

## Defy 251

### Chapter 251: Elephant In The Room

Griffin wasn't the eldest of the cardinal alphas. In fact, as impossible as it might seem, all four of them had been born at the exact same time. A rare, mythic occurrence regarded as both an ominous omen by some, and a celestial blessing by others.

Either way, it was undeniable proof of the Moon Goddess's mark on their lives. Goddess-touched heirs, they had been called the moment they took their first breath — celebrated, revered, feared and destined for greatness.

The point was that Griffin naturally slipped into the role of an elder brother, perhaps due to his easy going personality or that fierce, loyal heart of his. He was the one who held the line when everything else threatened to fall apart. So, it wasn't surprising that he was the first to break the silence.

"I believe we've been at odds lately," Griffin said, meeting Asher's gaze without wavering under the intensity.

"At odds is quite the understatement, don't you think?" Asher replied coldly, his voice devoid of warmth. "I think the term 'at war' fits better."

"We don't want war," Griffin told him calmly, hoping reason could still prevail.

"It didn't seem like it when you all ganged up on Jeremiah." He reminded them grimly.

Griffin opened his mouth to speak, but Asher was not in the mood for excuses.

He told him. "That wasn't war. Trust me, if I intended a real war, you'd know. That little scuffle I pulled with your deltas? That was child's child's play compared to what I had in mind. Unfortunately, Violet wouldn't like it if she heard." He leaned forward, "So don't worry, you've already paid the price, otherwise, you wouldn't be sitting at my table right now."

"Our table," Alaric corrected firmly.

Despite the recent turn of events, all four of them were considered kings of Lunaris Academy, each possessing a throne and wielding equal authority. They were meant to be a united front. No cardinal alpha was meant to be rule over the other.

Asher's head turned slowly to Alaric, his stare like a dagger. "You really shouldn't be speaking right now."

There was pure venom in his tone, and no forgiveness behind his eyes. It was clear Asher hadn't let go of what Alaric had done to Violet and was only tolerating him because there were bigger matters at hand.

Alaric swallowed, guilt plastered across his face. "I didn't hurt her intentionally, Elsie deceived me."

"Cry me a river." Asher's scoff was sharp enough to cut glass. He wasn't buying excuses.

Roman, unfortunately had to ruin his luck by opening his big mouth, saying, "It's nice to know I'm not under your line of attack this morning."

At once, Asher's gaze snapped to his once closest friend, eyes narrowing into a lethal glare. "Don't even get me started with you, you conniving bastard. You think you're so clever sneaking into her bed last night. You must've felt like a winner, right?"

"What?!" Griffin and Alaric shouted in unison, turning sharply to Roman.

The fox didn't even flinch. Instead, he raised his arm, sniffed himself, and muttered, "Damn, you must be so obsessed with Violet to still scent her on me even after the thorough shower."

Asher didn't waste time. His eyes glinted and suddenly, Roman's head slammed onto the table with a dull thud thanks to the power of his compulsion, the sound echoing in the Silver Court.

"Ahhh—shit," Roman groaned, lifting his face as blood poured from his nose. He pinched it, voice nasally, "Wrong answer, I see. You're not stalking her, you're stalking me. You must still love me, bro. Love you too."

Asher gave him a look of pure disgust, but Roman simply dabbed his nose with a napkin, the injury already healing up. Even though Asher looked ready to kill him on the spot, there was still a trace of their old bond beneath all that hostility.

Alaric, however, wasn't letting it slide. He shot to his feet, seething. "You snuck into Violet's bed last night?!"

"Thanks to you," Roman said smugly, "She needed comfort and I provided it. Unlike you, I'm actually climbing up the rank on her forgiveness list. But you? You've been tossed in the doghouse, my guy."

The words hit home and Alaric let out a guttural roar, ready for blows. Roman jerked upright, letting out a threatening snarl of his own, rising to the challenge.

The air turned electric, thick with testosterone and power, ready to explode.

"Alright, enough!" Griffin barked, rising like a mountain between them. "No more fighting. The school's already fractured from all the pack clashes. Jameson's on her last nerve with us and I know none of us want Elijah to get involved."

At the sound of that name, the tension dissipated like a balloon popped with a needle. Elijah. The one name powerful enough to silence even the most savage of wolves. None of the cardinal alphas wanted him putting "things in order."

Alaric and Roman both glared at each other but slowly took their seats, leashing their tempers. For now.

Griffin looked them dead in the eyes, warning. "From now on, no more childish bickering. If you two want to play 'whose dick's bigger,' save it for after this meeting."

The animosity between Alaric and Roman hadn't dissipated one bit. If anything, it lingered thick and sour but they understood. There was something more important at stake.

Once Griffin was sure peace had been restored, he focused on Asher.

"You've been gone for days, and you said there's a lot to discuss. Why don't we start there?"

Asher didn't answer right away. Instead, he gave them a long, hard look. Then his lips curled slightly, not in amusement, but in challenge.

"Or rather," he said, "we address the elephant in the room that all of you have been dancing around." His voice dropped into a slow, deliberate cadence. "Violet Purple."

That name crackled in the air like thunder.

"I intend to chase after my purple queen," he declared. "How about you?"

#### Chapter 252: A Little Victory

Silence fell among the alphas, so heavy it seemed to stretch on forever. But that was until Asher spoke again, his tone final. "Fine, then. I'll chase after her alone. She's mine."

At once, a rumble of protest erupted with all three of the other alphas speaking at once. Their voices overlapped, their words tumbling over each other, and making little sense, except for the collective tone that clearly said, You're not taking her for yourself without a fight.

Roman was the first to speak up.

"She's a rogue," He reminded Asher, as if the label was enough of a reason to deter him from going after her.

And yet, you had no issues sneaking into her bed, Asher wanted to snap back, but he bit his tongue. Griffin had already warned about them bickering and there was so much still to uncover. Normally Asher would have kept the information to himself, but even he couldn't shoulder that many secrets alone.

So instead, Asher answered, "I believe we can all agree that this label is largely meaningless. No human can genuinely be a rogue. Not in the way we define it."

"But she rejected the Houses," Griffin interjected, "This is a werewolf academy, Asher. We have rules. A structure. A legacy. If we bend the system out of emotional attachment for one girl, what stops another human from doing the same?"

He breathed, "I feel bad for Violet, especially after Roman's little stunt." Griffin glared at Roman, but pressed on, "But I'm thinking ahead. Jameson expects us to keep order. The humans here already fear what we can do. That fear is what keeps the balance. If they even sense a weakness in us, they'll take it. The pack lines will blur. The system will collapse. We'll lose control of the school."

It was a hard truth, one that even Asher with his deep desire to protect Violet, couldn't easily dismiss.

Roman added, "Not to mention, these rules were put in place by Elijah. If we defy them, what makes you think he won't come back to enforce them himself?"

"Then I say fuck him," Asher said bluntly, making everyone freeze.

"Asher," Roman's voice was edged with warning, "it's Elijah we're talking about."

"I know who we're talking about," Asher snapped. "But I also know Elijah graduated zillion years ago. So how long are we supposed to live under his ghost? This is our reign. We're the cardinal alphas. We should be the ones making the fucking rules now."

"That's open rebellion he's speaking of," Alaric pointed out to the others, shaking his head. "I'd advise not to take it."

Asher's lips curled into a mocking smile, sickly sweet and venomous. "Of course you would rather stay under your little safety net. No wonder you found it so easily to betray Violet."

Alaric's jaw clenched, but what could he say? It was the truth, and Asher would cling to that fact until he exacted his pound of flesh. Griffin and Roman exchanged uneasy looks, recognizing there was no easy fix to this hostility.

Griffin cleared his throat. "Asher does have a point. Elijah treats us like pets under his control, assuming we'd never challenge him. I'm not afraid of him." He looked toward Roman and questioned, "Are you?"

The question hung quietly in the air until Roman finally answered, "No."

The word was a spark and just like that, the tides shifted. But one person hadn't shifted with it.

Griffin leaned closer as he addressed Alaric. "Look, no one blames you if you choose to stick to your safety net," he said. "We all know what Elijah is capable of and I wouldn't want you getting into trouble again... like the last time."

Alaric's jaw ticked, his eyes darkening at the memory. Yet instead of shutting down, it only seemed to steel his resolve.

His head jerked toward Asher. "What do you have in mind?"

For a fleeting second, Asher practically glowed with victory. Not too long ago, they had all resisted the idea of him choosing Violet for them. Finally, here they are, circling the idea of chasing Violet like moths to flame.

He relaxed into his throne, fingers drumming lazily on the table. "We let her maintain her rogue status. On the surface, nothing changes. That way, order stays intact."

Alaric arched a brow. "And underneath?"

"We begin revising the rules that cut her off from basic access," Asher continued smoothly. "Rogues aren't allowed in the cardinal houses, some certain classes, or even events. That has to change."

Roman let out a low whistle. "You do know most people in our packs will resist, right? We're talking centuries of tradition here."

Asher's expression hardened. "Then command them to obey. You're their Alpha—act like it."

Alaric tensed. "You don't break custom and expect no rebellion. Push too hard and you'll ignite the exact chaos we're trying to avoid. People are a lot more likely to revolt if they feel something's forced on them. So we take it slow."

Roman nodded, a teasing grin crossing his face as he glanced at Alaric. "Not a bad idea. Nice one, thunderboy."

Alaric growled at the nickname, but it lacked the hostility from earlier. Just their usual friction. For once, they were all on the same side.

Griffin folded his thick arms, thinking. "Even better, we exploit the loopholes in the rule book."

He turned to Asher. "This is your domain. You play the game better than anyone. You'll find a way in."

Asher exhaled through his nose, annoyed. He didn't want patience. He wanted Violet. Now. But the others had a point. This wasn't about brute force, it was a game of chess. One that he loved playing, and Violet Purple was worth every move.

"Fine," he grumbled. "I'll go through the rules and find the perfect loophole."

"Good," Griffin said with finality.

Then Alaric asked the question everyone had forgotten.

"What about Elsie?"

Just like that, the excitement in the room vanished.

Four sets of eyes connected and held, understanding passing silently between them. Because if Violet was the spark they all craved, then Elsie was the wildfire that would consume everything.

## Chapter 253: Convince The Queen

"Don't worry about Elsie." Asher said suddenly, breaking the silence, "She won't be a problem from now on. I handled it."

Asher's words said so deceptively calm should have comforted them, instead

a prickle of dread slipped down each Alpha's spine.

Alaric shot Asher a wary look. "What did you do?"

There was no mistaking the implication of those words: Asher had been on campus last night, and he must have done something to Elsie.

Even Roman, usually quick with a joke, turned serious. "We've broken a lot of rules, Asher, but if you've tampered with her mind, Elijah will kill you. This time, literally."

Everyone knew the deal. Because they were all rivals for Elsie's hand, Asher's ability created an unfair advantage as he could compel her to fall in love with him if he wished.

For that reason, Asher was absolutely forbidden from entering her mind. Any power left a trace, and if the witches ever scoured Elsie and found even a hint of his manipulation, Asher would be as good as dead. In short, he could use his compulsion on anyone else, even his fellow cardinal brothers, but not Elsie. She was strictly off-limits.

Asher growled low, clearly insulted. "I didn't touch her mind. I only gave her a little warning. That's all. She'll be a good little girl now. Trust me."

Griffin didn't look convinced. "I don't like this," he muttered. He didn't care for Elsie, but Asher's methods were infamous.

"Look. Even the thought of trusting him is giving me goosebumps." Roman lifted his arms to show him.

Asher smirked, showing too much teeth. "Relax. She won't end up in a body bag... though it's tempting. After all, how can I kill Elijah's choice?"

"Better," Griffin said, but his tone was dry. "I don't trust you, Asher, but you know what's at stake. If anything happens to Elsie, Elijah might spare us as his heirs, but not Violet. The sick bastard would make an example of her and force us to watch."

Alaric raised a hand, thoughtful. "Maybe we're overthinking things. Elijah knew about Lucille for a while, and yet he didn't act. Not until it got out of hand. In the end, he just sent her away. I'm not saying I want that fate for Violet, but maybe... maybe we don't need to go to extremes to keep Elsie in line."

Before Asher could respond, Roman cut in, brows furrowed. "Elijah let Lucille tear us apart for sport. She was useful to him. Unfortunately, Violet isn't like that. Not so far."

"My purple queen is goodness personified," Asher said proudly. "Elijah wouldn't want her here. He wants us at each other's throat, not united and she's a threat to that."

"If that's the case... " Griffin said slowly, coming to realization, "... doesn't chasing after Violet openly risk drawing Elijah's attention? That man would sniff out any upheaval in a heartbeat."

"Maybe," Asher allowed, "but Elijah is still the Alpha King. He's got bigger problems than teenage drama from Lunar Academy. Still, if we want to keep Violet under the radar, we need to keep his attention elsewhere."

"How?" Roman asked.

Asher reached into his pocket of his jacket and pulled out two small bottles. The other three instantly perked up.

Alaric took one with a frown. "What is this?"

"A little discovery from my trip," Asher said. "It's called Ignis. Some lab out there's making it and intends to sell it. It gives humans werewolf-like abilities."

"What?!" Griffin snatched the other vial from Roman and sniffed it cautiously.

"No way," Alaric said. "The only way a human can have our traits is through a bite, that is if they even survive the brutal transition, or being half-breed."

"I fought one of the subjects," Asher said grimly. "Trust me, it wasn't an easy fight. The stuff sends them into a frenzy. But it wears off fast. They crash afterward. Hard."

By the time he finished, disbelief, and anxiety filled the room.

"If this is real," Alaric said, lifting the vial to the light, watching the milky liquid, "then chaos is already on the horizon."

He turned to Asher. "I assume you plan to send this to Elijah?"

"That's the plan," Asher replied smugly. "

It'll keep him busy. So with him worrying about humans matching our strength, he won't be poking around our dating life."

"Alright. I'll run my own analysis too. I need to confirm it's real, not a hoax. And if it's real, I need to know and study its composition and possible ways to negate it if possible." Alaric said with a little bit of excitement in his tone. As a science nerd, he couldn't wait to get started on the project.

"And you'll share your findings with me," Asher stated, more a command than a request.

There was a brief pause.

"Sure," Alaric agreed at last, knowing Asher would take it if he didn't. It was better than nothing.

"Now that we're done with that," Roman leaned forward, grinning, "how about you tell us what you found out about Violet in District One?"

Griffin and Alaric looked at Asher expectantly.

But Asher simply said to them. "Sorry, gentlemen. That part's off the table. Whatever I discovered about my purple queen stays with me. You want answers? Go dig for your own."

"Asher—" Griffin growled, clearly annoyed. "We're supposed to work together now," he added. "If there's something about Violet we need to know—something that could protect her—you should tell us."

"Mmhmm," Asher hummed, utterly unmoved. He stood up, brushed off his jacket, and looked down on them with that infuriating smug glint in his eyes.

"Instead of worrying about what I know," he said smoothly, "maybe you should focus on getting back into her good graces." His gaze flicked between Roman and Alaric.

Then, with a wicked smile, he continued, "I've heard she's not open to sharing right now. So I'd start convincing her if I were you. Or I can just claim her for myself." He winked. "Your choice. Either way, may the best player win."

And with that, Asher Nightshade strolled off like a king who had already won the war.

Chapter 254: Rain Of Vengeance

Roman was gone by the time Violet woke up from her sleep.

Good thing for him because had he still been there, she would have introduced his smug face to her clenched fist for blatantly disobeying her wishes and sharing her bed. The audacity.

But deep down, Violet knew she could never have rejected Kitten Roman. That bastard knew just how to slither past her defenses. The cat was her weakness, and Roman knew it alright.

Stretching out with a groan, Violet sat up, rubbing at her tired eyes. She was just about to swing her legs off the bed when her phone lit up on the nightstand.

It was a message. Curious, she reached for it and tapped her screen.

[When are you going to reveal Elsie's secret?]

Violet's frown deepened as she read the message twice, then a third time.

What the hell?

There was no name, just an unlisted number not saved in her contacts. The only person she had spoken to about the possibility of Elsie harboring a secret was Micah. Could it be one of his other lines?

Just to be sure, Violet swiped to her regular contact list and tapped on Micah's number she already had saved.

The line barely rang once before he picked up, as if he had his phone in hand.

"Violet?" Micah said, his tone suggesting he was surprised at the call.

"Hey," she began, "Sorry to call you this early. I just wanted to confirm something."

"Sure, go ahead."

"You didn't... send me a message just now, did you? Asking when I planned to reveal Elsie's secret?"

There was a beat of silence. Then Micah asked, sounding alert. "What are you talking about? What message?"

Violet blinked. "You... didn't send me that?"

"I did no such thing," he said firmly.

She stared at the screen, her gut twisting with an uneasy feeling.

"Oh," Violet murmured.

Micah caught on instantly. "Violet. What's going on? Who would send you something like that?"

"I don't know," she replied automatically, brushing her hair back with her fingers. "Maybe... it's nothing. Just a prank. Sorry for bothering you."

"Violet—" She heard him start to protest, but Violet ended the call before he could pry further.

Biting her nail, Violet paced across her room, staring hard at the message. Who the hell was this?

It couldn't be Asher. She hadn't seen him in days. Besides, his style would be to expose the secret himself and then inform her so both of them could watch and savor the victory. It couldn't be Griffin. She just knew it. As for Alaric, and Roman, they were all too concerned with playing servants to their queen Elsie and would never give her a weapon like this.

Left with no choice, Violet typed back.

[Who are you?]

She sent it and resumed pacing. A minute passed and then her phone pinged.

[You must be really dumb if you're busy with knowing my identity than dealing with Elsie Lancaster.]

Violet sucked in a breath. The nerve. She didn't like their tone. But if whoever this was had dirt on Elsie, she needed it. Badly.

Fine, if that's how they wanted to play.

[If you're that smart, why bother me? You could easily destroy her.] she replied.

The response came almost immediately.

[I am no longer part of the game. But you are, Violet Purple.]

Violet felt the hairs on her arms stand on end. If this wasn't a prank, it meant someone out there had an agenda, and wanted to use her as a pawn.

Or maybe it really was just a twisted joke.. After yesterday's disaster, it wouldn't surprise her if some attention-seeking parasite decided to test how close she was to snapping.

But somehow this didn't feel like happenstance. Violet decided to push further:

[What's Elsie's secret then?]

Her pulse spiked as she waited, eyes locked on the screen.

Another ping.

[What would you give me in exchange?]

Violet's brows drew together. What kind of game was this?

[What do you want?] she wrote back quickly.

Violet then sat down on the edge of her bed, the anxiety thick in her throat, the seconds stretching longer than she ever thought possible.

Then the message arrived. One line. Two words.

[Your position.]

What the...? Violet stared at the words.

"Position" could mean anything, but Violet was well aware that she had none left. She had been pushed off the Luna ranking and after yesterday's incident, she has lost the prestige of the Rogue Queen.

In theory, only her "Purple Queen" moniker used by Asher remained, and even that was worthless in the official hierarchy. Yet something about the phrase "Your Position" unsettled her deeply, like a puzzle piece implying so much more than she could see.

Violet was just about to type a response when her door flew open without warning. Startled, her phone slipped from her hand and fell to the floor.

It was not hard to predict who the culprit was.

Lila Meadows stood in the doorway, arms crossed and eyes blazing. "Thank God you're awake," she said, marching inside like a general about to give an earful to her subordinate. "Now we can talk. And don't think you can shy away from it this time."

Before Violet could even process that, Ivy and Daisy stepped in right behind her, shutting the door with a quiet but firm click that sealed the room off like a war council chamber.

Ivy didn't waste a second. "If you think we're going to let you wallow in misery and rot in your blankets like some tragic heroine, think again."

Violet blinked. "Who's wallowing in misery?"

The girls paused, their brows furrowed as they glanced at each other in confusion. That wasn't the reaction they were expecting. They had expected Violet would still be depressed.

"This is perfect anyway. I was just about to call for a meeting with you guys. "

Violet looked each of them in the eye, that fire in her gut roaring back to life. "Because it's time we rain down vengeance on our enemies."

#### Chapter 255: The Oracle's Side

Being stunned was an understatement; Lila, Daisy, and Ivy simply gawked at Violet like a fool. To think they had been debating how to haul her out of bed and comfort her for the day's trials, never guessing she was already on her feet, preparing for revenge? Wow. That was mind-blowing.

Ivy was the first to speak. "You just said 'enemies,' not 'enemy,' which means more than one...right? I thought Elsie Lancaster was our only enemy. What other enemies do we have? Tell me it's not the cardinal alphas. It can't be them, please."

"Knock it off, Ivy," Daisy snapped. Ivy's fixation on the alphas was clearly getting on her last nerve.

Violet boldly told her. "Yes, you heard correctly. I'm not sparing the cardinal alphas. I plan to punish them all."

Immediately, Lila's eyes shone with pride. "Whatever you decide, Princess, this humble servant stands with you wholeheartedly." The girl looked as if she were a breath away from bowing like a knight and pledging her allegiance.

"Whoa, hold up," Ivy interrupted, stepping closer. "Do you even realize what you're talking about? We're dealing with the cardinal alphas here. Even Elsie alone's going to be a battle, considering all her supporters. Add the alphas, and that's suicide."

"What supporters?" Daisy scoffed. "Have you looked at your Moon Feed this morning? The Oracle dropped a bombshell."

Violet's brows lifted in surprise. She quickly pulled out her phone and opened the Oracle's latest article.

Moon Feed Exclusive: QUEEN BEES & ROGUE QUEENS

Written by : The Oracle

Oh, my addicted readers of Lunaris! Your poor Oracle's heart is so shattered, even a polite "hello" feels like a lie right now. Let's skip the sugarcoating and plunge straight into our latest storm of scandal, shall we?

Mourn, Lunaris, mourn!

Oh, Lunaris.

Let's not pretend we don't all know what's on the tip of everyone's tongue right now: The Video. Yes, that one.

Oh, Elsie. You were once the ice queen we all feared and admired. But now? You've scorched so many flowers that even The Oracle is squinting at your crown. Releasing that well-timed video wasn't a powerplay—it was a full-blown massacre.

Do I condone Violet's risqué rendezvous with not one but two of the cardinal alphas? Absolutely not. Nonetheless, everyone to their own. But to throw a girl to the wolves like that? There's a word for that, darling: cruelty.

And before you bite, no—I'm not soft. But I still believe in girl code. Women supporting women. What happened to that, Elsie? Did you skip the lesson or were you too busy clinging to power to remember we're not supposed to cut each other down?

Now, I've witnessed my fair share of catfights, but seeing that humiliating takedown of our dear Violet Purple—oof. Even I, your drama-loving Oracle, had to clutch my pearls. There's a line you don't cross, honey. And Elsie soared right over it with the grace of a rabid hawk.

Lightning Prince Or Asshole Prince

As for you, Alaric, our Lightning Prince, you burned us. We shipped it. We rooted for you. Or did we not cheer him on when he literally kissed the thunder into Violet's life?

We said, "Oh look, maybe brooding Alaric has a heart after all." But then? You shattered it. Publicly. Mercilessly.

Dear prince Alaric, you're not just the storms these days, you're the heartbreak hurricane, and half of Lunar is gawking at your every move. I expected better from you.

But fear not, my cunning sweethearts, because as one door closes, another opens.

Who now stands with the Rogue Queen?

One name lingers in the air: Asher Nightshade. Remember that persistent death look alpha who's hovered around Violet from day one? Perhaps this fiasco is the break he's been waiting for.

If Asher intends to swoop in and console our Rogue Queen, well, sign me up for the front-row seats. Then again, he's vanished from the radar lately. Off plotting some wicked scheme, I presume?

If Asher's out of the picture, well... might I interest you in Griffin Hale?

Because did you see that man leap to Violet's defense? (Raise your hand if you swooned a bit when he roared on her behalf. No shame—we all did.) What a knight in shining armor moment. If chivalry isn't dead, it's probably wearing East House colors.

Rise or fall of the cardinal alphas?

Which brings me to another juicy thought: is the alliance between Griffin and Alaric fracturing? We've seen bonds strain before (cough Asher and Roman cough).

Their relationships are more frayed than that pair of old jeans in your closet and now the crackling tension between these two makes me wonder if the Cardinal Four might soon become... well, none.

By the Moon Goddess, let's hope this doesn't result in another calamity like the one at Silver Court last Saturday. My day planner can't handle another tragic meltdown.

Where does this leave us?

So, if we're playing chess, it looks like Elsie, the reigning queen bee, officially has Roman and Alaric on her side. (Or does she? Roman didn't look too cozy with her after the video.)

On the other hand, Rogue Queen Violet may just have Asher and Griffin backing her. Which side pulls more knights into their camp, hmm? The mind reels and I, for one, am living for it.

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

The Oracle.

"Whoa," Violet breathed, unable to believe what she'd just read.

"Yes, that was exactly the feeling I had after I was done too," Daisy admitted. "Aside from you, the Oracle is one of the few not scared to call out Elsie's behavior."

She added, "The Oracle has never been on anyone's case the way she's emotionally invested in yours. If I wasn't so careful, I'd dare to say she's on your side."

Ivy shook her head. "Elsie won't take this lying down."

"And that's where you're wrong," Daisy told her ominously. "No one fights the Oracle. Not when she holds the key to your secret. You don't want her opening that box."

#### Chapter 256: What A Rogue Does Best

"It's just one article," Ivy argued. "It's still not enough to draw Elsie's supporters to our side. Elsie Lancaster will marry one of the cardinal alphas after graduation. That alone is enough to keep people loyal to her, bitch or not." She made it clear to Violet.

"A shift is a shift," Lila countered. "People are beginning to see Elsie for who she is, and that's a good thing. A little drop makes an ocean. Not to mention, graduation is months away. So many things could happen in that span of time."

Everyone caught the implication in Lila's words, and their faces reflected varying degrees of shock. Violet didn't let herself get carried away, she quickly schooled her expression.

She wasn't trying to knock Elsie off her pedestal so she could take her place— Moon Goddess forbid she accept such a twisted fate, even if Elijah himself, in a world of impossibility, agreed.

She wasn't a prize to be fought over by the cardinal alphas. No, this wasn't about status or recognition. This was about justice. About taking down a tyrant. The alphas included.

"As much as I need the students' support to rise up against the injustice humans especially face in this school," Violet began, her tone steely, "my plan doesn't depend on their backing."

At once, all three girls perked up, eyes alert, hearts racing. They knew that look in Violet's eyes.

"Parents Week is happening this week. It's the perfect opportunity to strike."

"What's your plan?" Daisy asked, her sharp mind already spinning through the possibilities, prepared to dissect, analyze, and fine-tune whatever Violet had in store.

"Micah and I were talking, and he might have hinted that Elsie is harboring a dirty secret."

"What secret? Does he know the secret?" Lila asked quickly.

Violet blinked, the realization hitting her. "I... I don't know. It didn't cross my mind. But from the way he spoke, if he does know, he probably expects me to find it out myself."

"Or it might be a ruse," Ivy interjected. "You weren't exactly in the best state of mind yesterday. He might have said that to comfort you."

Violet frowned as the doubt crept in. No, it couldn't be. She remembered the look in Micah's eyes—how deeply he had meant it. Micah wouldn't lie to her. But then if she could remember clearly, he was half-demon and they were tricksters by nature.

Still, Violet shook her head. "No. I think he's telling the truth." Her voice was sure now. "And now that I think about it, Elsie's record is too clean for someone with such nasty behavior. She has to have a weakness."

"Even if she does," Daisy said slowly, "this is Tuesday. We don't have much time to dig into anything, let alone expose it. I'm all for your plan, Violet, but this might not be it."

"I thought about that," Violet replied, locking eyes with each of them. "Which is why we're going to bug her room and spy on her."

"Oh, come on!"

"That's invasion of privacy!"

Daisy and Lila's protests overlapped, both of them clearly uncomfortable with the plan.

But Violet didn't flinch. Her voice hardened as she stepped forward. "Elsie didn't play fair! She didn't care about my privacy when she leaked those videos! You heard the Oracle, she fought dirty. I'm not going to fight fairer. I'm going to fight dirtier."

"You don't have to pull yourself down to Elsie's level," Daisy tried again, turning to Lila with a desperate look. "Please tell your princess she's about to sully her royal prestige."

But Lila only shrugged, smiling wickedly. "The princess's decree is the law."

"Ugh!" Daisy groaned, curling her fingers like claws, as if she were imagining wringing Lila's neck in frustration.

Gods help her. How had she ended up with this bunch of chaos incarnate? She pressed her fingers against her temples, already feeling the headache brewing.

"Fine," she muttered, exhaling deeply. "But how do you even get a recording device? Jameson's locked down the school. No one leaves or enters without her permission, unless you're a wolf or an elite." She rolled her eyes at the injustice. "Even if you could leave, what would your excuse be? And even then, there are too many eyes on us. We're rogues. They expect us to cause trouble. They'd search us, and if they find a device? We're screwed."

"We don't need to go through all that," Violet said with a sly smile. "Natalie will help."

"Have you lost your damn mind?!" Ivy and Daisy exploded in unison.

"Natalie is an elite!" Daisy snapped.

"She's practically Elsie's ally! Why would she betray her?"

Violet calmly lifted her phone and opened the comment section under the Oracle's latest article. There it was:

NatalieAvax: Oracle servin' it pipin hot 🍷🔥🔥🔥

Ivy and Daisy blinked at the screen.

"That doesn't prove anything," Ivy protested. "She could've just liked the post."

Violet smiled knowingly. "You might not notice the little things, Ivy, but I do. Also, you said it yourself, Natalie and Elsie are allies, not friends. And allies shift with the tide. I've studied Natalie and she different from the others. No one hates Elsie's ass more than she does, but she just hides it well because she's elite. Elites supposedly has to support Elites, well, Elsie to be precise."

"But she doesn't have to do much in this case," Violet continued. "All I need is a recording device. Her family's a tech giant, so getting one would be like breathing. That's why I need her." She finished, letting her words sink in.

Daisy dragged a hand down her face. "I don't know, Violet. This is one hell of a crazy and risky plan. We haven't even thought about the fallout especially not after what we're planning to unleash during Parents Week. Jameson would skin us alive if she finds out it's our doing."

"That is if she finds out." Lila said with a conspiratory smile. The Fae probably had a lot of tricks up her sleeve.

Violet placed a hand on her shoulder. "Fear not, friend. They branded us rogues. Let's show them these rogues are not to be messed with. "

Chapter 257: Punish The Alphas

"It just crossed my mind," Lila said suddenly, "What if Elsie doesn't spill her secret before the time is up?"

Daisy's attention perked up instantly, her analytical mind already running through the implications. She said to Violet, "Lila's right. Everything we're planning hinges on bugging her room and catching her off guard. But if I were Elsie, I'd be extra careful especially during a sensitive week like this. If her secret is as dangerous as we think, she's not going to be careless about it."

Ivy added next, "And don't forget, parents officially start trooping in by Friday. Knowing my kind the aristocrats, they'll be turning on the charm and flashing their perfect hair, perfect smiles, trying to win over the parents. Elsie would undoubtedly be leading the parade and would not risk ruining her image with one slip-up. She'll be all glitter and grace."

Violet nodded, finally seeing the cracks in the plan. "You're both right. Elsie isn't stupid and would be extra cautious during this period. She'll walk on eggshells, even in private. We can't wait for her to slip. If we want to get that secret, we'll have to create the conditions to make her crack."

The girls looked at her in surprise but Violet continued to speak, this time, more fiercely. "People don't reveal their secrets when they're calm. They spill them when they're emotional. When they're backed into a corner, when their blood is boiling. That's when the truth slips through."

"I'll trigger Elsie." Violet announced, her eyes burning with purpose. "Mess with her head and make her feel like she's losing control, like everything is slipping through her fingers. I'll light a fire under her throne... ." her smile curved, slow and dangerous, "She'll be the one to set herself on fire. We'll just be there to catch the spark."

There was silence for a while until Ivy let out a whistle, "Damn, you're scary when you're like this."

Violet simply shrugged. Everyone had a darkness inside of them and it all depended on how you handled it. Right now, she wanted it out for a little play.

"How are you going to do what you just said?" Daisy asked her.

Violet said, "Elsie thrives on control. She's the way she is because of the favour of the Alpha king. She thinks no matter her bad behavior that the cardinal alphas would come back to her. I'm going to make her believe that's not the case."

"Ooh, interesting." Lila was excited. The princess was so cool the Fae Queen herself would weep in pride. Her little Fae could hold her own even in the midst of opposition.

Folding her hands behind her back, Violet began to pace up and down the room like a commander briefing her squad before an ambush. "You heard the Oracle. I have Asher and Griffin on my side, undoubtedly. But what she doesn't know is that Roman is wrapped around my fingers."

"What do you mean by that?" Daisy asked, instantly suspicious, her gaze narrowing.

Violet tapped the inside of her mouth with her tongue, wondering how much she could tell them. "Roman Draven graced my bed last night." She added immediately, "At least in his cat form."

The explosion was immediate.

"What?!" Ivy practically shrieked.

"That asshole hurt you!" Daisy barked.

"He's the reason we're living in this godforsaken dump!" Ivy added, throwing her arms up.

Lila, on the other hand, stood in the corner with her lips pressed into a tight line, the silence from her speaking louder than the others' outbursts.

As if catching herself, Daisy turned to Lila, saying. "Why aren't you saying anything? You should be advising your princess from making the wrong choice..." She trailed off as it hit her. "Fuck, you knew... you fucking knew and kept us in the dark all this while!" Her eyes flashed with anger.

"Trust me, I wish I could unsee what I saw that day." Lila said, and Violet's cheeks turned scarlet red.

Damn it! Lila had really seen her and Roman together that night.

"Look guys, I haven't forgiven him!"

"And yet, he crept into your bed last night."

Violet wanted to tell them about the animal bond Roman had mentioned, but her instincts kicked against it, as if it was something that should be privy to her alone.

So she said instead, "I know you're both disappointed—"

"Very disappointed," Ivy interjected. "You could have chosen a better Alpha."

Violet sighed. "Look, it's hard to explain, but I'm sorry. However, the point is to look at the current picture. Out of the cardinal alphas, Roman is the most loyal to Elsie and if she believes she has lost him, trust me, she's going to lose it." She said and waited for them to consider it.

Daisy and Ivy looked at each other, their eyes communicating as they came to an agreement.

Daisy said, "I don't support this, but if you feel like you could pull it off, then go ahead. But be careful, Violet."

"Yes, be careful," Ivy said like a wingman.

"While you feel you might play Roman, don't be roped in as well. For he who stares at the abyss, the abyss stares back at them. I don't know what harem you're creating, but Roman isn't one of them. He's a fox, and he would likely betray you again."

"Fine, I'll be careful. I won't fall for him." Violet said with a half-hearted smile, the word poignantly tasting like lies on her mouth. But she ignored it. She could handle this.

Ivy asked out of sheer curiosity. "So... do you still plan to punish the Alphas?"

Violet didn't hesitate. "Yes."

"Care to run us through it as well?" Daisy asked her.

"The Alphas are what they are because of their parents. They're heirs, and their parents expect them to follow in their footsteps, to make them proud." Violet paused, eyes shining with an edge. "But what if we show them who they really are instead?"

She started pacing again, saying.

"Griffin is aggressive. Asher is manipulative. Fox is an asshole. And Alaric..." her voice dropped into ice, a cruel chill wrapping around his name, "Well, he's a cold-hearted bastard."

She turned to face them. "What if we bring their worst sides to the surface for the world to see? What if we show everyone the monsters behind the golden thrones? The Cardinal Alphas have to learn that they're not gods. They are not untouchable."

Ivy cried out, "But Griffin has been sweet to you all this while!"

Violet nodded. "Yes, he is. But I can't spare any of them. And besides..." her lips curled into a wry smile, "we can't make it so obvious we're the ones behind it."

Daisy narrowed her eyes. "They'd still know."

"They can only suspect," Violet said coolly. "But there'll be no proof. That's why we have to be careful. No traces. No loose ends."

"Asher is not stupid. Moreover, he can easily compel any of us to tell him the truth. I don't want him near my mind." Daisy expressed her fear.

But Violet said to her. "Even if Asher knows the truth, he can't say the truth. He knows I'll be expelled from the school if the news of our treachery is exposed. I know Asher, he's too obsessed with me to let me go. So you have nothing to worry about, he'd not go poking around for a truth he already knows."

Daisy shook her head in pity, "I can never understand how you relate easily with these alphas. It literally gives me the chills to even breathe the same air as Asher."

Violet wanted to retort that everyone was blowing Asher's faults out of proportion. Sure, he had his—well—questionable tendencies, but underneath that, he was a decent person. You just had to go beyond the surface, dig deep — quite deeply — and voilà: there were his better qualities.

So she smiled sheepishly instead.

Lila announced. "If that's the case, that means we'll also need video evidence. This is going to be exciting."

"We can use the video of Griffin losing control yesterday," Violet suggested. "It sends the message we want, that power left unchecked is dangerous."

Daisy chimed in, "And Roman? I mean... it's normal for men to sleep around. I don't think it'll create the kind of impact we're hoping for."

Violet's smile was razor-sharp. "Don't worry. I have a plan. And I'll need all your help, especially you, Lila."

Lila blinked in surprise, eyes wide. "Really?"

"Yes," Violet confirmed. "We'll be needing your abilities."

A smirk curved on Lila's lips, her eyes flashing like a match struck in the dark. "I'm in."

Daisy let out a low whistle. "This is dangerous. But hey, what's life without a few risks?"

Violet turned to Ivy, one brow lifted. "You in?"

Ivy rolled her eyes, but the fire in them betrayed her excitement. "If you're creating history, what makes you think I wouldn't want my name in it?"

"Good." Violet's smile was pure satisfaction as she looked over her girls. Her pack. Her army.

"Let's begin."

#### Chapter 258: Perfect Window

First period was canceled that morning and for good reasons. Violet and the girls received an alert from the Lunarix link, the school's academic app. All the students of Lunarix Academy were expected to converge at the ballroom. Hence they joined the students funneling in one direction.

Though Lunarix Academy was known for its cutting-edge dorms and lavish wings, the school had been around for a long time, and the ballroom remained one of its oldest and grandest parts.

With vaulted ceilings crowned by breathtaking chandeliers, marble floors polished to a mirror shine, tall arched windows, and water-paint murals lining the walls, the space practically reeked of legacy.

Depending on the occasion—such as the assembly taking place right now—it often doubled as a conference or banquet hall, thanks to its impressive size.

Perhaps due to the sudden nature of the announcement, Violet did not get much of the attention she had expected after yesterday's incident. It relieved her a bit even though she knew it wouldn't last forever.

Students filed in, filling the room with chatter, but all noise quickly died down as their eyes caught sight of principal Jameson. But that was not all because the four cardinal alphas were standing tall behind her.

Everyone practically froze, not because of the cardinal alphas powerful presence but because everyone knew the alphas had been butting heads lately. Even the Oracle predicted the cardinal alphas breaking up.

And yet, here they were, united behind their principal Jameson like the good old days. They knew instinctively, something big was coming.

Once the last student squeezed through, Jameson stepped forward to the podium, her voice echoing through the mic.

"Thank you all for coming," She commanded everyone's attention. "Now in recent days, we have seen recent events threaten the harmony of this great academy. Scandals. Fights. Chaos."

She paused, letting the tension simmer before she went on, "Let me warn you: Lunaris will not tolerate such behavior moving forward. Not on my watch. Any further misconduct will be met with the harshest retaliation, and trust me, I don't mean detention."

The hall was dead silent at this point and some of the students, especially the humans, had expressions of dread on their faces. Violet was concerned as well knowing the stunt she was about to pull off, however, she remained brave. Jameson was all talks because at the end of the day, the wolves would do whatever they wanted.

"Fortunately," Jameson added, "I'm in a forgiving mood today because this week is Parents Week."

There was an explosion of noise as cheers, laughter, and squeals of joy rent the air. Students clapped, whistled, and bounced with excitement. Of course, not everyone was impressed. At the front, Elsie Lancaster rolled her eyes so hard it looked painful.

Jameson offered a polite smile, "Yes, yes, I hear your enthusiasm. This is a chance for our first-years and transfers to show their parents what life at the esteemed Lunaris Academy is all about. And for our seniors, maybe you find it routine, but it's also a time to reconnect with your families, and represent Lunaris with pride. Don't waste it."

She turned slightly, gesturing to the East Alpha.

"Your Alpha, Griffin Hale, will now take the stage to walk us through the event schedule."

The moment Griffin stepped forward, the students broke into another uproar, their cheers thunderous.

"I love you, Alpha Griffin!"

"Alpha Hale, marry me!"

Another screamed, "Throw your shirt!"

Griffin grinned charmingly, soaking it in for a moment before he raised a hand for silence. "Alright, alright, keep your hearts in your chests."

Laughter rippled through the students.

Then, he began his speech with a more serious tone. "Lunaris Academy has come far over the years. From an exclusive werewolf academy to one now known across Aster City for promoting coexistence between wolves and humans. And this week, we're going to show our parents exactly why Lunaris is worth every ounce of its prestige."

There was more cheering, but it was hushed as Griffin continued with details.

"We'll begin with a Welcome Ceremony, a series of Speeches, a Tour of House Facilities and Open Class Observations. Plus, an interactive session called 'A Day in the Life' and a Meet-the-Teachers Panel led by none other than our top student guide, Mary. Let's give her a round of applause for her amazing service!"

From where she stood, Violet turned her head at the mention of Mary, surprised to see her in the corner. She hadn't crossed paths with the girl since that first encounter, yet here Mary was, smiling in modest acknowledgement of the applause.

It was weird to say the least.

"Then," Griffin continued, "we'll have our Legacy Luncheon for elite lineages and alumni. And guess who's hosting it?"

He paused dramatically.

"Your queen bee, Elsie Lancaster."

Another thunderous applause, especially from the elite circle. Elsie lifted her hand in a wave, soaking in the praise like sunlight

Griffin didn't stop there, his voice deepened with energy. "But the real fun starts on the weekend! House competitions are back, and yes, Lycan Fangball will be held this Saturday!"

The crowd went so wild their cheers shook the chandeliers this time. The mention of the brutal, bloody sport had adrenaline shooting through the room. The girls especially, were thrilled at the thought of their favorite Alpha stripping down and clashing in that brutal, adrenaline-forked game.

Griffin let them have their moment before he silenced them once more.

"We'll also be hosting lots of showcases," he added. "All clubs, societies, and groups, this is your moment to shine. Parents want a show, so give it to them. Get creative. Impress the crowd. Also, it is compulsory for every student to take part in one way or the other."

Excited murmurs buzzed again.

Daisy asked, "Are rogues mandated to participate as well?"

Violet shrugged, "I have no idea."

"And for the first time ever," Griffin said dramatically, "Parent-Student Combat Duos. Yes. You heard me right. If your parents think they've still got it, let's see how you handle the duel together."

From the corner, Asher scoffed under his breath. Of course his father would be up for that. He could already feel the headache coming.

Griffin wrapped it up with flair, "And finally, Sunday night is the Evening Gala. Dress your best. Walk like royalty. Because this event will be broadcast across Aster City."

The students gasped in shock. Then without wasting a second, some were already on their phones, booking their outfits.

Violet glanced at her girls. Lila. Ivy. Daisy. Except they were already looking at her as well, the same thought passing between them like lightning. This was the window they needed — the coverage. The world would see Lunaris for what it truly is.

Griffin raised a fist.

"Let's give our parents something to remember. Let's show the world what Lunaris is made of."

Then he chanted: "Lunaris above!"

And the crowd chanted back at a deafening volume :

"We rise! We rule! We never back down!"

And with that, the students poured out of the ballroom, buzzing, plotting, and glowing with anticipation for the super event, not knowing that chaos was about to be redefined.

Chapter 259: First Bait

"Wait up!" Violet called, weaving through the exiting crowd of students as her eyes locked onto the familiar figure moving swiftly ahead.

Mary halted at once, like she'd been expecting to be stopped. She turned slowly, her blonde hair catching the light.

Violet offered a small smile. "Hey. Where've you been?"

"Hello to you too," Mary responded quietly.

Violet was about to press for details, but noticed Mary glancing sideways and her gaze shifted to where Daisy, Ivy, and Lila stood, waiting for her.

Violet gave her roommates a quick look in return, silently telling them she'd catch up soon. Understanding her unspoken signal, the trio slipped away into the thinning crowd.

Now alone, the ballroom was nearly empty, save for a few staff members tidying up the mess left behind by students before shutting the doors.

In that echoing space, Mary let out a wry smile. "I've...been in the hospital."

Violet's heart jumped. "Which hospital?" she asked quickly, the pit of her stomach turning cold and her voice coming out sharper than intended.

Mary raised an eyebrow, amused. "The school's hospital, of course. Where else would I go?"

Because of Adele's ominous warning, Violet had always assumed something strange was going on in that hospital and would never encourage anyone to go there. She couldn't exactly dissuade Mary either, after all, what would she even say?

Violet laughed sheepishly. "Oh, right. The hospital. Where else would it be? Sorry, my mind can be a little dull sometimes," she managed to cover up.

Mary took a breath, looking hesitant, then confessed in a low voice, "I've been having epileptic attacks. It had been mild for as long as I know, but since that week they got so severe the school decided to keep me in the ward for observation."

Violet's heart sank. "Oh... Mary, I'm so sorry." She reached out and put a comforting hand on Mary's arm, gently squeezing.

But the moment she did, Mary's eyes snapped wide. She gasped as though jolted by an unseen force, and her body went rigid. In an instant, she collapsed, dragging Violet down with her.

For a terrifying heartbeat, Violet froze, having no idea what to do. It all happened so quickly. Then she realized the girl was convulsing, her limbs jerking uncontrollably on the floor.

"Mary!" Violet cried, completely stunned. Her breath caught in her throat, panic rising. "Somebody help!" she called out weakly, her voice barely carrying as her mind scrambled to process the situation.

Her attention shot downward when Mary's hand gripped her arm so tightly that it hurt, her jacket saving her from experiencing a deeper injury.

All at once, Mary's convulsions seemed to still for a moment, and her pupils rolled back. Her voice, half-choked, shaped words that emerged in a haunting, distant tone:

"Child of war,

Child of chaos,

The moon chose you not for peace,

but for fire—

A crown forged not in gold, but blood.

A hate-bite unravels the knot,

The purple bloom awakens.

Blood calls to blood; blood of my blood.

Four thrones must break for the other to rise,

And truth will bleed behind loving lies.

Beware—the serpent smiles where hearts are set.

The storm, the beast, the fox, the puppeteer,

With hearts entwined,

Shall break the law.

A father's wrath,

A kingdom's lie.

Two worlds tremble at her name—

The hidden princess who tames the flames.

So warns fate: night is coming.

Peace or war—let none forget,

The goddess moves her final bet."

Violet was transfixed by the scene, the words wrapped around her like a noose, thick and suffocating. Her ears rang with them, each syllable searing into her bones like prophecy carved in fire. She couldn't breathe. Couldn't move. Couldn't think.

It wasn't until someone, probably one of the staff, rushed in and pushed her aside to help Mary that Violet snapped back to reality, adrenaline leaving her shaky and breathless.

She let them tend to Mary, rising on her feet unsteadily.

Blood of my blood. Four thrones must break. The serpent smiles. And that final mention of a father's wrath.

In her mind, all of it rang as ominous as a death knell.

A staff member managed to carry Mary away just as her roommates, Lila, Daisy and Ivy came hustling into the room, their eyes wide with shock.

"What just happened?" Ivy asked, startled at her rattled features.

Violet shook her head, her throat clogged. "I have no idea."

Lila gave her a long, narrowed look, eyes sharp like a hawk circling prey. It was the look of someone who just knew something was up.

Before she could say anything, Daisy swooped in like a divine distraction, looping her arm through Violet's.

"Come on, let's go," The girl led her away.

The hallway was alive with the usual noise of students chatting, lockers slamming, heels clicking, and sneakers squeaking. It was a routine they were now used to and they moved through it until Daisy turned to Violet and said, "Now be sure to execute the first plan."

With that, Daisy and Ivy split off, leaving Violet alone with Lila.

Violet casually flipped open her locker and reached inside. Her fingers found a random textbook she had absolutely no reason to touch. Still, she pulled it out with great flair.

Then, with the theatrics of a girl who'd just run a marathon in heels, Violet let out a long, exaggerated yawn.

Lila blinked. "Why the hell are you yawning? Didn't you sleep last night?"

Violet placed the book against her hip and said with a half-smirk, half-sigh, "Nope. Roman Draven came to my room last night."

Lila's gasp was so loud it could've shattered crystal.

"WHAT?! ROMAN DRAVEN CAME TO YOUR ROOM LAST NIGHT?!"

At once, heads turned and conversations halted mid-sentence as eyes were suddenly fixed deliciously on them.

Except it was exactly as planned.

Violet smiled, slow and sly, like a fox with its paw on the trap's trigger. The bait had been set. Now let the gossip feast begin.

Chapter 260: The Goddess Fool

"No, you can't go in there!" a nurse called out, her voice high with alarm as Adele barged through the double doors of the ward. But Adele didn't even stop nor flinch, undeterred by the frantic protests

At her side was Asher and the puppeteer turned a fierce glare on the nurse, barking, "Rest your ass."

Immediately, the nurse's defiance melted like a puppet cut from its strings. Meek and mute, she returned back to wherever she came from, powerless to protest further.

Adele saw the whole thing but said nothing. If anything, it confirmed that she'd made the right choice by bringing Asher along. His ability commanded compliance—and right now, obedience was gold.

They strode down the tiled corridor, the air thick with antiseptic and tension. Adele's eyes briefly swept over an elite student perched on the bed, chatting with her phone. The girl hastily averted her face, trying to use her hair as a curtain to hide her face.

Classic.

It wasn't uncommon for students, especially the elites, to hide out here to escape class. The hospital wing was like a safe haven for them. Indeed, it was for humans.

But Adele didn't care. She wasn't here for her or any of the others hiding out here. It was Jameson's business to enforce stricter rules and control her students.

Mary wasn't hard to find. She made sure of it with the loud, chilling voice echoing across the entire hospital floor:

"Night is coming.

Woe to those that sleep.

Woe to those with eyes but see not.

With mouth, but talk not.

The wheel is turning.

The war waits for no one."

The haunting words struck like a blade dipped in ice, lodging themselves in Adele's spine. She stepped faster, urged by the frantic need to help the young girl from whatever they were doing to her.

When Adele arrived at the scene, her fury only escalated upon spotting a woman in a doctor's coat, furiously scribbling Mary's every word.

Something snapped inside of Adele and she strode over without pause, snatching the notepad right out of the woman's hands.

"What the—You!" The doctor's voice was high with outrage before she even looked up. But the moment she recognized Adele, she bristled with alarm.

"What are you doing?" the woman snapped. "This is not your territory."

But Adele ignored her. Instead, she skimmed the notes, her lips curling in disgust as she realized what they were doing. Then, with a single yank, she tore them to pieces.

Shock flared in the doctor's eyes. "How dare—!" She lunged forward, but Asher took one threatening step, and the woman froze, his presence now dawning on her.

"You don't want to start this," the doctor warned, her gaze trained warily on Asher. All of them knew what he was capable of and Adele bringing him here was a clear threat.

Yet Adele only stared her down.

"I've come to take one of our own." Her words were cold and final.

"Your own?" The doctor scoffed, laughing as if she'd heard a bad joke. "The girl is human."

Without missing a beat, Adele pulled a folded piece of paper from her pants pocket, brandishing it for her to see.

"You'd be amazed what research turns up," she said icily. "While the girl bears no markers from tests to indicate she has wolf blood in her, her genealogical records show that one of her ancestors had a child by a werewolf."

The doctor blinked, uncertainty etched on her features for the first time.

Adele went on, "Due to the racism and persecution at the time, the woman claimed her human husband fathered the child. They buried the truth and hid it so deeply by intentionally marrying her daughter into human bloodlines, generation after generation, until the wolf blood became diluted. But wolf blood can't stay hidden forever, and now, it's waking in Mary."

Silence blanketed the room as Adele took a step closer, her eyes never leaving the doctor's. "The moon goddess blesses wolves, not humans. If her gift has awakened, it's because her blood remembers what she is. She clearly possesses all the traits of a seer—a fact you know deep down, judging by the way you greedily pocket her sacred words." Her voice was thick with disgust now.

Even with the guilt, the doctor opened her mouth and argued with Adele, "She's still human nonetheless, we'd be the ones to help her."

Adele let out a humorless laugh. "More like use her." Then she turned swiftly toward the girl and commanded, "Asher, take her."

"No, you can't! I'm calling security, and Patrick would—"

But Adele hissed, "I don't care about Patrick. Let me spell it out for you in case you don't understand—Seers are sacred to the wolves. And if they should hear how the goddess's messenger has been treated

here, trust me when I say death would be too merciful for you and your people. Even Alpha King Elijah can't stop the wrath of his people if that's what you're banking on."

The blood drained from the doctor's face as she saw the truth reflected in Adele's eyes. She didn't even know what to do at this point, the fight having gone out of her. Adele helped her make the decision

"Take her now, Asher." She commanded.

Mary's convulsions had stopped. Now she lay still in bed, murmuring words that didn't make sense even in her sleep. Asher moved to her side, but the moment he touched her, the girl gasped, and then she was speaking again in that otherworldly voice:

Prince of chaos,

Prince of war,

He who weaves the stars with silken thread,

The goddess's sharp-edged weapon.

The hand that pulls, the heart that plots,

Will find himself tangled in the very knots—

For tonight, your truth will gleam.

Blood of my blood,

The blood calls home.

The princess must be protected,

But she is not yours to keep.

For love unearned shall twist to chains,

And power seized may birth your bane.

But fear not—

The bond you long for will bind again,

But not before it births you pain.

Who defies fate and spits on the moon?

Who challenges the goddess?

The prince of schemes does.

But fate smiles, for his fate is cruel—

Even the god made flesh may yet be the goddess's fool.

Asher was usually not one to show emotion, but at that moment, his face was so pale it was obvious the prophecy had rattled him. Even Adele and the doctor stood frozen, stunned by what they had just heard.

Then he carried the girl and said, steely and low, "We're done here."