

## Chapter 482

Violet

This was the reason we had to tell them before we got here. If we hadn't, this would have been the moment Kylan was forced to spit it all out anyway, in front of Aelius, with all of them staring at him in horror and confusion.

Aelius was not beating around the bush. Telling them in the woods had bought him at least a little dignity for this.

Kylan's jaw was locked, eyes intense as he glared at Aelius, who chuckled to himself and folded his arms over his cloak. Looking at him, I couldn't help but wonder what Aelius really thought.

Would he understand where I was coming from on this? Would he agree that Kylan had been reckless, that he should have spoken to me first, that he had no business making a decision like that without me?

Or would he stand behind Kylan?

I glanced around the campfire. Dylan, Nate, and Trinity were looking back and forth between Aelius and Kylan. Their eyes were wide, like they expected Kylan to fly across the fire any second now and deal with him.

Trinity had stopped sipping her tea, her eyes darting dramatically.

"You are aware," Aelius said, his eyes still on Kylan, "that what you have agreed to carry is not something anyone was meant to carry."

"I'm aware."

"And yet you trusted and listened to the betrayer...Varius. You took it anyway."



"Yes."

"To take away the burden from your..." Aelius let out a sigh. "Mate."

"Yes."

Kylan's answers were short but confident. Aelius let out a hum that was different from the one he had given when he had skipped over Kylan during the introductions. I didn't like it, because it sounded like approval.

Aelius wasn't going to say it warmly or lay a hand on Kylan's shoulder and tell him he had done the right thing. That wasn't who Aelius was, and we both knew it. He had already praised one person for today, two adding Albie, and that was as far as Grandpa Aelius would allow himself to go.

"Do you think he'll be able to handle it?" I asked. "Baelor?"

I didn't really want his opinion. I wanted to know what he had already seen, and what he knew.

Aelius's eyes turned to me slowly. "Kylan is destined for greatness, Child of Blood," he said. "He has more raw willpower than his father. Far more than most I have watched come and go. If he truly commits, he will control Baelor and not the other way around."

That was good, right?

I let his words settle in. "But?" I asked nervously.

"But his problem lies elsewhere," Aelius said. "His problem is emotional."

His gaze drifted back to Kylan. His eyes were gentle, but even then, everyone knew the next words leaving his mouth would be honest. "The



thing that might be your downfall, Kylan," he said, "is that you love Kian —"

"No."

Kylan pressed his lips together and was seconds away from exploding. I knew that was the one thing he didn't want to hear. That Kian was his weakness.

"Yes," Aelius answered dryly. "You love your brother still, and that is not something to be ashamed of."

Even though I didn't want to know, the bond had already said everything. Aelius was right. There was an ache in Kylan's heart. A sadness for his brother. Aelius had said the thing Kylan had been refusing to say out loud, without ever raising his voice. He had pulled it right out of him.

Kylan still cared.

Even after everything he had put him through, he still cared for him.

Though I wasn't quite sure if it was care or pity. When it came to Kian, both of those could get close.

Aelius let out a long breath and stared ahead.

"Even I," he murmured, "am waiting on the arrival of a brother who has betrayed me."

A small smile tugged at the corner of his mouth.

Varius?

Dylan cleared his throat. "No offense," he said, his tone hard, "but I think we'd all like to know what exactly we are doing here."



So did I.

Jason said Aelius needed our help, and that's the reason we were here in the first place.

Aelius made a soft sound at the back of his throat. "I did not send Jason to your school without a reason," he admitted. "I needed to know if the disaster I had foreseen could still be undone."

What disaster?

Kylan straightened beside me. "Is this about him?" he asked. "Kian?"

Aelius's eyes closed for a brief second, but no response left him. He had given us every reason to believe that this was indeed about Kian.

"You have been having nightmares, have you not?"

I nodded eagerly, knowing he could only be talking to me.

"And your eyes have been aching."

I nodded again.

"These nightmares," Aelius said, "are not nightmares. They are reality."

The air left my chest. Deep down, I knew they weren't just nightmares. It was only recently that I had begun to accept that everything had felt too real to simply be a dream.

"It is unfortunate we have not been able to address this sooner under the circumstances," Aelius continued. "But I could not call upon you until you and the prince had begun to mend whatever was sitting broken between you. I will need both of you fully, and working together, for what comes next."



Kylan and I glanced at each other with the same sense of awkwardness. I suppose we both knew we weren't fully okay, but what else could we do?

"Has it been worked out?" Aelius asked.

"Yes!"

I didn't even let a breath pass or give Kylan the chance to answer it for me. I didn't care about how desperate I sounded right now, I just needed to know.

"I would like to know now," I began, my breath heavy. "What is going on? Where are my parents?"

Aelius held my gaze for a long moment while I waited for his next words. Between the flicker of the campfire and his silence, at least a minute passed.

"Your parents are no longer in the Veil, Child of Blood. They have crossed back into our world."

I knew it.

All kinds of emotions hit me all at once. First joy, because they were really out there...Adelaide and Alaric, Mom and Dad. After all that time trying to imagine how life could've been, they were finally out.

But then came the worry. Because if they were no longer in the Veil...

That meant no one was in the Veil.

"Kian has the other half," Kylan said, his voice low. It wasn't a question. Aelius gave a slow nod, and when I saw his throat bob, I knew it was serious business. Aelius didn't get scared easily.



My fingers curled into my lap. “W- where...” I tried. My voice came out small. “Where are my mom and dad?”

My eyes drifted toward the dark tunnel at the back of the cave. I doubted they were at Bloodstone Haven decorating and baking pies while they waited for my return. If they were there, he would've told me already.

“You have already sensed where they are,” Aelius told me.

A flash of my last nightmare struck me. The dark cave, Mom and Dad's voices, those terrifying red eyes. If everything else had been real, then that part had been too. They were in danger.

Aelius lowered his head. “Everyone who has left the Veil,” he began, “has been captured by the High Priestess Gloria, and by the one who carries Baelor's other half. The one who is preparing for his revenge... Kian.”

