

Alphas Bride 721

## Chapter 721 Changes in the air (2)

James swallowed hard. He thought that he was careful, but it seemed that he underestimated how much his father was keeping an eye on him.

James' heart was beating wildly. Was Cornelia in danger? He needed to confirm she was safe.

Damn it! He was thinking that he had months, yet only after a few days, his father found out about Cornelia!

Did she return from the Dark Howlers pack? Probably. Can he send her a message to run?

James jolted when Alpha Edward patted his shoulder. He was so out of it that he didn't notice the old guy approaching him.

"Remember that your position is not allowing you to get attached to a nobody. Fun is fine, but she can't be your Luna unless she has a good background. Understood?"

James relaxed a bit when he realized that his father only knew how James was sleeping elsewhere, without knowing about Cornelia.

"And one more thing...", Alpha Edward said. "There is no need for you to hide in George's house. You are the future Alpha and this whole pack is your playground. Feel free to bring any woman to the packhouse and kick her out when you are done."

An angry growl bubbled in James' chest. Did his father suggest that James should sleep with random women? The idea of him touching any woman other than his chocolate-colored Goddess was making his wolf feral, but James couldn't allow his father to see that so he quickly lowered his head.

Alpha Edward burst into laughter.

"Are you shy now, son? Don't be. It's normal for Alphas to explore women. To be honest, I was suspecting that something was wrong with your appetite, but I see that things are how they should be since you returned from the Dark Howlers pack. It seems that Alpha Damon was a good influence in that area."

James really didn't want to talk about it. Was it possible that his father forgot that Damon found his Luna? Or did he think that Damon was sleeping around despite Talia's presence?

"Is that all?", James asked.

"Yes, you may go. We are leaving tomorrow morning. Pack for three days. Other than attending a party, I expect you to wipe the floor with warriors from the Blue River pack. Now that Marcy is gone, you are the only one I have. Make me proud, son."

James stood up, but then he paused to ask, "Who all is going?"

"The two of us, your mother, and Nora."

For a brief moment, James was tempted to ask if he could bring Cornelia with him. He could say that he wants an Omega of his choice to accompany him, and they wouldn't come out of James' room. That would be fantastic! But that would work only if his father was not there. No matter what, he couldn't risk Cornelia catching Alpha Edward's eye.

Was it a mistake to bring her to the Red Moon pack? No, no... they were mated, and his wolf was going crazy in need to be with Cornelia. If they were apart, James would lose his mind. Literally.

James didn't realize that he was running to George's villa while clutching the folder his father gave him.

He ran up the stairs and into the room where he shared nights with Cornelia. His steps didn't falter as he went with urgency toward the bathroom from where he could hear water running, and he managed to discard his clothes without stopping.

"AHH!", Cornelia shrieked when James hugged her from behind.

She was naked in the shower, with soap in her eyes, and she didn't hear him enter the bathroom.

"I missed you", James spoke against Cornelia's neck, and then he kissed the mark that was there. The mark that signified their bond, and that she was his.

Cornelia's gasped at the electric sensation that fired up her nerve endings and her knees gave in. She was glad that James was holding her, or she would plop on the tiled floor of the shower enclosure.

Cornelia lifted her head up so that the water falls on her face and then she blinked the sting from her eyes.

She turned to look at James with a smile that faltered when she noticed that his expression was not good.

"What happened, Jay?", she asked with concern obvious in her voice.

James didn't want to talk about it. Not now. He didn't want to talk or think about anything outside that shower enclosure.

He cupped her cheeks with his palms and kissed her hungrily, stealing her breath in the process.

Cornelia could feel his desperation and she clung to him while responding to his kisses, knowing that once he releases his steam, he will talk about it. And she was glad that he found solace in her. Mates should balance each other, that's how it should be.

James grabbed her buttocks and started lifting her up. She thought that he will take her right there in the shower, and she was ready to wrap her legs around his waist, but he kept on lifting her higher and higher with ease, like she weighed nothing.

Cornelia would admire his strength if not for the lack of something to hold onto. She nervously gripped his shoulders and then fisted his hair, steadying herself on the rod that was holding the shower curtain when he lifted her high enough for her thighs to rest on his shoulders with his face right between them.

Cornelia looked down to see him staring at her intimate bush right at the moment when a low growl escaped his lips.

Cornelia's back hit the wall and her palm pressed on the ceiling a moment before James buried his face into her, and his tongue started caressing her clit.

"Oh, Gods!", she exclaimed. She saw it coming, but she was not prepared for the sensational overload which came with every flick of his tongue.

He lapped at her hungrily, growling and mumbling something she couldn't understand, and her legs shook uncontrollably.

Cornelia hoped that he won't let go because her body was not in her control anymore. She was at his mercy.

"Jay... Jay... James...", she chanted wantonly, her every cry was higher in pitch and then her body tensed as the whole bathroom was spinning.

Only when she bent over him weakly did he stop sucking on her clit.

James lowered her slowly, making her feel his firm body against her soft one, and he stopped the moment his erection prodded at her entrance that was throbbing numbly from her orgasm.

He pinned her against the wall and grabbed her thighs to create that perfect angle for him to penetrate her soft heat which welcomed him.

Cornelia couldn't react to the sensational overload. James was too intense, too needy, greedily touching, caressing, pinching, licking, sucking, and kissing her everywhere without pausing the movements of his hips, and she gasped and moaned as he stretched her insides.

Cornelia feared that she will pass out right there with him inside her. Can one die from too much erogenous stimulation?

"I love you, Cora... I love you...", he murmured with every thrust, hoping that she will believe him and that she won't abandon him no matter what the future brings.

### **Chapter 722 Changes in the air (3)**

Cornelia leaned on James limply as they stood under the shower and he washed her in slow deliberate movements without a word spoken.

He enjoyed her every shiver and sigh as his fingers traced her perfect curves. She was hard and soft in all the right places, absolutely perfect, for him.

He really wanted to touch her more and hear her ecstatic cries again, but he feared that it would be too much, so he held back. It was hard.

When he was satisfied with washing her, James wrapped Cornelia in a towel and carried her to bed.

They laid to face each other, James completely naked and Cornelia wrapped in a towel.

"Will you tell me what's going on?" Cornelia was the first one to speak. He would normally be tense when he came to her in the evening, but this was more than usual.

James puffed his cheeks. "My father wants me to go to the Luna ceremony in the Blue River pack."

"And?"

"We will leave tomorrow morning and stay there for three days."

"And?"

"I can't take you. It won't be safe."

"And?"

"How do you know there is more?", he asked.

"Because you are still not looking me in the eyes, Jay."

James smiled helplessly. Cornelia was not easy to deceive, and it was not like he wanted to lie to her, but he didn't want to tell her unpleasant things either. However, now she was onto him, so he had to say something. "My father has... expectations." His eyes darted toward the folder that was crumpled on the floor.

Cornelia waved her finger, and a stream of silver light flew from there to disappear into the folder. A moment later, the folder rose in the air and drifted to Cornelia's hand.

Cornelia frowned at the contents of the folder and James shrunk while waiting for her reaction. And there it was, gritting of teeth before she said, "Your father wants you to fuck these women?"

James cringed at Cornelia's harsh choice of words which told him she was upset, and he couldn't blame her.

"I have no intention of touching any of them. I'm only telling you that he has expectations and instead of being here with you, where I belong, for the next three days I will need to be his perfect heir, pretend that I'm entertained by those women while avoiding them, and play stupid how I don't see they want to manipulate me."

Cornelia felt guilty for her temper flaring. Before they came here, James was honest about his position and his family, and she knew what she was getting herself into.

Neither of them wanted to hide their relationship, but even if they could find a way around Alpha Edward, with the Guardians watching, it was dangerous to reveal Cornelia's presence. That's why she spent her days in the Dark Howlers pack when James was unable to be with her.

She understood that James was in a difficult situation. This was their first challenge as a couple since they came here and she had no intention of letting him face it on his own.

"So...", Cornelia drawled while keeping the folder on the side. She turned to James and pushed his shoulder so that he lays on his back. "The issue here is that you will go to the Blue River pack, and you can't take me. Right?"

James confirmed. "Right." His eyes widened at the sight of Cornelia opening up the towel. He loved the sight of her skin. She looked edible and he really wanted to lick and suck and bite her all over.

Cornelia smiled at the sight of his hungry gaze. She leaned on him and started drawing invisible patterns on his chest with her index finger while talking, "What will you do if I'm there?"

James' excitement dwindled when he realized that he can't put her in such a situation. "But my father..."

"Let's not think about him", Cornelia interrupted him. "Imagine that tomorrow you reach there, and I'm there as well. What will you do?"

James found it difficult to focus because the sparks of their bonds prickled his skin wherever they touched which was a lot of surface at this point. "Uhm... I would not leave you out of my sight or hands. No sneaking."

Cornelia looked at him for a few long moments before asking. "What makes those three special?"

"They are not special", James said quickly. "You are better than those. You are the best."

"But your father chose them for a reason. What is it?"

James needed a moment. That finger moving over his pecks was super-distracting and his blood pooled in his crotch area to feed his raging hard-on.

"Those are daughters of high-ranking members. Not Alphas' daughters because my father thinks that it's early for me to associate myself with those. Two are daughters of Betas and one is a daughter of a general. The point is that they have status and can bring him benefits..." James' voice trailed as he finally understood where Cornelia was going with this. "You want to meet up with me there."

Cornelia was planning more than just a meet-up. She wanted to be with James right under Alpha Edward's nose because no one, NO ONE gets to set up her mate with another woman.

"Let me take care of this", Cornelia said while getting on top of James to straddle him. Her hips moved and his hot and hard shaft fit perfectly between her wet folds.

James was incredibly turned on by Cornelia's possessiveness that radiated from her naked form.

"What are you going to do?", James asked.

"You will see", Cornelia responded mysteriously.

He would tell her that going there was a crazy idea, but the thing was that other than a handful of people who were living and working in George's villa, no one else from the Red Moon pack was aware of Cornelia's existence. She could show up, shoot up some magic, and say that she was a messenger from the Moon Goddess, and no one would suspect a thing.

Cornelia was telling him how she will call Talia and there were more words after that, but James' mind was buzzing because Cornelia lifted herself and held his shaft in place while lowering herself on him.

His insides shook at the sight of Cornelia who threw her head backward to enjoy the sensation of him filling her up and when he was about halfway in, her jaw fell open slack.

They spent two weeks in the Midnight Guardians pack while healers dealt with the Guardian who intruded and then two more days in the Dark Howlers pack, and they made love many-many times, yet this was the first time for Cornelia to take initiative.

The scene of her sitting on top of him was arousing beyond belief and it was all amplified by the addictive sparks that danced over his cock as she enveloped him in her hot heat.

Her palms landed on his pecs and her hips started rocking against him.

"Is... is this OK?", she asked breathily.

"Perfect", he responded with a growl and his hands traveled from her perky breasts to her hips, unsure where to caress more because every inch of her flesh was inviting.

James lifted himself into a seated position and their bodies moved in sync, kissing and nibbling and fondling, and James thanked the Moon Goddess for giving him such a fantastic mate.

### **Chapter 723 The first morning at the Blue River pack (1)**

~ the Blue River pack ~

Talia smiled before opening her eyes. She knew that the warm body next to her was Damon's, and his addictive scent of the forest and dark chocolate was all around her. It was her favorite way to wake up regardless of the unfamiliar surroundings like a guest bedroom in the packhouse of the Blue River pack.

"Good morning, kitten", Damon greeted her, and she could hear that he was smiling.

"Good morning", she responded and rubbed her cheeks on his chest.

Damon chuckled and pushed her hair to the side, to reveal the left side of her neck. His eyes flashed in approval. His mark was still there.

Ever since their double-marking in the Midnight Guardians pack, his mark was visible on Talia's neck as proof that she was his. After several markings that faded rather quickly, this one was still visible and going strong.

To Damon, it looked like two wolves overlapping and howling at the moon, but Talia said that there was only one wolf, a forest, a moon, and stars. They couldn't agree on what it looked like, but they agreed that the mark was there, and it was nearly identical to Talia's mark on Damon's neck.

"Enjoying the sight of your handiwork?", Talia asked, knowing very well where Damon was looking. He would do that every morning, and a few times during the day.

"I enjoy that you are mine, kitten."

"I am yours even without the mark."

Damon knew that, but... "This is for everyone to see that you are taken. Mine." He leaned to kiss his mark and a shaky sigh escaped her lips. It was such a sensitive spot.

"Mrs. Blake", Damon called in a husky voice. "If you keep clinging onto me like that, we won't get out of this bed."

Talia looked at him with a pout. Why did he make it sound like it was her fault? He started it! And that thing poking her belly was definitely his erection!

Before she could retort, Talia's eye lost focus for a moment, and then she said, "Kai and Meg arrived. Omegas are showing them to their room."

"Good", Damon was pleased. "With them here, Meg can handle Cornelia when she arrives."

Cornelia called them around midnight, asking for a room and to be considered as part of Talia's group. They had no idea what Cornelia was up to, but they knew that Cornelia only needed coordinates because she will teleport into her room, and they both hoped that she won't cause a commotion and expose the existence of witches.

Damon and Talia arrived on the previous day, before any other guests.

The event will officially last for two days, with the first day being Tatiana's Luna ceremony, and the party will extend to the next day. Close friends and family could stay longer, but others will be expected to leave during or after the second day.

Damon's and Talia's intention was to attend Tanya's Luna ceremony as representatives of two separate packs. Considering the latest developments with the Guardians, the duo decided to postpone announcing publicly that Damon's Luna and Alpha of the Midnight Guardians pack were the same person.

For that purpose, Maddox arranged for their rooms to be in a separate wing, where Tony, Kalina, and the other Wilkow sisters will be, so outsiders from other packs won't know that Damon and Talia were sharing a room.

Damon will be officially attending Tanya's Luna ceremony with Maya, Caden, Keith, Pierce, Caleb, and Lulu. They all got rooms in the same area.

Four Talia's guards were present as part of the group from the Dark Howlers pack, but they will be keeping an eye on Talia.

Two out of six Talia's guards were absent. Liam stayed in the Dark Howlers pack with his newly-mated witch Amelia. Sandy was in the Midnight Guardians pack with Tyler, adjusting to her powers and learning about being a Gamma.

Mindy and Gideon were also present, but they are attending independently of Talia and Damon. They are part of Alpha's family and staying on the third floor of the packhouse in Mindy's old room, because Mindy is THE sister, and Gideon is the brother-in-law.

Talia was set to attend Tanya's Luna ceremony as the Alpha of the Midnight Guardians pack with her Betas, Meg and Kai. And since last night, Cornelia will join that mysterious lineup.

Yasmin wanted to attend the ceremony as well, but Axel asked her to take it easy because of the pregnancy.

Now that they were aware of the Guardians lurking from the shadows, Axel didn't want to take risks.

After Talia ventured into Vincent's memories, Vincent was in a coma-like state for eleven days. When he came around, he was disoriented and unsure about where he was. They kept monitoring his condition, but he didn't seem to be lying and healers didn't pick up anything abnormal other than him bursting into crying spells several times a day.

They used this opportunity to gather blood and tissue samples, confirming that Vincent was not a werewolf, a human, or a witch. What was he? No one knew exactly, but he was stronger and faster than his physique would show, his nails were tough as diamonds, yet he didn't possess healing abilities more

than a human would have. His body showed resistance to chants and spiritual energies, but his wounds closed quickly without scarring after they applied the medicinal paste made of herbs.

Liseli wanted to do more tests and to get into his mind again, but Talia didn't want to make a guinea pig out of him or worse... to kill him. Vincent was so damaged from the first attempt, and Talia feared that if they do it again, the guy will be completely useless.

Before they let Vincent go, Cornelia and Yasmin cast a tracking spell on him with the hope that he will lead them to the base of the Guardians.

Axel and the witches staying in the Midnight Guardians pack had a task to follow Vincent's location, and as of now, Vincent was still on the move.

Ex-Alphas, Sophia and Isaac, were questioned about their connections to the Guardians, but they were either not aware that they communicated with a Guardian in disguise, or they were good liars. They seemed genuinely distressed about the possibility of outsiders coming in without being noticed.

The security around Sophia and Isaac increased and now their every interaction was recorded.

James regretted that they didn't let Vincent talk to the ex-Alphas while they monitored them secretly, but by the time he came up with that idea, it was already too late because Vincent was comatose, and the ex-Alphas were alerted that an outsider was trying to approach them.

Damon's and Talia's weeks in the Midnight Guardians pack passed quickly, and they needed to return to the human realm. The vacation (if it can be called as such) was over.

Damon and Talia did as much as they could to prepare for attending this event at the Blue River pack. They were aware of dangers, or at least some of them, but Talia refused to hide. This was a territory of their allies, and it was a perfect place to lure her enemies to show their faces. She hoped that she was not biting down more than she could chew and that her presence here won't put her loved ones in danger.

#### **Chapter 724 The first morning at the Blue River pack (2) [Bonus chapter]**

Damon hugged Talia tightly and inhaled her sweet citrusy scent of freesia that made him lightheaded. There was a time when he thought how he might get bored of that scent, or immune to it, but now he knew he was ignorant because the more he inhaled it, the more he craved Talia's proximity.

That's how the mate bond works, it interlinks their souls and destinies until they can't live without each other, and Damon couldn't imagine his life without Talia. If anything happened to her, he would go mad.

They went through a lot together, filling a lifetime of anxiety, yet all those moments put together, good and bad, were just a fraction of his need for Talia.

More than once, Damon wondered what he would do if they could start again. He would be wiser, and more decisive, and pay attention to Cassie, Marcy, and whatever-their-name-was so that he could chase them away before they cause any harm. Unfortunately, there was no such thing as do-overs and he needed to own his mistakes and stay in the present.

Damon was not the one to brood over the unpleasant past, but when it came to Talia, he was all kinds of different.



Now they were in the Blue River pack and Damon was on the edge as if dangers were closing in from all directions... invisible blades were pointing at Talia, ready to pierce her and take her away. He became paranoid. But it was not just paranoia because Alpha Edward was coming and at tonight's Luna ceremony, many other power-hungry werewolves will have their eyes on Talia, and Guardians were watching, and... will he be able to protect her?

"It will be alright", Talia said, and Damon realized that he allowed his anxiety to seep through their mate bond.

"Promise me kitten...", Damon breathed. "Promise you will be safe. Don't do anything reckless."

"I promise", she said right away.

Damon looked at her with a small frown of scrutiny. He didn't believe her. It was too easy. Talia never went against him, but she would find gaps to slip through and find herself in the middle of a dangerous situation.

He realized that it all depended on the definition of what that reckless was, so he decided to formulate it clearly without imposing too many restrictions.

"Promise that you won't use your abilities", Damon said, obviously satisfied with this solution.

"My abilities?"

He confirmed. "No matter what happens, I don't want you to use your abilities. Promise."

"What if rogues attack?"

"I don't give a rat's ass about anyone else. Your safety comes first. I want you to think before you act. We are in the middle of the Blue River pack, and that's Maddox's pack. Do you believe that enemies can waltz in here and cause a commotion?"

"What are you saying?"

"I am saying that if anything out of place happens, it's probably a ploy to test you. You are here as the Alpha of the Midnight Guardians pack. Other Alphas will show respect when facing you, but what they actually feel is envy and greed. You are the youngest Alpha right now, and your position is proof that you have abilities. For regular werewolves, the mystical qualities of your pack are rumors, however, Alphas know that members of the Midnight Guardians pack have abilities. They will want to find out what your abilities are. Don't fall for it."

"What if they want to harm me?"

"They won't", Damon said with confidence. "You are a precious Alpha female. They will try to test you, manipulate you, charm you, befriend you, use you for their benefit, but no one will be stupid enough to harm you."

Talia lowered her head and instinctively reached to touch the necklace that was around her neck, the only thing she had from her mother. It was silly because she never met her parents, but that necklace was proof they existed, that they were special, and that they cared for her, and Talia hoped that some of their love and wisdom was left in that necklace for her to use.

She knew that Alphas were power-hungry and most of them were ruthless, but the idea of being surrounded by enemies who wanted to do with her who-knows-what was unsettling.

Damon cupped her cheeks with his palms. "Kitten, I need you to trust me on this one. I am here. Your guards and your Betas are here. Let us handle the mess and don't expose your cards."

"You are talking like you know that something bad is coming."

Damon shrugged. "It's you, kitten. You are a magnet for trouble."

Talia frowned. "Does that mean if anything bad happens, it will be because of me?"

"I would never say that."

She exhaled and looked at him guiltily. "I know. I'm sorry. I guess I'm tense and..." She stopped talking when Damon's lips covered hers.

"Let me help you relieve some of that tension", he spoke against her lips and then he kissed her again before slipping lower.

He didn't forget to kiss his mark on her neck and lick it thoroughly until she moaned, and the scent of her arousal filled the room. Next, he peppered kisses on her collarbones, breasts, and abdomen, and then he buried his face between her legs.

Talia struggled to breathe as Damon knew exactly where to run his tongue, how fast, and with how much pressure to make her forget everything outside the confinement of that bed.

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Damon and Talia entered the dining room for breakfast to see that Cornelia was already there, chatting with Maya, Caden, Mindy, Gideon, Meg, and Kai.

The moment Cornelia spotted Talia, she gestured that they need to talk, and Talia mouthed, 'after breakfast', to which Cornelia nodded in agreement.

Maddox's Beta Oliver was also in the dining room, sitting at the second table with Talia's guards, Keith, Caleb, Pierce, and Lulu, and two more females. Talia needed a moment to recognize them as Ivy and Lily, sisters from the Lightclaw pack that were now working as Kalina's assistants. With Kalina being the Luna of the Lightclaw pack, her assistants were treated as high-ranking pack members.

Before Damon and Talia could ask about the whereabouts of their hosts, Beta Oliver explained, "Luna Tatiana's and Luna Kalina's sisters arrived, so Alpha Maddox, Luna Tatiana, Alpha Antony, and Luna Kalina went to welcome them and show them to their rooms. They will all join us shortly. Please, help yourself." He gestured toward the food.

Talia was not used to this formal way of talking where titles and full names were used, but she understood that Oliver did it because there were guests present. Using titles was a sign of respect.

Last night, Kalina was super-excited that her sisters will come. She said that it was a long time since all five of them gathered, and their parents will come later that day as well.

Kalina's party at the Lightclaw pack was to announce that Alpha Anthony found his mate (and his future Luna), so Kalina's family didn't come. However, Tanya's ceremony is the real thing, she will become the Luna of the Blue River pack officially, it was a big deal.

### **Chapter 725 Malia strikes again! (P&D)**

Damon was quick to pull a chair for Talia and to start piling food on her plate as soon as she took her seat. She smiled helplessly at her Alpha, knowing that this was his impulse to provide for his mate.

Talia was aware that it meant a lot to Damon to feed her, and she didn't have the heart to remind him that he can't do that for lunch or dinner because other people will be watching, and his doting behavior will be a giveaway that they were mates.

Per Damon's request, Damon and Talia were assigned to sit at the same table during the upcoming ceremonies and Talia considered making changes to those arrangements. She quickly dismissed that idea because Damon will blow a fuse if any man comes to talk to her.

Talia wondered if it would be better if she came here as Damon's Luna, and for Alpha Natalia Moonrider to reject the invitation. But then... they wanted to test the waters and see how people will treat Talia before they discover that the largest pack in North America just got larger because Damon's mate is an Alpha with a pack.

Damon suggested that they keep their secret until James' birthday when the two of them would make the grand reveal right in Alpha Edward's packhouse. Talia was not sure how Alpha Edward would react, but she would love to record it and replay it for many years to come. She was confident that it will be epic.

At the thought of Alpha Edward's reactions, Talia glanced at Cornelia and wondered, what was the witch up to? Wasn't she aware that James will arrive in a few hours? Will they pretend not to know each other? As a witch, Cornelia didn't feel the pull of the bond like werewolves, but James will go crazy in need to be close to her, to touch her, to feed her... and Alpha Edward will be right there. Oh, and there was the point that James will go berserk if any guy dares to get close to Cornelia. Even if no one notices that mark on Cornelia's neck, they will notice James' strange behavior. This can easily turn into a disaster.

Talia jolted when Damon squeezed her knee under the table.

"Eyes on me, kitten", he growled lowly.

Talia couldn't believe it. She was looking at Cornelia, for crying out loud!

Damon was always possessive and jealous, but since their double-marking at the Midnight Guardians pack, he became unreasonable.

Now that she thought about it, Talia realized that she didn't have the capacity of worrying about James and Cornelia because she was sitting next to a man who was a walking calamity.

Talia was here as the Alpha of the Midnight Guardians pack, and she will definitely end up talking to Alphas and high-ranking members of other packs while Damon... Damon will probably flip this place and ruin the party.

Talia glanced at the second table where Keith was with Pierce, Caleb, and Lulu. Her four guards were chatting in a good mood with Beta Oliver, Ivy, and Lily, and stuffing their mouths with food. Luckily, they were all werewolves (except for Cornelia), so no one thought of them like they were starving for a week before coming here.

Talia was happy to see Keith in good spirits. Their visit to other realms didn't start well, but after Keith got a task to interrogate Sophia and Isaac, he spent most of the time training warriors of the Midnight Guardians pack, and at two casual parties they had there, Keith volunteered to be the bartender where he introduced members of the Midnight Guardians pack to the art of mixology (how he called it).

Damon had his doubts about bringing Lulu along because she didn't take the blood oath, but Keith assured them that Lulu was loyal. On top of that, Talia said how the blood oath was not a requirement for one to be her guard, so Damon didn't have reasons to leave Lulu behind.

Talia didn't give importance to the blood oath, but considering that Lulu was the only one who missed that ceremony and that Damon was grumbling whenever Lulu was mentioned, Talia started feeling uncomfortable around Lulu as well.

Talia dismissed unpleasant thoughts. It was a matter of trust and she trusted that Lulu didn't have bad intentions. Why Lulu avoided the blood oath? That was Lulu's business and Talia didn't want to force it. Besides, it's not like Talia and Lulu will be on their own in the middle of an enemy territory where Talia's life will depend on Lulu, so it was fine to bring Lulu along. At least that's what Talia hoped.

An excited chatter of female voices was becoming louder from the hallway, signifying that the Wilkow sisters were coming.

Talia knew that Kalina had four sisters, and they were all close in age.

Tatiana was the oldest one, twenty-four years old. Next were Lidia, Daria, Varya, and Kalina was the youngest, currently twenty years old. With the pregnancy of werewolves lasting about five months, the mother of the Wilkow sisters was able to give birth to five daughters in four years and to have a breather between pregnancies.

Talia turned in time to see that Tatiana entered the dining room with four brunettes surrounding her. Kalina was there, and Talia only needed to figure out which ones were Daria, Lidia, and Varya.

Maddox and Tony were walking a few steps behind the females that talked enthusiastically at the same time.

Just as everyone was in the dining room, everything abruptly stopped.

Somehow, all eyes were directed at the female who was wearing a white t-shirt and jeans. Her long brown hair cascaded over her shoulders as her dark eyes looked intently at the table where Beta Oliver was with Ivy, Lily, and Talia's guards.

Talia inhaled sharply and turned toward that table to see Pierce standing up while looking at the brunette like he had never seen a woman in his life. The scene was quite comical because his cheeks were full of whatever food he had in there, and he had smidges of cream cheese around his mouth.

The room was so quiet and the only thing making noise were Pierce's running shoes as he walked toward the female who became his whole world in an instant.

Tanya and Kalina stepped to the side to open the path and the other two Wilkow sisters did the same.

Kalina bit her lip so that she doesn't squeal from excitement. That was her middle sister, Daria. And she found her mate!

Kalina looked at Talia with stars in her eyes. Her belief that Talia had mate-matching abilities was reinforced again!

Maya and Meg exchanged knowing glances. Malia strikes again!

Pierce stopped moving only when he was so close that their bodies nearly touched, and he looked down into Daria's dark eyes that gazed expectantly into his baby blues.

He took a deep breath, wondering if she was smelling of freshly baked buttery pastries, or if that was the food he just ate (and he still had some in his mouth).

Now that they stood next to each other, with Pierce standing a full head taller compared to Daria, everyone noticed that they had matching clothes; white short-sleeved t-shirts, jeans, and light gray running shoes.

#### **Chapter 726 Deal for Talia's special advisor**

"I'm Daria", she squeaked, sounding more like a five years-old girl than a grown female. She quickly cleared her throat and repeated, "Daria. Daria Wilkow." This time, her voice was normal.

Pierce smiled at the silly woman who was a nervous wreck. Didn't she know how perfect she was? He swallowed food from his mouth before saying, "Pierce."

Pierce licked his lips slowly, somehow managing to smear the cream cheese further, and then he asked Daria, "Are you hungry?"

He tilted his head toward the table with food, hoping that she will say she was horny and not hungry, and they can get down to the important parts of mating and marking.

"Yeah. I am...", Daria breathed and got on her toes at the same time her arms snaked around his neck to pull him down.

Pierce thought that his gorgeous mate will kiss him, but she ended up licking him around his lips. It would be gross, but she smelled of fresh pastries and wherever she touched him was electric.

Daria licked Pierce's face clean from cream cheese and crumbs, and then she smacked her lips. "I had enough food. Unless you have something more important to do, I want you. Now."

Pierce swallowed hard while wondering if he should pinch himself to make sure he was not dreaming. He heard stories about how mates were made for each other, and now he confirmed it was true because just as he was horny, his mate wanted him as well. Things didn't get better than that!

He was sure that his jeans will explode how much his erection was stretching them. Damn, she was hot!

No one said a word when Daria grabbed Pierce's t-shirt, right in the middle of his chest area, and walked out of the dining room with Pierce following obediently.

"Hahaha! Mama and Papa will go crazy when they hear about Ria!", Kalina laughed loudly while clapping, pulling everyone out of their stupor, and then she turned to Talia. "Lia, that's your guard. Is he a good man?"

Talia nodded with a big smile on her face. "He is."

Tatiana bobbed her head happily. "I guess we can cancel her return flight to Germany." Tatiana was elated that another of her sisters will stay nearby.

Tatiana was in the final stages of moving her "Dama T" fashion business. Maddox secured her a fantastic office space that was in a human city, close to the territory of the Blue River pack. He got her a whole building that included private offices, shared and collaborative areas, storage spaces for fabrics and garments, and even a store that looked like a series of VIP lounges where customers can see catalogs and have private shows of the latest collections. The whole building featured high-tech cabling and security, and every room had controlled temperature and humidity.

Tatiana was impressed. Her mate thought of everything. Once the move of "Dama T" completes, Tatiana won't have a reason to go to Europe, so she was very happy that one more of her sisters will stay in the continental US.

"Talia, you are awesome!" Maya exclaimed.

"Oh, yes.", Mindy was quick to join. "We need to document this and use it to feature our mate-matching business."

"Don't make decisions related to my Alpha without involving me", Meg protested.

Talia wanted to tell them to stop that nonsense because she had nothing to do with Pierce and Daria being mates, but she didn't want to argue with them. It was useless anyway.

With the latest news being Daria and Pierce being mates, Tatiana introduced her newly-arrived sisters.

"These are Lidia and Varya", she said, and then she called out the names of everyone who was in the dining room before they continued eating.

...

After breakfast, Cornelia went to the study with Damon and Talia.

Cornelia wanted to talk only to Talia, but Damon insisted on tagging along, so here they were.

"I told you that I want to be treated as a member of your party", Cornelia said.

Talia had to voice her concerns. "You are aware that James and Alpha Edward will be here."

Cornelia made a face. "Yes, I am. The old bastard is setting up my mate with some sluts."

Talia's heart was beating wildly as she realized that Cornelia was about to do something reckless. She was aware of Cornelia's situation and if that was her and Damon, Talia would burn everything. However, that would be an emotionally driven action, and not a wise one.

She had to ask, "What will you do?"

"I will prevent that from happening.", Cornelia said with confidence.

"How?"

"To be honest..." Cornelia paused. "I'm not sure." Was choking Alpha Edward to death an option?

"Don't be impulsive", Damon said.

Cornelia snapped to look at him. "Would you be able to sit and watch as other men are swarming your mate?" Seeing Damon's expression darkening, Cornelia smirked. "I thought so. If you don't plan to help, then let me deal with my problem."

"We want to help, we really do", Talia was quick to say. "But we can't create a commotion at an event that will be full of Alphas and high-ranking members."

"If things go as planned, there won't be any commotion", Cornelia said.

Talia's face lit up. "So, you have a plan!"

"I have almost a plan", Cornelia admitted. "How things turn out will depend on Alpha Edward and how persistent those women are to get their hands on James. However, no matter what happens, I need to attend the event as someone important, important enough that I can interfere."

"A member of my party is not important", Talia said sourly. If it was a Beta or someone high-ranking, it would be different, but how can Cornelia impersonate a high-ranking she-wolf when it was obvious that she didn't have a wolf?

Cornelia knew that it was a long shot filled with dangers and uncertainties, but how could she stay on the side when James was facing an evening where other women will try to get their hands on him?

Cornelia knew enough about Alpha Edward to be able to predict two likely outcomes. One was that Alpha Edward successfully pressures James into being close to another woman. Even if James doesn't get touchy-feely with that woman, just him being friendly with a female who was flirty would break Cornelia's heart, and then Cornelia will break something... or someone. The second possible outcome was for James to resist his father, which will make Alpha Edward punish him. Again, it was not a scenario Cornelia would approve of.

'What do you think?', Talia asked Damon through their mind-link.

'I don't like it', Damon responded honestly. 'Cornelia is a loose cannon, unfamiliar with werewolves and our ways. Considering that Alpha Edward has plans with James that include other women, Cornelia will explode.'

That was exactly what Talia was thinking, but how can she deny helping Cornelia when it was a matter of mates? If Damon was in trouble and her friends refused to help, Talia would be devastated.

'You want to help her', Damon's voice sounded in Talia's head.

'Of course, I do', Talia confirmed. 'If that old guy is scheming against fated mates, I will help her get rid of him and hide the evidence.' Those were Talia's honest sentiments, but as an Alpha responsible for a pack, she also knew that she needed to exercise caution. Going wild based on emotions was not a good thing.

### **Chapter 727 Talia's special advisor**

"Introduce me as your special advisor", Cornelia demanded from Talia. "Considering the mystery surrounding the Midnight Guardians pack, no one will dare to question it."

Talia didn't see a problem with introducing Cornelia as an advisor, or as anything else Cornelia wanted. After all, other than Yasmin, Cornelia was the second witch that provided assistance without demanding some kind of a deal for the smallest things. In addition to that, Cornelia was mated to James, a teenage genius, and doing a favor to Cornelia will definitely help them keep James as their ally.

However, Talia was concerned about Cornelia's safety. If Cornelia gets compromised and people realize her special background, Cornelia will get a big invisible target on her back. It will also cause a cascading effect where everyone close to Cornelia will be put under scrutiny. Talia already had so many problems on her hands that she didn't want to add more.

But even with weighing all that, Talia couldn't just refuse Cornelia.

Talia needed a few moments to come up with something.

"Cornelia", Talia called. "Promise that no matter what happens, you won't reveal your identity as a witch."

Cornelia was quick to agree. "No one will find out." And live to tell about it. She kept this second part to herself.

Seeing that Talia was reluctant, Cornelia decided to give her another push. "Do you want us to make a deal?"

Talia refused. "That won't be necessary. I consider you as my friend and friends help each other when they can."

Cornelia was surprised that Talia called her a friend, but the witch didn't care about that mushy stuff. Her mate was pressured to go against their bond or suffer consequences, and Cornelia had no intention of giving up here.

"Talia", Cornelia spoke solemnly. "My mate is facing a tough situation. Without my involvement, he will end up harmed, no matter what he does. I need to help him. I need to try. Please..." Cornelia didn't say more, but Talia didn't need to hear anything else.

"I understand. Feel free to use identity as my special advisor. But promise me one thing."

"Another promise?", Cornelia asked suspiciously.



"If you are over your head, tell me. Damon and I will help you. And it's not just the two of us. Our friends also believe in the mate bond, and no one approves of Alpha Edward's methods. Don't think that turning Alpha Edward into a frog will solve anything. He is still alive because he is crafty and dangerous, and his disappearance will have unimaginable consequences." This was the reason why George still didn't issue an Alpha challenge to Alpha Edward. George was ensuring that the society of werewolves won't blow into shit after he defeats Alpha Edward. The old guy had many spies with orders to eliminate certain people if anything happens to him.

Cornelia was confused. She only wanted to save James from sluts, yet Talia was talking about Alpha Edward. Cornelia didn't think that the old guy was worth mentioning. "What are you trying to say?"

"You are not alone, and you should reach out if you need assistance."

Cornelia agreed. "That is something I can promise."

With James-related business out of the way, Cornelia thought of giving some information, "James is coming here with Alpha Edward, Luna Layla, and Nora."

Both Damon and Talia frowned at the mention of Nora.

Nora was one of the few outsiders who were in close contact with Talia, and Nora doesn't know that Talia (Damon's mate) is Alpha Natalia Moonrider. Sure, Nora took the blood oath not to harm Talia (among other people), but what if she recognizes Talia and speaks without thinking? Nora was not the sharpest tool in the shed.

Cornelia left the study, leaving Damon and Talia behind.

"Are you worried about Cornelia and James?", Damon asked.

"Yes, and also..." She lifted her head to look at him. "Isn't Marcy here? What if her parents or Nora see her?"

Damon's mouth formed a big 'O'. He forgot about Marcy!

"I will talk to Max so he can make sure it doesn't happen", he said.

Damon guessed that Maddox won't be happy. Maddox was still angry at Damon for setting him up with keeping Marcy in his pack, and when Damon reminds him that the group from the Red Moon pack will be in attendance... it won't be good.

"Kitten, can you come with me to talk to Max?"

With Talia present, Maddox will control his temper.

Unsuspecting Talia agreed.

...

Later that day...

Cornelia was about to knock on the door, but before her knuckles connected with the wooden surface, the door opened.

"Oh!", Mindy exclaimed in surprise.

Gideon opened the door, and Mindy was quick to exit only to nearly bump into Cornelia.

"Did you come to visit us? Or do you have some business with Gideon?", Mindy asked Cornelia who was eyeing their outfits.

Mindy was wearing a pastel orange summer dress and had her hair in a French braid, while Gideon wore a dark brown suit, and his hair was neatly slicked back.

"Sorry", Cornelia said. "Actually, I was hoping to talk to you, Mindy. Uhm... did the ceremony move to earlier in the day?"

"No", Mindy responded with a smile as she realized that Cornelia was referring to their dress-up. "We are going to meet my parents." She inched closer to straighten Gideon's necktie. "First impression is important."

Gideon was visibly nervous. He was going to meet his in-laws. The bad thing was that they were actually younger than he was, and he worried what they will think about him. What will he do if they don't approve? Will his pumpkin-infused princess like him less? What if she rejects him as her mate?

Gideon inhaled a shaky breath and smiled ugly at Cornelia.

Cornelia's eyebrows shoot up. Why was Gideon showing his teeth? Was that a threat? Was he about to bite her?

Seeing that neither Gideon nor Cornelia spoke, Mindy said, "We are going to be late, but we can spare a minute. Cornelia, can you tell me quickly why you are here?"

"It's not important. We can talk later."

Mindy didn't have time to coddle the witch. Gideon was on the verge of falling apart, no matter how much she told him that her parents were not scary. Did Maddox frighten Gideon when Mindy was not looking?

Cornelia watched as Mindy and Gideon moved down the hallway and then she followed dejectedly.

Now that her status as Talia's special advisor was confirmed, Cornelia didn't have much to do, so she relaxed in her room while thinking about when James will arrive and how he will react when he sees her... And then it hit her: that was a fancy party and she had nothing to wear!

Since she was staying in the human realm, Cornelia had a few sets of casual clothing that she would wear while in the Dark Howlers pack. During nights she would be naked with James, and she didn't go anywhere else.

That was why she went to see Mindy, with the hope that Mindy will have a dress Cornelia could wear. They were about the same size (with Cornelia being wider in the hips), as for other females, Talia was too skinny, Maya was too tall, Meg was petite, and Cornelia didn't know anyone else.

Now what?

**Chapter 728 Tatiana's bridesmaids**

"Cornelia?", Talia called, making the witch snap out of her thoughts. "Is everything OK?"

Talia saw Cornelia standing on the stairs and spacing out, so she got worried.

Cornelia looked at Talia, and she was about to say how it was not important, but then she remembered Talia's words that they were friends who help each other. Can Talia help her with this outfit-predicament? Cornelia was not sure, but there was no harm in telling Talia about it.

"I have nothing to wear for the party", Cornelia admitted.

Talia blinked at the witch. It was the first time for Talia to hear Cornelia speak in such a humble tone. Even when she was asking a favor to be Talia's assistant, there was a dose of haughtiness, yet now Cornelia appeared... vulnerable.

How can Talia ignore a friend in need? "I know just the person who can help!"

Cornelia's eyes widened. "You do?"

"Yes, yes. I'm heading there now. Follow me..."

Talia led Cornelia to a room that was on the second floor of the packhouse. The noise and clamor of female voices were heard through the closed door.

After a short knock, without waiting for an answer, Talia opened the door to reveal a bright room that looked like storage.

Portable racks were lining the space, with garment bags hanging on them, and one corner was filled with boxes that had shoes sticking out of them. On the left, several dressers with many half-open drawers revealed sparkly jewelry and other accessories.

"Tanya", Talia called and Cornelia snapped to look at the people who were sitting on the sofas in the middle of the room. Other than Tatiana, there were also Kalina, Varya, Lidia, Meg, Maya, Ivy, Lily, and several other females that Cornelia didn't recognize.

"Cornelia has a wardrobe issue and nothing to wear for tonight. Can you help her?", Talia asked.

Tatiana waved her hand toward the racks with garments that were wrapped in plastic, and one of the unknown females stood up. "Of course! We brought extra dresses."

Both Talia and Cornelia frowned in confusion at the deep voice that came with a heavy Italian accent, and it definitely belonged to a male. The tall and slim figure approaching them had a wide-brimmed pink hat with white flowers, and he was wearing a pink jumpsuit, and that sway in the hips as he walked belonged to a female who was on a catwalk. He also had an eyeliner and pink lip-gloss, but under all that makeup and glitz was definitely a male.

The guy eyed Cornelia. "Do you have a color preference? Your aura is strong and confident, we should go bold to match it and make a statement. How about crimson? Let's pick a few dresses and see if alterations will be needed. Nothing too long because we don't want to hide those gorgeous legs..."

He was speaking so quickly that Cornelia had difficulty following his words. He ended with, "I am Mario, Dama T's assistant." He gestured toward Tatiana, indicating that she was Dama T, and then he emphasized, "Her ONLY assistant."

Tatiana rolled her eyes. "No one will take your job, Mario!"

Mario was upset to hear that Tatiana had unknown people around her and he assumed that it was Maddox's way of keeping him away from his boss (aka Tatiana). Before Tatiana found her husband-to-be (how Mario addressed Maddox), Mario was working closely with Tatiana, business-related and private, yet now they were excluding him. They even picked a new location for the "Dama T" headquarters without him and that was a big deal!

Unfortunately, Mario was human, and Tatiana didn't know how to explain that her union with Maddox meant she was a Luna, leading a whole pack of werewolves, and she needed people by her side. It was a lot of work.

Mario threw Tatiana an angry side-glance. "I am just making sure."

Talia heard that Tatiana brought some of the designers from the "Dama T" here. They were all humans, from Europe. A number of them agreed to move to the United States so they can work from the new location, and it seemed that this sassy Mario-person was one of them.

Mario was stuffing garment bags in Cornelia's arms, and in less than ten seconds, the witch couldn't be seen under all those clothes. Mario pushed her toward the bathroom with, "Come, dear... let me help you put these on."

Cornelia moved per command, still not quite sure what she got herself into. Mario was a skinny male in a pink jumpsuit, a human without powers, yet he moved swiftly and spoke even faster, and Cornelia's mind was spinning while wondering if his super-power was to confuse his opponents.

Talia was satisfied that she got to solve Cornelia's outfit problem, and she did it by simply bringing the witch here.

Why was Talia here?

Alpha Natalia Moonrider was more than just a guest at Tatiana's Luna ceremony. She had a role to play.

Normally, a Luna ceremony would be conducted under a full moon, with pack members surrounding Alpha and Luna who vow to lead the pack to the best of their abilities, drink a mystical potion, and mix their blood. This ceremony allows Luna to tap into the powers of the pack and establish a mind-link if she didn't have it already.

Maddox and Tatiana did this in a small ceremony with just selected pack members present.

Considering that both Maddox and Tatiana had many connections with humans, Maddox as the CEO of the River Construction, and Tatiana as the owner of the "Dama T", the duo decided to celebrate their union with a unique ceremony that will include their human friends also, and it resembled a human wedding.

Tatiana will walk down the aisle while wearing a white wedding gown and have bridesmaids and that's where Alpha Natalia Moonrider will fit as part of this spectacle.

Talia came to try her bridesmaid's dress. Damon was in a different room in the packhouse, where guys were trying on suits.

Talia wanted to ask which one was her dress, but she noticed that Tatiana's mood was not right.

"Did something happen?"

Kalina responded. "With Daria enjoying her mate, we are one bridesmaid short."

"Can we just proceed with the ceremony without her?", Meg asked.

'CRACKLE-CRACK!'

Tatiana gripped the armrest of her chair with such force that the wood cracked. "My lucky number is thirteen. I need twelve bridesmaids with me being the thirteenth female on that podium!"

"Where can we find another one?", Varya spoke in a pleading voice while signaling with her eyes that Tatiana should let go of that armrest before their human friends freak out. Tatiana always had a bossy temper, and since Maddox marked her, it got worse.

Talia got an idea. "You need an available female, and there is one." Talia pointed at the bathroom where Cornelia went with Mario. "Cornelia needs a dress, and she is about the same height as Daria. As long as the dress fits, I'm sure she will be happy to help."

Tatiana's face lit up and she looked at the door of the bathroom with sparkles in her eyes.

Cornelia stepped out of the bathroom in a bright red sleeveless mini dress with a heart-shaped neckline and a see-through tail that reached her knees. It fit her well and Mario said that she should try the shoes to match, and that's why she came out, but she paused when she realized that everyone was looking at her.

"What?", Cornelia asked. Did she miss something?

And that's how Cornelia ended up being a bridesmaid for Tatiana's Luna ceremony.

### **Chapter 729 Malia strikes again! (L&J)**

The packhouse was buzzing with activity which extended to nearby houses where guests were staying.

This was a high-profile three days-long event full of important people, and reporters were there as well.

The schedule for the first day included a party that starts in the afternoon with snacks, drinks, and music. When looking from the packhouse, at the back of the garden was a massive event hall that was set up with tables and chairs that extended into the garden.

White and golden streamers created elegant arcs between balloons, and everything was luxurious.

The archway made out of white roses was set on a podium in the garden, ready for the main ceremony that was scheduled at sunset. The ceremony will resemble a wedding, and Tatiana and Maddox mentioned to their human guests that they are worshiping the Moon and Nature; the couple hoped that will be enough to explain the Shaman and strange chants which will include words such as Alpha and Luna and blessings of the Moon Goddess.

After the ceremony, there will be dinner, followed by endless snacks and drinks until late into the night.

For the second and third days, the schedule was less formal. Guests will pick among activities such as fishing, boating, sparring (no weapons allowed), and a tour of the territory which included seeing rehabilitation facilities for abused and ostracized members of the werewolf society. The Blue River pack had a reputation for providing protection and education to the less fortunate ones, and Maddox hoped that they will secure some donations as well.

Another goal of this extension to the party was that people can approach Tatiana and meet the new Luna of the Blue River pack in a casual setting.

Not all guests were set to stay for more than one day, and a handful of guests announced that they will leave after midnight. Due to security concerns, some Alphas refused to stay overnight out of fear that rogues will attack their territories because everyone knew about this event.

It was lunchtime with many people seated in the garden when Alpha Cristian arrived with his Luna Michelle and their son Ashton. Cristian's Beta Imre stayed in the Spring Leaf pack to take care of any issues that might arise during their absence.

Maddox was quick to stand up and welcome Alpha Cristian and his family.

As the Alpha family from the Spring Leaf pack crossed the terrace that connected to the garden, two figures emerged after them. Those were generals from the Spring Leaf pack, Jordan and Allen.

Jordan and Allen were both tall, tanned, and super-muscular, and humans usually thought that they were bodybuilders.

On his third step on the terrace, Jordan froze completely like someone hit a pause button.

Allen was alerted and he quickly reached for the young Alpha Ashton.

"Ahh!", the six years-old Ashton cried in surprise because Allen grabbed his shirt from behind and handled him like a chicken.

Allen pushed the boy behind him and crouched to observe the crowd, ready to attack, thinking that Jordan's unusual behavior was because he spotted an enemy.

This aggressiveness and the boy's cry for help got everyone's attention, and only a few noticed that Lidia, the second Wilkow sister, was standing up from her chair in slow motion.

"AHHH!", this shriek escaped Kalina's lips when she realized that the frozen bulky man on the terrace was her brother-in-law.

Mates! Malia strikes again!

Talia did her best to ignore Meg, Maya, and Mindy who were giving her knowing glances. There was no point in reacting because no matter what she says, those girlfriends made up their minds that Talia had the power to bring mates together.

After an unknown measure of time, Jordan and Lidia moved toward each other.

Lidia was a tall brunette with curves in all the right places, but when Jordan stood next to her, she looked feeble next to his bulky frame, like the smallest breeze would blow her away.

Jordan lifted his hand and caressed her cheek with his thumb.

Both of them were high on the fact that their other half was right there, and the addictive sparks that flared upon their contact confirmed it.

Lidia smiled and leaned into his touch. Jordan released a low growl, in a possessive approval of her small action that confirmed her acceptance.

"My love...", he murmured, and a number of sighs and suppressed squeals were heard from females who were nearby.

General Allen frowned at the scene in front of him. He knew Jordan since they were kids. They trained and partied together, and as much as Jordan would turn into a softy when he was drunk, that never-ever happened when he was sober, and Allen was confident that Jordan didn't lick any alcohol since the previous night. Jordan was never this... mushy. Was that a smile on Jordan's face? It looked creepy.

What was creepy for Allen, Lidia saw as the most enchanting smile in her life. Everything about Jordan was perfect. She liked them big and muscular, and this was a perfect male specimen like she picked from a catalog of hotties.

Jordan's scent reminded her of kremowka papieska, a cream cake that her grandmother used to make. Lidia could feel the flaky pastry filled with eggy custard and dusted with powdered sugar and she swallowed the saliva that pooled in her mouth. She really wanted to taste him.

Without any warning, Lidia jumped on Jordan, and he was quick to grab her ass and support her there for her to press on his crotch area where a bulge was formed.

Lidia released a shaky breath, knowing what she felt at the cradle of her thighs was for her.

Her arms snaked around his neck and her ankles connected behind him.

"Second floor. Take right at the landing...", Lidia spoke, and Jordan's legs moved with urgency knowing that she was navigating them toward her room. He couldn't run fast enough.

"Is that your sister's boyfriend?", Mario asked Tatiana who looked at the double door through which Lidia and Jordan disappeared like her mortal enemy was there.

Tatiana would often talk about her sisters, but never in the same sentence with guys, giving him the impression that the Wilkow sisters didn't have romance in their lives. As of recently, Tatiana would talk about Kalina and Tony, and the Maddox character appeared out of nowhere, but the other three sisters were single how much Mario knew.

"Yes, yes", Kalina responded instead of Tatiana. "They love each other very much." There was no way a human would understand how two strangers could act so familiar from the moment they met.

"This reunion was totally Hollywood-worthy.", one female said dreamily.

Kalina responded with a stiff smile while wondering if Tatiana will be able to find another substitute bridesmaid because another Wilkow sister was taken and probably won't make an appearance tonight.

"Varya", Tatiana called grimly. "You are not allowed to find a man before my ceremony."

Varya burst into a laugh. She loved all of her sisters, but if a mate comes, she will bail the ceremony without a second thought and she wouldn't have any regrets about it. She looked at the newcomers, and after confirming that Cristian was taken, Ashton was too young, and her wolf didn't stir at the sight of Allen, Varya turned her attention back to the food on her plate while stabbing that steak like it was his fault that she ended up as the last unmated one among five sisters.

### **Chapter 730 James' insecurities**

The group from the Red Moon pack was arriving in two vehicles, with four passengers each.

Two high-ranking soldiers were in front of each car, taking turns driving while the back rows were reserved for passengers. In the first car were Alpha Edward and Luna Layla, while in the second car were James and Nora.

They were currently stuck in line at one of the checkpoints through which guests needed to pass in order to enter the territory of the Blue River pack.

Guards stationed there were verifying headcount and invitations. Also, after confirming that only were-people were present inside vehicles, guests were warned that humans will be in attendance and that shifting into their wolf forms or exhibiting their super-strength was prohibited. It was a usual procedure, to avoid exposure, yet there was always a rowdy guest or two who had a few drinks too many that started growing fangs and growled before someone knocked him out.

These kinds of events were a nightmare for security. Guards needed to ensure that only the right people attend the event and that no one will be disturbed by party crashers that included (but were not limited to) bitter ex-es, hopeful mistresses-to-be, malicious rogues, and attention-seekers who wanted to appear in the news on the next day.

Unfortunately, all this tightened security created delays for the people who had the right to attend the event.

James was checking his phone every few minutes. There were six more cars ahead of them and it was taking forever.

James always kept his head cool, but that changed once Cornelia entered his life. He was aware of the effect she had on him, and he knew that with Cornelia by his side everything could collapse, but at the same time, he couldn't stay away from her. It was a form of self-harming pleasurable madness that he sank into willingly.

James left that morning while Cornelia was sleeping. She looked so beautiful and peaceful that he didn't want to disturb her. He scribbled her a note that she should take care of and that they will stay in touch via text messages.

It wouldn't be strange, since every morning James would leave early, and whenever Cornelia woke up, she would teleport to the Dark Howlers pack, and they wouldn't see each other until evening. They had



phones to communicate, but only in case of an emergency so that they avoid the possibility of being discovered.

Today was different.

On the previous night, Cornelia saw the files with information on three females that Alpha Edward gave to James, and Cornelia hinted that she will do something about it, and then they had sex and he kind of forgot about it, but now his nerves were acting out.

How can James not worry when Cornelia was not responding to his texts, and he had no idea what she was up to? Or maybe she was not going to do anything... yes, yes, that made sense. His chocolate-colored Goddess was set on testing him. He will need to find a way to avoid those females and survive the next two days without following his father's orders.

"Troubles with your girlfriend?", Nora asked mockingly.

James narrowed his eyes at her while hiding his phone from Nora's curious gaze. "What did you say?"

Nora raised her hands, palms up and she tilted her head at the tinted privacy glass that separated them from the soldiers in front. "I noticed you are nervous, and I thought that we could talk to pass the time."

"Mind your own business", James growled at her menacingly and Nora shrunk in her seat.

The truth was that since they left the Red Moon pack, Nora was dying from boredom and James was completely ignoring her.

She would prefer to be with Alpha Edward in the car, but with Luna Layla present, that wouldn't be appropriate, so she was stuck with this teenager who was easily irritated.

Nora would like to tell Alpha Edward that James brought a woman with him from the Dark Howlers pack, and she would tell about George and Dawn as well, but they forced her to do that stupid blood oath and if she hinted about those secrets, there would be serious consequences, so she had to keep quiet.

Nora couldn't wait to get out of that car, shower, dress up, and mingle. Who knows? Maybe she finds her mate, and he will be tall, handsome, and high-ranking?

...

The afternoon was trickling away and James was sitting in his room and cursing under his breath at his phone. Why the hell was Cornelia not responding?

Did she get angry at him for coming to this party and leaving her behind?

James rubbed his face with force as insecurities crept into his heart. She told him that it was not a good idea to go ahead with marking and that she shouldn't come to the human realm and... she was right.

At the end of the day, there was a limit to how much his wits can save him, and James had to face the reality that he was just a teenager who had to obey his father in order to survive. He was not qualified to have a mate. A real man would protect his mate and stand for what he believes in, yet here was James...

about to attend a party he hated and to be surrounded by people he didn't care about, and all that while his mate was alone somewhere.

He regretted not refusing Alpha Edward the moment he heard that he needed to join this circus. Alpha Edward would be angry and punish him, but even if he got a severe beating, he would end up staying in the Red Moon pack with Cornelia instead of being here.

Oh, God! There will be press coverage and what if Cornelia sees him with some women hanging on his arm? Of course, James wouldn't get close to any random woman, but what if they stick to him while posing for a photo? How will he explain that to Cornelia?

The more he thought about it, the more he wanted to run... run from everything. Maybe that's what he should do. Go home, find Cornelia and run. Surely, Alpha Damon will give them a temporary refuge until they figure out something, or maybe they could go to the Midnight Guardians pack or to the Silver Flame Coven and stay there forever.

'Where are you?', Alpha Edward's stern voice sounded in James' head.

James sucked in a sharp breath while checking the time. How long was he spacing out when his father was this angry? 'I'm almost done getting ready.'

'Hurry up!', Alpha Edward snapped.

James realized that he was running out of time. The sun was getting lower in the sky, and the noise from outside was a giveaway that the event was ongoing, and if James didn't make an appearance, Alpha Edward will send someone for him, and then it won't be good.

James told himself not to panic. He needed to get down there and he will find a way out of this. Surely, with Alpha Damon, Alpha Talia, Maya, Caden, Alpha Tony, Luna Kalina, and other people who were aware that Cornelia was his mate, James will be able to figure out at least one exit strategy.