

Claimed And Marked By Her Stepbrother Mates

Chapter 341-The Crazy Guy Named Maximus

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Helanie:

The girl arriving with her father was Jessica. She wore a black dress that couldn't hide her beautiful long legs. Her pretty brown eyes shone even more with winged eyeliner and glittery eyeshadow.

I was such a fool to think I was special. The compliments directed at me were nothing compared to the ones given to the ladies before me. They were gorgeous.

Of course, the brothers would choose them any day over an average girl like me. Jessica had her brown hair straightened like a waterfall. She was all smiles with Norman, who was also constantly speaking with her. Whenever she had something to say to him, he would bend down to reach her level. He would casually pull his face near her ear and listen to her attentively.

However, while Kesha looked too arrogant and full of herself, Jessica was the one who seemed friendly. She was going around checking on everyone. Even Kaye seemed to smile a lot for her.

"I heard they had a breakup previously, but then—well—her father convinced Norman that she would be a good choice." Rudy must have noticed how attentively I had been staring at her for him to come and tell me what was going on between the two of them.

She must have a lot of patience to tolerate someone like Norman, who looked like a giant beast in a dark gray tweed suit. The brothers were busy greeting everyone and then taking pictures with them.

Charlotte had a golden dress on. Her eyes kept looking over at Maximus, who seemed anxious. I saw her trying to communicate with him here and there, but he was too distracted. It confused me to watch him look at me and then smile at me—almost as if nothing had happened. Nothing had gone wrong between us.

Everyone began to clap and welcome my mother and Lord McQuoid and my mother, who had just arrived in their car.

My mother looked stunning in a light blue high-low dress. Honestly speaking, I truly believed she deserved happiness. I couldn't believe I had been about to jeopardize her

relationship for my own. Since when had I become so selfish? My eyes darted to Daphne, who was glaring at my mother with hatred. The brothers didn't look very pleased to see her either.

But they kept fake smiles on their faces for the sake of their father and the guests. Even their plus ones were forcing smiles while standing beside Daphne to show whose side they were on.

After my mom had met up with everyone, she looked through the crowd, and her eyes fell on me. She excused herself from the crowd and walked over to us. As she stopped before us, she directed her attention to Senior Rudy.

"Welcome to my place. I am so glad you students managed to take time out of your schedules to attend the ceremony." She was so gentle when talking with them. But whenever she was alone with me, she was so harsh.

"Of course, we couldn't miss it. You look absolutely amazing," Penn rushed to respond before Rudy could.

"You look stunning," Rudy said, side-eyeing Penn for stealing his chance.

"You two are kind gentlemen," my mother blushed, shaking her head at them playfully.

"I am Helanie's friend," Penn was quick to explain why he was being so nice to her. He wanted to be in her good books.

Well, funny story—none of them knew my mother hated me. So that would just put them on her hate list.

"Oh, you two are her friends?" she asked as she pointed at Rudy.

"I am not trying to be just a friend."

As soon as Rudy said that, I felt my jaw hit the ground. But my mother found it funny.

"Two alphas?" She looked amazed.

After they spoke with her, they excused themselves to go congratulate and meet Lord McQuoid. That gave my mother some time to walk over to me.

"You didn't wear the gown I got for you." She used a gentle tone, but her head remained high as if she wasn't even talking to me.

"I don't want to be in your debt," I replied coldly.

"Hmm, well, you look good," she said before turning around and leaving. Her mood was so dull with me.

"You okay?" Lamar patted my back, and I gave him a reassuring nod.

My mother and Lord McQuoid now stood face to face, Emmet holding a ring box for his father and Charlotte holding a ring for my mother.

My mother kept tearing up as Lord McQuoid held her hands and spoke sweet nothings to her.

That's when Maximus's message popped up on my screen. My eyes nearly jumped out of their sockets when I read the text.

Maximus: Your silence gave me so much confidence. I am going for it.

I started to panic, my blood running cold. Why was he lying? Maybe this was what he and his mother had planned after I said no to him.

"I thought you said you and Maximus weren't going to stop the engagement ceremony?" Lamar whispered in my ear, probably as confused as I was.

"I told him we wouldn't—" I was in shock and panicking. I didn't want any part of this.

"I don't think he understood that because it seems like..." Lamar pointed at my phone, my heart sinking in my chest.

"Oh no," Lamar gasped, and so did I.

Shit, that would be bad.

They were going to go for it.

Maximus reached his father and tapped his shoulder. All eyes shifted to him as he smiled and gestured for his father to step aside so he could have a word with him.

Oh no!

I began to hastily make my way towards the stage, but the crowd was hard to push through. They all wanted to take pictures and record the perfect moment when Lord McQuoid put a ring onto my mother's finger.

I noticed Daphne smirk before her eyes landed on me. She seemed to be too conscious of my expression.

I would not let Maximus play me so miserably and get me into trouble.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 342-It Went South

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Helanie:

With my shaky hands, I started to dial Maximus's number. I needed to stop him before he got us both in trouble. Of course, it wouldn't be bad for him because he would get out of the mess later on, but I wouldn't be able to move past it—because of how they made the plan.

I watched him stop talking and lower his head, narrowing his eyes at his phone's screen. Then he raised his head and found me in the crowd, excusing himself from his father. At least he hadn't told his father anything yet.

He didn't answer my call because he understood I wanted him to step aside so we could talk.

We both snuck to the side, reaching the backyard where no one was.

"Helanie, what is going on? Why did you call me? I was about to tell Dad—" he was speaking casually, like he could fool me, when I interrupted him.

"No!"

I watched him close his eyes and shake his head, making sure he heard me right.

"What do you mean, no?" he asked, wanting me to explain in better words.

"I don't want to be with you anymore." I didn't know why he didn't understand from my text that I didn't want him to stop the ceremony.

"What?" He almost raised his voice before holding in his anger and forcing an awkward smile. "Is this a prank? Or maybe seeing so many people has made you afraid—"

Before he could keep going, I added, "I have told you I don't want us to be together. You asked for a chance, and I gave you that chance. I just didn't feel like I was ready. I'm not ready yet."

I couldn't tell him outright that I knew about his mother and his plan because that would expose them for being publicly evil to me. I didn't want to trigger them—at least not yet.

"What are you saying, Helanie? You told me you would give me a chance, and you did. We had a date, and you confessed you liked me, so—what is this back and forth about?" He was now breathing heavily, sounding so aggressive.

"And then now you're telling me? Now? All this time, you made me believe we were going to be together, but suddenly, Rudy shows interest in you, and you're backing down from me?" He yelled, causing me to step back and stare at him in horror.

"Don't you dare turn this on me. I am not the one who—"

He hushed me down as he waved his finger in my face.

"That's enough games. You're coming with me, and we are stopping this ceremony. I will tell everyone we are mates, and you can't stop me," he yelled again, grabbing my arm to drag me back to the venue.

"No!" I tried to free myself, but his grasp on my skin was so tight that I had to use my full strength. And I did.

I was able to unwrap his fingers from around my arm and push him. Before my wolf's awakening, I wouldn't have been able to budge him, but today, he stumbled back a little and stared at me in shock.

"Your wolf is awake, isn't she? Does she not like me? Does she want Rudy?"

I didn't know why he kept saying his name.

But that wasn't good. He was trying to make me look like the bad person here.

"Maximus, I told you two nights ago that I wasn't ready. I don't understand why you're acting so shocked when you were fine every other day," I yelled back at him, tired of him accusing me when he was the reason we weren't together right now.

"Huh? You think I'm some fool who was celebrating two days ago and then suddenly realized, 'Oh shit, I'm getting rejected?' You freaking played me, Helanie," he yelled again, throwing a punch at the wall beside us.

"I texted you—" I shut up when he lunged at me and grabbed my hand tightly once again.

"I don't care. You never did. And I never received your text. So we are going to stop this ceremony whether you like it or not. I will tell my father—everything. And then I won't even care if you want me or not. The truth should be out."

He scared me when he started pulling me after him.

At this point, I couldn't fight his strength, but before we could take a few steps, Norman briskly walked our way. He must have followed us.

"What the hell is going on here?" he hissed, his eyes landing on Maximus's grip on my wrist.

He quickly stepped toward us and freed me from Maximus's grasp.

"She is rejecting me," Maximus gulped before complaining about me to his brother.

Norman turned to me, his eyes suddenly filled with anger.

What is going on? Norman knew?

"I told her to tell me if she had changed her mind, and she didn't. But today, she is suddenly saying she doesn't want to be with me," Maximus was already in tears. His plan was working.

He had managed to make me look bad. So even if I confronted Maximus, he would never admit to his plan.

He wasn't a fool. He was calculated.

So this is what he had planned to punish me with after I sent him that text?

"Helanie, what the heck is he saying? You can't just—lead him on—" I knew why he seemed so angry.

It wasn't just about Maximus, but also because I had told him about Kaye, too.

"I'm doing this because of Maximus and his m—mother—" I was about to say it when Maximus turned to me and yelled in my face.

"You are a horrible person! How could you—how could you make such a fool out of me? Wait until the last moment to break my heart?" He kept accusing me, not even letting me explain my side.

"Enough, both of you. This ceremony will go uninterrupted."

As Norman made that decision, Maximus looked at him in defeat.

He then glared at me, then back at his brother, before marching toward the back exit of the mansion.

"Maximus!" Norman attempted to call after him, but then he turned to confront me. "Go back to the ceremony. I will deal with you later."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 343-So I Am The Bad One Now?

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Helanie:

I returned to the ceremony feeling confused and stressed. My mother and Lord McQuoid had already exchanged rings.

I stood next to Lamar, feeling dizzy. All this time, I had tears in my eyes. I wanted to cry because of the turn of events. Maximus really broke my heart. At that point, I also realized I should have spoken my truth to Norman.

"Are you okay? What happened between you and Maximus? He never came out from the backyard," Lamar whispered, trying to be discreet.

"He accused me of never texting him and purposely delaying things to embarrass him at the last minute. He also claimed... I'm leaving him for Rudy," I forced the words out, my breath catching in my throat.

"Wait, what the fuck!" Lamar hissed, shaking his head before pointing at my phone. "Give me that."

I handed him my phone, and he opened my inbox, pointing at the text I had sent Maximus.

"There, you go. Proof. You're worrying over nothing," he said with a reassuring smile. But it didn't change anything.

Maximus had said I led him on and then backed out just to humiliate him.

"I don't know... The way he made me look in front of his brother—when one of his brothers has already been hurt because of me—I think Norman is going to be really angry with me." I was panicking just thinking about Norman planning revenge for his brother.

That would be bad. Really bad.

"Don't stress out. He can't force you to love someone," Lamar said, but he wasn't getting my point.

"Lamar, it makes me look bad. Almost like a troublemaker. My reputation will be ruined, and when I finally tell my side of the story, nobody will believe me. They'll think I have a habit of—" I stopped talking as my breath caught again.

"Hey, hey!" Lamar quickly started rubbing my back.

Everyone was busy taking pictures with the newly engaged couple, but I stayed in the background, hyperventilating.

As I raised my head, I noticed the family staring at me in confusion.

"Your face is so red," Lamar explained why everyone had their eyes on me. The guests hadn't noticed, but the family had.

There was no interest on Norman's face, but Emmet quickly excused himself. Norman tried to raise a hand to get Emmet's attention—probably to stop him from coming over—but Emmet had already stepped off the stage.

"I'll head back inside. I don't want any attention on me, Lamar," I requested.

"Okay, I'll walk you—" Lamar cut himself off as another hand rested on my back, immediately warming my body. I looked up from the ground and met Emmet's concrete-filled eyes.

"It's okay, nothing new. Some people get anxious in crowded places," Emmet comforted me almost instantly. "Let's go for a walk. What do you say?" he asked Lamar, who nodded because I couldn't get any words out.

Within minutes, we were walking down the road. Night was starting to fall, and the weather had worsened as a storm rolled in.

Lamar walked beside me while Emmet walked ahead.

"Sir, may I ask you a question?" I spoke up, realizing that talking helped calm me down.

"Sure, Lamar," Emmet said, rolling his shoulders as he moved.

He was so tall. His presence was really comforting. There was something about him—his aura was peaceful, like sitting by a fireplace wrapped in a warm blanket.

That's how I would describe him.

"The rogue community is interesting. There's almost a pattern of monsters coming and going," Lamar paused when Emmet slowed down and eventually stopped. He turned his head slightly, as if to show interest in Lamar's statement.

"How many monsters have you come across?" Emmet asked.

"I mean, there are plenty that I've heard of," Lamar answered.

"Hmm, there's a reason for that. You see, there's always one big force behind these small monsters coming out to attack the rogues. If you ever encounter one, you'll know," Emmet said, pouting slightly.

His phone rang, and he excused himself but didn't walk away.

"We're right outside the mansion, Norman." Of course, it was Norman calling him. He had already started showing his disapproval of my interactions with his brothers.

"We'll eat in the mansion. All three of us aren't really party people anyway," Emmet said, already knowing I wouldn't be going back to the venue after what had happened earlier.

Thankfully, he made the decision for us. We stayed in the mansion, where we were served food before the ceremony ended.

"Come to the celebratory lunch tomorrow," Emmet told Lamar before heading outside to be with his brothers and say goodbye to the guests.

"You'll be okay?" Lamar looked so concerned for me. Just a few days ago, I felt like I had everything. And today, after seeing the look in Norman's eyes—the disgust he had for me—I hated it.

It only proved my point. I should have stayed away from the brothers. I should have never gotten involved, and none of this would have happened.

There's a reason it's called a forbidden relationship.

"I'll be fine. Please be safe out there," I said, walking with him to see him off. After giving me a side hug, he left the mansion, but I stayed standing outside my room.

Before I could go inside, the mansion door opened, and someone walked in.

"I'll be quick," Kesha told Kaye, rushing toward the staircase. "I'll be in the bathroom," she added before heading upstairs.

I felt awkwardly out of place when I came face-to-face with Kaye.

He looked like a stranger, not even sparing me a second glance as he kept walking past me.

"Okay!" he responded to her, dodging me and walking away.

The fact that he was acting like I was the reason he got hurt and that we weren't together reminded me of Maximus.

The brothers had played a clever game—since they couldn't be with me, they accused me instead. That way, none of the blame or guilt fell on them.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 344-Hello My Ex!

Chapter 344: 344-Hello My Ex!

Helanie:

That night was so hard for me to get through. I couldn't sleep well as I kept waking up at intervals. And when I eventually did fall asleep, I woke up to loud cheering outside.

It took me a minute to remember that today was the celebratory lunch. The academy students had received invitations, but they knew this day was only for Lord McQuoid's close family friends.

So, I guess they felt out of place coming here. I told Lamar he didn't have to come here either for me. I wanted to get out of the mansion and meet him and Gavin at Benita's Café.

But before I could do that, I realized I would have to pass through those who were very angry with me at the moment.

I wore a red floral dress with long sleeves and red boots, rushing out of my room when I spotted the brothers walking toward the exit together.

It was all four of them.

But Emmet was the only one who stepped up to stop me. "You're headed somewhere?"

I meekly nodded my head, avoiding direct eye contact with Maximus, who had Norman's arm around his shoulder.

They were so lucky to have someone by their side. Even when Maximus played a game, he was still treated like a victim of my poisonous claws. And Kaye had changed entirely—not just physically.

He hadn't even looked my way once.

Isn't that what I wanted?

Rejection, so that I could be with his brother?

"My friends and I have a meetup at the café," I spoke with difficulty, as standing among them and feeling their disdain for me was making me uncomfortable.

"There's lunch at home, and you're going out through the crowd?" Norman unwrapped his arm from Maximus' shoulder to intervene. This time, there was a clear hint of disgust in his voice when speaking to me.

"He's right. It'll be hard for you to get past the cars and the guards since security is very tight today," Emmet scratched his eyebrow, speaking in a tone nice enough for Norman to roll his eyes at me.

"Oh!" I felt so out of place.

"If you don't want to come out, you can stay in your room. The maids will check on you every few minutes," Emmet quickly added when he noticed I was at a loss for words.

"Thank you," I said with a smile, and that's when a scoff left Maximus' mouth.

"Of course," he commented, tilting his head but staring into space.

What did he mean by that?

Emmet's phone rang, and he excused himself, walking to the side. Now it was just an uncomfortable moment where I had to stand with the three who thought so little of me.

"I will be in my room—," I spoke to Norman, who shrugged, showing he couldn't care less.

Kaye walked away after waiting for his brothers to join him, and then Maximus stepped up. Now that the others were gone, he was going to have a word.

"Would you also like a princess treatment, your highness?" That taunting tone killed me. I frowned, stepping back from him and glancing at Norman behind him.

"Don't spin this on me. I have proof that I did text you—," I fidgeted while looking for my phone in my bag, but it seemed like they weren't looking for any evidence. They had already deemed me guilty.

"It doesn't make a difference. You led me on just so you could go ahead and be with some alpha boy. And you know why?" Maximus started laughing under his breath, anger and betrayal shining in his eyes.

"You knew my parents wouldn't agree to this marriage, and we would have to live in the woods until my business thrived. And that was something you didn't want. You wanted luxury and—"

I had to hush him harshly with my palm.

"You have said enough. You know why I didn't go along with 'your plan'?" I used a firm tone this time, not backing down as I glared into his eyes.

"Because you were playing me." As soon as I said that, I expected him to start defending himself.

It wasn't something he didn't already know. He must have realized that I was onto him, but of course, he wouldn't admit it in front of his brother.

"Goddess! Do you hear her? She has the nerve to accuse me when she's the one who played the biggest game here. You wanted an alpha—how many other alphas have you been trying to trap in your love cage before finally picking one with the biggest pack so you could get the title of Luna?" His accusations hit deep.

I turned to his brother and muttered, "He was—" but I shut up when Maximus squared up again.

"I won't let you lie so bluntly. This conversation ends here. You fucking broke my trust and my heart, Helanie." He punched his chest, a tear rolling down his cheek before his brother stepped in.

"Just go back to your room and spare my brothers," Norman patted Maximus' back to show his support while keeping his eyes on me, silently telling me to leave.

As I was about to turn around, Emmet showed up again.

"Helanie, how about meeting my father just once and congratulating him? I know he'll notice." He was so sweet to think of my reputation, even when his brothers looked upset that he was speaking to me.

I gave him a nod, unbothered by Norman's harsh glare, and followed him outside. Maximus was being comforted by his big brother.

But now I was in the fresh air, feeling much better.

Much better—until my steps halted abruptly when my gaze fell on the arriving guests.

Arriving with his father was someone I thought I would never see again.

I froze, my breath quickening and my heart pounding in my temples as I watched Altan step out of the car with his dad and head toward the garden.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 345-Falling Apart

Chapter 345: 345-Falling Apart

He looked so happy, as if he hadn't spent a sleepless night after leaving me at the subway.

He wore a fancy black suit, all smiles and laughter while being greeted by my mother and Lord McQuoid. I couldn't do it. His sight destroyed my mental health. The young alpha getting hugged by everyone had left me to die.

I turned around and sped up, my ears blocking out every sound except for my heartbeat. As I stormed in, I bumped into the hard chest of Maximus, stepping back before pushing him aside with force to get away and hide in my room.

"What's wrong with her now?" I heard Norman ask Maximus, but I didn't stay to listen and rushed inside.

After everything that had happened, now I was someone who trapped Alphas. Seeing Altan reminded me of his accusations when my father reached out to him for me.

He told his father and the council that I was trying to trap him—and the other Alphas too.

And now that Maximus, Kaye, and Norman think the same, nobody will believe me.

I sat on my bed, rubbing my eyes over and over to stop myself from crying. I even forgot to shut the door. I just knew I had to sit down before I collapsed.

There was some noise outside my door before Norman opened it and walked in with Emmet and Maximus by his side.

Emmet took the lead, pushing past Norman and reaching the bed.

"What happened?" His heavy breaths told me he was already worried something had happened to me. And, of course, it was probably because I had stopped following him and rushed back inside.

I was fighting my tears, my fists tightly clenched around the bedsheet. I lifted my face and made direct eye contact with the three of them, but my lips couldn't utter a single word anymore.

"What happened to you?" Norman asked, looking less concerned and more annoyed that Emmet was anxiously waiting for my response.

I didn't say anything.

Maximus rolled his eyes and then muttered, "I didn't even say anything that bad. I said it because I was hurt too."

The way he explained himself made it seem like he was worried I had taken offense to his words.

"Wait, you said something to her?" Emmet asked. My vision had turned blurry, and even though I was looking at them, I felt completely zoned out.

"It's between us," Maximus muttered back at Emmet.

"No need to argue. She's fine," Norman gestured for Emmet to leave with him. "She just needs some time to calm down."

He must have noticed I was holding my breath. I was struggling to hide my tears, waiting for them to leave so I could cry my heart out.

"Let's give her some time," Norman suggested again.

"Okay, but let me call her friends first. Maybe she'll feel better if they're around," Emmet offered, holding out his hand for me to pass him my phone since I couldn't even say a word.

"Maybe call Rudy," Maximus said, his hands in his pockets and an angry look on his face when mentioning Rudy.

"Maximus," Norman gave him a gentle shake of his head.

"No, I'm serious. I know what upset her—me saying his name." Of course, Maximus didn't know what was truly upsetting me. But I was so overwhelmed with emotions that I didn't want to argue with him at all.

"Wait, what is going on?" Emmet frowned, his hand clenched into a fist, resting on his thigh with his elbow raised slightly. He turned just enough to glare at Maximus.

"Call Lamar only," I managed to say, and the silent staring contest between the brothers ended.

"You guys go ahead, I'll join you in a minute," Emmet told his brothers while dialing Lamar for me.

"No! I will stay," Maximus responded stubbornly. I didn't understand why he insisted on staying when it was clear he didn't care about me or my well-being.

"And give her some water, maybe," Maximus muttered, turning his face away as he spoke to Norman. Norman sighed before reaching my bedside table and pouring a glass of water for me. I took only a small sip, just to avoid any conversation or an argument over something as simple as a glass of water.

After Emmet made the call, he seemed to realize I wasn't comfortable with them being in the room with me.

I would have been fine if it was just Emmet, since he never judged me. But with Maximus—who kept clenching his jaw and throwing subtle remarks about how I should calm down—it didn't sit right with me.

"Lamar will be here soon," Emmet said, standing up. "Let's leave now."

He spoke directly to Maximus because he knew Maximus wouldn't leave unless they all did. Norman paced around with his hands in his pockets the entire time. He looked anxious, casually playing with his mustache and twirling it while keeping his head down.

They finally left, and I switched off the lights in my room, quickly sliding under the blanket.

I had too much on my mind. What if Altan recognizes my mother?

I mean, he had never met her before, and my mother never talks about her pack to anyone, but what if they do?

I was drowning in worry.

It broke my heart to see Altan so happy. After years of dragging me along with him and then abandoning me, he was back on his feet—happy and confident.

I couldn't fall asleep, even though I thought it would help me feel better and pass the time. So I stayed awake for all the hours Lamar took to get here. Our mansion wasn't right by his pack.

So when he finally arrived, he stormed into my room, turned on the lights, and locked the door instantly.

I sat up, watching him with swollen eyes. The look of horror on his face told me I had called the right person.

The person who couldn't stand to see me in distress and truly cared about me.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 346-I Was A Fool Back Then

Chapter 346: 346-I Was A Fool Back Then

Helanie:

"That's the Alpha?" he asked, looking completely shocked.

"Yeah, the one who left me," I repeated. I guess I hadn't focused much on Altan when telling Lamar about the incident before. I had only briefly mentioned him.

"That's... crazy. He was in love with you? I mean, you two were dating back then?" Lamar was sitting on the bed with me, forcing me to eat the burger he had brought for me.

"Helanie, I don't know if I should tell you this or not, but I have some information on him—from before I even knew he was the asshole who left you with those animals that night," he said, looking down, closing his eyes, and taking deep breaths. That worried me.

"Tell me everything you know," I said with confidence, even though I knew the truth would hurt.

"Altan has been lying to you," he paused. "He found his fated mate the day he turned eighteen. They turned eighteen together. But... she was from another pack, so you never got the chance to know much about her. He was very protective of her, so he kept her a secret." He hesitated on the word *protective*.

I couldn't believe it.

I lost everything for someone who had been playing me?

"But he never told me. He said he would accept me, and—oh my God, I've been such a fool," I covered my mouth with my hands, tearing up. He quickly hugged me while I sobbed my heart out like crazy.

"Lamar—he used to be so draining, mentally and emotionally. He kept me hanging with false hopes. Of course, he didn't stay to fight for me. Of course, he didn't protect me—he chose his reputation over mine. He didn't want anyone to find out. He didn't want his mate to know he had been with me, so he would rather let me die there. Yeah!" I nodded, letting out a bitter laugh at how stupid I had been.

"Hey, he's an asshole. It's his loss—he lost a gem like you," Lamar patted my back. After a while, I broke the hug and wiped my cheeks with the back of my hand.

"Tell me more," I needed to know. All this time, I thought he got cold feet, but now I finally understood why.

He didn't want to protect me—he was already protecting his mate.

I was just his side chick.

He never really cared about me.

"You know he's engaged?" Lamar asked, holding my hands tightly, trying to comfort me.

The question itself was heartbreaking.

He moved on without any guilt.

It confused me because, even if he never truly loved me, we had been friends since childhood. Did our friendship mean nothing to him at all?

"Who?" I asked in a whisper, barely able to say the word.

"Sydney Coombs. She's his fated mate."

My heart sank at the revelation.

"What?" I gulped, trying to wet my dry throat.

"What are you saying, Lamar?" I tried to pull my hands from his, my voice breaking miserably.

"He's been with her since they were fifteen. Sydney told me all about it one night when she was upset with him," he explained.

Lamar wasn't the kind of guy to spill someone's secrets. He had never done it before—until now. And that was because he knew I 'needed' to hear this.

"Of course," I remembered. "You slept with her that night because she was depressed about something."

I finally understood why she had so desperately wanted me dead.

"Yeah, she wanted to stay with her Alpha mate but didn't want rumors spreading that she had cheated on him. Their relationship was already hanging by a thread, so she was ready to go as far as getting you thrown out of the academy tests just to save her reputation. And I wanted to stay in the academy because I wanted to find those asshole Alphas," he explained, watching me as I smiled to myself.

"What happened?" he asked.

"It's just so funny. I walked out of my house that night thinking I'd be safer with an Alpha who loved me. Turns out, everything was a lie." My eyes burned with tears once again.

We remained silent for some time, and that's when it hit me.

"You know... it's so odd that the Alphas that night mentioned my pheromones. In the moment, it didn't faze me because I was so scared, but now that I think about it—my pheromones have been kept a secret in our pack. Why did I assume people from other packs knew about them?" I muttered under my breath, finally recalling the small details I had tried to forget about that night.

Watching Lamar's confused expression, I added, "They even mentioned me wearing my pendant—" I stopped mid-sentence when I realized my explanation wasn't helping Lamar—it was only confusing him more.

"Pheromones?" He squinted his eyes, and I gasped.

Shit.

I had never really told him much about that either.

"You mean... the scent that disappears when you feel the mate bond—?"

I'm so stupid. He must be wondering why I'm still wearing the pendant when I've already felt the mate bond with three Alphas.

"Actually, um... it's not just a heat thing. It's a curse, and I have to wear it forever," I admitted, watching his eyes widen in shock.

The next few minutes were difficult as I explained everything—the story of my pheromones, how the pack members perceived me as filthy, and why I was so afraid of anyone doing research on me. All of this could be used against me by the Alphas and their parents.

"Look," Lamar said after hearing everything. He took my hand and gave me a gentle smile. "None of that matters. What happened, happened. We're on our journey to get revenge. As for Altan—there will come a time when you'll have to face those Alphas again. You must stay strong and remember—I'm always with you."

His words gave me so much comfort that I instantly flashed him a broken smile.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 347-The Innocent People Killer

Chapter 347: 347-The Innocent People Killer

Helanie:

After Lamar left, I fell asleep and woke up to the noises outside. I heard from the maid who brought me food that the guests had finally left. I also heard that the celebrations went well. So, I guess I was never brought up in any of the conversations. And of course, my mother would have never introduced me or asked about my absence.

After I finished my dinner, I was about to walk out of my room with the dishes when I came face to face with Norman getting home.

"I will call you later," he quickly hung up on the person and stepped in my way. "Whatever you did to Maximus and Kaye has really upset me. The only reason you are still staying here is because, in two days, you will be gone. And I don't ever want you back in our lives, in my mansion, or around my brothers again."

He warned me, his finger pointing in my face while showing a clear hint of disgust for me.

"What do you have to say about yourself?" I asked, not looking timid anymore. I spent the whole day crying—I was exhausted now.

"What did I do?" he frowned, his hands flying to his waist as he glared at me, waiting for a response.

"You are a lycan, and you are going around killing innocent people." As soon as I reminded him of his own actions, he looked around to make sure nobody had heard me and then grabbed my arm to pull me back into my room. He slammed the door shut and breathed heavily, his hand still on the door.

"What happened? You can't take the truth?" I hissed.

"You don't know anything, and don't you dare talk about that—" he slid his hand down from the door just to point a finger at me.

"Huh, what? What will you even do?" I provoked him, angry that these brothers could switch sides just like that. "Kill me like you kill other innocent people?" I scoffed.

"So when you thought Emmet was the lycan, you saved him from getting exposed. But now that you think I am the lycan—you are suddenly remembering how wrong it is—" he paused, biting the inside of his cheek.

"I am not exposing you either. And is that what you are upset about? That I didn't warn Emmet?" I folded my arms over my chest, already realizing I had said the wrong thing.

He cared deeply about his brothers, and it showed from his actions, body language, and overall bias.

"Don't you ever try to do that. I love my brother, and had you threatened Emmet like you are threatening me right now, I would have been the one to kill you with my own bare hands," he yelled, causing me to step back in fear.

"Don't raise your voice at me, Norman. I have tolerated you and your brothers' accusations for far too long now—" I was trying to get my point across when his intimidating step toward me silenced me.

"And you want to retaliate now as if we were the bad ones? We always stood by your side, only for you to hurt my brothers, play with their hearts, and then act like we are the worst people in the world?" he grunted, lowering his body over mine, looming over me threateningly.

"Just because you all took my side or saved me when I was in the right doesn't give you—or your brothers—the right to insult me," I hissed, biting my tongue when I felt like a whimper would escape my lips.

"I don't care about your emotional drama, Helanie. I am not my brothers. And you better stay away from Emmet if he is your next target." His words stabbed me in the chest, but I wanted to have one last say before he left.

"You stay away from innocent people, Norman." I watched him clench his jaw at my threatening voice before he walked out of the room and slammed the door hard after him.

I was beyond angry now.

They played me well. I didn't dare leave the room again and went straight to bed.

When I woke up, it was 5 a.m.

In two days, I would be gone from here, and I wouldn't return to this place either.

"You slept okay?" Lamar asked as I hopped onto the back of his bike. We were going to meet Lucy, so I wanted to be in good spirits.

Hearing that she had woken up gave me a little hope for happiness. She now meant the world to me.

"Yeah, the thought of seeing Lucy helped me sleep better," I reassured him, but the low energy coming from my body betrayed me as I recalled Norman asking me to stay away from Emmet.

I am not a bad person. So why did they make it seem like I was always the problem?

It made me feel so out of place. Like when you befriend twins, and whenever something goes wrong, they accuse you because they owe each other loyalty. So you become kind of a third wheel or an easy target.

We arrived at her pack and then at her apartment in a few hours. I didn't want to eat on the way.

"This is hers," Lamar pointed at the wooden door, my eyes traveling to the apartment next to hers. It was Gavin's apartment.

They were so ashamed of their small pack and living conditions that they never mentioned anything about their packs at the academy.

Taking a deep breath, I knocked on the door, and her mother answered. The kind, sweet woman with dimples just like her daughter smiled at me.

"You must be Helanie. And you—you young boy must be Lamar."

She looked so happy to have her daughter back. I would die to have a mother whose happiness came from seeing me alive.

But enough about me!

I don't know why I always do that—talk about me and my miserable self.

Today was Lucy's day.

She took us straight to her room, walking us through the messy living room where Lucy's mother would usually be knitting clothes. She had her own small shop where she sold knitted goods.

"She's inside," her mother said, opening the door, and quite a surprising sight awaited us.

Lucy was getting ready, doing her makeup like she never used to before, and smiling at herself.

It was such an amazing sight to see her looking so happy now.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 348-The Missing Monster From The Tenth Floor

Chapter 348: 348-The Missing Monster From The Tenth Floor

Helanie:

"Honestly, I feel like my best self ever."

Lucy had darkened her eyes with eyeliner. She never used to wear such heavy and bright makeup. She looked good, though, but the sudden change in her seemed like denial to me.

"What about—the mate bond—" Lamar shut up when I eyed him for bringing it up.

And the way her smile faded before she forced a wide grin just hinted at how she was doing her best to forget about it.

"It happened. It is okay. I mean—I guess—he wasn't meant to be with me," she looked away but then started running her hands through her hair to make it seem like it didn't affect her much.

"Lucy!" I instantly hugged her, and she closed her eyes, sniffing silently.

"Helanie, when I was in a coma, I had this recurring feeling of being stuck in a long, empty, and dark tunnel. I tried so hard to get out of it. I did my best, but every time I thought I was getting closer to the light, it would get darker again. During all that time, I realized what I had done. My life didn't end with Gavin, Helanie. It didn't," she spoke determinedly, but little whimpers still left her lips.

I broke the hug and watched her smile at me.

"My life is beyond him. It is a precious thing to be able to wake up every day and have a family with you. I cannot imagine waking up having no one by my side. And I was giving that up for someone who didn't give two shits before cheating on me?" she hissed suddenly, making me realize she was angry with Gavin.

And rightfully so.

"Anyway," she rubbed her face with her hands, "I want to live my life to the fullest. I don't want to just become someone's mate. I tried to be a nice girl, but no! That wasn't me. I want to enjoy—I want to be a free spirit," she shrugged her shoulders, and that's when Lamar and I shared a glance.

We forgot to ask her the most important question until she mentioned the word 'spirit.'

"What happened to you two?" she frowned when she noticed how we had been sharing looks.

"Lucy, do you remember anything from that night?" I questioned worriedly.

Because I remembered that night vividly. It left me broken. I remember being so petrified for her and losing my mind.

"Umm yeah, I was on the rooftop and just—lost my mind."

The minute her mother stepped in, Lucy gave her a smile.

I don't know why she was lying. I knew she was on the tenth floor.

"Lucy! The tenth floor," I uttered, and she pouted.

"What tenth floor?" she let out a laugh, making me look stupid.

"I am so glad my baby has friends like you guys," her mother was all smiles as she served us food.

She had a pretty cute family.

Her father was the regular, sweet kind of man, always holding the newspaper with his big glasses on. Her siblings were twelve and eight.

She was right—she had everything she could ever wish for.

"But Lucy—remember—" I shifted my attention back to Lucy while she was giggling with her mother.

That's when Lamar placed his hand on the back of my hand and eyed Lucy's mother. I shut up and let her mother walk out. The minute she did, Lucy adjusted her posture to face me properly in bed.

"The entity got out," she spoke up in a whisper, making me realize she didn't want her mother to freak out, so she hadn't told anyone—especially her mother—about the entity.

"What do you mean by it got out? Tell me from the beginning."

Now that she wasn't lying and was openly talking about the entity—and also admitting to knowing about her—I started asking more questions.

"I went to the tenth floor because my dumb ass liked speaking with that entity. It seemed like he or she—whoever it was—knew me and was making me feel better. She convinced me to let her into my body. She said once she gave me power and made me feel better, she would move on," Lucy reminded me of my own conversation with that entity.

"She promised, and I let her in—but the minute she entered my body, she started to control my mind. I got scared and decided to jump off so that she wouldn't get to take over me. However, right when I hit the ground, I heard her giggles. And Helanie—they didn't come from inside me. She is out and about now—"

Her words sent chills down my spine.

Lamar and I exchanged a terrified look as we understood just how scary this was going to get.

"What do you mean by that? Did you see her?" Lamar asked, both of us really worried now.

"No! I just—heard her. And I knew she was free," Lucy confirmed.

My mind began to race. What if it got into someone more powerful?

"I feel guilty because I'm the reason it got out. But what if—what if it tries to come for me?" She instantly held my hands before forcing a smile. "It can't, right? I sort of became the reason she's free now. So she wouldn't come for me?"

I felt bad for her. She had only woken up a few days ago, and she was already stressed out. But honestly, I had no idea what the entity was planning to do.

"Or maybe go after the last survivor?" Lamar recalled that there was someone who had escaped the entity's grasp but also managed to trap her—unlike Lucy.

"It's okay, Lucy. We will find a way to catch her, okay?" I reassured her, and she nodded meekly.

"Tell me, what have I missed?" she asked in her usual soft and timid voice.

She was trying hard to be cheerful, but I knew it would take her some time to get back to normal.

"Oh, where to begin?" I sighed, remembering that I had to tell her about my relationship with the trainers—who now hated me.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 349-Am I A Monster?

Chapter 349: 349-Am I A Monster?

Helanie:

"She took it well," Lamar said as he mentioned Lucy. We only told her whatever the others knew and not what Lamar and I were up to.

"Way too well," I reminded him how excited she got when she found out I am related to the Trainers.

"Yeah, she was hoping she would get some benefits," Lamar laughed as he mentioned her comments about how we will never get bullied again or get away with many messy things. As if she can do anything messy.

"She didn't want to talk about Gavin, did she?" I pouted, feeling extremely guilty that now we will be stuck with two friends who can't be around each other.

"She even asked me why I am letting Gavin live in my place. To be honest, she shouldn't. Back when she knew I was awful to you, she was still pretty nice to me. Even

when my presence would exhaust you, she would just throw herself at me. I understand she was doing it out of anger, but still—we should make a rule. If friends in the group are going to date, they should spare us from dragging us into it," Lamar explained, but I sighed and shook my head.

"Lamar, it doesn't work that way. Lucy and I were friends, sure. But I am sure it is different now. If your friend is getting ditched and one of your friends is screwing them over, you will have to take a stand. Consequences are what make people not repeat the same mistakes," I wanted Lamar to know that when Lucy was being nice to him, that was when Lamar was actually showing remorse to me.

In fact, he had shown remorse way before that. So it was a different thing.

I was just confused and lost at this point.

"Lamar, why don't you leave me near the mountain trail? I will walk my way up. I want to stretch my legs a little," I asked, and he nodded. The next thing I knew, he was dropping me off and heading back home.

Me: Are we going to train anymore?

I texted Norman with much reluctance. I didn't want to beg him either, but I wanted to learn. He read my text and then responded with a simple word.

"No!"

That itself was a hint that he was done giving me any favors for free. I was sure Maximus had kicked me out of the club too, and I didn't want to go work for him either.

So I was back to zero again.

I had been roaming around, taking slow and steady steps when I realized I wasn't alone. I started to look around in panic, and then someone jumped out from behind the tree so suddenly that he was able to grab my wrists and pin me against the tree.

"Rayden!" I muttered, fear of being alone gnawing at me.

"Officially the rogue king's stepsister, huh?" he referred to the engagement ceremony that he missed because they didn't let him in.

"What the fuck, let me go," I hissed, struggling to free myself. The nasty smirk on his face terrified me.

"Really? Why would I? I let you go the last time, and look what you did. You fucking ruined my reputation, my life—and—" As he attempted to bring his face closer, I headbutted him.

He lost his balance and went tumbling back onto the road. The hint of shock and pain while his nose bled was clear in my sight, and it was one satisfying sight.

"And your credibility, you asshole," I muttered, straightening my posture and stretching my neck.

"How—" I watched his face change color, looking pale and shocked at my strength.

"Ohh!" As reality hit him, he got up and started wiping his nose clean. He stared at the blood on his palm and then let out a laugh, shaking his head in disapproval.

"You must think that awakening your wolf would save you," he smirked, his voice dripping with bitterness.

"What makes you think it wouldn't?" As soon as I said that, I lunged at him to punch him. However, he dodged, and I almost lost my balance.

"Haha!" He let out a laugh, but that's when I spun around and backhanded him, knocking him down again.

"Don't laugh like a maniac in front of me. You never know when I'm putting on an act and when I'm actually being serious," I hissed, watching him grimace. I bet his ego was taking hits one after another. He was the type who thought he could do whatever he wanted, but the minute he got put in his place, he started to lose it.

And right now, he looked like he was losing his shit.

I watched him grimace, not even trying to get up.

"What happened? Gave up so soon?" I let out a laugh, then clicked my tongue while walking around him in circles.

"Maybe you're forgetting something," he lowered his head and chuckled just a little before he got up quickly. The next thing I knew, he was blocking my hits and had pushed me up against the tree once again.

"That I'm an Alpha!" he yelled in my face.

"You are—and will always remain—weaker than me." As he continued, I felt this bubble of energy rise within me.

It reached my head, and then my vision started to blur—almost like it was turning bloody. He was just a bag of blood instead of skin.

I watched his eyes widen, and a gasp escaped his lips before he let me go and stepped back. He looked anxious—to the point that he tripped and landed on his butt.

"What kind of monster are you?" His words snapped me back to reality. I watched him get to his feet, looking more frightened than ever, and then he ran off.

I couldn't even utter another word after him because his panic had scared me as well.

"Why the fuck did he call me a monster?" I asked myself, completely lost in his shock.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 350-The Wild Confrontation

Chapter 350: 350-The Wild Confrontation

Helanie:

Just when I decided to walk back home and think about Rayden's comments later, a car passed by me. It suddenly stopped and then reversed, this time stopping right next to me.

My mood instantly soured when I saw Maximus and Kaye in the car.

"Why did you stop?" Kaye asked, rolling his eyes and refusing to look my way.

"Look, that's our beloved stepsister. She must need a ride," Maximus stated in a taunting tone, and I had to shake my head at him.

"Thank you, but I will walk back home," I replied, continuing my walk when Maximus drove up to me again and stopped abruptly.

"Are you sure? Or maybe Rudy is on his way to pick you up?" Maximus mocked once again, this time using Rudy's name.

I grunted, deepening my glare at him while Kaye only stretched his neck, cracking his knuckles.

"Dude, let's go. She doesn't need a ride from us," Kaye once again seemed disinterested.

"Listen to your brother, he's spot on. I don't need a ride from you two," the minute I said that, Kaye turned his neck to me and stared at me with a weird look on his face.

"Hear her, now that her wolf is waking up, she doesn't need our help," Maximus clenched his jaw, muttering the words through his teeth.

"That's because I don't want you to remind me you did something for me for the hundredth time," I wasn't backing down. I had just scared off Rayden, so I felt like I had it in me to respond to someone's taunting the way they deserved.

Especially Maximus.

"Rudy?" Kaye nodded his head to himself.

"Stop saying his name. We are only academy mates, not even that close of friends," I retorted before they could spread rumors and make it uncomfortable for Rudy and me to ever talk again.

"Of course, she won't admit it. She does that a lot—one must wonder when Rudy will get replaced," Maximus commented, steadily opening the door to his car and stepping out to face me. He folded his muscular arms over his chest and smirked, but there was pain behind his smirk.

Which was so fascinating to watch since I knew he lied about being in love with me.

"I didn't play anyone, Maximus. I'm not like you," I hissed back, trying to get past him when he sidestepped and blocked my path.

"What exactly is going on between the two of you? And what's the deal with Rudy?" Kaye, who was never interested in anything related to me, was suddenly getting out of the car and walking all the way around to face me.

"She chose Rudy so quickly," Maximus hissed.

"Quickly? Is that—Rudy is the reason?" Kaye muttered under his breath, and while his brother didn't notice, I did.

"You two should be leads in Gossip Girl, you're making stuff up—" I shut up when Maximus turned to his brother.

"The way she played me—" As Maximus scoffed and rolled his eyes, I watched Kaye zone out before staring at his brother in shock.

"What do you mean by that?" Kaye asked, pressing his brother now. I began to feel the heat of confrontation coming, and before I knew it, Maximus was already blurting it out.

"Let's just say she had someone else in her grasp before she dumped them for Rudy."

I watched Kaye take steady breaths while his jaw kept clenching.

"Do you know about us?" Kaye questioned, filling the air with tension. Silence hit Maximus before he shook his head, looking clueless.

"Huh? I was talking about—" He paused before finishing, "Me!"

The two kept staring at each other, and then Kaye looked at me angrily. "Wait—you two were a thing?"

"I don't want to talk about it. It's over." I wasn't a confrontational person, mainly because I knew they would side with each other and corner me.

I didn't want to have this conversation here.

"No, wait," Maximus grabbed my hand, pulling me back to stand between them. I felt the pressure, realizing how scary it could get once again to be caught between two powerful creatures.

"I want to know why you chose Rudy over me," Maximus asked, knowing damn well he was just making stuff up to make me look guilty.

"Because you were playing me!" I yelled and freed my arm.

"What are you talking about?" Maximus took me seriously for once, reaching out gently to nudge my arm.

"Wait, you two were together?" Kaye repeated the same question.

"Huh!" He let out a laugh that stole Maximus' attention. I closed my eyes because, at this moment, I realized they wouldn't back off until we had this conversation.

"So all that time when I was suffering, you were with my brother?" Kaye stopped pacing, standing tall and nodding his head.

His glare was so empty it was terrifying. The new tattoo of a sword and a fishtail on his neck was such an attention-grabbing addition to his presence.

"What do you mean, Kaye?" Now it was Maximus' turn to be shocked.

"Remember I had a breakdown? That was because she asked me to reject her, and I kept asking her who she had chosen over me," Kaye detailed the conversation, causing Maximus' eyes to go wide.

"Huh? Reject her? But why would you reject her? She's my mate," Maximus stated, shocking Kaye into staring at him.

The two kept looking into each other's eyes before they turned back to me.

"You're mates with me, right?" Maximus questioned.

I stood in front of them like a culprit and then steadily shook my head. "I'm not."

I watched Maximus close his eyes and then shake his head while smiling, as if he thought I was joking. "But I felt something with you."

"You claimed you did. I felt nothing, and I've told you that before too. And yes, Kaye and I are mates, but we were done long ago, before you and I had anything—" I explained quickly before one of them could cut me off.

"So you decided to jump into my brother's lap?" Kaye phrased the question in a way that made my breath hitch in my throat.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

- Chapter 351-The Brothers And Their Miserable Stepsister

Chapter 351-The Brothers And Their Miserable Stepsister

Chapter 351: 351-The Brothers And Their Miserable Stepsister

Helanie:

"Kaye, watch your language," I hissed at him, and it angered him even more.

"Shut up!" Kaye yelled, his finger pointing at me.

"She didn't tell you we were mates?" Kaye let out a grunt, his eyes getting watery again.

"I swear, no. She told me she would take care of some stuff before we both announce to our dad that she is my mate and we move out of the mansion," Maximus tried to explain to his brother so that he understood that he didn't betray him.

Now that I realized what Kaye was saying, I was instantly guilt-ridden. If my ex or my mate had gone to date my sister next, I would be devastated too. And Maximus wasn't even my mate, so me feeling attracted to him was just so wrong.

"She was going to accept you?" Kaye was now focused on asking his brother questions. It all just made me look worse, and I was aware of it.

"Yeah. We were going to interrupt the engagement ceremony. We decided that if our parents didn't accept our relationship, we would move out and cut ties with them so that our relationship didn't look wrong," Maximus explained, and Kaye shot me a glare.

"But you said—you were not ready to be in a relationship. You didn't—you told me to go ahead and date Kesha, but you wanted to be with Maximus? Did you not even like me—," Kaye began to stutter, but Maximus was looking devastated too.

"You gave me a tough choice. You wanted me to choose—," I shut up when Kaye rushed at me with his finger pointing in my face.

In that moment, I felt so scared at the two glaring at me and yelling at me that I began to press the bracelet in my hand. I wanted Emmet to come here and at least get me out of here.

"It was not a freaking hard choice when you chose Maximus. All this time, I thought maybe—maybe I was the one who pushed you by bringing up Kesha. But the way you effortlessly asked me to move on, you wanted me out of your life. Why? Because just like the others, you thought low of me too!" Kaye punched the car, and I stepped back, tripping in fear and landing on the ground.

"And then you picked my brother—freaking broke me—," Kaye placed his hand on his chest, having a hard time breathing.

"Kaye, I couldn't choose you because you were my mate—," I still managed to utter when I watched Maximus finally break free from the trance and stare at my wrist.

"What the hell are you doing?" he screamed at me, quickly kneeling down and grabbing my wrist to show it to Kaye. "She is calling Emmet on us!"

It was the shock on his face that killed me.

"She wants all of us to freaking fight?" Maximus quickly stepped back from me, raising his hands to show that he wasn't touching me because he thought I would use it against them in some way.

"I am just scared—I didn't mean to," I stuttered, my throat getting drier.

"Kaye, let's go. She is going to mess us up. This was all a freaking plan," it was like Maximus had just learned something.

"No! I need answers. Why did she lead me on, and what did she mean by saying she couldn't accept me but then chose to date you? Why? Why my brother—?" Kaye was screaming at the top of his lungs while Maximus pushed him into the car.

"Emmet will be on his way. We need to get out of here. He already doesn't care about her, and if she told him we were hurting her or doing something to her—he will hate us," the pain in Maximus's voice couldn't be fake. He sounded genuinely serious and hurt.

The two got in the car and slammed the door shut. Maximus sped off while I could see Kaye having a meltdown once again.

I got up, pulled myself together while still shaking. I looked around but couldn't move a step forward. I didn't know if I should go back to the mansion. I did look like a liar and someone who tried to come between the brothers. I could clearly see their points.

Kaye was now certain I was in the wrong and wanted him to date Kesha so that he would be out of my way. But that wasn't the truth.

And now Maximus—he was thinking I played him too.

"Helanie!" a familiar voice hit my ears, and without thinking twice, I turned around and rushed toward the guy stepping out of the car.

Emmet must have been returning home when he got my signal, so he sped his car and stopped right behind me.

I landed on his chest, my eyes closed, and my fists pressed against his hard chest.

"I am not a bad person. I didn't mean to play anyone. I just—cannot tell them the truth," I kept rambling, and the way he faintly wrapped his arms around me made me feel like home.

"They hate me now, and now everyone will think I lied—" I was sniffling uncomfortably, shaking like the life was being drained out of me.

"I wasn't even—playing them—everyone played me—but I am wrong because I am alone—" I didn't make sense, but in my head, I was saying a lot. All my secrets were spilling even when they weren't.

In a very gentle and comforting tone, Emmet said, "I believe you."

I suddenly stopped and raised my head to look into his eyes.

"Was it Kaye or Maximus? Which one is accusing you of playing a game?" He looked so confident and calm when he asked me that.

I began to step away from him because I immediately thought he would blame me, but instead, he held my arms and stopped me.

"I'm sure you had your reasons, and I will not judge you. The way you cried, I can tell there is a huge secret you're holding in your heart, and you're afraid to let it out."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 352-She Changed Faster Than A Weather

Chapter 352: 352-She Changed Faster Than A Weather

Maximus:

I had told Helanie to take her time but to let me know when she made her decision. I was really excited to be with her. Every time I saw her through the crowd, I felt at home. She was so charming, beautiful, smart, and loyal.

There was so much about her that I wanted to learn more about—her smile, her eyes, her dreams, and wishes. I could sit and write a book about them, even though I don't like writing books.

I laughed to myself and strolled into my room to change.

I had called my mom to talk to her about Kaye, but her beta told me she was in the restroom. I didn't ask too many questions because she's an adult, but the fact that her beta was always by her side made me raise an eyebrow.

Mainly because she always complained that Dad moved on and she didn't. I didn't want to be involved in their drama anymore. Especially because Ursula was Helanie's mother, and hurting her or saying anything bad about her would upset Helanie.

"I heard you called," Mom said from the other side as I answered her call. I needed to change my clothes, and I couldn't tell where my AirPods were, so I just put my phone on speaker for a while.

Now that I was in my room, I received another call from my mother.

"Yes, Mom, I was calling you, but your beta said you were in the bathroom," I responded, taking off my shirt and throwing it on the bed.

"Yeah, I was. Tell me, is Helanie buying your act of being in love with her?"

The minute she asked me that question, my mood soured.

I stopped dead in my tracks while reaching for the closet and placed a hand on my forehead, trying to figure out what to expect next.

"Yeah, Mom. I told you I'd let you know when there's progress. But rest assured, she is in love with me and has fallen for my lies."

I knew I had to respond because Mom was waiting for me.

But I didn't mean a single word. A few weeks ago, Mom had asked me to make Helanie fall for me so that she could stir up tension between my dad and Helanie's mother.

I didn't accept her plan—until I started falling for Helanie myself.

At first, I flirted with her just to see what would happen, but after the first time, I was already falling for her. She was so amazing. And then I told my mom I would do it.

Just so she wouldn't find out from someone else that I was with Helanie and try to ruin it for me. So every time her trusted men told her they had seen me with Helanie, my mom would let it slide.

My plan was simple.

Once I made a public announcement, there would be nothing my mom could do to separate us. I would not leave Helanie for anyone. I was playing a dirty game with my own mother, but she could be very dangerous and toxic. And I wouldn't let her toxic claws reach my Helanie.

She was too innocent for all this. All I knew was that I only wanted Helanie and no one else.

As my mom kept talking, I kept going along with the lies. I hated even thinking about playing with Helanie. But my mom needed to hold onto false hope. Otherwise—I knew she would get rid of Helanie before anyone even knew about us.

But once they did, no one would dare come after Helanie.

"Okay, Mom! I'll talk to you later," I hissed tiredly, not wanting to hear another bad word about Helanie. This was getting out of hand, and my mother was just waiting for the right moment to strike.

But in the next few days, things changed. Or I should say, Helanie changed.

Her behavior toward me became so cold. I guessed she was scared of how others would react. And I wanted to assure her that I would never let anyone hurt her. For that to happen, we needed to tell others about us.

So, I had to give her an ultimatum. I hated putting pressure on her, but she wasn't understanding that we were getting closer to the engagement ceremony.

That ceremony could get us in trouble. People would complain if they saw us together after our parents got married. It would go against the rules of the Lycan community as well as the pack's laws.

And then I risked it all, telling her to give me her silence if she wanted us to move forward with our plan. That night, I left the mansion to take care of my own things and returned exhausted.

I was tired. My body ached. My eyes moved to the clock, watching as it struck 3 AM.

My eyelids felt so heavy as Norman patted my back, bidding me goodnight.

I dragged my body upstairs to my room but was shocked to see Charlotte standing outside my door.

"I already told you, I wouldn't touch you with a ten-foot pole," I reminded her of our last conversation when she had tried to sleep with me.

It was after that night that I made up my mind to change my ways. I never really thought I was the type to be loyal to someone, but I guess that's what falling in love feels like.

"I'm not here to seduce you. I just needed a phone to text a friend. It's urgent, and mine isn't working," she requested, rubbing her palms anxiously.

I sighed and entered my room, noticing that the door was already open. She must have walked in looking for me.

I grabbed my phone and, without looking, unlocked it and handed it to her. She quickly typed something while I poured myself a glass of water, feeling incredibly thirsty.

"All done, thank you!" she said, rushing out of the room.

I checked my phone, but there was no notification from anywhere else.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 353-She Belongs To Me

Chapter 353: 353-She Belongs To Me

Maximus:

Current time:

My mind was racing at this point, and I was trying my best to drive safely, even though my hands were shaking. I couldn't even look at my brother. I felt ashamed of myself. And Kaye was losing his mind.

I couldn't really understand why Helanie would do this to me. The only thing I kept coming back to was that maybe she got upset that Kaye had made Kesha an option, and she wanted to punish him by letting him know she left him for someone else.

That could be a possible reason because that's why she suddenly left me too—by accusing me of playing her. She used me to take revenge on Kaye and then dumped me.

I kept my fingers wrapped around the steering wheel while tears forced their way into my eyes. The problem was that I had never felt like crying before, even in the toughest situations.

But at that moment, I wanted to cry my heart out like a child. I had loved her a lot, so it wasn't easy for me to live with the fact that she had never loved me.

What should I do now? How would I ever be in love with someone after this?

My attention snapped back to Kaye, who was waving his hand at me to stop the car before I ran into the main gate.

I hadn't even been paying attention this whole time. I felt guilty for unintentionally hurting my brother.

I parked the car and got out, running over to the other side to hold the door open for him.

"Let's just not tell anyone about this," I requested, and Kaye nodded.

"Whatever she did was messed up, but—I—I don't want her to deal with angry glares. I am helpless—I am a damn coward who cannot stand up to her." I began to look away because my brother was staring at me. I could tell he wanted me to make eye contact with him.

"And you think I could stand seeing her hurt? She played me worse. She didn't even want to accept me, even though I'm her mate. Do you think you love her more than I do?" I was surprised when Kaye put it that way.

I gave him the eye contact he had been wanting and instantly felt my heart break. He liked me less.

"I am sure—she didn't mean to. She must have been hurt that you made Kesha an option," I tried to make excuses for her when Kaye gently pushed me away.

"Right! And the punishment for me was to use my brother against me. Well, I must say, it worked. I am hurt, brother—and it doesn't help to look in your eyes and see love for my mate," he pointed a finger at his chest and yelled, "but of course, you are the winner. At least between us two."

I wanted to hug him, but he kept pushing me away and trying to breathe. I was worried for him, even when my own body was in a lot of pain.

"I don't want our brotherhood to be ruined because of this," I held his hand to plead with him, but he shrugged his arm free.

"I don't know. It will only heal when the love in your eyes for her fades away. Because I am damn sure mine never will," he made it clear he would never stop loving her. Then, he stopped briefly, turned around, and gave me one last look. "As for her reputation, I would choose hers over mine any day."

Instead of going back inside, he gestured at his driver to come get him. He slid into his car and sped away while I started dialing Norman's number.

It wasn't a good thing for Kaye to be out there when he was so stressed.

Me: Norman! I have been trying to contact you. Can you please check on Kaye? He was upset about something and left in a hurry.

After I sent him the text, I rushed inside, went to my room, and locked the door so no one would bother me.

I sat on the couch, holding my phone in my hands, scrolling through pictures of Helanie from academy projects and tests.

"She is so pretty," I felt a weird pain in my chest.

"But she is not yours. She is your brother's. Are you really going to choose her over him? Even after it was clear to you that the damn whore played you? Do you even know how many other dicks she had in her mouth, pussy, or ass—"

That was it. I got up, grabbed the knife from the table next to the fruit, and stabbed it right into my chest.

"Okay, okay, I'm sorry!"

My wolf understood that if he said one more word about Helanie in that way, I wouldn't hesitate to put myself through so much pain that he would die crying.

"I'm sorry, okay? But how would you describe her actions?" Now that he knew I would do anything, he asked in a much gentler, more respectful way.

"We will just say—she deserved someone better than both of us."

I finished and narrowed my eyes when I saw one particular picture I took a long time ago. It was a picture of her pendant back when she was stuck in the dream prison.

"Hmmm." I searched the picture and found some similar items in a rare online book posted several years ago.

My heart started to beat faster when I read some of the comments, but one particular comment stood out to me.

Random user: Although they are a pretty collection and rare to find, I can't look at them the same way after one of the girls started wearing them to hide her damn ugly pheromones. She's some girl I've seen around whose pheromones make men go crazy for her. I believe the pendant is innocent, but whatever spell was cast on it to hide her pheromones just makes me dislike this piece of jewelry.

She had commented on the same pendant Helanie wore. And the comment was from a few months ago.

"Remember at the training ground? She took off the pendant in the middle of the fight. Oh heck! She played you far worse than we imagined."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 354-Before I Leave.

Chapter 354: 354-Before I Leave.

Helanie:

"Tell me what happened?" Emmet insisted, but I had shut down again. I couldn't seem to forget how I once trusted Maximus, and now he was against me.

By the end of the day, Emmet was their brother. He would definitely lean toward them somehow.

"I got myself tangled up with them, and now they're both angry with me because I didn't want to make it official with either of them," I muttered, watching outside the window.

He was driving slowly, taking me back to his home. I would never call it my place.

"Hmm, that is messy. I guess I wouldn't know until I hear the whole story. But I'll suggest you let it be for a while. The more you try to explain yourself to them, the angrier they'll get," he advised, knowing his brothers too well.

"Helanie, I want to suggest something, and I hope you take it just as advice from your stepbrother or your professor," he said softly, taking the longer route. It was better this way.

I didn't want to sit directly across from him and look into his eyes while having this conversation.

"Sometimes, you just have to be honest. If you keep hiding things, you'll look like the bad guy. People will accuse you of lying and betraying others because they don't know the whole truth. For instance—" he paused, glancing at me to make sure I wasn't freaking out at his words. "In today's situation, they both deserve to know why you left them or picked them in the first place. The truth is important. We have to put ourselves in someone else's shoes too.

Think about it like this for a moment—if Kaye had been with you and then left you for a reason that he no longer saw as valid when dating someone closer to you—let's say your cousin—then what? Wouldn't you be upset too?" he asked gently.

With a heavy heart, I answered honestly, "Yes!"

He went silent for a moment and then smiled a little. "This is what I like about you. You don't throw tantrums and try to understand your mistakes too. For now, just let them be, and don't worry about what I think of you. I've known you for some time now, Helanie, and I know you're not a bad person at all. Just someone who is too afraid of sharing her secrets with others, and I can totally understand if that's because of a certain betrayal in the past.

Take your time. The academy is starting—" he stopped when I meekly added,

"They will make it so hard for me to live there."

"Nobody will let this affect your academy training. My brothers are not bad people. They'll be jealous—that I know—but things will be fine once you decide to open up and be honest with them. I'm sure they'll understand," Emmet said kindly.

He was so sweet.

I couldn't believe he never remembered that we had felt the mate bond. But now that my wolf was slowly waking up, I was feeling something odd.

His words were so charming, and then his scent—mmm! His scent.

I quickly shook myself awake from whatever daydream I had drifted into and straightened my posture in the seat. That was inappropriate.

But I could blame it on the mate bond.

"The home is here. Go inside, take a shower, and rest. I will send some chocolates to your room. They will help lift your mood."

I knew that even if I refused, Emmet would still send them to me.

But the minute we stepped out of the car, his phone started ringing.

"Yes?" he answered, a frown forming on his forehead.

"Oh! Okay, I'll be there."

It seemed urgent because Emmet suddenly looked so worried.

He hung up the phone and gave me a mild smile. "Go back inside. You will get your chocolates, and don't worry about anything, okay? Everything will work out."

I didn't know why, but it seemed like he was slightly doubting himself, unsure if things could actually get better from here.

He walked away on foot while I went inside, only to find my mother standing in the doorway, blocking my path to my room.

"What is it?" I asked tiredly.

"Take this and keep it with you." She seemed to be in a rush as she put something in my hand, looking around nervously.

It was a stack of money, which I immediately tried returning to her.

"No! Just keep it. When you leave for the academy tomorrow, I don't want you looking for cheap labor. I know nothing is cheap for you, but some jobs have serious safety risks—" she looked so pale as she spoke, nervously fidgeting with her fingers.

"Why do you care? Are you playing a game with me?"

The moment I asked her that, her eyes widened in shock.

"No! I would never—" her eyes started to tear up. "It's just that... umm... don't ever show up here again."

Her tone shifted in seconds as Emma showed up.

"We were heading outside. Did you change your mind?" She shot me a judgmental glare before asking my mother that question.

"No! We're having dinner outside. McQuoid wants us to celebrate the opening of the new restaurant in the abandoned pack, where they're creating a rogue community," my mom told her, holding her hand as they walked away.

"Where is Charlotte, though?" my mom continued to ask.

"She went to the salon. She needed some new acrylics," Emma replied as they disappeared.

I held the money and wondered—why did my mom give it to me?

What if she later accused me of stealing it from her?

I was scared of everyone around me now. They could always turn on me, playing games with me.

I got a notification on my phone that the trainers had an emergency. Since Kaye and Maximus would be skipping, there would be an additional one-day holiday.

That meant I would be leaving the day after tomorrow.

I couldn't wait for the academy to start again.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 355-It Was Just Her Pheromones.

Chapter 355: 355-It Was Just Her Pheromones.

Maximus:

"No!" I had been running around the mountains since forever. My nose was bleeding, and my eyes wouldn't stop shedding tears.

"All she had to do was tell me I was mistaking her pheromones for the mate bond—" I let out a howl, sitting on my knees and feeling the agonizing pain of transition. But I didn't want to transform. Norman was headed my way, so I had to stop the transition. He rushed over and knelt down before me, with Emmet coming into view.

"She freaking lied to me," I let out a cry, feeling like a miserable and helpless person—the feeling I never wanted to have.

I was a freaking powerful werewolf. Why the hell was I crying for a woman? But it wasn't just any random woman. It was Helanie.

"Hey, it's okay. It happens. Breakups—" Before Norman could start lecturing me, I turned my attention to Emmet.

"Gave her a pendant to ask for help whenever she needs it, huh? What about your own brothers?" I wasn't asking Emmet not to take care of her.

I was glad he was there to give her a ride because I did want her to get home safely.

But since we were on the subject of betrayal, I couldn't help but point it out to Emmet that all these years he had been distant from us had left us with broken hearts.

"I came here for you too," Emmet knelt down, trying to caress my cheek, but I looked away, avoiding his touch.

"You only came here so you could defend her if I ended up saying anything wrong about her," I yelled, tears rolling down my face like a waterfall.

"Max! Such stress is not good for you," Norman warned, but I pushed his hands away too.

"You two should go. Leave me alone. I don't want anyone's sympathy," I sniffled, trying to wipe my cheeks, but Emmet kept holding my hands.

"You have no idea what you mean to me, brother," Emmet managed to cup my face in his hands, showing me the redness of anger he felt from seeing me in pain.

"Well, I guess you're right. I have no idea," I clicked my tongue, laughing maniacally before tearing up the next moment.

"I think I'm gonna be alone for a while," I said in heavy breaths, my hand on my chest.

The pain wouldn't seem to calm down. That was the weirdest part. If she wasn't even my mate, why the hell was I in so much pain?

"I'll drop you home," Emmet suggested, but I was quick to reject his offer.

"Not you! I'm done wanting your attention," I said through my clenched jaw, and the pain on his face made me feel so proud of myself. After putting me through pain, he was finally going to suffer too.

"It's alright, I'll take him home," Norman gave Emmet a concerned look, but I wasn't ready to go with Norman either.

"No! I can find a place to crash myself. I just know I don't want to be under the same roof as her for the night." I watched Norman clench his jaw, probably getting angry that Helanie was staying with us, so I had to explain a bit more to him. "I don't want her out of the house. What I mean is—I don't want her in the house and lose my control and beg her to accept me."

I had to clarify, even when it was so hard to make a full sentence. I didn't want Norman to kick her out.

I was afraid if I stayed in the same house as her, I would end up begging her to stay and accept me—and I didn't want that.

I wanted to move on from her because of how she broke my heart.

But love is a bit hard to forget. I just needed a moment to do so.

"Let me—" Norman insisted, but I got up with difficulty, my knees going weak.

"I'm headed over to Mom's place."

The minute I said that, I watched Norman's face contort.

"No! She will take advantage of your miserable condition and make Helanie look like a monster," the moment those words left his lips, both Emmet and I stared at him in shock.

Since when did he start to care about Helanie's reputation? And I guess he noticed our skeptical glares because he immediately added, "Which she is, but Mom will only exaggerate it."

There was a subtle lie in his tone, but I was too worried about myself to focus on that.

I started to walk away, but I could tell Norman was still following me. He knew I wouldn't listen to him, and he wouldn't listen to me either. As for Emmet, he had rushed off, probably going home to drink.

Our problems must have been too much for him.

"What about Kaye? Why didn't you go after him?" I asked Norman, taking heavy steps toward the bus station. That was the plan—I would take a bus to my mom's pack.

I wanted to be away from my family and brothers for a while, but I also didn't want to be alone.

"Kesha found us on the way and insisted on taking Kaye with her. He seemed fine leaving with her. As for you, I think—you should take a car so that you get home before—"

Norman shut up when I let out a laugh of disbelief.

"I'll be fine, you think I cannot take care of myself" I watched him look so upset that I taunted him over this.

I didn't want to hurt anyone, but I was hurting too, and I wanted to be left alone for a while.

Well, Norman was stubborn, so he did end up forcing me onto the private jet and dropping me off at my mother's place.

But he did stick around for a minute, probably warning Mom not to try to manipulate me while I was hurting.

Once he left, my mother came to my room.

"Honey! Are you hurting because the plan didn't work?" Of course, she didn't know the whole truth, so she thought it was because I couldn't make Helanie ruin the engagement. Well, she did ruin something—not the engagement, but me.

"But don't worry. We will find another way for the engagement to be ruined. As for you—I have a surprise," she ran her hand through my hair, sitting beside me while I lay on the bed with my arms spread out and my legs hanging down.

"Look who's here," she smiled and pointed at the door, confusing me when it opened and she walked in.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 356-I Tell His Brother

Chapter 356: 356-I Tell His Brother

Helanie:

"Good morning," I heard my mother greet Lord McQuoid. I was asked to join breakfast so we could sit and eat before I headed off to the academy again.

It was Norman and Emmet, Emma and my mother with Lord McQuoid. I hadn't seen Charlotte the whole of yesterday, and now she was missing breakfast too.

Of course, she was.

She wouldn't want to sit and celebrate me. Or anything related to me.

"Helanie! Honestly, it was so nice to have you here with us. We felt like a family. Even when there weren't many moments for us to celebrate as a family, you being around felt so good," Lord McQuoid gave me a warm smile, my mother uncomfortably shifting in her seat and then looking up just to check others' reactions.

I did the same before responding to Lord McQuoid, "I am so glad that I got to know you. You are a wonderful man, someone my mother truly deserves. You have given her the happiness that she never got in her past. I think that says a lot about your kindness and how much you appreciate her," I watched his smile grow with pride upon hearing my compliments.

Emma rolled her eyes, silently mimicking me while making faces.

I noticed Norman shaking his leg and staring at me from under his eyebrows. Emmet seemed just like every other day.

He was always this way—unpredictable. I couldn't really guess what was going through his head all this time.

"By the way, I have prepared a celebratory lunch today," Emma quickly jumped in to have a say and get attention for herself.

The way everyone turned to her made me believe even they didn't know what she was talking about. It was obviously not for me. So what celebration was she speaking of?

"What is the occasion?" Lord McQuoid asked, proving that even he knew better than to assume it would be for me.

"You'll see. It's actually good news," Emma danced with her shoulders, looking so cringy.

"How is Kaye? And where was he last night?" Lord McQuoid now turned to his sons but asked Norman instead because, of course, Emmet wouldn't be interested in any conversation since he had already started eating his cereal.

"He spent the night at Kesha's place," Norman said, his eyes darting to me immediately. I held my breath in.

I was the one who chose my career over him, and even if I hadn't, I wouldn't be able to accept him until I had taken my revenge. But that didn't mean it didn't hurt. It hurt that he couldn't wait for me. He could have just stayed with me and made me believe I could rely on him. But that only happens in stories—when your mate holds your hand and stands beside you while you take revenge on those who hurt you.

"Oh! I'm glad that boy is coming around. He is finally making all the right decisions. I heard Maximus stayed with his mother last night." I was able to get the information from their father. It did hurt me that they were suffering so much because of me.

"He wanted to be away for a while. Nothing against anyone here, he just said he misses Mom." It felt like Norman was speaking directly to me or about me.

His father nodded, and the rest of breakfast went by in silence. After everyone was done, they all began to leave. It was only Norman and me left when I finally said, "I didn't mean to hurt them."

Even when Emmet had asked me to leave them alone for a while, I couldn't. I was responsible for their distress in a way that I couldn't explain my side to make them understand why I did what I did.

Norman sighed, filling his cheeks with air and letting it out before responding, "But you did. Kaye doesn't even want to see his brother's face."

I rushed to stand in front of him. "But Maximus was at no fault. He didn't even know about us." I hated that the brothers were fighting because of me.

"It doesn't matter. It's about a mate bond! Kaye is your mate, and mates are possessive, especially when he is powerful. He feels threatened." Norman looked so upset with me that his eyes held a darkness to them.

The playful banter we used to have seemed nothing like whatever this was.

"I heard Maximus talking with his mother about using me to ruin the engagement ceremony." I watched Norman's face twist in shock. He closed his eyes and shook his head, as if trying to confirm that he was hearing me right.

"I'm not some crazy person who would betray the people who took care of me. Do you think I don't realize how much your brothers have done for me? But to play me—Norman—I'm a fucking person with feelings and emotions too! First, Kaye gave me a choice—he put Kesha in front of me and asked if I was going to accept him or not. And if I didn't, he would go ahead and accept Kesha. And even if I asked for time, he would be with Kesha until then. And then Maximus—he—" I shut up when my voice started to break.

"Why didn't you tell me that before?" He slammed his hand on the table, leaning down to my level.

"How could I? None of you let me speak. And Maximus would never admit to it. But I swear, I heard them talk. They were making fun of how stupid I am and how they would throw me out of their lives after doing the same to my mother," I hissed, finally letting it all out.

It felt amazing to say everything that had been in my heart. To finally be listened to.

"I am going to—" Norman clicked his tongue, but I interrupted him.

"You are going to make my life miserable, I know. You're going to side with your brothers and see no wrong in their actions. I get it—you'd rather have me as a toy for your brothers because only they matter—" I shut up when he grabbed the glass from the side and spilled its contents on my face in one swift move.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 357-Taking The Right Stand

Chapter 357: 357-Taking The Right Stand

Norman:

The moment she said that, I couldn't help but do something reckless. I grabbed the glass and spilled the water on her face to wake her up.

Why the heck did she think I would want her, of all people, to be my brother's toy?

She seemed shocked, her mouth open, water dripping down her face.

Well, I regretted doing it, but it was a reflex.

"For not freaking defending yourself when all the accusations were being thrown your way," I told her, explaining why I did it. "And then half of it—for thinking I see you as a toy. You need to wake up now. Why the hell would I be okay with it?" I yelled.

She rubbed her face clean, and I couldn't help but bite my tongue awkwardly. Why did it affect me so much that she thought so low of me? I had never acted like this with anyone. Why was I so obsessed with what she thought of me, and why the hell was I so angry with my brother?

I mean, she wasn't wrong. I had never interfered in Maximus' love life before. I never cared when a girl approached me, asking me to tell Maximus to return her calls and all. But Helanie... she wasn't just some girl. She was someone I knew.

In a very calm way, she leaned down and grabbed a glass of water. I waited for her to respond to me after she drank the water, but instead, she threw it in my face.

"Now we're even," she hissed.

My suit was ruined, my hair was a mess, yet... I wanted to smile?

I held it in tightly, not wanting to look amused, but her reaction gave me so much satisfaction. Whenever she stood up for herself, I felt relieved.

"Why would you do that?" I had to act tough so she wouldn't think I was melting at the sight of her adorable pout.

"You did it too. As for standing up for myself—I just know people wouldn't believe me. But I didn't play your brother. He played me," she finished in a confident tone.

Of course, I believed her. Part of the reason was that my mom had first asked me to do something to ruin the engagement ceremony. But when I didn't do anything, she approached Maximus.

What struck me as odd was that I thought I knew my brother too well. The pain in his eyes didn't seem like an act to me.

So I was all set to do my own investigation, make them sit down together, and talk it out. There was a huge misunderstanding, and the lack of communication between them had caused this mess.

As for Kaye, I mean, he pretty much ruined it for himself when he put Kesha as an option. Did he not understand that it's a big turn-off for a woman to be put on a list of other women?

I guess I somehow failed my brothers by always siding with them. I did it out of love, but now their behavior was not only hurting them but also Helanie.

I mean, I never cared about other people before, but Helanie—what was it about her that made me ready to call out my brothers for doing something wrong?

She walked away while I remained glued to my spot.

I instantly called Maximus to have a word with him. He picked up, but it seemed like he was around other people. I kept hearing voices in the background.

At least he was fine. Was that why he wanted to go to Mom's place yesterday?

"Where are you right now?" I asked sternly, walking out of the breakfast room with my shirt and face still wet. I noticed the maids looking at me, gossiping with their eyes. They wouldn't dare say anything, not even in a whisper.

"I'm with Mom, why?" he inquired.

"When are you coming back home?" I asked, making my way to my room and unbuttoning my shirt with one hand.

"I'll be home by lunch, why?" The way he kept questioning me just made me believe something was seriously wrong.

"Okay, come soon because we're going to sit down and have a talk," I muttered, feeling bad that I had to confront my brother about this.

He wasn't a child anymore. I was ready to support him, take care of him in any way possible. But it pissed me off that he was now playing games like this.

"About what?" he insisted.

"Just come home," I said before hanging up to change my shirt and get some work done until he returned.

The day was so hard to get through, and I couldn't figure out why. I felt uncomfortable the whole time.

And then finally, lunchtime arrived, and I got back home to meet Maximus. But the vibe today was different.

Emma was dressed up really well, as if it was some big occasion. She mentioned something about it, but I couldn't guess what it could be.

"Kaye! Are you okay?" I was surprised to see Kaye sitting on the couch with Kesha next to him. She had her arm wrapped around his arm and her head on his shoulder. He looked much more at peace whenever he was with her.

"I'm good," he smiled, making me feel relieved for him.

I looked around, noticing Ursula wearing a fancy dress and the others looking confused.

"By the way, Jessica is coming over with Mom," Kaye said, sounding very relaxed and casual, as if he didn't have a meltdown yesterday.

"Okay, why?" Even though I had to give Jessica one more chance like she asked, I still felt weird being around her. The only reason I gave her a second chance was because of how caring she was towards my brothers.

She was the only one who understood their pain and never judged them. In fact, there were times when she stayed beside me during a full moon night, not caring about the danger she might get herself into. It made me appreciate her.

"Mom said they are going to make an announcement," Kaye shrugged, and it made me believe he didn't know what it was about either.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 358-One Last Laugh

Chapter 358: 358-One Last Laugh

Helanie:

I was a bit confused about what the main event was. But I could tell it was related to Emma. She had been running around making preparations while there was no sign of Charlotte. I had assumed she was one lazy girl and wouldn't help out her mother with anything. But to be absent for that long was odd.

Not to mention, on any other occasion or clarification, Charlotte is all around her mother, asking about her gown or when the hairstylist would come. But today, she was just silent.

What if she had convinced Lord McQuoid to get admission to the academy? I didn't want her to come and ruin things because I knew that's what she would do.

I left my room again to see if the maids needed my help. I've actually helped them with a few recipes since they asked for it.

They were nice and hardworking people. I loved interacting with them.

But as I was about to walk toward my room and briefly passed the living room, a disturbing sight awaited me that made me stop dead in my tracks.

It was Kaye and Kesha. They had arrived earlier and had been sitting in the living room ever since then. The maids had to run around and do extra miles to please that princess.

Kesha was pretty spoiled. She wouldn't even say hello to anyone else other than the brothers and their father.

She would clearly avoid my mother and Emma too. That's how she was. But I noticed how she would stick her arm around Kaye's, as if trying to tell the world he belonged to her.

But this particular sight was a bit hard for me to swallow since Kaye had made it seem like I played him.

But here he was, moved on, with her tongue down his throat. He sat with his arms spread on the back of the couch, his neck stretched back, leaning comfortably, while Kesha sat beside him, her legs folded under her body and her hands tightly holding onto his face. She had her mouth all over his, kissing him passionately and getting all excited. He barely moved, not even a finger, but she was doing the most.

She was constantly getting up and down in her spot, holding his face like she wanted to devour him. Her face was moving side to side, not letting him breathe either.

"Helanie! Don't just stand there. If you want to be a part of it, just help," Emma yelled from the kitchen as she saw me standing outside the living room.

That pulled the kissing couple apart. Kesha broke the kiss but didn't instantly turn her head around. She was breathing heavily while sitting still until she finally turned to glare at me.

I noticed her eyes changing color in a threatening way. I immediately stepped back and rushed away, while Kaye didn't even bother to notice that I had seen him.

I mean, I wouldn't care because it was over. But the acceptance from his side and the mate bond was the problem. However, the weird part was that I didn't feel the pain of cheating. Maybe a mere kiss doesn't cause such pain or maybe because my wolf isn't fully awake yet is why I hadn't felt the excruciating pain. It could be anything.

"Are you coming?" Emma yelled again.

"No! Go do your own work," I yelled back, annoyed, watching her get shocked when she should have known I'm no longer the nice one who does her errands.

But the time had arrived when we had to gather for lunch. I wouldn't have been invited, but Lord McQuoid insisted I join them like family every day, so I did.

Everyone looked all dressed up, with Norman in his office suit and Emmet in his black suit. It appeared he had briefly left for a meeting and then returned to join us for lunch.

Emma had a huge smile on her face as she stood in the living room, excitedly rubbing her palms together and giggling.

Thankfully, the couple wasn't tangled in each other's tonsils anymore. Kaye seemed distant, but Kesha still had her arms wrapped around his and her body pressed tightly against his. She was giving off the vibe of an obsessive girlfriend.

"What is it, Emma? You've prepared everything so well. I'm excited to know what the occasion is," Lord McQuoid had his arm around my mother's back as he asked Emma to make the announcement already.

She checked her phone and then nodded her head, taking deep breaths.

"Okay!" she calmed herself, a hand to her chest. "This is a huge thing for me, so I wanted everything to be perfect. Without delay, I want to include you all in a happy moment of my life. Ever since I gave birth to my daughter and have been a single parent, I wanted nothing for myself but a mate for my daughter. She had been very lonely but never lost her faith in the Moon Goddess." As she continued, it all made sense.

Charlotte found her mate.

But where was she?

"So, as you all already suspected, my baby has found her fated mate—" She broke down in tears from immense happiness while my mother ran to give her a hug to support her in this joyful moment.

The brothers shrugged and tiredly clapped their hands, while Lord McQuoid seemed genuinely happy.

"And—today—you're going to meet him," she added, still hugged by my mother.

That's when someone arrived in the living room. It was Charlotte, holding hands with her mate.

My heart didn't just skip a beat; it fucking stopped when I saw Maximus standing beside her, all smiles and happy with his mother behind him.

Emmet and Norman looked shocked as they stared at each other and then at me.

I stood silent while Maximus and Charlotte joined the living room, asking for blessings from Lord McQuoid, who seemed too happy to utter a word.

Things started to blur for me, but then someone's whisper brought me back to reality.

"Good luck feeling that pain of betrayal. I didn't know karma would strike you so quickly. You left me for him, and now he left you for your cousin."

It was Kaye, having one last laugh in my ear.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 359-Tell Me About Helanie

Chapter 359: 359-Tell Me About Helanie

Emmet:

A few hours ago:

"Where are you headed?" Norman asked me, snapping his fingers to get my attention while he didn't stop walking toward his car.

"I have a meeting with a publisher," I replied, standing next to my car. Norman seemed slightly disturbed but also like he had just taken a shower.

"You took a shower twice?" I remembered he had a different shirt on in the morning.

"The cat spilled water on me," he hissed, and I could only suspect one person doing so that my brother wouldn't immediately kick them out of the house.

Norman could lie to me all day, but I could tell he treated Helanie differently than other people. He showed empathy for her, and that was the first time I'd ever seen him do that.

"Anyway, good luck with the publisher," Norman said, looking very exhausted.

"Is everything okay? Did the cat speak too?" I asked, raising an eyebrow when his eyes traveled to my face.

We brothers looked visibly different—different hair colors and eyes too. But that was because of the powerful genetics from our parents' side, and some other reasons involved.

But Norman growing his blond beard suited him.

"This Maximus and Kaye—I can't believe them," Norman hissed. Now that he knew I also knew about their deal with Helanie, he wasn't being as secretive with me.

"What did they do?" I was curious about the whole deal.

I could tell Helanie wasn't in the wrong in this situation, but I thought maybe my brother messed up unintentionally.

"They did her dirty. I need to get to the bottom of it, and then I'm going to confront them," Norman looked all flustered.

"You're going to confront your heartbeats for Helanie?" I chuckled, watching him notice the smirk on my face, "Come on, it's not a bad thing to do the right thing for someone like Helanie. She's our stepsister too," I shrugged once I noticed Norman was offended.

"Ew!" he dramatically reacted, as if copying someone, "I would never care for her. Anyway, I must leave now," he sighed, rubbing his chest before walking away.

I always felt bad for my brother. He was doing too much, and at this rate, he'd only become a robot. But seeing him care for Helanie gave me some hope for him.

After he left, I began my journey too. I had to take my private jet to reach my desired destination. As my jet landed and I got out, I smelled the air and stretched my arms.

I took the car for the rest of the way and reached a particular neighborhood. As I parked in front of one house, I realized the neighbors had come out to look at me.

This one was particularly the omega side of the pack.

I fixed my coat and got out of the car, now standing outside the door before I gently knocked on it.

"Who is it?" a very dramatic, high-pitched voice came from inside.

"We're here to randomly pick houses for gifts and donations," my warrior yelled back, and the door immediately opened.

She quickly started to fix her little curly brown hair. Her cigar had red lipstick on it, and her eyeliner was a little smudged.

"Hello there," she pumped her chest out, making me look away in disgust.

"I'm Larissa Niles," she giggled, taking the cigar out of her mouth and holding it between her fingers.

"Hi, I'm Emmet," I said, watching her get all excited. Somehow, I understood this lady was not a kind one.

"Well, come on inside. You look rich," she said, oddly shameless. She didn't hide the fact that she was excited about a donation.

I hadn't come here for donations. It was just an excuse to be here. I'd spoken to the pack's alpha, and he had agreed that I could make donations without disclosing my identity because I hated the press.

"Oh my, you even smell rich," she led me inside to a messy home where cleanliness wasn't a priority.

"Sullivan, get up and leave some room for the rich man here who's come to give us a donation," she yelled at her son, who was sitting on the couch playing a video game.

He quickly got up and flashed me a smile.

He was Helanie's stepbrother.

I sat down on the side of the couch, looking around to see any signs of Helanie. There were no pictures of her.

Did this family not remember her?

What happened that she left them and decided to live like a rogue?

"So, do you have other children?" I asked, my warriors scanning the house to make sure the family knew they were being observed.

"Oh no! I only have two kids—this is Sullivan, and then there's Vani. She must be in her room, studying, as if that would get her anywhere," she rolled her eyes at her daughter's hard work. But she was fine with her adult son littering around the house and lying on the couch playing video games.

"Hm, you had another daughter—what was her name? Oh, Helanie!" I snapped my fingers, pretending to think of the name.

The look on their faces told me they weren't happy to hear her name again. The two exchanged a very secretive glance before Larissa responded, "Oh, that poor girl died a few months ago."

She shrugged and then added, "I'll bring you some snacks. Sullivan, wanna help?" she motioned for him to join her in the kitchen.

"You look familiar." A voice from behind me made me briefly turn around and stare at the 15-year-old girl holding a book in her hands.

It was my published book from a year ago.

"Hello," I greeted.

"Hi!" she smiled, coming over and sitting on the couch with me. "She didn't die, you know," she started out of the blue.

"Huh?" I pretended as if I had no clue who she was talking about.

"Of course you know that. She lives with you, doesn't she?" That little girl shocked me with her information. But I had a feeling that if I wanted to know more, she was the right person for it.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 360-I Misread The Signs

Chapter 360: 360-I Misread The Signs

Helanie:

My heart had crumbled into tiny pieces like a cookie. My eyes kept trying to hold back the tears, but there were times when it became too hard for me.

Right before my eyes, Maximus chose Charlotte.

I could only think back and remember when he was convincing me to share my past with him. Imagine if I had done that. We make mistakes when we are emotional and overshare. Thankfully, I didn't.

But would that help?

Right now, it wouldn't. Because I was devastated inside my heart. All I could think about was leaving this place and going back to the academy. I couldn't wait to kick Rayden's ass.

I began to think about other things to stop myself from crying and drawing attention to myself.

"Helanie!" Emma calling my name turned heads to me, "Are you not going to congratulate her? I know she's not your cousin, but you two have grown up like cousins. Come on, give her a hug," she stretched her arm out and wiggled her fingers, asking me to go hug Charlotte, who was looking at me with those eyes that said she had won a better position in this family.

"Before that—," Emmet cleared his throat, stepping in front of me, "I would want to congratulate my brother."

Thankfully, him stepping up ruined the moment for Charlotte. The brothers gathered around them, and I saw Norman gesturing at me to escape the living room now that no one was looking.

As I was about to do so, Emma called me again.

"Where are you going?" It was becoming too much. If she was happy for her daughter, she should just stay happy and not drag others into the mess, using this moment to get back at them.

"She has some pending work. She should submit it before the academy starts. Just because she's our stepsister doesn't mean she gets a pass," Norman excused, giving me a reason to hide in my room for the rest of the night.

Even when we hated each other's guts, he somehow helped me out of the situation. I bet he did it so I wouldn't ruin his brother's happy moment.

I nodded my head and went straight back to my room, and once I was in my room, I broke down.

"Fucking idiot, Helanie. Why do you keep getting fooled?" I hissed under my breath, kneeling down on the cold floor and remembering Kaye's words.

Today, right before my eyes, I saw the worst sights.

Both the men that made me believe they loved me had someone else beside them, but that's how it was going to be.

I was the one who chose revenge over my love life, so I shouldn't be crying and focusing on it so much. But then the pain was too much for me to ignore.

I sniffled and cried for two hours before climbing into bed and falling asleep.

I woke up to the maid knocking on the door a few times. She had brought me all the food from lunch and specifically told me that Emma sent it to my room.

I did eat it. In fact, I ate it like a savage while tears streamed down my eyes. I wanted to be left alone, so when Emmet texted me to ask if I was okay, I just told him I was and that I was heading to bed again.

I respected him for giving me the space I needed in that moment. I woke up again around midnight.

"That's it," I grunted, getting out of bed to go outside and force my wolf to wake up and transition. I needed her desperately tonight. I wanted my mind off my pain, so I had decided to focus on my wolf instead.

I grabbed my purple sweater and walked out to the garden, rushing to the back exit. Since I had been living here, I knew when the warriors would change shifts. Those two minutes were enough for me to get out of the mansion and get some fresh air.

Once I was outside, I began to hear howls in the distance. I frowned, looking around. But I kept walking on the road until I heard a lycan's howl, and that's when panic struck me.

I checked the calendar on my phone to see a full moon, not the eclipse. That's when it hit me. I was stupid enough to think that since the eclipse was over, the lycans would be gone and hiding. But Norman was out there, running around and howling.

I understood it wasn't a good time for me to be out here. But then the howls were so painful that I couldn't move away.

They were also from a pretty nearby place, so I got kind of intrigued. It was a few minutes past midnight, so maybe he was still transitioning.

Curiosity struck me, and without thinking twice, I rushed toward the sounds. I reached the deep wooded area in no time, and the howls grew louder. It was the right place. I hid behind a tree when I realized there were other people around.

I stuck my head out from behind the tree and saw Kaye standing in my view. Not only him, but Norman stood in front of him too.

Huh? Norman seemed fine.

Of course, he did.

Because the one transitioning was right between them, howling in pain. The sight was too much for me. I wanted to turn around and run back, as far away from this place as I could. But my steps were glued to the ground.

Tears streamed down my face as it started to make sense to me. Of course, I caught feelings. I wasn't some jerk who decided to go after her mate's brother for no reason.

The damn mate bond did it to me.

"Maximus, just relax. Get your mind off all the depressing stuff so you can transition painlessly," Norman uttered to Maximus, who was howling as he was transitioning into a lycan.

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