

Chapter 421

Violet

Kylan's brows lifted as he went into deep thought.

"It's not that simple," he breathed. "I do acknowledge them as my siblings, but when you grow up spread across different mistresses, different halls, different rules...it's harder to build real bonds."

There was not even a hint of a smile on his face as he said it, and it made my chest ache for him. It didn't have to be that complicated, yet it was because of these Lyperian laws that didn't make any sense.

He nudged my shoulder gently. "And for the record," he added, "I was just teasing you earlier."

"About?"

"With your heart," Kylan said, his lips curling, "and the way you care about people...you'll make an amazing sister, Violet. You do not have anything to worry about."

Heat rushed to my cheeks, and I looked down at the bracelets, smiling shyly. It was just words, but perhaps the words I needed at the moment.

"I don't know what you and your family have discussed, and it's not for me to know. That's between you," Kylan said. "But what I do know is that when the Pup is born you should visit home often, be someone they can trust, and show them they are not alone. You've endured things most people never have, but you can turn it around and use that strength to guide them."

I slowly nodded, taking in his deep words.



"I will."

"Good," Kylan gave me a nod. "Don't be me."

Don't be me...

It must not have been easy for him seeing the way the king manipulated all of his siblings, including him, and not having the power to do anything about it.

I took a deep breath and lifted two woven bracelets from the rack. One green, and the other blue like Kylan suggested.

"I got it!"

Kylan let out a long yawn beside me. "Finally. It's been centuries."

I nudged my shoulder into his ribs, then mimicked his words while I scrunched my face, making him laugh. He reached over, and took the two bracelets from my hands.

"I'll pay. You wait here."

"I can pay for them myself..."

But he had already turned and walked toward the counter.

Typical...

I shook my head slightly, allowing the smile tugging at my lips to break through. He never made a big show of things, never announced it like some grand gesture. He just did it.

I moved closer to the window while he paid and looked outside at the crowd that had now gathered near the stall to admire Kaelis.



She was standing there, but not alone. In the midst of my bracelet crisis, Nate had somehow managed to get closer to Kaelis, close enough for her to wave something that resembled a ribbon in his face.

Nate leaned away at first, but then he suddenly laughed. A real laugh.

I blinked, confused. It was such a contrast from earlier.

What was going on between those two?

I couldn't figure them out at all. Still, watching them like that, I felt a small spark of hope.

Hope that they would both find their happiness, and that it would come in a natural way. Footsteps approached me, and I didn't need to look to know it was Kylan.

"You have to admit," I said softly, still watching them, "they do look good together."

Kylan released a slow breath, and I turned to look at his tensed jaw.

"Or not..."

"I hope it works out for them," he said. His words had come out so fast I wasn't even sure he was breathing, but I had not been mistaken.

"Suddenly?"

A laugh almost escaped me. His sudden change of heart was certainly unexpected.

"Yes," he said simply. "Suddenly...I've decided not to interfere anymore."



Something about all of this made my chest feel lighter. I had been rooting for them ever since I confronted Nate in the mountains. He said he wasn't into her like that, so I dropped it, but I still sometimes wondered, what if...

"Did you talk to them?" I wondered.

Kylan shrugged, then exhaled. That was answer enough. He took my hand and started guiding me toward the door.

"Let's go."

~

After a few more stops in the market, the afternoon had passed and we began making our way back to the palace.

This time we decided to walk and take the longer route. It had been Kylan's idea to let Fergus and Sonya enjoy the nature a little more since they would be leaving tomorrow.

They walked all the way behind, together with Dylan and Trinity. Kaelis walked several steps in front of them, and Nate not too far from her, but once again keeping his distance.

Kylan and I walked in the front, the guards still surrounding us from a distance as the path began to look familiar again. We were getting close to the palace.

I felt a strange mix of excitement and nerves. Soon we would leave, back to Starlight, but not before dealing with whatever the king had planned for Kylan. Every time my thoughts drifted to that, an uncomfortable feeling settled in the pit of my stomach.



It wasn't as if I wanted to think about Camille because I knew Kylan would keep his promise, and I would not have to worry. But could one blame me?

And then there was Starlight. We would train again, study, and take that raven who had caused so many problems and now sat calmly on his shoulder with us, knowing the devil was sealed inside him. And all the unanswered questions about the Veil...

Gloria...

A sudden sense of guilt hit me.

What kind of daughter was I, having fun at the market and stuffing my face with a Lyperian donut while not knowing how my parents were doing?

"You're thinking again," Kylan said.

I shot him a weak smile. "I think you know what about."

A hum left him. "I don't know. I can't read your mind," he said. "But I can tell you that life is uncertain, nothing is guaranteed, and for all we know everything might go to shit tomorrow," he chuckled.

I snorted softly. "So dramatic."

"I'm serious," he followed. "So just live and enjoy things while you can."

"Says the one who refused to mark me," I laughed softly.

He nudged my shoulder, making me stumble, but before I could trip, his arm shot out immediately and caught me.



"Still as clumsy," he judged, shaking his head.

I smiled up at him, but that smile quickly faltered as he suddenly reached for my wrist and lifted it, the small lycan charm on my bracelet dangling.

"I've been meaning to ask you." His eyes were focused on it. "But can I have my bracelet back?"

My brows creased. "No."

"N-No?" he asked, genuinely confused.

"No," I repeated. "You gave it to me, remember?"

"After you gave it to me," he argued.

I swallowed, my thoughts drifting back to the person why I had lost mine in the first place. The reason why I had lost mine.

Chrystal...

Nope.

I forced the memory away.

That was over now.

With his free hand, Kylan reached into the bag of bracelets and pulled something out. It was a bracelet that nearly looked identical to the one I had gotten him.

It had the same woven design, the same rhinestones, a charm. Now I understood why he had been so quick to pay earlier.

He had already spotted it and decided he would take back his bracelet.

I laughed softly. "If you want it that badly, you can have it."

His face lit up instantly, and he looked like a boy who had just found treasure. Kylan carefully removed the bracelet from my wrist and replaced it with the new one. It fitted just as perfectly.

He wasted no time sliding the original back onto his own wrist with a satisfied smile.

"Does it really mean that much to you?" I asked, squinting my eyes.

He sighed at the bracelet. "It came from you, so yes. It means a lot to me."

The palace soon came into view, but something just didn't feel quite right. There was something wrong. Too many guards, far more than earlier.

They were lining the entrance, the courtyard, and even the beginning of the path. My steps slowed. There had to be at least fifty.

"Were there always this many guards?"

Kylan frowned. "No? Not that I know of."

A strange feeling crawled through my stomach as we stepped closer, and the rest of the group had now caught up.

"What is the meaning of this?" Fergus asked, addressing no one in particular.

"I can't remember Dad ever mentioning something about a travel," Kaelis said, her face flushed.



"Neither can I," Kylan grumbled softly. He raised his voice at the guards.
"Is there a problem?"

As soon as Kylan called out, the ones guarding the gates stepped aside and the air suddenly grew colder as he revealed himself.

King Elyx...

My heart started beating faster, seeing that wicked smirk across his lips. Why? Because I knew that this couldn't be any good. I knew this day had been going too smoothly.

"Is there something I'm not yet aware of?" Kylan asked, his voice calm despite the irritation in his body language.

The king's gaze scanned the group, but it never settled on mine. He had come here with a specific goal. I watched as he slowly stretched out his arm, then pointed.

"Arrest him!"

I followed the direction of his finger, but when I saw it landed on Kylan, I was immediately confused. I knew he despised him, but why would the king ever want to arrest his own son?

Everything happened so fast I barely had time to react. The guards moved, but they walked right past him and went straight to the person standing behind him, Nate.

Hands grabbed his arms. Nate looked around unsure of what was happening while Kaelis shoved one of the guards.

"Get off of him! What are you doing?!"

"Kaelis," the king said sharply. "Stay back. You do not want to get involved."

Everyone started talking at once as the guards began pulling Nate, shouting orders. Fergus, Sonya, Dylan, Trinity.

"You can't just do this to the kid!" Fergus called out.

"I am the king of Lyperia. This is not the Bloodrose swamps. There is order here, and I shall do as I wish, Alpha Fergus."

The only person calm in this situation was Kylan, who was neither in shock nor reacting the way one would have expected him to.

"For what am I being arrested?" Nate called out, letting out a bewildered chuckle.

"Halt!" The king's voice cut through, and the guards stopped. Time seemed to stand still as everything fell silent and the king took step after step until he stood before Nate.

"Nate Wyrnsbane," he declared coldly, "you are under arrest for the Wyrnsbane family's disloyalty to the crown, the illegal use of Lunaris, and the brutal murder of your sister, Chrystal Wyrnsbane."

What?

"Take him to the dungeons!"

