

Defy 331

Chapter 331: Griffin And Irene's Match

The excitement in the room had reached a fever pitch as every pair of eyes locked on the two figures standing at the center of the arena. Irene Hale, and her son, Griffin Hale, two titans cut from the same steel, now stood face to face with each other, tension radiating between them. Even in silence, their confrontation gave the crowd exactly what they wanted: a show.

"Such childish theatrics," Alpha Henry rolled his eyes from where he was seated. His comment caught the attention of Alpha Leon, who was lounging beside him.

Unlike grumpy Henry, Alpha Leon was thoroughly enjoying the view, his eyes shamelessly sweeping over Irene's body. That woman was a work of art. Too bad she would probably snap his dick in half if he so much as made the wrong move.

And of course, there was her mad husband, Arion. He might look easygoing, but Leon knew better. The man was pure crazy. Fitting, really. Only Irene would end up with twins whose original mission had been to kill her. A twisted, yet weirdly romantic love story.

Beside Leon, his wife, Luna Alexa, was fully focused on Griffin. Her eyes smoldered, lips curling as she bit down, lost in thoughts of everything that boy's hands could do. She smirked to herself. One of these days, Griffin was going to give in. She would make sure of it.

Commander Malakai's voice boomed over the crowd. "Let the match begin!"

Irene never hesitated. She struck first, dashing forward with blinding speed, her fist snapping out in a clean arc. Griffin ducked smoothly, his reflexes quick, and countered with a low sweep toward her legs. But Irene was ready, and jumped with ease, twisting mid-air, and landed with the grace of a seasoned warrior.

The crowd cheered madly, clapping for her amazing moves. Of course, a certain Alpha was less than thrilled with all the attention she was getting. If it were up to Alpha Henry, he would have downplayed every single one of Irene's moves. Thankfully for everyone, his bitter thoughts stayed in his head, so no one gave a damn.

Mother and son circled each other, their eyes locked, and muscles tense. Then Irene lunged again, this time feinting left before pivoting and slamming a fist toward Griffin's ribs. He blocked, but the force of the hit reverberated through him, pushing him back a step. Violet, watching from the stands, gripped her seat tight. God, Irene was a beast.

But so was Griffin.

He sprang forward in a blur, launching a rapid series of punches and kicks that Irene blocked, deflected, twisted, and retaliated, the clap of their strikes echoing across the room like a drumbeat.

Their movements were fast, but not too fast such that the humans could not follow. Griffin caught Irene's wrist mid-punch, spun her around, and locked her arm behind her back in a flash.

Gasps rippled through the audience. But before he could tighten his grip, Irene slammed her elbow back into his side, forcing him to release. She spun, hooking her leg around his knee, and dropped him hard onto the mat.

The women roared with support while the men groaned in disappointment. But Griffin rolled with the fall, landing on his feet in a crouch, eyes glittering with challenge. He wiped at his busted lip, the hint of a smirk playing at his mouth.

"Not bad, Mom," he called, circling her again.

"Not bad yourself, boy," Irene fired back, her breathing quick but controlled. Her eyes were alight with pride and focus. "But don't hold back."

A beat of silence passed between them. Irene knew exactly how much Griffin was holding back.

She rushed forward once more, quicker this time, her fist whipping through the air. Griffin parried, but she followed up with a brutal combo: a jab to his ribs, an elbow to his jaw, and a spinning kick that knocked him back several feet. He stumbled, bruises blossoming across his torso, but still Griffin didn't unleash even a fraction of his true power.

The audience was on their feet now, swept up in the battle's ferocity. Violet's heart pounded as Griffin rose, bruised, but not broken. His breath came evenly, his stance sure, but his eyes shifted to the crowd, just for an instant.

It was time.

Irene launched a crushing blow right at him, and he absorbed it without flinching. The sheer force knocked him flat, and as he lay still, Malakai counted to three. When he made no move to get up, the verdict was sealed.

The arena exploded with applause and cheers.

Commander Malakai swept in, grabbing Irene's hand and hoisting it high in the air. "And here is your Winner, Alpha Irene Hale!"

The crowd went wild, chanting her name with pride.

Irene stood tall, barely a scratch on her, and the picture of victory. Beside her, Griffin had finally risen, wiping the blood from his split lip, bruises already forming across his ribs and jaw.

But as Malakai raised her hand, Irene's gaze flicked sideways to her son. Deep down beneath the pride and triumph, she knew Griffin had been holding back so much.

Had it been a fair fight with no rules, this match would have been a war. One she wasn't so sure she'd win. These children were rising fast, stepping into their power, and soon enough, she would have to let go of her authority.

But for now, Irene smiled and took the cheers.

Violet watched as Griffin left the arena in defeat. Even though it was just a show, he was still hurt, and no matter how minor the injury was compared to the real battles he faced, it made her sad to see him in pain.

How she wished she could sneak out and kiss it better. But there was no way she could leave now, not with Nancy seated right beside her. Besides, three of her boyfriends were still set to fight and next up was Roman Draven and his father.

Chapter 332: Roman And Leon's Match

Commander Malakai stepped out once more to announce the next fight. How Griffin had managed to convince this stern, no-nonsense man to host the event, Violet had no idea.

"Next up, we have the enigmatic Alpha of the South, Leon Draven!"

A wave of cheers and whistles broke out as Alpha Leon swaggered onto the arena floor. Where Irene had looked fierce and formidable, Leon carried a relaxed, cocky air, his combat pants and tight T-shirt showing off every sculpted inch of his body.

Leon, far from finished, lifted his arms and stripped off his shirt in slow motion before tossing it away. The audience hushed for a second, unsure what was happening, until he started unbuckling his belt.

Nearly everyone burst into shocked gasps as Leon casually began undressing right there in the middle of the floor, unbuckling and stepping out of his pants until he was down to personalized black shorts that hugged his muscular thighs. The crowd went wild.

Someone from the stands couldn't help themselves and yelled, "Make me yours, Daddy Leon!"

Laughter rippled through the students, and even some of the teachers struggled to keep a straight face.

Up in the VIP seats, Luna Alexa didn't look the least bit surprised. She simply rolled her eyes, muttering under her breath, "Just when you think he'd grow up."

Commander Malakai, ever the professional, barely batted an eye as he stepped back into the spotlight. "And now, facing him is our own cardinal alpha, the fox-hearted warrior, the ever-sly and deadly, Roman Draven!"

The cheers grew even louder, the students clearly hyped for the next match. Roman emerged from the side, sauntering forward with that trademark lazy smirk on his face, oozing charm and mischief.

Without hesitation, and clearly inspired by his father, Roman peeled off his shirt in one smooth motion, sending another ripple of noise through the stands. His bare torso was leaner than Leon's but no less impressive, defined and agile, his muscles taut and honed.

Father and son stood shoulder to shoulder, their likeness almost uncanny. Apart from the difference in hair and eyes, they looked remarkably alike. Up close, Leon's body bore the extra bulk of years of training, while Roman was leaner, all sharp lines and the lithe grace of a predator.

"Hot damn," someone breathed from the stands. "There really are two of them."

Violet, watching with narrowed eyes, couldn't agree more. Definitely two of them and trouble in double.

Commander Malakai raised his arm. "Let the match begin!"

Leon was the first to make a move, lunging forward with surprising speed. Roman evaded with ease, flipping back in an acrobatic twist that drew awed gasps from the crowd.

Unlike the Hales, whose fight was pure strength and brawl, the Dravens were a dazzling display of agility and finesse. Leon hammered forward with unstoppable force, while Roman flowed around him, quick, nimble, and razor-sharp in his reflexes.

Leon swung a powerful kick, but Roman leapt over it, flipping mid-air and landing softly, a cocky grin tugging at his lips.

"Too slow, old man," Roman taunted.

Leon laughed, dark and deep. "You think that was my best?"

He rushed in again, and this time Roman met him head-on. Their fists collided in a rapid exchange of strikes and counters, their bodies twisting and ducking with seamless coordination.

Roman flipped, spun, and weaved through each assault, his keen animal instincts and incredible flexibility making it all look effortless. He coiled and snapped like a whip, landing quick kicks and rapid-fire jabs.

The crowd was wild now, caught up in the breathtaking athleticism of it all. The humans in the audience gaped as the two werewolves moved in ways that barely seemed possible.

Leon caught Roman's wrist mid-strike and yanked him forward, but Roman twisted out of it with a lithe backflip, landing lightly and springing forward again. He was a blur, ducking under a punch, sliding low, and aiming a swift kick to Leon's legs, but his father absorbed the hit and retaliated with a heavy arm swing.

To the crowd, they looked evenly matched,

but Violet, watching closely, could tell that Roman was holding back just as much as Griffin had.

And then, in a blink, it happened. Leon pivoted with a burst of speed and locked Roman in a chokehold from behind. The crowd gasped as Roman stiffened, his body straining, his back arching as Leon's muscular arm cinched tightly around his neck.

Roman could have slipped out easily, but after a beat, he lifted his hand and tapped twice on Leon's arm.

Commander Malakai's voice rang out. "Tap out confirmed! Winner of this match, Alpha Leon Draven!"

The arena erupted with noise as Malakai stepped forward, raising Leon's arm in victory. Leon, never one to miss a show, threw his head back and let out a primal howl of triumph.

And because he couldn't resist, he followed it with a slow, sexy grind of his hips, rolling them in a way that had half the audience screaming and the other half trying to cover their kids' eyes.

"Oh for heaven's sake," Luna Alexa covered her eyes in embarrassment when she caught her husband's smug, sweaty grin.

Roman wiped the sweat from his brow, then shot a wink in Violet's direction before strolling off the arena floor, pure swagger in every step.

It was like Cupid had fired an arrow straight at Violet's heart and she smiled bashfully, her cheeks heating up. Her friends turned to her at once, grinning wickedly.

"Oh, she's blushing," Ivy said with a smirk.

Nancy laughed loudly. "I bet she wants to shag him dirty right now."

Except Nancy was the only one laughing. Ivy, Lila, and Daisy froze, staring at her with wide eyes, completely bewildered.

Noticing their looks, Nancy threw up her hands. "Joking! Obviously joking!"

That broke the tension, and the girls burst into awkward laughter, trying to brush it off. Yep, just a joke. Totally a joke.

They all turned back to the arena, silently agreeing not to dwell too long on how shamelessly blunt Nancy could be sometimes.

Seriously, how had Violet survived her all these years?

Luckily, the next match began almost immediately, cutting through the awkwardness like a breath of fresh air.

Chapter 333: Alaric And Caspian's Match

"Now entering the arena is the unbeatable brains of the North Pack, Alpha Caspian Storm!" Commander Malakai introduced.

It was time for the showdown between Alaric Storm and his father. The audience clapped politely at first, expecting nothing out of the ordinary. But the moment Caspian appeared, dressed in sleek black from head to toe, the energy changed. In each hand, he carried Escrima sticks, their glossy surfaces catching the light.

A ripple of surprise rolled through the stands. Was that a weapon?

It wasn't that weapons were outright banned, but Malakai had clearly stated no brutality. Apparently, Alpha Caspian had decided to blur that line, or maybe he had something else in mind. No one knew for sure.

The arena buzzed with anticipation as Caspian expertly twirled his Escrima sticks, then set his stance solidly at the center of the floor, completely in control.

"For a nerd, he really went full ninja," Daisy remarked beside Violet, impressed.

Malakai's voice boomed again. "And facing him is the charming prince of Lunaris Academy, Alaric Storm!"

The cheers hit a whole new volume and Violet's gaze was drawn instantly to the entrance as Alaric emerged, dressed to match his father in black combat pants and a black singlet that hugged his torso, white bandages wrapped neatly from his wrists down to his fingers. His Escrima sticks rested lightly in his hands, his expression cool but lit with challenge.

Violet's heart gave a hard thump. She couldn't quite wrap her head around it, but there was no denying this ninja vibe was hot. The way his black clothes highlighted his pale skin, the measured grace of his movements, that icy, focused stare, Alaric was giving pure sexy warrior energy. Her northern prince had never struck her as dramatic — theatrics were usually preserved for Roman — but tonight, he was delivering full cinematic flair.

The arena was holding its breath as Malakai gave the nod. "Begin!"

In a flash, father and son closed the distance, their Escrima sticks clashing with a clean, resonant crack. The sound snapped through the arena, silencing the last of the murmurs in the crowd.

They separated just as quickly, both twirling their sticks with brisk, flawless control. It was mesmerizing to watch their spins, flips, and blocks flowing in perfect sync. The sticks moved so fast they blurred, cutting the air with a low, sharp whistle.

The arena shook with roaring cheers.

Violet was impressed like everyone else, but her stomach was tight with nerves. No matter how good Alaric was, she couldn't shake her worry for him.

Surprisingly, it wasn't Alaric who stole the show, it was Caspian. Known to everyone as the workaholic Alpha, always buried in paperwork and meetings, he wasn't exactly expected to shine in combat. Yet here he was, proving exactly why he held the Alpha title. His speed and sheer skill were nothing short of breathtaking.

They collided again, their sticks hammering together in a rapid exchange of blows. Both men moved like shadows, ducking, twisting, and leaping. The Storms, like the Dravens, were masters of agility, but they brought something more: pure speed.

Blinding, dizzying speed.

More than once, the human spectators struggled to keep up, their eyes darting side to side, trying not to miss a single flash of movement.

Suddenly, with a perfectly timed pivot, Alaric swung and caught Caspian across the back with a solid thwack. Caspian stumbled forward, just a fraction of a second off his rhythm.

The students cheered wildly, voices echoing across the arena. "Nice move, Prince Alaric!"

Alaric didn't hide his satisfaction. He grinned and let his eyes lift toward Violet. Their gazes locked for a heartbeat, and Violet's heart skipped.

Then Caspian rushed at him without warning, giving him no time to bask in the moment. Alaric spun, instantly back on guard, his body coiled like a spring.

This time, the match got serious.

The fight escalated, their movements faster and deadlier, like two battle-hardened warriors locked in a real fight. The Escrima sticks collided again and again in rapid succession, their bodies twisting, dodging, and weaving with impeccable timing. The acrobatics were spectacular, flips and spins merging perfectly with rapid-fire attacks.

Alpha Caspian was good but Alaric was better.

Violet's breath snagged as she noticed faint crackles of lightning begin to ripple across Alaric's body. It was subtle but undeniable, sliding over his arms and shoulders like a lover's caress. His speed kicked up a notch, and for a fleeting moment, it was clear he could finish this match right here, and now.

But then, Alaric hesitated.

It was tiny, almost imperceptible, but enough. He slowed down at just the critical moment, his foot slipping slightly out of place and Caspian seized the opportunity.

With a swift, merciless move, Caspian hooked Alaric's leg and swept him off balance, sending him crashing to the mat. Before Alaric could react, Caspian crossed his Escrima sticks in an "X" over his throat, pinning him down.

The arena held its breath, waiting for the outcome. Without hesitation, Alaric dropped his Escrima sticks in a show of surrender.

There was an explosion of applause, as the people roared their approval for one of the best matches of the day. Even Zara Storm, who had barely looked up from her work all evening, was clapping now, her eyes shining with rare pride.

Caspian stepped back and extended a hand to his son. Alaric took it, and his father pulled him to his feet, pressing their foreheads together briefly, a gesture of respect even as the crowd celebrated.

Alaric turned to leave, wiping sweat from his brow. But as he passed Violet's section, he shot her a wink, smirking in a way that made her stomach flip.

From the VIP seats, Zara caught the exchange and frowned instantly, her eyes narrowing. She glanced around and, for the first time, noticed that Elsie was nowhere to be seen, just her mother. A feeling of unease crept over her, but she shook it off. She was probably overthinking things.

It was common for girls to crush on boys. Her son understood his duty and would make the right choice.

Violet's excitement over Alaric's fight faded quickly, her nerves tightening again. Up next was Henry and Asher's match, and she already had a bad feeling about it.

Chapter 334: Asher And Henry's Match

A hush fell over the arena, tense and expectant, as if the crowd instinctively understood the stakes had just risen. The air felt heavier, every gaze pinned on Commander Malakai as he announced.

"Now entering the arena, the Supreme Alpha of the West, Henry Nightshade!"

A polite applause followed as Henry stepped out, shirtless, and clad only in dark trousers, every ripple of muscle on display. His body was a portrait of power, shaped by years of ruthless training.

Henry was undeniably a handsome man, and perhaps he would have been even more so if he ever cracked a smile. Not that it mattered to Violet. No matter how polished the outside was, his soul was pitch black, and corrupted beyond redemption.

She tore her gaze away in disgust, already nauseous, and turned toward the entrance as Malakai's voice lifted again.

"And facing him is the unpredictable and undefeated puppet master, Asher Nightshade!"

A deafening roar went up from the students. Violet's heart thudded as Asher stepped into the arena, shirtless like his father, his black loose pants riding low on his hips. He looked every bit the embodiment of dark, dangerous allure.

While the screams of female fans rang out across the arena, wild and frenzied, Violet barely registered them. Her gaze was glued to Asher, and dread curled in her stomach. This wasn't her Asher. His face was hard and empty, his eyes like steel. Distant and ruthless. He had become the cold, deadly version of himself she had once feared.

Violet's stomach twisted painfully. She didn't like this match. She didn't trust Henry. And worst of all, she didn't trust Asher to stop himself. Both of them were psychos in their own ways.

Father and son stood face to face, the air between them crackling with tension. Neither of them moved a muscle. Neither said a word. They stood like twin statues, carved from ice and stone, both masters of control.

Then, just before Commander Malakai could raise his hand to start, Henry said aloud, his voice dripping with contempt.

"I know you've all been impressed by the matches today," Henry sneered, eyes scanning the crowd before settling back on Asher. "But what you have seen so far is child's play. So prepare yourselves and let the West Pack show you what a real fight looks like."

Uneasy murmurs spread across the stands, the tension doubling, and Violet's heart pounded in her chest.

"Now I see why that boy turned out the way he is," Nancy muttered beside her, eyes narrowed in disgust.

If even Nancy, who had never met Henry before, could sense the darkness in him, that said it all.

Across the arena, Irene cupped her hands around her mouth and called out mockingly, "All that talk, Henry. Are you gonna fight or keep running your mouth?"

Henry's eyes snapped to her, murderous fury flashing in his glare. If looks could kill, Irene would have been reduced to ash. But she just laughed, popping a pink bubble of gum with a loud snap, completely unfazed.

Henry turned away with a growl, locking eyes with Malakai. "Start the match."

Malakai hesitated, casting a worried glance at Asher. Something was off, and everyone knew it. This wasn't going to be a drill but a fight to the bone.

But Asher simply brought his fists up, his jaw clenched, and his eyes burning with icy determination. "Start the match," he growled.

Malakai barely signaled the start of the match when Henry struck first, slamming his fist into Asher's face with brutal force. Blood spattered from Asher's lips, but he barely flinched. Instead, he responded with a vicious uppercut that cracked against Henry's jaw, sending the older man stumbling back a few steps.

Henry spat blood onto the mat, a tooth dislodging with it. He smirked, eyes wild with bloodlust. "Good," he growled, licking his lips. "Bring it on."

Asher's eyes flashed dangerously.

They collided, fists swinging, bodies crashing together with brute force. Every punch landed like a thunderclap, every block cracked like breaking bones. It was savage, raw, and unrelenting. There was no finesse, no mercy. Just two alphas tearing into each other with everything they had.

"I don't like this," Daisy whispered, her voice tight with fear. She glanced at Violet, who was gripping her seat so hard her knuckles had turned white, her eyes wide and locked on the fight.

Violet could barely breathe. The brutality was unlike anything they had seen today, and while the werewolves in the audience were used to such violence, the human parents were visibly shaken, some rising from their seats, deciding they had seen enough.

Even without the use of his power, Asher and Henry were equally matched, their bodies slick with sweat and streaked with blood. They knew each other's every move—Henry had trained Asher, and Asher had studied his father's fighting style like his life depended on it.

Henry was stronger, seasoned by age and experience. But Asher was faster, and driven by pure defiance. He tackled his father to the ground, straddled him, and began to punch hard and fast, each blow landing with a sickening crunch.

The murmurs rose to frantic levels now. This wasn't entertainment anymore; it was a grudge match, dangerous, savage, and unstoppable. No one so much as twitched toward the arena. Interrupting two alphas locked in blood feud was suicide, especially with these two, each determined to crush the other

Henry shoved Asher off, and both of them rolled to their feet at the same time, crouched low, eyes locked, breathing hard. Bloodied and bruised, neither showed any sign of backing down.

Then Henry's eyes flicked toward Violet, and something cold and vile twisted his lips into a smirk.

"She's pretty," he drawled, loud enough for Asher to hear. His eyes glittered with dark promise. "I wonder what she'll feel like beneath me, screaming while I fuck her silly."

Asher's eyes snapped to Henry, his vision going red with fury. He knew the tactic well. It was Henry's own lesson from years ago : "Exploit your enemy's weakness." Violet was his weakness, and Henry knew exactly how to use her.

The rage was too much to control.

Asher lunged with a roar, wild and reckless, throwing all caution aside. But Henry pivoted smoothly, seizing the moment, and in a ruthless blur of motion, he twisted behind Asher, locking his arms.

"Got you," Henry hissed, his breath hot and vicious against Asher's ear. "You've gone soft, boy. Let me remind you why you shouldn't."

With a brutal snap, Henry yanked and broke Asher's arm.

Chapter 335: Take Care Of Them

Violet wasn't even sure she was breathing. The crack of Asher's arm breaking echoed loud in her head, over and over.

"No!" she screamed, the sound ripping raw and desperate from her throat as Asher crumpled to his knees, clutching his shattered arm.

Her heart pounded so violently she could feel it hammering in her ears. She stood frozen, rooted to the spot, her soul splitting apart with helplessness.

She wasn't the only one shaken. Human parents were now hurrying out of the arena with their children, unable to bear the brutality any longer. The ones who remained began shouting their outrage. Henry had crossed a line, breaking every rule of the match. Even the Alphas were rising to their feet, tension crackling through the stands as they watched the situation get out of control.

But Alpha Henry didn't care. Not one bit.

Unfortunately, even with his arm broken and hanging limp at his side, Asher refused to back down. He kept fighting, but it was wild and uncoordinated now, and Henry toyed with him easily, laughing like the twisted psychopath he was.

"Alpha Henry, that's enough! Let the boy go, now!" Irene's voice boomed from her seat, her eyes blazing with fury.

Henry barely spared her a glance, dismissing her completely, as if she were air. Instead, he yanked Asher around until he was facing Violet.

Violet's pulse skittered, her chest tightening as she saw Henry gripping Asher's good arm. Her eyes locked onto his, and Henry smirked, cold and cruel.

"Oh God," Violet choked out, her stomach plummeting as realization hit. He was going to do it. He would snap Asher's other arm, right there, and right in front of her. It was a classic villain's move. Henry wanted Asher broken, humiliated, powerless and for Violet to watch him fail. His intention was to scar them both.

"V-Violet?" Nancy's voice shook with dread as she saw Violet tearing off her jacket and unfastening anything that would weigh her down. "What are you doing?"

But Violet ignored her. Alpha Irene, Caspian, Henry, none of them were moving fast enough while that monster kept hurting her Asher.

She was not waiting anymore.

Before Nancy could even react again, Violet vaulted over the barrier and sprinted into the arena, her heart thundering in her chest.

To be honest, Violet had no idea what she was doing. Her feet just kept moving, propelling her forward on instinct. Henry's wicked smile only widened when he spotted her charging toward him. Asher saw her too, and his voice rang out, raw with panic.

"No!"

God, he should have known. This had been his father's plan all along. No one interfered in a fight between two alphas because it was too dangerous. If Violet got hurt, Henry could easily claim he had lost control, that it was his wolf acting on instinct and no one would be able to hold him accountable.

"Get out of here!" Asher screamed at that stubborn bull of a woman while struggling desperately against Henry's grip.

If he could just get free and just one second, look Henry in the eye, he'd drag him straight to hell. But Henry knew that too, and he wasn't letting go. And Violet wasn't stopping either.

"Violet!" all three of the remaining cardinal alphas bellowed at once, leaping into the arena in perfect unison.

Unfortunately, they weren't going to reach her in time, not with the speed she was moving.

Violet knew that too, which was exactly why she didn't aim to take Henry head-on. She wasn't reckless enough to go toe-to-toe with the "Supreme" Alpha. No, she had a different plan.

Just a few meters away from him, using the slickness of the polished floor, she shifted her weight and dropped, sliding at full force between Henry's legs like a blur. His eyes widened in shock, caught completely off guard.

But before she slid all the way through, Violet's fist rocketed up, striking him hard right in the balls.

Henry let out a guttural cry of pure agony, his entire body jerking as pain took him hostage. His grip on Asher loosened a bit and that was all Asher needed.

With a feral snarl, Asher swung his good fist and landed a brutal punch to Henry's face, knocking him sideways.

Henry stumbled, staggering back in pain right into Griffin. The look on Griffin's face said it all. Fury. Pure, caged fury. Without hesitation, Griffin's fist lashed out, slamming into Henry's chest with such force that the man was lifted off his feet, flying backward through the air.

But it didn't stop there.

Roman, quick on his feet, shifted mid-motion into a gleaming green horse, so as Henry soared past him, Roman twisted, using his hind legs to deliver a crushing kick mid-air, sending Henry's body spinning and veering wildly off course.

And as if the entire thing had been choreographed down to the last detail, Henry hurtled straight toward Alaric.

Alaric's eyes glinted coldly. He calmly raised one hand, palm open, and released a savage blast of electricity that crackled through the air and slammed into Henry's chest, jerking his entire body as volts coursed through him.

Still, it wasn't over.

Henry's body, limp and twitching from the electric shock, crashed down toward Violet's direction. Without missing a beat, Violet twisted around and delivered one final punch square to his face, packed with all her adrenaline and rage.

Alpha Henry fell to the ground, defeated.

For a beat, there was nothing but stunned silence. The entire arena was frozen, their eyes wide, and jaws slack. No one dared move or speak, caught in the aftershock of what they had just witnessed.

If anyone was more stunned than the crowd, it had to be the cardinal alphas' parents. Other than that year when Elijah had taken the boys away, they had never seen such powerful coordination from them. Not until now.

Irene stared for a long moment, speechless. But then her lips curled, her eyes lighting up, and she slowly began to clap, each smack of her hands echoing in the quiet. Arion was next, his claps louder and much more enthusiastic, pride burning bright on his face.

Suddenly, the crowd erupted, as if a fuse had been lit. Applause and cheers crashed through the arena, loud and chaotic, the walls reverberating with the force of it. The energy was electric, like the climax of a superhero movie when the villain finally falls.

And Henry Nightshade had just been exposed as the villain of them all.

Violet, still buzzing on adrenaline, finally let out a wail, clutching her hand. "Aww! Come on!" she cried, the pain from that last punch catching up with her in full force now.

But her pain didn't matter. Not when her eyes found Asher, still on the ground, his face twisted in pain.

"Asher!" she screamed, bolting toward him.

Alaric was already there, crouched beside him, checking his arm carefully.

"What's happening?" Violet demanded, fear lacing her voice.

"Henry shattered his bones," Alaric said grimly, his eyes scanning Asher's arm. "And it's starting to heal wrong."

"Oh God," Violet's stomach dropped, a sick wave rolling through her.

"We need Adele. Now," Alaric said sharply.

"I'll get her," Roman offered, already shifted back into his human form, naked but unfazed.

"Bring her to my place," Griffin cut in, already lifting Asher like he weighed nothing at all.

Roman gave a tight nod and vanished in a blink.

With the match over, and after such an unexpected display, some of the pack members had crossed over the barrier, heading toward them with a mix of excitement and curiosity. Unfortunately, this wasn't the time for that.

"We need to move now," Griffin said, his eyes scanning for the quickest escape route. There were only two paths open, and both were packed with people.

As if on cue, Irene appeared at their side. "I'll handle it," she said firmly.

She disappeared into the crowd, and within minutes, a thunderous Alpha roar shook the arena. Instantly, a clear path opened as people scrambled aside.

Griffin didn't wait for instructions. He moved fast, and the others fell in step with him.

As they went, Violet brushed past Irene, who grabbed her arm and leaned in. "Take care of Asher," Irene said, her voice low but full of intent.

Before Violet could reply, Irene pressed her forehead to hers in an unfamiliar, almost doting gesture. And as if that wasn't surprising enough, Irene whispered, "Take care of them all, destined one."

What the—?

Violet didn't have time to process the words because Alaric's voice called her back sharply.

"Violet, come on!"

She sprinted after him without hesitation. Alaric reached out, gripping her hand and intertwining their fingers. Up ahead, Griffin was already moving fast with Asher cradled in his arms like a child.

Griffin didn't slow, didn't falter, his eyes locked on the East House where help was waiting.

Violet's eyes stayed fixed on Asher, her lips moving in silent prayer.

Please let him be okay.

Chapter 336: A Look Into Roman

"Aah!" Asher's scream tore through the house, and Violet flinched like it had been her own pain. She couldn't take it anymore.

From the moment Adele arrived, Griffin had instructed Roman to take her out of the room, and the idiot had done exactly that without even blinking. Did they think she couldn't handle seeing Asher in pain? This was Asher they were talking about. Her precious Asher.

"I'm going back in," she said, stepping forward, only for Roman to block her path.

"I'm sorry, Violet. But you can't," Roman told her gently, arms outstretched. "Trust me, you're better off out here than inside."

"Asher needs me! I should be in there holding his hand or, doing something," Violet argued, her voice rising in frustration.

"In the state he's in, if you tried holding his hand, he'd probably crush it," Roman said. "Griffin's stronger and can hold him down if needed. They've got him."

His tone was so calm and so sure, that Violet couldn't find it in her to fight it. She let out a long breath and leaned back against the wall, her heart heavy.

According to Adele, Asher's bones had shattered and begun healing on their own, but in the wrong alignment. If left alone, it would cost him strength, maybe even full use of his arm. The only option was to rebreak the bones, set them correctly, and heal them properly.

Violet didn't want to imagine what that kind of pain felt like.

Then again, maybe she could. Her own hand still throbbed. She had been trying to ignore it, hiding it behind her back when she could, but when she shifted her fingers and winced, Roman noticed.

He reached out suddenly, catching her injured hand with a frown.

"How long were you planning to hide this?" he asked, his voice low.

"It's nothing," Violet said quickly. "Just a little sore."

"Sore?" Roman's brows knit in a scowl. "Violet, your knuckles are swelling. That's not soreness. That's probably a fracture."

She tried to shrug it off, waving with her other hand. "It's really not a big deal. Can we just focus on Asher right now?"

And that was it! Roman's patience snapped.

"Focus on Asher? You mean the same Asher who's in there getting treated, while you're out here with a busted hand pretending it's fine? Do you think he's going to be grateful when he finds out you were hurting and didn't say anything? You think he'll applaud your self-sacrifice?"

Roman's voice cracked like a whip, sharp and furious. Violet stared at him, stunned.

Then her shoulders sagged. "You're right. I was being reckless. I'm sorry."

Roman looked up at the ceiling, breathing deep like he was trying to cool down. After a moment, he stepped forward and pulled her into a light hug, kissing the top of her

"I'm sorry for yelling," he murmured.

"No. I needed it." Violet closed her eyes for a second. She let herself sink into the moment, inhaling his soothing scent.

Roman pulled back slightly. "Come on. Let's get that hand looked at."

But Violet hesitated, casting one last look toward the door.

"Don't worry, Griffin will alert us when they're done," Roman assured her.

She nodded, slowly. Then she let him lead her away. That was how, for the first time ever, Violet walked into Roman Draven's room.

As they reached the door, Roman scratched the back of his neck and muttered, "Just a heads-up. I haven't exactly cleaned up."

Violet raised a brow. "Roman, I don't mind your mess."

And if she was being honest, she was dying to see what the inside of his lair looked like.

Roman pushed open the door, and his intoxicatingly male hit her first, soaked into the very bones of the room.

As expected of a cardinal alpha's quarters, the room was massive. The walls were deep obsidian and trimmed in silver. The lighting in the room was low, sultry even, and a crimson glow leaked from beneath the bed frame.

Violet gulped for half a second as her eyes landed on the massive, king-sized bed that could easily fit four, maybe five. The sheets were jet black silk, crumpled and absolutely lived-in with a shirt hung carelessly over the edge.

Her gaze tracked to the full length mirror on the opposite wall, strategically placed to catch the view of the bed from just the right angle. Of course.

Violet said nothing, choosing instead to pretend it was for checking outfits. Or whatever lie would help her sleep at night.

Books cluttered the nightstand and she scanned the titles. "The Art of War" , and "Poems That Make People Undress" . One of them was bookmarked with a receipt from a lingerie store. Violet stared at it for a moment, then just looked away.

And then she saw the posters.

Roman's walls weren't decorated with art of landscapes or wolves. There was just... him. Photos of Roman Draven in various stages of smug, smoldering narcissism were all shot in high definition.

Violet blinked at the first one with Roman shirtless, backlit by flames, and his chin tilted in that signature I-own-you smirk.

Then her eyes slid to the largest piece on the wall, and everything in her brain just malfunctioned.

It was a poster of Roman fully naked from head to toe. Yes, not even a sock spared. But he was not alone. There was an unknown woman with him, equally nude, and knelt perfectly in front of him.

Her bare back to the camera, her body was the exact coverage that kept the image from becoming scandalous. She wasn't just placed in the shot. The woman was posed, hands delicately braced on Roman's thighs, with her head bowed like worship.

The lighting was masterful with deep reds and blacks wrapping around them like smoke. It was an erotic, bold and shamelessly confident art.

Violet hated how good it was and didn't even realize she'd been staring for too long until Roman stepped into her view, blocking the poster with his body. He chuckled nervously, scratching the back of his head.

"I did a bit of modeling in my free time," he offered, his voice careful.

"It's fine art," Violet said casually, as if she wasn't bothered by the sight of the woman ruining such perfect art — in her opinion.

Yet somehow, those words didn't soothe Roman. Instead, he looked like he was seconds away from being sentenced to death.

"I haven't cleaned up my room yet," Roman added meaningfully, clearly offering to take the poster down.

But Violet just smiled sweetly. "Like I said, it's good art."

Roman swallowed hard. Then, with nothing else to say and panic brewing beneath his smirk, he mumbled, "Let me get the first aid,"

And with that, Roman vanished with his heart pounding.

Women were terrifying.

Chapter 337: Out Of Lunaris

Roman sat beside Violet at the edge of the bed, unusually quiet as he focused on her injured hand, the first aid kit with its contents laid open between them.

Violet watched him in silence, noticing the way he handled her hand with so much care that a small smile crossed her lips.

"I didn't think you'd be this good at this," Violet said. "I usually assign medical competency to Alaric."

Roman gave a short laugh, glancing up at her. "Yeah, he'd probably love to hear that."

She tilted her head. "So? Where'd you learn?"

Roman's smile faded slightly, replaced with a more serious expression. "I didn't exactly have a choice. Growing up with Leon and Alexa, they weren't what you'd call involved parents. They were mostly distracted with their own needs and personal lives. So, I figured things out on my own."

Violet didn't say anything and let him talk.

Roman continued, his voice lower now. "I didn't grow into my powers easily either. People think it's all instant. Like, poof, I see a new animal and I become it. But it wasn't like that. Not even close."

He looked down at her hand, wrapping the last layer of bandage carefully.

"Sometimes I'd try to shift into something I'd seen, and only half of me would change. Like, one side of my body would be the animal, the other side still human. Bones cracking the wrong way. Skin not adjusting. I'd collapse half-shifted, bleeding all over the place. It was a mess."

There was a quiet bitterness in his voice. Not self-pity. Just the truth.

Violet reached out with her uninjured hand and gently touched his knee. "But you overcame it. Look at you now, Roman. You're in control. That's what matters."

Roman paused. Then slowly, he looked up at her.

"I don't deserve you," Roman said, his voice raw. "Not after the kind of life I've lived. Not after the things I did to you." His words were soaked in remorse, with no smugness left in them.

Violet held his gaze. "It doesn't matter anymore, Roman. The past is in the past."

Something passed in his eyes. Relief? Gratitude? Or maybe even disbelief.

"Thank you," he said softly.

"There's nothing to thank me for," Violet replied and then glanced down. "And it looks like you're done."

Roman nodded, brushing a thumb over the edge of the bandage. "Yeah. That should hold until Adele takes a proper look."

Without thinking, Violet leaned in and pressed a quick kiss to his cheek. "Thank you, doctor," she teased him.

Roman froze for just a second. Then, with sudden intensity, he grabbed her face and kissed her full on the mouth. Violet didn't hesitate and melted into the kiss, her hand sliding into his hair as he deepened it.

The room tilted without warning and her breath caught as her back hit the bed, and Roman's body followed, his mouth still on hers, kissing her like he needed her to breathe.

There was heat everywhere. That wild energy Roman always carried crashed into her, making her want to forget everything else.

She would have let him. Violet was dangerously close to letting go. But then his phone rang, the sound slicing through the moment like cold water.

Roman pulled back, breathing hard. He reached for his phone without looking, answered it in one word, then hung up.

"Adele's done," he announced. "We should head back."

Violet blinked up at him, her breath still shaky. The warmth that had been curling in her belly vanished, replaced by a new concern for Asher.

She sat up quickly, her heart thudding in a completely different way now. Roman stood and offered her a hand which she didn't hesitate to take.

It was late, which meant most of the parents had already left and the students were back in their dorms. Just like earlier, when they stepped onto the path, the students' eyes followed them, murmurs rising at the sight.

But something was different now. The students stepped aside, clearing the way, not out of fear of offending their Alpha, but out of respect.

Roman and Violet exchanged a glance but said nothing. Right now, their only priority was Asher.

They reached the East House in record time, and to Violet's surprise, Nancy and Ezra were waiting right outside Griffin's door with her roommates. It was almost as if they were waiting for her.

"Nancy?"

"Violet?" Nancy came over quickly and pulled her into a tight hug. "Thank the gods you're safe."

"Yes, I'm obviously safe..." Violet started to say, but Nancy's eyes caught her bandaged hand, and her face tightened with concern.

"You're obviously hurt."

"It's just a small fracture," Violet explained. "Adele will heal it if she still has energy left. If not, I'll wait until tomorrow. But I'm fine, I swear it!"

Then her gaze drifted to her friends, who were unusually quiet, their faces solemn and downcast. The air felt heavier suddenly, like something was wrong.

Her chest tightened. "What happened? Why does it feel like something's off? I don't like this."

Nancy and Ezra exchanged a look, and neither of them spoke right away. It was the kind of silence that only came before bad news.

Violet's nerves prickled. She shifted on her feet, more anxious now, and said firmly, "What's going on, Nancy?"

Then Nancy took a deep breath and said, "After today's incident, Ezra and I have been talking, and we don't want you here anymore."

"Excuse me? I don't understand." Violet blinked. It just didn't make sense.

Nancy spoke again, this time with finality. "I'm sorry it's sudden, Violet, but we're pulling you out of Lunaris Academy."

"What?" Violet wasn't sure whether it was her or Roman who shouted that. Or maybe both of them did.

"No. No." Violet shook her head, her voice rising. "This must be a joke or something." She gave a short laugh, but none of her friends were smiling. Their expressions were quiet and mournful.

The laughter died in her throat.

Her face changed instantly. She stared at Nancy, stunned.

You have got to be kidding her.

Chapter 338: Enjoy Your Night

"Violet, Ezra has secured a place in District Seven. There are excellent human schools there, and you can attend without risking your life," Nancy said in a rushed breath, fully aware Violet didn't want to hear any of it.

"No. No. No. I don't want to hear that," Violet shook her head like the words were poison meant to corrupt her mind. She turned quickly to Lila, gesturing toward Nancy. "Are you going to stand there and let her do this?"

"Your safety is the priority. If District Seven is the safest place for you, I won't argue with that." Lila said calmly.

Violet gaped at her, the sting of betrayal hitting hard in her chest.

Roman stepped forward, placing himself in front of Nancy. "I'll protect Violet if that's what this is about."

But the sudden proximity triggered a sharp growl from Ezra, his instincts surging to the surface, perceiving Roman's move as a threat

Nancy raised her hand to calm her mate before looking Roman straight in the eye with a sneer. "Oh, really? Big talk for someone who peed on my daughter in wolf form and bullied her every chance he got."

"Oh fuck." Violet breathed, realizing Nancy knew more than she had let on. Someone had told her. She turned accusingly toward her friends, and her gaze locked on Lila. It wouldn't surprise her if the girl had told on her, using the excuse of 'protection' just to get her out of Lunaris.

But before she could speak, Daisy told her quietly. "It was Caroline Lancaster. She had a little mother-to-mother talk with Nancy when you left with the guys earlier." Her voice was heavy with meaning.

Violet's fists clenched. Caroline and Elsie! That mother and daughter duo were really testing her patience. Tomorrow couldn't come fast enough to expose their rotten asses.

Roman blinked, caught off guard by the call-out, but he recovered quickly. "You're right, ma. I was horrible to Violet at the start, which is why..."

No one saw it coming when Roman dropped to his knees and began kowtowing before Nancy.

"Forgive me for my past sins, mother. I humbly request your permission to date your daughter, Violet Purple! Please, mother-in-law? Father-in-law?" He looked up at Ezra this time, hopeful.

It was safe to say everyone was speechless, Violet included.

Nancy blinked, completely lost. First Asher, now this? Was Violet planning to send her to an early grave? The horrifying reality of being the mother of a girl with four boyfriends was finally crashing down on her.

But Roman wasn't done. He pressed on dramatically, "I might have been a bad wolf once, but I'm a good kitten now. Ask your daughter if you don't believe me. I like Violet, and I want to be with her. So please, don't take her away. I can take care of her. I swear it on my balls. No, wait, not my balls. I was planning to use those to satisfy your daughter—oh fuck, I shouldn't have said that..."

Roman smiled sheepishly as Nancy's expression soured.

"Goddess help me." Violet face-palmed where she stood.

Roman cleared his throat, recovering again. "The point is, I swear on my life to protect her." And not my family jewels, he added silently, bowing his face to the floor at Nancy's feet.

Nancy and Ezra exchanged helpless looks. They had come to take Violet away from this madness, only to get dragged right into the thick of it.

"Violet isn't going anywhere," a voice thundered just as the doors to Griffin's quarters opened.

Asher Nightshade stepped out, flanked by Alaric and Griffin. Their faces were hard, and unreadable. Asher was shirtless, his injured arm tightly wrapped in fresh bandages, yet he moved without a hint of pain. His eyes held that lethal, murderous glint Violet knew all too well.

This wasn't going to end well.

"Violet Purple is not going anywhere," Asher repeated, his voice carrying absolute authority.

Ezra met his gaze. "I respect you Asher, but this is a family business."

"With all due respect, Ezra, Nancy might be your mate, but the law hasn't officially recognized Violet as your daughter." He retorted.

Nancy cut in, her voice taut with emotion. "Your father tried to harm my daughter!"

But Asher replied coolly, "Apologies, but children don't get to choose the kind of father they have."

Nancy sighed. "You're a good kid, Asher, but that doesn't change the fact that Violet is no longer safe here. Your father—"

"My father can't take on all four of us," Asher interrupted.

As if on cue, Griffin and Alaric stepped closer to him, while Roman grabbed Violet's hand and pulled her to their side, placing her in the middle of them like a protected treasure.

"Before anyone can touch her, they'll have to go through us first," Roman declared boldly.

"She's safest here," Alaric added, electricity crackling along his body in response to his emotions.

"We'll protect her," Griffin said, his tone more of a vow than a statement.

Ezra and Nancy exchanged a bewildered look, clearly thrown off by the united front.

Asher's voice came again, cold and edged with command. "And just so we're clear, I'm a cardinal alpha with powers while your husband is a sub-alpha who answers directly to mine. Do you really think he can protect Violet better than we can? That he can stand against my father when push comes to shove and win?"

Ezra opened his mouth to protest, but let out a defeated sigh instead. Asher's words stung, but they were true.

"Also," Asher's eyes darkened, his tone dangerous, "Violet is mine. Did you really think I'd let you take her away from me? I'd have hunted her down and dragged her back to where she belongs and that is right here at my side."

To make his point clear, he wrapped his arm around Violet possessively. The way he touched her sent a shiver down her spine. His words were both romantic and terrifying.

A chill swept through the room. No one dared to speak.

Standing taller, Asher declared, "No harm will come to your daughter, Nancy. Not on my watch. I believe that settles this conversation. Have a safe journey. I expect to see you at the gala tomorrow. Enjoy your night, because I certainly will with your daughter beside me."

Without waiting for a reply, Asher took Violet's arm and led her inside, Griffin and Alaric flanking them.

Roman, ever the showman, was the last to go. He paused dramatically, winking at Nancy. "Goodnight, Mother."

Then he closed the door on the stunned audience.

Chapter 339: Round One

As soon as the door closed behind them, Violet whirled toward Asher.

"Asher, are you—"

She didn't get to finish.

Instead, Violet yelped when Asher grabbed a fistful of her hair, yanking hard enough to make her bend. Their bodies were pressed flush against each other, and she could feel the heat of his breath as he hissed through clenched teeth, "Do you have a death wish or something? How could you run into the arena like that? My animal of a father could have killed you. That was reckless, Violet." He tugged harder to make his point.

It hurt. Goddess, it hurt, but the pain only awakened something wild inside her. Something dark. Something that craved it.

She laughed right in his face. "Reckless? Yes. But I saved your ass and kicked his."

"I don't need saving," Asher growled, their faces so close now that all she had to do was tilt forward and their lips would crash. And judging by the hard length pressing into her stomach, he was just as turned on as she was.

"Oh, my sweet Asher," she mocked, smirking at him, "You did need saving. So you're welcome."

A guttural growl ripped from Asher's throat, his lips pulling back to flash razor sharp teeth, his glowing eyes showing a glimpse of his wolf. But Violet wasn't intimidated. If anything, the air around them turned hotter, thick with the crackling edge of sexual tension.

"Fuck," Roman groaned from the side. "Is it just me or is this fight making everyone hard?"

But he wasn't the only one. The tiny hairs on Violet's body stood on edge from the static in the air.

Alaric.

Well, Violet couldn't blame them. Asher had a way of making you both furious and feral. And right now, she was a lot more feral than furious.

She leaned in to kiss him. But to her shock, Asher pulled back.

"What the hell..." Violet blinked, completely speechless.

But Asher turned his back on her, facing the other men. "Our girlfriend seems to be a sucker for punishment," he announced, his voice laced with wicked amusement.

Then, slowly, he turned to her again, staring her dead in the eyes. "And punishment she will get."

Violet swallowed hard as the realization hit her. She was trapped in a room with four alpha males. All of them her boyfriends. The air thickened, heavy with dark dread and dangerous

Then Griffin spoke, his deep voice rumbling through the room. "Do you think she can handle our punishment?"

It was both a challenge and a dare. Violet lifted her chin boldly, meeting all their stares. "I'm not a chicken. I can take whatever you throw at me."

Alaric laughed wickedly. "We'll see about that, Vixen."

Roman rubbed his hands together gleefully. "So, what punishment do we start with?"

Asher, the one in control, gave the order. "Griffin, undress her."

Violet told herself she was ready. She really did. But when Griffin strode toward her like a predator, her heart began pounding wildly in her chest.

Before she could even open her mouth, Griffin had already ripped her shirt clean off like some caveman, leaving her gasping. Her clothes hung in shreds as he continued tearing through them until she stood in only her bra and thong panties. He intentionally left those on, his gaze dark with appreciation.

Griffin smirked as he reached for her panties, but Asher's voice stopped him. "Leave them. I want to enjoy this sight a little longer."

Griffin stepped back, and Violet felt their stares crawl over every inch of her body. To be honest, she hadn't planned for this to happen tonight. She had worn the matching underwear just because it was nice. Now, she was watching a group of alpha wolves feel good over it.

She huffed, masking the heat creeping up her face. "What's next?"

Asher walked over, grabbing her chin roughly, forcing her to look at him. His smirk was pure cruelty. "By the time we're done with you, let's see if you'll still be smiling."

Then he stepped back, giving another order. "Griffin, our little Violet needs a good spanking. I'm sure you know what to do."

Oh, fuck. Not Griffin! That was going to hurt as hell.

Violet barely had time to react before Griffin grabbed her and tossed her over his shoulder like she weighed nothing. She wriggled and kicked, but it was useless.

She was well and truly fucked.

Griffin carried her with ease, tossing her onto the bed like she was a child. The softness of the mattress did little to cushion the way he manhandled her, flipping her over so her stomach pressed into the sheets, her backside perfectly arched and exposed.

"Hold still," Griffin growled, his big hand pressing firmly between her shoulder blades, keeping her pinned in place.

Violet opened her mouth to protest, but a sharp cry escaped instead as his palm struck her ass. The sting tore through her, hot and searing. She gasped, her cheeks flushed, the sound reverberating in the room, feeding the fire already burning low in her belly.

Griffin's palm connected with her bottoms again and again, each strike sending a shock of pain that quickly blurred into something more. Something addictive. The ache twisted into a pulse deep inside her, and before long, she was biting her lip, the burn mixing deliciously with the heat pooling between her thighs.

When the fifth strike came, Violet was already trying to squeeze her legs together for some kind of relief, but Griffin chuckled darkly and used his knee to nudge them apart again.

"Uh-uh," he teased in that rumbling voice of his. "Punishment means no shortcuts, little purple."

Violet let out a strangled moan, any remnants of pride slipping through her fingers as her body gave in. When Griffin finally paused, his hand lingering on the curve of her reddened bottoms, she was trembling, her thoughts fogged with nothing but raw need.

It was humiliating how soaked she felt, almost as if her panties had melted off in the process.

Griffin leaned down, his voice brushing her ear. "All done. For now."

He finally let her go, and Violet collapsed onto the bed, flushed and breathless, her thoughts scattered and messy.

But it wasn't over.

Asher stepped in front of the bed, his wicked smile cutting through the haze. "Now, onto round two."

Oh God....

Chapter 340: Round Two

"Tie her up," Asher ordered before Violet could even catch her breath.

"What?" Violet blinked, spinning around just in time for Roman to catch her, steadying her like a predator cornering prey.

"No, wait. What are you guys up to?" Her heart slammed against her ribs now. Whatever this was, they weren't playing. The realization hit her like cold water. She might have gone too far this time.

Roman leaned down, brushing a kiss against her forehead. His voice was soft, almost soothing, but the cruel glint in his eyes said otherwise. "No need to panic, darling," he whispered. "We're only going to hurt you in the best way."

Her breath hitched.

Roman smiled wider. "Are you done yet?" he called out.

Violet's eyes widened in shock. That cunning fox had been distracting her, and by the time she noticed, it was too late. Griffin and Alaric had already worked the knots around her wrists and ankles. She pulled at them, but they didn't budge. They had her spread wide across the bed, every limb restrained.

The boys stepped back to admire their work.

"She looks beautiful," Alaric and Griffin said in unison, exchanging a glance of mutual surprise.

"She looks delicious," Roman corrected, his gaze predatory with his tongue flicking out—except it wasn't human anymore. A forked serpent's tongue darted out, and a cold shiver raced down Violet's spine. Whatever they had planned just turned serious.

Asher stepped forward, standing at the foot of the bed, eyes dragging over every inch of her body stretched and vulnerable. His gaze was molten, heavy, possessive, and his voice oozed power.

"She looks like a sacrifice laid out on my altar," he murmured, low and dangerous. "Poor, poor sacrifice."

The taunt in his voice made Violet's skin flush with both dread and something darker. She should be terrified. But like always, her mouth worked faster than her common sense.

"All that big talk, Asher," she bit back. "When are you going to stop staring and get on with it?"

That earned her a wicked smile, the kind that made her heart thump unevenly.

Asher didn't reply to her directly. Instead, he turned to Alaric.

"Your turn, thunderboy. Show us what you've got."

Then, like the sadist he was, Asher dragged a chair to the side of the bed and sat down, crossing his legs, and prepared to watch the show.

And for the first time, Alaric let loose the predator beneath the prince. His face shifted, darkness creeping across his expression. Violet swallowed hard. She had given the opportunity for the devil to be unleashed, and now, he was ready to play.

"Hey, thunderboy?" Violet called out, her voice shaky, her heart pounding faster as Alaric stalked toward her, fingertips crackling with faint, ominous sparks.

"Any chance you'll make this quick?" she tried to joke, her bravado faltering. "Instead of dragging it out like our psycho Asher probably—oh, sweet fucking universe!"

Her words broke into a sharp gasp as Alaric ran his electrified fingers along her belly, tracing upward. The sensation was a sinful mix of ticklish and electrifying —literally. Alaric drew circles on her body, light as a whisper, but searing with tingling shocks that sent bolts of pleasure straight to her core. She gasped, moaned, writhed.

"Damn it, Alaric! You're charging me like a goddamn light bulb," she whimpered, lost between agony and bliss. "If I wasn't naked, I'd think this was an interrogation."

Alaric chuckled darkly. "Really? Let's see if you'll still joke after this."

His words carried a dark promise and Violet tensed, anticipating his touch as his fingers gilded towards her breast.

The moment his sparking touch teased her nipple, Violet's body arched clean off the bed. She moaned so loud it filled the room, pulling at her binds, helpless. She wanted him to stop, yet at the same time, wanted him to keep going. She needed more. She needed him. Anything to soothe the throbbing ache pooling between her legs. God, this was torture.

"Alaric... please," Violet begged him, her voice hoarse, wrecked, trembling. She couldn't even clamp her thighs together, the bastards had made sure of that. She was left there, spread wide, writhing, a desperate, hungry mess.

"You don't seem so mouthy now," Alaric whispered against her ear, his breath hot, dripping with mockery.

His hand found her other breast, never losing the rhythm, and when he crashed his mouth over hers, Violet welcomed him hungrily. His tongue swept into her mouth, clashing with hers, fisting her hair as if he owned every part of her. Alaric tasted like pure energy. His lightning was everywhere, blooming inside her, crawling under her skin, flooding straight to her core, building... building...

"Stop," Asher commanded ruthlessly.

And just like that, Alaric obeyed like the good soldier he was.

Fuck, no.

"No, no, no!" Violet gasped, staring at Alaric as he pulled back with a wicked grin. This had been their plan all along. That devil Asher. When had they even schemed this? Or did they always work together like a perfectly tuned machine?

And now, all Violet could think of was the unbearable ache. She was throbbing, shaking, dripping with wetness and stuck with what had to be the feminine version of blue balls.

As if that wasn't enough, Asher leaned over her, smug and infuriating, asking in that maddening voice, "So are we sorry for running into the arena and risking that pretty little life of yours?"

Violet met his gaze, defiant as ever, despite the need burning through her.

"Not a fucking chance, Nightingale. I saved your sorry ass, be grateful for it."

Asher grinned, sharp and dangerous. "Good. I was hoping you'd say that."

He stepped back and nodded toward Roman. "Your turn, lover boy. Show her how the Dravens do it."

Done giving the order as usual, Asher leaned back in his chair, the puppet master satisfied after pulling the strings into motion.

Violet lifted her head just in time to see Roman stalking toward her, and the look in his eyes made her gulp.