

### Chapter 389

Kylan

Jack and I shared a look.

It had become clear that neither of us knew what was about to happen, but knowing the king as we did, it was easy to assume it would not be pleasant.

What did he even want, and why now?

He clasped his hands behind his back and began pacing. "I've been meaning to discuss something with the two of you," he said. "Something important, and it really can't wait."

As always, Jack obeyed. "Sure, Elyx."

He walked closer, leaving me no choice but to follow. "Make it quick," I said when we reached him. "I'm actually in a bit of a hurry."

"Oh, please," the king chortled. "The Hastings girl who moves at a snail's pace with those tiny little baby steps of hers?" he said. "Don't worry, son. She'll be exactly where you left her."

I glared at him, hard. This was what he did. He poked at people just to see them react, and no matter how often I reminded myself not to entertain him, he almost succeeded this time.

His brow lifted as soon as he didn't get a response, and he turned to Jack. An exaggerated gasp escaped him. "Chrystal still hasn't come home yet?"

Jack narrowed his eyes. "I suppose not."

A laugh escaped the king. "I see," he said, his gaze shifting to me. "First Chrystal, now Kayden." He frowned. "People seem to disappear around you, Kylan, and I cannot help but wonder if I am next."

My jaw locked so hard it hurt. He kept throwing out words, but I could not tell whether he knew something or if this was just his usual self. Who knew at this point?

A low chuckle slipped past his lips, and he was clearly enjoying himself. I barely had time to react before the king slammed his fist into my chest hard enough to send me stumbling, but I steadied myself quickly.

"Better keep an eye on this one, Jack," he said. "They always said he had a dark side."

Jack responded with an uncomfortable laugh. The king had a habit of acting this way and was completely oblivious to the fact that no one thought it was amusing.

"Either way, that's not what I wanted to talk to you about."

There it was...

He rubbed his chin between his fingers. "Do you remember what I shared with you about Kylan taking on a mistress?"

Jack nodded. "I do, Elyx."

So that's what this is about, and it couldn't have been worse timing.

"I'm grateful you didn't take it too hard that it didn't work out with Chrystal," the king said. "But it couldn't have been prevented. I suppose even you must admit your daughter can be...difficult at times, and that it maybe has to do with the way you've failed to raise her."

My eyes snapped to Jack. He kept his face calm, but I could see it. His jaw tightened through his smile, and his shoulders stiffened just a little. He was holding himself together while the king spoke about his dead daughter, and when King Elyx opened his mouth, there was no telling what would come next.

I had mostly created my own scenarios inside my head. I had made myself believe that Kayden was his favorite son and that Jack was his best and only friend, but no one was supposed to treat a friend like that. I wasn't trying to be a hypocrite, because I was well aware that I hadn't always been the best to Nate, but even at my worst, I hadn't treated him like that.

The king went on, completely unbothered. "I was thinking we should proceed with the royal ceremony in two days," he said. "It's right before Kylan leaves for school again, and since we're already in the middle of celebrations, it makes sense." He looked at Jack. "You'll still need to prepare everything, of course."

I let out a defeated breath. Jack glanced at me apologetically. There was nothing he could say or do to stop it, and he was certainly not to blame. This was the deal I had made with the king.

"I will, Elyx," Jack said quietly.

"Good," the king smirked. "It will be a celebration no one will forget."

There was something in his eyes as he said it. He seemed too pleased, and I couldn't tell if he was planning something more, or if he simply hated Violet and everything connected to the Bloodrose so much that he wanted to see them all crack in front of him.

I hadn't even thought about the royal ceremony that much and didn't care for it either. There would be no ceremony because I wouldn't do that.

to Violet.

Besides, with Kayden around, I wasn't exactly too worried.

There was no world in which Kayden would ever let me have something he believed was his, especially not now that he could walk again. It had happened before, and I was convinced it wouldn't happen again.

"Where is she?" I wondered. "The maid, Camille?"

The king lifted a brow. "You're starting to sound like Kayden."

"What do you mean?"

"He asked about her quite a lot too." He waved a hand. "I gave him the same answer I'll give you. The girl deserves a break."

And with that, he meant that she was preparing for the ceremony this very second. A ceremony she wouldn't experience.

The door opened, pulling me from my thoughts, and the queen stood in the doorway. She was already ready for the evening, wearing a large red dress that shimmered with glitter. Her hair, usually pinned into a bun, fell over her shoulders in thick curls.

Her lips parted as if she were about to speak, but they quickly closed again. She seemed surprised to find us all here.

"Well," the king said brightly, "a family reunion. All four of us!"

Four?

My eyes flicked around the room before it hit me.

He was counting Jack.

Why?

Jack and the queen shared an uneasy glance, and her eyes never left his as she walked forward, the sound of her heels echoing until she reached us.

"My beautiful queen," the king said, pleased. "No one compares to you."

His eyes turned to Jack. "Isn't she absolutely breathtaking?"

Jack gave a nod while the queen stood with a smile that didn't quite reach her eyes. That alone told me something was wrong. The king's compliments were something she always cherished.

"May I steal him from you?" she asked calmly.

"Who?" The king blinked. "Our dearest friend, Beta Jack, or our son?"

The room fell silent as I looked back and forth between all three of them.

"Our son," she said, her tone sharp. The corner of her eyes twitched, and I could tell she looked offended.

Offended and done.

"Kylan," she spoke with a tight smile. "Please come with me. Now."

The queen turned before the king could make any comment, and I didn't hesitate. If anything, the timing couldn't have been better.

I followed her into the hall, the door slamming shut behind us, and caught up quickly. "Hey!" I called out. "That thing just now between you, the king, and Beta Jack? What was that?"

She let out a short chortle. "You're one to talk."

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Chapter 389

I frowned. "I'm sorry?"

The queen stopped in her steps, her eyes locking onto mine. She leaned closer, her voice dropping. "Your brother. Tied up like an animal and gagged in the kitchen pantry after I told you not to ruin Kaelis's howl."

Well, fuck.

"What is that?"

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