

Alpha-less 391

Chapter 391

As Tessa's eighteenth birthday drew near, so did the turning of the year.

Walter knew Landon was secretly preparing a coming-of-age ceremony for her, but deep down, he still hoped Tessa would return to the Frostmoon Pack and undergo a more formal, more grand celebration

He wanted everyone in the pack to know-his Tessie was back! She wasn't some disgraced girl, nor a weak, unawakened werewolf; she was a powerful fighter with a high-level wolf soul, someone the top werewolf medical organizations were fighting to recruit!

After dinner, Walter brought it up again. "Tessic, are you sure you don't want to come back to the Frostmoon Pack? People misunderstood you before; but if you're willing..."

"No need, Grandpa. I've gotten used to being on my own." Tessa declined gently, but firmly.

She understood her grandfather's good intentions. But to her, the Frostmoon Pack was no different from the Sinclair family-if not for her grandfather, she wouldn't have stepped foot into the Sinclair household again, either.

And truthfully, she no longer needed any pack to support her-she was strong enough on her own.

She had already built her own "unofficial squad"-like Lightwing Order; or Night Alliance, which the old special forces commander kept trying to hand over to her; and of course, her close allies like Samuel, the members of Avery Band, Camille, and others.

In terms of intelligence networks, influence, and combat power, they were no weaker than a mid-sized pack.

There was simply no reason to return to a place so full of prejudice.

Winona, who had been about to pour herself a glass of water, happened to overhear their conversation- and instantly felt relieved. She didn't want Tessa back in the Frostmoon Pack. Tessa had already outshone her in every possible way; even if she hated to admit it, that was the truth.

The only thing Winona could still feel superior about was that Tessa had no pack. According to werewolf tradition, a wolf without a pack was a rogue, someone others looked down on. No matter how capable she was, that stigma wouldn't go away.

At least I still have that. Winona told herself for comfort.

Walter had expected her answer, but he still let out a sigh.

"All right; I'll respect your choice. But three days from now, it'll be your eighteenth birthday, your coming-of-age ceremony. Our family would like to throw you a party...'

Tessa politely refused again. "No need, grandpa. I don't like events like that." Besides, she'd already promised Landon that he could handle everything for her. The only person in the Sinclair family who genuinely wanted to celebrate her birthday was her grandfather; she didn't want him to worry about it.

Walter fell silent!

He knew well that Tessa wasn't fond of such occasions.

"Mr. Thorne will host my coming-of-age ceremony. Grandpa, you're welcome to

attend. Tessa extended warm invitation-to him, and only him.

"You sure there's nothing you want for a present?" Walter still wanted to do

something more for his granddaughter on her big day.

"Grandpa, I already have everything I need; I don't want anything. Just be good and behave, and I'll be

happy."

Walter turned to Louis.

"Louis, haven't I been good lately?" He'd never been this obedient in his life!

Louis chuckled.

"Ms. Sinclair, Walter's actually been very well-behaved lately."

"That's good. Grandpa, I'm heading out-Landon's still waiting for me."

"Go on, have fun." Walter beamed.

Seeing Tessa go out on a date with Landon filled him with joy.

His Tessie had carried far too much on her shoulders at such a young age. A rare break like this-she deserved it; she deserved to relax and enjoy herself for once.

As soon as Tessa stepped out of the Sinclair estate, she saw Landon's car waiting there-just as she expected.

Chapter 392 No Mating Plans Just Vibes

"Have you been waiting long?" Tessa asked as she got in the car.

"Not long."

On the drive to dinner, Landon couldn't help but ask again, "Are you really sure there's nothing you want for your birthday?"

It was a question he'd asked more times than he could count.

To prepare for her coming-of-age ceremony, he'd even calculated the placement angles of the moonstones in the sanctuary twenty-eight times.

Maybe he cared too much; maybe that's why he agonized over every little detail.

But Tessa wasn't someone who desired material things. And anything she did want, she was more than capable of getting for herself. That, in turn, left Landon completely stumped.

Having a girlfriend who was so strong and independent left the Alpha King with a strange sense of helplessness-like there was nowhere left for him to show his devotion.

Even though he had already prepared a gift, he couldn't shake the worry that she wouldn't like it...

"I want the stars in the sky," Tessa said playfully, for once in a teasing mood.

"The stars?" Landon brushed his fingers against the blush creeping over her ear; a soft glow lit up his eyes. "When the werewolf world finally breaks the dimensional barrier in quantum mechanics, I'll take you to pick them by hand."

Tessa pondered. I had only been joking, did he have to take it so seriously? Landon pulled up in front of Silvermoon Estate and drew her into his arms. "My girl is finally about to come of age."

Even though they hadn't known each other that long, he still felt like he'd been waiting forever.

Leaning against Landon's warm chest, breathing in the scent of his unique pine pheromones, Tessa felt truly relaxed and safe.

She used to believe that turning eighteen wouldn't change anything.

But now... she found herself looking forward to it.

"Mr. Thorne, you know this already-but since I've awakened my wolf, I'll be able

to recognize my fated mate on the day I come of age..."

"Hmm." Landon lowered his head and kissed her forehead. "I'm looking forward to that day to

Suddenly, Tessa felt a ripple of unease. "But what if... what if we're not fated mates?"

"There's no what if." Landon cut her off firmly. "I've said it before-even if you're not my fated mate, I've already chosen you for life."

There was a steadfast light in Landon's deep eyes-it was the oath of the Montedra Alpha King.

To be so completely and unwaveringly accepted-it made Tessa happy, of course,

In the past, she was always the one who got left behind; but Landon had always chosen her, always stood by her. Still...

"Mr. Thorne, there's something I should say upfront. Even though I'll be an adult soon, I'm not thinking about forming a mate bond anytime soon."

She was only eighteen; everything in her life was just beginning.

Landon gently held her hand and kissed the back of it.

"I know."

They hadn't even known each other that long.

How could I expect her to agree to something as serious as marriage now? Even though he and Flex both wanted to make her their mate as soon as possible, they would respect her every choice.

"Don't worry. I'll never force you to do anything you don't want to do. In fact, even the slightest hesitation from you, and I won't let it happen."

Was it unfair to him, for me to put it this way?

"But... your family and your pack probably want you to find your fated mate and form a bond, right? After all, having a Luna is important for a pack's stability..."

"No one gets to make me do anything I don't want to do."

Not even his family or his people.

"Besides, I'm already twenty-eight. If the Nightshade Pack really had to have a Luna to stay stable, I wouldn't have waited this long. Nightshade Pack updated its governance model years ago. Aside from my beta, Nathaniel, and his family, the Jones family and the Quest family also help me manage every aspect of the pack. So, Tessa, you don't need to worry about any of that. Of course, I hope one day you'll become my Luna and help lead Nightshade Pack; but I know you have your own vast world-and even if you don't want to be tied down by Nightshade Pack, I'll still fully support you."

Chapter 393 Mr Thorne Is Way Too Good at This

Tessa was so moved by Landon's words, she couldn't even speak.

Every step he took was for her; even the future-he had already thought it through for her. Everything he did was always to give her a safety net, never to become a shackle.

She couldn't help but tilt her head up and place a kiss on his perfectly sculpted jawline.

"Mr. Thorne, why are you so good to me?" she asked, overwhelmed to the point where she didn't even know how she could ever repay him.

"Of course I'm good to you. There are so many people who like you; if I don't treat you right, what if you run off with someone else?"

Even though he was confident he was the one most suited for her, he couldn't help but feel uneasy seeing all those suitors around her; there was always a

sense of urgency.

"Remember this-now and always, you're mine. You're mine and mine alone." That was Landon's obsession, one that nothing could change.

Those words suddenly reminded Tessa of Song Sinian-he'd made a similar declaration of possession, but when it came from him, it had felt like chains. When

it came from Landon, it was like moonlight melting gently over her.

"Mhm, I'm yours." Tessa curled up in his arms, smiling as she replied.

She was willing to be his, too...

On New Year's Eve, the cold wind in Navoris swept through Times Square, flinging snow like pellets through the air, but it couldn't douse the blazing excitement in the eyes of the million-strong crowd.

Tessa wore the wolf-fur scarf Landon had given her, perfectly paired with the cashmere hat Walter had knit by hand in the same shade.

She held tightly to the old man's wrinkled hand, mingling with the throngs of the Wolf Pack, her gaze lifted to the towering crystal ball at the center of the square- an 11-ton sphere covered in faceted prisms, swirling with rainbow light under the neon glow and snowflakes, like a cluster of stars fallen to earth.

"One more minute!" someone shouted; like a rising tide, the countdown surged forward from the edges of the crowd.

Walter looked up at the flickering digits on the screen and was suddenly flooded with the memory of the first time he brought Tessa to a New Year's celebration over a decade ago.

Back then, three-year-old Tessa had been dressed in a white tulle dress, the hem stained with stolen strawberry jam. He had bundled her in a wolf-fur cloak, and she'd waved her pudgy fists in excitement.

At the time, she was the girl prophesied to have no wolf, shunned by the rest of the Sinclair family. Only he had been willing to take time out of his schedule to bring her to the New Year's ceremony.

Now, the girl beside him had not only awakened a high-level wolf but had become the backbone of the Sinclair family. Those short-sighted fools from back then had all come to regret it. Tessie will only keep getting better from here on...

He discreetly wiped the corner of his eye, but Tessa caught him in the act.

"Grandpa's tearing up again," she said with a grin, pulling out a handkerchief embroidered with a wolf-head crest. "You have to be good this year-go for your check-ups when you're supposed to, and stay healthy okay?"

"You little rascal... anyone listening would think you were my

elder!" Walter chuckled and gently patted the back of her hand, then suddenly pointed at the crystal ball. "Look! It's starting to drop!"

The dazzling sphere began to descend, visibly inching down as the crowd erupted in a wave of cheers.

Tessa felt Walter's hand trembling slightly, so she pulled him closer, sharing her warmth with him.

On the outer façade of the 110-story Spire Tower, a massive projection played clips of New Year's celebrations from years past. One frame flashed by quickly-a much younger Walter, standing tall and proud as the Frostmoon Pack's alpha, cradling a baby Tessa in his arms.

"Five, four, three..."

Tessa threw her arm in the air with the crowd, her palm slick with nervous sweat.

"Two! One!"

Chapter 394 Falindale Made Me Fierce

At the stroke of midnight, the crystal ball landed precisely at the base of the flagpole; a downpour of golden confetti burst into the air like a torrential rain.

At the same time, a cascade of massive fireworks lit up the sky over the Hudson River; the wolf-head crest of the Montedra Wolf Pack bloomed brilliantly in the night.

When the firework burst at the wolf's eye, it flowed with a silvery liquid glow-it was a special effect Landon had custom-designed just for Tessa.

"Happy New Year, grandpa!" Tessa leaned close to the old man's car amid the thunderous noise, pinning a silver badge etched with the character "longevity" to his lapel. "You have to stay healthy and live a long, long life!"

Walter gently traced the edge of the badge, then pulled out a red velvet box. Inside was a pocket watch. The outer case was engraved with the Frostmoon Pack emblem; on the inside was a chibi-style silhouette of young Tessa.

"The chain is woven from Sanctum ice-silkworm thread; in the inner lining, I sealed some of my wolf fur," he said, tapping the cover with his fingertip.

A hidden compartment popped open in response. "If you inject your wolf soul into it, the family crest will reveal the Sanctum command-the mark that exiled you back then will be erased. As long as you wish to return, the gate to the Frostmoon Pack's barrier will always be open to you."

This pocket watch was not only a coming-of-age gift; it was also the key to her return to the pack.

As he spoke, Walter's voice began to tremble. "If I hadn't left to fight in the war against the vampires back then, you wouldn't have been cast out of the pack and wouldn't have had to face Falindale alone..."

"Grandpa," Tessa clasped his trembling wrist, holding the pocket watch to her heart, "it's all in the past now. And because I went to Falindale, I was able to grow into who I am today. From now on, it's my turn to protect you."

"Oh, my little Tessie has grown up!" Walter's heart swelled with emotion and pride.

Tessa gripped Walter's hand tightly. Above her, the sky sparkled with fireworks as the distant sound of "Forever Friendship" echoed through the air in grand brass tones.

Suddenly, she spotted a familiar figure on the balcony of a distant high-rise- Landon, dressed in a black -overcoat, raised his glass toward her over the crowd. Tessa smiled at him; she knew he could see her."

It was their own private New Year's greeting, shared across the space between them...

After the celebration ended, Tessa took Walter home to rest.

As she helped him into his room, he gently reminded her, "Tessie, tomorrow is your eighteenth birthday No matter what happens, I just want you to follow your heart and do what makes you happy."

He knew Landon would come to see Tessa first thing in the morning, to confirm whether they were fated

mates.

Even if the result wasn't what they hoped for, he wanted her to stand firm in her choices; to live freely and

happily as herself.

"Don't worry, Grandpa; I've always been that way."

Tessa replied with a smile.

Even though New Year's had just ended, she was already looking forward to what tomorrow might bring.

What kind of surprise would Landon have in store for me? Most importantly, would he turn out to be my fated mate? As she lay in bed, the snow-glow from outside painted the ceiling in silvery light; for a moment, it felt like she was lying on the icy ground of the Arctic.

Her fingertips absentmindedly traced the outline of the pocket watch in her pocket; her nerves tangled with anticipation.

Emma, sensing her emotions, offered a soothing voice. "No matter what tomorrow brings, I'll be right here with you."

"Of course-we're partners forever."

Tessa smiled, though she knew she should sleep; there wasn't even a hint of drowsiness. Her mind was filled with all the possibilities of what tomorrow might hold.

"Emma, what do you think his wolf will be like?" Tessa gazed up at the snow shadows drifting across the ceiling, her fingers brushing the skin behind her ear as it slowly grew warm. "Every time he releases his pheromones, I just melt. It's like being wrapped in the coziest, softest blanket-warm, safe..."

"You mentioned before that you sensed his wolf was from an ancient bloodline. Could it be the legendary Obsidian Crystal Wolf? Fierce and powerful... they say

it can devour metal, and its hide is impenetrable."

Chapter 395 Pine Needle Crown Incoming

As Tessa spoke, she began mumbling to herself, still speculating. "But when I fought him, his wolf power felt like it contained spatial laws... could it be the Void Devourer Wolf from the spatial class? In battle, It can absorb an enemy's claws, weapons, and other things into the void, stripping them of their ability to attack and when it opens its mouth, it reveals a bottomless black mawlike it's connected to another dimensions

"As long as his wolf isn't from the Frost Pack, I don't care what it is," Emma replied.

Just the mention of a Frost Pack wolf made Emma think of their alpha, Nathan- that freak had caused the Tessa of the past immense pain and trauma; Emma hated him for it.

"No way," Tessa reassured her. "I didn't sense any of that cold, icy energy in his wolf power."

She quickly changed the subject. "Emina, what do you think it'll be like when your wolf meets his?"

Emma's wolf soul gave her tail a swish deep in Tessa's consciousness; her silver- white mane stirred an invisible breeze. "Maybe the moment his wolf sees me, he'll flatten his ears-kind of like when a human boy sees a girl he likes and starts fidgeting with the hem of his shirt."

Emma's voice carried a hopeful smile. "But what I really want to know is-when Landon, the alpha king of Montedra, realizes I'm the legendary White Wolf, the one who isn't bound by any wolf-rank hierarchy, will he be as stunned as the first time he saw you take down over a dozen werewolf mercenaries?"

Tessa let out a soft laugh, turning over and burying her face in the pillow.

Neither of them worried Landon would react like other alphas-intimidated or threatened by her being the White Wolf. They were just excited to see how surprised he'd be when the truth came out.

"I also want to run with his wolf across the snowy forest," Emma said. Usually the "quiet type" of wolf soul, she now sounded like a hyperactive wolf pup poked in a hornet's nest, rattling off more than a dozen possible first-meeting scenarios. "I'll have him chase my paw prints, cracking through the ice crust with each step. Then we'll roll around under the northern lights, our fur tangled with snowflakes that glisten like icy gems; we'll run until we've scattered a trail of diamonds!"

"I want to leave a crescent-shaped mark on his heck-not a mate bond, just a White Wolf's recognition of a worthy rival. When he shakes his head, pine needles and snow will fly off together; maybe they'll even smack some clueless bird flying by."

Tessa burst into laughter, tears forming at the corners of her eyes as she imagined Landon covered in pine needles. "If he dares complain it looks ugly, I'll weave him a crown of pine needles and stick two icicles in it -for antlers!"

She and Emma kept going, caught up in their imaginings.

By the time she checked the clock again, it was nearly 3 AM.

"Oh my, less than 22 hours left until the day I've been waiting for finally arrives."

Tessa forced herself to stop daydreaming. "I bet he'll come find me before tomorrow morning even hits. I have to rest now and meet him in the best shape possible."

"Good night-may you have a wonderful dream," Emma whispered as her wolf soul curled into a fluffy her tail gently patting Tessa's spirit. "When tomorrow's moonlight spills over the Sanctum altar, we'll te his tie off-wolf style."

Deal, Tessa's voice brimmed with anticipation.

That night, even her dreams were scented with pine and snow....

During the day, "restless" was the only word that could describe her.

Calm and composed as she usually was, this was the first time she'd felt this jittery yet excited.

Walter, of course, understood the reason behind her unease. He chuckled and teased, "Tessie, looks like you can't wait for tomorrow to come. But let's get you something to cat first-it's only early evening. Even if little Landon is throwing you a coming-of-age ceremony, there's still over ten hours to go."

Chapter 396 Sinclair Family Needs a Timeout

"Grandpa, I'm not. Tessa said stubbornly. "The coming-of-age ceremony... it's just a regular birthday to

But the tips of her cars were so red, they looked like they could bleed.

Walter simply smiled at her with loving patience.

"Mr. Thorne's throwing you a coming-of-age ceremony? Where's it happening? I want to go too, Winona asked, voice laced with envy.

Landon personally organizing Tessa's ceremony meant it would be a grand affair- probably even attended by high-ranking werewolves from the Nightshade Pack.

She could no longer paint, which had been one possible route into noble werewolf society. Now, the only option left was finding another way to get close to high- ranking wolves.

Tessa let out a cold snort. "And why would you want to go? To ruin my night?"

"You!" Winona clenched her napkin, nails digging into her palm. "We're family, aren't we? You've gotten close to Mr. Thorne now-can't you help your brother and me out a little?"

"Help?" Tessa arched a brow; her knife and fork scraped sharply against the porcelain plate. "When I was exiled from the Sinclair family-cast out by the Frostmoon Pack-did either of you help me then? And now you remember we're related?"

If she hadn't promised her grandfather she'd spend the holidays at the Sinclair estate with him, she wouldn't be living here at all.

"That's enough, Winona. Stop talking," Walter said sternly, casting an unhappy glance in her direction. "All that time you spent in the lower-rank training camp, and you've learned nothing. From now on, every holiday, you'll go back there for training-until the word social climbing is no longer lodged in that brain of yours." "Grandpa!" Winona protested.

"I'm done eating. I'm going upstairs," Tessa said as she set down her utensils and left the table.

Being around these people could ruin even the best mood. As she walked away, Walter followed suit, letting out a long, weary sigh.

Sure enough, the warmth they'd shared as a family during Christmas had only been temporary; the rot at the core of this household had never really gone away...

"Cedric, did you see that?" Winona turned to her brother across the table. "Tessa's up in the clouds now, she doesn't care about us at all!"

Cedric lowered his head, fiddling with his knife and fork, his eyes flickering with hesitation. He wanted to say something, but the words wouldn't come.

He knew he had no right to ask Tessa to put in a good word for him with Lord Landon-but he couldn't stop hoping. If he could use Landon's authority to help the Frostmoon Pack acquire that starfall iron vein...

The sun had set, and dusk was deepening.

Tessa stayed in her room and didn't come out again. As the sky darkened, her heart rate picked up. To

distract herself, she opened her laptop and tried to focus on work.

Until the faint scent of pine-his pheromones-drifted in with the cold night breeze.

Tessa shot up at once; outside her window, the familiar black luxury car waited.

It was 9 PM, three hours before midnight. Landon had already come for her, even earlier than she had imagined.

As if sensing her gaze, Landon stepped out of the car and looked up directly at her window. Their eyes met

He smiled gently and waved to her.

Tessa beamed back and waved, then turned and ran out of her room.

As she passed the living room, Walter was watching TV. She called out quickly, "Grandpa, Landon's here to pick me up. I'm not coming back tonight."

She paused, then added, "And I might not be back tomorrow either."

Walter, fully aware of Landon's plans, didn't ask a thing. He simply grinned and replied cheerfully, "Go on, then, hope you and Landon have a wonderful day together."

Watching her rush out the door with barely contained excitement, Walter waited a moment longer, just to be sure they had gone. Then he stood, climbed the stairs, and changed into a dark gold ceremonial robe embroidered with the image of a Snowmoon Wolf howling at the moon in the mountain forest.

It was the only relic he had kept from his days as alpha.

It was time for him to head to the Wolf Sanctum-to prepare for Tessie's coming- of-age ceremony.

Chapter 397 Wolves Wanna Meet

Tessa dashed out the door, and Landon was already there, arms wide open to welcome her.

She threw herself into his embrace, unable to hide the joy on her face. "Why are you here so early?"

"I couldn't wait to be alone with you. It's your eighteenth birthday-your coming- of-age ceremony. I didn't want to miss a single second of it."

Tessa understood exactly how he felt, because she'd been looking forward to this too.

"Where are we going?"

"Get in the car," Landon said, without answering directly. He simply opened the passenger door for her.

Tessa didn't press him; she trusted Landon completely and handed this most important day of her life over to him without hesitation.

Landon got in and started the engine.

Tessa watched the snowflakes spinning past the window, and suddenly noticed that the car's fragrance had changed to her favorite pinewood scent. The seat was warmed to a perfectly cozy degrees, and even her usual jazz playlist was playing on loop.

The car left Navoris city limits, heading toward the quiet outskirts. The snowfall grew heavier the farther they drove.

"We're here."

More than an hour later, the car came to a stop at the edge of a forest near the Navoris border. Behind a wall of snow-covered pines, a silver-blue glow flickered faintly.

Landon popped the trunk and pulled out thick fur blankets, a star projector, and a metal case stamped with the Nightshade Pack crest-it was his carefully prepared camping gear.

As they stepped through the pine barrier, Tessa suddenly held her breath. The forest floor beyond was blanketed in bioluminescent moss that glowed soft blue beneath their steps. In the distance, a frozen lake shimmered with starlike ice crystals locked beneath its surface.

The moonlight spilled across it, making the entire lake ripple like a flowing galaxy. It felt like a secret sanctuary untouched by the outside world. Even as snow continued to fall, the stars and moon above remained vividly clear.

"This is Starfall Lake-sacred land of the Nightshade Pack," Landon explained while spreading out the blankets and tucking Tessa into a double-sized fur sleeping bag. "Only on days of major rites can anyo enter. The unique terrain here makes it possible to see stars and the moon, even during snowfall.

He opened the metal case to reveal a perfectly preserved strawberry cake, two steaming cups of cocoa, and a handcrafted box of werewolf chess pieces.

Tessa laughed, picking up one of the pieces. "So we're camping now? You really went all out."

"Want to eat something first?" Landon cut the cake, the frosting decorated with eighteen star-shaped candles. "I was going to wait till midnight, but I was worried someone might start gnawing on wolf fur if they got too hungry. Word is, someone didn't eat properly today."

Tessa sat up straighter in an instant. "Did Grandpa send you a message again? He kept sighing at my plate during lunch!"

Landon just chuckled softly and said nothing, handing her a slice of cake. "Come on, eat. Don't go hungry

"I won't." Tessa said, taking a bite. The taste of strawberry jam mingled with the piney air on her tongue. She suddenly pointed upward. "Look! The Big Dipper is right above us!"

Landon followed her finger but found his gaze lingering on her instead. Her hair had caught a bit of frosting, and under the moonlight, it sparkled like scattered diamonds.

He reached out to gently wipe it off, his thumb brushing the corner of her lips, his eyes filled with a warmth that couldn't be put into words. "The seven stars of the Big Dipper-they match the seven months and seven days since we met. Each star records every step I've taken toward you."

Night deepened; the snow had stopped.

Landon propped the star projector onto a tree branch. A swirling star map appeared across the snowy ground, and the handle of the Big Dipper pointed directly at their intertwined feet.

Tessa lay back with her head resting on his arm, watching glowing butterflies flicker across the "sky" on the snow. She suddenly felt the gland at the back of her neck begin to heat up. Why do I feel like I want to be marked...?

"My wolf, Flex, has been dying to meet your wolf... but he's never been able to sense her," Landon said suddenly, his voice husky. He took her hand and pressed it against his chest. "Ever since we entered the forest, he's been ramming my mental barrier like a pup looking for his mate. Can you let them meet?"

There was no threat now, no combat-just time that belonged to the two of them alone.

And now, Landon finally had the chance to express what Flex had been yearning for.

"Of course."

Tessa had already decided she would let Emma meet Landon's wolf today-and she would also tell him her wolf was the White Wolf.

So when he asked, she didn't hesitate for a second.

Tessa connected with Emma through their soul-link. Emma, no need to hide anymore. You can reveal our scent, you can finally meet Landon's wolf.

Chapter 398 Bite Me If You Mean It

Emma received the command and immediately withdrew the barrier that masked her pheromones.

In an instant, the sweet scent of lily of the valley surged from Tessa's body like a tidal wave, forming a veil of transparent mist that hung over the snowy ground.

The next second, Landon's body went rigid; a low, restrained growl rumbled from his throat.

His wolf soul, Flex, lifted its dark head deep within his consciousness, amber eyes locking onto Tessa's White Wolf, Emma-who tilted her head, silver-white mane shimmering with a haze of silver mist in their mental link, like a starlight sprite seen through a curtain of water.

"She's saying hello," Tessa said with a light laugh as Emma's tail-wagging echoed softly in her mind.

The White Wolf picked up a phantom pine branch and tossed it toward Flex through the mental link. Pine needles scattered gently in the shared plane of consciousness between them.

The giant dark wolf caught the branch in its jaws within the mental space; though nothing touched the real snow, Landon's fingers unconsciously tightened at Tessa's waist.

Suddenly, snow slid off a distant cedar with a soft rustle, startling a flock of glowing sparrows-that was the result of his repressed wolf power slipping free.

Landon rolled over and pinned Tessa to the fur blanket, his nose nearly touching hers. "Do you know what it's like to see your wolf wag its tail at your mate?"

He bit her earlobe, voice rough like wind laced with snow. "Makes me want to press you into the snow right now and show you in the wolf way-you're mine."

Tessa's fingers brushed the hot skin at the back of his neck, feeling the tremble beneath his taut muscles.

Emma nudged against Flex in their minds, and the moment their spirits touched, the ice crystals beneath Starfall Lake let out a high-frequency hum, the vibration coursing through the ground into their entwined bodies, as though the entire world resonated with this meeting of souls.

"Tessa, Landon's wolf is really from the ancient bloodline like me!" Emma's voice was giddy. "He's an Obsidian Crystal Wolf! The silhouette in his mind looks so fierce, his fur like forged steel-only a powerful ancient wolf like that is worthy of being our mate."

As the wave of Landon's possessiveness swept over her, Tessa let out a soft laugh. "Your wolf should've told -you-mine's a White Wolf, right?"

"Yeah." Landon's brown eyes reflected her smiling face; as his Adam's apple bobbed, a vein pulsed at his neck in sync with the rising tide of his pheromones.

Suddenly, he dipped his head and bit her collarbone, rubbing through her sweater to leave a dark mark.

It seemed he didn't even need to wait until midnight-he was already so intoxicated by her pheromones that he wanted to pin her down in the snow and make her completely his...

Tessa raised an eyebrow and hooked a finger around his tie, yanking it downward. "That's it? Don't you know White Wolves aren't bound by traditional wolf rank? According to legend, they've overthrown multiple Alphas and have

always been seen as rebellious anomalies by the old nobility..."

Before she could finish, Landon silenced her with a forceful kiss.

That aggressive kiss softened the moment it brushed her tongue, turning tender-just like when Flex nudged Emma's chin with his nose in their minds. That was his instinctive reverence and restraint toward his future mate.

He had made a vow long ago, whether or not Tessa was his fated mate, she was the only mate he would ever recognize in this life. What was so frightening about the White Wolf anyway? It was just an excuse for cowards.

She was the one he had chosen. Even if the entire wolf tribe saw her as a heretic, he would stand in front of her and tear apart every accusation with the fangs of the Nightshade Pack. As for the so-called "hierarchical order", he would crush it with his own hands.

The meteorite fragments beneath the lake emitted a faint blue glow, resonating with the pheromones coiling between the two of them, as if the astral spirits from three centuries ago were awakening to witness this meeting across time.

When Tessa, breathless, gave Landon's shoulder a gentle push, he pulled back slightly, panting, his body still braced above hers, one knee pressing beside her leg-an unmistakable wolf claim stance. Yet the moment she frowned, he loosened his hold.

Landon's fingers slid through the ends of her hair, coming to rest at the gland at her nape-flushed pink from her wolf soul's restlessness, like a cherry blossom blooming under moonlight.

His thumb grazed the spot, sometimes soft as falling snow, sometimes pressing down as if to brand her. A trembling restraint coated his voice, laced with ancient wolf instinct. "Only ten minutes till midnight. Nervous?"

Chapter 399

"I'm not nervous..."

Though Tessa wore a smile, the tips of her ears were flushed bright red. "That's impossible. But just like you said-whether or not we're fated mates, we'll still be each other's only one."

So even with her heart pounding, she still had the mind to tease him.

Her fingers trailed up the back of Landon's neck, raking lightly through his short hair. As they curled around the base of his neck, she deliberately let her nails scrape over his sensitive skin. The moment he inhaled sharply, she leaned in and brushed a kiss against the corner of his lips. "But more than nerves... I'm looking forward to how your pheromones will feel on my gland"

At her unmistakable hint, Landon's pupils trembled; his arms tightened fiercely around her, as though he wanted to fuse her into his own body.

"Tessa, don't tempt me. I won't be able to hold back," he growled, Adam's apple bobbing, his eyes were dark with restrained desire.

If she kept pushing him like this, he really would lose control and press her down into the snow, claiming her in the raw, primal way of wolves...

Tessa let out a quiet laugh. "Then don't hold back."

She'd already made up her mind-now that she was of age, she wasn't going to suppress her physical desire for him any longer. She wanted to pin him down in the snow and finally become one with him, completely.

"Just wait. Once the clock hits midnight, I'm not letting you go." Landon's voice turned hoarse, a growl threading through it; his eyes burned hot enough to set her ablaze.

Tessa's eyes lifted, her tongue flicking lightly across her bottom lip. "We'll see who ends up begging first."

Landon couldn't get enough of this vibrant, seductive side of Tessa. His throat moved as he dropped soft kisses along the corner of her mouth. "Thirty seconds left. Ready, Tessie?"

Tessa didn't reply. She simply guided his large hand to her chest, letting him feel the rapid beat of her heart, excitement and nervousness knotted together.

As the final ten-second countdown began, she slowly closed her eyes. She could feel Emma nuzzling close to Flex in their shared consciousness; their pheromones surged like a tidal wave across the snowy ground, transforming the space into a world that belonged only to them.

The moment the clock struck midnight and shattered through the snow-laden cedar forest, Tessa's pupils contracted sharply-because in Landon's eyes, a surge of deep blue light erupted like a key unlocking the innermost chambers of her soul.

In the instant their eyes met, time seemed to splinter into a thousand shards of crystal; each one reflected their search for each other across the expanse of time.

It was a tremor more instinctive than breathing-like stardust aligning at last; like glaciers finally melting.

Destiny, weathered through countless lifetimes, burst into being with a force that tightened her throat until all she could hear was her heartbeat pounding like a drum. At the same time, a hot current shot from the gland at her nape straight to her fingertips.

Landon's pinewood scent sharpened into clarity—it wasn't just a smell, but a summons engraved into her DNA; sharp like melted snow, burning like pine resin aflame. It clutched her heart in invisible hands painful, but achingly sweet.

And her lily-of-the-valley fragrance crystallized into a silver mist in the night sky. The moment Landon inhaled it deep into his lungs, a suppressed whimper broke from his throat-like a wolf who had finally found its long-lost moon.

It's him! Emma's jubilant cry and Flex's deep growl exploded in both their minds. He's our fated mate! The two ancient wolves collided in the spiritual plane, their union unraveling the energy of Starfall Lake that had been building for three hundred years, now dissolving into a murmuring tide.

Tessa saw the light in Landon's eyes quake violently-like thousands of stars flaring to life at once.

His fingers dug deep into her waist; her nails had already bitten into the back of his neck. Both of them trembled beneath the overwhelming force of destiny that had struck without warning...

Chapter 400 Tongue Maps

The next second, Landon's kiss crashed down on her. It was wild-utterly out of control..

His tongue pried her mouth open with unrelenting force, claiming her breath inch by inch, like he was determined to drown her in the waves of all the restraint and yearning he'd bottled up until now.

Tessa threw her arms around his neck and kissed him back with equal fervor, pouring all her joy and relief into it.

The crystal ice of Starfall Lake trembled with a high-pitched hum. Meteor fragments from the lakebed rose into the air, forming a spiraling star map in the night sky-each glowing point like a sprinkle of golden dust blessing their kiss.

In the distance, a pine branch cracked under the weight of snow; startled glimmerfinches burst into flight, flitting over their heads. Phosphorescent dust from their tail feathers landed in Tessa's hair, scattering like crushed diamonds.

They kissed until they were both gasping for breath, their warm exhales mingling and vanishing into the forest chill.

Suddenly, Landon hooked his arm behind Tessa's knees and lifted her off the ground, turning to press her against the trunk of an ancient snow cedar.

The moment her legs wrapped around his waist, she could feel it-his raw, simmering wolf strength thrumming through him, barely held back by fabric. His wolf soul was trembling with ecstatic joy.

His mouth moved from her lips to her jawline, then trailed down her neck, biting and grazing until it reached her collarbone. He finally paused just above the gland at the back of her neck, where his canines teased the skin-like a rehearsal for the mark he was about to leave.

Tessa's cheeks flushed pink; an involuntary moan slipped from the corners of her lips.

She tilted her head back, baring the length of her delicate neck. Moonlight bathed her racing pulse in silver; Landon's tongue followed that shimmer like a path, drawing the scent of her lilies-of-the-valley deep into his lungs.

"I've wanted to do this for so long..." Landon's voice was low and ragged, vibrating against her skin and sending shivers down her spine. "I've wanted to kiss you like this... to make you mine... to cover every y inch of you with my scent..."

-His nose brushed her flushed earlobe; then his mouth returned to hers, slower this time-as if he were

mapping her with his tongue. From the corner of her lips to their soft peaks, from the ridges of her teeth to the tender curve of her palate, he marked each spot with the warm trace of his pine pheromones.

Tessa matched his rhythm, her hands clutching at the hair at the back of his neck.

Clear strands of saliva slid down the corners of their entwined lips, but they clung to each other like two halves of a magnetized moon-impossible to separate.

Another pine branch gave way with a sharp crack; a clump of snow dropped straight onto their heads.

The sudden cold broke the fever of their kiss. They both gasped and blinked, eyes fluttering open.

For a beat, they just looked at each other-then, at the exact same moment, they both let out soft, breathless laughs.

Landon brushed a light kiss to the corner of her mouth, then threw his head back and let out a long how into the sky. It didn't sound like an Alpha's warning call; it sounded like a boy who'd lost his mind with joy

The next instant, the shadow of the Obsidian Crystal Wolf emerged behind him. Jet-black fur began to ripple out across his skin.

Behind Tessa, the White Wolf's image shimmered into view. Emma's consciousness surged to the surface silver-white fur sprouted from beneath her skin, and in the blink of an eye, she transformed into the elegant White Wolf of the snowfields.

Flex-majestic and proud-stood tall as the Obsidian Crystal Wolf. His pelt gleamed like forged steel, and in his amber eyes, the reflection of the White Wolf flickered.

He padded forward and gently bumped Emma's forehead with his nose. She cheekily caught his ear in her teeth and gave it a playful tug.

The two wolves greeted each other with affection, then shot off like arrows into the snow-covered forest.

They ran wild and free, chasing through the frozen woodland. Crushed beneath their paws, the glowing moss left behind a trail of soft blue light.

Flex deliberately slowed, letting Emma catch his tail between her teeth. Then, with a sudden twist, he pinned her to the snowy ground and nudged her chin with his damp nose. Emma batted at the

pine branches with her paw; snow cascaded down in a flurry, landing in Flex's dark mane, where it instantly melted into glittering droplets from the heat of his body.

The White Wolf gazed up at the stoic black wolf who allowed her every mischief; a joyful yip rose from her throat, childlike and unguarded. Even the swirl of snow around her wagging tail sparkled with untamed delight.

In the distance, startled glimmerfinches took to the sky again, their wings mingling with the wolves' streaking shadows, forming a living, breathing starstream-as if the entire forest had awakened to celebrate the dance of these ancient wolf souls.