

Alpha's Rejected Mate Returns as Queen

Chapter 551 - 551: Two Points and One Line

Chapter 551: Two Points and One Line

Selma Payne's POV:

We'd long been troubled by how to deal with the exchange students.

Although the contract had been extended, contract would expire one day. What should we do then? Send the elves back? However, the elves were in a civil war. Putting aside the issue of whether it was safe to send them back, it was still unknown whether the interim government would still exist!

But were we going to keep dragging it out like this? How long would that take? It would be best if the civil war ended in a year. Would the elves want to settle down in the werewolf pack if it lasted for ten or twenty years?

But what would we do if they want to return to their hometown? Stop them from leaving? What about those students with families? From now on, would they be separated from their flesh and blood?

In the end, the root of the problem was still the elves. We were naturally willing to cooperate if the other party could devise a relatively normal solution. But now, there was a big problem no matter how I looked at it!

Not to mention how multiple Elf Kings suddenly appeared, the requirements of these documents alone were two extremes. Those who wished to send the elves back obviously harbored ill intentions, and those who wished to keep the elves in the werewolf pack weren't necessarily good people. In short, I could sense that a conspiracy was slowly taking shape around these innocent children.

"We shouldn't have sent the exchange students back," I immediately expressed my opinion. "This is not right. Their statements are contradictory. They must have used the Elf King's name, meaning these documents are illegal."

"Of course!" Aldrich agreed. "Although I missed a lot of things while I was unconscious, I think it's best to keep children away from conspiracies, even if it looks like they're relatives. For people who don't care about morality, harming their loved ones will be even more unscrupulous."

My father pondered for a while before shaking his head. "But I don't think we can do that."

"Why not?" I didn't understand. "There's obviously a problem here. If we send the children back so easily, it's hard to guarantee what will happen to them. Moreover, who would take over even if they were to be sent back? Now, the elf race has more forces of all sizes than the stars in the sky. Which side's request should we accept and which side should we reject?"

"That's the problem," my father said. "We can't reject all these diplomatic documents. It's too tough. Refusing the request to be sent back at such a special time seemed like detaining the elves as hostages, which would send a dangerous signal to the elves. Even if the other side has already fought until the sky is dark, we can't easily gamble on the possibility of conflict."

My father's words calmed me down. Indeed, it would be unwise to refuse outright. No matter what, since the other side's split forces could send the same request at the same time, it meant that there was a secret among these exchange students that we didn't know. Moreover, this secret was of great importance to the elf race.

But were we going to send the students back to that war-torn place just like that?

In response, my father said cunningly, "Not rejecting doesn't mean you have to agree, right? Otherwise, I wouldn't have sat here all night to reply to a fief."

Aldrich and I looked at my father in confusion, and he slowly pushed open the large pile of letters from the elf race. He took a slightly old file from the drawer and handed it to us.

Inside was the new agreement signed earlier to extend the duration of exchange students studying abroad.

I didn't understand. My father gestured for me to take a look at the contents. I read it from beginning to end. I suddenly understood my father's intention when I saw the signature and seal.

"Oh my god, how could I have forgotten about this!" Staring at the gorgeous handwriting, I exclaimed, "That's right, that's it. The one who signed the agreement with us was the interim government. The only person we had to be responsible for was the interim government! As long as the interim government doesn't ask for the exchange students to be sent back, we can use this as an excuse to stall for time!"

"That's true," Aldrich said. "This way, we won't have any room for criticism in our procedures. It's useless for those independent forces to be anxious because this is ultimately not a conflict between them and us, but between them and the interim government."

My father was very satisfied with our answer. He smiled and said, "That's right, so we don't have to refuse or agree. We just have to ask for the opinion of the interim government. As for the rest, there's no need for the werewolves to interfere in the internal turmoil of the elves. We just have to wait and see."

Thus, a conflict that could have caused a dispute between the two groups was resolved silently. Although the elves couldn't go home for the time being, they were safe. As for what the elves think, it had nothing to do with us. It was their problem to be unable to unite in their opinions.

As for the secrets of the exchange students, it wasn't the time to explore them yet.

Now, I had to go back and sort out the truth about Layla's death and prove the victim's innocence..

Chapter 552 - 552: The Illusory Crown

Chapter 552: The Illusory Crown

Selma Payne's POV:

I once thought that the Evaria Family would be extremely respectful toward this descendant who could help them reach the heavens in a single bound. At the very least, they would have to maintain superficial respect.

However, I completely overturned my previous views after a series of events.

The Evaria Family didn't like Jack Evaria. They only wanted to squeeze out every bit of his value to make use of him. I suspected that the Evaria Family really wanted Jack Evaria to replace my father or me.

First of all, regarding Layla's death, there was no doubt that it was Jack's doing. But was he the only one who did it? Didn't the Evaria Family know anything about this? I thought not only did they know, but they also added fuel to the fire and used Jack to complete this flawless assassination plan.

Jack could indeed erase everyone's memories related to this, but only the Evaria Family was different. This was because they were not victims who were kept in the dark but chess players who manipulated everything outside the chessboard.

Even if Jack could really deceive his people, as long as the Evaria Family turned around, they would easily find many suspicions. Why was Julie not dead? Where did

the person who was controlling Julie go? Why didn't he grasp the final direction of this assassination?

They didn't even need to investigate much. As long as they saw the 'forgotten', they could determine who the person who broke the plan was.

Moreover, Julie felt that Jack was not free and did not like being controlled by the Evaria Family.

Although it was still questionable whether his memory was accurate due to her mother's filter, at least I could confirm that Jack was arrogant and self-centered. Determining whether the Evaria Family had deliberately cultivated his personality was difficult.

However, it was indisputable that no king would be willing to be controlled by others, even if he was just a shameful 'candidate' and a child in everyone's eyes.

Therefore, Jack's relationship with his family was not harmonious. It could even be said that there were many contradictions. And what Sir Evaria said about 'recuperating due to illness' was also debatable. Was Jack terminally ill, or did the Evaria Family not want to release this uncontrollable time bomb?

Therefore, I was inclined to believe that the Evaria Family knew what Jack had done. Perhaps they were the ones who secretly urged Jack to assassinate Layla. Otherwise, it would be difficult for a weak child to rush to another city thousands of miles away.

This led to another question – how exactly did the Evaria Family want to use Jack?

If they really wanted Jack to become the future Lycan King, then the correct way to do it was to arrange for him to have a pair of parents like Sisley so that he could receive a perfect aristocratic education, manage his connections, gather his reputation, and control the power of the family. Then, he would wait for the opportunity to start a war for the throne.

But what did the Evaria Family do? They locked Jack up in a manor and did not allow him to see the light of day all day. They called it cultivation, but the only medical practice seemed to treat Jack as an inexhaustible sperm bank and create more children with royal blood for the family.

These were all guesses, except for Jack's ending. After the fall of the Evaria Family, Jack immediately died. It was as if he had lived on for more than thirty years just to become a sign of weakness for the family on the last day of his life.

The Evaria Family had no intention of installing Jack to the throne of the werewolf pack. He was just an excuse, a flag, and a reassurance that would allow the family to reach the throne with a clear conscience.

Actually, I should have thought of this long ago because Jack's royal bloodline was the bloodline of the Oromalivira Family, not the bloodline of the Evaria Family, right?

If he really ascended the throne, it would be hard to say whether it would be a family that favored him but was in conflict with him or the old royal family that gave him the right to inherit.

After figuring this out, the plan of the Evaria Family was obvious.

It would be best if the rebellion succeeded. A sickly and short-lived ghost would be helped to the throne, or he would die of illness after a few years. Before he died, he would leave a 'posthumous edict' to pass on the throne to the family that raised him.

Or perhaps he would become a tyrant because of his personality. That way, the Evaria Family could launch a righteous war of 'eliminating the violent and pacifying the good' and rightfully ascend to the throne.

In any case, they could change from 'aristocrats' to an 'imperial clan' and then to 'royal family'.

Unfortunately, the whole plan was aborted before they could start a decent rebellion. Jack still had his value. His death would become the life insurance of the entire Evaria Family.

Once my father insisted on holding them accountable, they could completely attribute their delusions and disloyalty to Jack's bewitchment. After all, he had the power to manipulate people's hearts!

Not only Jack but also Sisley, Sunflower, and the descendants of the Evaria Family who had spent so much effort to leave behind were just tools to be used..

Chapter 553 - 553: Old Leaves And New Sprouts

Chapter 553: Old Leaves And New Sprouts

Selma Payne's POV:

This was the truth – the chilling truth.

Everything was a sacrifice of ambition. The schemes and plots spawned terrifying monsters, and he became the first sacrifice to pay the price of failure.

I didn't know how to comment on this. I couldn't say such high-sounding words like 'the dead should be honored', but i also sincerely felt it was ridiculous.

A plan that had taken generations of effort and countless vengeful souls had disappeared.

The Evaria Family no longer had any power to fight back. That was how a vanity fair was. Any seemingly glamorous and indestructible gorgeous castle was just a shelf made of paper. It looked scary, but once it showed signs of decline, the greedy speculators would rush forward and take every brick.

This was the case for the Evaria Family and the Oromalivira Family.

So i was glad we won.

But was it all over?

I kept feeling that I had overlooked something, but no matter how I thought about it, I couldn't figure out the problem.

The aftermath of Layla's death was handed over to the professionals. With a reliable conclusion, the missing pieces of the puzzle were quickly filled up.

The first was the Woof Anca Family. While showing their loyalty to the royal family, they secretly collaborated with the Evaria Family to do some tip-offs.

This kind of double-betting behavior was a common 'noble wisdom', which usually allowed them to obtain satisfactory benefits in any outcome, provided they could deal with their tricks.

Unfortunately, the Woof Anca Family had kicked an iron plate this time. I didn't intend to let this family off. Even my father strongly supported my decision. He even thought that if i wanted to do it, i had to be more decisive and not give them any chance to turn the tables.

"The Woof Anca Family has a long history. Even though they are declining now, it can't change their complicated relationship with the werewolves."

My father said, "If you can use this family, you will receive powerful support when you ascend the throne. However, once they intend to rebel, even if it was decades ago, you cannot let your guard down. Selma, you must give up some of your old forces and position to your trusted subjects. This is the first step in learning the balancing of power."

The first time I heard my father say this, i was shocked. It revealed something different.

"But isn't it too early? My subjects..." I asked uncertainly. "This should be something that will happen a long time later. Father, the Woof Anca family is an obstacle, but they have made great contributions in the past. If you take their authority away from them, it will be a huge blow to you."

My father only smiled gently.

"Very early? But my dear, when I was your age, your mother and I had already taken up the responsibility of this country and began to mediate with the old ministers left behind by your grandfather. We also gave everything we had for the werewolves."

"... I don't understand what you mean."

"Many years have passed, child. Your mother and I are no longer young. Now, we are not as energetic as we were when we were young when we worked overnight. I think we have to accept the fact that we are old."

"But you and Mother are not even fifty years old. This is the prime of your life for a werewolf."

"In our prime? Maybe..."

My father looked at the night sky outside the window and suddenly revealed a nostalgic expression.

"When I was very young, I did some outrageous things – God, I was a little rascal who didn't know the immensity of heaven and earth. I've caused a lot of trouble for some families that I couldn't stand, and I've arrogantly mocked the enemies of the Oromalivira Family in the social circle. I've even sneaked into human society and almost caused some unnecessary friction.

"I was so young then. I was full of energy and energy. I could make a scene from beginning to end every day as if I would never tire.

"Now that I think about it, such a long time has passed without realizing it. It's been so long that it feels like a dream. "I'm old, Saroma. It's not that I'm aging, but that my spirit, energy, and mentality are no longer young. This might be considered a form of maturity, but we all know that anyone with power can be mature and steady. What the werewolves need in the future is a young and sharp fire to clear the obstacles for them.

"I've been waiting for an opportunity to retire and hand over the werewolves to their future navigator. And now, Selma, I believe that the time has come. You are mature, experienced, responsible, and in the prime of your youth. I think it's time for you to shoulder the heavy responsibility of the werewolf pack. You should shoulder the responsibility of being the king."

Why did my father want to pass the throne to me so suddenly? Was I trustworthy enough? Could I shoulder the responsibility of being a queen? I was already strong enough to lead the future of the werewolf pack.. Wouldn't i go astray?

Chapter 554 - 554: Self-Examination

Chapter 554: Self-Examination

Selma Payne's POV:

I felt helpless, followed by fear and resistance.

I refused incoherently. "No, Father. It's too early. I'm not mature enough. I'm not strong enough. I do not understand everything in the vanity fair. I'm not enough to take over your burden. I'm even at a loss about this."

"When will you be strong, mature, and insightful enough? I think the answer is never. The world is changing every second. New things are constantly appearing, and old things are constantly disappearing. The human heart is as fickle as a river. One second, we think that we have seen through everything, but the next, we find that a new problem has appeared before us.

"Child, everyone is an ignorant acolyte. They are constantly preparing, pondering, and comprehending their responsibilities and values. You're like this, and so am I. Selma, I've been learning daily since becoming the Lycan King. I've been trying to make myself a perfect leader. However, the truth is that I'll never be perfect because there's no such thing as perfection in this world. All I can do is try not to leave any regrets.

"I understand your fear. When responsibility comes, we will always feel small and want to retreat. But don't worry, you have family and friends, loyal helpers, and wise advisors. Becoming a king doesn't mean you have to bear everything alone. No one can bear everything on their own. That is arrogance and irresponsibility. I will help you, your mother will help you, your husband and friends will help you, and your subjects will help you. You are not alone, my daughter. You have everything."

At this moment, I didn't know what to say to express my feelings. I'd dreamed countless times of how I would look when I became a queen. That would be an even more glorious honor than now and also an even greater responsibility.

I was excited about this, but I felt even more unsettled and uneasy when this moment truly arrived.

Even if I had many assistants, could I successfully carry out my responsibilities as a queen?

When I sat on the throne, could I convince the ministers? Could I gain the people's trust and lead the werewolves to a bright future?

At this moment, any fantasy was illusory. The future was unpredictable, and was I the one chosen by fate?

"I don't know, Father... I don't know." I muttered. "Being a queen – I don't know if I can. This was not a small matter, completely different from being the crown princess. Once I become the queen, no one can cover for me. My every move is closely related to the werewolf pack. Once I make a mistake, there will no longer be anyone to clean up the mess for me, like when I was a princess.

"I've made many mistakes, Father. Some of them were insignificant, while others were related to countless lives. These things that once weighed down on my heart have not disappeared even now. They are just hidden in the corner of my memory, waiting for me to commit another unforgivable crime and reappear to blame me for my incompetence and stupidity.

"Becoming a wise queen has always been my dream. But I don't know if I can make it happen. What if I make the same mistake again? I won't have the chance to make up for it, which will likely bring countless dangers to the werewolf pack."

"I don't know, Father. I don't know..."

I felt extremely confused. On the one hand, I knew I should bravely take responsibility and not be so overcautious and in a dilemma.

But on the other hand, those fears were not fake. I was afraid of making mistakes because I had suffered the pain of making them, and others always paid the price for my mistakes.

This made my heart suffer.

My father sighed and then smiled again.

"You may be a little indecisive, child, but I don't think the flaws can overshadow the merits. This is what makes me believe that my judgment is right. You have the heart of a benevolent person, and this is a necessary condition to become a leader."

I wanted to say something, but my father didn't give me a chance. He continued, "But there's one more thing I have to say. You're too arrogant, Selma. Your way of thinking is simply too arrogant.

“As I said just now, no one can shoulder everything alone. This kind of thinking is arrogant and irresponsible. Child, have you always been alone? Look around you. You have family, friends, followers, and bystanders.

“Every decision you think you made on your own is inevitably influenced by others. This is especially true when you became a leader – you can’t be an autocratic tyrant because a person’s energy is limited, and it is difficult to take care of everything on your own. This is why we need ministers, officials, and think tanks who can advise us.

“Stubbornly thinking that everything is your fault is just a useless internal friction that can’t solve the problem. A high sense of morality is a form of arrogance. It reflects distrust-distrust of your helpers, so you subconsciously monopolize everything..”

Chapter 555 - 555: The Rising Sun

Chapter 555: The Rising Sun

Selma Payne’s POV:

I was speechless for a long time. My father’s words echoed in my ears.

I was very nervous and even wanted to retreat.

But at the same time, I could feel a sense of joy overflowing from the bottom of my heart. They gradually surrounded me like honey, making me feel sincerely happy.

This was a form of recognition. After exhausting myself with my duty, I finally received the recognition I had been waiting for.

From a weak and self-abased girl in a small town to a powerful crown prince, I had never stopped fighting to fulfill my responsibilities.

There was laughter, sadness, fullness, and loss during this period. But no matter what, at this moment, the last missing piece of the puzzle in my heart was finally filled – recognition.

I believed that I still had a lot to learn about becoming a queen. But just like my father said, maybe it was time for me to stop and examine my arrogance.

There was no end to learning. Perfection was a non-existent contradiction. Why should I use this as an excuse to shrink from the future? Wouldn’t that be irresponsible?

I thought deeply when I suddenly heard a commotion at the door.

It was my mother.

"I knew you two would be here." My mother walked over kindly and helped me tidy my hair. "It seems someone forgot her promise to accompany the children to a picnic this afternoon."

She gave my father a sidelong glance, which immediately turned my father from a dignified monarch into a guilty husband.

"Oh... Yes, yes, I did promise the children," whispered my father. "I almost forgot – but it's not too late, right?"

My mother burst out laughing. "That's right. I knew you two workaholics would forget. That's why I came to remind you in advance. It's already eleven o'clock. Bertha has prepared everything for the picnic. Now we only need Grandpa and Mom."

She seemed to have only come to remind us not to forget to have lunch with the children and then left hurriedly.

However, after a few seconds, my mother returned and stood outside the door with a smile. "Regarding what your father said, Selma, I think it's time, right? Your father and I are old. Although our bodies are still strong, we have lost our youthful and energetic hearts. Now is the best time, my daughter. No matter your decision, I will believe in and support you."

It was only then that I realized that my mother had heard everything.

People always seemed especially childish and fragile in front of their mothers. My mother's words inexplicably softened me, and tears unknowingly filled my eyes.

I tried to hold it back, but in the end, I still rushed over to hug my mother.

"Oh, oh, look at you, little girl. You're already a mother, but you still like to act like a child." My mother hugged me lovingly while my father gently embraced us.

"It's time," I sobbed. "I should shoulder my responsibilities. I shouldn't run away because I'm not afraid... Father, Mother, I feel happy from the bottom of my heart."

I saw Aldrich standing in the corridor with the children through my misty eyes. The children held their father's hand curiously. Their mother's tears made them feel strange and curious. My husband looked at me tenderly. He was there with the children. He was my supreme treasure and my strong backing.

We looked at each other and smiled.

The children also laughed. They ran over like swallows in the wind. They pulled their father along and leaned into my arms. They also spoke cutely to their grandparents.

I picked Cynthia up, and she wiped the tears off my face. "Mother, are you going to become the Queen?"

"I think so, child, but it may take some time."

"That's good." She smiled and narrowed her eyes. "When you become the queen, I will become a princess."

"You're a princess now, my dear."

"That's different." Cynthia reasoned with me. "Now, everyone calls me 'Your Highness'. I'll become 'Your Royal Highness' when you become the Queen. Only then will I be a real princess."

"Alright, alright, you're right." I kissed her, and the other children asked me to kiss them.

Maxine ran over with Duke Frank. She was a strong but light wolf. She ran to my side like a gust of wind.

This time, the spacious door of the study seemed a little crowded.

"What happened here? Why are you crying, Selma?"

"I'm crying tears of joy," I said, stroking her soft fur. She squinted comfortably. "Are you in a hurry? We'll set off now."

"I'm not in a hurry," said Maxine. "It's the Duke who's hungry. That's why we came to you."

Duke Frank smiled magnanimously, not knowing if he could accept this obvious lie.

The children had gone to pester their grandfather again, and my father did not hide it. He bluntly said that he had decided to pass the throne to me.

The Duke was a little surprised. After all, my father was in his prime. But when his gaze shifted to me, he instantly understood.

"We're all old." He sighed. "It's time to hand over the mission of the era to the new rising sun.."

Chapter 556 - 556: The Art Exhibition

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Selma Payne's POV:

I received an invitation from Emma.

The freedom of life inspired this girl, and she could freely display her talent in painting. She returned to the Lycan pack this time to hold a private art exhibition and use this occasion to catch up with her relatives and friends she had not seen for a long time.

"This is my last chance to invite a princess," she teased over the phone. "It's already June. After this hot summer, you'll be the Queen!"

After some discussion, the date of my coronation had been decided. It would be in August. In this half year, I had been busier than before, preparing for the official ascension.

My father gradually handed over authority to me. This meant I had to learn to handle all government affairs independently as the supreme ruler. I no longer had to do some assisting work like before.

It was a sweet torture. The progress satisfied me, but I couldn't ignore the exhaustion.

This art exhibition was a rare opportunity to relax. I hadn't seen Emma in a long time.

Some of these invitations were for me, Dorothy, Aldrich, the children, and even my parents. However, they did not plan to go. "Someone must stay in the palace to guard it in case of accidents," my father said.

The wolf cub was already three years old, and Sunflower and Cynthia looked like they were three years old. However, other than Cynthia, the children still had no official name.

Our family thought about it. Since we'd been calling them by their nicknames for so long, we might as well call them by their nicknames for a few more months. Therefore, this was put on hold. I planned to announce their official names after I ascended the throne and conferred the title of nobility to the children.

It was a sunny day. We drove to Emma's outdoor art exhibition in the suburbs. The theme of this exhibition was 'Natural Legends', so Emma had specially chosen this vast and historic lawn to decorate it with flowers and plants like a mythical garden.

"Look, whose little angel do we have here?"

Emma immediately ran over when she saw us. However, she didn't run over to Dorothy and my friends but to the little turnips around us dressed like sprouts.

The children were not afraid of strangers at all. Even though the last time they saw Aunt Emma was in the Spring Rain Pack, these little snobs still remembered this kind and lively aunt because Emma kept sending them delicious food and fun things they encountered during their trip.

The children screamed and ran into Emma's arms, almost falling over. Emma kissed and hugged them one by one before she had the time to pay some attention to us.

"Selma, Dorothy!" She gave each of us a big hug. "I have missed you guys so much."

Dorothy gave her a 'don't give me that look' look. "Pardon me for being blunt, Miss, but you didn't seem to know us a minute ago."

"Don't say that. Of course, I love you, but who can ignore these little angels who are like cotton balls?" Emma hugged the children and looked at Aldrich. "I'm glad you're as healthy as ever, Aldrich. We all saw how worried Selma was back then. Now that she has such a happy family, I'm sincerely happy for you and your wife."

"Thank you, Emma." Aldrich shook hands with Emma in a friendly manner.

"I'm glad that Selma has such good friends like you."

"Alright, ladies and gentlemen, the time for small talk is over. This isn't some random social occasion, alright?" I interrupted them helplessly. "The past is in the past. Thank you for being by my side now. And now, let me see those wonderful paintings. After dealing with endless official documents for half a year, I desperately need a chance to cultivate my body and mind. It's not easy."

We mulled over Emma's paintings. She had a classical style and liked realistic characters and scenery. Just like the theme of the art exhibition, the theme of all the paintings was related to legends.

I saw that painting again. I had hallucinated because of it on the night of the Spring Rain Pack. Now that this painting was finally completed, I was shocked to find that the content of the painting coincided with my hallucination.

The angry goddess, the swaddling clothes held high, the panicked man, and the demon watching everything coldly from the refuge bush – I suddenly felt that they seemed to be moving. The goddess roared, the baby cried, the man defended himself, the demon laughed silently, and the moths weaved lightly between the characters, playing a silent sorrowful song for this farce.

Unknowingly, I was once again haunted by this painting. I observed every detail with fascination, from the devil's fleeting gaze to the trace of blood seeping out of the swaddling clothes. I seemed to have become a moth in the painting, immersed in the scene, listening to the actors of this tragedy roar out their lines.

"Selma!"

Someone nudged me. I turned around abruptly. It was Aldrich.

He looked at me worriedly, and when I looked back again, I saw the same painting – but everything was still as if it had just been an illusion.

I believed something was going to happen..

Chapter 557 - 557: A Heartless Death

Chapter 557: A Heartless Death

Selma Payne's POV:

Emma was chatting with Avril and Mara when she saw something strange and rushed over.

"What happened?" Seeing my pale face, she asked worriedly, "Are you feeling unwell? There's a resting area over there. Why don't you go and sit for a while?"

I struggled to shift my gaze away from the painting. I grabbed Emma's arm and asked, "This painting – where did you read about this legend?"

Emma was stunned. She supported me and replied in confusion, "I heard it from the family's elders. I told you about it at the Spring Rain Pack. Do you remember?"

"Where is he? The elder who told you the legend?"

"I think he's probably dead. I remember that he entered his declining years when he took care of me briefly. I haven't heard from him for many years. He probably passed away a long time ago."

I turned around to look at the painting again. Everything was still. The paint was quietly sitting on the canvas that belonged to me. There were no emotions.

But I was sure that it wasn't an illusion. That scene didn't happen on this canvas. This painting was just a medium, but it gave me a feeling that it was real. It was as if I had experienced it myself.

I told the people what I had just seen and heard about the vivid legend.

"Are you too tired recently, Selma?" Avril worriedly asked, "I always see trainees hallucinating from overwork in the military camp. Dorothy said that you've been working non-stop recently. Maybe you're just too tired."

"No, no, I'm very sure everything is real," I said firmly. "Something is going to happen. This painting is a sign."

Avril and Mara lived relatively quiet lives, and I could understand why they couldn't agree with the signs of these supernatural beings.

Aldrich and Dorothy believed me without any hesitation, especially Dorothy. As a prophecy witch, even though she had deliberately sealed her ability, she could still sense the restless elements in the air.

"Yes, this painting also gives me a feeling that's hard to describe. It's hard to say whether it's good or bad. It's too messy. The closer I get to it, the more I can feel the complicated existence contained in it." Dorothy stared at the moth in the painting and muttered, "This is too strange. I think I should take a look..."

I stopped Dorothy. "Wait, do you want to see this painting? Don't do that yet. There's something strange about this painting. It's too dangerous to examine it rashly."

"What happened?" Emma was completely stunned. "Is there something wrong with my painting? I can guarantee that I created everything here. There was no external intervention during this period. They should be just ordinary oil paintings."

"It's not the painting, dear. It's the legend in the picture."

I consoled the terrified Emma and suggested softly, "Maybe we can take down this painting for now?"

Emma nodded immediately. "Of course, this isn't my best work. Without it, the exhibition won't have any problems."

Thus, the oil painting 'a Heartless Death' was quietly taken down and stored in a temporary warehouse.

I didn't have the mood to look at any other paintings. This painting seemed to have some magic that took away all my emotions, so much so that even the children could see that I was absent-minded. They didn't leave me to play and followed me nervously.

I stayed away from the crowd and found peace in the corner of the resting area. Aldrich accompanied me and said softly, "If you're tired, let's go back today. The exhibition will be on for a week. We can come back at another time."

I leaned on his shoulder tiredly and whispered, "I'm not tired, I just feel an indescribable sense of nervousness. It feels like something big is about to happen, and I can only guard against the air in vain. As for that painting, even Dorothy thinks that there's a problem with it. I'm considering whether to buy it from Emma and keep this potential danger within sight."

"If you think it's necessary, we'll go find Emma. But babe, I think you should relax a little. Don't be so harsh and force yourself to think about serious things. We're here to enjoy today, aren't we? You've been too tired during this period. You need to relax."

I smiled and didn't say anything else.

I knew that I should relax my tense nerves, but one thing after another happened, and I couldn't find the time to relax. I was not the only one who was tired. Aldrich, Dorothy, my family, friends, and supporters all did their best for me. I couldn't leave them alone.

Not long after, Emma arrived.

"Hey, girl, how are you feeling?" She handed me a cup of hot cocoa and whispered, "Don't tell anyone. This isn't on the menu of the open-air bar."

I smiled and indicated that I was fine. Emma chatted with me and stammered about what had happened just now.

"Although I don't know the details, there seems to be something wrong with the painting, 'a Heartless Death'. If you need it, take it with you.."

Chapter 558 - 558: Seeing Is Believing

Chapter 558: Seeing Is Believing

Selma Payne's POV:

"In fact, I have thought of buying it." I didn't deny it. This was exactly what I needed. "The market price of artworks is always fluctuating. I'll get someone to appraise them and quote you a reasonable price."

Emma waved her hand nonchalantly. "Don't say that. I don't paint for money. It's just a hobby to pass the time. Urgh, that sounds like a real joke."

She shuddered and continued, "Anyway, I said I'll give it to you. Just treat it as me bribing our new queen in advance. When I hold another art exhibition in the future, I'll announce to the audience that even the Queen's collection room has my paintings. Wouldn't followers surge over like floodwater then? So just accept it as a gift."

Emma winked playfully, waved at her friend who was calling her from afar and left.

"So, the problem is solved now," Aldrich said. "The painting will be sent to your bedroom tonight. We have a lot of time to study it. Now, be happy. Let's play with the children. I just saw Dorothy telling them the legends of each painting."

Night came.

Emma had someone send the painting to the palace during the day. The servants thought I ordered it, so they temporarily hung it in the living room.

No one slept tonight. We had searched through almost all the myths and legends related to the Moon Goddess in the royal library, but we couldn't find even the slightest bit of legend related to 'a Heartless Death'.

In all the legends, Moon Goddess was undoubtedly a virgin goddess. It was not that she or her incarnations did not have love legends, but none of them mentioned that the goddess had personally given birth to a child.

That was strange. If there were no records in the legends, how did the elder Emma speak to know about it?

The eastern sky was already bright. Looking at the room full of books, I felt tired from staying up late. My body, which hadn't had a wink of sleep for a night, finally issued a protest signal, strongly demanding that I quickly remove the fatigue that had accumulated over the past few months. Otherwise, it would go on strike.

The oil painting on the wall was facing me. I looked at it and then at the book in my hand. I felt more and more sleepy.

Unknowingly, the book in my hand seemed to close, but I didn't know if it was real or an illusion. My vision became increasingly blurry, and the figure in the oil painting gradually

turned into a block of color. The morning light shone on it, distorting it into a strange and dazzling color.

I felt my head drop, and I was about to fall asleep.

Aldrich was flipping through a book, and Dorothy whispered something to the werewolf grandmasters over the phone. Gradually, all of this left me. I was too tired. I had to sleep.

So sleepy...

"... Wake up, child."

Someone whispered something in my ear, but I didn't hear it. I just grumbled impatiently and then continued to sleep.

"Wake up, child..."

"He's here. You have to wake up..."

"Wake up, Selma..."

"Madeline..."

"-wake up!"

A serious female voice softly shouted in my ear. I quivered and suddenly woke up.

Looking around, I felt as if everything just happened was an illusion. I was lying on the soft bed in the bedroom. The sky outside the window was dimly lit, but no one was in the room. A few seconds later, I heard footsteps. The bedroom door opened, and Aldrich walked in.

He seemed visibly relieved to see me awake.

"You're finally awake, baby. You frightened me." He placed the tray on the bedside table and handed me a cup of hot cocoa. "Have some to warm yourself up. You haven't eaten for a whole day."

When I saw the hot cocoa, my hazy brain suddenly jolted awake. I asked, "Have you and Dorothy found any clues about the painting?"

Unexpectedly, Aldrich asked in surprise, “The painting? What painting? Have you bought any artwork? I don’t remember you asking me to find any clues about the painting before you fell asleep. As for Dorothy, I don’t know. Do you want me to ask?”

“All of you... You don’t know?” Aldrich wouldn’t joke about such things, which astonished me even more.

How was that possible? We went to the art exhibition together, heard Emma say she would give me that painting as a gift, and read the legends together for an entire night!

Out of the corner of my eye, I suddenly saw a few cards on the dressing table.

An ominous premonition gradually enveloped me. I immediately asked, “When did I fall asleep? How did Emma’s art exhibition go?”

Aldrich replied with lingering fear, “You scared me to death. Yesterday morning, we were about to set off when you suddenly fainted. My dear, I understand you’ve been under pressure recently, but your health is also very important. If you delay your meal because of work again, I’ll have to protest to His Majesty.”

“As for the art exhibition, I didn’t go yesterday, so I don’t know how it went. But I think it should have gone very smoothly. After all, Emma’s family and friends came on the first day.”

I felt like I’d fallen into an ice cave.

“Did you just say we didn’t attend the art exhibition yesterday?”

I jumped out of bed and ran to the living room without putting on my shoes. However, the scene that greeted my eyes made my hair stand on end.

There was nothing.

Nothing on the wall was supposed to be ‘a Heartless Death’..

Chapter 559 - 559: An Illusory Home

Chapter 559: An Illusory Home

Selma Payne’s POV:

How was this possible? Where did the painting go?

But no matter how carefully I searched, the wall was still empty.

Why?

“What happened, dear? Calm down.” Aldrich hugged me from behind, trying to calm my trembling, but the empty wall made me weak in the knees. Where had the day gone?

Was I in an illusion? Or was it all just a dream?

But what about the omen of that painting? Was it real? Or was it just a fantasy?

I had to confirm this with Aldrich, Dorothy, Emma, Mara, Avril, and everyone else, whether it was true or not-

However, when I turned around, the scene that greeted my eyes made me freeze in fear.

“What happened? Selma? Did you have a nightmare? Don’t worry, you can tell me.”

Aldrich was still trying to comfort me, but this only had the opposite effect.

My husband’s handsome face, which I was so familiar with, had disappeared. At this moment, his facial features were blank, like a flesh-colored egg, making one’s hair stand on end.

“No, no, no. No...”

I was sure I was either hallucinating or dreaming. Was this person really my husband?

What was this place? The palace?

I pushed Aldrich away and strode out of the suite, trying to find someone to confirm my guess. However, the corridor was eerily quiet under the broad daylight. I ran through the entire floor but didn’t see a single person. My parents, Dorothy, Kara, Bertha, and the servants were all gone. It was as if I was the only one left in the world.

I tried to go downstairs, but the stairs seemed endless. I couldn’t remember if I ran dozens or hundreds of floors. Even when my body, forged by a god, felt sore, I still couldn’t wait for that familiar gorgeous door frame.

This was not right.

I could only try to back up but smoothly returned to the starting floor.

There was still no one on this floor. The hot water kettle in the pantry was still steaming, and a pair of scissors was in the flower pot under the French window. It was as if someone was working and talking softly a second ago.

This was not the real world.

I thought.

A premonition drove me back to my 'room', where there was a way to leave, I was sure of it.

The room was so quiet that even Aldrich was gone.

I skimmed the empty wall and went straight back to the bedroom. On the bedside table, the cup of hot cocoa was still steaming. I picked up the cup, sniffed it, and took a sip. Sure enough, there was no smell.

I liked the taste of berries, so whenever I couldn't sleep at night or felt tired, Aldrich always gave me black berry tea.

"Who are you?" I looked around and asked loudly, "Stop hiding. I know you're here. You can't fool me."

The surroundings were quiet, and no one answered.

Suddenly, there was a sound in the living room. I ran out and realized that the living room had unknowingly changed.

An exquisite painting was hanging on the empty wall.

It was the Heartless Death.

I stared at the painting. None of the characters in the painting looked out of the painting, but everything seemed so ironic to me.

No matter who it was, this person was mocking my weakness.

"Don't be angry, little girl. It was just a prank."

A teasing male voice suddenly sounded in my ear. I turned around abruptly, but there was no one behind me.

"Where are you looking at? I'm here."

In the painting, the demon that was supposed to be hiding in the bushes suddenly turned its head. Its strange yellow pupils were like ice cones, making my hair stand on end.

I felt disbelief, fear, anger, and understanding.

“It’s you, Azazel.”

The demon in the painting gradually lost his skinny and ferocious appearance in people’s fantasies and turned into a handsome young man. However, that beautiful face didn’t give me a good feeling. It was this face that broke my heart in that snowy mountain that seemed never to welcome the dawn.

The moment I recognized Azazel, I understood. The reason this place felt unfamiliar to me was that everything was fake. It was just a fake space that Azazel had constructed, just like when he was in the snowy mountains.

At the same time, I realized this fact, the illusion began to collapse. Azazel laughed out loud, panting as if he had seen a great prank play out.

“You have figured it out! Haha, alright, I know this won’t stop you for too long. But it doesn’t matter, your keen senses satisfy me even more, my dear girl.”

The painting was also disintegrating. The slippery paint corroded the canvas and the wall like sulfuric acid, outlining a hideous hole in Moon Goddess and the man’s face.

The devil was melting along with the painting, but he still stared at me with malice.

“You’re very smart, child, just like your mother.”

“What did you say?” I growled. “Stay away from my mother!”

The demon laughed again. “But it doesn’t matter, my dear, the mystery is about to be revealed. After a few thousand years, the story will now see to its only ending – my dear daughter..”

Chapter 560 - 560: The Revival

Chapter 560: The Revival

Selma Payne’s POV:

The demon's words made me widen my eyes in shock.

What did he say? Daughter?

However, before I could ask anything, the crumbling illusion suddenly collapsed. My vision blurred, and I fainted.

When I woke up again, a loud noise woke me up.

I struggled to sit up and saw a very familiar bedroom. But I didn't dare to confirm it was real. The bedroom door was pushed open as I was about to verify it.

Aldrich ran in with a cup of black tea that emitted the sweet fragrance of berries and shouted anxiously, "Wake up, something happened to Selma..."

When he saw that I had woken up, his words got caught in his throat. At this moment, another loud noise came from outside the window. I subconsciously looked out and saw thick smoke rising from the distant horizon.

Now I was sure that this was the real world.

I immediately looked at Aldrich, who told me everything without asking. "We just received news that there was an explosion in the suburbs. The werewolf grandmaster detected a very strong aura of evil power there. The soldiers and paramedics are rushing over there now, but we're unsure if there are any casualties."

Looking at the rising smoke, a cold premonition gradually crept into my heart. It wasn't thick smoke but a concentrated evil power, just like I had seen in the elves' territory.

"Tell all soldiers and rescue personnel to retreat immediately. Do not come into contact with the black smoke!" I immediately replied, "That's not smoke from an explosion. Once you come into contact with it, you'll immediately become a mutants like those cultists!"

It was Azazel. I could guess the source of all the accidents.

It wasn't a dream, and Azazel didn't provoke me for no reason.

He was announcing his arrival.

Aldrich did not doubt my words and relayed my orders almost immediately.

I immediately put on my clothes and rushed out of the building. Downstairs, my parents were already gathered in front of the palace. My father seemed to want to go to the crime scene personally, but I stopped him.

"I'll go check on the situation. Father, you and Mother stay in the palace in case of accidents." I said. "It's not just any cult ritual or obscenity over there. It's... it's a great demon, Azazel. He's here, he's coming for me. I have to face this myself."

"No, Selma, don't go. It's too dangerous. The werewolf grandmasters will try to repel the demons, and the Moon Goddess will not allow the demons to cause trouble in her territory. As long as we wait, everything will pass."

However, we all knew that this was not the case. The werewolf grandmasters were powerless before the demons, and we didn't know when the Moon Goddess would arrive. My mother just didn't want me to die. When facing a supreme demon, it was hard to say if I was just an ordinary werewolf.

However, this was not the reason. I had to face all of this. From the moment I allowed the Evaria Family to linger on, it was destined that I had to put an end to everything personally.

I must resolve the feud between the Rocky Mountains and the mystery of my bloodline.

So I gently pushed her hand away, pretending not to see her tears.

My father looked into the distance and then shifted his gaze to me. After a while, he said in a low voice, "Be careful, Selma."

"We'll wait for you to come home."

Since the black fog would 'pollute' ordinary people, I had no choice but to choose helpers who could resist the mutation, such as my subordinates.

Usually, they didn't have much presence and just lived their days in their posts like ordinary people. However, when they were in danger, they would stand up and follow me without any complaints to resist the danger of their positions.

It made me feel touched and guilty – when did I ever pay them? Based on the relationship between master and kin, could I control their lives with peace of mind?

However, I was not allowed to be sentimental in times of crisis. I had to prepare for the next tough battle without any distractions.

The location of the explosion was in a cemetery in the suburbs, and it happened to be the family cemetery of the Evaria Family.

When I arrived, everything was a mess.

Even though I tried my best to be fast, the demons were recovering faster than me. Under the influence of evil forces, many evil creatures came into being. The corpses

sleeping under the ground quietly climbed out of their coffin, bared their fangs, brandished their claws, and prepared to tell the world about their boundless loneliness.

The suburbs did not mean that there was no one living there. A few scattered families were next to the cemetery, and they were the first to bear the brunt of the zombie tide. Even the sharp claws of the werewolves could not withstand the zombies. No matter how many wounds they had, the endless evil power would help the zombies recover.

By the time we arrived, people were already injured, and the evil energy even contaminated some, and they were on the verge of mutation.

I immediately had New Flow wrap and purify the mutated werewolves while I commanded the black gold moths to heal the wounded. However, the zombies didn't just cause superficial injuries. I had to use New Flow to absorb the evil power attached to their wounds to heal them.

However, purification required time. A few seconds was enough for the evil power to contaminate a wounded person, and I was in a terrible position.

I commanded my subordinates to fight against the zombies while purifying the evil power. It was inevitable that I felt that I couldn't be in two places at once..