

Chapter 99

Violet

I squeezed my eyes to take a better look as an old, short man shuffled into the hall, supported by a wooden cane. His lips stretched into a smile, his eyes locking on me.

“No so fast, Sir,” a woman’s voice called out from behind him, trying to keep up with his steps. She looked like some kind of assistant.

“Shut up,” the man said, waving her off as he struggled to walk toward us, his gaze never leaving mine. “I’m perfectly fine.”

“Sure, why not,” I heard Kylan mutter under his breath.

“Who is that?” I whispered, curious.

“Principal Sterling,” Kylan answered.

I blinked in surprise, my eyes darting back to the man who clearly needed a hand.

Principal Sterling?

It was the same man who was always on brochures and pamphlets, but I had never seen him before.

“I thought he was too old to walk, and hasn’t left his chambers in ages,” I murmured. “What is he doing here?”

“What do you think?” Kylan replied, releasing my hand as Principal Sterling finally reached us.

This time I could take a clear look at him. His head was mostly bald, except for a few gray strands. Deep wrinkles covered his bronzed skin, and even though his eyes looked tired—he still carried an air of authority.

He looked back and forth between me and Kylan, his smile wide and his eyes sparkling with excitement.

“Young prince,” he then said, grabbing both of Kylan’s hands tightly.

Kylan stiffened slightly but didn’t pull away, just forced a smile in return.

Then Principal Sterling turned to me, and reached for both of my hands. “And you are Violet Hastings.”

I lifted a brow as he squeezed my hands, then steadied him, worried he might fall over.

“Sir, please…” The woman behind him pleaded, but he ignored her.

“I left my chambers the moment I heard the news,” he spoke. “Starlight, blessed with the first royal academy match in years!”

My stomach turned as the whispers behind the glasses grew louder. “The word has already spread among other schools,” Sterling continued, beaming. “Including the king’s arrival, and Alpha Fe—.”

I barely had time to process his words as the man almost fell over, dropping his cane to the floor.

He tried to bend down, reaching for it.

“Wait,” I gasped, stopping him at the same time as both Kylan and the assistant crouched down to grab the cane.

Kylan was first. “Here you go,” he chuckled, handing it to Sterling before patting his back. The man nodded gratefully and suddenly shuffled off, mumbling something under his breath as the assistant trailed behind him.

I stood there, frozen, confused about what exactly had happened in the past minute. “He…the…” I pointed my finger at the man who had now entered the room where Fergus and the King were having a conversation. “What?”

Kylan chuckled softly beside me. “Don’t let that cane fool you. He’s probably the strongest shifter in this school.”

I raised a brow, not believing a word he just said. Strongest? That frail old man?

“I’m not liking this attention,” I whispered, aggressively. Supposedly, it was the first royal match in years, everyone was staring at us, the damn principal even made an appearance—and it was all for a bond that wouldn’t even last.

“Get used to it,” Kylan spoke.

“Easy to say for you,” I let out a huff. “You got three more to go, but I got four.”

A smirk appeared on Kylan’s lips. “You’ll survive.”

Minutes passed as Kylan and I leaned against the wall, enjoying the silence again. Well, whatever was left of it, with loud whispers and murmurs still floating around us.

After some time, the door opened and we both stepped away from the wall. I straightened immediately, then reached for Kylan’s hand again, seeking protection.

The king’s entourage were the first to step out of the room, followed by the king himself who left without sparing either of us a glance.

“Where is he going?” I wondered, leaning closer against Kylan.

“Back home,” he said simply.

Was he not going to talk about what was discussed?

What he expected?

Judging by Kylan’s reaction, this must be something normal for him. The king was so cold and distant—not even Fergus was like that.

Moments later, Fergus stepped out with Principal Sterling, who was struggling to keep up despite his cane, and his assistant following closely behind.

“I can assure you,” Sterling said. “We will look after her, make sure her years here are comfortable—and she will be in good hands.”

Who?

Me?

Fergus mumbled something I couldn’t quite understand before Sterling walked off with his cane again, limping slowly. When he was about halfway, Fergus turned to look at us. First his sharp eyes met mine, then shifted to Kylan as he slowly made his way over.

We were met with silence as he stood in front of us, looking back and forth between us with a tight expression.

“The talk went better than expected,” he finally sighed, running a hand through his hair. “You should prepare to visit Lyperia within the coming weeks,” he said. “The king has formally invited the Bloodrose pack.”

My stomach twisted at his words. A formal visit to Lyperia? I wasn’t even sure what that meant, if I was even ready for that—or what the king had planned.

Fergus looked Kylan, who had been quiet, up and down. The two of them locked gazes, neither of them showing any intention of backing down.

Fergus took pride in being the Alpha, but Kylan took just as much pride in being the Lycan Prince.

It was two individuals with difficult personalities having a stare down, and I wondered who would speak up first.

“Lycan or not, Crown Prince or not,” Fergus eventually said, his tone hard, “this is my daughter, and I hope you know what you’re doing—and if you ever hurt her, you’ll deal with me. Do you understand, boy?”

“Dad!” I snapped, heat rising to my cheeks.

Kylan held out his hand to stop me from talking. His expression remained calm as he nodded. “I understand, Sir.”

Even Fergus, who had seemed prepared to argue, was left speechless. Flustered, he nodded his head, then turned and walked away without another word.

Shocked, I looked at Kylan. He had the chance to talk back, and I knew he could because his mouth was unfiltered—yet he didn’t. It almost looked like he respected him.

Kylan chuckled softly beside me.

My brows furrowed. “What’s so funny?”

He smirked, shaking his head slightly. “Nothing,” he said. “It’s just interesting to see how much he cares.”

I stared at him for a moment, his words lingering in my mind. He wasn’t wrong—Fergus did care, but it wasn’t the kind of care I wanted. To me, caring meant honesty.

“Let’s go,” Kylan said, pulling my hand.

As we walked through the hall, I grabbed my phone to check for a message, but there was still nothing from him…Dylan.

No texts, no calls—and since he had ran to Fergus the first chance he got, I supposed he had a whole lot to say.

I felt Kylan’s gaze piercing through me, and immediately felt like I owed him an explanation. “It’s about Dylan,” I admitted, earning a nod.

Where was he, and what was he up to?

Not many words were exchanged as we made our way back to my dorm. Luckily, the halls weren’t that busy—giving me the chance to breathe for a moment.

The moment was short lived as I noticed a figure standing at my door with crossed arms.

Kylan frowned slightly as we got closer. “Is that—”

“Yes,” I whispered, cutting him off.

What did she want from me, and why now?

Esther’s eyes narrowed slightly as we made our way in front of her, then she looked from me to Kylan, her expression unreadable.

“Prince Kylan, and Violet?” she said. “Come with me.”