

Alpha's Rejected Mate Returns as Queen

Chapter 289 Imagination

Selma Payne's POV:

When we returned to Avril's side, the lunchbox on the table was still unopened.

"Why didn't you open it?"

"I... I'm nervous!"

We didn't know how to react, but we encouraged Avril to gather her courage. She had to eat lunch. It would be bad if she fainted from hunger during the midnight ceremony!

After taking a few deep breaths, Avril opened the lid with a slight tremble.

A small iron box was in the corner of the exquisitely arranged food. Opening it, there was a black bracelet shining with a subtle luster.

Avril covered his mouth as if she was about to cry again.

Every werewolf had heard such a bedtime story when they were young:

Long ago, the Moon Goddess sent a valkyrie to the mortal world to find her lost spear. This spear had been picked up by a young man who lived in the depths of the forest and used it as the pillar of his house.

To retrieve the spear, the valkyrie changed into a young girl, a woman, and an old woman to approach the young man.

But she didn't know that this young man raised by nature had the world's clearest vision. He had long seen through the valkyrie's disguise and rejected her time and time again to see the valkyrie again – he had fallen in love with her.

For the fourth time, the valkyrie, who had seen through the young man, returned to her original appearance and, in a feat of anger, killed the man who dared to deceive her. The young man's hot blood splashed into the valkyrie's eyes, and she saw through his heart.

The valkyrie held the dying young man in her arms and begged the Moon Goddess for help. The goddess turned the spear into a black wolf so the young man's soul could live in the wolf's body.

At the end of his life, the young man weaved his hair into a bracelet and gave it to the valkyrie. He swore to be the slave of the bracelet and that he would try to return to the valkyrie's side no matter how many times he reincarnated.

Due to this legend, the wristbands that werewolves weaved with their hair became a love token. It represented an indomitable love and a promise that would never disappear. The valkyrie and the black wolf would punish anyone who went back on their promise.

"I didn't expect..." Avril broke down in tears again. This time, no one reminded her about her makeup. We were doing no better than her.

Looking at Avril's happy crying face, I was happy for her, but at the same time, I couldn't help but fantasize: When I marry Aldrich, what kind of token would he give me? Would it be more touching than evening primroses? Would it be more sensual than the bracelet? What should I give him? Would he laugh at me for being childish? Or would he happily accept my kind intentions?

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The fragrance of the bay leaf tree wafted from the potted plant and drifted into my fantasy, spraying a layer of sweetness on everything.

As the best men and bridesmaids, we had to dance for the guests in place of the 'shy' bride and groom. In ancient times, this tradition was somewhat similar to blind dates, so traditional social dances had a bit of a charm. But times were different now. We were all young people who didn't like to follow traditions. Passionate rock music and cheerful dance steps were our favorites.

The rigid rules of pairing in pairs were thrown to the back of our minds. We freely pulled the guests we were familiar with into the dance floor with us, and most of them happily accepted the invitation.

My dance partner was naturally Aldrich. The elegant spiral dance steps were no longer rigid under the transformation of rock and roll, allowing any sweet casualness to flow.

As we laughed and played around, the young guests joined us spontaneously while the older guests indulged in our youthful and playful antics. I saw Avril sticking her head out of the stained glass window of the bride's lounge, excitedly drumming for us. Perrin peeked from the opposite window and looked at the entranced Avril with a loving smile.

The bride and groom had seen each other before the wedding. What should they do?

What should they do? I didn't think the goddess would deprive them of their right to happiness because of such a cute mistake, right?

After the dance, we returned to Avril's side amidst the guests' cheers.

Aldrich reluctantly held my hand and whispered, "Have you had lunch? Are you hungry? The bridesmaids have to keep the bride company, so you won't be able to eat anything at the party. Do you want me to get someone to send you some food secretly?"

"The newbies' parents have prepared some delicious food for us."

I patted his hand to convince him not to worry. I turned around and caught up with the girls' light footsteps.

In the lounge, Avril was humming a song while bobbing her head. She wished she could dance on stage.

"This is my favorite song! Mara even adapted it into an opera when she was in the opera club, and it was broadcast on the first day of the performance!"

We looked at the top student of the Midnight Opera House in surprise. Mara waved her hand shyly and said, "It was just a small test, and it was not a TV broadcast. It's just that the media came to interview the school that day and took some footage at the school."

"That's still very impressive." We gave her a round of applause.

The sun set amidst the laughter of the people, and the moon hung high in the sky.

Finally, it was time for the ceremony.

290 Catching The Bouquet

Selma Payne's POV:

The moonlight shone upon Avril's beautiful face, making her look like an angel sculpted out of white clouds by the God of Forging.

I held the bright flowers and helped her hold her wedding dress from behind. I asked softly, "Are you still nervous?"

"At a time like this, it's very calm," she said with a smile. "I've already been nervous about what I should be during the day. Now, I can only feel joy and happiness."

The girls cheered.

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Avril's parents came to lead their daughter into the venue. Seeing her daughter's unconcealed joy, Avril's mother choked and said, "In my impression, you're still a little girl. In the blink of an eye, you'll get married."

"Mommy..." Avril's eyes reddened.

“Alright, the ceremony is about to begin. Don’t ruin your makeup with your tears.” Avril’s father tried to stop his daughter from crying, even though he had tears in his eyes.

After sorting out her emotions, Avril held the flowers in her hands and said firmly, “Let’s go,” she said.

Through the thorny and vine-woven flower gate, across the path paved with countless petals, under the guidance of the moonlight, the elegant bride slowly walked toward her lover on the stage. The moon halo covered her with a hazy veil, the bay leaf exuded a soft fragrance, and the gorgeous skirt glistened. All the factors spared no effort to accentuate the bride’s beauty.

The moment he turned around, Perrin was stunned. He couldn’t react until Avril was in front of him.

“... you’re so beautiful.” He looked silly when he opened spoke as he stared at her, but it also contained a shining love.

The newbies stood still, and the priest went on stage.

“We’ve gathered here tonight to witness a couple make an eternal vow under the moon.”

“Perrin Marshall, in good or bad, rich or poor, healthy or sick, happy or sad, will you love the lady beside you forever and loyally? Swear your loyalty to the moon and promise it will never change until the end?”

Perrin held Avril’s hand tightly and said, “I do.”

Avril Carvallo, in good or bad, rich or poor, healthy or sick, happy or sad, will you love the gentleman beside you loyally and unwaveringly forever? Swear to the moon your loyalty and promise that it will never change until the end?”

Looking into Perrin’s eyes, Avril said, “I do.”

“Does anyone present have any objections to this sacred marriage?”

Of course not.

The priest sprinkled holy water that reflected the moonlight on the newlyweds and announced loudly, “In the name of the Moon Goddess, I hereby announce that you are officially husband and wife! Now, please put the ring on her.”

A cute flower girl came on stage with a soft cushion. Two plain brass rings lay in the middle of the dark blue velvet.

After putting the rings on each other, before the priest could say anything, the newlyweds hugged each other intimately and kissed each other passionately to declare their love to the crowd.

The elderly priest smiled in a tolerant manner.

After the ceremony, the night party began.

The bride had been eyeing the stage for a long time and pulled the groom to perform the first opening dance. Halfway through the dance, the eager best men and bridesmaids came onto the stage, and then the dance went out of control. There was music and dance everywhere, as well as cheers and laughter. The newlyweds were glued to each other, the guests applauded, and even the old priest hummed lively music.

I pulled Aldrich to dance one round after another. At first, the girls wanted to pull me away to have fun, but later, perhaps they saw that there was no room for a 'third party' between us, they left me and ran to the dining table to eat cupcakes.

"Are you tired?" Wiping away the sweat on my forehead, Aldrich brought me to the soft rhythm of the music. "You've been busy all day. You should take a good rest."

I panted lightly, but I felt so excited. "I'm not tired at all. I love weddings so much. I'll never feel tired in a place I like."

"Do you like this kind of wedding?"

"Of course! Everyone is chatting, laughing, playing, and being so cozy!"

However, even if I liked it, I knew that my wedding was destined to be unable to be so full of excitement. The royal wedding was a grand event for all the people in the country. This meant that I would receive thousands more blessings, but I also had to pay a certain price. For example, I had to be reserved and polite in front of the camera. I would never be able to 'disobey the rules' like Avril and hold his lover like that.

After an unknown time, the girls pulled me out of the sweet barrier and said, "Hurry! She's going to throw the bouquet!"

Avril was already standing on the stage, with many young men and women behind her, hoping the bouquet representing happiness would fall into their arms.

"I'm going to throw it! Three, two, one!" Avril counted down quickly.

The colorful bouquet formed a beautiful arch in the air, and then-

It fell into my arms!

The girls screamed in excitement. They looked at me and then at Aldrich. They were so excited that they almost fainted.

I was so stunned that I didn't even have time to react.

Until Aldrich hugged my waist and whispered, "What's wrong? Aren't you happy that you're holding the bouquet?"

"Of course, I'm happy, " I laughed. Of course, I am!

"I can't be happier!"

291 The Night Run

Selma Payne's POV:

After the bride and groom were led into the new house, my duty ended.

The new couple's parents sent the concierges off one by one. When it was my turn, they said gratefully, " Thank you for coming to this wedding, Your Highness. If there's anything unsatisfactory, please tell us."

"Everything is fine." I comforted the two nervous parents. "Avril is my good friend. Perrin is also a good guy. It's my honor to be their honored guest."

After my identity was exposed, I often received an attitude of fear and respect from my old friends. If I was disappointed and lost before, I was used to it now.

The Lycan Pack in the early morning was like a jigsaw puzzle, a busy place was joined by a quiet night, and a brightly lit place was joined by a dark alley. The car window was the screen that showed everything, playing colorful pictures for the people in the car.

I was suddenly interested in the light and shadow under the street lamps. I counted the balls of light that I passed by, but I kept getting dizzy. After counting thirty to fifty, I had to start again.

Aldrich quietly drove the car, and none of us spoke. The atmosphere was very quiet for a while. But this time, it wasn't as awkward as before. For two people with the same mind, words didn't mean everything.

The early morning breeze gently lifted the hair falling on my temples, making my ears itch.

I removed my hair bun and pulled it back into a loose bun.

Aldrich didn't look at me, but I knew he was smiling.

Looking at the seemingly endless lights, I softly said, "... when do you think we should hold our wedding?"

"What do you think?" Aldrich asked back.

"If I could choose, I hope it would be tomorrow."

"I, too, think tomorrow is the best, but His Majesty will not agree," he said, laughing.

"I know, I was just joking."

"Other than tomorrow?"

"The day after tomorrow is fine too."

"The day after tomorrow, His Majesty will be angry too."

"Don't worry about that. We're the ones getting married anyway."

"Ohoho! Has our twenty-year-old Princess entered her late rebellious phase? This is not good."

"If the day after tomorrow is no good either, then we can do the day after tomorrow."

"To be honest, I'm not afraid. But you don't want to be out of your father's, do you?"

"My parents would never do that. They would support all my decisions."

"I agree with the former, but I think the latter is open to discussion."

"This won't do, that won't do. When do you think is the best time?"

"I think now is the best time."

I slapped him and laughed, "Be serious!"

"I'm being serious, the serious words in my heart." Aldrich shrugged. "God knows how much I want to drag you to the church to get married right now."

I chuckled and said, "That won't do. Didn't you see? Earlier, the priest left halfway through the wedding. I think the old man is sleeping soundly now."

"We can wake him up or perform the ritual in his bedroom. That way, he can go back to sleep immediately after he finishes the ritual."

"This doesn't seem right."

“So what should we do? Not today, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, not even the day after tomorrow. The longer I wait, the more I miss you. If I wait any longer, I’m going to die.”

“Perhaps we have other solutions.”

“What?”

I whispered in Aldrich’s ear, “Let’s elope!”

Riding on the moonlight, riding on the evening wind, riding on the lights of thousands of houses. We could drive the car into the sky and let the midnight raven lead the way. We could ask the lingering white clouds to guide us when the day broke.

We crossed the stars, the sun, and the circling eagles and petrels until we touched the cool moonlight and stood in the bustling courtyard of the Moon Palace.

The valkyrie would guide us, and the servants would wash away the dust. We came to the Moon Goddess like naked babies, begging for her forgiveness, blessing, and love.

The goddess dipped bay leaves in the moonlight to bless us and then weaved a gauze cloak with the moonlight to cover us. She would use her majestic yet gentle voice to make an oath for us and then carve the Eternal Oath on the floor tiles of the courtyard.

From now on, we’d be eternal lovers. The moon was our witness, and time was our escort. Even if the physical body died or the soul reincarnated, the meaningful oath would forever be engraved in the deepest part of our true self. In the future, meeting in the middle of a sea of people would begin another journey.

Right now, right this second.

While the moon was still there, while the stars were still there.

‘My lover, are you willing to elope with me?’

My wedding with Aldrich had been brought forward.

According to tradition – why were there so many traditions recently – the marriage of a prince or princess would take at least half a year to prepare. In history, many people took three to five years to become officially married couples from an engaged couple. However, when it came to me, I wasn’t so particular. As a Princess who had ‘wandered among the common folk’ for more than ten years, my life had nothing to do with tradition.

292 Good Things Come In Pairs

Selma Payne's POV:

So, I suggested, "Why don't we set it for August? It can also be held with my coronation ceremony, wearing a crown in the day and a wedding dress at night. How perfect!"

Actually, I was joking, but I didn't expect my parents to agree so readily. They didn't think it was a joke at all.

"To be crowned as the heir under the sun and to be the bride under the moonlight. Oh my god, this is so romantic." My mother clutched her chest, her face red. "I can't wait to be seated in the front row of the audience!"

My father actually allowed my mother to 'let her imagination run wild', not echoing his opinion.

"Wait," I stopped them immediately. "Wait, I was just joking.

"I know, but that doesn't stop it from being a great idea, does it?" my mother said.

Of course not!

"But there's only one month until your coronation ceremony in August!"

"So what?"

"A month is not enough to prepare anything! Didn't you say that the gowns and decorations would take at least half a year to be ordered?"

My mother had a 'how could my daughter be so ignorant and so sad' expression on her face. "Half a year is just for show, just like those gorgeous dresses and luxurious decorations, they are just tools to highlight the identity of the royal family. If there are at least five experienced designers and twenty skilled tailors in charge of a piece of clothing, it can be completed in three hours, let alone thirty days."

It was interesting that I still feel like a country bumpkin in my fifth year as a Princess.

In short, my parents invited Duke Frank and Aldrich into the palace at lightning speed. I was just speaking to Aldrich, and the next thing I knew, the father and son were already at the door.

Looking at the joyous and harmonious atmosphere between the elders, Aldrich and I whispered to each other, "It's over. They're satisfied with this proposal."

"To be honest, although I want to walk into the wedding hall with you right now, my dear, I don't want you to have any regrets at the wedding."

Looking at his bitter expression, I knew we were on the same side.

However, resistance was insignificant in front of the elders. Ten minutes later, before Aldrich and I could catch up to their thoughts, the matter was settled.

I felt a little helpless. "It's us getting married"

My father only looked at me with an unfathomable expression. My mother said, "So you don't want to?"

"Don't want what?"

"You don't want to get married to Aldrich as soon as possible?"

"Of course... I want to."

"Isn't this good enough?" My mother smiled. "You're a child with your own opinions. If you didn't want to, you would have opposed it strongly."

At this moment, I finally understood why my father's expression was so profound. It turned out that they had seen through my plans even earlier than I had.

I subconsciously looked at Aldrich and found that he was also smiling.

"Do you want it?" he asked.

I was a little embarrassed in front of the elders, but I still held his hand and nodded vigorously.

On the 20th of July, the royal family issued an announcement that caused a great stir in the entire werewolf race.

First, the royal family would hold the official coronation ceremony of Princess Madeline on August 31st.

Secondly, on August 31st, the royal family would hold the wedding of Princess Madeline and Sir Aldrich.

These two announcements were quickly passed to every werewolf's ears with the summer wind. While the people cheered for the official heir of the royal family, they were also puzzled. Princess Madeline and Sir Aldrich... when did this happen?

However, the outside world's speculations no longer had anything to do with me. As the female lead of the coronation ceremony and wedding, I was caught up in endless choices and rehearsals.

From the smallest button on the gown to the concierge's arrangements, I had to decide and give the nod. At first, I thought it was quite interesting, but after signing more than 300 invitations in a row, my only wish was to run to my father's study to deal with those troublesome documents that were not friendly to my eyes.

As my female companions, Jordin and Emma faithfully carried out one of their duties – to be my personal assistants.

"At 9 a.m., your designer will send you the latest revised version of the coronation dress," Emma carefully checked the schedule. "At 9:30 a.m., the Antique Chamber of Commerce will bring the vase style you asked for, and then at 10:15 a.m. ..."

"Stop, stop, stop!" I broke down and stopped her. "That's enough, that's enough. Kara has already nagged me three times last night. I will remember it. Really."

Jordin shrugged helplessly. I know your ears are getting calluses from listening to it, but there's no other way. The schedule is constantly changing, and we must read it to you every time it's changed."

I was puzzled. "Why do I have to decide on such small details as buttons? Can't the designer draw up a draft for me to see?"

Without waiting for them to reply, I broke down and answered my question, "I understand, I get it. It's a tradition that the princess has to take care of everything personally. I'm grateful to my extravagant ancient ancestors for giving me this kind of tradition. I would have liked this kind of life 300 years back."

293 Token Selection

Selma Payne's POV:

The coronation ceremony was arranged to be held in the Moon Palace, and so was the wedding. The wedding was originally planned to be held in the palace, but because the palace's interiors needed to be kept a secret, it was moved to the Moon Palace.

Hundreds of invitations I signed had been sent to various places, and each pack would send a representative to attend the ceremony.

This meant that the Shadow Pack would also send people over.

I'd already memorized the current Alpha of each pack, and I'd also heard about Benson inheriting the Shadow Pack. As an Alpha, he would likely come to the ceremony in person.

I thought I would have some resistance to this, but to my surprise, I didn't have any reaction when I thought of Benson after so many years. Be it the violent rejections, the cold river water, or the ashen heart, they all disappeared with time.

If I saw him again, what would I say?

I didn't think I'd say anything because there was nothing to say.

The people around me vaguely knew that I had been hurt in the pack that adopted me, but I didn't tell them in detail, so everyone pretended not to know and didn't ask me anything.

The rehearsals were arranged frequently, and any minor changes would require Aldrich and me to rehearse. We spent the entire morning or afternoon at the Moon Palace every day. Sometimes, I really wanted to move all the furniture to the Moon Palace.

As my bridesmaids, Dorothy, Jordin, and Emma were even more annoyed than I was. After all, I could occasionally use work as an excuse to escape these boring procedures, but they couldn't. When necessary, the girls would take my place as the bride and informed me of the changes when they came back.

Finally, one day, Dorothy broke down. "Who's getting married? Shouldn't the bridesmaid just hold the bride's dress, scatter the flowers, and then stand on the stage as decoration? Why do I feel like we're even more exhausted than you, the real bride?"

Jordin, who had been a marionette for the whole day, said bluntly, "I've never been so envious of Avril and Mara. All they have to do on their wedding days is dress up and cheer on the stage. They don't have to do anything."

Avril was married and could no longer be the maid of honor. Mara was a commoner, so she couldn't be my maid of honor. Therefore, the two girls only needed to sit in the VIP seats on the wedding day and watch the show.

We talked about everything for a while, and the topic came to the token hidden in the lunch box on the wedding day.

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I felt it was very romantic to give each other the evening primroses and bracelets like Avril and Perrin did, but this was a routine I had just seen. I liked it but didn't want to do the cliché.

It was fine if I used some other legends about the symbol of love, but given my 'former heretic god' identity, it was not appropriate to keep trying to gain nothing from the anecdotes of the Moon Goddess.

In fact, Aldrich and I had already exchanged tokens that belonged only to us. I embedded a black opal condensed from the goddess' blessing in his chest, and he put the ring transformed from the Moon Oath on me.

What could be more precious and sincere than these?

However, giving each other gifts in a lunchbox was an ancient tradition that had existed for thousands of years. I didn't want to be half-hearted, so the girls helped me develop an idea.

"How about a hand-embroidered towel with the flower patterns of osmanthus?" Emma suggested, "It's very popular for young noblemen and women to give each other this recently. It's said to be the revival of the traditional love token."

I shook my head. "It's good. It's just that I don't know how to embroider at all. It's not good to have human hands in this."

Jordin said, "Why don't you write a love poem? You can hide it in your necklace or write it on the back of your photo."

I shook my head again. "I haven't had any talent in literature since I was young. I really can't read and write."

The girls' ideas from noble families were classical, but Dorothy's ideas were much more 'modern'.

"Why don't you just dress up as a bridesmaid and deliver the lunchboxes yourself?" She said, "What can make Aldrich like you more than yourself?"

This sounded like an outrageous idea, but after carefully thinking about it, it seemed feasible.

Why did I have to limit my thinking to a specific thing? What was important was to convey my thoughts, not something else. Since that was the case, couldn't I express it personally?

I cheered, picked Dorothy up, and spun her around twice. "You're a genius! I love you so much!"

Dorothy fell on the sofa in a daze and mumbled, "Thank you, but considering that you're about to get married, I'm sorry to reject your kind intentions."

So, we secretly called the tailor, asked him to make a bridesmaid's dress in my size, and kept it a secret.

As expected of the veterans who had served the royal family for generations, they didn't even ask a single question about my request. Three days later, they sent my secret bridesmaid dress mixed with the girls' bridesmaid dress.

The royal family's bridesmaids definitely couldn't be as simple as the common people's. Although we all preferred the current trend of simplicity, we must consider the royal family's reputation, no?

294 The Silver Moon Pack

Selma Payne's POV:

Looking at the layers of lace edges and soft muslin on the bridesmaid's dress, as well as the large gems embedded in the cuffs and neckline, I took a deep breath. I began to silently calculate how much financial pressure these once-worn clothes would bring to the royal family.

Please don't laugh at me for being so calculative. Only the head of the household indeed knew how expensive daily necessities were. I'd already begun to learn how to deal with the royal family's finances from my mother. Looking at the account books daily, I almost feel that money was not money but white paper.

Being a Princess of my royal parents and being a Princess of the werewolf pack were two completely different experiences. This mental exhaustion was ten thousand times more tiring than facing Azazel. When I thought about how I'd have to deal with endless government affairs every day for decades, I felt that I should find a place deep in the mountains and live in seclusion until I die.

These were all jokes.

Standing in front of the mirror in the same bridesmaid dress, I suddenly felt like I wasn't the bride but was going to a friend's wedding.

At this moment, I suddenly understood Avril's melancholy before her marriage. Everything had changed too quickly. One ceremony, one night, and everything had changed.

Lovers had become husband and wife. Although love had not changed, only love had not changed. Marriage brought not only sweetness but also responsibility. Once you decided to stay by your side from now on, the world would instantly change its expectations of you. So many good couples had become resentful of each other, but how much of it was because reality and fantasy were so different?

What was my label for Aldrich? My lover, my partner, my boyfriend, and my fiancé. However, the word 'husband' was completely different from the previous labels. The weight was thousands of times heavier than all the other labels combined. It

represented a formal contract, a serious relationship that could no longer be viewed as a joke. Every step that he took with him would determine the future.

Marriage... Could I really get used to it?

It was soon the end of August, and only a few days were left before my coronation and wedding.

The emissaries of various packs have arrived one after another. Besides preparing for the ceremony these few days, I followed my parents to meet the important guests. Other than the southern Duke and Carolyn, I didn't know anyone else. Before every meeting, Kara would bug me with the guests' basic information.

As the left-hand President, Arkadius would have to accompany us to more important meetings. As my father's trusted aide, his authority in the Council of Elders was greater than the fence-sitting right-hand President. He also had a wider network in the various packs. Under his lead, I quickly learned about the various packs.

A few of the Alpha left a deep impression on me. For example, the leader of the Silver Moon Pack. He was a talkative middle-aged man. People's first impression of him might be that he was tactful. However, when you had a deep conversation with him, you would find that this was only a superficial understanding. He was an Alpha with great wisdom, and tactfulness was just another wisdom honed by time.

Francis Quinn was about the same age as my father, and the way he looked at me was inevitably a little tolerant and gentle, like an elder to a younger generation. In front of me, he didn't maintain a respectful distance like other Alpha; instead, he could freely talk to me about the Silver Moon Pack, which doubled my good impression of him.

"Please forgive me for my recklessness, Your Majesty, Your Highness," he said with a slight sigh. "I have a daughter about the same age as the Princess. She married into the Shadow Pack a few years ago. I was reminded of my daughter when I saw the Princess, so I was a little naggy. Please forgive me."

I smiled and nodded, saying, "There's no need to be so formal, Sir. On the contrary, the conversation with you made me feel very gratified, and I don't feel bored at all."

However, Francis' daughter was married to a Shadow Pack member. I didn't expect to hear about this here. It was a little unexpected.

The meeting time ended, and Francis said goodbye to us. Although I was a little curious about his daughter, I couldn't force that topic on him out of courtesy.

The Silver Moon Pack was considered one of the more powerful packs of the werewolves. Although the Shadow Pack was also a wealthy pack, the difference

between the Silver Moon Pack and the Shadow Pack was like the difference between a second-tier city and a super-first-rate international city.

The two packs were not close to each other. Francis must have found his mate there since he agreed to let his daughter marry into the Shadow Pack.

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Who could it be?

I compared the candidates in my mind and found that they were most likely my brother, Rhode, and Benson's head guard, Daniel.

After thinking about it for a long time, I laughed at my own unruly thoughts. What did it matter who it was? Anyway, it had nothing to do with me.

Soon, it was the day before the ceremony.

The palace was now like a complicated and precise instrument, with countless joints operating orderly. Everyone maintained their high spirits and was full of physical strength, sparing no effort in the final preparations for tomorrow.

As the person in the spotlight, I finally had some free time. My only task for the past few days was to receive all sorts of care and maintenance. I would go through the schedule twice when I had nothing to do. It could be said that it was good after all the hard work.

As for secretly video-calling Aldrich, it was the 21st century, and some old rules didn't have to be followed so strictly, right?

295 Travelling
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Selma Payne's POV:

August 31st, 4 am.

Under Kara's constant calling, I woke up with my bird's nest-like hair.

"Your beautician will be here in fifteen minutes." Kara pushed me into the bathroom and said, "Your stylist will dress you up in an hour. If you still want breakfast, I'm afraid you'll have to wash up quickly."

It was rare for me to wake up so early. Everyone in the palace had woken up very early today, and I was probably the last to open my eyes.

In the living room, the girls in gowns were already ready. In addition to being my bridesmaids, they also needed to be my concierges during the ceremony. The guest list

was half a piece of A4 paper; most of them were selected because of their identities. Only Dorothy, Emma, and Jordin were my trusted aides, so they naturally took on holding my hands.

Sitting on the soft sofa, I almost fell asleep with a pillow. "The ceremony will only start at ten o'clock. Why are we up so early?"

Dorothy clutched the crystal ornament on her collar, still feeling a lingering fear of what she had gone through after waking up. "I can't say for sure about other things, but I think it will take you an hour to wear the dress, considering that it is ten thousand times more complicated than ours."

All in all, the difficult struggle from then to now was forgotten. At seven o'clock, I had become a beautiful girl with a radiant face in the mirror.

"The carriage is ready," Kara reported. "His Majesty has ordered us to set off in ten minutes."

I took a deep breath and said to the girls, "Let's go. It's my time."

Inevitably, a large number of media members gathered at the entrance of the palace. They came from the top media companies of various packs. They carried their long-shot lenses and short ones, hoping to capture first-hand information about the coronation ceremony. It would be even better if they could capture some breaking news about the royal family.

However, no one would give those with ill intentions this chance.

Today, I'd be taking the carriage according to tradition. As the main character of the ceremony, I'd be taking the carriage myself. It would be a lie to say that I wasn't nervous since it was my first time facing the people alone without the presence of my parents. Fortunately, I'd already gone through countless rehearsals before this, so I'd memorized the rules of how to deal with unexpected situations and act in a routine manner.

The people on both sides of the road cheered and raised banners and signs with my face on them. This was a wonderful experience. Seeing someone who didn't know they supported and admired me so much, I felt touched, and my nose couldn't help but sting.

Although I knew they didn't know me and were doing this out of love for my father, that didn't stop me from thanking the people for their support.

Without the first eighteen years of life as a Princess, there were still doubts and dissatisfaction about my identity in the imperial court. Even I occasionally thought about my true identity. In the dead of night, the melodramatic plots of the soap operas I'd watched in the past would automatically play out in my mind. Even though I knew I was my parents' child, I couldn't avoid this worry.

Only today, when I saw the cheering citizens and felt the overwhelming welcome and support, the shadow of uneasiness in my heart was finally dispelled.

I didn't have to worry about those illusory concerns. From now on, I should think about how to be a good Crown Princess, train my abilities, and live up to the people's expectations of me.

I sat up straight and waved at the cheering crowd.

I saw a cute little girl sitting on my father's shoulder, waving her chubby little hands and smiling at me with an innocent and bright smile.

I returned her smile and winked at her.

I didn't think I'd fear the schemes and difficulties waiting for me. After all, I had thousands of innocent children like this little girl behind me. I couldn't take a step back, even if it were for them.

The convoy advanced slowly according to the planned route, and we arrived at the Moon Palace at half past eight.

Sometimes, I found it ridiculous. According to my experience, was the Moon Goddess still willing to accept me into her temple? After many rehearsals, I had walked out of the Moon Palace unscathed, so I believed the goddess would not mind. At the very least, she would not think it was a provocation from a 'fallen' god like me to enter her temple casually.

I used to say things like "oh, Moon Goddess", but I'd changed that. I didn't change it on purpose, but I'd stopped mentioning the goddess' name. This was a rule that automatically corrected my actions.

In the lounge, everyone was making their final preparations. I was the only one who had nothing to do, so I watched my attendants exchange pleasantries in boredom.

They were all descendants of nobles or meritorious families and had been in the social circle for many years since they were young. They were much more skilled in making connections than me; a Princess was getting married halfway.

As children of the upper class who was 'born noble', it was understandable for them to have an arrogant temper. But with a halfway Princess like me, some were not very convinced.

296 Gossips

Selma Payne's POV:

I usually didn't care about people gossiping about me behind my back. For one, I was too busy to deal with these minor details. Secondly, not everyone was 'qualified' to talk to me.

It was a bit impolite to say this, but the fact was that some young people who were self-aware of their status didn't even have the right to take the initiative to talk to me if we were to get serious. Such people were like Tom, Dick, and Harry to me. Who would care about them?

To make me look up, even if not a demon on the level of Azazel, it should be a famous villain like Adele, who could do something bad.

That was why I was happy to have a reputation for being tolerant and not being calculative about those petty people who didn't deserve my attention.

However, being tolerant didn't mean that I was deaf. The lounge was only so big, and it would be too impudent to say such things in front of everyone.

Sighing helplessly internally, I put on a cold expression and gestured for Jordin to invite the boy behind the screen who was 'imagining' my teenage love history over.

To my surprise, this boy looked quite familiar.

"What's your name?"

The boy bowed stiffly and said, "Your Highness, my name is Casti Woof Anka."

I was even more familiar with this name now. I asked, "Who is the former Elder Eric Woof Anka to you?"

"He is my grandfather, Your Majesty."

"I see. No wonder."

No wonder I thought he looked familiar. He was the grandson of an old acquaintance.

Ever since Elder Eric was forced to 'recuperate' at home by my father, the once arrogant Woof Anka family had learned to tuck their tails between their legs. They seemed to have just realized that even though their family had more than two hundred years of history and had produced countless elders, they could not surpass the royal power and summon the wind and rain. They finally understood the principle that 'a tall tree attracts the wind, and one should retreat at the peak of one's strength'.

In the face of the well-behaved Woof Anka family, my father also revealed his intention to reconcile. After all, even if this family had no credit, they had worked hard. Arranging for Casti Woof Anka to join my concierge team was a political signal.

It was just that the genes of this family were not very good. The grandfather in power was arrogant, and the grandson sent out to make peace was also brainless.

Looking at the cold sweat on Casti's forehead, I coldly asked, "What were you talking about with your companion just now? Can you tell me about it?"

I could see how flustered Casti had become. He had always been arrogant and despotic because of his family's influence. It was his bad luck that he had run into me today.

"It's just... it's just a joke, Your Highness. It's a complete waste of your time to hear it."

"I'll decide whether it's a waste of time." I waved my hand and stared into his fear-filled eyes. "Now, I want to know what you just said."

Casti was already unable to suppress his panic. As long as he wasn't an idiot, he would understand what I meant and would be able to predict the ending that would befall him.

Seeing that he didn't say anything, I motioned for Jordin to invite the other boys and girls who were pretending to be invisible behind the screen over.

The lounge was so quiet that one could hear a pin drop. Everyone knew that there was no way to settle this peacefully. No one wanted to be involved in this mess, and they wanted to become mute immediately.

The trembling children were 'invited' by Jordin to face me. They and Casti didn't look very old, about fourteen or fifteen years old. They were in their foolish and self-righteous puberty.

I'd been through this stage before, so I knew how much of a jerk a child of this age could be. Being a b*stard didn't always mean that they were evil, but more of a combination of stupidity, entitlement, and self-righteousness.

"Tell me, what were you guys talking about just now? You were smiling so cheekily." I was like a dean who had caught a student making a mistake, leisurely waiting for the students to walk into the trap.

No one answered me. No one dared to answer me.

Silence was always helpful in the face of interrogation. I saw a few of the children pouting, thinking they were hiding it as if they were certain I would easily let go of their mistakes like their elders.

Unfortunately, I wouldn't let them have their way. These people dared to slander me, which meant their families didn't respect me much. That was why these children dared to be so presumptuous with the protection of their influence. I understood that I could

only get some people's support at a time, but those who take advantage of others would not have my mercy.

"Looks like you are not willing to tell me." Facing the silent crowd, I pretended to be sad. "What a pity. So you guys don't want to be friends with me because you think I'm older than you all, and there's a generation gap?"

"Those who know me know I'm never a person who forces others. Since you don't want to get close to me, don't worry. I won't force you to do something you don't like."

I waved at Jordin and said, "My dear Countess, would you be so kind as to send these lovely children away on my behalf? There are too many people here today. Please send them back to their parents in person to avoid any accidents so their family members won't worry."

Jordin nodded in agreement and said to the confused children rather arrogantly, "Everyone, please follow me."

297 The Crown

Selma Payne's POV:

Seeing that I was about to go through with my words, this group of little b*stards with golden spoons in their mouths finally couldn't pretend to be childish and calm anymore.

The boy, vaguely surrounded by the others in the center, mustered his courage and stood up, wanting to plead with me. "Please have mercy, Your Highness. We've never attended such an important event before. We're too nervous and subconsciously want to gossip to divert our attention. I apologize for our foolish actions. Please give us a chance to turn over a new leaf. We will control our mouths."

I looked at him expressionlessly for a few seconds until he started to tremble. "I still don't know your name."

"What?" the boy was stunned.

"I don't know your name, so I don't know your family name or which family you come from. This way, I won't be able to complain to your parents, and you won't be grounded or punished by not having any snacks." Seeing the boy's disbelieving expression, I chuckled. "Or do you want me to do this? Remember your family? Remember you?"

The boy took two steps back in a panic and stuttered, "No, Your Highness. I don't want that... thank you for your understanding. Please allow me to take my leave. I wish you all the best today with the goddess' blessing."

His companions didn't expect him to back off so easily. They mumbled something in dissatisfaction, but he glared at them fiercely. They could only follow him and bow to me, then unwillingly left with Jordin.

I couldn't understand what these young masters and young mistresses were thinking. Did their family not teach them any common political knowledge?

I said I didn't know their family names, which meant I didn't intend to use this as an excuse to punish their families. Other than the boy who stood out, no one else could tell. I was speechless.

After sending away the unruly troublemakers, I suddenly lost quite a few concierges. I had to find someone to fill in the gaps as soon as possible.

"Oh my, take the list to my parents. They know who to choose as a substitute."

Although the ceremony would only start at 10 am, all the guests who received the invitation arrived. It was easy to find a few substitutes.

At 9:30, the substitutes were also in position. I was rather familiar with one of them. It was Carolyn. During the rehearsal, she was on her graduation trip with various packs, so she didn't participate and was only on the waiting list. I didn't expect that she would still become my concierge.

We hadn't seen each other for many years, so we didn't feel distant and greeted each other affectionately. This seemed to have become a trendsetter, as Carolyn was quickly welcomed in the unfamiliar lounge.

I was happy for her, but at the same time, I was a little sad. It was hard to say whether it was a good or bad day to be regarded as a social standard.

We were led to the designated location by the rites official, where we stood in line and prepared to start the ceremony officially.

After a long wait, the trombone that signified the beginning of the ceremony finally sounded for the first time.

I took a deep breath as the gorgeous door in front of me slowly opened. I smiled and took my first step.

After going through countless rehearsals, I couldn't remember those familiar standards when it was actually time. Everything was so natural. There was no pretentiousness, no intention. It was as if I was born knowing how to take every step, and there was a set of standards leading me.

There were many silent spectators on both sides of the grandstand. I didn't know most of them, but there were occasionally one or two familiar faces.

I saw the shocked Benson and the petrified Rhode from the corner of my eye.

When I reached the front of the stage, I stood still, and the rites official helped me take off my gorgeous long cloak. Then, I kneeled on the soft cushion embroidered with the royal emblem with gold and silver thread.

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My parents rose from their thrones and came to me.

"Madeline Periana H. Oromalivira is the legal daughter of I, the Lycan King Victor Periana H. Oromalivira, and Queen Helena Garcia H. Oromalivira's.

"Thanks to the Moon Goddess, werewolves should be in their positions and perform their duties. They should be given proper names to avoid chaos in the sky.

"Today, under the witness of all the fair and kind, I will act on behalf of the goddess' legacy and officially crown this royal bloodline as the Princess. She will legally possess the power to be addressed as 'Your Highness' and officially become a member of the core royal family. She will be the symbol and spokesperson of the royal family in all subsequent occasions that are tacitly acknowledged and authorized."

My mother took out the crown soaked in osmanthus water and handed it to my father. My father held up the crown and placed it on my head solemnly.

At this moment, the Officer of Rites, who was waiting on the side, shouted, "Goddess bless the Princess!"

The guests followed the Officer of Rites and shouted three times, which lasted for a long time and resounded through the clouds.

The coronation of the Princess was only the first procedure. The coronation of the Crown Princess, which followed, was the most important.

My father once again read out the declaration, which only had a few changes compared to before. Then, he took another gorgeous crown from my mother's hands, symbolizing my status as the successor, and placed it on my head.

This tiara was heavier, more ornate, and more dramatic than the previous one. It almost completely covered the crown that belonged to the Princess. Just like me, compared to being just a princess, my main duty was to be the Crown Princess.

298 An Old Acquaintance From Hell

Benson Walton's POV:

There was nothing good to say about my days as a leader.

After losing my initial pride and passion, I admitted that the mundane work was a little boring. A wolf that yearned for freedom lived in my heart, but the reality was that I could only sit in front of my desk and deal with official business, fighting with a group of people for profit.

The Shadow Pack was still a united, rich, and powerful pack, but it was not quite the same as I had imagined.

This kind of anxiety grew more and more intense in my boring life. The responsibility of being a leader and the desire for freedom tormented me alternately like ice and lava. After a few years, I felt like I had aged twenty years. I couldn't find any of the vigors of my youth.

Other than that, there was another thing that was tormenting me.

The Moon Goddess did not show her mercy in the end. After so many years, my second mate had yet to appear. The friends who grew up with me gradually found their mates or entered the hall of marriage. I was the only one who was still waiting for the fated mate that would never come a second time.

Time had changed. I was no longer the arrogant young boy from back then. The fated mate theory couldn't withstand the pressure of life. Now I wanted to find a mate who knew and loved me, even if she was only a chosen mate.

After my father and mother retired, they lived in seclusion. At first, they were worried about my life, but later they didn't care much. My mother said, "Although we are very worried that you can't find a life partner, we can't push a good family's child into the fire pit."

No matter what, time passed by slowly, and there were no waves in my peaceful life.

Until one day, a piece of explosive news swept through the entire werewolf kingdom.

When I saw that familiar face on the television, I was stunned for a moment. There was no other reason. After so many years, we silently acknowledged that person's death. Even when we saw a face that was the same as hers, our first reaction was that this person looked like her.

However, I reacted a few seconds later. How could there be two identical people in the world?

Who was that on the television?

The only answer was that she had returned.

In that instant, a cold, wet fear crawled all over my body like a tide. The fear that had been suppressed in the bottom of my heart for many years again broke through all the obstacles in my heart, bared my fangs, and brandished my claws.

She's back...

How did she appear?

She-

Selma.

However, the introduction on television was different. The anchorperson used a calm tone to describe the encounter with the legendary 'Princess Madeline', and everything was separated from the familiar face.

A familiar photo with the ridiculous word 'Princess?' Did a serious news channel learn to joke around? It wasn't the first of April today.

The news ended quickly, and the television continued to play advertisements or idol dramas, but this had nothing to do with me.

At this moment, I was like a deaf person. I didn't care about anything other than the photo in my mind.

This was a sign.

I thought.

After running away, lying, and hiding for so many years, my delayed retribution was finally coming.

Ten minutes later, Rhode kicked open my door excitedly. He said something to me excitedly and happily. Then, he mumbled to himself in doubt. After that, he made up his mind as if he was acting in a mime.

No, it was not a mime. I couldn't hear anything because of the buzzing in my ear.

"What did you say? I can't hear you," I said, confused.

Rhode gestured excitedly. Before I could see it clearly, his parents arrived, sobbing. Then, my parents, those who knew Selma in the past, and even more spectators were amazed by this 'resurrection'.

I couldn't hear anything they said. The sharp ringing in my ears tortured my eardrums. I could only nod in agreement to my good friend's request, even though I didn't hear anything.

I was in such a dazed state until I realized I had already set foot on the land of the Lycan pack.

The ringing in my ears had disappeared, but I would rather it was still there.

As an Alpha from a small pack without any merits, I didn't have the right to meet with the King in advance. I was wondering if this was a good thing or a bad thing. I could escape for a few days, but I had to face the late guillotine blade.

The only ones who were truly happy were Rhode and his wife. They couldn't hold back their tears at the thought of meeting their long-lost family member. Even though this family member of theirs had suddenly become a Princess that they could only see but not reach, they didn't doubt that they, as civilians, would be able to meet her.

Selma was a kind and nostalgic person. They believed that she would not forget them.

I believed it, too.

She wouldn't forget me. She wouldn't forget what I'd done to her and everything I'd done to her.

She wouldn't.

The moment I saw her at the conferment ceremony, the guillotine in my heart finally reached its highest point. She didn't look at anyone on the grandstand, nor did she look at me, but I knew that she had already noticed me.

Whether I was willing to accept it or not, she had already seen me.

I felt like I had fallen into an ice cave when I saw Mr. Payne and his family's teary eyes.
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At the same time as they rejoiced, could they guess that the Alpha they had entrusted their friendship and trust to was the culprit that prompted their daughter to choose suicide?

I didn't think so, but it didn't matter.

I was done for, so it didn't matter anymore.

Benson Walton's POV:

After leaving the Moon Palace, I was in a daze. Even Rhode, who only had eyes for his little sister, noticed my abnormality.

"Hey, bro, what's wrong? You've been out of your mind these few days, are you feeling unwell?"

I forced a bitter smile and replied in a low voice, "It's nothing,"

No matter how much Rhode asked, I didn't say anything.

Looking at my frown, Rhode suddenly thought of something and asked, "Could it be related to Selma?"

I was shocked and subconsciously refused, but accidentally spilled the coffee beside me.

"There's something wrong with you." Rhode frowned. "Listen, buddy. If you have any problems, you must tell me, okay? We're friends. You're my Alpha, I'm your Beta. We should face all problems together."

Looking at his sincere expression, I only felt bitterness and could not speak.

'My dear friend, if you knew that your precious sister had committed suicide because of me, would you still treat me as a close friend?'

When I saw the news, I knew the countdown on our friendship had started.

What was meant to come would come. No matter how much I wanted to escape, sin would corrode me like maggots attached to the bone.

Mr. And Mrs. Payne couldn't wait to submit an application to the palace immediately because they had no channels, they needed my parents to do it for them. Or rather, I should do it for them.

What did it feel like to be sent to the execution ground?

I didn't know when this application would be seen, but lying on the guillotine, waiting for the blade to fall, was always the most torturous moment.

My father and Mr. Payne had been good friends for many years, so he accompanied my mother and Mr. And Mrs. Payne to go for a walk around the shop to relax.

“Young man, get along well,” he said to me before he left. “I saw you and Rhode having a fight. You’re not a child anymore, son. You know that friendship is more important than a little temper.”

“I know...” I could only try my best to maintain a silly smile, not letting the anxiety in my heart reveal a trace of suspicion.

In the evening, we came to the Moon Palace again to attend the wedding ceremony of ‘Princess Madeline’.

Madeline... Selma...

It was only now that I realized they were the same person. Selma, who had returned to the Lycan pack, was living a good life. She used to be a timid and stubborn little girl, but now she had become an unapproachable Princess as if all that had happened in the past were just my fantasies.

How good would it be if it was a fantasy?

The ceremony was grand and majestic, fully demonstrating the power and wealth of the royal family to the guests. This was a kind of etiquette but also a demonstration. It showed all the werewolves that the royal family had a strong descendant bloodline, and any Alpha who dared to use the excuse of the royal bloodline’s decline to make a small move would have to consider whether their weight was enough to provoke it.

If I had a guilty conscience, I was the one who would bear the brunt of it.

I did not attend the banquet later on and did not dare to see Selma’s face. Thus, I left early with the excuse that I was not feeling well. Before I left, I saw Rhode and his wife, Mr. And Mrs. Payne, trying to bypass the guests and touch Selma. I immediately looked away as if I had been electrocuted. I didn’t dare to look at them again and left in a hurry.

The royal family’s accommodation for Alpha and his entourage was very advanced. The comfortable bed could make a tired person fall asleep in thirty seconds. However, I couldn’t close my eyes, no matter how hard I tried.

The Moon Temple’s gorgeous decorations and the scepter that symbolized royal authority appeared before my eyes. The tottering golden statues and sharp gemstones seemed like they were about to slice off pieces of my flesh.

I tried to escape, but a large group of guards chased after me. They roared and pressed me against the cold marble floor. Fear made me cry, and a pair of beautiful crystal shoes embedded with diamonds appeared in my blurry vision.

A stern and cold female voice sounded above my head, “Long time no see, Benson.”

I raised my head with great difficulty and met Selma's eyes, filled with disgust and ridicule.

I wanted to say something, but the guards already gagged my mouth. My face was wet with cold sweat, and the beads of sweat that fell into my eyes drew out more tears. Just as I was at a loss, a shocked and pained voice gave me my final judgment. "Benson! I trusted you so much. How dare you kill my sister!"

I looked behind Selma and saw the furious Rhode pointing at my nose and cursing at me. Behind him, Mr. Payne and his wife were hugging each other and crying bitterly. They were looking at me with eyes full of anger and accusation. My parents stood awkwardly at the side. My mother sighed while my father looked at me with shock and disappointment. "You're such a disappointment, Benson."

I struggled to defend myself, but the guards were like a mountain that pressed me down, making me unable to move. Selma bent down and coldly looked at my powerless attempts. After a while, she said, "I'll never forgive you for what you've done, Benson. People like you don't deserve to be a protected citizen of the Moon Goddess. Go to hell!"

She kicked me hard, her sharp, high heels piercing my eyes. I wailed and suddenly opened my eyes-

It was just a dream.

Outside the window, the sky in the east had already brightened.

300 Long White Dress

Selma Payne's POV:

To be honest, being a bride was not as interesting as being a bridesmaid.

Looking at the girls running errands for me, laughing and chattering along the way, and even telling me the interesting things that happened at the party, I was so envious that I wanted to take off my wedding dress and join them.

After sending each other the bay leaf tree and Wolf's Fang and receiving the blessings of my parents and Duke Frank, I finally made it to exchanging lunchboxes.

Although it was already afternoon, the purpose of the lunchbox was for something other than lunch.

I took out the bridesmaid's dress I was thinking about, and I was about to change into it with the help of the girls, but suddenly I heard a sound of a tear – the skirt of the bridesmaid's dress was torn open a slit as long as the forearm, and its collar was in

Dorothy's hand, the hem of the skirt got stuck on the corner of the heavy gold-carved round table at some point.

“!”

The girls checked the bridesmaid's dress in a panic, but the tear ran through the skirt and could no longer be worn.

“I'm sorry!” Dorothy apologized helplessly, “I didn't see the dress got stuck on the table. Oh my god, I'm so sorry!”

I hugged her and consoled her. “It's okay. It's just a bridesmaid's dress. I'm not going to wear it to the wedding.”

But now that I couldn't wear the bridesmaid's dress, how was I supposed to meet Aldrich? It wasn't an exaggeration to say that the wedding dress skirt could almost cover half the room, and it would be difficult for me to walk around in this dress without being noticed.

The girls rummaged through their luggage, hoping to find a replacement dress. However, in addition to being as gorgeous as ancient gowns, the gowns modeled after ancient styles also inherited the rigid characteristics of ancient gowns. One could only wear one size.

Due to the lack of elasticity, I couldn't stuff me in if it was small. If it were too big, the skirt would fall off after a few steps, and I couldn't use brooches or belts.

I sat at the side dejectedly and thought, ‘It's over. The plan is ruined. My wedding is going to be incomplete!’

Just as I was at my wits' end, Dorothy suddenly took out a plain white dress from a box in the corner. It didn't look like a custom-made suit. A clergyman left it behind.

“Try this!” She handed the dress to me in high spirits. “It looks like your size.”

I made a last-ditch effort and tried it on casually. I didn't expect this dress to fit me. It was so close-fitting that I almost suspected it was custom-made for me.

It was said that the bride had the best luck on her wedding day. It seemed that this was true!

The girls cheered excitedly, and Jordin and Emma went to Aldrich's place to lead the charge. Ten minutes later, Dorothy and I quietly set off.

Before I left, I removed all the gorgeous decorations on my hair. Dorothy helped me cover my head with a thin veil, saying that it could block other people's gazes on the way.

Standing in front of Aldrich's family's lounge, I counted down from five, and when I heard Jordin say our secret code, I pushed the door open and entered.

Aldrich was standing with his back to the door. Hearing the sound of the door opening, he helplessly said, "What is it? And you want me to leave first."

The girls stood at the side, covering their mouths and snickering. I nimbly walked behind Aldrich and tapped his shoulder.

Aldrich turned around, but before his helpless expression could disappear, he saw my brilliant smile.

"Aren't you surprised?" I scattered the petals hidden in the palm of my hand into the air and threw myself into his arms. "I don't know what to give you. After thinking about it, nothing is more precious than me. Do you like it?"

Aldrich smiled as he held my waist as if no one else was around. He whispered into my ear, "I like it. I like it very much. I like it the most."

The girls had long since left to stand guard at the door, leaving only Aldrich and me in the lounge.

"I couldn't wait to see you again at the ceremony," I whispered. "Now I understand why the bride and groom couldn't meet before marriage in ancient times. If every new couple is like me, unable to wait for even a moment, and can't wait to elope with you, then this rule does make some sense."

Aldrich lovingly pressed his forehead against mine and repeated what I said. "You want to elope with me? If you want, we can leave now."

"What?" Before I could react, Aldrich had already pulled me out.

The girls outside the resting room had already disappeared without a trace. I didn't know where Aldrich was taking me, but I trusted him and followed him.

We followed a small, hidden corridor and arrived at a sealed garden behind the moon god temple. This area was not open to the public; usually, only the church's members would come here. However, all the clergymen had gone to help with the coronation and wedding today, so the garden was quiet, and there was no one.

The garden in the middle of summer was full of flowers, and colorful butterflies and bees were perched in the center of the flowers, quietly observing us, the unexpected visitors.

A thorny arch had been decorated on the lawn, and a path paved with fresh flowers extended to an exquisite ceremonial stage. Dorothy stood in the middle of the stage, wearing a white robe that symbolized the Moon Emissary, like a priestess of the Moon Palace.