

Chapter 57

Violet

Kylan’s ‘training’ in the woods was turning out to be more like a torture. Every exercise felt like a punishment, and I now was doubting whether he was really invested in teaching me, or just trying to make my life more miserable.

He had me doing lunges, core exercises, running up and down hills, and, after turning my legs into jelly, I was now forced to hang from a tree branch.

He yelled louder than Commander Jorn if I even dared to slack off. What bothered me even more was that he looked so handsome while doing it. So handsome, it actually turned me on.

What the hell was wrong with me?

I breathed, glancing at the branch above. It was a surprise I was still holding on, and somehow this seemed to be the only thing I was good at today.

My arms weren’t trembling, and my body was calm and stable. The burn in my muscles was still intense—but I had too much on my mind to focus on it.

My mind kept going back to Jane, and the reason why she had changed so suddenly. That look in her eyes when I asked her about Adelaide’s secret weapon as she looked at me as if I was crazy, as if I was the one who had brought it up—was something I couldn’t shake off.

The fearful look in her eyes, and the way Rochwall pulled her away...

It was all so strange...

The other half of my mind was too occupied with Kylan. Every time I thought I had him figured out, he changed.

He was warmer yesterday than today. He told me he’d chosen my punishments so no one else would hate me, saying he was the only one allowed to hate me—but did he realize that his behavior made me hate him?

Did he want me to hate him?

No—otherwise, he would never have helped me.

He was more confusing than the mystery of Adelaide, and that was hard to beat at the moment.

Another thing that was hard to beat was my growing feelings for him. He treated me like shit, yet I couldn’t get him off my mind.

I absolutely hated him, despised him, wanted to stay away from him—yet I wanted to be near him. I knew I did because, If I didn’t, I wouldn’t have let him train me.

Truthfully, I didn’t know what I wanted.

“You’re almost there,” Kylan called out. “Five more minutes.”

I groaned inwardly, hearing the frustration in his voice. He seemed way more energetic when he watched me suffer as if he enjoyed watching me struggle.

Looking down at him, he still looked as strong and striking as always. Even from up here, he looked like a piece of art as his dark hair fell slightly over his forehead.

He watched me with an intense gaze, arms crossed as he probably waited for me to fail.

I had something else on my mind though.

An embarrassing thought.

He looked so good from above, it made me think of how much better he would look if I were to straddle him, sit on top of him, and run my fingers over his abs as I...

Fuck...

My cheeks flushed as I realized what I was thinking, and I quickly closed my eyes, trying to shake that horrific thought away. A strange feeling traveled to my core.

What was wrong with me?

“Interesting,” Kylan said, pulling me out of my thoughts.

My eyes snapped open, and my heart skipped a beat. “What?” I panicked, hoping he hadn’t somehow read my mind.

“It’s interesting,” Kylan repeated, looking unfazed. “You’ve got no issue hanging from a tree, but you can’t run laps without almost dying.”

He had a point.

I hadn’t even realized I’d been holding on that long, and the strange thing was that I could go on for hours. Somehow, hanging from this tree felt so natural, as if the tree was my only friend, willing to help me.

“You know,” Kylan lifted a brow, “maybe you should leave Starlight and join the witches down the road.”

I scoffed, rolling my eyes. “And why would I do that?”

He gestured around us with his hands. “Because you look all one with nature and everything.”

“Maybe I have strong arms.”

“Then why can’t you plank?” Kylan countered, genuinely curious.

“I don’t know,” I shrugged. “I guess because I’m a healer, I work better in nature.”

“Must be it,” Kylan’s dark eyes looked even more intense that they usually did as he stepped closer, almost standing directly under me.

“After this, we’ll head back so you can run ten more laps,” Kylan said casually, as if he hadn’t just put me through one of the worst training sessions in my life.

“Are you insane?” I groaned, already dreading it. “Are you really going to make me run after that?”

“Yes, it’s not your after school arts and crafts class, Puppy,” he growled. “It’s training.”

“Training?” I glared. “Or some kind of payback for...what Nate and I did.”

The moment those words escaped my lips, I wanted to break off the branch and hit myself over the head with it. Why did I have to bring that up?

“Hmm?” Kylan hummed, oblivious. “What exactly did you and Nate do?”

My cheeks began to glow. “Nothing.”

He gave a slight smirk. “Then what’s the problem?”

Frustrated, I tightened my grip around the branch, and that was a bad move because before I knew it—I lost my balance and slipped down. I was unable to reach the ground as Kylan’s strong arms were around me, catching me mid-air.

He set me down on my feet, though his hands remained wrapped around my waist. Startled, I looked up, suddenly at a disadvantage when it came to height as he hovered over me.

His eyes seemed to soften a bit, and the heat rose in my body, a heat that had absolutely nothing to do with the workout.

He was so close...just like the last time...

“Those were fifteen minutes,” he murmured, his voice low. “You’ve made it.”

“W-What do I get?” I stuttered, barely aware of my own words. At this point, I was just saying anything to make it seem like his hands digging into my waist didn’t affect me.

He tilted his head slightly as he unexpectedly pulled me closer. “What do you want, Puppy?”

What did I want?

I wanted him to push me against the tree and kiss me as if it was the last day of our lives, I wanted to wrap my legs around him and pull him closer, I wanted to feel his touch again, I wanted to feel all of him...

My heartbeat sped up, and I could feel my pulse quicken as our faces drew closer and closer. His eyes flicked down, then back to mine, like he was seeing straight through me and knew what I wanted.

Was he going to kiss me?

I held my breath, not knowing how to breathe properly anymore as his face was almost close enough to actually kiss me, but then I snapped out of it.

Kylan released a chuckle as I stepped back, trying to collect myself.

I cleared my throat, my voice barely a whisper. “I want...for you to reject me.”

Kylan slightly turned his head, laughing out loud as if I had just told him the funniest joke. My chest felt tight as the sound of his mocking laughter reached my ears.

It was the kind of laugh of someone who couldn’t believe he had just been rejected twice by a nobody.

“Kylan, I’m serious—” I said, almost pleading. “You’ve had your fun, now please...just reject me.”

I couldn’t take it any longer.

The feeling of wanting someone I hated? I couldn’t do it anymore.

He spun back around, cackling. “Reject you? So you can go fuck Nate?”

Double standards much?

I knew for a fact that he had stuck his dick into many holes despite being well aware we were mates.

I clenched my fists. “I don’t even like Nate.”

It was the truth.

We were close friends, almost like siblings.

“Right,” Kylan spat. “That’s why you’ve been wearing his hoodie and parading around campus like he’s your mate?” His eyes grew darker, and for the first time—he had basically admitted that it did, in fact, bother him.

“It’s not like that!” I snapped. “Besides, you keep pretending not to care—and someone who doesn’t care doesn’t get to make assumptions!”

“You’re right—I don’t care,” Kylan smirked, stepping closer. “But when you recruit my best friend so you can both play with me and get on my nerves, you can’t blame me for caring—“

“Then reject me so you don’t have to care anymore!” I raised my voice. “You don’t understand, Kylan—I need you to reject me, please!”

I had intended to sound strong, but my voice cracked as I gave him a desperate look. “I’m begging you, please!”

His smirk disappeared, and he had stepped so close, my back hit the tree. “Why do you want me to reject so badly?” His voice softened. “Tell me.”

I could feel his breath in my face as he waited for an answer I didn’t want to give him. “Just because.”

“No...” he sighed. “Don’t do that. Tell me why.”

My throat tightened, and I tried to look away, but his gaze kept following me. “Because if you don’t...” I struggled to find the words. “If you don’t, I’ll do something I’ll regret.”

His eyes widened a bit, and he leaned in even closer, his face inches from mine. “What are you going to regret, Violet?” he whispered.

There it was again...my name.

Violet.

We stared at each other in silence, and I knew he wouldn’t step back without an answer. I tried to lower my head, but then his hand reached up, gently raising my chin.

Even though his eyes had softened, they still held this boldness to them.

“If you can’t tell me, show me,” he spoke. “Violet...what are you going to regret?”