



Chapter 422

Violet

I couldn't think properly.

My mind went completely numb as I watched the guards drag Nate away, pinning his arms behind his back. Kaelis ran after them, pushing at the guards and shouting for them to let him go.

Meanwhile the words kept replaying in my head.

Disloyalty to the crown...

Illegal use of Lunaris...

Brutal murder of Chrystal...

Murder?

This couldn't be happening.

My eyes widened slightly as I looked at the king. His mouth was moving, but I was so out of it that I couldn't hear a single word he was saying. Fergus was speaking too, and so was Sonya. Even Dylan and Trinity were brave enough to nearly get into the king's face.

I did not.

My body started shaking, though I wasn't sure whether it was fear or anger. They had taken Nate away, accused him of murdering his own sister. He was set on ruining his life.

No...



Calm down, Violet.

You need to calm down.

I squeezed my eyes shut and forced myself to breathe. Slowly and controlled. When I opened them again, the world rushed back to me all at once.

I could now hear the voices more clearly. Fergus's voice dominating above all.

"Does Beta Jack know you're keeping his kid in the dungeons like some animal?"

The king answered calmly. "Of course he knows, Alpha Fergus. Who do you think will be keeping him company?"

My heart dropped straight into my stomach. So it was not only Nate, but Jack as well. His own Beta. The disloyalty to the crown was meant for all the Wyrnsbanes.

Kylan had been quiet for a while, but this time his legs moved as he stepped forward.

"Keeping him company based on what?" he demanded, his voice firm.

The king shrugged lightly. "I have my reasons."

Kylan released a short laugh. "Sure," he said, pacing and kicking a nearby rock.

"There will be an emergency council tomorrow," the king announced. "A three-day trial, and the accused will be given the opportunity to defend themselves."



He looked around, still refusing to look at me.

"Until then, the palace is on lockdown," he said. "These are very serious accusations, and if they were to get out of Lyperia, it would be very embarrassing for all parties involved, including me."

Lockdown...

The king turned his eyes toward Fergus.

"I'm afraid you'll have to remain here as well, Alpha Fergus," he said. "Until the lockdown ends. I cannot allow you to return to the swamps, and I suppose you'll have to remain to learn the fate of your children."

Fate of...what?

Fergus growled. "What do you mean by that?"

A chortle came from Kylan before he dug a hand into his hip and shook his head, also well aware that all the king was saying at this point was bullshit.

The king lifted a hand, and one of the guards stepped forward carrying a scroll. He took it and slowly unrolled it. Then he cleared his throat and began reading.

"The three-day trial will address the charges brought against the following individuals for violations of Lyperian law."

My chest tightened as he continued.

"Queen Cecilia, the Wyrnsbane family, Violet and Dylan Hastings, Trinity Richard, Lian Kai, Sora Talavera, Lady Mona...and the witches of the mountains."



My heart started racing.

He was going after everyone, including the witches.

Would they also be in the dungeons?

Why did he not send us to the dungeons?

And where were Kylan and Kayden in all of this?

"Charges include, though are not limited to...conspiracy to murder, adultery, witchcraft, treason against the crown, and..."

Elyx's eyes locked onto mine for the first time.

"The unlawful use of forbidden magic."

No way...

Though my eyes remained strong, a chill went through my spine. The unlawful use of forbidden magic had to be me, and it hadn't just been once.

The words felt unreal.

I slowly turned my head toward Kylan, but found him already looking at me.

And for the first time since the king started speaking...he looked just as confused as I felt.

Kylan lowered his head. "Just let him talk," he muttered under his breath. "Don't say a word."

He said it quietly, but loud enough for everyone behind us to hear, and

something in his tone made me worry. Rightfully so, because he wasn't laughing anymore. He wasn't mocking the king like he usually would.

Kylan was Lyperian. He knew what the king was capable of, and his reaction made it clear that all of this was very serious.

The king continued speaking as if all of this hadn't just scared the hell out of all of us.

"I unfortunately had to arrest Nate Wyrnsbane," he said, sighing, "as well as the two ladies-in-waiting and the witches involved."

I felt like throwing up.

"But out of respect for status," he continued, "the others mentioned will be escorted to their chambers until tomorrow, when they will be brought before the council for trial."

I couldn't help but look behind me.

Fergus stood stiffly beside Sonya, his jaw tight, hands clenched, but he stayed quiet now. Only because Kylan advised him to.

Then his eyes met mine. His brows drew together as he gave me the smallest shrug. I knew he had a thousand questions and no idea where to even start.

I could already hear his thoughts.

Do my children have a hand in the murder or the use of magic?

Well, surprise dad.

Both.



I glanced down, my mind racing. If the witches were arrested...did that mean Varius was in the dungeons too?

The thought made my chest ache. That old man wouldn't survive out there.

The king snapped his fingers.

"Escort them to their chambers," he ordered. "They will remain under strict supervision until the trial."

The guards moved immediately and spread around us. I squeezed Kyran's hand and felt him rub his thumb over my knuckles. He brought his lips to my ear.

"You're okay," he whispered. "Trust me."

I nodded, even though I wasn't okay. It felt as if my heart was about to explode, and there was no way to stop it.

When the guards started walking, we followed behind them, past the gates.

That's when I turned my head one last time to look at Dylan and Trinity, mom and dad.

Their faces were tight, and the worst part of this was that no one had seen this coming. None of us understood what had just happened.

If this was the king's way of catching us off guard, he had certainly succeeded.

My eyes scanned Thorne, still perched on Kyran's shoulder.



The raven looked oddly calm and turned his head as if none of this chaos concerned him. Quite hilarious, considering this was probably Kayden's doing.

It seemed like Thorne was his whole world. Without Thorne or Baelor's shadow, his life didn't seem to mean much to him anymore, so he figured he might as well mess everything up for everyone else.

But would Kayden really give up that easily? That wasn't like him.

It seemed impossible, but then again...

Lately impossible things had been happening a lot.

"I need to know if Varius is here," I whispered quietly.

Kylan didn't look at me, just kept his gaze forward.

"Not here," he said under his breath. "Keep walking."

So I did.

Not that it stopped my mind from spinning, because once we had entered the palace and walked through the halls, I realized just how empty it was. There were no servants, no mistresses, no children, no nobles...

Something had happened while we were gone.

Something big.

When we finally reached the room, the guard outside stepped aside and Kylan pushed the door open. The moment we stepped inside, he shut it quickly and locked it.

Then he leaned back against the door and drew a long breath.



None of us said anything, but our eyes said enough.

We both let out quiet chuckles at the same time.

Not happy ones. I guess it came with both of us being so baffled our brains didn't know how else to react.

"We should've never left—"

"Wouldn't have made a difference," Kylan shook his head. "I knew he was up to something, and I suppose this is it..."

His words trailed off, and his expression suddenly shifted as his eyes grew wide.

"What's wrong?" I asked. A silly question, really. What wasn't wrong at this point?

Kylan rushed across the room and dropped to his knees beside the bed. I stepped closer as he reached underneath it.

"No," he said in a stressed voice.

"What is it?" I asked quickly.

His arm moved around under the frame, searching frantically. But when he couldn't find what he was searching for, he slammed his fist against the side of the bed so hard it shook.

Even Thorne had lost his cool and jumped off his shoulder, flapping his wings.

"Fuck!"

My stomach dropped as I took another step forward, and then I finally



realized.

The box...

That was the last spot we had hidden it, and it was gone.

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