

## Chapter 396 Negotiation

Anthony's POV:

It was already half past three o'clock in the morning when we got back to the royal palace. Even then, Jennifer didn't seem tired at all. She beamed at me, her eyes twinkling with excitement.

"Anthony, I'm just so happy that Skylar gave birth safely." Jennifer held my hand and sighed happily. This was the third time she had said something to that effect. Anyone could've seen how happy she was.

"Well, a baby is always a good sign." I chuckled patiently. "Well, honey, it's getting late. Let's go to bed."

"Anthony, I can't help but hope that Skylar will be able to stay with Jerome and their baby." As she spoke, her smile was wiped off her face. Now, she looked depressed.

"That day will come." I tried to comfort her, wrapping my arms around her gently.

"Anthony, Caroline and Skylar both have kids now. I can't wait to see our child." Jennifer touched her belly, her eyes lighting up again.

"In due time, honey. Our baby will be here soon." I smiled. Then I reminded her sternly to go to bed. "If you want our child to grow up to be strong and healthy, you need to get some rest."

"But Anthony, I can't help but feel a little scared." Jennifer sighed. "Skylar's delivery today was dangerous. I'm worried that when I give birth to the baby..."

"You'll be fine, honey. I'll make sure only the best doctors are there to help you through it." I pressed my lips against hers to stop her from talking anymore. "Let's have just one child, okay? I don't want to make you suffer more than once."

"Deal." Jennifer smiled and kissed me back tenderly.

After freshening up, Jennifer and I went to bed and soon fell asleep.

The following morning, I got up early. Jennifer was still sound asleep.

"Don't wake the queen," I instructed the maids. Then I got dressed and quickly had breakfast. Afterwards, I went straight to my office to deal with pressing government affairs.

Today, I needed to contact Aldrich and tell him about Skylar's most recent development.

After settling down at my desk, I straightened my collar and gestured at an attendant to come forward. "Get the vampire king on video call. There's something important I need to discuss with him."

"Yes, Mr. Jones." The attendant scurried off to do what he was told.

Soon, he set a tablet on my desk for the video call.

After a couple of rings, the call finally connected.

"Hello, this is Aldrich." Aldrich's deep voice sounded from the other end of the line. He had refused the request for video and turned it into a regular voice call.

I didn't mind. "Good morning, Aldrich. This is Anthony, the lycan king."

"Why are you calling me at this hour?" Aldrich asked indifferently. If I wasn't mistaken, his voice had a hint of hostility.

"I hope I'm not bothering you." I decided to go about this as diplomatically as possible. "I believe Skylar already told you that she was pregnant. Coincidentally, she gave birth earlier than expected due to a little accident. Rest assured that she is fine, and has given birth a healthy baby boy."

"What?!" Aldrich gasped in disbelief. "She gave birth already?"

"Yes. If you don't believe me, I can redirect the phone call to the hospital," I explained calmly. "Skylar was out shopping with her friends yesterday when they came across a band of robbers trying to hurt an innocent woman. She valiantly rushed in to help, but one of the robbers pushed her to the ground..."

"What?!" Aldrich exclaimed. "Anthony, if you can't take care of my daughter, you'd better give her to me as soon as possible!"

"Calm down, Aldrich. Fortunately, my queen was there at that time and she handled everything. Skylar turned out fine and gave birth to the baby safely." Truth be told, I understood where Aldrich was coming from. In a gentler tone, I added, "It was an accident that could've been avoided if our public security was better. I sincerely apologize. We will severely punish the robbers behind the accident. But Skylar has just given birth. She is very weak, and the baby was born prematurely. She needs to rest first. How about we—"

"Well, since you apologized, I'll accept your apology," Aldrich said slowly. "But I don't think it's necessary to postpone our meeting. Our hospitals are also very good. We can take care of Skylar from there."

I had already expected such a response, so I remained calm. "If that's what you really want, it's not impossible. But Skylar is in urgent need of her mate's care. What if you let her mate go with her? This is also what she wants."

The vampire king fell silent. Finally, he asked, "Skylar's mate is a werewolf, right?"

"Yes," I answered without missing a beat.

"Humph, in that case, I'm afraid I can't agree," Aldrich grunted. "It took me a great deal of time and effort to convince the elders to let me bring back Skylar, who is a mixed-blood. How much more a pure werewolf? Forget about it!"

"Aldrich, I can assure you that Skylar's mate is an upright werewolf and faithful to Skylar. If he comes with her, he won't make trouble," I persisted.

"Even if I agreed, it'd be useless." Aldrich's tone softened a little. "The elders will never let a werewolf wander our castle freely."

"I understand." I cleared my throat and spoke seriously. "Aldrich, why don't we both compromise? You can agree to let Skylar stay in werewolves' territory for a little longer as she recuperates, and I won't bring up the topic of taking her mate with her to vampires' territory, at least for the time being. Aldrich, please understand where we're coming from. After all, Skylar is weak and needs the care of her mate more than anything right now, and the newborn baby needs its mother's care. I'm sure it won't be too late for her to go to vampires' territory by the time she recovers."

"Humph... Cunning werewolves. Alright, fine." While Aldrich sounded reluctant, he still agreed to compromise.

I ignored Aldrich's sarcastic words and proceeded briskly. "It's a deal then. When Skylar has recovered, I will tell you immediately."

I silently breathed a sigh of relief. Although it wasn't that smooth a negotiation, the outcome was not too bad. It seemed that Aldrich really loved Skylar.

"If you have nothing else to say, let's end this call," Aldrich hissed coldly.

"Wait. There is one more thing I needed to talk to you about." I was thinking about Austin. Now that we couldn't exchange Skylar for Austin as previously agreed, I was worried that the vampires would mistreat Austin. "Although we're postponing our meeting, you still need to follow your end of the deal and ensure Austin's safety."

"Don't worry about it," Aldrich sneered with disdain. "We vampires do not lie."

"Thank you for your understanding, Aldrich. If nothing else, goodbye."

After I got off the phone with Aldrich, I went straight to look for Caroline.

When I found her, she was walking with my mother in the garden.

I approached her and went straight to the point. "I'm sorry, Caroline. You've probably heard about Skylar's premature delivery. She's too weak to go on a long trip, so I negotiated with the vampire king and we have decided to postpone our meeting until Skylar has recovers."

"Anthony, I totally understand," Caroline said hurriedly. "It's no big deal. But thanks for telling me this."

"I'm glad you understand. Thanks for being patient, too," I said with a gentle smile.

"I'm willing to wait for Austin, no matter how long it takes." As she spoke, Caroline blushed slightly. "I'll be okay. Besides, I have Alice with me. I just know that Austin has been thinking about us."

It made me happy to see how considerate Caroline had become. The hard-headed girl from our youth had finally grown up.

As for Skylar and Jerome, at least they could be together for a little while longer. This was a good thing, wasn't it? Godfrey's birth was just the beginning.