

Chapter 577

Violet

Kylan and I both watched Kaelis, waiting for her to speak. She just sat there with a soft smile, eyes far away, like her mind had drifted somewhere else. Nate lifted his knee and nudged her back to us.

"Wake up." Nate squeezed her waist. Her eyes went big as she jolted upright.

"Oh! Yes. Right." She blinked herself back into the room, sitting up straighter. Her eyes flicked to Kylan. "So. Da—"

She stopped, shook her head, catching herself before the word could fully leave her mouth. I watched her swallow it back down, making sure she wouldn't repeat the same mistake from earlier. "Elyx," she corrected carefully, her finger in the air. "Elyx asked to speak with Mom. Right before they transferred him to Prison Island."

Kylan let out a weak grunt, as if that was supposed to make us believe he had stopped caring a long time ago. I knew better though. Without the mate bond or the Life Sense, I knew better because I knew him.

"So." Kylan let the word sit a moment. His voice had gone softer than he probably wanted. "What'd he say? How much he hates us, how we'll all get what's coming?"

Kaelis chuckled and shook her head. "I basically had to drag it out of Mom," she admitted. "But it wasn't that at all..." Her smile faded a little. "If anything, it was the complete opposite."

I frowned. "The opposite?"

Kaelis hummed, tilting her head before knitting her brows. "She said he spoke of regret, redemption...and how he's willing to accept whatever happens to him as long as he knows you'll take the throne one day." She

looked at Kylan. "Said the one thing he ever really wanted was for you to have it. Regardless of who stands by your side."

She gave me a nod. "And if he has to give up everything for that to happen, then so be it," she said. "He only wished for her to tell us he is sorry, and that he wishes to see you one last time."

Kylan didn't say anything. I watched his chest rise and fall, slow and heavy, like he was counting each breath just to keep himself calm. "One last time..." he said, his voice cracking with anger.

Kaelis shrugged. "That's the part I didn't get either," she huffed. The muscle in Kylan's jaw twitched, and something dark crawled up behind his eyes. He looked seconds away from exploding.

"So what is this?" he snapped. "After everything he did, he gets to sit in a cell and feel sorry about it, and then he gets to see me?"

I reached over and took his hand, rubbing his palm. His fingers curled around mine, and his breaths eased.

"I think he might have something to tell you," Kaelis said carefully. "I think that's why he wants you to come to Prison Island? But I'm not sure." She squinted.

"And what makes you think that?"

"Because that's what he does, remember?" She lifted a shoulder. "He says something crazy so he'll get your attention, and knows you will do something about it. That has always been the thing between the two of you."

A silence fell over the room. "He didn't talk about...well, you know." Her eyes darted.

Kian.

"Just us and the others, but particularly you. Mom told me not to tell you," she added. Her eyes shifted to Nate. "But then I told Nate, and he said you had the right to know—"

"You'll tell your mate but not your brother?"

Kaelis nodded, proud as anything. Then she grabbed Nate's face with both hands and pulled him against her. He pulled his head back, awkwardly glancing at Kylan.

"Okay," Kylan exhaled. "All of this has been fun, but there's a long day tomorrow. Everyone needs to go."

They got up. So did I, because it felt like the natural thing to do. My legs had already decided before my brain could catch up.

Kylan tugged my hand. "Not you, Pup. We were busy, remember?"

"Okay." I awkwardly placed my hands beside me. His tone had been so aggravated that I genuinely thought I might have to go too.

"I was just heading back to my dorm anyway," Kaelis said, stretching her arms. "I've got my own, you know?" She beamed. "It's really big, it's got this huge closet, and an amazing bathtub." She turned to me. "You should come with me."

Her eyes lit up, wide and hopeful, and I couldn't say no. That was one of the hardest things when looking at someone as bright as Kaelis. Besides, the news about Elyx really seemed to have affected Kylan. If anything, he did not need me there right now.

I never liked leaving him alone, but this was one of those moments he might have needed just that.

"Sure," I said.

"No," Kylan said at the exact same time.

We looked at each other, and his brows instantly lifted. Then his head tilted toward Kaelis, as if he was instructing me without words to tell her no.

I sighed and turned to Kaelis. "Aren't you spending the night at Nate —"

"No, don't worry." Kaelis giggled behind her fist. "We've been caught up on...that since this morning, and the afternoon, and just now—"

Nate cleared his throat loudly, then nudged her shoulder. He shot Kylan an apologetic glance, while all he received in response was a cold glare.

"Sure. Why not," he said, lazily pointing at the door. "Goodnight."

—

Kaelis hadn't been joking.

Her dorm was big.

Bigger than the one I shared with Trinity, and just as big as Kylan's. Clothes were scattered around as she already prepared her outfit for tomorrow. Her mouth hadn't stopped moving since we arrived, and she had a lot of stories to tell.

"I'm so happy I finally get to spend some time with you," Kaelis said, holding up a top. "You were gone all day."

"I know. I'm sorry—"

"Do you want to know what happened today?" Kaelis interrupted.

I sank down onto the edge of her bed and let myself fall back into it, while Kaelis kept going and going...

I finally understood what Sora and Lian must have felt, traveling all that way with her. A whole trip of this.

As those two crossed my mind, I wondered how the two of them were holding up, wherever they had disappeared to. I hadn't heard from them, which at Starlight was definitely a good sign.

"And then these three girls actually had the nerve to wink at my Nate today, right in front of me," Kaelis went on, throwing her hands up. "Three of them, and I almost lost it right there in the courtyard!"

I laughed, letting her pull me back into the story. My eyes drifted shut as I sank further into the mattress, listening to her voice.

"I swear, I almost let Vayla out," she scoffed. "And the last time that happened, a few days ago, I got so pissed I could've sworn I saw this purple crack in the middle of the sky—" 

My eyes snapped open. "Wait," I said, sitting up. "What?"

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