

Chapter 681 Planning for ceremonies

The second day with witches passed quickly.

Other than talking with Evanora and Axel about portal use, Talia and Damon strolled through the area, and Damon got to see the Silver Flame fountain in person.

Damon observed the statue that depicted a female and a wolf standing next to each other while reaching up to the skies. The silvery flame danced where the female's hand and wolf's paw connected.

Damon was familiar with the scene because Talia shared her memories with him, and he thought how it was strange since this was obviously his first time here, yet he had a feeling of familiarity, like a *déjà vu*. It was from the time when he didn't feel the bond, and he left her behind. She came here, desperate to find a cure for his condition, and he just left.

"What's going on?" Talia asked Damon when she noticed that his mood was off.

His smile didn't reach his eyes which were full of sadness. The memory Talia shared with him about this place was with Yasmin and Axel having their ceremony as mates, and Damon had so many regrets about it.

"You've been through so much because of me, without me," he said.

Talia hugged him and buried her face into his chest. She loved that his arms moved around her naturally, but... "You need to stop doing this to yourself, Damon."

Damon tightened his hold on her and buried his face in her hair, but he didn't respond.

Talia thought that she was prone to depression, but the more time she spent with Damon, the more she realized how hard he was on himself.

Part of her was glad that she got to see this vulnerable side of Damon. That was only for her to see, but she also wanted to make it better. She could fight off enemies and punish anyone who talks smack about Damon, but how can she fight his inner demons?

"We are together now, and that's what it counts.", she said.

Damon knew she was right, but he still felt guilty. Will he ever be able to make it up to her? He was determined to spend the rest of his life trying.

He lifted his head to meet her gaze and promised, "I will give you the best Luna ceremony ever."

Talia poked his chest with her index finger. "Who needs a flashy ceremony? Even if you get the most popular band and cover everything in gold and shiny jewels, do you think that will be enough?"

Damon's eyebrows shoot up. She wanted more than that? He was ready! "What will be enough?" He would hear her wishes and give her more than that.

Talia grinned. "A lifetime with you."

Damon looked at her helplessly. He was ready to agree to whatever she wanted, yet she only wanted him.

She was Natalia Moonrider, the Alpha of the Midnight Guardians pack, with an ancient wolf for her spirit. Many knew her as Talia, her friends called her Lia, but only Damon was aware of how fantastic she was. Talia was his mate, his kitten, his everything. She was modest, and he loved it, but he wanted to dote on her and spoil her rotten because only when she was happy due to something he did, the ghosts from the past would shrink.

"You already have me, kitten. All my days are yours." He licked his lips nervously. "About your Luna ceremony..."

"Don't let us interrupt you," Evanora's melodious voice came from the side.

Talia and Damon both looked in that direction to see Evanora and two more witches approaching them.

"We are here to finalize details related to tonight's ceremonies in the fountain.", Evanora explained.

"We thought of waiting for your moment to end, so we don't spoil it, but it didn't seem you will move on anytime soon, and we have time constraints."

"We understand," Talia responded.

Damon wondered if Talia realized that she leaned into him and that her hold on him tightened. It was a silent claim on him, and she did it every time unknown witches were in the visual range.

"What are you planning for?", Talia asked.

"Mated couples will go when the moon is high. We have Amelia's and Cornelia's union to celebrate. As for Yasmin and Axel, we will do their ceremony at dawn. Blessings to new life are the best when done at the moment a new day is born..."

Talia thought how that was fantastic. Everyone gets blessings, but she wanted one also. She waited for Evanora to finish her speech before asking, "About that... Do you think that Damon and I can participate?"

"As a mated couple, do you want to go separately or together with others?", Evanora responded with a question.

Talia was pleasantly surprised that Evanora agreed so easily. "We can? Really?"

Evanora cocked an eyebrow at her. "Without you opening the portal, none of the ceremonies planned for tonight would be possible. Besides, you reignited the flames of our fountain. How can I refuse?"

Talia looked eagerly at Damon. "What do you think?"

Damon looked at the silly woman who reignited his whole life. "Any is fine."

"You heard my mate.", Talia said to Evanora. "Any is fine, so we will leave it up to you."

Seeing that Evanora was in the mood to fulfill requests, Talia asked, "Can we talk about what's needed to create a new portal?"

Evanora's expression stiffened. "Let's talk about it some other day."

Talia took that as a 'no'.

Talia didn't get it. Every talk they had so far was fine, but on a few occasions when Talia mentioned creating a new portal, Evanora would dodge the topic.

Talia made sure they were aware of the convenience to have a portal connecting the Silver Flame Coven with the Dark Howlers pack. Amelia was mated to Liam, and a direct portal would allow Amelia to visit her sisters anytime she wants while avoiding the hassle (and exposure) by going through the portal that connects to the Midnight Guardians pack territory.

Talia wanted to use the favor Evanora owed her so that they create the portal, but how can she bring up that favor if Evanora doesn't want to talk about it at all?

"Mother!" Yasmin called breathily while running toward them.

Evanora's eyes flashed with fierce disapproval. "What's wrong with you!? Why can't you walk slowly? What will happen if you trip? Even if you don't think about yourself, think about your children!"

"Sorry, sorry," Yasmin said with haste.

Two witches shrunk when Evanora snapped, but Yasmin smiled brightly. Yasmin saw this as her mother's concern. Evanora never coddled Yasmin, but Yasmin knew that under that harsh tone, Evanora meant well.

"I heard that you are planning the union ceremonies, and I didn't want to miss it.", Yasmin said.

Evanora gestured toward Talia and Damon. "Talia and her mate want to participate."

"Oh, good!" Yasmin exclaimed. She was a ball of energy. "With that, we will have three couples. Let's make every ceremony unique, just how they are..." It was obvious that Yasmin had something on her mind.

Damon put his arm around Talia's shoulders and pulled slightly so that she would move with him. "Let's go back to our room. We should rest because we have a long night ahead of us."

Chapter 682 Dodging a beneficial proposal

Talia and Damon reached their room, each immersed in their own thoughts.

Talia plopped on the bed and stared at the ceiling.

Damon laid next to her sideways and propped his head on his elbow. He loved observing her in silence, but he knew that she had many things going on in her head.

Talia turned to look at him. "Why is Evanora avoiding to talk about a new portal?"

"If you noticed, why are you persistent?"

"She is dodging to discuss a proposal that's obviously beneficial for both sides. I want to know why."

Damon would love to know why also, but... "Sometimes we need to accept the rejection without understanding the reasons of the other side."

Talia puffed her cheeks in annoyance. Was Damon siding with the moody witch? No, that was not the case.

Or did Evanora want to swindle another shady deal? That was a possibility.

Talia would be fine letting it go if it was not important.

"New portal would be much more than just connecting us with witches. We could make portals in Max's territory and Cristian's."

Damon chuckled. His mate had big plans. "You don't need to convince me, kitten. But don't make it sound like we are paralyzed without portals. Didn't you say that if it's within the same realm, we could use teleportation magic that requires only a diagram and a few chants?"

Well, he was right about it, but... "For teleportation magic, we also need a witch. If we have portals, anyone could use them."

"Maybe that's the problem."

Talia didn't get it. "What do you mean?"

"I'm just guessing here, but hear me out," Damon started with a disclaimer. "Evanora might be reluctant to get another portal opened because she fears what might come out of it. Yasmin is mated to Axel, so that gives Evanora a sense of security that the Midnight Guardians pack won't turn hostile. At the same time, the Midnight Guardians pack is a filter for outsiders who are forced to pass through there because it's the only way to reach witches. You see another portal as a convenient way to travel, but Evanora sees it as Pandora's box."

Talia needed a moment to process Damon's words. "We can use that."

"We can?"

"Just as the Midnight Guardians pack won't be hostile because Yasmin and Axel are mates, the Silver Flame Coven is now connected to the Dark Howlers pack. Amelia and Liam are mates, and with the portal placed in the territory of the Dark Howlers pack, we will definitely secure it."

Damon didn't want to break Talia's optimistic bubble, but he had to.

"Don't dismiss the fact that Yasmin and Amelia are not the same. Yasmin is Evanora's daughter, and Axel is high in the hierarchy of the Midnight Guardians pack with only one above him." Damon gave Talia a knowing look. "On the other side, Liam is just a guard, while Amelia is just a witch."

"You want to say that Liam and Amelia are disposable."

"I know you see everyone like a family, kitten, but you need to accept that not everyone is the same. When Evanora is weighing her options, she is thinking from her point of view, and I can't say that I disagree."

Talia couldn't believe this. "If we are responsible for endangering witches, Amelia won't approve, which means that Liam won't either. Will you really put them in such a bad situation where they need to pick a side?"

"Not if I could help it, but..." Damon's voice trailed when he realized that Talia was frowning at him. He loved that she wanted everyone to be happy, but he needed to remind her how that was not always an option. "What if someone is keeping me as a hostage in exchange for access to the portal? What would you do if you receive my severed finger? You can't ignore that the Midnight Guardians pack is in a realm of its own, while the Dark Howlers pack is surrounded by many other packs and creatures. If we have a portal in our territory, it will be only a matter of time before others find out, no matter how tightly we guard that information."

Damon thought that he discouraged Talia, but she looked at him stubbornly. "If safety is the reason why Evanora doesn't want to talk about it, then we need to warn her that there are other portals, some that she might be unaware of."

It took Damon a moment to process where Talia was going with it. "You are talking about those strange energies in the lake that Axel showed." They didn't talk about it with Evanora, yet.

Talia confirmed. "And the ones in the lake next to Darkbourne."

"We don't know if those are portals.", Damon reminded her.

"True, but they could be. My point is that unless one knows about the portal or stumbles on it accidentally, those things could be there."

Damon looked at Talia for a few long moments and then he started laughing.

"What's funny?", Talia asked.

Damon shook his head at the silly female. "You will approach Evanora with an argument how opening one portal is not a security concern because there might be many others she is not aware of. I would like to see how that goes."

Talia pouted. "You will. Tomorrow." She looked at him dejectedly because he was laughing again. "If you won't support me, at least don't mock me."

Damon clamped his mouth shut, but his shoulders were still shaking. He couldn't help it. She was so innocent and adorable.

Talia couldn't look at him anymore. His eyes were tearing up!

She pushed herself off the bed, but before she got her bearing, Damon grabbed her arm and tugged her back on the bed.

"Let me go!", Talia hissed while wiggling under him.

"No."

Talia wiggled a bit more in an attempt to escape his grasp, but no matter what she did, Damon blocked her movements with ease. She narrowed her eyes dangerously. "You want to hold me here so that you can laugh at me?"

"I'm not laughing at you."

"Why are you laughing then?"

"You make me happy."

All Talia's hostility sizzled away within a second. She made him happy. She liked that.

"You make me happy as well", Talia said dreamily as her arms snaked around his torso.

Damon was quick to find her lips and kiss her deeply. Talia couldn't believe that even after kissing him a million times (or more), her toes curled when he captured her tongue with his lips while letting her feel his teeth.

Talia couldn't deny that Damon was a great kisser. He skillfully used his lips, tongue, and teeth to set the pace with suction and pressure, and within a minute, Talia was breathing heavily while tugging on his shirt. She would rip it into shreds, but they were in the realm of witches with only a few changes of clothes, and she didn't want him to run out of garments.

Damon smiled into the kiss when Talia started working on the buttons of his jeans impatiently. His kitten was eager to feel him, and he approved. This was exactly the vacation he was hoping for.

Chapter 683 Preparing for the sacred ceremony

Four witches came into Talia's and Damon's room before the feast.

They carried ceremonial garments for both Talia and Damon, a basket of small white flowers, and containers that held golden paste. That reminded Talia of Axel's and Yasmin's appearances during their ceremony at the fountain, especially Axel whose body was completely exposed (except for his precious parts).

Damon and Talia were both excited about the ceremony, neither aware of the incoming conflicting emotions (jealousy, possessiveness) that will fill the rest of the evening.

Talia wanted to have a ceremony, but she didn't approve of Damon's delicious body being on display for witches to see. But can it be a proper ceremony if he was covered up?

It was a tough choice, but Damon looked only at her, like bare-breasted witches were not in the room, so she allowed it. For now.

Damon went on the side to change into the skimpy garment which was actually just a string holding two strips of clothing to cover his firm ass and the crotch area.

The moment he stepped back into the room, Talia's eyes flashed in admiration and approval, but a second later she remembered witches in the room, and Talia glared at them while telling them how that's her mate and they shouldn't stare at him.

Damon obviously didn't mind the lack of clothing, and he was amused by the way Talia was protective of his body, but his mood worsened when he got to see Talia wearing her outfit for the ceremony.

Talia had an inch-wide silvery strip over her breasts to cover her nipples, but even the tiniest bikini would provide more coverage.

Damon wished that Talia could put more fabric on her flesh, because Axel, Liam, James, and Keith were there. Axel and Liam were mated, James was too young, so only Keith was a real problem, but Damon would beat any guy into a pulp if he looked at Talia; being mated or young didn't provide immunity from Damon's wrath.

Talia used every ounce of her control not to rip those witches into pieces as they prepared them for the ceremony.

Damon was standing with his arms spread while two witches drew intricate symbols with golden shimmering paste over his chest, back, and legs. Yes, they used brushes, but it was still too close!

The other two witches were working on Talia, but she didn't notice it at all because all her attention was on two females that were within the touching distance of her mate.

Once the golden designs were done, both Damon and Talia got to sit on chairs while witches braided white flowers into their hair. Actually, only Talia got braids because Damon's hair was not long enough. For him, witches used the golden paste as a hair gel, and they twisted strands of his hair while sticking flowers in there.

In Talia's opinion, getting ready was dragging like it lasted forever, but eventually, it was done, and the witches left their room with a reminder that most of the witches are already at the feast.

Damon stood up from the chair and posed in front of a mirror, occasionally throwing glances at Talia to make sure her eyes were on him. He knew that he looked good and that his mate approved.

Talia admired Damon's muscular body that was decorated with golden designs. With flowers in his hair that shimmered in golden, he looked like a statue of some ancient deity.

Even without decorations, Damon was a dreamboat, but she had a problem with his outfit. The fabric was light, and Talia knew that if Damon gets hard, that flimsy thing will go up, for everyone to see Damon's assets. Can she allow him to step out of the room like that? There are so many witches out there!

Damon noticed where Talia was frowning.

"That's yours, kitten", Damon said with amusement in his voice. "All of this" He gestured at himself. "Is yours only."

"I know. I'm concerned that the fabric will move and... you know."

Damon chuckled. He could say the same thing about her, but Damon knew that he had more moving parts.

He came up with an idea.

"When we are at the table, it won't be a problem, and when we are standing, I will be right behind you. How does that sound?"

Talia cocked an eyebrow at him. "You want to poke me from behind."

"Only if I get aroused."

"How about you don't get aroused?"

"I can't promise that because my sexy mate will be right next to me. You look edible and the only thing I want to do is..." Damon started thrusting his hips suggestively while wiggling his eyebrows at her.

Talia burst into giggles. He was outrageous and handsome, and nearly naked, and hers. Completely hers.

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In another room, Amelia and Liam were wearing ceremonial clothes that covered their private parts below the waist. They had golden symbols written over their bodies and flowers in their hair.

Liam couldn't peel his eyes off his adorable mate, and he released low growls whenever another female got too close which made painting symbols on him difficult because witches were scared of him.

"Are you alright?", Amelia asked when they were finally alone in the room.

He was quick to walk to her and pull her into his embrace. "I am now."

Amelia liked the fact that Liam disapproved of her sisters being close to him, but... "Will you be so hostile toward everyone?"

"Never toward you, as for others..." Liam stretched his neck in an attempt to release some of his tension. "I don't think so."

"You are not sure."

He couldn't deny that part. All this was new, and he was adapting, and he wished that he had another few days (or a few weeks) of solitude with Amelia because his hunger for her didn't diminish, not even a little bit. They were going at it for a full day, and other than giving her a few hours to sleep (while he watched her), and breaks to clean up and eat the food that was left at their door, Liam was in Amelia. Literally. But it was not enough. Actually, it seemed like he wanted her more.

"It will take me some time to get used to this", he said. "The bond is affecting me in ways I couldn't predict. It's like an insatiable urge to be with you, and everyone else is unwanted."

He realized that he was selfish. This was not only about him.

Liam touched the left side of her shoulder close to the pink mark was turning darker. Soon, the pattern will be distinguishable. His mark.

"Does it hurt?", he asked.

"No", she assured him.

"If you don't feel well, tell me."

"I'm not in pain, but..." She paused while picking her words. "I feel different."

"How different?"

"It's like my connection with nature is strengthened. My senses are sharper." And he smelled of lilac. How was that possible?

Liam smiled at her dreamily. "The bond solidifies after marking, making us stronger. The fact that you can feel the difference means it's working."

"Do you feel different?", she asked.

"I feel like I can run laps around Earth, and move mountains, and fuck you senseless until the end of my days."

Amelia's cheeks turned crimson. She didn't expect those outrageous words to come out of his delicious mouth.

Liam chuckled and leaned to kiss her lips, but Amelia wiggled out of his embrace before he could deepen the kiss.

"We should get going.", Amelia said while avoiding to look at him. She knew that he disapproved, and he wanted more, and she feared that if she looks at him, she will give in, and then they won't go to the feast at all. "People are waiting for us. The sacred ceremony will bless our union."

Liam puffed his cheeks. "We can't go now."

Amelia met his gaze. "Why?"

Liam looked down helplessly.

Amelia's eyes widened when she saw that Liam's erection lifted the fabric that was covering his crotch area. Well, that might be a problem.

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Chapter 684 The feast with witches

When James and Cornelia made an appearance in the garden where tables for the feast were set, James wondered if they were last to join the festivities.

It was way past sunset and the whole area was illuminated by crystals that were emitting faint light, making the whole setting magical. Garlands of fresh flowers hung off the pillars and trees, filling the air with the sweet aroma. The Silver Flame fountain stood in the middle of it all, glowing like a beacon.

Three tables were elevated compared to the others.

At the table in the center were Evanora, Yasmin, Axel, and a few more high-ranking witches that James met before.

On the right side was another one, set for six people. Talia, Damon, Liam, and Amelia were there already, and Cornelia told James that two empty seats at that table were theirs to take.

On the left from the main table were four healers from the Midnight Guardians pack, Keith, and Cassandra.

There were many other tables arranged through the garden, with witches eating and drinking. The nearby females were shamelessly checking out James despite Cornelia's obvious displeasure.

James was interested in Cassandra. She was a she-wolf and the Oracle of the Midnight Guardians pack who had the knowledge comparable to shaman's. In addition to that, Cassandra stayed with witches to improve her craft in mysterious ways and James really hoped that she will have some ways to help him with his sensing-the-bond situation. James was not comfortable talking about it with strangers, but he had a feeling that the time was running out and he was getting desperate.

James was confused to see Keith being so friendly with the healers, Cassandra in particular. James observed Keith so far, and he assessed the guard as non-approachable, afraid of Damon and loyal to Talia. Keith talking with Cassandra in a relaxed mood was outside James' expectations.

James noticed Cassandra shrinking when she looked at the main table, and James wondered if Cassandra was mistreated somehow. Did she get special privileges only because of the guests? He dispelled those thoughts because it was none of his business.

No matter where he looked, James saw breasts. Palm-sized, plump, round, pear-shaped... breasts... everywhere. Even with Cornelia by his side, James had difficulty not staring and he could only imagine the savagery that would happen if werewolves from the Red Moon pack find their way here. Alpha Edward would probably lead them and use his position to make first picks. James tried not to think about it.

Cornelia held James' hand while leading the way toward their seats, and James focused on the golden designs that were shimmering on her bare back. Her chocolate skin contrasted gold designs that moved with her, making them appear alive.

James wished that witches look at him more or get closer, because only in a fit of jealousy Cornelia would claim him as hers, and he liked when that happened.

The moment they sat, a witch approached them to fill their glasses with sweet wine.

Witches don't have a concept of Omegas who will do menial jobs and serve others, but they have low-ranked witches who would do whatever is needed.

During this feast, the witches took turns bringing food and drinks. James noticed that the witches who served them would sit at their table and eat and drink with others until their shift came again. It ensured that everyone serves, and everyone gets served.

Only Evanora, guests, and a handful of high-ranking witches didn't stand up to serve others.

James was excited. This was not the first time that he and Cornelia appeared as a couple, but it was the first time during an official function. A big bonus was that this was a separate realm, so his father won't ever find out about this.

If this was the Red Moon pack, appearing at a party with Cornelia would be suicidal. His heart ached. Was that why she was reluctant to come with him? Did she want to be recognized and not hide her identity? That was a big problem that James didn't know how to fix.

James felt bad about the need to conceal Cornelia's importance. He wanted to shout for everyone to hear how amazing she was, and that she was his, but how can he do that if he knew it would put her in danger?

James didn't approve of Damon hiding the fact that Talia was his mate, but James agreed that it was the right thing to do at the time.

For the first time since they got close, Cornelia was not wearing anything on top and he could see her two bouncing peaks staring at him, calling him to get closer and to suck on them. He licked his lips and swallowed hard, knowing that he shouldn't give in to those desires because this was in public. Heck, even in private, Cornelia was opposed to them going all the way and him marking her.

James knew the reasons and he couldn't say that she was wrong, but around Cornelia, James' rationality was replaced with the urges of a man to claim his woman, and his impatience was a reminder that he was still a teenager.

"James?"

Cornelia's voice pulled him out of his daze.

"What?", he asked while forcing his eyes to go up from her breasts to her face. It was a beautiful face.

"That's enough", Cornelia said while gesturing toward her plate that was heaping with food.

James smiled awkwardly. He was staring at her breasts, and he spaced out and overdid it as his hands moved on auto-pilot. But he had no intention of admitting to it.

"This is for both of us.", James said and grabbed a fork, ready to feed his chocolate-colored Goddess that was shimmering in gold.

James' mood was spoiled at the sound of giggles around them because they were between Damon and Talia on their right, and Amelia and Liam on their left. Both couples were super lovey-dovey, feeding each other, touching, and kissing, somehow reminding James that they did it and will definitely do it tonight, and James... James knew that he needed to keep his hands to himself.

James fought against the negativity and he focused on feeding Cornelia because as long as she doesn't reject him, it will be fine. It had to be.

They were about halfway through the plate when Evanora stood up and announced that it was time for the ceremonies.

Cornelia looked at James excitedly, even though she had mixed feelings about this. The ceremony was to celebrate their union, as soulmates. On the downside, James couldn't feel the bond and they didn't mate, so she felt like a fraud. At the same time, Cornelia was not sure if they will have another chance like this, and she didn't want to miss it.

Cornelia knew that she was selfish, but she couldn't help it. She wanted a memory of this ceremony as something she will cherish forever.

Even if they separate and she doesn't see him ever again, Cornelia was confident that she won't yearn for any man other than James. If the heavens give them their blessings during this ceremony, it will be another confirmation that they are soulmates.

Chapter 685 Three ceremonies (1)

Seeing that James' lips were glistening from juices, Cornelia grabbed a napkin with the intention to make him presentable.

James enjoyed the cleaning service, but he wished that Cornelia used her tongue.

When she was done, she pushed another napkin into his hands.

"Am I messy?", Cornelia asked while pursing her lips and moving her head sideways to give him a good view.

"A little bit", James responded and grabbed her chin.

Cornelia thought that he will wipe the mess, but the cheeky werewolf kissed her right there, for everyone to see.

His tongue quickly found its way into her mouth and caressed her tongue in ways she couldn't refuse, and Cornelia gripped his shoulders to steady herself.

James inched away and looked at Cornelia who was slightly dazed. He loved that he had this effect on her.

"I think I missed a spot."

He was about to kiss her again, but Cornelia was quick to put her hand over his mouth.

"Not here!", Cornelia whispered with urgency.

She was the second-ranked witch in the Coven, yet now everyone saw her being kissed. And it was not just that she was kissed, but she was kissing him back! How undignified.

"OK. I will lick that off later", James said and winked mischievously.

He chuckled at her outraged expression that sizzled away within a second. She was unable to be mad at him no matter how cheeky he was.

Neither of them could deny the fact that when they were together and touching each other, neither James nor Cornelia worried about the uncertain future.

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The witches and werewolves gathered around the fountain, eager for the ceremonies to start.

The silvery flames danced above the statue of the woman and the wolf, spilling the light over the surface of the water, making the whole fountain appear like it came out of another dimension.

Amelia and Liam were first.

Witches started chanting and the couple stared at each other like they were the only two people on the planet.

The scene reminded Talia of the ceremony that Yasmin and Axel had, but this time Yasmin was next to Evanora, adding to the chants of high-ranked witches that were led by Evanora.

Amelia and Liam stepped into the fountain, and the chants intensified at the same time when the silvery flames at the top of the fountain started dancing wildly like someone was fanning them.

Shiny ripples in the dark water started moving toward Liam and Amelia, and then the light climbed up their skin. They glowed. Literally.

Amelia and Liam faced each other, the silvery light from the fountain ignited their golden tattoos, giving them the appearance of ethereal statues.

"The heavens are blessing your union", Evanora said when Amelia's and Liam's bodies were completely lit up. "May you have long lives full of happiness."

The witches burst into cheers when Amelia and Liam kissed.

The ceremony boosted their energy levels and Liam felt a pulsating need in his crotch area. He really wanted to jab himself inside her, but he was faintly aware of all the eyes on them and he knew that it wouldn't be appropriate.

Liam lifted Amelia in his arms and carried her princess style. Everyone knew that they were going back to Amelia's room.

Amelia loved how Liam had eyes only for her, and the fact that his erection was poking her behind told her that her mate means business.

Amelia used healing spells and herbs to ease soreness from all that lovemaking, and she hoped that Liam didn't notice because she wanted to make him happy. Well, he was making her happy also, many orgasms happy, but it was getting sore later, and she didn't want him to know about that last part.

Liam's steps didn't pause in the slightest when witches surrounded them with an intention to congratulate the couple. With one fierce growl from Liam, the witches parted to make way and Amelia giggled while snaking her arms around Liam's neck. His hostile expression softened in an instant when he looked at Amelia.

Yasmin patted her chest dramatically. That was romantic and raw, and she loved it!

Talia loved it as well. The animalistic urge to claim mate was super-sexy and Talia really wished to bite Damon and mark him again. Soon.

Her eyes moved to Damon to meet his fiery gaze directed at her.

'Mate looks yummy', Liseli spoke in Talia's mind. 'I can feel Sapa's excitement. Can we go for a run after the ceremony?'

'I'm sure we can.' Evanora never mentioned any restrictions related to moving within this realm, so it would be fun to let their wolves out to explore while spending quality time with each other.

Next were James and Cornelia.

The duo moved to the fountain to face each other.

Cornelia tilted her head up to see James' face and she wondered if he was always that tall.

The silvery light reflected on his skin, making the golden designs on his pale skin shimmer, his shoulders were broad, and he didn't look like a teenager, not even a little bit.

Yasmin and Evanora took turns chanting, and even a laywoman like Talia realized that something was different compared to the previous ceremony.

The air stirring at the fountain was sharper, and the flames on the fountain grew bigger.

Cornelia and James didn't break the eye contact, and they either didn't notice that the water in the fountain was splashing around them, or they didn't care.

Cornelia could feel the energy seeping into her, and she was in a euphoric daze. It was like she had a private channel with nature, only for her to use, and she wondered if James felt the same.

The more she looked at him, the more handsome he was, and the pull toward her soulmate became unbearable. It was like her skin was on fire and only his touch could soothe it.

Cornelia realized that something was wrong. Why was she getting aroused?

She bit the inside of her cheek harshly to snap out of her daze and then her head snapped toward Evanora and Yasmin.

"What are you doing?", Cornelia hissed.

Instead of responding, Yasmin chanted with more enthusiasm.

Yasmin knew about the challenges Cornelia and James were facing, and she discussed with Evanora to add to the ceremony a dose of sensitivity. Evanora was not willing at first, but Yasmin persuaded her. As usual.

With this addition to the ceremony, both James and Cornelia had become more sensitive to the energies around them, and that included nature and their mate bond. Everything else was a side effect of that.

Cornelia looked at James as the silvery light climbed his body, following the golden patterns on his skin and she wondered what was going on with him because he was just staring at her without moving a muscle.

Cornelia feared that James' wolf will end up hurt from this. She would scold Yasmin for doing whatever she was doing, but Cornelia found herself unable to move. Was James OK? He looked like he was struggling with something.

'MATE', James heard a voice in his head and the desire for Cornelia became maddening. James was fighting against his urge to claim Cornelia right then and there, but the attraction was intensifying by the second, clouding his mind completely.

Chapter 686 Three ceremonies (2) [Bonus chapter]

James was overwhelmed by the surges of desire that swelled within him.

His wolf was stirring and urging him to claim the female that stood in front of him.

James' throat was dry like he crossed many deserts without a single drop of water, and Cornelia was the water of life who could quench his thirst. He really wanted to consume her completely until they meld to become one.

His heart thundered in the rhythm of her name. Cornelia. Cora. His mate. His. HIS!

James was aware that Cornelia was several centuries old, but at that moment her eyes full of concern and love made her appear like an unspoiled delicate maiden who was oblivious of the savagery males were capable of. Males, like him. Would his touch desecrate her beauty?

His whole universe was reduced to the chocolate-colored Goddess in front of him, yet he felt like his world expanded. She was glowing like a beacon that showed him the only way to happiness, and his stomach tightened with the need to merge with her in every way possible.

The chants and winds dimmed to background noise, and James could hear Cornelia's breaths that were in sync with his. She smelled of sweet wild berries, and her slightly parted lips were silently begging him to claim her.

James was absolutely certain that Cornelia's heart, mind, and soul were his. The only thing he didn't claim was her body and an irresistible need overwhelmed him to take that part of her as well because only when she was completely his, he could be at ease.

The chanting stopped and silence blanketed the garden. Out of several hundred witches, no one made a peep as all of them were focused on Cornelia and James who were standing in the fountain and glowing.

Normally, Cornelia's skin looked darker in contrast to James' white one, and her natural melanin made him look much paler than he was, yet now they were both glowing in pulses that matched their synchronized heartbeats. The silvery light enveloped them completely, erasing the distinction between the two and making them appear as one.

James resisted, he really did... but then something snapped.

"Mine!", James growled, and his hand landed at the back of Cornelia's head at the same time his lips crashed on hers.

Cornelia's eyes were open wide in shock as he was never so rough. She wanted to push him away, but the pull was unbearable as she was fighting against her own madness, and he tasted delicious, and her arms moved around him.

James kissed Cornelia hungrily and his free hand caressed her cheek and then moved down her jaw and neck, and he swallowed Cornelia's shaky moan when her body trembled against his.

James pulled away and stared into Cornelia's unfocused eyes that were directed at him. His nostrils flared when he picked up the scent of her arousal, and that was the last straw. He flung her over his shoulder and walked out of the fountain.

James didn't need to growl for witches to make way for them as he carried Cornelia back to her room like she was a sack of potatoes.

Cornelia was unable to react. It all happened so quickly!

Unsure how to face her sisters after being so embarrassingly manhandled, Cornelia buried her face into James' back and pretended that she was unconscious.

"The heavens blessed your union!", Evanora shouted after them.

The witches exchanged confused glances while murmuring among each other, hesitant to cheer and congratulate the couple because they left.

"YEAH!", Yasmin exclaimed while fist-pumping in the air.

The ritual amplified both James' and Cornelia's sensitivity to energies, but Yasmin did it mostly for Cornelia.

When Yasmin found out about the stalemate between the duo, she couldn't believe it.

Did Cornelia really think that James should return to his pre-Cornelia life without her? How could Cornelia make such a decision on her own?

It's not that Yasmin didn't understand Cornelia's concerns, but that kind of reasoning didn't belong between soulmates.

Since ancient times, soulmates were meant to be together. From the moment they recognize each other, soulmates become one, and they stick together no matter what life throws at them because separation will harm them both.

What Cornelia was doing went against nature; as a witch, that was the closest thing to breaking the law!

It was obvious that James was head over heels for Cornelia and only a blind person would miss all the signs they were mates, which meant that the person putting a wall between them was Cornelia.

At first, Yasmin tried to talk some sense into Cornelia, but that led nowhere, so Yasmin decided not to meddle. However, how could she remain a spectator when James approached her to ask for help? But casting spells out of the blue was risky so Yasmin needed to find the right opportunity, and then Yasmin heard that Cornelia wanted to take part in the ceremony, and that was exactly what Yasmin was looking for.

Yasmin carefully prepared a potion and arranged that it gets mixed in Cornelia's and James' wine during the feast. This ritual stimulated the right components to react, and the wheels were set in motion. Now it was up to the mated couple to figure out what they will do with all that pent-up sexual energy.

With this, Cornelia will stop avoiding the inevitable, and if it succeeds, Cornelia will be grateful to Yasmin. Eventually.

"Let's take a short break!", Evanora announced.

"Mother!", Yasmin exclaimed. "Are you alright?" The high priestess looked unusually pale.

"I just need a moment and then we can proceed."

Talia was quick to approach Evanora. "If you are unwell, we can do it some other time." She really wanted the ceremony with Damon, the fountain, silver flames, and everything else called magic, but not at the cost of Evanora collapsing halfway.

Talia was wary because the lovey-dovey moments she planned with Damon ended in a disaster, and she hoped that this won't be one of them. But if Evanora can't complete the ceremony, where will that leave them? With one more bitter experience? Talia wanted this to be perfect. She needed this to be perfect, and if magic and witches can't make it come true, then no one can.

Evanora waved like it was not important. "Nonsense. The moon is in the right position and the mood is right. I just need a few minutes to catch my breath." She turned to one of the witches that were helping with the chants. "Serena, can you bring me a glass of water?"

The witch confirmed and disappeared into the crowd.

Evanora didn't want to disclose how taxing it was to work with the energies from the fountain. Yes, other witches were chanting as well, but as the one leading the ceremony, Evanora took most of the burn.

Evanora remembered the scene when Talia reignited the flames with ease, yet those same energies were too much for the old witch to manipulate for two ceremonies back-to-back. How could Evanora admit to such a weakness and still be considered as the high priestess?

And also, Yasmin stood right next to Evanora, yet she was completely fine.

Was it because of the babies Yasmin carried in her stomach, or... Evanora exhaled sadly while remembering Yasmin's father. It was probably his bloodline that made Yasmin so much better than any other witch, but Yasmin never saw herself as above others.

Chapter 687 Jay and Cora (1)

In Cornelia's room...

James kicked the door to close and flung Cornelia on the bed.

Cornelia yelped in surprise, and she grimaced in preparation for the impact, but then she felt hot palms on her back that lowered her softly on the mattress.

Before she could regain her senses, James was on top of her, kissing her hungrily and swallowing her words before she could form any.

Both were practically naked, so there was a lot of skin-to-skin contact, the flimsy garments covering their crotch areas provided no obstacle for them to feel each other.

Cornelia could sense the urgency behind James' every move, and his masculine energy enveloped them both.

So far, James embraced Cornelia many times. He was always caring and gentle and considerate of her needs, and this time it was still all that, but it was different.

She could describe the experience as animalistic and raw, and she was drowning in his need to be with her. Was this how it would feel from the start if he was of age when they met? At that time, she didn't know him at all, and Cornelia didn't think she would be comfortable with a stranger feeling her out, even if that stranger was her soulmate. In a way, she was glad that they had this time to meet each other before doing the deed.

James' palms caressed her body with unexpected proficiency, setting her soul ablaze and she was surprised when he jumped off the bed.

'CRACK!'

Cornelia felt like someone poured a bucket of ice on her when she realized that James crushed a glass with his hand that was now balled into a bloodied fist.

"James!", Cornelia shrieked while scrambling off the bed.

She reached to grab his injured hand, but he jerked his arm out of her reach.

"Don't touch me.", he said breathily.

James walked to the open window to greedily inhale the air like he was suffocating.

Cornelia didn't know what he was doing, but that definitely looked like he was in distress.

"James, please... tell me what's going on."

James closed his eyes. "This... just... leave me alone."

"Not until you talk to me."

She touched his shoulder, and he twisted his body away.

"Don't", he squeezed through his teeth. "Why can't you leave?"

"I'm not leaving. This is my room.", she said stubbornly. The fact that he avoided her touch twice was killing her from the inside.

"Your room?", he asked while looking around, like it was the first time he heard about it. "Right. This is your room. I will leave."

"No!", Cornelia exclaimed and with one wave of her finger, the open window closed, and all three windows were shut now and shimmering in silvery light just like the door, and James knew that she locked them in.

James puffed his cheeks. "You want to know what's going on?"

"Yes."

"This is not right."

Cornelia realized that he was talking about what was almost happening on the bed. "What do you mean, not right? Don't you want it?"

"Yes! My desire for you is so strong that I had to cut my hand for the pain to help me regain control because I don't want to do something you will hate me for.", he responded in one breath.

"I wouldn't hate you."

James snorted. "Yeah, right."

"I'm not lying."

"But you are not telling the truth either."

Cornelia frowned. Did he call her a liar? "And you know what I'm thinking better than I do?"

James was looking straight into her eyes now. "I know that you are not willing, Cora. This is just the effect of the ceremony that did... something." He didn't tell her that his wolf told him they were mates, because that was not important. "Now you feel the arousal, but once it wears off you will be back in your thoughts about how no matter how much we love each other, we can't be together because I can't stay here, and you can't come with me since I'm not strong enough to protect you."

Cornelia's heart cracked. Those were her words and she said them more than once, but now that he said them... it hurt. Why did it all sound like James was the one who needed to compromise? Like he was the lacking one? Was there really no way for them to be together?

She felt guilt eating her up. James was her soulmate, yet she cornered him into a place where he didn't have a say, and where he felt inferior. What kind of a mate does that?

"It's my fault", she said. "Instead of looking for solutions, I was looking at obstacles."

She reached for his bleeding hand and was happy when he allowed her to inspect his injury.

James gritted his teeth and glared through the closed window like his mortal enemy was right there, all in the effort to ignore the magnificent sparks of their bond that prickled his skin wherever they touched.

Cornelia frowned at the sight of glass that was stuck in his palm and she ushered him to sit on the chair. She kneeled by his side and started carefully pulling the glass pieces out of his flesh.

Cornelia's heart shook with emotions she never experienced before. The tent in his crotch area was proof that he was aroused. Just a minute ago, she was on the bed under him, willing to let him take her and satisfy his hunger, yet he didn't. He choose to deny himself what he wanted and to harm himself, so he doesn't harm her.

Can he be any sweeter?

Cornelia's hands moved steadily to remove the glass as she talked.

"Since I've felt the bond, and I found out about your background, I was only seeing one obstacle after another. If you are just a guy from Damon's pack, it would be easy. If you are a guy from Talia's pack, it would be easier. But instead of making it easy, the forces beyond us decided that we should be soulmates and things became... challenging."

With the last piece of glass out of his hand, Cornelia murmured ancient chants that sounded like a lullaby, and his wounds closed at the rate visible to the naked eye.

After confirming that his wounds were gone, Cornelia spoke again.

"I am the second-ranked witch in the Silver Flame Coven, and you are the smartest person I've ever met. With my power and your mind, we have a lot to work with, and if anyone can make this work, that will be the two of us."

She raised his gaze to see his endlessly blue eyes trained on her.

"What are you saying?", he asked stiffly due to the tension that built within him. His wolf was stirring his emotions and muddling with his mind, urging him to claim mate, but James resisted.

"I am saying", she paused to lick her lips nervously. "We are mates, and we will find a way to be together."

James stared at Cornelia, and she could clearly see emotions washing over him. Disbelief, happiness, doubt, hope.

James waited for her to say more, but that was it. He chided himself. What was he expecting? Just the fact that she said how they should try to be together was progress.

Chapter 688 Jay and Cora (2)

James pried his hand out of Cornelia's hold.

"Thank you for healing me, Cora." That sharp pain helped a bit, but now that it was gone there was nothing to distract him from the throbbing need in his crotch. "If you don't mind opening the door, I need to put some distance between us." He wanted to get up, but he knew it will be in vain until she removes the silvery restriction.

"Why?", she asked.

"Because staying this close to you is torturous. I don't want to do something you will hate."

Cornelia panicked when she realized that James wanted to leave. She grabbed his hand. "I already said I won't hate you, or the things you do to me."

James stared at her hands holding his, the fantastic sparks of their bond should be the best thing ever, but now they tormented him because he couldn't act on that primal need to claim his mate.

Did she know how much he suffered right at that moment?

Cornelia was right there, nearly naked, for him to see. Her chocolate-colored skin embellished with golden designs, her melodious voice that awakened butterflies in his stomach, her scent of sweet wild berries all around him... it was all perfect to awaken the possessive beast that only wanted to copulate, and her touch made it several folds worse.

James heard Cornelia when she said that she won't hate him and that they should stick together, but maybe it would be better to stay apart if he was not allowed to claim her. He might lose his mate, but at least he will keep his sanity because nothing can be worse than this agony he was enduring.

James swallowed hard and the bobbing of his Adam's apple was accompanied by the tick in his jaw muscles as he pressed his teeth together. He needed to get out of there before he did something that can't be undone.

Cornelia scooted to kneel in front of him and she gently pressed his knees to spread his legs apart further.

James watched her as she hesitated for a moment before reaching for the silvery cloth that was covering his crotch area, and she flicked it to the side to expose his erection.

She stared at his cock. Of course, she knew what that was. She saw many pictures and in the human realm she saw some racy videos (for research purposes, of course), but this was the first time for her to see that organ in person. It was big and slightly intimidating. And she remembered that healthy males grow until the age of twenty-five. Didn't that mean James can grow bigger?

"Cora...", James called in a strained voice, and she knew that it was a warning how she shouldn't play with fire.

Cornelia had no idea what she was doing, but she steeled her resolve to do it anyway. James was an existence branded into her soul and if being close to him will burn her alive, then... so be it. If soulmates can recognize each other naturally, then she only needed to follow her instincts and things will be alright.

"You are not willing to do things to me, out of fear that I will hate you", she said. "So, I will do things to you in order to prove that it's OK."

Her dark brown eyes didn't leave his blue ones as she reached to hold onto his cock that was hot and hard, and she saw the way his chest rolled as he sucked in a breath upon contact.

Just how she saw in movies, Cornelia started pumping his length while wondering if she should squeeze more. Or was this too much? But then... they were mates and if he could feel the sparks, any type of touch will do.

She was uncomfortable because this was new, but she didn't want him to think that she was forcing herself because she wanted to drown in their bond. However, for someone who was always watching her image of a dignified witch who knew what she was doing, Cornelia found it difficult to let go of the control.

Cornelia threw a quick glance at his face and she swallowed hard when she saw him staring at her with intensity like he could see her most hidden thoughts.

Insecurities crept into her mind. The people in the videos she watched were wiggling about and moaning, and James didn't move a muscle. Was she doing this right? What if she was making a total fool of herself? Ah, but she already started and she can't just stop! What to do? She decided to ask...

"Is this OK, Jay?"

"How did you call me?", James asked breathily.

Cornelia realized that this was the first time she addressed him as Jay. The truth was that she came up with it at the same time when he called her Cora. Cornelia thought it went well, Jay and Cora, but she was too shy to say it aloud. Until now.

"Jay. Can I call you like that?"

James' mind was clouded with lust by electric sparks that danced over his cock, but he was aware that she gave him a nickname. No one ever did that. People called him the 'young Alpha', the 'future Alpha', or James, and this was the first time he got a nickname that didn't remind him of a position that didn't belong to him. He liked it.

Cornelia saw him nod in approval of the way she addressed him, so she went back to her first question. "Is this OK?"

It was slow and she was too gentle, and he would prefer if she used her mouth or straddled him, but he didn't want to freak her out. "It's... fine."

Cornelia was not sure if she should believe him. Who says that he is fine with an expression like he was in pain? Shouldn't it be enjoyable?

"Now that your senses are intensified, did your wolf speak to you?"

"Yes", James confirmed, knowing where she was going with this. "He said that you are my mate."

Cornelia smiled. It's not that she was doubting it, especially after the ceremony they just completed, but another confirmation was good to hear.

"Did he say anything else?"

James groaned. "Are you really expecting us to have a conversation now?"

"Maybe?", Cornelia said in a singing voice.

James put his hand over Cornelia's that was holding onto his cock, and she thought that he will remove her hand from there but he leaned to look into her eyes up close.

"You said that you won't hate me, no matter what I do."

"I did say that, yes."

"Can I do anything?" He wanted to make sure.

"We are mates, Jay. You can't harm me, and I can't hate you."

"Good", he said. The nickname Jay sounded foreign and dear to his heart at the same time.

Without delay, James picked up Cornelia and carried her to the bed.

His desire for her exploded during the ceremony at the fountain. Since they came to this room, Cornelia healed his hand, agreed that they should stick together, gave him a nickname, and held onto his cock, and she said that she won't hate him no matter what he did... and he was determined to test the boundaries of that last one.

Chapter 689 Jay and Cora (3)

Driven by his craving for that skin-to-skin contact where he will feel Cornelia's perky breasts against his chest, James lowered himself, careful to hold most of his weight on his elbows so that he doesn't make her uncomfortable.

The sparks danced over his flesh wherever they touched, and considering the amount of touching surface, he thought that he will come just from this. It was fantastic!

James' hips moved and she gasped when his erection pressed at the cradle of her thighs, two flimsy fabrics didn't provide much padding.

Cornelia dug her fingers in his back and James was never so excited in his life. His mate was right there, under him, pulling him closer while arching her body into his, and it was the best feeling ever!

He wanted to do to her so many things, but in their current situation, it could all be narrowed down to two.

"I want to claim you as mine Cora.", he growled. "I want to mark you."

His lips moved along her jaw, slightly open so that she can feel his teeth.

He nipped on her skin, just below her ear and then he licked her there, and he loved the sensation of her trembling under him; but more than her body accepting him, he needed to hear her say that she was willing.

James lifted his head so that he can see her eyes. "Can I?"

Cornelia opened her mouth to respond, but no sound came because her heart was stuck in her throat. She inhaled forcibly and tried to speak, but again, she was mute.

The pull of their bond was messing with her mind before, and the ceremony made it several folds worse, and now that they were technically naked on the bed, both feeling the bond and accepting each other as soulmates, none of her reasons to hold back seemed important.

Seeing his brows coming together as he searched her face for answers, she nodded fervently.

"Yes.", she forced the word out of her mouth.

"Yes, what?", he asked.

"Yes, mark me, and yes... for the other." Yes, for everything! Why was he making her say all those embarrassing things?

James smiled as he dove to claim her lips in a deep sensual kiss that made her toes curl. He kissed her many times before, but this time it was different. She could feel the anticipation and promises that were hidden behind every move of his tongue.

His hands caressed her body with no reservation. His left hand kneaded her breast, his thumb mischievously flicking her hardened nipple, and his right hand brushed the skin of her stomach, teasing her in circular movements and going slightly lower with each rotation.

With one swift tug, the string around her waist was torn.

Cornelia was dazed from all the kissing, and she opened her eyes when she felt the chill where James used to be. Did he leave the bed again?

No, he was still there. She could feel his hot palms squeezing her thighs.

Cornelia's breath hitched at the sight of James who was sitting on his knees, right between her legs as his heated gaze roamed her body and burned her skin.

His palms were on the inside of her thighs, keeping her legs open for him to see everything.

Cornelia was not used to being so exposed, but somehow, she knew that he truly adored every inch of her body and she let him have that visual treat.

James enjoyed the way her breasts moved as she breathed, those two hard peaks were calling for him louder with every heartbeat, and this time he won't need to hold back.

He admired her curves. Her waist expanded into childbearing hips; lovely legs that were soft and lean, yet not muscular how most of the she-wolves have them. And then there was Cornelia's neatly trimmed pussy that glistened from her juices, and he took a deep breath to inhale her sweet scent of wild berries that was driving him crazy.

That right there was his breaking point, in the middle of lust and madness and knowing that his chocolate-colored Goddess was willing, it was the last straw for him to let go of the brakes.

James crawled back on top of Cornelia and she thought that he will kiss her more, but he stopped advancing when his lips reached her breasts.

Her body arched when he started sucking her nipples harshly, and a surprised gasp escaped her lips when she felt his fingers caressing her clit without any warning.

James growled into her flesh when he felt how wet she was.

His fingers prickled at the point of contact, and he wondered if she could feel those sensational sparks as well, but he kept those questions for later because this was not the time for intellectual conversation.

James had them more than he cared to remember. It was one (sometimes two) per event where such activity was expected.

It was not like they were forcing him into anything, but he was not particularly willing either. He was young and curious, and he let the other party take the lead, to start the process. At that time, he would sit or lay on his back, and women would do most of the work. They thought that he was used to being served, and none of them believed that he was not experienced.

A few parties later, James got plenty of the experience, but his interest dwindled; not because those women were not attractive because they were, and they knew how to please a man. However, James saw the whole act as a way to survive. Most of the future Alphas were enjoying sexual liberties their position allowed them, and James needed to blend into that crowd. He was going through the motions so that his father wouldn't scold him as a non-worthy future Alpha.

Ah, what all he needed to do to create the perfect image of the future Alpha of the Red Moon pack. Well, not perfect... just what his father expected it to be.

There were times when James hated it, he hated himself, but now all that will be put to good use because he was familiar with a woman's body, and right there next to him was a gorgeous, naked, woman's body he wanted to please.

Compared to his previous encounters, intimacy with Cornelia was different.

His body ached for Cornelia. Everything with her was out of this world, but the best part was that she accepted him as her mate. She said that he can claim her and mark her and he was super-nervous at the thought that it was happening.

For Cornelia, it was the first time to be with a man in such an intimate situation, and centuries filled with life experiences didn't prepare her for this tornado of sensations as her every cell came alive.

She tried not to think about the way how James skillfully caressed her body. Considering his age, she thought of him as inexperienced, but his every stroke proved that her assumption was wrong. Or was it just beginner's luck? She didn't believe in coincidences and luck, but before she could think more about it, his finger slipped inside her and curled to hit just the right spot, and her eyes rolled at the back of her head.

Chapter 690 Jay and Cora (4)

Cornelia had no idea how long it lasted. A minute? Three? Ten?

James was kissing her neck and growled lowly while stroking her down there, she could feel the heat of his body splashing on hers, and the familiar pressure in her core was building at an alarming rate.

Now that they were on the bed like this, Cornelia wondered why she hesitated to indulge in this intimacy so far. Even if James didn't feel the bond fully, he was still attracted to her, and the sensation of his skin on hers was out of this world.

Cornelia touched herself many times before, but it was never this intense, and if this was the introduction to the pleasures to come, Cornelia was eager to welcome her mate with her arms (and legs) open wide.

Her body tensed and James swallowed her scream without stopping the movements of his fingers that caressed her intimate parts relentlessly.

He loved seeing her like that, unrestrained, lost in lust, gasping for air, because of something he did. Was it possible that she became more beautiful?

Cornelia's chest heaved as she blinked to focus her vision only to see James licking a see-through slimy substance that stretched between his fingers. Did that come from her? How embarrassing.

James smiled wickedly. "You are delicious, Cora." He regretted using his fingers instead of his tongue. Next time.

He never went down on a woman before, but he was confident that it will be good for both of them because she tasted of sweet wild berries, his favorite, and he would lick her until she collapses from orgasms.

James went back on top of Cornelia to settle between her legs, and his lips hovered above hers.

"Last chance to stop me, Cora", he said, and he really hoped she won't do it.

Cornelia was touched that he was still giving her a choice and showing her that he cared.

Her hands moved lower on his back, and he felt her thumbs hooking on the string that was around his waist. The cloth hitched to the side, and it was on his hip now, but it was still a symbol to remind them that there were obstructions between them.

With one swift tug from Cornelia, the fabric gave in and both of them were now completely naked.

She looked him in the eyes as her insides trembled from the anticipation of what was to come.

"I love you, James.", she spoke against his lips, and before he answered, she kissed him.

He couldn't respond to her confession without breaking the kiss, and he didn't want to break it. After all, he had the rest of his life to tell her how much he loves her, or even better... he will show her.

Their kisses morphed from sweet and slow into fervent and passionate, but they didn't stop; not when he was grinding against her to spread her juices over his shaft, not when she felt the pressure increasing, and not when her insides stretched to accommodate his length... he swallowed her gasps and moans and inhaled her cries, and they were one.

James groaned when he was all the way inside her. She was tight and hot and all around his cock, and there were mind-blowing sparks, and he wondered if he came already. It was that good.

A surge of energy swelled in his chest, and he broke the kiss abruptly as his head jerked to look at the ceiling.

"AWOOOO!"

His deafening howl shook the windows, and some of the glass panels cracked.

James looked down at the woman under him, to see that her eyes were full of tears. He thought that she was in pain, or maybe his howl disturbed her, but her unfocused gaze was on him, and she was smiling a little.

James kissed Cornelia's tears away and started rocking into her, groaning with every push and silently congratulating himself that he didn't come already.

He loved that her hips moved in the rhythm he set, and her gasps and moans were music to his ears.

That was his chocolate-colored Goddess right there, under him, welcoming him. It was surreal.

They were both delirious as their bond grew stronger, allowing them to sense each other's emotions a bit more with every sway of their bodies.

None of them used any particular technique as they moved on an instinct, an instinct to merge with mate, and James somehow knew exactly where and when to kiss and lick as his fangs itched to come out and mark her.

"Oh, James...", she moaned, and his lust level rose further, urging him to move faster.

Damn, she felt good. This was the best! No wonder newly-mated couples don't come out of seclusion for days. He didn't want this to stop. Ever!

"Fuck, Cora!", he cursed loudly. "You are perfect. You are mine!"

He gripped her hip and started thrusting into her with more urgency, and the outrageous sounds of flesh slapping against flesh filled the room.

James groaned when Cornelia's fingers dug into his back and he felt her insides coiling around his cock in rhythmical pulses, and he knew that was it.

His fangs sank into her flesh, and Cornelia trembled under him as orgasm trashed her insides.

James' unintelligible sounds were muffled in her neck as he filled her with his venom and with his seed at the same time, the pleasure was so overwhelming that he feared he might pass out.

James knew it was done. The marking was complete, and their movements were jerky from the aftershocks of their orgasm, but they were reluctant to stop because they wanted this to go on forever.

The sensation of belonging enveloped two bodies. It was euphoric.

James licked her neck while relishing the fact that he marked his mate. She was his. Irrevocably. It was beyond fantastic.

With this, James confirmed that the stories were right: sex with the mate was the best thing ever. Probably because it was not sex, it was making love, or it would be better to call it making forever since it went beyond physical gratification as two souls merged into one.

James looked at her flushed face and grinned foolishly.

"You are mine", he said.

"Yours", she confirmed.

"Only mine."

She smiled. "There is no one else, Jay. Only you, and it will always be only you."

He liked that. He liked it a lot.

His tongue darted to moisten his lips before he asked, "How are you feeling?"

She hesitated to answer, and he could see her cheeks darkening as she glanced down to the point where their bodies were connected. He was still inside her.

"I am fine."

James chuckled. "I was asking about your neck."

"Oh..." Cornelia thought how she made a fool of herself. Yasmin told her how werewolves were insatiable, and she assumed that James was asking if it was OK to go for the second round. Did he think of her as lewd now? How embarrassing. "My neck is fine also."

"Cora, Cora, Cora...", James chanted. "Do you know how happy I am?"

Her lips lifted into a smile. "Tell me about it."

James' eyes flashed with mischief. "How about I show you?"

His hips moved, and she gasped into his mouth.

She was still sensitive from what they did, but instead of giving her a breather, James was picking up his pace and Cornelia gripped his shoulders because she knew that her mate was aching for her and now that they mated and his venom was coursing through her system, she had no intention of denying him what was his.