

Defy 681

Chapter 681: Shattered Dream

"So what do we do with her?" Roman asked as soon as the interrogation ended.

Asher folded his arms. "That question should be answered by the Queen. We're in her territory, after all." The sarcasm was subtle, but the jab landed — a reminder of her earlier warning.

Queen Seraphira lifted her head. Her complexion was pale, almost dimmed, as if someone had snuffed out the ethereal glow she always carried. Still, she held her posture.

"So far," the Queen said, her voice steady despite everything, "she has committed no crime aside from entering illegally. Her memories will be cleared, and she will be sent back to the human realm."

Violet's stomach dropped. She wasn't quite sure what she'd expected, but the ruling still hit hard. Hannah wasn't trustworthy — not by a long shot — but sending her straight back into that nightmare? After what she'd confessed?

It felt cruel. But what could she do?

"No, no, no!" Hannah's face was drained of all color. She spun to Violet first with raw desperation in her voice. "Violet!"

But when it hit her that Violet wasn't the one with the final say, Hannah fell to her knees before the Queen, shaking.

"Your Majesty, please, you can't send me back! You don't understand. Ziva will kill me if I return empty-handed. I can't go back there." Her breath hitched, terror bleeding through every word. "Please. I just... I can't."

Her pleading seemed to fall on deaf ears, especially with the Queen's impassive expression carved in ice. Even the cardinal alphas looked conflicted by the ruling. Sending Hannah back was the logical, lawful choice but knowing what awaited her, it just felt like handing her a death sentence wrapped in protocol.

"I am sorry, child, but your place is not here." The Queen delivered the final verdict.

From the look on Hannah's face, the Queen might as well have struck her. Everything seemed to collapse around her in one crushing instant.

No. Hannah roared inside. She couldn't go back, not like this. Her hands curled into fists so tight her knuckles bleached white. Then, with fire blazing in her eyes, she said,

"Then by your gods and goddesses, whichever rule your realm, I claim asylum!"

At once, not just the queen, but Taryn, gasped aloud, both of their eyes widening as if Hannah had uttered something forbidden.

"You—!" Taryn choked out, genuinely stunned.

Hannah stood firm, fierce and unshaken in her decision, while Violet and the cardinal alphas exchanged puzzled looks.

"What's going on?" Griffin demanded into the tense silence.

The Queen's eyes narrowed with sudden fury as she stepped forward. "Who told you to say that? Was it Angus?"

"What?" Hannah's breath hitched as she stumbled back, startled. "No—no one told me anything. I just thought asylum is what refugees ask for. And since you Fae are obsessed with your gods, I figured it would make an impact.... " Her voice trailed off, uncertainty creeping in. "Did I say something wrong?"

Violet turned to her mother. "Why? What does it mean?"

Queen Seraphira exhaled, her expression tightening. "We've never had a situation like this. But she invoked the gods directly which means the judgment is no longer mine. It belongs to them."

A heavy stillness fell. Everyone in the room knew one thing about the Fae:

their deities were never invoked lightly.

Hannah had called them into this, and now, they would answer.

Violet had a feeling this wasn't the end. She asked carefully, "What happens if they don't agree?"

Queen Seraphira looked Hannah dead in the eyes. "You die."

Hannah blinked. "Eh?" Surely she misheard.

"You are not one of us. How dare you call upon them?" the Queen said, regal and cold.

Roman muttered under his breath, "Your gods sure are petty as hell."

Taryn shot him a murderous glare for speaking ill of their gods.

But instead of retracting her words, Hannah lifted her chin and said, "Then I'll accept whatever punishment they mete out."

No one noticed the way Taryn stared at her confused, as if trying to understand what kind of creature she was. But there was also the smallest trace of pride, impressed by her audacity.

"So what happens now?" Hannah asked, eager to get this over with.

The Queen exhaled, clearly burdened. "As far as I know, this is the first case of its kind since the Free Fae separated from the other Fae. That means there will be preparation. The priestesses would ready herself, but with the Trial of Ascension already underway it will take time."

Hannah nearly bounced. Time. Glorious, life-saving time.

Until she remembered she'd still be stuck in a cold, miserable cell.

"Perhaps, Your Majesty..." Hannah said cautiously, "since I've gone from suspect to potential refugee, maybe my living conditions could be upgraded? I don't exactly have the best company." She added pointedly, staring at Taryn.

Taryn's jaw flexed. "We don't trust her."

"Exactly," the Queen agreed. "We do not trust her. But she cannot be treated like a criminal either..." Seraphira paused, thinking. Then said, "Settle her into a comfortable room."

Hannah gasped, hand flying to her mouth. A real room? With a bed? With blankets?!

She almost cried.

"What about the not trusting her part, Your Majesty?" Asher reminded.

"Taryn will shadow her. Won't you?" the Queen said firmly.

"What?" Taryn's face fell.

And Hannah's bright dream dimmed instantly.

Taryn tried, "Your Majesty, I think—"

"You're concerned about her betraying us," Seraphira said. "Are you not capable of keeping an eye on her? Or shall I assign someone else?"

Please say yes, Hannah begged internally.

She was so done with bargain-bin Mufasa. Maybe the Queen would assign her some handsome, gentle Fae warrior who'd fall in love with her, give her hybrid babies, and she could have permanent residence in the Fae realm.

A girl could dream after all.

Then Taryn met her gaze.

Hannah swallowed at the storm brewing in his eyes. He must have sensed her dread because a dark, satisfied smirk curved his mouth.

"I'll do it," he told the Queen.

And just like that, Hannah's delusional princess fantasy shattered into dust.

Chapter 682: The Queen Was Still In Love

On their way back, though the Queen walked ahead with her back straight and her chin held high, yet anyone with eyes could see the heaviness in her steps. Weariness clung to her like a second skin.

They all knew what her problem was, and it was finding out Angus had more children after Violet. What exactly had she expected? The man had literally kidnapped their daughter as a baby while she ran back to the Fae realm with her tail between her legs. It shouldn't shock her that Angus went on to produce more powerful children. She hadn't given him any more—he simply found replacements.

Asher's gaze, especially, bored into the Queen's back as he thought. He could see it clearly: Queen Seraphira was still very much in love with Angus. And he had betrayed her. Not that Asher could blame her for struggling. He wasn't even bonded to Violet yet, and he was already so in love with her he couldn't imagine breathing without her.

With a broken bond like theirs, the longing never faded. They would keep pining for each other. Except Angus clearly found ways to "cope" with the loneliness—by getting his stick wet at every opportunity—unlike Seraphira.

On the bright side, thank the goddess there was an entire realm separating the two of them, because Asher could only imagine how easily Angus would manipulate her again. The thought was revolting.

Asher made a mental note to tell Violet to make sure her mother never left the Fae realm or came anywhere near Angus unless it was over his dead body.

Suddenly, the Queen stopped.

They all halted with her, waiting with a sense of tight anticipation for what came next.

Then the Queen turned gracefully. She studied them for a brief moment before saying, "This will be the end of our conversation tonight."

From her tone, it wasn't up for debate.

The cardinal alphas exchanged a glance, and Griffin answered for them. "If you say so, Your Majesty."

The Queen's attention shifted to her daughter. "You should prepare yourself as well, Violet. Tomorrow night, I'm holding a party in your honor. It's time I introduce you to the Fae."

Violet blinked, taken aback. "Wow," she breathed. "That's... sudden. But alright?"

What princess didn't want to finally see her people? Violet forced herself to keep the tone cheerful.

"Your mates are expected to attend too," the Queen added.

"We wouldn't have it any other way," Asher replied.

There was no universe in which he'd allow Violet to be surrounded by a swarm of Fae he didn't trust.

The Queen didn't comment on his tone, only nodded. "Have a restful night, then."

She turned sharply and walked away, her gown trailing behind her until she vanished down the hall.

Violet and her mates remained where they stood, watching her disappear into the corridor.

"She's sad," Violet murmured.

Beside her, Roman clicked his tongue. "Why wouldn't she be sad? Imagine staying celibate for years only to find out your mate was out there being ultra-max fertility god virile. I'd cry too."

"Shut it," Violet smacked Roman in the stomach, and he doubled over with an exaggerated groan of pain.

"We should return. It's going to be a long day tomorrow," Alaric said.

Oh right. Her training started tomorrow. A weird mixture of excitement and nerves fluttered through her chest.

"Let's go then," Griffin said, and without any warning, he scooped Violet straight off her feet.

She squealed in surprise before laughter bubbled out of her, her body melting easily into his arms as the group began walking away.

Meanwhile...

Queen Seraphira was as numb as hell by the time she reached her chambers. Even her guards, who were trained to read the slightest shift in her demeanor, couldn't decipher what was wrong as she walked past them with a heavy air.

It all felt like a nightmare she'd woken into rather than from.

She felt used, disgusted, and above all, furious. Every memory with Angus slammed back into her all at once—the times they had spent together before she discovered he had lied and wanted Violet for another purpose.

Or perhaps what pissed Seraphira the most was him having more kids after her. Not just one, but eight more kids. He'd moved on effortlessly, spreading his seed like pollen in spring while she had longed after him like a fool.

The sheer disrespect made her stomach twist.

To think she had even prayed that he would be redeemed. That he would realize his wicked ways and repent. That maybe—too late as it might be—he would one day make it up to Violet.

Goddess above. How could she have been so painfully naive?

There was a knock on the door, followed by Lila's voice from outside.

"Your Majesty?"

Seraphira ignored it, and the door did not open for her.

Lila called again, "Your Majesty?"

Finally, the Queen answered, "We'll talk tomorrow, Lilarin. Let me be for tonight."

There was a pause behind the door, as if Lila was trying to understand why the Queen was suddenly like this.

Then she responded, "If you say so, Your Majesty."

And that was the end of it.

Seraphira took a deep, shuddering breath. There was no way Lila didn't know. She had sent her to find Violet and keep an eye on Angus. Why hadn't she told her? Out of concern that the truth would hurt?

Well, it did hurt in the end. But it was better knowing than staring Angus' offspring in the face without warning. That wound cut deeper.

Seraphira didn't want her around tonight. If Lilarin hadn't told her this, what else had she been hiding?

Not just Lilarin, Seraphira even turned down her handmaiden, who came to settle her for bed. She wanted to be alone.

So she tended to herself, then laid down on her bed in her silky nightgown, staring up at the ceiling.

Her heart was heavy. If she could get her hands on Angus right now, he'd be as good as dead. That fucking son of a biscuit.

Seraphira had been certain she wouldn't sleep a wink. But like a thief, sleep stole over her.

And the next moment, there was Angus.

Chapter 683: Where Is Your Sister?

At first, Queen Seraphira couldn't believe her eyes. She must be dreaming.

And yes, she was dreaming indeed.

Except it wasn't by her own will. Angus had pulled her into this.

"Hello, Seraphira," her former husband and mate said casually, standing before her in the dream space.

Once upon a time, Seraphira would have been a little delighted to see him. But now, her once-shocked face twisted into something ugly.

With a roar of pure fury, Seraphira thrust out her hand and Angus was ripped off his feet, dragged toward her as if seized by an invisible force. She caught him by the throat the second he reached her, fingers tightening with lethal intent.

Her amethyst eyes blazed with anger.

"How did you pull me into a dream?" she hissed, her tone venomous. "How dare you? After everything you've done?"

But infuriating, arrogant Angus didn't flinch. He didn't even pretend to be scared. Instead, he laughed and then lifted something between them.

It was a necklace.

"Properties belonging to loved ones are enough of a link to pull someone into the dream world," he said smoothly, "Magic follows blood and bond."

Seraphira's eyes dropped to the necklace dangling inches from her face.

It was a tiny gold chain woven with tiny runes while at its center hung a crescent moon carved from pale crystal.

Her mother had given her that necklace, and she had once thought it was lost until now.

And Angus had kept it.

But for what purpose? Did he think she would run back into his arms simply because he held onto a trinket from her childhood?

Seraphira saw right through him. Angus hadn't kept it out of love. He'd kept it for a moment exactly like this and was another tool for manipulation, nothing more.

Hot simmering rage coursed through Seraphira again, burning through every vein. Her eyes darkened as her fingers tightened the more around Angus's throat. The veins in her hand glowed with power, and for a terrifying moment, she looked as though she would truly kill him, dream or not.

Angus must have realized it too, because he vanished instantly.

Seraphira spun, her purple hair whipping behind her. "Where are you?!" she roared, voice echoing violently through the dreamscape. "Come out, you bastard!"

Then Angus appeared behind her, hands raised, and speaking in his gentlest tone. "Seraphira—"

She didn't let him finish.

Seraphira whirled and punched him across the face so hard Angus was thrown back, hitting the ground with a grunt of pain.

"My love, —!"

But she was already advancing, fury radiating from her like a storm that could swallow cities. With a lethal sweep of her arm, an invisible force slammed into Angus, flinging him sideways. He crashed hard, rolling to a stop as Seraphira shouted, her voice shaking with emotion,

"Eight more kids! Eight? Are you fucking kidding me?!"

Angus lifted a hand, dazed, "I can explain—"

"Oh, you will," Seraphira snarled, "but right now, I'm speaking."

She flicked her wrist again, and Angus's body slammed into the ground with brutal force. He coughed hard but Seraphira wasn't even close to being done.

"Wasn't ruining Violet's life enough for you?" she screamed at the top of her voice, "One wasn't enough? You destroyed her entire childhood! Her entire identity! And yet—yet—you did it again. To eight more children!"

Angus flinched as if the words themselves were blows.

Seraphira's chest heaved, anger pouring out of her in waves. "And you dare—" her voice broke, then rebuilt itself in fire, "you dare to murder your own daughter?! Your fucking daughter, Angus! Even animals protect their own!"

"But you —!" She pointed a shaking hand at him, her voice raw. "You are worse than a monster"

The truth finally settled in her heart. She had spent years excusing him, praying for him, and hoping that her mate would one day change.

Now, she saw him for what he truly was.

He could never be redeemed. Not now. Not ever.

Angus attempted to rise, but Seraphira lifted her hand, and his body jerked violently upward. She held him suspended midair, his limbs kicking uselessly. For the first time, panic flooded his face.

His hands clawed at his throat as she began choking the air out of him. His eyes bulged while his face reddened.

"Seraphira—stop—!" he rasped.

She didn't.

Her voice dropped into a chilling whisper, dripping with vengeance. "Perhaps it's a blessing we met like this. Now I can finally end your pathetic life."

Angus jerked helplessly as the invisible force tightened around his throat.

"At least," Seraphira hissed, "it's one good thing I can do for Violet after failing her. This world will be a better place without scums like you. Goodbye, Angus."

There was murder in her eyes, and

Angus saw it too.

"Fuck!" he choked out, panic finally overtaking every ounce of arrogance.

Then, in a terrified rush, he was suddenly ripped out of the dream, the realm collapsing abruptly. Hence Seraphira's hand closed on empty air as his presence vanished.

Angus jerked awake with a violent gasp, coughing so hard his entire body shook. His lungs screamed for air. His hand then shot to his throat and he winced as pain lanced through him. The ghost of Seraphira's grip burned into his skin.

She really meant to kill him.

"Father!" Ziva rushed to his side. She grabbed his shoulders, steadying him. "I saw you choking and I pulled you out immediately. What happened in there?"

Angus finally sat upright, aided by Ziva's hands. His heart pounded not from fear, but from pure disbelief. He had not seen that coming.

His mate. Sweet, soft, and foolish Seraphira had attacked him like a rabid beast.

Sure, he had expected anger, tears, and dramatic accusations, but murder? She had taken him by surprise.

The Seraphira Angus had once knew wasn't capable of that. The Seraphira he knew folded like silk in his hands. She had chosen to run back to her precious realm with her tail tucked instead of fighting him for Violet. She had always been breakable, predictable, and naive.

Except the woman he met tonight?

That was not the Seraphira he remembered.

Ziva studied his face when he didn't answer. She had opposed him reaching out to his ex-wife, the Fae Queen in the first place, but her father always did whatever he wanted. Unfortunately, she couldn't openly disobey him.

Angus' plan was simple. Reunite with Seraphira, bring her to earth, and rebuild the family. With Seraphira on his side, winning Violet over would be a cup of tea. Except he hadn't expected how much Seraphira would change or rather how angry she would be.

Ziva frowned when her father wouldn't answer her. Angus' plan was clear to her name. He was trying to make their family complete. And that meant not just Violet, but her wretched mother too. And that didn't sit well with Ziva. She was not going to share her father's love with Violet, lest her mother. That would be over her dead body.

If only she could get hold of Hannah now. Then she could put her plans into place. But that bitch had disappeared on her. She was as good as dead once she got her hands on her.

Ziva forced innocence into her voice when she asked, "Father, did you see her? Did it go poorly?" she asked, tilting her head as if concerned.

Angus ignored her question as his gaze swept the room. The twins—Lauren and Layla—sat silently on the far side, tense, watching him closely.

And then it struck him.

Someone was missing.

He straightened. "Where is Hannah?"

All three girls froze.

Ziva's jaw clenched. Lauren and Layla exchanged a panicked look.

Of course Angus had finally noticed.

His voice dropped dangerously low. "Where. Is. Hannah?"

Lauren jumped in first, stumbling over her own lie. "Hannah is just around the corner! If you need something done, Father, I—I can do it for her. Anything you need."

"Oh?" Angus drawled, his eyes sharpening like a blade. "Is that so?"

Lauren swallowed hard, knowing she was sinking fast but unable to climb out.

The room was suddenly too small when Angus said, "Then call her right now. I want to see her."

The silence that followed was deafening. And it was the kind of silence that told Angus everything he needed to know.

Angus turned to Ziva, his voice cold enough to freeze bone. "Where is Hannah?"

Ziva's jaw tightened. "She's not here."

His expression shifted instantly, darkening. "Where is she, then?"

Lauren and Layla held their breath, bracing for the explosion they knew was coming. Ziva hesitated only for a second before schooling her features and said, "Hannah ran away from the village."

The twins' heads whipped around so quickly it nearly snapped. They stared at Ziva in shocked disbelief.

"What?!" Angus' face was raw fury.

Ziva said, "I didn't want to tell you because I thought I would find her on my own, but I can't find her. She's gone."

Chapter 684: Omission Of Truth

"What did you just say?"

Angus looked like he was about to explode like a ticking time bomb. His eyes were so dark and murderous that the twins gulped, the temperature in the room suddenly cold and brittle.

The twins knew Ziva was a bitch, but doing that to Hannah? That was pure cruelty. Their father would never forgive anyone who escaped the village. Hannah practically had a death sentence hanging over her head now. She would surely die, and that would be on Ziva—not that the bitch had a heart to feel remorseful.

Ziva said with more boldness, "Hannah ran away from the village, and I can't find her."

Suddenly, Angus's head snapped toward the twins. He looked between Lauren and Layla as if weighing which of the girls would be more likely to confess the truth. He settled on Layla.

"Is it true?" Angus asked her. "Did Hannah really run away from home, or is there something I'm not being told?"

At once, a great tension settled in the room. For the first time, real fear flashed in Ziva's eyes. She and Layla had clashed recently, and she'd punished her for it. Ziva knew, in that moment, Layla might seize the opportunity for revenge.

Layla's mind was made up. She would not be part of Ziva's mess. Not to mention, her arrogance needed to be knocked down a notch.

But before she could say a word, her twin, Lauren's voice echoed in her head, "Don't do it."

Layla groaned mentally. "Are you fucking kidding me?" she replied in her mind. "We have the opportunity to put our sister Ziva in the corner where she belongs, and you're telling me not to take it?"

Lauren answered desperately, "Father would deal with her for sure, but she'll recover. This isn't the first time. After all, Father still needs her in the end. Ziva would come back, and what do you think she'll do to you after putting her through that torture?"

That gave Layla pause. Then she told Lauren, "So let's say we keep quiet, and then what next? You saw what she just did. She threw Hannah under the bus, and we're supposed to keep quiet about it? For all we know, we might be her next victims. Wake up, Lauren! I'd rather become her enemy and sleep with my eyes wide open than be murdered in my sleep because I kept my defenses down."

"Layla," Angus said again, his voice low but thunderous with restrained rage. His gaze bore into her, dark and unrelenting. "Tell me the truth. What do you know?"

Layla opened her mouth, her features hard with resolve. Except when she spoke, her words were instead,

"Yes, Ziva is right, Hannah ran away."

Angus frowned before his expression became one of disappointment. For a moment there, he thought she had a different report for him. But once again, it seemed his children had learned to fear each other more than him.

He turned away, missing the distress on Layla's face. As soon as the control lifted off, Layla turned to glare at her sister with a mixture of anger and betrayal. Of course, Layla had not meant to take Ziva's side, but her sister had taken her off guard and put the words in her mouth.

"I'm sorry," Lauren whispered through their shared mindlink, guilt thick in her voice. But Layla immediately slammed the connection shut.

What a fool!

Her fists clenched until her knuckles turned bone white. Her eyes welled up with tears of betrayal, but she pushed them back. She couldn't break down in front of her father, or he'd suspect something was up. She couldn't let her sister be punished for Ziva's crime.

Although now, the three of them were doomed once Angus found out the truth. Just like she feared, Ziva was a parasite that sucked the life out of everyone around her.

Meanwhile, Ziva breathed in relief. That had been far too close. But in the end, her siblings knew their place. They knew better than to challenge her.

"So Hannah is gone?" Angus murmured, more to himself than to the room. His fingers toyed absently with the rings on his hand, his expression distant, and unreadable.

Then, suddenly, his calculating eyes locked on Ziva.

"So you lied to me."

Ziva's heart stumbled. For a terrifying moment, she thought he saw through the entire charade.

"What?" she asked, feigning confusion.

Angus didn't flinch. "The day I returned, you said everything was under control."

Shit. Ziva knew she had fucked up.

"You had just come back from your trip, Father," she rushed to explain, "I didn't want to burden you with bad news. I thought I could find her on my own like I did with Rose." She dropped that last line like bait, hoping he'd remember her past successes and pardon her.

But Angus chuckled darkly. "Except that's where you're wrong. In the past, you told me about Rose, and I gave you permission to find her, didn't I?" He paused, eyes boring into Ziva. "Or am I misremembering?"

Ziva said nothing. Because it was true.

She had confessed everything to him the moment she uncovered the truth about Rose. And he had given her full permission to find the girl—by any means necessary.

Lauren and Layla forgot how to breathe when they saw their father slowly turn toward the wardrobe. He opened it and pulled out a wicked-looking black, braided leather whip, with jagged ridges glinting under the light. It was cruel in design and even crueler in purpose.

Angus ran his hand slowly across the length of it, relishing the feel. The leather was smooth yet deadly, stiff from age, with a rich scent of oil. But more than that, he relished the fear that passed between his daughters.

Ziva masked her emotions well.

The twins did not.

Returning to them with a chilling calm, Angus began to preach, "What have I always taught you girls about lying? But even worse than that, what did I say about the omission of truth?"

None of them said a word, their heart pounding at this point.

"Lauren," Angus suddenly commanded, "get here."

"What?!" Ziva and Layla shouted in unison, the color draining from Lauren's face.

Layla stepped forward, saying with a panicking tone. "Father, she didn't say anything—"

"Exactly." Angus's voice was steel. "She knew the truth and chose to stay quiet. That, Layla, is far worse. She'll be the scapegoat. One sacrifice to teach the three of you who holds the authority in this house."

He turned his cold stare toward the trembling Lauren.

"Come here."

Chapter 685: Her New Place

Queen Seraphira jolted awake with a gasp, her chest heaving as she shot upright in bed. Her heart was racing, her blood still pumping with the adrenaline of nearly killing that bastard.

How dare he? How dare he mock her restraint and mistake it for weakness? Just because she had chosen peace did not mean she was incapable of war. He was lucky tonight because he won't be the next time they meet.

A sudden cough broke through the Queen's fury. Then another and another and harder now, rattling through her chest.

Seraphira leaned forward, hand clutched over her mouth until the cough finally ended. Then she slowly pulled her hand away, and her eyes widened at what she saw.

Her eyes widened because a bright smear of red glistened in her palm.

It was blood.

Queen Seraphira stared at it in stunned silence.

"What the hell...?" She whispered, shocked.

Then she pushed herself off the bed, determined to stand but the moment her feet touched the cold floor, her world tilted.

A low, dizzy hum filled her ears and the room spun. She reached for the bed post and missed it by inches.

To be honest, Seraphira had no idea what happened except the ground rushed up faster than she could catch herself. Just like that, the Queen collapsed onto the floor with a heavy thud.

At once, the door to her chambers swung open, as if the sentient palace had sensed the Queen's distress. At the same time, Seraphira's eyes fluttered shut, her body sinking fully into unconsciousness.

Hannah followed after Taryn, keeping a very safe—and very intentional—distance between them. He claimed he was taking her to her resting chambers, but with the night she'd had, she prayed to God he wasn't secretly leading her to some dark corner to murder her.

Of course she was joking. Mostly.

But something deep in Hannah's gut whispered that if he did decide to kill her, it wouldn't be beyond him. The man looked like he enjoyed violence the same way some men enjoyed breakfast.

As they walked through the hallway, Hannah found herself glancing around. The palace was beautiful but the statues lining the walls were another story entirely.

After her experience with Taryn, she knew very well they weren't actually statues. They were shifters, frozen in stillness, watching her. She could feel their eyes on her, tracking every breath she took. Goosebumps erupted along her arms.

"Creepy bastards," she muttered under her breath.

Lost in her thoughts, Hannah didn't notice that Taryn had stopped walking.

She walked straight into his back.

Her nose bounced off rock-solid muscle, and she stumbled backward with a small yelp. When she lifted her gaze, Taryn was glaring at her as usual.

Hannah rolled her eyes. "Oh, for goodness sake. Do you have any other expression aside from glaring at me?"

She lifted her fingers and dramatically pulled the corners of her own eyes down, mimicking his perpetual scowl. "You look like happiness personally offended you."

Taryn said nothing. He just kept glaring at her with that same stone-carved expression he seemed born with. Honestly, at this point Hannah was convinced his face was stuck that way.

He stepped forward and stopped before a tall white door. "We're here."

Hannah blinked, then approached the door cautiously. Except she couldn't find a handle. There was not a knob nor a latch, just smooth, annoyingly perfect wood.

She shot Taryn a confused look. "How do I open this?"

Taryn shrugged, utterly unbothered. "What do you think?"

Hannah scowled. The universe must be punishing her with this Fae for all the bad things she's done. That's the only explanation.

Left with no other options, she planted her hands on the door and shoved her shoulder into it, hoping brute force might magically make it cooperate.

Except nothing happened.

She tried again and still nothing. The door didn't even creak.

The third time, Hannah stepped back, inhaled deeply, and braced herself like a warrior charging into battle. She threw her whole weight forward— and the door swung open at the last second.

Her momentum betrayed her entirely. Hannah flew straight into the room and landed on the floor with a loud, dramatic thud.

"Urrrgh..." she groaned, sprawled out like a tragic pancake.

Behind her, a sound broke through the hallway.

It was laughter. A deep and rich shockingly beautiful laughter that belonged to a certain Fae.

Hannah pushed herself up and stared at him. The glorious, terrifying, and permanently scowling Taryn was actually laughing. And, Goddess help her, he was stunning when he did.

Her heart slammed against her ribs.

Oh no.

No, no, no.

She was really out here crushing on bargain-bin Mufasa.

She was doomed.

Taryn stepped into the room after her, still wearing that irritating smirk from watching her crash-land like a sack of potatoes. He extended a hand toward her, wordlessly offering help.

Hannah slapped it away without hesitation.

"I don't need your pity," she said, scrambling to her feet and brushing imaginary dust off her clothes. She scowled at him. "Now tell me, how do you get that stupid door to open?"

Taryn crossed his arms, far too pleased with himself. "You command it. The house is sentient. It responds to intention." He paused, letting that sink in. "Did I forget to mention it doesn't like brute force?"

He laughed wickedly, and completely too satisfying for someone with his personality.

"That evil Mufasa," Hannah muttered under her breath, glaring daggers at him.

Taryn ignored the insult with all the elegance of a predator who knew it still had the upper hand. "Anyway," he said casually, "I hope you like this because there are no redesigning options for you."

"What do you—" Then she actually looked around, and screamed.

Her room was pink.

It was not a soft nor boring pink. No. It was beautifully, delicately, and overwhelmingly pink.

There was soft rose-gold walls, blush-pink curtains embroidered, and velvety carpet the exact shade of sunset clouds. Even the ceiling glowed with a warm rosy hue, like dawn captured in a room.

It looked like a princess suite hand crafted just for her.

Chapter 686: Beast Lord, Taryn

This was a dream come true!

Hannah didn't even care that he was technically her enemy. She flung herself at Taryn without warning, blurting excitedly, "Thank you! Thank you so much!"

Taryn froze on the spot. Not just because the hug came out of nowhere, but because he was utterly confused by her reaction. He had given her this room specifically to piss her off, not make her happy.

The Fae loved colors, but when Lilarin designed the princess suites and one of the brownies suggested giving one a pink theme, she had vehemently rejected the idea.

According to Lilarin, Violet hated the color, and most humans would rather die than be caught living in that shade once they reached adulthood.

So Taryn had practically been vibrating in anticipation, waiting for Hannah's lips to twist in disgust and her eyes to light with righteous fury at the violently pink room.

Instead, she was hugging him with excitement, her softness and warmth wrapping around him completely.

Then her delicious scent wafted into his nose, and the beast in him rose. No! Taryn pushed her away before he did something he would regret.

Hannah let out a startled yelp as he shoved her roughly.

"What the—!"

She was ready to curse in a full outburst when a dangerous growl rumbled from his throat, and he bared those enormously large canines at her.

Damn, he was indeed a beast through and through.

The curse died on her lips when she realized she was playing with fire.

Instead, she pouted. "Fine, I won't touch you again." Then she added immediately, "You'll be the one doing the touching, then." She laughed.

It was a harmless joke, but Hannah had no idea what that did to the lion shifter barely holding himself together. His imagination had seized on the word "touch", and none of the images were innocent.

Taryn cursed his life. He should never have agreed to this. He couldn't have another male around his mate—no, he would not acknowledge that.

If only she had agreed to return to the human realm, then he could deal with these feelings alone. Now he didn't know which was worse: having her around every day or losing her life if the gods rejected her.

Hannah giggled as she ran to the bed and flung herself onto it. She bounced and let out a scream of delight. This was pure heaven, it was so soft it felt like lying on a cloud.

She gathered the sheets into her arms and sniffed them. She moaned; they smelled like pink peony, light and floral with a sweet, airy freshness that reminded her of spring mornings.

She giggled again, kicking her legs in excitement. If her family could see her right now, they'd die from anger and embarrassment overload.

Although the color pink was not outright forbidden in Angus' household, every one of them would rather die than own a pink item. To them, pink was a girlish color and symbolized weakness. They were raised to be soldiers. Showing even an ounce of softness was enough reason to be picked on by the other siblings.

Hence Hannah had kept her fascination to herself. Her room back home had been painted entirely black—an intentional effort to appear more intimidating, especially since she was often looked down on as a half-breed.

But inwardly, all she longed for was to throw on a pink dress, maybe something with tulle, and just let herself be a girl for one day. Even the romance movies she watched, she had done so secretly.

The only person among them who hadn't been afraid to express her femininity was Rose. Not one of them had complained, because Rose was simply Rose. Everyone liked Rose. She had that aura that drew people to her. But in the end, her softness had been her downfall.

But now, Hannah didn't have to worry about any of that. Here, she could wear the most cringe-worthy girly outfit and no one would bat an eye.

As if on cue, her gaze drifted to the wardrobe and she sprang off the bed with the excitement of a four-year-old.

Taryn, on the other hand, watched her like she was some alien creature he couldn't decipher. The instant Hannah opened the wardrobe, a loud scream tore from her lips. Taryn winced, clapping his hands over his ears.

The gods save him from this disaster.

Hannah couldn't believe her eyes. There were pinks, yellows, creams, whites—so many colors. The dresses were stunning, of course; the Fae were exceptional fashionistas. Hannah was so overwhelmed with joy that tears slipped from her eyes.

She lifted a hand to her mouth and turned to Taryn. "Thank you. I mean it, thank you so much."

Taryn frowned at her reaction. He had intentionally assigned her this room to annoy her, and yet she was thanking him? For the first time, he sensed there was a story behind her reaction, and he softened just a little.

He cleared his throat. "You should get some sleep. Tomorrow, you'll meet the priestess so your trial can be arranged."

But Hannah chuckled, "I doubt I'll be able to sleep with the excitement bubbling inside of me."

"Don't care," Taryn shot back immediately, feigning indifference.

Of course he didn't care. Hannah snorted, though she had no idea why that bothered her. She looked around and asked, "Where are you staying?"

"Why?" Taryn tilted his head. "So you can sneak around again and try to murder the princess?"

Hannah rolled her eyes, unimpressed. "You are insufferable."

Taryn didn't care. He added, "At the moment I stay next door, which means I have my eyes on you, so don't even get ideas..." He stepped forward, filling the space between them and towering over her, "...because the next time I catch you in my paws, I'll snap you in two."

Hannah instinctively leaned back from his intimidation. "Alright, I've heard you, Mufasa. Calm down a little bit."

Taryn growled at the title, but he stepped back and walked away, the door closing behind him.

As soon as he left, Hannah released a long breath of relief. If only he wasn't so handsome, she would have gotten over this toxic attraction.

She slumped onto the bed with a sigh.

Well, first things first, once the gods approved her stay, she'd find herself a handsome Fae and bam! Permanent residency secured.

Suck on that, Ziva! Haha!

Meanwhile, as soon as Taryn stepped into the hallway, one of the Fae on duty was already waiting for him.

"BeastLord Taryn," the Fae bowed his head, "we have a problem. It's the Queen."

Chapter 687: Death No Fae Wished To Face.

Seraphira woke with a jolt.

For a moment she didn't know where she was, her vision swarmed and all she could register was the suffocating heaviness in her limbs like her body had been stuffed with wet sand.

When her sight finally cleared, she found herself beneath the Tree of Life again.

The sacred roots glowed around her, and when the healer commanded it, it slowly withdrew from her skin.

Zuru, the healer, was not the only one around, both Lilarin and Rhara hovered around her with faces tight with worry.

"Your Majesty," Zuru whispered, her voice filled with relief as she supported Seraphira upright.

Seraphira tried to rise, but she was weak, hence Zuru supported her, guiding her toward the small resting bed that had been set up beside the enormous trunk.

But she refused immediately.

"No," Seraphira rasped, brushing Zuru's hand away. "Do not coddle me. Tell me what happened." Her eyes narrowed. "Don't tell me that bastard Baron drained my power again."

Immediately, she caught the look between Lila and Rhara. That shared glance told her something was up and it didn't look good.

So she commanded. "Tell me what is going on, now."

Zuru's throat bobbed. The healer looked as if she desperately wished someone else would speak first. When no one did, she forced her eyes up.

"I'm sorry, Your Majesty but your fainting this time has nothing to do with Baron." She hesitated. "Well, not exactly."

Seraphira stilled.

A coldness crawled up her spine. If this wasn't Baron's doing, then it meant something far worse.

She shifted on the bed, her tone clipped and clear. "Zuru. Speak plainly."

The healer inhaled deeply, bracing herself.

"It is Thal'voryn Shai, Your Majesty."

The words struck her like a slap.

"What?" Seraphira blanched. "No. No way." She shook her head, disbelief carving through her. "That's not possible."

But it was.

Thal'voryn Shai—in the human tongue, bones that fade, bones that thin—was a rare but terrifying disease. Only one in a hundred Fae ever suffered it. It crept silently through the body when a Fae's magic grew too strong for its vessel. When the balance between flesh and power fractured, the magic began devouring from within. First the bones thinned, and finally, the body failed altogether.

It was a slow, magical decay. The death no Fae wished to face.

Seraphira exhaled shakily. "Why is this happening? My bloodline is powerful. We have never—" She broke off, icy dread curling in her chest. "...never struggled to contain our magic."

Zuru wringed her hands as she explained. "I, too, could not believe it at first. But after reading your magic and cross-examining the fluctuations in your power, I formed a hypothesis.

"Your Majesty, the power you hold is immense, but you share a life force with Baron. When he siphoned your magic so violently the last time, it disrupted the natural balance within your body. The magic you gathered afterward did not realign properly. Your body has been under strain ever since." Zuru swallowed hard. "And now it has accelerated the condition."

A heavy, choking, merciless silence upon them.

Seraphira stared at nothing, feeling the world tilt. Thal'voryn Shai wasn't just an injury, it was a death sentence.

Lilarin stepped quickly into the silence. "What about the Tree of Life? Shouldn't it heal her? That's how it work, isn't it?"

Zuru's shoulders sagged. "The Tree can keep her alive for a while but once her body wears down..." She hesitated. "...Your Majesty will die."

It was as if someone ripped the ground out from under Seraphira.

Just when she had finally reunited with Violet and things were finally falling into place, the gods decided to punish her with this?

Rhara swallowed. "How long does Her Majesty have?"

Zuru answered reluctantly, as though the words seared her own tongue. "A full lunar year if Her Majesty does not use her powers." She glanced at Seraphira apologetically. "But if you continue using your magic, I'd say half of that. Perhaps less."

Zuru continued, "The dizziness was only the first sign. Soon, you may experience extreme fatigue, tremors, vomiting, difficulty channeling, and eventually loss of control over your own magic."

Lilarin and Rhara looked sick while Zuru looked heartbroken as if she could already witness the Queen's death.

But Seraphira felt nothing, just a numb, hollow ringing in her ears. To be honest, this all felt like a joke to her.

Lilarin was the first to recover her voice. Her expression hardened, the soft concern in her eyes replaced by a cold razor-edge of calculation.

"This cannot get out," she said, "If word spreads, it will cause panic through the Free Fae and the goddess knows Baron will seize your weakness to gain more footing. We must control this."

"How many people know I was brought here?" Seraphira asked.

Rhara answered. "Two, Your Majesty. One of the guards posted at your door when you collapsed and BeastLord Taryn. They assisted in the transfer."

Lilarin's jaw tightened. "Taryn is loyal. One of your most trusted. He won't utter a word even under pain." Her eyes darkened. "But the others? They cannot be trusted."

She turned to Rhara, her voice turning icy. "Their memories must be erased tonight. If any resist, kill them."

Even Zuru flinched.

Seraphira swallowed thickly. The thought of killing her own people—even to protect them—made her chest ache. But Lilarin wasn't wrong. If this truth reached the court, chaos would follow. Baron would rise like a vulture.

There was no choice.

Zuru composed herself and reminded her. "Your Majesty, you must not use your powers anymore. Your life depends on it. Tonight you rest. Tomorrow, I will begin treatments in secret."

But Seraphira shook her head instantly.

"That cannot happen."

Lilarin was stunned. "What do you mean it cannot happen?"

"I promised to train my daughter."

"Your Majesty—" Zuru started.

"No more magic," Rhara cut in. "Your body cannot afford—"

"I have failed Violet," Seraphira said, her voice breaking for the first time. "I abandoned her as a baby and spent years hoping fate would correct my mistakes. If training her is the last thing I can do before I die, then so be it. I will not fail her again."

Chapter 688: Who Likes Watching?

Violet Purple and her men returned to their quarters, and no sooner had the door closed behind them than Asher said, "Can we talk? All of us?"

At once an awkward tension settled. Whatever joke Roman had been telling Alaric died off immediately. They shared a look, sensing that whenever Asher used that business tone of his, something was up—and deep down, they already knew what it was.

Violet straightened. "Sure, go on."

Asher looked at his brothers one after the other, then said, "I appreciate you guys being considerate of me, but I didn't ask for that."

"Oh boy," Roman mouthed. Just what they thought.

"Just because my bond with Violet hasn't formed yet doesn't mean you have to pity me. I'm uncomfortable with it. Moreover, it's totally unfair of me to ask the three of you to go celibate when the bond pushes you to do otherwise. I wouldn't keep my hands off my purple queen if I had the chance." Asher finished with a smoldering gaze aimed Violet's way.

She blushed instantly.

Griffin said, "I apologize. It wasn't our call to make without consulting you, but you wouldn't have agreed."

"Exactly," Asher said pointedly.

"Don't blame them, Asher," Violet told him gently. "We only wanted to be considerate."

"And how's that turning out? Great, right?" he said sarcastically, hinting at Roman losing control earlier.

Violet couldn't form a word because he was right. Being in the same room and unable to touch any of them had been painful torture. For all of them.

"Moreover..." Asher's eyes darkened, letting his wolf peek through as he began to walk toward her with a predator's grace.

Violet's heart picked up speed. She stepped back slowly, as though moving any faster would set him off. Yet with every inch she tried to reclaim, Asher took two, closing the distance effortlessly.

Then her back hit the wall, and before she could breathe, he closed the remaining space. His body pressed flush against hers, caging her in completely.

Asher lifted a lock of her hair and let it slide slowly through his fingers. Leaning in, he breathed in her scent. The low, guttural groan that escaped him was pure man and pure animal.

"...who said I don't like watching?" he finished, the smile that curved his lips equal parts thrilling and menacing.

Violet's breath hitched when she felt his hand slip beneath her gown, his fingers slowly caressing the inside of her thigh.

"You don't know how damn attractive you look when you're pinned beneath them," he murmured, "or the way your sun-kissed eyes glow when they hit the right spot... the way your lips part just perfectly."

Violet didn't know which was worse—the vivid images he painted in her mind, or the way he kept her suspended on the edge, deliberately avoiding the place she knew those fingers were headed.

"Or..." he whispered, "the way you gasp when I do just this..."

He tugged her panties aside and slipped a finger into her.

And she did gasp.

Violet instinctively gripped Asher's shoulders, her eyes widening, her expression betraying exactly what he was doing to her.

"Yes... just like that," Asher rasped, his fingers sliding in and out of her soaked heat with expert precision. He kept the pace agonizingly slow, intentionally holding her orgasm just out of reach.

"Asher, please..." Violet begged, breathless and shaking.

But the puppet master would not hurry. He kept moving at his own merciless pace, savoring every reaction she gave him.

While he fucked her with his fingers, Asher glanced over his shoulder at the cardinal alphas and said, "What do you think? Watching is hot, right?"

None of them needed to answer. The thick tents straining against their pants said everything. They were staring at Violet like starving wolves eyeing a feast.

Asher's low chuckle vibrated against her ear, smug with the knowledge of it. As a reward to his purple queen, he eased in a second finger.

Violet let out a shuddering sigh, her tight walls clenching around him greedily, desperate for more fullness. She was so wet she slurped and gushed around his digits, every obscene sound only making the moment more intoxicating.

"Goddess," Asher groaned, his eyes fluttering shut in bliss. She was so hot and tight around his fingers he could almost feel how she'd be wrapped around him instead. She'd be slick, perfect, and devastating.

He pumped faster, and Violet lifted her hips to match his rhythm, her breath coming in soft, frantic bursts. She could feel her release building, coiling, climbing higher and higher until her entire body quivered with the need to fall.

"Yes... yes..." she gasped, everything tightening, and rushing toward that peak she was more than willing to topple over.

Then Asher pressed his thumb to her clit and dragged it in a slow deliberate stroke and that did it.

Violet fell apart, stars bursting behind her eyes as her orgasm crashed through her in a dizzying wave. But Asher didn't stop. He kept thrusting his fingers in and out of her, unrelenting, and dragging her pleasure out until it rose again, blurring straight into a second orgasm building just beneath her skin.

"Oh God," Violet cried out, her fingers digging into Asher's shoulders as the pleasure stole her breath. He went perfectly still, his fingers pausing inside her as he soaked in every aftershock rolling through her body.

Finally, Asher withdrew from her. Then, without breaking eye contact, he lifted his soaked fingers to his mouth and licked them clean, tongue dragging over his knuckles like a cat savoring a treat.

Violet could only stare, breath caught in her throat, while heat unfurled between her legs. The sight alone made her throb. She wanted him. She wanted them.

Drawn together like magnets, Asher leaned in and captured her lips, licking over her bottom lip first. Her mouth was soft, and full, and he loved every inch of it.

He suckled her lower lip, then nibbled lightly before tracing the upper one with his tongue. There was no flavor that could describe her; she simply tasted addictive, and he wanted more.

When Violet parted her lips, Asher slipped his tongue inside, and the moment hers met his, it was electric. A possessive growl rumbled in his chest as his grip around her waist tightened.

Violet's arms looped around his neck, fingers threading into his hair, pulling him closer. Their tongues danced slow and seductively, the world ceasing to exist around them.

They finally broke apart, chests rising and falling, their breaths mingling. A small smile tugged at Violet's lips, and against his will, it pulled one out of Asher too.

Then Roman ruined it.

"Dude, message passed. So when do we start?"

Chapter 689: Open Up For Me

Everything happened quickly. One moment she was still on her feet, and the next, Violet was tossed over Roman's shoulder like a princess in distress and carried straight into the bedroom.

The second the door shut, her dress was gone, and she suddenly found herself surrounded by three hungry, towering males. Well, make that four. Asher clearly wasn't done with her in the slightest. Not even close.

"Come here, my purple queen," Asher commanded from the bed.

He sat propped against the headboard, long legs sprawled out like a king waiting to be served. And yes, he was completely and unashamedly naked.

Asher's slitted eyes glowed with hunger, fixed pointedly on Violet as if daring her to disobey.

A dark thrill shot through Violet, yet that inbuilt defiance in her rose up to clash with his command. Instead of obeying outright, she climbed onto the bed on all fours,

and low, hungry groans sounded behind her.

She knew exactly why.

In that position, her backside was lifted and bared to her mates, giving them one hell of a view.

"Fuck!" Griffin cursed under his breath.

Next, she heard the drag of a zipper pulling down, followed by a shaky grunt.

Violet smiled inwardly. Their reactions emboldened her. To be desired like that made her feel powerful like some goddess deserving to be worshipped.

Asher's stare was wild enough to terrify anyone else. But it only made her body respond, aching for him even more.

Fear had no place between them. He could never drive her away. Not now. Not ever.

Then she crawled between his legs, her gaze locking onto his hard, throbbing length. It stood there waiting for her, a bead of precum already glistening at the tip, and Violet's mouth watered. Asher was long, thick, and beautifully veined, an impressive sight that stole her breath for a moment.

But instead of giving his length the attention it demanded with her sweet lips, Violet swung a leg over and straddled him, deliberately settling herself right over his cock. Asher let out a strangled groan the instant her heat pressed against him.

"My wicked queen," he gritted out, his voice strained with pleasure but full of indulgence.

Violet smiled knowingly, then rolled her hips against him. Her slickness coated his length, making every glide hotter, and wetter. And the sinful knowledge that all she had to do was tilt her hips and take him in sent a dark thrill straight through her.

She rode him, moving back and forth, her arms looping around his neck and her lips parting in soft, breathless gasps.

Asher groaned deep in his chest, one hand sliding down to grab her ass and squeeze hard. Then he guided her movements, pulling her against him with a grip so tight his nails nearly dug into her skin, rubbing her over his length with clear, hungry intent.

Without warning, Asher smacked her ass, and Violet yelped, the pain melting into pleasure so fast her pussy clenched around nothing, aching for the fullness she still didn't have.

Violet ground against him harder, helpless to stop herself. She needed friction—anything to satisfy the deep, pulsing need twisting low in her belly. And the more she chased it, the wilder she became.

Her moans tangled with Asher's guttural groans, both of them drowning in sensation. Neither of them spared a thought for the other cardinal alphas behind them, hands wrapped around their throbbing shafts, taking their pleasure as they watched.

Almost immediately, she felt Asher tense beneath her, and then a hot, thick rush spilled between their bodies spurting onto her skin, and splashing the sheets.

Asher cursed under his breath, he had not planned to lose control like that. But when it came to Violet, nothing was ever planned.

Violet shuddered through her own release, pleasure rolling through her. But it still wasn't enough. She needed more.

Before she could even form a word, strong hands gripped her waist. In the next breath, Violet was yanked forward, slammed down against Asher's still-twitching body

and filled in one brutal, claiming thrust.

Violet screamed, her fingers clawing at the sheets as her body struggled to adjust to the sheer size.

"Fuck—!" she cried, the breath shattering in her throat.

Roman didn't give her a second to breathe. He held her down, pounding into her like a man possessed, every thrust deep and ruthless. Violet could only arch, mewl, and break apart against him as he took his pleasure from her, using her wild sounds as fuel.

Violet moved with her mate, her hips matching Roman's brutal pace. He was buried so deep inside her that every thrust punched the breath from her lungs. Her moans were ragged now, her throat already hoarse from screaming while Roman never once slowed, taking her with an intensity that nearly sent her mind blank.

While he pounded into her like a beast claiming what was his, Asher slipped off the bed, likely to wipe himself clean only for Griffin to step smoothly into his place.

"Come on, baby girl," Griffin murmured as he climbed onto the mattress, his eyes dark with hunger. "Open up for me."

Violet swallowed, her eyes widening at the sight of the thick, flushed head pointed right at her lips. Griffin wasn't just long, he had the kind of girth that gave a woman pause. He was the biggest of her mates, not that she was keeping score but Goddess, it was impossible not to notice when he was inches from her mouth.

Intimidating as his size was, she still parted her lips, and took him in.

"Oh, yes..." Griffin groaned, his eyes shuddering shut, head tipping back as if the strength left his body. His reaction was like that of a starved man finally tasting water, except in his case, it was his cock wrapped in the warm, wet heaven of Violet's mouth.

"... Goddess... just like that..." Griffin's whole body trembled as he buried his hand in Violet's hair, guiding her exactly how he wanted.

But with Roman slamming into her from behind, Violet was forced to take Griffin deeper, her lips sliding down his thick length until he hit the back of her throat. Each of Roman's thrusts rocked her up and down Griffin's cock.

Violet moaned, sucking and licking him greedily while Griffin let out a stream of filthy, incoherent curses.

Goddess! She was going to be the death of him.

Chapter 690: Building Stamina

Roman pounding into her from behind and Griffin thrusting into her mouth with his thick, heavy dick was enough to drive Violet feral with lust. In that moment, she was nothing but their vessel for pleasure, and she loved every second of how they handled her.

Griffin thrust deeper, and she nearly choked on his shaft, his fist tight in her hair, pulling just shy of pain. But she welcomed it. She craved it. She loved the way they used her, the way they made her feel wanted, devoured, and worshipped in the filthiest way possible.

Violet pushed her hips back, meeting Roman's brutal thrusts, her ass slapping against him with each drive. At the same time, she hollowed her cheeks and sucked Griffin even harder.

The two men groaned in unison, deep and guttural, their pleasure vibrating through her. They rewarded her effort instantly by thrusting harder, deeper, taking exactly what she gave and demanding more.

Violet moaned and screamed around Griffin's dick, her sounds muffled by the thick length filling her mouth. The vibration of her voice only made him twitch, tightening against her tongue.

Griffin stiffened suddenly, his cock pulsing at the back of her throat. Instinct told him to pull away but Violet refused. She latched onto him like a starving creature guarding her meal, sucking him greedily, unwilling to let him go.

"Fuck, Vi..." Griffin choked out, his voice breaking as veins stood out along his neck. His grip in her hair slackened, his whole body shuddering violently as he spilled hot, thick release down her throat.

Violet swallowed every drop greedily. When she pulled back, she dragged her tongue over the swollen head showing him exactly how much she enjoyed her reward before Griffin finally eased out of her, still impossibly hard.

Then Roman grabbed her waist and dragged her back onto him, maneuvering their bodies until they were sprawled along the edge of the bed. He lay flat on his back, heels braced against the floor, while Violet's spine rested against his chest, her legs spread wide on either side of him.

From this position she could see her mates surrounding her like predators closing in on their prize. And Alaric's eyes were like the very storm he summoned as he stared right into her.

A shiver rippled through Violet's body. She knew exactly what he intended to do to her once he finally got his hands on her.

Roman lifted his hips just enough to slide back into her, the head of his cock pushing past her swollen entrance before he sank in deep again. Then he settled back, one strong arm curling around her waist and holding her snug against his chest as he began to thrust from beneath her.

"Look at you..." he murmured against her ear, his voice a low, wicked purr. "Aren't you so damn flexible?"

The angle he hit her from made her see stars.

"Shit, Roman..." Violet moaned, her voice breaking as he drove into a spot so intense it made her whole head spin.

"Yes... say my name," Roman growled, slamming into her harder, the bedframe rattling violently beneath them.

"Roman..." Violet whimpered, teeth sinking into her lower lip as the pleasure dragged her under.

"Louder," he ordered, thrusting with a force that punched the air from her lungs. "Say it—who made you like this, princess?"

That last word dripped from his mouth with a twisted, corrupt delight like he was savoring every second of being the one fucking a royal.

"You did, Roman. All of you," Violet gasped. "You all made me like this."

"Like what exactly?" he demanded, and this time he grabbed her breast, squeezing hard enough to drag a cry from her throat.

"Fuck..." Violet choked out, her back arching. It was a sweet torment—too much and yet, not nearly enough.

"Made you like what exactly?" Roman pressed, his voice dark velvet and command. "Answer me, princess or you can forget about this—" He slowed his thrusts, dragging them out agonizingly, and Violet nearly lost her mind.

She broke instantly. "You made me like this! All bad and horny—fuck, Roman, please!"

Roman's smirk was pure sinful victory.

Then he let go of all restraint.

He set a brutal pace, pounding into her until Violet's moans broke into raw, breathless cries. There was no pause, no mercy. Just raw, dominant possession. Right now, they were nothing but animals rutting each other.

"God. I'm not gonna last!" Alaric snarled, fisting himself with a pace that matched Roman's savage thrusts.

And who could blame him?

From where he stood, every detail was on display : the obscene glide of Roman's cock, slick with Violet's wetness; the way her body welcomed him, swallowed him, and pulled him back in with every thrust. It was erotic enough to short-circuit a saint.

Alaric's breath hitched and that was all the warning he gave.

He came hard, his release spilling across the ground in thick spurts, a guttural curse tearing from his throat.

He was panted hard, unable to believe what the fuck just happened.

Meanwhile, Roman fisted Violet's hair and tugged her head back, pulling her into a kiss. The angle was nearly impossible with how savagely he was pounding into her yet he handled it like it was nothing. No wonder they called him the god of love. Honestly, it was starting to look more like god of sex, because Violet could absolutely see why now.

Roman kissed her long and filthy, devouring her cries. Every moan was muffled against his mouth, her sweet gasps swallowed by him as he rode her through the pleasure. Then he broke the kiss with a wet drag of his lips and focused once more on fucking her senseless.

"You love getting fucked like this, don't you, princess?"

"Yes! Please, so don't stop..." Violet was panting now.

"I wasn't planning to." Roman said, pounding her into her with rising intensity.

Violet's eyes rolled to the back of her head. How was she going to survive this night? And yet, she couldn't tell them to stop, not when she enjoyed every bit of it.

Then her walls clenched around him. "I think.... I think..." she couldn't finish her words, overwhelmed by the stimulation. But Roman knew just what she was saying because he too was close.

So he began to move even faster, and harder, his grip around her tight enough to leave an imprint, immobilizing her so all she could do was take everything he had to give.

A scream left Violet's lips as the orgasm ripped through her, her whole body shaking. But Roman didn't stop. He kept driving into her, chasing his own release, growling like a beast as he used her until finally he groaned deeply and spilled himself inside her.

"Fuck, that was great," Roman breathed, his arms finally loosening around her.

Violet didn't even try to move. She slumped against him exactly as she was, boneless and trembling. That had been insane. She was wrung out and exhausted in the best possible way.

But of course, her other mates had their own ideas.

"No!" Violet protested the second Griffin lifted her off Roman, clearly intent on having his turn.

Griffin only said. "Building stamina, baby girl. Building stamina."

With her legs wrapped around his waist, he pushed into her slowly, easing in inch by agonizing inch until her traitorous pussy clenched around him and drew him deeper. Griffin buried himself to the hilt, thick and stretching, and Violet purred in helpless satisfaction.

God, she really was a sucker for pain.

He didn't even give her a second to catch her breath. Griffin simply grabbed her wrists and threw her arms around his neck, fully expecting her to hold on as he took her for the wild ride he intended.

Just like Roman, there was nothing gentle about him either.

He pounded into her, hard and relentless, until Violet was screaming and clinging to him for dear life.

Griffin showed off his incredible strength in the way he took her. He hooked one arm beneath her legs, lifted her effortlessly, then slammed her back down onto him.

Fuck her life—these mates would be the death of her.

He kept spearing into her, over and over, each thrust hitting so deep inside her that Violet could barely breathe. She was already hypersensitive, her nerves stretched thin, her body trembling with every brutal stroke. She couldn't take much more yet her body clung to him greedily, begging for everything he gave.

Then he carried her to the bed and laid her down, only to start thrusting into her with a speed that wasn't human. Violet's whole body shook beneath him, the bed slamming into the wall again and again.

Her breasts bounced wildly with each hard stroke, and the slap of flesh against flesh filled the room.

Violet clenched around him, screaming his name as she came, but Griffin didn't stop. He fucked her through it, thrust after thrust, until at last he stilled with a deep groan, burying himself completely as he spilled inside her.