

Chapter 38

Demetri Contreras POV:

Haven left the room for her laboratory. She said she had a critical experiment to run today that might take a few hours. Before she left, she glanced at me and whispered, "You might have a visitor today. Rest well."

I knew she was deliberately creating an opportunity for me and our impending "guest."

I leaned back against the pillows and closed my eyes, but my hearing was stretched to its limit, covering the entire wing.

I could hear the guards' hushed conversations, the distant sound of chopping from the kitchens, and... a hurried, messy set of footsteps, filled with venom and excitement, rapidly approaching my room.

She's here. A cold smirk touched my lips.

"Stop! Mrs. Villarreal! You can't go in! Madam Kramer ordered that the Alpha needs to rest!" I heard a guard's voice.

"Get out of my way, you ungrateful dogs!" Mrs. Villarreal's shrill voice screeched. "I am the Alpha's nursemaid! I have urgent business to report to him! You can't afford the delay!"

Then came the sounds of a struggle. Mrs. Villarreal seemed to have thrown all caution to the wind today, charging like a mad bull.

Finally, the door was slammed open.

Mrs. Villarreal burst in, her clothes disheveled and her hair a mess. Behind her were two guards with bloody scratches on their faces.

The moment she entered, she was hit by the room's thick stench—a mixture of disinfectant, bitter herbs, and the faint, underlying smell of rotting flesh. She recoiled.

She covered her nose and mouth with a handkerchief, her face showing undisguised disgust. In her eyes, this once stately bedroom of the Alpha had become a stinking morgue.

But that disgust lasted only a second, replaced by a fanatical, triumphant excitement.

She rushed to my bedside. The moment she saw me lying "weakly" in bed, my face pale, a victorious light flared in her eyes.

"My Alpha! My poor, poor Alpha!" She immediately put on a mask of utter grief, squeezing out a few crocodile tears as she collapsed beside my bed.

Her movement was so abrupt she nearly knocked me off the bed. A wave of cheap, cloying perfume washed over me, making me want to gag.

"You... you have suffered!" she wailed, gripping my hand. "It's all my fault! I was blind not to see that wicked woman's true face sooner!"

I watched her performance, feeling nothing but a faint desire to laugh.

"Mrs. Villarreal?" I asked, deliberately using a weak, breathless voice. "What... what has happened?"

My apparent weakness emboldened her.

She shot up, her face tear-streaked but her eyes vicious. "Alpha! You've been deceived! We've all been deceived! That Haven Kramer, she's not healing you! She's poisoning you!"

Her voice was sharp and shrill, full of incitement. "The dark concoctions she makes you drink every day are slowly corroding your body! She wants to kill you and seize your fortune and title!"

"Proof? Do you have proof?" I continued my act, playing the part of a deluded victim in need of the truth.

"Of course I do!" she exclaimed, excitedly pulling a small paper packet from her dress—the one Haven had deliberately dropped. "This is the poison powder she uses on you! I saw her hide it with my own eyes!"

She held the packet of starch up to my face as if it were a crown.

She thought she had me. She thought she had won.

She had no idea she was just a pathetic clown, reading lines from a script.

And the director of this play was about to make her entrance.

Just as Mrs. Villarreal was about to continue her tirade, a panicked, uncertain voice came from the doorway.

"Mrs. Villarreal? What... what are you doing here?"

Haven Kramer had appeared. She stood in the doorway, still holding a glass flask from her lab, her face a perfect picture of surprise and the "panic" of being caught.

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Mrs. Villarreal saw her and jumped up like a victorious rooster. She pointed a finger at Haven and turned to me. "See, Alpha! She's guilty! We've caught her in the act!"



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