

Fated To Not Just One, But Three #Chapter 421: Lying - Read Fated To Not Just One, But Three Chapter 421: Lying

Chapter 421: Lying

Sofia's POV

His words hung heavy in the air. "That's what you really want?"

I forced my chin higher, even as my insides twisted painfully. "Yes," I said flatly, my throat tight. "That's what I want."

The lie stung. My wolf whimpered inside me, calling me a coward, but I couldn't let Damien see it. I couldn't let him think he still had that power over me... until I know the truth about Rebecca's death, I have to stay away from him.

Damien's jaw tightened, the muscle there flexing as his hands curled into fists at his sides. He looked as if he wanted to break something—anything—but instead, he just stood there, staring at me with those burning eyes filled with so much pain.

"I don't believe you," he said finally, his voice low, rough, almost trembling. "You love me, Sofia. You always have. You can spit your nonsense, you can push me away, but I know what's inside you."

His words hit me. For a second, I wanted to scream that he was right, that he still lived in every scar on my heart. But I bit it back, burying it under my hardened heart.

"Believe what you want," I whispered harshly. "But I don't want anything to do with you..." I frowned and continued. "And what happened here should never happen again. From now on, it's about our son. Nothing more."

His eyes darkened, rage and hurt colliding in them. He stepped close enough that I could feel the heat of his body again, but he didn't touch me. His voice broke as he rasped, "Then I pity you. Because you'll spend the rest of your life lying to yourself."

I flinched. My heart lurched. But I stood my ground.

When he finally turned away, raking a hand through his hair, the silence that followed was suffocating. My knees trembled, but I forced myself to walk past him, to leave the office without looking back.

Because if I looked back—I wasn't sure I'd have the strength to leave.

The moment the door shut behind me, I pressed my back against it, my chest heaving. A single tear slipped down my cheek before I could stop it. I wiped it away quickly, angry at myself for even letting it fall.

Why did it still hurt this much? Why did his words cut so deep?

I clenched my fists, staring down at the floor as memories replayed in my mind. His arms around me, his voice saying he loved me, his eyes burning with a pain that mirrored my own. For a heartbeat, I wanted to believe him. I wanted to run back in and let him hold me until all of this madness disappeared.

But then Rebecca's face flashed before me, and the sharp suspicion that Damien's hands were not clean. My body stiffened all over again.

"No," I whispered to myself, shaking my head hard. "I can't. Not until I know the truth."

My wolf whined inside me, torn between loyalty and desire for Damien, but I pushed her down. I couldn't afford to be weak. Not when my heart wanted to betray me so badly.

I straightened up from the door, forcing myself to stay calm. I wiped my face, forcing the tears away, and made my way down the hall. My heart still ached, but I told myself I needed to see Olivia. She had been broken too, and she needed me just as much as I needed her.

When I stepped into her room, she was sitting on the bed, hugging her knees, her eyes red like she had been crying. The moment she saw me, she looked guilty.

"I'm sorry," Olivia whispered, her voice trembling. "For earlier... hugging Damien. I wasn't in my right mind. I didn't mean for you to think anything was happening between us."

Her words came fast, like she was scared I had judged her. My chest softened, and I gave her a small smile.

"Olivia," I said gently, walking to sit beside her. "You don't have to explain yourself to me. You're my sister. I know you. I trust you. And nothing—nothing—will ever change that."

She stared at me, relief flashing across her face, but the pain in her eyes didn't fade. "I'm just... worried," she admitted, her voice breaking. "About Lennox. I keep dreaming something bad will happen to him. But at the same time, I'm angry. Angry at him. Angry at them."

I reached out, brushing a strand of hair from her cheek. "It's okay to be angry, Liv. It's okay to feel torn. But don't let it eat you alive. Follow your heart."

Her lips trembled, but she nodded. I stood, giving her hand one last squeeze. "Rest now. We'll get through this together."

Then I left her room. But instead of going to my own chamber, my feet carried me elsewhere.

I found myself heading toward the old storehouse—a dusty room at the far end of the hall where old belongings were kept. I hadn't gone there in years, but tonight something pulled me toward it.

When I opened the creaking door, the air smelled of old wood and abandoned things. Cobwebs hung in the corners, and boxes, and trunks were stacked high like little towers of the past. I began digging, searching for something I couldn't even name.

At first, I thought I was looking for one of my old keepsakes—a necklace, a book, or maybe an old journal. Something I remembered but hadn't seen in years. But as my hands moved through the dusty boxes, my eyes caught something else. Something that made my brow furrow instantly.

There, tucked at the bottom of a wooden chest, wrapped in faded cloth, was something that didn't belong to me. My breath caught as I pulled it free.

It was Rebecca's.

Her scent clung faintly to the fabric, her initials stitched carefully into the edge. My hands shook as I unwrapped it fully.

"What is this doing here?" I whispered, my wolf growling low inside me.

Chapter 422: Suspect

Damien's POV

The slam of the door echoed in my office long after Sofia left.

I stood there, fists clenched, staring at the empty space she had filled just moments ago. Her scent still lingered in the room, sharp and sweet, pulling at every part of me that I tried to keep under control.

My chest heaved. My wolf paced violently inside me, restless and angry.

"She's lying," I muttered to myself, dragging a hand through my hair. "She still loves me."

I had seen it in her eyes. I felt it in the way her body had trembled against mine. The way she broke when she said this would never happen again. Those weren't the words of a woman who felt nothing.

No. She was hiding something. Something deeper than just anger or pride.

I turned to the desk and slammed both palms against it, the wood groaning under the force. My eyes burned as Rebecca's name crossed my mind.

Does Sofia still blame me for her death?

She hasn't spoken of Rebecca's death since she returned, but I could feel it in my bones... the way she looked at me, like I was more monster than man. Even in her silence, I knew—she still suspected me of Rebecca's death.

A growl ripped from my throat as I paced the room. "I didn't kill her," I snarled into the empty air. "But how the hell do I prove it to you, Sofia?" Every time I tried to pull her closer, she pushed me further away. Every time she let me touch her, she turned around and cut me with her words.

And still—I couldn't let her go.

My wolf howled her name in my chest, demanding we claim her, mark her, bind her once and for all. But I couldn't—not while she looked at me with those eyes, full of doubt, full of suspicion.

I leaned forward, elbows on my knees, staring at the phone on my desk. There was only one way to fix this. Only one way to rip out the last wall between me and Sofia.

I picked it up and dialed.

The line rang twice before a voice answered. "Alpha Damien."

"It's me," I said, my voice low but sharp. "Any update?"

A pause. Then my investigator's voice came back, respectful. "No, Alpha. Nothing concrete yet. No new leads."

My fingers curled tight around the phone. "It's been two fucking months," I spat. "Two. And you're telling me you still don't have anything?"

"I'm trying, Alpha. But whoever covered this up did it well."

I closed my eyes, my wolf growling in the back of my skull. "Try harder," I snapped. "I don't care what it takes. Find me answers. Find me proof. I want to know who killed Rebecca. I want every mystery solved. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, Alpha," he said quickly. "I'll keep digging."

The line went dead.

I stared at the silent phone for a long time, my jaw locked, my breath rough.

Deep down, I knew. If this mystery was solved—if I could drag the truth into the light—Sofia would stop looking at me like a murderer. She would stop running.

And maybe, just maybe, she'd let me hold her without walls between us.

I slammed the phone back down and leaned back in my chair, staring at the ceiling. My wolf howled in frustration.

Then the door burst open.

Sofia stormed in, her eyes blazing, her chest heaving. In her hands was a piece of faded fabric, but I recognized the initials stitched at the edge before she even spoke.

She held it up like a weapon. "Why the hell was this in the storehouse?" she demanded, her voice shaking with anger.

I froze, frowning. My brows pulled tight as I pushed away from the desk. "What?"

"Don't act like you don't know," she snapped, stepping closer. The cloth trembled in her hands as her voice rose. "Her things—her scent—hidden there like some dirty secret. Why?"

I shook my head slowly. "Sofia... I have no idea. Maybe she left it here during her last visit. Years ago. When you were still here. The maids could have stored it away."

Her laugh was sharp, bitter. "Lie," she hissed. "That's all you do. Lie."

My wolf growled inside me, stung by her words. "I'm not lying," I bit out, my voice low, controlled, though my fists itched to slam against the desk again. "I didn't even know it was there."

But she wasn't listening. Her face twisted with something worse than grief. It was jealousy, suspicion, betrayal all tangled into one.

Her next words struck like a blade. "Were you and Rebecca fucking back then?" she spat. "When I left three years ago, did you two have an affair? She came back, didn't she? You were fucking her... you were fucking my friend."

My chest snapped tight. "What?" I roared, disbelief crashing through me.

She pressed on, her voice trembling with fury. "Why Damien? Tell me the truth, Damien. Did you fuck her?"

The accusation hit harder than claws. My wolf snarled so violently inside me I thought I'd lose control.

I stepped toward her, towering, my voice a guttural growl. "Watch your mouth, Sofia."

But her eyes burned into mine, unflinching, daring me to answer.

For a heartbeat, the air between us felt like it would snap in two.

I stepped closer, my voice breaking out of me like a growl.

"You know me," I said, my hands trembling at my sides. "I'm not a womanizer, Sofia. Why are you doing this to me?"

Her nostrils flared, but she didn't look away.

"You can accuse me of anything," I continued, my voice hoarse. "Anything but this. But not this." I struck my chest with a clenched fist. "You know I can't do it. Not with her. Not with anyone. Not when I was yours."

But the look in her eyes told me she didn't believe me. Or maybe she didn't want to.

The pain rose in my throat. "I wish I could just stop loving you," I whispered, my voice cracking despite my best effort to sound strong. "I wish I could."

Her lips parted, but no sound came out.

I took one step back. Then another. My wolf howled at me to stay, to grab her, to make her listen, but I forced myself to turn.

Without another word, I walked away. Out of the office. Away from her.

Every step felt like a blade dragging through my chest, but I didn't stop. Because if I stayed another second, I wasn't sure whether I'd end up on my knees begging her to believe me—or lose myself completely and spit words in anger I would regret.

Chapter 423: Missing

Frederick's POV

It was almost evening, and still no sign of Olivia.

She hadn't shown up since she stormed off yesterday. At first, I thought she just needed a little time, that she'd calm down and come back on her own. She didn't even need to apologize; just come back. But she didn't.

My eyes drifted to the wall clock. It's five p.m. already. Nothing. Not a single glimpse of her.

"Should I call her?" I muttered under my breath. But my pride tightened in my chest. No. She was the one who should be apologizing. She was the one who accused me of things she didn't understand.

She had been jealous. Acting jealous.

But then... she wasn't wrong.

I rubbed a hand over my face. Olivia had been right about my interest in Selene, even when I tried to pretend otherwise. And now that Selene and I had crossed that line—now that we'd had sex—I didn't even know what to do with myself.

Should I follow Selene's suggestion and act like it never happened? Go back to Olivia, fulfill the prophecy like I'm supposed to? That's what I'd been thinking since last night. But no matter how hard I try, I can't get Selene out of my head.

And it's not just me.

She's been avoiding me all day.

She hasn't left her room once. Not a sound from behind that door. It makes me wonder—does she regret it so much that she can't even look at me now?

And what did she mean when she said she "has a man"?

My brow furrowed deeply. Of course she would. A woman like Selene—so devastatingly beautiful—men should be lining up for her. Yet she never let them touch her. Until me. And now she dares call it a mistake.

I leaned back, staring at the ceiling, my chest tight with questions.

Finally, I grabbed my phone and dialed Olivia's number.

"Pick up," I muttered under my breath, pacing across the room. The line rang once, twice—then cut off. The number you are trying to reach is switched off.

I froze, staring at the screen. Switched off? Olivia never switched off her phone.

My jaw tightened. Fine. If she wouldn't answer me, I'd find out another way. I scrolled down my contacts and pressed Calvin's name.

He answered on the second ring, his voice sharp and impatient. "What do you want, Frederick?"

I clenched my teeth, ignoring his tone. "Is Olivia home?"

There was a pause, then his voice came back annoyed and angry. "No. She's not here."

Before I could ask anything else, he ended the call.

I lowered the phone slowly, my chest burning with frustration.

Where the hell was she?

My mind twisted with ugly thoughts. Was she with the triplets? Had she gone crawling back to them after everything?

The idea made something black coil inside me.

"Did she return to them?" I muttered to myself, pacing harder now. The thought of her with them gnawed at me like fire in my veins.

Jealousy. Pure, violent jealousy.

I scrolled again and dialed Lennox's number. The call connected, and Lennox's rough voice bit first. "What now?"

"Where is Olivia?" I barked. "Why are you not letting her go? Do you want her dead? You know the blood vow—if she doesn't end up with me, she could die. Why is she with you?"

There was a beat of silence. Then Lennox's voice snapped, angry. "She's not here, Frederick. Don't accuse us. We didn't take her."

Levi cut in, calm but tense. "Olivia has been avoiding us. We don't know where she went."

My heart thudded. She wasn't with them. She wasn't at home. Her phone switched off.

"Then where is she?" I demanded, but the call grew quiet. No one had an answer.

Lennox cursed and hung up the call.

My frown deepened as I stared at the phone. Were they lying? Olivia had to be either at her home or with the triplets. If she wasn't in either place, where could she be, and why was her number switched off?

My worry increased, and instead of thinking of a way to get to Olivia, my feet carried me before I even thought about it to Selene's room.

I pushed the door open without knocking. She sat on the bed, legs crossed, a book open in her lap. Her head lifted fast, her eyes narrowing with annoyance when she saw me.

"Don't you knock?" she snapped, snapping the book shut.

I ignored the rudeness in her tone, closing the door behind me. "I just wanted to make sure you were okay."

"I'm fine," she said quickly, too quickly, her voice tight. "You don't have to check on me."

Her words only made me step closer. She shifted back, pressing into the headboard, her knuckles pale around the book.

"Selene," I murmured, my voice low and full of worry, which was unlike me. I couldn't believe I, Frederick, whom women threw themselves after, who on a normal day wouldn't care about what Selene said, who would be happy that she saw it as a mistake so she wouldn't bother me, was actually acting this way. "Why are you avoiding me? What are you running from?"

"I'm not running," she said sharply, but her eyes darted away. "I just... I don't want this to happen again. What happened last night—it was a mistake. I told you."

The word mistake vexed me more. My jaw tightened as I reached for the book in her lap and tossed it aside. She gasped, glaring up at me, but the tremble in her lips betrayed her anger.

"Don't call it that," I hissed. "You wanted me as much as I wanted you."

"I didn't," she whispered, but her body betrayed her. Her breathing quickened, her thighs pressed tight together, her chest rose fast.

"Liar," I growled. My hand slid to her jaw, tilting her face up. She tried to push me away, her palms flat against my chest, but I caught her wrists, pinning them to the bed.

"Frederick—stop. Please."

Her words were soft, weak, and breaking under the tension. Annoyed, I crushed my mouth against hers before she could finish, the kiss rough, desperate, pulling the fight

right out of her. She struggled for a moment, squirming beneath me, her muffled protests brushing against my lips.

But then her resistance stopped. Her mouth opened, letting me in. Her wrists, once straining against my grip, trembled and then stilled. A moan slipped out of her throat, betraying her.

I deepened the kiss, fury and hunger tangled together, and when I finally let her wrists go, she didn't push me away. Her hands gripped my shirt instead, pulling me closer.

As I deepened the kiss, a thought hit me and made me feel guilty.

Olivia was still missing, and here I was, kissing Selene like she didn't exist. What if she walked in right now? What would she see? What would she think of me?

Chapter 424: The Man I was meant To Kill

Selene's POV

Goodness. I wanted to push him away. I needed to push him away. This wasn't the plan. This wasn't what I told myself. For five years my only purpose had been to kill this man. To get close enough, gain his trust, slip the poison into my blood, and end him. That was the vow I whispered over my mother's grave. That was the reason I'd breathed every day since. And here I was — kissing him back, my hands trembling against his chest, my whole body on fire.

"Mate," my wolf howled in my head, the sound echoing like a curse. Yes. That's what made this so cruel. The Moon Goddess, in all her twisted humor, had tied me to the very monster I was supposed to kill. My mother's killer. My enemy. My mate. From the moment I'd first seen him at that party, my wolf had screamed it. Mate. And I had shoved it down, locked it behind iron walls, told myself it didn't matter. Mate or not, I would stick to the plan. And he didn't know we were mates. Thank the stars, he didn't know.

But now... now his mouth was on mine, his scent all around me, his hands dragging heat from my skin, and I couldn't stop myself. My fingers fumbled at the buttons of his shirt like a traitor, desperate, hungry, shame clawing at me even as desire burned hotter. I hated him. I wanted him. I hated myself for wanting him.

A strangled sound tore from my throat — part moan, part sob — as my wolf pushed harder inside me, wanting him to fuck us again. This is wrong, I told myself. This is not the plan. And yet my hands slid over his skin anyway, pulling him closer instead of pushing him away. His lips claimed mine again, harder this time, and the world tilted. My wolf howled in satisfaction, and I was losing—losing to him, losing to myself. His shirt fell open under my shaking fingers, his skin cold beneath my palms.

"Selene," he growled against my mouth, grabbing the back of my neck. I should have stopped. I should have remembered my mother, my plan, my vow. But when he parted my thighs, all I did was spread them wider. I dragged my fingers through the dark hair there, mapping the hard lines of his muscle, feeling the frantic, hammering beat of his heart against my palm.

He stared down at me, his eyes twin pools of dark fire and possession. "Your turn," he rasped, his voice a low, thick sound that demanded obedience. He didn't wait. He grabbed the hem of my blouse, pulling it up slowly, giving me time to feel the friction of the cloth dragging across my skin, exposing the flesh to the cool air bit by bit. When it was over my head and tossed aside, he didn't move. He simply looked.

My chest rose and fell rapidly, the nipples beneath my thin bra tight and aching. I felt utterly exposed, not just physically, but morally. This was the moment of no return. He finally reached out, his thumbs tracing the line of my collarbone, then sliding down to the delicate lace of my bra. He didn't unhook it; he simply slid his hands beneath the fabric, cupping the weight of my breasts.

A groan tore from my throat, raw and involuntary. The contact was shocking, the heat of his palms radiating through me. I leaned into him, burying my face in the curve of his neck, inhaling the intoxicating, dangerous scent of him. "You smell so alluring," I whispered against his skin, a ragged confession.

"You are horny for me, little wolf," he answered, his teeth lightly nipping the soft skin of my neck. Then, with a quick, practiced motion, the clasp of my bra gave way, and the lace fell open. I was jealous, wondering how many times he had done this to be so good at it.

He stepped back just enough to look at my bare chest, his eyes darkening further with predatory hunger. His gaze was heavy, possessive, sending a fresh wave of heat crashing low in my belly. He sank to his knees, his hands moving to the waistband of my skirt. He found the zip and drew it down with a slow, deliberate sound that felt deafening. As he pushed the skirt over my hips, his eyes never left mine, demanding I watch the slow, complete dismantling of my resolve.

When he reached the thin fabric of my underwear, he hesitated. His fingers brushed against the soft, warm skin of my inner thigh, and my legs trembled violently. "Tell me to stop," he challenged, his voice low and daring.

The cold knot of hate twisted once; I should push him away. But the heat was too intense. The need was too strong. I reached out and grabbed a handful of his hair, pulling his head up just enough to meet his gaze. My voice was a desperate, ruined breath. "Fuck it," I ordered, my voice a desperate, ruined breath.

He didn't smirk this time. A slow, intense heat replaced the arrogance in his eyes. He lowered his head again, his mouth finding the sensitive skin of my inner thigh where his

fingers had just been. My breath hitched. The contact was electric, a sudden, blinding shift in the air. He was reverent and brutal at the same time, using his hands to spread me wider, leaving me utterly open, utterly vulnerable.

Then his tongue made contact with my pussy. The shock was a lightning bolt straight to my core. A loud, sharp gasp tore from my lungs, and I felt the strength drain out of my legs, forcing me to lean heavily against the cold stone of the wall. This was too much. This was intimate. This was what the enemy should not be allowed to do. But my body, the traitor, was already arching into the sensation.

His mouth was demanding, working with a relentless focus that wiped every single thought from my head. I could only feel. Feel the heat of his tongue, the gentle abrasion of his stubble, the slow, increasing pressure of his hands holding me exactly where he wanted me. The pleasure built instantly, a tight coil of pure, agonizing need. I twisted my fingers into his hair, holding him to the task, unable to stop him, unable to breathe.

My wolf was howling in pure, unadulterated satisfaction now, the sounds echoing in my mind, Yes. Yes. Mate. Take. The climax hit me with the force of a tidal wave. I cried out, a strangled, animal sound, my hips bucking wildly against his face as the tremors shook me to the bone. It was a complete, mind-shattering release that left me weak and trembling, my head thrown back against the wall.

He finally stood, his breathing heavy, his eyes never leaving my face—a face he had just ruined with pleasure. He didn't ask if I was okay. He simply reached for the button and zip of his trousers. I watched, mesmerized, as the last barrier between us fell away. The heavy denim pooled around his ankles, and then he stood before me, fully, beautifully, terrifyingly naked. The sight was breathtaking and visceral. I gasped—a sharp, involuntary sound—at the dark, engorged proof of his cock. It was thick, hard, and utterly dominant.

He took one long, slow step toward me, closing the distance between my still-trembling body and his powerful, ready form. The air was thick with musk and heat, and the scent of our shared climax. "Now," he said, the word deep and seductive. "Spread your legs wider, love."

He grabbed my hips, tilting me, and the hot, heavy head of his cock pressed against my soaked entrance.

Chapter 425: Disappointed

Selene's POV

The moment his hard, hot head pressed against my slick entrance, the last remnants of my plan—my vow, my hatred—shattered like glass. It was a physical thing, the soundless explosion in my mind, leaving only the primal, urgent need that was thrumming in my blood, dictated by the wolf I'd fought so hard to control.

"I can't believe I'm doing this," I choked out, a final, futile protest that felt weak and pathetic even to my own ears.

Frederick didn't acknowledge the words. He simply shifted his grip, one hand sliding to the small of my back to pull me flush against him, the other grasping my hipbone. The pressure increased, a slow, merciless slide.

Then, with a deep, shuddering inhale, he pushed.

A sharp, ragged gasp tore from my throat as his cock filled me completely, stretching me to the point of pain, but a pain that instantly curdled into the most intense, overwhelming pleasure. It was a deep, satisfying pressure that felt like coming home, even though this 'home' was a blazing inferno that would consume me whole.

"You're so tight, little wolf," he growled, the possessiveness in his voice a dark, intoxicating poison. He waited for a beat, letting me adjust, letting the shock and awe of his size settle within me.

My fingers dug into the rock-hard muscles of his shoulders, my head falling back against the wall, eyes squeezed shut. All I could smell was him—earthy, dangerous, and intoxicating—and the musky scent of my own arousal.

"Move," I whispered.

He didn't need to be asked again. He pulled back almost completely, the air rushing into the small space between our bodies, and then drove in hard and fast.

The impact stole my breath. It was a rhythmic assault, each thrust deep and deliberate, targeting the core of my being. My hips instinctively rose to meet his, the traitorous movements of a body wholly given over to its mate. The frantic hammering of his heart against my chest matched the frantic rhythm he was setting.

"Look at me, Selene," he commanded, the authority in his voice so sexy.

I forced my eyes open. His gaze was a twin flame of dark fire and sheer possession, his face a mask of intense pleasure and something that looked suspiciously like triumph. The sight of him, dominating me, fucking me, sent a fresh wave of heat crashing over me.

"Say my name," he demanded, his thrusts slowing to a grueling, delicious pace.

"Frederick," I gasped, moaning.

His lips twisted into a predatory half-smile, and he slammed into me one more time, hard enough to knock the breath from my lungs.

Suddenly, he caught my hips and smoothly, powerfully, lifted me off my feet. I cried out in surprise and wrapped my legs instantly around his waist, holding on tight as he spun us around and pressed me back against the cool stone wall. He didn't lose penetration for a second.

The change in angle was electrifying. I felt him hit a new, exquisitely sensitive spot deep inside me. With my feet no longer on the ground, I was completely dependent on him, completely at his mercy. My arms wrapped around his neck, holding on for dear life, my nails scoring tiny lines into his skin.

"Fuck," he ground out, his voice thick with raw passion.

He began a new rhythm—slow, deep, and utterly devastating. The friction against the wall and the depth of his penetration was too much. The pleasure coiled tighter and tighter, a blazing knot in my belly.

"This is not supposed to happen," I sobbed, the words tumbling out on a rush of air, but my hips bucked up against him, begging for more.

"I know," he rasped, his eyes darkening further as he tilted my hips up with a forceful hand, finding the perfect angle to drag me over the edge.

I moaned helplessly, my eyes fluttering shut, but then I felt Frederick's grip shift, his muscles flexing as he lifted me from the wall. He didn't even slow, still buried inside me, his breath ragged against my neck as he carried me to the bed. My legs clung to him instinctively, my nails biting into his shoulders.

He sat down on the edge of the mattress, taking me with him so that I straddled his lap, still impaled on him. We were face to face now, so close his breath mingled with mine, and there was no place left to hide.

He slid his hands up to my hips, guiding me down, slow and deep. "Easy," he murmured, his voice rough but softer than before. "Just feel me."

I did. I felt everything—the heat of his body, the thickness stretching me open, my wolf inside me clawing for more.

My body moved on its own, rolling my hips as I sank onto him again and again. But beneath the rising tide of pleasure, shame enveloped me.

Tears welled up before I could stop them. At first, they were just a sting in my eyes, but then they spilled over, hot tracks down my cheeks. I bit my lip hard, trying to hold the sound in. He didn't notice. He thought it was the intensity, the pleasure. He never knew those were tears of pain, of bitter disappointment in myself.

"God, Selene..." His voice was a low growl, his thumbs stroking circles into my hips as he guided my movements. "You're perfect like this."

I turned my face away, pressing my forehead to his shoulder so he wouldn't see. My tears soaked into his skin as my body betrayed me, moving faster, seeking the pleasure that my mind despised.

Inside my head, the words were a scream: I hate this. I hate myself. I hate you. But my mouth only released a broken, breathless moan as I sank down harder, deeper.

He groaned, his head tipping back, completely unaware of my torture. "That's it," he rasped. "Ride me, little wolf. Just like that."

Another sob escaped me, muffled against his neck. He must have thought it was a sound of ecstasy, because his hands tightened on my hips, guiding me with more pleasure. My body trembled, caught between the tearing edge of release and the black tide of self-loathing.

I clung to him, my nails raking faint lines into his back, my eyes squeezed shut. He whispered something—words I didn't even register—and I hated myself more for the way my body obeyed, my hips rolling, pleasure coiling tighter in my belly even as my tears fell faster.

Chapter 426: Regrets

Selene's POV

His hands slid lower, gripping my ass now, forcing me down harder, deeper, until there was no space left between us, no escape from the brutal, aching fullness of him. The steady grind of his hips made the bed creak beneath us.

"Fuck, Selene," he groaned, burying his face in my neck, his breath hot and ragged. "You feel too good. Like you were made for me."

The words gutted me. Not for you. Never for you. But my body betrayed me again, shuddering, clenching around him in desperate pulses that only fed his hunger.

My sobs came faster, quieter, swallowed into the heat of his skin. He thought it was ecstasy. He thought it was pleasure. He had no idea it was my soul breaking.

His tongue traced the line of my throat, his teeth grazing lightly over my pulse, sending sparks down my spine. "Say it again," he demanded against my skin, his voice thick with pleasure. "Say my name while you take me."

My heart screamed no, but my lips parted anyway, spilling the word in a moan. "Frederick..."

His answering growl was savage, triumphant, as he thrust up hard, hitting that devastating spot inside me. My head snapped back, another broken cry escaping, the sound twisting into something between a sob and a moan.

He didn't stop. His grip tightened, guiding my hips in brutal, perfect circles, drawing me higher and higher toward the edge I didn't want to fall from. Shame burned in my chest, shame that tasted like ashes on my tongue, but pleasure still tore through me, relentless, merciless.

"I can feel you," he rasped, eyes dark with hunger as he looked up at me. "You're close, aren't you? Don't hold back. Cum for me."

My tears blurred everything, turning his face into a smear of fire and shadow. My nails dug harder into his back, leaving stinging marks, but still I moved, still I rode him like he asked. My body surged toward that terrible, inevitable release even as my heart bled.

Inside my head, I was screaming. I hate you. I hate me more. I swore I'd kill you, not—

The thought broke, drowned under the force of sensation. My walls clenched tight around him, my body wracked with tremors I couldn't stop. Pleasure ripped through me like lightning, so violent it dragged a raw, unholy sound from my throat.

He caught it, devouring my mouth in a crushing kiss, swallowing the sob that spilled free with my climax. His tongue tangled with mine, desperate, dominant, as though my release was his victory.

And maybe it was.

When it was over, when the spasms began to fade, I sagged against him, trembling, my tears still hot and endless against his skin. He held me tighter, stroking my back, whispering low, possessive praises into my ear—completely blind to the fact that I wasn't trembling from aftershocks alone, but from the hollow, soul-deep ache of betraying myself.

As the pleasure faded, leaving me weak and exhausted, the blinding clarity of my betrayal hit me with the force of a physical blow. The pleasure, that monstrous, all-consuming pleasure, evaporated, leaving behind a cold, hollow cavity where my soul used to be.

My mother's face—pale, stained with blood—flashed behind my eyelids. I vowed. I vowed.

The realization hit me. I shoved hard against his chest, wrenching my body free of his slack embrace. He was still heavy with relief, breathing slow and deep against my neck, but the sudden, desperate force of my movement made him grumble and release me.

I scrambled back over the sweaty, rumpled sheets, stumbling off the side of the bed. My legs felt like water, but I forced myself upright, not pausing to look down at my exposed, ruined body. I just needed to be away.

"Selene? What the hell?" Frederick's voice was rough with confusion and annoyance, the sudden coldness in the room snapping him out of his post-climax haze.

I finally looked at him, and the sight was sickening. He was sprawled on his back, eyes dark and heavy-lidded, a slow, predatory smile just starting to curve his lips—the look of a conqueror, a victor. He reached out a hand toward me, attempting to pull me back into his arms.

"Get back here, little wolf," he commanded, his voice already returning to that thick, arrogant drawl.

I flinched back from his hand as if he'd struck me. I felt bile rising in my throat. My own tears had dried, leaving tight, salty tracks on my cheeks. I stared at him, not with desire, but with a pure, resurrected hate.

"Don't touch me," I spat, my voice a raw whisper that shook with barely contained rage.

He went still. His smile vanished. His dark eyes narrowed, instantly hard and predatory again, finally registering that my trembling wasn't from pleasure, and the tears hadn't been ecstasy.

"What is this, Selene? The coy act is getting old." He sat up, crossing his arms over his powerful chest.

I took a shaky step back toward the wall, desperate to find my clothes and my composure. I needed to solidify the iron walls around my wolf and my heart again. He is the enemy. He is the killer. This was a tactical error.

I straightened my spine, forcing the air back into my lungs. "This," I said, my voice gaining strength, steeling itself, "changes nothing. Nothing about us."

I looked directly at him, letting the hatred shine in my eyes. My fingers found my skirt lying on the floor. I ripped it up and pulled it on with clumsy, frantic movements.

Frederick stared at me, his face unreadable, his immense power radiating in the sudden, tense silence. He must have noticed the cold anger, the utter self-loathing, but he didn't understand the source. And he couldn't know.

As I dressed, I made a silent promise to myself. Fuck the mate bond. By tomorrow, I'll poison my blood. And make sure he feeds from me so I can end all this.

Chapter 427: She Took Everything

Selene's POV

Frederick frowned. "I have no idea what's wrong with you," he spat as he rose from the bed and swiftly pulled on his clothes. Where I stood, I turned away, my wolf howling inside my head for him, but I ignored her and kept my eyes fixed elsewhere. When the door finally slammed shut behind him, I released a shaky breath I hadn't realized I was holding. I told myself this wouldn't happen again. I told myself I was in control. But the fire he lit inside me... I hated it. I hated him. And most of all, I hated myself for giving in.

Before I could steady my racing heart, a sharp voice cut through my head.

"Selene."

I froze. The mind link. The triplets.

"We hope you're not trying to betray us."

The words landed heavy in my mind, my frown deepened. Betray them? Why would they even think that? Of course, they didn't trust me, not when their precious mate must have soiled my name to them. My frown deepened. I hated her. I hated her perfect life.

We shared the same bloodline—both of us great-granddaughters of Hailee, yet it was her who was chosen. She was given the special abilities. She was marked by fate, adored by everyone, worshipped even. And me? I was left in her shadow, forgotten.

And if that wasn't enough, she had them. The triplets. Three powerful Alphas who would tear the world apart just to protect her.

All of that should have been mine.

The abilities. The power. The love.

But the Moon Goddess handed it all to her, like she was worthy of everything and I was worthy of nothing.

When I was little, I showed signs of something rare. I could mix herbs and make remedies. I could cure fevers, heal wounds that should have taken weeks, even ease the pain of a wolf's shifting.

Father saw it.

He had always been obsessed with the prophecy—the one that spoke of Hailee's bloodline, of a great-granddaughter chosen by the Moon Goddess to rise above all others. So when I displayed my gift, he thought it was me. He looked at me with pride. With admiration. With love.

For a while, I believed it too.

He treated me so well. Better than anyone else. I was his star, his chosen. His voice softened when he spoke to me. He told the pack I was special. The one destined to change everything.

I basked in it. I clung to it. Because for once, I wasn't invisible.

But then... everything changed.

As I grew older, the truth became clearer. My gift was rare, yes—but it wasn't the power. It wasn't the fulfillment of the prophecy. I wasn't the chosen one.

It was her.

Olivia.

The other great-granddaughter of Hailee.

The day Father realized, I felt it. His eyes on me changed. They no longer shone with pride—they grew cold. The warmth vanished. The special meals, the words of encouragement, the hand resting proudly on my shoulder... all of it disappeared.

And just like that, I was nothing again.

The pack whispered about Olivia even though they had never seen her. I overheard mocking whispers—how I wasn't worthy enough, so the Moon Goddess had granted another... a female younger than me. In our pack, Olivia became a subject of reverence even though they never met her, never laid eyes on her. She had done nothing for them, while I, the one healing them with herbs and remedies, became the mistake. I became the other great-granddaughter.

My wolf growled low inside me, the pain of those memories clawing at my chest.

That was the day I learned to hate her.

Not just because she took my father's and the pack's admiration. Not just because she was chosen. But because she had everything I had once dreamed of—everything I believed belonged to me.

The abilities.

The power.

The love.

All of it... hers.

And mine?

Nothing.

I let out a slow breath and pushed back against the link. "You think I'm betraying you?" I sneered.

There was a long pause. Then Lennox's sharp voice came through. "You have been acting strange. Why should we trust you?"

I smiled, but it was a small, hard smile. "Do you think I came here to make friends?" I answered. "Do you think I'm cozying up to him because I fell in love with him?"

"No," Louis said, suspicious. "Then what?"

"For the same reason you brought me in," I said, and my words were slow so they could not twist them. "Revenge. A chance to take what was stolen from my family." I let that settle in their minds. "You forget one thing. I did not come here because you three asked me to. I came because I want him dead—because he took from me what he had no right to take."

Levi's voice hummed in my head. "So why flirt? Why act like you are into him?"

"Because to get close to him I had to be close," I said plainly. "Because if he smells a trap too early, we fail. If I act distant, he will never drink my blood. If I act warm, he trusts me more. That is the plan. Have you forgotten the plan?"

Silence answered me for a moment. Then Lennox warned, "We will be watching."

"Good," I said. "Watch. But don't think I'm here for you. I am here for myself. To avenge my mother's death." My wolf snarled in my bones, torn between my revenge and the mate bond.

"If you think I will betray you," I added, voice low, "then you can come do it yourself. I am your weapon. Treat me like one, or I will remind you why you needed me."

The link went quiet again. I could feel their minds circling, trying to decide if they trusted me. It was easy to tell I had rattled them.

I didn't let them speak as I ended the mind link and sucked in a deep breath, feeling exhausted and worn out from the pleasurable sex. I collapsed on the bed, closed my eyes, and covered myself with the blanket. I rolled onto my side, curling under the blanket. My body still hummed with the leftover heat of what had just happened, but my mind was restless.

I hated him.

I hated myself more.

And yet, when I closed my eyes, the picture that came to me wasn't of my mother, or of my father's cold face. It was of him.

Lord Frederick.

I'd only been near him for a short time, but already he had slipped into my blood like a poison. On the outside he was cold, his voice like steel, his eyes like ice—but to me, he felt... different. Warm, even. Or maybe that was just the mate bond twisting my senses, making a monster look like a savior.

I pressed a hand to my chest, trying to still the frantic beat of my heart. He was a vampire. Three hundred years old. Everything about him should have repulsed me. But damn it, he was so hot—broad-shouldered, tall, built like a man in his early thirties, with a face carved from temptation itself.

He was exactly the kind of mate I'd always dreamed of, the kind that made your skin burn and your wolf howl. The kind you want even when you're supposed to hate him. The kind you fantasize about late at night when no one's watching.

My fingers curled in the sheets as my mind betrayed me, conjuring images I had no business thinking about—his mouth, his hands, the way his body moved against mine.

I squeezed my eyes shut. No. Stop it.

This was the enemy. This was the man I was meant to destroy.

But the images kept coming, hotter, deeper.

And then—

A sharp sound snapped me back to reality.

Loud voices downstairs.

I sat up quickly, my wolf pricking her ears. The murmur rose into shouting, then broke off, replaced by the thud of footsteps. Something was happening.

I pushed the blanket off, swinging my legs over the edge of the bed. My heart pounded, the haze of my fantasies scattering like smoke.

"What's happening?" I muttered under my breath, moving toward the door.

Chapter 428: A child I never Knew

Selene's POV

With my breath panting, I hurried downstairs, my bare feet hitting the polished floor. My heart was still racing, but this time it wasn't from Frederick's touch—it was from the loud voices echoing through the manor.

This was strange.

Frederick's home was always silent, almost unnaturally so. One thing I had learned since being here was that he hated noise. He loved quietness, the kind of silence that made you feel like even the walls were holding their breath.

But now... that silence was gone.

The voices grew louder as I neared the grand hall. Deep, angry, commanding tones mixed with nervous replies. My wolf's ears perked inside me, restless, uneasy.

"What's happening?" I whispered under my breath, clutching the banister as I came down the staircase.

I froze halfway down the stairs when I saw a maid slumped against the wall, blood spilling from the side of her neck. My heart jumped, my wolf snarling inside me.

And then I saw Frederick standing in the center of the hall, one hand clamped firmly around the arm of a boy who struggled against his grip. The child couldn't have been more than five. His lips were smeared with red blood, fangs still bared as he hissed and kicked at the air.

"HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I WARNED YOU?" Frederick's voice thundered, echoing through the vast manor. His eyes blazed red as he glared at the trembling housekeeper. "NEVER—never leave his door open!"

My breath caught as my gaze shifted back to the boy. His features... gods. The sharp cheekbones, the deep sea-blue eyes, the faint curl of his white hair—it was like looking at a smaller version of Frederick himself.

A cold shiver ran through me.

Was this... his son?

How had I never seen him? Never even heard of him?

The boy caught sight of me at that moment. His fangs glistened, his bloodstained lips curling into a mocking sneer. "Another woman warming my father's bed?" he spat, his voice cruelly mature for his young age.

My eyes widened, shock rooting me to the spot.

Frederick stiffened instantly, his gaze snapping to me. For the first time since I'd known him, I saw a flicker of panic in his eyes. His jaw clenched, his grip on the boy tightening until the child hissed in pain.

"Enough!" Frederick roared. His voice shook the hall, his aura spilling heavy as stone. He turned on the boy, his expression sharp with fury. "You will not speak like that in my house. You will learn respect!"

The boy only smirked, fangs still bared.

Frederick's chest heaved. His hand lashed out, gripping the boy's chin tight enough to make him wince. "Guard!" he barked. Two shadows moved from the edges of the hall. "Take him to his room. Lock it. I will think of a good punishment for his actions."

The boy struggled, growling, but the guards dragged him away. His eyes never left mine, burning with a hatred far too old for his young face.

The moment they disappeared down the corridor, the manor seemed to breathe again.

I swallowed hard and glanced at the maid, her pale skin damp with sweat. She was human. She would die if someone didn't help her soon.

Without thinking, I rushed forward, crouching beside her. "Here," I whispered, pressing my hand to her wound. My mind ticked fast, already recalling the herbs, the mixtures, the remedies I had memorized since I was a girl.

I looked up at Frederick. His expression was stony, unreadable, his eyes locked on me.

"I can help her," I said firmly. My voice shook, but only slightly. "Let me."

Frederick's eyes narrowed, studying me as if weighing every word. Finally, his lips pressed into a thin line.

"Are you a healer?" he asked, his tone filled with curiosity.

The question caught me off guard. My throat tightened. "No... not a healer," I admitted quickly. "But I know herbs. Remedies. I can stop the bleeding until—"

He cut me off with a shake of his head. "Don't bother." His voice was cold and dismissive. "A healer has already been called. She'll be here soon."

I froze, my hands still pressing over the maid's wound. My chest burned with something heavy. Slowly, I lowered my gaze, pulling back as his words sank into me.

It wasn't just rejection. It was dismissal.

He didn't trust me. Didn't need me.

I stood there, silent, as he turned and walked away. His steps were steady, unhurried, as though none of this chaos had touched him.

I looked down at the maid again, at the pale skin, the blood still seeping between her fingers. If Olivia had been here...

My jaw tightened. If it had been Olivia, she could've healed this maid in a heartbeat. She was the chosen one. The blessed one. The one who carried the goddess's light.

Me?

I was nothing more than the girl with herbs, nothing else.

The bitterness I had buried deep stirred again, sharp and poisonous.

Even here, even now, Olivia's shadow still swallowed me whole.

I stayed crouched beside the maid a moment longer, my fingers trembling as I pressed the cloth against her wound. Just as Frederick had said, the healer walked in.

I rose slowly, brushing my bloody hands on my dress, and turned away. My first instinct was to go to my room, to shut the door, to bury myself under blankets and force my wolf silent.

But the mate bond wouldn't let me.

It was like a rope pulling at my chest, a tug that grew stronger with every step I tried to take away from him. My wolf paced inside me, whining, restless, claws scraping at my ribs. Mate.

I clenched my jaw. No. I had promised myself this would not happen again. I had promised myself I was in control.

But another thought slid in, dark and sharp.

If I wanted Frederick to drink from me—if I wanted this plan to work—I had to get close. Not just close. Good. Trustworthy. Desirable.

I had to be in a good relationship with him.

I inhaled deeply, composing myself. Then I turned to one of the kitchen maids who had come running at the commotion. Her eyes were wide with fear as she stared at me.

"Prepare a cup of coffee," I ordered softly, but firmly. "The way Lord Frederick likes it. Bring it to me."

She hesitated only a moment before hurrying off. I stood still, arms folded, forcing my heart to slow, forcing my face into calmness.

When she returned with the steaming mug, I took it carefully, my fingers tightening around the porcelain. My wolf stirred again, purring now instead of growling.

This was the way. This was how I'd get him to trust me. Acting like I cared.

Without thinking twice, I walked to his office. The carved wood was heavy with his scent. Usually I would knock. Usually I would hesitate.

But now I didn't.

I pushed the door open and stepped inside.

Frederick raised his head from behind his desk. His eyes narrowed as soon as they landed on me. For a moment, the silence between us was heavier than anything I had felt downstairs.

"What are you doing here?" he asked, his voice low, unreadable.

I held the cup a little tighter and walked toward him, my heart hammering.

Chapter 429: Poisoned Blood

Selene's POV

I stepped closer to his desk, placing the steaming cup in front of him. "I thought..." I paused, forcing my voice out. "I thought maybe you could use this. You've been under a lot of stress."

His eyes narrowed sharply, flicking from the cup to me. A frown pulled at his mouth. "What is wrong with you?" he demanded. "One moment you push me away, swear you don't want me, and the next you're offering me coffee like some doting lover. Which is it, Selene?"

My throat tightened. I looked away, biting back the storm of words clawing at me. "Nothing," I whispered finally, my hands curling against my sides.

He studied me for another long moment, suspicion etched across his face. Then, with a sharp inhale, he lifted the cup and took a slow sip.

"That boy," Frederick said suddenly, setting the cup down. His voice had lost its sharpness, replaced by something heavier. "He is my son."

My eyes widened, though I stayed silent.

"His human mother died while giving birth to him," he continued, his gaze fixed on the dark liquid in the cup. "He's more vampire than hybrid, which makes him... dangerous. Unstable. I keep him hidden because he doesn't know how to control his thirst."

I swallowed, my heart thudding as I nodded slowly and pulled the nearest chair. I sank into it, studying him, trying to read the unreadable.

For a while, neither of us spoke. The silence between us was not like before—it was thick, full of unsaid things, the mate bond thrumming in the air.

Finally, I rose. The pull inside me dragged me closer until I stood behind him. My eyes traced the tense lines of his shoulders, the way the weight of the world seemed to press on him even when he sat still.

"You look stressed," I murmured softly, surprising even myself.

Before I could change my mind, I placed my hands gently on his shoulders. His muscles were stone beneath my palms, hard and stiff. I pressed carefully, kneading the tension with my fingers.

Frederick let out a slow, deep breath. His head tilted forward slightly, his eyes closing.

Then came the sound I hadn't expected—the low, rough moan that slipped from his throat. It sent a shiver down my spine.

"Yes..." Frederick groaned under my touch, his voice low and rough. "It's been ages since I've felt this."

The raw honesty in his tone made my chest clench. I knew he was telling the truth. His body leaned into my hands like he hadn't been touched in years, and maybe he hadn't.

But still—this wasn't just me. This was the mate bond pulling strings, tightening the knot between us. He didn't know, and I would never tell him.

"Selene," he rasped, his voice trembling in a way I had never heard before. "What are you doing to me?"

My heart hammered. I knew what it was. The bond. The curse of it. But he didn't, and he never could.

Before I could pull away, his hand shot up, catching mine. In one swift motion, he dragged me forward, pulling me into his lap. My breath caught as his gaze locked onto mine while I felt his arousal pressing against my ass.

"You're so beautiful," he whispered, the words heavy, almost reverent. His thumb brushed my cheek, tracing slowly as if memorizing me.

Heat burned under my skin. My wolf whimpered softly inside me, betraying me.

Then his voice dropped lower, almost teasing, but rough with desire. "Tell me... are you sore? From last time?"

The blood rushed hot to my face. I couldn't answer. My lips parted, but no words came.

A smirk tugged at his mouth. "There's only one way to find out."

His hand slipped lower, tugging at the hem of my skirt, sliding it upward inch by inch. My heart raced, my breath caught. The air thickened, hot, suffocating.

But then—like a knife stabbing through haze—the memory hit me.

My mother.

Her death.

My revenge.

The heat in my veins turned sharp. My chest burned with rage.

As his hand brushed dangerously close to my thigh, I let my wolf rise. My blood shifted, dark and toxic, poison threading through my veins.

He didn't notice. His breath was heavy, hot against my skin.

But I knew.

If he tasted me now—if I let him—he would be swallowing poison.

My wolf growled in disapproval, a low rumble echoing inside my head, but I ignored her. Her protests were nothing compared to the fire in my veins, the poison I had laced into my own blood. My heart pounded as I lifted my eyes to his.

"Feed from me," I whispered, my voice trembling but steady. "I know you want to."

His eyes flickered, hunger flashing there for a heartbeat before he tore it away. "No," he said roughly, his hand tightening on my waist. "You don't know what you're asking for."

Before I could speak again, his fingers slid between my thighs, slipping past my soaked entrance and pushing a single finger inside me. A broken moan fell from my lips, my head tipping back against his shoulder. Heat and poison swirled inside me, dizzying and dangerous.

"Just feed from me," I gasped, clinging to his arm. "I'm pure blood. I... I want to know what it's like to be fed from by a vampire."

He stilled, his forehead pressing briefly to my temple, his breath hot and ragged. "Selene..." His voice cracked on my name. "Are you sure?"

I swallowed hard, my resolve solidifying even as my wolf howled in my mind, clawing to stop me. If he does feed from me, he dies. The thought burned like acid but I didn't push it away. "Yes," I whispered, "feed from me."

Frederick's hand trembled against my skin, his finger still buried deep inside me as he nodded slowly. His eyes had gone darker, glinting with hunger.

His finger began moving again, curling, stroking, coaxing sounds from me I couldn't stop. At the same time, his head dipped lower, his lips brushing the crook of my neck. My pulse thundered there, hot and poisoned, throbbing just beneath his mouth.

His breath ghosted over my skin, each exhale a shudder. "You're tensed, little wolf," he rasped, but even as he said it, his fangs grazed my flesh.

My wolf's growl rose to a snarl, but I tilted my head anyway, baring my throat. "Do it," I whispered, "Or I'll give it to someone else..."

At my words, his hand tightened on my hip, as his mouth hovered over my pulse.

Chapter 430: Refused

Selene's POV

Instead of sinking his fangs into me, I realized he was only grazing them against my skin, teasing, testing, making me ache with both fear and want. At the same time, his hand moved lower, sliding another finger deep inside me. My body jolted, back arching as a broken cry tore from my lips. I spread my legs wider, unable to stop myself, shameless under his touch. His fingers filled me, curling, pumping with a rhythm that left me gasping. He lowered his mouth to my throat, not biting, not sinking his fangs in, but sucking. His lips dragged against my pulse, pulling the skin into his mouth, his tongue stroking, wet and hot. I trembled, waiting—waiting for the sharp pierce of his fangs, for the poison to meet him, for the moment everything would end. But it never came.

"Please..." the word slipped out in a desperate moan, my voice ragged, broken, filled with need and terror. My body betrayed me, clinging to the pleasure even as my mind screamed of vengeance. Still, his fangs never pierced. He just kept fucking me with his fingers, deeper, harder, his pace relentless as if he wanted me undone first.

"Why?" I gasped, clutching at his arm, nails digging into him. "Why won't you—"

He pulled his mouth from my throat, his fangs dragging lightly across my skin one last time before he lifted his head. His eyes burned, dark and molten, his breath harsh against my ear.

"I know myself, Selene. If I take a bite—" his breath hitched, fangs flashing as he fought to control himself, "—I won't be able to stop. I'll drain you. I'll kill you."

"You can't," I gasped, shaking my head, trembling beneath the weight of his words. "You won't—"

But I never finished. His mouth crashed against mine, swallowing the rest, his kiss brutal and silencing. His tongue claimed me, his teeth nipping, his hunger pouring into me in a different way. I moaned into his mouth, the taste of him burning my resolve to ash.

In the next moment, he moved with startling speed, twisting me around and bending me forward. My stomach pressed against the hard surface of his desk, my palms flattening against the polished wood as he stood beside me. My breath came in ragged gasps, every nerve alive, every thought shattered.

Then I felt him. Thick. Hard. His cock pressed against my entrance, sliding along my slick folds, teasing, threatening. My body jolted, my wolf snarled inside me, torn between resistance and surrender.

And then—he thrust.

The sudden stretch of him made me cry out, the sound muffled by the desk as he buried himself deep inside me with one hard stroke. My nails scraped across the wood, my body arching as the overwhelming fullness consumed me.

"Frederick—" I moaned his name, half plea, half curse.

He leaned close, his lips brushing my ear, his breath ragged. "Better this," he growled, his hips grinding deeper, harder. "Better I fuck you than take your blood. Because if I taste you, Selene..." His voice broke into a guttural sound, primal and raw. "I'll never let you go."

The desk groaned under the force of his thrust, my body jolting forward as he drove into me, deep, hard, and relentless. My palms slapped against the wood, fingers scrambling

for an anchor I couldn't find. His hand came down over mine, pinning them flat, his strength absolute, his claim undeniable.

"Better this," Frederick rasped, his mouth at my ear, his breath hot and ragged. "Better I fuck you than sink my fangs in. Because if I taste you—" His hips slammed forward, burying himself in me until I cried out. "—I won't stop. I'll drink you dry."

A broken moan tore from my throat. My wolf howled in satisfaction. My blood was poison. My vengeance was fire. But my body—gods, my body betrayed me, arching, trembling, clinging to the brutal rhythm of his thrusts.

"You can't," I gasped, shaking my head, my voice unraveling into a plea. "You won't—"

His lips crashed onto mine, swallowing the words. The kiss was savage, all teeth and hunger, devouring me until I couldn't breathe. When he pulled back, his eyes were molten, burning with a hunger deeper than blood.

He yanked me upright against his chest, one arm locking across my stomach, the other sliding up to grip my throat. His cock filled me, moving inside me with a punishing pace that left me sobbing with every thrust.

"Tell me to stop," he growled, his fangs grazing the frantic pulse at my neck.

"Never," I moaned, tilting my head, baring myself. "Bite me. Do it—"

"Selene." His voice cracked, low and guttural, a predator fighting himself. His thrusts grew harsher, the desk rattling beneath us, his control fraying with every second. "If I take you like that, you're mine forever. You don't understand what you're asking."

"Then take me," I gasped, tears springing to my eyes from the pressure, the pleasure, the torment. "Just feed from me." I pleaded because if he did, this torment would be over.

His hand tightened around my throat, his growl vibrating against my skin. His mouth hovered over my neck, lips hot, tongue tasting, fangs grazing, promising the pierce that never came.

I screamed his name as he drove me over the edge, his rhythm unrelenting, his body shuddering against mine as if he, too, was breaking apart. My blood burned with poison, but my heart—traitorous, damned—beat only for him in that moment.

And then, with a guttural sound that shook through his chest, he buried himself deep one last time. His whole body trembled as he shuddered against me, his forehead pressed to my shoulder, his growl a low, primal rumble. My own release followed, convulsing around him.

The room blurred. The scent of him, the sound of our ragged breathing, the heat of his body pressed to mine—all of it wrapped around me as I slumped forward on the desk.

Before I could collapse completely, his strong arms swept me up. He turned, sinking down onto the leather chair and pulling me into his lap, holding me there, still trembling, his forehead resting against mine. I could feel his heartbeat hammering through his chest; I could feel the restraint it cost him not to sink his fangs into my neck.

I closed my eyes, boneless, my head falling against his shoulder. Sleep tugged at me, soft and heavy, but then I heard him, his voice rough and low, more confession than statement:

"I think I'm in love with you."