

## Chapter 264

Kylan

Violet gave me a look, and in that one glance I knew exactly what she was doing. She was too busy trying not to betray anyone. I could see it so clearly, and it was what I had feared the most.

With every choice she made, she asked herself if she had betrayed someone. Maybe even me.

Just the thought hurt, because I never wanted her to wonder that. Yes, I had shown my disappointment when she lied to me, but I never wanted her to bear that burden.

"Jack," the king clicked his tongue and snapped his fingers in the air. "Take your wife and your daughter with you on your way down," he ordered. "For...the Royal Mate."

Jack chuckled under his breath. "Yes, Your Majesty," he said. He patted Nate's back, grinning from ear to ear as if the king had just given him a day off. "Gladly!"

"What?" a sharp voice cut through. Chrystal stepped out from where she had been hiding. Her eyes were wide with shock, her lips parted in disbelief. She looked like she could not believe what she had just heard. Truth was, neither could I.

The king was the kind of man who, if you told him what to do, would do the opposite just to prove his authority. For him to agree with Violet so quickly, without a single fight, felt wrong. But for now, it was something I could live with.

It meant one thing. Chrystal would not be climbing those mountains. Not

today.

But then there was still him...

I looked over at Kayden. He sat in his chair with a smirk plastered across his face. Too calm, and too pleased.

My jaw tightened. This was not the end. I did not know what game he was playing or what this crap about 'Kian' or being 'reborn' was supposed to mean, but one thing was certain. Today would not be that day, and I would never let him near Violet.

I shot Violet a small smile, just enough to tell her not to worry too much, and that everything was okay. Truthfully, I didn't agree with her going back to those mountains, but I could live with it. It was not worth a disagreement, not when she needed me the most.

My gaze slid back to Chrystal. She only had eyes for Violet, and if looks could kill, she would've been dead by now. Her stare burned into her like she was already plotting her next move.

And if that was the case, she would have to do it from court because she wouldn't be stepping foot into the witches' territory.

Beside me, Dylan chuckled under his breath. "She did her a favor," he muttered softly. "I was planning on killing her today anyway."

My head snapped to him, stunned. I suspected it wasn't meant for me to hear, yet I had. By now I knew Dylan well enough to know he meant every word.

I chose to ignore it.

The first group started moving again, walking past us as the rest of us let

them through. Somehow, Jumpie found her way onto my shoulder again, and I rubbed her neck, noticing her cheeks were stuffed with food that was probably meant to be for the witches.

She let out a high-pitched burp and then settled, looking pleased with herself. She would be taking a nap, for sure.

As Nate passed by, he gave me a quick tap on the shoulder. "Have fun staying in those mountains all night," he grinned. "I'm sure you'll have a great time. The witches are cool people actually!"

My brows furrowed. His words only reminded me of what Violet had agreed to. It wasn't just this group she would be staying with, but all the groups. And Nate knew all too well that I would stay with her for the rest of the day.

He glanced back once more. "Don't worry. I might keep you company later!"

I was too aggravated to answer, and just watched him go with the first group. The queen followed not long after, with Kaelis glued to her side. Violet's ladies, Lian and Sora, walked past too, though, as expected, Trinity stayed behind.

She ran straight to Dylan and cupped his cheeks before kissing him. A sight I had already seen a few times too many.

"You should go down and rest," he told her, pulling away. Yet, he didn't give her the time to answer as he already had his arms under her, lifting her bridal-style.

Her laughter rang out, and the two of them began walking with the third group. A familiar giggle in front of me made me turn my head, and my

eyes went back to Violet.

She was beaming at the sight of them, but all I could look at was her. All the noise around me faded, as did my worries as I looked into the most beautiful blue eyes I had ever known.

"Do you want me to carry you too?" I asked. It was a serious question.

She rolled her eyes at me, but her smile remained. "I can walk," she said. "But thank you."

"Good."

I looked her up and down, debating whether to just sling her over my shoulder anyway. Jumpie wouldn't be thrilled, but Violet had always been my first. Jumpie could be the close second.

We didn't look away from each other, not even for a breath. That was until someone cleared his throat, and I realized Fergus was still beside us.

Violet turned to him at once. "Thank you for coming, Dad," she spoke immediately. "And thank you for what you just did. It meant a lot to me."

I was sure it did. Fergus promised he would do better, and now he was doing just that. It might have come too late, but at least he was finally standing up for Violet.

Fergus smiled, warm and proud. "I should be the one to thank you for representing the Bloodrose so well, for helping make all of this possible," he said, ruffling her hair as if she were still his little girl. "I will let you kids be for now."

Then he walked away, satisfied. I was sure he had much more to say, but he must have known now wasn't the right time, and he was right. Their

conversation would be one of old wounds, years in the making, and it needed to be handled quietly and privately. It was what Violet deserved.

Violet planted her hands on her waist, staring at Fergus's back. "Kids?" she spoke, offended. "We are adults."

"We might be," I chuckled, "but not to them."

And by them, I also meant...him.

My eyes shifted ahead and I caught the king watching us over his shoulder. Kayden was watching too, each of them wearing a smirk I did not trust. It felt like they both had their own plans, and none of them were any good.

A tight knot formed in my chest, and out of instinct, I reached for Violet's hand and squeezed it tightly. I always did because at times I feared someone might try to take her from me if I didn't, and these days, I could never be too sure.

Only then did I remember that I had something urgent to share with her. Something that could not wait. I should have been asking her about her time in the mountains, but unfortunately it seemed like we didn't have much time for small talk nowadays.

Besides, I would see it for myself soon enough. This was way more important for now.

"Violet," I pulled her a little closer. Her fingers pressed harder into mine, and as she looked at me, her lips parted like she had been holding something back herself.

And then we spoke at the same time.

"Varius warned me about the same thing Adelaide—"

"Adelaide spoke to me—"

We both stopped and froze, staring at each other. Whatever this was, it had only just begun...

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