

Defy 301

Chapter 301: Parents Day Exposé

Just when it seemed Elsie had been backed into a corner, she burst into laughter. It was a clever and polished move like any trained hostess defusing tension.

"Why so serious, Alpha Irene?" she said mid-laugh, "This event is meant to be relaxing, not stiff with nerves."

The comment drew soft murmurs of agreement and a few approving nods. And just like that, Elsie suddenly had the people on her side. Honestly, Violet was impressed. Elsie was every bit the smooth and shrewd hostess.

"We didn't intentionally brand the humans as rogues," Elsie continued. "They chose it themselves. The title was bestowed naturally as this is a werewolf academy, after all. And, if I may remind you, your son Griffin was part of it."

And just like that, Elsie ruined it.

Violet winced internally. Why would you throw her son under the bus like that? She wept inwardly for Elsie.

Irene's voice was cold and hard as glacial ice when she said, "So, because my son made a foolish decision, you decided to follow along like some clueless bimbo without a spine?"

Elsie stood frozen, caught off guard, but quickly recovered. "With all due respect, Alpha Irene, your son is an Alpha and one of the reigning kings of Lunaris Academy. I'm just an ordinary wolf blessed with the Alpha King's favor. There was no way I could challenge him and the others—"

"So in simpler terms, I might be getting a coward for a daughter-in-law?"

A gasp swept through the Luncheon.

Irene was known for her fierce demeanor, but no one had expected her to turn that intensity on Elsie, the presumed future Luna — if Griffin wins the title of Alpha king. Yet here she was tearing into her like any other.

"What's the point of a Luna who can't stand her ground against her Alpha? If she folds at the first sign of tension, is the future of our pack not already compromised?"

Face flushed with humiliation, Elsie tried to salvage what little pride she had left. "Alpha Irene—"

"The East are not made of soft wills and fragile egos," Irene snapped. "If I wanted a docile, obedient daughter-in-law, I'd know exactly where to find one, and it certainly wouldn't be in the East. I'd marry my son into the West pack if that were the case."

That jab landed hard.

Several members of the West House looked visibly offended, but none dared speak. Their Alpha wasn't present to defend them, and worst still, their new Luna perfectly fit Irene's pointed critique.

"You're the Queen Bee, Elsie. You're meant to lead, to set the standard. And yet, the moment students question the system, you shut them down?"

"We did it to preserve order, Alpha Irene," Elsie hissed, her perfect facade starting to crack. "Lunaris Academy has followed these traditions for years. We can't just let outsiders stroll in and destroy everything. That's a recipe for chaos. They made their choices. They should live with the consequences, not cry to you and try to sway your allegiance!"

And just like that, Elsie's composure slipped, and the people watched in stunned silence as the Queen Bee finally bared her fangs.

It dawned on Elsie in the silence that followed that she had just fucked up. Everyone was staring at her now, their eyes narrowed and judgmental, as if seeing the real her for the first time. Her throat tightened and she wished the ground would just open up and swallow her whole.

So she instinctively took a step back, ready to bolt, only for a pair of arms to slide around her shoulders and keep her in place.

Caroline had arrived.

"Apologies, Alpha Irene," Caroline said with a calm, elegant smile. "My dear Elsie..." she turned to her daughter with a look so tender it might have fooled anyone who didn't know better, "has been under a lot of stress lately. She poured her heart into planning this Luncheon. Please forgive her emotional outburst."

Alpha Irene gave a dismissive wave, looking entirely unbothered. From her reactions alone, it was clear that she was so done with the event and wanted to be anywhere else.

But Caroline wasn't finished.

"However, Elsie's concerns about the girls seated at the table are legitimate. Do you know that the one with the purple hair is the daughter of a whore?"

At once, a sharp gasp rippled through the Luncheon and just like that, attention ricocheted away from Elsie and landed squarely on Violet, who now sat ramrod straight in her seat.

Violet had predicted Elsie would eventually use her background against her, but she hadn't expected the blow to come from Caroline herself. Now, it all made sense where Elsie inherited her vileness. The apple hadn't fallen far from the tree.

Still, Violet didn't flinch nor shrink under the intensity of those judgmental stares or the growing whispers. Instead, she locked her gaze on Alpha Irene, reading her expression, waiting for her reaction.

But Irene didn't even blink. "So?"

"She's been hovering around your son, Griffin. And Elsie's potential husband." Caroline's tone was intentional, her words holding calculated meaning.

One that Irene obviously understood.

"Asher Nightshade, Alaric Storm, and Roman Draven are also Elsie's potential husbands," Irene replied coolly. "Only one will take the throne, and according to the Alpha King, only one will marry her. So what of the others? Do they not deserve the freedom to choose? A second option, perhaps? Your daughter's future is secured, Caroline. Should the rest be left with nothing?"

Caroline's mouth twitched with irritation but she masked it well. Clearly, this wasn't the reaction she had hoped for. But no matter, she would find a way to repair this bridge her daughter had so eagerly set on fire.

Violet intentionally remained silent even though the subtext was clear that she was the backup plan. And though the thought churned her stomach, she couldn't deny it made a twisted sort of sense.

She understood what was at risk here which was why she didn't make any full commitments to Griffin yet for a reason. But how could she explain to Irene that this was all still a test run? That she was still trying to understand not one, but four emotionally complex, dangerously powerful boys? There was no safe way to word that, so Violet held her tongue and waited.

Now she had her attention, Caroline said confidently, "Trust me, Alpha Irene, you wouldn't want this one as your son's second option. Not when she's after all the heirs and I have solid evidence to prove that."

At that, Violet's heart slammed into her ribs. Her eyes widened.

No.

It couldn't be.

But it was exactly what she feared.

Chapter 302: Power Of An Alpha

Violet's heart pounded in her chest as she watched Irene's expression shift while the clip of her making out with both Griffin and Alaric played.

It felt like the world was caving in around her.

She saw the exact moment Irene's eyes widened in disbelief, as though struggling to process what she was seeing.

Standing beside her, holding the phone for her to watch, Caroline was nothing short of pleased. Irene's reaction was everything she'd hoped for. This was her chance to finally remove the obstacle in her daughter's path once and for all.

Thank the heavens she had been keeping tabs on the school. If she hadn't intercepted things when she did, her foolish daughter might have lost Irene's favor completely.

Nothing would ruin her plan.

Everyone was curious about what Alpha Irene was watching, but none dared to interfere. All they could do was wait for Irene to lose it so they could get a taste of the gossip.

Violet swore her soul nearly left her body when Irene finally looked up. The woman's gaze locked onto her with unsettling intensity. What was she thinking? Was she angry? Did she feel betrayed?

Yes, Violet had lied. Yes, she had kept the nature of her relationship with her son and the others a secret. But there had been no time to explain anything. Still, even with guilt squeezing her chest, Violet didn't look away. She met Irene's stare eyeball to eyeball.

When Irene opened her mouth, Violet braced herself for the rebuke, but instead, Irene laughed.

Huh?

Violet blinked in confusion. What was going on here?

Caroline, Elsie's mother, frowned. There was nothing remotely funny about the situation. So what was Irene playing at?

But Irene laughed again, louder this time. A boisterous, unapologetic laughter that echoed across the space.

The wolves from the East didn't need to be told, they joined in almost instantly. It was a little awkward at first as some were unsure of the joke, but it quickly spread.

Soon, the entire Luncheon was filled with the sound of laughter. Even the other human parents joined in, swept away by the sheer absurdity of it all.

When Irene finally stopped, the room quieted again, hanging on her next words.

She said lightly, "It's an honor, really, to know that I'm inspiring the younger generation. Monogamy is so last season."

"Alpha Irene!" Caroline gasped, scandalized. "These are the Alpha heirs we're talking about!"

But Irene only shrugged. "They're young. Let them explore. This is the age for experimenting, not shackling themselves down. I'm sure they're very much aware of their duties."

Then she dusted her sleeves like something about the whole scene had bored her. "Anyway, I think I've had enough fun for today. I'll take my leave now."

Murmurs arose at once. The Luncheon had barely begun, and yet Alpha Irene was leaving already? No one had seen that coming.

Caroline's jaw dropped. Clearly caught off guard, she scrambled to do damage control.

"Alpha Irene, surely you're not upset over a little chitchat? Come now, don't be provoked."

But the damage was done. Irene was already walking away, and it seemed to dawn on Caroline right at that moment that the woman was fucking serious. She quickly walked over to her and tried to touch her, "Alpha Irene—"

But that was a big mistake.

The moment Caroline's hand wrapped around Irene's, the woman turned and let out a roar so ferocious that Caroline paled. Goosebumps erupted on everyone's arms, and most people felt the urge to bow their heads in submission as the Alpha aura filled the space. It was overwhelming and suffocating.

With her eyes blazing amber as her wolf rose to the surface, Alpha Irene commanded with a voice that was both human and wolf, "Don't you ever touch me without permission!"

Caroline whimpered. As she was just a mere wolf, not an Alpha, she felt oppressed by the aura and could only nod her head. Only when Irene left did she let out a sharp breath, as if her lungs had finally been returned to her.

So that was the power of an Alpha? Violet was both impressed and frightened as she witnessed what happened. Her eyes happened to cross with Caroline's, and the hatred she saw in that woman's eyes was enough to make her shudder.

But Violet ignored her and followed after Alpha Irene. The woman might have defended her here, but Violet knew her own fate was about to be worse than Elsie's.

The gods help her.

On their way out, Irene almost collided with Luna Zara, Alaric's mother. But instead of the usual warm greeting, Irene simply ignored her and walked on as if she hadn't seen her.

Zara blinked, momentarily frozen in place.

That was odd.

They were good friends who always exchanged pleasantries. So why the sudden cold shoulder?

With a small frown, Zara turned to watch Irene's retreating figure before shrugging lightly. Whatever it was, she'd find out soon enough.

And with that, she made her way toward the Luncheon with curiosity in her eyes.

Violet and the girls followed at a safe distance, just in case they unintentionally provoked the Alpha the way Caroline had done.

Irene didn't speak to them and just kept walking. But that was enough confirmation for the girls that she wanted them around. However, Violet noticed the way her nose kept twitching, as if she were tracking something. Or rather. someone.

Griffin.

Well, thank the gods she wouldn't be receiving the rebuke alone. Violet was grateful that Irene was a reasonable person.

At a point, Violet turned to the girls and said, "I think it's time you let us be."

They understood her words and protested, of course, especially Lila. Alpha Irene was obviously strong and dangerous, and she wanted to be there to defend her in case the woman tried to harm her.

"Don't worry," Violet assured her. "She'll probably yell at me and demand I leave her son alone, but she won't hurt me. So give us some space to talk. I'm sure some of your family are here already. Spend time with them."

Ivy's reaction gave her away at once. Her mother had been at the Luncheon and witnessed what happened. She'd probably rip her one.

"Don't return to the Luncheon. Hang out with Daisy's brother. I'll be back soon," Violet advised.

She had chosen Daisy because Lila Meadows' identity here was fake. Violet still had a feeling she had manipulated the scholarship with Fae magic just to land herself here and protect her.

So she squeezed Lila's hand. "Don't worry, I'll be fine. So for once, go have fun without the princess."

Hopefully.

Chapter 303: Griffin In Trouble

"This had got to be a joke," Violet and Irene said at the same time in disbelief as they stared at the shocking scene before them.

Unlike Elsie's stiff, etiquette-obsessed Luncheon, the men were clearly having the time of their lives.

The guys had arranged their vibrant bash on the East House lawn and it was jaw-dropping. While it didn't boast the pomp and lavish excess of Elsie's setup, the atmosphere was so effortlessly fun and lively, such that Irene and Violet felt like crying. They had clearly wasted their time at Elsie's.

The funniest part was that Irene had stormed in, probably ready to drag her son out by the ear, but now, she was utterly speechless.

There was a whole roasted cow positioned upright over a spit, its body glistening from the heat and low flames licking beneath it. Parts of the meat had already been carved, the remaining flesh still sizzling under the fire. Just beside it, a long tent had been set up where students took turns serving slices of the meat.

The air was thick with the mouthwatering scent of grilled beef. Violet turned to see Irene swallow hard, clearly salivating at the sight. She knew werewolves loved meat, it was practically a staple in their diet, and it seemed even a woman like Irene couldn't resist the allure.

A lineup of students stood behind various cooking stations, their tools clanking as they grilled, fried, seared, and seasoned the meat in different creative styles from spicy skewers to sweet-glazed cuts.

Around them, both students and their visiting male family members milled about, laughing, chatting, and clinking paper cups of punch as they waited their turn. It was loud, colorful, and almost festive than the Luncheon even though there was still the ever-present tension of competition and class lines.

However, that was only the beginning because all around them, everyone was clearly having fun.

Just ahead of them, a lively axe-throwing competition was underway. Targets had been carefully lined up against tree trunks, each painted with bold rings of red, white, and blue. Both students and visiting parents took turns hurling their axes and aiming for the bullseye to earn points for accuracy. Cheers erupted every time a blade landed dead center, and even louder groans followed when there was near misses.

On the other side of the lawn, a group of werewolves had gathered for what might be the most ridiculous, but surprisingly competitive event of the day: a howling challenge. The goal was simple and it was to see who could let out the deepest, most powerful howl. It was loud, silly, yet unforgettable.

None of the Alphas joined in which gave the younger and lower-ranked wolves a chance to show off. Everyone knew Alphas had the strongest howls, so with them sitting this one out, it felt like a fun free-for-all. Some wolves tried to make their howl sound deeper by growling first while others struck tilted their heads so far back it was a miracle their necks didn't snap.

Yes, it was silly, but it was the kind of silly that people loved. It warmed Violet's heart to think that Griffin had poured his heart into this plan, making sure the occasion was special and meaningful for both the human and werewolf fathers alike. Even though he was currently in trouble. No matter how tempting the occasion, it seemed Irene hadn't let go of her anger and was still trying to locate her son.

They passed a group of students, likely werewolves, who were oiled up, flexing their biceps and showing off their abs in a hilarious show of impressing the parents. It was vanity, since muscles alone could not win approval or secure an alliance. But it was fun for the older men, especially the humans, who were impressed by their sheer strength.

Of course, no party would be complete without a drinking contest. This time, it was between the parents, and the students cheered loudly as their fathers went head-to-head. It was during that lively moment that Violet spotted Asher sitting alone in the corner, quietly sipping from his cup.

Her heart ached at the sight. Why was he always by himself? Just thinking about their argument made her feel even worse. As if sensing her presence, he turned, and their eyes met instantly.

Even with his sunglasses on, the connection was intense so much so that Violet felt her stomach flip. There was always something strange about the bond between them. It was as if they could really see each other, not just on the surface, but deeper. He could see her pain, her truth. And she could see his.

Still, Violet had to look away and hurry after Irene. She would find Asher later, once everything else was dealt with.

Violet finally understood why it had been so hard to find Griffin Hale. The guy was locked in an intense arm wrestling showdown with Roman Draven.

A ring of students and parents had gathered around them, cheering, whistling, and even placing playful bets on who would win. With the mix of scents in the air, it was no wonder Irene hadn't been able to track her son down easily.

When the crowd noticed them approaching, they parted just enough to let them through, and that was when Violet got a full view of the scene.

Griffin and Roman were shirtless, their torsos fully exposed. Every muscle flexed under the strain, arms trembling as sweat glistened on their skin. The tension between their locked hands made their veins pop, their bodies gleaming like they'd stepped out of a sports magazine.

Violet blinked hard.

The scene was so hot, that her thoughts began to wander. What would it feel like to be caught between both men? To have their hands on her? She didn't even realize she was salivating until Irene's voice

cut through her fantasy.

"Close your mouth, Violet. I'm still standing right here."

Violet's face flushed. Gods, had she been ogling someone's son right in front of them? That was mortifying.

At that moment, Griffin sensed her presence and looked up. Unfortunately, the distraction was all Roman needed and he slammed Griffin's hand down onto the table.

Cheers erupted around them as Roman's packmates whooped in celebration.

Arion, who had been cheering his son from the side, let out a dramatic groan, clearly disappointed. It was obvious Griffin had the upper hand, but Violet's arrival had cost him the win.

Griffin threw her a sheepish smile but it didn't last long because his eyes met his mother's stern gaze instead.

Irene didn't speak. She simply raised one hand and gestured with a finger in a silent but clear command:

Come. Here.

Chapter 304: Queen Takes Knights

He was in trouble. Griffin could tell from the way his mother just kept walking without looking back, clearly expecting them to follow. So he walked closer to Violet and nudged her. "What's going on?"

"She found out," Violet replied, her voice low, conscious of Arion, who had turned to look at them. He had probably picked up on their conversation with his wolf senses, considering there was still some distance between them. He walked side by side with his wife, who wasn't speaking to him either.

"Found out what?" Griffin whispered now, noticing that his father was listening too.

"About us. All of us. I think." Violet sighed. "Caroline no doubt painted me as the whore." There was bitterness in her tone. Elsie's mother was a petty wench.

"Oh," was all Griffin said, the truth sinking in.

Still, he reached out and squeezed her hand. "Don't worry about my mother. She might seem tough on the outside, but she's soft and sweet as crab meat inside," he said with confidence.

Violet's lips quirked. "You mean like you?"

Griffin lifted a brow. "Really? You think I'm not tough?"

"Oh, you're tough, big boy," Violet said, reaching out to playfully punch him in the stomach, only for her hand to pause and linger. "Damn, that's solid."

Griffin grinned knowingly. "One of these days, I'll let you touch me all you want."

Before Violet could respond, Irene whirled around and glared at them. "Are you guys fucking kidding me right now?"

"Sorry," Violet apologized with a bashful look, unlike Griffin, who just rolled his eyes. He was usually the one suffering through his mother's shameless public displays of affection between her husbands. It was nice to know she was finally getting a taste of her own medicine.

Arion snickered quietly at the side, earning another glare from Irene before she turned and walked on.

They ended up at Griffin's room, which Irene had probably chosen for the privacy it offered, knowing the conversation ahead was going to be sensitive.

Of course, Griffin and Violet arrived late, having intentionally lingered behind. Both had used the moment to brace themselves for the heat they were about to walk into.

Irene didn't speak at first, her back turned to them, likely running through a hundred thoughts in her head. Then she said just two words:

"How many?"

They couldn't tell who she was addressing, but the question was clear enough. Before either of them could answer, Irene turned around, fire blazing in her eyes.

"Don't think of lying to me. Caroline showed me pictures of you with each of the boys. So tell me, how many of the boys are you dating?" Her tone was sharp and demanding.

So the question was directed at her, Violet realized. The answer was sitting right on the tip of her tongue when Griffin answered for her boldly.

"She's dating all four of us."

There was silence until Irene exploded.

"Are you out of your mind?! How could you allow this?!" This time, the fury was directed at Griffin as she stormed up to him.

"I could have accepted your choice. I want your happiness, after all. But all four of the cardinal alphas vying for one girl? That's not romance, that's rebellion! Do you think Elijah will sit back and watch this unfold? Is this Asher Nightshade's idea again? Didn't Lucille already teach you what happens when you get involved with that crazy kid? How could you leap into this death trap all over again?!"

She spun toward Violet next.

"And you! I have no problem with you being with my son. You clearly like him. But with your background, how do you expect me not to question your intentions with the other heirs? Is Griffin not enough for you?"

"Fine, maybe I could tolerate Alaric. I have two husbands, so I understand polyandry, even though, as a cardinal heir and Elsie's potential match, that's already a political nightmare. But Asher Nightshade? Roman Draven? That's not love. That's greed."

"Do you even understand the danger you're putting yourself in by agreeing to something this reckless?"

This time, Violet was completely tongue-tied. Her saving grace came when the door suddenly flew open, drawing every eye in the room. Alaric Storm, Roman Draven, and Asher Nightshade strode in as if they owned the place.

Asher, of course, led the pack.

"The more the merrier," Arion muttered with a deliberate cough.

"Alpha Irene," Asher said coolly.

"Hello, Irene," Roman chimed in with his usual playful lilt.

"Pleasure seeing you, Iron Lady," Alaric greeted with a familiar smile that didn't quite land.

But Irene was not amused. Her expression remained hard as steel as she asked them, "What is the meaning of this? How dare you interrupt a private family meeting?"

"This is no longer just a family meeting," Asher replied, stepping forward. "Not when it involves Violet. And not when it involves us. We know what you've discovered, and we're here to set the record straight."

"There's no record to set straight," Irene snapped. "You destroyed that girl, Lucille. Now you want to ruin this one too? I won't let that happen!"

And yes, now would be the perfect time to mention that Irene Hale absolutely hated Asher Nightshade. While she didn't know all the details surrounding Maria's death, she was very aware of the abuse Henry had inflicted. She despised Asher completely, and it wasn't surprising that she believed his son would turn out even worse.

Lucille's case only confirmed her worst fears.

Tired of the argument, Violet finally spoke up. "I am not Lucille, and I will never be her. I know it doesn't make sense, but I feel strongly for each of these men. I'm honestly scared, and I've tried to ignore these feelings, but I can't deny them anymore. So think whatever you want. Judge me a whore if you must, I don't care. But with all due respect, Alpha Irene, I'm not leaving your son. Or Roman. Or Alaric. Or Asher. Not even if you put a knife to my throat."

"I won't either," Griffin said, lacing his fingers with hers. "She's mine, Mother."

"And mine," Asher added from behind her.

"Mine too," Alaric said as he took her other hand.

Roman stepped up behind her with a lazy grin. "Looks like the Queen takes Knights, after all."

Chapter 305: Start An Orgy

Irene stormed out in anger, but Griffin wasn't concerned. His mother, for all her fire, was not an unreasonable woman. She would never do anything reckless that might jeopardize her son's safety.

Besides, his father, Arion, was present.

If there was anyone who could get through to her, it was him. That man could charm the moon down from the sky if he tried.

Now, if it had been the other twin, Father Aeron, who came along, then maybe there'd be real cause for alarm. So yes, Griffin counted his stars—lucky him, it was Arion who made the trip.

With Irene gone, they all settled into the couches in Griffin's room. And frankly, the whole setup felt strange. It wasn't like Asher and Roman hadn't been in his room before, but this was the first time they were all gathered with an air of friendliness. And it was all because of one girl, Violet Purple.

Violet was sandwiched between Roman and Alaric, while Griffin sat across from them beside Asher Nightshade. Yet, even amidst the rare harmony, Griffin could still sense the tension between Violet and Asher, one that he intended to resolve. If they were going to make this harem work, there was no room for negative energy.

Griffin's eyes locked with Alaric's from across the room and with a slight tilt of his head toward the door, he signaled the obvious message: it was time to go.

But Alaric, lounging a little too comfortably beside Violet, gave the smallest shake of his head in reply. He didn't want to leave. Not when Violet was right next to him, warm and close.

Griffin's jaw tensed, and then a growl rumbled from his chest. It was quiet enough to not seem aggressive, but loud enough to draw every head in the room.

Violet blinked, startled, turning to Griffin with a puzzled frown. "Are you okay?"

Griffin cleared his throat quickly, relaxing his shoulders and covering it up with a casual smile. "Yeah. Sorry. Something was stuck in my throat."

Violet didn't believe him. Griffin was a bad liar and she wondered if he knew that.

"Idiot." Asher muttered from the side.

Griffin turned to him with a glare. To think he was trying to save his ass here and he was being an ungrateful ass. Perhaps he should just let him drown in his shit.

Thankfully, before Griffin could respond, Alaric stood and announced casually, "I think I have to go. My parents are here already."

"Oh, okay," Violet said, turning to bid him goodbye, only to gasp slightly as Alaric swooped down and pressed a quick, soft smooch to her lips. The kiss, though brief, caught her completely off guard. Her cheeks flushed instantly, blooming red.

When Alaric straightened up, he gave her a knowing look, then turned and clapped Roman on the shoulder. The motion was rough, and carried meaning. He was to leave as well.

"Huh?" Roman blinked, confused. "Wait—why am I leaving? My folks aren't even here."

That was until his eyes connected with Griffin's, who mouthed clearly, "Go."

Roman narrowed his gaze, his quick instincts kicking in. His eyes shifted to Asher and Violet, catching the tension radiating off them like static. Ah. Understood

With a stretch so lazy and elegant it might as well have been choreographed, Roman rose from the couch like the cat he often became. "I guess this is my cue to leave as well. We'll settle all this later. But for now, the Brotherhood calls me."

Violet parted her lips to say something, but she didn't get the chance. Roman leaned in swiftly to say his own goodbye too, and unlike Alaric, there was nothing restrained about his kiss.

It was slow and heated, his lips coaxing hers open, his tongue teasing with just enough pressure to make her head spin. Violet didn't mean to, but a soft moan escaped her lips before she could stop it. By the time Roman pulled back, smug satisfaction painted his features

"I guess that's enough for now," he murmured, brushing a thumb across her bottom lip.

Violet stared, dazed. Her heart thudded against her ribs as Roman casually strolled over to Alaric.

"Seriously, dude?" The lightning prince was not happy over being outdone.

"What?" Roman deadpanned, as if he were completely innocent.

Then, without another word, Alaric turned back. And the moment Violet saw that stormy look in his eyes, and that powerful stride, she knew the boys had just turned her into competition. So she opened her mouth in alarm. "No, Alaric—"

But it was too late.

Alaric was already there, slamming his mouth against hers in a kiss that crashed her world. Unlike Roman's playful seduction, Alaric kissed her like vengeance and desire had collided in his veins. His fingers tangled in her hair, pulling her flush against him, lips moving in rough, searing rhythm.

Violet could hardly breathe, all she could feel was sensations. She felt like she was falling into a never ending pit and her fingers gripped his shirt to anchor herself else she lost her mind. Her toes curled in delight, and a shiver raced down her spine.

Heat exploded in her core, and by the time Alaric finally pulled back, Violet was left trembling. Her breathing was shallow, her swollen tingled, but most of all, her eyes were glaze over with want.

"Tell me my kiss was better," Alaric breathed against her lips, like he'd dive right back in if she dared to say otherwise.

"Why don't you let me kiss her one more time so our turns are equal and she can make a valid judgment?" Roman chimed in, clearly ready for a second round.

"What?" Violet gasped in disbelief. Goddess help her with these men.

But before their nefarious plan could go any further, Griffin's voice thundered across the room.

"Are you two insane, or are you actually trying to start an orgy?!"

Even in her dazed state, Violet managed to find Griffin. He was standing there with a furious scowl on his face, but more than that, there was a very obvious bulge in his trousers.

Her breath hitched. Had the scene really been that arousing? But that was a ridiculous question, considering her own panties were soaked.

Griffin roared, "Wait till I get my hands on you two!"

Roman and Alaric took off before he even reached them, laughing as they disappeared down the hall like the shameless alphas they were.

Thankfully, Griffin didn't swoop in for a goodbye kiss because Violet honestly didn't think she could survive another devastating kiss without tearing off someone's clothes.

But then it hit her.

She was alone with Asher Nightshade.

Chapter 306: Solve The Puzzle Together

The silence that followed was awkward at best.

At first, Violet had wanted nothing more than to talk to him and clear the air between them, but now that her wish had been granted, Violet had no idea what to say.

"I'm sorry."

"I'm sorry."

They both said it at once, their eyes locking in surprise.

"Let me go first," Asher said.

"No," Violet shook her head. "Let me go first."

She drew in a steadying breath. "I'm sorry for lashing out at you. I was angry, but I should have given you the chance to explain before jumping to conclusions. So yeah, I'm really sorry."

"You don't need to apologize, Violet. It was all my fault. If I hadn't gone behind your back to investigate your parentage, we wouldn't have fought at all." He paused, looking her right in the eyes. "I don't like us fighting."

Immediately, Violet was reminded of the little boy she had seen in his memory, the one who stayed in bed at night, wishing for a different kind of miracle. Her heart clenched. She hadn't meant to bring back that kind of pain for him.

There was no guarantee Asher wouldn't push her buttons again, but Violet made up her mind right then. She would control her temper better from now on.

Asher looked at her, eyes dark and sincere. "I'm sorry for what I did. Would you find a place in your heart to forgive me, Violet Purple?"

There was a moment of silence as Violet studied him, right before a smile crossed her lips. It was not the teasing type, but a gentle one that was full of kindness.

"Apologies accepted, Asher Nightshade. "Although..." Her eyes shone with that sharp curiosity he had come to know too well. "I'm very much interested in knowing what you found out about me."

"Very well, then." Asher agreed immediately. "Let's begin."

Violet swallowed, her breath catching slightly as curiosity and anticipation prickled at her skin. She had longed for the truth for so long, yet now that it stood before her, her heart thrummed with a strange kind of dread. What if it changed everything?

"I believe strongly that your biological father is alive."

"What?" Violet gasped, her eyes snapping wide open as the revelation hit her like a slap.

Lila had never spoken much about her father, only that he was the reason she had been separated from her birth mother. And that he was dangerous and was someone to be avoided at all cost.

Asher didn't stop there.

"That's not all. He very much knows where you are considering he's been keeping track of you."

Violet gulped, her heart pounding louder.

Cold sweat broke out along her spine, her breath shaky, while her mind spun.

He knew where she was?

Living in the desolate district one, her entire life had practically been a secret. If the man had eyes on her all this time, why hadn't he come for her? If he meant to kill her, wouldn't he have done so already?

It just didn't make sense. Unless there was something she was missing. Or maybe Asher was mistaken?

She tried to anchor herself in reason. "How are you so sure it's my biological father and not my mother?"

"Because of the contents of the letters he sent over the years." Asher's brows furrowed. "They don't read like something a woman would write. There's too much pride. Too much plans." He paused. "I don't like it."

He raised his head slowly, locking eyes with her.

"And it seems you've met your biological mother already. Who is she?"

Oh.

So this was what it was. A transaction of information. She should've known that nothing came without a cost when it involved Asher Nightshade.

Violet ignored his question entirely, asking instead. "Where are the letters?"

Asher didn't budge. "Who is she, Violet?"

He rephrased, "What are you?"

Violet's lips tightened. "I'm sorry, Asher, but I can't tell you that. It's for your own safety."

Asher scoffed, the sarcasm dripping from his next words. "Do I look scared to you?"

She sighed, exasperated. "It's not about fear, Asher. This isn't some schoolyard dare. It's dangerous, truly dangerous. And I'd never forgive myself if anything happened to you because of me. This is my burden to carry. My battle."

Without a word, Asher stood up and crossed the space between them.

Violet tensed as he knelt before her, the movement unexpected. Then, gently, he took her hand in his and pressed a soft kiss to her knuckles.

"You can trust me, my purple queen," he murmured against her skin. "I would never hurt you. I would never use your secret against you if that's what you're worried about. I swear it."

His eyes flicked up, holding hers with intensity. "If anything, I'd lay down my life for you, love. That is what I promise."

Violet swallowed, stunned silent by the softness in his tone, and the way his words wrapped around her like armor and warmth all at once.

"Moreover," he added quickly, a shadow of cunning passing through his gaze now, "look how much information you got from me in just one seating. Imagine what we could accomplish together. If we worked as one, we might even discover the full truth and the identity of your father. We could solve this puzzle together, princess."

Asher kissed her hand again, this time deliberately slow. It was a move meant to shatter her resistance and it was working.

Violet was honestly tempted to tell Asher the truth. She trusted him. But then, Lila's warning kept ringing loudly in her ears.

She sighed. "I need time. Time to think about this."

"Take all the time you want, my purple queen, but not too long. If someone intends to harm you, I want to be prepared for it. You don't know how much you mean to me, Violet Purple." His voice was reverent as he kissed her fingers, one by one, the gesture stirring the same heat Alaric and Roman had summoned earlier.

Violet had been craving Asher for a while now, even though he claimed she wasn't ready. But this was Griffin's room... surely he wouldn't mind if they made good use of it.

Just as Violet began to relax, ready to turn up the flame, Asher took the cue and announced, "Also, your mother is mated."

"What?!" Violet shouted, every ounce of lust vanishing from her body at once.

Chapter 307: Who To Trust?

"...and yes, Nancy is mated to a werewolf from Asher's Pack. That's pretty much all," Violet finished, narrating her earlier conversation with Asher to her roommates.

It was night, and although the visiting parents had left, a few of the Houses were still throwing parties. Unfortunately, as rogues, they weren't permitted to attend. Not that they cared, not when it gave them time to fine-tune their plan. While the students were busy drinking and having fun, they were preparing a well-palated revenge dinner to be served on Gala Night.

"Wow," Ivy breathed, clearly mind-blown. "That's a lot we weren't aware of."

"I think I trust Asher. I should tell him the truth," Violet said, but all three pairs of eyes pinned her to the spot with startling intensity.

She gulped and quickly rephrased, "A bit of the truth?" Violet grimaced when their expressions didn't change at all.

Trying again, she offered a valid reason, "Asher won't hurt me. He's proven that several times. And look how much information we got from him in just one day. If he and I work together, we might finally uncover the truth about my father—about my background."

"Maybe we should wait until after the revenge plan before telling him a bit of the truth," Daisy said, using air quotes. "Just in case he doesn't like what we do and decides to use your secret as payback."

Violet nodded. "I get your point. But Asher isn't like that. No matter what I do, he'd never reveal something that could hurt me."

"After revenge or not, we are not telling Asher Nightshade or any of the cardinal alphas anything," Lila suddenly said, her voice like steel. All three of them turned toward her.

"Why?" Violet asked, her voice strained. She was sick and tired of all the secrets. "We could make him swear a pact never to speak of it."

"Still no." Lila's tone didn't waver.

Daisy and Ivy exchanged glances, sensing the rising tension.

Violet stood up, eyes locked on Lila, her jaw clenched. "Why? Is it because you're scared he'll find out the truth about my father? A father you refuse to tell me anything about?"

Lila sighed. "Just let it go, Violet." She stood up languidly, clearly intending to leave.

She added quietly, "Also, I didn't want to say this because I thought you needed a bit of happiness in your life, but don't fall too deeply for the cardinal alphas. It's for your own good. That's all I have to say."

She turned, heading for her room, but Violet's voice cracked like a whip.

"Don't you dare move another step!"

"Violet?" Daisy said cautiously.

But Violet ignored her. Her eyes were blazing, her chest heaving with emotion.

"You don't get to throw bombs like that and just walk away! No—you don't get to do that! I am so sick of your cryptic messages! So explain yourself right now! What do you mean I should stay away from the cardinal alphas?!"

"You shouldn't trust them, that's all. They might turn against you in the future, that's all."

"Exactly, why?!" Violet demanded.

"I already told you, Violet. Everything will make sense in time."

"Time? Time?! What time exactly?" Violet's voice rose, having reached the end of her patience. "You won't tell me about my mother! Or my father! Not even about my powers! You say I'm Fae, but I don't feel like anything at all! And now you're telling me to stay away from the Alphas? Why, Lila? Why?!"

But Lila didn't answer, she simply kept walking. Violet rushed after her and grabbed her arm, yanking her around. "Don't ignore me, Lila. I'm talking to you!"

That was when Lila snapped, eyes flashing. "Because you are a threat to their throne!"

Violet froze. "What?"

"You're Fae, Violet. Fae are stronger than werewolves. Do you honestly think they'd let something like you walk freely among them? Do you really believe you'll end up with all four of them? One of them will be Alpha King one day and he'll marry Elsie. It's time to wake up from your delusions, princess. Your little harem fantasy won't survive outside the walls of Lunar Academy."

It was safe to say Violet was shell-shocked. She hadn't expected those words to come from Lila. But most of all, it felt like reality had just slapped her in the face. And yet, something clicked in her head. Her eyes narrowed.

"You said I'm a threat to their throne," she repeated slowly, her tone suspicious. "What does me being Fae have to do with their throne?"

Lila gulped. A flicker of fear flashed across her face, as if she had let something slip that she wasn't supposed to say.

Violet stepped closer, saying with a low tone. "You're hiding something. What are you not telling me, Lila?"

But Lila hardened her expression and rephrased carefully, "You're a threat to the alphas."

"That's not what I heard." Violet hissed.

"Believe whatever you want, princess. I'm done for tonight. So if you'll excuse me." Lila turned away.

"Stop right there!"

Lila halted with an irritated sigh.

Violet stepped in front of her, fists clenched at her sides. "As the rightful princess of the Fae folk, I invoke the authority vested in me. I demand you tell me the truth right now."

The room fell deathly still. Lila's expression went pale. Everyone knew the laws. The Fae were bound by their words and their hierarchy. And with Violet invoking her royal authority, Lila had no choice but to obey.

But at once, an unsettling smile curved Lila's lips, and just like that, she slipped back into her cold, unreadable self. Her voice was almost mocking as she said, "Next time you want to invoke a command, you should probably know what kind of Fae you are. And just so we're clear, you're an uncrowned princess. That means you have no authority."

She stepped closer. "Even if you did, your authority still falls beneath that of the Fae Queen..." Lila's eyes gleamed as she delivered the final blow. "—and the Fae Queen says no."

With that, she turned and walked away, leaving the silence to settle behind her like frost.

Violet couldn't believe what had just happened. No, she was in shock, frozen to the spot as if her feet had grown roots.

"Violet?" Daisy called out, concern lacing her voice.

Violet didn't even realize the tears had slipped down her cheeks until she wiped at them furiously. Her mind was made up.

"Violet?" Ivy asked more cautiously as she watched her grab her phone and jacket, clearly preparing to leave. "Where are you going?"

But Violet didn't answer. She stepped into the night, their worried voices echoing behind her. Everything was falling apart. And right now, she didn't know who to trust anymore—if anyone.

Through her tears, Violet fumbled with her phone, the screen blurring as she tapped Alaric's contact. It didn't even take three rings before he picked up.

"Hey," his voice came in, sounding distracted as usual. "What's up?"

But then Violet sniffled, and he noticed at once, his tone shifting.

"Violet? What's going on? Are you okay?"

She tried to steady her breath but failed. "Where are you?"

There was a pause, then, "I'm at the lab," he replied carefully, as if trying to read between her words.

Violet let out a watery laugh, wiping at her cheeks. "Of course you are," she muttered, trying to mask her ache with humor. Only Alaric would be buried in books and formulas when everyone else was out having fun.

"I'm coming," was all she said and ended the call. Violet shoved the phone into her jacket pocket, wiping her face with the back of her sleeve. She strode towards his private abode.

Thankfully, it was the lab and not his house—an oversight the elites never caught in the Rogue Rule. That loophole was about to become her saving grace tonight.

When Violet arrived, Alaric was already waiting at the entrance with his arms crossed and posture tensed.

"What's going on?" Alaric started to ask, walking toward her, brows furrowed. "Did Asher do anything again—?"

He didn't get to finish.

Violet reached him in a rush and flung her arms around him, burying her face in his chest. His warmth engulfed her, and he wrapped his arms around her just as tightly.

"What's wrong?" he asked gently, running his hand through her hair in a soothing motion.

Violet shook her head, not ready to explain. In fact, she didn't even want to remember what happened tonight.

"Can I spend the night at your lab?" she asked, trying to make light of it. "I promise I won't take up much space."

Alaric didn't say anything in response. Instead, he gently pulled back, and before she could blink, he scooped her into his arms.

Violet let out a soft yelp, clutching his shoulders. "Alaric!"

But the lightning prince didn't stop, nor say a word. Alaric carried her through the lab entrance like she weighed nothing at all, the doors closing shut behind them.

Chapter 308: Discovered By The Alpha king

Patrick could feel the tension even before he was ushered into the Alpha King's study. The air was thick, almost tangible, and the moment he stepped in, he saw why.

The Alpha King stood with his back turned to him, his shoulders rigid, and posture taut like a bowstring about to snap. The guard at the door cleared his throat lightly before announcing, "Alpha, Patrick is here."

Only then did the Alpha King move, turning slowly to acknowledge his presence. His face practically was carved from stone, his eyes dark and unreadable.

"You may leave us," Elijah said to the guard.

The guard bowed low and quietly exited, shutting the door behind him with a soft click. Even with that, Elijah made no move to sit and made no effort to invite Patrick to sit either.

Patrick, having known the Alpha King long enough, understood his temperament and what could possibly happen if he ruined his mood further. So he remained standing, waiting without complaining.

Finally, Elijah broke the silence, saying with a heavy voice.

"Asher has made a startling discovery."

He reached for a small box on the desk and opened it. Inside, he pulled out a delicate bottle filled with a milky-white liquid and without a word, rolled the bottle across the desk toward Patrick.

It rolled towards the doctor with unnerving accuracy and just before it could reach the edge and fall, Patrick caught it swiftly, halting its motion.

There was mild surprise on Patrick's face but Elijah didn't notice. The Alpha King seemed lost in his own grim thoughts, his expression troubled. His mind was clearly elsewhere.

"They call it Ignis," Elijah announced finally, ending the silence. "Have you seen anything like it?"

Patrick didn't answer immediately. Instead, he lifted the small bottle between his fingers, holding it up to the light, making a mock show of studying it.

Of course, Patrick knew what it was. He was the one who secretly produced it after all. But then, he was surrounded by creatures who could detect a lie through changes in heart patterns. He had to be careful.

"What does it do?" he asked instead, neatly sidestepping the question.

"It grants humans inhuman abilities just like us." Elijah's voice was dark. "Asher found it on his trip to District One."

Patrick narrowed his eyes slightly, obvious suspicion slipping into his tone.

"What was Asher doing in District One? Wasn't he supposed to be in school?"

"Shouldn't you be more concerned about the drug, and not the movements of one of my heir apparents?" Elijah said coldly.

Patrick covered up smoothly, offering a half-smile. "I'm only saying I hope it's worth the attention," he said, voice dipping low, as he inclined the scarred side of his face — the one Asher Nightshade had nearly clawed apart.

"I guess we'd test it out then," the Alpha King said simply.

Without another word, Elijah stepped out of the office and Patrick followed, without any need for instruction. They moved through the long hallways of the pack house and while they walked, Elijah said to him in a lowered voice.

"I wouldn't want this news spreading through the pack yet. It would cause unnecessary havoc. So we'll keep it quiet, for now."

Patrick gave a slight nod of understanding. His instincts pickled as they continued downwards, lower than Patrick had ever ventured before. Perhaps because he was feeling guilty, he hoped this wasn't a trap and Elijah wasn't leading him to his death.

When they stepped in fully, the smell of sweat and odour hit him first. Four werewolves were already in the room and two of them held onto a human man with torn and filthy clothes, his face drawn and fearful.

The other two stood firmly at the entrance, their bodies forming a barrier, ensuring no one else would peep or interrupt what was about to happen.

Elijah glanced briefly at the human before turning to Patrick.

"This one's a murder suspect from District Four," he said. "Escaped into our territory, trying to outrun his crime."

A small, cruel smile touched the Alpha's mouth. "I'm giving him a chance to stay if he agrees to fight for it."

Patrick understood immediately.

What a smart move. Since the man was already a suspect, human authorities wouldn't waste much energy trying to find him here. And even if they did, once he crossed into Elijah's territory, he belonged to them. The Alpha King could deal with him however he pleased.

One of the guards approached, offering a thin string with a needle attached.

Patrick took it without a word, withdrawing the Ignis liquid from the small bottle with expertise.

The human, sensing something off, shifted nervously. Patrick approached him, the needle gleaming faintly under the dull light.

Before Patrick could inject him, the human lifted a trembling hand.

"Wait," he croaked, locking eyes with Elijah. "All I have to do is fight you and you'll hide me from the authorities, right?"

Elijah didn't even blink.

"You have my word," he said.

Something in the human's shoulders stiffened, like a man making peace with the devil. However, he still hardened his heart, and set his jaw. His mind was made up.

Patrick didn't hesitate any longer, he pressed the needle into the man's skin and

the man winced slightly at the sharp pinch of pain.

Although the human wasn't taller than the Alpha King, he was broader, carrying more weight across his frame. Patrick stepped back as he finished, handing the used string back to one of the wolf who immediately disposed of it.

Then the room shifted into a thick, pregnant, every eye fixed on the man standing in the center. For a moment, nothing happened.

Then the man groaned.

It started low, almost like a grunt of discomfort, but quickly grew into something worse. He clutched at his chest, bending forward as a loud, raw cry tore from his throat.

For a terrifying moment, it seemed like he was about to die right there on the basement floor.

He dropped to one knee, gasping, choking, his face twisted in agony. The wolves exchanged uncertain looks, except Patrick. Not that anyone noticed, they were worried about the man.

One of the guards took a half-step forward, but Elijah held up a hand, stopping him.

And just as suddenly as it began, the man snapped upright with a loud, rattling gasp.

His chest heaved as he stared down at his hands, wide-eyed, almost disbelieving. It was as if he was seeing himself for the first time.

"God," he breathed, awe-struck, flexing his fingers slowly. "I've not felt this light in a long time. I feel so powerful."

He looked around the room, a wild grin starting to form on his face, he was full of power. Whatever Ignis was supposed to do, it had worked.

Elijah pulled off his shirt in one smooth motion, tossing it to the side without care. His muscles, built from years of battles and born strength, flexed as he approached the human now filled with unnatural power.

The man grinned wide, almost feral. Then

the fight began before anyone could blink.

The human struck first. It was a brutal punch that caught Elijah square in the ribs, the force so heavy that it drove the Alpha King back three staggering steps. A gasp ripped from Elijah's mouth.

Stunned, he looked up quickly, eyes narrowing. So it was true, Asher hadn't been exaggerating about the drug after all.

The human saw the slight opening and lunged again, drunk on his newfound strength. He had made up his mind at that moment, if he could kill Elijah now, he would not need to wait on a promise he might not keep. He could kill the Alpha king and be free.

And Elijah noticed his intention. There was a shift in the man's eyes. A dark, desperate hunger for more than just survival. This wasn't a fight to win favor anymore. The human wanted him dead.

The next clash was rougher, and faster.

Elijah dodged a brutal swing aimed at his neck, twisted low, and slammed a savage elbow into the man's ribs. The crack of bone echoed through the basement.

The human snarled and retaliated, landing a heavy fist against Elijah's jaw. The Alpha King's head snapped to the side, blood pooling at the corner of his mouth, but he only smiled. A dangerous, deadly one.

Enough was enough.

Elijah caught the next punch midair, yanking the man forward, then slammed his forehead against the human's nose with a sickening crunch.

The human staggered, dazed, but Elijah didn't give him time to recover. He attacked him, letting his fists fly relentlessly and mercilessly. Blow after blow rained down till the man's knees buckled under the force.

Elijah then grabbed him by the throat, lifting him off the ground like a rag doll.

The human struggled weakly, kicking, clawing, but it was useless. With a brutal twist of his arm, Elijah snapped the man's neck.

Silence crashed over the room.

Elijah let go as if he was holding dirt and the lifeless body hit the ground with a dull thud.

He then turned slowly toward Patrick, blood splattered across his bare chest, his breathing rough but steady.

His cold and furious eyes locked onto him.

"Find the composition of that drug at once."

Chapter 309: A Satisfied Queen

Patrick stepped out of the Alpha King's house, his spine ramrod straight, and every movement he made measured and careful. Not one flicker of emotion passed across his face even though inside, his heart was pounding so hard it felt like it would leap out of his chest.

The cool night breeze caught the hem of his coat, but Patrick didn't break stride. He walked briskly toward the black car waiting patiently for him at the curb. His driver as always hurried to open the door. Without sparing him a glance, Patrick ducked inside and settled into the back seat.

The moment the door clicked shut, the car rolled away from the Alpha king's estate's heavy security gates, pulling onto the broad road lined with old trees.

Still, Patrick didn't allow himself to relax. His hands remained on his lap, every fiber of his being tensed and wired tight. He only let out a shaky breath once the mansion disappeared completely from view and they had driven several miles down the road.

He leaned his head back against the seat, closing his eyes briefly. That was close. Too close.

For a terrifying second during the meeting, Patrick had thought Elijah had figured it out. The Alpha King's sharp gaze, the way his questions seemed to probe a little too deeply had nearly stolen the breath from his lungs.

But that was not the case. Elijah still trusted him. For now. If Elijah wanted him to investigate the composition of the drug, it meant he already had people working on tracking the source of Ignis. It was only a matter before Elijah knew what he had done.

Patrick opened his eyes, reaching into his coat for his phone. His fingers worked swiftly, dialing without hesitation. The line rang twice before it connected.

"Darling," Cynthia's voice purred through the speaker, all silk and seduction. "How did the meeting go? Did he gobble you up yet?"

"This is no time for jokes," Patrick said tightly. "Elijah is onto us."

There was a beat of silence, and then a hiss from Cynthia.

"That damn fool Umal," she cursed, her voice losing its earlier velvet smoothness. "We should not have let him carry on such a sensitive mission."

Patrick pinched the bridge of his nose, his headache pounding harder.

"It's too late for regrets. Asher got his hands on one of the doses and passed it to Elijah. That was how he found out."

Cynthia cursed again, fiercer this time.

"What do we do now?" she asked, her voice all business now.

Patrick stared blankly at the road unfurling ahead through the windshield.

"We move," he announced after the pause, forcing calm into his voice. "We move before Elijah finds out I'm the one responsible."

He took a slow breath, feeling the gravity of the next words he was about to utter settle on his tongue.

"Contact my family."

There was a sharp inhale from Cynthia on the other end.

"Patrick, are you sure?" she asked, almost cautiously. "You know what they think of you. They might not answer."

Patrick's hands clenched into fists. Of course, he knew. Even as a descendant of Gerald, the human general that rose against the werewolves, and yet, he had been branded a traitor. They despised him for bending knee to Elijah, for working with the wolves rather than continuing the war. They thought him a disgrace.

But they didn't know the truth.

They didn't know the plan he had been building in secret, stone by bloody stone.

But soon, they would see. Soon, they would respect him.

He swallowed the fury clawing up his throat and said, his voice hard like stone, "Tell them I've discovered a weapon against the wolves. One that will bring the packs to their feet."

Silence hummed across the line for a moment. Then Cynthia said with certainty.

"All right, Patrick. I believe in you."

"Thank you for believing in me, Cynthia. I promise you will not regret this. We'd shape a better world for our people."

"I know my love, I know."

"Good bye."

"Good bye."

He ended the call.

Patrick stared at his reflection in the dark window, the weight of what he had just set into motion heavy on his chest.

This was it. There was no turning back now. The world would remember his name and he would be the one to strike fear into the heart of the mighty werewolves. He would fulfill the destiny his ancestors had bled for.

The heavens help him.

Back at Lunar Academy.....

In Alaric's lab, in the furnished room tucked within, Violet lay nestled in Alaric's arms, their bodies tangled together. She was wearing one of his oversized black shirts, the sleeves draping past her wrists, and panties beneath. The fabric carried his scent, wrapping her in a cocoon of comfort and safety.

Alaric hadn't asked questions when she came to him broken and hurting. He hadn't pressed her to explain and simply held her tight until her heavy lids closed and sleep took her. Violet was grateful for it more than words could ever say.

However, late at night, unbeknownst to them, a tiny green snake slithered through the cracks of the lab entrance. It was no other than Roman Draven.

After the party hosted by his house, he had gone to Violet's shack, expecting to find her, only to be met with an empty bed and the hollow ache of absence. Irritated but determined to find her, he tracked her scent like a bloodhound, and it had led him right to Alaric's lab.

Once inside, the snake shifted. In seconds, Roman returned to his human form, and crouched silently by the door, her scent hitting him strongly like a blow.

Sweet. Warm. Violet.

He rose carefully, his bare feet soundless on the floor as he crept toward the room.

His lips curved into a sly grin when he saw them curled together on the bed.

So this is where you ran off to, my little flower.

Roman did not hesitate. He climbed into the bed with feline grace, his body barely making a dent on the mattress. His eyes gleamed mischievously as he leaned in, brushing his lips gently over Violet's forehead, then her cheek, then down to the corner of her lips.

Violet stirred, a soft whimper slipping from her throat.

Roman's hand moved to cup her face, his thumb grazing her bottom lip. Her sleepy eyes fluttered open, and the moment she saw him, a raw, hungry need flashed in her gaze. Without hesitation, she pulled him closer, their mouths crashing together in a kiss that was both greedy and desperate.

Roman growled low in his chest, deepening the kiss, tasting her. His fingers slipped beneath the hem of Alaric's shirt, tracing slow, tantalizing circles along her bare thigh, inching higher. He found the delicate line of her panties and skimmed his fingers just under the waistband, making her shiver.

Violet arched instinctively into his touch, seeking more. The kiss grew hotter, more consuming, as his fingers explored the damp heat he found waiting for him.

Roman groaned, his body thrumming with satisfaction and he increased his pace. Unfortunately Alaric stirred and for a moment, everything froze.

Roman lifted his head, his hand pausing where it was. Alaric's sleepy, stormy eyes opened, instantly narrowing when he registered the sight of Violet gasping softly beneath Roman's touch, her body writhing for more.

Tension cracked like electricity in the room and for one terrifying second, Violet feared a fight would break out. But then Alaric's gaze darkened, not with anger, but with something far more dangerous. Hunger.

"This is how you want it, huh?" Alaric rasped, his voice low and rough.

Before Violet could reply, Alaric leaned in and began to kiss along her shoulder, trailing up the curve of her neck, his lips sending sparks over her skin.

Taking that as cue, Roman continued where he stopped, his fingers teasing her clit, making her whimper. Then, to her shock, Alaric's hand slid down, joining Roman's between her thighs as he located her moist heat.

Together, they worked her body, Alaric's fingers thrusting deep while Roman teased her sensitive bud. Violet felt like she was burning alive, the pleasure building higher and higher until she thought she might shatter apart.

Their mouths never left her, kissing her throat, her collarbone, her jaw and whispering dirty promises against her skin.

"Let go, Violet," Alaric whispered in her ear.

Roman nipped at her earlobe and murmured, "Come for us, my queen."

And she did.

Violet cried out, the sound torn from deep inside her chest, her body trembling as wave after wave of pleasure rocked through her. She buried her face into Roman's chest to muffle her cries, but it was too late.

Both men held her through it, coaxing every aftershock out of her until she lay boneless between them, gasping for air, her body humming with afterglow.

Neither Alaric nor Roman moved away immediately. They stayed close, pressing tender kisses against her flushed skin.

Violet, dazed and overwhelmed, smiled like a fool. That was perfect.

Chapter 310: How To Unwind

Violet Purple slept like a baby.

Why wouldn't she, when she was sandwiched between two hot male bodies? It was all a girl could wish for. And right now, as she slowly stirred, she intended to trail her fingertips down the solid ridges of their abs one after the other and perhaps explore further.

She smiled to herself at the thought of her naughty plan and turned to the side to begin her plan only she couldn't. Something stopped her from moving completely and a frown marred her face even before she opened her eyes.

"Good morning, beautiful. How was your night?" Roman's glinting green eyes and familiar smirk were the first thing that greeted her.

Huh? Something was off. Violet felt it even before she looked up and discovered both her hands were tied to the headboard.

"What the...?!" Violet panicked, tugging at the binds, all to no avail.

When had they tied her up? She wasn't exactly a heavy sleeper, so how hadn't she noticed? The thought of losing her freedom without warning made her uneasy.

"Shhh, calm down, vixen," another voice murmured beside her.

It was Alaric.

He began to kiss the sensitive skin beneath her shoulder, that spot between her neck and collarbone, and it was all it took to calm her down.

Alaric continued speaking, his lips brushing her skin. "You looked so stressed yesterday, baby. Roman and I have decided to help you unwind." He added, "But if you don't want it, say no, and we'd stop immediately."

Violet didn't need anyone to explain what their version of "unwind" meant.

She looked towards Roman and that lecherous look on his face was enough to make her shiver.

She looked up at her bound hands and swallowed. Whatever they intended, they weren't going to go easy on her.

And deep down inside, she wanted it.

She said to Alaric, "No sex."

But Alaric laughed. "Little vixen, this is sex already. But I understand your point. None of us are crazy enough to take your first time, not when Asher's put a claim to it. So don't worry. All you have to do is sit back and enjoy."

It was a bit annoying the way Asher claimed dibs on her virginity, but at the same time, his intentionality left her hot and flustered. It kept Violet in anticipation, wondering how their first time would even go.

Violet took a deep breath and said, "Do it."

Alaric had never looked more proud. He turned to Roman, the go-to guy for all things immoral. "Go ahead. Show the Rogue Queen what happens to greedy girls like her."

"As the Queen wishes."

Roman's cruel laughter was enough to make goosebumps erupt all over her body, her heart already pounding.

He ran a hand up her leg, leaving a hot trail of excitement in its wake. Then he parted her thighs, and Violet's pulse began to race. This was it. Roman began to rub her through her panties, and she cried out, her back instinctively arching up.

"Shhh," Alaric murmured against her lips, silencing her with a brief kiss. He pulled back with a cruel smile. "You're all ours. Say it."

But Violet, ever defiant, said instead, "You're all mine."

Alaric chuckled, the sound rumbling deeply in his chest.

"Keep that fire. You're going to need it."

Having had enough, Roman pulled at her panties, dragging it down her legs and tossing them away without a second thought. Roman didn't move immediately, Violet could feel the intensity of his gaze as he took her in. It made her core pulse, wetness pooling between her legs

"I think this is going to be delicious," Roman admitted shamelessly.

Violet whimpered, her body already taut with anticipation. Roman lowered his head, and the moment his tongue slid between her folds, running along her hot dripping core, Violet gasped aloud, her eyes widening like saucers.

"Roman!" Violet cried out as he licked and sucked her until she was writhing in pleasure.

Violet tasted just as intoxicating as Roman had imagined, and he devoured her with hunger. Her sweet, tangy flavor was like a drug he couldn't get enough of, and he drank from her like a man starved for a salvation only she could offer. She was an endless well he would never tire of.

Violet moaned wantonly, her body straining helplessly against the binds. Roman was driving her mad with need, and it frustrated her to no end that she couldn't tangle her fingers in his hair or grind against him the way she craved.

She was completely at their mercy, under their control, as Alaric resumed tracing small, fluttering kisses along her skin. Bound and trembling, she had no choice but to take whatever pleasure they decided to give.

Yet Violet didn't give up. She groaned in satisfaction, moving her hips against his mouth, demanding more. Sensing her need, Roman slipped two fingers inside her, fucking her harder while his tongue assaulted her clit relentlessly.

"Oh God!" Violet's erotic moans echoed through the room, so loud it was a blessing the lab was so secluded. Hardly anyone ever ventured this far, and perhaps that was what gave Violet the freedom to surrender completely. To own her pleasure without shame.

As if that wasn't enough, Alaric lifted her shirt and found her breast, rolling her hardened nipple between his fingers. His slow, deliberate torment was a sharp contrast to Roman's relentless hunger, and Violet felt like she was being pulled apart by both sensations.

Perhaps now she understood why Nancy never abandoned her trade because it felt so damn good. Violet had always loathed sex, hated the stigma that clung to it and how deeply it had scarred her. But this was different. It was amazing. Liberating.

The moment Alaric charged his fingertips with lightning and brushed it across her nipple, Violet shattered. She screamed at the top of her voice, her back arching, toes curling, as the orgasm tore through her.

Violet broke free of her binds without realizing it, grabbed Roman's head, and forced him down harder, grinding her hips up into the movements of his tongue.

"Fuck!" Violet heard Alaric gasp at the raw, erotic sight before him. But she couldn't bring herself to care, not when she was lost in the throes of her climax, clinging to the high for as long as she could.

Roman didn't stop, his fingers and tongue working her mercilessly, drawing every last tremor from her body. Not to be outdone, Alaric kept charging her skin with electricity, the static growing so thick in the air that even their hair stood on edge. Violet shattered again and again, her body trembling violently as Roman savored every drop of her pleasure until she was utterly spent.