

# Defy The Alpha(s)

## Chapter 24: Making Progress

Violet hurriedly gobbled down her food, not because it was incredibly delicious, but because she wanted to be done with it as quickly as possible and get away from this psychopath.

Unfortunately for Violet, Asher seemed to misinterpret her urgency. He looked at her with concern and said, "My poor queen, you must be starving. Let me order more for you."

He was already picking up his phone when Violet shouted, "No!"

He raised an eyebrow, clearly taken aback. "No?"

"Yes, I'm good. Any more than this and I'll throw up," she replied honestly. Years of deprivation had conditioned her stomach to accept only so much, and she truly couldn't eat any more.

Asher frowned, clearly disapproving. "You have quite a small appetite. It's not enough, little purple. But don't worry, you're here now, and I'll fix that."

Shivers ran down Violet's spine at those words—a promise she wished had never been made. Asher was not going to let her out of his sight. Good thing she was already thinking of another way to escape. She would not let this psychopath groom her into being his "purple queen." That was never happening.

Violet slowed her pace, eating less quickly now but still taking large bites of food, trying to make it appear natural. Thankfully, Asher was focused on his phone now, and that gave her some breathing room.

Still, Violet couldn't help but watch him. Asher Nightshade looked surprisingly proper in his Lunaris uniform. Unlike Roman and Griffin—based on her recent experience with them—Asher wore his uniform fully and neatly, and she found herself wondering if he was, in fact, a model student.

Or maybe that, too, was just an elaborate act to make people believe he was something he wasn't. Just like his abilities, was everything about him a facade? What was real about Asher Nightshade?

Violet got so absorbed watching him, trying to unravel the enigma he seemed to be, that she barely noticed she was still eating. There was something about him that was

undeniably alluring, though she couldn't quite figure out what it was. Was it his overgrown hair, gelled smoothly to one side of his face, or the nearly invisible pores on his skin? How could someone look so perfect?

As he typed away on his phone, the slightest frown appeared on his face. Violet found herself having the ridiculous urge to smooth it away. *Yep, this was more proof that she was going crazy.*

Or perhaps Asher was somehow willing her to find his features appealing. That sounded absurd, though considering Asher, nothing seemed impossible.

Violet ended her inner monologue and lifted her head to steal a glance at him, only for her eyes to collide with his. The suddenness of it startled her so much that she choked, the food going down the wrong pipe.

Violet began to cough violently, tears slipping from her eyes.

"Here," Asher said, quickly pushing a glass of water to her lips. She didn't even protest, instinctively gulping it down until the glass was empty. Asher set the glass aside and began to rub her back gently.

"You're safe. I got you," he muttered, his hand moving in soothing circles across her back.

Violet had stopped coughing, but she was now frozen in place, staring at Asher as if he had suddenly grown two heads. No one had ever said those words to her. Even though this was some twisted situation, no one had ever taken care of her like this.

Maybe Nancy had, but only when Violet was sick and she didn't want her to die. No one else had ever looked at her like she truly mattered, like they genuinely saw her.

Violet was caught in the moment when Asher cupped her face with one hand, the other continuing to rub her back, his touch now slowing into a gentler, almost seductive rhythm. Her breath hitched, coming out in shallow bursts.

Violet couldn't fight the strange magic in the air. Asher leaned in, her own eyes slowly drifting closed. She knew what she was doing. It was only a kiss, nothing more. Violet justified it in her mind

However, just as their lips were about to meet, the door suddenly swung open, and Principal Jameson's voice echoed through the room, "Who the fuck is in my office...?" she trailed off as she processed the scene before her.

Violet jerked back immediately, the feeling of being caught about to kiss a psychopath feeling like a slap across her face. It was a sobering shock, yanking her back to reality.

"Mr. Nightshade... Oh, shit..." Jameson cursed as she realized he wasn't wearing his shades.

Violet used the distraction to scramble away from Asher, managing to get to her feet just as Jameson pulled a pair of aviators from her bag and put them on.

With the principal's over-the-top reaction, Violet couldn't help but wonder what was so unnerving about staring into Asher's eyes.

Sure, his eyes were unusual from the others, but that was all.

If anything, Violet found herself oddly comfortable staring into those slitted, reptilian eyes. Unless, of course, Jameson had secrets she didn't want Asher pulling from her. Unlike Jameson, Violet had no secrets, aside from her plans to escape tonight.

"Oh..." Jameson finally seemed to recognize her. "Miss Purple..."

Even with her eyes hidden behind the shades, Violet could sense the accusation in Jameson's tone. She had begun to judge her and it was not surprising, not after her "creative" application.

Violet grabbed her satchel. "I'm leaving for class."

Asher rose to his feet as well. "I'll escort you—"

"No!" Violet shouted, startling both Jameson and Asher.

She licked her lips, regaining her composure as she spoke calmly, "I think you've done enough already." And it was anything but a thank you.

If Asher walked her to class, Violet could only imagine the commotion it would stir among the other students. She didn't want that kind of attention.

Before coming here, Violet had checked her ranking, and to her dismay, she'd already moved up to eighteenth place. If those she had pushed aside to reach that rank were anything like Sharon, she was in for more trouble, even though she wasn't responsible for any of it. She didn't even want this!

Who on earth was pushing her up the ranks? Whoever it was, they'd have a meeting with her fists soon enough.

For a moment, it seemed like Asher might ignore her and insist on his own way, but for once, he relented.

Thank God, Violet sighed inwardly.

Violet would rather deal with Asher's obsession in secret than let it be broadcast to the entire academy. She just couldn't handle it.

Jameson, however, seemed to realize what Violet's departure meant. That she'd be left alone with Asher. Oh shit.

Immediately, she shot a pleading look in Violet's direction, silently imploring her to stay.

But Violet only saluted her with a knowing grin. "Have a nice day, ma'am."

And then she left.

Jameson swallowed, turning back to Asher, who now wore a scowl on his face.

Just when he had been making progress with his purple queen, she had to come in and ruin the kiss.

## **Chapter 25: True Evolution**

"There you are!" Someone suddenly jumped in front of her, startling Violet out of her thoughts.

"Ahh!" Violet screamed, instinctively landing a punch on the person's face, only to realize it was Lila.

Lila yelped in pain while Violet's expression shifted to horror as she recognized her friend. She hadn't meant to hit her, but years of always keeping her guard up had conditioned her to react this way.

Violet rushed forward, hysterically checking on Lila.

"I'm okay, I'm okay," Lila insisted, trying to calm her down. "See? No damage." She attempted a smile, but her face scrunched up in pain. "But damn, that was a mean hook."

With a deep breath, Violet slowly calmed her racing heart. But almost immediately after, her expression twisted in anger.

"What the hell is wrong with you?! Why would you jump in front of someone like that? Are you asking for death or something?" she shouted.

Lila rubbed her cheek, pouting. "I should be asking why your automatic response to a small prank is to punch someone in the face. What if the person was innocent..." She added with a pout, "Just like me."

"Well, where I come from, there's no mercy for 'small pranks,'" Violet said with emphasis. "And it teaches people like you to never try it again." She retorted coldly.

Lila's pout deepened, her eyes almost watering as she complained, "You're so mean."

"If I'm so mean, you can remedy that by leaving me the hell alone," Violet replied bluntly.

At first, Lila's persistent following had been cute, but now it was becoming increasingly annoying. Violet liked to keep her distance from people—no one could be trusted.

There were no friends, only selfish individuals capable of betrayal and cruelty. This jungle of a school wasn't a place for friendships, either. Violet refused to admit, even to herself, that Lila was slowly breaking down her defenses. That could never happen.

"Not going to happen." Lila said defiantly, startling Violet. For a moment, she thought Lila had read her thoughts.

"What?"

"I know you're trying to push me away, but I won't let that happen. I can see it in our future, we're going to be great friends," Lila said with so much conviction it made Violet frown.

What gave Lila such confidence? Was she a psychic or what? Ugh, what was she even thinking?

Lila chirped happily, "So I saw your schedule, and we have both classes together. Come on, let's go. We're already late."

Without waiting for an answer, Lila grabbed Violet's hand and pulled her along with such speed that Violet almost stumbled.

"Incoming!" Lila screamed as she dashed through the crowded hallway, making other students jump out of the way.

"That lunatic!" Violet cursed, but there was nothing she could do except let Lila drag her along.

They soon stopped in front of a numbered door. Lila flung it open and pulled them both inside before Violet even had a moment to mentally prepare.

The class was already seated, with only the teacher missing. Violet counted herself lucky—if only she knew better.

The moment they entered, all eyes turned toward them, and as Violet expected, whispers began. If she hadn't earned fame as the first freshman in Lunaris to make it to the top twenty, then her legendary fight in the dining hall certainly did the trick.

As expected of Lunaris, the classroom was large and luxurious. Violet could feel the cool air of the air conditioner, and they even used an electronic whiteboard. It was beyond anything she'd ever seen.

Most of the students were human, but quite a few werewolves sat among them as well. Violet was glad to see that none of the Cardinal Alphas were in this class.

With her head held high, Violet choose a seat at the back, trying to make herself as inconspicuous as possible. Lila, however, followed her like a buzzing mosquito, her movements clumsy as she tried to settle beside Violet.

At this point, Violet gave up trying to drive Lila away, confident that the girl would tire of following her eventually. Hopefully?

The murmurs continued, with students glancing at her, but Violet ignored them all. Thankfully, it wasn't long before the anthropology teacher arrived.

Mr. Radcliff was a tall, sharp-featured man with piercing silver eyes. He carried a coffee mug in one hand and an electronic device in the other. He paused briefly, assessing the class before heading to his desk at the front.

Lila leaned over and whispered to Violet, "They say Radcliff is a racist prick who prefers werewolves and practically worships them. Good thing karma gave him a human form, unlike his siblings."

Before Violet could fully digest that tidbit of information, Radcliff was already in front of the board. Without any pleasantries, he scrawled the day's topic in large, clear letters on the whiteboard.

### **"Werewolves: The True Origin of Humanity?"**

Violet's eyebrows shot up, though she quickly schooled her expression, unlike some of the human students who gasped audibly.

Professor Radcliff turned, his face full of disdain as he looked at the humans sitting among the werewolves.

He stepped forward and asked, "Can anyone tell me the theory of evolution? Or, simply put, how did humans come to be?"

No one moved. It was clearly a loaded question.

"Why isn't anyone speaking?" Radcliff asked, his voice laced with mock disappointment.

Under his breath, but loud enough for all to hear, he muttered, "Humans. Always the cowards. And you wonder why Werewolves shouldn't rule this earth?"

No shit. Lila had not been kidding. Radcliff was a racist scum.

Radcliff sighed as if teaching was a burden he had been sentenced to. "Fine. The first five hands to go up will get five points each."

Violet quickly realized how much weight the point system held, as nearly every hand shot up, including several of the werewolves' hands—and Lila's.

Lila?!

Violet gave Lila a bewildered look.

"What?" Lila scowled. "I need points if I'm going to have any chance of protecting you."

"I don't need your—" Violet started, but students were already answering the questions.

"According to the biblical perspective, in the beginning, all life was created by God. On the sixth day, God created Adam and Eve, the first humans," one student answered.

"Amen." Radcliff clasped his hands together in mock prayer. "Five points to you. Next."

He picked the next student.

"Charles Darwin's theory, based on natural selection, suggests that species evolve over time. Organisms with favorable traits survive and reproduce, passing those traits on to future generations, leading to gradual adaptation," the student answered.

"Excellent. Five points to you. Next."

And just like that, Radcliff picked three more students, none of whom were Lila, leaving her visibly frustrated.

Radcliff clapped his hands and said. "All of you answered correctly," he said, "and stupidly, at the same time."

The excitement on the students' faces immediately vanished. They hadn't expected that.

"Humans weren't the beginning of evolution, it was the werewolves."

## **Chapter 26: Make An Enemy**

In Violet's entire life, she had never heard anyone spout so much nonsense as this man was spewing right now.

By chance, had the teacher taken coke before coming to class? Was that what was in his coffee? And yes, the Lunaris teacher would probably be capable of it. After all, teacher-student relationships were encouraged here, so taking coke shouldn't make any difference.

Radcliff went on to prattle about how werewolves were not only the first inhabitants of this world but also the true predecessors to what humans now call 'evolution.'

His voice carried a faint edge of disdain on the word evolution, as if it were a misguided myth that humans had arrogantly clung to.

It didn't escape Violet that the werewolf students seemed unbothered as he spewed that propaganda; if anything, they looked quietly pleased. Of course, the teacher was on their side. Why wouldn't they like it?

However, this was clearly racial discrimination, and she could feel the tension rising among the humans.

Professor Radcliff himself was completely indifferent to the unease in the room, which was akin to a mixture of diesel and gasoline that was dangerously close to igniting.

He continued, "The concept of human evolution, as you know it, is largely a fabrication. Pure-blooded werewolves were the first beings, blessed with strength, resilience, and intelligence. It was only later that humans emerged, an offshoot, weaker and less capable."

A human student at the back couldn't contain himself any longer and lifted his hand.

"And what is it...?"

"Dion."

"How can I help you, Dion?" Radcliff asked, his lips pressed into a thin line. It was obvious he didn't appreciate the interruption.

Dion asked, "Is this even in our curriculum?"

The entire class burst into laughter, including Violet. She wasn't a robot, after all. She had been waiting for someone to call the teacher out, and now that Dion had mocked his lecture, she was pleased.

Unfortunately, Mr. Radcliff looked like someone had just spit in his face, and his expression was downright scary. For a moment, Violet imagined Radcliff murdering Dion for his audacity.

He began stepping toward Dion in a menacing manner, and with each step he took, it seemed like he was sucking the very air out of the classroom. Finally, he stood in front of Dion, and Violet had to give Dion credit for not flinching, instead, he stood tall.

Professor Radcliff's expression was cold as he spoke. "This class, Dion, isn't for speculative debate. It's a study of werewolf heritage, culture, and legacy, one that's deeply rooted in fact, even if some humans would prefer to believe otherwise." He glanced around the room, daring any other human to challenge him.

He continued, "And the fact that you asked that question means you haven't either studied properly or intended to rile me on purpose." He added conclusively, "Ten points from you."

"Aww, man," Dion moaned, "It was just a question, sir!"

"Another ten points deducted." Radcliff declared.

Dion slumped back into his seat, sulking, while the teacher turned to leave.

Violet turned to Lila, "Can points be transferred?"

"Obviously. How do you think you've been climbing up the ranks so quickly?"

"Oh." The realization hit Violet.

Initially, she wanted to compensate Dion for standing up for what he believed in, but a sinister thought crept into her mind. What if she transferred all her points away? You know, like philanthropists give away their wealth. That would be like contributing to society, or in this case, Lunaris, right?

But Lila seemed to catch on instinctively, shooting her a warning look, as if she had read her mind. "Don't even think about it."

Violet smiled sheepishly, but that idea had already taken root and wasn't going anywhere.

"Is there a problem here, Miss Violet?"

Oh, shit.

Violet swallowed when she looked up to see Radcliff standing right in front of her. Judging by the way his eyebrow was arched and his cold gaze focused on her, she bet

he had overheard her talk about transferring points to Dion and assumed she was challenging his authority.

"No, sir..." The response was right there on Violet's lips, but her expression furrowed. Screw it. She wasn't going to let this man bully her like the others.

"Actually, sir. I do have a problem, and it's with your theory." Violet said fearlessly.

Radcliff was taken aback, clearly not expecting that. Even her classmates straightened up, a slow tension filling the room. Violet swore she saw someone pulling out their phone from the corner of her eye.

"And what exactly is the problem, Violet, the chosen one?" His words dripped with sarcasm.

Violet had no doubt that Radcliff knew about her circumstances at Lunaris and didn't approve. In his mind, she probably wasn't worthy enough for Alpha Asher. If only he knew she didn't want his attention either.

Violet cut straight to the point. "If werewolves were truly the pioneers of evolution, then why didn't they dominate the earth like humans? Humans have always been resilient, adaptable creatures capable of extraordinary feats. From my perspective, it seems more plausible that at some point, a human might have surpassed their natural limits and developed the ability to shift into wolves. Through reproduction, that trait could have been passed on, spreading the gene responsible for it."

She continued, "Or maybe the moon goddess decided to bless some random human for a noble act, giving rise to werewolves. But let's be real, if neither of those scenarios fits, I'd bet my ass they were cooked up in some lab experiment gone wrong."

Her words hung in the air, bold, unapologetic, daring the room to challenge her theory.

For a moment, the classroom was drenched in stunned silence. The tension was so thick it felt like the air itself had stopped moving. Then, in the blink of an eye, Violet saw fury contort Radcliff's expression, his sharp features darkening with an almost feral rage.

As if that wasn't enough, snarls and snapping jaws sounded around her. Violet's stomach churned as she realized the noise was coming from her werewolf classmates.

She swallowed hard, her earlier confidence draining quickly. In her eagerness to challenge Radcliff's narrative, she had unknowingly offended not just him but an entire species.

The werewolves looked ready to leap from their seats, their eyes blazing with anger. If it weren't for the presence of witnesses, Violet was sure they would have torn her to shreds right then and there.

Fan-fucking-tastic. Make an enemy out of an entire species. Just what she needed.