

Chapter 448 PT.1

Day 3

Violet

The doors opened, and two guards dragged him in. His head hung low, and his body looked limp. When they pulled him closer, I finally saw his face, and my heart shattered into pieces.

He looked completely broken, zoned out, and it wasn't hard to see that he had been through hell. He was still Nate, and he looked the same...but the spark wasn't there anymore.

It had disappeared the same way it had with Sora.

And Kaelis still wasn't here yet...

The crowd erupted.

"Murderer!"

"Disgrace!"

"How could he do that to that poor girl! Your own sister!"

People screamed over each other, pointing the finger at him like they had already decided the king's voice was the only one they should trust. My eyes traveled to Kylan, and my heart broke even more after seeing his face.

He had gotten up from the bench, his hand squeezing the railing so hard his knuckles had gone white.

Kylan looked like he was seconds away from doing something he

couldn't take back, and so was I. Because he wasn't supposed to be standing there...

When I looked at the king, I caught him already staring at me. His lips were pursed, and that proud smirk on his face was almost saying, I told you this would happen.

"Nate?"

Jack's broken voice cracked through the noise.

Nate's eyes widened for a moment, and life flickered behind them as he looked over his shoulder. "Dad?"

Jack tried to get up, but a guard shoved him back down immediately. He struggled, fought, but they held him there. "Let me talk to my son! Let me —"

"Stop it!" the king shouted.

Nate got dragged to the center, right next to me. His eyes met mine, and even then, they weren't quite what I had expected. I don't know what I expected. Maybe anger, blame, hatred...

But there was only emptiness. He had already accepted whatever was coming and didn't have the energy to feel anything anymore. I looked up and down until I forced myself to stare at his chained hands, seeing a candy wrapped in gold and blue through his balled fist. It looked like something that kept him calm.

"Nate..." I whispered, unsure of what to say. I guess I wanted to apologize, but the words got stuck.

"It's okay," Nate muttered, looking away. "Don't feel sorry."



The king cleared his throat. "Nate Wyrnsbane," he announced loudly. "You stand here today for the murder of Chrystal Wyrnsbane. For standing behind your father's adultery, and for the use of Lunaris."

He tilted his head. "How do you plead? Guilty...or not guilty?"

Nate turned his head until he could see Kylan, whose hands still hadn't left the railing. He gave Nate a simple look, and then that thing happened that would always happen between them. Just that one look was enough for the two to understand each other. But I didn't..

Nate turned forward again, shaking his head slowly. "I might be guilty," he said.

What?

"I might not be."

The crowd reacted immediately, and confused looks were everywhere.

Well...that started off great!

The king raised a brow. "Do not confuse me with these unclear answers. Elaborate."

Nate looked directly at him. "My father, Jack Wyrnsbane, is a great man. A loyal beta who would never betray you." His voice was steady now. Much stronger. "And you should know that better than anyone."

People looked at each other, either agreeing or disagreeing.

More murmurs spread through the room.

"I would never kill my sister," Nate continued. "I don't know where she is. The last time I saw her...she was pretty shaken up by the false

promises you made her."

The crowd glanced at each other like they didn't know what to believe anymore. Nate exhaled slowly. "And the Lunaris...I might've used it," he admitted. "I had an injury once, and I did use it...and I might've taken more than I should have." He shrugged weakly. "I don't know that for certain. I'm not a doctor."

The crowd went wild with shock, some with disgust, others like they pitied him. My mouth literally fell open.

Why did he do that?

Why would he admit to that?

But then I remembered the look he exchanged with Kylan.

He had asked him to hold on, and stretch time.

Kaelis really needed to hurry up now...

The king yawned dramatically and waved his arm. "Madam Renata?"

Now all attention was on her. There was complete silence as the woman made her way up the stairs. She curtsied as she passed the king and then sat down.

She didn't look pleased with the situation. Far from it. Her shoulders were stiff, hands clasped tightly in her lap...

"This woman," the king began, "has served this palace for many years. She is loyal to the crown, though some might say she's more loyal to Lady Mona. The two...confide in one another."

Suspicious murmurs spread through the crowd.



"That's right, Your Majesty," Madam Renata confirmed, her voice weak.

"You hired Sora and Lian to be ladies-in-waiting. How did that come about?"

My stomach tightened as I glanced at the two girls behind me. Madam Renata shifted uncomfortably in her seat. "Lady Mona recommended them."

"The same criminal who sits over there?" The king gestured toward Lady Mona.

A few people chuckled in disbelief.

"Violet Hastings and Trinity Richard?" the king asked. "You taught them etiquette, correct?"

Madam Renata looked around nervously, her head barely moving in a nod before the king continued.

"How did the girls get along during their lessons?"

Madam Renata took a small breath. "They started off rocky at first...but then they got along well. Too well, perhaps. They were always whispering amongst themselves."

The king smirked. "So what you're saying is...things have been tense for a while, and these girls have been showing suspicious behavior. That is what you're saying, right?"

She stuttered. "I—"

"Have you heard them discuss Chrystal Wyrnsbane?"

"Uh..."

Her eyes found mine for the first time, and my throat bobbed. It wasn't a stare of a woman who wanted to take us down, but one of a woman who regretted ever setting foot inside this courtroom.

"Did you not come to me during the first days," the king continued, "to tell me that the Moon Goddess must have made a mistake? That such a mate was unfit for the crown prince? That you could see the...mischief in those blue eyes everyone seemed to be falling for?"

"Uh..."

"I'll take that as a yes," the king stated. "Is it possible that—"

"These are all lies!"

A loud and commanding voice cut through the room, even more powerful than Fergus's had been yesterday.

It was Vincent Kai, Lian's father. His sons backed him up, repeating after him.

"Drop the charges, and let them go. These are good people!"

Some people cheered, others raised their hands at him in disagreement. The king, who didn't like getting interrupted, clicked his tongue. "Vincent Kai. One more word, and you'll find yourself in the dungeons."

Vincent didn't flinch. "You can do that," he said. "But then you'll have to explain to your people why their best fighter is in chains."

The king's nostrils flared. "Guards!"

"No, wait, he's right!" Madam Renata called out. She raised herself from her seat and slammed her hands against the table. "There must have been some kind of mistake!"

Commented [Ma1]:



Everyone froze, listening to the woman who rarely had something positive to say. "They all have pure hearts and the kindest souls," she went on. "That day...Your Majesty, that day I only told you what Lady Mona asked of me. It was all because she wanted to make Violet's time here miserable—"

"Thank you, Madam Renata!" The king's voice boomed. "I have heard enough! You may go back down now!"

He was done with her as soon as she stopped saying what he wanted to hear. At the end of the day, many people inside these palace walls shared the same traits. Not everyone, but many.

Madam Renata lowered her head and walked down the stairs quickly, disappearing back into the crowd.

She threw Lady Mona under the bus.

For us...

A dismayed sound left the king, and his eyes sharpened. Whatever had just happened with Madam Renata clearly didn't go the way he wanted.

"Camille," he said.

Camille let out an uncomfortable chuckle and gave him a quick bow. "Yes, Your Majesty."

Then she walked past him and took Madam Renata's place.

"This is Camille," the king announced. "Or soon to be...Lady Camille."

He looked across the crowd, making sure everyone heard. "She is to be the crown prince's mistress."



There were shocked faces everywhere, and the Bloodroses looked furious. Fergus's face had gone red, his jaw tight, but his eyes were fixed on the king's. By now, he must have known this was not Kylan's fault.

The king had embarrassed me so many times already that I knew how to stay calm.

"It's a privilege she has rightfully earned for doing the right thing."

"Now." The king smiled at her. "Tell them what you told me."

"Yes, Your Majesty."

Camille straightened her back, held her chin high.

"Chrystal wanted to expose Nate for his Lumaris addiction," she began. "When she confronted him...he went crazy. He took a dagger and started stabbing his twin sister."

big sale: 100 bonus free fou you

get it