

Chapter 383

Violet

The elevator started moving, and my stomach twisted as we went up. I didn't even know where we were going, but I did know that I couldn't breathe right.

Kayden's hand was still wrapped around Sora's arm, and it was definitely not gentle. His fingers dug into her skin, and I could feel her shaking beside me. She kept her head down as soft whimpers escaped from her lips. I knew she was trying her hardest not to cry and believe it or not...we both were.

My eyes traveled from his hand to his face, and fuck, he was tall. Even if I wanted to take him on, I doubted I would be able to. The two of us were no match for him, at least not like this.

There was nothing kind left in that gaze of his. Not even the slightest. All I could take in was coldness, like he was already more than halfway gone. And those red streaks in his hair stood out even more up close. They just looked wrong.

Kayden noticed me staring, and his glare snapped to mine, daring me to say something.

I was terrified, but knew not to show it. Showing fear around people like him only made things worse, and that's how we had ended up in this situation. He smelled Sora's fear within seconds and had decided to use it to his advantage.

"Where are we going?" I asked, realizing there was no clear destination. I didn't know what he had done, but he had manipulated the elevator to the point the doors wouldn't even open.

"You tell me," Kayden spat. "Because you are going to take me to Thorne. Right now."

Sora's eyes flicked to mine. That was not a question.

My heart sank, and my brain worked overtime as I thought of what to do. He wasn't just angry, but completely unhinged and capable of anything until he got his raven back.

I heard a scoff inside my head. It was Lumia.

'I was going to take it easy on you and wait it out...but honestly?' she said.
'You silly, silly girl.'

Okay, I deserved that.

"Did you come looking for me?" I asked carefully.

"Yes," Kayden said without shame.

His response sent a chill through me. I glanced down at my phone through my pocket, a thousand thoughts going through my mind.

"Don't," Kayden said instantly. "Don't even think about reaching for your phone. I'll break it in half before you can blink."

I looked back up at him.

"I was kind to you," he said, looking ahead. "I showed you these beautiful violets, I prayed to my lord for you, I...killed for you. I thought we would make a great team," he said, his words growing more aggressive with each breath. "I felt blessed when you healed me and hoped you'd finally come around."

His grip around Sora tightened, and her body flinched.

"But conspiring with Kylan to steal my raven?" Kayden's voice dropped. "That's where I draw the line. Even with you, Violet," he said. "I need my raven, and I need it now."

My heart slammed against my ribs. The only reason Kayden was really losing it was because of Thorne. I wasn't sure exactly what part he played in Kayden's plans yet, but I knew that we needed the raven to seal Baelor and could not do it without him.

Something clicked in my head.

Did he just confirm that I healed him?

My thoughts started racing over each other. I wanted to know more, to ask him what he meant, but I doubted he would answer now. He only wanted that raven. Either way...it had just been confirmed that it was me. I was responsible.

"The five minutes I gave you and Kylan?" Kayden said calmly. "They're long over."

My throat bobbed as I waited for his next move. He tilted his head slightly before he continued. "I don't want to cause a scene," he said. "I just want to resolve this peacefully. I need my raven back before midnight."

"Is it that important to you?"

"Yes," he said immediately, his mouth twitching. "I'll go on my knees and beg if I have to..."

"Don't bother," I told him.

Kayden scoffed. "Oh yeah?" he raised his brow.

"Then do you want me to bother stepping straight to the court and telling everyone about that fun thing we all did when we buried a body together?"

He wasn't serious.

He couldn't be serious.

I planted a smirk on my lips, trying to appear unbothered. "I don't think you'd want to risk that."

Kayden's grip tightened around Sora's arm, and another whimper came out. "I don't think you understand," he said, his voice low, "what I'd be willing to risk without that raven."

Sora gasped. "I...I know where it is!" she blurted out, her voice shaking.

My heart dropped straight into my stomach. What is she doing?

Kayden's eyes lit up. "Finally," he sang. "Looks like we've found ourselves someone who actually does have something to lose."

She didn't want to do this...

She couldn't do this.

I shook my head at Sora, silently begging her to stop. She glanced at me, her gaze apologetic and fearful.

"Now speak up, bird," Kayden urged. "Where is my Thorne?"

I could hear my pulse pounding in my ears and feared how this would end. He would go to the Wyrnsbanes, take back his raven, and everything would be ruined.

Sora swallowed. "I...it's in the palace kitchen."

What?

Kayden's expression shifted from confusion to anger, then to worry. "The...kitchen?" He exhaled. "What is my raven doing there?"

I was wondering the same.

Lying to Kayden wasn't any better than telling him the truth.

Sora rushed her words out. "The crown prince wanted revenge. He was talking about...about having it cooked."

Huh?

A frustrated sound came from the back of Kayden's throat, and he kicked his foot against the elevator wall, the sound hard enough to make us flinch.

"You are going to take me to it. Now."

He slammed his hand against the button for the lower floors, and the elevator started going down. *My mind was spinning because I knew we were in big trouble.*

I was glad she hadn't told the truth, but I had no idea what Sora thought would happen next.

What if Kayden snapped? He already said he didn't care anymore.

The doors slid open, and the kitchen floor was empty. There were no cooks, no servants, no noise.

It made me wonder whether this was a calculated move on Sora's side.

Using my eyes out in the open was a risk, but maybe if I prayed to the Moon Goddess, I'd be able to make him sleep the same way Adelaide had done to Alaric.

Kayden leaned out first, scanning the room. He had been careful up until now. It was safe to assume that he had slipped away from wherever he had been. "I don't hear anything."

Sora nodded. "They won't be using this kitchen today," she said, pointing toward a side door. "But the raven is there. I saw it myself...he's inside a black cage."

Kayden grunted and shot her a sharp look.

I still had no idea where this was going, and that somehow made it worse.

"I'm so sorry, Violet," Sora suddenly sobbed. Tears spilled down her cheeks, and they were the fakest tears I had ever seen in my life.

I almost admired the commitment.

At least they were real enough for Kayden to believe it. Kayden released a chuckle. "You've done well," he said. "So well I might even reward you."

Then his eyes snapped to me. "Walk."

I did, and as I walked I looked down at my hands, trying to think of the perfect moment to use them. I didn't know what he was capable of, what powers he himself might've gotten along the way, and I did not want to find out.

What I did know was that the second I opened that door and there was no raven inside, all hell was going to break loose.

Kayden stayed right behind me, and Sora lagged a few steps behind him.

My eyes squinted as her hands closed around a thick wooden chopping board from the counter.

I could barely react as everything happened so fast. She raised her arms and swung hard, slamming the board straight into Kayden's legs.

"What the fuck?"

His eyes darkened as he stumbled forward, barely catching himself as he turned around, and then she hit him again. This time on the right side of his head.

Kayden stood no chance, and his body dropped to the floor. She had caught him off guard, and me too, to be honest. I had no idea she was capable of this.

She breathed hard, her hands shaking and her green eyes piercing through mine as the board stayed clenched in her grip.

"...I think I just assaulted a prince," she gasped. "I've never hit anyone before...I hope he's not dead."

Well...

That was not where I thought this was going.