



Chapter 323

Violet

Kylan couldn't laugh this time, but neither could I. I had almost forgotten that Dylan also used to be a real pain in the ass.

Dad cleared his throat, trying to change the subject, but Kylan decided to play along. "Really?" he said. "What makes you say that?"

Little Dylan shrugged. "I just told you. It's that look in your eyes."

Before Kylan could respond, the younger girl had already slammed her tiny hands on the table, standing on her toes to speak up. "No, he doesn't look Lyperian!" she defended. "Uncle Ewan always says the Lyperians are ugly, remember?"

"Yes, from the inside—stupid."

"You are stupid, Dork Face!"

Dylan and I glanced at each other, both biting back a laugh.

Dork Face?

Could I really not have come up with something better?

"Kids!" Dad scolded, ruffling our hair with a sigh. "Violet, sit down." He then looked at Kylan. "Sorry about that."

"It's fine," Kylan replied calmly, though I could tell he was holding himself back. If those two had known each other as children, they probably never would've gotten along.

"Don't take it to heart, Sir," Little Dylan spoke. "I'm just curious. I'll be



Alpha of the Bloodrose one day, so it's important for me to know what goes on around here."

Ah, right...that was also a thing.

He used to brag about that at least once a day.

Trinity couldn't help herself. "Aren't you too adorable?" she said, grinning ear to ear.

"I'm not adorable. I'm the future Alpha, miss."

Younger Dylan shot her a warm and unexpected smile, while her eyes darted between the two as if comparing them. Dylan, of course, kept staring straight ahead, like he couldn't believe that was really him. He hadn't changed much, though, because he could still be just as suffocating.

"What are you staring at?" both Dylans asked at the same time. Dylan let out a sigh, and I wanted to sigh right along with him. He was the one who told us not to interact too much, yet if anyone was close to exposing us, it was him. I mean...both versions.

"How old are you?" Dylan asked suddenly. His voice had become a bit kinder, and it was his first genuine interaction with himself.

"Almost eleven," the younger one said proudly.

"Then you need to act like it," Dylan said. "Go outside and play, stop looking for meaning behind every little thing."

Dad chuckled. "That's what we keep telling him."

"Yes!" The younger me agreed. "Dylan's like a grandpa. He's exactly like



Uncle Fergus!”

“No, I’m not,” Little Dylan groaned under his breath. In the meantime, Dad began pouring tea into the cups, and the scent I loved so much hit me instantly.

It was hibiscus, sweet, floral, and just perfect. My heart softened at yet another memory. It used to be one of Mom’s favorites. Every night, she and Dad would sit by the fire and share a cup. Sometimes I would peek from the stairs and close my eyes with my little hands whenever they would share a kiss. But I would also smile because I knew my mommy and daddy loved each other.

As I looked up, I caught Dad glancing at me. His gaze lingered for a while before he looked away, pretending to focus on the teapot.

I couldn’t help but wonder...

What if everything Little Dylan had just said about Kylan looking ‘Lyperian’ had been Dad’s thoughts too?

What if he had just been playing along all this time?

Our eyes met once more, and this time, both of us turned away within a second, pretending it hadn’t happened.

“Here you all go,” Dad said, setting the teapot down and handing out the cups one by one. I wasted no time, bringing the cup to my lips. As soon as the warmth hit me, I felt something tighten in my chest.

Should it really be this difficult to drink a cup of tea?

Dad’s tea?



I blew softly and took a small sip. The taste was just as perfect as I remembered it. A bit sweet, but not enough to take away the taste of the hibiscus. I took a slow breath, trying to steady myself because if something could make me cry, it had to be this.

"Is it not to your liking, uh...miss?" Dad asked. All this time, he had been polite but distant. One thing that I had noticed was that just like little Violet, he also hadn't asked for our names, and it didn't seem like he cared much either.

I shook my head quickly. "No, it's perfect...Sir," I said, smiling.

He gave me a pleased nod. "I'm glad to hear that," he said, watching as I took another sip.

"Me too!" Little Violet jumped in. "This is one of my mommy's favorites!" she spoke with a wide grin.

Across the table, Trinity's face softened. She reached for my hand, giving it a small squeeze, and I squeezed back gratefully. Dad looked at both of us but didn't say a word.

Out of the corner of my eyes, I saw Kylan raise his cup. He took a small sip out of courtesy, but I could tell it wasn't exactly his taste. He was just being polite.

Dylan, on the other hand, who loved tea, had not touched his at all. He just sat there, staring at himself. Both Dylans...

When the first drops of rain fell, they both tore their gazes away.

"There's the rain," Dad murmured, glancing toward the window.

Little Violet gasped. "I hope Mommy's okay!"



"Your mom will be fine," Dad said, his voice warm and reassuring. "A bit of rain doesn't scare her."

"Right," little me nodded confidently. "Mommy is out to get me some special medicine because I haven't been feeling too well," the little girl explained, swinging her legs under the table.

My heart dropped at the mention of special medicine. Just as I thought, Mom had really been out that day, getting the glasses.

I found the courage to look at Dad, and his eyes found mine before a single word had left my mouth. "I hope your daughter gets better soon," I told him, my voice trembling just a little.

Dad chuckled. "I'm sure she will," he said gently. "I have good hope."

I waited for him to look away, but he didn't. For a moment, it felt like time froze as the two of us just kept staring at each other. The taste of the delicious tea, our comfortable home, our table, his beautiful eyes, because Trinity was right, he did have the most beautiful eyes... everything was so painfully alive.

"Daddy!" Little Violet jumped to her feet, breaking the eye contact that we couldn't. "Can I show my new friends my room?"

Dad blinked. "I don't know, Violet—"

"Thank you, Daddy!" she interrupted, already running for the stairs. Dad released a sigh and looked at me with a helpless smile. I gave him one in return because I didn't really know what to do with myself back then either.

"You don't have to worry. We really don't mean any harm," I said, scooting back. I nudged Kylan gently, and we both rose from our chairs. "



We'll just keep her company for a bit."

Dad smiled, squinting his eyes. "I believe you. She already said you are good people."

I nudged Kylan once more, and then we made our way toward Little Violet, following her steps as she climbed the narrow stairs, already out of breath.

"You're exactly as I thought you'd be," Kylan whispered as he climbed the stairs in front of me. "And you have always been in top form, I see."

I laughed softly, feeling warmth bubble in my chest. I really thought I'd changed a lot, but if Kylan said I was exactly as he thought I'd be, maybe I hadn't.

Together, we had reached the top of the stairs, instantly entering my room. I felt my pulse quicken. Even after all this time, I remembered this space so well.

I could see now that it wasn't that big, but to my younger self, it had felt like an entire world. My room...

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