

Defy 421

Chapter 421: The Loving Mate

Violet took the same route back to the shack, only to stop short when she saw a silhouette waiting there.

Her heart skipped a beat and she panicked internally.

Whoever it was could probably scent Roman on her. And then what? Questions would probably arise why she'd left her mate, alone, to seek out another male deep in the woods. Suspicions would snowball and rumors would spread. Whatever chaos comes afterwards, Violet wasn't even sure she could contain it.

She had always told herself she didn't care what the public thought but that was easier said than done.

Sure, she might be able to rope her men back in with the help of the prophecy, but not their parents. Someone like Zara already hated her ass. And Henry? Who knows what he'd do to drive Asher away from her?

How was she supposed to balance all this? How could she fight for her men without destroying lives in the process?

If the goddess truly destined the cardinal alphas for her, then when would the mate bond strike them too? How long could she wait because time was seriously slipping.

At that moment, the only option Violet could think of was to sneak away. But before she could move, she felt a gentle tug through the bond and her shoulders relaxed even before Griffin stepped out fully.

They stared at each other for over a minute in silence, a tentative tension between them. Then, without a word, Griffin opened his arms, and Violet ran into them without protest.

He hugged her so tightly it nearly knocked the air out of her. Pressing a kiss to her forehead, he said, "I'm sorry. I shouldn't have stopped you. Not when I know about the prophecy. But Violet..." He sighed. "I'm just worried. There are—"

"Shhh." Violet pulled back to look at him. "I get it. I have to be careful. There are bigger forces at play. But Griffin, my feelings haven't changed, and if the others are really mine, I'm not giving up on them. I just won't sneak around anymore. I know how badly this could backfire on me. On us."

She looked up at the darkening sky with a sigh. "I just wish the Moon Goddess would give me some kind of hint, or a manual on how to go about this. This is too much."

"I know it is," Griffin said, rubbing his arms. "And I won't lie, it stings watching you run off before we've even had a chance to settle down. Our home means something....." He scratched his scalp, clearly nervous. "It's a mate thing and it's important to the male when the female feels safe enough to make it hers too."

Violet stilled. "Oh." It hit her. "Shit."

Griffin gave a crooked shrug. "It's stupid, I know. You basically lived in my East House room already. But I would've made this one special, maybe painted it purple. You'd like that, right?"

Violet sighed. "Griffin—"

But he kept rambling. "I could build you a wardrobe if you don't want to share mine. And if you need a bigger sleeping space—"

"Griffin—"

"You can have my shampoo now that my hair's gone—"

"Griffin!" Violet shouted, and finally, he shut up.

After a moment of silence, Violet apologized sincerely.

"I'm sorry. I didn't know about this."

Griffin shrugged, trying to play it off. "It's not a big deal. It's just living together."

But Violet wasn't fooled. She knew Griffin too well. He might downplay things, but these small gestures mattered to him. That was the difference between Griffin and the others. He was grounded, thoughtful and the kind of man who found meaning in small rituals.

Violet rose on her toes and kissed him softly on the lips. "I won't promise to be perfect," she whispered, "but I'll try not to neglect your needs while trying to claim my other boyfriends."

Griffin smiled. That slow, warm smile that always melted something inside her. He leaned down, kissing her again, gentle and lingering. Then he pulled back, his nose twitching slightly.

"You reek of Roman," he teased with a smirk. "Did the two of you make up?"

At that, Violet stepped back with an exasperated groan. "We didn't even have time to talk."

"Mmmhmm," Griffin hummed, the suggestive tilt of his brow saying everything. It was the kind of sound that dripped with innuendo, as if "of course" something had gone down.

"Stop it." Violet rolled her eyes, half amused, half mortified. Then she confessed. "He called me a whore for even suggesting we date despite the bond with you."

Griffin's face darkened instantly. "That bastard," he growled, fury flashing in his eyes.

"Don't worry," Violet said, keeping her tone calm despite the ache in her chest. "It's just Roman Draven's classic style." She added air quotes with a wry smile. "He's trying to push me away."

Griffin exhaled and shook his head. "Roman can act like a kid sometimes, but I know exactly who can handle him." His gaze burned into hers, full of proud certainty.

"God, stop that, you're making me blush." Violet laughed, pushing him playfully.

Griffin chuckled, clearly enjoying himself. Then he turned and walked toward the front of the shack where he'd been standing earlier. He returned with a small bag in hand.

"I figured this might happen," he said, pulling it open. "Brought a change of clothes and snacks." He held up a pack of granola. "You haven't eaten since you got back."

For a second, Violet couldn't speak, her throat tight with emotion. What had she done in her past life to deserve someone like Griffin? Someone who was loving and attentive to her needs.

Without a word, she closed the distance between them and kissed him. This time, it wasn't soft, but a deep, and heady one. She poured everything into it, her gratitude, and hunger for him. It didn't help that Roman had lit the match and left it burning. Now, she needed release.

Legs wrapped around him, Violet pulled back just enough to pant against his lips. "Shack. Now."

"Yes. Shack," Griffin agreed immediately, one arm locking around her waist while the other grabbed the bag. With urgency in every step, he carried her straight to the door.

This was going to be a nice evening.

Chapter 422: Alone

"You're finally awake."

Those were the first words Asher Nightshade heard when his eyes fluttered open. He turned to the side and saw his father seated beside the bed, a deeply amused expression tugging at his face.

"I was beginning to think you'd sleep for eternity," Henry said. "Would've solved most of my problems considering you've been a real pain in my ass lately. But alas, I still need an heir, and I'm not exactly in the mood to start over with another one who'll just betray me in the end."

Asher didn't respond. He shifted his gaze around the room instead. He was in the hospital again. The steady beep of a heart monitor echoed annoyingly in his ears and his body ached like hell. If this was what living felt like, then maybe being dead wouldn't have been so bad.

No. He couldn't think like that. He'd promised his purple queen a lifetime.

With a grunt, Asher pushed himself up into a sitting position. His eyes landed on a bouquet on the nightstand, and hope surged in his chest.

"Don't get excited," Henry said, following his gaze. "It's not from the girl. Alaric brought those. Since when did you two become so close?"

Asher stayed silent.

Henry narrowed his eyes. "Well, you boys were once united at one point."

Yeah, they had once been united against Patrick after Elijah had handed them over to be experimented upon, so he could figure out what made them "tick".

If Alaric had come, what about Violet? Was she safe? Had they found her? And how long had he even been asleep?

Henry let out another mirthless laugh when Asher still wouldn't speak to him. "It's almost funny," he said, "how you're treating me like this when I've been here the whole time, and not even the bitch you nearly died for bothered to visit you."

"Don't call her a bitch again," Asher warned, his voice cold. "And if Violet didn't come to visit me, then she's smarter than I give her credit for. I wouldn't trust what you'd do to her, not with your track record."

For a moment, father and son locked eyes in a tense staredown until Henry burst into laughter. It was long, hollow, and dripping with mockery. "Really? Is that what you think? That the bitch was thinking about you?" he sneered. "Let me crush that fantasy for you."

At once, Henry picked up the remote from the nightstand and turned on the television mounted to the wall.

As if on cue, a broadcast was playing already. The camera panned over a crowd of cheering students, then cut to the two smiling anchors behind a sleek news desk.

"It's not all doom and gloom in Lunaris Academy these days," the female broadcaster began with a bright smile. "Finally, we have some good news to share and what a story it is. Amidst what's been a particularly dark season for the school, a light has broken through."

Her co-anchor, a well-groomed man with peppered gray hair, nodded. "That's right, Tessa. The news of a confirmed fated mate bond has spread like wildfire. And not just any mate bond, we're talking about Griffin Hale, one of the Cardinal Alphas, and a human named Violet Purple. I'd say this marks a symbolic victory in more ways than one."

The screen shifted to footage from earlier in the day. It was a video that had gone viral online and it was of Griffin and Violet sharing a kiss at the haircutting ceremony. Then a perfectly edited clip rolled and this time, from the celebration afterward.

It was Griffin and Violet dancing excitedly while pack members cheered around them. Then another cut was of the two of them stepping into Lunaris Academy's campus hand in hand as students screamed their names like fans greeting celebrities.

"It's been called a good omen," Tessa added as the scene faded back to the studio. "Fated mates have always been celebrated in werewolf history as signs of divine favor. But what makes this even more powerful is that Violet is human."

Her co-anchor leaned in. "Exactly. With recent reports of human students being bullied and marginalized within the academy, this changes the narrative. If the Moon Goddess herself paired a human with a Cardinal Alpha, then it sends a strong message. It may even shift inter-species politics moving forward..."

But Asher wasn't listening anymore.

The television droned on as the broadcasters continued to gush over the union and speculate on its impact, but to Asher, the world had muted.

His gaze was locked, and frozen, on the screen.

The broadcasters had paused on a close-up of the kiss, zooming in just enough to clearly show the mate rune etched into both of their necks. Violet's face was radiant, her lips curved in a smile that was real while Griffin had his arms around her, sheer contentment in their eyes. They looked so happy.

Asher's chest tightened, his vision tunneling. Violet was mated. Not just that, she was fate mated to Griffin? The cold reality settled over him like a fog, numbing every nerve. She had moved on without her.

Asher's gaze stayed fixed on the screen, so intense he didn't even feel the tear sliding down his face until Henry leaned in and grabbed his jaw, tilting it in his direction.

"Such weakness. Pathetic," Henry said coldly, inspecting him like a failed experiment. "This is not what I taught you."

He shoved his face away with a rough hand, and suddenly Asher felt small again. He was back to being that boy from long ago, always striving, always falling short under his father's gaze.

This time, when Henry grabbed him again, it was harder and painful. And his voice was like poison.

"The girl's gone now. So pull yourself together. If anything, you should be grateful this happened. I was planning to get rid of the bitch anyway, but it looks like the Moon Goddess did me a favor."

The light dimmed in Asher's eyes and Henry saw it and kept going.

"Graduation is what you should be focused on. No more bitches, do you get me?"

Asher didn't respond.

But he didn't need to. Henry was already convinced his message had sunk in.

Henry stood to leave and had only taken a few steps toward the door when he stopped. Slowly, he turned back, watching Asher in silence for a beat.

"You know what?" Henry said suddenly, his voice oddly amused. "Go after the girl."

Asher blinked up in confusion. But then he caught the glint in his father's eyes, and saw the trap for what it was.

Henry smirked. "You always claimed you weren't like me and that you were better. But chasing a mated female and ripping apart a goddess-chosen bond?" He chuckled. "Even I wouldn't sink that low. But I suppose children always outdo their parents, don't they?"

With that final twist of the knife, Henry turned and left.

Silence fell in the room, heavy and cold while Asher sat there, hollowed out.

The goddess had mated Violet to Griffin and not him? Not him? Not after everything? He saw her first. He worked the hardest for her!

But nothing.

As if suddenly drained of life, Asher slowly curled in on himself, pulling his knees toward his chest. Somewhere in the back of his mind, he reached for a memory of his mother. Her voice. Her warmth. But it all felt far away. Too far.

In the end, he was always alone.

Chapter 423: A Letter To The Princess

"Thank God, you're finally here," Ivy exhaled in relief as she opened the door to see Violet. She stepped aside, only to reveal Griffin standing at the corner with his usual sweet smile.

"Hello?" Griffin greeted, waving politely.

"Oh. Hello." Ivy smiled back, slightly thrown off. She had expected Violet to come alone, but clearly, that wasn't the case anymore.

Now that Violet was mated, she and Griffin went practically everywhere together like twins joined at the hip.

"Are we not welcomed?" Violet asked when Ivy lingered at the doorway, still staring.

"Oh, sure," Ivy said quickly, stepping aside to let them in.

Violet walked in with Griffin, their hands intertwined. She glanced around and wasn't surprised why Ivy had chosen not to leave. The new room was much more spacious than their old one in the East house. The walls were painted in a cool pastel tone, soft and soothing. But what truly caught Violet's attention was the sight of four beds. Not three.

Her steps slowed at once.

Since she now cohabitated with Griffin, the bed count should have dropped, not risen.

Almost immediately, a pang of jealousy hit her. Of course, they had gotten a new roommate.

Violet wasn't against her girls making friends, but the thought of someone else joining their inner circle didn't sit right with her. Violet didn't want to share them. Not with anyone.

Ivy caught her staring and explained, "We insisted on keeping your own bed just in case you have a fight with him and need a space to crash. You'd always have your place." She added, "No offense, Griffin."

"No offense taken." Griffin replied.

Violet was so touched, she was so speechless.

"Or," Daisy said, stepping out of the restroom, "maybe whenever she just wants to sleep over. Everything doesn't have to be dramatic, Ivy."

She came to a stop and breathed. "Hello, Griffin. And hello to you too, Violet. You finally showed up. I was beginning to think you were going to come at midnight and bother me like some witch."

Griffin waved with his usual polite smile while Violet rolled her eyes. Daisy's sarcastic streak always came out when she was annoyed.

"Sorry about that," Violet said, her voice unusually soft as she looked down and began tracing invisible circles with her toe. "I got sidetracked."

Ivy and Daisy stared at her, then at each other and ended up shuddering. Who was this bashful creature pretending to be Violet? The mate bond was terrifying.

Finally, Violet looked up and noticed the third bed. Her brow furrowed. "Where's Lila?"

Daisy opened her mouth to answer but paused when she caught Griffin's presence. Her eyes flicked to Violet, a silent question passing between them.

"Don't worry," Violet said quickly. "He knows everything."

"What?!" Daisy and Ivy cried out in unison.

"You told him?" Ivy accused her.

Violet shrugged. "He already knew half of it before we were mated. Now that we are, it's only right he knows the truth. Keeping secrets from your mate is basically asking for a doomed relationship. Besides," she looked at him with practically love in her eyes. "Griffin would put his life on the line for me."

"Oh, I absolutely would," Griffin promised, locking eyes with her. They just stood there, staring at each other for what felt like an entire minute, lost in their own world.

Ivy and Daisy exchanged a look and groaned. This was so cringey. Vomit-inducingly cringey. It would take them an eternity to get used to this new reality.

"Moving on!" Daisy shouted, deliberately cutting in and it worked.

She turned to Ivy. "First of all, put the necklace on her."

"Sure thing, boss." Ivy mock-saluted and headed to the drawer.

With Lila gone and Violet officially staying with Griffin, it was clear Daisy had claimed the top dog position between them. And she sure wore it well.

When Ivy returned with the necklace, Violet frowned. "What's that?"

But Ivy ignored her and handed it directly to Griffin. "Care to do the honors?"

"Gladly," Griffin said, taking it from her.

Violet had no choice but to turn around, giving Griffin her back.

She felt the brush of his fingers against her neck as he swept her hair to the side and her breath hitched. There was just something intimate in the way he handled her.

When Griffin clicked shut the clasp, the chain settled cool against her skin, the medallion resting just above her collarbone. Violet lifted it and took a good look at it.

The medallion's design was strange as it had two heads carved into the surface. However one head was facing upward while the other was downward, yet they were bound together. Around them were unfamiliar inscriptions etched into the metal, probably Fae. Typical Lila's style.

"What does it mean?" she asked just in case.

"We don't know," Ivy answered. "Lila just said we had to make sure you wore it. Apparently, it's supposed to mask you from Baron's people."

Violet shot her an exasperated look. "So the same Lila, who none of you have told me her whereabouts, told you to throw some mystery necklace on me that could do God knows what, and you just went ahead with it?"

"Well, don't come for us," Ivy raised her hand in defense. "Lila's your girl, and while she acts all cryptic and shady, at the end of the day, we know she means well."

"She left you a letter," Daisy added, pulling it out. "Says it's supposed to explain everything."

"And," Ivy said, "it's up to you whether or not you want to share whatever you learn from it."

"That sounds serious," Griffin said, his eyes on Violet with concern.

Violet's stomach began to twist with unease. She realized just how grave the situation had become. It wasn't like Lila to disappear without explanation, and then leave a letter that apparently held answers to her questions?

Still, she reached out and took the letter from Daisy.

All eyes were on her now. The weight of their attention settled on her shoulders, making her uncomfortably self-aware as she unfolded the paper and pulled out the note.

"I'm going to read it out loud," Violet said.

"Really?" Ivy asked, visibly surprised.

Not just her, Griffin and Daisy looked equally taken aback.

"It's not like you guys won't find out eventually," Violet explained. "We've all waited too long for the truth, and it's finally here. Besides, if you're a hundred percent with me, then you should know what you're fighting for."

The three exchanged glances and gave a final shrug in agreement. She was right.

"Alright, here I go." Violet took a deep breath, the kind one takes before battle.

She held the paper steady and began.

"To Princess Violet..."

Chapter 424: The King Is Alive

"To Princess Violet,

If you're reading this message, I'm probably gone already. Perhaps you might think me a coward, but the truth is there are urgent matters I must attend to in the Fae realm. And just maybe, I am a coward since I'm relieved I won't be there to see the wrath on your face by the time you're done reading this letter."

Although Violet hadn't even finished the letter, her face was already marred by a deep frown, an ominous feeling forming in the pit of her belly. God knows what Lila had done this time.

Violet went on,

"Just as an extra measure, in case you stubbornly refused to put on the necklace. If you want to still be with your darling boyfriends, better wear that or you can say bye-bye to them forever when Baron gets his hands on you."

Violet snorted after she read that part. This was manipulation. Nonetheless, she got the message and moved on.

"Although I've been spelled by the queen not to tell you the identity of your father, Fae are also good at exploiting loopholes, and I hope you'd be able to make the connection by the time this story is over:

Once upon a time, there lived a young Faerie princess who had a fascination with the outside world. What would it be like to live amongst the humans? Unlike the other seasonal Fae, the wild Fae lived isolated and amongst their brethren. They had been told for so many years to be wary of the other Faeries who envied their free magic. And the humans who only wanted their powers. But the young princess knew there had to be more to them. And one day, she did escape.

She had been betrothed to marry one of the finest Fae and eligible bachelors in their kingdom. Her betrothed was from a House who had served the generations of Queens for years past, and now, they would finally be joined in marriage. But the princess never wanted the union. She was not ready for such responsibility.

So on her wedding day, she ran off to the human realm. There she hid her identity and lived amongst them as a traditional doctor. The humans were amazed by her skills, and she quickly gained favor with the locals. Of course, the princess aided her patients with the use of her magic, but they had no idea, and she was too happy to be useful.

Then one day, she received a private invitation to heal a special client. This client was a werewolf who had been stricken by a demonic illness, and no amount of medicine could help him. Except the princess never expected she would meet her mate instead.

Mating bonds between interspecies were rare, but not uncommon. However, the princess had found her destined one and she would not let him go. So she healed him with her magic till he got better.

It was not surprising they fell in love; they were mates, after all. The princess trusted him and revealed she was Fae. Her mate was more than happy to accept her, and then he revealed his own secret to her. He was a werewolf king who had been betrayed by his own people.

They wanted to steal his throne, so they sent the demon after him to kill him and created powerful heirs with the help of magic to take his place. The naïve princess believed his words line, hook, and sinker. All that mattered was making her mate happy. So she promised to give him an heir so powerful she'd destroy the children of his rivals and help him gain back his throne.

The princess came from a line of wild Fae with pure, powerful magic that could connect with the goddess itself. So she called on her and willed for a daughter of war. And the goddess answered.

Back home, the queen had noticed the power pull and sent her youngest and fiercest warrior to find the princess. By the time the warrior tracked her down, the princess was with child.

The young Fae warrior, wary of her wolf mate, found out the truth. The princess' mate lied to her and was using her for the sake of a powerful heir. Of course, the princess did not believe her until she had the truth staring him in the face. Her mate, in a quest for power, had summoned a chief demon who not only almost killed him but raped his pregnant wife and cursed his brother.

Mates were supposed to cherish one another, but it seems even the mate bond could not transform men with a soul as dark as his. So with the help of the warrior Fae, the princess escaped her mate. He could never get his hands on the child, knowing what she could do.

The princess thought she had outrun him, but her wicked mate found them on the day the baby was born. The warrior fought her best, but the wolf came prepared.

The young princess, left with no choice, bound the princess's power. Her father could never use her powers, not unless she permitted it.

Her mate, furious over her action, tried to take her. If he wouldn't unbind her powers, then she would give him more heirs.

But the warrior Fae fought hard and was able to escape with the princess, leaving the child behind.

Mates were inseparable, and the wicked mate had found them through the bond. He had only been biding his time and waiting for the birth of his heir all this time.

Left with no choice, the princess called on the goddess to sever the bond, but it nearly destroyed her in the process. The princess returned to the Fae realm with the warrior Fae, but she was barely hanging on to life. Mates were supposed to be one soul, but she had shattered hers just to be free from the bond.

The damage had been critical, and it was obvious the princess would die. The queen was helpless and did not know what to do. No magic was helping. Then the princess's once betrothed Fae stepped forward and offered a solution. He would willingly share his life force with her. So the queen joined both of their lives together. As long as he lived, her daughter would live.

Just like that, the princess lived and had no choice but to marry the betrothed Fae who had saved her life. But she never forgot her daughter that had been stolen from her by her wicked mate. Once she was crowned queen, she secretly sent the young warrior to find her daughter.

The warrior Fae found the princess who had been living ordinarily, unaware of her lineage or the threat at the corners. The queen refused to give her consort an heir, knowing his greed. His house only wanted to solidify their position as the top amongst the other wild Fae.

As long as the queen lived, she had an heir already.

Now, the queen's consort would do anything to get rid of the princess. On the other hand, the wicked mate waits patiently for the return of his mate and the awakening of his daughter's powers.

It is now up to the warrior to protect the young princess until the enemies are rid. However, strange things have happened, like the princess being mated to the enemies she was meant to destroy. What game is the goddess playing? We have no idea, but this changes everything.

Perhaps, all hope is not lost after all.

Note: Any similarity to any living person is entirely up to the reader. I am not to be blamed.

Yours forever,

Guardian Fae.

For over a minute, no one in the room could talk. They were all shocked over what they had just heard. Although Lila had said it was a story, they all knew it was her way of exposing the truth without breaking the deal with the queen.

"Damn," Griffin was the first to speak. "King Angus is alive?"

Yes, he had figured it out.

Daisy and Ivy looked at each other with the same troubled expression. This was a huge revelation. They might not be werewolves, but they too had believed the first Alpha king was dead.

"So Elijah lied about his brother's death?" Ivy asked, shocked.

"I don't think it was just him," Daisy said. "You can't hide something as huge as this alone. According to the story, he was sick. So he probably didn't die after he summoned the demon. And then Elijah was crowned king—"

"The elders knew," Griffin said, realization dawning on him. "They probably kicked him aside and crowned Elijah king just to cover things up."

"Or, Angus faked his death," Daisy reasoned. "I mean, the dude summoned a demon to fake his death. He must have had contingency plans in case things went wrong." Daisy shrugged. "I don't know, a lot of ideas are going through my mind right now."

But while they were busy making theories, Violet was frozen on the spot.

"So Micah is my brother...?"

Chapter 425: Siblings Reunion

Bang! Bang! Bang!

"I'm coming!" Micah shouted, yanking on his pants with one hand and raking the other through his hair.

Who in the hell was banging on his door at this late hour? He was sure he had no other appointments tonight besides Violet, who clearly bailed. And no way would her possessive mate, Griffin, let her sneak off to another male's room at this time.

So, it had to be one of the desperate students looking for a late-night "fix." He sighed. As much as he enjoyed feeding on their sexual energy—and secrets—it was moments like this that made him feel like a glorified whore.

Which was why he nearly choked on his own breath when he opened the door and found—

"Violet?" His brow shot up to his hairline. "Well, this is... surprising." He leaned against the frame lazily, a half-smile appearing on his lips. "Sorry darling, but this isn't really the time for a—"

He didn't get to finish because Violet launched herself at him, wrapping her arms around him in a tight hug.

For a solid minute, Micah stood frozen, stunned, his brain scrambling. She hugged him tighter and from the desperation in her grip, he didn't need to be an empath to sense the mess of emotions rolling off her.

Micah was tempted to return the hug, but instinct warned him to keep his hands to himself. Something was off. Way off.

Then she pulled back and looked up at him, her eyes brimming with emotion so raw and strange, it left him speechless. Before he could say a word, she raised her hand and began tracing his cheekbones, his jawline, his brow, as if memorizing every inch of his face.

Micah blinked. "Okay...?"

He stepped back slightly, trying to ease her off him. "I think this is the part where I shut the curtains and we both pretend this never happened. See you tomorrow, sunshine."

This was starting to cross into dangerous territory. He didn't know what was wrong with Violet, but he was not about to get roasted alive by the werewolf community for messing with someone's fated mate. Not even for a girl like her. And gods, was she tempting. Her emotions were ripe, and bleeding all over the place. It was perfect for feeding, but then it was too risky.

What people didn't know about Incubi was that sexual energy was only half the meal they took. Memories were also stolen in the heat of passion. That was how he built his moniker as the great oracle with access to unimaginable information.

It had been risky "nudging" Violet towards Elsie's secret. But Elsie had needed to be taken down a notch, and when the opportunity came knocking, he simply opened the door.

But Violet was smart and ended up figuring out his identity. It wasn't surprising though. No one else could have known about Elsie's secret, not when the girl had guided it well. But then, little Grace did come to blow off some steam once in a while and he did "help".

Although, Micah's motives for helping Violet hadn't been pure. No, it was far from it. He wanted Violet's trust, and thought to buy it that way. He had never encountered someone whose heritage was hidden; it was nearly a clean slate. It was not normal. There was nothing normal about Violet. Not her hair. Not the fact no one seem to know a thing about her.

But none of that explained what the hell she was doing here now.

"You must know, don't you?" she suddenly whispered.

Micah tensed. "Know what?"

"That Angus is alive?" she said, her voice barely audible.

Two things happened instantly.

Micah's entire demeanor changed, his eyes sharpening into cold steel, while the teasing smirk vanished.

Then Violet gasped as her back slammed against the wall and his hand was around her throat.

"Who are you?" he growled, his voice laced with fury. "Did he send you?" His grip tightened.

Violet clawed at his wrist. He was suffocating her.

Then a roar thundered down the passage.

Shit. Her mate was here.

Micah released her instantly just as a fist collided with his jaw with a sickening thud, sending him flying backwards into the room. He crashed into the shoe rack, knocking down the shoes in a loud clatter.

"Are you okay?" Griffin asked, turning immediately to Violet, worry etched into every corner of his face as he helped her up.

"Yeah, I'm good," Violet coughed, rubbing her neck where Micah's grip had just been. Her voice was hoarse, but steady.

Griffin's gaze turned back to Micah with a dangerous glint. His entire body tensed, a low, guttural growl tearing through his chest.

Micah groaned as he got to his feet, his head snapping toward Griffin with a deadly snarl. His eyes had gone entirely black now, like pits of ink. Half-succubus or not, he still carried werewolf blood, and the Alpha in him wasn't going to take that punch lying down.

They were two seconds from tearing into each other when Violet shouted. "Stop it!"

But Neither seem to want to back down.

"Stop it right now!" she yelled again, stepping in between them with a look that brooked no argument.

Micah was still breathing heavily, his fists clenched at his sides, his body shaking from barely-contained fury.

"Who the hell are you?" he spat, voice rough with suspicion. "Did you approach me on purpose? Did he send you?"

"Send me here?" Violet blinked, confused for a second. Then something clicked in her head, and she blurted, "I'm your sister!" She lowered her voice. "I think."

Micah froze.

Just like that, the fire in his eyes dimmed. "Shit," he muttered, almost to himself.

"Yeah, shit," Griffin echoed dryly. "Because I'm not seeing the resemblance at all."

That was all it took for both Violet and Micah to turn to him at the same time, and the sheer force of their glares made Griffin blink and raise his hands in surrender.

"Okay," he mumbled. "Maybe I see it now."

Micah ignored Griffin completely and turned his attention to Violet instead. "What are you?"

A low, guttural growl rumbled from Griffin, deep and unmistakably a warning. His body shifted slightly in front of Violet, protective, and stiff. The message was clear: he didn't trust Micah, not even a little.

Violet didn't trust him either. Her lips pressed into a tight line, and she bit down on the corner of her mouth, clearly torn. The uncertainty in her eyes gave her away before she could speak.

"If you're really my father's daughter," Micah continued, eyes narrowing in curiosity, "then there must be something special about you. Angus doesn't breed mediocrity. He's obsessed with creating the perfect heir. The kind that would usher our kind into a new era."

He stepped forward, lowering his voice just a little. "I'm half-werewolf, half-incubus, which you already know of course. So tell me, little sister, what are you?"

Tension thickened in the air like a fog as

Violet hesitated, her hand twitching at her side.

Micah was dangerous, charming, clever, and manipulative. Everything about him screamed untrustworthy and he was part demon — they were not exactly trust worthy. For all she knew, he could be working with Angus. And if that was the case, revealing her secret would only doom her faster.

Sensing her hesitation, Micah added, "If you're worried about your secret getting out, you shouldn't be. You already know I'm the Oracle and we both know what chaos that would cause if that little truth slipped."

Griffin's eyes widened. "You're the Oracle?! Dude, what the fuck?" He was

stunned.

Micah gestured lazily, like Griffin had just proven his point. "See?"

Violet lifted her head, meeting his gaze with slow determination. She was walking a tightrope with no safety net beneath her but if she wanted answers from Micah, she had to give him something first. Lila was going to kill her for this.

"Half-werewolf," she said carefully, "half-Fae."

There was instant silence.

Then he let out a short, disbelieving laugh. "Impossible."

When Violet didn't waver, it dawned on him.

Micah snorted with a bitter edge. "Of course. Leave it to Angus to create more abominations."

Griffin bared his teeth in a snarl. "Violet is not an abomination."

Micah raised both hands as if in surrender. "Forgive me. I am."

Violet ignored the tension sparking between them and got to the point. "How long have you known our father—no, Angus is alive?"

She refused to call him by that title. "Father" was too generous of a title for a monster like him. He was simply a sperm donor, nothing more.

Micah's expression turned unreadable. "Well, if we're going to dig into that conversation, shut the door and grab a seat."

Violet and Griffin exchanged a look. This was why they came, wasn't it?

Griffin gave a short nod and closed the door. Together, they followed Micah deeper into the apartment.

Chapter 426: The Truth Game

Not just the teachers, but other staff members of Lunaris Academy resided in the faculty housing aside from Micah and Principal Jameson.

Micah was no ordinary counselor; he was still royalty, and that respect had to be paid to him even though he wouldn't be Alpha king. So, he had an entire bungalow all to himself where he could conduct his "business" without interference.

The inside, of course, was spacious, luxurious, and refined. It was outfitted with dark leather, floor-to-ceiling curtains, and a plush sofa. Griffin and Violet settled down while Micah echoed from the corner, ruffling through the fridge. "Care for a beer?"

"No, thank you!" Violet answered before Griffin could say a word.

"We are going to see Asher tomorrow, remember?" Violet reminded him, her brows lifted.

If there was anything Griffin wanted, it was a drink, and there was no way in hell they were getting wasted tonight. Their minds needed to be sharp, and they had to be fit on their feet tomorrow.

"Juices would be good, thank you."

"Such a buzzkill," Micah muttered with obvious disappointment.

Moments later, Micah returned with a tray and placed a glass in front of Violet.

"Strawberry juice? Really? What am I, ten?" she wrinkled her nose.

"Only for my little sister." He patted her on the head, only for Griffin to let out a low growl, his warning clear: Get his hand off her.

Micah took his hand off, but his intense gaze and the way his lips tightened showed just how much he thought about Griffin.

With a smile that didn't touch his eyes, Micah said in a mockingly sweet voice, "Your mate doesn't want you drinking, and you're not ten. Make do with this, Alpha." He placed a glass of water in front of Griffin with a dull thud.

Griffin saw it and snorted. Was he seriously kidding him?

Notwithstanding, he still took the water and chugged it down. Then he placed the empty glass on the tray and said in an equally taunting tone, "Thank you, brother-in-law."

Micah's eyes twitched before narrowing, the tension between them rising again. Even before his identity as the oracle was revealed, Micah and the alphas were not exactly enemies, but they were not friends either.

After all, one of the heirs would be Alpha king in the future, a position that should have been his had his mad father not diluted his blood with that demonic contact. He didn't loathe them exactly; such was his fate. They just never got in each other's way.

"Can we just not do this right now? This is not what I came for," Violet said in a weary voice.

That seemed to bring them back to their senses at once. Micah straightened up and left with the tray.

As soon as Micah was gone, Griffin leaned in and whispered, "I get he's your brother, but don't trust him. Demons are deceitful."

Violet turned to Griffin with a frown and said, "And Fae are tricksters. I thought you'd be one not to judge people because of their nature." She took a deep breath. "Nonetheless, I'll be careful. I didn't tell him I'm a princess, did I?"

"Fair point," Griffin said, relaxing as if nothing had happened just as Micah returned.

He had a bottle of beer in his hand and intentionally drank from it right before he plopped down on his sofa. "Let's get this conversation started."

Griffin's jaw hardened, seeing through Micah's tactics. He was riling him on purpose.

Violet asked him, "Did you know Angus was alive from the very beginning?"

"What do you mean by 'from the beginning'? You need to be more specific about your question, sister."

Violet wet her lips with her tongue and asked, "For how long have you known Angus is alive?"

"For a while now," Micah answered.

Violet waited for more details, but that was all.

"Is that it? You are not going to tell me more?"

"For a Fae," Micah said with a lilting tone, "you lack their cunning."

He then finished his beer in one go and set it down on the table between them. There was a suddenly serious aura around Micah as he faced Violet. He said to her, "The same way you don't trust me, I don't trust you either, little sister. For all we know, you might be a distraction sent by our father to lower my guard."

"I'm not!" Violet said defensively. "I just found out about you today. You think if I had a family out there, I would have ignored you all this while? All my life, I thought I was alone, and now suddenly, I have a crazy father and a demon for a brother."

"As if having a Fae for a sister isn't crazy," Micah retorted.

"So we only have each other. Why would you think I want to harm my family?" Violet made her point.

There was silence for a while, and it was the kind that had everybody holding their breath as they awaited a serious verdict.

"We will ask each other three questions and must tell the truth. That would be all for tonight," Micah announced, a glint in his eyes.

"And how would we know you're not lying? You're a demon, after all?" Violet challenged.

"Fae are good at telling lies, or haven't you developed that gift yet, sister?"

Although it seemed like a harmless question, Micah was already sourcing for information. Even if Micah wasn't their enemy, he was still dangerous. Just like Asher would say, anyone with information had the most power. Violet had to be careful here.

"Fine. Let's do that," she agreed.

Griffin looked at her with concern. Micah was more experienced in this game than she was. But there was nothing he could do now.

"Good." Micah smiled, and Violet swore his eyes flickered black for a second before returning to normal.

"You can go ahead," he told her.

"No, you go first."

"Who told you the truth about Angus?" Micah said. "That is my first question."

Violet swallowed. Micah was really good at this. Going straight for the head, wasn't he?

"A friend," Violet answered with a gulp.

Micah smiled, all teeth like a shark at the scent of blood.

Although Violet had been as vague as possible, she didn't have many friends, and it wouldn't be hard for Micah to figure out "who?"

Chapter 427: The Heirs

"I see you're beginning to learn, little sister." The words sounded encouraging, but the amused chuckle dripped with the satisfaction of someone watching her struggle, still a step behind.

Violet's expression hardened. There was no going easy on him anymore. This was the time to get serious.

"Are you in communication with Angus?"

"Nice one. No, I am not in communication with Angus," he answered, then went on to ask, "Why are your gifts dormant?"

"By my gift, do you mean my werewolf side or my Fae side? Or should I answer both and treat it as your second and third question?" Violet challenged.

For a second, Micah simply looked at her and laughed boisterously, as if he couldn't believe she tried to outsmart him.

"I have to give you that; you're a fast learner, Violet. However, I mean your Fae side. Why can't I sense your magic?"

"It's locked away," Violet answered.

"Hmmm," Micah said. It was obvious he had more questions concerning that, but he couldn't waste his last chance.

"Can I trust you?" Violet asked him.

"No," Micah answered bluntly, only to add, "However, I can be a good ally."

Although it was not the answer Violet wanted, it would have to do.

"Now for my last question," Micah said a little too excitedly. He intertwined his hands together and rested his chin on them. Then he looked straight at Violet and asked, "When do you intend to fight the cardinal alphas for your throne?"

"What?" Violet was taken aback by the question.

"I am a demon, so I cannot rule. But you, Violet, are half Fae, half wolf. You are powerful enough and an heir. Have you expressed your desires to your boyfriends to contend for the throne?!"

"There's nothing like that!" Violet exclaimed, rising to her feet. She was flustered and stammered as she said, "O-one of them would be the heir and rule peacefully!" But even as she said it, Violet realized that it didn't sound so convincing anymore.

"Oh sweet, naive child." Micah clicked his tongue in pity. "Is that what you tell yourself? That you'd live with the cardinal alphas happily ever after? Well, let me break it down for you."

Micah was on his feet, and so was Griffin. He stood protectively as Micah approached, saying, "The cardinal alphas have been told all their lives that one day one of them would be Alpha king. Then suddenly enters a girl with violet hair who turns out to be Angus' heir..."

Micah stood five feet away now as he asked, "Do you think our uncle Elijah would welcome you with open arms? He loathes my ass since I remind him of how his life went to shambles because of his brother's greed. What do you think he would make of you? An eligible heir?"

Then he looked at Griffin and said, "Sure, I understand you're mated to the East cardinal Alpha and have gained an ally. The East would support you with all they have now that you're one of them. But what about the others? Do you think Alpha Henry would sit back and watch you take away something he's worked for his entire life?"

Micah took a step closer, only for Griffin to rumble a dangerous growl, causing him to step back at once.

He warned her, "The cardinal alphas are not your allies, Violet."

"And you are?" Violet retorted.

"I'm still blood-related. They're not."

"Says the one who said I couldn't trust him."

Micah looked guilty as charged. "I have my reasons," he said.

Violet snorted in disbelief. "You don't know my relationship with the boys. They would not hurt me."

"You will be the worst fool to trust the words of men..." Micah suddenly paused as something hit him.

"You still desire them even when you're mated to Griffin. Could it be..." His eyes widened.

"We leave now!" Violet grabbed Griffin's hand and began to walk away.

"You still have one more question left, Violet!" he reminded her.

"Fuck you and your games, Micah," Violet told him without looking back.

"War is at our doorstep, better be prepared to fight it, Violet!" Micah shouted after her, but she ignored him and shut the door hard behind her.

Alone in his room, Micah stared at the emptiness before leaving for his study. He went straight to his shelf full of books and pulled out a small, inconspicuous leather-bound one.

He dropped it on his desk and then opened to a Chapter titled: Angus Heirs.

"We are not alone, sister," Micah muttered just as he wrote "Violet Purple" on the tenth line.

Meanwhile....

"I should never have trusted him!" Violet fumed on her way back with Griffin.

"Don't worry, I'd keep an eye on him." Griffin told her.

"Thank you." Violet said, intertwining their hands with an expression full of gratitude.

Together, they left for the East house and prepared for bed. But even as they laid on that bed, Violet's mind was all over the place.

Would it be a good thing telling the other alphas the truth about her heritage? Asher especially has always had his eyes on the throne? If push comes to shove, would they fight her for the throne?

No, no, Violet pushed the crazy thoughts out of her head. The moon goddess would soon mate them and things would be good. Mates do not hurt each other.

But Angus did hurt her mother.

With an inner groan of frustration, Violet turned and buried her face in Griffin's chest. She inhaled his addicting scent and it calmed her at once. Yes, she would think of him and nothing else.

Just like that, Violet dozed off.

It was not long before a hissing noise was heard as a small, green colored snake slithered into the room in the dark. It climbed on the bed and crept towards Violet's body. It seemed to look for the position only to end up curling itself around her arm and settling finally.

Chapter 428: A Mate Who Doesn't Mind

Violet found herself sandwiched between two warm bodies. At first, she ignored it, content to bask in the strange comfort radiating from both sides. But then, the familiar scent of pineapple and whipped cream wafted into her nostrils, jolting her awake.

Roman.

Violet's heart raced at the sight of him. How had he gotten here? Oh right, that was a silly question to ask considering he had a talent for sneaking into her bed. She just never expected him to show up after their fight.

A wave of inexplicable joy washed over her. Roman wasn't as far gone as she had feared.

Initially, she considered reaching out to touch his handsome face, but a mischievous idea took hold instead. Carefully, she slipped out of bed. Griffin stirred as soon as she moved, but he didn't wake, and Violet let out a quiet sigh of relief.

Climbing back onto the bed, she gently took Griffin's hand and placed it around Roman's waist, then waited. No one stirred.

Good.

With a playful grin, she took Roman's hand and draped it over Griffin's waist as well. He remained blissfully asleep.

Violet tiptoed to the bedside table, grabbed her phone, and positioned herself for the perfect shot. She stifled a giggle, delighted by how cute they looked together.

Next, she adjusted the camera to include herself in the frame. Perfect. She couldn't wait to show this to Asher when he woke.

Satisfied, Violet slipped away to the bathroom, giggling like a mischievous imp, knowing it wouldn't be long before the confusion set in.

True to her prediction, it wasn't long before Griffin began to stir.

Even with his eyes closed, his hand instinctively roamed over his mate's body, and to his delight, he discovered she was naked.

A smile crept onto Griffin's lips as he trailed his hand further down, squeezing her ass with delight. Yes, that felt good. But something felt off, her ass was firmer than he remembered.

Meanwhile, Roman was enjoying one of the best sleeps he'd had in ages when a rough hand groped his ass. What the hell?

His eyes shot open at the same moment Griffin's did.

For a brief moment, silence enveloped the room as they stared at each other, their minds racing to comprehend the bizarre situation.

"Ahh!" Roman and Griffin screamed in unison, scrambling off the bed.

"Dude, what the fuck!" Roman cursed, feeling utterly violated.

"I should be the one asking what you're doing in my room!" Griffin shot back, a look of confusion etched on his face.

"What do you mean your...?" Roman trailed off, glancing around and realizing, indeed, this was not his room.

"Fuck!" He cursed, running a hand through his hair. Roman couldn't recall how he ended up here at all. What was happening?

"Hello, sleepyheads," Violet announced, stepping out of the bathroom.

Both men turned toward her, their gazes sweeping over her appearance. Her hair was wet and sexily tousled, inviting them to run their fingers through it. The white bathrobe she wore clung to her curves, teasingly concealing the beauty beneath.

As they continued to admire her, Violet let the bathrobe slip from her shoulders, and their breaths hitched in their throats.

Goddess help them. Griffin and Roman let out a strangled groan in unison. This was pure torture.

Unlike Griffin, who wore only boxer briefs, Roman was completely bare, his hardened member on full display.

But Violet didn't laugh at him, instead, she locked her smoldering gaze onto him and began to walk forward.

Roman felt like a deer caught in the headlights, paralyzed by indecision. He should have walked away, as he usually did. His animal instincts might have led him here, but now he was back to his senses. Yet, he stood there like an idiot, rooted in place until Violet was right in front of him.

He watched her, breathless, trying to anticipate her next move. Violet placed a hand on his chest, her fingers tracing over his tan skin, sending shivers down his spine. She lowered her head and kissed his nipple, then the other, igniting a fire within him.

Roman groaned, his eyes connecting with Griffin's, expecting him to do something. But Griffin stood there, watching with an intense heat in his gaze. What was wrong with him? His mate was touching another man, yet he felt no fury, no urge to tear them apart. Instead, he seemed entranced.

When Violet grazed her teeth over his small nipple, it was the last straw. Roman's instincts took over and he grabbed her by the hair, lifting her face to meet his. It was a rough kiss full of teeth and tongue. Violet responded with the same wild passion, her body pressing against him as if she couldn't get enough of him.

When Violet pulled away from the kiss, her lips were swollen and her chest heaving as she pinned Roman with a triumphant gaze. "I told you," she gasped, fingers tightening in his hair, "he wouldn't mind."

But those words shattered the last fragile restraint between them. In one fluid motion, Roman hooked an arm behind her knees while supporting her back, lifting her effortlessly before depositing her on the wide bed with a bounce that sent damp strands of her hair splaying across the sheets.

Before the mattress could even settle beneath her weight, Roman was between her thighs, his large hands gripping her hips with possessive force as he buried his face in her wetness. His tongue, hot and wicked, traced one long, torturous stripe from her entrance to clit that had Violet arching off the bed with a startled cry.

Just as the sensation crested, Griffin's weight dipped the mattress beside them. His calloused palms cradled her breast with exquisite gentleness. Right before his mouth closed over her peaked nipple in a perfect suction that pulled straight to her core, each flick of his tongue timed perfectly with Roman's relentless ministrations between her thighs.

"Oh God!" Violet moaned, the sensations driving her crazy. She wanted to die. Well, in a good way.

Roman moaned against her too, the vibration shooting through her like livewire, while Griffin switched breasts, his free hand rolling and pinching the neglected nipple just to hear her breath catch.

Between them, Violet thrashed, her fingers clutching at the sheets, then Griffin's head first when Roman doubled his efforts, then Roman's hair when Griffin bit down on her nipple just shy of pain.

Their scents mingled around her, pineapple and whipped cream from Roman, that warm amber with citrus musk from Griffin until Violet couldn't tell where she ended and they began.

Roman fucked her with his tongue, deep and unhurried strokes that had her thighs trembling, while Griffin alternated between suckling and nipping, each sharp pleasure-pain making her jerk against Roman's mouth.

"I can't—" Violet gasped, her legs wrapping around Roman's shoulders instinctively as the knot in her belly tightened to an unbearable degree.

Griffin was murmuring something filthy against her breast when Roman added two fingers to the rhythm of his tongue, curving it just so against that spot inside her. Violet came with a keen wail that she felt reverberate through both men pressed against her.

Pleasure washed over her in torrents of bliss as Roman lapped at her, drawing out every last shudder, while Griffin kissed his way up her throat to capture her cries with his mouth, swallowing each gasp as if he could consume her pleasure itself. Only when her whimpers turned oversensitive did they let go, both men pulling back to watch her splayed between them flushed, panting, and utterly ruined.

Chapter 429: Where Was Asher?

Who knew all that was needed to change Roman's mind about her was a little seduction.

Almost immediately, after their little "indulgence", Griffin received the call that Asher had woken. Now they rode together in tense silence toward the hospital, the hum of the car engine doing nothing to ease Violet's nerves.

She twisted her fingers in her lap, hyperaware of Roman's thigh pressed against hers and Griffin's warm presence.

The timing couldn't have been worse considering she hadn't visited Asher once during his coma. Not when she had been taken by the mating fever, the East Pack customs, and finally had to rush back to the academy. And now, the moment she resolves to finally see him, he wakes up.

Yet through it all, Asher had never left her thoughts. Violet just prayed he'd understand.

"So how does this work exactly?" Roman's voice cut through the silence, his fingers drumming against the leather seat.

Oscar, who served as the driver, kept his eyes fixed on the road, the beta's neutrality giving nothing away as Violet sat bookended between Griffin and Roman in the back.

"Just like we were, Roman. Like nothing ever changed," Violet said.

"But something did change," Roman argued. "You're bonded to Griffin. That's something the rest of us don't have. No matter how much you try to play it down, Violet, the feelings you have for us will never amount to the bond you share with him. Even if we somehow end up together, we'd be struggling for scraps. The real deal is you and Griffin."

"The prophecy says Violet will unite the pack," Griffin interjected.

"Yeah, by having us bonded to her too," Roman muttered. "I just don't see how or when that's going to happen. Or even how it unites the pack."

"There's more you don't know, Roman..." Violet confessed hesitantly. "About me."

"What is it?" Roman asked, his curiosity piqued.

"I'll tell you when we get there," she replied.

For all Violet knew, this could come back to bite her if the cardinal alphas betrayed her. But she was willing to take that chance and trust them for once.

They continued the ride in silence, and it wasn't long before they arrived at the hospital. Violet stepped out of the car, the crisp morning air brushing against her skin as she clutched the fruit basket tightly in her hands.

Together with Griffin and Roman, they walked toward the entrance. The hospital's glass doors slid open with a soft whoosh, revealing a bright, bustling lobby filled with the smell of antiseptic and the murmur of conversations.

All three of them made their way to the elevator, silence enveloping them as it ascended.

When the elevator doors slid open, they stepped into the hallway. Violet's pulse quickened as they approached Asher's room, but her anticipation was abruptly halted by the sight of two guards standing in front of the door.

Griffin stepped forward. "I'm Griffin Hale," he introduced himself, but the guards merely acknowledged him, and his eyes narrowed slightly.

"We know who you are," the guard replied, his tone flat. "You're not permitted inside."

Griffin's brow furrowed, frustration creeping into his voice. "I don't understand. Why are we not permitted inside? Who made that decision? I need to see Asher."

"The decision is from Alpha Henry," the guard stated, his gaze unwavering.

Violet felt a chill run down her spine at the mention of Henry's name. She exchanged a worried glance with Griffin, who was clearly struggling to maintain his composure. Sensing the tension escalating, Roman stepped forward, his posture filled with confidence.

"Let me handle this," he said, his voice smooth and charming. He approached the guards with an air of authority. "You know me, right?"

The guard's expression remained cold, and unyielding. "Not even you, Roman Draven, is permitted inside."

At once, Roman's demeanor shifted. The charm faded, and was replaced by a dark intensity that radiated from him. "I am going inside, and you won't stop me!"

"Or what?" a voice interjected, cutting through the tension like a knife.

They all turned to see Alpha Henry approaching, his presence intimidating.

"Alpha Henry," Griffin and Roman greeted with forced politeness, the unease in the air rising.

Violet remained silent, her jaw clenched. As long as she lived, that man didn't deserve her respect. The mere sight of him ignited a fire of resentment within her, as she was reminded of all the pain he had caused Asher.

"Roman Draven, Griffin Hale, and his mate," Henry drawled, his gaze finally landing on Violet. A sneer curled his lips, as if he found her presence distasteful. "To what do I owe this pleasure?"

Violet met his gaze boldly. "The pleasure is not yours. We are only here to see Asher."

Henry's expression darkened. "You would do well to mind that tongue around me, you insolent bitch." He took a menacing step forward.

But Griffin was quick to react, stepping protectively in front of Violet, a low growl escaping his throat. The air crackled with tension as the two men faced off, their instincts flaring.

Henry remained calm, though the glare he directed at Violet was deadly. He took a deep breath, restraining himself. "Asher has no intention of seeing you," he stated, his voice dripping with condescension.

"I don't believe you," Violet shot back, her voice firm despite the sudden fear brewing inside her. It was a lie. She could feel it. Asher would not say that.

"Is that so?" Henry scoffed, amusement in his eyes. He turned to the guard. "Let them in."

The guards stepped aside, and Violet, Griffin, and Roman entered the room with Henry following closely behind. But as they crossed the threshold, confusion took hold because there was no sign of Asher.

Henry froze, his expression shifting from arrogance to alarm. "Where is Asher?" he demanded.

Roman retorted, "We should be the ones asking you that."

Henry's eyes widened in realization, and he rushed into the adjoining restroom, his heart pounding in his chest. The seconds stretched into an eternity as he searched the small space, but there was no sign of his son. Panic clawed at him as he returned to the main room, the truth dawning on him like a dark cloud. Asher was gone.

That fucking useless son of his!

Chapter 430: Threatened By Henry

Asher had escaped his father's clutches, that much was obvious.

When Henry realized his son was gone, his eyes darkened with fury. Violet recognized that wild look instantly and took a step back. She tapped Griffin from behind. "Run?" she whispered.

"What?" Griffin didn't seem to have heard her.

"Run!" Violet bolted before anyone could react. Sorry, but ladies first! She wasn't sticking around to be collateral damage.

Henry roared, "Get them!"

Before the first guard could lunge at them, Griffin drove his fist against his temple, sending the man staggering sideways with a grunt.

The second guard seized Roman in a tight hold from behind. But Roman wasn't having it. With instinctive finesse, he used the wall as leverage, kicking off it with both feet. His body arched midair in a tight flip over the stunned guard's head. He slipped out of the grip just in time to land nimbly behind the man.

The guard spun around, but didn't get the chance to strike because Griffin's fist was already waiting. It connected with a sickening crack against the guard's jaw, sending him falling to the ground.

Roman threw his hands in the air, exasperated. "Seriously? I had that handled!"

"You're welcome," Griffin muttered and was already sprinting down the corridor.

However, to their shock, they saw Violet running towards them with a shriek, "There's more of them coming!"

"Oh shit!" Griffin cursed beneath his breath. Fighting in a public hospital was really not the best.

"To the stairs!" Roman said, turning at once. Griffin took Violet's hand and followed after him.

Roman yanked the stairwell door open, his feet barely touching the top step before he halted, his eyes going wide.

"Are you kidding me?!"

A swarm of guards were heading up the stairs as well.

Roman at once slammed the door shut and threw his weight against it.

"They're here too!" he shouted.

The door jolted violently behind him with the first kick. They kicked again harder, the wood groaning under the pressure. But Roman held still with gritted teeth, his muscles straining.

"I can't hold them back!" he yelled.

Griffin and Violet turned only to find themselves cornered. The guards had closed in, the hallway suddenly small with their numbers. Suddenly, the guards parted smoothly like obedient wolves as Henry stepped forward, his eyes hardened with cold fury.

He spat. "Where is my son?"

Violet rolled her eyes in utter disdain, then lifted her middle finger without hesitation, and barked back, "Go fuck yourself, asshole!"

Then she shouted. "Griffin!"

Immediately, Griffin hooked an arm around her waist, snatched Roman, and sprinted straight for the glass window at the end of the hall.

"Wait—what?!" Roman barely got the words out before they crashed through it.

Glass shattered around them like a thousand tiny diamonds as Griffin threw them all through the sixth-floor window. Violet's shriek pierced the air while Roman howled a curse, and together they plummeted into the open air, free-falling.

The wind ripped past their ears while the ground raced toward them like a vengeful god. At first, Roman clutched Griffin's shirt in blind panic before he broke loose and was falling on his own.

"Roman!" Violet screamed with terror.

But she shouldn't have worried because Roman exploded into emerald feathers, transforming into a bird with a sharp caw!

Oh right! She had forgotten about his ability.

Soon enough, Violet recalled she was still falling with Griffin and her breath caught in her chest. However, although Griffin was the one who carried her that fall, what hit the ground was Griffin's seven-foot towering alter-ego.

The Beast.

He landed with an earth-shaking thud, knees bent, his arms shielding Violet. The pavement beneath him cracked from the force, but Violet did not have a scratch. She was safe.

Breathless, clinging to his monstrous shoulders, Violet blinked up into the Beast's big amber eyes.

"Way to go, boy." Violet wheezed, still shaken. Then she reached out and patted his buzz cut. "And you're handsome in this form too."

"Mate. Like Me." The Beast softly growled his response, his chest rumbling.

Violet laughed. He was so cute.

From the corner of her eyes, she watched as a green bird flew to the ground and in a flash, transformed into Roman Draven. A furious, naked Roman Draven.

"Perhaps next time, both of you should give me —oww, my eyes." Roman dramatically shielded his eyes at once.

And yes, the Beast was naked too.

"Dude, don't scare me like that next time!" Roman complained.

Violet rolled her eyes. Leave it to Roman to make a big deal out of everything.

"We need to go!" Violet told them, looking upwards to see Henry staring at them from the shattered window.

Fucking psychopath!

"Seriously, this is not my finest moment," Roman murmured, grabbing a napkin left behind on a bench and awkwardly covering his front.

They had landed in the back of the hospital, startling patients who had been out there relaxing. Now, they watched from a distance with wary eyes, some even recording the scene on their phones.

"This is not intentional!" Roman called out, trying to clear his name as he walked ahead. "I'm not flashing! Think of it as a public photoshoot!"

"Oh, come on, already" Violet dragged him along, "We both know you've been in worse situations."

Roman grumbled what sounded like a protest but he went with them nonetheless.

Together, they made it to the hospital's garage where they knew Oscar was parked.

As if Oscar knew the urgency of the situation,

the car screeched toward them or so they thought until the car's window rolled down and they all shouted in unison:

"Asher?!"

What was going on here?

"Dude, where the hell did you come from?!" Roman exclaimed.

Oscar himself waved at them from the other side of the seat.

"There's no time for this. Get in at once." Asher commanded. Typical of him.

Violet and the others didn't want either. Immediately, they entered and Asher drove off.