



Chapter 480

Violet

I waited for the reaction.

I had already pictured what their faces would look like, but right now the only way to describe them was hard as stone.

Kylan seemed flustered by the silence. He loosened his grip on me and rubbed his face with his other hand, letting out a laugh of disbelief as his eyes dropped to the ground.

He couldn't look at any of them yet, and I didn't blame him. I doubted their reaction would stay like this for long, either.

I already started counting in my head.

Three.

Two.

One.

"What?" All three of them said it at the same time.

There you have it.

"You did what?"

"How could you do that?"

"I knew something was off about you."

"This is so messed up!"



And they just kept going.

"Were you even thinking?"

"How do you sleep at night?"

"How are you this calm, Kylan? How?"

"Why did it have to be this? Why couldn't Violet just be...pregnant or something?"

I blinked at the last words. Nate's words.

What?

Kylan's face scrunched, his brows drawing together like he hadn't been thinking the exact same thing only days ago.

"And Violet," Dylan cut in. His face was red with anger. "Did you know about this?"

This time Kylan did look back over his shoulder. "This is not her fault. I didn't tell her about this until recently," he defended. "So please keep her out of it."

Trinity let go of Nate to slam her hand over her mouth, her eyes widening with shock as she finally began to realize. "Oh my Goddess," she gasped. "I cannot forgive you at all, Kylan. No wonder she cried!"

I had the urge to facepalm so badly. Trinity, please. Why?

Dylan's head whipped back to Kylan, his eyes shooting daggers. "You made my sister cry?"

"You could've told me about this, Kylan," Nate said, his voice angry. He



leaned forward to look at Dylan and Trinity. "I say we should just get rid of him and push him down the hill and not tell anyone about it!"

I knew he wasn't serious, but there wasn't a single trace of his usual joking. His jaw was tight, and his eyes hard. He was hurt by all of this too.

Kylan's face scrunched again. "Nate?"

"We turn right here," I whispered, focused on the path. I couldn't lose track of where we were going. Not even with all of this happening behind us. But in the meantime, I really hoped Kylan could finally see just how crazy he actually was.

Perhaps hearing it from them, from people who weren't his mate and weren't biased, would finally change his mind. I had already told him my opinion, and he had stood his ground every single time.

"Are we forgetting that Violet bled?" Dylan said behind us. "She bled out of her face sealing that devil into the raven, and you just decided, what... that it wasn't enough? You had to come along and fuck it all up?"

A sigh and a chuckle slipped from Kylan, but he didn't argue back.

"You know, I always thought you were an odd one," Dylan continued, his voice rising. "But allowing that...that devil inside your body just makes you an idiot. You are fucking—"

"That's okay. I did it for her."

Dylan stopped.

"It was bound to happen," Kylan continued calmly. "It would have either been me or her, and I made my decision."

I looked at Dylan, seeing the crease in his brow vanish. An exhausted



breath slipped past my lips as I already knew what was coming.

"Oh, well," Dylan said, his voice flipping completely. "In that case, you're a fucking genius. Wonderful. Smartest dude I ever met!"

Of course...

I almost stopped walking, feeling my blood boil with anger.

"You've got to be joking," I spat.

Dylan shrugged his shoulders. "Rather him than you, Violet. No offense."

"Dylan!" Trinity gasped.

A scoff slipped from Kylan, followed by a short laugh. Now with Dylan backing him up, there was no way he would change his stance.

"He's not mistaken," Kylan said. "I need to keep Violet safe...always. Those were my thoughts, and motivation."

I let out a slow breath through my nose. Dylan had folded, and even Nate, who had wanted to push him down a hill three seconds ago, had now gone suspiciously quiet.

'Ah,' Lumia purred. 'And just like that, they've all magically lost their spine.'

They did, and it was infuriating.

The only one who still had a glare on her face was Trinity. At least one person in this group still had a conscience.

I squeezed Kylan's hand a little harder. He glanced down at me with the smallest, most apologetic smirk on his lips.



As I rolled my eyes at him, he leaned over and pressed a quick kiss to my cheek. Unfortunately,

a small chuckle slipped out of me before I could stop it.

It didn't change anything...

I was still pissed.

I still knew I was right, that he shouldn't have been the one to do this, and the fact that everyone behind us had suddenly decided he was some kind of hero now didn't fix that. It bothered me more than I wanted to admit.

"But wait," Nate called out. "When did this even happen?"

Kylan took a deep breath before he began to explain. He told them about Varius's words about Kian, the blood moon, Valerius's involvement, and how he had managed to keep Baelor under control.

When he finished, no one spoke.

I could tell by their faces they were still trying to make sense of it. It went so silent there wasn't even the sound of our footsteps anymore.

The path beneath us had smoothed out. The bumps had faded, and we had started walking down.

That could only mean one thing.

We were almost there...

Nate cleared his throat behind us.

"Look," he started, "the thought of you having the devil inside of you is..."

terrifying, but you're still my brother. I'll always have your back. You know that."

"Thank you," Kylan said.

Dylan gave a small nod. "And I respect you for it," he added. "Honestly, I would've done the same for Trinity—"

Trinity's head whipped to him so fast I had barely noticed if it weren't for her huge and dangerous eyes. She did not want him to finish that sentence.

Dylan immediately shut up. He knew better.

A small breath slipped out of me. I didn't even know how to feel anymore. The same group that was yelling less than ten minutes ago was now patting him on the back because he had 'saved' his mate like I had asked for it.

It was unbelievable.

'One is fresh out of the dungeons, and the other is a Bloodrose,' Lumia hummed lazily inside me.

'Lumia...we are Bloodroses!'

'Oops, my bad!'

"Here, here!" A voice called out to us.

I lifted my head and watched as a small figure stepped out, holding a torch in one hand and waving cheerfully with the other.

It was a boy. A kid who couldn't have been older than ten, with messy blonde hair sticking out in every direction. I could tell by his earth-toned

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clothes that he came from Bloodstone Haven.

Not only that, but I recognized the face. For some reason, that little boy seemed very familiar.

Trinity cooed loudly. "Oh my Goddess, look at him!" She immediately picked up her pace.

"Wait—" Dylan started.

"No, it's okay," I said quickly. "We know him."

"We do?" Kylan asked.

"Yes," I said, looking up at him. "That's Aelius's apprentice, remember? The one who lured us into the tent."

Kylan's face changed as he slowly began to recognize him, and he huffed out a small laugh. "I do remember."

The boy nodded and stayed exactly where he was as we drew closer. The second Trinity reached him, she leaned down and patted the top of his head.

"Too cute!"

"Thank you, beautiful miss!" He beamed up at her.

Trinity reacted with a pout. Then his eyes shifted to me.

"Do you know my name?"

I tilted my head, thinking back. I had only met him once, and he had been even smaller back then. He had grown a lot in a short time.

"Albus..." I tried. "Or was it Albie?"



His eyes lit up. "Yes! Both are okay."

He looked around at the rest of the group, the torch flickering in his small hand. "I begged Master Aelius to guide you to the cave. It's closed tonight, and the path can get really dark from here."

Nate let out a soft chuckle. "Isn't it past bedtime for you, kid?"

Albie frowned. "I've never really had a bedtime before."

Trinity laughed and ruffled through his hair as we started walking again. Albie ended up between Nate and Trinity, who were already making conversation. Dylan had forced himself beside Trinity, as if that adorable boy could possibly be a threat.

He was a Child of Blood.

The thought of it almost made me smile, but it didn't last long.

The closer we got, the worse my stomach felt. The cave was visible now. Just barely because now that it had been closed it was too dark, but I could see it from afar.

"Hey," Kyran squeezed my hand.

I looked up with worried eyes. Kyran was watching me carefully. He had felt it through the bond, no doubt.

"Remember," he started. "I—"

I let out a shaky laugh. "No, you're not hurting my grandpa, Kyran."

He let out a small chuckle and brushed his thumb gently over my knuckles. "We'll see."



We reached the cave a few moments later and stopped right in front of it. Now that it was closed, I could see it was in the same state as it had been when Mom stood before it, pulling the sled with Dad inside, and begging Grandpa Aelius to help her.

I drew in a slow breath.

She had been so brave back then, and I would too. I could do this...face Aelius.

Albie stepped forward and pressed his small hand flat against the stone. "Master Aelius?"

Then he looked back at us with the biggest, toothiest grin. "Welcome, friends."

The cave opened. A low rumble came from inside, followed by the deep grinding sound of stone shifting against stone. I clung to Kylan's arm without thinking, then forced myself to let go and brushed my hands down my jeans.

Maybe showing a little independence wouldn't hurt.

As the cave slowly opened the rest of the way, a flickering light appeared inside. My heart nearly beat out of my chest as the seconds dragged on.

Then it stopped.

The light steadied, and there he was.

Aelius...standing right at the center of the entrance.

My eyes dropped to the long, black cloak that dragged over the ground and traveled all the way to his blue eyes. His face was just as unreadable as I remembered.



His sharp eyes moved across all of us. First the others, and then they finally landed on me.

"Child of Blood."

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