

Wolfless 541

Chapter 541 The Return and the Moonlight

The news of Avery Band's return exploded across the internet in an instant.

AveryBand Returns, #AveryIsBack, and #AveryBandPublicityStunt all shot straight to the top of Twitter's trending list.

Facebook wasn't any quieter—longtime fans flooded the group page with comments like “My youth is back!”, often paired with grainy photos of those underground basement rehearsals from years ago. On the flip side, critics swarmed the comment sections, sneering: “Flip-flopping for clout? That's a new low”

The two sides clashed beneath nearly every post, and even the band's early obscure tracks were dragged back into the spotlight and mocked with fresh memes.

Eventually, Avery posted on his personal Instagram: “Thank you for the attention. We just needed some time to figure things out. Music is still the one thing we truly want to hold on to. Let's focus on the work and not waste energy on the noise.”

The accompanying photo was of the five of them rehearsing at the villa the night before—strings catching the light, faces relaxed. Unpolished but real.

The post helped calm things down. Fans slowly shifted from arguing to commenting, “Can't wait for the new album.”

Rather than hurting their reputation, the whole incident unexpectedly renewed public interest. Old footage of their basement shows resurfaced online, and their Spotify streams tripled overnight. Their popularity soared even higher than before.

Avery's first public appearance after returning was on a talk show, joined by the full band.

“There was a very cool ‘Don’ at your last concert,” the host asked with curiosity. “Will we be seeing him on stage again?”

Speculation had been swirling for weeks about the mysterious “Tess.”

“Tess will always be family,” Avery replied, casting a warm glance toward Tessa in the audience, hidden behind sunglasses. “But he prefers staying behind the scenes. Probably won’t be performing again.”

“That’s such a shame!” the host sighed dramatically. “That ‘Tess’ had cross–gender appeal! Even I wanted to be a fan!”

The crowd burst into laughter. In the audience, Tessa’s lips curved ever so slightly.

“One last question,” the host turned to Avery again. “The fans really want to know—do you have a girlfriend?”

Avery paused, then smiled calmly. “I do like someone. But... we probably won’t end up together.”

Her gaze swept across the front row and quietly landed on Landon—seated right beside Tessa. For a moment, a flicker of peace and acceptance passed through Avery’s eyes.

Landon met her look with a cool composure, fingers tightening around Tessa’s hand without a word.

After the recording wrapped up, Tessa rose to leave.

“Let’s go.” Landon gently smoothed back the strands of hair blown out of place by the wind. “The guys can

handle the rest of the interviews. The fans are calming down too. Give it some time—this whole thing will pass.”

Tessa nodded and walked out of the studio beside him.

The night breeze outside carried a faint chill. As Landon draped his coat over her shoulders, her phone buzzed in her hand.

She glanced at the caller ID and paused for a beat before answering, voice cool and steady. "Speak."

"Tessa, the Moonstone has arrived safely at Navoris Port. Should we bring it to you now?" The voice on the other end was brimming with triumphant excitement.

Tessa looked toward Landon, a subtle glint flashing in her eyes before quickly vanishing. "Deliver it to Wisteria Apartment. I'll inspect it myself."

Half an hour later, a discreet black SUV pulled up in front of Wisteria Apartment.

Two men in black suits carried a sleek silver-gray case into the elevator. When it hit the floor, it landed with a weighty thud, radiating the distinct chill of raw gemstone.

They gave Landon a quick glance, then turned to Tessa and spoke with well-practiced respect, just as instructed in their briefing. "Tessa, we risked our lives to retrieve this Moonstone. Its purity is 99.9%—exactly as requested."

The lead man unlatched the case. Inside, laid on a black velvet lining, the Moonstone shimmered under the ceiling light—an icy blue halo pulsing like trapped moonlight.

Tessa kept her excitement in check as she picked one up to examine. The surge of energy inside made her fingertips tingle.

Deep in her consciousness, Emma began leaping with excitement. It's the Moonstone! I can feel it! The moon energy is so pure! With this, we can finally break the blood pact!

Chapter 542 Breaking the Chain

Tessa tamped down the excitement in her chest and looked up at the two men, her tone steady, as if she were discussing nothing more than a simple transaction. "This time you've done well. Payment will be wired to the agreed account, with a bonus on top."

Surprise flashed in their eyes. They immediately bowed. "Thank you, Tessa."

Playing along with the act, they said no more and turned to leave.

"I'm going to put this away." Tessa gave Landon a quick nod, lifted the case, and strode into the bedroom, locking the door behind her – moving so fast she didn't even give Landon the chance to offer, "Let me carry that for you."

She set the case into the safe and twisted the hidden lock extra tight.

Only when she leaned against the door of the cabinet did her tightly wound shoulders collapse. Her palm pressed to her chest – her heart was pounding so hard it felt like it might burst free.

Finally... she had the Moonstone.

The blood pact that had tormented her for years – she was finally going to destroy it.

"Tessa! We really did it!" Emma trembled with excitement in her mind, her voice nearly choked with joy. "This Moonstone's lunar energy is strong enough to burn right through the brand of the blood pact! Once we break it, that shackle Nathan's had around you will be completely destroyed – no one will be able to manipulate you through the contract again, and you'll never have to worry about him tracking you down!"

She paused, then her tone ignited, blazing hot like fire. "After that, your blood will belong only to you... to Landon. You can let him mark you whenever you want nothing will be able to stop it anymore."

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Tessa's fingertips pressed against the cold metal door of the safe, but even the icy surface couldn't cool the heat burning through her hand.

Yes.

No more chains.

Once the blood pact was severed, she could stand openly by Landon's side. His scent could finally be woven completely into her blood. She'd never again have to fear someone using a contract to threaten or control

her.

That thought sprouted like a seed in her chest, bursting into life with a fierce joy that made even her - breathing feel feverishly hot.

"Tessa?" Landon's voice came from outside the door, followed by a soft knock.

Tessa took a deep breath, shoved down the heat rolling inside her, and when she opened the door, her expression was bright and composed. "All good. The Moonstone's safely stored."

"This Moonstone's lunar energy is so pure it practically burns to the touch. Strong enough to punch through three layers of energy shields," Landon said, studying her carefully. "The mines in Eclipse Valley have been protected by hidden wolf clans for a thousand years, Mining it is like breaking through a frozen tundra with your bare hands. Why go after such top-grade Moonstone?"

Tessa raised an eyebrow and played it cool. "What else? I'm bailing Xavier out."

She followed with a smooth explanation. "You know the Coldfang formation depends on the bloodline to

activate. Now that Avery's not inheriting the corps, the formation's power is way down. This Moonstone can purify and boost the energy flow just the thing Xavier needs to rebuild it. Consider it a thank-

you for letting Avery come back."

Landon's gaze flicked briefly toward the locked safe. He didn't press further. Instead, he stepped forward and tucked a strand of her hair behind her ear. "Want me to go with you?"

"No need. You've got enough on your plate." Tessa looked up at him, her eyes smiling. "It's just a delivery. I've got it."

Landon held her gaze for a moment, then nodded. "Alright. Be careful. Call me if anything happens.

"Okay." Tessa smiled and hugged him.

His warmth was comforting – but deep down, she knew this was something she had to face alone.

Once Landon left the bedroom, she turned back to the safe, her eyes darkening.

The Moonstone lay quietly in the hidden compartment, glowing faintly like a star waiting for dawn. In a few days, she would use the excuse of "scouting a new site for TS expansion" to go alone to a villa – one protected by an energy barrier she had laid herself.

She had secretly purchased it a month ago. Following the descriptions in the Wolf Codex, she and Emma

– one powerful enough to lock in all energy fluctuations. Not even Landon had constructed a Sealing Array would be able to sense anything through it.

Over the past few weeks, whenever she was away for class, she had quietly finished anchoring every part of the array needed to break the blood pact.

Tessa's fingertips slid across the keypad of the safe. A glint of resolve flashed in her eyes.

The wards, the formation, the Moonstone... everything was ready.

All she needed now was one full moon night

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with no interruptions.

Chapter 543 The Full Moon and the Lie

The days passed in their usual rhythm. Landon remained busy with business and pack affairs.

Tessa went to class as scheduled, occasionally bringing up the TS Entertainment expansion. She said she'd already found a plot of land in the suburbs and planned to sign the contract after the full moon.

Wolves were naturally sensitive to lunar shifts. Full moons brought the strongest energy surges, so using that timing made sense—not just as a cover story for “high energy equals good luck for signing,” but also because the blood pact ritual required that same lunar power.

“I’ll go with you,” Landon said as he stood, the edges of his fingers already glowing faintly with that cold light unique to awakened wolves—the full moon always made his instincts more alert, and the wolf within him restless.

Flex’s voice rumbled through his mind with low warning: “She’s hiding something. Her heartbeat is faster than usual, her scent’s laced with tension. I tried reaching Emma, but she’s ignoring me. They’re definitely keeping secrets.”

Tessa pressed her hand to his arm, her smile touched with helpless confidence. “It’s just a contract signing. I

can handle it.”

“But tonight’s the full moon. Rogues get agitated out in the woods—they might attack anything that moves...”

Tessa raised an eyebrow with a teasing smile. “Tch, I’ve awakened as a white wolf, remember? You think I’d get hurt by a bunch of Rogues?”

Still, Landon didn’t let go. His gaze darkened. “Why won’t you let me come? I won’t get in the way. I’ll just wait in the car.”

Flex growled low in his head: “She’s deliberately talking up her strength to put you at ease. But her aura doesn’t lie – that’s the resolve of someone heading into danger, not someone going to sign a damn lease.”

Tessa gently patted the back of his hand, adding a playful tilt to her voice. “Come on, I just wanted to surprise you. If you tag along, what kind of surprise is that?”

“Surprise?” Landon frowned. “Didn’t you say

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“Close enough.”

it was a contract?”

Breaking the blood pact, then forming a new one with him... that was a kind of contract, wasn’t it?

She saw the deep furrow in his brow and reached out to smooth it with her fingertips. “Be good. Don’t you have a Nightshade Pack meeting tonight? It’s almost time—you don’t want to be late.”

If not for the strict time constraint required by the unbinding ritual, she would’ve waited for him to leave for the meeting before sneaking off—just so he wouldn’t worry or grow suspicious.

Landon's Adam's apple shifted. He tried one last time. "You really can't just tell me what it is? Even a hint?"

It wasn't that he didn't trust her strength. But the unease inside him wrapped around his ribs like a vine, tight and relentless.

"I told you—it's a surprise." Tessa winked, a mischievous glint in her eye. "When I come back and tell you, I promise you'll say letting me go alone was the right call."

She deliberately

emphasized the words "right call, hoping to reassure him.

Landon stayed silent a few moments longer. Gradually, Flex's agitation settled. She wasn't wrong – her white wolf bloodline was powerful. Ordinary threats wouldn't touch her.

He leaned in and kissed her forehead, his fingertips brushing the top of her hair. "Keep your phone on. Check in every thirty minutes."

"Got it." Tessa smiled, hugged him tight, and grabbed her briefcase. "I'm off. Wait for good news.

Landon stood by the window, watching her car disappear into the night. His fingers whitened from how hard he gripped the frame.

Flex's voice came again: "Her aura shifted once she left the city. It's focused now. Intent. Like she's heading. into a ritual that's been planned for a long time."

Landon didn't respond. He pulled out his phone and opened their location sharing—something they'd set up jokingly before. The little glowing dot on the map crept steadily toward the forested outskirts.

He didn't chase after it.

She was a white wolf. A true alpha. She could handle herself

He had to trust her.

But the unease in his chest swelled like the ocean's tide beneath the full moon—relentless and hard to shake.

He opened their chat window, typed “If anything happens, call me,” paused, then deleted it. He replaced it with “Be safe,” stared at it for a long time, and only then hit send.

Chapter 544 Severed for Good

When Tessa drove out of the city, she finally allowed herself a deep breath. She quietly disabled the location-sharing function on her phone, then opened her private navigation app and switched the destination to the secret villa.

Thirty minutes later, the black sedan pulled into a concealed forest path. The villa lay hidden among the trees, with only a faint light glowing from a second-floor window—the nightlight she'd left on in advance, to illuminate the layout of the array.

As soon as she opened the villa's front door, a rush of air hit her—thick with the scent of cold iron and ancient wolf sigils. In the center of the living room, the Sealing Array shimmered silver under the moonlight, exactly as described in the Wolf Codex, a nine-grid formation inlaid with crushed wolf bone powder. At its core sat a shallow indentation—just large enough for the Moonstone.

“Are you ready?” Emma's voice echoed in her mind, carrying a thread of tension.

Tessa nodded and locked the door behind her. She stepped into the center of the array and sat down. From her document folder, she took out the Moonstone, its surface glowing ice-blue in the moonlight, weaving into the silver lines of the array like a living web...

“It's going to hurt,” Emma warned, her voice low and steady. “The lunar incantation will fight back. The silver ring will start burning, and then—”

“”

“I know. But no pain could be worse than what I felt when I was forced into that bond.” Tessa cut her off, her fingers brushing the silver ring. She’d worn it for five years. It felt like it had grown into her bone. The words forever yours etched inside were already branded into her flesh.

She placed the Moonstone into the core of the array and bit her fingertip, letting her blood drip onto the crystal.

The Moonstone instantly burst into blinding blue light. Energy surged along the array lines, filling the room and locking into place inside the Sealing Array. Tessa’s ring finger seared with white-hot pain, like a branding iron pressed into her bone. The silver ring pulsed with black light, clashing violently against the Moonstone’s glow—the lunar energy trying to purify the curse, the curse clawing back in its final death throes.

“Ugh...” A choked cry escaped her lips. Sweat beaded instantly on her forehead. The silver ring burned so intensely it felt like it was melting into her bone. The lunar incantation etched inside it stabbed upward like a thousand fine needles burrowing toward her heart—sharper than any blood pact flare—up she’d ever endured.

“Focus!” Emma shouted. “Let the Moonstone’s energy flow through your blood—use it to drown the incantation!”

Tessa clenched her teeth, forcing herself to lean into the icy-blue current. It was like glacial water, flooding through her veins, washing over every nerve. Wherever it touched, the black glow of the curse dimmed- but with every inch it faded, the backlash worsened. She could hear faint cracking sounds inside the ring- that was the resonance core Nathan had repaired with his own blood essence... now being annihilated.

She didn’t know how long it lasted.

When the Moonstone’s glow finally began to fade and the array’s silver light settled, the silver ring that had bound her for five years gave a sharp snap and split clean in two—then clinked to the floor.

Her ring finger was finally free. Only a pale indentation remained, as if nothing had ever been there at all

Tessa collapsed in the center of the array, drenched in cold sweat, her fingers still trembling. But when she looked down at the shattered ring on the floor, a laugh escaped her—shaky and breathless

, but full of relief

It was over. The chain Nathan had forced on her was finally broken.

At that exact moment, far away in Yalvaria, deep in the Frost Pack territory, Nathan stood before an altar.

Without warning, the blood-bond silver ring on his left ring finger slipped off and clattered against the icy

stone.

His pupils shrank. He instinctively reached out, but his fingers grasped at empty air.

Wolf howled in his mind, a raw, guttural panic like nothing he'd ever heard. "It's broken! The link with her is gone! The blood pact—it's been severed!"

Nathan's hands clenched, knuckles white.

He could feel it—viscerally, brutally—that soul chain that had connected them for five long years... ripped away like a lock torn loose, its last echo already gone.

"Tessa..." he whispered her name, voice wrapped in a tangle of emotions. "You really are... merciless."

Even the last thread between them—she'd severed it without hesitation.

Did she truly not feel even a shred of sentiment for what they once had?

Chapter 545 Burned Into Ashes

The full moon outside the window slowly dipped toward the west as the glow of the spirit-sealing array faded into nothing.

Tessa picked up the broken ring from the ground and tossed it straight into the metal basin where the charcoal still burned.

The flames crackled as they licked the silver shards, charring the engraved words – Forever Yours – until they turned pitch black. From now on, she was free.

Bracing herself on the floor, she stood up. Her legs were still a little weak, but she felt lighter all over. Without the suppression of the blood bond, even her breathing came easier.

“We did it,” Emma said with a smile in her voice. “The spell’s fully broken. The blood bond is gone. There won’t be a trace of Nathan left in your glands.”

Tessa walked to the window and pushed it open, letting the night wind flow in.

The air in the forest carried the fresh scent of grass and trees. Without the weight of the blood bond, even the moonlight felt freer.

She pulled out her phone and saw a message Landon had sent half an hour ago: “Still busy?”

Her fingers tapped a reply on the screen: “Almost done, heading back soon-”

As soon as it sent, she could almost picture the way Landon’s brows would finally relax when he read it.

Now, she could finally stand beside him without any burden. Let his mark be the only one etched into her blood.

Now, she could go home with him openly – meet his family, his people

– meet his family, his people – and let their relationship bask in the sunlight.

By the time the car rejoined the highway, the sky was already tinged with pale gray.

Tessa turned on the music and gazed at the mist drifting past the window. For the first time, it felt like sunlight really could reach every shadowy corner of her past.

When she returned to Wisteria Apartment, Landon was sitting on the couch in the living room, phone in hand, eyes bloodshot – clearly, he hadn't slept all night.

The moment he heard the door open, his head snapped up like a startled beast. In an instant, he crossed the room and grabbed her wrist. "You're back? Are you okay?"

Tessa saw the worry in his eyes, and warmth filled her chest. She turned her hand and held his tightly. "I'm fine. There's something I need to tell you."

She led him to the couch and held up her ring finger for him to see.

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Now, she could finally tell him the truth about the silver ring and the blood bond without holding anything back.

Landon's pupils contracted sharply. His fingertips brushed her ring finger – smooth to the touch, no longer blocked by that cold band of metal.

So that's what it was... He finally understood why she had never taken that silver ring off in the last five years why she always flinched when he touched it by accident...

"I'm sorry

I lied to you," she said softly. "I asked for the Wolf Codex and the Moonstone because I needed I burned it." them to break the blood bond. But it worked. It's done. The ring's gone

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Landon pulled her into his arms with such force it was as if he wanted to fuse her into his bones. His voice was hoarse and shaking. "Idiot... how could I ever blame you?"

He lowered his head, his scorching breath warming the crown of hers. "If anyone should apologize, it's me. I should've noticed something was wrong. I should've been there for you sooner."

His fingers traced the faint pale mark on her ring finger, their warmth making her tremble. "All these years.. did it hurt that much?"

He didn't even want to imagine the agony she endured under every full moon – how she gritted her teeth and survived it alone. Or how many silent wounds she'd hidden, dealing with it all by herself.

Back when he sensed she was hiding something, he should've pressed for answers. Instead, he stepped back again and again in the name of respect, letting her carry it alone.

The woman in his arms shook her head and buried her face in his chest. "It's all in the past

now."

"No, it's not," Landon cut her off, his voice resolute. "But you don't have to face it alone anymore."

His voice trembled. Even his fingers shook. "So that's why you didn't want to meet my family before... because of this?"

The thought of all the times she hesitated at the mention of meeting his parents made his heart clench like it was being squeezed.

Chapter 546 A Worthy Name

Tessa nodded, eyes misting. "I didn't want to meet them with someone else's mark still on me. And I didn't want your family to know I'd once been tied to another man like that... But it's over now. It's all behind me→

"Over?" Landon suddenly shot to his feet, the pressure in the room dropping as his rage surged. The ferocity of the wolf clan radiated from him, barely restrained. "After everything he did to you, you think it just ends here?"

Even Flex was thrashing violently in his mind. "Landon, let's go to Yalvaria right now and tear Nathan apart!"

"Landon!" Tessa grabbed his arm and shook her head firmly. "Don't go. If you do, you'll only spark a war between our clans. He's not worth it."

"Not worth it?" Landon turned toward her, the red in his eyes still v

He made you suffer for five years

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Tessa stood on tiptoe and pressed her hand to his tense jaw, forcing him to look at her. "I know how much you care. But there's no need. For me, breaking the blood bond was enough. He doesn't deserve a single piece of my life anymore."

She smiled softly, her fingertips brushing the corner of his eye. "If you started a war over him, or got yourself hurt... that's the only thing that would make me truly angry."

Besides, if there was revenge to be taken she would take it herself.

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Now that the bond was gone, there was nothing holding her back anymore.

Landon stayed silent for a long time. Gradually, the hostility around him faded, though his jaw remained clenched tight.

He said nothing, but the frost in his eyes said everything detail.

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he wouldn't forget. He'd remember every last

Tessa knew he hadn't truly let it go, but she didn't push further. Instead, she changed the subject and swayed his hand in hers. "So, can I finally meet your family now? Grandpa's been wanting to meet them for ages."

Landon's expression softened. He gently rubbed her ring finger, his voice low. "Give me a little more time. My dad... still needs some convincing."

His father was a traditional Alpha, always wary of white wolves. To him the hierarchy of the clan – and a threat to order.

white wolves were unruly

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outside

Landon couldn't let his father treat her with suspicion because of her bloodline, and he definitely would let her suffer a single slight.

dub

"What kind of girls does he like?" Tessa asked curiously.

Landon lowered his head and kissed the top of hers, voice steady and certain. "Doesn't matter what he likes. I only like you."

Tessa broke into a smile, the last traces of gloom finally lifting from her heart.

That's right as long as he liked her, what else really mattered?

In the end, they settled on meeting Landon's father next Saturday at noon.

When Walter found out, he immediately called Tessa back to the Sinclair family home.

The old man rummaged through his camphorwood chest and pulled out a silver-gray dress. The hem was embroidered with the exclusive Frostmoon Pack totema

erent moon set into a wolf's head

in silver thread by the pack's most skilled embroiderer over the course of three months.

crafted

“Tessa, try this on,” he said, handing her the dress, a subtle nervousness in his tone. “We’re not as powerful as the Nightshade Pack. We don’t have much, but we can’t lose face either.”

Tessa ran her fingers over the totem, the silver threads cold to the touch. “Grandpa, what are you doing? You’re making it sound like we’re going to war.”

“This is more important than war,” he sighed and pulled her to sit beside him. “The Nightshade Pack is the backbone of Montedra’s wolf clans. Landon’s father is notoriously domineering. To them, we Frostmoon wolves might not even be worth mentioning... But listen – even if his father gives you a hard time, you hold your head high.”

. He gripped her hand tight, knuckles turning white. “You’re the pride of the Frostmoon Pack. You’re an awakened white wolf. You’re not anyone’s subordinate. And if they really make things hard for you, we won’t marry into them. I’ll take care of you myself.”

“Grandpa...” Tessa’s nose stung. She didn’t need anyone to take care of her anymore, but her grandfather’s stubborn love never failed to move her.

“I understand. Don’t worry – I won’t shame the Frostmoon Pack.”

Walter looked at her, eyes red now too. “I just worry that you’re too good at holding things in. That you’d suffer in silence to keep others from worrying. But remember – if the sky falls, I’ll hold it up for you. If it comes to that, we’ll throw everything we have at them. But I won’t let anyone disgrace you.”

Chapter 547 The Ultimatum

Meanwhile, Landon returned to the main estate of the Nightshade Pack.

Inside the council chamber, Darren sat silently, staring at an old scroll of clan laws. When he heard footsteps, he didn’t even look up. “You finally decided to come back?”

Landon walked straight up to him and got to the point. “Next Saturday, I’m bringing my fated mate to meet you.”

Darren finally raised his eyes, wolf irises sharp and appraising. "Fated mate? Since when do you have a fated mate? You're not trying to pull a fast one, are you?"

Landon let out a soft laugh. "I've gone all these years without a partner. If I wanted to fool you, I would've done it long ago. Let me be clear my wolf only responds to her. My blood only reacts to her. She's the one. My future mate, and the future Luna of the Nightshade Pack"

Darren set the scroll down, his fingers tapping the table. "Where's she from? Which pack? What can she do?"

"Frostmoon Pack. Her name's Tessa." Landon didn't mention—her white wolf bloodline, worried it would raise red flags. "She's strong—runs several companies on her own. Sharp mind, sharp instincts. She's every bit the equal of any Alpha."

Darren arched a brow. "Frostmoon Pack? That fading little clan?"

"Dad." Landon's tone cooled. "Their pack doesn't matter. What matters is her. She's worthy of me- and of being Luna of the Nightshade Pack."

"You're bold," Darren said, rising to his feet and looking down at him. "The Luna of this pack must be approved by the Council of Elders. It's not up to you alone."

"I'll handle the council." Landon didn't flinch. "I didn't come here to ask permission. I came to inform you. Next Saturday at noon, I'm bringing her. If you accept her, great – everyone's happy. If you don't..."

He paused, eyes turning cold and resolute, like the tundra in winter. "Then I'll walk away with her. I'll give up my claim to the Nightshade Pack inheritance – all of it."

"You dare?" Darren's dominance burst out instantly, making the flames in the chamber's candles flicker violently. "You'd destroy the Nightshade Pack's legacy over some unknown female wolf?"

“She’s not some unknown. She’s my fated mate.” Landon met his father’s pressure head-on, his words clipped and firm. “The Nightshade Pack can survive without me. But I can’t survive without her.”

At that moment, Landon’s sister, Rebecca, walked in with a tray of tea – and right into the tension between father and son. She rushed to break it up. “Dad, Landon, come on. Can’t we talk about this calmly? Landon, couldn’t you try discussing this without starting a war?”

“Dad, don’t be angry,” Rebecca said, pushing a teacup toward Darren. “Landon’s wolf is an ancient obsidian shadow wolf. If the Moon Goddess gave him a fated mate, how could she be weak? And come on- Landon’s standards, do you really think he’d fall for someone ordinary?”

with

She smiled playfully. “You’ll meet her next Saturday. Who knows – you might like her even more than he does.”

Darren snorted but didn’t respond. Still, he didn’t outright refuse.

Landon took that as a silent agreement and gave a small nod. “Then I’ll bring her at noon next

Saturday

With that, he turned and walked out, his back straight like a pine tree that would never bend.

Rebecca watched him go and sighed. “Dad, look at that stubborn streak. But honestly, I’ve met Tessa. She’s great. Can’t you go easy on her, just for Landon’s sake?”

Among the Thorne family, Rebecca had always been closest to Landon.

That’s why, when Landon and Tessa realized they were fated mates, Rebecca was the first person he told

With Tessa's permission, Landon had arranged for them to meet – and from the moment Rebecca met her, she'd taken a liking to her. The girl had not only a kind heart, but had even cured her years-long insomnia on the spot.

Darren took a sip of tea, his expression unreadable. "We'll see when the time comes."

He was curious now. Just what kind of woman could make Landon willing to give up everything?

Chapter 548 The Calm Before the Storm

Landon had arranged the meeting at Silvermoon Estate.

The estate was heavily guarded and impossible for outsiders to enter, offering the perfect privacy for the kind of calm, honest conversation this occasion demanded.

Ysabel, more nervous than Tessa herself, clutched her hand tightly and whispered again and again, "Tessa, seriously, there's no need to be nervous! My dad might be strict with my uncle and the others, but he actually responds better to softness than to defiance. Just speak normally – he'll be able to see how amazing you are."

"I know," Tessa replied with a smile, patting the back of her hand. "I'm not nervous."

"I knew it! You're the best!" Ysabel's eyes lit up. "Dad's definitely going to like you – you're my uncle's fated mate, after all!"

Tessa only smiled again, keeping the comment tucked silently in the back of her mind.

"By the way, how are things going with Nathaniel?"

Ever since Nathaniel had confessed his feelings, Ysabel had come to terms with her own and officially entered a relationship with him.

She was practically glowing with happiness every day.

At the mention of his name, a blush crept up Ysabel's cheeks, and she grew a little shy. "He's been really sweet... Honestly, I used to be kind of mean to him. I was just too slow to realize he liked me for so long."

"It's fine to be a little slow," Tessa said, ruffling her hair. "You're at the perfect age to fall in love. Everything's right on time."

"Yeah!" Ysabel nodded enthusiastically, then suddenly remembered something. "Anyway, you should finish getting ready. My uncle said it's almost time to go."

Meanwhile, at Navoris Airport-

Nathan and Grant stepped off the plane, both heavily disguised.

Grant glanced nervously around, sweat beading in his palms. "Alpha, this is Landon's territory. Nightshade Pack's eyes are everywhere here. You can't afford to be reckless."

Nathan's fingers idly toyed with a snake coiled around his wrist. Clearly venomous.

-

pure white, tongue flicking cri

He stroked the scales casually, voice ice cold. "You're too noisy, Grant. If you're scared, go back to Yalvaria, No one's stopping you."

"I'm your beta. I go where you go," Grant said through clenched teeth. "But don't forget -Tessa broke the blood bond! That ring is shattered. She has no ties to you anymore. Even if you drag her back, she'll never accept you!"

At the mention of the broken bond, blood-red fury-flashed in Nathan's eyes His grip on the snake tightened until it hissed in pain.

"No ties?" he echoed softly, his tone laced with venomous rage. "Anyone I set my sights on stays

by my side

even if I have to tear out her soul. The blood bond is gone? Then I'll use chains. Use forbidden spells. Break her legs if I have to but she's staying with me."

"Alpha!" Grant's voice cracked in panic. "She orchestrated the ambush on the Icefield Pack feelings left for you! You're chasing a ghost!"

she has no

"Silence!" Nathan's head snapped up, claws unsheathing in a gleam of cold steel. "Say another word and I'll rip out your throat!"

Grant saw the madness in his eyes and knew nothing he said would change the outcome. But he had to try. "We already tried to kill Landon once with a puppet attack. He'll never let us off. Coming to Navoris now is suicide! Even if you don't care about your own safety at least think about the Icefield Pack!"

Slash-

—

Nathan's wolf claws tore across Grant's face without mercy, leaving three deep gashes down to the bone. Blood streamed from his jawline.

Still, Grant stood firm, trembling but defiant. "Alpha, please — wake up! Tessa will never go with never would!"

–

you.

She

Nathan stared coldly at his bleeding face, then barked to his men behind him, “Drag him out. I don’t want to see that eyesore again.”

They moved quickly, seizing Grant as he struggled, shouting, “Alpha! You’ll regret this!”

Nathan didn’t look back. Instead, he turned to the white snake in his hand and chuckled eerily. His voice dripped with madness. “Tessa, I’m coming for you. And this time... no one will stop us.”

Sunlight streamed through the airport windows, but it couldn’t chase the shadow from his eyes.

He was like a cornered beast with nothing left to lose – ready to leap into the abyss and drag his prey down

with him.

Chapter 549 First Impressions

On the way to Silvermoon Estate, Tessa received a message from Lina.

“Phantom, didn’t you ask me to keep tracking this guy? He’s come to Montedra—he’s in Navoris right now!

rare for Phantom to ask her to do anything, so Lina had taken the task very seriously.

“Yeah, I know.”

Tessa frowned.

She had expected Nathan to be unwilling to let go after she broke the Bloodbond, but she didn't think he'd show up so quickly.

It had been less than four months since Frost Pack was attacked by Glacier Pack. Instead of staying busy rebuilding his pack, he had the time and energy to come to Navoris looking for her.

Hah. Some “responsible” alpha he was.

“Need me to do anything?” Lina knew exactly how difficult Nathan was to deal with and cared a lot about Phantom's plans.

“Don't do anything. Just keep tracking him. But make sure you stay safe—don't act rashly.”

“Relax, tracking is what I do best.”

Tessa reminded her again, “Seriously, just track him. Nothing else. You're no match for him—don't take any risks.”

“Got it, I won't do anything stupid,” Lina promised.

Seeing Tessa staring at her phone with a tense expression, Landon took her hand and asked, “What's wrong? You look upset. Are you nervous?”

“Not really.”

Nervous?

It was just meeting Landon's family—it wasn't that big of a deal. She only cared because he mattered to her. She wanted his father to like her so Landon wouldn't be put in a difficult position.

Landon wrapped his large hand around hers. "Didn't I tell you? You're with me. You don't have to win anyone else over. It's enough that I like you."

What other people thought really didn't matter.

With a thoughtful and caring boyfriend like him, Tessa felt safe. "I know."

She knew—he would do anything for her.

When they arrived at Silvermoon Estate, Darren was already waiting in a private room. Rebecca sat beside him.

"Do you know what time it is? Why aren't they here yet?" Darren said sternly. "Showing up late on a first meeting—they clearly don't respect me."

"Dad, what's the rush? They're not even late—it's just that you got here early," Rebecca frowned. "Do you have a problem with Landon's girlfriend?"

If he did, that would be a problem.

Darren didn't say anything, which pretty much confirmed it.

"Dad, you haven't even met her—why don't you like her already? Did someone tell you something?"

"Dad, Tessa is Landon's fated mate. She's the one he's chosen. Don't go too far with this, or it won't end well."

“Rebecca, you really think that girl’s good enough?” Darren let out a cold snort. “Landon’s the alpha of the Nightshade Pack. His Luna needs to be someone who can support him—not some helpless girl who always needs protecting. Otherwise, she’ll just drag him down.”

“Tessa isn’t the type to cling to a man. She’s independent and more than capable of leading the pack alongside Landon,” Rebecca said firmly. “I haven’t seen her wolf form or her strength with my own eyes, but if Landon’s obsidian shadow wolf recognizes her as his fated mate, how could she possibly be weak?”

“Hmph.” Darren neither agreed nor disagreed.

The Sinclair family?

But in Navoris, which pack’s Sinclair family was actually worth mentioning?

Just then, Landon walked in with Tessa.

The moment the girl entered the room, Darren recognized her—she was the one who had brought Landon coffee at Thorne Corp last time. Even then, he had thought she didn’t look like a simple coffee runner. Her looks and aura were both remarkable.

“Hello, I’m Tessa. It’s nice to meet you.”

“This isn’t our first time meeting, is it?” Darren’s tone was neutral.

Chapter 550 Cold Reception

Tessa knew he was referring to that time at Thorne Corp and acknowledged it gracefully. “I’m sorry. I didn’t know better last time—I should’ve greeted you.”

Seeing how open and straightforward she was, Darren let it go. If he pushed any further, Landon might just turn around and walk out with her.

“Your name’s Tessa, right? Which Sinclair family are you from?”

“The Sinclair family of Frostmoon Pack. My grandfather is Walter.” There was unmistakable pride in her voice when she mentioned her grandfather.

Darren’s brow twitched ever so slightly.

He’d heard that name before.

Five years ago, when the wolves fought against the vampire invasion, Walter had indeed taken the front lines and earned several military honors.

He gave a noncommittal “Oh,” his eyes unreadable.

Walter had been powerful in his prime, but the Sinclair family of Frostmoon Pack had long since declined -each generation weaker than the last. As one of Walter’s descendants, what outstanding qualities could Tessa possibly have?

He studied her with no change in expression, his fingers subconsciously rubbing the wolfbone ring on his hand.

Strange. He couldn’t sense even the faintest ripple of wolf energy from her.

Is she a low-tier omega?

In his mind, Darren’s first impression of Tessa had already taken a hit.

But Tessa had long known from Landon that Darren feared and distrusted “unbound” white wolves. He believed that their bloodline disrupted the order of the pack.

So the moment she entered the room, she had deliberately restrained her white wolf aura, suppressing even the most subtle fluctuations of power.

She didn’t want to be dismissed the moment she walked in just because of her bloodline—she believed in her own strength and wanted to earn respect on merit.

Even if Darren never came to accept her, it didn’t matter.

What she wanted was never the approval of the Thorne family—but Landon himself. As long as he stood with her, nothing else mattered.

Since he no longer held out hope for her combat ability, Darren could only explore other strengths. “I heard you just started college. Which school are you attending?”

“Med Uni and Navoris University.”

“What?” Darren actually showed a hint of surprise. “You’re attending two elite schools at the same time?”

“Dad, you didn’t know?” Rebecca chimed in with a grin. “After she enrolled in Med Uni, the

presidents of both Navoris University and Mulch University personally tried to recruit her!”

She looked incredibly proud just bringing it up.

Darren responded with a noncommittal “Hmm.”

Managing two elite schools at once—clearly smart. But in the wolf world, brains never outweighed strength and pack resources.

He went on to ask some questions about Frostmoon Pack and the Sinclair family. Tessa answered them all calmly and confidently.

That kind of composure, at least, met his expectations for a daughter-in-law.

Unfortunately, her background and power were still too weak—far from worthy of Landon.

But Tessa was sharp. She could clearly see the distance in his eyes. Out of respect for him as Landon's father, she kept her politeness and didn't say much.

After dinner, Tessa offered the gift she had prepared. Darren didn't even lift an eyelid—he just set it aside.

Landon was deeply dissatisfied with his father's behavior, but given the setting, he kept his temper in check. Silently, he tightened his grip on Tessa's hand—to let her know that no matter what, he was on her side. Other people's opinions didn't matter.

Tessa responded with a calming smile.

She was no longer who she used to be. After everything she'd been through, she had long since learned to remain calm in the face of honor or disgrace.

Darren, to his credit, still had some sense of decorum. Even if he was displeased, he didn't say anything overtly harsh. The dinner wasn't exactly pleasant, but it hadn't turned hostile either.

Still, seeing Landon constantly serve food to Tessa while barely eating himself made Darren frown.

If this kept up, that once decisive, razor-sharp son of his would be dulled beyond recognition.

How could someone who couldn't even manage his own meals—who only had eyes for a woman—ever lead the Nightshade Pack? How could he hold his ground as the Alpha King of Montedra and keep the restless packs in check?