

### Chapter 333

Violet

The table was covered with all kinds of dishes for Kaelis' first howl. So many plates, so many colors and spices and sweets, all set out for everyone to taste, and it should have excited me.

But my mind wasn't here...

Not on the food, not on the laughter of the four girls around me, and not even on Madam Renata, who had just walked out with some of the maids.

Not even on Little Violet or the dream we were in last night...

All I could think about was what Kaelis had told me about the royal ceremony, and every time my thoughts went back there...All I could see was Kylan.

Just the image of him on top of her, or no, maybe she on top of him. She was bold enough to want him as mistress, so I bet that's what she wanted. Take him away from me.

I swallowed hard and closed my eyes for a moment. Yes, I was jealous. And no, I was not going to lie to myself about it.

Now all I could do was trust Kylan and pray to the Moon Goddess that he would take control of the situation the way he promised. Or else...

That was a good question...

Or else...what?

Lian, who sat beside me, nudged my shoulder. "Are you alright?"

Her eyes were even softer than they had already been these past days, ever since we returned from the mountains. She never asked for details or an explanation. She just kept checking if I was okay. Sora did the same, Trinity too.

We never really talked about it deeply, about what had happened that day or the fact that I was half witch, but they just accepted it, and I could tell it was sincere.

I would say Lian and Trinity were the strongest ones in the mind out of all of us, whereas Sora, with the most innocent soul, was still the one who carried guilt in her eyes to this very day.

"I'm just tired," I smiled back.

I was tired of not being able to rant about how disturbing this royal ceremony was. But since Kaelis, who by the way was so sure Kylan would actually go through with it, was not talking about it anymore, I assumed it was a family thing for now and not meant to be spoken about outside the family until the king revealed it.

"Lili!" Sora called, moving her fork to Lian's mouth to feed her a piece of cake. Lian, who had been so focused just a second ago, opened her mouth instantly and laughed.

Though nothing was funny, I laughed too.

All it took was one giggle for Sora to flutter her lashes and turn toward me with the fork. "And Vivi!"

I quickly put on a poker face and shook my head to decline. Kaelis must've had eyes on the back of her freaking skull because she turned her head from the near end of the table to see what was going on.

"Is my cake not good?" she asked, clearly stressed. "I knew it—"

"No!" I said, taking a forceful bite. It was way too sweet for my liking, and my mouth was full as I spoke. "It's not that. The cake is good."

Kaelis opened her mouth dramatically, then nodded, making the others laugh before sitting back down.

It was adorable how excited she was. Before coming to Lyperia, I did not know anything about a First Howl, but I was happy for her, and I believed she deserved this moment.

Yes, even after learning it would be during the same moon Baelor might strike, I was still happy for her, and I would work my hardest to make sure nothing ruined her day.

She deserved this. Her moment. Her howl.

She kept gushing about this special thing that was going to happen at her howl, something none of us could miss, and I was not going to let it be Baelor.

Neither would Kylan...

"Is it good?" Trinity asked, flashing me a thumbs-up from across the table.

I gave her a nod, and she lifted her hand to make half of a heart. I completed the other half with mine.

A small chuckle escaped me, because if she really knew what went on in a royal ceremony, she would not be making hearts right now. She and Dylan would both be standing over Kylan with a chainsaw, warning him not to let it happen.

Sora turned to Kaelis. "It's such a pity your little sister couldn't make it," she said. "Kiora is the cutest."

Kaelis shrugged. "I don't blame her for wanting to spend the day with Dylan." She nudged Trinity. "And I think it's very nice that Trinity suggested for Kiora to spend the day with the Bloodrose."

I smiled to myself. It was actually very kind of Trinity to suggest it, and for the Bloodrose to bring Kylan's sister with them. Even the queen agreed, since she knew Dad would be there too.

What still shocked me was how Dylan could fool a few people into thinking he was charming. All he had to do was stay quiet and never smile, so basically what he was usually best at. Kylan was kind of the same, but maybe I just thought it was laughable because Dylan was my brother.

It used to happen at the Bloodrose all the time.

"I'm so sad you're all leaving for Starlight again." Kaelis sighed dramatically. Her eyes were big, and her lips pursed into a pout. "Sometimes I wish I could just...join you."

Although it was just a wish, her whole face lit up like she actually saw herself there.

"You can still take the entrance test," Lian suggested with a shrug.

Kaelis laughed. "And get ninety-five percent just to make a chance? On top of convincing my overprotective mom?"

She shook her head. "My ambitions run high...but even I know where to stop dreaming."

Sora and Trinity both let out small chuckles, while Lian just lowered her head in silence. I remembered Jack saying Lian was actually something special, and that she had real potential to become a great warrior like her brothers. Instead, she was here with me, which must have sucked. She really did seem to have the Starlight mentality, and I am sure she would have fit in perfectly.

"If you really want to do it," I began suddenly. All eyes turned to me. "You need to stand up and do it. Anything is possible if you believe in yourself, and that belief...is the first step," I told them. "So if any of you want to join Starlight, you will have to trust that your dream is bigger than your excuses, and fight for that dream until you achieve it."

All three of them blinked at me like they were trying to figure out when exactly I became the type of girl who gives speeches. So was I.

Trinity narrowed her eyes before a wide smile reached her lips. "You go, Violet," she called out. "Some motivational speaking!"

I didn't know what to do with their reactions, and my cheeks were already starting to glow, so I just dropped my forehead to the table with a dull thud.

What was I even saying?

They all burst into laughter.

"Don't be shy, Violet," Kaelis said, still smiling. "That was good—"

Her words were cut short when the door suddenly swung open, and just like that, every sound in the room died. I lifted my head to see why everyone had suddenly stopped breathing.

Kaelis squealed, jumping out of her chair.

In the doorway stood Kylan, and beside him...Nate.

Kylan's eyes found mine instantly, and Nate's gaze swept across the table, calm. It felt good to see the two of them together, but it didn't take long to finally realize why, other than Kaelis, the room had fallen dead silent.

It wasn't awkward just because. This was the first time the girls were seeing Nate after everything that had happened at the mountains. After Chrystal...

And nobody knew how to react to him, because nobody knew what version of Nate was standing in that doorway.

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