

## Chapter 395

Violet

It was a red, blinding light that burned straight through the greenhouse, and it came right from Thorne's eyes.

"Drop it!" I called out, turning away. Dylan dropped it instantly, and we both stumbled a step back.

The greenhouse filled with a low, humming sound that lasted a few seconds, and Dylan's gaze snapped to mine. My heart slammed against my ribs, and I could see the worry in his eyes.

"Were his eyes...red before?" he asked nervously.

I took a deep huff, shaking my head. "No," I muttered. "No, definitely not in our time."

My skin prickled. Thorne felt restless, and it made me think of the past. For all we knew, he was just waiting for the right moment to turn into another shadow beast.

"That thing is out of control," I told Dylan. "And if Kayden doesn't get to him, Thorne will find him instead."

Dylan exhaled slowly, rubbing his hand over his face. He probably knew what was coming, but I couldn't help it. The need to know how far this thing could go was stronger than the fear.

"I need to look again."

My hands were shaking as I walked toward the cage again. I didn't wait this time because I knew that if I did, I would back out. I reached for the cloth and pulled it off in one go.



The red light exploded back into the greenhouse, somehow brighter than before. I turned my face away instantly, squeezing my eyes shut.

The second Thorne let out a sharp, piercing screech, I threw my hands up to cover my face, and then the light vanished.

"What?" I whispered, confused.

I slowly lowered my hand, but then the red light flared again. My hands reached for my face for a second time, and once again, the light disappeared.

Was Thorne...malfunctioning?

Dylan grabbed my wrist. He pulled my hands down, and as expected, the red light surged. Then he lifted my hands back up in front of my face, making it disappear again.

We stared at each other in shock. "It's the ring," he concluded, his eyes dropping to my hand.

My throat went dry. "T-the ring?"

"Take it off," he said quickly.

My fingers fumbled as I slid the ring off and shoved it into his hand. Dylan didn't wait and tossed the ring straight into the cage. Thorne shrieked once, then whimpered and curled in as if he couldn't take it.

I just stood there, staring. My thoughts raced back to Little Violet and Kylan's words. She had said we would need the ring, and it turned out she might have been right.

Dylan looked at me. "Did you know it could do that?"



I frowned, still trying to make sense of it. "No," I breathed. "How could I? It's Kylan's ring."

I had always thought wearing it just suppressed my powers, the same way the glasses used to. From my understanding, that was all it was supposed to do. I never would have expected it to scare Thorne. It did not even make sense.

Dylan hummed under his breath, eyes fixed on the cage. "Interesting," he mumbled.

I observed him, trying to read his face. Part of me wondered if he was already attempting to connect the dots that I couldn't seem to find. A silence settled between us as we both stared at the cage.

"Should we hide Thorne back in the room?"

"No." Dylan shook his head. "We should keep him here, far away from Kayden and the palace rooms," he said. "If that thing lights up again, better it's in a greenhouse during a celebration than a bedroom."

It made sense.

"We should get back," he added, glancing at me. "You especially, royal mate."

I rolled my eyes, despising that name more than anything. "You're right."

We carefully put everything back the way it had been. The cage was hidden behind the pots, and the cloth draped over it just like Nate had left it. Then we walked from the gardens, back through the halls on our way to the ballroom.

"We just have to survive a few more hours," I told Dylan. "Then we can



finally breathe... for now."

"Best case scenario," Dylan corrected.

Sure.

Best case...because what if the plan didn't work?

What if the fate Aelius was set on could never be changed? What if Varius was wrong to believe that we could alter it?

Baelor was already terrifying enough, but if I fucked up the sealing and the Veil fully cracked, we would be as good as done. It would quite literally mean the end of the world as we knew it.

"You didn't greet him, by the way," Dylan said casually, a faint smile tugging at his mouth.

"The raven?"

He snorted. "No. Dad."

"Oh...him," I gasped softly, looking away. "He didn't greet me either."

The king was definitely high on the list of people I hated most, but he was not completely wrong about Alpha Fergus's fear of stairs. If he truly wanted to greet me, he would have done so, wouldn't he?

"It's not like Dad would ever admit it, but I think he still feels a bit embarrassed," Dylan said. "I mean, I still am."

I responded with a sigh. Dylan and Dad had made fools of themselves, but this was different. Dad's situation was not the same. I could not stop thinking about the words I had heard him say in the past, when he implied that Little Violet might have had something to do with our



parents' deaths. It pained me to think that he might have forced himself to care for me only because he believed he owed it to his sister.

And if that was true, I did not want to force him to love me. We both did not deserve that.

Dylan gave me a pat on the back. "He missed you."

I gave him a small smile, deciding not to get into it. It wasn't something to discuss at the moment.

I drew in a long breath as the two large doors to the ballroom opened and we entered again. Kylan's eyes were already on me from a distance, like he had been waiting for me to walk through that door the entire time. He stood with Kaelis, Kiora, and Nate, but his attention had shifted completely.

Dylan removed his hand from my back. "I'm gonna find Trinity."

"Sure."

Kylan rested a hand briefly on Nate's shoulder. I caught him whispering something before he broke away and started walking toward me. My lips curled into a smile as I walked toward him, ready to tell him about Thorne and the ring.

But then an uneasy feeling crept in, and I glanced to the side. My breath caught when I saw Kayden moving too, straight toward me.

What did he want now?

My steps quickened just a little, and Kylan's expression hardened the moment he noticed Kayden. My heart pounded as I kept my eyes forward, wondering who would reach me first. Just when I thought it couldn't possibly get any worse, my eyes locked with the king.



He had taken his seat again at the long table, watching the room with a lazy smirk. His fingers tapped against the wood as he watched us, before curling into a fist and striking the table three times.

Everyone stopped, even Kylan and Kayden. The music cut off, and every head turned toward him. He had definitely seen what was happening, and I couldn't help but wonder...

Was it just perfect timing, or was he helping?

"It's time for the speeches," the king announced calmly. "And after that, we can finally go outside so the real event can start." His eyes locked onto mine.

"It's getting late, and I'm growing impatient."

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