

Chapter 380

Violet

My mouth was wide open as the queen spoke. I watched nervously as Kayden's face shifted and waited for him to say the wrong thing.

Instead, he grinned.

It was a slow, smug grin, and it showed he was enjoying every second of this.

"Excuse me?" Lady Mona said sharply, taking a step forward.

"Yes?" The queen frowned.

Lady Mona straightened. "Surely Kayden walking again is far more important than whatever howl the princess has planned for today."

The king's hand wrapped around her arm. "That's enough," he said firmly. The room went quiet at his commanding tone.

Lady Mona stared at him, shocked.

"I will make sure Kayden will have his moment," the king continued, reassuring his favorite mistress. "And no one would want to miss that. Trust me," he said. "But for now, it is very important that he heals. He'll need it."

Kayden let out a small chortle. "You know the king knows best, Mom."

"He does sometimes," the queen hummed softly. "Then about the doctor," she smiled. "I'll have someone send him your way."

She turned to leave, then paused and looked back. "Kylan," she said,

blinking. Her eyes shifted to me next. "Violet?"

She wanted us to follow her, and it wasn't a question. Kylan and I glanced at each other, both deciding there was nothing more to see here for now. We followed Cecilia into the hall, and as the door cracked open, heads leaned forward.

Whispers buzzed around us, and eyes tried their best to take a peek at the so-called miracle.

The queen stopped and cleared her throat, facing everyone gathered in the East Wing. For some reason, the audience of spectators only seemed to have doubled.

"Is it Kaelis' day," she asked calmly, though her voice was loud, "or Kayden's day?"

She didn't have to ask a second time. People shifted, then turned away one by one. The hall emptied except for the usual guards, and the whispers faded.

It had become clear that the thought of someone stealing Kaelis' attention today, after everything she had worked toward to make this day special, was something she couldn't handle.

Especially if that someone was Kayden.

I felt the same way.

She shot us a sharp glance over her shoulder, and the hair instantly rose on my body. "Walk with me," she said. "Please."

Kylan and I did.

Only then did it fully hit me that we were still in our sleeping clothes. Heat rushed to my face as I glanced down, mortified, then almost laughed to myself. At least we were wearing something this morning.

Usually we weren't, so honestly, this could have been worse.

We went down the narrow stairs we had rushed up earlier and moved away from the main hall into a smaller, quieter room. The queen closed the door behind us, and the sharp look was back almost immediately.

"Something isn't right about all of this," she said, not wasting any time. "And I know you both are very well aware of what's going on," she spoke with a nod. "You and your friends who have been sneaking in and out of the library."

She knew about the library?

"I..." Kylan started.

She cut him off, lifting a hand. "I wasn't born yesterday. I know dark shit when I see it."

I blinked, startled by her choice of words. So this was how Kylan must have felt last night.

Another thing.

Was she talking about me or Kayden?

"I..." Kylan tried again.

"I don't care about your brother walking," Cecilia continued. "But no one wakes up with red hair."

Kylan huffed and ran a hand through his hair. "You still don't have to worry about anything," he said. "I've got the situation under control. I promise."

My heart skipped. Kylan didn't make promises lightly. Ever.

If he said that, it meant he was still confident despite the situation. Too confident.

The queen studied him. "Are you sure? Because I only need one finger to deal with that arrogant boy myself if you let me."

"I've got it under control," Kylan repeated.

The hopeful part of me believed him, but there was also this realistic part. I was almost terrified of how calm he sounded and could not tell if he was trying to ease his mother's thoughts or genuinely believed we could stop whatever Kayden had planned.

The queen breathed, pressing a hand against her chest. "If you still don't want my help, fine, but I do have one thing to say," she said. "Kaelis' howl will not be ruined today. Not by him, and not by anyone."

My throat tightened.

"I understand," Kylan hummed.

The queen narrowed her eyes at us. "And what exactly are the two of you wearing?"

Both Kylan and I looked down at the same time.

When we looked up again, the queen was already halfway to the door. This time, she did not give Kylan the chance to stutter and was gone.

before either of us could speak.

The message was clear and received.

She wanted Kaelis' day to be perfect.

Kylan and I slowly turned our heads to look at each other, waiting for whoever was going to speak first. There was obviously too much to discuss, but not enough time.

"What now?" I asked quietly.

His eyes searched my face for a brief moment, as if he couldn't believe I would ask him that. There was no panic in them. Only the steady look he always seemed to have whenever his mind was already five steps ahead of everyone else.

"There is no 'what now,'" he said dryly. "Everything proceeds as discussed. You'll do the sealing tonight."

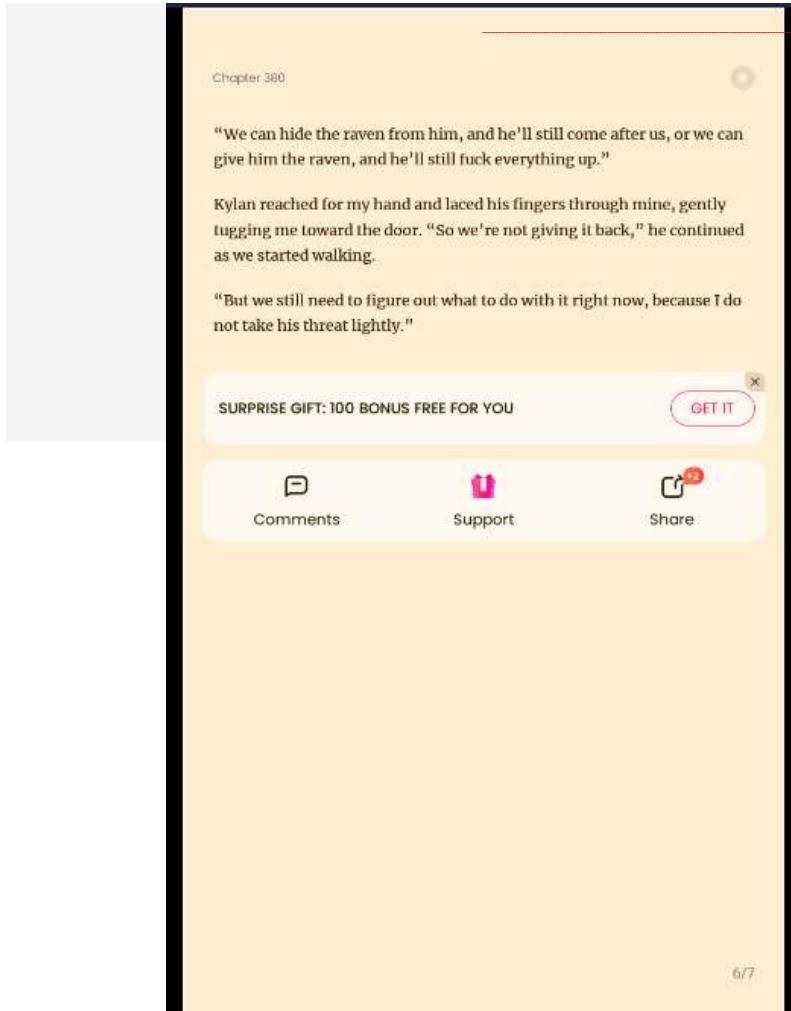
I felt a lump in my throat. I had no idea where the sudden fear had come from, and I didn't know what I expected him to say. I stood behind him, one hundred percent, but maybe I wanted him to tell me that today would not be the day.

But it was, and that was the harsh truth.

There were no more delays, no more maybes...

I lowered my voice. "So...we're not giving back the raven."

Even after everything Kayden had said. Even after the threat hanging over all of us.



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