

Chapter 336

Kylan

Nate and I waited inside the Greenhouse of the Wyrmsbane estate. As promised, I showed up for him, and we were waiting for Beta Jack to arrive.

I could only imagine the look on that man's face once he saw me, but if I could speak for Nate so he wouldn't have to, I would do that.

My lips curled as I stared down at my hand, remembering Violet's touch. Right before I left, she took it and told me to come back soon, because she wouldn't close an eye before I returned. It was cute.

Violet and I had a good night, filled with passion and sweet words, but there was no denying I was still a bit tense about yesterday. The way her friend ran out had bothered me beyond words, and if it hadn't been for Pup, I really would've gone after her.

I exhaled, shaking my head in disbelief. Violet was too kind for her own good, and I loved that about her. It was why I fell for her beyond our bond, but at the same time, I hated it.

It didn't make sense even to me...But I just wanted her safe. I knew for a fact that if someone would squeeze her shaky friend the right way, she would talk to save her own ass. I knew her kind, and I didn't trust her.

A chuckle left me because, believe it or not, I was so proud my Violet had finally found her voice. It was still hard to believe that the same girl whose lips used to tremble had basically looked me in the eye yesterday and told me to fuck off.

That was good. It was only the reason behind it that I wasn't fond of.

Nate snorted across from me. "What's up with all these faces you're making?"

Curious, I raised a brow at him.

He lifted his chin. "Don't tell me you're still thinking about how Violet told you off because you were bullying that girl."

"I wasn't bullying her," I told him, pushing off the table to stand straight. "I just don't understand why Violet has to be so stubborn all the time."

Nate cackled. "Look who's talking."

I stared at him, not even attempting to defend myself, because he was right. Look who's talking...

"Nate, come on," I muttered. "You and I both know that girl can't be trusted."

Nate threw his head back to look at the ceiling. When his gaze met mine again, he let out a steady breath. "But Violet trusts her," he said simply. "And you should trust Violet."

I narrowed my eyes a bit, thinking about his words. Violet and I had had our issues, but we'd fixed them, come to an understanding, and I did trust her. Fully.

"Hasn't she done almost everything you've asked of her until now, when she shouldn't have had to?" he added.

I stayed quiet.

"And wasn't it you," Nate continued, looking me straight in the eye, "

who also didn't want her to tell me the truth because you thought I couldn't take it?"

My jaw tightened. He wasn't wrong...again.

"I didn't say that because I thought you would betray her," I said, trying to explain myself. But it were no excuses. It was the truth. "I said it because I didn't want to put that burden on you."

Nate's face changed, and he released a hum.

"I would've rather carried that burden," he said gently, "than bury my sister without knowing why things had to be that way. At least then I would've understood."

I held his gaze and didn't look away because that's what he deserved. For me to listen for once.

Nate had been carrying too much all this time, drowning silently for years. I was sure he must've felt some sense of relief after the campfire, hopeful I'd finally show up for him...only for me to encourage others to keep secrets from him as well, and throw the one thing he trusted me with right back in his face.

"Back at Starlight," I began, lowering my head. Then I quickly raised it again, because once more, I had to look him in the eye when I said it. Nate shot me a questioning look.

"I told you not to overdose on fairy dust, and called you a Lunarissniffing son," I said, remembering the exact words.

Nate let out a chuckle, but I didn't. Those words were harmful and might've pushed him into even a deeper hole, while I felt a satisfaction for taking my shot back.

"I shouldn't have said that. Ever."

Nate's eyes widened. I would not apologize because I should've done it back then, but I wanted him to know.

"I can see that you're..." I gestured vaguely at his eyes, his posture, then awkwardly cleared my throat. "I'm proud of you, Nate."

Fuck, I really was—but it sounded so strange. I wanted to run out of that greenhouse, and even Nate tried to keep a straight face, but drastically failed. A surprised laugh slipped out. "Wow. Yes, great!" he said, sarcastically. "I've finally heard the words I waited for all my life."

I laughed with him. There was so much I wanted to do for him, maybe even start with where exactly he got that crap from and if he wanted me to flush it for him, but I wouldn't push it.

One step at a time.

"We're still on for tomorrow night, right?" Nate asked.

The full moon was only days away, and we needed to figure out when to return to the past. One thing was certain. We had to go back as soon as possible, and we could not afford any mistakes. That's why we had all agreed to meet at the library tomorrow and see how far we could get.

I knew Dylan had probably already mapped it out. Written it down to the minute, and had an answer to every question. That was just the kind of brain he had, but you wouldn't hear me complaining.

"We have to be," I answered with a sigh. "We don't really have a choice."

Nate looked at me again, his eyes slightly softer. "And how are you holding up?"

I let the silence stretch a moment. "As long as Violet is still breathing," I murmured, "I'm good."

He smiled as if he had already expected that answer, and nodded once. "That's good to hear," he said. "But you should also look after yourself, Kylan."

I looked away for a moment. I was fully aware, and I would do that...just not yet. Not until Violet was safe. Until then, I would look after her, the kingdom, and the ones I cared about.

I exhaled through my nose. "Any idea when Jack will get here?"

"I'm not sure," Nate shrugged. "Are you in a rush?"

A short laugh left me. "No. I just don't do good with greenhouses," I admitted. "Last time I was in one, Fergus Hastings found me under his daughter's dress."

Nate frowned hard. "Well..."

Before I could say something else, the door creaked open. We both turned at the same time and saw Jack Wyrnsbane standing there in the frame.

He had an unreadable expression as his eyes moved between our faces. Then he took a controlled breath.

"I expected you to be here, Kylan."