

30 Days To Freedom: Abandoned Luna Is Secret Shadow King Chapter 241

He coveted her

(Third-person's POV)

But Matthew didn't know. If he had known that Lyra Blackwood had opposed Olivia's mating to Theodore because of him, how could he have let her go?

Matthew barely suppressed his astonishment, not letting Olivia notice a thing. He searched his memory, trying to grasp something from that time, but there was nothing.

Lyra had left him no clues. When Olivia asked what they had talked about, he could only recall fragments.

"Your mother said you were growing up fast and wouldn't disappoint me," he said carefully. "She asked me to be sure to come back for you."

Disappointed, Olivia softly leaned against his chest. She had thought her mother might have

chosen Matthew for her, but now she concluded it wasn't so.

Her mother simply wanted her to become strong, and Matthew was the path to that strength.

She reflected on their past; she was a naive sixteen-year-old, while he was already a revered

Alpha King.

They had only met three times, and their last farewell was so rushed he didn't even look at her. She had thought he was angry, but now she understood her mother was just trying to

protect her.

As Olivia rested in his arms, Matthew's mind was in turmoil. He now understood that Lyra's words were more than a dying wish; she was creating an opportunity for him, placing her daughter in his hands.

And he had completely missed it. He had watched her from afar for over a decade, infatuated with her, coveting her, and knew her too well.

He could sense that her current gentle demeanor meant she was about to pull away again. As if to confirm his fears, Olivia expressed her gratitude.

"Thank you for being the one my mother sent me to," she whispered. "The one who saved me from Theodore's control."

She whispered through their mate bond, "Thank you, really, my King." But her heart was in

She was growing more attached to Matthew with each passing day, yet she felt she had to push him away. His wonderful life shouldn't be entangled with her and children who were not his.

(Olivia's POV)

I pulled away from Matthew's embrace and walked over to Leo. My eyes instantly caught the faint red mark on his cheek.

A dark, cold look flashed in my eyes as I glanced toward Theodore's hospital room. To lift my son's spirits, I brought up a conversation I had overheard.

"I heard you talking to Beta Tristan on the phone, about taking us to the European Territory?" Leo's face lit up with pure joy.

"Wow! The ancient werewolf kingdoms! Is it true, Alpha Kane?" His excitement was infectious. "Can I visit the Moonstone Citadel, the Royal Training Grounds, and the Shadow

Archives?"

Matthew casually placed a protective hand on the boy's shoulder and confirmed it with a simple "Mm." Overjoyed, Leo declared his new dream.

"Mom, I've changed my mind. I don't want anything Grandma Eleonora promised me." His eyes sparkled with determination. "I want to be a royal guard. Can I, Mom?"

Seeing the stars back in my son's eyes, I gently took his hand. "Of course, you can. You can be anything you want to be."

The group later arrived at Matthew's office in the Council Hall. The entire floor echoed with my exasperated voice as I chased after a hyperactive Aurora.

"Aurora, don't run!" I called out breathlessly. "Aurora, you can't touch their things!"

The staff watched in amusement as I finally caught her. I warned sternly, "Don't cause trouble for him, okay?"

Aurora, with puffed cheeks, retorted defiantly. "Papa won't get angry. I'm not the trouble, Mama is the trouble. You always make Papa sad."

Then, her voice grew soft and pleading. "Mama, if you leave Papa again, don't take me with you. I want to stay with Papa. Brother chose you, but I choose Papa."

My eyes instantly filled with tears. I hugged my daughter tightly, whispering, "I'm sorry, so sorry. You'll understand when you're older."

I couldn't leave Aurora with Matthew; I couldn't grant that wish.

I carried Aurora into the lounge, where Matthew and Leo were engrossed in a strategic war game. Just then, Tasha walked in with a stack of freshly developed photos.

Her eyes fell upon what must have looked like a painfully intimate scene. I stood behind Matthew, my hand on his shoulder, which he covered with his own.

He would occasionally turn to speak with me, his other hand gently tucking a stray strand of my hair behind my ear. His gaze was full of tenderness, making me blush.

Aurora broke the silence, looking at a photo and complaining, "I'm ugly. Why don't I look like Papa?" The room went quiet.

Matthew picked her up, reassuring her gently. "You'll be beautiful when you grow up. How could you not be beautiful when you look like your mother?"

Aurora then blurted out innocently, "Mama is pretty, prettier than Aunt Tasha..." before Matthew quickly covered her mouth.

At that moment, Leo won the strategic game. Matthew just smiled, "Even an Alpha can misstep," and urged me to play a round.

"Let me teach you," he said, taking my hand. I felt my cheeks burn with embarrassment.

(Tasha's POV)

My face turned ashen. I walked out of the lounge and into the restroom, staring at my reflection in the mirror.

My mind replayed the intimate scene, Matthew's handsome face, and Aurora's innocent words. A venomous thought took root in my mind.

Was it only because of Olivia's beautiful face? If her face was destroyed, would he stop loving her?

My mind filled with rage at how lucky Olivia always was. She had everything I wanted, everything I deserved.

I pulled out my phone with trembling fingers. The number I dialed belonged to someone I knew would understand my desperation.

“Destroy Olivia’s face,” I hissed into the phone when he answered. “And I’ll give you everything you want, including access to her system.”

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Disfigure her? But I want her life.

(Ethan’s POV)

More Rewards

In the hospital room, I sat on the bed, peeling an apple with a knife. The blade moved smoothly through the red skin, creating a perfect spiral.

My phone buzzed. Tasha’s voice came through, trembling with rage.

“Destroy Olivia’s face,” she hissed. “And I’ll give you everything you want, including access to her system.”

I paused, the knife hovering over the apple. “Are you sure?” I asked coolly. “What I want is not to disfigure her.

I want her life.”

Silence stretched between us. Then Tasha’s voice returned, harder now.

“Taking her life is also fine! You wait for my news!”

The line went dead. I sneered and muttered to myself, “I never thought my mother and sister had such poor judgment. Mom chose the wrong mate. My sister is even worse, Theodore is terrible, and Matthew is no

better.”

The door opened. My father Faelan Moonstone walked in, followed by mother Annelise Moonstone.

“Who made you so angry?” Annelise asked, picking up the apple and throwing it away.

My demeanor softened instantly. "It's nothing. Mother, why did you and Father come?"

Annelise sighed, her eyes focusing on the burn on my neck. "Some things, you shouldn't do yourself. You

don't know how much I treasure you."

She sat beside me, her voice turning urgent. "What about your relationship with Seraphina Kane? You need to

seize the opportunity of Matthew's upcoming coronation."

Her fingers traced the air as if counting invisible coins. "Your two older brothers are not promising. Your

father and I are counting on you for the rest of our lives. Everything your father has will be yours,

understand?"

I nodded obediently. "Yes, Mother."

After they left, my mind replayed a memory from before I was five. Annelise relentlessly whipping Lyra in the basement. The sound of leather against skin. Lyra's muffled cries.

All of Annelise's subsequent kindness felt utterly hypocritical to me. I had waited thirty years for Lyra to

return, only to receive news of her death.

Now, with no one left to care about, I resolved that it was time to bring the Moonstone Pack down with me.

(Olivia's POV)

After having lunch with Matthew and dropping off Leg and Aurora at the Crimson Pup Creche, I drove to the hospital. Theodore was in a meeting with Lydia Miles and several company executives.

Theodore's bodyguard blocked my path. "Luna, the Alpha is in an important meeting."

I angrily pushed him aside, kicking open the conference room door. The executives looked up in shock as I stormed in.

I walked up to Theodore in a rage. "Theodore, what gives you the right to hit my son?"

Even when he had caused me to fall or tried to make me miscarry, I had never laid a hand on him. The red

mark on Leo's cheek burned in my memory.

"Did Leo say something? I was just lightly disciplining him," Theodore said, trying to grab my hand.

I recoiled. "If you dare touch him again, I won't let you see him anymore!"

Theodore quickly apologized. "My love, I was wrong. I promise I won't hit him again. I'll take you to see Ethan."

Lydia tried to interject about the meeting. I took the opportunity to turn and leave.

Theodore caught me at the stairwell. "I'll take you to see him," he pleaded, but I moved away when he reached

for me.

"I won't touch you. Come with me," he said, stepping into the elevator. "If Ethan is Hacker Zero... he could also

endanger Matthew."

That was the only way he could get me to follow. Inside the elevator, he suddenly said, "My love, I bought this hospital. In the future, if the pups have any minor ailments, they can come directly."

He even mentioned Aurora, but I cut him off, my eyes cold. "Aurora is not your pup."

We entered Ethan's room. Ethan feigned surprise.

"Luna, why are you here? And with your former mate?"

My gaze fell on the burn on Ethan's neck. I suddenly realized that Hacker Zero's only exposed skin had been

his neck.

"How did you get hospitalized?" I asked.

Ethan calmly explained, "Oh, I went for dinner with Seraphina yesterday. The server was careless and scalded

me while changing the moonlight wine."

He showed me a photo on his phone of them at the restaurant. Theodore called Seraphina, who confirmed they had dinner at 7:30 PM, the exact time of the exhibition hall explosion.

It seemed to be a misunderstanding.

(Ethan's POV)

As Olivia turned to leave, I stopped her "Luna, do you want to know about your mother?"

Theodore tried to dissuade her, but I launched into a tirade, mocking him. "I heard you opened a film company for Audrey Vale? Your mistress's name is Clara Thorne, isn't it? With a pup, Rosalie? Where are they

now?"

My words hung in the air, an unspoken threat of the asylum. Theodore paled as he met Olivia's hurt and icy

gaze.

I pushed Theodore out of the room, sneering. "I really don't know how that Alpha King Matthew can tolerate you buzzing around Olivia,"

I slammed the door shut.

Now, only Olivia and I were in the room. She sat on the sofa by the window as my cold gaze lingered on her slender, white neck.

I could almost hear the rhythmic pulse of her carotid artery. A heartbeat as clean as Lyra's.

I picked up the fruit knife on the coffee table and walked towards her.

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He Regrets Sealing Her Memories

(Ethan's POV)

Olivia looked up in surprise as I sat down beside her, holding an apple and the fruit knife. I began peeling the apple with careful precision, the blade moving in smooth strokes.

“Were you close to my mother?” she asked softly.

I nodded, not looking up from the apple. “Very close. Ask me anything you want to know.”

Her voice carried a hint of uncertainty. “Cynthia Mooncrest told me my mother escaped from an arranged

mating with the Mooncrest family. Is that true?”

I paused, considering my words carefully. “Your mother was indeed fleeing an arranged mating. On her way out, she encountered danger. I was the one who helped her escape.”

Olivia’s shoulders seemed to relax slightly. I sneered inwardly. She believed Lyra had successfully escaped, unaware that she had simply fallen into another devil’s cage.

To solidify her trust, I reached for my phone and showed her an old photograph. “This was taken in 1995. I was just a child then.”

The image showed a young me standing beside Lyra Blackwood. The proof was undeniable.

Olivia’s eyes widened with gratitude. She grabbed my hand suddenly. “Thank you for helping my mother. I

can’t express how much this means to me.”

I feigned sadness, letting my voice c***k slightly. “We lost contact after that. She promised to return someday, but she never did.”

Olivia mentioned something that made my blood run cold. “There’s something puzzling about my mother’s company in the Sovereign’s Citadel – Shield Chajn Technology. It’s been losing money since inception, which seems strange for a tech genius like her.”

She paused thoughtfully. “Maybe she left it as a foothold, planning to return one day. Perhaps even to see you.”

The words hit me like silver poisoning through my veins. While Olivia had been cherished and taken. everywhere by our mother, I had been abandoned and despised. She had received the love and legacy that should have been mine.

The injustice burned within me, festering like an infected wound.

The conversation shifted to Hacker/Zero. I remarked casually, “It’s a shame such a talent died.”

Olivia's response was ice cold. "Hacker Zero was a prolific criminal. I've seen Matthew's intelligence report detailing his many crimes."

The words were a stunning blow. Not only had she stolen my mother's love and inheritance, but she also knew the extent of my secret life. She had to die.

I concealed my murderous rage and offered her a piece of the freshly cut apple. "This was your mother's favorite fruit."

"But my mother never ate apples," Olivia replied innocently.

"I really love eating apples," I remembered the happy look in her eyes when I stole an apple and gave it to her back then. So, was she even lying about her own habits?

I handed her the precious photograph with cold precision. "Keep this. It's yours now."

As soon as she left, I called Tasha immediately. "I'll make her death silent," I promised, my voice steady as

steel. "But I want access to her system immediately. Arrange it."

(Theodore's POV)

I waited outside Ethan's room, pacing like a caged wolf. When Olivia emerged, I desperately tried to convince her.

"Olivia, Ethan is Hacker Zero. He deceived us both. You have to believe me."

She brushed me off with infuriating calm. "Don't call me 'my love' anymore. I am Matthew Kane's mate."

Then she delivered the most devastating blow. "Since Master Healer Alistair treated my traumatic memories

of your affair, my love for you vanished along with the pain."

Her eyes held no emotion as she looked at me. Just the placid gaze one gives a stranger.

"I really don't love you anymore, Theodore."

I couldn't accept it. I stammered about our ten years together, her sacrifices, everything we had built.

Her indifference was a blade far sharper than her previous hatred.

“Theodore, let’s end it here,” she said, sealing my fate with those simple words.

I collapsed internally, watching her walk away with measured steps. In a frenzy, I chased her out of the

hospital and into a torrential downpour.

I blocked her car desperately, pulling open her door as rain soaked through my clothes.

“Please, don’t forget me,” I begged, my voice cracking with pain so profound it seemed to merge with the storm.

I tried to embrace her, desperate to feel any warmth, any connection through our severed mate bond. But she was ice.

She coldly threatened to take me to the pack courts, strip me of visitation rights to Leo, and erase herself from my life completely.

Her utter lack of emotion not love, not pain, not even anger was my complete undoing.

I stumbled back as she drove away/leaving me lying defeated in the storm. The rain mixed with something else on my face.

Seraphina Kane appeared with an umbrella, her expression concerned.

I grabbed her hand suddenly, a new desperate plan forming in my fractured mind. “Help me see her one more time. Please.”

I regretted sealing her memories. I would have them restored, even if it meant she would go back to hating me.

At least then, I would still exist in her heart.

(God’s POV)

Olivia arrived at the Shadow Syndicate’s intelligence center, her movements efficient and purposeful. Her phone rang, and a woman’s gentle voice came through the speaker.

Olivia seemed slightly surprised. “Have dinner together tonight?”

She paused, listening. “Matthew is hiding something from me?”

Another pause. “Okay, I won’t tell anyone I’m going to see you.”

Two hours later, Olivia walked into a restaurant, her guard seemingly down for the first time in weeks.

In the alley across the street, Ethan loaded a silver bullet into his gun and aimed directly at Olivia.

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Ethan was Shot

(Olivia's POV)

I sat at a booth by the window at The Sovereign's Table, checking my watch for the third time in five minutes. The mysterious caller who claimed to know Matthew's secrets was already twenty minutes late.

A tall shadow fell across my table. I looked up to see Caelan Mooncrest standing there, his pale features twisted in what he probably thought was a charming smile.

"Check, please," I called to the waiter, raising my hand.

Caelan pressed his palm down on the bill before the waiter could reach it. "From now on, Miss Blackwood's meals at this restaurant are complimentary."

I stood immediately, unwilling to get entangled with him. "That won't be necessary."

Before I could take a step, another figure blocked my path. Morgana Mooncrest stood there, her eyes filled with undisguised contempt.

"Come with me," she ordered, her voice sharp as broken glass.

I found myself trapped between mother and son, both radiating hostility. The other diners were starting to stare.

"Fine," I said coldly. "But make it quick."

Inside the private room, Morgana wasted no time on pleasantries. "You orchestrated my granddaughter's detention, didn't you? Cynthia is being held by the pack authorities in connection with that hacker case."

"Your granddaughter made her own choices," I replied evenly.

Morgana's face flushed with rage. "Did you treat your own granddaughter with the same harshness? Oh wait, you don't have one. But I suppose you know all about abandoning family, just like your mother."

The mention of my mother made my blood run cold. "What did you say?"

"Lyra Blackwood," Morgana spat. "That unfilial daughter who almost ruined the Mooncrest pack by running away from her arranged mating."

This confirmed part of Ethan's story, but something felt wrong. "When did this happen?"

"Thirty-five years ago," Morgana said with venom.

My heart stopped. Thirty-five years ago? But Ethan had said thirty. A five-year discrepancy.

Morgana reached into her purse and pulled out a small device. "I have something you want. The projection code for Lyra. I'll give it to you in exchange for Cynthia's release."

I stared at the device, then pulled out the photograph Ethan had given me. As I looked closer at the image, my blood turned to ice.

There were marks on my mother's arm. Thin, parallel lines that could only be whip marks.

"Did my mother ever return to the Mooncrest pack?" I asked, my voice barely a whisper.

Morgana's laugh was cruel and bitter. "Return? That ungrateful wretch never came back. She died outside our territory, and good riddance."

The casual cruelty in her voice made me sick. I stood abruptly, shoving the photograph back into my pocket.

"Keep your deal," I said, disgusted. "I want nothing from you."

I stormed out of the private room, my mind racing. The five-year discrepancy, the whip marks, Morgana's hatred – something was terribly wrong with Ethan's story.

I had to find him. I had to demand answers.

(Third-person POV)

In the dark, rain-soaked alley near The Sovereign's Table, Ethan Moonstone held a silver-loaded gun to Tasha's head. Rain dripped from his dark hair as he pressed the barrel against her temple.

"Please," Tasha whispered, her voice shaking with terror. "Remember, our target is Olivia. I hate her for stealing Matthew Kane from me."

Ethan's face twisted with disgust. "For a man?" he sneered. "You're cheap and vicious."

Tasha's eyes widened in confusion. "But you said-"

"Do you know who she is?" Ethan's voice was deadly quiet. "She's the only person I care about in this world. The person I love the most."

His finger tightened on the trigger, but before he could fire, cold metal pressed against the back of his skull.

"Hello, son."

Ethan's blood turned to ice. He knew that voice.

"Father," he said without turning around.

Faelan Moonstone stepped closer, his own gun steady. "You betrayed us. You intentionally left clues for Matthew Kane to uncover and destroy the Moonstone pack."

Ethan laughed, the sound bitter and broken. "Betrayed you? You want to talk about betrayal?"

He turned slowly, facing the man who had raised him. "Let me tell you about betrayal, Father.

You captured my mother. You imprisoned her. You r***d her for five years."

Faelan's expression didn't change. "She was given to me as a gift."

"And your mate Annelise whipped her every night for five years while I watched," Ethan continued, his voice rising. "You made me from violence and hatred. You transplanted a rogue wolf heart into my chest because I was born broken."

"You were weak," Faelan said coldly.

"I was your victim!" Ethan screamed. "Just like she was!"

The gunshot echoed through the alley like thunder.

Silver burned through Ethan's chest, and he collapsed to the wet pavement. Blood mixed with rainwater, creating dark rivers that flowed toward the storm drains.

As his life ebbed away, memories flashed before his eyes. The nightmares of his mother's screams. The transplanted wolf heart that never felt like his own. The years of training to become a weapon.

His last thought was of Olivia. At least he hadn't dragged her into his abyss.

At least she would never know the truth about what he really was.

(Third-person POV)

Olivia heard the gunshot from inside the restaurant. Something deep in her enhanced senses pulled her toward the sound, an inexplicable compulsion she couldn't ignore.

She ran through the rain, her heels clicking against wet pavement. When she reached the alley, it was empty except for a pool of blood being washed away by the downpour.

"Miss, did you see anything?" A pack authority officer approached her, notepad in hand.

"I heard a gunshot," she said, staring at the blood. "But when I got here, there was nothing."

As she gave her statement, she saw Matthew Kane standing in the rain across the street. He looked breathless, upset that she hadn't called him through their mate bond.

He approached slowly, his hand extended toward her. She reached for it but somehow missed, their fingers barely brushing.

Without a word, he handed her his umbrella. But instead of getting into his armored vehicle, she ran to her own car.

She had to find Ethan. She had to know the truth.

The Royal Infirmary was nearly empty at this hour. Olivia rushed to Ethan's room, but it was vacant. The bed was made, as if no one had ever been there.

"Excuse me," she called to a passing nurse. "The patient in room 314?"

"He was discharged this afternoon," the nurse replied. "But he left a contact number."

Olivia dialed with shaking fingers. A woman's voice answered on the second ring.

"Hello?"

"I'm looking for Ethan Moonstone," Olivia said.

“This is his mother. Ethan has gone abroad for a confidential mission. He won’t be reachable for some time.”

The line went dead.

Olivia stared at her phone, confusion and dread warring in her chest. She heard footsteps in the corridor – the distinctive sound of Matthew’s approach, his Alpha presence filling the space.

She quickly hung up and turned to face him.

(Third-person POV)

Matthew saw Olivia standing there, soaked and trembling. Her clothes clung to her body, and her hair was plastered to her skull from the rain.

He assumed she had rushed here for Theodore Redgrave. The thought made his jaw clench with barely controlled fury.

Without a word, he swept her into his arms with supernatural strength. She was lighter than air in his grasp, fragile and precious.

He carried her to his car, then back to their home, and finally into the bathroom. He placed her gently in the tub and turned on the hot water, steam rising around them.

He reached to help her out of her wet clothes, but she caught his wrist.

Tears began to fall then, ‘pat, pat, pat’ against the porcelain.

Matthew gripped her face in his hands, his Alpha fury barely contained as he lowered his voice to a dangerous whisper.

“Don’t cry.”

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Attending Leo’s Concert

(Matthew’s POV)

Olivia stared at me in a daze, unable to speak. She was trembling, her face pale and her eyes red-rimmed as tears streamed down her cheeks.

Seeing her so pitiful, my heart softened. I released her face and began to undress her, my voice devoid of emotion.

"You'll be uncomfortable in wet clothes."

Olivia wiped her tears, trying to compose herself as she pressed my hand, which was on her shirt button. With a pleading tremor in her voice, she whispered, "I'll do it myself..."

I gently wiped a tear from her eye, realizing I had been too harsh, and softened my tone.

"How can you undress yourself when you're shaking like this?"

The thought of her getting drenched and crying for another man made my heart ache. I gazed at her intently, refusing to let go.

"I am your mate. I've held you, kissed you, changed your clothes. I've seen everything there is to see."

At my words, Olivia's face flushed, and she looked down, begging softly, "I want Briar."

"No," I replied quietly, pulling her hands away.

I swiftly unbuttoned her shirt and removed her clothes, my brow furrowing at the touch of her cold skin. I filled the tub with more hot water and began to wash her hair, the white foam gradually covering her beautiful figure.

As I rinsed the foam from her body with the showerhead, she cried out in embarrassment, trying to stop me. "I'm not cold anymore, I'm not shaking! I can do it myself, please don't do this... I'm not a pup."

My expression cooled slightly, but I kept my voice gentle. "You're worse than a pup."

I pulled her to her feet, and she buried her face in my chest in shame, but I pulled her away. "I'm dirty," she mumbled, noticing that I was soaked as well.

In what felt like an eternity, she stood there, completely exposed, until a large, soft robe was wrapped around her. She opened her eyes to meet my deep, indifferent gaze.

I held her tightly, her bare feet on mine, and asked softly, "Did you go to the infirmary to see Theodore?"

She shook her head, but when I pressed her to say who she went to see, her eyes reddened again and she refused to answer. Sensing my rising anger, she suddenly stood on her toes and kissed my lips.

The kiss softened me, and I kissed her back, a gentle, brief touch, before lifting her out of the bathroom. I handed her the hairdryer.

“Dry your hair, change, and come downstairs for dinner.”

As I reached the door, I paused and looked back. She had dropped the hairdryer and rushed back into the bathroom, emerging with a soaking wet photograph.

Tears fell from her eyes as she tried to dry the photo, not her work documents or her phone, but a single picture. I frowned, and Briar, who had been waiting outside, immediately went in to help.

Fifteen minutes later, I was in my study. Tristan reported, “Alpha King, Luna Olivia... Luna Olivia went to the infirmary to see Theodore, and then she went to see Ethan Moonstone. But Ethan has suddenly been sent abroad by his adoptive father, Faelan Moonstone, on a mission.”

My brow furrowed. The report stated that the pack trackers had repeatedly lost track of Ethan.

Tristan continued nervously, “Ethan hasn’t returned since leaving the infirmary this evening.”

After a few moments of silence, Tristan presented another report. “We found no silver weapon and no body within a two-kilometer radius. No missing person reports have been filed, and no infirmary has admitted a silver poisoning victim. The nearby surveillance was cut beforehand. The locals, including Luna Olivia, only heard a gunshot but saw no one. However, the amount of blood indicates someone was definitely injured.”

“Keep investigating,” I ordered, putting down the file. “Have the pack enforcers protect my mate.”

Tristan understood immediately. “In this case, Luna Olivia is a witness, so she should have 24-hour protection.”

This was a perfect excuse, as Olivia would surely protest if she knew I had sent warriors to protect her. I then added, “Handle the investigation into the Moonstone pack yourself. Don’t let anyone else touch it.”

(Olivia’s POV)

At the dinner table, I was lost in thought. A warm hand settled on my waist, and I turned in surprise to see Matthew.

He was breaking his promise to keep his distance in front of Leo. I tried to push his hand away, but he simply captured mine, holding it tightly.

Leo gathered his courage and asked, "Mom, Alpha Kane, can you come to my school music concert?"

It was tomorrow. He wanted his mother to see him perform, and he also wanted to make "Alpha Kane" proud.

"Your mom can go, but Alpha Kane is very busy," I replied.

But Matthew interjected, "Your mom can save me a seat, I'll be there later."

He gently squeezed the back of my neck; I wasn't feverish. The electric touch made me almost spit out my venison stew.

I glared at him, but he just smiled, his eyes twinkling. He then looked at Leo, though his gaze was fixed on me.

"Leo, it looks like your mom doesn't want to go?"

I immediately saw the worry on Leo's face. "My love, are you unwilling to go to our pup's concert?" he asked, his voice low.

My eyes widened, my heart fluttering with a confusing mix of emotions through our mate bond. My love? Our pup?

I worried Leo would be upset, but he wasn't. He looked at Matthew with pure admiration, a look he used to reserve only for Theodore.

"Of course not," I said, taking Leo's hand, while my other was still held by Matthew. "Mom has never heard you play the piano."

My gaze fell to my hands, held by the two most important males in my life, and my eyes welled up. I felt panicked, desperate, and overwhelmed by the urge to run away.

After dinner, as Leo played the piano beautifully, Matthew wrapped his arms around me from behind, holding me possessively. He wanted to hold me in front of my son and daughter, and to my surprise, my son seemed pleased by the Alpha's protective display.

Feeling trapped, I fled to my room. I had just started to close the door when Matthew's large hand stopped it.

I quickly released the door, afraid of hurting him with my enhanced strength. He stepped into my room, his territory.

“You said you’d give Leo a good impression while he’s here,” I reminded him. “You said you wouldn’t come to the third floor.”

Just then, Leo’s voice came from the second-floor landing, “Mom? Tristan is taking me and

Aurora to see a movie. Can we go?”

I met Matthew’s faint gaze, my back against the sofa. I didn’t want them to leave, but I couldn’t refuse my son.

As the pups’ happy voices faded and the armored vehicle’s engine started, Matthew closed the door and locked it. He trapped me in his arms.

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A Passionate Night

(Matthew’s POV)

Olivia was held in my arms, feeling my heat through the thin fabric. She instinctively resisted and took a step back, her eyes wide with uncertainty.

I surprised her by retreating first, sitting down on the sofa. My voice was soft, a stark contrast to my earlier intensity as I beckoned her.

“Come here.”

I was giving her a choice, waiting for her to come to me willingly. Olivia hesitated and took another step back, her heart clearly a whirlwind of conflict.

A flicker of deep disappointment and sadness crossed my face, a rare c***k in my stoic facade. The sight of her rejection struck something deep within me.

I stood up to leave, my voice quiet. “Rest early.”

As I turned away, I heard her sharp intake of breath. The sound of her tears was more than I could bear.

With tears welling in her eyes, she took a decisive step towards me. In an instant, I turned back, closed the distance between us, and swept her into my arms.

I carried her to the bed, my heart pounding with relief and desire.

I gently kissed the tears from her eyes, my voice low and husky. "You want me too, don't you?"

Overwhelmed and shy, Olivia could only avert her gaze. I pinned her hands above her head, refusing her plea to turn off the lights.

"Look at me," I commanded, wanting to see her completely, to drown in the sight of her.

I kissed her, feeling our tongues intertwine. Olivia moaned, her body beginning to tremble beneath me.

I moved down, taking her n****e into my mouth and circling it with my tongue. "You're perfect, Livvy."

I kissed her body addictively until I reached her c*****s. "Are you this wet for me?"

Olivia's face was flushed with desire and embarrassment. She embraced me and kissed me again, her voice breathless.

"Give it to me, Matt, I want you."

I could no longer hold back. I entered her, thrusting into her, slamming into her with desperate need.

Every stroke made her cry out louder. "Don't stop," she begged. "Don't ever stop."

In the throes of our passion, I whispered commands and confessions into her ear. "Don't hide things from me."

I thought of her as my little liar, someone I had to use all my wits to keep. Later, as she slept soundly in my arms, I held her close.

I whispered my deepest fear into the darkness. "My love, don't run away again. If you run again, my heart will break."

Hearing the children's car approach through my enhanced Alpha senses, I reluctantly left her side to greet them.

(Olivia's POV)

The next morning, I woke up feeling surprisingly well-rested. There was no soreness thanks to my wolf's enhanced healing.

The pristine state of the room made me wonder if the passionate night had been a dream. Until I undressed and saw the tell-tale love bites scattered across my skin.

Mortified, I tried to avoid Matthew. I asked Briar to let me know when he had left for pack business.

However, Matthew was standing just outside the bathroom door and overheard me. He playfully teased me through the door.

“I’m busy today, I won’t wait for you, Miss Shy.”

When I finally emerged, he was waiting for me with a single pink tulip. The delicate flower seemed to glow in the morning light.

“I bought it myself,” he said softly, his eyes tender.

The simple gesture moved me to tears. A pink tulip – the symbol of eternal love.

He pulled me into an embrace, his voice laced with genuine concern. “Did I hurt you last night?”

Overwhelmed by his tenderness, I stood on my toes and kissed him. The kiss was soft, filled with all the emotions I couldn’t voice.

(Tasha’s POV)

I returned to the Kane Estate deeply unsettled. The previous night’s encounter with Ethan

Moonstone had left me terrified.

But what I witnessed upon my return ignited a different kind of turmoil. I saw Matthew kissing Olivia with a tenderness I had never seen before.

When Matthew noticed me, he instinctively shielded Olivia from my view. His voice was cold as he dismissed me.

“Tasha, you’re dismissed for the day.”

The gesture, meant to protect Olivia, felt like a dagger to my heart. He had never looked at me with such protective instincts.

Consumed by jealousy, I went downstairs. Beta Tristan was organizing the day’s schedule, referring to Olivia respectfully.

“Luna Olivia’s security detail needs to be adjusted for the concert,” he said to another guard.

I snapped at him bitterly. “She’s not Luna. Neither the Kane family nor the European court has officially accepted her.”

Beta Tristan could only sigh, his expression weary. “For the Alpha King, his own acceptance is all that matters.”

His words stung because they were true. Matthew’s devotion to Olivia was absolute, regardless of protocol.

Driven by resentment, I stepped outside into the shade of a tree. My hands trembled as I dialed Faelan Moonstone’s number.

“I’ve made up my mind,” I said, my voice hard with determination.

“I will give you their signed partnership dissolution agreement. I’ll help you ruin Matthew’s reign.”

My voice grew venomous as I continued. “I’ll make everyone believe that Olivia is the culprit for his downfall.”

As I finished speaking, my eyes widened in shock. I met Olivia’s beautiful grey eyes watching me from the garden path.

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Matthew’s Confidant

(Tasha’s POV)

I quickly put away my phone and looked up at Olivia approaching me. Her grey eyes held genuine concern as she asked, “Tasha, are you feeling better?”

I nodded, forcing my voice to sound grateful. “Thank you for your concern, Luna.”

The title surprised her. I could see it in the way her eyebrows lifted slightly. For months, I had deliberately called her Miss Blackwood, refusing to acknowledge her status. Now I was calling her Luna.

She pushed the thought aside and asked, “You wanted to talk to me last night, what was it about?”

Looking into her pure, trusting eyes, my mind flashed with the image of Ethan Moonstone collapsing at my feet. The memory of his blood on my hands made my stomach churn.

Why was everyone so good to Olivia? She remained blissfully unaware of the sacrifices made for her protection. The bitterness and resentment surged within me like poison.

She deserved to be in hell, not cherished and protected like some precious jewel. I leaned in closer, my voice dropping to a whisper.

“The Alpha King has a confidante.”

Olivia’s calm expression faltered instantly. Her face went pale as she stammered, “A... confidante?”

Her voice was so faint I could barely hear it. Her hands twisted together nervously, betraying her inner turmoil.

I nodded slowly, savoring the moment. “They’ve known each other for five or six years. Matthew visits her annually.”

I pulled out my phone and showed her the photo I had carefully saved. Matthew stood beside a radiant, tall she-wolf with flowing auburn hair. His eyes were filled with warmth as his hand rested protectively on her arm.

“Perhaps it’s in the past,” I said with false nonchalance, watching her face crumble. “After all, he marked you.”

I twisted the knife deeper, my voice casual as if discussing the weather. “Or maybe she refused his marking. She lives in Seattle now.”

Seeing Olivia’s crestfallen expression, I delivered the final blow. “The Alpha King went to visit her right after he marked you.”

Olivia froze completely. Her gaze drifted toward the estate where Matthew was laughing with her children, his deep voice carrying across the garden.

“Is she a very outstanding she-wolf?” she asked softly, her voice barely above a whisper.

“Yes,” I confirmed with satisfaction. “A renowned healer. Very famous in the supernatural medical community.”

(Olivia’s POV)

I forced a smile and thanked Tasha before walking toward my family. Each step felt like walking through quicksand.

Matthew held the car door open for me, his hand gently taking mine as he reminded me, “Drive slowly, love. The roads are still wet from last night’s rain.”

I stared at his hand covering mine. His touch was warm and respectful, just as it always was. He had never overstepped with anyone, especially she-wolves.

His kindness, I realized with a cold weight settling in my chest, was simply born of responsibility. He would be this way with any she-wolf who became his mate.

The thought made my heart ache. I was nothing special to him. Just another duty to fulfill.

After dropping the children at the Crimson Pup Creche, I finally broke down. My body was wracked with sobs as I slumped over the steering wheel.

There were only twelve days left until our agreement ended. But I felt like I could no longer bear even one more day.

(Olivia's POV)

After getting travel documents for the children, I returned to Shield Chain Technology. The familiar building should have brought me comfort, but instead, I felt hollow.

I was surprised to see that the building opposite, once Theodore's new company headquarters, was now a music store. Through the large glass windows, I could see Theodore sitting at a grand piano.

The beautiful melody drifted across the street, instantly transporting me back to our youth.

< Chapter 246 Matthew's Confidant

We had met in a pack infirmary when he was eighteen.

After his father Kaelen and his mistress left the pack, Theodore found solace on the piano. I used to sit with him for hours, my fingers sometimes playfully interrupting his tune.

The memory turned sour as I watched Seraphina Kane walk up to Theodore. She sat beside him on the piano bench, her fingers mimicking the very same playful gesture I once made.

I turned away, my heart hardening like stone. He had grown up to be just like his father, Kaelen Redgrave. A cheater and a manipulator.

My son would be like Matthew instead. Strong, honorable, and true to his word.

Unseen by me, Theodore's gaze followed my departure through the window. He was deliberately using our shared past to claw his way back into my memory, convinced I still cared enough to not want him dead.

Back in my office, I pushed my team relentlessly. I was determined to make Shield Chain completely self-sufficient before I left.

I drove them through intensive training sessions and spent the rest of the day personally pitching our firewall technology to potential clients. Every meeting was crucial.

That evening, at the pack's music concert, I sat with Aurora on my lap. The little pup was fascinated by the orchestra tuning their instruments.

The seat to my right was suddenly occupied by Killian Vance. He looked troubled as he settled beside me.

"Elara injured her leg during training today," he explained, his voice heavy with concern. "She's resting at home."

He mentioned hearing from Lydia Miles that Theodore was still harassing me. Then his voice became earnest as he held my arm.

"Elara misses you terribly," he said, his ice-blue eyes sincere. "If you have time, could you visit her?"

I readily agreed, my heart warming at the thought of the sweet little pup. "Of course. I'll come by tomorrow afternoon."

But as I spoke, Aurora suddenly clutched my arm protectively. Her small hands pulled it away from Killian's grasp with surprising strength.

"Uncle Killian, this is my daddy's seat!" the little pup declared, her voice loud and indignant.

She began pushing at Killian with her tiny fists, creating an embarrassing scene. Other pack members turned to stare at us.

"Daddy won't break his promise!" she insisted, her voice rising. "He said he'd sit with Mommy!"

I tried to calm her down, my cheeks burning with embarrassment. "Aurora, sweetheart, Daddy is very busy. He might not make it tonight."

The words felt like ash in my mouth. I didn't even know if Matthew would keep his promise anymore.

And at that moment, my waist was grabbed from behind, and my whole body was lifted into the air.

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The Secret is Exposed

(Olivia's POV)

Killian looked on in astonishment, reaching out as if to grab me. However, his hand froze in mid-air as he met the gaze of the newcomer.

My eyes met Matthew's calm ones, and I bit my lip, suppressing my emotions.

He held me aloft, his voice low and directed at me. "Where were you going to have me sit?"

His words implied that while our daughter Aurora might be innocently possessive, I was being deliberately distant. In the crowded concert hall, I felt a wave of embarrassment at being held so intimately by Matthew.

I pressed my hands against the arm around my waist, but he refused to let go. Meanwhile, Aurora beamed with pride.

"See, Mommy? Daddy always keeps his promises."

Matthew affectionately stroked his daughter's head, clearly pleased. Seeing Killian about to stand, I quickly intervened.

"Professor, don't get up." I then turned to Matthew, attempting to placate him with a soft voice. "I'm just going backstage to see Leo. You can have my seat."

Matthew, however, had other plans. Instead of letting me go, he swept me up in a princess carry.

I instinctively wrapped my arms around his neck to keep from falling. He strode to my original seat and sat down, settling me firmly on his lap with my back to Killian,

The gesture was overwhelmingly possessive, his Alpha nature asserting dominance over his mate. He smoothed my skirt, covering the faint marks on my pale legs from our intimacy the night before.

Our faces were inches apart, the warmth of our breath mingling. The memory of the previous

cheeks. night flooded my mind, and a blush crept up my

I felt such closeness was too much for a public setting and unbecoming of his status, a display reserved for newly mated pairs. When I tried to stand, his arm tightened around my waist.

He leaned in, his lips brushing my ear as he whispered. "I've already been backstage. Leo is next."

The warm air tickled my ear, but it was my heart that fluttered. Just as I placed a hand on his chest to push him away, Briar excitedly announced that Leo was on stage.

Matthew captured my hand, and I turned my attention to the stage. My heart swelled with pride as I watched my son perform.

While I was distracted, Matthew shifted me to his other leg, a move that forced Killian to avert his gaze from me. Matthew then coolly engaged Killian in conversation about his research and Elara's injury.

"How is Elara's leg?" Matthew asked, his tone casual but his eyes sharp.

Killian's face grew more somber. "She twisted it during combat training. Nothing serious, but she's been asking for Olivia."

"I see." Matthew's grip on my hand tightened slightly. "You've been watching them for some time, haven't you?"

After Leo's triumphant performance, the group was faced with a dilemma. Killian eagerly reminded me of my promise to visit his injured daughter.

"Olivia, you promised Elara you'd come see her tonight," he said, his ice-blue eyes earnest.

Simultaneously, Leo, revealing his jealousy of Elara, announced his own plans. "Uncle Kane booked my favorite restaurant for a celebration!"

Caught in the middle, I felt a pang of anxiety. Matthew took my hand, calmly telling Killian that we would visit Elara together the next day.

hand away. But I was driven by a desperate need to maintain distance and escape any event that might deepen my bond with Matthew before my planned departure. I pulled my

"I don't want to break my promise to Elara," I said, looking at Matthew's placid face. "I'll be back soon. You all go ahead and celebrate."

Though his eyes flickered with an unreadable dark current, Matthew simply replied.
“Okay.”

As I got into Killian’s car, leaving my children calling after me, Aurora burst into tears. She clung to Matthew’s leg and wailed.

“Mommy is leaving! Mommy doesn’t want Daddy, and she doesn’t want me!”

He comforted her, his mind silently finishing the thought: She just wants to leave me.

At that critical moment, Beta Tristan rushed forward. His face was pale with urgency.

“My King, the media called. Someone leaked your mate bond severance agreement with the Luna.”

He explained that he was trying to suppress it, but it had been sent to multiple outlets. My gaze was fixed on Olivia’s car, which was momentarily stuck in traffic.

I made a decision that risked everything. “Let them publish it.”

My voice was devoid of emotion. Tristan was aghast, his eyes wide with shock.

“My King, the scandal of deceiving the public about your mating status could end your reign!”

But I was resolute. “Do it.”

Within minutes, the news exploded across the supernatural networks. The headlines screamed across every major outlet: “Alpha King’s Fake Mating Exposed – Secret Agreement Revealed.”

The scandal created a massive uproar among the packs. Emergency council meetings were being called. My phone buzzed incessantly with calls from allied Alphas.

I stood still, having gambled my entire future on her reaction. As the traffic began to move, my heart trembled.

Then, Killian’s car screeched to a halt. The passenger door flew open.

I watched as my beloved mate, her face etched with worry, ran back towards me. Her grey eyes were wide with panic and something else – something that looked like fear of losing me.

I set Aurora down and strode forward, pulling Olivia into a crushing embrace. The relief that flooded through me was overwhelming.

I cupped her face, my lips finding hers as the tension in my heart finally broke. She didn't pull away. Instead, she kissed me back with desperate intensity.

Around us, cameras flashed. The media had arrived, drawn by the breaking news. But I didn't care.

I whispered against her lips. "Hush, let me kiss for a while."

Her hands fisted in my shirt, holding me close. The fake agreement was exposed, but this – this was real.

The crowd around us erupted in chaos. Pack members shouted questions. Reporters pushed forward with microphones.

But in this moment, there was only Olivia in my arms, finally choosing to stay.

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You Won't Leave Me

(Olivia's POV)

I was stunned as Matthew's lips captured mine. His kiss was lingering and full of affection, his Alpha scent of cedar and steel enveloping me completely.

The world around us seemed to fade away. Only his warmth remained, pressing against me with desperate intensity.

After a moment, I came to my senses and pressed against his chest, trying to push him away. As he paused for breath, I gasped in a low voice, "Matthew, our Partnership Termination Agreement..."

But before I could finish, he captured my lips again. "Hush, be quiet," he murmured against my mouth.

His hands moved to hold my waist and the back of my head, trapping me in his passionate and domineering embrace. I had no room to resist.

The sound of gasps from the crowd and the flash of phone cameras surrounded us. I was kissed until my eyes were hazy and my face was a deep shade of crimson.

Suddenly, a voice from the crowd shouted, "It's Alpha King Kane from the trending topic! Is that his mate?"

The news was spreading like wildfire through the supernatural networks. More voices joined in, creating a cacophony of excitement and speculation.

Finally, Matthew released me, tucking my flustered face into his chest to shield me from the prying eyes. He had made his point clear to everyone watching.

Everyone now knew I was his Luna. The public display left no room for doubt or denial.

He lifted me into a black armored vehicle that had pulled up beside them. Our children had already been whisked away by Beta Tristan.

Inside the car, away from the crowd, the full weight of the situation crashed down on me. "Our mate bond severance agreement has been exposed," I cried, my voice trembling.

Tears streamed down my face as I clutched his shirt. "Wasn't it destroyed by Tristan? Why did it leak out?"

I had seen the news online. The agreement, our signatures, and the damning timing that suggested a deliberate deception of the supernatural community.

Overwhelmed with guilt and panic, I felt responsible for ruining his reign. "What should we do?" I sobbed.

"I'll confess to the Eastern Council, okay? It's all my fault. You were just trying to help me."

My words tumbled out in a rush of desperation. "I shouldn't have accepted your protection, shouldn't have let you claim me just for Aurora's legitimacy."

He held my face, his own emotions suppressed. "How could accepting my protection be a mistake?" he asked softly.

"If not me, then who? Killian?" His voice carried a dangerous edge that made me shiver.

Lost in my despair, I nodded weakly. "Yes, I should have stayed with my former colleague, I should have... not you..."

The admission shattered something inside me. The words felt like poison on my tongue, but my fear drove me to speak them.

Seeing how terrified he had made me, Matthew's voice softened. "You're talking nonsense," he said, wiping my tears with gentle fingers.

“You’ve already accepted my mark, you can’t belong to anyone else. Claiming you, being Aurora’s father, was my wish.”

He then laid out his plan, his gaze intense and unwavering. “What you need to do is tell everyone that the shredded mate bond severance agreement is invalid.”

“You, Olivia Blackwood, are willing to stay with me, Matthew Kane, forever. Our bond is strong, we won’t sever it.”

His words felt like a giant stone pressing down on my chest, making it hard to breathe. My mind reeled with conflicting thoughts and fears.

I remembered my promise to Victoria Kane to leave. The existence of his supposed “confidante” haunted my thoughts.

The deep-seated trauma from Theodore’s betrayal made me terrified of placing my heart in his hands, only for it to be shattered again.

Yet, the thought of his reign being destroyed because of me was equally unbearable. I couldn’t live with that guilt.

As our vehicle arrived at the Stonehaven Council Hall, we were swarmed by reporters. Cameras flashed and microphones were thrust toward our windows.

Inside, the atmosphere was chaotic. His staff were in a frenzy, arguing over damage control strategies.

A large screen displayed a constant stream of public condemnation from various pack leaders. The situation looked dire from every angle.

Soon, Matthew’s parents, Barrett Kane and a furious Victoria Kane, arrived. “How could such a mistake happen?” Victoria demanded, her voice sharp with accusation.

Matthew calmly sent his parents out of the room. He then escorted a silent, shaken me to a private lounge to rest.

(Matthew’s POV)

Returning to the meeting room, I faced my mother with cold determination. “What did you say to her behind my back?” I asked, my voice dangerously calm.

“Told her to leave me after the public notice period ends? Mother, do you plan for your son to be alone for the rest of his life?”

Victoria was stunned into guilty silence. Her face paled as she realized I knew about her interference.

At that moment, the tide of online opinion began to shift. I had been monitoring the networks through my staff's reports.

I locked eyes with my mother, issuing an ultimatum. "If you don't want your son to be alone, if you don't want his reign ruined, then coax her back."

"And be nice about it." My tone brooked no argument or defiance.

Defeated, Victoria left to find Olivia. Her shoulders sagged with the weight of her mistake.

With my mother gone, Barrett Kane watched in astonishment as my master plan unfolded. The public discussion online was transforming before our eyes.

Pack members, analyzing the leaked document, noted that I had given all my assets to Olivia. I had asked only for joint custody of our children.

They saw the heart-wrenching reason for the bond severance listed as "public pressure." The strain put on a former Luna with a complicated past resonated with many.

The narrative flipped from scandal to a tragic romance. "The Alpha King doesn't want to sever the bond at all," became the consensus.

Seizing the moment, my team flooded the supernatural networks with photos of our passionate public kiss. They framed the leak as a malicious smear campaign against a loving mated pair.

At this moment, the conference room door was pushed open. Olivia stood at the entrance, meeting my gaze directly.

I looked at Olivia quietly. I could hear my own heartbeat, the heart that beat for her.

"My Luna, walk towards me. Just one step is enough, the remaining nine hundred and ninety-nine are for me to take."

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I Don't Want to Leave Him-1

(Third-person's POV)

Olivia's heart pounded violently against her ribs. Her eyes, drenched in tears, shimmered as her gaze gently drifted across Matthew's handsome face.

She started to walk towards him. Each step felt like crossing an ocean of doubt and fear.

Her hands trembled at her sides. The weight of everyone's stares pressed down on her shoulders.

Matthew stood up, a hint of joy gracing his eyes as he strode to meet her. He extended his hand, and she placed her small hand in his.

Their eyes met and held. The world around them seemed to fade into nothing.

His fingers intertwined with hers. Warm and steady, anchoring her in the storm.

Online, pack members were buzzing about the ten-page list of assets, digging deeper and finding amusement in the revelation. "[So, this is what 'leaving with nothing' really means.]"

Olivia's other hand clutched her phone, the screen displaying the phrase 'a paper full of absurdity. "Why did you list all your clothes?" she asked, her voice barely a whisper. "What am I supposed to do with them?"

He watched her calm down and gazed at her quietly. "It's Beta Tristan's old habit..."

His hidden thought was that he had wanted to write his own name on the list as well. To give her everything, including himself.

"An accountant's habit, hard to break," Beta Tristan said as he entered, clearing his throat nervously. "Alpha King, I was just following your orders to give you a detailed list of assets."

The Beta's face was flushed with embarrassment. He had never expected the document to be leaked.

"So that's how it is," she murmured, her mind replaying a pack member's comment: "[A paper full of absurdity, but what's written is... his love for her.]"

Her heart clenched at those words. Love. Was it really love?

Matthew placed his hand on her waist, and she took a step closer to him. His turbulent heart finally found peace as he gently pulled her into an embrace.

She melted against his chest. His scent of cedar and steel surrounded her like a protective shield.

"Alpha King, the press conference is ready, and the press release has been prepared," Beta Tristan reported, sighing with relief that the crisis had been averted.

His tablet showed positive trending topics. The public opinion had completely flipped in their favor.

“Good, you’ll host it,” Matthew said, not taking his eyes off Olivia.

Beta Tristan was stunned. His mouth fell open in shock.

Matthew had terrified him today with his unpredictable decisions. First threatening to abdicate, now refusing to appear at his own press conference.

“But Alpha King, the media expects to see you-

“Handle it,” Matthew cut him off firmly.

Ignoring his Beta’s shock, Matthew took Olivia’s hand and led her into the master bedroom of the lounge. He opened the wardrobe, sifted through a row of women’s clothing, and handed her a royal blue dress.

The dress was elegant and sophisticated. Clearly chosen with care.

“Change into this.”

Olivia was taken aback. Her eyes widened in confusion.

“Aren’t I supposed to accompany you to the press conference? To clarify to the public that the mate bond severance was a misunderstanding?”

“Beta Tristan can handle that,” Matthew said, gently pushing her into the bathroom and closing the door.

From the very beginning, he had never intended for her to face public scrutiny. She was ‘Cipher,’ and the dark web still had a bounty on her head.

Her safety was more important than anything else. More important than his reputation or his crown.

When Olivia emerged with her long hair pinned up, her eyes trembled slightly as she looked at Matthew. He was dressed in a well-tailored, dark blue suit that made him look noble and mysterious.

The fabric hugged his broad shoulders perfectly. Every line of his body spoke of power and elegance.

It was the first time she had seen him in a suit; for their marking ceremony, they had worn traditional ceremonial robes. He was truly a sight to behold.

Her breath caught in her throat. He looked like a king from a fairytale.

“What’s this for?” she asked, bewildered, but he had already taken her hand.

He slipped a Dragon Stone jade bracelet onto her wrist—a rich, vivid green with a translucent blue hue that shone brilliantly even in the dim light.

The jade was warm against her skin. Ancient power hummed within the stone.

“It suits you perfectly,” Matthew said, admiring the bracelet on her hand. “My grandmother asked me to give this to my future Luna.”

His voice was soft, reverent. The bracelet was clearly a family heirloom of great importance.

Olivia caressed the jade, feeling the warmth of his palm still lingering on it. “Where are we going, dressed so formally?”

Matthew held her hand and led her out of the Stonehaven Council Hall. The car headed towards the Eastern Territory’s Grand Assembly Hall, and Olivia realized with a jolt that he was going to introduce her to the pack elders.

Her heart fluttered with anxiety in his arms. Meeting the elders meant making their relationship official.

Matthew gently brushed a stray strand of hair behind her ear, his warm fingertips grazing her earlobe. Her face grew warm, and she reached up to still his hand.

“Matthew,” she whispered, her voice shaking.

Outside the window, the city lights twinkled like a colorful, dreamlike tapestry.

“I...” she began, wanting to say she didn’t want to go.

“If he blames me, you’ll have to go and explain for me,” Matthew whispered coaxingly in her ear.

His breath sent shivers down her spine. His voice was like honey, sweet and persuasive.

“Should I tell the truth?” Olivia asked in a low voice.

He suddenly pulled her tighter against him. She turned to meet his radiant golden eyes, which were dazzling in the light.

His eyes were truly beautiful. Like molten gold in the darkness.

“Yes. Tell him you’re my Luna and you won’t leave me.”

His voice was desperate now. Raw with need and fear.

He didn’t know what his mother, Victoria Kane, had said to her, but he feared the worst and was determined to solidify their bond with every ounce of his strength.

They were so close, their warm breaths mingling. He leaned in, his voice gentle as he pressed, “Alright? Help me.”