

Wolfless 581

Chapter 581 All That Remains

“I’ll keep a close eye on Samuel,” Rosa said with a bright spark in her eyes. “You go rest, Tessa! If there’s any reaction to the antidote, I’ll notify you right away.”

Working alongside Tessa on something this monumental had completely reshaped Rosa’s view of medicine.

Tessa hesitated for a second, then nodded.

No matter how powerful her white wolf bloodline made her, the sleepless days were finally catching up. Rest wasn’t a luxury anymore—it was a necessity to keep going.

Before heading to rest, she stopped by Samuel’s room.

Inside, the S+ ranked werewolf was idly tugging at his IV line. When he saw her enter, his eyes lit up. “Is that my savior?”

“The antidote’s ready,” Tessa said, settling into the chair beside him, her voice tinged with exhaustion. “Rosa will monitor your reactions.”

Samuel noted the paleness in her cheeks and, for once, turned serious. “You look worse than I do, and I’m the one with a virus trying to tear apart my DNA.”

He understood how durable the ancient white wolf bloodline was—but if even she looked like this, the last few days must’ve been hell.

“When you recover, you’re buying me dinner. Three months.” Tessa arched an eyebrow, trying to keep the mood light.

“No problem. I’ll even throw in my heart and soul,” Samuel replied with a smirk—then quickly backtracked at her warning glare. “Kidding! Kidding. I know better than to provoke Landon’s jealous streak.”

He paused. “Any word from him? About Stephen?”

“Nothing yet.” Her fingers twitched slightly. Rationally, she trusted him—but her heart couldn’t fully relax.

Samuel waved it off. “Relax. That guy’s tough as hell. He’s the Alpha King of Montedra for a reason—e. every inch of it with pure combat skill. There’s barely a handful in the world who could lay a scratch on him.”

His confidence calmed her. The tension in her chest eased.

“Stay put,” she said as she stood. “Don’t make Rosa chase you around.”

Tessa returned to the temporary rest room. The moment her head touched the pillow, she slipped into unconsciousness.

She didn’t know how long she’d slept, but a faint shift in the air stirred her awake.

There it was—that familiar scent of pine.

Tessa’s eyes snapped open.

At the window stood a tall figure, backlit by soft sunlight.

“You’re awake?” Landon turned to face her. His combat uniform still carried the sharp, acrid trace of gunpowder—but his eyes were gentle, unbearably warm.

In an instant, she was fully awake. She bolted from the bed and threw herself into his arms, only then realizing her hands were trembling.

Even the mightiest bloodline couldn't guard against the sheer relief of seeing the one she loved standing in front of her, safe.

"You're really here?" she mumbled into his neck. "Is it over?"

"Mm." Landon pulled her closer, fingers sliding through her hair. "Stephen and his secretary are in custody. Soon as we landed, I came straight to you."

She smelled like lilies—her natural scent, faintly mixed with disinfectant. Her exhaustion was clear in her body's weight against his. His chest ached just holding her.

"I missed you," Tessa whispered—and before he could reply, she kissed him.

Every ounce of worry, every hour of pressure, melted into that kiss.

And Landon? He'd been waiting far too long.

His arms tightened around her, hand cradling the back of her head as he deepened the kiss, turning her gentle press into a searing embrace. Her lily scent tangled with the smoke on his clothes, filling the room with a heat that had nothing to do with medicine.

He kissed her as if trying to make up for every second they'd spent apart.

Only when their breath ran thin did he pull back, forehead against hers, voice hoarse.

"Stephen and his secretary are locked up in Montedra. With them in custody, we'll be able to tear down the rest of the operation behind this virus."

Tessa traced the stubble on his jaw, her fingertips trembling slightly. “You couldn’t have waited until I finished my research? You knew how dangerous Yalvaria is—Nathan’s base of power...”

“If I waited any longer, you would’ve collapsed.” Landon caught her hand and pressed it over his head. “I didn’t have to risk everything to handle them.”

His thumb brushed over her cheek, lingering. “But you—you’re not invincible, even with that bloodline. You look pale as snow.”

“I’m fine,” she murmured with a tired smile. “The antidote’s done. If clinical trials go well, we can begin mass production next week.”

Landon smiled faintly, but his hand never left hers.

She’d saved a nation.

He’d destroyed a regime.

And now, finally, they could breathe. Even if only for a moment.

Chapter 582 The Prisoner’s Last Bluff

“My girl is so incredible,” Landon murmured, pressing a kiss to the crown of Tessa’s head. His voice held pride—but also a deep undercurrent of worry. “But I’d rather you didn’t have to be. I just want you safe?”

He had never claimed to be a selfless man. In his world, her safety would always matter more than saving the world.

Tessa noticed the red in his eyes and gave him a gentle shove. “You came straight from Yalvaria, didn’t you? Landed and ran straight here?”

“Mhm.” Landon didn’t deny it. He scooped her up in his arms and carried her to the narrow bed in the break room. “I wanted to see you first.”

The small hospital bed left no space between them. Pressed together so closely, he could feel every breath she took against his neck. Exhaustion ebbed from his limbs under her touch, but being this close—after so long—set his nerves humming again.

“Go to sleep.” His hand stroked slow, calming circles on her back, voice tender and quiet.

Tessa nestled deeper into his arms, nose brushing his collarbone. “You haven’t slept either.”

Landon let out a quiet laugh in the dark and turned, pulling her tighter against him.

His lips brushed against hers almost by accident—and that single touch lit a fuse between them. Their breaths tangled, quickened. He gave her one more kiss, slow and restrained, before pulling back.

“If I stay any longer, neither of us is getting any sleep.”

Tessa only let out a muffled “Mhm” against his chest, her face burning.

Landon lingered for a long moment, holding her close before he finally let go. “Call me if anything happens. I won’t be far.”

Only after the door clicked shut did Tessa curl up, breathing in the lingering scent of pine on the sheets— and fall into deep, peaceful sleep.

The next morning, freshly showered and dressed, Tessa returned to the research center to meet Micha

The newly formulated antidote showed promising results—but a small residual side effect remained. “Honestly, it’s already negligible,” Rosa said, scanning the data on the monitor. Her voice was tinged with awe. “Most top-tier teams can’t even reach this level.”

“Not enough,” Tessa said firmly, pointing at a subtle gene fluctuation on the screen. “Even a minor side effect like this could cause latent damage to the werewolf gene chain. It needs further refinement.”

With millions at stake, there could be no compromises.

Michael nodded in agreement. “Rosa, stay here and continue monitoring the trial group’s vitals.”

Then he turned to Tessa. “Come with me. We’re going to see Stephen.”

Outside, Ethan was already waiting beside a military jeep—one of the elite members who’d returned to

Montedra with Landon.

When he saw them approach, he jumped down and opened the doors.

“Mr. Michael, ma’am,” he said respectfully. Now that Michael was operating on Montedra soil, Ethan’s job was to ensure his safety at all costs.

Michael climbed in. Tessa followed.

They were driven into a highly fortified military base. Deep inside, Stephen was locked inside a reinforced isolation cell.

When he saw Michael enter, he lunged for the bars, eyes bloodshot with rage. “Traitor! You think moving the medical institute to Montedra means you’ve won? As long as I live, I’ll never let you succeed!”

Michael only scoffed. “Still so arrogant for a man behind bars. When you unleashed a genetic virus on civilians, did you think this day wouldn’t come?”

Stephen’s gaze slid to Tessa—and then locked on Landon, who stepped in behind her.

His tone suddenly turned slick. “Michael, we’re both from Yalvaria! Help me get rid of Landon, and I’ll make you the permanent head of the medical organization. You’ll have absolute power.”

Michael didn’t even bother replying. He turned to Landon. “Alpha, what’s the plan?”

Landon had just ended a video call with the Montedra Council. Now, he walked up to the cell, eyes like sharpened ice.

“Stephen, do you really think silence will save you? Waiting for Yalvaria to swoop in and rescue you?” He tapped the metal bars with his finger, voice cold. “Or are you hoping Montedra will get desperate enough to beg you for the antidote?”

Stephen’s flinch was almost imperceptible—but it was there. The jab had landed.

He sneered, stiff-necked. “You won’t get a single word out of me. The core data for Project Z is known only to me. Once the virus fully spirals out of control, you’ll come crawling.”

But the look in Landon’s eyes said it all.

As soon as Stephen’s threats fell, one of the Montedra military officers standing beside Landon let out a cold laugh. “Dream on. You think our unity is as fragile as your power games? In Montedra, every citizen—from scientists to the people on the streets—is fighting tooth and claw to stop this virus. You don’t get to scream from a cage and pretend you’re still important.

Tessa ignored the prisoner’s ranting. Calmly, she retrieved a transparent vial from her portable cold case and stepped toward the cell.

Stephen’s composure cracked. He lunged for the bars, panicked. “What are you doing?!”

“If you’re so confident in the virus you created,” Tessa said evenly, her tone utterly tranquil, “why not test it on yourself?”

Before he could react, the syringe was already in her hand. With a clean, practiced push, the needle sank into his arm.

Cold serum flowed into his veins. Stephen’s eyes flew wide.

“You-! How dare-” He tried to charge forward-

Landon’s boot slammed into his chest, launching him into the back wall of the cell.

Without a word, Landon stepped forward again, planting his polished shoe squarely on Stephen’s hand. A sharp crack followed by a scream cut through the cell as bone gave way.

“You think you can touch her?” Landon’s voice was frigid. “If you’re so fond of spreading viruses, then you can enjoy the result yourself.”

Stephen shook, trembling from the pain, but his eyes still burned with venom. “You’ll regret this... The moment I die, my backup copy of the Z Project will auto-upload to the Yalvaria Council. Montedra’s going to burn.”

“Oh?” Tessa lifted a small USB stick between two fingers. “You mean this backup? The one hidden in the Council’s server? We cracked it last night.”

Stephen’s face went chalk-white.

The military officer gave Tessa a look of unhidden admiration. “Ms. Tessa, I heard you’ve completed the antidote. This entire nation owes you a debt.”

“I only did my part,” she replied, slipping the syringe away. Everyone’s worked for this. I’m just one of many.”

“Let’s go.”

Landon’s fingers closed around hers as he gently led her out of the cell block.

Behind them, Michael looked at the crumpled figure on the floor and shook his head. “Blind to the end.”

Stephen’s cries turned into muffled sobs.

He finally understood: he had lost from the beginning.

He had lost to Montedra’s unity. He had lost to Tessa’s brilliance. He had lost to Landon’s unshakable will.

Chapter 583 The End of the Game

As they exited

the military base, Landon finally broke the silence. “Tessa... is there any way you can step away from the lab, even briefly?”

Her steps halted. She turned to him sharply, panic flickering in her eyes. “Why? What happened?”

Her voice trembled. There was only one reason Landon would bring this up—one person.

Her grandfather.

Landon’s silence was answer enough.

Michael sighed. “Go see him, Tessa. I’ll take care of the remaining adjustments to the antidote. I promise.”

Landon took her hand. It was cold and trembling. “No matter what happens,” he said softly, “I’ll be right there.”

Tessa’s fingers curled against his palm. She had known—deep down—for days. But knowing didn’t make it hurt any less. Her voice was barely a whisper. “Okay.”

They didn’t speak again. The drive was long, but heavy with unspoken emotions.

When the car stopped in front of the hospital, Tessa sat frozen at the bottom of the steps, staring at the glass doors ahead. Her feet felt like they were made of lead.

Landon stood behind her and gently pressed a hand to her back. “Come on,” he said quietly. “He’s been waiting a long time.”

He knew: the only reason the old man was still breathing was because he wanted to see his granddaughter one last time.

Sunlight streamed over their clasped hands, silent but steady, as if trying to lend them strength.

Tessa inhaled deeply.

Landon brought Tessa to Mr. Walter’s hospital room. Inside, Yardley and the others were already gathered. They weren’t there out of filial piety.

They were there because they were afraid that if the old man passed, he might leave them nothing. So they waited, hoping their presence would earn them a share—anything—just not everything going to Tessa.

They didn’t trust her.

The moment she arrived, Yardley jumped to his feet.

“Tessa, where the hell have you been?” he barked, feigning righteous anger. “Do you know how long your grandfather’s been waiting for you? He loves you the most—he’s on his deathbed, and you show up just now?”

Every word was an accusation, dripping with false

He didn’t care where she’d been.

He only cared about the inheritance.

Tessa gave him a single glance.

Just one look—and Yardley was instantly silenced.

But then Winona stepped forward.

concern.

“He’s right, isn’t he? Dad’s always loved you most. But now you’ve screwed up, and no one’s allowed to say a word to you?”

Landon’s brow creased in disgust.

The Sinclair family was truly nauseating.

If not for the promise he’d made to Mr. Walter to leave them untouched, he’d have thrown them out already. Even hearing their voices was exhausting.

Lila quickly chimed in too.

“Tessa, your grandfather loves you the most. Go talk to him. He’s only still breathing because he’s waiting to see you.”

Tessa clenched her fists.

So it really was time. There was no saving him now.

Inside the room, Louis heard the commotion and stepped out. The moment he saw her, his eyes reddened.

“Ms. Tessa

, thank God you’re back. Go on in. He’s been waiting just for you.”

At that, Tessa no longer spared a glance at the other three. She brushed past them toward the door.

Yardley tried to follow—but Landon’s guards blocked him.

Chapter 584 Final Goodbye”

Frustrated, Yardley turned to Landon. “Alpha, I know we’ve overstepped, but this is a family matter. We just want to see him one last time. Isn’t that reasonable.

Hands in his pockets, Landon cut him off coldly.

“He wants to see Tessa. That’s it. So shut your mouth. I don’t care for your noise.”

Just a look from him, laced with the pressure of an alpha’s presence, and Yardley backed down without another word.

Not long after, Ysabel arrived—tears brimming in her eyes. She had rushed here as soon as she heard Tessa had returned.

She knew how much Tessa cared for Mr. Walter. Now that he was like this, she had to be here for her.

When she and Nathaniel reached the hospital, they found Landon waiting outside alone. That meant Tessa had already gone in.

“Can she handle this?” Ysabel asked, clearly distraught. “How could you let her go in there alone? She must be devastated—she shouldn’t have to go through that by herself.”

She wasn’t afraid of her uncle anymore. Not when she was this worried.

Landon exhaled deeply. “She and the old man are saying their final goodbye. No one else can be part of that.”

He couldn’t breathe just thinking about how much pain she was in.

If he could take her sorrow and carry it for her, he would—but some things couldn’t be shared.

And that was what made it all the more agonizing.

Ysabel wiped her eyes, trembling. She couldn’t even imagine the pain Tessa must be going through.

She wanted to be there with her.

But she couldn’t.

This was a moment only grandfather and granddaughter could share,

Nathaniel pulled her close, wrapping an arm around her shoulder.

“Don’t cry. Tessa still has us—her friends. She’s not alone, okay?”

At least, she still had them beside her.

Hudson and Cameron arrived soon after, their expressions solemn.

They all knew Mr. Walter had been holding on just to see Tessa.

Now that she was here, the old man was finally ready to let go.

Chapter 585 The Final Breath

Inside the hospital room, Tessa sat silently at her grandfather’s bedside. He lay unconscious, and she kept telling herself he was only sleeping—that he would wake up soon, and everything would be okay.

It was the only way she could breathe.

No one knew how long had passed when the old man finally opened his eyes. The moment he saw Tessa sitting beside him, a faint smile formed on his lips.

He tried to lift his hand, but he had no strength left.

“Tessa...”

He wanted to speak, but not a sound came out.

Tessa understood instantly and grasped his hand tightly.

“Grandpa, I’m here. I came back. I’ll stay with you,” she whispered with a trembling smile at the corners of her eyes.

She couldn’t cry. Not now. If she cried, he would only feel worse.

“Are you in pain? Where does it hurt?” Her voice cracked with worry. He must have been holding on, suffering, just to wait for her. And now, finally seeing her, he could let go.

His tired eyes were full of unspoken words, but he could only look at her—gaze fixed, almost greedy. If there was another life to live, he wanted to be her grandfather again. And in that life, he would protect her better, never let her suffer.

Tessa saw the effort in his eyes.

His

gaze

drifted toward the cabinet nearby. She followed his line of sight, opened the drawer, and found an envelope inside.

A letter.

From him.

She opened it with trembling hands, and as she read it, her tears finally came, She sobbed uncontrollably, her face hidden behind the letter.

Hearing her cry, Landon stepped inside. He found her crumpled in a chair, crying like a child. Without hesitation, he pulled her into his arms.

“Tessa, don’t cry,” he murmured, holding her close. “Grandpa wouldn’t want you to be like this. You’ve got to be strong now.”

Seeing her fall apart like this tore his heart to shreds. But some things in life couldn’t be avoided.

Not even Michael could save him. No one could.

Seeing how carefully Landon was holding Tessa, Mr. Walter relaxed a little. At least now, he could let go

knowing she was in good hands.

“He just wanted to see you one last time. He’s in pain now. Maybe it’s time we...” Landon didn’t finish the

sentence, but Tessa understood.

Remove the oxygen tube.

Spare him the agony.

“I’ll do it,” Landon offered gently, not wanting her to carry this pain.

But Tessa shook her head.

She stood up, looked into her grandfather’s eyes.

“If there’s a next life, I’ll find you,” she said, voice cracking. “I’ll be your granddaughter again. And next time, I’ll behave. I won’t make you worry.”

The old man smiled—a soft, peaceful smile.

He had no doubts. His Tessa was strong. She'd survive. Especially now that Landon was by her side.

Louis and the others quietly entered the room. Louis cried so hard he nearly collapsed—Nathaniel had to steady him.

Even Yardley cried. No matter how strict his father had been, he knew it had all been for his own good. And now, that anchor in his life was gone. No one left to rely on. No one left to protect him.

"I'm sorry, Dad," Yardley whispered through tears. "I've been such a disappointment. If there's a next life, I promise I'll be better."

Lila stood beside him, silently crying.

Winona, on the other hand, was emotionless, her face blank. It was like none of this had anything to do with her. She stood as if she were only a spectator, a stranger to the moment.

And why not?

The old man had always loved Tessa most. Now that Tessa was here, her presence was irrelevant.

She didn't need to cry. She didn't need to feel anything.

That was her place in the Sinclair family. Always on the outside looking in.

The old man swept his gaze slowly across the room.

So many had come to say goodbye.

But he didn't cry.

He only gave a faint nod of acknowledgment, content.

And then-

With trembling hands, Tessa reached for the oxygen tube.

She did it herself.

Her hands shook violently, but she still did it.

Chapter 586 Until We Meet Again

“Grandpa... see you in the next life,” Tessa choked out, her voice trembling with every word.

Now, all she could do was hope there really was such a thing as another life.

Mr. Walter’s eyes slowly closed for the last time.

He had so many ties to this world, so many things he still cared about—but in the end, none of them could hold him back.

He was gone.

What followed was the funeral.

Landon took care of everything. Every arrangement, every decision—he handled it all alone.

Tessa hardly spoke.

Ysabel never left her side. She knew how much Tessa was hurting, but there was nothing she could do to ease the pain.

“Tessa... please, eat something,” Ysabel pleaded gently.

Seeing her like this brought tears to Ysabel’s eyes.

But Tessa only shook her head.

“Don’t worry about me,” she said quietly. “I just... need a little more time.”

She wasn’t lying.

She knew what she needed to do. She knew she had to get up, to face it all. But for now, her grief had its grip on her heart, and it wouldn’t let go. All she wanted was to give her grandfather the farewell he deserved.

But it hurt—more than she ever thought it would.

“Just eat a little,” Ysabel tried again. “If you go on like this, your body won’t hold up. Mr. Walter wouldn’t want to see you like this, right?”

“Ysabel... please go. I just want a little more time with my grandpa.”

They were alone in what had been Mr. Walter’s room. Everyone else was busy with the preparations.

Ysabel wanted to say more—but the look in Tessa’s eyes stopped her.

She stepped outside without another word.

Nathaniel was waiting.

Seeing her come out, he wrapped an arm around her shoulders. He could guess how bad things were inside.

“We can’t do much,” he murmured. “But we can stay by her side. That’s all that matters right now. Don’t overthink it.”

“Nathaniel, I feel so useless, Ysabel whispered, voice breaking. “Tessa has done so much for me. And now

seeing her like this... I can’t do a single thing to help her.”

“You’re already doing a lot,” he said softly. “Tessa just needs time. You think someone like her can just turn her emotions off?”

“I know.”

But knowing didn’t stop the worry.

Tessa stayed in her grandfather’s room for a long time.

She only left when the entire funeral setup was complete—and from that moment on, she stood there in silence.

Winona watched her from a distance, a mocking smile playing on her lips.

So the cold-hearted Tessa could be this fragile, huh?

Or was it all just an act? Maybe she was performing for the crowd.

“Winona, go pay your respects,” Lila whispered, glancing nervously at the guests arriving. “Standing here like this—it’s not appropriate.”

Mr. Walter was gone now. No matter what tensions existed before, they should fade away with him. That was how things were supposed to be.

“Mom, are you serious?” Winona snapped. “My leg hurts. I can’t stand around over there.”

“Winona! You can’t act like this,” Lila hissed. “There are so many relatives coming. If they see you like this, you can kiss your chances of inheriting anything from Sinclair Corporation goodbye.”

“Mom, can you stop being so naive?” Winona sneered. “You really think if I walk over there, Tessa’s just going to hand me shares of Sinclair Corporation? Do you even know her at all?” ‘

Lila frowned.

“She’s still your grandfather. You could at least show some respect.”

“He never treated me like his granddaughter,” Winona replied coldly. “So why should I pretend now?”

She crossed her arms. “Do whatever you want. But don’t expect me to play along.”

Chapter 587 Homecoming

Yardley had heard everything she said. He stormed over and slapped her across the face.

“You heartless b*tch! Your grandfather just passed, and you’re still saying crap like that? Do you even have a conscience?”

Everyone else was drowning in grief.

Only she was still hung up on that nonsense.

Truly disgraceful.

Winona clutched her face. There were still other people around, and Yardley had actually slapped her in public.

Winona had always been someone who cared deeply about saving face.

The slap hit more than just skin—her tears immediately began to fall.

“You’re all the same. What, I’m not part of the Sinclair family too? Fine! If none of you want to see me, I’ll leave!” she cried and ran off.

Lila watched her go, worried something might happen to her. She wanted to follow, but Yardley grabbed her hand.

“Where do you think you’re going? There are guests here. You should be staying to greet them!”

“But Winona just ran off like that. I’m worried something might happen to her.”

“What could possibly happen? Don’t tell me you still haven’t seen it. She only ever thinks about herself. Selfish to the core. People like her never get into real trouble,” Yardley said bitterly, the disappointment in

his voice unmistakable.

If he’d known things would turn out like this, he would’ve treated Tessa better from the start.

Who would've thought the daughter they all looked down on would become so powerful—and even end up being Alpha Landon's fated mate?

Lila looked like she still wanted to argue, but when members of the Frostmoon Pack came over to pay their respects to Walter, she put on a calm face and pretended nothing had happened.

Tessa had been there the entire time—over two hours now. Once Landon finished handling the funeral arrangements, he came to sit with her.

He didn't say much. There was nothing to say. Words wouldn't comfort anyone right now. Just being there with her was enough.

Nathaniel was helping organize everything. With him and the others taking care of things, the funeral went smoothly.

When evening came, Tessa insisted on keeping vigil beside Walter's body. This was the only time she'd have left with him—there was no way she was going to let that go.

And Landon stayed with her the entire time.

She barely touched any food that night. Watching her like this tore at his heart.

Hudson and his group stayed with them too.

No one left.

Except for Yardley and Lila—they couldn't take it and went back to sleep. In the Sinclair family, it seemed Tessa was the only one who truly felt things deeply...

The next morning, everyone got in their cars and followed the hearse to the crematorium.

This had been Walter's final wish—wolves are born of nature and must return to the earth. Cremation, to him, was the purest return to nature.

Louis showed up too, dressed in a black suit that made him look even older than before.

Old friends of Walter arrived one by one. When they saw Louis, the men embraced and wept.

“Walter spent his life doing good... How did he leave us so suddenly...”

Louis wiped his face, his voice raspy. “He went peacefully. He said he was happy he got to see Tessa again before the end. He had no regrets.”

Everyone stood silently as Walter's body was pushed into the cremator. When it came out, all that remained was a box of ashes.

Tessa held the box close, her fingers brushing across the rough wooden surface. Her eyes stung, but she forced a smile.

“Grandpa... we're going home.”

Everyone around her had red eyes.

This elder who once dominated the werewolf world had, in the end, chosen the simplest farewell for his final journey.

Chapter 588 A Promise Fulfilled

At last, everything for the old man's funeral had been settled. One by one, mourners stepped forward to lay flowers at the grave. Just then, a light rain began to fall. Nathaniel quickly arranged for several hundred black umbrellas to be brought in and distributed among the guests. Landon opened one and held it over Tessa the entire time.

Staring at the photo on the gravestone, Landon made a silent vow in his heart: Grandpa, don't worry. As long as I live, I'll protect her with everything I have. No

one will ever hurt her. It was a promise he would lifetime.

carry for a

Even after the guests had all left, Tessa remained at the gravesite. Landon, Nathaniel, Hudson, Cameron, Ysabel—and even Landon's second sister, Rebecca—stayed with her. No one had the heart to let her face this moment alone.

"Grandpa, I should go now," Tessa said, her voice hoarse but steady. "You're here alone... you have to take care of yourself. I'll look after Louis. I won't let him suffer."

She paused, then gently stroked the cold stone. "And Montedra—you always worried about it. I'll protect it, I promise. Look at your granddaughter... not bad, right?"

"I'll be okay. Let's go," she turned to the others, forcing a smile. "You're all exhausted. Don't worry about me."

Ysabel grabbed her hand. "Tessa, let me stay with you for a few days."

Tessa ruffled her hair. "No need. I still have a lot to take care of."

Rebecca stepped up and reminded her gently, "If you need anything, call me. Don't carry it all alone."

"Thanks, Rebecca."

Landon looked around. "It's getting late. Everyone should head back and get some rest." They'd been taking turns watching over things for two days now and were beyond exhausted.

Ysabel looked like she still wanted to argue, but Nathaniel pulled her aside. "Uncle's here. She'll be fine." Only then did she nod and follow the others away.

In the car, Tessa closed her eyes for a quick nap. Tomorrow, she had to return to the research center to wrap up everything. No matter how heavy her heart felt, life had to move forward.

Landon didn't take her back to her apartment. Instead, he brought her to his villa—there were servants there, and he'd feel better knowing she was being

dred for. Tessa didn't argue. When he scooped her into his arms, she simply wrapped her arms around his neck and buried her face in his chest.

Inside the bedroom, Landon asked gently, "Want to take a bath? I'll run the water."

Tessa looked up at him, her eyes still tinged with red. "Landon, I'm okay. I just haven't recovered yet."

"I know," he said, sitting down beside her and pulling her into his arms. "But Grandpa would want you to be

strong, wouldn't he?"

She leaned into his chest without replying. She understood all the logic in the world—but the ache in her heart wasn't something she could simply reason away.

"Take a bath, eat something, then get some sleep," Landon urged her gently, his voice soft as silk.

"Okay" For once, she didn't argue..

After her bath, dinner was ready. Landon sat with her while she ate. She barely touched her food, but he didn't push her. That night, he lay beside her, holding her close, his hand gently patting her back, as if soothing a wounded creature.

In the darkness, Tessa curled into his chest, finally finding a sliver of peace.

With him there, even the hardest things seemed possible.

The next morning, Tessa woke up early.

Knowing she had to go to the hospital, Landon got ready quickly and drove her to the research center.

As soon as they arrived, they overheard nurses whispering that something had happened to Samuel: Tessa's heart dropped.

She rushed to his room—only to find Michael trying to resuscitate him.

She immediately jumped in to help. After a quick exam, she discovered the cause: Samuel had pushed himself too hard trying to analyze the residual gene virus data and collapsed from exhaustion.

Looking at his pale face, Tessa was both furious and worried. “Why the hell are you pushing yourself like this? You think we can't handle it? Or are you just in a rush to recover so you can wreck yourself faster?”

The antidote had been completed, but the virus wasn't fully cleared from his body. Overexertion would only worsen the side effects.

Samuel woke to the sound of her scolding and quickly tried to explain. “I would never doubt you or Master. I just... wanted to help more...” He hadn't expected his once-strong body—one that had endured high-intensity training and rapid healing—to feel this weak.

Michael removed his stethoscope, frowning deeply. “The virus's side effects are more stubborn than we thought. If someone like Samuel, with top-tier healing, can't handle it, ordinary infected people will be in serious trouble.”

Tessa nodded, her expression heavy. The infection had already spread too far. If they couldn't eliminate the side effects completely, the consequences would be disastrous.

Chapter 589 The Master's Apprentice

"Master, let's head to the lab," Tessa said firmly, turning to Michael with a tone that left no room for argument.

Michael froze for a second—then it hit him. She'd called him "Master." That one word sent a jolt through him. "You... you're really acknowledging me as your master?"

He'd waited so long for this. That one word had taken years to hear.

Off to the side, Samuel chimed in, sounding just a bit sour. "Master, don't you think that's a bit of a double standard? You sure weren't that excited when I apprenticed under you."

"How can that be the same?" Michael shot him a look. "Your junior's talent is top-tier across the entire medical world!"

Samuel immediately put on a grin. "Yeah, yeah, my junior is the best. So.... how about calling me 'Senior' once, just for fun?"

Tessa glanced at him, completely ignoring the remark, and turned back to Michael. "Let's go. No time to waste."

After the two of them left, Samuel lay in bed, feeling a little left out. He'd clearly been the first to take Michael as a teacher—so why did he suddenly feel like the outsider? Still, the idea of having such a badass junior sister made him smile again.

With her in his corner, maybe Landon wouldn't be so quick to push him around anymore.

That evening, when Landon arrived at the hospital, Tessa was still busy sorting through lab data. Seeing him walk in, she frowned. "Landon, didn't I tell you not to come? There's still viral residue here, and you've got so much on your plate already."

He walked over and wrapped his arms around her waist from behind, resting his chin on the top of her head. "No matter how busy I am, there's always time to see you." He lowered his head and kissed her ear gently. "I had Hudson leak evidence to Yalvaria's opposition party about Stephen embezzling military funds. Parliament's a mess right now, too busy fighting among themselves to bother us."

It was a clean move—ruin Stephen's reputation while keeping tensions between the two countries from escalating.

Tessa turned around and brushed the dark circles under his eyes. "Everything's taken care of?"

"Yeah, don't worry." Landon took her hand—only to find her fingers ice-cold. "Why are your hands freezing?" He picked her up and carried her to the cot in the break room. "Sit tight."

He opened the thermal container, and a rich aroma filled the room—it was Rebecca's nourishing spirit broth, a classic werewolf remedy for restoring strength.

"My sister heard you've been busy and grieving. She made this just for you," Landon said, scooping up a spoonful and holding it to her lips. "Come on, open up."

"I can feed myself." Tessa reached for the spoon, but he gently held her hand down.

"Let me do it, just this once," he said softly. "You've been through so much lately... Let me take care of you"

Seeing the red veins in his tired eyes, Tessa didn't argue. She opened her mouth and took the spoonful obediently. The broth was warm and comforting, spreading through her like a quiet hug.

"You drink some too," she said, taking the spoon from him and offering him a bite. "You haven't rested properly either."

Landon chuckled and took the bite. They continued like that, sharing spoonfuls back and forth. Moonlight streamed in through the window, casting a gentle glow over the rising steam—it made even the air shimmer with warmth.

“When all this is over, let’s go to the sea,” Landon said suddenly. “Just the two of us.”

Tessa nodded, a smile finally reaching her eyes. “Okay.”

She wasn’t fragile—but being cherished like this, it didn’t feel so hard to lean on someone.

After finishing the soup, Tessa let out a yawn. Her eyelids were starting to droop.

She was never the type to doze off easily, but the past few days had been a whirlwind of research and grief. Now that she could relax, exhaustion hit her all at once.

Landon watched her blinking sleepily and couldn’t help but smile.

Even just sitting with her like this made everything feel grounded. He reached out and brushed her bangs away. “Close your eyes for a bit. I’ll be right here.”

Tessa shook her head, her arms winding around his neck, practically climbing into his lap. “You should go home. It’s way more comfortable there.”

She knew he still had a mountain of work waiting. Even if Stephen had been temporarily silenced, the diplomatic mess that followed would take every ounce of care to navigate.

Chapter 590 A Place You Deserve

“I’ll stay with you a little longer,” Landon said, brushing his nose gently against hers. “Our Tessa is amazing. Just a few more days and you’ll have the side effects completely solved, right?”

“Three days, tops,” Tessa said with quiet certainty, placing a kiss on the corner of his lips. “After that, we’ll be done for good.”

“Alright. I’ll be waiting.” Landon pulled a light blanket over her and only left once she’d drifted off to sleep, her breathing slow and steady.

Just as Tessa had promised, three days later, the lab delivered good news—after countless rounds of fine-tuning, the antidote’s side effects had been reduced to nearly nothing. Normal patients could now take it with no significant impact on their bodily functions.

Rosa, who had stuck by Tessa’s side every step of the way, couldn’t hold back her excitement any longer. She threw her arms around her and jumped up. “Tessa! You’re incredible! How can someone like you even exist?!”

Back when this started, plenty of people in the hospital had their doubts. A college student leading a gene- virus project? Impossible, they said. But now, the results spoke louder than words—and slapped every naysayer square in the face.

Michael stood nearby, his expression full of unfiltered pride. “Beautifully done.”

Anyone who’d worked with him knew how hard it was to earn praise from the medical legend, yet his admiration now was sincere. To decode such a complex gene sequence—Tessa’s talent was nothing short of a miracle.

Tessa patted Rosa’s back, her eyes warm. “You’ve pulled your share of all-nighters too. You’ve worked hard.”

She’d seen it all—Rosa burning the midnight oil beside her, giving it everything she had.

Rosa’s eyes welled with tears at the recognition. “It was worth it! Every bit of it!”

She'd been running on high-strung nerves for days, and now, with the pressure finally off, it all came rushing out. "Tessa... thank you. Being with you made me realize I'm capable of more than I ever thought."

There was a time she'd doubted if medicine was the right path for her. This experience had given her a new sense of purpose.

Tessa turned to Michael. "Master, isn't the International Werewolf Medical Association short on talent? Rosa's qualified to join."

This wasn't favoritism. Rosa had more than earned the recommendation.

"The International Werewolf Medical Association?" Rosa froze.

It was the dream of every aspiring medical professional. She'd never dared to even consider it.

Michael studied her, remembering her relentless drive and sharp focus over the past few weeks. At last, he nodded and extended his hand. "Miss Rosa, welcome to the International Werewolf Medical Association."

Rosa quickly wiped her sweaty palms on her lab coat and reached out hesitantly. "I... Can I really?"

"Of course." Tessa wrapped an arm around her shoulders, smiling softly. "You've earned it."

With the final phase of the project in Michael and Rosa's hands, and Samuel's recovery well underway thanks to the new treatment and his own strong healing factor, Tessa could finally step back.

She packed her things and told Michael, "Master, I'll leave the rest to you. I'm still just a student. Camping out in the hospital lab all the time isn't exactly normal."

"You've done more than enough. Leave it to us now."

When Tessa returned to campus, the early autumn breeze was sweeping golden ginkgo leaves down the tree-lined paths.

She had changed back into a plain white T-shirt and jeans, her long hair tied into a ponytail. Walking among the other students, no one would have guessed that she was the unsung hero who'd pulled countless lives back from the brink. The government had kept her identity classified, crediting the victory to an international medical team. Only a select few in the inner circle knew the truth.

That afternoon, with no classes scheduled, Landon's car waited outside her dorm.

"My dad wants to take you to dinner," he said, opening the door for her, a hint of tension in his voice.

Tessa paused. "Is this his way of resuming my trial?"

The viral outbreak had cut her original test short—she'd never had the chance to complete the challenges Landon's father had planned.

"No, just dinner," Landon said, taking her hand. "He wants to apologize in person. Last time, at that family dinner... he was out of line."