

Chapter 551

Violet

He was right.

I done it before.

I had stood in front of a council, led an entire team into battle today, looked Grandpa Aelius in the eye, and asked him why he was giving up in front of Bloodstone Haven.

It wasn't that I couldn't find my voice. We were long past that.

Lumia hummed, making her presence known deep within me, and I could tell she was agreeing with every word Kylan said. Of course she was.

"My biggest fear is disappointing all of them," I said quietly. "I don't want to get it wrong, and it feels like every single time I finally open my mouth and say what I think, that's exactly when I make a mistake. So it's easier to just...not."

Kylan's hand found my waist, and our eyes connected. "Everyone makes mistakes, Violet," he said simply. "I make them all the time. You've seen me make them."

I couldn't argue with that.

"And I don't even know what mistake you keep talking about," he went on. "Because from where I'm standing, you did amazing today." He let out a light chuckle. "And yesterday, and pretty much every day before that."



He caught my face in both hands and pressed his forehead to mine. "And if you really think you make so many mistakes," he continued, "then make them. Make a hundred of them, a thousand. I do not care," he whispered. "I'll be standing right there every time, and I'll still believe in whatever you have to say."

His gentle words left me speechless. His thumbs brushed my cheeks. "Just speak your mind, and know that I'm always going to choose your side. No matter what comes out of it."

I rolled my eyes, playful, and gave his chest a shove that made him stumble back a step. His words were sweet, but...

"You were planning on leaving me today," I reminded him.

Kylan laughed, his face shifting into something softer. "And I'm sorry for that," he said.

My lips trembled into a smile. He wasn't someone who admitted his faults or apologized easily. When he did, he meant it, and hearing it once more meant a lot to me.

But hearing it once more also made me think back on what we had lost. My mind traveled to the deal with Baelor that never went through, and to the fact that whatever way in we'd almost had, was gone now.

I had this crazy thought that Aelius would somehow fix it, but now I honestly did not know what came next. Everyone was waiting on a plan. Grandpa had stood up in front of his entire village and told them I was the one who would change fate, and I had a little over a week and absolutely nothing to show for it.



Why would he do that to me? Why would he hand the whole thing over and let me decide? Did he not know me?

I pulled back a little to get a better look at Kylan. For the next question that was about to leave my mouth, I had to.

"Do you really think he's dying?"

A loud laugh slipped past Kylan's lips. He raised a brow. "We still don't even know how old the man is," he said. "For all we know, he's half vampire, which would explain a lot, actually." He grinned. "No. He's not dying anytime soon, Pup. Trust me."

I hummed, nodding, and let a laugh slip out with him. It was ridiculous. There was no real reason to believe it, but since it came out of Kylan's mouth, I wanted to believe it.

But just as quickly as I was about to let it go, the worry crept back in. "Why do you think he stepped away after that speech?" I asked. "He took Sterling and Rochwall and Jason with him. That's crazy, right?"

I caught my bottom lip between my teeth. All of it didn't sit right with me. Aelius wasn't the kind to do anything by accident, and there was always a reason with him. Even today, when he had betrayed nature, there had been a reason.

"You don't think..." I brought my nail up to my mouth and started chewing on it. "What if Jorn's health—"

"Hey..." Kylan reached over and gently pulled my hand away from my mouth. "You're overthinking again."

His grip traveled to both my shoulders before he gave them a



squeeze, his thumbs working circles around them that made me relax a little. I sighed out a smile. If he could manage to stay this calm tomorrow, when the teacher would get here, I knew for a fact that he would be alright.

"Are you not wondering what this teacher of yours is going to say tomorrow?" I asked out loud. "Or who it even is."

There were so many people it could be, though my hopes were still on that one person, as unrealistic as it might be.

"I've been wondering the same," Kylan admitted. His brows drew together. "I just hope whoever it is can actually do something to help me reach Baelor properly," he said. "Baelor was willing to listen, and Valerius might not agree, but I believe that if I can reach him again, talk to him and..."

I listened attentively, but Kylan trailed off with a sigh. His brown eyes turned weak as they stared back at me. "Never mind," he said. "I know you don't want to hear about him—"

"No, no!" I reached out and held onto his forearms. A lot had changed, especially today. "You can always talk to me about it. Always."

A laugh bubbled up out of me before I could stop it. Kylan eyed me strangely, letting out a chuckle. "Are you okay?"

"Fine." I pressed my lips together but failed to hold it in. "It's just, after everything I watched today? I'm officially convinced that you and him are not one, not even in the slightest." I shook my head, still laughing. "I don't know why I ever worried about mixing the two of



you up when he's all terrifying, and you're just...you."

Kylan looked at me with a warm smile, letting me get it all out. Just when I thought this would be it, I let out a snort that only made it worse.

He released a surprised chuckle. His eyes lowered for a moment, but when he looked down at me again, something in his gaze had changed. Something that made my throat bob.

A pair of brown, intense eyes stared back at me as he stepped forward until I felt the edge of the kitchen counter press against my back. There was nowhere left for me to go.

My pulse jumped, my eyes darting anywhere but him, only to find their way back to his anyway. I knew where this was headed, what he was doing, what he was going to say next, and he was doing all of this on purpose. The silly thing was that it was working.

"So does this mean," he began, voice dropping, "that I'm officially off probation?"

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