

## Defy 211

### Chapter 211: Talk To Violet

Griffin glanced out the window, relief etched on his face. "Thank God the storm's finally subsided," he said knowingly, throwing a look over at Alaric Storm, who was sprawled out on the couch, eyes glued to the television.

If Alaric heard him, he didn't acknowledge it. His entire focus was on whatever movie was playing, the screen casting a faint glow across his face.

Griffin sighed, rolling his eyes before stepping forward and placing a tray on the table in front of him. "I made you your favorite snacks."

And the transformation was instant.

Alaric's gaze snapped to the tray, his blue eyes lighting up like a kid on Christmas morning. And it was all thanks to Salted Caramel Brownie Bites.

Griffin had gone all out, baking them in mini-muffin tins to create bite-sized treats, drizzling each with rich, homemade salted caramel sauce, and finishing them off with a sprinkle of sea salt for contrast. The scent alone was intoxicating, a perfect mix of chocolate, butter, and caramelized sugar.

Alaric turned to Griffin with a look of pure adoration. "Have I told you I love you?"

Griffin, pulling off his apron and tossing it onto the table, smirked. "Sorry, I'm straight."

Alaric chuckled but wasted no time grabbing one of the brownie bites. Still warm from the oven, steam curled from the edges as he took a bite.

"Oh God," Alaric moaned, his head rolling back in bliss. "This is so much better than fucking."

Griffin shot him a dubious look. "Mmhmm."

He highly doubted that.

There was absolutely nothing better than sinking his d\*ck into a woman's soft, warm heat, gripping her ass while she moaned his name—

Yeah, nope.

A slight shift in his body temperature had him immediately dropping the thought, reaching instead for another can of beer from the table.

It was times like this he enjoyed the perks of being a werewolf. They couldn't actually get drunk which meant no liver failure, no blackouts, and certainly no hangovers, no matter how many cans of beer they downed. Unless of course, the specifically created ones designed to inebriate them.

And judging by the empty cans scattered around the floor, they'd put that theory to the test. At least a dozen lay discarded, with another half-dozen still waiting for their turn.

It wasn't just the beer either.

Empty snack wrappers littered the ground, proof of their unapologetic binge session. The only reason there weren't piles of dirty dishes in the mix was because Griffin had already cleared them earlier, right before he started baking.

And now?

Now, Alaric sat on the couch, blissfully lost in the world of salted caramel and chocolate, while Griffin nursed his beer, wondering how the hell he ended up babysitting a sugar-high storm wielder.

Well, it had all started when the damn rain just wouldn't let up, and Griffin finally had enough of Thunderboy turning his heartbreak into their personal weather disaster.

So, naturally, he'd done what any sane person wouldn't do. He tracked Alaric down to the hills in the middle of a raging storm and launched a high-risk rescue mission.

Griffin couldn't even recall how many lightning bolts scorched him in the process, but thank the gods he was a tough bastard. In the end, he had convinced Alaric to stop sulking and come back with him.

And now here they were, holed up in his room, binge-eating, watching movies, and pretending like they wouldn't talk about Violet anytime soon.

Griffin didn't bat an eye Alaric flopped onto him while eating, casually using him as a human pillow. Their closeness had been a hot topic for a while with plenty of people rumors they were gay. But he couldn't care less.

He and Alaric had always been tight, like the brother he never had... at least, until recently. His mother had finally given birth to another son —a two-year-old little shit who was Arion's official successor.

Not that it changed anything.

Both his fathers—Aeron and Arion—had never cared about biological ties. They never personalized the children, never claimed one over the other.

As they always said: "They're all ours."

Even up to this day, Griffin had no idea which one was his biological father, especially since Aeron and Arion were identical twins and shared the same features.

Nor did he plan on getting a test done, not until the day he died. It didn't matter. Because they both loved him equally. And that was enough.

Alaric abruptly muttered, "Simp."

Griffin's attention back from wherever his mind had wandered. He glanced over. "What?"

Alaric gestured lazily at the movie. "The guy's been crushing on the female lead for years, and she won't even notice him. Meanwhile, he's got another girl who actually wants him, but does he go for her? No. He just keeps lingering like a lost puppy. So foolish."

Griffin snorted. "You mean the same way you like Violet even when Elsie wants you?"

Alaric sat up instantly. His expression darkened as he snapped, "I told you not to mention her name."

Griffin only shrugged, eyes flicking back to the screen. "I bet in the movie, the boy still ends up with the girl." Then, looking at Alaric, he added, "But this isn't a movie. This is real life. And reality is a bitch. So... isn't it better to talk to Violet one on one and hear her words before writing her off completely? Even if you call it quits, at least you won't spend the rest of your life wondering what if."

For a moment, silence stretched between them.

Griffin could tell from the cold, unreadable look on Alaric's face that he was going to cling to his usual stubbornness. But to his surprise, Alaric sighed.

"Fine." He said, raking a hand through his damp hair. "We'll meet tonight and talk."

Griffin brightened immediately. Then, grinning, he playfully patted his chest. "Now, come on, baby boy. Lay your head on my chest."

Alaric flipped him off without hesitation while Griffin laughed.

All good.

#### Chapter 212: History Of Lunaris

Thanks to the house war, Principal Jameson had instantly announced a campus-wide curfew. No one was allowed outside their dorms after seven p.m., and each house was to stay strictly on its own turf. If students needed something, they had to inform their house prefect.

But what about the rogues? Who would they notify if they needed anything?

Luckily for Violet, Lila, and Ivy, they didn't require much at that moment. The three of them were sprawled on the living-room floor of the shack, bellies full from dinner, and too lazy to make a move.

It was a good thing they'd hauled back enough food, so they wouldn't need to journey to the Silver Court for breakfast tomorrow. Even better, none of it would spoil, all thanks to Lila who had cast a quick preservation spell of some sort over it.

"The lights are going to be an issue," Ivy mumbled, glancing at her power bank, whose battery was nearly dead.

"We'll charge our gadgets tomorrow at school," Violet told her, "and in a day or two, we can figure out hooking up the electrical lines."

The idiots in charge had cut off any supply of light to the rogues' house. Currently, the girls relied on a stash of old candles they'd discovered in the musty storage room, left behind by the shack's previous owners.

Amid the clutter, they'd found the candle holder, a battered stove, some skateboards that might help them zip to school, plus a hopelessly broken bicycle. There was more in there, but it was too late—and too dark—to sift through it all.

Ivy rolled to face Lila. "You have magic, so can't you, like, charge my phone to one hundred percent or something?"

Lila, who seemed miles away, turned her head just enough to scowl. "Don't bother me." Then she went back to staring at the ceiling.

Ivy pouted. "You're so weird." With a huff, she flopped back down. "If I ever get powers," she grumbled, "I want the ability to charge anything at will. Perhaps then, I'd charge your brain, too." She definitely meant that as an insult.

Violet snorted a laugh, pressing her palm to her mouth to stifle the noise. Her attention went to Lila, noting that although she was physically present, her mind was clearly somewhere else. Not just that, her eyes were distant, empty, as if she were drifting in a dream or something.

Curiosity rose in Violet. Was this some Fae thing? When was Lila finally going to teach her more about her Fae roots, and everything she was capable of? Violet was growing impatient.

Suddenly, Ivy burst back into the room, making Lila gasp sharply. In that same moment, the vacant look vanished from Lila's eyes, as if she'd just been pulled out of wherever her mind had wandered.

All three girls sat up, just as Daisy appeared clutching Ivy's tablet, the one she'd borrowed earlier. She looked breathless with excitement. "I think I just found something you're going to want to see."

They exchanged glances, and Violet spoke for them all. "Go on."

Daisy settled herself on the floor, flipping the screen around so they could see. "So I spent hours digging through Lunaris's old history archives, and look what I found..."

She turned the tablet toward them, revealing an ancient photograph of a couple. Confusion flickered across their faces as they clearly had no idea who these people were.

"What about them? Are we supposed to know them or what?" Ivy inquired.

"These are the true founders of Lunaris Academy... kind of," Daisy began, taking a deep breath before continuing.

"During the Great War between humans and werewolves, back when they were ruthlessly pursued, driven from their homes, and often met with hostility or worse. Right on this land, Roy Raymond, and his wife, Abigail Raymond, both ordinary humans with no children of their own, risked their lives to shelter and protect young werewolves. They believed since the gods refused to give them a child, it was their duty to safeguard the innocent ones that the society feared, misunderstood and cut down simply for existing."

"They hid them," Daisy continued. "Took them in when no one else would. Fed them, protected them. For years, they offered sanctuary to young werewolves who had nowhere else to go, shielding them from human soldiers and bounty hunters who sought to exterminate them."

Daisy's tone suddenly darkened.

"Of course, those were dangerous times.

Tragically, Roy and Abigail's compassion did not go unnoticed by those hostile to werewolves. They were eventually discovered and executed, paying the ultimate price for helping the persecuted.

"But that wasn't the end of their story. Among the children they saved was a boy who would later become the first Alpha King. He never forgot their sacrifice and took on their surname, 'Raymond'. When the war finally reached a stalemate, and the hunting of werewolves began to subside, he sought to create a safe haven

for the wolves. He built the first house of Lunaris Academy, not as a school, but as a refuge. A sanctuary where werewolves could grow strong, train, and learn to defend themselves in a world that had once sought to erase them."

It made sense now to Violet why the wolves had such power over Lunaris Academy. Humans didn't belong here. This place was theirs — even if it was first owned by a human.

"As times changed," Daisy said, "Human views on werewolves shifted as well, the Academy evolved with it. What was once a secret refuge became a structured institution, where werewolves could not only train in combat but learn the skills they needed to survive in a world that would never fully be theirs."

And then came the part everyone already knew.

"But the human government was never comfortable with what they didn't understand. After all, a school filled with trained werewolves sounded more like an army being bred in secret. They wanted oversight. Control. And the easiest way to get it was integration."

"The government demanded that humans be admitted. And it was not just any humans, but hand-selected ones, precisely those from influential families. Those who could be trusted to return to their world with 'understanding' and a firm leash on them," Daisy explained. "And for years, that's how it was. Werewolves and humans learn side by side, but never as equals."

"Eventually, the system began to expand and the public became upset with such exclusivity. The government finally proposed that the Academy shouldn't just be a place for the privileged. The common public alike should have the same opportunity to attend, regardless of their status."

Her lips pressed together.

"But let's be real. The Academy was never going to open its gates freely to just anyone. So the Conscription was born. Now, every eighteen-year-old in their last year of high school is offered a once-in-a-lifetime chance to attend Lunaris Academy to ensure equality of opportunity and foster a more peaceful coexistence. Or so they claim."

#### Chapter 213: To Restrict A Rogue

"Nice story, but I don't see how that's going to help our situation." Ivy was being her bitchy self again.

Daisy shot her a flat look. "I didn't say it was going to help us. And perhaps, if you let me finish, we'd see if we can salvage something out of our situation."

"There's more?" Lila lifted a brow.

"Oh, there's more," Daisy said, her voice taking on an ominous edge. "And worse."

That got everyone's attention.

"Just as you thought, we are not the first students to go rogue," Daisy continued. "Except, in every recorded case, it's always been werewolves. Never humans. I don't know what's with the wolves them, but there's this restlessness, an unyielding dominance that makes them crave rebellion against their Alphas. And Lunaris Academy has had no shortage of them. The most notable one is Humbert's Case."

"Humbert? A student?" Violet asked.

"Yes. This happened about thirty-something years ago. There were no Cardinal Houses at the time, but the current Alpha King, Elijah, was already reigning over the Academy. And, as always, there were those who thought they could challenge him."

Daisy continued, "Humbert and his allies were among them. They rebelled, openly defying the Academy's hierarchy, and in return, they were sentenced to this same shack. It was the largest rebellion Lunaris had ever seen. According to the records, it was feared that Humbert and his rogues would cause irreparable damage to the school. Over twenty students renounced their ties to their packs, choosing to go rogue."

"Twenty?" Violet was shocked. And to think the academy was making a ruckus over four of them.

"Elijah had every right to expel them as the Alpha king's brother at the time. That was what the school authorities advised as well. But it turned out, he was far more sinisterly clever than anyone gave him credit for. Instead of expelling, he sentenced them here." Daisy gestured around them. "To this very house. A 'punishment' disguised as mercy."

Daisy said. "The idea of being a rogue is to be free from authority. They answer to no one, obey no laws, reject the hierarchy of the wolves. That's why true rogues are cast out of the pack. But in this case? Sending twenty students to a single house, with limited space and resources... That's not freedom. That's a imprisonment."

A chill ran through the girls.

"Humbert forgot he wasn't an Alpha," Daisy continued. "But he tried to be. And the result was within one week, all twenty students were dead."

Ivy swallowed hard. "What happened?"

"Chaos. They tore each other apart."

"But twenty of them dying? That's too far-stretched," Violet said, frowning.

"Werewolves are prideful creatures. They will die for what they believe is their honor. Without an Alpha to lead them, without order, it became a war zone. They fought each other to death." Daisy then added, "I had to hack the school network to find this, so don't go running your mouth. The Academy locked this news down hard. They didn't want it leaking to the public."

"Well, thank the gods, we're not werewolves," Ivy muttered, clearly creeped out by the revelation. "At least we don't need to fight each other to the death like those testosterone-filled maniacs."

The girls exchanged looks, just as Violet echoed, "Thank God. Indeed."

"That's not all," Daisy said grimly, the mood in the room plummeting even further.

Ivy groaned dramatically, throwing her hands in the air. "What now? Do you get off on scaring the life out of me?"

Violet, however, wasn't in the mood for dramatics. "What is it?" she asked firmly.

Daisy hesitated for a second before finally saying, "I found out that there are actual Rogue Rules and Restrictions in place."

"Oh, God," Ivy gasped, looking like she was about to faint.

"Is it that bad?" Violet pressed, her voice tense.

"In my opinion? Yes."

"Fine. Let's hear it, then."

Daisy took a deep breath and began to read aloud:

#### Current Rules & Limitations for Rogues at Lunaris Academy

- Rogues are forbidden from living in the Cardinal Houses (North, South, East, or West) and must reside in designated Rogue Quarters or off-campus housing.
- No access to house-exclusive resources, meaning no private study lounges, elite training grounds, unless permitted by an alpha.
- No pack sponsorships—rogues cannot receive financial aid, mentorship, or protection from any house.
- Restricted access to combat training classes unless granted special permission.
- No priority in healing or medical services as pack members will always be treated first in any emergency.
- No access to pack-specific benefits, such as priority meal plans, exclusive events, or elite networking opportunities.
- Rogues are automatically ranked at the bottom of the school's social hierarchy, regardless of their previous standing.
- Cannot challenge a house-ranked student for rank, territory, or leadership.
- Cannot hold leadership positions in any student-run organization unless granted approval by a House Alpha.
- Rogues are banned from house-exclusive social events such as House Parties, Alpha Gatherings, or Ranked Council Meetings.

- No official status in pack-run clubs\*

unless directly sponsored by an Alpha or Beta.

- If a rogue and a house member fight, the rogue is automatically at fault, facing harsher consequences regardless of who started it.

- Job opportunities on campus are extremely limited. Positions available to rogues are janitorial, maintenance, or errand-running jobs.

- Curfew is enforced at midnight—any rogue caught on campus after curfew will face disciplinary action or detention.

- Must check in with security every time they enter or leave campus grounds.

- If a rogue is attacked, harassed, or falsely accused, they must defend themselves —houses are not required to intervene.

- Cannot appeal punishments in the house court system, meaning rogues have no voice in student disciplinary matters.

- Punishments for rogues are double that of house students for the same infraction since rogues are considered natural troublemakers and will always face stricter consequences.

Daisy let out a shaky breath as she finished reading, lowering her phone. When she looked up, no one looked okay.

Violet's expression was blank, her jaw tight as if she was forcing herself not to react. Ivy looked pale as death, blinking rapidly like she couldn't believe what she'd just heard. And Lila... well, Lila was just being Lila.

"So... what you're saying is..." Ivy's voice was thin, brittle. Scared. "We're basically second-class citizens now?"

"Worse," Daisy corrected, her voice grim. "We're the lowest of the lowest. No one has to treat us with respect, no one has to protect us, and if someone starts something with us, we're always the ones who get blamed."

#### Chapter 214: Dangerous Imagination

Violet couldn't sleep. Not after the bombshell Daisy had dropped on them earlier. As if being a Rogue wasn't hard enough, now there were actual rules they had to follow. And if there was anything Violet hated, it was rules designed to intentionally persecute others.

To be honest, Violet wasn't worried about herself. No, she could handle whatever Elsie and her minions threw her way. What concerned her most was her friends. If Elsie couldn't get to her directly, she'd undoubtedly turn her frustrations on them.

Violet sighed, rolling onto her side, staring at the poorly lit room. The wobbling candlelight cast shifting shadows on the walls, adding an eerie stillness to the space. Violet would have missed her old room, if not for the fact that her mind wouldn't stop running amok with too many thoughts to count.

Tomorrow, she told herself. Yes, tomorrow she'd figure out what to do. For now, she needed sleep.

But sleep never came easy for her.

Instead, Violet lay on her back, eyes fixed on the ceiling, letting her mind drift. Counting sheep had never worked for her, not even back at the trailer when sleep was just another battle to fight.

She remembered those nights all too well. When Nancy brought customers over at ungodly hours, she had no choice but to curl up in the cramped living room, lying on that hard, lumpy sofa, staring at the trailer's roof and willing herself to be anywhere but there.

Back then, Violet's only escape was her imagination.

Usually, she'd dream of having money. Lots and lots of it. With the money, she'd have a better life and wouldn't have to scrape by and live her dream life.

And on some nights—her better nights—she'd let herself believe in something sweeter.

Love.

Her prince in shining armor would always take the form of her latest secret crush—the one she never spoke to, only admired from afar. And in her mind, she'd play out the perfect fairytale. They'd fall in love. Get married. Have a family. Live a life untouched by the ugliness of reality.

But fairytales were for fools.

And Violet Purple had long since stopped believing in them even if she couldn't help but dream about it. Guess she was a fool too.

Except this time, Violet's imagination took a wilder turn.

She pictured Asher Nightshade hovering over her, his slitted gray eyes locking onto hers with a gaze that sent a shiver down her spine.

"Missed me?" he murmured before burying his face into her neck. His lips moved against her skin, pressing hot, lingering kisses that sent a pulse of heat through her body.

Instinctively, her back arched, pressing closer to him. A large, calloused hand slid over her stomach, fingers splayed wide as if to claim every inch of her feverish skin.

He didn't stop. If anything, her reaction spurred him on. His mouth trailed lower, brushing over the delicate line of her collarbone, before his jaw pressed down against the thin strap of her singlet, pushing it aside as he worked his way to the swell of her chest.

"Asher," she gasped.

"Shh, Relax." he hushed her, his lips grazing her skin, his fingers drawing lazy circles around her waist, making her hyper aware of his touch.

Just when she thought he would dip lower, push the boundaries even further, Asher switched tactics, gliding back to her throat and letting his tongue dip into the hollow of her neck. A spot she had never realized was sensitive until now.

A soft, involuntary moan slipped past her lips.

Asher pulled back slightly, his gray eyes gleaming with smug satisfaction. "I was waiting for that sound."

Then he turned his head, addressing someone just out of her view. "Hold her down."

Violet blinked in confusion. \*What?\*

Before she could react, another figure loomed above her. Alaric.

"Little Vixen," he purred, pinning her wrist to the bed with something that felt like chains of some sort.

Violet's breath caught. "What are you doing? Let go of me right now!" she demanded, tugging at the strange restraints, but they didn't budge.

Before she could fully process what was happening, someone grabbed her other arm, binding it as well. Griffin appeared above her. "Don't worry, love," he said. "You're in safe hands."

"A lady is having a very good time," another voice drawled, and Violet twisted her head to see Roman perched on the edge of the bed, wearing that infuriating smirk.

What the fuck was going on here?

In one hand, he held a feather, twirling it between his fingers. Then, intentionally and slowly, he dragged it across her stomach. The light touch sent a ripple of sensation through Violet, her muscles tensing involuntarily.

Fascinated, Roman watched her body react. "Interesting," he mused. Then he gave Asher a mischievous glance. "The lady's quite sensitive. You'd do well to serve dessert properly."

"Yes, sir!" Asher replied, and Violet looked down to see him kneeling between her legs.

"Oh, God," she whispered, realizing exactly what was about to happen.

Asher's grin turned wicked as he spread her thighs apart with ease. His gaze lifted, locking onto hers with a promise that sent a shudder racing through her.

"Don't worry," He said with dark amusement. "This god will take care of you."

Then he lowered his head.

Violet jolted awake, sitting up so fast that her head spun. Her breath came in loud gasps, while her chest rose and fell as she tried to calm the frantic pounding of her heart. Sweat clung to her skin, dampening the thin fabric of her nightshirt, but that wasn't the worst of it.

There was a deep, aching pulse throbbing between her legs. Heat curled low in her stomach, leaving her restless, and Violet realized, with mortification, that she was... turned on.

What happened? This was so not the kind of imagination she had in mind. How on earth was she turned on by that depravity?

She fell back onto the bed, pressing a hand over her face. This can't happen again. Next time, she'd avoid imagining any of the cardinal alphas. That should do the trick and keep her out of trouble.

Guessing it must be around midnight, Violet tried to calm down and drift back to sleep. Except, just as her eyelids fluttered shut, she heard a slithering sound.

The hairs on the back of her neck stood up. The candle's weak glow barely illuminated the room, but it was enough for her to see a small, green snake creeping toward her bed.

Before Violet could even blink, the snake morphed into a familiar green-haired Alpha.

Roman.

That motherfucking bastard!

A current of adrenaline tore through her. Violet opened her mouth to scream, to wake the entire goddamn dorm if she had to, but Roman was faster. He lunged, pinning her to the bed and clamping a hand over her mouth.

"Don't make a sound."

Oh, hell no.

Chapter 215: The Truth About Friday —1

"Don't. Make. A. Sound," Roman warned again, just in case she had any other bright ideas.

At first, defiance blazed in Violet's eyes, but the seriousness in his voice told her he meant every syllable. So she grudgingly forced herself to relax.

That was when she felt it.

The full weight of Roman's body pinning her down. His naked chest flattened against hers, the heat of his skin scorching through the thin fabric of her nightshirt. And worse, something else —very much not flaccid—nudged her thigh.

Her eyes widened in alarm, a new kind of awareness crashing over her.

Roman smirked, clearly enjoying the realization that dawned in her gaze.

"Get off me, asshole," she snarled into his palm.

Roman studied her for a moment, his keen senses reading her body language. Then, as if deciding she wasn't a threat, he slowly lifted his hand from her mouth. Except that was his first mistake.

The second he showed that sliver of trust, Violet snapped her knee up, aiming for the most vulnerable part of him.

But Roman didn't carry the nickname "the fox" for nothing. Anticipating the attack, he caught her leg with infuriating ease, his fingers curling around her calf before she could land the blow. He held her there, a dark, knowing look gleamed in his eyes, as if to say, Nice try.

That smug look sent heat rushing to Violet's face, not out of embarrassment, but sheer frustration.

Bastard.

Fine. If she couldn't fight him, she'd wake the whole damn dorm.

"Li—!"

Before she could finish, Roman's hand was on her mouth again, muffling her again. But Violet wasn't one to be silenced easily. This time, she bit him hard enough that she almost tasted blood.

Roman jerked his hand away with a low growl, giving her just enough space to wriggle out of his grasp. Violet rolled off the bed, landing hard on the floor, but she was up in an instant, scrambling toward the door.

"Lila! Lila!" she hollered.

"Shit!" Roman cursed under his breath. He knew he had seconds before the entire dorm was awake.

"Don't drag anyone else into this," he said urgently. "I'm only here to talk to you, not to harm you."

Violet ignored him, gripping the doorknob, ready to run.

"It's about Elsie."

She froze.

Her fingers hesitated on the cold metal handle, her mind warring with itself. Elsie? No. She couldn't trust him. The last time she put faith in Roman, look where she was.

As if sensing her doubt, Roman added, "On the gods and the living, I swear it."

Violet shouldn't trust him. She knew that.

But something in his expression spoke some measure of sincerity she couldn't quite dismiss.

But then, a sharp knock rattled the door.

"Princess!" Lila's frantic voice came from the outside.

Violet's heart leapt in her throat.

"Hide," she whispered tersely, eyes darting around the dim room.

Violet turned, just as Roman began to make a move. When she opened the door, Lila rushed inside, wide-eyed and scanning the room as if expecting to find someone lurking in the shadows.

Seeing no one, she turned to Violet, panting, "What's wrong, Princess? Did something happen?"

Violet swallowed hard, forcing her expression into a neutral one. "I had a nightmare," she lied smoothly despite her racing pulse. "I dreamt you were taken away from me or something."

Lila exhaled, relief softening her features. "That was just a nightmare, Princess. Nothing will happen to me. I won't leave your side." She pulled Violet into a comforting hug.

Guilt prickled at Violet for deceiving her, but what choice did she have? She had to hear what that bastard had to say about Elsie

When Lila finally released her, she offered, "If you want, I could share the bed with you tonight."

"No!" Violet said, more forcefully than intended. Lila blinked, startled.

Violet coughed, feigning bashfulness as she scratched the back of her head. "I mean... I'm no longer ten. It would be quite shameful for a girl my age to be scared of nightmares."

Lila chuckled. "Then sleep well, Princess

"You too, Lila."

Shutting the door behind her, Violet took a moment to steady her nerves. Then she stepped into the middle of the room, scanning warily for a certain green-haired Alpha. "Roman?" she called softly. "Where the hell are...?"

A small, green-furred rat scuttled out from under the bed and scampered toward her feet. In one swift motion, the rat shifted into a very naked, and annoyingly handsome, Roman. He stood so close she could practically feel the heat rolling off his skin.

Violet swallowed hard, letting her gaze flick over his strong, chiseled shoulders, and washboard abs, each ripple defined in the candlelight. She made sure not to look any lower than his waist, but it was impossible to ignore how finely built Roman was.

Crossing her arms, Violet tried to maintain composure, despite the fact that this was probably the last sight she expected at such an hour.

Roman opened his mouth first. "From Rogue Queen to Princess. You certainly have a peculiar kink, my lady," he teased in that usual, mocking tone.

Violet, however, was in no mood for banter. "What do you want?" she demanded coldly. "You said something about Elsie, so better start talking, or I'll start screaming murder."

"Well, about that..." He drawled, stretching the moment out, clearly enjoying the power shift. "I'm sure you have many questions about Friday."

"Oh, I do have," Violet deadpanned, her tone threaded with warning.

Roman was unbothered by the barely veiled threat. "Calm down, Lady Purple. I'll answer all your questions, but we'll have that conversation outside."

Violet narrowed her eyes. "You think me a fool? You want to lure me outside so hkuspring whatever trap you've laid, don't you?"

Roman lifted his palms in a calming gesture. "My mouth tends to run away from me, and I can't promise I won't say something to spark your fury. I'd also rather avoid the combined wrath of you and your three roommates. So why not have this chat a bit more... civilly?"

Violet didn't move. She didn't trust him. Not even a little.

Roman exhaled, shaking his head as if this was her loss. "Or..." he said, tilting his head, "I can just leave. Take my stories with me." He let the words hang between them, watching her reaction carefully.

Violet clenched her jaw. She hated when he played these games.

"But," Roman continued smoothly, "if you do want to talk, meet me behind this lovely new shack of yours, where we'll be free from prying eyes. Not that there'd be many at this witching hour, but you can never be too careful."

He added one final time. "I'll be waiting. And please, come alone."

#### Chapter 216: The Truth About Friday —2

Roman's expression brightened the moment he spotted Violet approaching, watching her every step like a predator assessing its prey.

"I was beginning to think you weren't going to show," he teased.

Violet, however, wasn't smiling. Without hesitation, she tossed a shirt at his face. "Put that on."

Roman caught it with one hand, his brow arching in question. He lifted the fabric to his nose, sniffing. "Whose shirt is this?"

He could not catch a scent. If anything, it smelled old.

"Doesn't matter," Violet said icily. "Just wear it, or we're not having this conversation."

Roman played idly with the fabric. "Why?" His voice dipped into something teasing as he let his eyes slowly rake over her, knowing exactly how to get under her skin. "You don't like what you see?" He gestured toward his bare torso.

Refusing to lower her gaze, Violet kept her expression steeled. "Put. It. On."

Roman sighed dramatically, pouting in a mean moue. "So violent," Then, to her shock, he added in a whisper, "I like it."

Violet's brows furrowed. What the hell was wrong with this guy?

Thanks to the half moon overhead, its light was just enough for Violet to watch Roman slip the shirt over his head, his muscles flexing as he pulled the fabric down. It fit snugly over his frame, covering enough of his man bits. Thank the gods.

When he was done, he spread his arms wide. "Well? How do I look?

Violet's response was a sudden heavy slap across his cheek. The playful light in Roman's eyes vanished instantly.

"You promised you wouldn't make any request that put me in harm's way!" she spat.

Pah!

Another slap, this time on the other cheek. Roman took it without flinching. He didn't even try to stop her. He just stood there, taking it; only grimacing at the sting.

"And yet, you deceived me!" she shouted, her eyes flashing with uncontained fury. "Where is your honor?! What is the worth of your words?!"

Roman's patience finally snapped.

"It was for your own good!" he yelled at her. He deserved all her violent outburst, but he would not apologize for his actions.

Violet's breath was ragged, her heart hammering in her chest. She searched his face, trying to understand him. But there were too many thoughts running through her mind, too many emotions warring inside her to get a good read on him.

"More like for your own selfish reasons," she said, voice bitter.

Roman's eyes darkened. Without warning, he seized her arm, tugging her so close she nearly collided with his chest. Violet's breath caught.

For a second, she feared he might strike her, so she instinctively felt for the hidden knife in the pocket of her nightshirt. The same knife she had stolen from Asher during the Running Game. She wasn't foolish enough to meet Roman without some form of defense.

But Roman didn't hit her. He just held her. His grip was firm but not painful, his body rigid against hers as he sneered down at her.

"You, Violet Purple," he hissed, "without knowing anything, come out of nowhere and try to break up a relationship already decreed by the Alpha King. With your sweet little cunt, you seduce my brothers—"

Violet swung at him again, but this time, he caught her wrist mid-air. She struggled, but Roman pulled her closer, until their bodies were nearly flush, their breaths intertwining. The heat between them was suffocating, their rage reaching dangerous levels.

His green eyes burned with a challenge. "Isn't that the case? Or is there something more special about you?"

Violet gave a harsh laugh. "Of course. A man-whore would always think the worst of others."

Roman's muscles coiled, his jaw clenching, her words having landed a blow to his pride. He usually bore that title proudly, but from her lips, it oddly pissed him off. Yet even as he stood there fuming, Violet pushed him further.

"Or did I lie?" she taunted him.

His teeth ground together, his nostrils flaring. "Elsie might be awful, but I'd pick her over a whore like you any day."

Violet didn't even blink.

"Good for you," she said, laughing coldly, her eyes shining with mockery. "The man-whore and the bitch. Both of you would make such an excellent couple. I bet with your prowess, she'd breed you an entire litter to carry on your great legacy!"

She knew her mouth would get her into trouble one day. But tonight? Violet was too angry to care. Moreover, he was the one who had woken her from bed to insult her, she'd not accepting his grace insults lying down.

"Don't call Elsie that!" Roman snarled, grabbing a fistful of Violet's hair and yanking back just enough to make her yelp.

Pain flared along her scalp, but Violet refused to show weakness. Instead, she seized the chance to pull out her knife with her free hand. But Roman was faster. He caught her wrist and wrenched the blade from her grip, tossing it aside.

"You really thought you could use that on me?" Roman rasped, eyes bright with the wolf clawing to the surface. The air between them was boiling with a strange tension.

Trembling with anger, Violet bit out.

"Actually, I was thinking of taking out one of your eyes for placing a hand on me. I'm curious if your lovely Elsie would still be so attached to you if you were disfigured."

"Let's put that theory to the test, then," he murmured darkly.

Violet braced herself, fully prepared to fight him. She was already running battle plans through her head. A plan that involved screaming for Lila and the two of them committing murder of the south

cardinal alpha. As long as the Oracle kept her mouth shut, nobody would ever suspect there was a cardinal alpha buried behind their shack.

Yes. Her plan was that dark.

But instead, Roman did the unthinkable.

He kissed her.

It wasn't soft.

It wasn't gentle.

It was fury incarnate.

His lips crashed against hers with bruising force, claiming her mouth like a battlefield. His grip in her hair tightened, angling her head to take more, to devour.

Their rage melted into a tangled mess of anger, tension, and suppressed desire neither of them wanted to admit. Violet gasped against him, her fingers curling into his shirt, torn between pushing him away and pulling him closer.

### Chapter 217: Fury And Fire

Violet found herself responding to Roman's heated kiss, their mouths crushing together in a furious clash.

Roman groaned against her lips, pressing his body so firmly to hers that there was barely any gap; the layers of clothing were practically useless, because she could feel every inch of him—especially one part of him that was definitely not soft.

Somewhere in the background, a soft rustle sounded in the woods, but neither of them noticed the retreating figures, too consumed by the raw fire of their kiss and the power struggle that fueled it.

They broke apart for a moment, gasping for air. Violet's head spun, half her senses returning just enough for her to thunder, "What is this? I thought you were going to fight me!"

"Fight you? Physically?" Roman blinked at her as though the idea had only just occurred to him.

Then he scoffed with a lazy, sensual edge to his voice. "I'm sorry, my lady, but I'm a lover, not a fighter."

"What?" Violet was dumbfounded.

His green eyes smoldered as they roamed her flushed face, her parted lips still swollen from their kiss.

"And this," Roman murmured, his thumb brushing over her lower lip, "is how I fight my battles." He leaned in to whisper, "So let's fight, Lady Purple. Show me your worst."

Violet barely had time to brace herself before Roman captured her lips again.

His hands clasped her face, tilting it just the way he wanted as his mouth slanted over hers, demanding and insistent. A low, pleased sound rumbled from his throat as she responded, her own fingers gripping the front of his shirt.

Roman didn't kiss like he was giving, no, he kissed like he was taking. And gods—he was good.

His tongue swept past her lips, deep and unrelenting, coaxing a moan out of her before she could stop it. In that instant, it felt like Roman truly was some god of pleasure, stealing her breath and leaving her teetering on the edge between fury and desire.

But this was a battle, and so far, Roman was winning.

Violet swore she was not thinking straight when her hand traveled down and closed over his hardness.

Dear God.

The temperature couldn't be normal. He was quite hot. Not just that, Roman was thicker and longer than she thought. Not that she had thought about "it" a lot. Maybe once or twice. Surely, not more than that. Kind of. Shut it.

Roman groaned into her mouth as she ran her fingers up and down his length. Violet felt a rush of power at the realization that the arrogant, self-assured Roman Draven, was unraveling under her touch.

She was the one in charge and she could feel it in the way his kiss turned messy, almost desperate, as if he was struggling to keep up.

To be honest, Violet had no idea what she was doing. This would be the first time she would be giving a member of the opposite sex a hand job and to think it was Roman of all people. All Violet had to rely on was her creativity, like circling the base of his member right now.

He growled into her mouth, the sound vibrating through her and making her own core pulse. But Violet forced herself to remain controlled, determined to win this war.

Roman grew delirious with pleasure, one hand digging into hair while the other gripped her waist, anchoring him through the waves of ecstasy.

Violet knew it was game over the moment she fondled his balls, noticing how his body tensed, muscles taut. So she gave a wicked squeeze, eager to push him right to the edge.

Sensing he was a mere breath away from losing control, and thus being conquered, Roman abruptly pulled back with a staggering amount of self-control.

"Nice try, Lady Purple," he rasped, his voice thick with need, yet smug with victory. "But I've been playing this game much longer than you have."

Before Violet could react, he had her backed against the nearest tree, the rough bark pressing into her skin. Then Roman dropped to his knees, his hands sliding down her curves, gripping her hips.

Violet's eyes widened as it sank in: her dream was playing out right before her, though in a different form.

She should stop this, end their twisted game. Yet deep down, some reckless part of her wanted it. No matter how much she'd regret it when her head cleared.

Roman looked up at her then, his green eyes dark with hunger. "Now it's my turn. Let's see how many hits you can take."

He hiked up her undershirt, hands traveling up her smooth, soft thighs. Violet let out a shaky gasp as he hooked his fingers into her panties and pulled them down. Then Roman buried his face between her folds, finding her slick, hot, and ready.

"Oh God!" Violet bit her lip, squeezing her eyes shut against the sudden onslaught of sensation. She had definitely taken on more than she could handle.

It should be against the rules—except no rules existed when they started this outrageous game. Roman, without warning, slipped a long, thick finger inside her.

"Urrgh..." Violet choked out, pressing a hand over her mouth so her roommates wouldn't hear.

She didn't want to imagine the judgment in their eyes if they found her like this. She shouldn't be frolicking with the enemy, but right about now, she couldn't help it.

Her body clenched instinctively around his finger as he thrust in and out at a controlled pace, drawing a muffled cry from her throat as the sensations mounted.

It didn't help that Roman looked up at her just then, his enchanting green eyes pinning her in place while he continued to fuck her with his finger.

"Look at us... the man whore and the whore. Isn't it a chaotic sight?"

Violet couldn't even speak, too overwhelmed by the pleasure. Though she was no stranger to touching herself, this was an entirely different level of intensity. Her hands found his hair, gripping tightly. God, It felt so good.

Roman sped up, pushing her closer and closer to the brink. Violet's breathing hitched in short, urgent gasps, her body trembling as she teetered on the edge.

But that was not the end. It was just the beginning.

Roman quickly delved between her legs again, lapping up every trace of her release. He let out a sound of appreciation when her sweetness coated his tongue, intoxicating him.

Violet's head fell back against the tree, eyes fluttering shut. Roman braced her while he licked and sucked at every inch, his mouth torturing her sensitive flesh.

Roman never slowed, tongue, mouth and fingers working in tandem to drive her wild. Instead of screaming, Violet bit down on her palm as she came again, her body seized by wave after wave of pleasure

Roman, tasting a fresh surge of her essence, feasted on it, drawing out every last drop of her orgasm until Violet was limp and panting, sliding down the tree trunk.

He glanced up, his face glistening with her arousal, a self-satisfied smile playing on his lips.

"I guess I won, lady purple."

Chapter 218: Devil's Advocate

Oh, shit.

That was the first thought that came to Violet's mind as she slowly came down from the fifth heaven.

Her body still tingled from the lingering orgasm, but her mind was already snapping back into place. She forced herself to stand, ignoring the weakness in her legs. There was no need to panic. The deed was done, and now it was up to her to salvage the situation.

"Thank you for your services," Violet said stiffly, straightening her clothes as though Roman were some male escort being graciously compensated.

Roman stilled. Then a growl rumbled in his chest. Was she seriously pulling this act on him?

Violet arched a daring brow. "It was a good one, wasn't it?"

But he bristled.

For a second, Violet thought he might snap, his eyes burning dangerously close to fury. But instead of exploding, Roman let out a dark chuckle, the sound slithering down her spine like silk.

Roman rose to his feet slowly and Violet stepped back instinctively, only to feel the rough bark of the tree pressing into her back. Rather than backing away, he pressed closer, his body heat wrapping around her like a trap.

He captured her face between his hands, stroking her cheeks in a slow, sensual gesture. "If it was that good, then you should forget Alaric and Asher..."

His voice dropped, his lips grazing her cheek as he added, "Griffin too. I've seen the way that one's been staring at you lately."

Violet blinked. "Excuse me?"

Roman's hands trailed down her sides, intentionally brushing the swell of her breasts, sending a heated jolt through her that she refused to show outwardly. His hands settled on her waist and he jerked her forward.

Violet gasped, fully aware of the undeniable proof of his arousal pressing against her stomach.

Roman smirked, knowing exactly what he was doing.

"I would fuck you to your heart's delight every day..." he whispered against her ear, his breath hot and tempting.

His lips trailed along her jaw, down to her throat. Soft, slow, maddening kisses.

Violet's eyes fluttered shut, her head tilting back before she could stop herself, giving him more access.

"Satisfy your body's every cravings..." He paused, his lips hovering right over her pulse.

Roman pulled back just enough to meet her eyes. His gaze was no longer playful, it was now serious.

"If you would only leave the others alone." He let the words sink in before adding, "I'll give you anything you want. Sex. Money. Fame. You name it."

For a moment, Violet almost fell for it.

She lifted a hand to his face, fingers grazing his jaw, her touch light and reverent. His eyes closed at the sensation, as if savoring it.

Then Violet whispered in a lilting tone, "What a great martyr you are, sacrificing yourself for the good of your Cardinal brothers..." Then her eyes hardened, and she shoved him back. "Except I don't believe a word of it."

Roman had already proven he'd do whatever it took to reach the throne, including accepting that snake, Elsie. She wouldn't be a pawn on his chessboard.

She stepped away, struggling to regain composure. She had to be careful with this one. The bastard was a master at seduction, and she would not fall into his honey trap. Again.

Even as stubborn as she was, Violet knew when to retreat from a losing battle, and right now, if she stayed any longer, she was going to make a grave mistake.

"I came here to learn the reason behind your action on Friday, but all you've fed me are crumbs."

She turned to leave, throwing over her shoulder, "So if that's all for tonight, I'll be taking my leave."

Then, just to twist the knife, she added, "Thanks for the release. I needed that."

Violet barely made it two steps before he was right in front of her with astonishing speed, blocking her path and snarling.

"I'm the one thing stopping Elsie from tearing you apart."

Violet didn't flinch, meeting his glare evenly. "No, you're not. That would be Asher. Perhaps, I should be thanking him if I knew where he was right now."

Roman's face hardened.

"Don't encourage Asher. With his reckless streak, he's already flirting with too much trouble. Don't give him more reasons to oppose Elijah."

Violet held his gaze, challenging him. "Then start talking, Roman."

Roman hesitated. Then, reluctantly, he said, "I'm sure you've met Micah, son of the former Alpha king, Angus Raymond IV."

Of course, Violet has met him and heard his story and she still felt bad for Micah every damn time.

"His father was so obsessed with having absolute power that he summoned a demon—a chief demon, no less."

Her throat tightened even though she already knew what happened next.

"It raped his pregnant wife, then killed him for his audacity. However, demons are such sardonically humorous creatures..."

He went on to say, "The power Angus so much desired was granted to his son. It transformed Micah in the womb, turned him into something we don't understand. However, such power comes at a great cost. Angus' death was supposedly not enough."

"On the same day, it was reported that Elijah supposedly had some strange encounter in his dream. He had seen everything play out between his brother and the demon. And the demon before leaving muttered some sort of words he couldn't understand. But it wasn't until later he would come to understand that he was the one who paid the price."

"He was rendered sterile," Roman announced, watching her reaction. "The family got their all-powerful heir, but it would only be Micah. No other heir. No lineage."

"This reality left Elijah bitter and angry. He has gone everywhere for a solution all to no avail. Spilled his seed everywhere with the hopes of raising bastards, but nothing. The curse is too strong."

"Micah couldn't rule either. Demons are creatures of mischief, even if half breed or a created one, whatever he was. It would be an abomination for a demon to lead werewolves. In one word, the throne was left empty, no successors. Until our parents made one for themselves."

Roman's gaze darkened, locking onto hers. "I'm sure by now, you know none of our powers were gifted." His voice carried a bitterness that sent chills down her spine. "Our parents forced the hands of the goddess to give us this curse..." He glanced down at his arm where faint green scales had covered as he willed it.

For the first time, Roman looked haunted.

Without thinking, Violet whispered, "Not everyone agrees with that. You're amazing."

Fuck.

Her lips clamped shut the moment the words escaped, but it was too late.

Roman's head snapped up, his expression startled, as if he hadn't expected that of all things.

For a moment, they just stared at each other. Then, just as quickly, Roman smothered the surprise, masking it with indifference. He pushed on, acting as if the moment had never happened.

"To cut the long story short," Roman continued, his tone sliding back into neutrality, "Elijah loathes us."

Violet felt her stomach turn.

"He turns his frustration on us, blaming us for what he could have had. A heir. Elsie is no gift, she's a trap, and Elijah wants us to dance along."

His jaw ticked. "But Asher—Asher doesn't abide by rules. And he plays his games too recklessly."

"If Elsie opens her mouth and reports you to the Alpha King..." Roman hesitated, then shook his head. "I can't tell what would happen to you. Or what he would do to my brothers."

There was a sudden pause. Roman came closer, his eyes fixed on Violet's.

He warned. "Elsie is a spoiled brat. If she thinks her position is threatened, she will look for a higher authority to fix it." His hand ghosted down her arm, fingers barely brushing her wrist. "I turned you into a Rogue to give her a semblance of control. To make sure she doesn't do anything stupid."

Violet let out a sharp breath as his touch skimmed lower, intentionally slow.

Roman's eyes darkened as he added, "Asher can't have you. Not with your... mystery background. It will undoubtedly be chaotic."

His fingers curled at her hip.

"Alaric yearns for love. Don't give it to him."

Violet's breath hitched as he leaned in further, murmuring tantalizingly against her ear.

"Griffin is too stubborn, perhaps the toughest of us all when it comes to being headstrong."

His lips almost grazed her skin as he whispered, "So don't start that bond with him, please."

For a moment, the world seemed to tilt, her heartbeat loud in her ears. Then, Violet found her voice.

"And what about you, devil's advocate?" Her tone was almost mocking. "Are you the one to have me?"

"If you want me to." His eyes twinkled, "I'm already doing my part."

His fingers tightened just slightly,

something wicked in the curve of those lips, and quite dangerously enticing.

"So what say you, Lady Purple?"

His lips brushed the corner of her jaw, a whisper of a touch. "Are my reasons enough?"

His kiss lingered now.

"Or do I have to seduce an answer out of your mouth?"

#### Chapter 219: Bonded Fate

"Fine," Violet said, but not without stepping away from Roman.

Why was he so touchy-feely with her? It felt good—too good—and that was exactly the problem. He was messing with her head, and making her feel things she had no business feeling.

Roman didn't follow after her this time. He simply stood there, waiting patiently as if he already knew she'd come to the conclusion he wanted.

Violet told him. "I'll leave the Cardinal Alphas."

Roman smirked, looking far too satisfied. "I knew you were a smart one."

"But only on one condition."

The smirk on Roman's lips thinned in an instant, and he muttered under his breath, "And I knew you weren't going to make it easy either." He ran a hand down his face and sighed. "Fine. What's your condition? State it."

Violet didn't hesitate.

"Get Elsie off our backs. She is not to touch me, nor my roommates. Keep your bitch on a leash. That is my condition."

Whatever happiness Roman had felt at first vanished. His jaw ticked as he rolled his shoulders back, cracking his neck stiffly. For the first time that night, his expression looked pained.

"You know that's a tall order. Elsie's had it out for you from day one."

Violet stepped up to him, tilting her head up with a sharp glare. "And getting Asher to stay away from me isn't hard? You know that too."

A muscle in Roman's jaw twitched. Violet saw it and so she pressed her advantage. "If Elsie's after me, I'm not stupid enough to let go of Asher, who at least shields me from your fiancée's evil ways."

Roman growled at the mention of that word, but Violet stood unflinching.

"Pretending doesn't fit you Roman Draven. You know what your beloved Elsie is but you turn a blind eye and defend her because you want the throne. But that's none of my business. So about the deal, what do you say?"

He exhaled through his nose, his nostrils flaring. His voice was tight as he said, "You know nothing about Elsie or why she does the thing she does."

"There's no excuse for bad behavior." Violet said simply.

"You —"

"Deal or not?" She demanded.

"I'm going to try." Roman said.

"That's not enough," Violet countered, her tone laced with fire. "If Elsie comes for me or my friends tomorrow, or Monday, we can consider this whole agreement off." She stared him straight in the eyes. "And I promise you, Roman Draven, I will come full force."

"Fine," he gritted out the words. "I'll handle her. But in return, stay out of the spotlight. Don't provoke her. Don't engage her. Just be a quiet Rogue for the rest of the school year, and we'll be good to go."

The 'quiet' part would be difficult. But if it meant avoiding an all-out war with Elsie, then so be it.

While Violet loved a good fight, she was outnumbered and she had her roommates to consider. Elsie would fight dirty and surely hurt them. She couldn't let that happen.

Roman extended his hand. "Deal then?"

Violet eyed it with suspicion but still, she shook it.

"Deal."

Roman smiled, his fingers lingering over the top of her palm and caressing it slowly.

Violet tried to pull away but he wouldn't let go.

Then without warning, the idiot yanked her forward, making her stumble into his chest. His tactics was beginning to get boring.

Violet scowled. "What is it now?"

Roman's grin was wolfish. "About our other conversation?"

Her brows furrowed. "What other conversation?"

Roman lifted a brow knowingly. "The offer I made you."

"Oh. That."

At that, Roman loosened his hold, allowing her the space to step back, which she did.

"About that..." Violet dragged out her words, watching him carefully before delivering her answer. "I think I'll go for a dick that hasn't been dipped into more holes than I can count."

Roman's eyes flashed with dangerous gleam, but he blinked it away just as quickly. "You do know you're the only one who calls me a man whore and gets away with it." His tone held a warning edge.

Violet shrugged, entirely unbothered. "Sorry, but I don't know how to fit in with your sycophants."

Roman stared at her at a loss for words, then he burst into laughter that was deep and disconcerting.

Taking that as her cue, Violet turned to leave. "Alright, I'm done here."

But just as she spun around, he caught her again. "What now?" she growled, exasperated.

For the first time that night, Roman looked strangely nervous, which made her frown. His mouth opened, then snapped shut, as though he was struggling to say something important.

Violet's patience wore thin. "Chat me up when you're ready to talk."

She turned.

"Elsie is not the only reason I sought you out tonight."

Huh?

Slowly, Violet turned back, brow lifting in fresh curiosity. "Then what is it?"

Roman dragged a hand through his hair, ruffling it as he began pacing.

Violet sighed, she did not sign up for this right now.

"Roman?"

No response.

"Roman?" she called again, louder this time.

Still nothing.

"Roman!" she snapped, having had enough. "It's the middle of the night, and I cannot stand here forever waiting for you to open your mouth and speak!"

Roman stilled. For a second, he almost reached for her, as if to grab her and make her understand, but he stopped short when she instinctively stepped back.

Losing that last shred of confidence, he ran a hand over his face and began muttering, "This might sound crazy to you. Actually, of course it will. You... you don't even know how my abilities work.. I mean I was hoping you'd accept the offer and I'll solve the issue without you knowing and then—"

"Roman!" Violet cut him off. "I have no idea what you're talking about. Make yourself clear!"

"I bonded with you."

"What?" Violet asked, baffled.

"No, not me," he stressed, "my animal side."

Violet blinked, staring at him like he had just spoken a foreign language.

"Excuse me?"

## Chapter 220: The Alpha Who Cried Wolf.

Eyes narrowed and with an uneasy feeling curling low in her belly, Violet asked, "What do you mean, bonded with me?"

Roman exhaled heavily, dragging a hand through his already ruffled green hair. "It must have happened that day I shifted into my cat's form."

The skeptical look that flickered across Violet's face made Roman's expression darken. He clenched his jaw before saying, "I'm not kidding, Violet. My animal side is an extension of myself. We are one and the same. Even though I override it as its owner, it still affects me nonetheless."

"And what exactly does this animal side want?" she asked, suspicion still in her voice.

Roman swallowed, "I shift mostly during the night, and after its walk, it..." He hesitated for a second before finishing, "it wants to rest close to you."

There was a beat of silence until her outburst.

"Are you fucking kidding me right now?!"

Violet muttered something under her breath, something that sounded an awful lot like, 'Is this your latest tactic to get into my pants?'

Roman's brows twitched in irritation, but his voice remained calm. "I might have played games before, but I kid you not this time." His eyes burned into hers, unwavering. "I have no control over this. It's never happened before. If it had, I would have never risked spending time with you. Moreover... You are partially responsible for this as well."

Violet's expression flashed with anger.

"Don't you dare put this on me."

Her voice was razor-edged, cutting through the tension like a blade.

"Don't you even dare."

She stepped closer, eyes burning with anger. "I already paid the price, Roman. You cashed in the favor of using Kitten Roman and turned me into a Rogue, remember?"

Roman's lips parted, but no words came out. His head dipped slightly, and he whimpered.

Violet stilled as a soft, mournful sound left his lips. It was instinctual, sounding like that of an animal. When Roman lifted his head, his usually bright green eyes had dulled melancholic

For a second, just a second, the look nearly enchanted her into compliance. Nearly being the word.

Violet shook her head, breaking out of whatever enchantment that was. "It's not happening," she said firmly.

"Violet—" Roman's voice was low, almost pleading. "I give you my word—"

"Sorry," she cut in smoothly, her tone laced with mockery. "But your word bears no weight. Have you forgotten?"

She tilted her head, watching as his expression stiffened. "Right now, you're like the child who cried wolf."

Roman's hands curled into fists at his sides. "Then what do you want me to do?" His voice rose with frustration. "I didn't ask for this unexplainable, spellbinding connection. I just seek time to understand it, and break it."

Violet took a step closer, their atmosphere heated. "So far, since I arrived at this school, you've humiliated me in front of everyone by pissing on me, or do you think I've forgotten that? You've played and betrayed me like a fool. Even now, you tried to seduce me just to get what you want..." she shook her head, "You're indeed a fox as they call you."

Letting her words sink in, Violet tilted her chin up and locked eyes with him as she continued. "What makes you think I don't want retribution? What makes you think I don't want to see you suffer?"

Roman didn't speak.

Violet's lips curled coldly. "And I do hope you suffer well. This thing? I hope it eats you alive."

She turned sharply, making it clear that this conversation was over. "I hope you stick to our deal and don't pull me out of my bed for this matter again."

She had barely taken a step away when—

CRACK!.

A massive thunderbolt shattered the sky.

Both Violet and Roman froze as the sound ripped through the night, and seemed to shake the very foundation of the earth. But it didn't stop there.

CRACK! BOOM! CRACK!

Lightning slashed violently across the sky, illuminating the forest in eerie white flashes. The roar of the storm followed, rolling through the air like an angry god's wrath.

Then the sky opened up and the rain poured. It was sudden and violent, soaking them within seconds. Cold droplets pelted down, crashing against the ground and turning the earth beneath them into thick, clinging mud. The wind howled through the trees, bending them, and twisting their branches.

"Fuck!" Violet hissed, throwing her hands over her head as she turned on her heels, running toward shelter.

This wasn't the work of some imaginary angry god, but a cardinal alpha. It was undoubtedly Alaric's handwork. She thought he had calmed earlier but it seemed not to be the case.

Does the guy not sleep? Violet thought as she ran to the door without a care for Roman.

He'd find his way here, he'd find his way back.

Violet hardened her heart, and went in.

Whatever game he was playing this time, She wouldn't fall for it.

Bond her ass.

Violet rushed inside, and slammed the door shut behind her. But the moment she turned, she nearly screamed.

A flash of lightning streaked across the sky, briefly illuminating the dark room and in that moment, she spotted Lila, standing silently by the doorway.

Violet's pulse skyrocketed. "Shit! Lila, what the hell?!"

Lila blinked at her, utterly unfazed. "Where are you coming from?"

Violet forced a neutral expression, brushing off the damp strands of hair stuck to her face. "I couldn't sleep and was patrolling the area when the rain started," she said smoothly, keeping her voice light.

If Lila suspected anything, she didn't show it. Instead, she simply exhaled and said, "You should go and rest, Princess."

Violet nearly sighed in relief.

She was about to nod when a thought struck her. Yes, Roman that bastard had nearly caught on. No way was she risking that again.

"Lila," Violet started. "Can you... dial down on the 'Princess' a little?"

Lila's brows furrowed, confusion crossing her face.

Violet gave a half-hearted shrug, trying to keep her tone casual. "It's just... I don't want the wrong people catching on."

Understanding dawned in Lila's expression.

She nodded. "Sure, Violet."

Violet let out a breath. "Thank you."

With that, she turned toward her room, heart still hammering in her chest.

As Violet shut the door behind her, she exhaled deeply, pressing her back against the wood.

This has been one strange night.