

Chapter 396

Violet

The speeches had been going on for a while, and I had lost track of how many people had spoken.

There were so many of them. Brothers, sisters, more family. One after another, all speaking of pride, tradition, and the Moon Goddess.

Yet, my eyes kept drifting back to Kayden, and I wasn't the only one. It wasn't his Howl, but all eyes were still on the prince who could suddenly walk again.

A small breath escaped me as I stared at him, and Lady Mona, who rested her hand on his arm, proudly. She hadn't stopped smiling once, and neither had he.

He leaned back in his chair like he owned the room, smirking, and his eyes...they were locked on me.

He probably wanted all of us dead for what we had done to him, or more so for what he had done to himself. He had become so obsessed with Thorne, and the most dangerous person is the one who has nothing left to lose. An uncomfortable chill went through my body, and my gaze moved forward again, back to where it was supposed to be.

Kaelis.

And Kylan.

After what felt like forever, it was finally his turn. He stood beside his sister, taking some of the attention off Kayden.

Kaelis lifted her chin, and to anyone else, she looked radiant, proud...but I



could see it.

The way her eyes would flick to Kayden every now and then, and how close she was to actually losing it. Her night had already been ruined by one person.

Kylan cleared his throat, demanding attention.

"I always like to think I know everything," he began, a small smile tugging at his mouth. "I even wrote down what I wanted to say tonight. Planned it, practiced it," he said, taking a breath. "But I think it's better if I just look at my sister and speak from my heart."

The guests cooed while the king let out a loud chuckle. I turned to look at him and saw him lean into Cecilia. "Since when does our son have a heart?" he whispered, clearly not as quiet as he thought.

Cecilia rolled her eyes, completely unimpressed, before focusing her attention on her children again.

Kylan took Kaelis's hand and gently turned her toward him, forcing her to look at him. As she did, a genuine smile appeared.

"Honestly," Kylan said, "a lot has happened between us over the years, and we haven't always been as close as I wished we were," he admitted. "But one thing never changed... I've always loved you, and I've always felt the need to protect you."

Kaelis's eyes widened in surprise.

Something warm settled in my chest, and before I realized it, I was smiling. It was nice to hear him say those words that didn't come as easy to him to someone else. I love you.

"What also hasn't changed," he went on, "is how loud, stubborn, and



dramatic you are, and how you're always convinced it's just your world we're all living in."

The hall filled with quiet laughter. Everyone could agree on that.

Kaelis shot him an offended look and slapped his shoulder. "But," Kylan continued, unfazed, "what hasn't changed either is how strong you are... in every way."

His eyes softened as he squeezed her hand. "I'm not just talking about your physical strength, because we all know you're strong enough to fight a dragon," he said, making everyone laugh.

"I'm talking about your ability to believe in something and stand your ground for it," he clarified, his lips curling. "I suppose you can say it's the very thing that makes us bump heads, but I hope you never lose that," he said. "Iyperia needs people like you."

Kaelis's cheeks flushed, and she dropped her gaze for a few seconds before lifting it back to him.

"Tonight isn't just about a Howl," Kylan said. "It's about stepping into who you are. Trusting your wolf, your instincts, and yourself."

Kaelis gave him a nod.

"And we all saw you suck at dancing, but I know better than anyone that you're a perfectionist," Kylan told her.

A few people laughed again. I chuckled to myself, realizing he couldn't just let it be. Kylan wouldn't be Kylan without throwing something in there.

"But I hope you know that you don't have to be perfect, and you don't need to impress anyone. The people who want to show up for you will



show up for you.”

The room grew quiet. I felt an ache in my heart, listening to Kylan's words. They were much deeper than just a speech. He was referring to the king, and the need all of his children felt to fight for his attention.

“You have already impressed your big brother,” Kylan chuckled, releasing her hand. “And that’s more than enough.”

Kaelis's eyes glistened. She was on the verge of shedding tears, but she didn't. The corners of her lips trembled as she maintained her smile. Before it could get too emotional, Kylan released her hand and took an awkward step back. He seemed unsure what to do with himself now that the speech was over.

Applause filled the ballroom, and Kylan had already prepared to walk away. Before he could, Kaelis took his hand and pulled him back. She wrapped her arms around him in a tight embrace. Kylan froze, then laughed softly and hugged her back.

I couldn't help but laugh as Kylan looked over at me, a little flustered. He seemed both embarrassed and cute in a way that made my heart flutter. It was as if he wanted to ask, why is she hugging me?

The king suddenly stood and snapped his fingers in the air, gesturing for the room to calm down.

“Well,” he announced after the applause died down, “with that being said, we can now move to the gardens for the main event...”

“I think we're all forgetting a brother.”

The silence that followed hit hard. All heads turned again. Kayden's chair scraped loudly against the floor as he rose to his feet.



My stomach dropped.

What was he doing?

King Elyx threw his head back, and laughter rumbled from his chest. He spread his arms wide. "My dear son, Kayden," he said, amused. "Everyone had prepared something beforehand, however, you didn't get the chance to, and therefore..."

"So what?"

Kayden lifted a brow. The king's face tensed, and a few uneasy chuckles came from the crowd.

"I don't like being...excluded, and since Kylan spoke from the heart," Kayden huffed, taking a step forward, "I suppose I can do that too."

He took another step.

"Besides," he added, lips curling, "I think I just realized why Kaelis might be my favorite sister."

Kylan clicked his tongue. "Good for you, but I don't think..."

"Of course you can speak, Kayden," Kaelis said quickly, cutting him off.

She gave Kylan a tight, polite smile. I knew Kaelis, and I knew her heart. She didn't want him speaking any more than we did, but she wasn't willing to cause a scene over it. Not tonight.

Kayden clapped his hands once, grinning widely.

"Great!"

He had already reached the center of the room. Kylan didn't leave



Kaelis's side and stood in front of his sister, as if he feared Kayden might hurt her.

"So," Kayden said as he turned in a circle. "Where do I start?"

Commented [Ma1]: