

## Chapter 165

Violet

The woods looked darker than the last time we were here. So did the path we followed as we headed for Aelius' cave—or the caves of Bloodstone Haven.

Days had passed, and after surviving a week of Commandor Jorn's training, it was now time to survive Aelius's.

And in a few days, I would have to survive Lyperia.

As promised, Kylan had joined me. He walked a few steps ahead of me, and even that wasn't enough to save me from myself.

"Ow!" I yelped, almost tripping over a fallen branch. Luckily, I had managed to catch myself just in time before I hit the ground. Nothing new for me.

Kylan looked over his shoulder, chuckling. "Do you need a break?"

"No, I'm good."

"Or do you need another piggyback—"

"No, I'm good!" I said, waving him off. He was having way too much fun with this.

A laugh escaped his lips. Frustrated, I quickened my pace and bumped against his shoulder to push him aside. Then I took the lead at the front.

"I can walk, thanks."

He was annoying, but it was moments like these that had taught me to be

more confident and to stick up for myself. I loved going back and forth with him. Sure, Kylan was annoying—but he also had the ability to make me smile.

I didn't know if he enjoyed my presence the way I did, but I wanted to believe he did.

"Can I ask you something?" I bit my lip, glancing back.

Stupid question. By now, I knew how he would respond to that.

"Depends," we both said at the same time, followed by a laugh.

I went quiet for a second, not wanting to sound too pushy, but then I asked the question anyway. "Do you think you could ever...fall for someone?"

When I didn't hear any leaves rustling behind me, I figured Kylan had stopped walking, so I looked back and caught him standing there, lost in thought.

Did that mean he had?

The moment he had caught me staring, he forced a smile, then started walking again. "I believe anyone can," he answered.

My heart began racing. "Yes, but have you ever fallen for someone?"

I felt so stupid, and I didn't even know what I expected him to say.

'Yes, Violet. You've caught me. I'm madly in love with you.'

Kylan didn't answer right away. "You don't have to tell me who, and I actually don't really care. I'm just trying to start a conversation," I

rambled. “And I know it’s none of my business, but I just want to know if you’ve ever liked someone enough to say you actually love the person, like—”

“I have.”

Those two words hit harder than expected. My chest felt tight as my eyes lowered to the dirty ground. If he had meant me, I wanted to believe he would’ve said so—but he didn’t. It must’ve been someone else.

So he could fall for someone, and he was capable of love, just not with me. Here I was, thinking there was even a small possibility he might be warming up to me, but I was wrong. Trinity was wrong. We were all wrong.

Maybe I had imagined it. All those sweet moments, those smiles...the kiss. Maybe it had never been real.

“High school sweetheart?” I asked, trying to sound casual.

Kylan caught up beside me. I turned sideways, seeing him smirk. “Not quite, but something like that.”

“What was she like?”

“Hmm...good question,” he hummed, pressing his lips together. “Incredibly stubborn, clumsy... not exactly the brightest, to be honest.”

I narrowed my eyes, trying to paint the picture in my head. Who would’ve thought that someone like that would be Kylan’s type?

Incredibly stubborn, clumsy, not the brightest... that description didn’t even come close to me.

I wasn't 'incredibly' stubborn, I was easy to work with, a quick learner, and always thought a few steps ahead.

"But also smart," Kylan added. "And beautiful. Kind, with a strong mind, and blessed by the Moon Goddess with the most beautiful laugh that could heal any scars."

Looking at his face, I didn't know whether to be impressed or annoyed. I had never heard Kylan speak like that about something, let alone someone.

I scrunched up my face. "Okay, so it's definitely not Chrystal."

Kylan chuckled, scrunching his face as well. "I thought you expected more from me."

"Well, you did date her at one point, no?" I retorted. "Did the girl love you back?" I asked further, not giving him the chance to defend himself.

Kylan let out a defeated breath. "She made it very clear, yes."

This was the part where I was supposed to stop, to spare myself the pain, but I couldn't. Kylan was talking, which was a rare thing, so stopping now was not an option. Maybe if I tried just a bit harder, I could even manage to get a name out of him.

Not that it mattered, since I didn't even know the girl.

"Why didn't the two of you work out?"

He let out a deep breath. "Because she deserves so much better than I could ever give her."

I patted his back, showing my sympathy. As I looked ahead, I saw we had

almost reached the caves. It was a pity. I would've loved to talk about this subject some more.

I wanted to tell Kylan that he wasn't that unbearable, and that if he really wanted it, he could be enough. Maybe I felt this way because it wasn't Chrystal. Maybe I should've been worried that my wolf wasn't crying out of jealousy, but that wasn't the case at all. If anything, I was even a bit bummed that it didn't work out for him.

I cared about him. A lot. I wanted him to be happy too. Even if it wasn't with me.

"Don't you sometimes wonder how she's doing?" I asked as we got closer.

A light chuckle escaped from Kylan's lips. "She's strong, so I think she'll end up just fine," he said softly.

He sounded so warm when he said it, like he truly believed his first love would live a happy life.

"Maybe when all this between us is finished," I said, gesturing between the two of us, "you can go look for her...tell her how you really feel, and make her your Luna."

Kylan snorted. "You really are..." he began shaking his head.

"What?"

"Nothing," Kylan sighed.

Then we stopped in front of the caves. Our gazes immediately locked. Nervously, I cleared my throat. "So do we knock or—?"

Suddenly, a loud noise made both of us step back. Kylan immediately stretched his arm in front of me. The rocks shifted, the cave opened, and then a figure appeared in front of us.

Aelius...



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