



## Chapter 160

Kylan

The market was packed.

As usual, people were talking loudly, laughing, and the air had a strong scent of the market food. It was everything I hated.

Bright, colorful, loud.

We had some time between classes, and Nate had begged us to go downtown again. He said he felt left out, that the three of us hadn't done anything fun in weeks. So now here we were, Nate, Dylan, and me, walking through the same market where everything had changed.

Where we met Aelius...

Where Violet found out the truth...

It felt strange being back here. Almost like walking into a memory I wasn't ready to deal with.

I couldn't help but wonder what Violet was doing at this moment, just like I couldn't help but wonder every damn second if she was doing okay.

At least, knowing that Dylan and Trinity still stood by her side after everything she had told them, made me feel a bit better. We weren't the only ones holding onto the secret anymore. It was out in the open, and seeing Violet look past her fears to tell them the truth made me proud of her.

Even then...



Why did I kiss her like it meant something?

That was question that had been on my mind the entire night.

It didn't take long for me to give myself the answer to that question. I wasn't stupid.

I was falling for her, and deep. 1

Just the thought of falling for someone scared the hell out of me. Even worse was it being someone I didn't deserve, not after everything I had done to make her life even a bit harder. I had tormented her, bullied her, pushed her...

Yet, after everything, she still treated me with a great kindness. She had every right to hate me, but she didn't. She just forgave me. Let it go.

Like it was easy. Like it was nothing, just like him...Kayden.

Because that's who she was.

"You're quiet today," Nate said, walking beside me.

Dylan who walked ahead, looked back, raising a brow. "He's not known to be a man of many words, but he is really quiet today."

I shot them both a look, hoping it would shut them up. Unfortunately, it worked on most people. Just not them.

What was I supposed to say?

Hey, I think I'm falling for my mate?

Just thinking about it made me feel like an idiot. Falling for your mate was supposed to be something normal, was it not?



"So yes or no?" Dylan asked, interrupting my thoughts.

"What are we talking about?"

"If you're hungry, yes or no," Nate said, walking ahead.

"I guess," I shrugged, clearing my throat. Then I followed the two.

—

I stared down at my plate, pushing around the food with my fork. Dylan and Nate were talking about something, laughing, but I didn't care enough to listen.

All I could think about was Violet.

Her beautiful sculptured face, that left dimple whenever she smiled, those eyes brighter than the clearest sky...

It was getting harder to stop. She was in my head all the time, even when I didn't want her to be.

Something shifted when she was inside that Veil, and that something were my feelings. Holding her limp body in my arms made me realize just how much I cared.

I craved her. Every part of her. Her voice, her touch, her mouth...her body.

But I knew better...

She had thrown too many hints in my direction, but I had turned her down every single time. Not because I didn't want her, but because I wanted her too much.

One more touch, that was all it would take, and that would be it for me. I



wouldn't be able to stop. I had already lost control before—almost marked her without meaning to, just because the beast told me to do so, and it couldn't happen again.

Fuck, I wanted to—and I knew she would most likely let me, but I could not be that selfish. I could not keep her locked in Lyperia, let her live a dark life, waiting until it was her turn for me to visit her room, when she was so much more than that.

A witch, a child of blood, a princess in her own right...

I had mocked her over and over, but she was so much more than I could ever be. I felt my fist tighten, and only then did I notice how hard I was gripping my fork. My knuckles were white, hands were shaking.

The fork slipped from my hand as Nate scooted back, got up, and walked off without a single word.

I blinked. "Where's he going?"

Dylan glanced over his shoulder. "Grabbing napkins."

I nodded slowly, both of us watching Nate move through the crowd.

"You know..." Dylan said, "I feel bad for him."

I let out a short laugh under my breath. "Why?"

He looked at me, lifting his brows. "Even Violet didn't trust him enough to tell him the truth. About...you know."

"That was my call," I said right away. "Not hers."

Dylan nodded but didn't seem convinced. "So you don't trust him?"



"Nate's a Lyperian noble," I simply answered, dodging his question. Nate had been by my side as long as I could remember, and he was supposed to be loyal to me. I trusted him to take care of me, but that didn't mean anyone else should trust him.

Especially not after learning he was using those damn Lunaris pills.

"I just feel sorry for him, and I don't want this to backfire." Dylan hummed.

"Sorry?" I clicked my tongue. "He's rich, spoiled, loved by his parents. He's had everything handed to him without having to lift a finger. He's got a better life than us, so why would you feel bad for someone like that?"

Trust me.

Nate would be just fine.

"Yeah?" Dylan sighed. "But does any of that truly matter when your sister is Chrystal?"

I didn't say anything.

He was right.

Having someone like Chrystal for a twin...it had to mess with you.

"Have you heard anything about what's gonna happen to her?" Dylan asked.

I shook my head. I hadn't thought about it, and I didn't want to. Because if I did, I would have to go over everything she did to Puppy again, and I wasn't sure when I would really snap. Thinking about it too much made



me want to kill her.

Nate returned just in time before my thoughts could get any darker. He smiled, dropping a stack of napkins on the table, then sat down again.

"What are we talking about?" he asked, looking between the two of us. I glanced at Dylan, who released an uncomfortable sigh.

"He asked about Chrystal," I confessed.

Dylan gave me a look, his stern eyes asking me what I was up to. I could tell my honesty bother him, but I couldn't quite understand why, since he was the one who was suddenly buddy-buddy with Nate, and did not agree with us keeping him out of everything.

I thought the Bloodrose weren't the emotional kind, but Dylan and Puppy definitely were.

"How are you doing?" Dylan asked Nate who was still smiling as if the question didn't bother him.

I knew it did. Nobody in his right mind would enjoy speaking about his monstrous sister. I could relate because the king had already embarrassed me beyond words more times than I could remember.

"I'm okay," Nate shrugged.

"You're okay?" Dylan repeated. "Well, have you heard anything about her?"

"She's back home," Nate said casually. "Don't know much about the suspension. Don't really care."

"But you do," I said, glancing at him. His left brow twitched a bit, and



that's when I decided it was time for him to drop the act.

"No, I don't."

I raised a brow. "It's your sister."

"And she hurt Violet."

"But she's still your sister," I said, raising my voice slightly. "And I know you're upset, and that deep down you blame me for it because I led her on all those years —"

"N-No," Dylan stated, his voice sounding strong, even through his stutter. Though we should've had the conversation a long time ago, we had never addressed it.

"I don't blame you, Kylan," Nate said, smiling warmly.

"I think you do," I said.

"We shouldn't discuss this," Nate said, pointing his head to Dylan. "Not with him. Let's not make him uncomfortable."

"Fair enough," I smiled back, though I doubted Dylan cared much. Even now, he was watching us with sharp eyes, studying every word, every look.

"Let's talk about something else," Dylan cleared his throat as he realized all eyes were on him. "Have you heard anything about the visit to Lyperia yet?"

"No," I said. "And I hope it will stay that way for a long time."

And I meant it.



I didn't want to take Violet there — not yet, not even for a short trip. In Lyperia, she wouldn't have any freedom or privacy. She had yet to train with Aelius, and still didn't know how to control her eyes. They would test her, break her apart, and the thought of dragging someone that precious into that world, even for a little while, made my chest tighten.

Yes, I was a proud Lyperian—but all I wanted was to protect her from all evil, starting with Lyperia.

"I believe the invite should come any second now," Nate said, taking a bite from his sandwich. His mouth was full as he reached for another napkin. "I know everyone back home is jumping to meet her."

Just as Nate was done talking, my phone buzzed. I wasted no time, opening the message, hoping for it to be Puppy—but it definitely wasn't.

It was Lyperia...

'To His Royal Highness Crown Prince Kylan of Lyperia. We welcome you and your mate Violet Hastings to the royal courts...'

I froze, my face dropping as I could not allow myself to get past the words 'royal courts.'

I knew this would happen, everyone knew, but getting the actual invite made everything much more real.

My favorite thing to do was running from my problems, but this wasn't something I could run from. This was something I would just have to face head on.

"What is it?" Dylan asked, worried. "Is it Violet?"

"I don't think so," Nate chewed in my ear, almost sitting on my damn





lap. He grabbed the phone from my hand and scanned the message with a laugh.

“Kylan is going back home.”

I was going home, and I was definitely wasn't ready...



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