

Defy 81

Chapter 81: Not Over

The early morning air was cool and crisp as Violet slipped out of the East House, her footsteps silent as she left the East House.

The sky outside was a deep navy, hinting at the first light of dawn but far from breaking yet. It might have been four in the morning or something, Violet didn't know. She didn't have her phone with her. She lost it during the incident. All she knew was that she couldn't wait any longer.

With such chaos yesterday, the Oracle must have already drafted her next explosive article, and Violet had no intention of giving her any more juicy weapons against her. She hated how that damned gossip seemed to have ears everywhere, capturing details even she didn't remember happening.

If Griffin heard her moving about earlier, he made no effort to stop her or come see her out, and for that, she was grateful. Violet didn't know how to handle goodbyes, especially after such a disturbing event. At the moment, her relationship with the giant Alpha was complicated. She hated him yet didn't hate him so much at the same time. Violet needed to process these new developments.

Still, as she walked through the East House alone that morning, it felt like a walk of shame. She shouldn't feel guilty—nothing happened last night with Griffin—but it lingered, gnawing at her annoyingly.

The East House hallways were mercifully empty, and Violet managed to leave without encountering a single soul. By the time she arrived at the West House, she let out a relieved sigh. The door was not locked, thankfully, and she was able to slip inside quickly, her mind focused solely on making it to her room unnoticed.

But the moment she turned to face the foyer, her breath hitched in her throat. Standing just a few meters away, leaning casually against the wall as if he'd been waiting all night, was none other than Asher Fucking Nightshade.

The master puppeteer and the reason she was in this shit in this first place.

Violet's heart lurched in her chest as her eyes locked onto his piercing gaze... oh, he was wearing his glasses. Yet that didn't diminish his dangerous aura one bit.

His presence was overwhelming, as always, his long dark hair disheveled just enough to look maddeningly perfect, his expression unreadable but far from kind. He exuded the kind of power that made the air heavy around him, suffocating and alluring all at once.

Violet gulped, her throat suddenly dry as fear gripped her. Of all the mornings, of all the places... why here? Why now?

But then, she wasn't one to back down, especially not after everything he had done to her. Anger bubbled up inside her, washing away her hesitation, and filling her with reckless confidence.

Straightening her posture, Violet strode forward, stopping right in front of him. Their eyes locked, two stubborn individuals locked in a silent battle of wills, neither of them willing to yield.

"Did you get in my head again? Is that how you knew I was coming?" Violet accused him with a sharp voice.

Asher arched a brow. "I told you, I don't read minds."

"But you could have influenced my thoughts," she snapped. "You already have a grip on my mind and might have tugged at the wirings in my head, manipulating me to arrive here at this exact moment."

Asher chuckled, the sound low and infuriatingly smug. "Perhaps, Violet Purple, you flatter yourself. You're simply too predictable. I knew you'd be too proud to return to the West House in the morning when everyone's up, chattering and gossiping. This hour seemed perfect for a quiet escape, so I waited. And, as expected, you didn't fail me."

Violet's jaw clenched and with her glare cutting, she said, "What do you want from me? Griffin already told me you're forbidden from messing with my head again."

"Yes," Asher admitted, his smirk faltering only slightly. "I'm forbidden to do it anymore. A disappointment, truly. I had so many plans for us, my little purple queen." He reached out, his fingers brushing a strand of her hair.

Violet swatted his hand away with a hiss. "Don't touch me. And don't call me that."

Unfazed, Asher tutted. "However, all hope is not lost. I can still get in your head. You just have to ask me to."

For a moment, Violet stared at him, dumbfounded. Then she scoffed, her voice laced with outrage. "What makes you think I'd ever let you near my mind again? Do you think I'm as twisted as you?"

"Curiosity," Asher replied smoothly, his tone dripping with dark amusement. "It's a small yet heavy motivator. Moreover, you might try to hide it, but I see the darkness in you too, Violet Purple."

He stepped closer, the space between them vanishing until their chests brushed. Shivers ran down Violet's spine, but she masked her reaction, refusing to give him the satisfaction.

Asher's voice dropped to a seductive whisper. "Your morals tell you what I did was wrong, but deep down, you loved it. I see it, the darkness, that's what drew me to you in the first place. You don't feel sorry for what happened. If anything, you've had a taste, and now you hunger for more... crave for more..."

For a fleeting moment, Violet felt the pull of his words, their intensity threatening to ensnare her. Their eyes locked, his full of promises she didn't want to consider, hers defiant yet wavering.

But then, she abruptly broke the spell. "Your days of manipulating me are over. If that's all, I'll be on my way."

Asher blinked, momentarily caught off guard. He hadn't expected her to resist, let alone push back. But as Violet turned to leave, he reached out and grabbed her hand, his grip firm but not forceful.

Violet glared at his hand, her voice icy. "What?"

Instead of responding, Asher placed something in her palm. Violet's eyes widened as she looked down to see her phone.

"We are not over, my little queen," Asher said in a gentle yet chilling tone. "This is just the beginning. Do have a lovely day."

With that, he released her hand and strode away, his confidence radiating as if he already knew he'd won.

Violet stood there, staring after him with an exasperated look, clutching her phone tightly.

Whatever game this was. It was getting more dangerous.

Chapter 82: Control Currency

Hello, my dazzling wolves and spellbound humans! It's your favorite tea-spilling Oracle back with another steamy update from the chaos that is Lunaris Academy.

And once more, we're diving right into the whirlwind that is Violet Purple!

The Violet Purple chronicles continue to stir our already bubbling tea pots, and it's almost impossible to keep up with her fiery ESCAPADES. And trust me, this one will have you howling for days.

DREAMS OR DESIRES? THE ASHER ANGLE

First on our plate: rumors of Violet having some rather... provocative dreams about none other than our dark and dangerous West Alpha, Asher Nightshade.

Yes, darlings, word on the grapevine is that Violet has been experiencing steamy nocturnal visits, courtesy of her subconscious. Now, here's the million-moon question: are these just dreams, or has Asher finally taken the bull by the horns (or perhaps the storm by the lightning bolt)?

And before you ask, how long has this been going on? Has Asher's name been whispered in her dreams since the scenting ceremony, or is this a new development?

Could it be that Asher's infamous powers have seeped into Violet's mind, or is our purple-haired enigma simply falling victim to his magnetic allure? Is Asher her final choice in what we're calling "Violet's Alpha Hunt"?

Either way, it seems the emotional fortress that is Asher might just have found his match.

But wait, don't go penning their love story just yet. Asher's "games" are legendary. Is this a move on the chessboard of his mind-bending power plays, or does he genuinely have feelings for Violet? Only time (and perhaps more dreams) will tell.

GRIFFIN AND THE PURPLE STORM: AN UNEXPECTED TWIST

Just when we thought the dream tea was enough, we were treated to the sight of Griffin Eastwood—yes, the Griffin—carry an unconscious Violet from the classroom

like some heroic romance novel. If that wasn't enough, the plot thickens: Griffin broke up with Amanda Rayes right afterward.

Let me repeat that for the people in the back: Amanda Rayes, Griffin's longest-standing girlfriend, is out of the picture. And who's at the center of it all? Our purple storm, of course.

Now, if you're scratching your head wondering what led to this shocking split, you're not alone. My sources say something went down before that dramatic walkout.

Let's piece this puzzle together: Alaric Storm, Roman Draven, and even Roman's beta, Abel, were spotted in that classroom prior to Griffin's grand exit with Violet.

What were they doing? None of the Alphas are talking, but their silence speaks volumes. It leaves the rest of us to wonder: was this a clash of the Alphas, or something even steamier?

Now here's the kicker: the next morning, Violet was spotted leaving the East House. That's right, Griffin's house. Early morning walk of shame, or something more innocent? Well, if history serves, nothing about Violet's life is ever simple.

ROMAN & ALARIC: WHERE DO THEY STAND?

And let's not forget our other Alphas. Roman, for one, has been noticeably quiet amidst all this drama. Could it be that he's immune to Violet's spell, or is he simply biding his time? Never underestimate Roman, after all, he's the wildcard in this game.

Meanwhile, Alaric Storm, the ever-reserved lightning prince, has been suspiciously close to Violet recently. Advanced Biology, anyone? Is Alaric's silence his way of staying above the fray, or has Violet managed to spark something within him? And if so, how will our brainy Alpha navigate this tangled web of alphas?

ELISE LANCASTER: THE QUEEN IN QUESTION

While the Alphas and Violet steal the spotlight, let's not forget Lunar's reigning queen, Elsie Lancaster. Her silence on this entire situation has us all buzzing. Is she keeping her cool, or is the queen bee plotting her next move?

Violet's meteoric rise is shaking the academy's social order, and if anyone can maintain their throne amidst the chaos, it's Elsie. But with Violet pulling all the attention—and perhaps a few Alphas—Elsie's crown might be slipping.

FINAL THOUGHTS: A STORM OR A SCANDAL?

Lunar Academy is no stranger to drama, but Violet is a category five hurricane in human form. From dreams of Asher to the firestorm with Griffin and whispers of something brewing with Alaric and Roman, she's rewriting the rules of this academy one scandal at a time.

So, the big question on everyone's mind: who does Violet really want? Is she playing the field, or is she simply caught in an uncontrollable whirlwind of Alpha attention? Conspiracy wink!

One thing's for sure, this story is far from over.

As always, my lovelies, I'll be watching (and sipping tea) to bring you all the juicy updates. Until next time, keep your claws sharp and your secrets sharper.

Yours ever nosy,

The Oracle.

Violet laid in bed, staring at the screen with empty eyes. The world outside her room buzzed with life, but she was detached, her thoughts miles away.

Just as she had feared, the Oracle had written about her as usual.

Violet had never been the type to obsess over her reputation. Back home, she'd lived with a carefree attitude, unfazed by whispers or stares. But Lunar Academy had a way of making even the strongest willed care about the most frivolous of things. After all, in this place, reputation wasn't just a word, it was currency, power, survival.

She had once told Dion with pride, "I don't fear the Oracle. I have no secret to hide." But as Violet stared at the damning image plastered across her feed, she realized how wrong she had been.

It wasn't about secrets anymore. It was about perception.

The image was like a silent accusation, twisting the narrative of her life in ways she couldn't control. Especially as she stared at the picture of her leaving the East House that morning. How did the Oracle even get hold of that? Who the hell was the Oracle? And who was helping her?

Perhaps everyone in this damn school. Whatever the Oracle was, he or she traded in secrets anyway.

If there was one thing Violet hated most, it was losing control. She despised the idea of someone else pulling the strings of her life, writing her story without her consent. And the Oracle was doing just that, manipulating her image, her actions, her choices, all for entertainment.

Violet's hands clenched into fists, crumpling the fabric of her blanket. Her jaw tightened as anger flared in her chest, hot and consuming. She really was going to kill that little witch once she got her hands on her.

"You shouldn't read those."

Chapter 83: Swear Your Fealty

"You shouldn't read those," a familiar voice said, rousing Violet from her thoughts.

She looked up sharply, startled to see her roommate, Daisy Fairchild, standing beside her bed, her brunette hair still slightly disheveled from sleep. However, Daisy's keen eyes were locked on Violet's screen, her expression completely blank as she peered over at the article.

"Why?" Violet asked, her tone defensive. She clutched her device closer as if shielding it. "Why shouldn't I read them? You think I'm affected by it?"

"Aren't you?" Daisy challenged, one perfectly arched brow raised in skepticism. Her head tilted slightly to the side, giving her an inquisitive, calculating air that unsettled Violet.

There was something about Daisy—the way she spoke, the way she looked at one as if she could see straight into their soul—that always put her on edge. The girl was too smart for her own good.

Violet stiffened, feeling irritation rise within her. "You don't run away from your fears. You face them," she snapped back, her voice firmer than she intended. To prove her point, she turned her screen towards herself and boldly clicked on the comment section.

Daisy didn't reply, only folded her arms and watched in silence as Violet's eyes began to scan the responses pouring in.

And, as expected, the students of Lunar is didn't disappoint her.

@AsherLover23:

"OMG, Violet dreams about Asher?! Lucky b*tch! I wish the Alpha would invade MY dreams too!
#AlphaGoals #DreamVisitor"

@GriffinRocks:

"Violet is such a WHORE! First Alaric, now Griffin, and let's not forget Asher. She's literally throwing herself at the Alphas who are WAY out of her league. #StayInYourLane #GriffinDeservesBetter"

@ElsieQueenForever:

"LMAO, Violet can try all she wants, but no one's taking Elsie's crown. Nice try, PurpleShit. #TeamElsie
#QueenOfLunar is"

@AlphaObsession:

"Asher mentally messing with her? Yeah, right. She's just making up lies to get attention. Classic pick-me behavior. #NotBuyingIt"

@RomanForTheWin:

"At least Roman isn't falling for her tricks. The guy's too smart to be dragged into this nonsense.
#RomanIsTheBestAlpha"

@DreamTeamAsher:

"If Asher is visiting her in her dreams, it's because she's pathetic enough to beg for his attention.
#DesperateMuch #AlphaAsherRules"

@ElsieRoyaltyStan:

"No matter what this human tries, Elsie will ALWAYS be the queen. Violet can chase all the Alphas she wants, but she'll never beat Elsie. #KnowYourPlace #TeamElsie"

@MoonpackGossip:

"The fact that this girl is involved with FOUR Alphas at once? She's literally living a reverse harem fantasy. Disgusting. #PickAstruggle #AttentionSeeker"

@HowlAtTheMoon:

"Anyone else think Violet's just lying about the dreams? Probably just trying to make herself sound more interesting. #FakeDrama #NotImpressed"

@PackLoyalForever:

"Violet can't seriously think the Alphas want her for real. Like, they're probably bored, and she's a shiny new toy. She'll be tossed aside soon enough. #TemporaryEntertainment #SheDoesntBelong"

@MoonlightOracleFan:

"The Oracle really outdid herself with this one. But let's be real, Violet's downfall is just beginning. #GrabThePopcorn #DramaNeverStops"

@AlphaRomanceLover:

"Griffin and Amanda were PERFECT together. I can't believe he dumped her over Violet. This purple-haired disaster is ruining EVERYTHING. #BringBackAmanda #GriffinDeservesBetter"

To be honest, Violet was affected unlike what she claimed. She was human after all and the comments were vile, bullying and outright humiliating, making her chest tighten. But then she caught sight of a comment that made hope and an unfamiliar emotion rise inside of her.

@LilaDDefender:

"Y'all are so quick to bully Violet without even thinking—what if she doesn't WANT this? What if it's the Alphas chasing her? Ever thought of that? Stop blaming the victim. #ThinkBeforeYouSpeak"

@MoonpackWatcher:

"@LilaDDefender LMAO, of course you're defending her. Aren't you her friend? Birds of a feather flock together. #FriendOfAWhore"

@LilaDDefender:

"@MoonpackWatcherExcuse me? Just because I don't condone bullying doesn't mean I'm her 'friend.' Maybe try being a decent person for once? #StopTheHate"

@SilverPawCommentary:

"@LilaDDefender Girl, stop. You're clearly her friend, and no one's buying your holier-than-thou act. Violet's bringing this on herself. #ActionsHaveConsequences"

@LilaDDefender:

"@SilverPawCommentary You're all so blinded by your hatred that you're ignoring the possibility that the Alphas are to blame. Pathetic. #DoubleStandards"

Even in her dreams, Violet could recognize the telltale signs of her loyal yet flawed friend:
@LilaDDefender.

Lila and her endless bot accounts, tirelessly defending her at all costs. But this time, Lila had made it obvious, so much so that others had caught on and figured out her identity.

"Where's Lila?" Violet asked aloud, scanning the room and noticing her empty bed.

Daisy looked around and replied, "She didn't sleep here last night. Probably thought you'd return and didn't want to face you."

Violet frowned. "And Ivy?" She turned to see Ivy's bed similarly unoccupied. Surely, the stoic and often cold Ivy wouldn't be avoiding her too?

"She left early this morning while you were still asleep. Probably off on one of her runs." Daisy shrugged, her tone casual but laced with disdain. "You think Ivy cares about what happens to you? She'd probably thank her gods if you fell off your high horse."

"It's not about that," Violet muttered, rubbing her forehead. She already had so much on her plate already. "I was hoping she might know where Lila is. The girl tends to talk too much, and God knows where she ended up last night."

Daisy snorted. "Lila has more friends than you give her credit for. She's probably at one of their places. Don't start blaming yourself for something you didn't do. She talks too much, Violet. She has to learn that words have consequences."

Daisy's words struck a chord. She was right. Lila had to be held accountable for her actions. But Violet couldn't ignore the pang of guilt in her chest. Despite her flaws, Lila was loyal, and Violet had never been one for making friends, let alone finding someone as steadfast as Lila. The girl had her faults, but who didn't? Even Violet knew she wasn't perfect. At all.

As if summoned by their conversation, the door creaked open. Both Violet and Daisy turned their heads, and there she was: Lila was standing in the doorway, her face pale and her eyes rimmed with red.

They stared at each other in silence, the air thick with tension. Then Violet sighed, her anger long gone, replaced by exhaustion. Perhaps it was the absence of fury in her expression that emboldened Lila, because in the next instant, her eyes watered with tears, and she rushed forward.

Before Violet could react, Lila threw herself into her arms, tackling her onto the bed.

"I'm so sorry!" she sobbed into Violet's shoulder. "I'm so sorry... I didn't mean for it to happen this way. I swear I didn't..."

Violet lay frozen under her friend's weight, the awkwardness of the moment washing over her. But as Lila's genuine sobs filled the room, Violet felt her hardened resolve begin to soften.

Even the coldest heart couldn't withstand the sight of Lila's tears. Slowly, almost reluctantly, Violet wrapped her arms around her crying friend and murmured, "It's alright. I forgive you."

For a moment, the room was silent except for Lila's quiet sniffles, and Daisy's soft sigh of disapproval. She clearly wanted Lila to suffer more and learn her lessons.

But Violet knew, despite the flaws, that Lila's loyalty was something she couldn't afford to take for granted. Especially now, she had so many enemies around her at Lunaris.

When Lila finally calmed down, wiping the remaining tears from her face, she looked up at Violet with an expression of fiery determination.

"I swear to you, Violet, I will never sabotage you. Never. In fact, I'll do everything in my power to help you get revenge on those bastard Alphas. They won't know what hit them."

Daisy arched her brow, saying sharply . "Careful there, the walls have ears, Lila."

But Lila didn't care. Before Violet or Daisy could process what she was about to do, Lila suddenly dropped to her knees, bowing her head low in an exaggerated kowtow.

Violet's eyes widened in shock as she stared down at her. "What the hell are you doing? Get up, Lila!" she demanded, her voice tinged with panic.

But Lila remained where she was, her posture rigid and unyielding. She raised her head slightly to look at Violet, her expression deadly serious as she said.

"I belong to you now, Violet. My life is yours. I'll follow you to the ends of the earth, through fire and storms. Whatever you need, I'll do it. I swear it."

Daisy, who had been observing the entire scene with increasing amusement, let out a small laugh. She rolled her eyes and returned to her bed, muttering, "With the way things are going, one would think we're back in ancient times. A little over the top, don't you think?"

Violet, however, did not reply and could only stare at Lila in stunned silence. She was unable to comprehend what had just transpired. How could someone like Lila exist? Neither had she done nothing to deserve this girl's unwavering loyalty, yet here she was, swearing fealty like a knight in some medieval tale. It didn't make sense at all.

"You're insane," Violet finally said, shaking her head, although she no longer sounded mad.

Unfortunately, there were many insane people at Lunaris Academy and perhaps, she needed one like Lila at her side. Even though she didn't deserve her. At all.

Chapter 84: Past Dreams, Now Visions

Now that things were back to normal between Violet and Lila, an awkward tension broke out in the room. A silence that stretched until Lila, ever the chatterbox, broke it.

"You should stay here and prepare for class while I go get your breakfast," Lila said, her voice unusually gentle as though she was walking on eggshells.

"No," Violet said suddenly.

"No?" Lila repeated, her brows furrowing in surprise.

Violet's eyes shone with a fiery determination as she met Lila's gaze and said. "The whole school must have seen the news by now. They'd expect me to stay here, to cower in shame, but that's not going to

happen. I can't let them get to me. I have to show them I'm unaffected by their gossip and mockery. I'm not someone who can be pulled down that easily."

From the corner of the room, Daisy, who was now quietly reading a thick book, snorted audibly. She looked up, her gaze connecting with Violet's and said smartly. "You have a flair for the drama, don't you? Honestly, I can't even tell the difference between you and Ivy at this point."

The jab hit its mark.

Violet stiffened, the insult sinking deep. Her gaze turned icy, and without missing a beat, she retorted, "Perhaps indeed, I might have a flair for the drama, unlike you, with no life beyond your nose buried in a book."

Bam! It felt like a huge bomb had been dropped in the room. For a fleeting moment, hurt flashed across Daisy's face, and Violet noticed, causing a pang of guilt tugged at her chest.

However, she squashed the feeling down. She was not the one who started it. The girl should be able to stomach receiving her own taste of medicine.

With the tension in the room now almost unbearable, Violet rose abruptly from her bed and strode to the bathroom, slamming the door shut behind her. The sound reverberated through the room, while Lila was left to deal with the unsettling atmosphere.

Violet turned on the shower, the warm water exactly what she needed as it cascaded over her skin and soothed her tired body. But that was not enough to calm her busy mind. Although she tried hard not to think of yesterday's incident, snippets still managed to creep into her mind.

Nonetheless, Violet still stubbornly scrubbed her body and willed her mind to focus. By the time she was done, her fingers pruned from the long shower and she wrapped a towel around herself, stepping out of the cubicle.

Facing the mirror, Violet stared at her reflection. Her usually sharp eyes looked a bit dull, framed by faint dark circles. Her cheeks were paler than usual, and there were obviously lines of stress etched faintly on her face. She leaned closer, and studied her reflection the more.

And that was when it happened.

The bathroom seemed to blur around her, the edges of her vision darkening. The reflection in the mirror rippled like disturbed water, and when it stilled, what Violet saw wasn't herself.

She froze, her breath catching in her throat.

In the mirror, Roman was kneeling before her, his tongue darting out as he lapped at her clit. Violet felt the wave of heat that surged through her, but before she could process it, the scene expanded. And one more person appeared.

To her left, Alaric leaned in, his lips wrapped around her nipple, suckling deeply, his hand kneading her flesh. And he was not alone.

On her right stood Asher, his hands firmly massaging her other breast, his fingers occasionally pinching her nipple just enough to elicit a pleasure-pained gasp from her reflected self.

And then, Griffin loomed from behind her. His large hand splayed across her bare stomach, holding her steady for the others to pleasure her, while his lips brushed against the side of her neck. His fingers tangled in her hair, tugging lightly as he whispered something inaudible yet tantalizing into her ear.

But it wasn't just the sight of the Cardinal Alphas surrounding her, each one busy pleasuring her in their own way, that left Violet rooted in place. No, it was her own reflection that stunned her.

The woman staring back at her didn't look like her at all. Her half-lidded eyes were clouded with unrestrained passion, her lips swollen and parted as soft mewls escaped them. Her cheeks were flushed, with her chest rising and falling with her labored breaths. There was just no hesitation, no restraint. She looked... blissful. Euphoric.

It was a version of herself she didn't recognize, and it terrified her.

With a sharp gasp, Violet stumbled back, and the vision shattered instantly, leaving her staring at her pale reflection once more. Her heart hammered in her chest, while her breathing was erratic as she pressed a trembling hand to her lips.

What the hell just happened? What the hell had she just seen?

No, this couldn't be happening. This had to be Asher's doing. He had claimed to set her free, but surely this was some cruel trick, another of his manipulative games. The bastard had twisted her mind before, and it wasn't beyond him to leave behind some lingering poison—something that didn't even need his active interference to manifest.

Fuck it!

Violet cursed as she felt the familiar throbbing between her legs. The gods help her. Surely, she wasn't lusting after four guys. Four Assholes that she shouldn't be concerned with at all. Something must be wrong with her head.

With an exasperated groan, Violet spun around and headed straight back to the shower. The water blasted down on her with full force as Violet turned the handle, the cold spray making her gasp. But she stood there, letting the icy jets cool her fevered skin, the chill seeping into her bones and slowly quelling the storm raging inside her.

For a long time, Violet stood under the water, her arms braced against the tiled wall as she let the droplets trail down her face and body. The initial shock of cold gave way to a soothing numbness, and finally, the throbbing between her legs began to fade.

When Violet finally turned off the shower, her hands were shaking, but her mind had never felt sharper, more focused.

Nice try, Asher. But it wasn't happening again.

Chapter 85: Alphas At The Table

"What were you doing in the bathroom all this while? I almost thought you were not going to come out and we'd miss breakfast." Lila asked the question that had been on her mind as they walked in the direction of the breakfast hall.

Of course, leave it to Lila to want to know everything.

"I simply took my time." Violet answered curtly, her cheeks turning red a bit.

No way in hell was she telling Lila she had a strange vision, if it could even be called that, or was it a daydream? The point is the last time Lila figured out her secret, it hadn't ended well. Despite Lila's promise to remain silent this time, Violet wasn't about to take any chances. Yep, not happening.

"Oh, is that so?" Lila seemed skeptical but thankfully didn't push further.

Good. It seemed she was finally learning when to back off.

As they approached the breakfast hall, Violet noticed several cars parked outside, but one in particular—a sleek, red sports car—caught her eye. It felt like she had seen it before.

"Who owns that car?"

"Which one?" Lila followed her gaze. "Oh, that's Griffin Hale's car."

That explained the familiarity. Violet remembered seeing a smaller model of it in his room.

Lila went on to say, "From what I heard, they say Griffin loves his car above any other thing. He even calls them his baby. One time while he was still together with Amanda Raynes, they had a fight and she kicked his car. It was safe to say she nearly lost her head that day."

"Is that so?" A mischievous idea began to form in Violet's mind.

Oblivious to the thoughts stirring in her friend, Lila asked, "Why do you ask?"

"Nothing," Violet responded with a nonchalant smile, looping her arm through Lila's. "Let's head in, shall we?"

Together, they stepped into the Silvered Hall, leaving the talks of Griffin's car behind them.

But the moment Violet and Lila entered, the room seemed to freeze in time. Conversations stopped mid-sentence, the clattering of trays and dishes ceased, and a silence as heavy as a storm cloud descended upon the space.

Violet felt the weight of countless eyes on her, their scrutiny sharp and unrelenting. Lila, beside her, halted abruptly, her earlier confidence draining in an instant. She tugged at Violet's sleeve, whispering nervously, "Maybe we should—"

"No," Violet said firmly, cutting her off. "We're not turning back."

If they wanted to stare, she would give them a reason to. She refused to show weakness, not now, not after everything.

As they moved further into the hall, she could hear the whispers start up again, gentle at first, then growing louder, like a swarm of bees buzzing in the background. But Violet wasn't fazed. She let her gaze sweep across the room, daring anyone to meet her eyes. Most looked away, intimidated by her brazen defiance.

Then her attention shifted to the elite floor, and there she was, Elsie Lancaster.

The reigning queen of Lunaris Academy sat at her table, surrounded by her usual entourage of sycophants. Her expression was carefully neutral, but her eyes told a different story. They burned with an intensity that could only be described as hatred, a firestorm of anger and jealousy hidden beneath her icy facade.

Violet stopped for a fraction of a second, locking eyes with Elsie. The air between them seemed to crackle with fire and brimstone , a war waging in their gazes.

Beside her, Lila tugged at her arm, whispering. "Violet, stop. Everyone's watching."

"Let them watch," Violet replied coolly, dragging Lila along despite her protests. She kept her head high, her movements unbothered. They wanted to see if she would break, to see if the Oracle's article had gotten to her. But Violet was determined to show them otherwise.

With unwavering confidence, Violet strode toward the food counter and she grabbed a tray, and served herself. Lila followed closely behind, her nervous glances darting around the room.

Unlike before, Violet didn't turn toward the lower floor where the non-elite students gathered. Instead, she set her sights on the upper floor, the elite section. If they claimed she was an elite, then perhaps it was time to act like one. And if it happened to provoke Elsie Lancaster in the process, all the better.

Lila hesitated as they reached the stairs, glancing over her shoulder at the lower floor. "Maybe we should just sit downstairs today?" she suggested.

The tension in the hall was suffocating enough and Lila didn't want to come anywhere close to an angry Elsie.

"No," Violet said sharply, her tone leaving no room for argument.

Great. It was the war of the queens today.

Lila had no choice but to quickly keep up with Violet.

The moment Violet ascended the stairs, the conversations in the hall reached a crescendo. It was as though Violet had just crossed some forbidden boundary, and everyone was eager to see what would happen next.

And she didn't disappoint.

She spotted an empty table near the center and headed toward it. Lila trailed behind her, looking more like a frightened rabbit than an elite. Not that she was one. Yet.

As they approached the table, Violet's morale shattered instantly. Her steps faltered, and she nearly lost her footing. Her eyes widened as she realized why, because sitting a few tables away were the four cardinal alphas.

Alaric, Griffin, Roman, and of course, Asher.

They were all there, their imposing figures impossible to miss. Alaric was flipping through a book, his intelligent eyes glancing up briefly. Griffin leaned back in his chair, arms crossed, his gaze curious. Roman wore his signature smirk, as if he knew a secret no one else did. And Asher... Asher was the worst of all. He sat with his usual calm arrogance, his eyes lazily following Violet's movements.

For a moment, Violet froze. The boldness she had so carefully built seemed to shake under their combined scrutiny. But she quickly steeled herself, straightening her posture and lifting her chin.

She pushed forward, and managed to reach the empty table and placed her tray down, ignoring the pounding of her heart. Lila as well followed, her movements stiff and awkward.

This was going to be an uncomfortable breakfast.

Chapter 86: The Pack

"How are you able to eat in this condition?" Lila asked, her fork hovering uncertainty over her plate.

She spent more of her time peering out at the elites that surrounded them. She couldn't help but wonder what was going through Violet's mind when she chose this spot. They were like small fishes surrounded by sharks and it was frightening.

"You mean, why shouldn't I eat in this condition?" Violet retorted, as she continued to eat without a care.

Lila gave her an incredulous look, her brows furrowed as if trying to decipher an alien. "You do know you're insane, right?"

"Maybe," Violet replied with a casual shrug, shoveling another bite into her mouth. "But at least I'm not weak. And to deal with people like them..." She subtly nodded toward the table where the cardinal alphas sat in all their dominating glory. "You can't show weakness. The moment they sense it, they'll pounce on you like vultures on a carcass."

Lila swallowed nervously, her appetite entirely gone. She couldn't help but glance toward the alphas' table. Even amidst the din of the hall, they stood out like kings on their thrones, drawing attention without putting effort. The aura around them was thicker, charged with a subtle authority that made the rest of the room feel insignificant.

Thankfully, the dining hall had gradually returned to its usual buzz of chatter as if nothing happened. Although she could still sense their gazes, it wasn't as intense as before. Especially the cardinal alphas who discussed animatedly amongst themselves.

Violet in question observed their table and it looked less like something offered by a school cafeteria and more like the dining table of a five-star restaurant.

A pristine, luxurious tablecloth adored their table, they had shining gold plates and cutlery, and glasses that seemed far too delicate for casual use. Yep, these guys were in a league of their own.

The food was the real showstopper. Platters of delicacies, steaming and fragrant, were spread out like a feast meant for royalty. Each dish looked meticulously crafted, the kind you'd only see in magazines or at exclusive high-end events.

Violet's nose caught a whiff of something buttery and rich, her stomach growling involuntarily despite the meal she was eating.

She couldn't help but wonder if this really was made by the same cook who prepared the cafeteria meals? Or did the alphas have private chefs hidden somewhere, crafting these decadent dishes exclusively for them?

Sure, the food she ate here was leagues better than the garbage her old school served, but whatever the alphas were eating was in a category of its own. And then there was the wine too. Yes, wine. On a school morning.

What kind of school was this, where students casually sipped wine before classes? It was absurd. Yet, at their table, the cardinal alphas embraced the extravagance as if it were their birthright.

And perhaps it was.

"You're right," Lila said, surprising Violet, who raised a curious brow. "It can't be anything good when they're all gathered like that."

"What do you mean by that?" Violet asked, her interest piqued. She took another mouthful of food, waiting for an explanation.

Knowing they were surrounded by werewolves with super hearing, Lila leaned in, her voice dropping to a whisper. "The alphas prefer staying with their packs during meals. It's a tradition. Eating with their pack fosters unity and presents a strong, cohesive front. But for the alphas to be sitting together like this... it means something is up."

"Even Asher stays with his pack?" Violet asked.

"Not really. Kind of." Lila scratched her head, wondering if she should say it, "unlike the other Cardinal alphas, Asher isn't really close with his pack members. Even when with them, he prefers solitude. His pack members are more like little soldiers to do his bidding than actual pack family. "

Violet paused mid-chew, her frown deepening. Werewolves were known to be tactile, social creatures who thrived on physical connection, especially within their packs. The idea of a wolf so disconnected from its pack seemed unnatural, almost wrong.

"That's strange," she murmured, a lot of thoughts running through her mind. "The pack is supposed to be like family. What went wrong with him?"

Lila shook her head, her face clouded with unease. "Who knows? But the point is, the alphas only come together like this when they need to show unity, to make a statement. It's never just casual. It's when they're making decisions, big ones. And trust me, Violet Purple, those decisions are never going to favor you. Not when you're already on their radar."

A foreboding feeling settled over their table and Violet paused, her spoon halfway to her mouth. The ominous undertone in Lila's voice sent a chill down her spine, but she refused to let it show.

Just as she was about to brush it off, Violet's gaze was involuntarily drawn to the alphas' table where her gaze connected with Asher's. And it was the dark, knowing smile curling on his lips that made her heart skip a beat. It wasn't just a smile; it was a promise of trouble, a silent declaration that whatever storm was brewing, he would ensure she was at the center of it.

The food in Violet's mouth turned to ash, and her appetite vanished entirely. She swallowed hard, her throat suddenly dry.

And the smug bastard was indeed out to make her life miserable.

Asher rose to his feet with the confidence of someone who knew he owned the room. Then, with deliberate flair, he tapped his spoon against the wine tumbler in his hand. The sharp, rhythmic clinking echoed through the hall, silencing the chatter as all heads turned toward him.

Unlike the judgmental and mocking looks they had given Violet earlier, the crowd gazed at Asher with awe and reverence, as if they were in the presence of a god. The gods help her, it was nauseating.

Asher said smoothly. "Can I have your attention, please?"

Chapter 87: Bleed For You

Asher paused, ensuring every single eye remained on him before he continued. "There will be a bonfire party on Friday night."

The announcement was met with thunderous cheers and whoops of excitement, the entire hall erupting in joy. Clearly, these Lunaris students loved their parties as much as they loved their bullying. Violet, however, had already decided she wasn't going. She had no interest in mingling with this crowd, especially under Asher's watchful eye.

But as if he could read her mind—no, he didn't need to read her mind; he just knew how her mind worked—Asher's voice cut through the celebrations.

"Attendance is mandatory for all houses. There will be no absences. Anyone who skips will face serious consequences from their respective alphas."

And it was unfortunate he was her Alpha. Fuck her life.

His piercing gaze found hers across the room, and Violet's blood boiled. He didn't need to say her name; the message was clear. You will be there, Violet Purple.

Violet's jaw clenched, her eyes narrowing in fury as she locked stares with him. But Asher, being Asher, didn't flinch. If anything, his smirk deepened, infuriatingly calm and self-assured.

"And that would be all for now," he concluded, his voice as smooth as silk. He raised his glass in a mock toast. "See you all on Friday night!"

The students roared with approval, their cheers echoing through the hall as Asher sat back down and casually drained his wine in one swift gulp. But his eyes never left hers. Even amidst the renewed chatter and excitement over the announcement, he watched her smugly.

Violet's glare could have melted steel, but it didn't faze Asher. Instead, his smirk widened, as if he were enjoying every second of her silent rebellion.

Before Violet could process what was happening, someone got in the way, breaking the contact. Asher's smirking gaze was forced to shift, and before Violet could blink, Elsie Lyka Lancaster had slinked onto his lap.

The move was intentional on her part. Elsie straddled Asher like it was her throne and he was her willing subject. With an air of ownership, she grabbed his face and kissed him, a bold, unapologetic kiss that left no room for doubt about her intentions.

This wasn't a kiss born out of love. No, it was a declaration, loud and clear for all to see. It was Elsie's way of saying, He belongs to me.

She didn't care about what Violet Purple had done or what games she played. The cardinal alphas were hers—her toys, her conquests, her pieces in the grand game she ruled.

Violet felt her stomach churn. She hated the sight of it, hated how Elsie's blonde hair shimmered under the lights as she tilted her head to deepen the kiss, hated the way Asher didn't push her off but instead let it happen. And most of all, she wished she could wring the bitch's pretty neck until she became a thousand broken pieces.

"Violet!"

The sudden voice snapped her back to reality. She turned to see Lila's concerned face, her brows knit with worry. It was only then that Violet looked down and realized what she had done.

Her hand was bleeding. Tiny shards of glass from her crushed tumbler dug into her palm, water pooling around the remains on the table. She had destroyed the glass without even realizing it.

Violet stared at her bloodied hand in confusion, then at the scene of Elsie and Asher, her expression darkening. Since when did she start caring about what Asher did with his whore?

This wasn't her. She didn't care about Asher. He could kiss whoever he wanted, and yet...

Violet clenched her jaw, ignoring the sharp sting in her hand as she turned away from the spectacle. She needed to get out of here.

When Violet stood, Lila rose with her, ever the faithful friend. The blood from Violet's hand dripped onto the ground, staining the tiled floor.

"Wait, let's clean the wound first—" Lila said, her voice frantic as she tried to grab Violet's hand. But Violet pulled away, her face set with a determination that bordered on defiance.

Maybe Daisy was right; maybe she did have a flair for the dramatic. Because right now, Violet wanted them all to watch. And they did watch. Every pair of eyes in the Silvered Hall, including those belonging to Roman, Alaric, and Griffin.

"Let's go then," Lila said hesitantly, her smile forced as she tried to guide Violet toward the exit. But Violet had other plans. Instead of following her friend, she strode confidently toward the cardinal alphas' table.

Lila froze in place, the blood draining from her face as she watched Violet make her bold move. What in the world was she doing?

At the table, Elsie saw her coming and sat up straighter on Asher's lap, a triumphant smirk playing on her lips. She was the queen peacock, perched high, ready to bask in Violet's reaction. She thought she had won.

But Violet had no intention of giving her the satisfaction. Ignoring Elsie completely, she picked up Asher's napkin from the table. She slowly used the white cloth to clean her bloodied hands. The stark red stains on the napkin felt symbolic, a small act of rebellion that made everyone in the room hold their breath.

Then, without so much as a glance at Elsie, Violet leaned in close to Asher. Her lips barely moved as she whispered into his ear, her words dripping with venom.

"Mark my words, this will be the last time I'll bleed for you."

Asher's eyes widened slightly, an unknown emotion flickering in his gaze, cracking his otherwise stoic demeanor. His gaze followed her as she straightened and turned away, her head held high.

Elsie, still perched on Asher's lap, glared at Violet, clearly unsettled by the strange exchange between them. And for the first time, she did not feel so confident anymore.

Violet didn't look back as she walked away, Lila following after her while the others were left speechless.

Chapter 88: Just Like Lucille

"Hello Adele, "

Adele turned from her desk, her sharp gaze landing on Violet, then drifting down to her bleeding hand. She sighed heavily, muttering under her breath, "You have got to be kidding me."

Violet attempted a dry joke. "I know, surprise, surprise, right?"

But Adele wasn't in the mood. Abandoning the thick book she'd been reading, she stood and approached Violet, her face a picture of exasperation. "You and Alaric," Adele began, shaking her head, "I don't know which of you is worse at this point. You must really love me so much you can't wait to visit me every day."

Violet smirked, not one to let sarcasm slide past her. "Yes, I miss you so much my balls are beginning to ache."

Adele raised a brow, her lips twitching. "Gutter kids and their foul mouths," she muttered with mock annoyance, shaking her head.

Had it been anyone else, Violet might have snapped back, but coming from Adele, it didn't sting. If anything, it felt oddly neutral. She followed Adele's gesture to one of the beds and sat down without protest. Adele wasn't exactly a friend, but she wasn't an enemy either, their relationship right now was somewhere in that liminal space of indifference and obligation.

Lila had not followed Violet to the infirmary because she had sent her to class. She would not let the girl follow her along at the expense of her education. Lunaris might be many things but their education was topnotch.

Moreover, Lila was her friend, not her servant. Not that the elites at Lunaris understood that seeing they literally had fellow "students" serving them as "servants".

She watched as Adele cleaned the wound just as the question came. "So what happened this time? Which of the alphas is responsible for this one?"

"None, actually," Violet admitted. "I was the one who got distracted and crushed a glass of water."

Adele paused, one brow lifting. "You crushed a glass? With your bare hands?"

"Yes. Stupid, right?"

"Hmmm," Adele mused, resuming her work. "You're stronger than you look. It's not easy to crush that with bare hands."

"I was... emotional," Violet grimaced slightly when she recalled what led to the outburst while Adele worked. "People do stupid things when they're angry."

"And let me guess," Adele said dryly, "Asher?"

Violet exhaled sharply. "The one and only. However, he had a little help this time."

Adele said nothing, her focus on cleaning the wound. After a moment, she leaned back and said, "No glass embedded. I'll seal it up."

Taking Violet's hand, Adele began channeling her healing energy. The warmth seeped into her skin, soothing and tingling at the same time.

"So," Adele asked suddenly, her tone

far too casual, "do you like Asher?"

The question startled Violet, and she instinctively tried to pull her hand back, but Adele held firm. After all, she was not done with the healing process.

"Ha," Violet laughed nervously. "You do realize this is emotional manipulation, right? Aren't you supposed to be ethical?"

"Answer the question, Violet. Yes or no."

"No," Violet snapped defensively.

"Liar."

"But I—" Violet stopped mid-sentence, realizing werewolves could sniff out lies. She sighed, defeated. "Okay, fine. I might have been attracted to him," she admitted reluctantly. "At first," she emphasized, "but the guy is a nutcase, and there's no way in hell I'm starting anything with that lunatic."

Adele scrutinized her for a moment longer before finally releasing her hand. Violet glanced down to see her skin flawless, as if nothing had happened. Although it was not the first time, it still took her by surprise.

"Teenagers," Adele muttered, cleaning up her tools like a disapproving parent. "Always drawn to the bad ones. At least you still have your senses and it shows Asher hasn't stolen those away too."

"You mean like Lucille?" Violet asked cautiously, her voice a whisper. She noticed how Adele, who had been organizing her stuff, stiffened at the mention of the name.

"And where did you hear that?" Adele's voice was steady, betraying no emotion as she continued her task, not turning to face Violet.

At least she hadn't denied it, Violet thought, sensing an opportunity.

"Griffin isn't as tightlipped as the others," Violet continued, trying to sound nonchalant. "Though he didn't dive into details."

"And you expect me to dive into those details?" Adele finally turned around, her arms crossed over her chest, her expression unreadable. "What makes you think I would divulge a story that isn't mine to tell?"

Violet stood up, closing the distance between them with a few determined steps. "Because you care about the Cardinal Alphas, and you're particularly concerned about Asher's recent actions. Maybe if the 'second one' understands the history of the 'first one,' she can avoid a similar fate."

For a moment, it looked like Violet's plea had reached Adele, but then the healer's expression hardened. "You needn't worry about repeating history; precautions are in place to ensure Asher doesn't tamper with your mind, not without your consent," Adele replied, her tone final.

"So your fears won't happen, Violet Purple. You can go back to class now; your hand is healed," Adele concluded, signaling the end of their conversation as she turned to leave.

But just as Adele reached her desk, likely to resume her reading, Violet called out, driven by a sudden impulse. "I'm starting to have visions about him."

Adele paused, turning sharply. "Visions? Of him?"

"Not just him. All of them," Violet confessed. She gulped hard, aware of the potential consequences of her revelation. The piece of information might find its way on the Oracle's article tomorrow if care was not taken.

"When did the vision start?"

"Today." Violet answered.

"Since today, you said?" Adele repeated, her tone probing.

Violet nodded. "Yes, right after I bathed. I was staring at the mirror, and then it just... happened." She hesitated, swallowing hard, her cheeks burning as she struggled to find the words. "I saw them... and they were—"

"Say no more," Adele interrupted sharply, holding up a hand to stop her.

Violet felt a wave of relief wash over her. As embarrassing as it was to admit, at least she didn't have to describe the graphic details. Still, she couldn't shake the unease in Adele's demeanor.

"Did Lucille have the same visions as me?" Violet asked cautiously, watching Adele's reaction closely. "Did Asher lie when he said he wouldn't mess with my head again? Is he still doing it, even unknowingly?"

Chapter 89: Not Another Lucille

Adele's gaze darkened further, her lips pressing into a tight line. She looked away for a moment, as though weighing her words carefully, before finally speaking.

"I can't say for certain if Lucille experienced the exact same thing. Her head was so messed up it was difficult to separate the truth from the lies," she said, her voice slowly. "However, there are... similarities." She paused, confessing. "Asher's power doesn't always function in ways even he fully understands. It has a will of its own, and sometimes it lingers longer than it should. It can leave traces, imprints—"

"Imprints?" Violet interjected, her voice rising with panic. "Are you saying he's left something in my head? That this is permanent?"

"Calm down," Adele said sharply, silencing Violet's outburst. "I didn't say it's permanent. But it's possible that whatever he did to you has left residual effects. That's why it's critical that you stay away from him. The more contact you have with Asher, the stronger these... imprints might become."

Violet's hands clenched into fists at her sides, frustration bubbling to the surface. "So what am I supposed to do? Just avoid him forever? That doesn't fix the fact that these visions are happening now! Moreover, how do I avoid someone who's not intent on leaving me alone."

Violet told her. "There's a party on Friday night and everyone is mandated to attend and I'm sure as hell he doesn't plan on avoiding me at all!"

By the time Violet was done, her chest was heaving from both anger and exhaustion. She did not ask for this at all! She had come to Lunaris to study, not get entangled in Asher fucking Nightshade's games.

"Fine, I'll talk to the others and they'll exempt you—" she began, but her voice trailed off, her eyes widening as if a sudden realization had struck her. "Oh fuck, I can't help you. It's happening on Friday."

Violet's shock was palpable as her mouth fell open. "Are you kidding me right now?" she exclaimed, incredulous.

Adele shook her head, her demeanor apologetic yet serious. "I wish I could intervene, but I don't have the authority to disrupt tradition," she explained, her tone regretful.

"What tradition?" Violet demanded, her frustration mounting. "What's happening on Friday, Adele?"

"I can't divulge that. The Alphas would have my head on a spike if I spilled their secrets," Adele replied, her tone indicating the gravity of the secrecy.

Violet clenched her fists, her nails digging into her palms as she struggled to contain her rising anger. Why was the damn school so full of secrets and twisted traditions? It was becoming unbearable.

Adele sighed, sensing Violet's overwhelming frustration. "However, one thing I can tell you," she added, leaning closer as if sharing a confidential tip, "if you get the chance to make the choice, leave the West House without hesitation."

Realizing she had no luck with that one, Violet shifted the conversation. "Fine, then tell me about Lucille's story."

Adele let out a long sigh, her hand coming up to rub her temples as though Violet's persistence was physically draining her. She stared at Violet with a mix of frustration and reluctant admiration.

"You really don't let things go, do you?" Adele muttered.

"No," Violet said firmly, her eyes blazing. "Especially not when my sanity, my safety, and my future in this godforsaken school seem to be hanging by a thread. So, spill it. Who is Lucille, and what happened to her?"

Adele's voice turned distant as she began to recount the story. She leaned against the edge of her desk, crossing her arms as if bracing herself for the retelling.

"It all started in their first year at Lunar Academy," Adele said with a heavy heart. "Asher has always been a thrill-seeker, someone who thrives on pushing boundaries and breaking rules. For him, rebellion isn't just an act—it's a part of his identity."

Violet leaned forward, hanging onto every word, her stomach twisting with unease.

"When the Alpha King announced that whoever became his heir would have to marry Elsie Lyka," Adele continued, "it was like a bomb went off in Asher's world. The idea of being bound to someone he didn't choose, someone who represented everything he despised about the system, drove him mad. He hated the rule. He hated the expectation."

Violet frowned. "So he decided to rebel against it?"

"Rebel isn't even the right word for what he did," Adele said darkly. "He wanted to tear the entire system down. And he thought he could start with his brothers, the cardinal alphas. He believed he could sway them to his side, make them his allies in his rebellion against the Alpha King."

"And Lucille?" Violet asked, her voice barely above a whisper.

Adele's expression darkened further. "Lucille was his test object. She was sweet, naive, and utterly unsuspecting. She trusted Asher. She thought he cared for her. And he used that trust to mold her into his puppet. He manipulated her mind, broke her will, and bent her to his cause. Slowly, piece by piece, until there was nothing left of the vibrant girl she used to be."

Violet felt a chill run down her spine. "And the other alphas? What did they do?"

"They weren't on board with his plans," Adele said. "Alaric, Griffin, and Roman, none of them supported his rebellion. But they didn't stop him either. Maybe they thought it was just another one of Asher's games, or maybe they didn't realize how far he would go. By the time they saw the extent of the damage, it was too late."

Violet's fists clenched, her nails digging into her palms. "What happened to Lucille afterwards?"

Adele hesitated. "You'd have to get the answer from the alphas yourself. It's not my place to tell. I've told you enough."

"So now he's trying to do the same thing to me," Violet said with fury.

Adele looked at her. "I don't know to be honest. He could like you for real, after all, he let go of his grip on your mind. However, Asher has never been the best at matters of the heart. He has an unconventional way of loving and that is why I'm telling you this. So you know what he's capable of."

Violet nodded, her jaw set. "I'm not Lucille."

"Good," Adele said, her voice firm. "Because we don't need another Lucille."

Chapter 90: Pillars Of The New World

Violet left Adele's office, exiting into the infirmary's main corridor. The sterile, polished medical environment stretched out before her, and she couldn't help but let her gaze wander.

So far, Adele's office had been her only point of contact within the infirmary, but now, curiosity clawed at her now. What went on in the rest of the building? Why did they build this much space if Adele's office was the only place she needed to get her wound healed?

Her eyes landed on the elevator just a few steps ahead, its sleek, metallic doors gleaming under the bright fluorescent lights. It stood out like a beacon, almost daring her to press the button.

Who had access to those upper floors? Were they reserved only for the elite students? Special cases? Violet was so damn curious, the mystery eating at her. Mary hadn't spoken about that part of the infirmary either, and Violet found herself wanting to know more.

In the end, her curiosity won and Violet decided to take the bull by the horn and explore the area. Unfortunately, she barely managed to take two steps toward the elevator when a firm hand reached out, grabbing her arm. Violet spun around, her heart skipping a beat when she came face-to-face with a stern-looking Adele.

"What the fuck do you think you're doing?" Adele's voice was gravelly and sharp, cutting through the silence like a blade.

Everything happened suddenly and Violet was caught off guard by the intensity in her tone. She couldn't help but stammer, "C—check-up."

"What?" Adele's brow furrowed as she tightened her grip.

"I was supposed to have my weekly mandatory check-up today," Violet clarified, her voice coming out smaller than she intended.

"At what time?" Adele pressed, her eyes narrowing.

"6 p.m."

Adele glanced at the clock on the wall, her expression hardening. "It isn't 6 yet, Violet Purple."

Violet swallowed, unnerved by Adele's penetrating stare. The woman had a way of making her feel like she'd done something terribly wrong, even when she hadn't.

"I thought... I thought I'd check out the premises before my appointment," Violet explained nervously. "It's my first time after all. I wouldn't want to get lost on my way here."

Adele's eyes narrowed further, disbelief written all over her face. "Well, it isn't six yet, and you won't get lost. Also," she added, "I'm canceling your appointment today. I already evaluated you yesterday, and you're good. There's no need for you to come for any medical assessment. And if I'm not wrong, you should be on your way to class right now."

Violet stared at her, frowning. Something wasn't adding up. Adele's tone was too sharp, too insistent. It was as if she were actively trying to get her out of the infirmary. Why? That was the question.

"What?" Adele snapped, catching Violet's scrutinizing look. "Why are you staring at me like that?"

"You don't want me here," Violet said slowly, her voice probing. "Why don't you want me here? Why? What's going on?"

Adele ignored the question entirely, her tone dripping with sarcasm as she said, "It seems to me that you like punishment. Should I add your name to detention? Perhaps you'd enjoy a good time with the delinquents in this school."

Violet held her gaze, searching Adele's face for any cracks, any hints of the truth but the woman had such an impassive look that she couldn't catch a whiff of anything. She was even worse than Asher.

Finally, Violet let out a resigned sigh and said, "Fine, I'll leave for class. But don't think this is over. I'll get to the root of what's happening in this school."

But Adele snarled, "Perhaps, put that energy into finding a way to defeat Asher's games."

Fuck. That was a low blow. Violet went red in the face. Turning on her heel, she had already begun to leave only for Adele's hand to clamp down on her arm once more.

"The next time you have a mandatory check-up," Adele said, her tone cold and authoritative, "come see me, and I'll take care of it. If I'm not around, go to any of the cardinal alphas. They'll handle it. Do you hear me?"

Violet opened her mouth to argue, but Adele's tone grew even more commanding. "Do you hear me?"

"Fine! Okay!" Violet snapped, her voice raised in exasperation.

"Good," Adele said curtly. "Now leave."

Without another word, Violet yanked her arm away and stormed toward the revolving doors. Just before stepping outside, she glanced back.

To her shock, Adele was still standing there, arms crossed, her sharp gaze fixed on her like a hawk watching its prey, making sure she didn't try to sneak back in.

No one in this academy was normal, Violet muttered under her breath as she left through the revolving doors that swished open, and the chilly air outside hit her like a slap, contrasting greatly the sterile warmth of the infirmary.

Something wasn't right about the infirmary, or Lunar Academy in general. Violet thought as she crossed the small road that led to the school building. Nothing about earlier was normal.

The way Adele had insisted she never stepped into that elevator, her harsh tone, and the strange ultimatum to go to a cardinal alpha for her check-ups, it all reeked of secrets.

Although it seemed like Adele was just being overbearing. But inwardly, Violet couldn't help but sense that the woman was being protective. Except it was the kind of protective that screamed that something was hidden. And why involve the cardinal alphas in her medical matters? Not unless they knew whatever she — Adele — knew.

If the cardinal alphas held the answers, then approaching them would be like walking a tightrope over a pit of snakes. Each one of them was dangerous in their own way. Especially Asher.

Asher wouldn't give it freely, not without asking her to participate in his game again. And she would be a fool to give him permission to mess with her head again.

Alaric would never tell her either. That one was the most tightlipped out of all the alphas.

Neither was she getting entangled with Roman either. The playboy might look harmless but then, whoever was friends with Asher could never be normal. He would probably want something from her as well.

Griffin was the key. The brute had shown a surprising softness at times, and she could use that to her advantage. However, Violet knew she had to tread carefully. Griffin might appear straightforward, but he wasn't stupid, and getting him to open up wouldn't be easy.

Not to mention, the cardinal alphas were really sensitive about their secrets.

By the time Violet returned to the school building, the first lesson of the day had already ended. Students were milling about, preparing for the next one.

She noticed a few lingering glances and hushed whispers as she entered the hallway, but she ignored them. If Lunaris had taught her anything, it was to keep her chin up no matter what.

She glanced at the schedule on her phone and just like Griffin said, her lessons had been adjusted. Her next class was History of the New World.

Violet found the class and unlike the other times, she decided to sit in the front seat seeing the cardinal alphas were fond of the back seat. This way she could avoid facing any of them.

Violet barely finished settling into her seat when someone called, "Hello, Violet."

She looked up and froze. Standing in front of her was an impeccably dressed, stunningly beautiful girl. Violet's breath caught as recognition dawned, and the blood drained from her face.

Oh, fuck.

"Urm, hey... hello," Violet stammered, swallowing hard. It was the girl who had given her the makeup that day, the same girl whose tea party she had promised to attend, and had failed miserably to show up. Fuck her life indeed.

"Natalie Avax," the girl introduced herself with a sweet smile, extending her hand for a handshake.

"It's nice to meet you, Natalie Avax...." Violet trailed off, her voice faltering as the weight of the surname hit her like a truck.

Her mind raced as she hesitantly took Natalie's hand, her grip weak. She said slowly, "Your name sounds similar to the company name on my phone."

"Yes, that's right. The one and only Avax." Natalie giggled softly, her laughter melodic as their hands lingered in the handshake.

Violet gulped, her throat dry. "Your family made the phone I—no, the whole school—uses...." Her words trailed off again as the reality overwhelmed her.

She stared at Natalie, stunned. It was incredibly hard to get one's hands on a good phone these days, and yet here this girl was, descended from a family that practically controlled communication in their world. Violet had always thought herself impervious to intimidation, but now, standing in front of Natalie Avax, she felt small. Insignificant.

No wonder the students at Lunarix did whatever they wanted. These weren't just kids, they were the children of the pillars of the new world.

And she, Violet Purple, was a nobody.