



Chapter 495

Violet

The walk through the woods was easier than I expected.

The sun was on its way down through the trees ahead of us, and it was not as dark out here as it had been the last few times. If we didn't have all of this going on, I'd even say the walk was peaceful.

But unfortunately, I was unable to keep my head quiet. It hadn't been since I woke up from the nightmare, and now only an explanation about that strange flower could stop it. Would it really lead us to my parents?

As I looked up, I noticed we were almost there. The cave was already in sight. I looked over at Kylan.

"What is the real reason you wanted to do this?"

After some small talk about what the flower could mean, I decided to ask the question that had been on my mind.

"We have to find out, right?" He shrugged without breaking his stride. "Sooner the better."

"That is your answer?"

"That is my answer."

I stopped in my steps for a moment, then continued walking when I noticed he hadn't. That's when it became clear to me that he didn't want to talk about it. My pace quickened to catch up with him.

"Do you feel responsible for Kian?" I asked. "Because if you do...I want to hear about it, and tell you why you're wrong."

A chuckle left him, and his eyes softened. "But those feelings are not yours to carry, Pup." He gave me a weak smile. "Kian is my problem..."



"Our problem, and soon everyone's problem." I let out a small laugh through my nose. "And I can feel everything, so it is mine to carry."

His smile dropped. "I am...sorry."

I wanted to ask him what he was even apologizing for. It should've been for Baelor, but we both knew it wasn't.

Unfortunately, he could not control his brother. This was not on him.

I dropped it, and let out a sigh.

"I really hope this works out with the flower."

"Same."

As we kept walking, the ground beneath our feet began to change. Kylan took my hand as we walked up to the cave, which was once again closed today. My stomach suddenly turned, thinking about the worst case scenario...or well, the most embarrassing one if he'd send us away.

I clenched the drawing in my hand. No, he couldn't do that. Not when he was also desperate to get mom back.

We slowed down. Then we stopped, and just stood there in front of it.

I did not know what I had been expecting. Maybe for the mouth to do something on its own or for Albie to somehow pick us up halfway. Obviously, neither of those things happened.

And the longer I stood there without anything happening, the more my stomach started to dip a little.

I shifted my weight from one foot to the other.

"So," I said. "Is he not going to open it?"

Kylan frowned. He opened his mouth. "You know how I feel about that



man, but I do not believe he'd let you—"

Before he could finish, we heard a loud, slow grind of stone moving against stone.

"—wait out here in the cold," Kylan finished, shooting me a look that said, See?

The stone slid the rest of the way open. To my surprise, the tall figure standing in the opening was not Aelius. I gasped, looking at the familiar face who rested his hand on the inside of the cave. The light inside hit one side of his face, showing off a deep dimple as he smiled at us.

I let go of Kylan's hand without even thinking.

"Jason!"

I walked right into his arms. I had not even done that when he had come by Starlight. I suppose seeing him here was different. He had been here when I had seen him through Adelaide's eyes, but now he was not a little kid anymore.

"Wildflower." An amused laugh escaped him as he hugged me back. The hug lasted for a few seconds before I stepped back, standing between him and Kylan.

"Oh!" I looked back and forth between the two of them. Jason was still smiling, arms crossed now.

Kylan was also standing with his arms crossed, but his jaw was almost twitching.

"Jason, Kylan. Kylan, Jason...but the two of you have already met."

Kylan released a small hum I could not quite read while Jason raised two fingers in a small lazy salute.

"Hey, man."



Kylan tipped his chin up at him in answer.

I had been in awkward situations before, but this was really something. “Can you take me to Aelius?” I asked Jason.

Jason stepped to the side, allowing us to enter the cave. “Sure,” he said. “I’ll take you to him.”

It was the same as it always was inside. The campfire, the pot, and the low cushions. Jason gestured around. “Do you want something to drink first, or—“

“We are in a bit of a hurry,” Kylan cut him off. “So if you don’t mind.” His hand rested around my waist.

Jason showed him a confused laugh. To Jason, he was just Kylan, but to Kylan, Jason was the amazing sorcerer everyone couldn’t stop talking about.

And now I greeted him...with a hug.

“We are in a hurry, but I will have that drink with you some other time,” I told Jason quickly. “I promise!”

His smile came back. “That is great. I’m sure we will since we are going to be working together a lot.” He glanced over at Kylan. “And very closely.”

I heard Kylan’s breath go out hard through his nose, and nearly burst out laughing. Jason was just playing right into whatever it was Kylan was doing, and he did not even seem to notice he was doing it.

It had been like that with Aelius too.

“Since you’re in a hurry.”

We followed Jason through the dark tunnel leading to Bloodstone Haven. Maybe because the sun hadn’t set yet, I could actually see this time...



though there wasn't much to look at. The tunnel itself wasn't very interesting.

"Where is your friend tonight?" Jason asked me over his shoulder. "The one with the beautiful smile?"

"Trinity?"

"With her mate," Kylan answered before me. I looked down at my feet, holding back my laughter.

Jason responded with a hum. "And the apple?" he asked a few seconds later. "How is it going with that?"

"Still with dark magic," I huffed. "Mine, and everyone else's."

"Then that is the first thing we will work on next time."

I laughed. "I will hold you to that!"

We walked a few more steps in silence. "Why did you just call me Wildflower?" I asked him, remembering the nickname he had used earlier.

"Because you are kind of wild," he chuckled. "And you are a flower."

I gaped at him. "Why do you think I am wild?"

"That time with Baelor when you lost control and started losing your shit?" he said immediately. "That was incredible...but wild?"

I started laughing. That moment had been so embarrassing, it still kept me awake late at night. But at least he was able to joke about it.

Kylan let out a low growl. "Is Aelius expecting us?" he asked Jason. This time his voice was flatter than it had been when he had told him to stay away from Trinity. "Does he know why we are here?"



"Aelius knows most things."

We were finally at the end of the tunnel. Jason put his palm on the heavy door and pushed. "And he is always expecting you."

Bloodstone Haven appeared in front of us again, and somehow it looked even prettier than before. I took a breath and stared in amazement. Even knowing what I was walking into this time did not stop me from staring.

"Come on." Kylan gave me a slight nudge, and we started walking with Jason leading the way. The village was just as crowded as before. Elders stood in small groups whispering to one another while children stopped to stare and wave at us as we passed.

Even so, they kept their distance. I felt small and big at the same time walking through all of those people. Small because I did not know what they wanted from me. Big because all the attention was on me, though I didn't really know what to do with it.

"Are they afraid of us?" I asked Jason.

"No." He shook his head without turning around.

"Everyone here respects you, Violet. They have for a long time. We have been waiting for you."

He glanced back at me.

"They must remember how brave your parents are," Kylan added, a small smile on his lips.

"He is right," Jason said. "They are just cautious of you because father told them it is not time yet. That is all."

Father...

He had said it again.



"The two of you must be close," Kylan pointed out. He had also noticed, "for you to be calling him...father."

Jason chuckled, keeping his gaze ahead. "After my mom passed, he took me in. He's the closest thing to family I still have," he said. "He's done more than my actual father ever bothered to do for me, anyway."

"I know that one too well," Kylan replied.

Jason grinned. "Mine has been on Prison Island since before I was born, and yours...well, he'll probably join him soon."

Jason glanced back. "Perhaps we can visit them together?"

Kylan let out a scoff, but a smile was still visible.

I grinned a little to myself. All of this was sad, but they were bonding.

We walked through a few trees and ended up at a cabin I had never seen before. It was medium-sized, wooden, and secluded from the rest. In the front was a nice little garden with some plants I recognized.

"Do you live here?"

"I do. With your grandfather."

We stopped at the door. "Aelius does not live in the cave?" I asked, my mouth wide open.

Jason laughed out loud and turned to me.

"Nope. He has a cabin, food, a bed. He reads books..."

"I am glad to hear he eats and sleeps!" I blurted. "For some reason, I thought he just floated in the air most of the day."

This time there were two chuckles. One from Jason, and one from Kylan. The two of them shared a look.



"Is she always like this?"

Like what?

A slight smile curled onto Kyran's lips.

"I guess," he said. "She has a...strange sense of humor."

"No, I don't!"

Jason turned back to the door. He pulled a small key out from inside his cloak. He then slid it into the lock and pushed the door open.

We had barely walked in, but the first thing I saw was Grandpa Aelius.

He was sitting cross-legged on the floor right in the middle of the room. His eyes were bright and glowing white, and staring right at us while his right hand was held out in front of him.

He had been waiting for us.

He spoke in a hurry. "The drawing. Show me."



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