

Alpha's Rejected Mate Returns as Queen

Chapter 51 Envy

Selma Payne's POV:

Maybe the ending after my identity was exposed wouldn't be good, but at this moment, at least at this moment, I was willing to trust in Aldrich, his sincerity and courage, and never let him down.

We expressed our trust and love for each other with our kisses under the moonlight.

Once the kiss was over, I felt a little shy. Although there was no one around, it was still quite embarrassing.

"Are you angry?" Aldrich gently leaned on my forehead and asked with a smile, "Because I kissed you for too long, you didn't have time to breathe?"

Gosh! Why did this person become so frivolous once he recovered his emotions?

I punched him a few times playfully and then returned to his arms.

We sat on the training ground, quietly admiring the moonlight and enjoying this quiet moment.

"About that prophecy..."

We spoke at the same time and laughed.

"I want to say, don't worry. We won't be in such a dire situation." Aldrich consoled me, "We won't let this happen, right?"

"In fact," I whispered. "The prophecy says that our disaster doesn't come from us but from some external factors that she can't see."

"I'm too nervous. Although I know the cause isn't me, I'm still afraid that any decision I make will make things worse."

Aldrich gently kissed my cheek and said, "I'm very happy that you're thinking about me, but you have to promise that you'll always put yourself first, okay?"

"But you have to promise me that," I said.

We didn't swear to each other, but there was no need to. Passionate love flows in our blood, proving that we would never let each other feel heartache.

Benson Walton's POV:

Before I knew it, winter had come.

The atmosphere in the pack had not been very good recently. It had been a long time since Selma committed suicide, but the haze caused by this damn human had not dissipated.

Rhode didn't talk about this anymore, but I knew that sometimes he would sit at the place where Selma jumped off the cliff for the whole night. Mr. Wharton would also go occasionally.

It wasn't a surprise how I knew. I didn't feel guilty about Selma's death. Yet, somehow, I would occasionally walk there without realizing it.

Daniel had to be one of those who were feeling proud.

His trip to the Silver Moon Pack had allowed him to encounter his mate accidentally. Teresa was a good girl. She was strong, beautiful, brave, and of noble birth. I wouldn't say that I was a little envious of that lucky kid, Daniel.

As for me, I was still alone. I hadn't even seen the shadow of my second mate.

The Southern Pack was a powerful pack. I wanted to go there and try my luck, but the Moon Goddess seemed to have forgotten about me, a young werewolf in his prime. There were so many young wolves out there, but not a single one of them was fated to be with me.

"Hey, don't be too disheartened. Love is something that no one can say for sure." Rhode handed me a bottle of ginger beer and said nonchalantly, "Look at me. I'm single like you. Finding a mate isn't something that can be done in a short time. Some people are in their fifties and still haven't met their mate."

"Go to hell! Don't spout nonsense." I grabbed the ginger beer and took a big gulp. "If I don't find a mate until I'm fifty, what would happen to the pack? My packsmen won't be able to wait with me for so long."

Rhode laughed. "Haha, don't use the pack as an excuse. You're just afraid of not being able to find a wife!"

I didn't say anything, so I'd make it a silent consent.

I wouldn't be so anxious to find my mate if I were an ordinary werewolf. But I was the Alpha, the leader of a pack. Finding my other half was related to the pack's sustainability. It was a mission that I must fulfill.

"In my opinion, we don't have to follow the ancient tradition. A mate is hard to come by."

Rhode put his arm around my shoulder and motioned me to look at the dance floor. "What era is it now? Some werewolves rejected their fated mate and chose a chosen mate. We've gone to many packs, but aren't there many Alpha's Luna who is a chosen mate?"

I looked disinterestedly at the lively and enthusiastic girls on the dance floor.

How could a chosen mate be compared to a fated mate? The former was just a lie about dopamine, while the latter was the most precious half that the Moon Goddess had given to werewolves.

A pack's Alpha could only give birth to the purest offspring by coming together with their fated mate to ensure the continuation of the pack.

I didn't continue the topic.

"When the southern Duke met us yesterday, I wanted to say, 'Oh my god, he's such a handsome old man.' It's not that he's not strong, but his looks are beyond my expectations. Is he really fifty-two years old?"

"It's true." I nodded. "I heard his ancestors had elven blood, but I don't know how he inherited what his ancestors had."

"The southern Duke only found his mate at thirty-six!" Rhode winked at me. "Maybe you don't have to wait as long as he does. Thirty-five will do."

"Get lost."

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I danced a few rounds under Rhode's urging. Then, I was about to go back to rest. When Rhode saw me about to leave, not wanting to stay any longer, we said goodbye to the party's host.

"Stay and enjoy for a while more. We still have to set off fireworks at night." The southern Duke's daughter, Carolyn, said, "Are we not hospitable enough? Please don't be shy and treat this place as your home!"

52 The Transfer Student

Benson Walton's POV:

I didn't have the heart to reject a young lady too directly, so I said vaguely, "There's something related to my pack that I have to deal with. I have to go back for a meeting."

"Alright," said Carolyn regretfully. "Good night."

We bade each other farewell.

I wasn't sure where Rhode heard the gossip, but he said, "Carolyn is the only heir to the Southern Pack. I heard the southern Duke wants to send her to study at the Lycan Pack."

"She's someone else's daughter, so she can be sent wherever she wants." I was not in the mood to talk to him about this.

"Get your spirits up, man." He nudged my shoulder. "This is no ordinary gossip."

"She's just going to school. What else can it be?"

"Moon Goddess, use your leader's brain and think about it. Are the educational resources of the Southern Pack very bad? Or was there a reason the southern Duke had no choice but to send his daughter to the Lycan Pack? Carolyn can receive her education in her home. Can't the Duke find a good teacher?"

"What do you mean?" Now I felt that this wasn't as simple as it seemed.

Rhode chuckled and winked. "There's a well-known Sir Aldrich in the Lycan Pack."

"So, the southern Duke wants his daughter to marry Sir Aldrich?" I didn't think that was possible. "Both of them are heirs to their families. After marriage, should they stay in the Lycan Pack or the Southern Pack? Carolyn wants to inherit the pack, and Sir Aldrich is an officer. They can't compromise."

"Don't worry." Rhode sighed and said helplessly, "Relax, bro. Get those complicated politics out of your head. Maybe the southern Duke only wants to find a good husband for his daughter? You saw for yourself how much he treasured Carolyn yesterday."

"But the territory and the title... "

"No buts, you old-fashioned little old man." He shook his head. "You've changed a little after you became the Alpha, Benson. Don't always be so tense. Sometimes you should put down the burden of the Alpha and take a break. Otherwise, the consecutive transfers will crush you."

He furrowed his brows strangely. "Maybe the Moon Goddess is afraid that your unreasonable look will scare your other half, so she hasn't allowed your mate to appear yet."

I had to admit that Rhode made sense. Even my parents disagreed with me, always tense and worried I'd be exhausted.

However, the secret buried deep in my heart forced me to do so. So I had to find something to distract myself and force myself not to think about that matter. Otherwise, I'd be suffocated by those indescribable feelings before I collapse from work.

Selma Payne's POV:

It was winter, and a transfer student came to the school.
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The students were all discussing whether or not Sivir Academy would undergo some changes, such as being incorporated into the royal family's exclusive school for the noble.

This was because this ordinary academy had received two students with special statuses in a year – the Queen's relative and the Duke's daughter – an eye-opener for the teachers and students who were commoners.

"She's so pretty!" Mara shouted, "Didn't you see? When she came to submit her application to join the club, all the boys' eyes were glued to her face!"

Avril rolled her eyes. "Calm down. Don't act like you don't know anything. You're as stupid as those guys with muscles and big breasts in their heads!"

"I'm just telling the truth!" Mara asked, "How did she introduce herself? 'Hello everyone, my name is Carolyn, daughter of the southern Duke. It's a pleasure to meet you'. I've never seen such an elegant gesture before!"

"Hey! That's not true! You have a real royal by your side. Compared to Selma, that Duke's daughter is at best a girl from the countryside," said Avril unhappily.

Mara frowned. "You're too mean. That's unlike you."

"You're too infatuated," said Avril. "That's unlike you."

Seeing that they were about to start quarreling, I quickly mediated. "Alright, alright! It's just a transfer student. There's no need to quarrel over this. I heard that she's only sixteen. So, she should still be in high school. She probably won't have much to do with us."

Dorothy, who had been silent at the side, suddenly said, "I heard that Carolyn kicked out the female lead on the first day she joined the drama club."

Mara's expression was strange as she mumbled, "You can't say that. It's just the role of a young maiden, Quincy Scott. There are three people in the female lead group."

"Hmm, you're right. How can one-third of the female leads be considered the female lead? I heard that the southern Duke's family has elven blood. In my opinion, they should be sirens. They can steal people's souls with just a few words," said Avril.

"Don't say such things! I'm just stating the facts!"

"Let's get to the point. I wonder if Chloe can accept your 'truth as it is'?"

Chloe was a second-year junior in the high school partition. She was a gentle and thin girl who had been playing the role of 'a young girl'.

In addition, 'the Butterfly Lady' was a great success after all the twists and turns. Ryan, the drama club president, was inspired after the night of the magic riot and made a series of genius adaptations.

53 The Bloody Incident

Selma Payne's POV:

After the Midnight Opera House, which you could think of as Broadway in the werewolf society, sent them an invitation to perform, the drama club became famous. The actors became even more popular.

Quite a few students noticed the commotion, so I had no choice but to pull Mara and the others out of the cafeteria.

The cold winter wind calmed them down. After a while, Avril said, "Alright, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have judged you and Carolyn so harshly."

"I'm also at fault," Mara said, shaking her head. "You're right. I admire Carolyn so much that I don't care about other people's feelings. How sad must Chloe be right now?"

I asked, "Aren't they going to premiere it on Sunday at the Midnight Opera House? It's already Wednesday. Will they make it for rehearsal?"

"I don't know," Mara said unhappily. "You know I'm in the logistics team. I only have to decorate the stage and dress the actors. As for other things, Ryan never discussed with us and acted arbitrarily. This may be a common problem with talented directors."

"So," Dorothy said. "It was Carolyn who requested to get the role?"

"Yes," Mara nodded, "She said she wanted to present her most beautiful side to her fiancé like the young maiden, Quincy Scott. Think about what happened back there,

Moon Goddess! All Carolyn had to make this request gently, and all the boys, including Ryan, agreed without hesitation.”

“Was Chloe there?” I asked, frowning.

It would be impolite to take the role away from the female lead.

“Of course she was. In fact, Chloe was practicing her positioning with the extras. When she stepped off the stage, she was told she was off the female lead role.”

“Poor girl!” Avril exclaimed softly. “I can’t imagine how sad she must be.”

“She helped the drama club rise from a nobody to the top,” Dorothy added. “And then she is removed after the grinding is done. I have to say; this is a microcosm of the entertainment industry.”

I didn’t know Chloe very well, and I was also indignant on her behalf, so I couldn’t help but have a bad impression of the transfer student, Carolyn.

Although the entire matter appeared to be Ryan and the others’ decision, wasn’t Carolyn the one who had arrogantly made the request and enjoyed the outcome?

Such a tactic gave me an indescribable feeling-disgust and contempt.

Carolyn was different from Aldrich and me. She was like a child from a genuine, noble family. She looked gentle on the surface, but she had a natural arrogance.

This reminded me of those queen bees I saw in high school. They were unscrupulous bullies, and the only difference was whether their tricks were fierce or gentle.

Without a doubt, Carolyn was the latter.

“Maybe we shouldn’t underestimate her.” I sighed. “I only hope that her acting addiction only acts up on the stage and not in real life.”

Dorothy said, “But, seriously, fiancée in ‘the Butterfly Lady’? That can’t be auspicious.”

“Who cares about her?” Avril said, “For a lady who wants to be in the limelight, the position of the female lead is the most important thing. I bet she doesn’t even know the story of ‘the Butterfly Lady’.”

The girls all laughed.

I kept having a bad feeling. It was as if Carolyn was going to become a huge problem.

I could only hope that she would not cause any trouble.

What I was afraid of happened. Although I repeatedly prayed that Carolyn wasn't a troublemaker, trouble still happened.

The incident happened on a peaceful afternoon. Without any warning, an armed fight broke out in the drama club.

Yes, an armed melee.

No one knew why a group of werewolves had given up their fists and used fruit knives and baseball bats instead. The metal had caused severe consequences.

Three students were seriously injured and admitted to the hospital, while more than a dozen were covered in bruises.

The university students were called to help maintain order, so I had to stop the curious students from breaking into the theater while preventing the hot-blooded boys from fighting again.

The principal and the teachers were watching the troublemaking students seriously. Such a terrible incident had never happened since Sivr Academy's establishment. When blood was seen in a student's fight, it was not something that the school could handle. The police had to be involved.

"I heard Chloe's boyfriend came to the drama club to cause trouble!" Of course, Mara always got first-hand news. "He fought with Ryan."

I could guess why. "Is it because Carolyn stole Chloe's role?"

"It's obvious, isn't it? But, if I were Chloe, I wouldn't give it up either," said Avril.

"No." Dorothy shook her head. "I don't think Chloe was behind this. She's kind. Maybe even a little weak. Have you guys heard her say anything bad about Carolyn? I don't think she'd dare to ask her boyfriend to do that. "

I believed Dorothy more. Since her witch bloodline awakened, her prophetic talent seemed to have penetrated all aspects of life. She didn't have to do anything special to see through a person's nature easily.

"Ha! A high school boy who values his reputation more than anything else," said Avil with a sneer. "Maybe he thinks that Carolyn bullying Chloe has embarrassed him."

The police came to escort the troublemaking students away. I saw Chloe was holding back tears and wanted to go with her boyfriend, but she was pushed aside by a kid called Adam.

Selma Payne's POV:

All the people present were rounded up and sent to the police station, except for one who had to take care of Carolyn.

It was strange that this matter seemed to have nothing to do with her, but I learned from the other members that Carolyn had to eat fruits during lunch, so she brought the fruit knife. She also stepped forward to stop Adam and Ryan's fight when it broke out, and she took the initiative to point out that Ryan had stripped Chloe of her role because of her.

I couldn't tell what was wrong with the whole thing, but that strange feeling rose in my heart again. It was uncomfortable and creepy.

But I didn't want to use these speculations to slander an innocent girl. One cannot push all the fault of men being jealous of beautiful women, right? That didn't make sense.

During the training that night, I told Aldrich about the incident at school.

He frowned and said, "Students using knives in a fight? These kids are too insensible. The police and the injured won't let them off just because they acted impulsively."

"Who said it wasn't?" I wiped my sweat with a towel and recalled the blood on the floor of the opera hall. "Three people were seriously injured. This will be on the news tomorrow. The group of reporters was like hunting dogs who smelled blood. There will be no peace in the Academy now."

"Some tabloids like to make up sensational stories to attract attention," Aldrich reminded me. "You may have to remind your classmates to keep their personal information a secret. Otherwise, there might have been nonsensical news like 'a woman who's unparalleled in sex caused a gang fight' or 'unraveling Sivr Academy's chaotic secret'."

"How do you know so much?" I was surprised. "Did the newspapers also spread rumors about you?"

Aldrich shook his head. "Not really. Those fence-sitters are very aware of the current situation. They won't provoke people with status. However, the army is not within their scope of fear. After all, most of the soldiers are civilians, right?"

To lay hands on the soldiers who protected our home and country made my bad impression of the tabloids even worse. "That's disgusting. These unscrupulous newspapers live off blood like leeches."

I made a mental note that after I succeeded as Queen, maybe I could start with media control. If I wanted to realize my dream of becoming a great Queen, I must really do something for the people.

After training, Aldrich and I sat in the lounge eating hot waffles.

“Winter vacation is coming soon. Time really flies.” I sighed. “It’s the Moonlight Festival next week. Have you decided whom you’re going to play?”

The Moonlight Festival was the most traditional festival of the werewolves. It was a festival to celebrate the birth of the Moon Goddess. On this day, the she-wolves would act as the Moon Goddess, her maidservants, Valkyries, and various incarnations from the legends. The he-wolves would dress up as her servants, guards, or followers.

“What about you?” Aldrich asked. “What do you want to want to be?”

“I would like to play the Moon Goddess,” I said shyly. “The Queen has prepared many beautiful dresses and accessories for me. I don’t want to waste her efforts.”

When I was still a ‘human’, I rarely participated in the Moonlight Festival. Even if I did, I would only play the role of an insignificant maidservant. How out of place would it be for a human to mix in with the werewolves who were partying? I didn’t want to be snubbed, so I spent most of my time watching movies in my room.

Aldrich decided to play the role of a shepherd who fell in love with the goddess at first sight because of the gentle moonlight. His name was also ‘Aldrich’.

“I will follow, respect, and love you forever! Where the moon shines is where my heart is at peace. Please keep an eye on my heart. If it has changed, let me be a firefly, forever in your glory.”

“There won’t be a firefly as handsome as you, Mr. Shepherd.”

We exchanged a sweet kiss that tasted like chocolate waffles. Unfortunately, it was almost the army’s curfew time, and he had to return.

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“See you tomorrow.” I hugged his waist and said reluctantly, “Maybe we can discuss your outfit tomorrow? I’ll ask the Queen to find a few skilled tailors.”

Aldrich gently kissed my forehead and said, “We obey your will, Your Highness.”

The next day, the school’s gate was surrounded by reporters as expected. To let the students in, the school even had to ask the police for help to make way.

However, the reporters persevered and surrounded the cordon tape, trying to stuff their microphones into the mouths of every passing student.

Even the chauffeur who sent me to school couldn't stand it. "This is crazy. These annoying flies. I bet they have spies in every organization. Once something happens, they'll try to tear up a hot exclusive report like hyenas."

After avoiding the reporters, I came to the classroom frustrated and found that everyone was whispering.

"What happened?" I asked Dorothy.

Dorothy was eating her breakfast; two pieces of dry whole-grain bread.

55 A Vacation

Selma Payne's POV:

"Chloe took a long break." Then, as she chewed, she said, "Last night, some of my classmates saw the reporters go to Chloe's house. They waited from evening to dawn and only left when Chloe's parents couldn't take it anymore and called the police."

"However, when she was going to school this morning, she was stopped by reporters on the way. A large group of people carrying cameras and microphones asked her questions, and she was so scared that she broke down."

"Oh my god, poor girl!" I was shocked.

Mara and Avril came over, and the former said, "I have a cousin who works at 'New Moon Evening News'. She said their newspaper is working overnight to link yesterday's incident with the incident from half a month ago."

"This is nonsense!" I felt that some media needed to fix their uncontrollable writing. "These two things have nothing to do with each other. They're just spreading rumors!"

Avril replied, "Isn't this how a newspaper should be? They don't have much to talk about during the peaceful times, so they write some speculative stories to boost sales."

During lunchtime, more than half of the large public cafeteria was empty.

The parents were deeply worried when they heard that the reporters had surrounded and blocked the students, so many students were taken home by their parents.

The school discussed whether they should take a short break before the storm subsided. It just so happened that the Moonlight Festival was next week, and the joy of the festival could always make people forget the disharmonious interludes.

Last night, I asked my father about the students' fight, and he also paid close attention to it. He said that according to the law, Adam and the underage drama club members

were not required to bear criminal responsibility, but their parents had to pay a hefty fine and medical expenses.

Ryan and the adult students in the drama club were not so lucky. According to the regulations, they faced three months in prison in addition to being fined.

The school was also considering whether to expel Adam, Ryan, and the others.

The punishment of expulsion was so severe that the other students who heard the news felt sad. Everyone was discussing this matter's outcome, except an ignorant girl.

Carolyn.

She was sitting at the dining table and elegantly enjoying a luxurious lunch, not paying any attention to the speculations of her female companions.

Honestly, I didn't want to be so skeptical of Carolyn, but I felt something was wrong with her. This guess was very unreasonable as I had no way of verifying it. Instead, I was torturing myself.

Dorothy followed my line of sight and lowered her head to gnaw on her dry bread.

After a while, she said, "Carolyn gives me a very uncomfortable feeling."

Her words attracted us.

"I can't explain it." Dorothy frowned and said, "It's just that, every time I see Carolyn, I feel like I'm looking at a ball of cold mist as if her appearance is just a layer of paper."

"Wow, I don't understand," Mara said in disbelief. "But it doesn't feel good."

"Does this mean there's a problem with Carolyn?" asked Avril with a confused expression.

Dorothy shook her head. "I can't be sure. After all, this is just my subjective feeling. Perhaps it's just an illusion."

I didn't think Dorothy's judgment was wrong.

Witches were a wonderful group. You could doubt their character, but you couldn't doubt their abilities, especially a rare power like prophecy, which gave every witch extraordinary insights.

Regardless of how we viewed Carolyn, it didn't matter at the moment. After all, I couldn't send her to the security department for an examination without any evidence, right?

In the afternoon, the academy issued a notice: There would be a short break until the end of the Moonlight Festival.

“The Moonlight Festival!” Avil was extremely excited. “Have you guys decided whom you want to dress as? The mall will have a discount every year around this time. So let’s go buy some dresses and accessories!”

Mara wasn’t too interested. “The discounted items are all old goods from a few years ago. They’re either very ugly or even uglier. So they are not interesting at all.”

Dorothy displayed her usual reluctance and didn’t participate in the conversation. I felt she probably wouldn’t have gone out to participate in such large-scale events before she became an adult.

So I suggested, “How about this? We all go to the palace and stay for a few days? There’s no one of my age there, so just treat it as hanging out with me. What do you think? We can hire tailors and craftsmen to customize gowns and jewelry, and I guarantee everyone will look beautiful!”

A few of them were shocked. They had never thought that there was such an option.

Avril tugged at her hair and said with uncertainty, “Is that a good idea? If we were to rashly disturb... I mean, it’s the palace we’re talking about! Will the King and Queen agree to this?”

Mara was not very calm either, “If we go to the palace, we have to submit an application in advance and be interrogated or something, right? Can we make it in time? Shouldn’t we have etiquette training? Do we also have to kiss the King and Queen’s hands when we meet? Or a knee? Maybe bow?”

I didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. “What are you thinking? You’re going to be guests, not prisoners. Relax.”

Mara and Avil couldn’t relax at all. “To the palace! Is that a small matter? For three generations, no one in my family has ever seen what the reception room in the palace looks like, let alone stayover in the palace!”

56 The Southern Duke

Selma Payne’s POV:

“Isn’t the opportunity here?” I laughed. “Don’t worry. The King and the Queen are hoping I invite some friends over to our place. What do you think? Come on, come on!”

Ultimately, they could not resist the temptation and agreed in disbelief.

Dorothy was silent. I was unsure of her opinion, so I asked, "Come on, Dorothy? You know that place is very friendly, right?"

She agreed.

We went out separate ways at the school gate. Before we parted, I reminded them, "I'll get the rites official to send the invitation to your house tomorrow. See you in the afternoon!"

This was the first time I had invited friends to my place. I was so excited that even my parents could see my excitement.

"Is there good news?" My mother asked gently. "Look at how you're all smiles. You're like a kitten."

I held my father's arm with my left hand and my mother's arm with my right. Then, I said happily, "I invited my friends to the palace to hang out! They'll be coming over tomorrow afternoon. Can I borrow the royal tailor?"

"Of course, you can!" My parents said in surprise, "We're very happy that you made good friends in school. I think they must be excellent children."

I told them about the girls, and the warm night passed peacefully.

The following day, the official of rites sent the invitation away. After that, I couldn't sit still in the garden, constantly afraid that something would go wrong.

'Sigh, we are getting along so naturally in school, so why are you feeling uneasy now? Calm down, Selma! You know the girls, you will have a happy holiday.'

In addition, I'd postponed the training with Aldrich. Secrets, secrets, secrets again! I wanted to share my love life with my girlfriends like an ordinary girl, but it was a pity that this wish had to be put on hold.

In the afternoon, the girls flew into the palace like a group of curious birds.

"Moon Godness!" said Avril, still panting. "I can't believe I'm really in here."

"Did you see the guards at the palace gate? They're so handsome," Mara said excitedly. "I bet the boys will be jealous when they see their uniforms."

The girls asked if they had to greet the King and Queen first. I asked them to relax and said, "No need to be so formal. It's not as serious as you think. There's no need to pay a formal visit. This isn't the town hall, is it?"

“The Lycan King is busy with work and can’t leave often. Perhaps the Queen will invite us to dinner tonight.”

Avil was hyperventilating. “My god, I’m having dinner with the Queen! I won’t be able to eat anymore because I’ll always pay attention to whether the knife and fork touch the plate, and I will not be able to pay attention.”

Dorothy looked at us and laughed and smiled.

In the afternoon, we visited every corner of the palace, focusing on the gorgeous garden. The girls took many photos, saying they would develop them and pass them on to their grandchildren.

“I’m going to lie to my grandson and granddaughter that I was once a duchess! I can’t wait to see their faces,” Mara said with a smirk.

“Don’t be crazy,” said Avril, unable to take it anymore. “You don’t even have a boyfriend.”

While we were fooling around, we met an unexpected person.

The southern Duke.

“Good afternoon, your Grace.” I didn’t forget my disguise and bowed to him.

The girls around me imitated what I said.

“Good afternoon, Miss Selma. How are you?” the southern Duke smiled kindly.

“Thanks to you, everything is fine.”

We weren’t familiar with each other. I only met him once on the night he came to the Lycan Pack. He was meeting my parents at the time, and I just greeted him politely.

I exchanged a few words with the southern Duke before he took his leave.

After he left, the girls gasped for breath like babies who had just learned to breathe.

Mara asked, “Is this what a noble is? He’s so majestic. Although he was smiling, I didn’t even dare to look at his face.”

Even Dorothy nodded in agreement.

“Not all nobles are like that,” I explained. “In fact, most of them are no different from us. The southern Duke is an exception.”

“He served in the army when he was young. He was a famous soldier, so he always had a murderous aura.”

“It seems that Carolyn’s temperament is completely different from her father ‘s,” said Avril. “She always looks so delicate and soft. You can’t tell that she’s from a military family.”

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“A father will always pamper his daughter!” I thought of my father’s love for me and my adoptive father’s tolerance for me. “How wonderful it is to experience a kind father’s heart.”

In the evening, my mother invited the girls to dinner.

Avil and Mara took out the most formal clothes from their luggage. They were dressed like they were going to receive a Nobel Prize.

“It’s just an ordinary dinner,” I said helplessly. “It’s not a big party. Relax, guys.”

In the end, under my strong suggestion, the girls wore simple floral dresses to the banquet.

My mother was delighted. When she saw the girls, I swore she was more motherly than when she was with me, which made me a little jealous.

“Thank you for watching out for Selma.” My mother raised her glass and toasted, “I was always worried that she’ll have difficulty adapting to school, but with you guys, I believe she’s extremely happy.”

57 The Non-Existent Fiancé

Selma Payne’s POV:

Of course, it wasn’t alcohol. It was just non-alcoholic fruit water.

The girls were a little reserved at first, but they gradually relaxed and even began to tell my mother some embarrassing things about me in school.

“You haven’t seen the football captain’s face!” Mara chuckled. “He’s been a tyrant in school for so long. He wouldn’t have thought that someone would floor him.”

My mother laughed at my story of ‘bravely eradicating the bullies and evil forces in school’, while I laughed awkwardly at the side, praying that Mara and Avril would not expose me.

“This is the first time I’ve heard from someone else how much of a righteous person Selma is!” My mother looked at me with relief and said to Mara, “Thank you for telling me about this.”

Mara was flattered. “You’re being too nice. It’s nothing. If you want to hear more, we still have a lot of things about Selma.”

Seeing that the girls were about to ‘sell’ me out, I quickly changed the topic. “We met the southern Duke in the garden this afternoon. He’s such a noble man, isn’t he?”

The girls’ attention was diverted, and they nodded in agreement.

“You guys met Lennon?” My mother said, “Don’t judge him based on his aloofness. He’s a very good person.”

I asked my mother, “What was he doing at the palace?” Did the King summon him?”

Unlike Duke Frank, the southern Duke did not live in the Lycan Pack. He had his pack and could not become a minister. In addition, he was not a member of the Council of Elders, so he basically did not participate in politics.

I really couldn’t figure out what he was doing at the palace. He couldn’t possibly come to have afternoon tea with my father, right?

“Speaking of that... “My mother laughed. “Lennon came for his daughter’s hand in marriage. He wants to find a nice husband for his daughter as soon as possible. He loves his daughter.”

“Hand in marriage? So, Carolyn doesn’t have a fiancé right now?” I was surprised.

The girls were surprised too. They all knew that Carolyn had stolen Chloe’s role to ‘present her most beautiful side to her fiancé’ like Quincy Scott.

My mother didn’t understand why we were surprised. “Of course, Carolyn is only sixteen years old.”

She sighed. “Actually, I didn’t quite agree that Lennon gets his daughter an engagement so early. I know that you young people are not like us. You don’t like to be bound by marriage too early, right?”

The girls looked at each other and finally hid the matter with tacit understanding.

After dinner, my mother told us that she had asked Kara to prepare a bedroom for the girls.

“However, it’s also an interesting experience to squeeze in the same bed with friends, isn’t it?” She winked at us mischievously and left.

Mara and Avril seemed to have been completely captivated by my charming mother.

“She’s truly an extraordinary Queen.” Mara held her face and said, “I feel like a young boy. My heart is beating faster.”

“Wipe that smile off your face. You look silly.” Avril frowned as if she had not ‘fallen’ for my mother. “Have you met many Queens before? The ones in the TV series don’t count.”

“How can those shoddy actors be compared to Her Majesty?” Mara mumbled, “She’s a real, noble Queen.”

At night, the guest room was neglected, as expected. Four girls were squeezed onto my wide four-post bed.

We didn’t feel uncomfortable. Instead, we felt a different kind of peace.

“Just like little wolf cubs that are huddled together for warmth.” Dorothy was always straight to the point.

We chatted about all sorts of things for a while before the topic shifted to Carolyn and her non-existent fiancé. Carolyn had acted as if she was very much in love with her fiancé in school. Who would have thought that her fiancé didn’t even exist yet?

I had the same strange feeling again. “This doesn’t feel right. Carolyn is making me feel weird.”

“It’s obvious that she has a boyfriend behind the southern Duke’s back, or she’s delusional.” Avril never spoke politely. “Did she make up a lie to perform on stage? Forgive me for being blunt, but she’s not a good person.”

“Do you still remember what I told you before? Carolyn gave me a strange feeling?” Dorothy suddenly said, “I don’t feel this from the southern Duke. I could tell at a glance that he is a werewolf. The mixed bloodline does not affect that at all.”

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“Are you saying that there’s a problem with Carolyn?”

Dorothy replied, “Sort of. I keep feeling that there’s something about Carolyn that I’m familiar with. Earlier, I suddenly realized that I felt the same kind of fluctuations from her on the day of the chaos at the academy.”

I instantly understood what Dorothy implied. She had detected magic fluctuations in Carolyn, but she had to keep her secret. Thus, she could only use chaos as an excuse.

Mara and Avril were shocked. "Doesn't that mean that Carolyn is a witch? But didn't the rumors say that the southern Duke's family has elven blood? So how is she a witch?"

58 The First Political Discussion

Selma Payne's POV:

"That's why I said it's just a feeling," Dorothy said uncertainly. "It's not necessarily correct. Rather, it's ridiculous."

The southern Duke had made significant contributions to the war when he was young and had even personally executed a legend wizard. So how was his daughter involved with a witch? It was impossible, no matter how I thought about it.

However, I trusted Dorothy's insight even more. Perhaps there was something wrong with Carolyn. I had to find a chance to talk to my father and mother about this to prevent it before it happened.

The next day, with the help of the royal tailor, we designed the clothes for the entire day to wear for the Moonlight Festival. Mara was the musician, and Avril chose Valkyrie. Dorothy had no experience in this, so she decided to play the 'girl in the shadow', the incarnation of the Moon Goddess in the dusk. In some versions of the myth, she was the daughter of the Moon Goddess and a witch in the mortal world.

After spending the whole day in fabric and lace, Avil said that she had never felt that choosing clothes was such a tiring thing.

At night, I asked Kara to take the girls to the hot spring, while I took the opportunity to tell my father and mother about Carolyn's abnormality.

"At the academy, I somehow felt that there was something very off about Carolyn," I said solemnly. "She doesn't have a fiancé, but she used her fiancé as an excuse to steal the role in the drama. She looks like a gentle girl but can inadvertently push for a bloody conflict."

"Dorothy's insight further confirmed my opinion. She's a witch and wouldn't have sensed magic fluctuations wrongly."

Of course, my parents knew about Dorothy's identity, so they also took this seriously. Carolyn was the southern Duke's only daughter and the heir to the Southern Pack. No matter what, nothing could happen to her.

“What do you think, my daughter?” he asked. “If you were the decision maker, how would you deal with this?”

I thought I was just a messenger, but such a question caught me off guard. I was a little stunned for a moment.

Could I tell my father about my childish thoughts? This was not a small matter. It was better to let my father and mother handle it, right?

My father saw my hesitation and encouraged me. “Don’t worry. Just be bold and tell me your thoughts. You’ll have to face these problems in the future and take on the responsibility of a Queen, don’t you?”

My mother also encouraged me with a gentle but firm gaze.

Thus, I made up my mind and organized my thoughts. “First of all, this matter has to be kept a secret for the time being to prevent this matter from spreading and causing harm to Carolyn. After all, we have yet to confirm whether there is something wrong with her.

“Second, inform the southern Duke of this. Carolyn is his daughter, and he has the right to know everything. Besides, we can only continue the investigation smoothly with his support. After all, no kind father would want to see his daughter in danger.

“Third, Carolyn might have been mentally controlled by a witch, or she might have been switched. We must investigate her schedule and social information to see when she was attacked.

“And fourth...

I was not sure if I should say this. After all, it didn’t sound so ‘open ‘.

“... Fourth, if we can confirm that there’s a problem with Carolyn, then we have to think of a way to resolve it. If she’s under control, we need to find someone to remove the mind control. It’ll be even better if we can find the murderer in her memory.

“If she has been switched, the witch who dared to switch her identity as the Duke’s daughter and sneak into the Lycan Pack is likely to have ulterior motives. We must find a way to capture her, or... Get rid of her without alerting her.”

After saying that, I nervously waited for my father’s opinion.

I regretted saying, ‘get rid of her’. After all, Carolyn was one of my packsmen. After all, everything was still undecided. But, to say that I would kill my people so casually, was this something a princess or queen should do?

My father was a benevolent ruler. So I didn’t think he would agree.

Finally, he spoke.

“Selma, my daughter, to be honest, you have surprised me a little.”

As expected! My father was surprised at my viciousness. I'd disappointed him.

“I didn't expect you to be so thoughtful. To be honest, you make me feel it would be fine even if I passed the throne to you tomorrow.”

“I'm sorry, Father,” I said dejectedly. “I should have treated Carolyn...”

Suddenly, I realized that my father wasn't angry. On the contrary, he was looking at me with a gratified and satisfied gaze.

‘Did I... Do well?’

“My baby, you need to be more confident. In fact, you can do very well. Don't easily downplay yourself.” My mother put her arm around my shoulder. “I can see that you're a little uncertain, but the facts prove that you've thought it through very well, haven't you?”

“But I shouldn't have said something like getting rid of Carolyn so casually,” I muttered.

59 Baby's Breath

Selma Payne's POV:

My father suddenly became serious. He acted like a king and not my father.

“Kindness is a necessary quality of a leader.” He advised me, “the people cannot recognize a cruel rule without mercy.

“However, a benevolent king will not last long. People will always commit crimes, so you can't be kind to everyone. That's cowardice and irresponsible to others.

“Strictness is as important as kindness. Only a strict and kind king can treat his people fairly and lead the country well.”

The King's solemnness suddenly bloomed with kindness. He touched the top of my head and said with satisfaction, “I'm very happy that you have these two qualities, Selma. Do you remember what I told you on the first day?

“You will become a great Queen.”

I didn't expect to receive such high recognition. I was so excited that I couldn't help but cry. Yet, at the same time, I felt a little embarrassed.

Was this the feeling of being acknowledged? It was so wonderful I was almost addicted to it.

My father and mother patiently waited for me to calm down. I quickly composed myself, wiped the tears from the corner of my eyes, and asked, "So, what should we do next?"

"We'll do as you say. Keep this a secret and inform the southern Duke." My father said, "The pack has been peaceful for too long, and the werewolves haven't bared their sharp teeth in a long time. It looked like some people can't sit still and want to stir up trouble to get something."

I felt that my father seemed to have some ideas about this. "What do you think?"

My father shook his head and smiled at me. "It's just some random commentaries. It doesn't matter."

He didn't want to say, so I didn't ask.

After interacting with the King, I gradually concluded: The King bore responsibility, and with responsibility came secrets.

As my identity was a secret, I couldn't participate in the conversation between my parents and the southern Duke. My parents could only speak on my behalf.

Today, I was still with the girls, picking out dazzling accessories.

The girls weren't as carefree as they were yesterday. Even the bravest of them all, Avril, was being a little cautious. I didn't understand. Was it wrong to ask?

Mara said to the pile of dazzling metals and gems, "Selma, these are too expensive. We can't afford them."

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Avril seemed reluctant to part with the brooch, but she held back and did not look at it. "This brooch looks like it's worth a year of my living expenses. It's so beautiful, but it makes my heart ache."

There was no need to mention Dorothy. I supposed she was thinking of putting a black veil on her head and leaving. I had to say that this was more in line with the theme of the 'girl in the shadow'.

It was only then that I understood my friends' concerns. While condemning myself for being careless, I told them, "There's no need to worry about the price. These gowns and jewelry are gifts from Her Majesty the Queen."

“What?” Mara and Avril’s eyes widened again. “B-but these are too precious. We can’t take such precious things.”

To calm their worries, I deliberately winked and said, “Don’t be embarrassed. This is the royal family’s style, you know. The Queen can’t possibly entertain you with factory goods on sale in the mall, right? That would be too embarrassing for the royal family.”

“So... ” I brought over a tray of jewelry and winked at them, “To honor the reputation of the Lycan King and the Queen, please give us some face and accept it?”

The girls laughed at me; their worries swept away.

As expected, the first thing Avril did was to take away the star-shaped broken diamond brooch.

“It’s said that baby’s breath is made of the tears of the Moon Goddess. It’s to commemorate a Valkyrie who died protecting children,” she said.

Mara said, “I’ve heard about it in an elective class. It seems that some witches also use the baby’s breath to display power. After all, in the legend, the Valkyrie died under a witch’s curse.”

“It seems so.” Avril showed a disgusted expression. “Now that you mention it, I suddenly feel that this brooch isn’t as beautiful as it was.”

Mara didn’t respond as usual. Instead, she seemed to be thinking about something. Suddenly, she said, “On the first day of Carolyn’s transfer, she seemed to have worn a baby’s breath-shaped jewelry. It’s a silver ring. I saw it when she submitted her application to the club.”

As soon as she said that, the entire place fell silent.

“Let’s not talk about this anymore!” Dorothy shook her head and said, “The more we think about it, the more skeptical we will be. If this continues, every detail could become ‘evidence’ of Carolyn’s crimes. In fact, everything is just nonsense.”

The girls quickly changed the topic and continued to pick out the accessories they liked.

I silently noted this suspicious and colorful baby’s breath pattern in my heart. I even used silver, which was harmful to werewolves, adding another layer of doubt to Carolyn’s suspicion.

The highly anticipated Moonlight Festival was finally coming.

The day before the festival, the girls left the palace. They followed the tradition and set off with their families for a carnival parade.

60 Moonlight Festival

Selma Payne's POV:

"Let's meet at the school gate! Let's set a meeting place."

I wanted to go to the appointment with Aldrich hand in hand, but I couldn't. On this day, only family members and lovers of the opposite sex would go together. So, to not reveal any clues, we could only bear the pain and go separately.

"I'll see what I can do!" Aldrich hugged me and hid behind the thick curtains of the empty room." I promise this will not be a lonely Moonlight Festival. The footsteps of the shepherd will always follow the Holy Moonlight."

After I parted ways with Aldrich, I went to see my parents.

My parents had to leave in advance to give a speech at the festival, which meant I had to go alone.

"Keep in touch with the guards at all times," my mother said worriedly. "Every year, a small accident will occur during the carnival parade. If you meet a drunkard or a hooligan, don't tolerate it. Order the guards to beat them up!"

I realized this was an excellent opportunity, so I said, "I'll be with my friends. Maybe Sir Aldrich can accompany us? He's a valiant soldier. With him here, we'll be very safe."

As my father's right-hand man, Duke Frank would be by my father's side on such an important occasion. It was too pitiful for Aldrich to be alone. It wouldn't be too suspicious if I asked him along with my friend.

As expected, my parents agreed.

So I immediately contacted Aldrich and told him that we could go out hand in hand openly.

He couldn't refuse the surprise, so Aldrich and Duke Frank came to the palace together and naturally stayed by my side.

Due to the festival, the palace, which had always been in good order, became jubilant. The servants had a day off, and all of them were dressed up.

Along the way, we met many 'servants' and 'incarnations' of the Moon Goddess. They were all amazed by the handsome 'shepherd' Aldrich. Honestly, I was a little jealous but also a little proud for some reason.

“So many people are looking at you. They must have thought that the legend has come true.” We sat on the sofa in the bedroom, sharing the same glass of wheat juice. “Aldrich playing ‘Aldrich’, who can say this isn’t a beautiful coincidence?”

Aldrich looked at me affectionately and said, “Thousands of people pay attention to me, but they are nothing. Only the moonlight can stay in my heart.”

“You’re really into your role today.”

I admitted that I was bewitched and unknowingly gave him a passionate kiss.

After the kiss, I finally realized I had applied a bright silver and transparent lip gloss.

“Oh no, my makeup!” I grabbed the mirror, and, as expected, my lipstick was smudged.

Aldrich’s lips were now brightly colored.

“It’s my honor.” He gently wiped the residue from the corner of his lips. “To be able to taste the moonlight.”

Moon Goddess! How could someone say such sweet words so easily?

My lipstick was already ruined anyway, so I didn’t care about that and kissed Aldrich to my heart’s content.

This caused me to spend some time touching up my makeup, and we were late. When we arrived at the school, the girls had already been waiting for a long time.

“Greetings, Your Highness, the goddess.”

Avril, who looked like a Valkyrie, properly bowed to me. Mara and Dorothy followed suit.

“Thank you, my dear daughters.”

I pretended to return the greeting, and we couldn’t hold back our laughter.

“Let me introduce you. This is Sir Aldrich. He will be our guard today.”

I’d introduce them to each other.

“This is Avril, Mara, and Dorothy, my good friends.”

They greeted each other. Mara and Avril were a little excited, which was not hard to understand if one knew how popular Aldrich was among the young people.

We first came to the central square to listen to my parents' joint speech. There was nothing much to say about these traditional prayers, but since the speaker was the beloved couple, the King and the Queen, the people were very enthusiastic.

In the end, my father announced the official start of the parade. He and my mother saw me in the crowd and winked at me playfully.

The float parade started, and the excited crowd followed closely behind.

We followed behind a carriage full of irises and raspberries, singing loudly to the band. Aldrich protected us tightly from being scattered by the crowd and gentlemanly acted as a support for us to dance in circles.

The revelry team came to a snack street. We felt a little thirsty, so we rested by the soda stall.

As they drank their soda and chatted, Avril suddenly pointed at a father and daughter pair in the distance and said, "Is that the southern Duke and Carolyn?"

We followed the direction she was pointing at and saw that the southern Duke, dressed in a Roman robe, was helping the gorgeously dressed Carolyn onto a float.

"Carolyn is also involved in the exhibition? I'm not surprised at all," said Avril. "No one else in the world likes to be in the limelight more than her."

"The drama club's performance at the Midnight Opera House has been canceled because of the fight," Mara said. "So maybe she needs another stage to shine."

Maintaining her usual detest toward Carolyn, Avril said, "The price is to push away another girl as pitiful as Chloe."

Next to the float was a girl wearing a grass-green tutu dress, not knowing what to do. It seemed like Carolyn had replaced her.