

Defy 691

Chapter 691: Final Course

Pleasure still danced across Violet's flesh as she lay sprawled on the bed, panting and trying to catch her breath. She expected that now Griffin was done, Alaric would immediately snatch her up and take his turn but he didn't.

Instead, he simply stood there, watching her. The intensity of his gaze made her whole body go taut with anticipation.

It was Asher who moved first. He stepped forward with a towel and a basin, pulling her gently higher onto the bed so she lay more comfortably.

"How do you feel, my queen? Had enough already?" His tone carried genuine concern, yet the slight curve of his lips showed dark amusement.

Her answer should have been yes, she was done. After everything her mates had just wrung out of her, how could she possibly want more? And yet her body knew it wasn't over. One more mate was waiting to take her through the heavens, and instinctively, her core throbbed at the thought.

"Greedy little thing, aren't you?" Asher murmured, watching the slick wetness stream down her thighs as he cleaned her.

Violet purred in response. Yes, she was gluttonous. Good thing she wasn't human, because right now she was more than ready, no, she was eager for Alaric.

But Asher clearly had other plans of paving the way for her lightning prince. His hand slid between her thighs, fingers finding her clit, and he began to touch her provocatively.

Violet sighed, throwing her head back as she arched into his touch. Asher flicked her faster now, wanting her to lose control. Watching her do so was his favorite entertainment.

"Ugh..." Violet's nails dug into the sheets, her heart hammering against her ribs. Then he shifted his rhythm, circling her clit in circular motions that made her entire body tighten. And that was all it took for her to fall

She came with a gasp, head lolling back, and her eyes wide as another rush of wetness spilled between her thighs.

Asher didn't even give her a second to recover. He withdrew his hand only to lower himself between her legs, kneeling, and then he took her with his mouth. He feasted on her wetness, lips and tongue drinking from her like she was the well of life itself.

Violet whimpered, her hand shooting out to shove him deeper into her, fingers threading through his silky hair. She lifted her hips, grinding up into the relentless strokes of his tongue and fucking his face with hungry need.

Asher didn't relent for a single second. He devoured her savagely, tongue and lips working with obscene skill, and it was no surprise when he stole another orgasm out of her. He licked her raw, over and over, until her legs clamped tight around his head and her toes curled hard.

Then Violet crashed, her whole body shaking, eyes falling shut as the pleasure ripped through her. Her legs trembled violently, unable to hold themselves up anymore, and she let them drop, limp.

Violet was utterly satisfied.

Then Asher withdrew from her, his chin slick with her release. He dragged his thumb across the mess, wiping away what clung to him, then brought it to his mouth and licked it clean.

Violet's heart skipped a beat. How could something so filthy look so achingly hot? Her core clenched around nothing, arousal sparking back to life.

"Now," Asher said, a wicked smile cutting across his lips, "for the final course of the night."

And with that, he moved away.

Violet's heart pounded so hard it felt like it might burst from her chest when Alaric stepped forward, naked as the day he was born. He was rock-hard—so hard it had to ache—pre-cum dripping from the flushed tip. His blue eyes were intense, edged with the kind of storm he was used to summoning.

Then, as if the room itself sensed the rising heat, the light dimmed, then cycled through different colors in a teasing swirl as though announcing the next act. At last, everything settled into a dark, carnal red.

The music began out of nowhere, sung in the Fae tongue none of them were familiar with. Yet those sounds awakened the hungriest parts of them. The lust in the room swelled instantly, thickening the air until it felt like the only thing they could breathe.

Alaric stalked onto the bed on his hands and knees, the red light gliding over him and turning every inch of his body into pure seduction. Violet's breath hitched as her eyes roamed over those lean muscles, the flex of his back, and the ripple of his arms and stomach. Each movement made her hornier, heat licking through her body.

"Hello, Vixen," he whispered, lowering himself over her until the warmth of his body pressed along hers, his hands framing her head.

"H-hello my cocky prince," Violet replied shakily, her pulse tripping over itself. She could feel his cock pressing against her stomach, thick and throbbing.

"Alright," Alaric chuckled, his voice low and dark. "I'll show you how cocky I am right now."

He leaned in and claimed her lips slow and dirty, as if savoring every sinful second. His mouth moved against hers with patient hunger, teasing her bottom lip before sucking it into his mouth, tasting and devouring her.

Violet moaned softly, her fingers curling into his shoulders as he deepened the kiss, tongue sliding against hers in a sensual, unhurried dance that dragged heat straight into her core.

Then he broke from her lips only to trail down her jaw with hot kisses. He lingered at her pulse, biting her lightly before soothing the sting with his tongue, earning a sharp gasp from her. His lips traveled

lower, dragging over the column of her throat, worshipping every inch as if he had all night to discover her.

When he reached her chest, he paused just long enough for her breath to hitch before continuing downward, kissing along her ribs, her stomach, the warm, soft skin that made her jerk under him.

Then he reached the dip of her belly.

He pressed his mouth there, slow and reverent. Violet shivered violently, her body reacting to him with helpless, electric urgency.

Alaric smirked against her skin.

"Sensitive little thing," he murmured. "Good."

Alaric's lips brushed her skin until he reached her breasts that was still flushed and pebbled from the night's assault. Violet's breath hitched when he hovered over her nipple, his warm breath ghosting over the sensitive bud.

Then he ran his tongue over it.

Violet gasped, the sensitivity shooting straight to her pussy. He circled the nipple with teasing strokes, tracing the edge of her areola before finally closing his lips around her. A soft, broken moan escaped her as he suckled deeply, greedily, drawing every sound he wanted from her throat.

Her back arched off the bed, her fingers tangling desperately in his hair, urging him closer.

Alaric growled low in his chest, loving every reaction. He switched sides, his free hand rising to grab her other breast, squeezing hard enough to make her gasp. His mouth then sealed over the opposite nipple now, claiming it. Violet writhed beneath him, overwhelmed by the dual assault.

Then he lifted his hand again.

This time, the smallest spark of lightning crackled between his fingertips, and he touched the charged fingertip to her nipple, tracing it in a slow, electrified circle.

Violet screamed, her thighs clamping together as pleasure blasted through her. She throbbed violently, wetness spilling between her legs.

"Alaric..." she gasped, trembling. "Please. I want—I need—"

But her lightning prince didn't stop. If anything, he grew hungrier, switching between sucking one breast and shocking the other, drowning her in stimulation until she was a shaking mess beneath him.

Violet had no choice but to press her thighs together, desperate for relief, her hips lifting helplessly off the bed.

It was no surprise she came right there, overstimulated and utterly undone, her body jerking from the intensity.

"Good," Alaric said, "Now, you're ready."

He then grabbed her thighs and spread her open for him, displaying her glistening folds like something sacred and obscene all at once. She was dripping so wet it should've been a crime and Alaric's eyes darkened, hunger sharpening every line of his face.

He positioned himself between her legs, the thick head of his cock brushing her entrance. Violet braced herself, expecting him to thrust in.

But he didn't.

Instead, Alaric dragged the head up and down her slick folds, tracing her wetness, parting her lips, and rubbing the sensitive spots he already knew would make her lose her mind. Violet moaned loudly, her hips lifting to meet him.

"Alaric, please. Get inside me already."

He chuckled darkly. "Patience, mate."

Then, without warning, he lifted one of her legs and hooked it over his shoulder. Violet's eyes widened at the new angle, her breath catching.

Alaric smirked. "There it is, the look I wanted."

And finally, he pushed into her.

Slowly.

Painfully slowly.

Violet's mouth fell open in a silent 'O', her body stretching around him, clenching instinctively as inch after thick inch sank into her. He watched her reaction with a pride so possessive it bordered on feral.

"Look at how beautifully you take me," he rasped, voice breaking.

Then he snapped his hips forward in one savage thrust, burying himself to the hilt.

Violet screamed as pleasure, shock, and pure overwhelming bliss crashed into her all at once.

Chapter 692: Shock The Palace

Alaric knew he would keep this image of Violet forever burned into his mind. She was so raw in her reactions, so unabashedly expressive it drove him insane. Beautiful didn't even begin to cover it.

And Violet, she didn't know how to describe it, only that this new angle did something to her. He filled her in a deeper, different way, striking spots that tore her breath away and sent her eyes rolling back. Goddess above, nothing had ever felt this good.

Unlike the others who drove into her like they were possessed by demons, Alaric was something else entirely. With her leg already hooked over his shoulder, he gripped her hips and slammed into her to the hilt. Then he drew back before slamming into her again and again. He set a punishing pace in intervals, each thrust angled perfectly, and hitting her g-spot with such ruthless precision that Violet spilled a string of colorful curses.

At this rate, she knew she wasn't going to last.

The North Alpha held her firmly, controlling every grind of his hips as he claimed her body. And Violet could only mewl and writhe beneath him, undone by every calculated stroke.

Alaric growled low in his chest. "You're mine now, Violet. My beautiful Vixen."

Then he planted one hand beside her head, the other one gripping her thigh as he angled his hips even deeper. And that new angle wrecked her.

Violet's back arched clean off the bed, a strangled cry ripping from her throat as the stretch hit a place so unbearably good she saw bright pinpricks behind her eyelids.

"Goddess—Alaric—"

"That's it," he encouraged her, his voice dripping with dark satisfaction. "Let me hear you."

He pulled back again torturously slow, letting her feel every inch, every vein, and every stroke. Then he snapped his hips forward with a brutal, consuming thrust that made her gasp so sharply it was nearly a sob.

Violet's hands flew up, grabbing helplessly at his arms and shoulders, anything at all to anchor herself as he plunged into her again, deeper, harder, and more intentional than before. The bed creaked under the force of him, her leg trembling violently atop his shoulder.

"You feel that?" Alaric whispered against her ear, his breath hot and ragged. "You're taking all of me, my beautiful mate, every damn inch."

But Violet could only nod because speech was impossible now. Her whole body tightened around him, pulling him in, begging for more without a word.

"Goddess, I feel you," Alaric groaned, hips snapping harder. "You're so close now, aren't you? Don't hold back for me. I want to watch you fall.... Fall for me, my Vixen."

She came undone for him.

Violet's vision blurred as the orgasm ripped through her so violently her body bowed off the bed, a raw scream tearing from her throat—only for Alaric to snarl in triumph and slam into her harder, refusing to give her even a second to recover. Thunder cracked outside the palace, a booming warning of the lightning prince losing control above her.

Alaric didn't stop. He plowed through her orgasm savagely, his hips snapping forward over and over until Violet didn't know where she ended and he began.

Then out of nowhere, she felt hands over her.

It was Roman. He was the first to drop beside her and closed his mouth over one nipple, sucking hard. Violet's back arched so sharply the sheets bunched beneath her.

Dear lord. She was going to die at this point.

Then Griffin came out of nowhere and

took the other, and it was over. The triple stimulation nearly drove her mad as Griffin enveloped her nipple before he nipped at it gently, then sucked with deep, slow pulls that shot straight to her core.

Violet howled like an animal overwhelmed by too much pleasure. It was so much stimulation and yet she took it like the good girl she was.

Lightning cracked again above the palace, so bright it flashed through the windows. Static glimmered through the room, raising goosebumps on her skin. Her hair lifted slightly from the electricity in the air. All four of her mates felt it too and still none of them stopped.

Asher appeared last, his hand gripping her jaw with a tenderness that contradicted the intense hunger burning in his eyes. He tilted her head up and sealed his mouth to hers, stealing her screams, swallowing them greedily as if those belonged to him.

And still Alaric took her mercilessly.

Violet didn't know how to feel. It was good, and too overwhelming. Her body didn't belong to her anymore. She was their vessel, their offering, their sweet ruin, and they were her storm.

Thunder shook the palace again.

Roman moaned against her breast. Griffin growled low, his teeth scraping her nipple, while Asher devoured her lips, sucking them like they sustained him. Static danced across Violet's skin, little sparks erupting wherever Alaric touched.

Then everything exploded.

The overstimulation stole a brutal, soul-clenching orgasm that made Violet scream against Asher's mouth, tears spilling from her eyes as her body convulsed.

Her climax dragged Alaric with her.

"Violet—!" he choked, thrusting into her one final, devastating time before he came so hard his entire body shook violently. A massive thunderclap cracked the sky, louder than any yet, shaking the palace to its foundations.

But he wasn't the only one that shattered.

Electricity traveled from Violet's body, and slammed into all three of the other cardinal alphas.

Griffin's entire body jerked, a curse falling from him as he came. Roman groaned brokenly, spilling against the sheets, shaking. Asher froze mid-kiss, fingers digging into her jaw as he moaned into her mouth and shuddered with release.

Four mates. Four orgasms. One queen. It was a phenomenon that should have never been possible. This wasn't just love making or any claiming, they had made pure magic.

Alaric collapsed on top of her first, Roman slumped to her left, Griffin to her right, and Asher sprawled somewhere near the top of the bed, all of them panting like they'd just survived a battlefield. Which, honestly, they had.

"What the hell just happened?" Griffin wheezed, chest heaving.

Roman laughed breathlessly. "I have no idea but I don't mind doing it again."

Violet didn't even respond to that. She was wrung out in every possible way, her body too exhausted to care. She simply shut her eyes and passed out instantly.

Alaric noticed and eased himself off her body. "Our mate's dead out," he muttered.

Roman huffed a broken laugh. "That means she enjoyed every damn second of it. Good work, mate." He patted Alaric's shoulder. "You're improving. I'm so proud of you."

"Fuck off," Alaric snapped, face red, before dropping his head on Griffin's chest, using him as a pillow.

Asher managed to push himself upright, his gaze drifting to Violet. "Good," he murmured, brushing a stray curl from her forehead. "She needed that."

"Of course she should sleep. Short-circuiting us in the middle of sex had to take a lot of energy," Roman joked.

"That's Alaric's doing," Griffin said. "And I have a feeling we weren't the only ones shocked tonight. I guess we'd find out, tomorrow."

Chapter 693: Attack The West Pack

Alpha Rowland slammed his fist on the table so hard the scattered maps jumped.

"What are we still waiting for?" he barked. "We have the bigger army. We should storm that damn pack house right now and kill every single one of them, so you," he jabbed a finger at Cane, "can take charge."

Alpha Cane sat at the head of the table, surrounded by the two alphas he "felt" he trusted. The irony wasn't lost on him considering trust was a joke among the west pack wolves.

He didn't delude himself into thinking they were friends or that they liked him. They were together today because of ambition and blood, nothing more.

After all, they had used and betrayed Marlow, one of their own. This alliance would end the same way. Except he'd be smart enough not to fall victim.

Alpha Drake, the oldest among them, said with his raspy voice, "You cannot touch the East Alpha or the South Alpha," he warned. "Especially not without Alpha King Elijah's permission. If you strike without his blessing, he'll come for all our heads."

He went on to say, "For starters, we eliminate Ezra King. He's the glue holding the others together. Once he's gone, the pack members will realize they stand alone. Then they'll fall in line behind you especially now that Asher Nightshade is missing..." His lips curled. "Or, if the goddess favors us, already dead."

The room fell into a heavy silence.

The circumstances surrounding Asher's disappearance were baffling to everyone, especially after the failed assassination attempt. Not just his, but the rest of the cardinal alphas as well.

Rumors were spreading that some girl had kidnapped them. It was absurd to imagine the cardinal alphas, with all their power, being taken by a single girl, but for now the rumor served their purpose, and they hoped it stayed that way.

If Asher returned, well, they'd would deal with that problem permanently.

Rowland let out a harsh, humorless laugh.

"You're joking, right?" he snapped at Drake. "So we're supposed to sit here with our thumbs up our asses, waiting for them to gather support and back Ezra? That's your strategy?"

He scoffed loudly, then turned to Cane, sneering openly.

"I didn't help unseat Henry's son just to crown a coward."

The insult snapped something visceral in Cane. Before Rowland even registered the danger, the wolf moved fast and grabbed him by the throat.

He slammed Rowlan into the wall so hard dust rained from the beams. Rowland choked, his feet kicking weakly against the ground.

Cane's voice was ice. "If you speak to me like that again," he hissed, "I'll show you exactly how cowardly I can be when I rip your throat out."

Rowland, despite his legendary temper, couldn't break free as Cane's strength pinned him like a child.

After a long, dangerous moment, Cane released him roughly and Rowland staggered, clutching his throat, eyes bloodshot with humiliation.

Cane straightened his clothes with chilling calm before turning back to Drake.

"I'm not waiting for Elijah," he said coldly. "His heir is missing. He can't expect the West Pack to remain stagnant. The strongest rules, and I am taking what's mine."

"Moreover...." he trailed his fingers along the table, "I just received Intel that reinforcements are coming from the East. They'll arrive by tomorrow morning."

Drake's jaw dropped. "That fast?"

Cane said, "The East alphas are resilient fighters, and nearly match us in skill. If they get here, we're screwed."

The Alphas nodded their heads in acknowledgment.

"So," Cane continued, "we move by midnight before they arrive."

He pointed at the location of the west pack house on the map.

"Once we overtake the palace, Alpha Irene and Alpha Leon will be given the chance to walk away alive. But if they resist—" A dark glint entered his eyes, "—there will be casualties."

Rowland's earlier humiliation melted into savage pride. "Finally," he grunted. "About damn time."

Cane's chest swelled not from Rowland's approval, but from the certainty of victory blooming inside him. Everything was going according to as planned.

He stepped back from the table. "Prepare our men. By midnight, we march and take what should have been mine from the beginning."

Immediately, Rowland wiped his bleeding lip and stormed out, muttering curses but already barking orders at the men he found at the door. It was time.

Meanwhile...

Two wolves guarded the entrance of the compound, leaning lazily against the wall, sharing a cigarette between shifts.

Suddenly they heard a rustle and both men froze. They stomped out the cigarette instantly and lifted their weapons, vigilant.

"Who goes there?" one barked.

A lone figure stepped out of the darkness, cloaked from head to toe. The wolves tensed, fingers brushing their triggers.

Then the stranger slowly lifted his hands and lowered his hood.

"No, no, please don't shoot," he said, voice trembling just the right amount. "I come peacefully."

The guards exchanged a confused look. No one simply walked up to Cane's temporary fortress. Still, they didn't lower their weapons. However, their hesitation was all Micah needed.

"Gentlemen," he said with a silky tone as he lifted one hand casually, tracing invisible patterns in the air. "Surely you wouldn't mind letting me in. It's considered rude, after all, to leave a guest standing at the door."

Shadow swirled around him, too subtle in the darkness for untrained eyes to notice yet the effect was immediate.

A warm, unnatural fog slipped into the wolves' minds and their eyes softened with instant, unblinking adoration. They lowered their weapons.

"Yes," Micah crooned, stepping forward like a king being escorted into his own palace. "That's the way you welcome a guest."

The wolves nodded eagerly, eager to please and serve him.

"Anything you need," one of them murmured dreamily.

"Good boys," Micah praised, patting one gently on the cheek.

He straightened his cloak confidently.

"Now, you wouldn't mind taking me safely to see your new Alpha, Cane, would you?"

Both wolves bowed their heads, utterly enthralled.

"Of course," they said in unison.

Chapter 694: Nothing Ever Worked Smoothly

Throwing Alpha Marlow under the bus and then using his mansion as the base of their rebellion had to be one of the most diabolical betrayals of the century.

But Micah understood why they chose it.

Marlow's estate was huge and sat at the edge of West Pack territory, where the forest thickened and the ground sloped downward into ravines, making it hard to penetrate.

For a sub-alpha, it was impressive; however, nothing was ever truly impenetrable. Marlow had built this estate to protect his wealth and indulgent lifestyle, but now Cane had repurposed it to protect a rebellion.

Micah took it all in and smirked inwardly.

No wonder they felt secure enough to plan treason here.

There were werewolves everywhere, and the only reason he hadn't been caught was because he kept weaving his charm, ensuring anyone who glanced his way simply overlooked him.

He had removed his cloak and switched into normal clothing, blending in better with the wolves. Not that it would truly save him from being recognized. He might not be one of the famous cardinal alphas, but most wolves still knew the former Alpha King's demon son locked away in Lunar Academy. But none would dare speak, not while under his control.

And for once, Micah actually came to love his gift or rather, love who he was. To think the fate of the West Pack rested on him, a half-demon. He could only imagine the faces of the werewolves when this goes down in history.

"How long until we get there?" Micah asked in a low voice. His powers were beginning to drain; this was the first time he had ever stretched his charm over so many people for so long. He could feel the strain tugging at him.

"Just two more turns," one of the guards replied.

Micah looked ahead, but the corridor stretched far before the next bend. He couldn't wait to get this over with. All he needed was to be within ten meters, and the guard would get rid of Cane while under manipulation.

"Move faster then!" he urged them. If he slipped here, he was as good as dead. There were wolves everywhere and there was only one of him. And with his power draining, it was safe to say he didn't like the odds.

But Micah should have known nothing ever went well.

Just as they made it past the first turn, another set of guards stepped out from the corner. As usual, Micah let his charm wash over them and kept moving, unbothered. Except a voice cut through the air suddenly and froze him in place.

"Where are the three of you headed?"

Micah halted immediately, brows pulling tight. He turned and scanned the scans wondering what had gone wrong.

Then his mouth twitched.

Oh fuck.

A mated wolf.

Of all nights, he had to run into the one thing immune to his sexual appeal. Fated mates were so rare he hadn't calculated the possibility of running into one.

"I asked you a question!" the wolf barked, already reaching for the weapon slung at his side. "Who the hell is he?" He pointed straight at Micah.

There were two others behind him, tense and alert. Micah pushed his charm toward them, but they were already agitated, the adrenaline spiking through their systems, and making it harder to charm them. He could feel them resisting his sexual appeal. Fighting him.

Fuck. This was about to go straight to hell.

He might as well start it himself.

"Kill them!" he commanded the two guards he had under control.

And all hell broke loose.

The mated wolf lunged straight for Micah, fury blazing, and pulled the trigger the moment he had a clear line of sight.

"Hell!" Micah hissed as the bullet whizzed past, grazing his arm. Heat seared through him.

They were using guns. Fucking bastards.

True wolves fought with claws and strength, not weapons. But he guessed he shouldn't expect honor from rebels.

The two charmed guards attacked the three newcomers with feral violence, claws flashing, and snarls ripping through the hall. The mated wolf tried to get around them—still aiming for Micah—while Micah threw himself behind a pillar, rolling to avoid another bullet.

It was a bloodbath.

Micah didn't wait for the outcome. He slipped away while the wolves continued tearing into each other.

But the clash had already drawn attention. Doors flung open as more wolves spilled into the corridors.

Micah ran and every few steps he'd let his charm burst out and snaring whoever he could. He turned wolves after one another, letting them destroy while he went in search of Cane.

But he shouldn't have bothered, because Cane appeared at that exact moment, eyes wild, clearly alarmed by the chaos breaking out in his estate. And like the others, he too had a weapon in hand.

"You—!" Cane recognized him instantly.

"Oh shit," was all the warning Micah had before he threw himself to the ground, rolling out of the line of fire. He escaped by a hair's breadth as bullets shredded the air where his head had been a second ago.

But Cane didn't pause. He kept firing relentlessly, forcing Micah to dodge left, then right, then duck behind the small jutting corner of the hallway wall, the only cover available.

Micah pushed his charm outward, aiming it towards Cane, but the wolf expelled it instantly, shoving the influence out like swatting a fly. He had seen Micah for what he was and couldn't fall for his illusion.

Cane closed in fast. He rounded the corner toward Micah's hiding place, forcing him to abandon it and keep dodging. Micah darted out, using his supernatural speed to weave through the narrow bits of cover as he closed the distance between them inch by inch. Cane realized what he was doing a second too late.

Click.

His barrel was empty.

Cane's eyes widened. He quickly tried to reload, but Micah moved first.

With a twist of his body, he lunged, snatched the gun straight out of Cane's hands, and slammed it across the alpha's face with a brutal, bone-rattling crack.

Chapter 695: Become My Hostage

Cane hit the floor hard, crashing onto his back with a snarl as blood gushed from his nose and Micah smiled in satisfaction.

Ouch. That had to hurt.

Micah stepped forward to snatch the bastard up only for something to punch into his side with a loud sound. He staggered, hand reaching instinctively to his side and brows tightening in pain. The incubus looked down only to realize he had been hit, his hand red with his blood.

He jerked his head up and spotted the shooter. The wolf's eyes brightened when he realized the bullet had hit and prepared for another shot to end him. But Micah moved fast, grabbed Cane by the collar, and hauled him upright, using the bigger male as a shield.

Already, more wolves poured into the hall from every corridor, filling the space. There was nowhere to run or hide. He was trapped.

Micah tightened his grip around Cane's neck, black claws extending from his fingers, unmistakably demonic.

"One more step," he hissed a warning, "and I'll open his throat."

The wolves hesitated, fear washing over them. They knew from Micah's demeanor that he wasn't bluffing.

But the bloody and furious Cane laughed through his teeth. "Shoot him!" he barked at his men. "We outnumber the bastard—"

He didn't finish because Micah deliberately slashed across his throat. It was not deep enough to kill him, but enough to cause him pain and steal his voice. The blood spilled at once, staining the front of Cane's shirt.

Micah growled, "Now would you back off?!"

They began to retreat, slowly, and cautiously, but not nearly enough for his liking.

"More space! Unless you want him bleeding out on this floor." Micah ordered, baring his teeth.

His side throbbed violently. That bullet was silver and though he wasn't a full werewolf, it sent pain lancing through his ribs. Micah gritted his teeth. He would not collapse here. Not when he was so close to ending this.

Cane's eyes burned with rage and humiliation, but the claws at his throat kept him silent. He still wanted the title of Alpha, and wasn't ready to die for pride. So he became a willing hostage.

"Make space for him." He ordered.

At once, the wolves backed away.

Micah began to move, dragging Cane with him, choosing the tighter pathways—narrow hallways where only one wolf could approach at a time. He kept Cane positioned between him and any open angles, making it impossible for someone to get a clear shot without hitting their self-named Alpha.

Finally, he reached a side exit and shoved it open with his shoulder, stumbling outside.

Cold air slapped his face.

Beyond the mansion, the terrain shifted into the outer grounds where there was only

dense brush, tall grass, and the beginning of a forest.

A perfect hunting ground for wolves.

More of Cane's men streamed in from both sides of the estate, forming a semicircle. Their guns were raised, glowing eyes fixed on them as they awaited orders to make a move.

Out here, in the open, Micah was at a huge disadvantage. There was nowhere to hide, making him the perfect prey.

Cane's lips curved into a bloody, arrogant smile. Even with Micah's claws digging into his neck, he had the audacity to straighten his shoulders as if he were the one holding all the cards.

"You know it deep down, Your Highness, Micah that this is over. All you have to do is surrender." His voice dripped with mock respect.

Micah's eyes narrowed.

Cane went on, emboldened by the ring of wolves tightening around them.

"You're Angus' son, after all. I doubt Alpha King Elijah would be pleased to learn that I harmed royalty."

Micah scoffed so hard it bordered on a laugh.

Cane continued, already seeing the future unfolding in his head. "In fact, you're useful—very useful. I could negotiate my takeover of the West Pack with him. A precious hostage like you would make things move quickly."

Micah actually laughed this time. "So that's your plan, huh? Use me as a hostage."

"A willing hostage," Cane corrected smugly. "No one dragged you here, Micah. You stepped right into this fight on your own. A fight that had nothing to do with you."

"Oh, I know." Micah kept his claws tight on Cane's throat, looking around and his calculating the distances, any weakness he could find. "But the moment you assumed my uncle gives a fuck about me? That's where you failed, Cane. Elijah doesn't care about anybody."

"Yes," Cane agreed without shame. "Elijah gives no care. But you're still his nephew, and if there's one thing the Alpha King values above all else, it's his pride." He smiled. "What would the humans say if his nephew died in a useless fight?"

"You would openly rebel against your king?" Micah asked, baffled.

Cane shrugged. "Casualties happen in war. I didn't drag you here, you came on your own. And besides..." he chuckled darkly, "Asher Nightshade is gone. Elijah's options are limited right now. The west pack needs a leader.

"So tell me, little prince, will you accept defeat and let us treat you with courtesy considering this was an unfortunate first meeting? Or shall we drag you off as a prisoner of war?"

For a moment, Micah went still. He looked like he was thinking and Cane smirked, thinking victory was already at hand.

Then Micah's lips curled, slow and wicked.

"And what makes you think I came alone?"

Cane's face drained of color.

Because at that precise moment, the ground trembled.

The sound began as a rhythmic thud at first before it grew louder into pounding footsteps.

Cane whipped his head toward the trees just as wolves burst from the shadows of the forest.

"NO—!" Cane tried to shout, but Micah moved first.

With the last of his strength, he unleashed all of his charm. It slammed into Cane's men like a fog. Half of them staggered, sluggish, and confused, their eyes glossing over as his magic tangled their minds.

It was all the opening they needed.

Micah's allies slammed into Cane's forces with brutal force. Immediately, claws shredded the air, teeth snapped, and bodies collided in a frenzy of fur and blood.

Chapter 696: The Life After Death

Ezra's wolf was a blackish-gray beast, his coat dark as storm clouds at first glance, but streaked with silver whenever the light struck it. He cut through the trees like a shadow given form and he led the charge.

A snarl ripped from Cane's throat, hatred igniting in his eyes the moment he saw the rival sub-Alpha. He had always despised Ezra — the hypocrisy, the self-righteous calm, that irritating air of honor Ezra wore like armor. Even before Ezra became Asher's right hand, Cane had wanted him dead.

He should have known something was wrong the moment Micah showed up. What business did the former king's demon-spawn son have on West Pack soil, much less inside his stronghold? But Cane had been too focused on orchestrating his own attack to realize his enemies had outmaneuvered him first.

Fine. That didn't matter now.

This was an opportunity and he would not let it slip by. He would tear Ezra apart and erase the bastard once and for all.

So Cane shoved free from Micah's hold. He crouched low, his chest vibrating with the rage of his wolf, ready to launch into the fight when the world suddenly swirled around him.

The next thing Cane knew, he was standing on the edge of a cliff, and his heart nearly leapt out of his chest. With a startled shout, he stumbled back several steps before daring to look down.

Beneath him churned a river of molten lava.

But that wasn't the most horrifying part.

Things were swimming in it.

That is, if they could even be called things. These were living beings, but their flesh was gone, and charred away. They were nothing but blackened skeletons, but somehow still alive, screaming, and writhing through the endless burning river.

Cane's eyes widened like saucers, the blood draining from his face. He didn't know where he was, not exactly, but a nagging dread whispered the truth. He just didn't want to admit it.

This had to be a dream. But It wasn't.

This realm was swallowed in darkness, yet the infernal embers kept everything lit in a haunting, blood-red glow. The air was dry and blistering hot, burning his throat with every breath. He already felt parched, desperate for water.

But the screams—goddess, the screams.

Millions—no, billions—of tormented souls wailing in agony. The sound was deafening, pounding into his skull, splintering it from the inside. He could hear pieces of their voices, whispers of regret, stories of mistakes, and pleas for second chances they would never receive.

But it was too late for all of them.

Cane's terror grew as a massive demon emerged through the glowing heat and stepped into the molten river. The flames didn't touch him of course. This was his home and he was immune to its cruelty.

He towered at nearly ten feet tall, wielding a large, sharp, wicked looking spear.

Alpha Cane knew, with a cold certainty, that if they pitted him against that monster, he wouldn't last a second. There was no flesh to rip into, no vulnerable point to sink his claws. The demon was all bone and probably indestructible, unlike him.

He wouldn't win.

Then he watched as the demon thrust his massive spear into the molten river of souls and hauled one out on the blade's tip. Bile surged up Cane's throat immediately. The sight was like watching someone spear a piece of steak except this wasn't beef.

It was a human being.

The soul dangled weakly from the spear, and Cane noticed something horrifying: this one wasn't all bone yet. Now that it was out of the river, the missing flesh had begun to grow back slowly yet painfully.

Cane remembered with a sickening jolt that the souls in hell were immortal— condemned to suffer, heal, and suffer again. Forever. There was no pause nor respite. This was their punishment.

"No, no—please! Please have mercy!" the soul sobbed.

But it wasn't the pleas that froze Cane where he stood.

It was the voice.

He could recognize that voice even while asleep.

Alpha Henry.

Cane's jaw dropped, horror choking him as he stared. Henry was barely recognizable, his flesh charred and peeling, still regrowing even as it burned away again. But it was him.

"A—Alpha..." Cane rasped in disbelief.

It never did hit him where Henry would end up after the atrocities he committed. Perhaps it just never occurred to him that he would be punished. Or perhaps they chose to live their lives without a care for where they ended up after death. But now, reality was staring both of them in the face.

The demon grabbed Henry by the torso and lifted him casually, while Henry's body dangled helplessly.

"Please—no, don't! I can't take anymore!" Henry cried with a cracked voice.

But the demon only smirked cruelly, and rumbled, "You enjoyed tormenting people when you were alive. Why? Can't face a bigger opponent now, Alpha?"

Then, as if Henry were a rag doll and the demon a child bored of his toy, he seized Henry's arm and ripped it clean off. The limb was tossed back into the lava. Henry's scream was so piercing Cane felt it in his bones.

"No! No, please—stop! Stop already! It hurts!"

The demon tilted his head, savoring the agony. "There is no stopping. Not for a soul in here."

Cane should have looked away, but he couldn't. His eyes stayed locked as the demon tore Henry apart piece by piece, until only the head remained. Then the demon kicked it back into the molten river.

Cane knew Henry wasn't dead. He couldn't die.

His torment would restart. Again. And again. For eternity.

Whether it was cold sweat or the blistering heat, Cane was drenched from head to toe. Trembling, he turned, and found Micah leaning against a jagged rock, clutching his wounded side.

Micah smirked darkly. "How's that for the life you're about to enjoy once yours ends?"

Cane's scream tore from his throat instantly.

Chapter 697: The Law Of War

With Micah's help and the advantage of surprise, it was no wonder they had subdued the rebels in no time. Unknown to them, from the moment Micah stepped onto the estate, he had already charmed enough wolves to quietly get rid of those guarding the entrances. It gave their forces the perfect opening to lay siege without raising suspicion.

Cane's arrogance had been his downfall. His mistake was believing that with Asher gone, he could end the Nightshade reign just like that. But Asher was not Henry. Asher had formed real bonds with people willing to risk everything for him. If this had been Henry, Irene, for starters, would have gladly watched the West Pack burn to ash.

Good riddance.

Not to mention, Cane had started all of this with betrayal.

If he wanted to be Alpha so badly, he should have challenged Asher and won like an Alpha should, not slither through the coward's route. An Alpha was a leader; the rest of the hierarchy looked up to them. So yes, the sensible West wolves would rather die than let Cane turn their pack known for resilience and discipline into a laughingstock.

No coward was going to be Alpha.

In no time, every wolf in the estate was forced to their knees in the field, subdued and stripped of their weapons. Even the sub-alphas who had sided with Cane were treated no differently. They too were on the ground, awaiting judgment.

Not all the alphas had supported Cane.

Alpha Uzzarh—one of the only three sub-alphas with packs outside the West borders like Ezra—had chosen to run. He hadn't aligned with Cane, but he hadn't supported Ezra either. He picked neutrality.

That, of course, would be addressed when this was over.

There was no neutrality in war. As long as they operated under the West Pack banner, every sub-alpha was expected to rally under their Alpha and fight his wars. The same way the four alphas would fight Elijah's wars.

As if Asher had foreseen his own disappearance, he had made it clear that Ezra would take his place in his absence.

Of course, the role should have fallen to Jeremiah, but the wolf was still too inexperienced to handle those snakes —barely respected by the older ranks. If they didn't take Asher seriously half the time, they would absolutely tear Jeremiah apart. Ezra was the safer choice until Jeremiah grew into his strength.

Alpha Lemiel, the other Alpha, had been the one to send reinforcements, and with Alpha Leon's wolves joining the cause, they finally had enough numbers to confront Cane and his band of rebels.

Naturally, not all sub-alphas were present. The rest would be hunted down later by Irene's wolves once they arrived in a few hours. And like they always said: cut off the Hydra's head, and the body collapses. Now that their instigator had fallen, the others would scatter like frightened birds, making them easy targets.

Except their instigator was missing.

"Where is he?" Ezra roared, scanning the crowd.

He stood bare-chested, wearing only the pair of pants one of his men had thrown at him minutes after he'd taken down the last of the rebels. They had minimized bloodshed as much as possible, but any wolf who refused to surrender had been put down. That was the law of war.

"Where is Cane? Don't tell me we let him escape?" he demanded, addressing no one in particular as he stalked toward his allies—Alpha Irene and her husband Aeron, Alpha Leon and Alexa, who had surprisingly agreed to fight.

Naturally, Nancy was not here. She was at the West Pack house where she was safe.

There was no damn universe where Ezra would risk his pregnant wife on a battlefield.

"I last saw him with Micah," Alexa said. "And since Micah isn't here either, I'm guessing they're together."

"So where are they then?" Leon demanded. "Micah was supposed to deliver Cane to us. Don't tell me he has other plans with him?"

"What plans?" Irene snapped, her eyes flashing. "He risked his life for this. What in the world could he gain from betraying us now?"

"I don't know," Leon shot back. "You're the one who hired the demon, remember?"

Of course, the hot-tempered Irene exploded. "You dumb piece of—"

But before she could finish, the air rippled and both Micah and Cane materialized out of thin air, cutting off their argument mid-curse.

Micah landed lightly on both feet. Cane, however, hit the ground like a sack of potatoes.

Everyone waited for him to rise and start raging over his failed rebellion but he didn't move. His shoulders began to tremble and before anyone could make sense of it, a small whimper escaped him.

At first, no one believed what they heard. But the broken sound came again and until it cracked open into a full sob.

A stunned silence blanketed the entire field for a moment before murmurs rushed through the air.

Was the leader of the rebellion crying?

No one dared voice it aloud, as if naming it would shatter reality itself.

Maybe he was mourning his loss. Yes, that had to be it, they thought. Because this was really strange to comprehend.

Ezra's head snapped toward Micah.

"Where did you take him? What did you do to him?"

Micah shrugged casually, "Just took him out of the picture while you all reclaimed the pack."

"See?" Irene said pointedly, shooting Leon a glare.

Leon Draven had nothing to fire back with this time.

Micah continued, unbothered.

"Although, I may have given him a little preview of his afterlife." His lips twitched, dramatic as ever. "But I'm afraid he'll need therapy after that. Oh wait... there's no therapy in hell. Just punishment."

The moment those words left Micah's mouth, Cane wailed loudly.

"Please! Don't kill me!"

He lurched forward toward Ezra, driven by desperation. But the sudden movement looked too much like an attack, and Ezra reacted on instinct by kicking Cane squarely in the chest, sending him sprawling across the dirt.

Realizing the mistake, Cane scrambled up, this time approaching on his knees like the others. He rubbed his trembling fingers together, begging frantically:

"Please don't kill me! Please! Do anything else—hurt me, break my hands, my legs, anything—I'll take it. Just don't send me there yet. Let me make penance. Please! I don't want to go to hell! I beg you!"

Chapter 698: He Wanted Death

It was safe to say everyone was shell-shocked. None of them had seen Cane's reaction coming, least of all his allies. And right now, they were embarrassed to death.

To think this pathetic fool was the Alpha they had risked their lives rebelling for? They stared at him in frozen disbelief, shame burning through them. Not that any of them could truly understand the nightmare Cane had just lived through. It was the sort of terror that tears a man open and strips him down to nothing.

"You disgrace!" Alpha Rowland roared from his spot on the ground. He always had a huge temper, and right now his body shook with the fury of humiliation.

It wasn't enough that he had been stripped down to nothing, but the bastard responsible for dragging them all into this rebellion couldn't even take defeat like a champ. Instead, he was here, whimpering like a woman? That was not just a personal insult, but a disgrace to his identity as a member of the West pack.

They died like heroes, not like chickens.

He said coldly, "Perhaps I should end you with my hands instead."

Rowland lunged at Cane with a frustrated roar, but before he got close enough, Aeron gave him a sucker punch that dropped him flat with a thud.

"Fuck!" Rowland groaned on the floor, clutching his bleeding nose.

Aeron looked down at him, "You should be pleading for your life at this point, not behaving like an uncultured animal."

"Rowland..." Alpha Drake quickly crouched beside him. "You should calm down."

Alpha Rowland sat up, cursing under his breath. He glared up at Aeron, who wasn't even ruffled.

Aeron growled, "Try anything stupid again and you'll be the first to die."

But Rowland scoffed. Did he think he was afraid of death? Unlike pathetic Cane, he wouldn't cower in the face of the inevitable.

Aeron left him but stayed close, his sharp eyes watching his every move.

"Don't bother them, Rowland. Not if we want to survive this," Drake warned.

"We're not going to survive this. We attacked Asher Nightshade and attempted a forceful takeover, remember?" Rowland muttered. "Who keeps rebels alive? The West pack shows no mercy." He gritted his teeth. "I shouldn't have trusted Cane's capability. What could the bastard do so special anyway? I should have taken the pack for myself. Now look at this mess."

Then Drake nudged him, intentionally keeping his voice low. "Not if I speak up for you."

"What?" Rowland narrowed his eyes, suspicion building inside of him. "What do you mean speak for me?"

Drake gulped, then gathered his courage. "Just like you said, Cane was a terrible choice. I realized it at the last minute and made the necessary choices. So ... I led them here."

Immediately, Rowland froze, a bell ringing in his mind. It dawned on him Drake had betrayed them. He set them up. Memories of all the time they were seated together orchestrating their plans flashed through his head — and to think one of them was a snake all along.

Drake, sensing the shift in Rowland's demeanor, tried to soften the blow. "It's just as I thought, he failed in the end. But Ezra is honorable, and he gave me his word. All you need to do now is show repentance, and I'll speak for you...."

Unknown to him, every word only fanned the wildfire inside Rowland. Drake didn't even notice the way Rowland's fist tightened, shaking with fury.

He continued speaking, "It's best to remain docile now and let me handle—ugh—"

Drake's sentence cut off with a strangled gasp. He looked down to find Rowland's fist buried in his chest. The wolf had punched straight into him.

"You—" Drake choked, blood dripping from his mouth. "How could you—?"

The disbelief in his eyes meant nothing to Rowland, whose face was carved with righteous fury.

It all happened so fast that not even Aeron, standing right beside them, could interfere. Shock rolled through everyone in the field like a cold wind. The lesser wolves stared in horror at the sight of their supposed pack leaders murdering each other. It dawned on them too late how catastrophic their decisions of joining them had been. They were doomed.

Rowland twisted his hand deeper inside Drake's chest, crushing the heart so there was no chance of survival. Drake groaned, choking on his own blood, staring at the dark glint in Rowland's eyes as the life drained out of him.

"Unlike you," Rowland snarled, "I'd rather die with honor. See you in hell."

With one final crushing twist, he tore what remained of his selfish heart and shoved Drake away.

Drake fell to the side, his face frozen in permanent disbelief that Rowland would end him. Then the light in his eyes died out for good.

For a moment, silence washed over everyone.

Then Ezra muttered dryly, "Finally, one problem taken off my hands. Tonight just keeps getting better."

Cane stared at Drake's body in horror. Whether it was grief for a fallen ally or terror of where Drake's soul had just gone, no one could tell. But judging by the petrified look in his eyes, it was likely the latter.

It didn't help either that Rowland turned those cold, steel eyes on him, and the soul left his body. Rowland was coming for him.

"No...." he shifted away.

Aeron's demeanor shifted instantly.

"Stay down," Aeron warned. But he might as well have spoken to a rabid dog because Rowland's hackles were raised, a low growl rumbling from his chest.

Then Rowland leapt high into the air, clearly aiming straight for Cane. How dare that bastard start this rebellion and then beg for life? A painful death was the only justice. They would all rot in hell.

Aeron moved at the same moment, slamming Rowland back to the ground. But Rowland kicked him hard in the ribs and they broke apart. As soon as they separated, both men growled, circling each other.

Ezra tried to interfere but Leon held him back.

"I think the fools decided his fate. Let Aeron handle this."

"Oh, this is going to be interesting," Irene was exhilarated at the thought of seeing her husband in action.

Rowland had just issued Aeron a fight.

"Move! Move away from them!" They directed the rebels on the ground to make space for the both wolves.

Immediately, they obeyed, none willing to be casualty in the fight about to happen.

And just as expected, Aeron and Rowland collided with a force that cracked the earth beneath their feet.

Rowland's snarl tore through the air as he launched himself at Aeron, with his claws extended, and his eyes glowing with savage gold.

Aeron matched him too with a growl of his own, his eyes turning a deep, burning amber as he dodged and countered, the two wolves fighting in human form but dripping with feral power.

Rowland first swung a brutal hook meant to break bone, but Aeron blocked it with his forearm and retaliated with a knee to Rowland's ribs. A sickening crack echoed through the space.

But Rowland didn't even flinch. Pain meant nothing to him now. If he was going to die, it was going to be like a warrior.

He lunged again, his claws slashing across Aeron's chest and three bloody lines ripped open instantly.

Aeron stared down at the blood then bared his teeth. He was going to make him regret that.

They collided again, and this time Rowland came at Aeron with reckless abandon, swinging wildly, fueled by sheer rage. But

Aeron, stronger and far more controlled, easily deflected each strike, countering it with punishing blows that made Rowland stumble but never fall.

"Fight me properly!" Rowland roared, spit flying. "Don't patronize me!"

"You're dead meat already, asshole," Aeron shot back.

He grabbed Rowland's wrist mid-strike and twisted it hard, snapping his bones. Rowland hissed but didn't retreat, using his other hand to rake claws across Aeron's jaw, leaving red trails.

Aeron's head jerked back, but he countered with a savage elbow that smashed into Rowland's cheekbone.

Rowland let out a laughter that was bloody, guttural, and totally unhinged. "This is how a wolf dies!"

He charged again and Aeron met him head-on this time, slamming him to the ground with so much force that dust spiraled upward. Rowland thrashed beneath him, claws slicing everything he could reach—Aeron's arms, torso, and sides.

But he pinned Rowland's wrists, lifted his free hand and drove it through Rowland's abdomen in one brutal strike.

Blood gushed out hot and dark as Rowland arched upward, eyes going wide from the shock. He let out a pained growl while Aeron withdrew his hand, leaving Rowland's stomach torn. The wound was brutal with his intestines showing but it was not enough to kill him.

But all the wolves froze at this spot expecting Rowland to give up now and just admit defeat.

Rowland laughed, wheezing in the process as blood pooled beneath him. "I said I'd die with honor, not by your mercy."

Then a dangerous glint flashed in his eyes and Aeron realized his plan a little too late.

Rowland moved with the last burst of strength he had, staggering toward one of the wolves. The wolf tried to stop him, but Rowland elbowed him hard enough to knock him flat. He grabbed the fallen guard's gun.

"Rowland!" Aeron barked, lunging forward.

Rowland grinned at him, "Honor, not pity."

Before anyone could stop him, Rowland shoved the barrel under his jaw and pulled the trigger.

He died instantly.

Chapter 699: Punishment And Rewards

For a moment, no one spoke.

The scene was just too heavy for anyone to form words. It was unbelievable how things had gotten out of control so quickly.

Rowland's corpse still lay sprawled where he'd shot himself, brutally reminding the rebel wolves just how close they were to the grave right now. One wrong move and they would join him.

"Well," Micah drawled, "I guess I'll be visiting two new faces in hell now."

Cane flinched, the memory of his own visit still fresh in his mind. He could almost imagine Drake and Rowland arriving in hell and realizing how much of a mistake they had made. Except it was too late.

Ezra took a step forward, his gaze sweeping over the rebels. His wolf was still simmering under his skin, furious, and ready to kill.

"So," he said slowly, "does anyone else want to die tonight?"

There was nothing but dead silence. The rebels didn't even dare to breathe loudly.

"You rebels deserve to die," Ezra began, his expression hard as steel. "Every single one of you. You turned your backs on your Alpha—the Alpha who won his position, the rightful heir of the West pack, and you rallied behind him...." He pointed straight at Cane.

Cane didn't even dare lift his head, not when he wore shame like a sackcloth. No one would ever look at him the same again. He had lost his position, his respect — and he might very well lose his life too.

"A coward," Ezra spat. "A man who wanted what didn't belong to him. A man who tried to reap where he did not sow. And all of you—every one of you—followed him. Is that what the West pack has turned into? A pack full of sharks?!"

He paced before them, his presence towering and unrelenting.

"Where is the discipline drilled into our blood? The strength? The honor? What legacy do you think you were building? A future of betrayal? Of treachery? Of wolves stabbing wolves in the back? Is that the standard you want our children and grandchildren to inherit?"

Some of the rebels lowered their heads in shame. Others began to cry.

Ezra continued, his voice rising like an approaching storm. "Is this what we want the West pack to be known for? Cowards and traitors? Because that's exactly what you became tonight."

A broken voice rose from the back.

"sorry... I am... I am so sorry."

Ezra stared at the wolf who spoke, who immediately bowed his head to the dirt.

And then like a dam breaking, desperate cries filled the field

"Have mercy on us!"

"We didn't know any better!"

"We don't want to die!"

"I swear—I'll change!"

"Please, Alpha Ezra, don't kill us!"

Ezra's voice exploded like thunder.

"SILENCE!"

All voices died instantly, choked off like flames in a storm.

Ezra inhaled deeply, then spoke with clear, biting authority.

"The way of the West is to show no mercy."

The wolves stiffened. They knew that, yet they weren't ready to accept their fates.

"But," he continued, "we might have a war on our hands soon and the werewolf population is fragile enough as it is. A rebellion like this is damaging, and right now, we cannot afford more losses. Not when our true enemies would rejoice at seeing us tear each other apart."

Ezra paused, letting his words sink in.

"That is why..." He exhaled. "...we will have mercy on you."

What? They could not believe what they just heard?

Then a wave of disbelief—and relief—swept through them. Murmurs broke out with some crying again, and others laughing shakily, overwhelmed.

But Ezra lifted a hand. "However.. ."

Their excitement froze.

"No rebellion goes unpunished. Not this one, and certainly not any that may attempt to follow it."

He stepped further closer, saying in a dark tone, "You all will face consequences so that none of you ever again would let such treacherous thoughts cross your mind."

Ezra listed the punishments one by one, his tone brooking no argument.

"Every Alpha who participated in this rebellion would be stripped of their position and imprisoned immediately."

Murmurs arose amongst the wolves. If this was the alphas punishment, they could only imagine what awaited them.

"Not just the alphas, every single one of you will work the lowest duties in the pack until further notice. You will serve the widows and families of those harmed by your rebellion. You will rebuild what you helped destroy. And for the next three months, you will not leave pack grounds. Consider that leniency, because the alternative was death."

Despite the harshness, none protested. This was better than death.

Ezra then turned toward Cane.

Cane's breath stuttered, fear gripping him like ice.

Ezra picked up one of the guns seized from the rebels and Cane scrambled backward immediately, hands raised.

"Please—please, don't do that— Ezra— Alpha—please—"

But Ezra's eyes were cold and final. His decision was made.

Cane bolted to his feet to run when — BANG

The shot struck his kneecap.

Cane screamed, collapsing hard, and clutching his shattered knee.

Ezra approached him without rush or pity.

"You said I could do anything," Ezra reminded him, kneeling beside him with dark amusement curling his lips. "And I've decided what I want to take."

He pressed the gun barrel to Cane's other knee.

"Your legs."

Cane sobbed, shaking violently.

"No—no, please—please—"

BANG.

The second kneecap exploded.

Cane howled in agony, writhing on the ground, broken.

Ezra stood and looked down at him like the worthless creature he'd revealed himself to be.

"Now," he said coldly, "you won't have the freedom to walk, run, or plan another rebellion."

Cane choked on a sob, clutching what remained of his knees.

Ezra continued, "This is a temporary punishment. When your Alpha, Asher Nightshade, returns, he will decide your final fate."

Ezra stepped back and folded his arms.

"Let's all pray," he added with a mocking smirk, "that you've made enough penance by then."

Micah let out a long, exhausted breath and slumped onto the ground, sitting with his back against the wall. His strength had finally fizzled out, leaving his limbs heavy and his vision dipping in and out.

"Now that we're done with them, can we concentrate on me for a minute?" Although his voice was laced with sass, his face was pale.

Alexa came to his side and crouched down, her eyes scanning his torso. "Your wounds have healed with the bullet and that's not good."

Micah said to her. "Since when did you become a doctor?"

Alexa snorted. "I'm the Luna of my pack. I've picked up more first aid tricks than you think." She grabbed the torn edge of his shirt and ripped it open without hesitation.

"Oy," Micah hissed, "you could've warned—"

He didn't finish because a voice so sharp rent through the air.

"Take your hands off my mate."

Alexa froze mid-movement.

Micah's eyebrows shot up, and despite his pain, a slow smirk curved his lips. "No way."

They both turned.

Adele was storming toward them and her eyes were dark, and deadly, fixed on Alexa with a glare that could peel bark off a tree.

Alexa stood up so fast she nearly tripped. "You know what, fine," she muttered, throwing her hands up. "Take him. I'm not touching anyone's mate. Goddess forbid."

She rolled her eyes dramatically and stalked away, mumbling something under her breath about "overprotective possessive wolves" and "why mates were always a headache."

Adele ignored her completely.

She dropped to her knees beside Micah, her anger slipping away long enough for worry to creep into her eyes.

Micah managed a small grin. "How are you even here?"

Adele scoffed. "You think I'd let my mate walk into a rebellion without backup? I left the hospital as soon as I could." Her gaze dropped to his side, her breath hitching. "And I was right. You're a mess."

Micah winced. "It's just a scratch."

"Sure," she deadpanned. "And I'm the Moon Goddess."

Then her expression hardened. "This is going to hurt."

Before he could ask what would hurt, she flicked out her claws.

Micah hissed as she dug them into his side, searching through his flesh for the embedded silver. His jaw clenched so hard his teeth creaked while sweat broke across his forehead.

"There," Adele muttered, pinching the bullet between her claws and pulled it.

Micah's breath exploded from his lungs in a harsh, agonizing hiss as the bullet tore free. She tossed the bloody silver aside, then immediately placed her glowing palm over the wound.

Warmth spread through him, knitting muscle and sealing the torn skin. His pain receded in slow waves until all that remained was the throb of leftover adrenaline.

The moment the wound closed, Micah didn't even wait a second. He reached up, curled his hand around Adele's waist, and tugged her against him.

And without a word, he kissed her hungrily, pouring his feelings into it.

Adele didn't resist at all. She dug her hands into his hair, melting into him.

Chapter 700: A Jealous Mate

Whatever happened next with the West Pack, Adele didn't care. She dragged her mate back to the pack house, determined to get him somewhere safe. Micah had sacrificed enough for them already. They should be grateful he was still breathing.

Because deep down, Adele knew if anything had happened to Micah, none of them would have cared. They would have probably muttered, "Good riddance," relieved that the demon son of Angus was finally gone.

Adele couldn't even blame them. She had once seen him through that same lens until the goddess tied their souls together. Her mate wasn't what they painted him to be. Sure, he could be a menace when he wanted to be, but she knew Micah's heart.

He was goodness and light, whether the world deserved him or not. And right now,

she feared the day he would break himself trying to prove that to people who might never stop stereotyping him until the day he was gone

As soon as they stepped inside the packhouse, Nancy King was the first to approach them.

"Your Highness," she said, bowing slightly, pride warming her features. "Thank you. If it hadn't been for your help, we would have lost far more wolves tonight. You ended the war before it even began."

The sincerity in her tone took Adele aback.

Maybe there was hope. Maybe, with time, the Goddess' hand would help them see Micah for who he truly was.

Micah puffed his chest a little. "Well, thank you. I did what any bro—" he nearly slipped, catching himself, "—friend would do. Violet is dear to me, and Asher is the rightful heir to the West Pack, no matter what anyone says."

Nancy nodded gratefully before turning to Adele. "The Goddess was kind enough to bless you with him. Rest. I'll ensure no one disturbs either of you tonight." Her voice carried layered meaning that Adele caught every thread of it.

Adele nodded. "Thank you. I appreciate it."

Nancy gave a subtle wink and moved on.

Micah immediately grinned so wide she was surprised his jaw didn't snap.

"What?" Adele arched a brow when he wouldn't stop giving her that stupid, smug look.

"Resting up?' Micah said with a suggestive tone, "Is that what we're going to do?"

"Shut up and lead the way, Micah." She tried to sound annoyed, but the tiny smile tugging at her lips betrayed her.

"I should warn you," he said cockily, "I'm actually so drained it might take me hours to recharge to a hundred percent, honey."

Adele stopped and pinned him with a hard stare. "Lead. The. Way. Micah."

His smirk deepened. "I like it when you boss me around, honey."

Adele scoffed, completely done with him.

"Come on," Micah chuckled, reached for her hand, and intertwined their fingers. "Let's go."

And together, they disappeared down the corridor.

As soon as they entered his room, Adele paused, scanning the space with a critical eye.

"At least they know how to treat you well," she said sarcastically, taking in the spacious layout.

The room was large enough with soft light warming the dark interior. The massive bed with thick furs, and velvet pillows rested against the far side. A wardrobe stood in the corner and the fireplace was lit, filling the air with heat. It was luxurious enough for royalty.

When Adele turned back, Micah was standing there, still in his bloodied, ripped clothes, looking at her with that annoyingly expectant expression.

"What?" she asked, feigning innocence. "You should wash up. You smell like blood and gore."

"Really?" Micah drawled, smug as always.

He grabbed the hem of his shirt and peeled it off in one clean motion, tossing it to the ground. Then he pointed at his bare torso like he was presenting a prized artifact.

"You really don't want a piece of this?"

Adele followed the motion—and sweet goddess.

Her mate was sexy as hell. The hard lines of his abs, the flex of his muscle with every breath, the taper of his waist, and that deep V leading downward, vanishing beneath his pants was enough to ruin even the purest of maidens. His skin was warm bronze, glowing in the firelight, taut over strength that came from both his incubus and werewolf heritage.

Her gaze reached his face, and Micah was already smirking, eyes glittering with amusement. Yes, he knew exactly how sinful he looked. He was an incubus after all. Everything about him was built to seduce.

"Yes. I don't want a piece of it," she said flatly.

Micah's jaw literally fell.

"In fact..." Adele threw herself onto the bed and stretched dramatically, "...I think I prefer this bed. Considering I traveled across territories to rescue my mate only to find some other woman's hands on him."

She ended it with a hiss.

Oh. It dawned on Micah. So that was the problem. His mate was jealous.

"Come on, Adele, she was just helping."

"Yes, I'm sure," she snapped. "I might not be a succubus, but even I could smell the lust rolling off that woman. And you..." she jabbed a finger, "... are an incubus, Micah. Do you know what that does?"

Micah held up both hands. "Fine. I'm sorry. It was stupid of me not to stop the horny Alexa from—" he shifted his position, "—helping me. And if it comforts you, she barely even touched me."

He sat slowly on the edge of the bed as Adele eyed him with a tight jaw and dark gaze.

He swallowed. Damn, he really had a possessive mate. Not that he minded.

Having never been chosen by anyone in his life, having a woman ready to claw someone's eyes out for touching him?

Yeah. He could love her for the rest of his damn life for that alone.

"You didn't even ask me to come with you," Adele grumbled. "If I was there, no one else would've laid a hand on you."

Micah softened. "I just didn't want you to get hurt. You're still under hospital surveillance, remember?"

"I'm not weak," she snapped.

"Fine," Micah acknowledged, surrendering at last. "You're not weak. Next time, even if it's a journey straight into hell, I'll take you with me. And I'll make sure not even the succubi down there look at me."

"Good." Adele nodded firmly.

"Okay, so now that we're past that part, can we move on—"

He leaned forward, but before he could get anywhere near her, Adele's leg slid up and pressed firmly against his chest, stopping him in place.

Micah froze at first, right before a slow, wicked smirk curved his lips.

"Well," Micah purred, eyes glued to the long line of her leg, "guess who's got a foot kink? Moi. Obviously."