

Chapter 168

Violet

Ouch.

Leave it to Aelius to humble me.

"You are different from the others. The Alpha King's blood that runs through your veins is too strong for such a weak body. You're simply not ready."

By now, I knew this was typically Aelius. He didn't hold back. He was always like this. No matter what, when it was time to offend anyone, he went straight to the point.

"Not even in shifting class?" I asked carefully.

"Especially not in shifting class," he said, his eyes going even wider at the first word.

Once again, I didn't know if this was just some piece of advice or something he had actually seen.

I looked down at my lap, thinking about his warning. I didn't understand it completely, but I could feel what he meant. All my life, I had been unable to control Lumia, who would just do what she wanted.

There were days when she felt close—where she would share my anger, my pain, my happiness. But there were also days where she would suddenly vanish, like she didn't want to be part of me at all.

"It's like sometimes she's there, and sometimes she's not," I spoke out loud, wishing for some of his wisdom.



"Even when you're smiling, I can sense so much anger inside of you. But it's not you," Aelius said. "The wolf is furious with you."

"What?" I flicked my eyes up. "I don't understand. Why would she be?"

I hadn't done anything to her...

"You've abandoned her," Aelius answered.

"I didn't—" I started, but Aelius lifted his hand, shutting me up.

"You did. But you are Violet, and Violet's brain always needs to work a little harder than most people's to understand," Aelius said, his tone too sarcastic for my liking. "Violet never gets it on the first try because Violet is Alaric's daughter."

I tilted my head, not quite understanding what he was getting at.

"Violet has already processed enough information for today. We will continue next time."

Why was he referring to me in the third person, like I was some lost soul?

"So the lesson is over?" I asked, holding his gaze.

"Yes," Aelius confirmed. "And I need you to forget anything we talked about beyond how to control your eyes."

Seconds later, his eyes began to glow as he turned his head toward the cave entrance. Shortly after they had faded, a loud sound, like one you would hear while grinding rocks against each other, echoed through the caves as the entrance opened.

Kylan...



I turned my eyes to the cave, and there he was. Kylan's expression was cold, like he was one breath away from destroying everything in this cave. In his hand was the big basket, filled with red apples. He marched toward Aelius without glancing at me once, and when he reached him, he dropped it onto the ground. A few apples rolled past me in the process.

"They were a bit further into the woods than I thought," Kylan snarled. "The trees were near the damn road—"

Kylan's mouth never stopped moving, but a loud yawn came from Aelius's mouth. So loud it drowned out every other sound. Even I couldn't hear Kylan anymore.

As soon as Kylan's mouth stopped moving, Aelius's yawn stopped as well.

He looked at me with a lazy expression, jerking his chin toward Kylan. "Good luck with that."

Kylan's face hardened even more, and if looks could kill, Aelius would've been dead by now. Still, the man remained unbothered as he stood up and wiped his hands on his coat.

"You did okay, but you should try to focus more next time. Lesson will continue after your return," Aelius summarized. "Have a good night."

Kylan reached for my hand without hesitation, helping me up even as his eyes stayed locked on Aelius. Without glancing my way, his other hand found its way behind my back like it was second nature to him now. In his eyes, I couldn't do anything right without potentially tripping, but if that was what it took for him to touch me even a little, I didn't mind.

A small growl came from his lips, but then his eyes found mine. His jaw unclenched as he scanned my face like he was trying to read my



thoughts. "Are you okay?" he asked.

I shot him a reassuring smile. "Fine."

His lips curled just enough for me to notice. I had barely caught it, but it was there. "Good."

He led me out of the cave, but halfway to the exit, a voice made us stop.

"Violet?"

It was Aelius. Kylan and I turned at the same time. He had that same look on his face as before, like he was torn between warning us about what was coming or staying silent and letting fate play out on its own.

I swallowed in anticipation as he closed his eyes for a moment, but when he opened them again, it was like the moment had never happened.

"Never mind," he waved his hand. "Just don't forget what we have talked about today. Stay safe, my child."

Something about his words made me feel uneasy, and I didn't know what it was. Why did it now sound as if he was pitying me?

"Am I going to die?" I asked, not beating around the bush. If that was what he had seen, I'd rather just know now.

"Or is it both of us?" I glanced sideways at Kylan.

There was one thing I did know. If the world was about to end, Kylan could absolutely ruin me first.

Aelius raised a brow. "When did you ever hear me say something about you dying?" he said with an attitude. "I already said the lesson would



continue after your return.”

He then turned to Kylan, giving him a skeptical look. “She had decided for herself that someone was going to die, and decided to drag you with her,” he said, shaking his head in disapproval.

“Good luck with that.”

It was the same thing he had said to Kylan earlier. It seemed like he was beginning to get tired of both of us.

“T-That’s not—” My mouth dropped open, looking back and forth between the two of them. “I—I didn’t—”

“Drop it,” Kylan muttered under his breath, giving me a small nudge to keep walking. We made our way out of the cave, and Aelius’s laughter slowly faded behind us.

“He’s just fucking with us because he lives for our reactions,” Kylan said as the cold night breeze hit us. I barely had time to wrap my arms around myself before he slipped off his jacket and threw it gently over my shoulders.

“You’re telling me?” I muttered, rolling my eyes. “Thanks, by the way,” I patted the jacket.

“No problem.”

“So,” Kylan said, “how did it go?”

I glanced at him, my eyes probably giving away how tired I felt. “Do you want the short version or the long one?”

I gave Kylan a moment to think and stopped walking, looking up at the



sky. It was almost fully dark now, way darker than when we had arrived, and it made me realize just how long I had been in that cave.

Believe it or not, I could've sworn I was only in that cave for a few minutes, even though I knew Kylan, who went out looking for apples, would definitely disagree.

"It's really dark," I said, looking up. Kylan looked up too.

"It is."

Then we both lowered our heads, and our eyes met.

"I want the long version," he said, his gaze holding mine. "And if it's going to take a while... you should probably sleep at mine tonight."

I almost choked on my own spit, completely caught off guard. His tone was so casual, like it wasn't a big deal at all, and it shouldn't have been. By now, I'd slept there more times than I could count. Still, the fact that the offer came from him meant a lot.

His brown eyes watched me, waiting patiently.

"Yes," I said, feeling a blush creep up my cheeks. "I will."

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