

Fated To Not Just One, But Three #Chapter 241: Their Reasons - Read Fated To Not Just One, But Three Chapter 241: Their Reasons

Chapter 241: Their Reasons

Lennox's POV

Silence.

The kind of silence that swallows you whole.

The kind that sinks its claws into your chest and squeezes until you can't tell if you want to scream, vomit, or laugh.

Cousins.

After everything... after the bond we thought we had? After the way we loved her?

Louis turned around so fast his boots scraped the marble, his fists clenched, so tightly his knuckles looked like bone. "No... no, this can't be right."

But it made sense. It made horrible, painful sense.

I thought back to Great-grandmother Hailee's words. "Something is coming... something that will break you. But don't be afraid—it was meant to be."

This was what she meant.

It was Olivia.

I buried my face in my hands. "Why... why didn't you tell us? Why keep this a secret?"

Father exhaled slowly. "Because it wasn't my place. Parker told me Olivia's story in confidence. But when I discovered the truth... when I realized she was part of our bloodline, I knew things had to end between you."

I looked up at him sharply. "So you forged letters and destroyed her life instead?"

"She's family, Lennox!" Father snapped suddenly, the calm in his voice breaking for the first time. "You were falling for her. All of you were. It wasn't right."

"You could've told us the truth!" Levi shouted.

"And what would you have done?" Father shot back. "Would you have believed me? Or would you have loved her anyway? And besides, I knew none of you would have left her."

"We would have had the right to know!" I roared.

Father looked at me, pain flashing in his eyes. "Maybe. But I wasn't willing to take that risk. So yes, we forged the letters. We gave them to the guards to pass on. I acted as if I believed Parker had stolen from the pack, though I didn't. But I needed Olivia to be cast down. I needed her to become someone you wouldn't look at again."

My stomach churned.

"So you turned her into an omega," I muttered bitterly. "Just so we'd reject her."

"Just so you'd forget her," Mother added softly. "We didn't know the letters would be spelled. We only wanted her to leave you. We never wanted her dead."

Father ran a hand through his hair, looking more exhausted than I'd ever seen him. His voice lowered.

"The plan was working," he said, as if trying to convince himself more than us. "You hated her. She had no place in your hearts anymore. She was an omega, disgraced, avoided by everyone. And you... you were slowly moving on."

Mother nodded faintly. "You were getting closer to Anita. We thought... maybe you'd finally forget Olivia."

But the moment she said it, something snapped inside me.

Forget her?

They wanted us to erase Olivia like she was nothing. Like she hadn't been our whole damn world at one point.

Father continued before I could speak. "Then the Moon Goddess... decided to bind you to her. All three of you."

He looked at each of us, his eyes dark. "Your mate. Your blood. The same girl we fought so hard to push away from you three."

Louis cursed under his breath and turned away, shaking.

Levi clenched his fists, his jaw ticking.

I just stood there. Frozen.

"And when that happened," Father went on, "we knew we couldn't stop it anymore. But we also couldn't let the truth come out."

He paused. His voice broke slightly. "So I did what I had to do."

He sighed.

"I forced you to mark her."

I shook my head in disbelief. Father's eyes shimmered—not with tears, but shame. "I was pained... Goodness, I was. I knew what I was asking you to do. Marking her meant sealing the bond forever. But if you didn't... if you refused... the council would ask questions. The Moon Priestesses would get involved. Bloodline investigations would follow."

"You knew she was related to us," I said hoarsely, "and you still made us mark her?"

"I had no choice," he said, voice sharp with guilt. "An Alpha must never reject his mate—it would have raised alarms. Questions. And if the truth of her parentage came out, there would be consequences for everyone. For you. For the pack. For her. So I forced the bond to complete. Quietly."

A suffocating silence fell again.

I couldn't breathe.

The girl we had loved—obsessed over, fought for, hurt, and broken—was our blood.

Our distant cousin.

It made me want to vomit.

And yet... even as the weight of the truth settled on my shoulders like a boulder, the love didn't go away.

I hated it. I hated myself for it. But it was still there.

This pull... this ache... this invisible string that tied me to her. Even knowing the truth, I still wanted her.

I didn't know about my brothers. Maybe they felt the same. Maybe not. But one thing echoed painfully in my chest—Father was right.

Even if he had told us the truth back then... we wouldn't have let her go.

We would have loved her anyway.

We would have held on.

That's how far gone we were.

Louis broke the silence, his voice hoarse. "Who are her real parents?"

Father's expression tensed immediately. "That's not my place to say."

"Not your place?" Levi snarled, stepping forward like he'd break Father's neck with his bare hands. "You made us hate her. And now you're suddenly silent?"

Father stood firm. "I promised Parker I'd protect that part of her story. I won't break that promise."

"Even now?" I growled. "After all this?"

Mother stepped forward, her voice barely above a whisper. "He's right. It's not our story to tell."

I let out a bitter laugh and shook my head, pain swelling in my chest like a storm.

"You took everything from her. You made her feel unloved, unwanted... you turned her into a ghost in her own home. And now you want to act noble? Now you want to protect her?"

Neither of them answered.

I looked at my parents—and for the first time in my life, I felt nothing but disgust.

"You will never be forgiven for this," I whispered.

Not for the letters.

Not for making us hate her.

Not for forcing us to destroy her with our own hands.

Neither of them spoke.

Neither tried to defend their actions.

I turned and walked out of the throne room, not looking back. I didn't want to hear another word. Not from them. Not from anyone.

My legs carried me blindly through the hallways, my heart aching. I didn't know where I was going—I just needed to be alone. Somewhere no one would think to find me. Somewhere silent.

The library.

No one ever came here anymore. It was always quiet... cold... still.

Just how I needed it to be.

I pushed the doors open and stepped inside, letting the rich scent of old books and polished wood wash over me. I walked slowly through the aisles, trying to breathe, trying to think, but nothing made sense anymore.

I wanted to scream.

But instead, I slumped into the farthest corner near the windows. I thought I was alone... until I heard a voice.

"Lennox?"

I froze.

I turned, and saw Rebecca at the door.

She looked just as I had last seen her—still dressed in that flowing white gown, her long dark hair tumbling over her shoulders. But her eyes widened in surprise the moment she saw me.

"Oh," she whispered. "I didn't know anyone would come here today."

I stayed silent, staring at her. Her gaze drifted over me slowly... and then she noticed it.

The redness in my eyes.

The way my fists were trembling.

She stepped closer, gently, like she was approaching something fragile. "Lennox... are you okay?"

"I'm fine," I muttered, turning my face away. "Just needed space."

I made a move to leave—quick, sharp steps—but she moved faster, blocking my path gently with her hand on my arm.

"Wait," she said softly. "Sometimes... it's okay to not be okay."

I paused, swallowing hard.

She looked at me, her voice even softer now. "I know you're an Alpha. You've been trained your whole life to be strong, to hold everything in. But... you're still human."

Her words hit me like a punch to the chest.

Because I'd heard them before.

Not from her.

But from Olivia.

She said them years ago, when I broke my arm in training and refused to show pain. She was massaging the bruise and whispered those same words to me... "You're still human, Lennox. You're allowed to hurt."

That memory hit me hard.

My lips trembled.

My throat closed.

And before I knew it, the tears came.

I tried to stop them. God, I tried.

But I broke.

Right there.

In front of Rebecca. A woman I barely met twenty-four hours ago.

She gasped softly and reached forward, pulling me into her arms.

I should have pulled away.

But I didn't.

Because in that moment, I felt safe. Warm. Like for once, someone saw through all the rage and pain and armor... and just held me.

I clung to her, my forehead buried in her shoulder, and let the sobs come.

She rubbed my back slowly, whispering, "It's okay. Let it out."

I don't know how long we stayed like that, but when I finally pulled back, I met her eyes.

Something shifted.

The air thickened between us.

Our eyes locked.

My breath caught.

And then... without thinking—without planning—we kissed.

Softly.

Slowly.

Like the world paused for a heartbeat just to watch us break every rule.

It was wrong.

It was confusing.

It was everything I wasn't supposed to want.

But in that moment... it happened.

And I didn't stop it.

Chapter 242: A Letter

Lennox's POV

God, I wanted to pull away.

I wanted to end this madness.

But I couldn't.

The kiss... it felt so damn good.

Too good.

Her lips were soft, warm—nothing like Olivia's, yet somehow they still made my heart clench the same way. I hated it. I hated how my pain found comfort in someone else. But I didn't stop.

She didn't either.

My hands slid to her waist before I could think, and she leaned into me like she belonged there. The way her fingers curled against my chest... the way she exhaled like she had been holding her breath for hours...

It should've felt wrong.

It was wrong.

But at that moment, I didn't care.

Because kissing her made the screaming in my head go quiet.

Just for a second.

Just enough to breathe.

But when we finally pulled apart, both of us breathless, the silence between us was louder than anything I'd ever heard.

Her eyes met mine, filled with a thousand questions neither of us had the answer to.

I looked away first, stepping back like I'd just been burned. The cold air rushed between us, but it did nothing to cool the heat rising in my chest.

"I... I didn't mean to do that," I said hoarsely, running a hand through my hair.

"I know," she whispered. "Me neither."

A pause.

Then her voice, quiet again. "But... did you regret it?"

I hesitated.

My heart screamed yes.

My lips stayed silent.

Because truthfully... I didn't know.

Did I regret it?

Did I feel guilty?

Was this betrayal to Damien?

"I don't know," I said honestly.

Rebecca nodded slowly. "You're hurting. I understand. I don't expect anything from you, Lennox. I just... I saw you breaking, and I wanted to be there."

I clenched my jaw, trying to hold in the chaos surging inside me.

"Thank you," I said softly.

She nodded, and without another word, she left.

I slumped against the wall, shutting my eyes... my mind replaying that kiss over and over. Damn it, why did it feel so good and so right?

I shook my head hard. "Stop it, Lennox... she's your uncle's wife," I breathed out with a broken sigh. What the hell is happening to me? Minutes ago, I realized Olivia—the girl I'd loved my whole life—might be related to me, and now I've kissed Rebecca, who's family. My uncle's wife. What the hell is going on?

The door to the library creaked open, snapping me from my thoughts. I looked up to see my brothers stepping in.

They both wore the same worried, confused look.

They didn't say anything at first.

Neither did I.

Just silence.

The kind that dripped heavier than any words could manage.

Louis finally leaned against the opposite wall, arms crossed, his eyes distant. "I still can't believe it."

"Me neither," Levi muttered, pacing slowly. "Our own parents... they forged those letters. Lied to us. Manipulated us."

"And Olivia..." Louis added quietly, "might be related to us."

I let out a bitter laugh. "What the hell even is our life?"

Louis shook his head. "It doesn't make sense, man. None of it does. I keep going back and forth in my head. Trying to find a hole in the story. Something that would prove they were lying. Something that would make this all a sick misunderstanding."

"But they weren't lying," Levi muttered. "You saw their faces. You heard their voices."

"Yeah," I said slowly, rubbing the back of my neck. "That's what makes it worse."

For a moment, none of us spoke again. We were each stuck in our thoughts. Memories. Regrets.

Then Louis exhaled sharply and muttered, "What if Olivia was still alive?"

Both Levi and I looked at him instantly.

He didn't take it back.

"If she was alive," he continued, his voice low and bitter, "we would've had to cut ties with her. Let go of everything we felt. Of everything we ever were."

Levi looked down. "Would we, though?"

I swallowed hard.

My chest tightened.

Because I knew the answer. We all did.

I looked them in the eyes. "No," I said. "We wouldn't have. I couldn't have."

Louis sighed, pressing a hand to his forehead. "Shit..."

"She could be our cousin, and I still wouldn't have been able to let her go," I admitted. My voice cracked near the end, and I hated it. Hated how broken I sounded. "Even when I tried to hate her... it didn't work. Even after everything we did to her, all she had to do was look at me and I—" I shook my head. "I would've stayed."

There was silence again. This one heavier. Sadder.

Then Levi spoke, his voice quiet, almost hollow.

"So... are we finally accepting it now?"

I looked at him.

"What?"

He met my eyes. "That she's dead."

The words punched the air out of me.

Neither of us responded immediately.

We didn't want to say it.

Didn't want to believe it.

But what if she was really gone?

Louis sat down slowly in one of the wooden chairs, elbows on his knees, head in his hands.

I clenched my fists.

"I don't want to," I whispered.

Levi sat across from me, his expression grim. "Neither do I. But what if this is true... what if she really is gone?"

My heart sank, and all I could think of was the possibility that Olivia might still be alive.

Olivia wouldn't just die like that.

Not her.

"I keep thinking about it," Louis said suddenly, his voice muffled through his hands. "Who were her real parents? Why would they leave her with Parker? Why would Dad hide it from us?"

"They know more than they're saying," Levi muttered. "They've known it for years. If she was related to us, if they traced her bloodline all the way back to our great-grandmother, then they must've found names. Something."

"But they won't tell us," I added bitterly. "They're still protecting some secret. Even now."

"And that's what pisses me off the most," Louis growled. "They destroyed everything just to hide something none of us even understand."

I nodded slowly. "There's more to this. There has to be."

We fell silent again.

Then—

A knock.

The library doors opened, and a guard stepped in, holding a folded letter in his gloved hand.

He bowed slightly. "A letter just arrived... addressed to the three of you."

We all stiffened.

"No," Levi said immediately. "Burn it."

Louis shot to his feet. "Don't bring any more cursed letters near us. We're done being manipulated."

The guard hesitated, clearly caught off guard. "But... it states important—"

That made us all pause.

My chest tightened. "Important?"

"Yes, Alpha," the guard nodded.

Levi exchanged a glance with me. "Still... it could be spelled."

"I don't trust anything written anymore," Louis muttered. "For all we know that thing's laced with dark charm."

I nodded and stepped back. "Call Dustin."

The guard bowed and turned on his heel.

Moments later, Dustin walked in, his brows raised in concern. "You called me?"

I gestured toward the letter still held in the guard's hands. "We need you to read it."

He blinked. "Me?"

"Yes," Levi said. "We don't trust it. We don't even want to touch it. Read it out loud."

Dustin stepped forward, hesitantly taking the letter.

He examined the seal before he carefully broke the seal, unfolded the paper, and began to read.

"Save Rebecca from Alpha Damien... don't be deceived... everything is fake."

He paused, then looked down at the bottom of the letter.

"The sender..." he said quietly, "just signed it with a G."

"G?" I repeated.

Louis's eyes narrowed. "What the hell does that mean?"

Chapter 243: Who Is That

Olivia's POV

For hours, I remained locked in my room while my so-called funeral rites were taking place outside. This time, I couldn't bring myself to watch.

I didn't want to see it.

Couldn't stand to see hundreds of people mourning me... saying goodbye to a girl who was still breathing.

Who was still here.

And the question that haunted me most—whose body were they burying?

Whose lifeless form were they lowering into the ground while crying over me?

How had Alpha Damien pulled it off?

Who was this man? How could he manipulate reality so perfectly—down to the last detail?

I paced the floor, back and forth, my heart thundering in my chest. My mind kept returning to the conversation we had earlier.

He told me my mother had killed Alpha Gabriel's mother.

That's why they wanted me dead.

But when I asked more—how that happened, why my mother would do such a thing—he refused to speak. Said that was all I needed to know.

I hated that.

I hated secrets.

I sighed and sat back on the edge of the bed, staring blankly at the wall as my thoughts wandered... and landed on Lennox.

When we kissed I could feel his hesitation for but also his desire for me... not as Olivia but as Rebecca. It made me wonder if I was really gone and this Rebecca was real— Does that mean he could've kissed her—on the very day of my funeral?

I shook my head violently, pushing the thought away. It hurt too much to linger on it.

Then suddenly I heard it.

Faint.

Soft.

Floating through the air.

A song.

One of my favorite songs. Hero by Mariah Carey

My breath hitched.

Why... why was it playing?

I jumped to my feet and rushed toward the sound, my heart pounding.

It grew louder as I reached the hallway, then the stairs.

And louder still when I stepped outside the mansion.

The garden was full of people.

Pack members, warriors, omegas—everyone stood gathered around a center display.

I weaved through the crowd, my breath coming in shallow gasps, until I saw it—

A glass casket.

And inside...

I froze.

Everything inside me stopped moving.

There, inside the casket, lay a body.

The body they believed was mine.

Pack members moved slowly, each taking turns to bow, whisper farewells, or leave a single white rose on the stone steps leading up to the coffin.

My feet moved on their own.

As I stepped closer, I felt the weight of every stare, every whispered prayer. But they didn't see me. Not as Olivia.

To them, I was dead.

As I neared the casket, my gaze fell on the triplets.

They stood like statues—each seconds away from breaking down. None of them spoke. All had tears in their eyes, clinging to the last shred of control.

Louis gripped the railing so tight.

Levi was blinking fast, his shoulders trembling.

Lennox... his jaw was clenched, face pale, tears silently trailing down his cheek.

My heart shattered.

I stepped closer... closer still... until I reached the glass.

And then—I gasped.

Loud.

My knees buckled.

Because lying inside was a headless body—a body that looked exactly like mine.

Same build.

Same hands.

Beside the body... the head.

And goodness—

It looked just like me.

The face.

The hair.

Everything.

It was like staring at a twisted, lifeless reflection.

I stumbled backward, dizzy, bile rising in my throat.

No. No no no no no.

How is this possible?

My body swayed, my vision blurring.

I felt dizzy and just as I was about to hit the ground, strong arms caught me.

Held me.

"Easy, dear," came the deep, calming voice of Alpha Damien.

He was suddenly there, holding me against his chest.

I couldn't speak.

Couldn't breathe.

Couldn't think.

Only one thought echoed through my mind—Who the hell is that in the casket?

He guided me away from the casket and back to the main mansion.

When we got to my room, he let go of me and frowned.

"Why were you there... you could have stayed in this room," he spat.

I frowned right back and met his eyes, asking the question that had been tearing me apart. "Who is that? The body that looks like me—who is she?"

"It's none of your business," he said coldly, turning away.

No. Not this time.

I stepped in front of him and blocked the door. "No, Alpha Damien. I deserve to know," I said, my voice trembling with anger. "You told me my mother killed Alpha Gabriel's

mother and refused to explain. Now everyone is down there mourning and laying to rest someone who's not me—and you still won't tell me who she is?"

He said nothing.

So I raised my voice. "I want the truth!"

His hand went to the doorknob, but I stepped closer and grabbed his wrist.

"You're not going anywhere," I said. "Not until you tell me who that girl in the casket is."

He tried to push past me, but I didn't move. I didn't blink.

And then I said it—the one thing that shifted the entire air in the room.

"If you won't tell me..." I whispered, "then let's end this game."

He stopped.

I kept going.

"You can kill my parents like you planned. I won't stop you. But I'll expose everything. I'll make sure your enemies know I'm not Rebecca. And Sofia? She'll be dead within hours. So go ahead. We both lose."

The silence was sharp. Deadly.

He turned slowly, his brow furrowed with anger.

His jaw clenched. He looked as if he wanted to rip the entire room apart.

Then finally—

He gritted his teeth and spat the word through them.

"Fine."

I exhaled shakily.

His gaze darkened, like the truth was a poison he hated to speak.

"The person in that casket..." he said, his voice low and heavy, "is you."

I blinked.

"What?"

He stared at me. "That body is you, Olivia."

My heart stopped. What is he talking about?

He let out a tired sigh.

"The person in that casket," he whispered, "was the real Rebecca. The one who died in your place."

Chapter 244: Should Be Thankful

Olivia's POV

My eyes widened as I struggled to wrap my head around what Alpha Damien had just said.

"Now can you move away?" he groaned, already reaching for the door.

But I shook my head stubbornly. "No."

There was no way I was letting him leave. Not until I had answers. I couldn't keep living in the dark.

"I have more questions to ask," I said firmly.

The look he gave me made it clear he was running out of patience—but I didn't care.

"Why did you kill her?" I demanded. "You killed her... just for this, didn't you? To make all this work?"

Alpha Damien's eyes darkened. An irritated frown settled over his expression.

"And what makes you think I killed her?" he asked coldly.

I hesitated.

He stepped closer, his voice sharp with anger now. "What do you take me for, Olivia? A monster? A heartless man who slaughters innocent girls for convenience? Is that how you see me?"

I didn't answer.

He scoffed, the anger in him growing deeper. "You should be on your knees thanking me."

"What?" I breathed, confused.

"I saved your fucking life," he snapped. "And I'm not just talking about Alpha Gabriel. You think he's the only one who wants you gone?"

My brows furrowed deeper.

He pointed to the window like he could still see the crowd below. "There are people in this pack... and beyond... who would pay anything to see you dead. You don't even know the half of it."

I swallowed hard.

"Being dead to them," he continued bitterly, "is the only thing keeping you alive. You should be grateful, Olivia. You're safe. You're breathing. And you get to keep your heart beating because of me."

I opened my mouth to respond, but he didn't give me the chance.

"Next time you want to accuse someone of murder, think carefully," he said, voice low and full of anger. "Because not everyone who lies to you is trying to hurt you."

Then he stepped back and reached for the door again.

"And don't bother me again," he muttered, just before walking out and slamming the door behind him.

And just like that, I was alone again.

Shocked, I went over to the bed and sat on the edge... What did he mean? Who else wanted me dead? Why? What the hell was going on?

I gripped the bedsheets tightly, my heart still racing. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't piece anything together. The truth felt like a puzzle with half the pieces purposely hidden—and Damien was the one holding them all.

Was I really safer being dead to the world? And if so... why were there people determined to kill me?

My thoughts swirled endlessly until I felt too exhausted to keep questioning. Outside, I could still faintly hear the murmurs, the music, the quiet sound of people grieving a girl who wasn't really gone. My own funeral...

Eventually, the muffled noise faded into silence... And somewhere in that stillness... I drifted off.

When I opened my eyes again, the room was dark.

The moonlight crept through the curtains, casting pale shadows across the walls. I blinked slowly, my throat parched and dry. I sat up, groggy and disoriented. The clock on the wall told me it was late—deep into the night.

The funeral must've ended hours ago.

Still half-asleep, I stood and padded toward the door, needing something—anything—to drink.

The hallways were quiet now. Everyone must have retired to bed after the funeral....

As I reached the stairs, I slowed down, hearing voices.

I crept down a little farther and peeked from behind the wall.

There in the living room, standing in front of the fireplace, was Anita.

She looked nervous, arms folded across her chest.

And facing her—was Levi.

His face was stony, jaw tight, eyes cold.

I held my breath and listened.

"You need to keep staying in your room," Levi said flatly.

Anita flinched.

He crossed his arms. "We don't want to see your face. Not right now."

My heart skipped a beat.

He sounded... broken. Tired. Like grief had hollowed something inside him.

Anita nodded slowly, biting her lip. "I understand," she whispered.

But Levi didn't say anything more.

He just turned and walked off, his shoulders rigid.

I pulled back before either of them could see me, my heart thudding in my chest.

I waited for Anita to leave, but she didn't... instead she stayed by the fireplace and I couldn't go back to my room, so I stepped out of hiding.

When Anita heard my footsteps, she looked up and stared at me blankly... she believed I was really Rebecca.

Staring at her now, I could tell everything was taking its toll on her... the vibrant Anita I once knew seemed to be fading more and more each day.

"Hi," she said softly, her voice barely above a whisper.

I hesitated. My instinct was to ignore her and keep walking—but I couldn't. That would seem cold. Unusual. Suspicious.

So I forced a smile and walked over to her.

"Hey," I said, standing a few feet away.

"You okay?" I asked carefully.

Anita didn't respond at first. She blinked a few times, then slowly lowered herself into the armchair behind her.

"No," she said flatly, staring at the floor. "Not really."

Something tugged at my chest. I knew this girl. I'd laughed with her, danced with her, trusted her. She was my best friend.

Or... she used to be.

I sat across from her, unsure of how much I could ask without giving myself away. But my curiosity, my pain—it got the better of me.

"I heard..." I began slowly, testing the waters. "I heard that Olivia—the one who died—was your best friend."

Anita looked up, her lips twitching slightly. But she didn't speak.

"I'm not judging," I added quickly. "But if she was your best friend... why did you look like you hated her? Why did you betray her?"

She looked away, gulping hard.

I thought she would stay quiet.

Or maybe get angry. Say something mean.

Maybe make up a lie.

But instead... she cried.

Her lips trembled, and her eyes filled with tears.

Then, her whole body shook.

She covered her face with her hands, but the tears kept falling.

Loud sobs came out of her as she started to cry harder.

She looked hurt... really hurt.

Like someone who had lost something important.

Like someone full of pain.

Chapter 245: Regrets

Olivia's POV

I never expected Anita to break down in tears... this was not what I expected. I expected her to give excuses, say evil things about me, but she didn't—rather, she was crying loudly while I just sat there, not knowing what to do.

After a few minutes, she got a grip of herself and began wiping her face. I looked at her, wondering why she was crying. Was she mourning me? Was this guilt? Or was she just acting, trying to get something out of me?

After a few minutes, she finally pulled herself together, sniffing as she wiped at her face with trembling fingers. She didn't look at me at first, just kept staring at her hands.

"I'm sorry you have to see me this way," she murmured.

I nodded slowly. "It's okay to let it out... don't apologize for that," I said gently, though deep down, I wanted to scream at her. Tell her she was a terrible friend. Ask her why. Why did you hurt me like that, Anita?

I loved you.

She sucked in a shaky breath and finally met my gaze.

"I wish..." she began, her voice cracking. "I wish I never let jealousy take over me."

My brows drew together.

"I wish I never agreed to them," she added, her tone low with shame.

Them?

My heart skipped a beat. I leaned forward slightly. "Who?" I asked, careful not to sound too eager.

She hesitated, eyes darting around the empty room before she whispered, "My parents... and the triplets' parents."

My blood ran cold.

I kept my expression calm, but inside, everything felt like it was tilting sideways.

"What... what happened?" I asked, my voice low.

Anita hesitated again, like she was weighing whether to tell me the truth.

Then finally, she spoke.

"A week before Olivia's birthday... Lady Fiona came to see me," she said slowly. "She told me she didn't want Olivia for the triplets. She wanted me."

I swallowed hard. "Did she tell you why?"

Anita shook her head. "No. She just said Olivia wasn't the right fit. That she needed me instead."

I could see the shame flicker in her eyes as she continued.

"I was going to say no," she admitted, "but then I thought about the way the triplets looked at her. The way they laughed around her, smiled just by hearing her name..." Her voice cracked again. "I wanted that."

She looked away. "Boys never looked at me that way. No one ever did."

And she was telling the truth.

Anita was beautiful—no doubt about that—but boys were never attracted to her. Not really. Not like they saw me.

She let out a bitter sigh. "So I told my parents what Lady Fiona said. I thought they'd talk me out of it. But instead... they encouraged me. Said they had their own plans too. That this could work in our favor."

My throat tightened. "And you agreed."

She nodded slowly. "Lady Fiona took me somewhere... I don't even know where. It was a witch... they... they did something. They gave me something to drink, something to bathe in. They said it would help. That it would 'clean me'—make the charm stronger, make the triplets look at me the way they looked at her."

My stomach turned.

So that was it.

It wasn't just betrayal.

It was planned.

Crafted.

I sat back slowly, trying to keep my hands from shaking.

Anita wiped her eyes again, her voice barely above a whisper.

"I regret everything," she said, her gaze fixed on the flickering fire. "All of it."

I stared at her, unsure if I was ready to believe her... unsure if I even wanted to.

But she kept going.

"I didn't get the triplets' love," she said, her voice breaking. "Not even for a second. No matter how much charm or magic was used, they never looked at me like they looked at Olivia. Not once."

She finally looked at me again, and this time, her eyes were hollow.

"I lost my best friend," she whispered. "The only person who ever saw me... really loved me. And now she's gone."

Her words hit like a punch to the chest.

She didn't stop.

"I regret hurting her. I regret every action, every cruel word, every moment I let someone convince me she didn't deserve what she had. I regret listening to my parents. I thought I'd be happier if I had what she had... but I was wrong."

She placed a hand gently on her stomach.

"And now... I'm carrying babies who might not even make it into this world," she said with a broken voice. "I can feel it. Something's not right. The doctors say I should rest, that I need to hope—but all I feel is this... fear."

I opened my mouth to respond—to say something, anything—but I paused.

Because just then, the front door opened.

Alpha Damien walked in.

His eyes landed on me immediately, sharp and annoyed. He didn't say anything, just gave me a look that said you shouldn't be here.

I turned back to Anita, forcing a soft smile.

"I have to go," I said quietly.

She nodded slowly, her hands folded in her lap, her eyes still wet. "Thank you... for listening."

I hesitated, then turned and walked away, Damien's gaze following me the entire time.

I took the stairs back to the room I shared with Alpha Damien. We both stepped in, and I expected him to lash out... I was used to his lashing out, but he didn't. Instead, Alpha Damien dragged himself to the nearest seat and slumped into it, shoulders hunched, face buried in his hands like the weight of the world was pressing him down.

I blinked, surprised. He looked... exhausted. Broken. Scared. This was the first time I had ever seen him like this.

I stepped forward slowly. "What's wrong?" I asked quietly.

God, I was supposed to hate this man... so why was I worried?

He didn't answer.

Just sat there, breathing hard through his nose, refusing to meet my gaze.

I moved closer. "Alpha Damien..."

Still nothing.

I crouched beside him, my voice softer. "You don't have to keep shutting me out. Whatever it is... just tell me."

A long, tense pause filled the room.

Then, finally, he lifted his head and looked at me—his eyes red-rimmed.

"They've given me three days," he muttered.

I frowned. "Three days for what?"

"To step down."

My breath caught.

He looked away. "If I don't... they'll kill Sofia."

My heart stopped. "What?"

"They still believe I care about her," he said bitterly. "That I'm still in love with her. They don't believe I've moved on."

Chapter 246: Attraction

Levi's POV

Throughout the night, I couldn't sleep... so many things were in my head. Firstly, we had just laid Olivia to rest but deep down I still can't accept it... somehow, deep down I feel like she is still alive... it is delusional of me, but I just can't get away from those thoughts.

My wolf has been oddly silent, and I could tell he was mourning Olivia, just like me. It was already late in the morning, but I just couldn't get out of bed... I felt drained, staring at the portrait of Olivia all through the night... I had shed silent tears and never for once, blinked my eyes... I stayed all night imagining this wasn't real... our Olivia couldn't be gone just like that...

A hurried knock landed on the door and by the scent I realized it was Clark, one of our betas. I groaned but didn't ask him in. He knocked again and I got irritated.

"What!" I barked at him.

"Levi... you need to see this," he yelled from outside. The urgency in his voice told me something was wrong. I jumped out of the bed and went to the door... I pushed it open and saw Clark standing in front of me.

"What happened?" I asked, panicking.

"It's Anita.... I think something is wrong..."

I frowned. "And what's wrong with her?" I asked sharply, my voice laced with irritation.

"She is having complications," he said.

I cursed under my breath and followed him, the urgency in his footsteps forcing my own.

We reached Anita's room, and the moment I stepped inside, I stopped cold. Lennox and Louis were already there. Lennox leaned stiffly against the wall, arms crossed, jaw tight. Louis didn't even look at her—just stared blankly at the floor. My mother stood beside the healers, nervously biting at her thumbnail, while three healers surrounded the bed.

Anita was screaming. Blood soaked the sheets under her, the metallic scent so thick it made my wolf recoil. She gripped the sheets, crying and writhing as pain wrecked through her body.

"She's hemorrhaging again," one of the healers said.

I didn't move closer. I didn't even blink. I just stood there, arms crossed, watching as she twisted in pain.

I should've felt something. Pity. Worry. Even concern for the babies...

But all I felt... was a blank feeling... If I could lose Olivia, then I am prepared to lose anything.

She kept begging between sobs. "Please... save my babies... please..."

The crying grated on my nerves. The healers worked on her while I and my brothers all stood quiet.

After some time, the room grew quiet.

The head healer stood upright, her gloves stained red. She let out a breath. "She's stabilized... but..." she paused and looked at my mother. "There's only one baby left. The other baby is gone."

A long silence followed.

Anita broke it with a soft, pathetic cry. I didn't move. Neither did my brothers. She curled in on herself, weeping into the pillow.

I stared at her, not knowing what to feel. That might've been our child. But there was no ache. No panic. No sense of loss twisting in my gut. Maybe I was too numb. Or maybe, deep down, I'd already disconnected from everything tied to her.

Before I could think more, the door creaked open and Rebecca walked in. The moment her scent hit me, my wolf stirred—again. It was like my heart recognized something before my mind could even catch up.

She didn't say a word. Just stood quietly near the doorway, her eyes on Anita.

My gaze snapped to her like a magnet. Everything else vanished. The blood-soaked bed. Anita's sobs. The hollow ache in my chest. All of it. Gone. All I saw... all I felt... was her.

Lennox and Louis noticed too. I could feel the shift in the room—feel them stiffen. Lennox's eyes locked onto her like she was gravity. Louis took a step forward without realizing.

What was this? How could someone pull us in like this—so easily, so completely?

"Alpha..." one of the healers spoke suddenly, snapping me out of the trance. "You have to mark her."

I blinked. "What?"

She looked between the three of us, worry in her tone. "The last child. It's not just blood loss anymore. Her connection to the father is weakening. If none of you mark her... she may lose the remaining baby."

I felt my heart harden instantly. Lennox scoffed and looked away. Louis clenched his jaw. I let out a cold breath.

"We're not doing that," I said flatly.

"Absolutely not," Lennox added, his voice ice.

"You can take that option off the table," Louis finished.

The healer's eyes widened. "But—if you don't—"

"She's not our mate," I cut her off. "She never was."

"And she never will be," Lennox snapped.

"She made her choices," Louis added.

Anita whimpered again on the bed, but none of us felt pity for her.

"She played a game and lost," I said, my eyes still on Rebecca. "This is her consequence."

The healer tried to speak again, but none of us stayed to listen. We turned and walked out together.

Outside the hallway, I murmured to my brothers. "I'm going to the garden," I told my brothers quietly. "I need to clear my head." They didn't question me. We were all too drained to speak.

Once outside, I drew in a deep breath and tilted my head to the sky. The garden was still. Silent. I thought of Olivia, how she used to walk here every evening. I could almost see her now—barefoot, smiling, humming something under her breath. My chest tightened.

"I miss you," I whispered, though the wind carried it away before I could even believe I'd said it out loud.

I sat on the stone bench near the rose bush she once planted and ran my fingers through my hair. My thoughts were a storm—Olivia, Anita, the child we'd just lost... the way Rebecca had walked into that room and effortlessly shattered my focus.

What the hell was happening to me?

A soft rustle behind me snapped me out of it. I turned. There, by the edge of the path, stood Rebecca. She was halfway turned, clearly trying to sneak away unnoticed.

"Don't leave," I said before I could stop myself. "You can come in."

She froze for a moment, then hesitated... and finally walked into the garden. She didn't speak right away. Neither did I. The silence between us felt thick—but strangely comforting.

When she got closer, her scent hit me again—soft, warm, familiar in a way that shouldn't have been possible. I inhaled deeply, and my wolf stirred again, tugging at my soul like it was reaching for something it had lost.

Finally, she broke the silence.

"Why?" she asked softly. "Why don't you want to mark Anita... to save the baby?"

I didn't look at her. I just stared ahead, my jaw clenched. Because I couldn't explain it. Not fully. So I gave her the only truth I had.

"Because I don't love her," I said.

She looked at me, her brows slightly furrowed.

"I never loved her," I added, my voice low. "She was just... convenient. And I've lost too much already to keep sacrificing pieces of myself for things that were never real."

I turned and finally met her eyes.

"And that baby?" I said. "I don't even know if it was ever really mine. But even if it is... I'm not giving her a bond she doesn't deserve."

Rebecca said nothing, just watched me closely.

"I won't let her tether me," I continued, my tone firmer. "Not with guilt. Not with pain. And not with a child I never asked for."

For a moment, she didn't speak. Then, very softly, she said, "That must've been hard to say."

I looked away again.

"It wasn't hard," I replied quietly. "It's just the truth." And the silence returned... but this time, it didn't feel tensed.

And this time I decided to ask. "Do you love Damien?" I didn't know why I said it, but I am not taking it back.

Her eyes snapped to mine. The question hung between us, awkward and heavy. I didn't even know why I asked. Maybe it was curiosity. Maybe jealousy. Maybe something deeper I didn't want to name yet.

"I..." she started, then hesitated. "I'm trying to." That answer made something in my chest tighten. She looked away, fiddling with her fingers. "He's been good to me. Kind, in his own way. He protects me. And he says he loves me... I'm trying to believe that. To grow into that."

"But you don't love him yet," I said quietly.

She didn't deny it.

"I don't know what love is," she admitted. "Everything feels blurred. And Damien once loved a lady. And... I don't know if what I feel is comfort, or something deeper. I can't tell the difference."

I nodded slowly, but something inside me bristled. I didn't like this. I didn't like the idea of her trying to force love for someone else. Especially not him.

And then, before I could stop myself, another question came out of me.

"How do you feel when you kiss him?"

Her head turned sharply, her eyes widening. "What?"

"Do you feel anything?" I asked, my voice low. "Butterflies? Heat? That pull in your chest like something is anchoring you to him?"

She blinked, thrown off.

"I..." she frowned. "It's just a kiss. Warm. Gentle. Nothing intense. It doesn't feel... electric or anything. Sometimes, I don't feel anything at all."

That answer hit harder than it should've. And that's when I said it.

"I could kiss you."

Her eyes widened even more. "What?"

"To help you know," I said softly, my voice lower than before. "So you can tell the difference. Between what's real... and what's just comfort."

Chapter 247: Taken

Levi's POV

I waited for her to pull away. To say no. To call me crazy or remind me she belonged to my uncle.

But she didn't.

She just stared at me... and for a second, I couldn't even breathe.

She didn't say anything.

Her lips were slightly parted, and her eyes looked unsure—but not angry. Not afraid.

I leaned in again, slower this time.

And when I kissed her... it was like something inside me snapped.

It wasn't soft or gentle.

It was full of need. Hunger.

She gasped a little, and I felt her grip my shirt.

Her lips moved with mine, and a low sound left my throat—a moan I didn't even mean to let out.

I pulled her onto my lap without thinking.

My hands went to her waist, then her hips, holding her close.

She pressed against me, and we kissed again—deeper, harder, like we couldn't get enough of each other.

Her fingers ran through my hair, and mine moved to her lower back, then down.

I grabbed her ass, and she let out a soft moan into my mouth.

It felt like the world disappeared.

Just her.

Just this.

We kissed desperately. Our tongues tangled... fuck, it was so intense my stomach flipped—there it was, that rush of butterflies.

When we finally pulled apart, we were both panting.

Breathing hard.

Our foreheads almost touched.

She was still on my lap.

Her hands on my chest.

My arms around her.

We didn't say a word.

We just looked at each other, like we didn't know what we had just done—or what would come next.

I stared at her, my heart pounding like a drum in my chest.

Why?

Why was I so drawn to her?

Why did she make me feel like this—like I couldn't think straight when she was near?

My hands were still on her waist.

Her breath still mixed with mine.

Everything about her felt so familiar... too familiar.

Then suddenly—I blinked.

And just for a second, Olivia's face flashed over hers.

It was so fast, but so clear.

Those eyes. That softness.

I froze.

A cold shiver ran down my spine.

I gently moved her off my lap, careful not to be rough.

Her eyes looked confused, but I couldn't explain.

I stood up and took a step back, avoiding her gaze.

"I... I need to go," I said quietly.

She didn't say anything.

I looked at her one more time, and guilt slammed into me.

We had just buried Olivia.

And here I was... kissing someone else.

I swallowed hard and turned away, walking out of the garden without looking back.

Back in my room, I slumped into the couch, running both hands through my hair.

But no matter how I tried to shake it off... I couldn't stop thinking about the kiss.

Her lips. Her scent. Her breath mixing with mine.

That moment had felt like I had forgotten everything—every pain, every loss.

Even Olivia.

And that... scared me.

Because it felt right.

Too right.

I leaned forward, resting my elbows on my knees, staring at nothing.

What was happening to me?

A soft knock came at the door, and seconds later, Lennox and Louis stepped in without waiting for permission.

They didn't say a word at first.

Just walked in and sat down across from me, both looking as drained as I felt.

We sat in silence for a while, the weight of everything pressing down on us.

I finally broke the silence.

"Do you remember that letter?" I said quietly. "The one that came before all this... about saving Rebecca."

Lennox frowned. "Yeah... I remember."

Louis nodded slowly. "The one that said she needed help. That she was in danger."

I looked between them. "What do we think now? That Damien is forcing her into this marriage?"

Lennox leaned back, arms crossed. "It doesn't make sense. She seemed happy with him."

Louis sighed. "She looked... trapped to me."

"Exactly," I said, sitting up straighter. "And why would someone send us a warning if there wasn't truth in it?"

Lennox rubbed his chin, thinking. "Could be Damien was forcing her into this marriage. You know she is human. He's powerful enough to do something like that."

Louis met my eyes. "Are you saying we need to step in?"

I nodded slowly. "I'm saying... we need to find out the truth. About her. About the letter. About everything."

I paused, my voice quieter.

"Because if she's not there by choice... then we have to help. We can't stay silent."

They both nodded, and the room fell quiet again.

The room stayed quiet, heavy with all our thoughts.

I could tell my brothers were just as tense as I was.

Then the door suddenly swung open.

No knock.

Just Damien walking in like the place belonged to him.

We all stood up instantly, our bodies going stiff.

His eyes darted around the room, sharp and impatient.

"Where's Rebecca?" he asked.

I glanced at Lennox, then at Louis. "She's not here," I said calmly.

He didn't say anything.

Just stared at us like he didn't believe it.

Then, without another word, he turned and walked out.

We watched him go, the door still slightly open behind him.

Lennox scoffed. "Did you see his face?"

Louis nodded. "He looked panicked."

"I don't like this," I muttered, already heading for the door.

We followed him down the stairs and into the sitting room.

And there he was.

Pacing.

Running a hand through his hair.

He looked... worried.

Not angry. Not annoyed. But really worried.

Before we could ask what was going on, his phone rang.

He picked it up immediately. "Hello?"

We couldn't hear what the person on the other end was saying, but we saw the way his face changed.

Eyes wide. Jaw clenched.

Then—"Shit!" he cursed loudly, just before the call ended.

"What's going on?" Lennox asked, stepping forward.

Damien looked at us, breathing hard. "Rebecca..." he said slowly, "she's been taken."

My stomach dropped. "What?"

"By who?" Louis asked quickly.

Damien's face hardened. "My opponent. One of the Alphas contesting against me," he ground out, his voice trembling.

My eyes widened, and my wolf growled angrily inside me.

Before I could speak, a guard burst in behind us.

"Alphas... a lady... half dead is at the gate... asking for Alpha Damien...and she looks Familiar."

I exchanged confused glances with my brothers, but Damien was already moving towards the door.

We followed him and outside we saw a half-dead woman sitting on the floor... she looked so familiar...

Damien ran towards her while we moved closer and the closer we got, the more our eyes widened until we were close enough to recognize her fully.

"Sofia...!"

Chapter 248: Never Loved Her

Lennox's POV

Sofia...! It was really her.

Even though we hadn't seen her in more than three years, we recognized her instantly. Nothing had changed. She still looked just like Olivia... just an older version. Same eyes. Same nose. Same soft lips that used to curl into the same kind of smile that made everything else disappear.

My chest tightened the moment I stared at her. It was like seeing a ghost. A ghost of Olivia...

Then suddenly, everything shifted. Damien panicked and rushed forward, scooping Sofia into his arms like she weighed nothing. Her body was limp, her eyes half-closed.

"Call the healers!" he shouted at the nearest guard, his voice sharp with fear.

Before we could ask anything, he turned and sprinted into the mansion with her in his arms. My brothers and I exchanged confused looks. No one said a word. But we all followed.

By the time we reached Damien's room, he was already kneeling beside Sofia on the bed, clutching her hand tightly.

"She's burning up," he whispered, brushing her hair back from her forehead. "Come on, baby. Stay with me..."

His voice cracked. The fear in his eyes wasn't fake. The pain in his expression wasn't fake. He still loved her. He never stopped.

So why? Why did he marry Rebecca? Why bring her here and call her his Luna when his heart clearly still belonged to someone else?

The healers rushed in behind us and began their work. One of them placed glowing hands over Sofia's chest, while another crushed herbs into a paste.

Damien didn't move from her side. He kept whispering to her unconscious form like she could hear every word.

"You're safe now. I won't let anything happen to you again... I promise."

I stared at the scene, frozen. And then—my mind jolted.

Rebecca. Where was Rebecca? Last we heard... she was taken. By Damien's enemies. We thought he'd be the one panicking, calling the search teams, turning the whole territory upside down. But he wasn't. He hadn't even mentioned her since Sofia arrived.

My heart dropped.

"Shit," I muttered. I made a mind link to Clark.

"Get Dustin. Both of you to the CCTV room—now," I said. "Tell the search team to search for Rebecca. We need Rebecca found immediately. Double the patrols at the borders."

"What happened?" Clark asked quickly.

"Just do it!" I snapped and hung up.

I looked back at Damien. He hadn't moved from Sofia's side. His wife was missing, possibly in danger—and he hadn't even noticed. He was too lost in Sofia.

And in that moment, one thing became painfully clear... he never really loved Rebecca.

Levi spoke. "Who do you think took Rebecca? We have to find her, remember?" Levi sounded frustrated, but Damien didn't utter a word. He just kept staring at Sofia as if if he looked away, she would disappear.

Levi frowned and I spoke. "I have ordered the patrol team to look for her...Let's check the CCTV room," I said.

Louis and Levi nodded, but Damien didn't care... he didn't even utter a word or show any concern, rather, his attention was solely on Sofia. For a moment, I was glad she was back because she will have to clear the misunderstanding Damien had about us telling her his secrets.

We rushed straight to the CCTV room, our footsteps echoing down the hallway like thunder. None of us spoke. We were all tense—angry, confused, afraid. All for a stranger.

Clark and Dustin were already inside, standing near the main monitor with worried expressions. As soon as they saw us, they stepped back and gave me room.

"Pull up the last two hours of footage," I ordered. "Start from the garden."

The CCTV operator nodded and began tapping quickly on the keyboard. The screen blinked and switched to a view of the garden. There was Rebecca and Levi having a conversation.

My brow furrowed, and seconds later—he kissed her. Deeply... passionately.

My jaw clenched. I turned slowly to Levi. He looked away and sighed.

"It just happened," he muttered. "I didn't plan it. I just..."

He didn't explain more. He didn't have to. I couldn't judge him. Because what he didn't know was—I had kissed her too. And none of us had told the others.

I looked back at the screen, shaking the thought away. "Rewind," I said. "I want to see what happened after she left."

The footage played. Rebecca walked out of the garden and headed toward the training field, arms crossed, like she was lost in thought. Then, from the edge of the screen, three masked men appeared—fast, silent.

"What the hell—" Louis muttered under his breath.

We all leaned forward. The men cornered her quickly. One grabbed her arms while the second pulled something out of his pocket. A cloth. He pressed it over her nose and mouth.

Rebecca struggled, tried to scream—but within seconds, she went limp. Unconscious.

"Damn it!" Levi snapped, punching the wall.

"Follow them," I said urgently.

The footage jumped as the guard changed the camera angle. We saw the men dragging Rebecca through a back path. Then—one by one—they climbed over the high fence with her.

The next camera switched to the outside of the gate. And there... we saw it. A black car waited by the edge of the woods. One of the men popped the trunk while another carried Rebecca's limp body and placed her inside.

The trunk shut with a loud slam. A few seconds later, the others jumped over the fence and all three ran toward the car. Then they drove off.

Silence filled the room. No one moved. No one breathed.

I stepped back from the monitor, my fists clenched. "They planned this. They were waiting for her to be alone."

Louis cursed softly. "They dared enter our pack house."

Levi didn't say anything. He just kept staring at the screen like he wanted to burn it.

"She's been gone for almost an hour," I said. "And Damien... he didn't even notice."

I swallowed hard, feeling the storm of anger growing in my chest.

"I want the scent tracked immediately," I ordered. "Send the best wolves out. I want that car found. I want every border locked down. Nobody gets in or out without clearance."

Dustin and Clark nodded and rushed out.

And then I looked at my brothers. "We need to have a talk with Damien now..." I said, and didn't wait for them to speak before leading the way out.

Chapter 249: The Truth

Lennox's POV

We walked back into the room and realized Sofia was now conscious.

"How are you feeling now?" he asked tenderly, but Sofia frowned at him and slowly forced herself to sit properly on the bed. She met our eyes and flashed us a weak smile before turning back to Damien, who looked tense—and then, unexpectedly, she slapped him hard across the cheek.

The healers gasped, while my brothers and I just stood silently... watching.

Damien's head jerked slightly from the impact. He didn't defend himself. Didn't even flinch.

Sofia's lips trembled as tears welled in her eyes.

"Because of you, I was kidnapped!" she shouted, her voice shaking with anger.

Damien finally looked up at her, his expression unreadable. "Sofia..."

"No!" she snapped, cutting him off. "They took me and kept me locked away for days! Days, Damien! And do you know what they did?"

She didn't wait for a reply.

"They showed you pictures. Videos. They told you if you didn't back out of the contest for Supreme Alpha, they would kill me. You know what you said?"

Damien looked away.

"You told them to go ahead," she whispered bitterly. "You said you had already married. You have no feelings for me anymore... You didn't just move on— you replaced me. With my best friend."

Her voice cracked on the last word.

My brothers and I glanced at each other, stunned. Our eyes widened as the realization settled over us.

Rebecca was Sofia's best friend?

Sofia's hands clenched into fists as she stared down Damien. "How could you marry her?" she spat. "Rebecca was my best friend!"

A heavy silence dropped over the room. Even the healers were frozen, unsure if they should stay or go.

"You married my best friend," Sofia said again, slower this time, like she couldn't even believe it herself. "She knew everything. She knew how much I loved you... how much I wanted you."

She looked around the room like she just remembered something. Then her eyes narrowed.

"Where is Rebecca?" she demanded. "Where is that bitch?!"

Damien flinched.

"She used to call you her big brother, remember?" Sofia laughed bitterly. "She used to say you were like family to her. And I believed her. I thought she was loyal. I thought she was a good friend."

She pointed a shaking finger at Damien. "But now I know the truth. You two were fucking each other behind my back, weren't you?"

"No," Damien finally said, his voice cracking. "It wasn't—"

"Don't lie to me!" she screamed. "How long were you sleeping with her?!" she spat at Damien again.

Damien's jaw clenched. His eyes, dark and wet with emotion, locked on hers—and then he snapped.

"You left me!" he yelled, his voice booming through the room. "You left me, Sofia! Did you forget that?!"

We all froze.

Sofia blinked, stunned. The rage on her face faltered.

"You disappeared without a word," Damien continued, rising to his feet. "Just a note. No explanation. Just gone. And I looked for you, Sofia. I turned the world upside down trying to find you. Do you have any idea what that did to me?!"

Tears had started to pool in Sofia's eyes again.

Damien's voice dropped, more broken now. "And in your letter, you left because I couldn't give you a child. That I was impotent. You think I don't remember that."

His fists clenched at his sides. "You believed I wasn't enough—and you left."

Sofia's bottom lip trembled. "I—Damien, I never—"

"You never loved me," he said again, this time his lips trembling. "If you did, you would never have left me."

Tears finally spilled from her eyes, running silently down her cheeks.

I couldn't stay quiet anymore. I stepped forward. "Sofia," I said carefully, "when exactly did we tell you Damien was infertile?"

Her brows furrowed, confused. "What?"

"You told him we were the ones who said it," I said, pointing to myself and my brothers. "He blamed us. Accused us of betraying him."

Sofia looked between us, her confusion turning into disbelief—like a realization was forming in her mind.

She slowly turned to Damien. "Who told you they were the ones?" she asked softly.

Damien's lips parted, but no words came out.

"Because I never said that," Sofia continued, her voice getting stronger. "I never said they told me anything."

Then she looked down, her brows still drawn in as she thought.

"I saw your results," she whispered. "I saw them myself in your drawer."

Damien's eyes widened, but Sofia continued. "And I didn't just leave because of that... I had other reasons for leaving," she said.

Damien's frown deepened. "What other reasons?" he spat in pain. "I love you, Sofia... I made sure to show you how much I did."

But Sofia didn't respond. Her jaw tightened. Her eyes dropped to the blanket across her lap. And when Damien took a step closer, she turned her face away.

"I'm not ready to talk about it," she muttered, her voice low but sharp. "There were reasons I left, Damien. Things you wouldn't understand."

Damien opened his mouth to argue, but she raised a hand.

"Don't," she said flatly. "Not now."

She glanced around the room, suddenly tense. Her eyes darted past each of us like she was searching for something—or someone.

Then her gaze locked on Damien again.

"Where's Rebecca?" she asked coldly. "I want to see her."

Damien's expression darkened. He didn't speak right away. That silence said more than words ever could.

"She's not here," he finally said.

Sofia narrowed her eyes. "What do you mean she's not here?"

"The people who took you..." he started slowly, hesitating, "they might have taken her too. That could be why they let you go."

Sofia's breath caught in her throat. Her whole body tensed.

"No," she whispered, panic rising quickly in her voice. "No, no... she can't be with them."

Damien frowned. "What do you mean?"

Sofia shook her head, suddenly looking worried. "She can't survive that, Damien."

"What are you talking about?" I asked gently.

Sofia looked at us, her eyes full of fear now. "She's terrified of the dark. And tight spaces. She had panic attacks just locking herself in a bathroom with the lights off. If they put her in one of those basements..."

Her voice cracked, and fresh tears spilled down her cheeks.

"She won't last a day," she whispered. "She'll die."

Chapter 250: Speak To The Camera

Olivia's POV

The splash of a bucket of water slammed me back to consciousness. For a moment, my vision swam, blurry shapes shifting until my eyes adjusted, and I realized two men were

standing right in front of me. My eyes widened in fear as I looked around and saw I was in a dimly lit, empty room, tied tightly to a chair... my lips sealed shut.

I watched the two men, who seemed like guards, move aside and a man seated on a seat across from me came into view. I stared at him, confused. He wasn't like the others. He looked to be in his early thirties. Clean-shaven, sharp suit, piercing gray eyes that never left mine. He leaned forward slowly, resting his elbows on his knees.

"You're awake," he said simply, his voice calm. Too calm. I said nothing. I couldn't—my mouth was taped shut.

He tilted his head slightly, studying me like I was some strange puzzle. "You look really pretty," he muttered. "No wonder Damien married you."

I flinched, not understanding what he meant. He smiled, but it didn't reach his eyes.

"I'm going to remove the tape," he said. "Don't scream. There's no one here who'll help you." He nodded at one of the guards. A second later, the tape was ripped off my lips.

I winced at the pain. I coughed a little, then whispered, "Who are you?"

The man chuckled softly. "Let's just say... I'm one of Damien's enemies...." I froze.

"What do you want from me?" I asked, my voice weak. He leaned in closer, his eyes narrowing.

"Not much," he said. "Just to use you... as bait. Damien steps down, and I send you back to him... if he doesn't, then I kill you."

My eyes widened as everything dawned on me... this was the same man who had Sofia.

"Where is Sofia? Are you holding the both of us?" I asked, panicking... strangely, I wanted to meet her.

The man scoffed. "No.... Since she is not important to Damien, I decided to release her back to him and take you instead," he said simply.

A gasp escaped my lips as realization sank in. Sofia had been sent back to Damien. That was Damien's plan all along, and it had worked. Now I was the bait—and I knew, deep down, Damien would never come for me.

He stood up, buttoning his coat slowly, never breaking eye contact with me.

"But first," he added smoothly, "I'll be back to make a video of you to send to your husband. If he loves you as he claims, he'll step down. If he refuses..." He paused,

letting the silence settle like a blade at my throat. "Then I'll kill you and send your body back to him."

A gasp of fear escaped me, but he wasn't bothered. He just turned to the guards. "Make sure she's comfortable. Feed her. Keep her alive. She's more useful breathing."

And with that... he walked out, leaving only the chill of fear behind. I stared at the door as it slammed shut. The two tall men stood like statues in front of me... their eyes were blank, like they'd done this a hundred times before.

I sat there in silence, hours ticking by like years. The guards didn't speak, didn't move—they just stood there like shadows, breathing but lifeless.

My body ached from the awkward position I was tied in. My wrists burned, my shoulders were sore, and my stomach kept twisting from hunger and dread. But more than anything, it was my heart that hurt. Because somewhere deep inside... I already knew. Damien wasn't coming for me. He wouldn't. I was just a piece in his game. A bait. Not a person worth saving. He had Sofia now. The one he truly loved. The one he thought he lost. And now that she was back, I was... replaceable. Disposable.

This... this was where I die. The thought settled in my chest like a heavy stone, and I couldn't stop the tears from falling quietly down my cheeks. I didn't sob. I didn't scream. I just... cried in silence.

Time passed—I didn't know how long—and then the door opened again. It was him. The same man from earlier. He walked in casually, tossing his coat over the back of the chair like we were old friends. Then he pulled out a phone and handed it to one of the guards.

"Start recording," he said simply.

The guard lifted the phone and pointed it at me. The man walked up and crouched in front of me again, tilting his head up at me. Up close, I noticed how handsome he was—how that made him all the more terrifying.

"This is your chance," he said softly. "Look into the camera. Cry. Beg Damien to save you. Plead for your life. Show him how much you need him."

I stared at him for a moment. Then slowly, I turned to face the camera. But I didn't cry. And I didn't beg. I stared straight into the camera, ignoring the burning in my throat, the sting in my eyes. My heart was racing, but my voice stayed steady.

"I believe by now you must have received Sofia," I said slowly, my voice no more than a whisper. "Congratulations on that." I swallowed the lump in my throat. "I know my life doesn't mean much to you. And I know... you're not coming to save me, Damien. But

please," I paused, drawing in a shaking breath, "let my parents go. I kept to my part of the deal."

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw the man frown slightly, but I didn't stop.

"If this video somehow reaches them—if they're watching... I just want them to know I love them. I don't understand why my father was alive all this time and never came for me. I don't know why my mother stayed silent... why she kept that truth hidden." My voice cracked a little. "But... I forgive them. Both of them."

My lips trembled as I took another breath. "I wish things could've been different. I wish I had more time to understand, to ask why... but I don't."

I looked back at the camera, at the little black lens that somehow felt like the eyes of everyone I'd ever loved. "And to the triplets—Lennox, Levi, Louis..." I said their names slowly, gently, like a prayer. "I wish I could tell them this face-to-face, but I forgive them too." Tears began to spill quietly again, this time without shame.

"I hope one day they find peace. I hope they learn to love without hurting... and live without hate. I hope they remember me for who I was before everything fell apart." I hesitated for a second, my voice dropping to a whisper. "Please... tell them the truth someday. All of it."

Then I turned to the man. "I'm done."

He didn't move right away. He just... stared at me. His expression unreadable. Then he gestured to the guards with a sharp flick of his hand.

"Leave us," he ordered.

The two men exchanged glances but obeyed, stepping out and closing the door behind them. Now it was just me and him. Alone.