

Claimed And Marked By Her Stepbrother Mates

Chapter 481-My Mate Is Cursed.

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Helanie:

I was ready to hear him deny it and gaslight me. He must have come here to try and convince me not to bring up his name. I knew he was a coward, and I wasn't going to use his name anyway. He was not someone I could ever count on. I had made a fool out of myself once, but not again.

"Like you said, I was a coward," he said quietly, not instantly brushing off the truth. "It's not that I didn't like you. You were pretty, and I liked having you around—" he stopped himself, trying to be honest.

"You kept me around—and I got ruined for it—" Of course, he played me big time. He didn't even like me; he just liked having me there.

I shook my head in disbelief, sighing and laughing at my own stupidity.

"I know it's pathetic. I know I'm a bastard for it, but trust me, I haven't slept peacefully even for one night since that night," he said, letting out a cry, his hands pressed together like he was begging for forgiveness.

"No! You don't get to act like the victim who can't sleep. You ran away—you knew what they would do to me," I shouted, pushing him back and instantly brushing my hands over my dress like I was wiping them clean.

"I'm not acting like a victim—I called my warriors the minute I got on that train. I even tried to come back, but my father—he injected me with wolfsbane and tied me up in chains. I was even ready to admit everything and stand with you when you sent your father to my mansion to tell mine that we were dating. I was chained up all that time, asleep until you were gone," he was crying, but still managing to speak clearly.

I stared at his face in shock. Was he telling the truth? Did he really call the warriors? Did he really try to come back?

"And that excuses you? You fucking ran away—it doesn't matter if you 'tried' to come back—you didn't," I screamed, watching him step back and cry silently this time. Did he really think I'd be thankful just because he wanted to come back for me?

"I don't want to see your face ever again. I don't want to hear your excuses," I shouted again, putting money on the counter without caring how much it was. I just wanted to get away from him and every toxic person in my life.

I pushed him aside as I walked out of the café. The fresh air really hit different. I don't know what I would have done if he had threatened me like the rest. At least he was sorry.

See! I have such low standards. But that didn't mean I would ever forgive him. He left me there when he was supposed to be protecting me that night. The only reason I was in that abandoned subway was because he promised he'd take care of me if anything ever happened.

Once I was nearing home, I got a notification of an incoming call popping up on my screen. My spoiled mood instantly started to lift when I saw who it was.

"Hello, Professor Emmet," I teased, just trying to hype myself up for a happy conversation.

"Keep talking, I just want to hear your voice," I heard his deep voice, and the way he breathed made it clear—he was drunk.

"Have you been drinking?" I asked, disappointed, but since he called for help, I didn't want to lecture him too much.

"I am. How can I not? This is how I cope with loss," he said softly. "I miss you."

Even though I was worried for him—and it wasn't really something to blush over—I felt relieved knowing he was still with me.

"I miss you too," I whispered shyly, not going inside my house yet and deciding to take a walk. I wasn't that girl anymore who was too cautious about her reputation. I could take a call and talk to anyone I wanted. I didn't care who judged me.

"Helanie, what if I forget you? How will you remind me of you?" he asked, this time honestly opening up about what he was dealing with.

"I'll do anything—but you need to talk to someone about it. Please. Why is this happening? Is it because of the alcohol?" I asked, worried.

I would hate for him to forget about me.

"It's supposed to happen, Helanie. That's what curses do," he whispered, making me stop in my tracks.

"Curse? You're cursed?" I didn't know that. How the hell had he kept this from me for so long?

"Do you really think I was born this way? But when I'm with you, I'm a different person. I feel more alive, happier, and I can feel emotions. But when you're away—I feel dead," he said. "And now—my two little brothers are certain I don't love them. What should I do? How do I fix myself? How do I show that I care, because I do," he said, his voice shaking, and it broke my heart.

Of all people, Emmet was the last one who deserved that kind of pain.

"Emmet, we need to talk about this curse. No more secrets," I said, and I heard him fall silent. "And Maximus will know you love him. He's just caught up in his own feelings right now."

The fact that Emmet's whole world revolved around his brothers and me made him even more precious. I guess his only real problem was that he kept so much hidden that everyone assumed he didn't care.

He needs to open up to his brothers like he does with me.

We talked about random things after that because I wanted to comfort him. He told me amazing stories, and I noticed how his voice started sounding more alive as we went on.

But then I had to say goodbye, all because I had a trial tomorrow, and Norman was getting ready to defend me. Even when he wouldn't be allowed to speak too much, he can still get some words in.

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

Chapter 482-Time For My Trial

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Helanie:

"Keep your calm and make sure you answer every question after giving it some thought. Watch your word choice too," Norman said to me as we stood together, watching Alpha Diaz come in with his warriors. He was going to be questioning me, and I'd have to defend myself—with Norman's help.

Maximus, Emmet, and Kaye were sitting in the front row, and behind them were my friends. Rudy and Sage had also shown up for support.

I knew they were going to be shocked when they found out the whole truth about me.

"Shall we begin?" Mr. Vonston asked, gesturing for me to sit behind the witness stand. My heart was pounding so hard. I had never been to a werewolf court before. I didn't know what kind of questions would be asked.

My character might be torn apart even more. And what was worse—my so-called family was sitting in the row with the people who hated me. Right behind Alpha Diaz, supporting his decision to punish me.

"This girl here was caught in an immoral act with several alphas. And then she turned around and claimed she had been gang-raped," Alpha Diaz stated, loud and clear.

"And if my father had done a simple test, he would have confirmed—" I was in the middle of speaking when Alpha Diaz cut in.

"That you had sex with alphas? Consensual, rough sex?" Alpha Diaz yelled, making my fists clench.

"Say it even louder and then see my fist up your ass," Maximus shouted, causing Mr. Vonston to shoot him a sharp look.

"Please, keep your rogue behavior out of my court. As for you, please remain calm," he said, clearly being much gentler when speaking to Vonston. But Maximus wasn't looking for support either. He knew Vonston would side with an alpha from a pack.

"I wasn't having fun with anyone or trying to trap someone. I was gang-raped, and the people who did it tried to kill me. I survived—and returned home to a father who never had an ounce of sympathy in his heart for me. They took one look at me and decided I was the problem. No one asked me what I had been through. I had to force the words out, and even that didn't help. I was thrown into the pantry, and later I had no choice but to run away to save my life," I shouted at the top of my lungs.

Everyone went quiet for a moment.

I noticed Emmet closing his eyes, his jaw clenched tightly.

"Why did you fake your death and run away if you were honest? You should've stayed and let the truth come out," Alpha Diaz smirked, trying to earn a round of applause from his supporters, who nodded proudly at him.

"I didn't fake my death," I hissed at Alpha Diaz, who looked at me like speaking out loud was some huge inconvenience for him.

"Then? What was it? You went on vacation while telling everyone you were dead?" He looked like a fool, making all those gestures.

"You think I told everyone I was dead?" I asked, my arms casually resting over the table before me. I was on the witness stand with Alpha Diaz questioning me. That's how it worked in a werewolf court.

He looked lost and even glanced around at the people who laughed at his stupidity before quickly pulling a straight face.

"Miss Helanie, do you mind telling us why it was perceived that you died?" the council head, Mr. Vonston, asked.

"I ran away, but it was my father who faked my death." I tilted my head toward my father, who timidly squeezed behind his wife when eyes fell on him.

"And why did you run away from your punishment?" Alpha Diaz asked, a smirk on his lips like he had just won something.

"Because I was going to be murdered by my father. He was paid a heavy price to kill me," I spoke loudly, causing the audience to gasp and the jury—a group of new councilors—to exchange a glance.

The brothers were intensely watching everything, my friends sharing the same look as them.

"Who would pay your father to kill you and why?" Lord Vonston asked.

"It doesn't matter. She has no proof, she's making outrageous claims. That's what she does," Alpha Diaz scoffed, shaking his head at me.

"He is the one who paid my father, and one might ask him why," I knew my words wouldn't be believed, but I had to speak my truth.

"See, this is what I'm talking about," Alpha Diaz pointed at me, and the rest of the people in the room stared at me with disgust on their faces.

"Why were you running away from your punishment?" Lord Vonston asked again.

"What punishment? Can you please ask them what crime I've committed?" It was crazy how they were going around in circles without telling me what I had supposedly done wrong.

"You—committed adultery with six alphas and then accused the alphas of rape and even dragged my son's name through the mud," Alpha Diaz said.

I closed my eyes when he mentioned his son. However, he had already made a deal with the council that his son must never be called for questioning, since his involvement couldn't be proven. Just because he had spoken to me once or twice didn't link him to the crime.

He was a witness that night, but of course, that wouldn't be used in my favor.

I watched Emmet and Norman speak in whispers before Norman walked over and said, "You want to punish Helanie for having—intimate relations with many alphas. But where are the alphas? Which alphas are you talking about?" Norman said, and everyone's heads turned to Alpha Diaz.

"You're saying a crime was committed, but why is Helanie asked to provide proof while you get to make accusations without any? Bring us those six alphas, and then you can justify your demand for punishment."

The look on Diaz's face was priceless. Norman knew he had him.

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

Chapter 483-I See My Culprits

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Helanie:

"Well, then why did she claim she was raped? Why won't she give the names?" Alpha Diaz countered, but nobody seemed too impressed.

"I was raped," I said loudly, not trying to hide the truth.

"Really? And do you have any proof? You didn't even get a test done," Alpha Diaz asked, scoffing as if he was mocking me for lying.

"You didn't let me, you made my father—" I shut up when he interrupted.

"Do you have proof of that?" he asked, and everyone laughed until Norman started shaking his head. Attention turned to him, and then he pointed at the door.

"There was a witness that night—who would love to tell you what happened." As he said that, the door opened, and in came Altan.

Not only did I gasp and narrow my eyes in confusion, but Alpha Diaz looked so lost and anxious.

"Lord Vonston, I was promised my son wouldn't be dragged into this," he complained.

"I volunteered," Altan said, taking the stand. "It's true. I was there that night. I was— with her."

He closed his eyes when they landed on me. The guilt was written all over his face.

"Why?" Lord Vonston asked.

"Because I was dating her," the words from his mouth made heads turn. The brothers looked down and clenched their jaws at his confession. Took him too long to come forward.

"I saw the alphas come at her and harass her," he continued. "And before you ask me why I didn't stick around to fight for her, I never do. I am a coward—it's a known fact. But what she's saying is true. I can name the alphas that I recognized." Altan made my jaw drop.

Alpha Diaz seemed to be having a hard time accepting the truth.

"Bring in Romeo, Kaidon, and Darius. The rest... I don't know any of them, but I do know Rayden is dead and Zellu is abducted, probably hiding and pretending to be abducted," Altan glared at his father, who had been nonstop saying I faked my death just to run and hide.

"Rayden—that one admitted to raping her," Lord Vonston quickly checked his files and nodded his head.

Now that Norman had brought Altan in, everyone was slightly shifting from taking Diaz's side.

I don't know how Norman managed to do it because Alpha Diaz would have never allowed his son to come forward.

"And you don't even need to do any of that. I made your work easy," Norman added, hinting towards the door again.

The door opened, and in came Kaidon, Romeo, and Darius. I don't know where they were found.

I thought Kaidon had been hiding somewhere. Behind them were their parents.

My eyes briefly landed on Maximus, and he mouthed, "We found them."

He pointed at himself, then at Kaye and himself, so that Norman wouldn't take all the credit.

All the men came and stood in a line. Darcy started tearing up when he saw Romeo in the lineup. He was doing his best to look innocent with tears in his eyes. Kaidon looked genuinely guilty, but I couldn't be sure what he would say.

But Darius, he stood tall with no emotion on his face. Or so I thought. The minute he knew nobody was watching him, he winked at me.

My body shuddered in disgust, and I quickly looked away.

"So, why don't we bring in Romeo first?" Norman asked, making Darcy look down in disappointment. I wasn't surprised my mother didn't show up.

She didn't care, so she wouldn't waste her time. If anything, she might be angry that I caused so much drama.

Romeo walked over to the witness stand on the other side and sat down, sniffing as if he had been wrongly accused.

"You have been accused of raping Helanie Niles in the abandoned subway. Do you plead guilty?" Alpha Diaz asked, and Romeo quickly started shaking his head.

Well, I knew this would happen.

The others had to go sit with him in a line, too.

"It's a lie. I would never do anything so horrible," he scoffed, clenching my jaw.

"What about you? What do you have to say?" Norman asked Kaidon, who adjusted his posture in his seat and briefly exchanged a glance with his mother.

I knew what would happen. Let me guess, he would lie just for the sake of his mother.

But he surprised me when he started breaking down and confessed the heartbreaking truth before everyone.

"It's true. We—raped her."

Everyone gasped, hands covering their mouths. Lord Vonston closed his eyes and shuddered in shock.

"I was drunk—and drugged—but that doesn't exempt me from punishment. She was begging us to stop—" he continued, causing me to break down. I saw Emmet get up,

but then Kaye put his hand on his shoulder and stopped him, eyeing Norman to look over at me.

Norman steadily walked toward my stand and slid the glass of water closer to my hand. They were doing everything perfectly to avoid diverting attention from the main issue and starting any other rumors that would further stain my character.

"Wait a minute—you were drunk and drugged—but you remember everything? Why didn't you come out before?" Alpha Diaz, however, found a way to question Kaidon.

"Because I was told by them that I had dreamed about it," Kaidon admitted. He was doing his best to confess to his crime, but others had been convincing him that no crime had been committed that night.

"So you were so passed out and out of it that you didn't remember anything? You even relied on what your friends told you. What made you think it happened now?" Alpha Diaz smirked as he cornered Kaidon.

"When the flame of lust is mixed with any alcohol—it acts as a crazy instigator. A person might forget the event temporarily, but when reminded of it, they remember," Norman said as he presented the research done on the flame of lust.

"But it still doesn't prove anything. He's confessing to being drunk—could it be that he's lying now?" Alpha Diaz asked, and the crowd started nodding their heads once again. But it was Darius who diverted attention to himself when he cleared his throat.

We all watched his face, thinking maybe he would confess or deny, but he took a different approach that left me paralyzed.

"We had consensual sex with her that night. The one where she—forced us, and it was not the other way around."

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

Chapter 484-My Pheromones

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Helanie:

"He's lying. What makes you think I would ever want to do anything with a disgusting man like you?" I screamed, the weight of the lie making everyone look at me with disgust again.

"Please stay seated. You had your time to tell your side. Let him speak now," Lord Vonston stated, his tone harsh.

I sat down again, taking deep breaths, but the calmness on Darius' face was making me angrier.

"So, what were you saying?" Alpha Diaz smirked while secretly glancing at me before he turned his attention back to Darius.

"I'm not sure why Kaidon remembers it differently. But there's no proof that we ever told him it was a nightmare or anything. In fact, it's crazy how Kaidon discarded his phone and all. I guess his memories were all messed up, and sadly—Helanie's words got to him. You see, she's really good at learning about basically everything. You can check her record; she's defeated monsters and everything with her knowledge of herbs and weapons. She probably used that knowledge to convince Kaidon she was gang-raped. And Kaidon, he stupidly listened to her. He destroyed our phones and his too," Darius was such a jerk.

So this is what he'd been doing ever since his friends told him I was alive? Clearing his tracks?

"And you said she forced you all? One might ask how an alpha could get forced by a worthless creature, especially six alphas," Alpha Diaz asked.

Norman was anxiously staring at Darius, but he kept calm because he knew our case would get weak if we argue too much.

"Ahh! Didn't she tell anyone about her pheromones?" As soon as Darius mentioned my secret, the hairs on the back of my neck stood up.

"And she keeps them hidden by wearing a pendant," Norman quickly jumped to defend me. I realized the brothers had been sharing everything they knew about me to protect me.

"The pendant she didn't have on her when she seduced us," Darius added calmly.

I hated his face. He had such a smug look that I wanted to punch him.

"Is that true?" Alpha Diaz turned to Altan, who gulped.

"I wore it when Altan boarded the train and left," I quickly jumped in to dismiss such a ridiculous claim, but I noticed Darius smile and shake his head.

"Once again, nobody saw it, right? Altan left and didn't see it. Kaidon doesn't remember. But she just confessed that she took it off," Darius said loudly.

"I didn't—I mean—Altan did when—m..." I shut up because it looked bad for me.

"Please ask her to take off her pendant so that you know what I'm talking about. Her pheromones made us go crazy for her. The fact that she had it off—and didn't wear it while enticing us—just makes us victims," Darius commented confidently, and Romeo quickly nodded.

"She was begging them to let her go," Altan added.

"Take off your pendant and then let us ask Lord Vonston and everyone here if they can control themselves. Helena knew what she was doing. She wanted us, not Altan, because she realized Altan was engaged and wouldn't accept her," Darius kept going, making me realize why he was so calm. He knew it could get very messy if he wanted it to.

"Take off your pendant," Lord Vonston ordered, but I shook my head.

"Is it true? Is it true that the pendant makes people around you—commit—adultery?" he asked, and I lowered my head.

I was doomed.

"She has been going around accusing everyone when she's the only one to blame for it. She had fun that night and thought she could blackmail one of them into accepting her, but sadly, it didn't happen. So, she decided to accuse them," Alpha Diaz hissed, his entire arm raised and hand pointing in my direction.

"Well, then why not take the herb and see who is telling the truth?" I thought maybe the brothers would be skeptical of my truth after Darius made such a strong claim, but Norman seemed convinced of my side.

"Helanie will take it too," he added, and I began to nod.

"An alpha taking a truth potion to reveal his secrets?" Alpha Diaz shook his head.

"It will be a private session. Only the things related to Helanie and that night will be shown as evidence," Norman argued.

"There are certain rules we have agreed upon. We cannot just bend them. An alpha, or alpha kings, cannot be injected with those weapons or herbs," Lord Vonston stated loudly, sighing as the jury started whispering together.

They seemed bored, almost like they no longer cared about justice because they probably thought I was lying.

"Rayden—he was your friend and he confessed to raping her," Norman yelled at Darius, who calmly straightened his back.

"And you must check from our data that we hadn't even been seen with him for some time. We don't know if Helanie and him met up again and Helanie said something—to anger him. I'm not saying what Rayden did to her was right, but you see, what she's doing to us isn't right either. I cannot have sympathy for someone who seduced me into sex and now is ruining my reputation," he replied calmly, leaning back again and briefly eyeing me.

"Enough! This only makes sense. There is a fault of no one—but one—m," Lord Vonston stated, making me sit straight and anxiously look around.

He was wrapping it up?

"Her pheromones!" he added, and the world from under my feet was stolen once again.

"That is ridiculous. He's admitting to have done that," Norman pointed at Kaidon, who still seemed pretty adamant in his confession. He nodded, staring at Vonston.

"Well then, I guess we have a solution. The pheromones could be a problem, and she can use them on any alpha. Since the others are not guilty, and there is literally no proof but her own confession that she didn't have her pendant on to control those evil pheromones that she hid from all of us and deceived us, we think there is only one way to control them. If she has a husband and he mates with her, marks her, probably her pheromones will go away, or whenever she is in heat, she will have him by her side. And who else could be a better candidate than the one who is confessing to raping her? Kaidon!" Vonston shocked us all, but Diaz and his minions had smirks on their faces.

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

Chapter 485-My Brother Will Risk It All For His Mate

Chapter 485: 485-My Brother Will Risk It All For His Mate

Norman:

"No!" Helanie shook her head and stood up, slamming her hands on the desk. "I refuse such punishment."

I couldn't believe they were using it against her. But at this point, I had figured out that the only way these alphas could get punished is if we somehow make them confess.

"But why? So that you can keep using those pheromones?" Vonston yelled at her, but that was all we could tolerate. We had wasted our time here.

"That is enough. We gave you time and trust, but you proved you cannot do justice. We will be taking her back—she is our stepsister, and we get to decide where she lives," I added as I threw the papers away. It was about time I lost my composure.

My brothers got up to go stand beside Helanie. She looked so timid but had the courage to stand up for herself.

They didn't let me do the talking either. And sadly, Darius had come in strong, accusing her.

"I'm sorry, but that's not how it works. If you remember the rules, only an alpha can decide if a pack member can leave the pack and live as a rogue. By leaving the pack and living with you, it would make Helanie a rogue, and only Alpha Diaz gets to make that choice. So Alpha Diaz, what do you suggest for your pack member?" Vonston turned to the evil man, who looked so happy with the victory.

"I will follow the rules. When a she-wolf commits adultery, we get her married to the man she slept with. In this case, since the others were drugged by her pheromones, I've decided to get her married to Kaidon. But if he disagrees, then there's a man whose two mates died and has kids—he needs a wife to help raise them. I'd ask you to request Helanie to marry him and take care of his children," it was as if Diaz wasn't speaking—he was shooting fire arrows straight at my body.

I wanted to grab him and kill him, but that would be too rash of a decision. Helanie wouldn't get justice that way.

And we would be outnumbered.

"Marrying a teenager to an old man? Why is it her responsibility to take care of that man's children?" Maximus yelled, Kaye stepping forward to support his reasoning.

"Fine, then she'll get married to Kaidon—don't you want to fix what you did wrong?" Alpha Diaz was so clever. He turned to Kaidon, who stared at Helanie. He was targeting the right person. Kaidon was too emotional and guilty and probably wanted to fix things.

"I'll marry her." His mother wasn't the only one who let out a sigh and threw her head back—we were exhausted with him as well.

"Okay, that's fine. I think Helanie's marriage will be a good idea for now," Emmet spoke up, and the hall went silent. He hadn't said a word in a while, so when he did speak up, everyone listened.

I saw Helanie stare at him with teary eyes.

It's not like we had a choice. If Helanie didn't come to court to get married at the full moon, the warriors would arrest her, and a war would break out. We would fight for her without caring what we'd lose in the process. But in the end, we might lose Helanie, because we'd be outnumbered. Even though Sage, Rudy, and Penn were on Helanie's side, their pack would be too scared to go against the council and so many other packs.

"Good, you prevented a whole war," Lord Vonston folded the file, gesturing to the warrior to bring him food.

Helanie looked so defeated that we couldn't even look at her. She began to pace in front of us, briskly walking ahead.

"Helanie!" Emmet called after her, but as she stopped, she didn't get to speak with him. Instead, her eyes traveled to our mother.

"Huh! Did you all have fun bringing shame to our family name? Turns out, she's the problem. Hey girl! Did you ever take off your pendant around the men in my life? That would be incredibly disgusting." Mother had no lock on her mouth.

She never thought before speaking.

"You're a woman yourself—have some sense of decency," I spat in anger, watching her shake her head and walk past us.

"Oh no! We'll be living with her until the next full moon?" I heard Helanie's stepmother complain.

It felt like we had lost everything. As Romeo and the others walked past her, I noticed Helanie lowering her head.

"You think me getting married is the right thing?" I watched her finally face Emmet once the road had emptied. There was no one left behind but us.

"Helanie, that's because if we didn't, they would arrest you and throw you somewhere in the dungeon. And by the time we found you, they'd have you married to someone," Emmet explained why he agreed.

"Which they'll do anyway. I don't know what you were thinking, Emmet!" The disappointment in her eyes broke my heart, so I could only imagine how her mates must be feeling.

Kaye was looking around, pacing to avoid showing that he cared. And then there was Maximus, who looked so dull, yet ready to go to war.

"I know what was going through my mind," Emmet said quietly. "You will get married on this full moon, Helanie."

Doubling down on his words was not what I expected from him.

Helanie looked at him with disbelief in her eyes when he added, "With me."

"What? But what about the forbidden... tag and Kaidon?" Helanie was shocked—and so were the rest of us.

"Our parents aren't married yet. And as for Kaidon, when he goes missing on the day of the wedding, they'll have no choice but to marry you to whoever claims to be your fated mate. But we'll wait until the last moment so no one has time to come up with a plan to stop our wedding. Helanie, they played games. Now we will play. But our first step is to make you an official rogue, while marrying a rogue will make you one and you will need no permission from your alpha in that case."

I was shocked and had disagreed with them marrying in such a haste, but it seemed like Emmet had thought through this plan carefully. And maybe this would be the reason Helanie escapes marrying Kaidon—or anyone else.

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

Chapter 486-What About The Promise To The Moon Goddess

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Helanie:

"What?" I couldn't believe Emmet was saying this. I thought he would want to first take care of his father and make sure he doesn't lose his mind about Emmet marrying me. But Emmet was willing to risk it all for me.

I guess I never had anyone who was willing to risk everything for me. So I was stunned, just standing in my spot and watching him.

"She—she made a promise to the moon goddess that she will not accept her mates," Maximus spoke up, breaking my attention from Emmet.

"In order for her to take revenge and get justice, she will need to at least get freed from this pack," Norman supported Emmet with his idea. But Maximus had managed to cast some shadow of doubt over my promise.

"Helanie, I can wait for you. You know that. But marrying Kaidon would be way more traumatizing for you," Emmet quickly held my hands when he saw me zone out.

"And who knows what he will do? His mother is toxic, his friends will walk all over the home. And even if you demand a rejection, it will only happen at the next full moon—so you'll have to stay with him for a while. And I don't know if I—we—are okay with that," Norman raised his voice, making sure he was heard among the others.

I was silently watching them put forward their arguments.

"Kaidon is out of the question," Maximus grunted. "That's not what I meant."

He explained, but his words had already made their way into my head.

"Excuse me, what's going on here?" I hadn't even realized another car had pulled up. Penn had returned after letting his parents drive away. "Is it about the marriage issue?" he approached us.

I was so relieved to see him—and my friends behind him.

"If it's okay, and if she's ready, I can marry her. I'll take care of her and even reject her if she asks for it at the next full moon after our marriage," Penn said, and my ears perked up.

He had my full attention, and it made Emmet slowly pull his hands back from mine.

"Marriage is not a joke," Kaye grunted from behind his brother, already showing he wasn't okay with the plans we were making.

"But apparently, it is to the councils," Lamar groaned, his face red with anger.

"I think she shouldn't make a rushed decision. Let her rest and then think about it. She still has days left, and they did say it has to be Kaidon, so we need to be careful with every step we take now," Gavin suggested, his eyes telling me he knew I was struggling to make a decision.

"But there is no way she's marrying Kaidon," Penn added, and everyone else nodded with him.

"But let's take her home to rest for now. She's been through a lot, and seeing those alphas walk out free must have been so hard on her," Sage said, agreeing with my despair.

"Sure, but can we have a word with her before you take her away?" Emmet said it in a way that made everyone share a glance. They weren't stealing me from him, but I guess Penn's suggestion—and my silence—had made it seem that way.

"We'll wait in the car for her," Lamar patted Penn's back to make him walk away and leave me alone with my mates so we could have a personal conversation.

Since Penn didn't know, but the rest of my friends did know about my mates, they also understood that today had been an incredibly hard day for all of us.

"Helanie, don't think about anything else right now. I know you hate the moon goddess, but don't let her be the reason you choose someone else over me, please," Emmet said, making me feel so bad for him. I had never seen Emmet beg anyone before, so I felt his misery—and I guess he felt mine too.

"Let her rest for now," Norman gently held his brother's arm to pull him away from me.

"I'll wait for your decision. Please be wise," Emmet said before stepping aside. If I could, I would've kissed him goodbye. But I couldn't.

We had to be more careful than ever now, because my character was under a microscope. I was on their radar, and they would do anything to keep me in prison so I couldn't escape the wedding at the full moon.

So I needed to look like I was going to accept the marriage with Kaidon. As I walked away, I turned and saw the brothers looking at me.

They all looked so sad and defeated that it broke my heart.

"Don't worry, we still have days," Lamar said to me once I sat down.

"I thought we had days before the trial, too. You have no idea how I felt when my pheromones were brought up. That's what I ran away from. I knew the council would never believe me because of the lack of evidence. And it makes me hate my father so much. If only he had let me take those tests and show them the bruises," I sighed, going silent—because that wouldn't have helped either.

"I guess... nothing could have helped me. Look how they separated Rayden's case from the others. They want confessions from their mouths, which they will never give," I sighed again, resting my head on Lamar's shoulder and closing my eyes.

This car ride was the only time I could let myself be upset—because once I got home, I would need to build up my confidence and strength like a wall, so that no harasser or stranger could see through it.

My friends insisted we stop and eat at a café, but I couldn't swallow anything. I just asked them to drive around while I slept in the car.

I felt safe with them around me. For the next few days, peace would be the last thing I'd worry about. My wedding day would probably go down as the second worst day of my life—where my future would be decided against my will.

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

Chapter 487-Want Her Dead

Chapter 487: 487-Want Her Dead

Emmet:

"Maximus—," I ran after him as he rushed into the woods. I couldn't watch him look so sad and angry with me. I loved my baby brothers so much.

"No! You will stay away from me from now on. I'm done begging for your love and care. You've shown again and again that you don't care about me," he yelled, turning around to show me his teary eyes.

Seeing the tears in his eyes felt like walking on fire. The heat rushed from my feet to my head.

I would do anything to make him feel better. But what could I do? I was in love with Helanie—the only person I could love after losing my first love.

Helanie came into my life and became so important that the thought of losing her makes me want to stop living. And she loves me back.

If it were someone else, I might have left her for my brother. But it's Helanie, and her love is meant for me. I can't treat her like an object and leave her for my brother as if her own will doesn't matter.

"You say you care about me—do you really?" Maximus yelled, the strong wind blowing his tears away.

"I do," I said, trying to reach him, but he kept stepping back.

"Then reject her—leave her," his words made me freeze and take a step back.

"What happened? You don't want to prove your love to me? The minute I ask you to give something up, you're scared?" Maximus yelled, stepping even further away.

"That's not fair," Norman's voice cut into our stare-down.

"You don't know what he has done for you," he snapped at Maximus, who shook his head in disapproval.

"Of course you'd say that. That's what you always do. You try so hard to make us like each other, to make us care about each other, when there's no real love or care between us," Maximus scoffed at Norman, waving his hand at him.

"This time I'll tell you what you should've known from the beginning."

As Norman stood beside me, I turned to him, gave Maximus my back, and shook my head at Norman, silently asking him not to tell him.

"Why? Why don't you want to tell him? Why let him hate you when it hurts you so much?" Norman yelled at me, raising his voice past his usual level with me for the first time.

"What is it that you have to tell me?" Maximus asked, but there was bitterness in his tone.

"Something you should have known a long time ago," Norman continued, even as I kept pushing him away, trying to take him with me.

"Let's go," I insisted, grabbing his arm, but he shrugged me off. I saw Kaye arriving, his eyes showing he could sense some drama unfolding.

"Tell me," Maximus shouted.

In a brief moment of weakness, Norman said it all.

"Where do you think you were getting the blood from all those years? How do you think your strong and powerful brother kept ending up passed out in the hallway? You think it was just the alcohol?"

When silence fell, I slowly turned to look at Maximus. Norman shouldn't have said anything. Maximus almost lost his balance, but Kaye rushed to hold him up.

"It's true. While we were busy taking care of Maximus, there was one person who let you bite him and drink his blood—he never even stopped you. So no, he wasn't passed out drunk when you needed him. He was there for you, and he passed out because you were drunk on his blood," Norman continued.

The look on my little brothers' faces scared me.

That look of guilt—something I hated seeing on them—was there.

"Why didn't you tell us?" Kaye whispered, big tears rolling down his cheeks.

"You—," Maximus reached out and gently pushed Kaye aside, struggling to stay on his feet.

"Why didn't you—why didn't you tell me? Do you know how small that makes me feel?" Maximus sniffled, tearing up instantly before he ran into my arms. He held onto me like a child would cling to his mother.

"You're a bad brother, why would you do that?" he cried, stomping like a kid.

"Why?" Kaye asked the same question as he stepped forward and wrapped his long arms around us, pulling us into a group hug.

"Because it's happening to me," I muttered, and the two of them broke the hug. "I'm forgetting things. And having episodes now."

"What?" Norman grabbed my arm to turn me around. "How bad is it?"

I knew he was upset because I had told him it wasn't that serious.

"I even forgot about Helanie for a while," I admitted. I guess that was enough for them to know it was pretty bad.

"What about us?" Maximus asked in a soft, careful voice.

"I haven't forgotten you guys much—mostly because you're always around me. But I'm scared... I'm losing my mind. I'm turning into something else—a creature, an animal," I continued, watching their concerned faces. This was what I had avoided admitting for so long.

"There should be something we can do, right?" Maximus asked Norman, who sighed, looked down, and tried hard to think of a way to stop it.

"It's a curse," I reminded them.

"And every curse can be broken," Norman reminded me, looking hopeful again—until Kaye spoke up.

"I... I think I'm losing my mind too."

We all stared at him in confusion.

"I—umm—it's strange because I never really thought about what my curse might be... until I looked at Helanie."

He wasn't making much sense.

"What do you mean? Just say it clearly," Norman pressed. We all knew if there was anyone we could count on, it was Norman.

"What does Helanie have to do with your curse?" Maximus asked Kaye. We were all even more interested—and worried—now that Helanie's name was involved.

"Because when I look at her—despite how much I love her—I want to kill her. Maybe that's my curse. I'll either want to kill my mate... or I'll go crazy trying not to."

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

Chapter 488-Choosing My Mate

Chapter 488: 488-Choosing My Mate

Helanie:

"She ruined our name. We can't even go out anymore," I heard my stepmother yelling from outside the room, clearly making sure I could hear her.

"I can't even go play games with my friends," Sullivan added, using his harsh and loud voice.

I was lying on the couch in the room, reading a book and rolling my eyes every time I heard them.

"It's not like you have any friends," Vani yelled back from inside the room, sitting on the bed doing her homework.

I heard loud footsteps approaching the room, and then Sullivan stood in the doorway.

"You shouldn't be sharing a room with her. She'll make you just like herself," Sullivan muttered, his eyes full of disgust when he mentioned me.

I calmly pulled the book to the side and raised my eyebrow at him.

"That would make me the happiest. Who wouldn't want to get into the RVs and then become their top student?" Vani said with a bright smile, making me glance over at her and smile back.

"Really? I'm pretty sure she fucked her way up," Sullivan grimaced, arms folded across his chest.

I sat up on the couch, then rested my hands behind my back, leaning on them casually. I crossed one leg over the other and began to gently shake it.

"Then you should try it too. If you're so sure that's how it works, go ahead—give it a try," I said with a shrug. He let out a loud grunt in response.

There was a difference now—they didn't dare hit me anymore. I'm pretty sure they knew I would hit back... and a lot harder than they could.

"Don't waste your time on her. She's only going to be staying with us for a few more weeks before we get rid of her. And then—that poor Alpha will have this trash on his shoulders," Larissa appeared behind her son, her lips curling upward and her upper lip wrinkling toward her nose in pure disgust.

"He's not even an Alpha. I'm not sure he'll ever win the Alpha title. He's screwed. His luck is gone," Sullivan added.

As the two walked away, I kept thinking about their words.

I'm definitely not going to marry Kaidon.

Even though Kaidon had shown remorse and tried his best to be honest on the stand, I still couldn't look at him without being reminded—traumatized—by that night.

And then there was Penn. The offer he made sounded a lot better than marrying Kaidon... or that old man.

"You're going to marry Kaidon?" Vani asked, lifting her head from her books. Even the question in itself was so weird to me. I would never marry any of those losers for any punishment.

"No," I answered honestly.

"You shouldn't. What those Alphas did was wrong. They deserve punishment, not a mate like you. That would be a gift."

The fact that Vani didn't care what the trial said or what her mother thought—and that she believed me—made me feel something I hadn't felt in a long time: a sense of peace.

"Thank you," I said to her, and she lit up, getting out of bed to come sit beside me.

"Of course. We're sisters," she frowned, then sighed. "Please choose that man who came to our house asking about you. I know it might be wrong, but... could it be that you two might fall in love?" she pouted, surprising me. She didn't even know Emmet was my mate, but she thought we looked good together.

"He's my stepbrother," I reminded her, raising a brow.

"No, he isn't—at least not yet. Anyway—what are you reading?" she asked, peering into the book. I gave her a small nod, and she picked it up, flipping through the pages.

"It's a book on Soren Vaughn. The man who never had a wolf. Everyone used to say he was an omega or something. It's crazy—his adventures are all in here, but there's no detail about what kind of wolf he ended up having to go on those adventures," I explained, and she stared at the drawings of his tattoos.

She stopped at a black-and-white hand-drawn picture of him.

"Look, the gray pattern in his eyes—it looks just like yours," she laughed, pointing at the meticulously drawn pattern.

"And those tattoos look like the moles behind your neck," she added, quickly brushing my hair aside and holding the book next to my neck to compare.

"Damn, they really do look the same," she gasped.

"Yeah, well, I guess all werewolves without active wolves look the same and have similar moles," I said, laughing and gently taking the book from her hands.

She laughed with me for a while. We talked about her school before she went out to grab a tray of food for both of us. Her mother was getting angry about her eating with me, but Vani didn't care.

She was more confident and stronger than I was at her age. Maybe it was because, no matter how loud her mother yelled, Vani knew they wouldn't hurt her physically the way they hurt me.

Meanwhile, I held my phone in my hands and stared at Emmet's number. I had been told to be careful and not write anything in a text that could be used against me later.

If anyone found out I was having an affair with my stepbrother, they'd tell Alpha Diaz, and he'd lock me up to make sure I had no chance of stopping the marriage with Kaidon.

So I had to come up with a gentle and sneaky way to tell Emmet about my decision.

Me: Hey, I've been thinking about everything, and I think I've made my decision.

It was like he'd been holding his phone, waiting—because he read the message almost the second I sent it.

Professor Emmet: Please tell me it's good news.

I smiled while typing.

Me: I'll attend your classes—only yours.

His response told me he understood exactly what I meant.

Professor Emmet: Thank you so much. I'll prepare all the notes and make sure you're satisfied with my lessons ;)

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

Chapter 489-The Distraught Fiancé

Chapter 489: 489-The Distraught Fiancé

Norman:

Jessica: I can't believe you trusted that girl's words and went against my baby brother.

Jessica: Look what happened. She was proven to be a liar.

Jessica: I am deeply hurt, and I want an apology.

Jessica: I saw your brothers as my own, but you never cared about my family.

"Isn't your phone buzzing a little too much these days?" Kaye playfully slapped my back as he sat down on the patio with me.

"She could go on and on. Someone needs to take her phone away," I groaned under my breath, putting my phone down on the table.

"She must be really upset. She's been blowing up my phone too. And I get where she's coming from. She's his sister and has been there for us. I'm sure she doesn't know what an evil monster her 'baby brother' is," Kaye mocked the way Jessica always referred to that grown man as a baby.

"I can't deal with her right now. Even when her name pops into my head, all I can think about is Helanie and what Jessica's brother did to her," I sighed, taking a sip of my coffee.

"You guys didn't question me further," I knew Kaye was desperate to know how we felt about his little confession the other day.

"We just didn't know what to say. If your curse is to kill your mate, and your mate is Helanie, that means—" I stopped talking, unable to say it out loud.

"War between brothers. Because she's their mate too?" Kaye sighed, smiling as he nodded in understanding.

"I will never go to war with you, and neither will the others. They love you. But—we'll keep Helanie safe too," I confirmed. There's no way we'd think about hurting him. But we will defend her from his attacks.

"I don't know why this happened to me. Why me— and maybe it was fate when Helanie asked for time and we broke up. Maybe it was the Moon Goddess looking out for her. Because she does seem to have some fascination with Helanie," although Kaye was trying to make light of the situation, I noticed the tears in his eyes. The brothers had shown their love for Helanie for a while, so I could only imagine how Kaye must be feeling now—torn between loving her and feeling the urge to kill her.

"I'll find some way. I just need to get into Mom's head," I said, watching Kaye lean back in his seat and stare at the sky.

"Is Emmet marrying Helanie?" he asked.

Emme told us that Helanie had made up her mind. Thankfully, she had stopped with the whole "promise to the Moon Goddess" thing. One must not be blinded by anger to the point that they make their own life miserable.

Marrying Penn would have been a good option for her if Emmet wasn't in the picture. But she has someone who loves her, and that someone is her mate, so why not?

"I guess it's also helping me not freak out about the fact that Emmet will be marrying her. But then Maximus—I don't think he'll be able to stay calm for too long," Kaye wasn't wrong. After I told Maximus and Kaye about the sacrifices Emmet had made for them, Maximus had stopped complaining or hurting Emmet with his words. But seeing Helanie marry Emmet will be hard for him.

"But it's not like he can do anything about it. The council will be marrying Helanie off on the full moon night. At midnight, to be exact. And with the way the accused's Alpha King fathers have been doing everything they can to fix this by getting her married, they won't delay the wedding," I reminded Kaye that we don't have time. We need to get Helanie out of there.

"Hmm, what exactly is the plan?" Kaye asked.

"So, you'll be taking care of Kaidon. Make sure he doesn't arrive in time. When the clock strikes twelve and the desperate council is looking for Helanie's groom, I'll show up with Emmet. Emmet will volunteer, and I'm sure they'll just marry her off without a second thought. They want her married and settled so she'll forget about the revenge stuff. Besides, Alpha Diaz won't be there that night to object. The council will go by his earlier words—he said Helanie should be married to anyone as punishment on the next full moon," I repeated my plan.

"What about Dad and Helanie's mother?" Kaye mentioned the elephant in the room, and I sighed under my breath.

That part was worrying me too. My dad deserved happiness as well. But right now, Helanie's safety was way more important. Besides, Helanie was my brother's fated mate, so it was a risky situation.

"We'll deal with it later. You just keep an eye on Maximus. Emmet is worried about him," I sighed as I rubbed my face in my hands.

I wasn't thinking that we would marry Helanie off to Emmet and everything would magically be fixed. We still have my brother's curses to deal with, the fact that they are mated to Helanie, and then there's my mother's anger—along with the biggest issue: justice for Helanie.

"We'll take care of it all. How about we pay her a visit?" Kaye suggested, making me nod my head. I didn't trust Helanie's pack members or the family she lived with.

"We must. Call Emmet and Maximus," I said as I stretched my neck, and that's when a text popped up on my phone again:

Jessica: Tell me what I should do? My brother says he didn't do anything. Why am I the one getting punished? What did I do wrong? If he's found guilty, I'll punish him myself. But if there's anything I can do—any way I can get the truth out of him—I'll do it.

I was surprised she said that. I've known her to love her brother a lot. I appreciated that she wanted to help, but I was more impressed by the fact that she thought I would believe she would actually hand her brother over to the council if he was found guilty.

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

Chapter 490-The Alphas Keep Proposing

Chapter 490: 490-The Alphas Keep Proposing

Helanie:

"Keep an eye on her. Make sure she doesn't take off her pendant around your mate," an old woman advised a newly married couple who had just shifted into the house two doors down from ours. I held my sister's hand and her bag in the other, rolling my eyes at them.

"You think my sister will hit on her husband?" My sister freed her hand, turned, and glared at the old woman.

"Watch your manners, little one. If you turn out like her, you'll end up like her," the woman groaned. The other woman quickly pushed her husband behind her back, as if I would steal him right then and there. I grabbed the chocolate out of my pocket, unwrapped it, and took a bite.

I saw the way the two women were shocked, as if they had never seen someone eat before.

"Why would you talk about my husband like that?" the newly married bride, Maya, yelled at Vani.

"Don't you know your husband doesn't even do any work? My sister is friends with Alphas and rogue kings. Why would she hit on your husband of all the men?" Vani hissed, causing the two women to grind their teeth at her.

"We should tell your mother you're becoming just like her," the old woman hissed at Vani, her eyes filled with anger when they landed on me.

"And you think she's a good role model?" I scoffed at the mention of my stepmother.

"What's going on? Is there a problem here?" I heard a familiar voice, and my eyes rolled back in my head, just like all the other times he had shown up. Which was many times.

He shows up wherever I go, and I just look away from him, hoping he'll get the hint—but he doesn't.

"Alpha Altan, we are so sorry. We didn't mean to speak to this filthy creature, but sometimes we have to look after our men," the old woman hissed while glaring at me but quickly bowed to Alpha Altan.

He wasn't crowned yet, but of course, he was still the alpha in line.

"Did you just call her filthy?" Altan stepped forward, making me puff air into my cheeks and let it out in frustration.

The women shared glances, silently asking one another if he was angry or if he would double down on their words.

"She is Helanie Niles, the only one from our pack who has aced her academic career. She's from RVs that barely anyone can get into, and most importantly, she is my friend. She's nothing like how you're trying to make her out to be," he yelled at them, and that's when I felt the need to intervene.

"You are not my friend, so don't even try to act like you are. As for these women, I can defend myself against such crazy ladies," I hissed at him, watching the women's jaws drop in shock at the fact that I was speaking so badly to their Alpha.

"But I want to be here for you, Helanie," Altan said, sounding genuine and sweet. How funny!

I used to beg him to be nice to me. Before, he would lose his mind over small things, and then I'd have to act like a clown just to make him smile. I don't know why I put up with that before.

"No, Altan. You don't need to be here for me. You weren't there for me when I needed you, so no! Don't try to be a hero now," I shrugged, shaking my head, feeling proud of myself for not worrying about how bad he might feel or how he would look at me.

The fear of losing him had turned me into such a clingy and spineless girl. Looking back at myself, I don't even feel angry at him, but at myself.

"Yep! My sister has better Alphas now," Vani held my hand and started walking me away. But I could tell Altan was still following us.

"I hate him and his father," Vani almost seemed to read my mind and said it out loud.

"Helanie, please hear me out," the minute Vani and I were inside my house, Altan followed in. My brother, who had been lounging around, doing nothing but playing games, immediately sat up and stood straight, bowing down to the Alpha who didn't deserve that much respect.

"What is it, Altan?" I almost yelled at him. He had been following me for a week, and I was getting annoyed with the fact that no matter where I looked, he'd be there.

Just yesterday, when my friends came over, he was standing at a distance, trying to join us. And then his father banned my friends from coming here too.

Life wasn't easy here, but I didn't think it was that difficult. I had been through worse. Some taunts and comments couldn't affect my sanity now.

"Hey, watch your tone," Sullivan, the pro Alpha ass-kisser, yelled, a wide smirk on his face as he looked over at Altan for approval.

"Shut up," I yelled, and then Altan grunted at him before looking back at me.

"Just hear me out once," Altan said again, and I sighed.

"What is it?" I asked, folding my arms over my chest. My sister did the same, both of us tapping our feet as we watched him.

I was expecting him to apologize and all, but what he said wasn't what I wanted to hear.

"Marry me!"

"What?" Sullivan gasped, and I heard him even drop his phone.

"Marry me, Helanie! I will be the best Alpha for you. I will love you and take care of you. I will never let any harm come your way, and this time, I will even sacrifice my own life for you. Please, accept my proposal and don't marry Kaidon. Being with him will be a victory for the rapists. Next time someone wants a gorgeous mate, they'll just rape her and then ask to marry her to fix her life," he continued, making me stare at his face with bottled-up rage.

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

Chapter 491-The Stained Blood

Chapter 491: 491-The Stained Blood

Jessica:

I kept staring at my phone while breathing heavily. How could this have happened? Just a week before my wedding and all this mess came to light. I closed my eyes and thought about the girl in question.

"Helanie Niles, the innocent-looking blonde," my wolf recalled her face, and my heart skipped a beat.

"They've postponed our wedding because of all the issues going on," I hissed and got up, grabbing a bat from my closet and heading to my brother's room.

"What are you doing?" my wolf asked as I stormed into Darius' room, the bat in my hand. I lifted it and started beating the crap out of my brother.

He woke up and started crawling away from me, reaching up to grab the bat.

"How could you do that to someone?" I was screaming in tears, losing my mind.

How the heck did I not see it before? My baby brother had turned into a little monster and had been hurting people.

"What the hell is wrong with you?" he shouted back after jumping off the other side of the bed.

"Did you do it?" I asked, glaring at him with my fists clenched. He held the bat so I couldn't grab it and start hitting him again.

"You're crazy," he yelled, and that's when my father barged in.

"Ask him! Ask your son what he did to that girl!" I couldn't believe I was standing in front of a rapist.

I felt disgusted and wanted to get out of there. How could my brother have done all that and then come home to eat dinner with us? He shouldn't be around any woman.

"Oh," Father scoffed, shaking his head in disbelief.

"Jessica, my daughter, you're accusing your brother? Didn't you hear what happened in court? It was proven that she used her pheromones to trap and force your brother," my father explained, gently patting my shoulder.

"If there's anyone I thought would trust me, I thought it was you," Darius sniffled, holding back tears.

"Oh, cut the crap. Those pheromones might have excited you, but they didn't make you hurt her. Her own boyfriend ran away, didn't he? If her pheromones were so dangerous, he would've stayed and joined you too, right? Since they apparently turn people into monsters," I screamed in tears, watching him shake his head again.

"That was because we were already drunk. Mixed with that—"

I held up my hand and silenced him.

"And then you said you never saw her after Lady Darcy told us Helanie was accusing you of rape," I remembered the night of my engagement ceremony when my brother suddenly disappeared. It was only later that I found out what was going on.

"I think I've come at the right time," Lady Darcy's arrival while I was in tears and losing my mind made me grunt and look away from her.

"May I please have a word?" She asked my father to excuse us, and he did. He always listened to her because he wanted me to marry Norman. I loved him too, but thinking about what he must think of me after this situation with my brother made my stomach turn.

I left the room and went to sit in the living room while Lady Darcy stayed in the room with my brother. She came out with him.

"Jessica, why are you hurting this poor boy? Hasn't he suffered enough?" She sat down and held my hand.

"Not enough to make up for what he did to that girl," I sobbed, closing my eyes at the thought of being related to a monster.

"I didn't do anything. I swear," he cried out in front of me, but I wouldn't even look at his face anymore.

"Really? Then take the truth weapon. Tell everyone the truth." I just had a really bad feeling. No girl would go out and tell such a horrific story just for fun.

"They'll expose his secrets. Even if it wasn't rape, he does sleep around. He'll look bad, and the council can use those private tapes against him later. Why would you want that for your brother? That girl and her mother are known for doing things like that," Lady Darcy was clearly on my brother's side, and that made me even more suspicious.

Why was she so desperate to defend him? I mean, I knew she hated Helanie, but still...

"Really? That girl wanted to trap alphas — that's the excuse, right? But she never asked to marry any of them, and she never even came forward with her story. She was silently staying in her room until you called the council and told them the missing pack member

was alive. So I'm sorry if I'm having a hard time wrapping my head around the 'truth,'" I scoffed, watching them both look at me.

"She wanted to marry an alpha, but her pack's alpha had figured out her tricks. That's why she ran away and started over — she realized her old ways wouldn't work on a real alpha," Lady Darcy said, finishing her point.

"Helanie is good at making people feel sorry for her. No wonder Norman is always defending her so fiercely," she said — and then she covered her mouth, but it was too late. I caught it.

"It's true, Jessica. That man who never thinks about anyone except his brothers now cares so much about Helanie, you have no idea. Even before he found out she was a 'victim,'" Lady Darcy rolled her eyes at the word, "he was all about her. Just try saying something against her, and you'll see what he does. That girl has my son wrapped around her little finger. Not just him — she even fooled Maximus into falling for her and then ditched him in the worst way. She's trouble, and none of you will see it until it's too late."

My energy drained, and I leaned back in my seat. My brother seemed genuinely hurt and upset too. I was so lost at that moment. But there was some truth in Helanie's eyes that I cannot avoid. I must not believe what these people are feeding me. I will hand my brother over to the council if I found out he truly committed such a disgusting crime against someone.

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

Chapter 492-Letting Them Know

Chapter 492: 492-Letting Them Know

Helanie:

"So, will you marry me, please?" he asked this time, since I took a little longer to answer than he must have expected. The fact that a smile spread across his lips made me chuckle sarcastically.

Did he really think I was still the Helanie who would start celebrating just because he finally proposed?

That used to be all I cared about. I'd wait for him to pop the question — and he knew it. There were times he even hinted at it just to get me excited and then crush my hopes. He used to enjoy playing with my feelings.

I raised an eyebrow and stepped back to get a good look at his whole body.

"Oh my goddess!" Larissa screamed from behind me. My stepbrother gasped, and my father — who had just entered the house — looked so proud and happy.

What the hell!

"No!" I hissed, and immediately heard more gasps and some people swearing under their breath.

"Please, I want you to be my mate. Helanie, let me make things right for what I did wrong," Altan continued. My father rushed to my side and grabbed my arm, but I pulled away quickly.

"Say yes — he'll help you fix your reputation," my father whispered to me, and I turned away from him with a disgusted look.

"Really? What reputation? I never lost any. As long as I can look at myself in the mirror and be proud of who I am, I don't see anything wrong with my reputation," I muttered angrily. I was surprised at how stunned my father looked every time I responded to him with even a bit of firmness.

"As for you," I turned to Altan, "I'm not something you can fix. I'm fine. I don't need an alpha to live my life, and marriage is definitely not the solution to my problems. Justice is," I hissed, reminding him not to sink any lower than he already had.

"Ahhh! Stupidity stays with you no matter how many academies you attend," my father said with a dismissive wave of his hand. My stepmother came closer to Altan, staring at his face.

"I just want to know why you want to marry her. Is beauty all that men care about? I've seen her friends come around, and that Alpha Penn — he's such a handsome boy, and he looked at her with those dreamy eyes—"

As my stepmother kept rambling about the men in my life treating me well, I noticed Altan react a little differently at the mention of Penn.

"Alpha Penn? Didn't he used to be friends with those rapists? I don't think you should be hanging around him,"

The audacity of Altan to try and tell me who I should or shouldn't be around made me laugh out loud. The whole room went silent, and my stepmother grimaced.

"Why does everyone want her, while I had to marry an omega — and a useless one too?" she complained, as if she wasn't the one who'd been sleeping with a married man for years.

"Altan. Kindly leave," I said, pointing at the door.

"Helanie, think about my proposal. It will give you everything you've ever wanted," he added again, and as much as I wanted him out of my sight, my greedy family stood around him, staring at his face like they'd never seen an alpha ask someone to be their mate.

"Everything I wanted in the past was barely anything — I was settling. Now I have bigger dreams, and you — and your pack's status — don't even come close. So please, get out."

As I raised my voice at him, my stepmother raised her hand like she was going to slap my arm. But she stopped.

She wouldn't dare — not after last time.

She knew I wouldn't hold back anymore.

"I'll be there on the full moon, Helanie," he said one last time before walking out of the house.

After he left, my family turned to me with questioning looks.

"Why didn't you accept his proposal? Didn't you do all that just to marry an alpha?" my stepmother asked, scratching her scalp like she was truly confused — when it should've been obvious that I did none of what I was accused of.

"I mean, she got Alpha Penn. I guess she did do all that and got what she wanted. But then she's marrying Alpha Kaidon, oh my! I haven't found one good mate, and she's drowning in alphas,"

Freaking Sullivan hissed, flopping back onto the couch again to waste more hours of his life doing absolutely nothing.

"You could have said yes and gone on to live a better life. Now you'll have to marry the guy you said raped you — and he isn't even an alpha yet. Goddess knows if he'll even win the crown, even after getting into Fell Moon Academy for the title," my stepmother sighed, rolling her eyes and slapping her forehead.

"Why don't you all find something else to do? Doesn't it get exhausting hating on me?" I snapped at them, raising my voice and letting the harshness cut through the room.

The three of them exchanged glances before my father stepped forward.

"What happened to being obedient and well-mannered?"

He had the nerve to blame my misery on my "good manners."

"And yet, I never made you proud. The only time I saw you proud of me was when Altan proposed today. You know what? Now that I think about it — the three of you have always acted like the things I'm being accused of. You wanted me to marry an alpha. And you—" I pointed directly at my father. His eyes widened like he sensed the threat in my voice — a warning to think twice before ever speaking over me again.

"You were so happy when you heard I'd gone to meet Alpha Altan that night. You didn't even ask if I needed to go to the hospital. Your greed knows no limits. Now I know why my mother left you. She's living her best life without you."

I let it out — all the anger, all the pain I'd been carrying in my chest for years.

There was more, but this much was enough.

I needed him to feel it first.

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

Chapter 493-Welcome To My Home Stepbrothers

Chapter 493: 493-Welcome To My Home Stepbrothers

Helanie:

"Huh? You think it was my fault?" he screamed, raising his hand, trying to scare me. But he knew better than to touch my cheek again.

"Why? Weren't you the one who brought in this trash and ruined your own marriage? Besides, let's not even talk about it now. My mother now lives a life of luxury, fully supported by her fiancé. He loves her the way she deserves to be loved." Oh, the look on their faces when I talked about my mother living a better life than them was priceless.

Larissa instantly teared up as the idea of my mother doing well, after she ruined her marriage, seemed too unrealistic to her. She wanted to win, no matter what the prize was.

I returned to my room, tired of hearing complaints and taunts all day long. The only difference was that not many dared to say those things to my face, and if they did, I would give them back so well that their jaws would drop.

I could hear them argue outside, probably upset that I ruined their chance to become part of the royal family. I had always had a bad feeling about my father. But I used to force myself to forgive him, even when he never apologized or did anything to show me he cared.

But for the sake of the memories from before my parents got divorced, I loved my father. Until now.

Now that I have grown up, I am starting to realize I don't have to love someone just because they're family or just because we shared amazing memories together. The minute they start hurting you is the exact moment you can stop caring for them and loving them. It's important to remove toxic people from your life in order to move on.

I was in the room, scoffing and grunting, while my sister offered me chocolate.

She was adorable. How the heck was she different from the rest of them? Guess it's never about blood; it's about the mind.

"I'll go get you some juice," she snapped her fingers while watching me hyperventilate and rushed out of the room.

I don't know why I was getting so worked up, but I guess it just happens when you finally wake up from a long nightmare and realize the people around you are actually that evil.

However, she returned breathless, a huge smile on her lips.

"What happened?" I was confused about what might have happened.

"They're here," she leaned to the side, smiling at me.

"Your stepbrothers are here! They're so tall and nicely dressed!" she jumped up and down, shocking me with the news of their arrival.

"Wait, what? They're here? You're joking with me, right?" I asked in bewilderment, thinking maybe she thought that would cheer me up.

"No! Really! They are—," she stopped when someone appeared behind her, and there went my heart. Emmet stood tall in a black suit, his head tilted and a smile on his lips. He had his hands in his pockets and looked so gorgeous. I had not seen a handsome man like him in my pack or in my house, so I guess the house got blessed with handsomeness because of his arrival.

"Emmet," I got up and stopped myself from rushing over and landing in his arms. That would expose us. We'd have to wait just a little while.

"Helanie," he said my name as well, much more warmly.

"Oh, I didn't know you would come." I was suddenly blushing so hard. But I was glad it was just Vani in the room with me. She wouldn't judge me no matter what, so I was fine.

"Why not? Although—," he started walking inside, not even looking around but making sure he had taken enough of my view. "We had to wiggle in because your alpha Diaz is a sucker, isn't he, Vani?" he turned to her, who nodded happily.

I bet she was happy to have someone she could call an older brother, and he would genuinely care for her. Unlike Sullivan.

"And this is her room?" Before I could spend more time with Emmet alone, Maximus walked in wearing a gray suit. Oh my! He looked handsome too.

"Oh, Helanie, how are you?" His tone changed so much when talking to me. His eyes were shining as if tears were about to appear, before he looked away and changed his mood.

"This must be our little sister?" Maximus frowned at Vani, giving her a head nod.

"Yes, I am," Vani nodded.

"Vani, we have a lot of gifts for you outside," Maximus added, and she quickly rushed outside. Now it was just the three of us. I could tell Emmet wanted to hold me, but his eyes kept moving to Maximus, who was staring at us like a couple of cops.

"We should go outside. The others are here too," Maximus announced, pointing his thumb toward the door.

"Hello, Maximus. How are you?" Since he kept changing the topic and acting restless, I decided to take the first step.

The anxiety in his body faded, and a soft, comforting smile appeared on his lips. "I'm good. How are you?"

"I'm good," I replied.

"We're aware of that whole mess, and trust me, we'll have another round with those alphas soon. And that time, we'll get them good," Maximus added, mentioning the trial I lost.

"I hope so, Maximus," I gave him a pout. I had my eyes on Emmet too.

I could tell he was noticing us.

"Okay, let's go outside," Maximus turned around and walked out of the room quickly.

Emmet and I started to walk together when I felt Emmet lean over me from behind and plant a kiss on my shoulder, then another on my neck, and finally one on my cheek. His breath was so fresh that I wanted him to keep his face next to mine forever.

"I haven't forgotten about you. I will never," I heard him whisper as he walked past me and exited the room but waited outside for me to step behind him.

And when I came out, I saw Kaye in a black long coat, black shirt, and black pants, and then Norman, who also wore a black suit.

It was the first time my family was going to meet them.

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

Chapter 494-Feeling Jealous? My stepbrothers Are Amazing

Chapter 494: 494-Feeling Jealous? My stepbrothers Are Amazing

"So, this is your home?" Maximus sighed as he looked around. I could tell what he was trying to do. Larissa was staring at them with her eyes big and wide. The four of them in a small house looked really big—almost like they were taking up all the space. They were big and tall too, and their personalities were what made this home seem smaller. My stepbrother stood beside them looking like a feather. He didn't dare pass a comment either.

"This your stepbrother? The other one?" Kaye smirked, pointing at Sullivan while comparing him to himself. "What do you do, boy?" Even though there wasn't much of an age difference, Kaye said it to insult Sullivan for doing nothing and always being on the couch, or bullying me.

"I am not doing anything currently. But I am looking for work," Sullivan lied obviously. I had never heard him talk about his interests in work at all.

Emmet was casually walking around, acting like he was checking things out, all while gently brushing the back of his hand against mine repeatedly. I felt so shy and special when he paid attention to me like that.

"It will be amazing if you can help him with the academy. The academy will help him with discipline," Larissa was so quick to ask for help.

The brothers shared a glance and then chuckled.

"What do you think the academy is for?" Norman stretched his neck, making me crack a little smile because I knew he took so much pride in his academy that he must have been offended that she even suggested the academy for her son.

"I was just thinking, if Helanie could do that, my son can do it too," she shrugged, embarrassing herself even more. Norman looked at me when she mentioned my name, then at Sullivan.

"There is a huge difference between Helanie and your son. Helanie is born to do greater things. She is compassionate, passionate, and also very well disciplined. She is hardworking and very brave. Your son should continue being brave in video games. I don't think our academy will take someone like him," as expected from Norman, he didn't just stop there.

Not only was I watching him with a smirk, but his own brothers were sharing glances and eyeing each other, silently observing Norman.

"Norman, but I guess he can try," Maximus teased him. Norman took a deep breath and glared at Maximus before he added,

"No! The academy is only for capable people, okay?" That was such a childish way for him to argue, but we laughed at the expense of Sullivan.

"I don't think I can do the academy either. It's too tough for me," Sullivan hissed at his mother for getting him rejected and walked out of the house.

"I was just trying to help," Larissa rushed after him, and now it was just us. Not just us, though—Vani was checking her gifts, whereas my father was watching them from the kitchen.

"I hope they're not bothering you. If they do, just give us a call," Kaye didn't hold back and said it right in front of my father, who steadily lowered his gaze.

"I'm a hardworking student?" I raised my brow, and Norman quickly looked away. "You're still you. So much pride," I joked, and his brothers laughed at him. But I noticed Norman didn't react the way he used to.

"Hey, come on, she was just joking," Maximus slapped his back, and Norman finally looked up again.

"I am disappointed. I don't know if I can look you in the eye after the trial. But trust me, I haven't rested since that day. I will do whatever I can—whatever! To bring you justice," the serious tone in his voice made me sigh and nod my head.

"It wasn't your fault. The system is rigged. Of course, the council favors packs," I didn't want to stay with that guilt.

And it was enough for me that they weren't giving up on me.

"May I ask—if what you said about my daughter is true?" Finally, my father walked out of the kitchen and asked Norman.

"The fact that you have to ask someone else how capable your daughter is makes me pity you," Norman was harsh that way, but it was justified. "And for what I said, it was not at all exaggerated. That snowstorm that everyone was afraid of, reaching the pack, she dealt with it and those monsters."

The look on my father's face was worth watching. He never thought I could do anything great.

My stepmother had just come into the room when she heard about it, and her face fell. She looked so angry about it.

"And her mother—is she happy there? Is she—on good terms with Helanie?" he asked, but there was hidden pain in his voice. Or maybe deceit, I couldn't tell.

"She's happy," Kaye answered with a sour mood.

However, I had to ask the rest of the question myself. "She is just as good to me as you are. Guess I had bad luck when it came to parents." I taunted, and my father looked down.

"It's just that—it's not easy to juggle between—" my father had no excuse, and he knew that too.

"Well, Helanie doesn't make it very easy for anyone to like her," Larissa took over, helping her husband in a way that she wanted to.

"Well, I must say, you have a big heart," however, it was Emmet's comment that made Larissa and my father happy for a brief moment before Emmet added, "Otherwise, who would marry a woman who is outright evil and good for nothing?"

That comment towards Larissa made her jaw drop.

She grunted and sprinted to her bedroom, with my father rushing after her. Now we could talk. I sat down with them while Vani promised she would make them tea.

"We'll meet again on the day of the full moon," Emmet said, his eyes sparkling at the thought of us marrying.

Maximus looked away, while Kaye kept his eyes on the ground. Norman was watching us all.

"I will wait for your arrival," I said to Emmet, as that was the plan. Just before midnight, he would come to my rescue so that the council would have no choice but to accept him as my mate.

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

Chapter 495-The Bride Without A Groom

Chapter 495: 495-The Bride Without A Groom

Helanie:

It was odd. Wearing a white dress for my wedding. I chose a plain satin dress because we still had to show that I wasn't happy about this marriage but at the same time, I wanted to look like a bride for Emmet.

There weren't going to be many people. Just my family and Kaidon's family. My friends had decided not to come because I told them so. They were anxious, and I had to tell them to just trust me.

Penn had been extremely upset because after his initial offer to help me out in front of the brothers, I never got back to him.

"Just think about it one more time. Marrying Kaidon would traumatize you." Lamar was on the phone with me, others listening in since he had put it on speaker.

"Lamar, trust me. I'll be fine," I reassured him, scared that maybe our calls were being recorded.

"Why didn't she choose me?" Penn muttered from behind, still complaining.

"Penn, not right now," Salem hissed at him, and he grunted in response.

"Anyway, I'll tell you guys what I have in mind." I was being careful not to use certain words.

For example, I couldn't say I had a plan.

"Well, I hope by that you mean not getting married." Lamar was so down. I heard from Sage that he hadn't been eating at all ever since the trial happened. All my friends had been worried about me.

The academy had started, and they said they couldn't enjoy a single day like they used to when I was there.

Lucy was her usual self, and Sydney was being very quiet. It was almost like a storm was building inside her.

I'm not sure if she had heard about me and Altan already. But she must have—

The trial had exposed a lot of things, and I heard it was also in the headlines.

"Anyway, I'm at the council court. I'll let you know later what happened here," I said before hanging up the call.

My parents and I sat in the waiting room, waiting for Kaidon and his mother to arrive. It had already been a few hours, and I was kind of hoping Alpha Diaz didn't notice.

I heard he had locked up Altan. Someone from the mansion told my father that Altan wanted to come and interfere with the marriage, offering to marry me instead, but his father locked him up.

"What's taking them so long?" Larissa scoffed, rolling her eyes all the way to the back of her head.

I knew what was taking so long.

It was already midnight, and this was around the time we were supposed to get married.

I straightened my back and checked the clock. It was just unsettling—and not because Kaidon didn't show up. Of course, he wouldn't. But where the heck were Emmet and Norman?

"Kaidon's not even picking up his phone," I heard Alpha Diaz's voice as he walked toward us, and my heart sank in my chest. What the heck was he doing here?

"Ugh, nobody wants this woman," he let out a laugh.

"Should we go back home? We've been sitting here for a while," my stepmother suggested, but Alpha Diaz didn't even look at her.

"What should we do now?" the council head, Lord Vonston, asked Alpha Diaz, who had been glaring at me like I was the problem.

"Just keep them here. We still have time. The moon is rising and will stay at its peak for a few hours, I believe. But before the clouds cover the sky, I'll have a husband here for her."

This was exactly what I had been afraid of—and my fears were coming to life.

I slowly lowered my head and fidgeted with my fingers.

"Even her stepbrothers, who paid so much to be allowed to stay here tonight, are missing," Alpha Diaz commented in passing before he walked toward the exit. That was not good.

I stepped to the side and started calling Emmet again, but he wasn't picking up anymore.

"Ugh," I muttered, trying Maximus—but of course, he wouldn't answer either. Norman had told me that on full moon nights, Maximus would be in the woods, and Kaye would be taking care of him.

But where the heck were Emmet and Norman?

"It seems like they've opened the side room for us. We should rest there," Larissa got up and walked toward the room. My father and stepmother followed.

My sister was left at home with the neighbor watching her.

I was anxious.

I stormed into the room and looked at my so-called family. They were so stress-free, and here I was, freaking out.

I even called Norman so many times, but he didn't pick up either.

That's when I finally got a call back from Kaye.

"You were calling? Is everything okay?" he asked.

"Umm, I didn't want to worry you because I knew you'd be with Maximus tonight—" I was speaking in whispers so my family wouldn't hear and mess things up even more.

"Don't worry about that. Tell me, what's bothering you? Have you got—married yet? I mean—have you and Emmet—"

I noticed how hard it was for him to talk about my marriage to his brother.

"That's the issue. My groom is nowhere to be found. I've been calling Norman and Emmet for a while now, but they're not picking up," I started breaking down.

Until now, I thought I was fine and everything was going according to plan—until this happened. And being all alone again, among people who hated me, left me in such a state of panic.

"Really? Okay, don't worry. I'll do something," I heard him getting all worked up.

"Alpha Diaz said he's bringing me some guy to marry," I mumbled under my breath.

"Oi! That is not happening. I'm coming over," he said, and my heart skipped a beat. I didn't know what he could do by coming here or how that would help, but I had a feeling he was talking about volunteering.

"Don't worry, you'll have the next full moon to reject me."

And I was right. My heart started beating louder and faster, but it was the only way to get anything done.

If he couldn't make it... would I have to call Penn? But it will take so much time then.

"I'm coming, Helanie," he reassured before hanging up.

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

Chapter 496-The Unexpected Groom

Chapter 496: 496-The Unexpected Groom

Helanie:

"Okay, listen up," Vonston arrived shortly after I ended my call with Kaye.

"We have a groom on the way. It's an old man—" he began, but I already knew who the groom was.

"I'm not marrying that old man," I hissed at him.

"Well, you are getting married tonight."

He shrugged and walked away, making me turn toward my family—who weren't doing anything to help me.

"What am I going to do now?" I asked myself, rubbing my palms anxiously.

"What are you looking at me for? I'm not fighting anyone for you. The council gave us instructions—you have to get married or be exiled. And by exiled, they mean punished," my dad said, emotionless as ever.

Of course, he'd never stand up for me.

Even after I returned and achieved so much, he still wasn't proud of me.

Sometimes, I wondered if he had ever loved me at all.

"But you can fight them. Why won't you?"

My stepmother smirked, making my stepbrother laugh at her words.

"And Helanie, what was all that academy training even for? It's not like you can fight everyone," my stepmother mocked, clicking her tongue at my misery.

"But I can!"

A loud, thunderous voice echoed through the hall as he walked in.

His presence filled the air, thick with tension. His body language screamed confidence.

"Norman!" I called out, running straight toward him and into his arms.

I'd been so stressed out and anxious, I didn't even realize what I was doing. But seeing him gave me a sudden sense of calm.

He paused for a moment before gently placing his hand on the back of my head to comfort me.

"Where have you been?" I pulled back from the hug and asked, voice shaky. But before he could answer, my attention was already shifting. I was looking behind him—for Emmet.

"Norman, where is Emmet?" I asked again, my eyes widening by the second.

Norman looked like he had been through something.

"I—" he cleared his throat and then looked past me, toward my family, who seemed to have been watching us closely.

"Come here," Norman gently held my arm and led me toward the exit so we could talk without anyone overhearing.

The clouds were quickly filling up the sky, and I knew the council would rush to get me married.

The punishment had to happen on the exact day.

"Why is your cellphone switched off?" I hissed at him.

"It ran out of battery. I've been in the woods—looking everywhere for—"

He paused, and that's when I finished the thought for him.

"Emmet? Did Emmet go missing?"

I watched as his face filled with sadness.

"I don't know..."

He was definitely hiding something from me at this point.

"Norman, please tell me the whole truth."

As I insisted, Norman finally opened his mouth—and what he said shocked me.

"Emmet texted me that he wanted to drink a little. After that, I tried to call him, but he kept cutting my calls. And later, he just stopped answering completely. Before my phone died, I looked around for him... because I'm not even sure if he's okay or—"

He paused again, one hand on his forehead and the other on his waist.

"Or passed out somewhere," I finished for him, feeling a wave of disappointment hit me hard.

"Don't think like that. He probably just forgot or something. I'll find him soon," he tried to reassure me, but I was already shaking my head. As if forgetting about his marriage with me was a kind excuse.

"Kaye is coming over. He said he'd offer himself... until the next full moon."

I couldn't believe Emmet had done that.

To go drink—on the one day he knew he got messy—was beyond me.

Why was he so anxious to drink and not even trying to be there for me?

I could feel my voice getting heavier as I held back tears in front of Norman. I feel like such a burden now.

"Kaye? No. That is not happening,"

And then the way Norman took a stand for his brother—like an older brother should—made me feel even guiltier.

"Of course I'm not so selfish as to ruin his life and chances with Kesha," I muttered, changing my mind.

Before, I was so scared I thought I'd marry Kaye just until the next full moon, but now—after seeing Norman's reaction, the way he shook his head so firmly—I knew I wasn't going to marry Kaye.

Or anyone.

"That's not what I meant," Norman sighed.

"I'm calling Penn," I said, nodding my head. That was it. He was the only one who had proposed to me genuinely.

I was just so hurt that night.

All the people who claimed to stand by me were suddenly... gone.

"By the time he gets here, Alpha Diaz will already be here with a new groom of his own choosing," Norman announced, and I hissed.

"Then what do you suggest we do, huh? I'm doomed. I'm so stupid—I always trust people with my whole heart and—"

I hissed again, and out of sheer frustration and hurt, I slapped myself.

That's when I heard Norman grunt and grab my hand.

The pressure he put on my wrist made me look him in the eye, shocked.

"If you ever touch yourself like that again—"

There was a warning in his voice. It wasn't anger. It was desperation. Protective.

"I'm tired, Norman. I don't want to fight anymore," I whispered, barely recognizing my own voice.

I couldn't believe I was saying this—but too much had happened.

The injustice, the public humiliation, and now this.

I had to admit it... I had lost.

I should've listened when my parents said I couldn't go against the alphas.

"Come with me. I know what we should do," Norman said softly.

He closed his eyes and took a deep breath before gently pulling me toward the council room—the place where the wedding was supposed to start.

"I don't want to go in there," I resisted, pulling back.

He stopped walking and turned to look at me.

Then he said something that shook the ground beneath me.

"I'll marry you."

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

Chapter 497-Married My Brother's Mate

Chapter 497: 497-Married My Brother's Mate

Norman:

"I, the future rogue king Norman A. McQuoid, accept the top student of RVs and the best of the best, Helanie Niles, as my mate and my wife," I said firmly, my hands holding her fragile hands.

It wasn't easy for me to do this. But we only had a few minutes before Alpha Diaz would barge in and bring in a groom. And they would tie her to that man—or even an animal—because the full moon was already being covered by clouds.

"I, Helanie Niles, accept Norman as my mate and my husband," she uttered with great difficulty, very unhappy with how things were going. I could tell she wanted to break down so badly that she kept blinking over and over to stop the tears.

I saw the looks on everyone's faces when the council brought them to the small office where Helanie and I were standing. It was just her family, but they were shocked. Of course, it seemed strange to them—her mother was going to marry my father soon.

Sadly, we were left with no choice and no way out.

I told the council head that I had felt the mate bond with Helanie tonight when I arrived. And that Helanie's wolf had been slowly waking up. I could tell Lord Vonston wanted her gone just like the others did. But Alpha Diaz wanted her to suffer.

So, for the sake of his alliance with the rogues, Vonston said it was okay for me to marry her, since at least that would settle her pheromones.

It seemed believable to him and explained why her pheromones wouldn't stop. He blamed it on her body's desperate need for a mate.

"Thank you for your cooperation. You may mark each other now," Vonston said, stepping back.

My head was hurting so much. Of course she couldn't mark me, but I would. Her acceptance of me was more for the court's paperwork.

It seemed as if we hadn't fully thought through the whole wedding process. I watched her stare at my throat move as I gulped, then I turned to the small crowd of my family. I scratched my scalp and stepped closer, but she quickly stepped back, so I stopped.

"What is going on? She can be with others—why is she not letting you mark her?" Vonston changed his tone once my sharp gaze landed on him. Now that Vonston was standing right next to me, I bet he could feel what damage I could do to him if he didn't stop disrespecting her.

"You have to understand, it's not easy for her to stand here with a man she just felt a mate bond with. The idea of marrying someone after men have hurt and betrayed her must be hard for her," I snapped, shutting down any rumors before they could start.

"Okay, well, she must let you mark her," Council Head Vonston said with a sigh.

I stepped toward her again, and this time, she didn't move back—because she knew it would cause problems. We would be accused of lying. And if Alpha Diaz came before I had marked her, he'd start asking questions about the mate bond. So we had to get it done before he showed up.

It wasn't easy for me either. I leaned down and swallowed hard as I waited for her to flick her hair off her neck. She did—very unwillingly.

I was watching her eyes shoot daggers at me. I didn't marry her because I wanted to. I just wanted to save her. And I knew the consequences of my decision too. My brothers were going to be so upset with me.

I closed my eyes and buried my face in her neck, and her scent hit me. It hit me like I had never been hit by anything before. She smelled like fresh cherries. Her skin was soft and clean.

I opened my mouth, and just as my canines touched her skin, I felt a strange sensation in my body.

At that moment, I realized if I didn't do it quickly and pull away, she'd probably call me a pervert. And honestly, it would be normal. Any man would feel something while marking a woman—right?

I quickly pierced her skin with my canines, but didn't go all the way because I could tell she was in pain.

And then, once she calmed down a little, I dug in just a bit deeper to leave the mark. My hands were awkwardly moving—trying to hold her but then instantly pulling back. I had never been this nervous around anyone before.

Then I felt her hand land on my chest. For a second, I thought maybe she was letting me rest my hand on her back... until I felt a push and realized—nope! She wanted me to back off.

So I did.

I quickly stepped away and looked away.

"Umm, let's sign so I can take her home," I said to Vonston, who nodded and motioned for Helanie to sit down and sign the wedding papers.

I stepped aside and saw that her family had the exact same look on all their faces—wide eyes and mouths hanging open.

I ignored them and quickly walked toward the exit, standing at the door as I called for my warriors. I needed to know how the search for Emmet was going—and to have the car ready so we could get out of there as soon as possible.

That's when my eyes moved up, and I saw Kaye rushing toward me.

"Why are you here? Where's Maximus?" I asked him, worried about who was watching over Maximus now.

"I left some animals for him in the cave and watched him go in. He'll stay there for a while, and once I'm done here, I'll go back to check on him," Kaye said, breathing heavily, peeking into the room to catch a glimpse of Helanie.

"She's in a bridal dress..." he uttered, fixing his hair.

"Let's do it," he said, and as soon as he tried to step into the room, I grabbed his arm.

I didn't expect him to be so excited about it.

What was I supposed to say to him now?

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

Chapter 498-Everyone Hates Me Now

Chapter 498: 498-Everyone Hates Me Now

Norman:

"Kaye, it's done already," I said, struggling to find the words to explain what I had just done.

"What do you mean, brother?" Kaye asked, frowning. As he narrowed his eyes toward the room and saw Helanie signing the papers, he turned to look at me.

"Don't tell me you let Alpha Diaz marry her off to someone," he said, his tone almost threatening.

Usually, I would've felt disrespected—but not this time. His concern was real.

"I didn't," I said with a heavy groan.

"Then? Did Emmet come? Where is he?" Kaye glanced around in panic before locking eyes with me. "I don't understand."

Of course he didn't. It was like he was seeing right through me.

"There's no one here. So, who did she marry?" he asked again, this time making my chest tighten.

"Kaye—" I didn't get how he could ask that when I was standing right here.

"Mister Norman, if you may please come and sign the marriage papers so we can all head back home before the storms settle," Lord Vonston's voice cut through the tension, snapping Kaye out of it.

He looked at me, pointed a finger at Vonston, then back at me.

"What?" he mouthed. "What the fuck?" he added under his breath.

"Did you—Norman, please tell me you didn't do that. How could you step on all of your brothers?" he hissed, grabbing my shoulders and shoving me hard in the chest.

I stood still. I didn't move. I hadn't done anything wrong. We didn't have a choice. Kaye came too late.

"I didn't have a choice. It was either I marry her, or the man who showed up seconds after I accepted her," I said, remembering the old man Alpha Diaz's warriors brought in. He probably went off to complain to Diaz, but there was nothing that could be done now.

"Did you secretly want her or what?"

That hit me like a slap. I narrowed my eyes at him in warning, silently daring him to not say anything else like that.

He chuckled bitterly, shaking his head as he stepped back.

"Well done. You played us all."

No matter what I said now, the sadness in my brother's eyes would drown it out.

"Let's leave this behind for now and take her back home—" I tried stepping toward him.

But he turned around with a grunt.

"I'm sure you can do that yourself. You won anyway."

His words cut deep, each step he took away from me carving them further into my chest. I couldn't call him back. I had to go inside and face Helanie—who clearly wasn't happy with me either.

I was starting to feel like a creep who forced his way in. But I knew my heart. I did it because she needed someone at that moment.

I walked back into the office and sat down beside Helanie, who still hadn't looked up from the floor. I could tell she was crushed—and it hurt me.

I didn't mean to bring pain to any of them. I really didn't have another way.

I signed the papers and turned to Helanie.

"We should head back home."

It was definitely strange for me too. There had been moments when I told myself I'd be fine marrying Jessica—she understood me. But then, I'd slip right back into that mindset where I couldn't see myself loving anyone or caring for any woman except my brothers.

And now, I am married.

Also, I had a fiancée... who I was going to have to face eventually.

"Hmm," Helanie nodded and got up from her seat. Her family started swarming her like ants.

"I'm so glad you got married to someone outside the pack," her father said, while I was busy wrapping things up with Vonston. Still, I kept one ear on them.

"Does that mean her mother can't marry that man anymore?" her stepmother laughed, making me feel sorry for people who sit around rooting for someone else's misery.

"Stay close," I whispered to Helanie, keeping one eye on her.

"Helanie, you proved what kind of daughter you are—stealing your mother's happiness," the woman added with a cruel smile.

That was enough. I didn't even know why Helanie was still standing there listening to this woman.

"Excuse me," I said to Vonston, turning toward Helanie.

"At least she didn't steal someone else's entire marriage," I added sharply.

My words shut them up instantly.

Larissa groaned and glanced at her husband—a useless excuse for a man—probably expecting him to defend her.

"Say one more word, and I'll make sure you regret it. Stay away from my wife," I hissed, leaning toward Larissa and pointing a finger at my own chest.

She swallowed hard, and only then did I straighten my back and turn to Vonston, grabbing the final documents from him.

"And for everyone who's ever talked about Helanie—stay out of her business," I said loud enough for the whole room to hear.

That's when Alpha Diaz walked in, fury written all over his face.

"Too late," I muttered under my breath as I held Helanie's hand.

"She survived your trap."

As we walked past him, I didn't even care to hide the disgust in my voice.

We left the office, and as we neared my car, Helanie pulled her hand away and stormed into the backseat. I didn't mind her attitude—she had every right to be upset.

A girl whose body had already been violated... now married off without her will.

She must've had so many dreams, and they were all crushed.

The silence in the car was so thick that when I cleared my throat, she actually jumped.

"You haven't eaten anything. We should stop and—"

I shut up when I heard her sigh and saw her clutch her hands together tightly.

I knew why she wasn't talking.

The second she opened her mouth, all those tears she was fighting to hold back would pour out.

This was just another loss for her.

I couldn't help but wonder where Emmet was.

Then I got a message from one of my warriors, and what they told me was shocking:

Warrior: We found Emmet in a bar, drinking himself to the point where we had to carry him back to the

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

Chapter 499-The Angry Bride

Chapter 499: 499-The Angry Bride

Helanie:

I was in a different kind of zone all this time. I just wanted to blink and have time pass.

The next thing I knew, I was sitting in his car, looking out the window. I had been let down again. And this time, by the man who was my mate, the love I thought was all I needed to forget about my challenge to the Moon Goddess.

"Helanie, let's eat something," I heard his voice again, and I clenched my jaw. My anger wasn't directed at him, but the person I was really mad at wasn't around at the moment.

So, I was kind of annoyed with all the brothers.

And then there was Norman's fiancée, Jessica.

How would she feel about all this? I can't be the kind of woman who takes someone else's man.

"Tell me something," I turned to him and saw him sit up straighter.

"Sure," he replied, half-distracted, like he was worried about what I might ask.

"Did you hear from him?" I asked, my eyes silently warning him about what would happen if he didn't answer honestly.

"I haven't. I'm sure there's a good reason he couldn't come," Norman said, his tone flat. I hated how he could hide everything without giving anything away.

"You're such a liar," I hissed and turned my back to him again.

"Okay, listen, I don't want to do this right now, but don't tell anyone that we lied about the mate bond—" he started, but I turned to him and groaned. His eyebrows drew together, and then his eyes narrowed at me.

"What are you mad at me for?" he mumbled. "I'm just saying, if anyone finds out and they complain—"

As he kept talking, I looked him up and down, then scoffed.

He followed my gaze and then shook his head at my reaction.

"I'm surprised your throat still works after all that scoffing," he groaned.

"Just make sure—" he continued with the same lecture, and I rolled my eyes, throwing myself back in the seat, arms crossed.

"I heard you for the first time. You know what? If you were this annoying to your brothers—always reminding them what to do and what not to do—maybe this wouldn't have happened," I said, gesturing between us, meaning the whole wedding mess.

He sighed and looked out the window.

"Emmet is not irresponsible," he said.

"Yeah, sure. Emmet, say thanks to your brother for backing you up—oh wait, Emmet's not here," I snapped, throwing a small fit in the car and kicking the driver's seat.

"Sorry," I quickly realized I was making things harder for the poor driver and sat up straight to avoid doing it again.

"You'll get to reject me at the next full moon. Just calm down now. That part was important," Norman said in a calm and respectful tone.

"And by then, Jessica will have cursed me with maggots on my grave," I sighed.

"Is that what this is about?" I heard his tone shift, and I turned to him again.

"Norman, there are certain things I really hate people for. One of them is stealing someone else's mate or fiancé," I groaned.

"That's a good quality, but weren't you going to marry Kaye if I hadn't stepped in?"

I don't know why he thought that was the right time to point out my hypocrisy, but sure enough, it made me even more mad.

You see, Emmet would never do that. He knew when I was too annoyed and just saying dumb things. He'd let me vent without interrupting.

But this big oaf in front of me—just looking at his face was making my anxiety worse.

"And now I'm his wife," I said my thoughts out loud, and Norman groaned loudly.

"I wouldn't have been stealing Kesha's mate because he was my mate in the first place," I hissed at Norman, now sitting on the seat with my legs folded under me, towering over him.

"And that makes it okay to break the promise you made to the Moon Goddess—"

He stopped when I gasped, and that finally shut him up.

"Oh Norman, if you don't shut up—I will literally murder you," I screamed, waving my hands at his neck like I was about to strangle him. He didn't move but just looked at my hands with raised eyebrows.

After he didn't say a word, I calmed down and sank back into my seat.

"I was just pointing out that you broke the promise because it was Emmet, who you loved. So marrying that mate would've been justified—"

As he went on, I turned and gave him a tired look, and he finally stopped talking.

Does he not know when to quit? Does he always have to be right?

After a while, I couldn't take it anymore. I buried my face in my hands and started crying. Even if this was meant to be a punishment, Emmet had made me believe this day would become a blessing for our love. All the days I had waited for this night, I'd prepared so much in my head to say to Emmet.

I was so happy. Even when everyone else thought I had lost, I believed I'd actually win—I'd gain my love, and together we'd fight for justice for me.

I felt a small nudge on my arm and looked up to see Norman holding out a handkerchief, nudging me gently with the back of his hand to get my attention. He was looking the other way. I quickly grabbed the handkerchief and started wiping my cheeks.

Thankfully, he didn't say another word for the rest of the car ride.

After hours and hours, we finally arrived—just as the sun was starting to rise.

I didn't want to face anyone, but what else could I do?

I got out and stared at the mansion. Tears welled up in my eyes again.

I was suddenly so emotional that day.

The mark hurt so much, too.

"Let's go," Norman said, walking me quietly toward his bedroom.

His bedroom!

Crap, all this chaos made me forget...

Now we'd be sharing a bedroom?

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

Chapter 500-He Chose Her Memories Over Me

Chapter 500: 500-He Chose Her Memories Over Me

Helanie:

Since no one was awake, it was easy for us to sneak into his bedroom. He turned on the lights, and I took a deep breath.

His room was squeaky clean and smelled like fresh roses. It was a spacious room, and he had clearly changed the furniture and everything for his wife's arrival.

I could tell most of it was designed for Jessica's comfort. Even that soft cloud-like sofa by the window screamed Jessica's style.

I felt disgusted with myself. I had ruined someone else's happiness.

But then, a part of me reminded me who her brother was, and I tried to comfort myself with the idea that maybe I was hurting him back—by taking his sister's mate.

Blame is a powerful thing. If we try hard enough, we can ease our guilt by convincing ourselves we did nothing wrong.

But for me, the guilt always came back.

"You should get some rest," he muttered and started fixing the soft mattress.

I was tired, but not in a rush to sleep. We needed to set some boundaries.

"There's a perfectly good couch over there," I pointed at the other couch facing the TV on the wall.

"No, I don't think you should be sleeping on the couch," he said quickly, then stared at me like he was waiting for praise.

"I meant you sleep on the couch," I snapped, and he frowned.

"I won't fit," he muttered. "You know what, you sleep on the—"

Before he could finish, I grabbed a pillow and started walking toward the couch.

"No, don't. It'll be uncomfortable for you. Why can't we—"

He trailed off when I turned around and narrowed my eyes at him.

"It's a big bed. We could make a wall in between."

He looked away the second I gave him that look.

"Don't tell me you want to share a bed with me," I said, just to get under his skin.

Sure enough, he turned bright red.

"No! Why would you say that? Sleep wherever you want. I'll—sleep on the ground," he grumbled, grabbing a blanket from his closet. He rolled it out on the floor, then grabbed his pillow and settled in.

"You can use the restroom first," he added quietly.

The moment he mentioned the restroom, tears started to fill my eyes again.

How was I supposed to live like this?

Using his bathroom... having him around all the time...

Why the hell did Emmet do this to me?

I watched Norman take off his coat, and somehow, even that felt inappropriate now. I rushed into the bathroom to avoid any more awkward moments.

His bathroom was all white, with a small jacuzzi. I sighed and looked around some more. The girly skincare stuff must have already arrived from Jessica's place.

Wait—when was their wedding?

The thought hit me hard.

Was it supposed to be this full moon, and they delayed it because I was being punished?

It had to be this full moon—why else would they send her stuff here so early?

She was practically everywhere in his room.

After washing my face, I came out of the bathroom still wearing the same dress. All my stuff was back at the academy, and Emmet had probably forgotten—just like he forgot about me—to bring my bags like he said he would.

"Ugh," I groaned, kicking the ground in frustration. I looked around and sighed when I realized the room was empty.

Norman wasn't in the room. Where did he go?

That made my heart pound. Maybe he had found out something about Emmet.

I left the room and started walking toward Emmet's forbidden passage—his haven.

My heart was racing in my chest. What if someone saw me?

I was wearing a white knee-length dress, my hair still curled, looking like I was either coming back from a prom date or still ready for one.

And since everyone knew today was my wedding, seeing me here would definitely raise questions.

But at that moment, only one thing mattered—I had to find out what was going on. Where was Emmet?

Crossing the passage made me feel like I was headed the right way. I spotted a few warriors entering his room. I sped up, needing to know if Emmet was okay.

He had to be, or else Norman would've freaked out in the car.

The fact that he stayed calm and didn't even leave the driver's seat made me believe he already knew Emmet was safe.

Once I reached the room, I stopped. I could hear Norman talking to the warriors inside.

"He's fine. Just drunk and passed out," one of the warriors said to Norman. I closed my eyes and took a few deep breaths.

"I don't understand. Why would he leave and get drunk at a bar?" I heard Norman say—it sounded more like he was talking to himself.

"Sir, we also found a bunch of pictures in his pockets. And a bracelet too. He had this photo on the counter, and his face was resting on it," the warrior added.

My heart skipped a beat.

A bracelet.

"What is this bracelet?" Norman asked.

"Listen... you will not tell anyone about this. We'll talk to Emmet first and then come up with an excuse for him."

Typical Norman—always trying to save his brother from looking bad.

"Show me the pictures," he added, and the warrior handed them over.

As Norman held the pictures and the bracelet in his hands, I stepped into the room.

The warriors exchanged a quick glance and then stepped back, making Norman look up from what he was holding.

His back had been facing me.

"This bracelet belongs to Azura," I said calmly, "and I'm guessing these pictures are hers too."

Norman turned around quickly, eyes wide, completely caught off guard.

"So it's true, then. He got cold feet because he remembered his ex," I laughed bitterly, my gaze drifting past Norman—

—to the bed where Emmet lay sleeping like he didn't have a single care in the world.

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