

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna chapter 141-150

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna

Vivian's POV

I shifted my weight awkwardly in Zaliver's strong arms, still not entirely sure how much full control I had over my own newly heightened limbs. "Do you think... maybe we could start over? Clean slate?"

Nice going, my wolf snorted dryly in my mind. Now the doctor probably thinks we're some feral, unhinged Luna mated to the Lupus Deus who already had a solid reputation for being a walking bloodbath.

Perfect, I replied mentally, sarcasm practically dripping from my thoughts. We're the ultimate unhinged power couple.

I muttered something softly under my breath that even I didn't quite catch, then glanced up at the pale man I had just aggressively tried to rip apart. I offered him a small, deeply embarrassed smile.

He looked at me as if I had suddenly grown a second head right before his eyes.

Then, much to my surprise, he offered a bright grin though it was definitely the specific kind of desperate grin that screamed *please don't kill me, I have a family*.

"Of course, Luna," he said quickly, his voice coming out a whole octave higher than before. "There's absolutely nothing to forgive! I mean, sure, you attacked me and almost ripped my uh, well, the whole situation is completely understandable. Totally reasonable... I swear."

His nervous words started trailing off as his eyes darted frantically over my shoulder, his entire body stiffening as if he'd just spotted death itself lurking in the corner of the room.

I didn't even have to turn around to know what was happening behind me.

"Zaliver, are you glaring at him right now?" I asked dryly.

"No," came his smooth, cool voice from directly behind me.

"Are you sure about that?" I arched a single brow, not buying his innocent tone for a fraction of a second.

"Yes. Right, Dr. Leonard?" Zaliver said and it wasn't a casual question. It was a strict, unyielding command wrapped tightly in silk and steel.

"Oh yes, absolutely, Alpha!" the doctor replied immediately without a moment's hesitation.

Yeah, that answer doesn't count anymore. Our mate just alpha'd the poor man into complete submission, my wolf whispered.

For once, I completely agreed with her assessment.

There was a long, awkward pause, a heavy silence stretching endlessly between the three of us. I glanced down at the floor and idly swung my legs where they dangled mid-air in his iron grip.

"Sooo... are you gonna put me down now, or are we reenacting some possessive scene from a romance novel?" I teased softly.

Zaliver let out a quiet breath against my hair and slowly eased me down, though his broad hand stayed firm on my front, as if making sure I didn't suddenly lunge at anyone again.

"Alright, Dr. Leonard," Zaliver said briskly, his tone shifting instantly to pure business. "Now that we've gotten that little demonstration out of the way, check her over, and then get out."

Without a second of hesitation, the terrified doctor nodded and hurried straight out of the house. I heard his car door swing open outside, followed by the frantic rustling of medical equipment being gathered.

I tilted my head back, looking up at Zaliver through narrowed eyes. "So, what the hell was all of that about?" I asked.

He didn't answer right away. Instead, he let me twist gently in his hold so I could face him better. His pale eyes were thoughtful, calm, and intensely focused on mine.

"That," he said quietly, "was exactly what I suspected would happen. When I first shifted years ago, I lashed out viciously at everyone near me it didn't matter who they were. Friends, family, total strangers. I've been wondering all morning why you didn't do that when you woke up. Now I know. It's the bond. It recognized me instantly and kept your wild instincts in check. But everyone else? Fair game."

I frowned deeply as his heavy words settled in my mind. I tried my best not to focus on the return of that damn, persistent hum fluttering through my veins, but it was nearly impossible when he was standing so close.

"You're telling me," I said, my voice rising slightly, "that you knew there was a high chance I'd wake up and go full monster on anyone near me and you still slept right next to me all night? I could've clawed your eyes out!"

Zaliver didn't flinch at my tone.

"First of all, I'm not stupid," he said firmly, his eyes searching mine. "Second, I never actually slept. I stayed awake all night watching over you, making sure your body adjusted safely to the shift. I let you stare at me this morning because I wanted you to feel completely grounded when you woke up. And third..." He leaned in slightly, his voice dropping to a low purr. "Even if you had attacked me... as you saw earlier, you're no real threat to me."

I stared straight at him, narrowing my eyes.

"No threat, huh?"

He nodded, completely calm and utterly composed. "Exactly."

"Really?"

"Really."

"Hmm. That's funny," I said, my voice smooth like honeyed steel, "coming from the man whose neck I literally snapped."

His broad body tensed instantly.

"Gotcha," I grinned triumphantly.

I was not expecting the slow, dark smirk he gave me in return.

It was slow. Wicked. Extremely dangerous.

The hum inside my chest flared back into that intense, candle-flame heat, licking across my bare skin and making my breath catch in my throat. His bright blue eyes darkened, glowing bright and intense. My heart pounded furiously against my ribs.

"Oh, did you now?" he said huskily.

Before I could even blink, I was expertly spun around. My back met his broad chest, and his large hand pressed firmly to the small of my back, anchoring my body flush against his. His other hand slid up into my long hair, gripping gently but firmly at the base of my skull.

Okay. What the hell just happened? I gasped inwardly, my mind spinning.

I don't know, my wolf whispered, sounding completely breathless. *But whatever you do, don't screw this up.*

Everything around us seemed to completely disappear into the background. The air between us was suddenly charged with something wildly electric and primal. Our eyes locked, our heavy breaths instantly syncing together in the quiet room. We were leaning closer, drawn together like powerful magnets, helplessly pulled toward the inevitable.

It didn't feel like a simple kiss was going to be just a kiss.

It felt like crossing a permanent line one that, once crossed, could never be undone again.

The candle burning deep inside me roared into a full flame.

And I didn't want to stop it.

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna

Vivian's POV

I could hear his heartbeat racing, matching the frantic, chaotic rhythm of my own. Zaliver's lips hovered just a breath away from mine, the tight space between us crackling with electric tension, heat, and something that felt dangerously close to absolute surrender.

Then

"I've got everything ready for ohh..." Dr. Leonard's voice cut through the intimate moment like a dull knife scraping violently against porcelain.

I stiffened instantly, mentally cursing him into oblivion. *Really, Doc? Right now of all times?*

Zaliver's pale blue eyes stayed locked on mine for a second longer, molten promises and unspoken desires swirling in their depths. Then his jaw tightened visibly, and he dragged in a deep, forced breath.

"Just hurry," he snapped, finally pulling away from me.

The intoxicating warmth of his touch vanished, leaving my bare skin tingling frantically in its absence.

Dr. Leonard, perhaps realizing the terrifying gravity of what he'd just ruined between two apex lycans, moved quickly to get things started. He worked in complete silence, carefully checking my eyes, ears, reflexes, and everything in between. Thankfully, he completely skipped over asking about my weight I think we'd both silently agreed never to revisit that absolute disaster again.

Zaliver didn't leave my side for a single second. He hovered close, his broad arms crossed over his chest, muscles tensing beneath his shirt every time the poor doctor had to touch me. There was a fiercely possessive edge to his cold glare that, I'll freely admit, gave me a certain smug satisfaction deep inside. The subtle way his jaw clenched every time Leonard brushed even so much as a strand of my chocolate hair? Yeah... I definitely noticed.

By the time the doctor was done scribbling frantic notes on his clipboard, I was getting a little bored and maybe far too aware of how Zaliver's sheer physical presence affected me.

"So," I said lightly, breaking the heavy silence in the room, "what's the official verdict, doc?"

Zaliver stepped in even closer to my side. The doctor, wisely, took a cautious step backward. Light beads of sweat lined his brow, his pulse thundering loudly in his neck.

Had he looked this absurdly nervous the last time I saw him? I really didn't think so.

Is he... scared of me now too?

You did literally try to kill him five minutes ago, my beast chimed in, not being helpful in the slightest.

Correction, I shot back mentally, you tried to tear him apart. I apologized for that.

Me, you, us same difference.

Whatever.

Dr. Leonard cleared his throat, visibly forcing himself to find his voice. "Well, everything's progressing just fine. Just like any other natural transformation. Your muscles and physical strength are... severely underutilized, though. That's something we'll definitely need to address."

I blinked at him, instantly suspicious of where this conversation was headed.

"I strongly recommend a formal training regimen for the Luna," he said, nervously glancing back and forth between us. "To help her safely adjust to her enhanced strength and supernatural reflexes."

I wrinkled my nose in immediate disgust. "Yeah, no thanks."

Zaliver completely ignored my protest, stepping in seamlessly as if I hadn't even spoken.

"How much training do you suggest?" he asked, his arms crossed tightly over his broad chest like he was already planning my daily workouts.

I whipped my head around to glare at him, but he was already locked in on the doctor, his facial expression completely unreadable. Still, through our open bond, I felt the gentle warmth of his reassurance the soft press of calm and total support wrapping around my heart. His broad hand settled gently on my shoulder, grounding me.

"An hour or two a day should be more than enough," Dr. Leonard replied. "At least until she learns how to properly manage her capabilities. The routine will also help her reach her full potential."

"I really don't want to " I started to protest again.

"For how long will the training be necessary?" Zaliver asked smoothly, cutting me off clean without even glancing my way.

I narrowed my eyes into angry slits at him, offended and amused all at once. He so clearly knew I hated this whole idea. But his underlying emotions told me he was trying to protect and help me, not control me. He was still sending steady waves of comfort down the bond, even if his stern words didn't match his actions.

"A week. Maybe a bit more," Dr. Leonard replied carefully. "It largely depends on how much effort she puts in."

I huffed loudly and turned my back on them both. Like hell I was going to follow some strict, painful training regimen. I was already running as a wolf and now as a massive lycan, too. That had to count as a full-body workout.

"Oh, I'm sure she'll give it her all," Zaliver said confidently, clearly lying straight through his teeth.

Then, his other hand slid down to rest directly near my mating mark.

I froze completely.

His broad thumb moved in slow, teasing circles over the highly sensitive skin, stroking the claim he'd left on me. Every single nerve ending in my body lit up at once. The electric tingling sensation danced wildly down my spine, the intense connection between us pulsing vibrant and alive. It didn't just hum like it had before it stirred something far more dangerous. A magnetic tug toward that burning need I still didn't quite know how to tame.

I nearly melted onto the floor right on the spot.

And just like that, I was painfully aware of the fact that Zaliver my mate knew *exactly* what he was doing to me.

The doctor barely had time to exchange a few quick parting words with Zaliver before he quietly slipped out the door, leaving me completely breathless and trembling. My muscles still hadn't caught up with reality, and my body felt like a helpless marionette dancing under Zaliver's thumb just a simple, deliberate touch, and I was entirely his.

When he finally removed his hand and stepped outside briefly with the doctor, I took the crucial chance to breathe truly breathe and gather myself back into one solid piece. Someone else had come with the doctor, but only Zaliver returned inside. The stranger stayed just outside the front door, their lingering presence feeling like static in the air.

I straightened up, forcing my face into something neutral neither welcoming nor overly suspicious. Just... blank.

"More like, 'Take me now, did you seriously volunteer me for exercise?'" my wolf muttered dryly inside my head, clearly appalled by my weak response.

I ignored her completely and narrowed my eyes at Zaliver as he walked back into the living room.

"What was that all about?" I asked, trying my best to keep my voice steady, calm, and controlled.

He raked a hand casually through his thick, dark hair, and I had to force my gaze away from him. For a split second, I wanted to do that too let my own fingers tangle in it just to see if it was really as soft as it looked.

"I knew you'd reject the idea instantly if we asked you, so I went ahead and made the executive decision for you. It's for your own good, Vivian. You know that." He came closer, radiating Alpha authority and infuriating calm.

I crossed my arms tightly over my chest and tilted my head back, scowling up at him.

"Whether it's good for me or not, Vivian does not approve of unnecessary physical activity," I said, my voice sharp with attitude. "Workouts and I simply don't mix. Food and I? We're literal soulmates."

His pale eyes lit up with sudden, deep amusement. He opened his mouth to say something witty, then stopped himself and grinned instead.

"Vivian doesn't approve? Are we talking in the third person now?" he asked with a soft, rumbling chuckle.

I shrugged carelessly. "And what if she is?" I could be as weird as I wanted to be. Maybe it would distract him long enough to drop the whole ridiculous 'exercise' idea entirely.

He smirked, stepping right into my personal space. "Well then... Zaliver would like to join her." He spoke with mock seriousness, clearly enjoying himself at my expense.

And just when I thought the entire situation couldn't possibly get any more ridiculous, a bright, unfamiliar voice piped up from right outside the open doorway.

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna

Vivian's POV

"Can I be the narrator then?"

I frowned immediately and looked past Zaliver's broad shoulder.

Who the hell is that? Why does he sound so familiarly irritating?

Zaliver rolled his pale eyes and looked down at me, his facial expression flattening completely.

"Albericus is at the door. Don't attack him," he said plainly before turning and heading toward the main entrance.

"Why would I attack Algeb "

The second his foot crossed the threshold, I snapped.

A violent wave of blinding fury rushed straight through me, red-hot and terrifyingly instinctual. I lunged forward before I could even process the thought, sharp claws ready

"Jesus, woman!"

Albericus jumped back just in the nick of time, barely avoiding my lethal swipe, but Zaliver grabbed me from behind before I could go in for another vicious round. His massive arms locked tightly around me, strong and unyielding, lifting my feet completely off the ground.

"It was worth a try," Zaliver muttered under his breath, turning me firmly away from the doorway. I writhed and twisted wildly in his hold, trying desperately to break free.

"You knew she was gonna attack me, and you still made me come in?! What kind of Alpha lets his Luna try to brutally kill his charming, handsome, loyal Beta who's done nothing but work hard for this pack? Are you "

"SHUT UP!" Zaliver growled out, his deep voice resounding like thunder through the house.

He spun me around and pinned my back flat against the living room wall, pressing his broad body firmly into mine to keep me completely still. Both of my wrists were trapped high above my head in just one of his massive hands.

I snarled viciously at the green-eyed pest still standing in the doorway. Albericus. Or, as I preferred to call him, Algebra. He bared his sharp teeth back at me in return, looking just as ready to throw down and fight.

But Zaliver forced my gaze right back to him, pressing his forehead gently to mine.

"Come on, Vivian," he murmured softly against my ear. "It's Alber... Algebra, like you call him."

His voice was soft now, deeply coaxing and calm.

From behind him, the male groaned out dramatically.

"No! Not you too, man!" he whined like a kicked, miserable puppy. He slapped both of his hands against his head and started swaying dramatically as if he'd just suffered the ultimate betrayal.

And yeah, it was definitely Algebra. I recognized that ridiculously annoying theatrical display anywhere.

But the stark truth of the situation hit me like a bucket of ice-cold water.

I hadn't actually meant to attack him. I hadn't wanted to hurt him at all. That sudden, violent fury... the wild, uncontrollable urge to tear him apart limb from limb that wasn't truly me.

That was the beast.

And she was getting harder and harder to keep caged up inside.

I forced myself to take a long, steadying breath, deep enough to anchor my chaotic mind. My eyes squeezed tightly shut, and I focused really focused on forcefully pushing the wild thing inside me back into the dark, locking her behind whatever mental gates I could muster. It wasn't easy in the slightest. She was extremely restless, coiled beneath my skin like a violent storm waiting to break open.

When I finally opened my eyes, Zaliver was still right in front of me, his muscular chest pressed firmly against mine. He had loosened his tight hold on my wrists, but he didn't move away completely. Not that my wolf minded in the least honestly, neither did the rest of me. She practically purred with deep content at the feel of him. So warm... solid... protective. My entire brain derailed just thinking about it.

Stop that. Focus.

"Why do I keep attacking literally everyone who walks into this house?" I muttered to no one in particular, my voice dropping low and sounding far more exhausted than I intended.

Zaliver didn't flinch. Every deep breath he took made his chest shift slightly against mine. My cheeks warmed with a sudden flush of heat.

"Because you're obviously completely insane for trying to maul someone in the presence of this fine piece of ass," Algebra said dryly from the side, throwing a dark glare at me as if I'd ruined his entire day.

I rolled my eyes dramatically at him just as Zaliver spoke up, his voice remaining calm, steady, and grounding.

"Your beast remembers these people from your human memories, but she hasn't had direct, personal interactions with them yet as a lycan. And being inside our home it feels strictly like her territory. It's purely instinctual. She's fiercely protecting what she thinks is hers," he explained carefully. Then his pale blue eyes found mine. "Are you fully in control now?"

I gave him a small, deliberate nod, focusing hard to keep my restless wolf on her tight leash. After a long pause, Zaliver finally took a slow step back from me.

"Uh-uh. Don't let her go, man! She literally tried to rip me apart!" Algebra yelled out, pointing an accusing finger at me with an expression full of pure betrayal.

I smirked dryly at him. "You're still standing on your own two feet, aren't you?"

He narrowed his green eyes again, muttering something dark under his breath about ungrateful wolves.

I turned back to Zaliver, my deep worry surfacing once more. "So... am I just going to be a walking landmine from now on? What if I lash out at someone else by accident? What if I end up hurting Hannah? Or the baby?"

"No," Zaliver said gently, but his tone shifted slightly, like he knew something important that he hadn't told me yet. His eyes locked onto mine, an odd, unreadable flicker of anticipation hidden in their depths.

I frowned, tilting my head. "What?"

"I'll explain it all to you later," he said, far too vaguely for my liking.

I groaned out loud, completely exasperated. "Seriously? Why not right now?"

My wolf grumbled inside my head too. *He's always hiding something from us...*

I glanced over at Algebra, who was still sulking dramatically near the entry corner like a Beta who had been denied his meat.

"Sorry for trying to eviscerate you," I said, giving a small shoulder shrug. "But, like you just heard, it wasn't entirely me. I'm still working on the whole controlling-the-beast part of all this."

He just huffed softly and looked away toward the wall. Charming as always.

"So... why'd you even call him over here in the first place?" I asked Zaliver, finally stepping away from the wall and stretching my tight arms a bit. I could feel both of their intense eyes tracking my every move.

"I need someone reliable to stay with you for about an hour. I've got something important I need to take care of," Zaliver said, his voice completely casual.

I snapped my head straight toward him, blinking in utter disbelief. "You're leaving?"

The sheer disappointment in my voice was absolutely impossible to hide. My entire body went instantly tense. The mere idea of him not being right around me made something deep inside my chest stir uneasy, restless, and fiercely possessive.

He definitely should have told me about this earlier.

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna

Vivian's POV

Both my wolf and beast growled inside my mind, the sound low, violent, and unrelenting. They didn't like this sudden departure at all. Neither did I. A sharp, burning spike of possessiveness tightened in my chest, surprising even me with its sheer intensity.

"Just for a little bit," he promised softly, stepping close and pressing a gentle, lingering kiss to my forehead. "I'll be back before you even know it."

I let my eyes flutter shut for a second, soaking in the contact. That intoxicating little hum that always came after he touched me it almost started up again in my chest.

"Albericus " Zaliver began, turning toward his second-in-command.

"Yeah, yeah," Algebra cut him off with a heavy, resigned sigh. "Protect her with my life. Got it. Even though she's clearly the one more likely to protect me at this point."

I snorted softly, watching as Zaliver turned to stare at him with a deadpan, unreadable expression. Algebra stiffened instantly, his playful posture suddenly becoming alert and guarded.

And then, the strange buzz inside my head started up again.

Voices. Muffled and distant. Like quiet whispers under deep water. Two distinct tones, but completely impossible to decipher. My eyes narrowed in deep focus.

Wait a second... Were they mind-linking right in front of me?

I stared back and forth between them as a sudden realization started to take shape in my mind. If they were communicating through the pack link, then... was I actually picking up on the frequency? The hum in my head intensified, but no matter how hard I focused my mind, the spoken words remained garbled and blurred. Extremely frustrating.

Algebra's lips parted into a small, surprised "oh," like something had just clicked for him in that moment.

I turned my head back to Zaliver, my gaze sharp as glass. "What are you hiding from me?"

He didn't answer right away, just giving me that frustratingly unreadable look of his.

I exhaled sharply through my nose, crossing my arms over my chest and giving him the sternest, most authoritative look I could possibly manage. "You're leaving, so I think the absolute least you could do is tell me why."

His pale eyes flicked to mine again, cold and unreadable as always. But I wasn't going to just let it go this time.

One way or another, I was going to get the truth out of him.

Even if it killed me in the process.

...Okay, maybe not killed. That joke really doesn't work when you're technically immortal.

"I will tell you. I promise," Zaliver said, his voice dropping low and edged with hidden frustration. "For now, I've got to go have a little chat with a nosy snake."

A... snake? My brows drew together in confusion. Was that supposed to be some weird code for something?

Before I could even ask what he meant by that, the air pressure shifted in the room his scent vanished entirely, and I knew he was gone. Just like that. No warning. No time for

my endless questions. He always did that vanished into thin air right when I needed real answers the most.

Which left me standing completely alone in the living room with a very uncomfortable, and clearly sulking, Beta.

I turned my body toward Algebra, my arms folded tightly across my chest. "So... are you going to tell me what that was supposed to mean?"

He deliberately avoided my gaze, his lips pressed in a tight, stubborn line. A small shake of his head was all I received.

My wolf stirred aggressively beneath my skin, agitated and whispering in my thoughts. My beast was even more primal growling viciously, clawing for immediate answers. We all wanted to know where Zaliver had gone, and more importantly, who the hell this curious snake was.

Was it some hidden code for a woman? A female trying to slither her way into my mate's undivided attention?

Anger sparked hot and irrational in my chest. My gums ached from the sheer pressure of my clenched jaw, my sharp canines pressing just under the surface of my lips. I wanted to bite something. Anything. Preferably hard. Preferably fleshy.

I narrowed my eyes into lethal slits at Algebra. He knew the whole story. I could see it written all over his face. And he was definitely not going to tell me willingly.

He noticed the sudden, dangerous shift in my expression and immediately began frantically shaking his head. "Don't even try it, Vivian. I'm under a strict oath "

"I'm his Luna," I growled out, taking a heavy step forward, my voice surprisingly soft but heavily laced with pure, unyielding power. "Tell me."

The command rolled out of me like an irresistible ripple of Alpha dominance, soaked in a raw strength I hadn't even realized I possessed.

Algebra's green eyes went wide in pure shock. His hands shot straight to his throat as if an invisible force was choking him like my command had wrapped tightly around his windpipe and yanked hard. His face reddened rapidly, his breathing hitching in his chest.

My initial smugness instantly faded into pure panic. "Hey! Are you okay? Algebra?!"

He strained to speak through the pressure, his voice cracking violently under the force of my command. "N-No! Ahhh Alpha... went to talk to Venom! He's not... supposed to be here this long. Zaliver wants to know why. Shit! I wasn't supposed to say a damn thing. I'm a dead man!"

He doubled over slightly, coughing harshly and clutching his temples in pain.

I blinked in utter disbelief, taken aback by what had just happened. Venom?

That certainly didn't sound like the name of a sweet, friendly island guest. It sounded way more like the villain in a terrible movie, or someone you'd run into in a dark back alley during a full moon.

At least now I knew for sure that Zaliver wasn't off meeting with some random girl.

I tilted my head, frowning. "Who names their kid Venom anyway? And why does it matter that he's still around? Isn't he part of the pack?" I rubbed the back of my neck awkwardly and then gently patted Algebra's back to help him recover. "I'm so sorry. Are you okay? Do you need some water or something?"

He waved me off dramatically, standing back up straight and beating his chest with one fist as if he'd just barely survived a grand war. "Nah, I'm fine. Just had my Luna nearly rip my soul out and yank classified secrets straight from my vocal cords. No big deal at all. You'll probably need to hire a new Beta soon. But let's be totally honest, no one's going to be as handsome or hardworking as I am. And let's not forget my own mate won't even look at me, let alone let me "

He stopped talking mid-sentence. He completely froze in place.

I blinked rapidly.

Wait... what did he just say?

"You... have a mate?" I asked, utterly stunned. "Since when?!"

Why hadn't Zaliver ever mentioned this to me? Why hadn't *anyone* told me? I groaned internally. I was really starting to think my mate possessed the emotional communication skills of a damp log.

Algebra nodded very slowly, still completely refusing to meet my eyes. He slumped heavily onto the couch and buried his face in his hands, his fingers tangling into his short curls.

When did he cut his hair?

I realized I hadn't even noticed the change. Was I really that out of touch with everyone lately?

I hesitated for a moment before walking over and sitting down quietly beside him on the couch. The heavy guilt of accidentally hurting him with my command still weighed on me. But my curiosity was tugging far harder.

Who was she? Did I know her?

And then... it hit me like a physical blow.

Like a crash of freezing water, every single emotion in the room shifted sharp, chaotic, and completely overwhelming. But these emotions weren't mine at all.

Deep sadness. Crushing frustration. Painful longing. Absolute despair.

They all pooled heavily in my chest, as if they had leaked straight out from him and sunk directly into my soul.

These weren't my feelings.

They were his. Algebra's.

And they were devastatingly heavy.

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna

Vivian's POV

I blinked as a strange ache bloomed in my chest, heavy and tight, making my eyes sting with unspoken emotion. Algebra was hurting I could feel it long before I even saw it reflected in his eyes.

"Want to talk about it?" I asked gently, settling beside him on the plush couch.

He let out a slow, deliberate breath and glanced at me. His face was completely unreadable, serious in a way that vividly reminded me of the dangerous Beta who had once kidnapped me. That hard, ruthless edge in his expression was back the exact same one he wore the very first time we met. If I didn't already sense the deep sorrow tangled beneath his calm surface, I might have backed off entirely.

"I'm fine. Really, Luna," he said, brushing off the heavy tension in his voice with a weak shoulder shrug.

That was a lie. A terrible one.

"What's her name?" I asked quietly.

I couldn't just sit there pretending I didn't notice his agony. The pain rolling off him in heavy waves felt like it was bleeding directly into my own soul. There was a part of me,

deeply instinctive and fiercely protective as his Luna, that wanted to help carry that weight for him.

He didn't answer right away. He just stared silently at the ceiling with a distant look that made my heart clench for him. After a long moment, his shoulders sagged, and the playful mask completely fell away. He leaned back, letting his head thump heavily against the couch cushion, and I mirrored his position, watching him from the corner of my eye.

"Aurora," he murmured softly.

Just the name came out soft and full of agonizing ache. My throat tightened instantly. I stayed quiet, giving him all the space he needed. I didn't want to push or pry not unless he genuinely wanted to share it with me.

"We met about seventy years ago," he said finally, his voice coming out much quieter now. "Zaliver used to send me out on constant errands off the island back when he refused to leave it himself. That day, I was on one of those routine runs. It wasn't planned or anything special... we just crossed paths. Literally. If she hadn't stepped onto the street at that exact moment, I never would've noticed her. The road was packed with people. But somehow... my eyes landed on her right away."

His gaze was far-off, as if he could still see her standing right there across time.

"What did she look like?" I asked softly.

He paused for a second before answering. "Long black hair, dark eyes, skin pale like pure moonlight... slim, around my height."

There was a strange stiffness in the way he spoke. Something felt deeply off in the sudden way his muscular body tensed beside me.

"Or... at least, that's what she looks like now," he added under his breath, almost like a bitter afterthought.

That made my brows draw together in confusion. "Now? Did she change her style or something?"

He shook his head slowly, his lips twisting into something that wasn't quite a smile.

"When I first met her, she looked like a storybook Snow White beautiful, kind, so gentle. But now..." His jaw tightened visibly. "Now she's cold. Heartless. Cruel. She's simply not the same person I fell in love with."

I waited patiently, unsure of what to say to comfort him.

"We fell hard, right from the very start," he continued, staring straight ahead. "It wasn't easy at all, not with me being a werewolf and her family deeply hating my kind..."

I blinked in surprise. "Wait. She's not a werewolf?"

He shook his head again, even more slowly this time.

My wolf stirred inside my mind, snorting dryly. *Look who's talking.*

Yeah, fair point, I admitted silently.

"Then what is she?" I asked, already guessing the answer from the dark tension in his eyes.

He turned his head to look at me with absolute seriousness. "A witch."

"Oh." The single word slipped right out of my mouth before I could stop it.

Witches. Secretive, unpredictable, and dangerously powerful. Even giant lycans and wolves treaded very carefully around them. Hearing that Algebra had not only loved one, but fully mated with her it stunned me even more than my own bizarre bond with Zaliver.

"You said... she's completely different now?" I asked softly, frowning deeply. "She turned cold after you mated?"

That didn't make any sense to me. The mating bond a real, sacred connection was supposed to deepen love and trust, not destroy it. Betrayal, cheating, cruelty... it all felt entirely impossible between fated mates. It would be like tearing your own soul in half on purpose.

But clearly, something had irreparably broken between them.

And I didn't know what hurt worse: watching Algebra talk about her like this, or realizing that even a sacred mate bond wasn't always enough to protect someone from devastating heartbreak.

"She is," he said, his voice low and sharp like a heavy blade dulled by far too much use. Those piercing green eyes of his stayed locked straight ahead, hard and unreadable, until something subtle flickered in them. Pure grief. Raw regret.

I hesitated for a moment, but my voice came out gentle. "May I ask why?"

He didn't owe me anything. He didn't have to explain his past to me. But I absolutely hated seeing him like this Albericus, always the loudest guy in the room, always cracking stupid jokes to make people laugh. Now he sat in this heavy, suffocating silence as if it was crushing him from the inside out. Maybe I should ask Zaliver to speak with him later, wolf to wolf.

Albericus suddenly slapped both palms against his thighs, rubbing them up and down rapidly as if he was trying to physically scrub the raw tension off his skin. Then, without saying a single word, he rose from the couch and began pacing the living room in long, aggressive strides, like he was desperately fighting something he couldn't put into simple words. I watched intently as his hand went up to clutch the back of his neck, the muscles in his arms straining under the pressure. When he finally came to a stop, it was right in front of the window, his back turned completely to me.

Even from where I sat on the couch, I could feel the unbearable heaviness radiating off him. My beast shifted uneasily in the back of my mind. My wolf tilted her head, watching his broad back closely. Whatever dark secret he was wrestling with it ran deep.

Just as I opened my mouth to tell him he really didn't need to explain it to me, he spoke up, his voice tight and heavily laced with pain.

"She tried to outwit death."

I blinked, thoroughly confused. "What?"

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna

Vivian's POV

"I'm older than I look, Luna," he said, still staring fixatedly out the window as if he were deeply afraid to look me in the eyes. "I've seen what black magic does. I've watched wolves completely destroy themselves trying to mess with dangerous things far beyond our understanding... but when it comes to death... there's always a steep price to pay."

His broad fists clenched tightly at his sides, and through my heightened lycan senses, I could hear the sharp grinding of his back teeth. His heart was beating wildly in his chest, hammering like it was desperately fighting against the tragic truth trying to escape his mouth.

Black magic. Just hearing the sinister term made my skin prickle with uneasy chills. I didn't know much about dark arts only quiet whispers, terrible horror stories, and strict pack warnings. It was more than enough to know it was deeply dangerous, dark, and twisted. And using forbidden magic to escape death? That was like playing a deadly game of tug-of-war with the ancient gods themselves.

"Who was she trying to save?" I asked softly, already terrified of the answer.

He hesitated just long enough for my breath to catch in my throat, and then he said, his voice almost too soft to hear, "Our son."

My heart sank like a heavy stone dropped into freezing water.

They had a child. Albericus and Aurora... they had a son together.

And they lost him.

I couldn't breathe for a long moment, the crushing weight of his confession hitting me hard in the chest. The profound grief lingering in Albericus's aura wasn't fresh, but it had clearly never healed. No wonder his loud laughter had always felt a little too forced sometimes. No wonder his cheerful smile always had quiet moments of hidden pain behind it. He had been carrying this unbearable tragedy all along.

I immediately pictured myself in his place imagining me and Zaliver, holding a sweet child of our own, and then... losing them to the shadows. I nearly choked on the sudden rush of agonizing emotion. My beast whimpered softly inside my mind, while my wolf growled protectively. The mere thought alone was completely unbearable. The sheer pain of losing a child... and a mate? It would utterly destroy me.

"Did it work?" I asked quietly, barely able to push the trembling words past the thick lump in my throat. I knew I shouldn't pry any further, but hope is a cruel thing. It clawed relentlessly at my heart, wanting needing some kind of miraculous outcome for him.

Silence filled the room.

His heavy breathing slowed down.

My heart broke all over again.

I could smell it in the air before I even saw it the sharp, bitter scent of deep sorrow too heavy for one person to hold inside. He turned around very slowly, a single tear slipping silently down his pale cheek. His green eyes stayed tightly shut, as if the memory itself was far too painful to witness again. His entire muscular frame was trembling violently, as if the massive effort to stay upright was becoming too much to bear.

And then, he dropped directly to his knees.

"No," he whispered, his voice cracking wide open into a raw, gut-wrenching sob that echoed mournfully through the living room.

Tears streamed freely down his face now, and through our newly forming connection, I could feel every single ounce of his shattering agony as if it were my own.

I knelt on the floor beside him without a second thought, gently placing my hand on his broad shoulder. There were simply no human words powerful enough to soothe this profound kind of loss. But I stayed right there with him silent, steady, and present as his cries filled the quiet room.

And the only thing I could offer him was my unconditional presence.

Because sometimes, that's all we truly have left to give when everything else has been stolen away.

People always say that comforting a broken person is hard, but to me, the truly difficult part is being the brave one who breaks down in front of others. Letting someone see you like that torn wide open, vulnerable, and stripped completely clean of all your defenses takes far more courage than people ever give credit for.

The very second he collapsed under the weight of his grief, my Luna instincts took over completely.

Without a moment of hesitation, I dropped all the way to the ground and wrapped my arms tightly around him. This big, terrifyingly powerful Beta was shaking like a frail leaf as decades of buried grief shattered right through him. His sobs were raw, gut-wrenching, and heart-breaking, and all I could do was hold him tighter against me.

I rocked us slowly back and forth on the floor, murmuring soft, comforting words that I wasn't even sure he could consciously hear. I brushed his short curls back gently, letting him cry out his pain for as long as he needed. My wolf stirred deep inside my chest, her own silent sorrow rising smoothly to the surface. She felt his loss too not just a generic sadness, but something far deeper. A silent thread of a sacred pack connection was forming between us and him.

I don't think either of us ever expected to feel this deep of a bond, especially not after the rocky way our relationship had started. And now? My wolf was deeply ashamed of having violently attacked him earlier. She carried that heavy guilt like a fresh wound.

We must have sat there together on the hardwood floor for twenty minutes, maybe even longer. Time blurred completely into silence and the quiet sounds of his healing pain.

Slowly, his heavy breathing began to steady out. The violent shaking of his shoulders stopped. He didn't immediately move, though. He just sat there, his broad body feeling heavy against mine, his wild emotions gradually settling into a calmer state. They were still stormy, but vastly quieter now. It was like he was carefully corking the dark bottle again, shoving everything back down into the depths where it wouldn't hurt quite so loudly.

"Sorry about that, Luna," he rasped out. His voice was completely hoarse, his quiet laugh sounding dry and fragile as he used the back of his sleeve to rub at the tear tracks streaking his red cheeks. His eyes were heavily rimmed with red, his face still flushed from the raw intensity of it all.

Whoever had originally said that strong men don't cry had clearly never seen a grieving father mourn his lost family.

"Don't you dare apologize," I told him softly, offering a comforting squeeze to his shoulder. "I'm just glad you finally let some of that pain out. How are you feeling?"

I already had a pretty good idea based on what I was sensing, but I wanted to hear the words come directly from him.

"I'm fine. Really," he said, his tone turning gruff as if the firm words were spoken to convince both of us. He stood up off the floor, pulling away from the embrace. I stayed seated on the floor for a second longer, peering up at his tall frame with a raised brow. But I didn't push him any further. Talking about losing a child... that simply wasn't something anyone should ever be forced to revisit.

He cleared his throat loudly and deliberately tried to shift the heavy mood in the room. "So, what exactly can you do now that you're all mighty, powerful, and upgraded?" he asked, a crooked, familiar smile tugging weakly at the corner of his mouth.

I watched the subtle emotional shift roll through him. Albericus was expert at stuffing his deep pain down, burying it quickly beneath sarcastic jokes and lighthearted distractions. It genuinely surprised me how fast he could physically recover, but that was just the supernatural way of our kind. We healed quickly both physically and emotionally sometimes almost too quickly for our own good.

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna

Vivian's POV

I stood up from the floor and stretched my aching muscles. The sharp, salty scent of old tears still lingered heavily in the air, but I deliberately ignored it to spare him any more embarrassment.

"Well," I said teasingly, offering him a small smile, "I could start by attacking anyone who walks into my house uninvited."

He snorted softly. "Yeah, I noticed."

I scratched the back of my head, feeling a little sheepish about my violent welcome earlier. My wolf curled up uncomfortably inside me, silently chastised once again for her chaotic aggression. She deeply regretted it now. So did I.

"I really am sorry about that, Albericus. I honestly didn't know."

His head jerked toward me so fast you'd think I'd just slapped him across the face. His green eyes went wide in utter disbelief, and he pointed both hands straight at me as if I'd just announced I was the Moon Goddess herself descending from the heavens.

"Did you just say my actual name?" he asked, his voice dropping into a tense whisper as if the sacred sound might vanish into thin air if he spoke too loudly.

I crossed my arms over my chest and gave him a deadpan look. "Yes, I said your name."

His entire face lit up instantly. He clapped his hands together like an overexcited pup and actually bounced on his heels right in front of me. "Finally! I've been waiting so damn long for this moment!" He hastily pulled his phone out from his back pocket, tapping the screen with lightning speed before aiming the camera lens right at my face.

"Okay, okay... go! I'm recording now. Say it again!"

I narrowed my eyes at him. "Doing this just makes me not want to say it ever again."

"Oh, come on," he pouted playfully, a wide grin breaking across his face. "I literally just cried in front of you! You owe me big time."

I rolled my eyes, my lips twitching into a reluctant smile despite myself. "Fine."

He lifted the phone a little higher to catch my expression. "And... go!"

I let out a soft sigh. "Albericus."

For a full second, he went completely still. Blank-faced. Absolutely no reaction.

Then he dropped his phone right onto the rug and burst into uncontrollable, gut-busting laughter. He collapsed to the floor and rolled onto his back, cackling wildly as if I had just delivered the absolute funniest joke in modern history.

I stared down at him, my eyebrows drawing together in a heavy frown. *Okay... maybe he's still emotionally unstable from earlier? What if this is some weird post-breakdown coping mechanism?*

But then I heard what he managed to gasp out between frantic wheezes, and every bit of my genuine concern vanished into thin air.

"Dayyuummm. That shit sounded so dry," Algebra wheezed through his laughter, smacking the floor repeatedly with both palms.

He was completely fine.

I glared down at his laughing form, my irritation bubbling right up to the surface. Without overthinking it, I nudged him with my foot. Okay... more like shoved him with my foot.

Hard.

Way too hard.

His broad body shot straight across the room like a helpless ragdoll, slamming violently into the far wall. He crashed heavily into the mounted flat-screen TV, and a horrible, sickening crunch echoed through the space right before the massive screen splintered into a jagged mess of shattered glass. Shards and broken plastic tumbled down onto the floor with a sad little clatter. Algebra groaned out loud as he slid down the wall like a battered cartoon character.

I froze in pure horror. Eyes wide as saucers. Mouth hanging wide open.

My arms flew up on pure instinct, as if my clumsy hands could somehow catch the massive TV mid-fall even though it was already far too late. The heavy screen hit the floor right on top of his chest.

My wolf whistled loudly from deep within my head.

Run, bitch. Run for your life.

"No, no, no, no, no... shit! Oh Goddess, this can't be happening. He's gonna kill me," I mumbled frantically, panic spewing from my lips in a rapid, nervous spiral.

I tiptoed cautiously toward Algebra, who lay groaning under the heavy TV wreckage. His eyes cracked open into a tiny squint, his face a wild mix of physical pain and utter disbelief.

"I didn't even hit you that hard!" I blurted out, defending myself very weakly.

I snapped my head toward him and pointed an accusing finger at his chest with a heavy scowl. "You! He's going to kill *you*, because this is totally your fault!"

His face contorted in sheer offense. He pushed himself up from the floor with a heavy grunt, shoving the shattered television off his chest and attempting to set it back upright on the stand as if that simple act would somehow undo the total destruction.

"Me?! What the hell did I miss here? Because I sure as hell don't remember launching my own body into the wall! This is all on you, she-hulk!"

I growled out loud in pure frustration, stomping my foot down like a spoiled child. The wooden floor beneath me cracked instantly with a loud, ominous crunch. I lifted my heel very slowly and stared down in horror at the fresh, splintered dent I had just left behind in the dark hardwood.

"Ugh!" I groaned, rubbing my pulsing temple with one hand.

Algebra stood beside me, cursing rapidly under his breath as he inspected the total carnage. His green eyes bounced back and forth from the shattered TV to the deeply dented hardwood floor.

"Do you think he'll notice?" I asked, my voice coming out small and terrified, sounding just like a guilty pup caught red-handed stealing meat off the kitchen counter.

Zaliver wouldn't yell or fly into a rage that simply wasn't his style. No, he'd just disapprove with that quiet, chilling disappointment that always made me feel like I'd single-handedly let down the entire lycan pack.

"Not unless you manage to keep him completely out of this room for the rest of eternity," Algebra muttered dryly, brushing drywall dust off his pants.

"This is still entirely your fault," I insisted stubbornly, narrowing my eyes at him. "If you hadn't mocked me for how I pronounced your name, I wouldn't have kicked you across the room!"

He rolled his eyes dramatically toward the ceiling. "Sorry, but I finally understand why you gave me a weird nickname in the first place. Algebra just sounds bizarre when you try to say it out loud. And for the record, you didn't just nudge me. You gave me a full-on Bruce Lee-Hulk-fangirl lethal kick! That combo is straight-up lethal, Vivian. I'm like... ninety percent sure my internal ribs are fractured."

To prove his point, he grabbed the hem of his shirt and lifted it up.

My eyes widened at the sudden sight of firm, tanned abs eight of them, to be precise and right over his left side, a dark, nasty purple bruise was already rapidly forming on his golden skin.

Immediate guilt hit me like a speeding freight train. I sucked in a sharp breath. "Oh wow..."

Then, because my brain clearly isn't wired properly in high-stress situations, I reached out and poked the dark bruise with my index finger.

"OW! What the hell is wrong with you?!" he yelped out, jerking his body back and slapping his shirt down to cover his ribs.

"Sorry!" I said sheepishly, looking around at the absolute chaos we had just created in under half an hour.

Zaliver hadn't even been gone for thirty full minutes. In that tiny window of time, I had violently assaulted his Beta, shattered his massive television, smashed a hole into his hardwood floor, and bruised someone's internal organs. He was definitely going to execute me.

"Alright, alright," Algebra said with a deep sigh, placing both hands on his hips as he took in the wreckage. "I might actually have a plan to fix all of this."

My head snapped straight toward him so fast I nearly gave myself instant whiplash. "Really?! You're gonna call a high-end clean-up crew and swear them to absolute secrecy? Like in those crazy mafia movies?"

He snorted out loud and gave me a deadpan look. "No. I've got something way better than that."

Honestly? That vague statement terrified me far more than the broken TV ever could.

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna

Vivian's POV

"My plan was better. You have to be the dumbest Beta I've ever had the misfortune of knowing," I muttered under my breath, my arms tightly crossed as I stared at Algebra in total disbelief.

"This is perfect," he insisted, standing tall with far too much confidence for someone who clearly didn't think things through.

Apparently, his grand idea of fixing the destruction involved stepping outside something I still couldn't do without my heightened senses going completely haywire. The exact moment he opened the front door, I was hit with a brutal overload of blinding light, intense smells, and overwhelming sounds that made my vision blur and my skin crawl. I lasted four minutes. That was it. Four agonizing minutes of sensory overload before I fled right back inside.

Algebra, on the other hand, possessed zero shame. He casually dragged a massive rock from outside and dumped it directly over the dent in the hardwood floor, looking just like a caveman trying to hide evidence. Then, with all the brilliant insight of a complete genius, he strolled into Zaliver's private study, grabbed a blank piece of printer paper, and taped it over the cracks in the wall. Taped. A. Single. Piece. Of. Paper.

I flopped heavily onto the couch and buried my face in both hands, groaning out loud. I felt like I was actively losing precious brain cells just by being in the same room with him. At this rate, I'd be the next idiot living in this house.

"Oh, come on," Algebra said cheerfully, entirely pleased with his work. "Just tell him you were redecorating. Then stand right in front of the TV while you explain it to him. Distraction and confession. That's solid strategy."

Note to self: Betas should never be put in charge of emergency plans. Ever.

I rubbed my temples with my fingertips, hoping to massage away the pounding headache forming right behind my eyes. The sharp pain came in distinct waves soft at first, then deep and strange, like I was hearing muffled, garbled voices under deep water again. The exact same weird sensation from earlier.

Algebra's silly grin vanished in a fraction of a second. He moved closer and crouched down in front of me, his facial expression turning entirely serious.

"I was only joking, Vivian. I can call a proper cleanup crew right now. Say the word." His tone was completely sincere now, a far cry from his earlier goofiness.

I blinked at him and shook my head, no longer even concerned about the ruined wall or the dented floor. At this point, I was seriously considering just grabbing Zaliver and kissing the daylights out of him the second he walked through the door maybe that would distract him enough to ignore the total chaos.

"It's not that," I murmured softly. "Just a headache. That's all."

His brows furrowed together. "I'll call someone "

"No," I cut him off quickly. "It's fine. Zaliver will be back home soon anyway."

Algebra hesitated for a moment, clearly uneasy. "Still, I don't think it'll matter to him if he hears it from me or not. If something's wrong with you... I'd rather he know right now than regret it later." He looked at me really looked at me and said softly, "I know this might sound strange coming from me, but... thank you, Vivian."

I blinked in surprise. "For what?"

The sudden question must have caught me completely off guard, because for a moment, I completely forgot about the pulsing ache in my head.

He smiled, just a little bit, but the warmth genuinely reached his eyes. "For making him happy. I've been with Zaliver for a very long time. And I've never... never seen him like this. Not without crippling guilt or self-loathing weighing him down constantly. You make him smile. You make him breathe. So... thank you for that."

Tears suddenly threatened to blur my vision. I hadn't expected to hear that from him of all people. It was honest, warm... and completely unexpected.

I gave him a small, heartfelt smile in return. Words utterly failed me.

"Well," he said after a quiet pause, loudly clapping his palms together. "I'm not gonna just stand around and stare at the wreckage all day. Wanna play a game?"

My brows rose in curiosity. "What kind of game?"

He wiggled his brows mischievously at me. "You'll see."

Why in the goddess's name did Algebra have four high-powered Nerf guns sitting in his car? I peeked cautiously around the hallway corner, clutching a neon foam blaster tightly to my chest as I contemplated the sheer ridiculousness of my current situation.

Apparently, Algebra's unique definition of fun involved an all-out Nerf war inside the house. His logic? That it would help me adjust to my new lycan instincts in a controlled environment. And weirdly enough... he was actually right.

The moment the game started, I could feel my spatial awareness sharpening instantly. My reflexes felt faster, my breathing far more controlled. My inner wolf, usually a looming force of growling dominance and chaotic discomfort, was now curiously silent watchful, even. She observed the playful game with intense interest, almost like she was actively learning alongside me.

And damn it, my fierce competitive streak refused to let me lose. My wolf seemed to agree entirely, muttering quiet encouragement in the back of my mind.

Careful. Left. Don't miss. He's crouched down. Both guns ready. Wait for the shift in his body weight.

I could hear Algebra's heartbeat pounding at the very end of the hall. I didn't even need to see him I could feel the distinct heat of his body behind the wall, like my mind had suddenly tuned itself to a new frequency.

For the very first time, my new lycan self didn't feel terrifying.

It felt... powerful.

And maybe just maybe kind of fun.

"I can hear your heartbeat, Luna. Might as well surrender now," he called out mockingly from his spot.

A confident smirk tugged at my lips. "And I can see you, genius. If anyone's surrendering today, it should definitely be you."

Peeking around the corner once more, I caught sight of him tense and twitchy, his body completely ready to spring forward, but hesitating just enough to give away his exact position. Perfect.

"Damn," he muttered under his breath, stepping out into the open hallway with a grin. "You and your mate should be banned from playing games with others. You're both way too intense unless it's just the two of you."

I stepped fully out as well, blasters raised high, my eyes narrowed on my target. His movements were slow, deliberate. One little twitch, and I'd take the shot.

He lifted both hands up into the air, Nerf guns still held in his fingers, but the universal sign of surrender was unmistakable.

"Alright, alright. I give up. Somehow, you keep finding the exact same hiding spot I pick. You two are impossible," he said with a dramatic sigh, waving one of his foam blasters in defeat.

I tilted my head, keeping my guard up. "And how exactly do I know you're not bluffing me?"

Until he either completely dropped his weapons or officially gave up, I wasn't taking my eyes off him. I had zero intention of losing this stupid war, even if it was just a silly Nerf battle.

"I don't know what you " he began, rolling his green eyes.

Bad move.

Without overthinking it, I pulled the trigger and fired a foam dart straight at his forehead. The dart hit its mark with a highly satisfying thunk. He blinked in utter shock, stunned, his green eyes darkening with absolute disbelief.

"Did you just "

I shot him again.

And ran like hell.

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna

Vivian's POV

The house erupted in complete chaos as I ducked and weaved through rooms, adrenaline fueling my wild laughter. Behind me, I could hear his heavy footfalls on the floorboards and the frantic clicking of his plastic blaster.

"You better stop moving and let me shoot you!" he growled out, clearly frustrated with my speed.

"Never!" I yelled back, spinning around and shooting blindly behind me. Thanks to my heightened lycan reflexes and sharper senses, I could anticipate his every movement with ease. What was lightning-quick to a regular human felt ridiculously sluggish to me now.

"Stop shooting me!" he shouted from behind the kitchen counter, ducking his head down for cover.

"Suck it up, Algebra!"

He grumbled something under his breath that I didn't quite catch, but my ears twitched when the familiar sound of tires crunching over driveway gravel reached me. I froze instantly in place and glanced at the clock hanging on the wall.

He was back.

Zaliver.

My heart leapt violently in my chest, a sudden surge of warmth spreading rapidly through all my limbs. A low hum stirred deep inside my chest a deep, magnetic pull to run straight to him, to bury my face in his broad chest and breathe his intoxicating scent in. I needed him. Needed to feel his solid touch, scent his comforting skin, and just be near him again.

"Zaliver's home," I whispered softly, knowing Algebra's heightened hearing would catch every single word.

He popped his head up from behind the counter with an almost feral grin, those mischievous green eyes gleaming bright. I raised a brow at him in silent question.

He pointed a finger toward the front door and mimed shooting his blaster at it. Ah. A surprise welcome-home ambush?

I grinned widely and gave him a eager nod.

Algebra crept silently over to the living room, hiding behind the couch the prime position to get the very first shot off. I scanned the remaining space quickly. The main staircase was out of the question. If I hid up there, the open door would block my line of sight, and those lightweight foam darts were way too slow to adjust trajectory. Algebra already claimed the best piece of cover.

Think fast, Viv.

I settled on standing out in plain sight just a few feet away from the front door, as if calmly waiting to greet him home like a sweet mate. My plastic guns were tucked securely behind my back, but my tense posture practically screamed suspicious. Oh well.

Algebra looked over at me from his hiding spot and gave me a quick thumbs-up. I braced myself as the distinct sound of heavy, approaching footsteps grew louder outside. My racing pulse matched the rhythm of each step.

Pure excitement bloomed inside me. I didn't know if I was actually going to shoot him or simply launch myself straight into his strong arms. Maybe both. My wolf was pacing restless circles in my head, her ears perked up and her tail flicking. My beast crouched just beneath my skin, waiting eagerly for his return.

The brass doorknob twisted.

I glanced once more at Algebra. His face lit up with pure anticipation, his Nerf gun locked and loaded.

Everything suddenly slowed down to a crawl.

The heavy front door swung open with a thud, and the exact second Zaliver stepped inside, our eyes locked together. His piercing, stormy blue gaze hit me like a live electric wire. For a long heartbeat, the rest of the world faded away entirely until I remembered the weapons held behind my back.

I brought the guns around, my heart thundering against my ribs, and opened rapid fire.

Each brightly colored dart spun through the air in slow motion, as if time itself was holding its breath. Right next to me, Algebra let out a wild war cry and shot his own volley of foam darts.

And then Zaliver's eyes those stormy, beautiful blues flashed pure, dangerous black.

He moved.

Gods, he moved fast. A dark blur of raw power and lethal speed shot straight toward me, his heavy presence like a massive wave of gravity pulling everything into its orbit. Just behind his shoulder, someone else bolted through the open doorway a man impossibly tall, with long white hair and gleaming golden eyes that slit vertically like a serpent's. I didn't even have time to process what I was seeing before Algebra was sent flying airborne across the room.

My focus snapped right back to Zaliver.

He was smirking down at me.

That cocky, infuriating, heart-melting smirk I hadn't even realized I'd missed so desperately until this very second.

A loud scream caught in my throat, and then I was suddenly flying backward. I barely had time to react before Zaliver caught me smoothly mid-air. We hit the floor hard, but he absorbed the entire impact like it was nothing, rolling us gracefully over so I landed beneath him, until he flipped us once more and pinned me firmly down, my wrists trapped tightly above my head.

The Nerf guns were long gone, scattered across the room.

I gasped out loud as the sheer intensity of the moment slammed into me all at once.

"Hello, Vivian," he purred softly, his deep voice thick with absolute satisfaction. "You weren't seriously going to shoot me, were you?"

His handsome face hovered just inches above mine, loose strands of dark hair tickling my forehead.

The entire world completely melted away. Algebra? The strange, tall white-haired man? None of it mattered. All I knew was that my mate was finally home, pinned right on top of me, warm and real and undeniably mine.

"Zaliver!" I squealed out, my massive grin breaking completely loose. I hooked my legs tightly around his waist, tugging his solid weight closer to me.

A faint flicker of surprise crossed his expression, his pale eyes widening slightly, before they slowly darkened with something far deeper and far more intense.

"Vivian?" he murmured, his voice turning rough and low as his large grip on my wrists tightened against the floor.

"Mmm?" I hummed out softly, tilting my head up to gently nuzzle my nose against his. His eyelids fluttered closed, and he brushed his broad nose affectionately against mine. My inner wolf practically melted on the spot. Even the fierce beast inside me quieted right down, rumbling with pure contentment.

When his eyes opened again, they were significantly darker, laced with a heavy heat and hunger that mirrored my own growing desire. His dark gaze dropped straight down to my lips, and I parted them slightly, openly inviting him in. He let out a soft, heavy groan, his broad hips pressing down instinctively into mine. He began to lean down closer, his mouth brushing against mine

"Awww, hell no!" Algebra's loud voice suddenly snapped through the air. "No grinding on the living room floor while I'm standing right here!"

I bared my sharp teeth in a sudden snarl toward the disruption as Zaliver groaned out in frustration and dropped his forehead heavily onto my shoulder. The vibration of his chest rumbling in irritation echoed my exact feelings.

"Cockblockers," my wolf growled inside my mind, utterly unimpressed. "Cockblockers everywhere."

With a resigned sigh, Zaliver pushed himself up off me and offered his large hand. I took it gladly, letting his strength pull me easily to my feet.

Algebra was sprawled dramatically across the hardwood floor near the broken TV again, looking as though he hadn't just single-handedly ruined the single best moment of my entire week.

The tall, white-haired stranger now stood quietly a few feet in front of him, his head bowed low, his arms clasped formally behind his back. It wasn't an act of submission exactly it felt far more... disciplined. Almost military.

But he certainly didn't smell like any wolf I had ever encountered.

My beast shifted uneasily inside me. She didn't like him one bit.

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna

Vivian's POV

A low growl started to rise deep in my chest, my beast's wild fury building up again, fully ready to lash out at the unknown intruder. I grit my teeth tightly and forced her back into the dark, shoving the violent instinct down with everything I had.

I turned to Zaliver and wrapped myself completely around him, burying my face deep into his chest. His comforting scent filled my lungs earth, storm, and something wholly, uniquely him and my erratic heart finally settled down.

Without saying a single word, he wrapped his massive arms securely around me, his broad palm rubbing soothing, slow circles into my back.

He understood. He always did.

Turning back toward the two of them, I took a slow, cautious step forward, my eyes locked firmly on the tall man I didn't recognize. Something about him set off all kinds of silent alarms inside me not the kind that screamed immediate danger in the obvious sense, but something deeper, quieter, and vastly more primal. It wasn't just his strange energy, though that alone made the heavy air in the living room feel distinctly heavier. There was a quiet, lethal power tucked right beneath his surface, and even though he stood perfectly still, I could feel it coiled tightly like a snake beneath his smooth skin.

He gave off a very strange combination of absolute serenity and lethal intent. It unsettled me, but not in a way that made me want to turn and run away. More like... I simply couldn't look away from him. It was odd. Very odd.

Still, I couldn't help but notice just how tall he was taller than Zaliver, even. And that was really saying something.

"Hi, I'm Vivian," I said, my natural curiosity easily winning over my caution. "How tall are you?" I tilted my head back and studied his long frame, trying my best not to sound too utterly fascinated.

Zaliver moved in close right behind me, the heavy weight of his arm slipping around my waist like a possessive claim. I felt his solid warmth press firmly into my back as his dominant presence wrapped around me protectively, but I didn't break my gaze from the stranger.

The man's striking golden gaze flicked briefly toward Zaliver before locking right onto mine. His eyes... gods, his eyes were stunning. They were vivid and mesmerizing, with vertical pupils slitted like a deadly predator, which made it almost impossible to break the visual connection. There was something ancient lingering behind them. Something sharp, cold, and wild.

He finally looked down slightly at me, and I took in more of his distinct appearance. He wore pristine white pants, a fitted black shirt beneath a white vest, and white shoes so remarkably spotless it made me seriously question if he even walked directly on the ground. He had a lean, exceptionally powerful build every single line of his body spoke of incredible agility and lethal precision. But it was his unique hair that caught the ambient light in the strangest way, the ends looking almost translucent, like glass kissed by pure sunlight.

"My apologies, Luna Vivian, for my earlier behavior. I am not worthy of your regard. My name is Venom. I am... a snake shifter. And I stand seven feet tall." His voice was smooth far too smooth. Cold, but strangely pleasant, like fine silk sliding over a sharp blade. The sudden chill that ran down my spine had nothing to do with fear and everything to do with the captivating way he said it.

The subtle way his words hissed ever so slightly... it wasn't deliberate. It was entirely natural for him. Still, the underlying sound was undeniably threatening. Beautiful, but razor-sharp. And I knew just *knew* that if Venom ever truly wanted to, he could be the single most terrifying creature I'd ever encountered. Maybe even more so than Zaliver.

My wolf and inner beast stirred, desperately trying to read his intent, but even they seemed genuinely unsure of what to make of him. He was completely unlike anything we had ever come across before.

I made myself breathe in deeply and offered him a warm smile, willing my body to relax. I didn't want him to think I was terrified of his presence.

"Oh, don't be so dramatic, Venom," I said honestly. "I think you and I are going to get along just fine. It's nice to meet you."

He peered down at me again, and I could have sworn something subtle shifted behind those bright golden eyes. Curiosity, maybe. Or perhaps something else entirely.

Behind me, Algebra finally spoke up with a rough grunt. "Oh, yeah. I'm doing great. Thanks for asking," he muttered sarcastically, brushing drywall dust off his clothes as if he hadn't just been launched violently into the wall a minute ago.

I rolled my eyes at him, but then paused as a brilliant idea suddenly came to me. A very petty, very satisfying idea.

I made my way over toward Algebra, who eyed my approach with open suspicion even though he was already standing back on his feet. I gave him a soft, reassuring pat on the back innocent and harmless and in the exact same smooth movement, I peeled the crumpled piece of printer paper off the wall near the TV. Then, I casually kicked the rock aside with my foot. It rolled across the hardwood floor before hitting the baseboard with a sharp thud. I didn't even flinch.

With a mock gasp, I looked back at the exposed damage and widened my eyes as if I'd only just noticed it.

"Oh no," I said, feigning deep concern. "Would you look at that? The TV is shattered. And oh wow, a giant dent in the floor? What a shame... such a shame." I even threw in a loud, pitying sigh for good measure.

I glanced over my shoulder at Zaliver. His eyes weren't even looking at the broken mess he was staring intensely at my hand, which was still resting casually on Algebra's back. Waves of dark jealousy rolled off him, subtle but completely unmistakable. Meanwhile, Venom actually looked faintly guilty for the chaos.

"Yes," Zaliver said, his voice dropping low and sounding oddly tight. "What a pity."

Something in the dark way he said it made my spine instantly straighten. His facial expression was completely unreadable, but I knew him far too well by now. His heavy gaze kept bouncing back and forth between me and his Beta with something that looked a lot like dangerous suspicion.

"I'm really sorry about "

I quickly turned my body to Venom before he could foolishly take the blame for the mess.

"No, no. Don't worry," I said, waving my hand dismissively at him to wipe away his concern. "Seriously, don't. It's fine. Like, stop. Like stoop."

"Yup," Algebra chimed in quickly, catching on to the act. "Accidents happen all the time."

We looked at each other, and in that brief, silent exchange, an unwritten agreement was officially struck between us. Neither of us was ever going to explain to Zaliver what had actually happened in this room.

Some things were definitely better left unsaid.