

Defy 101

Chapter 101: His Turn

"You do know that I can eat with my hands, right?" Violet said, watching Asher as he lifted a forkful of perfectly twirled spaghetti toward her mouth.

"Mmmhm." Asher hummed in response.

And yet, he didn't stop feeding her.

Left with no choice, Violet opened her mouth and accepted the food. The way he fed her was almost... tender. His movements were deliberately gentle, almost as if he were playing the role of a doting boyfriend. Almost, being the word.

But Violet wasn't fooled. This was just a fleeting moment, a fragile truce. Come tomorrow, they'd be back at each other's throats. Asher's crimes against her were far too severe to be erased by a single kiss. Even if it was a hot, toe-curling, mind-melting kiss—Oh, shut up already! Violet cut off the thought immediately, her face heating.

She accepted another mouthful of spaghetti from him, trying to shake the warmth creeping into her chest. After that incident, he had left her alone, only to return later with a tray of food. It had been a simple gesture, but it touched her more than she cared to admit.

The Silvered Court was likely locked at this hour, and she doubted there was anything edible in the vending machines. The fact that Asher had gone out of his way to bring her a proper meal... it made her stomach flutter in ways she didn't like to acknowledge.

As Asher twirled another forkful of pasta, Violet found herself staring at him. She imagined what it would be like to have him as a boyfriend. He was undeniably attractive, charming when he wanted to be, and surprisingly attentive. If only he were normal, then she might consider challenging Elsie for him.

But then reality crashed in, and Violet shuddered. No. Absolutely not. Asher was trouble incarnate, and she didn't need that kind of chaos in her life.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" Asher asked, his sharp eyes narrowing slightly as he studied her.

The question caught her off guard, and she blurted, "You do know the kiss doesn't mean anything, right?" The words tumbled out in a rush, her cheeks heating under his scrutiny.

Asher paused for a moment, his hand holding the fork suspended mid-air. Then, without a word, he resumed feeding her, his expression unreadable.

"You haven't answered me," Violet pressed, her voice a little sharper now.

"Whatever you say, little queen," Asher replied lazily, his tone dismissive, as though the entire topic bored him.

Violet's eyes narrowed at once. She knew Asher better than to take that response at face value. He was the type to twist her words, to make her regret not nipping things in the bud. She needed to make it clear—crystal clear—that whatever happened between them earlier meant absolutely nothing.

But just as she opened her mouth to speak, Asher chose that exact moment to stuff it full of spaghetti.

Violet glared at him, her cheeks puffed with the unexpected mouthful. It was obvious he'd done it on purpose. Asher, of course, was unfazed. Instead, he reached forward and plucked a stray strand of spaghetti from the corner of her lips. And then, slowly, he ate it.

The move was so effortlessly smooth, so maddeningly sexy, that Violet could only sit there, speechless, her heart hammering in her chest.

The gods have mercy on me, she thought in a daze. This man is going to be the death of me.

Violet decided to let the topic drop, realizing that arguing with Asher would only lead to more frustration. He was too cunning, always twisting her words. When the meal ended, Asher cleared the dishes off to the side and began walking toward her.

Violet's pulse quickened as she tried to sit up. "I think I'm strong enough to return to my dormitory now," she said nervously, hoping to diffuse whatever he had planned.

But Asher didn't care. He continued toward her until she was forced to lean back, her head hitting the pillow.

It dawned on her: Asher had intentionally fed her to give her the strength for whatever his plans were. It felt like she was a chicken being fattened up for slaughter. And in this scenario, she was the chicken, entirely at Asher's mercy.

"Asher...?" Violet's voice faltered as he leaned over her, his body hovering inches above hers. His haunting, slitted gray eyes bored into hers, making her forget how to breathe. He was so devastatingly handsome that she couldn't think straight.

Asher's face drew closer, and Violet's heart raced. Fine. Just one more kiss, she told herself. Just one more indulgence, and then tomorrow, we're back to being enemies.

But just as their lips were about to meet, the curtain surrounding her hospital bed was abruptly yanked open. Startled, Violet pushed Asher back and turned to see none other than Alaric standing there, his stormy blue eyes flashing with fury.

"Did you miss your way, thunderboy?" Asher snarled, clearly displeased with the interruption. His expression darkened as he glared at Alaric.

But Alaric ignored him entirely. Instead, he directed his fiery gaze at Violet. "I can see you're so busy that you forgot about the assignment you're supposed to be doing with me."

Oh, crap. She had completely forgotten about that.

"Wait, I—" Violet started to say, trying to rise from the bed, but Asher's hand shot out, pulling her back down onto the mattress.

"She's busy," Asher declared coldly, his grip on her unyielding.

"No, I'm not," Violet shot back, trying to break free, but Asher refused to let her go.

Alaric's jaw tightened, his frustration barely contained. Before anyone could predict his next move, he stormed over to the bed, reached down, and scooped Violet into his arms.

"Hey! What the—!" Violet shrieked as she was suddenly airborne.

Asher snarled, furious, and lunged to grab her back. But Alaric, quick to anticipate his move, pulled off one of his gloves and pressed his bare hand against Asher's wrist, sending a sharp jolt of electricity through him.

Asher let out a yelp, his hand recoiling as the shock forced him to release his grip. His expression was a mix of surprise and pure rage.

"You little—" Asher growled, attempting to retaliate. But when he tried to infiltrate Alaric's mind, he hit a mental fortress so impenetrable it left him more annoyed.

Realizing he couldn't break through, Asher let out an irritated huff, his fists clenched in frustration.

Alaric smirked triumphantly, his hold on Violet secure. Without another word, he turned and strode out of the infirmary, carrying Violet like a prize won in battle.

Chapter 102: Prized Alpha

"Put me down, please, I can walk on my own." Violet demanded, her cheeks red with embarrassment. Thank the gods, she met no student out on the way.

For a moment, it seemed Alaric would ignore her request; she couldn't tell what he was thinking. But then, he carefully set her down to her surprise. And the second her feet touched the ground, Violet quickly adjusted her skirt, tugging it down for modesty, and straightened herself as if reclaiming her dignity.

Clearing her throat, she said briskly, "Let's go."

Without a word, Alaric turned and started walking, his usual calm demeanor intact as he led the way out of the infirmary. Violet followed him, her head held high even with the lingering embarrassment.

As they walked down the road, Violet felt a chill run down her spine. She glanced over her shoulder and froze when she saw Asher standing at the entrance of the infirmary, his piercing gaze locked onto hers.

There was something unnervingly possessive about the way he looked at her, as if daring her to step out of line. The message in his expression was crystal clear: Be a good girl.

Violet's heart hammered as she quickly faced forward and quickened her pace, nearly jogging to catch up with Alaric. How had she forgotten, even for a moment, how dangerous he was? And to think she had been shoving her tongue down his throat moments ago. What had she been thinking? Violet knew she was really courting death.

As if sensing her unease, Alaric reached out and took her hand in his. Startled, Violet glanced at him, her steps faltering for a moment. He didn't look at her or acknowledge the gesture. He simply held her hand firmly and continued walking. Violet's protest died in her throat, and she silently allowed herself to be pulled along, Alaric's presence seemingly shielding her from Asher's ominous gaze.

The North house came into view as they walked down and for a moment there Violet opened her mouth to remind him that she was not going up to his place, but

Alaric veered off onto a narrow, winding trail that led into the woods instead. The words died in her throat.

The air was cool and filled with the scent of pine and earth, but Violet couldn't shake her growing unease. After all, the only sounds were the soft rustle of leaves, the occasional snap of a twig and their own breathing.

Although Violet trusted Alaric, walking through the woods late at night was not the brightest idea and Violet was beginning to get suspicious. The only reason she did not run away was because Alaric did not

give her any threatening vibe — which Asher was fond of. Moreover, the assignment was legit. He had no reason to hurt her. Yet.

"Where are we going exactly?" Violet asked, trying to be brave.

"Relax," Alaric said without breaking stride. "We're almost there."

And true to his words, they arrived not long after.

They emerged into a small clearing, and Violet found herself staring at what appeared to be a simple, weathered shelter nestled beneath the towering trees. It was unassuming, almost like an abandoned cabin, with moss creeping along its edges and vines draped lazily over the roof.

"This is your workshop?" Violet asked, raising an eyebrow.

Alaric shrugged, stepping forward to push the creaky door open. "Don't let appearances fool you. Come inside, and you'll see."

Well, she had no choice anyway. Alaric went in before her and she followed him. But the moment Violet stepped over the threshold, she stopped in her tracks, her jaw nearly dropping to the ground.

The transformation from the modest outside to the expansive, meticulously arranged interior was incredulous. It was unbelievable that Violet stepped further in, her expression full of awe.

The space was vast and meticulously organized, and each corner seemed to be dedicated to a different project or piece of equipment while the air smelled like oil and metal, evidence of the many hours of labor Alaric spent within these walls.

At the side, steel shelves held neatly labeled compartments filled with wires, gears, and gadgets. While a massive workbench dominated the center of the room, its surface cluttered with blueprints, half-assembled devices, and an array of tools that Violet couldn't name.

Above the bench hung a grid of lights strung together in a pattern that resembled constellations. The soft, bluish glow bathed the room in a futuristic ambiance, giving it a peaceful yet electrifying energy.

Suspended from the ceiling were models of planetary orbits, and in the corner, a lightning globe buzzed faintly, crackling with small bursts of electricity that danced within the glass.

In one area, an entire wall was dedicated to physics equations and diagrams scribbled on a massive chalkboard. The formulas sprawled across the board like an intricate web, some of the equations so advanced that Violet's head hurt just by looking at them alone.

Not far from there, models of electrical circuits, magnets, and coils were aligned. Books, papers, literature on theoretical physics and electrical engineering were neatly stacked against the wall, their spines worn from use.

Towards the back, a large table featured an array of electronic components and microcontrollers next to a laptop that displayed complex simulation software. The digital monitors displayed real-time data from his experiments.

It was safe to say that Violet was both impressed, intimidated and scared by the scope of Alaric's intellect and the depth of his dedication.

How in the world had he not gone mad from reading the volumes upon volumes of these books? If anyone amongst the cardinal alphas was supposed to be crazy, it was him. Not Asher.

Not to mention with his incredible mind, Alaric could create gadgets that could potentially revolutionize energy use within the werewolf community. Alaric was really a prized werewolf. No wonder Elsie wouldn't let go of any of them. They were incredible in their own ways, she guessed Elsie must have difficulty choosing.

Poor Girl.

Chapter 103: Are you Immune?

What caught Violet's attention most, however, was a small, framed photo on the table, showing a younger Alaric, his white hair less wild but his eyes just as sharp. He looked really cute and it unknowingly brought a smile to her lips.

She continued looking around, acutely aware of the faint hum in the air, a tangible energy that made her hair stand on end. In this place, the air felt alive, as if charged with the unmistakable presence of lightning.

"Well," Alaric asked, "what do you think?"

Violet hesitated, unsure how to put her amazement into words. "It's... impressive. You... built all this?"

"Most of it," Alaric replied, walking over to the workbench to pick up one of the papers without a purpose.

He was shy, Violet noticed but didn't say a word. It was kind of cute to be honest. Dealing with Asher's unsettling energy all day was tiring, hence being with Alaric's less intimidating energy made it breathable.

He confessed, "This is where I come to think. And work. And get away from people."

"Hmmm," Violet admitted. "I guess I underestimated you."

"Don't worry, I get that a lot. People look at me, and all they see is the cute nerd."

Violet watched his every move as he drew closer. The air between them seemed to crackle faintly, as though electricity was building up around him.

Alaric stopped just a step away from her, leaning in slightly as if sharing a conspiracy. "Can I tell you a secret?" he asked.

Then, without waiting for a response, he continued in a rambling manner, "Not that it's a secret or anything, but most people don't know. Neither do they ask. They just assume that the Alphas are trained on how to control to use our powers."

He paused, taking a deep breath as if to steady himself. Then, in a quieter voice, he said, "But the truth is I was not trained, I learnt it all by myself. It took a lot of practice, and sometimes... you need to push the boundaries to truly understand what you're capable of."

Violet blinked, a nervous laugh escaping her lips. "Okay, that's a nice sentiment, but what does this have to do with—"

Before she could finish, Alaric began to tug at the fingers of his gloves, pulling them off one by one.

Oh boy. She didn't like this.

The sight sent warning bells ringing in Violet's head. She instinctively took a step back, her pulse quickening as she recalled the sheer destructive power he wielded. The air in the room felt heavier, charged with invisible tension.

"Don't move," Alaric said, his tone commanding yet calm.

Though his words lacked the eerie compulsion Asher's voice carried, Violet found herself rooted to the spot, as if her body refused to disobey. Her breath hitched, and her eyes flicked between his now-exposed hands and his unreadable expression.

"I keep thinking about that incident over and over again and it doesn't make sense. But I know what I saw and now, I want to confirm it. Are you really immune to my lightning, Violet Purple?"

His bare hands radiated faint sparks, small tendrils of electricity dancing across his skin. The faint hum of energy grew louder, filling the room. It was mesmerizing and terrifying all at once.

"Alaric," Violet said cautiously, her voice trembling despite her best efforts to remain calm. "What are you doing? I'm not immune to lightning. I'm human, remember?"

"I know but I know what I saw. But don't worry, I won't use much, just little of my power. I just need to be sure of it. Trust me." he replied, his tone almost soothing.

Trust him? Was he kidding her right now? Violet thought, but the words never made it past her lips. Her body refused to budge, and her mind was screaming at her to run. Yet, there was something in Alaric's gaze that held her in place.

The sparks in his hands intensified as he brought them closer to her, the energy crackling audibly now. Violet could feel the static in the air, raising the tiny hairs on her arms and making her heart pound in her chest.

"Just stay still," Alaric murmured, his voice low and almost hypnotic. "This won't hurt... I think."

"You think?" Violet hissed, but before she could say anything else, his hands hovered just inches away from her skin.

Alaric's hands finally made contact with her skin, and Violet gasped as the electricity rushed through her. She braced herself for the searing pain she expected, but it never came. Instead, the sensation was exhilarating, sending a thrill through her entire body. It was as though the energy wasn't hurting her but flowing into her, dancing along her nerves like a pulse of life.

Her wide eyes snapped up to meet Alaric's, and for the first time, he looked utterly stunned. His normally composed expression was replaced with one of pure disbelief as sparks flickered and crackled around them, illuminating the space in an otherworldly glow.

"This... this shouldn't be possible," Alaric said with disbelief. His hands tightened on her arms as if testing her reaction, but Violet didn't flinch. She stood still, her body warm and buzzing with the current, yet there was no pain, only an incredible, unexplainable connection.

"What... what is this?" Violet asked breathlessly, staring at their joined hands as the lightning wrapped around them like ribbons of light, illuminating the workshop in a surreal brilliance. The static hummed around them, filling the air with a charged stillness that seemed to suspend time itself.

"I don't know," Alaric admitted, his voice shaky with awe. "No one has ever... no one can withstand this. Not like this. I've even burned people by accident before." His brows furrowed, and he looked at her with something between amazement and suspicion.

It didn't make sense yet Violet still asked.

"Alaric, is this... normal?"

"No," he said bluntly, his eyes glued to the display of energy. His grip on her arms tightened, and he leaned closer, searching her face for answers she couldn't provide. "This is anything but normal."

Chapter 104: No Help From The Universe

"So, what does this mean for me?" Violet's voice was edged with panic as she stared at Alaric. "Does it mean that I'm not human?"

"I don't know," Alaric admitted, clearly frustrated with himself.

"Wait a minute..." Violet's eyes widened as a thought struck her. "Am I a werewolf?"

"I don't seriously know!" Alaric snapped, throwing his hands in the air.

"How can't you know that? You're supposed to be the smart one! You should know everything!" Violet's exasperation bubbled over as she glared at him.

"Well, I don't know everything, Violet Purple! I'm not a fucking computer!" Alaric shot back, his voice rising.

The tension between them was intense for a moment before Violet caught herself. She took a deep breath and rubbed her hands down her face. "Fuck... I'm sorry," she muttered an apology.

Her tone was softer as she continued, "I'm not trying to be a bitch, okay? It's just... I've spent my entire life believing I was human. And now, suddenly, nothing feels normal anymore. Ever since you cardinal alphas barged into my life, it's like everything I thought I knew about myself is being unraveled."

Alaric calmed down as well. "No, it's alright. You're just confused and scared. You're questioning everything, and that's understandable. And for all we know, you might still be human, just... a human who's immune to lightning."

Violet scoffed at the idea. "That doesn't sound very human, does it?"

Alaric shrugged, his lips quirking in an awkward half-smile. "Maybe you're like one of those old-world superhero stories. You know, like Superman? He was human, wasn't he?"

"Superman was from another planet," Violet corrected, crossing her arms.

"The Flash, then?" Alaric argued. "He got his powers after being struck by lightning while standing next to some chemicals, I think."

"Really?" Violet raised an incredulous brow, giving him a look that screamed disbelief.

"It sounds stupid, I know," Alaric admitted, looking away and scratching the back of his neck.

Violet sighed and ran a hand through her hair, trying to process everything. "You really don't think I'm a werewolf?"

"You don't smell like one," Alaric said bluntly. "Humans smell like humans. Werewolves smell like werewolves. It's how we recognize our kind. Trust me Violet when I say you don't smell like a wolf at all."

"Great," Violet muttered sarcastically, shaking her head. "Now I'm questioning whether I smell weird."

Alaric chuckled softly, the tension in the room easing slightly. "You smell fine, Violet, even for humans."

Violet arched a brow, a teasing smirk on her lips. "And how would you know that?" She let out an exaggerated gasp, her tone mockingly scandalized. "Alaric Storm, have you been sniffing me out like some kind of weirdo?"

Alaric laughed, shaking his head. "I haven't done that. But if you want me to..." He leaned in suddenly, his face nearing hers as though he was about to scent her.

Violet burst into laughter, her amusement filling the room. "You're ridiculous!"

Alaric laughed along with her, but as the sound faded, the atmosphere in the room suddenly shifted. It was subtle in the way the air grew heavier, the way his gaze softened yet burned all at once. He leaned in closer again, and this time, his deep inhale was on purpose.

"You smell amazing," he murmured, his voice husky and low.

Violet froze, her heart hammering wildly in her chest. She tried to ignore the way her pulse quickened, but then he added, "Do you know that werewolves mark their prospective mates on the neck? And you, Violet Purple, have one insanely creamy neck."

Oh fuck. What was she supposed to reply to that?

The intensity in Alaric's tone, paired with his words, sent a shiver down her spine. Unlike the other alphas, Alaric wasn't typically flirtatious. But when he was, it was devastating.

Violet's brain screamed at her to back away, to regain control of the situation. Unfortunately, another scathing thought screamed just as loudly: She'd kissed Asher an hour ago. She couldn't—no, she wouldn't—kiss Alaric. She wasn't Elsie.

Elsie was the one clearly lusting over the four cardinal alphas. Surely, she — Violet — had liked them at some point when she didn't know them better. But that was all it was all. A crush. She was not the type of girl to play around with different boys at the same time. It was not normal behavior.

But then Alaric began leaning in. Fuck her life. She needed self control here!

By sheer grace, Violet placed a hand on Alaric's chest—his very solid, very muscular chest. The universe was really not helping her right now —and tried to gather her scattered thoughts.

"Alaric, I don't think—"

He kissed her.

It was a soft kiss, a fleeting brush of his lips against hers, but it left her stunned.

Violet swallowed hard. "This is a bad idea..."

He kissed her again, lingering this time, his lips firmer and more insistent. When he pulled back, his gaze locked onto hers, waiting for a reaction.

"There are so many reasons why we shouldn't—"

He silenced her with another kiss, this one deeper, more commanding, making it impossible to think straight. When he pulled back again, his breathing was uneven, his eyes dark with desire.

Oh, screw this. He wasn't going to get her all hot and bothered and leave her hanging like that.

Violet grabbed his face and smashed her lips to his. Whatever consequences awaited her for kissing two alphas in one night could deal with themselves later. Right now, she wanted this. And clearly, so did he.

She pushed him against the nearest shelf, sending books and gadgets toppling to the floor. Neither of them cared. The kiss was fiery and wild, their tongues tangling as Alaric growled low in his throat. The second her lips parted for him, his tongue stroked against hers, and she responded by sucking gently on it, eliciting a deep, guttural moan from him that reverberated through her entire body.

Just as the heat between them reached a fever pitch, a thought hit her like a cold bucket of water.

Violet abruptly pulled back, her breathing ragged as she met Alaric's hooded gaze. "What if I'm a witch?"

Alaric groaned, throwing his head back in visible frustration. Was she seriously kidding him right now?

Chapter 105: Caught In The Rain

"I mean, think about it. My hair is Purple. Who in this school has such an unusual color of hair aside from Roman. And he's a werewolf." Violet said with excitement in her voice like a detective uncovering a grand mystery.

"Just because you have purple hair doesn't make you a witch, Violet. Trust me, witches don't exactly walk around advertising themselves like that."

Alaric leaned in again, his lips ghosting over hers, but before he could kiss her, Violet not only turned away but also placed a firm hand on his chest and pushed him back. Her mind was whirring with newfound theories, leaving no room for romance.

The maker of the moon, have mercy on him. Alaric sighed internally as he cast a glance down at the bulge in his trousers.

Violet, meanwhile, was entirely oblivious to his predicament.

"Then maybe I'm Fae," she pressed, her eyes sparkling with the idea. "The Fae are known for unnatural hair colors."

"And powers," Alaric added dryly.

"Mine could be locked away!" Violet countered with a triumphant smile. "What if I'm some hidden Fae princess, sent away to protect me until the right time when my powers awaken? Maybe my secret power is lightning, and that's why I'm immune to yours!"

Alaric crossed his arms and raised a brow, trying not to laugh. "I didn't know you had such a flair for storytelling, Violet. But even if it were remotely possible, you're not Fae."

"And why not?" Violet shot him a hard look.

"You don't have their grace," he replied firmly.

"Perhaps, that's not the case but you have to admit that I make sense right?" Violet said, waiting for Alaric's acknowledgement which never came.

Her enthusiasm visibly deflated at his lack of support. "Fine. Think whatever you want. Let's just finish the assignment so I can go back to my dorm." She made to move away, but Alaric reached out and gently grabbed her arm.

"You're a mystery, Violet," he said with his eyes holding hers. "And mysteries aren't solved in one night. But if you're willing, I can show you something amazing with my powers. Something that might make you forget about all these wild theories."

She raised a skeptical brow. "What about our homework?"

"I'll handle it. I'm smart, remember?" He winked with a cocky grin.

"It's a group assignment," she pointed out, crossing her arms. "We're supposed to work together."

"Fine," Alaric said with mock exasperation. "Then maybe I'll just tell the professor it was all your doing. You know, give you the glory this time?" He teased, referencing that biology class where they got off on the wrong feet.

Violet narrowed her eyes but couldn't hold back the small smile that tugged at her lips. "Alright, fine. Show me what amazing thing you can do with your powers."

Alaric's smile widened, his boyish charm in full effect as he reached out and took her hand. "You won't regret it," he said, leading her toward the door.

The trek through the woods was quiet, save for the crunch of leaves and twigs beneath their shoe. When they reached the hilly terrain of Lunaris, Alaric took her hand and guided her up the highest peak. His grip was gentle, and Violet couldn't help but marvel at how romantic this moment felt.

As they reached the top, the view of the sprawling landscape of Lunaris stretched endlessly, taking her breath away. But there was no time to admire the scenery as Alaric had something else in mind.

"What next?" Violet asked him.

Alaric turned to her, his electric-blue eyes lightning up. "We call on the thunderstorm," he said, his voice brimming with pride and excitement.

Violet's breath hitched as she noticed electricity crackling faintly in the air around him. For a moment, she swore she saw sparks flicker in his eyes. The smile on Alaric's face was pure, genuine, and full of childlike wonder as he stepped behind her and took both of her hands in his.

"Lift them toward the sky," he instructed, his voice steady.

Violet hesitated but did as he asked. The moment her hands stretched upward, Alaric's energy surged through her. It wasn't painful but exhilarating. She gasped in astonishment as a streak of lightning shot from his fingertips, soaring into the heavens. A buzzing sound filled the air, growing louder as the energy around them intensified.

The next minute that followed, lightning strikes upon strikes shot into the sky as Alaric summoned himself a lightning storm. The sky answered him, loud thunderbolts cracking across the horizon. The booming sounds of thunder filled the air, but instead of fear, Violet felt a thrill coursing through her veins.

The ground beneath them shook slightly, as if bowing to the raw, untamed power Alaric was unleashing. Violet's hair flew wildly in the charged air, and she could feel every cell in her body tingling. She had never experienced anything like this. It was pure, unbridled energy, and it filled her with awe.

The intensity grew until fat droplets of rain began to fall from the sky, splattering against their skin. Alaric lowered their hands, and the lightning dissipated, leaving only the sound of rain and the occasional rumble of distant thunder.

He turned to her, his face wet from the rain but illuminated by an infectious grin. Violet couldn't help but laugh. Alaric laughed too, their shared joy echoing in the stormy night. The rain drenched them both, but neither seemed to care.

Still laughing, Alaric reached out and cupped her face in his hands, his thumbs brushing against her wet cheeks. For a moment, his gaze locked onto hers, the intensity in his eyes silencing her laughter. Without a word, he leaned in and kissed her.

It wasn't tentative or hesitant, rather, it was deep and passionate. The rain fell around them, soaking their clothes and plastering their hair to their faces, but it only heightened the moment. Violet's hands found their way to his chest, clutching at his shirt as the kiss deepened.

Time seemed to stand still, leaving just the two of them, locked in that moment. A moment Violet knew she would never forget.

However, it was quite unfortunate that a green colored wolf was having a run at that time and got drenched in the rain Alaric had summoned.

"Fuck you asshole!" Roman cursed Alaric's ass whenever he was.

Chapter 106: Science Geek

~ Griffin ~

Griffin Hale sat alone in his room, the glow from the large screen of his computer illuminating his chiseled features and fiery red hair.

He was playing a game and gripped the game controller with intense focus, his fingers flying across the buttons as the sound of grunts and battle cries echoed in his room.

This wasn't just an ordinary game but a personalized video game with cartoon versions of the four Cardinal Alphas as the main characters. He had deliberately chosen Roman as his opponent, and at this moment, the green-haired, cartoonish version of Roman was taking a relentless beating from the hulking animated Griffin.

Though the animated Roman was getting obliterated, the victory felt hollow. It didn't satiate the roiling emotions churning in Griffin's chest. It was just not enough and no amount of digital destruction could quell it.

"Come on, Roman, is that all you've got?" he muttered under his breath, his voice filled with venom.

The animated Roman fell to the ground in defeat, but instead of reveling in his victory, Griffin tossed the controller across the room. It landed on the floor with a thud as he leaned back in his chair, running a hand through his thick mane of red hair. His chest heaved as he tried to calm his breathing, his frustration showing.

The fight earlier with Roman had left Griffin unsettled, and now the beast inside of him was clawing at his psyche, demanding release. One he could not give, not unless he wanted someone's death on his hands. The bastard wasn't all the time in his control.

Unlike the other cardinal alphas who carried the burdens of their own cursed gifts, Griffin's was far more primal. The beast inside him wasn't merely a part of him; it was a separate entity altogether, existing in a perpetual state of rage, demanding violence, and resisting any form of control.

Werewolves typically dealt with their wolf side as an extension of themselves. It was their animal counterpart that coexisted in harmony. But Griffin's beast wasn't like that.

It had its own mind, its own will, and it didn't want peace. It wanted dominance, destruction, and freedom from the constraints Griffin imposed on it. And he, in turn, didn't trust the beast. Their relationship was a warzone, a constant struggle for control, with neither side willing to concede.

"Shut up," Griffin growled, as if speaking to the beast inside him.

But it didn't quiet. It never did. And all this was brought about by Roman. Roman Draven's audacity to match Griffin's strength using the power of animals, was an insult the beast couldn't tolerate. His beast saw Roman as an insult, a rival who dared to claim equality despite lacking Griffin's raw, unbridled power. To the beast, Roman was a threat. A cheat. Someone who dared to challenge its dominance. And it raged against the very idea of him.

Griffin slammed his fist against the armrest of his chair, the wood cracking under the force.

This was the price not just him but the other Cardinal Alphas had to pay for the reckless decisions of their parents. They had sought to make the ultimate weapon out of their children. The strongest alphas, and they had succeeded. But at what cost?

In his case, they had condemned him to a life of constant vigilance, ensuring the beast never gained the upper hand.

In Asher's case, they had produced a monster he wasn't even sure they would be able to deal with in the years to come.

For his best friend Alaric, they had taken away his innocence, and given him what? Solitude?

And then for Roman.... no, he wasn't going to think about that motherfucker. Not unless it was his fist ramming his ugly face. But then, poor Roman didn't deserve to be a victim too. They were all pawns in the game for the throne.

And it scared him that they might destroy each other one day.

At once a knock sounded on Griffin's door, drawing his attention.

"Go away!" He growled with a low, guttural voice. Griffin wasn't in the mood to deal with anyone, not with the beast clawing at his control.

But then, a familiar voice came from the other side of the door "It's me."

Griffin's head snapped up. Relief replaced the tension for a brief moment as he recognized Alaric's voice. Without hesitation, he yanked open the door, revealing his cardinal brother, soaked to the bone, his hair plastered to his forehead. Rain dripped from his shirt onto the floor.

"Thank the gods it's you..." Griffin began, but then his brow furrowed, and a sardonic smirk crossed his face. "Why do you look like a drenched rat? Don't tell me—" He glanced at the lightning crackling through the sky outside. "The storm was your doing, wasn't it?"

Alaric nodded, brushing past him into the room. The faint scent of ozone clung to him, a signature of his power. Griffin shut the door behind him, his movements still tense and jagged.

But Alaric's sharp gaze landed on the broken arm of a chair that had been reduced to splinters. His eyes flicked to Griffin, taking in his dilated pupils, shallow breaths, and the rapid rise and fall of his chest. His heartbeat pounded like a war drum in the room, loud, erratic, and telling.

"He wants out, doesn't he?" Alaric asked grimly.

Griffin didn't need to ask who "he" referred to. This was not the first time they were dealing with "him". So he nodded stiffly, his jaw clenched.

Alaric stepped forward, saying. "Quick, sit down before you lose control."

Griffin reluctantly obeyed, lowering himself onto the couch. His movements were stiff, as if any sudden motion might unleash the beast inside him. Alaric knelt before him, pressing his palm flat against Griffin's broad chest.

"Alright," Alaric muttered, his eyes narrowing in concentration. "We're going to stabilize your autonomic system as usual. Your sympathetic nervous system is in overdrive, spiking your adrenaline and cortisol. I need to get your parasympathetic system to counteract it."

"I have no idea what science gibberish you're spilling! Just calm me before he's out!"

Chapter 107: Griffin As A Wife

"Fine, " Alaric said, taking a deep breath, and focusing on the subtle electrical impulses running through Griffin's body.

Every heartbeat was controlled by electrical signals originating from the sinoatrial node, the heart's natural pacemaker. Using his powers, Alaric sent faint currents of electricity into Griffin's chest, mimicking the signals produced by the SA node to regulate his heart rate.

"You'll feel a slight tingling," Alaric warned, though Griffin barely flinched.

As Alaric worked, he monitored Griffin's physical response. The erratic heartbeat began to steady under his influence, the chaotic rhythm falling into a slower, more controlled pattern.

"You're also overventilating," Alaric said with a calm yet clinical tone. "Your body's CO2 levels are dropping, which is why you feel like you're losing control. Breathe with me slowly."

Griffin followed Alaric's breathing, his inhales and exhales gradually deepening and slowing down. Alaric then adjusted the currents, using the vagus nerve, a cranial nerve that plays a crucial role in parasympathetic control, to further regulate Griffin's body's response.

"There," Alaric said after a few minutes, his voice filled with pride and satisfaction. "Your fight-or-flight system is disengaged."

Griffin leaned back against the couch, his eyes closed as the tension ebbed from his body. His breathing was even now, the beast retreating back into the back of his mind. Thank the gods.

"You've really got that lightning voodoo down to a science, don't you?" Griffin joke, cracking an eye open.

Alaric smirked, standing up and brushing his damp hair out of his face before he dropped down to the seat beside Griffin.

"It's not voodoo, Griffin, but physics. Electricity is everywhere. It's in your nerves, your muscles, your heart. I just... nudge it in the right direction."

Griffin snorted loudly, crossing his arms. "Whatever, man. I still don't get how women find you nerds interesting."

Alaric smirked, unbothered by the jab. "Because science is sexy," he said, gesturing to himself. "And I happen to have an incredibly handsome face to add to my admirable physique. So yes, Griffin, women would trip over this body."

Griffin burst into laughter, the sound reverberating through the room. "Keep telling yourself that, nerd. Just don't get too big of a head."

"If I had two heads, Griffin, I'll just marry myself. I mean do you know what I could achieve having double of this incredible brain. It would be smoking hot!" He claimed.

"Smoking hot with a monster head!" Griffin burst into laughter again, this time holding his belly. "God, I can't take it anymore."

Alaric stood staring at him with a blank expression before he grimaced at his soaking wet clothes clinging to his body. Without another word, he started heading towards the door.

Griffin called after him, his laughter dying down, "Dude, stop stealing my clothes, especially when you're not going to return them!"

Alaric didn't bother turning around. Instead, he raised a hand in a dismissive wave, rolling his eyes. "You have too many clothes anyway. Consider it charity."

"And you don't!" Griffin shouted after him but he ignored it.

Alaric found his way to Griffin's massive walk-in closet, a shrine to his friend's taste for luxury. The sheer size of the space was overwhelming, with rows of neatly hung designer shirts, jackets, and pants. Shoes were meticulously arranged on tiered racks, and a collection of watches gleamed under the soft lighting.

"Seriously, Griffin, how many wardrobes does one guy need?" Alaric muttered to himself, as if he wasn't guilty of having his own enviable collection.

He picked a loose shirt from a hanger which was a black one with minimalistic gold detailing. Unlike Griffin, his own style of dressing was more modest and less bling bling.

The particular shirt was stylish, but far too big for his leaner frame, thanks to Griffin's broader shoulders and larger build. Hence it draped over Alaric like a curtain, but he rolled up the sleeves and made it work somehow.

For pants, Alaric grabbed a pair of grey sweatpants, tightening the drawstring at the waist to keep them from slipping down. "Why are you built like a fucking bear?" Alaric grumbled as he cinched the pants securely.

Satisfied with his makeshift outfit, Alaric stepped out of the closet. He found Griffin still seated down and waiting for him and a far suspicious smug grin plastered across his face.

Griffin gestured at him with a lazy wave. "Look at you, borrowing my style now. Admit it, I've got great taste."

Alaric rolled his eyes, adjusting the oversized sleeves. "Your taste is decent. I just make it look better."

Griffin shook his head, saying. "You're unbelievable."

"You're just mad I look better in your clothes than you do," Alaric quipped, using the towel he grabbed from the room to dry his damp hair.

"Dream on, thunderboy. My clothes are too refined for a walking science experiment like you." Griffin taunted, casually scrolling through his phone.

Alaric then made to sit down only for the aroma of something rich and spicy to catch his attention. His gaze fell on the table where a steaming bowl of chicken soup sat, perfectly arranged as though it had been waiting for him.

He blinked, his towel dropping onto his lap. "When did you prepare this?"

Griffin, lounging comfortably, barely looked up. "I didn't just prepare it. I always cook extra and stock my fridge. Thought you'd be starving after summoning a rainstorm out there."

Alaric shook his head, a rare, genuine smile tugging at his lips. "If only you weren't a boy, I'd probably fall for you right now."

Griffin replied deadpan, "Sorry to disappoint, but I'm not into hot nerds."

For a beat, the room was silent before both burst into laughter. It was rare to see Alaric so at ease, and Griffin relished the moment.

The warmth from the soup seemed to seep into Alaric's soul as he ate, the two sitting in companionable silence. Griffin observed as Alaric savored each spoonful, his face calm and contemplative. But when Alaric finally set the bowl down, his expression shifted.

"Actually," Alaric began, his tone somber than usual, "there's a reason I came to see you."

Chapter 108: Asking For A Betrayal

"And here I thought you missed my wonderful cooking," Griffin joked, intentionally trying to ease the awkward tension lingering in the air.

He turned toward Alaric, who sat across from him on the couch, his fingers drumming nervously on the armrest. "Alright, spit it out."

Alaric hesitated, then swallowed hard. "There's... something I didn't tell you about that incident with Violet last time."

"Dude," Griffin deadpanned, "spit it out already."

The pressure finally got to Alaric, and he blurted out, "Violet is immune to my lightning."

For a moment, Griffin froze, staring at Alaric with an expression of utter disbelief. Alaric, in turn, waited with bated breath for the inevitable explosion of questions.

"No fucking way!" Griffin shouted, springing to his feet as if jolted by a current himself. "Are you serious?"

Alaric watched as Griffin began pacing back and forth, running his hands repeatedly through his hair. The shock was clearly hitting him hard.

Alaric stood up, grabbing Griffin's arm to steady him. "Stop pacing, you're making me dizzy."

But Griffin shook his head, still processing. "Tell me you're joking. That's impossible. Even the smallest jolt of your electricity can paralyze me on the spot. How can she be immune? Maybe you made a mistake?"

"It's not just once, Griffin," Alaric said firmly. "The first time it happened in the classroom, I thought I was imagining it. But I confirmed it today. Not to mention, it was the both of us wielding that lightning storm today. She really is not affected by it."

This time around, Griffin did not move around, he just remained on the spot as if the energy had been drained out of him, finally coming to acceptance.

"So, what are you saying? She's not human?" He asked with an expression of awe and confusion.

"Probably. " Alaric said at first unsure, only to change his mind the next seconds, "Yes, she's not. I mean she fucking has purple hair, Griffin. And no human can withstand electricity."

"Wow, this is too much information to take in all at once. " Griffin breathed, as if the weight of the revelation had knocked the wind out of him.

"But..." He asked, "if she's not human, then what is she?"

"I don't know for certain," Alaric admitted. "But we've been running theories and she thinks she might be a witch. Or even fae."

Griffin snorted. "Witch, maybe. She's got that wicked edge. But fae? Please. She doesn't have their grace."

Alaric chuckled dryly. "I made the mistake of saying that to her face. Let's just say I got the death glare of the century."

Griffin burst into laughter, shaking his head. "Sounds about right."

Alaric grew serious again. "But honestly?"

I think she's a hybrid. Violet is an orphan and with the rise of intermarriages between humans and werewolves, perhaps, her mother got entangled with a werewolf that she shouldn't and that led to her birth?"

"She doesn't smell like a wolf," Griffin pointed out.

"She might be an imp, leaning more to her human side than werewolf trait." Alaric argued.

"It still doesn't explain her purple hair?" Griffin countered.

"Fine, " Alaric groaned, "Violet Purple is a mystery that we can't figure out in one day... except that's the problem..." He suddenly said with an ominous tone.

"What do you mean by that?" Griffin sensed his unease as well.

"You do know what's happening tomorrow."

Griffin's amusement faded, and his demeanor shifted. "Asher," he muttered.

Alaric nodded. "Griffin, Asher can't have her."

"It's Asher we're talking about here, Alaric." Griffin said grimly. "Whatever that psycho wants, he always gets it. If he wants Violet, he will get her no matter what you do."

"Except Violet's not human, which is why we need to act now." Alaric insisted. "If Asher knows what Violet is—and I'm sure he does by now—we're in trouble. God knows what he'll do with her."

"God." Griffin rubbing his hand down his face from exasperation. "Perhaps if you hadn't taken her to that hill, Asher wouldn't have figured it out. And then, there's the Oracle as well who must know the truth as well because her fucking spies are everywhere. The gods help you, Alaric. Are you planning to let the whole school find out? Where the fuck was your brains, Alaric? Not to mention, do you know what those people at the hospital would do to Violet if they found out there's something special about her?!" He growled angrily at him.

"Okay, you're right. That was a shitty move out there. But that was the release Violet needed at that moment. She was freaking out and I needed to do something. But you're right, it's not an excuse for my mistake."

He took a deep breath, "I'll handle the Oracle and pay her to shut her mouth up. We've been turning a blind eye to her business because she's been handy, she wouldn't risk incurring our wrath now. As for the hospital, I would rather die than let them lay a hand on Violet. However, it's Asher we should be worried about the most here. Violet Purple would not remain in the west house." Alaric hoped that was convincing enough.

Griffin sighed. "Fine, I'll help. However, Alaric, you do know we can't win, at least not without Roman's help."

At that, Alaric's expression darkened. "Oh, hell no." He might hate Asher, but not as much as he hated Roman's ass.

"You know I'm right," Griffin pressed. "We might have the numbers but Asher's pack is disciplined and strategic. Roman's cunning is the perfect counterbalance. We need him."

"Roman wouldn't betray Asher for us, the same way I wouldn't betray you for them." Alaric said coldly. "The two are practically the same."

"Not necessarily," Griffin said. "Unlike Asher, Roman has a heart. He might help us if he knows what's at stake."

"And what if he plays us for a fool and it's all for nothing."

"Then so will it be. However, we have to try first."

"Fine, do whatever you want. But don't expect me to be polite." Alaric grumbled. He could never forgive Roman for what he did to him.

"As long as your grudge doesn't get in the way, I don't care," Griffin said.

"Fine. I'll be on my best behavior. "

Then, they sat in silence for a moment until Griffin said. "So... what exactly were you and Violet doing before you figured out she was special?"

Chapter 109: Ironlady

Griffin might not have been the most intellectual of the alphas, but he certainly wasn't blind to what was happening around him. Right now, Alaric looked like a deer caught in headlights, guilt practically oozing off of him.

Griffin narrowed his eyes, crossing his arms over his broad chest. "Don't tell me you two fucked."

"No, we didn't!" Alaric blurted, nearly choking on his own spit in his haste to deny it. "We just... made out. Not once," he admitted reluctantly, scratching the back of his neck. "And, uh... under the rain."

Griffin let out a low whistle, a smirk tugging at the corner of his lips. "It was that good, huh?"

Alaric's face turned an even deeper shade of red as he fumbled for words, his gaze darting away.

"But you do want to fuck her, don't you?" Griffin pressed, his tone casual but his gaze scrutinizing.

Alaric shot him a challenging look, finally regaining some composure. "And you don't?"

Griffin shrugged, "She's hot, strong, my kind of woman. Of course, I'd want to. But shouldn't you be jealous right now? I mean, we're talking about some girl you want to bone."

Alaric surprised him with his answer. "I strangely don't feel jealous. Besides..." He hesitated for a moment before continuing, "It's not the first time we've shared a woman anyway..."

Griffin's eyes glazed over slightly, as if recalling a distant memory.

Alaric leaned in, adding in an enticing tone, "And it was very good."

Griffin exhaled sharply, his jaw tightening. "Yeah, until the girl decided to play us against each other. So no, I'm not doing Lucille again."

"Violet is not Lucille," Alaric argued firmly.

"She's not," Griffin admitted, his voice hardening, "but they share the unfortunate similarity of being under Asher's control."

"I don't know what Asher's done to Violet," Alaric replied, "but her mind is strong. And she's immune to my electricity. Lucille wasn't. Maybe, just maybe, Violet can somehow resist him."

Griffin's head snapped toward him. "Wait, is that what this is about? Is that why you want to bring her out of the West House? You want to pull her into your house, groom her into your perfect version of Lucille, and keep her away from Asher?"

Alaric scowled, his voice laced with frustration. "You know that's not what this is."

"Then convince me," Griffin challenged.

"Whether or not I have personal motives," Alaric said evenly, "we both know Violet can't stay in Asher's house. That's a fact. Moreover, if the plan goes well, Violet would be the one choosing what house to stay in."

Griffin apologized. "Fuck. I'm sorry. Whether she's under his control or not, I should have your back, even if it's a terrible idea and you're bound to get your heart broken again."

Alaric couldn't help but laugh at that, the tension between them dissolving as Griffin joined in. They laughed until their sides ached, the camaraderie between them momentarily easing the heavy conversation.

"Thank you," Alaric said to him.

"You're welcome," Griffin replied with a chuckle.

Just as the moment settled, a sharp vibration filled the room, making them both pause. Alaric, sitting closest to the phone on the table, picked it up. His face paled when he saw the name on the screen.

"Shit. It's Ironlady."

"What?!" Griffin shouted, shooting up straight. Alaric handed him the phone, and Griffin immediately cleared his throat, bracing himself as he picked up his phone. He greeted his mother, "Hello, Mama."

The stern voice that responded was unmistakably that of his mother, the infamous Ironlady, Irene. "I received a video recording today, and I have to say, the fight I witnessed was not impressive."

Griffin muttered a curse under his breath, his jaw clenching. There was no doubt in his mind who the culprit behind this video leak was. It was his beta, Oscar. He would be having a serious talk with Oscar later about where his loyalty lay.

"Are you losing your touch or something? Have you forgotten the way of the East? We crush our enemies, not have fun with them," his mother continued in her uncompromising voice.

From the corner, Alaric mouthed 'feral' to Griffin, barely stifling his laughter. Griffin in return shot him a glare.

"It won't happen again, Mom," he assured her through gritted teeth.

"It better not," she replied, her voice as hard as steel.

"Yes, ma'm."

And then, almost as if a switch had been flipped, her tone softened, becoming unexpectedly sweet and maternal. "Nonetheless, how's my baby doing?"

Griffin couldn't help but smile, even as he protested, "I'm fine, but please stop calling me baby. I'm a grown man, Mom."

At this point, Alaric could not hold his amusement anymore and burst into laughter.

Unfortunately, Irene's sharp ears didn't miss it, her attention shifting from her son. "Is that Alaric's voice I hear?" she asked, her tone turning curious.

"Yes," Griffin replied, shooting Alaric an exasperated look.

"Hand him the phone," Irene demanded.

Griffin happily handed the phone over, mouthing, 'lie on your grave

' but Alaric called him bluff, accepting the phone with a grin.

"Hello, Irene," Alaric greeted her with his charming voice.

"How are you doing, my dear?" she asked, her voice filled with genuine affection.

"Doing well, Irene. And yourself?"

"Good, good," she replied before adding in her usual no-nonsense tone, "Now I won't bother you with school stuff which I'm sure you're good at, just keep an eye on my baby boy, will you? You know how he gets sometimes."

"Of course, my beautiful Irene, I'll keep an eye on your baby for you." Alaric said with emphasis, blowing Griffin an air kiss.

Griffin gave him the middle finger and Alaric laughed as he handed the phone back to him.

Before Griffin could say a word, Irene asked quickly. "So, what's your progress with Elsie? Is she into you these days? What's your progress with her?"

Though Griffin was accustomed to his mother's nosiness regarding his relationship with Elsie, today it grated on him more than usual.

To be fair, it's a valid question considering the East wants Elsie to be their Luna. It was quite unfortunate he was the least of the cardinal alphas Elsie liked. And yet, he had to pursue the girl because his people wanted her.

"The time you use to gossip about my love life, you could use it to take care of both your husbands," he reminded her.

"Oh, don't worry about your papas," Irene said breezily. "They're perfectly fine. And for your information, they're dying to hear this news as well—"

Almost on cue, Griffin could hear the voices of his fathers in the background, bickering loudly about who would braid his mother's hair.

Griffin seized the opportunity, "I think that requires your attention before it turns into a full-blown brawl and they destroy something at home. Have a nice day, mama." He blew her a kiss through the phone.

"Griffin, don't you dare—!" Irene began, but Griffin had already ended the call.

He took a deep breath, exhaling heavily, relieved to have escaped further interrogation.

"That was a close one," he muttered to himself.

Griffin then glanced at Alaric, who was still chuckling at the whole exchange.

"Don't worry, I'll take care of you baby, " Alaric mimicked Irene's voice, touching him on the shoulder.

At once, Griffin pounced on Alaric. He was going to kill him tonight!

Chapter 110: Kaila Won't Be Serving

"You wouldn't believe what I saw Alpha, " Jeremiah, Asher's beta, came to report the result of his finding.

Of course, there was no way in hell Asher had let Violet willingly go with Alaric just like that. The guy was obsessed with Violet and would never rest unless his eyes were on her.

"What is it?" Asher came to stand before him, moving from his desk where several reports were scattered across.

Jeremiah gulped, "It's hard to say, Alpha."

"Out with it and don't keep me waiting!" Asher's tone was clipped, showing his growing impatience.

Jeremiah hesitated, his fingers twitching at his sides. "Alaric first took her to his workshop. They spent a lot of time there."

Asher's gaze narrowed. "And?"

"Then he took her to the hills," Jeremiah continued, his voice faltering. "And...I saw Violet wielding his lightning."

Asher's brows shot up. "What did you just say?"

Jeremiah swallowed hard, bracing himself. "Alaric held her hand while he summoned lightning and she survived. The lightning didn't harm her at all, Alpha. It was as if she was immune to his power."

"Are you kidding me right now?" Asher obviously did not believe him.

Jeremiah quickly began to explain knowing his head might roll otherwise. Asher was not really a kind and patient Alpha.

"I know it's hard to believe Alpha, even I could not believe it at first. But it was both of them on that hill, no one else. I couldn't get even close to avoid getting hit by the lightning strikes. But Violet, she just stood right there, excited to have wielded the lightning with Alpha Alaric."

Jeremiah pressed on, swallowing thickly. "And then...after they brought down the rainstorm together, they...kissed. Under the rain." He explained truthfully.

The room fell deathly silent, save for the crackle of the fire in the hearth. Even Jeremiah didn't carelessly breathe out of fear of Asher lashing out. Speaking of Asher, a muscle ticked in his jaw, and for a moment, Jeremiah thought he might have gone too far.

But then, to his astonishment, Asher's lips curved into a slow, unsettling grin. He began to laugh, gently at first, until it grew into something dark and mirthless, filling the room with a menacing echo.

Jeremiah stood frozen, the hair on his arms standing on end. When Asher was like this, it only meant one thing: chaos was coming.

"I chose right," Asher murmured to himself, his laughter dying down but his grin remaining. "Turns out you're special after all, my purple queen."

Jeremiah cleared his throat nervously. "Alpha Asher, what are your orders?"

Asher's eyes gleamed with malicious intent as he turned to his beta. "Inform the wolves of the North House. During the games tomorrow, Violet Purple will be their primary target. She must not, under any circumstances, escape their grasp. Let them all know, she belongs to the West House."

"Yes, Alpha," Jeremiah said quickly, bowing his head before rushing out to deliver the command. As well as escape Asher's unsettling presence.

Left alone, Asher leaned against his desk, his fingers tracing the edge of the wood. A dangerous smile played on his lips as his slitted eyes stared unblinkingly at the wall.

"My little queen," he whispered, in a low and possessive voice. "There will be no escaping me. You are mine. We are meant to be together."

Meanwhile that same night....

Roman had just finished his run, his green fur matted from the rain the bastard Alaric had summoned with his ability. However, the night was far from over because he had received a tempting invitation

from a half-breed beauty from the North House earlier that day, and he wasn't one to decline such opportunities. If you knew what he meant.

Although there was no rule preventing the alphas from fraternizing with women from other houses, yet Roman knew this was a deliciously bold move considering

the special hatred Alaric had for him.

He was just about to go fuck a member of Alaric's house right under his nose and the irony of it all made him grin. Life was a game, and he loved playing it on hard mode.

The enmity between Alaric and Roman had deep roots and it stemmed from an incident not long ago when Roman had slept with Alaric's girlfriend. In Roman's defense, the girl had offered herself, and he had simply obliged. It wasn't his fault she had chosen him, was it?

But tonight, Roman relished the thrill of the forbidden as he planned to cross into enemy territory for a clandestine rendezvous. And as he neared the North House, Roman shifted his large, lupine frame into the slender, sinuous form of a small green snake.

To successfully pull off this meeting required stealth, and his snake form was perfect for sneaking into enemy territory unnoticed. Slithering through the undergrowth, Roman made his way toward the house.

The foliage rustled softly as he moved, his body undulating smoothly over the damp ground. Thankfully, the girl lived all alone on the first floor, making it all easier for him. They had all the privacy for their coitus tonight.

Spotting the open window on the first floor as he had instructed the girl, Roman slithered up the wall, his scales finding purchase on the rough surface. He reached the window ledge, his forked tongue flickering out to taste the air.

He then slipped through the gap, entering the girl's darkened living room. The faint scent of her perfume lingered in the air, the tantalizing smell exciting him for what was about to happen.

Roman slithered across the wooden floor, making his way toward the bedroom door. Once there, he shifted back into his tall, muscular frame and naked as the day he was born. He didn't need to bother for clothes, not when the fun was about to begin.

Smirking, he opened the bedroom door and stepped inside. The room was dark, but his werewolf eyes could pick out the shape of the girl lying under the covers. Oh, she was playing hide and seek. Good,

he loved women with a naughty streak.

Roman slowly approached the bed, his body taunt with anticipation. He pulled the covers with a dramatic flourish, fully expecting to find the alluring half-breed.

Instead, Roman found himself staring down at someone entirely unexpected

"Oh, fuck..."

Before Roman could react, the room lit up with a white light and buzz as Alaric struck him with a bolt of lightning.

He collapsed to the floor in a heap, convulsing. The smell of singed hair and flesh filled the room as Alaric stepped out from the darkness, his hand still crackling with residual lightning.

"I'm sorry but Kaila wouldn't be serving tonight." Alaric said coldly, his eyes glowing with the power of his element.

The bedroom door opened, and Griffin walked in, his towering frame filling the doorway. He leaned casually against the frame, a smile playing on his lips.

"It's nice to see you, Roman, we've been waiting for you." Griffin said with mockery

Roman glanced between Alaric and Griffin, realization dawning on him.

Fuck his life.

Roman cursed as he realized he had walked—no, slithered—right into a trap.