

## Defy 141

### Chapter 141: A Very Rich Woman

Violet sat in her seat frozen in disbelief and for a moment, she almost thought Roman was deadly serious until she saw the sparkle of mischief in his eyes. Of course. This was Roman's idea of entertainment, tormenting her for his own amusement!

"You are mad, do you know that?" Violet spat with irritation.

Roman leaned back with exaggerated flair, flipping his damp hair in a dramatic motion, scattering droplets of water onto her.

"Madly handsome, you mean," he quipped, his grin as infuriating as ever. "Thanks for the compliment, my lady, but flattery won't excuse you from taking responsibility

"That wasn't a compliment, you moron!" Violet shot back, her voice rising with exasperation. "And what do you even mean by 'taking responsibility'? You weren't even a virgin!"

To her utter shock, Roman gasped, placing a hand over his chest as if she'd just stabbed him in the heart. "So, you're saying you'd only take responsibility for virgins? Even though you were the one who lusted after me? That's so partial, Lady Purple. My inner child is devastated."

"Hurt your inner child, my ass!" Violet hissed through gritted teeth. "You're clearly just enjoying making my life miserable."

"Oh, absolutely," Roman said, his voice mock-serious. "Especially since a certain purple-haired enchantress used me and doesn't even feel guilty about it."

Whatever biting retort Violet had ready immediately died on her lips. His words struck a nerve, reminding her of that mortifying moment in the classroom. Whether she liked it or not, Roman wasn't entirely wrong. She had used him, even if it were unintentionally.

Lowering her head, Violet muttered, "I'm sorry." She looked up at him with sincere golden eyes, silently hoping her apology was enough to end this ridiculous conversation.

Roman, however, had other plans.

"Apology unaccepted," he declared with a smirk that bordered on wicked.

"What the hell was that?!" Violet's jaw nearly dropped to the floor.

Roman stretched out in his chair, lounging as though he owned the place. "I kissed you, Lady Purple..." His grin widened, wicked and teasing. "And if I remember correctly, I kind of ate you out, too."

Violet's cheeks turned a fiery shade of red as the humiliating memory resurfaced. At this point, she wished the ground would open up and swallow her whole.

"That's too much work to be forgiven with just a few words," Roman continued smoothly, clearly enjoying her discomfort.

"Isn't that the whole point of an apology?" Violet challenged him, tilting her head as her temper began to rise.

Roman was unfazed as he replied, "I also mentioned taking responsibility."

Violet narrowed her eyes suspiciously as something hit her. "You want something from me, don't you. What is it?"

Roman's grin turned sly, almost feline. The intensity of his gaze should have unnerved her, but Violet held her ground.

"Indeed," he drawled, his tone honeyed. "There's something I need your help with."

This was going to be trouble, her instincts warned her. But Violet didn't exactly have a choice here.

Roman leaned forward, resting his elbows on the table as he began to explain. "As you know, I can morph into any animal of my choice. But it comes at a cost. To keep things balanced, I have to let my animal side out. Nighttime is usually when I set it free, but I have a party tonight. That means I need to morph now, or I'll be unbalanced. The problem is..." He trailed off dramatically, his green eyes locking onto hers. "I'm vulnerable in my animal form and I need to remain that way at least before the party tonight. Unfortunately, if someone with bad intentions comes along, I would either harm him — depending on which form I'm in — or be in real danger."

Violet's reply was instant, her tone dripping with sarcasm. "To think you trust me when I'll be first in line to take advantage of that."

Roman laughed, unbothered by her hostility. "Which is why you, my dear Violet, are going to babysit me."

"I didn't agree to anything," Violet shot back.

"You don't have a choice, Violet Purple," Roman said, her name rolling off his tongue like silk. For some reason, hearing him say her name like that sent an unexpected shiver down her spine. What the hell was wrong with her?

"What animal are you even planning to turn into?" Violet asked warily. "I hate snakes, and I've heard that's your favorite. If that's the case, forget it. I'm not touching you in that form."

"Fine," Roman said with a dramatic roll of his eyes. "I'll turn into something cute, something you ladies adore. Just make sure you treat me like royalty until the party starts."

Violet scoffed, crossing her arms. "God knows I can't wait for this 'debt' to be over."

Roman's grin only grew wider, and Violet knew at that moment that she had just made a deal with the devil himself.

So she stood up, brushing off her nerves with a huff. "Fine, let's get this over with. Do your animal thing."

"Gladly," Roman added with a cocky grin. "Just don't get too awed."

"Hardly," Violet shot back, giving him a pointed look.

Roman stepped forward, intentionally rolling his shoulders and flexing his muscles like a contestant at a bodybuilder competition. The exaggerated display had Violet rolling her eyes so hard she thought they might get stuck in the back of her head. The guy was in fact arrogance incarnate. Thank the Gods Alaric was nothing like him.

But her amusement was short-lived as she was unprepared for what she saw. In a blink of an eye, the towering, cocky green-haired Alpha before her was gone, replaced by something so small, so unexpectedly adorable, that Violet froze in her tracks.

Sitting where Roman had been was a shockingly rare green Scottish Fold cat. The vibrant green of his fur matched his eyes, which blinked up at her with an unsettling combination of feline innocence and undeniable smugness. His rounded ears and tiny, compact frame made him look impossibly cute. No, he was far too cute for someone like Roman.

"Meow," the cat form of Roman mewed, perfectly mimicking a helpless kitten.

For a moment, Violet could only stare, her jaw slack with disbelief. This... this was Roman? She blinked rapidly, trying to connect the vain, smirking Alpha with the tiny, purring creature in front of her. She was charmed.

But then, slowly, a rare and slightly sinister smile curled Violet's lips. Even Roman who saw it froze, the playful arrogance in his cat eyes shifting into unease.

Violet didn't say a word, bringing her face level with his instead. The smile on her face was positively devious now, her golden eyes gleaming with mischief.

The green cat's ears twitched, and Roman let out a low, cautious purr. Why does it feel like he freely landed himself into a hunter's trap?

Violet reached out and lightly tapped the tip of his nose. "Oh, Roman," she said with a tone almost too sweet to be genuine. "You're about to make me a very rich woman."

## Chapter 142: Queen Of Nothing

~ Alaric ~

Alaric Storm lifted his head from his phone as Griffin plopped down beside him on the plush sofa. The school's common room was buzzing with chatters, the air still alive with the energy of their recent victory.

Members of the pack were scattered around, laughing, teasing, and riding the high of their win. But for Alaric, the noise barely registered. He felt detached from them, his mind occupied with something else.

"She still hasn't picked up?" Griffin asked, his voice cutting through the haze.

"Not exactly." Alaric sighed, holding up his phone. "She sent me a message."

Griffin leaned over to read it aloud. "Apologies. Would meet you at the party. Making some quick bucks."

He arched an eyebrow, mirroring Alaric's own puzzled expression. "What the hell does that mean? What's she up to now? Is she selling something? Betting on fights? You've got your hands full with that one," he added with a laugh.

Alaric sighed, scratching the back of his head. "Do you think she needs money? Is that why she's avoiding me? If she needed help, why wouldn't she just tell me? I have more than enough money to last two lifetimes."

Griffin gave him a look that screamed disbelief. "Seriously, dude? Do you really not know your own girlfriend? Does Violet seem like the kind of girl who'd waltz up to you and say, 'Hey boyfriend, I'm broke. Can you wire me some cash?'" He mimicked a high-pitched feminine voice, his impression of Violet so absurdly off that Alaric couldn't help but snort.

"So... I should send her money?" Alaric asked seriously.

"Goddess have mercy," Griffin groaned, running a hand down his face. "How is it that I know your girlfriend better than you do? Violet's too proud for that. She'd probably punch you in the face if you even suggested that."

Alaric retorted, "Not all of us grew up with three sisters," Alaric muttered. "The only sibling I have hates my guts and couldn't care less about my love life."

"Moreover..." Alaric said, perking up. "You forget, stubborn women run in the family. Violet's like your mom, you know, fierce, independent, and not afraid to smack sense into you when you're being dumb."

"Well, when you put it that way, I guess they are similar.", Griffin reluctantly agreed.

"Maybe that's why you're into her," Alaric teased, nudging him with his elbow.

But Griffin gave him a pointed look with a clipped tone. "Don't even start."

"Fine, if you say so." Alaric raised his hands in surrender, letting the matter drop even though inwardly, he knew it was far from over.

Out of all the cardinal alphas, Griffin bore the worst treatment at Elsie's hands. She dismissed his abilities and saw his beast as a liability, a manifestation of chaos rather than true leadership.

The East might be rich in resources but choosing a mate, especially an Alpha, was a sensitive issue. And to Elsie, Griffin was only good for smashing and breaking things. Brute strength was not enough of a quality in a mate for her.

A wave of protectiveness surged through him. Griffin didn't deserve that kind of treatment. He was more than his power, more than his beast. If anyone understood what it was like to be judged unfairly, it was Alaric.

That's why he'd do whatever it took to make sure his friend was happy, even if it meant sharing the one thing he cherished most. Moreover, If there was anyone he would trust with Violet's heart, it was Griffin.

It would seem strange to Violet and she would probably protest against the idea at first. But he'd seen the way her gaze lingered on his best friend, that flicker of curiosity in her eyes that she probably wasn't even aware of. It would not be easy but he had enough faith for the three of them.

Violet wasn't Lucille. And Alaric would make sure this didn't turn into the same painful story. He'd protect them both even if he had to go face to face with the son of a biscuit, Asher Nightshade. He would not let him win this time.

Griffin, who thought Alaric was still worried about Violet, said to him. "Look, she's probably fine. But if you're really worried, talk to her at the party. Find out why she's giving you this distance. Just... don't smother her. Violet's not the type to take that well."

Alaric nodded, already deciding to shift the conversation elsewhere when a sudden commotion broke out nearby. His pack members were parting like the sea, murmurs rippling through the group as Elsie Lancaster strode into the room with her usual air of arrogance.

The mood in the common room shifted at once, and Griffin, who had been relaxed moments ago, went rigid. His jaw was clenched so tightly that a vein in his temple pulsed, his eyes narrowed into slits.

Alaric turned his attention to Elsie, watching as she marched toward them, her heels clicking against the floor. She wore her signature scowl, her features twisted into a look of irritation as she came to a stop directly in front of them. Ignoring Griffin entirely, her focus zeroed in on Alaric.

"What do you think you're doing?" she snapped, her voice cutting through the common room like a whip.

Alaric was caught off guard by the bluntness of her question. "What?" he asked, his confusion showing in both his expression and voice.

"I know you're dating that bitch just to get my attention," Elsie declared, her chin tilting upward haughtily. "But this has gone too far. You have my attention now, so break up with her. Immediately."

The room fell into an eerie silence. Every single pack member present had heard her demand, and their conversations halted mid-sentence. They now watched to see how he would respond to that.

Alaric and Griffin's gazes locked for a brief second, and then, as if choreographed, they burst into laughter.

The laughter was loud and unexpected such that it stunned everyone. Alaric laughed so hard he doubled over slightly, clutching his stomach, while Griffin's deep chuckles rumbled in his chest. The sheer absurdity of Elsie's statement had completely undone them.

"What's so funny?" Elsie hissed, her cheeks flushing a deep red as she glared at them. "I didn't say anything funny!"

But Elsie's outburst only made the alphas laugh harder to the point Griffin wiped a tear from the corner of his eye, shaking his head in disbelief. Was she fucking kidding him? Someone was really living in delulu land.

It was only by sheer grace that Alaric was able to calm himself. But even as he met Elsie's furious glare, he didn't bother dignifying her demand with a response. It was a waste of time and energy.

Both Alaric and Griffin rose to their feet at the same time. Without a word, they began to walk away, leaving Elsie standing there, her face a picture of shock and indignation.

And that provoked her.

"Don't you dare walk away from me!" Elsie snapped, stepping forward and grabbing Alaric's arm to stop him.

Chapter 143: The Hospital

Elsie, blinded by her own arrogance and fury, reached out and grabbed Alaric's arm, her fingers curling around his bare skin with enough force to halt his steps.

Which was of course a big mistake.

Alaric's body went rigid, his muscles locking up as the energy inside of him reacted instinctively to the unwanted touch. Even his once rowdy pack members all held their breath having sensed the ominous charge that sent static tingling along their skin.

Alaric Storm wore his gloves, not because he lacked control over his abilities, but because lightning was inherently wild, unpredictable, and devastatingly powerful.

He had learned how to wield it, yes, but emotions were an entirely different thing. When heightened, his powers responded, even breaking free from the restraint of his gloves that served as a dampener.

And right now, Alaric's emotions were anything but calm as electricity licked up his arms, surging to the surface.

Elsie's body jerked as the electricity shot through her veins and she screamed in pain.

She convulsed as several thousand joules of voltage surged through her nervous system. Her hands jerked violently away from Alaric, her eyes wide in shock with her breath choking in her throat. Though the whole thing barely lasted a few seconds, to her, it might as well have been an eternity of agony.

Alaric yanked himself back with wide, horrified eyes. "No, no, no—fuck!" he cursed, running his hands through his hair in frustration.

"Shit," Griffin growled under his breath, already moving before anyone else. No matter how much of a bitch Elsie was, she was still unconscious and twitching on the floor.

He crouched down and lifted her into his arms effortlessly, groaning slightly as residual shocks crawled up his limbs. Though he winced, he gritted his teeth and pushed forward, ignoring the pain.

"Quick. Make way! She needs help," Griffin barked, already storming toward the door.

Alaric, frozen, could only watch, guilt burning into his chest like acid. This was his fault. He did this.

"Alaric!" Griffin's voice snapped him back to reality. "What the fuck are you waiting for?! Let's go!"

Alaric didn't waste another second following after Griffin. The both of them moved down the corridors, passing through students who stared in shock at the sight of the unconscious Elsie.

They made a beeline for the infirmary, straight into Adele's ward.

The second they arrived, Adele who had been tending to another injured student whipped around at the sudden commotion. Her brows furrowed in immediate suspicion as she took in the sight of Griffin carrying a limp Elsie.

They have got to be kidding her.

"What the hell happened?" she demanded, already moving toward them.

Alaric clenched his fists, his shoulders taut with tension. "I... zapped her."

Adele gave him a look. The kind of look that screamed, Are you fucking kidding me right now? So you're going about shocking people now?

Griffin, sensing the incoming lambasting, interjected quickly, "Unintentionally. She grabbed him first."

Adele rubbed at her temples as if she were personally burdened by their stupidity. "That's still not an excuse," she muttered, before shooting a glare at Alaric. "You know your powers are tied to your emotions. You could have done better."

Alaric didn't argue. He just swallowed the guilt, his hands curling into fists.

Adele shook her head and stepped closer to assess Elsie's condition. "And Elsie of all people?"

Griffin said firmly, "Elsie did this to herself."

Adele rolled her eyes. "Yeah, tell that to fucking Elijah when he punishes his ass for it. I thought you both were smarter than this but it turns out I was wrong."

Alaric told her, "Could you just help her. I'll take whatever punishment Elijah seems fit to give me. Elsie might be a bitch but she won't be dying in my arms. My father would kill me for this."

But Adele sighed. "Look, I'd love to help, but I'm out of juice."

Both Alaric and Griffin's heads snapped toward her. "What?"

"I burned through most of my energy healing up the Fangball players. This is why you don't electrocute people on a game day." She gestured at the beds occupied by injured students.

Griffin's gulped. "Well, shit."

Fangball was a brutal game which meant there were lots of injuries at the end. Although werewolves had accelerated healing, depending on the injury, it could take time. Moreover, Adele's role was to provide immediate relief. Hence, it was no wonder Adele had drained herself.

Adele said, "I could look at her, but we both know the hospital has better facilities."

The temperature in the room seemed to drop at once. Alaric's expression darkened instantly as a low, warning growl rumbled from his chest at the mere suggestion.

Adele wasn't fazed and she met his gaze. "You already know she has medical ties there," she pointed out. "Moreover, all those experiments, isn't it for their sakes. She's Elijah's favorite, they wouldn't try anything stupid with her. Get her out of here."

She turned her back to them, moving toward another patient, leaving no room for argument.

Alaric and Griffin locked eyes, a silent communication passing between them.

"She's not wrong though, Elsie's their vip." Griffin admitted after a long pause.

Alaric exhaled sharply through his nose. "Of course, she'd be." His tone was bitter.

But then, they had no choice.

With Elsie still unconscious in Griffin's arms, they stormed into the hospital wing, their presence drawing immediate attention. The nurses on duty rushed forward, guiding them swiftly to a private emergency room.

They followed the standard procedures,

attaching electrocardiogram electrodes to Elsie's chest to monitor her heart rhythm. Then an IV line was inserted into her vein, pushing fluids to stabilize her vitals and other procedures none of them could care about at that moment.

But throughout the whole process, Alaric and Griffin didn't move an itch from their spot. They stood at either side of her bed with vigilance. It was to the point that any nurse that came close to administer medication found themselves on the receiving end of a barely restrained snarl.

But to her credit, the lead nurse didn't back down. She straightened, meeting Alaric's gaze squarely. "She needs an anti-arrhythmic agent. Her heart needs to stabilize."

Griffin intimidated her with his body but after a long beat, he gave a short, reluctant nod.

Elsie was a werewolf and it wasn't long before she stabilized. Although she was still unconscious, relief flooded the two alphas, especially Alaric. She was going to be fine.

But neither of them left. Not until Elsie woke up and they knew she was far. So they stayed, watching over her.

Then, the door opened.

The moment the newcomer stepped into the room, both Alaric and Griffin bristled.

Their hackles raised, their muscles coiled with instinctive aggression.

The man in a white coat entered, his hands tucked casually in his pockets.

"Well, well," The man drawled, his voice smooth like silk over steel. "If it isn't my two favorite alphas."

A low, deadly growl rumbled from Alaric's throat.

Griffin's eyes flashed dangerously, his entire body tensing like a beast ready to strike.

They knew this man.

Patrick.

Elijah's personal mad scientist.

Chapter 144: Doctor Patrick

If there was anyone Alaric and Griffin hated with every fiber of their being, it was the man standing before them.

Patrick Vale.

The bastard doctor.

Patrick still had the same smug, polished appearance, the same unsettling detached amusement in his expression, like he was dissecting them with his eyes, assessing them as nothing more than test subjects.

His youthful appearance might have deceived anyone else, might have made one believe he hadn't aged a day, but Alaric and Griffin knew better. The bastard had carved up enough bodies to know how to preserve his own.

Yet, even though the surgeries had been flawless, it was not perfect.

The procedures couldn't completely erase the grotesque, jagged scars marring the side of his right face—a permanent signature of Asher's wrath and a reminder of his past failure. It was the delightful legacy of the night Asher had compelled him to stab himself with a scalpel.

The stitches had been neat and the tissue repaired fine, but the skin remained slightly warped. Hence, the scarred flesh stretched in places where it shouldn't, pulling ever so slightly whenever he smirked.

Alaric had never been a fan of Asher's methods. But this? He agreed for once.

And if only Asher had killed the bastard that day, things would have been so much better.

But then again, even Alaric knew that if Patrick had died, Elijah would have simply found another sadist to take his place.

Perhaps even someone worse.

Alaric's blue gaze connected with Patrick's dark, beady eyes. But it was his right eye—the unnatural one—that made his stomach twist.

He knew Patrick had stabbed that eye out that day thanks to Asher's compulsion. And yet, here it was.

The bastard must have had it replaced. Whatever it was now, it wasn't normal, and staring at it sent a prickle of unease down his spine.

A deep, instinctual revulsion crept up Alaric's spine, and his disgust manifested physically with lightning crackling between his fingertips, the air around him charged with volatile energy.

Patrick noticed. He always noticed. And the bastard had the audacity to smirk.

"Easy there," Patrick crooned, taking a leisurely step forward. "Easy, thunder boy. You've already put one person in a hospital bed. We wouldn't want another unfortunate victim, would we?"

Although Patrick's words dripped with false sympathy, his eyes gleamed with accusation, obviously blaming Alaric for the incident.

And the small reminder was enough to make Alaric's breath hitch.

Elsie.

Alaric's fury was instantly dimmed, his jaw unclenching and his cracking fingers lowering slightly. But the moment Patrick took another step closer, his fangs bared in warning.

Yet Patrick didn't stop, saying instead,

"Whether you like it or not, I have to take a look at her."

"The others have already examined her. She's fine. Elsie's a werewolf. She's strong. An ordinary shock can't take her down." Alaric snarled at him.

Patrick tilted his head, something dark gleaming behind his eyes. His voice dropped, dripping with sick amusement.

"Look at you, Alaric," he mused. "All strong and protective. Standing over your precious eligible mate."

Then, the bastard chuckled.

"Unfortunately for you," Patrick's voice turned low, sly, "my hands have already been on her body."

His words were carefully chosen and deliberately misleading. Alaric knew what the bastard was doing. He was provoking him on purpose.

But it didn't matter because it worked.

A violent snarl tore from his throat, his fangs lengthening, and his blue eyes glowing with power.

And as if to reinforce the threat, Griffin let out a thunderous roar, the sheer force of it sending a ripple of wind that whipped across Patrick's face.

For a brief second, Patrick actually flinched.

But it was brief. Too brief.

He recovered far too quickly for a man who should have been terrified out of his pants. Not that he had ever been, else he wouldn't have risked his life to experiment on them from the beginning.

Patrick's lip curled. "And yes, you too, Griffin, I didn't forget you."

Then his voice suddenly carried a sudden edge. "All of you are so impressive now. Such powerful Alphas." His eyes gleamed sharply. "Though I can't say I didn't have a hand in shaping you."

Something inside of Alaric snapped as the memory returned. He recalled being strapped to a cold table, screaming, wires piercing his skin as they experimented on him.

His fists clenched. "Get out." Alaric's voice was lethal.

Patrick grinned.

"That's quite disappointing, considering I'm actually glad to see you."

Griffin's snarl rumbled deeper, vibrating through the walls. The man was really pushing his luck now.

"Fine, I'll take my leave then." The doctor

turned, reaching for the door, when—

"Ah." He paused.

The air changed.

"Oh, right," Patrick drawled, turning back with lazy amusement. "Before I go... I don't suppose you know a Violet Purple, do you?"

Alaric and Griffin stiffened.

The brewing storm inside Alaric soared violently. While Griffin's growl deepened, his whole muscles tensed like a coiled spring.

But even with the two alphas exuding auras and a stance that was considered threatening and dangerous, the doctor was totally unfazed even though he was a mere human with no extra lives.

"Of course, you do," Patrick smirked. "She's your girlfriend, after all." He gave a sleazy grin, his next words filled with malice.

"And I can't wait to get my hands on her."

Alaric snapped.

Lightning roared to life in his hands but before he could unleash hell, Patrick casually clicked a pen.

Except it wasn't just a pen.

It was a frequency disruptor. A finely engineered bio-sonic emitter designed specifically for werewolves.

The moment it was activated, waves of piercing, ultrasonic frequencies shattered through the air, tuned to the precise neurological sensitivities of werewolves.

Alaric and Griffin collapsed on the floor immediately. The vicious, piercing noise shattered through their skulls making their ears ring and their heads to split with sharp, pulsating agony.

Their bodies spasmed, their teeth elongating, claws unsheathing involuntarily as their wolves manifested with a howl of pain. It was like being torn apart from the inside out.

Patrick stood over them, watching them writhing.

Then, casually, he said, "Tell Adele she can't steal my patients forever."

With that, he dropped the device onto the ground and walked away.

The moment he left, Griffin dragged himself forward, his face twisted with fury and pain.

With a feral snarl, he slammed his fist into the device, shattering it to pieces. The noise stopped at once.

Both Alaric and Griffin lay there, gasping, their chests heaving from the sheer agony of the experience

Then there was a soft groan and their heads snapped up.

Elsie finally stirred, blinking blearily. She looked disoriented.

"What... happened?" she mumbled, her voice weak.

But then she reached for her ear and

when she pulled her hand back, her finger was covered in blood.

Alaric's stomach twisted.

That fucking bastard.

Chapter 145: Kitten Roman

~ Lila ~

"Violet! HELP ME!" Lila shrieked as a ferocious-looking, yet absurdly adorable green Scottish Fold cat chased her like a demon possessed, her feet kicking up small clouds of dust.

This was not how she had planned to die.

Not heroically in battle — definitely not in the second great war.

Not in a tragic love story —like Elena and Kael

Not even from embarrassment at failing a test — sadly, no reference for this.

Boho! Of all the possible deaths, being mauled by a furious cardinal alpha in kitten form was not on her bingo card.

Well, what cruel fate had led her here?!

It was all thanks to Violet.

She should have known better. Even Daisy had warned that this was a terrible, horrible, catastrophic idea, but Violet, the shameless hustler, had roped them in with sweet words and unshakable confidence.

Because if there was one thing Violet Purple knew how to do, it was to milk people dry with a business pitch so convincing it could sell ice to a yeti.

And to be honest? Her logic had been sound.

Violet had recognized the demand in the market because thanks to the stupid — in her own language — hierarchy in the school, majority of the student population never got close to a cardinal alpha before graduation.

Not to mention touching, holding, or even standing near one was considered a privilege. Snapping a photo with one? It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

But now, thanks to fate — or karma, depending on who you asked —Roman Draven has provided the perfect opportunity.

A cardinal alpha, forced into the form of an adorable kitten? It was a once in life time chance that Violet, the ruthless businesswoman couldn't give up on.

So she had pitched it perfectly:

"For a totally reasonable fee, you can HOLD, PET, FONDLE and SNAP AN EXCLUSIVE photo with Roman the Kitten!"

It was the ultimate souvenir!

A photo they could cherish forever and flex to their future children. And children children. To even the tenth generation — if they cared enough.

At first, her roommates had thought Violet lost her mind, but when they saw how profitable it was , eveyone was definitely in. Except there was a little problem, they had zero preparation and resources.

There was no marketing. No set-up. Not to mention, it was only a few hours before Roman shifted back to his human form and had his revenge on them. The goddess have mercy on them.

They needed speed and efficiency before Roman became entirely useless to them.

But Violet wasn't the Purple Storm for nothing and Lila saw firsthand the power of connections.

All Violet did was one word to the right students, elite and non elite, mostly the ones who approached her during the Fangball match and bam! Everything fell into place.

The photoshoot was then set up in the Green Space, the school's iconic garden known for its beautiful flowers, scenic stone pathways, and breathtaking water features. In one word, the serene aesthetic was perfect for capturing a "magical" moment with Kitten Roman.

Within the hour, the place was transformed into a professional-grade photoshoot, with all tasks delegated:

Camera crew? Check.

Props and backdrops? Check.

Soft cushions and luxury blankets for Roman's "royal cat throne"? Check.

A ridiculous yet adorable wardrobe of kitten outfits? Also check.

Except that was where the problems began.

Dressing Kitten Roman.

One unlucky fool was chosen for the task.

And that unfortunate soul was her. Lila.

Somehow, one of the elite girls had miraculously ordered a batch of custom kitten clothing online, and it arrived in record time.

And the great task began.

At first? Roman had been calm.

A little too calm for her liking especially while staring up at her with those beautiful green eyes.

Except she should have known it was a mistake.

Lila should have listened to her gut.

Because the moment Lila tried slipping a tiny tuxedo over Kitten Roman's head...

All hell broke loose.

The kitten who had been perfectly docile transformed into an unholy menace.

With his fangs bared, claws unsheathed, and with a murderous yowl, Roman lunged at her.

And thus, the chase from earlier began.

"Violet! HELP!" Lila screamed again, bursting out of the makeshift dressing room and running for her dear life.

Kitten Roman bounded after her, his tiny but powerful paws skimming the ground like a small hunter in pursuit of prey. Damn it! He should have turned into a larger animal!

Nonetheless, he would catch the girl and use her as a scapegoat.

How DARE they treat him like a pet?!

He was Roman Draven!

A lover — well, not at the moment —, a cardinal alpha! A predator! Not a doll to be dressed up!

He should have known not to trust that conniving fox, Violet Purple. He totally underestimated her.

Just as Lila's lungs were about to give out, a hand shot out of nowhere and snatched Kitten Roman from behind.

"There you are!" Violet said, exasperated.

She had only gone to the restroom for two minutes, and chaos had already broken loose.

She turned disapproving eyes onto the tiny green kitten struggling in her grasp.

"Bad kitty!" she scolded, tapping him lightly on the nose.

Kitten Roman's green eyes darkened. How dare she?!

He let out a hiss of pure menace but Violet smirked.

"Someone's mad, isn't he?"

And, to prove just how angry he was, Kitten Roman swiped his tiny claws across her arm.

"Agh!" Violet gasped, clutching her now-scratched skin.

"Okay, fine, I deserved that one. But no more."

Kitten Roman narrowed his eyes and she glared back knowing he could perfectly understand her. After all, he was a grown man in a kitten's body.

He stopped squirming and Violet was relieved. She adjusted her hold on him, securing him against her chest, his soft fur pressed against the curve of her side.

And for once?

Kitten Roman didn't fight it.

He settled against her, his tiny paws resting against her shoulder, his tail flicking contentedly.

And Violet was none the wiser.

She had no clue that Kitten Roman was currently experiencing the greatest moment of his life.

Because right now?

His face was pressed against Violet's soft, comfortable... chest.

Oh.

Oh, yes.

Her chest was soft.

Her body so soft.

This was bliss.

Maybe... just maybe, he could tolerate being in this form for a while — if he could be pressed against more breasts .

Meanwhile, Lila was bent over, gasping for air, her hands on her knees.

She stabbed a finger in Kitten Roman's direction.

"I swear he hates me."

To confirm her suspicions, Kitten Roman turned to her and snarled, flashing tiny, sharp teeth.

Lila screeched.

"See?! I said it!"

That was it.

She was done.

"I'm out. You dress him up yourself."

And with zero hesitation, she shoved the small kitten outfit into Violet's hands and stormed off, making sure to put a safe distance between herself and the demon cat.

With Lila gone, Violet sighed and looked down at the kitten nestled comfortably against her.

Roman looked smug. Suspiciously smug.

Almost as if he was pleased that he had successfully chased Lila away.

Violet narrowed her eyes.

"Alright, mister," she murmured, tilting his tiny chin up so they were nose-to-nose.

"We need to talk."

#### Chapter 146: Sugar And Money

Violet carefully carried Kitten Roman back into the makeshift makeup room, treating him with the kind of reverence one might offer royalty.

And knowing Roman, he expected nothing less. Even in feline form, he still managed to exude an air of smug entitlement, his fluffy tail flicking lazily as if he was entirely unbothered by the situation.

She placed him gently on the table and stepped back with her arms crossed. Golden human eyes met green cat eyes, the intensity of the stare-off feeling almost ridiculous. If anyone had walked in right now, they'd assume she was having a psychic conversation with her pet.

Violet sighed, breaking the silence first. "What would it take for you to behave out there?"

Kitten Roman let out a throaty growl in response, his tiny body vibrating with irritation.

And yes, that was a no.

Although Violet could not understand cat language, her short experience with her former cat, Stray, had taught her the subtle nuances of feline moods, and right now, Roman was in full-on you betrayed me, human mode.

"Yes, I know," she placated. "This isn't what we agreed on. But I saw an opportunity, and I took it. You can't blame me for being a businesswoman." She shrugged, as if it was the most logical thing in the world.

Roman promptly barked in her face.

Okay. He did blame her.

Violet exhaled, rubbing her temples. "Fine. Here's the deal. I dress you up, you go out there, behave, and make me some cash. In return, I'll owe you one favor."

She lifted a finger before he could make a sound, his ears having perked up. "But there are conditions. You can't harm me, can't ask for anything that gets me in trouble, and no sexual favors. None of that creepy alpha bullshit, are we clear?"

A low, rumbling snarl vibrated from Kitten Roman's throat instead.

Violet arched a brow. "Oh? You don't like it?" Her lips curled into a knowing smirk. "Maybe I should just leave you here, then. Babysitting duty is over. I'm sure you'll have tons of fun running around alone until sundown. Just you, the big wide world, and all the students looking for a stray cat to entertain them." She sighed theatrically, turning on her heel.

Kitten Roman let out an immediate hiss of protest.

Violet paused, her smirk widening. "Thought so." She turned back, placing her hands on her hips. "Alright. Meow three times if you agree to my terms."

There was silence at first. Then—

"Meow. Meow. Meow."

A victorious grin spread across Violet's lips, with her golden eyes sparkling and practically reflecting money signs as she looked down at the grumpy green furball. This was perfect. Roman was going to make her rich.

Overcome with joy, Violet grabbed one of his tiny paws and bumped it against her fist. "Yes! That's how we roll, partner."

Still buzzing with excitement, she playfully rubbed his ears, pinched his cheeks, and ran her fingers over his velvety snout. "You're so adorable," she cooed.

Kitten Roman merely blinked at her, his green eyes half-lidded in mild suffering. Fine, fawn over me all you want, woman,

he thought smugly. He had what he wanted anyway, one favor, owed by her, and she couldn't back out now.

Satisfied with their agreement, Violet got to work dressing him, pulling out the small black tuxedo they had ordered for him. The tuxedo was a ridiculously well-crafted piece made of sleek satin with a crisp white undershirt peeking from beneath the neatly folded lapels.

It's tiny gold buttons gleamed under the soft light, and the little bowtie at the collar gave it an extra touch of aristocratic charm.

The entire time, Roman sat there stiffly, judging silently as Violet slipped his small paws through the sleeves, adjusting the fabric, and fastening the buttons.

But something happened.

As Violet maneuvered around him, a ridiculous thought popped into her head right at that moment. Was his err... reproductive equipment the same as a normal cat's?

At once, Violet froze mid-movement. What the fuck was wrong with her? She was not checking that!

Shuddering at her own wayward thoughts, she quickly finished dressing him and grabbed the final touch which was a pair of tiny round cat glasses with gleaming silver rims.

Carefully, Violet slipped them onto his face, adjusting them so they rested perfectly on his tiny feline nose.

Done, Violet took a step back to admire her handiwork. The gods help her. Kitten Roman looked freakishly adorable.

It was almost unfair how even as a tiny green-furred menace, Roman still managed to ooze an effortless charm that could melt hearts. He looked like a mafia boss cursed into feline form, too dignified to be taken seriously, yet undeniably captivating.

Violet clapped her hands together in glee. "Alright, Kitten Roman. Time to charm my customers."

Without a sound, Roman leaped gracefully onto Violet, his small form curling against her chest as if he owned the spot. His velvety green fur pressed into the fabric of her wear as she instinctively adjusted her hold, cradling him easily.

This was, unfortunately, his fate, reduced to a cuddly attraction for money-hungry Violet. But if he was going to be paraded around like some exotic treasure, at the very least, he would do it with style.

As soon as they approached the camera crew, the atmosphere buzzed with energy. The team was a mix of giddy students and one professional-looking elite girl who had way too much camera gear for a student.

The second she locked eyes on them, the girl's fingers twitched over her high-end camera, and she wasted no time snapping them.

Click! click! click! The camera's rapid-fire shutter sounded off like a machine gun.

Although Violet was still in her sportswear, her look was not casual at all, instead Kitten Roman's presence only enhanced her image.

With her striking purple hair, her rebellious air, and the sleek green Scottish Fold cat lounging in her arms like he was born for the limelight, they looked like two delinquents destined for mischief.

There was an effortless synergy to the two of them, chaotic yet cool, wild yet refined. The contrast was exotic, refreshing, and utterly photogenic.

The students assisting with the setup could barely contain themselves anymore. The sight of Kitten Roman in his tiny tuxedo was too much sugar for their poor diabetic heart.

"Oh my god, he's so cute!" one of the girls squealed, nearly vibrating on the spot.

"I just wanna hold him!" another gushed.

"I'd die happy if I could squish those little cheeks!"

"For me, I just want to squeeze him tight!"

The excitement was reaching dangerous levels that Kitten Roman, who was a sucker for attention, for the first time in his existence, felt the true terror of being prey. The unrestrained desire in their eyes was scary.

Violet, on the other hand, was not looking at the crazed admirers but at the long line of students already forming, their eager faces filled with anticipation.

Some of them were bouncing on their heels, clutching their phones in preparation with their wallets already out. And the sight of it made satisfaction curl in her chest.

Yes. This was indeed a good day to make some serious money.

Chapter 147: Magical Hands For A Purple Witch

~Roman~

For the first time in his illustrious, scandalous, and absolutely magnificent life, Roman Draven, Ladies' Man Extraordinaire, had more hands on him than he could count or happily oblige.

Sure, Roman liked a good touch—a well-placed, loving touch. But this? It was a battlefield.

He was squashed, cradled, smothered, and fondled within an inch of his life. And it wasn't just the women—oh God, no — there were guys too, though they were very few —thank God — and lacked the same feverish enthusiasm as the females.

Still, the rough pats, ruffles, and one particularly aggressive back scratch from a beefy-looking dude left Roman feeling utterly offended. Violet was so going to pay for this!

But even that was not the end. No, it was the beginning of Kitten Roman's horrors.

Roman, in his infinite foolishness, had forgotten one critical thing when agreeing to Violet's money-making scheme. His numerous aggrieved exes were in attendance.

Barbara, the wicked she-devil, had pinched him so hard that her claws dug into his fur like she was trying to rip his soul out through his ribs. It had been so excruciating such that actual tears welled up in his gorgeous, mesmerizing green cat eyes.

Yet not one of these buffoons noticed his silent suffering. Roman had to endure it alone, his silent pain swallowed in the chaos of overly excited students cooing over him. The betrayal. The injustice. The absolute audacity. He bore it alone.

At least on the bright side, his other exes had been merciful, charmed by his beauty to think about revenge.

And still, that was not the end of it. There were the perverts.

For a school filled with intelligent and top performing students, Lunaris Academy sure had a lot of them. Some of the girls had taken great pleasure in spanking his tiny, dignified backside like some demented sport.

Sure, Roman liked the spanking part during foreplay but he didn't so much like it now he was at the receiving end of it and in animal form.

Thankfully, Violet had put a firm stop to that before it got out of control.

Except it did get out of control.

One particularly brazen, depraved, and shameless degenerate secretly fondled him down to the forbidden area.

Roman had never felt so violated in his life.

His entire soul left his body for a second. At that moment, his dignity, his status, his legacy, all crumbled into ruin with that single, unauthorized touch.

His first instincts had been to maul her, to leave scars so deep her ancestors would feel them. But he recalled the deal with Violet and restrained himself.

Hence Kitten Roman had settled for a deep, guttural hiss, baring his fangs at the girl.

The girl jumped away from him and couldn't even defend herself which was enough admission of guilt if Roman had ever seen one.

But this was not over. No. He had memorized her face.

When this charade was over, he'd track her and they were going to have a long conversation about boundaries, consent, and basic animal rights. He meant, manners! Yes. Manners. He would teach her one.

And perhaps the next time Violet manages — 'manage' being the word — to convince him into doing this again, he would be needing a chaperone — preferably Asher — to keep these shameless degenerates in order.

That being said, not everything about the experience was awful.

The attention was intoxicating. His fur was covered in actual lipstick stains as a result of the kisses , and he had more admirers fawning over him than any royal dignitary. Even in animal form, he was simply irresistible.

But most importantly, he had felt them all, if you know what he meant.

Roman had been squashed, nestled, and pressed against more heaving bosoms than he could count. And oh, did he count.

While being mercilessly smothered in adoration, he had carefully selected his future dates, making a mental list of which assets were worthy of his divine attention.

It was truly a learning experience.

To think he had wasted his time cycling through the same old she-wolves, hybrids and human elites when the common students had so much to offer.

It would affect the hierarchy they kept going on but who cares, he was a cardinal alphas and did whatever he wanted.

And it was time to expand his domain. To spread his goodness beyond societal expectations.

Moreover, most of those girls would thank God in church, if he as much as looked their way, not to mention showing them attention. So yes, the gods would be so proud of him. He was bringing their worship to new heights.

But even as his future conquests took shape in his brilliant mind, his gaze couldn't help but drift—again and again—to Violet.

There she was. The purple storm.

With her devil-may-care aura, her sharp golden eyes, and that calculating, business-like intensity, she was supervising the madness like a queen commanding her empire.

And for the first time, Roman found himself impressed.

She was ruthless. Witty. Shrewd. A born schemer. Like him.

The last time he had been chosen to spend time with Elsie in this form, she had cared for him, showered him with comfort and affection, but even she never thought of something like this.

But his mind, ever loyal to his queen, snapped at him.

"Idiot. She's just using you. Elsie took care of you without expecting anything in return. Violet is squeezing every cent out of you."

Roman gritted his tiny cat teeth, yet he couldn't stop watching her.

There was something magnetic about Violet. The way she moved through the crowd, the way people parted for her, the way she owned the entire operation like she was born for it.

Roman frowned, shaking the thought away. Elsie was his queen. Violet was just a passing storm. A fleeting distraction.

Even at that Roman couldn't help but remember the warmth of being tucked against her side earlier. The way her heartbeat had beat against him and to Roman's absolute horror, he purred.

The girl currently holding him gasped in astonishment, thinking she was the cause of it. But Roman ignored her, his attention fixed elsewhere.

His gaze returned to Violet, appraising her again.

Roman proudly had a thing for breasts and while Violet's was sizable, she wasn't as ample as the women he usually went for. And yet... he kind of liked it.

Except this was dangerous thinking.

If only she wasn't Alaric's girlfriend.

But then, being Alaric's girlfriend had not stopped Julia from pursuing after him.

Alaric still hated him for Julia, thinking he had seduced her. If only Alaric knew the truth that Julia had been the one who pursued him first. He would never go after a cardinal brother's woman, not unless they shared.

But Roman had never bothered explaining. Why would he? People love it when they have a strong reason to hate others. Explaining now would change nothing between them. Not to mention... he was really tempted to steal Violet this time around. Truly tempted.

"Hey, Kitten Roman!"

Roman's ears twitched in absolute offense.

The camera girl snapped her fingers to get his attention.

"Look at the camera!" she chirped.

His entire body bristled.

How. Dare. She.

"Kitten Roman" sounded good only when Violet said it. But from anyone else? It was an insult.

Roman let out a deadly snarl, and the girl paled, swallowing nervously.

Good. Fear was the correct response.

Before he could scare her further, a familiar voice called his name.

"Roman?"

The snarl died in his throat.

Oh no. Mama was here.

Violet appeared with her arms crossed, golden eyes narrowed and looking every bit the disapproving handler of a misbehaving child.

He could already hear the lecture coming.

Roman's ears flattened.

So scary.

Violet effortlessly plucked him from the girl's hands, holding him firmly so he could not escape even if he wanted to, and sat down, tucking him onto her warm lap.

"We had a deal, remember?" she reminded him.

Yes, yes, a favor owed. One that he planned on cashing in tonight.

"I'd like to believe that we are all good. So

be a good boy, okay?"

Then she scratched him and Roman's entire being short-circuited.

Oh.

Oh yes.

That was divine.

Then she scratched further.

No.

No, no, no, no.

She found the right spot. He was doomed.

His tiny cat body squirmed, but it only encouraged her.

Stop. No—keep going. No, stop it!

She kept scratching, her fingers expertly working along his sensitive fur-lined nerve endings.

Roman's tiny body jerked in delight, betraying him entirely.

This was indecent. Unfair. And Illegal — And it wasn't what you're thinking.

And yes, that evil Purple haired witch with magical hands knew exactly what she was doing with that smirk plastered on her face.

When she finally stopped, Roman was left a panting mess in her lap.

Violet Purple smiled down at him victoriously.

"Now," she said sweetly, "Let's get back to work. Shall we?"

Roman let out a pathetic meow.

Fuck.

She had him real good.

#### Chapter 148: Her Royal Prince

The instant Violet stepped into her dormitory, a boom of confetti exploded above her, causing tiny, colorful specks to fall over her and Kitten Roman like a victorious rain.

"Congratulations, Violet! You're a rich woman!" Lila hollered with uncontrollable glee, already diving into a large bag overflowing with crisp Cede notes. She scooped up a handful and tossed it into the air, letting the money flutter down in slow, tantalizing swirls.

For a long second, Violet simply stood there, watching as actual money danced through the air before settling at her feet. Money she could have never dreamed of making so quickly in her entire life.

The sight was just so breathtaking that a slow, smug smile curved her lips. A kingdom of wealth built in a single afternoon. She was beginning to love this school.

Lila, drunk on the euphoria of success, continued her ridiculous display, tossing notes in the air like she was some eccentric billionaire making it rain at a private gala.

"We did it, Violet! You absolutely fleeced them. I'm so proud of you!."

Violet let out a pleased hum. Oh, she had fleeced them alright.

For the scholarship students and lower-income crowd, Violet had been kind enough to charge them five Cede per session for a humble two-minute interaction with Kitten Roman, taking as many photos and videos as their devices could hold.

Two minutes was more than enough, but if they wanted more? That was when extra charges applied. She was fair, but she was also a businesswoman.

For the elites and the rich non-elite students with little sense, Violet had played to their egos. She had upped the charge to fifty Cede for a five-minute session.

It was daylight robbery. Yes. And yet they had paid without hesitation.

Why?

No one wanted to appear cheap in front of their peers, especially not in front of the scholarship students. Falling below the expectations was as good as a social death sentence. The irony was almost poetic.

But the true masterpiece of Violet's scheme was the VIP section.

She had leveraged the school's obsessive hierarchy, creating an exclusive space in the closed-off green garden where the privileged could lounge on plush sofas, bean bags, and carefully placed seating while sipping wine — contributed by Natalie. Bless her.

They were served in flutes, giving the illusion of luxury, while an assortment of snacks were laid out. For an exclusive fan service from Kitten Roman, Violet had set the price at two hundred Cede per person.

And what had they done? They paid immediately without even blinking a single eye at the cost.

The elites lived to throw their money at anything that made them look privileged, and Violet had capitalized on it like the entrepreneur she was born to be.

Not to mention, she was the purple storm, the famous member of the elite, as well as Alaric Storm's girlfriend. At this point, she was already a cardinal queen.

At this point, If Violet were to bottle air and label it Cardinal Alpha's Blessed Breath, she had no doubt they'd probably buy it for a thousand Cede each.

For the first time, Violet realized just how powerful connections were. Money was good, but it wasn't enough. The true currency here was status. And today, she wielded it like a weapon. And it had worked — it felt good as well.

However, Violet knew she couldn't afford to get too carried away with this power though. The hierarchy only favored a select few, and she wasn't about to lose herself in the privileges that came with it.

Ivy had been in charge of keeping track of their earnings throughout the whole event. Though Violet was dying to know the exact total, she had already made peace with the fact that she had secured enough to cover her expenses for the entire semester.

The students who had helped with the event had been compensated, well, the scholarship students, anyway. The rich ones had refused her payment, finding it borderline insulting.

They had helped her because they wanted to, even calling it an honor to assist the purple storm in her first event.

Violet had to bite back laughter at the absurdity of it. They practically thought she was royalty now

As much as Violet wanted to bask in her financial success, her attention drifted to the kitten still nestled against her chest.

Kitten Roman was... filthy.

His once vibrant green fur was now matted with traces of lipstick, smeared foundation, and unidentifiable smudges from too many hands. His tail drooped, and even his little ears sagged from exhaustion.

Roman had worked today. Three hours of being passed around like a sacred relic, kissed, groped, and aggressively cuddled by students who had probably fantasized about doing the same to him in his human form. That was scary now she thought about it.

In one word, Roman had suffered for her wealth, and while Violet had little sympathy for a cardinal alpha who usually strutted through life getting everything he wanted, she wasn't heartless.

Roman had pulled through for her.

Now, it was time to return the favor.

Before Lila, Daisy, or Ivy could rope her into breaking down the event's total earnings, Violet marched straight to the bathroom with him.

The sun was setting, but Roman had yet to shift back. That's when it hit her that he had said 'before the party', but he hadn't specified 'when before the party'. Not that she was complaining.

Violet was still thrilled over the money she had made to be pissed over the convenient missing details. He still needed to bathe after all because there was no way she was letting his green-furred ass climb into her bed looking like that.

Violet shut the door behind her and turned on the sink faucet, letting the water run until it was a comfortable temperature, then shifted her attention back to the cat in her arm.

Violet exhaled. "I'm about to wash you. I can't let you return to my bed like this."

Kitten Roman barely reacted. He opened one emerald-green eye, regarded her with what looked like indifference, and then promptly shut it again, as if to say, "Do whatever you want. I don't care anymore."

Violet tried not to think too hard about the fact that she was about to bathe Roman Draven, cardinal alpha, infamous playboy, in cat form.

Nope. This was just a cat. She told herself.

With careful fingers, Violet undid the tiny tuxedo that had once looked adorable but was now wrinkled and stained. The cat-sized sunglasses clattered to the side as she placed them on the counter, and just as she reached for Roman, he meowed softly, low and rumbley.

Violet squinted at him because that meow sounded so suggestive?

No, she shook her head. There was no way a grown-ass man in cat form enjoyed being undressed by a woman.

But Kitten Roman purred as if to mock her.

Blushing furiously, Violet quickly but carefully lowered him into the water, half-expecting him to hiss, scratch, or, at the very least, struggle. Instead, Roman let out a deep sigh, stretching his little limbs like a spoiled prince being pampered in a royal bath.

Violet huffed. Unbelievable.

But then, it was bath time.

Violet picked up her lavender-scented shampoo, because she did not have a musky male body wash. Not to mention, one made for cats. Roman would simply have to make do with this one.

She worked the suds into his fur, her fingers massaging gently. Roman's ears twitched slightly at the sensation, but when she reached his shoulders—

Purr.

Violet's hands stilled.

Did he just...?

She tested it again, this time rubbing the area behind his ears.

Roman purred louder.

She could feel his satisfaction vibrating through his tiny form, heat rushing to her cheeks.

No, this was fine. Totally fine. It's just a cat appreciating her service.

It wasn't until she reached his belly and Roman's purring spiked, a small, involuntary shudder ran down his feline form that Violet froze.

Why did it feel like she was touching places she would never dare touch in his human form?

As if that was enough, her mind formed an image of Roman lounging in his human form, green eyes gleaming with mischief as he purred, "Keep going, sweetheart."

Violet yanked her hand back as if she had been electrocuted.

Nope. Nope. Nope. She was so not doing this.

Quickly, Violet rinsed him off, ignoring the way his tiny, smug tail flicked against her wrist asking for her attention.

Finally, she wrapped him in her towel, holding him against her chest as she dried him off.

"There," she muttered, pulling back to examine her work.

Kitten Roman's fur was soft, gleaming, and scented lightly with lavender. He smelled clean—and, dare she say, like her.

Roman cracked open one eye again, this time looking up at her, then promptly closed it with a sigh of utter contentment.

"Yes, I'm sure you enjoyed that," Violet

snarked as she carried him back to the dormitory, wrapped up like some royal prince after a bath.

She was so not doing this again.

Chapter 149: Quite A Day

Five thousand Cede notes.

Violet stared at the crisp stack of bills, her fingers carefully tracing over the smooth paper like it was her firstborn child. Even after deducting expenses, paying for refreshments, compensating helpers — the ones who allowed her to —, and ensuring everything was squared away, she was left with a very impressive sum.

For the average Lunaris student, five thousand Cede was pocket change. But for her, a scholarship student who had learned the art of stretching every coin, this was a small fortune. It would last her through the semester if she spent it wisely.

But then again, Lunaris was a vampire, sucking wealth from its students like a starved beast. Everything in the school was costly, its prices hiked all thanks to the privileged ones who were willing to pay at whatever price offered.

Violet wasn't worried, though. If today had taught her anything, it was that she had ways of making money. Lunaris was a bleeding gold mine, and she had every intention of striking it rich again.

Her gaze traveled toward the small, green-furred menace snoozing soundly on her bed, blissfully unaware of the next financial endeavor she was already planning.

It would take some serious convincing to pull him into another stunt like this. She had caught him off guard this time, there was no way he'd fall for it twice.

Or would he?

Violet smirked. If she could charge the elite students a ridiculous sum just to hold Kitten Roman, then she could surely convince the cat himself.

She just needed to find the right leverage.

Of course, there was no way Violet could have pulled it off without her roommates and was grateful for their help. Ivy and Lila were both from well-to-do families and didn't need her money, but not Daisy.

Violet had insisted on paying her for her time but she wouldn't accept it. She had even tried slipping some Cede notes into Daisy's bag when she wasn't looking, only for the girl to return it with a stern, unimpressed stare.

"It's your money. You worked hard for it," Daisy had said, leaving no room for argument.

Of course, Violet was touched. But she wasn't stingy either. One way or another, she would find a way to repay her. All of them.

Violet's train of thought was interrupted by Lila, who had been keeping a watchful eye on her like a hawk tracking its prey.

"That's the third yawn now," She noted.

"She's probably exhausted," Daisy chimed in, stretching her arms above her head. "That was a grueling three-hour event."

Violet exhaled deeply, stretching her own limbs as another yawn—the fourth one now—forced its way out. Now that the adrenaline of her business empire was fading, the sheer exhaustion was beginning to creep up on her, making her limbs feel heavy.

"You're right, I'm dead tired," Violet admitted.

"Then sleep," Daisy said matter-of-factly. "The cardinal alphas party until morning. You're going to need all the strength you can get."

Ivy checked her watch. "It's only seven. The party doesn't really kick off until eleven. We'll be back by ten to get ready. That should give you enough time to rest."

"Thanks," Violet murmured, already looking forward to a blissful, undisturbed nap—

"Wait," she blinked, narrowing her eyes at Ivy's choice of words. "Did you just say we? As in, you three? Are you guys going somewhere?"

And the shift in energy was instant.

Ivy looked at Daisy. Daisy looked at Lila. The silent conversation between them lasted mere seconds, but Violet caught it all.

Oh. They were hiding something from her.

Lila was the one who finally caved, gnawing on her bottom lip before hesitantly confessing, "Dion has this mini-party happening before the main one. And, um... he kind of invited you too?"

Violet arched her brow. Kind of?

"But," Lila continued quickly, "he didn't want any drama with the cardinal alphas. Especially Asher. You know how he is about other guys around you. Dion just didn't want trouble. Please, don't be mad at us."

Violet sighed, rubbing her temple where a headache was forming.

"I'm not mad," she said flatly, her lips pressing into a thin line. "I'm just mad that a certain asshole still has a say in my social life."

There was nothing but silence as they waited for her final judgement.

"But," she sighed, waving them off, "even if I wanted to go and cause problems, I'm way too tired. You guys go have fun."

Lila's face lit up, and before Violet could even react, she was suddenly wrapped in a suffocating hug.

"Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!" Lila squealed.

Violet blinked. The hell?

Her old self would have never let anyone touch her like this. But Lunaris Academy had transformed her into someone who accepted these things now. Violet didn't know whether to be happy about that.

"Okay, okay," She grumbled, peeling Lila off her. "Now go before I change my mind."

The trio didn't waste a second. Within minutes, the dorm was emptied, leaving only Violet and the exhausted kitten sprawled out on her bed.

Violet stared at the tiny creature sprawled on her bed.

Why hadn't he transformed back yet? Then again, Roman had been doing this for years. He'd shift back when he was ready.

Violet changed into her pajamas in the bathroom because there was no way in hell she was risking that with Roman in the room, cat form or not.

Normally, she would have worn something sexier for sleep but she couldn't mislead or give Roman Draven ideas. She wasn't into the man whore. Not at all.

Once Roman was back to his human form, this unholy alliance would be over, and she'd go back to hating his smug ass in peace.

Satisfied with that thought, she crawled into bed, keeping a reasonable distance between herself and the sleeping cat. She was determined to stay on her side.

But the longer Violet stared at the adorable creature, the harder it was to resist the urge to touch him.

Fuck it.

With a resigned sigh, Violet scooted closer, wrapping an arm around Kitten Roman before pulling the blanket over them both.

He was so warm. So snuggly.

For a brief moment, she wished he was just a cat. One that she could keep at her side forever.

With that thought, Violet's eyelids grew heavy, and she fell into a deep, contented sleep.

One hour later.

Roman groaned as his body stretched, the sensation of bones shifting and muscles expanding sending a shiver through him. In seconds, his cat form melted away, giving way to the strong, human physique he was used to.

As his consciousness returned, so did the warmth, and the soft sensation of something—or rather, someone—pressed against him.

Roman cracked open his eyes and the first thing he realized was.... Oh... he was snuggled against a woman's body.

Instinctively, his lips curled into a smirk. Now this is how a man should wake up.

But then he looked up and that smirk died.

It was Violet Purple.

Roman groaned in sheer disappointment. What a waste of a perfectly good moment.

It wasn't uncommon for women to sneak into his bed. Hell, at this point, it was practically tradition. But this? This was an unfortunate twist of fate. Not only was she Alaric's girlfriend, but if Violet woke up right now and saw them like this, she'd probably gut him.

Roman was about to carefully extract himself from the situation when he caught a scent that shouldn't be here.

He stiffened and turned. And there he was. Sitting casually on the chair near the window, watching them with that knowing gaze.

"Hello, Roman," the intruder drawled lazily.

Fuck the fucker. What was he doing here?

"You've had quite a day, haven't you?"

Chapter 150: Betray A Friend

Asher Nightshade must have slipped into the room while they had been asleep, and for a strange, irrational reason, it annoyed Roman that he had waltzed in, uninvited, into a moment that belonged only to him and Violet. He shouldn't have cared, but damn it, he did.

However, Roman blamed the lingering irritation on the residual effects of his animal transformation. Like every Cardinal Alpha, his powers came with their flaws.

The traits of the animal he morphed into always bled into his human side, influencing his instincts and temperament. He had spent hours as a cat, and cats were territorial by nature which explained why Asher's uninvited presence in Violet's room was grating on his last nerve.

Roman sat up, his muscles tense, every inch of him vibrating with the urge to throw the unwelcome guest out of the room. He glared at his so-called friend, keeping his voice low enough not to wake Violet.

"Do you sneak into her room like this every day?"

Asher barely blinked. "I keep watch over her."

"Really?" Roman sneered, unconvinced.

Asher could spin lies like silk, wrap them around anyone he pleased, but not him. Roman knew him. Saw through him. He knew the depths of his darkness, the sickness that resided in his soul.

"Are you judging me right now? You?" He arched a brow. "Are you any better?"

Roman was ready to argue, only to pause. Fair point. He was, after all, currently naked in Violet's bed after spending hours as a damn cat. But at least when he sneaked into a woman's room, it was usually by invitation. Most times. kind of.

He frowned as he thought back to certain occasions. Okay, maybe not always. Roman exhaled. It seemed birds of the same feather truly flocked together.

But at least his conquests had never involved this level of obsession.

And Asher was obsessed. Completely, dangerously, beyond reason. And the motherfucker was surely never going to forgive him for what he planned to do tonight.

"She's not Lucille," Roman pointed out, his voice harder than he intended.

"No, she's not." Asher's agreement came smoothly at first, only for him to add, almost reverently, "She's so much better."

Roman watched as Asher rose to his feet, closing the space between them, his eyes dark with desire as he approached the bed where Violet lay, blissfully unaware of the two wolves hovering over her.

"Look at her," Asher murmured, his voice hushed with an awe that was so dangerously close to worship like one would a goddess. "So beautiful. Strong. Irresistible."

Roman did look. And it was a mistake.

His throat tightened, his tongue suddenly feeling too heavy in his mouth.

Violet was breathtaking, but asleep, she was lethal. His eyes traveled over the soft rising and falling of her chest, the way her hair, black at the roots and fading to purple at the tips, sprawled across the pillow in a wild, untamed wave. To the slight part of her lips, full, inviting, sinful. Those lips would look so damn good wrapped around his—

Fucking hell.

Roman tore his eyes away, swallowing thickly. But when he met Asher's eyes, that knowing, taunting glint told him he knew exactly where his mind had gone.

That bastard!

He snarled, teeth flashing. "Keep me out of your mess this time, Asher. I want no part in it."

"I'm not pulling any strings," Asher replied smoothly.

Liar. Roman didn't believe him for a damn second. Even when Asher wasn't spinning, he was spinning. If you understood what he meant.

"I won't accept her," Roman told him with a tone of finality.

Asher only shrugged, as if it was all the same to him. "Nor would I be forcing you either. Everything will work itself out. Just like it always does. It's already happening with the others."

Roman studied him, watching the quiet, calculating intensity in his gaze. Asher always played the long game—watching, waiting, moving his pieces with the patience of a winning side. And tonight, he had plans. Plans that involved Violet, whether she knew it or not.

Plans that he, himself, planned to disrupt.

"Do you have to fight the Alpha king?" Roman asked out of concern for his friend. "Elsie is not so bad. Neither would Elijah take your disobedience lightly."

Elsie was a bitch, and a proud one at that, sure, but she wasn't the worst option for a mate. However, she was not 'his' choice. And if there was anything Asher loathed the most, it was others having control over him. And he would rather burn the whole damn world to the ground than let Elijah decide his fate for the rest of his life.

But even Roman knew the answer before Asher even spoke.

"We'll see," Asher murmured cryptically before kneeling beside the bed. Without hesitation, he brushed his fingers along Violet's cheek.

Roman's eyes widened slightly as Violet leaned into him, chasing his touch even in slumber.

Fuck. This was serious.

A deep, satisfied rumble echoed from Asher's chest, possessively. She was perfect. He claimed her, even now.

Asher straightened up, his piercing gaze finding Roman's once more. "You already know what's happening tonight. I take it that I have your support?"

Roman didn't blink. "Of course." He lied to his face.

Asher studied him for a moment, scanning him for deception. But Roman kept his expression blank, his body still, willing him not to smell the deceit. If Asher did, he gave no sign.

"Good." He nodded, satisfied.

Asher went on to say, "Now that Alaric thinks he's gotten his paws on her, he'll try to keep her between himself and Griffin, and away from me. I can't let that happen. Alaric's too eager and foolish to understand the game here. I'll be the one controlling the narrative and ensure everything goes as planned."

A beat of silence passed before Asher moved to stand beside Roman, placing a hand on his shoulder, saying, "Thank you for always supporting me, old friend."

"It's nothing," Roman said, his voice neutral.

Then just as suddenly, Asher's fingers tightened on his shoulder, the temperature in the room plummeting.

Roman's wolf stirred, rising instinctively to the challenge he sensed from a fellow Alpha. He knew what was the problem even before Asher spoke his next words.

"I don't care about your antics with her, but her first time is mine." Asher marked his territory like the possessive wolf he was.

Roman's grip on his own temper wavered slightly, but he didn't crack. Instead, his lips curled into a lazy smirk, unbothered on the outside yet seething on the inside from the warning his Alpha side perceived as a challenge.

"I told you already, I don't intend to claim her." He said. Then, with a casual shrug, he added, "Nonetheless, duly noted."

In that same moment, the tension in the room snapped, as if it had never been there. Asher's deadly countenance softened. He looked pleased.

"Good."

Then, as if he hadn't just made one of the most insane declarations of his life, Asher sniffed the air and crinkled his nose.

"You smell girly."

Roman groaned, running a hand through his hair. Great. He needed a shower. Immediately. If Asher reacted this way, he didn't dare to imagine what Alaric would do if he smelt his girl on him.

"See you at the party then," Asher announced, strolling toward the door with all the audacity of a man who owned the place. Which he kind of did. West House belonged to him. Literally.

And just like that, Asher Nightshade was gone.

Roman let out a sharp breath. What in the world has he gotten himself into? One thing was for sure, after tonight, he'd be Asher's enemy and that wasn't going to bound well for him.

Asher never forgives. It was safe to say today was the last day he'd be friendly to him. From tomorrow, Asher would probably count him amongst his enemies.

It had been fun but it was time to call it quits. He needed to go, Roman thought as he took one last look at Violet.

But the moment Roman opened the door, he crashed into someone. It was one of Violet's roommates. The girl with the long blonde hair and the air of an aristocrat

Her blue eyes widened, her jaw nearly hitting the floor as she stared at him. Or rather... stared down.

Roman blinked. Then glanced down at himself.

Oh.

Right.

He was naked.

Her jaw dropped, eyes locked onto that very specific area. When she realized she had been caught staring, her face went beet red.

Roman smirked and winked at her. Then right in front of her horrified eyes, he shifted into his usually small, green snake form. And the shriek that followed was legendary.

The girl jumped back so hard she nearly knocked herself out against the wall.

Satisfied, Roman slithered away into the hallway, leaving behind a traumatized roommate. That should be enough revenge at the purple head.

For now, he had a party to attend.

And a friend to betray.