

Fated To Not Just One, But Three #Chapter 371: Hailee Was Here - Read Fated To Not Just One, But Three Chapter 371: Hailee Was Here

Chapter 371: Hailee Was Here

Olivia's POV

For a moment, I couldn't move. My body felt stiff, my breath stuck in my chest.

Act, my wolf pushed at me. You have to act.

I swallowed hard. My pride hated it, but I reminded myself—nudity was nothing new for us. We shifted into wolves all the time, and every time we shifted, we were naked. It wasn't shameful. It was normal. If he thought this would get to me, he was wrong. He could watch, but that was all. He would never touch me.

I stood up slowly, lifting my chin. I made sure he saw that I wasn't shaking, I wasn't scared. Piece by piece, I undressed, taking every layer of my clothes. My wolf growled low inside, reminding me that this was only an act.

From the corner of my eye, I saw him shift in his seat. His pale fingers gripped the desk, his glowing eyes drinking me in.

"Moon Goddess," he breathed, hunger dripping from his tone. "You are a beauty. No wonder those triplets never wanted to let you go."

My jaw clenched. Anger burned hot in my chest, but I forced my lips into a calm line. I wanted to spit in his face. I wanted to burn him alive. But I stayed still. Not yet. Not now.

Frederick slowly stood and stepped closer, lifting a hand as if he wanted to touch me. "So tempting..." he murmured.

I snapped my eyes to his and took a step backward. "No. Not until marriage."

He froze, then laughed—a deep, mocking laugh that made the room feel smaller. "Then let us marry tomorrow," he said, sounding so serious about it.

My heart jumped, but I didn't flinch. "No," I said firmly. "If you want me, I must know you first. A marriage without knowing each other is nothing. Even you must agree to that."

His eyes narrowed, suspicion flickering there. Then his smirk returned. "Very well, Olivia. You want to know me? Then I'll give you that chance. But remember..." He leaned close, his breath cold against my ear. "You are already mine."

In your dreams.

He pulled away, retreating to his seat, while I gathered my clothes from the floor and dressed. His lustful eyes never left me, burning holes into my skin. Once I was fully clothed, I sat across from him. But never once did he take his eyes off me. It was so creepy, but I ignored it and spoke up.

"Where is this place?" I asked, shifting in the chair and glancing toward the wide window beside us. The glass was clear, showing a sky unlike the one I knew. The air outside looked colder, the trees unfamiliar, and in the distance stood tall, ancient buildings, their outlines sharp and strange.

A sharp chill slid down my spine. This is a different country.

"This place..." I said slowly, turning back to him. "Where am I?"

Frederick leaned back, one leg crossed over the other. "France," he said smoothly. "This is my family home. The place where I was raised."

My chest tightened. France. Another country. No wonder everything felt strange.

But he wasn't finished. His eyes narrowed. "And this..." He paused. "This is where your dear Hailee lived for eleven years."

My brow furrowed, my wolf stiffening inside me. Hailee? Here?

I forced myself to stay calm, to keep my expression blank, even though questions screamed in my head. Eleven years. Why had she been here? What did he mean by that?

"Why was she living here?" I couldn't stop myself from asking.

Frederick shrugged. "She needed shelter and protection, and we gave her."

I frowned and folded my arms. "Is that why you forced her into the deal? Is that the exchange of the deal you both had?" I pressed on. I knew there were a lot of things I didn't know. This Hailee—I never met her. I was not lucky like the triplets to know her. I wished she was still alive. She had a lot of questions to answer and respectfully a lot of slaps to take from me.

Frederick's smirk grew darker, but his eyes had a shadow in them that made my wolf uneasy.

"My deal with Hailee..." his voice dropped, low and heavy. Then he looked straight at me, his expression blank. "It was never done forcefully. It was about life... and death."

I frowned, crossing my arms tight. "Stop talking in riddles. What do you mean?"

He leaned back in his chair, his pale fingers tapping on the wood. "She wasn't forced, Olivia. But she didn't really agree either. When someone stands at the edge of death, choices are... different."

My stomach twisted, my wolf growling. "So you used her weakness," I snapped.

Frederick tilted his head, a fake look of innocence on his face. "I saved her life, Hailee... and that of her unborn children, one of whom happens to be your grandfather. So without my act that very day, you would never have existed. You only breathe today because of me. Because I saved her. And because I spared them." He leaned forward, his voice dropping into a growl. "So don't stand there, child, and look at me with disdain. Your very existence is my doing."

He spat, sounding annoyed by my attitude.

But I didn't get scared of his annoyance. My thoughts were fixed on Hailee. The thought of Hailee—alone, scared, trapped by this man—made anger rise in me like fire. I hadn't even known her the way the triplets had, yet his words made me want to tear him apart piece by piece.

I drew in a sharp breath, controlling my emotions. "I'll see you later, Frederick," I said, my voice blank. "I need to go back home."

His eyes narrowed, his lips curling into that same infuriating smirk. He shook his head slowly, like a teacher correcting a stubborn child.

"No," he said simply. His voice was calm but authoritative. "You're not leaving tonight."

My wolf bristled. What?

He leaned back in his chair, steepling his fingers. "If you claim you want to know me, then you will stay. How else will you learn who I am? How else will I learn who you are, my future wife?"

Chapter 372: Knowing More About Him

Olivia's POV

God, I wished I could wipe that smirk off his face with a single punch. My wolf pushed hard inside me, but I forced her down. I couldn't risk losing control now. I straightened, lifting my chin, letting my voice come out calm. "We are not yet married, Lord Frederick." For a heartbeat, his smirk faltered—then returned, wider, sharper. He leaned back in his chair, his fingers tapping lazily against the polished wood. It seemed like this was a habit of his.

"I'm not asking you to pack your things and move in, Olivia," he said smoothly, his eyes locked on mine. "Not yet. That day will come soon enough." His tone made my skin crawl, but he went on, calm and so sure of himself.

"All I ask is tonight. Stay here, under my roof. Learn the walls you will one day walk as their mistress. Know me, as I know you." He tilted his head, his voice dropping into something softer. "That's how it begins."

I kept my face blank while my fingers curled into the fabric of my dress under the table. This man was up to no good but I'm up for it... two can play this game. "Okay." I shrugged, crossing my legs and leaning back, feigning composure when I was anything but calm.

Frederick gave me a fake smile before turning back to the scattered papers on his desk. His focus shifted instantly, pale hands gliding as he scribbled and signed, his eyes scanning documents as though I wasn't even present. I stayed still, though my gaze wandered around the office.

"Could it be here?" My wolf whispered inside me, "The vessel. It has to be somewhere close. Somewhere he trusts." I scanned the shelves behind him, lined with old books and strange jars. The carvings on the door. The tall chest in the corner with iron locks. My heart quickened.

If his vessel was here, I had to find it. I had to search, to look into every shadow of this mansion. Because the moment I discovered it, Frederick's power would no longer be untouchable.

"What are you looking for?" Frederick asked suddenly. Though shock jolted me that he had caught me staring, I masked it with calm and slowly turned back to him. "I was checking if there's any decaying body around," I replied smoothly, forcing a faint smirk. "Who knows... I might be the next victim."

His pen stilled in his hand. Then, with deliberate slowness, he lifted his head. His eyes locked onto mine, sharp and probing. For a long moment, he said nothing. Then his lips curved into a faint smirk.

"Hailee lived here for eleven years," he said softly, almost taunting. "Did we kill her?"

My wolf stiffened inside me, her hackles raised. Frederick leaned back in his chair, his fingers now lazily drumming against the desk again. "What makes you think we would kill you, Olivia? If she survived here under our roof, so will you."

My jaw clenched, but I forced my expression to remain blank. He went on, his tone calm, almost bored, as though we were discussing something ordinary. "And besides... I do not drink recklessly. Not anymore. I have what I need—blood from the hospitals. Fresh, clean. No need to waste."

The way he said it made my stomach twist, but I didn't let him see my unease. I sat back in my chair, crossing my arms. Frederick sighed, closing the file. "I should take you to Mother... she is dying to meet you." He said while standing to his feet.

I froze for a second, my brows furrowing. "Your... mother?"

He arched a brow, tilting his head as if I'd asked something foolish. "Yes. Did you imagine I was born from stone?" His lips curved again with that annoying smirk of his. "Even monsters have mothers, Olivia."

My frown deepened. Just earlier I'd discovered he had a sister, and now a mother? My stomach twisted. I had thought his parents would have been long gone—buried centuries ago. "She is here?" I asked while also rising to my feet.

"Yes." Frederick responded while already going for the door. "This is her home. I merely came for a visit." He opened it and stepped aside like a gentleman, gesturing for me to pass. I narrowed my eyes, and he rewarded me with his signature irritating smirk.

The hallways were long and quiet as Frederick walked ahead of me. His steps were slow and steady, like he knew every corner of this place. I followed, my chest tight and my wolf restless inside me. We stopped at a tall wooden door with strange carvings on it. Frederick pushed it open, and I stepped inside behind him.

The room was dark, lit by a few small candles. The air smelled of herbs... and sickness. My eyes went to the bed in the middle of the room. A woman lay there. Her skin was so pale it looked almost white. Her hair, silver like the moon, spread across the pillow. She looked weak—too weak—each breath coming slowly, as if it took all her strength just to stay alive.

My wolf went quiet, uneasy. Frederick walked straight to her. And for the first time, his smirk faded. His face softened. He reached for her hand and touched it gently, like she was made of glass.

"Mother," he whispered, his voice softer than I had ever heard it. "Wake up." Her eyes opened slowly. Red eyes, but dull with age, looked at him. For a moment, I saw something different in him—fear, or maybe sadness.

"Mother," Frederick said again, his voice low. Then he looked at me. "Olivia is here." His lips curved into that annoying smirk again, but softer this time. "As I promised," he said.

My frown deepened. As promised? What does he mean by that?

"She is here?" the aged woman asked weakly. Though she looked like a frail woman in her eighties, I knew she had to be hundreds of years old. "Yes, Mother... look." Frederick gestured toward me where I stood by the door.

The pale woman turned her head slowly in my direction, and when her eyes met mine, her face lit with a genuine smile. "Moon... she carries Hailee's energy." Her voice was fragile but warm. I swallowed hard, at a loss for words. Her smile deepened. "Finally Felix will have a mother," she whispered.

My brow furrowed. Felix? Who is Felix? And who is becoming his mother? I turned sharply toward Frederick, my arms folding across my chest. "Felix? Who is Felix?" I asked, my wolf growling with unease inside me.

Frederick stayed calm. He let his fingers trail lazily over his mother's frail hand before straightening and turning toward me.

"My son," he said simply, like it was the most normal thing in the world. "He is three years old."

The air seemed to drain out of the room. My chest tightened, my wolf stiffening inside me.

"Your... son?" I echoed, my voice dropping low.

Frederick's smirk widened, his eyes locked on mine, watching every flicker of shock on my face. "Yes. I had a one-night stand with his mother, a human, and she conceived. Unfortunately, she died giving birth to him. He has never known a mother. But soon..." His smirk sharpened. "...he will know you as his."

Chapter 373: Compare

Olivia's POV

"Excuse me." The words slipped from my lips sharper than I intended, slicing through the heavy air in the room. My wolf growled inside me, restless, clawing at the edges of my control.

Frederick arched a brow, clearly unbothered by my outburst. "Is something unclear?"

My hands curled into fists at my sides. Unclear? Everything about this was unclear. My mind spun, trying to grasp what he had just said. A son? Three years old? And he expected me—me—to step into that role?

I lifted my chin, forcing myself to stay calm. "You think I'll just... accept that? That you have a child, and somehow I'm supposed to become his mother?"

The smirk never left his lips, but there was something darker behind his eyes now. "Not 'somehow,' Olivia. It is what will happen. Felix is mine. Soon, you will be mine. That makes him yours. It's simple."

My chest tightened, anger blazing hot in me. Simple? He spoke as if my life, my choices, were just lines on a page he could rewrite.

I turned slightly toward the pale woman on the bed—his mother—who was watching me with that strange, warm smile. She looked at me like I was already part of them, already tied to this cursed family.

My jaw clenched. I wished I could spit in his face and tell him over my dead body. But I had to keep up with my act.

Don't get me wrong—I don't hate children. Never. My wolf softened at the very thought of them, innocent and pure. But this wasn't about a child. This was about him. About Frederick trying to twist me into something I wasn't, into someone he could claim and control.

"I accepted to be with you, not to become a mother... I'm just eighteen. I'm not ready to be a mother now or in a few years to come." I frowned. But actually, it was a lie. I loved children. After this nightmare, I wanted pups—wanted them with the triplets.

Frederick shrugged. "Hailee had triplets at your age and became a wonderful mother. If she could do it with three pups, you can do even better with one."

My anger intensified, and it took every inch of control from me not to yell at him. I hated what he was doing... comparing me to my great-grandmother Hailee... it was as if he loved her... like it was she he always wanted but was forced to have me. Like I was some pale copy of his long-lost dream.

My wolf snarled, and I could feel her pressing against me, demanding I lash out. But I couldn't—not yet.

I steadied my breath and forced my glare onto him. "I am not Hailee," I said sharply, my angry voice echoing through the room. "And I will never be her. Stop looking at me like I'm some replacement for the woman you couldn't have."

His smirk faded for a moment, and then he opened his mouth to speak, but his mother beat him to it. "Stop it, Frederick."

Frederick stiffened, his head snapping toward the pale woman on the bed. His smirk faltered, replaced by concern.

"Mother—" he started, his tone unusually careful.

But she raised a trembling hand, silencing him. Her eyes, weak but still sharp, shifted to me. That strange, warm smile returned.

"She is not Hailee," she whispered, her words slow but firm. "Do not make the mistake of turning one into the shadow of another."

Frederick's jaw clenched. His hands curled into fists at his sides, but he said nothing.

I stood frozen, my heart pounding. My wolf stirred inside me, unsettled but... curious. Why was she defending me?

The old woman's gaze never left mine. "Child," she said softly, "just try to understand him..." She coughed weakly, and Frederick immediately stepped closer, brushing a hand across her arm with a tenderness that didn't fit the monster I knew.

I blinked, startled. The way he touched her—it was careful, reverent, even loving. For the first time, I saw him as something other than the smirking demon who haunted me.

Feeling drained, I let out a heavy sigh. "I need to rest," I muttered, rubbing at my temples. My body felt heavier than it should. Back home, it had only been morning when I left... but here, in this strange country, it was already night.

Frederick's mother smiled faintly from her bed, her tired eyes following me as I turned toward the door. "Go on, child. Rest."

Frederick moved immediately, his hand brushing across his mother's arm once more before straightening. Without a word, he gestured for me to follow. His long strides carried him down the dim corridor, the silence pressing in around us.

We stopped at a tall door at the end of the hall. He pushed it open and stepped aside, waiting for me to enter first.

I walked in—and froze.

The room was large, lined with velvet curtains and a massive carved bed at the center. The faint scent of cedar and smoke clung to the air. But what caught my attention wasn't the size or the luxury. It was the little details. His coat thrown across the chair. His boots by the corner. His gun placed on the side table.

My brows furrowed deeply. "This... this is your room."

"Yes," he said smoothly, stepping inside behind me. His voice was low, calm, but it carried a weight that made my stomach twist. "We are sharing a room."

My wolf bristled instantly, growling inside me. My hands curled into fists at my sides as I turned sharply toward him.

I forced a glare onto my face. "That wasn't part of the deal."

His lips curved into that same maddening smirk. "What's wrong? Afraid you won't be able to control yourself around me?" he taunted in a mocking tone.

Something in me snapped. I had held back, swallowed my anger, played his twisted game—but I was tired of that smirk, tired of his arrogance, tired of him comparing me to Hailee like I was some secondhand version of her.

If he wanted to play, I'd give him a move he didn't expect.

I leaned back against the edge of the bed, folding my arms, my lips curling into a sharp smile. "Control myself? Don't flatter yourself, Frederick. Maybe if you weren't still hung up on Hailee—" I spat, "—you wouldn't be so desperate to trap me here. Tell me, did it break you when she never wanted you back? Is that why you're trying so hard to use me as her replacement?"

A frown twisted his face, but I continued. "Sadly, my great-grandmother was a fool. Allowing a man like you to get close to her... what was she thinking? Maybe she wasn't as wise as the stories make her out to be. Maybe she was weak—too weak to see through you."

The moment the words left my mouth, I saw it.

His smirk vanished. His eyes, glowing red, widened in fury. For the first time, I saw his mask slip completely.

Before I could move, before I could even draw breath, he was on me.

His hand shot out and wrapped around my throat, cold and strong. He slammed me back against the wall, the air in my lungs vanishing as his grip tightened. My wolf snarled, thrashing inside me, but my body froze against the sudden rush of fear.

His face was inches from mine now, his voice a dark growl. "Don't you dare speak her name to me like that again." His eyes blazed, every ounce of his control burned away. "Hailee was more than you could ever dream to be. Watch your tongue, Olivia... or I'll tear it out."

Chapter 374: Sharing a room

Olivia's POV

Aggressively, he let go of me and turned his back on me. My throat still burned from his grip, but I stood frozen, staring at him. His shoulders rose and fell sharply, his breath ragged, heavy—like I had torn something open inside him. His back was turned, but I didn't need to see his face to know my words had struck deep. He wasn't smirking anymore. He wasn't taunting me. He was... hurting.

My wolf shifted uneasily inside me. "He loves her."

The truth hit me like a bucket of cold water. The way his chest moved up and down, the way his hands opened and closed—it wasn't just anger. It was sadness. A sadness so deep it had cut into him for years, and now it leaked out through the cracks in the mask he always wore.

Hailee.

Just her name, spoken aloud, was enough to unravel him. And in that moment, I realized something. This man—this monster—was in love with her. Not a passing desire, not a fleeting hunger. He loved her. Obvious, painful, desperate love.

And suddenly... I was eager to know more.

What had really happened between them? Had he ever told her how he felt? Or had he stayed silent, letting her slip away into another man's arms? Did she reject him, choosing her husband instead? Was that why he carried this shadow in his heart, this bitterness?

The questions suffocated me; they made me restless and insistent.

I found myself wanting to know their story because it was clear. Hailee was more than just a memory to him. She was his wound, his obsession... his weakness.

And maybe, just maybe, if I could uncover the truth of what happened between them, I could find the key to defeating him.

"Olivia." His voice was sharp, pulling me back. He was still not facing me. "For your own good, never say her name again."

Then he walked away, leaving me standing there with a thousand questions burning inside me.

I drew in a shaky breath and opened the mind link. "Lennox? Levi? Louis?"

Their voices rushed in immediately, quick, urgent, and tangled with worry.

"Olivia, what's going on? Are you okay?" Lennox's voice was rough.

"You've been too quiet. What is going on?" Levi asked quickly.

Louis was calmer, but I still felt his worry. "Talk to us, Liv. Tell us what's happening."

"I'm fine," I lied, forcing my voice steady. "Don't worry. But... there's something you need to know."

I paused, then whispered, "Frederick... he was in love with your great-grandmother, Hailee."

Silence hit the link. Heavy. Thick. I felt their shock slam into me all at once—Lennox's rage, Levi's disbelief, Louis's unease.

"What?" Lennox exclaimed in shock.

I nodded, though they couldn't see me, sinking onto the bed as I rubbed my sore neck. "He was and still is... his actions make it obvious," I whispered.

"Bastard," Levi spat.

I inhaled slowly. "There's more. He has a three-year-old son with a human. The mother is dead. I haven't met the child yet."

Louis's response was sharp. "So he wants you to step into her place? To play mother?"

"Exactly."

"In his fucking dreams," Levi growled.

"Olivia. If you can teleport to us right now, do it. I need to see you with my own eyes. I need to be sure you're okay." Lennox pleaded, still sounding worried.

My throat tightened. The pain from Frederick's grip was still there, a reminder of how close I had come to danger. Part of me wanted nothing more than to run to them, to let them hold me, to let the three of them shield me from all of this. But I couldn't. Not yet.

"No," I whispered, firm but soft. "I can't. Not tonight."

I felt Levi's frustration through the link. "Olivia—"

"Tomorrow," I interrupted, steadying my voice. "Tomorrow, I'll come. I promise."

Louis's calm voice broke through, though I felt the tightness in his chest. "You'd better keep that promise, Liv. Because if you don't, we're coming for you—whether you like it or not."

A small, tired smile tugged at my lips, even as my eyes stung. "I know. That's why I love you three."

"And we love you," they chorused in unison.

I drew in a long breath. "I have to go. I'll reach out if anything happens."

"Please do," Lennox urged.

After ending the mind link, I took off my sandals and glanced around the room. I walked to the window and pulled the curtain just a little. Night had already fallen. The moonlight made the garden outside glow, but the shadows felt long and cold. Somewhere inside this mansion, maybe even close by, was the vessel that housed his soul. The one thing keeping his power strong.

My heart raced as I shut the curtain quickly. I need to find it. But where do I start?

Still deep in thought, my body went stiff when the door creaked open. My head turned sharply, and there was Frederick—walking back into the room.

This time, he didn't spare me a glance, as if I wasn't even there. He moved straight to the wardrobe, pulled out dark silk pajamas, and disappeared into the bathroom.

I heard the water run, the sound of him moving inside, and I sat frozen on the edge of the bed, my frown deepening.

Minutes later, he returned—dressed simply, his hair damp, his pale skin almost glowing under the dim light. Without a word, he crossed the room, slid into his side of the massive bed, and lay back against the pillows.

The silence in the room was suffocating. He didn't look at me, didn't even acknowledge me, as if I were just another piece of furniture in his space.

His voice finally came, flat, calm, without warmth.

"Turn off the lights. All of them. I can't sleep with them on," he ordered.

My frown deepened as I glared at his back. Did he really think I would jump to his orders? Joke's on him.

It looks like we'll be sleeping in separate rooms then," I snapped. "Because I sleep with the lights on."

It was a lie, but I delivered it with enough effort to make it sound real.

Frederick shifted slightly, his head turning just enough for me to see the corner of his pale face in the dim glow. His eyes glinted red for a brief moment, then softened back to that calm, collected expression that infuriated me more than his smirk ever could.

"Lies don't suit you, Olivia," he said evenly, his voice low, almost amused. Then, without waiting for my reply, he reached out, flicked the small switch on his side of the bed, and the last dim light blinked out. Darkness swallowed the room whole.

I clenched my jaw, the silence pressing down thick and heavy between us. My wolf stirred uneasily inside me, growling at the audacity of this man—this monster—lying beside me like we were husband and wife.

Fine, Frederick. Let's play this game.

I reached for the switch on my side of the bed and flicked the light back on.

Chapter 375: Annoyance

Olivia's POV

I didn't miss the way Frederick stiffened on his side of the bed. His chest rose with a slow, deliberate inhale. He didn't turn. He didn't speak. But I felt the shift in the air, sharp and heavy.

"You're testing me," he said at last, his voice calm but carrying that low edge that made my wolf bristle.

I lifted my chin, glaring at his back. "Or maybe I just don't take orders from you."

Silence stretched between us, so thick I could hear the ticking of the old clock on the wall. For a moment, I thought he might leap up, snap at me, and try to put me in my place again.

But instead of snapping, he reached out and flicked the switch. Darkness swallowed the room.

My jaw tightened. Without hesitation, I leaned over and turned it back on. The faint glow returned.

A pause. Then click—dark again.

I clenched my teeth and pressed the switch once more, the light flickering back to life.

We went on like that—him turning it off, me turning it on. Back and forth. Back and forth. The air between us grew heavy, his patience clearly thinning, but I refused to give in.

The moment my fingers brushed the switch again, everything happened in a blur.

In an instant, Frederick was on me. His hand caught my wrist, and he pushed me down against the bed, his body hovering above mine. His pale face loomed close, his sea-blue eyes glowing faintly in the dim light.

"Enough," he growled, his voice low but ragged, vibrating in his chest. "If you don't stop this little game, Olivia, I will tie you to this bed myself."

His grip on my wrist was firm, unyielding, pinning me in place. My wolf snarled inside me, thrashing to be let loose, but I forced her down, meeting his stare without flinching.

Then, as abruptly as he had moved, he released me. Frederick rolled away, pulling the covers over himself like I wasn't even worth his attention anymore. But he left the lights on.

Inhaling deeply, I remained still where I lay on the bed, staring up at the ceiling. Four long hours passed. I lay stiff on the bed, staring at the ceiling, too alert to slip into real sleep. My wolf stayed restless, pacing inside me, urging me to stay cautious. Every creak of the old house made me tense.

Finally, exhaustion won, and my eyes drifted shut—but never deeply. My body stayed half-awake, prepared for anything.

Hours later, the soft shift of movement pulled me back. My eyes opened instantly, narrow and sharp.

Frederick was already out of bed. He moved with a strange grace, his pale frame straight as he adjusted the cuffs of his shirt. Morning light bled faintly through the curtains, painting the room in silver and gray.

He noticed me watching but didn't seem bothered. His voice came cool, calm, matter-of-fact.

"Breakfast is served at eight. Don't be late."

I blinked at him, my lips twisting into a mocking smile. "Breakfast? Blood-sucking monsters eat?"

His head turned slightly, just enough for me to see the faintest smirk tug at his lips. But he didn't answer. Instead, he buttoned the last button of his shirt, smoothed his collar, and walked toward the door as if my words hadn't mattered at all.

I sat there for a moment, staring at the door he had closed behind him, before finally dragging myself off the bed.

I washed up quickly, splashing cool water over my face, trying to erase the marks of exhaustion around my eyes. My wolf stirred, still uneasy, reminding me not to relax. I searched for clothes but found nothing new laid out for me. Of course. Typical Frederick. I frowned and slipped back into the same clothes I had worn yesterday, smoothing them down as best as I could. It wasn't much, but I wasn't about to beg him for anything.

When I finally made my way downstairs, the faint scent of food—real food, not blood—drifted through the halls. It surprised me, enough to make my steps falter.

The dining room was wide, with long windows letting in the pale morning light. At the table, seated gracefully with her hands folded, was Frederick's sister.

She looked up when she saw me, and unlike him, her expression wasn't cold. She smiled. A genuine, soft smile that instantly caught me off guard.

"You must be hungry," she said warmly, her tone calm and friendly. "I've been waiting to meet you."

I blinked, my guard still high, unsure how to respond. But her eyes held no malice, no taunt—Only friendliness.

"Come, sit," she added, motioning to the chair across from her. "Don't worry. I don't bite."

Her little laugh was light, almost teasing—but not in Frederick's cruel way.

The warmth in her eyes didn't match the coldness of this house, and that alone made me suspicious.

I leaned forward, resting my arms on the table. "Frederick told me he has a son... why isn't he here?"

Her smile wavered. Just for a moment. She looked down, fingers twisting together before she forced it back.

"He will be," she said quietly. "Soon."

The answer was simple enough, but the way she said it—too quick, too careful—told me more than the words themselves. She wouldn't meet my eyes, and the air suddenly became tense.

Something wasn't right.

My wolf stirred inside me, uneasy. "She's hiding something," she whispered.

I sat back, keeping my expression calm even though my thoughts spun. She wanted me to believe the boy's absence was nothing. But everything about her body language told me it was more. Much more.

Before I could press her again with more questions, a piercing scream ripped through the hall.

The sound was sharp, high, and full of panic.

Both of us froze.

A heartbeat later, the door burst open and a maid rushed in, her face pale, her breath coming fast.

"Ma'am," she stammered, clutching the doorframe. "He... he's at it again!"

My brow furrowed. Frederick's sister shot to her feet, her forced smile gone, now replaced by fear.

Chapter 376: His Son

Olivia's POV

Frederick's sister rushed ahead with the maid, her steps quick and frantic. For a moment I stood frozen, torn between staying out of whatever madness was happening and letting my curiosity drag me in. But my wolf pushed at me, hard. Go.

Before I could think twice, I followed them up the stairs. My heart pounded as I trailed them down the hall until they stopped abruptly at a tall door. Frederick's sister didn't hesitate. She shoved it open and stormed inside, her panic so obvious. I stepped in right after her, my eyes darting across the room.

And then I saw him. A little boy, no more than four, sat calmly on the bed. His small hands were clutching the arm of a maid... and his mouth—

My breath caught. Blood. He was drinking her blood. The maid was pale, her body trembling, but she was alive. Still conscious. Still breathing. But the boy—there was nothing ordinary about him. His eyes glowed faintly, his aura sharp and unsettling. I didn't need anyone to tell me. Instinct screamed the truth.

Frederick's son. The one I'd only just heard about.

The boy pulled back at once when Frederick's sister rushed forward. Her voice was sharp, trembling with both fear and authority.

"Felix! Stop this at once!"

She grabbed him and yanked him away from the maid, her strength far greater than any human's. The boy snarled—not like a scared child, but like a predator disturbed mid-hunt. His small face twisted, his eyes blazing as he glared at her with raw fury.

For a moment, the room froze. The maid slumped against the wall, weak but alive. Frederick's sister turned to the other servants who had rushed in behind her. "Take her," she ordered quickly, her voice full of concern. "Get her cleaned up and bandaged."

The maids nodded hurriedly and carried the bleeding girl out of the room. My gaze stayed locked on the boy. He looked far too powerful, far too composed to be a child of

three—or even four. His energy felt ancient, terrifying, and my stomach twisted at the sight.

Frederick's sister held him firmly, but I could see it in her face as she looked at me: something wasn't right. Something about this boy was... more.

Before I could even find the words to speak, the door behind us slammed shut with a sharp crack. I spun around, and there he was—Frederick. His tall frame filled the doorway, his eyes cold and unreadable.

For a second, the room went still. Even Felix froze, though his small chest still rose and fell in anger. Frederick's gaze swept across the maid's bloodied arm, his sister's tense grip on the boy, and finally landed on me. His jaw clenched, and when he spoke, his voice was loud and full of rage.

"I told the maids," he said slowly, each word sharp, "never to let a human near him."

His eyes snapped to the sister, his anger intensifying. "And yet here we are."

His sister swallowed hard in panic. "We are trying our best, brother... He just can't control it, Frederick. He's still a child—"

"A child?" Frederick's voice snapped like a whip, though he didn't raise it. He stepped further into the room, his presence suffocating. "Look at him. Do you see a child?"

My gaze flicked back to Felix. His small body trembled, but it wasn't with fear—it was with hunger. His glowing eyes burned into his father's, his lips still stained red. The power radiating from him made my stomach twist tighter. I swallowed hard, my wolf pressing against me, whispering the truth. "That boy... he's dangerous."

Frederick sharply turned his attention to the boy, his glare fixed on him. "How many times have I told you, Felix? We do not feed by force. We are not savages."

The boy's small body shook—not from hunger this time, but from the weight of his father's rage. His eyes flicked downward, though his lips still glistened red.

Frederick's voice cut through the silence again, sharper than before. "There is blood in the fridge. I allow you to drink once a week, and you know this. Once. Not more."

Felix's fists clenched on his little knees. His voice came out low, stubborn, and full of venom that didn't sound like it belonged to a child.

"I'm hungry. Normal food is disgusting. I hate it."

Frederick's jaw tightened, his aura pressing heavy against the walls. He stepped closer, towering over the boy, his voice rising.

"Then you will learn to eat it."

Felix's head snapped up, his eyes blazing. "No!" he shouted, his voice echoing like a growl. "I don't want it!"

The room stilled at his outburst, the power radiating off him unnatural for his age. My wolf bristled, unease crawling under my skin.

But Frederick's voice boomed, silencing even the air.

"Enough!" His tone was final, leaving no room for argument. "You have broken my rule, and for that, your punishment is this—"

He leaned down, his angry eyes piercing into his son's. "For one month, you will eat only normal food. No blood. Not a drop. You will learn control, or I'll kill you with my bare hands."

The boy's chest heaved, his little body trembling with fury. His teeth bared slightly, the predator in him desperate to rebel. But Frederick didn't flinch. He only frowned.

"Yes, we are vampires," he growled, "but we are not monsters."

The boy's small chest moved fast, up and down, like he was fighting to hold in all his anger. His glowing eyes turned away from Frederick and landed right on me. The way he looked at me made my stomach twist. No, I wasn't afraid of him, but the way he stared— It wasn't the gaze of a normal child. His little face was twisted with hate, as if I were the reason his father had punished him.

My wolf whispered inside me, "He blames you. He already sees you as the enemy."

I frowned, forcing myself to stay still. His eyes were too sharp, too scary for a boy his age. He was dangerous—just like his father.

"Make sure the maid is taken care of," Frederick instructed his sister. Then his gaze shifted to me. "Come with me, Olivia. We have something to talk about."

He didn't shout, but I could tell it wasn't a request. It was an order.

I gave the boy one last glance—his tiny fists were clenched, his angry eyes still locked on me. Then I turned and followed Frederick out of the room.

Chapter 377: The Act

Olivia's POV

Frederick led me into his study and closed the door behind us with a loud snap. I could see he was still fuming with anger, and I just hoped he didn't direct that anger at me. He stood by the desk, staring at me with eyes that felt heavy, while I glared at him, folding my arms tightly against my chest.

"I believe you have met my son... although this is not the way I wanted you two to meet," he said casually, his eyes still on me.

I said nothing, waiting for him to finish.

"You have to learn how to accept him... how to communicate with him..."

My frown deepened, my anger rising. "Accept him? You mean raise him? Be his mother? I told you, Frederick, that was never part of our plan."

His jaw tightened. "He is mine. Soon, we will get married. That makes him yours."

I wished I could spit on him and tell him over my dead body would I be his wife, but I had to hold back my words. I stepped closer, my voice sharp. "No. That's how you want it. I am not Hailee. Stop pretending I am."

His smirk faded. "Careful, Olivia."

But I didn't stop. "This isn't about me, is it? You're still in love with her. That's why you keep looking at me like I'm her shadow. Why don't you go retrieve her corpse from the grave and..."

In a flash, he moved. His hands slammed the desk, caging me in. His face was so close I could feel his cool breath on my lips. His eyes glowed red, filled with anger.

"Stop pushing me, Olivia," he growled. "Because one day I might not be able to control myself and might just have to fuck you to shut you up."

His gaze dropped to my lips, and my glare deepened. What was he trying to do? With rage, I shoved him back. "Stay away from me," I snapped before storming out.

I shook my head, thinking to myself... I can't... I can't continue with this act... I have to find the vessel and stop this charade... I can't even stand a second with this man... I moved quickly, desperate to put distance between myself and the study. But halfway down the hall, a small figure blocked my path.

Felix.

He stood there, his small hands clenched at his sides, his strange eyes burning into mine with a look far too sharp for a child. His voice was low, cold, carrying rage that didn't belong in a boy his age.

"You'll never take him from me."

I froze, my breath catching.

His little chin lifted in defiance, his stare never wavering. "My father is mine. And I won't let you steal him."

I scoffed at his attitude and stared at him. I didn't know what to say to him, but I decided to play a small trick on him.

I let out a soft laugh, shaking my head. "Oh, this is funny."

His brows furrowed, confusion flashing before his anger returned. "What's funny?" he snapped.

I stepped closer, folding my arms, lowering my voice so only he could hear. "You think you can keep your father all to yourself? You're wrong. One day, he and I will have children—children of our own. And do you know what will happen then?"

His lips parted, but I didn't give him a chance to speak. I leaned in, putting on more act. "He'll love them. More than he loves you. And when that day comes, you'll be nothing but his forgotten mistake."

Felix's little hands shook, his fists tightening so hard I thought his nails might pierce his skin. His face flushed with rage, but his voice came out in a trembling growl. "No... he won't. He'll never leave me."

I tilted my head, letting a cruel smile tug at my lips. "The only way you can stop that from happening is to make sure your father never marries me."

His fangs bared out, his small chest rising and falling quickly. His eyes—so young, yet far too ancient—locked on mine with pure hatred.

I continued with my act. "If you can't do that..." I paused and shrugged. "Then I'm sorry... you will lose your precious father." I pat his shoulder and flashed him a wicked smirk. "Think about it."

With that, I turned and walked away from him. With my back turned against him, I smiled to myself... I had planted a seed in his heart ... all I had to do was make sure I made him believe the only way he could stop this marriage from happening was destroying the vessel that held his father's soul.

I had no idea how I was going to achieve that. A child, dangerous as he was, wasn't predictable. He was power wrapped in instability. But if I pushed the right buttons... he might become the very weapon I needed.

I reached the corner of the hall, my steps slowing as voices floated from behind me. Felix was still in the corridor, his small but furious voice echoing faintly.

"She'll never take him from me," he muttered, more to himself than anyone else. "Never."

A smile ghosted over my lips. The seed was planted. Now, I just had to water it with the right lies.

I teleported away and arrived back home in my room. The moment I landed back in my room, the familiar scent of home wrapped around me, but it brought no comfort. I sat heavily on the edge of my bed, my mind spinning. The plan had always been simple in theory: find the vessel, destroy it, and strip Frederick of his power. But theory never matched reality.

I ran my hand over my face, exhaustion creeping in. I couldn't waste another day pretending. Frederick's obsession with Hailee, his twisted desire to replace her with me, his insistence that I mother his son—it was suffocating.

I needed to move. I needed to act.

Suddenly, I got a mind link.

"Olivia..." Sofia's voice trembled.

Fated To Not Just One, But Three #Chapter 378: The Call - Read Fated To Not Just One, But Three Chapter 378: The Call

Chapter 378: The Call

Sofia's POV

As usual, silence was the constant thing between Damien and me. I could practically count the times we spoke in a day. When we did, it was only about our son, or something general. Never about us.

Maybe I should have loved it. This was what I wanted, wasn't it? We were co-parenting. Civil. Respectful. Distant. Exactly how I had imagined it should be.

But lately... I wasn't so sure anymore.

It was becoming harder to bear, seeing him every day but not really seeing him. Sitting across from him at the table with nothing but words about Charlie between us. Passing him in the hall and not even brushing shoulders.

No smiles. No laughter. No touches.

And I knew Damien. When it came to me, he was always a man of touch. His hand on my waist as he passed. His fingers brushing mine when he handed me something. His palm against the small of my back when we walked side by side.

Before, minutes never passed without him finding some excuse to reach for me.

Now... nothing.

The absence of it left an ache I didn't want to admit to. And worse—it made me wonder if co-parenting was really what I wanted... or if I was lying to myself all along.

We sat across from each other at the dining table, lunch spread neatly between us. Damien's phone buzzed against the table. He picked it up without hesitation, his thumb gliding across the screen.

A faint smile tugged at his lips—small, but real.

And my heart ached.

Who was he texting? His beautiful secretary? The one I saw the other day?

I clenched my fork so tightly my knuckles ached. A wave of heat surged through me, sharp and jealous, though I had no right to feel it.

I couldn't sit there, watching him give his attention, his smile, to someone else while I sat invisible on the other side of the table.

The chair scraped against the floor as I pushed back abruptly.

"Excuse me," I muttered in annoyance.

Before he could even glance up, I stood and left the table, my chest tight, my wolf restless under my skin.

When I got to my room, I sank onto the edge of the bed, my hands trembling as I tried to hold myself together.

But the tears came anyway, hot and stinging. I pressed my palms over my eyes, willing them back, but they refused to stop.

"You still love him," my wolf whispered, her voice cutting straight into my chest.

I shook my head weakly. "No..."

"Yes," she pushed, sharp and certain. "I told you. You love Damien."

My lips trembled, the truth clawing its way out. "Yes... I love him." My voice cracked. "But—"

"But what?" she snapped, impatient, almost angry.

The words caught in my throat. I hated myself for this—for feeling something I knew I shouldn't.

"We are related. And our families..." My breath hitched. "There's blood between us. Too much hate. It can't work."

My wolf scoffed, pacing in the back of my mind. "Excuses. Olivia is with the triplets, isn't she? Everyone said it was impossible, and yet she chose them anyway."

I swallowed hard, my heart aching at the mention of her. Olivia and I had similar situations, and Olivia still chose to be with her mates and me? Here I am wallowing in pain.

"Stop being stubborn and tell Damien how you feel." My wolf urged, but I frantically shook my head.

"I'm scared... what if he no longer has feelings for me and just wants to co-parent..."

My wolf stirred, getting annoyed with me. "You won't know until you find out." She urged.

I swallowed hard and contemplated on how I was going to stand in front of Damien and confess to him that I still love him.

What would he say? Will he say it's better we just co-parent? Will he say he loves someone else now? Will I be able to live with that?

The thought crushed me, and I pressed my palms over my face, my body trembling.

Then—ring. Ring.

The sharp vibration of my phone broke through the storm in my head. I flinched, snatching it from the nightstand, my heart leaping when I saw the name on the screen.

The investigator.

The one I had paid weeks ago to dig into Rebecca's death.

I had never buried her. I couldn't. Not without answers. Not without knowing who had the audacity to take her head and leave her body like that.

Damien had sworn he knew nothing, that he had no hand in it. And for once, I believed him. But that left me with a truth even darker—if it wasn't him, then who?

With shaky hands, I pressed the phone to my ear.

"Hello?"

His voice came through steady, professional. "Miss Sofia... I have something for you."

I sat up straighter, clutching the phone tight. "Tell me."

"I went through her records—Rebecca's. I pulled them directly from the phone companies. It wasn't easy, but I managed."

He paused, and I heard the weight in his voice before the words came.

"Her last call... the final one she made before she died... was to Alpha Damien."

My chest tightened, my breath caught. "W-What?"

"They spoke for fifteen minutes," he continued firmly. "Fifteen minutes. I traced the time stamp. It was the very night she was beheaded. After that call... nothing. Her line went dead."

I froze, my wolf stirring inside me, restless and growling.

Fifteen minutes. Damien had told me he knew nothing, that he hadn't spoken to her for a long time. He swore it.

And now the investigator is telling me they spoke before her death? But if he had spoken to her that night—what did they say? Why hadn't he told me?

My hand trembled around the phone, my voice barely a whisper. "Thank you... please keep digging."

The investigator's tone softened. "I will... I will inform you if I get any other information."

The call ended, leaving me in silence again.

Chapter 379: His Office

Sofia's POV

For the past thirty minutes, I sat frozen on the edge of my bed, my mind spiraling endlessly, my chest tight with panic. The investigator's words replayed like a haunting echo. Her last call was to Alpha Damien... they spoke for fifteen minutes. Fifteen minutes.

I didn't know what to think. Should I confront Damien? Demand answers? But what if he denied it? What if he realized I was prying behind his back, digging into Rebecca's death? What if he believed I no longer trusted him? And worse... what if he decided to silence me to protect his secrets? The thought churned my stomach.

My wolf scoffed, her voice sharp inside my head. "Stop it, Sofia. Damien would never hurt you. You know this."

I wanted to believe her. I truly did. But now, staring at the ugly truth pressing in around me, fear twisted everything I thought I knew.

What if the Damien I once loved wasn't the same Damien who sat across the table from me today? Panic wrapped around me tighter.

I loved him. That truth was undeniable. But now a single question terrified me more than anything else. Had I been loving a man who might have played a role in my best friend's death? The thought alone nearly broke me.

I forced myself out of the room before I drowned in that storm. My feet carried me downstairs, each step heavy, my wolf whispering warnings and doubts that tangled in my chest.

In the living room, Charlie laughed on the rug as his new nanny rolled a ball back and forth with him. His little face glowed with innocence, so carefree, so untouched by the shadows crushing me.

"Where's Alpha Damien?" I asked, my voice calm though my pulse raced.

The nanny looked up politely. "He's out, ma'am."

I nodded and lowered myself beside Charlie. I let him climb into my lap, hugged him close, and played with him, clinging to his laughter as it soothed my restless wolf. Yet my thoughts refused to leave the worry gnawing inside me.

When Charlie's attention fixed on his toys, I slipped away quietly. My heart pounded as I walked the hall toward Damien's home office.

At the door, I already knew it was locked. Damien never left his office unlocked when he was gone.

I stood there chewing my lip, questioning what I was even doing.

Still, my fingers reached for the keypad. I wondered if I still knew the code. Back when Damien and I had been together, the numbers were the date we first met. A bitter smile touched my lips at the memory. Surely he must have changed it by now. Why wouldn't he?

But something inside me urged me to try anyway. My hand trembled as I pressed the digits.

Beep. Beep. Beep.

For a second, silence. Then—Click.

The lock released.

My breath lodged in my throat.

He hadn't changed it. After all these years, after all that stood between us, the code was still the same.

I slipped inside, closing the door softly behind me. My heart pounded as I scanned the office. Quickly, I pulled open the first drawer, searching for... I didn't even know what. A letter? A file? Anything to explain why Rebecca's last call had been to him.

My hands shook as I sifted through documents. Contracts. Reports. Nothing.

Then—Click.

The sound of the door unlocking.

I froze, ice flooding my veins.

"Looking for something?"

That voice. Low. Calm. Commanding.

Slowly, I turned. Damien filled the doorway, his tall frame cutting a dark silhouette across the dim light room. His eyes locked onto mine, sharp and heavy, and my breath stilled.

He stepped inside, shutting the door with a slow, deliberate snap. "Tell me, Sofia..." His gaze swept over the open drawer before pinning me again. "What are you doing in my office?"

Panic surged through me. I couldn't admit the truth. I couldn't tell him I was investigating him, not when I didn't even know what he was hiding.

So I lied.

"I..." My throat tightened, but I forced the words out. "I came to steal money."

His brows drew together, confusion flickering in his eyes.

I lowered my gaze, swallowing hard. "Things have been... hard for me. And I needed money. So I thought... maybe..." My voice faltered, shaky, my wolf growling at me for spinning such a pathetic excuse.

Silence pressed between us, heavy and suffocating. His expression was unreadable, impossible to decipher.

His eyes narrowed, sharp and searching, as if stripping away every layer of my lie. Then, to my surprise, his tone softened.

"I don't keep cash here anymore," he said. "It's in my room. Third drawer. If you needed money, Sofia, you should have just asked me."

The words almost sounded reasonable. But instead of relief, they twisted inside me like a blade.

I lifted my chin, forcing a bitter laugh. "Asked you? You and I are enemies, Damien. We hardly even speak. Don't pretend otherwise."

I turned to leave, but his voice stopped me like a command.

"How much?"

I froze.

Slowly, I looked back at him. His gaze pinned me, still unreadable. My lips parted before I could stop them. "Thirty thousand."

He nodded once, as if the number meant nothing. "I can give you that." He stepped closer, his presence thick and suffocating, his voice dropping lower. "But since you didn't ask, you'll give me something in return."

My breath hitched. "What... what do you mean?"

His hand lifted, fingers brushing across my lips, slow and deliberate. My heart hammered as his eyes darkened, trapping me in place. I should have pulled away, but I didn't. In truth, heat tingled across my skin, betraying me.

"Nothing you can't handle," he murmured. His thumb traced the corner of my mouth, sending shivers down my spine. "Suck me."

My eyes widened, breath catching.

"I've missed this mouth, Sofia," he whispered, his gaze fixed on my lips, thick with hunger. "And now I want you to remind me just how good you are."

Chapter 380: Just Teasing

Damien's POV

I was only teasing her. That's the truth of it. I knew exactly how Sofia would react—snapping at me, glaring at me with that anger in her eyes, ready to spit instead of bend. And damn, I wanted it. I wanted to see that spark. To feel it. Once upon a time, I used to find it amusing—the way she'd hum in annoyance, the way her temper would flare over the smallest things. I'd poke at her on purpose, just to watch her unravel. Back then, it wasn't just funny. It was addictive. Even now, years later, nothing's changed. She's still the only one who can look me in the eye without fear. Still the only one who can raise her voice to me and make my wolf fall silent instead of raging. Still the only one who can make me want to push, just to hear her snap back. And when she does—when that sharp tongue lashes out at me—it feels like home.

I leaned against the desk, watching her glare at me for what I had just said.

"Excuse me?" she demanded, her frown deepening. I put on my act and held her gaze with a serious look.

"You heard me, Sofia. Get on your knees and suck me, and the money's yours. It's not like you haven't done it before. You used to love it." I pushed further, deliberately teasing her.

Her frown deepened, her glare sharpened, and I could tell she was one step away from slapping me across the face. I wouldn't have minded it. In fact, part of me wanted it—wanted that outburst, wanted her rage as much as I wanted her submission. Sofia. My Sofia. The only woman alive who could twist me in knots without even trying. Her lips parted, ready to lash out, ready to spit venom at me the way she always did when I pushed too far. And gods, I craved it. That spark. That fury. That reminder that she wasn't afraid of me, even when she should be.

But beneath her defiance, I caught the flicker I'd been searching for—the hesitation. The memory. The way her chest rose and fell too quickly, her throat working as she swallowed hard. She remembered. And that was enough to make my blood heat, to make my wolf stir with a growl that wanted more than just words from her. I tilted my head slightly, my tone dropping into a whisper meant only for her.

"Go ahead, Sofia. Tell me no. Tell me you don't remember how good you were at it. Tell me you don't still think about the way I used to taste on your tongue."

Her cheeks flushed, but her glare never faltered. She hated me in this moment, I could see it. Hated me for dragging the past into the present. Hated me for holding her here, cornered, with nowhere to run. And yet—her body betrayed her. I caught it in the twitch of her fingers, the way her knees shifted, the way her wolf stirred uneasily inside her, torn between resisting me and remembering exactly how much she used to crave me.

I straightened slowly, pushing away from the desk, closing the distance between us with measured steps. Each one deliberate. Predatory. My eyes locked on hers, daring her to move. Daring her to strike me. Daring her to give in. When I stopped in front of her, so close I could feel the heat radiating from her skin, I bent down just enough for my breath to brush her ear.

"You can hate me all you want," I whispered, my voice low and seductive, "but we both know your mouth was made for me."

Her body stiffened against me, every muscle tight as a bowstring. For a heartbeat, I thought she might finally slap me, scream at me, storm out the door. Instead, her lips parted and she spat.

"Fuck you, Damien."

The sound of it rolled through me like fire, sharp and delicious. I smiled, savoring the fury in her voice. That was my Sofia. She jerked back, trying to move past me, but I shifted, blocking her path with one lazy step. My hand braced against the doorframe, caging her in without even touching her. Her chin lifted in defiance. Her eyes burned into mine. And I gave her the bait.

"Two hundred thousand dollars," I said smoothly, my voice calm, confident, certain. "Every month."

Her eyes widened before she could stop herself. Just for a second. Just long enough for me to know I had struck the right chord. I leaned in, lowering my voice to a husky whisper.

"You can keep spitting venom at me all night, Sofia. You can curse me, hate me. But we both know you need what I'm offering. And you know exactly what I want in return."

Her throat bobbed as she swallowed hard, torn between pride and temptation. I felt her wolf stir, restless, betraying the truth she refused to admit out loud. Her lips trembled before she bit them, her eyes narrowing on me. For a long moment, she didn't speak. Just stood there, her chest rising and falling too quickly, like she was choking on her own pride. Then her voice came out shaky.

"Only that," she muttered, her glare fixed on me. "Just... sucking you off. Nothing else. No sex."

The words twisted something inside me—half amusement, half hunger. I tilted my head, studying her, savoring the way my closeness was having an effect on her. She hesitated, her jaw clenching.

"Just this once."

A low chuckle rumbled in my chest. I stepped closer, close enough that she flinched but didn't back away. My voice dropped, smooth and dark as velvet.

"No, Sofia. Not just once. Wherever I want it. Whenever I want it. But..." I leaned in until my breath brushed her ear, my words sinking into her. "No sex. Just your mouth. That's all."

Her eyes flicked away, her body going rigid, as if looking at me would shatter the fragile wall of defiance she still had left. I waited. Silent. Patient. Letting the weight of my offer hang heavy in the air, daring her to reject me. Seconds dragged by. Her fists clenched. Her jaw tightened. I almost expected her to spit in my face and storm out. But instead, she exhaled, her voice barely above a whisper.

"Fine."