



Chapter 326

Violet

"I think we've got all the answers we need," Kylan responded.

A light chuckle escaped Dad's lips. He nodded once and took a step back to let us pass. It was really hard to just keep my mouth shut, but at the same time, I didn't know if staying over for lunch to eat chicken crispy sandwiches was a good idea.

Dad didn't force us to stay, didn't beg...he just let us go, and a part of me shattered as Kylan pulled me away, down the creaking steps.

I could hear Dad right behind us. When we reached the bottom of the stairs, the first thing I saw was Little Violet, who had already made her way down, hugging Trinity tightly.

Trin was already standing by the door beside Dylan, who had his hands shoved in his pockets as he observed his younger self. Little Dylan leaned against the wall, his arms crossed and eyes narrowed as if he was still trying to figure us out.

It was funny, honestly. Even as a kid, he had that same judgmental and curious look. Most of the men here were like Dylan, and in a way, he just screamed Bloodrose.

What would they have talked about?

Would they have talked at all?

Who knows. I know for a fact that Trinity must've asked him at least one question.



Dad made his way to Little Violet and gently tugged her dress, pulling her away from Trinity. "Alright, princess," he sighed. "We shouldn't hold up our friends."

Little Violet huffed dramatically. Dad's eyes flicked to mine, and this time he didn't look away. There was just this gentle smile on his lips, telling me that it was okay.

He knew.

He also knew I couldn't stay.

And it was okay...

Or maybe he didn't know at all, and I was just overthinking everything like always.

"Come on, Violet," he said, smiling. "Say your goodbyes properly."

Violet giggled, her eyes on Trinity. "You need to come back and play dollhouse with me!" she said. "All of you!"

My cheeks began to flush. I remembered quite a few things, but I really couldn't remember myself being so spontaneous. Neither could Dylan. This was the same Violet who was too afraid to ask for something as simple as a pencil.

Where did it go wrong?

Trinity bent down, laughing. "I'm sure we'll play dollhouse one day, Violet," she said warmly. A smile appeared on my lips as I watched the image of Trinity playing dollhouse with my younger self. It was both adorable and ridiculous.



Little Violet turned to Dylan and wrapped her small arms around his legs. "You can smile now!" she looked up.

Dylan stiffened instantly. "Sure," he said awkwardly, patting her back with one hand.

Kylan came next. He looked at her with sharp eyes, but when she beamed up at him, they couldn't help but soften. She showed him her teeth and waved her little hand for him to lower himself.

"What is it?" Kylan growled softly, lowering himself. I gave him a slight nudge and cleared my throat. I wasn't sure if he wasn't too fond of Little Violet or was just trying to keep his distance, but at the same time, I wanted him to remember that it was me.

He planted a patient smile on his lips and tried again. "You want to tell me something," he concluded, his tone much kinder. "What is it?"

Little me hummed, placing her little hand against his forehead before closing her eyes in concentration.

What was she doing?

Greg took a half step forward, reaching out his hand, but then he stepped back and stood as if it had never happened. For some reason, this didn't seem to be Little Violet's first time, but I couldn't even remember that I was capable of doing that.

"Come," she tugged gently at a strand of his hair and leaned in to whisper something only he could hear. Kylan's eyes went wide as she spoke, and I hated not being able to hear what she discussed.

What was I saying to him?



Whatever it was, it had made an impact.

When she was finished, Little Violet stepped away. Kylan glanced at me, shooting me a worried look. He just gave me a small, dismissive shake of his head.

Curiosity burned through me, but before I could ask again, it was my turn. Little Violet didn't need to ask because I had already gone to my knees to face her.

My breath caught as I met her gaze, my own eyes staring back at me. If there was one thing I hated, and was only really able to do so since Kylan had stepped into my life, it was looking people in the eye.

Eye contact. It had never been my strong suit...or so I thought, but this girl right in front of me...

Her eyes were full of light and innocence and the kind of happiness I wasn't used to.

"Do you really not want a crispy chicken sandwich?" she asked, her voice soft but hopeful. "My Daddy makes the best."

I know he does...

I laughed, shaking my head. "I can't stay, Violet," I said, feeling an ache in my heart. "But I want you to enjoy yours, okay?"

Her face lit up, and she attacked me with a big hug. "I really like you, and I also like that we have the same hair," she whispered. "I-I think it would be so nice to have pink or purple hair, but Mommy says I'm still too young!"

A chuckle escaped me as I pulled her back to look into her serious eyes.



She just went from one thing to another, and it was something I still did. If I were to look inside her head right now, Little Violet's head, it would probably be a mess.

She seemed so passionate about it, it almost made me consider doing it for her. As I looked over her shoulder, I caught Little Dylan staring at me as well. "Come here," I said, waving him over.

He scoffed like he didn't want to, but dragged his feet anyway. His hands were still buried in his pockets, and he gave both Kylan and the older Dylan a cold glare on his way over.

When he stopped in front of me, he tilted his chin. "Yes?"

"You'll be kind to her, right?" I asked gently, poking Little Violet's shoulder.

The boy scrunched his nose. "Did you tell her the same?"

"Well—"

"No, you didn't," he said defensively. "So don't tell me what to do either."

Kylan chuckled beside me.

Dad just let out a sigh, and unlike the first time, he didn't jump in to correct him. Why would he bother? Because this was Dylan. This was the way Fergus was, and the way Fergus raised him, and he really couldn't help it.

He had a wall built out of pride, and even if he had changed a little, that wall would never fully crumble.



Despite his actions, he grabbed Little Violet's hand and pulled her back. Little Violet looked down at their intertwined hands with a soft smile and leaned her head against his shoulder.

Dad rested his hands on their shoulders, and our eyes met one more time. He said nothing, just took the time to look at all of us. Trinity, Dylan, Kylan, and me.

"It's a pity you can't stay longer," he told us. "But I understand this journey must not be an...ordinary journey," he said. "Still, I want you to know that if there's anything you need, our door is always open. Always."

As the last word left his mouth, I could've sworn I heard a crack in his voice as his eyes were on me.

I just wanted to hold him, hug him, but I couldn't...

'It's okay, Dad. I know you know, so we can drop the act and hug each other.' That was on my mind.

More than anything, I wanted to tell him that I loved him so much and that I was sorry. He had always loved me so much, and now I was wondering if I had ever shown the same love in return. He had never complained, not once—not even when all of my attention was pointed at her. I had always been all about Mom, Mom, Mom...even though I loved them both the same, and I just really hoped he knew that.

Kylan must've felt my unease because it didn't take long for him to slip his fingers between mine.

"Thank you for the invite. We really appreciate it," he said, showing his gratitude. "You're a good man, Sir—"

"Greg—"

Commented [Ma1]:

Commented [Ma2R1]:



"Greg," Kylan repeated. "You're a good man and a good father."



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