

Chosen Mate Of The Beastmen Empire

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Chapter 21

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Nyx's soft hands grasped Theon's injured hand, and his heart went wild, the tips of his fingers tingling. The pain from the cut didn't even register.

Theon wasn't exactly trying to hurt himself on purpose, though. He'd just been a little careless, lost in thought, and sliced his hand.

With his reflexes, he could've stopped immediately, only cutting the skin slightly. But when he saw Nyx getting closer and closer to Zayne, he made a decision and gave himself a real cut.

It wasn't a big deal, just a small wound, because he didn't want to freak Nyx out by making it too serious. Theon couldn't figure out why Nyx had been avoiding him lately while getting all buddy-buddy with Zayne. He guessed in his mind, 'Is it something my uncle said during their video call that upset her? Has she grown to hate me?'

In a desperate attempt to grab her attention, he figured if he messed something up, even if it was something silly like cutting his hand, she'd have to focus on him again—even if it meant getting scolded for being clumsy by her.

To his surprise, Nyx didn't scold him at all. She didn't get mad that he'd messed up. Instead, she rushed to his side like he'd been seriously hurt.

She cleaned the wound for him and looked around for medical machines. She even asked with a trembling voice, "Does it hurt a lot?"

The cut wasn't long but deep, on his left index finger. When Nyx saw all that blood, her eyes turned red, and she looked so worried that Theon couldn't help but feel a strange warmth spread through him.

Her eyes,

round and doe-like, shimmered with tears, filled with concern and tenderness.

Meanwhile, the viewers went nuts and started to curse Theon.

[Did she cry???? No, don't cry, sweetie!]

[You're disgusting, Theon!! You made Nyx cry!!]

[Is she scared of blood? Must've really freaked her out, poor Nyx.]

[I wish I could jump through the screen and comfort her... Zayne, you better comfort her!] Actually, Nyx wasn't crying, but her eyes were red from the worry. There weren't any tears falling.

She leaned down and blew gently on Theon's wound, saying, "Let me blow on it. You'll feel better."

Theon was completely dumbfounded. A warm, tingling sensation spread from his fingertips all the way up his spine, making his whole body stiff, like he was a stone, a very hot stone.

The comments exploded with more content.

[Stop babying him! He's not in pain! He's tough as nails! He's just pretending!]

[It's a tiny cut! It'll heal up in no time!]

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Theon, drop your act

(You've seen blood on the battlefield and didn't flinch, but you're playing the injured puppy over a little finger cut??)

[Never seen a female pampering a male like this... Nyx is actually comforting him...]

[Ugh, I'm dying here. When will Nyx sec MY partner application?]

[Why does Theon get comforted?? What's so special about him

It wasn't just the viewers who were pissed-Zayne was seething 100.

This whole act of competing for Nyx's attention was downright pathetic. And, what sucked, it was working.

Now, Nyx was all focused on Theon, practically ignoring Zayne.

Zayne's fist clenched, and the sound of his knuckles cracking filled the room, but he kept his smile sweet as he turned to Nyx. "His wound's already been treated with the mini healing device. The bandage will take care of the rest. It'll be fully healed in half an hour."

Nyx, still worried, looked down at Theon's hand.

Zayne then turned to Theon, his smile turning to something cold. "Why don't you have some rest? I'll handle the live stream with Nykie."

Theon wasn't having any of that. He replied, "Didn't you almost fail the cooking class? I can handle this. It's just a small cut." Zayne shot back with a sarcastic grin, "At least I can keep my hands steady. Not everyone ends up cutting themselves just trying to slice some veggies."

Nyx thought they were just being polite and didn't want to bother each other. But when she looked at the screen, she saw the comments were roasting both of them for being so obvious in their competition for her attention.

[Heh, they're so young. Just two childish kids.]

[Both are great in their own right with good looks, brains, and strength. But why are they so silly when it comes to competing for a female's attention?]

[Can't watch this anymore...]

[That's so obvious. Females can easily see through their tricks.]

'Competing for my attention?' Nyx muttered in her mind, her eyes widening in surprise.

"You guys are overthinking this," Nyx said to the viewers. "They're not my partners. They're just my guardians."

When the chat exploded with comments like "Guardians are basically like the backup partners, aka fiancés", Nyx puffed out her cheeks and replied, "Seriously, you all misunderstand it."

She cleared her throat, looking straight into the camera. "Zayne has said it himself that he's only my guardian because he wants to be part of my family."

[...]

[Don't buy it.]

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I swear on Beast God's name, he's lying. 1

He's from the Desolate Planet. Of course he has plenty of tricks to fool you. He knows how to read people and play the game.]

Probably too scared to confess, so he's pretending he's got no ulterior motives!!

(It's easy to tell whether he loves you or not! Remember how cold and unfeeling Zayne was when other females were chasing him? Doesn't look like that now...]

[He's clearly up to something!!]

The chat went crazy, and Nyx started to feel a strange unease. It finally hit her that she fell for Zayne's words.

If this was true, then Zayne's plan had worked like a charm-she had definitely pulled away from Theon and

gotten closer to Zayne.

She frowned, the doubt gnawing at her.

Noticing how still Nyx was and how her eyes kept something was wrong.

darting to him with that suspicious, scrutinizing gaze, Zayne knew

"What's going on, Nykie?" Zayne asked while stepping closer.

Nyx instinctively took a step back.

Zayne paused, thinking for a second. His gaze flicked to the active comments on the screen, and sure enough, he saw the viewers peeling him apart. His expression didn't change, but his eyes darkened, the

shadows deepening.

[Control Zayne! He's glaring at me!!]

[Is his beast form a sheep? I'm gonna pass out. Is this some carnivorous type beastman bloodline pressure?] [This is terrifying. I feel like I'm being threatened by his gaze...]

[Who said he was gentler than Theon...?]

[Maybe he's only gentle around Nyx...]

The chat wisely dropped the subject, knowing better than to poke the bear-especially with Zayne being the live-stream admin. They were all just one wrong comment away from getting kicked out and blacklisted.

But it was too late. Nyx started setting boundaries. She wasn't going to play favorites. Whether it was Theon or Zayne, she kept a respectful distance from both of them.

After explaining to Theon and Zayne how to make the perfect filling for sandwiches, Nyx ignored them and started to interact with the viewers.

Nyx was a good cook. Back on Earth, she used to spend plenty of time in the kitchen-even if it was forced by her family, she never actually hated cooking.

With swift, practiced motions, she placed the fried egg, tomato slices, and salad dressing onto the baked toast and finished a perfect sandwich.

Some viewers had already prepped their ingredients and were trying to follow along, but when it came time to make their own, they were complaining about how hard it was.

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Meanwhile, Theón and Zayne were on the other side of the kitchen. They silently glared at each other, both frustrated and resentful.

They worked in silence while occasionally sneaking glances at Nyx's side profile.

Zayne, who had a steady hand and a sharp eye, thanks to his medical training, had quickly mastered the art

of sandwich making. After a few tries, the sandwiches he made looked nearly identical to Nyx's.

Once he had a batch ready, he carefully placed them on a tray. Then, in the blink of an eye, he transformed into his beast form, placed the tray on his head, and strutted toward Nyx like a proud puppy.

The viewers's eyes almost popped out.

[What the hell? He just went full beast form??]

[Females hate beast forms! Don't tell me he's gonna get kicked out of the kitchen...]

[I don't care about him, but please don't scare Nyx!!]

[Ahh, Nyx turns around! She sees him!!]

Nyx, still focused on her sandwiches, suddenly felt a tug on her sleeve. When she turned around, her eyes

widened as a giant, fluffy snow wolf filled her field of vision.

Without thinking, her arms went around the massive creature and pulled him into a hug.

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The viewers in the live stream were absolutely stunned, their eyes nearly popping out of their heads. They were all shocked by Nyx's actions of holding Zayne. After all, Zayne's beast form was a wolf!

Wolves had always ranked high on the empire's list of least favored beast forms for females. When it came to choosing a spouse, females tended to look at factors like power, status, genetic level, and wealth. Carnivorous males usually excelled in these areas, which made them more attractive to females.

But there was a catch. Females actually preferred the more docile herbivorous males. They were less aggressive, didn't give off that overwhelming, oppressive vibe, and were gentle and submissive.

Once bonded, males were legally bound by the empire law and could never betray their Matron. As a result, females could freely spoil whichever consort they pleased. Carnivorous males often ended up on the bottom rung of the family hierarchy.

Lions, wolves, and leopards were the classic examples of males who had high status before marriage but low status afterward, and who were dominant outside the home but lowly within it.

No female would ever willingly get close to a wolf, but now, Nyx had just shattered that belief.

Of course, most of the viewers in the live stream were Nyx's fans, so after a brief moment of shock, they quickly snapped back to reality.

If it was Nyx, it wasn't so strange at all. After all, this was the same female who wasn't afraid to handle a venomous, rampaging black mamba.

The snow wolf might look cold and intimidating, but the feeling of embracing it was soft and warm. Nyx practically sank into its thick fur, overwhelmed by a wave of happiness.

It took her moment to snap back to her senses, but once she did, she was so embarrassed that she couldn't even look up. Her long lashes fluttered like crazy.

The snow wolf, with his gray-blue eyes gleaming with amusement, lowered his head and offered her a tray with the sandwiches he had made. "Did I make it well, Nykie?"

Nyx knew full well he was teasing her, but she couldn't bring herself to resist. She could be tough and cold with Zayne, but when it came to this talking, charming white wolf, she just couldn't say no.

Without thinking, she wrapped both hands around the snow wolf's head and snuggled closer. Honestly, Zayne's sandwiches looked amazing with every detail precise and perfect. Nyx couldn't help but admire it and patted the wolf's head a few times in appreciation.

The viewers in the chat were absolutely green with envy, their eyes practically turning red with jealousy. All of them wished they could crawl out of the screen and take the wolf's place.

But the most jealous one was Theon. He glared as the snow wolf cozied up to Nyx, wagging its tail and trying to get her attention. Having known Zayne for years, Theon had never seen him act so shamelessly.

But then again, Theon thought if this was the way to get close to Nyx...

Theon's ears turned pink as he felt a wave of shame wash over him, but he didn't hesitate. He shifted into his beast form and nudged his way over to Nyx, trying to worm his way into her affection just like the snow wolf.

There he was, a majestic lion in front of her, trying to push his head into Nyx's hands, just like a giant furry baby.

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Now, Nyx was caught between the wolf and the lion, both vying for her attention. She was completely helpless, even forgetting that she was still live streaming. Lost in the softness of the moment, she couldn't pull herself together.

The chat went wild, utterly stunned and jealous by the sight.

[I can't even imagine what it would be like if my female liked my beast form this much... I'd be so happy..."]

[My beast form is also a wolf. Can Nyx pet me too?]

[I can tell Nyx really likes them. Her eyes are sparkling...]

[Darn it! I'm so jealous...]

[When will I ever get to live this dream?]

[How I wish other females could be as gentle as Nyx...]

[Too bad there's only one Nyx... Alas...]

Many viewers had already sent their partner applications to Nyx but had received no response. They had long since accepted the cold reality of their chances. Still, seeing this scene unfold made their jealousy flare up again

Every male watching couldn't help but wish they were the ones like Theon and Zayne, who could transform into their beast forms and end up cradled in her arms.

While Nyx wasn't paying attention, the live stream chat slowly turned into a matchmaking contest. Countless males flooded the chat and sent private messages with their personal info, desperately trying to catch her attention.

By the time Nyx finally noticed, she was startled. She ignored countless applications and cleared her throat awkwardly. "Let's get back to making sandwiches," she said, trying to steer things back to the task at hand.

The competition between the two males was seriously messing with the progress. It was almost breakfast time, and they'd barely made a few sandwiches.

Luckily, both Theon and Zayne were incredibly reliable when they got serious about something. They worked at lightning speed and made the sandwiches even faster than machines could do it—without any help from Nyx.

As they kept working, Theon prepared a cup of milk for Nyx, making sure she would still get her breakfast on time.

The sandwiches looked perfect and delicious, making everyone watching go "aww". Since it was Nyx's idea to make them, the viewers were all over it, showering praise for her creativity.

However, to be honest, most of them weren't expecting much of its flavor. They thought a sandwich couldn't really be that impressive. It probably wouldn't taste bad, but it wasn't exactly going to blow anyone's mind.

That thought lasted the first batch of sandwiches was neatly placed on the tray.

The steam from the freshly baked toast rose in a swirl, and a wave of warmth and rich aromas hit them all at once.

The toast was crispy with just the right amount of sauce. Taking a bite, savory meat juice burst out, mingling with sweet tomato slice and fried egg that made it so flavorful to dominate the eaters's taste buds.

The Intelligent Brain was able to detect the smell and simulate it for the viewers, so they could virtually "smell" the deliciousness. But unfortunately, they couldn't taste it no matter how much they begged. They were left drooling, staring as Nyx lovingly fed one sandwich to both Theon and Zayne.

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Those two guys were so satisfied that they forgot all about trying to keep up appearances. They dug in, barely taking a breath before finishing the sandwich. But it was too small for their appetites, so Nyx gave them each another.

"Go ahead. Have more," Nyx smiled at them, her eyes crinkling in happiness.

With her appetite, she could have eaten up to two sandwiches, but since there were thirty in total, she was more than happy to let the two big eaters handle the rest. Watching them enjoy it so much made her equally

delighted.

Nyx turned her gaze to the screen, seeing the viewers practically losing it. The chat was filled with comments begging her to unlock the replay so they could watch it and follow the recipe, hoping to replicate the taste for themselves.

Nyx smiled at them and said, "Actually, I'm doing this live stream to thank all of you. I'll randomly pick 100 viewers and send them a sandwich."

Nyx felt a little embarrassed about offering sandwiches as a prize, which seemed kinda cheap, but she had no idea how excited the viewers were getting.

After all, a female offering gifts to males was unheard of in the entire empire!

[Pick me! Please!]

[Pick me! Pick me! Pick me!]

[I really need that sandwich. If I don't get it, I'll die from depression.]

[Bless me, Beast God!]

Hundreds of billions of viewers were fighting for just 100 spots, so the odds were astronomically low.

At the Military Headquarters Building....

It was just around the time when everyone was supposed to be getting to work, when suddenly there were

some low moans

side..." and whines: "I missed it!", "Me neither!", "Luck is never on my

"What the hell are you all doing?" A cold voice, sharp like a blade, cut through the chatter.

The clerks instantly froze, their heads tingling in fear. They were caught red-handed-sneaking a peek at Nyx's live stream while on the clock, and now their supervisor, Felix, had caught them.

Felix looked down at them with that cold, intimidating glare. "You guys are watching Nyx's live stream?"

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Not winning the sandwich was already bad enough for the clerk but what followed was even worse. Of all the supervisors to get caught by, it just had to be Felix.

Everyone froze up, like chickens that had their throats grabbed. The murmurs in the office came to a dead stop. They couldn't even look Felix in the eye, stammering out half-hearted apologies for slacking off during work hours.

To their surprise, Felix didn't seem angry at all. He simply said in a deadpan tone, "Don't let it happen again."

It wasn't until his oppressive presence was completely gone from the room that they all let out a sigh of relief. Shoulders slumped, they exchanged bewildered looks and thought, 'Do we really just get away with it? No reprimand, no formal apology? Is that really Felix?'

Back at his office, Felix glanced down at the Intelligent Brain screen, where the words [Sorry, you did not win] flashed.

In the stillness of the office, after a long pause, a soft sigh escaped him. He realized he'd probably lost his mind.

Not only had he, like those reckless young officers, been watching Nyx's live stream at work, but he'd also felt disappointed.

Felix could rarely sense such an obvious emotion. The more he thought of it, the more ridiculous he felt. This was such a trivial thing, and yet, here he was, feeling emotions he couldn't quite wrap his head around. He asked himself, 'Why am I even affected by something so insignificant?'

Shaking his head, Felix grabbed a file from his desk. He wouldn't think about Nyx anymore. He wouldn't give it another second of his attention.

But just as he was about to focus on the paperwork, the Intelligent Brain pinged him with a new notification: [Nyx has sent you a friend request.]

Felix sat up straighter in his chair, his reflexes kicking in. He almost accepted the friend request in an instant. "He stared at the chat interface for a long while. His fingers hovered over the keyboard, but no message came from Nyx. After a moment, he typed the first thing that came to mind:

[Good morning, Ms. Voss.]"

It was just being polite. On this planet, males should always initiate greetings with females.

Nyx was still in the middle of trying to figure out how to message an elder. She had rewritten and deleted her text multiple times. Seeing Felix's message, she was so shocked. She quickly typed back: [You can just call me by my name, or Nykie works too.]

She thought calling her "Ms. Voss" sounded too formal. She couldn't bring herself to accept such a formal title.

Felix replied almost immediately: [Alright, Nykie.]

Though Felix felt it was a little too familiar for someone they'd just met, since Nyx had offered the option, he decided to go along with it.

Nyx: [Sorry to bother you, but I'd like to send you some of the breakfast we made. Are you at home right now?]

In the galaxy, sending things didn't require an address. As long as they knew the recipient, the logistics system could

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pinpoint the location and deliver it directly.

Felix: [I'm at the Military Headquarters Building. You can send there. Thanks, Nykie.]

83%

Nyx hesitated and wondered. "The Military Headquarters Building? Can I really send it there? Back in my school days, they wouldn't even let students bring breakfast into class. Well, perhaps people here must be a bit more relaxed.

She pushed her doubts aside and replied: (Alright, I'll send it. The sandwiches are the ones Theon and I made together. Hope you like them.) She attached a little bunny bowing emoji as a cute touch.

At 9 AM, the atmosphere at the Military Headquarters Building was serious, with everyone settling into their work routine.

Someone, rushing in that morning and still not having had breakfast, pulled out a nutrient drink and chugged it down, grumbling. "This brand's drinks are getting worse every time."

"Why don't you just order some takeout?" came a quiet suggestion from the desk next door.

There weren't too many strict rules at the Military Command, and even eating during work wasn't officially banned.

But the hungry clerk just replied, "Forget it. What if Felix sees us? That wouldn't be good."

Felix, as their supreme leader, never ate at work, so his subordinates had to keep their act together. Besides, takeout was never all that great.

The clerk added, "I really wanted a sandwich, but I didn't win it."

"You watched Nyx's livestream too?" asked another clerk.

"Of course. I've been following her since the Jade Garden incident. I really like her," the hungry clerk replied.

Their conversation about Nyx immediately caught the attention of a few others nearby.

Someone chimed in, "Don't even get me started. We were sneaking in a little live stream during work, and Felix caught us! Lucky for us, he didn't make a big deal out of it."

Just as they were about to spill their guts about the awkward encounter, they heard a colleague's warning cough, and everyone immediately fell silent.

Felix's tall figure appeared, walking past them as he headed for the building's exit. The room went still with everyone sneaking peeks at Felix.

To their surprise, he appeared to be carrying something. He signed for a package, cradled it in his arms, and took it back to his office with him.

Curiosity kicked in, and suddenly, everyone had the nerve to look closely at what Felix was holding.

Someone saw it and shouted, "Are those sandwiches?!"

No one in the room could have mistaken what they saw since they were watching the entire live stream.

Those sitting in the clear thermal box were the same plump sandwiches from Nyx's livestream giveaway. There were about five of them.

A brief silence fell, followed by confused murmurs. No one in the office dared believe it.

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Someone asked, "Marshal Lane watched the live stream too?!"

"And he actually won the prize?" another replied.

Holding the box in both hands, Fel replied.

sandwiches, examining it for

returned to his office. He carefully washed his hands before picking up one of the

ra moment before taking a bite.

He ate slowly, savoring each bite with an almost solemn concentration.

83%

If Nyx saw this, she would probably burst out laughing. A simple everyday sandwich was now being treated like a gourmet dish by Marshal Lane.

As he reached for a second sandwich, there was a soft knock at the door. It was one of his subordinates who had been caught watching Nyx's live stream earlier that morning.

The young male put down the documents he was delivering, but before he left, he couldn't resist asking, "Is this the sandwich you won from Nyx's livestream giveaway?"

The familiar, mouthwatering scent of the sandwiches made him fight to hold back his saliva. He was practically on the verge of tears.

He screamed in his mind, 'Why didn't I win? Even if it were one of my colleagues, that would be better. At least I can have a bite, but who dares take food from Felix?'

Felix's expression remained calm, and he corrected that clerk with ease, "It wasn't from the giveaway. She

sent it to me personally."

His implication was he didn't fight for a spot in the lottery-this was a special gift, just for him.

The clerk was speechless with jealousy written all over his face.

With a polite nod, the clerk excused himself and hurried back to his desk.

But once he was out of earshot, he couldn't hold it in any longer and started grumbling to his colleagues. "I tell

you what, Marshal Lane is definitely playing tricks! He said the sandwiches were personally sent by Nyx to

him."

Everyone was startled upon hearing that news.

Someone said, "It's gotta be because he is General Lane's uncle."

"I bet you're right," another echoed.

Everyone thought there was nothing more to it. After all, Felix was notoriously indifferent to females. Everyone

in the empire knew that he wouldn't be interested in anything romantic.

Theon thought the same.

Though he believed Felix had no interest in females, and even remembered Felix explicitly saying that he wasn't in competition with him for Nyx's affection, a sense of unease still nagged at him.

So, when Nyx offered to send Felix some sandwiches, Theon's instincts flared. The feeling of competition grew stronger. Unable to shake the feeling of crisis, Theon sent Felix a message staking his claim.

Theon: [Got your sandwiches, huh? Nyxie's only sending it to you because you're my uncle. Don't get any

weird ideas.]

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He waited a long time, but finally, Felix replied.

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Felix: [Well, say thanks to Nykie for me.]

His casual reply made Theon's breath catch in his chest.

Theon: [Why do you call her Nykie?]

92%

Theon was sure Felix had never used such a familiar nickname for anyone before. It made him realize that Felix's attitude toward Nyx was way more than just casual.

"Trying to set things straight, Theon attempted to assert his position.

Theon: [She only sees you as my uncle.]"

As for sending Felix sandwiches, Theon thought it was more about showing respect to his uncle, and not anything else.

Theon: [She feels like I'm not caring for you enough, so she thought she'd do something for me.]

Theon emphasized "for me", but Felix only focused on "care".

Still holding the transparent thermal box, Felix softened his gaze, his thoughts drifting to Nyx's petite, lively figure.

He could almost hear her soft voice, tinged with mild reproach, telling Theon that she was going to take the initiative and show some concern for her uncle.

Meanwhile, Theon was still typing away in the chat.

Theon: [You talked badly about her before, and she heard you, but she didn't get angry.]

Theon: Now do you get it? She's the most gentle, most adorable female in the world.]

Theon: [Feelings mixed with selfish motives don't deserve her.]

Theon: [I don't care if she has mental power or is E-level or S-level. I only like her. But you don't.]

Theon was this close to flat-out telling Felix he wasn't good enough for Nyx.

Felix chuckled softly, shook his head, and didn't respond. He thought Theon's jealousy was so blunt and childish.

But, as much as Felix hated to admit it, Theon wasn't wrong. Only the purest, most sincere love was worthy of someone so good as Nyx.

She was soft-spoken, stunningly beautiful, and kind to an almost unbelievable degree.

She'd risked herself to save a random male on the street who had lost control, and she even worried about a distant relative -someone she barely knew, someone who had even spoken harshly to her-and took the time to show him some concern.

After decades of being seen as a cold, emotionless figure, Felix had thought he didn't need warmth. But suddenly, a little bunny offered him her warmth without hesitation.

Felix poked at the soft and warm sandwiches in the thermal box. The heat from it tingled his fingertips, and he couldn't help but touch it again.

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Nyx received Felix's thanks.

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Felix: "The sandwiches are really good. Thanks, Nykie"

Nyx: (Mr. Lane, you're Theon's uncle, so you're my uncle too. No need to be so formal)

She thought he wouldn't reply, but after a while, another message came through,

Felix: [I'm only 47, not that old... Do you think I'm getting old?]

Considering that most people in the empire lived well over 500 years, and taking into account Felix's youthful good looks, there was no way he could be considered old. Nyx quickly denied it.

Felix: [Good, that's a relief. Actually, you don't have to call me "Mr. Lane"]

Nyx thought, 'What? No "Mr. Lane"? Am she supposed to just call him by his name? Nyx hesitated, unsure how to respond Fortunately, Felix saved her from the awkwardness and quickly switched the topic.

Felix: [I also got you a gift. It's custom-made, so it'll take some time to arrive. It should get to you by tomorrow afternoon]

Nyx: [Thank you!]

She felt a bit strange not adding "Mr. Lane", so she sent a little bunny making heart emoji for good measure. Just as Nyx sent Felix her reply, she noticed a familiar profile picture flashing in the friend request section. She usually ignored friend requests since there were just too many, but this one caught her eye. The profile picture was a black mamba, and it looked exactly like the young male who had lost control on the street earlier. Nyx quickly accepted the request.

Kian: [Hello.]

It seemed like Kian hadn't expected his request to be accepted, and he seemed a bit nervous, unsure what to say.

Nyx waited for a while, and finally, Kian sent a follow-up message.

Kian: [I'm Kian Linden. My beast form is a black mamba.]

Nyx thought to herself, "What a short introduction..."

She was about to ask if he was the same male from yesterday, the one who had lost control, when the third message finally came through.

Kian: [Your shirt is still with me...]

Nyx was taken aback. She hadn't expected it to be him, and she only learned now that his name was Kian.

Nyx: [It's not important. How are you doing right now?]

Kian was pleasantly surprised by her concern and replied almost instantly.

Kian: [I'm doing fine now. My Loss of Control Index has dropped to 73.]

To protect Nyx, the Supervision Office had falsely told Kian that they'd administered some kind of drug during

his loss of control to temporarily lower his index. Because of that, Kian didn't suspect Nyx's involvement.

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Even though he didn't know Nyx was the reason his index had lowered, he felt a deep sense of gratitude toward her. Had Nyx not thrown herself in the way to stop him, he probably would have gone on a rampage and hurt a lot of innocent people.

Kian: [Could you tell me what you like? I'd like to get you a gift.]

Now that Nyx knew Kian was recovering well, she felt relieved.

As for a gift, she wasn't really interested. She remembered Kian seemed like a student with a hard life, constantly taken advantage of by his biased mother. He didn't have much money, so there was no need for him to spend money on her.

Nyx: [I don't need anything right now. We can save the gift for later.]

After thinking about it for a moment, Nyx packed up a box of sandwiches and sent it to Kian.

Half an hour later, the sandwich arrived. At that very moment, Kian was at a shady underground arena near Central Planet.

The underground arena was a place where pirates and corrupt elites came together in secret, hidden away in corners of the empire. It was a playground for the rich and a den of misery for the poor, where people sold their lives for money.

Such illegal spots were nearly impossible to track for the authorities, let alone a regular delivery service. Once someone stepped into the underground arena, their signal would be scrambled and show a false location.

In the arena, two figures were locked in a brutal fight, tearing at each other with raw hands and savagery. What started as a bare-knuckle brawl quickly escalated into a bloodbath as they transformed into beasts.

Unlike the regulated fighting events organized by the empire, the underground arena's battles would often fight to the death. Desperate people would bet their lives to win huge rewards.

Kian had fought in this kind of arena over a dozen times. The fact that he was still alive meant he'd always come out on top. But he stuck to his personal rule of never killing

anyone, which made the audience and the arena's organizers unhappy. As a result, his reward was always half of what others earned.

He didn't want to abandon his principles. He just needed the money.

His mother only ever squeezed him dry for his scholarships and the little money he earned from legal side jobs. She had no idea about the dirty cash Kian made in the underground arena.

The money he earned here went straight into buying expensive drugs to delay the onset of his beast form's loss of control. Kian's father, whose Loss of Control Index had reached 90, was already locked up by the Supervision Office.

The abandoned males had no one to bail them out. They just had to wait for their end.

Even though Kian knew the drugs to delay his father's loss of control were only a temporary solution—his index would eventually rise again and get worse—he still kept fighting. He was trying to hold on, hoping the medication would give his father a little more time to live.

If it weren't for his father, Kian wouldn't have stepped into the underground arena at all. He could've stayed in school to be a top student at the empire's military academy. After graduation this year, he would join the Military Command.

Kian sat offstage, his face—beautiful yet almost otherworldly—was expressionless as he waited for the current match to end. It would be his turn soon.

He silently scrolled through his chat records with Nyx again and again. His gaze darkened with each pass.

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Chapter 24

Suddenly, a strong employee in uniform, built like a bear, stormed toward him.

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He shoved a transparent thermal box into Kian's arms and said, "Black Mamba, someone sent you something. It got delivered to a fake address due to signal interference and almost got destroyed. I stopped them just in time!"

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The underground arena had stationed some staff to monitor the fake addresses generated by signal interference, specifically to deal with any official investigations.

Occasionally, unsuspecting people like Nyx would send gifts to someone in the arena, and if those gifts got delivered to one of these fake addresses, they would typically be destroyed.

Luckily for Nyx, one of the staff working that shift was a friend of Kian's, so her gesture hadn't gone to waste.

Kian was momentarily confused as he took the thermal box from his friend, but when he saw what was inside, he straightened up with surprise. His dull eyes suddenly lit up with life.

It was like watching a dead man come back to life. The fighters around him, waiting for their own turn in the arena, couldn't help but peek over, their curiosity piqued.

Someone asked, "Who ordered you takeout? That looks fancy as hell!"

"Doesn't look like takeout, though. The packaging's way too nice," another male corrected the first one.

"That thermal box... Hold up, let me check. I swear, that brand's expensive! Damn, you know someone so generous? What the hell are you doing here fighting in this dump? You should be out there getting in with the big shot!" another guy shouted in excitement.

These guys, living on the edge every day, envied Kian's good fortune but couldn't understand why he'd still throw himself into a death pit like the underground arena. If someone cared about him enough to send him gifts, why the hell was he here risking his life?

Kian didn't respond. He lowered his head, opened the thermal box, and gently pulled out a big sandwich. Around him, the sound of swallowing saliva could be heard.

"That smells amazing! What the heck is it, man?" asked someone.

Another male echoed, "Yeah, bro, throw me one of those!"

Someone recognized it and gasped, "Wait, isn't this a sandwich from Nyx's livestream giveaway?"

"That's a sandwich? I've never seen anything like it," a male said.

"Who the hell is Nyx?" asked another guy.

The male who recognized the sandwich was a fan of Nyx. He quickly pulled up a screenshot from her livestream and showed it around, saying, "Nyx is this super cute female, my dream matron!"

The screenshot was from Nyx's live stream this morning. Her blond hair, pale skin, and round almond eyes were fixed seriously on the camera, looking adorably precious.

A crowd gathered around, all of them impressed.

A male gasped, "They're from such a stunning female. No wonder the box is so damn fancy."

"Man, you're damn lucky," added another male.

"You seem like such an ice-cold guy, but I didn't think you'd be into Nyx's live streams," someone else yelped.

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"Of course he is!" Kian's friend, nicknamed Bear, let out a loud laugh as he slapped Kian on the back. "You guys don't know the half of it. That female even touched his beast form with her own hands!"

The whole group froze and turned to stare at Kian.

The fan who had been showing off the photos was practically shaking now. He quickly dug up the infamous video of Kian losing control and compared it to Kian's face. It was indeed Kian.

That fan had been too distracted watching Nyx to pay attention to the black mamba's human form, but now he was piecing it all together.

Seeing the black mamba curl up beside Nyx in the video and now the young male holding the sandwiches, the fan felt like all the luck had fallen on Kian alone. Jealousy was palpable in the air.

Bear wasn't done stirring the pot. He raised his eyebrows at Kian, winking and saying, "Look at you, bro. You were soft as hell in Nyx's hands, and your tail's practically wrapped around her already, huh?"

The room full of young, bloodthirsty males erupted into whistles.

The teasing and jeering got louder and more intense. Kian's face instantly turned grim. His fists slowly clenched, veins popping on his forehead.

Bear, still not letting up, asked with a grin, "You still remember what it felt like, don't you? Are her hands soft? How good did her touch feel..."

Before he could finish the sentence, Kian's fist flew like lightning, smashing into Bear's face with a sickening thud.

Almost no one saw the punch coming. All they heard was a sharp whoosh of air. Bear, who was built like a mountain, crashed to the ground with a heavy, muffled thud.

The silence that followed was brief. Then, the roar of excitement from the others exploded.

"Damn! That was a good one!"

"Don't stop! Hit him again!"

"Get up, you useless piece of trash! Fight back!"

Just moments before, they'd been joking around about Nyx, but that camaraderie was nothing but a thin veil. The true atmosphere of the underground arena had now revealed itself.

This place was a violent hellhole—a lawless world where no one would stand up to stop the chaos. Everyone was a desperate outlaw, and no one cared for peace. They just wanted the fight to get even louder.

Kian stared coldly at Bear, who was wiping the blood from his nose, his eyes filled with frost. Surprisingly, Bear wasn't angry. He spat out a mouthful of blood and teased, "Still as fierce as ever, huh? Good job, man."

Bear had once been a fighter in the arena himself, getting wrecked by Kian in the past and barely surviving. After that, he quit and became a clerk at the underground arena.

They weren't just enemies—they'd built a strange kind of friendship through their fights. Thus, a single punch from Kian wasn't a big deal to Bear.

Bear raised his eyebrows and grinned. He then pointed at Kian and said to the crowd, "You guys see that? This kid's got feelings now."

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Bear knew Kian well enough to understand that the guy had an insane amount of self-control. Even when he was angry, he usually swallowed it down, keeping it all inside. Otherwise, he wouldn't have endured years of pressure from his mother, silently taking it until he finally snapped.

But now, just because Bear made a couple of light jokes about Nyx, Kian suddenly threw a punch at him. Bear slapped Kian on the shoulder in a knowing way and commented, "You're still too young, man."

"Who hasn't been young?" Bear sighed, shaking his head. "I used to like a female and chased after her for like eight years."

Back then, he wasn't stuck in the mess, and Bear almost had the kind of life he'd dreamed of—a normal, happy one.

"Then things went south. I started fighting here to pay off some debts, and I never dared go back to her," Bear said with a grin, even though his words had a bitter edge. "Guys like us, staying at the bottom of the world, don't deserve someone like

that."

Kian just stared blankly at Bear. He shoved Bear's hand off his shoulder without a word and turned back to his

seat.

Kian hugged the thermal box to his chest again, grabbing a sandwich and biting into it with mechanical force.

He grabbed another, chewing through it like a machine and swallowing hard with a determined look in his

eyes.

His slightly long hair and lowered eyelashes hid any emotions on his face, but it couldn't hide the overwhelming inferiority that filled his every movement.

It was hard enough just trying to survive. He wasn't in any position to ask for anything more. Before his turn, Kian stuffed his mouth with every sandwich, neatly packed up the empty thermal box, and then stood up to head for the arena.

His back was straight, and his frame was slim and fragile, showing a feeling that looked between a teenager and a man. But as soon as he stepped onto the arena, that fragile look disappeared, replaced by the sharp, focused presence like a blade.

This match didn't take long. Kian was ruthless and quick to defeat his opponent. His strikes were brutal, as if he was venting all his pent-up frustration.

But the moment his opponent fell, Kian pulled back, his fury retreating back into his chest.

Just like every time before, he spared his opponent's life.

He earned half the money that the others made, but Kian left the underground arena with only the empty thermal box in hand, like a ghost drifting through the place.

Outside, it was the middle of the day, and the sun was shining brightly.

The streets were crowded with people talking about the brave female who had stopped the out-of-control black mamba from hurting anyone, yet no one even noticed the male who'd been part of that story walking down the same street.

A little jewelry shop had just opened, with the shopkeeper cheerfully calling out to the young males walking by, trying to convince them to buy something nice for their favorite females.

Kian walked up, wiped the blood off his hands, and carefully picked up a necklace with a blue iris design.

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Nyx's skin was fair, and her neck was slender and delicate. Kian had once gently wrapped around it and brushed against it in his beast form during his loss-of-control episode.

Even though those memories had long since blurred into a hazy dream, Kian could still close his eyes and vividly picture how that necklace would look draped around Nyx's neck.

The necklace cost him 4,000 StarCoins. The price of the necklace was four months' worth of Kian's living expenses, but he paid it without hesitation. After that, he nervously sent a message to Nyx.

Kian: [I bought you a gift. It'll be at your place by tomorrow at the latest.]

The gift was missing a proper gift box, so Kian decided to personally carve and polish one to show his sincerity.

Back at his dorm, his roommates were all gone. In the era, most students attended day classes, while only the military academy students stayed in dorms. Kian shared a room with three others, and he rarely ever went home.

He hadn't gone back for years, but his mother still found ways to make his life miserable. She'd show up at his dorm to demand money, or worse, beat and humiliate him for no reason at all. But now, his mother would never cause trouble again.

A few days ago, after Kian had just returned to his human form, he heard that his mother had reported him to the Female Protection Association.

It was no surprise, but thanks to multiple witnesses speaking up for him, the Supervision Office had supported the claim that Kian was not in the wrong. The Female Protection Association eventually decided not to press charges.

That loss of control nearly cost both Kian's mother and her favorite son their lives, but somehow, Kian didn't end up in prison or even facing a lawsuit. His mother was furious with the outcome, but now, she was too afraid to lay a hand on Kian again.

That lesson had left them both scarred. The fear of the venomous snake's fangs would haunt them for life-an ordeal they were powerless to overcome.

Kian washed out the transparent thermal box that had held the sandwiches and placed it carefully on the top shelf of his cabinet, right next to that yellow shirt.

He couldn't help but run his fingers over the shirt, tempted to pull it down and hug it close. But he quickly withdrew his hand, forcing himself to suppress the overwhelming urge. His eyes lingered on the shirt as it sat peacefully in its high place.

A guy like him, covered in dirt and grime, couldn't and shouldn't contaminate something so pure. Even just thinking about it felt sinful.

Kian spent a sleepless night. Meanwhile, Nyx slept soundly.

After finishing her live stream and settling a few things, Nyx's insomnia vanished that night. She slept all the way until late morning.

When she woke up, she found two gifts waiting for her. For a moment, she was confused about which one came from Felix and which one from Kian.

The little gift boxes were both exquisitely wrapped, each looking handmade.

Nyx carefully opened the first box, and inside was a necklace. The chain was soft yet strong, made from a material she couldn't quite place.

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It was delicate, but it wouldn't snap easily. She held it up to her neck, and the small blue iris flower dangled perfectly between her collarbones, its shimmer catching the light.

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The second box contained a pair of fluffy hair clips. She took them out and was surprised to find they were designed as little bunny ears.

Nyx was a bit stunned to look at the clips. Though the bunny ear shape looked better than she expected when placed in her hair-cute, not childish-she still felt a bit embarrassed.

These clips clearly didn't match the mature, dignified vibe of someone like Felix, so Nyx assumed they must've been from Kian. After all, he was a young male; it made sense that he'd enjoy something like that. The iris necklace, however, seemed more like Felix's style.

Nyx didn't know she'd gotten the whole thing wrong.

She thanked both of them with a message and carefully stored both gifts back in their boxes to preserve them with special

care.

In addition to the two gifts, Nyx also received an invitation letter that gave off a faint, pleasant fragrance. It felt heavy and substantial in her hands, giving off a very vintage vibe.

On the letter was a distinct white tiger totem, which Nyx immediately recognized as the royal family's totem. She muttered to herself, 'It is..... an invitation to a royal ball?'

Nyx quickly looked it up on StarNet and confirmed it was real. The ball was set to take place a month later at the royal estate on Central Planet.

Officially, it was to choose a new royal consort, but in reality, it was a giant matchmaking event.

The male guests invited were all top-tier young elites, mostly from noble families, while the female guests were all A-level mental power holders. And, naturally, everyone invited was unmarried.

Nyx showed the invitation to Zayne, asking for confirmation. As it turned out, both Zayne and Theon- outstanding unmarried males-had also received invitations.

Nyx was stunned. "But I haven't even awakened my mental power yet."

'If all the invited females are A-level, how on earth have I received an invitation?' wondered Nyx.

Zayne responded in a deep voice, "The royal family has a keen sense for these things."

The video of Nyx soothing the black mamba had spread across StarNet, and while ordinary people might not have noticed, it was clear the royal family had realized something beneath the surface.

The crown prince, an SS-level male, was said to be in a precarious state and was on the verge of losing control.

Since Nyx was a female with potential for S-level mental power, it was no surprise the royal family had their eye on her. She had no choice but to attend the ball.

Nyx felt uneasy, and she asked, "What kind of person is the crown prince? Is he a good guy?"

Zayne nodded and answered, "He's a competent heir, so... yeah, I'd say he's a good guy."

Back when Zayne was at the Imperial Military Academy, he'd met the crown prince a few times.

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The prince was two years above him, and Zayne remembered him as almost perfect in every way-skilled in both literature and battles with a remarkable presence. He was polite, calm, yet authoritative, totally a true

leader.

Compared to him, the other royal princes seemed to have their flaws. Some were brooding, others stiff and lifeless, and many were mired in scandalous rumors.

Zayne realized that it was why the royal family had noticed Nyx. If there was even the slightest chance of saving the crown prince from losing control and becoming a wild beast, the royals couldn't afford to ignore it.

Despite Zayne's serious tone, Nyx felt somewhat relieved. She thought, "If he's a good guy, I don't mind helping him with mental soothing."

After all, her method of soothing wasn't like other females's. She could just play the doctor role and heal them without any emotional strings attached.

She figured the crown prince must have met all kinds of stunning females by now, and he definitely wouldn't care about someone like her.

She wasn't the type to be a heartbreaker. She couldn't even handle Theon and Zayne, let alone imagine the chaos if she added another love interest to the mix. The very thought of it gave her a headache.

"Meanwhile, at the royal palace, the atmosphere was tense.

The king was fuming with rage, while the queen was weeping, her face covered in her hands."

Just as the invitations for the royal consort selection ball were sent out, disaster struck- the crown prince had gone missing!

The guards on duty were immediately killed, and all available personnel were dispatched to search for the prince. The entire palace was turned upside down, but the crown prince was nowhere to be found.

The problem, however, was that this had to be kept under wraps. The crown prince's Loss of Control Index had already been dangerously close to critical levels.

Now, it was highly likely that he had already lost control and shifted into his beast form. If this got out to the public, it would cause an uproar.

The crown prince's beast form was a white tiger, a creature of immense power and aggression. If he had escaped into the wild, away from the palace, it could mean a catastrophe.

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"The chaos in the palace had yet to reach the outside world.

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As for the royal ball, Nyx wasn't as worried about the royal family's schemes as Zayne was. Her problem was much simpler- she couldn't dance."

Back on Earth, she'd never even touched social dancing, and the dances here looked even more complicated than anything she'd seen before.

Coming from the Desolate Planet, Zayne had very little knowledge of formal dancing himself. His experience was limited to what he'd learned in school, which he had no interest in at the time, just like he didn't care for cooking classes.

He barely passed those subjects, and even if he wanted to teach Nyx, he wouldn't have the skills for it. Theon was actually pretty good at dancing, enough to teach Nyx. But, as luck would have it, he was about to leave Central Planet to return to the 286th White Tiger Regiment.

He swore, though, that this wasn't another lie to Nyx.

As the highest-ranking officer of the 286th Regiment, he couldn't afford to be away from the base for too long. Since accompanying Nyx to Central Planet, he had already used up two weeks of his leave, hitting the max limit.

Zayne's leave was a little longer, and since he was going to be reassigned back to Central Planet, he could stay with Nyx for a while longer.

But Nyx didn't think she needed someone to babysit her-she wasn't a kid anymore. She was perfectly capable of living on her own. Still, both Theon and Zayne insisted that one of them should stay with her at all times. It was their duty as her guardians.

Theon dressed in his military uniform and straightened his clothes. With a look full of regret, he promised Nyx, "I'll be back often."

The base was in a remote location. To get there from Central Planet, it required three space jumps, and even if he took the fastest military shuttle, it would still take two full days just to make a round trip.

Frequent visits meant Theon would be making that long, tiring journey quite a bit. Just thinking about it made Nyx feel exhausted for him. She suggested, "Why don't I come with you guys to the base?"

Since she had already been registered as an imperial citizen, her mission to Central Planet was completed, and she didn't have to stay here.

"She didn't want Theon to keep running back and forth, and she definitely didn't want Zayne to be reassigned just for her.

Wherever they worked, she could go with them."

Theon's expression softened, tinged with helplessness. Having Nyx attached to him like this made him weak in the knees. He was sure no other male in the entire empire had such a sweet deal as he did.

Back in the military, he heard married soldiers complain about how indifferent their matrons were and how they never

missed them or reached out.

He knew Nyx wasn't like that-she was nothing like those cold-hearted females. But he hadn't expected her to be so unwilling to part with him, to even want to follow him to the base.

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Theon felt touched but still shook his head to explain gently, "Females have to live on high-level planets. The place I'm stationed is too remote, and it isn't safe for you"

Central Planet was the heart of the empire, home to the royal palace, an absolute top-tier world. The 226th Regiment, on the other hand, was on a mid-tier planet, surrounded by low-level planets with little development. It was one of the most desolate places in the empire.

According to imperial law, females weren't allowed to live in places like that. Even a short visit would require multiple levels of approval and reports.

When Nyx heard this, her face immediately fell with disappointment. She changed her clothes and reached out to grab Theon's sleeve. Since she couldn't go to the base with him, she at least wanted to see him off.

When they first arrived on Central Planet, the military shuttle they were on belonged to the 286th White Tiger Regiment. The shuttle had been docked at the nearest military base for the past few days.

This morning, the subordinate responsible for piloting the shuttle had received orders to prepare for the return journey. He had been waiting for Theon for quite a while.

When he saw Theon finally showing up, he rushed over with a teasing grin. "Boss, you're not still missing that little female back home, are you? It took you so long to get here..."

Before he could finish the sentence, he almost bit his own tongue in shock. His eyes widened when he saw a slender, pale hand reach out from the small shuttle and was immediately held by Theon's large, strong hand.

Theon and Zayne appeared one after the other and carefully helped Nyx step down from the shuttle. They didn't let go until she stood steady on her feet.

Nyx had a delicate form, a slim waist like a fine sculpture, and fair skin that looked stunning under the sunlight.

Squinting against the sun, she looked up and saw the stunned expression on Theon's subordinate. Amused, she gave him a

small nod.

The poor guy, a pure-hearted young male in his twenties who'd never interacted with any female other than his mother, turned beet red in an instant. His breath hitched, almost making him pass out from sheer embarrassment.

A voice screamed in his mind, A FEMALE IS SMILING AT ME!

He definitely recognized Nyx, and actually, every single soldier in the 286th White Tiger Regiment knew her. She was practically the whole regiment's crush.

But he wondered how his boss brought Nyx here. This was a base full of tough, rugged males, and females would never show up here.

The poor guy was about to explode from the embarrassment, and he thought, 'Oh my, what did I just say?! She heard it!'

But Nyx wasn't paying any attention to him. She didn't even realize his mental breakdown. After a brief, polite greeting, she turned her focus to Theon, who was about to leave.

Many people passed by, and every single one of them couldn't help but glance their way. As soon as they caught sight of Nyx, most of them froze in their tracks, nearly stumbling in shock.

Some even rubbed their eyes in disbelief, and they thought, 'Did I really just see... a beautiful female hugging a male on tiptoe? It's already a miracle that a female is even here. But a female actively hugging a male? That just never happens. Is this real life?'

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When Nyx hugged Theon, he was equally stunned, his body shuddering involuntarily. He had been hugged by Nyx before, but that had always been in his lion form. This was the first time they'd had such intimate contact in human form.

The hug only lasted for a moment, but as Nyx pulled away, Theon was left frozen there, as if the soft sensation of her body still lingered in his arms.

Flushed red, he stood there listening as Nyx softly whispered in his ear, reminding him to be careful on the road, to video chat with her when he had some free time, and that she'd miss him.

The males around them, with their sensitive hearing, could all hear her gentle murmurs loud and clear.

If looks could kill, Theon would've been pierced through a thousand times by the jealous glares of the others around them.

Those males only had one thought in their minds. 'With a cute female like Nyx at home, he can even bear to leave her? Why doesn't he apply to be reassigned back to Central Planet?'

Zayne stood behind Nyx and watched Theon's public display of affection with Nyx, his expression cold and unyielding. His body remained perfectly still, though his fists clenched so tightly that it seemed like he might throw them at Theon at any

moment.

Finally, after Nyx reluctantly waved Theon off, Zayne wasted no time. Before any of the males who'd been eyeing Nyx could approach, he swiftly led her to the small shuttle.

Once they got inside, the door shut with a hiss. Nyx sat down, and as soon as she looked up, her gaze met Zayne's calm, gray-blue eyes, which seemed to be hiding a hint of silent frustration.

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Nyx froze.

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Zayne and she locked eyes for quite a while, yet he didn't willfully ask her to make it up to him. Instead, he asked gently, “Wanna spend some time with me?”

As it turned out, his "charm offensive" took Nyx by surprise and worked surprisingly well.

She had wanted to go back home to rest after sending Theon off; yet before she realized it, she had already nodded and agreed to a walk with Zayne. Looking down, she saw her hand in Zayne's big palm.

Garden Square, the largest square on Central Planet, was located outside the Palace. It used to be the Royal Garden but was later opened to the public and greatly expanded. With colorful flowers that Females adored throughout the year, it became Beastmen's dating mecca.

Females were difficult to please; they wouldn't agree to a Male's invitation to date easily. Those who came to Garden Square in pairs to take a walk were either in love or at least had a thing for each other.

Zayne, having an ulterior motive, coaxed Nyx into coming here with him.

It was the first time Nyx had seen so many couples ever since she crossed over. She was too shy to see them dating, but obviously, her eyes and ears had their own ideas.

Not far away, a Female was scolding her partner for the scorching sun. Meanwhile, another Female slapped her partner in the face because the drink was unsatisfying.

Nyx was stunned; she knew Male inferiority was what was believed on this planet, yet it was only now that it became so vivid. To her, they weren't like couples out for fun; instead, they were more like bossy, arrogant princesses with their deferential slaves.

As she observed them imperceptibly, she didn't know someone was watching her at the same time. She, the pretty Young Female, walked hand-in-hand with a Male here in the garden, attracting the attention of countless passers-by.

Whenever they came across plant varieties she had never seen on Earth, she'd stop and listen to Zayne tell her about them. The more they walked, the more she was impressed by his knowledge-he knew so much though he wasn't an expert on plants at all. She looked up at him with unabashed adoration.

Those around were shocked to see such a look in a Female's eyes. They were used to the Females' gazes being contemptuous, disgusted, and condescending.

Occasionally-if they were lucky enough-they'd catch a glimpse of warmth in Females' eyes, but it lasted shorter than a shooting star. However, Nyx treated Zayne so tenderly with a gentle smile on her face all the time.

Zayne instantly became the happiest and luckiest Male on Garden Square, envied crazily by other Males. He looked straight away, but no one could miss the undisguised, joyful smile on his face.

The fresh air lightened Nyx's mood, and she made up her mind to go for a walk more often.

She looked down at a tuft of fluffy powder-blue flowers, and the petals fluttered in the gentle breeze. She couldn't help but squat, wanting to use Intelligent Brain to take a few photos from different angles to savor such a moment.

Suddenly, from the corner of her eye, she caught a glimpse of something white in the bushes not far away, causing her to turn to look in that direction right away.

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The bushes over there were of a variety not found on Earth, dense, tall, and vigorous, not a patch of them was white. She rubbed her eyes, figuring she had seen wrong and not dwelling on it.

Garden Square was so vast that she felt tired before they covered one-tenth of the area. Slumping into a bench, she was about to close her eyes and have a snooze for a while when, suddenly, a burning hand grasped her calf

She shivered, reflexively pulled away her leg, and sat upright, staring into the eyes of the half-kneeling Zayne in shock.

Looking calm, he spread his hands slightly to prove his innocence—he just wanted to massage and relax her tight muscles. His eyes dimmed as she dodged, but he soon smiled gently, "Come to me whenever you wanna give it a go?"

He was quite a pro when massaging; it wasn't just because he studied medicine. More than that, he had recently studied massage specifically for her. Males must master numerous means to please Females, and he was catching up as he had fallen behind too much.

Neither of them noticed the eyes of a ferocious beast staring at them from the bushes in the southwest

corner.

After resting for several minutes, they were ready to go home. As Zayne took the small Aircraft out of the Space Button, a gust of wind blew, swirling several fallen leaves into the air. Subconsciously, Nyx looked over and saw something white again.

This time, she caught a better glimpse of it, figuring it was an animal with white fur, but she didn't exactly know what it was, for it moved so fast that it vanished instantly.

She blinked hard and looked around; however, it was nowhere to be seen. Pausing for a second, she tugged at Zayne's sleeve. "Did you

see any

small animals? It's white."

Zayne immediately darted around. As one of the best among Male Beastmen, who were known for their keen senses, he was way more observant than she was; yet after quite a while, he just shook his head. "No." Perhaps there was one once, but it must be gone now, far from them no less. Or, there was another possibility—though negligible—that it was more powerful than he was and could even evade his senses. Whether such animals existed in the universe wasn't definite, but he was sure there were none on Central Planet. Animals more powerful than S-level Males simply didn't exist unless it was an SS-level Male in his beast form.

Yet there were only a handful of SS-level Beastmen in the Empire, all bigwigs. Why would any of them be here in his beast form? Zayne ruled out the possibility instinctively.

Nyx rubbed the bridge of her nose when hearing Zayne's response; perhaps she was hallucinating. After all, she knew exactly he was way more observant than her.

But she missed one possibility-the reason why only she could see the beast was because it only wanted her to see it.

After Zayne and Nyx left in the small Aircraft, other visitors on the Garden Square began to leave as well. It was almost lunchtime, and no Male wanted to starve his matron by failing his duty.

As the crowd dispersed, the bushes rustled perhaps because of the force of the wind, or maybe something was lurking inside.

A white tiger appeared silently among the bushes. Even during the day, it was as elusive as a ghost, making fools of seekers as

if it were the hunter.

As it slowly walked out of the bushes, it stared intently in the direction Nyx's Aircraft left, its eyes clear, blue,

and icy.

Its huge size reminded the others of a lofty mountain, and the markings on its body were slightly different from those of

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ordinary tigers, making it more mysterious and stronger.

It lowered its head and sniffed repeatedly on the bench where Nyx had sat. Squinting, it lifted its paw and then put it down with hesitation. After several seconds, it rubbed its head against the bench, leaving its smell on it while picking up Nyx

Finally, it locked in the direction. Making up its mind, it turned into a misty white shadow and chased after the

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Nyx was clueless that she was now a target of a fierce tiger. After seeing Theon off, she put her heart and soul into learning ballroom dancing.

Zayne pointed out that she shouldn't bother with this at all. Noble Females learned only the things they liked; others' opinions were irrelevant. And of course, she was allowed not to have the slightest idea of dancing. No one dared to mock her.

Yet it dreaded her to even picture herself making a fool of herself in public. To avoid faux pas on such a formal occasion, she searched for many dance training institutions on StarNet, but none was available to Females.

There were only a few schools in the Empire that were eligible to accept Females, which were specialized Female comprehensive schools and a few official universities.

Discrimination wasn't the reason; it was for Females' protection, as Female comprehensive schools were the safest in the Empire, even more so than the Palace. Females received education there from childhood to adulthood at age 18, completing all basic education while developing some interests.

Searching on StarNet, Nyx was shocked to know that most Females in the Empire would leave school when they reached adulthood; they rarely continued their studies.

Renowned universities, Imperial Military Academy, for example, were eligible to admit Female students, but in fact, they'd be lucky to have one Female student after hundreds of years.

Nyx felt bitter; she wasn't allowed to go to university at home, yet the Females here voluntarily walked away from receiving higher education. They really didn't know they were born.

In the room, she gawked at the screen in a daze, wondering if going to college here would be a wise choice when someone knocked on the door. Snapping back to reality, she turned around and saw Zayne.

Handing her the mixed serum, he showed her the resumes on his Intelligent Brain. "I picked out several great ballroom dance tutors suitable for you. Who do you prefer?"

Flipping through all the resumes, she saw all Males and could only pick one that seemed agreeable. Coleman Sherwin, a gentleman from an old aristocratic family—though down and out already. The young Coleman, with his pretty face and elegant temperament, was a famous playboy in the Empire, a heartthrob of several Females.

He mastered all kinds of aristocratic etiquette, especially proficient in ballroom dancing, and had rich experience in teaching Females.

Zayne had no objection to Nyx's choice; though Coleman was a bit frivolous in earlier years, he was already over 300 years old and a measured tutor who knew better than to develop any inappropriate relationships with his students.

Nodding, Zayne reached out to Coleman, who agreed to be at their doorstep at 3:00 sharp this afternoon. Nyx lifted her head and gulped down the serum, smacking her lips while frowning, thinking, 'Hats off to Beastmen; they take serum as formal meals for decades.

At first, the serum tasted fine; yet after having it on a daily basis for half a month in a row, she found it unbearable.

Zayne thoughtfully brought her a plate of sweet snacks in time, the raisin soufflé he had just baked under her guidance, rich and creamy.

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She had always been interested in baking but didn't have the time or money to develop it and could only memorize the recipes. This was the first time she had put one of them into practice, and it was a big, surprising success.

She brought a piece to his lips, wanting him to give it a go; shaking his head, he smiled, "I've already had some."

Fresh bakery, as nice as it smelt, didn't assure him enough to bring it to her directly. He tried some first to make sure it was OK before letting her have it.

Yet she wouldn't give up; she held the piece, her eyes tinged with stubbornness,

Zayne looked at her, his gray-blue eyes filled with tenderness. He lowered his head and took the piece away with his mouth, his thin lips brushing against her soft fingertips, making her tremble slightly.

She pulled away her hand at once; her heart stopped racing so fast when she noticed nothing off in his expression, and she figured perhaps he didn't do it intentionally.

Still flustered, she completely forgot that what she wanted was for him to take the soufflé with his hand instead of his mouth. After all this time, she still hadn't learned her lesson; he wasn't at all as harmless as he seemed to be.

He, on the contrary, knew that he should quit while he was ahead. After serving her with the full plate of soufflé, he left and went to the kitchen to clean up.

Seeing him leave, Nyx glanced at the time and saw it was just after 1:00 in the afternoon, nearly two hours before Coleman's arrival. So, she changed into light clothes and went to the courtyard outside for some fresh air.

Though Theon had been away from Central Planet these years, he had someone attend the villa frequently. The courtyard had a few newly added flourishing fruit tree saplings, and some adorable yellow flowers dotted the lush lawn.

The Royal Garden surely was more colorful and had more plant varieties, but this place was orderly and vibrant enough. Also, there was a swing in the corner. Nyx drew the drawing, and Theon made the swing based on it.

It had become Nyx's favorite spot; she often sat on the swing while basking in the sun, feeling like a retired person who enjoyed her peaceful retirement life.

Yet today, her exclusive swing was taken over by an uninvited guest—a petite, white thingy. She saw it from afar and walked quickly over, only to see a cute, furry back with pure white fur.

It was almost as impeccable as Zayne when he was in his beast form, but unlike the Snow Wolf, it was a small animal with soft, snow-white hair, reminding her of cotton candy.

The animal was curling up on the swing; upon hearing her footsteps, it warily propped up its body, revealing its face-as cute as cotton candy, just as she expected.

She instantly clutched her chest, her eyes sparkling as she thought, 'What a lovely kitten. I swear that it's the most perfect, elegant kitten I've ever seen!

The kitten had a round face, with eyes as pure deep blue as the ocean. Its whole body was white except for a clump of dark hair on its forehead, adding a touch of seriousness and majesty to it, resembling that of a tiger cub.

Nyx tried her best not to pat it; instead, she observed it carefully, and then she concluded-it was just an ordinary kitten, not

a Beastman.

When Male Beastmen were in their beast form, she always saw black mist around them. Take Zayne for example, though he didn't bestialize and didn't have a high Loss of Control Index, she still saw a certain light black mist surrounding Snow Wolf.

However, there was no sign of black mist around this kitten at all. Seeing this, Nyx smiled evilly and reached

out.

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Any cat person knew the trick of getting closer to a cat, which was all about patience. One should reach out and patiently wait till the cat came closer and smelt so that it'd be familiar with one's smell and then let its guard down.

Nyx crouched near the swing and held out a hand toward the kitten expertly. With her years of experience, not a single kitten could resist her charm; she believed the same went for this cotton candy in front of her.

As she expected, it cocked its head, looked at her, jumped lightly off the swing, came to her, and sniffed her hand while circling her.

Little did she know her smell was nothing but familiar to the kitten; upon sensing her smell in the Royal Garden, it pined for the smell so much that it threw caution to the wind and chased her all the way here.

Instantly, the kitten buried itself in her arms, meowing sweetly while playing cute, wriggling so much that its belly was out without guard.

No one would have guessed that such a clingy little kitten was a strong, majestic White Tiger just a few minutes ago.

The beast form of the royal Males was tigers, and that of the Crown Prince, a rare SS-level Male, was a White Tiger-not just any tiger; it was the White Tiger, the Divine Beast.

Beastmen who awakened the blood of the Divine Beast could revert to their Youth Form, similar to the energy-saving mode of machines. The Youth Form helped them better avoid danger and accumulate energy.

The Youth Form of the White Tiger was different from that of ordinary tigers. It didn't look like a tiger cub but more like a small white kitten, distinguished only by the clump of dark hair on its forehead.

It was an absolute royal secret that no one but the royal family knew about. And of course, Nyx had no idea that the adorable kitten curling in her arms was the Crown Prince of the Empire.

She couldn't help but be stunned when she saw the kitten throw itself in her arms; she had expected it to be aloof from its looks, yet it turned out to be the chummiest kitten she had encountered in years.

Clearly, the kitten liked her a lot. It stared at her face with its big, watery eyes, seducing her to stroke its soft belly while stretching its paw in mid-air rhythmically, a sign of relaxation and pleasure.

Its meow was soft and pleasant to hear, tugging at her heartstrings and making her smile. She held its round cheeks in both hands and stroked them gently with her fingers, and it felt so good that it squinted, lifted its face, and purred.

After a while, she changed her tactics; she started to scratch its chin with one hand and then deliberately let go. Sensing this, the kitten hurriedly wrapped its paws around her wrist, wanting her to keep petting it.

Its dorky, cute look made her heart melt. Bending down, she kissed its furry head non-stop. Other kittens would surely act pretentiously and dodge; though they'd let her kiss them, none would be enjoying her kiss this much like this cotton candy.

As she looked at the kitten, her gaze inadvertently fell on a certain spot, and she clicked her tongue. 'Such a clingy little kitten is actually a tomcat,' she thought.

She wasn't a pervert and wouldn't touch its testicles, of course. It raised its head and looked at her innocently, unaware that it had just dodged a bullet.

The two hours she spent waiting for Coleman were so fulfilled with the company of this kitten who showed up out of the

blue.

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The more she looked at it, the more it reminded her of cotton candy; besides, it was so clingy and sweet. She named a Cotton Candy, nicknamed Candy.

The Crown Prince now went with Cotton Candy-a true shocker. But at this moment, both Nyx and Comon Candy were enjoying themselves, and he responded eagerly whenever she called him "Cotton Candy" or simply "Cany

Nyx broke a soft branch and hung a bright flower on its front to use it as a cat teaser. It was perhaps the simplest cat sewer that had ever existed, but Cotton Candy loved it so much.

With his tail up in the air, he jumped up tirelessly and seemed never to grow tired. Nyx, however, felt fatigued and surrendered. She put down the branch and rubbed his furry head. "TII fetch you something to eat."

There was no cat food at home, but she knew cats were carnivores and could eat meat. She found a small chicken breast and an egg in the kitchen, and after some hesitation, she chose to let Cotton Candy have cooked food.

As she was about to cook, Zayne stopped her. "Let me. How would you like it?"

"Cut the meat into mince, add an egg yolk, and steam it." As she met his gaze filled with surprise, she added. "It's for a kitem" That explained the simple cooking method and the exclusion of any seasoner.

He paused. "A kitten? What kitten?"

Smiling, she said, "I bumped into a kitten in the yard. He's as white as you. And he's got a clump of hair on his forehead Re that of a tiger cub. You have no idea-he's so cute."

Unlike her, Zayne was greatly alarmed. He took a deep breath and decided he needed to do a good job of beefing up the villa's security system on behalf of Theon.

The lion losing control broke in because it was Theon, who passed the villa's biometrics without triggering the alarm and eviction defenses. But this time, it was a cat that came out of nowhere.

What if it was a Male Beastmen who was up to no good? It entered the villa so easily, which put Nyx in a very dangerous situation.

At Zayne's urging, Nyx had no choice but to lead him to the swing. However, there was no sign of Cotton Candy. She searched every corner of the courtyard, but he along with the cat teaser she made was gone.

Zayne was certain the kitten didn't want him to find it. He said, looking sullen, "There are no wild animals on Central Planet, and stray pets are rescued by special agencies. No one knows where the cat comes from; it's most likely a Beastman"

Shaking her head, Nyx disagreed. "He's just a kitten." Her conclusion was based on the existence of the black mist, which was nowhere near Cotton Candy.

Zayne begged to differ as she hadn't seen many Beastmen in their beast form at all; the insufficient sample size couldn't support her judgment. However, he did admit that using black mist to judge wasn't completely unreasonable.

That special black mist that only she could see was closely related to Male Beastmen's Loss of Control Index, and any Male Beastman might lose control, including underage ones; it was just that their Index was mostly below 30, making them relatively safe.

On second thought, maybe that cat really was just a cat. With this, Zayne relaxed a little and decided not to dwell on it for

now.

Cotton Candy ran away, and there was no one Nyx could cook for; she felt a sense of loss uncontrollably. The good thing was that it was almost 3:00, and Coleman arrived in advance.

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Her sadness was diluted by her enthusiasm for learning. She quickly changed into a proper dress and welcomed Colentan together with Zayne.

Unlike the photo on his resume, Coleman was a true gentleman in real life. The fine lines around his eyes didn't diminish his charm at all; they instead made him more mature.

His every move exuded an elegant charm, overshadowing countless young Males

At the sight of him, Zayne couldn't help but tense up.