

Defy 191

Chapter 191: Kill The Alpha King

Irene needed no protection. Her shoulders were squared, eyes blazing with defiance as she released an equally fierce roar, challenging Henry to do his worst. She wasn't going to back down.

"Whoa!" Leon quickly stepped between them, gripping Henry's shoulder to hold him back. "I believe it hasn't gotten to this. Remember, we're here to gain the Alpha King's approval, not his disapproval," he reminded the raging Alpha.

Henry didn't struggle against Leon's grip, but the rumbling growl in his throat didn't lessen. Leon was the only thing standing in his way of teaching that insolent bitch a lesson she wouldn't forget.

For a moment, it seemed like Henry was finally calming down, but that was until Irene tilted her head and called him, "Pussy."

And that did it!

Henry lost it!

He yanked free from Leon's hold, fury blinding him as he charged straight at Irene. But before he could even close the distance, a jolt of electricity paralyzed him, sending him crashing to the ground with a brutal force.

All eyes snapped toward Zara, standing calmly to the side, holding a sleek, modified taser in her hand, its prongs still crackling faintly from the discharge.

"Told you the current worked just fine!" she said matter-of-factly, as if she hadn't just incapacitated one of the most fearsome Alphas in the room. Rather, her tone suggested she was testing an experiment rather than subduing a predator.

Without a glance at Henry twitching on the ground, she turned back to her husband, still examining the taser with the fascination of a scientist evaluating a prototype.

And indeed, the particular model was specifically designed for werewolves. With humans and werewolves living closer than ever, they needed a way to protect themselves. Storm Enterprises was simply meeting that demand.

"So why was Ace complaining that the voltage wasn't enough? Does he want to take a life?" Her husband, Caspian asked, equally unfazed by the sight of Henry on the floor.

Zara scoffed, rolling her eyes. "Of course, It's Ace. He complains about everything. Had it been Alaric, he would've just gotten the job done without saying a word."

Caspian chuckled, puffing out his chest with pride. "Of course my boy Alaric is the best."

Meanwhile, the other alphas standing on their feet exchanged disbelieving glances. These two were strange, to say the least. Their detached, almost scientific approach to violence was unsettling, even to those accustomed to bloodshed.

Before the awkward tension could deepen, a loud announcement echoed through the hall.

"The Alpha King arrives!"

Immediately, they straightened, shoulders stiffening as Elijah strode in with his usual imposing presence, only to stop short at the sight of Henry, still twitching on the ground. His green eyes swept across the room, taking in the alphas before he chuckled under his breath.

"You guys never fail to amuse me."

As Elijah took his seat at the head of the mahogany table, Caspian muttered to his wife, "Perhaps the voltage needs some adjusting. It's taking longer than expected for Henry to recover."

Zara barely spared him a glance. "Taser 4.0 was designed to give humans enough time to escape a werewolf attack, not for this exact situation. So yes, it's naturally going to take longer for him to recover."

"Still, perhaps we should've tested it on someone else. Henry won't be pleased if he misses this—"

The sound of a hissing breath from Irene cut them short. Both couples looked up to see Elijah seated and staring at them, an unreadable expression on his face.

"Apologies, Alpha King," Caspian said, both of them respectfully quieting.

As the silence fell, Henry slowly stirred, his eyes flashing open. His muscles trembled from the aftershock as he slowly pushed himself upright. His gaze landed on Zara with murderous intent, his anger unmistakable. He was not going to let this slide.

"Alpha Henry," Elijah called casually. "You seem to enjoy the floor of my palace. If you're interested, I wouldn't mind hiring you to clean it. It would be...humbling." His tone dripped with mockery.

Henry's jaw clenched, and he bit back a growl. This was the Alpha King, and he had no choice but to swallow his pride.

"I would love to oblige, Your Majesty, but the West region would be left without a warden. I wouldn't want to burden you with the chaos that would follow."

Elijah waved a hand lazily. "Whatever. Let's make this quick and get it over with. I have more important matters to attend to."

Despite the tension between Henry and Irene, their eyes locked, both silently questioning Elijah's words. Other important matters?

What could possibly be more important than the concerns of his wardens?

The answer was clear: After their betrayal —as he often called it—Elijah had made his stance known. Whether they thrived or perished, it didn't matter. His heart had long since hardened to their fates.

Henry, frustrated, was the first to speak. "There's been a surge of Rogue attacks along my borders in the past three months —"

Elijah's gave him an incredulous look. "Are you seriously asking me to fight your battles now? Do I, the King, have to take care of every little fight for you? Or is this just another attempt to accuse me of incompetence?" His voice dipped into a sneer. "Do you all want to throw me off the throne before your sons even graduate?"

"It's not what you think, Your Majesty." Leon stepped forward, "These aren't the usual scattered rogue attacks. They're organized. Coordinated. It's almost as if someone's leading them. The West house has lost both territory and warriors, and still, your response has been silence."

"I share the same concern," Irene, Alpha of the East, added. "In our case, they've set fire to our smaller packs and kidnapped our women. Pureblooded she-wolves are rare as it is, we can't afford to lose any more."

"These aren't random strikes," Caspian added grimly, his voice carrying a note of forewarning. "They attacked and ransacked one of my companies, and stole weapons that could give them an upper hand in their next attack. Perhaps even an attack against the palace itself."

At that, the room fell into an intense silence. All eyes turned to Elijah, waiting for his response. But to their shock, instead of concern, his lips twisted into a sneer, eyes glittering with suspicion.

"So you armed our enemies? Is that the next step in your plan?" His voice dropped, heavy with accusation. "Was gifting your children those wretched powers not enough? Now you want to kill me and clear the road for them?"

Chapter 192: Compromise

Alpha Caspian looked utterly dumbfounded. He stuttered, "I—I think you're mistaken here, your majesty. I believe I mentioned that we were attacked."

Moreover, if there was any Alpha less inclined to violence, it was Caspian—their suspicion should be directed at Henry and Irene, the two war gods of the four regions.

"The North is more invested in technological advancements, not warfare," Caspian continued.
"Attacking you the Alpha King.... is preposterous!"

Elijah's gaze sharpened. "Didn't you just say your company was attacked, and weapons were stolen?"

"Yes, but by—"

"—Rogues," Irene finished unapologetically. For a woman, she wasn't scared speaking to Elijah, the Alpha king that way.

And Elijah did notice because his attention was wholly on her as she said, "We already told you this isn't just an ordinary rogue attack, Alpha Elijah. The rogues are testing our defenses, probing for weaknesses. My patrols are already stretched thin as it is. If this continues, I'll have no choice but to conscript more pack members into active service."

Leon, Alpha of the South, growled, "I've already done so. Except unlike the East, we're not natural fighters."

"Yes, your people are entertainers, Leon." Elijah's tone dripped with mockery.

However, Leon looked beyond the mockery and answered. "Morale is crumbling, your majesty. My people question our ability to protect them, and they're not wrong. We need reinforcements, but your rising taxes—" He clenched his jaw. "—are draining our coffers. How are we supposed to defend our borders when we can barely afford supplies?"

"Perhaps by working harder?" Elijah suggested.

"Work harder?" Alpha Leon scoffed and for the first time since their arrival, every mirth escaped his expression.

He hissed, "While the rogue threat is indeed concerning, I'm more troubled by the drought affecting my territory. Our crops are failing, and livestock are dying. My people are starving. We can't afford rising taxes when we're struggling to survive."

A tense silence followed after those words. Elijah steepled his fingers, his gaze void of emotion. "Rogue attacks, stolen weapons, dwindling morale, and economic strain. It seems you've all come prepared with your grievances."

Henry bristled. "These are not mere grievances. This is about the survival of our packs. Yet you sit here, indifferent, while we suffer."

"Watch your tone, Henry," Elijah warned. "Or have you forgotten who rules here?"

Caspian raised a hand before the tension could escalate further. "Apologies, your majesty, we are merely desperate for solutions before our own people turn on us. If the rogues are organized, we must determine who's leading them. I propose increasing intelligence operations along our borders. Capture and interrogate mercilessly any rogue found within our territories."

"And who pays for these operations?" Leon countered. "We're already crippled by taxes. Lower them, and we'll have the resources to bolster our defenses."

Elijah cracked his knuckles, his facial expression thoughtful, "Fine, I'll consider reducing the levy—if you deliver tangible results in quelling the rogue threat."

Turning to Leon, he added, "As for the drought, I'm sure the North has technology that can help you. The two of you should sort it out."

Leon groaned, as if the thought of dealing with Caspian was a real pain in the ass.

Caspian in question gleamed with anticipation as if he couldn't wait to drill into the South Alpha his brilliant ideas.

Elijah said, "In addition to that, I'll authorize a temporary suspension of your territory's taxes. In exchange, you'll supply additional provisions once your people recover."

"Fair enough," Leon agreed.

"And reinforcements?" Irene pressed.

"I'll dispatch warriors from the elite guard to assist your territories and eliminate the rogue threat swiftly," Elijah replied. "But mark my words, if I find out by chance that this is any of your ploys again to undermine my rule, trust me, the consequences will be severe."

The alphas in the room exchanged wary glances. None of them fully trusted Elijah, but for now, his terms would have to suffice.

"As you say, your majesty," they all agreed.

"Also," Elijah added, "do my heirs know of the increasing rogue attacks?"

"No, not yet." Henry answered, "We would like them to focus on their education. Their parents can handle this."

"That was your decision, not mine," Irene countered. "Our priestess predicted Lunaris Academy may face a rogue attack."

"And yet, she didn't foresee the attack on Caspian's company." Henry scoffed. "I respect your priestess, but you East people are too damn religious."

Irene bared her teeth at him in warning. No one disrespected her people and their ways.

"Now, that is no reason for a fight." Elijah said, "Henry is right. We should not bother the children with such troubling news. Lunaris Academy is in the capital city and has stood strong for years. It's the safest they can be. And if anything happens, it will be an opportunity for my heir to prove their worth."

"Unless there's more, that will be all. Feel free to spend more time at the palace and perhaps share drinks with me." Elijah offered.

"That would be an honor, your majesty." Henry said, his eyes gleaming with whatever potential ploy he had brewing in that head of his.

"Thanks for the offer, Alpha king Elijah, but I have wife duties to attend to tonight," Irene said with heavy innuendo

while staring at Henry.

As expected Henry's face wrinkled with disgust and that brought a satisfactory smile to Irene. She loved pushing the man's button so much.

Elijah burst into laughter, then his gaze ran over Irene's body in a way that didn't escape Aaron's notice. He growled a warning. Male wolves were naturally possessive of their mates. Alpha king or not, he would tear out Elijah's eyes if the occasion called for it.

"Your husbands are lucky men," Elijah remarked.

"Thank you, your majesty." Irene said with a forced smile. Had it been other men, she would have already smashed their face onto that table for looking at her like that.

"Let's go, Aaron." The East Alpha and her husband left.

As soon as Irene left, Caspian and his wife Zara were next in line.

"As much as we would love to schmooze with you, your majesty, there are certain projects that require our attention. Ideas to bring to life, designs to evaluate, prototypes to —"

"Please, just go already, Caspian. " Elijah couldn't bear a second of his nerdy talks.

"As you wish, your majesty," Caspian replied, taking his wife's arm. As they passed Leon, Caspian added, "Looking forward to our collaboration, Leon."

"Delighted," Leon replied, though his smile didn't reach his eyes.

Caspian left with his wife.

With that, only Henry and Leon remained. Elijah leaned back in his chair, his smile fading into a calculating gaze. "I suppose it's just us now, gentlemen."

Chapter 193: Just The Beginning

The door crashed open, startling the woman who looked up with dread etched across her face, only to exhale with relief when she saw the familiar figure.

"Lila..." The Fae Queen breathed out in relief, clutching the edge of her gown.

But Lila's expression was anything but reassuring, and dread coiled tight in the Queen's stomach.

"He's here, isn't he?" she asked, her voice strained.

Lila gave a grim nod.

The Queen's hands began to tremble as she paced the small room, her gown sweeping the floor in frantic movements. "How did he find us so quickly?"

"I don't know. I thought we'd thrown him off our trail." Lila glanced toward the door with growing tension. "We need to get the princess out of here."

The Queen's head snapped toward the door, her features hardening as if sensing a presence beyond. "I'm afraid that's too late."

A deep, guttural growl resonated from beyond the wooden frame, sending shivers through both women. The Queen rushed to the cradle, scooping up her sleeping child.

"Get behind me, my queen," Lila commanded, pushing the Fae Queen behind her as she took a defensive stance.

For a moment, the growling ceased, and silence fell. The women looked at each other but the hope was short-lived as a loud bang rattled the door, making both them jump.

The Queen clutched the child who stirred and began to cry, her distressed wails piercing through the air as if sensing the danger.

"Shh, princess. Please... not now," the Queen whispered desperately, rocking her in vain. But the child's cries only grew louder as another bang followed, louder this time, and splintering the wooden frame.

Lila's pulse hammered in her ears as she stood her ground. But deep down, she knew the door wouldn't hold.

Then, with a final, deafening crash, the door burst from its hinges. The Queen screamed.

Violet woke up with a startled gasp, sitting bolt upright. Her heart pounded against her ribs, and her clothes clung to her damp skin. She dragged in ragged breaths, trying to make sense of the vivid nightmare.

What the hell was that dream?

Violet ran a hand over her clammy face. It lingered like a shadow at the edges of her mind and Violet swore she could still feel the fear, the urgency, and the terrifying threat that had gripped hold of her.

Could the dream have something to do with her Fae origin, or was it just a product of her imagination?

She tried to recall the faces from the dream—the Queen, Lila, and the figure behind the door—but the images dissolved like smoke in her mind.

Violet fell back on her bed with an exhausted sigh, covering her face with the crook of her arm. There were so many things going on in her life right now and it was not surprising it would manifest in the form of a dream.

But before Violet could dwell on it further, a loud bang echoed against the door, making her freeze in place.

Déjà vu gripped Violet. Her pulse spiked as she sat up slowly, her breath caught in her throat. Surely... it couldn't be.

Another loud thud rattled the door, making her roommates stir awake with confused, fearful expressions.

For a moment, Violet considered ignoring it but the banging persisted relentlessly.

She squared her shoulders and stepped toward the door. There would be no running. No fear.

Taking a breath, Violet swung the door open—

A crowd of elites stormed inside, the door slamming against the wall with a loud crack. The rush of bodies knocked Violet off balance, making her stumble back.

"Hello, bitches!"

Elsie stood at the center of the chaos, firing a confetti cannon with a manic smile as colorful ribbons rained down around her. Her eyes gleamed with pure, unadulterated malice.

Violet's stomach sank.

Fuck. It had begun.

She should have known.

"Rule 101 of being a Rogue," Elsie announced with theatrical glee, "Rogues are outcasts and have no place in pack houses."

She turned to her circle of elite friends, eyes gleaming with twisted delight. "Seize them!"

"What? That's preposterous!" Ivy protested, but her words barely left her mouth before two girls rushed forward, grabbing her arms in an iron grip.

"No! Don't you dare touch me!" Violet snarled, twisting violently to break free. But a sharp yank from behind had her gasping as one girl fisted her hair tightly, jerking her head back. Two others seized her arms, locking her in place despite her struggle.

The same fate befell Daisy and Lila, their protests swallowed up by the chaos as Elsie's lackeys closed in like vultures circling carrion.

"Quickly! Grab their things!" Elsie commanded, her voice rising above the scuffle. "Sweep the place clean! Let's show these rogues their new quarters." She cackled with glee.

And just like that, her followers descended upon the room in a whirlwind of chaos. Wardrobes were wrenched open, hangers clattering to the floor as clothes were yanked out and thrown into boxes with careless speed. The sound of zippers being torn open and drawers scraping against wood mingled with the girls' shouts of protest.

"No, don't touch that—!" Daisy cried as one of the elites grabbed her framed family photo from the nightstand and tossed it carelessly into her bag. The glass clinked ominously against other items, and Daisy's breath hitched at the thought of it shattering.

A loud crash echoed through the room, freezing Ivy in place. She turned just in time to see shards of glass scattered across the floor which were the remains of her highly prized limited-edition crystal glass shoe.

"No!" Ivy wailed, her legs giving out beneath her as she collapsed to her knees, only to be yanked back up by the girls restraining her.

"Elsie! Stop this madness right now!" Violet shouted, eyes blazing as she strained against her captors. "You could have asked us to pack up and leave. We would've done so without all this destruction!"

"Oh, of course you would," Elsie replied mockingly, stepping forward with intentional slow strides until she stood before Violet. Her lips curved into a cruel smirk. "But where would the fun be in that?"

Turning away, Elsie tossed her hair over her shoulder and called out with giddy enthusiasm, "Keep at it, girls! Don't leave a single thing behind! We wouldn't want rogue energy tainting the place for the next occupants, now would we?"

Violet's hands balled into fists by her sides. But there was nothing she could do. Above all, she had a sinking feeling that this was just the beginning.

Chapter 194: Death House

They forced them out of their bedroom without any care for their appearance. Luckily, Violet had chosen a pair of boy's shorts and a singlet before bed, unlike her usual pants and shirts. With the cold weather, the others had opted for pajamas as well, though the thin fabric clung to their damp skin as the rain continued to pour.

The storm hadn't relented since the night before. If anything, it pounded harder now, soaking them to the bone as they walked through the downpour. The sky crackled with lightning crashes, emitting silvery lights like unyielding stormy tears, while thunder boomed above like the distant growl of some sorrowful beast.

Violet instinctively knew this storm was Alaric's doing. The thunder boy's heart was broken, and it was her fault. The guilt weighed heavy in her chest, making it hard to breathe. Her vision blurred with tears mixed with rain, and her foot slipped on the wet ground.

"Watch where you step, bitch!" snarled one of the girls gripping her arm, jerking her upright.

Violet glared through the rain-soaked strands of hair clinging to her face.

"What are you staring at?" the girl snapped.

Violet's lips curved into a wicked smile. "Why don't you let go of my hands and find out?"

"Don't fall for that," warned the girl on her other side, tightening her grip. "She just wants a fight. Heard ghetto bitches like her know how to fight dirty."

The first girl snorted with laughter. "Good for her. She'll be doing a lot of dirty fighting from now on."

Violet's smile vanished, her gut twisting at those words. She knew their fate from now on was going to be bad — she just didn't know how worse it be.

The walk dragged on, each minute stretching longer as they trudged past all four houses. With it being Saturday morning, it was no surprise that all the students were out and about—and none of them missed the chance to capture the scene.

Although the cardinal alphas were not at the scene, they were probably watching this from their rooms. Even if they didn't, enough pictures and videos had been taken by the students for them not to miss a thing.

Violet kept her head high despite the humiliation, though her heart hammered with dread as they neared the woods bordering the Silver Glade. The sight of the dark tree line sent a shudder crawling down her spine.

Violet frowned. Surely, they wouldn't expel them to go live in the woods like savages or something like that. They were still students at this school, right?

But instead, Elsie led them down an unfamiliar path, the rain-drenched grass squelching beneath their steps.

The air grew colder. The distant rumble of thunder reverberating through the woods like a warning.

Elsie finally came to a stop. Turning on her heel with a flourish, she spread her arms wide as if unveiling a grand surprise.

"We're here," she announced, her smile dripping with cruel anticipation.

"Oh God..." Violet whispered, her voice drowned out by the pounding rain. She stared up in horror at the house before her, every inch of her body going cold with something far worse than the chill.

A jagged flash of lightning split the sky right at that moment, illuminating the house in stark, eerie clarity. It was a decrepit bungalow half-consumed by time and neglect.

Moss clung thickly to the walls, crawling across the cracked windows like nature's attempt to swallow the place whole. Rainwater dripped from the sagging roof, which bowed under years of rot, and the gutters hung in jagged pieces, clinging stubbornly by rusted nails.

Even Alaric's secret lab in the woods felt like a paradise compared to this. This? It looked like something torn straight from a nightmare.

"What the hell is this place?" Daisy whispered in horror.

"No way I'm going in there," Ivy added, hugging herself against the chill.

Violet's heart hammered against her ribs as she took in the peeling paint, now nothing more than faint, weather-worn patches clinging to the warped wooden panels.

Whatever color the house had once been was now a distant memory, replaced by the murky greens and browns of rot and mildew. The front porch sagged dangerously, its wooden planks warped and splintered, as though one wrong step would send them plunging through the floor.

Even the front door was crooked on its hinges, as if it barely clung to the frame. One of the windows beside it had been cracked into a spiderweb of fractures, the jagged lines spreading out from a single, violent impact. Beyond the grimy glass, the interior was nothing but suffocating darkness.

"This can't be real," Violet muttered, shaking her head.

"Oh, it's very real," Elsie said with a smug grin, stepping beside Violet. "Welcome to your new home, Rogues. We call it 'The Shack', though 'haunted death trap' might be more fitting. Don't you agree?"

The other girls giggled at what they thought was a funny joke. Except the situation was not funny to Violet and friends.

"This place should've been condemned," Lila whispered through clenched teeth.

"And yet, here you are!" Elsie's eyes gleamed with dark satisfaction. "But don't worry. I'm sure the rats will make excellent roommates. Oh—and watch out for the floorboards. Step wrong, and you might just fall through." She laughed.

Violet's stomach twisted into knots, but she forced herself to meet Elsie's gaze with a shaky defiance. "I've faced worse things than a haunted house." She downplayed it.

"Have you, though?" Elsie's smile widened. "Because this is just the beginning."

She added, "Now, should any of you rebel and return to the pack houses, let's just say your fate would be way worse than this. You want to go rogue, this is what it means to be a Rogue. Have a good time together, Rogues!"

Without waiting for a response, Elsie turned on her heel, her entourage following with a final chorus of laughter as they disappeared into the rain.

Silence fell on the forsaken ones, broken only by the patter of rain and distant thunder.

"Well..." Ivy swallowed hard, her eyes fixed on the porch fearfully. "We're not actually going in there, are we?"

"We don't have a choice," Violet replied, her throat tightening.

To be honest, Violet was scared, but she put them through this shit and couldn't cower at a time like this. She stepped forward and the wood groaned beneath her weight.

"Careful," Lila warned. "This place feels like a death trap."

Violet swallowed the lump in her throat and reached for the rusted door knob...except it broke in her grasp.

Lila and the others groaned.

Violet sighed.

Perhaps Elsie had been right. She has not faced anything like this.

Chapter 195: Return Of The Oracle

MOON FEED EXCLUSIVE: PURPLE QUEEN OR PURPLE FALL?

Written by: The Oracle

Dramatic sigh.

Oh, my drama-loving darlings of Lunaris Academy! What a whirlwind of a day it's been with so much chaos, so much scandal, and yes, it's all circling around none otherthan our favorite wildcard, Violet Purple.

I know you're all holding your breath, waiting for me to dive into the drama of the century, but patience, my lovelies. Before we hit the nail on the head, let's take a quick stroll down memory lane, shall we?

The Storm That Stole A Kiss

Now, I've seen many things in my time here at Lunaris, but never did I expect our sweet thunder boy, Alaric Storm, to deliver a kiss that could short-circuit the entire academy.

Who knew the brooding weather prince could sweep a girl off her feet with one daring move? I mean, did anyone else feel the earth shift when he kissed Violet? Because I swear the air crackled, and it was not just from his lightning powers.

And Violet, oh Violet—you looked like you forgot how to breathe for a solid minute! No judgment, darling. I would've needed a defibrillator after a kiss like that. Alaric did bring up the heat after all. If I didn't know any better, I'd say the storms just found a new queen, or did he?

Purple Queen Takes the Stage

But let's not forget the cherry on top: Violet sliding right into the girlfriend role with ease, and giving Alaric's team the morale boost they needed during the Fangball match.

Was it the smoothest performance? Well... let's just say no one's handing out choreography awards, but hey, they got the point they needed, and that's what counts.

Note to all teams: next time you need a winning edge, maybe book a session with the Purple Queen herself.

Bonfire Style

And now, onto Friday night's bonfire bash at Silver Glade. Need I say more? The outfits alone deserve a standing ovation. (For my fashion enthusiasts, check out my separate article—The Best & Worst Dressed of the Bonfire—linked below. Spoiler: Some of you should rethink your wardrobe choices.)

But let's give credit where it's due and we know that Violet Purple and her entourage stole the show that night. Heads turned. Jaws dropped. Whether you love her or loathe her, you can't deny the girl has

an undeniable presence. Even Elsie Lancaster had to work hard to hold her crown in the face of that stunning entrance.

But alas, even the hottest parties come to an end, and for the newbies, the night was just beginning.

The Initiation Rite: Win Or Bow

Ah, the age-old tradition of Lunaris, the initiation rite. Every year, it's a test of courage, wit, and survival. But this year? This year was one for the history books, all thanks to—you guessed it—Violet Purple.

The girl never fails to surprise us. From stealing a kiss from Asher Nightshade (yes, you read that right) to maneuvering her way to victory in the most intense Running Game we've seen yet.

The Fall of the Purple Storm

But as they say, all good things must come to an end. In a twist that left jaws on the floor, Violet rejected all four houses. I repeat: She rejected all four houses.

As we all know, Lunaris Academy runs on hierarchy and tradition, and defying the pack system comes with a price. By choosing the path of a rogue, Violet has essentially placed herself at the very bottom of the food chain. I don't know what was going through her head when she made that call, but one thing's for sure—it wasn't the smartest move.

Deceit Of An Alpha

Now, sources close to yours truly reveal that Roman Draven might have had a hand in Violet's downfall. Yes, you heard right. The ever-smooth-talking heir of the South supposedly whispered just the right words to sway Violet's decision.

Why, you ask? Simple, our royal heartthrob wasn't about to let the Purple Storm outshine his beloved queen bee, Elsie Lancaster.

And just like that, Roman's move has likely sealed his place as Elsie's number one contender. Tough luck, Asher, Alaric, and Griffin—looks like the race for Elsie's heart just got a whole lot tougher.

The Legacy of Violet Purple

But let's not forget the mark Violet has left on Lunaris Academy. She may have fallen from grace, but her legacy won't be forgotten anytime soon. She has broken records, stirred hearts and bent rules no one ever thought of. Even as a rogue, Violet Purple's name will echo through these halls for years to come.

Is This the End?

But wait, are we truly witnessing the end of the Purple Storm? I wouldn't bet my last golden ticket on it. If there's one thing Violet Purple has taught us, it's to expect the unexpected.

Maybe—just maybe—she'll find a way to defy fate and rewrite her story. Or perhaps she'll remain an outcast, her storm finally silenced.

Only time will tell, my darlings. As always, I'll be watching (and sipping tea) to bring you the juiciest updates. Until next time, keep your claws sharp and your secrets sharper.

The Oracle

"Old Oracle seems to be losing her touch. This is the kindest she's ever been," Asher remarked, shutting down the article with a swipe of his hand.

He didn't even glance at the comments section below. There was no point, not when the predictable horde of faceless fools would be spewing their usual venom about his purple queen. And if he saw one too many insults, well... hunting them down would be far too tempting.

"You think she went easy on Violet?" Jeremiah asked, eyebrows raised in disbelief. The Oracle had built a reputation for sharp wit and merciless commentary. She didn't play favorites.

"I'm not thinking. It's obvious," Asher replied with a huff of irritation, leaning back in his chair. His fingers drummed against the armrest, restless energy thrumming through him. "But never mind that. What about the news on Adele?"

Jeremiah, his beta, straightened immediately, his expression turning serious. "About that... Adele's back, but—"

"But what?" Asher's gaze sharpened instantly, pinning Jeremiah in place with the force of his stare.

"She's locked herself inside her office. Won't see anyone."

Asher's eyes gleamed with amusement and curiosity. "Hmm... What sneaky, sneaky business is my favorite healer up to now?"

Chapter 196: Parasite

Adele was busy peering into her microscope, her eyes narrowed in intense concentration as she furiously scribbled down notes. A sudden gust of wind swept through the room, causing her to jump and whip around.

"Asher..." she gasped, clutching her chest as her heart pounded. "You should have knocked."

"Of course, I would," Asher replied casually, stepping further into the room. He pointed behind, "But then, you put out the 'Do Not Disturb' sign on the door. So, I figured I'd bypass the rule." He said as though ignoring boundaries was a normal thing.

Adele slowly shifted her body, trying to block the experiment behind her, but Asher's eyes had already locked onto it. Before she could get a word out, Asher already wolf-sped across the room, so quick it was almost a blur.

"No—Don't!" she tried to stop him, reaching out, but Asher easily brushed her aside.

His eyes fell on the table and spread across it were slides, notes, tubes of dark, clotted liquid, and a single jar containing what looked like a blood sample in an advanced state of decay. Asher's frown deepened at the sight, his stare lingering on the bizarre texture and color of the blood.

He scanned the piles of paper, picking one up. The corner of his mouth tensed. "You're running a test on Violet?" he asked with a clipped tone.

"Yes," Adele confirmed quietly, silently bracing herself. She knew exactly how obsessed Asher was with Violet, and she fully expected a reaction.

"Good," Asher said simply.

"Good?" Adele blinked in disbelief.

"What did you find out?" he pressed, not bothering to give her time to gather her wits.

"What?" Adele stammered, still taken aback by his calm reaction. Then realization dawned, and she inhaled. "You know, don't you? You suspect she isn't human?"

"If you can suspect it, then you already have the answer. What do the results say?" He tapped the paper in his hand, impatiently.

At once, Adele brightened, her excitement returning. "I did find out something but that's where the issue begins."

"Issues?" Asher repeated, brows knitting together.

Stepping to one side, Adele snatched the remaining vial of blood off the rack and handed it to him. "I drew this sample from Violet just a few days ago. Look closely. Tell me what you notice."

Asher accepted the vial and tilted it in the light. The blood inside had coagulated into a dense, semi-solid mass with a dark, almost tar-like color. He brought it closer to his nose, only to grimace in disgust. "It stinks," he pointed out. "Are you sure this is fresh blood?"

"Exactly. I thought I was losing my mind. But minutes after Violet left my office, the sample degraded into this."

"That's impossible," Asher snapped. "Even minimal knowledge of biology would tell you blood doesn't degrade like that without an extreme catalyst."

Although Alaric was the unbeatable science geek, Asher was still smart and could hold his own.

"Which is the point!" Adele exclaimed, throwing up her hands. "DNA, even if it degrades over time due to poor storage, extreme temperatures, or chemical exposure, and a whole lot of other factors, it simply does not degrade so fast...." She swallowed, "But this... this happened within minutes. Maybe even seconds. I was not exactly observant until it was time for me to begin the test."

Asher fell silent, processing the implications. Finally, he said, "Even degraded samples can still yield partial results with advanced techniques. You left for the whole day. Tell me you found something."

"You don't get it, do you?" Adele said, exasperated. "Violet's DNA sample was completely dead—dead dead. I couldn't extract a thing from it. The molecules were... inactive. There was no way to replicate or even parse them."

Asher clicked his tongue. "That is quite a loss."

"If I was a clueless human, I'd call Violet a freak," Adele confessed. "But I'm a werewolf, and I've seen enough supernatural messes to know that something is deliberately masking her identity. And considering we know nothing about her parentage, I suspect larger powers are at play here."

She glanced up at Asher's and winked. "You're right, though. I did discover something else."

That comment seemed to stir Asher's interest and his eyes gleamed with anticipation. "Show me."

His purple queen was a mystery and he loved himself a good puzzle.

Adele nodded and led Asher to another part of the lab table. This area was partially concealed by a sheet of cloth, masking rows of slides, tiny test tubes, and petri dishes arranged meticulously.

She peeled the cover back, revealing a setup of monitors, color indicators, and a sealed container with a precise temperature control gauge. Nearby, a digital readout blinked.

"I ran a werewolf test," Adele explained, gesturing to the equipment. "Basically, a standard assay to confirm or deny whether Violet had any werewolf markers. As we guessed... there was nothing. The normal triggers we see in typical werewolf blood—lycanthropic proteins, certain anomalies in the genetic code—didn't show up at all. Her blood killed it off as expected."

She let that sink in before continuing. "But then, this crazy idea hit me and I decided to run a different approach. I compared Violet's blood to another werewolf sample... and the strangest thing happened."

Asher glanced from the monitors to Adele. "What did you see?"

Adele picked up a small, sealed dish. Two distinct blotches of dried blood were visible: one labeled "V" and another labeled "W," presumably for "Werewolf." Slight lines separated them, though they overlapped near the center.

Adele tapped the dish lightly, and Asher could see that the area where the two samples merged had turned dark, like it had corroded or eroded the second smear.

"That is Violet's sample on the left," Adele showed him, "and the other is the werewolf sample. The moment I introduced the second blood, Violet's seemingly dead sample ate it up, dissolving it like acid. Within minutes, the entire sample labeled 'W' was—" she trailed off, struggling to find the right word. "Well, gone, essentially. The meltdown happened so fast I barely caught it on the instruments. It was as though Violet's blood overcame the other sample on a molecular level."

Asher's expression darkened with intrigue, all traces of casual arrogance gone.

"Whose werewolf sample did you use for that test?" he demanded suddenly, his voice tensed.

Adele looked him dead in the eye, and answered, "Alaric Storm."

Chapter 197: All Of Us Are Dead

"Excuse me?" Asher said, sounding as if he had misheard her. He stared at the corroded, blackened smear that used to be Alaric's sample.

"It was a standard blood file from a previous medical checkup Alaric had with me. I had it on hand, so I used it," Adele explained, her brows drawn together. "Why? Is anything the matter?"

Instead of answering, Asher burst into laughter. He cackled the way a movie villain might after a grand revelation. The sound carried through the lab, and sent a chill along Adele's spine.

"That is not funny, Asher Nightshade. Now tell me, what's the issue here?" she demanded, crossing her arms as though to protect herself from his unsettling amusement.

He ceased laughing but the cruel gleam in his eyes remained, his lips curling slightly. "Has anyone told you that Violet Purple is immune to Alaric's lightning?"

"What?!" Adele nearly dropped the vial in her hand, her jaw falling open. "No, that's impossible. She can't be—" Her voice died, eyes going wide as the blood drained from her face. "Goddess help us."

A wave of realization struck her. "Violet Purple isn't immune to Alaric's lightning," she breathed, horror lacing every syllable. "She's killing him."

Adele's mind was racing, her pulse hammering so loudly in her ears. She began to pace, her lab coat flouncing around her knees. "We have to warn Alaric. He has to stay away from Violet. At least, until we figure out whatever she is."

"Well, both of them have broken up, so I guess there'll be no seeing each other. Thank the gods," Asher replied nonchalantly, though the satisfaction in his tone was obvious.

Asher didn't say it because Alaric would be safe, but because there'd be no one standing between him and his purple queen.

Adele spun to face him, expression grim. "Ahh, right. I heard the results of your guys' pretty game. But do you really think that's enough to keep Alaric away from her? I've seen the way he looks at her. You too..." She trailed off, her gaze narrowing suspiciously.

"You too..." Adele repeated, her words a whisper as she realized something. Then, her eyes hardened with resolve. "You have to take the test too, Asher."

"Why?" Asher asked with arrogant calm. "Violet Purple is not immune to my powers, if you recall."

"Perhaps not yet," Adele retorted, "but maybe whatever death is in her blood, or whatever creature she is, simply hasn't learned to adapt to your mental powers. Perhaps one day, she'll turn that power against you and wipe off that smugness right off your face. So are you doing the test, yes or no?"

Asher merely lifted a shoulder in a nonchalant shrug. "Fine. It wouldn't hurt to try, anyway."

"Good."

Adele pointed Asher toward a high-backed swivel stool in the corner, clearing space on the table next to him.

"Sit," Adele commanded, donning a fresh pair of latex gloves.

Asher complied, rolling up his sleeve as Adele sterilized the area with a swipe of alcohol. The needle punctured his skin with a swift prick and dark crimson filled the syringe. Asher watched the whole process impassively, his face a study in boredom mixed with thinly veiled curiosity.

Adele removed the syringe, pressing a small wad of gauze to his arm, then turned her back to him, heading for the temperature-controlled rack holding what remained of Violet's blood.

She placed Asher's sample and Violet's in two adjacent slides, layering them onto a single petri dish rigged with sensors and connected to a computer display. She stepped aside, allowing Asher a clear view of the screen that would log any interactions.

"The principle," Adele explained as she keyed in a few commands, "is the same as with Alaric's test. If Violet's blood is indeed hostile toward werewolf blood, there might be a reaction when they come into contact."

So together, they watched the digital display. A whir sound came to life as the mixing process began, rotating the dish gently.

Seconds passed. There was nothing.

A minute passed and still nothing.

Asher leaned against the table, arms crossed, a smug twist at the corner of his mouth. "How long did it take for Alaric's sample?"

"In the blink of an eye," Adele admitted, eyes glued to the monitor. "It ate it up so quickly, I thought I was hallucinating. Maybe we need to give this one more time."

Asher let out a dismissive "Mm-hmm," the tone laced with condescension. His posture all but screamed **I told you so**.

Five minutes ticked by, the hum of the machine the only noise in the tense silence. Yet there was no reaction. The readout remained flat, no spikes, no sign of corrosion.

Finally, Adele exhaled, stepping back from the equipment. "Maybe I was wrong," she mumbled, eyes darting between the inert slides and the numbers on the screen.

"Indeed, you are," Asher said, sounding immensely pleased with himself. In fact, confidence was practically oozing from every pore in his body.

There was nothing. He was safe from Violet's lethal anomaly, while Alaric was not. The Gods had confirmed it. He and Violet were a match made in heaven.

The plan to involve his cardinal brothers in the rebellion against the Alpha king no longer mattered. Violet would be his and his alone. Others could go die as long as he cared — especially that betrayer, Roman.

Adele tapped a button to pause the rotation. She jotted down some final notes, her mind already moving to the next steps.

"We still have to warn Alaric," Adele said, glancing sidelong at Asher. "He has to know in case he plans on still seeing Violet secretly. If he does, who knows what might happen? I need more tests to figure Violet out, but for now, we can't risk losing the North Pack's heir to mysterious circumstances. It would be chaos."

Except she forgot a certain Alpha loved chaos.

"I'm afraid that's not going to happen," Asher said darkly, making goosebumps appear on her arm.

Adele whipped her head around, and what she saw on Asher's face was enough for dread to coil in her gut.

"No!" she cried, voice trembling with anger. "You're going to keep this from him? Just to get rid of your competition for the throne?"

Asher's mouth curved into an unkind smile. "Sorry, but there are no brothers in the jungle."

Realization hit Adele like a punch. She spun on her heel, trying to escape the lab. If she could just warn Alaric, or even inform someone else — but it was too late.

Asher appeared behind her in a blur, strong fingers digging into her shoulder. "Look at me," he commanded, turning her around with ease.

Adele tried to avert her gaze, tried to clamp down her thoughts, but Asher's mental pull was overwhelming. She felt her mind begin to succumb to his command.

"I want you to forget all about that day with Violet," he said, voice smooth as silk, and filled with the intangible power of compulsion. "Forget the blood. Forget the test. Her abnormalities are just a fluke, a quirk, and anything else you discover will mean nothing. You won't remember this conversation or these results."

Adele shuddered, instinctively raising her mental walls, but they were flimsy against his alpha dominance. Had she been an Alpha herself, she would have put up a fight and perhaps won, but Adele was an ordinary werewolf with just healing powers.

Asher tore down her mental walls like a child dismantling a house of cards and she felt a haze settle over her, like a thick fog creeping across her consciousness.

By the time Asher was done, her eyes were vacant. A beat passed. Adele blinked, then turned away, moving in a dull, mechanical fashion to obey his commands. She began packing up the test equipment, removing the slides from the rig, discarding them according to standard lab protocol.

But then she noticed something.

"What is this?" Adele mumbled, frowning at the petri dish.

Asher stepped forward, and what he saw made his blood run cold.

Violet's sample had begun breaking down his blood. Unlike Alaric's rapid reaction, this was more insidious. Molecule by molecule, it corroded his cells as if it were adapting, learning his composition. There was no violent reaction, just a slow, inevitable consumption until there was nothing left.

Asher's jaw clenched, the victory draining from his eyes, replaced by a chilling reality: He was not immune.

If not, all of them.

Chapter 198: For My Queen And Back

Asher knew right at that moment that he had royally and totally fucked up.

He had just compelled Adele to forget everything that happened, right when his own fate suddenly seemed to hang in the balance as well.

It dawned on Asher that he was slipping; the once-perfect finesse he prided himself on was cracking. And that alone was frustrating.

Everything was supposed to fall in line with his plans. After all, he was the puppet master, the one who pulled the strings and watched everyone dance. But now, the threads were tangling, and he was making mistake after mistake, as if he'd lost his touch.

Fuck. Asher cursed under his breath. He could not compel Adele to remember again, not today, at least. The mind was a fragile thing, and compulsion was an invasive force. The mind wasn't some unbreakable puzzle box and too much tampering could tear its delicate threads, and damaging Elijah's prized healer would bring consequences he didn't need at the moment.

Adele, her mind fogged by compulsion, gazed blankly at the dish, confusion knitting her brow. "What am I supposed to do with this?" she asked in a slow, dreamlike tone.

Asher's gaze hardened and without a second thought, he snatched the dish from her and crushed it in his hand, glass shards tinkling to the floor. Both his own blood sample and the remainder of Violet's were destroyed, leaving no trace of the alarming discovery.

He clenched his teeth, the implications rattling through his mind. So it wasn't just Alaric's blood sample that Violet's blood could devour. She could do the same to him. That reality was as sobering as it was infuriating.

But Asher forced his features into a cold mask. Whatever was happening, he would figure it out on his own. His purple queen was meant for him and not even her lethal DNA could stop him. She would not harm him, he had that much faith. But if he does die in her pursuit, then this had to be the greatest game he had ever played.

"Dispose of everything properly," he instructed Adele, "and make sure no one sees you do it. Then forget you saw that."

"Yes," Adele replied in that same dazed tone of voice, her eyes glassy and unfocused as the command overrode any conscious doubt.

With one last look at the shattered glass on the floor, Asher turned on his heel and strode from the lab.

Jeremiah was waiting just outside, leaning against the wall with his arms crossed as if anticipating his return. The moment Asher stepped through, Jeremiah straightened, concern etched on his face.

"Did you see Adele? What happened? Did she say why she's been away?"

"Prepare my things. I'm going off campus." Asher said without slowing.

"What?" Jeremiah balked, rushing to keep up with Asher's brisk pace. "I don't understand. Where are you going?"

Asher's lips curved into a humorless smile as he replied without looking back.

"I'm going to have a little chat with my future mother-in-law."

Jeremiah's eyes widened, confusion spreading across his features as he processed those words.

But Asher offered no further explanation. He walked in the direction of his house, his active mind already calculating and coming up with contingency plans he'd need for his next move.

Back at the West House dormitory, Jeremiah didn't give up. Even as he stuffed Asher's belongings into a travel bag, he couldn't contain his curiosity.

"How many days' journey?" he asked pointedly. "Should I add more clothes?"

But Asher shook his head. "Less clothes. I can buy more if the situation calls for it. Instead, pack a lot of cash..." He paused, then added coolly, "with two or so weapons."

Jeremiah lifted a brow. "Are you going to meet your mother-in-law or mutilate her? Remember she's Violet's mother, it'd help you in the long run. Unless of course you want your story to be an enemy to lovers' kind. I hear women dig it. "

"As if we aren't already," Asher said with a careless shrug, tugging on his black jacket. He knew his Beta was practically dying to know more, and Asher, though secretive, decided to drop him a crumb of information.

"District One is one of the worst zones in this country—poverty-stricken, lawless, violent and overrun by gangs. Makes sense my Purple Queen's got thick hides. Hardly any werewolf is found there, so guess what happens when one suddenly appears?" He left Jeremiah to fill in the blanks.

Jeremiah frowned with concern. "If that's the case, then let me go with—"

"You're my Beta," Asher cut in. "You'll stay and rule in my stead. I told you already, I want my absence under wraps. No one can know where I am or what I'm up to."

He stepped closer, the air tensing with authority. "Besides, didn't I hear there's some beef with members of the South House? Go teach those sons of a bitch a lesson, show them why the West House doesn't entertain traitors."

"Then at least go with a Gamma," Jeremiah pressed, refusing to drop it.

"The tracker is enough. If you don't hear from me in a week, you know what to do."

Still unsatisfied, Jeremiah snapped, "Is she even worth it? Violet doesn't know the sacrifices you make for her. All she does is ignore you like some bitch—"

Asher's warning growl cut him off. His eyes flashed dangerously as he snarled, "You will not speak of her that way again or I'll cut out that tongue of yours."

Then, in a voice dripping with finality, he declared, "I'm the Alpha. The king. It is my responsibility to go to war for my queen, and she receives me in return when I'm back."

Jeremiah swallowed hard, at a loss for words.

Grabbing the bag, Asher slung it over his shoulder. "Until I'm back, keep an eye on my Violent queen. If anything happens to her before I return..." he gave Jeremiah a long, cold look, "you'd better end your own life before I send you to hell myself."

Chapter 199: Blame Violet

"Aren't you going to come in, Ivy?" Daisy asked, eyeing the girl rooted at the threshold.

Violet had already stepped inside without incident, Daisy and Lila followed soon after. Now, only Ivy remained outside as she stared at the horrible interior.

"No!" Ivy wailed, voice shaky with dread. "This has to be a nightmare! I cannot live in a place like this. I'd rather die than be forced to stay in this shack!"

Everyone sighed, as they were reminded in that moment that Ivy was the aristocrat among them. She had likely never stepped foot in such squalor in her entire life, let alone being condemned to live there.

Unfortunately, even though they sympathized with her, the harsh reality remained the same: Ivy couldn't stay outside forever. Not that inside was any better. The roof leaked in several places, dripping rancid water that smelled foul whenever it splashed down. Eww

"Can you do something about her?" Violet asked Lila, exasperation in her tone. The morning was distressing enough as it is already. She couldn't allow Ivy to add to her headache.

A dark smile appeared on Lila's face. "Very much, Princess."

Daisy lifted a curious brow, while Violet simply shrugged; both of them turned to watch what Lila would do.

For a moment, it seemed like nothing would happen. But then a terrible gust of wind roared through the trees, rattling the decrepit house until it moaned as if it might collapse at any second. Outside, branches snapped in the fierce gale.

"Violet!" Daisy cried, alarmed, as the floorboards rattled beneath them. An old lightbulb overhead shook loose from its socket and smashed against the soaked floor.

"What are you doing, Lila?!" Violet shouted, anxiety spiking in her chest. She had no idea what Lila was up to, but the entire structure felt one push away from caving in.

In that very moment, the wind itself seemed to form a physical force, shoving Ivy forward. She stumbled over the threshold, yet instead of hitting the floor with a bone-jarring thud, a bed of leaves quickly materialized, wrapping around her like a protective cocoon and rolling her closer to the others.

Once Ivy was safely inside, the wind ceased, and those leaves receded, slithering back outside where they came from.

"Right at your footsteps," Lila declared proudly with a flourish of her arm, even as Daisy and Violet exchanged dumbfounded glances.

Violet's heart thumped, relieved that Ivy was no longer in the storm. "I asked you to find a way to bring Ivy in, not to collapse what's left of the house and bury us under the rubble."

"There were others out there," Lila responded calmly, the mischief fading from her eyes.

"Others?" Violet gasped, not really needing an explanation. It could only be Elsie's people, lurking somewhere to see how well they were coping with their new punishment. Those assholes.

Lila shrugged. "I had to scare them off before I performed any magic. I've already told you: I can't risk my identity. Not when your safety is my top priority."

"Oh..." Violet muttered, feeling sheepish, guilt pooling in her stomach for having doubted Lila's intentions even for a second. The girl would rather die than let harm come her way.

But they were interrupted by Ivy's wailing. "Why did you bring me here? I told you I can't live in this godforsaken place!"

Daisy rounded on her, having reached the end of her patience. "Enough of it, Ivy. We've all been through a lot already, don't make this any harder."

Ivy scoffed, pointing accusingly at Violet. "Don't make this any harder? When she put us through this mess? Who wanted to be a rogue? I never asked for it!"

Though Violet felt a heavy sense of guilt, Ivy's snippy attitude rubbed her the wrong way. "I warned you!" she snapped. "I told all of you not to follow me! But you went along anyway."

"Because I didn't know it'd be this horrible!" Ivy retorted. "Had I known being a rogue would be my fate, I never would have agreed."

"Oh, right, so that's the real issue?" Violet snarled, voice rising with anger. "You were only in this friendship for the good times and what you could get out of it. Because deep down, you know how hard it'll be to adjust to new roommates. You know no one else would take your selfish, self-entitled, proud attitude like we do!"

Ivy's expression fell for a second before hardening. "You're such a bitch, you know that?"

"At least I'm a bitch who owns up to my mistakes," Violet retorted. "Unlike you."

Ivy's jaw tightened in fury. "I'm done here. Enjoy your new life, 'cause I'm fucking done with you guys!"

Ivy stomped toward the door, but before she reached it, the wood slammed shut right in front of her face, splinters falling like sand. It was Lila's doing.

Lila announced with authority, "No one is leaving this house."

Daisy nodded in agreement, her tone brooking no argument. "Lila's right. Everyone calm down, right now."

"No, I'm not calming down, neither am I spending another second with you three," Ivy insisted, her arms crossed defiantly. "Let me out of here right now!"

Daisy stepped forward, face pinched with impatience. "And go where, exactly?"

Ivy scowled, racking her brain. "I don't know. Maybe get a camping tent and spend the rest of my days in it—thanks to a certain person ruining the rest of my school year for me." Her glare fell squarely on Violet.

Violet in question rolled her eyes, scoffing at the dramatic flare.

"Seriously, Ivy? You of all people living in a tent?" Daisy asked in disbelief.

Ivy shrugged loftily. "It can't be that hard."

"Do you even have a tent?"

"I'll order one."

"Can you set it up?"

"I'll pay extra for someone to set it up," Ivy shot back, chin tilting up. She had the money after all.

"And where would you bathe?" Ivy pressed. "Where would you—y'know—do your business? You can't go back to any of the pack houses, remember?"

Ivy swallowed, hesitation flickering in her eyes. "Well, before wars or globalization, our ancestors always found a way. I'll probably just... do my business in the woods?"

"Even in the middle of the night?"

"Especially in the middle of the night," Ivy muttered, though her voice quivered uncertainly.

Daisy and Lila both groaned in unison, exasperation etched on their faces. They were beyond done with Ivy, their drama queen.

Chapter 200: Bring A Queen Down

"I'm all for letting people make their own choices, but...." She trailed off, her tone suddenly guarded, "I'm afraid I cannot let you go, Ivy. You know my secret, and that of the princess,"

Ivy bristled. "But you told me I wouldn't be able to spill your secret."

"Yes, the spell is binding," Lila admitted, her eyes sharp with caution, "but you humans are tricky creatures. You might find a loophole, and I'm not taking that chances. You have to stay where I can see you."

Ivy let out a dry, humorless laugh. "So, I'm your prisoner now?"

Before Lila could answer, Daisy spoke up. "You're no prisoner, Ivy. You swore to do this together."

"I swore to go to the same house, not this," Ivy snapped.

"This is a house," Lila pointed out, gesturing at the ramshackle walls. "House of the Rogues. They may never accept us, but we can start our own pack right here."

Ivy stared at her, dumbfounded for a moment. Then she burst out. "You all have lost your damn minds. It's not enough that you've been reduced to—"

"We," Violet interrupted abruptly, correcting her sternly. "We have been reduced."

Ivy glared at her. "Excuse me?"

"You're part of this just like the rest of us, Ivy. Refusing to admit it won't change the fact that we are all social pariahs now."

"And yet, you want to start some sort of rebellion?" Ivy scoffed, disbelief laced in her tone.

"So you're just going to roll over and let them do whatever they want to you?" Violet challenged, her golden eyes flashing with fury. "If today's fiasco was any indication, then this is only the beginning. Elsie Lancaster is out for my blood."

"Yes, a war you've now dragged us into," Ivy countered bitterly.

"One you chose to be a part of," Daisy interjected, her voice cutting through the tension. "Don't dump everything on Violet. This is about you too. The plan was to pick a house, sure, but she made a last-minute decision and even begged you to leave. But you stayed, Ivy. Why? Because you trusted her. So trouble her no more and take some responsibility for your own choices."

And just like that, Ivy's mouth hung open, speechless.

"And another thing," Daisy continued. "Even if we had moved into the North House, do you really think it would've been all sunshine and roses? Elsie has hated everything about Violet from the start. That includes us too, her supporters. Do you think she would have made our stay in the North House easy?"

Ivy's brows furrowed as the reality of Daisy's words settled over her. Both Elsie and Violet were bitches in their own right, but the only difference between them was that Violet had a heart, unlike Elsie, the cold-blooded she-wolf. And if hurting those close to Violet was what it took for Elsie to get her revenge, she would do it without hesitation.

Seeing her hesitation, Daisy stepped closer, placing both hands on Ivy's shoulders, forcing her to meet her gaze.

"It's for better or worse, remember?" she reminded her. "It might seem like the worst right now, but at least we're together. We can fight back together."

"How?" Ivy snarked, although her bite was lesser now. "She's off the ranking. The Purple Storm has been cleared. Her fever is over. She has no power now."

At that moment, Violet, still unaware of her exact fate, fished out her phone. The moment she saw the screen, her stomach dropped.

Her name had plummeted to the very bottom of the ranking board. Even Ivy, Daisy, and Lila's rankings were higher than hers, even though they had all been grouped at the very bottom, with her own name standing out as the lowest of the low.

"Those motherfuckers," Violet growled under her breath.

Violet had never been obsessed with rankings, but she had been at the top. And being at the top had given her leverage. It had let her challenge Elsie Lancaster. It had let her date Alaric Storm. It had let her make money with Roman Draven.

But now? She had nothing.

Perhaps, she should have really thought this through because how was she going to make money now?

Her heart pounded as she quickly opened her Moonstagram, the account Lila had set up for her before the bonfire party. Just yesterday, she had shot up to two million followers, all because of her relationship with Alaric Storm.

Violet exhaled a shaky breath when she saw that her follower count hadn't dropped. It remained exactly the same. They had pushed her off the ranking yet did not unfollow her? That was strange.

But it wasn't until her notifications blazed with relentless pings that Violet realized she was not as free as she had thought.

Thousands upon thousands of notifications poured in and they weren't praise. They were vicious.

The picture Lila had taken of her and Alaric together, with her laughing at something he had said, while bathed in the glow of the bonfire, was now flooded with venomous comments.

And it was not just that picture. There were others, like when Alaric kissed her, and the way he had held her waist, pulling her close.

In one word, they were targeting the same bonfire pictures that only hours ago had been adored by everyone.

As for the comments, the abuse was relentless. Whore. Slut. Trash. Gold-digging bitch. They all called her.

Violet's vision blurred with rage and her grip on her phone tightened so hard she nearly crushed it in her fingers.

"What is it, Princess?" Lila asked, noticing the shift in her energy.

Violet turned to face them, eyes blazing with fierce resolve.

"It's not over," she declared. "Not when we have something they don't."

"What, exactly?" Ivy retorted warily.

Violet took a deliberate step forward, the fire in her veins burning hotter.

"We have a Fae," she said, eyes flicking to Lila. Then, meeting Ivy's gaze again, she added darkly, "And my anger."

She clenched her fists. "Elsie Lancaster has to go down."