

Alpha-less 281

Chapter 281 No Compromise

Tessa's calm question caught Steven off guard; he hesitated, then said, "Tessa, maybe you didn't hear me clearly. I said Evan-the Alpha of Thornbane Pack. He's also the owner of our company. We can't afford to

cross him..."

"He's just Evan." Avery walked in at that moment, catching Steven's words. His tone was firm. "Steven, no matter what, the company has to give us an explanation for this."

Steven was the youngest in the band, but he'd clearly thought through more than they'd expected.

"Hey, I just don't want everyone to lose this hard-won opportunity to perform because of me." Back when things were at their toughest, none of them had given up; they sure as hell weren't giving up now.

Only they truly knew how hard the journey had been.

"Steven, don't forget-we're a team. If they hurt you like this, they're hurting us. If success means my bandmates have to swallow injustice, then I don't want that kind of success." Avery had always been fiercely protective of his men; as long as they stood beside him, he'd never let them suffer.

"And if the company has a problem with us, then if we don't speak up now, it's just going to happen again. Next time, who will they go after?"

SkyEcho Entertainment wouldn't dare target him-the lead vocalist-but the others were a different story.

The rest of the band stepped out from behind the door they'd been outside listening the whole time, catching every word Steven said.

"Steven, it's not the end of the world. Worst case, we go back to having nothing.

But SkyEcho Entertainment will give us an answer this time."

"It's not like we haven't lived through hard times before We're not afraid of hardship!"

Everything they had today was built with their own hands; if someone had to be sacrificed to keep it, then no way were they going to accept that.

Steven looked at them, deeply moved.

"Alright, enough of this soap opera drama; we're not here to cry." Tessa finally spoke. "If they dared lay a hand on Steven, I'll make damn sure they pay for it." Still, seeing their bond hadn't changed one bit-it really touched her.

So many bands fell apart after they made it big. But she truly believed these five could make music together for a lifetime.

"Yeah. As long as we stick together, there's nothing we can't get through." Steven pulled everyone into a hug, and the five members of Avery Band embraced each other tightly.

Tessa joined them too, wrapping her arms around them. It had been a long time since she'd felt something like this.

"Let's go," she said. "First, we deal with the one who hurt Steven."

"Yeah."

Landon drove Tessa and Steven, while Avery took the other three bandmates in his own car. The off in force.

group set

When they arrived at the place where Landon had been holding their prisoner, Avery glanced at Tessa, who naturally walked side by side with Landon; he held back his questions.

Right now, what mattered most was resolving Steven's situation.

Inside the sealed room, the moment Thomas saw Avery and the others, he started thrashing violently.

He'd been locked up here for two days now. In all that time, he hadn't eaten a thing-hadn't even had a drop of water.

He tried to shift, to fight back, but this weird place had cut him off from his wolf completely. He couldn't transform, couldn't even tap into his wolf strength. Just like a weak human, he was helpless in confinement.

"Avery, what the heck are you trying to do? Don't you know kidnapping is illegal

under werewolf law?" Thomas shouted, voice hoarse. "I'm telling you, if you let me go right now, I'll pretend none of this ever happened. Otherwise, you're all dead!"

Chapter 282 One for One

Even now, Thomas was still as arrogant as ever.

"I didn't even go that hard. Steven's hand is still perfectly fine, isn't it? Now hurry

up and let me out, and get me something to eat."

Thomas had a terrible reputation as a rogue; he had no morals, no line he wouldn't cross. As long as the money was good, he'd do anything.

Seeing that it was the members of Avery Band who showed up, he wasn't scared at all. Everyone knew how much people in the entertainment industry cared about reputation. If he got out of here and told the press anything about Avery Band, they'd be done.

That was why they hadn't laid a finger on him these two days-just locked him up without daring to do anything. They'd have no choice but to let him go now

Avery stepped up to him, his expression dark. "Thomas you hurt Steven's hand, and you're still this attitude? What, you really think I don't have a temper?" He had a temper-way too much of one. That was probably why the company went after his people in the first place; he refused to play along.

"Cut the damn crap and untie me already, or I'm not letting this slide." Thomas was ridiculously smug, relying on Evan's backing.

"I'll say it now-y'all know exactly who told me to do it. If you want to keep working

in the werewolf entertainment industry, you'd better fall in line and stop trying to be special. Do what you're told."

Thomas had done every dirty thing under the sun; he was rotten to the core. In Navoris, no one could touch him.

Even the cops gave him face when they saw him.

And these nobodies in a band, they couldn't do anything to him.

"Enough. Why waste time talking to him?" Tessa, who'd stayed quiet the whole time, finally spoke.

"He hurt one of Steven's hands; I'll take one of his. Seems fair, right?" Tessa's voice was casual, even lazy- but what she said sent chills down everyone's spine.

"What are you trying to do? Little girl, do you know who I am? You want one of my hands? You must have a death wish!" Thomas didn't believe for a second this teenage-looking girl would really do something brutal. He couldn't even sense a wolf aura on her-made him feel even bolder.

"Does it matter who you are?"

Tessa walked right up to him, towering over him with a cold, detached stare.

That look-just that look-made the vicious, forty-something rogue shudder.

"Don't do anything crazy! I'm warning you-I've got people backing me! If you dare touch me, I swear..."

But before he could finish, Tessa had already made her move. She grabbed his wrist; it looked like just a simple touch, a little squeeze.

but found he couldn't move it anymore.

"What did you do to me?" His voice trembled. This girl she was actually terrifying.

"Relax. It's just one hand. But from now on, I'm afraid you won't even be able to jerk off with it," Tessa said offhandedly, like she was commenting on the weather.

She'd used Emma's power to crush the meridians in Thomas's wrist-completely destroyed them. The damage was permanent.

Avery was stunned. Did she really just say that? Out loud?

Steven was stunned too. Oh no. Tessa's gone bad!

Landon went silent.

Well... with Tessa, they'd better get used to it. This girl had never played by the rules.

"You"

"What? Still doubting me? Didn't you just say you didn't believe me? Fine, let's hear it-who's the one backing you?"

Tessa pulled out a voice recorder.

"I..." Thomas clammed up. He didn't dare say a word. There was no way he could afford to cross that

person.

Tessa raised a brow coldly. "What? Don't want the other hand either? Let me be kind and remind you, that one's never healing again."

Chapter 283 No Mercy

The scaring pain and the knowledge that the damage was permanent left Thomas no room to doubt her.

Cold sweat soaked his face. "Hey, I was just doing a job, alright? Someone paid me, I followed orders. Let me go, please! I swear, I'll never show up anywhere near Avery Band again. Isn't that enough?"

These people were terrifying-every last one of them. He couldn't afford to piss off any of them.

"Since you won't talk, looks like we'll have to try something else." Tessa's tone was still as calm as ever; but every word she spoke was terrifying.

When she took another step forward, Thomas panicked and caved. "I'll talk! I'll talk, alright?"

Why the heck am I so unlucky? All he did was take a job for ten grand-just a hit job like any other. And now he'd run into this violent little psycho of a girl.

"It was Evan-the Alpha of Thornbane Pack. He's also the one in charge of SkyEcho Entertainment. He said Avery's been too disobedient lately, so he wanted to teach them a lesson."

Thomas didn't care about anything else at this point; staying alive was all that mattered.

"I told you everything. Just let me go! Don't tell anyone I was the one who spilled, or Evan won't let me

live. Don't mess with him, either-you don't know how scary that man is!"

Just saying Evan's name sent a chill down Thomas's spine-and he was someone who'd done every terrible thing imaginable.

"I got it." Tessa stopped the recorder and tossed it to Avery.

"Steven, what do you think we should do with him?" she asked, turning to Steven, who'd been silent the whole time. "Don't worry-if you don't want to get your hands dirty, I can take care of it. Whatever you want; just say the word."

Hearing that, Thomas's face went pale. He dropped to his knees, pleading, "Mr. Steven, I'm begging you, please let me go! I'll never do anything like this again- swear, I won't!"

Steven's face was stone-cold.

"Funny... that's not what you said back in the restroom, was it? Didn't you say you wanted to take me? What's the matter now? Lost your nerve?" He'd kept his mouth shut all this time so the others wouldn't get dragged into it. But now that everything was out in the open-what was there to be afraid of?

As soon as he said it, the rest of Avery Band's faces changed. Tessa's eyes turned glacial; a terrifying pressure radiated from her without her even trying.

"Mr. Steven, I was joking! Just a joke! Please-please, let me go!" Thomas was so terrified he nearly pissed himself.

"Dead man walking!" Avery stepped in front of Thomas his body tensed, wolf power surging through him. He grabbed Thomas's other hand and snapped it back with brutal force.

"Ahh!"

Steven was their little brother and no one adored him more than they did. The fact that this guy had the nerve to even think about touching him was unforgivable.

Within minutes, Thomas looked like a human punching bag. His face was swollen like a pig's head, blood covered him from head to toe. Werewolf society had laws now-killing wasn't allowed-but giving someone a beating that left them half-crippled? Totally fair game.

When the rest of the band had finally let out enough rage, Tessa walked up to what was left of him. Thomas was shaking all over.

"I..."

Never in his life had he imagined he'd end up in such a pathetic state.

"Stand up," Tessa ordered.

Thomas staggered to his feet, trembling.

The moment he got upright, Tessa kicked him-hard-right in the gut.

"Ugh!" Thomas let out a guttural cry as he flew back, slamming into the concrete

wall with a sickening thud, cracking it with spiderweb-like fractures...

Chapter 284 Truths Revealed

Thomas collapsed to the floor, barely clinging to consciousness,

Tessa stepped forward, ready to land another blow, but Steven stopped her. "Tessa, I'm okay. Don't worry. Don't dirty your hands over someone like this-it's not worth it."

Seeing everyone stand united like this moved him deeply; it felt just like the old days-when they'd all been chasing their dreams together in Falindale.

"Okay."

Only then did Tessa stop.

"He's just a pawn for someone else. This isn't over." Evan had gone to great lengths to target Avery; the one who really needed to pay was him.

"Tess Evan's not just some regular werewolf. He's more than SkyEcho Entertainment; he has the whole Thornbane Pack behind him. This is an Avery Band issue-please, stay out of it." Avery couldn't help worrying about her. She was still just a kid-seventeen years old. Her life was only just beginning. He didn't want her tangled up with someone as dangerous as Evan.

Tessa frowned; she hated hearing him talk like this.

"Avery, I'm part of Avery Band too. Even if I didn't debut with you guys, even if I've been gone for a while, my heart's still with you! If something happens to any one of you, then it's happening to me too. I'm not letting any of you get hurt!"

She'd made her choice long ago-to become stronger, all so she could protect the people around her.

If she failed at that now, then everything she endured in the Devil's Training Camp would've been for nothing.

"Tessie!" Steven was overwhelmed. "You'll always be one of us, part of Avery Band forever. But we only want to share our glory with you, not drag you into this mess."

"Tessie, I know you mean well, but I really don't want you involved in this anymore," Avery added, still deeply worried something might happen to her.

Tessa was not pleased. What was that supposed to mean?

One minute they were saying she was part of the team forever; the next, they were shutting her out.

Landon, who'd been silently watching from the side, finally spoke.

His tone was calm. "So what if it's Evan? He's not untouchable. Why be scared of him?"

After all, Evan was nothing more than someone he'd already beaten.

"You!"

Avery was stunned. He hadn't expected this quiet man to speak up now, of all times.

"Here's what you do-end your contract with Evan's company. If it's not working, there's no point dragging

He'd already made up his mind to cut Evan off from every financial resource.

Whether it was Zane Cor or the recently acquired Sky Echo Entertainment, they were both going down

soon.

With that in motion, there was no reason for Avery and the others to stay tied to Evan's company any longer.

"What? End the contract?" There was no way Evan would let them go so easily. He was ruthless-driven by profit and never hesitating to cross the line.

They still had one year left on their contract. Evan wasn't going to let them walk without a fight.

"Leave it to me."

If it was important to Tessa, then it was important to him. Canceling a contract? That was easy.

"You'll handle it?" Avery still wasn't convinced. Sure, this guy looked powerful-but could he really stand against Evan?

"Yes. Since Mr. Thorne is offering to help, you can rest easy," Tessa said. She had her own ways of solving this, but since they were all so worried about her, it was time to let Landon's identity speak for itself.

"Alpha... Mr. Thorne?" Steven could hardly believe what he was hearing.

Avery's eyes widened in shock. "You-you're saying he's the Alpha of Nightshade Pack? Mr. Thorne?"

Tessa nodded.

Avery stared at Landon in disbelief. This romantic man was actually the Alpha of Nightshade Pack? And the CEO of Thorne Corp-the wealthiest company in all of werewolf Montedra?

Chapter 285 More Than Meets the Eye

"Fine, leave the termination to Thorne Corp-now you can relax, right?" Tessa said, a little sour. They didn't know what she was truly capable of, sure; but still it stung that they hadn't believed in her.

"Why are you helping us?" Avery cut straight to the point.

This wasn't going to be easy to handle. If Landon was offering to help... it had to be because of Tessa, right?

"Because you're friends with my girlfriend," Landon said simply, pulling Tessa possessively into his arms.

All at once, every member of Avery Band turned to stare at her. "Tessa, is that true?"

Avery and Steven looked especially tense, waiting for her answer.

Landon leaned in close, deliberately letting his breath tickle her ear. "Well? What do you say?"

The warmth of his breath made her ears instantly turn red. Even without a verbal reply, her reaction gave everything away.

The cold, aloof Tessa-the one who used to keep everyone at arm's length-had never let a man hold her like that without punching him into the ground, and now she was even blushing.

Avery and Steven couldn't help the bitter twist in their chests.

They knew Tessa wasn't ordinary, but they hadn't imagined she'd be involved with someone this powerful.

Landon-Alpha of Montedra's Nightshade Pack. There was no way they could compete with someone like

that.

Seeing how flustered she looked, Landon chuckled and finally let her go. "Alright, let's head back. We'll leave this guy to Ethan."

"Okay." Now free from Landon's embrace, Tessa finally looked more at ease. Before leaving, Landon contacted Nathaniel to summon Ethan.

When Ethan arrived, the first thing he saw was the bloodied, broken mess that used to be Thoras, sprawled on the floor.

He'd heard of Thomas before-an infamous rogue with no line he wouldn't cross.

Still, Thomas's crimes had never reached a level serious enough for someone like him, the captain of the criminal unit, to personally step in. So until now, he'd left it alone.

"Take him away," Ethan said to his team.

"Captain Simpson, are we really dispatching special forces for a guy like this? Isn't this overkill?"

Ethan snapped, "Cut the crap. Command told us to handle it-just do your job." Right then, Simon came in from outside.

"Captain Simpson, I think I just saw Ms. Sinclair. What would she be doing here? Does she have something

400 More Than Meets the Eye

"Tessa?" Ethan's eyes lit up.

"Yeah! I'm sure I didn't get it wrong!" Simon was a total fanboy; there was no way he'd mistake her. But since she was with a few other people, he hadn't gone over.

"I'll go check."

Tessa had always intrigued Ethan-so much skill, yet no wolf. There were just too many mysteries surrounding her. He'd always meant to look into her more, but work had kept him too busy.

Lately, several major international cases had dropped on his desk, and he hadn't had time to track her down.

The moment Captain Simpson headed out, Simon grinned and said, "Told you! I told you he treats Ms. Sinclair differently! None of you believed me-well, you saw it now!"

"Enough already. Just don't let Captain Simpson hear you say that again, unless you want to get chewed out."

Simon scoffed. "He's not hearing anything; he's off chasing after Ms. Sinclair!"

"Simon, are you too free these days? If you've got time to run your mouth, we've got an opening on the border that needs a tech."

Ethan had just walked back in-and caught Simon right in the middle of his gossip. Simon immediately mimed zipping his lips.

"I didn't say a word."

Ethan had gone out to look, but there hadn't been a trace of her-just air and shadows.

Still, he trusted Simon; he wouldn't make things up. But what had brought Tessa here? And that wreck of a man -Thomas... was she the one who did that to him?

Chapter 286 Things Left Unspoken

Landon drove Tessa and Steven back to the villa, but Steven refused to get out of the car.

"Tessa, really-thank you for everything today."

It was rare to see Steven this serious.

"Hmm. Still being so polite with me?" she teased., "Anyway, it's getting late; go in and get some rest. Leave the contract stuff to Mr. Thorne. You don't have to worry about a thing."

If Landon was handling it, there was no way it wouldn't go through. They had nothing to stress about.

Steven glanced at Landon in the driver's seat, then turned back to Tessa, his voice suddenly firm.

"Tessa, what I really want to say is-even for our sake, don't ever go against your own will."

Even if the man beside her was Landon, Alpha of the Nightshade Pack, they didn't want her doing anything she didn't truly want to do.

Tessa understood what he meant and couldn't help but laugh. How could he be this sweet?

"I know what you're saying. Now go on; the others are waiting for you."

"You're not coming in?"

It wasn't easy for everyone to gather like this again—and her finals were over now. She should be able to play music with them again.

"No, I've got other things to take care of."

"What kind of things? Can we help?"

Anything involving Tessa—they wanted to be part of it, no matter how big or small.

"It's nothing serious. Just some family matters—not really something you guys can step in on. Focus on your next album, okay?" she said, offering a casual excuse. Avery had ended up in trouble because he'd been too absorbed in the music. But that was also a sign of how much they loved it. So, she'd handle the threats in the background—for their sake. It was her way of contributing to Avery Band

"Okay... but promise you'll come hang out with us when you're free."

Steven finally got out of the car, reluctantly, and went to meet up with the rest of the band.

"Captain, Tessa's really changed. She's still as loyal as ever, but in a lot of ways.... she's different now."

"Yeah." Avery had noticed it too.

But if Tessa didn't want to talk about it, there was nothing they could do.

After all, it was her own business.

Steven pondered. Still, now that she was with Landon... would Landon really treat her well? Would he end up hurting her?

"What if Mr. Thorne does hurt her?" Steven still couldn't shake his

worry.

Landon was Montedra's Alpha King-no one dared go against him.

"Don't worry. No one could ever push her around," Avery said, trying to reassure Steven-and maybe himself too.

"If Mr. Thorne ever lays a hand on her, I don't care if it costs me my life-I'll take him down," Steven said flatly.

"Yeah." Avery gave that statement a silent nod of approval.

On the drive back, Tessa remained quiet, leaning back in her seat, eyes closed.

"What's wrong? You don't want me involved in this?" Landon asked gently.

He'd fought Evan more than once-he knew how dangerous and cunning the man was. He didn't want her too entangled with him.

"No. I'm grateful that you're helping me," Tessa replied sincerely.

She wasn't the type to take things for granted; he was just overthinking it,

"Hmm."

Landon didn't say anything else. When the car finally stopped in the underground garage, Tessa moved to get out-but Landon caught her hand.

She turned back, puzzled.

He leaned in, pulling her into his arms and kissed her deeply, holding her for a long while. Tessa was left breathless, her pretty eyes filled with confusion. "What was that for?"

"Nothing."

Landon let out a helpless sigh. This girl's heart is impossible to read.

He was just... lost. That was all.

"I'm heading up. You should get some rest too."

Just as Tessa was about to step out, Landon grabbed her wrist again. She turned back to him, puzzled.

He recalled the moment Tessa destroyed Thomas's hand-the raw, unfiltered

surge of wolf power he'd felt in her then. Carefully, he asked, "When you went after Thomas... did you use wolf power?"

Chapter 287 Tessa's Cool With It

Most people probably didn't notice, but as the alpha king of Montedra, Landon picked up on the subtle shift in the air around her with his unnaturally sharp

senses.

It was like a flicker of light in the dark-there for a heartbeat, gone the next-but he caught it; he held onto it tight.

That was a strong, unique wolf aura-one th up with excitement; Flex even wanted to come out and track down the source of that presence himself... left a deep impression on him and got his wolf, Flex, riled

Tessa had already stopped trying to hide the fact that she had a wolf, so she nodded. "Yeah. I have a wolf."

As she spoke, she kept her eyes locked on Landon, trying to read his reaction after she'd kept this from him for so long.

But there wasn't any disappointment or anger on his face-just warmth and joy.

He pulled her into a hug. "That's amazing. You have your own wolf now; you've got your own strength to fall back on. You won't be so easy to corner anymore."

And suddenly, everything made sense. The reason Tessa had been able to defeat more than a dozen werewolf mercenaries on her own, the way she could handle every problem without breaking a sweat-it wasn't that she was some weakling who hadn't awakened; she was actually a powerful, awakened high-rank wolf!

Knowing that, Landon was genuinely happy for her...

Feeling the strength in Landon's embrace and hearing the care in his voice, a wave of warmth spread through Tessa.

Her tense body slowly began to relax, and a smile of relief tugged at her lips.

In that moment, all the worry and anxiety in her heart faded away.

She'd made the right choice after all; he was someone she could trust-someone who always stood on her side, thinking of her first.

That only made Tessa more certain of her decision-on her eighteenth birthday, she would tell him her biggest secret, not only did she have a wolf, but it was a rare White Wolf.

Because the White Wolf was so powerful, it had always been seen as a threat by the alpha leaders of the werewolf world and hunted down, which was why their numbers had dwindled so badly.

But she believed that if it was Landon, he'd only be happy that she had a powerful White Wolf; he'd never see her as a threat...

Tessa stepped out of Landon's arms. "I'm heading upstairs."

"Yeah. Go on."

Final exams were over too; she could finally get a little rest over the next few days.

And the fact that Tessa was willing to tell him about her wolf-this secret-made Landon happy. It meant

essa's Cool With It

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The next day, Avery's manager went straight to SkyEcho Entertainment to find Evan in person.

Evan had been completely swamped these past couple of days, dealing with the fallout from the hacking incident targeting Zane Corp.

His wolf side was growing restless from the stress; his eyes flickered with a dangerous light, and a heavy, oppressive energy rolled off him. Even the air around him felt dense, like it was weighed down by his

emotions.

So when he saw Avery's manager walk into headquarters, it only made him more annoyed.

"You'd better have a damn good reason for being here. Even though Avery Band basically kept the company afloat, Evan didn't like Avery at all; he was too unruly for his taste.

"Evan, here's the situation," the manager said humbly. Steven hurt his hand, so Avery's decided to terminate their contract with the company."

"Terminate the contract? Are you kidding me?" Evan snapped. "Avery Band only got this far under my leadership. This is their prime money-making phase, and they want to leave me now? Dream on!"

"Evan, wouldn't it be better to end things on a good note? You've never liked Avery anyway; what's the point of keeping them in a stranglehold?" The manager had been by Avery Band's side for a long time-he knew exactly how far Evan had taken things.

Evan's tone dripped with sarcasm. "A good note? Mateo after all the time you've worked under me, you still think you can say crap like that? Don't you think that's laughable?"

Chapter 288 Evan Yells at Everyone

Mateo stayed silent for a moment. He knew playing the emotional card wouldn't move Evan, so he gave up and switched to a more direct tone. "Mr. Evan, what will it take for you to agree to the termination?"

Either way, Mateo had already decided to stick with Avery Band. He was the one who brought those young people up; he cared about them, and he believed they were capable of so much more.

No matter what, he was going to rise and fall with Avery Band.

"There won't be any termination," Evan said flatly. "But since they want to act out, everything they're working on-the album, all of it-shut it down. Let them sit on it for a while and reflect on their behavior."

He was clearly trying to freeze Avery Band out.

"So you all think you've made it now, huh? That you can break free from me?" Evan scoffed coldly, his alpha aura radiating from him without warning; the air around them trembled under the pressure. "I'm telling you now-that's not happening. You're going to spend your whole damn lives working for me."

Mateo flinched under the weight of that aura. As unwilling as he was, he didn't dare lose his temper in front of Evan.

The man wasn't just the head of SkyEcho Entertainment-he was also the alpha of the Thornbane Pack, powerful and dangerous.

"Mr. Evan..."

But before he could finish, Evan waved him off.

"Enough. Get out. We're done here. Don't bother me with this again."

He really was in no mood lately.

Mateo still wanted to say more, but just then, one of Evan's men came in and whispered something in his ear. Evan's face changed instantly.

"Damn it-who the heck is this? I spent millions hiring cybersecurity experts, and they're all useless?"

A bunch of trash.

Zane Corp's systems had been hit again, and this time, some highly confidential data had been stolen. "What the heck do I pay you for? Aren't you supposed to be some top-tier hacker?"

a year from

The cybersecurity specialist didn't dare say a word. He was pulling in a few hundred thous Zane Corp, but this was the first time he'd ever gone up against a hacker this slippery. It was like the guy was playing with him.

Mr. Evan, the opponent's too skilled. There's really nothing I can do."

"Get out!"

Evan didn't want to hear a single word of that crap.

.

Could this be revenge?" one of his men asked cautiously

Evan's brows knit into a deep frown.

If it really was Phantom, then they were in serious trouble.

There weren't many in the werewolf world who could go up against Phantom.

"All I did was pay a visit to the Lightwing Order. Does he really have to go this hard on me?"

Evan genuinely couldn't wrap his head around it. He hadn't even gone in with hostile intent; he just wanted to recruit Phantom to work for him.

"Find a way to get in touch with someone from the Lightwing Order," Evan sighed.

Maybe he really shouldn't have messed with Phantom-this was turning into a nightmare.

He wasn't even being given a chance to breathe. If this kept up, Zane Corp would

go under before he could even make a move against Landon.

Eventually, Evan managed to get hold of Lina and said he wanted to meet Phantom and clear up the misunderstanding.

But Lina just kept stringing them along, never giving a straight answer.

That evening, Tessa arrived at the Lightwing Order and opened her laptop to begin upgrading their systems.

Lina spotted her and walked over. "Phantom, those people you brought in to the Lightwing Order-what's their deal?"

She glanced toward the office at the intimidating figures inside and couldn't help but shiver again.

A few days ago, Tessa had called to say she was sending a few people over and asked her to clear some space for them.

Back then, Lina hadn't thought much of it-just arranged the seating. But when those people actually arrived, she realized each one had a terrifying presence. They were clearly not ordinary.

"It's nothing. Don't worry about them. They're only here to protect you."

Since Evan had found their location, she had to put some safeguards in place. Even though she was confident she could handle Evan herself, she didn't want Lina or the others to take any unnecessary risks.

"Phantom, isn't this a little over the top? Do we really need protection? Sure, I'm not as strong. can still handle a few of Evan's guys."

as you, but I

"It's not just a few of his guys." Tessa's icy blue eyes darkened with a dangerous gleam as she thought about what Evan had done. "This time, I'm going to erase

Evan from the werewolf world for good."

Chapter 289 The Real Predator

Lina's jaw dropped in shock when she heard Tessa speak so brazenly. For a moment, she couldn't say a single word.

"Phantom, are you talking about Evan Morrigan, the alpha of the Thornane Pack?"

"Who else?" Tessa raised an eyebrow.

"Well then! If it's something you've set your mind to, I'll support you no matter what!" Lina didn't hesitate.

To her, Tessa was always the only choice.

"No need to reply to Evan. Let him stew in it for a few more days," Tessa said calmly.

She hadn't really done much-just casually hacked into the Morrigan Group's system-and Evan had already lost his composure.

Someone like him, going up against Landon? What a joke.

Phantom, I've always known how capable you are. But Evan's no pushover-be careful when you go up against him!

Lina still couldn't relax.

Phantom might be a genius, but she was still just a seventeen-year-old girl. Evan, on the other hand, was the alpha of the Thornbane Pack, once the second most powerful pack in Navoris. His strength and status weren't something to take lightly.

"Yeah, I know. I'll be careful."

Evan couldn't do anything to her. No one knew she was Phantom.

Even if she stood right in front of him, he'd have no clue she was the one who'd attacked his network.

And her White Wolf bloodline gave her the ancient ability to mask her scent. Not even an alpha king could detect her.

So what if he was the alpha of the Thornbane Pack? He had no idea who the real predator in the shadows

was.

After upgrading the Lightwing Order's defense system, Tessa stood up to leave. "Get in touch if anything comes up. I'm heading out to find Avery and the others."

"Okay."

When Tessa arrived at Apartment One, the atmosphere in the room was heavy. Avery and their manager were both sighing nonstop.

"Evan refuses to terminate the contract." He hadn't even given them a chance to negotiate-he simply didn't want to end things. "If this keeps going, it'll seriously hurt the band." Mateo was frustrated. Things had escalated to a point where there was no turning back.

"So what now? Things are already a mess-do you think Evan will still release our next album?"

"He made it pretty clear-he wants us to 'cool off.'" And everyone knew what that meant: he planned to shelve them indefinitely.

Just then, Tessa walked in. "Enough. Your job now is to write new songs. Leave the contract issue to Mr. Thorne-he'll take care of it." With Landon on their side, what was there to worry about?

"Tessa, it's not that we don't trust Mr. Thorne, but Evan is seriously disgusting." They'd been blind to sign with a company like his in the first place.

"No worries. Mr. Thorne can be even more disgusting."

The members of Avery Band were speechless.

Was it really okay for her to talk about Mr. Thorne like that? Wouldn't he be mad?

Tessa sat down on the couch. "Here's an idea. Why don't you guys go overseas for a while? Don't worry about what's going on here. I'll handle everything in the meantime. What do you think?"

All they needed to focus on was the new album. Everything else, she and Landon would deal with.

"Tessa, we can't just run away now. No matter what happens, we need to face it head-on."

That was the one thing they refused to compromise on.

"Well, I think it'd do you good to get away for a bit!" They were way too tense to write anything decent.

"I'm planning to start an entertainment company, and you're the first artists I want to sign. I have high standards for my artists, and you guys? You're not cutting it."

"What? Tessa, are you serious right now? Are you doing this because of us? Even if you are, you can't just start a company on a whim!" Steven couldn't believe what he was hearing.

Chapter 290: A Declaration of War

"I'm serious." She wasn't joking-when did she ever have time to joke around?

"I thought Sinclair Corp didn't have anything to do with the entertainment industry," Steven scratched his head. He really didn't get what she was doing.

"They haven't in the past, but that doesn't mean they won't in the future. You guys know who Camille is, right? She's going to join my company. As for you all-think it over. I'm not going to pressure you."

It was their decision to make.

"Tessa, are you really serious? You're not joking?" Avery asked hesitantly.

"Yeah. When have I ever joked with you? I'm about to become the president of Sinclair Corp. Once that happens, I'll start my own entertainment company."

Since so many people around her wanted to make it in the industry, she couldn't just hand them over to someone else she didn't trust. She might as well open her own company-just for fun.

"Tessa, starting an entertainment company isn't that easy. Are you sure you can pull it off?"

The werewolf entertainment world was far more complicated than the human one. An artist's rise to fame didn't just bring wealth and attention-it meant power for the pack behind them.

When an artist blew up, their pack's influence and access to resources skyrocketed as well.

That was one of the main reasons Evan had invested so heavily in the entertainment industry. He used contracts infused with pack magic to bind artists to him, ensuring their absolute loyalty. Unless Evan personally agreed to a termination, no artist could escape his control.

Now, Tessa was starting her own company and even trying to poach his people. This wasn't just about competition or dividing profits-it was a direct challenge to Evan, and to the entire Thornbane Pack.

Tessa took a sip of water. "It's fine. I can afford to lose." A flash of something feral passed through her eyes.

If Evan dared to mess with the people she cared about, she'd make sure to pay him back with interest.

Starting an entertainment company and stealing his artists-that was only the first step...

"Avery, you guys..." their manager began, starting to worry. Given their relationship with Tessa, if she really opened a company, the band wouldn't hesitate to sign with her.

But what kind of resources could a brand-new company even offer?

Avery nodded. "If you really start one, we'll sign with you." If they couldn't sing together anymore, this was the next best thing.

"Yeah. We'll always be together!" Steven's eyes turned red. No matter how they did it-so long as they could stay together, that was enough.

"Wherever Avery goes, I go." He believed the band would go global one day.

"Good. Then all of you will go overseas. Leave everything here to me. By the time you're back after the New Year, it'll just about be time to start recording the new album."

She'd already planned it all out.

Now, it was up to them to prove what they could do.

"Alright. We'll do what you say." Tessa might've been young, but within Avery Band, her words carried serious weight.

When she spoke, they listened.

And at a time like this, they really didn't have many options left.

Even if Evan let them go, no agency in the country would dare to take them on.

Given the situation, signing with Tessa's new company was actually a pretty solid choice.