

## Chapter 445

Kylan

Kiora led me to the queen's chambers, and it wasn't long before the two guards standing in front of the door shot her angry glances. They didn't look too happy to see us coming.

One stepped forward with his hand up.

"The queen is not allowed any visitors—"

"Open the door."

He hesitated, looking at the other guard, then back at me. "Your Highness..."

"My patience is wearing thin, and I feel like killing somebody," I said without a blink. "Unless this door opens in five seconds, it might be either one of you. Maybe both."

The two bowed their heads.

"Now open the door!"

Kiora aggressively wiped her tears. "Yes, you heard my brother!" she said. "Open it!"

I guess we were on the fourth count when the door finally opened. I placed my hand behind Kiora's back, letting her enter first.

The queen sat by the window with a book in her hands, looking way too calm and elegant for someone who had just been accused of adultery and witchcraft.



But when she saw Kiora, something cracked.

"Kiora..."

"Mom!"

The two ran to each other, and Kiora threw herself into her arms. Fresh tears streamed down her face as the queen held her tight, brushing her hair and whispering things I could barely hear.

"It's alright, Kiora. It's alright. I'm here. Mom is here."

Her eyes shifted to me, and we gave each other a nod of acknowledgement. Kiora probably needed the hug more than I did anyway.

"I was so scared, Mom," Kiora sobbed. "They wouldn't let me see you. They kept saying you weren't allowed visitors, and I didn't know what was happening, and I thought they were gonna take you away and I'd never see you again and..."

"Shh." The queen pulled back. She cupped her face and wiped her tears with her thumb.

"I hate Dad," Kiora said. "He's a monster, and I hate him!"

The queen let out a laugh, and for the first time, she did not defend him. That was rare for a change.

"Look at me," she said, lifting Kiora's chin. "You are a princess. My daughter and I need you to be brave. Can you do that?"

Kiora nodded, though her lips trembled.

"All of this will be over soon. I promise," the queen told her. "Everything



will be just fine. Your mother has survived so much worse, and she'll survive this too."

"Mom...is it true?" Kiora asked, her voice small. "What they're saying about you and...and Beta Jack?"

The room went still. The queen looked at me for a moment, but I folded my arms, waiting for her answer. I told Violet she didn't love that man, but what if she did?

Even so, the adultery was a blatant lie. She wouldn't do something like that, and neither would he.

"No, sweetheart, it's not true," the queen said, focusing on Kiora again. "People say things when they want to hurt you, but that doesn't make it true."

Relief washed over Kiora's face, and she held her again. "I knew it wasn't true!"

I kept my eyes on the two for a bit longer. That woman was many things, many secrets, but she really loved my sisters.

"What about the other accusation?" I spoke up for the first time.

The queen looked at me over Kiora's head, her eyes piercing through mine. "Also false."

Kiora laughed. "Obviously," she said, pulling away to look at me. "Mom isn't a witch. That's just ridiculous."

"Right..." I said, my eyes squinting. Because if she were one, that would mean we...no. Impossible.

"If you're not a witch," I said slowly, "then what the hell are you?"



Kiara frowned, and the queen held my gaze. Her eyes begged me to stop asking more questions, but I needed answers.

"I'm a Lycan. A mother," she said. "A mother who's survived in this palace longer than most. Learned to adapt, endure, and that's all."

She was lying.

I knew she was lying about something, and had known so for a while now. On the night of Kaelis's howl, she spoke of Adelaide and Alaric and how she remembered everything while everyone else forgot.

The king hadn't forgotten, and Violet had already told me why, but it was not normal that everyone but her memory had been wiped clean.

There was more to it.

And then that thing she said to Violet, about burying the dangerous part of herself...

But I didn't push. The queen was a stubborn woman, and she had already decided she wouldn't tell. This was pointless.

"How is your big sister doing? Have you seen Kaelis?"

Kiara shook her head. "I have looked everywhere, but I haven't seen her, and I'm worried," Kiara shared. "She loves Nate so much, and Dad just... I'm worried..."

"Kaelis is doing fine!" I interrupted. The two gave me questioning looks. "She is doing her own thing...but she is doing fine for now," I told them. "As a matter of fact, I was just going to check up on her."

That definitely wasn't part of my plan, but it was the best step toward not being a shitty brother for once.



Kiora shot me a warm smile. "Tell her I miss her...and I do not think you're a bad brother, Kylan. Thank you."

The queen nodded, her eyes softening. "Be careful tomorrow, Kylan," she said. "Whatever you're planning...you and Violet need to be careful."

Well, for now, the plan was that there was no plan.

"I will."

I walked out the door, preparing to find Kaelis, but not without teaching those guards a lesson. I stood in front of them, watching them try to look anywhere but into my eyes.

"I know the two of you have nothing much going for you except standing in front of doors all day and kissing the king's butt, but princess Kiora needs her mom," I said, keeping my voice calm. "This is her palace, and if she wants to see her mom, she will see her mom. If I hear anyone tries to stop her ever again..."

I left it there, unfinished. I wouldn't even be here anymore in a few days, but I just wanted to get the point across. I was sure the queen would do the same after all of this was finally over.

At least they got it.

I saw them swallow, their faces going pale, and turned to leave without another word.

While my plan had originally been to get back to Violet as soon as possible, I was now on my way to the place I suspected Kaelis to be.

The library.

I told her to stop sulking and do something about it, and knowing Kaelis,



that was probably what she had been trying to do.

An impossible mission.

Once I stood in front of the door of the huge library, the flashbacks returned. This was where it had all started with the box, and there was no telling what would have happened if we hadn't.

I drew a breath and pushed open the heavy door before entering. I didn't have to walk far to see Kaelis, where I expected her to be.

She sat at one of the tables, surrounded by a huge stack of books. A small breath escaped me as I looked at my sister. Her hair was a mess, dark circles were under her eyes, and she wore the same dress I had last seen her in.

Did I push her to this?

She whispered as she read through one of the books and seemed so focused that she hadn't even noticed me walking in.

She had been here the whole time. While everyone fell apart, she had picked herself back up and was here, working and searching.

"Kaelis?"

The whispers stopped, replaced by a gasp as she lifted her head to look at me. "Kylan, you're finally here!"

She scrambled up, almost knocking over the books. Papers went everywhere, but she didn't care.

"I found something!" she said, moving toward me. I held out my arms, just in case she would faint, but she didn't need any help. Her eyes were bright even through the exhaustion.



"I..I'm so close to ending this!" she beamed. "I did what you told me to do, made myself useful, read through all the Lyperian law books, and I think I actually found something to stop all of this!"

Impossible.

"Tell me."

She shook her head, smiling brightly. "I can't explain yet. It's complicated, and I still need to write it all down, remember it so I won't look like a fool, but I have a plan. For Nate...for everyone!"

"Kaelis..."

She seemed so hopeful, and that was the part that got to me. I felt bad for her.

"I know how it sounds." She grabbed my hands. I had to admit, her grip was quite strong for someone running on no sleep.

"But you have to trust me, please," she begged. "Do not come up with your own plan, do not do anything reckless tomorrow, just let me handle it...please!"

"Kaelis..."

"I would never play with Nate's life. I love him!"

Her voice was determined, jaw set as she confessed. "You have to believe me and let me do this. I have a way to stop this!"

I dragged a hand over my face and let out a laugh. Yes, I didn't have a plan, and if I did have one, it would probably have been something reckless like breaking everyone out if I had to. Whatever it took.



But here was Kaelis, almost fainting from lack of sleep, begging me to trust her...because she loved Nate, and would never bet on his life.

My little sister spent days in a library refusing to give up on someone she loved. Someone I thought she wasn't allowed to love.

I was wrong about that...so who was I to question her? I should have believed her then, but it was not too late to believe her now.

"Okay."

Her face lit up. "Really?"

"Yes...and don't make me regret —"

She hugged me before I could finish. "Thank you, thank you!" she whispered. "Thank you, Kylan. I won't let you down! I will be there tomorrow. I promise!"

I chuckled. She had grown up quite a bit in a few days and found strength I didn't know she had.

"Kiora misses you."

Her eyes widened. "Kiora?"

I rested my hands on her shoulders. "Yes, she's okay now. But she's worried about you, and she misses you."

Kaelis nodded. "I'll talk to her after all of this is over!"

"Yes," I sighed. "And hopefully get some sleep. You—"

"Smell?"

"No—"



"Look like crap?"

"No—"

"Is it my breath—"

"No, just breathe and relax," I said, squeezing her shoulder. A laugh escaped her.

"I will, after tomorrow!" she said with a smile. "Until then, I need you to leave me alone. I need to get back to work right away!"

She was already making her way back to the table, full of renewed energy. "Kylan?"

She looked over her shoulder. "I promise everything is going to be okay. I really believe that."

I wanted to believe it too.

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