

Chapter 447

Day 3

Violet

Unite the kingdom...

Gasps and excited whispers spread through the crowd, and people leaned toward each other, trying to guess what it could be. Kayden shoved past the people around him until he had a clear view. Then he looked at Camille and let out a shocked laugh.

The disappointment, the disbelief, the betrayal...

It was all over his face.

The king didn't say what ceremony. People probably assumed it would be another mistress for him, but we knew better than that.

"However," the king continued, his voice dropping, "before we can celebrate, we must deal with something unfortunate."

He clasped his hands behind his back and began pacing. "Murder accomplices, conspirators, those who have threatened the safety of this kingdom."

He cleared his throat and looked toward the guards. Then he lifted his hand.

"What's happening?" I whispered.

The guards moved toward the four. Lian, Sora, Dylan, and Trinity. They were respectful enough not to grab them, and the four looked at each other before they all stood.



My heart beat faster as they walked toward the center of the room. Time was ticking, and Kaelis still wasn't here yet. Nate wasn't here yet.

I caught movement from the corner of my eye and watched as another guard made his way up. Toward me.

We were fighting against the same crimes. The king found it necessary to involve me too, so I already knew this would happen. And this time I wouldn't let Kylan save me.

"Please don't stop me," I whispered to Kylan. "There's no stopping this."

"Stop you?"

He had been so focused on Kayden, he hadn't caught on yet. I let go of his hand and got up before anyone could reach me or drag me down like some criminal. Because if I was going down there, I would do it on my own terms.

Kylan released a sigh, finally understanding what was happening. The crowd reacted immediately as they watched me, the royal mate, rise from her seat and walk.

I made my way down the stairs, down the path, my head held high and my steps steady. My gaze landed on the others. The queen and Varius, who gave me a comforting nod.

Then I walked further and looked from Kayden's cold gaze to Fergus and Sonya, who seemed ready to jump in at any moment.

I kept walking until I stood in the center with the others, and before I could settle, Trinity already had her hand in mine. Dylan stood on the other side, and Lian and Sora behind us.



"Did they hurt you?" Dylan whispered.

I shook my head.

"Where's Nate?" Trinity asked, her voice worried.

Lian's voice was low. "Dungeons," she muttered. "He looked pretty bad the last time I saw him."

My stomach dropped. Pretty bad. What did that even mean? How bad was bad?

"Sora," I whispered, glancing back. "Are you okay?"

Her lips started trembling. Her eyes were wet and red, and she looked like she might collapse any second. "Ye—"

"Stop talking!"

The king's voice cut through the quiet conversation. Sora flinched so hard she let out a small whimper. Lian immediately grabbed her hand and pulled her closer.

The sound of the door opening hit me once more, and I looked back.

Would it be Kaelis?

At last?

My heart sank.

It wasn't...

True walked in. Her steps were slow, head lowered, and she looked broken. Defeated. Whatever fight she had left in her had been drained completely. That woman didn't want to be here.



"True!" Jack called out from where he sat with the other accused. "Do not do this! Look at me!"

She didn't react, didn't even lift her head. Just kept walking until she joined the crowd and disappeared into it.

I turned forward again, and when I looked up at that hideous smile, a chill went through me.

"We are here today," the king began, "because Chrystal Wyrmsbane has been murdered."

He looked at all of us. "And these five..." He gestured toward us. "Played a part in it."

The room erupted, possibly the loudest it had been over these days. People were almost screaming, talking over each other. It was chaos.

But what bothered me most wasn't the noise. It was the look on Camille's face. That calm, knowing expression.

What was she up to?

There was still no clarity on whether the king knew of Kayden's involvement, but if he didn't, could that mean she had at least spared him out of pity? What was going on...

"They were there when it happened, plotted it as a group, and encouraged the killer," the king continued over the noise. "And soon, the killer himself will stand before you!"

Encouraged?

We all glanced at each other, confused and lost. It was obvious that we weren't really the target in the beginning, but he had changed his mind.



He was determined to ruin their reputation. Drag us through the mud because they were my people, and I refused to help him.

That's all this was.

He had lost his cool yesterday with Varius and the witches because he couldn't handle all Cecilia threw at him the first day, felt embarrassed, and had to punish someone for it to take back control. But really, all he had been doing this entire time was building toward one thing.

Nate...

He could do so much more with him because he had locked up Jack, had True under his spell. He had isolated him to the point either me or Kylan had to jump in.

"That's not what happened," Dylan whispered beside me.

The king's head snapped toward him. "What did you say, Bloodrose boy?"

Dylan raised his voice. "I said that's not what happ—"

"I do not care. How do you plead? Guilty or not guilty?"

Dylan froze. His eyes found Fergus in the crowd.

Fergus shook his head slowly. It was a message.

Just do whatever he wants and get it over with.

Fergus was a smart man. He must have seen it too. That none of this was happening without a reason, and that the others weren't exactly his target. He was just doing it to get to me.



It wasn't like he would send anyone to prison island. That would be insane.

But being accused of helping someone plot a murder would be enough for Lian and Sora to be removed from court. It would break their family's reputation. Dylan and Trinity could get expelled from Starlight. Me too, possibly.

Dylan clenched his jaw. "Not guilty."

The king looked at Trinity. "Not guilty," she said firmly.

Lian repeated it, but Sora's voice trembled so badly I barely heard her. "N-not guilty."

Then the king's eyes landed on me. We stared at each other, neither of us looking away. He wasn't just waiting for an answer.

He was waiting for me to stop all of this and beg him to get that box so we could open it. And Goddess, I was so close to actually doing it, but I couldn't. I promised I wouldn't.

What I truly wanted to say was the truth. Kayden did it, and he did it because I'm a witch. Chrystal found out, threatened to expose me, and he couldn't take it because he is obsessed with me. Or used to be.

But that wouldn't end well. If Adelaide and Alaric were here, they would've told me not to do it. They already did.

What would be the point, even?

The king would just deny it. Call me insane, and everyone would believe him. They would ask how Kayden could've possibly killed anyone in the state he was in back then. In that wheelchair, helpless.



Because they all underestimated him without any real reason. They always had.

After a long moment, I sighed.

“Not guilty.”

The king laughed loudly, tilting his head to Camille, who giggled with him. He then looked down at us again.

“You all lie so comfortably,” he said, shaking his head like he was genuinely surprised. “But I have two witnesses. Two people who can confirm you were indeed there that day, and one of them who can tell us exactly who killed her...and why.”

“Camille...True...and Madam Renata.”

Madam Renata?

My blood ran cold as the king's smirk grew wider. “And with that, it's also time to reveal the killer. We saved the best for last.”

Everyone's heads snapped toward the doors, and even I couldn't stop myself from looking.

“Give it up for the brother of the century. Nate Wyrmsbane.”