

## Defy 621

Chapter 621: Threat To The Princess

Hannah sprinted across the open courtyard and ducked behind the stone deck beneath a lion statue, her heart pounding so hard it felt like it would leap out of her chest.

She crouched low, gasping for air, eyes roving around in fear.

Coming here was a mistake.

She had tried to infiltrate the palace to find Violet, but it was impossible. The place was massive with endless halls, twisting corridors, and strange turns that led her nowhere. The eerie part was that there were barely any guards. Not even one. No palace this grand could ever be this unprotected. Something was wrong. Terribly wrong.

And she was too exposed.

Hannah pulled out her compact mirror and whispered, "Soror vocat te."

But nothing happened. The surface stayed smooth and still, only her pale reflection staring back.

Her pulse quickened, and she checked the back of the mirror to be sure it was the right one. It was. So why wasn't it responding?

Come to think of it, she hasn't felt the hot itch beneath her skin. It was unlike Hannah not to have contacted her for this while. It couldn't be.....

The blood drained from Hannah's face, not just because it dawned on her that by crossing the Fae realm, the magic in this place must have canceled out Ziva's powers, but because the statue of the lion was staring at her.

Cold sweat broke down her spine. She could have sworn it was facing forward when she arrived. Maybe her mind was playing tricks. Maybe....

The lion's eyes glowed red.

At first, she thought it was a ruby catching the light, but when that glow blinked with awareness, Hannah's stomach twisted.

"Shit!" she hissed, spinning on her heels.

The statue's stone skin cracked, shedding its marble shell as the massive beast shook free. Its mane gleamed white and spectral, and with a thunderous growl, the once-still lion came to life and lunged after her.

Hannah ran as fast as her legs could carry her, the ground shaking under the thunderous steps of the beast behind her. The lion was hunting her.

"Shit! Shit! Shit!" she yelled between ragged breaths, sprinting through the clear path. The creature's growl rolled through the air like thunder, and was terrifyingly close. She could almost feel its breath on her back.

Had she known this was how things would turn out, she would have never stepped foot in this cursed place.

Desperate, Hannah yanked at the necklace Ziva had given her. Her only chance now was to turn invisible. So she pressed it, and urgently whispered the charm under her breath. And just as she feared, nothing happened.

The lion kept coming.

Then, as if the ground itself had turned against her, a thick vine shot up and wrapped around her ankle, tripping her flat. The impact knocked the air out of her lungs, and before she could scramble to her feet, the enormous creature was already upon her.

Hannah squeezed her eyes shut, bracing for the end.

The lion roared a sound so powerful it rattled her bones and her whole body trembled. Hannah swore her soul almost fled her body from the sheer force of it.

"That's enough, Taryn." calmly said a voice from behind.

That voice gave Hannah the courage to crack one eye open, terrified of what she might see.

Hannah saw her, the young Fae called Lila.

Well, "young" was relative. Everyone knew Fae lived long lives and wore youth like a disguise. Still, she recognized Violet's old roommate from the human realm, the same one who'd opened the portal that brought her here to the Fae realm.

Lila stood over her with a wicked glint in her eye. "You didn't actually think a human, or rather, a hybrid, would pass through our gates unnoticed, did you?" She eyed Hannah from head to toe. "Still, I have to give credit where it's due. You made it farther than I expected."

Hannah sighed in resignation. She was doomed.

A sudden flash of light made her flinch, and she turned just in time to see the lion vanish, and was replaced by possibly the most striking man she'd ever seen.

What caught her attention first was his long, silky silver hair that spilled past his shoulders all the way down to his waist. How could a man have this much hair?

Well, he wasn't exactly a man.

Then her gaze moved to his pointed ears, each one adorned with delicate loops of earrings.

It was startling to realize the Fae had their own shifters too, and this one was sinfully handsome, even though his icy blue eyes raked over her with clear distaste.

He was tall, lean, all smooth strength and sculpted muscle. She could feel the dominant, commanding aura radiating from him.

Hannah hadn't meant to, but her gaze slipped lower and settled on the very obvious length resting between his legs. Her breath hitched, heat crawling up her neck.

He knew. Saints, he knew she peeked at him.

A deep, guttural roar tore from his chest — not the sound of a man, but a beast — and Hannah flinched, snapping her eyes away. It felt as though she'd offended him just by looking.

Yet that didn't stop the warmth pooling in her stomach, that strange, unwanted spark she couldn't explain. How twisted was it that she was checking out a naked male while being hunted in enemy territory?

Lila's voice cut through the tension. "You've been following us this whole time? What's your mission?"

Hannah tried to sit up, but the Fae shifter growled low in warning.

She rolled her eyes. "You expect me to talk from the ground?" She pushed herself up anyway. "I'll only answer to Violet. She's the one I came for. Arrange a meeting."

Lila chuckled darkly. "You have the nerve to demand after breaking into the Fae realm? How bold." Her tone dropped cold. "No need to talk. We'll find our own way to take what we need."

She lifted her chin. "Taryn, take her to the cells. She's a threat to the princess, and it will be investigated."

"Yes, my lady," Taryn replied curtly.

Before Hannah could protest, the silver-haired Fae grabbed her arm and yanked her to her feet.

"Easy!" she hissed.

But his response was to bare his teeth, flashing dangerously sharp canines right in her face. That was a threat. He'd eat her alive if she so much as pushed him.

Yep. Whatever odd attraction Hannah had felt for the buck-naked lion shifter vanished on the spot.

Right now, she was in a perilous situation, and the only person who could save her was Violet.

#### Chapter 622: Don't Divorce Her

Elijah's sudden arrival at the North pack was nothing short of startling. Everyone had expected him to make the trip the next day, so seeing him appear that late at night sent shockwaves through the wolves. Even the guards stationed at the gates straightened instantly, their weariness forgotten despite the disaster that had just befallen them.

Alpha Caspian and Ace were already waiting by the entrance when the black car stopped. The door opened and out stepped Elijah, dressed finely from head to toe, his presence enough to make even the wind hesitate.

Both men bowed their heads. "Your Majesty," Caspian greeted.

Elijah didn't spare him a glance. "Summon Violet Purple," he said immediately.

The words hit like a whip. Caspian blinked, trying to mask his surprise. Of all things, he hadn't expected this. After the blood and destruction on their pack, he thought the Alpha King had come to sympathize with them, not chase after his son's mate. It was disappointing, but he kept his expression calm.

"Of course, Your Majesty," he said, forcing a polite smile. "If you would please follow me to my office while she's brought to you."

Elijah gave a single nod. "Christian, go with them."

That was all it took to make the air turn heavier. Everyone knew what that meant — the Alpha King didn't trust them to bring Violet on their own.

"This way, Your Majesty," Caspian said, his voice measured. He turned, leading the way inside.

Their footsteps reverberated through the corridor as they climbed the stairs, the scent of smoke and blood still lingering from the recent attack. Neither man spoke, though behind them, Ace's throat bobbed nervously. His palms were clammy, and he tried his best not to fidget under the crushing silence.

He knew the truth. Violet was gone. But they didn't know that yet, and he was terrified of what would happen once they did.

They arrived not long after and he waited outside as his father and Alpha king went in.

"My apologies," Caspian said quickly, stepping forward to tidy the desk. "There's been little time to put things in order after the incident. If I'd known you were coming, I'd have made proper arrangements." He gave an awkward laugh that didn't quite reach his eyes. "Perhaps if I'd been given a heads-up..." He trailed off, realizing how that sounded.

Elijah said nothing. Instead, he reached into his coat, pulled out a white handkerchief, and brushed the dust off the nearest sofa before sitting down. His movements were slow, almost a reminder that he didn't owe anyone an explanation.

He crossed his legs. "Send word when she's here," he said coolly.

Caspian nodded, forcing composure, though the back of his neck prickled with sweat.

The King had come for Violet, and Caspian knew that nothing good could come out of his sudden interest in Alaric's mate. It had to be connected to the attack. Up until now, everyone had believed the girl was human, until she exposed herself to save them. That had to be why Elijah was here.

Caspian could only hope the King didn't do anything reckless. He might have failed Alaric in other areas, but he would sooner lay down his life than let harm come to his son's mate. No matter what Violet truly was, a mate was sacred. And she had to be spared.

Elijah continued. "Secondly, I'm here to extend my condolences to the families of the fallen. What happened to the North pack is unfortunate."

Caspian's jaw tightened. The word unfortunate felt like an insult. "It's my fault," he said. "If I had taken my duties more seriously, this wouldn't have happened. I should have seen it coming."

"Yes," Elijah said bluntly, "it is your fault."

Caspian's head snapped up, stunned. "What?"

Elijah went on. "Patrick tested your defenses over and over, and you did nothing. You let his influence grow right under your nose, feeding on your weakness. Now look at the cost."

Caspian slammed his palm against the desk. "And who brought Patrick into our midst in the first place?" he barked, his voice shaking with anger. "Tell me that, Your Majesty!"

Elijah growled low, a dangerous sound that made the air vibrate. The temperature in the room seemed to drop as both men stared each other down.

Then Caspian exhaled, realizing he'd crossed a line. He turned his gaze away, fists clenched. Elijah, too, drew in a steady breath, his shoulders loosening.

When he spoke again, his voice was composed but carried steel. "It won't happen again. Patrick will be brought to justice. My men are already scouring every district as we speak. He won't get far. The son of a bastard will be caught and dealt with accordingly."

Caspian gave a small nod, though the bitterness in his eyes remained.

"Your pack will receive full support from me," Elijah continued. "Reconstruction materials, funding, everything needed to rebuild. The families of the fallen will be compensated. We'll see that the North stands strong again."

The offer was generous, but that wouldn't bring back the people he lost. He bowed his head slightly.  
"We appreciate your help, Your Majesty."

Elijah studied him for a moment, then said, "I heard you intend to divorce your wife."

The question came so suddenly that Caspian blinked. "Yes," he answered. "I certainly can't live with a woman who tried to harm our son."

"Don't divorce her."

Caspian's head snapped up, disbelief cutting across his face. "Excuse me?"

Elijah leaned forward, eyes narrowing. "You heard me. Keep Zara close. The North pack is already divided as it is, and can't afford another crack. Whether you love or hate your wife doesn't matter. You'll remain Alpha and Luna, presenting a united front to your people. That is an order."

Caspian said. "You can't be serious—"

"I'm deadly serious," Elijah cut him off. "I don't care if you live in separate wings or refuse to speak behind closed doors, but before the pack, you'll act as one. The last thing we need is chaos breeding from your household."

Caspian's lips parted, but no words came out. The idea of keeping that woman near him again made his stomach twist, yet the King's gaze left no room for argument.

### Chapter 623: Fight For His Son

The room fell silent, the tension thick enough to choke on. Caspian felt a great anger swell inside him, and for the first time, he wanted to defy Elijah's orders.

Then, without warning, the door burst open and Christian stepped in, looking flustered. "Your Majesty," he said breathlessly, "we can't find Violet Purple."

"What?" Elijah thought he had heard wrong. Then, almost immediately, his cold gaze shifted to Caspian.

Caspian saw that look and went pale. He already knew what the Alpha King was thinking.

"I don't know where she is," he denied quickly, agitation flickering in his eyes.

Christian added quickly, "Not just her, Your Majesty, both Alaric Storm and Griffin Hale are missing as well."

The light in Elijah's eyes turned glacial. A muscle ticked in his jaw as he slowly rose to his feet, his dark Alpha aura filling the room.

"What did you just say?" His voice came out cold and lethal.

Even Christian swallowed hard. "I—I can't find any of the boys, not to mention Violet Purple."

Elijah turned to Caspian. The older Alpha tried to stand tall, but cold sweat rolled down his temples.

"Where are they?" Elijah demanded.

"Are you suggesting I hid them, Your Majesty?" Caspian shot back, meeting his gaze. "Even ten years ago, when you demanded my son be handed over to Patrick for testing, my wife and I obeyed without question. So why would I withhold him from you now?"

For a long moment, both Alphas locked eyes, neither blinking, the tension suffocating. Then Elijah broke it off and turned to Christian. "Turn the pack upside down. Search every inch of this territory. And contact Irene, tell her that if this is some ploy to undermine my authority again, my patience has snapped thin. She won't like what comes next if I find those kids myself."

"As you wish, Your Majesty." Christian bowed quickly and hurried out.

With Christian gone, it was just Elijah and Caspian again, and this time, the North Alpha's pulse pounded as the Alpha King's calculating gaze lingered on him.

Where the hell were those kids? What the hell were they planning?

If only they'd told him about their escape beforehand, he could've suggested better hiding spots. Now they were out there on their own.

He only hoped they knew what they were doing.

Elijah lifted his head, his tone thick with accusation. "Where is your wife being kept, or have you moved her as well?"

"She's in the healing wing, Your Majesty," Caspian answered tightly, resisting the urge to punch him square in the face. How had he never realized until now that Elijah was a bully, and a grade-A asshole in a crown?

Maybe he'd been too absorbed in his inventions to notice the tyrant ruling over them.

It was a miracle no one in the North Pack had challenged his rule, considering how detached he'd been. But perhaps the pack's prosperity, and a lightning-wielding heir like Alaric, had been enough to keep rebellion at bay.

Moreover, Caspian wasn't exactly weak. He just hadn't been interested in power.

But that ended now. He'd balance both the scientist and the Alpha in him.

But first, he'd find his son and his mate.

Elijah moved toward the door, and Caspian instinctively made to follow.

"I can find my way around," Elijah said without turning, the sharpness in his tone making Caspian stop mid-step.

Of course, Caspian wanted to argue, but the words died in his throat. He didn't trust the Alpha king around his wife, scratch that, Zara, his ex-wife. But perhaps, if there was anyone who deserved to be in Elijah's overbearing presence, then it was her.

So he stayed back, listening as his footsteps faded down the hall, silence falling in the room once more.

A few seconds later, the door creaked open again, and Ace rushed in, eyes wide with panic. "Father," he whispered urgently, "I know where Alaric and the others are."

Caspian's head snapped up, and his pulse spiked. He glanced instinctively toward the closed door, his heart pounding.

"Come with me," he hissed, grabbing Ace by the arm. He dragged him into the bathroom and twisted the tap on full blast.

Elijah wasn't stupid. Caspian was sure he'd left someone behind to keep watch. And with how that man operated, there was no guarantee someone wasn't standing right outside that door, eavesdropping. The running water would drown out whatever they said.

"Where are they?" Caspian asked lowly, his eyes hard.

Ace swallowed. "I—I don't know exactly."

Caspian's expression darkened. "What do you mean you don't know?"

"One minute they were outside, and then this portal just opened, and this girl came out of it. They seem to know her and call her by the name 'Lila'. I looked into it and she was one of Violet's roommates at Lunaris."

Caspian frowned, his mind trying to piece things together.

"She pushed Violet into the portal," Ace continued, "and then Griffin and Alaric went in after her. The portal closed right after."

For a moment, Caspian just stared at his son, too stunned to speak. A portal? If it had come from anyone else, he would've dismissed it as nonsense. But Ace wasn't a fool, and had his own analytical mind. He wouldn't say something he hadn't witnessed himself.

A muscle ticked in Caspian's jaw. "You're sure?"

Ace nodded quickly. "Positive. I tried to get closer, but it vanished before I reached it."

Caspian rubbed his temples, exhaling hard. A damn portal. That meant magic was at work. If that was true, then they were out of reach.

And Elijah was going to lose his mind if he learned that.

Caspian looked at the door again, paranoia twisting in his gut. "Don't tell anyone what you saw," he warned him. "Not a word, Ace."

If Elijah finds out they're gone from this pack, he'll stop at nothing to get to them. Perhaps, this little break is what they needed, after all."

Ace swallowed and nodded.

Caspian turned off the tap, his reflection staring back at him from the mirror. The face that looked back wasn't that of a inventor anymore, it was an Alpha ready to fight back for the future of his son - and his mate.

#### Chapter 624: No Where To Be Found

Elijah's face was unreadable as he strode down the long corridor of the hospital wing. The air around him was cold, his presence enough to make every werewolf step aside and bow their heads.

Their fear fed something inside him. Power. It was more intoxicating than any drink. The future of their kind was in his hands, and everyone knew it.

He reached the last private ward and opened the door without knocking.

Inside, Luna Zara lay propped up on crisp sheets, her pale hair spilling across the pillow. Two doctors hovered nearby with one checking her monitors, while the other quietly asked about her pain level.

They both froze as soon as Elijah entered, the air shifting immediately as the intensity of his aura pressed down on them.

Zara turned her head last, slowly and unbothered, her features impassive.

Elijah clasped his hands behind his back and said dryly, "Congratulations on returning from the dead, Luna Zara."

Her lips curved into a thin smile that didn't touch her eyes. "Thank you, Your Majesty."

The doctors didn't need to be told. They bowed once and scurried out, leaving the two of them alone.

Elijah took the chair beside her bed and crossed one leg over the other, studying her.

Zara had always been pale — that was a signature trait of the North Pack — but this was different. She looked ghostly pale, as if she had no blood in her body.

"You're quite a vision," he said, voice dripping with sarcasm.

"If you've come here to taunt me," she replied, her tone cool and weary, "you'll be disappointed. I don't have the strength for it."

Elijah gave a wry smile. "Of course you don't. Not when you're this close to losing everything. I mean, even animals protect their young, yet you performed an experiment on your own son." His voice hardened, "On my heir. You do have some guts, Zara."

Her eyes flashed. "It would have worked," she snapped, then caught herself. Her voice shook with regret, "I improved the Mnemosyne crown. I eliminated the risk. It could have been a breakthrough. But..." Her shoulders sagged. "I see now where I was wrong. I've committed a great crime against my son, and he may never forgive me in this life."

Elijah looked at her without blinking. "Then I suppose you haven't heard that Alaric is missing."

Zara's head jerked up. "What did you just say?"

He leaned back, feigning surprise. "Oh? Caspian hasn't told you? Seems he's taking that divorce rather seriously, keeping secrets about your own son now."

For a brief moment, Zara looked devastated. So this was how far Caspian was willing to go to separate her from her children. But as she studied the Alpha King, realization dawned on her. That cunning intelligence in Elijah's eyes gave him away.

Her expression hardened. "What do you want, Your Majesty?"

Elijah chuckled softly. "There she is, the smart Zara Storm I remember."

Zara's voice rose an octave. "What happened to my son?"

For the first time since arriving, the smile vanished from Elijah's face.

He said to Zara, "Your son, Alaric, is gone, alongside Violet. Any idea where your husband might be hiding them?"

Zara's mouth fell open. "Why would Caspian hide—" She stopped midsentence as realization struck. Her eyes narrowed. "It's the girl, isn't it? Violet. She's the one you want."

Elijah didn't deny it. "Violet Purple has proven to be a valuable asset hidden away for far too long. The only thing left to determine is whether she'll remain an asset or turn into a threat."

Zara's lips parted in disbelief. "And you think my husband would hide her?"

Elijah answered calmly. "People tend to misunderstand my intentions whenever I'm involved. Violet is Alaric's mate. Your husband would probably do anything to keep her close to ensure that kind of power remains tied to the North, even if she becomes dangerous."

Zara's composure slipped. "Violet Purple is also mated to Griffin Hale of the East and Roman Draven of the South. So why accuse us of hiding her?"

Elijah tilted his head slightly. "Perhaps because she disappeared on Northern soil. And if history has shown anything," his gaze bored into hers, "it's that your people go to great lengths to get what they want."

The implication wasn't lost on Zara. He was hinting at how far she had gone in pursuit of power.

Zara's jaw clenched. She told him straightaway, "Caspian doesn't have Violet Purple. That's not his style."

Without warning, Elijah reached across the bed and grabbed her by the chin. His grip was firm, his voice a low snarl. "I don't care whether your husband has Violet or not. What I'm saying is, find the girl. That's the least you can do for me after I saved you from a potential divorce. Be a little grateful, Luna Zara."

Then he let go. Zara exhaled sharply, releasing the breath she didn't realize she'd been holding.

Elijah straightened, slipping his hands into his pockets as if nothing had happened.

"We'll be in communication," he said

smoothly. "Once more, happy recovery."

He turned and left the room, leaving Zara to suffocate on the bitter taste of humiliation that lingered in the air.

No sooner had Elijah stepped out of the room than someone nearly collided with him in the hallway.

"Your Majesty," Christian bowed quickly, slightly breathless.

Elijah raised a brow, his voice edged with impatience. "How did it go?"

Christian straightened, his face grim. "We have a little problem."

The words made Elijah's frown deepen. "What kind of problem?"

Christian hesitated, visibly uncomfortable under the Alpha King's piercing gaze. "We've flipped the entire Pack House upside down but there's still no sign of Violet or the boys. It doesn't help that no one saw them leave the pack either."

For a moment, Elijah just stared at him, the silence thick. Then his expression turned serious. "You mean to tell me they just vanished into thin air?"

Christian swallowed hard. "It's not just that, Your Majesty."

"There's more?" Elijah could feel a headache brewing at this point.

Christian nodded slowly. "My men in the West Pack sent word. There was a rebellion in the pack but it's been contained."

Elijah narrowed his eyes, his jaw tightening. "And?"

Christian exhaled. "Asher Nightshade and Roman Draven are missing too."

"What?!"

#### Chapter 625: Father Is Back

Layla stepped into the room to see her twin, Lauren, playing with their sister Enya while Ziva paced anxiously up and down. It wasn't a surprising sight. Their sister Ziva had the worst temper and often showed it in her violent outbursts.

In such a mood, Ziva was highly volatile and could transfer her anger to anyone in sight. Layla wisely kept her mouth shut, scared of drawing Ziva's attention. Instead she slipped into the mental link she shared with Lauren.

Coming to sit beside her twin, she asked mentally, "What's going on with her?"

Lauren answered without moving her eyes from Enya. "She can't reach Hannah."

"Hannah?" Layla's curiosity sparked.

For a while now, Hannah had been missing. The one time Layla raised the issue, Ziva told her to let it be. Of course, Layla knew something was off, but since Ziva seemed unconcerned, she had chosen not to dig deeper.

Not that it affected her much. With Hannah gone, Lillian — lowest in the family hierarchy — now handled the dirty work like feeding Bree. Still, Layla had been curious about Hannah's absence, and it seemed she might finally get some answers.

"Why? What happened to Hannah?" she pressed.

Lauren sighed audibly through the link. "Apparently, our dear sister sent her to spy on Violet."

"Spy on Violet?" Layla's mental voice rose. "But didn't Father warn her...." She stopped short as realization hit. Ziva had gone behind their father's back again. No wonder she didn't want anyone prying into Hannah's disappearance.

Good thing their father, Angus, barely acknowledged Hannah, considering she was the weakest of them. Otherwise, Ziva would have a lot of explaining to do. But if Hannah stayed missing much longer, even he would notice.

"So where did she disappear to?"

"No idea," Lauren said. "She's not responding to Ziva's summon and it's driving her insane."

As if on cue, Ziva screamed, "Hannah! I swear to everything living and dead, if I ever get my hands on you, you'll wish you were never born! I'll peel your skin and roast you like a pig!"

Lauren and Layla exchanged a look but said nothing. They were used to this by now.

It was Enya who finally interrupted with the blunt honesty of a child. "Sister Ziva."

Ziva turned, and the rage melted from her face instantly, replaced by a gentle, almost motherly smile.

"My sweet Enya," she cooed, beckoning her over.

Enya hopped off Lauren's lap and ran to her, proudly holding out a small glass bottle filled with fluttering insects. "I did it, Sister Ziva!" she said excitedly.

The bottle had once been filled with lifeless bugs which Ziva had gathered and tasked the girl to bring back to life.

Now she took the bottle and watched, eyes narrowing with pleasure as the creatures buzzed inside it — some crawling along the glass while others fluttered in eerie synchronization, their tiny wings stirring the air. A faint smoky glow surrounded them, pulsing with traces of dark magic at work.

A huge smile broke across Ziva's lips. "Good girl," she murmured, lowering herself to Enya's height and stroking her silky black hair. "Go find Lillian. Tell her to bake you cookies. That's your reward."

"Cookies?" Enya's eyes widened with joy. "Yes!" She dashed out of the room as fast as her legs could carry her.

The moment Enya disappeared, the warmth in Ziva's face evaporated. Her smile turned to stone, her gaze dark and menacing once more. Layla and Lauren shivered, not because the room was cold but because the sudden switch was just too startling.

Their sister was quite scary.

She came to stand before Lauren and Layla, who waited anxiously for whatever their sister had in store for them next.

"I can't seem to summon Hannah," she said flatly, then moved to her worktable where a map was spread out, a single drop of blood marking a specific spot.

Ziva hovered over it, murmuring to herself. "I can't seem to track her either. Her last location says the North Pack, but that's all..." Her eyes narrowed. "It's as if she vanished off the surface of the earth."

Layla and Lauren exchanged a nervous glance before Lauren gathered the courage to ask, "Is that even possible?"

Abruptly, Ziva turned to her. "Yeah, it is, if she's out of this realm."

Layla's eyes widened. "Are you trying to say—"

"Hannah must be in the Fae realm," Ziva finished for her.

"Then Violet's mother finally revealed herself!" Lauren gasped in disbelief. "Father would be delighted—"

Ziva hissed sharply, her eyes flashing with warning. If looks could kill, Lauren would've dropped dead on the spot. Lauren's throat bobbed as she swallowed hard.

Ziva's face twisted with ugly jealousy. "Father will not hear a word of this. If he does... "

"What if he already knows?" Layla interrupted, her tone challenging. She hated when Ziva tried to intimidate her twin.

"He wouldn't," Ziva snapped confidently.

"The both of them were mates, Ziva. There's no way she'd appear in the human realm without Father sensing it," Layla shot back. "I'd rather tell him myself than face his wrath later, especially because your jealous ass can't handle a little competition."

Barely had the words left her mouth when Ziva hurled her hand, and a gust of wind slammed into Layla, knocking her flat on the floor.

Before she could stand, Ziva was upon her. She grabbed her by the front of her shirt and yanked her up effortlessly. Layla tried to reach for Ziva's forehead to paralyze her with her mental ability, but Ziva caught her wrist midair and twisted it cruelly. Layla screamed in pain.

"Ziva!" Lauren cried out, trying to step in, but one look from Ziva froze her in place.

Ziva leaned close to Layla, her voice venomous. "Just because you're my blood sister doesn't mean I'll spare your disrespectful ass. I could snap your neck right now, and with one word from me, Father wouldn't even blink. You know why? Because I'm the one he needs the most. I'm the one he trusts. And do you know how I'm sure he doesn't know about that Fae bitch? Because their bond was severed years ago. He told me himself."

She pushed Layla away with a disgusted scowl.

Lauren rushed to help her twin up, relieved Ziva had stopped. Layla only straightened her rumpled clothes with quiet fury.

Before either of them could speak, the door swung open and Lillian stumbled in, breathless. "Sister Ziva, Father is back."

#### Chapter 626: World Domination

The market was alive in .

Traders shouted prices from wooden stalls stacked with fruits, spices, and fabrics.

Some of the witches openly sold their charms and artifacts, the locals already accustomed to their presence.

Children on the other hand laughed as they chased one another through the narrow lanes. Their mothers stayed close by, some

haggling over baskets of grain, while the others gossiped excitedly with their neighbors.

Then, out of nowhere, a boy barely in his teens came sprinting down the street, his face pale and breath ragged. "The Supreme Alpha is back!" he screamed.

The effect was immediate.

Mothers snatched up their children, while traders slammed their stalls shut with trembling hands. Some scattered to homes nearby, shutters clattering as windows were covered. While the rest found hiding spots, waiting the moment out. No one wanted to be a scapegoat.

Within seconds, the once lively market turned ghostly silent. What had been a place of warmth and chatter was now abandoned, dust swirling in the sudden emptiness.

It wasn't long before the distant growl of an engine broke the quiet. A black jeep rolled down the deserted street, its tires crushing some of the forgotten fruit underfoot.

Inside, seated comfortably in the back seat, was the former Alpha King—now known to the people of the village as the Supreme Alpha—Angus.

He gazed out the window at the empty streets, a slow, satisfied smirk on his lips. Even with the window closed, he could scent the fear in the air.

That was power. And power, to Angus, was everything.

They arrived at their destination, and the guards immediately swung open the iron gates to let them in. The vehicle rolled through the vast courtyard, its tires crunching over gravel as the guards trained eyes followed them.

Angus had built this place after his settlement in the village, adopting every custom of the were-kind but twisting it to his own taste. The mansion was like a packhouse, except in this case, werewolves, witches, and even humans served side by side. To be precise, they served him. The whole community was built on control and to ensure his world Domination plans succeeded.

To Angus, wasn't just his pack, it was his first creation. It was the beginning of the empire that would only grow until the world was under his feet.

As soon as he stepped out, guards bowed low. There were wolves and witches in charge of the safety of the packhouse and none dared to look him directly in the eye. Angus only gave a single glance, satisfied by their order, before heading in.

Angus reached his private quarters, and the heavy doors shut behind him with a deep thud. Without a sound, he began to strip until he was down to only his boxers.

Across his back was a rune, an hourglass-shaped rune etched deep into his flesh. Two opposing triangles touched at their tips, flanked by small star-like crosses on either side. This was once a bond mark and sign of his connection to his mate, Queen Seraphira.

But the bond had long been broken, leaving the rune a ghostly black scar across his back.

But that was not the only strange mark carved into Angus' body. His arms and chest bore layers of tattoos—spirals, jagged lines, and interlocking shapes. The deeper ones looked burnt into his skin, healed over but still angry red at the edges.

Yes, the marks all had a purpose and Angus had bound its powers to his body. He had endured them all, standing still while they were carved into his flesh. After all, pain was irrelevant when power was the reward.

That was why Angus was feared. He was the strongest werewolf out there, and was immune to magic. In the past, Witches had tried and failed to kill him, their magic melting off him like water off stone.

He was untouchable. And he made sure everyone knew it.

Angus stood in front of the mirror, studying his reflection. The bond mark on his back looked dull and useless without Seraphira here to complete it. Yet he still traced it with a finger, as if he could feel her through the scar.

Sometimes, like now, he did miss her.

The door creaked open, and Angus didn't have to turn to know who it was. Her perfume already saturated the atmosphere.

"Father," Ziva breathed.

Her voice trembled with excitement as she hurried toward him, wrapping her arms around him from behind. There was pure adoration in her eyes, the kind of devotion that bordered on madness.

Ziva pressed her face against his back, as if seeking comfort from the heat radiating off his skin.

"I missed you," she whispered, her fingers tracing the tattoos carved into his flesh.

But Angus stood unmoved, eyes on his reflection in the mirror before him. "I trust everything remained in order during my absence?"

Ziva lifted her head, pride shining in her expression. "Of course, Father. You can always trust me to keep things under control. The witches obey, the guards remain loyal, and none dare question your rule."

"Good." Angus said, "We've come this far to let even the smallest of things stand in our way."

"I also trust your journey went well?"

"Of course. The candidates are nothing but putty in my hands. Humans are fragile creatures, add in greed and display of power, and they'll fall to their knees. It won't be long now and everything will go as planned."

Angus's eyes gleamed with ruthless determination, as though he could already see the world bending to his will.

Then Ziva said suggestively, "I'm sure you've had a long journey, Father, and could use a bath to relax." Her fingers trailed down his bare chest, slowly and deliberate, before sliding lower to cup the firm outline beneath his boxers.

Angus grinned, his voice thick with amusement. "I can never say no to such help."

Without another word, he swept Ziva off her feet. She let out a playful squeal, laughing like a newlywed as he carried her straight into the bath chamber.

#### Chapter 627: What About Violet?

Ziva had a smile on her face as she stirred from sleep. With her eyes still closed, she reached for her father, only for her hand to meet empty sheets. Her lashes fluttered open, and the dreamy softness on her face hardened into a frown.

She wanted more time with him, but apparently, the man had other plans. She didn't need to guess where he was; the low murmur of voices from the living room told her enough.

Ziva rose from bed and wrapped a robe loosely around her body. She wouldn't have minded walking out naked—let the whole world see she belonged to the Supreme Alpha—but her father hated when she distracted him during business. So she settled for this.

When she stepped into the room, Jericho, her father's Beta, was the first to notice her. His expression soured immediately. The man never hid his distaste for her, and if not for his usefulness to Angus, she would've rid herself of him long ago.

Three others were present, all werewolves, and her father's loyal advisors. Though Angus had welcomed witches into his new world, he still distrusted them enough to keep wolves closest. He had kinship with their kind, after all. Hence, she was the only witch he trusted and she in return ensured the other witches stayed loyal to him — by all means possible.

"You're here," Angus said without lifting his gaze from the reports spread across the table.

"Yes, Father." Ziva stepped beside him, slowly and deliberately brushing her hand over his arm as if to remind everyone in the room who she belonged to.

Aside from the faint furrow that creased his brow, Angus didn't react. His daughter was useful, but her petty possessiveness was beginning to grate on him. Business was business; pleasure was pleasure.

The same quiet disapproval shone in the eyes of his men, but none dared speak. They knew better than to comment on the Supreme Alpha's personal affairs.

Ziva sensed the shift in the room, and it irritated her. "You started the meeting without me," she said, her voice edged with accusation.

Angus finally turned his head, his cold eyes cutting into her. "I didn't realize I needed your permission to start my meetings."

Ziva flinched at the chill in his tone. It was only words, but she knew her father too well—he was angry.

"O-of course," she stammered, shrinking back slightly but still trying to recover. "I just thought you might appreciate my contribution to your plans."

"Well," Angus said flatly, returning to the papers, "you're here now, aren't you?"

He shifted his focus back to the others, his tone brisk. "Now, where were we?"

As someone who liked to dominate a room, Ziva didn't take kindly to her father's cool treatment, and it showed in the scowl that carved her face.

"...the attack on the North Pack could have been far worse if not for your daughter, Violet, stopping it," James, one of Angus's advisors, said.

At the mention of Violet, Ziva's eyes widened and then narrowed to hard slits. Of course she'd heard about the rescue, but hearing it recited like a trophy in front of her father tore the old well of jealousy wide open. She didn't want Angus proud of anyone but her.

"She's powerful," Angus conceded with a small nod. "Just like her mother." Pride laced his words.

Ziva's nails dug into her sides.

"If she's that powerful, then convincing her to our side would be difficult. I mean compared to your other children...." Jericho offered cautiously, glancing at Ziva as if trying to soften the blow. "She's been raised to loathe you and everything you stand for. I don't see how that's going to change easily."

"Yes, Father," Ziva agreed, forcing a smile. "What if Violet becomes strong enough to defeat you? Wouldn't it be an advantage to remove her before she reaches full strength?"

Yes. Say yes. Let me be the one to rip her heart out,

she thought, venom coiling in her mind.

But Angus simply laughed. A loud, boisterous laughter as if all they had done was tell him jokes.

"It is not funny, father. I'm worried about you, here." Ziva pressed.

Angus said, "When we get to that bridge, we'd cross it."

"But —" Ziva wanted to protest but Angus had already moved on.

"This Patrick Vale," he asked Jericho, "can you find him?"

"The witches can if they put in effort." Jericho replied. "Why? Do you want him eliminated before he kills more of our people?"

"That could be good PR," Edward, another advisor, interjected, "Alpha Angus risen and eliminates the racist terrorist Patrick Vale."

Angus's lips twitched. "Good thinking, but timing is everything. We'll find Patrick Vale

because we need to cloak him from being found by my brother Elijah and the government until the moment suits us."

"So we let him kill more werewolves?" Jericho asked, incredulous.

"Exactly the point," Angus said, "No revolution was ever born without sacrifice. Right now, my brother is beloved by the people, but what happens if he fails to protect his kind? They'll turn, they'll rage, and then they'll beg for a savior. Then the people would hope for a messiah and that

is when I come in. The werekind bow to strength and they'll cast aside a weak king when a stronger hand offers itself."

The men in the room exchanged looks, then one by one nodded in agreement. The plan had the cold logic of a trap, it was elegant and monstrous.

Edward, the third man, added, "We weave a sob story, pin your disappearance on Elijah. We'd make him the villain everyone loves to hate."

"I'll leave the narrative to you," Angus said, eyes glinting. "We just have to be conscious of timing. We cannot afford to make even a bit of a mistake."

Just when the atmosphere began to ease, Ziva suddenly spoke.

"What about the Cardinal Alphas?" she asked smoothly. "They're powerful, and next in line to your throne. Not to mention, each of them is linked to your precious daughter, Violet."

There was nothing but silence, the advisors looking at Angus for an answer.

Angus finally spoke. "Those are just pups. They don't hold a candle to me."

"Four powerful pups," Ziva muttered.

"I'm powerful too."

"But you're just one. There's strength in numbers,"

Of course, while Ziva appeared concerned for her father, the truth remained she only wanted a reason to get rid of Violet.

Angus looked at her, his tone calm but firm. "I understand your concern, but I cannot make a move against them. They're mated to Violet, at least three of them are. And if you've ever experienced the loss of a mate..." There was emotion in Angus's voice now, as if he were speaking from experience.

"...it's enough to make one lose their mind. If I'm going to use Violet, I need her mind intact. Not to mention, this bond is necessary. The only way to control this powerful daughter of mine is through her mates."

At last, Angus revealed why he wasn't bothered about Violet's growing powers.

Unlike the advisors, who were clearly impressed with his reasoning, Ziva felt completely defeated. No matter how much she fought, Violet was too damn lucky.

Angus, of course, wasn't blind to Ziva's intent. He admired her ruthlessness, but her emotions often clouded her judgment. Still, she was useful, and for now, she'd do just fine.

Angus instructed, "Jericho, gather the witches. Have them locate Patrick and place a cloaking spell on him."

"Of course, Your Majesty," Jericho replied with a respectful bow.

Angus straightened. "That will be all for now. You may leave."

One by one, the advisors filed out of the room, even Ziva.

"Not you, Ziva. I need you here."

Ziva halted immediately. Under normal circumstances, her father's summons would have filled her with pride. But tonight, she had been nothing but humiliated since the meeting began.

Once the others left, Angus turned to face his daughter, who stood with her hands clasped behind her back, her expression unreadable.

"What do you need, Father?" Her voice carried a sharp edge.

Angus lifted a brow at her tone. Women and their need for drama. Still, he needed her, and he could indulge her when necessary. Besides, she wasn't entirely unbearable; she could be... entertaining.

"You're angry," he observed.

"Am I? I didn't realize my emotions mattered since my opinions clearly don't."

"Ahh," he murmured, smirking. "So that's the problem. Fine, Daddy's sorry. Is that okay?"

Ziva tried to hold onto her anger, but the apology—rare as it was—disarmed her.

"Fine," she muttered, reluctant but appeased.

"Come here," Angus said, spreading his arms. She stepped into his embrace without hesitation.

"Daddy's sweet girl," Angus whispered, smiling as he lifted her chin and brushed his lips against hers. But Ziva wasn't satisfied with that. She wanted more—more reassurance, more possession—and threw her arms around his neck, deepening the kiss.

Yes. This was it. Angus was hers and hers alone.

When they finally pulled apart, Angus smiled. "Since you felt neglected in the meeting," he began, voice smooth and calculated, "I was hoping you'd do me a little favor."

Ziva's eyes gleamed. "Of course, Father. Anything you want." She clasped his hands eagerly, her excitement palpable.

"I want to pay my brother a visit," Angus said, his tone low. "A dream visit. I'll need you to perform the spell."

"Of course. I'll call my sisters, Lauren and Layla. They'll lend their strength, and we'll begin the spell tonight."

"Good," Angus said, satisfied. "I'll be waiting."

Ziva ran out of the room to get things started.

Moments later, Angus was lying on his bed while Lauren, Layla, and of course Ziva stood over him. The eldest sister held a small bowl filled with a strange dark paste. She dipped her fingers into it and smeared the mixture across Angus's forehead, drawing a crooked symbol while muttering a string of incantations under her breath.

"You should sleep now, Father," Ziva whispered.

Angus obeyed, his eyes fluttering shut without hesitation.

Layla frowned as she watched. The nerve of that bitch to ask for their help as if she hadn't physically assaulted her just hours ago. Layla resented her sister with every fiber of her being, but defying their father was out of the question.

Once Angus's breathing steadied, Ziva dropped the bowl and reached for a small dagger. The metal glinted sharply under the dim light.

"Hand," she ordered.

Layla hesitated but stretched hers out first. Ziva sliced her palm without mercy, drawing blood. Layla cursed under her breath, but Ziva had already moved on to Lauren, who winced as the blade grazed her skin.

Finally, Ziva cut her own palm, showing no sign of pain as she pressed her bleeding hand against her sisters'. Their blood mingled, staining the sheets.

Together, they began to chant, once, twice, three times. By the fourth, the strain began to show. Cold sweat clung to the twins' foreheads, their complexion sickly. Dream-walking was not for the faint of heart; it demanded focus, and endurance.

There were witches who specialized in it, but Angus trusted none of them, not when a single misstep could trap him in the dream realm or fracture his mind completely.

By the sixth chant, their legs trembled, threatening to buckle.

And then, on the seventh, their breath caught as one. All three gasped as their eyes glazed over while Angus's body jerked once before going still, his spirit now crossing into the world of dreams.

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Meanwhile...

Elijah paced his office, tension etched deep into his brow.

What was he supposed to do now? He was going mad trying to come up with a solution. Where in the Goddess's name had those kids gone?

"Your Majesty," Christian entered, interrupting his thoughts.

"Yes, Christian?" Elijah asked, his tone clipped with impatience. "Any progress?"

"Not exactly, Your Majesty," Christian said carefully, "but I've made a discovery."

Elijah paused. "A discovery?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"And what kind of discovery would that be?" Elijah's patience was thinning by the second.

"They tried to suppress the information," Christian explained, "but according to one of the assassins arrested after the rebellion, a portal appeared in the middle of the battle, the next, Asher and Roman were gone."

Chapter 629: Return My Throne

At that information, Elijah's eyes widened. "He really said that?"

"Yes, Your Majesty," Christian replied. "Usually, I'd take that as the raving of a madman, but considering what's happened lately, especially regarding Violet Purple, what if the same thing occurred here? A portal opened and took them?"

"Took them to where?" Elijah fired at him.

"That, I have no idea, Your Majesty. But what if this is all Violet Purple's doing? We have no idea what she's capable of. The children are smart, they must have realized you were coming for her, so they vanished," Christian surmised.

Elijah rubbed his jaw thoughtfully. "No, that can't be it. I might not know my dear niece very well, but the girl's no coward. And Asher wouldn't abandon his pack like that. He knows how dangerous it is to leave, especially after that rebellion. Whatever happened, I don't think the kids had a choice."

He looked up. "Investigate deeper. Check if someone else infiltrated the Pack House during that time. Let's hope Violet hasn't fallen into the hands of her father."

Christian's eyes widened. "Are you saying—" He stopped when the Alpha King gave him a sharp look. The name "Angus" was forbidden here.

Still, something didn't add up. "If he wanted Violet Purple, why take the Alphas too?" Christian asked carefully.

"Because mates are a package deal," Elijah replied. "You can't take one without the others losing their minds from the bond. However..." He paused, his tone darkening. "Call it instinct, but I don't think this is his doing. We're missing something vital here."

Something clicked in Elijah's mind. "What about Violet's mother? Did you find out what kind of creature she is to have given the girl such power?"

Christian hesitated, glancing toward the door to ensure no one was eavesdropping. "About that..." he began carefully. "We do know his existence"—he emphasized the word—"was kept extremely low. So even investigating who he might have had relations with, without mentioning names, is difficult. However, I received information about a healer who supposedly nursed him back to health. The timing fits and all evidence points to her being Violet's mother. But there's literally no information about her since his you-know-who-I'm talking-about, lived practically like a ghost."

Elijah had no words to say especially knowing how sensitive the topic of this conversation was. If news got out that Angus was still alive.....he didn't even want to think about it.

Finally, Elijah made up his mind. "Hire the help of witches."

"Eeh—" Christian's eyes widened.

"Enquire about Violet Purple's whereabouts," Elijah ordered, his tone sharp. "No matter the cost."

"O-of course, Your Majesty." Christian bowed quickly and left.

As soon as Christian was gone, he slumped on the seat with a weary groan. He stared at the clock on the wall, it was nearly one in the morning. They had been working out this problem for hours now.

He reached for his tablet and replayed the footage of Violet and Alaric levitating in the air as the warehouse disintegrated into nothing. The image burned into his mind. He'd never seen power like that. What kind of abomination had his brother unleashed this time?

Elijah knew sleeping that night was out of the question. Atleast, not until Violet's whereabouts was disclosed. President Roy would expect an update tomorrow and he had nothing for him.

He decided to go through the pile of work email waiting for him. Hence it came as a surprise when he began to doze off minutes later. At first, he fought against it, shaking his head as if trying to dispel the heaviness but it was useless.

Moments later, Elijah's head fell forward onto the desk, the tablet slipping from his hand as the Alpha King drifted—helplessly and unnaturally—into a deep, consuming sleep.

Elijah knew he was dreaming the moment his surroundings changed. A second ago, he'd been in his quarters at the North Pack, drowning in reports. Now, he stood in the middle of his own throne room, and it was silent, and uneasily empty.

What kind of cosmic joke was this?

Then came a voice that froze his blood.

"Hello, brother."

Elijah stiffened, the sound crawling through his veins like ice. Slowly, he turned and there he was.

Angus. His brother. In flesh and blood.

It had been what again? Seventeen, eighteen years? Yet he hadn't aged a day. The same jet-black hair. The same amber eyes. That same accursed handsome face they'd both inherited from their beautiful mother.

"Been a while, little brother," Angus said with that arrogant smirk Elijah remembered all too well.

The shock didn't last long because rage replaced it. "You fucking bastard!" Elijah lunged, but before he could reach him, Angus vanished into thin air.

"Easy now," Angus' voice came from behind him. Elijah spun around to find him leaning casually near the throne. "I deserve that, I'll admit. But I can't have you punching me in the dream realm, I might wake up with bruises." He chuckled.

Elijah's jaw clenched. He tried to hit him again, but Angus vanished once more, his laughter bouncing off the walls.

Frustration boiled over. Elijah threw his head back and barked a bitter laugh. "Of course. Run away like the bastard you've always been. That's what you're good at anyway."

Elijah's insult seemed to strike a nerve. The air around him crackled, and before he could react, Angus appeared behind him,

"Really? A bastard? Is that the lowest you could think of me?"

Elijah spun, startled, but anger fueled his reaction. He swung his fist only for Angus to catch it midair. With one effortless movement, Angus countered, slamming his own fist into Elijah's jaw. The impact sent Elijah staggering backward, clutching his face, his breath ragged.

When he raised his head, his eyes burned with pure hatred. "Excited to see you?" he seethed, "You fucking rendered me sterile! I can't have children because of you! Tell me—tell me how that's supposed to feel!"

Angus was unfazed, "Oh. That," he said lightly. "Sorry about that. Trust me, it wasn't intentional. I didn't realize Amoesdus was that petty. But look at the bright side—" his lips curved into a wicked grin—"at least you can still stick it into a vagina. That should count for something."

Those words hit harder than the punch. With a guttural roar, Elijah launched himself at Angus, slamming into him with unrestrained rage. The two brothers crashed to the ground. Elijah rained blow after blow, fists fueled by years of resentment.

"You ruined me!" he shouted, striking harder with each word. "You took everything from me!"

Angus only laughed through the punches, "Really? Everything? You are Alpha king and you seem to enjoy the position a little too much."

Elijah seemed to pause at that statement, but then the anger returned. That was no excuse. With a growl, he wrapped his hands around Angus's throat, his knuckles whitening. "I'm going to kill you today," he snarled, his eyes glowing with red fury.

Angus vanished like a puff of smoke, and for a breathless second Elijah was staring at nothing, again. He was up on his feet when Angus reappeared as though he'd never left, folding his hands behind his back with an ease that made Elijah grind his teeth.

"I didn't come here to fight you," Angus said, voice smooth as honeyed poison.

Elijah spat, "Then what, to mock me? Drag me out here to gloat?"

Angus chuckled, mild and bored. "I might be petty, but I have bigger things to do than gloat. I have a vision."

Elijah's eyes narrowed, suspicion sharpening every line in his face. "After all these years, you suddenly show up with a vision? Why now, Angus?"

Angus straightened. "I want my position back."

The words fell like a stone.

For a heartbeat, no one moved.

Then Elijah laughed. It was a long, ugly sound that rolled through the room and cracked against the wall. The kind of laugh that emptied the air of warmth.

Angus let the laugh die. He tilted his head, watching Elijah with sudden cold eyes. "You're toying with me?"

"Of course, not," Angus said, "You've done... well, a commendable job holding the werekind together. But the throne needs its true king."

Elijah's face twisted. "Goddess save, you're fucking serious." He breathed. "You actually think you can waltz back and take back what? Your position? After what you did?"

Angus shrugged as if the past were a small inconvenience. "I wouldn't come if I weren't serious."

"I should have killed you," Elijah snarled, stepping forward so close the air between them snapped. "I should've finished you when you were at death's door after that ritual. It would've saved us all this nonsense."

Angus didn't flinch. If anything, a faint smile ghosted his lips. "Perhaps you should have. Instead you tossed me like dirt and walked away. Now I'm back to claim what I believe belongs to me."

"Nothing belongs to you!" Elijah snapped.

"And it belongs to you?" he shot back, daring him to answer.

#### Chapter 630: What About Violet?

Elijah had the answer at the tip of his tongue, but he suddenly halted, a sly smile curving his lips. "Of course, the throne doesn't belong to me. It belongs to Violet Purple, your heir, doesn't it?"

The way Angus's smile vanished was nearly comical.

Elijah was smug. "I'm right, aren't I? So instead of the senile father, we place his rightful heir on the throne," he said sarcastically.

For a moment, Angus seemed caught off guard. Then, as always, he recovered with unsettling calm. "I have to give you that," he said evenly. "And you're right. My daughter, Violet, is the rightful heir, the child I had with my mate. A child of both worlds."

It was Elijah's turn to be stupefied. He hadn't known that Violet's mother had been Angus's mate. So where was she now? If she had been around, he should have heard one or two things about her.

Still, he didn't let his shock last. If anything, Elijah hoped his brother would keep talking, and maybe reveal more.

Their gazes locked, a glint of arrogance in Angus's eyes. "But you forget," he said, his voice dipping low, "she's still young. That's why I'll rule until I decide she's ready to take on my legacy."

"Your first son is a demon, all thanks to you. You haven't paid for that crime and the only way you've escaped judgment is because everyone believes you're dead. And now you've created a second abomination, Violet Purple?" Elijah baited Angus, trying to force him to reveal Violet's parentage.

Of course Angus saw through it. "You don't know what her other half is, do you? I don't blame you. Her mother even bound her powers so I'd have no access to her." He chuckled at the memory.

Elijah's jaw clenched hard. He hated being left in the dark while his brother held the upper hand.

"But don't worry, I'll tell you." Angus smiled as if he were doing Elijah a huge favour.

Elijah was not the least bit delighted by the arrogance, but he said nothing. He needed that information.

"She's Fae," Angus announced.

"What?" Elijah was shocked

Angus laughed deliriously, "I got mated to a Fae. Isn't that mind blowing?"

"Impossible," Elijah muttered, shell-shocked. It made sense now, the purple in her hair and the tremendous power she carried.

To be honest, Elijah had assumed Angus had sired a pure-blood heir and found a way to repeat the same spell used on the cardinal alphas. His second thought had been that her mother was a witch. A powerful one, given the warehouse spell.

"You fucked a Fae?" Elijah asked, still reeling.

Angus snarled, "Mated." He would not allow such disrespect to the memory of his mate.

"So Violet is half werewolf, half Fae?" Elijah repeated as if the information would sink in faster that way.

"The most powerful of all my heirs," Angus boasted.

"All your heirs?" Elijah's eyes narrowed. "Don't tell me you went around spreading your seed." Suspicion nicked at the edge of his voice.

Angus, self-pleased, answered, "Unlike you, mine fell on fertile ground." He taunted his brother.

Anger snapped back into Elijah. "I swear on the grave of our father, if it's the last thing I do, I'll make sure you never step on that throne."

Whatever pleasantry remained on Angus's face vanished, replaced by a dark look. "I sought you out because you are my brother. I talked to you because I thought you'd see reason with me and do the right thing, even join me."

He leaned in, fervent. "This power I've brought isn't going anywhere, it's staying in the family. The least you could have done was support it. I hurt you and compensated you by letting you rule this long. Now it's time to return things to the way they should be. And you want to be my opponent?"

"Not just your opponent," Elijah declared, stepping closer so their breaths mingled, eyes like steel, "once I get my hands on Violet Purple, I'll make her your worst enemy. So hide her well because your time is ticking."

Angus's confidence faltered. "Hide her? What are you talking about?"

Elijah narrowed his eyes. "Didn't you steal Violet away? Isn't that why you're here, babbling about reclaiming a throne?"

Angus froze. "Steal her?" He gave his brother a dirty look. "Why would I steal her when it isn't time?"

Elijah's gaze brightened. "So it isn't you then."

"Wait," Angus said, eyes widening. "It couldn't be—" but before he could finish his words, it was as if the rug was pulled right under his feet and he began to lose his grip on the dream world.

"No—wait—" Angus was still shouting when he was pushed out.

Back at ....

Angus opened his eyes, blinking as the familiarity of his room came into focus.

Beside him, Lauren and Layla breathed hard, as if they'd just ran a thousand mile. Blood darkened the sheets where their palms had bled from the cut, but their gazes were fixed on Ziva — they knew exactly what she had done. She had severed the dream-link.

Without a word, Ziva took each sister's hand and mouthed the healing spell. Flesh knitted together as if by will; the cuts closing abruptly. Still, the look she gave them made it clear: not a single word was to pass their lips.

She was finishing with the second sister when Angus cleared his throat. "What happened?" he asked.

Ziva didn't flinch. "Holding onto the connection was taxing," she said flatly. "It was starting to weigh on us, so we let go."

Angus said nothing. He wasn't a witch hence he couldn't know how difficult it must have been to pull his brother into the dreaming world. But he could see the exhaustion on their faces and guessed enough.

Ziva watched him, reading the slow turn of thoughts behind his eyes. She pushed with a cool voice. "About Violet...."

Angus looked at Ziva and let the words fall like an order.

"Don't worry about her. I'll find her. You can leave now."