

Alpha's Rejected Mate Returns as Queen

Chapter 513

Selma Payne's POV:

I didn't know what I had done, but by the time I reacted, I had already pounced on Aldrich's bed and tightly hugged him.

The surveillance device that was forcefully removed issued an urgent alarm, and the tiny wound left by the needle on my hand healed in an instant. However, I couldn't feel any noise or pain. Only this person in front of me could take away all my attention. His breathing, heartbeat, warm body temperature, and eyes were as deep as the night sky.

"Aldrich, Aldrich..."

I hugged him tightly and unknowingly started to cry.

Aldrich hugged me back. His arms were no longer as strong and powerful as before, and even a simple action like raising his hands made his muscles tremble.

But all of this was so fortunate in my eyes. Everything was real, and I was not dreaming.

"I miss you so much. You don't know how I've been through this time... everything is a mess. You're not here, and many people are bringing trouble to me. I feel like a bowl of rotten porridge. My brain is muddled and stiff, and I don't know what to do at all..."

The grievances and pressure in my heart instantly exploded, and I incoherently expressed all the pent-up complaints in my heart to Aldrich. I kept pecking at Aldrich's face and forehead. His body's scent made me feel at ease.

Aldrich didn't say anything, letting me vent my childish anger on him like a child. He only hugged me tighter, then kissed me back weakly, kissing away the tears on my face.

Just like that, I vented my anger for a long time before I completely let it go. I laid on Aldrich's body and hugged him tightly.

"Good girl, don't worry. I'm back." Aldrich kissed my ear and said gently, "I'm sorry for suddenly leaving you alone. I promise that all of this is over. I'll never leave you again. My dear, look at me."

I raised my head and saw Aldrich smiling at me with my teary eyes.

"You did well, Selma, and I've always known that you can always do well."

After experiencing the initial chaos, I finally regained some of my rationality. With a red face, I asked Tracy and Master Hayley to examine Aldrich. I also injected myself with another bottle of nutrient medicine under the disapproving gaze of the nurse.

During this time, Aldrich and I held hands tightly. I was not willing to let go. The nurse had no choice but to push our beds together, pretend to see nothing, and leave.

Aldrich indulgently allowed me to stick to him. Although he was still weak, he kept looking at me with eyes full of love and apology, which made me feel at ease.

Tracy and Master Hayley believed that Aldrich's body was fine at the moment, and it was only a matter of time before he recovered. After the examination, they left, leaving only the two of us in the ward.

I helped to tidy up the slightly messy sideburns on his head and looked at his sunken cheeks. My heart ached as I said, "You've lost a lot of weight."

"It's just some muscles and fat. Don't worry, I'll get them back in less than two months," Aldrich said softly.

I immediately shook my head. "No, no. Don't be in such a hurry. Tracy said that you need to recuperate from the deficit in your body slowly. We must slow down and recover the life force you lost because of those damn villains."

Aldrich did not know whether to laugh or cry. "Don't be nervous, Selma. Of course, we can take it slow. We'll listen to you."

I realized I was being a little too impatient, so I couldn't help but feel discouraged.

"No, I should listen to you." I mumbled, "I'll listen to you. You're the most important."

Just like that, we exchanged some small talk back and forth, and Aldrich suddenly laughed at me.

"I thought our reunion after a long time would be very warm, just like the reunion of the male and female protagonists in operas, full of love, words, and tears. But why are we acting more and more like children?"

I blushed and said sternly, "So? Don't you like it?"

Aldrich immediately snuggled up to me and let out a comfortable sigh. He said in a low voice, "No, my dear. I'll be satisfied with anything as long as you're by my side. Nothing in this world makes me happier than being with you."

This soft cotton ball wrapped around my 'aura' and finally kneaded into a soft cotton candy.

I lowered my head and didn't look at him. After a while, I softly said, "... I don't know. I've fantasized many times about what I'd say to you when you woke up, but now I can't say anything. Thousands of words are stuck in my throat, but everyone wants to come out first, and no one is willing to be outdone. I wished I could have a hundred mouths, but even my only mouth stopped working."

Aldrich laughed softly.

"It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter if you can't tell me," he said. "You don't have to say anything. I already know everything."

I'd simulated the situation after Aldrich woke up countless times in my dreams, but the real situation differed from any of the situations I imagined.

Selma Payne's POV:

Aldrich and my time alone lasted for a day. The next day, I had no choice but to leave the land of gentleness and return to being that all-conquering princess.

I was very reluctant when I left, but Aldrich didn't ask me to stay. Although his eyes told me not to leave, he still understood my responsibility and gently watched me return to the surface.

After being stationed in the Spring Rain Pack for a long time, even if the army followed the palace's orders from the top to the bottom, Aldrich's inexplicable departure and the empty position of the commander still stirred up some speculations.

This wasn't a big deal, and it was far from uncontrollable. However, being sick for a long time would reduce a lot of trouble in the future if we could suppress the bad signs early.

Since Aldrich had already woken up, the arrangements for this army should be on the agenda. They could not evacuate, as this was an essential force to defend the border and the Spring Rain Pack.

After discussing it with my father, we believed we could let Aldrich 'successfully complete the secret mission' after he had recovered and then let him 'recuperate from his injuries'. This way, the bad rumors circulating in the army would gradually dissipate.

Secondly, it was about the new commander of the army. Previously, it had always been under the direct jurisdiction of the royal family. On the one hand, it was because of the power struggle over the Lycan pack. To a certain extent, controlling this powerful military force was a deterrent to the fence-sitters.

On the other hand, the Spring Rain Pack's geographical location was special and involved many things. With Aldrich hiding here, I couldn't feel at ease to hand over the military power – not even to someone I trusted.

Now that the difficulties in the way ahead were solved, this huge military camp could finally welcome a wise and brave new leader.

The Spring Rain Pack had always been highly efficient, even in the suburban military camp. The soldiers had already built a strong and towering camp orderly, set up precise and pervasive fortifications, and all the conditions a military camp should have.

As a princess, I went to the camp to inspect it. The soldiers were very happy. Any novel event in the boring military life could make them talk about it for a long time. The military officers were even more astute. For me to suddenly come and inspect them at such an ordinary time, they started to guess the meaning of this trip secretly.

In addition, I went to inspect the work of the Spring Rain Pack as usual. When the forest grew bigger, it would attract more birds and beasts. The development of the Spring Rain Pack was not smooth, and there were many discordant incidents during the period.

However, not every spokesperson who stood out from the people would always think for the people — just like all the political organizations in the world, corruption and power play finally happened in the autonomous committee of the Spring Rain Pack.

This did not mean these corrupt officials were not loyal to me or the Spring Rain Pack, but loyalty and betrayal did not conflict.

Because of that, Jordin often complained to me in private. This girl, who had unknowingly been polished from a raw stone to a glittering gem, would occasionally feel heartache for the transformation of her like-minded partner.

“Back then, the Spring Rain Pack was just starting out. He was so hot-blooded, and Wania liked him very much.” Jordin was a little drunk. “He even proposed to Kira; the wedding was set for next summer!

“So, when the prosecutor presented the evidence, everyone’s first reaction was disbelief. Ten million dollars. He had embezzled so much after only being the project leader of a medical apartment project for three months! Only god knows that before everything was exposed, we thought he was unwilling to take up an official position because he was focused on constructing the Spring Rain Pack. Now, it seems the grassroots can only give him more ways to corrupt!”

“Kira was heartbroken and knew he was not a good man. After confessing to his crimes, he canceled the engagement with Kira. Mate relationships, in this era where myths and legends are gradually fading, how romantic was it to find one’s chosen one? Unfortunately, they’re not fated to be together!”

I remembered Kira, the girl with the same name as Emma, Jordin’s assistant.

The fall of her business partner seemed to have hit Jordin hard. She asked me in confusion, "Is everything going to change? The ambitious young man who once vowed to contribute everything to the Spring Rain Pack quickly fell under the corruption of money in a few years. He forgot his ideals and mutated into a parasite on the Spring Rain Pack."

I clinked glasses with her and consoled her, "The past can't be changed, who can say for sure what will happen in the future? Life's journey has always been lonely, and it is a very lucky thing to find a lover and a confidant. But I don't think we can always pin our hopes on others because everyone is changing. You can see that others are changing, and others can see that you are changing."

"Everything will change..." Jordin stared in a daze at the ice in the glass and suddenly asked, "What about you? Selma, will you change?"

I was stunned momentarily before I laughed and sighed. "I can't escape the ravages of time either. However, I think that no matter how much I change, there will always be a small place in my heart left for the past – that submissive little girl from the small town. She was the beginning of everything."

515 A Teardrop

Selma Payne's POV:

I'd tried to repair the black opals that were about to run out of power, but it was not that easy to restore the creation of a god. Ultimately, after using up the last of its divine power to replenish Aldrich's body, this shiny gem completed its mission and became an ordinary stone.

The mysterious and resplendent gem was embedded in Aldrich's fair chest, it was a very eye-pleasing scene. However, since it was no longer of use now, I suggested that Aldrich have surgery to dig it out in case any accidents happened later and harmed his body.

However, Aldrich refused.

"This is our token of love. I know it will never hurt me."

Alright, I was easily convinced.

After I stayed in the Spring Rain Pack for a week, Emma finally came back. She had gotten a little tanned, but her figure was more muscular than when she was in the office. Her apartment was filled with drawing boards and half-finished sculptures. She even wore an apron covered in colorful paint when she opened the door for me.

She was so passionate that she wanted to hug me, but she suddenly stopped and kissed me halfway through.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you, Selma.” She raised her hands, which were covered in traces of plaster and clay. “I hope to hug you, but your silk coat will be ruined if I do that.”

Emma, Jordin, and I hadn’t gathered together like this in a long time. Since we started our businesses, we’d been apart more than together. We often only met through the phone or the internet. So, we drank too much at night, half-squinting our eyes as we lay on the artistic pumpkin-shaped sofa in Emma’s house and talked about everything.

Speaking of my children and husband, the girls were very happy about Aldrich’s recovery. Emma was quite surprised to see my daughter suddenly appear.

“There are many different versions of the legends about the offspring of the Moon Goddess. This is a story I heard from my elders when I was young: One day, the Moon Goddess woke up on the lawn and found herself pregnant. She had given birth to a daughter, but she did not know who the father was. The goddess searched everywhere but to no avail. She was so angry that she thought the child’s father was a cowardly villain and even began to dislike the child. Hence, she came to the cliff and prepared to throw the child into the river to drown him. At this moment, the child’s father finally appeared. He had always admired the goddess, but he knew his lowly body was not worthy of a glance from the goddess, so he asked the demon for help. The devil sent out a moth, and in spring, the man’s sweat dripped on the goddess’s belly button, and the goddess became pregnant and gave birth.”

Emma excitedly told us the legend behind the painting. As she spoke, the blurry colors gradually became clear in my mind.

“How could a dignified goddess like her endure such humiliation? Therefore, she separated the drop of sweat that belonged to the father from the child’s body and threw it into the sea, cutting off the connection between her daughter and her father. The moth that works for the underground devil cannot eat the fruit trees on the ground. After that, the moth’s offspring will no longer be able to eat and will starve to death after seven days of ascendance. In the end, the goddess announced that men could never accept the moonlight’s grace again, so the man became a floating monster, living and dying day and night, futilely searching for his drop of sweat in the water.”

“This legend isn’t widely known because we traditionally think that the Moon Goddess is a famous Virgin. Therefore, this legend is regarded as a ‘deviant’. But now isn’t like 500 years ago anymore, right? More and more works of art began to pursue the ancient legends denounced as fallacies by the orthodox sects.”

I could gradually see the blurry colors on the canvas. The goddess looked angry and raised the baby in her arms. On the other hand, her daughter was still smiling

innocently, unaware of the possible fate that might come. The weak and despicable man ran out of the bushes in a sorry state. His cheeks and arms were covered with scars made of thorns. His strange expression seemed to beg for mercy, but it also seemed afraid of facing the goddess's anger.

Flying moths surrounded them. These little white creatures were nothing more than the creation of chaos, but they were about to pay the price for this farce.

Where was the demon?

I squinted to take a closer look, only to see the man sneer when he touched the corner of the goddess's robe – so the demon was hidden in the man's body. He indifferently interpreted this rotten marriage, greedily taking the goddess's anger and the fear of men as his dessert.

Where was the goddess? The goddess seemed to have noticed this as well. But why was she crying? The tear that did not fall from the corner of her eye, was she feeling aggrieved for her unexpected disaster, or was that tear supposed to fall into someone's heart?

516 The Child

Selma Payne's POV:

I was so mesmerized by the painting that I didn't hear Emma and Jordin's shouts.

In the end, they shook me a few times before I came back to my senses. The girls jumped in shock and asked worriedly, "What's wrong, Selma? You were in a daze while staring at the painting just now. We even went close to your ear to call you, but you didn't respond. Have you been too tired recently? Why don't we call it a night and rest first?"

I shook my head and recollected my thoughts. "It's nothing, I might have... drunk a little too much, so I didn't react."

Everything disappeared when I raised my head to look at the draft again. The angry goddess, the innocent baby, the despicable man, and the fluttering moth. There was nothing on the canvas, only colors of various sizes. It was as if everything I had just seen was an illusion relying on paint.

But that vision was so clear that everything was happening before me.

It was so real that it made one's heart palpitate.

He came in high spirits and left in a daze. My troubled expression attracted Aldrich's attention, and in response to his question, I told him everything about my illusions and questions.

Aldrich thought awhile and said, "Perhaps you can ask Dorothy. Isn't this like peeking into the past?"

I was suddenly enlightened and asked Dorothy about what I had seen.

However, to my disappointment, Dorothy had no clue about this either.

"I can't see the gods, my dear." She shrugged. "Even the Goddess of Fate can't spy on the past and future of a god."

"Okay." I was a little disappointed, but I didn't take it seriously. "Maybe I drank too much, so I was hallucinating. But that legend is novel, the temple's nuns would never tell such stories."

And so, it didn't take long for me to forget about it.

Life in the Spring Rain Pack made me feel relaxed. I did not doubt that this was because the big stone pressing on my heart had been lifted.

A month had passed since I arrived, and with the combined efforts of many parties, Aldrich had recovered very quickly, and most of the terrifying illness had disappeared without a trace. He had moved out of the secret ward half a month ago and was now recuperating in the top-floor ward of the central hospital.

Aldrich had no negative feelings toward his 'daughter', Cynthia. On the contrary, sometimes, he got along with Cynthia even better than I did. Cynthia was a serious little adult. However, no matter how serious she was, she was still a newborn. Her reservations quickly melted in the face of a gentle and loving father.

For example, the father and daughter were on a video call with the wolf cub. The wolf cub missed his sister very much, but he was a little shy when facing Aldrich – since he was born, he had only spent a few days with Aldrich.

Besides being the matchmaker for this father-son pair who had just acknowledged each other as strangers, I didn't participate in their conversation. If I were around, the wolf cub would naturally focus all its attention on me and be even more unwilling to communicate with Aldrich.

The wolf cub missed her sister very much. Although Cynthia would sometimes find her younger brother too childish, there was no doubt that she missed the wolf cub very much. Aldrich held his daughter and faced his son, the corners of his mouth almost reaching his ears.

“When will Mom, Dad, and Cynthia return?” the wolf cub asked. “It’s snowing heavily. I want to build a snowman. Grandma said Mother is the best at building snowmen, so I want to build a big castle with Mother. There will be Mom and Dad, Cynthia and Sunflower, Grandpa, Grandma, Kara, and Bertha.”

The young child’s voice made the people in the house laugh kindly, and my mother holding the wolf cub, laughed so hard that she bent over.

“The castle is huge,” Aldrich said. “Can you make it?”

The wolf cub puffed out its chest, unconvinced. “Of course, I can. Grandma said that I’m growing very fast. I’ll be as tall as the vases in the house soon!”

They chatted for a while, and Aldrich was about to undergo his routine examination. I took the video and asked about how my parents and my two children were.

Speaking of young Sunflower, my mother was a little hesitant. “What did you and Aldrich say about that child? He was different from Cynthia. The Evaria Family... Sigh.”

I was also worried about this, so I haven’t thought about how to tell Aldrich. However, this kind of thing couldn’t be hidden. After a few video calls with the wolf cub, he easily learned about this ‘little brother’.

It was a hot-headed decision to adopt him back then, and I only realized now that I was worried about Aldrich’s opinion.

However, to my surprise, Aldrich seemed very calm about this.

“He’s just a child,” he said. “He doesn’t even know who his parents are. Even if he has the blood of the Evaria Family, I should not have poured my hatred on an innocent child. The enmity between the Evaria Family and I will be settled sooner or later, and this child has already left that sinful family and has nothing to do with all this.”

He agreed to adopt the child.

Benson Walton’s POV:

What kind of experience was it to travel with a ghost?

I had to say, there was nothing special about it.

Julie’s remnant soul would neither run around nor do evil. Kevin had sealed her in a crystal bottle and occasionally let her out for fresh air. Every time this happened, Julie would wander in the area that Kevin had set for her.

We'd been to many places, and according to the intelligence, we'd visited all the former forces of the Evaria Family, but Julie's remnant soul didn't respond.

It was still in the Lycan pack. I crossed out the last possible location. We only had one choice left.

I'd rather it be a wolf's den or a tiger's den than the Lycan pack. but compared to me, Kevin had instead fallen into an indescribable fanaticism.

He wasn't overly excited and showed no obvious eagerness to try, but I could tell that a fire was burning in his heart, ready to burn the entire Lycan pack to ashes at any moment.

To be honest, this wasn't good. From experience, losing one's mind was the first step to failure. Moreover, the Lycan pack was not remote, where I had previously carried out missions. In that rich land, one wrong step would lead to eternal damnation.

However, Kevin did not listen to my advice, even though he seemed to understand my warning on the surface.

The closer he got to the Lycan pack, the more nervous Kevin became about the crystal bottle that contained Julie's remnant soul. In the end, he decided not to let Julie out at all.

"How can she feel where her other half is if you're like this?" I asked.

However, Kevin answered firmly, "It's in the Lycan pack, yes."

We'd return to this bustling city quietly. I needed to report to my superiors first. Since Selma had set off for the Spring Rain Pack, the current candidate had become Chekov.

"Good boy, welcome back safely." When Chekov greeted his subordinates, he would always say, "I hope everything goes well for you."

I organized the report and handed it to Chekov. The report was over after I described the mission. Chekov didn't give me any new missions. He only said Selma had asked me to continue investigating the truth behind Julie's death before she left.

Before I left, this mountain-like man warned me, "Finding the truth is your mission, kid, but be careful of your colleague.

"He is her Highness's trusted minister, and after working together for some time... I don't see any signs of his loyalty wavering."

"I don't doubt his loyalty. But sometimes, loyalty without reason is scarier than betrayal," Chekov said.

I understood what he was saying. Kevin's personal feelings for Layla might hinder our investigation.

That was all Chekov said to me. I didn't stay any longer and went to the Sorcery Research Association to meet up with Kevin.

The Sorcerer Research Association and the Royal Academy of Sciences were located at two ends of the same street. These two equally tall but differently styled buildings had once become a popular tourist attraction for the Lycan pack.

However, the number of visitors to the Royal Academy of Sciences had dropped significantly recently. The former president who had resigned was the head of the Evaria Family, which slightly impacted the image of the Royal Academy of Sciences.

Since the previous president resigned, the dean of the Royal Academy of Sciences had been temporarily vacant, and there had been no new positions until now. It was hard to say if the higher-ups forgot or intentionally ignored it. However, from the information I received, the internal department of the Royal Academy of Sciences was going all out to fight for the position of dean.

This might be what the higher-ups wanted to see. No matter who won, the influence left behind by the previous dean would be eliminated. This would even save the higher-ups the trouble of doing it themselves.

Julie's remnant soul had been transferred from the crystal bottle to a more secure device. Kevin and his colleague, Master Mary, were conducting 'research'.

This might not be accurate because what they were studying was not the remnant soul but how to transform it into a 'signal transmitter'.

"We can't just walk around the street with Julie's soul," Master Mary said. "It's too conspicuous. The power of the Lycan pack was a mix of good and bad, and many werewolf grandmasters were not officially registered. Even if they don't serve the Evaria Family or any other forces, just the fact that they want Julie's remnant soul as a good experimental material is enough to keep us busy."

I couldn't help much here, so I could only let them do their research. While they were busy 'modifying' their main force, I carefully inspected the Lycan pack I had not seen for a long time from top to bottom to make up for the information I had missed.

One day, I was having breakfast in a coffee shop that I often watched and suddenly remembered the old days.

In comparison, they could be considered two worlds. In the past, when I was sitting in the office and reviewing documents, I never dreamed that one day I would become a

ghost wandering the land of the werewolf pack, silently observing the many secrets happening in the corners.

518 The Tour

Selma Payne's POV:

Something happened. The Midnight Opera House was coming to the Spring Rain Pack for a tour.

I learned this from Mara. She would be one of the accompanying scriptwriters to perform in various places with the opera house. She even sent me VIP tickets.

Speaking of which, we probably hadn't seen each other in a long time. I'd been so busy here, and Mara often went out for business trips. The last time we met was during Mara's first opera after she became an official screenwriter. I went to support her.

"The theme of this tour is 'the Lost Myth'," Mara said excitedly over the phone. "This means that there won't be any classics that have already been on stage in this show. This was a challenge, but it was also an opportunity. The crew studied ancient myths day and night, writing and modifying scripts. To be honest, that period was really torturous. Watching one's painstaking efforts being criticized, denied, and modified day and night, that feeling was enough to make one collapse. However, it's all worth it. I promise that I'll give everyone a surprise with this performance."

As the 'national idol' of the werewolves, every performance of the Midnight Opera House would cause a scene where tens of thousands of people would turn up. I'm truly happy for Mara to be one of the scriptwriters for this tour.

"But why is the tour's first stop at the Spring Rain Pack?" I was a little confused. "Shouldn't it be in the Lycan pack?"

"Since we're pursuing something new, we should abandon the old rules in all aspects. The leader thinks that the Spring Rain Pack is a new city and a representative work of innovation, so it's the most suitable place to perform the new work of the troupe."

No matter what, I had to go and support them, so I decided on my schedule for that day early.

On the day of the concert, the troupe sent someone to ask me about my habits and requirements. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

"It's just a show, please don't be too nervous." I didn't know whether to laugh or cry as I told Kara, "Just do the usual. Don't put too much pressure on the troupe. It's not easy for the actors and staff."

Hence, the people sent by the troupe left while wiping their sweat.

Cynthia looked forward to this day the most. From the moment she opened her eyes in the morning, she had changed from her usual behavior of a little adult to an endless stream of questions. 'When do we start? When do we set off?' and other questions popped up almost every three minutes.

Kara was good at taking care of children. At least she was more patient than me and better at coaxing children than Aldrich. Hence, taking care of this little troublemaker was temporarily handed to her today.

"I finally understand why many people refused to be with fanatical fans." Leaning against Aldrich, I helplessly looked out the window at Cynthia and Kara weaving a flower crown. "She's so young, yet she already knows how to express her opinion on the beauty on the poster!"

"Cynthia has matured early," Aldrich said with a smile. "Besides, isn't it better to form her aesthetic style earlier?"

"It's better if she's aesthetically pleasing," I mumbled. "I'm afraid she'll grow up too early to be a beauty addict."

"Everyone loves beauty." Aldrich was very open to this.

The Spring Rain Pack had not yet built an opera house. It was ranked very low in the city and infrastructure. So the Midnight Opera House simply performed in the open and built a temporary stage.

The wide and sturdy wooden stage was decorated with gorgeous silk and tulle as if it was the play's background. The stage lights had not been turned on yet, which covered the stage in the dark with a layer of hazy black gauze, like a half-buttoned book, making people eager to see the words and phrases hidden in the shadows.

The stage was surrounded by an antique tent made of blankets and decorated with silk seats for individual guests. The tent in the middle must be mine tonight.

The troupe leader eagerly came to receive me, and Mara accompanied him.

We all understood what I was thinking, but I didn't mind this harmless way of trying to build a relationship with people I was familiar with. I also hoped that Mara could lead a better life in the troupe, so I didn't expose the troupe leader's thoughts.

After the initial exchange of pleasantries, he had the foresight to return the seat next to me to Mara. He also seemed to like children quite a bit, as he could casually answer Cynthia's endless stream of questions.

Cynthia wanted to meet with the performers. Just as the troupe leader was about to agree, I turned around to stop her.

“The performance is about to begin, my dear,” I said to Cynthia. “The actors are in the midst of intense preparation work. If you want to see them, they won’t be able to refuse. However, this will delay the preparation time. If there are any flaws in the performance, the actors’ hard work over the past few months will be in vain.”

Cynthia realized she’d been too rash tonight, so she sensibly gave up on her request.

The troupe leader cleverly suggested, “There’s not enough time now, but after the performance, if you’re willing, Your Highness, we can look backstage. The actors know that you’re coming today and they’re all very excited. It’ll be their greatest honor if they can get a few words of courage from you.”

Looking at Cynthia’s expectant gaze, I could only agree.

Selma Payne’s POV:

Even a professional troupe’s backstage was not much tidier than an amateur troupe’s backstage in school. Props, costumes, tables, and chairs, and half-drunk bottles of mineral water, could be seen everywhere.

The actors were nervous and uneasy when they saw us, and the staff was even in a hurry to clean up the mess.

However, this awkward scene only lasted briefly before it was broken. Cynthia, this young girl so obsessed with looks, immediately forgot about her shyness as a little adult and my advice when she saw the female lead. She started chatting with her like a little fangirl.

The female lead was a rather famous female opera actress. The name ‘Cynthia’ came from a role she had once played. At first, she was a little reserved, not knowing how to respond to a royal family member – the one that she had never heard of – and not knowing how to deal with a child who could ask ten questions in a second.

The commander was a quick-witted person. Even though the royal family had never announced Cynthia’s existence to the outside world, he still didn’t mention a single word about her identity. He simply addressed her as ‘Your Highness’.

“Your Highness is such a smart child.” He smiled like a kind grandfather. “It’s rare for a child your age to have such a sharp tongue.”

“Thank you for the compliment.” No matter what, a mother would always be proud of her child being praised by others. “The child is a little naughty. I hope you can understand the inconvenience caused to your troupe.”

The regiment commander's face immediately bloomed into a smile.

I didn't have much to say to the troupe. Besides, this wasn't a public setting, so I didn't have to say anything official in front of the media. Thus, this visit ended very quickly. The only one who was reluctant to leave was Cynthia. Before she left, she took a photo with the actress and left her signature on the photo.

On the way back, Cynthia hugged my autograph and asked, "Mother, will Aunt Mara always work at the Midnight Opera House? Then, can I go to the opera house more often after I return to the Lycan pack?"

"To be precise, our family has always had VIP seats in the Midnight Opera House. It's just that no one was interested in opera before, so we rarely went." I wiped the sweat off her forehead. A mimicry could even simulate such subtle physiological changes. It was magical.

"Yay!" Cynthia cheered. "In that case, I'll go every day!"

Watching the opera wasn't a big deal, but I had to put a wet blanket on her. "I don't think that's possible, my dear. You're still young. If you want to go out, you'll have to be accompanied by an adult, or you'll likely encounter danger."

"I know that you, Grandpa, and Grandma are very busy. Father can't do anything for now, and Grandpa also has official business to do." Cynthia still wanted to fight for some rights for herself. "I can ask Kara or Bertha to accompany me. They're also adults and are very trusted adults."

"But Kara and Bertha also have things to do. If they always accompany you to the opera, their work will be piled up, and they will be exhausted."

"In that case, I don't need an adult to accompany me! You know that I'm not just a two-year-old child. Mother, if a bad person tries to do anything to me, I can immediately make him disappear forever."

"I trust you, and I know you're not a good kid who will kill people. But how are we going to explain this to the outside world? A vicious assassin disappeared forever in the private room of a two-year-old child?"

"..."

Cynthia pouted and thought briefly before saying, "I can also bring a few more guards with me."

I held back my laughter and touched her hair, no longer teasing her.

“Okay, my dear, since you like it, I promise we can go to the opera once a week, okay? I’ll do my best to free up time to accompany you. Even if I can’t, I promise to find a reliable person to fulfill my promise in my place.”

“Really?” Cynthia’s eyes immediately lit up. “Thank you, Mother!”

After that, she couldn’t help but feel a little excitement along the way. Sometimes she talked about taking the wolf cub out to ‘see the world’, and sometimes she would talk about taking little Sunflower to explore new hobbies. She didn’t even consider whether these two real younger children could understand the gorgeous singing and elegant words.

When we returned to where we were staying, Dorothy had already returned. She didn’t enjoy the opera with us. She left after saying goodbye to Mara. With Tracy’s recommendation, she got to know several experts in the pharmacology research group, so the witch, who had a great interest in herbology, went into the laboratory.

She often had to stay up all night and rarely came back so early.

“I feel a little uneasy,” she said worriedly as she lay on the sofa in the living room. “That familiar feeling is back. It’s the feeling when fate is about to show me something.”

She raised her head and happened to see Cynthia. Without any warning, she froze.

Selma Payne’s POV:

I tried to wave my hand before Dorothy, but she didn’t react. I immediately understood what was going on.

Cynthia was still a little confused, but she quickly understood. “Is this aunty Dorothy’s prophecy?” she asked.

“I think so.” I nodded and told Cynthia to stay where she was for now. “I don’t know if she’s looking at you or something else, but just to be safe, let’s not move.”

Fortunately, the situation did not last long. After about ten seconds, Dorothy suddenly gasped for breath and fell from the sofa with stiff limbs.

I quickly went up to support her, but her clothes were wet and almost soaked in a cold sweat.

“Photo, photo...” I heard her mutter. “Let me see that photo.”

It was rare for Dorothy to be so weak. I realized something was wrong, so I handed the photo to Dorothy.

After looking at the photo, she suddenly groaned in pain and covered her head. The photo fell from her trembling hands to the ground.

I helped her to the sofa and called the infirmary worriedly.

“What happened?” I asked Dorothy, “Is there a problem with that photo?”

Dorothy lay on a pillow, sickly. Her voice was weak, “The problem is huge... Ever since I’ve mastered the Eye of Insight, I’ve rarely been forced to make prophecies. But it’s different today. I believe that the Goddess of Fate had a reason for forcefully stuffing the information in this photo into my mind.”

“The actress who took the photo with Cynthia, I believe there is something in her that is dangerous. Because I saw death, the shadow of evil power, and a family emblem in her fate – a garland-shaped family emblem composed of thirteen flowers.”

This was indeed bad news, I thought to myself.

An emblem in the shape of a garland. When was the last time I saw them?

In the distant north of the Elf Forest was a city with a long history and famous for its beautiful legends.

However, Garland City was not dangerous in any way, let alone related to evil forces.

So there was only one other possibility left – the servant family of the demon, who also had a garland as a coat of arms.

Dorothy’s description further confirmed my guess. “That family emblem is very strange. It’s similar to the one we saw in Garland City. The leaves on the garland are missing a few pieces as if insects gnawed them off.”

At this point, we looked at each other and knew what was happening.

I thought I’d have a peaceful life on this trip. I couldn’t help but hold my forehead, feeling exhausted from the bottom of my heart.

Dorothy laughed bitterly. “Perhaps we won’t have many peaceful days for the rest of our lives. What’s that saying again? ‘To wear a crown, one must bear the weight’.

Tracy checked and concluded that Dorothy was just a little exhausted. Dorothy was glad she did not have to take many pills. Although a herbologist, she was not very sensitive to medicine.

That night, I sent people to keep an eye on the opera troupe’s actress. I believed that even if she were a family descendant, she would not rashly make a move in the Spring

Rain Pack. My forces are everywhere, and the army was outside the city. However, with Adele's incident, for safety, it was better to pay attention to her movements in case she suddenly made trouble.

The next day, I asked Mara a lot about this actress, but Mara simply thought I was just trying to satisfy Cynthia's curiosity.

"She's an old senior in the troupe. Don't think she's only a few years older than us, she's very experienced. Tilly was born into a family of opera singers. She had become the Leading Actress of the Year at the age of five, breaking the record for her age! It was said that she had been receiving family education at home and had rejected even the best music academies in the werewolf pack. Come to think of it, her parents are both famous singers and musicians, why would she need to study in a normal school?"

"Although Tilly was famous at a young age, she is humble. She never puts on airs or has any romantic scandals with eligible bachelors. She also treats people like a spring breeze and has a good reputation in the opera house.

"However, Tilly has been on stage less often in recent years. At such a young age, no one knows why she suddenly considered retiring. Even for this tour, if it weren't for the leader choosing the Spring Rain Pack as the venue, we wouldn't have been able to get her to take charge."

Did she only agree to perform because of the Spring Rain Pack?

I sharply noticed some clues and continued to ask, "Does Tilly like the Spring Rain Pack?"

"Of course, she does. Who wouldn't like this thriving city? Besides, Tilly usually likes to travel. She often travels during her vacation. I heard that she has visited more than half of the werewolves packs."

It was not a big deal for an opera actor to be fond of traveling. Everyone had their hobbies.

However, if Tilly were a spy, it would be a big problem. Who knew how much information she had left in the places she had been?

Selma Payne's POV:

Cynthia was still slightly confused about how her idol suddenly became a suspect. The autographed photo that had made her happy for a few hours quickly became a time bomb. She did not know whether to throw it away or keep it. Tilly's lively signature on the photo was so glaring at the moment.

“Is she really a spy?” Cynthia asked in a muffled voice, “Isn’t she a pureblood werewolf who was born and raised in the pack? Even if she betrays us, will she ever have the chance to come into contact with foreign enemies?”

I touched the child’s head and softly said, “I’m not sure yet. Although Aunt Dorothy did see some clues, it doesn’t directly prove that Tilly is the spy. Perhaps she is indeed innocent, and she just unintentionally came into contact with the real spy.”

Cynthia didn’t believe such a naive explanation but didn’t ask any further. She just silently hid the photo in the corner of her suitcase.

I hoped to think of a good way to persuade this depressed child. However, I knew that if I spoke, I could only tell Cynthia an even crueler truth – Tilly might not be a spy, but whether she was ‘Tilly’ was another question. Being a dog in the manger was a method that had once caused me to suffer a huge setback.

The tour lasted three days, and soon, the Midnight Opera House troupe was leaving. Mara was reluctant to leave. She really liked the Spring Rain Pack and didn’t want to leave her old friends so soon.

Besides saying goodbye to us, Mara also left a small gift for Cynthia: A one-year visitor card.

“I heard you’re very interested in opera, little girl.” She gently touched Cynthia’s soft hair on her forehead. “Watching an opera is a wonderful experience, but I think working behind the scenes is also an unforgettable experience. You’re welcome to visit the opera often. Everyone likes you -not as a princess but as a child.”

This precious card lifted Cynthia’s depressed mood. She sweetly pounced into Mara’s arms and bid her farewell.

Before I left, Mara thought about it and told me some things that happened at the opera company.

“Tilly had been acting a little strange recently. Don’t look at me like that. I’m not a fool, girl. A Crown Princess will not personally inquire about an opera actress to satisfy her daughter’s interest. In short, listen to me. Tilly has been a little strange recently. She’s been mumbling something about someone watching her.

“At first, the troupe thought they had encountered a crazy fan, but the investigation was fruitless. Then, Tilly suddenly returned to normal, but in my opinion, it seemed even more abnormal – she seemed to be living under the flashing lights all the time, almost rigidly following the ‘character’ described to the media and fans, but the people around her are her friends and colleagues who are very familiar with her, so she did not need to do this at all.

“Although I don’t know why you’re paying attention to her, I’m guessing that if you’ve sent someone to monitor her, she probably has already discovered it. When she realized that the eyes surrounding her didn’t come from the crazy fans, she was very likely to have noticed it. So pay attention to the information you receive, Selma. Your subordinates will not lie to you, but Tilly will.”

Mara suddenly displayed unprecedented alertness and coldness, which made me feel rather unfamiliar. I suddenly realized: Mara was a year older than me. She was no longer the flustered little girl in the opera club.

“Don’t you think that this is hard to accept?” I asked, “I’m monitoring your colleague and using you to get information on her.”

Mara chuckled and said, “What kind of exploitation is this? Good girl, maybe you don’t usually pay attention to opera actors, but if you log into the support websites created by some fanatical fans, you’ll find that what you want to know is no secret at all, compared to those perverts who even want to know the color of Tilly’s underwear every day. Thousands of people have already known it before you.

“Besides, I trust you more than Tilly, Selma. I know you. Although we’re not as close as when we were students, I still understand your heart. If you pay too much attention to Tilly, there must be something about her that you have to pay attention to. And considering your status, I’m afraid this isn’t something the werewolves would be happy to see.

“So, if it’s of any help to you or the werewolves, I don’t mind being ‘used’ by you a few more times. Don’t think too much about it, Selma.”

Mara left with the Midnight Opera House, and the media broadcasted 70% of the news. On the TV screen, Tilly was so radiant and moving. Her every smile and wink were reflected in myriad amorous feelings under the flash. Thinking back to Mara’s warning, I couldn’t help but feel a chill in my heart.

Was Tilly still ‘Tilly’? Perhaps everything was just a coincidence that the actress was burdened with being an idol, or was the spy taunting the person monitoring her?

Benson Walton’s POV:

I knew the principle of ‘let the professional do the professional work’, and I was usually willing to pay trust and patience for this. However, after many unsuccessful experiments by Kevin and his werewolf grandmaster colleagues, this trust and patience had inevitably been slightly discounted.

Kevin used some complicated and explained methods that even I couldn’t understand to make some harmless modifications to Julie’s remnant soul. This made her sensing

range larger, and the 'signal' she sent to her other half could also be transmitted further, thus greatly increasing the efficiency of their mutual sensing.

But the problem was that such a transformation was very effective in theory, but in reality, it was defeated.

There was no movement from Julie's remnant soul for the next few days. I even took her around the city several times during my patrol, but nothing happened.

I couldn't hold it in any longer and wanted to ask Kevin if this method was reliable. However, Kevin's face was a hundred times gloomier than mine. I didn't have to ask to know his answer.

He had no choice but to wait.

Just waiting wasn't the style of people in our line of work. I searched through all the possible locations that we had listed and marked a few locations that Kevin didn't have the time to search carefully because he was in a hurry. I thought that if this didn't work, we would still have to go back and continue our search.

However, on the night I finished organizing my thoughts, the progress bar that had been stagnant finally moved forward.

The station of the mobile patrol team always maintained a simple style, just like the organization. There was nothing to enjoy, and it would not create an atmosphere of hard work. After living here for a long time, you slowly got used to the small and clean room assigned to you, just like a motel.

But tonight, I woke up in my room.

It was hard to describe what kind of feeling it was. It was cold and wet like someone had injected cold medical gel into the air. It made people feel solid resistance when they raised their hands.

When I opened my eyes, I immediately realized something must have happened.

The crystal bottle containing Julie's soul I'd been carrying with me all this time was now lying on the ground, a pile of shiny, non-renewable garbage.

I immediately rushed out the door, but I was not Julie's other half or a werewolf grandmaster with strange abilities. I couldn't find where the wandering soul had flown to, so I went to Kevin immediately but couldn't get through to his phone. I also learned from the Sorcery Research Association that he had left.

"Master Kevin said that if Mr. Walton came to find him, he should go to the temple in the suburbs," the security guard on duty said.

A temple in the suburbs?

I first thought of the Moon Palace, the divine hall that had stood in the werewolf pack for many years.

But the next moment, I rejected this idea and replaced it with another inexplicable thought – perhaps, it was another one.

The mysterious temple, funded by the royal family, looked similar to the Moon Palace at first glance, but the core was completely different. The existence of this temple was still an undisclosed secret, and even the information about it was not known to every intelligence personnel or mobile patrol member.

An ethereal sense of determination rose in me. By the time I reacted, I had already reached the edge of the forest that belonged to the royal family.

A figure stood not far away. It was Kevin.

The first thing he said when he saw me was, “We’ve found her.”

The forest that belonged to the royal family covered a large area. It had not been developed much, and most still maintained its natural appearance. This caused a lot of obstacles to our advance, so much so that we had to temporarily shift to become wolves to adapt to the sharp grass and messy branches.

The further I walked, the heavier my heart became. This was the direction to the Moon Palace. Although I’d never been there personally, the information wouldn’t lie.

I hoped it was all just a coincidence. It was best if Julie’s other half just chose a random place to take a walk instead of coming to see why the royal family built a temple that didn’t belong to the Moon Goddess to worship other gods and planned to stir up trouble with this explosive news.

After walking for about an hour, the view in front of us suddenly brightened. A grand and gorgeous palace suddenly appeared in front of us. This palace seemed to be built in the form of the Moon Palace, but the patterns in the details were more vivid and new.

Moreover, compared to the full moon totem of the Moon Palace, this temple was carved with crescent moons as thin and sharp as sickles and lifelike moths.

I felt increasingly uneasy, and for a moment, I even had the urge to give up on this operation. No matter what, this temple was not something I should explore.

However, Kevin treated this as nothing out of the ordinary. I wasn’t sure if it was my imagination, but how he looked at the temple was even a little respectful and pious.

“Let’s go,” he said. “Let’s go in and find the answer to everything.”

Chapter 523

Benson Walton’s POV:

Before entering the temple, I repeatedly confirmed with Kevin, “Do you really think we should go in? You might not know anything about this temple. You might know more than I do, but no matter what, this is not a place that you can enter as you please. The heresy’s Moon Palace stands majestically on the royal family’s land. I think anyone with a brain knows how to avoid suspicion and ensure they won’t be ‘shut up’.”

It was true that I was looking for Julie, but it was obvious that there was a bigger problem that couldn’t solve our current problem!

But Kevin turned a blind eye to my warning.

He looked at me with a creepy gaze and said seriously and contemptuously, “Take back your words, kid. Here... The master of this temple is very tolerant, but you have no understanding of it. Ignorance is not a flaw that can be forgiven forever.”

It made me feel like he had gone crazy for a moment.

I should be angry and be offended by this, but the truth was that I was like a deer that had been scared silly by a shotgun, not moving at all. I shuddered violently.

I didn’t understand what Kevin meant by that. Perhaps he had long become a captive of the heresy without him knowing? No matter what, Kevin had become the second temple in my eyes, full of secrets and strangeness. My radar was ringing like crazy, warning me not to try and discover secrets that I shouldn’t.

“... Alright,” I said stiffly. “Get your sorcery ready, Werewolf Grandmaster. I’ll be the vanguard.”

The temple’s door was tall and heavy, and the two-door rings as thick as oil barrels were about six or seven meters high. They were exquisitely carved decorations.

Of course, whoever knocked on the door was a fool. When I tried to use brute force to push this door that weighed a few tons, Kevin fiddled with it a few times, and the heavy stone door quietly opened inward, revealing a gap that two people could walk through side by side.

... Although Kevin didn’t even spare me a glance, I could somehow sense a sense of disdain from him.

I retracted my hand and walked to the door as if nothing had happened. I tried to observe the gap for a while to ensure no threats in my vision.

“This is the temple,” Kevin said. “In the werewolf pack, except for those lunatics who believe in the cult, no one would be crazy enough to cause trouble under the eyes of a god.”

‘Aren’t you a heathen yourself?’

I was the first to enter.

The temple wasn’t dark. The floor was inlaid with countless lamp stands in the shape of moon laurel branches and leaves, and at the top of each branch was a white, cream-like smokeless candle. The candles burned quietly, emitting a faint yellow light and a faint strawberry fragrance.

What a god who knew how to enjoy life, I wondered. What did her believers usually offer her? Strawberry ice cream and a blueberry sandwich biscuit?

I saw a huge stained glass embedded in the tall ceiling. The glass had a drawing of a woman with her arms open as if she was hugging. I couldn’t see her face because a few lifelike flying moths were covering her face with a light veil.

The moonlight poured down through the glass, causing the goddess on the glass to emit a soft halo as if she had some divinity.

Unknowingly, I was engrossed in it. I only came back to my senses when Kevin came over and gave me a push.

I immediately looked away from the glass window. ‘Oh my Moon Goddess, I didn’t mean to spy on the heresy. Please forgive me.’

It was an empty temple. There were no statues or altars anywhere I could see, not even an altar for offerings. It was as if the temple had been ruined halfway through its construction. It had a golden and jade exterior but lacked the core inside.

I didn’t see Julie or anyone else in this clear place.

I looked at Kevin, signaling for him to use his little sorcery to help us find clues. But Kevin did not look sideways and walked straight to the innermost wall of the temple.

I quickly followed him to the wall with gorgeous embossed. However, I didn’t find any clues. There was no sign of Julie nor any invisible windows or doors.

At this moment, Kevin suddenly reached out and touched the wall. I thought he would fiddle with some small mechanisms like he did when he opened the door, but the next second...

Under my horrified gaze, those moth-shaped 'emboss' started moving. They flapped their wings in a daze, and then the rock-like color around their bodies faded, revealing the black and gold intertwining inside.

A moth flew up and circled Kevin and me twice before landing on a laurel-shaped lamp stand. Immediately after, the second and third moths flew into action, and then all the moths on the wall followed the previous guide and flew off the wall.

This wasn't the most creepy thing. After the moths left, they revealed the pattern of the moon laurel branches on the wall. The branches gradually shed their gray disguise and became tough and delicate again. The green leaves trembled and retracted, gradually revealing a stone door under them.

Chapter 524 524 The Young Man

Benson Walton's POV:

I was almost certain that Kevin must have a relationship with this temple. He easily found such a hidden door and was indifferent to everything happening before him.

However, now was not the time to question that. The stone door was slowly opening in front of us.

The moment the door opened, my sixth sense suddenly buzzed, sharply warning me that there was an extremely dangerous person hiding behind the door.

I subconsciously wanted to shift the position of the wolf form, but Kevin stopped me.

"It's useless. No matter how strong the body is, it can't stop his invasion." He looked sternly at the dark void through the crack of the door.

"He has a weak body, but his spirit is always successful. Changing forms is just to let him find a more suitable opportunity to strike."

I didn't understand what he meant, but given how he'd always been so calm and expected, I thought there was no harm in trusting him for the time being.

The room behind the stone door was dark, unlike the many candles and glass windows on the roof outside. The candle beside the stone door illuminated a small corner for us, and the contrast only made the darkness even more dangerous.

However, Kevin seemed completely unaware of the danger as he entered it.

“You have no way out,” he said flatly. “Put away your despicable tricks. You’ve already failed once, and I think you now understand that they won’t work on me.”

Who was he talking to?

I thought that my vision was superior among the werewolves, but no matter how carefully I observed, I couldn’t see through the dark void.

No one answered Kevin, as if he was talking to air.

Kevin was not in a hurry. He stood at the boundary of light and darkness and continued, “There is no point in delaying. From the moment you stepped into the Goddess of the New Moon Temple, you were already exposed to her sight. You can’t hide, and you can’t escape. Stalling for time will only consume her patience, and it will bring you an even more tragic end.”

There was still no sound in the darkness, but something suddenly appeared in my line of sight and wobbled toward the stone door.

When I got closer, I realized that it was Julie!

To be more precise, it was Julie’s remnant soul, but this confirmed that her other half was here. And it was self-evident who Kevin had been talking to.

I silently prepared myself for battle. If the other side decided to fight to the death, Kevin’s small fishing rod-like body wouldn’t be able to withstand even a single claw.

Kevin’s expression did not change at the sight of Julie.

“This isn’t a show of weakness, but a provocation,” he said. “Under the goddess’s watch, you can only accept being captured. Anything else is considered a rebellion. Don’t be so naive and put up a stubborn resistance. The goddess needs not a broken soul but the murderer to be executed!”

These words were impolite!

I suddenly caught a faint breathing sound. It seemed that the person hiding in the darkness could no longer maintain his disguise and revealed his breathing. This made my entire body tense up even more as I prepared to punch the next soul or something that appeared at the door.

However, in the next second, I only heard a few soft laughs.

“You’re very smart, Master Kevin.” The man’s voice came from the darkness. “I think you intentionally released Julie’s remnant soul to bait me.”

Kevin did not answer.

“You even led me to this strange temple. If I’m not wrong, you’re the same as that strange agent the other day. You’ve abandoned the Moon Goddess’ trust and turned to the arms of this heretic god who came out of nowhere-”

“Mind your words!” Kevin was suddenly infuriated. The calmness that he had feigned vanished. “You have no right to judge these two tolerant and kind goddesses, much less to criticize my faith.”

“You little demon, when your father was licking the demon’s toes, didn’t he tell you to learn to bow and kneel in front of your demon master? You b*stard of the Evaria Family!”

I looked into the darkness in shock. Coincidentally, at this moment, the moths that were as quiet as stone on the light rack and the ground seemed to have been infected by Kevin’s anger. They rushed into the dark stone door.

Their black-gold wings, which looked like they were made of gems and crystals, shone with soft light, illuminating the dark room as if it were daytime.

Under this light, I could finally see the interior.

The tall, gorgeous stone wall, the altar with exquisite curtains and soft beds, two identical pale women, and...

It was the handsome and arrogant young man below the altar.

The young man turned a blind eye to the threatening moths above his head. He calmly nodded at us and greeted us as if he was at a dinner party. “Good evening, my dear gentlemen.”

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