

Chapter 576

Violet

The knocking didn't stop. It was clear Kaelis had absolutely nowhere else to be and all the time in the world to prove it.

I giggled into the pillow as Kylan pushed himself off me and forced himself to the door. He picked up his shirt along the way, muttering under his breath as he put it on. Then he swung the door open.

"Evening, brother!" Kaelis stood in the doorway for about half a second before she went right past him, into the room. "That took you long enough."

Kylan hummed, sliding his hands into his pockets as Kaelis's eyes scanned the room. When they landed on me, her whole face lit up. She waved her hand for a second. "Violet!"

The smile on her face was so bright, I couldn't even be mad at her for what she had just interrupted.

I gave her a small wave in return. Nate came shuffling in behind her, an apologetic look on his face that was aimed at the both of us.

"Were you in Nate's room?" Kylan asked, his arms folding. His brows lifted as he waited for an answer.

Kaelis blinked at Kylan like he had just asked the stupidest question she had ever heard. "Of course, silly," she chuckled, giving his chest two light slaps. "Where else would I be?"

I watched as Kylan's jaw locked, and I bit down on my smile. It was just like it had been in Lyperia, when he was trying to act all cool about all of this while he was clearly still getting used to it. Nate rubbed his neck, letting out an uncomfortable laugh.

"So I'm just going to ignore Jumpie and Kayden's raven hanging back there." She raised her chin toward the cages. There was a chill that ran through me as she pronounced that name we had all refused to use. It wasn't just me, but I could see it on Kylan's and Nate's faces too.

"I actually only came by for one reason," she went on, planting her hands on her hips. "I wanted to show you our outfits. We match!" She beamed. "See? What do we think?"

She grabbed Nate by the arm and pulled him into the center of the room. He just let it happen, though his body language screamed how humiliating all of this was for him. Just his body, because the soft smile tugging at his lips as he looked down at her like she was his whole world told an entirely different story.

"Nate's favorite color is blue," Kaelis explained, gesturing at the two of them. "So obviously, we went with blue today."

Kylan let out a long sigh. He tried to hide his laughter, but failed as a small sound slipped out of him. "Nate," he said. "So this is what we're doing now. Really?"

Nate held his hands up in surrender, a defeated breath leaving him. "Just trying to keep her happy."

A grin appeared on Kaelis's face as she made her way to the chair behind the desk and plopped herself down on it. Nate immediately walked over. He pulled her up by her wrist, sat down himself, then pulled her down again so she was sitting on his lap.

His hands were tightly wrapped around her waist, like he had no intention of ever letting go. Kaelis turned her head to look up at him, while he looked right back.

My hand pressed to my chest, lips pouted at the sight. One look...

One look was all it took to see how gone those two were for each other. I

found myself wondering whether Kyran and I looked like that, too.

Kylan cleared his throat, loud enough that the two of them looked over at him.

"So," Kylan said. "You're mates. Wonderful." He rolled his eyes. "We all know that, do not need any more proof and truly, I'm thrilled for you both." He raised a brow. "But why are you here? Really?"

"She felt bad," Nate said, not giving her the chance to speak, which was hard to do, considering it was Kaelis. "About barely getting to spend any time with you today. That's all," he said. "And she also had something important to tell you. Isn't that right, Kaelis?"

She hummed a nod. It was basically his way of telling Kylan not to be too hard on her without overstepping, and it was beautiful.

Kaelis tilted her head. "Why? Were you two busy or something?"

"Since you're asking—" Kylan started.

"No," I said, at the exact same time. He shot me a quick glare.

"You all bailed on me. I missed you guys today," Kaelis declared, dramatic as ever. The same girl who had run past us this morning. "But I understand. Nate told me you went to visit your grandfather." She nodded like she knew all the facts. Then her brows drew together. "Which, honestly, I didn't even know he was still around...I was pretty sure he..." She pressed her lips together. "Never mind."

Nate's eyes darted back and forth as he looked over at us with an apologetic and lost expression. "I..." he sighed out. "I didn't mean to, but —"

I shook my head, giving him a small, comforting smile. "It's okay."

He had to tell her at least something, and I knew better than anyone how

it worked. There was only so much you could keep from a mate, and I knew from experience that the pain after a lie didn't feel that great either.

Nate carrying secrets he couldn't fully explain to Kaelis would only end up hurting her more.

Same for me...

I looked over at Kaelis, curled up in Nate's lap. Since the day I met her, she'd had a glow no one else did. Back then, I didn't know she was more than just a princess, but I already knew she was someone I could be comfortable around. Comfortable enough to share my secrets.

It wouldn't have made any sense to tell the whole Elite Team and leave her out of it. Not when she was important to me.

My lips curled. Kaelis caught me looking and hummed. "What is it?"

"There's actually something I want to tell you," I said. "Tomorrow night. If that's okay."

Kaelis's eyes went wide. "Oh my Goddess," she breathed. "Are you pregnant?"

Kylan snorted. Typical Kaelis, jumping to her own conclusions. "No!" I waved both hands frantically. "No, no, nothing like that. Absolutely not!"

Kaelis sighed and wiped imaginary sweat off her brow. "Oh, good," she said, relieved. "Because I was about to say. Since Nate and Kylan are so close, and you and I are basically sisters now, obviously," she went on. "It would only make sense for us to have ours around the same time. You know?" She tapped her chin. "Maybe in four years, once we're settled and back home?"

With each word she said, Kylan glared harder at Nate, who was staring at the floor. Definitely too soon...

I just breathed and fumbled awkwardly with my hands. It was either that or bolt out the door because I couldn't take this awkwardness anymore. Kylan and Nate had barely said a word to each other.

"Anyway," I said, a little too brightly, desperate to talk about anything else. "How are things back home? In Lyperia?"

"Well," Kaelis said, her eyes widening, "that's actually what I really wanted to talk to you about. It's Dad—"

Kylan gave her a dead look, like he was asking if she really still thought he deserved that title after everything he'd done. Kaelis swallowed.

"I—the king," she corrected quickly. "Well. The...I don't even know what he is anymore, honestly. But—"

"I don't want to hear about it."

Kylan's voice came out flat and cold. So cold that it even made me flinch a little. It was a well-known fact that only Elyx could get that mood out of him.

Kaelis looked back and forth between us, nervously biting her lips. She glanced at Nate like she wasn't certain whether to keep going.

He shifted his hand from her waist to her shoulder before looking at Kylan. "No." Nate shook his head. "I think you're going to want to hear this one," he said.

"Really. Trust me."

