

Chapter 476

Violet

A soft sigh escaped me as Kylan's lips found my neck where he had marked me just a while ago. It was past midnight, and lightning still flickered through the rain outside. Not that either of us noticed.

My knees pressed into the mattress on either side of his hips, and my hands pushed against his bare chest as I tilted my head to give him more access.

I needed him. All of him.

His fingers dug into my waist, pulling me closer, guiding me against him in a slow rhythm that made my breath catch.

"Kylan," I sighed out. I just wanted to feel close to him again. Or so I thought...

All I had to do was fully let go, allow myself to feel, but my eyes kept opening. Every few seconds, they would find his face, searching and checking for that red glow I feared. The one he had claimed Valerius had stored away.

I really wanted to, but it was frustrating. Not being able to close my eyes and lose myself in him like before. I truly thought everything would be okay again and was ready to dive back in where we had left off.

The love was still there. My heart still present, so why wouldn't my mind cooperate?

With a torn feeling, I reached for his face instead and pulled it back to look at him. His lips were slightly swollen, mouth parted as he breathed, and his eyes...

His eyes were still that beautiful brown.

My breath rushed out, and I pressed my lips against his again. Our mouths met, harder this time. My hips rolled up against him, and whatever sound I made had his grip tightening on my waist. Feeling him harden beneath me, a wave of relief washed over me.

This wasn't bad...

But then my thoughts wandered.

To the shadow, the horns I had seen on the battlefield, and lastly those red eyes that haunted me.

Baelor.

Despite his warmth, a chill went through my body, and I immediately pulled away, my chest rising and falling with each breath.

"Hey!" Kylan blinked up at me, worried. "What's wrong?"

Guilt crashed into me, and I shook my head. "Sorry," the word tumbled out. "I'm sorry, I just...I can't, I'm sorry—"

"Don't apologize." Kylan pulled me against him, his arms wrapping around me. He rocked me back and forth, a soft chuckle escaping him. "It's okay."

"It's not," I said, laughing through the embarrassment. "It's really not."

I rolled off him and lay down on my back, staring up at the ceiling. My heart was still racing. Not from desire anymore, but from shame. From frustration at myself.

He turned to face me, propping himself up on his elbow. There was not a

single hint of disappointment on his face, but a gentle smile instead.

"Why wouldn't it be okay?"

"Because we talked things out," I said, my voice hoarse. "And I know I'll have to learn how to live with this, and I am really trying, but I still need more time before..." I gestured vaguely between us. "This."

There was a moment of silence before Kylan let out a breath. "Okay."

Okay?

That was all?

I looked at his face, puzzled.

Why was he smiling?

He pulled me into his arms, tucking my head under his chin.

"You're not angry?" I asked, trying to look up at him.

Kylan laughed and kissed the top of my head.

"If you're not ready, you're not ready," he said simply. "Just getting to hold you again is enough for me."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes," he said, determined. "You do not owe me anything, Pup. The best thing about having you in my bed again is falling asleep with you in my arms and waking up next to you. Everything else can wait."

A warmth spread through my chest. For me, it was the same. It wasn't that I didn't feel safe around him anymore, because I did. I felt saved and loved, and it didn't take me long to figure out that that wouldn't change.

Despite that thing he had inside of him.

My fingers brushed through his hair, playing with the strands at the back of his neck. It had grown quite a lot since we returned to Starlight, but I liked it this way.

I lowered my free hand to his thighs, watching him suck in a sharp breath. "Do you need some help?" I asked. "I feel kind of bad to leave you hanging."

Kylan groaned softly. He took my hand and pressed it flat against his chest, right over his heart. "I want you to go to sleep," he said. "We need enough rest for tomorrow anyway."

I leaned into him, my body relaxing against his.

"Are you sure?"

Kylan nodded.

"You're being very considerate," I murmured.

He released a snort. "I don't have dimples," he said. "So I need another way to win you over than that...Jason."

A giggle escaped me. After everything, he was still keeping himself busy with Jason. I pointed a finger in his face.

"If I hear you trying to sneak off to the bathroom while I'm asleep," I warned, "I'll get angry."

Kylan hummed, his lips curving into a smirk.

"Noted."

A yawn escaped me, and I wrapped my arms around his waist instead, burying myself in it.

We remained like that for a while, just in silence, hearing the sound of rain tapping against the windows.

Not long after, my eyelids grew heavy, and I drifted off to sleep in Kylan's arms.

~

Not again...

It was the same dream as before. The Veil, voices, the fall, and then the white light. But it followed the same pattern as the last time.

I was back on that field, the soil beneath my feet. It didn't take long before Claire...mom called out to me, and then vanished again. After that, I waited for Baelor.

For the shadow with the horns and the red eyes to come charging at me like before, but he never came.

Flustered, I looked around and was met with nothing but emptiness.

No...

This is the part where I'm supposed to wake up.

Wake up, Violet!

I squeezed my eyes shut, then opened them again. The field was gone, but it wasn't over yet. Not even close.

This time I found myself in a dark cave. Or maybe a mine? I couldn't tell.

The walls were of rough stone. The air was cold and damp, and smelled of earth. Seeing no other way out, I walked further. At the moment, that seemed to be my best option.

But the further I walked, the more the darkness wrapped around me. There was no light, no exit...only darkness.

"Hello?" I heard my voice echo through the space.

"Violet!"

My heart stopped.

Adelaide...

"Mom?" I called out, desperately. "Mom, where are you?"

"Violet, get out of here...now!"

Alaric?

"Dad?"

I walked further, faster now. Adrenaline rushed through me. Mom and dad were here, and I had to save them. I couldn't leave them behind.

After a few steps, my feet glued to the ground. Even if I wanted to walk further, I couldn't.

Because from a distance, a pair of red eyes floated through the darkness.

Familiar eyes.

"You came..." a voice rumbled. It was deep, dark, and just wrong. Something told me I had to get out of here, and now. "Lettie."

That nickname...Lettie.

Kian?

Carefully, I stepped back. First one step, then another, until the red eyes flew toward me. That's when I turned and ran for my life, my heart pounding against my chest.

But it didn't matter how fast I ran, I would never be able to outrun that. The darkness chased me, swallowing everything behind me, and I could feel it getting closer and closer.

I let the energy flow through my eyes, waiting for the glow to happen, but it never came.

Why?

~

I woke up gasping for air. My skin was drenched in sweat, which seemed to be a regular thing by now, and the room spun around me. Terrified, I looked beside me and already felt two strong arms around my body.

Kylan was holding and shaking me.

"Violet! Violet, look at me!"

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