

Defy The Alpha(s) - Chapter 741: Murder A Queen[1,020 words]

Chapter 741: Murder A Queen

Queen Annequin followed Rhara, her stride unhurried, spine straight, and her chin lifted in confidence. If this was a trap, and she was being led to her death, she sure showed no sign of fearing it. In fact, she looked almost amused by the possibility.

Guards lined the corridors wall to wall, standing at rigid attention. Their presence was heavy and every turn they took revealed more of them.

Annequin glanced around, her sharp eyes taking it all in. "Is the palace always this well protected," she asked lightly, "or is all this for me?" She smiled to herself. "Because if it is, I must say, I'm truly honored."

Rhara didn't respond, her jaw set tight. The foreign queen was exhausting. Every word out of her mouth felt like a provocation.

When no answer came, Annequin hummed. "I suppose most of the Fae here don't talk much."

That was it.

"Just shut up and walk," Rhara snapped.

Annequin stopped.

The sudden stillness was palpable. Slowly, she turned her head, her eyes narrowing as she looked at Rhara. When she spoke again, her voice was tight, controlled, and stripped of its earlier playfulness.

"Careful," she said. "I may be an outsider, but I am still a queen."

Something shifted in the air.

Rhara felt it immediately, a pressure she hadn't noticed before coiled around her spine, subtle but unmistakable. For the briefest second, unease crept in. What power did this woman carry beneath her armor and smug smiles?

"Apologies, your highness." Rhara said respectfully.

"Apologies accepted." Annequin said so casually it didn't feel like she had been offended at all in the first place. Her mood swings were out of this world.

After that, Rhara didn't say another word.

They walked in silence until they reached a wide set of double doors. Rhara pushed them open, and Annequin stepped through only to slow in surprise.

Books.

Shelves upon shelves of them towered from floor to ceiling.

Annequin blinked, then gestured around. "Didn't you say the Queen's study?"

A voice answered her from the corner.

"Why?" Queen Seraphira stepped forward. "So you can pinpoint my quarters and murder me in my sleep?"

"Of course not," Annequin said, almost offended. "Why would I leave my kingdom only to come to another and murder its queen?"

Seraphira's gaze was cold, and assessing. "I don't know. You tell me."

For a moment, the two queens simply stared at each other. Power met power, neither willing to blink first.

Then Seraphira broke the silence. "Rhara. You may leave us."

Rhara stiffened. "Your Majesty—"

One look from Seraphira silenced her. Rhara bowed and withdrew, pulling the doors closed behind her.

The room fell quiet.

Annequin exhaled slowly and turned in a slow circle, taking in the library properly this time. "Your people love you," she remarked, almost thoughtfully.

Seraphira arched a brow. "And yours don't?"

Annequin chuckled, drifting toward a shelf. Her fingers traced the spine of the volume with surprising gentleness. "It's complicated," she said. "Some do. Some don't."

She turned back to Seraphira, her smile thin. "In the end, it's always a fight for power."

Seraphira studied her for a long moment, then gestured toward the wide table at the center of the room.

"Have a seat."

But Annequin paused beside the table. "I hope you don't mind," she said casually, already reaching for the clasps at her shoulder.

Before Queen Seraphira could respond, Annequin had already taken off the first piece. She set aside the pauldron engraved with Astaria's crest on the table.

Next were the vambraces, which she unfastened with ease, followed by the layered chest plate that guarded her torso. Each piece hit the table with a dull thud that echoed through the quiet library.

Seraphira watched her speechless. This was not what she expected at all.

Annequin moved efficiently and methodically with the experience of someone who had put on and taken off her armor more times than she could count.

The greaves followed, then the articulated hip guards and last was the gorget at her throat. She tugged it free and rolled her neck with an exaggerated wince.

"Gods," Annequin muttered, flexing her shoulders. "That thing is torture."

She straightened, finally free of the metal shell she had worn to the party. Beneath the armor, Annequin wore a fitted tunic in muted slate-blue, belted at the waist, and paired with soft trousers and boots. There were no jewels. No regalia. Nothing at all that screamed her title as the queen.

She glanced at Seraphira and added, almost as an afterthought, "By the way, excellent food. Truly. I would have enjoyed it more if I wasn't uncomfortable inside that tin can."

Seraphira did not respond. She simply studied the woman before her, trying to reconcile the carefree tone with the undeniable authority Annequin carried. She behaved so lightly it would be easy—dangerously easy—to underestimate her.

But Seraphira knew better. No one ruled a kingdom by accident.

Annequin finished by collapsing into the chair opposite her with zero grace, throwing her arms wide and letting out a dramatic groan. "Freedom," she declared. "I swear, I'm never getting back into armor. At least not anytime soon."

In contrast, Queen Seraphira lowered herself into her seat with elegance. She folded her hands atop the table, her posture perfect.

She wasted no time.

"Why are you here?" she asked.

Annequin blinked at her, then groaned again, rubbing her face. "Vacation."

Seraphira stiffened. "Excuse me?"

Annequin dropped her hand and met her gaze directly, all humor stripped away in an instant. "My kingdom is loud. Politics. The nobles and their endless opinions." She shrugged. "So I chose the one place no one would dare to follow me. And here you are. Congratulations. Your kingdom appeared on my radar."

"And you expect me to believe that?"

Annequin lifted a brow. "Why wouldn't you?"

Her eyes searched Seraphira's face. "Tell me, Queen of the Free Fae. What do you think I've come to achieve in your realm?"

"Or," Seraphira leaned in, her voice dropping low. "You tell me, what did my husband promise you?"

Defy The Alpha(s) - Chapter 742: Ally Or Not[1,572 words]

Chapter 742: Ally Or Not

"Ahh, your husband," Annequin said. "You mean the one seated beside you on the dais because you obviously didn't introduce him to me."

"Don't play games with me," Seraphira warned.

The air in the room tightened instantly, pulsing with power.

"Fine," Annequin said, leaning in as well. Her tone shifted, losing its teasing edge. "I've had no direct interaction with your husband. But I have heard of him. He's been trying to meet me and has already managed to reach the other court kings. That's how you found

members of the Summer Court on your lands. Those Fae have always been a little too ambitious for their own good."

"You expect me to believe that?" Queen Seraphira asked carefully, her gaze narrowing.

Annequin shrugged. "I don't know much about the free Fae, but our kind?" She smiled. "We're incapable of lying."

Then she added almost at once, amused, "Though we are very good at twisting the truth to our advantage. And omission, last I checked, is not a lie."

Queen Seraphira stared at the Fae with a small frown creasing her brow. Usually, she read people's aura, and the pulse of magic that revealed their intent and nature. But there was nothing on Queen Annequin. It was as if she stood there soulless.

Which was impossible. Everyone had a soul. There was something off and unsettling about the Fae. She just couldn't tell.

Seraphira rose from her seat and walked slowly toward the shelves lining the wall, her fingers brushing along the carved wood as she spoke. "I'm sure you've heard the story of how the free Fae came to be. How we were separated from the others."

"All I've heard are fables," Annequin replied unapologetically. "Different versions told by different mouths." she tilted her head slightly. "But perhaps I might hear the truth from an authentic source."

"Every Fae child knows the story before they can even speak," Seraphira said. "It was a rhyme we grew up with. Repeated until it shaped our minds, and became the only truth we believed. The tale of the five primordial Fae gods. How the four sought to bind every Fae to a court and its respective magic. But the fifth refused."

She paused. "And to protect us, the fifth enclosed us behind barriers for thousands of years. Until the magic weakened and it finally fell."

Seraphira pulled a book from the shelf, its spine worn with age, and turned back to Annequin. "Because of that isolation, you could say we're a little outdated."

She held Annequin's gaze. "Of all the queens who ruled the free Fae, Queen Iskava was the only one curious enough to look outward. She kept records, preparing for a future no one else believed would come. The others?" Her lips pressed thin. "They planned only for extermination. Any outsider who stepped onto our sacred land was meant to die."

"And you, Queen Seraphira?" Annequin asked calmly. "Which are you? Remember the stranger, or reject them?"

Seraphira's expression hardened. "I'm a rebel. The first of the free Fae to run from the cage we called home. As for strangers... that depends on the stranger." Her voice lowered. "I've been burned too many times to trust freely anymore."

Annequin was not offended by her words. The Fae Queen looked patient. Distrust was expected after all.

Queen Seraphira turned back to the book in her hands and began to flip through its yellowed pages. "Queen Iskava did her best to catalogue every known Fae court that she could."

She paused on a page and read aloud, her finger trailing the lines. "The Summer Fae—bright, volatile, creatures of heat. The Autumn Fae—clever, patient Fae. The Winter Fae—cold-blooded in both magic and temperament. And the Spring Fae, ever-renewing, beautiful, and deceptively cruel. The Day Court and the Night Court. Dawn and Dusk. The Sea Fae. The Mountain Fae. Even the Shadow courts that refuse sunlight entirely." Seraphira lifted her gaze to Annequin, eyes sharp. "They are all here."

Then she closed the book. "But there is nothing at all about Astaria. So pray tell me, Queen Annequin," she said coolly, "about your beloved Astaria."

"That's only because your records are outdated," Annequin said lightly. "If your kind stepped outside those borders you guard so fiercely, you would have known about us. Astaria isn't hidden. It's simply ignored."

"Some already do know," Annequin went on, "Your husband, for instance. I think it's just you—and those like you—who choose to keep a blind eye to what's happening beyond your forests."

"You—" Queen Seraphira snapped. Power stirred in the room as the air tightened, reacting instinctively to her temper.

Annequin lifted a hand, unfazed. "I thought you wanted to hear about Astaria," she gestured towards the empty seat across from her. "So why don't you sit because the Free Fae aren't the only ones with fables, your majesty."

For a long moment, it looked as though Seraphira might order her thrown out, then with visible restraint, she closed the book and placed it on the table.

Slowly, Queen Seraphira sat. Then she clapped her hands once.

The doors opened immediately, and servant Fae glided into the room, dressed in flowing white gowns. They moved in silence, setting goblets and a decanter between the two queens.

"I thought you might be thirsty," Seraphira said.

Annequin inclined her head. "How thoughtful of you."

The tension didn't vanish, but it was restrained, and wrapped in etiquette. The servants bowed and withdrew as swiftly as they had arrived, leaving the library empty once more.

Annequin reached for the decanter without hesitation. She poured herself a drink, lifted it, and took a generous sip without a pause, or even the slightest concern that it might be enchanted or poisoned.

Seraphira watched her closely.

Annequin swallowed and laughed. "That's a strong one," she said. "If I didn't know better, I'd think you were trying to loosen my tongue."

Seraphira scowled as she lifted her own goblet. "You seem loose-tongued enough already."

"Ah," Annequin replied, eyes glinting as she drank again, "but now I'll be more honest."

Seraphira was irritated by that knowing smile. Annequin knew far more than she was saying and has played it to her advantage so far.

The Astaria queen leaned back in her chair, one ankle crossing over the other, saying,

"We don't have any stories of a fifth god. Not in Astaria. All we know are the gods we worship. Each court honors its own. In that much, Queen Iskava was right. Summer, Winter, Autumn, and Spring. The four major courts existed independently for centuries."

She lifted her glass, swirling the liquid slowly.

"That is," she continued, "until my grandfather. King Oberon. He was the first to dream of something different. He believed the Fae would survive longer if we stood as one. Stronger and united."

Seraphira said, her tone edged with sarcasm, "So in the end, the fifth god's dream won after all."

Annequin's eyes flicked up, unmistakably amused. "Woman," she said bluntly, "the unification of the four courts has nothing to do with your god or your myths. It's simply politics."

Seraphira's lips thinned. "Call it what you like. Her will will be done."

Annequin did not argue. She simply shrugged, letting the belief sit where it was. Some truths, she knew, were better left unchallenged.

"To achieve his vision," Annequin went on, "my grandfather married into each of the four courts. Strategic unions. Summer, Winter, Autumn, and Spring. With those bonds came loyalty, armies, and influence enough to begin weaving the courts together."

She paused briefly before adding, "Then came my father. Aldric. Of course, there are many stories between then and now. But that is the foundation and all you need to know. I now rule Astaria, while my parents enjoy the luxury of doing whatever they please with their lives."

Seraphira narrowed her eyes. "But you said the other courts are ruled by their kings."

"They are," Annequin replied easily. "Each court still observes its customs and keeps its ruler. I can't be in four courts at once."

But I am their sovereign. They answer to me. I have the power to make kings, and unmake them."

The silence that followed was heavy.

"And what," Seraphira asked carefully, "have you come to do in my land? To force us into unity so you may rule over my people as well?"

Annequin groaned, rolling her head back. "Oh gods, no. I already have enough headaches managing four courts. I don't have the patience to take on more."

Her tone sobered.

"Until recently, the only Fae we knew sealed behind barriers were the creatures of Tamry Forest. Their king—who, quite fortunately, is my uncle. But the Free Fae? You are uncharted territory."

She met Seraphira's gaze fully now.

"Whether I like it or not, I need to know if you are allies or enemies. And if you are allies, I need to secure that bond before one of the vipers in my court decides to ally with one of yours and create a problem neither of us can control. I don't know if I'm making sense, Queen Seraphira."

For the first time since the conversation began, Seraphira relaxed. The tension in her shoulders eased, just slightly.

"You make a great deal of sense now," she said.

And for the first time, the two queens seemed to have a shared sense of purpose.

Defy The Alpha(s) - Chapter 743: Legion[1,023 words]

Chapter 743: Legion

"Now that we're on the same page," Annequin said, "I was hoping you might permit me to remain here a while longer. To observe, to understand the ways of the Free Fae. Progress between allies begins with familiarity, after all. And when you choose to visit Astaria, you would be afforded the same courtesy."

She paused, then added lightly, "As I mentioned, this is also a rare opportunity for me to rest from the endless demands of my people."

Queen Seraphira hesitated, her fingers tapping lightly against the rim of her goblet as she considered the request. Understanding Annequin a little did not mean trusting her. If anything, the longer the Queen of Astaria spoke, the more Seraphira sensed how much was being deliberately left unsaid.

Annequin noticed the hesitation immediately.

"You still don't trust me," she said.

Seraphira did not answer. She lifted the goblet to her lips instead and took a slow sip.

Annequin released a weary sigh. "Then let's do this another way. I'll swear an oath."

That got Seraphira's attention.

"Oaths among the Fae are binding," Annequin continued. "We can swear it to your goddess. I believe that should be sufficient."

The goblet hit the table with a dull thud.

"Before we do that," Seraphira said, "there is something I want to know."

Annequin tilted her head. "Oh?"

"What is your ability?"

There it was.

"Excuse me?" Annequin asked.

"You heard me," Seraphira replied, her voice firm, and unyielding. "Show me your gift."

The air between them tightened as power pressed against power. For a long moment, neither queen moved, neither willing to yield ground.

Then Annequin exhaled.

"Fine," she said, pushing herself to her feet. "But there's one thing."

Seraphira's eyes narrowed. "What?"

"Don't scream."

A scowl immediately crossed Seraphira's face as she straightened, her instinct sharpening. If this was a threat, she would meet it head-on.

Annequin walked several steps away, creating distance between them. She rolled her shoulders once, as if loosening tension she'd been carrying for far too long, then drew in a deep breath.

The first thing Seraphira noticed was the sudden drop in temperature.

The air became biting cold, raising gooseflesh along her arms. Oh. A winter Fae. Seraphira realized it at once, her gaze flicking to Annequin's blue hair, now seeming darker, and deeper.

Then the shadows came.

They poured out of Annequin like smoke, thick and rolling, swallowing the Faelight as they spread across the room. The darkness itself was unsettling—but it wasn't what sent fear clawing up Seraphira's spine.

It was the eyes.

Glowing red. Dozens of them.

No, more than dozens.

The shadows shifted, taking form, rising into shapes that breathed and watched and waited for command. This was not a single beast, but many. A legion.

Seraphira shot to her feet, her chair scraping sharply against the floor as she stumbled back, her heart hammering. Power gathered instinctively at her fingertips, but for the first time in years, it felt thin.

"Goddess have mercy..." she whispered, her voice barely sound as she stared into the abyss staring back at her.

Then, just as suddenly as they had appeared, the shadows recoiled.

The red eyes vanished one by one as the darkness folded inward, retreating into Annequin's body with frightening ease.

Then the room returned to normal, warmth seeping back into the air. And silence reclaimed the space.

Annequin stood there calm, and cautious. She carefully watched Seraphira who remained frozen, her pulse roaring in her ears, and the image of those watching eyes burned into her mind.

Her confidence made sense now.

Queen Annequin was not afraid of harm coming to her, not when she carried an army within her. If it came down to a direct confrontation, Seraphira honestly didn't know who would win—and that realization unsettled her deeply.

Finally, Annequin spoke. "I didn't want to show you that until you trusted me at least a little." She tilted her head, studying Seraphira. "Although you handled it better than most. Others usually run screaming, calling me a monster." She clicked her tongue, oddly amused. "Or perhaps this is just a delayed reaction and you'll still chase me out of your kingdom."

She seemed entirely content with either outcome.

"How—?" Seraphira began, still reeling.

Annequin raised a brow. "You mean how my parents managed to create a creature like me?" she asked casually, as though they were discussing weather. "Well, for starters, my father is an extremely powerful winter Fae who was turned into a Dark Fae at birth. Long story." She waved a hand dismissively. "My mother, on the other hand, is half Fae, half human—and she shares her body with a demon."

She smiled faintly. "So you can imagine what happens when two beings like that procrastinate. They give birth to me — the impossible."

Seraphira stared at her, speechless.

Annequin added quickly, "And that's just me. My siblings actually got the better end of the deal."

"You have siblings?" Seraphira asked, genuinely stunned.

Annequin nodded. "My mother is half human, which means she isn't limited by the Fae's reproductive difficulties." Her tone was dry. "Both my parents are currently on a mission to repopulate the extinct Dark Fae line. At present, they've produced thirty-five children."

She clapped once, slow and ironic. "Congratulations to them."

Seraphira felt her temples throb. Goddess help her.

"They've had several centuries to manage it," Annequin continued. "Which is why the throne was handed to me while they continue their little project."

That was it.

Seraphira turned back to the table, poured herself a drink, and downed it in one gulp. Then she poured another. And drank that too.

She reached for a third only to find the goblet empty.

"Goddess," she muttered. "I need more wine."

Just when Seraphira thought she had it bad, it turned out someone else had a far worse story.

Annequin asked innocently, "So, am I still swearing the oath, or should I pack my troublesome ass and leave your kingdom, Queen of the Free Fae?"

Seraphira squeezed her eyes shut. She prayed to the goddess she hadn't just invited catastrophe into her realm.

Defy The Alpha(s) - Chapter 744: Protected By Her Mates[1,022 words]

With Queen Seraphira gone, Violet was left alone with her beloved stepfather—and she had no intention of spending family time with him.

She had barely risen from her seat when Baron said, "How exactly do you intend to rule the Free Fae when you plan to return to the human world?"

Violet paused.

Slowly, she turned back to face him.

Baron's gaze was hard and filled with resentment. "Isn't that greed?" he continued, his tone edged with bitterness. "Rule your beast father's kingdom. You know nothing about the Free Fae and our people, so leave us be."

Violet let out a humorless laugh.

"And you think you're the right fit?" she asked coldly. "Your delusion is far more impressive than my supposed greed."

Across the hall, the cardinal alphas had already noticed the shift. They didn't move immediately, but their bodies tensed, their instincts on alert. They knew Baron wouldn't dare do anything openly—but they also knew Violet was fearless enough to provoke him.

When Violet leaned closer with a scowl, all four of them rose to their feet in unison. If Baron so much as lifted a hand, they would be on the dais in seconds.

Violet stopped just short of him.

"Thank your lucky gods you're married to my mother," she said, venom laced into her word. "If it were me in her place, you'd be screaming in whatever hell even immortals fear."

Their eyes locked, not that Baron blinked.

Violet straightened, turning to leave, then stopped as she remembered something.

"Oh," she added casually, glancing over her shoulder. "The next time you try to fuck with me in my dreams?"

She pointed down toward the floor, where Asher stood watching them with unnerving stillness.

"My mate will make sure you wake up a vegetable. Trust me, Asher doesn't threaten, he delivers."

She didn't wait for a response and walked away with her head high, leaving the space around Baron buzzing with tension.

Baron watched her go, a slow, thoughtful smile curling his lips.

"And that," he murmured to himself, "is exactly why he'd be perfect."

The moment the cardinal alphas noticed Violet approach, they moved out of their positions immediately, creating space for her at the center without a word. Violet slid into the seat between them, noticing the way her mates protected her from either sides.

Asher was the first to ask. "What happened? What was that about?"

Violet said lightly. "Nothing important. Just giving my stepfather a friendly reminder why he shouldn't mess with me."

Griffin's jaw tightened instantly. "If he ever lays a hand on you, I'll pulverize him myself."

Violet laughed. "Then you'd kill my mother."

Except the words hit harder than she expected now she said it.

Griffin's expression fell, guilt flashing across his face. "Oh. I— I'm sorry."

She waved it off quickly. "It's a joke."

But even as she laughed, the truth underneath it tightened her chest. Her mother's life was still tied to Baron's and one careless move was all it took and she'd be gone forever.

Queen Seraphira might not have been the best of mothers but Violet just got her and she wasn't about to lose her anytime soon. They will find a way to unbind her from Baron, one way or the other.

Roman noticed the shift immediately.

"Forget all that," he said, already reaching for a plate. "Eat, my dazzling Princess."

Violet blushed. Roman, the charmer.

He picked up a piece of honey-glazed fruit that was soft, and dripping with syrup and crushed petals, and held it to her lips. Violet opened her mouth obediently, but instead of pulling away when she took the fruit, she lightly sucked his finger before releasing him.

Roman froze.

His eyes darkened instantly, pupils blown wide, while his breath hitched like he'd been struck. Violet smirked, thoroughly pleased with herself.

Alaric cleared his throat. "Enough of that. We have a decree over our heads, remember."

Roman groaned, leaning back in his chair. "Oh, right. The dick killer."

Violet nearly choked on the fruit.

"Stop it," Griffin warned Roman just as he shifted closer, lifting a spoon from a bowl of warm grain soaked in spiced milk. "Open, my love," he said gently.

Violet obeyed again, laughing as she swallowed. Being pampered like this made her feel oddly small and cherished all at once.

And right at that moment, the pain hit her without warning.

Violet gasped, her fingers clutching at the table as a sharp spike drove through her skull. "Ah—"

All four of them were on her instantly.

"What's wrong?" Asher asked.

"Your head?" Alaric pressed.

Violet squeezed her eyes shut. "The headache has begun and Goddess, it's terrible."

That was all it took.

Griffin stood and swept her into his arms as if she weighed nothing. The Fae watched the as he carried her away from the feast, her head tucked against his shoulder. Violet barely registered them, the pain drowning out everything else.

They moved fast through the halls, and back to the private chamber. Griffin laid her gently on the bed while the others worked at removing her outer garments until she was left in soft innerwear.

Lila arrived moments later, holding a steaming cup. "Let her drink this," she said, pressing it into Alaric's hands. "It'll dull the magic backlash."

Alaric went to her and Violet didn't argue. She swallowed the bitter brew in one go, grimacing. That was terrible.

"Good," Lila said, satisfied. "Have a rest. You should be better in the morning."

When she left, Roman climbed onto the bed beside Violet without hesitation, pulling her close and setting his fingers gently at her temples. He began to rub slow circles, the pressure perfect.

"Breathe," he murmured. "Let it pass."

It worked. Gradually, the pain loosened its grip, fading into a dull ache. Just like that, Violet's body relaxed inch by inch.

The others settled around her and

Violet sighed, the tension finally draining from her chest.

She felt blessed having four marvelous mates by her side. So she closed her eyes with a smile, sleep slowly claiming her.

Defy The Alpha(s) - Chapter 745: Killed A Human[1,011 words]

Chapter 745: Killed A Human

Back at the Human Realm:

"Hey, Kelly!" Ken called, jogging after her.

Kelly glanced back once, rolled her eyes, and kept walking.

Ken caught up easily, falling into step beside her with a grin. "Hey."

"What do you want?" she snapped. She clearly wasn't in the mood for his antics.

"Easy," Ken said, lifting both hands in mock surrender. "I just realized we take the same route home. Why don't you ever wait for me?"

Kelly shot him a look. "And why would I?"

He hesitated, clearly realizing how ridiculous that sounded, then straightened. "Because I could protect you."

She stopped short. "What?"

"It's not safe to walk home alone these days," he said seriously. "Especially as a human. But with a werewolf by your side..." He flexed his arm dramatically. "Guaranteed protection."

Kelly tried to keep a straight face but failed.

A short laugh slipped out before she could stop it. She shook her head and resumed walking.

Ken's grin widened as he matched her pace. He took that as a win.

"This is only for tonight," Kelly warned him. "Don't bother me tomorrow."

"Okay," Ken agreed easily—though even he knew that wasn't going to happen. He wasn't sure when the attraction had started, only that it had. And now that it had, he had no intention of letting it go.

They walked in silence for a while. Kelly greeted a few of their customers and neighbors along the way, but never once addressed him.

"Why don't you like me?" Ken asked suddenly.

She turned to him, unimpressed. "Or do you mean why I'm not swooning over your annoying, handsome, lover-boy face like everyone else?"

Instead of being offended, his smile deepened. "So you do think I'm handsome."

"Ugh," Kelly groaned. "You're exhausting."

"Maybe," he said cheerfully. "But admit it, our names even sound good together. Kelly and Ken."

"Keep lying to yourself," she muttered, walking faster.

Thankfully, the bus stop came into view just ahead. A small crowd had already gathered with some seated on the bench and others standing and waiting quietly.

Then her gaze snapped to the hooded figure moving toward them, and for half a second, panic clawed up her spine until she recognized the face beneath the hood.

Noah.

Or rather— What in the name of the Lord had happened to him?

Noah had always been a scrawny kid, probably from overworking and never having time to take care of himself. But this was different.

In just a few days, he had become all bones, and Kelly meant that literally. His clothes hung off him like they no longer belonged to his body.

His pallor was sickly, an ashen gray that clung to his skin, stretched too tight over his sharp cheekbones. His face looked sunken, and aged, like someone who had lived decades of suffering in the span of days. Dark shadows pooled beneath his eyes, which were bloodshot and wild, too bright against his dull skin.

Kelly didn't realize she had stepped back until her shoulder bumped into Ken's chest.

Ken's hands came up instinctively, steadying her. Unlike her, he didn't flinch. His gaze remained locked on Noah, assessing him while his body subtly shifted into a protective stance.

"Found you." Noah spoke, his voice raspy and dry, as if it hadn't been used in a long time.

The words sent a chill straight down Kelly's spine.

"We should get out of here," Kelly whispered to Ken.

She didn't know why, but Noah frightened her right now and every instinct in her body was screaming at her to run. Something did not seem right about Noah.

But Ken ignored her.

Confident, stupid Ken stepped forward instead, closing the distance between himself and Noah.

"Dude," Ken said, trying to sound casual as he drew closer, "what the hell happened to you? Did you—"

He never finished the sentence because

Noah's fist slammed into his face with brutal force.

The impact cracked through the air and

Kelly screamed as Ken's body lifted off the ground, hurled backward as if he weighed nothing. He flew several meters before crashing into the concrete wall beside the bus stop, the sound of bone and brick colliding making her stomach twist.

Her hands flew to her mouth while the people gasped.

What the hell?

Then chaos broke out.

The crowd at the bus stop instead of fleeing came closer instead, with their phones out and began to record the scene with shouts of commotion in between.

Before Kelly could even process what she was seeing, a werewolf pushed through the crowd.

"Hey!" he barked, stepping forward to break the fight. "That's enough—"

He reached for Noah which was a big mistake.

Noah caught the werewolf's wrist mid-grab and there was a sickening crack.

The werewolf screamed as Noah twisted his arm with inhuman strength, snapping the bone like dry wood. Before the werewolf could even fall back, Noah kicked him hard behind the knee.

Another crack resounded.

The werewolf collapsed in a howl of pain, clutching his leg as the crowd recoiled in horror.

"What the—" someone shouted.

But another voice laughed. "Is that a human beating a werewolf's ass?! Yo, this is insane!" he zoomed in closer with his phones.

What none of them understood was that the werewolf hadn't fought back because he'd gone in assuming Noah was human.

And that assumption had almost cost him his life.

At the same moment, Ken groaned, slowly recovering.

Kelly's heart leapt as she saw him push himself off the ground, blood streaking down his mouth with fury blazing in his eyes.

"Ken, don't—!" she screamed.

But it was too late.

With a roar, Ken charged at Noah and the blow that followed sent the bastard flying his turn.

Noah smashed straight into the bus stop shelter. Glass exploded outward in a shower of shards, with metal screeching as the structure buckled. The boy collapsed on the twisted iron and shattered glass.

Immediately silence fell. Then slowly, accusing eyes turned toward Ken.

"He killed him," someone whispered.

Defy The Alpha(s) - Chapter 746: Run For Your Life[1,136 words]

Chapter 746: Run For Your Life

The speed at which public opinion shifted sent a cold shiver down Kelly's spine.

Aster City had been on edge for weeks now with humans and werewolves snapping at each other over every little thing, and she could feel that tension coiling tight in the air. One moment, the crowd had been thrilled, and entertained by the fight, the next, that feeling had turned deadly.

Their eyes were on Ken.

Kelly knew that look and what came next.

"You all saw what happened!" she shouted, stepping forward before fear could paralyze her. "Noah attacked first, both of them!" Her finger jabbed toward the injured werewolf still writhing on the ground, his bones struggling to knit back together. "Ken didn't start this!"

She planted herself in front of Ken without thinking, her arms spreading slightly as if her body alone could shield him from the crowd that was beginning to close in.

"It was self-defense!" she declared, her voice shaking but loud. "He had no choice!"

A scoff rose from somewhere in the crowd.

"Self-defense?" a man sneered. "That's bullshit. He's a werewolf, that kid was human. All he had to do was take a hit or two."

Another voice chimed in. "Yeah. But he used his full strength."

The ugly murmurs increased.

"And now the boy's dead," someone said grimly.

Kelly's stomach dropped.

"This is exactly why these creatures shouldn't be walking among us," a woman hissed. "They're dangerous."

"That's murder!" another person yelled.

The word rippled through the crowd like gasoline on fire and it didn't help that the bus pulled in right that moment.

Its brakes hissed loudly, the doors folding open with a mechanical sigh. Instead of dispersing, more people spilled out, drawn by the noise and the tension like moths to flame.

"What's going on?" a passenger asked.

"Some Werewolf killed a human," someone answered immediately.

"What?"

The driver leaned out of his seat, eyes narrowing as he took in the scene. "Hey, what the hell happened here?"

"Call it in," another voice urged. "Get the authorities."

Kelly's heart slammed violently against her ribs. This was quickly getting out of control.

She felt Ken shift behind her, probably trying to defend himself. Kelly turned her head just enough to whisper. "Ken, don't. You need to run. Now."

"Run?" he whispered back, disbelief in his tone. "I didn't do anything wrong."

"I know," she said. "But that doesn't matter anymore. Not to them."

"I am not—" Ken started, anger bleeding into his voice only for a collective gasp to ripple through the crowd.

They turned just in time to see Noah pushing himself upright.

Cuts littered his body with blood soaking into his clothes. One arm hung at a wrong angle, the bone clearly broken, but he didn't even flinch. Almost as if he didn't feel it at all.

His eyes lifted, and there was nothing human in them anymore. A wild, unhinged gleam burned there, hungry with violence. The crowd sensed it too and some of them backed away instinctively.

How was he still standing? That shouldn't be possible.

"Ken..." Kelly whispered, her voice slightly trembling. "You need to run. Now."

Ken didn't move.

Noah's lips peeled back, a low snarl tearing from his throat, raw and animalistic.

"Ken," she pressed, fear settling deep in her bones. Whatever stood in front of them wasn't the boy Noah anymore.

Still, Ken wouldn't move.

Then Noah launched.

He moved faster than anything human had a right to and Kelly barely had time to scream before Ken shoved her aside. She hit the ground hard, pain flaring up her shoulder as Noah slammed into Ken.

They crashed to the concrete in a tangle of limbs with Noah straddling him instantly.

This wasn't a fight but a mauling. Noah struck wildly, his fists and elbows coming down with feral brutality, while snarling and snapping his teeth at him. Ken struggled beneath him, grunting as he tried to push Noah off.

"Get off me, you fucking bastard!" Ken cursed but Noah didn't budge.

Then, without warning, Noah dropped his head and sank his teeth into Ken's throat. What followed next was a wet, tearing sound and Ken screaming in agony.

The horrible sound traveled through the space causing the crowd to gasp in horror.

Blood sprayed across the pavement as Noah ripped his flesh with savage force.

Kelly gagged violently, bile burning her throat as she scrambled backward.

This was barbaric.

"Holy shit! This is sick!" the same man from earlier shouted, pushing closer with his phone raised, excitement gleaming in his eyes.

Others weren't laughing. In fact, several people turned away, their faces pale, while some stumbled back toward the bus, unable to stomach the violence any longer.

Just when everyone thought it was over, Noah drove his fist straight through Ken's chest.

Ken let out a broken groan, blood spilling down the corner of his mouth as his body jerked once. Noah's eyes gleamed with savage intent as his hand closed around Ken's heart and tore it free in one brutal motion.

The light drained from Ken's eyes and for

a suspended moment, no one moved even though their phones remained raised, still recording the impossible scene unfolding before them. The air felt thick and

suffocating, as horror rooted the crowd in place.

Then Noah straightened slowly.

Whatever humanity he had left was gone as he lifted the heart to his mouth and bit into it.

The reaction was instant as screams rent the crowd. Several people gagged violently, with some doubling over as they vomited onto the pavement. Others stumbled back in blind panic, tripping over themselves as reality finally dawned on them.

Kelly scrambled to her feet, shocked. Even the injured werewolf from earlier had managed to rise too, staring at Noah with open revulsion.

Then Noah suddenly dropped to his knees as a scream ripped from his throat. He clutched his head as if something inside him was tearing itself apart, his body convulsing with violent spasms. The sound sent icy chills down Kelly's spine.

"Run!" she screamed. "Run for your lives!"

She didn't wait for anyone else and fled.

The remaining werewolf followed her, alongside a few stunned humans. But the others stayed behind, still filming even as terror engulfed the street.

Then Noah stood again.

Except this time, something about him was deeply wrong. His movements were jerky, grotesque, his limbs bending at unnatural angles. His eyes glowed crimson as he staggered forward.

Some humans finally backed away in fear.

All except one.

The man who had been cheering earlier stepped forward instead, grinning. "Yeah! That's it! Show 'em who's boss!"

Noah turned his head slowly and lunged.

He tackled the man to the ground with terrifying speed and sank his teeth into him.

Chaos exploded.

Defy The Alpha(s) - Chapter 747: Zombie Virus[1,012 words]

Chapter 747: Zombie Virus

"Good evening," the newscaster said, her expression professional, but visibly strained. "We interrupt regular programming to bring you a developing situation out of Aster City, specifically the Northbridge District, following a violent outbreak that occurred late last night at approximately nine p.m."

A footage rolled beside her shoulder, showing shaky phone recordings, and screams of a frightened crowd.

"According to eyewitness videos circulating online, what began as a physical altercation between a werewolf identified as Ken Hart and a human male named Noah Lux quickly escalated into something far more disturbing. Clips show Noah exhibiting extreme physical resilience, abnormal strength, and violent behavior inconsistent with any known human condition."

Right at that moment, the video cut to a freeze-frame of Noah's gaunt face, his eyes bloodshot, and mouth smeared with blood.

"Authorities confirm that the situation turned fatal when Noah attacked Ken, resulting in Hart's death at the scene. Moments later, Noah reportedly began attacking bystanders, displaying what witnesses described as feral behavior, including biting and cannibalism."

The anchor swallowed before continuing.

"At this time, officials are investigating what they believe may be a rapid-onset infection. Sources within emergency response units suggest the condition causes extreme aggression, loss of higher cognitive function, and a compulsion toward flesh consumption."

A new headline flashed: **UNCONFIRMED VIRAL OUTBREAK.**

"Online, the phenomenon has already been dubbed the 'Zombie Virus'—a term authorities urge the public not to sensationalize. However, they have confirmed multiple similar incidents within a three-block radius of the original outbreak."

The camera returned to the newscaster.

"As a result, the city has issued an immediate curfew across Aster City. All individuals present in the Northbridge District during the incident are currently being identified, tracked, and placed under mandatory quarantine for observation."

"Residents living near the affected area are strongly advised to remain indoors, lock all doors and windows, and not to allow anyone inside, even if the individual is known to them. Authorities stress that the infection may not be immediately visible."

Her voice lowered, grave.

"Special containment units are currently deployed as officials race to curb what they describe as a potentially catastrophic spread. While investigations are ongoing, emergency services warn that failure to contain this outbreak could pose a serious threat to public safety, possibly even to human survival itself."

Vera Turner's attention snapped up when her brother rushed into the office and said,

"You have to come see this."

At once, she lowered the remote onto the table and hurried after her brother.

Vera barely made it three steps before she stopped short. Strapped to a metal stretcher in the center of the space was what used to be a human. If that word still applied.

The man's limbs were bound tightly with restraints, the thick straps cutting into his skin that looked pale and clammy. His chest rose and fell in shallow, erratic breaths, each one accompanied by a low, animalistic growl that vibrated from deep in his throat.

The sound alone made Vera's stomach twist.

His face was wrong with the structure warped, his cheekbones protruding unnaturally as if the flesh had shrunk away from the bone. And his teeth were sharper now as if they had been filed while saliva

foamed at the corners of his mouth, dripping down his chin.

Patches of his hair had fallen out entirely, leaving raw-looking skin behind, while the rest clung to his scalp in brittle, uneven tufts. His eyes were bloodshot, the whites veined with angry red, pupils blown wide and unfocused as they tracked movement in the room with feral intensity.

He lunged against the restraints the moment Vera stepped closer, snarling loudly. She flinched before she could stop herself.

Joseph moved beside her, lowering his voice. "We couldn't get to the boy. Noah. He disappeared after the incident." His jaw tightened. "This is one of the infected we could actually get our hands on."

"Infected," Vera echoed flatly.

"The city's on lockdown," Joseph continued. "There are police everywhere. Even Military presence too, from what I hear. They're calling it crowd control, but we all know the truth."

Before Vera could respond, their mother, Moira Turner, entered with Patrick close behind her.

Patrick didn't even waste time, already pulling on his gloves as he approached the stretcher with an unreadable face. He tried to touch the creature but he snapped suddenly, his teeth clicking inches from Patrick's wrist. Thankfully, Patrick withdrew his hand just in time, his eyes narrowing.

"Wheel him into the lab now," he ordered calmly.

Two men moved at once, gripping the stretcher and pushing it forward as the infected thrashed, and growled louder. His body arched unnaturally as they wheeled him through into the lab beyond.

Vera turned to Patrick. "You can figure this out, right?"

"And for once," Patrick said dryly, "My older sister wants me to clean up her mess." Then he walked away, already focused on the task ahead.

Vera watched him go, jaw tight.

Joseph said to her. "I don't know about you, but this is bad, Vera."

"Shut up," she snapped, already moving.

She stopped outside the lab, its walls made entirely of thick, transparent glass. From here, they could see everything.

Inside, Patrick and the other doctors strapped the infected man onto a reinforced table, securing his limbs, chest, and finally his forehead, locking his head in place so he couldn't bite. The man screamed, thrashed, snarled with pure rage and hunger.

Vera didn't stay to watch. Sure that Patrick was working on the "situation", she turned and walked away, choosing to wait until he was done.

Two hours and a few minutes later, Patrick stepped into the office where the rest of his family waited.

Vera was on her feet instantly. "How did it go? Were you able to get the infection out of him?"

Patrick stopped in the doorway and fixed her with a hard, unblinking stare.

"There's no getting the infection out of him," he said flatly. "He is the infection."

Silence fell.

"Excuse me?" Vera said slowly.

Moirá's brows knitted together. "Explain yourself, son."

Patrick gulped. "We're looking at a zombie infestation."

Defy The Alpha(s) - Chapter 748: Destroy Ignis[1,038 words]

Chapter 748: Destroy Ignis

For a long moment, no one spoke.

Then Vera scoffed. "Oh, fuck off. That's complete bullshit."

Patrick barely had time to answer before she rounded on Joseph instead, fury blazing in her eyes. "I told you to bring back Noah. Fucking Noah! And you come back with some infected scum from the street? So how exactly is that my problem?"

Joseph didn't even say a word and simply reached into his jacket, pulled out a tablet, and activated the screen.

"Because.... " he turned the tablet toward her and pressed play.

The shaky recording showed the bus stop and the crowd watching the altercation between Ken and Noah.

Vera's jaw tightened as Joseph fast-forwarded the clip, saying, "Watch closely."

The footage jumped to the moment one of the humans in the crowd laughed, cheering Noah on as he attacked Ken.

Joseph slowed it down the moment Noah lunged and sank his teeth into the man's flesh as he screamed.

He lowered the tablet, saying,

"That is the infected we brought back for you. So yeah, it's very much your business."

Vera's expression hardened into a cold scowl, realizing there was no getting out of this.

Or at least, until it hit her.

"If that's the case," Vera said with a razor-sharp voice, "then Elias needs to explain this."

Patrick looked up sharply. "Excuse me?"

She turned on him. "You're the one who made the drug. You're the one who sent Ignis to Noah. So tell me, Patrick, how the hell did it get to this?"

Patrick laughed, harsh and disbelieving. "You're really doing this?" he snapped. "You're pushing this on me now? When you knew from the start that the upgraded Ignis was experimental? But guess who didn't care? Guess who wanted her precious Horsemen no matter the cost?"

Vera exploded. "Then why didn't the others turn out like him?!"

"Because science doesn't give a shit about your expectations!" Patrick shot back. "Human physiology varies. Metabolic response varies and neural pathways—"

"How does that explain him ripping a werewolf's heart out and eating it?" Vera screamed.

Patrick stopped mid-rant as something clicked in his head.

"...The others didn't do that," he muttered.

Vera shook her head, trying to understand him. "Didn't do what?"

Patrick's eyes slowly widened as the thought took shape, one that made his skin prickle. "Cannibalism," he said. "None of the others committed cannibalism."

Joseph frowned. "What are you getting at?"

Patrick swallowed. "Werewolves have always been tied closely to their goddess. Blood, soul, and devotion." He looked up, unsettled. "What if Noah killing Ken wasn't just murder? What if desecrating him by eating his heart crossed the line?"

Vera barked out a laugh. "Oh, now you're religious?" she scoffed. "Have you completely lost your fucking mind? I'm talking about damage control, and you're talking about divine punishment?"

Patrick met her glare. "Look around you, Vera. Werewolves are magical creatures. They shift, heal and some have powers. You're telling me it's impossible that something answered that act?"

"Enough!"

Moirra, their mother, slammed her palm against the table, the crack echoing through the room. "I will not have this family tearing itself apart."

She turned to Patrick, her voice calmer but no less heavy. "Can you fix this?"

Patrick hesitated.

"I honestly don't know," he admitted. "But maybe. If I have the original infected... "

"Noah," Vera said flatly.

Patrick nodded. "This infection isn't random. When we looked into the infected, we picked up signal patterns, neural synchronization. He was reacting to something. If not someone. It got me thinking of a hive structure. The infected might have low intelligence but they receive direction vividly."

Joseph was dumbfounded. "You're saying Noah is controlling them."

"Or influencing them," Patrick said. "If we get him alive, I might be able to reverse-engineer the process."

"So you're saying there might be an antidote for this." Vera looked hopeful.

Patrick exhaled through his nose, already tired. "You're misquoting me again, Vera. I said there might be a chance. That's not a guarantee."

"But you're Patrick," she pressed, her voice softening in that familiar, dangerous way. "You're capable of anything you set your mind to. The wolves may have their goddess, but those brains of yours?" She tapped her head. "They were touched by God."

Vera breathed in relief. "Then there's no hitch in our plans." She spoke faster now, excitement building inside of her. "We distribute Ignis as planned. And what better time than now? The city is in chaos. Curfews, fear and confusion." Her eyes gleamed. "We can use this moment to wipe the wolves out once and for all."

"No." Patrick faced her. "That cannot happen, Vera."

Her brow furrowed. "What?"

"You're talking about releasing more Ignis when it already caused this. Our war is against the wolves, not against humans. We might as well drive our kind extinct."

Vera scoffed. "You already said Noah was cursed because he committed cannibalism. So we stop the others from doing the same thing. Simple." She waved a hand dismissively. "And you're going to reverse-engineer everything once we get Noah, right? So we press forward."

She added. "There are always casualties in war, Patrick. You know that better than anyone. This is the opportunity we've been waiting for and we cannot miss it."

Patrick's jaw tightened. "I won't let you do this."

A tense silence fell between them.

Vera's expression shifted. The warmth drained away, leaving a dangerous glint in her eyes. "And what exactly are you going to do about it?"

Patrick pushed back his chair and stood abruptly. "I'll destroy them if I have to. I made Ignis after all."

He turned and walked out.

"Patrick!" Vera called after him.

But he didn't slow or look back.

Vera cursed and chased after him. She caught up and grabbed his arm.

"Don't be stupid," she snapped.

Patrick spun and shoved her back. "Get out of my way."

The force sent her stumbling, fury exploding through her chest. Just like that, something in Vera snapped.

She reached inside her jacket, movement quick as she drove the blade forward.

Patrick gasped as the knife slid between his ribs, his eyes widening in shock as blood bloomed across his shirt.

Defy The Alpha(s) - Chapter 749: She Felt Nothing[1,091 words]

Chapter 749: She Felt Nothing

Vera was frozen for a breath, her breath coming in quick bursts as if she had just ran a marathon, fingers still locked around the knife's hilt buried in her brother's side.

"You were always going to be a problem," she whispered, her face devoid of even the faintest flicker of remorse as she stabbed him even deeper.

Then Patrick staggered backward, one hand clamped over the wound as blood seeped through his fingers. His eyes were wide with disbelief, as if his mind refused to accept that it was his sister who had done this. Then his knees buckled.

Right at that moment, footsteps thundered down the corridor.

"No!"

The scream that rent through the space was as deafening as that of a wailing banshee.

It was Moira. Their mother.

She rushed forward, dropping to her knees just in time to catch Patrick as his strength gave out completely. He collapsed into her arms, his blood soaking into her clothes as she pressed her hands desperately against his wound.

"No, no, no—stay with me," she pleaded, her voice breaking.

Then Moira lifted her head, eyes blazing as they locked onto Vera.

"What have you done?" she screamed.

Vera didn't flinch. "I did what had to be done," she said coldly. "We always knew Elias was too soft-hearted for this mission. It was only a matter of time. Better we eliminate him than lose everything."

Moira stared at her as if she were looking at a stranger. Then her expression twisted into one of raw fury.

"You fucking psychopath," she spat. "Your brother brought us this far, and now you want to reap where you did not sow?"

The words struck harder than any blow.

Vera froze. "What...?"

But Moira was already turning away from her, shouting, "Joseph! Get help for your brother. Now!"

Joseph moved immediately only for a knife to fly past his face. It slammed into the wall behind him with a sharp thunk, the blade grazing his neck just enough to draw a thin line of blood.

He stilled.

"No one goes anywhere," Vera commanded with a lethal voice. "Elias dies."

"Get the doctors, you moron!" Moira barked, clutching Patrick tighter as the life slowly drained out of him.

Vera's eyes flicked to Joseph. "Take another step and you die too."

She meant it.

Joseph swallowed hard and stayed where he was.

Silence fell, thick and suffocating.

Moira slowly set Patrick down, his body limp, his breathing shallow and uneven.

Then she rose to her feet.

When she turned back to Vera, something had changed. Her eyes were cold now and merciless.

"You'd fight me?" Moira sneered. "Your own mother?"

Vera did not back down. "The mission is greater than personal needs." She repeated the words Moira herself had drilled into them since childhood. "That was your mantra. Elias left because he knew he was unworthy and weak. I'd rather lose my own brother than face my ancestors knowing I brought them shame."

Moira's laughter was mocking and hollow.

"Then perhaps I should send you to your ancestors myself. Because a wretch like you is dead to me." Her words landed like a death sentence.

Then Moira slipped her hand into the pocket of her pants and brought out brass knuckles. The metal caught the light as she slid them over her fingers with ease. Her eyes were no longer maternal, now ruthless and focused. It was the eyes of a woman who had long been in the game long before her daughter was born.

Vera reached for the straps at her pants and pulled free a knife, the blade glinting as she spun it once between her fingers before settling into a stance.

So this was how it ended. Her mother's life or hers. And she had not come this far only to die unfinished.

"Vera—Moira—stop!" Joseph shouted, rushing between them with his arms spread wide. He spoke with desperation. "It doesn't have to be this! We're family—"

Vera let out a battle scream and drove her boot into Joseph's side. He went flying to the side, collapsing in a heap while she launched herself straight at her mother.

Steel met steel.

Moira pivoted, and blocked Vera's first slash with her forearm, the brass knuckles ringing sharply as they knocked the blade aside. Vera followed with a vicious kick aimed at her ribs, but Moira twisted away, countering with a strike to Vera's shoulder that numbed her arm on impact.

Vera hissed but didn't slow down.

She attacked wild and ruthlessly, her knife flashing in deadly arcs meant to kill.

Moira absorbed it all with grim control, deflecting, dodging, and redirecting them. Unlike her daughter's, her own strikes were calculated —not to kill, but to weaken, and end the fight without ending her daughter.

"You've lost your mind," Moira growled, slamming her knuckles into Vera's wrist.

The knife flew from Vera's grip, skidding across the floor.

Vera didn't retreat and slammed her head into Moira's face. Blood sprayed from Moira's nose, and she in return, grabbed Vera by the hair and drove her knee into her stomach, knocking the air from her lungs.

Vera staggered and Moira seized the opening.

Her fist connected with Vera's jaw and the brass knuckles crushed into her bone, sending Vera crashing to her knees.

Vera gasped from the pain, blood spilling from her mouth as she struggled to breathe.

Then her mother stood over her, chest heaving, and knuckles slick with blood.

"Have your senses returned now?" she demanded. "Is this enough?"

For a moment, Vera stayed still and Moira's shoulders loosened. Except that was her mistake.

Vera moved like lightning.

Her hand shot out, grabbed the fallen knife and slashed behind her mother's knee with brutal precision.

Moira screamed.

Her leg buckled and she collapsed hard onto the floor, blood pouring freely as pain tore through her. She tried to crawl back, dragging herself away. Vera rose slowly, breathing hard, her eyes burning with triumph and a dark glint.

"When we meet in hell," Vera said coldly, stepping closer, "I'll atone for my sins."

Moira's eyes widened in horror.

"No—!" she cried, reaching out.

Vera cut her across the throat without hesitation.

Moirá's hands flew up, pressing desperately against the wound as blood spilled through her fingers. She choked, gurgling, her eyes locked on her daughter's as life drained from them.

Then she fell still.

Vera Turner stood there, bloodied, staring down at the woman who had raised her, and she felt nothing at all.

Defy The Alpha(s) - Chapter 750: Preferably Alive[1,101 words]

Chapter 750: Preferably Alive

Joseph came to slowly, the world tilting as pain throbbed behind his eyes. His hand went to his temple and came away slick with blood. Vera had shoved him so hard that he had hit his head against the wall and blacked out.

He sucked in a sharp breath and pushed himself upright, the muscles in his body protesting as the hall came into focus.

He saw her.

"Mom?" His voice broke.

Joseph staggered forward, his legs giving way beneath him as he dropped to his knees beside Moirá's body. Her eyes were wide and empty, staring at nothing. His shaking hands hovered over her face, then fell uselessly to his sides.

"No... no, no, no—" He choked, then screamed as his gaze dropped to the gaping hole in her throat.

He turned slowly, horror hollowing him out from the inside.

Vera stood a few steps away, calm, collected, and almost bored after she had killed her own mother.

"What have you done?" Joseph whispered, his voice cracked.

"I did what had to be done," Vera replied flatly. "It's natural selection. The weak get eliminated, and the strong remain at the top of the food chain."

Joseph stared at her in disbelief. How was this monster his sister?

She stepped closer to him. "So now you choose," she said, tilting her head. "Are you with me or against me?"

Joseph didn't answer.

"Will you help me finish what our ancestors started? Or will you cower like them?" She gestured dismissively toward Moira's body. "If it's the latter, I'll give you the same easy death."

Silence stretched between them.

Joseph's gaze drifted back to the bodies on the floor—his mother, his brother. His shoulders slumped, his head bowing as shame flooded him.

Vera laughed.

"I thought as much."

She turned and walked to Patrick's body, kicking him just to be sure he was gone. He was dead.

"Get rid of the bodies," Vera said over her shoulder. "Then come find me. We have havoc to wreck."

Then she walked away, laughing, untouched by the carnage she'd left behind.

As soon as she was gone, Joseph broke down in tears. He collapsed over his mother's body, trembling as he gently closed her eyes with his palm.

"Forgive me," he whispered through the tears. "I'm a coward who couldn't protect you."

He crawled to Patrick next, his breath hitching. "We always called you the weak one. Turns out it was me all along. I'm sorry I didn't defend you or Mother."

He reached for Patrick's arm—and it grabbed him back.

Joseph nearly screamed, then froze as Patrick wheezed, barely conscious, blood bubbling at his lips.

"Save... me," Patrick rasped.

Joseph nodded, his eyes darkening with determination.

The situation in President Roy's office was total chaos.

Screens lined the walls, each one flashing a different angle of the disaster that had wrecked the city. Thermal scans lit up clusters of red across a city map while phones buzzed nonstop, and the aides argued furiously.

President Roy stood at the center of it all, hands planted on the conference table, and his jaw clenched so tight it ached.

"Enough," he snapped, and the room fell silent instantly.

"Tell me what the problem at hand is. I want the truth, and not the version withheld from the public."

The head of Biosecurity swallowed. "Sir, Noah, the mastermind of this incident, was never apprehended."

Roy's eyes narrowed. "I know that. So where is he?"

"Off the grid," the man admitted. "There's no digital trail or sighting of him. He vanished after the incident. And not just that."

Roy lifted his head. "What now?"

"We have no idea how this virus came about, but we suspect it has something to do with Ignis."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Although the blood analysis from the infected does not confirm Ignis in their bloodstream, but we analyzed the video, and Noah showed signs of being under the effects of Ignis."

Roy exhaled through his nose. "How many infected?"

There was a pause.

"Confirmed?" the Director said. "Twenty-seven. Suspected exposure pushes that number closer to forty."

Roy groaned, running his hand through his hair. Then he asked. "What about Patrick?"

The silence this time was worse.

"President Roy, we've deployed every resource," the aide continued. "Tracking, warrants, surveillance, but nothing. Not even David Avax has produced results."

Roy's expression darkened. "David Avax doesn't come up empty."

"Well," the man muttered, "this time he did."

Before Roy could respond, a sharp tone cut through the room.

"Secure line," an aide announced. "Incoming call from Alpha King Elijah."

Roy didn't hesitate. "Put him through."

The main screen changed, and Alpha King Elijah appeared, posture straight, and expression carved from stone.

"President Roy," Elijah greeted evenly.

"Elijah," Roy replied. "I'm positive you're calling about the incident."

"I am," Elijah said. "And I won't waste time. You saw it clearly, your own people started that fight."

A murmur rippled through the room.

Roy didn't deny it. "And your wolf escalated it."

"After a human attacked him first?" Elijah countered. "The footage is clear. We both know what happens when you provoke a wolf."

Roy leaned back. "And thanks to whatever the fuck happened, I now have a strange virus wreaking havoc on my city." He sighed. "We need to find Patrick by all means. He must be responsible for this."

"We've been tracking Patrick Elias Turner for a long time, and every effort so far has failed. Doesn't that tell you something?"

Roy frowned. "Meaning?"

"Technology cannot locate him. So we will consult a witch." Elijah decided.

Several advisers scoffed openly.

"A witch?" Roy repeated incredulously.

"Yes," Elijah said calmly. "Magic predates your satellites."

Roy shook his head. "Fine. Do whatever superstition you want. I don't care how you find him."

Elijah studied him. "Then we agree."

Roy stepped closer to the screen. "Patrick is now a global threat. If you find him—"

"Dead or alive?" Elijah asked.

Roy didn't blink. "Alive. He needs to clean up the mess he made."

Elijah inclined his head. "Fine, then. I'll try. For now, try keeping your city together."

Then the screen went dark.

"Fucking asshole," Roy muttered under his breath before turning back to the room. Then he instructed them, his voice hard as steel. "Lock the city down tighter. Quarantine every infected and run experiments if you have to."

One aide hesitated. "Sir... ethically—"

"Ethics don't matter if the city falls and we all become God-knows-what that human became," Roy snapped. "Contain this, or there won't be a city left to save."