

Chapter 332

Kylan

Nate and I walked side by side past the gates. It suddenly felt as if everything was back to normal again, but I knew it wasn't.

This was the first time we had actually walked together since everything went to hell, and if Nate didn't have something serious to tell me, I wasn't even sure he'd be here. But he was...

He showed up, and he looked good.

Too good...

Because 'good' was a dangerous word, and I doubted he was anywhere near healed. I wasn't completely oblivious because I knew what pain felt like. It took me years to get over what had happened to Kayden, and I still wasn't exactly there yet. Losing a sister? His twin? There's no way he could just survive that and bounce back in a week.

Yet the look on his face was too calm...

"Mom is losing all hope," Nate said quietly. "She's been crying every night, says she knows something bad happened to her, and she even requested the king to organize a search party."

I snapped my head to him, frowning. It was to be expected that if anyone would start taking serious action first, it would be True, who had always cared deeply for her daughter.

So that's what he meant earlier...

He thought the king would've addressed Chrystal's disappearance.

Nate kept walking like he hadn't just said something that could cost several people their heads. "I'm one hundred percent sure Dad knows," he continued. His jaw was relaxed. "I'm certain he must've done something to shut it down."

Once again, not a surprise.

Beta Jack had always been the sharpest.

He let out a breath. "He hasn't directly asked me yet," Nate said. "But he knows...she's gone, and he knows I'm involved," he stated. "Otherwise he would've never done that."

I took in his words.

Even Beta Jack, who was no stupid man at all, must've had every dark thought possible about Chrystal...and still, she was his daughter, and he loved her. That's why I knew that Nate was right, and that whatever he did, whatever he prevented True from planning, was because he was suspicious of Nate's involvement.

Jack could've still loved his daughter, and still known she was dangerous.

"What did he say?"

Nate didn't answer right away. He looked straight ahead again and exhaled slowly. It was clear he was picking his words carefully. "He told Mom not to make any rash decisions and wait it out," he said. "And then he told me he wants to talk to me tomorrow."

I clenched my jaw.

Someone like Jack would say that. There was no doubt about what would happen tomorrow. He would tell Nate to tell him the truth, and that he

would protect him, and that man really would. He was probably preparing himself for the truth at this very moment.

There was so much going on with Little Violet, Gloria, Kayden, Baelor... whose original plan had apparently been to drag me into Kian's vessel crap, but that was no excuse for not being there for Nate.

I would not let him go through this alone again. What would be the point of the letter if I would just let him fall again?

"I'll do it," I stated. "I'll talk to Jack."

Nate scoffed as a laugh slipped past his lips. "I think you have other things to worry about, Kylan," he reassured. "This is something I'll just have to do on my own."

I stopped walking, and so did he.

We both turned our heads at the same time, just looking at each other in the middle of the path. Sure, his eyes weren't Lunaris red, but I could still feel the fear in them. He was scared.

I knew he wanted me to be there, but I guess with the way I had been treating him all my life, he still must've felt like he couldn't tell me what was on his mind. That he needed me there, and needed my support.

"I got this, really..."

He nodded slowly, though it was more to convince himself.

"It'll be hard," he whispered. "But he'll understand, and he'll also understand why we did it. But for him to understand...I'd have to tell him about Violet."

My stomach dropped.

He was right, but it wasn't our decision to make. Violet, being a witch, wasn't just some casual news to drop, but something big. A noble Lyperian being killed to protect...a witch.

If this were to come out, Lyperia would lose its shit. Especially after we had just gone to the mountains to help the witches per Violet's request, and with the news about the stone.

"I'll ask Violet first," I decided. "Because this is about her, and she deserves to know—"

"Yes, sure," he cut me off, shifting his weight. "I wasn't just going to do anything without her permission. You should know that."

I was supposed to know that.

Embarrassed, I cleared my throat. "And I will go with you tomorrow. You should know that."

It was not up for debate, but Nate still tried. He released a frustrated sigh. "Ky—"

"No," I shook my head, determined. "I've let you fix enough of my problems over the years, and the things I didn't let you fix...I kept from you," I admitted. "I won't do that anymore. I dragged you into this mess you didn't ask for, so I will be there with you tomorrow, and that's final."

Nate blinked, his expression surprised. Then a small smirk appeared. "If that's what you want," he muttered. But I knew that was what we both wanted.

We started walking again, and this time in comfortable silence. It was

weirdly peaceful. The kind where the world pretends nothing is wrong.

The grass was green, the sky was blue, the breeze was soft, just like it had always been in Lyperia, and what we were known for. If someone from outside or even our own people were to walk through right now, they would never believe that this proud kingdom was rotting from the inside out.

And that it was all because of the royal family...

I looked at Nate, wondering if he'd feel the same, but all I noticed was the softest smile. He was still smiling like nothing was going on. I wanted to be there for him, I had to be there for him—but I also wanted to do it in my own way.

Despite all that happened, Nate and I weren't the type to cry in each other's arms, and that's what made this so complicated. The letter was a start, but I didn't know how to fully bridge that gap between us just yet.

With Violet, it had come a bit easier, and part of it might have to do with me pouring my heart out that night she came into my room. Doing that in front of someone I wasn't even that close to yet had actually felt...good.

But this was Nate...

Nate, whom I cared about like a brother, and somehow that made it harder.

"Do you want to talk?" I asked, trying to keep my voice steady.

"About?"

I suddenly stuttered. "Y-You look great today!"

You look good today?

Really, Kylan?

I rarely got nervous, but how could I even begin a conversation about Lunaris? About withdrawal? About the ways I could step up and be a better friend so something like that would never happen again.

Nate exhaled. "I think talking about...that would be great...but let's save that for some other time."

Then he cracked a laugh out of nowhere. Offended, I turned my head.

"What?" I snarled, thinking it might be about the way I approached it.

Nate shook his head, still laughing. "I was just thinking about the Royal Ceremony thing," he confessed. "What was that all about?"

I couldn't help but laugh with him. "There won't be a ceremony."

"I know," Nate grinned. "I know you must've gotten yourself into some kind of mess with the king, and that you wouldn't do that to Violet...but ..." he pulled a face. "Her reaction was a little too good?"

I rubbed the back of my neck, eyes widening.

"You didn't tell her what happens at a royal ceremony, did you?"

Nate shoved my shoulder and laughed. "I don't know what the hell is going on, but I really hope for your sake that you do have a plan."

My thoughts went to every ceremony I'd witnessed after I turned eighteen. The kind I couldn't forget, even if I wanted to. The closed doors, the moans, the furniture banging against the walls as they fucked

Commented [Ma1]:

until the floor itself complained

That wouldn't be me, though...

Yes, with Violet, eventually, but not with anyone else.

I wouldn't let that happen, but neither would Kayden. I truly believed that once Kayden learned who the mistress was supposed to be, he wouldn't stand for it. The way he looked at Camille when I had pushed her over Chrystal's grave was not the look of someone who didn't care.

I wasn't saying he loved the girl, but there was no doubt he'd already claimed her as his because he felt like he didn't have anyone else.

"I hope so, too, Nate..." I said quietly. "I hope I know what the hell I'm doing."



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