

Chapter 402

Violet

It was really him.

It wasn't time yet, but that clearly didn't matter. It hadn't stopped him before. He was already on the move, and I had no idea where he was headed.

But if my suspicions were correct, it would have to be Thorne.

Leaves burst into the air from the shadow's impact, and my mind snapped into survival mode. I had two options. Stay with Kaelis, or run back and warn the others.

The fate of the world rested on my shoulders, and I was tempted to choose the latter. It couldn't have been a coincidence. Baelor had spoken my name, and I heard Mom and Dad's voices inside my head.

Were they trying to warn me?

My heart stopped beating for a moment as a sound came from the trees. I clenched my fist, ready for anything, but then two figures stumbled out of the trees, giggling.

Kaelis's friends.

"Oh my Goddess," one of them breathed, eyes wide. "Did you hear that?"

A relieved sigh escaped me, and I nodded so fast my neck almost hurt. Were they talking about Baelor? Had they heard him too?

"That was Vayla!"



Right.

Kaelis...

I could barely open my mouth before another howl broke through. Then another, until there were several coming from every direction.

"That must be the commoners!"

The girls laughed, almost bouncing on their feet. I tried my best to keep up, but there was nothing more I wanted than to get back to the garden. No matter what, I couldn't fail sealing Baelor. Especially not after hearing Mom and Dad's voices.

My heart nearly stopped for a second time as another figure stepped from behind the trees. Bare, breathless, and in a hurry.

It was Kaelis.

They told me she was fast, but I hadn't expected her to be that fast.

Either way, it was for the best because that meant we could get back.

"Kaelis!" Her friend squealed. "You're back already!"

"Help, quick!" Kaelis shouted, already grabbing her dress. She looked overwhelmed, flushed, and suddenly alive in a way I had never seen before. Her hands shook as she pulled the first pieces of fabric over her shoulders.

We rushed toward her at once, all of us struggling to help her put on her dress.

"I felt it," Kaelis said under her breath, her arms raised. "I felt it!"



Felt what?

She balanced on one foot, forcing her heel on by herself. Then she bent to pick up her jewelry before pushing it into her friend's hand.

"He must've felt it too, right?" she said, smiling from ear to ear.

"Who—" I started.

But before I could finish, Kaelis grabbed her skirt and sprinted past us.

"Kaelis!" one of the girls shouted.

We all ran after her. I knew I was in a hurry, but she was just something else.

She didn't slow down and didn't look back. She held her dress up as she ran, not caring about the stains of dirt, and it didn't take long before the garden suddenly came back into view. Everything had returned.

The light, the people.

The king and queen waited with open arms, but Kaelis didn't even glance at them or anyone else for that matter. She went straight toward...

Kylan?

I squinted, slowing my steps as I was not only trying to make sense of the situation, but also trying to find the right moment to tell the others it was time to go.

Kylan's eyes were huge, pure shock written all over his face as he stared at Kaelis, then turned halfway to look at the person beside him.

Nate.



Nate clutched his head, breathing hard, and stumbled as if he was trying to get away. Something was wrong.

"Nate!" Kaelis called out, still out of breath. She almost tripped over her own feet, barely catching herself before she stopped right in front of him. The entire garden froze, and every single pair of eyes were fixed on them.

I felt my chest tighten.

What was going on?

My eyes locked with Dylan, hoping he would have an answer. He shook his head and gave a light shrug before leaning closer. "We've got to go..."

"I know," I whispered back, though my attention was still on Kaelis, who was standing in front of Nate.

"My mate," she breathed. "You are my mate."

Kylan looked back and forth between the two, his jaw clenched.

I guess we could all agree those words landed like a blow. Nate and Kaelis?

She had made it very obvious that she had a crush on him and was glued to his side, especially tonight, but even I could not have seen this coming.

Nate chuckled softly, brushing his hands through his hair. Gasps came from the crowd, and all the guests pushed closer, waiting to see how this would end. Literally everyone.

Kaelis grinned widely, but Nate...

It was clear to me that he was uncomfortable. Extremely uncomfortable.

His expression shifted with guilt. He glanced at Kylan, then back at



Kaelis, and shook his head. Slow at first, then harder, like he was trying to make the moment disappear.

For every step Nate stepped back, Kaelis moved forward, the crowd close behind her. I didn't want to be selfish, but we really had to move, and unless Nate gave her something, there was no way we could disappear with all those eyes on us.

I could tell that Kylan hadn't seen it coming at all. He dropped his head and cursed softly, like he already knew how this would end.

Nate didn't want a mate and had been very vocal about that.

He was taking way too long, and I was pretty sure everyone knew how this would end.

It wasn't that Kaelis couldn't see it, but she just lived in this fantasy the Moon Goddess had presented to her and refused to accept anything else.

"Nate?" she said softly, her voice hopeful. "Say something..."

"I-I..." Nate started, his throat bobbing as he swallowed.

"Yes?" Kaelis whispered, her eyes glistening. "What is it?"

"I, Nate Wyrmsbane, re—"

Her face fell, and the crowd gasped loudly. Some covered their mouths, others laughed as they exchanged looks. The situation was so severe that Nate couldn't finish.

Was he going to reject her publicly?

Today of all days?

He looked around with a look of pity, then gave it another go. "I re—"

A loud snort came from behind us.

"Kahlia, stop it," a voice laughed. It was Lady Mona, and I bet she was enjoying this.

I felt my stomach drop, knowing this was the absolute worst that could ever happen to someone.

"Please don't," Kaelis whispered, her eyes on Nate. She shook her head slowly as if it would somehow make him change his mind.

Nate took a breath and stepped closer, taking her weak hands in his. "Kaelis, you are amazing, kind, beautiful...perfect, and I'm so sorry," he whispered. "But I just...can't."

It was meant only for her, but I heard it. I knew Kylan did too. He let out a breath that sounded too relieved, but then his face changed. Guilt flashed over it like he hated himself for that small moment of relief.

"This is embarrassing but expected," someone muttered a bit too loudly.

Kaelis pulled her hands back. Her chest rose and fell as her breathing grew uneven. She turned away from him, forcing herself to face the crowd that mocked her, and somehow, that made everything worse. Most of these people weren't here to celebrate. They were here for her downfall. This was what they wanted.

She shoved past the people in front of her and ran, barely hearing anything else. The same two friends she'd been with chased after her.

"Kaelis!" Cecilia cried out.



She took a few steps forward, then stopped as if something held her back and only stared as her daughter disappeared.

“Well, it wasn’t that good of a match anyway!” the king chuckled, spreading his arms wide. “Now where’s the music and the shifting?”

I felt disgusted, seeing him turn away. So much for his favorite daughter.

Nate’s hands were shaking. He rubbed his fingers together like he didn’t know what to do with them and couldn’t meet our eyes. Because it was Nate, and he had one of the kindest hearts, I had no doubt he felt really, really bad.

But Dylan didn’t waste any time, and he and he said what we were all thinking. “We’ve got to go,” he said. “Now!”

Kylan, who had looked lost ever since all of this happened, hardened his face and tapped Nate’s back. “Get it together.”

He walked past him to grab my hand. “Let’s go.”

Lian and Sora had also reached us, and then we started walking fast. With everyone’s attention shifted elsewhere, we managed to slip through the crowd unnoticed.

As Kylan pulled my hand, I couldn’t help but glance back once. My eyes immediately caught on Kayden, who did notice us. With a smirk, he pushed himself back from the table and started walking with every intention of following us.

He didn’t get far. Just as I was about to warn Kylan, Cecilia suddenly moved in front of him and placed both hands on his shoulders.

She stopped him...



That was the last thing I saw before we disappeared into the crowd, and in that moment, something had become clear to me.

The queen didn't go after Kaelis because she knew what was at stake, and it was too big to ignore. She stayed because she knew if this failed, her daughter would lose more than just her pride.



Comments



Support



Share