

Alpha-less 451

Chapter 451 Home Turf, Hidden Thorns

Hearing that, Nathaniel looked even more aggrieved.

"So what if I do get her? Ysabel's totally obsessed with Tessa. She's never gonna take my side

"So what-you giving up?"

"Of course not." Nathaniel was firm.

Werewolves were loyal when it came to love. Even though Ysabel didn't have a wolf, he'd fallen for her at first sight.

Since he liked her, he was going to keep chasing her-no matter how hard it got. He wouldn't give up.

"Landon, quit picking on Nathaniel. He's already suffering enough"

"How is he suffering?"

"Come on, it's Ysabel! She hasn't awakened her wolf yet, can't-even recognize her fated mate. Who knows how long before she figures out Nathaniel likes her? He's got a long road ahead."

And who knew if he'd even succeed.

"Yeah... that is pretty tragic." Ysabel really wasn't easy to win over. That girl was totally clueless.

Always saying she wanted to fall in love-

But never realizing there was already a Nathaniel doing everything for her behind the scenes.

As the plane crossed the international date line, Tessa's watch automatically adjusted to Navoris time.

They landed at exactly 1:30 a.m. local time-and Landon already had 23 unread messages waiting on his phone.

Just as they stepped off the plane, they spotted Ysabel waiting for them.

The moment Nathaniel saw her, his mood shot straight through the roof. He practically lit up like a flower in bloom.

"Ysabel, it's been three days. Did you miss me?"

Ysabel stood there holding a massive bouquet and gave him a blank look.

"It's only been two days. What's there to miss?"

Then, spotting Tessa, Ysabel immediately turned and handed the bouquet to her.

"Tessa, welcome back! You have no idea how much I missed you these past three days!"

Nathaniel:

Seriously? A double standard this outrageous?

Was that even allowed?

How could she do this to him?!

What had he done to deserve this kind of treatment?!

Tessa glanced at Nathaniel and couldn't hold back a laugh.

She then handed the bouquet off to Landon to carry and threw an arm around

Ysabel's shoulders as they walked out together.

Nathaniel's mouth twitched.

He'd bet anything-

Tessa was doing this on purpose.

He was jealous.

Very jealous.

And yet even if he was jealous-no one cared. He was completely and utterly pitiful.

"Tessa, was your trip to Yalvaria fun?"

"We were in Astrovia, and it rained the whole time. Didn't really get to do anything. But after finals and college applications are out of the way, let's go on a trip together."

"Yes, yes! You're the best, Tessa!"

Watching Ysabel cling to Tessa's arm like that made Nathaniel's jealousy spike again.

"Alpha, can you do something about your girlfriend? All she does is seduce clueless little girls." That was just unfair.

"My woman can do whatever she wants. If you've got a problem, we can fight it out."

This couple was absolutely shameless.

They knew perfectly well he couldn't beat either of them-and still said stuff like that!

They all returned to Wisteria Apartment. It was late, so Landon and Nathaniel decided to stay the night.

Landon called Nathaniel to the study to talk business, while Tessa and Ysabel went to their room to rest.

Maybe it was the jet lag, but even after a shower, Tessa lay in bed unable to sleep.

Utterly bored, she pulled out her phone and logged on.

The moment she got online, she saw a group chat with a few of her rowdy Yalvaria friends blowing up about

Nathan.

"That Nathan guy really got wrecked, huh?"

"For real! Glacier Pack hit their home base out of nowhere. Frost Pack's gonna

need at least two or three years to recover from that."

"Any guesses who screwed him over?"

Chapter 452 Secrets She Can't Share

"No idea."

*Phantom, you online? Was that you?"

Tessa blinked at the screen.

Wow. Talk about timing.

"I'm not that powerful."

"Come on! If you can't do it, who can? Quit being modest! Just admit it already- was it you?"

"Phantom shows up in Yalvaria, and boom. Pack gets wrecked. I'm calling it now, it was Phantom!"

"Definitely her! Anyone who crosses her is doomed. Guaranteed."

"No kidding, that girl's a menace."

Tessa was speechless. Were they seriously trash-talking her right to her face? This was way too much.

"Guess you guys don't need me handling your network security anymore." Her fingers danced across the

screen.

"Heh, we were just joking! You're not that petty, right?"

"Exactly! Just teasing! Our sweet Phantom is beautiful and kindhearted!"

"Cut it out. I need you all to keep an eye on Nathan for me. If he does anything, let me know immediately."

No matter how things looked now, once Nathan recovered from the shock, he'd definitely realize she was behind it.

"Got it. We'll be watching him like hawks."

"Alright. I'm going to bed."

"Night!"

The next morning, Landon had already arranged breakfast for everyone.

As they ate, he said warmly, "I've got to head to the office soon. You and Ysabel stay home and review. I'll take you two out for dinner after work."

So this was the infamous overbearing boyfriend type.

Apparently, he had to micromanage everything.

"Okay," Tessa replied sweetly, clearly unbothered by Landon's fussing-if anything, she enjoyed it.

"Also, stay indoors these next few days. Word is, some higher-ups in the Werewolf Council have gone missing. No clue what's going on yet. Just stay safe and study."

Nathaniel jumped in immediately. "Yeah, especially you, Ysabel. You haven't awakened your wolf yet. Don't go wandering around. Too dangerous."

It's fine, I've got Tessal" Ysabel said cheerfully.

"Tessa's not going out either." Landon warned, giving her a sharp look.

Ysabel instantly backed down. "Got it, got it. We'll study at the apartment." Only then did Landon case up.

After breakfast, he asked Tessa for a goodbye kiss, then left with a satisfied grin. Ysabel and Nathaniel both shook their heads at the sight.

Once Landon was gone, Ysabel finally relaxed.

She was about to start ranting about her overbearing uncle when Tessa's phone rang.

It was Ethan.

Tessa frowned, but answered.

"Tessa, I know you've got exams coming up. I hate to bother you now-" Ethan's breath came through the line, laced with distant wolf howls and sirens.

"If you're calling, just get to the point." If he didn't want to bother her, he wouldn't have called.

"Where are you? I'll come pick you up. It's urgent-seriously bad."

As the captain of the SWAT division, he hated having to keep asking a young girl

for help. But when lives were on the line, he had no choice.

"I'm at Wisteria Apartment. Just come here."

After hanging up, Tessa went to get dressed.

Ysabel followed her immediately.

"You're going out? But my uncle said not to! What's going on? Can I come with you?"

At this point, whether she studied or not didn't really matter. She might as well go out and blow off some

steam.

"Sorry, not this time. Stay home and review.

Ysabel looked heartbroken.

"Why not? Why can't I ever go with you, Tessa? Why do you always have so many secrets?"

Weren't they supposed to be best friends?

Why were there so many things Tessa wouldn't let her in on?

Chapter 453

The Council's Missing Link

"Ysabel, I really do have something to take care of. I can't take you with me this time.

Ysabel clearly wanted to go, but seeing how serious Tessa looked, she didn't press the issue.

"Okay then... just be careful, alright? And you have to get back before my uncle does."

"I know," Tessa promised. She didn't want to worry Landon either.

After changing clothes, she headed downstairs to wait for Ethan.

As soon as she stepped out the front door, Ethan's car pulled up.

Tessa opened the door and got in.

"The situation's critical. I had no choice but to come to you again. I'm sorry for the constant trouble."

"It's fine. Just tell me what's going on."

Ethan turned the wheel and navigated around a roadblock while explaining, "A senior council member from the Navoris Werewolf Assembly has gone missing. He's been advocating for peaceful coexistence between White Wolves and the alpha class..."

The moment the words "White Wolves" came out of his mouth, both Tessa and Emma were all ears.

"You know how it is," Ethan continued. "In werewolf society, White Wolves are seen as outsiders-rogue by nature. They don't follow the traditional hierarchy and can even rival alphas in power. That makes a lot of alphas uneasy. This official wanted to break that mold and push for a new order. His identity is too sensitive to reveal right now, but his stance could shape the entire future of the Murican werewolf community. If his vision takes hold, it might finally end the long-standing divisions and bring about real peace."

Inside Tessa's mind, Emma was wagging her tail furiously. "Tessa! Did you hear that? We have to save this councilman. If his ideas take root, we'll no longer have to endure those looks of suspicion. We can ditch these cloaking necklaces and transform freely-whenever we want!"

Don't worry. Leave it to me, Tessa answered through their link.

Ethan kept explaining, "We've tried everything-scent tracking, advanced tech, nothing works. Even our natural wolf instincts are drawing a blank on this one."

The entire task force was in disarray. No leads, no clues.

Then, suddenly, Ethan remembered Tessa. And he'd rushed over, hoping she could work another miracle..

"Understood."

Tessa didn't ask any further. If it wasn't her business, she wouldn't pry.

Soon, they arrived at a heavily guarded facility.

After multiple security checks, they were finally granted entry.

"Sorry, but we have to screen everyone. This is a sensitive case."

"No worries. A place like this should have strict procedures."

Tessa was getting a little impatient with the repeated scans, but she held it in.

She was here to help-not to cause trouble.

After passing checkpoint after checkpoint, they finally reached Ardu and the team.

The moment Ardu saw her, he looked like someone who'd just been thrown a lifeline.

"Tessa, thank god you're here. I've tried every trick you taught me and still can't find him."

They were out of options.

Seeing her gave them hope.

But just then, a commanding voice cut through the air.

"Ethan, what the hell are you thinking? Do you even realize how classified this operation is? You think it's okay to just bring some girl in here?"

A man in full military uniform stepped forward, his presence radiating an

unmistakable authority. There was still a lingering scent of wolf battle aura clinging to him-a clear sign he'd recently fought tooth and

claw.

This was Mr. Zachariah.

And he was not happy to see Tessa.

His voice was sharp, loaded with disapproval and suspicion.

Chapter 454 Bite Back

"She's with me. I'll take full responsibility," Ethan said sharply, refusing to back down.

He knew exactly what Tessa was capable of. And he wasn't about to let Mr. Zachariah's condescension shake his trust in her not when the stakes were this high.

"Ethan, what the hell are you thinking? We're supposed to be working together to find him, not dragging in some random girl! Do you even remember what discipline means anymore?" Zavala barked.

As a soldier, he understood how critical and sensitive this mission was. There was zero room for error.

Especially when it came to werewolf class politics-one mistake could set off a storm no one could contain.

"Mr. Zachariah, Tessa's seriously talented. She can really help us," Simon cut in, unable to stay silent.

He knew Mr. Zachariah hadn't seen Tessa in action. If he had, he wouldn't be saying any of this. Honestly, he might end up eating every word.

Tessa had already helped them crack multiple high-level cases.

Zavala snorted, face twisted with disdain.

"Her? A little girl who probably still smells like baby powder? How much help could she possibly be? Your team used to act like you were the best of the best, and now you're counting on some kid? Do you even understand the gravity of this mission? We're talking about a key figure pushing for peace between White Wolves and the alpha class-this isn't some playground skirmish."

Ethan sighed, long and low. He turned to Tessa. "Ignore him."

Without another word, he started guiding her toward the inner corridor. He knew once Tessa started working, Zavala would see the truth for himself.

"Ethan! I'm talking to you!" Zavala shouted behind them, his temper flaring.

The pressure had been building on his end for days. No progress, just mounting chaos-and now Ethan was placing all his hopes on some teenage girl?

It was too much.

But Tessa didn't even flinch. She frowned, turned slightly, and said coldly, "Can you shut up already? You're too noisy."

She didn't have time for this.

The priority now was to find that missing official-someone who could change the future for all werewolves, especially her own people.

She was already sorting through every possibility in her mind: what kind of magic, what kind of cover, what kind of enemy would cause the trail to go cold for both wolves and tech alike.

This wasn't the time to argue.

Zavala, publicly scolded by a girl half his age, looked like he'd swallowed a live grenade.

The rest of Ethan's team couldn't help chuckling.

"Ethan, what's your problem? You looking to fight me now?"

"If that's what it takes, I'm game," Ethan replied flatly, a wave of beta-class pheromones spilling from his collar. It didn't have the dominating pressure of an alpha's, but it had a seasoned sharpness-razor-honed from years of real combat.

"But I'm warning you: you're wasting time. Every second counts right now, and you're here throwing a

tantrum."

"You-" Zavala was seething. "You really think she can solve what a whole task force couldn't?"

"Whether you believe it or not is your problem," Ethan said coolly. "But don't drag everyone else down with your doubt."

Then he turned. "Simon, get Tessa inside. No more delays."

"Got it," Simon replied.

Without another word, he led Tessa into the core operations center-leaving Zavala behind, still fuming.

Chapter 455 Lost Without a Trace

Mr. Zachariah was fuming, but Ethan didn't even spare him a glance.

If he kept throwing a tantrum now, he'd only end up making a fool of himself.

One of Zavala's men leaned in and murmured, "Sir... I heard Ethan cracked several major cases lately. Do you think it might be because of that girl?"

Their two squads had always been neck and neck in performance.

But lately, Ethan's team had been on a winning streak-solving big cases one after another and getting major recognition from higher-ups.

Zavala shot him a glare.

"What nonsense are you babbling? We solve cases based on skill. You think a teenage girl is the reason for all that?"

He'd always believed in his own strength—and never looked-twice at anyone else's.

"But Captain, there's no smoke without fire. We used to be evenly matched with them, and now they're leaps ahead. There has to be a reason, right?"

Zavala had been ready to storm off in frustration, but hearing that, he hesitated.

Instead, he dragged over a chair and sat down.

Fine. He'd stay and watch. Let's see what trick Ethan had up his sleeve.

Inside the cool-toned, neon-lit control room, Simon led Tessa through a maze of high-tech systems.

The air buzzed faintly with ozone and wolf pheromones. On the walls, holographic screens looped surveillance footage from the Council Hall.

"What do you think? Ever seen anything like this? Do you know how to use it?" Simon asked. He knew Tessa was good with computers, but this gear was cutting-edge. No ordinary high schooler would know their way around it.

Tessa turned and gave him a look.

"Simon, are you seriously underestimating me right now?"

She'd seen tech like this two years ago. Please.

Simon rubbed the back of his head sheepishly.

"I didn't mean it like that. We only just got this equipment ourselves. I barely know how to use it. I was just worried it'd slow you down. But if you've got it, great!"

Tessa didn't respond. She sat down at a console and got to work,

"You didn't find anything?"

"We picked up a faint trace of the councilman's pheromones," Simon explained, handing over the data files. "But they were basically useless. According to the residual trail, the last time he was seen at that location was

ten days ago. After that nothing. It's like he vanished off the face of the earth"

Even the file used code letters to refer to the councilman-his identity strictly confidential

"Tessa, if you have any ideas, please. We haven't slept for days, and we've still got nothing. Without knowing where he is, we're completely stuck."

"Alright. I'll take a look."

Tessa opened the system and started parsing through data.

"You're seriously hacking into the Werewolf Council's biometric lock... in front of

me?" Simon whispered, half in awe.

This girl was something else.

"Stop talking. I need silence to concentrate."

Simon clamped his mouth shut.

Fine. If she could really find him, he'd do anything she asked-no questions asked.

People don't just disappear into thin air.

This councilman had to have been taken.

But by who?

That was the real question.

Tessa tried several different approaches-nothing.

Simon stayed nearby, tense, hoping for a breakthrough. But as she continued without any success, his optimism began to fade.

Then Ethan walked in and noticed the look on Simon's face.

"Still no leads?"

Simon shook his head helplessly.

"Ethan, I think we're out of options. It's been over ten days. We might have to face the fact that... he's not coming back."

He didn't want to say it—but deep down, they were all thinking the same thing.

The odds weren't looking good.

Chapter 456 Gone Without a Trace

Ethan stayed silent.

He stood off to the side, eyes fixed on Tessa.

At this point, she was his last hope.

He wasn't the type to give up until the very end.

Simon stood by too, at a loss for what else he could do.

If Ethan and Tessa hadn't given up, how could he?

"Tessa, is there anything I can do to help?" he asked. At the very least, he was a trained professional-maybe his help could make a difference.

But Tessa only shook her head.

"You can't help with this."

She wasn't trying to be rude-it was simply the truth.

Simon opened his mouth, then shut it again.

The feeling of helplessness stung more than he expected.

He'd always been someone who tried his hardest. But sometimes, effort alone wasn't enough.

He had done everything he could.

And it still wasn't enough.

"Simon, maybe take a break. Step outside for a bit," Ethan suggested. Simon had

been cooped up in this room since the incident began.

Sometimes, a shift in environment could bring new insight.

"I'd rather stay," Simon said quietly.

He wanted to watch. To learn.

Tessa was using techniques he'd never even seen before.

This was a rare opportunity-he wasn't about to waste it.

Tessa didn't respond.

She was already deep in concentration.

Because of the sensitive nature of the operation, everyone inside the control zone had to shut down their communication devices.

Tessa's phone had been powered off when she entered.

Which meant-back at Wisteria Apartment, Landon came home to find she was gone.

And every time he tried calling her, he got the same message: phone off.

Ysabel watched her uncle's icy expression and dared not say a word.

Landon threw his phone onto the couch.

"She didn't tell you where she was going?" he asked, voice low and dangerous.

Ysabel immediately shook her head.

Of course she didn't know.

She was just as upset!

"Uncle, don't worry so much. Maybe she'll be back any minute," she offered

weakly. But the tension in the room was making her anxious too.

Landon sank onto the couch.

Ysabel hesitated, then tried to sit down too.

"I asked you to stay here and watch over Tessa. This is what you call looking after

her? What makes you think you deserve to sit?"

Ysabel had barely bent her knees when his words hit her like a slap.

She silently backed away, eyes wide.

"Uncle... when did you ever say I had to watch her? And she doesn't even need me to watch over her..."

But before she could finish, Landon shot her a glare so sharp she froze mid- sentence.

She quickly lowered her head and started fiddling with her fingers, pretending she hadn't seen anything.

My heart is broken, she thought. But I'm not saying a word.

When Tessa came back, she was going to tattle.

Her uncle had been so mean to her lately. Tessa had to know!

Landon stayed in the living room, forcing himself to stay calm.

Maybe she just had something to do and her phone died, he told himself. Maybe she'll walk through the door any

minute.

But by 8:00 p.m., there was still no sign of her.

His composure began to crack.

Inside his consciousness, Flex paced back and forth, equally unsettled.

"It's been too long. Why isn't she back yet? And why can't I sense Emma's aura at all? Where are they?"

As a rare ancient Ink Obsidian Wolf, Flex should've been able to detect Emma anywhere within Navoris- unless she was deliberately suppressing her presence.

Unless they weren't in Navoris anymore.

Or they were in a location shielded against ancient wolves...

Finished

Like a high-grade wolfbone barrier-a fortress built from the remains of long-dead

wolves, capable of cloaking even the most primal of energies.

Chapter 457 Signs of Trouble

Ysabel, who had always been confident in Tessa, was starting to panic.

"Uncle, why isn't Tessa back yet? She's been gone for seven or eight hours already. What if something happened to her?!"

"Don't jinx it!"

Ysabel shook her head.

"Uncle, that's not what I meant. I'm really just worried about Tessa. If she's not back soon, I'm going out to look for her!" Ysabel was genuinely concerned.

No matter what she went out to do, it shouldn't take this long!

"Get back here!"

Landon was exasperated. Navoris was huge-how was a girl who hadn't even awakened her wolf supposed to find anyone?

Ysabel was on the verge of tears.

"Uncle, I'm seriously worried! I can't just sit here anymore!"

"Alright, I'll contact Nathaniel. You stay put!" He had tried to convince himself to give Tessa the personal

she needed, but she'd never been gone this long before-and she wasn't answering her phone.

How was he supposed to stay calm?

Ysabel immediately nodded in agreement.

Landon reached out to Nathaniel through a psychic link and instructed him to send out Nightshade Pack's wolf trackers to search for Tessa.

Nathaniel followed the order at once.

"Alpha, the wolf trackers discovered that Tessa left with Ethan. As long as we find Ethan, we'll find Tessa!"

Nathaniel rushed to Wisteria Apartment to report to Landon in person.

Hearing that Tessa was with Ethan made Landon even more uneasy.

Ethan was the captain of the Navoris State SWAT Team, tasked with hunting down the most dangerous rogue werewolves!

If Tessa was with him, she could easily get hurt.

"So have you found Ethan?" Landon asked directly.

Nathaniel shook his head. "Alpha, you know how it is-Ethan's with SWAT. He answers to the Werewolf Council. Even we don't have the authority to track their movements."

"No authority doesn't mean no way, -Landon said, locking eyes with Nathaniel. "Alright, I got it." Nathaniel had no choice but to accept it.

What else could he say? If the Alpha gave an order, of course he had to carry it out.

Meanwhile, in the surveillance tracking room where she'd spent over ten hours, Tessa finally found a lead. She drew a signature white wolf rune matrix with her fingertip across the holographic screen. The lines- formed from silvery-frost pheromones-lit up at once. Following the threads, a map of Lower Manhattan emerged on the screen.

"This is it-basement level three at coordinates (N40 43', W74 00'). Try there. But the target might've used masking magic, so the real location could be off by as much as three blocks. If they're not there when you arrive, that could be why."

Simon and Ethan, who'd been beside her the whole time, looked toward the screen when she spoke.

"Tessa, are you sure?"

Tessa nodded.

"This is the only location I was able to find." She was about eighty percent confident, but she didn't want them to end up disappointed.

"Alright, got it!" Ethan immediately gave the order. "Simon, gather the team. We move out now!"

"Yes, sir!"

Simon rushed out to assemble the squad.

Tessa had been sitting for over ten hours-she was truly exhausted. She got up to stretch her body.

Seeing Ethan still there, she looked up at him.

"What is it? Something else?"

"No, I'll take you home in a bit."

"No need. Saving them comes first." She could get home on her own.

"Tessa, thank you." She'd really come through for them this time.

Tessa turned and walked out.

"Don't mention it."

Ethan led her outside, where Simon had already assembled the team.

Mr. Zachariah and the others had been waiting out front. Seeing such a commotion, they all stood up.

One of Mr. Zachariah's men whispered, "Mr. Zachariah, did they really find them?"

Chapter 458 Apologies and Explanations

Mr. Zachariah eyed Ethan suspiciously.

They had been rivals for years, and he knew Ethan wasn't the kind of guy to make reckless moves. If he was mobilizing this many people, he had to be onto something.

"Ethan, did you guys find a lead?"

Ethan glanced at him coolly. "What's it to you?"

"Come on, why are you being so stingy? This isn't just your problem-it's a matter of life and death."

Simon gave a cold snort. "That's not what you were saying earlier. If you don't trust us, then why bother tagging along?"

"Ethan, this concerns the safety of a high-ranking councilman. Let's not waste time arguing. If you really do have something, let's go together," Mr. Zachariah said, swallowing his pride.

No matter what, the mission came first.

Ethan nodded.

"Fine. We'll bring you this time. Just don't look down on others so easily next time."

It really rubbed people the wrong way.

Mr. Zachariah glanced at the girl beside Ethan.

Now that he looked again, she was actually kind of likable.

"Kid, I'm a rough guy. If I said anything out of line earlier, I hope you don't take it personally. When this is all over, let me treat you to a meal," Mr. Zachariah said with a sheepish grin.

Ethan was exasperated.

Mr. Zachariah was always like this-arrogant on the surface, but serious when it came to work.

"No need to be polite."

Tessa didn't respond to him directly.

"Simon, take Tessa out," Ethan said. She wouldn't be able to leave by herself. "Yes, Ethan."

Simon personally escorted Tessa to the front gate, then apologized, a bit

embarrassed. "Tessa, sorry. I should've taken you all the way home, but we've got

a mission coming up, so I can't."

Tessa knew they were rushing to save someone-how could she expect him to take her home?

"No need to apologize. Go on."

By the time Tessa took a cab back to Wisteria Apartment, it was already 10 p.m.

As soon as she punched in the code and opened the door, Ysabel came running from the couch.

"Tessa, where on earth were you? Do you know how worried I was?" Ysabel looked like she'd been about to

cry.

"I just had to take care of something. I told you before I left."

Seeing that Tessa wasn't hurt, Ysabel finally relaxed. "But we couldn't reach you

at all! You weren't answering your phone and you weren't coming home-of course we were going to worry!"

They had been worried sick!

"Alright, I'm fine now, aren't I?"

Tessa glanced at Landon, who was off to the side radiating a cold, oppressive aura. She gently pushed Ysabel aside.

Not good-Landon looked seriously pissed...

Tessa stepped forward, hugged him, and tried to explain. "Landon, don't worry, I just went out to take care of something. I had to turn off my phone for it, so I couldn't answer your calls."

Landon was speechless.

They'd been worried for hours, and she was just "taking care of something"? "You didn't even call? Don't you know how worried we were?" Landon wrapped his arms around Tessa. He didn't know what to do with her.

Tessa rubbed her cheek against Landon's neck apologetically. "It slipped my mind in the moment. I'm sorry. I promise I won't make you guys worry like that again." She hadn't meant for it to happen this way.

But the place Ethan had taken her really wasn't something she could explain to others.

In the sea of consciousness, Emma flicked her fluffy white wolf tail and nudged Flex's obsidian-colored wolf head with her nose. Ripples of silver-blue light shimmered through the mental domain. "Don't worry. We ancient wolves aren't so easy to put in danger. Next time I'll remind Tessa to keep you all updated and safe."

She had used quite a bit of psychic energy helping Tessa track down the high-ranking councilman. She'd forgotten to remind Tessa-and Landon-to call...

Chapter 459 You Owe Me Too

Flex's obsidian-black tail wrapped around Emma's fluffy white one like a silken ribbon. He pressed a paw pad gently against the silver-frost totem on her brow, sending ripples of deep violet through the mental domain. "Alright, but next time, don't make us worry like this again."

His low wolf-howl transformed into a caress of spiritual energy, brushing away the faint golden shimmer that had appeared on the tips of Emma's ears from

overexertion.

The two wolf spirits nuzzled close once more.

Emma's silvery fur brushed against Flex's obsidian coat, and the light patterns formed in their mental domain flashed once across the white wolf totem on Tessa's brow-an imprint unique to ancient wolves: the Soul-Breath Resonance mark.

"So where did you even go?" Ysabel couldn't help asking. "Nathaniel looked everywhere and still couldn't find you."

Nathaniel also looked at Tessa curiously..

Tessa turned to Landon. "You had Nathaniel out looking for me?"

"I didn't mean anything by it. I was just worried about you."

Once Flex picked up Emma's scent again and Landon confirmed Tessa was on her way back, he had told Nathaniel to stop searching.

"I know you were worried about me."

She knew she'd been in the wrong this time. She shouldn't have disappeared for so long.

"Alright, now that I know you're safe, I can finally relax. I didn't even dare drink water while you were gone," Ysabel said, pouring two glasses-one for Tessa and one for herself.

Seeing her like this made Tessa feel even more apologetic.

"I'll take you out for a day of fun sometime to make up for it."

"Nope, make it up to me now. I haven't even had dinner yet!" She was practically starving-how could she wait until "sometime"?

"You didn't eat either?"

The always composed Nightshade Pack Alpha-he hadn't eaten either just because she'd been missing?

"No." Of course he hadn't.

Ever since meeting this girl, he'd forgotten what "staying calm" meant.

Anything that had to do with her affected him.

Landon asked, "Did Ethan and the others run into trouble?" If Ethan was involved, it couldn't be anything good.

"Yeah, but I can't tell you the details. You understand, right?" Some things were confidential and couldn't be discussed.

"I get it. But since you're making it up to Ysabel, don't you think I deserve something too? I was just as worried about you."

Now that she was home safe, he definitely wanted some kind of reward.

Otherwise, all that anxiety he'd suffered for hours would've been for nothing.

Tessa couldn't help but laugh. "So, what kind of reward do you want?"

Landon pinched her slim waist discreetly. "You'll find out tonight."

He was absolutely going to "punish" this little troublemaker who had worried him all night.

Flex howled approvingly in the mental domain.

Landon wrapped an arm around Tessa and started leading her out. "But first, let's get something to eat."

"Perfect. I'm starving. My treat." She hadn't had time to eat at all.

She hadn't had a bite since noon-she really was starving now.

As soon as Nathaniel heard that, he rushed off to prep the car.

He'd worked hard all afternoon too.

If Tessa was buying dinner, he was going to enjoy every bite!

Once the group arrived at the restaurant and placed their orders in a private room, Nathaniel announced excitedly, "I've got some great news! I just got word-

Nathan's in really bad shape right now!"

"Nathan? The Frost Pack Alpha? Did he mess with you guys or something?" Ysabel asked. She'd heard of him. She knew all about how her uncle had led Nightshade Pack to attack Frost Pack three years ago.

"How bad are we talking?" Tessa asked casually.

She already knew exactly what Nathan's current situation was.

And no, she didn't feel even a little sorry for him.

On the contrary-he brought it all on himself.

He had no one to blame but himself for provoking her out of nowhere. Of course

he had to pay the price.

Chapter 460 Punishment and Planning

"On the very night we returned to Navoris, Glacier Pack's Alpha led a surprise attack on Frost Pack. Somehow, they got their hands on a secret key to the formation, and managed to dismantle the Eternal Frost Barrier-the defense Frost Pack relies on to survive. Their core region was heavily damaged. According to Yalvaria's informants, Frost Pack will need at least two to three years to recover to full strength."

Nathaniel finished with barely contained excitement.

Then he looked at Landon, then at Tessa. Both of them were completely calm.

"Alpha, how are you not reacting to this at all?"

"Am I supposed to react? If Glacier Pack hadn't moved so fast, Nathan would've ended up even worse if I'd gotten my hands on him."

"True. That Nathan's always been reckless. Arrogant as hell. Wonder who he pissed off this time to get beaten down like that!"

"The funny thing is, he doesn't even know who did it." Landon chuckled. "Whoever took him down-I'm very interested in that person."

As soon as Landon said that, Tessa immediately lowered her head and pretended to scroll through her phone.

Just then, the food arrived, and the topic shifted as everyone began eating.

After dinner, Landon specifically instructed Nathaniel to escort Ysabel back to the old house.

Tonight, he had plans to properly "punish" his little troublemaker-and the apartment wasn't the place for

extra company.

And Landon was a man of his word. That "punishment" started in the living room, continued into the bedroom, and finished in the bathroom. Tessa's satisfied cries didn't stop until just before dawn.

Holding the sleeping Tessa in his arms, Landon's Adam's apple bobbed. He kissed her sweat-damp cheek

If she didn't have exams in a few days, he absolutely would've "punished" her for three full days and nights...

By the time Tessa woke up the next day, it was nearly noon. If not for her exceptional physical endurance, she probably wouldn't have been able to get out of bed.

Even so, when she stood up, her waist still felt a little sore.

She strongly suspected Landon had used "punishment" as an excuse to indulge himself!

Still, this experience had taught her: next time she came home late, she'd definitely send him a heads-up

first...

Just after she finished washing up, Samuel called.

"Tessa, that was you, wasn't it! I heard all about what happened to Frost Pack as soon as I got back to Yalvaria. You're something else you didn't even have to lift a finger, and you got Frost Pack's rivals to take

Nathan down that hard."

Tessa didn't deny it. "He wouldn't stop messing with me. What did he think was going to happen? Oh, and be careful now that you're back in Yalvaria. That psycho Nathan might come after you just to vent.

"Don't worry, I'll stay alert." Samuel's tone was light. He was clearly in a good mood after hearing about Nathan's downfall. "By the way, Michael wants to set up a branch of the werewolf medical organization in Murica. He's thinking about having me lead it. Since I'm from Murica, I know the terrain better. What do you think?"

"That's something you need to decide for yourself. Whatever you choose, I'll support you."

Samuel couldn't help laughing. "Tessa, honestly, that might be the most touching thing you've ever said to

me."

"I'll just say this-if you ever need anything, just let me know."

She'd never been the type to say cheesy, emotional things.

"Well, obviously. If we really do expand the organization here in Murica, you think

I'm going to let you the hook? With you around, why wouldn't I take full advantage?"

"Anything else? If not, I'm hanging up. My grandpa's calling." Tessa glanced at the incoming call.

"Alright, talk soon."

After ending the call with Samuel, Tessa answered her grandfather's.

off

The old man didn't have anything urgent-he just hadn't seen her in a while and wanted her to come back to the Sinclair family home for dinner.

Tessa readily agreed.

She was planning to visit that evening anyway-she had her eye on Grandpa's collection of ancient texts. Who knew? Maybe one of them held the key to breaking the blood contract.