

Defy 181

Chapter 181: Alone

Violet stood paralyzed, watching the chaos unfold around her, her heart hammering against her ribcage. She had known her decision would shake the school, but she hadn't expected it to unravel into complete madness.

Griffin struggled to keep the peace, but it was a losing battle. Asher was beyond livid, his rage rippling through his pack, igniting an instinctive aggression in them

His wolves had taken aggressive stances, snarling and baring their fangs, their bodies coiled. They were ready to defend their Alpha, to strike down anyone who dared oppose him.

On the other hand, Roman, who had borne the brunt of Asher's punch was not pushing for revenge, no, it was his pack demanding for violence. Both packs might have been friends in the past but they weren't about to stand back and let their Alpha be attacked without retaliation, especially when Asher had already sunk his teeth into him.

The agitation was too much, with the low growls and hisses filling the air like the prelude to an all-out war. The human students were frozen in place, unsure whether to flee or stay, while others whispered anxiously among themselves, their eyes darting between the enraged Alphas.

"That's enough!"

Alaric's voice thundered across the space, carrying a command so powerful it shattered the air like a storm's fury.

As if the heavens themselves answered, lightning tore across the sky, striking the earth with a deafening crack. The ground sizzled where the bolt landed, dangerously close to where Asher, Griffin and Roman stood.

The reaction was instant. The Cardinal Alphas recoiled, breaking apart as another bolt of lightning struck closer to their wolves. The scattered sparks sent the snarling pack members scrambling, their yelps filling the night as they backed away in alarm.

All eyes snapped toward Alaric Storm.

He stood at the spot, his eyes sparking with uncontained electricity, his platinum hair glowing under the eerie flicker of lightning. The air around him pulsed with so much power that no one dared to move or speak.

Slowly, Alaric ascended the stairs leading to the entrance, elevating himself above the others and demanding the full attention of everyone present.

He gazed out at the crowd, his expression looking like it was carved from stone. Then he spoke with a voice so cold it felt like a death sentence.

"You heard them. They rejected the four houses. They refuse to be governed. They deny the protection of a pack."

The bitterness in his tone was obvious, and was edged with something close to betrayal and disappointment.

"They have turned their backs on the natural order. They owe no allegiance to the Cardinal Alphas. And we all know what that means."

Alaric let the words settle, his furious gaze sweeping over the assembled crowd, challenging them to speak the truth aloud.

At first, there was nothing but silence until a lone voice whispered. "Rogues."

Another voice picked it up, louder this time. "Rogues."

Then another, and another, until, like a flood breaking free, the entire school chanted in unison, their voices filled with scorn and condemnation.

"ROGUES! ROGUES! ROGUES!"

The name reverberated through the school ground, the collective judgment crashing down like a hammer.

Violet's stomach twisted into knots.

Daisy, her face paling, ran a hand down her face. "Fuck. I knew this was a bad idea."

Ivy took a step back, eyes wide with panic when one of the werewolves began to circle her.

It moved slow on purpose like a predator sizing up its prey. His nostrils flared as he inhaled, and the snarl that followed sent a chill down her spine.

"Violet, what is happening?!"

More wolves followed suit, shifting into a strange, menacing dance, their eyes locked onto Violet, Lila, Ivy, and Daisy with unhidden hostility. They weren't just looking at them. No, they were claiming them as outcasts, treating them as threats.

Violet's heart sank like a stone as she realized this was a mistake. A horrible, irreversible mistake.

Violet knew rejecting the houses would mark her as an outcast, but she never thought it was this serious. Her decision marked her and her friends as enemies to the very system that governed the school.

And now, she stood amidst the snarling wolves, whose eyes burned with the primal need to put the rogues in their place.

She turned her gaze toward Roman, the one who had convinced her to do this. The look on his face was indecipherable, but something in his eyes told her he knew exactly what he had done.

He had set her up for this. And now, there was no turning back.

"What does he mean, Rogues?" Lila cried with disbelief. "We're not even werewolves!"

Rogues were the lowest of the low in werewolf society, considered beasts without a home, wolves without a pack. Some were outcasts, banished for breaking the sacred laws of their kind. Others were lone wanderers, forsaking their packs for reasons of their own. But no matter the cause, the label carried the same weight.

A rogue was a threat.

Without a pack, there was no structure. Without structure, there was

unpredictability, which was a danger to the established order of werewolf society. And if a rogue gathered enough numbers, they could pose an even bigger threat to the alphas, to the packs, to everything they had built.

That was why most alphas eliminated them on sight. It was an unspoken rule of survival—kill first before they became a problem.

And now, Violet and her friends had just been branded as one of them.

"It doesn't matter," Daisy muttered, shaking her head, her tone heavy with resignation. "Even if we aren't werewolves or rogues in the traditional sense, our choice puts us in the same category in the eyes of the houses."

She turned to them, her jaw tight with frustration. "Or have you forgotten that Lunar Academy operates under a strict werewolf hierarchy? The alphas take their traditions very seriously."

Then, her gaze cut straight to Violet, her tone scathing. "It's clear to me now why you did what you did." A dry, humorless laugh escaped her lips. "But congratulations, Violet. You just doomed us all."

Violet sucked in a sharp breath, the words hitting her harder than any blow.

She had tried to warn them. She had told them not to follow her. And yet, they had still chosen to stand by her side. It was no excuse but now, they were suffering the consequences alongside her.

Violet's mouth opened but no words came out. Her throat was tight, as if an invisible noose had cinched around her neck. Her mind scrambled for something to say, for a way to explain, but the words refused to form. She hadn't wanted this. She had just wanted freedom. A way out. She didn't know it would be this bad.

Before she could even attempt to apologize, Alaric's voice rose above the murmurs of the crowd.

"And that concludes today's events. All changes to the houses would be executed tomorrow. Enjoy what's left of your morning." His voice was different now, it sounded lower, and sadder.

Violet snapped her gaze up to him, only to see his back already turned to her. His broad shoulders, once squared with strength and confidence, now sagged slightly as he began walking away.

She had never seen him like this before. Defeated. It was like a knife through her chest.

"No—Alaric, wait!" she blurted, stepping forward.

But she never made it.

A vicious snarl tore through the air, stopping her in her tracks. A wolf stood in her path, its gleaming fangs bared, hackles raised. Then Finn, Alaric's beta stepped out from beside the wolf.

"You are not to approach or associate with Alaric Storm or any Cardinal Alpha from now on, rogue." His voice was as cold as steel, his eyes burning with rage.

Violet swallowed hard. "No, Finn, I just need to talk to him one last—"

The beta growled this time, it's sound vibrating deeply in his chest. It was a warning.

It was no use, there was no room for negotiation. Violet clenched her fists, her nails digging into her palm. Fine. She would find a way to talk to Alaric later.

For a long moment, Finn held her gaze, his fury unhidden. And then, finally, he turned on his heel and walked away, taking the remaining wolves with him.

And just like that, it was over.

The students, now satisfied that the event had concluded, began to disperse. Their judgmental glances burned into Violet's skin, whispers floating between them like knives in the dark.

The other Cardinal alphas had long gone. Not one had stayed behind.

The weight of reality settled on Violet's chest painfully. She was nothing now. No house. No allies. No place.

But of course, the night wasn't over yet.

A smug voice sliced through the silence.

"Well, well... look at this tragic little sight."

Violet's stomach twisted, recognizing the voice.

Elsie Lancaster.

Her nostrils flared as Elsie stepped forward, her lips curled into a triumphant smirk.

The self-proclaimed queen of the academy had never looked more delighted.

"To think, all this time, I was racking my brain for ways to get rid of your crazy ass, and yet, you just did the job for me." She cackled, crossing her arms with a mocking tilt of her head. "I mean, really... you're even crazier than they say."

Violet's hands itched to wipe that smirk right off her face. Instead, she met her gaze with cold defiance.

"If I'm that crazy," she said evenly, "then you should be scared."

Elsie didn't flinch. She only laughed, full of unshaken confidence.

"No, sweetheart." She leaned in slightly, her voice dipping into something darker, something venomous. "You're done. For real, this time."

She let that sink in before adding, almost sweetly, "If I were you, I'd start watching my back."

It was a warning and a promise.

Then, with one last glance at Daisy, Ivy, and Lila, her expression twisted with disgust.

"See you later, losers."

And with that, she spun on her heel, laughing like a witch.

Finally, her prayers has been answered. Violet Purple has been delivered into her hands and there would be no one to save her!

Chapter 182: War Of The Rogues And Cardinal Houses

The meeting hall buzzed with conversation, agitation in the air as the cardinal alphas and the elite students gathered in their exclusive space.

Unlike the rest of the school, which had already dispersed, the real power brokers of Lunaris Academy remained to decide the fate of Violet Purple and her friends after the chaos they had ignited.

And it was not surprising that Elsie Lancaster was at the center of it all. She

stood first, saying with righteous indignation.

"Violet Purple and her friends rejected our ways, our laws, and our protection.

A rogue has no place in our hierarchy. I demand that Violet Purple be removed from the rankings immediately!"

Murmurs rippled through the room with some students nodding in agreement, while the others thought the opposite, uncertainty written across their faces. This was the first of its kind, at least since their rise to power, it didn't mean their predecessors didn't have a sensitive case like this.

"You're right," Amanda chimed in smoothly, siding with Elsie like a vulture smelling blood. "Allowing a rogue to remain on the rankings undermines the authority of the houses. We can't have a rogue queen. That would be devastating."

A scoff pierced followed her words.

"For a harmless human, you seem awfully eager to rip her down," Natalie remarked, her arms crossed, and her razor-sharp gaze brimming with mockery. "Do you have that much of an inferiority complex, Amanda Raynes?"

Amanda's mouth opened in fury, but before she could spit out a retort, Asher's stare landed on her, and she snapped it shut. There were certain lines even she wouldn't dare cross especially when the west house Alpha looked at her that way. Cold and deadly. She quickly realized her place.

Natalie took advantage of the silence to say. "Last time I checked, rogues are werewolves. Violet and her friends are human. Their decision makes them outcasts, not something as offensive as going rogue. It's not the same thing."

"Last time I checked," Roman interjected, lifting a brow, "You're human too, and yet you live under the protection of his pack." He tilted his chin towards Griffin, making his point loud and clear.

"Because I have no choice," Natalie shot back. "If I did, I'd be on my own and perhaps, be branded a rogue." She challenged him.

Roman clicked his tongue, as if in sympathy. "And there lies the problem," he mused. "Violet is a natural-born leader. If she gains followers, she could rally other misfits, the weak, the outcasts, and lead a rebellion against us. It would be first of its kind, the war between Rogues and the Cardinal Houses. "

A murmur rippled through the student council. The idea was absurd, yet... plausible.

Natalie scoffed. "You're being dramatic. Violet is human. What could a human possibly do?"

"A lot," Asher's words carried heavy meaning. He wasn't condemning Violet but indirectly reminding them all of the war that nearly brought them all to ruin.

Griffin, who had remained largely impartial, finally spoke. "Violet earned her place. Stripping her of her ranking because she chose independence would be unjust."

"Her independence is a threat to our conformity," Roman countered, "And let's not pretend she truly earned that spot. Asher's pack backed her from day one. He was her patron."

The room stilled when the secret was out. It was something everyone had suspected, but none had dared to voice aloud because they feared Asher.

Eyes turned to Asher. If he was rattled, he didn't show it. He remained composed, unnervingly calm. But the look he gave Roman was pure venom. Their friendship had clearly been in the past because now, it was clear that Asher Nightshade despised him

"So much for making history," Sharon muttered bitterly.

At that statement, a harsh chuckle rumbled from the far side of the room.

Alaric Storm.

His laughter was bitter, condescending, and reeking of resentment. Everyone watched as he tilted back the dark amber liquid in his glass, swallowing it in one smooth gulp before slamming it down on the table.

"Tell me," Alaric began, his voice heavy with sarcasm, "which one of you climbed the ranks without spreading your legs for one or all of us? Without wrapping yourselves around an Alpha's arm like a trophy to be paraded? Without riding the wave of public opinion and social climbing thanks to us?"

He said with mockery. "Go on. Raise your hand. I'd love to see."

The entire room was dead still and not one person raised a hand.

Asher huffed out a laugh. "Well, well. How fascinating."

Elsie, visibly irritated at losing control of the conversation, shoved the discussion forward.

"The point is," she snapped, "Violet and her little band of misfits have no pack. No rank. She made her choice. She doesn't deserve to remain among us."

Her voice hardened. "What happens when others follow her lead? What then?"

"You mean to say the humans?" Natalie said, clearly having fun rattling her.

Elsie slammed her palm down on the table. "Violet Purple will be removed from the rankings. She can't be an elite and a rogue. Does anyone object to that?"

None of them said a word, but that didn't mean they agreed with it either.

She turned her gaze toward Alaric, her expression gleaming with malice.

"And next on the table is your relationship with the Rogue Queen." she mocked.

Alaric's jaw ticked. "My love life is none of your concern."

"Oh, but it is," Elsie pressed, savoring every second. "She rejected the houses. She doesn't get to reject the system and still keep her Alpha boyfriend. You don't get to keep her."

"If that's the case, you already have your answer. Both of us are over. So let her be."

"But not everyone knows that. The same way you claimed her publicly, a public break up should be able to pass the message." Elsie said with a wicked curl of her lips.

Natalie clicked her tongue. "Tsk. Tsk. Elsie Lancaster, you are having a field day, aren't you?"

"I'm sorry? I'm just doing what everyone with a backbone would do, restoring order in this school." She claimed.

"Hmmm," Natalie said unconvinced, "Let's hope you're able to accept the same measure when it gets to your turn one day."

"Until the day comes." Elsie smiled at her without warmth, their disdain for each other so apparent at that moment.

Roman said, "If Violet's so independent, let her stand on her own without the help of the Alphas. A public break up would do the trick."

Alaric's anger flashed like a live wire.

"You can't tell me how to break up with her."

"They're right, Alaric," Asher said, surprisingly siding with them.

His tone was controlled, his words thoughtful, although there was something cold beneath it.

"It's not just about you anymore. This is about setting an example. If we let her slide, others will think they can defy us too."

Alaric let out a humorless laugh, shaking his head as he stared at the near-empty bottle in his grasp. Then, slowly, he tilted it back, draining the rest of it before slamming it onto the table so hard the glass cracked.

"Fine." His voice was hoarse and thick with emotion. "I'll do it. I'll break up with her, publicly. Make a show of it. I'll humiliate her, whatever that makes you all sleep better."

Chapter 183: Storm vs. Beast

"Alaric!" Griffin called after the retreating Alpha, but he wouldn't even slow down or acknowledge him.

"Come on, Alaric!" Griffin demanded for his attention, but there was still nothing.

Frustrated, the big Alpha caught up to Alaric, grabbed him by the shoulder and yanked him around. But the moment Alaric turned, his blue eyes flashed with anger.

"Not a word about her!" he hissed at Griffin.

It was not hard to guess his intention with his relentless pursuit. Except his friend didn't back down.

"You know it's exactly about her!" Griffin shot back, unflinching.

In response, a deep, ominous thunder cracked overhead like a warning. As if that wasn't enough, the air sizzled around him, static crawling over his skin. His muscles twitched as the charge from Alaric's body snapped against him, the fine hairs on his arms rising in response

"Your petty tricks won't work on me—"

Griffin was still saying when Alaric slammed a bolt of lightning straight into his chest.

The world blurred as the force of the blast sent Griffin crashing into a tree, bark splintering on impact. The air was knocked from his lungs while the sting of residual electricity burned through his veins.

Thank the gods they were outside else they would have destroyed school property. Not that they couldn't repair it with their money, but anyone could have gotten hurt in the process.

Griffin groaned, pushing himself up slowly, his body still buzzing from the shock. His vision refocused on Alaric, who stood rooted in place, watching him with cold fury.

A slow grin tugged at the corner of Griffin's lips. Then he rolled his shoulders, saying in a gravelly tone, "Fine, you want a fight? You'll get one."

Griffin rose to his feet, and let the change come upon him. His muscles began to bulge, veins pulsing beneath his skin as his body grew and stretched until it became larger than usual. Though he didn't fully shift into his terrifying Hulk-like form, the East House Alpha still looked intimidating in this size.

Then, with a wild glint in his eyes, Griffin let out a maniacal laughter as if reveling in the challenge.

"You want to blow off some steam? Let's work out, baby."

Without hesitation, Griffin charged at him. Alaric shifted his stance at the same time, his expression sharpening as lightning crackled to life in his palm, snapping and twisting into the shape of a whip.

And just like that, storm clashed with beast.

The electric whip lashed forward with a flick of Alaric's wrist, snapping through the air like a living serpent and striking at Griffin's path.

But Griffin saw it coming, nor was slow. He dodged the first strike with a deft roll to the side, his huge body moving with surprising agility for someone his size. The second strike nearly clipped his shoulder, the crackling energy leaving a faint scorch in the air.

Griffin grinned, the thrill of the fight making his blood sing. "You're holding back, Storm. You never do well when you're emotional."

Alaric's eyes burned with electric fury as the words hit straight to home. His control over the lightning was masterful, but even right now, it fizzled at the edges, fluctuating with the emotions raging inside of him.

The whole issue with Violet was brewing inside of Alaric like a temper resulting in the manifestation of his unstable powers. A flaw Griffin very much noticed.

"This isn't about me, is it?" Griffin said, his voice nearly drowned by the deafening clap of thunder. "You're angry at her, not me. You're heartbroken and in pain."

"Shut up!" Alaric roared, and without hesitation, he lashed out again, and this time the whip wrapped around Griffin's arm, a surge of electricity jolting through him.

Griffin snarled, his muscles seizing for a brief moment as the pain shot through his limbs. But instead of crumbling, he roared through the agony, yanking Alaric forward with sheer brute strength, his biceps flexing as he swung him sideways like a ragdoll.

Alaric barely managed to brace himself as he flipped midair and landed in a crouch, his boots digging deep into the earth.

"That's all you got?" Griffin taunted, shaking his arms free of the lingering current

Alaric took a deep, controlled breath, lightning gathering in his palm once more, this time coiling around his knuckles like gauntlets. "Not even close."

He launched forward at blinding speed, lightning enhancing his reflexes, his fists a flurry of strikes. Griffin blocked the first two punches, the force behind them numbing his forearms, but the third hit got him, a crackling punch slammed into his ribs that sent him skidding several feet back.

Okay. Perhaps, he shouldn't have provoked him. Griffin realized, clutching his side. The pain was intense, but it only fueled his drive. With a beastly growl, he charged again, this time feinting left before pivoting on his heel and delivering a monstrous uppercut.

Alaric reacted, but a fraction too late, his anger having blinded him as Griffin's fist connected squarely with his jaw.

Alaric's body was lifted clean off the ground before he crashed several feet away, rolling across the dirt. The force of the blow momentarily blackened his vision, static buzzing in his ears.

Fuck. Perhaps he used too much strength.

"Alaric, are you okay?" Griffin bent to check up on him, only for Alaric to send a shock through his body.

"B—bastard!" Griffin cursed, his body locking up from the attack, right before he fell beside his cardinal brother. Both alphas gasped for breath, neither making an effort to rise.

The heavens opened up at that moment and rain poured down in heavy sheets, drumming against their battered bodies, mixing with the scent of burnt ozone and sweat. But as cooling as the rain was, it was not enough to calm the pain Alaric carried inside.

Griffin turned to Alaric, "So can we talk now? "

"Not her, please. I can't deal with it right now." Alaric shook his head, pained.

"You do know it's all Roman's fault. He had an ulterior motive from the start and played us all." Griffin added with emphasis, "He probably deceived her too."

"No," Alaric said, his voice raw and frayed, as if each word was tearing him apart from the inside. "It's not just what she did, it's the fact she gave up on me so easily. She made those decisions without a second thought about how they would affect me. She never believed I could protect her, never trusted that I was strong enough to stand by her side. Violet Purple never believed in me."

Chapter 184: Her New Prey

The party should have ended already, but Elsie Lancaster and her loyal entourage weren't ready to let go of their victory celebration just yet. Not when the humiliation of Violet Purple was still fresh and ripe for their merriment. This was Elsie's moment, and she was going to bask in it for as long as she pleased.

"You should have seen the look on her face when she said, 'I reject all the houses,'" Sharon mimicked in an exaggerated, mocking tone, "I bet she thought we'd all drop to our knees and crown her Queen of the Rogues!"

She dissolved into laughter, clutching her stomach so hard as tears spilled from the corners of her eyes. The sound was infectious, and affected the girls who joined in the fun.

If there was anyone who despised Violet as much as Elsie, it was Sharon Andrews. The sting of being pushed out of the top twenty rankings and being humiliated by Violet in front of everyone when she first arrived at Lunar Academy still burned.

Though she had clawed her way back into the elite, Violet had continued to rise, outshining, outperforming and overshadowing her at every turn. Sharon had waited patiently, biting her tongue, and biding her time. At last, the tables had turned. Violet Purple had fallen and she was ready to feast on her remains.

Surrounded by her usual clique of elite students, Elsie held court like a queen, savoring every moment of her triumph. Their drinks were refilled without a word by Grace, their self-appointed maidservant, who dared not challenge their rule.

And in the corner, nursing his own drink, was Roman Draven. He was silent, watching the girls as they celebrated and made their plans, a disinterested look on his face as he swirled the liquid in his glass.

Though he had changed out of his bloodied and tattered clothes, the injuries remained. The bruises stretched ugly and purple across his jaw and knuckles, reminding everyone of the beating he had endured in Asher's hands. The worst of the wounds were already fading, but it would take the rest of the day to fully heal.

"So," Annabelle mused, her voice dripping with intrigue, "what's the plan for Violet Purple and her little band of misfits? I'm sure as Rogues, they deserve to be taught some lessons."

"Of course. For starters, Rogues shouldn't have the same privileges as the rest of us." Elsie sipped from her glass, the words tasting sweet on her tongue. "Their access to training grounds and specialized classes meant for ranked students only should be limited."

There was a pause, just long enough for the words to sink in and the others to agree to the idea.

One of the girls named Angel with a rare voice of conscience, asked uneasily. "Are you sure we can do that? She's still a student. Not a criminal."

Amanda Raynes scoffed. "Lunaris Academy was built on the foundation of the pack system. If she isn't in a pack, she shouldn't enjoy the same privileges. That's how hierarchy works."

"They still have to train. You're making them walking targets," Angel pointed out.

"If they wanted security, they should have picked a house." Sharon said. "Violet is a scholarship student, a freeloader, and a rogue. She contributes nothing to this school, just leeches off it. If it wasn't for the Alpha King's generosity and our families' donations, she wouldn't even be here."

Sharon's eyes gleamed as she met theirs. "Violet Purple needs to learn to be grateful."

Amanda perked up. "I'll mess with her schedule a bit. Take her off her classes, especially the advanced ones. I'll have a little chat with Principal Jameson about my family's willingness to contribute to that new academy project in exchange."

A ripple of agreement passed through the room, the girls nodding in approval.

"And what if Violet fights back?" another girl asked warily. "She's stubborn. She won't just lie down and take it."

Elsie was just about to respond when Sharon beat her to it.

"If they act up, we need a way to control them," Sharon suggested. "We should assign someone to keep an eye on them."

For a fraction of a second, Elsie's eyes flashed at the sudden intrusion on her spotlight. Sharon was overstepping and speaking as if she held authority over this conversation. Unfortunately, Elsie didn't like sharing power. She was the one who called the shots, not Sharon.

She said sweetly but with an unmistakable lethal edge. "I think it's time you sat back and let me handle this, don't you, Sharon?"

Sharon's face flushed red and some of the girls snickered. She had thought she and Elsie were equals but she was wrong.

With Sharon successfully silenced and put in her place, Elsie exhaled, pleased. "Why waste time watching them when we can just make their lives miserable?"

There was a hum of approval before one of them asked.

"And what about Asher? You know he has a fascination with Violet. We wouldn't want to piss him off."

Although the question was not directed at Roman, it ought to be answered by him since he knew Asher too well. However, the South House alpha had been silent throughout the conversation. Annoyance flickered across Elsie's face as she turned to him.

"Well? You've been awfully quiet. What do you say, Roman? The Cardinal Alphas can't interfere, right?"

"You're right, my queen." His voice dripped with saccharine charm, though there was an edge beneath it. "Violet Purple is now your prey. If any Alpha were to help her, it would be a violation of the werewolf hierarchy and would cost them.

Breaking those rules are grounds for an Alpha to be challenged and possibly have his status revoked."

He concluded. "And we both know the Cardinal Alphas are very fond of their position."

That response seemed to thrill Elsie, and she practically preened at the confirmation. "Violet Purple has fallen from grace. We don't even need to lift a finger, not when the students will gladly tear her apart for us."

The girls cheered, raising their glasses in a toast to Violet's downfall.

Elsie's gaze settled on Roman. "But let's not forget the Alpha who made all of this possible."

Silence fell over the room as she approached him, eyes shining with satisfaction. "Roman Draven, one of my suitors."

Roman lifted his glass lazily. "No need to make a big deal out of it," he said with that same disarming smile, but Elsie was determined to claim him, here and now, in front of everyone.

Without hesitation, she strode toward him, grabbed his face, and kissed him full on the lips.

The girls celebrated the sight while Elsie reveled in her triumph. Finally, she had won. She had the status, the power and the alphas.

What she didn't notice, however, was that the fire in Roman's kiss had dimmed just a little.

Chapter 185: What Are You?

The walk back to their hostel was a silent, heavy trudge. Violet, Lila, Ivy, and Daisy were dirty and exhausted, weighed down by the events of the night.

When they arrived at their house, they weren't alone. Clusters of students still lingered in the common area, their idle conversations dying the second they spotted the four girls.

Violet felt their stares fall on them like vultures drawn to fresh carrion. However, none of them dared to speak. Good for them. Violet was not in the mood to tolerate anyone's bullshit.

Her blood was still hot, and if anyone so much as breathed wrongly, she wouldn't mind breaking one or two noses to show an example.

The students must have sensed the murderous energy radiating off her because, like instinct-driven prey, they instinctively stepped aside, parting like the Red Sea to allow her and her roommates passage.

But the second they disappeared behind their door, the whispers ignited like wildfire. However, Violet didn't move away from the door immediately. Instead, she stood there, waiting....one... two... three. Then, without warning, she yanked it open.

A group of students who had been leaning in to eavesdrop, tumbled gracelessly into the room, their limbs flailing as they hit the floor in a heap of tangled arms and legs.

The moment they looked up, their faces drained of color. Violet stood over them, her eyes dark and merciless, her posture screaming one thing—run.

"W-we... it's not what it looks like—" one of them stammered, their voice cracking.

Violet didn't say a word. She just stared, the cold, ominous look on her face more terrifying than any threat she could have spoken.

"Fuck! Let's leave!" another one yelled, yanking at the others as they scrambled to their feet and bolted out of the room as if their lives depended on it.

Violet remained at the threshold a second longer, her gaze flicking to the students still loitering outside. It was just one glance and they scattered like frightened mice. Satisfied, she slammed the door shut with a resounding bang.

"You shouldn't have bothered," Lila's voice broke through the tense atmosphere.

Violet turned to see Lila stepping forward, her hands moving in weird motions as if she were weaving something invisible through the air.

Ivy frowned. "What the hell are you doing?"

"Constructing a whisper shield," Lila replied nonchalantly, fingers still moving through the air. "This way, nobody will be able to hear what we discuss in here."

The temperature in the room shifted instantly and a chill crawled up their spines as an almost imperceptible pulse of energy saturated the air.

Daisy shuddered. "That's unsettling. Although I wish I could see whatever it is you're doing. It'd be cool to study it."

"I can see it."

Violet's soft declaration had the effect of a gunshot in a silent room. Three heads snapped toward her in unison, their eyes widening in shock.

Lila's fingers stilled midair. "You can?" she asked, her voice carrying more astonishment than surprise. However, Violet didn't notice it because she was mesmerized with her new discovery.

"What does it look like?" Lila pressed, her tone eager now and her eyes gleaming with fascination.

"It's like..." Violet reached out, watching as wisps curled around her fingertips before dissolving into the air. "Cotton," she murmured. "Soft, weightless... and it's everywhere."

Their entire room was cocooned in delicate, pastel-colored threads, floating like mist, filling every crevice where sound could escape.

"You're right," Lila lips curled into a knowing smile. "We call them muting cottons where I'm from. They block out spaces, ensuring no sound leaves these walls."

"It's beautiful..." Violet whispered, entranced by the beautiful sight.

"Alright!" Ivy's exasperated voice interrupted the moment. "Enough of whatever this is."

She stood with her hands on her hips, her sharp gaze bouncing between Violet and Lila as if she were watching two lunatics. All Ivy and Daisy saw was Violet reaching out and touching nothing but mere air. And to them, that was far more unsettling than the idea of soundproofing magic.

Daisy crossed her arms, her expression skeptical but curious. "Okay, what the hell is going on? Someone better start talking. Now." She turned to Lila with pointed determination. "Starting with you."

"I saw what you did in the forest, Lila," Daisy continued, narrowing her eyes. "You're not human. What are you?"

Lila's expression turned serious. "I'll tell you, but first, you have to swear you won't expose my identity to anyone outside this room."

Ivy scoffed. "And you expect us to swear like kids? What's stopping any of us from running our mouths the second we step outside?"

"The promise will be binding," Lila said simply. "Even if you wanted to tell someone, you wouldn't be able to."

Violet, Ivy, and Daisy exchanged uneasy glances. But then, they had no choice.

Daisy was the first to cave. "Screw it, I need to know," she muttered, stepping forward eagerly. "So how do we do this?"

Lila extended her hand. "We say the oath, then we slap each other's hands to bind it."

Daisy squinted at her, unimpressed. "That sounds stupid."

"Try it and see."

Shrugging, Daisy took Lila's hand, and the ritual began.

"Do you, Daisy Fairchild, swear to keep my identity a secret before the heavens, the earth, and the elements?" Lila intoned.

"Agreed," Daisy said.

They slapped hands.

The moment their palms connected, a shockwave of energy pulsed through Daisy, causing her to jerk back with a startled yelp.

"FUCK!" she exclaimed, shaking her tingling hand. "That is some serious voodoo shit!"

"I'm next!" Ivy declared, practically shoving Daisy aside. She wanted to see and feel it for herself.

The process repeated, and when the binding magic passed through her, Ivy gasped.

"Holy—" She turned to Daisy, holding up her arm to reveal the goosebumps crawling across her skin. "Okay, now I believe it."

Then it was Violet's turn. She placed her hand in Lila's, expecting the same electric pulse, but it never came. Instead, the magic wrapped around her like warm sunlight, sinking into her skin as if embracing someone familiar.

Violet sucked in a breath while Lila studied her reaction but said nothing.

Once the oath was completed, Daisy's eyes were alight with curiosity. "Okay, Lila, spill. What are you?"

Lila's face lit up. "I think it's better if I show you," she said with excitement. "Just... don't freak out."

The three girls nodded, holding their breaths in anticipation.

At first, nothing happened.

Then Lila's features began to change. Her skin became impossibly smooth, almost luminous, her blue eyes morphing into a striking shade of violet. But the most astonishing transformation came when her rounded ears elongated into elegant, pointed tips.

Violet, Ivy, and Daisy's jaws all dropped to the ground.

Lila Meadows... was Fae.

Chapter 186: The Princess

"Impossible!"

"Slap me!"

"No way!"

All three girls shouted in unison, their voices overlapping in shock, disbelief, and pure astonishment.

Violet's pulse was thundering in her ears. Her gut had told her from the very beginning that something was off about Lila, yet nothing had prepared her for this. Lila? A Fae? It was mind blowing.

"This is mental!" Daisy exclaimed, nearly tearing at her own hair as if that would help her smart brain process the situation.

"This shouldn't be possible! Fae don't exist! They're nothing more than stories from mythology classes but here you are, standing right in front of us... in the flesh and blood..." She trailed off, tentatively poking Lila on the face.

The moment her fingertips met Lila's skin, she gasped. "Fuck! You're real!"

Lila's eyes twinkled with amusement.

"Oh, faeries are very much real. We just don't mingle much. Bad history and all, especially with humans. So we keep to ourselves, hidden and safe."

"Humans don't like the unpredictable,"

Violet pointed out, arms crossed as she processed this revelation. "Especially when it comes to creatures with supernatural abilities they can't control."

Lila grinned at her. "Bingo."

While Violet and Daisy were busy wrapping their heads around the whole thing, Ivy had a completely different approach. She circled Lila slowly, eyes narrowing as she scrutinized every inch of her Fae features like she was studying an ancient artifact in a museum.

"Your ears," Ivy finally breathed, her fascination barely hidden. "Are they real?"

Lila raised a brow. "You're staring at them right now, Ivy. What do you think?"

Ivy bit her lip unsure before reaching out. But realizing that might be rude, she caught Lila's gaze. "Can I touch them?"

Lila shrugged. "Sure."

Ivy's fingers ghosted over the side of her ear, her eyes widening as she made contact. She had expected something unnatural, like hard cartilage or an inhuman texture, but instead they were soft. The skin was warm and smooth and wasn't much different from her own ears, just... shaped differently.

"Damn," Ivy whispered, the texture fascinating her.

As she continued trailing her fingers up and down, Lila suddenly let out a bubbling laugh, her shoulders shaking.

"That tickles!" she admitted, laughing.

Encouraged by her reaction, Ivy grew bolder, tracing the delicate curve before finally brushing against the very tip— snap!

Ivy yelped, jerking her hand away as Lila bared her fangs, an aggressive snarl rumbling from her throat. Her usually warm violet eyes had darkened with warning.

The room fell into stunned silence as it dawned on them that Lila nearly bit Ivy's hand off.

Violet and Daisy instinctively tensed, exchanging wary glances. They were sharing a room with a creature powerful enough to kill them in the blink of an eye. Suddenly, that didn't seem like such a great idea anymore.

Lila, realizing what she had done, quickly took a step back and lifted her hands in a placating gesture.

"I'm so sorry," she said with genuine remorse.

"What the hell was that?" Ivy demanded, still recovering from her near-death experience. Kind of. Losing a finger was as good as death to her.

"I should have warned you." Lila sighed, rubbing the back of her neck awkwardly. "That spot is... sensitive. It's an erogenous zone for us. Only our mate is supposed to touch it."

"Oh."

Ivy's face turned a deep shade of red as it dawned on her. Her lips parted in mortification, and she quickly tucked her hands behind her back, far away from Lila's ears.

"Noted. No more touching... ever again," She nodded slowly, completely flustered.

An awkward tension settled over the room again before Violet broke it, asking with suspicion. "There's something I don't understand."

"What is it?"

Violet's voice was laced with skepticism as she said. "You're a Fae which means you're a long way from home. So why are you here? Specifically in Lunaris Academy, a school full of werewolves? Should we be worried about your intentions?"

Daisy, who had been listening intently, nodded in agreement. "That's right. You're the first living Fae I've ever seen.

The rest are nothing but legends written in books, stories passed down through generations. And yet, here you are, hiding in plain sight. So tell us, Lila, what's your real purpose here?"

The question settled heavily in the air as they waited for an answer.

It was already a miracle that humans and werewolves coexisted without tearing each other apart. If the Fae were now secretly integrating into the human realm, their presence could mean one of two things—either an attempt at peace or the prelude to war. And if it was the latter, everything they knew could crumble into chaos.

The last time the supernatural was exposed, the world nearly collapsed. Another revelation of this magnitude could be catastrophic.

"You're right," Lila admitted, the wary tension between them growing. "I did come here with a purpose."

A chill ran down Violet's spine, Ivy's stiffened and Daisy's lips pressed into a firm line. It was exactly as they feared. The three girls exchanged uneasy glances, bracing themselves for the worst.

But before they could voice their concerns, Lila quickly added, "It's not what you think. I didn't come here to start a war or reveal our existence. My intentions are good."

Ivy scoffed, still skeptical. "So your 'good intentions' involve pretending to be human and attending Lunar Academy?"

Lila shook her head. "No. I was sent here on a mission." She finally confessed, "The truth is... I'm looking for someone."

A strange feeling settled in Violet's gut, her heartbeat picking up. "Someone?" she repeated.

Lila nodded. "Yes."

"Who?"

Lila swallowed hard, as if she was about to reveal something she wasn't supposed to. "I'm searching for the Queen's daughter. Our future heir. She was taken at birth and we've been searching for her ever since."

"And you believe she's here?" Violet asked, her voice measured. "In the human realm? At Lunaris Academy?"

Lila said. "Yes. I'm certain of it. I've checked and triple-checked. All the signs lead here."

Violet's breath caught slightly. She wasn't sure why, but something inside her stirred at those words.

"Then... you must've found her," Violet subtly inquired.

"I have," Lila confirmed, her violet eyes locked onto Violet's with stanch certainty. "Both of us have met."

The world felt like it tilted beneath Violet's feet. For a split second—just the briefest of moments—a flicker of hope had ignited in her chest.

Violet had spent her entire life not knowing where she came from. She had no past, no roots, no family, only questions that had never been answered. And though she never said it out loud, she longed for the truth. She had always longed for family.

But that fragile hope shattered in an instant because Lila had already met the princess. Which meant...

It wasn't her.

The disappointment was like a heavy stone in her chest, and Violet's shoulders slumped just slightly before she schooled her expression into neutrality. If Daisy and Ivy noticed the exchange, neither of them said anything.

Ivy simply raised a hand. "Just asking out of curiosity, but... who's the lucky princess?"

Chapter 187: Way Beyond Her League

"I'm sorry, but I can't tell you that," Lila answered, causing both Daisy and Ivy to groan in disappointment. Although Violet had already made peace with the idea that she wasn't the one, the truth still stung more than she cared to admit.

"Why tell us all that if you're not going to reveal the identity of the princess?" Ivy wailed. "I don't do well with suspense!"

"You don't understand the situation here," Lila told her with a grave tone. "There are people who want the princess dead. The fact that you already know about the missing Fae princess makes you enough of a target."

Ivy and Daisy tensed, exchanging uneasy glances. It seems the matter wasn't as simple as they had thought.

Violet wanted to keep her mouth shut, but she couldn't rest, not until she confirmed what she needed to know.

"So... I'm not the princess?" She finally asked.

But Ivy let out a small laugh, unable to help herself. "Come on, Violet. Just because you're an orphan and have that unnatural purple hair doesn't mean you're a faerie princess. Right, Lila?" She turned to the fae, waiting for confirmation.

However, Lila's calm expression betrayed nothing and it made her frown. Ivy asked again. "Violet Purple isn't the princess, right?"

Instead of answering, Lila posed a question of her own. "What do you think?"

"Oh, fuck," Daisy muttered, eyes wide with realization. She turned to Violet, her expression shifting as if seeing her in a new light.

"You've met her." Violet's breath hitched as she recalled Lila's words, reading beneath the line. "That's me." It dawned on her.

"That's why you've been following me around and wouldn't leave me alone. You were sent to protect me."

"If you say so." Lila's response was cryptic, but the truth was glaringly clear now.

Violet's legs gave out from beneath her as if the revelation was too much for her to bear. She slid down against the wall, her mind spinning like crazy. She was a Fae? Not just any fae, but a princess? How was that even possible?

Ivy spun toward Lila, her voice demanding answers. "But you just said you can't reveal the princess's identity. What is this now?"

"I was spelled not to reveal information about the princess," Lila explained calmly. "Violet Purple figured it out on her own. She exploited the loophole."

Violet was not even listening to their conversations, her pulse roaring in her ears while her breath came in shallow gasps as she tried to process everything. Just moments ago, she had wished she was the missing princess, and now, the wish had come true in the most unfathomable way.

She had a family out there. She wasn't a freak. She was just different. Not human. Instead, she was a Fae princess. Just as she had argued with Alaric. Goddess help her, this had to be a joke.

"Wow," Ivy breathed, still grappling with the truth. "Violet Purple is a fae princess."

The hint of jealousy in her tone didn't go unnoticed.

Although their relationship had grown less hostile, Ivy still carried her aristocratic pride. She relished the fact she was the richest in their group. But now, Violet—the orphan girl adopted by a prostitute—was beyond her league. She was a creature of legend and Ivy didn't know how to feel about that.

"This has got to be the craziest night of my life!" Daisy exclaimed, shaking her head in disbelief.

Ivy, still skeptical, asked, "If she's a Fae, why doesn't she have pointed ears like you?"

"I'm sorry," Lila replied, "but I can't reveal certain information about the princess."

"Then how are you sure she's a Fae? Maybe you're mistaken or something—"

"Ivy," Daisy warned, but Ivy pressed on.

"No, seriously! What if you're giving her false hope?" She continued, her words tumbling out faster now.

"Ivy! Shut it!" Daisy's voice cracked through the air like a whip, silencing her.

Ivy blinked in surprise because this was the first time Daisy had ever snapped at her like that. Usually, she was the one doing the shutting up. And it was usually on Lila. Being on the receiving end for once didn't feel so good.

But Daisy wasn't finished. She stepped forward until she was nose-to-nose with Ivy. "I get that you have some superiority complex. But guess what? This is the reality now. And someone in this room is bigger than you. So get over it!"

Ivy's cheeks burned crimson as she stiffened, her pride wounded.

"I think I've had enough for tonight," she muttered with anger.

Then Ivy spun on her heel and marched toward her bed. Without another word, she yanked the blanket over her head, and turned her back to the room.

In the silence that followed, Violet already found her bearings. Rising shakily to her feet, she approached Lila and touched her face gently.

Lila lowered her head slightly, her posture humble, as Violet traced her fingertips along the smooth contours of her cheeks, feeling for something—anything—that might explain the connection between them.

"My mother...the real one..." Violet whispered, her voice so small it was almost lost in the air. "Is she alive? Does she know I'm here?" She swallowed hard. "Is there... is there any chance I can meet her?"

"The Fae Queen is alive," Lila answered. "She knows of the princess and waits for her return. But... the princess cannot meet Fae Queen yet. It isn't safe. Until the time is right, the princess must remain alone as she has until now." Her words, spoken in a reverent, almost ceremonial tone, struck Violet like a bittersweet lullaby.

A thousand questions were at the tip of her tongue, but Violet guessed this was enough for now. And Violet knew deep down, she wouldn't sleep a wink this morning.

"Fine," Violet swallowed hard. "We'll talk more in the morning."

"Yes, please," Daisy groaned, stretching with an exaggerated yawn. "I don't think my brain can handle any more revelations tonight. Too much shock for one night."

"I'm not going anywhere," Lila promised. "We'll talk tomorrow."

"Oh, thank God." Daisy groaned.

As they began to drift toward their beds, Violet hesitated. Then, on impulse, she turned and wrapped her arms around Lila in a tight hug.

"Thank you for looking after me, even when I didn't know and was a bitch about it."

A radiant smile broke across Lila's face. "It is an honor to serve the princess."

With that, they parted and headed to their respective beds. But then, sleep wouldn't come easily, so they spent the rest of the hours thinking about the newfound truth.

And thanks to that, they forgot about their new unsettling reality.

They were rogues now.

Chapter 188: Dream Alpha

"Good morning, Luna!"

"Good morning, Luna!"

Guards posted along the corridors greeted the red-haired beauty, but she paid them no attention because there was nothing good about this morning.

The woman was none other than Luna Beatrice, wife to the reigning Alpha King, Elijah. One would assume that as Luna to the supreme Alpha, she would be all smiles, yet there was not an ounce of warmth in her expression, her features perfectly stoic. But beneath that impenetrable mask, there was no mistaking the fire of anger that burned inside of her and showed in her strides.

Her expensive gown swirled around her legs with her heels clicking against the marble floor, her red hair tumbling in beautiful waves as she walked down the corridor toward her husband's quarters.

However, when she arrived, the guards stationed at the entrance blocked her path.

"Move," she commanded him.

"Apologies, Luna Beatrice, but the Alpha King has ordered that he is not to be disturbed." The guard's stance was rigid and unmoving.

Beatrice stepped closer till she was standing face-to-face, her eyes dark with fury. "Move. Now." The lethal edge in her voice made the air seem to thin around them.

For a moment, the guard looked like he wouldn't budge, but the other guard stepped in and whispered something into his ear. The first guard listened for a moment longer before finally stepping aside.

"You may meet the Alpha, my Luna," he said with a bow of respect.

If eyes could kill, the guard would have been dead on the spot because Beatrice's glare was sharp enough to pierce steel. She stared at him long enough for the air between them to crackle with tension before she swept past him into the room.

The heavy door closed behind her, shutting out the murmurs of the guards. Beatrice stepped in with the fierce regality only a queen could possess. Though these were her husband's quarters, she could count the number of times she had entered. The lavish decor and gold-accented furniture did nothing to impress her as she was long used to the luxury that came with her title.

Her steps slowed, her heels no longer echoing as the room's thick carpet swallowed the sound. But all the grandeur faded into insignificance at the sight before her.

Her heart turned to stone.

Elijah, her husband, lay sprawled across the massive bed, his bare chest rising and falling beneath the tangle of limbs belonging to three women. Their golden hair, smooth skin, and exposed curves painted the perfect picture of indulgence and sin. The scent of expensive cigars and spiced wine lingered in the air, unable to hide the night's debauchery.

Beatrice's jaw clenched hard, her hands curling into fists at her sides until her knuckles turned white. But she made no sound — not a gasp of shock or cry of outrage. Her heart pounded against her ribcage, and she was only able to temper the heat of her rage by sheer will.

This was not the first time. Nor would it be the last

The pissed off Luna strode to the windows and yanked the curtains apart, allowing the harsh morning light to pour into the room. The sudden intrusion of sunlight cut across the bed, illuminating the room with ruthless clarity and stirred the women from their slumber.

They blinked against the morning rays, gathering the sheets to cover themselves as they squirmed beneath her cold gaze.

Elijah was the last to wake, and his reaction was different. His eyes found Beatrice, and a slow, lazy smile curved his lips. "Good morning, my lovely wife."

Except there was nothing 'lovely' about the rage brewing in Beatrice's chest. If she had allowed her true fury to break free, the entire palace would have shaken with it. Yet, she stood as still as stone, staring down the man she had once believed to love. One she had thought loved her too.

To the outside world, Beatrice was envied for her marriage to the Alpha King. She was a human—a rarity among Luna queens who were always she-wolves—and her love story with Elijah had become a romanticized tale told among human females who dreamed of marrying Alphas.

Their supposed love story had begun within the walls of Lunaris Academy, where fate, or perhaps Elijah, the manipulator, had entwined their paths.

Beatrice had entered the prestigious school as one of the many scholarship students, a program established by the previous Alpha King to foster unity between humans and werewolves in a time of strained relations.

Her arrival had been unremarkable at first, and she had sought to keep it that way. In a school ruled by the elite, where the strength of one's bloodline dictated their status, Beatrice didn't want to bring attention to herself.

Elijah, on the other hand, had been impossible to ignore as he was the academy's untouchable heartthrob. Rich, handsome, and the heir apparent, he ruled

the academy with an iron grip wrapped in a velvet glove.

His arrogance and cruelty toward humans were well-known, nonetheless, students still followed him without question, humans and werewolves alike bowing to his authority. Thanks to that, Beatrice had made it her mission to avoid him.

Then something happened.

The death of Elijah's elder brother had shaken the kingdom, forcing Elijah to leave the academy and assume his role as the next Alpha King sooner than expected. When he returned months later to finish his final term, something about him had changed. He was calmer, his cruel streak seemingly tamed, or so it had appeared.

The girls of Lunaris Academy had swarmed him more fiercely than ever, vying for his attention now that he was on the throne and needed a Luna to rule alongside him.

It was every female's dream to be his mate, except her. Beatrice knew better than to believe in fairytales that only happened in movies and love shows. Even now, Beatrice could not understand why he had sought her out considering their first encounter had been as mundane as any other.

The day they met face to face, it had rained. Caught beneath the downpour, she had opened her umbrella to shield herself when a voice asked to join her.

She had turned to find Elijah beside her.

The shock had rendered her speechless. What business did an Alpha king have with a nobody like her? Couldn't he afford an umbrella? Of many other females hanging around with umbrellas, why did he choose her?

Yet, she could not refuse him. They had walked side by side in silence until he reached his destination. Beatrice had offered him a brief nod and hurried away, unaware that such a simple act would alter the course of her life.

The next day, her name had climbed the elite rankings for the first time with startling speed. Gossips spread immediately, and the treatment from her peers shifted overnight. No longer was she the invisible Beatrice, she was now the center of attention, and Elijah was never far behind.

Despite her suspicions and the walls Beatrice had built up high, she could not escape Elijah's magnetic pull. His charm was a weapon he had honed through years of practice, and she had been defenseless against it.

What began as cautious companionship soon blossomed into something more. By the time graduation arrived, Elijah had dropped to one knee before the entire academy and proposed to her.

It was surreal. An ordinary human female being married to the Alpha king. No, it was impossible. Except they did get married and it was too late for Beatrice to see this sham of a marriage for what it was.

Elijah had already started the trend of alphas marrying humans and Lunar Academy was just the place to go to get your werewolf mate, or the most exciting of them all, your dream Alpha.

Chapter 189: Luna Beatrice

Beatrice stared at the three women shamelessly draped over her husband, but she did not flinch. Years of living with Elijah had taught her that showing weakness only fed the beast that dwelled within him.

"Now, if you don't mind, I would like to speak to the Alpha king." Beatrice deliberately avoided the word "husband." That title had lost all meaning a long time ago. Except when maintaining appearances in public, Elijah was nothing more than a stranger she shared a house with.

The girls, however, did not move. Instead, they laughed as if Beatrice's words were the punchline to a joke. Elijah had brought them into her home with impunity, making it clear she held no authority and hence showed her no respect. Beatrice's face burned red, however, that was only for a moment before her mask was firmly back in place.

"Oh, come now, my love," Elijah drawled lazily, addressing her like a lover who had interrupted his fun. "Don't be such a party pooper. The fun's only begun."

"I came here to speak with you, not to witness your latest indulgence." Beatrice said coldly.

"Fine." Elijah groaned with mock exasperation before turning to the women. "You heard your Luna. Time to leave. We need to have an 'interesting conversation,'" he added with a wink that dripped with innuendo.

"Of course, Luna," one woman purred.

They giggled mockingly, finding the idea of Elijah being with Beatrice laughable. In their eyes, she was too rigid and cold to interest him. Little did they know, in the early days—before Beatrice had discovered Elijah was not the man she thought she knew—their passion had once been unstoppable.

"Move along, darlings, or I might have to punish you," Elijah teased, smacking one woman's backside when she wasn't fast enough.

The girl gasped with mock surprise before laughing and gathering their scattered clothes. None of the women bothered to dress, strolling confidently from the room. What was the use? Whether naked or clothed, everyone in the pack knew their Alpha's appetite.

With Elijah now left, he sat up, the sheet falling to reveal his battle-scarred chest and taut muscles. Despite his early fifties, his werewolf genes kept him looking like a man in his prime with his dark wavy hair, charming green eyes, and a smile that had seduced and lied more times than she could count. His muscles flexed as he folded his arm behind him, a little dusting of hair in his armpits.

If there was anyone who looked older, it was Beatrice considering she was human and did not possess werewolves special anti-aging gene. Yet, that didn't diminish the fact the woman was a great beauty especially with her exotic hazel eyes.

"What is it, wife?" Elijah taunted. "What pressing matter has you storming in so early?"

But it turned out Beatrice has had enough because she bit back with a saccharine smile, "You do know sticking your prick into every hole isn't going to give you an heir. You're impotent darling, or have you forgotten?"

The smirk vanished from Elijah's face. In a blink, he was in front of her with a speed only a werewolf was capable of, his eyes blazing with fury. Though she flinched, Beatrice held her ground.

"Go on, hit me." She goaded him. "Come on, what are you waiting for? Do it?"

Elijah's snarl rumbled deep in his chest, but her unwavering gaze stalled him. He took a step back, smile returning as if the outburst had never happened.

"Why would I harm my precious wife? Only monsters hit their women," he said with mock innocence.

True to his words, Elijah had never hit her, but then his punishments were worse than any physical pain. He relished playing games that would break even the strongest of minds. And yes, she has lived with the monster for years.

"Of course not, hitting is beneath you. You simply find your opponent's weak point and strike when they least expect it and where it hurts the most."

Instead of Elijah feeling offended at that summary, he said delightfully. "How well you know me. No wonder you're my wife."

He caressed her cheek as though she were something precious, though his actions betrayed the sentiment.

"You're hurt, I know. But you must understand that I have to keep sowing seeds. You never know which one would bear my heir." He gave his excuse for cheating.

But Beatrice did not buy it, saying instead, "No, that's simply your justification for cheating and disrespecting me. You already agreed that one of the boys would be your heir. Right now, their parents have been wanting to see you for three days. Three fucking days, Elijah! They haven't left, but what did you do? You ignore them. You neglect your people!"

"You mean the same people who went behind my back to create powerful heirs that would topple my government? Is that the same people you are talking about?!"

Elijah yelled at her, his eyes flashing with anger.

"The parents are to blame, not the children. Not innocent pack members. There must be trouble if they're here to see you. Hear them out first." Beatrice demanded.

"Fine, I'll help them." Elijah finally agreed and Beatrice was close to breathing in relief when he added, "But on a condition, of course."

"What do you want?" she asked warily.

A glint of amusement danced in Elijah's eyes. His fingers traced the hollow of her throat, making her shudder with revulsion.

"It's been too long since I've enjoyed my wife's touch," he whispered. "Do this for me, and I'll grant them their audience. What do you say, my queen?"

Beatrice was tempted to tell him to rot in the deepest hell, but she knew the level of Elijah's cruelty and how the innocent would only suffer his cruelty.

"Fine," She spat. "Let's get this over with."

Elijah's smile was pure victory. "On your knees, then, my love. Worship your king."

Beatrice did just that, and in mere minutes, Elijah had his eyes closed and head lulled back in pleasure as his wife serviced him.

Chapter 190: Parents Union

Alphas were naturally aggressive and dominant, which was why there was always one Alpha per pack. Having two or more dominant Alphas in the same space for too long was like striking a match in a room filled with gasoline.

For that reason, all the Alphas of the four houses were given separate residences in the palace, lest they tore each other apart in the fight for dominance.

However, a message had been sent out: The Alpha king would see them. Hence, they had to leave their rooms once more for the grand hall. It was not surprising that Henry Nightshade, Alpha of the West pack and Asher's father, was the first to arrive, considering the man was punctual and disciplined to a fault—a trait he had inculcated into his son who now embodied the no-nonsense nature of the West.

However, Asher Nightshade looked nothing like his father, at least physically. Where Asher was all dark and handsome, Henry had dirty blonde hair and beaded black eyes so dark they resembled the abyss. The man's features were sharp and austere, lacking warmth and exuding a repulsive aura that could make a child cry if he merely glanced their way.

He was a figure that commanded fear rather than admiration. But just like all Alphas, Henry was tall and strong. His attire was black on black, entirely flawless. The West Alpha was the epitome of organization, showing no ounce of emotion.

They said birds of a feather flocked together, but there was nothing identical between Henry Nightshade and Leon Draven, Alpha of the South and Roman Draven's father. While Henry was all grim and cold, Leon was sweet and sunshine.

There was no doubt Leon had graciously bestowed his good looks on his son, except his eyes were amber where his son's were green, inherent to his unique power. Like father, like son, Leon also had

this easy charm that seemed to draw people in effortlessly.

With such stark differences in character, the two shouldn't even be friends, yet Henry and Leon still got along better than any of the other Alphas.

Caspian Storm, Alpha of the North, entered with his wife, Zara. Together, the two were engaged in a heated debate about one of their latest inventions that had earned their pack a reputation for innovation.

There was no doubt Alaric had inherited both the brains and the looks from his parents. Caspian and Zara bore a striking resemblance to each other, especially with their piercing blue eyes—so much so that one might mistake them for siblings. Kind of... They were actually cousins, three times removed. Thankfully.

The North was known for its close breeding in a bid to preserve the bloodline, hence the saying, "The North Stays Together."

It was said that after the virus decimated the population of she-wolves, siblings had even married each other just to ensure the Storm bloodline didn't fade into oblivion. If there was any pack resistant to human and werewolf breeding, it had to be the North. Yet, even they had been forced to adapt due to the lack of females. However, the Alpha bloodline would always remain pure and untainted.

And it was at that moment that Alpha Irene, the famous Iron Lady of the East and Griffin's mother, strode into the hall with one of her two husbands, Aeron.

Irene was a tall, imposing woman, and the furs draped over her shoulders only added to her already formidable presence. Perhaps that was intentional, after all, in a supernatural world dominated by male Alphas, she knew she had to do everything to keep the men from looking down on her and undermining her authority.

And just as she thought, it wasn't long before the men showed why they were dicks and assholes.

"Finally, the lady of the day graces us with her presence." Henry Nightshade clapped his hands mockingly. "For a moment there, I feared you might keep the Alpha king waiting as well." His words dripped with sarcasm.

Just as was the case with their sons, who couldn't stand each other, the same tension rippled between their parents. Especially between the East and West—it was no secret that Irene and Henry loathed each other for countless reasons.

Wild wolves were naturally monogamous creatures who mated for life. While werewolves were only half-wolf, some became selective, exclusive lovers, while others embraced polygamy—or polyandry, in this situation—depending on their human side, or, as the wolves believed, the will of the Moon Goddess.

Henry, however, believed firmly in the patriarchal system, where women should remain under a man's rule and have no authority unless permitted. And having two husbands? That was the final straw. To Henry, Irene represented everything wrong with the world.

To Irene, Henry embodied everything she despised. The women of her pack were warriors, carving their own paths. It also didn't help that the East had the largest population of pure-blooded she-wolves alive.

To Henry, those women were resources wasted on the battlefield, better off given to men to replenish the dwindling werewolf population. Hence, both Alphas would rather die than give in to each other's demands.

"Alpha Henry, you must have wet dreams about me to be this excited every time I walk into a room," Irene shot back without missing a beat.

Henry's eyes darkened with disgust as he spat, "I'd rather become a eunuch than stick my dick into that stretched-out hole of yours. Who knows how many others you've spread your legs for beyond your husbands?"

A warning growl rumbled from Aeron's throat, but Henry didn't flinch. Instead, he smirked cruelly. "Which brother are you, again? The older or the younger? How does it feel sharing the same hole with your twin? Must be cozy."

Aeron stepped forward, his face taut with anger. "Better to share a woman we both love than to drive one to her death with cruelty."

The jab hit its mark. Henry's expression fell, his lips peeling back in a dangerous snarl as he lunged at Irene.