

Claimed And Marked By Her Stepbrother Mates

- Chapter 319-Try Me, Bitch

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Helanie:

I was so worried. After Norman told me he knew that I had felt the mate bond with the lycan and left, I couldn't rest.

So, he knew the lycan, or was he the lycan? All the signs were pointing at him.

Or---

Could it be Kaye?

Why didn't they want him to transition and had to use wolfbane in his body instead of letting him go out and transform?

"Lamar!" I called out, waking him from his sleep. "So you think the lycan always transitions and turns into a lycan, or only on the full moon?"

I sat in my bed, the curtains drawn so no lycan could watch me sit there and talk about him. I was so paranoid that Norman would come through the door and attack me.

Now that I had my suspicions about Norman, I felt unsafe. He didn't like me.

The only reason he was putting up with me was because of his brothers. It all made sense. He knew about me and Kaye, which is why he had been much nicer to me, unlike at the beginning.

"I don't know," Lamar sounded pretty sleepy on the other side. "Gavin! Move! We are not---lovers," I heard him grunt at Gavin, who he told me had a habit of cuddling when he sleeps. And that was annoying Lamar, because Gavin, in his sleep, didn't know who he was lying down with.

"Hmm, I'm so confused," I muttered.

"What is it? Are you okay though? We're meeting tomorrow, right?" he asked.

"Yeah, we will also visit Lucy. Maximus will be busy tomorrow, so I'm free," I said. I'd been doing really well with Maximus at work.

We were spending time together and he was helping me learn a lot about the weapons.

"That's cool then. We'll get some answers from Gavin too," he yawned, and I felt bad for waking him up from his sleep.

"Okay. Let's meet tomorrow then. You can go back to sleep now," I said, tired and bored.

The brothers were going to spend time with Kaye in the morning. And as much as I wanted to know and meet Kaye, I couldn't.

I knew it would trigger him.

After I ended the call with Lamar, I went to sleep.

Only to wake up to loud knocking on the door. I dragged my feet out of bed and reached for the door, answering it.

"You like cooking, don't you? Come make me breakfast," Charlotte stood outside my door, looking all fresh in a blue dress and full makeup. I turned and checked the time--it was 8 a.m.

"Why would I cook for you?" I grunted under my breath, trying to close the door, but she forced it open again.

"You live here for free and do nothing. Besides, remember how you were so happy to cook for the brothers, acting like such a hardworking lady. So, what happened now? Was it all just for show?" she really thought she could get to me with her loud tone and taunting?

"Yeah, maybe. Anything else?" I asked, watching her jaw drop at my audacity.

I understood why she was bothering me so early in the morning.

It was because none of the brothers or their father was at home.

I could tell even the maids were being told off for the day after Kaye had made a mess and they had to clean it all night.

"Get your lazy ass out of here and get to work, Helanie. Because today, we won't tolerate your sassy attitude," Emma appeared behind her daughter, her hand on her waist, and with the other, she was pointing at me.

"Charlotte, get out of my way and let me sleep in peace," I tried to slam the door shut again, but this time, her mother joined her and pushed me back into my room.

She rushed inside with her fingers pointing at me, both hands ready to point at me.

"What the heck is wrong with you?" I suddenly felt ambushed. Charlotte stormed in and looked around, her eyes landing on my phone. I had a very bad feeling about it.

"Hey, get away from my stuff," I tried to get past Emma, but she grabbed my arm and twisted it behind my back.

"Huh! A student or RVS," Emma laughed while Charlotte picked up my phone.

Emma had both my hands tied behind my back, tightly held by hers.

"Let me go," I was moving with my best ability, but she had a wolf's strength, and even with her weaker wolf, it had more power than I had.

"Oh! Let's see what you've been doing on this phone," Charlotte strolled towards me and held my face for facial recognition. I heard my phone screen unlock when I was too late to turn my face to the side.

I had a very bad feeling about this. If she started going through it, she would find things I didn't want her to know.

So, anxiety and the need for quick action struck me.

"I said--" I grunted, tightening my body before I put force on my hands and wrenched my wrists out of Emma's grasp. "Don't touch my stuff."

With that, I lunged at Charlotte and snatched my phone out of her hands. Before her mom could react or Charlotte could fight back, I raised my hand and slapped her to the ground.

She landed on the floor, a hand to her cheek and tears forming in her eyes.

"How dare--" her mother rushed in front of me, but I was so quick to grab her hand that even I was shocked, and then I twisted it behind her back with ease.

This new energy in my body was so vibrant that I loved it.

"Next time when you think you can overpower me, remember! I am a student of RVS!" I whispered in her ear from behind.

I pushed her away, watching her tumble but balance her body weight when her daughter got up to give her support.

"Let's go, not right now," Emma whispered to her daughter, who was ready to bawl her eyes out.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 320-A Promise To Keep

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Helanie:

I've been so happy with my new strength that even while showering, I couldn't help but sing and dance a little. There's truth in the saying that once you get your wolf, you become the happiest.

Although she wasn't fully awake enough to have a conversation with me, she was doing her best to show me her presence by giving me her strength.

I put on the black jeans and blue shirt, happily left my room, and locked it. Even though I didn't really have anything to worry about, except for the new clothes I bought with my pay from working daily hours for Maximus, I still preferred locking my room.

Emmet should too.

I felt so guilty whenever I remembered sneaking into his room.

I left the mansion on foot and looked up from the road to glance back at the mansion. I saw Charlotte standing on the second floor terrace, glaring down at me.

With a wave of my hand, I teased her with a goodbye and then continued on my way.

I didn't want to take a car or anything. I just wanted to enjoy my newfound strength. I'd waited so long for it.

Once I was nearing the woods and heading down the mountains, I saw Lamar standing with his bike, playing a game on his phone.

"Hey!" I cheerfully waved my hand, making him slide his phone into his pocket and raise an eyebrow, judging me.

"Someone looks happy as heck," he commented.

"Guess I've got good news," I said, dancing a little with my shoulders.

"Rayden died?" he asked, looking shocked, and with a shake of my head, I corrected him.

"I felt my wolf wake up," I whispered, and he began to smile widely before pulling me into a hug.

"Congratulations! What's her name?" he asked happily.

"Well, she isn't talking much. She only spoke once, but I'm using a part of her strength right now," I replied, feeling a little sad about the lack of conversation.

"So, you mean to say, you got all the good perks and don't have to put up with your wolf's sass?" I bet his wolf growled at him for his comment, because he quickly stuck his tongue out and touched his ear to apologize.

"And what do you mean by 'a part of it'?" he asked.

"I feel like there's more to her, like more strength. I'm so excited to finally have her with me," I said. That was definitely an accomplishment. And I wasn't lying about the strength part.

Ever since she had woken up in me, I've been feeling very optimistic about her.

"Anyway, where's Gavin?" I looked around and saw his clothes hanging from a tree.

"He transitioned and went out for a run," Lamar answered.

"Now tell me, why have you been asking me such weird questions about that lycan? And why aren't you worried that the lycan saw the cameras?" Of course, I couldn't avoid that question for too long. He'd been waiting to ask me.

With a deep, heavy breath, I opened my mouth to confess part of the truth to him.

"Remember the first night we encountered the lycan?" I watched him nod.

"Well, the reason he didn't attack me—or I think he didn't that night—was because—" I saw curiosity take over his face.

"Ugh! Just tell me, is he your father or something?" he made me grimace and slap his chest. "Then tell me," he insisted, and I answered.

"He's my mate!"

I watched him go silent, then cock his head before he started laughing out loud.

"Helanie, you're so funny!" He put a hand to his stomach and threw his head back, laughing.

"And Kaye is my mate!" I watched his laughter slowly fade away.

"Wait, does that mean he's the lycan—?" He had a shocked look on his face, but he was about to be hit with another big shock.

"And Emmet is my mate too!"

I watched him go completely silent this time.

"Helanie! Please don't tell me their father is also your mate." I don't know why he couldn't take me seriously as he started laughing again, but when I didn't join him, his laughter began to fade.

"You're serious?" He now seemed to understand the seriousness of the situation. I nodded my head, and that made him cover his mouth with his hand.

"What in the freaking world is going on?" he commented, causing my body to fill with goosebumps.

"Don't be nasty," I hissed at him.

"Oh shoot! Wait, why did Emmet happily introduce you as his mate then?" He had the same question I once asked myself because I didn't think Emmet would see me as his mate, only as his stepsister.

I mean, I didn't want him to see me more than that because he didn't even remember the mate bond with me, but still—

"Umm, he was drunk when we first felt the mate bond. So, he doesn't know," I said, watching Lamar rub his temples. "But Kaye does, and I'm pretty sure the lycan does too," I finished, remembering Norman's face whenever I mentioned the lycan.

"This is, umm—I don't know if it's a curse or a blessing, but it could get very messy. What are you planning on doing? I mean, which mate do you think you're going to accept?" he asked, folding his arms over his chest, his body hunched down as he stared at my face in anticipation.

"None. I'm going for—" I bit my bottom lip. "Maximus."

I watched him shake his head and close his eyes, counting something on his fingers.

"You forgot to mention he's also your mate," of course, he would think I was losing my mind.

"Because he's not, but we've been—" I shut up, afraid of getting judged.

"Wait, so you don't want to be with your mates, but their brother?" he asked.

"Lamar, I actually made a promise to the moon goddess that I wouldn't accept my fated mates until I take my revenge. My war isn't just against the Alphas; it's against the moon goddess too," I declared loudly, watching his eyes widen as I spoke my disdain for the one he worships.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 321-The Purple Rose Is Dangerous

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Helanie:

"You hate the moon goddess?" He looked slightly offended but also curious, as if he wanted to ask me more questions.

"Can you blame me?" I felt judged, so I quickly countered with a question.

"Listen, I know what you went through was horrible and you didn't deserve it. But the moon goddess is not to be blamed for it. We make choices for ourselves, and then those Alphas too. They chose to be jerks. The moon goddess cannot come to Earth and fight the bad guys. We have to do it ourselves," he explained, reaching for my hand, but I quickly pulled it back.

I didn't want to hear any logic. I wanted to stick to my promise. I just couldn't get past the fact that the moon goddess didn't let anyone have a little empathy for me in their hearts. Not even my mother.

So, yeah, I was blaming her.

"Okay, let's not argue about that. And you know what, I will never mention her again before you, all happy?" I could tell Lamar felt guilty for upsetting me.

"It's okay. Not your fault though. I do act aggressively sometimes," I admitted, being wrong and apologized.

"Of course you do. You've got so many mates to kick my ass, and then your strength," he joked, making me laugh.

"But on a serious note though, why do you think you have so many mates? It's not common. In fact, I've never heard of any real case like that," he turned the conversation back to the real questions.

"I'm so clueless myself," I sighed.

"And why just the two brothers and a lycan? It's like, when the mate bonds were connected, the lycan got tangled in just passing by the mixer," he joked again, making me roll my eyes at him.

"Hey, but be careful. Choosing Maximus over your mates might cause some problems. We don't want any, right?" he made me nod in agreement while Gavin showed up in the meantime.

"Helanie," he smiled after he put on his clothes and was walking toward me. He looked so happy to see me.

"Hey, how are you feeling now?" I asked with a small smile on my face. He stopped next to Lamar's bike and gestured to his body, showing he had healed.

"I am sadly on my feet again," the tone he used was so sad.

It was also hard for me to watch him like this. He was the first one I had met and befriended along with Lucy. They were so nice to me. Watching them fall apart had really been difficult for me.

"I know you hate me, Helanie. For what I did to Lucy and how I manipulated her. I was honestly scared that—if I confessed—I would lose everyone." I started walking, and this time, he had genuine tears of shame in his eyes.

"And I proved my point. You see, when Lucy cheated on me, nobody really said anything to her. You guys just believed she was uncomfortable and wanted to get back at me without even knowing if I had cheated on her or not. For her, it was justified, but you didn't know. Yet, you were on her side," he rubbed his face with his hands. "I'm not defending my actions. I'm just explaining why I did what I did," there was so much agony in his voice as he once again tried to make a point that honestly seemed valid.

Lucy was not wrong, but I was.

"You held me accountable—hard," he laughed at himself. "But you didn't react like that when you found her cheating on me, twice. I know I did too, but I swear I was drunk beyond any knowledge of mine. To the point that Jenny and I didn't even know how far we went that night. We didn't feel anything because we were so wasted. And I didn't

want to lose my mate or anyone because of that mistake. I've been abandoned way too many times, Helanie. I didn't want to be left alone again." His eyes started to get red as he teared up.

"Anyway, I hurt the most pure soul ever. I can only imagine how much disgust Lucy must have felt towards herself when she cheated on me because that wasn't what she wanted to begin with. That's why I wanted to get her out of that coma at any cost," he said determinedly, clenching his fist.

"I cannot live with myself until she's awake and living a good life," he sniffled, rubbing his eyes.

"Buddy, we're with you. We also want her back," Lamar quickly patted him on the back and gave me a look.

"What were you trying to do on the mountains? What herb could bring her back?" I asked, jumping straight to the main question.

"Not an herb. It's a rose, the rose to dreamland," he said excitedly. "It's a—" Before he could finish, I did it for him.

"The purple rose?" My hopes dropped at the mention of it.

"Yes!" Gavin said, excited to share the knowledge with me. "When in a coma, werewolves are usually stuck in dreams. So if I can enter her dream—" I shook my head to already dismiss his plan.

"For the purple rose to work, she would need to sniff it herself, and she's not awake to do so," I said. As soon as I said that, I noticed Gavin's face turn blue from disappointment.

"And even if you could, I'd suggest you don't. It's not a dream world, but a dream prison. Whoever goes there stays stuck. Mister Rune wouldn't let them leave," the memory of it had faded from the other traumas I kept alive in me.

But whenever I do get a chance to remember that prison, I feel shivers up and down my spine.

If Kaye hadn't arrived in time, I would have been stuck in that prison forever.

In that moment, I felt like I owed it to Kaye, and what did I do in return?

I was going to break his heart in the most painful way by asking him for time while accepting his brother.

"How do you know that with so much certainty?" Lamar asked, bringing me back to reality.

"Because I've been there," I said, watching their jaws drop.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 322-His Drunk Brother

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Helanie:

"That seems scary. I'm so glad Professor Kaye was there to help you out," Lamar said, throwing a stone away after I finished telling them part of what I went through in Rune's dream prison—obviously leaving out the whole kiss and mate bond thing with Kaye.

We sat on the ground in a circle, trying to think of a way to help Lucy.

"But—now we know how to get out of it. All we need to do is find the rose in the dream prison, which is our way out, and just destroy it," Gavin still hoped this was the way to help Lucy out of her coma because it was the only thing we knew of. Finding another way would take too much time.

"That's the issue, Gavin. It's not that easy to find yourself, let alone that rose. And Rune will be even stricter now that Kaye and I escaped his grasp," I wanted him to understand how dangerous Rune could be.

"Besides, didn't she tell you how it's done? Lucy can't sniff out the rose herself, and it doesn't work any other way," Lamar helped him understand why this plan wouldn't work either.

"I just can't believe she's lying in the hospital because of me, and I—" Gavin broke down for the fifth time. Lamar had to hug him while giving me a sad look. He really felt Gavin's pain, and so did I.

"Gavin," I slid closer to him and wrapped my arm around him. Lamar and I stayed with him, hugging him as he cried his heart out. After he was done, and they were ready to leave, I called out to Gavin one last time. The thing was, he became my friend before Lamar, and I could tell it was bothering him that he was now left out completely.

"Gavin, are you and Salem okay? I just know she has been trying to reach out to you," I wanted to rebuild our friendship, but it would take some time—especially after he manipulated Lucy so much.

But then again, he was guilty, and if Lucy wakes up and forgives him, we won't have any reason to keep distancing ourselves from him.

"I know. I don't want to think about anyone else until I've helped Lucy. I can't be happy if she's not happy," Gavin said softly, sitting on Lamar's bike.

The two sped away, while I wanted to go meet Kaye at the hotel. But I didn't think going unannounced would be a good idea.

So, I called Emmet first since he was easier to talk to.

"Hello?" His voice was so raspy, and the cold tone he used made him sound even more intriguing.

"Umm, I was thinking about meeting Kaye. Is he okay now?" I asked, guilt dripping from my voice.

"He's still pretty much the same. But don't worry, he'll be fine soon," he reassured me again, just like the other day.

"And if you want to meet him, I'm at home and heading to the hotel. I can take you with me," he offered while groaning a little, probably getting ready to leave.

"Okay, thank you so much. I'm on my way home—or you can pick me up on the road—" I didn't want to go home and then leave again. If he picked me up on the way, it would save us both time.

"Sounds like a good idea to me," I heard him mumble, followed by the sound of fabric ripping.

"Seriously?" he complained. "I freaking ripped my new shirt." That was the first time he had talked to me about random things.

"Never mind, I'll just wear this one." At this point, I realized he wasn't even talking to me. But since he stayed on the call, I did too. Don't ask me why. Walking alone on the empty road in the dark would have been really scary if he hadn't been on the phone with me.

After a few minutes, he just hung up as if he forgot he was on the call in the first place.

I was strolling toward the mansion, not in a hurry, when Emmet's car pulled up. He opened the passenger-side door for me, and I slipped inside.

"Where were you all day?" he asked, starting the car again.

"I went out to meet my friends," I replied, adjusting my seatbelt.

The rest of the car ride was mostly silent. Emmet hardly said anything, just kept nodding his head like he was lost in thought.

After a while, we arrived at the hotel. We both got out, only to be met with news that even Emmet didn't expect.

"What do you mean we can't meet him?" Emmet asked Maximus, who had come to speak with him. He raised a brow at me, probably surprised to see me with his brother, but then focused back on Emmet.

"I don't know. By the time I arrived, Norman had already taken him away. He told me Kaye needs some time and that it's better if we leave him alone for now. The more he sees all of us, the more depressed he gets. I don't even know what that means," Maximus scoffed, clearly unhappy about Norman taking Kaye away.

"I'm sure Norman has a good reason for it." Emmet didn't seem happy either, but he always put his faith in Norman.

I wasn't too sure. He did it after I told him about Emmet and Kaye. Was he doing it to keep me away from him?

I wasn't going to ask Kaye for rejection—not after the last time when he got so upset. I wasn't that heartless. I came here just to check on him.

"Of course, you would say that. It saves you time," Maximus taunted Emmet, who only gave him a stare before reaching into his pocket.

"Hey, you're not going to drink when you came here with her, right?" Maximus quickly objected.

"I was just looking for chewing gum," Emmet defended himself, his miserable tone unintentionally shifting the mood.

"Well, you chew your gum, and I'll take Helena home," of course, Maximus wouldn't let this opportunity slip away.

Emmet didn't argue, and since I didn't either, Maximus and I headed to his car. He had one big question for me.

"So? Did you do what you needed time for?"

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 323-She Messed Me Up

Chapter 323: 323-She Messed Me Up

Kaye:

I rushed into my room, slamming the door hard and then opening it to slam it shut again. I wanted to break every inch of the mansion and set it on fire.

The anger inside me was unimaginable. I wanted to hurt someone so badly.

"I have told you to stop going after her. She is not the one. She was playing you," Ye yelled in me, getting anxious as I threw my stuff around—the stuff that was once so dear to me that I had gotten Helanie kicked out of the mansion when she accidentally broke it.

This stuff was once made for me by my mother. But why was it that I no longer cared about it?

"That is because we didn't wait and chose that Kesha," I yelled back at Ye, getting angrier that he was still talking about Helanie like she was the one in the wrong.

"Just admit it. She is asking for rejection so that she can ask someone else to accept her. And it is different for us. We told her we are pretending to choose Kesha, not accepting her. We gave Helanie a chance, and she said she wanted to wait, so we had every right to move ahead and get ourselves a deal that suits us best. But she—she played you. Now that she found someone else, she wants to ditch you," he was going on and on even when he knew I was losing it.

"No! She will never do that to me. I will fucking kill whoever she chooses over me. She is my mate—" I screamed in my head, pointing a finger at myself.

"My own parents used to be so biased. They would pick others over me and look at me like I was the reason behind all their troubles. And now my mate—my mate is choosing someone else over me," somewhere, Ye's words had gotten to me. I was beginning to have this feeling that maybe he was right. Helanie must have fallen for someone else. Why?

Why couldn't she wait for me?

And who is it that she wants to date so badly that she doesn't want to wait anymore, while with me, she kept asking for time?

I grasped my hair in my fist and started to pull it. Storming into the bathroom, I stared at my reflection in the mirror, and all I could do was let out a laugh at myself.

"You are so pathetic," I said to myself, shaking my head in disapproval.

"You couldn't even get your mate, and you talk about achieving anything," I hissed at my pathetic, lonely image.

Defeated image.

"You have done nothing but try to prove your worth. You wanted everyone to know you are worth saving—that you were worth all the trouble. But the truth is—Mom was always right. All this trouble for what? For a son like you. You don't even deserve to stand in the same line as your brothers," my eyes kept watching my face, and all I could think of was my childhood.

When I would stand in the corner with the nanny by my side and watch my mother playing with Maximus. She loved him so much.

She never loved me the same. She would ignore me while I stood there and sobbed, asking her to play with me.

I didn't ask her to do anything for me—she went above and beyond and then started to hate me.

In the mirror, I could see that little boy staring back at me. He had the same kind of tears of defeat in his eyes.

He never got his confidence, never got love and appreciation, and today, he lost his mate too.

"People use you because you are so easy to bend and mess around with," I pointed my finger at the mirror and touched it.

"You! You need to change. This pathetic version of you who wants love and acceptance should die now," I tapped my finger on the mirror before my eyes landed on the shaver.

With my body hunched down and my hand on the sink, I grabbed the shaver with my other hand.

"I will become what everyone's worst side looks like. I will become what they have dreaded me to become," I hissed, running the shaver over my head. I watched my hair fall into the sink, and so did all my dreams, innocent wishes from my childhood.

"Good people don't get to be happy," my mother's words rang in my head. "You need to watch the people around you. Observe them. The more toxic they are, the more loved they are. People try to please them hard since it is not easy to please them. You look at Emmet—I want him to pay attention to me because otherwise, he wouldn't. You, on the other hand, you are just there. Whenever I turn my head, I see you standing there, looking at me. With those demanding and wishful eyes, you make me sick to my stomach. Why won't you disappear, Kaye, so that I can redo it all again?"

Those words of hers had been engraved in my memory forever. But tonight, I truly understood what she meant.

I was just there for Helanie. She took me for granted.

I was never enough for her.

Once I had shaved my head, I punched the mirror and shattered it into pieces. The broken reflection of mine stared back at me, and I found my eyes changing color.

That's when I heard my brothers arrive in the room.

It was Emmet and Norman.

The beloved ones.

Norman, who cares nothing about outsiders but somehow, everyone respects him and always mentions him before everyone else. Then there is Emmet, who doesn't even give two shits about his own brothers, but somehow, Maximus and I want his attention so badly.

And then there is Maximus, my best friend. But I must say, he plays people all the time. He does them wrong, yet he is loved and always looked after.

Sadly, even Kesha is someone whose first choice was Maximus. I remember being so jealous back then, but now I don't want her.

I wanted Helanie, and she chose someone else too.

The next thing I knew, my brothers were holding me down and injecting wolfsbane into my body while I smiled and teared up at how foolish I had been all this time.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 324-Feels So Taboo

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Helanie:

"Did you do it?" Maximus asked again, trying to make me focus on him. Of course, my focus was on him—I was just buying some time to make up an excuse.

"Actually—," I shifted in my seat, getting uncomfortable, "I don't know."

I looked away instantly to avoid his questioning stares.

"Helanie, what is going on? Do you not want to— be with me?" The hurt in his voice made me bite the inside of my cheek.

"I am trying to resolve this issue, and then—I will get back to you," I muttered under my breath because I had to say something at least.

"Okay, I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable. I can wait, but I hope you do it before the ceremony. It will put my father and your mother in an awkward situation if we tell them afterward," he said softly, trying not to offend me or push me into making a rushed decision. And I appreciated him for that.

As we arrived home, he made it clear that he wanted to have one last word with me before I walked out of his car, so I stayed around for a bit.

"I didn't mean to pressure you into anything. I am ready to wait for you as long as you need me to. Okay? Even the date of their mating ceremony wouldn't stop me from causing a ruckus and marrying you," he smiled at the last phrase because it visibly made my cheeks turn red.

His hand gently touched mine, his fingers hovering over my skin. We just sat in silence, looking into each other's eyes.

I noticed him getting relaxed in his chair, his head resting back, and his eyes blinking slowly.

"You are my peace," he whispered, closing his eyes and finally holding my hand in his. He raised my hand to his mouth and rested it against his lips, pressing it and inhaling my scent.

"Mmm, I really cannot wait for you to be mine," he finally placed a soft kiss on the back of my hand before he opened his eyes and let go.

"I love you, Helanie," he spoke in a loving tone. I couldn't believe I once settled for so much less when I could have someone who looks at me in a way that I know he is going to express his feelings for me.

"Thank you for showing me what true love is," I whispered back, and I guess I caught him by surprise. He wasn't expecting me to respond with something so sweet because I usually stayed quiet.

"Ah! My night is made," he smiled through his eyes. "Thank you, my love, for giving me this little bit of affection that I will cherish the entire night and probably even please myself while thinking about—" I guess he got too lost in his words until he saw my eyes grow wide. "I meant... um, it's a guy thing. What the fuck am I even saying? Please tell me I'm not scaring you," he insisted, slapping the back of his head to snap himself out of it.

With a smile, I shook my head at him, and it gave him a sense of relief. His face was so easy to read.

"I'll go make a quick call to my mom to inform her about Kaye," he said, sounding upset when mentioning his brother. That was the reason I felt like I needed to sort this mess out.

"Okay, please be safe out there," I said and was about to get out of the car when he held my hand and stopped me.

"Say that one more time," he demanded, his eyes hungrily moving to my lips and then visibly gulping, making it obvious what he wanted to do.

"Please be safe, Maximus," I granted his wish. He leaned forward and pressed his lips very gently over mine. His lips tasted so sweet that I could stay like that forever.

"Go and eat plenty," he joked, breaking the kiss because he could tell I was too conscious of someone walking out on us. We had become a bit too bold, getting so cozy in public places.

It could get us in trouble if we didn't do everything the right way. We should be the ones to tell everyone about us—not the other way around.

However, I didn't know what his father's reaction would be. I could tell he was deeply in love with my mother, so there was no way he would just accept it as it was. He would probably even yell at me, and my mom—oh, my mom would kill me.

I pushed all these thoughts away for a while because right now, I even had his brother, who wasn't ready to reject me.

It seemed like such a taboo to be in a relationship with Maximus.

As I stepped into the mansion and went to my room, I found Norman standing outside my door with something in a blue bag in his hand.

"Hey," I frowned in confusion, quickly unlocking my door to enter.

"Did you not see me, or are you just so stupid that you don't know if someone is standing right next to your door, it means they have something to talk about?" I had only just entered my room when Norman stormed in after me, complaining and already being so hostile.

"Who bit your ass today? You come in and start arguing already?" I watched him groan at my choice of words.

"It's just that—I don't really care," he rolled his eyes and said it with so much sass that if I weren't looking at him, I would have thought he was snapping his fingers and moving his hips around.

"Do that again. I actually found it funny," I raised both my eyebrows, shrugging as I used a teasing tone.

"Whatever, you mean nothing to me—" I didn't understand why he came to talk to me just to say he didn't care about me.

And then he pulled the blue bag to the front, offering it to me. "Take it."

He did it in a demanding tone, making me frown as I grabbed the bag and peeked inside. I was shocked to see what he had brought for me.

It completely contradicted him saying he didn't care. Maybe that's why he kept saying it—he didn't want me to take his gesture too seriously.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 325-It Was All A Lie

Chapter 325: 325-It Was All A Lie

Helanie:

"What is this?" I asked, watching Norman's face. He looked arrogant even when he had brought me something that meant a lot to me.

"You don't recognize the sweater you wore literally every day?" Of course, he had to ruin the moment with his rude tone.

"I know, but this was—torn. I left it in the woods," I held the sweater in my hand, looking at it and asking Norman.

"Is it still torn?" he asked.

"No! But—did you get it fixed?" I was so shocked, seeing it look so new, as if it had never been worn before, but I knew it was my sweater because my mom crocheted it herself.

"Thank you—," I couldn't believe he was doing something nice for me.

He awkwardly looked away and said, "I only got it fixed because I didn't want you to say I'm the reason you don't have your sweater now," he scoffed.

Although he always ruins the mood, this time, I was okay with his behavior. He did something so sweet for me.

"Well, you're very right. I would've blamed you," I joked, and he grunted like a tired old man.

"Norman! Are you the lycan?" I had to ask him, as I couldn't live with this anxiety anymore.

Every time I mentioned the lycan, he gave me the same look. The look of confusion and shock.

"Why are you talking about him again?" he whispered while looking around at the warriors.

"They're far away. They can't possibly hear us. But I need to know the truth," I insisted once again.

"Because if you don't tell me, I'll keep looking for answers. And I don't want to accuse someone innocent in the process," I watched him grunt at my words.

I had completely pushed Emmet out of the suspicion because I remembered the first time in the mansion on the full moon night. He was pretty much human that night.

I knew it was just midnight, so he could have been leaving for transition, but as much as I knew, the lycan transformation happens instantly. So whoever is the lycan leaves before midnight, not afterward.

It occurred to me a little late, but at least it did, and now Emmet was safe from the accusations.

"Tell me," I stomped my foot in annoyance. Norman gave in and grunted out of reflex.

"Yes, I'm!"

As he glared me down with his response, another shock hit me, leaving me stunned.

"Does that mean—you're my mate?" The minute I reminded him of what his confession meant, he gasped and stepped back.

"Huh? No!" he stepped further back and then shook his head vigorously, but before he could react, I did.

"Ew! No!" I let out a yelp beyond my control, and it kind of made him stop in his tracks and walk back up to me.

"What do you mean by ew? Am I ew to you?" With his hands on his waist, he muttered, biting the words as he spoke them.

"I mean—it's you! You are not—please tell me you are not a lycan," I insisted, losing my mind.

Anyone but him.

I did not want him to be my mate at any cost. Even if it meant I had to go to war with the lycan.

He pressed his lips tightly, his face turning red from anger, and then muttered, "Oh well, I'm a lycan. And a very angry one. Make sure you lock your windows tight tonight because I will come and drag you by your ear and leave you somewhere far away so I don't have to see your face again." He pointed his finger at me, the tip actually touching my nose, and then he scoffed as loudly as he could.

"And this—you need to pay for it. I didn't do it for free," now that I had upset him, he had lost his mind. He pointed at my sweater and then demanded money from me.

"So I get you as a mate—" I pretended to gag, "and now I have to pay for my own sweater too?"

He was getting angrier and angrier at my comments. And I couldn't help but keep pushing him.

I was devastated too.

"And you think I'm happy that you're my mate? I have a perfectly fine girlfriend that I love desperately. It would be a downgrade to be fated to you!" He scowled while throwing his hands in the air and rubbing his temples.

"Then let's reject each other, so we don't have to live with this feeling of filth from our mate bond." I thought he would be happy to get rid of me, but I guess I had touched his ego—something I didn't want to do. I just wanted him to reject me, and that was all.

"I will not do what you want me to do. I will do it my own way, and since you messed up with my head, bye!" He waved his hand, so angry that he could barely say anything properly.

"Hey!" I called out to him, but he left. There was something weird about him confessing to be a lycan.

He didn't seem too serious, like it was nothing. And I was trying to cope with the news in the most hilarious and comedic way.

What would happen now?

I didn't want him as a mate. And it made me realize how important it was that I finally came clean to Maximus about everything. He deserves to know about my past, those alphas, his brothers, and even the lycan being my mate.

"Okay, I'm going to do it tonight. I will be honest with him, and if he still wants to believe me and accept me, I'll be happy," I took a deep breath and then left my room.

I knew while I was arguing with Norman, Maximus had left for his room.

I strolled through the living room, avoiding eye contact, and made it to the second floor. I don't usually come here a lot anymore, but once I was outside Maximus's door, I realized tonight was a special night.

My instincts led me where I needed to be to know the whole truth.

"Yes, mom, I was calling you, but your beta said you were in the bathroom," Maximus had his mother on speakerphone.

I realized it was the wrong time until his mother spoke up.

"Yeah, I was. Tell me, is Helanie buying your act of you being in love with her?"

My heart sank in my chest—not just at her question but also at what he responded with.

"Yeah, mom. I told you I'd let you know when there's progress. But rest assured, she is in love with me and has fallen for my lies."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 326-Not Trusting Men!

Chapter 326: 326-Not Trusting Men!

Helanie:

My fists clenched tightly, tears starting to itch my eyes, but I swore I wouldn't cry. I wouldn't cry for a boy.

"Good. Just make sure she is crazy enough for you that she ruins the ceremony. I want that witch out of your father's life. And once she is defeated by her own daughter, you will throw Helanie out of the mansion just to impress your father and get back on his good side. Remember, we don't want to ruin your relationship with your father. So when he gets devastated, you will say—" She was cunningly trying to feed Maximus with plans, and he was happily obeying her.

"I will say, 'Dad, I thought I would be happy to have Helanie. But after seeing you sad, I have decided I don't want her here. The one who couldn't even watch her mother being happy can never make me happy.' Is that correct?" There was a weird exhaustion in his tone as if his mother had spoken far too many times about this plan to him.

"Yes, correct," she sounded relieved after her son confirmed he had made a perfect fool out of me.

I stepped away from his door and then sprinted downstairs, so horrified by what I had heard that I didn't even realize I had bumped into none other than my mother.

"What are you doing running around like that?" Emma appeared from behind her, already yelling at me under her breath. She would definitely take her anger out on me for the last day.

"I am sorry," I kept my eyes down, so drained of energy and love that I couldn't fight back. This is why I never wanted to fall in love with anyone. I couldn't focus on my revenge when I was having a heartbreak.

"Wait a minute," Emma quickly grasped my arm to stop me. Of course, she saw right through me. She realized I was hurting, and she had to get back at me when I was at my lowest.

"Emma, where is Charlotte? I have to ask her for her size. I am planning on getting her a beautiful gown for the engagement ceremony." My mother didn't even notice me standing there, all broken and shattered. But her entire attention was on Charlotte. She wanted to get her a new gown while her own daughter was being played, used as a weapon against her.

"Really?" Emma let go of my arm since she received bigger news than confronting me.

"Of course. I want her to look her best on my special day," my mother's voice faded as I walked past them, trying to escape before Emma's attention fell on me again.

"Okay, keep an eye on him and make sure he is well-fed," Emmet was entering the mansion, busy on a call, when our eyes met unintentionally.

I didn't want anyone to spot me like that. So the moment he looked at me and frowned, I knew he had noticed me. I quickly lowered my head, hid my eyes, and stormed into my room. I grabbed the sweater from my bed and threw it back onto the bed because I couldn't trash this place. It wasn't even mine. I couldn't take my anger out on anything.

I sat on the bed, fighting tears, then grabbed the sweater again and slammed it hard on the bed once more. I was losing my mind, thinking of myself as the biggest idiot for even telling Lamar that I had fallen for Maximus.

I had asked my mate to reject me for this man.

I was such an idiot to think I had finally found love and that Maximus had set the bar high. How did he manage to fool me so well, and I never even suspected he was playing me?

I held the sweater again and brushed it hard against the bed once more.

"That sweater must have really pissed you off," I was taken aback by Emmet's voice. He was standing at my door, arms folded, leaning against the doorframe.

"I didn't know I—" I gasped.

"That you didn't lock the door. You slammed it, trying to shut it, but then—this boot." He looked down and eyed my shoe, the one I had kicked off in a hurry and frustration when I got inside.

"Oh." I took a deep breath, forcing a smile, but nothing seemed to work.

"Do you need anything?" I asked, too caught up in my feelings to find the right words to communicate with him.

"No! I should be asking you that question. Do you need anything? Are you okay?" He was so calm when speaking to me that I couldn't help but take a deep breath and lower my head.

The next thing I knew, I started crying.

Of course, I couldn't hold back my tears after such a huge betrayal. Who can I trust now? Just imagine if I had been a few minutes late and had told Maximus all about my past and everything.

I was asking to get myself into yet another messy situation.

"Hey." The worry in his voice grew more intense as I broke down in front of him. I felt him sit on the bed beside me, the mattress shifting under his weight. He was a big guy; of course, his presence couldn't be ignored.

"Who made you cry, Helanie?" he asked with such confidence that I unfolded my hands and stared at his face.

"Tell me, who hurt you so badly that you came to this academy for revenge?" My heart started to race like crazy.

I kept watching his face, and with every second that passed, my eyes grew wider and wider.

"Tell me his name, and I will make sure—" he leaned in, his eyes locked onto mine, devouring me, "he is never heard from again."

He whispered the rest, sending chills down my spine and covering my skin in goosebumps.

"I don't know what you're talking about—I didn't come for revenge," I laughed awkwardly, feeling my body go numb. I never thought someone would straight up come to me, ask who hurt me with such confidence, and then, without even asking for any proof, promise to help me take my revenge.

"You were pregnant, and you lost your baby. Who was the father? Who hurt you, Helanie? Who did that to you?"

The moment he mentioned my pregnancy and miscarriage, my head started to spin, and my jaw dropped as a wave of paranoia hit me.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 327-Hello Professor!

Chapter 327: 327-Hello Professor!

Helanie:

"What do you mean—?" I was stuttering because, just a minute ago, I was thinking about trusting his brother—that backfired—and now he knew about my past?

I just realized I should keep my secrets to myself, and yet, here I was, exposed.

"Your boyfriend or someone got you pregnant and then didn't want to take responsibility because you were probably an omega or without a wolf—or for some other stupid reason—so you came to the academy to become something and show him what he lost, right?" As he explained further what he knew, I began to relax.

"Oh! Yes!" I couldn't think of anything else in the moment and decided to agree with whatever assumptions he made.

"Fascinating." He tilted his head as if he were listening to a story or had just solved a puzzle.

"It is, isn't it?" I taunted, and he quickly straightened his posture.

"I didn't mean to say that. It's just that—you were so scared, and then suddenly, you're not?" He was so observant. This little conversation we were having made me wonder if I even knew him at all.

"I was just shocked that you found out about it. It's not every day someone talks to me about that," I lied through my teeth, and I didn't feel bad about it. I needed to protect my secrets now.

"Hmm, what made you cry tonight? Was it your mother?" He looked away, his voice hinting at a little stress, but it could have been from anything.

"Yeah, I don't wanna talk about it," I held my hands, scratching the flesh between my fingers.

"Did you get yourself a gown?" he inquired.

"No, not really. I don't think I'll be coming to the ceremony," I excused, as it would be pointless for me to be there.

Now that I knew the engagement was definitely happening since I wouldn't be interrupting it, I needed to find a place to crash for the night.

"Why not?" Emmet asked, holding my sweater and studying the details with curiosity.

"My mother hates me, and I don't want to be at her engagement ceremony either," I shrugged.

"That will be too bad. I'll be alone too. Why not come and accompany me?" This was the most Emmet had ever spoken to me.

I never thought of him as talkative. He was usually quiet, focusing only on his own matters or the important stuff. So, this was a good change in him.

"You wouldn't be lonely. You have so many people who love you and know you. You'll get busy with them, and then I'll be the lonely one." I guess we were both just competing now over who was lonelier.

"Okay, well, I give you my word. You'll be my girl that night, okay?" My heart twisted, and I hated that feeling. Just a minute ago, I had been betrayed, and now my heart was already skipping a beat.

Talk about moving on quickly.

But with Emmet, it was different. He was the first one I had felt a mate bond with. And then—he had always been so respectful toward me.

"I'll take care of you," he explained when I went silent after his comment.

"Promise?" I asked, and he pouted so cutely.

"I'll take you shopping," he suggested out of the blue.

I smiled as I shook my head. "No, no! That would be too much."

"Actually, I was hoping you'd offer me help too, but okay," he shrugged, making me laugh.

"Sure, we can go shopping together then."

Wow. I never thought I would be smiling after such heartbreak.

Kudos to Emmet for always coming to my rescue.

"As for now, why don't you help me with, umm—rearranging my research papers?" he suggested in such a sweet tone that I couldn't say no to him.

Besides, it would really help me not think about Maximus, at least for a few minutes.

"Sure, I would love to do that." I got up from the bed, and he did too.

"You already know my room, don't you?" My eyes followed his back as he walked ahead of me. "I always forget to lock my doors."

I felt so guilty because it seemed like he knew I had been in his room.

We walked through the hallway, and once we got inside, he pointed at the open door.

"See, that's what I was talking about."

There was something so odd about the way he spoke. One would think he knew everything about a person, but then he would explain it in a way that made you unsure if he was certain or just guessing.

We walked into his room, and he tossed the papers onto the ground right before my eyes. "I guess the wind blew them."

At this point, it was obvious that he just wanted to distract me from whatever had upset me.

"Must've been a very powerful wind, professor," I joked, kneeling down to pick up the papers, but he waved his hand to stop me.

"I'll do that. You sit on the bed and go through this book. I want you to tell me what you think about it."

He handed me a new book that I guessed was written by him and gestured for me to sit on his bed.

Someone like him—who didn't allow maids or anyone to clean his room—I was expecting a messy bed. But his sheets were spotless and neatly tucked, his pillows were perfectly fluffed, and the blanket looked so cozy.

It felt a little weird sitting on his bed, but after being overly cautious with Maximus and still messing up, I decided to loosen up a bit. I needed to stop overanalyzing everything, taking every little thing as a romantic gesture, or considering it forbidden.

Yeah, I was losing my mind.

Still, I sat on his bed and held his book in my hands. He went ahead and rearranged his papers while I kept reading.

After he was done, he pulled up a chair next to his bed and sat down to discuss the book with me. But before doing so, he peeled open a chocolate bar and handed it to me.

He was so caring and thoughtful toward me.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 328-Jealousy Suits Him-Punishment Too

Chapter 328: 328-Jealousy Suits Him-Punishment Too

Helanie:

"Good morning," I greeted everyone as I joined them for breakfast. Only Norman and my mother were at the table.

I stayed up late last night reading Emmet's book with him. He was so talented. I didn't know he was writing his own book about different research topics and weapons. He even mentioned the findings of Purple Rose.

Norman just scoffed while going through a file, and my mother rolled her eyes. I sat across from her awkwardly.

The silence was so intense that if Norman's phone hadn't rung, we would have drowned in it.

He got up, answered his call, and walked away from us. It was as if fate wanted me to suffer.

Now that it was just my mom and me, anxiety started to rise in my body because I could tell she was getting ready to have a word with me.

"What happened to you yesterday?" she asked in a cold tone, her eyes on the door to make sure nobody saw her talking to me.

"You!" I replied with a sarcastic smile.

"If you hate me so much, and if this place is hurting you, why won't you leave?" She was so smart—wanting me gone so badly that she was now directly pointing out reasons why I should go.

"You think I wouldn't if I had an option?" I grunted, not breaking eye contact with her.

She fixed her posture and then grunted, "That sick bastard hurt you, didn't he?"

The sudden change in tone caught me off guard. But I figured it was because now I was her problem after my father kicked me out. Of course, she would hate him for leaving me to burden her now.

"It isn't anything new," I replied, looking down to adjust the already perfectly placed silverware.

"Helanie—you should—" She suddenly shut up when Norman returned.

He sat down, and the next people to join us were his father, Emma, and Charlotte. The two gave me a disdainful look before whispering to each other and then glancing at me. It was obvious they wanted me to know they were talking about me.

To think they had been told never to bully me again, yet they were still at it, just proved how full of resentment they were.

And then he arrived, wearing a gray shirt, his hair styled perfectly, and his eyes shining. Maximus tried to give me a smile, but before he could, I had already looked away.

After a few minutes of an awkward breakfast, I had to go outside and wait for Maximus so we could head to his garage.

It was going to be so hard for me to be around him and not tell him that I knew all about his game plan.

I slid into his passenger seat, and he sat in the driver's seat, all smiles.

Once we hit the road, he started tapping his fingers playfully on the steering wheel.

"You know, I kept remembering what you said to me last night—" he spoke sweetly, but I countered immediately.

"Which part?" I asked skeptically. Of course, he must have prepared this line in his head since morning, probably to fool me some more.

"Please be careful out there," he reminded me, not realizing I was testing him.

I don't know why, but now I felt like every time he opened his mouth, he was lying.

"I missed you so much," he continued, but I had already averted my attention to my phone when it beeped in my lap.

"Aha," I replied absentmindedly, not paying much attention to him but also trying to hold in my emotions while reading a strange text from Rudy.

Topsenior_Rudy: Okay! But then bring back my shoes.

I frowned and texted him back.

Me: Umm? Shoes?

Topsenior_Rudy: Sorry! That was meant for someone else.

Topsenior_Rudy: Damn, I feel so embarrassed. Trust me, I wasn't asking you to buy me shoes.

I bit the inside of my cheek to keep from smiling visibly.

Me: Got it 😊

Topsenior_Rudy: Well, now that I'm already in your DMs, might as well say hello!

I smiled again at how smooth he was. It made me think back to my time in school when I used to be obsessed with reading romance books about jocks.

I knew they had a certain way about them. Even when I was dating Altan, I never got to experience the flirting and perks of being a jock's girlfriend. I never felt that excitement.

Our relationship had been a mess—I wasn't supposed to be around him unless he wanted to pull me closer and show me off.

Now that I was spending more time around other people and receiving compliments, I realized I wasn't as bad-looking as Altan had made me feel. He always had some criticism ready for me.

"Rudy!"

I snapped back to reality when I heard Maximus say his name.

"What?" I asked, watching him park the car as we arrived at our destination.

"Why is he texting you so much?" I heard the jealousy in his voice.

Wow, he was such a great actor. If I hadn't overheard him talking to his mom about his plan to play me last night, I would have thought he was genuinely jealous.

"He's my senior," I reminded him, and he unbuckled his seatbelt, turning in his seat to face me.

"Don't tell me what I already know. I asked you why he's texting you and why you're giving him time that belongs to me," he asked more directly this time, making me bite my tongue to stop myself from saying too much.

"I'm not giving him your time. I'm just texting him back while you're driving," I responded, and I could tell my tone had turned much harsher.

Without waiting for him, I unbuckled my seatbelt and got out of his car, slamming the door a bit harder than I intended.

"Are you okay? You sound really angry today." He got out and asked while taking weapons from the trunk.

"I'm fine," I replied, purposely checking my phone just to annoy him.

"Okay, leave your phone in the car, Helanie. I won't tolerate disrespect," he warned, his patience already wearing thin.

Well, this was just the beginning.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 329-His Gameplan

Chapter 329: 329-His Gameplan

Helanie:

My heart wasn't ready to accept any excuses from Maximus, so I didn't confront him. He had asked me to leave my phone in the car, and I did. He was my boss at work, and I needed this money. I was waiting for the right moment to tell him I couldn't be with him. I wouldn't give him a reason or the satisfaction of knowing he had hurt me.

Not until the engagement ceremony was over.

Now, I wanted my mother to get engaged to Lord McQuoid so that Maximus and his mother could taste defeat.

"This was the last weapon for the day. From tomorrow, we'll test a few new ones and a few old ones, and then—we'll figure out a way for you to keep working even after the academy reopens." Not only was he distracted, but he had also been trying to make small talk with me all the time.

I could tell he had noticed the change in my behavior. I was much colder to him.

"Okay," I spoke without emotion, jotting down the last bits of the testing.

"And with that—we're free to spend the rest of the day together." He came from behind and suddenly kissed my cheek. My reaction was wild this time. I quickly stepped away from him and grimaced.

Oh, the look of shock on his face was worth watching. It wasn't just that he played with my feelings but also that he tried to make me talk about my past. He asked if I had any boyfriends or anything.

Was he trying to get me to name someone so he could later use it against me and call me a slut as part of his plan?

"Helanie? What is your problem?" He didn't use a harsh tone, but his eyes clearly showed he wasn't happy with how disgusted I looked.

"I'm not comfortable with you showing affection in public places where anyone can see us and start asking questions," I said, shutting the notebook and handing it over to him.

He stood before me with his hands on his waist and a very judgmental look on his face.

"Okay," he said in a way that told me he didn't believe my excuse, but he had no other choice.

"Did I make a mistake?" he asked again.

"No! Why do you keep asking me that? Did you do something I should know about?" I used a softer tone this time since I couldn't afford to make him openly challenge me.

I needed to handle this situation more carefully.

"No! Of course, I didn't," he said confidently.

"You know why you're feeling so low? It's because of the upcoming engagement ceremony, isn't it?" He finally looked relieved, as if he had just given himself an excuse.

"Correct. I guess that's it." I gave him a closed-lip smile while walking back to the car with him.

"Don't worry, everything will go fine. I'll take care of it," he reassured me while starting the car.

I guess he wanted us to keep talking, but I wasn't in the mood. I really didn't feel like talking to him. He noticed it too after I ignored him a few times. The car ride was tense for me.

Finally, when I could see the mansion in view, I put my phone down and straightened my back in the chair.

I was so ready to get out of the car. Being with him was uncomfortable in a way—because I had fallen for him. Basically, I was the only fool in love. And being betrayed again and again by men like him made me wonder if I always picked the wrong ones.

They came for me because they wanted something from me. I should be the one choosing someone for myself.

But I wasn't ready to do that anymore.

I jumped out of the car and almost ran to the front porch when Maximus caught up with me.

"Hey! What's the rush?" He slowed me down and eventually stopped me outside the door on the front porch.

"I was just uncomfortable in these boots. I want to take them off," I had the lie prepared in my head just in case I wasn't quick enough to get away from him.

"Then you should have told me. I would've bought you a whole shoe store." A line like that would have made me blush if I hadn't overheard his conversation with his mother yesterday.

For now, I faked a smile and nodded.

"You're such a flirt." My comment was dry, but even if he noticed, he didn't mention it.

Why would he?

He only cared about getting his job done.

And then there was my mate, who had lost his mind after I asked him for rejection.

"I'm yours," he still managed to say something sweet. "Anyway, I've found the perfect solution to your worries."

I was all ears, so I folded my arms over my chest and tilted my head in interest.

"We should tell everyone that we want to be each other's mates. That we're in love," he said, making me scoff in my heart.

Of course, he was such a player. He was following his mother's orders so carefully and attentively.

"I asked for some time, Maximus," I reminded him, but he immediately started shaking his head.

"It's been a week already. How much more time, Helanie? In one week, the ceremony will happen, and then what? I want this to be said so that—" he was talking when I cut him off.

"And why do you think making this public would be good for us? Do you think your father would stop the engagement for us?" I asked in a sharp tone, tired of his persistence.

At first, it seemed like he was just being affectionate, but now, it felt manipulative.

"Then I'll take you and disown myself. I can live in the woods or on the mountains as long as I have you by my side." In a confident and determined tone, he laid out another lie—one that, despite being false, still made my heart skip a beat.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 330-Mine Forever

Chapter 330: 330-Mine Forever

Charlotte:

Tears sprung down my eyes, whimpers forcing to leave my lips.

My heart seemed to stop beating as I heard them talk. Maximus had never spoken to me like that. He was so soft, so willing to submit to her.

The fact that I had seen his car pull up in the driveway and ran to the door to welcome him—only to hear him and Helanie talking outside—blew my mind. Why wouldn't he notice me?

He was begging her to accept him so he could take a step like stopping his father's engagement to Ursula.

That shocked me.

"And what about my academy?" I heard the ungrateful, manipulative witch ask him.

She wanted to continue her academy even after he told her he loved her?

I would have left my whole world behind for him.

That was the problem. Why couldn't Maximus see the difference between us?

"You can continue the academy, just that I won't be the trainer here. But rest assured, you will continue your academy. Norman will make it happen for me," he said.

I was losing my mind listening to them.

It was basically just him begging her to be with him.

I ran back to my room to avoid getting caught by them. Tears welled up in my eyes as I slammed the door shut and locked it.

"Where have you been? I was waiting for you—" My mom was sitting on my bed, cutting fruit for me when she saw me struggling to breathe.

"It's over—" I uttered with difficulty.

It felt like the world had collapsed on me.

Nothing looked alive anymore.

Just the memory of hearing Maximus talk so sweetly and profess his undying love for Helanie had scared me enough that I slid against the door and dropped to the floor with a thud.

"Char! What's wrong?" The only person who truly cared about me jumped off the bed and rushed toward me.

"Baby! What's wrong? Why are you crying? Did someone say something to you?" She started wiping my tears, but there was a whole sea ready to pour out, a volcano ready to erupt.

"Mom! It's all over," I continued, sobbing and hiccupping.

"Char, I can't see you like this. Please tell me what's wrong," my mother broke down just watching me cry.

I didn't want to worry her, but I couldn't hold it in anymore.

Helanie stole my Maximus from me.

"She—she stole him from me," I broke down even louder this time, covering my face with my hands before I started slapping and hitting myself.

My mother's fingers tightly gripped my wrists as she did her best to stop me from hurting myself.

But I was already hurting so badly. A few hits were nothing compared to losing Maximus.

"Listen to me, look at me!" My mom finally got a hold of my face and forced me to meet her eyes.

"Now tell me, what happened? Who stole whom?" she asked, her eyes already filled with tears before she even knew the full story.

"That slut—Helanie—she and Maximus—"

I didn't even have to explain further. My mother already knew what I was going to say next.

The widening of her eyes showed me her shock.

"They are... having an affair?" she whispered, trying to keep the words from reaching the walls.

I gave her a nod, enough for her to cover her mouth in utter disgust.

I told her everything I had heard between hiccups, and she listened to my cries attentively.

"I will fucking expose her to the council for this forbidden affair. I will make sure she dies a horrible death, a death like a pig's—" My breathing was out of control. My emotions were all over the place.

With every word I spoke, I gasped and then hiccupped.

"No! You won't do anything," my mother's stern voice pulled me out of my trauma, and I glared at her.

"You want me to sit and watch her have Maximus? Don't you know how much I love him?"

I shouldn't have to tell my mother about my love for Maximus. She knew everything about it.

"I grew up only loving one man, Mom. I never even wished to have anyone else in my life. I just wanted Maximus. I could go live in the woods with him, work hard, and even clean houses if that's what it takes. I just want Maximus. If I have him, I don't want anything else," I said.

Saying those things out loud took me back to the moment I stood outside and heard Maximus convincing Helanie to accept him.

Why did he need to beg her?

Why?

If he had asked me, I would have bowed at his feet.

But he overlooked my love for him and went after the obvious seductress. Of course, he did.

Women like her are so clever. And girls like me—shy and innocent—are always left behind in these situations.

"You're not getting my point. It seems like the only reason they aren't together is because Helanie is afraid of everyone finding out. So if you expose them, Maximus will just take her and leave. Once the truth is out, Lord McQuoid will definitely tell them to go. Do you really want to help them? Let's keep it a secret for now," my mother argued.

She wasn't getting it.

Every passing second was dangerous for us. Maximus and Helanie could tell his father about them, and then it would all be over.

"I can—I can get her killed."

I snapped out of my misery and looked back at my mother, hope shining in my eyes.

"You've gone mad. Just shut up and do as I say. I will make sure they never happen. I just need to pass the right information to Ursula at the right time. Ursula will take care of her messy daughter herself," my mom grunted, her eyes filled with tears as she watched me cry.

I would go above and beyond to have Maximus.

He is mine, and he will only be mine.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 331-The Lycan Always Forgets

Chapter 331: 331-The Lycan Always Forgets

Helanie:

I was on the verge of breaking down after hearing Maximus express his fake love for me. It was truly heartbreaking.

Just a few months ago, Kaye had said something similar to me.

He had asked me to accept him, and he would leave with me. But he didn't want to wait.

And then tonight, Maximus said the same thing—but he was lying.

Altan used to make such crazy promises in the coldest tone as well.

It was always like that.

No one had ever fulfilled their promises to me.

"Maybe I'm really not that special for someone to be honest and loyal to me," I whispered, covering my face in my hands and sniffing as my tears soaked my palms.

"What will I do after I reject Maximus and refuse to be in a relationship with him? Will he openly try to hurt me? What will happen to my revenge when such a powerful man is after me, trying to take me down?"

I was losing my mind, disgusted with myself for getting tangled up in yet another mess.

If I had avoided this from the start, I would have been fine.

No heartbreak.

No pain.

I would have just focused on myself.

I had been so happy to have my wolf, but now, that happiness and small victory were overshadowed by Maximus's betrayal.

That night, I went straight to bed because I had other plans for the morning.

Lamar, Gavin, and I had talked about going to the library to find a way to help Lucy.

However, we were going to tell Gavin about the tenth floor in the morning so our research would start in the right direction.

I woke up before breakfast and even left the mansion early to avoid seeing anyone. I planned to meet up with my friends, and then Lamar would drop me off directly in the woods where Maximus would be waiting for me.

That was another issue I needed to solve.

After rejecting Maximus, I would need a new job. I didn't think working with him would be good for my mental health.

He would make my life miserable—I knew he was capable of it.

I remembered how, in the beginning, he had hated me. I mean, he still did.

But before he faked affection for me, he was clever and vindictive.

I would need to stay far away from him.

"Hey," I waved my hand, slowing down when I saw Sage and Rudy standing behind Lamar and Gavin near Benita's café.

"Sorry for crashing your meetup, but I was so curious that I couldn't sit still when I saw Lamar and Gavin show up on his bike," Sage mumbled in one breath, laughing awkwardly at herself.

"Oh no, that's fine," I said, forcing a smile as I waved my hand.

I had a bad feeling she was here to talk about the Lycan.

She had a weird obsession with catching that Lycan.

"I just wanted to ask Gavin a few questions, and I'll be quick," Sage said, shifting her attention to him.

"Yeah, sure. What's it about?" Gavin asked, his expression matching the curiosity of the rest of us.

"That Lycan—you saw him transition, right?" she asked, her excitement evident.

"No!" he replied bluntly.

"Oh! Then walk us through your time in the cave," she said, using hand gestures to show her eagerness.

As Gavin began speaking, I noticed Rudy glancing at me, only to quickly look away when I caught him.

Now that was something new.

"I was on the mountain when night fell. I had been up there for days at that point, but that one night, things got out of hand. I was unable to defend myself because I had run out of flashlight power, food, and basically everything I needed to survive. I felt something attack me from behind. The next thing I knew, my body was free-falling off the mountain. But then, the Lycan grabbed me and dragged me to his cave. He was so scary and—" Gavin grimaced at the memory of being trapped with the Lycan.

"So, he attacked you and then took you to his cave?" Sage clarified as he nodded.

"That's what I remember," he answered.

"And what about, um—your time in the cave?" she asked, her fingers anxiously fidgeting.

"He put me in there and left. I hid in his cave, and by the time he came back, he was covered in blood—like he had eaten something, or maybe someone. The smell of blood was rich and... powerful. It was like whoever he ate was a high-ranking werewolf or someone with immense power," Gavin's face paled as he recalled the details.

It must have been horrifying for him.

"Hmm... and he didn't eat you?" Sage asked directly this time.

"Actually, no, he didn't. He just came and left. It was like he forgot he had put me in there. There were times when he would appear in the cave, looking lost—like he was trying to remember if he had been there before. That's when I started noticing that he doesn't remember what he did the night before."

That was the key to our answers.

A huge revelation.

We all exchanged shocked looks before turning back to Gavin.

"Great! So that means if he broke the cameras when trashing the cave, he wouldn't even remember doing it," Sage let out a deep sigh of relief and then smiled confidently.

So this had been worrying her.

Of course, it was something to be concerned about.

But right when Gavin made that revelation, one of my biggest worries was answered as well.

So the Lycan wouldn't remember that I was his mate?

Is that why Norman wanted to ask me if I was in the woods?

So—he's really a Lycan?

Petrified, I began to sweat.

All this time, I had convinced myself that he probably lied just to stop me from asking about the Lycan.

But now I was certain.

It has to be him.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 332-I Know Your Truth

Chapter 332: 332-I Know Your Truth

Helanie:

Sage and Rudy were gone after that. Lamar and I told Gavin all about the tenth floor so that we could look at Lucy's case with a new motive and fresh ideas.

"That is creepy—so there is a survivor?" Gavin had been too shocked ever since he heard us tell him everything about the tenth floor.

"Yep! Seems like there was one. Helanie seems to have a weird magnetic pull that attracts these entities," Lamar joked, but it stuck with me.

He wasn't wrong.

First Rune, and now the entity from the tenth floor.

"But finding the survivor would be difficult. You said Professor Norman promised to help you. Has he found out anything yet?" Gavin inquired, and I rolled my eyes.

"He is just full of talk. We will have to find out for ourselves. We'll go to the library and check everything about the abandoned building that is now an academy," I suggested, watching them nod in agreement.

"But first, I want to go meet Lucy. I haven't been able to visit her because I feel like if she hears me talk, she will be so upset," Gavin muttered, quickly finishing his sandwich to make it seem like he wasn't crying.

Lamar and I shared a glance as we agreed with him. Gavin took a cab while I went to the hospital with Lamar.

"Lucy!" The minute Gavin entered her room, he broke down beside her bed. She was sleeping so peacefully, but she needed to wake up.

"Please just forgive me. I am ready for any punishment you give me, just please—," Gavin lowered his head, his tears wetting his palms.

I guess we all make mistakes, but this kind of punishment is hard to watch.

"You know, we grew up as friends. Her family was our neighbors. When my dad left me and my mom, her mother stepped up and did everything she could to help us out. And to think—I am the reason her daughter is in this state today. You know, she hates me. When I went back home, she was at the door, and she cursed at me," he sniffled, constantly trying to wipe his eyes with the back of his hand. "She said I will never be happy, and she is not wrong. I can never be happy," he continued.

"She said she wishes she hadn't helped us so that I would have starved to death in my childhood. And who can blame her? She fed a monster, and then the monster grew up and fed on her daughter," Gavin was out of breath, hiccupping when Lamar patted his back and offered him a glass of water.

"We will find a way to bring her back, Gavin. Remember, we are going to look for the survivor? I'm pretty sure there will be some information in the library about it," I spoke gently, choosing my words carefully.

"And then Professor Norman might have some information for us as well," Lamar gave me a look, reminding me not to dismiss Norman's help. At least it would help Gavin feel hopeful.

He was really in despair, and we needed him in a sane mind to do proper research. Besides, we couldn't lose another friend.

"You heard me, Luce! I will find a way for you to wake up and be on your feet again. After you left the academy, nothing has been the same—" he was crying hysterically when my eyes moved to Lucy's face.

"Is she—" I noticed some expressions forming on her face.

"Lamar—" I held his hand and shook it, signaling him to look at Lucy.

Lamar looked as shocked as I was.

She was slowly shaking, her eyes moving, and then she gasped loudly as her eyes shot open.

"Lucy!" I yelped, covering my mouth.

"I'll go fetch the doctor," Lamar ran out after informing us. Gavin slowly raised his face, his eyes growing wide at the sight of Lucy waking up.

"Lucy, oh my goodness," I clapped, tearing up. Gavin got up and stared at me.

"Come on, she is awake." I hugged him, jumping up and down.

He started to smile slowly before turning to Lucy. "Hey!"

She was breathing heavily at this point, but at least she was awake. The doctors arrived, and they practically kicked us out to do a thorough checkup on her.

We waited outside the whole time, excited to have her back, when Lamar showed up with Maximus and Emmet beside him.

"So, great news?" Norman asked the doctor the minute he came out, just as Norman reached the door.

"That's a miracle. She just woke up," the doctor's words ran through my ears like a sweet melody.

We were sitting on the bench, holding hands.

I raised my head to Maximus, who gave me a smile, and mine started to fade away.

"Can I see her?" Norman asked, and when the doctor allowed him, he walked into the room with Emmet.

However, Maximus decided to come up to us first.

"Are you all happy now?" He looked so happy to see me happy, as if I didn't know the truth.

"Yes, she is back," Gavin, who didn't know that the man before him was a cunning manipulator, replied joyfully.

"Well, I'm glad your friend is back. At least you guys will be less stressed now." Gavin didn't notice, but Lamar followed Maximus's eyes when he spoke directly to me.

"Yeah," I replied but looked down. That's when Maximus went inside to join his brothers.

"Someone is way too head over heels in love with you," Lamar whispered in my ear, but I elbowed him to make him keep his posture.

How do I tell him, without sounding like a crybaby, that I got played yet again?

After the brothers left, we were told not to meet Lucy just yet. She needed rest, and they didn't want to exhaust her too soon.

Meanwhile, I found a moment to comfort Norman.

He was on his phone outside the hospital when I arrived behind him and said, "You are a Lycan, and you forget what you did once you transition back into your human form."

I swear his body tensed up, and in that moment, I knew I was right.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 333-As A Mother Should

Chapter 333: 333-As A Mother Should

Helanie:

"I cannot wait to see her again. When can we see her? Did they say anything?" I asked Lamar after I entered the mansion. Norman didn't stop and dashed away after I made a confession to knowing his truth.

It was crazy that the minute he dropped me off, I called him again. I was genuinely happy. After suffering a bad heartbreak, I finally received good news.

"The doctor said she first needs to heal and go back home. Since it's very rare, almost impossible, for a werewolf to come out of a coma, they want to be careful with her," Lamar relayed the information. But the happiness in his tone was enough for me. Both Gavin and Lamar were overjoyed.

Gavin still wanted to stay with Lamar because he knew Lucy would be going home soon, and he didn't want her to smell his scent and get emotional.

"Okay, then we will meet her together," I said before we said our goodbyes.

Part of the reason I suddenly cut the call was because Charlotte was standing in front of my bedroom door with her hands on her waist.

"What is it now, Charlotte?" She should have gotten the hint of exhaustion in my voice and left me alone. But knowing Charlotte, that was not something she planned on doing.

"Why did you ruin my dress?" she asked, making me frown and narrow my eyes at her.

There were mixed emotions on her face that I couldn't understand. I knew she hated me and enjoyed bullying me. But that day, as she stood before my door and accused me of something I hadn't done, she looked more determined than ever to get me in trouble.

"What dress? I wasn't even home the entire day," I gestured for her to move away so I could get inside.

But she refused and extended her arm to block my path.

"Don't lie to me. You were jealous that your mother got that dress for me, and it hurt your feelings. Now come on, apologize to me!" she suddenly started screaming out of nowhere, causing me to step away from her. That's when Lord McQuoid walked in from his office, watching Charlotte yell at me.

"What is going on here?" He looked tired, as always, from watching us argue.

"She is accusing me—" Before I could explain that she was losing her mind, Charlotte started talking over me.

"She ruined my dress—the dress your mate got for me!" Charlotte broke down so loudly that my eyes nearly jumped out of their sockets.

Just a minute ago, she seemed fine. Angry and enraged, sure! But no way was she about to cry.

"Helanie, is that true?" Lord McQuoid asked me.

At that moment, I really wanted to ask him—how did he give birth to such cunning and manipulative kids? He wasn't very smart himself, was he?

"No, I didn't. I wasn't even home the entire day," I quickly defended myself. "Besides, I didn't even go near her room or her dress. I haven't even seen it," I added in a desperate tone.

"Okay, okay! I will fix this matter. Charlotte, you will go with my son and get yourself another gown—" As Lord McQuoid suggested that, Charlotte was already on board.

"Sure, please ask Maximus to take me. The others don't really like me," she pouted, acting as if Maximus liked her.

But then again, I didn't know anymore. It could be that whatever Maximus told me was a lie. Maybe he did sleep with her.

I didn't want to defend Maximus in my head anymore.

"Okay, I will do that. Happy now?" Lord McQuoid asked her so nicely that I already felt like a guilty person.

I lowered my head and walked past them while she was all smiles, and he was acting all fatherly toward her.

Once in my room, I gave it some thought and decided to go speak with Lord McQuoid alone. I wanted him to know I really didn't do it.

I left my room to go to Lord McQuoid's room, the one he shared with my mother—the same room that used to belong to his ex. I was near the door when I heard him talking with my mother.

"Helanie ruined her dress." My heart sank in my chest.

"Says who?" my mom asked.

"Charlotte accused Helanie of ruining her dress. She was crying so much, it broke my heart for the poor girl. She tries so hard to be liked by everyone. And then my sons—and today, the dress too," he said, hinting that he believed Charlotte.

Of course, she was his favorite. I was beginning to see it clearly now.

I wanted to go back to my room, pack my stuff, and leave. I would go live anywhere in the rogue community. Of course, I couldn't stay too long in a pack with Lamar since I didn't belong to any pack either.

But my steps paused when I heard my mother's response to his accusations.

"Helanie didn't do it." Her tone was harsh but confident.

"I'm not saying she did. I'm saying Charlotte thinks Helanie did it. But someone else surely did it to mess with her." I wasn't sure if Lord McQuoid was accusing his own sons. They wouldn't even walk past her.

I mean, they weren't that childish.

Norman could be.

He was pretty annoying and childish. Yes! He seemed like the type who would steal a lollipop from a child.

"I'm not sure about your sons, but I know Helanie. She's not that type. I don't love her or anything, but at least I know her. Besides, she didn't even stay in the house today. Her friend woke up in the hospital, so she went straight there," my mother said.

I was shocked to hear her defend me.

It was a little thing, but it was something.

And she knew about my whereabouts. How?

She also said she knows me. Was that a compliment?

"I know. I'm not saying Helanie did it. I'm also happy her friend woke up. Are you happy now? She's doing fine. Helanie is a warrior."

That conversation felt so out of place to me.

Why were they even talking about me in the first place?

I thought my mother didn't even acknowledge me.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 334-His Empty Threats

Chapter 334: 334-His Empty Threats

Helanie:

I returned to my room, and at that moment, I saw a maid rushing out of it. I frowned and instantly entered to see what she had been doing in my room when I found a dress lying on the bed.

It was the most beautiful purple gown in a plastic cover. It was a beautiful one.

"Maybe Emmet got me this dress." I quickly uncovered it, and a huge smile spread across my lips—until I read the little note on the side.

"This will look good on you, pumpkin!"

Tears started to sting my eyes, my nose getting stuffy as I realized who the dress was from. It was not from Emmet.

"Mom!" I hissed.

Why was she suddenly doing this for me? There's no way she doesn't have a plan in mind to get me in trouble. I know her well. And I also know she would never be kind enough to get anything for me.

I put the dress in the closet for later. I'll see what to do.

The rest of the day was quiet for me. I did some assignments and worked out until it was time for me to head out again for training.

"Let's see. He'll have to open up eventually."

Norman was standing with Emmet outside the mansion near his car. He had his arm folded over the roof of the car, his other hand running through his hair nonstop, while Emmet was casually drinking from a bottle.

"Ready?" Norman saw me and asked with a quick jerk of his head.

I only gave him a nod in response.

Emmet subtly slipped his hand down and hid the bottle behind his back, as if he didn't want me to see him drinking. It could be because he was my professor. I also didn't look at him until I was sure he had hidden the bottle.

I would hate to make him uncomfortable.

"Going for training?" Emmet asked, clearing his throat.

A huge smile spread across my face while watching him talk to me.

He was so special and decent. His maturity always surprised me.

"Yeah, I'm trying to get ready before the combat classes," I replied, and he started nodding his head.

"That's actually a very good idea. I see you're doing very well, but Helanie, you shouldn't tire yourself. Going to the hospital, then to the woods for your job, and then training—don't you think that's too much?" He continued to show concern, asking me in a worried tone.

Standing next to him made me look so small. But it was Norman's scoff that pulled my attention away from Emmet.

"She's a pretty annoying person. And such people never get tired," he remarked while getting in his car.

I could tell the brothers were joking with each other, but why did Norman have to put me down to laugh?

"Come on, blonde, we're getting late," he said, snapping his fingers with his hand extending out of the car.

"If you're free, I'll take you out shopping tomorrow." Emmet was strangely calm as he offered to shop with me.

Training went well. Actually, pretty well. Norman taught me some moves for attacking and defending myself. And luckily enough, my wolf was still sharing her strength with me. That was the best part of her waking up.

But I just couldn't wait to talk with her. Having someone to talk to would be so much better than being alone.

"We'll work on your reflexes tomorrow," Norman said, getting in the car while I rushed after him to sit with him.

"How is Kaye?" I asked the minute he started the car.

"He's fine and none of your business," he replied coldly, fixing the mirror and then tapping his fingers on the steering wheel.

"He's my mate, of course I care about him," I retorted, feeling judged.

"Well, he's your mate that you don't want. So basically, you have no right over him," he continued to drive and talk without any emotion.

"Still—can't I even ask how he is?" I got so defensive that I raised my voice.

And obviously, he didn't like it.

"Will you shut up? Or I'll drop you right here and make you walk—" he threatened as he suddenly parked the car on the side of the road.

That's when I pushed the door open and jumped out of the car.

"Helanie—" he grunted, getting anxious as I slammed the door and started walking.

"Get back in the car," he yelled, leaning on the door.

"No!" I yelled back.

"Helanie, it's not safe out here after dark," he muttered through clenched teeth this time.

"Then you shouldn't make threats," I yelled back, briskly walking away.

But the minute he started walking, it was so obvious.

His heavy steps and long strides made him catch up to me in no time. Even when I was doing my best to get away fast, he had already reached me.

"I was just—get in the car, Helanie," he spoke in his deep tone, standing tall and broad in front of me, blocking my path.

"Then I'll drive," I hissed as he placed his hands on his waist, lowering his body a little to look me in the eye.

"Do you even know how to drive?" he asked in a low tone.

"No! But I want to so I can run into a tree and get you killed," I hissed, stomping my foot.

He gets under my nerves every time.

He's always so harsh to me.

And about Kaye—I didn't mean to hurt him. I asked for rejection because he had already made his choice over me. Why drag me with him?

"Okay, you can do that some other time. Besides, a little accident won't hurt me," he said, walking back to his car.

Reluctantly, I followed him.

After I sat in the car, he silently drove us back home. And the minute I got out, I slammed the door shut on purpose.

I could hear him grunt in complaint every time I did that.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 335-A Hooker And Her Pimp

Chapter 335: 335-A Hooker And Her Pimp

Helanie:

"I like this one," I said, touching a pink gown and smiling at Emmet. He looked so fresh wearing all black. The girls around wouldn't stop eyeing him all the time. They looked at him as if he was some kind of meal.

Of course, it was exhausting since he was my mate, and I knew I wouldn't ever be with him, and one of these girls would hold hands with him in the future.

"I think it will look great on you," Emmet signaled to the helper nearby, and in the next few minutes, I had made up my mind to buy this dress.

However, I didn't have enough credit for it. It was really expensive, and my budget was low.

"From me," Emmet gently touched my bag to lower it after he noticed I had been struggling to tell him that I didn't want such an expensive gown.

"But I don't want you to pay for anything. Every time you do it for me, I feel a brick of burden added to my back," I wasn't exaggerating one bit. It was indeed true.

His help meant a lot, but that didn't mean I could keep asking for more and more.

"You know I will still buy it, right?" Emmet gave a smooth stroke to the strands of hair that kept messing around his forehead and extended his arm out to the cashier with his card in his hand.

I looked around awkwardly, noticing the girls elbowing each other while staring at Emmet. They kept giggling and seductively pushing their chests out or pulling their dresses down for a good view. And not going to lie, they were gorgeous. They had amazing bodies. How is it possible to walk out of the house, and everyone you see looks like a social media model?

"And show us some beautiful glass slippers too." My heart flipped in my chest when Emmet asked for the glass slippers. A little laugh had just escaped my lips when I caught him looking at me. I didn't care about the others, but Emmet's eyes on me made me shyly explain to him.

"When I was little, I was obsessed with glass slippers. I would always imagine going to my 18th birthday ball wearing glass slippers," I overshared, but since he listened very attentively, steadily blinking his eyes, I kept talking.

"And, did you go to the ball wearing glass slippers?" he asked, tilting his head.

"No! I was a rogue—," I hid my ugly truth with a less painful lie. Being a rogue would have been wonderful compared to being in that situation.

"Hmm," Emmet lowered his head and then signaled for me to try on the slippers. They were beautiful. The minute I slipped them onto my feet, I smiled and nodded my head to buy these ones.

"You really look like Cinderella," he commented so softly that I forgot to thank him. But the stain from blushing too hard was still visible on my face.

"But don't ever wait for a prince to come to your rescue," he commented, holding all the bags himself and not letting me carry anything. He also got himself a suit. Our shopping was done, and going with him was amazing. He was so mature and caring about little details that I never got bored of his company.

"Is it not good to have someone who loves you and protects you?" I asked, slipping into the passenger seat with him.

"Not that it is bad or anything. It's just that you won't find someone like that, and it will break your heart. So become someone of your own first, and then look for love. But

remember, don't be afraid to toss a person out of your life if they hurt you, and then don't shed a single tear for them. You got it?" He pointed his finger at me as he sat down, and in that moment, I don't know what happened—my heart skipped a beat.

His eyes deepening into mine made me gulp and then nod my head weakly. He was so adorable.

"Are we heading home now?" I questioned, and he gently shook his head.

"Now we will eat something first and then head back home, if that's okay with you and if you don't have to be somewhere else," he asked, and I happily gave him a head nod.

I had nowhere to be. But Maximus had been blowing up my phone—to the point that I had put my phone on silent.

We went to the same Benita's Café since her pack was the closest, and we had already shopped from the pack's mall.

We entered the café, and as always, Benita rolled her eyes at my arrival.

Everyone was gawking at Emmet, but he was casually making his way past the tables to get us one at the very end.

Once we two settled, Benita quickly took the menu card from the waitress to come speak with Emmet herself.

"Emmet McQuoid, you finally showed up," she had a huge fake smile on her lips, her eyes shooting daggers at me whenever she could.

"How are you, Benita?" he asked, clearing his throat.

"I am great. But how are you? You stopped coming here a few years ago. I still remember when you and your brothers used to come play with Kedron," she mentioned her son, probably. He was the only one she spoke about whenever the brothers or Penn showed up. I had gathered from her that she had only one child, and he was in the Fellmoon Academy.

"Right, how is he now?" Emmet inquired, his thick eyelashes blinking before he caught Benita's eyes on me. "She is Helanie. A special student and also—my soon-to-be stepsister."

It was amazing whenever he introduced me because he used my academy title first, but the latter part always drained my energy.

For some reason, him calling me his stepsister just made me wonder if he really had no clue about the mate bond we shared or if he just didn't care.

"Oh!" There was a clear sign of discomfort on her face, and in that moment of disappointment, she blurted out something that left me paralyzed.

"Then you must take care of her. You know, I found her on the hooker's street with her pimp."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 336-My Heart Skips A Beat Whenever He Speaks

Chapter 336: 336-My Heart Skips A Beat Whenever He Speaks

Helanie:

My jaw had hit the floor, and Emmet seemed stunned too. I glared at her, but she kept going.

"I would have never said anything, but she is a young girl. And I was shocked why her family let her sell herself—," she shut up when Emmet closed his eyes and raised a finger to ask for a minute.

"You mean to say—," Emmet opened his eyes and stretched his neck, but this time, his eyes had determination in them, "when I gave her a task to go do a little research on the people of Hooker's Street, you thought she was selling herself?"

I was taken aback by his statement. She looked between us before shaking her head and awkwardly smiling.

"She was with that guy Lamar—," the way she threw Lamar into the mix made a knot form in my stomach. I hated her taking my friend's name. But before I could defend him, Emmet spoke up again.

"Do you know who Lamar is?" he asked, his leg beginning to shake.

"Yeah, he is the guy who—" she was cut off as Emmet added.

"He is her fellow, a great academy student, and was in the project with her. I wanted the two to prove to us they were capable of doing such a little task before they got the forms from us."

Emmet was so confidently defending me that I began to wonder if that was indeed why I had gone to Hooker's Street in the first place.

"Oh!" The look of terror on her face as she held her hand to her face was worth watching. But that didn't mean she hadn't done any damage to me. She had caused me misery by telling Emmet about my rendezvous on the street with Lamar. Not to mention, Lamar got dragged into the mix for nothing.

"I am so sorry. Why didn't you tell me all this time?" Benita asked me directly, and it made Emmet tap his fingers on the table.

"All this time? Have you been running your mouth all this time? She is just eighteen years old. Why would you keep talking about it if you care so much about her well-being?" His tone suddenly turned harsh, making her look around as her servers started to notice the commotion.

"I am sorry. I was just worried for her," that was all she could say, obviously.

"No! You weren't," I wouldn't let it slide. "You were taunting me. I remember how you made me cry when you name-called me in front of everyone and even told me that I wouldn't get the job because I am that kind of girl," I reminded her, watching her face change color as her eyes kept moving to Emmet for a response.

"Get up, Helanie," he spoke, slamming his hand on the table and scaring me. "We will not eat here."

"Emmet! It is not like that. I may have said the wrong stuff, but that is because my son is becoming an Alpha, and if someone had seen her here—it would have been a problem for my son. He really works hard to keep his image clean—just give me one chance," she started to plead.

Of course, she was begging before Emmet because of his status in the academy. I had heard her mention it to Penn before that she wanted the trainers from RVS to give her son private lessons and training.

"Emmet, it is fine. I am very forgiving."

I watched her jaw tighten before she forced a smile at me when I took her side. I didn't want to let go of this place since everyone from the academy comes here to eat. Lamar loves this place too, as he says the nachos she makes remind him of his sister.

I can forgive her for Lamar.

"You serious?" Emmet questioned, and only after I gave him a reassuring look did he accept the menu out of her hands.

"But be careful next time, Benita. It's not good to gossip. Those hookers work hard for themselves. They are better than those men or women who steal, hurt, and taunt others. They're minding their own business—you should mind your own," he advised her before dismissing her with a hand gesture.

Once he placed the order and she left, I cleared my throat to explain myself to him.

"Back when I was getting admission and had no money for supplies or food—I did go to Hooker's Street. It wasn't Lamar's fault, though. I asked him to take me. I didn't do anything, though, because I realized I wasn't really good for it. I was useless." I smiled as I laid my truth before him.

I knew he would raise some questions and probably not believe my words, but after I finished, he smiled calmly.

His hand extended on the table, holding the ketchup bottle he kept playing with. In a deep and steady voice, he replied, "I know you didn't do anything. I trust your words. But Helanie, even if you did, you were a consenting adult. Look around and tell me if you think any of these people haven't had sex before. They all have—so what makes a hooker different from them? You never know under what conditions they took that job. And even if they did it for money, at least they are working hard instead of stealing from people. Remember never to feel guilty over something that is no one's business but yours and as long as no laws are broken."

His words flowed perfectly from his lips, his eyes determinedly looking into mine.

It was the second time today that he made my heart skip a beat. He was unlike anyone I had ever met.

"And next time someone talks about hookers in a taunting way, take a stand for them," he finished, making me smile widely.

"And keep smiling—you have a pretty smile."

I don't know why he had to add a compliment, but that was when my heart skipped a beat for the third time.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 337-The Venue Full Of Gorgeous People

Chapter 337: 337-The Venue Full Of Gorgeous People

Helanie:

We had a great time. Emmet was so thoughtful. He talked about so many interesting and engaging topics. His calm and deep voice was so captivating that I could listen to him for hours.

Once we arrived home, we found Maximus taking a walk in the parking area. Of course, he looked anxious. And I knew why.

He had been texting me, asking why I told him I couldn't go shopping with him but went with his brother instead.

"You go ahead, I'll bring your bags to your room," Emmet said. He obviously didn't know Maximus was waiting to confront me and not him. But it worked for me, as it helped me escape quickly.

I got out of the car, watching Maximus stop and glare at me, and then rushed toward the main entrance.

I could tell the brothers had talked.

I was in my room when Emmet knocked on the door with my stuff.

The door was slightly open, but he was a gentleman.

After getting a nod from me, he came inside with the dress in the cover.

"Have a great night, okay?" he said, stepping out. But that's when Maximus came into view, holding my shoebox and other small bags with the jewelry that Emmet had insisted on buying for me.

I guess Maximus had asked Emmet to let him carry the other bags.

Once he was inside, he put the box and the bags down and stood with his hands on his waist.

His eyes told me he had a lot of complaints about me.

"What is going on with you? You're acting distant today. Even in the woods, you kept talking about others. Did I do something to upset you?" There was a hint of sadness in Maximus's voice. But I knew better than to believe him anymore.

He had fooled me before. I wouldn't let him or anyone else play me again.

"I'm actually really tired these days."

The lack of response from me made him slam the door shut, startling me.

"No, Helanie. You're lying to me. Something is going on, or else you wouldn't have gone out with Emmet, spent the entire day with him, and ignored all my texts," he hissed, stepping closer and leaning down to point his finger in my face.

"Now, here's what's going to happen. You will tell me what's really going on with you. I'll be busy for the next three days, but I want to know the truth," he said in a harsh tone, as if he was genuinely hurt.

Maybe he was truly worried and could see his plan failing.

"The engagement ceremony is in three days, Helanie. Three days! I want your answer before that. If it's too hard for you to tell me anything, or if you're too busy to respond, then give me your silence on our relationship, and I'll take the hint and call off the engagement on the day itself. It will turn into their breakup ceremony," he shocked me with his ultimatum. He was making sure to ruin things for his father and my mother.

And once he cancels the engagement in such a dramatic way, there will be no turning back.

He wanted to do this so that everyone would find out, making it difficult for my mother and his father to recover from that embarrassment.

I remained silent while Maximus walked out of my room, slamming the door shut once again.

At that moment, I started to wonder if I should just tell him that I wasn't ready for this. Because if I didn't say anything, he would take my silence as a sign. And he would go for it.

After spending hours in my room, finally, when the clock struck 1 AM, I began to write a text for him.

I had a really bad feeling about his reaction. Of course, his response wouldn't be anything like Kaye's because Kaye was genuinely hurt. But Maximus would be angry that I had ruined his game.

Me: I have been thinking about it a lot, and I have come to the realization that I am not ready to be in a relationship yet. I haven't found my fated mate. And it's not that I didn't like you—I did. But remember, you asked me to give you a chance and then decide? I gave you a chance, and I have decided—we are not compatible. I would be grateful if you didn't hold it against me and let me live in peace.

Of course, my message reeked of anger and fear that his reaction would be explosive. I wouldn't have been so harsh if I hadn't overheard his conversation with his mother and realized I had to walk away from him.

But I was ready to be with him. And that part angered me.

He didn't read my text until 3 AM, when I was jolted awake by the loud rattling of the windows and noticed that he had finally read it.

However, he never responded to me.

Worried and confused, I dozed off again. Staying awake would only make me stress out more.

When I woke up, just as Maximus had said, he was gone—along with Norman. I heard that Norman had asked him to help with some errands and clean one of the second-floor rooms for a guest.

"Good morning," I greeted as I joined the rest for breakfast. Only Emmet was present from the brothers.

"Morning," Lord McQuoid greeted me back, while Emmet gave me a nod.

Charlotte kept glaring at me, her fingers tightly wrapped around her fork.

I was shocked by her glare. I hadn't even done anything this time.

"I'm sorry that Maximus couldn't go with you. But at least your mom helped you get a gown." It was then that Lord McQuoid explained the reason behind her anger. Every time one of the brothers scolded her or messed up, she would take her anger out on me.

"Dad, Mom texted—Norman is preparing the room for her. She has invited herself to your engagement ceremony."

It seemed like the tough job of delivering that news to his father was left on Emmet's shoulders. And right off the bat, the air grew thick with tension.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 338-The Awkward Ceremony

Chapter 338: 338-The Awkward Ceremony

Helanie:

"That is creepy. Why does she want to come to the ceremony?" The horrified look remained on my mother's face throughout breakfast until she finally spoke up while leaving the room with Lord McQuoid.

I caught the gist of it, and it confused me a little. She was actually right. It was weird for an ex-mate to invite herself to her ex-mate's engagement ceremony.

"Helanie!" Charlotte cleared her throat, her fork hitting the plate hard. "You should start preparing for my engagement ceremony too. It will happen very soon." There was a strange mockery in her voice, though a smile remained on her lips.

"Of course, I will be preparing it myself since I will be the happiest to watch you go," I rolled my eyes before getting up from the chair. Emmet and the others had already left.

Charlotte grunted but didn't argue since there were many people around today. The mansion was being decorated for the beautiful ceremony, and the venue was the mansion's royal garden.

I stayed in my room for the rest of the day. I would occasionally check my phone to see if Maximus had responded. Nope! He had not.

And then, after hours of not hearing from him, I heard his laughter from outside my room and couldn't help but peek out. He was now standing on the porch with Norman, holding a cup of coffee and sharing a good laugh with him.

It was a clear reminder to me that he wasn't affected by my rejection. I just wished he had shown some resentment. But I guess it was true—he didn't care at all.

So every word he had ever said to me was a lie.

I was so upset that I went to my bed and didn't wake up for any meals. When I woke up, I found Lamar had left me so many texts.

He told me that Gavin and he were invited to the ceremony and that they wanted to ask if they should come.

I told them they should because I would be attending the ceremony too. The academy students had all been sent invitations.

The next two days were kind of a blur, as everyone was only focused on the preparations. The brothers were barely around.

While everyone was preparing for the ceremony, I was focusing on my training. Norman would manage to find some time to meet me in the woods, and after he left, I would practice with his guard. I was getting much better at the moves. And so far, my wolf strength hadn't left me, so I was very hopeful.

My mother's engagement ceremony was on the last day of the lunar eclipse. And two days later, the academy was reopening too.

Of course, I knew I would finally have a talk with Maximus. I was just curious how it would go. Would he threaten me for ruining his plan and reveal his true intentions to me, or would he simply discard me as a failed mission?

Now, the day had arrived. My heart was pounding in my chest as I got ready in my pink gown.

Lord McQuoid had hired makeup artists and hairstylists for all the women in his mansion, including me.

With my hair styled like a princess, two braids reaching the back of my head and meeting there while the rest of my blonde curls were left loose, I was ready.

"May I say you are the prettiest person I have ever done makeup on?" The makeup artist had said that quite a few times throughout the process.

I gave her a shy smile, not knowing why she was claiming that. Lately, I had been getting such compliments a lot.

I walked out of the room and noticed someone leaning against the wall with his hands in his pockets.

"Oh, Emmet!" Placing a hand on my chest, I gestured that he had scared me. I had heard that everyone was already at the venue, so I thought I would be alone in the mansion.

He looked so devilishly handsome that it took me a minute to blink myself out of his gorgeous sight.

His black suit fit perfectly over his muscles. Half of his hair was tied in a man bun while the other half was left open, with a few damp strands styled over his forehead and face.

"Wow!" He was a man of few words, so when he examined me and uttered that one word, I felt my cheeks turn red.

They got so warm as I looked down and blushed.

"Thank you," I replied.

"Why are you still in the mansion?" I asked after gathering myself to not act like a hopeless romantic.

"Remember I told you," he pushed himself off the wall and strolled toward me, "you will be my girl for the day? I didn't want you to feel left out."

That was so nice of him. But every time he called me his girl, I just felt so odd. I knew he meant he would accompany me, but it just sounded wrong in my ears.

Something a mate would expect from her mate.

"Shall we?" He held out his arm for me, and without giving it a second thought, I wrapped my arm around his and walked out of the mansion.

The minute we left the mansion and hadn't even stepped off the front porch, we bumped into Maximus. He seemed to have been rushing back into the mansion when we got in his way.

A frown appeared on his forehead, and a look of shock and confusion covered his face. It was a bit strange because why would he care now?

He hadn't cared for three days after receiving my texts.

Emmet continued walking past him, and so did I, with my arm still wrapped around Emmet's.

Maximus wore a royal blue suit and watched us move away from him. The way he had paused in his steps and then followed us made me feel like he had been heading inside for me.

Was he going to argue with me? Bully me when he found me alone?

I couldn't tell.

We were now at the venue, where many people were waiting for Lord McQuoid and my mother to arrive.

In the meantime, Emmet and I parted ways so that he could go stand with his brothers and I could be with my friends.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 339-He Is Back With His New Mate

Chapter 339: 339-He Is Back With His New Mate

Helanie:

Lamar and Gavin wore gray suits, just different shades. The two had dressed up nicely, had their hair done, and stood close by. It was odd to see them talk so much until I approached them.

"Hey!" I greeted, bowing down dramatically as I felt like a princess in this heavy gown.

"Hello," both of them said in unison, offering their hands to me. I held both their hands before walking between them and standing in the corner with the decorations.

"Are you finally relieved?" I asked Gavin, who nodded with a smile.

It was nice that he had shown guilt. He had even stayed in the mountains and proved that he was willing to go above and beyond to fix the mistakes he made.

I just couldn't wait to see Lucy again. I heard she was spending time with her family and wasn't allowed to meet anyone at the moment.

But that was enough for now.

Our eyes moved to Penn and Jenny arriving with their parents, and a knot formed in my stomach.

"Speaking of them, I'm so sorry for what they have been doing to you," I guessed Lamar had filled Gavin in on what had happened when he was gone, including Rayden being expelled and me being the trainer's stepsister.

"Their sight makes me sick to my stomach," I grimaced, looking away from Penn's parents. But Lamar elbowed me, and I looked back at them, only to find Jenny and Penn coming our way.

"Someone is going to outshine her mother," Penn complimented, his white suit making him look like a prince.

"Thank you!" I said with a smile.

Jenny rocked a gray gown, but her eyes kept moving to Lamar, who hadn't even looked her way once.

"Hey," came Sage in a long fishtail green gown with Rudy behind her in a black coat and white shirt.

The two always came together. They were childhood best friends, and at first, I thought they were dating too.

But I realized later on that wasn't the case.

"Hello, gorgeous people," Rudy greeted, but his eyes stayed on me. Whenever he was in view, the girls would start giving him heart eyes.

Even Sydney had been watching Rudy and biting her bottom lip. I didn't get her obsession with every handsome man. And recently, she had been staring at Rudy every chance she got. Both Sydney and Salem had their eyes toward us, each looking at a man of their interest.

The two had come wearing brown and black satin corset dresses. They stayed with their family, whereas Salem kept her eyes on Gavin. I noticed he wanted to see her too, but I guess he was afraid of jeopardizing his friendship with us.

"What is going on?" I asked Gavin since he kept looking over at Salem. Whenever she tried to smile at him, he would look away, and her smile would fade.

"Nothing." Gavin smiled awkwardly.

"Go talk to her, she has been really worried about you." The minute I suggested that, I watched Lamar and Jenny look at me with puzzled eyes.

"No! I don't want to," Gavin retorted.

"She is also your enemy," Jenny muttered, her eyes shifting to Lamar, who had told her repeatedly that he didn't want to befriend anyone who was friends with our so-called enemies.

"It is different, Jenny," I shut her down. "Besides, Salem looks guilty to me. She has apologized too. And honestly speaking, I don't see why Gavin has to keep punishing himself." I was ready to forgive Salem for Gavin, as long as she behaved and redeemed herself. She didn't have to suck up to us or always praise us—just not mess with us or cause trouble.

"Then why can't you be friends with me?" Jenny asked in a low voice.

"You are our friend," I reminded her, but I noticed her eyes move to Lamar, who clearly thought otherwise.

"Come on, go ahead, I am okay with it," I said to Gavin, who had briefly looked hopeful until he probably took Jenny's words too seriously.

"No! Because of me and Salem—Lucy—I don't want to do it." Sadly, Gavin was drowning in too much guilt to move on with his life. And I couldn't force him to.

"You have a nice, forgiving heart," Penn whispered from behind me, right into my ear. My eyes landed on Maximus in the distance, his gaze narrowing at us.

"Thank you," I replied.

"Umm, but why am I not able to win this sweet heart of yours?" Penn continued, making my skin break out in goosebumps.

"Well, your parents hate me," I reminded him playfully, getting my message across in the most casual way.

"I am an Alpha, Helanie. I will make a decision, and they will have to respect it." He wasn't joking—he actually sounded offended that I didn't believe he had it in him to make them accept me.

Well, I had heard many such claims before. One of them came from Maximus, who was looking at us like he was completely shocked. Did he forget that we had broken up? That our fake relationship was over?

"Well, I am not ready for a relationship yet," I gave him the same excuse as before, and he sighed.

"If you keep making me wait, I might fly away," he joked, but he wasn't wrong. No man was ready to wait for me.

Only I was the fool who had agreed to wait for Altan to confess to his parents about me. I guess only girls could be such fools.

Sage had slid closer to Emmet, making small talk with him. Her body language seemed interesting. She was all shy and bubbly in front of him. That was unlike her usual self.

The brothers had a corner on the stage where they kept meeting up to talk about random stuff. It was indeed a busy day for them.

And then—something happened.

Everyone's eyes moved to the side when someone arrived dramatically. Gasps erupted, and heads turned to the newly arrived couple.

It was Kaye holding hands with Kesha.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 340- She Owns Him Now

Chapter 340: 340- She Owns Him Now

Helanie:

Kaye had changed his appearance. There was a tattoo on the side of his neck. His hair was probably only an inch long, but it was all black with one blonde streak running to the back of his head. He seemed broader but thinner at his waist. However, his muscles and visible veins told me he had been working out a lot lately. His long black coat, black pants, and white shirt made him stand out even more. I always thought he had brown hair, I guess he had been dying his hair all this time.

Kesha had a huge smile on her lips, wearing a short gray sequin dress with thin straps. Her high stilettos made her look even taller. Her hair was curled to perfection, and she wore heavy makeup. She looked like a goddess walking alongside a Greek god. She also made sure to have Kaye as close to her as she could.

I felt something flip in my chest. Kaye walked past me and reached the stage where his mother was.

She greeted him proudly with a hug and held his face in her hands, kissing his forehead. I just silently watched it all. Kaye then casually wrapped his arm around Kesha's tiny waist and pulled her closer for a picture with his family.

It was a disaster. I felt tears rush to my eyes, but I blinked hard to get rid of them. Of course, he was involved with Kesha—he had picked her over me.

He gave me a choice that was ridiculous. He wanted me to leave everything behind when he knew I couldn't accept him right away. It was like he wanted us to end but wanted me to be the one to make that decision.

I was definitely bitter and unreasonable. We both let go of each other, so I shouldn't be worried about him moving on. I had hurt him so much that he had a meltdown.

However, just because I didn't break down didn't mean I wasn't hurt enough when he gave me an ultimatum—either accept him or he would choose Kesha.

"Lamar, you look great," Jenny complimented after he ignored her for a good ten minutes. He finally looked down at her and only gave her a nod.

"Do I not look good?" she asked in a sad tone but kept a weak smile on her lips.

"What do you want from me, Jenny? Because if you're looking for compliments, trust me, I find nothing interesting about you anymore." My head spun when I heard Lamar hiss at her and use such harsh words. Lamar wasn't the type to insult someone openly just to show he didn't like them. But if he was doing it now, that meant she had really hurt his feelings.

"We can still be friends, right?" She should have realized that playing with him and then going back to someone like Rayden would cause problems in our friendship. Part of the issue was that she knew Rayden hated us and always caused trouble, yet she never confronted him.

"NO! I cannot be friends with you. I hate your mate, and anyone who stands with him is my enemy," Lamar pointed a finger at his chest, trying to keep his voice low, but I was able to hear them just fine since Gavin and I were standing right behind them.

"But I am not like him—," she tried to speak when Lamar raised his finger to stop her.

"Doesn't matter, just leave me alone." I understood where he was coming from. His anger was justified. I hated Rayden too. He was a cruel man who had wronged everyone.

"Okay." With that, Jenny stepped aside, holding back her tears.

"How are you all?" Our conversation was interrupted by Norman's arrival. I hated to admit it, but he looked good too. I even rolled my eyes and let out a deep breath I had been holding ever since I heard Jenny and Lamar speak.

"We are fine, sir!" Gavin replied happily.

"Good, good." Norman glanced at everyone before his eyes lingered on me for a moment.

I began to feel weird when he added, "Everyone looks good, except one." He mouthed that last part while looking at me.

I didn't know what was wrong with him, but he had to ruin my mood. The others didn't notice because they were too busy laughing.

He then walked away and started speaking to the council. The wind was harsh, so I had to keep fixing my hair with my hands.

"Mom!" Maximus yelled, waving his hand to greet her.

The lady was a nuisance. I remembered having such a bad time with her. Her arrival had filled the air with negativity. She carried herself well, wearing a light purple gown with diamonds. Her hair was styled in short curls, and she wore red lipstick like the models from before.

She had elegantly made her way through the crowd, responding to their bows with just a hand gesture before joining her sons. Norman had given her a side hug, while Maximus stood beside her like an excited child after he joined last. Seeing the two together made my heart sink in my chest.

And then there was Emmet. Lady Daphne turned to greet him, but he didn't even take his hands out of his pockets to shake hers.

I watched as she tried to talk to him, but he was anxiously pacing back and forth, waiting for her to finish.

The next few minutes passed with everyone talking to each other. I couldn't speak. I had this weird feeling in my body that no amount of jokes could lift. It came from the fact that I had thought this engagement wouldn't happen because Maximus was so madly in love with me.

I raised my head and noticed Norman staring at me—not just staring, he wasn't even blinking while walking past me to his mother. His entire head was turned toward me, and the moment I caught him, he quickly tried to look ahead. But by that time, he had already walked straight into a tree.

I wanted to laugh at him, but his mother arrived just as she noticed he had hit his head hard.

"Where are you lost?" his mother asked with a smile. Of course, she didn't see me in the crowd.

Why was he staring at me if I looked so bad?

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

