



Chapter 439

Day 2

Violet

Day two felt no different, but I had a gut feeling that it would be worse.

Although Kylan had managed to save the night yesterday, this was not how I expected my morning to go. Still, I sat in the same courtroom, in the same seat, with Kylan beside me again. It was like nothing had moved forward, and we were stuck in the same moment.

My fingers rested in my lap as I glanced around the crowd below me. It was packed again. The council had returned, the nobles, the bloodroses, including Fergus, and mistresses, though some had skipped day two, perhaps fearing they would meet Lady Mona's fate as well.

There were newer faces as well that I hadn't seen before, all gathered like this was some kind of spectacle they couldn't afford to miss.

I had expected to be summoned again, and the king did not disappoint. I was pretty certain today was not yet my day, but of course, he needed me here to sit and watch.

My eyes lifted to the king. He stood in front of the bench, his arms crossed. I looked at him for a second too long, causing his gaze to find mine. A slow smirk pressed across his lips, and he seemed completely unshaken.

I doubted yesterday went the way he expected, and knew he would go even harder today. Shock went through me as he lifted his hand and waved at me.

Why was he waving?

My brows drew together as I stared in confusion, but then I lifted my own



hand and waved back. As soon as I did, he dropped his arm and his smirk with it, replaced with a flustered expression.

My hand stiffened in the air.

What was that all about?

Lumia sighed within me, and Kylan chuckled at the situation.

"Is he your friend now?"

Ah, so that was it. I wasn't supposed to wave at him. I released a soft scoff, nudging Kylan's shoulder. "Shut it."

Suddenly, three loud slams echoed through the room again, and the flashbacks from yesterday returned. "Silence!"

The noise from the crowd faded as everyone looked at him.

The king.

He cleared his throat. "We will start again."

Same as yesterday, he began to pace across the floor while his hands were behind his back. He pretended to be in deep thought, while we all knew this had already been planned out.

His gaze swept over the room, over every person, and it lingered just long enough to make them all uneasy. It made me uneasy.

I shifted closer to Kylan, leaning my body into his. I knew it was ridiculous, but I had always believed somehow that if I stayed close enough, he could shield me from whatever was about to happen next.

He adjusted slightly to make space for me before his hand found mine.

"Yesterday was...difficult," the king continued, squinting a single eye. "But necessary!"

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Necessary for whom?

Necessary for what?

I was sure everyone had their opinions, but no one spoke. No one dared.

"The accused will know their fate tomorrow."

A grin grew on his lips. "You should know that this king cares about you. He wants to help Lyperia, and he wants to assure you...he will do whatever it takes to get what he wants."

His eyes searched mine, then he rolled them as he looked away.

"And that is to bring everything back to the way it is supposed to be."

A knot formed in my stomach. He wasn't talking about the kingdom, he was talking about bringing Adelaide and Alaric back. And even that part still sounded strange.

"The next individuals on my list..."

There were fewer murmurs than yesterday as the crowd was fully immersed, waiting for whatever crazy stunt the king would pull next.

"I almost don't want to say, because it is a pity," he said with a laugh. "Especially considering the royal made stood in this very room not too long ago, convincing this court to aid them."



The shift was immediate, and every head turned to look at me.

I didn't see much of it because I had dropped my gaze as fast as I could, my hand squeezing Kylan's.

I knew it.

This was about the witches.

My breath hitched, my chest rose and fell way too fast to the point I feared I might faint. This was already too much, and now that it had practically been confirmed that I would have to stand there and explain myself tomorrow, I didn't know what to think.

I couldn't do that.

A warm hand settled on my thigh. "Relax," Kylan whispered. "He's just trying to scare you."

I swallowed, forcing myself to nod, even though it didn't feel okay. Not even close.

And the feeling got even worse when the doors opened. For some reason, the sound of the heavy door that filled the room felt ten times louder in my head.

When the crowd reacted, I forced myself to look up, already fearing what I would see. It was a group of mountain witches, cuffed together with chains binding their wrists. It was...disgusting.

So disgusting, it made me want to get up there and smack the king in the face.

There were men, women, and elders included. There were more than I



could count at first glance. Fifteen, maybe more, but not all of them.

As they moved further into the room, people began to shift away as if a group of monsters had just walked inside. But they didn't do it for them. The witches.

They did it for the one who had entered behind them.

My heart shattered into pieces as I looked at the man who could barely walk as it was, being dragged inside by two guards like he was nothing. Literally dragged.

Varius...

He looked weak, exhausted. His skin had lost its color, and he almost looked like a corpse. He looked like he wasn't even supposed to be here anymore.

This isn't it.

This isn't how this is supposed to go.

My fingers curled into the seat beside me, pressing down hard as I leaned forward slightly.

I didn't know what I would do, what I could do, but I couldn't just sit here and watch...this.

They were my people.

This was unacceptable.

"Don't do anything reckless," Kylan warned, his eyes boring into mine. I gave him a quick nod and looked ahead.

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"Bow to your king," one of the guards barked, right before he shoved Varius to the ground. So roughly, his knees hit the hard tiles with a thud.

Gasps broke out instantly.

A low hum came from Varius as he lifted his head until his eyes found the king. His body might've been weak, but his eyes were determined.

"You are no king of mine."



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