

## Chapter 441

Day 2

Violet

Kylan looked to the side, his eyes locking with Fergus, who had already taken a step back. Then they returned to the king.

"If you believe Varius deserves punishment for taking responsibility," Kylan's voice carried through the entire room. "Then so do we."

Murmurs spread instantly. Everyone understood what he had just done.

My breath caught as I got up and stood with him, not even knowing why. I knew he had probably thought this through, but that didn't stop me from wanting to pull him back down so he wouldn't speak any longer.

He hadn't just defended Varius, but had placed himself on the same level as the witches who were casting spells for Baelor. He made it impossible for the king to single them out, and that could be dangerous.

The king was the king, but he was the crown prince. Yet he had always been so convinced that the king wouldn't get rid of him.

An exhausted breath escaped from the king's lips, and he rubbed his temple. This most likely wasn't part of his plan either, but once again, with Elyx one could never know.

His eyes suddenly widened as he let out a short laugh. "This is an interesting turn of events," he said, pacing again. "But..." He lifted his finger in the air. "Now that you mention it...I do seem to recall you insisting on restoring the Lyperian stone," he said. "Begging, even."

His hands rested behind his back as he stopped walking, his gaze moving



between Kylan and the rest of the court. "You were almost on your knees, and look at what that has brought us!"

He seemed to be seeking validation from the court, and he got exactly what he wanted.

Kylan's expression did not change. The same calm rested on his face, though he must have also known how difficult it would be to recover from this.

I could already imagine what they were thinking. 'The kingdom had been fine without the stone, without the crown prince's involvement, and now witches were using its power for the wrong reasons.'

"Do not worry. The kingdom will forgive you," the king added.

There was already a noticeable shift in the way people looked at him. They were giving him side eyes, looks of disgust, whispering...

And all of this could've been prevented if I had just...

No.

I couldn't.

"I cannot allow my son, the crown prince, to take the blame for doing the right thing. Unlike that man over there, he does not lead these people, so yes, he bears responsibility, but I won't let him take the full blame for these..." he gestured vaguely toward the witches, his nose scrunching. "Savages."

There seemed to be a lot that the king was missing here. Even though none of it was true, Kylan never said he was responsible. He said they both were. Was the king really that dense?



"Either way, it's always a joy to see my son care so much about politics," he chuckled. "And that's why I would like to hear from him...what should happen to them."

I felt an uneasy feeling in my chest and forced myself to sit down. He had cornered him again, and no way out of this didn't cost something.

Just how far was he willing to go?

I followed the direction of Kylan's eyes, and they traveled to Varius. There was a moment of understanding as the two looked at each other. It wasn't something people would understand, but I did.

They had discussed something down there in those dungeons. Something I was most likely not aware of.

When Varius gave him a small nod, my heart started racing.

"Varius of the mountains," Kylan began, taking a small breath, "should be banished from Lyperia."

A wave of agreement followed, but that didn't stop Kylan from speaking. "He should take a portion of the Lyperian stone, as it is the witches' right and the source of their power. He should take those who have not taken part in this...and leave Lyperia for good."

Kylan snapped his head to look at me for just a second, but that was all I needed to know how sorry he felt. But he didn't have to be.

"It's okay," I mouthed.

He had found a way to save Varius, to save the witches, but the fate of the others...that's what would remain a mystery.

It was complicated. Because yes, they had made a mistake, a really bad



mistake, but they were still my people. I could still talk to them, get through to them...

They could still change.

"What about the guilty witches?" the king asked. "What do you think should happen to them?"

A grin reached the king's face. He knew exactly how Kylan would answer, and truthfully, he didn't have much of a choice. He could not say, in front of his people who followed the Moon Goddess, that the king should spare Baelor's followers.

"They..." Kylan breathed, shaking his head. "Should be transferred to Prison Island and await judgment by the High Court—"

"That would surely be execution!" the king interrupted, rubbing his hands. This time, the reaction was stronger. "Good thinking, son!"

"Burn those witches at the stake if they refuse to live by Lyperia's ways!" someone shouted.

To them, this was the most reasonable solution they had heard all day. It was so clear to me that Kylan disagreed, but this was unfortunately out of his hands.

The king had exposed himself yet again. Yesterday hadn't gone the way he wanted. I didn't give him the reaction he wanted, and now he was pushing harder.

He knew I didn't want those witches to die, and I was pretty certain he didn't care much either. Because if he did, he surely would've dealt with him first.

The one who was probably the biggest Baelor worshipper present in this



room.

My gaze swept across the room until it stopped on him.

Kayden.

It felt as if my heart had stopped beating, as a pair of cold eyes had already locked onto mine. He shook his head in disapproval and mouthed something clear.

'Stop him.'

Kayden's jaw was set, his eyes darker than yesterday when the king had supposedly betrayed him by sending Lady Mona to the dungeons, or even when he had first entered this room.

Stop him?

I declined silently with a simple shake of my head and fixed my gaze forward. I had a sudden change of mind, and Kayden wanting me to stop him only made me want to do the opposite.

Maybe these witches were bad.

My hands were in my lap, and I looked right in time to see the king's mouth move in an exhale. His face was relaxed, and everything had fallen into place exactly how he wanted.

"My people," he began. "It seems my son has made a mistake...one he will no doubt work very hard to correct, and he has already made a start today."

A few people in the crowd nodded along. "And that's why I will take his request into consideration!" he said. "Tomorrow, I will deliver my final sentence!"



Tomorrow...

Everything kept leading back to that third day, and today had already been hard. The exhale that escaped me made me realize I had been holding my breath until now.

I frowned, feeling Kylan's eyes on me, and turned my body just enough to face him. He had this look on his face as if he were trying to see through me, to find out if I was really okay.

I forced a small smile and extended my hand. Once my fingers brushed against his, he accepted and allowed me to pull him back down again. As he sat, my hand never left his.

He parted his lips. "I'm sorry," he breathed.

I gave him a light nudge. "Don't be."

I should have been the one to say sorry because I knew what that had cost him. Varius had warned us back in the mountains. Whether the stone would be restored by father and son's hands or by the power of my eyes, someone would have to take the blame.

Kylan didn't do anything. I convinced him to go to those mountains, and I would have done it again because those poor people were sick, but I had never intended for it to end like this.

Sending those witches to Prison Island without a fair trial would be harsh. I didn't believe the high court would give them one anyway. I knew it wasn't what Kylan wanted, but it wasn't what Kayden wanted either. Just for that reason alone, it felt like it was probably the right thing to do, even if it hurt.

My fingers tightened slightly around his. "You did what you had to do," I



murmured. "I think Kayden is behind it. He told me to stop you—"

"Guards!" the king called out.

Kylan frowned, and I suspected his thoughts circled back to the words I hadn't finished. He understood where I was going with this.

"Take the prisoners back to the dungeons!"

With the king's command, movement started again. Guards stepped forward, preparing to lead the witches away, when a voice suddenly broke through.

"I disagree with the crown prince!" Kayden shouted, making everyone freeze. "His way is not the right way!"

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