

Chapter 386

Violet

We had led Kylan to the kitchen and were already standing in front of the pantry. Sora reached for the handle, but her fingers froze halfway.

That's when I heard it too.

The three of us glanced at each other as muffled sounds came from the other side. That could only mean one thing.

Kayden was awake.

A small, panicked huff came from Sora's throat and her brows pulled together as she pulled her hand away. Kylan lifted his chin toward the door.

"Open it."

"Yes, Your Highness!"

Sora squeaked but did as she was told, swinging the door fully open. The muffled sounds grew louder. I stepped inside first, my eyes immediately finding Kayden, tied to the pole where we had left him.

The cloth was still wrapped around his eyes, though it sat slightly crooked now, and even though he couldn't see us, it didn't take a genius to figure out he was furious.

His chest rose and fell rapidly, and his head turned in every direction as soon as he heard the creak of the door. A half-muffled growl tore from him, and I didn't even want to imagine what he would do if he weren't restrained.

I felt Kylan step up beside me but didn't turn to face him. I just waited to see what his reaction would be.

"He's going to kill me, he's going to kill me," Sora whined, nearly tripping over herself as she closed the door behind us.

Kayden answered her with an angry sound, and I didn't need to see his eyes to know exactly who that rage was aimed at. Obviously the one who had hit him over the head.

I finally turned to face Kylan, who had stayed quiet. I had already braced myself for his usual frown, only to find an unexpected smirk tugging at the corner of his lips.

"Did she do this?" he asked, referring to Sora. "The nervous wreck?"

Sora clapped her hands over her mouth. "I'm so sorry, Your Highness," she gasped. "Please forgive me!"

Kylan let out a sound between a laugh and a cough. Then his eyes turned back to Kayden, who chose that moment to struggle again. He was trying to free himself, but it was simply impossible.

Kylan coughed once more, covering his mouth with his hand, and then he laughed. It wasn't a soft laugh but a full-blown one, the kind that made it clear he was enjoying every second of this.

What?

Sora's hand dropped from her mouth, and she looked just as stunned as I felt. I gave her a small shrug and she gave a shy nod in return. At least he could laugh about this.

And he just kept going, his shoulders even shaking with it. When I

squinted to see what was so funny, it finally hit me how absurd the whole thing looked. Kayden, the one in the running to become Baelor's vessel, tied to a pole in a pantry, ropes wrapped all over his body.

This time I was the one who snorted, but I squeezed my eyes shut and pressed my lips together to hold it in. "Kylan," I said between breaths, "don't laugh. This is a very serious situation."

He drew in one long breath. "Yes," he said, forcing himself to calm down. "I know."

His eyes flicked to Sora once more, shorter this time, and he shook his head. "I mean...if we ignore the part where everyone is going to be looking for him, especially today," he said, gesturing at Kayden, "this is actually not the worst idea."

Sora made a tiny, relieved sound. Kylan's expression changed. It was like he hadn't just died of laughter moments ago, and his eyes glared holes through the cloth covering Kayden's eyes.

"Honestly," he added, almost impressed, "who would've thought she had it in her?"

Kayden answered with another muffled growl as his body strained against the ropes.

"Not Kayden," I muttered. "That's for sure."

His movements grew sharper after that, and he became more restless. He was slowly turning into an animal, and there was no shift needed for that.

"So what do you want to do?" I asked Kylan.

"Nothing," he hummed calmly. "From what I understand, the kitchen

will be empty all day. I'll lock the door, and he'll stay here until we finish the sealing tonight," he said.

I nodded, but didn't feel at ease yet.

"What if they send out a search party for him?"

Kylan shrugged, nonchalantly.

"What after the sealing?"

Kylan exhaled slowly. "After that, we let him go. There's not much else we can do."

Sora stiffened beside me. "Yes, but he threatened to tell about Chrystal!" she hissed. "And I don't want to go to prison island!"

The shift in Kylan was instant.

His eyes went dark, and he stepped toward Kayden immediately. He knelt in front of him and reached out to rip the cloth from his eyes in a single movement.

My heart beat in my chest as Kayden's dark eyes locked onto Kylan's. He had stopped struggling, stopped growling. He was just staring, and only the Goddess knew what was behind that stare.

All of a sudden, Kayden's lips curled around the gag. He laughed through it, and a chill ran down my spine.

Kylan answered with a quiet chuckle of his own. The most terrifying thing was that Kayden wasn't really afraid. He should've been, but he wasn't.

All of it suddenly felt very rehearsed.

Kayden tore his gaze away from Kylan and looked straight at Sora. He gave her a slow wink, and Sora sucked in a sharp breath. She ducked behind me and clutched her fingers in my sleeve like I would somehow be able to save her.

"Don't do that," Kylan warned. He reached out for Kayden's jaw, forcing his face back. His grip was hard enough for the cloth to slip free from Kayden's mouth and drop to the floor, but Kayden didn't make a sound.

He just smiled wider, and now there was no hiding it.

"Don't look at her," Kylan said coldly. "Look at me."

Kayden's gaze locked onto his. "I am looking, brother," he said. "Very well."

It went silent, and the two stared each other down until Kayden spoke again.

"I'm warning you," he said slowly. "It's in everyone's best interest that you untie me and bring me to Thorne. Right now."

Kylan tilted his head. "And why would that be?"

"Because if you don't," Kayden replied, chuckling, "you will betray someone you do not want to cross. Someone who is counting on me, and he will get very angry."

His eyes flicked between all of us, then landed back on Kylan. "I have a plan, and unless you free me, bad things will happen to all of us.