

Chapter 444

Kylan

With the lockdown, the East Wing was as dead as every other corner inside the palace. It was already a well-known fact that it wasn't exactly the happiest wing in the palace, but today it was worse than any other day.

Determined, I made my way over to the window where I knew I would find Kayden.

He didn't disappoint. I turned around the corner and stared straight at his back. He looked out of the window, his shoulders stiff and tense like he had been standing there for a long time, trying to figure out where it all went wrong.

Good.

If he had truly done what I had expected, this was exactly what he deserved.

Kayden let out a scoff, but he didn't turn. "What do you want, Kylan?" he asked, frustrated.

I felt a twitch in my jaw. "Enjoying the view?"

My footsteps were slow as I settled beside him, looking out of the window myself, straight at the garden. Below us were violets. The same violets he had supposedly requested in her honor, only to screw her over again and again.

I exhaled. "I want to talk."

A dry laugh escaped his throat. "Now you want to talk."



"Now I have questions."

Questions?

Kayden turned his head to look at me and met me with an angry frown. Behind that anger, all I could see were tired eyes, and believe it or not, those red streaks in his hair suddenly didn't seem as bright anymore.

"Your mother is in the dungeons," I stated. "The woman who's done everything for you. She defended you, protected you, and looked the other way every time you did something unforgivable."

He clenched his teeth. "Thank you for the wonderful news, Kylan! I had no idea. It wasn't like I was right there when it happened yesterday or anything."

I couldn't help but chuckle. "She is there because of you."

Those tired eyes suddenly became dark. Then they switched to guilt, and this time I truly wanted to believe it wasn't pretend.

"I didn't want that to happen," he said, explaining himself.

"But it did."

I had many questions that didn't need to be answered because I was already certain, but more than that, I just wanted to fuck him over. I wanted to get him as angry as possible before I would hit him with the final blow.

About Camille...

Kayden tilted his head from side to side, staring at me, daring me to keep going. I gave him what he wanted.



"You've been working with him this whole time, haven't you?" I said with a confident smile plastered on my face. "You and the king...the two of you had some kind of deal going on."

Kayden straightened his head and blinked. He wanted me to continue.

"That night...you somehow made contact with the witch, Gloria, gave those witches the order to cast that spell...sold them out afterward when your plan failed, and the king needed something to get to Violet, and now they're rotting in the dungeons while you stand here...feeling sorry for yourself."

Still nothing.

His face was like stone.

"You thought nothing would happen to them because he promised you," I went on. "You give him what he wants, he gives you what you want...but he threw you off."

My eyes lowered to his throat, and when it bobbed, I knew I was getting close. I didn't know yet what it exactly was that Kayden had been after, but I knew something more was going on.

"A piece of advice from someone who got treated like shit by that man for years," I chuckled. "He is a manipulative liar who cares for no one but himself, and you were stupid enough to think you were different...special...that he wouldn't turn on you like he turns on everyone," I told him. "But I suppose you don't have the right to be angry because the two of you are the same."

His nostrils flared, and a quiet hum left him. "And now you're freaking out...and I don't know what you've told the king, but you aren't completely stupid, so you must realize now...if he's willing to do all of



that...what makes you think he won't tell everyone it was you who killed Chrystal? That's unless you didn't tell him, of course."

His hands curled into fists, and his breathing turned rapid. He played a dangerous game, and now he was realizing he was never a player at all. Just another piece.

"The only thing giving you some sort of hope is that you've managed to pin it all on Nate," I said. "Because you wanted to make him the sacrificial lamb for standing up to you that day and beating you up..."

"Oh yeah?"

"Yes!" A laugh escaped me. "You never forget, Kayden. That is who you are!"

His eyes flickered.

"So it was either him or Sora because she hit you unconscious, embarrassed you," I went on. "But you knew I didn't care about Sora. You knew Nate would hurt more, so you told the king to go after him...Nate. So the two of you could both get what you wanted."

Kayden's lips curled into a smile, and he shrugged.

"Am I right or not?"

He exhaled and turned back to the window, like he couldn't face me anymore.

"Do you have a plan?"

"What?"

"Varius, the witches, Violet...my mother." His voice was flat and empty,



but not mentioning Dylan and Trinity, the ladies-in-waiting, or Nate, told me all I needed to know. "I mean, I know Violet will be safe, but if the king doesn't let the others go...do you have a plan?"

"A plan?" I nearly chortled. "After those witches prayed to their Lord Baelor for this kingdom's downfall..."

"That wasn't their fault," Kayden said, his voice trembling slightly.

"Then whose was it?"

He snapped his head as if he was going to attack, but before it could get any further, he calmed himself with a deep breath. "No plan, I suppose?"

"I think you have other things to worry about."

"What should I worry about?"

"Camille..."

I watched his whole body go stiff. The color left his face as he grabbed my collar. I pushed him off and brushed myself clean.

"What about her?" Kayden asked. "Is she dead? Did he kill her? I-I asked Dad, but he refused to say..."

"She's safe and sound, under the king's protection."

His brows knitted. "What?"

"While you were busy plotting and scheming, she got close to him. Very close," I said. "You might've wondered, at some point, how the king came to know all your plans, but your maid betrayed you for a title. And tomorrow there will be a ceremony. He wants to make her my mistress."



Kayden's face twisted into something ugly I had never seen before, and it made me worry for a split second if this had indeed been the best choice. His whole body was shaking, hands trembling, his eyes wild.

"No."

"Yes."

"No, he can't. You can't!" he shouted. "She's mine! She belongs to me. Everyone knows, and I won't allow it!"

There was pure desperation, almost heartbreak. He didn't care for many people, but he cared for her more than he would like to admit, and if he hadn't exposed himself that day...

If he hadn't reacted when I had forced her to the ground in front of Chrystal's grave...we wouldn't have been here.

"You love Violet, and you wouldn't do this to her," he said, a laugh escaping him.

"Well, I made my own deal with the king," I explained. "Help with the Lyperian stone in return for a mistress. Not much I can do about it."

"I'd rather die than allow it," Kayden roared.

A smirk appeared on my face. "I do not want you to die," I said. I lifted my hand and brushed his shoulder. "If she says she's yours...you'll do something about it."

With that being said, I left Kayden behind and walked off. The talk went better than expected.

This was what I had planned from the start, and it had turned out well. Kayden would lose control tomorrow, possibly make a scene, and stop



the ceremony. And I knew he would do it because he had almost done it today.

Kayden wasn't afraid to speak up.

The first issue had been taken care of, but unfortunately, that wouldn't be the only thing tomorrow, and I had yet to come up with a plan.

I quickened my pace, eager to get back to Violet, and found myself in the most comfortable wing again. The last thing I desired was for her to be alone in that room all day, but tomorrow it would all be over, with or without a plan.

"No!"

I was about halfway when I heard a familiar voice cry out.

"Let me go! I just want to see my mom! Please!"

I turned around immediately.

Kiora...

My heart dropped when I looked behind me and saw my sister. Two guards held her by her arms, dragging her down the hall like she was some sort of criminal while she was kicking and screaming.

Her face was all red, soaked with tears. Kiora was just a kid, a princess, and they were treating her like this.

"Hey!"

The guards looked up and froze, as did Kiora, as I marched over, rage taking over. "Let go of her. Now!" I demanded before even reaching them.



They looked at each other. One opened his mouth like he was going to argue, probably about to say something about the king's orders. I didn't let him.

"I said let her go!"

They dropped her arms and backed off. "I apologize, Your Highness," one of the guards said. "The princess has been standing in front of the queen's waiting room, and the king—"

"I do not care," I said, finally reaching them. "Do not let me see you touch her again."

"Yes, Your Highness."

"Now go."

Both guards bowed before almost running away. Kiara released a broken gasp, stumbled forward, and almost hit the ground, but I caught her just in time. She collapsed against my chest, sobbing and shaking.

"Kylan..." she bawled, her tears soaking through my shirt.

"I'm here." I wrapped my arms around her tightly. "It's okay."

"Okay?" She pulled back enough to look at me, her eyes red, swollen, and angry. "Don't tell me you're here when you haven't," she said, hitting my chest. "You forgot about me, Kaelis forgot about me, and I haven't seen anyone! I'm not allowed in court, I-I barely know anything, they won't let me see Mom!"

"I know—"

"No, you don't know because you only care about Violet!" Kiara said. "I've been alone this whole time, and I'm so scared, Kylan."



Looking into her eyes, my chest hurt. She had been right to call me out. I had been so focused on everything else. The trial, the dungeons, Kayden, Violet...

I forgot about the one stuck in the middle who didn't even understand what was happening. Kiora was only fourteen and shouldn't be dealing with any of this.

"You're right, and I'm sorry." The words felt useless now. "I'm so sorry, Kiora."

She cried harder, leaning into my arms as if she was scared I would disappear again. I held her, let her cry it out until there was nothing left. I didn't know how long we were standing there, and I didn't care.

When her sobs turned into hiccups and shaky breaths, I pulled back. "I-I want to see Mom," she pleaded. "Please!"

Her eyes went wide.

"You will see her. Let's go," I said, slinging my arm over her shoulder. She took a long breath, resting her head against me as we walked.

"I'll show you where she is."