

Claimed And Marked By Her Stepbrother Mates

Chapter 51-In The Backseat Of My Car

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Norman:

"Why can't we admit her? She's in bad shape," Maximus's voice was raised, though not at me. His anger stemmed from sheer frustration as he paced around his car, the door to the backseat left open to reveal the wounded Helanie. The sight of her was truly devastating, one must have felt bad for her. But not me.

I didn't feel deeply affected. My reaction was a learned behavior. I just knew I had to feel bad for her and that's what I was trying to do.

"Do you want our academy to be in the news? We've worked tirelessly to reach the level of success we have today. I'm not risking it for anyone—especially for her," I said, gesturing toward her. I tried. But I just couldn't act like I would give up everything for the sake of someone like her.

Ever since she had stepped into our lives, she had been trying to get our attention. And my naive brothers were drawn to her innocence.

She was wheezing, probably from pain, and my eyes lingered on her longer than I intended before I looked away. No! I wouldn't let myself feel sorry for her.

My brothers aren't very wise. They're emotional fools with soft hearts, prone to weaknesses. But I have none of those flaws.

The only weakness I have is 'are my brothers'.

"To hell with that! It's not our academy's fault. People will understand. Right now, she's dying—" Maximus groaned, running his hands through his hair.

I rolled my eyes and knelt down by the car door, struggling to fit in the tight space without bending awkwardly. Carefully, I touched her wrist to check her pulse. Her skin was smooth, soft to the touch. Her wrist was so slender that I could hold it between just two fingers, and it still felt fragile. If I applied a little more pressure, her wrist would split into two halves.

I noticed her thick eyelashes fluttering as she fought to keep her eyes open. Despite her injuries, she was trying to stay conscious. It surprised me.

She was so stubborn—refusing even to pass out.

But her eyes were swollen and dark, bruised almost beyond recognition. I noticed her bruised lip. She must have endured so much pain as a wolfless creature.

"What happened?" Maximus's hand on my shoulder startled me, nearly making me jump.

I swallowed hard and immediately pulled my hand away. It was like I had drowned in a sea of unknown emotions. They didn't seem learned for a moment and that startled me. I placed my hand on my chest, a little above the scar on my ribs and then shook myself out of the trance.

"Um, she's sustained many injuries, but none are fatal," I said, standing up, feeling oddly disoriented.

Why the hell had I taken so long just holding her wrist?

"Well, she can't heal on her own. And just because she won't die doesn't mean she's in any less pain. Look at her—she's barely breathing. We need to get her immediate care," my brother said, his voice edged with worry for a girl who seemed to do nothing but disturb our peace. Worse still, her mother had once ensnared our father in her manipulations too.

I remembered her mother behaving the same way when she first entered our lives. She used to be so helpless, constantly in trouble, and my father loved swooping in as her 'hero.'

"Let's take her to our farmhouse. I'll bring in doctors and nurses, have them sign NDAs, and make sure she's well cared for. She'll be fine, alright?" I patted Maximus's shoulder as he continued to stare at her. I wasn't going to let this issue be a noose around my brother's neck. He didn't understand the severity of this situation yet.

"Maximus, remember what we've discussed about her? She's making us lose sight of ourselves," I reminded him. I'd been so proud of him tonight for seeing through her, but now he was falling back, just like the others.

We weren't supposed to think like emotional fools. We run an academy, and it's our duty to protect its reputation above all else. And then, my brother's image meant the world to me.

"Fine, but we need to take good care of her. This happened to her under our academy's shelter," Maximus said, looking visibly weary. But he knew he could trust me.

I'd make things right. What this fool didn't realize was that if anyone found out, they'd start questioning him, asking why he was looking for Helanie—a candidate—after

midnight. He'd told me he wanted to confront her, but nobody would understand that; they'd see it as an excuse. I'd let a hundred more Helenies go if it meant protecting my brother's reputation.

"Alright, let's drive her to the farmhouse, then," Maximus said, resigned, as he moved to get back in his car. But I caught his hand, pulling him back.

"You should head home. I'll take care of her," I said, watching as Maximus drifted into thought before snapping back and shaking his head.

"I can drive her myself," he insisted. However, I knew he was not thinking straight and would end up making a mistake or two. Above all, I needed to keep her away from him.

"Maximus, don't you trust me?" I asked, hands on my hips.

With a sigh of defeat, he stepped out and let me take over. I climbed into his car, sending him home in my own vehicle.

After starting the engine, I adjusted the rearview mirror to get a quick look at the biggest drama queen around.

"How can someone manage to get into so much trouble all the time?" I muttered, shaking my head as I spoke to her.

I wasn't sure she could even hear me; she'd finally passed out.

Tomorrow, I'd have to clean Maximus's car. She'd dirtied it with her blood. Poor guy—he must have been frantic when he realized she was missing.

Why couldn't she just mind her own business and stay out of trouble?

But then it hit me—tomorrow is the test, and there's no way she'll make it onto the field in this condition.

"Looks like you are going to fail this test and then, you are out of the academy," I couldn't believe something good came out of something tragic.

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

Chapter 52-Wrapped Around Her Finger

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Norman:

"Well, I guess this time the Moon Goddess really wants you to stop bothering us," I said, pressing down on the gas. It was a long drive ahead, but I knew her injuries weren't life-threatening.

I had already arranged for doctors and nurses to be ready upon our arrival. Our family farmhouse was a beautiful place, rich with greenery and memories. After hours on the road, I finally pulled up to the house.

The ambulance, along with a team of medical staff, was already there.

"Take her inside," I instructed, adjusting my shirt. It was 8 a.m., and I hadn't slept a wink all night. Still, the serene morning weather was refreshing. I took a deep breath, letting myself relax for a moment as I watched the paramedics lift her onto a stretcher.

She looked so defeated, so alone. My small smile faded as I recalled the sound of her pained breathing, her voice heavy with sorrow.

"Ugh!" I muttered, turning away and trying to clear my mind.

"Take good care of her. I'll check in later, alright? If anything urgent comes up, call me," I told the doctor. He nodded, but before I could leave, he added, "Your brother has been calling non-stop. Should I update Maximus McQuoid on her condition?"

A wave of tension settled over me. My brother had been so worried that he'd contacted everyone involved here.

"Only if he calls again," I said firmly. "But don't reach out to him yourself. Let him rest." With that, I headed back to my car, anxious to be on time for the test at the ground.

This entire mess would be dealt with without dragging our academy's reputation through the mud. And I wouldn't let anyone question my brother's decisions.

Once I was back in the car and on the road again, my phone rang. It was Maximus. Hearing about his constant worry for Helanie filled me with frustration. If she weren't in our lives, my brother would be free of all this stress.

"Yes, Maximus, she's fine. I have the best doctors here, and they're taking good care of her. They said she's lost blood, but not enough to be fatal. You were fast to find her, and that saved her. It's just that, without an active wolf, she can't heal on her own. Don't worry; she's in good hands," I assured him in one breath, hoping he'd feel some relief.

After a few more minutes of reassuring him, he finally ended the call. It was a miracle she could still move as she did after such a terrible fall. Her injuries weren't life-threatening, but the pain she must be in... it would be unbearable for most.

But why did we even care?

There are countless people who suffer daily. We can't grieve for them all.

Once I reached the mansion, I took a quick shower and put on a clean white shirt before heading to the training grounds. My brothers were already there, preparing to start the test. When I arrived, I saw the candidates standing in a line. They greeted me with a respectful bow, then sat as I gestured for them to take their seats.

"Is there a problem, Lucy?" I asked, noticing the girl with short hair glancing up from her table, looking tense.

Our exam was set up in an open-air area for all the candidates from this shelter. Today, it was their turn to be tested.

"It's just that... one of us left last night," she murmured, her expression somber.

Was she talking about Helanie? I thought no one here even liked her.

"Well, whoever is gone is gone. You should focus on your own test and stay competitive," I told her, making it clear that I was disappointed in her distraction.

"Does that mean," Salem asked confidently, raising her head, "that because one of us left, the candidate with the lowest score still passes?" She wasn't wrong. The rule stated that only five candidates from each shelter could advance, meaning one would typically be disqualified. But with Helanie gone, they were all technically guaranteed a spot in the academy. We were still holding the test to assess their abilities, though.

I knew all the candidates well; I had examined them thoroughly before this.

"Exactly," I replied, giving her an approving nod. Salem's posture straightened with pride.

Since only one student fails each round, they should be grateful Helanie left.

Just then, Emmet and Maximus arrived, looking refreshed—until their eyes landed on the empty seat. Maximus already knew what had happened, but Emmet seemed confused.

"Where's Helanie?" Emmet asked, stepping closer and whispering in my ear.

"She left," I said, keeping the truth from him to avoid stirring up more concern over that rogue.

"Huh. What do you mean, 'she left'?" Emmet questioned, his expression shifting to disappointment, just as I'd expected.

"I'll explain everything after the exam," I assured him with a steady look. I'd have to tell him sooner or later—otherwise, he'd think I was hiding something from him.

"But—" Emmet began, only to be gently pushed back by Maximus, who was well aware of the situation's seriousness.

"Helanie won't be here today. Let's get through this, and afterward, I'll fill you in on everything that happened," Maximus said, trying to calm Emmet. Even so, Emmet began pacing back and forth, radiating such intense frustration that I started to worry about him.

"Where's Kaye?" I asked, looking around for the others. Emmet and Maximus were already here, but Kaye was nowhere in sight.

It didn't take long for him to arrive, though he came with trouble trailing right behind him. Dressed in a large black overcoat with the collar turned up, he walked over with a fierce energy, a group of warriors following closely behind. The anger in his eyes was unmistakable, and I sensed he was about to make a drastic move.

"I'm here," Kaye announced, his voice tight with anger. "And I'm here to arrest two despicable candidates who committed a crime last night."

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

Chapter 53-Saving Helanie

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Kaye:

After I arrived in my room, a heavy sadness settled over me. I couldn't quite understand why, but something about this night just felt wrong. I sank into the bathtub, letting countless thoughts swirl through my mind.

"That mate bond... it has to be just something from the dream prison," I murmured to myself, trying to make sense of everything.

"Dammit!" I groaned in frustration.

Every time I closed my eyes, I recalled the words spoken by Helanie in the dream prison. Could it be?

Was she really abused?

Or was it something even worse--assault?

She had said she didn't want to feel the same way about her body here as she did in the real world. She also mentioned some group of alphas. I sighed heavily and got out of the bathtub. Ever since I returned, I'd started seeing Helanie in a different light. I might have thought she was lying to gain sympathy... if only she was.

But she never spoke about any of this to anyone, not even a hint of abuse. I remember my brothers telling me that when she first arrived, she had been starving for days. And then there was the fact that she didn't even want to return to her pack.

After drying off, I slipped into black boxers and went straight to bed. Tomorrow was the big exam for the new candidates, and I was the one who had created the test.

I awoke to a dim, gray light filtering through the window--dawn had arrived, though the sun barely broke through the clouds. My body felt weighed down, as if the night itself clung to me, refusing to let go. A dull, deep ache lingered in my chest, but I couldn't understand why.

I couldn't shake the feeling that something bad had happened last night. I didn't remember what, but I knew I'd woken up in the middle of the night with that same strange sadness weighing on me.

I rolled out of bed, yawning and stretching. Burying my face in the sink, I washed up and then paused, my hands gripping the edges as I stared down into the water.

"What is going on?" I groaned in frustration. I hated feeling this way. Before all this dream prison business, I'd been so focused on my goals, determined in my direction. And now, all I could think about was someone who was soon to be my stepsister.

I felt a flash of disgust, but then, just as quickly, I remembered the kiss we'd shared. It had felt so raw, so real.

My mouth was dry, and my muscles felt tight, as if I'd been clenching my fists in my sleep. Whatever had me so tense, I couldn't quite name it. I slipped on a black coat and

decided against a shirt. Wearing just black pants, I studied my reflection in the mirror. My hair was a little messy, and it seemed like it might be time for a change.

"And to impress whom?" I didn't expect Ye to be so critical. But then again, my wolf was always like that.

"Huh? Why would I impress anyone? You know me. I do what I want. This is just for a change." I shrugged, feeling a stab of annoyance. I hated when anyone questioned my motives.

"You used to do everything to be accepted by Dad and Mom," Ye scoffed, "and now Helanie is added to the list?"

I shook my head at him, trying to ignore his words as I worked some gel into my hair, styling it. I finished off with a heavy chain around my neck and put on the watch my brother Norman had given me. After all that, I just wrapped my long overcoat around my arm to wear it later.

Once I was all set, I walked out of the room and was immediately greeted by Maximus. But he didn't seem to notice me--he was lost in his own world, talking to someone on the phone. Sliding my hands into my pockets, I strolled closer, intending to greet him, but his words froze me in my tracks.

"How is Helanie? Is she recovering well?" Just hearing her name made my attention snap to his conversation.

"I get it, Norman, and I trust you and the doctors you picked for her. But her condition was so bad. I'm sure those candidates did something to her," he said, his anxiety causing my body to tense.

Someone did something to Helanie? When?

It must have been last night. Was that why I felt so restless?

But why would I feel anxious over her? She's not related to me by blood, so why would her situation affect me this much?

I didn't want to consider the mate bond from the dream as a reason--I knew it was a lie.

"I saw Lamar cleaning up blood in the kitchen while Sydney answered the door and lied to me, saying Helanie wanted to quit. Those two were the only ones awake. I'm sure they did something. Are we really not going to do anything about it?" Maximus's concern for Helanie made something twist uncomfortably inside me.

I should be glad that my brother was so responsible and caring. But why wasn't I?

"Okay, okay. Just tell the doctors to keep her safe. I think she'll be fine at the farmhouse," he said, as I nodded to myself, processing everything I'd overheard.

Without alerting him that I'd heard it all, I walked away.

"What are you doing?" Ye questioned, noticing my steps had turned into a brisk walk. I made my way to the exit and quickly got into my car.

The exam was set to start at noon, and Helanie's shelter would be the first to take it. It was only 5 a.m. now, but I knew I needed to do the right thing.

"I'm going to the farmhouse," I said, storming into my car and gripping the steering wheel in frustration.

"Dammit!" I groaned as I hit the road, trying to process what had happened to Helanie. The worst part was that nobody seemed to be planning any action against Sydney and Lamar.

"And why should this concern us? It's not our problem. We should stay focused on our own goals," Ye hissed at me, but I ignored him.

All I could see was the long road ahead and my own mounting concern for Helanie. I knew, deep down, that if I didn't check on her myself, this feeling would only get worse. I needed to see her for myself.

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

Chapter 54-I Want To Be Her Hero

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Kaye:

Despite my wolf yapping about how we shouldn't be wasting time on Helanie, I kept driving and reached the farmhouse a few hours later.

The moment I got out of the car, I spotted a warrior holding a phone to his ear until he met my gaze.

He slowly lowered the phone, awkwardly clearing his throat as I walked past him.

"Seriously? Calling my brother to tell him I'm here?" I gave him a look of disbelief before heading toward the main gate and gesturing to the warrior there to open it.

The pool was dirty, as though no one was taking care of the farmhouse. Why?

Just because my brothers and I weren't staying here? And what about Helanie? Why wouldn't they clean up before her arrival?

"And someone clean the damn pool and the area around it!" I shouted, watching everyone scramble to get to work. They knew better than to give excuses. I had a problem—I couldn't control my rage.

Sometimes, I'd say things so hurtful that I'd rather cut ties with people than apologize for my outbursts.

Apologizing to someone outside my family didn't sit well with me. I hadn't been raised to bow down. I was determined to make the world bow to me.

But right now, all I could think about was Helanie.

"Where is she?" I asked, stepping into the farmhouse as the sliding glass door opened.

The spacious living room was filled with nurses lounging around. At least Norman had ordered an entire team of doctors and nurses to look after Helanie.

"She's resting," a nurse quickly jumped to her feet, hiding a coffee mug behind her back. Did she really think I didn't notice?

"So, there's a patient here, and you're all just lounging around?" I put my hands on my hips, then pressed two fingers to the bridge of my nose, trying hard not to yell.

"Actually, we took care of her and decided to take a quick break—" the same nurse started to explain, while the others stepped back from a table crowded with food. The sight of it made my blood boil. Helanie was probably in her worst state, something I'd already gathered from Maximus's words, and here they were... having a party.

They had taken over the kitchen and living room, using the TV to watch movies as if on some vacation.

"Open the damn door for me!" I shouted. A doctor emerged from one of the rooms, hastily bowing, fumbling to adjust his shirt as he approached.

Was this a medical team or a group of tourists?

An awkward silence settled as I faced him, hands on my hips, my breaths heavy. I wanted to scream, to call them all out for this lack of respect, but then I thought of Helanie, and the rage drained out of me.

"What happened to her?" I asked, my voice steadier now as I made my way toward the room where she was kept.

"She's suffered severe injuries. Someone brutally beat her," the doctor explained, relaying the details he'd gathered from Maximus and Norman about last night.

Hearing all this made me want to punch a wall.

"Alright, leave me alone with her," I gestured for him to step back and entered the dimly lit room. She lay there, hooked to IV drips, surrounded by shadows.

Bandages covered her body; her face was swollen, her head wrapped in gauze. She looked so fragile lying in that bed, like a creature too delicate for the world around her.

"Helanie..." I pulled a chair close to her bedside and sat down, watching her face. Even after everything they'd done to her, she still held on to a kind of haunting beauty. Her face carried an enigmatic look, as though she were hiding an entire world inside her.

"Hey," I murmured, gently grazing my fingertip over the back of her hand. One of her fingers on her right hand was broken, encased in a plaster cast. Her other hand had an IV drip attached, and I kept my touch as light as possible. Touching her without her permission felt almost like a violation.

"A violation? Aren't you being dramatic?" my wolf grumbled. "Fine, she's hurt and all, but come on—she's just another she-wolf. Okay, maybe our stepsister, too," he added with a sigh.

"And I'm telling you, the reason we're even worried is because she's our stepsister. Nothing more," he insisted.

But I wasn't paying attention to him. My gaze remained fixed on Helanie. I sat in silence for about ten minutes before I saw her eyelids flutter open. My heart leaped out of my chest.

I quickly leaned back, pulling my hand away from hers, giving her space.

"Dr Alson, she's awake!" I called for the doctor, trying to keep my voice steady.

The doctor rushed in, and I stepped aside, though I didn't leave the room. I couldn't shake the feeling that, even though my brother had brought her here, the doctors hadn't been taking her condition seriously. But now they would.

Or else—I'd make sure of it.

"Alright, she's stable, but her recovery will take time," the doctor said after an hour of checkups and administering her medication. He left, and the room was quiet again, just the two of us.

She sat propped up against two pillows, breathing slowly, her eyes fixed on the wall ahead of her.

"Helanie!" I stepped closer and sat down again.

"Did you... save me?" she asked, her voice trembling. Tears gathered on her lashes, spilling with every blink. I could only imagine the fear and pain she must have felt last night when they hurt her.

I hesitated, a wave of guilt rising in me. I knew it was Maximus who had saved her. But he wasn't here, and she seemed to be looking to me as her rescuer.

With a slight nod and a lot of guilt, I replied, "I did."

I'd always felt a sense of jealousy toward Maximus—not out of spite, but envy. I'd watch as my parents showered him with praise, giving him all the credit, even when I performed just as well on any project.

But today, for the first time, I broke my rule of never taking anything from my brothers. I took credit for something that wasn't mine, and for someone with whom I wasn't even sure what my relationship was.

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

Chapter 55-How Sweet!

Chapter 55: 55-How Sweet!

Helanie:

"Who are you picking?" My father loomed over me, towering above a small six-year-old. Every time he asked me this question, it felt like I was committing a crime just by thinking about choosing.

"I don't want to be without Mommy," I whimpered, clutching my teddy bear tightly.

"Helanie! You're not a child anymore." My father snatched the teddy bear from my hands, trying to force an answer from me.

"Now look at me and tell me, who do you pick?" he demanded, his intense gaze piercing into mine.

"Mommy!" I whispered, barely audible, choosing my mother for what felt like the hundredth time that week. And once again, his hand struck my cheek.

"You'll never be loved like this. If you can't choose your father, you don't deserve to be a daughter. I've given you everything—even this stupid teddy bear. I work day and night for you and your mother, and yet you still choose her?" His voice shook as he yelled, making me curl up tightly, sobbing uncontrollably.

"That's enough!" my mother's voice broke through, saving me as she walked into the room and saw what he was doing.

"She doesn't want to go! Why are you forcing her?" she shouted, cradling me as I melted into her arms.

"Since you cheated, Alpha Diaz allowed me to keep her until our rejection is finalized on the full moon. So back off!" My mother held me tightly, and for the first time, I felt safe in her embrace. I never told her that every time my father forced me to choose, I always picked her.

Dad had made it clear that if I chose my mother, he would be harsh with me whenever I came to stay with him. And I didn't want my father to be cruel.

"Fine! Take her all you want, but one day, she'll make a choice and she will choose me," he said, his voice echoing through the air, claiming that I'd eventually have to make my choice—though he ignored the truth. I had already chosen. I had chosen my mom.

"Helanie!"

A familiar voice began to break through my dream. My mother's presence blurred as I slowly opened my eyes, finding myself surrounded by doctors. It took a moment, but I remembered what had happened the previous night.

However, I was shocked to see my stepbrother beside me. This place was unfamiliar, and I could have sworn that I'd died last night.

"Did you... save me?" I could barely string together a full sentence. Kaye was sitting in the chair beside my bed, his expression unreadable.

He stared at me for a moment before answering, "I did."

I was stunned. How was he always the one to find me? The one to save me?

"Why—and how did you find me?" My voice was barely a whisper. I wasn't hurt or crying from the assault last night; I was mortified that someone had to see me like this.

"I don't know... But tell me what happened last night, Helanie. I need you to tell me everything," he insisted, his gaze narrowing as he spoke. The intensity in his voice made me freeze for a moment before I swallowed hard.

"Don't think about anything else, just about last night," he added, noticing that my mind was wandering.

"The people who did this... they belong to prestigious packs. I don't think anyone would believe me. And even if I said their names, they'd just bully me more, if I ever made it to the academy—" I stopped, remembering why that dream might no longer be possible.

"Academy," I repeated, attempting to sit up, but Kaye held me down.

"Hey, you're not supposed to get up," he said firmly, his steady gaze stopping me from moving and injuring myself further.

Why did he care so much?

"No! I can't miss the exam. I have this one goal, this one chance, and—oh no! I'm going to miss it!" I gave up trying to leave the bed, throwing myself back onto the pillow and crying out loud for the first time. The academy was my only focus, my reason to keep going, and now it felt like that had been stolen from me.

"Helanie! I'll have the damn exam postponed until you're healed, do you hear me?" He grabbed my arms, leaning over me and yelling until my crying softened and I looked back at him, stunned.

"What?"

I felt confused. What did he just say?

"You would... postpone the exam?" I asked, swallowing hard. The words felt like needles in my throat.

"I will," he replied, removing his hands from my arms as he sat back down, while I leaned against the bed, almost sitting up.

"But why? Don't you want me out of the list? Isn't that what your brothers want?" I recalled how Norman and Maximus seemed determined to see me fail these tests.

"No! I'm not like my brothers," he said sharply. Then, almost to himself, he murmured under his breath, "At least, not for you."

It was so quiet that I couldn't be sure I'd heard it correctly.

"Now, as for the ones who hurt you—you really think I'm not capable of punishing a couple of so-called elites? Helanie, your..." he paused, clearly struggling with the words, "your stepbrother..." He practically groaned at the label, as though it pained him to describe himself that way.

So, he was still having trouble accepting a connection with me. Then why did he care so much?

"Your stepbrother is very powerful. Now, just start from the beginning, and watch how I deal with those bastards," he said, allowing the faintest smile. For a moment, the ache I felt faded.

"It was Lamar and Sydney. I didn't do anything. I was starving, so I went to the kitchen—and I found them... hooking up. But they got so angry. She didn't want any rumors spreading, so she persuaded Lamar to beat me up and dump me somewhere far away, so I couldn't make it to the exam. They wanted me out, and now they've won." Just talking about the academy brought a painful lump to my throat. I felt like I'd never cared about anything as much as I did about reaching my goal.

"You didn't lose, and they didn't win anything. I don't give a damn about our academy's reputation. I care about justice, and the exam will be postponed until you're strong enough to join it. I'll make sure you are taken to the testing grounds myself," he said firmly. Then, unexpectedly, he placed his hand on my forehead, gently stroking it.

What had happened to him?

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

Chapter 56-I Failed.

Chapter 56: 56-I Failed.

Norman:

It was all unfolding before my eyes. My brother had arrived with the warriors to make an arrest, and I had a sinking feeling about it.

"What's going on, Kaye?" I approached him steadily, trying to catch his attention. His bulging muscles and tense veins made it clear just how concerned—and angry—he was about this particular matter.

I glanced over at the candidates and saw Sydney and Lamar staring at each other. It reminded me of Maximus's words.

"Something happened here last night. Right at this shelter," Kaye announced, raising his hand to point at the cabin behind everyone.

Most of the candidates looked bewildered—except for the two accused of being involved.

I glanced over at Maximus, who returned a look that told me even he had no idea what was going on with Kaye.

I hadn't told Kaye, and it didn't seem like Maximus had either. So how would Kaye even know?

"What happened?" Emmet asked, setting down his papers and slipping his hands into his pockets.

"Can we discuss this privately first?" I asked Kaye, uncomfortable with the way he was handling things. If this was truly about Helanie and the two candidates, then it needed to be dealt with discreetly. Damaging our academy's reputation over that girl would be reckless—and besides, we didn't even know everything.

Could it be that they'd had a confrontation with Helanie, and she simply hadn't come out on top? That sort of thing happens often among werewolves. We're part animal, and situations like this arise.

"No! Everyone should know," Kaye refused, not even glancing at me. He walked directly over to the candidates, stopping at Lamar's table.

Lamar sat upright, his face expressionless, though the slight twitch at his temples betrayed his nerves. I could sense his anxiety from across the room. At this point, they both looked so guilty that it was hard to doubt anything had happened last night.

Could they truly be so heartless as to attack her without any provocation?

"Get up." Without another word, Kaye grabbed Lamar's collar and pulled him out of his chair, shocking everyone around. Sydney covered her mouth in horror as Kaye marched over to her table and seized her by her ponytail.

I cringed, twisting my body and gritting my teeth. It didn't look right for him to handle them so roughly. But was it not justified?

"Hey, you can't do that to her!" Salem rose to defend her sister, but her eyes caught Emmet's steely glare from afar. He stood silently, head bowed with his intense eyes peeking through his thick eyebrows, tapping the tip of his index finger on the table as a warning. She sat down again, covering her face in her hands.

"These two attacked an innocent candidate last night," Kaye announced, his voice bold and unyielding. "They beat her without any provocation or wrongdoing on her part and then abandoned her at the bottom of a hill, knowing she doesn't have a wolf. She could have died."

The details struck me as odd.

"And the fact that you—" he shook Sydney by her ponytail, still gripping both of them beside him. Standing tall between them, he glared down. "You encouraged this brute to attack her," he growled at Sydney, who kept her eyes glued to the floor.

How did he know all this?

Even Maximus exchanged a glance with me before he pulled out his phone to contact the warriors back at the farmhouse.

"Wait—they attacked Helanie?" Emmet finally broke his stare at Salem to ask his brother.

"They left her to die," Kaye added flatly.

Without another word, Emmet strode forward, using his long strides to close the gap and swiftly yanked Lamar from Kaye's grip.

Emmet forced Lamar to face him and then punched him square in the face, prompting me to rush over to stop him. Emmet was uncomfortable, restrained most of the time only because he didn't want to unleash the storm that simmered inside him every second.

"Emmet, let the warriors handle this," I said, rushing behind him and wrapping my arms around his waist to pull him away from Lamar. Maximus caught on and quickly moved between Emmet and Lamar—only to take over and start punching Lamar himself.

"Hey!" I shouted. We needed to be cautious with this case. The two culprits could play on sympathies, and we didn't want that. Sydney and Lamar would later claim they were abused before being investigated.

These two had committed a crime; they shouldn't be given any opportunity to paint themselves as victims later.

"Warriors, take them away and notify their packs," I ordered, finally managing to push my brothers off Lamar, who was nearly unconscious.

Kaye had released Sydney, but he was glaring at her like he wanted to end things right here and now.

"I didn't do anything! You guys are only accusing us because some wolfless rogue accused me. She's just jealous of me!" Sydney began ranting as the warriors moved to cuff her.

"Really? Then tell me, you two—" Maximus turned to Lucy and Gavin. "Did Helanie talk about quitting last night? Did she leave right before your eyes?"

I noticed Salem glancing slowly at Gavin and Lucy, giving them a warning look.

"No! She was so determined. She would never quit—that's not Helanie." Despite usually being timid and hiding behind her boyfriend, Lucy rose to her feet to speak up.

I watched her confidently take a stand for what was right.

"There you go, brother," Kaye said, walking over to me with a surprising intensity. "Even a new candidate knows how to stand up for someone she barely knows. It's not about a particular person, but about doing the right thing." Shock struck me when Kaye leaned in and whispered, disappointment clear in his eyes.

It was the first time I'd ever seen that look on his face.

"You think I'm not doing the right thing?" I tried to grab his arm to stop him, stunned that my younger brother was now against me, all because of Helanie.

Did she say something to him about me? She'd been partially conscious when I took her to the farmhouse. Maybe she heard me venting.

"It doesn't matter. Justice will be served," Kaye replied as he freed his arm and briskly walked away, leaving me to watch the warriors arrest the two culprits and take them away, while my brothers looked back at me with expressions I'd never wanted to see.

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

Chapter 57-The Ugly Nurse

Chapter 57: 57-The Ugly Nurse

Helanie:

I was given tranquilizers for hours, but as I slept, the horrifying events from the night of the Alphas—and the faces of Lamar and Sydney—kept replaying in my nightmares. By the time I woke up, I realized it was already too late.

"Please don't get up. You need to rest," said the nurse beside my bed, but the way she pressed her fingers firmly into my shoulder to push me back down made it clear she wasn't thrilled about caring for me.

"I just want to know... did the exam start today?" I asked in a hoarse, strained voice.

"Huh? I'm not here to find things out for you. Why can't you just stay quiet and rest?" she replied, sounding exasperated.

I didn't understand. Why was she so irritated with me?

"Is she awake again? We can't keep pausing the movie," another nurse grumbled as she walked in, and that's when it dawned on me why they seemed so bothered.

"Go to sleep, okay?" the nurse by my bed ordered, throwing me a sharp look before turning around to speak with her colleague.

"She keeps waking up," I overheard her complain as they both exited, slamming the door shut behind them.

"Can I get some wa—" I started to ask, but the loud slam cut me off. I glanced around for water but found nothing within reach.

I rested my head back, staring up at the ceiling. No. I wouldn't let them treat me like this. They were here to take care of me, and I refused to be seen as a burden just because they couldn't enjoy the luxuries of the farmhouse.

I noticed an empty glass on the small table beside me. Moving my arm was difficult, as I'd been bedridden for a while and hadn't moved my muscles after that incident. A cast covered my little finger—a reminder of the extent of the injuries Lamar and Sydney had inflicted on me.

With effort, I carefully stretched my arm and nudged the glass until it tipped over and crashed to the floor, shattering with a loud noise that was sure to attract the attention of the nurses and doctors outside.

The door swung open, and they rushed in, panic clear in their eyes. The nurse, whose name tag read "Prim," rolled her eyes once she realized what had happened.

"Did you freaking smash it?" she hissed, hunched over and snarled like an angry dog.

"I did," I replied calmly, unafraid as she advanced toward me.

"Who the heck does she think she is?" the other nurse demanded, glancing at the doctor, who merely shrugged. What kind of people were assigned to care for wounded werewolves?

These people lacked even a hint of compassion.

"And may I ask why? Are you going to clean it up?" Prim yelled as she stomped closer. Did she really think I wouldn't tell Kaye how she was treating me? Or did she assume she could lie to him?

I wondered what was going through her head—how she could be so brazenly disrespectful.

"No! You will clean it up. You're here to take care of me—" I stated firmly, noticing her face twist with annoyance.

"Ohhhhhh!" She rolled her eyes dramatically, forming her mouth into a large, exaggerated "O." "We're here to take care of her. Look at that attitude!" She sneered, her tone dripping with sarcasm. "We don't even know who you are. It's a privilege granted to you by the Rogue King's sons that you're resting here. Otherwise, people without a wolf usually die in the woods alone."

The smirk on her lips hinted that she knew I was wolfless.

"Why didn't anyone tell me?" A strong, deep voice suddenly echoed through the house, causing everyone's eyes to widen in shock.

"That's Emmet McQuoid," one of the doctors whispered, quickly stepping away from the nurses. They began to jostle each other in their desperation to leave, but they couldn't; the brothers had blocked the doorway.

As Kaye entered with Emmet right behind him, it was clear Emmet had been questioning Kaye about me. The two brothers exchanged an odd look at the nurses before their eyes fell on the shattered glass.

"What's going on here?" Kaye demanded, his gaze shifting to the broken glass on the floor.

"Oh, we gave her some medication, and she's... creating a bit of a scene," Prim had the nerve to lie.

"She seems perfectly calm to me," Emmet observed, slipping his hands into his pockets as he eyed Prim. She subtly adjusted her curly red hair and pushed her chest out, though her attempt to appear confident was hardly discreet.

"She was accusing us of not doing a great job," she said, suddenly switching to a softer tone. "I don't mean to be rude, but we work really hard, so it hurts when someone tries to use their power against us—" She looked down, clasping her hands in an attempt to appear vulnerable.

"She was giving you all a hard time?" Kaye questioned, his voice filled with suspicion.

"They're lying. I only asked for water when she ignored me and left the room," I quickly explained, hoping to clarify before she painted herself as innocent and me as some kind of crazy brat.

"That's not true. We didn't hear her. We've been checking on her nonstop. But ask her—why did she break that glass?" Prim quickly looked up, and as everyone's attention shifted to me, she wrinkled her nose at me with a smug little smirk.

"Did you break the glass?" Kaye asked, and I felt a lump form in my throat. They already thought I was difficult. Appearing spoiled on top of that was hardly ideal.

"I did," I admitted, refusing to lie.

"See? And then she started saying, 'Oh, you're going to clean this up' and so on," Prim muttered meekly, making me clench my jaw.

"She's telling the truth," the other nurses chimed in, siding with her, while the doctors remained silent.

"Helanie!" Kaye turned to me, his expression serious. "I'm going to handle this because we don't treat anyone unfairly here," he assured, and I caught a smirk twitching at the corners of Prim's lips.

"Apologize to her right now," Kaye commanded, his voice firm.

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

Chapter 58-The Two Handsome Hunks

Chapter 58: 58-The Two Handsome Hunks

Helanie:

"I don't even need her apology. I don't like making anyone feel low or disrespected. But since she's shown no respect for my job, I suppose it's fine. I'll accept her apology," Prim forced a weak, triumphant smile, trying to look both innocent and full of herself.

"What are you babbling about?" Emmet groaned at her.

"I didn't ask her to apologize to you. I'm telling you to apologize to Helanie for your mistreatment of her and for causing her stress when she should be resting," Kaye asserted, his tone clear and leaving everyone in shock.

Prim's mouth dropped open, her gaze fixed on Kaye.

"But why would I apologize? I didn't even do anything wrong," she replied in a softer tone, but I could tell that neither of the brothers believed her.

"So, you checked on her multiple times, right? And all the party leftovers, the movies left on the TV, the mess in the living room and the kitchen—those must all be Helanie's doing too, right?" Kaye faced her, calling her out.

"Umm, we were just bored, so—" she stammered, flinching as Kaye slipped his hands into his pockets.

"If you were doing your job properly, Helanie wouldn't have had to break the glass to get your attention. Yet you still had the nerve to belittle her and make her look bad when your job was to look after her. That amazes me," Kaye stepped closer, towering over her. Emmet leaned against the wall, smirking.

This was the first time I'd seen Emmet take pleasure in someone's misery.

"You're fired. All of you are," Kaye enunciated each word, and chaos erupted among the group.

"But we didn't do anything! It was the nurses—they were bitter about having to care for a wolf-less girl," one doctor protested, now trying to shift blame as their jobs hung in the balance.

"Oh, really?" Emmet turned to the nurse, who gasped.

"We didn't do anything! It was only Prim who spoke badly about the patient," one of the nurses, who had earlier complained about me bothering them, quickly tried to cover herself.

"She has a name—Helanie," Emmet corrected her sharply before adding, "You're all fired. You heard my brother. Now get out of here."

He raised his hand in a dismissive wave, not even looking at them, as though exhausted by the topic being dragged out. The doctors and nurses looked devastated as they were ushered out of the farmhouse.

"We need to hire better staff for our people," Kaye remarked, stepping closer to my bed, only to be unintentionally edged aside by Emmet, who leaned in before him.

"Helanie! They really put you through a lot," he murmured, bending down and gently lifting my chin with his finger to examine my face. His touch was so gentle, and his gaze lingered on my features with such intensity. Did he even know how incredibly attractive he was in our realm?

"What about the exam?" I asked as he straightened, clearly disheartened by my injuries.

"It's postponed," Emmet replied.

"I postponed it myself and arrested the culprits," Kaye quickly interjected, prompting Emmet to turn slightly and give him a sidelong glance.

"Will I be able to take the test again?" I knew I sounded like a broken record, but my mind was focused solely on that test. I just wanted to join the academy, to learn how to fight and defend myself. If only I could do that, something like this would never happen again.

"Of course. But to do that, you need to heal first," Emmet said, placing his hand gently on my head, petting it like one would a small, beloved puppy.

His gesture was casual, but the warmth of his touch made it feel special. I bet he didn't even realize it, but I did.

"I'll stay with her," Kaye offered, and Emmet groaned.

"What? Don't you have your usual corridor parade during full moons to keep up with?" Kaye teased, rolling his eyes as he mentioned Emmet's private corridor.

I'd heard that no one else went there; it was reserved just for Emmet. The corridor led to a guestroom outside the main mansion, where he would often retreat.

"Yeah, but make sure to take care of her, and keep me updated on her health," Emmet said, patting Kaye's shoulder before turning to give me one last, warm look. "Helanie, get well soon, okay?" His hands were in his pockets, and he gave a simple nod that somehow suited him perfectly.

I nodded back, watching Emmet leave with Kaye following him outside. Their kindness surprised me a bit, though I'd come to expect it from Emmet, who had been kind since the beginning. But Kaye's sudden change in attitude was unsettling. Why was he suddenly so concerned about me?

I only hoped he hadn't remembered the mate bond. I didn't want the mate bond interfering with my goals. My mind was set on revenge, and I had already made a promise to the Moon Goddess: until I achieved that, I would reject anything she chose for me.

So, I couldn't even think about having a fated mate—let alone two.

"So," Kaye returned, rubbing his hands together. "The new team of doctors and nurses will arrive in two days. Until then, they'll be on call with me. I'll be taking care of you from now on," he said, adjusting my blanket with care, which made me narrow my eyes at him.

I was sure he knew I was watching him. He ignored my gaze for a while, but eventually, he couldn't help glancing back at me.

"What's wrong?" he asked, his eyes carrying a hint of apprehension, as though he feared what I might bring up.

"Why are you being so nice to me? Didn't you kick me out of your home before?" I asked, watching him take a deep, steady breath.

"People make mistakes. And I never claimed to be perfect," he replied with a shrug.

"No, seriously—why are you being so kind to me?" I pressed, and he sighed, rolling his eyes as though he was tired of the same question over and over.

"I realized you might not be as evil as I thought," he said, then paused. "And if you ask me another question, I might just say something so shameless it'll make your cheeks turn red. Is that what you want?" The way he bit his bottom lip playfully to tease me made me gasp, and I quickly turned my head to the side.

He laughed, but what he said next surprised me even more. "Look at you! Why do you get so blushy so fast? Just wait until I give you a bath—how are you going to survive that?"

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

Chapter 59-Losing My Brothers

Chapter 59: 59-Losing My Brothers

Norman:

I haven't been able to rest ever since Kaye left. His eyes held so many questions for me.

"He must have just been upset," Maximus guessed, noticing my silence.

"It's fine. I'm not upset with Kaye—he's my brother. It's just that..." I stopped, realizing that my brother saw me as a role model, and I had let him down.

My real issue was with Helanie. She was coming between us brothers. But I also decided then and there not to speak about her in front of any of them from now on. If I had to make changes for our own good, I'd do it quietly, without discussing it.

"Maximus! Maximus!" As we entered our mansion, a loud, high-pitched voice echoed through the hallway before we could even see who it was.

Then Charlotte appeared, practically bouncing in front of us, her wide smile making me cringe. She was wearing a short purple dress and holding a plate of cookies.

"I made these for you!" she said, raising the plate up, even getting on her tiptoes to reach Maximus.

My brother shot me an awkward side-eye before sighing and accepting a cookie. Her smile brightened even more when he took one.

"Oh, Norman, why don't you try one too?" she asked, turning toward me, though her eyes remained fixed on Maximus. I'd been noticing how she kept eyeing my brother lately, and I wasn't pleased. We allowed her to stay here, but that didn't mean she and her mother could start stirring up trouble.

"No, thank you. And what are you doing in the kitchen, making cookies?" I asked, stepping in front of Maximus. Her surprised look told me she hadn't expected me to confront her.

Just because I hadn't done it before didn't mean I wouldn't do it now.

"I... I saw a video on baking and thought I'd give it a try. I remembered how much Maximus likes homemade cookies." She stepped back, keeping a careful distance but still stealing glances at him.

The hesitation and stuttering in her voice gave away a hint of the fear she must have been feeling in that moment.

"You don't need to do anything for me or my brothers. Now go feed these cookies to someone else," I raised my voice, watching her flinch. Her mother, hearing the commotion, rushed out of her room, hugging her daughter protectively and avoiding my gaze.

"Let's go." I grabbed the cookie from Maximus's hand, tossing it back onto the plate as I walked past the two of them. They were not good people—they had bad intentions. Charlotte was probably trying to trap Maximus because, let's face it, who wouldn't want to marry a future rogue king?

"What was that? Why did you even accept that cookie from her? Are you interested in her?" I demanded as soon as we were out of earshot. Maximus awkwardly scratched the back of his neck.

"No!" he replied quickly.

"Then why are you accepting cookies from her? Don't you realize she's trying to show interest in you? When you take the cookie, you're giving her hope," I said, frustrated. I couldn't understand why my brothers struggled to see the difference between simple kindness and encouraging someone's advances.

Besides, I'd never allow Charlotte to cling to him. Anyone connected to Ursula had no place in our lives.

"Sorry. I thought I'd just keep her guessing and then tell her I wasn't interested if she asked directly," Maximus shrugged, still not grasping the seriousness of the situation.

"Maximus, you can't play those games here. I know you see other women outside this mansion, but do you not remember what Dad warned you about? You can't bring any of those affairs into this house. And as much as it pains me to say this, Charlotte lives here. She's family—though by force—so if you lead her on, it's going to be a problem, and you'll have to see her every day afterward." I grabbed his arm, trying to make him understand the gravity of the matter. My brothers were my everything, my soul purpose of living.

I'd tried to teach him countless times to have patience and trust in the Moon Goddess. She would reveal his fated mate in time. But he was impatient—and, if I'm honest, a bit too addicted to the attention from women.

I winced at my own thoughts; honestly, it was a disgusting habit.

"Fine, fine, I get it. I'll go to rest. Hopefully, Kaye and Emmett will update us about Helanie's condition," Maximus's voice softened a bit when he mentioned her.

I had noticed something strange about that girl—whoever spent time with her would start acting oddly. Somehow, they would find a way to bring her up in conversation, as if she'd cast some kind of spell on them.

"They're weak, or maybe just too emotional," I muttered to myself, heading to my room.

But I needed to make sure Kaye still saw me as he always had. Everything I did, I did for my brothers. How could he look at me and judge me like that? His comment earlier had really gotten under my skin.

It's not like he hadn't made his own mistakes. But I always understood him and stood by his side, and he knew that about me too. That's what hurt the most—he questioned me today, and all because of Helanie.

Grabbing my phone, I dialed one of our warriors' numbers, lying back on my bed and staring at the ceiling.

"Get me some information on Helanie Niles," I said, nodding to myself. The only way to deal with this was to understand why she was here. If I could dig into her past, maybe I'd discover her real intentions.

As soon as I hung up, Emmett's message popped up on my screen.

Emmett: Kaye has volunteered to stay with Helanie and take care of her. Also, we'll need a new team of doctors and nurses.

I sat up, stunned. This was too much. Things were spiraling out of control. Helanie needed to be sent away.

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

Chapter 60-The Divine Beauty Of My Stepsister

Chapter 60: 60-The Divine Beauty Of My Stepsister

Kaye:

"Helanie! Your wounds need to be cleaned, and you need a bath to help with your fever." I watched her stand hesitantly by the bed, hugging herself tightly and looking reluctant.

"I—" Her voice held a quiet hesitation, her gaze fixed on the ground as if she wasn't really present. It felt as though only her body was here.

I walked over and, without touching her hand or arm, gestured toward the bathroom and started in that direction. As I neared the door, she slowly began to follow, her hand rubbing her elbow, eyes still cast downward. I'd never seen anyone with such pure innocence.

My brother's words echoed in my mind.

No! She was nothing like her mother.

In fact, she seemed different from any other she-wolf.

Once she entered the bathroom, I gave her privacy to undress and settle into the bath. After a few minutes, when I stepped inside, I saw she hadn't fully undressed—she sat in the water, wearing only her bra and underwear. I understood she wasn't comfortable being fully exposed around me, and I respected that.

I sat beside her, holding the washcloth gently in my hand, pressing the warm cloth over her bruised back with the lightest touch.

My heart sank as I worked, even without direct contact. There was something so haunting about Helanie. She barely moved, her gaze fixed somewhere far away, distant.

She hadn't said much since I'd insisted on helping her with the bath.

"Let me know if it hurts," I murmured, but she didn't respond.

I moved to her shoulder, careful around a particularly dark bruise. Her skin felt warm beneath my touch, and for a moment, I almost forgot why I was here—lost in the quiet sound of water, the faint scent of lavender, and the soft rhythm of her breathing.

She was so distinct, her scent almost intoxicating, comforting in an inexplicable way. In her presence, I didn't feel the usual weight to keep up appearances.

Realizing I'd zoned out, I forced myself back to reality, focusing on wringing out the washcloth.

However, there was something on her back I couldn't look away from—circular burn marks scattered across her skin.

The pinkish scars seemed to be healing, but they were unmistakably from cigarette burns.

The moment I let the washcloth slip into the water and gently touched one of the marks, I felt Helanie's body shudder. That small, startled movement told me she'd just come back to the present, from wherever she'd been lost.

"That will be it. Thank you for your help," she said quickly, almost pulling away, her voice laced with urgency.

"I'm almost done," I replied softly, though I could sense her unease.

"No! It's fine. I can manage myself," she insisted, reaching for the washcloth that had slipped into the tub.

"Uh... it's under you," I said, debating whether to help her find it or simply let her be.

She was unusually tense and unwilling to let me continue—not in a way that seemed like personal choice, but more as if the thought of being touched repulsed her.

"Hey, what's going on?" I finally asked, unable to understand why she seemed so miserable yet fought so hard. I'd never heard her talk about boys, mates, makeup, or any of the usual things people her age enjoyed. Even when she was in the mansion, I have not seen her talk to her mother. And it reminded me how her mother wanted her gone. Why? How could a mother hate her daughter so much and why?

"What are all these marks on your body?" The moment I mentioned them, she lifted her head, and my breath nearly caught in my throat. Her eyes were red, as if she was trying to hold back tears.

"I'm... human, remember?" she replied, her voice barely above a whisper. "I don't have a wolf to heal me, so the scars stay, and my body is fragile. Can you please leave so I can dress?" She quickly turned her face away after her response.

It was painfully clear that her secrets mattered deeply to her. No amount of pressing or prying would make her open up.

Could it be trust issues?

"Sure. I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable." I got up, pointed to the black dress I'd left for her, and walked out of the bathroom.

Once back in the bedroom, I began pacing from one corner of the room to the other.

"The ruthless Kaye, going crazy over a few marks on a stranger's back," Ye taunted, making me roll my eyes.

"What? Did I upset you by calling her a stranger?" He always knew how to get under my skin.

"Why are you straying from your motive? What happened to your goals? Surely, taking care of that woman's daughter wasn't on the list, was it? I hope you haven't forgotten what her mother did to you and your family." Ye's words dripped with venom, causing me to close my eyes. But the minute I did, those burn marks on her back flashed in my mind.

"She acted like it was nothing, as if cigarette burns are normal—something people just brush off. But, because they're wolves, they heal," I muttered under my breath. Just then, the bathroom door opened, and I quickly composed myself.

She stepped out in the black dress, her skin soft and glowing.

As she sat on the bed, I turned to leave to get her some food when her voice—gentle and soft—called my name, and my world seemed to stop.

"Kaye!"

It was so delicate that the hair on the back of my neck stood up.

"Thank you." Her simple gratitude filled me with a surprising sense of pride, making me feel important.

A small smile crept onto my lips, and I took a deep breath before turning back to her with a nod.

Her platinum blonde hair was still wet, falling loosely over her shoulders—a striking contrast to the black dress.

In that moment, a wave of disgust washed over me, and I quickly left the room. Isn't it wrong to think this way about my stepsister?

"Imagine what Mom would say," Ye murmured darkly, sending chills down my spine.

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