

The Alpha's Bride #Chapter 991: Finding Olivia (4) - Read The Alpha's Bride Chapter 991: Finding Olivia (4) Online -

Chapter 991: Finding Olivia (4)

"Olivia," Talia called gently. She could use her Alpha command to force Olivia to obey her, but she wanted Olivia to do this on her own.

In order to help Olivia see the situation clearly, Talia used her aura to obstruct the mate bond between Olivia and Luis. That bond was set to pull two together, no matter how toxic the situation was.

"Do you remember how you read the Cinderella story to me?" Talia asked. "I loved it because a prince came and rescued a poor girl. I spent my days imagining I was Cinderella and Omegas in the packhouse were my evil stepsisters. I was living in the attic and waiting for my prince to rescue me." She glanced at Damon. "I believe that fairytales can come true. Maybe not in the literal sense, but they tell us there is such a thing as a happy ending, and we don't need to suffer abuse and neglect."

Talia held Olivia's hands and squeezed a little. "I remember how happy you were when you told me you found your mate. Look at him. He is not a prince. He is a monster. Being alone is better than this. I want to rescue you, but you need to be strong enough to push him away. Reject him as your mate. A mate should love you and treat you well, and not make you shrink in fear."

Olivia took a few shaky breaths and then looked at Luis who was sprawled on the floor, unable to get up under the pressure of Damon's Alpha aura.

With the pull of the bond diminished, Olivia saw Luis in a different light.

Somehow, the so far intimidating Luis looked small, and he would be pitiful if not for that sneer on his face. Why was she infatuated with him? When she left the Red Moon pack, Olivia was full of hopes and dreams, and Luis shattered them all at once to show her that reality was ugly and full of pain.

Olivia had no idea what Talia was offering, but nothing could be worse than this.

With that, Olivia gathered what was left of her courage and said, "I, Olivia of the Shadowbite pack, reject you, Luis, as my mate."

Olivia inhaled sharply, waiting for the gut-wrenching pain to come, but it didn't. The only odd thing was the burning sensation on her neck, but the pain in her hip overshadowed it. Olivia could see Talia looking at her with a pair of silvery eyes, and she barely noticed that Luis was wailing on the floor.

"Stop being a whiny-ass baby!" Damon said irritably, and he said in a deeper voice that echoed against the walls of the cabin, "Accept her rejection!"

Luis didn't want to, but his mouth opened on its own, and the words came out.

Olivia felt something was missing inside her chest, but it was not painful. It was like a burden was taken away.

"Should I denounce my pack?" Olivia asked Talia.

"Not yet. We will do that last because your Alpha will find out about it."

Olivia nodded in understanding. "What are we waiting for?"

"Pack your things," Talia said. "If there is anything you can't leave behind, take it with you. We will leave as soon as you are ready."

Olivia left into the adjacent room, and Talia turned to Luis.

Damon watched as Talia's hair turned silver, and he knew that Talia was looking into Luis' memories. He didn't know how many secrets Luis held, but even some were better than none. There was no way they could leave him alive after this. Luis saw too much.

Damon was alerted when the air filled with tangible hostility, and he saw black streaks twirling in Talia's eyes.

"Damn it!" Damon cursed under his breath when he realized that Talia also saw what Luis did to Olivia over the years, and probably more than that. Double damn it!

Damon put his hand on Talia's cheek and forced her to look at him. "Kitten, snap out of it. It's over. Whatever he did..."

Damon's voice trailed when a series of rapid snaps came from the floor. It's not that he wanted to spare Luis' life, but he didn't want Talia to carry that weight. Well, what was done was done.

Damon wanted to pull Talia into a hug, but Talia raised her hand to stop him, and she looked at him seriously.

"We need to leave," Talia said. "The moment he saw me, he mind-linked his Alpha about intruders. They will be here any minute."

Olivia was at the door, now pale as a sheet of paper. Talia didn't know if Olivia's horror was because Luis was dead or because of what Talia said. Olivia was clutching a

bundle made out of a bedsheet that reminded Talia of the bundle she had taken when she fled the Red Moon pack.

"Denounce the Shadowbite pack," Damon said to Olivia with urgency.

Without delay, Olivia spoke, "I, Olivia of the Shadowbite pack, denounce the Shadowbite pack as my own, and I reject Alpha Silas as my Alpha."

Olivia clutched her chest as the pack link broke, and Talia pulled her to stand between her and Damon.

They all saw the door flying open with several people there a split second before violent winds enveloped them, and the three of them appeared in the garden behind the packhouse of the Dark Howlers pack.

Talia smiled. "We did it!" Talia's smile fell when Olivia plopped down like a ragdoll.

"Olivia!" Talia cried.

'She is seriously hurt,' Liseli said. 'She has severe injuries that are old, and some internal organs ruptured when her mate hit her. Breaking the mate bond and pack link only added to it. She was running on adrenaline, but her body couldn't keep up.'

'We need to save her!'

'You can't,' Liseli said. 'All this teleportation drained you, and mate doesn't look like he is in top condition either.'

Talia looked up at Damon to see that he was pale. Their mate bond allowed her to use his energy when they resonated with each other, but they had already teleported twice, and it was obvious that Damon was not well.

She wanted to save her friend, but not while risking her baby or Damon's wellbeing.

There was only one thing to do.

"We need to take her to the doctor!" Talia said to Damon.

"Let me take her."

Talia's head whipped there to see Valerian approaching from the side.

Valerian spent a lot of time in the garden, mostly keeping to himself, and sometimes Talia would forget he was there. Talia believed that her ability to conceal her presence came from her father.

In the last month, Valerian was resting, eating, and exercising under Travis' and Keith's supervision, and he was visibly better. The emaciated man they found in the dungeon was long gone. Now there were muscles, and even though he was still lean for an Alpha, Valerian was filling up nicely.

Valerian scooped Olivia in his arms. "I know the way. Mind-link Travis, so he knows to expect me."

With that, Valerian dashed in the direction of the pack hospital.

Talia mind-linked Travis, 'Doctor, a patient is coming to the pack hospital.'

'Situation?' Travis asked without wasting time on pleasantries.

'It's a victim of abuse. Her body is in bad condition, and her wolf is weak. I'm unable to come, so my father is bringing her. She is unconscious.'

'Alright.'

'Travis?'

'Yes?'

'Please, take care of her. Olivia is my friend.'

'Of course, Luna. I will keep you up to date with the situation here.'

With that, Talia closed off the mind link.

Talia wanted to go with Olivia, but she decided against it. Travis was an excellent doctor, and she would be there as a decoration (probably getting in the way) while Damon needed her.

"Don't worry, kitten," Damon said. He didn't hear the conversation between Talia and Travis, but he saw Talia looking in the direction of the pack hospital with worry on her face. "Travis is the best doctor, and Olivia is a she-wolf. It might take time, but she will heal."

Talia was touched that he was comforting her, despite his weak state. She tugged Damon's hand, and they moved to sit on a bench.

"How are you feeling?" Talia asked Damon.

Damon rubbed his face. "Let's not do this again."

Talia moved to sit on Damon's lap, and she smiled brightly. "We won't do that again."

"Are you happy your friend is here?"

"I am happy she is out of that hellhole! I hope she recovers soon. I would love to have Olivia as part of our big ceremony."

Damon shook his head helplessly.

Talia tried to think about what she got from Luis' memories. There were images of other females that were submissive, but she didn't see any in bad shape like Olivia. However, that didn't mean abuse didn't happen outside of Luis' sight. The Shadowbite pack allowed their males to treat females as possessions, and no one would interfere. What was the possibility that Luis was the only one violent?

"Damon?"

"Yes, kitten?"

"Do you think that other females in the Shadowbite pack..."

Damon put his finger over Talia's lips, preventing her from speaking further. "Let's not jump to conclusions. Maya is from that pack, and she told me that the situation there is bad for females, but there was no mention of this level of abuse. I will get our spies to investigate and see what's going on before we do anything."

Talia nodded in agreement. "How long will that last?"

"As long as it takes," Damon responded. "We can't rush this. If we gain the reputation of aggressors, people will resent us, and that will create openings for others to attack. No matter how big and strong we are, if doubts creep among our ranks, we will collapse like a house of cards."

"You are a wise man, Damon Blake."

Damon smiled smugly. Talia praising him will never get old.

The Alpha's Bride #Chapter 992: Not the first time (kidnapping) - Read The Alpha's Bride Chapter 992: Not the first time (kidnapping) Online -

Chapter 992: Not the first time (kidnapping)

Talia pecked Damon's lips a few times, and she moved to straddle him on the bench.

Damon scooted lower slightly so she could sit on his crotch, which swelled already. He was eager to feel her right there. Preferably without clothes.

Damon wrapped his arms around Talia as he deepened the kiss with a growl. He loved when she initiated any type of intimacy.

The best feeling was when her body pressed against his while their flavors mixed, and Damon was careful not to apply too much pressure because he didn't want to risk harming their baby.

Damon knew they were in the garden, and someone might see them, so he didn't go beyond caressing Talia's skin under her blouse. But it was torturous.

"How about we take this upstairs?" Damon spoke into her lips.

Talia released a shaky breath. It's not that she didn't want to, but weren't both of them exhausted? Or maybe they could take it slow? Before she could respond, an angry shout reached them.

"Damon!"

It was Caden.

Caden didn't care that Damon and Talia were making out on a bench in the garden. "What did you do in the Shadowbite pack?"

Damon groaned in frustration when Talia moved away from him, but he didn't let her stand up.

"Nothing," Damon responded grumpily. How did Caden know they went there? Damon's strategy was to deny and investigate later. "How can I be on the other side of the country when I'm here, in the garden, with my mate?"

Caden cocked an eyebrow. "Don't bullshit me. The two of you teleported about half an hour ago."

Damon cursed under his breath when he realized... Keith. That snitch!

Well, there was no point in denying it further. "Sure, we teleported. What about it?"

"What did you do there?" Caden continued pressing.

"Why do you think we did anything?"

Caden narrowed his eyes at Damon. "Because I just got off the call with Alpha Silas. He told me a wild story about intruders, strange winds, Olivia's mate dead, and Olivia missing. Do I need more to know you were there?"

"That's all circumstantial evidence. It doesn't mean it was us."

Caden couldn't believe this! Was he talking to a grown man or with a child? "You can't go around kidnapping people."

Damon shrugged. "I'm not admitting to anything, but it wouldn't be the first time." Didn't they technically kidnap Talia? And look how well that turned out.

"This is different!"

Talia had enough. She was already stressed and hormonal, and she was having a moment with Damon! They were about to go up for some sexy time, but Caden came and ruined it!

"That was NOT kidnapping," Talia said. "I wanted to visit my friend. I found out she was abused to the point of her wolf suffering and her mate assaulted her right in front of me."

Caden wanted to say how they have no right to meddle in the internal affairs of another pack, but if he said that after Talia's story about abuse, it would make him look like an asshole.

"Where is she now?" Caden asked.

"If you must know, she is in the pack hospital, fighting for her life," Talia responded.

Caden's eyes widened. "In OUR pack hospital?"

"Did you expect me to turn a blind eye when someone is hurt because she dared to have a guest?"

"You don't need to tell me how bad the situation is there," Caden said to Talia. "However, the universal rule is that one can leave a pack amicably only to follow their mate."

Talia looked at Caden sternly. "Get your facts straight, Beta Caden. Olivia denounced her pack before she left with us, and she broke the mate bond before we killed Luis. That means Olivia was an unmated female who didn't belong to any pack before she stepped into the Dark Howlers pack. As for killing that violent buffoon, it was in self-defense. The only thing they can pin on us is trespassing. Assuming they can prove it was us, give them some compensation, and we will be done with it."

Damon looked at Talia with sparkles in his eyes. His kitten was brilliant!

"Trespassing?" Caden asked in disbelief to what both Damon and Talia nodded.

Caden needed a moment to process this. Damon and Talia went there, killed a person, and took away another. How can that be reduced to trespassing? But his Alpha and Luna were united on this matter, and his objections would be wasting his breath.

He still had to say, "We can deny this. However, if they confirm Olivia is here, it will blow out of proportion."

Damon smirked. "Why would they blow anything when we took in a stray she-wolf?"

"You will deny you were there," Caden said in disbelief. "Is our story that Olivia killed her mate, avoided their patrols to escape their territory, and crossed two thousand miles without being discovered until she reached out pack?"

"Sounds good to me," Damon said, and he looked at Talia. "What do you think?"

Talia confirmed without delay. "That's exactly what happened. The journey was so strenuous that the poor girl is recovering in our pack hospital."

Caden looked at Damon and Talia helplessly. So far, he had to deal with Damon's unpredictable behavior, and instead of stabilizing him, Talia was adding oil to the fire. What a headache.

...

Olivia was drifting in and out of consciousness, and her mind was swimming.

Somehow, there were hazy images of Talia showing up with a guy she called her mate, then Luis hitting her, and she broke the bond... Did that really happen?

But, if the mate bond was gone, what was this pleasantly prickling feeling on her right side? It was just like when she met Luis and when he held her before he took her to the Shadowbite pack.

The haze consumed her, and this time she could hear rhythmical beeping. Was this the pack hospital in the Red Moon pack? While growing up, Olivia would fall asleep on a free hospital bed while her father tended to his patients.

Olivia wondered if all that was a dream.

Maybe she never went to the Shadowbite pack. Maybe they were still in the Red Moon pack, and Luis was treating her nicely, and she was looking forward to a bright future. Or maybe she didn't meet Luis at all, but he was just a product of her imagination.

With that, Olivia drifted off to darkness again.

Something was off, yet it felt right. The scent of bergamot filled her senses, and this time Olivia was confident that she was close to her father. He was the only one who would add bergamot to sanitizer to make it minty and citrusy and to soften the harsh pinch of alcohol; it was the scent that seeped into her father's clothes and all their furniture.

Only after leaving home, Olivia realized how much she loved that scent which would always bring a smile to her face. She thought that comfort of bergamot was gone forever, yet here it was, all around her.

Olivia tried to move, but she felt trapped. Was she stuck somewhere?

Her body was pleasantly numb, but she could feel the little prickles on her right side, this time, with the scent of bergamot.

Olivia's eyes fluttered open, and it took her some time to focus her vision and observe where she was.

It was an unknown room, but white walls and the beeping of machines on her left were a giveaway that she was in a hospital. There was an IV stuck into her left arm and...

"Ahh!" Olivia cried when she realized there was a man on her bed. She didn't want to wake him up, but he startled her, and he was definitely a stranger. What kind of a hospital was this?

Travis' eyes sprang open, and he stared at Olivia. The horror in her eyes broke something in him.

When Valerian brought in Olivia, Travis couldn't believe this was happening. Talia told him to expect a patient, a victim of abuse named Olivia, and that she was Talia's friend.

Travis didn't expect that the girl would be so skinny and broken, and his heart cracked from the anguish that swelled within him. Who dared to ruin such a wonderful female?

She smelled of sweet mangoes, and his wolf was howling.

'MATE!'

Travis jolted when that word echoed in his mind, and it took every ounce of his control to focus on the girl as a patient. She needed him to make things better, and for that, he needed to stay present.

He wanted to know what had happened, but Valerian didn't have that information.

Travis' wolf growled while urging Travis to find whoever dared to harm their mate and rip those bastards into pieces. It was hard to focus, but he pushed through the exams and surgery, and then he collapsed on the bed next to her. Until now.

"Who are you?" Olivia asked. "Why are you in my bed?"

Travis' wolf urged him to stick close to Olivia, but Travis knew better. He slowly got up from the bed and took a step back. He lifted his hands, indicating that he meant no harm.

"You had surgery. Try not to move. I am Travis Arzt, a doctor in the Dark Howlers pack. Your mate."

"My mate?" Olivia asked while wondering if her ears malfunctioned. "How is that possible? My mate is Luis." Or did she imagine that?

Travis' expression darkened. "Luis? Is he the one who did this to you!? Where is he?" Travis was ready to give him the death of thousand cuts!

Olivia blinked. "Luis is... dead."

Travis' chest was heaving. He was full of this inexplicable rage without an outlet. How can he kill a guy who is already dead?

Travis stared into Olivia's hazel eyes, and he was not sure if he should feel happy or sad or angry. Nothing seemed right. He found his mate. She was right there, beautiful and smelling of sweet mangoes, but her body was battered, and she said someone else was her mate.

The Alpha's Bride #Chapter 993: Getting closer (T&O) - Read The Alpha's Bride Chapter 993: Getting closer (T&O) Online -

Chapter 993: Getting closer (T&O)

Talia and Damon entered the room to see Olivia sitting on the bed and Travis standing one step away from her.

Nurses were updating Talia on Olivia's condition, so Talia knew that Olivia had surgery and was recovering. Based on the changes in readings from the machines attached to Olivia, nurses notified Talia that Olivia was awake. That's why she came.

"You are awake," Talia said with a smile, and she paused when she realized that Olivia barely paid any attention to her. Olivia was totally focused on Travis.

Talia's eyes moved from Olivia to Travis, and then she put her hand over her mouth. She could feel the energy fluctuations between them, which confirmed they were mates, but something was off.

"What's going on?" Talia asked.

This time, Olivia reacted. She turned to look at Talia. "He says he is my mate."

"Do you think he is lying?"

"I don't know what to think." Olivia realized that Travis kept his head down in submission when Damon and Talia entered. "Who are you?"

"I guess I didn't introduce myself properly. My full name is Natalia Moonrider. I am the Alpha of the Midnight Guardians pack and this..." Talia tilted her head toward Damon. "...is my mate, Damon Blake, the Alpha of the Dark Howlers pack."

Olivia gaped at Talia. "Did you say you are an Alpha?"

"No matter who I am, I will always be Talia, your friend."

'You have bigger problems than your friendship to salvage, girl,' Liseli spoke in Talia's mind. 'With her wolf weakened, Olivia doesn't feel the mate bond.'

Only then Talia realized what was wrong. She knew firsthand what it meant not to feel the bond because she went through that with Damon. At that time, even if someone told her that Damon was her mate, Talia wouldn't believe it. On top of Olivia's body and spirit weakened, she also had a bad experience of abuse by her first mate and the breaking of that bond was still fresh. What a mess.

Talia needed to tread carefully, or this might implode.

Talia remembered when she met Travis for the first time. His demeanor reminded him of Olivia. Wasn't that a sign they were two halves of a whole?

Talia walked to the bed and held Olivia's hand. "This man is Doctor Travis. He is the main Doctor in the Dark Howlers pack, and he would never harm a person regardless of if she is his mate or not."

Olivia's eyes teared up. "You say he is my mate, but I don't feel it."

"I know your wolf is weak, but can't you sense his scent?" Talia reached to take Travis' hand and she guided him to put his hand over Olivia's. "Don't you feel the sparks even a little bit? Aren't your instincts telling you that this man is your other half?"

Olivia stared at their connected hands. Did she feel something? There was the prickling sensation, and Travis' touch felt good but... "The sparks were wrong before." She pulled her hand away and hid it under the blanket.

Talia could see Travis' disappointment and Olivia's doubts, and her heart ached for both of them.

"I don't know why the Moon Goddess gave you Luis as a mate," Talia said. "Maybe he was necessary so you can end up here and meet Travis. Travis is a good man. He taught me about herbs and medicine and helped me heal when others thought that my wolf was gone for good. Take your time, Olivia, but don't reject him. He would never harm you. If he dares to raise his voice in your presence, let me know and I will teach him a lesson."

Olivia's shoulders shook and she lowered her head. Talia wrapped her arms around Olivia and patted her back gently.

'I'm so sorry, Travis,' Talia spoke through the pack link. 'I know that this is not how mates usually meet, but Olivia is traumatized. You will need to be patient with her. She is a good female, but her mate abused her for the last few years. She broke the bond today. Everything is fresh.'

Travis' wolf was urging him to get closer to Olivia and not touching her was torturous. 'Tell me what her mate did to her.'

Talia didn't think it was a good idea. 'Are you sure you want to know?'

'I need to understand what I'm dealing with if I am going to help her.' His wolf needed to understand also.

'It won't be pretty,' Talia warned him.

Travis steeled his resolve. 'I can take it.'

'Relax. Open up your mind...'

Travis wondered what Talia was up to, but he did as she asked.

Travis recoiled when images started flooding his mind.

Olivia looking at him and smiling... Olivia's expression changed into confusion and then fear... Olivia in tears... Olivia bruised... Olivia setting up the table with shaky hands... Olivia with her head lowered while keeping her eyes tightly closed like she was bracing herself for impact... Olivia crying and begging for the hitting to stop, and then she stopped making noise as she curled up into a ball while wishing for the pain to stop.

Talia didn't show the ones that were of sexual nature. She wanted to spare Travis from seeing that, knowing that even this would be too much.

Travis felt his insides churning in dejection and helplessness because it felt so real like it was happening right there. He saw his mate suffering, yet he just stood there and watched. Even worse. He was the one who made her suffer.

Travis put his hand over his mouth and ran outside.

"Can you go with him?" Talia asked Damon.

Damon grimaced. He was not willing! They could hear Travis puking his guts out in the hallway. Why would he go there? But Talia was looking at him pleadingly and he stomped outside.

"Why did they leave?" Olivia asked.

"Just as you need time to adjust to this situation, Travis needs the same," Talia explained softly. "He won't force you to accept the bond or his mark, but it's hard to fight the urges to claim his mate. He will be back in a few minutes once he calms down."

Olivia nodded in understanding. "Will you tell me how you became the Alpha? How did you meet your mate?"

Talia didn't know where to start. "Tell me what you know, and I will fill you up." She assumed that Olivia knew at least something about the waves caused by the appearance of Alpha Natalia.

Olivia shook her head. "Since I left the Red Moon pack, my contact outside the Shadowbite pack was cut off. I had no access to television or media. Some rumors would drift in occasionally, but it was more for entertainment because no one knew how reliable they were."

"Well... The Red Moon pack is gone," Talia said. "Alpha Edward fell in the Alpha challenge."

Olivia was visibly shaken up by this information. "Who would dare to challenge the Red Moon pack?"

"He was the one who issued a challenge to the Dark Howlers pack."

Olivia glanced at the door fearfully. "Your mate killed Alpha Edward?"

"No. He used a Champion." Talia didn't want to spend time explaining about George and his history, so she stuck to the relevant parts. "The territory and members of the

Red Moon pack were divided among other packs, and their packhouse is now a neutral territory that we use for settling disputes."

"What about my dad?"

"He is in the Lightclaw pack, working as a pack doctor. I didn't contact him because I didn't know how long you will need to recover. Let me know when you want to see him, and I will set it up."

Olivia looked toward the window, and she could see her reflection in the glass. She reached to touch her sunken cheek. "Maybe later."

The door opened and Travis and Damon walked inside.

Talia and Damon exchanged knowing nods, and Talia said to Olivia, "If you need anything, tell Travis or the nurses. If you want to reach me, they can help you until we get you a cell phone." Or until she joins the Dark Howlers pack.

Olivia felt fear gripping her insides. "You are leaving?"

"I will come tomorrow. Until then, spend time with Travis, Olivia."

Olivia's eyes darted to Travis.

"He is your mate," Talia reminded Olivia. "He will take care of you. Give him a chance."

"I don't know how."

"Listen to your instincts. I know it's hard but give him a chance. You owe that to yourself. You can sit in silence, talk, hold hands, or whatever. If it feels good, go at it. If it's making you uncomfortable, let him know and he will stop."

Travis looked at Talia gratefully. "Thank you, Luna."

Talia smiled sadly. She didn't resist when Damon's hand wrapped around her, and Damon led the way outside.

"Olivia," Travis spoke first. "You are the daughter of the pack doctor from the Red Moon pack."

"Do you know my dad?"

"Only from stories."

"How do you know who I am then?"

"Talía told me stories about you."

Olivia blinked. "What did she say?"

"Talía said that she had one friend while growing up. And it was a kind girl who went out of her way to help her out when no one else would..."

Olivia smiled a little while Travis reminded her of how Olivia taught Talía about herbs and the basics of medicine, and how they read and studied together.

Olivia didn't realize at what point Travis sat on the edge of her bed. He was close, and she could feel his behind against her leg through the blanket, but he didn't initiate any physical contact.

Did she want him to hold her hand? She was not sure but being with Travis like this didn't feel scary at all.

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Chapter 994: Getting closer (T&O) (cont.)

Travis was talking about his early days as a doctor, unaware that Olivia's hand inched closer to his.

Travis jolted when he felt prickles at the tips of his fingers.

"Can I touch your hand?" Olivia asked.

In less than a heartbeat, Travis' hand was palm up. "Of course you can, Olivia. But... don't force yourself." It took everything in him not to grab her hand and hold her, and he wanted to hold the rest of Olivia also.

Travis remembered Damon's words from the hallway. Damon told him to man up and stop vomiting. Something along the lines, "Look at you, like a pampered human girl who smelled something icky and got collywobbles. Get your shit together, Travis. Your mate needs you. This is not about you..."

Travis knew that Damon was right. This was not about Travis. It was about Olivia and her overcoming the trauma of abuse.

Normally, Travis would be the one to advise others about physical and mental health, but it seemed that when it came to his own mate, Travis turned stupid to the point of needing Damon to remind him of what was important.

Considering that Damon's EQ was negative, Travis realized that he needed to step up his game.

If he gave in to his instinct, he would scare the female more, and she will see him as another abuser, a guy who can't respect her wishes and boundaries.

Just saying he won't do anything against her will was not enough. Travis needed to show it.

Olivia inched closer until her palm was over Travis'.

"What is your wolf doing?" She asked.

"My wolf..." Travis shook his head. "You don't want to know."

Olivia bit her lip nervously. How could she not know? She remembered when she met Luis, her wolf was urging her to pounce on her mate, and she was confident that Travis felt the same, yet he was holding back. For her.

Olivia licked her lips nervously. "You don't need to contain your instincts."

Travis' heart cracked. He lifted his free hand and cradled her cheek gently, and he didn't miss that she stiffened upon contact.

"No matter what my instincts are urging me to do, it won't be good if both of us are not enjoying it, Olivia," Travis said. "I am sorry that your first mate was a monster, and I'm sorry I don't have the power to erase your past, but I give you my word that I will devote my life to healing your scars; physical, mental, and emotional ones. I will be patient until you are ready to open up and accept me completely. There is no need for us to rush into anything. Take your time."

Olivia's vision was blurred from tears. It has been a long time since a male spoke to her about consent and healing.

"Am I making you uncomfortable?" Travis asked while caressing her cheek with his fingers.

Olivia blinked her tears away and looked at him.

Travis realized that this would require another approach. Olivia forgot how to stand up to herself, and she would never tell him if something was wrong. That Luis bastard broke her.

Travis pulled his hand away, and Olivia felt the loss of this touch. It was warm and gentle, and she didn't hate it, but she didn't dare ask for it back either.

"How about we come up with a signal?" Travis suggested. "It can be something subtle."

Olivia didn't understand. "A signal for what?"

"For when you want me to stop. Will you be alright with..." Travis thought for a moment. "Touch your ear."

"What?"

"When I am making you uncomfortable, touch your ear. Like that, I will know that I need to stop whatever I'm doing. You won't need to explain, and I won't ask questions. What do you say?"

"I can try."

Travis smiled. This was progress. "Is it alright if I hold your hand?"

Olivia nodded.

"If you don't want it, you can touch your ear," he reminded her.

"Holding hands is fine," Olivia confirmed.

Travis held Olivia's hand between his, and he savored the sensation of the sparks that prickled his skin.

"Why don't you tell me about yourself?" Travis asked.

"I thought that Talia told you already."

"Your voice is like music to my ears. Please, tell me whatever you are willing to share."

This compliment caught Olivia by surprise, and her face exploded in fierce blush.

Travis panicked when the heart rate machine started beeping frantically. "Did I do something wrong?"

He pulled his hands away, but Olivia was quick to grab his hand.

"No, no," Olivia said. "It's just... what you said... it was nice."

Travis exhaled helplessly. "You better get used to it."

"To what?"

"To me being nice."

Olivia was flustered. "Why would you be nice to me? Look at me."

"I am looking at you, Olivia. Your eyes are pure, and there is not a shred of malice inside you. You smell of sweet mangoes, and I can assure you that I never saw a more beautiful female in my life, and I believe that I never will."

The machines were going crazy again, and the door flung open to show two nurses. Jill and Cathy.

Cathy pushed buttons on the control panel to lower the volume. The beeping was deafening.

"Doctor Travis," Jill called sternly. "How can you just sit there and not assist the patient?"

Travis smiled goofily. "What do you say, Jill? Isn't she the most beautiful female on the planet?"

Jill huffed. "Are you flirting with..." She stopped when Cathy swatted her arm.

"What?" Jill asked Cathy who was giving her eye signals Jill didn't understand.

Eventually, Jill got it and shouted, "Did you finally find your mate!?"

"I did," Travis said. "This is Olivia, my mate. Olivia, the noisy one is Jill, and the perceptive one is Cathy."

Olivia blinked, unsure how to respond to this.

Jill's face darkened. Why did he call her the noisy one?

"Listen, Doctor..." Jill's next words were muffled in Cathy's palm.

"We apologize for intruding," Cathy said with a knowing smile. "Doctor Travis, if you can verify that patient's health is not in danger, maybe you could disconnect her from the machines." She started dragging Jill out. "If you need us, you know where to find us." Cathy and Jill disappeared behind a door that closed behind them.

Travis turned to look at Olivia. "Will you be OK?"

"With what?"

"With me giving you a checkup."

Olivia shrunk under the blanket.

Travis lifted his hands defensively. "Take your time. I promise to be gentle."

Olivia thought that she was silly. Yes, he was her mate, but he was also her doctor, and somehow... his proximity made her feel safe. She shouldn't make him unwanted because someone else hurt her before.

Travis' eyebrows shot up when he saw Olivia pushing the blanket lower.

"Can I examine you?" He asked to what she nodded.

"Let me know if any of this is uncomfortable." Travis moved slowly by checking her pulse and blood pressure, and then he asked her to lie down.

"I will lift your gown to inspect the incision. You can raise your arm if I'm hurting you," Travis said with so much tenderness that Olivia felt like crying.

She didn't dare to look down, but she felt the breeze and then his fingers pressing slowly around the area that was covered with gauze.

Travis swallowed hard. That was his mate, right there, and she was perfect in every way possible, but he couldn't pretend that he didn't see her ribs sticking out to stretch her skin covered in bruises. Luis was lucky to be dead.

The Alpha's Bride #Chapter 995: Malia strikes again (T&O) - Read The Alpha's Bride Chapter 995: Malia strikes again (T&O) Online -

Chapter 995: Malia strikes again (T&O)

"I don't see any bleeding or signs of infection," Travis said while forcing his voice to stay even as he pulled her hospital gown lower.

Normally, he would focus on the injury and not on the person. That approach allowed him to remain objective and act rationally, but when it came to Olivia, his years of training and practice were for naught.

It was not fair. Meeting mate should be magical and full of physical affection and carnal pleasures, yet instead of rejoicing the fact that he found his mate, Travis was in agony.

Everything within Travis screamed to hold the female in front of him, to kiss her, possess her, and complete mating by sinking his teeth into her neck to mark her as his, and he had difficulty keeping his urges in check. If he rushed Olivia into something she

was not ready to accept, he would be the same as the abuser who brought her into this state.

He was better than that.

"Let me help you sit up."

Olivia blinked to see Travis offering his hand for her to take, and she did.

His other hand landed on her back as he gently supported her to sit.

"I will listen to your lungs and heart. Can you breathe in and hold it for a second?"

Olivia inhaled a shaky breath, acknowledging that the scent of bergamot full of good memories was wafting from Travis.

The stethoscope moved over her back, and she reminded herself to breathe.

Olivia's time as a child in the hospital of the Red Moon pack held some of her best memories. She wished to go there, to that time of innocence when she believed that the worst things in life were injuries warriors sustained, and her father could fix them all with a few stitches and a bottle of medicine.

The last few years left horrible scars on her soul, and she wondered if she would ever be complete again. Wasn't she just a burden? Luis would call her all kinds of names and tell her that she was useless and that she was lucky he was putting up with her.

Just by looking at Travis, Olivia could tell that he was a kind man. He didn't deserve a mate like Olivia, broken. Wouldn't it be better just to let him go? But Talia made her promise not to reject him...

"How are you feeling?"

Travis' voice sounded close to her ear, and she whipped her head to see that his chin nearly rested on her shoulder. Close. Super-close.

From this distance, she could see every speck of blue in his gray eyes full of concern.

"If my proximity is making you uncomfortable..." Travis' voice trailed when Olivia reached to touch his forehead. Her fingers trailed over his temple, and then she brushed his ear.

"You should touch YOUR ear if you want me to step away," Travis reminded her.

"I don't want you to step away," Olivia said in a small voice.

Travis' heart soared. Progress! How far can he push it without pushing too much? "Can I hug you?"

Olivia nodded faintly. It was barely noticeable, but that was definitely a nod.

His arms moved around her, and he pulled her to lean on him as he awkwardly bent behind her to maximize the surface of her back touching his chest.

Travis stuck his nose at the base of her neck, and he took a deep breath that filled his system with the scent of sweet mangoes.

"Bergamot," she whispered.

"What?"

"Bergamot. Mint and citrus."

Travis knew what bergamot was, but he had no idea why she brought it up. "Do you want me to get you some?"

"You are doing it."

Travis realized... "Is that how I smell to you?"

"Yes."

"Do you like that scent?" Travis asked.

"I always did."

"Good."

"Is it?"

"Of course. It confirms your wolf is here. I will get you better in no time."

Olivia smiled at his words. "How about you come in front?"

Travis was not willing to let go of her, no matter how awkward his posture was. He waited for that hug forever!

"Is my checkup done?" Olivia asked when she realized that Travis was not moving a muscle.

"Yes. I disconnected the machines."

"Can you help me lie down and come next to me?"

"Next to you? Where?" Did she want him to sit on the chair?

Olivia patted the mattress on her right.

Travis' eyebrows shot up. "Are you sure? I mean... I want to, but... you know..."

Olivia smiled at Travis' awkward stumbling over his words. "I don't know if it will be alright, but I am willing to try."

Travis helped her lie down slowly, and he was next to her in less than a second.

He didn't know where to put his hands. Was it OK if he touched her? Hugged her? He didn't want to risk it.

He laid on her right and propped his head on his elbow while facing her.

"Is this alright?" Travis asked. Their legs were touching through the blanket.

"Yes."

"Are you in pain?"

"I am fine," Olivia assured him. "What made you become a doctor?"

"My father was the pack doctor. He is retired and is traveling..."

Olivia listened to Travis' story how his father taught him the basics of medicine, and she couldn't believe how much in common they had.

...

It was early the next morning when Talia peeked into Olivia's room to see that Travis and Olivia were sleeping on the bed, with Olivia being cocooned in Travis' arms.

Talia waved at Damon to see inside, and he held the door open while Talia tiptoed in to leave the basket with fruits on the table.

Talia was almost out when she heard Olivia calling softly, "Talia?"

Talia turned in slow motion. "Sorry for waking you up. I didn't hear from you the whole night, so I thought of checking on you, but it seems things are fine. I left you fruits. I will stop by later."

"Talia?" Olivia called again.

"Yes?"

"Thank you for everything."

Talia knew that this thank you was for not giving up on Olivia, for coming to check on her in the Shadowbite pack and making her break the bond and flee the pack and bringing her here where she found her mate that will treat her well.

"You are welcome, Olivia. Repay me by being happy."

"I will."

Talia glanced at Travis who was pretending to be asleep, but she didn't want to call him out. Did Olivia notice? It didn't matter.

Talia wondered, was there any truth in her having the ability to bring mates together? Maybe Malia was a thing, and she should look into it more. If everyone had fated mates, they would have less time for scheming and meddling in other people's business.

Talia waved and left the room with Damon.

Olivia's body was exhausted, medications made her drowsy, and Travis' proximity came with warmth and the feeling of safety. She looked at his relaxed expression, and she couldn't believe that he could do that, make her feel safe. It was something she used to take for granted, but now she knew better.

Olivia snuggled closer to Travis, and she buried her face into his chest to take a deep breath filled with bergamot, and then she drifted off to sleep again.

Travis waited for Olivia's breathing to become slow and even, and then he pressed his lips to the top of her head.

Olivia didn't say it outright, but somehow... he knew that she accepted him, and it made him nearly cry with joy.

You can see Travis & Olivia's pic in the comments :)

The Alpha's Bride #Chapter 996: The Luna Ceremony of the century (1) - Read The Alpha's Bride Chapter 996: The Luna Ceremony of the century (1) Online -

Chapter 996: The Luna Ceremony of the century (1)

As the day of Talia's Luna ceremony approached, the Dark Howlers pack was buzzing with activity.

Guests were arriving from around the world. High-ranking werewolves, witches, humans, and even a few Guardians (like Edgar, Declyn, and Julian).

More than a thousand guests included individuals who had connections to the Dark Howlers pack, the Midnight Guardians pack, Talia, and Damon. The event was set to be streamed as well. It was the event of the century.

Every member of the Dark Howlers pack and the Midnight Guardians pack was invited, even Omegas.

Members of the Dark Howlers pack hosted guests, the packhouse was full, and the hotels in nearby human cities were out of vacancy.

This event was a big deal.

Because of human presence, other creatures were warned that they shouldn't do anything non-human, and the patrols were strengthened to assure rogues don't come to cause a ruckus.

Tatiana and Mindy were the main organizers, setting up the whole ceremony to look like a massive wedding with the bridal party participating in a ceremony where Damon and Talia will exchange vows. After that, there will be dinner and a celebratory party.

Talia picked her bridesmaids, and Damon picked his groomsmen, and then they added their mates as plus ones, and it became huge, but Damon said that anything less than that was unacceptable.

The celebrations started in Darkbourne three days ago with festivities to honor Damon, Talia, and the future Alpha in Talia's belly.

The main venue for the wedding was next to the lake.

Omegas cleared the area and set up a podium for the ceremony, as well as one for the band. There will be a dancing area and numerous tables with chairs, several bars, and a big tent for final food preparations before it is served.

The winter was not easing up, but in the Pacific Northwest, winters are mild, and witches set up in advance energy crystals to ward off any rain clouds and warm up the ground. Like this, it was pleasant for humans so that everyone could attend the wedding in the open.

In the packhouse...

Talia was standing in front of a full-length mirror while Tatiana was tying the elegant silk ribbons at her back to adjust the bodice.

Also in the room were Cornelia, Amelia, Mindy, Meg, Kalina, Sandy, Michelle, Daria, Yasmin, Arya, Trisha, Zina, and Dawn.

Arya, Sandy, Zina, Michelle, and Amelia were in front of dressing stations with mirrors for Omegas to fix their hair and makeup for the ceremony. Other females were sitting on the sofas and snacking on fruits while chatting in a lively atmosphere.

Most of the females in the room were wearing black and white bridesmaids' dresses which had chest area covered in white and black crystals and a high waistline from where a knee-length flowy skirt started. The skirt was black at the waist, and it faded into white at the bottom. Those were Tatiana's creations to symbolize black and white, the groom and the bride. The high waistline was perfect for accommodating the pregnancy bellies of several bridesmaids, as Cornelia, Mindy, and Meg were showing.

No matter how impressive the bridesmaids' dresses were, they all admired Talia's gown, which looked like it came from the fashion catalog made for royalty.

It was a sleeveless white dress with a sweetheart neckline. The bodice was embellished with silvery sequins and diamonds. The cathedral train tulle skirt had intricate embroidery, which featured shiny see-through stones and numerous white pearls.

"Did I tell you how wonderful this dress is?" Talia asked Tatiana.

"You should thank Damon. He is the one who paid for the materials," Tatiana said.

Talia wondered if Damon would approve of the dress.

"I will thank him later." In private. Talia's brows came together at the thought of her and Damon alone with that dress on her. Will Damon rip the dress? That was highly likely. When her Alpha sets his mind on mating, he doesn't care how much money and work went into the garment that got in the way.

Tatiana stuck her finger under ribbons that crisscrossed along Talia's back. "How is this? Is it too tight? Can you breathe? Is there pressure on your stomach?"

Talia's bump was visible when she was naked or wearing something tight, but this gown had lines made of diamonds in such a way that it created a deception of a flat abdomen.

"It's not tight," Talia responded.

"Are you sure?"

"I don't know how you made it this comfortable." The gown had a bulky appearance, but it was surprisingly light and soft. Like a cloud.

Tatiana smiled proudly. "These are special materials."

The door opened, and Talia turned to see Olivia peeking in before coming into the room gingerly.

Olivia was familiar with all the females present, but she was shy in a big company and would frighten easily.

Two days after being discharged from the hospital, Olivia became a member of the Dark Howlers pack. Olivia was living with Travis, and she was helping him in the hospital. In the last few weeks, her physical appearance improved drastically, and she resembled the female Talia remembered before she left the Red Moon pack years ago.

Talia's eyes fell on Olivia's neck.

Olivia's steps halted, and she subconsciously reached for the left side of her neck.

Talia smiled slyly. "Travis marked you."

Olivia nervously glanced to her right, only to see all females staring at her.

"The good doctor got his pecker wet! I wish it happened last week!" Mindy exclaimed, and Olivia's face exploded in blush.

"Don't be shy," Kalina said to Olivia, and she turned to Dawn. "Pay up!"

Dawn pouted. "I'm not paying anything. That mark doesn't mean they had sex."

Kalina cocked an eyebrow and turned to Olivia. "Well? Did you have sex with your mate?"

Olivia swallowed hard. "What?"

"Did you bet on when Olivia and Travis will seal the bond?" Talia asked in disbelief.

Kalina nodded earnestly. "I said it would be in the week of your Luna ceremony. Dawn, Amelia, and Arya said it would be next week, and Mindy and Sandy put their bets on the previous week. Cornelia said it would happen after the new year."

"Don't forget Maya. She was for this week also," Cornelia reminded Kalina. "You will need to share the winning with her."

Talia shook her head helplessly and looked at Olivia.

"We are happy for you," Talia said, and then she spoke to Olivia through the mind link, 'Ignore them. They mean no harm. Did you have fun?'

Olivia bit her lip and responded through the mind-link, only for Talia to hear, 'Travis was... wonderful.' He was gentle and patient, and caring, and he put her first. It was all that Luis wasn't and so much more, and Olivia was so happy that she feared it was all a dream and she would wake up to see it was not real. But it was real because she woke up in Travis' embrace, and the first thing he did was ask her if she was OK to what she responded how she was much more than OK. Travis' kiss ignited a passion Olivia had never felt before, and they made love in the morning (twice), and they would probably still be in bed if Talia's Luna ceremony was not such a big deal.

Talia put her hand behind her back and showed a thumbs up to the females on the sofa.

"YES!" Kalina screamed. "I knew it! Victory is MINE!"

Olivia flinched, unsure what was going on, but then Tatiana pushed a black-and-white dress into her hands with, "The ceremony won't wait for you."

Tatiana's tone told Olivia that this was nonnegotiable, and she scurried into the bathroom.

Kalina was jumping for joy.

"Lina!" Talia called sternly. "Stop jumping!"

Kalina looked at her feet. "Are you afraid I will break a heel or damage your carpet?"

Talia giggled. "None. But I fear you might hurt your pup."

Kalina's jaw fell open slack. "What did you say?"

"Did you say that Kalina is pregnant!?" Tatiana shrieked while holding onto her belly. Out of all the bellies in the room, Tatiana's was the biggest one. "Are you sure?"

Talia confirmed with a confident nod.

Kalina sat on the sofa in slow motion, and she held onto her stomach. She didn't get pregnant during her first heat, so she didn't dare to hope that the second time would be much better, but this... was wonderful.

"Please, don't tell Tony. I want to surprise him," Kalina said, and females murmured in agreement.

The door of the room flew open to show Maya come in breathily. "Am I late?"

Talia greeted her with a smile. "No, you are just on time."

"We thought you won't make it, considering that you went into heat four days ago," Cornelia said.

Maya responded with a stiff smile while swallowing the pinch at the back of her throat.

Maya's previous heat was just over a month ago. Talia predicted it in advance, so Maya and Caden planned a vacation getaway where they could focus on making a pup. Maya was optimistic, but it didn't happen.

The heat four days ago hit her unexpectedly. It's normal for heats to be about six months apart, and this was unusual. Maya asked Talia if Talia had anything to do with it, but Talia didn't deny or confirm her involvement.

"My pheromones are in check. I can do this," Maya said bravely.

Talia walked to Maya and hugged her.

"Of course, you can do this," Talia said and leaned closer to say in a whisper, "Take it easy. You don't want to overwork yourself in your condition."

Maya's whole body froze. "What did you say?"

Talia smiled, and she closed her eyes. "Three pups."

Check the comments to see the inspiration for dresses.

The Alpha's Bride #Chapter 997: The Luna Ceremony of the century (2) - Read The Alpha's Bride Chapter 997: The Luna Ceremony of the century (2) Online -

Chapter 997: The Luna Ceremony of the century (2)

Maya was confident that the world stopped spinning, and everything stilled, including Talia who was standing right in front of her.

"What did you say?" Maya asked in a whisper.

Talia smiled. "Triplets, Maya." She knew about Maya's worries, so she assured her. "I am positive."

"Woah, Caden is a stud! He can nail them three-in-one." Mindy exclaimed.

"My cousin had four pups at the time," Trisha said. "It's a lot of work."

"Who cares if it's one or four? When it gets hard, she can ask us for help," Dawn said while rubbing her perfectly flat stomach. There was a pup inside there, and she couldn't wait for her stomach to start showing.

"Well, congratulations!" Zina exclaimed, and all females gathered around Maya to chatter excitedly while Maya was technically unresponsive.

The door flew open, and Caden stood there.

Caden was rushing to dress up in dark gray pants and a white shirt when he felt Maya's unstable mood.

Maya's last heat came unexpectedly, and it was an emotional experience for both of them as they wondered if this was the Moon Goddess giving them another chance or if she was punishing them by giving hope when there was none.

Caden wouldn't think less of Maya if she couldn't give him a pup, but he knew that it was important to her. Maya and Caden went to get checked after their second heat with no pup, and Doctor Travis said there was nothing physically wrong with either of them, but Caden knew that in this situation, usually, everyone would point fingers at the female.

Caden didn't want anyone to think bad of Maya, was she bullied?

Caden was unsure what to expect when he got here, but why were all these women ganging up on his mate?

"Maya! Are you alright?" Caden exclaimed while pushing Zina and Daria so he could pass between them and by the time Maya got into his sight, he saw her sobbing and full-blown ugly crying.

"Stay away from her!" Caden shouted angrily, and he wrapped his arms around Maya to pull her away from others.

He had no idea what was going on, but it couldn't be good. Did they harass his mate? And why was everyone just standing there and not saying anything?

Even Talia was looking at them with a smile on her face, and she was supposed to be the compassionate one!

Caden cupped Maya's cheeks and wiped her tears with his palms. "Shh... it will be alright, love... let me take you out of here."

"Pups..." Maya said through sobs.

Caden was not sure if he heard her right. "What?"

Maya sniffled. "Pups, Caden. Three of them."

Caden's eyes widened to the point of hurting, and then his mouth stretched into the biggest grin ever. "Are you sure?"

"She is sure," Talia responded. "Congratulations."

Caden felt like shouting, crying, and jumping for joy at the same time. He embraced Maya tightly and buried his face into her hair. He whispered something for Maya to hear, and she nodded while fisting his shirt.

"You are not... supposed to... go... there..." Mario's strained voice was heard from the hallway, and soon after, they could see Damon standing at the door with Mario hugging Damon's thigh.

Mario looked at Tatiana pitifully. "I'm sorry, T. I told him not to come and that it's bad luck, but I couldn't stop him."

Tatiana stood in front of Talia to block Damon's view. "Didn't you hear Mario? It's bad luck to see the bride in her wedding gown."

Damon sneered. "If there is any bad luck, I will punch it in the face. As for this insect..." Damon looked down at Mario, and he twisted his body unexpectedly with such force that Mario shrieked as he flew down the hallway.

"He is human!" Tatiana angry whispered.

Damon straightened the lapels of his black suit jacket. "I told him more than once not to touch me." Mario was giving Damon heebie-jeebies.

Tatiana was torn. Should she keep blocking Damon's view? Or go to check on Mario? What if he died from the impact?

Talia peeked from behind Tatiana, and Damon's eyes lit up. That was his kitten right there!

Talia stepped to her right, but Tatiana followed at the same time, and Damon frowned in disapproval.

"Tell your mate not to stand in my way, or I won't be responsible for the consequences," Damon said.

Tatiana frowned. "With whom are you...?" Her voice trailed when she saw Maddox at the door.

"Come, love," Maddox coaxed Tatiana away from Talia.

God knows what Damon would do if Tatiana kept standing between the lovebirds. They all heard about Gregory's test and how Damon killed a female without hesitation.

Sure, Tatiana was an Alpha female, and she wouldn't snap easily like a dry twig, but Maddox didn't want to clash with Damon.

Damon had an advantage before, and Maddox could take him down with little luck. However, since Damon turned into a black Alpha despot, Maddox knew he would set himself up for suffering. The only one who could control Damon was Talia, and unfortunately, she had developed a mischievous side lately.

"Damon hurt Mario," Tatiana said to Maddox.

"He will be fine." Probably. How Maddox saw this, hurting Mario wouldn't be a bad thing. Mario was too touchy-feely for his own good.

A brilliant idea formed in Maddox's mind! He can go out with the pretense of checking on the pesky assistant and kick him while unconscious. A fragile human could die easily, and they would blame Damon for injuries...

Tatiana narrowed her eyes at Maddox. "Why are YOU here? Weren't you supposed to keep an eye on Damon?"

"I am keeping my eyes on him. That's why I'm here."

Tatiana gaped at Maddox. "Your job was to keep him away from here, not join him."

Maddox pouted. "Why are you talking like I'm the only one?"

Tatiana had a bad feeling about this. Did this mean there were more males on their way?

She couldn't believe her eyes when James appeared at the door, and he went straight for Cornelia. And then there were Cristian, Tony, Kai, George, Axel, Owen... and Tatiana gave up.

James sat on the sofa next to Cornelia, and he kissed her belly twice, and then he went for her lips. Cornelia giggled while lacing her perfectly manicured fingers in James' blonde hair, and they were making out like no one was watching.

Mindy met Gideon halfway, and she twirled on her toes to give him a good view of herself from every angle. Gideon hummed in approval. His pumpkin-infused princess was beautiful.

Mindy eyed her handsome mate, who was sharp in a well-fitted dark gray suit. And he smelled of lavender. Intoxicating.

"Are we dancing tonight?" Mindy asked coyly.

Gideon smirked. "I've got my dancing shoes on, princess."

Mindy leaned to give him a smacking kiss on the lips. Before she could pull back from the kiss, Gideon's hand was at the back of her neck, and he held her in place while deepening the kiss.

Maddox turned his back to Mindy and Gideon. Yes, they were mated for a while and expecting a pup, but seeing his baby sister with someone else's tongue down her throat was unpleasant.

"I thought you guys were supposed to head to the venue first, and ladies would join you later," Yasmin said to Axel.

"Isn't it better if we all go together?" Axel responded with a question while appreciating Yasmin's look in her black and white sparkly dress. She was enchanting.

"Are kids alright?" Yasmin asked.

Axel hummed in confirmation. "Grandparents are entertaining them." Sophia and Isaac were at the venue already. They were watching over Edgar and Valeria in the family-friendly area that was enclosed and covered with soft surfaces so that little ones won't hurt themselves.

Evanora and Edgar were set to watch over the kids later.

Two sets of grandparents were not close, but they kept their interaction to non-hostile on matters that included their grandkids, and other than that, they didn't try to fake pleasantries.

Talia asked Evanora if she wanted to be part of the bridal party, but Evanora refused. Evanora wanted to be a guest so she could relax with her soulmate and observe this human celebration up close.

Olivia peeked out of the bathroom, and she blinked at the sight in front of her. She heard the commotion, and she hoped that she had imagined it. Why were all those males there?

Her anxiety sizzled away when she saw the most dashing man walking toward her.

Travis was super-handsome in the dark gray suit that fit him perfectly, and his smile made her heart flip.

"What do you think?" Olivia asked in a small voice while looking at her dress shyly.

"Breathtaking," he responded, and she knew he meant it.

"Uhm... you are dapper."

Travis smirked. "Dapper? I like it."

Travis leaned to kiss Olivia, and he paused with a frown to look to his left. There was Omega standing there and fidgeting.

"Can I help you?" Travis asked stiffly.

The Omega gestured toward Olivia. "I apologize for intruding, Doctor Travis. I need to do Miss Olivia's hair and makeup."

Travis was still glaring at the poor Omega when Olivia got on her toes to kiss him on the cheek. "I will be back in a bit. Wait for me?"

Travis smiled goofily. "I will wait as long as it takes."

Olivia blushed. His hungry gaze told her he was thinking about naughty things, wonderful things that were reserved for mates.

With everyone busy with their mates and preparations, no one noticed that Damon and Talia tiptoed out of the room.

The Alpha's Bride #Chapter 998: The Luna Ceremony of the century (3) - Read The Alpha's Bride Chapter 998: The Luna Ceremony of the century (3) Online -

Chapter 998: The Luna Ceremony of the century (3)

Talia giggled while ensuring she didn't step on the dress as she followed Damon to another room. He was in a rush.

Damon couldn't wait to find privacy with Talia. She looked edible, and he wanted to do all kinds of things that shouldn't be done when others were watching.

He closed the door behind them and verified it was locked before turning to Talia.

The dress, the light makeup, her braided hair decorated with pearls... it all went great with little pearl earrings that matched the pendant on her necklace, which was an heirloom her mother left behind.

Talia held her breath while Damon circled her without making a sound. She loved the fire in his eyes that spoke of boundless love and carnal pleasures.

Damon was a predator eyeing his prey, ready to pounce at any moment, and his deadly proficiency was the most potent aphrodisiac.

"You are beautiful, kitten," Damon said in a low growl.

Damon caressed her cheek with the tips of his fingers while looking at her dreamily. "I can't believe you are mine. From today onward, the whole world will know that Natalia Moonrider and I are one."

Talia's smile was reflected in her eyes. She could feel his passion and sincerity, and she returned his feelings with equal fervor.

Talia stepped closer to Damon until their bodies nearly touched, and she looked up.

"Damon Blake, you are mine."

The growl in Talia's voice confirmed that Liseli spoke as well, and Sapa howled from joy.

Their mates were right there, beautiful and domineering. How could they resist the call?

Damon's arms wrapped around Talia as he kissed her tenderly, slowly exploring her mouth with his tongue and enjoying every little sigh she made.

Talia allowed herself to be lost in Damon's opulent flavors of dark chocolate and his scent of the forest. She loved how her body fit against him, even in that puffy wedding dress. Everything was perfect.

Talia's eyes sprang open when she felt Damon's fingers gripping the edge of her bodice.

"No, no!" Talia said with urgency while pushing his hands away.

Damon blinked. "What?"

"You can't tear this dress."

Damon cocked an eyebrow in disapproval. Who cares about the dress? He was interested in the flesh below that pesky fabric! But he knew that dress was important for the ceremony. The tearing will come later.

He needed to compromise. For now.

"Turn around," he ordered.

"Why?"

"So I can undo whatever needs to be undone back there."

"We don't have time for that." It took her a good half an hour to get in the dress. It had a bunch of ribbons and buttons that were cleverly hidden from sight.

"We have almost an hour until the ceremony, kitten," Damon reminded Talia. "The guys wanted us to open a bottle and drink, but I would rather drink you than anything else."

Talia was torn. Intimacy with Damon was always rewarding but... "I can't risk messing up the dress, and there is no time to get it on and off properly. We need to be patient. In a few hours, we can..."

"Few hours!?" Damon clutched his chest dramatically.

Talia hid an incoming fit of laughter under a cough. How can such a handsome and powerful guy act like a toddler? "You said that you want our ceremony to be perfect. For that, this dress needs to be intact. Is it too much to ask for a few hours of holding back our urges? Trust me, it's hard on me also."

"Kitten," Damon said in a low voice. "Even a few minutes without you is a few minutes too much. Do you know how much I crave you every waking moment? And you are in my dreams as well. Only when we are one, I feel sane."

Talia smiled goofily. Here was Damon, impatient and horny, and he said some sweet things that made her question if that dress was really necessary.

Damon's eyes flashed when he got an idea, and he started removing his suit jacket with a determined expression.

Talia took a step back. "Damon?"

"Don't worry. I won't ruin your dress. Lift."

Talia was confused. "What?"

"Lift the dress," he pointed at the skirt. "Let me see your legs, kitten."

Talia had no idea what he was up to, but she lifted the dress to show her white high-heeled shoes.

"More," Damon ordered.

Talia was careful not to wrinkle the fabric, and the moment her knees came into view, Damon ducked and disappeared under layers of tulle.

Talia burst into nervous laughter as his breath tickled her skin. Did he lick behind her knee? "What are you doing?"

"What is this?" Damon asked while observing the strip of lacy fabric around Talia's thigh, and Talia jolted when he pulled it to snap against her flesh.

"It's a garter," Talia responded.

"Why so frilly? Shouldn't it be holding up stockings?" Talia didn't wear stockings. "And did you lose the second one?"

Talia giggled. "Tanya said that after we exchange our vows, you will get to remove the garter and toss it into a crowd of bachelors. The lucky guy who catches it will be the next one to marry."

Damon snorted. "Do you believe in that?"

"Not really, but Tanya said it's human custom, and it's fun."

Damon cursed under his breath. "If it's so much fun, why didn't they do that at HER Luna ceremony? Max would never allow it."

"Why?"

"WHY!? First, we are not humans. Second, no one will touch the fabric that clung this high on your leg." He nipped her flesh just above the garter, sending a pulse of need to Talia's core. "And third, if those single bastards want to marry, they should find their mates and not use mumbo-jumbo related to MY woman."

Before Talia could react, she felt a snap as the garter gave in under Damon's fingers, and she knew that he had stuffed it into his pocket.

"That's settled," Damon said with satisfaction. "Is there any other piece of clothing on you that you plan to give to someone else?"

"No," Talia said through giggles that died down abruptly when Damon spoke again.

"Walk back until you find something to lean on, kitten."

Talia looked back to see a sofa that was facing away from them. She moved backward slowly, and Damon followed her while squatting. He was completely hidden under the layers of tulle.

Talia put her hands on the backrest of a sofa. "OK."

"Ah!" She exclaimed in surprise when he pressed his nose at the cradle of her thighs.

Talia bit her lower lip at the familiar sensation of Damon ripping her panties. His impatience always turned her on, but there was a problem, "Damon! I need those for the ceremony."

Damon chuckled. "No, you don't. No one will know what's going on under the dress. It will be our secret..." His breath splashed at the cradle of her thighs, making her giddy from anticipation of what was coming.

"Mmm," he hummed in satisfaction while nuzzling her folds with his nose. He gripped her thighs to spread them apart as he buried his face into her.

Talia threw her head back and stared at the ceiling as Damon caressed her pleasure centers with his tongue. He was good. He was the best. And the best part was that he was hers.

Since Damon brought Talia to the Dark Howlers pack, every day, he would show her that she was his only one. They went through numerous trials, and she knew that nothing and no one would stand between them.

The feeling of belonging was overwhelming, and she didn't realize at what point her defenses collapsed, allowing her to be unreservedly his, just as he was hers.

In less than a minute, Talia's legs trembled, and she gasped for air.

She was barely aware of the rustling sound her dress made as Damon crawled from under it.

"How was that?" He asked with a confident smirk while licking his lips that glistened from her juices.

Talia smiled goofily while catching her breath. "It doesn't seem fair that I am the only one having fun."

Damon nodded earnestly. "My thoughts exactly."

"I can't go down on my knees, and you can't rip the dress," she reminded him.

"I won't," he promised. "Turn around, kitten."

Talia obeyed, and she leaned on the backrest of the sofa, wondering what he was up to.

In one swift move, Damon grabbed the back of her skirt and flung it over her head, along with the dramatic cathedral train that covered her completely.

For Talia, everything turned white, and it took her a moment to realize what Damon was up to.

She took a step back and stuck her butt out.

Damon hummed in approval. He loved that she knew what to do.

Talia heard the sound of his zipper, and then he said, "I prefer to see your face and to feel your hair between my fingers, but since you said this dress is important, I will make do with what I have, which is your lower half."

'PAK!'

Talia jolted when he spanked her. The pain radiated in waves of pleasure that amplified her arousal.

"And it's a wonderful half, kitten."

"Ah!" Talia cried when she felt another type of sharp pain. Did he bite her butt? Damn, it was hot!

She was surrounded by whiteness, and she could feel Damon touching her down there. It was fantastic!

There was pressure and a stretch, and she gasped as he entered her in one mighty stroke.

"Fuck, kitten..." Damon cursed and started rocking into her. "You are perfect. Mine!"

Knowing that he will get to enjoy every day with Talia was making him extra horny (if that was possible).

He never wanted a female more than he wanted Talia, and it was more than just her body. It was about her mind and emotions, and he had an inexplicable need to consume her every waking moment, just as she was consuming his. They were one in every possible way.

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Chapter 999: The Luna Ceremony of the century (4)

Next to the lake...

The event area was lively.

Guests started arriving hours in advance. There were a lot of people from the Dark Howlers pack and the Midnight Guardians pack (everyone was invited), and they were eager to help out. It made them feel important. Some even brought food and drinks with them because Damon and Talia said they don't need wedding presents, so the setting up of the venue turned into a pre-wedding party. The mood was good and the area was ready before the scheduled time.

Evanora was standing next to Edgar and observing the crowd gathered. Hundreds of people were standing or sitting in small groups and chatting over drinks and snacks.

Evanora was particularly interested in humans. They looked like werewolves and witches, but their spirits and bodies were weak, and their connection with nature was almost non-existent.

Evanora's interest in humans was not because they were powerless, but because she heard about humans using technology to better their lives. They had machines, weapons, and advances in medicine that alarmed her. Human lifespans were short in general, but they were large in numbers and inherently avaricious which made them dangerous.

Evanora was additionally repulsed while reading about their history. Humans hoarded treasures they didn't need without caring about overusing resources available or harming others in the process. They spoke about global warming and scaling down, yet everyone craved luxuries and self-indulging. Humans were contradictory enigmas and Evanora was unsure if she wanted to explore them or stay away from them.

Axel and Evanora went through the library of the Guardians, and they found evidence of experiments done on people with abilities. It all pointed toward humans as the culprits, but they didn't find more than that.

Declyn said that Guardians were collecting written material related to portals and other creatures for the purpose of preventing the information from leaking. If it reached human hands, it could be catastrophic. Of course, part of it was Gregory's greed and his desire to reopen the portals, but they had overlapping interests, so they collaborated.

In Declyn's words, "No one is considering humans as a threat because they are weak, however, that's playing to their advantage. Humans created devices that can block the pack link and suppress our abilities, and those are things we confirmed. By now, we are confident they know of other creatures, but the information is contained which tells us that people who are aware of our existence are in high positions."

Evanora was not sure if she should believe him. "Aren't you Guardians considering yourself as the most powerful creatures? How come you can't hunt down a few humans?"

Declyn shook his head. "It's not simple. Humans have a big imagination and are easy to deceive. It's difficult to distinguish if their stories came from a movie, a book, or because they actually know about us."

Gregory was interrogated on the topic, and he showed amazing resilience toward truth-telling potions that witches could make. If he knew anything about humans doing experiments on creatures with abilities, Gregory was unwilling to share.

Talia wanted to peer into Gregory's mind, but Damon was against it. This was not just any guardian, but Gregory. His ability was to interfere with other person's senses. They had no way to confirm if Gregory was completely stripped from his abilities, or if something was still lingering. If Talia went into his mind, he could trap her in there forever. It was not worth the risk.

Evanora found the whole situation unsettling. How are they supposed to protect themselves if they were forbidden from using their magic? If not for Edgar, Evanora would go back to the Coven a long time ago. She would also take with her all witches, and they would close the portal behind them.

Unfortunately, with every passing day, leaving was less probable for witches.

Within the first month of opening the portal, several dozens of witches found their soulmates among werewolves who came to patrol the area. Almost every day at least one newly mated couple was announced, and Evanora knew that it would be unfair to try separating them. If it were a few couples, she could convince them to come together, but with such a big number, it was a daunting task. Edgar assured her that he will work with her on protecting witches and other creatures from humans, and Evanora softened her stance. It was hard to say no to Edgar.

...

In one of the tents where the bridal party was preparing...

Valerian was sitting on a chair while Cassandra combed his hair.

He didn't like other people touching him, and Cassandra was careful not to get too close.

Since he arrived at the Dark Howlers pack, Valerian spent a lot of time in the garden, alone. Talia had a lot of things to deal with, so she asked Cassandra to accompany Valerian.

The Oracle was the only one from the Midnight Guardians pack present, she didn't have any particular duties assigned, and she knew Valerian before he disappeared.

Cassandra quickly learned about his schedule. While Valerian was attending physical therapy, she was with witches, learning about magic, spells, potions, and controlling energies. Valerian would have lunch with Damon and Talia, and somewhere mid-afternoon Cassandra would join him in the garden.

There were days when they just sat in silence, and Cassandra tried to diminish her presence while Valerian was lost in thoughts.

Part of her felt guilty because she didn't have a premonition that would prevent him from being imprisoned by the Guardians. It was her duty to keep the Midnight Guardians safe, and she wondered why the Moon Goddess didn't interfere with Sophia and Isaac becoming Alphas.

Most of the time, Cassandra would tell Valerian stories about the Midnight Guardians pack and things that happened in his absence.

Valerian was surprised to hear that his parents went after him and didn't return. He didn't know that.

Valerian was deeply interested to hear about Sophia and Isaac and what they did while he was gone.

He didn't blame Cassandra for the prophecy that caused Talia to be abandoned. After all, it was just a vague divination that predicted Talia's immense powers. The guilty ones were Sophia and Isaac who choose to label Talia as a bringer of calamity and kick her out while pretending that she didn't exist.

Valerian couldn't decide how to punish his sister and brother-in-law for what they did. Killing them sounded easy and punishing them... no punishment will give Talia back what she lost.

He was outraged to hear that Axel got the care and special treatment that was supposed to belong to his daughter.

Valerian told himself not to hate Axel. It was not Axel's fault. But it was hard to separate Axel from the injustice Talia grew up with. She didn't know who her parents were, she didn't know how special she was. Instead, she was hiding and fighting to survive. Valerian used all of his control not to blow up at innocent people, and he blamed himself because none of those would happen if he didn't make the mistake of leaving Talia there.

"Done," Cassandra announced and took a step back.

Valerian raised his gaze in slow motion to remind himself where he was. Wedding. Tent. He accepted to hold Talia's hand and walk with her down the aisle. It was a big honor and he was unsure if he deserved it, but he knew it meant a lot to Talia, so he accepted.

"Who all is here from our pack?"

Cassandra cleared her throat before responding, "Alpha Axel, Luna Yasmin," she paused when Valerian frowned. Sure, Axel was Talia's proxy, but everyone addressed him as Alpha, and Yasmin became Luna officially since she joined the pack. Yasmin didn't have a mental connection to the pack, and she couldn't transform into wolf form, but everything else about her was Luna-like.

Talia didn't mind that Axel and Yasmin were addressed as Alpha and Luna. Actually, she offered more than once for Axel to take over as the Alpha officially, but he refused. No amount of convincing from Talia would make him forget Valerian's gaze which was full of disappointment and anger, and there was something lethal that told Axel he shouldn't make waves.

"Who else is here?" Valerian grumbled.

Cassandra smiled awkwardly. Did he want her to say everyone's names? Almost everyone from the Midnight Guardians pack was here! Some had pups at home, and some stayed for security, but whoever was able, came to attend this massive ceremony. But Valerian wanted names, so she started from the top of the hierarchy.

"Beta Meg and Beta Kai, Gamma Sandy and Gamma Tyler, Calla, Remi..."

"Is Natalia here?" Valerian interrupted her.

"Not yet," Cassandra responded right away.

Cassandra wondered, did Damon and Talia elope? Cassandra heard that's a thing with humans, and since they decided on this human ceremony, maybe they eloped as well.

In the tent for the bride's side of the ceremony, other than Valerian and Cassandra, there were other females in black and white sparkly dresses, surrounded by Omegas who were doing the final touches on hair and makeup.

"Do you think they will come on time?" Kalina asked Tatiana while glancing at the time nervously.

Tatiana gritted her teeth in annoyance. This was an event of the century that featured her designs, and Damon and Talia will ruin it because they had to get frisky.

They all heard noises from the other room in the packhouse, and they knew what was going on there. Tatiana was on verge of banging at the door, but Maddox pulled her back saying that Damon and Talia will not miss their own ceremony.

Now that they were minutes away from start, Tatiana regretted listening to Maddox.

The only one who understood Tatiana's grief was Mindy. As the main organizer, Mindy put countless hours into making sure they had enough space, food, and entertainment, that the colors were matching. And Damon and Talia were not here! This was a disaster!

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Chapter 1000: The Luna Ceremony of the century (5)

"AAAHHH!"

Shrieks were swallowed by the roar of a sudden gale that exploded in the middle of the tent unexpectedly.

Unsecured objects went airborne, and people ducked for cover while the tent shook in an effort to stay attached to the ground.

"Talia!" Maya cried. "Did you need to do this inside?"

"Sorry. My aim was off," Talia lied. Her aim was not off. They were running late, and the only way to reach in time was to teleport, but how could she do that when they had humans in the vicinity? Going straight to the tent was the best option.

It took a few seconds for the dust to settle, with Damon and Talia embracing each other in the middle.

Damon wore a black suit, and his whole body pulsated in darkness while Talia was enveloped in a silvery light.

"I told you we won't be late," Damon said smugly.

"You were right."

"I am always right. Remember that for the years to come."

Talia smiled. Years to come. She liked the sound of it.

"Aya! Your hair is a mess!" Dawn cried, and Talia was not sure if she was messy from teleporting or because of what she and Damon had done before. Damon helped her tidy up, but he didn't know how to fix the braids and beads weaved in there.

"Come, come!" Zina gestured vigorously for Talia to sit in front of a mirror.

Damon watched helplessly as females dragged Talia away, and Michelle ushered him out with, "We need to get Talia ready, and you also need to fix yourself..."

'I will see you at the altar, kitten,' Damon's voice sounded in Talia's head, and by the time she turned to where he was, he was gone.

Two Omegas were busying themselves with Talia's hair and makeup, and Mindy stood there and shook her head in disapproval at Talia. "You really know how to test my nerves."

Talia looked at Mindy innocently. "It's not like the ceremony will start without us. A few minutes here or there, no one would notice."

Mindy didn't have time to argue. They were running behind schedule. "It's time for final checks. Do you have something old?"

Talia pointed at her necklace.

"Something new?"

Talia nodded. "Dress, earrings, shoes, pick one."

Mindy asked her next question. "Something borrowed?"

"I got that covered!" Tatiana exclaimed and pushed a shiny hairpin into Talia's hair. It had diamonds, and it matched Talia's styling.

"You will need to return this. It belonged to my nana," Tatiana said.

"If you don't return it, it won't count as borrowed, which will bring bad luck." Kalina chimed in.

Talia wondered if offending the Wilkow sisters would count as bad luck, but she didn't want to say it aloud.

Mindy approved the hairpin and moved on to the next item, "Do you have something blue?"

Talia froze. She HAD something blue. Those were her panties. But they were gone now. Damon ripped them and probably stuffed them into his pants pocket. He collected her torn undergarments as souvenirs.

"Lia?" Mindy called suspiciously. "Something blue?"

Talia fidgeted, and she called through the mind link, 'Damon?'

'Missing me already?'

Talia would flirt back if Mindy were not giving her a stinky eye.

'Do you have my panties?' Talia asked.

'They are MY panties now, kitten.'

'Can I have them?'

Damon snorted. 'What I take, I don't give back.'

Talia was frustrated, and she wanted to bicker, but then she remembered that her panties were torn. Even if she snatches them back, it's not like she could wear them.

"Is it OK if Damon has it?"

Mindy couldn't believe this. "No! The bride needs to have something blue! Please, tell me you are joking." Mindy's eyes widened when she realized they had a problem. "Ask him to give it back!"

"Will this do?" Cassandra said from the side, and they saw her pull out of her pocket a bracelet made out of blue beads.

Mindy didn't like the shabby-looking bracelet. It didn't match anything.

Talia was happy that she didn't need to explain the absence of panties. Her father was right there! Seeing Mindy's disapproval, Talia quickly snatched the bracelet.

"This is a relic that can suppress a Guardian," Talia explained. "It is very precious."

"It is not matching anything you are wearing," Tatiana said from the side. "We are not going for precious or useful. This is your day to be just pretty, and that trinket is not cutting it."

Kalina agreed with her sister. "It looks like it's made of cheap rocks."

"No one needs to look at it," Talia said and pushed the bracelet into her cleavage. The tight bodice will keep it in place. "Thank you, Cassandra."

Cassandra bowed deeply. "It is my honor, Alpha."

Mindy gave up. "Alright. It seems we have everything."

"That's not everything," Tatiana said and gave a big coin to Talia. "Put this in your shoe."

"What is this?" Talia asked.

"The rhyme goes, something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue, and a sixpence in your shoe. This is a sixpence."

Talia was not sure about this superstitious nonsense, but she saw that Mindy and the Wilkow sisters were serious about it, so she didn't object. She gave the coin to Zina, who was one of the few non-pregnant women around. "Can you help put this in my shoe? It's difficult like hell to bend in this dress, and I don't want to squish my belly."

Zina took the coin and mumbled, "You had no problems bending earlier."

Talia's eyebrows shot up. "What?"

"Nothing. Lift your dress. Which leg? Left or right?"

Dawn giggled. "That was not nothing. We all heard you."

Zina smirked. "Do you mean, you heard what I said, or you heard noises our bride and groom made in the packhouse?"

"Both!" Dawn exclaimed, and the females burst into laughter while Talia wished to disappear.

Valerian observed this from the side, and he was happy to see that Talia was surrounded by so many friends. Since he arrived at the Dark Howlers pack, he has been paying attention to the pack and Talia, and he confirmed that Damon adored Talia and that she had a good circle of friends. That made him less guilty about the whole situation.

'We are ready!' Caden's voice sounded in the minds of most of the females in the tent.

"Oh, my!" Mindy exclaimed. "Veil. Where is the veil!?"

"It's right here," Meg said while bringing the long see-through white veil that had white lace along the edges. Yasmin was right next to her, carrying a sparkly tiara. It was a piece of jewelry that belonged to the Moonrider family.

Talia didn't want to wear anything associated with Sophia, but Axel assured her that Sophia and Isaac didn't have a ceremony that resembled a human wedding. That tiara was in a room displayed like decoration, and Talia had seen it before, but she didn't care about shiny trinkets held under glass displays.

Eventually, Talia accepted the head ornament. It was part of the Midnight Guardians pack, and she didn't want to exclude her pack.

Just in case Sophia and Isaac tried to harm Talia, Cassandra performed a ritual to remove any bad juju from the tiara.