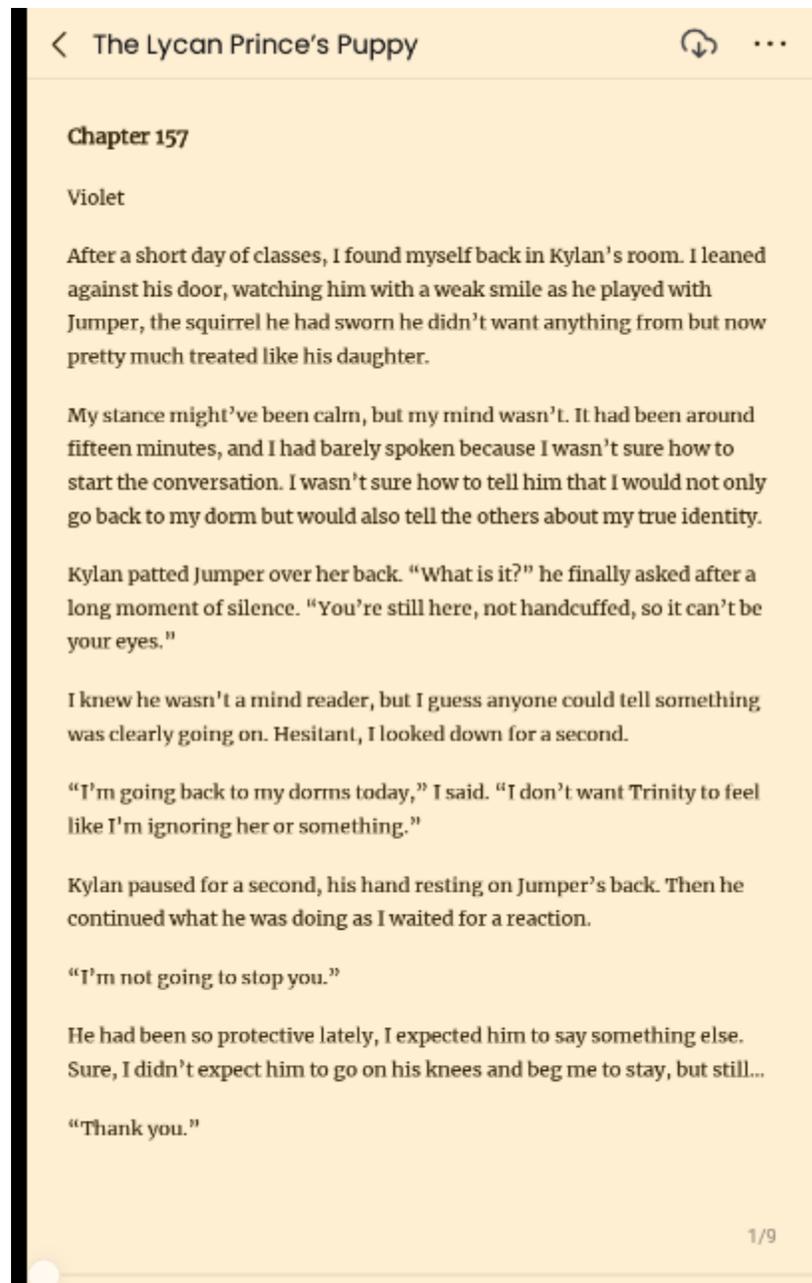


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Chapter 157



Thank you? Why did I even say that? I didn't owe him a 'thank you' for letting me sleep in my own bed.

"And," I added, "I'll be telling her the truth. About everything."

Once again, I had expected him to argue, but all that came from him was a shrug.

"You should've done that from the beginning," he said, not even looking up. "She's your friend, is she not?"

I frowned, feeling slightly annoyed. "And Dylan too."

Another shrug. "Well, that's your brother...cousin...whatever the two of you are," he muttered, still sounding unbothered.

"Are you even interested?"

"Of course I am," Kylan responded. "I just trust you enough to make the right decisions—"

"I will also tell Nate—"

"No—"

Kylan's tone was sharp—so sharp even Jumper had jumped from his hands and ran back into her cage. His dark eyes finally met mine.

"Why not?" I asked, confused. "It's just Nate."

And Nate was just as important to me as Trinity and Dylan. Nate was the first person at Starlight who I had befriended, the first person I could trust. So why couldn't I trust him now?

"He's not just Nate, Violet," Kylan stated. "He's Chrystal's brother, her



twin, before he's 'just Nate.'"

Kylan being that heavily against the idea of telling Nate took me by surprise. Sure, I knew they had their issues once in a while, but Nate was his childhood best friend, his right hand, his other half, his future Beta.

"You don't trust him?"

Kylan's face hardened. "I trust Nate with my life," he said. "Just not with yours."

"It's Nate," I whispered, unsure of what to say. "He's a good person, Kylan. He does not have a bad bone in his body."

He had known Nate longer than I had, and if he really didn't trust him, he wouldn't even let him stay by his side. It just felt so wrong to tell everyone and disregard Nate as if he meant nothing.

"Violet," Kylan warned, walking closer to me. He sighed as he wrapped his hands around my wrists—not tightly, but just enough for me to focus on him. "You need to listen to me," he said. "I know you want to see the good in everyone because that's who you are."

I nodded slowly. It was true. At times when my mind didn't go to choking them, I even felt bad for Esther and Chrystal.

"But Nate is a Lyperian noble, and when it comes down to it, he will always choose his family. He is not a good person," he shook his head. "You've seen for yourself what the king did to Adelaide. Us Lyperians are not good people."

My heart squeezed in my chest. I wasn't focused on Nate anymore. I was focused on him. How could he say that when he was also a Lyperian?

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Did he truly believe that?

"Fine," I gave in. "I'll only tell Trinity and Dylan."

Kylan had his reasons—he always had—and he was right most of the time. If he believed it was not time to tell Nate, then I trusted his judgment.

Kylan released me and took a step back.

"I should probably tell them outside the gates," I suggested. "I was thinking...maybe you could lend me your key?"

"No, I'm going with you," Kylan decided, rubbing his temples as if the thought gave him a headache. "Wherever you go, I go—Puppy."

"And why is that?"

"Because someone has to protect you."

I crossed my arms and smirked. "Careful. Someone might think you actually care about me."

Kylan opened his mouth like he was about to give me one of his usual sarcastic comebacks, but then he stopped. He sighed instead, and then a small smile spread on his lips.

He didn't need to say it, but by now I knew him well enough to know what that silence meant. He wasn't opening his mouth because if he did, he would have to admit that he did, in fact, care.

But Kylan being Kylan, could of course never admit something that outrageous.

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Chapter 157

"I was thinking we should go after curfew?"

Kylan nodded. "So are you going back to your room now or later?"

"Later," I immediately replied, my voice a bit higher than usual. We still had some time to go before curfew, and my mind already began wandering to something I had longed for, for a while now. His touch.

"You know," I started, biting the inside of my cheek. How would one ask to finally do something about this tension without sounding too needy or too desperate? Basically, anything not to feed his ego even more.

Kylan hummed, waiting for me to speak.

"We've still got time..."

He swallowed his lips, folding his arms. A cocky grin appeared. "Do we?"

"Yes."

"Then..." he exhaled. "How about you help me clean my closet? I've been meaning to do that, actually."

He said it with a straight face. I narrowed my eyes, knowing he was doing it on purpose. Kylan had a reason for everything. His first excuse was me being a virgin, the second excuse was my eyes, and the third would be some inner battle with himself because he couldn't live with the idea of loving someone.

It was getting tiring at this point.

"You know what," I clicked my tongue. I began walking, and my shoulders brushed his as I made my way to his closet. "Let's do that."



“W-What?” Kylan reacted, flustered. I turned my head just to catch the look on his face. He was genuinely surprised, like he hadn't expected me to react like that.

“You're serious?”

“Yes,” I said, tossing him a fake-sweet smile. “Hopefully it's not as full of crap as your excuses.”

Kylan blinked. “I'm sorry?”

I mimicked his tone, tilting my head with a pout. “I'm sorry?”

He scoffed, and seconds later I felt his shoulder bump against mine with a force that was enough to make me stumble. I caught myself just in time, pressing my hand to the wall. When I eyed him, ready to complain, something held me back.

It was that rare, soft smile—the one not many got to see. The one you could only notice by the way his eyes lit up.

The one that reminded me again that no matter how frustrating, complicated, or impossible he made things—I couldn't help but at least try to understand him.

—

It was past curfew when we walked through the dark woods. As decided, tonight would be the night I told Trinity and Dylan the full truth.

Trinity walked beside me, Kylan and Dylan ahead of us. It was silent, but the peaceful kind. I guess we were all thinking about different things. Trinity and Dylan about the reason I wanted to talk to them, Kylan about whatever was going on in that mind of his, and my mind was with Nate.



I told myself that Kylan must've had his reasons. I trusted him enough to follow him, but deep down, it felt wrong. It didn't feel right to leave Nate out, and with every step we took, it began to feel more and more like betrayal.

My eyes closed for a split second, and I exhaled, trying to wash away the guilt. "I know it's a bit over the top," I whispered to Trinity, "bringing you all the way out here just to tell you something—"

"No, I don't mind," her curls bounced as she spoke. "It's okay. It's even a bit like a double date, isn't it?"

A small smile tugged at my lips at those ridiculous words. "A double date," I repeated, staring at Kylan's back.

Because let's be honest, how could it possibly be a double date if we had never even been on a date?

—

After walking a little more, we found a quiet spot in the woods. It was an empty area with a few thick branches laid out like seats. Kylan and I used to come here sometimes after training.

Back then, he would mostly talk while I would look at how the sunlight fell perfectly on his dark eyes, making them a bit lighter than they actually were.

Good times...

I sat down beside Kylan, while Trinity and Dylan sat across from us.

As soon as their curious gazes landed on me, my breathing grew heavy. That's when it really began to kick in.



What the hell was I doing?

I had dragged them all the way out here, thinking I could just confess and they would be okay with it. But what if it went wrong?

What if Trinity's kindness and Dylan's redemption had their limits?

What if they wouldn't look at me the same again?

What if they would be weirded out...disgusted?

I lowered my head and squeezed my hands in my lap. Then I felt a warm hand rest gently on my thigh.

My eyes widened, and my head shot up to see Kylan's gaze locked on mine.

"Are you okay?" he whispered, concerned. "Because if you're not, we can turn back around and—"

"No," I gulped. "I'm okay."

Somehow, that simple touch of his had managed to calm me down. Maybe it wasn't exactly the right comparison, but it made me realize that Kylan knew, and Kylan accepted it, and if he did, so would Dylan and Trinity.

If he didn't run, neither would they.

I mustered some courage and moved my gaze to the couple once again. They were waiting, quietly and patiently, and I knew I couldn't wait any longer.

I just wasn't sure how to start yet.

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Chapter 157 ⊕

‘Hi, my name’s Violet, and surprise — I’m a witch?’

‘Hey guys, remember those thick ridiculous glasses I’m not wearing anymore...’

I sighed deeply through my nose, knowing it would sound ridiculous either way. I might as well speak up and say it, because there wasn’t any reason to stall.

“I’m...” I swallowed. “I’m half witch.”

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