Defy The Alpha(s) 2: Rebel Beast - Chapter 211: A Slithering Serpent[1,333 words]

Venus Crotalus was a dead snake once she got her hands on him.

Brittney had finally managed to escape Trisha's vigilant watch, only to discover there was no sign of him anywhere. Was he kidding her? If Variant or Valerie caught up with her now, it was over. She probably wouldn't get another chance like this tonight.

She searched the crowd, rising slightly on her toes to see past the bodies moving around her. There was nothing. No black hair or familiar face. No infuriating serpent who had summoned her over and then decided to disappear.

Then, just as Brittney was considering the possibility of strangling him whenever she eventually found him, Venus appeared between two passing people like a ghost.

He was grinning.

That tasty, slithering bastard.

The moment he knew she'd seen him, he turned and walked away.

"Oh, you have got to be kidding me," Brittney muttered.

She pushed her way through the crowd, keeping her eyes fixed on him. Venus never once stopped to wait for her, but somehow he never moved fast enough to completely disappear either. Every time someone blocked her view, she'd catch another glimpse of his black hair a few seconds later, always farther ahead.

He was doing this on purpose.

Brittney watched him descend from the arena grounds and followed, weaving between the last clusters of partygoers until she reached the bottom. By the time she got there, however, Venus had vanished again. There was nothing ahead of her but the woods.

She stared at the trees. Then came a rustle from somewhere beyond them, followed by the briefest glimpse of black hair disappearing behind a trunk.

Fuck. Was it weird that she could recognize the back of his head now?

She must be losing her mind.

Brittney took one step toward the woods before stopping herself.

Wait. Was she actually out of her fucking mind?

This was practically the opening scene of every horror movie where some woman made a catastrophically stupid decision and everyone watching screamed at the television for her to turn around. Was she seriously about to follow a serpent into a dark forest alone because he'd smiled at her and disappeared between some trees?

How much did she really know about Venus anyway?

They'd shared one passionate night together. One very memorable, extremely satisfying night, yes, but that didn't suddenly make him trustworthy. He was still a serpent, and for all she knew, this could be some elaborate ploy to lure her away from everyone else and kill her.

Except that didn't make much sense either.

If Venus wanted her dead, he'd had every opportunity last night. She'd been alone with him, completely vulnerable, and he'd done many things to her, but murder certainly hadn't been one of them.

Besides, Brittney couldn't shake the strange conviction that Venus wasn't going to hurt her. And if she remembered correctly, a certain serpent had quite the habit of tempting her into things and then challenging her to see whether she'd actually follow through.

If this was another one of his games, he had chosen the wrong human to play it with.

Brittney glanced around the edge of the woods one last time. Truthfully, she wasn't exactly alone out here. She could hear couples scattered among the nearby trees, some talking and laughing while others were making sounds that required absolutely no explanation whatsoever.

The woods had become the unofficial extension of the party.

Wonderful.

At least if Venus tried to murder her, there were witnesses nearby. Granted, half of them sounded far too preoccupied with fucking each other to notice, but Brittney would take what she could get.

With that reassuring thought, she entered the woods.

Light from the arena followed her at first, slipping between the trees and illuminating enough of the ground for her to see where she was going. But the farther she walked, the weaker it became until the darkness between the trunks swallowed almost everything ahead.

Brittney pulled out her phone and switched on the flashlight.

"Venus?" she called under her breath.

There was no response. She continued forward, and after another minute of walking, Brittney slowed.

Okay. Maybe this hadn't been her brightest decision.

She turned slightly, trying to remember which direction she'd come from. The distant music was still audible, but the trees had begun to look irritatingly identical, and Brittney was starting to wonder whether she'd managed to get herself lost.

A rustle sounded ahead and her light immediately swung toward it. For half a second, she caught the blur of Venus's hair and the edge of his jacket disappearing behind another tree.

Brittney's eyes narrowed. Oh, that fucking snake. He wasn't lost. Serpent Boy wasn't waiting for her either. He was playing with her.

Unfortunately for Venus, Brittney had never known when to walk away from a challenge. She tightened her grip on her phone and went after him. If the serpent wanted to play, she would follow this game to the end.

The direction he'd disappeared in eventually led her into a small clearing surrounded by thick woods. An enormous oak stood in the middle, its sprawling branches stretching overhead and its roots breaking through the earth around its trunk.

Brittney stopped.

Well, shit.

Unless morning suddenly decided to arrive several hours early, she wasn't entirely confident she could find her way back to the party on her own.

For the first time since entering the woods, Brittney seriously questioned her decision to trust Venus. She hoped the bastard hadn't taken his little prank far enough to abandon her out here because if he had, getting roasted would be the least of his problems once she found him.

A shadow blurred past her and Brittney spun around.

She didn't see him.

Movement came from her right this time and Brittney turned quickly, her phone light sweeping across the trunks and bushes, but once again caught nothing.

Her heart began beating faster.

This was different from following glimpses of him through the woods. She couldn't see him anymore. She could only hear the occasional rustle of leaves and the low disturbance of something moving around the clearing.

Her adrenaline kicked in. Brittney slowly lowered her phone.

Fine. If he wanted to act like a snake, she could treat him like one.

"You know, for someone who went through all this trouble to get me alone, you're suddenly being very shy, Serpent Boy."

Silence fell.

Brittney kept her eyes ahead, but every part of her attention shifted to the sounds around her.

"What happened?" she continued. "All that confidence disappeared because we're alone now? I expected better from you."

A faint rustle came from somewhere to her left, but she resisted the urge to look.

"Or perhaps this is all you've got. Slither around in the dark and hope the poor human gets scared." Brittney scoffed. "Very impressive. I'm trembling."

Another rustle sounded, closer this time.

Brittney smiled to herself. There you are.

"Honestly, Venus, I'm starting to think I gave you far too much credit. Maybe I should just go back to the party and find myself a beast who actually knows how to—"

Movement came from behind her and Brittney whirled around. Her hand caught his arm before Venus could retreat. She planted her feet, used his momentum against him and threw him straight over her shoulder.

Venus hit the ground hard enough to knock the breath from his lungs, and for one glorious second, there was complete silence. Then he started laughing.

The bastard actually lay there laughing.

"Oh, you think that's funny?"

Brittney was on him before he could recover, straddling his waist and pinning him beneath her. Venus made no attempt to throw her off. If anything, the grin spreading across his face only made her want to strangle him more.

Brittney leaned down until their faces were only inches apart.

"Now," she said sweetly, "I'm going to give you a choice."

Venus's brows rose.

"Roasted snake or sautéed?"

Defy The Alpha(s) 2: Rebel Beast - Chapter 212: Deserve Each Other[1,425 words]

At that question, Venus grinned up at her.

"I knew you had a thing for snakes. I just didn't know how to prove it until now."

Brittney's face went hot. "You—" She never got to finish.

One second Brittney was straddling Venus with the very satisfying belief that she'd finally gotten the better of him; the next, the world tilted. Her back hit the grass, her phone slipped from her hand, and Venus was suddenly above her, having flipped their positions so quickly she barely registered how he'd done it.

Brittney sucked in a breath as he settled between her thighs, one hand planted beside her head while the other held her firmly at the waist. She immediately tried to squirm out from beneath him, only for the movement to press her directly against the hard length beneath his joggers.

She froze, and their eyes met. Oh, that fucking— His mouth slowly curved.

Brittney hated that smile. Mostly because her body decided it liked their new position.

"Who's getting sautéed now?" he murmured.

"Don't get cocky."

"A little late for that, don't you think?"

Her eyes widened. The bastard.

Venus laughed under his breath and lowered his head toward hers, but the moment Brittney realized he intended to kiss her, her fingers buried in his black hair and yanked his head back. Hard.

“Don’t even think about it.”

Surprise flashed across Venus’s face, and for the first time since she’d found him tonight, the amusement disappeared. He went still above her, and although Brittney couldn’t read everything that crossed his face, she caught the sudden uncertainty there.

She arched her neck instead and reached for the small cluster of rhinestones she’d carefully arranged over the marks.

Venus’s gaze followed her fingers.

“I know love bites are common,” she said, peeling the rhinestones away one after another, “but I don’t remember asking for fucking acupuncture, Mr. Crotalus.”

The last stone came free. Beneath them sat two puncture marks, unmistakably shaped by a serpent’s fangs.

The swelling had gone down and the angry redness had faded considerably since she’d first discovered them, but the marks remained small and distinct against her skin, like someone had pressed the shapes into her flesh and left them there.

She glared up at him. “Care to explain?”

Venus didn’t look surprised. That was all Brittney needed.

“You knew.”

His jaw hardened.

“You fucking knew?” Her anger immediately returned. “Did you do this on purpose?”

The look Venus gave her stopped the next accusation on her tongue.

“Really?” His voice had lost every trace of teasing. “Do you genuinely think I would deliberately hurt you like this, my lady?”

Brittney’s mouth opened, but nothing came out. And annoyingly enough, that sensible little voice in the back of her mind chose that exact moment to remind her that perhaps she shouldn’t dismiss the possibility entirely.

She barely knew this guy.

Yes, he was fun to be with and she'd trusted him enough to spend the night with him. But Venus was still a serpent. She didn't know how he truly felt about humans, what he wanted from her, or whether this thing between them was anything more than two people making very questionable decisions because they found each other attractive.

And if there was one thing Brittney had plenty of experience with, it was choosing the wrong men.

Venus watched the doubt creep across her face.

"Neither of us was exactly thinking clearly that day," he said. "I was caught up in you, and you were caught up in me. I didn't even realize I'd nicked you with my fang until afterward."

"Really?" Brittney scoffed. "You call this a nick?"

"Fine. I'm sorry." Venus paused, then reached for the collar of his turtleneck. "Although I suppose we're both animals when it comes to sex."

"What is that supposed to—"

Venus tugged the collar down, and Brittney fell silent. There, against the side of his neck, was the unmistakable imprint of human teeth.

Her teeth.

Wait a fucking minute. She did that?

Brittney stared at the mark, trying very hard to remember exactly when she'd bitten him hard enough to leave such brutal evidence behind. Unfortunately, several moments from that night came rushing back at once, none of which helped her case.

For once in her life, Brittney couldn't think of a single thing to say.

When she finally looked at Venus again, one of his brows was raised, amusement dancing openly in his eyes as he waited to hear how she intended to defend herself.

Brittney cleared her throat.

"I suppose we deserve each other."

Laughter burst from Venus's chest, so genuine that Brittney couldn't help joining him. They laughed at the ridiculousness of it all until their laughter gradually died and their eyes met again.

Neither looked away.

Venus was still above her, his body nestled between her thighs, and without their laughter filling the space between them, Brittney became painfully aware of their position again.

His gaze dropped to her mouth.

“So...” His voice lowered. “Can I kiss you now?”

Brittney smirked. “You don’t need to ask.”

She caught his face between her hands and pulled him down. Their mouths collided.

Venus kissed exactly the way he played his games—like he couldn’t resist pushing her just to see what she would do about it. His mouth moved against hers slowly at first, almost tauntingly, refusing to give Brittney the urgency she wanted.

She wasn’t having that. So Brittney slid one hand into his hair and deepened the kiss herself. A low sound left Venus, swallowed between their mouths, and his teasing disappeared. His hand closed around her waist as he kissed her back with enough force to press her deeper into the grass.

Much better.

Venus kissed her hard. His hand slid from her waist to the back of her neck, holding her exactly where he wanted her as his tongue swept across her lower lip before slipping between them. She welcomed him with equal enthusiasm.

There was something incredibly annoying about kissing Venus because even this felt like a competition. Every time she thought she’d taken control, he changed the angle of his head and stole it right back. When she tugged his hair, he answered by catching her lower lip between his teeth. When she tightened her thighs around his waist, his fingers flexed against the back of her neck. Neither seemed willing to surrender.

And Brittney fucking loved it.

Then his lips left her mouth, traveling along her jaw instead, and Brittney’s breath caught when he reached her neck.

“Careful,” she warned immediately.

Venus stopped, and for half a second, neither moved. Then his lips brushed deliberately over the place where his fangs had marked her.

A violent shiver raced through Brittney. She gasped and arched into him before she could stop herself, blindsided by the sensation that shot through her from that one touch.

Lord in heaven. Since when had that part of her neck become so damn sensitive?

Venus noticed, and his mouth returned to the marks, this time closing over them with a slow pull that made Brittney's fingers dig into him. A cry escaped her before she could swallow it, and she felt the curve of his smile against her skin.

The bastard was enjoying this. Worse, so was she.

Every pass of his mouth over the marks sent another wave of heat through her body. Brittney's thighs tightened around him instinctively as the ache between them grew almost unbearable.

What the hell was this serpent turning her into?

Oh, right. A fucking mess.

Venus sucked at the sensitive skin again, and Brittney's head fell back against the grass with another helpless sound.

That was it. She couldn't take it anymore.

Brittney yanked his hair, pulling his mouth away from her neck before staring him dead in the eye.

"I want you inside me. Right now."

The playfulness in Venus's expression disappeared. His eyes darkened as they searched hers, the desire in them so blatant that a shiver ran through Brittney.

"As you wish, my lady."

Before Brittney could respond, Venus hooked an arm beneath her and lifted her from the ground. She instinctively wrapped her legs around his waist as he carried her across the clearing toward the enormous oak.

Her back met the rough trunk of the tree. For a moment, neither of them moved. They simply stared at each other, breathing heavily, their faces only inches apart. Brittney could still feel his arousal pressed against her, and from the look in Venus's eyes, he was waiting to see whether she would change her mind.

She didn't.

Venus's hand moved to her denim skirt and pushed it higher, clearing the fabric out of his way. Brittney was equally impatient. She slipped her fingers beneath the waistband of his joggers and tugged them lower, her hand wandering shamelessly over the firm curve of his ass.

Venus's mouth twitched while Brittney smiled sweetly at him.

Then she smacked his ass. Hard.

Defy The Alpha(s) 2: Rebel Beast - Chapter 213: Missed His D... Not Him[1,227 words]

All his life, Venus had been told that no human could handle a serpent. That given the choice, humans would always prefer wolves, dragons, or practically any other beast before willingly mating with one of his kind. To humans, serpents were cold, venomous creatures better feared from a distance than welcomed into their beds.

But that belief had clearly never accounted for Brittney.

Or perhaps she was simply the anomaly.

The sting of her palm across his ass still lingered, sharp and unexpected, and Venus's head snapped up in surprise, his eyes finding hers.

Brittney merely looked at him innocently. "What?"

A broad smile slowly spread across Venus's face. She really didn't care that he was a serpent. There was no hesitation in the way she touched him, no instinctive revulsion or trace of the caution humans had been taught to show his kind. Here she was with her legs wrapped around his waist, looking quite pleased with herself after smacking his ass.

To Brittney, he was simply Venus Crotalus.

And fuck, he had never wanted a female this badly.

His smile turned dangerous.

"Let's see how long you can keep that look on your face."

Brittney's innocent expression immediately became a smirk. "Is that a threat, Serpent Boy?"

"I don't make threats. I simply deliver."

A shiver swept across Brittney's skin at the look in his eyes.

Her pulse jumped. Good. She'd been hoping he would.

Brittney didn't need any man treating her like some fragile little thing who might break if he handled her too roughly. She had never been ashamed of wanting sex, nor had she ever

pretended otherwise for the sake of appearing proper. When she wanted something, she owned that desire and went after it.

And right now, she wanted Venus Crotalus.

With her skirt already bunched around her waist, Venus tugged her underwear down her legs, and Brittney had to unwrap herself from around him to step out of it. The moment it was gone, he hoisted her back against the oak, her legs locking around his waist again.

She was wet and ready for him. Venus could smell her arousal everywhere, the scent saturating the air and flooding his heightened senses until it nearly drove him mad with need.

Thank fuck they were outside. Because right now, he had no intention of holding back.

“Come on....” Brittney’s voice was breathy now. “Fuck me already.”

Venus didn’t rush. He positioned himself at her entrance and pushed in slowly, inch by deliberate inch, wanting her to feel every bit of him on the way.

Brittney’s breath caught, a low moan slipping free as he filled her. The stretch was familiar, her body remembering exactly how he felt even as it adjusted all over again to his size. Her walls clenched around him instinctively, and the sensation of being this full again had her head falling back against the bark.

Heavens above. It felt so good.

Her nails dug into his shoulders as her legs tightened around his waist, pulling him further in. Venus didn’t stop until he was fully seated inside her, pausing there to feel her pulse around him.

Brittney’s chest rose and fell rapidly, her inner walls fluttering around him in small, involuntary pulses that drew a low groan from his throat.

“I miss being inside of you. I swear I could die in here,” Venus said, following it with an experimental drag of his hips that had her mewling.

When Brittney recovered enough, she leaned toward his ear, voice rough. “Well don’t die yet, I like your dick a little too much to start mourning for the loss.”

Venus chuckled, not even offended she missed his dick and not him.

“Fine, for the sake of my dick, I’ll stay alive.”

“Good.” Brittney clasped his face. “Now shut up and move, serpent boy.” Though the command came out shakier than she intended.

“Shut up and move?” Venus’s voice dropped low, the humor in it thinning out. “That’s what you want, my lady?”

“Yes, that’s what I…”

The rest of the sentence died in her throat, because he pulled almost all the way out and drove back in hard enough to rattle her against the oak.

Brittney’s head knocked back against the tree, and a sharp, wrecked “Fuck!” burst out of her before she could catch it.

“That’s for the smack.” He did it again, just as deep, and her fingers clawed at his jacket. “And that’s for the mouth.”

“You’re such an ass…” Her breath hitched on the next thrust. “God, don’t stop.”

“I can’t,” Venus confessed. “Not unless I want to die.”

He set a pace that left her no room to think or reason. Every snap of his hips shoved her up the trunk an inch before his hands dragged her back down onto him, the wet slap of their bodies loud in the quiet between the trees.

The bark scraped her back raw through the halter top, but she didn’t care. Her thighs burned from gripping him, and the thick, hot drag of him hit so deep inside her that her toes curled inside her boots.

“Look at you,” Venus panted against her cheek. “Skirt around your waist, back against a tree, taking me like you were made for it.”

Brittney grabbed a fistful of his hair and yanked his face up to hers, her own voice shredded. “Maybe you should stop talking and make me come, Serpent Boy, before somebody walks in on a snake getting beaten by a human.”

Venus’s laugh came out as a growl. “Beaten?”

He shifted his grip, hooked one arm under her knee, and pushed her leg higher against the trunk. The new angle sent him so deep that Brittney’s mouth fell open on a silent cry. Then it came out all at once, loud and ugly and utterly unladylike.

“Oh, fuck, Venus, right there, right fucking there…”

“Louder,” he rasped, hips punching up into her. “Let them hear who you belong to tonight.”

“I don’t belong to…” Another thrust cut her off, and her nails raked down his neck. “Fuck, okay, okay, I belong to your dick, just don’t you dare stop.”

He bit back a groan and obeyed. His thrusts grew rougher, less rhythm and more hunger, and he buried his face against the side of her neck. His lips brushed the marks his fangs had left, and Brittney felt the cool tips of those same fangs graze her skin. She went rigid.

“Don’t you dare,” she gasped.

“I won’t.” His voice was strained, almost pained. “I’m not going to bite you, I swear. Just let me…”

He closed his mouth over the marks and sucked, slow and hard. The sensation shot straight through Brittney, and the tension in her belly tightened until she could barely breathe.

“Venus, I’m going to…” Her voice cracked. “Oh shit, oh fuck, I’m going to come, I’m…”

“Then come.” He slid a hand between them, his thumb finding her clit, and pressed down in a firm circle. “Come on me, Brittney.”

And she did, breaking apart with a scream she barely managed to muffle against his shoulder. Her whole body clenched around him in violent waves, her heels digging into his back, her hips jerking helplessly against his hand.

“Fuck. Fuck. Fuck, fuck, fuck, Venus!”

He kept moving, dragging every last spasm out of her while she shuddered and swore into his jacket. Her walls gripped him so tightly that his rhythm shattered.

Venus slammed into her twice more, deep and graceless, then pressed his forehead hard to the trunk beside her head, and a rough, broken sound tore out of his chest as he spilled inside her.

Defy The Alpha(s) 2: Rebel Beast - Chapter 214: Handed Him What He Came For[1,104 words]

Brittney waited for Venus to ease back, but he didn’t.

At first she thought he was only catching his breath. Then she felt a small change at the base of him, a slow thickening that pressed against her entrance. She frowned, still dazed, and rocked her hips to make room. There was none.

The pressure only grew, steadily stretching her a little more with every pulse of his heart until the fullness bordered on too much, enough to make her breath stutter. She tried to

shift again and felt only how firmly he held her, the movement pulling her tighter around him.

"Oh, fuck," she breathed. "This again?"

It had happened the last time they were together too, and neither of them had been able to move for a while.

Brittney had no idea how he did it, or how her body managed to take it, but God, it felt good. Each time Venus twitched, a ripple ran through her walls, and they answered on their own, clenching helplessly around the pressure. She couldn't grind or chase anything. All she could do was feel, and the stillness made every sensation louder than the thrusting had.

"Venus," she whispered, a question on her lips.

But Venus didn't answer. His forehead stayed against the bark, his breath coming in long, uneven pulls against the side of her neck. A crease had formed between his brows, and his eyes were shut as if he were trying to understand something happening far away.

At some point his arms slid beneath her thighs, and he held her up without effort, taking her whole weight as if the tree were no longer needed.

Brittney let her head fall against his neck this time, her lips parted. Heat spread slowly through her belly and down her trembling legs, and her fingers curled into the hair at his nape. She wasn't pulling now, only holding on.

The crescent moon hung high in the sky, and the wind moved through the branches overhead. The air smelled of crushed grass and sweat. Her heartbeat was loud in her ears, and she could feel his answering it, slow and heavy, where their chests pressed together.

Brittney lost track of time. It could have been five minutes or an hour. Her thighs began to shake from the stillness alone, and she realized she didn't want it to end.

Then, gradually, the pressure began to ease. It happened by degrees. The fullness softened first, then loosened, and Venus shuddered against her, a long, shivering tremor that ran through them both. He slipped free with one last aftershock that pulled a gasp from her throat.

Venus didn't set her down right away. He held her a moment longer, breathing hard, then knelt and lowered her carefully onto the grass, one hand cradling the back of her head. Her skirt pooled around her hips, and her legs didn't seem to belong to her anymore.

Venus bent over her and began to kiss her, gently, as though he were apologizing for everything he'd done to her against that tree. He kissed her forehead first, then the corner of her eye and the line of her jaw.

He found the marks on her neck and brushed his lips over them so lightly she barely felt it. He kissed her collarbone, then the curve of her shoulder, and tugged her halter straight before pressing a kiss to the raw red patch the bark had left on her ribs.

Brittney sighed in bliss, welcoming every kiss.

Just like the last time, sleepiness began creeping over her, except this time she managed to fight it. Beneath the drowsiness was a warm, almost delirious satisfaction that left her perfectly content to remain exactly where she was.

Venus murmured against her skin, "Do tell me you enjoyed that."

"Are you kidding me?" Brittney chuckled. "That was fucktabulous."

Venus couldn't help laughing into the curve of her shoulder. She was so damn cute and funny.

"You have to tell me, though..." Brittney spoke through the occasional hitch in her breath whenever Venus's lips found another sensitive spot. "Is it just you, or are beastmen naturally this good at fucking?"

"Why?" Venus kissed the valley between her breasts. "Have you tired of me already and intend to take another beast, my lady?"

He'd meant it as a tease, but the thought of Brittney choosing another male sent an unexpected stab of jealousy through his chest.

He'd rip the bastard apart. Brittney was his— Venus caught himself. All right. Perhaps he needed to calm the fuck down.

His thoughts were getting dangerously ahead of him.

"Oh, don't worry...." Brittney wore a wicked grin as she traced a path down his toned chest, slipped her hand into his joggers and gave his still-hard erection a firm squeeze. "I still like this a little too much."

Venus groaned at the squeeze, the sound rough and helpless, his hips pushing into her palm before he could stop them. Brittney Thorne would be the death of him.

"However...." She slowly released him. "I'm a curious little thing."

That was where Venus saw his opportunity. He slid a hand beneath her skirt, his fingers parting her slick folds as he asked, "Is that the same curiosity that had Aria and Maverick kissing earlier? Does Aria like a beast's cock as much as you love mine?"

He circled her clit once, then pushed a finger inside her and twirled it in a way that had her gasping at the sensation.

When she didn’t answer, he pinched her clit sharply. "Answer me, Brittney."

"Aria and Maverick are a match made in heaven, unlike the both of us...." Brittney gasped out, overwhelmed, her hips lifting off the grass to chase his hand.

Venus’s attention sharpened at that. Match made in heaven? It wasn’t clear enough, but he couldn’t press her without raising suspicion. So he kept his hand moving, curling his finger inside her until Brittney cried out again, her clit oversensitive beneath his thumb.

To throw off any suspicion his strange question might have stirred, he leaned his forehead against hers. "If the both of them were made in heaven, then what about us?"

Brittney’s heart missed a beat. Venus couldn’t be serious. It was the amazing sex making them both sentimental.

"We don’t need to be made in heaven," she answered. "We’ll make our own heaven right here on earth."

Venus pressed a kiss to her forehead and hated how naturally it came. Brittney had just handed him a piece of what he’d come for, completely unaware that he’d deliberately drawn it out of her.

Defy The Alpha(s) 2: Rebel Beast - Chapter 215: The Mysterious Friend[1,682 words]

It was supposed to be just one dance with Luther, but Trisha ended up spending far more time with him than she anticipated. If the guy turned out to be a vampire, she would have no trouble believing he’d put her under some kind of compulsion.

Right now, they’d wisely avoided the actual seating areas, most of which had been taken over by couples who were more interested in making out than sitting. Instead, they were seated on one of the lower stone tiers overlooking the party, where there were considerably fewer kissing couples, still talking as if Brittney hadn’t abandoned her with a complete stranger in the first place.

"So you’re trying to tell me you’ve been to the human city?"

"Yes, quite a few times," Luther answered.

"Interesting." Trisha lifted a brow in an exaggerated manner. "You won't tell me what kind of beast you are, yet you've been to the human realm more than once. That's not something every beast can boast of."

Luther rolled his eyes at the suspicion written all over her face. She'd been like this throughout their conversation, listening to everything he said while silently picking through his words for anything that didn't add up.

"Come on, you know some beasts work in the human cities, right?"

"Yes, I know. Certified beasts. The ones who obey the rules and are trusted enough to behave." Trisha watched him carefully. "Are you one of them?"

"No, I'm not."

Trisha released a long sigh.

Earlier, his mysterious act had been entertaining. Now it was becoming downright frustrating. She knew his name, knew he wasn't a student, knew he had snuck into the party and apparently, he'd visited human cities several times. Yet every answer only seemed to create another question.

"However..." Luther said, finally tossing her another morsel. "My parents are in charge of those soldiers."

Trisha's brows shot up. "All of them?"

Luther nodded.

"And who exactly are your parents?" She shifted toward him. "They must be powerful if they can get you into human cities whenever they please."

"Curious, are we?" His lips curved into a smirk. "Don't worry. You'll find out in due time."

Trisha made an irritated sound in the back of her throat.

Luther looked even more amused. She was quite cute when she was annoyed.

"So does that mean you don't want to hear what happened to me on one of my earliest trips to Nova City?"

Trisha perked up at once. "Of course I want to."

She might not be able to force the truth out of him tonight, but Trisha was patient. He could keep feeding her these little pieces if he wanted. Eventually, she would fit them together and figure out exactly who he was.

"So what happened?"

Luther leaned back on his hands. "Have you ever used one of those electric scooters humans leave all over the city?"

Trisha was stunned. "A scooter?"

"Yes."

"So you're telling me whatever happened to you involved a scooter?"

"I was quite young."

Trisha's lips twitched. "Continue."

Luther glanced away like he was already reconsidering telling her.

"It was one of my first proper trips into Nova City without someone watching my every move. I'd seen humans riding those things everywhere. They'd walk up, scan something with their phones, and suddenly the scooter would unlock."

"It's called an app."

"I know that now, Trish."

Trisha's brow rose. Trish?

Luther conveniently ignored her questioning look, cleared his throat, and continued. "Anyway, I wanted to try one. The problem was that I didn't have the app."

"So you downloaded it."

"No."

Trisha stared at him.

Luther immediately became defensive. "I didn't know I needed to."

"Oh my God."

"Our technology is different. I thought the phone merely communicated with the machine somehow."

"It does. Through the app. But like you said, you know that now." Trisha fought back a laugh. She couldn't even begin to imagine how this had gone.

"So what did you do?" Now she was curious as hell.

"I forced it to unlock."

Trisha’s smile disappeared. "You what?"

"I forced it."

"With what?"

Luther paused.

The silence lasted just long enough for realization to dawn on her.

"You used whatever mysterious beast strength you’re refusing to tell me about to steal a scooter?"

"I didn’t steal it. Not when I intended to return it."

"Sorry, Luther, but that is exactly what people who steal things say."

Luther let out an aggrieved sigh. "I really didn’t steal it. I even left some of the human currency my father had given me."

"Where?"

"On the scooter."

Trisha stared at him for two seconds before bursting into laughter. Somebody help her. This had to be one of the funniest stories she’d ever heard. This guy could probably make a fortune touring human cities and narrating all the ridiculous things he’d done in them.

Luther dragged a hand down his face. "This story was much less humiliating in my head."

"No, no." Trisha was already wiping beneath one eye. "Please continue. What did the scooter do with its money?"

Luther gave her a flat look.

She grinned.

"Fine. I got it unlocked and started riding."

"You mean illegally."

"Do you want to hear this or not, Trisha Thorne?"

"Very much. Go on, Luther. I'll do my best to control myself during this very serious and completely humorless story."

Luther caught the sarcasm easily but continued anyway.

"For the first few minutes, everything was fine. Then I saw a human boy ride past me much faster. He looked at me, and I looked at him."

"Oh no..." Trisha already knew where this was going. "Please tell me you didn't."

Trisha waited.

Luther's expression became grave. "It was clearly a challenge."

Trisha face-palmed. "Oh, you idiot."

"He was younger than me and could handle the thing better than I could. It was a hit to my pride, and I couldn't take it."

Yep. Whatever came next had definitely ended in disaster.

Luther continued with what little dignity he had left. "I didn't understand that those scooters had speed restrictions, so I removed it."

Trisha's mouth fell open. "You fucking removed the speed limiter?"

"I didn't know that's what it was."

"What did you think it was?"

"Something preventing me from winning."

Trisha stared at him.

Luther shrugged. "Again, I was young. I didn't understand what I was doing."

"You keep saying that as if youth explains your attempted suicide."

"It wasn't attempted suicide. I knew what I was doing."

"Clearly." Trisha gave him a look. "So, Mr. Know-It-All, what happened next?"

Luther drew a breath. "The scooter accelerated enough that I caught up with the boy."

"Congratulations." Trisha gave him a little clap, although that wasn't nearly disastrous enough to be the ending she'd anticipated.

"Thank you."

"That wasn’t sincere."

"I’ll take it anyway." He shifted slightly. "Actually, I passed him. And that was when I discovered something else."

Trisha was almost afraid to ask. "What?"

"Humans put stairs underground."

For one confused second, she merely stared at him. Then it clicked.

"No."

"Yes."

"You rode it into a subway entrance?"

"I didn’t know what a subway was!"

Trisha doubled over.

Luther waited with wounded dignity while she laughed so hard she could barely breathe.

"I went down the first three steps, but the scooter went down considerably more. I, however, did not."

"What happened to you?"

"There was a railing, and my body met it..." He paused. "Quite intimately."

Trisha’s entire body shook with laughter. She knew she shouldn’t be laughing this hard at something that had obviously hurt him, especially when he’d been unfamiliar with the human city at the time, but it was his fault for telling the story like this.

Luther’s mouth betrayed him with a reluctant smile. "I landed on the stairs, broke two ribs, dislocated my shoulder, and had what the healer later described as an impressive amount of bruising."

Trisha’s laughter died immediately. "Damn. I’m sorry."

"Don’t be. They healed. I’m a beast, remember?" Luther waved it away. "Except the worst part wasn’t the ribs."

Her eyes widened. "There was something worse?"

"The boy followed me. He stopped at the top of the stairs, looked down at me, and asked if I was okay."

"Aww, that was nice of him."

"Then he asked if he could have my scooter."

Trisha lost it.

Her laughter rang loudly enough that several students nearby turned to look, but she couldn't have cared less. She bent forward, one hand clutching her stomach while Luther sat beside her with the long-suffering expression of someone deeply regretting the decision that had brought him to this moment.

"You're lying," she managed.

"I wish I were."

Luther watched her, his embarrassment gradually giving way to amusement. "I'm glad my suffering entertains you, Trisha Thorne."

"It really does." She wiped beneath her eyes.

When she looked at him again, however, Luther wasn't laughing anymore. He was staring at her.

Trisha's smile slowly faded beneath the intensity of his gaze.

"You're quite beautiful," he said.

She froze.

Until now, everything between them had been easy. A dance that had lasted longer than intended, his ridiculous stories, teasing, and the occasional spark she'd deliberately ignored whenever she felt it. Luther was a beast with a mysterious identity. She was human. This thing would not last.

Yet when Luther leaned closer, Trisha didn't move.

Her heartbeat quickened as the distance between them disappeared. His gaze dropped briefly to her mouth before returning to her eyes, giving her every opportunity to pull away.

She didn't.

His lips barely brushed hers, the contact so light it sent an unexpected tingle down her spine. Luther lingered there for a second, close enough that one small movement from either of them would turn it into a real kiss.

"There you are."

Trisha jerked back. She looked up to find Valerie and Variant standing a few feet away.

Valerie’s eyes narrowed. "We’ve been looking for you everywhere."

Variant’s gaze moved from Trisha to Luther, lingering on him with immediate curiosity.

"Care to introduce us to your friend?"

Defy The Alpha(s) 2: Rebel Beast - Chapter 216: Where Is Brittney[1,503 words]

Trisha would have answered for him, except she realized she didn’t know enough about Luther to introduce him as anything, much less a friend. And considering she’d almost kissed him a few seconds ago, that realization made her feel incredibly stupid. What the hell had she been thinking?

"You heard her." Trisha turned a pointed look on him. "Do answer her, my friend."

Luther stared at her as if he couldn’t believe she’d thrown him under the bus that quickly.

Trisha held his gaze without an ounce of sympathy. The silent exchange went on long enough for Valerie and Variant to glance at each other before Luther finally broke it and rose to his feet.

"I’m Luther." He offered them a charming smile that probably worked on most people.

Valerie and Variant only frowned.

"I don’t know anyone here named Luther, and I pretty much know every beast at this academy," Variant said, her eyes narrowing.

Valerie stepped closer and sniffed the air around him. Her frown deepened. "I can’t get a scent from him." She leaned back and studied him from head to toe. "And maybe it’s the face paint, but I don’t recognize him either."

"What are you?" Variant demanded. "Which House are you from?"

Variant had shifted completely into the role Maverick had entrusted her with tonight, and Trisha found herself rising too as the situation suddenly became more serious than she'd realized.

Luther lifted both hands. "There's no need for the hostility, ladies. I didn't come here to cause trouble."

"If you didn't come here to cause trouble, then tell us who the fuck you are."

"He said he's an outsider," Trisha supplied. "He came because of the party."

That answer only made Valerie and Variant more suspicious.

"An unidentified beast sneaks into Bestiaris on the one night the human students are here," Variant said. "Do you understand how that looks?"

Luther did.

The beasts within Bestiaris were dangerous enough, but at least they lived under academy rules. Beyond these grounds were beasts with no reason to tolerate humans at all, and some hated them far more openly than the students did.

"I have no intention of harming any human." Luther's gaze slid to Trisha. "Especially Trish."

Her head snapped toward him.

"Trish?" Valerie and Variant echoed at the exact same time, their suspicion momentarily giving way to identical looks of intrigue.

Trisha glared at Luther.

The bastard had done that deliberately.

She opened her mouth to defend herself, but the words never came. Two familiar figures approaching through the crowd caught her attention instead.

"Oh, look. Maverick and Aria are finally back."

Valerie and Variant immediately followed her gaze.

"Perfect." Variant glanced meaningfully at Luther. "Perhaps Maverick will finally be able to tell us who you are."

She turned toward the approaching couple.

Their arrival drew attention almost immediately. Earlier, one kiss between Maverick and Aria had practically shut down the entire party. Now they were returning from the woods together, hand in hand, and everyone who had spent the last hour wondering where they'd disappeared to suddenly had something new to stare at.

Aria noticed. There was no way she couldn't.

Conversations lowered as they passed, heads turned, and several beasts made absolutely no attempt to hide their curiosity. Aria ignored them all. Her fingers remained intertwined with Maverick's as she walked beside him, her chin lifted with considerably more confidence than she felt.

Variant's eyes narrowed the longer she watched them. They seemed closer now.

There had already been something between them before they disappeared into the woods, especially after that kiss, but the awkward tension was gone now. Maverick kept Aria tucked close to his side, and Aria wasn't fighting him for space. If anything, she seemed perfectly content to stay there.

Then Variant caught their scents, and her mouth slowly curled into a wicked grin.

Valerie smelled it a second later.

"Oh."

Variant looked at her. Valerie stared back.

Neither needed to say it.

They weren't the only ones who noticed either. Beast senses were far too sharp for Maverick and Aria to disappear into the woods together and return carrying each other's scents so strongly without everyone drawing the most obvious conclusion.

They had fucked.

At least, that was what every beast watching them seemed to believe.

It was a miracle Aria didn't trip over her own feet with so many eyes following her. Maverick seemed completely unaffected by the attention, his hand firm around hers, and Aria drew what little courage she could from him. She searched the crowd for familiar faces until she spotted Valerie and Variant waving at her.

Thank God.

"There they are." Aria immediately changed direction, tugging Maverick along with her.

Maverick allowed himself to be dragged without complaint, although he caught the expressions on Valerie's and Variant's faces before Aria did.

He knew those looks.

Trouble.

"Finally..." Valerie drawled when they reached them, giving Maverick a very knowing look. "The two of you decided to crawl out of your little nest, Alpha."

Maverick didn't miss a beat. "It was a lovely nest, wasn't it?"

He turned to Aria as if seeking her agreement.

"Don't encourage them, Maverick. Moreover, nests are for birds."

Valerie and Variant burst out laughing.

Aria's eyes narrowed. "What?"

That only made them laugh harder.

"Why? What's funny?"

"Nothing," Valerie managed.

"Clearly, it's something."

Variant recovered first. "She's laughing because beasts nest too."

Aria blinked. "Excuse me?"

"Nesting," Valerie explained, still grinning. "It's something females of certain beast species do when they need comfort or security. Different species have their own version of it, but wolves are especially known for it."

"Clothes, blankets, pillows," Variant added. "Anything soft or carrying their scent or their mate's. They gather everything together somewhere private and make themselves comfortable."

Aria glanced at Maverick, dumbfounded. He looked quite entertained by this conversation.

"It's especially common among mated females," Valerie continued. "Stress can trigger it. Sickness too. Heat, pregnancy, after giving birth. Basically, whenever instinct decides she needs somewhere safe."

"And before you ask," Variant cut in, already anticipating the question forming on Aria's face, "human mates have been known to do it too."

Aria's brows shot up. "Humans?"

"Sometimes." Valerie nodded. "The bond doesn't give you a beast, but your body can still respond to your mate in ways you aren't used to. Some human females start stealing their wolf's clothes, gathering blankets and pillows, even getting territorial when someone messes with their nest."

Variant grinned. "Worse, some don't even realize they're doing it."

Aria's mouth slowly fell open. Then her gaze swung accusingly toward Maverick.

Maverick raised his hands. "Don't look at me. You would have learned about it once classes started."

Aria threw her hands up. She was so done with this.

"Thank the fuck I'm single," Trisha muttered.

Variant's attention snapped toward her, and the look that appeared on her face made Trisha immediately regret speaking.

"Are you sure?"

Trisha gave her a long look. "Really?"

Valerie grinned. "Trisha made a new friend tonight."

"Oh, for God's sake."

"Actually..." Valerie turned toward where Luther had been standing. "You should meet—"

She stopped because the space beside Trisha was empty. Her smile vanished.

Variant straightened. For a second, none of them spoke.

Trisha stared at the vacant spot where Luther had been standing only moments ago, then searched the people around them.

He wasn't there.

Her gaze swept farther across the party but there was nothing. Luther was gone.

Maverick's attention snapped to Trisha. "Who's Luther?"

Trisha shifted under his stare, suddenly looking nervous. "Just some guy I met at the party."

"Not just some guy," Valerie corrected. "A beast who doesn't belong to the academy."

A low growl emanated from Maverick's throat.

"What?"

"He said he was an outsider," Variant added. "We don't know what kind of beast he is either."

Maverick's expression hardened. An unfamiliar beast was dangerous enough, but one from outside Bestiaris was another matter entirely. The academy had rules its students were expected to obey, especially where the humans were concerned. An outsider had no reason to respect any of them.

And tonight, the academy was filled with humans.

"How the hell did he even get into the school?"

"I don't know," Trisha admitted. "He told me he came for the party. I thought he was just some guy who snuck in because he wanted to have fun."

Before Maverick could question her further, Aria looked around, suddenly realizing someone else was missing.

"Wait. Where's Brittney?"

Variant and Valerie went still. Their eyes immediately swept the crowd.

"Oh, shit," Variant muttered.

Aria's stomach dropped. "What?"

"She said she needed some air," Trisha answered. "I tried to follow her, but she left me with Luther—!"

"Oh my God," Aria could feel a headache growing.

Valerie cursed beneath her breath. They had been so distracted by Luther that neither of them had noticed how long Brittney had been gone.

Maverick eyes abruptly went blank and

Aria recognized the look immediately.

He was mindlinking someone.

Defy The Alpha(s) 2: Rebel Beast - Chapter 217: Do It Here[1,521 words]

This was not her style at all, yet Alek obediently followed Dimitri into the woods. It didn't help that along the way, she caught glimpses of other couples doing things a lady shouldn't be looking at.

Above all, a lady like her shouldn't be walking through the woods at this time of night with a man. But then, this wasn't just any man. This was Dimitri. Her mate. The piece of her soul she hadn't known she'd been waiting for. And yes, she wasn't naive enough not to know what might happen once they were alone.

Throughout the night, she and Dimitri had done a lot of kissing. Yet it never seemed to be enough. While Dimitri had made it clear that he wouldn't pressure her into having sex with him or accepting his mark, the urge to take things further had only grown stronger.

Alek wasn't scared. This was simply a life-altering decision, and she needed to be absolutely certain that whatever happened tonight was because she wanted it, not because some supernatural bond was pushing her toward him.

Unfortunately, separating the two was becoming increasingly difficult when all she could think about was running her fingers over Dimitri's biceps, kissing him again and perhaps allowing those kisses to lead somewhere they hadn't before.

The atmosphere around them certainly wasn't helping. Everywhere she looked, beasts were tangled around each other, kissing, touching and disappearing deeper into the woods without the slightest concern for modesty.

And all that shamelessness was beginning to rub off on her.

They found a spot deep enough in the woods that the music from the party had faded to a distant thrum. There were no busy couples nearby and no wandering students, only the two of them beneath the trees and the occasional flicker of moonlight slipping through the branches.

Alek barely had time to appreciate the privacy before Dimitri turned to her. One second her feet were on the ground, the next his hands settled around her waist and lifted her effortlessly.

Alek sucked in a startled breath and instinctively wrapped her legs around him.

"Dimitri—"

He carried her the few steps to the nearest tree until her back met the trunk, his body settling between her thighs.

Then he stopped. And that was what made her heart race.

Dimitri didn’t kiss her. He didn’t reach beneath her dress or take advantage of the position he’d put them in. He simply looked at her, his face close enough that she could feel the warmth of his breath against her lips.

Giving her the choice.

Alek swallowed.

Her dress had ridden higher when she wrapped her legs around him, the thigh-high slit exposing far more of her leg than it had earlier. Dimitri’s gaze dropped briefly before returning to hers. His hand moved slowly along her bare thigh, and Alek’s breath caught.

His palm was warm and rough against her skin, his fingers spreading over the softness of her thigh as if he were memorizing it. The touch wasn’t even particularly indecent, yet her heart had fallen out of rhythm.

His thumb stroked once against her skin. "Still sure you want to be out here with me, baby girl?"

Every doubt and every want she’d carried through the woods was suddenly standing right in front of her, waiting for an answer.

"Where would I be if not with you?"

The answer came with a boldness that surprised even Alek.

Dimitri reacted instantly. His eyes brightened with the unmistakable glow of his wolf rising closer to the surface, and Alek’s already racing heart stumbled at the sight.

His hands slid higher, following the bare length of her thighs until his palms settled over the curve of her ass.

Alek inhaled sharply.

"Careful, Alek baby," Dimitri murmured, his gaze fixed on hers. "You keep answering me like that, and I’m going to start believing you know exactly what you’re doing to me."

She gasped, and it had nothing to do with his words or the slow squeeze of his hands. He had pulled her flush against him, and she felt the hard, unmistakable length of his erection pressing between her thighs. Nothing separated them but the thin lace of her

panties and the fabric of his pants, and it was enough that she felt every inch of him, hot and insistent against her.

Heat rushed through her. Knowing Dimitri wanted her and feeling the proof of it against her were two entirely different things.

As if testing her reaction, Dimitri tightened his grip on her waist and drew her down as he rolled his hips up, one slow, deliberate stroke that pressed the hard length of him against her. Alek shivered, her nails digging into his shoulders. The friction dragged through the thin lace, and her core throbbed, every bit of warmth in her body suddenly pooling low in her belly.

Dearest Father in heaven, it felt good.

Dimitri did it again, slower this time, wanting her to feel every inch of the stroke. The ridge of him dragged along the thin lace and over the place that made her toes curl inside her boots. Alek's head tipped back against the bark, her lips parted on a sound she had never made in front of anyone.

"There," Dimitri murmured, watching her face. "That's the spot, isn't it?"

Alek nodded, unable to speak. He gave her the same stroke again, and a shaky moan slipped out of her before she could swallow it. Her hips moved on their own, rising to meet his, and the dress rode higher until the slit was bunched around her waist and the night air touched her bare thighs.

"Look at you," Dimitri said, his voice gone low and ragged. "Moving against me like you've been wanting this all night."

"I have," Alek admitted, and heat flooded her face even as she said it.

Dimitri groaned. His hands clamped over her ass and held her still while he ground against her in a tight, steady circle, and her breath stuttered, broke apart and came back in short, shallow gasps. Her chest heaved against his. Her nails dragged down the back of his neck, and she felt the rumble of a growl travel through his chest into hers.

"Do you know what it's going to feel like when I'm finally inside you?" he rasped against her ear. "You're this wet through two layers of cloth. You'll take me so well, baby. You'll grip me so tight I won't remember my own name."

"Dimitri..." Her voice cracked on his name.

"Say it again."

"Dimitri, please..."

He picked up his pace. Each grind pressed harder and rolled slower, then faster, and the pleasure wound tighter in her belly with every pass. Her thighs trembled around his waist. The sounds spilling out of Alek's lips had stopped sounding like hers, high, breathless little cries that she couldn't hold back, and the wet slide of lace against her swollen flesh made her dizzy.

"I can't," she gasped. "Something's... I'm going to..."

"Let go," Dimitri growled. "I've got you. Let go for me."

The coil snapped.

Alek buried her face against his shoulder and cried out, her whole body clenching around nothing as the release tore through her, wave after wave. Her fingers fisted in his shirt. Her legs locked around him so hard she nearly lifted herself off the tree, and she shook, helpless, while he held her up.

Dimitri's grunt came low and strangled against her hair. His hips stuttered, then he drove forward in three rough, uneven thrusts, and she felt him go rigid against her. His breath hissed through his teeth as he came in his pants like some boy who had never touched a girl before.

For several long seconds, neither of them moved, the only sounds their ragged breathing. Alek's body kept trembling in small aftershocks, and Dimitri's forehead rested against the tree beside her head.

"Well," he said finally, a rough, breathless laugh in his voice. "That's embarrassing."

Alek let out a shaky laugh of her own. "I'm not complaining."

Dimitri then lifted his head. His eyes found hers, softer now, almost dazed, and he cupped her face in one large hand and kissed her. It was slow and deep and unhurried, and she melted into it, her fingers sliding into his hair, her heartbeat still racing against his.

When they finally broke apart, he rested his forehead against hers.

"Mine," he whispered, with something much gentler than a claim in it.

"Then make me yours," Alek said.

For a moment Dimitri only smiled against her temple, taking it as a sweet echo of his own whisper. But then her words truly dawned on him, and the smile slid off his face.

He looked at Alek. She was watching him with the calm of a woman who had already decided.

Dimitri didn’t move. He didn’t seem to breathe either. He had promised himself he wouldn’t push Alek toward this, and she had just walked straight past every careful line he’d drawn.

"You mean now?" His voice came out rough, almost unsure. "Out here...?"

Defy The Alpha(s) 2: Rebel Beast - Chapter 218: No Gentleman[1,524 words]

Alek nodded, biting down on her lip nervously.

"No." Dimitri said it before he’d even finished thinking. "I’m not taking you for the first time out here like we’re two people sneaking away for a quick fuck."

Alek’s brows rose.

"You’re my mate," he continued. "Your first time isn’t going to be with dirt beneath your back and half the academy somewhere in these woods. You deserve more respect than that."

"What if that’s what I want?"

The sheer disbelief that crossed Dimitri’s face was one for the records. He had braced himself for shy Alek, not this.

"You want me to take you right here? On the forest floor?"

Alek nodded, although the warmth creeping into her cheeks betrayed some of her confidence.

"Baby girl, there are leaves and God knows what else on that ground." He glanced around them before returning his incredulous gaze to her. "I’m a wolf, yes, but that doesn’t mean I intend to behave like an animal when I’m making love to you for the first time."

Alek’s mouth twitched. "You are an animal."

Dimitri gave her a look.

She grinned back at him.

"That’s not the point."

"I think it’s a little bit the point."

"Alek."

"Dimitri..." Alek said. "I’m a virgin. You’ve known since our first kiss, and I love that you want my first time to be special. But special doesn’t have to mean a bed, flowers and you treating me like I’ll break."

She drew in a breath. "I’ve listened to my friends talk about sex for years. All the ridiculous places they’ve done it, the things they’ve tried, the things they would never admit to anyone outside our room. And I’ve always been the one listening. The sensible one. The careful one."

Dimitri watched her closely.

"Maybe I want to know what it feels like not to be sensible for once...." She swallowed. "I don’t want you to be a gentleman tonight."

"Alek."

His jaw flexed, the warning in her name sending a thrill through her. But Alek wasn’t finished. She could see him struggling against his own instincts, and she knew exactly how to make that struggle harder.

She leaned in until her lips brushed the shell of his ear.

"Don’t tell me your wolf hasn’t thought about it," she whispered. "Laying me down in the dirt with the earth against my back and nobody but the moon watching. Pinning me there and taking me hard enough that I still feel you tomorrow."

A growl rolled out of Dimitri’s chest. His eyes flared bright, his wolf rising so close to the surface that she could see it looking back at her. Alek’s pulse jumped at the sight, but she didn’t retreat.

Dimitri caught her chin gently, forcing himself to hold her gaze instead of giving in to everything she’d just put inside his head.

"And you’re certain?" His voice had gone rough. "This isn’t something you have to do to prove anything to me."

"I know." Alek’s answer came without hesitation. "I’m not trying to prove anything. I want you. I want this. And if I change my mind, I’ll tell you."

Dimitri released a slow breath and rested his forehead against hers. "You’re going to be the death of me, woman."

Alek smirked. "I take it I won, then."

"You'll always win with me, baby girl."

"Then I'll consider myself honored."

Dimitri brushed a few strands of red hair away from her face, his expression caught somewhere between affection and disbelief.

"Last chance to tell me to stop."

But Alek rolled her hips against him and felt him swell against her, his breath hissing out through his teeth.

"I want you now," she whispered.

Slowly, Dimitri lowered himself to his knees and laid her down on the bed of leaves and soft earth, one hand cradling the back of her head so it never touched the ground. The faint moonlight fell across her face, her red hair spread dark against the soil, and Dimitri looked at her as if he had never seen anything so beautiful.

"And Dimitri?"

"Yes, baby girl?"

"You're still being a gentleman."

His eyes flared gold, and his smile turned slow and dangerous.

"Not for much longer."

Dimitri's hands closed around her knees, and he pushed her legs apart with such force that Alek's breath shuddered out of her. The cool night air touched her where she was bare and open to him, and she felt his gaze travel over every inch of her.

He dragged the bunched fabric of her dress up to her waist and hooked his fingers into her panties. He pulled them down her legs, past her boots, and this time he didn't tuck them away. Instead, Dimitri balled the damp lace in his fist, leaned over her, and pressed it between her lips.

Alek stared up at him with wide eyes.

"A gentleman wouldn't do that, would he?" His voice was calm, almost pleasant, and the wolf in his gaze was anything but.

Alek’s hands were free. She could have pulled the lace out and told him exactly what she thought of him. Instead, her fingers curled into the leaves beside her head, and she held his stare. The taste of herself on the fabric made heat flood her face, and she felt him see that and approve.

"Good girl."

He sat back on his heels and stripped off his shirt, then unbuckled his belt and shoved his ruined pants down his hips. Alek’s eyes dropped, and widened.

What the fuck?

She had heard that werewolves were generously made. Worse, she had felt how well endowed he was the times they had played around. But feeling it was nothing like seeing it, thick and flushed and heavy, standing against his stomach as though it had never been spent.

Fear closed around her throat. How was that supposed to fit inside her? She made a small, muffled sound against the lace, and Dimitri caught it.

"You asked for it, baby girl." He wrapped a hand around himself and stroked once, slowly, holding her stare. "You’ll get what you want. And you were made for me, so don’t be frightened. You’ll take me so well."

The words steadied Alek, but they didn’t make her any less afraid. She nodded anyway.

Then Dimitri settled between her knees and kissed the inside of her thigh, finishing it with a sharp bite that made her core clench around nothing. He was so close, and still not close enough.

Finally, his tongue dragged through her in one long, rough stroke, and Alek’s whole body jerked, a cry swallowed by the fabric in her mouth.

Good Lord. Every thought in her head short-circuited at once.

Dimitri didn’t ease into it. He licked her with slow, heavy strokes that made her thighs shake, then closed his lips around her clit and sucked until her fingers tore at the leaves and her hips began to lift on their own. His hands held her thighs open, pinning her where she was, and every moan she tried to make came out thick and muffled.

When her legs started trembling, he slid a thick finger inside her. Alek went rigid at the intrusion. She was tight, impossibly tight, and the stretch burned.

"Breathe," Dimitri murmured against her. "Look at me. That’s it."

He worked the finger in and out in patient strokes, his mouth never leaving her clit, until the burn gave way to a deep, melting ache. Then he added a second finger, and her back arched off the ground. Her moans came faster, higher, and she stopped caring how loud they were. When he hooked his fingers just right, a startled cry ripped out of her.

"There it is." He lifted his head, his chin glistening, and looked up at her flushed face. "You're ready."

He withdrew his hand, braced himself over her, and drew the lace from her mouth. "I want to hear you."

"Yes, I'm ready!" She shouted, impatient.

So he lined himself up. The blunt head of him pressed against her entrance, and Alek's courage faltered for a single breath. But she wrapped her arms around his neck and held on.

Right then, Dimitri went still.

At first she thought he was savoring the moment. But his eyes had gone blank, the beautiful brown dulled to something distant and unfocused, like he were listening to a voice only he could hear. His arms slackened. His weight sagged against her, and he didn't breathe.

"Dimitri?"

He didn't answer.

"Maverick," he breathed a moment later, so quietly she almost missed it, and it wasn't meant for her.

Alek's heart stumbled. A chill poured through her that had nothing to do with the night air, and her stomach dropped. She knew exactly what this meant, and she dreaded it.

Then his eyes cleared. Dimitri blinked, and when he looked down at her, the hunger had drained out of his face. What replaced it was far worse, the look of a man who hated what he was about to say.

"I'm sorry," he said quietly. "We have to go back to the arena."

Defy The Alpha(s) 2: Rebel Beast - Chapter 219: Special Treatment[1,183 words]

"Do you think something happened to Brittney?" Aria was beginning to panic. "That one of the beasts dared to..." She couldn't finish the sentence. She didn't even want to imagine that one of the beasts had hurt her friend.

"I don't think so." Trisha tried to sound hopeful. "She said she needed some air."

At that moment, Maverick snapped out of the mindlink, a deep frown settling across his face.

Aria's heart missed a beat, thinking the worst had happened.

"What is it?" she asked nervously.

Maverick sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose. "I think I just made a mistake."

"A mistake?" Aria stared at him in confusion.

Before he could explain, a familiar voice came from behind them.

"What is the matter?"

Aria turned instinctively and immediately wished she hadn't. Caelis Cobryn stood a few feet away, looking as cold and irritatingly beautiful as ever.

And just like that, Aria was back in the woods with Maverick between her thighs, her hands trapped above her head and Caelis standing between the trees, watching.

Worse, she remembered exactly what she'd done when she'd caught him. She had looked the bastard straight in the eyes.

Fuck.

What in God's name had possessed her?

Whatever courage had taken control of her body back there had apparently decided to remain in the woods, because Aria could feel heat rushing into her face. Her heart began pounding so violently that she was almost certain Maverick could hear it.

Caelis, on the other hand, looked perfectly unruffled.

Of course he did.

There wasn't the slightest trace of embarrassment on his face to suggest that he'd recently been caught watching another man with his mouth between her thighs. Dark glasses concealed his eyes, his expression as composed as ever. Karen stood beside him, although thankfully she wasn't hanging from his arm this time.

"Are you okay?"

Maverick’s voice pulled Aria sharply back to the present.

"Y-yeah. I’m fine." She cleared her throat.

Aria lifted her head again, and for the briefest moment, she could have sworn one corner of Caelis’s mouth moved.

The little shit.

By the time she looked properly, there was nothing there. Caelis merely raised one of those annoyingly perfect brows.

"Congratulations on finally acquiring a girlfriend, Maverick." His attention remained on Aria. "Although she appears rather startled by my presence. Perhaps there’s something she would like to tell you."

The bastard.

Aria glared at him. If eyes were bullets, the Basilisk Prince would have dropped dead where he stood.

How dare he?

He had been the one hiding behind a tree watching them, yet he had managed to stand there with that innocent expression and make her feel like the guilty one.

For one dangerous second, Aria considered telling Maverick exactly why she’d reacted that way. Then she imagined what would follow. Maverick discovering Caelis had watched them and getting upset. Two territorial beasts squaring off in the middle of the party while everyone watched. And by morning, the Roost Report would probably have an entire edition dedicated to her sex life.

Absolutely not.

For all she knew, Caelis had stumbled upon them by mistake—and then stayed to watch.

Aria forced a smile. "Like he said, I was startled, that’s all."

Then, just quietly enough to make it seem as if the comment wasn’t meant for everyone, but loudly enough that she knew Caelis would hear her, she added, "He does have a habit of creeping up on people. Just like the snake he is."

Caelis had never been particularly bothered by petty insults. Usually, they slid off him without so much as a blink. But this one landed, and his jaw shifted almost imperceptibly.

It wasn’t enough for anyone else to notice, but Aria did. Suddenly, she didn’t feel nearly as embarrassed anymore.

"Thank you, Caelis," Maverick said curtly, taking note of the strange tension between his mate and the serpent.

"I was under the impression you were impervious to a woman’s touch," Caelis said casually. "Was that merely a misconception, or have you wolves finally proven your little theory about finding the other half of your soul?"

Aria’s heart stuttered.

That was the only reaction she allowed herself. She kept her expression carefully blank, suddenly conscious of just how perceptive the beasts around her were. One nervous glance at Maverick, and Caelis might find the answer he was clearly fishing for.

Except before either Maverick or Aria could answer, Karen butted in.

"I think the better question is how this is supposed to work." She looked between them. "Aria is a student here and you’re her professor. What happens when she needs better grades? Or breaks a rule? Does everyone else get the same special consideration, or is sleeping with a professor one of the privileges reserved for his girlfriend?"

Karen looked exceedingly pleased with herself after asking the question. What she failed to notice was Caelis slowly turning his head toward her. Behind the dark lenses of his glasses, his eyes glowed.

He had been so close.

One question was all he’d needed, and the idiot had interrupted before either of them could answer. Caelis couldn’t remember the last time he’d been this tempted to turn someone to stone simply for the pleasure of shutting them up permanently.

"It might not work in your world," Maverick finally said, his attention settling on Karen, "but this is Bestiaris Academy, where humans and beasts are being forced to navigate circumstances none of us have encountered before. And insinuating that I would compromise my position to favor one student over another tells me you know absolutely nothing about my character."

Karen’s smugness faltered.

"However..."

The air changed.

Aria felt it before she understood what was happening. An immense pressure descended over the clearing, so sudden and suffocating that several gasps sounded around her.

Valerie and Variant immediately retreated several steps, putting distance between themselves and Maverick. Trisha went pale beside Aria, while Karen's face lost every trace of color.

Caelis alone remained exactly where he was. His head stayed high, shoulders straight, not giving Maverick so much as a step. Yet when Aria looked closer, she noticed the tension running through his body. He wasn't unaffected.

He was resisting.

Just how powerful was Maverick?

"The first insinuation is excusable," Maverick continued calmly. "Make it again, and you'd better have enough evidence to substantiate your accusation. Otherwise, you'll answer to me for it. Are we clear?"

Karen couldn't answer. She looked frozen where she stood, although Maverick hadn't used any visible power against her. His presence alone had rendered her incapable of doing much more than stare at him.

Then the pressure vanished. Karen sucked in a loud breath and stumbled backward, relief washing across her face.

Maverick didn't spare her another glance. Instead, he turned to Caelis.

"Good thing you're here." His expression hardened. "Someone who doesn't belong to this academy managed to get into your party tonight."

Caelis's attention sharpened.

"And since this gathering is yours," Maverick continued, "I'm assuming you'd like to explain how an unidentified beast got past your security."

Defy The Alpha(s) 2: Rebel Beast - Chapter 220: Let's Play A Game[1,018 words]

"What did the intruder look like?" Caelis asked, his expression turning serious, and for the first time, Aria noticed a strange similarity between the two men.

Wait a minute. Why the hell was she comparing the serpent to her wolf?

Aria shuddered. Whatever was going on with her needed to end right now. Caelis was a cold-blooded, murderous snake shifter and absolutely nothing like her Maverick.

Maverick looked at Trisha, who immediately became aware that everyone was waiting for her to speak.

"Urm..." She took a steadying breath. "His face was painted, so I couldn't really make out what he looked like. But he had these really striking amber eyes and red curls, I think..." Her cheeks began to warm beneath everyone's scrutiny.

Then she remembered something else.

"And yes, he was wearing a black sweatshirt, which I thought was strange because almost every other male I've seen tonight is either shirtless or barely wearing anything."

"Is that so...?" Caelis murmured.

Something about him changed. His features remained composed, but his focus seemed to turn inward, as if Trisha's description had given him something to think about.

Maverick caught it too.

"Who is he?"

Caelis regarded him. "I cannot tell you because I don't know. However, I'll have my people search for anyone who doesn't belong here. If there's an outsider somewhere on these grounds, he'll be found and apprehended."

Although Caelis's words should have been reassuring, Maverick didn't believe him for a second. The snake was full of lies and secrets.

Perhaps Caelis sensed his distrust because his features remained perfectly impassive as he changed the subject. "You should enjoy the party, Professor Maverick. Your opponent has apparently decided not to attend."

Maverick's eyes narrowed. "Rhydian?"

"Who else?" Caelis replied. "But fear not. He'll be here in time for the fight. Even Rhydian isn't cowardly enough to run from that."

Aria perked up at the announcement. Rhydian wasn't coming to the party?

Relief immediately washed through her. All night, she'd been anxious about what might happen when Maverick and Rhydian finally came face-to-face again. Who knew she'd been worrying about nothing?

Except the feeling lasted all of five seconds.

Why wasn't Rhydian coming?

This was the same party he'd practically laid his own future on by negotiating for the humans to attend. Why would he suddenly decide not to show up?

Was he all right?

Oh, for crying out loud, Aria. What is wrong with you?

She was standing beside Maverick, worrying about another man. A dragon, no less. Rhydian was none of her concern. Absolutely none.

Aria chided herself and tried very hard to believe it.

"Speak of the devil..." Trisha muttered with annoyance, drawing everyone's attention.

They followed her gaze to see Brittney heading toward them, except she wasn't alone. She was being dragged along by none other than the serpent shifter who worked for Caelis.

"What is the meaning of this?" Aria's eyes narrowed at the sight of her friend, immediately going on the defensive.

Valerie and Variant quickly pulled a furious-looking Brittney from the serpent's grip, tugging her to their side.

Venus subtly bowed his head toward Caelis. "I found her wandering around the woods and brought her back. We wouldn't want a careless human getting herself killed and somehow having the blame fall on us." The last part was deliberate, his attention shifting toward Maverick.

"Careless?" Brittney snapped. "Why don't you come say that to my face, you little earthworm?"

She made a move as if to confront Venus, but Variant immediately pulled her back with a frown.

"Are you out of your mind?" she chided before giving Brittney a proper once-over. Her brows furrowed. "Why are you wet?"

Brittney looked down at the damp patches on her clothes. "Well..." She cleared her throat. "I heard there was a beautiful lake around here and decided to check it out."

"In the woods this late at night? By yourself?" Maverick asked, looking more disapproving than suspicious.

Brittney shrugged. "The leaders of the beasts gave their word that we wouldn't be harmed. There was no way I wasn't going to take advantage of that."

Maverick said nothing. He wasn't pleased that she'd wandered off alone, but he didn't want to escalate the matter any further. What mattered was that Brittney was back and unharmed.

What none of them noticed was the brief glance Brittney and Venus exchanged.

For a fraction of a second, Brittney's irritation disappeared, and something far more intimate passed between them. Venus's gaze lingered just a little too long before they both looked away, returning effortlessly to their roles as the irritated human and the serpent who had supposedly done nothing more than drag her out of the woods.

However, Valerie subtly sniffed the air. The scent was faint, but she caught traces of Venus on Brittney. Her squirrel immediately became curious, but Valerie dismissed it just as quickly. The serpent had dragged Brittney all the way back from the woods, so naturally some of his scent would have rubbed off on her. There was no reason to think anything more of it.

"Well, thank you for your help, Caelis, but I think we're done here," Maverick told the serpent when it became obvious he had no intention of leaving.

"Oh, I know." Caelis made no move to go. "But since this is a party, I was thinking we could all play a little game."

At the mention of a "game," everyone's brows shot up. Caelis voluntarily standing around socializing with them was strange enough. Caelis suggesting they all play a game together was downright suspicious.

Maverick sensed something was up immediately. "No, thanks."

"Don't be such a bore, Maverick." Caelis sounded almost offended. "You're the academy's greatest advocate for human-beast interaction, and the moment I suggest an opportunity for exactly that, you refuse?"

Maverick's eyes narrowed.

Caelis ignored him and turned his attention to the girls. "If you don't want to play, then surely the humans are capable of deciding for themselves whether they'd like to have some fun."

His gaze settled on Aria.

"Or am I mistaken, Aria Aspen?"