't be true.

Adelaide, Alaric—there were nothing but names. Nobodies. They weren't my parents because mine had already passed away. Claire and Greg from the Bloodrose pack. I was Violet Hastings, a werewolf, meant to be a healer. I wasn't—

My thoughts faded as tears reached the corner of my eyes.

No matter how much I wanted to deny it, everything started to make sense. The isolated upbringing, the consistent issue with my eyes, the whispers growing up, the prophecies...the connection to Adelaide, and even the way the Soothsayer had addressed me.

Was I really half witch?

Was Adelaide really my mom, and how was he even certain?

"Kylan?" I whispered, my voice trembling. A second later his hand brushed through my hair as if he hadn't just dropped the biggest fucking bomb on me.

"You think you've got it all figured out, but you don't—Violet," he stated calmly.

His words hit me like a truck, and my heart ached. I wanted to argue, but deep down, I knew he was right.

I didn't know a damn thing...

"Have you thought about what will happen once you turn on whatever the hell you've turned off?" Kylan continued. "What will happen when you have to function without those glasses again?"

I bit my lip, accepting the harsh truth because no—I hadn't thought about that. The broken glasses, the loss of the Lyperian stone, would make my life way too difficult—and I didn't know how to fix it. I didn't know anything.

Kylan was right.

What would happen if I would turn 'it' back on?

"Those glasses," Kylan spoke. "They protected you, Violet. They shielded you from the voices, the nightmares, the visions."

They did, and I had no idea what would come next without the one thing that had protected me my whole life.

Life had always been hard, but perhaps it was a bit more easier just moments ago when I was just Violet, and not half...that.

"Stop talking." I whispered, feeling overwhelmed. Whatever he had to say, I didn't want to hear it.

Could he really not wait until tomorrow?

Did he have to say this now while I was fucking blind?

"Chrystal will go straight to the king when she's done sulking," Kylan said. "She'll tell him we're mates—and you know he'll never accept you. Not as a Bloodrose, and certainly not as..."

My throat tightened.

Even he wouldn't say it for a second time.

As a witch.

I couldn't breathe, couldn't think.

I wasn't even a Hastings, but was I still a Bloodrose? Could I still claim that name?

Kylan let out a deep sigh. "The king already knows who you are, Violet. He's known for a long time."

I gulped in fear as a memory returned to my mind. After that dinner on family day, the king asked me who had given me those glasses, then told me to make sure I kept them on at all times because he wouldn't want me to lose them.

At the time, I didn't think much of it. I just assumed it was his way of trying to intimidate me—but now, I realized that wasn't it.

He knew...

Startled, I turned my head to Kylan's direction, even though I couldn't see anything.

"He's the one who gave Claire the glasses for your eyes," Kylan shared. "He's one of the maby who told me witches weren't to be trusted. That they were dangerous. And you..." He trailed off.

"He'll have you dragged out of here for walking the Starlight halls as a witch. He'll have you dragged out of here for even being my mate."

My chest rose with each breath. How could I have been so stupid and reckless to make such a mistake? I knew Chrystal hated me, but I never thought she'd go as far as stepping to the king. Then again, I hadn't known I was half...that...or that the king even knew about my identity.

Would she really go that far, or was Kylan just pointing out possible scenarios?

Suddenly everything that never made sense started making a whole lot more sense.

Dad, or Uncle Fergus, had always been a bit distant, even before the Dylan situation, but I thought it was just his personality.

Turns out, that wasn't the case. His sister had brought a half-breed into his pack—the Bloodrose—and after she passed away, he was forced to deal with it...deal with me.

If he knew, why would he have even sent me here in the first place?

I thought everything was fine after family day, but maybe it was just a facade.

Had he wanted to get rid of me that badly?

Was I just his dead sister's burden, something to throw away?

Tears pricked my eyes as I fell further into my thoughts.

Just when I was about to lose it, Kylan wrapped his arms around me from behind, pulling me close. I immediately calmed, feeling the heat of his body.

"I have a solution for both problems," he said quietly. "But the decision is up to you."

His grip tightened slightly, and I leaned into him, waiting for him to speak—since I had run out of ideas. I never really had one to begin with.

He let out a low chuckle as if preparing himself to say something ridiculous. His soft hand brushed down my bare arm before it slid into mine, and I held it tightly.

"The ring," he said. "Both the witch and the soothsayer mentioned it. At the time, I didn't understand, but now I do."

I blinked, my heart pounding in my chest. He couldn't be talking about 'that' ring, could he?

"It's made of Lyperian stone. Strong enough to protect you. It would do the same as your glasses did."

My breath caught, and a wave of emotions hit me. Relief, confusion, and something I couldn't quite understand. Was this what the soothsayer meant when he called Kylan my savior?

If he gave me this ring, it would mean...

"If I give you this ring, Violet," Kylan broke through my thoughts, his tone serious. "It means I've claimed you as my mate. It would make you untouchable. You would be protected by ancient Lyperian law created by our ancestors, and you wouldn't have to fear anyone—not even the king."

We had gone from me being blind, to me being half witch to me wearing his ring, and it was all too much to take in.

The moment he would give me the ring, it would mean he was publicly accepting me, tying himself to me in a way that would change everything.

I remembered what he had said before—he didn't want a mate, especially not a weak one. He had made that painfully clear the day I found out we were mates, and again, later in the woods. Kylan had never hidden his disdain for the Moon Goddess's choices.

He didn't believe in it. He didn't want it. Simple as that.

Had he changed his mind?

My throat felt dry, and no words would come out. 'Be my mate, Violet,' those were the words I had been longing to hear—but his offer didn't feel sincere. Something sounded off.

"You're saying it like there's a catch," I chuckled uncomfortably.

"Because there is," Kylan replied, firmly. I felt his hand move to my finger, gently brushing over it as if he was imagining the ring there.

"I'll accept you as my mate..." he paused, making my heart jump. "But only in name."

Ah, there it was.

He wasn't finished. "I cannot, and will never, love you."

Even though I had expected it, the words still hit me like a blow. Hearing them out loud somehow made it worse.

"You can't love me?" I whispered, the words leaving my mouth before I could stop them.

"That's right," he confirmed easily. "Not the way you want me to. Not the way you love me."

I felt my body stiffen, and my cheeks burn at his blunt words.

He was well aware of my feelings for him. I bit my lip hard, thankful I couldn't see his face at the moment because that would've been too embarrassing.

I wanted to deny it, but I couldn't force the lie past my lips.

The guy wasn't stupid.

What was there to deny?

I loved him—did I not?

"That doesn't mean I won't care," he said softly, brushing my hand with his fingers as if to somehow ease the pain.

Only Kylan could reject and accept someone in the same breath.

"I'll care for you," his voice was filled with sincerity this time. "I'll give you the respect a mate deserves—"

"But you won't love me," I finished, cutting him off before he could say it again. "I get it."

Despite the sharp pain in my chest, I tried to keep it together. At the moment, there were bigger things to fry than Kylan not loving me, such as what could happen to me if I would not accept that ring.

I forced an uncomfortable knot down my throat.

"Is that it?"

Kylan exhaled, and I knew there was more to come. "I need you to realize that after you graduate, you'll have to move to Lyperia. You'll be the future Luna, the queen."

I listened, feeling the weight of his words sink in. Being a Luna, a queen...even though I still had four more years left until graduation—that sounded like the worst possible nightmare, and I had already been through enough of those.

The best scenario would've been for Kylan not to be a prince, for me not to be half witch with some messed up eyes—and for him to love me the way I loved him.

But it wasn't about what I wanted, it was about what I needed—and I needed that ring to protect myself.

"You'll be an outsider, Violet. You'll have to adjust, learn everything about Lyperia, about court life, and it will be brutal," he continued. "People will talk. They'll say you don't belong, that you're not good enough because you're a werewolf in a Lycan kingdom."

He squeezed my hand. "Will you be able to take it?"