

Chapter 478

Violet

My mind drifted back to the conversation from earlier, a sigh escaping me.

The day had been too quiet and tense.

For me...

After I told them about my suspicions, no one really said anything. They nodded, processed it, and then went on about their day without thinking about it too hard.

Even now, at evening Elite training in the indoor training center during Rochwall's class, everything went on like usual. Dylan was somewhere off to the side with some of the other guys while Nate's laughter echoed across the room at something Mandy had said. 1

Trinity, who had finished classes earlier, talked about going shopping with some of the girls.

They all just moved like the world wasn't possibly ending, and Kian wasn't out there somewhere...waiting.

I didn't know what I expected. Panic? Questions? A bigger reaction?

Instead, I got nothing. Maybe they were just processing in their own way. Or maybe they didn't want to face it until they had to. But it could also be that I was just overthinking it again.

My eyes drifted to Kylan beside me. His arms were crossed over his chest, and his eyes scanned the room. I knew he was thinking the same thing as he looked just as thrown off by everything.

Well...at least they'd agreed to join us tonight.

"So what?" I muttered. "Are we the only ones who care?"

Kylan's face relaxed, and he let out a chuckle.

"Looks like it," he said. "But it's not like we were any different before. We knew what could happen, and have been living like it would for the past months."

"Right..."

While he had Baelor inside of him.

I took a small breath. "I wonder if Aelius will let us past the caves tonight," I said. "Into Bloodstone Haven?"

It was a silly thought. Probably wishful thinking. But I had always been curious about the Bloodstone Haven I had only seen through Adelaide's eyes. The place that could've been my home.

I guess I could always go across the river and visit the witches academy, but in order for that to happen, I had to tell them my identity. This was different. These were Adelaide's people living in a whole community hidden from the outside world. Sorcerers only.

I waited for an answer, but it never came, so I looked at Kylan instead, his gaze meeting mine. There was sympathy there. I was aware of what it meant. He could already sense the disappointment coming.

"Don't be let down if he won't," he said gently. "You know how careful he is with outsiders...not that you're an outsider, but—"

"I understand," I smiled.

I just wanted Aelius to trust me. To see me as more than just some fragile girl he needed to protect from afar. Sure, I hadn't been perfect and I wasn't sure if I could ever be, but I had proven myself. Hadn't I?

The more I thought about it, the more it felt like something was lodged in my throat. I couldn't even subtract the dark magic from an apple and, judging by Jason's reaction, that was supposed to be one of the basics.

"I should've bought him a bracelet instead," I muttered.

Kylan released a short laugh. "Do you think Aelius is waiting for a bracelet?"

"Maybe...it could soften him up," I huffed. "It's not too late to ask Kaelis. Maybe Sora or Lian."

It went quiet for a moment, and my thoughts drifted to my friends. They had been so excited to join us at Starlight, but if I had to believe anything regarding that nightmare from last night...if Kian had really succeeded in taking Baelor's half, I feared there wouldn't even be a Starlight much longer.

I could be overreacting. Maybe not...

But what if they were better off in Lyperia?

"Have you gotten any word from home?" I asked, curious. "Regarding the king?"

Kylan shook his head. "Not on the king or the search for Kian either." He glanced at me. "And if I did, I would've told you first."

I would've told you first?

"Oh really?" I snorted.

Kylan let out an uncomfortable chuckle and nudged my shoulder, like he hadn't meant for it to come out the way it did.

"You will tell them about it before we get to the caves, right?" I asked. "About...you know."

Kylan nodded. "I will," he confirmed. "I'd rather just get it over with. They will find out anyway."

I thought about how that conversation would go. How would they take it? Would they understand my anger and agree with me, because they sure would have to, right? Anyone in their right mind would've.

"Everyone!"

Rochwall's voice cut through, silencing the room.

"Can I have your attention please?"

He stepped to the front with a bright smile on his face. The kind of smile that revealed that whatever he had to share was possibly good news. And I couldn't help but wonder what it could be.

"First of all," he started, "I just want to say how proud I am of all my children and especially all the new faces on this team. Seeing you in those uniforms, training...running," He shook his head, beaming. "You're shaping up to be something special."

He took a step forward. "That said," Rochwall continued, "next training session, you'll officially hear about your first mission. It will be an important one...but only one team will be selected to take it on!"

Groans filled the room, and I felt confused about whether people did or didn't want to do it. Until Kylan whispered into my ear. "Another team can do it," he muttered beside me.

"Also," Rochwall went on, "I've been informed that Commander Jorm's next training won't be kind to your legs. So I'm letting you train freely for the rest of the session. Take it easy on yourselves."

As soon as he was finished, the voices filled up again. Dylan and Nate started making their way over to us, and my eyes followed them curiously.

When they reached us, they both dropped down onto the mat, Dylan beside me and Nate beside Kylan.

"So," Dylan started. "What time are we gathering tonight?"

Kylan and I glanced at each other. Where did the sudden enthusiasm come from?

"I don't want to go too late," Kylan said. "Maybe around eleven?"

"Eleven is fine," Nate agreed. "Quite early actually. It will still be light outside!" he added sarcastically.

Dylan squinted his eyes. I knew what that meant. He had been thinking.

"I assume the two of you will finally tell us what it is that caused you to ignore each other for several days?" he asked.

I felt a small knot tighten in my stomach. It wasn't unlike him to try to unravel more, even if he was wrong. Especially when it came to my relationship. It wasn't just that, but with Trinity who had been refusing to leave my side during the fight, he had to know something more had been going on.

Kylan shrugged. "Just make sure you get to the gate on time."

—

It was a few minutes to eleven. I stood next to Kylan at the gates, waiting for the others to arrive.

Behind us, the courtyard was dark, lit up only by a few useless lamps that flickered. There were still some students hanging around, talking too loud, laughing like it wasn't already past curfew.

"Starlight treats curfew like a joke," I said, smiling.

"Then you should bring it up with the student council for next year," Kylan said, looking at me with a grin. "You and Nate could lead the whole thing. I'm sure everyone would be grateful, Pup!"

That was definitely sarcastic.

I snorted and rolled my eyes at him. "That's not what I meant. I never said I wanted it fixed."

Glancing past his shoulder, I could already see the others heading our way. "There they are."

Dylan walked beside Trinity with his hand wrapped around her waist, while Nate walked on the other side. The three of them kept walking until their paths crossed with ours, stopping directly in front of us.

"Cutting it close," Kylan teased, glancing at Nate.

"We have four minutes!" Nate called out.

"Three."

The two went back and forth while I looked at Trinity and Dylan. She leaned into Dylan, her cheek against his shoulder.

"Tired?" I asked her.

"Yes," Trinity breathed. She tilted her head a little against Dylan's shoulder. "I'm hoping Grandpa has some hot milk waiting or whatever tea they brew down in those caves. Something to keep me awake, at least!"

"I don't think it's really that kind of visit," Dylan said. "And if I have to believe everything we've heard about him, I doubt he'll be in the mood for small talk."

Trinity waved him off. "He's a sweet old man. I'm sure he'll give us a very warm welcome."

Right...

A warm welcome.

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