



## Chapter 331

Kylan

I knew it.

From the moment we walked into this throne room to listen to the king's bullshit, I knew he would end it with this announcement.

He had been waiting for this moment. I should've known the second I threw that necklace at his feet, it would be a bruise to his ego that he would answer with something dramatic like this.

Other than finally calling out Lady Mona for being a two-faced embarrassment, what had he even said today?

Nothing.

Just noise and rubbish.

Especially that he implied the queen and Beta Jack were involved. That was just Laughable.

And now he was waiting for me to share the 'good' news.

I exhaled through my nose and looked at Nate, then at Violet.

Two people I cared about deeply, and two people I did not want to hurt anymore. Violet knew this would come, but still...what kind of man would I be if I played along with the king's game and humiliated her here in front of every single royal and council member?

I shifted my gaze to Kayden.

Kayden, who had no idea his precious maid was supposed to be the first



mistress. But as long as the king wouldn't mention Camille's name, which I knew he wouldn't, Kayden wouldn't care.

There were two choices, and no time. I could continue with my original plan, which I knew would work. Play along, let Kayden spiral once he finds out, and make him do something about all of this before the ceremony could even unfold.

Or I could be the mate Violet's dads praised me to be and shut all of this down, even though I had made the deal with witnesses present.

Violet touched my arm. One soft touch, but when she shook her head at me with a soft smile on her lips, I knew what she wanted me to do.

She wanted me to go with my original plan.

My chest burned. She told me to stop protecting her, but I would never, no matter what she said. I had to protect her.

"Your Majesty, I—"

"You can do the honors, Your Majesty," Violet cut me off, nodding toward the king. "Please."

My chest squeezed. No matter what she said, she wasn't okay. She couldn't be. But she trusted me so much that she just went along with it because I told her I had a plan, and she had always believed in my plans.

"Very well," the king said, satisfied, before turning back to the crowd. "I am pleased to share," he announced, "that despite being so...infatuated with his Royal Mate, my son and heir Prince Kylan has personally agreed to take on a first mistress."

Gasps and whispers shot through the room. The council members



beamed like me, taking on a mistress would somehow cure the kingdom of all its suffering, not knowing so much more was about to come.

I kept calm, but deep down I wanted to break something. Perhaps the king's nose. I glanced at the Queen.

She was finally starting to warm up to me, and I did not want to mess that up again. I knew she was against all mistresses, and she had been so pleased when I told the king I would not take any. So as I looked at her, I had expected to feel her disappointment, but there wasn't any.

She went quiet and only looked at me, like she was trying to understand why I would make the king say such a lie. She knew I would never choose anyone over Violet.

"And of course," the king added, "the ceremony will be held after Kaelis' first howl. We must not steal the spotlight from my sunshine."

Everyone turned to Kaelis, and the royals and council members started clapping. Kaelis and Kiora glared at me from across the room. They did not know me. We were not that close anymore, and I suppose in their eyes, I was such an asshole they believed I could really sink that low and take a mistress.

"Preparations are already in motion," the king said. "It will be a grand celebration, and the beautiful chosen one is from Aevanor."

Aevanor...

I let out a chuckle under my breath. Of course, Camille was from Aevanor. That kingdom was only one step below the Lyperians on the chart of vile kingdoms.

"And Royal Mate!" the king called out suddenly.



I instinctively reached for Violet's hand again, but she pulled away and stepped forward. "Yes, Your Majesty?"

He narrowed his eyes at her as his lips curled into a small smile. "Do you know what the most special part is...of a royal ceremony?"

I felt the anger burn up my spine because I already knew where this was going. In his eyes she wasn't embarrassed enough already, so he felt the need to push her further.

"I do not think she wants to know, Your Majesty," I said coldly. I knew she was trying to be strong, but this was not it. I grabbed Violet's wrist and tried to pull her back, but she shook me off and shot me an irritated glance.

"No, Your Majesty. I do not know."

The throne room broke into pathetic laughter.

The king waved his hand carelessly. "I can't tell you now anyway," he gestured toward the children in the room. "But perhaps," he said smugly, "you should ask...someone."

Violet released a sweet chuckle. "I will, Your Majesty," she replied, then looked back at me. Her eyes locked on mine. "I'm sure Kylan would love to tell me."

I forced a smile. "Yes."

It wasn't like I hadn't been honest with her, but she just never asked. She didn't because she knew there was no point, and that Camille would never be my mistress.

The king clapped his hands once. "That was it for today. Everyone is



dismissed!"

People couldn't wait to get out. Whispers filled the throne room as most fled out through the doors. Half the people present didn't even want to be there, but they had to.

Anyway, the king made his point.

He was the king, and gathering a bunch of people that weren't even fond of him was something only he could do. Good for him.

I quietly observed as he stepped from the dais and brushed past me just enough for me to feel the air of his heavy cloak. He didn't even look at me because he didn't feel the need to.

He had won this "round" in his head.

"I wonder what his reaction will be when he finds out there won't be a royal ceremony."

My eyes shot instantly to Nate. I had no idea what to say, what to do, how to begin—but I knew I had to get words out. That much I owed him.

I looked from Violet, who had stepped back to give us some space, to Nate.

Nate frowned. "Oh, you're wondering why I'm here, of course," he chuckled lightly. "I received your letter, Kylan," he said. "I won't say much, but...I would rather keep you in my life and see if you can follow through than win a grudge."

I let out a relieved breath. He was my best friend, my brother in every way that mattered, and I had wronged him so many times...I didn't even know where to start. I didn't deserve him.

"N—"

Before I could even get a word out, someone shoved me aside. Kaelis came out of nowhere and threw her arms around him.

I narrowed my eyes, observing. What was her deal with him anyway?

"You must be feeling better!" she beamed.

Nate smiled, gently pulling her back. "I am!"

"Was it my soup?" Kaelis asked hopefully.

"Yes!" Nate said with exaggerated excitement. "It motivated me to recover so I could taste something else."

So the soup was disgusting...

Kaelis did not get the hint. She clapped her hands in excitement while Nate widened his eyes at Violet, who covered her mouth to hide a laugh. It seemed like the two of them had their own inside jokes now. Interesting.

Violet sucked in a breath. "Yes, yes, we've all missed each other," she sang. "Now, can someone tell me what happens at a royal ceremony?"

Kaelis' smile dropped, and she locked angry eyes on me. "Come." She took Violet's hand and pulled her away. "Let's go to Madam Renata's. I'll tell you everything about it."

Violet glanced back over her shoulder. She gave me a helpless shrug and then walked out with Kaelis. I wished I had the chance to tell her whatever she would hear would definitely not happen, but I had high hopes that Violet was smart enough to know that already.



"The king is something," Nate exhaled.

"Yes, and unfortunately, he's my..."

Father...

I took a deep breath and locked my eyes on Nate. Standing in front of him now, after pouring my soul into that letter, made me feel uneasy. At first, I wondered if it was too much, if he would read it and think I was pathetic, but now that he stood here in front of me after the shit I had pulled...no, it wasn't too much. It wasn't enough.

I knew I wasn't forgiven, not yet. It would take a lot more than a letter, but he was trying...

"Is there something on my face?" Nate asked, smiling.

I huffed out a laugh. "Yes. You're still ugly."

He cracked a smile. "So are you."

"I thought the king was going to talk about Chrystal," Nate said, more serious now. "But I suppose Dad must've been able to stop it just in time."

I fluttered my eyes.

What was he on about?

"Chrystal?" I repeated. "Why would the king talk about Chrystal?"

Nate swallowed hard. "My mom...I know we have a lot to talk about, Kylan, but we need to talk about something else first," Nate breathed. "Something happened."

