

Chapter 451

Violet

Everything was spinning...

I breathed harshly, staring at the ceiling as sweat dripped down my temples. Everything burned. My lungs burned, my legs felt like they were made of sand, and I couldn't believe there was a time I really thought my life today would be better than it was two months ago.

I would rather go through all of it again.

Lyperia, Baelor, the trial, all of it.

If it meant I could avoid this exact moment.

Then again, maybe if I hadn't neglected my body the way I did, maybe if I had focused more on strength instead of...other things, I wouldn't be in this position right now.

I fought so hard, and for what? It wasn't like we were living in peaceful times either. We were still sitting on a ticking time bomb while Kian was out there somewhere with Camille. No one knew where, not even the Lyperian guards, who had quietly been looking for him to avoid humiliation.

No one had heard anything. It was silent, the same as it was in this moment.

The kind of silence that made you feel like something bad was coming and you just couldn't see it yet.

As soon as a shadow appeared above me, I let out a groan of agony. An



arm dangled over my face, and my eyes caught the green woven bracelet swinging back and forth.

Commander Jorn's smirk was as insufferable as it had been these past months. He brushed his butterscotch-colored hair to the side with his free hand.

Butterscotch...

I could really go for some right now.

"It was a cute little gesture, Hastings," Jorn said, wiggling the bracelet I had bought him. At least he had been wearing it. His smirk widened. "But unfortunately, not enough to make me go easy on you in my training!"

The whole Elite Team burst out laughing. At least they could find some joy in my suffering. I knew Kylan and Dylan weren't laughing at me, though Nate might have.

I turned my head to the right and saw Kylan lying beside me, sweat dripping down his forehead as well. A gasp escaped me as I saw his chest shaking with laughter.

That traitor.

'This wouldn't have happened if you had taken your rest last night,' he spoke through the link.

I lifted a brow. 'Oh? And how exactly was I supposed to do that?'

The corner of his mouth twitched. He knew exactly what I meant. I had been spending a lot of nights in his room, and let's just say sleeping wasn't exactly our top priority. However, whenever I did fall asleep, it wouldn't last anyway, and it was all because of that...strange dream.

"Eyes here!" Jorn barked.

I turned back to face him, my smile dropping as I caught the stern look on his face. There was some progress, because there was a smirk now. Before, that man wouldn't even show me a curl of his lips.

He walked away, shaking his head. "I should convince the school board to change the rules for next year. No mates, no marks, no secret...mind links. Nothing but focus."

I rubbed at the slight scar on my neck that was not so invisible anymore. Everyone knew, and it didn't take long for them to find out.

I heard a soft chuckle beside me.

"Despite our weak link here dropping like a sack of potatoes," Jorn continued, turning back to face the group, "I want everyone to give it up for Hastings. She has come from completely useless, and has now officially reached just below average."

Just below average.

Wow.

"Which means we can finally get to the real training," he raised his voice over the laughter. "You get to wear your uniforms again, shift, go on excursions, and maybe even one day protect the school if the Moon Goddess decides to doom us all."

The team erupted into cheers while a few called out my name with praises like I had actually done something impressive. I looked at Kylan. He had this soft smile on his face, and he shrugged like it was something to be proud of.



Being just below average...

'You've been on a roll lately,' Lumia said. 'First the mark, now this. Just below average? For someone who started from far below nothing, this is really impressive.'

Far below nothing?

Was that even a thing?

I chose to ignore her.

"Alright, you're finished for today," Jorn announced, waving a hand. "Take care of your muscles, do whatever, get out of my sight."

Finally.

And what was more perfect after early morning torture? More classes. Just what I needed.

Kylan appeared beside me, grabbing my hand to pull me to my feet. He wrapped his arm around my waist to steady me, his brown eyes filled with gentleness.

"You're tired, Pup," he said. "You should skip classes for the day and get some sleep."

"Good idea." I tilted my head. "Will you wear a blonde wig and go to Advanced Healing Techniques for me instead? Maybe take my exam for me while you're at it?"

He clicked his tongue and pushed my shoulder a little too hard. I pushed him back in response, using all my strength, but he didn't budge.



“Bye, Violet!”

It was Mandy who had called out to me from across the room. “Are we seeing you at lunch?”

“Maybe!”

She walked with the other girls, already headed toward the locker room. I had been getting closer to them since we returned from Lyperia. Everyone on the team, but Mandy especially.

She had always been kind to me, even before all of this, and I respected her since this was already her third year on the team. But lately, she had taken on more of a big sister role.

“Look at my Violet making friends,” Kylan teased. He rested his hand on my head, using me as support while tying his shoelaces. He lost his balance as Nate attacked us by slamming his arms around our shoulders.

Nate held us in a headlock, squeezing tight. Dylan was also heading our way. “Look at you two being all adorable, and guess what?”

“What?” we both said at the same time.

Nate’s lips curved into a smile. “Since my mate isn’t here yet, the two of you aren’t allowed to have fun either.”

Dylan let out a chuckle. “I think it’s a bit too late for that.”

“Oh, he’s jealous,” Nate concluded. I laughed as Nate finally released us, ruffling my hair before he moved to his next target. Dylan, who had already seen what was coming, let out an exhausted breath and slumped his shoulders right before Nate latched onto him instead.



He had been doing that a lot lately.

"You did good today, Vi," Dylan nodded. "Just below average is basically elite for someone who couldn't even stand on one foot a few months ago."

As soon as Kylan dared to laugh, I elbowed his side.

"Thanks," I said, dripping with sarcasm. Dylan was Dylan, but I knew he meant well. He just didn't always know how to say it. "It means a lot coming from you!"

~

After freshening up, we found ourselves walking through the Starlight halls toward the cafeteria. Somewhere along the way, we bumped into Trinity, who joined us.

My hand was in Kylan's as we moved as a group, people staring at us. They weren't even trying to hide it anymore. But then again, they never did. Eyes followed us everywhere, whispers starting up the moment we passed.

As if I wasn't already known as the blessed mate, the trip to Lyperia and the mark had changed everything. Everyone knew now, as word had spread within the first week of us being back, reaching all the way home. It turned out hiding a mark wasn't that easy after all.

Fergus's reaction was complicated. Yes, he had been one of the few to push Kylan to mark me, but when he found out, he was all weird about it, making up any excuse as to why we should've waited instead. I knew the Lyperia trip had spooked him, so I also knew he would eventually come around, which he did.



For the kingdom, the news of a royal mating was something great to keep their minds off their king rotting in the dungeons. That was definitely a topic that earned a lot of whispers as well, though no one dared to ask directly.

As for Chrystal...

I exhaled quietly, my shoulder brushing against Kylan's as he looked down at me. It was just me and Trinity in the dorm now.

Amy had been expelled, and as far as everyone was concerned, Chrystal too. Rumor had it she had left Starlight, and the rumor disappeared just as quickly.

No one asked questions, and no one mentioned her name. It was like she hadn't existed at all. It was actually kind of cruel and made me feel guilty. At times, I couldn't help but wonder if it was just me or all of us.

Either way, I let the thought go as quickly as it came.

It didn't matter now. A smile grew on my lips. This was what mattered. Kylan, my friends, everything that made me happy.

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