

Chapter 417

Kylan

The wildest part of today wasn't seeing Kayden. It was the look on Kaelis's face as she looked at me like I was the one who had completely lost it.

"I suppose you didn't put in a good word," she mumbled, her brows lifting as if she had expected more from me.

My jaw locked. "No, Kaelis. Of course I didn't."

"I am not giving up on Nate, Kylan," she shot back. "The Moon Goddess paired us for a reason."

I glared at her, but she didn't back down. Those brown eyes that reminded me too much of the queen's had that stubborn spark in them. It was the one she'd had since we were children, when she insisted she could outrun me or declared she would one day be the strongest Lycan in Lyperia.

"What might that reason be?"

"It is my job to bring out the best in him," she replied immediately. "I will protect him, love him the way he deserves, be his light when he forgets how to find it."

I almost pitied her.

My heart hurt for her. It hurt because I wanted her to grow up and accept the facts.

Couldn't she see that love wasn't something she could just decide on simply because the Moon Goddess told her to?

"I understand this must all be very sudden for you," I said carefully. "But

that doesn't mean you love him. You know how powerful that pull is, and it can confuse things."

She gasped, then laughed in surprise. "You really don't know what you're talking about, do you?"

"I know you—"

"No, you don't," she shook her head. "We haven't been that close recently, and you don't know me as well as you think you do, and you have no idea that the Moon Goddess showed up in my dreams and hinted at Nate being my mate."

My stomach dropped.

Dreams?

I searched her face, hoping for a sign that perhaps she had been mistaken. But she looked serious. I had never seen her that certain in her life.

My thoughts drifted back to the moment I shared with the queen in the tower. The way she looked when we spoke of Kaelis and how she wanted to say more but chose to stay silent.

Was that it?

If she had just told me, I could've done something about it. Maybe prayed to the Goddess to spare Kaelis the pain.

A strange frustration rose in my chest.

Why would the Moon Goddess do this?

If Kaelis wasn't lying, why would she show her visions and let her believe that this was the way it was supposed to be?

She took a step toward me, her chin lifted. "If you actually knew me,

you'd know this isn't out of nowhere. I've loved Nate for a long, long time."

As those words left her mouth, it felt like my mind began to rewind, going all the way back to our younger years.

A long, long time...

All those times she insisted on tagging along when we were just children.

The way she would sit too close to him even when I told her to give us space.

How she would light up every single time we came back from Starlight, and how often she found reasons to visit the Wyrmsbane estate to the point everyone just expected her to be there.

And suddenly, I felt like an idiot.

Because what about that time when she had gone against the queen's wishes so she could join Nate in the mountains, or when she had made him soup to cheer him up?

Had she really liked him all this time?

I exhaled slowly.

Maybe I hadn't seen it clearly, or maybe I hadn't wanted to.

This wasn't new to her. It was just new to me, but that didn't change anything.

"No matter how long you've loved him," I said, trying to keep my calm, "this bond cannot be."

"W-why?" She stuttered, looking genuinely confused.

I opened my mouth, but I had nothing. All I had was the urge to stop this

and make her see reason.

“W-well, Nate has quite the reputation at Starlight—“

“So do you,” she cut in. “My friends told me all about you at Starlight. At the Royal Academy and even at court. Honestly, is there anyone in this kingdom you haven't dramatically fallen into bed with? I'm not stupid. I've met half your fan club!”

She used her hands, explaining dramatically. “But that doesn't matter anymore because you changed, haven't you?” she called out. “You love Violet, and only Violet.”

Right..

I exhaled through my nose.

“But Nate...”

I was still looking for an answer.

“You have to consider Nate. He's fighting his own battles—“

“I know all about his...battles,” Kaelis sighed. “Because I pay attention to him. I always have.”

The Lunar is...

I had no idea how she knew, but she was clearly well aware and was still standing here, fighting for him. A strange feeling of pride and fear tightened in my chest.

“I accept him as he is,” she continued. “And I will be the one to help him heal.”

Her eyes sharpened as they locked onto mine.

“Besides,” she added, “you weren't exactly stable. You still aren't. Yet

you and Violet turned out all right. So please spare me.”

Right...

I released a huff, completely ignoring the part where my own sister had just called me out for still being unstable.

“You can’t be with Nate because Nate will one day be my Beta. There are certain responsibilities—”

“Great, then I will be the Beta’s mate,” she shot back. “Unless you do not believe a princess is capable of such a role?”

“Don’t be ridiculous!” I said, dragging a hand down my face. “I did not say that. I would never say that.”

“Then what is it you’re saying?”

Dear Goddess...

I was starting to sound exactly like the guy I had been mocking from day one. Dylan.

Overprotective, annoying, and just saying a whole bunch of nothing.

So this was what he felt like when it came to Violet.

“Kaelis,” I tried again.

She folded her arms, frowning.

“What if I told you your love for Nate is one-sided,” I said.

She scoffed, but there was a small smile on her lips. “If it were one-sided, I would have let him go already,” she said. “I’m not that pathetic, and I know it stopped being one-sided a long time ago.”

She said it with too much certainty to question her. Still, I had yet to see

it. We surely weren't talking about the same Nate who had said time and time again that he had no desire for a mate.

"Don't make this harder than it has to be," I said, almost pleading.

"I'm not," she shot back. "Nate has a mouth of his own, and he used it pretty well last night when he recycled these same excuses instead of giving me an actual reason."

I laughed under my breath and looked down at the stones. She just wouldn't stop.

"I would love for you to get back over there," she said, tilting her chin toward the beginning of the path, "and give Nate that same energy while you ask him why, exactly, he hasn't rejected me."

I went quiet.

She had a point.

Nate hated hurting others, but he was also honest in his own way. If he was absolutely certain about not wanting her, he would have ended it last night like I expected he would've.

He wouldn't have left space for hope.

"You can blame me all you want, but as long as he doesn't reject me," she went on, "there is no rejection to accept, and you know I'm right."

I took a good look at Kaelis. She wasn't crying, throwing a tantrum, or being half as desperate as I made her out to be.

She was being honest, and suddenly I wasn't sure if I was really trying to protect them or control the outcome. It wasn't fair of me to come at her like that when Nate hadn't even rejected her properly.

Whatever was going on between them was between them. Who was I to decide who could and could not be together?

"You're really not going to give up, are you?" I mumbled.

"There is nothing you can say that will change my mind," she replied. "I'll fight for him until he properly rejects me."

She had changed overnight. I didn't know if it was the howl, the bond, or the initial heartbreak, but it was like a different Kaelis was standing in front of me.

"Now are you going to embarrass yourself any further," she asked, "or are you going to mind your business and walk away?"

A short laugh slipped out as I slid my hand into my pocket, feeling until my fingers closed around the small, wrapped candy I'd been given earlier. I extended my fist, the candy in my hand.

"Open."

Her brow raised. "What?"

"Open your hand."

She hesitated for a second, then extended her palm, confused. Now both brows were raised as I dropped the candy into it.

"It's from Orrithyl," I explained. "It's supposed to bring good luck...and if you're really going through with this, you need it more than I do."

Her face softened, and relief washed over her as she realized what had just happened. Before I could change my mind about all of this, I reached up to pinch her cheek and walked past her.

It was time to accept that she was much stronger than I gave her credit for. When I slowed my steps and glanced over my shoulder, I caught her rubbing the spot where I pinched her, her eyes still on the candy in her hand.

I let out a quiet chuckle.

She won this one.

SURPRISE GIFT: 100 BONUS FREE FOR YOU ✕

[GET IT](#)

-  Comments
-  Support
-  Share