

Defy The Alpha(s)

#Chapter 21: One Of Them - Read Defy The Alpha(s)

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Determined not to let anyone ruin her breakfast, Violet ignored the unnerving stares and took a bite of her warm croissant, her eyes fluttering shut as she let out an involuntary moan of satisfaction. By the gods, it tasted so good she almost wanted to cry. This was heaven. She closed her eyes, savoring the taste.

But her bliss was cut short when she heard Lila's panicked voice: "Violet, look out —!"

Violet opened her eyes just in time to avoid the food and drinks being thrown in her direction as her entire meal crashed to the floor.

"What the hell?" Violet snapped, her gaze darting upward. An unfamiliar girl stood over her, glaring murderously. Her eyes blazed with anger while her lips curled into a snarl of pure disgust.

"So this is what they replaced me with?" the girl spat, pointing at Violet. Her voice was dripping with fury. "She doesn't even know the fucking rules!"

Oh, fuck. Violet realized at that moment who this was. This must be the former occupant of the twentieth spot on the Lunaboard, the elite student she had replaced. Great. She hadn't even thought about the previous spot-holder until now.

And for once, Violet wasn't even responsible for the trouble that had found her! She was completely innocent this time.

Now every eye in the room was pinned on them, including the elite students peering down from the platform. It was obvious that everyone expected a show, especially with many of them already pulling out their phones to record the altercation.

When Violet stood up, they likely anticipated she'd engage in a fight. Instead, she calmly brushed off the crumbs from her croissant that had fallen on her clothes during the commotion.

The girl in question was poised for a fight, clearly expecting Violet to rise to the bait. But instead, Violet simply turned her back on her and made to leave.

Turning one's back in the middle of a confrontation was probably the biggest insult Violet could give. It meant she didn't consider the girl a threat. She didn't even deem her

worthy of attention. The act showed that Violet was not afraid, and the girl wasn't even on her radar as a worthy opponent.

Sometimes, silence was the most powerful response. A weapon that hurt more than a verbal jab, especially when it denied someone the reaction they craved.

Violet was also painfully aware that the elite students were watching her every move, expecting her to put the girl in her place. She wasn't about to give them that satisfaction. She wanted them to lose interest in her. Perhaps if she didn't react the way they expected, they would deem her boring and forget about her.

Then, she'd be able to go back to the place she belonged. At the bottom. And rest in peace. How blissful that would be.

And the current fool could go back to being twentieth, and all of this would be over. Whatever Asher had planned, it wouldn't work.

"Hey! I'm talking to you. Don't ignore me, you daughter of a whore!" the girl spat after her.

Violet halted abruptly, her neutral expression cracking. Any semblance of restraint vanished at that moment. There was nothing that set her off quite like that insult. Suddenly, her priorities shifted. Perhaps, this girl needed to be taught a lesson after all.

The girl must have sensed her mistake from the way Violet turned on her with a powerful stride, approaching like a storm. In a heartbeat, Violet was standing before her, the girl already bracing herself in a fighting stance.

Violet raised an eyebrow at the gesture. So, she knew how to fight? Was that why she had the confidence to provoke her, thinking she'd win?

Violet chuckled inwardly. Good thing these privileged brats didn't know how gutter rats fought.

Instead of immediately engaging, Violet asked, "What's your name?"

The girl blinked, caught off guard by the question. "Sharon..." she trailed off, realization dawning on her. "Wait, you don't even know my name, and you took my spot?!"

At that moment, everyone around them fell silent, not a single person — not even the staff — daring to intervene.

Violet stoked the fire by saying, "Sorry, I tend not to care about people beneath me."

"You—!" Sharon's eyes widened with fury. She pulled her arm back, preparing to strike, but Violet saw it coming. She dodged and swiftly grabbed Sharon's arm, twisting it behind her, making Sharon yelp in pain.

"How dare you?! Do you even know who I am?" Sharon shrieked, struggling against her grip, trying to free herself.

But Violet didn't care. She grabbed Sharon's hair and forced her to face the crowd.

"Listen up, everyone," Violet began, her voice carrying over the crowd. "I don't care who you are or where you come from. I don't give a fuck about your hierarchy or the privileges you enjoy at this school," Violet declared, her gaze pointedly meeting Elsie's, the silver-haired she-wolf whose attention she now had.

"I came here to study, and that's exactly what I plan to do. I know my place, and I'm not here to change it. So I'll stay in my lane, and I expect you to stay in yours. No trouble, no altercation. You just leave me alone, and we'll be fine."

Violet added, her voice hardened. "Oh, and a quick note, no name-calling, especially the word 'whore.'" She flashed a smile full of teeth. "That one pisses me off the most."

But Sharon didn't get the message, spitting out, "You're nothing but a whore, bitch! You think we don't know that?"

Enough was enough. Violet dragged Sharon over to the spilled food, shoving her face into the mess she caused. Sharon sputtered and struggled, but it was futile. Violet could hear gasps of shock all around her. They probably hadn't seen that coming.

Violet spoke again, tauntingly, as she held Sharon down. "Where I'm from, we don't waste food. And if it falls, we pick it up, like you're doing now."

Sharon finally gave up struggling, and Violet let go. The girl was reduced to sobs, her face and hair smeared with food.

Violet straightened, her gaze scanning the room, meeting the eyes of every student, daring them to challenge her. Her stare lingered on the elites, each one of them watching intently.

Suddenly, one of the girls in the elite section stood up, clapping slowly. She was soon joined by another, then the entire section of elite students, followed by the rest of the students on the floor. Within moments, a cacophony of applause filled the room.

Violet should have been satisfied, even victorious, but all she felt was dread. This wasn't an ordinary applause, not with that proud look on their faces. The elites were accepting her. Whatever just happened, it was like a twisted rite of passage, one that she had somehow passed.

No. Violet's blood ran cold. This was not what she wanted. She didn't want to be one of them.

With her heart pounding, Violet forced her legs to move. She had to get out of there. She needed to find Principal Jameson and drop out of this hell hole today.

As she made her way out, she caught a glimpse of the students descending on Sharon like vultures, recording her humiliation. Violet felt a pang of pity for her. Almost.

But Sharon had brought this upon herself, dragging her background into it. And Violet had bigger problems now than some petty former top twenty elite.

Chapter 22: First Date

Violet did not waste even a second more as she headed to the administrative floor. She had ignored Lila who questioned her where she was going. But the girl didn't need to know, not when she might try to stop her.

The receptionist looked up briefly, then barely acknowledged Violet's presence, her eyes shifting back to the phone screen in front of her. Violet could hear gunfire blaring from the movie she was engrossed in, the volume turned high enough that it drowned out the faint sounds of the office. Violet couldn't tell whether her lack of response was a cue for her to go in or fuck off. Violet chose the former.

She approached the office door, lifting her hand, and knocked firmly. There was no response.

Violet knocked for a second time, wondering if Principal Jameson was even in the office. It wasn't yet eight o'clock, after all.

She had left the dining hall intending to get her issues sorted before the first lesson and hopefully leave the academy once her dismissal had been processed. Everything was planned perfectly.

When there was no response again, Violet frowned. Maybe that was why the receptionist had barely acknowledged her. A heads up would have been nice. What a bitch!

Frustrated, Violet turned to leave when she unmistakably heard the words, "Come in."

Her heart began to race. This was it. The moment she had been waiting for. She would walk into that office, demand her scholarship be revoked, and Principal Jameson would do just that. Violet had made up her mind.

Violet pushed the door open and walked in, her heart pounding with every step. Her eyes fell on Principal Jameson, who was seated in her executive chair with her back turned to her.

For a moment, Violet thought there was something different about the way she looked, like her form was broader or something. But she shook it off, deciding that it was just a trick of the eye. After all, who would be in the principal's seat, if not Mrs. Jameson herself.

Ignoring the strange feeling, Violet straightened up, steeling herself. She cleared her throat, forcing herself to gather the courage. "Mrs. Jameson, I have something to discuss with you."

There was no response from Mrs. Jameson for over a minute, an awkward silence falling between them. Deciding there was no need to beat around the bush anymore if the woman wouldn't even acknowledge her, Violet decided to let the cat out of the bag.

"I don't want to study here anymore, Mrs. Jameson. Please revoke my scholarship and have it handed to someone else."

There it was. Violet felt lighter as soon as she let out the issues that had been eating her up. Now, there was no way the principal could ignore such a direct and sensitive demand anymore.

She noticed the slight movement as the principal's chair swiveled, signaling a turn, and she held her breath in anticipation. But when the chair finally completed its rotation, the face that came into view made the blood drain from her face.

You have got to be kidding me.

There was no Principal Jameson sitting there from the start. It was Asher fucking Nightshade, posing in her place.

Violet didn't know how to process the whirlwind of emotions that hit her. Shock gave way to disbelief, then anger, then dread, and then even more dread as her survival instincts kicked in. This was Asher she was dealing with, and he wasn't even wearing his shades.

Her striking amber eyes locked onto his magnetic, slitted gray gaze—haunting and reptilian, and entirely too focused on her.

Violet swallowed.

"Do tell me, Violet," Asher Nightshade finally spoke, his voice disturbingly calm, a mask over the storm that was clearly building beneath. "What is this I hear about you wanting to reject the scholarship?"

The question echoed across the room, heavy as a judge's gavel, and Violet swallowed hard. This was the first time Asher had addressed her without a nickname. Yep. She'd just royally screwed up.

Before Asher could even blink, Violet had already made up her mind to run, adrenaline kicking in. She had to get out of there.

But before she could take a single step, his voice cut through her thoughts like a blade, commanding, "Don't move."

Violet froze on the spot.

"Relax."

Just one word, and every ounce of tension drained from her body. Violet found herself standing there comfortably, as if she were in the company of an old friend, even though moments ago all she wanted was to flee from this devil.

Asher stood up from the chair, and despite his command to relax, her heart began to pound faster. Violet knew this psychopath was the reason she was in this school, and trying to leave was like spitting in his face. How had he even known she would come here? Could he have predicted this?

A chill washed over her at the thought. If that was the case, then this guy was far more dangerous than she had imagined. Someone who could read her better than she knew herself? That was not someone she wanted to mess with.

But the next moment, anger surged through Violet. Who was he to tell her what to do? She was her own person, and if she wanted to leave this damn academy, it was her decision to make, not his. He had no claim over her.

So when Asher stepped closer until they were face-to-face, his frame towering over her, she spat, "It's none of your business whether I leave or stay, you mindfucker!"

She knew she shouldn't have insulted him; it was like throwing gasoline on a fire. But, oddly enough, Asher didn't seem to mind at all. Instead, he burst into laughter, a sound that should've been chilling, but came out rich and smooth, sending shivers down her spine.

"Oh, my little purple," Asher cooed, cupping her face with his hands. His touch was surprisingly warm, cradling her cheeks with a gentleness that seemed entirely at odds with the monster she knew him to be.

"You are so predictable," he whispered, and that alone made her blood run cold. What did he mean by that? Was he saying there was no escape, that he already knew her

every move? Wait—was he in her head all this time? Violet had no clue how his powers actually worked anymore.

"Can you read my mind? No..." she swallowed nervously. "Are you reading my mind right now?"

Asher chuckled. "How silly of you to think that just because I control minds means I can read them too."

She narrowed her eyes. "You said I'm predictable."

"I am skilled at mind control, which means I can infer a lot about someone's state of mind through careful observation. It's more about perception and guesswork rather than direct thought-reading," he said, running his hand through her hair.

Violet flinched, recalling how he had cut her hair before. She could only hope he didn't have a hair fetish, if he did, she'd probably end up bald, thanks to him.

"It's kind of offensive though," Asher said, with mock disappointment. "Assuming that just because I have mind control, I also read minds? Tsk, that's so bad of you, my little purple flower." He reprimanded her as if she were a child.

"But don't worry," he continued, his tone shifting, "you'll have plenty of chances to learn more about me... in the next..." he glanced at his luxurious watch, "twenty minutes of our first date. At least, in reality."

"What?"

Chapter 23: His Rebellion

This wasn't a date; it was a kidnapping, plain and simple. The last thing Violet wanted was to spend any more time with this stalker, manipulator, emotionless jerk—you name it. But then again, she had no choice. If she was ever going to get out of this academy, she'd have to find some way to appeal to Asher. Hopefully.

So when Asher said, "You should sit," without the usual coercion following his command, Violet understood it was his way of giving her a chance to "behave" before he took away her choice altogether. The underlying threat was still there, just beneath the veneer of politeness.

Without a word, Violet walked over to the plush leather couch in Jameson's office and sat down. She could only hope that Principal Jameson would walk in at any moment and perhaps change the outcome of this situation.

But even as she held onto that faint hope, Violet knew better. It was becoming painfully obvious that Jameson was nothing but a puppet, and the real rulers of this academy were the Cardinal Alphas.

As soon as she sat down, Asher followed, casually plopping down beside her. He sat facing her, one leg bent, relaxed, his entire demeanor as if they were friends about to have a casual chat, despite the tension crackling in the air.

"Turn towards me," he commanded, his voice holding the authority of a king who expected nothing less than obedience.

Violet obeyed, though she let out an exaggerated sigh, a subtle form of rebellion. Not that Asher seemed to care. As long as she followed his instructions, she would have worn a sackcloth, and he would've been indifferent.

They sat facing each other with Violet wondering what exactly he had planned. Asher, however, seemed completely preoccupied with typing something into his phone.

His hair fell messily over his forehead as he concentrated, and for some inexplicable reason, Violet had the urge to brush it aside. However, she clenched her fists slightly, shaking her head. What was wrong with her? There was no way she was catching Stockholm syndrome already.

Almost immediately, Asher looked up, a smile breaking across his face as he set his phone aside. It was so sudden, so genuine, it caught her off guard. The happiness seemed real, and it looked almost... good on him. And he took advantage of her distraction, grabbing her hand.

"So, about my powers..." he murmured, holding her hand firmly as she tried to pull it away, his warmth enveloping hers.

"Mind control and mind reading are two very distinct abilities, even though they both deal with the mind. Technically, it's possible to possess both. In fact, if I really put effort into it, I could develop mind-reading as a secondary power. But, honestly, mind reading can be chaotic and exhausting, and I'd like to keep what's left of my sanity intact."

Oh God, he just admitted his mind wasn't complete. Violet cried inwardly.

Asher continued as if they were in some twisted classroom setting, all the while drawing small circles on her arm. If it was meant to soothe her, it sort of worked, though it only made her more hyper-aware of his presence.

"With my mind control ability," Asher began, "I can manipulate someone else's thoughts, behaviors, and actions. It means exerting influence over their will, forcing them to act in ways they wouldn't otherwise choose." He paused, adding casually, "For example, I could make you kiss me."

Violet's entire body stiffened, her back going rigid. Her gaze flickered up to meet his heated eyes, first in shock, then disgust. But as she searched those strange, captivating orbs, an idea formed in her mind, maybe this was the key to solving her problem.

"The kiss..." she said breathily, the air between them suddenly feeling thick and charged, "Is that what you want? Is that your motive for all of this madness?"

Asher raised a brow, clearly taken aback by her words. Before he could respond, Violet had already pushed him back against the armrest of the couch, leaning over him, their bodies pressed close as she continued, "If that's it, then let's get this over with."

For a long moment, Asher just stared at her, stunned by her boldness, before he broke into laughter. Violet frowned, annoyed. She hadn't been trying to be funny. Then she felt his hand glide up her neck, his fingers brushing against her lower lip, and she shivered despite herself.

His gaze lingered on her lips, the intensity of it causing a warmth to rush to her cheeks. Asher finally spoke, "If all I wanted was a kiss, I would've taken it already. And while I do admire the fire in your eyes, when we kiss, it won't be out of obligation. You won't look as if you're doing me a favor. Your eyes will burn with passion, Violet, not defiance."

Violet flinched as if he'd struck her, though it was only the force of his words that hit her so hard. She shifted back, allowing Asher to return to his previous position.

He grinned, knowing he had won that round. Without missing a beat, as if the moment between them had been just a brief interlude, he reached for her hand again. Violet resisted, baring her teeth at him. Asher didn't back down, baring his own teeth in response, accompanied by a low, guttural growl.

That growl was enough to remind her that while Asher might look human, beneath that skin lay a beast. She hesitated, then reluctantly relented, letting him take her hand. Again.

"As I was saying..." he continued, "I can directly give commands, subtly influence decisions, or even completely override your own choices."

Violet shivered at the thought of him turning someone into a puppet. She wondered just how deeply he had already sunk his claws into her mind. How many of her actions were her own? Had he planted the idea of her coming here, just to orchestrate this twisted version of a "first date"?

No. Violet shook her head. She knew herself well enough to trust that she wouldn't willingly stay at this academy after everything that had happened between her and this psycho. This was her decision, no one else's.

"However..." His voice cut through her thoughts. "The effectiveness of my ability depends on my strength of will, my focus, and sometimes... the level of emotional connection between me and my target..." He trailed off, intertwining their fingers together.

It was a simple gesture, something that shouldn't have affected her, yet Violet's heart began to race for reasons she couldn't quite grasp.

"If my target has a particularly strong will, they might resist the control, especially if they recognize it's happening," Asher explained, his voice almost teasing. "But since you're basically a baby taking its first steps, it's safe to say we'll be having lots of late-night dates, my purple queen."

In other words, he was planning on visiting her dreams tonight. The thought frightened Violet, but at the same time, a rush of strange anticipation went through her. After all, it wasn't every day one got a stalker pervert invading her dreams. No, it wasn't romantic at all. Yet Violet was still a girl, and the idea of a handsome guy pinning after her—even a slightly unhinged one—was thrilling.

"Why me?" Violet whispered. She needed to understand. She wanted to understand. Sure, her application had been "creative," but there had to be others that had caught his attention as well.

This time, Violet didn't flinch when Asher ran his fingers through her hair. His touch was gentle, massaging her scalp, and she nearly melted at the sensation. She shouldn't have been getting comfortable with Asher, the mind-controlling psychopath, yet there was something vulnerable about the moment that drew her in.

"Don't you get it?" Asher whispered, his eyes blazing with intensity. "You're my rebellion."

"What?"

"My future," he rephrased. "Our future has been laid out for us like a damn map. But you, my chosen, will wedge the knife. You will tear them all apart and, perhaps then, rip out my bleeding heart. How poetic would that be?" He laughed, his tone laced with something dark.

Violet pulled away, unsettled as his laughter teetered on the edge of madness.

Almost immediately, the door to the office opened, and Violet's heart leaped, hoping it was Principal Jameson. But it wasn't. Instead, a young girl in the Lunaris Academy uniform entered, pushing a trolley.

"Alpha Asher," the girl addressed him, bowing her head, waiting for his command.

"What is going on?" Violet asked with a frown.

Asher glanced at his watch, a slight crease forming on his brow. "You might be a bit late to your first class today, but don't worry, I'll take care of that. My purple queen must eat first."

"What?" Violet asked, bewildered.

Before Violet could fully process what was happening, the girl began to set up the food on the small table in Principal Jameson's office.

"All done, Alpha," the girl announced, her tone eager, almost as if serving the meal had been a great honor.

Asher barely acknowledged her, dismissing her with a wave. Then his piercing gaze fell on Violet. "What are you waiting for? Eat. Don't think I'll let you wander around campus starving after your little breakfast disaster."

Violet was stunned that he knew about it. While it would have been easy to stubbornly refuse the food, but deep down, Violet was hungry. She decided to let it slide, just this once.

She looked down at the table, and her entire body went still. Goosebumps prickled across her skin as she stared at the meal set before her.

The food was exactly the same as what she'd ordered that morning, right down to the size of the portions and the drink.

This was beyond creepy.

It was borderline stalking.