

Chapter 228 Confrontation

Rufus' POV:

My father's expression darkened and he cast a sidelong glance at Maya. Finally, he turned and snorted at Richard. "Take care of your own mate. Quit making a fool of yourself."

I heaved a sigh of relief. Fortunately, my father didn't blame Maya.

Richard's face instantly fell. He retorted, "Those are all rumors. They're not true at all!"

My father didn't want to listen to his excuses. He waved his hand dismissively. "You can leave now."

He was always a man who had the final say. Richard had no choice but to leave with his attendants.

"If there's nothing else, I'll go to Mother's place first." I turned to leave after saying goodbye to my father.

But he stopped me. He leaned towards me and whispered in my ear in a voice so low that only the two of us could hear. "Don't forget our agreement. If Sylvia's identity as a traitor's daughter can't be redeemed, no matter how many achievements she attains, she will always be a slave."

I didn't say anything. I simply nodded to him then left with Maya.

As soon as I arrived at the gate of the queen's residence, I heard peals of laughter from inside.

The guard at the gate saw me approach and showed a look of surprise. He immediately rushed inside to announce my visit.

I didn't wait for the guard to come back and invite me in. Instead, I entered the palace and went straight to the hall.

There, I found Alina and my mother chattering about. My mother looked amused.

"Rufus, what brings you here?" When she saw me, my mother stood up in surprise and walked over to receive me. "You rarely visit me. Aren't you busy with work?"

"Not right now. I came to see how you're doing." We walked to the sofa and sat down. An attendant handed me a cup of coffee, which I accepted gratefully.

"Nothing's changed. I'm still the same as before. But thanks to Alina, I feel much better these days." She winked at Alina and pushed her towards me. "You two should talk!"

Alina stood in front of me obediently and smiled at me softly.

"Long time no see, Prince Rufus," she said meekly.

I ignored her and continued to sip from my coffee.

Embarrassed, Alina smiled awkwardly then glanced at my mother for help.

"You two should spend more time with each other, or else you'll never get to know each other on a deeper level." My mother tried to smooth things over for Alina. She smoothed the creases on Alina's clothes as though she was her mother. "You don't have to visit me so often. Go see Rufus whenever you have time."

Alina lowered her head shyly. "I'm worried I'll disturb him at work."

"You're so considerate and honest," my mother praised approvingly. "You can have dinner with him sometime. He's always so busy that he often forgets to eat. You have to watch over him for me."

"I wonder if Prince Rufus would be open to that idea..." Alina parted her mouth slightly and looked at me hesitantly. Her tentative and cautious tone was very convincing. She was such a great actress.

"Of course he would. Who could refuse such a good girl like you?" My mother didn't even bother to consult me and made the decision for me.

I couldn't help but sneer. "She drugged two students from the military school with an aphrodisiac, took a video, spread fake news on the forum, and caused cyber and physical bullying. Is this what a good girl would do?"

A trace of panic flashed in Alina's eyes but she quickly recovered. "Prince Rufus, I don't know what you're talking about."

"I traced the IP address through the post on the forum. Guess what I found?" I asked slowly. Alina's panic was obvious now.

She didn't dare to say anything. She simply sat down next to my mother, her face as pale as a ghost.

"I traced the IP address to your maid's phone. What a coincidence, am I right?" I sneered indifferently.

"How can that be..." Alina was completely flustered, her lips trembling, unable to finish her sentence.

My mother, on the other hand, was pissed. "What the hell is going on? Explain to me right this instant!"

Tears started to stream down Alina's face. "Coco was the one who did it. I... I have nothing to do with it!"

Chapter 229 Execution

Alina's POV:

At the mention of the aphrodisiac, I instantly suspected that Warren had ratted me out. I was flustered and angry.

My plan was perfect! Rufus couldn't have traced it back to me unless someone told him.

It wasn't until Rufus showed me the evidence that I realized it was that stupid Coco who messed up this whole operation.

Laura was glaring at me, demanding an explanation. I had never seen her so angry with me.

Panic-stricken, I was worried she would kick me out of the imperial capital, so I put all the blame on Coco.

"Why on earth would your maid do such a thing without your permission?" Laura squinted at me suspiciously, planting her hands on her hips domineeringly.

"She..." My mind was a complete mess and I couldn't think logically. "She has a crush on Prince Rufus. I tried to dissuade her, but she didn't listen to me!"

Coco, who was standing in the corner, whipped up her head in shock. "What? No—"

"Now that you've been caught, you have to suffer the consequences. Both Queen Laura and Prince Rufus are reasonable. Maybe their punishment will be light." I stepped forward to block Laura's vision and winked at Coco meaningfully.

Coco couldn't help but burst into sobs. She buried her face in her hands and begged, "Please forgive me, Queen Laura and Prince Rufus. I was the one who did it. Miss Quinn is innocent."

I turned around. I couldn't bear to see how miserable Coco looked.

After all, she had worked for me since she was a child. I couldn't help but feel bad for her.

"Did you know about this?" Laura glanced at me and asked in a razor sharp tone.

Despite my guilty conscience, I clenched my sweating palms and shook my head. "I only knew that she had been acting strange lately and often went missing. I never thought she would hurt others. If I had, I would have stopped her."

Laura snorted and said nothing.

I was so nervous that I broke into a cold sweat. I couldn't tell if she believed me or not.

"Now that you've found the culprit, what are you going to do?" Laura turned to Rufus and asked pointedly.

From the moment Coco admitted her guilt to when she pleaded for mercy, Rufus didn't say anything. He just looked at us coldly, his expression completely unreadable.

"It's up to you, Mother," Rufus finally said.

I instantly felt relieved. Laura was way more easygoing compared to her son. If everything went well, I would be able to protect Coco. I secretly looked at Coco reassuringly.

"Okay. It'll be simpler if you let me deal with it," Laura said with a cryptic smile.

It was a relief to hear that. Laura was probably going to let Coco off lightly.

"Execute her." Laura coldly ordered her men to drag Coco out of the hall without hesitation.

Coco immediately burst into sobs, her face a deathly pale. "Miss Quinn, help me! Please! I don't want to die!"

I was standing next to Laura, completely stunned. I felt so numb that I didn't dare to speak. How could Queen Laura be so cruel?

"Miss Quinn! Please! Say something!" Coco was still begging for mercy, her eyes filled with desperation. Suddenly, her expression turned fierce and she shouted, "I wasn't—"

"Gag this bitch and get her out of here!" Laura interrupted Coco aggressively. "How dare a maid covet a prince?"

With her mouth blocked, Coco could do nothing but cry uncontrollably. She glared at me with resentment.

I avoided her burning gaze, feeling as though I would reach my breaking point any second now. My mind was a complete mess.

After Coco was dragged away, Rufus didn't stay any longer. Before he left, he glanced at me for the first time.

"Please have Alina sent away as soon as possible, Mother,"

Rufus said to Laura indifferently. Then he left.

Despite his cold words, I still felt relieved. As long as Laura was on my side, there would still be room to maneuver.

But to my surprise, Laura's attitude changed completely the second Rufus left. She looked at me with cold disdain and said, "I thought you were a smart girl. Turns out that you're also an idiot."

Chapter 230 The Queen's Advice

Alina's POV:

I froze on the spot, speechless. I wondered if Laura saw through me.

"What? Have you already lost your tongue? It was just a small thing, but you couldn't even do it well. What are you if you are not a fool?" Laura sneered. Then she turned around, walked to the sofa, and sat down. "Do you think Rufus won't find out that Coco is simply taking the blame for you?"

"I don't understand what you mean," I said in a low voice, wanting to keep playing dumb.

Laura looked at me coldly and said, "Stop pretending. I've been in this position for so many years. I've already seen all kinds of people and their tricks, brilliant or not. You are still too naive. If you are really so innocent and pure, then I don't think you are suitable for this position."

I got so flustered at once. I didn't expect that Laura would see through me so easily.

"When did you find out?" I asked haltingly.

"I knew it from the first time I saw you," Laura snorted coldly. Then she picked up her fan and flapped it gracefully. "People can't hide their ambition in their eyes."

I touched my eyes subconsciously, feeling a little confused. "But you still chose me."

"I need someone who has the desire, ambition, and even ruthlessness. Only such a she-wolf can truly defend her power." After saying this, Laura looked at me up and down and shook her head. She added, "You have the desire and the ambition. But you are not ruthless enough. You have to understand that in the imperial capital, the cheapest thing is compassion."

"But Coco is..." I wanted to stand up for Coco, but Laura interrupted me impatiently.

"I know you don't want to give her up. But this time, you don't have a choice. You have to. How can you not sacrifice anything in doing something great? Which is more important to you, your life or your humble servant's?"

I couldn't answer her question. No matter whose life was more important was not under my control.

"I suppose no one else knows about this," Laura said when I remained silent.

I hesitated for a moment, thinking of Warren. Should I tell Laura the truth or not?

"You must tell me everything. Otherwise, how can I help you? Do you think Rufus will let you go just like that next time?" Laura threw away her fan and said angrily, "Come on, be straightforward. I hate indecisive people the most."

"Okay, I'll tell you. The son of the Beta of our pack also knows. His name is Warren, and he's my childhood friend," I hurriedly said. "He knows everything I did, and he has evidence. He even threatened me with it. He said that if I don't leave the imperial capital after the military parade, he will expose my crimes."

"Now I can say that you are really stupid. How can you let him walk around with that big of a secret?" Laura rebuked me loudly since I didn't live up to her expectations. "Just now, I asked you to tell me the truth, but you still wanted to protect him, right? You won't even know why you're doomed one day."

"So, what shall I do now?" I couldn't help but shiver. Laura's angry look scared me, reminding me of my father.

"Since things have already reached this point, we don't have a choice but to kill him," she said indifferently.

My eyes widened in shock. I regretted telling her the truth. "Warren is the son of a Beta. He's not an ordinary werewolf that can be killed casually."

Laura snorted coldly and said contemptuously, "So what? Do you expect me to consider that?"

Her words sent a chill down my spine. For the first time, I felt so insignificant in front of supreme power. Even though Warren and I had fallen out, I never thought of killing him.

"Go back and think it through. Come back to me when you figure it out. I will help you by then. But if you can't really make up your mind, it doesn't matter." Laura paused and gave me a kind smile. "You can go back to your pack anytime. Many she-wolves want to be the future queen anyway."

Chapter 231 The Disappearing Witch

Rufus' POV:

After leaving my mother's palace, I went directly to a meeting.

But at noon, I made time to go to the army to see Blair. He had no classes in the afternoon, so he planned to lead the soldiers in their afternoon training.

"Looking at your unhappy face, I can say that things didn't go well. Am I right?" Blair hit the nail on the head. He then walked to the fridge, took out two cans of beer, and handed one to me. "Tell me what happened."

I pinched my glabella wearily and said, "Someone has served as scapegoat."

Blair clicked his tongue. "Tsk. I knew it. Her maid, right?"

"Yeah." As I answered, I opened the can of beer and clinked cans with him. "That maid has been with her since she was a child. And my mother executed that maid."

"It must be hard on Alina." Blair sighed, took a sip of his beer, and added, "Didn't she plead for mercy?"

"Of course, she wouldn't dare!" I said sarcastically. "She even played along with my mother."

"Your mother is so clever. Didn't she see through Alina's trick?" Blair seemed a little shocked. "I thought Alina and her maid would be punished together."

"I don't know if my mother saw through her or not." I put down the beer, took out a cigarette, and played with my lighter. "But I have to find a reason to send Alina out of the palace. Judging from my mother's attitude, I think she intends to keep Alina here."

"You know what? I'm really curious. What has your mother seen in Alina that she likes Alina so much? The first time I saw Alina, I already felt that she was a scheming she-wolf. Is it because she is so obedient to your mother that your mother likes her? But she's just pretending." Blair looked puzzled.

I sneered coldly, "No matter how much my mother likes Alina, she can't stay."

"But if you kick Alina out of the palace for no reason, your mother will be angry. How about you wait and see what happens next? Just be more cautious during this time. Now that her maid was executed, I think Alina will restrain herself. She won't play any trick for the time being," Blair said.

"Okay," I said with a nod and lit the cigarette. "I'll figure something out."

"By the way, there is one more thing I want to tell you," Blair said in a serious tone, pulling a long face.

"I sent my men to look for that witch, but I haven't got any news yet. The witch race is mysterious. They usually disguise themselves as ordinary people and hide in different places. Looking for that witch is tantamount to looking for a needle in a haystack."

Blair was one of the few werewolves who knew my secret. He had never given up on helping me find a way to remove my curse. But after so many years, we hadn't found any clues yet. We didn't even know if that witch was still alive or dead now.

I smiled nonchalantly. "It doesn't matter anymore. I now have the most important person in my life. I don't care whether the curse can be removed or not. All I want to do now is to protect my beloved well."

Blair patted me on the shoulder and said, "Thank goodness you finally admit it. Didn't you say you just admire her? Actually, you were so serious at that time when you said it that I almost wanted to

give you a punch to sober you up."

"Well, I didn't expect it either. Maybe it's fate." I took a drag on my cigarette and exhaled the smoke slowly. "Fortunately, I met Sylvia. Otherwise, I don't know how I will end up."

Thinking of Sylvia made my heart skip a beat.

"It's a pity that Sylvia doesn't have a sister." Blair shook his head regretfully. "If only she does, it would be great."

"And what do you mean by that?" I kicked him angrily. "Don't you dare try to covet Sylvia. Otherwise, I won't let you go even though we are friends."

Chapter 232 The Secret Mission

Blair's POV:

I moved sideways, deftly avoiding Rufus's kick. "Hey, I'm not that kind of werewolf, okay?"

"I think you are," Rufus snorted coldly.

"Where's your trust in me now?" I asked with a smile. Knowing that Rufus was only joking, I started acting.

He glared at me coldly and stubbed out his cigarette. "The fact that you can still act like this now means I still trust you enough."

I feigned an aggrieved look. "You can forget our friendship just because you have a mate now?"

Rufus ignored me and finished his beer before throwing the empty tin into the trash can.

"But then again, don't you really want the throne?" When it came to this topic, I became serious and stopped joking. "Richard is not qualified in that position at all. He can't do well."

Rufus didn't say anything. He seemed lost in thought.

I knew that he didn't want to leave the werewolf race behind. He didn't want to leave the future of the werewolf race in Richard's hands. But the deadliest problem was the bloodline. Rufus couldn't have children, which worried the lycan king the most.

"But even if you don't fight for it, Richard will still take you as a rival. He will only do more things to harm you and secure his position," I said to him again. I was anxious for him. The lycan king was getting more and more fond of Richard now. It was as if he was training Richard to be his heir.

Rufus frowned and still didn't answer.

"The future of the werewolf race must not fall into the hands of a sinister villain. We can't just watch the empire being destroyed by Richard without doing anything," I said in an unprecedentedly solemn tone, looking at him seriously. "So, Rufus, you have to fight with him."

Rufus pressed his lips tightly. With a determined expression on his face, he said firmly, "I know, Blair. And I know what I'm doing. I have the same beliefs as you."

Upon hearing Rufus say this, I breathed a sigh of relief. It seemed that he wouldn't give up fighting for the throne.

"There's another important thing I need to ask you for help. It's about the case of Sylvia's mother," Rufus added.

"Are there any new clues?"

"Yes. The evidence we need might be in the room of the Gamma of Sylvia's pack. I want you to sneak into Sylvia's pack and help me find the evidence." After saying this, Rufus took out a map and gave it to me. "Here is the exact layout of the room and where you can find the evidence."

I took the map and looked at it carefully. "When will I set out?"

"In a day or two. The parade will be next week, and the members of Sylvia's pack should be about to set out. I have to participate in the military parade, and it's not possible for me to do this myself. So that's why I'm asking you. You can find an excuse and leave the capital during this time. I will temporarily take over your classes in the academy." Rufus patted me on the shoulder and added, "Be careful."

"Yes. I will fulfill this mission." I gave him a solemn military salute and took the task.

Then Rufus left.

At this time, someone from the academic affairs office called and asked for a copy of the physical test data of Classes A and B.

I clicked on the photo album, browsed through it, and sent two photos they needed.

Then I started tidying up the photo album. My fingers paused on Sylvia's photo.

In the photo, Sylvia was smiling brightly. It was taken by chance during the placement test. When she had just entered the academy, she rarely smiled. And there was always unconcealed sadness in her eyes. For some reason, I couldn't help but secretly take a photo of her when I saw her smiling for the first time. I kept it all the time.

At first, I was really attracted to her, and I couldn't take my eyes off her. I admired her toughness. I had never seen such a contradictory woman, brave yet tolerant.

But when I found out about the relationship between Sylvia and Rufus, I had to stifle my rising feelings for her. But I still couldn't control my heart until what Rufus had said just now woke me up.

"It's time for you to wake up, Blair," I said to myself and sighed.

I took a last look at the photo, moved my fingers, and pressed the delete button.

Chapter 233 Being Abandoned

Richard's POV:

I stormed back to the palace angrily. I felt as though my chest was about to explode. Damn it! I couldn't believe that my father actually scolded me in front of Rufus. How humiliating!

Rufus must've felt so smug now. He probably viewed me as some circus monkey that could be toyed with. How could I have become the laughing stock of the family?

This was all because of that bitch, Lucy! If she hadn't cheated on me, I wouldn't have been in this situation.

"Prince Richard, please have some fried pork chop. Lady Lucy cooked it herself." Just then, a servant approached me with a plate.

I was so angry that I yanked the plate out of his hands and dumped its contents on his head. "I had Lucy locked up. Who allowed you to let her out?"

The servant was shocked. Black sauce dripped from his head and onto the expensive carpet we were standing on. Trembling, he didn't dare to clean himself up. "It... it was Lady Lucy who ordered us to open the door."

"So you just obeyed her? Are you her slave?!" I cursed and kicked him to the floor. "Where is she?"

"She... she's in the kitchen."

I left him in the dust and stomped towards the kitchen. There, I found Lucy standing to the side, instructing a maid who was cooking some food in a pot.

Thinking about the pork chop, I gritted my teeth angrily. That bitch had the audacity to lie that she had cooked it herself.

"Lucy! Who the hell allowed you to come out of the confinement room?" I grabbed her by the wrist and started dragging her away.

Fearful for their lives, the servants didn't dare to utter a word and simply scurried out like mice.

Lucy stumbled as I yanked her. "Let go of me!"

I glared at her and continued to drag her towards the confinement room.

"Richard!" Lucy opened her mouth wide and bit down on my hand—hard.

Enraged, I slapped her across the face and threw her on the floor. "You shameless bitch! Touching you could only make my hands dirty!"

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to bite you just now. It's just, I was about to fall..." Lucy said meekly, holding her hand up to her swollen cheek.

What the hell?! Lucy was an arrogant she-wolf. Did it take a beating for her to actually apologize to me? It took me a while before it dawned on me that she was up to something.

"Are you hurt?" Lucy stood up and approached me, concern written all over her face.

"I'm fine." With a cold face, I didn't stop her, because I wanted to see what exactly she was up to.

"Oh, that's good." Lucy smiled and looked at me cautiously. "Kyle—"

At the mention of that damned name, I instantly flew into a rage. "How dare you say that name?!"

But Lucy was stubborn. "How is he? I'm sorry for what I did to you, but please tell me how Kyle's doing. Can you take me to see him?"

I was so angry that I actually felt dizzy. I kicked her away and roared, "He's a dead man! He was sentenced to death. Didn't you know that? Do you still want to see your lover? You'll have to die first. You can see him in hell!"

"What?! No! Please have mercy on him!" Lucy burst into tears and knelt at my feet, begging like mad. Her slim body looked particularly thin, probably from being tortured the past few days.

I felt sick to my stomach, as though I had just been force fed a fly. I used to treat her somewhat decently, but now, decency seemed completely unnecessary.

I shoved her away coldly. "You should think about how to atone for your sins. You humiliated me in front of so many werewolves! How dare you beg me now?"

"I'll do whatever you want, just let Kyle go. Please!" Lucy sobbed and pleaded, stripped of any semblance of dignity.

"In that case... I can arrange a script for you. You will sacrifice your life in exchange for your mate." I smiled sardonically and whispered in her ear, "Then at least you can die a somewhat honorable death."

"You're insane!" Lucy pushed me away with all her strength. Eyes wide, she asked in disbelief, "You want to kill me? Aren't you afraid of falling out with my father?"

I laughed and my eyes twinkled with amusement. "It was your father who proposed this script."

Chapter 234 Pregnant

Lucy's POV:

Richard's words sent a chill up my spine. I looked at him stiffly and asked, "What do you mean?"

"Don't you get it?" Richard had a sarcastic smile on his face. "Your father has abandoned you."

"No, that's not true!" I shook my head subconsciously and kept stepping back. "You are lying to me. My father can't give up on me. I'm his only daughter."

"You must be dreaming. Your father has so many bastard children, boys and girls. Any of them can take over your position at any time." Richard relentlessly broke my fantasy. He looked at me contemptuously and said, "When you die, your sister can play the romantic story of continuing your love by becoming my second mate."

"That's enough! I don't want to hear anything you say anymore." I covered my ears, not wanting to hear another word from him. I was overwhelmed by extreme sadness.

Even though I initially resisted when my father gave me to Richard, I had already learned to accept my fate. I thought this was the worst result, spending the rest of my life with a man I didn't even care. I just didn't expect that my father would really let me die someday.

He was so disgusting! They were all so disgusting. How could they decide for my life at will?

And Kyle... My poor Kyle... We were so in love with each other. But in the end, we were just separated by these people. It was not worth living in this world anymore.

"When you die, I will put your and Kyle's ashes together." Richard forcibly pulled down my hands that were covering my ears. With a terrible gloom all over his body, his lips curled into a wicked smile.

"Then I will flush it down the toilet. You are only qualified to be in the sewer. I wish you two to be together forever down there. After all, you're a perfect match."

"Fuck off, you idiot!" I shook his hands off and kicked him in the crotch.

But he dodged sideways. His muscles swelled up all over his body as he glared at me with his bloodshot eyes. "I dare you to say it again!"

I sneered and totally went crazy. "I don't want to talk to someone who is sexually impotent. What? Do you think you are something? Richard, the only thing big you have is your ego. There's nothing you can be proud of. Aside from looking like a man, what else do you have? Every time I have sex with you, I feel like I'd rather use my own hands instead."

I didn't hesitate to curse him at will. I was going to die anyway.

"If you are really capable, why do you have to be so afraid of Rufus? You are nothing but a coward. You don't have any ability at all. You're just a villain pretending to be a virtuous gentleman. Shame on you! You are not only shameless but also disgusting."

Richard was stunned. It took him a while to realize what he had heard. He was so angry that he slammed me to the floor.

"Fuck you! I will kill you today."

I subconsciously covered my belly and dodged Richard's punches and kicks. I wanted to fight back, but he was too strong. I was no match for him at all.

He raised his foot and was about to kick my lower body, but I tried my best to protect my belly from

him.

Richard looked at me suspiciously. He pulled my hair and asked, "Why are you so afraid that I will kick your belly?"

"No." I panicked for a moment and reflexively covered my belly.

Richard pinned me to the floor and tore my clothes with his bare hands, revealing my bulging belly.

I was really scared at this moment. I had never seen him look this gloomy before.

"How long has it been?" Richard asked coldly, grabbing my neck.

He squeezed my neck so tightly that I couldn't speak well, so I could only squeeze a few words through clenched teeth, "Before I became your mate."

I knew that my baby and I could not survive today, so I let it be. I sneered, "I wanted to find a father for my child, but I didn't expect that you would discover it like this." ①