

WALKING INTO THE BEAST WORLD

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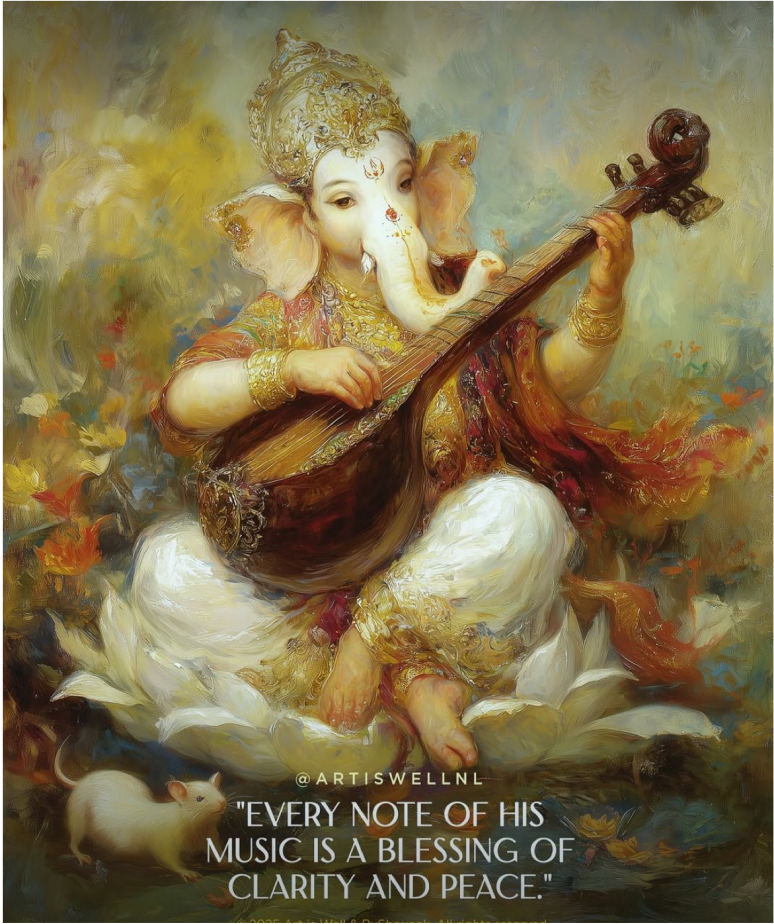
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She is power...

She is beauty...

She is life...

She is me...

DEDICATION

“To every heart that still believes in second chances.”

Thank you:

Maa and Papa for the support.

DISCLAIMER

The characters and world belong to their respective creators/owners. This story is made out of love and admiration for the original work. No copyright infringement is intended. This story may also include cultural references, languages, or traditions from various backgrounds. The author has made every effort to portray them respectfully and accurately, but any unintentional inaccuracies are not meant to offend.

Also contains mature themes, language, or sensitive topics intended for readers 18+. Reader discretion is advised. It's purely fictional and created for entertainment purposes.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the Beast World.

Before you step into this story, I want you to take a slow breath and leave behind everything you know about love, rules, civilization, and logic. This tale was not written for the faint-hearted. It was written for the wild souls — the ones who ache for fantasy, who crave tenderness, who believe in magic, destiny, and love that refuses to fit into a single shape.

This is the journey of Kritika, a woman thrown into a world of untamed lands, beast-men, divine secrets, ancient prophecies, and bonds that go beyond blood and beyond time. Here, strength is survival. Here, a woman is not just a lover or a mother — she is power, she is creation, she is the beginning and the catalyst for change.

Not all moments in these pages will be pretty. Some will be painful. Some will challenge you. Some will melt you. And some will make you believe in something bigger — in healing, in family that is chosen, and in love that doesn't apologize for being fierce.

This world is vast. The characters are flawed. The bonds are deep. And the dangers waiting ahead are older than history itself. Every smile has a shadow. Every love has a cost. And every power that awakens... will demand a price.

I hope, as you read, that you fall in love — not only with the beast-men, the cubs, or the romances — but with Kritika's fire, her resilience, and her becoming.

Thank you for stepping into this universe with me.

Now hold on tight...

The Beast World is waking.

Author_Gun

BLURB

🐾🌟 Falling into the Beast World?! 🌟🐾

One moment she was scrolling through memes... the next—🌟
BAM!—she’s dropped into a mysterious Beast World 🐾👁.

No way back. No instructions. Just an AI voice in her head 🗣️
whispering:

“You’re here to... increase the population.” 🗣️🐾

Now our bold female lead must adjust to a wilder, stranger world
🐾🐾—where beastly handsome hunks 🐾🐾🐾 surround her
24/7... ready to serve, protect, and maybe steal her heart ❤️🐾.

👑🌟 A harem of extraordinary men.

🐾🐾 Dangerous adventures & sizzling chemistry.

🐾🗡️ A story of survival, passion, and unexpected love.

Can she build a new life... or will these beasts awaken something
deeper than she ever imagined? ☐❤️🐾

👉 Join us on this wild, addictive journey filled with magic,
mischief, and way too many abs.

🌟🐾 Welcome to the Beast World—where the real adventure
begins! 🐾🌟

#BeastWorld #HaremRomance ❤️ #FantasyRomance 🐾
#AICompanion 🗣️ #SpicyAdventure 🗡️

✿🌀 Meet Kritika Marrero 🌀✿

She wasn't born to be a heroine... but destiny (or maybe the universe's glitch) had other plans. 🌀

Kritika Marrero — 24, stubbornly independent, a total caffeine-powered realist ☕💻.

One moment she was racing deadlines in the city... the next, she's tumbling through a glowing rift ✨🌀 into a mystical Beast World 🐾.

Suddenly stranded in a land where humans are rare and beasts rule the skies, forests, and oceans 🐉🌲🐾, Kritika must rely on her sharp wit, quiet courage, and an AI guide in her head 🧠 to survive.

On the surface, she's practical, sassy, and fiercely protective of her freedom 🖐️👉 —

but deep down, she carries an ache for belonging ❤️✿.

✿ She's the girl who'd rather wield a dagger than wait to be rescued.

✿ The kind who learns to bargain with kings and wrestle destiny itself.

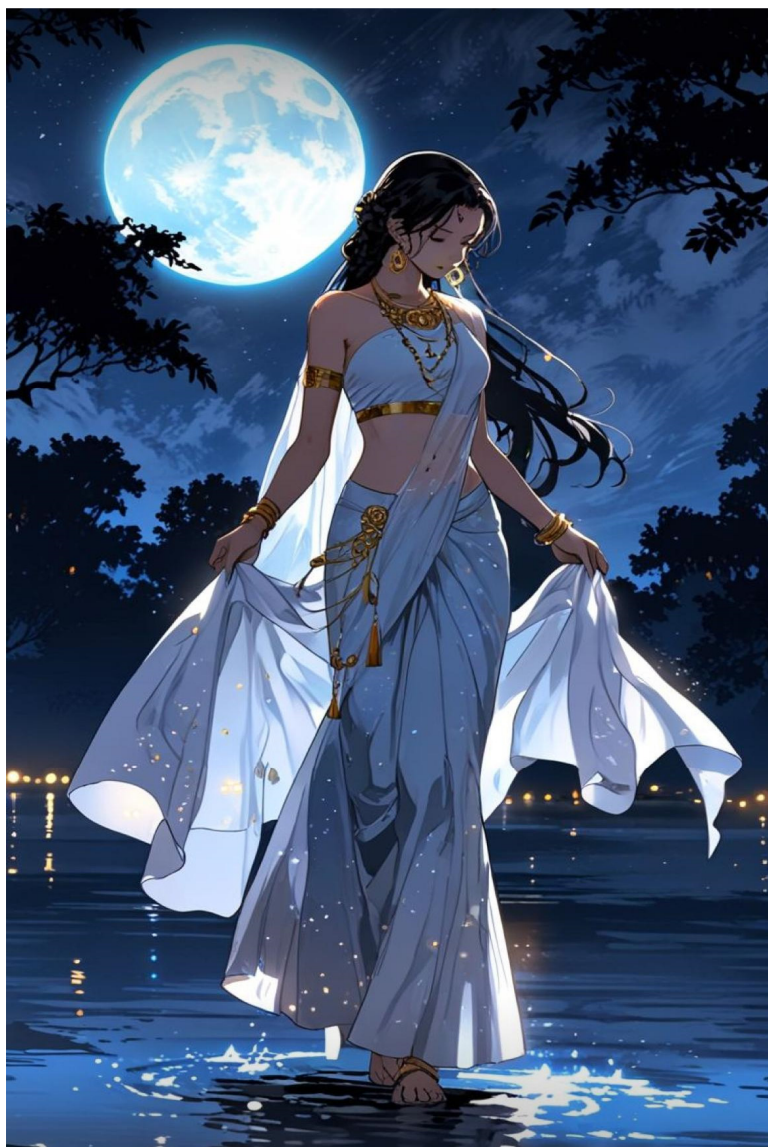
✿ The one who turns chaos into strategy... and enemies into allies.

As for her harem of extraordinary men... that secret stays locked behind her mysterious smile 😊🧐.

Get ready to fall for Kritika Marrero —

A woman who never expected to lead, yet finds herself at the heart of a wild new world... and at the center of countless untold hearts. ❤️👉

🌀✿ Her adventure is only beginning...



PROLOGUE

✨ The Day the Sky Fell ✨

The Marrero home always smelled like warm bread and fresh marigolds.

In the heart of Delhi's old lanes—where the streets hummed with rickshaws and the chatter of spice vendors—stood a wide, sun-bleached house draped with bougainvillea vines. It was always alive: with cousins arguing over TV remotes, uncles playing cards on the veranda, aunts clattering pans in the kitchen.

Kritika Marrero had grown up in that lively chaos—a half-Indian, half-Italian daughter with almond-shaped eyes, warm olive-toned skin, and hair that curled like it had a mind of its own. At twenty-four, she was still the dependable one who remembered everyone's birthdays, still the cousin who could calm a screaming toddler and fix the Wi-Fi at the same time.

That Saturday morning had started like every other:

Nonna was kneading dough for focaccia in the corner of the kitchen while Kritika's bua diced onions for dal. The air smelled of garlic and cumin, east meeting west the way it always had in their home.

"Ki, don't forget the coriander this time!" her younger brother Rohan called from the living room.

"And bring the brown sugar!" her aunt added.

Kritika laughed, grabbing her canvas grocery bag. "Yes, yes. I'm your personal delivery girl."

She tied her hair into a loose bun, slipped on her sandals, and waved as she jogged out into the sun-washed street.

The market was only a few blocks away. The October breeze was kind, carrying scents of roasted peanuts and sweet jalebis. Kritika's mind wandered – about her freelance design work, about Nonna's stories of Italy, about how she always felt a little of both worlds and yet not fully either.

She was halfway back home, balancing a paper bag of groceries, when her phone buzzed with a text from Rohan:

Hurry up! Nonna's threatening to start dinner without your mushrooms.

She grinned at the screen and stepped off the curb –
– and never saw the truck coming.

There was a sudden screech of tires.

A shout from somewhere.

A blur of white light as the world spun out of focus.

The bag slipped from her hand – lemons and coriander spilling across the asphalt – before everything went dark.

The last thing she heard was Nonna's voice in her head, soft and steady from some half-remembered memory:

"La vita cambia in un battito d'occhio..."

"Life can change in the blink of an eye."

And then... silence.

CHAPTER 1

The first thing Kritika noticed was the smell of damp earth. It was rich, wild, and far too sharp to be the disinfected tang of a hospital. Her lashes fluttered open to a ceiling of swaying emerald leaves. Sunlight broke through in shattered gold, dancing over her damp hair. She gasped and jerked upright – only to realize she was lying at the edge of a river, her clothes clinging to her skin, soaked and heavy.

Water dripped from the tips of her hair as she scanned the clearing. The river hummed softly beside her, a ribbon of silver weaving between stones. No sign of the street, the market, her family – nothing.

Her heart began to pound.

“What... where the hell am I?” she whispered.

A voice answered.

Low. Smooth. Deep as the river itself.

“You’re awake. Good.”

Kritika turned so fast she nearly slipped back into the water.

Standing a few feet away was a man – if he could be called that.

Tall, broad-shouldered, his dark hair falling in damp strands over sharp cheekbones. His golden-green eyes locked on her with a predator’s stillness. Barefoot, with strange, scale-like markings coiling faintly along his arms and throat, as if the sunlight itself painted him in emerald.

He smiled—slow and deliberate, the kind of smile that made Kritika’s spine stiffen.

“My name is Curtis,” he said, voice a low rumble. “I am a snake beast... and your would mate you now.”

That smirk—dirty, teasing, maddening—made her forget to breathe.

Her brain short-circuited.

No. No way.

Curtis. That Curtis.

Kritika’s jaw went slack.

This was the same infuriatingly hot snake-beast she had once obsessed over in her guilty-pleasure Beauty & the Beast webnovel series—the one who belonged to that annoyingly perfect white-lotus heroine.

Oh hell no, she thought, her pulse thundering.

I’m not letting that delicate little lotus keep all the good ones. If this is a dream, I’m stealing every damn beast from her story. 😏

She opened her mouth—ready to ask a thousand questions—but before a single word came out, a soft chime echoed in the air.

A voice, crisp and mechanical yet strangely gentle, rang in her head:

“👤 Welcome to Beast World. I am your guide in this world.

You may give me a name.”

Kritika froze.

A guide? A talking AI in her head?

She glanced at Curtis—still standing there, watching her like he could taste the confusion rolling off her.

“Oh, you’ve got to be kidding me...” she muttered under her breath, unsure whether to panic, scream, or laugh.

— — — — —

“What name should I give? Aki.” Said Kritika in her mind

The Aki’s voice pulsed in her head like a soft bell:

“✱ First Task Initiated:

Take two mates and enter the Beast City.

Completion required to unlock survival privileges.”

Two mates? Beast City? Kritika blinked, stunned. She barely understood what was happening—then her eyes met Curtis’s.

He tilted his head, that sly, serpent smile curling on his lips. “Looks like the world itself is already pushing you toward me, I saved your life, you have to accept me as your mate.” he said softly, eyes glowing a dangerous gold.

Something snapped inside Kritika.

Maybe it was panic.

Maybe it was adrenaline.

Maybe it was the fact that she’d fantasized about this very snake-beast while hate reading that Beauty & the Beast knock-off novel.

Before she could think, she moved—closing the distance, gripping his hand, and crashing her lips onto his.

Curtis inhaled sharply against her mouth, startled. His hands instinctively found her waist, scales brushing her damp skin. The kiss wasn’t soft or polite; it was furious, a clash of everything she’d been bottling up since waking.

When she pulled back, both of them were breathing hard.

His eyes flickered between confusion and hunger.

Kritika smirked, wiping a drop of water from her lip. "If I need mates to survive, I'm not wasting time. You're mine first, snake boy."

Curtis's low chuckle rolled through the cave like thunder. "Bold little female," he murmured, his tongue just slightly forked when he spoke. "I like that."

She tugged at his wrist. "Then stop standing around and show me where you live."

Still half-dazed, he let her pull him away from the riverbank into the yawning mouth of a cave—his cave. The walls glittered faintly with mineral veins, and the air inside was warm, thrumming with a subtle energy.

Kritika glanced over her shoulder at him, a flash of mischief lighting her eyes. "One mate down..." she whispered to herself. "One more to go."

The Aki hummed in her mind like a secret, waiting for her next move.

FIRST MATE/ CURTIS

Curtis is a striking red snake beast, a fusion of raw power and serpentine elegance. His scales glint like polished ruby, reflecting the light in shifting patterns as he moves, giving him a dangerous yet mesmerizing aura. Long and lean, his body is muscular and flexible, coiled with the strength to strike or constrict with lethal precision, yet supple enough to move with unnerving grace.

His eyes are sharp and golden, like molten metal, with vertical pupils that flare when he's protective, possessive, or amused. They hold a calculating intelligence, but also a hidden softness reserved only for Kritika and his cubs.

Curtis's tail is long, thick, and powerful, capable of lifting heavy objects or encircling those he cares for — most notably Kritika. He often wraps it protectively around her, signaling both his dominance and possessive affection.

His face retains human-like features — strong jawline, high cheekbones, and full lips — but the slight scale texture along his temples and jaw gives away his beast nature. Two subtle snake horns curve back from his forehead, adding to his intimidating appearance.

In motion, Curtis exudes confidence and danger, his movements fluid and hypnotic, yet every flick of his tail or tilt of his head can signal a change in mood — curiosity, playfulness, or deadly focus. Despite his fierce exterior, those closest to him know the protective, loyal, and surprisingly tender side he reserves for Kritika, the cubs, and his chosen mates.

His presence alone commands attention — a beautiful, dangerous, and deeply magnetic aura that few can resist and fewer dare to challenge.



BONUS CHAPTER /

MATING CURTIS

Kritika stripped her dress immediately, taking control of her snaky. Curtis watched her with an amused expression, golden eyes tracking the deliberate arch of her spine as damp fabric pooled at her feet. Her skin prickled under his gaze—not with shame, but with the thrill of his coiled stillness. She stepped closer, barefoot on cool stone, and traced the hard line of his jaw. "You're thinking too much," she murmured, fingers sliding down to rest over the rapid pulse in his throat. "Survival requires adaptation." His scaled hand caught hers, pressing it flat against his chest where twin heartbeats hammered beneath her palm.

He moved with serpentine swiftness. One moment Kritika stood defiant; the next, her back hit yielding hay as Curtis pinned her wrists above her head. The stacked bales smelled of dust and distant sunlight, scratching her thighs as he hooked her knees over his shoulders. His tongue—forked, hot—dragged up her inner thigh. She gasped, back bowing off the hay when he reached her core. Curtis didn't tease. He feasted, lips sealing over her clit as his tongue plunged deep, lapping at her with rough, rhythmic strokes that left her trembling. Kritika's cry echoed off the cave walls as her first climax ripped through her, sharp and sudden as a lightning strike.

He didn't relent. While she shuddered, Curtis hooked her legs wider, exposing her completely. His tongue circled her swollen clit with relentless precision, then dipped lower to taste her release before surging back up. Kritika fisted hay in her hands, stems snapping as another wave built—deeper this time, coiling low in

her belly. "Curtis—" His name broke into a moan as he sucked hard, sending her crashing over again. Her thighs clamped around his head instinctively, but he only growled against her, the vibration making her sob.

Her hips bucked wildly against his mouth as he devoured her with single-minded hunger. Each flick of his tongue against her sensitive bundle of nerves felt deliberate, punishing in its intensity. Kritika's vision blurred—she couldn't tell if the wetness on her cheeks was sweat, tears, or river water still clinging to her skin. A third climax tore through her, sharper than the others, leaving her gasping and boneless against the hay. Still, Curtis didn't lift his head, his tongue now tracing slow, maddening circles around her throbbing entrance.

Only when her trembling legs threatened to slip from his shoulders did he finally pull back. His chin glistened with her slick, golden eyes burning with primal satisfaction. "Still bold?" he murmured, voice thick as he dragged a scaled thumb over her swollen lower lip. Kritika answered by sinking her teeth into his finger—hard enough to draw blood. Curtis hissed, pupils slitting into thin black daggers. Before she could blink, he flipped her onto her stomach, pinning her hips down with one powerful hand while the other gripped her hair.

Hay scratched her cheek as he positioned himself behind her. No warning—just the brutal, scalding stretch of him forcing his way inside her unprepared body. Kritika choked on a scream, fingers clawing at the hay bale beneath her. Curtis didn't pause. He drove deeper, each thrust a punishing claim that scraped her raw. "You wanted a mate," he growled against her ear, his breath hot and dangerous. "Now take it."

Her body fought the invasion, clenching tight around his thick length, but he only slammed harder. Pain blurred into a white-hot burn, and she bit down on her lip until copper flooded her tongue.

Yet beneath the agony, something else sparked—a dark, unwanted coil of pleasure tightening low in her belly with every brutal stroke. She hated it. Hated him. Hated the wet, obscene sound of their joining echoing off the cave walls.

But after a while, she started enjoying how he went raw, unfiltered, and feral—just like the beast he truly was. Her moans, sharp and involuntary at first, softened into ragged gasps that matched his rhythm. Her pussy, slicked anew despite the punishing pace, clenched around him greedily, pulling him deeper with each thrust. She was getting used to his rough lovemaking, the scrape of scales against her inner thighs, the way his claws dug possessively into her hips as he claimed her. The pain didn't vanish; it melted into a throbbing, all-consuming heat that made her arch back against him.

Curtis sensed the shift—her body yielding, her breath catching not in protest but in surrender. He snarled low in his throat, a sound of pure triumph, and slammed into her harder, faster. The hay beneath them tore apart under their weight, scattering golden strands across the stone floor. Kritika's fingers scrabbled uselessly against the bale as another orgasm ripped through her, this one deeper, darker, flooding her veins with liquid fire. She screamed his name, the sound raw and primal, echoing off the glittering cave walls.

Just then his cock hit her spots—that sweet, hidden ridge deep inside—making her scream “Right there!!! Oh god I love ah!!!!” Her back arched violently, every muscle locking as pleasure detonated like a supernova. Curtis growled, grinding against that spot relentlessly, his scaled hips pistoning with brutal precision. Stars burst behind Kritika's eyelids—she couldn't breathe, couldn't think, could only feel him carving her open again and again.

Her hand slid down his sweat-slicked chest, fingers tracing the hard ridges of his abs. The moment her fingertips brushed the lowest muscle, Curtis shuddered violently against her, a ragged moan

tearing from his throat. She grinned against his lips — *he was hers*. Kritika seized his nape and yanked him down, crashing her mouth onto his. She devoured him — tongue thrusting deep, tasting blood and salt and *power* as she claimed him back.

The love making went on and on again and again. She claimed her first mate close to heart making her grin. She blushed and hid herself inside her. Kritika wrapped her legs tighter around Curtis's waist, locking him deep inside her pulsing heat. She buried her face against his scaled shoulder, hiding her flushed cheeks as a fierce grin spread across her lips. He was hers — *hers* — and the possessive thrill of it burned hotter than the friction between them. His low growl vibrated through her bones as he thrust harder, deeper, as if trying to fuse them together.

Curtis's claws scraped down her spine, drawing faint lines of fire as he lifted her hips higher. "Mine," he snarled, the word raw and guttural against her throat. Kritika answered by sinking her teeth into his shoulder, tasting salt and serpent musk. She felt him swell impossibly thicker inside her, stretching her to the brink as his twin hearts pounded against her chest. Her climax tore through her again — violent, shattering — and she screamed into his skin, her body convulsing around him like a vice.

The love making went on and on again and again. She claimed her first mate close to heart, making her grin. She blushed and hid herself inside him. Kritika wrapped her arms tighter around Curtis's neck, burying her face deeper against his scales as a fierce smile split her lips. She felt him pulse inside her, thick and possessive, and the raw thrill of ownership burned brighter than the friction tearing her apart. His answering growl vibrated through her bones as he pinned her wrists above her head, thrusting deeper still.

CHAPTER 2

Kritika woke up the next day, all sore and aching. She groaned as she stretched, wincing at every movement.

Author (in her head, teasingly): “Yup... all the unholy things you know. Don’t worry, I’ll write bonus chapters for that scene. 😊”

Curtis, leaning against the cave wall with those golden-green eyes fixed on her, stepped forward. Without a word, he pressed something into her palm—a small green emerald.

“What...?” Kritika mumbled, confused.

Before she could react, Curtis tilted it toward her mouth. The moment she touched it with her tongue, it melted like chocolate, sliding down her throat in a silky warmth. Almost instantly, her skin tingled, glowing softly as if lit from within. She glanced at her hands—soft, flawless, radiant... like a divine goddess.

Curtis’s eyes darkened possessively. He stepped closer, tail curling, claws brushing her side, the air around him thick with unspoken hunger.

Kritika laughed softly, reaching up to cup his face. “Curtis... you’re being greedy. Listen,” she murmured, stroking his jaw gently. “You’ll hibernate in the dead season. But I... I need more protection from the rootless beasts and ferals while you sleep.”

His smirk faltered, and for the first time, his gaze softened into something almost sad. 😞

Kritika tilted her head, brushing her fingers over his scales, making him shiver. “See? It’s not about you. It’s about survival. I just...”

she trailed off, cooing at him like he was a little child, “I just need help sometimes.”

And then—just one touch from her, gentle and playful—and Curtis’s lips curled into a grin, wide and unrestrained, like a kid who had just gotten chocolate. 😊

He rumbled softly, resting his forehead against hers. The possessiveness lingered, but now it was mixed with something softer, something trustful, and Kritika knew... she had him, heart and soul, even if he didn’t fully understand yet.

Kritika shivered slightly as she brushed damp hair from her face. The morning air in the forest was cooler than expected. She tugged her tunic tighter, frowning.

“Curtis,” she murmured, looking up at him with soft urgency, “I... I think we should visit the Camel Hump Village. There’s a healer there. I’m still feeling a bit cold from yesterday.”

Curtis’s eyes narrowed at her words. His golden-green gaze darkened with concern. “Cold?” he hissed softly, stepping closer. Every movement was careful, protective, coiled like a predator ready to strike.

But then his attention drifted, and a small, almost smug smile spread across his lips. It was her mating mark—his mark—still vivid across her back and around her throat. His snake form had wrapped around her while she slept, hissing softly toward her heart, staking his claim. The realization made him feel a surge of pride and... desire.

“Mine,” he whispered in a low, almost possessive growl, his tail brushing along her side.

Before she could tease him, Curtis worked with quick, practiced motions. Scales slid and shimmered, fusing into fabric as he crafted her new outfit—a tight dress molded from his own snake skin. It

hugged her curves perfectly, accentuating every line, while leaving his mating mark proudly visible around her neck and shoulders.

Kritika examined herself, smirking. “Bold choice,” she teased. “Showing off my snake boy’s... affection?”

Curtis’s eyes glittered with pride. “Affection?” he hissed, tail curling possessively around her waist. “Protection. Claim. Both.”

She leaned into him lightly, cooing, “I’ll let you take credit, snake boy... but only if you behave in Camel Hump Village.”

He growled low, amused but obedient. “I can manage that... for you.”

The two of them left the cave together, stepping through the lush, green forest toward the Camel Hump Village. Birds scattered overhead, the air smelled of wet earth and wildflowers, and every step they took made Curtis’s gaze flicker to Kritika, protective, possessive, proud.

She adjusted the edge of her dress, feeling both vulnerable and powerful, her heart racing. Beside her, Curtis moved like a living shadow—his form serpentine, sleek, yet every muscle taut with energy and ownership.

The journey had begun, but the forest already seemed alive with whispers—whispers of beasts, harem intrigue, and the rising power of a female, who wore a snake’s skin like a queen’s robe.

The path to Camel Hump Village was winding, flanked by towering oaks and creeping vines. As Kritika and Curtis approached, the village seemed unusually quiet. The moment the villagers spotted Curtis, their whispers rose into a low hum of fear.

Four strips of scales ran along his body, glinting under the sun. Muscles coiled under shimmering red -gold skin, his serpentine form radiating power and danger. Even the bravest hunters gave him a wide berth.

Kritika strode forward, standing tall beside him. “He’s... mated with me,” she announced firmly, eyes scanning the villagers. She tugged slightly at her dress, revealing the mark around her chest—a clear claim from Curtis.

The effect was immediate. Murmurs of fear shifted into murmurs of jealousy. Every male in the village stiffened. Curtis’s eyes flickered possessively at them, tail curling around Kritika’s waist in a silent, warning embrace. Yet despite his power, he moved carefully, obediently, letting her lead. It was clear to everyone: the snake beast might be terrifying, but he answered only to her.

The village head, a broad-shouldered beast with fur like burnt bronze, stepped forward. “Follow me,” he said, his tone respectful, almost wary, leading them through a narrow lane to a small hut nestled at the edge of the village.

Inside, the air was thick with the scent of herbs, dried flowers, and resin. Candles flickered in clay holders, casting soft golden light over every surface. And there, in the center of the room, sat the village healer: Harvey.

Harvey was a striking figure. Golden-spotted fur covered his ears and tail. His tail flicked lazily, coiling around his legs as he studied them with piercing amber eyes. Broad shoulders tapered into a slim, powerful torso, veins and muscles visible beneath his tanned skin. Sharp cheekbones caught the candlelight, giving his face a regal, predatory quality. His hands, long-fingered and dexterous, rested on the edge of a wooden table cluttered with herbs and vials.

When Harvey rose, the leopard ears twitched at Curtis’s approach, but his stance was calm, controlled. The tail swept slowly behind him, a reminder of the grace and power that lay coiled beneath his seemingly relaxed form.

Curtis stiffened slightly, protective instinct flaring, but he did not move forward until Kritika placed a hand on his chest. Harvey’s

amber gaze flicked to her, noting the mark near her collarbone with a hint of jealousy.

Kritika took a deep breath. "I... need your help. I'm feeling cold, and I think I might need more protection than I can muster alone."

Harvey's eyes softened fractionally, and he inclined his head. "I will help you," he said, voice smooth but carrying a subtle growl. "But know this... the snakes in this village do not often tolerate outsiders claiming mates so openly. You are brave to walk in with him."

Curtis's tail tightened protectively around Kritika's waist. Even as the village stared in awe and jealousy, it was clear: no one—not even Harvey—would touch her without Curtis's approval.

And Kritika... she was beginning to understand just how much power—and how many eyes—her mark had already drawn.

CHAPTER- 3

Harvey moved with deliberate grace, selecting herbs and roots from his shelves. His amber eyes never left Kritika as he murmured incantations under his breath, blending powders and leaves into a simmering potion.

Finally, he looked up, tail swaying lazily behind him. "She is weakened by the cold. To regain strength, she must be nourished. Curtis..." His gaze flicked to the snake beast, "you will feed her. Warm food. Bone soup. It will help her body recover."

Curtis's golden eyes narrowed slightly, possessiveness brimming in every scale. "Me? I... of course," he hissed, his tail tightening around Kritika's waist reflexively. "I will see what she eats. No one else touches her."

Harvey inclined his head in approval. "It will take seven moons for her to fully regain strength. Until then, proper nourishment and warmth are essential."

Kritika blinked, shivering slightly despite Curtis's protective coils. "Seven moons?" she murmured, her mind spinning. Then she tilted her head, hesitating before asking the question that had been nagging at her.

"I... I'm a herbivore. Or vegetarian," she said softly.

The words landed like a thunderclap in the small hut.

Curtis froze mid-hiss, tail stiffening, eyes wide. "You... what?" His voice trembled slightly, disbelief laced with the faintest amusement.

Harvey's ears twitched sharply, and his tail flicked twice, signaling alertness. His amber eyes widened in quiet shock. "You... eat only plants?" he asked slowly, the words heavy with incredulity.

Kritika nodded, curling her fingers around the edge of her dress. "Yes. I can't... eat meat. I've never done it. Is that... a problem?" She looked between them, curious but unfazed by their reactions.

Curtis blinked once, then hissed softly, tail curling protectively around her more tightly. "You... you eat plants?" he repeated, voice a mixture of disbelief and amusement. "I... I will have to rethink my feeding routine."

Harvey's chuckle was low, amused but restrained. "This is... highly unusual. Most of the mates I encounter are... adaptable. But you... I have never met a mate who refused meat entirely."

Kritika shrugged, a playful smirk tugging at her lips. "Well... lucky for you, Curtis. Looks like you're learning a whole new way to take care of me."

Curtis growled softly, his pride and possessiveness mixing with reluctant admiration. "I... can manage," he said, though his eyes gleamed like a child learning a new trick. "You will be fed, always... in your way."

Kritika leaned into him, cooing softly as she stroked his scales. "Good boy," she murmured, making him grin like a kid who just got chocolate.

And so, the rhythm of her recovery—and the power of her influence—began to take root, even as the first threads of jealousy, awe, and desire wove themselves through the small village and her two protectors.

The evening sun dipped low, casting long golden streaks across the hut. Kritika sat cross-legged on a soft rug, her fingers lightly tracing the intricate patterns of the woven mat. Curtis sat nearby, tail coiled

protectively around her, his golden-red eyes never leaving her face. Harvey moved quietly, arranging herbs and root bundles on a nearby table.

Kritika drew in a slow breath. "Harvey... may I... please stay here for a while?" she asked softly, her gaze gentle but firm. "It would be easier for me to recover... and to find food, vegetables, and herbs with your guidance."

The words landed like a stone in the quiet room.

Curtis's eyes widened slightly, scales bristling with surprise. His possessive instincts flared immediately, his tail twitching against hers. Harvey's ears twitched, his tail flicking in careful attention, eyes narrowing slightly in astonishment.

Kritika tilted her head at Curtis, blinking innocently, a sly spark in her gaze. She wanted him to notice what she was about to do—test him, push the boundaries. If he can find everything I need for my cooking, if he is strong, resourceful, and, yes... a healer too... maybe he's perfect as my second mate.

Curtis stiffened ever so slightly at the unspoken plan in her eyes, but he didn't say a word. He simply leaned closer, his warm breath brushing her hair, his tail tightening in silent approval. Kritika felt the almost imperceptible acknowledgment ripple through him—he understood her thoughts without her speaking them aloud.

Her lips curved into a small smile. "I see you already like Harvey joining our... little family," she murmured teasingly, brushing her fingers along Curtis's scales. "You think he'll be useful... for me."

Curtis grinned—a slow, predatory grin that shifted instantly into something softer as he rested his chin lightly on her shoulder. He didn't speak; he simply was, a living promise that her plan would be protected and respected.

Harvey, observing silently, caught the glimmer of strategy between the two. His amber eyes flicked between Kritika and Curtis, and though he didn't comment, he felt the subtle shift—the power dynamic, the emerging hierarchy forming before his eyes.

Kritika leaned back, satisfied. “Good,” she said softly. “Then I’ll stay. But know this... I have a lot of ideas for our meals, and for our... little adventures. I expect cooperation, especially from my snake boy here.”

Curtis’s tail flicked once in amusement, and a low, throaty rumble vibrated through his chest. “As you wish,” he hissed, a hint of pride threading his tone.

Kritika’s smile widened. Perfect. Her plan was taking root. With Curtis by her side, and Harvey as her silent, capable ally, she could begin shaping the future she wanted—her harem, her home, and her growing influence in this strange new world.

The warm glow of the hut settled around them, the first threads of trust, power, and playful strategy weaving between the three. And Kritika Marrero, already thinking ahead to her second mate, felt a thrill run through her chest. This world was wild... but it was becoming hers.

CHAPTER 4

Kritika leaned over Harvey's neatly arranged collection of vegetables and herbs, her eyes widening as she surveyed the bounty. Crisp green leaves, vibrant roots, fragrant flowers, and rare forest vegetables she had never seen outside the Marrero kitchen – it was a treasure trove.

Her lips curled into a wide, delighted smile. "Harvey... this is incredible," she whispered, almost reverently. "With this, I can make a proper feast—for Curtis, for you... and for me."

Curtis, still coiled protectively beside her, watched her with his golden-red eyes glinting like sunlight on scales. Every movement she made sent ripples of possessive pride through him, but he stayed close, silently approving every flick of her hands and every excited glance she gave Harvey's bounty.

Kritika's mind raced with ideas. She could recreate dishes from her family back home—the warm spices of Italy, the bold flavors of India, the sweet aromas of desserts she had learned to make alongside Nonna. Her heart swelled at the thought of sharing these flavors in this strange, wild world.

But her smile twisted into something a little mischievous. She decided she wouldn't stop at just the basics. She would make something special, something that reminded her of her family, something she loved most...

"I know what I'm making first," she said softly, voice brimming with determination. "A meal that feels like home... like family. Curtis, you'll be my taste tester, and Harvey... you'll help me make it perfect."

Curtis's tail flicked with quiet amusement, and he huffed a soft hiss of approval. Harvey's ears twitched as he nodded, already reaching for a mortar and pestle to begin preparations.

Kritika's heart fluttered – not with fear, but with anticipation. For the first time since waking in this strange new world, surrounded by beasts and unfamiliar territory, she felt a spark of control, comfort, and excitement.

And as the scents of herbs and simmering vegetables began to fill the hut, Kritika Marrero knew that this small feast was just the beginning – not only of her recovery, but of the life she was determined to build in the Beast World.

The hut smelled of spices, warmth, and something undeniably homey. Kritika stood over the skillet, stirring carefully. Half of the ingredients Harvey had collected were missing – either unavailable in the village or too rare to find – but she didn't panic. She adjusted on the fly, improvising spices and herbs she remembered from her family kitchen.

When she finally plated the Bharwa Baingan, the small stuffed eggplants glistened with a fragrant, rich masala, the aroma wrapping around them like a warm embrace.

"Alright," Kritika said, taking a deep breath. "One bite... and you better not insult me, Curtis." She smirked at him.

Curtis's golden-green eyes narrowed in suspicion, but there was an unmistakable glimmer of anticipation. He leaned forward, picking up one of the stuffed eggplants with careful precision, as if he might devour it in a single bite.

The moment it touched his tongue, something shifted. His eyes widened slightly, then softened. The rigid possessiveness of his scales relaxed, and a deep, approving hiss rumbled from his chest. He leaned back, tail coiled around her more tightly, gaze fixed on her with something almost like reverent pride.

"She... she made this herself?" he murmured, voice low and incredulous. "With... with what we had?"

Kritika crossed her arms, smirking, enjoying the rare sight of Curtis humbled by taste. "Yes. You like it?" she teased.

He didn't answer immediately, only hissed softly and let out a deep, satisfied rumble that made the air vibrate. His chest expanded slightly as if he were swelling with pride, possessive energy radiating off him in waves. Kritika's grin widened; seeing him this pleased satisfied her more than she expected.

Meanwhile, Harvey's reaction was quieter but just as powerful. The leopard beast-man leaned forward, tail curling gently behind him, amber eyes gleaming with a mixture of surprise and appreciation. His ears twitched as he savored the flavor, a faint smile tugging at his lips. He let out a low, appreciative purr, which made Kritika's chest swell with pride.

"You... have a remarkable touch," Harvey said, his voice smooth, calm, and full of admiration. "Even with missing ingredients, you've balanced the flavors perfectly. This... this is truly good."

Kritika's eyes sparkled. "Thank you, Harvey," she said softly. She glanced at Curtis, whose grin was practically feral now, and whispered teasingly, "See? You're not the only one impressed."

Curtis growled low in his throat, leaning closer so that his head nearly brushed hers. "I... don't think I've ever tasted anything like this," he admitted, voice a husky purr. "You... are mine, Kritika. Mine and only mine... and now you've made me hungrier for more."

Kritika chuckled, leaning into him. The warmth of the hut, the scent of spices, and the satisfied hums of her two mates wrapped around her like a protective cocoon.

Half of the ingredients had been missing, but what she had created was enough to win hearts, claim loyalty, and deepen bonds – and for Kritika Marrero, that was worth every improvisation.

The last bite of Bharwa Baingan lingered on Curtis's tongue, his golden-red eyes glinting with pride and possessiveness. Harvey, tail flicking thoughtfully behind him, had just finished savoring the flavors, his amber eyes warm with quiet admiration.

Kritika took a deep breath, the small fire of excitement sparking in her chest. She turned to Harvey, her gaze steady and playful.

"Harvey..." she began, her voice soft but confident. "I want you to join my... family. As my mate."

For a brief moment, Harvey froze, ears twitching, tail curling tightly around his legs. He looked over at Curtis, whose expression was calm but filled with that unmistakable possessive warmth.

Curtis nodded once, a subtle gesture that carried weight.

Harvey's amber eyes widened slightly, a mixture of surprise and relief flashing across his face. He inclined his head in acknowledgment. "I... I will," he said softly, voice steady, "if you allow me."

Kritika's lips curved into a triumphant smile, the warmth of her decision lighting up her features. "Good," she said, eyes sparkling. "But you are given a big responsibility." She leaned forward, resting her hands lightly on his shoulders. "You will cook food, and make sure every member of my family – yes, including Curtis – is well-fed, healthy, and happy. I know you love to cook... I saw it earlier."

Harvey's tail flicked thoughtfully, then curled more confidently around him. "I... can do that," he said, amber eyes meeting hers with sincerity. "I will take care of it."

Kritika tilted her head, smirking playfully. "I'm trusting you with this... and trust me, that's not something I give lightly."

Curtis let out a low, approving hiss, coiling more tightly around her as if to emphasize his support. Kritika leaned into him briefly, then turned her attention back to Harvey.

"You'll find that our family... well, it's a little different," she said with a teasing glance at Curtis. "But if you can handle cooking and keeping everyone happy... then I think you'll do just fine."

Harvey allowed himself a small smile, the flicker of a growl in his chest softening into a quiet rumble. "Then I will not fail," he promised.

Kritika clapped her hands together softly, satisfaction radiating from her. "Perfect. Let's start small... with tomorrow's meals. You'll see how fun it can be... and how chaotic too," she added, smirking at Curtis, who huffed and wrapped a possessive arm around her.

As the golden light of the setting sun filtered through the hut, Kritika Marrero sat between her two mates—one fierce, protective, and fiery, the other calm, skillful, and dependable—and felt a thrill of power, joy, and anticipation for the adventures to come.

This was only the beginning of her family, her harem, and her reign in the Beast World.

CHAPTER 6

The morning sun filtered softly through the treetops, painting the hut in warm gold. Kritika sank into the stone tub, the water steaming around her, soothing her aching muscles. She closed her eyes, letting the heat relax her body—but her mind was already racing with plans.

Beast City... she thought, letting her fingers trace the water's surface. It's time to see what this world truly holds.

A gentle chime echoed in her mind, and her AI's calm, mechanical voice spoke:

“✿ Task Reminder: You must mate with Harvey soon to claim the rewards and proceed to your next task.”

Kritika opened her eyes with a sly grin. Perfect... timing, she thought. A healer and a strategist in one. Let's make this family complete.

Drying herself, she called Curtis and Harvey over. Both appeared almost instantly—Curtis leaning against the doorway, scales gleaming, eyes sharp, while Harvey's tail twitched nervously behind him.

“I've been thinking,” Kritika began, voice soft but strategic, “we should visit Beast City tomorrow. There's a caravan coming from the City of Ghosts—females rescued from ferals—and it will be safer if we travel as a group. Curtis, your security will protect everyone... Harvey, your healing will be vital. Together, we'll be twice as prepared.”

Harvey's ears twitched, and Curtis's tail flicked in agreement. The two shared a brief glance—silent communication that made Kritika's grin widen.

"Oh, and one more thing," she added, voice teasing, walking up to Harvey. "Before we leave, I'll mate with you tonight. That way, our little family is... complete. A perfect little unit for my cute kitty."

Her fingers trailed to Harvey's tail, gently petting and teasing it like a curious cub, flicking it back and forth. Harvey froze, his ears flattening slightly, cheeks burning crimson—his normally controlled composure shattered by her bold play.

Curtis's smirk widened, watching her antics with approval and amusement. He let out a low, throaty chuckle, coiling more tightly around her in silent possessive pride.

Harvey, however, couldn't hide his embarrassment. His amber eyes darted between Kritika's mischievous grin and Curtis's amused gaze, tail twitching nervously under her playful fingers. This... this is humiliating, he thought, but there was no denying the thrill running through him.

Kritika tilted her head, voice soft but commanding. "See? Being touched like this is normal... It's a gesture of curiosity and trust. You'll get used to it."

Her small, intimate game left Curtis chuckling and Harvey flushed, but it also reminded them—both men knew without words—that Kritika was the center of this family, the mind behind every plan, and the heart everyone wanted to protect.

As the sun climbed higher, Kritika's mind shifted to strategy. Tomorrow's caravan would be dangerous. Rootless beasts, ferals, and ghost city survivors—every step demanded careful planning. But with Curtis by her side and Harvey loyal and capable, she knew one thing for certain:

Her family was growing. Her power was rising. And Kritika Marrero was ready to take the Beast World by storm.

The first rays of sun peeked through the leaves, painting the hut in soft gold. Kritika stirred slowly, stretching her arms and letting out a long, lazy sigh. Her body ached in all the right ways, and she rolled onto her back, completely content.

Ugh... my cute kitty has turned wild, she thought with a sly grin.

☺ The memory of last night's chaos – of Curtis and Harvey, of all the heat and intensity – made her cheeks flush and her lips curl into a satisfied smile.

A voice echoed in her mind, teasing as always:

Author: "Weren't you the one who begged him, bi***?"

Kritika giggled softly, covering her mouth, a little embarrassed but mostly amused. ☺ "Okay, okay... guilty as charged," she admitted, wiggling slightly in the soft blankets.

The two mates were already nearby, and she could see the gleam of mischief in Curtis's golden-green eyes, while Harvey's amber gaze flickered with a mix of shyness and lingering heat.

"He... lost control once he was exhausted," she murmured to herself, remembering the intensity, the care, the sheer passion they had both poured into her. Curtis had joined him seamlessly, their synchronized strength and desire leaving her utterly breathless.

She closed her eyes, letting the warmth of the blankets and the presence of her mates envelop her. A soft smile tugged at her lips. I... I'm so lucky, she thought. Such loving, protective, amazing mates...

Kritika's fingers drifted lazily to Curtis's tail, brushing it gently, then to Harvey's arm, teasing just enough to make them both flinch. "Mmm... what did I do to deserve this kind of love and affection?" she whispered to herself, her chest swelling with gratitude.

Her heart ached in the sweetest way—filled with warmth, contentment, and the soft, unspoken promises of the mates who would follow her anywhere.

Thank whoever sent me here... she thought, her smile widening, for this love, this family, this world.

And as the morning light bathed the hut, Kritika Marrero, completely lazy and spoiled, basked in the afterglow of last night's passion, knowing that her mates were hers, and hers alone.

SECOND MATE / HARVEY

Harvey is a striking leopard beast, blending feline elegance with humanoid form. His body is athletic and well-built, toned like a skilled hunter, with powerful limbs that hint at both strength and agility. His golden eyes gleam like molten sunlight, sharp and perceptive, always observing, calculating, yet soft and warm when he's near Kritika or the cubs.

His leopard ears, perched atop his head, are covered in soft, golden fur with black tips, twitching subtly at every sound — a testament to his heightened senses. His tail, long and thick, flicks with emotion, whether it's irritation, amusement, or tenderness, and it often coils protectively around Kritika or the cubs, a living symbol of his care and vigilance.

Harvey's white hair contrasts strikingly against his golden fur, falling slightly over his forehead in a tousled, natural way that makes him appear both approachable and regal. Along his arms and torso, subtle leopard markings shimmer, especially when light catches them, adding to his predatory yet majestic appearance.

Despite his fearsome predator nature, Harvey carries a calm and soothing aura, exuding patience and reliability. His presence feels grounding — a warm, steady force in the chaos of the beast world. Whether he's cooking, tending to cubs, or protecting Kritika, his blend of strength, intelligence, and quiet gentleness makes him indispensable to the family.

When he moves, it's a mixture of fluid feline grace and measured purpose, every step precise, controlled, and undeniably captivating.



BONUS SCENE |

MATING WITH HARVEY

Kritika didn't hesitate. She grabbed Harvey's wrist, her grip firm and purposeful, and pulled him toward the shadowed corner of the hut that served as his private space. Before he could protest or even register the movement, she slammed her lips against his, fierce and demanding. Harvey stiffened instantly, a choked gasp muffled against her mouth, his hands hovering awkwardly in the air as if unsure whether to push her away or pull her closer. His tail lashed wildly behind him, betraying the shock warring with a sudden, electric jolt of desire.

She broke the kiss just long enough to whisper hotly against his leopard ear, her voice a low, throaty purr that vibrated through his sensitive fur. "Tell me, Harvey," she breathed, her teeth grazing the delicate edge of his ear, "will you give me all the pleasure I need?" Her fingers tangled possessively in the fur at his nape. "Use that clever kitty tongue... make me moan." She punctuated her demand with another searing kiss, deeper this time, her tongue claiming his mouth with an urgency that left him trembling.

Harvey's initial shock dissolved into a low, involuntary growl that rumbled deep in his chest. His hands finally found purpose, sliding down her spine to grip her hips, pulling her flush against him. The scent of her skin—warm, clean, and utterly intoxicating—overwhelmed his senses. His tail coiled instinctively around her thigh, anchoring her to him as he surrendered to the raw hunger she'd ignited. His kiss turned fierce, demanding in return, his tongue exploring her mouth with a newfound boldness that mirrored her own.

Kritika gasped into the kiss, arching against him. She guided one of his hands roughly between her thighs, pressing his palm against the damp heat already soaking through her thin shift. "Show me," she commanded against his lips, her voice ragged. "Show me how a healer uses those clever fingers." Her teeth sank into his lower lip, a sharp sting of possession.

Harvey obeyed with a desperate groan, his touch turning clinical precision into something feral. He mapped her slick folds through the fabric, finding the swollen bud beneath with unerring accuracy. His thumb circled it in tight, relentless spirals while his fingers slid lower, pressing deep against her entrance. Kritika cried out, her nails digging into his shoulders as her hips jerked against his hand.

She tore at his tunic, shoving the rough fabric down his arms. Her mouth found his collarbone, biting hard enough to leave marks as she pushed him backward onto his sleeping pallet. He landed with a grunt, his eyes wide and pupils blown black with need. Kritika straddled him, her shift riding up her thighs. She didn't waste time—grabbing his wrists, pinning them above his head with surprising strength. "Don't move," she ordered, her voice thick. "This is mine to take."

Her free hand yanked his trousers down just enough. She positioned herself above him, slick heat pressing against his aching hardness. With a sharp, gasping cry, she sank down onto him in one fierce, claiming thrust. Harvey arched beneath her, a ragged groan ripped from his throat as she enveloped him completely, tight and scorching hot.

Kritika rode him with ruthless abandon, her hips pistoning, each downward slam driving the breath from his lungs. Her nails raked down his chest, leaving angry red welts. "Mine," she snarled, leaning forward to bite his earlobe, her voice thick with exertion and possession. "Your seed belongs inside me *now*."

Harvey bucked beneath her, his hands gripping her thighs hard enough to bruise. A choked cry escaped him as his control shattered, his release surging deep within her in hot, pulsing waves. Kritika threw her head back, a guttural moan tearing from her throat as her own climax ripped through her, muscles clamping down on him with fierce intensity.

Harvey took control the moment he felt Kritika was tired. Her frenzied pace faltered, her body trembling with exhaustion. In one fluid motion, he flipped her onto her back, pinning her wrists beside her head. His amber eyes burned with predatory intensity, no longer shy kitty but dominant leopard. "My turn," he growled, voice rough as gravel. He surged into her with deep, measured thrusts that stole her breath, each one hitting her core with devastating precision. His mouth claimed hers, swallowing her gasps as his hips moved with relentless, possessive rhythm.

Kritika arched beneath him, nails scraping his back as sensation overwhelmed her. "Harvey —!" His name tore from her throat, half-protest, half-ple. He silenced her with another searing kiss, his thrusts growing harder, deeper, as if branding her from the inside. Her thighs clamped around his waist, pulling him impossibly closer as another climax built, sharp and urgent.

He went on for hours claiming Kritika harder and harder every time, his leopard instincts unleashed in the shadowed hut. Each powerful surge drove her higher, her cries growing ragged, her body slick with sweat and trembling under his relentless possession. Midnight painted the room in deep blues when he finally stopped, collapsing atop her with a shuddering growl, spent and panting, his teeth still gently clamped on her shoulder.

Kritika lay pinned beneath him, breathless and utterly claimed, her skin humming where his claws had marked her hips. Her mind drifted through the haze—*Beast City tomorrow... the caravan... Curtis guarding us...*—but the thoughts dissolved as Harvey's

warmth seeped into her bones. His tail lay heavy across her thigh, a possessive weight even in exhaustion.

He went on for hours claiming Kritika harder and harder every time, his leopard instincts unleashed in the shadowed hut. Each powerful surge drove her higher, her cries growing ragged, her body slick with sweat and trembling under his relentless possession. Midnight painted the room in deep blues when he finally stopped, collapsing atop her with a shuddering growl, spent and panting, his teeth still gently clamped on her shoulder.

Curtis and Harvey...

But then entered Kritika's snake beast husband Curtis, his scales sliding silently into the room, his twin members already glistening. Kritika gulped and demanded in her mind ah! My both holes are about to get drilled again...* she did a very happy dance in her mind when she felt Curtis lining his two members across her two holes, the thick tips pressing against her wetness and rear entrance simultaneously. Harvey stirred weakly beneath her, his amber eyes widening as Curtis's shadow fell over them.

Curtis didn't speak—his forked tongue flicked the air, tasting their mingled sweat—before pressing forward. Kritika gasped as both members breached her at once, filling her completely, stretching her impossibly wide. Harvey froze beneath her, pinned by her weight and Curtis's slow thrusts began, rhythmic and deep. Kritika's back arched violently, a choked scream tearing from her throat as pleasure-pain ripped through her core and rear simultaneously. Her fingers scrabbled against Harvey's chest, seeking anchor points as Curtis's scales rasped against her thighs.

Harvey immediately spread her legs wider, locking her ankles behind his own thighs with surprising strength. He smirked up at

Curtis, his hands sliding up to knead Kritika's breasts roughly, thumbs circling her nipples into stiff peaks. "Role your eyes back, pretty thing," he growled, watching her face contort. "Show us how deep he's fucking that clever brain out." Kritika obeyed instantly, rolling her eyes skyward until only the whites showed, her mouth slack and drooling as Curtis pistoned into her with relentless force. Harvey pinched her nipples hard, drawing sharp whimpers that mingled with the wet slap of skin on skin.

Curtis hissed in approval, his thrusts deepening, the thick ridges of his twin cocks dragging against her inner walls with each withdrawal. Kritika's body convulsed between them, suspended between Harvey's bruising grip and Curtis's invasion. Harvey leaned up, biting her exposed throat as he commanded, "Scream for him, Kritika. Scream how full you are." She shattered, a raw, guttural wail tearing from her throat as Curtis's rhythm stuttered, his release flooding her core and rear in hot pulses that made her spasm uncontrollably.

Harvey released her ankles only to flip her onto her hands and knees, her back arched high. Curtis withdrew with a slick sound, replaced instantly by Harvey mounting her from behind, his leopard cock plunging back into her aching, dripping cunt. Curtis slid his still-hard length into her stretched rear, the dual penetration making her sob into the furs. They moved in brutal tandem—Harvey's sharp, punishing thrusts meeting Curtis's slow, grinding rolls—until Kritika's vision blurred, her mind dissolving into pure sensation.

She didn't feel the moment consciousness slipped away. Only the overwhelming fullness, the searing stretch, the animalistic growls vibrating through her bones, and the hot flood of seed deep inside her core and rear as both beasts claimed her one final, shattering time. Darkness swallowed her whole, blissfully numb

CHAPTER 7

The sun hung high in the sky, spilling warm golden light across the hut. Kritika sat cross-legged on a woven mat, casually munching on fresh, ripe tomatoes for breakfast. Each bite burst with sweetness, and the glow on her skin seemed almost magical—something she noticed and smiled about. 😊 Perfect for a little goddess effect, she thought, savoring the tangy flavor.

Curtis coiled nearby, his golden-red eyes scanning the forest, every muscle taut and alert. Harvey, tail flicking with quiet concentration, arranged small bundles of herbs and supplies for the day's journey.

Kritika finally spoke, voice calm but commanding: "Curtis... you'll take point. Make sure the caravan's route is safe and no ferals or rootless beasts approach. Harvey... you'll travel with the injured or weak females. Make sure everyone stays healthy. And I'll... oversee the group, coordinate, and keep you two from getting too distracted."

Curtis gave a low hiss, tail curling possessively around her waist. "Of course," he said, voice soft but deadly serious, his protective instinct flaring like fire.

Harvey inclined his head, amber eyes attentive. "Understood. I'll ensure no one falters. I... I'll keep everyone alive and healthy," he replied, though a faint blush crept over his cheeks.

Kritika smirked, biting into another juicy tomato. "Good. Remember, teamwork keeps everyone safe—and it keeps me happy," she said, her eyes glinting with that teasing authority that both men couldn't resist.

She finished her small breakfast, placing the last tomato aside, and stood gracefully. "The caravan is coming today. Let's make sure our little family shows them how strong, capable, and... intimidating we can be," she added, giving Curtis and Harvey a sly wink.

Curtis hissed softly in approval, while Harvey's tail flicked nervously—both men already reading her words as both a command and a playful challenge.

Kritika's skin glowed in the morning sun, her energy vibrant and magnetic. She knew she had her mates, her mind, and her strategy ready. Nothing could stop them—not rootless beasts, not ferals, not the dangers of Beast City.

Let them come, she thought, brushing her hair behind her ear. We'll show them exactly who we are... and how strong our little family has become.

The caravan rumbled closer, dust rising along the forest path as Kritika, Curtis, and Harvey prepared to meet them. Kritika adjusted her dress, checking the glow of her skin from the tomatoes she'd eaten earlier. Perfect, she thought, smiling to herself.

As the first of the beast-men and rescued females approached, Kritika stepped forward, her voice calm, warm, and confident.

"Greetings," she said, eyes soft but steady. "We're here to help you. Curtis and Harvey will ensure your safety, and I'll... make sure everyone is comfortable and well-cared for on this journey."

A few of the beast-men shifted nervously, wary of Curtis's towering presence coiled protectively behind her, scales glinting in the sun. But Kritika's polite tone, her kindness, and the gentle way she regarded them gradually won over their suspicion.

Harvey stepped in quietly, offering medicinal herbs to a few injured females. His amber eyes were calm, precise, and reassuring. Kritika

nodded subtly at him—her silent approval encouraging him, making him glow with pride.

Curtis hissed softly at anyone who dared step too close to her, yet when she touched his scales or whispered instructions, he relaxed, trusting her judgment entirely.

One by one, the rescued females and beast-men began to warm up to Kritika. Her polite gestures, soft words, and careful attention to their needs made her seem almost like a goddess walking among them. By the time the caravan had fully assembled, whispers ran through the group: She is kind... she protects us... she commands respect without anger or fear.

Kritika smiled quietly to herself, knowing her strategy was working. She didn't need to intimidate them—her aura, her intelligence, and her natural charm did it for her. Curtis and Harvey stayed close, vigilant yet unobtrusive, their presence reinforcing the sense of safety she projected.

"This way," she said, motioning gently for the caravan to follow. "We'll keep to the forest path. It's safer, and the journey will be smoother. Curtis... front. Harvey... check everyone along the line. I'll stay in the middle, making sure no one is left behind."

The caravan moved as she instructed, and Kritika couldn't help but feel a thrill of satisfaction. Her polite behavior, kindness, and strategic thinking had already won over the beasts—and she knew that with Curtis and Harvey by her side, she could handle anything the Beast World threw at her.

This is only the beginning, she thought, watching the caravan move steadily. My family is growing... and so is our strength.

CHAPTER 8

The caravan finally reached the bustling outskirts of Beast City. The streets were alive with a cacophony of sounds—claws clicking against stone, roars echoing in alleyways, and the chatter of beast-men negotiating trades. Kritika walked confidently at the center, Curtis coiled slightly behind her, Harvey attentive at her side.

Her mind tingled with the familiar chime from Aki.

✱ Task Update: Mate with a royal or ruling family member from Beast City to claim rewards and advance your mission.”

Kritika’s eyes flickered with curiosity and strategy. “Show me,” she whispered, letting the AI beam the information directly into her thoughts.

A figure stood out immediately—a massive white tiger beast with a jagged scar running across his right eye. Winston. He sat apart from the crowd, quiet, observant, and deliberately distant. Unlike the others, he didn’t indulge in trivial chatter or gossip. His amber eyes scanned the surroundings with an intensity that made Kritika’s pulse quicken—not from fear, but from recognition of power.

Nearby, some of the rescued females began bad-mouthing a lesser-known member of the caravan, Jim, laughing and whispering behind their hands. Kritika’s lips tightened imperceptibly, a flash of irritation crossing her otherwise calm expression. Yet the anger was not directed at Winston—it was a small, controlled fire for those who indulged in petty cruelty.

She said nothing, allowing her presence to speak for her. Curtis noticed immediately, his tail curling protectively, muscles taut under his scales, reading the subtle shift in her energy. Harvey's ears twitched in quiet concern, sensing her inner calculation.

Kritika's gaze returned to Winston. His posture was commanding, yet relaxed. The scar across his eye didn't diminish his aura—it enhanced it, a testament to battles fought and survived. Even from a distance, she could feel the tension he radiated, the kind of controlled strength that made others instinctively give space.

Interesting, she thought, her mind already running through possibilities. Strong, silent, cautious... this one will need more than charm. He respects power and strategy.

Curtis hissed softly beside her, tail brushing against her leg in reassurance. Harvey's tail flicked uncertainly but followed her gaze, sensing the new challenge.

Kritika smiled faintly, lips curling in that subtle, strategic way that had made Curtis and Harvey fall for her wits just as much as her heart. "Winston," she murmured under her breath, "we'll see how you respond... when I make my move."

And with that, she stepped forward into the chaos of Beast City, calm, poised, and already plotting her next steps. A white tiger, a scar, and a silent strength—her new challenge awaited, and Kritika Marrero was ready.

Kritika moved gracefully through the crowd, her steps confident and unhurried. Curtis stayed coiled slightly behind her, every muscle ready, scales glinting in the sunlight, while Harvey walked quietly at her side, amber eyes alert to every motion.

Winston's gaze caught hers almost immediately. The white tiger's scarred eye tracked her calmly, but there was no hint of intimidation—only measured curiosity. Kritika's lips curved into a

faint smile. Good... he notices me, but he doesn't react impulsively. That's promising.

She approached the edge of where he sat, deliberately close enough to be seen, but careful not to intrude on his space. The subtle sway of her hips, the warmth radiating from her presence, and the faint scent of herbs and spices from her journey seemed to reach him effortlessly.

"Winston," she said softly, voice steady but melodic, "I hear much about your... exploits." She tilted her head, her amber-brown eyes locking with his scarred gaze. "I hope you don't mind a little company. I think there's much we could learn from each other."

Curtis hissed low in warning, tail flicking, while Harvey's ears twitched nervously, sensing the tension in the air. Kritika placed a reassuring hand on Curtis's scales. "Relax... for now. I want to see how he reacts. Strength respects strategy, not dominance alone."

Winston's jaw shifted slightly, a faint rumble resonating from his chest—not aggressive, but testing. He didn't move closer, but he didn't look away either. There was a careful calculation in his posture, a silent challenge she could feel without words.

Kritika's smile widened, subtly teasing. She leaned slightly forward, brushing a strand of hair from her face, letting her presence radiate confidence and calm. This one won't fall for hasty charm, she thought. I'll need patience, cleverness... and a little daring.

Curtis, sensing her intent, coiled his tail protectively, muscles tense, but the glint in his eyes showed he trusted her plan. Harvey, still close, shifted slightly, ready to intervene if needed, though his own blush revealed the faint thrill of watching Kritika assert her influence.

Kritika took a measured step back, folding her hands lightly in front of her. "I'll return later," she said softly, "when you've had time to observe. Then... we can speak more privately."

Winston's scarred eye flickered with interest, and for the first time, a low, approving growl rumbled in his throat. Kritika's smile only widened. She had planted the seed, tested the waters, and already felt the subtle tug of the challenge she had accepted.

As she walked back toward Curtis and Harvey, she whispered with satisfaction, "This one... will take some finesse. But I like a challenge."

Curtis hissed softly, tail brushing against her, while Harvey's ears twitched, his tail flicking nervously. Both could feel her excitement – and knew, without question, that Kritika Marrero was about to claim yet another powerful mate for her growing family.

CHAPTER 10

The caravan moved steadily through the forest paths, sunlight filtering through the canopy and casting dappled patterns across the group. Kritika walked at the center, Curtis slightly coiled behind her, Harvey following closely, keeping an eye on the rescued females and supplies.

Her mind, however, was focused on one thing—Winston. The massive white tiger with the scar across his right eye had remained distant since they first arrived in Beast City, observing silently, not engaging in chatter or banter.

Perfect, Kritika thought with a sly grin. A silent, brooding one... he'll be fun to tease.

She adjusted her dress slightly, letting the sunlight catch the curves she knew would make him glance up. Then, in a soft, playful voice, she spoke just loud enough for him to hear:

"Winston... I hope the journey isn't too boring for you. It would be such a shame if someone so strong and... intimidating... got tired before we even arrived."

The white tiger's scarred eye flicked toward her. His jaw shifted, a low rumble vibrating in his chest. He didn't speak, but the faint twitch of his tail betrayed that he had noticed her—and that her words had reached him in the way she intended.

Curtis hissed low, tail flicking possessively. Harvey, walking beside her, stiffened slightly, ears twitching nervously. Kritika glanced at them both, lips curling in amusement. Oh, don't worry... I know what I'm doing.

Later, as the caravan rested by a small stream for water, Kritika approached Winston deliberately, her steps light and confident. She stopped just a few paces away, letting her eyes meet his scarred gaze.

“You know,” she said softly, letting her words drift teasingly, “some say strength is all that matters in the Beast World... but I think intelligence and a little charm go a long way.” She let her hand brush lightly over a nearby tree, close enough that he could feel her presence, but careful not to overstep.

Winston’s ears twitched. A low growl rumbled in his chest—not aggression, but awareness. She could feel the silent challenge radiating from him, and a spark of excitement flared in her chest. Finally... someone who isn’t falling for the easy charm.

Curtis let out a low hiss, coiling slightly around her, tail brushing her leg possessively. Harvey’s tail flicked nervously, amber eyes flicking between Kritika and Winston. Both men understood her strategy—she was testing him, teasing him, and slowly drawing him in without forcing a reaction.

Kritika’s lips curved in a subtle, confident smile. “Don’t worry, Winston,” she said softly, almost to herself, letting the words float so only he could hear. “I don’t bite... much. But I do like to see who can keep up.”

For the first time since she’d arrived in Beast City, Winston shifted his stance slightly, leaning forward just enough to show that her words had caught his attention. The faintest hint of a smirk touched his scarred features, and Kritika’s smile widened in quiet triumph.

Perfect, she thought. A challenge... and he’s already curious. This is going to be fun.

With Curtis and Harvey close, and the caravan moving steadily ahead, Kritika felt the thrill of strategy, play, and the quiet beginnings of another bond forming—her family growing, her

influence expanding, and her heart satisfied with the careful game she was orchestrating.

The road to Beast City was long and dusty, lined by towering darkwoods whose shadows stretched across the caravan like silent sentinels. Kritika walked between Curtis and Harvey, nibbling on a piece of wild fruit Harvey had found for her. Her mood was unhurried, almost serene — until her eyes found Winston again.

The white tiger strode a few paces ahead, his tall frame carrying an air of effortless power. The scar over his right eye caught the pale morning light, making his expression sharper, colder. Kritika tilted her head slightly, her lips quirking as she decided it was time to play again.

She stepped a little ahead of Curtis, letting her soft laughter drift toward Winston.

“ You walk as if the whole world depends on your shoulders,” she teased lightly.

Her tone was warm — neither mocking nor disrespectful, just enough to stir curiosity.

Winston’s ears twitched but he kept his gaze forward. His tail swayed once, slow and heavy. Kritika grinned. He hears me... but won’t give in yet.

She slowed her pace so they were almost side by side, pretending to admire the trees. “ Do all white tigers keep to themselves,” she murmured, “ or is it only the ones with a story behind their scars?”

That earned her a sideways glance — brief but sharp. His golden eye met hers for a heartbeat before he looked away again.

Curtis made a low sound in his throat, a soft hiss that vibrated like a warning. Kritika reached down and brushed her fingers along one of his coils.

“ Easy,” she whispered. “ I’m just talking.”

Harvey cleared his throat softly behind them. The tip of his leopard tail flicked in mild amusement. He'd already guessed what Kritika was doing—drawing Winston out, one thread at a time.

As the caravan crested a hill later that afternoon, they stopped to rest. The wind carried the scent of rain and the far-off hum of the city. Kritika took the moment to approach Winston again. She crouched near the edge of a rock where he was seated and plucked a small wildflower growing beside his boot. She rolled the stem between her fingers, then looked up at him.

"You should smile at least once," she said quietly. "It might scare the ghosts away."

Winston's jaw shifted; the corner of his mouth almost curved—almost.

The briefest hint of a huff escaped him, something halfway between a scoff and a laugh.

Kritika caught it and leaned back, satisfied. "See? You can do it."

Curtis watched the exchange with narrowed eyes but stayed silent, sensing that his mate was safe. Harvey only shook his head and went back to sorting herbs in his pouch.

When the caravan resumed, Kritika walked beside her two mates again, an impish sparkle in her eyes.

Curtis slid closer, his voice a low rumble. "You enjoy provoking the tiger."

She smiled, brushing her fingers over his scaled arm.

"I enjoy seeing what hides behind the mask," she replied softly. "Sometimes the strongest ones just need a reason to speak."

Harvey glanced at her, his leopard ears angling forward. "You think he'll join us?"

Kritika's gaze flicked to Winston's broad back as he led the group. A slow, knowing smile curved her lips.

"I think he's already listening," she said.

The caravan slowed as the sun climbed higher, the warm air shimmering over the path. A small clearing by the roadside spring made the perfect place to halt. Beasts settled in clusters under the shade of thick-rooted trees, sharing water and simple rations.

Kritika's eyes, however, were fixed on Winston.

He had already moved to the farthest boulder near the water, as though the weight of his presence demanded distance. The soft breeze ruffled the short white fur on his tiger ears. They were sharp at the tips, a little tufted inside, and twitched at every rustle in the clearing.

Beneath those ears, his face carried the hard angles of a warrior — strong jaw, a straight nose, and the faint shadow of a stubble that didn't quite soften his expression. The long scar slicing from his brow across his right eye to his cheek gave him a permanent air of danger, yet there was something magnetic about it.

His body was tall and broad-shouldered, clothed in travel-worn dark leathers that fit over muscle like they were meant to move with him. His arms were dusted faintly with white fur near the elbows, stripes of pale silver trailing down like whispers of his beast form.

And then there was his tail — long, white, and thickly furred, with a hint of silver striping near the base. It swayed lazily as he sat, curling slightly at the tip, so fluffy that Kritika's fingers twitched at the thought of sinking into it.

Oh my stars... it looks softer than any pillow I've ever owned, she thought, biting the inside of her cheek to stop the grin that threatened to spread. How is a girl supposed to resist that?

Curtis noticed the way her gaze lingered and gave a sharp, low hiss of warning. She quickly patted his scaled arm with a sly smile.

“Relax,” she murmured. “I’m just... curious.”

Harvey, crouched near his herb pouch, caught the gleam in her eyes and groaned under his breath. His leopard tail flicked in mild annoyance, though his ears tipped forward, betraying his own curiosity about how this would play out.

Kritika dusted off her palms, smoothed the folds of her travel dress, and stepped away from her mates toward the lone white tiger.

Winston’s ears twitched before she reached him, picking up her soft steps. His golden eye shifted toward her briefly but then returned to the horizon, as though uninterested.

Kritika stopped a couple of paces away, crossing her arms loosely as she tilted her head.

“Always sitting apart,” she said lightly. “You make it look as though you own that rock.”

Winston didn’t answer right away. His tail gave one slow flick, a silent reminder that he had heard her. When he finally spoke, his voice was low, rough-edged but steady.

“Some of us prefer silence.”

Kritika smiled, stepping a little closer but still keeping respectful distance. Her eyes flicked once more to his ears—how they twitched in the breeze—and then to that tail, the tip curling idly against the rock.

“Silence has its place,” she said softly. “But sometimes, good company makes the silence... warmer.”

For a heartbeat, Winston’s gaze moved back to her face. His golden eye narrowed slightly, curious but guarded. The wind teased a lock of Kritika’s hair across her cheek, and she tucked it back slowly,

letting her fingers brush her own neck, drawing his attention to the mating marks near her collarbone without a word.

Curtis shifted from where he sat in the distance, muscles taut, while Harvey muttered something inaudible as he busied himself with herbs.

Kritika lowered herself gracefully onto a smaller rock a safe distance from Winston, not too close to threaten, not too far to feel dismissed. She rested her chin lightly on her palm, her smile warm and unhurried.

Inside, her thoughts were humming.

Let's see if I can get the mighty tiger to talk more than two words before sunset... and maybe, just maybe, get closer to that tail.

CHAPTER 11

The breeze off the stream carried the scent of damp earth and leaves. Most of the caravan had settled down to rest—some beasts were sharpening weapons, others tending the rescued females. The soft murmur of voices created a low hum that easily hid a private conversation.

Kritika shifted slightly on the stone near Winston, her posture casual enough not to draw any attention. Her gaze was fixed on the river's rippling surface, but her words were meant only for him.

Leaning forward just enough for her hair to shield her face from view, she whispered, her voice low and smooth,

“Winston... be my mate.”

The white tiger's ears twitched; a flicker of tension rippled down his shoulders, but he stayed still, his golden eye sliding sideways to watch her.

Her hand moved slowly, deliberately, until her fingertips brushed the thick fur of his tail where it curled on the rock beside her. The tail stiffened, the muscles under the fur coiling as if startled, then twitched against her palm. She stroked it lightly once, like a secret promise.

“If you don't want to answer,” she murmured, eyes still on the water, “I'll wait. But I will claim you in my family when the time comes.”

Her tone held no pleading—only certainty, and a quiet warmth that carried weight.

The corner of Winston's mouth tightened, as though holding back a reaction. His tail gave a single slow flick beneath her fingers but didn't pull away.

Kritika's smile turned sly, still hidden behind the curtain of her hair.

"I want to steal the breath from those females who mocked you today," she added softly. "They don't deserve to laugh at someone like you."

For a moment there was only the sound of water slipping over stones. Winston didn't speak, but the low rumble in his chest told her he had heard every word. The golden eye held her profile for a heartbeat longer before turning back toward the trees.

Kritika let her hand fall back to her lap as if nothing had happened, her expression composed when she leaned away. Outwardly nothing had changed, yet she felt a spark of something new in the air—an unspoken accord between them that no one else had noticed.

Across the clearing, Curtis watched with a narrowed gaze, his coils shifting restlessly, while Harvey's ears twitched as he pretended to focus on his pouch of herbs.

Kritika simply tilted her chin toward the horizon, hiding her smile.

One step closer, she thought. The tiger just hasn't said yes yet.

The high walls of Beast City rose from the mist like the ribs of a giant beast, carved from black stone and draped with banners that fluttered in the breeze. Beyond the massive gates, Kritika could hear the roar of the crowd—cheers, claps, the deep voices of the city's beast-men echoing in welcome.

The caravan entered slowly, guarded by soldiers of every kind—lions with bronze armor, wolves with steel spears, and hawk-eyed scouts perched on the battlements. Kritika's eyes widened at the

sight of the bustling streets, where markets overflowed with dried meats, herbs, colorful stones, and woven cloth.

Curtis slithered beside her in his half-beast form, protective and alert, while Harvey's leopard ears flicked nervously as he took in the noise and chaos. Winston walked at the front of the group, his posture as straight as an iron blade, the sunlight turning the fur along his tail into silver flame.

At the city square stood the Ape King Berth—a towering figure with thick, coal-grey fur covering his arms and broad chest, crowned with a circlet of polished bone. His sharp, amber eyes studied each new arrival.

When the rescued females stepped forward—five in total—the crowd erupted in applause and whistles. The Ape King raised a massive hand, and the noise hushed.

"Citizens of Beast City!" Berth's deep voice carried across the plaza. "Today we celebrate victory—five more females brought safely from the Ghost City!"

The cheers that followed shook the ground beneath them. Kritika's lips curved in a small, genuine smile at the sight of hope lighting the women's faces.

Berth's gaze then shifted to Winston.

"White Tiger of the North," he called, his voice booming, "step forward so the females may choose you. Your bloodline is strong. Your protection will bring them safety."

Winston stepped out of the line, his face unreadable, his long white tail swaying gently behind him. As he

The bustling streets of Beast City faded behind them as Kritika led Curtis, Harvey, and Winston through narrow alleys and quiet stone lanes. Her sharp eyes darted to make sure no curious onlookers were following too closely. Winston walked silently at her side, his

white tiger ears flicking occasionally, his golden gaze fixed on her but careful to remain unnoticed.

Kritika glanced at him slyly. "You're sure this is what you wanted?" she whispered, her tone soft, almost conspiratorial.

The white tiger's tail flicked once. "Yes," he replied quietly, his voice low and steady. "You are the one I've been... seeking."

A bright smile spread across Kritika's face. Perfect, she thought. Everything is falling into place.

She turned slowly, letting her fingers brush over Curtis's scales and Harvey's fur as she moved past them. Then, with a playful glint in her eyes, she planted soft, affectionate kisses on each of their cheeks—Curtis hissed softly in surprise, Harvey's ears twitched furiously, and Winston's golden gaze widened in quiet astonishment.

The three men froze, completely helpless in front of her radiant joy. Curtis's tail twitched, coiling protectively around her, while Harvey's amber eyes darkened with embarrassment and affection. Winston's scarred eye softened, his tail curling slightly as if he wanted to wrap it around her.

Kritika laughed softly, the sound melodic and full of warmth. "See?" she said, brushing back a strand of hair. "All of you are mine, but that doesn't mean I can't celebrate happiness, right?"

Curtis let out a low rumble, eyes gleaming with pride and possessiveness. Harvey's tail flicked nervously, ears tilted forward, but there was a glint of admiration he couldn't hide. Winston, the stoic and silent one, allowed a small, almost imperceptible smirk to touch his lips—a quiet acknowledgment that he accepted her dominance and delight.

Kritika's gaze swept over her three mates, her heart swelling with gratitude. I've found them... and they've found me. Together, we're unstoppable.

She wrapped her arms around herself, still smiling, feeling the energy of her mates radiate toward her in waves. In that secluded corner of the city, away from prying eyes, Kritika Marrero allowed herself to savor the moment—the quiet triumph of securing her family, the thrill of controlling the hearts of three powerful men, and the soft warmth of love and loyalty surrounding her.

"This is just the beginning," she murmured softly, almost to herself. "We have a city to navigate, a family to protect... and many more hearts to claim."

Curtis hissed softly in agreement, Harvey's tail flicked in anticipation, and Winston's golden eye met hers with quiet promise. Together, the four of them stood, a united force ready to face the challenges of Beast City—and the adventures that awaited.

WINSTON THE WHITE TIGER

Winston is a majestic white tiger beast, tall and broad-shouldered, his presence commanding even in silence. His snow-white fur gleams faintly under moonlight, striped with elegant streaks of silver and pale grey that ripple across his muscular frame whenever he moves. His humanoid body carries the mark of a true protector — strong arms, sculpted chest, and a stance that radiates calm authority.

But what sets him apart — and what once made others turn away — is the long, jagged scar running diagonally across his right eye. It's not just a mark; it's a story etched into his skin — one of sacrifice and courage. He earned it while saving his young niece from a rogue beast attack, a moment that left him half-blind in that eye but never weakened his spirit.

To most females of the beast world, the scar was a flaw — a symbol of imperfection — and they rejected him as a mate. But to Kritika, it is a badge of honor, proof of his selflessness and heart.

His eyes, one a deep sapphire blue and the other a faint misty grey from injury, hold a quiet sadness — the kind that comes from being seen as less than what he truly is. Yet when he looks at Kritika, that sadness melts into pure devotion. She gave him what the world denied: acceptance, desire, and belonging.

His white tiger ears, tipped with faint silver, twitch when she laughs, and his thick tail often curls around her when he sleeps beside her, protective and possessive even in rest. The warmth of his fur is her comfort — especially on cold nights when his body becomes her safe haven.

Despite his scarred appearance, Winston carries himself with grace and quiet nobility. His growl can shake mountains, yet his touch is gentle enough to soothe crying cubs. His voice, deep and resonant, carries the weight of experience — the kind of voice that can command armies or whisper soft reassurances against Kritika's ear. To her, Winston is strength in silence, beauty in imperfection, and love that never needs to prove itself.



CHAPTER 12

Kritika leaned back against the stone wall of the secluded alley, letting the distant sounds of Beast City fade into a soft hum. Her gaze swept over Curtis, Harvey, and Winston, each of them attentive and waiting for her words.

"I don't want to live in Beast City for much longer," she said softly, her voice carrying a quiet determination. "I want a home hidden somewhere in the mountains... a place where we can live away from the chaos, just us — my family... and all my cute little mates."

Curtis's tail twitched, curling protectively around her. Harvey's ears flicked forward, a faint blush dusting his fur. But it was Winston who tilted his head slightly, golden eyes narrowing thoughtfully.

"What kind of family do you dream of?" he asked, his voice low, rough-edged, but curious.

Kritika smiled, her eyes shining with warmth and vision. "A family where everyone is safe, happy, and cared for. Where no one has to hide who they are, or fear others' judgments. Where love isn't a secret or a weapon — it's protection, comfort, and strength. I want laughter in every corner, warmth in every hand, and all of you... with me."

Winston's scarred eye softened for the first time in front of her. He shifted slightly closer, letting the faint scent of his musk reach her without a word. His tail flicked in small, unconscious circles, the movement subtle but revealing the interest and trust growing between them.

Curtis let out a low, approving hiss, his coil tightening slightly around her as if claiming her in silent agreement. Harvey's tail flicked nervously but loyally, ears twitching as he processed her words—her vision of a family that included all three of them.

Kritika's smile widened, sensing the unspoken understanding in the air. "I want us to be a family that no one can break, no matter the chaos outside. Hidden, safe, and full of love... my little kingdom of us," she whispered, her fingers brushing lightly along Curtis's scales, Harvey's fur, and just enough of Winston's tail to remind him of her gentle claim.

Winston gave a low, approving rumble, the closest thing he had to a smile, and Curtis and Harvey mirrored it with contented hisses and tail flicks.

"Then we will build it," Winston said finally, his voice carrying quiet promise. "A family hidden from the world... and I will protect it with you."

Kritika's heart swelled as she looked at her three mates, each powerful, loyal, and entirely hers. This is what I wanted, she thought, her lips curling into a triumphant, tender smile. My hidden family... my safe kingdom... and all my cute little mates by my side.

The quiet of the secluded alley was broken by the soft rustle of fur and claws against stone. Kritika's eyes lifted, and her heart skipped a beat—not out of fear, but curiosity. A lithe figure emerged from the shadows: a wolf beast-man, elegant and quick, his beautiful white fur glinting in the sunlight.

He bowed slightly, a polite but confident gesture. "Greetings, Lady Kritika. I am here to court you," he said smoothly, voice melodic and soft.

Kritika's eyes widened for a moment before narrowing mischievously. She glanced at Curtis, Harvey, and Winston. 🐾

Their reactions were instant: Curtis's tail coiled protectively, Harvey's ears twitched nervously, and Winston's scarred eye sharpened, watching every movement.

"Who are you?" she asked, tilting her head with that subtle confidence she always carried.

"My name is Shuu," the wolf beast replied, bowing again, his large, fluffy tail swishing behind him like a banner.

Kritika whispered in her mind to the AI, "Am I claiming two royal mates? Well... this is weird." The Aki's voice chimed softly back:

"Claiming two mates secretly can strengthen your position. It will help you in future strategic alliances."

Kritika paused, fingers brushing the edge of her dress, thinking carefully. She understood the implications. She wasn't acting rashly – this was part of the story's hidden strategy. She needed to see how Winston would adjust to another potential royal mate, and how her family rules would be respected.

"Very well, Shuu," she said softly, her voice carrying a calm authority. "Court me... like Winston."

Curtis let out a low hiss, tail tightening protectively around her. Harvey's ears flicked forward, alert but intrigued. Winston's scarred eye lingered on her face, analyzing every subtle motion. He understood immediately – the request was not a challenge to him, but a test. Kritika was fair; she wanted to see if Shuu could respect the family structure she had begun to establish.

Winston's jaw shifted subtly, the rumble in his chest quiet but approving. She is testing fairly, he thought, to ensure balance, protection, and respect for our family.

Kritika added softly, just for him to hear, "Keep an eye on him, Winston. I trust you will understand my intentions."

The white tiger's tail flicked slowly, curling protectively around him as he studied Shuu. He knew the wolf prince's position—son of the wolf King, close to Ape King Berth, and likely a pawn in the larger political game. But Kritika had already planned for this. By observing Shuu under her rules, they could ensure the safety of her growing family without alerting anyone to her true strategy.

Kritika smiled faintly, brushing her fingers along Winston's arm without needing a word. "We will see if you can follow my rules, Shuu," she said, voice light but commanding. "If you can, then perhaps you may belong to my family too."

Shuu's ears flicked in acknowledgment, eyes bright with both curiosity and respect. Curtis hissed softly, Harvey's tail flicked nervously, and Winston's golden gaze never left the wolf prince.

Kritika's mind swirled with possibilities—but one thing was certain: her hidden family, her rules, and her power would remain intact, no matter who stepped forward next.

The mountain air was crisp as the caravan continued through the outskirts of Beast City, the sun casting long shadows on the cobbled streets. Kritika walked confidently at the center, Curtis coiled protectively behind her, Harvey keeping pace quietly at her side, and Winston silently observing the surroundings. Shuu, the wolf prince, followed with cautious elegance, every movement deliberate, his large fluffy tail swishing slightly behind him.

Kritika's mind raced with strategy. This isn't just about choosing mates... it's about forming a family that can survive anything. She glanced at Winston, who caught her eye immediately. The subtle nod he gave her told her everything—he understood the test and would ensure that Shuu respected the rules she was establishing.

They stopped at a small clearing outside the city to rest. Kritika turned toward Shuu, her posture calm but commanding. "You are here to court me," she said softly, letting her amber-brown eyes lock

with his. "But first, you must understand my family rules. Do you accept them?"

Shuu's ears twitched, and he dipped his head respectfully. "I accept, Lady Kritika," he replied smoothly.

Curtis hissed low in the background, muscles coiling tighter as he kept a protective eye on the wolf prince. Harvey's tail flicked nervously, but he stayed still, waiting to see how Shuu would behave under Kritika's guidance. Winston, as always, remained calm but alert, his scarred eye sharp, analyzing every twitch of the newcomer's ears and tail.

Kritika smiled faintly, stepping closer. "Good. Then you will follow my rules, respect my mates, and uphold the safety of our family at all times. Failure to do so will have consequences – understood?"

"Yes," Shuu replied, his tail curling in acknowledgment.

Satisfied, Kritika decided to test him subtly. She leaned forward slightly, allowing the faint scent of her presence to reach him, and let her hand hover near his fur, brushing it lightly – not too much, just enough to gauge his reaction.

Shuu stiffened for a heartbeat but then relaxed, his amber eyes showing respect and restraint. Curtis's scales glimmered as he hissed low, signaling his approval of the wolf prince's discipline, while Harvey's ears twitched with quiet relief. Winston's tail flicked once – a signal that he had noted Shuu's response and deemed it acceptable.

Kritika smiled warmly. "Very well. You may continue, but remember – our family comes first. Loyalty, protection, and respect are not optional."

The wolf prince bowed his head again, a small, respectful smile on his lips. "I understand. I will follow your guidance."

Kritika's lips curved into a sly, satisfied grin. Good, she thought. This family will grow strong, and everyone will know their place... even royalty.

With that, the group continued toward the heart of Beast City, Kritika walking at the center, her three mates and the wolf prince forming a protective circle around her. The subtle power dynamics had been set, and she could already feel the bonds beginning to weave between them — all under her careful, strategic guidance.

And as the sun dipped lower in the sky, Kritika Marrero allowed herself a small, private smile. Her hidden family was growing, her rules were being respected, and the adventure in Beast City was just beginning.

PRINCE SHUU

Prince Shuu, heir to the wolf Kingdom, is a creature of elegance and mischief — the kind of male whose beauty hides a thousand secrets. With silver-tipped auburn hair that glimmers like fire under sunlight and wolf ears alert to every sound around him, he is both charming and unpredictable. His eyes, molten amber with flickers of gold, seem to read thoughts, always glinting with cunning amusement.

As the young ruler of the wolf Territory, Shuu carries himself with effortless grace, his every movement fluid and precise. His humanoid body is lean but strong, wrapped in soft layers of fur around his wrists and neck — a symbol of his royal lineage. A long, fluffy tail, almost too expressive, gives away his mood — twitching when he's irritated, curling around Kritika when he's amused or affectionate.

Though his laughter is light and his smile disarming, beneath that playfulness lies the strategic brilliance of a true wolf prince. He was raised in a palace of whispers and manipulation, taught that survival often means smiling while your enemies sharpen their claws. Yet, despite the poisonous court he grew up in, Shuu's heart is still surprisingly gentle — especially toward Kritika, who treats him not as a prince, but as a man capable of love and loyalty.

His world, however, is far from peaceful. Among the six beast rulers, the Ape King Barth stands as the cruelest — a tyrant whose lust for control knows no bounds. Barth manipulates Shuu's father, the aging wolf King, like a pawn in his schemes. Through threats and blackmail, Barth has slowly tightened his grip over the wolf

Territory, using its resources and warriors to strengthen his own hold on the beast lands.

Shuu despises Barth's domination — but for years, he was forced to play along, pretending to obey while secretly plotting the downfall of his father's oppressor. His charm became his weapon, his wit a shield. Only Kritika, with her strange warmth and fearless honesty, made him drop the mask.

With her, he is not the wolf prince or the cunning ruler — he is simply Shuu, a male who craves affection and freedom. When he smiles at her, it's not the calculated grin of a diplomat — it's the unguarded expression of a man who finally feels seen.

In battle, Shuu is swift as lightning — his claws gleam, his movements blur. In love, he is playful, teasing, and endlessly curious, a trickster who can make even the most dangerous moment feel like a game.

But make no mistake — beneath that boyish grin lies the mind of a future king. The one who will someday end his brother's reign of manipulation and reclaim his father's crown. And by his side, he knows, will stand Kritika — the only one bold enough to outwolf the wolf himself.



CHAPTER 13

As the group rested in the quiet clearing, Kritika closed her eyes for a moment, reaching out with her mind to her AI.

"Find me a mountain," she whispered silently, letting her thoughts flow. "It must be close enough to Beast City to remain accessible, but completely hidden from tracking, floods, and volcanic eruptions."

The AI responded almost instantly, a calm voice echoing in her mind:

"Coordinates found. Safe, secluded, and elevated. No natural threats detected. Ideal for your family's settlement."

Kritika smiled, opening her eyes to meet Winston's golden gaze. "We leave after seven moon nights," she said softly, letting her plan unfold. "By then, Winston and Shuu will set up our house there. They'll secure the territory, make it comfortable, and prepare for our arrival. Once we move, no one will be able to track us."

Winston's tail swayed slowly as he absorbed the instructions. "Three moon nights for us to prepare," he murmured. "Understood."

Shuu's amber eyes lit with excitement, though a flicker of concern crossed his face. Kritika noticed immediately.

"Shuu," Harvey said gently, stepping closer, "you must not reveal Kritika's identity to anyone yet. Keep it secret. Once she is mated, the announcement will be hers. This is for her protection."

Shuu nodded quickly. "Understood. I'll guard her secret."

Curtis coiled lightly around Kritika, scales shimmering in the sun. His hiss was quiet but approving. He trusted her strategy implicitly.

Kritika turned back to the group, her mind already working through the logistics. By the time Winston fully recovers from his last travel mission, he will be rested and ready to help secure the mountain. She glanced at Winston. "You'll need a few days of rest after the previous journey. Once you recover, you'll work harder than ever to protect our home."

Shuu's role was equally clear. Already serving as a guard in the wolf territory, he would quietly report to the wolf King about his courtship without revealing Kritika's true identity. This would maintain appearances, prevent unnecessary suspicion from Ape King Berth, and give them political cover.

Harvey crouched nearby, tail flicking thoughtfully. "Kritika's plan is clever," he said softly, his amber eyes scanning Shuu. "She's mating two royals from different families in a large city. That will catch attention. If others discover it prematurely, she could become a target. So keeping her hidden until everything is ready is essential."

Shuu tilted his head, clearly trying to grasp the political nuance. Kritika and the others could sense his confusion—it wasn't a lack of intelligence, just inexperience with subtle political maneuvering.

Curtis hissed softly, brushing his tail along her side, almost protective in gesture. Kritika smiled and patted him lightly. "Don't worry. We've planned everything. You, Harvey, Winston, and Shuu—everyone has a role. By the time we leave, the mountain will be ready, food secured, and our territory protected."

She paused, letting her eyes sweep over the men. "This isn't just about a home. It's about safety, strategy, and survival. And I will not let anyone threaten my family."

Winston's scarred eye softened, his tail curling lightly around him in silent agreement. Shuu straightened, ears alert and tail flicking – finally understanding the importance of discipline, secrecy, and timing.

Harvey nodded approvingly. "Once everything is in place, Kritika's family will be untouchable. Hidden, safe, and strong."

Kritika allowed herself a small, satisfied smile. Her plan was coming together – carefully measured, perfectly timed, and entirely under her control. The hidden family she envisioned was no longer just a dream; it was becoming a reality.

The three days passed quickly, filled with laughter, learning, and careful planning. Kritika patiently taught Winston and Shuu the basics of keeping a house clean, organizing supplies, and making bedding. She demonstrated folding sheets, fluffing pillows, and arranging small spaces to feel comfortable yet functional.

Shuu, it turned out, had a natural talent for sewing, much like Curtis. Kritika's eyes lit up at the realization. Perfect, she thought. "Shuu, once we reach the mountain, I want you to keep some cotton ready. We'll make covers for the bedding and pillows ourselves. That way, everything will feel like our own little home," she instructed. Shuu's ears twitched, a small smile appearing on his face.

Meanwhile, Kritika spent time cooking for her two suitors as well as her mates. She ensured Winston and Shuu received equal attention, giving them the care and comfort they needed while also maintaining her bond with Curtis and Harvey.

Curtis, however, could not hide his feelings. His scales shimmered faintly with agitation as he watched Kritika move between her suitors and mates, serving food and laughing with ease. He let out a low, guttural groan in frustration, the possessive energy practically radiating from him.

Kritika paused mid-step, a mischievous glint in her eyes. “Oh?” she murmured, tilting her head. “Feeling a little jealous, are we?”

Without hesitation, she moved toward him and pressed a soft, teasing kiss on his lips — right there in the middle of the hall. Curtis stiffened, caught off-guard, but melted under her touch.

Her two suitors, Winston and Shuu, froze for a heartbeat, surprised but curious, while Harvey leaned against a beam, tail flicking with amusement. He chuckled softly, shaking his head. “Curtis is way too protective for her,” he muttered, clearly entertained by the display.

Curtis’s tail coiled tightly around his legs as his chest rumbled low. Kritika smiled faintly, pulling back and letting her fingers brush against his scaled arm. “Relax,” she whispered. “You know I’m yours.”

Curtis hissed softly, his possessiveness simmering, while Winston’s scarred eye gave a subtle nod of approval—he understood the balance Kritika was creating. Shuu’s ears flicked, trying to process the playful dynamics, and Harvey continued giggling quietly, thoroughly enjoying the scene.

Kritika stepped back, hands on her hips, a triumphant smile on her face. Equal attention, happy mates, protected heart... she thought. Everything is coming together perfectly.

And with that, the four men and their clever, mischievous mate continued their preparations for the journey to the hidden mountain—a home that would soon belong entirely to Kritika and her carefully chosen family.

CHAPTER 14

The sun had just begun its climb over the horizon, casting golden light across the clearing as Shuu and Winston prepared to leave for their scouting and preparation missions. Kritika stood at the edge of the small courtyard, her eyes scanning both of them with that familiar mix of affection, authority, and mischief.

"You know... don't play with starters," she said lightly, the tone teasing but layered with command. "Stay careful while you're out. I don't want either of my mates hurt – am I clear?"

Both males nodded silently. Shuu's wolf ears twitched, Winston's tail flicked in acknowledgment, but Kritika could sense the tension under their composed exteriors. This was her moment to ease that edge, to remind them of warmth and safety.

She reached into her bag and pulled out a small package. "I've made something for you to eat," she said with a smile, handing it over. "Try to avoid trouble while you're out. I don't want to see my mates injured at all!"

Shuu, shifting slightly into his wolf form, tilted his head curiously. "For me?" he asked softly, a gleam of gratitude in his amber eyes.

Kritika's smile widened. "I know you love my sweets," she teased lightly. "So I packed some for you to take along." Shuu's fluffy tail flicked in delight, curling gently around him as he accepted the package.

Her gaze moved to Winston, who stood stoic as always, yet she could sense the alertness beneath his composed exterior. "Winston," she said, reaching up to place her fingers lightly on his scarred cheek, "please be alert and take care of yourself. I will pray

to my beast goddess for your safe travel. But both of you... don't get injured."

Her words were soft, warm, and filled with the kind of reassurance only she could give. She leaned forward and pressed gentle kisses on their foreheads — first Shuu, then Winston — in their beast forms.

Then, with a playful smirk, she ran her fingers along Shuu's soft fur and Winston's thick tail, rubbing lightly in a way that made them shiver with unexpected delight. Low purrs and rumbles escaped them, and even Curtis and Harvey, standing slightly behind her, watched with amusement at her antics.

"Be alert, boys... okay?" she whispered, her amber-brown eyes meeting theirs. "I want you back in one piece, and with good stories to tell."

Shuu's wolf ears flicked forward as he gave a small bow, tail curling lightly in response. Winston's golden gaze softened, a low rumble vibrating in his chest, signaling both approval and understanding.

Kritika stepped back, hands on her hips, watching them prepare to leave. Her heart swelled with affection and pride. My boys... strong, loyal, and completely mine. Now go, and stay safe.

As they departed toward their missions, Kritika exhaled softly, her smile lingering. Her family — her carefully chosen mates — was growing stronger, and with each day, her hidden home in the mountains was becoming not just a dream, but a carefully constructed reality.

The sun was high over Beast City as Kritika, Curtis, and Harvey made their way through the bustling market. The air smelled of spices, fresh fruits, and baked goods. While Winston and Shuu were out hunting and stocking supplies for their hidden mountain home, Kritika had taken it upon herself to prepare for the move — and, of course, to show her love for her mates in her own unique way.

“Harvey,” she said, turning to him with a soft smile, “carry me while Curtis stands guard. The market’s busy today.”

Harvey’s ears twitched, a faint blush creeping across his fur as he bent down and lifted her with ease. Curtis coiled slightly, his golden eye scanning the crowd like a hawk, protective and ready to strike at the slightest threat.

Kritika’s hands moved quickly as she shopped, picking out ten large bags of rice  for her family. Curtis, silently hissing with mild exasperation, paid for everything, raising a few curious eyes in the market.

But Kritika wasn’t finished. She piled baskets with colorful furs, fresh fruits, and herbs—enough to stock a small household for months. Curtis, seemingly unbothered, carried it all effortlessly on his tail, coils wrapped securely, as if the weight was nothing.

Her sharp eyes caught Harvey staring at a small display of hair jewelry. Kritika’s lips curved into a playful smile. “Go ahead, you like it? Take a closer look,” she teased, letting him inspect the delicate pieces.

But Kritika had her own plan. She walked into the shop herself, careful and deliberate. The shopkeeper, noticing her attention to the items, asked curiously, “Confused female... is this for your favorite male?”

Kritika’s smile widened, full of confidence and warmth. “No,” she replied. “These are for all my mates. They deserve the best things in this market. I am choosing something special for each of them.”

The shopkeeper blinked, stunned, while Curtis and Harvey, standing outside, stiffened slightly, understanding immediately what she meant. Kritika carefully selected four hair accessories and four neckpieces—each unique, each designed to suit her mates perfectly.

As she handed them to Curtis and Harvey to carry, she glanced around, ensuring no one could deduce the identities of her other two mates. She hadn't given any names or introduced them to anyone, keeping the secrecy intact.

Curtis coiled tightly around the bundles, tail flicking with pride, while Harvey's ears twitched, a quiet smile on his lips. Both understood the meaning behind the gifts: it was Kritika's way of showing love, care, and connection—not just to them, but also her longing for Winston and Shuu, who were still out securing the mountain.

The market seemed to pause around them, the chatter dying down slightly as those nearby took in the sight of Kritika, confident, generous, and clearly adored by her mates. Anyone watching would have wanted a female like her—brave, kind, and cunning all at once.

Curtis hissed softly, tail curling protectively around the goods. Harvey's tail flicked in quiet amusement, and Kritika allowed herself a small, triumphant smile. All my mates... all my family... everything is coming together exactly as I planned.

The morning sun filtered softly through the curtains of their temporary lodging, casting golden streaks across Kritika's face. She stretched lazily, only to hear the unmistakable sounds of a scuffle outside.

"Curtis... growling?" she muttered, blinking sleepily.

She rose and peeked out the window. Indeed, Curtis was coiled protectively around the entrance, his scales glinting in the early light as he hissed and snapped at a group of intruding suitors attempting to approach her. Harvey stood nearby, ears alert, tail flicking in anticipation, ready to intervene.

Kritika rubbed her eyes, letting out a small sigh. "I'm sorry, boys," she murmured, her voice still thick with sleep. "But... can you

handle them? I'm too tired to deal with chaos this early in the morning."

Harvey gave a faint nod, his tail flicking in agreement. Understood, his expression seemed to say. Curtis hissed low, muscles coiling tighter as he readied himself to strike.

Kritika settled back onto the soft bedding, closing her eyes for a moment. Okay... time for something special, she thought. Quietly, she linked with her AI in her mind.

"Aki... can you give me the first task rewards that I received for mating two mates—Harvey and Curtis?" she whispered mentally.

The AI's soft voice resonated in her mind:

"Acknowledged. Reward protocol initiated. You have unlocked a special ability: the power to hide your aura, rendering your true strength undetectable to others."

Kritika's eyes fluttered open in surprise, a soft smile spreading across her lips. Perfect... exactly what I needed.

She flexed her fingers experimentally, feeling the invisible waves of her energy settle. Her aura, once strong and unmistakable, now flowed silently around her—undetectable, concealed, yet still potent. This meant she could move through both Beast City and future territories without revealing her true power, protecting herself and her family.

"Curtis, Harvey... you can relax now," she said softly, her voice carrying quiet authority. "I've got this covered—even if I'm not directly visible."

Curtis hissed low in acknowledgement, coiling slightly but letting his tension ease. Harvey's ears flicked, tail curling with a satisfied swish.

Kritika sat up, feeling the thrill of her new ability pulse subtly through her being. Hidden, safe... and untouchable. This will make the journey to our mountain home so much easier.

She stretched her arms above her head, a small laugh escaping her lips. "Beast world, prepare yourselves. Kritika Marrero isn't just surviving here — she's thriving."

Outside, Curtis and Harvey handled the suitors swiftly, unaware that their mate had quietly empowered herself. Kritika's smile widened as she sank back into the bed, savoring the rare moment of calm before the next adventure began.

CHAPTER 15

The afternoon sunlight filtered lazily through the curtains, casting a warm glow across Kritika's bed. She stirred, body flushed and restless, a deep ache of desire pulling through her. The thoughts of her mates – Curtis, Harvey, and even distant Winston and Shuu – had been teasing her mind all morning, and now she could no longer resist.

She pressed her hands against herself, eyes closing as waves of pleasure coursed through her. Soft moans escaped her lips, each one fueled by the overwhelming longing for her mates' touch.

Outside, Curtis's keen senses twitched sharply. The scent of her arousal reached him immediately. His protective instincts surged, and without a second thought, he coiled and ran, scales shimmering in the sunlight as he headed straight for her.

Harvey, not far behind, caught the same intoxicating scent. His ears flicked back, and his tail swished nervously but with urgency. He raced to her side, mind focused on only one thing – his mate.

Bursting into the room, the two men froze for a heartbeat, eyes widening. Kritika's body writhed in the sheets, hands moving with practiced abandon, lips parted in soft, desperate moans that called for them. The sight, the scent, the undeniable heat radiating from her – everything pulled them in like gravity.

Curtis hissed low, coiling protectively around her bed, his possessive gaze locking onto her flushed form. Harvey's tail flicked rapidly, ears twitching as he approached, careful but unable to resist the pull.

Kritika's eyes opened slightly, glinting with mischief and longing. "Finally," she murmured, voice husky. "I've been waiting for you... both of you." Her hands slowed but didn't stop, fingers tracing lazy circles against her skin as she held their gazes. The scent of her desire thickened in the air, wrapping around Curtis and Harvey like a tangible force.

Harvey's ears flattened against his skull, a low growl rumbling in his chest as he took another step forward. His claws dug into the wooden floorboards, leaving faint scratches. "You tease," he breathed, tail lashing like a whip. "Calling us here like this... when you're already..." He couldn't finish, nostrils flaring as he drank in the sight of her flushed skin.

Curtis slithered closer, scales rasping against the bedframe. His eyes, molten gold and predatory, never left Kritika's face. "She knows exactly what she does," he hissed, the sound vibrating through the room. His tongue flicked out, tasting her scent thick on the air. "Playing with fire." He coiled tighter, a living barrier between her and the door.

Kritika's eyes sparkled with pure delight. She bounced onto her knees, the sheet falling away completely. "Curtis!" she exclaimed, her voice breathless with excitement. "Turn into your beast form and crawl over my body! I want to feel your cold scales right now!" She reached out, fingers trembling with anticipation, yearning for the smooth, chilling touch only his serpentine form could provide.

Without hesitation, Curtis obeyed. His human form dissolved into shimmering coils, scales erupting across his skin as he expanded. A massive serpent, thick as a tree trunk and gleaming obsidian-black, filled the space beside the bed. He flowed onto the mattress with liquid grace, his immense weight causing the frame to groan softly. Slowly, deliberately, he began to slide his powerful body over Kritika's bare skin. The cold, smooth scales pressed against her fevered flesh, a delicious shock that made her gasp and arch her

back. She ran her hands along his flank, reveling in the sheer power and alien texture enveloping her.

"Go too and fro," Kritika moaned, her voice thick with need, "rub my pussy Curtis with your skin with your scales..." Her hips lifted instinctively, seeking the friction of his belly scales against her most sensitive place. Curtis understood instantly. He shifted his weight, lowering the broad, muscular section of his underside directly over her core. With deliberate, rhythmic undulations, he began to move—back and forth, back and forth—the hard, cool scales dragging exquisitely against her wet heat. Each pass sent jolts of pleasure through her, the unyielding texture contrasting perfectly with her softness. Her moans deepened, echoing in the room as she clutched at his coils.

"Turn back from your beast form, Curtis," Kritika gasped, her eyes gleaming with command. "Harvey, turn into **your** beast form and suck my pussy!" Instantly, Curtis shimmered, shrinking rapidly back into his naked human form beside her on the bed. Simultaneously, Harvey dropped to all fours. Fur erupted across his skin, his muzzle lengthened, teeth sharpened, and powerful muscles bunched beneath a thick coat. In seconds, a large, sleek leopard beast stood at the foot of the bed, amber eyes fixed on Kritika's glistening core.

Harvey prowled forward, his feline grace silent on the mattress. He lowered his head, his rough, warm tongue dragging a long, deliberate stripe up Kritika's soaked slit. She cried out, arching violently, her hands flying to fist in his fur. He lapped hungrily, his tongue swirling around her clit before plunging deep inside her, the sensation raw and animalistic. Kritika's moans became sharp, desperate cries, her hips grinding against his muzzle.

Beside her, Curtis—now fully human—claimed her mouth in a fierce, possessive kiss. His hand slid down her trembling body, fingers finding her swollen nipple, pinching and rolling it roughly.

His other hand tangled in her hair, holding her face to his as his tongue mimicked Harvey's rhythm below. Kritika writhed between them, overwhelmed by the dual assault—Curtis's demanding mouth and hands, Harvey's relentless, devouring tongue working her cunt.

Harvey growled against her folds, the vibration sending shockwaves up her spine. His rough tongue curled deep inside her, lapping at her slick walls before flicking rapidly over her throbbing clit. She screamed into Curtis's mouth, her thighs clamping around Harvey's head as her body convulsed. Her orgasm ripped through her, wetness gushing against Harvey's muzzle. He drank her greedily, purring as he licked every drop.

Curtis finally broke their kiss, panting. "Mine," he hissed possessively, golden eyes burning. His serpentine body tightened around her waist, pulling her hips higher against Harvey's ravenous mouth. "Again. Make her cum again." Harvey obeyed instantly, tongue plunging deeper, faster—the broad flat of it slapping against her swollen clit until Kritika sobbed, back arching off the bed. Another violent climax tore through her, weaker but no less intense, leaving her trembling and gasping.

"Harvey," Kritika gasped, voice raw and commanding despite her exhaustion. "Change back. Now." The leopard shimmered, fur retracting, muzzle shortening until Harvey knelt naked between her legs, his cock thick and flushed against her thigh. She turned her head, locking eyes with Curtis. "Both members," she ordered hoarsely. "From behind. *Now*." Curtis understood instantly. He uncoiled, shifting behind her, his dual cocks—one nestled beneath the other—already slick and rigid. He gripped her hips, lifting her onto her knees as Harvey scrambled forward, positioning himself before her face.

Kritika didn't hesitate. She took Harvey's throbbing length deep into her mouth, hollowing her cheeks as her tongue swirled around

the crown. Her throat worked, taking him deeper with each bob of her head, muffled moans vibrating against his flesh. Harvey groaned, fingers tangling in her hair, hips jerking instinctively. Behind her, Curtis pressed the tip of his lower cock against her slick, stretched entrance. With a possessive growl, he thrust both members forward—the lower plunging deep into her pussy while the upper slid firmly along her sensitive cleft, pressing hard against her clit. Kritika screamed around Harvey's shaft, her body convulsing between them.

The dual invasion was overwhelming—Curtis's lower cock pistoning deep inside her while the upper ridge ground relentless pressure against her clit with every thrust. Harvey bucked into her mouth, the salty taste flooding her senses as she sucked him fiercely. Curtis gripped her hips hard enough to bruise, his serpentine strength driving her back onto him, then pulling her forward onto Harvey. The rhythm was brutal, possessive—a relentless claiming from both ends. Kritika's world narrowed to the stretch, the friction, the suffocating heat, her muffled cries punctuated by Harvey's ragged groans and Curtis's primal hisses.

Kritika pulled her mouth free with a gasp. "Harvey—change back!" she commanded, her voice ragged. Instantly, fur rippled across his skin, muzzle elongating as he dropped to all fours—a leopard once more. Kritika didn't hesitate. She buried her face in the thick fur at his flank, then dragged her tongue roughly up the underside of his beastly sheath. A low, rumbling growl vibrated through him as she took the emerging tip of his feline cock into her mouth, sucking hard. The coarse texture and musky taste were primal, electric. Behind her, Curtis snarled approval, his thrusts turning punishing, the upper ridge of his cock rubbing her clit raw with every snap of his hips.

"Now!" Kritika gasped, releasing Harvey's cock. She rolled onto her back, legs spreading wide. "Beast form—inside me!" Harvey

needed no further urging. He lunged forward, powerful leopard shoulders pinning her thighs apart. His rough, hot tongue rasped up her slit once—a claiming stroke—before the blunt, thick tip of his beastly cock pressed against her swollen entrance. With a possessive growl, he thrust forward, burying himself deep. Kritika screamed, arching violently—the sheer stretch, the heat, the primal invasion overwhelming. At the same moment, Curtis shifted, kneeling above her face, his dual members glistening. Kritika seized them both, taking the lower deep into her throat while her tongue lavished the upper ridge and curled greedily beneath to suck his heavy, tight balls. She gagged around the thick intrusion, tears streaking her temples, as Harvey began a brutal, animal rhythm inside her.

Harvey's leopard form drove deeper, the thick, ridged length of his beastly cock stretching Kritika impossibly wide. Each powerful thrust forced ragged cries from her throat vibrate around Curtis's lower member. She sucked harder on Curtis's balls, hollowing her cheeks as Harvey's hips pistoned, claws digging into her thighs. She saws; I see souls." Curtis hissed, fingers tangling in her hair, hips jerking deeper into her mouth. "Prove it," he rasped, grinding against her face. "Suck like you mean it." Kritika obeyed, choking down both lengths, her nose buried in his musk while Harvey's animal heat filled her core, the dual violation complete—mouth stuffed, pussy impaled, body trembling between them.

Harvey's growl vibrated through her bones as he pinned her hips, the leopard's powerful thrusts turning brutal. Kritika's screams muffled around Curtis's cocks, tears mixing with spit as she struggled to breathe. Her throat convulsed around the thick intrusion, her tongue frantically working the sensitive underside of his upper shaft and lapping at his tightened balls. Behind her, Curtis snarled, "Swallow," forcing her head down until her nose pressed against his pelvis. She gagged, stars bursting behind her

eyelids as Harvey's knot began to swell against her entrance, stretching her further.

Harvey's leopard form drove deeper, the thick, ridged length of his beastly cock stretching Kritika impossibly wide. Each powerful thrust forced ragged cries from her throat that vibrated around Curtis's lower member. She sucked harder on Curtis's balls, hollowing her cheeks as Harvey's nose. "Not the same," she gasped around Curtis's shaft. "Beast feels... *real*. Raw." Her thighs trembled as Harvey's knot pulsed against her entrance, demanding entry. Curtis hissed, fingers tightening in her hair. "Then take it," he commanded, grinding against her mouth. "Prove you can handle both." Kritika obeyed, choking down both lengths, her nose buried in his musk while Harvey's animal heat filled her core, the dual violation complete—mouth stuffed, pussy impaled, body trembling between them.

Harvey's growl vibrated through her bones as he pinned her hips, the leopard's powerful thrusts turning brutal. Kritika's screams muffled around Curtis's cocks, tears mixing with spit as she struggled to breathe. Her throat convulsed around the thick intrusion, her tongue frantically working the sensitive underside of his upper shaft and lapping at his tightened balls. Behind her, Curtis snarled, "Swallow," forcing her head down until her nose pressed against his pelvis. She gagged, stars bursting behind her eyelids as Harvey's knot began to swell against her entrance, stretching her further.

Suddenly, Kritika's fists hammered against Curtis's thighs—panicked, desperate thuds. Her face purpled, eyes bulging as she choked, unable to draw breath around his relentless thrusts. Seeing her struggle, Curtis instantly withdrew both members, sliding wet and glistening from her mouth. She collapsed onto the mattress, gasping raggedly, chest heaving as she gulped air. Her voice was a raw scrape: "Rub yourself... cum on my face." Confusion flickered

in Curtis's eyes, mirrored by Harvey's beastly snarl. Kritika pushed herself up weakly, her gaze sharpening. "Like this," she rasped, her own hand wrapping around her slick folds, fingers circling her swollen clit with practiced urgency. "Watch."

Harvey shimmered back into human form, his cock still thick and dripping. Curtis followed, stroking himself slowly. Kritika's draped scaffold, her movements deliberate. "Now," she gasped, her own fingers quickening. "Harder." Both men obeyed, hands pumping their lengths in sync with her frantic rhythm—Harvey's rough grip, Curtis's serpent-smooth strokes. The room filled with harsh breaths and the slick sound of skin on skin. When Kritika arched, crying out as her climax ripped through her, Harvey roared, thick ropes painting her cheekbone. Curtis hissed seconds later, pearly streaks splashing across her forehead and lips. She licked them away, panting.

Exhausted, they collapsed onto the tangled sheets. Kritika traced lazy circles on Curtis's chest while Harvey nuzzled her neck. "Listen," she murmured, her voice still raw but firm. "If I take more mates—and I will—it'll be impossible to please everyone at once." She lifted her head, eyes sharp. "So you'll cooperate. No jealousy. No fighting." Her fingers drifted lower, brushing Harvey's thigh. "If one of you needs release while I'm occupied..." She paused, letting the implication hang thick in the air. "You'll help each other. Understand?"

Harvey's ears flattened slightly, a low growl rumbling in his throat, but Curtis merely hissed, a sound almost like approval. Kritika's hand slid between them, her touch deliberate. "Watch," she commanded softly. She took Harvey's softening cock in one hand, Curtis's in the other. Slowly, firmly, she began stroking them both, her thumbs pressing into the sensitive ridges beneath their heads. "Like this," she breathed, her own arousal stirring again as she felt them stiffen under her touch. "Focus on the rhythm. Together."

Harvey's breath hitched, his hips jerking instinctively, while Curtis's slit-pupiled eyes narrowed, fixed on her hands. "See?" Kritika whispered. "It's not so hard. You just need... practice."

CHAPTER 16

The sky was streaked with the pale pink of dawn as Kritika, Curtis, and Harvey quietly slipped out of the beast city. Most of the streets were still quiet, with only a few early workers moving about, so their departure went unnoticed—just as Kritika wanted.

“AI,” Kritika murmured in her mind as they crossed the wide wooden bridge at the edge of the city, “stay alert. If you sense a group of beastmen nearby with unfriendly intentions, warn me immediately.”

Aki: “Understood. I’ll scan the area every few breaths and notify you at once if danger approaches.”

Kritika smiled faintly at the reassurance. The road ahead stretched through hills cloaked in morning mist, their destination lying somewhere beyond the craggy ridges.

Despite her determination, Kritika felt the weight of last night’s passion still lingering in her body. Her legs ached in a way that made her wince whenever she stepped on uneven ground.

Seeing her struggle, Harvey glanced back over his shoulder with a knowing look. “You’re walking like you’ve been in a battle,” he teased softly, flicking his leopard tail.

Kritika shot him a glare that was more playful than angry. “A battle you two started,” she muttered under her breath. Then, raising her voice, “Harvey... would you mind if I rode on your back for a while? I think the mountain path will be tough.”

Harvey shifted smoothly into his beast form—a powerful spotted leopard with a sleek back perfect for riding. “Climb on,” he said, his deep voice rumbling from his beast throat.

Kritika mounted him carefully, wincing slightly but finding comfort in the steady warmth of his fur. After a while, she switched to riding with Curtis instead, the snake's broad coils giving her a surprisingly steady seat.

Even so, she couldn't stop herself from muttering with a dramatic sigh, "I swear, even after eating that emerald, I feel like my poor kitty is going to file a complaint against the both of you."

Harvey nearly stumbled on the trail, and Curtis made a sharp hissing sound that sounded suspiciously like a chuckle.

The mountain path wound upward beneath a canopy of towering trees, their leaves catching the first golden rays of the sun. The air was crisp and smelled of wet earth, herbs, and wildflowers. Kritika, despite her soreness, felt her spirits lift as the wilderness grew thicker and the city sounds faded behind them.

The further they climbed, the quieter it became—only the soft thump of Harvey's paws on the trail and the dry whisper of Curtis's scales against stone.

Kritika sat comfortably against Curtis's broad shoulders now, her hair fluttering in the cool mountain breeze. Her amber-brown eyes narrowed slightly as she tilted her head to the side, as if listening to something only she could hear.

Curtis noticed. "What is it, Kritika?" he asked, his deep voice edged with a hiss.

"Hmm... nothing dangerous yet," Kritika replied softly, her gaze fixed on the treeline. "But the wind feels different here. Like it's carrying more than just leaves."

Harvey slowed his pace, his leopard ears twitching. "You sensed something? I didn't hear or smell anything."

Kritika smiled faintly at his curiosity but didn't explain fully. "That's because some things can't be smelled or heard. Let's just

say... I have a way of noticing things a little sooner than most beasts do."

Curtis's golden eyes flickered toward her. "You mean... you're not entirely like the other females here."

Kritika winked. "Exactly. I'm special. Let's leave it at that for now."

Before either of them could press further, the calm, clear voice of the AI chimed in her head:

Aki: "Warning. Movement detected ahead – approximately five beastmen. Their approach is slow, and they're keeping low. Possibly hunters or scouts."

Kritika straightened a little, her teasing expression giving way to a calculating one. "We've got company ahead," she said aloud, alerting Curtis and Harvey.

Harvey's tail lashed once. "How do you know?"

"Let's just say my instincts are rarely wrong," she replied smoothly, glancing in the direction of the unseen figures.

Curtis's coils tensed, ready to strike if needed. "Should I deal with them now?"

Kritika shook her head. "Not unless they come too close. I don't want to start a fight without knowing who they are. They could be hunters... or just lost travelers."

Harvey's ears flicked uneasily. "Still... we should stay alert."

Kritika nodded, her expression calm but her senses razor-sharp. She rested her palm against the side of Curtis's neck, murmuring so only he could hear, "I trust my hunches more than anything else here. I'll know if they mean harm before they get too close."

Both males glanced at her with new respect; for the first time, they realized their mate wasn't just clever – she was something far more mysterious.

The trio slowed their pace as the mountain path narrowed, winding past a cluster of moss-covered rocks. The air here was cooler, carrying the scent of pine and damp earth.

Kritika raised a hand suddenly. "Stop."

Curtis's coils froze mid-slide, and Harvey crouched low with a soft growl rumbling in his chest.

"What is it?" Harvey whispered, his leopard ears swiveling forward.

Kritika's gaze softened, her sharp senses picking up something faint but familiar—like a heartbeat too light to belong to a grown beast. "Not danger," she murmured, stepping ahead carefully. "Something... smaller."

From behind a fallen log came a tiny whimper, followed by a faint rustling.

Kritika crouched slowly, speaking in a gentle tone. "Hey there... it's alright. I won't hurt you."

A moment later, two small shapes stumbled into view—one was a little wolf cub with silver-grey fur matted from dust, the other a spotted fawn barely old enough to walk straight. Both looked thin and frightened, their big eyes wide with distrust.

Harvey's breath caught. "Cubs... survivors."

Kritika's heart clenched. She moved closer, lowering her voice even more. "You must have escaped the feral raids, didn't you?"

The wolf cub growled weakly, trying to stand between the fawn and the strangers despite its trembling legs.

Curtis, surprisingly gentle for his size, lowered his massive head and let out a low soothing hiss—more like a lullaby than a threat. The cub stopped growling, blinking at him with uncertain eyes.

"They're just babies," Kritika said softly. She extended her palm slowly, letting the fawn sniff her fingers. "We're not here to hurt you. You're safe now."

Harvey stepped closer, his healer's instinct kicking in as he examined the cubs' ragged fur and thin frames. "They're hungry... and exhausted."

Kritika looked at Curtis and Harvey with a quiet determination. "We can't leave them here. They won't survive another night alone."

Curtis inclined his head. "They can come with us. The mountain will be safer than the open roads."

The wolf cub's tail gave a cautious wag as Kritika reached out to gently stroke its head. The fawn pressed its tiny muzzle against her palm as if seeking warmth.

A small smile curved Kritika's lips. "Looks like our family just got a little bigger."

Harvey's golden eyes softened. "You've got a way with every creature you meet."

Kritika glanced up at him with a playful grin. "Guess I'm just... special."

CHAPTER 17

The morning mist lingered on the trail as Kritika adjusted the bundle of cloth around the tiny fawn. She had fashioned it into a sling so the baby could rest against her chest, its long lashes brushing her sleeve. The wolf cub trotted close to her heel, occasionally stumbling over a loose pebble but refusing to be carried.

Curtis slithered alongside, keeping his massive head low so as not to frighten the little ones. His golden eyes stayed sharp, scanning the brush for any sign of predators.

Harvey padded beside them in his leopard form, his tail flicking in irritation each time the cub strayed too near a thorny bush.

“You’re worse than an uncle with no patience,” Kritika teased, laughing softly as Harvey nudged the wolf pup back into the path with his paw.

Harvey shifted back to his two-legged form just long enough to grumble, “I’m a healer, not a babysitter.”

Yet there was no mistaking the way his voice softened when he added, “These two are all bones. We’ll need to feed them properly as soon as we make camp.”

The wolf cub gave a tiny, determined bark as though declaring it could manage on its own. Kritika crouched to ruffle the fur on its head.

“Brave little one,” she murmured. “But you’re part of our pack now. We look out for each other.”

Curtis's tongue flicked in the air as he spoke in his low hiss, "I'll hunt at dusk. Soft meat for the cub... sweet roots for the fawn."

Kritika smiled at the unexpected tenderness in his tone. "See? You're already acting like a big brother."

The group moved steadily uphill, the sun filtering in broken shafts through pine needles above them. Whenever Kritika felt the stones dig into her sore feet, she'd trade places—sometimes sitting on Curtis's broad coils, sometimes letting Harvey offer her a ride in beast form while the wolf cub tagged along loyally.

By midday they paused beside a clear stream to rest. Kritika knelt to splash water on her face and let the fawn drink from her palm.

The AI's calm voice hummed at the edge of her thoughts:

Aki: "No hostile groups detected within a two-mile range. Terrain ahead remains stable."

"Good," she whispered back mentally, "keep it that way. They've had enough running for one lifetime."

The cubs curled up together in the sun-warmed grass, asleep within minutes. Kritika watched them with a tenderness that made Curtis tilt his head curiously.

"You care for them as if they were your own," he said.

"They're survivors," she replied quietly. "If I can give them a home in the mountains, I will."

Harvey stretched, ears twitching at the distant call of mountain birds. "A healer's den always needs laughter. Maybe the cubs will bring some."

Kritika chuckled. "Or a lot of mischief."

For a while the group rested in companionable silence—the sound of the stream and the cubs' soft breathing wrapping them in a rare sense of peace.

The path to the mountain grew steeper as the group approached the rugged peaks. Pines and jagged rocks lined the way, but a sudden sight made Kritika pause and grin.

Ahead, Winston stood at the wooden entry gate that marked the start of their mountain territory. His massive white tiger form was unmistakable, and the way he was bellowing and nudging the wooden gates into place showed the sheer strength and precision he had poured into creating a path for them.

“Winston!” Kritika called, her voice carrying across the crisp mountain air.

Winston’s head turned, his sharp eyes softening as he saw the familiar group. Even from a distance, his tail flicked in pleasure.

Kritika’s voice softened as she jogged forward. “Did you eat properly and rest, or were you busy fixing our home?”

Winston’s lips curved into a rare smile, one that made his scarred eye crinkle faintly. “I managed. Only thinking of you and the others kept me going,” he said, his deep voice rumbling like the mountain beneath them.

Before she could step closer, Winston closed the distance in a few powerful strides. Kritika felt a soft, warm press on her forehead—a kiss that radiated strength, care, and quiet devotion. She smiled back, feeling the familiar thrill of his presence.

Raising her hands, she looked at him mischievously. “Up you go, big guy,” she said, ready to be carried.

Winston’s eyes flicked to her, then softened further. With a gentle but firm motion, he lifted her with ease, holding her against his chest. Kritika giggled like a carefree child, looping her arms around his neck in a tight Koala-like hug.

Curtis and Harvey, watching from behind, exchanged amused glances. Curtis's tail twitched possessively, while Harvey's ears flicked, a quiet chuckle rumbling in his throat.

The wolf and fawn cubs scampered after Winston's paws, feeling safe in his presence as if instinctively knowing he was part of their new family.

"Looks like we're finally here," Kritika murmured, snuggling closer against Winston's strong chest. "Our home... my family... all together."

Winston lowered his gaze to meet hers, his scarred eye soft yet proud. "Yes... all together. And safe."

As they continued toward the heart of the mountain, Kritika's giggles and the cubs' tiny footsteps echoed along the rocky path—a symphony of warmth and belonging that marked the start of their new life.

CHAPTER 18

Kritika stepped carefully over the final boulder, her eyes widening in awe as the full scope of the cave revealed itself. The entrance was wide and natural, flanked by jagged rocks and pine roots that made it nearly invisible from the outside. The light from the morning sun illuminated the smooth stone floor and the intricate carvings along the walls—subtle markings left by Shuu and Winston as they reinforced the cave’s structure during their preparations.

The outer area of the cave functioned as a decoy space—a smaller open area with a few scattered stones, low walls, and natural barriers. From the outside, it looked like the main cave, but it was deliberately designed to mislead any intruders. Anyone entering here would think they had reached the heart of the mountain, only to discover there was nothing of value beyond.

Curtis’s coils pressed against the edges of the entrance as he examined the outer perimeter. “Clever,” he hissed. “No one would suspect the real space is hidden behind this.”

Kritika nodded, impressed. “Exactly. Shuu and Winston really thought this through.”

Stepping past the decoy area, she discovered the hidden inner chamber. The opening was cleverly obscured by a natural rock formation, acting like a secret doorway. As she stepped inside, the space opened into a high-ceilinged cavern with polished stone floors and walls reinforced with wooden beams. The air smelled faintly of herbs and smoke—Shuu had prepared discreet areas for cooking and healing, while Winston had designed secure sleeping nooks and watch posts.

The chamber was spacious enough for all her mates and the cubs to move freely without crowding. Each section of the cave served a specific purpose:

- Sleeping quarters tucked into the far end, separated by natural stone partitions for privacy.
- Cooking and dining area near the center, with fire pits and storage for food and supplies.
- Observation posts carved into small alcoves along the walls, allowing Curtis, Winston, and Shuu to monitor any activity outside without being seen.

Kritika ran her hands over the smooth walls and smiled. “It’s perfect... safe, hidden, and functional. Every detail is designed to protect us and our little family.”

Harvey padded in behind her, tail flicking. “They’ve thought about everything – even escape routes if needed.”

She nodded, eyes sparkling. “And no one will ever find us here unless we want them to. My family... my mates... this is exactly what I wanted.”

Curtis hissed softly in agreement, coiling protectively around the outer edges of the inner chamber, while Harvey began inspecting the herbs and food stores. Even the cubs ventured inside, sniffing and exploring with timid curiosity, while Kritika knelt to stroke their heads.

Her heart swelled with pride. This wasn’t just a cave. It was their sanctuary—a stronghold built with love, protection, and careful strategy, ready to shield them from any threat that might come from the outside world.

Kritika moved further into the hidden chamber, her fingers brushing the cool, polished stone walls. Sunlight filtered in faintly through a small natural crevice above, casting golden streaks across

the cavern. The inner sanctum was larger than she had imagined — high ceilings gave it an open, airy feel, while the stone floor was smooth and even, reinforced at key points by Winston and Shuu's careful craftsmanship.

Curtis slithered along the outer edges of the chamber, his body coiling around strategic points like a living guardrail. His keen eyes scanned every shadow. "Anyone stepping inside would have to cross me first," he hissed, satisfied.

Harvey padded silently beside her, tail flicking over the smooth stone. "And I'll make sure food, herbs, and supplies are perfectly stocked. No one goes hungry here."

Kritika smiled. "Exactly what I wanted. Each of you has a role. Curtis — security. Harvey — healing and nourishment. Winston and Shuu — construction and defense planning. And me..." she paused, looking around the cavern, "...I get to enjoy all of you while making sure this place stays our sanctuary."

The cave's layout was as strategic as it was beautiful:

- Outer Decoy Chamber: A natural bluff that could mislead anyone entering the cave, lined with boulders and small rock piles. Intruders would think this was the main space, giving the family time to react.
- Hidden Inner Chamber: The real heart of their home, obscured by a false rock wall that blended seamlessly with the cave.
- Sleeping Nooks: Carved along the walls, each mate and cub had a cozy corner, separated by subtle stone partitions for privacy without isolating anyone completely.
- Central Hearth: A wide, shallow pit for fire, flanked by cooking surfaces and storage areas. Harvey had already organized herbs and food for easy access.

- Observation Alcoves: Small, elevated platforms along the edges of the cave allowed Curtis, Winston, and Shuu to monitor the entrance and the surrounding mountain paths without being seen.

Kritika ran her hand over one of the observation alcoves, testing the view. She could see the outer decoy area clearly and even the start of the mountain path. "Winston... Shuu... you two really outdid yourselves. Whoever tries to find us here will be in for a surprise."

Winston's deep rumble of approval echoed through the chamber. "This place is strong. It's more than just stone and wood—it's a fortress for our family."

Shuu padded forward, his wolf tail twitching proudly. "I even reinforced the weaker sections near the ceiling. Should anyone try to climb in, they'll have to face multiple layers of protection."

Kritika chuckled, stepping into the hearth area. "Looks like my sanctuary is ready. Safe, functional, and just the right amount of cozy."

She knelt, letting the cubs explore the central space, their tiny paws pattering against the stone. "And my little ones will grow here safely," she murmured, stroking their heads.

Curtis coiled closer to the entrance, Harvey checked the supplies, and Winston and Shuu exchanged approving glances. Kritika's eyes sparkled with satisfaction—this wasn't just a cave. It was their fortress, their home, and the start of a new life where her mates and the cubs could thrive in peace.

Kritika stepped into the heart of the inner chamber, her eyes sparkling with excitement. "Alright, everyone," she said, clapping her hands lightly, "let's make this place feel like home. We're not just surviving here—we're thriving."

Curtis hissed softly, tilting his head. "Where do we start?"

Kritika smiled and gestured to the piles of extra furs Shuu and Winston had collected. "First, we use these to make bedding, rugs, and wall decorations. Comfort is key, and it will help us feel safe and cozy."

She showed them how to layer the softest furs to form thick, warm bedding. Harvey padded closer, studying her hands as she folded and tucked the fur. "This is... actually relaxing," he murmured, tail flicking.

Kritika giggled. "See? Even a healer can enjoy a little creativity. Curtis, I want you to focus on the heavier furs—make sure the sleeping areas are secure and warm. Harvey, help me with the softer layers and cushions for sitting."

Winston nodded, already shifting rocks and logs to create small platforms along the walls. "We can make floor sofas this way," he said, gesturing to the carved stone ledges. "Add cushions, and it'll be perfect for everyone to sit together without crowding."

Kritika's hands moved quickly, placing furs along the ledges, rolling some into small bolsters for pillows, and cutting a few to line the hearth area so they could sit close to the warmth of the fire. "Low edge dining tables next," she instructed, showing them how to stack flat stone slabs on short, sturdy logs. "This way, we can eat together comfortably and still have space for cooking and storage nearby."

Shuu's nimble fingers proved perfect for weaving furs into wall hangings and small decorative touches. "These will make the cave feel less... like a cave," he said, stepping back to admire his handiwork.

Kritika clapped her hands. "Exactly! A home should feel like our space, warm and inviting, not just a place to sleep. Curtis, see how the furs double as rugs and insulation? You can move the heavier

layers to block drafts, or add them near the entrance for extra protection.”

The group worked efficiently, guided by Kritika’s clear instructions and her eye for detail. By mid-afternoon, the once bare cavern had transformed into a functional and welcoming home:

- Thick, layered furs covered the sleeping nooks, giving each mate and the cubs a cozy corner.
- Rugs and wall hangings softened the stone surfaces, making the space warmer and inviting.
- Stone ledges with cushioned seating formed floor sofas around the central hearth.
- Low-edge dining tables stood ready, surrounded by soft pillows and floor cushions.
- Small decorative touches, from hanging furs to woven mats, gave the cave a personalized, familial feel.

Kritika stepped back, hands on her hips, and smiled at her handiwork. “Perfect,” she said. “This is not just a home—it’s our sanctuary. A place where we can rest, train, eat, and just... be together.”

Curtis coiled around the entrance, eyes gleaming with approval. Harvey inspected the bedding and tables, nodding quietly. Winston and Shuu exchanged satisfied glances, proud of how their structural work had turned into a warm, livable space.

Even the cubs padded around happily, sniffing the rugs and nestling into the furs as if instinctively recognizing the safety and comfort of their new home.

Kritika’s heart swelled. “Alright,” she murmured softly to herself, “now this is really our mountain home.”

The morning sun filtered through the small crevice above the inner chamber, casting golden streaks across the newly arranged furs and low tables. Kritika stretched, feeling the warm softness beneath her and the contentment of seeing her family safe and settled.

“Alright, everyone,” she called, clapping her hands, “today we start our routines. We need to be organized if we want this place to stay safe and comfortable.”

Curtis hissed low, coiling around the outer edges of the chamber. “Security first,” he said, his eyes scanning the cave’s entrance and the hidden decoy area outside.

“Exactly,” Kritika said, smiling. “Curtis, you’re in charge of guarding the cave and monitoring the paths. Harvey, you’ll handle food, herbs, and healing—make sure everyone is nourished and healthy. Winston and Shuu, continue reinforcing our home and checking the perimeter. And me... I’ll oversee everything, plus... quality control,” she added with a mischievous wink.

The cubs, now fully exploring, scampered between them. The wolf cub tried to mimic Curtis, crouching and sniffing at the entrance, while the fawn curiously investigated the hearth area. Kritika knelt to stroke their heads. “Good little helpers,” she cooed. “You’re part of the family now, so pay attention and learn.”

Harvey chuckled softly, watching her interact with the cubs. “You have a way of making everyone listen to you, Kritika.”

“I do,” she said, standing and brushing off her hands. “But rules are important. We protect each other, and everyone knows their role. That way, we stay safe and happy.”

Curtis flicked his tail, a protective gleam in his eyes. “I don’t need rules to know that,” he hissed softly, “but I like that you’re organizing us.”

Kritika's lips curved. "I know, but it helps keep our little family running smoothly."

By midday, the cave was bustling with controlled activity:

- Curtis patrolled the entrance and decoy area, his massive form coiled and ready.
- Harvey inspected food stores, chopped herbs, and checked on the cubs' wellbeing, giving them small pieces of soft fruits to nibble on.
- Winston and Shuu carried and adjusted furs, bolstered weak points along the walls, and checked hidden observation posts.
- Kritika moved among them all, giving small instructions, teasing Curtis when he became too serious, and cooing at the cubs when they stumbled or played.

At one point, Kritika called out, "Curtis, stop glaring at Harvey for feeding the wolf cub first – it doesn't matter! And Harvey, Winston, Shuu – don't make the cubs climb the ledges yet. They're tiny, remember?"

All four males exchanged glances, grinning quietly at her playful scolding. The cubs, sensing the warmth and security of the group, nestled against Kritika's legs and began to doze in the soft furs.

Kritika knelt and stroked their heads, whispering, "See? This is what family feels like. Safety, love, and a little bit of fun too."

Curtis lowered his massive head to nuzzle her shoulder, while Harvey placed a gentle paw on her arm. Winston and Shuu stood back for a moment, watching the scene, tails flicking in quiet approval.

Kritika giggled, looking around at her mates and the cubs. "This... this is exactly how I imagined it. A place where we can be ourselves, take care of each other, and grow stronger together."

The cubs stirred, Harvey chuckled, Curtis hissed softly with affection, and Winston and Shuu exchanged approving nods. Kritika smiled to herself, a quiet sense of triumph swelling in her chest. Her mountain sanctuary wasn't just a home—it was a family, her family, thriving in the heart of the wild.

CHAPTER 19

As the sun dipped behind the jagged mountain peaks, Kritika surveyed her cozy cave home. The furs were fluffed, the hearth was ready, and the cubs were settled in their favorite spots near the outer area of the cave. Harvey and Curtis had already taken their positions nearby, keeping a protective watch over the little ones.

Kritika's amber eyes sparkled with mischief and anticipation. She stepped closer to Shuu and Winston, who were busy checking the outer perimeter and ensuring the decoy areas were still secure.

"Tonight," she began softly, her voice laced with authority and a playful edge, "I want both of you to be completely mine."

Shuu's wolf ears twitched, and he tilted his head, the gleam in his eyes showing both excitement and curiosity. Winston, the powerful white tiger, rumbled low in his chest, a mix of anticipation and devotion in his gaze.

Kritika ran her fingers along Shuu's sleek fur, feeling the warmth of his body as he leaned instinctively closer. Then she pressed a soft hand to Winston's chest, where the scarred white fur bristled slightly under her touch.

"You two stay focused, obey me, and don't let anything distract you," she instructed, a teasing smile playing on her lips. "Curtis and Harvey are taking care of the cubs, so we have privacy. Tonight is... about us."

Winston's tail lashed with excitement. "As you wish, mate," he rumbled, his deep voice vibrating through her chest.

Shuu crouched slightly, ears back in submission yet brimming with energy. "I'm ready, Kritika," he whispered, voice low and smooth.

Kritika's giggle echoed softly in the cave. "Good. Follow my lead, and remember—obedience and trust are key. I want this night to strengthen our bond, make it undeniable."

She took a deep breath, letting her aura subtly shift to signal the start of the mating ritual. Even though Curtis and Harvey were nearby with the cubs, the energy in the inner chamber became intimate and charged, focused entirely on her, Shuu, and Winston.

Curtis and Harvey, stationed near the outer area, exchanged quiet looks, both aware that their mate's other partners were under her guidance. "We've got the cubs safe," Curtis hissed softly. Harvey nodded, his tail flicking in reassurance, both fully trusting Kritika to orchestrate this moment.

Kritika's hands moved deliberately, caressing Shuu's sleek fur, then trailing along Winston's powerful chest. "Tonight," she whispered, voice sultry yet commanding, "you both belong to me completely. No distractions, no interruptions—just us, our bond, and our connection."

The cubs, lulled by the gentle fire and the calm presence of Curtis and Harvey, curled into soft balls of fur outside, safe and unaware of the intimate energy filling the inner chamber.

Kritika's lips curved into a confident, satisfied smile. "Let's make this night unforgettable," she murmured, as Shuu and Winston leaned in closer, their devotion and desire focused entirely on her.

MATING SHUU & WINSTON

Winston was the first to move, stepping forward with a low, possessive growl. His massive form pressed against Kritika's slender frame, his powerful arms wrapping around her waist as he buried his face into the crook of her neck. His warm tongue traced a slow, deliberate path along her skin, sending shivers down her spine. With gentle, practiced movements, he began removing her clothes completely, his claws retracted as he slid the fabric away piece by piece. Kritika arched her back, a soft sigh escaping her lips as she felt the heat of his breath against her bare skin.

Kritika left them and sat on the furs asking Shuu to lick pussy getting her ready for the night and she asked her Winston to sit near to her. Shuu obeyed instantly, crawling forward on all fours until his face was buried between Kritika's thighs. His tongue flicked against her clit with teasing precision, each lick deliberate and unhurried, building the tension slowly. Kritika's fingers tangled in Shuu's hair, guiding him deeper as she moaned softly. Beside her, Winston settled onto the furs, his thick thighs brushing against her hip, his presence a comforting weight.

The room filled with the slick sounds of Shuu's devotion, his tongue working in tight circles around her swollen folds. Kritika's hips lifted off the furs, seeking more friction, more heat. She glanced at Winston, her eyes dark with need. "Touch me," she commanded, her voice husky. Winston's hand slid down her stomach, his rough fingers parting her lower lips to expose her fully to Shuu's ministrations. The contrast—Shuu's soft, relentless tongue and Winston's calloused grip—made her gasp.

Kritika's breaths grew ragged as Shuu's tongue plunged deeper, lapping at her entrance with hungry strokes. She could feel the coil tightening low in her belly, the pressure building with every flick and suck. Winston watched intently, his other hand cupping her breast, thumb circling her nipple until it hardened into a stiff peak. "You taste divine," Shuu murmured against her skin, his words muffled but fervent. Kritika's thighs trembled, her grip on Shuu's hair tightening as she neared the edge.

Without warning, Winston shifted, his thick fingers replacing Shuu's tongue, stretching her open while Shuu moved upward to trace wet kisses along her inner thigh. Kritika cried out, arching sharply as Winston's fingers curled inside her, finding that sweet spot with ruthless precision. Shuu's teeth grazed her hipbone, a sharp contrast to the gentle worship of moments before. The duality of their touch—Winston's dominance, Shuu's submission—sent sparks through her nerves.

"Look at me," Winston commanded, his voice gravelly with possessiveness. Kritika's eyes snapped to his, hazy with lust. As she held his gaze, Shuu's mouth closed over her clit, sucking hard just as Winston added a third finger. The double assault shattered her. Kritika's back bowed off the furs, a guttural moan tearing from her throat as waves of pleasure crashed over her. Her hips jerked uncontrollably, riding Winston's hand while Shuu drank every drop of her release.

Panting, Kritika collapsed back onto the furs, skin glistening. Shuu licked her clean with slow, reverent swipes, his eyes never leaving hers. Winston withdrew his fingers, bringing them to his mouth to taste her essence with a low growl of approval. "Good girl," he rumbled, stroking her thigh possessively. Kritika's chest rose and fell rapidly, her gaze drifting between them—Shuu's devotion a quiet flame, Winston's hunger a smoldering ember. She smiled faintly, already craving more.

Winston leaned down, his hot breath washing over her breast before his mouth closed over a nipple. He didn't suck gently—he *chewed*, grazing the sensitive peak with deliberate, rhythmic pressure from his teeth, just shy of pain. Kritika gasped, arching violently as fresh sparks shot straight to her core. "Oh—*fuck*!" she cried, her hands flying to his head. Shuu reacted instantly, burying his face between her thighs again, his tongue plunging deep inside her still-quivering entrance, lapping hungrily at the fresh rush of wetness Winston's assault drew out. The dual sensation—sharp, possessive ache above and insistent, cleansing heat below—made her climax shudder through her harder, sharper than before, leaving her trembling and gasping.

Shuu didn't stop. As Kritika's cries softened into whimpers, he sucked everything clean with meticulous devotion, his tongue swirling around her swollen clit, then dipping deep to gather every drop. His hands slid beneath her hips, lifting her slightly to press his mouth tighter against her, drinking her in with soft, satisfied sounds. Winston finally released her nipple, leaving it reddened and throbbing, and moved to the other, repeating the same rough, claiming attention. Kritika whimpered, her fingers tightening in Winston's fur as pleasure coiled anew, relentless and overwhelming under their combined focus.

"Winston," she gasped, her voice trembling with raw need. "Spread me for him. He is going to mate me right in front of you." Winston's growl vibrated against her breast as he obeyed, his massive hands hooking beneath her thighs, forcing them wide apart. Shuu's eyes locked onto her exposed, dripping cunt, his breath hitching with reverence. He didn't hesitate—positioning himself between her legs, he gripped her hips, his cock already slick and hard as he pressed the thick head against her entrance. Winston watched, unblinking, his tongue flicking her nipple as Shuu thrust deep in one smooth, claiming stroke.

Kritika screamed, arching off the sofa cushions as Shuu filled her completely, stretching her with thick, deliberate thrusts. She felt every ridge of him, every pulse of his heartbeat against her walls, while Winston's teeth grazed her nipple in time with Shuu's rhythm. "Mine," Shuu growled against her thigh, his hips pistoning faster, driving her back against Winston's chest. The wolf's possessive snarl echoed in her ear, his claws digging into her thighs to hold her open wider. "Show him who owns this," Winston commanded, his voice thick with dark approval.

Shuu obeyed, slamming into her with brutal precision, his balls slapping against her ass as he claimed her depths. Kritika's screams dissolved into choked sobs, her body convulsing between them – Winston's teeth anchoring her to the edge of pain while Shuu's cock hammered her into raw, blinding ecstasy. She felt the wolf's claws tighten possessively on her thighs, drawing beads of blood that mingled with sweat on her skin. "Deeper," Winston snarled, and Shuu drove forward, sheathing himself to the hilt, his guttural groan vibrating through her core as her cunt clenched around him.

The rhythm became savage, primal – Shuu's thrusts a relentless piston, Winston's mouth sucking bruises into her breasts, his free hand sliding down to rub rough circles over her clit. Kritika's vision whited out, her nails raking Winston's fur as another orgasm ripped through her, so violent her throat burned from screaming. Shuu growled, his pace faltering as he felt her walls flutter and clamp around him. "Fill her," Winston commanded, his voice dark with hunger. "Mark what's ours."

Shuu slammed home one final time, burying himself to the root as his cock pulsed, flooding her with thick, scalding heat. Kritika whimpered, her body trembling as she felt him spill deep inside, the sensation sending aftershocks shuddering through her. Winston's tongue lapped at a bead of sweat trailing down her

sternum, his eyes never leaving Shuu's face – watching, approving, as the wolf claimed his mate.

With a low groan, Shuu withdrew slowly, his seed spilling onto the furs beneath them. Winston immediately dragged Kritika backward onto his lap, his massive arms locking around her waist. His own erection pressed hot and urgent against her lower back. "Clean her," he ordered Shuu, his voice a graveled command. The wolf obeyed instantly, lowering his head to lick her swollen folds with slow, thorough strokes, gathering his own release mixed with her slick.

Kritika trembled, her body still humming from the brutal claiming. She watched Shuu's tongue work between her thighs – reverent, meticulous – while Winston's hands slid possessively over her stomach and breasts. His claws pricked her skin lightly, a silent warning against moving. "You belong here," he growled into her ear, his teeth grazing her pulse point. "Between us. Filled. Owned." Shuu's tongue circled her clit, coaxing another soft gasp from her as fresh heat pooled low in her belly.

Winston's hand slid lower, fingers slicking through the mess Shuu had left behind. He pressed two thick digits back inside her, stretching her tender walls. "But this," he murmured, thrusting slowly, deliberately shallow. "This way takes patience." His other hand gripped her hip, angling her upward as Shuu's mouth sealed over her clit again, sucking hard. Kritika cried out, her spine arching against Winston's chest as pleasure coiled tight once more – a raw, exposed nerve.

The wolf's thrusts deepened, fingers curling against her inner walls as Shuu's tongue fluttered relentlessly. "Come for us," Winston commanded, his breath hot against her neck. "Show us how perfectly you break." And she did – shattering with a sob, her cunt clenching around Winston's fingers while Shuu drank her down, his eyes locked on hers, dark with devotion.

Winston's growl ripped through the air as he flipped Kritika onto her stomach, pinning her hips to the furs. His hands dug into her flesh, drawing thin lines of crimson as he mounted her with predatory grace. There was no tenderness—only raw, animalistic hunger. He slammed into her without warning, stretching her brutally wide, each thrust a punishing claim that rocked her entire body. Kritika screamed into the pelts, her fingers scrabbling for purchase as he pistoned into her depths, his teeth sinking into her shoulder. Shuu watched, transfixed, stroking himself slowly—a silent witness to the tiger's savage possession.

Shuu crawled forward, his hand tangling in Kritika's hair to wrench her head back. "Look at him taking you," he hissed, forcing her gaze onto Winston's snarling face. Winston's hips hammered harder, driving her body forward with every brutal stroke. Shuu's free hand slid down to circle her throbbing clit, pinching the swollen bud sharply. "Feel him ruin you." Kritika's cry choked off as pleasure and pain collided—Winston's cock splitting her open, Shuu's fingers twisting her toward

another shattering peak.

Winston's hands raked down her spine, drawing blood as he roared his release. Heat flooded her depths in thick, pulsing waves, his teeth locked in her shoulder. Shuu didn't relent, rubbing her clit faster, harder, until her body convulsed around Winston's cock—milking him dry through her own ragged climax. She collapsed, trembling, as Winston withdrew slowly, his seed dripping onto the furs beneath her. Shuu released her hair, his fingers slick with her wetness as he traced the bite marks blooming on her skin.

The night went on. Winston pressed two glowing crimson crystals into Kritika's mouth, his growl low and commanding. "For stamina," he rumbled, watching her swallow them whole. Heat surged through her veins instantly—a sharp, electric buzz that tightened her muscles and reignited the raw ache between her thighs. Beside her, Shuu's eyes darkened with hunger as he traced

the fresh bite marks on her hip. "Again," he whispered. "Show us how deep you crave it." Kritika arched her back, the crystals' power coiling like live wires beneath her skin, her body singing for more.

CHAPTER 20

The mountain air was already crisp in the early mornings, carrying the scent of pine and distant snow. Two moons remained before the dead season — a time when the wind howled through the peaks and food became scarce.

Inside the cave-home, Kritika sat cross-legged near the low table she had taught them to build. Around her, Harvey was sorting bundles of dried herbs, Shuu was sewing extra quilt covers from spare fur, Winston sharpened wooden stakes for the outer path, and Curtis coiled by the fire, keeping watch.

Kritika's gaze drifted to the baskets of nuts, roots, and rice stacked in a corner. "We'll need at least double this if we don't want to risk going out in the worst snow," she said. Her tone was calm, but her mind was elsewhere.

A quiet thought had been lingering at the back of her mind for days: she hadn't experienced her monthly bleeding since arriving in the beast world. She chewed her lip, then decided to consult the only one who might know.

"Aki, why have I not had my periods yet?" she asked silently.

The familiar chime sounded in her head, the voice cool and factual:

"Kritika, your body has adjusted to the beast world. You are carrying cubs. Early stage, healthy and stable."

Kritika's eyes went wide. Her heart skipped a beat as her hands instinctively moved to her stomach. Pregnant... with cubs. A slow warmth spread through her chest — part surprise, part wonder, part panic at the responsibility now growing inside her.

She took a steadying breath. 'Then tell me... what reward do I receive for bonding with Winston and Shuu?'

Another chime.

"Reward granted: Elemental affinity. You may influence the earth's breath — soil, plants, wind, rainfall, sunlight. These abilities will grow stronger as you practice."

Kritika exhaled shakily, a tiny smile tugging at her lips. The idea of coaxing herbs to grow even in winter gave her a sense of power and hope.

She lifted her eyes to her four mates bustling about their chores, her expression softening with affection.

Then she asked, still in thought, 'And the next task?'

"Next task: accept two dragon males as your mates. Success will unlock higher elemental control."

Kritika blinked at the answer, a tiny, almost amused huff leaving her lips. "Dragons...? As if my life wasn't already dramatic enough," she muttered under her breath.

Shuu looked up from his sewing, ears twitching. "Did you say something?"

Kritika shook her head quickly, forcing a smile. "Just thinking about our supplies. We'll need to dry more fruits before the cold sets in."

But inside, she felt the weight of new secrets — the life growing within her, the power now humming at her fingertips, and the knowledge that two more mates, dragons no less, were fated to join her family.

Outside, the wind rattled the mountain pines, but Kritika felt calmer than ever. She would protect this strange, growing family — no matter how wild the world became.

The next morning was nothing like the calm evening before.

Kritika woke up with a queasy stomach and barely had the chance to reach for a water cup before she lurched over a wooden bowl and emptied everything she had eaten the previous night.

Harvey, who had been stoking the morning fire, rushed to her side at once. "Kritika!" His voice held both worry and confusion. He gently rubbed her back while she tried to steady herself.

But it didn't stop there — every sip of water, every bite of food came right back up. She grew pale and tired, sitting slumped against the cave wall.

Harvey crouched beside her and carefully pressed two fingers to her wrist, trying to sense her pulse the way his healer-mother had once taught him. His sharp ears twitched in surprise.

"Wait..." he whispered to himself. He checked again, concentrating harder. His eyes widened. There wasn't just one pulse. There were several tiny, fluttering rhythms intertwined with Kritika's own heartbeat.

The realization left him frozen for a moment. Curtis, noticing his expression, grew impatient.

"Harvey! What's wrong with her? Speak up!" Curtis's deep voice echoed against the stone walls, his tail lashing in frustration.

Winston stepped forward more gently, his snow-white ears flicking as he asked in a low, careful tone, "Harvey... what did you find?"

The leopard-shifter finally lifted his gaze, still stunned. His usual calm was replaced by astonishment.

"She's... she's carrying cubs," he said at last, his voice soft but clear. "More than one. Different... litters."

For a heartbeat, the cave fell into perfect silence.

Curtis blinked, then let out a startled snort. "You're saying she's already pregnant? With... with more than one of us?"

Harvey nodded slowly. "I can feel them. Tiny heartbeats. Strong and healthy."

Winston's usually reserved expression softened as he looked at Kritika, who was now leaning against the wall, eyes wide at the words that had just been spoken. Shuu's usually playful grin faded into something gentler, more protective.

Kritika let out a shaky breath. "I... I didn't expect to find out like this," she whispered, resting a hand over her stomach.

The four males exchanged glances — surprise and protectiveness flickering in their eyes. The mood in the cave shifted, the cold mountain morning now carrying a strange warmth of new beginnings.

Kritika shifted in her bedding, still pale but stubbornly trying to sit up. Her hand lingered over her stomach for a moment before she looked up at the four males hovering near her.

"Stop looking like I'm about to break," she said with a soft laugh. "I'm fine. But... we need to think ahead."

Curtis frowned. "You should rest. We'll handle everything."

She shook her head. "Resting won't feed the cubs. I'll need milk — fresh, safe milk. We should find a mountain cow or a gentle beast we can domesticate. If we can keep one near the cave, we'll have milk for me and the little ones. It'll help them grow strong."

The suggestion caught them by surprise, but then Winston's eyes brightened.

"There are wild shaggy cows grazing near the eastern slopes," he said thoughtfully. "If we build a small pen near the lower ledge, we could tame one. They're sturdy and used to the cold."

Shuu, who had been sitting cross-legged near the fire, nodded. "I can weave rope and make a simple harness to guide it. And I'll gather dried grass for feed. It's a good idea."

Kritika smiled, relieved that they were already planning. "Good. And one more thing—" She hesitated before adding, "I want to go outside. Just for a short walk. I need fresh air and a bit of sunshine. The cubs will like it too."

Harvey's brow furrowed immediately. "You can barely stand. Walking in the cold is not a good idea."

"I don't want to run a race," she replied gently. "Just a slow walk near the cave. I'll be careful, and you'll all be there, right?"

The males exchanged glances. Winston finally sighed and offered his arm.

"Fine," he said with a faint smile. "But only a few steps at a time. I'll carry you back if you get tired."

Kritika beamed at them as they helped her wrap herself in a fur-lined cloak. The crisp mountain air outside was sharp and cool, but it felt soothing against her flushed cheeks. She inhaled deeply, letting the scent of pine and earth fill her lungs.

The morning sunlight spilled across the stone ledge, turning the frost into glittering beads. Harvey stayed close on one side, Curtis on the other, while Winston walked ahead, scanning the slope for any sign of wild beasts.

For the first time since her sickness began, Kritika's smile returned. "This is perfect," she murmured. "Exactly what I needed."

CHAPTER 21

The trail up the mountain shimmered in the cool morning light as Kritika and her mates continued their slow walk back toward their cave-home.

At first there was only the brindled cow—her “mama cow”—padding steadily beside Kritika like a guardian. Then there was the soft shuffle of more hooves.

When they turned to look, a line of cows had begun to follow, their ears flicking, their tails swaying in easy rhythm. One by one the animals left the meadow behind and fell in step, forming a half-circle around Kritika.

Curtis blinked. “Uh... why are there more of them?”

Harvey counted under his breath. “Five... eight... ten... wait—fifteen. There are fifteen now.”

The cows didn’t look hostile at all; in fact, they looked calm, as if they’d already decided that Kritika was part of their herd.

Kritika, meanwhile, was trying to keep a straight face, though a giggle kept slipping out. The lead cow—her “mama cow”—suddenly slowed, shifted her weight, and lowered her front legs, bowing in a way that startled everyone.

Kritika laughed outright.

“Do you want me to ride you, mama?”

The cow gave a soft, approving moo, tilting her head as if answering.

“Oh my little cutie...” Kritika’s voice went tender with affection. “You really are special.”

With a quick glance at her mates for silent permission—and receiving three bewildered nods—Kritika gathered her skirts and carefully climbed onto the broad back of the cow. The animal stood up smoothly, carrying her as though she'd done it before.

Curtis couldn't help muttering, "This is unreal... first she tames them, now she's riding one."

Winston's lips twitched, almost a smile. "The cows chose her. We're just the guards now."

Harvey chuckled but stayed watchful, padding on her right side like a shield. Shuu shifted into his wolf form and trotted close to her left heel. Winston brought up the rear, his snowy tail swaying like a banner as he kept a protective eye on the path.

The little caravan climbed the narrow mountain track: Kritika riding ahead on the gentle cow, the rest of the herd marching quietly around her as if escorting a queen. The scene looked almost enchanted against the rocky backdrop of the peaks.

Every now and then Kritika bent forward to pat the cow's neck, murmuring,

"Good girl, mama. I'll make sure you and your friends have a safe pen near our home."

The cows flicked their ears in response, calm and trusting.

For the first time since leaving the Beast City, the entire group felt a strange sense of peace—like they were being led by something greater than luck.

The final stretch of the trail opened into a ledge where the mountain widened into a sloping terrace. From here they could see their cave entrance tucked beneath a jutting overhang, safe from heavy rain and landslides.

The moment the cows stepped onto the ledge, they slowed and sniffed at the ground, circling Kritika as if inspecting their new home.

Kritika slid off her “mama cow’s” back and landed lightly on her feet, her palm still resting on the animal’s neck.

“We’re home, mama. This will be your shelter now,” she whispered.

The mates exchanged looks. Curtis crossed his arms but there was a faint smile hiding under his usual stern expression.

“Guess we’ll need a cowshed now.”

“Not just any cowshed,” Kritika said, her eyes already scanning the terrace. She pointed to the flat stretch near a cluster of boulders.

“Over there — close enough so I can hear them at night but far enough from the cave so it won’t smell too strong. We’ll use wood for the frame and those big stones for the base wall.”

Winston nodded approvingly.

“That area is sheltered from the wind. I’ll bring strong branches and thick vines for the roof support.”

“I’ll dig a trench to keep rainwater from flooding the floor,” Curtis added.

Harvey was already thinking ahead.

“We should gather hay and dried leaves for bedding. And we’ll need a trough for water.”

Kritika smiled at them as her fingers absently stroked the cow’s warm hide.

“I’ll help by weaving some mats from tall grasses. We can hang them as windbreaks on the sides. The cows deserve warmth too — they’ll be feeding our cubs.”

The herd settled into the open space as if they understood every word. A few lay down to chew cud, their ears flicking lazily.

Shuu, back in his beast form, wagged his tail.

“Looks like they approve already.”

The rest of the day passed in a rhythm of work. Winston felled tall, straight branches and carried them on his shoulder with effortless strength. Curtis rolled heavy stones into place to shape the lower wall. Harvey and Shuu collected bundles of grass while Kritika wove them into thick pads to line the floor.

By the time the sun began to sink behind the mountains, a sturdy shelter stood next to the cave—its low sloped roof layered with leaves and moss, its floor padded and dry.

Kritika led the “mama cow” to the entrance of the shed.

“Here you go, mama. This is your nest now,” she said softly.

The cow gave a gentle moo, lowered her head to sniff Kritika’s hand, and stepped inside, followed by the rest of the herd.

As the mates watched, Kritika’s eyes shone with contentment.

“Now our family is complete. We’ll have milk, warmth, and company for the cubs.”

For a long while, they simply stood together, gazing at the herd as the night breeze stirred the grass, and for the first time, the mountain cave truly felt like home.

The first light of dawn spilled across the mountain terrace. Kritika stretched on the edge of the cave, her hair catching the morning sun as she watched the cows stir in their new shed.

Harvey had already prepared a shallow trough filled with fresh water, and the grass mats Kritika had woven cushioned the floor for the herd. Shuu and Winston were inspecting the enclosure’s

walls, making sure there were no weak points where the cows could wander off. Curtis patrolled the perimeter, tail lashing occasionally at distant mountain birds that dared to come close.

Kritika climbed down from her stone ledge, feeling the cool earth under her bare feet. She smiled at the herd, who greeted her with gentle moos and soft nudges.

“Good morning, my little mothers,” she whispered, crouching to stroke their heads. “Time to help feed your cubs-to-be.”

Harvey approached with a wooden stool and a carved bucket.

“I’ll start the milking,” he said, his voice gentle. “You should rest a bit, Kritika.”

But Kritika shook her head.

“No, I want to do it too. This is part of preparing for the cubs. I need to know what’s best for them.”

Carefully, she sat next to her “mama cow,” letting her hands glide over the animal’s warm hide. Slowly and patiently, she began to milk the cow, feeling the smooth rhythm and warmth of the milk filling the bucket. The cow hummed softly, almost in approval, as if recognizing Kritika’s care.

Shuu came to her side with bundles of dried grass.

“I’ll line the floor better so they’re comfortable,” he said, his wolf ears twitching.

Winston leaned against a boulder, watching her with quiet pride.

“You really think about everything, Kritika,” he murmured.

Curtis snorted, shaking his head but smiling anyway.

“Yeah... no one else could get a whole herd of wild cows to follow her like that.”

Kritika laughed softly, her hands still working.

“It’s not just me. You all help protect them, guide them... we’re doing this together. The cubs will be safe and strong because of all of you.”

The morning passed with quiet productivity. Kritika tasted the fresh milk, her nose twitching as she judged its quality. Harvey collected it into jars, labeling them for immediate use or storage. Shuu and Winston arranged bedding for the cows, while Curtis stood watch over the cliff edges.

By midday, Kritika leaned back against a warm stone, exhausted but satisfied.

“Our home... it feels real now,” she whispered, her gaze sweeping over the cave, the cows, and her mates. “The cubs will be safe. We’ll all be safe.”

The four males exchanged a look, realizing that in her simple, practical actions, Kritika had already built a fortress of love and care far stronger than any walls or weapons could provide.

The mountain was no longer just a home—it was a sanctuary, and Kritika, surrounded by her mates and the herd, had finally begun to feel like the heart of it.

CHAPTER 22

The morning sun filtered softly through the cave entrance, spilling light over the organized chaos of Kritika's mountain home. The cows stirred in their newly built pen, chewing cud lazily, while her mates moved about attending to various chores.

Kritika stood near a small stone hearth she had prepared for cooking, a wide smile on her face as she poured the fresh milk collected from the herd into a low, heavy cauldron. Harvey's eyes widened as he watched her.

"What are you doing, Kritika?" he asked, leaning forward.

"We're making ghee," she said cheerfully. "Clarified butter. My grandmother taught me this back home. It's healthier than animal fat, keeps your body warm, moisturizes your skin, and can even help heal minor scratches."

Harvey blinked, stunned. "You... you can make all that from milk?"

Kritika laughed softly, stirring the milk carefully over the fire. "It's a lot of work, and I can't do it alone. That's why I have you helping me. You're the best helper I could ask for."

Harvey nodded, his tail flicking with amusement and admiration. "Alright... show me how."

As the milk slowly separated and the golden butterfat rose, Curtis, Winston, and Shuu gathered around, curiosity overtaking their usual reserved expressions.

"It smells... different," Curtis muttered, sniffing the warm aroma. "Better than the fat we usually use for cooking."

Winston's eyes glimmered. "It's golden... and smooth. Is it really that good for us?"

"Yes," Kritika said, her hands steady as she skimmed the foam off the top. "It keeps you warm, nourishes your skin, and strengthens the body. Perfect for winter. The cubs will benefit too."

Shuu's ears twitched. "So this is like... a magic ingredient?"

Kritika grinned. "Not magic. Just knowledge passed down from my family. But yes... it feels like magic when you see how much it helps."

For the next few hours, she and Harvey worked side by side, churning, skimming, and storing the ghee in small earthen pots. The other mates watched in awe as Kritika demonstrated patience and skill. Every time the golden liquid pooled in the pot, they were reminded of how resourceful and clever she was—not just as their mate, but as the center of their growing mountain home.

By evening, the first batch was ready. Kritika held a small spoonful, tasting it with a satisfied hum.

"Perfect. Nourishing, smooth... and golden, just like sunshine."

The mates exchanged impressed looks, realizing that Kritika wasn't just building a home—she was creating a life for them that combined love, practicality, and care in ways they'd never imagined.

Curtis finally spoke, his usual gruffness softened.

"You really do think of everything, don't you?"

"Of course," Kritika said, brushing a stray strand of hair behind her ear. "This is our home, our family. Everything I do is for us."

Winston, Shuu, and Harvey all nodded in silent agreement, each secretly amazed at how much they had already come to rely on their clever, loving mate.

By mid-morning, the cave was filled with the warm, nutty aroma of ghee. Kritika carefully poured the first golden batch into small clay pots, letting it cool. Harvey, still wide-eyed, wiped his hands on his tunic.

“I never imagined something from milk could be so... versatile,” he admitted.

Kritika grinned. “It’s not just for cooking. It can moisturize your skin, strengthen your body in the cold, and even help heal scratches. Perfect for the winter months ahead.”

Curtis, who had been watching silently, crossed his arms.

“Hmph... fancy butter. But I’ll admit—it does smell better than what we usually use.”

Winston, ever the observer, tilted his head. “You really think of everything, Kritika. Even for the cubs, right?”

“Exactly,” she said, placing a reassuring hand on her stomach. “Everything we make now helps them, and helps us survive the dead season. Harvey, you can help me pack some for storage. We need to keep a reserve.”

Harvey carefully ladled the ghee into small sealed pots, while Kritika labeled each with notes for use: cooking, skincare, and medicinal purposes.

Shuu, fascinated, leaned over. “So we just... eat some, rub some on our skin, and we’re stronger?”

Kritika laughed, patting his wolf-form head.

“Yes, little wolf. But only the right amount. Too much at once can upset your stomach. Moderation is important, even with good things.”

As the work continued, Curtis wandered over to Kritika, tail swishing.

“I suppose I’ll admit... you’ve outdone yourself again. Not just clever, but useful. And that’s dangerous for us males—now we’re spoiled.”

Kritika only smiled, leaning into him as she stirred another pot. Harvey glanced at her fondly, noting how her attention to detail and care for everyone—including the animals—made her the center of their mountain home.

By evening, all the ghee was prepared and stored, the cave filled with warmth, golden light reflecting off the clay pots. Kritika sat back, brushing her hair from her face, exhausted but satisfied.

“One step closer to winter preparation,” she murmured, rubbing her belly softly. “And one step closer to making sure our cubs and this family will be safe, warm, and strong.”

Curtis, Harvey, Winston, and Shuu all shared quiet smiles, each silently acknowledging that their clever, loving mate was already building more than a home—they were building a legacy.

The warm golden light of late morning spilled across the cave as Kritika carefully poured some of the fresh milk into a heavy clay pot. Today, her plan was to make paneer—soft, delicate cottage cheese.

Harvey leaned closer, curiosity shining in his eyes.

“Paneer? You’re making that too?”

Kritika smiled, her hands working swiftly. "Yes. It's gentle on the stomach, easy to digest, and full of protein. Perfect for cubs or anyone recovering from sickness."

As the milk began to curdle with her careful addition of lemon juice, Kritika continued, her voice soft, almost nostalgic.

"You know... I never liked milk when I was a child. Every time my mother tried to give it to me, I would refuse. I hated the taste. But one day, after I got really sick, she made cottage cheese instead. Just a little... soft, lightly cooked... and I had it in tiny bites. Somehow, it helped me recover my strength without upsetting my stomach."

Harvey's ears twitched, and he leaned in even closer. "You... were that fragile as a cub?"

Kritika nodded, carefully draining the whey from the curds. "I was small, weak, and often scared my parents. They worried about me constantly. But this cottage cheese... it became my little secret. The only way I could get the nutrition I needed without hating food."

She shaped the paneer into small cubes and gently tossed them in a shallow pan with a little of the ghee she had made earlier. The sizzling sound made the cave smell heavenly.

"I only use a tiny bit," she explained, scooping a few cubes onto a small plate. "Too much and it upsets the stomach, but just enough... it strengthens you. That's why I want Harvey to help me make it. We need to prepare for the cubs too – small, healthy portions that will give them strength."

Harvey listened carefully, his tail flicking in fascination. "I never realized... all this came from your childhood experience. Your parents must have been so scared for you."

Kritika nodded, her eyes soft. "They were. But those little lessons... they taught me to care for others, to think ahead, and to make food not just for hunger, but for health and strength."

She offered Harvey a small piece of the roasted paneer.

"Try it. Just a tiny bite."

Harvey chewed thoughtfully, eyes widening at the creamy, golden texture.

"This... this is incredible," he said softly. "It's rich, smooth... and comforting. I can see why it helped you."

Curtis, Winston, and Shuu peeked over, curiosity piqued by the scent and sizzling sound. Kritika laughed lightly, offering each of them a small cube.

"It's not just food," she said. "It's love, care, and memories of home. And now it's going to feed our cubs and keep our family." The wisdom of generations and the warmth of her heart in everything she made.

The cave was filled with the rich, nutty scent of ghee and roasted paneer, the sound of sizzling milk, and the quiet laughter of a mate who had turned her childhood lessons into the foundation of a thriving family.

CHAPTER 23

The sun had just begun to rise over the mountain peaks, painting the slopes in gold and amber. Kritika led her mates and the herd of cows along a winding trail, enjoying the crisp mountain air. Her eyes, sharp as ever, caught sight of something unusual among the wild grasses.

Her breath caught. "Lentil seeds! 🥰 Look at these!" she exclaimed, kneeling down to inspect them.

Curtis carefully brought the small satchel she had pointed to. Kritika sorted through the seeds, separating the good ones from any damaged or tiny pieces. Her hands moved with practiced precision, each seed placed thoughtfully into a small pouch for storage.

"Perfect for soups and stews," she muttered, glancing at Harvey. "You'll help me cook these soon."

Harvey nodded, already picturing the creamy, hearty lentil dishes he'd make under her guidance.

As they continued, Kritika's eyes lit up again at the sight of fresh vegetables growing along the terrace edges. Spinach leaves curled in the morning sun, carrots poked through the soil, and even some cauliflower and okra peeked from small wild patches.

"We'll need to stock these," she said, quickly gathering baskets. "Fresh greens, roots, and legumes... they'll keep us nourished through the dead season."

The mates followed her instructions carefully, carrying baskets, gathering vegetables, and keeping the herd close. Curtis, ever

protective, kept a watchful eye, while Winston and Shuu helped sort and clean the harvest.

By the time they reached the cave, Kritika set the baskets down and rubbed her hands together. She glanced at her mates with a spark in her eyes.

“Now... what shall we cook for today? Something warm, filling, and strong enough to give us energy for the rest of the day.”

Her mind wandered through possibilities. Lentil stew spiced lightly with herbs, sautéed okra with ghee, and a side of roasted cauliflower perhaps. She wanted the meal to comfort and strengthen—not just fill their stomachs, but warm their hearts too.

Curtis smirked. “Knowing you, it’s going to taste amazing. And probably make all of us demand seconds.”

“Of course,” Kritika said with a playful grin. “But first... we cook together. Everyone helps. And then we feast.”

Her mates shared a look, realizing that in Kritika’s hands, even the simplest mountain vegetables and lentils would turn into a meal worthy of royalty—and a feast that would prepare them for the long, cold days ahead.

Kritika stood over the hearth, baskets of lentils, vegetables, and fresh rice arranged neatly around her. Today’s plan: a warm, hearty Sambar with steamed rice—a dish she had loved back home.

But as she began, she realized a challenge: the herbs and spices she usually relied on were missing. No instant spice mixes, no pre-roasted powders—just the raw ingredients from their mountain stores.

“Hmm...” Kritika murmured, tapping her chin. “I can make this work... I just have to improvise.”

She grabbed a mortar and pestle, grinding fresh coriander seeds, turmeric root, and dried red chilies she had carefully stored from previous trips. She added a touch of ghee to release the aromas. The warm, earthy scent filled the cave, making Harvey's nose twitch in anticipation.

"Kritika... that smells incredible already," he said, watching her work.

"Patience, Harvey," Kritika said with a teasing smile. "The magic comes in the layering."

She chopped the collected vegetables—okra, carrots, and a small head of cauliflower—into bite-sized pieces. Tossing them gently into the simmering lentil broth, she carefully balanced flavors, tasting repeatedly. Without pre-made mixes, she had to trust her instincts, using just enough salt, a hint of acidity from lemon, and the smoky depth of roasted spices.

Curtis leaned over, arms crossed but clearly intrigued.

"You really think this will taste like back home?"

"Not just taste like home," Kritika replied confidently. "It'll taste better. Trust me."

Winston and Shuu hovered nearby, helping with stirring, adding small amounts of ghee, and making sure the vegetables didn't overcook. Each time Kritika adjusted the seasoning, the mates watched in awe as her intuition and experience transformed the simple ingredients.

Finally, after what felt like hours of careful preparation, she ladled steaming sambar over fluffy rice into clay bowls. She set them on the low dining table she had instructed the mates to arrange, the golden broth glistening and fragrant.

"Dinner is served," Kritika announced, sitting down with a satisfied smile. "Let's see how my improvisation worked."

Her mates took cautious first bites – and were instantly captivated.

“Kritika...” Harvey breathed, eyes wide. “This... this is amazing. Better than I imagined.”

Curtis’ usual gruff expression softened, a small smile tugging at his lips.

“Not bad, cub... not bad at all.”

Winston simply nodded, savoring the flavors, while Shuu’s ears twitched as he chewed thoughtfully.

Kritika leaned back, smiling to herself. Despite missing some traditional spices and ingredients, her creativity and memory of home had made a dish that not only filled stomachs but warmed hearts.

“See,” she said, “where there’s a will – and a little love – you can make anything taste like magic.”

The mates exchanged looks, realizing yet again that Kritika wasn’t just their clever mate – she was the heart and soul of their mountain home, turning simple ingredients into strength, comfort, and family warmth.

CHAPTER 24

The night had settled over the mountain, a blanket of stars scattered across the sky. Kritika sat by the small hearth, the leftover sambar and rice still warm in clay bowls, while her mates lay in a deep, protective sleep, exhausted from the day's work. The cave was quiet, the only sounds coming from the low hum of the cows outside and the occasional crackle of the dying fire.

Kritika's mind, however, was far from rest. She leaned back on her hands, speaking softly, almost in a whisper:

"Aki... where will I meet my dragon mates? Any clue?"

The soft, ethereal voice answered in her mind:

"Dragons are territorial, Kritika. You will find them near the volcanic ridge east of your mountain. Two males... both have weaknesses that can be influenced through patience and subtlety. One is easily intrigued by intelligence and strategy; the other responds to displays of confidence and dominance. Approach carefully."

Kritika's eyes sparkled. "Perfect... that gives me an advantage. I can... lure them, convince them to court me. And if I do this right, they will become my mates without knowing the full extent of my strength until it's too late."

"Be cautious," Aki warned. "Dragons are proud and temperamental. One wrong move, and they may see through your plan."

Kritika chuckled, a low, confident sound that made even the shadows of the cave seem to lean in. "I've handled beasts far stronger and fiercer than dragons. This will be... interesting."

She glanced at her sleeping mates, Harvey's gentle breathing, Curtis' tail twitching in sleep, Winston's protective posture, and Shuu curled in his wolf form. They were exhausted, trusting her completely, unaware of her secret plan.

"I'll sneak out while everyone is asleep," Kritika murmured, her fingers tracing the edge of a clay pot absentmindedly. "Just a small trip... I'll learn about these dragons, test their reactions, and make my move. No one needs to know until it's done."

The AI hummed softly in her mind.

"Understood. I will guide and alert you to danger. Use your wit and subtlety, Kritika. Your rewards and future tasks depend on this carefully executed plan."

Kritika nodded, a mischievous smile playing on her lips.

"Good. I like a challenge. And tonight... the dragons won't even see me coming."

She settled into a small nook by the hearth, eyes scanning the moonlit landscape outside the cave. A plan was already forming in her mind—how to approach, how to bait their curiosity, and how to secure them as her mates without raising suspicion.

The fire crackled softly, echoing her thoughts: strategy, patience, and subtle power. Kritika knew this was just the beginning of a new chapter in her growing family—and in the journey of claiming her dragon mates

Kritika's steps were swift but careful as she navigated the thick forest, the faint glow of the moon guiding her path. Her heart beat steadily, anticipation and curiosity mixing with the faint ache in her belly. Suddenly, a soft alert sounded in her mind.

"Kritika... one of the dragons is nearby. No aggressive behavior detected—only curiosity," the AI whispered.

Her eyes widened slightly. "Curious, huh? Well, let's see how curious he is."

A misstep sent her sliding toward the edge of a cliff. Before she could react, a strong pair of arms caught her, pulling her back to safety.

"Act cute ☺," Aki suggested lightly, and Kritika gave a small, innocent smile.

Her rescuer's presence made her heart skip. Towering, graceful, and imposing, he was a dragon in humanoid form, with sleek scales glinting faintly under the moonlight. His black eyes studied her carefully, and his aura radiated power.

"Who... who are you? Why are you alone?" the male asked, his voice smooth and deep.

Kritika's cheeks warmed as she murmured under her breath:

"Oh my best goddess... did she send her son to me? He's so... good looking, even gods would blush in front of him."

Her soft words and shy demeanor made the dragon's eyes widen. Kritika blushed, realizing she had just flustered him—and it thrilled her.

"My mates are sleeping... they worked hard all day," she explained softly, placing a gentle hand on her slightly swollen belly. "And... I am with cubs. I was hungry, so I stepped out to find something to eat."

Her words hung in the cool night air, the truth of her condition and her vulnerability making her appear delicate yet intriguing. She sank slowly to the ground, rubbing her belly and letting out a small, hungry sigh.

"Something sweet and soft..." she whispered, almost to herself. "I need something to eat... please."

Sulphur knelt slightly to meet her level, his gaze softening but still full of intensity. His wings rustled faintly behind him, a display of restrained power. "You... you are with cubs?" he asked, voice barely above a whisper.

Kritika nodded, her expression both tired and hopeful. "Yes... and I am a bit weak. Could you... help me?"

A faint smile tugged at Sulphur's lips, his black eyes darkening with curiosity and something else—protectiveness. "I... I will not let anything happen to you," he said firmly, though his usual dragon pride was softened by concern.

Kritika's heart raced. Her plan to meet the dragons had just taken a personal turn. Sulphur's presence was commanding, yet his careful attention to her vulnerability gave her the advantage she needed. She settled more comfortably, letting him see her need while remaining cautious, knowing she now held the power to test his intentions and patience.

"Good... very good," the Aki whispered in her mind.

"Sulphur is intrigued. Your subtle display has worked."

Kritika allowed herself a small, satisfied smile. Tonight, she would learn more about him, and slowly, she would weave the threads that could make Sulphur her mate—just like she had planned.

The moonlight shimmered over the forest, the cool night wind brushing against them, and in that quiet moment, Kritika's adventure with her first dragon mate had truly begun.

Kritika shifted slightly on the forest floor, brushing leaves from her hair as Sulphur remained close, his imposing form protective yet careful not to overwhelm her. His black eyes glimmered in the moonlight, reflecting a mixture of curiosity and something more... something primal that made her pulse quicken.

“You’re... small, yet not afraid,” Sulphur murmured, tilting his head. “Most would run from me.”

Kritika gave a soft, playful smile, letting a tiny blush spread across her cheeks. “Why would I run? I can handle... beings far stronger than you.”

Sulphur’s lips curved slightly. “Is that so?” His tail twitched behind him, a subtle sign of his growing interest. “And yet... you are with cubs. You are vulnerable.”

She pressed a hand to her stomach again, letting him see her gentle protectiveness over her unborn little ones. “Vulnerable doesn’t mean weak,” she said softly. “It means I know what’s important. And right now... I need to eat. Something warm, soft, and sweet.”

The dragon’s nostrils flared as he sniffed the air, detecting her subtle scent of arousal, fatigue, and the unmistakable aura of a mate who knew her own power. Sulphur’s gaze darkened, intensity radiating from him.

“Sweet and soft... for you, nothing is too much,” he said slowly, his voice low and roughened with emotion he barely understood himself.

Kritika giggled softly, leaning back on her hands, letting her body language communicate both need and innocence. “You are too kind, Sulphur. Most would not pause to help someone like me alone in the woods at night.”

His tail curled slightly, brushing against her without touching, testing boundaries while staying aware of her comfort. “Kindness is... new for me,” he admitted. “But you... you intrigue me.”

“I do tend to leave... interesting impressions,” Kritika murmured, letting her eyes flicker up at him, teasing, playful, yet earnest. “Do you always follow curious females who wander alone in the woods?”

Sulphur's lips twitched, a hint of a smile. "Only the ones... who smell like they hold more strength than they show."

Kritika's heart skipped. Her plan was working—subtle, yet effective. By showing him just enough need, a hint of vulnerability, and a tease of her charm, she was drawing him in without revealing her full power.

"Good," the AI whispered in her mind. "Sulphur is intrigued. Keep calm, keep playful. The next step is to test his patience and curiosity further—without revealing your full strength yet."

Kritika leaned slightly forward, resting her chin on her hands. "I'm hungry, Sulphur. Will you help me find something sweet... and warm?"

The dragon's black eyes softened, his stance protective. "I will. And I will ensure no harm comes to you while you eat."

Kritika's lips curved into a satisfied smile. "Perfect. I think we're going to get along very well, don't you think?"

Sulphur's tail swished once, decisively, and he nodded. "Yes... I think we are."

The forest around them was silent, save for the rustle of leaves and distant sounds of nocturnal creatures. But in that quiet, Kritika knew that the first thread of trust and intrigue had been woven between her and Sulphur—the first step in claiming her new dragon mate.

Kritika shifted slightly, sitting cross-legged on the forest floor as Sulphur loomed nearby, his black eyes fixed on her every movement. She decided it was time to draw him in subtly, to make him think, desire, and eventually... consider courting her.

"You know," she began softly, her voice lilting with confidence, "there's a lot you can do with the fruits and

herbs of this mountain. Even creatures as powerful as dragons can benefit from them—if you know how.”

Sulphur arched a brow, curious. “Do you mean... you would teach me?” His tone was cautious but intrigued.

Kritika nodded, a playful smile on her lips. “Yes. Not everything is about brute strength, Sulphur. Intelligence, care, strategy... these can be even more powerful than a roar or a tail swipe.” She reached into her small satchel and pulled out a few freshly collected herbs. “For example, these leaves can be boiled for a calming drink... for mates or cubs. It strengthens the body, warms the soul, and sharpens the mind.”

The dragon watched intently, his posture relaxing slightly. “You... you know a lot for someone so... small.”

Kritika’s fingers brushed lightly over the leaves as she spoke, demonstrating their uses. “And these roots,” she continued, showing him a cluster of tubers she had gathered, “can be roasted or mashed. High in nutrients, they help recover energy faster than raw meat alone. Even warriors or dragons could benefit from such things.”

Sulphur’s tail flicked lightly, betraying a hint of excitement. “You... are teaching me. And yet... you speak as if you are already commanding. Why?”

Kritika leaned forward slightly, letting her voice drop to a softer, teasing whisper. “Because I am. I take care of those I claim. And I see potential... in dragons like you. Strength without strategy is wasted. And I... am very selective with those I allow close.”

The black eyes of the dragon darkened with intrigue, his pride nudged gently by her words. “And... what do I gain if I listen?”

Her lips curved knowingly. “Knowledge... guidance... and perhaps... the chance to court someone clever, strategic, and strong

in ways you haven't even imagined yet. Someone who could match your mind and your power."

Sulphur's gaze softened, a rare vulnerability crossing his features. "You... make it sound... enticing. Very few have made me consider such things."

Kritika's heart leapt slightly at his words. She knew she had successfully made him think—curious, intrigued, and already imagining a bond without fully understanding the depth of her power or intentions.

"Good," Aki whispered in her mind. "You are planting the seed. Sulphur will now consider you... a mate to court. Patience and subtlety will finish the job."

Kritika smiled softly, tilting her head. "Remember, Sulphur... the best things take time. And the cleverest dragons... always wait for the right moment."

Sulphur nodded slowly, his tail brushing gently against the forest floor. His eyes lingered on her with a new intensity, the beginnings of a desire that Kritika knew she could nurture, twist, and claim—without revealing her full power just yet.

She leaned back, satisfied. One dragon was intrigued, curious, and slowly being drawn into her orbit. And the night was still young.

Kritika plucked a few soft, sweet fruits from a nearby bush—plump grapes, juicy cherries, ripe strawberries, and tiny blue blueberries. She held them delicately in her hands, examining their color and sheen before popping them into her mouth one by one.

Sulphur's black eyes followed her intently, his gaze sharp and unblinking. She nibbled on a grape, then a cherry, and finally a strawberry, letting the juices coat her lips slightly. With each bite, she moaned softly, the sound light and playful, almost like a chipmunk savoring its treat. 🐿

Her lips were wet with the fruit juices, glistening under the moonlight, and her eyes sparkled as she chewed, savoring each burst of flavor. Kritika leaned slightly forward, letting Sulphur's eyes trace the movements of her mouth, her fingers brushing lightly against the fruits as she moved them toward her lips.

"AKI... look at him," Kritika whispered in her mind, a mischievous grin forming. "He's already curious... almost mad with desire."

The AI responded excitedly, almost blabbering in Kritika's thoughts:

"Incredible... you are using subtle body language, eye contact, and even the act of eating to seduce! He is completely captivated! Your intelligence and sensuality are creating a magnetic pull—he cannot look away!"

Kritika tilted her head, slowly letting a piece of strawberry slip between her fingers and into her mouth again, deliberately making the juice drip slightly. She plucked a blueberry and let it roll along her lips before popping it in, her eyes locking with Sulphur's.

The dragon gasped softly, his tail flicking nervously, wings twitching just slightly as his pulse seemed to spike. "Y-you... you are... exquisite," he muttered, his voice rough and low, betraying a sudden vulnerability.

Kritika smiled, her satisfaction growing. She already knew the art of seduction, and this was just the beginning. Her movements, her expressions, even the way she ate were all carefully designed to make him think, desire, and be drawn to her completely.

"Good boy," she whispered softly in his direction, letting the double meaning linger. "Curiosity is the first step. Desire... will follow."

Sulphur's black eyes darkened further, his breathing quickened, and for the first time, he felt completely entranced by a female – not just for her beauty, but for the intelligence, confidence, and strategy behind her every move.

Kritika leaned back slightly, still chewing a cherry, her lips red, wet, and plump. Her gaze softened just enough to tease him, letting him know that she was aware of her power over him – and that she enjoyed it thoroughly.

In the quiet of the forest, under the moonlight, Kritika's subtle seduction had claimed its first victory. Sulphur was captivated, curious, and now dangerously intrigued by the clever, beautiful female who dared to eat fruit in such a way... and make him utterly helpless to resist.

CHAPTER 25

Kritika stood in the forest clearing, the soft glow of moonlight highlighting her confident posture. She sensed the presence of Curtis, Harvey, Winston, and Shuu nearby – they were watching, protective as ever – but her focus was entirely on the dragon before her.

Her lips curved into a teasing smile as she stepped closer, locking eyes with Sulphur. The intensity in his black gaze made her pulse quicken, yet she remained composed.

“Will you court me, my fireball?” she asked softly, letting the nickname roll off her tongue like honey.

Sulphur’s tail flicked sharply, his jaw tightening as his pride wavered for the first time. “I... I will mate a female who will also mate with my brother,” he said, his voice steady but laced with shock and disbelief.

Kritika laughed softly, a musical, teasing sound that floated in the night air. “Can you bring him to me as well? Let me see what my other fireball could really be like. I need to... understand what I’m dealing with.”

Sulphur’s black eyes widened, his wings shifting uneasily behind him. He opened his mouth to protest, but she continued, her tone light and confident:

“Okay, I have to leave now. If my mates wake up, they’ll get worried about me. And you... you are sweet, my fireball. 🐉 Bye-bye... see you soon, maybe in my house... maybe in my bed.”

With that, Kritika winked, her gaze lingering just long enough to steal his breath, then turned gracefully and disappeared into the shadows of the forest.

Sulphur stood frozen, his chest rising and falling faster than usual. The air seemed charged around him, her scent lingering like a spell he could not break. His mind raced, heart pounding—she had challenged him, teased him, and claimed a piece of his attention with a single exchange.

“That... that female...” he murmured, his tail flicking with agitation and fascination. “She is unlike any I have ever met. Bold, clever... and dangerous in ways I cannot ignore.”

In the distance, Kritika’s form melted into the trees, leaving only the faint sound of her footsteps and the echo of her teasing words. She had successfully stolen Sulphur’s attention—and left him longing, curious, and undeniably drawn toward her.

The Aki chimed softly in her mind:

“Excellent, Kritika. You have ignited the first spark. Sulphur is now actively thinking of you... and considering his next move. Your strategy is working perfectly.”

Kritika smiled to herself, walking briskly toward a safer path back, her pulse steady and triumphant. One dragon intrigued and already mentally courting her. Two more were asleep, waiting for her return. And her cubs—though still unseen—were already stirring in the depths of her womb.

Tonight, the first threads of her new, powerful, and very complicated family had been woven.

Kritika moved carefully, trying to slip back into the warm cave where her mates were resting. Her heart still raced from the

encounter with Sulphur, the thrill of teasing him still lingering, but the safety of her family's presence was grounding.

As she settled onto the bed, Winston leaned close, his voice low and tender:

"If you get curious about someone, of course you should tell us... don't wander off, ♡ love."

He pressed his lips to hers softly, a gentle kiss that made her pulse flutter.

Curtis, ever the possessive one, let his hand slide subtly over her side, brushing against the curve of her waist and hips. His eyes darkened with need, but he was careful, protective, and wholly attentive to her comfort.

Shuu knelt near her legs, massaging them with skilled, strong hands, soothing the soreness left from her travels and her previous nights of activity. His touch was firm yet tender, grounding her and easing the tension in her body.

Meanwhile, Harvey hovered close, pressing a soft kiss to her forehead, murmuring:

"Rest, my little one. You've had a long day. Let us care for you."

Kritika leaned into their warmth, letting herself be cocooned by their attention. Her eyes fluttered closed, the combination of their touches, kisses, and soft words washing over her like a calming tide. She could feel their love and protection, and despite the excitement lingering from her encounter with Sulphur, she knew she was truly safe here.

A small, satisfied smile curved her lips. Her mates—Curtis, Winston, Shuu, and Harvey—were all attentive, loving, and completely hers. And yet... the memory of Sulphur's black eyes, his

curiosity, and the thrill of their interaction made her pulse quicken in ways her mates couldn't see.

"You're all too good to me," she whispered, letting her fingers brush Curtis's hand, Shuu's strong arms, and Winston's chest simultaneously. "I think... I might just spoil you all."

They exchanged amused, soft chuckles. Each knew she was dramatic, playful, and utterly in control—both of herself and of them. And Kritika, leaning into their combined warmth, allowed herself to feel safe, loved, and powerful all at once.

The cave was quiet except for the soft sounds of their breathing, the crackle of the fire, and Kritika's soft hum of satisfaction. Somewhere in the back of her mind, Sulphur lingered—but for now, her attention, her body, and her heart belonged fully to her five devoted mates.

The first rays of sunlight filtered gently through the cave's entrance, warming the stone floor. Kritika stirred, still wrapped in the cozy warmth of the bed. Her thoughts wandered lazily, and she decided she wanted her Harvey and Winston close to her.

"Come on... be near me," she murmured softly, her voice half-asleep.

At her request, both Harvey and Winston shifted into their beast forms, their warm furs brushing against her skin. Kritika giggled, playfully running her hands through the soft textures. Harvey's golden fur shimmered in the morning light, while Winston's sleek white pelt glowed softly.

The two beasts, clearly amused, leaned in and gently licked her face, eliciting laughter from Kritika. She hugged them tightly, burying her face in their warmth and feeling completely cocooned. Soon, exhaustion from the previous days overtook her again, and she drifted back into sleep.

Harvey and Winston stayed still, their large, protective forms curled around her. The gentle rise and fall of their chests, the rhythmic warmth of their bodies, lulled Kritika into a deep, peaceful slumber.

From the side, Curtis and Shuu watched quietly, their hearts swelling at the sight. Their little mate, so playful yet so innocent in her trust, looked like a cub in the safety of her chosen family. Curtis leaned forward, pressing a soft kiss to her forehead, followed by Shuu, their touches gentle, reverent, and full of affection.

“Sleep well, my little one,” Curtis whispered, his voice low and protective.

“Rest easy,” Shuu added, his fingers brushing her hair.

The cave was filled with quiet warmth—five devoted mates, one beloved female, and the calm of a morning spent in mutual love, trust, and playful intimacy. Kritika, cocooned in fur, kisses, and soft murmurs, felt completely at home, cherished, and loved.

Even as the forest outside came alive with the sounds of morning, inside the cave, the family of five rested, their bonds growing stronger with every shared heartbeat and gentle touch.

Kritika sat cross-legged on the soft fur rugs of the cave, her fingers tracing patterns on the ground. The morning sun filtered through the cave entrance, warming her skin. Her thoughts wandered to Sulphur and his mysterious brother, the second dragon who had been following her earlier. She decided it was time to gather information.

“Aki,” she murmured, closing her eyes and focusing on the mental link, “tell me everything you can about any nearby villages, especially ones with dragon inhabitants. I want to know where I might meet... my new mates.”

The AI’s voice chimed softly in her mind, calm and precise:

“Analyzing nearby settlements... There is a small village two days’ travel from your current location. The village head is a dragon named Sulphur. His brother, Rhae, is second in command. A bonfire ceremony is being organized tomorrow evening for females to select mates. Their customs require discretion, but given your status and abilities, you can approach strategically.”

Kritika’s heart skipped a beat. Sulphur—the same dragon who had saved her from the cliff—was the head of this village. And his brother, equally powerful, was nearby. Perfect.

“So... this is their village,” she murmured to herself, her mind already racing. “And they’re organizing a bonfire for mate selection.”

The AI responded with a note of caution:

“Yes, Kritika. These are two of the dragon brothers you previously encountered. Interacting carefully is essential. Any public display or misstep could alert others or trigger jealousy among your current mates.”

Kritika’s lips curved into a sly smile. “I know, AI. I’ve thought this through. I want Sulphur and his brother to see my interest... and I want to make it clear that I choose them. But I also need to ensure that Winston and the others understand my intentions before I go.”

She leaned back on her hands, eyes closing briefly as she recalled Winston’s words from their last conversation—how much he trusted her, and how much Curtis, Harvey, and Shuu valued her judgment. Her plan formed clearly in her mind.

“Aki, prepare me with all necessary knowledge about dragon customs for bonfires. Also, create a subtle aura shield around my presence so my current mates do not sense my approach prematurely. I want to arrive unseen until the right moment.”

“Acknowledged,” the AI replied. “Shielding aura and preparing intelligence on customs. You will have full advantage when arriving at the ceremony.”

Kritika nodded, feeling a thrill of excitement. She glanced at Harvey and Winston, resting nearby. “I’ll tell them about my intentions,” she whispered softly, “about these two fireballs I plan to court. But... they must trust me.”

She imagined the conversation in her mind—her honesty, tempered with her strategic charm, ensuring no one felt threatened while she prepared to meet Sulphur and his brother.

“Aki, also track the positions of the dragon brothers. Let me know the safest approach route to the bonfire while keeping me hidden from the villagers’ prying eyes,” Kritika added.

“Tracking and route planning complete. Estimated travel time: two days. Arrival optimal just before the ceremony begins,” AI confirmed.

Kritika’s smile widened, a mixture of satisfaction and anticipation. “Perfect. Tomorrow, we step carefully... but boldly. Sulphur and his brother won’t see me coming—and when they do, they’ll know exactly what they want.”

In the quiet of the cave, Kritika’s mind was already weaving strategy, charm, and a touch of mischief. Her fireballs—Sulphur and Reva—would not only notice her, they would be captivated. And she, as always, would remain several steps ahead.

CHAPTER 26

Kritika stood at the edge of the cave, her fingers tracing the smooth stone as her thoughts raced. Sulphur and his brother – Rhae – were powerful, dangerous, and irresistibly intriguing. But she knew that she couldn't act recklessly. Her current mates – Curtis, Harvey, Winston, and Shuu – deserved honesty, and she needed their trust before stepping into the dragon brothers' village.

"Aki" Kritika whispered, letting her mind link with it, "prepare me to inform my mates carefully. I need them to understand my intentions without feeling threatened. How should I approach this?"

"Suggested protocol: Begin with a calm explanation, emphasizing the strategic necessity of courting Sulphur and Rhae. Highlight potential advantages, including alliance formation, increased protection for the mountain, and the future safety of your cubs. Maintain confidence, but allow emotional transparency to reassure them," the AI advised.

Kritika nodded, letting the AI's suggestions shape her words. She turned to Harvey, who was stirring from his morning rest, his golden fur glinting in the sunlight.

"Harvey," she began softly, "I want to tell you something important. There are two dragon brothers in a nearby village who will be holding a bonfire for females to select mates. I... I intend to court them."

Harvey's amber eyes widened, and his tail flicked nervously. Before he could speak, she continued:

“I’m telling you first because I trust you. This isn’t a betrayal. It’s... strategic. Sulphur and Rhae could become powerful allies. Protectors of our mountain. And... it will help me ensure our family is completely safe in the long run.”

Winston, who had been quietly observing from the side, stepped closer, his white fur brushing against her arm.

“If this is your choice,” he said softly, his tail curling protectively around her, “then we support you. But you must promise to be careful. Two dragon brothers are not like any other males we’ve encountered.”

Curtis growled low in his throat, his possessiveness flaring, but Shuu placed a calming hand on his arm.

“We trust Kritika. She has never led us wrong,” Shuu said, his wolf eyes steady. “We’ll back her. But we’ll watch her, just like always.”

Kritika smiled, relief washing over her. “Thank you, all of you. I need your support—and your vigilance. That’s why I’m telling you now. I want to be transparent. This will be dangerous if mishandled.”

She then turned back to the AI.

“Aki, track Sulphur and Rhae’s positions. Prepare a subtle approach so I remain unseen until the perfect moment. And make a list of rituals, courtesies, and signals I can use during the bonfire to attract their attention without alarming the villagers.”

“Understood,” AI replied. “Route planning and ritual analysis in progress. Estimated safe approach time: just before dusk, when the bonfire begins.”

Kritika's lips curved into a confident smile. The plan was in motion. She had the trust of her mates, the protection of her family, and the cunning to ensure that Sulphur and Rhae would see her exactly as she wanted them to.

"Tomorrow," she whispered to herself, "we make sparks fly. And not just between them... between me and my destiny."

The cave was filled with quiet determination as Kritika prepared mentally, reviewing every detail. Her family, her cubs yet unborn, and her future lay in the delicate balance of strategy, charm, and careful seduction. And Kritika Marrero had always been a master of all three.

The small village square was bathed in the golden glow of torches, the bonfire yet to be lit. Kritika stepped into the open, her heels silent against the soft earth, but every eye was instantly drawn to her.

She wore a striking dress—black fur coat with red snake-skin accents off the shoulders—crafted meticulously from Curtis's own skin. It was bold, sensual, and protective all at once. Curtis, standing nearby, couldn't hide his jealousy as he watched the attention she drew. Yet he also knew the message it sent: anyone daring to lay hands on her would have to contend with him first.

Sulphur's breath caught instantly, his black eyes widening as recognition dawned. "She is the one I met last night... she is... with cubs already," he murmured, the awe clear in his tone.

Rhae, standing slightly behind him, equally caught off guard, felt a jolt of surprise. Kritika's beauty radiated like fire in the night, her pregnant belly a bold, undeniable statement that she was more than just a female—she was life itself, power, and seduction embodied.

The women gathered around the bonfire cast anxious, jealous glances. Their plans to challenge or intimidate her faltered as

Sulphur strode forward, protective and possessive. Kritika's lips curved into a mischievous smirk as she leaned slightly, her whisper cutting through the murmur of the crowd, meant only for Sulphur and Rhae:

“My little fireball... get ready to be mated by me. Welcome to my family, lover boys.”

Her words carried a charged intimacy that resonated in the air, drawing the attention of all nearby males. Many of them flushed with envy, sensing the magnetic pull she had over these powerful dragons.

Kritika's gaze lingered on Sulphur's ears, her small tongue darting playfully to trace the edge, making him shiver with anticipation. Then she turned her mischievous glint toward Rhae, the spark in her eyes daring him, teasing him, and leaving no doubt — she would claim them both.

The air thickened with tension, lust, and desire. Every subtle movement of her body, every glance, and every playful touch of her tongue sent ripples through the crowd. Kritika had mastered the art of seduction — powerful, calculated, and intoxicating.

Sulphur's chest rose and fell rapidly, his tail flicking with barely contained need, while Rhae's hands tightened into fists, struggling to maintain composure. Both dragons were completely ensnared, drawn to her in a way that made the world around them blur.

Kritika's smile widened. She had arrived, unafraid, magnetic, and in complete control. Tonight, the bonfire would not just illuminate the village—it would mark the start of her new, fiery, and undeniable claim over her newest mates.

The flames of the bonfire crackled in front of Kritika as she sat gracefully on the carved wooden log reserved for her family. The firelight kissed her features—her red-lined eyes gleamed with a

mixture of amusement and hunger. But her thoughts weren't on the sparks rising into the star-dotted sky.

They were on the two dragons who had silently stolen her curiosity.

She excused herself with a polite smile, slipping past the crowd as though heading for a walk. Shuu, who had noticed the glint in her eyes all evening, followed without a word, his long strides matching hers.

They moved past the circle of warm firelight into the hush of the woods. The air grew cooler, laced with the scent of damp earth and pine needles. Shuu finally broke the silence, his tone low but teasing.

"You're going to mate them in the woods, aren't you?"

Kritika's lips curved in a slow, unapologetic smile.

"Yes," she replied simply, her eyes glinting like polished rubies in the moonlight.

Shuu raised a brow at her boldness, his voice dipping to something halfway between a grumble and a plea.

"Why were you never that adventurous when you first mated me? I need your attention too, my mate!"

A ripple of laughter slipped from her, soft and rich as she turned her gaze to him.

"Oh... my little love wants attention? Don't sulk."

Her smirk deepened, playful yet promising.

"Wait for me tonight. Let me have my dragons first... you will have me later."

The teasing in her voice made Shuu's eyes narrow with mock jealousy, but the corner of his mouth lifted despite himself.

What neither of them realised was that their exchange hadn't gone unheard. The two dragon brothers—Sulphur and Rhae—had followed them from the bonfire's edge, their steps soundless, their breaths held as they listened. Their sharp senses caught every word.

Shuu's mood shifted as he noticed the thickening scent of dragonfire lingering nearby. He gave her a soft smile—almost boyish in that fleeting moment.

“Be safe,” he murmured.

At her nod, he vaulted lightly up into the branches of a tree, folding his arms and settling in as a silent guardian.

Kritika stepped further into the moonlit clearing, the hem of her red-scaled dress brushing against the damp leaves. Her voice carried into the night, low and inviting:

“Come out, my little fireballs. Don't hide from me.”

The woods held its breath for a heartbeat—then two shadows moved between the trees. Sulphur's black-eyed gaze caught the moonlight first, followed by Rhae's tall, solid frame, his amber eyes burning brighter than the flames at the bonfire.

They had come.

And Kritika, with her calm confidence and smouldering smile, stood waiting—ready to face the dragons who had been drawn to her since the night before.

CHAPTER 27

The clearing shimmered under a silver-washed moon, the air warm where the bonfire's glow spilled into the woods.

Kritika's pulse thrummed in her throat as the two dragon brothers finally stepped forward.

Sulphur was the first to appear; his black eyes glowed like molten glass, the night breeze stirring his dark hair.

Rhae moved behind him, broad-shouldered and quiet, the faint gold pattern along his neck glinting as if alive.

They looked nothing alike in colour but everything alike in the way they carried themselves – predators barely masking curiosity.

Kritika tilted her chin in greeting, the faintest curl of a smile playing at her lips.

"I wondered how long you would lurk in the shadows," she said, voice low and warm.

Sulphur's jaw shifted as though he fought a grin.

"You called us 'fireballs' ... not many dare to call a dragon that."

"That's because not many of them ever make me smile," Kritika replied, brushing her palm over a nearby tree trunk as if smoothing bark. "You two already have."

The words made Rhae's gaze sharpen, though his tone stayed even.

"You walked away from the safety of your camp... pregnant, no less. Either you are fearless –"

his eyes swept over her in a way that made her shiver –

“or foolish.”

Kritika stepped closer by half a pace, unhurried.

“Fearless,” she answered softly. “Foolishness doesn’t keep cubs alive.”

Sulphur’s eyes followed the small motion of her hand as she brushed a strand of hair from her face, her bracelets catching moonlight.

“You don’t sound like the other females at the bonfire,” he said. “You sound as though you’re choosing us instead of begging to be chosen.”

“Maybe I am,” she murmured.

For a heartbeat no one spoke. The night hummed with the distant music of the gathering and the whisper of leaves.

Up in the branches, Shuu shifted slightly but stayed hidden, his eyes fixed on her, ready to intervene if needed.

Kritika broke the silence, her tone light but her eyes glinting with a challenge.

“You both lead this village, don’t you? You must be used to females flattering you. I’m not here to flatter. I’m here because I think I might like what I see.”

Sulphur’s lips curved at the edge.

Rhae only tilted his head, still measuring her.

“We are not easily impressed,” Rhae said finally.

“Good,” she answered, letting that single word carry both mischief and promise.

The tension between them sharpened, alive but unspoken—an awareness that something new had shifted in the night air.

Behind them the bonfire roared on, but out here in the half-light of the woods it felt as though the world had gone quiet to watch the three of them circle each other, predator and prey unsure which was which.

Kritika's back pressed against the rough bark of the tree as she tried to keep her balance, her breath uneven.

Sulphur's sharp eyes noticed first, but it was Rhae who moved before she could protest.

"You shouldn't stand any longer," he said firmly, sliding an arm beneath her knees and lifting her as though she weighed nothing.

She wanted to protest but the weariness in her legs made her lean against his shoulder instead.

The dragons moved with unexpected gentleness as they carried her down the slope toward the narrow stream that shimmered under the moonlight.

Kritika cupped her hands in the cool water and sipped slowly, letting her heart calm.

A wry smile tugged at her lips as she rubbed the swell of her belly.

"Oh boy... you cubs are celebrating inside me tonight, aren't you?"

Sulphur crouched beside her, curious, when she guided his palm to rest lightly on her stomach.

A sudden, strong kick met his hand. His dark eyes widened in surprise; a second kick followed near Rhae's hand, as if the cubs were greeting them too.

For a brief moment the two dragon brothers shared a silent look over her head, the tension of earlier giving way to something almost protective.

The soft crunch of footsteps broke the stillness.

Shuu appeared from between the trees, worry etched on his face.

“Are you alright?” he asked, voice tight. “Curtis will kill me if he sees you like this—out here, tired, with the cubs kicking so hard.”

Kritika lifted her head, trying to sound reassuring despite the discomfort twisting in her lower belly.

“Hey... I’m fine. Nothing’s wrong. The cubs are just... active tonight.”

Her voice softened as she winced slightly.

“Shuu, can you call Harvey right now? Please.”

Shuu’s ears flicked in alarm at the request. He didn’t wait for another word; he turned and sprinted back toward the bonfire to fetch Harvey.

Sulphur shifted closer, brows furrowed.

“Is it time for them to be born?”

Kritika shook her head, one hand pressing over her belly as another wave of pain passed through her.

“It’s too early,” she whispered, more to herself than to them. “Not yet... please, not yet.”

Rhae adjusted the fur draped over her shoulders to keep her warm while the moonlight rippled on the water beside them.

Somewhere in the distance the bonfire’s music continued, unaware that in the quiet shadows near the stream, the night had grown far more serious.

Kritika’s breaths came faster now, each one leaving a cloud of mist in the chilly night air. A tremor ran through her body as she held on to Sulphur’s arm.

“Sulphur... help me into the water,” she whispered, her voice thin but steady.

“It eases the ache. Please.”

The dragon hesitated but obeyed, moving carefully so as not to hurt her. He supported her as she stepped into the cold stream. The moonlight danced on the ripples, glinting against his scales as he steadied her.

A cry tore from her throat — sharp enough to echo through the trees. That was when Harvey and the others came running, alarm flashing in their eyes as they heard her.

“Kritika!” Harvey’s voice was hoarse with fear. He knelt beside the water’s edge, scanning her face. “You can’t stay in the cold like this. It’s not safe — not for you, not for the cubs.”

He turned to Winston and the others, his tone suddenly commanding:

“Quickly! Build a shelter here. I need fire — warmth, and something to shield her from the wind.”

Winston was already gathering fallen branches, Curtis pulling up thicker logs with ease while Shuu darted off to fetch stones to circle the flames. Sulphur stayed beside Kritika, his large hand supporting her back as her legs threatened to buckle.

Rhae spread his cloak and fur-lined mantle near the shore, and Harvey carefully lifted Kritika from the water, laying her down on the softest furs they had. He crouched beside her, trying to keep his voice calm despite the storm of emotions raging in his chest.

“Breathe, Kritika. You are strong.”

Curtis soon returned with an armful of dry furs and draped them over her trembling form. The crackle of the fire grew louder as

Winston coaxed the flames higher, bathing the small clearing in a gentle orange glow that pushed back the icy air.

Kritika's hands gripped Harvey's wrist as another wave of pain washed over her. Her breaths were ragged but her eyes were fierce with determination.

"The cubs... they're coming sooner than we thought," she murmured, her forehead damp with sweat despite the cold.

Harvey held her gaze and nodded firmly.

"We're ready for them — just focus on your breathing. We'll keep you safe."

For a moment, the crackle of the fire and the distant rhythm of the bonfire drums seemed to blend into a single heartbeat, as if the whole night was holding its breath for the new lives about to arrive.

CHAPTER 28

Her breath came in sharp, ragged waves as she pushed again, muscles screaming in protest. First came two tiger cubs, tiny and delicate, their fur glistening under the firelight – Winston’s cubs, female twins. Kritika could barely lift her head to see them, but the warmth of life made her heart swell with something fierce and protective.

Harvey’s eyes were wide with awe, his hand trembling slightly as he helped her cradle the newborns.

“They’re perfect... she’s strong... you did it, Kritika,” he whispered, voice choked with emotion.

No sooner had she caught her breath than three male leopard cubs followed – Harvey’s sons – strong and healthy, letting out soft, primal cries. The newborns nestled instinctively against their mother, who weakly smiled, feeling their tiny bodies pulse with life.

Then, two female wolf cubs emerged – Shuu’s children – eyes still closed, tails curling instinctively. Kritika’s arms ached but she held them, feeling the bonds forming already, her heart swelling with every new life she touched.

Finally, two snake eggs appeared – Curtis’s legacy. One of them, as he gently announced, was female.

“This one will take 3–4 weeks to hatch,” Curtis said softly, his usual possessive edge softened by awe.

The birth had been excruciating. Kritika’s entire body screamed in exhaustion, but Harvey’s steady hands and the warmth of the fire, along with the three green crystals he placed near her, helped soothe and restore her energy.

Kritika finally leaned back against the furs, eyes half-lidded, a soft smile brushing her lips as she gazed at her growing brood. Sulphur and Rhae, watching quietly, exchanged shocked glances. Five female cubs — in this world, female births were rare, precious, and even more powerful than males. The significance of her gift left the dragons stunned.

“Five... female cubs...” Sulphur murmured, awe-struck.

“They... they’re incredible,” Rhae added, voice hushed.

Kritika’s smile widened faintly before her eyes closed, exhaustion finally taking over. Curtis’s hand hovered protectively over her, panic flickering across his face.

“Kritika!” he whispered urgently.

Harvey placed a reassuring hand on Curtis’s shoulder, calm but firm.

“She’s exhausted, Curtis. We need to let her rest. She’s not in a condition to move. We’ll stay here for a few days, keep her warm, feed her, and watch over the cubs.”

The family gathered around her, each mate settling close, their forms blending warmth, protection, and pride. Winston gently stroked her hair from behind, Sulphur and Rhae flanking her sides, Curtis hovering protectively, and Harvey ensuring everything was in place — the fire, the blankets, the warmth of their new life together.

In that quiet, glowing clearing, under the watchful moon and the crackle of fire, Kritika finally allowed herself to rest fully. Her family, in every form and fur, was there. And for the first time, the weight of pain and struggle melted into something fierce, protective, and infinitely beautiful.

The beast world had changed forever — and so had she.

CHAPTER 29

Kritika lay nestled in Sulphur's broad arms, her body finally allowing rest after the grueling birth. The warmth of his scales and the steady rhythm of his heartbeat lulled her into a deep sleep, while Rhae moved quietly around the den, carrying each cub with careful hands to settle them near the crackling fire Sulphur had ignited with a gentle surge of energy.

The dragons' den was massive — a cathedral of stone carved with natural elegance, fire pits glowing in strategic corners, and soft fur-lined alcoves for each cub to snuggle safely. One of the tiger cubs, tiny and curious, wriggled free and crawled straight into Rhae's arms. Her small head nuzzled against his chest and she curled up, her tiny paws kneading at his scales.

"Aww... my little cub," Rhae murmured, a rare softness lighting up his usually stern features. Sulphur, watching the interaction, smiled knowingly, a quiet warmth in his eyes that even Winston noticed.

But then, the atmosphere shifted. A shadow crossed the den — Curtis's face, dark with possessive intensity, appeared from the entrance. All the dragons and Harvey felt the tension, even Sulphur's massive shoulders stiffened.

Kritika, still resting but aware enough to sense the shift, opened one eye lazily and fixed Curtis with a half-lidded gaze.

"Curtis, I still love you 😊," she murmured, voice soft but teasing. "Baby, stop scaring the cubs. I'm fucking exhausted to love you right now, but yeah... I still love you. Now shut

up with that possessive behavior and let me sleep. Or all of you sleep outside this cave tonight.”

The words struck a chord of amusement through the den. Winston and Shuu couldn't help but laugh softly at her sassy command, even Rhae let out a low chuckle. Sulphur's lips twitched with suppressed amusement as Curtis's tail, thick and strong, twitched around Kritika's ankle possessively.

Curtis pouted, eyes narrowing like a kitten denied a treat.

“Hmph...” he muttered, curling closer to her.

Kritika let out a soft, amused sigh, resting her cheek against Sulphur's chest as she whispered:

“Good. Now sleep. All of you. I need my rest.”

Even with Curtis's tail still draped possessively around her, Kritika finally let herself close her eyes. The cubs were warm and safe, her mates surrounding her in forms both dragon, snake, leopard, and tiger. The den echoed with soft purrs, whispered breaths, and the occasional giggle from Shuu.

For a brief moment, the world outside didn't exist. Here, in the dragons' den, she was safe, loved, and completely surrounded by the family she had fought so hard to create.

And even Curtis, despite the pout and possessive tail, eventually settled close, his chest rising and falling in rhythm with hers, guarding her fiercely as she finally surrendered to the comfort of sleep.

By morning, the den was alive with the soft cries of cubs and the faint hum of dragons outside. Sulphur had sent his trusted messenger to fetch food and herbs for Kritika, but before he could even flap his wings, the news had already escaped the confines of the cavern.

Word spread like wildfire.

“The female from last night, her name Kritika—has given birth!”

“Five females and three males!”

“Impossible...! No female in centuries has birthed even one daughter, let alone five!”

The Dragon Village was in chaos. Everywhere, dragons transformed into their human or beast forms, whispering the unbelievable news to one another. The air shimmered with excitement, disbelief, and curiosity.

In the council chambers, the elders roared in astonishment.

“A single woman blessed with eight cubs at once?”

“And five of them are female? The balance will change!”

Meanwhile, in the heart of the village, the biggest shock wasn't just the birth—it was the revelation that Sulphur, the village head, and Rhae, his younger brother, had been courting the same female.

“The Dragon Lord and his brother?”

“And she... she accepted them both?”

“No wonder the moonlight danced last night—it was a union blessed by the stars.”

By the time the first few curious dragons dared approach the den, they were met by Winston's steely glare and Curtis's flicking tail warning them to keep their distance.

Inside, Kritika was awake again, sitting by the fire with the cubs nestled around her. Her face was pale but glowing, exhaustion softened by the joy of seeing her tiny family squirming beside her. Sulphur sat close, his golden eyes never leaving her, while Rhae knelt by the cubs, adjusting the furs to keep them warm.

“They're talking,” Kritika murmured faintly, a half-smile playing on her lips.

“Let them,” Sulphur replied calmly, brushing a strand of her hair from her forehead. “They have not seen life like this in centuries. You’ve brought hope, Kritika.”

“Hope?” she chuckled weakly. “Feels more like chaos.”

Rhae laughed softly, and the sound echoed off the stone walls like warm thunder.

Outside, dragons continued to gather in disbelief, their wings rustling in anticipation. Some bowed toward the den in respect, others whispered enviously about the powerful bond forming between the outsider female and their dragon lords.

In the shadows, an old dragon sage murmured to himself,

“The world is changing again. The Flame of Creation has been reborn... and it rests in her hands.”

Inside, Kritika had no idea her name was already spreading across kingdoms—the woman who birthed the future.

She only looked at her cubs, sighed softly, and whispered,

“Oh gods... how am I going to feed all of you?”

The den erupted in laughter, breaking the tension, even Curtis’s possessive growl turning into a purr.

Outside, the dawn light struck the cave entrance—signaling not just a new day, but the beginning of a legend.

The morning mist hung low over the dragon den. Outside, the air shimmered with the weight of approaching power. From the sky descended five grand dragons—scaled in shades of gold, obsidian, and ash. Their wings folded with a sound like thunder rolling through stone.

The village elders had arrived.

Sulphur straightened, his expression calm yet guarded. Rhae stood beside him, eyes glinting with quiet protectiveness. Inside the den,

Kritika stirred, her senses already alert before a single word was spoken.

“Aki,” she whispered softly, touching the small embedded crystal at her wrist.

“Yes, Kritika?” came the AI’s calm, familiar voice.

“Hide it,” she ordered. “Mask my fertility signals, suppress the cubs’ aura. No one should sense their true strength. Not even the healers.”

“Affirmative,” Aki replied. “Energy signature concealed. Only Harvey retains full diagnostic access.”

Kritika exhaled slowly, adjusting the blanket over her lap as the cubs stirred. The den glowed faintly from the fire Sulphur had kept alive through the night.

CHAPTER 30

The sound of footsteps echoed down the passage—heavy, deliberate.

The first elder, an enormous golden dragon in human form, entered with three others behind him. Their eyes were sharp, their presence ancient. The last to enter was a female healer, her silver hair braided with bone charms, her gaze both knowing and kind.

“Where is she?” the elder asked, his voice resonating like gravel and flame.

“Resting,” Sulphur replied, stepping forward, wings flaring faintly behind him. “You will approach with respect. She just gave birth.”

The healer moved closer first. Her steps were slow, reverent. When she finally laid eyes on Kritika—pale, tired, but still impossibly radiant—her breath caught.

“By the ancient flame...” she whispered. “She truly carries the mark.”

“What mark?” Rhae asked sharply.

The healer’s eyes flickered with ancient knowledge.

“The light that births balance. No female—no being—has carried this energy since the First Mother, the beast goddess herself. She is... special.”

Kritika met her gaze calmly.

“Then keep that to yourself,” she said softly but firmly. “I am no prophecy, and I need no title. I’m just a mother who wants her cubs safe.”

The elder frowned.

“The council must verify her health and the cubs’ vitality.
For the safety of the village.”

Before Sulphur could answer, Kritika’s tone sharpened – gentle but commanding.

“Only my mate, Harvey, will examine me. No one else touches me or the cubs.”

The air grew tense. The elder’s nostrils flared as faint embers escaped. But before the heat could rise, the female healer placed a hand on his arm.

“Leave it,” she said softly. “She’s right to be cautious.”

Then, turning to Sulphur and Rhae, she added in a voice only they could hear:

“Protect her. Whatever she hides – it is for the good of all of us. I have seen her flame. It is not from this world.”

Rhae nodded silently.

“We will guard her with our lives.”

The healer smiled faintly, her old eyes gleaming.

“Good. Then maybe this world still has a chance.”

As the elders retreated, murmuring among themselves, Kritika leaned back with relief. Harvey knelt beside her, checking her pulse discreetly while whispering,

“They didn’t sense it. You’re safe.”

“For now,” she murmured, closing her eyes, exhaustion catching up to her. “But Aki says the concealment won’t hold forever. The cubs’ power is growing...”

Outside, the sky rumbled again – not from weather, but from energy. The dragon lands had felt the shift.

And in a distant, another presence stirred awake, sensing the spark that would soon change everything.

Once the elders finally departed, a heavy silence settled over the cave. The crackling fire was the only sound, shadows flickering across the walls. Kritika exhaled softly, her hand brushing over the fur of one of the tiger cubs nestled against her.

She looked at her mates — Sulphur, Rhae, Curtis, Shuu, Winston, and Harvey — each watching her expectantly. The weight of secrecy, the tension from the elders' visit, and her own exhaustion pushed her to finally speak.

"I have something to tell all of you," she began, her voice calm but steady. "You already know I'm... different. But you don't know the whole truth."

The cubs stirred in their sleep, nudging her gently, as if sensing the gravity of her words.

"I'm not from this world," she admitted, eyes meeting each of her mates'. "I... I was transmigrated here. That's why my knowledge about living, cooking, and even handling beasts is... unusual. Why do my strategies and instincts seem sharper?"

Sulphur's dark eyes widened, Rhae's ears flicked forward, and even Curtis's tail twitched possessively, sensing the weight of her confession.

"The cubs..." Kritika continued, pressing a hand over her pregnant belly again, now calmer after the birth. "The ones I gave birth to... they have very high fertility rates. And they possess unique powers—powers that, if discovered, could make them targets. They're strong, intelligent, and magical in ways you've never seen."

Her gaze softened, lingering on each cub nestled near the fire.

"That's why I had to hide myself," she said quietly, almost whispering. "To protect them, to protect all of you... I cannot let the world know the full extent of what we have. I have to stay hidden."

Harvey, kneeling beside her, placed a reassuring hand over hers.

"Then we'll protect you," he said firmly. "Every one of you, every cub... no one will touch you as long as I live."

Curtis, still pouting from earlier possessiveness, curled his tail tighter around her ankle.

"I told you. You're mine," he murmured, voice low, almost growling, though his eyes softened when they met hers.

Winston chuckled, leaning close.

"And mine," he added, wrapping his arms around her shoulders in a protective embrace.

Shuu, ever gentle, rested a paw lightly on her lap.

"And mine too," he whispered, a shy grin forming.

Sulphur and Rhae exchanged a look, then stepped closer, flanking her.

"We've courted you, Kritika," Sulphur said softly, his golden eyes glowing in the firelight. "Your secret changes nothing. We'll guard you and the cubs. Together."

Kritika felt warmth bloom in her chest. Here, in the flickering light of the fire, surrounded by her mates and her newborn cubs, she allowed herself a rare moment of peace.

"Then... this is our family," she said softly. "Hidden, strong, and united. No one will take them from me. No one will take us from each other."

The cubs stirred again, purring and snuggling closer. Curtis, Winston, Shuu, Harvey, Sulphur, and Rhae all moved instinctively

to shield her, forming a circle of warmth, protection, and unspoken devotion.

For the first time in a long while, Kritika smiled and let herself relax completely, knowing that her secret was safe... at least for now.

CHAPTER 31

The firelight flickered softly, casting long shadows across the cave entrance. The males sat in a semi-circle near the mouth of the den, each lost in thought while Kritika slept peacefully on her bedding of furs and blankets.

Curtis broke the silence first, his tail flicking irritably as he glanced at Winston.

"She is very clever," he muttered. "See how she chose us?"

Winston tilted his head, ears twitching.

"Go on," he prompted, curiosity flickering in his eyes.

Curtis leaned back, crossing his arms over his chest.

"Winston and I are strong on land. Fighting, protecting, hunting... we handle anything that comes at the family head-on. But she... she didn't just pick brute strength. She picked strategy too."

Sulphur, sitting quietly on her other side, let out a low, approving hum. Curtis continued, his tone thoughtful.

"Harvey... she picked him for intelligence and support. He knows how to heal, how to manage resources, how to help us escape if anything goes wrong. She's thinking about every possible angle for the family's survival."

Rhae's eyes flicked, his black eyes glinting in the firelight.

"And she chose us... me and Sulphur... for mobility, air superiority, and quick response. If any threat approaches from above or afar, we handle it. She thought about everyone's safety."

Winston let out a low growl, a mix of admiration and mild jealousy.

“She planned this perfectly. Every role assigned without even telling us explicitly... she’s always ten steps ahead.”

Curtis nodded, his possessive tail flicking toward the sleeping female.

“And the best part? She picked us because she trusts us. Not just strength, not just skill... she trusts us to protect her, and the cubs, and each other.”

Sulphur and Rhae exchanged glances, their expressions softening. The realization settled quietly among them: Kritika hadn’t just chosen mates—she had built a fortress of loyalty, power, and love around herself.

The fire crackled, and the cave grew calm. Outside, the night whispered through the trees. Inside, the males remained vigilant, silently vowing to guard Kritika and her cubs with everything they had, while marveling at the cunning mind that had united them all.

Curtis muttered finally, almost to himself,

“She’s more than just clever... she’s brilliant. And she’s ours.”

A soft rustle from the bedding reminded them why they fought so hard—to keep their mate and her family safe. And for now, that was enough.

Five days had passed since the birth of Kritika’s cubs, and the den had settled into a rhythm. The cubs were growing stronger, Kritika’s health was slowly returning, and the family had established their routines. But the mountain called—their new home, hidden and safe, awaited them.

...

The males gathered near the entrance of the cave, their expressions serious but controlled. Curtis leaned against a rock, tail coiled tightly around his leg. Winston paced softly, while Shuu perched on a ledge, watching the moonlight spill across the forest floor. Harvey sat near Kritika, quietly discussing the safest route for their journey.

“We can’t risk being seen,” Curtis said, his voice low. “If word spreads about the cubs... or Kritika... other beasts will follow. We move before anyone notices.”

“Agreed,” Harvey added, glancing at Kritika. “We’ll take the mountain path north. It’s secluded, and the terrain favors us. I can carry the supplies and the cubs if needed.”

Sulphur stepped forward, his dark eyes glinting under the moonlight.

“I’ll go ahead tonight,” he said. “I’ll pack everything at our home and move it to the Light Mountain. By the time the others leave with Rhae early in the morning, everything will be ready.”

Rhae nodded.

“Then we leave at first light. The forest is still asleep. No one will see us.”

Kritika, seated on a pile of furs and blankets, let her eyes roam across her mates. She felt her stomach flutter slightly—part excitement, part nerves. Her thoughts wandered to the two dragons she was about to mate with.

“Sulphur,” she said softly, a mischievous glint in her eyes. “Once you’ve secured the supplies at the mountain, we’ll meet... and I’ll have my little fireballs.”

The dragons stiffened slightly, the tension of anticipation making the air crackle. Rhae's ears twitched, while Sulphur's tail coiled around his feet in quiet restraint.

"Understood," Sulphur replied, voice low and controlled.
"We'll be ready."

Kritika smiled, stretching slightly and resting a hand on her belly.

"The cubs will be safe, the mountain will be ready, and our family... will be together," she murmured. "It's time to make this our real home."

CHAPTER 32

The plan was clear. Under the cover of night, Sulphur would prepare the Light Mountain, moving supplies and securing a hidden cave for Kritika and her family. In the early dawn, the rest of the mates would accompany Kritika with the cubs, traveling quietly through the forest until they reached their sanctuary.

And once the journey was complete... Kritika would claim her dragon mates, strengthening the bond that would protect her family for generations to come.

The forest was silent, save for the soft rustle of leaves, as the family prepared to move. The night had never felt so full of promise – and danger.

The night was quiet, shadows dancing under the moonlight as Sulphur and Shuu made their way toward the Light Mountain. Their mission was clear: pack everything from their previous home and prepare the cave at the mountain to be a safe, hidden haven for Kritika and the cubs.

Sulphur moved with precision, every step measured to avoid detection. He packed furs, food stores, and protective charms, carefully checking each bundle. Shuu's nimble hands assisted, stacking and organizing supplies, making sure that everything would fit seamlessly into the new cave. Both of them were silent, focused, knowing that any mistake could expose their plans.

Meanwhile, back at the current den, Harvey, Winston, and Curtis worked to ready Kritika herself. Her comfort and health were their priority.

Harvey: "We need her well-rested for the journey and the mountain. Her body's still recovering. Soft bedding, warm wraps, and enough nutritious food."

Curtis was already laying out furs for her, coiling his tail around bundles of blankets, his possessive instincts flaring as he thought of her journey.

Curtis: "She will travel only with the best protection. Every cub, every step... I'll make sure nothing happens to her."

Winston inspected the collection of food and herbs, checking quantities and quality.

Winston: "We'll need enough energy-rich supplies for her. And the cubs... they're small but their needs are high. We pack fruits, grains, and something warm for her—enough to keep her nourished without slowing the journey."

Harvey brought over a set of green crystals, carefully polishing them for Kritika.

Harvey: "These will help her recover energy during the trip. I'll make sure she has them close."

Every mate worked instinctively, knowing Kritika's habits and desires. Furs were arranged in layers for warmth, fire-making supplies were checked, and food portions measured for convenience during travel. Curtis placed a protective charm near the bedding, a subtle mark only he could sense, to alert him of danger. Winston adjusted the placement of herbs and remedies, ensuring she would have access to them at every stop. Harvey double-checked the healing supplies and crystals.

Even Shuu and Sulphur, miles away, synchronized their work—preparing the mountain cave to be not just a home, but a fortress. Hidden entrances, cleverly positioned storage, soft bedding, and

strategic fire points all ensured Kritika would be safe the moment she arrived.

By the time Kritika was ready to travel, everything had been meticulously arranged. Each mate knew their role: protection, support, nourishment, and comfort. The family wasn't just traveling—they were moving as a perfectly coordinated unit, ready to protect their mate and her cubs at all costs.

The den was quiet now, only the soft crackle of fire in the background, as each mate glanced toward Kritika's bedding, silently promising: she would arrive safely, and no harm would come to her or the cubs.

Kritika's sharp eyes caught the subtle tension in Harvey's movements. Something was off, and she knew better than anyone that ignoring it could be dangerous.

Kritika: "Harvey... Do you need help? Tell me everything I should know."

Harvey hesitated, his paws clenching slightly. The truth weighed on him, but he couldn't hide it from her. Slowly, he spilled everything—small risks they hadn't considered, potential ambush points along the route, and weak spots in the forest that could make their travel dangerous.

Kritika listened silently, a small, knowing smile curling on her lips.

Kritika: "Good. Thank you for telling me. But remember... this stays between us."

Harvey nodded, relief washing over his face.

Kritika then focused her mind, contacting her AI.

Kritika: "Aki... I want all my mates—and my future mates—to go invisible. When we leave, no one should see or hear us. I want complete silence around our family."

Aki's calm, approving tone chimed in her mind.

Aki: "Approved. All members will be cloaked. No visual or auditory detection will be possible."

Kritika's smile widened. This was another layer of protection—silent, invisible, untouchable. She looked over her mates without them realizing the extra shield she had placed around them.

None of them knew that while they were preparing to move, Kritika was silently orchestrating their safety. She was always three steps ahead, her mind balancing strategy, love, and protection. Her cubs, her mates, her future mates—they were all guarded by her brilliance, and no one, not even the most curious of enemies, would ever know.

She leaned back on her bedding, closing her eyes for a brief moment, feeling the invisible aura wrap around the family like a protective cocoon.

Kritika (whispering to herself): "Safe... all of you will be safe."

The forest outside was still and quiet, unaware that a family of extraordinary beings was about to move, unseen and untouchable, toward their new home.

CHAPTER 33

The first rays of dawn barely touched the forest when Kritika's family began to move. Curtis, Winston, Harvey, Sulphur, Rhae, and Shuu surrounded her, each aware of their role but unaware of the invisible shield enveloping them. Kritika's mind had carefully activated the AI's protection spell: they were unseen, unheard, and untraceable.

Curtis carried some of the cubs on his tail, coiling protectively around them. Winston supported Kritika herself, his powerful frame steady beneath her as she nestled into his warmth. Harvey carried the prepared supplies – green crystals, furs, herbs, and the carefully packed foods Kritika had stockpiled. Shuu and the dragon brothers moved silently alongside, scouting the path and ensuring no obstacles threatened the family.

The journey was arduous. Rocky terrain, hidden crevices, and winding forest paths made the trek difficult – but the invisible aura allowed them to move without alerting any nearby beasts. Birds took flight at distant sounds, but no one saw the group gliding across the forest like shadows. Kritika's heart swelled at the sight of her mates working in perfect harmony.

Kritika (thinking): Perfect... my family, safe and sound. Soon, our home will be ready, and my dragons... my little fireballs... will be mine.

Hours passed. The forest gradually thinned, replaced by the jagged slopes of the Light Mountain. The peak glowed faintly under the rising sun, as if welcoming them. Sulphur's keen eyes had already marked the exact location where the cave would serve as their hidden sanctuary.

Finally, they reached the mouth of the cave. The Light Mountain's cave was massive, naturally fortified with high ceilings, hidden chambers, and a central hearth. Sulphur and Shuu had worked tirelessly at night, setting up beds, fire points, and storage areas. It was safe, warm, and spacious enough for the entire family and the cubs.

Kritika stepped forward, feeling the pulse of the mountain beneath her feet. She smiled, brushing her hand over the smooth stone walls.

Kritika: "This... this is perfect. Our home."

Curtis coiled around her protectively, Winston nuzzled her neck, and Harvey placed a comforting hand on her shoulder. Sulphur and Rhae lingered just behind, their eyes dark with desire and anticipation, sensing what was coming next.

Kritika: "Tonight... I claim my dragon mates," she murmured softly, more to herself than anyone else. The cubs will be safe, my family is protected, and my little fireballs will be mine.

The cubs chirped softly in their hidden nooks, unaware of the grand plan their mother had orchestrated. Kritika's smile widened as she glanced at each mate—human, beast, and dragon alike. Every piece of the puzzle was in place.

Kritika (thinking): Once the sun sets... our family will truly be complete.

The mountain hummed with life and magic, anticipating the next chapter—the claiming of her dragon mates and the forging of a family stronger than anyone in the beast world had ever seen.

The dragon village awoke the next morning to an eerie silence. The bustling chatter, the clattering of claws on stone, and the low hum of dragon wings were all gone. In the cave where Kritika and her

family had stayed just the night before, there was only one thing left—a glowing ruby stone, pulsing faintly with protective energy.

The elders gathered around, eyes wide in shock.

Elder Dragon: “What... what happened here? They were right here last night!”

They could find no footprints, no sign of struggle—nothing but the radiant gem lying in the center of the cave. Its warmth and faint glow radiated reassurance.

The oldest among them, a silver-scaled dragon with eyes like molten gold, bent down to touch it. The energy from the ruby seemed to speak without words, telling them everything: that the family was safe, hidden, and protected by forces far beyond the village’s comprehension.

The ancient dragon smiled knowingly.

Elder Dragon: “She is remarkable... She is safe, and she will keep her family protected at any cost.”

The other dragons murmured in awe. The story of this mysterious female, her mates, and the rare cubs she had birthed would spread through the village like wildfire. Yet none could follow, none could challenge her—she had vanished like a shadow, leaving only a token of her power and promise behind.

Even as the villagers speculated and whispered, the ruby’s faint pulse was a silent message: Do not disturb. She watches, she protects, and she is untouchable.

And somewhere far away, atop the Light Mountain, Kritika smiled in her secret sanctuary, surrounded by her mates and cubs, knowing her family was finally truly safe.

The Light Mountain loomed above them, its slopes bathed in the soft glow of the morning sun. Kritika could feel the faint hum of energy radiating from the peak—magical, protective, and alive. Her

family moved silently, each mate carrying their part of the supplies, the cubs nestled safely within Curtis' coils or Winston's protective arms.

Kritika (thinking): Perfect... our home, finally.

The cave Sulphur and Shuu had prepared was massive. Natural stone walls curved inward to create hidden chambers, the ceiling high enough to allow the dragons to stretch their wings if needed. Inside, Shuu had placed rugs and low seating made from furs, and Sulphur had carefully arranged fire points and storage for the supplies Harvey had packed.

Kritika's eyes glinted with satisfaction. She walked to the center of the main chamber and ran her hand along the smooth stone walls. Every corner, every nook had been thoughtfully designed to protect the family, keep the cubs safe, and provide comfort for her mates.

Curtis coiled protectively around the cubs near the cave entrance, his tail flicking as he monitored the surroundings. Winston nuzzled Kritika's neck, his warmth grounding her, while Harvey checked the supplies, humming softly in contentment.

Kritika took a deep breath, feeling the mountain's energy pulse through her.

Kritika: "Tonight... my dragons will be mine. Sulphur, Rhae my little fireballs. And once that's done, our family will be complete."

Her cubs stirred slightly, sensing the anticipation, while her other mates instinctively moved closer, forming a protective barrier around her. Every step of the journey had led to this moment: a hidden sanctuary, a family united, and the dragons she intended to claim.

Kritika (thinking with a mischievous smile): The Light Mountain... our perfect fortress. And tonight, magic will flow through our family like never before.

The mountain hummed quietly around them, the calm before the storm of passion and power that Kritika had meticulously planned. In the shadows of the cave, her eyes sparkled with anticipation as she began preparing mentally for what was to come—the claiming of her dragon mates and the deepening of her bond with every member of her extraordinary family.

CHAPTER 34

The Light Mountain was more than just a sanctuary—it was alive. Hidden in the shadows of the towering cliffs, a presence stirred. Silent, patient, and powerful. Kritika had unknowingly triggered an ancient safeguard when she requested her AI to make the mountain impenetrable: no one could enter or leave without her permission, and no trace of her family could be followed.

From the darkness of a hidden alcove, a figure observed. Eyes glinting like polished obsidian, muscles coiled and ready, this guardian of the mountain had sensed the arrival of something extraordinary. Most intruders were ignored, but this female...

Protector (thinking): She is unlike any I have seen. Powerful. Clever. Dangerous... yet...

The guardian tilted their head, curiosity mingling with intrigue. Kritika's aura was unlike any ordinary human—or beast—on this world. It rippled with energy, dominance, and a rare kind of seduction that commanded respect without a word. The guardian could feel the subtle pulses of her magic, her influence already shaping the mountain's defenses and harmonizing with the cubs' latent energy.

Kritika, unaware of the silent watcher, smiled to herself as she walked through the cave, planning her next steps. Every detail had been accounted for: the cubs' safety, her mates' comfort, and the dragons she was about to claim. Her AI whispered suggestions, but she barely needed it—her instincts were sharper than any ordinary beast.

Kritika (thinking): By tonight, everything will fall into place. My family, my dragons... everything.

The protector remained in the shadows, intrigued and cautious. No movement, no sound betrayed their presence. They would only intervene if absolutely necessary—otherwise, they would simply watch. For now, the mountain had chosen to observe this remarkable female and her extraordinary plans.

And Kritika, smiling quietly, remained blissfully unaware that she was already being watched by an entity as ancient and cunning as the mountain itself.

Kritika sat cross-legged on the soft grass, the golden light of the setting sun wrapping her in warmth. Around her, the cubs—her own and the ones she'd rescued—gathered in a half-circle, their tiny tails flicking, their paws clapping, their laughter echoing through the mountainside.

The cows grazed lazily nearby, their calm presence adding a sense of peace to the scene. Kritika held a handful of fresh hay, smiling as one cow nudged her gently, demanding attention.

“Patience, my lady,” Kritika teased softly, stroking the creature’s nose. “You’ll get your share. See, this is how you charm someone—soft eyes, gentle steps, and a smile. Works every time.”

The cubs tried to imitate her expression, their faces scrunching into adorably serious looks. One little tiger cub puffed her chest out proudly, another wolf cub wagged her tail excitedly, and even the rescued leopard cub tilted its head, copying Kritika’s graceful smile.

Kritika laughed—bright, free, and full of love. “Perfect! You’re all naturals! Soon, everyone you meet will be hopelessly in love with you.”

From the shadows above the ridge, the hidden guardian watched. The faintest trace of a smile touched their lips.

She's not just beautiful, the guardian thought. She's radiant.
Her energy heals even the coldest air of this mountain.

They leaned slightly forward, eyes softening as they saw Kritika gather the cubs in her arms, nuzzling them gently. The tenderness in her movements, the joy in her laughter – it stirred something in the guardian's chest that had long been dormant.

The wind picked up, swirling leaves and petals around her. Kritika's hair fluttered like a dark waterfall, her laughter rising with the breeze. For a moment, even the mountain seemed to hum in rhythm with her joy.

The guardian whispered to the silent air,

"You are not just a traveller, little one. You are a heartbeat this world forgot it needed."

Kritika, sensing a faint warmth in the air, paused for a moment and looked up toward the cliffs.

"Strange..." she murmured. "It feels like someone's blessing me."

She smiled faintly and went back to teaching her cubs how to blow kisses and bow like tiny royals – unaware that the ancient protector watching her from afar had already begun to fall under her gentle, irresistible spell.

The night on Light Mountain was quiet – almost sacred. The winds that brushed through the glowing trees carried a sense of change, as if the entire mountain knew what was about to happen.

Kritika stood barefoot on the warm earth, her long hair flowing with the breeze, her aura glowing faintly golden. The faint hum of her power made even the dragons in their hidden forms stir restlessly.

From above, two great shadows descended – Sulphur and Rhae. Their wings unfurled against the starlit sky before they landed

softly near the glowing stream that wound through the mountain. Their eyes burned brighter than the fireflies around them.

Kritika turned, her lips curving into a teasing smile.

“You two took your time, my fireballs.”

Sulphur smirked. “We wanted to see if you’d call us first.”

Rhae’s voice was deeper, smoother. “And you did.”

Her laughter was soft, wrapping around them like music. She stepped closer until both dragons felt her warmth — that gentle yet commanding pull only she had.

Kritika reached out, resting a palm on each of their chests.

“You’ve already become part of my life,” she said softly.

“Now it’s time to bind you to me — as mates, not just protectors.”

The dragons exchanged a glance. Sulphur’s voice wavered with restrained emotion. “Are you sure, Kritika? Once bonded, you’ll share our flame — our souls.”

“Then let’s burn together,” she whispered.

The mountain responded instantly. The earth trembled, winds spun in circles, and the air thickened with raw magic. Kritika’s markings shimmered across her skin — golden, bright, pulsing.

Sulphur lowered his head, pressing his forehead to hers. The heat between them flared, golden-red flames swirling around their joined forms, marking them with ancient dragon fire.

Rhae moved behind her, wrapping his arms around her waist, his breath warm against her ear.

“You are not afraid,” he murmured.

“Why should I be?” she replied softly. “Even fire bows before love.”

As her words left her lips, the bond sealed — three lights rose into the sky, gold, crimson, and silver, merging into one brilliant beam that shot through the clouds. The dragons' scales glowed faintly beneath their skin, and the mark of the dragon appeared on Kritika's shoulder, gleaming like molten sunlight.

Sulphur touched her cheek, awe flooding his features.

"You're glowing like the dawn."

"That's because I've accepted my fire," she said.

Rhae's deep voice followed, filled with reverence.

"Then from this night, your fire is ours, and ours is yours."

Kritika smiled — soft, radiant, and utterly untamed.

"Welcome to the family, my dragons."

The night wind howled in approval. Light Mountain shimmered brighter than ever, as though the stars themselves bent low to witness the union — of power, flame, and heart.



THE DRAGON BROTHERS – SULPHUR & RHAE

Sulphur – The Flame of Dawn

Sulphur, the elder of the two, carried the fire of the first sunrise in his veins. His dragon form shimmered with molten gold and deep crimson scales, like embers caught in motion. When he breathed, the air tasted faintly of smoke and warmth – comforting yet commanding.

In his human form, Sulphur's beauty was arresting. His hair, black with glints of copper, looked as if flames had been trapped in his strands. His eyes – obsidian ringed with gold – held both calm and chaos, a reflection of his dual nature.

He was the embodiment of balance: fierce in battle, yet protective to the point of obsession toward those he loved.

Sulphur was a leader by heart. His presence alone could still storms. He rarely spoke more than necessary, but when he did, his voice rolled like distant thunder – low, deep, and magnetic. He carried himself like a king who needed no crown, and even Kritika could sense that the fire obeyed him naturally.

When he smiled – truly smiled – it wasn't gentle. It was devastatingly beautiful, a sight capable of melting even the hardest ice. But only Kritika had ever seen that side of him – the warmth behind the inferno.



Rhae – The Shadow of Flame

Rhae, the younger brother, was his opposite in every way – quieter, colder, and far more unpredictable. Where Sulphur's fire glowed, Rhae's burned black-blue – hotter, rarer, dangerous enough to turn stone into vapor.

His dragon scales were darker – deep sapphire laced with streaks of silver. When moonlight touched him, he shimmered like starlight scattered across a night sky. In his human form, Rhae was impossibly graceful, with hair silver as liquid moon and eyes the color of storm clouds before lightning.

He was a watcher, a thinker, and a silent protector. Where Sulphur commanded attention, Rhae dissolved into the background – unseen until he wanted to be seen. Yet when he chose to act, his strength was merciless. His enemies said his flames were so hot they made even fire scream.

But with Kritika, Rhae's sharpness softened. Her laughter could disarm his guarded soul. Her touch drew out the warmth buried beneath his cool exterior. To her, he wasn't the shadow – he was the calm before dawn, the quiet promise that fire can also heal.



The first rays of dawn touched the glowing cliffs of Light Mountain, painting the stone walls in gold and amber. The air smelled faintly of smoke, flowers, and new beginnings.

Kritika stirred under the warm furs, her body heavy with exhaustion, her skin still faintly shimmering from the dragon fire that had marked her the night before. A soft groan escaped her lips as she tried to move — and instead found herself tightly wrapped in the strong arms of Rhae.

His chest rumbled with a low, sleepy hum.

“You move, little flame, and I’ll think you’re trying to start another fire.”

Kritika giggled, voice husky.

“You dragons and your heat... I can’t even lift my head without feeling cooked.”

Sulphur, sprawled nearby, turned his head lazily, eyes half open.

“You weren’t complaining when you were the one setting us on fire, mate.”

She blushed and buried her face against Rhae’s chest, muttering,

“You two talk too much for males who should be sleeping.”

Rhae chuckled and tucked her closer, his tail lazily wrapping around her ankle — a possessive gesture he had picked up from Curtis.

“Sleep, Kritika. Your body needs rest. You carry more power now than before.”

Her fingers traced the faint scales at his collarbone, curiosity gleaming in her half-closed eyes.

“It feels different,” she murmured. “The bond. Like a fire humming under my skin.”

Sulphur reached out, brushing a strand of hair from her face. His tone was softer now, reverent.

“That’s the mark of our soul flame. You share the essence of dragons now. You’ll never be cold again.”

Kritika smiled faintly, exhaustion melting into comfort.

“Good. Because I’m too tired to fight the chill or your teasing.”

The dragons exchanged a fond look. Sulphur stretched his wings lazily before tucking them in again, while Rhae adjusted her position so she rested against his heart.

Outside the cave, faint noises of life stirred – Harvey’s careful footsteps, Winston’s deep growl as he organized the cubs, Curtis scolding a wolf cub for chewing his tail.

When they peeked in, all four froze.

Kritika was curled up peacefully in Rhae’s embrace, Sulphur resting nearby – a picture of contentment and quiet strength. The faint golden light from her shoulder marks illuminated the dragons’ sleeping faces.

Curtis crossed his arms, whispering with mock annoyance,

“She’s collecting mates faster than we can count.”

Winston smirked. “And yet, she looks happiest now.”

Harvey smiled softly, his voice gentle.

“She’s safe... that’s all that matters.”

Kritika mumbled in her sleep, tightening her hold around Rhae.

“Mmm... no fighting, my boys. Be good... or I’ll ground all of you.”

The cave erupted in quiet laughter. Even the cubs giggled, not understanding the words but sensing the warmth.

As the sun fully rose, its light filled the den — warm, golden, and alive. Kritika, her mates, and their cubs were together again, their hearts bound by more than fate — by choice, by love, and by fire itself.

CHAPTER 35

The Light Mountain morning was already sweltering. The sun had climbed high enough to warm the stones, and Kritika could feel it pressing against her skin even inside the cave. She groaned softly, fanning herself with a hand.

Curtis, lying near the entrance in his serpentine form, hissed softly at her touch as she lowered herself onto his cool scales. The temperature contrast made her shiver in relief.

“Ah... Curtis, you’re freezing but perfect,” she murmured, pressing against him. “I swear, this heat is killing me today.”

Curtis’s tail wrapped lightly around her waist — a possessive yet gentle grip. His eyes glimmered with a mix of irritation and affection.

“Hot, huh? Maybe you should stop teasing me with your... ways last night.”

Kritika rolled her eyes, laughing softly.

“I was just trying to survive the heat... and you know, stay entertained.”

Harvey peeked in from the edge of the cave, carrying a bowl of freshly prepared porridge for her.

“Little flame, you need food. And water. And... maybe fewer laps on dragons’ scales.” He winked teasingly.

Rhae and Sulphur stirred nearby, stretching lazily. Rhae’s hand reached out instinctively, brushing against her shoulder where the

dragon bond still pulsed warmly. Sulphur's tail flicked curiously, nudging a cub who had tried to climb onto his back.

The cubs erupted in playful squeals, scrambling over their dragon uncles, Curtis's tail, and each other. Kritika giggled, feeling the chaotic warmth of her family – the cubs' tiny claws tickling her arms, the dragons' protective presence enveloping her, and the heat from the sun and Curtis's cool scales blending into a strange but perfect comfort.

"You all are insane," she muttered with a grin, nibbling on a piece of bread Harvey offered. "But... I love it."

Curtis coiled a little tighter around her, murmuring possessively,

"Don't forget... I'm yours, little flame. And don't even think about running off."

Kritika laughed, pressing her forehead against his cold scales.

"And I'm yours... but right now, I just need some cold and calm before breakfast chaos takes over."

Outside the den, the sun continued to rise. Light Mountain's stones gleamed golden, the cubs played in the shadows, and Kritika, surrounded by her mates and her family, felt the rarest peace – the kind that comes from knowing you are completely, unapologetically at home.

The next few days on Light Mountain were merciless. The sun blazed down, and Kritika's body felt like it was on fire. Even Curtis's cold scales couldn't fully counteract the overwhelming heat. She sat panting, trying to cool herself with her hands and the occasional dip in the stream, but her exhaustion only grew.

Her mates exchanged worried glances. Harvey's hands hovered near her shoulders, checking her pulse. Winston's tail flicked nervously, while Curtis coiled tighter around her waist. Sulphur and Rhae exchanged tense looks, aware this was no ordinary heat.



Suddenly, from the shadowed cliffs, a figure emerged — tall, imposing, his fur shimmering like frost. His eyes were icy blue, and his presence radiated cold. The mountain guardian, an Ice Wolf beast-man, stepped forward silently.

“Step aside,” he commanded, his voice calm but filled with authority. “She is beyond what you can handle now.”

Before anyone could protest, the guardian raised his hands, and a wave of frosty magic swept over Kritika. She gasped, then slumped unconscious into Curtis’s waiting arms. The guardian gently laid her down on a soft bed of snow and moss he had summoned, his magic forming a protective dome around her.

A small, glowing mark appeared on the center of her forehead — a sigil pulsing with cool energy. Curtis hissed in concern.

“What... what did you do to her?”

The guardian’s icy gaze met the mates.

“I gave her a channeling mark. She cannot survive this heat alone. She carries too much energy — the heat from the fire dragons she mated with, combined with her natural aura. She is burning from within, unable to release it safely. This mark will stabilize her until she can learn to channel properly.”

Harvey stepped closer, kneeling beside her.

“She mated with the fire dragons recently... That increased her energy beyond normal limits?”

The guardian nodded.

“Yes. The bond amplified her power, but without training or focus, it becomes destructive to her own body. This is why she has been struggling these past days. Now she will rest and recover, and the mark will protect her. Only she

can learn to harmonize this energy — but it will take guidance.”

Curtis’s tail coiled tightly around her, a protective gesture.

“So she’s... burning herself up?” he growled softly.

The ice fox eyes softened slightly.

“Not burning herself, but burning without a release. Her power is immense — it is a gift, but also a danger if uncontrolled. The dragons awakened more than just passion in her... they awakened potential that she cannot yet contain.”

Kritika’s mates exchanged worried glances, realizing the true weight of her strength. Yet even in her unconscious state, her aura radiated warmth, determination, and a strange beauty that made all of them silently vow: they would protect her, no matter what.

The guardian finally spoke directly to the mates:

“Do not fear for her life. Let her rest. Once she awakens, she will need training to channel the energy safely. Until then, none may disturb her — not even the dragons she bonded with.”

Curtis, Winston, Harvey, Sulphur, and Rhae all nodded, their protectiveness intensifying. Around them, the mountain’s natural chill seemed to hum in harmony with Kritika’s slumbering power, stabilizing the dangerous heat that had threatened her just hours before.

Kritika, marked and resting, remained at the heart of a protective circle — her mates surrounding her, the guardian watching, and the mountain itself bending to shelter her. For the first time in days, there was calm.

Kritika’s eyes fluttered open, and she found herself surrounded by a soft, golden light. She wasn’t in her cave anymore — she was

floating on a cloud that shimmered like liquid silver under a sun that felt warmer than any she had ever known.

A figure approached, radiant and ethereal, with eyes like molten gold and hair flowing like sunlight through water. Kritika's heart skipped a beat.

"Kriya... my daughter," the being said softly, her voice like wind through leaves. "You have awakened."

Kritika instinctively rose, feeling a calm she hadn't felt in years. The figure's presence was gentle, yet infinitely powerful. She realized this was the Beast Goddess — the guardian of the world she now lived in.

"I... I am Kritika," she whispered, unsure how to explain everything that had happened.

The goddess smiled, kneeling to sit across from her on the cloud. She extended her arms, and Kritika felt herself pulled into a warm, protective hug. Every worry, every exhaustion melted away.

"No, my daughter. You are more than Kritika now. You are Kriya — your soul is ancient, born from the essence of the Beast World itself. This world... your creation... your gift. And now, it is your duty to guide it, to nurture it, and protect it."

Kritika pulled back slightly, looking into the goddess's glowing eyes.

"Me? But... I'm just... human... well, I mean, half human, half—"

The goddess chuckled, the sound like a cascade of bells in the sky.

"Your form is but a vessel. Your soul, your essence, has existed since the world's beginning. I chose to manifest you here to guide the beasts, to protect the delicate balance of

this realm. And you, my daughter, carry the legacy of everything this world needs.”

Kritika felt a rush of emotion — pride, awe, and a bit of fear. She wrapped her arms around herself.

“How... how do I even begin?” she asked, her voice trembling.

The goddess smiled warmly, placing her hands over Kritika’s.

“Like this. Sit with me. Talk with me. Learn from me. Play with me. Eat with me. These are the first lessons. The world is not just survival, Kriya. It is joy, it is care, it is love. You will learn to guide it, but first... you must know yourself.”

For hours — or perhaps days, time felt strange here — Kritika and the goddess laughed, talked, and shared stories. She learned secrets of the world, of the beasts, of the energy that flowed through her. She felt the warmth of love and power intertwining, and realized that her cubs, her mates, and her life in the mountains were just the beginning of something far greater.

The goddess leaned back, eyes glimmering like starlight.

“Remember, Kriya, you are not alone. I am always here. Your mates, your cubs, your allies... all are extensions of your will. But your choices will shape the future of this world. Protect it wisely, daughter.”

Kritika nodded, feeling her chest fill with purpose. She leaned back, letting the cloud carry her gently as she processed the enormity of her destiny. She was no longer just Kritika Marrero — she was Kriya, the daughter of the Beast Goddess, destined to protect and guide the world she had come to love.

And with that thought, she closed her eyes, savoring the warmth of her goddess’s embrace, ready for what was to come.

CHAPTER 37

Kritika slowly opened her eyes, blinking against the soft light filtering through the cave's entrance. The first thing she noticed was the warmth of her mates around her — Curtis's protective coil, Winston and Harvey curled near her sides, Shuu guarding from a distance, and the two dragons, Sulphur and Rhae, leaning in curiously.

Her breath caught in her throat as she realized something incredible. She had slept three full moons straight. Three moons of deep, divine rest that had allowed her body to grow stronger, her soul to awaken fully... and her belly had changed. She placed a hand on it gently, feeling the soft stirrings of new life.

“Oh... my little cubs...” she whispered, a mix of awe and love washing over her.

Her thoughts raced. She was now carrying the cubs of the dragon brothers, Sulphur and Rhae, in addition to the ones she had already borne with her original mates. Her heartbeat quickened, and she could feel the faint but potent pulse of their elemental energy within her.

As she shifted slightly, each of her mates stirred, their eyes widening with emotion.

Curtis's tail tightened possessively around her waist.

Winston's large hands cradled her sides, lips trembling.

Harvey whispered her name, a mixture of worry and awe.

Shuu's eyes glimmered with pride and happiness.

Even Sulphur and Rhae exchanged glances, realizing something monumental had changed.

Tears welled up in the eyes of her mates. Some quietly wept, overwhelmed by the magnitude of her gift and the life growing inside her.

Kritika smiled softly, brushing her hand across Curtis's scales and Winston's fur.

"It's okay... I'm okay. All of you..." she murmured, her voice soothing yet strong.

But a secret weighed on her — none of her mates knew her true identity as the goddess Kriya. They saw her as Kritika, their beloved mate, their cubs' mother. They did not yet understand that the divine energy she now radiated was ancient, tied to the very essence of the Beast World itself.

Kritika placed a hand over her forehead, feeling the faint pulse of the mark left by the mountain guardian. It now hummed softly with her own awakened power, a subtle reminder of the goddess she truly was.

"I must guide them... protect them... and keep this secret... until the right time," she thought.

Her gaze swept over all her mates. They were hers, bound by love, loyalty, and now divine destiny. She smiled, letting a small, mischievous thought flit through her mind.

Let them cry, let them marvel... but one day, they will know who I truly am.

Kritika leaned back, the warmth of her mates surrounding her, the cubs stirring gently within her, and for the first time since arriving in this world, she felt complete, powerful, and ready for the responsibilities of both mother and goddess.

The Beast World awaited, and Kriya – Kritika – was ready to embrace her destiny.

Kritika's eyes glimmered with mischief as she raised her hand. "Who saved me? Can you bring him here?" she asked softly, her voice calm but commanding.

Immediately, her mates stirred, watching her with awe. Curtis shifted his scales protectively, Winston's hands rested on her shoulders, Harvey's eyes widened in admiration, and Shuu's ears twitched with curiosity. Even Sulphur and Rhae glanced at her, sensing a surge of power radiating from her.



A golden light shimmered at the edge of the mountain, and from it emerged a majestic figure. At first, it was the form of a massive wolf — pure, silver-furred, eyes like molten starlight — moving gracefully across the terrain. Then, in a dazzling transformation, the figure shifted, growing taller, ethereal, almost divine. His form radiated warmth and power, the aura of a god manifesting in flesh.

Kritika's lips curved into a sly smile. "I would be lucky to accept you as my mate... God of Light," she said, her eyes sparkling with playful challenge.

The figure's golden eyes softened, and a voice resonated directly in her mind. It was deep, melodious, playful, almost teasing.

Light Guardian: "Mate? Are you sure? You've only just woken, little Kriya. You're always so full of surprises."

Kritika: "Of course! And don't think I will go easy on you. I've been through dragons, snakes, leopards, and all my other mates. You think I can't handle a god?" she retorted, her tone teasing but filled with genuine challenge.

The two exchanged thoughts directly, their minds linked like mischievous children fighting over sweets.

Light Guardian: "Hmm... I see. Bold, clever, and utterly irresistible. But... can you keep up with me?"

Kritika: "Ha! You'll see soon enough. I never back down. And besides..." She leaned closer, her mind projecting confidence, allure, and amusement all at once. "...I have my little army with me. You'll have to impress them as well."

Her mates watched silently, their expressions a mixture of pride and astonishment. Curtis's tail wrapped tighter around her, Winston's hand rested protectively on her back, Harvey's arms ached to touch her, and even Sulphur and Rhae tilted their heads in

fascination. None of them could deny the power and charm radiating from Kritika.

The Light Guardian chuckled, a sound like wind through crystal trees. "Very well, little one. I accept your challenge... but only if you promise to be fair and kind."

Kritika: "Fair and kind? That's my specialty," she said with a smirk, playfully flicking a finger of energy toward him, which he caught effortlessly.

The mountain air shimmered, the cloud of divine energy swirling gently around her. Kritika felt her heartbeat quicken, the merging of playful flirtation and latent power filling her. The light from the guardian intertwined with her aura, brushing against her mates' energy like a warm breeze, yet her identity as Kriya remained hidden, shielded by her mind-link.

The playful battle of wits and energy continued, laughter and teasing echoing across the mountain. Even in the presence of a god, Kritika held her ground, commanding respect, admiration, and affection from everyone around her.

This is only the beginning, she thought, her gaze twinkling. Let them all see what I, Kriya, can truly do.

The curious cubs, sensing something unlike anything they had ever felt before, padded cautiously toward the Light Guardian. Their tiny noses twitched as they sniffed the radiant aura surrounding him. Then, as if encouraged by some invisible signal, they dashed forward with abandon—mauling, growling, and yipping in their own playful languages.

The Light Guardian laughed, a sound like sunlight scattering over water, gentle yet powerful. His hands moved gracefully, weaving small, harmless magic tricks—sparkling lights, floating motes, and gentle gusts of warm air—that made the cubs squeal in delight and bounce around like a flurry of autumn leaves. Kritika giggled,

watching the magical play, while her mates exchanged astonished looks. Curtis growled softly, possessive but intrigued; Winston's hand rested protectively on her shoulder, and Harvey's eyes widened in awe.

Finally, Harvey broke the silence, curiosity lacing his voice. "Wait... are you really a god?"

The Light Guardian's gaze softened, turning toward her mate. "Harvey, the truth is simple," he said, his voice warm yet commanding. "Kritika is my soul mate. Long before this world was built, before the gods created this place, I was waiting for her. She is my destiny... my only mate, here in the beast world and beyond—even in heaven."

The cubs paused mid-leap, sniffing him again, sensing the depth of his connection to Kritika. Sulphur and Rhae looked on, stunned, their jaws practically dropping at the revelation. Winston and Curtis tightened their hold around her, protective yet fascinated, realizing the scale of power and destiny surrounding Kritika.

Kritika's cheeks flushed, a mix of pride, love, and mischief dancing in her eyes. "Oh, my Light," she whispered, "I suppose I should have expected nothing less from my destiny."

The guardian bowed his head slightly, a gesture both playful and reverent. Around them, the mountain seemed to hum with quiet energy, the cubs yipping and prancing like tiny sparks of joy, perfectly in tune with the divine presence that now shared their home.

This... this is going to be fun, Kritika thought, her mind buzzing with anticipation. My family, my mates, and now... my god. Let the games of love, loyalty, and power begin.

The mountain air shimmered faintly, as if blessing the bond of mates, cubs, and the goddess-in-training, all in one heartbeat of destiny.

The morning sun filtered through the dense canopy of the mountain, casting playful shadows across the mossy forest floor. Kritika sat cross-legged beneath a wide, ancient tree, her eyes closed, breathing slowly. Around her, the air seemed to hum with quiet energy, responding to the divine presence seated beside her: the Light Guardian.

"You will not interact with anyone during this time," he instructed softly, his voice like a gentle wind weaving through leaves. "Focus only on your energy, your breath, and the flow of the mountain around you. Your soul is ancient, but your control is still young. Meditation is the first step."

Kritika obeyed, feeling the subtle shift of energy under his guidance. Slowly, she began sensing the life force in the surrounding plants, the flow of air, and the whisper of soil beneath her. The Guardian's hands hovered lightly over hers at times, guiding the release and containment of energy, showing her how to let it expand outward safely, and retract it before it became overwhelming.

After a few hours, he led her deeper into the woods. Kritika's curiosity itched, and naturally, Harvey and Shuu had followed quietly, their ears twitching and eyes wide with amazement. Harvey whispered, "How does he even know we're here?"

The Guardian smiled faintly without turning. "I have always known."

He continued his lessons, walking Kritika slowly among the native flora of the mountain. He taught her the uses and benefits of each plant: which leaves could heal, which roots could strengthen energy, which flowers could soothe pain, and which berries could

enhance focus. Kritika's mind raced with ideas—culinary, medicinal, and magical applications all at once.

"You must understand the land before you command it," he explained. "Your strength will grow from understanding life, not just forcing it to bend."

Once the botanical lessons ended, he moved on to defensive techniques. Kritika felt the sudden rush of power as he demonstrated a shield—a glowing, semi-transparent barrier that shimmered with his divine energy. "In emergencies," he said, "you will not always have time to think. This is your first line of defense. Feel the energy of your body, your mates, and your cubs. Draw it into a shape that protects all of you."

Kritika mirrored his gestures, feeling her own aura flare with raw potential. The Guardian's eyes softened with approval. "And now, attacks. You must learn to strike without harm to yourself or those you love. Precision, control, and timing are everything. Your energy must flow outward, then return harmlessly to you."

Hours passed. Kritika's body burned with effort, her mind expanding with new awareness, yet she felt exhilarated—alive in a way she had never imagined. Harvey and Shuu kept their distance, awed by the intensity of the training. Even Curtis, Winston, Sulphur, and Rhae observed from afar, sensing the surge of divine energy from the mountain itself.

By the time the sun began to dip toward the horizon, Kritika had mastered the basic control of her powers: meditation, energy regulation, plant knowledge, defensive shields, and controlled offensive strikes.

The Light Guardian looked down at her, a faint smile on his face. "You are ready to grow, Kriya. But remember, power without restraint is dangerous—even to those you love. Every step from here will test your heart as much as your soul."

Kritika opened her eyes, determination sparkling in them. “Then let every test come. I am ready – for my mates, my cubs, and for this world.”

Around them, the mountain seemed to sigh in approval, the leaves whispering, the air shimmering faintly with the promise of new beginnings.

CHAPTER 38

Far away from the peace of the Light Mountain, deep within the blackened forest where even moonlight feared to touch the ground, the King of Ferals stirred.

His massive claws drummed against the armrest of a throne made from bones and hardened obsidian. The air around him stank of decay and power – wild, chaotic, uncontrollable.

Before him knelt a trembling scout, half-man, half-beast, his fur matted with blood and dirt.

“Speak,” the King growled, his voice deep enough to make the cavern tremble. His crimson eyes glowed faintly, slitting like a serpent’s.

The scout dared to look up only once. “My lord... there is a female... they call her Kritika. She has given birth to nine cubs – five females, three males, and two snake eggs still hatching. All born healthy... all from different beast lines.”

The King stilled. His breath became heavy, the silence dangerous.

“Impossible,” he rumbled finally. “A female bearing that many cubs... of mixed bloodlines... without dying?”

The scout nodded rapidly. “It is said she mated with leopards, wolves, tigers, serpents... and even dragons, my lord. She lives on the Light Mountain now. Hidden. Protected.”

The King rose to his full height – easily thrice that of an ordinary beastman. His shadow spread like living smoke, twisting and snarling around him.

“So... she exists.” He turned to his council of feral generals — hulking beasts with teeth like daggers and eyes glowing in hunger. “The Traveler. The one the prophecies whispered about before the Great Silence. A female who would unite species under her scent.”

His lips curled back in a cruel grin. “And she hides behind dragons and weaklings.”

One of his generals spoke, cautiously. “My King, the Light Mountain is not easily breached. Its guardian is the Wolf of Ice — even we dare not challenge him.”

The King laughed — low, dark, and bitter. “Then we do not challenge the wolf. We burn what he protects.”

The room filled with growls of approval.

He turned, staring into the dark flames of his brazier, where a shadowy form took shape — the image of Kritika, sleeping peacefully, her cubs around her. The reflection shimmered, almost as though she could sense him watching.

“Such calm,” he whispered, tracing a claw through the image. “Such power... hidden beneath that softness.”

His tone hardened. “Find her scent. Send my hounds. Let the feral winds carry my mark toward her mountain. If she truly carries the blood that can save this world, then she belongs to me — the King of Ferals.”

Outside, the winds howled — not natural, not gentle. The very forest seemed to rise, beasts stirring in their dens as the dark energy of their king pulsed outward.

Far above, in the serene Light Mountain, Aki suddenly flickered to life beside Kritika’s slumbering form.

⚠ Alert: “Kritika — energy disturbance detected. Feral aura expanding from the southern forests. Estimated time before it reaches the valley: three days.”

Kritika's eyes snapped open — sharp, calm, and glowing faintly with divine gold.

“So,” she whispered, her voice steady. “He finally found me.”

The night sky burned red. Clouds rolled in like furious beasts, and the howls of the ferals echoed across the valley. The King of Ferals stood at the edge of the southern cliffs, glaring toward the distant glow of the Light Mountain — that shimmering fortress of divine peace.

“March,” he snarled. “Tear through the forests, scale the cliffs, and bring me the female alive!”

Hundreds of feral soldiers roared in unison, their claws scraping against stone, their eyes wild with hunger and madness. They stormed forward, trampling trees, ripping through underbrush as they charged toward the sacred mountain.

But the moment the first feral paw touched the mountain's base — everything changed.

The air thickened. The soil trembled. A sound like a heartbeat pulsed through the entire range. Then came the light — not soft or warm, but brilliant and merciless.

An invisible force slammed into the charging army. Ferals screamed as the ground beneath them glowed with golden veins of energy. One by one, they froze mid-leap — their bodies suspended in blinding light before shattering into pure dust.

“What—what is this?!” roared one of the generals, slashing wildly at the air. His claws met nothing. His body turned white-hot — and in the next breath, he was gone.

The King of Ferals stepped back, eyes widening as the mountain began to hum — a deep, celestial resonance that made even his black heart skip.

From the peaks, rivers of light cascaded downward like molten gold, wrapping around the mountain like a living barrier. The forest below shook, trees bending to their roots as if bowing to the divine presence.

The King growled, his muscles tightening. "This... is not normal energy. It's not beast magic."

A sudden voice — calm, deep, and powerful — rolled across the mountains like thunder.

"This mountain is under divine protection. Any beast, mortal or feral, who steps beyond its shadow with malice shall perish."

The King flinched. His claws dug into the ground. "Who dares speak to me?!" he roared.

The wind itself answered him — cold and sharp as a blade.

"You are a fool to challenge what was built by the Goddess Kriya herself. Leave, before your soul turns to ash."

The ferals behind him whimpered, their bodies trembling. Several began to retreat instinctively, sensing the overwhelming energy of death crawling up their spines.

But the King — stubborn, proud — launched his power forward, a black wave of feral essence meant to shatter the divine field. It struck the barrier...

And disappeared.

In less than a blink, the darkness dissolved, consumed by the golden light. A shockwave threw him back into the trees, snapping trunks like twigs.

The King roared in rage and disbelief, smoke rising from his fur. "WHAT IS THIS POWER?! WHO DARES STAND BETWEEN ME AND MY DESTINY?!"

But the mountain said nothing more.

The divine glow pulsed once — then went still.

At the summit, where Kritika and her family rested, not a single leaf stirred. The cubs slept soundly. Aki flickered silently beside the sleeping female.

△ Update: “Energy source confirmed — divine signature matches yours, Kritika. The mountain has recognized you as its master. Intruders have been neutralized.”

High above, unseen even to the dragons, the Guardian Wolf stood atop a cliff, his silver eyes glowing faintly.

He smirked.

“A fool, indeed, to test a goddess on her own mountain.”

And in the distance, the King of Ferals limped back into the shadows — eyes burning, heart seething — now knowing the name of the power he had awakened.

“Kriya... the Mother of Beasts,” he hissed.

“You’ve made an enemy of the Ferals.”

Far away from the glowing serenity of the Light Mountain, in the heart of the Beast City, chaos of another kind brewed.

The great marble towers of Berth’s palace glittered beneath the moonlight — beautiful but cold, just like the man who ruled them. King Berth of the Ferals, scarred yet imposing, sat upon his throne of bones, his golden eyes narrowed in fury after his defeat at the mountain.

But now... a new temptation distracted him.

In front of him, standing by the cascading pool that fed into the underground ocean, was Mermaid Queen Qin — radiant, ethereal, her long aquamarine hair shimmering like moonlight on water. Her

tail glistened with emerald and sapphire scales, but her smile was sharper than coral.

Berth's growl softened as he looked at her. "You've kept me waiting, Queen of the Sea," he said, his voice deep, laced with frustration and want. "Tonight, I expected your answer."

Qin smiled faintly, swirling her tail as pearls scattered into the water. "You're a king," she purred, "but kings come and go. I have seen many rise and fall. What makes you worthy of a queen like me?"

Berth leaned forward on his throne, his aura dark and pulsing. "My strength. My bloodline. And my will to take what I desire."

She tilted her head, a teasing light in her eyes. "Hmm. You say that, and yet you were thrown back by a mountain that refused your entry. Tell me, Berth, what kind of king can't even conquer land?"

A low snarl escaped his throat. His claws dug into the armrest, cracking stone. "Watch your tongue, sea witch."

But Qin only laughed — a melodious, haunting sound. "Tch. You're amusing when you're angry."

Then, with lazy grace, she extended her hand, long nails glinting with sea-green light. "You want me? Prove you can keep me. Bring me what I desire — the Emerald of Souls, the one guarded by the dragons of the Light Mountain. Only then will I consider your proposal."

Berth's fury ignited again. "That mountain!" he growled. "It stole my men — erased them from existence!"

"Then take it back," she said simply, her tail flicking water droplets into the air. "If you want to claim me, you must defeat that power. Bring me that emerald, and I will be yours. Fail..." Her lips curved into a sly smile. "And perhaps I'll find another king who can."

Berth stood abruptly, his aura flaring. The guards stepped back as black energy rippled through the hall.

He stalked toward her, his voice low, dangerous. "Don't play games with me, Qin."

But the mermaid queen only smiled wider, her sea-green eyes glinting like blades. "Oh, but I always do, my king."

And with that, she dove into the water, her tail cutting through the moonlight like a blade of emerald fire. The sound of her laughter echoed across the chamber as she vanished into the depths.

Berth stared at the rippling surface for a long, tense moment. Then he turned toward the open balcony that overlooked the beastlands — his jaw tightening, his mind burning with vengeance and desire.

"The Light Mountain again..." he muttered darkly.

"If that's where the Emerald lies — and where she hides — then I'll crush both the goddess and her dragons to dust."

Unseen to him, faint golden sparks shimmered in the distant sky — Kritika's divine energy stretching across realms, sensing the rising malice.

Her protection spell pulsed gently in response, as if warning her:

"Another predator has taken interest in your light."

CHAPTER 40

The night over the Beast City was quiet, almost unnaturally so. Berth, the mighty ape king, paced restlessly in his private chambers. The events of the past days — the Light Mountain, the loss of the ferals, and the mysterious mermaid queen Qin — had twisted his thoughts into a knot of fury and confusion.

But then, a soft shimmer appeared in front of him — a single emerald, glowing with an inner light that pulsed like a heartbeat.

A voice, deep and commanding yet calm, resonated in his mind:

“Berth... consume this, and your path will become clear.”

Hesitant, Berth took the emerald. Its warmth spread through his palm and into his mouth as he swallowed it. At first, nothing happened. Then — the world shifted.

He saw it all, clearly. The manipulations of the feral king and the mermaid queen Qin — every scheme, every whisper, every plan meant to ensnare him or draw him into chaos. Every lie, every hidden hand... revealed. His mind cleared like a storm finally passing.

The emerald’s magic reshaped him physically too. His old, bald head filled with dark, glossy hair, his body regained youthful vigor and strength. He stood taller, broader, more imposing — yet sharper, more intelligent, as if the years of blindness had been peeled away in an instant.

The voice spoke again, firm but guiding:

“Your next task is clear. Court Kritika of the Light Mountain. But heed this: you cannot enter the mountain

without her permission. You must leave the city behind forever, for your past entanglements only delay what is promised to you. Patience, Berth. She chooses. She guides. Only then shall your path open fully."

Berth's golden eyes reflected the glowing emerald as it faded into dust in his palm. The weight of the command sank in, and for the first time in many cycles, his heart was calm.

He flexed his powerful arms and straightened his posture. The chaos, the fury, the manipulations — they were gone. Only clarity remained.

"Patience..." he murmured to himself. "I will wait. I will follow her rules... for her. For what comes next."

Outside the palace, the city of beasts slept unaware of the transformation of their king. Berth stepped onto the balcony, looking toward the distant Light Mountain. A faint golden glimmer seemed to beckon him, whispering promises of strength, destiny, and a future unlike anything he had ever imagined.

He whispered to the night sky:

"Kritika... I will reach you when the time is right. I will honor the order. And when I do... nothing will stand in my way."

The emerald's glow had vanished, but its gift remained — a king reborn, guided, and patient, waiting for the moment when his path would cross with the goddess-born female who held the balance of the beast world in her hands.

The morning sun bathed the Beast City in a golden glow as Berth strode into the central council hall. The chamber, usually echoing with chatter and scheming, fell completely silent. Whispers erupted instantly as everyone noticed the dramatic transformation of the ape king.

Gone was the old, worn figure they knew. In his place stood Berth, young, radiant, and impossibly commanding. His muscles rippled beneath taut, golden-brown skin, and his eyes gleamed with sharp intelligence and a strange calm authority that made even the boldest males bow their heads.

Even the female courtiers, who had been leaning into flirtation and intrigue, froze. Many of them had hoped to catch his attention, but the sheer aura of purpose radiating from Berth shut them all down.

Clearing his throat, Berth raised his hands, and the room immediately fell into an attentive silence.

“I have made a decision,” he began, his voice deep and unshakable. “The city of beasts is no longer my home. My path lies elsewhere — beyond the mountains, where a female waits who holds more than beauty. She holds the balance of power, wisdom beyond any of you, and the very heart of this world. Her name is Kritika.”

The room erupted into murmurs again, but Berth raised a single hand, and silence returned like a command of the elements themselves.

“I will leave this city forever. Those who wish to follow their petty schemes or pursue me here may do so — I will not be swayed. My focus is on the mountain, and my female chooses the time and place I may approach. Until then, I will wait. Patiently. Prepared. And when I arrive... no obstacle, no rival, no enemy will stand in my way.”

Some of the elder kings, men who had shared battles and councils with him for decades, bowed deeply in respect. The younger males, many of whom had coveted the king's attention or attempted to outshine him, swallowed their envy and admiration.

Even the females who had tried to seduce him now realized that Berth's heart and loyalty belonged elsewhere. His transformation, his calm authority, and the clarity in his eyes left no room for doubt.

"Go forth and maintain the city," Berth continued. "I will not interfere unless provoked. My purpose lies with Kritika, and no one shall impede it."

A low, respectful murmur passed through the chamber. His words weren't just a declaration — they were a decree, a promise, and a warning all at once.

As Berth turned and left the hall, the female courtiers and kings alike whispered among themselves, awestruck:

"He... has changed. Completely. And he will follow her."

Outside the palace, Berth's mind drifted to the Light Mountain. The emerald's gift had not only cleared his vision but sharpened his resolve. Every step he took now was measured, purposeful — a king reborn, moving toward his destiny and the female who would command not just his loyalty, but the fate of the entire beast world.

The morning sun barely touched the peaks of the Light Mountain as Kritika sank into the soft warmth of the forest clearing. Her breaths were long and deep, her body still trembling from the intensity of the energy flowing through her. Light, ever patient, finally released his hold, allowing her to catch her breath.

Even with her body carrying the cubs of Sulphur and Rhae, Kritika's desires burned brighter than ever. Her gaze met Light's, dark eyes full of playful mischief and divine understanding.

"You're enjoying this way too much," Light whispered, a smirk playing on his lips.

Kritika merely giggled, leaning into him, letting her fingers trace the warm lines of his chest. Her mind was entirely focused on him, forgetting the distant stirrings of the world below. The Light

Mountain guardian's power hummed through her, intertwining with her own rising energy.

Curtis, Winston, Harvey, Sulpher, and Rhae — all of her mates — were in the nearby cave, giving her space while their hearts ached with the need to protect and adore her. But Kritika was lost in the game of love and seduction with Light, her laughter and moans mingling with the soft rustle of leaves.

“Kriya...” Light murmured, using the name only he knew, “you’re fearless... and completely uncontainable.”

She grinned, pressing closer, letting their shared energy intertwine, her hands exploring, teasing, claiming. The world seemed to shrink, leaving only her, Light, and the fire of their bond.

And in all this, Kritika did not notice Berth at all — the ape king who had been reborn, waiting patiently, his thoughts tangled between patience and desire. Her focus, her heart, her body, were fully occupied by the divine guardian who now matched her in power, wit, and mischief.

Every gasp, every touch, every playful bite was a dance — a game of love she orchestrated, leaving Light equally enraptured and laughing in delight. The forest echoed with their shared joy, bliss, and wild connection.

Kritika, even as a mother-to-be of dragon cubs, felt more alive, more free, and more dangerously seductive than ever. The mountain, her cubs, her mates — all watched, waited, and respected the fire of their goddess-born female, knowing this was her realm, her family, and her love — untouchable, uncontainable, and entirely hers.

LIGHT – GUARDIAN OF THE LIGHT MOUNTAIN

- Species/Form: Originally an ice wolf beast-man; can shift to a divine god form.
- Appearance: In beast form, he has sleek, silvery-white fur that shimmers faintly under moonlight. His piercing black eyes radiate intelligence and a calm, commanding presence. In his god form, his body is taller, perfectly proportioned, with a radiant aura of silver and gold that naturally commands respect. His long hair seems to flow like liquid light, and his movements exude both grace and lethal precision.
- Abilities:
 - Energy Manipulation: Can control elemental energies around the Light Mountain, especially light and ice.
 - Protection: His aura automatically shields the mountain, detecting threats and neutralizing them.
 - Teaching/Guidance: Expert in meditation, energy regulation, creating shields, and safe offensive techniques for emergencies.
 - Connection with Kritika: Deeply bonded with her soul; his powers resonate with hers, amplifying her abilities while calming her overflows of energy.
- Personality: Calm, patient, intelligent, and playful in private moments. Though divine, he has a mischievous, almost childlike side with Kritika, teasing her, laughing

with her, and matching her cleverness. Fiercely protective of her, he respects her independence and her control over her own power.

CHAPTER 41

As the sun dipped lower, casting golden streaks across the peaks of the Light Mountain, Kritika felt the subtle tremor of a presence at the base of the hill. Her senses, sharpened by her divine heritage, picked up the steady, commanding energy of Berth — the ape king, transformed and patient, watching, waiting.

But Kritika's attention was nowhere near him. She was entirely wrapped around Light, her fingers tracing the firm lines of his chest, her body pressed close as they shared another round of wild, playful love. The cave echoed with their laughter, their moans, and the rustle of their movements.

"Kriya... you never cease to amaze me," Light murmured between kisses, his hands roaming, feeling the growing swell of her pregnant form.

Kritika smirked, her eyes glinting with mischief. "You like this, don't you? My little fireball of light..." She teased, tracing her tongue along his collarbone, letting her seduction pull him into another dance of desire.

Outside, Berth stood silently, watching the cave from below, the energy of Kritika washing over him like a tide. His golden eyes narrowed, intrigued yet disciplined. He understood her strategy even without seeing — she was testing him, seeing how far he would wait, how patient he could be, how much he truly desired her.

"She's clever," Berth murmured, his deep voice a low rumble that seemed to merge with the mountain winds. "And daring... very daring."

...

Inside the cave, Kritika's movements became bolder, her laughter ringing like a chime. Light's energy intertwined with hers, radiating warmth and pleasure that could have set fire to the mountain itself. Every touch, every glance was an assertion of dominance and playfulness — her way of testing Berth's restraint without leaving the cave.

Berth remained at the base, unmoving, silent, yet every inch of his being was pulled toward her. He would not cross her boundaries; he would not rush. He was learning patience the Kritika way, while she reveled in the thrill of testing not just him, but the limits of all her mates' devotion.

Kritika smirked to herself, feeling powerful, irresistible, and untouchable, knowing she could command the hearts and loyalty of kings, gods, dragons, and guardians alike — all while having the freedom to play with them.

The cave was still warm from their morning together, the cubs nestled safely outside with Harvey, Curtis, and Shuu keeping watch. Kritika, now reclined against Light, her fingers tracing patterns across his chest, finally lifted her gaze toward him with that signature mischievous glint in her eyes.

"Light," she purred softly, "I want you to meet someone... Berth. The ape king is waiting at the base of the mountain."

Light's brow arched, a hint of amusement dancing in his dark eyes.

"You want me to...?"

Kritika nodded, playful yet firm. "Yes. Go down and have a word with him. Make him understand his place, and mine. Calm his eagerness, but don't let him forget why he came."

Light's smirk mirrored hers. "I see... this is one of your little games."

“Not a game,” Kritika corrected, stretching languidly against him. “A test. I want to see patience, loyalty, and respect. Make him understand — only I decide what happens here.”

With a flicker of divine energy, Light rose, his form radiating power and authority. Kritika leaned back, watching as he glided effortlessly down the mountain path, his presence already commanding the air around him. The ground seemed to hum softly beneath his feet.

Before leaving, Light whispered, lips brushing her ear:

“You have such fun ways of keeping control, my Kriya. I’ll make sure your little ape king knows exactly what he’s dealing with.”

Kritika chuckled, closing her eyes as she felt the protective waves of energy flowing from Light to Berth, ensuring he approached respectfully, not aggressively. She knew her mates would follow her rules, her divine aura guiding them subtly even before she spoke directly.

Down at the base, Berth sensed the energy shift immediately. The air itself seemed to pulse with Kritika’s presence, though she remained hidden in the mountains. Light approached him, calm yet firm, radiating Kritika’s power and authority.

“Berth,” Light’s voice rolled like distant thunder, commanding yet smooth, “she has asked me to meet you. Listen carefully. Your patience is being tested. Your respect must match her power, and your intentions must be clear. Only then will you step into her world.”

Berth straightened, feeling the weight of Kritika’s unseen presence in every word. His hands clenched briefly, but his mind sharpened. He understood immediately — this was no ordinary female, no ordinary challenge.

Kritika's smirk echoed in her mind as she watched from above, her divine sense stretching over the mountain, enjoying her carefully orchestrated test.

"Good," she whispered to herself. "Let him learn his place... and let the fun begin."

At the base of the Light Mountain, Berth stood firm, feeling the subtle hum of the mountain's energy around him. Every instinct in him screamed caution — Kritika's aura was powerful, almost divine, and he knew he was treading in territory far beyond a mere beast city king.

Unbeknownst to him, the feral king was lurking nearby, his senses stretched thin, desperate to catch a glimpse of Berth's energy to sneak past the mountain's protective barrier. His plan was simple: follow Berth under the pretense of respect and use the opportunity to kidnap Kritika. But the mountain itself, alive with Kritika's subtle wards, shivered at the dark intent.

From above, Light moved silently, his presence invisible to both Berth and the hidden feral. He approached Berth's side, not as a companion to guide physically, but as a mentor of energy and patience.

"Berth," Light's voice resonated only in Berth's mind, calm yet firm, "focus. Do not act recklessly. She has asked me to meet you here, but this is more than a test of patience — it is a test of respect, restraint, and loyalty. One wrong move and you alert the wrong eyes."

Berth exhaled slowly, grounding himself. He could feel Light's energy weaving around him, forming a protective bubble, shielding him from detection by the feral king.

"What about him?" Berth asked, nodding toward the shadowy energy nearby, sensing the lurking presence of the feral king.

“Ignore it for now,” Light instructed. “Do not confront him. Kritika wants you to meditate, to connect with her energy from afar. Focus entirely on her. Do not speak of what I share with you, or even hint at it to anyone. She trusts you, Berth. You must earn this trust fully.”

Berth closed his eyes, drawing in slow, controlled breaths. Light’s guidance pulled him into a deep meditative state, allowing him to connect with Kritika’s aura across the distance. He could feel her presence — warm, playful, and dangerously magnetic — yet restrained, testing him.

Meanwhile, the feral king edged closer, trying to breach the mountain’s barrier. Every step he took was halted by invisible wards, sparks of divine energy flickering across the forest floor. He hissed in frustration, sensing the formidable power keeping him at bay.

“This... this is impossible,” he growled under his breath.
“How could a female —”

Light’s voice cut into his mind, cold and sharp:

“Step closer, and you will regret it. Leave now, or face what even kings fear to challenge. You will not touch her.”

The feral king froze, sensing a presence far greater than any he had ever faced. Meanwhile, Berth’s meditation deepened, his energy syncing with Kritika’s subtle signals, building a bond even before he reached her side.

“Focus on her, Berth. Your connection is your strength. Your restraint is your shield,” Light whispered.

Berth’s energy pulsed, vibrant yet calm, and the feral king realized he could not interfere, trapped by Light’s protection and Kritika’s unseen aura.

High above, Kritika smiled quietly, unaware of the full details. She felt the energy of Light guiding her chosen ape king, and her aura stretched across the mountain, protecting her family, her mates, and even testing the patience of Berth.

“Good,” she whispered in her mind. “Let him learn patience... let them all see who truly commands here.”

The stage was set — Berth, patient and focused; Kritika, powerful and playful; Light, the silent guide; and a lurking threat kept at bay by divine foresight.

CHAPTER 42

After five full moons of disciplined meditation, Berth opened his eyes slowly, the world around him shimmering with a new intensity. The energy he had absorbed, guided by Kritika and Light, coursing through his body, transformed him completely.

No one had ever witnessed such a phenomenon: a 4-star Ape King evolving into a 5-star beast-man — stronger, faster, and imbued with a commanding aura that made even the fiercest males of the beast world pause. His fur gleamed with a metallic sheen, his muscles more defined, and his eyes radiated a calm, authoritative brilliance that demanded respect.

Berth flexed his hands, feeling the surge of raw power flowing through his veins. Every nerve in his body pulsed with energy, each breath a reminder of the connection he had formed with Kritika across the mountain.

“This... is incredible,” he murmured, voice deep and resonant. His roar echoed across the forest, vibrating the trees, yet carrying no aggression — only power and mastery.

Light, standing silently nearby, observed with approval.

“It is rare for even the strongest beasts to evolve without a near-death trial,” Light said. “You have grown not just in strength, Berth, but in wisdom, patience, and restraint. This is the gift Kritika allows only for those she trusts completely.”

Berth's eyes glimmered with a mix of pride and determination. He could feel Kritika's aura from miles away, her energy guiding him even now, testing him, challenging him to rise to her level.

He stretched, feeling his claws sharpened, his tail longer and more powerful, and a new strategic intelligence filling his mind. Every step he took now left a trace of energy, a subtle mark of his ascension, detectable only to those sensitive to the divine.

"Five moons... five full moons of meditation, patience, and restraint," Berth whispered to himself. "For her. For Kritika. I am ready."

Even the hidden feral king, still lurking at the base of the mountain, felt the tremor of Berth's evolution. The power was so overwhelming, so pure, that even he instinctively stepped back, realizing he was utterly outmatched.

Meanwhile, Kritika, sensing the shift in energy from her perch atop the mountain, smiled knowingly. She allowed herself a brief moment of satisfaction. Her chosen ape king, now a 5-star beastman, was ready to meet her on equal footing, and the mountain — her home — was secure under his strength and the guidance of Light.

Berth bowed his head subtly, acknowledging her unseen presence, a silent promise that he would never falter, never betray the trust she had placed in him.

The mountain held its breath, the cubs nestled safely, the dragons unaware of the change, and the feral king frozen in awe. A new era had begun — Berth, elevated to a level no one dared imagine, and Kritika, the unseen goddess, orchestrating every move from above.

...

Kritika groaned, clutching her swollen belly, feeling the familiar sharp pangs of labor. She gasped and whispered in her mind,

“Light... now. Bring Berth up the mountain. Keep the feral king away. Protect everything.”

Within moments, the guardian of the mountain appeared beside her, radiating calm energy, as Berth arrived silently, ascending from the base of the mountain under Light’s guidance. His new 5-star presence brought a sense of strength and reassurance, perfectly complementing the warmth Harvey exuded as he stepped in to assist with the birth.

Both Berth and Harvey, seasoned healers in their own right, worked in perfect synchrony under Kritika’s instructions. Light hovered nearby, sending subtle energy pulses to soothe Kritika and shield the area from any unwanted intrusion, especially from the lurking feral king below.

Time seemed to stretch unnaturally — two full moons of labor, yet Kritika bore it with a mix of exhaustion and determination. Finally, the first signs of new life emerged, and Kritika’s heart raced with anticipation.

“Here... here they come,” Harvey whispered softly, his hands steady and confident.

One by one, the dragon cubs entered the world, encased in glowing eggs that reflected their unique essence. Two female twins shimmered in radiant golden hues, their aura pure and majestic. The two male twins glowed fiery red, radiating a raw, powerful energy even from within their shells.

Sulpher and Reah, already deeply bonded to Kritika, smiled through tears, watching as the next generation of dragons came into existence. The aura surrounding the eggs was intense, pulsating with life, magic, and promise, so strong that even Light’s divine presence seemed to resonate with it.

Kritika, lying back against the soft furs, felt both exhaustion and an overwhelming sense of fulfillment. She whispered, “Welcome to

the family... my cubs. Grow strong, protect each other, and honor the world you are born into."

Berth, standing firmly at her side, nodded solemnly, his gaze lingering on the dragon eggs. He could feel the tremendous power contained within them — the children of Kritika, the dragons Sulpher and Reah, and the divine lineage she carried within her.

"They are extraordinary," Sulpher murmured, gently circling the eggs with reverent caution.

"Each one... a reflection of their parents' strength," Reah added, voice tinged with pride.

As Kritika rested, still catching her breath, Harvey tended to her needs, while Light maintained a protective energy barrier, ensuring absolute safety. The cubs, still within their eggs, glimmered with potential, a promise that the next generation of the beast world would be unlike anything seen before.

And in that sacred, quiet moment atop the light mountain, surrounded by her mates, guardians, and the promise of new life, Kritika allowed herself a deep, satisfied smile, knowing her family — and the world she had helped shape — was stronger than ever.

CHAPTER 43

Light Mountain:

The hidden feral king, lurking far below the peaks, felt a seismic shift in energy emanating from the mountain. The births of Kritika's dragon cubs, the unleashed divine aura, and Berth's ascension combined into a phenomenon he could neither comprehend nor withstand. He groaned, irritation and fear mingling in his chest.

"This... this is impossible," he muttered through clenched teeth. "The power... it's changing everything."

The forest around him trembled slightly as if acknowledging the sudden surge of dominance and protection above. The feral king's claws dug into the ground, his instincts screaming that the mountain – and the female residing there – was no longer accessible by conventional means.

Camel Hump Village:

Several leagues away, a different story unfolded. Bai, the girl who had originally entered this world, ran desperately through the forest. Her breaths came in ragged gasps, and her bare feet slapped against the rough terrain. The familiar tension of a pack of wolves closing in behind her sent shivers down her spine.

"Help! Help!" she screamed, panic lacing her voice.

This time, there was no Parker, the Wolf Prince from the beast city, no one to intervene. The story was repeating itself, but Bai had no protector, no ally at her side. The air was tense, filled with the scent of danger and fear.

She stumbled over a root, almost falling, and the pack of wolves was only moments away. Her mind raced, thinking of ways to escape — hiding, climbing, anything that might buy her a few precious seconds.

Meanwhile, the distant tremors and the unseen protective aura from Light Mountain subtly reached the outskirts of the forest, hinting that the balance of power in this world was shifting, and even Bai's predicament might soon intersect with Kritika's growing dominance.

Bai Qing Qing stumbled and gasped for air as the wolf pack closed in, their growls sending chills down her spine. Just as a particularly large wolf lunged toward her, a massive shadow slammed into the forest clearing, scattering the wolves.

Tony, the bear beast, towered over the wolves, his dark fur bristling with raw power. With a single roar, the remaining wolves skidded backward, terrified of the sheer dominance radiating from him.

Bai blinked, barely believing her eyes. She was saved, but the intensity of Tony's gaze made her stomach flutter nervously.

"If you want to live, you must agree to mate with me," Tony rumbled, his deep voice leaving no room for argument. "Otherwise, the wolves won't stop until you're gone."

Bai's heart raced. She had no choice. Slowly, she nodded, the fear and desperation outweighing everything else.

"I... I agree," she whispered, her voice trembling.

Tony's eyes softened ever so slightly, but a gleam of interest and admiration appeared. Her beauty, her scent, and her radiant, innocent smile had captured his attention instantly. He chuckled lowly, amused and impressed by her courage.

"Good," he said, scooping her up in his massive arms. "Then let's go, my mate."

Before Bai could react, she found herself carried bridal style through the forest, the wolves far behind, and arriving at Tony's dark, majestic cave. Inside, the cavern was vast, lined with thick furs, glowing crystals, and a sense of powerful security.

Bai's eyes widened as she took in her new surroundings. She had been saved, yes—but she also realized, with a shiver, that she had no idea what she had truly signed up for. The bear beast's eyes lingered on her as he carefully set her down, and the intensity of his possessive aura made her pulse quicken.

"This is... my home now," Tony murmured, stepping closer, his shadow casting over her. "And you, my mate, will learn exactly what it means to be mine."

Bai swallowed hard, realizing that her life in the beast world had just taken an irreversible turn.

Bai struggled in Tony's massive arms as he carried her deeper into his cave, her mind racing with panic.

"Let me go! I don't belong here!" she yelled, kicking and flailing.

But Tony's grip was unyielding. His strength far surpassed anything she had ever faced. Even when she tried to wriggle free, he calmly adjusted his hold, making it impossible for her to escape without risking serious injury.

She darted toward the cave entrance at least three times, each attempt more desperate than the last. But the cave was cleverly built — high ceilings, winding passages, and natural barriers that kept intruders out and prisoners in. Each escape plan failed.

Tony, watching her struggle, let out a low, amused growl:

"You can try all you want, little one. This cave is mine. And now... so are you."

Bai's chest heaved as she panted, her attempts exhausted her. The bear's eyes glimmered with both dominance and fascination. Her beauty, defiance, and persistence made him smile faintly.

"Relax," Tony said, his voice calmer now, though still firm.
"Struggle all you like... eventually, you'll understand why this is better for you."

Bai sank to her knees on the soft furs, her energy spent, her plans for escape thwarted at every turn. For the first time, fear and awe mingled in her chest. She realized the truth — she had been saved, but at a cost she hadn't anticipated.

Tony stepped closer, gently brushing a strand of hair from her face.

"Resist now if you must... but one day, you'll see this cave, this life... and me, in a different light."

Bai glared at him, still trembling but now silently questioning:

What exactly had she agreed to?

Her thoughts were interrupted as Tony placed her on a warm fur bed, surrounding her with protective barriers, leaving her trapped yet safe. She knew deep down she couldn't escape him, but she also didn't yet understand the depths of the bond she had unknowingly stepped into.

The cave was unbearably still. The fire that had once crackled near the entrance burned low, its light flickering faintly across the stone walls.

Bai lay motionless on the furs, her eyes wide open but distant — unfocused. Her body trembled faintly, but her face showed no expression. It was as though her spirit had drifted somewhere far away, leaving only her shell behind.

Her mind had gone blank. She wasn't thinking, wasn't feeling — not yet. Everything inside her had folded into a quiet, endless ache. The world felt muted, the colors drained from around her.

Tony sat a few feet away, breathing heavily. He glanced at her — at the stillness, the silence — and confusion crept into his eyes. What had he done? His chest tightened, and the weight of realization began to settle like stone on his heart.

“Bai...” he said softly, but she didn’t respond.

She stared at the rocky ceiling, the tears that had once fallen now dried against her skin. Every muscle in her body was tense, ready to flinch, but she didn’t move.

Inside her head, thoughts whispered — scattered, painful fragments:

How did this happen?

Why didn’t I run faster?

I should have known... I should have...

Her breath hitched, but no sound came out. She didn’t have the strength to cry. Instead, she curled into herself, pulling the fur around her like a fragile shield against a world that suddenly felt cruel and unrecognizable.

Tony’s hand twitched, as if he wanted to reach out — to comfort, to apologize — but he couldn’t. The sight of her trembling, broken silence horrified him more than any beastly roar ever could.

“I didn’t mean to... hurt you,” he muttered, voice hoarse and uncertain.

But Bai didn’t look at him. She just whispered, barely audible:

“You already did.”

That single sentence hit him harder than claws or fangs ever could. The proud bear who once commanded strength and authority now felt small — his power turned to ash.

He backed away slowly, lowering his head. Outside, the night wind blew through the cave, carrying a soft, mournful echo — as if the mountain itself grieved for the silence within.

CHAPTER 44

By dawn, the storm in Tony's heart had turned into panic.

Bai was burning with fever. Her breathing came shallow and uneven, her skin pale and slick with sweat. The furs beneath her were damp from the heat radiating off her body. Her lips trembled as she whispered something incoherent — her voice barely a breath.

Tony's chest tightened with fear. The guilt that had already begun to devour him now burned into terror.

"No... no, please, Bai... don't do this to me," he muttered, pacing before kneeling beside her again. Her face looked so fragile, so small.

He pressed his palm against her forehead — hot. Too hot.

He couldn't stay there. He couldn't let her die.

With trembling arms, Tony lifted her carefully — her body limp in his hold. Then he ran.

He ran through the forest, across streams and thorny bushes, his feet bleeding, his heart pounding wildly in his chest. He didn't care. He had only one thought echoing in his head — save her.

The sun was barely peeking over the horizon when he stumbled into the sheep village — a quiet settlement nestled near the valley. The startled villagers froze at the sight of the massive bear beast-man carrying a human woman in his arms.

He dropped to his knees before their healer's hut.

"Please," he gasped. "Please help her. She's... my mate. She's burning up. I—I didn't mean for this to happen."

The old sheep healer looked at him long and hard — her eyes sharp but kind. She nodded once and motioned him inside.

Tony gently laid Bai down on a soft wool bed. The healer began to grind herbs, muttering under her breath. The sharp scent of medicine filled the room.

Bai's eyelids fluttered, and for a brief moment, she saw him — kneeling beside her, his massive form shaking, his eyes wide with something she hadn't expected to see there: fear. Not of her. But for her.

Even through the fever, even through the fog of pain, a small spark flickered inside her heart — a strange, distant thought: He came back. He's trying.

She drifted back into unconsciousness, but the faintest hint of relief softened her features.

Tony sat there, unmoving, watching every breath she took. His claws dug into his palms until they bled. He whispered, voice thick and breaking:

"If she lives... I'll never hurt her again. I'll spend my life making it right."

The healer looked at him with quiet understanding.

"Then start by forgiving yourself," she said gently, placing a wet cloth on Bai's forehead. "And pray she does the same."

Outside, the dawn broke fully, and warm light spilled into the small hut — a fragile promise that maybe, just maybe, redemption was still possible.

The world smelled of herbs, smoke, and rain.

Bai opened her eyes slowly, the weight in her head making it hard to focus. The roof above her was made of woven reeds, sunlight

slipping through the gaps in thin golden lines. Somewhere nearby, she heard soft bleating — sheep, gentle and rhythmic.

Her throat felt dry. Her body was sore, her lips chapped. She blinked several times, trying to remember... and then her eyes widened.

The cave. The fear. Tony.

Her heart skipped painfully. She tried to sit up, but a firm, wrinkled hand pressed gently on her shoulder.

“Easy now, child,” came a calm, raspy voice. “You’ve been very sick. Don’t move too quickly.”

Bai turned her head to see an old sheep beast-woman beside her. Her wool was snow-white, her eyes soft and kind. A wooden bowl sat in her lap, steam curling from the herbal mixture within.

“Where... where am I?” Bai whispered, her voice barely audible.

“In our village. Near the river plains,” the healer said. “A bear brought you here. Carried you all night, bleeding from his feet.”

Bai froze. Her fingers tightened around the blanket.

“Tony...” she murmured.

The healer nodded. “Yes. That’s his name. He’s been outside since dawn. Hasn’t eaten, hasn’t slept. He won’t leave the gate.”

Bai’s heart thudded unevenly. She didn’t know how to feel. Fear. Anger. Pity. All mixed until she felt hollow.

She lowered her gaze, staring at her hands. Her nails were clean. Her wounds were bandaged. The fever had broken. Someone had stayed by her side through the night.

Her lips trembled. “Why?” she whispered.

The healer looked at her for a long moment before replying softly.

“Because guilt can either destroy a man... or change him.”

Outside, the sound of heavy footsteps pacing could be heard — then silence.

Tony sat by the gate, his head bowed, claws buried into the dirt. His shoulders shook as if he were fighting an invisible war inside himself. He could smell her — awake, alive — and yet he couldn’t bring himself to go in.

He didn’t deserve to see her, not after what he’d done.

Inside the hut, Bai stared at the door. A faint light flickered in her chest — not forgiveness, not yet. But something quieter. Curiosity. A fragile wondering if monsters could truly regret what they had done.

She took a slow breath.

“Can you... tell him,” she said weakly to the healer, “that I don’t want to see him. Not now. But... he should eat something.”

The old healer nodded, hiding her small smile. “I will, child.”

As she left, Bai turned to the window slit, sunlight brushing her face. Her heart still hurt, her trust still shattered — but there was warmth there now. A small, uncertain warmth that maybe, in time, could heal.

Outside, Tony looked up as the healer approached.

“She doesn’t want to see you,” the old woman said gently, “but she asked me to tell you to eat.”

Tony’s breath caught. His eyes widened. For a moment, he couldn’t move — then he lowered his head, tears slipping down his face, soaking the earth beneath him.

“Thank you,” he whispered. “I’ll wait. For as long as she needs.”

And he did.

The sun climbed higher, and still, the bear sat there — a silent shadow at the gate — while the woman inside began the slow, painful process of piecing her soul back together.

The days in the sheep village moved slowly, paced by the soft hands of the healer and the steady care of wool-lined beds. Bai’s fever ebbed; the color returned to her cheeks in hesitant waves. Her limbs no longer trembled with every breath. She could sit without the world tilting.

One morning, as light spilled through the hut’s reed walls, she rose and, with a hand that still shook, reached back to pull aside the blanket at her shoulder. There — faint but unmistakable — was the mark: a small sigil, warm beneath her skin, the same kind of binding the healer explained all women received in this world when a male claimed them under the old laws of beast-lords. It glowed a soft, living amber, and beside it her skin bore the ghost of other traces from the nights before.

The healer watched Bai study the mark with a mix of gentle steadiness and quiet relief. “It means he has taken responsibility,” the old woman said, voice patient. “It binds you two in name and duty — but it does not bind your heart or your will. That part is yours.”

Bai’s face folded. She thought of Tony — the crushing strength, the terrified footsteps, the raw, ashamed pleading in his eyes when he carried her to the village. Her hands curled into fists at the memory and then went limp. Her throat closed. A thousand questions flickered across her mind and none had simple answers.

When the healer poured a cup of cooling herbal tea and set it in her hands, Bai began to tell the story. Not the violent details — she let

the healer hear the facts in small, careful pieces: the wolves chasing, the bear's rescue, the demand he made, the weakness that left her unable to run. The healer listened without interruption, nodding once in a while, her face unreadable but never unkind.

When Bai finished, silence held the hut for a long breath. Then the healer spoke, slow and steady, like a hand smoothing a rough path. Her words were practical and laced with an old wisdom Bai felt in her bones:

"You survived," she said first. "That matters. Your body, your mind, and your choices now — those matter more than what was done to you. In our laws, a mark binds two people in responsibility. It should not be a chain of fear."

She leaned forward. "You must hear him out, if only to know why. Let him speak. Let him show remorse, and let him do what he must to make amends. But do not let pity or pressure push you into forgiving before you are ready. Punish him in the ways you see fit — that can be chains of duty, tasks to perform, and service to repair the harm. But do not throw away the safety he gave you without knowing the truth of his heart."

Bai swallowed. "You think... he can change?" Her voice was small. The healer's eyes were not soft. "I think all beasts are capable of dark things and of learning better ways. Tony brought you to life. That is action. Whether he becomes the man you can live with depends on his choices now, not on the moment he broke you."

Wordless, the healer shifted to practical matters: how to cleanse a mind stuck in winter, herbs to soothe haunted sleep, a pattern of tasks Tony could undertake to show contrition — fetching medicine, repairing the hut of the wolf pups he'd scattered, taking watch while Bai regained strength, bringing offerings to the healer's altar each dawn and dusk.

Bai closed her eyes and pictured him at the gate all morning, at the healer's whisper telling him she didn't want to see him. She pictured the tears he shed, the way he had sat in the dirt and not moved. That image was a splinter through her grief and shame; it was also something else — a thread she could not yet name.

"Let him explain," the healer repeated, softer now. "But let him earn the right to be near you. Let him prove that the mark will mean protection and care, not more harm."

Outside, Tony paced by the gate. When the healer came to him with Bai's message — that she would not see him yet, but that he must eat and rest — he bowed his head and cradled the small loaf she gave him like a relic. His great shoulders shook once, and then he began to move with a new, trembling purpose: to do the small, hard things the healer had prescribed. He would fetch herbs. He would sit up nights by the river to mend nets. He would speak apologies until his throat bled. He would do whatever it took to show that his hands could build instead of break.

Inside the hut, Bai lifted her tea cup and let the warm herbal steam calm her. The mark on her shoulder did not feel like a verdict; it felt like the beginning of a long question she would have to answer in time. She did not know yet whether she would stay. She did not know whether she could forgive. She only knew this: for now, there was an arrangement, a duty the world demanded of them both, and a slow, painful work of repair that lay ahead.

The healer's last words, as Bai dozed into a healing rest, stayed with her: "You are the author of your life now. Use your voice when you can. Use your strength too. And when you are ready, decide."

CHAPTER 45

Bai slept like a leaf in a storm — tossed, fragile, folding inward. In the deep, fever-soft dreamspace she drifted into a place that felt older than the world: a wide plain of black glass under a sky full of slow-moving stars. A voice, neither harsh nor gentle but impossibly ancient, called her name.

“Bai.”

She turned. A figure stepped from the light — not the healer, not Tony, but something woven from dawn itself. Its face was both familiar and impossibly distant; its eyes held a patience that made her whole body ache.

“You have learned your first lesson,” the voice said. “Good. Listen carefully now.”

The dream-voice showed her a memory that was not hers: Tony, at the edge of the wolf-pack clearing, clutching something small and dark — a chunk of black crystal lodged at his throat. It pulsed like a trapped heartbeat. She saw it flash and heard the whispering that had bent Tony’s will: hunger, fear, blind command. It explained, in images and a voice that cut clear as ice, that the crystals were old corruptions — pieces of a hunger-magic that latches onto a mind and steals its consent.

“He was taken,” the goddess-voice said softly. “Not fully of his own will. Burn it. Free him. Break the crystal’s hold.”

Bai watched Tony stumble, his eyes half-shadowed when he carried her away — and something cold and small slid into her chest: grief for the part of him that had been stolen, and a fierce wanting to claw it out.

Then the voice changed. Where the first words had been balm, now they were an edge of steel.

“There is more,” it told her. “You are marked. You have returned. This world does not wait. The balance is tilting. Take five mates as soon as possible, Bai. Bind them to you. Form the circle. If you refuse, if you delay, the consequence will be greater than you imagine.”

Bai’s stomach dropped. Five mates. The voice gave no kindness with the order, only a cold clarity as if reading a ledger: five. Not one. Not three. Five.

“Why me?” she whispered in the dream, voice small.

“Because you carry a pulse they feel,” the voice answered. “Because you can create a tether others cannot. Because the dark grows hungry. Go quickly. Burn the black crystal on Tony. Then choose — not as a slave, but as a woman who must decide her protection and power. Choose with your eyes open.”

The scene faded into light. The goddess’s hand — warm, tender — rested on Bai’s forehead, leaving a small, resonant warmth that felt like a promise and a warning at once.

Bai woke gasping. The hut smelled of herbs and wool and the quiet rhythm of the healer arranging poultices. Sunlight slanted in. Her throat was dry, her pulse wild. For a breath she could only remember images: the black shards, Tony’s hollowed eyes, the number five like a ringing bell.

She sat up slowly, mind still clinging to the aftertaste of the dream. The mark on her shoulder warmed under her fingers, and something hardened beneath the fear — a clarity that moved faster than the fog. The healer looked up from the basin and met Bai’s eyes; the old woman saw the change at once.

“You’ve seen it,” the healer said softly. “The mountain? The gods? They do not speak without cause.”

Bai nodded. “The crystal... Tony’s not fully... he was —” Her voice broke. She swallowed. “I need to burn it. I need to free him.”

The healer’s face settled into the lined map of someone who had seen human pain and beastly grief too many times to be surprised. “If what you dreamed is true,” she said, “you will need flame and salt, and something to call the crystal out. The mountain or Light could help. Do you want me to fetch Tony so you can speak to him first?”

Bai thought of the gate, where Tony waited kneeling in the dust, head bowed like a penitent. She pictured his heavy, ashamed face when she had told the healer she did not want to see him — and then the tiny thread in her chest at the memory of his tears. For a moment the dream returned: the goddess’s small, grave command.

“Yes,” Bai said finally. “Bring him in here. He must know. He must let me. If he resists, we cannot risk the shard staying. We burn it for him even if he must be bound.”

The healer rose. “I will also send word to the mountain. If Light or Kritika can lend their power, breaking the curse will be easier and safer.”

Outside, where the sun warmed the village path, Tony still sat. When the healer opened the hut door and called him in — voice barely above a whisper — he rose at once, shaking, as if the slightest movement might shatter him. He crossed the threshold with the slow carefulness of a thief hoping for mercy.

Bai’s eyes met his. There was no forgiveness yet. There was a task, and a command from something older than both of them. The decision that lay ahead would not be hers alone to make — the goddess had set the world in motion, and Bai felt the gravity of it.

“First,” Bai said, voice small but steady, “we burn the crystal. Then we choose. I don’t know if I can love you, Tony. But if you want to be anything other than the beast who broke me, you must let me free you.”

Tony’s hands trembled as he came forward. “Do it,” he said in a voice threaded with fear and hope. “Burn it. Take it away from me.”

The healer arranged a shallow brazier, salt, and a bundle of bitter herbs. Outside, the wind felt like the hush before thunder. Far away — on Light Mountain and beyond — energies shifted in answer: a small shiver in the leaves, a ripple that said the world itself was paying attention.

Bai lifted her chin. The goddess’s command burned at the edges of her thoughts: five mates. It was an order and an omen — heavy, strange, and not hers in origin. The weight of it settled on her shoulders like a mantle she had not wanted.

For now, though, the immediate thing was the black crystal in Tony — the small, hateful thing that had bent a man’s will. She drew her breath, steadied her hands, and prepared to do something urgent and terrible and necessary: to burn the dark out of the man who had taken her life and, possibly, the first step toward answering a power that demanded five.

The wind whipped past Bai as she clung to Tony’s broad, furred shoulders, his massive form cutting a path through the forest with silent precision. Even in the chill of early morning, the heat radiating from his body reminded her of the strange mix of fear, relief, and curiosity that still lingered in her chest.

“Where exactly is this Greenwood place?” Bai asked, voice muffled against his fur.

Tony glanced back, his eyes soft but wary. “One moon’s travel from here. The bonfire... it’s where females of the surrounding villages go to select mates. That’s where we’ll find yours.”

Bai's stomach fluttered nervously. Five mates. One moon. And here I am, just trying to survive. Her mind raced, picturing the strength, cunning, and patience she would need to claim them — especially when she didn't even fully know who she could trust.

“Tony,” she murmured, “I... I don't know how I'll manage this. Five mates... how can I...?”

Tony's hands rested gently on her sides, steadying her. “Bai,” he said firmly, “you have the mark, the gift, and whatever the gods put inside you. They've chosen you for this. You just... need to act like yourself. Trust what you feel. That's all.”

Bai swallowed hard. She felt the weight of her destiny pressing on her, and yet a flicker of courage sparked. Somehow, she would make this work. Somehow, she would survive — and claim her mates on her terms.

The forest slowly thinned, giving way to rolling green hills. Smoke began to curl into the sky in the distance: the bonfire. Bai's pulse quickened as she spotted it. Flames licked the night sky, and figures moved around the fire — males and females alike, their shapes dancing in the flickering light.

Tony slowed his stride, keeping her low to avoid attention. “We wait until nightfall. Then you step in. Observe. Choose. Make your move carefully.”

Bai nodded, though her heart was pounding. Observe. Choose. Make my move. She could almost hear the goddess's voice again, whispering from the dream: “Be careful, my child.”

As the sun dipped below the horizon, painting the hills in gold and purple, Bai felt a strange mix of fear and thrill. The journey to claim her five mates had begun, and the Greenwood bonfire would be the first test of her courage, cunning, and her unique power — the power that could bend the heart and will of any beast around her.

Tony's massive form moved silently beside her, ready to protect, but he knew better than to interfere unless she commanded it. Bai's hand rested on his fur, grounding herself. She took a deep breath, feeling the weight of her mark, the lingering power of the goddess, and the whisper of the five souls she was destined to claim.

"Let's go," she murmured, her eyes shining with determination. "It's time."

The night wrapped around them, carrying both danger and possibility. And for the first time since her transmigration, Bai felt fully alive – ready to step into the bonfire, ready to choose, and ready to embrace the destiny the gods had carved for her.

The Greenwood bonfire crackled in the distance, its flames casting long shadows across the hills. Bai's pulse raced as she adjusted herself on Tony's broad back, her small hands gripping his fur tightly. The smell of burning wood mixed with the earthy scent of the forest; it was a raw, alive energy that made her senses tingle.

Tony's deep voice rumbled softly beside her. "Remember, Bai... no one can see you until you choose to reveal yourself. Stay calm. Observe."

Bai nodded, though her stomach fluttered. Her eyes scanned the clearing below. Males and females moved around the fire, the heat of the flames illuminating strong forms, powerful tails, and sharp, gleaming eyes. She could feel her mark pulsing lightly on her back, a reminder of the magical bond she now held with Tony and the divine mission she had been given.

Five mates... five... she thought, trying to steady her breath. I can do this. I have to.

Tony descended silently to a small ridge overlooking the bonfire. Bai slid carefully off his back and crouched low, hidden by the tall grass. The firelight danced across her face, highlighting the determination burning in her eyes.

Several males moved closer to the center of the bonfire, their postures strong, confident. Others sat quietly, watching the flames, waiting. Bai instinctively felt which of them were dominant, which were clever, and which could be tamed — her senses sharper than any mortal's, attuned to the energies of those around her.

A ripple of excitement coursed through her. Each male exuded a different aura: some fiery, some steady, some curious, some playful. Her goddess-given intuition told her which ones would respond to her presence and which would resist. She had to be precise, careful... and patient.

Tony stood silently behind her, his eyes alert for any threat, but also giving her space. He knew better than to intervene — this was Bai's moment to assert herself, to claim what the gods had destined.

She inhaled deeply, letting the warmth of the fire mingle with the crisp night air. Slowly, she rose from the grass, allowing her shadow to stretch across the ridge, her eyes scanning the males below.

“Time to make my move,” she whispered to herself, a mischievous glint appearing on her lips.

Her body hummed with energy — the residual effects of her mark and the divine guidance she carried. With each step she took toward the bonfire, the firelight reflected in her eyes, drawing attention without revealing her fully. She could feel the dragons' eggs growing inside her, her strength as a mother radiating outward, amplifying her aura.

From across the clearing, some males began to notice her silhouette, their curiosity piqued. Bai's lips curved into a subtle, knowing smile. Let them come to me... let them see who I am.

Tony's deep, protective presence reminded her she was safe. But more than that, he reminded her she was ready. Ready to claim her five mates, ready to step into the next chapter of her destiny.

The Greenwood bonfire was alive with whispers, intrigue, and unspoken challenges. Bai's heart pounded with anticipation. She crouched, flexing her senses, and prepared to step down into the firelight — to enter the arena where her courage, cunning, and newfound power would be tested for the first time.

“Here I come,” she murmured, her eyes gleaming. “And I’m not leaving without what’s mine.”

The night held its breath, waiting for the female who had been sent by the gods to change the course of the beast world forever.

CHAPTER 46

Far from the Greenwood bonfire, deep in the shadowed caverns of the feral kingdom, the Feral King sat upon his jagged throne, his claws drumming against the dark stone. His senses were heightened, alert to the faintest pulse of energy from miles away – the tremor of power that had always been Bai’s mark.

Suddenly, a searing burst of light shot across the sky. It was as if the stars themselves had ignited, and the dark crystals embedded in the corners of his throne room vibrated violently. The black crystals that had once bound Tony – crystals infused with feral magic – began to crack and smoke, their energy screaming in pain.

“No... impossible!” the Feral King growled, his amber eyes widening.

He clawed at the largest crystal, trying to contain the explosion of energy, but the force was beyond his control. A pulse of warm, golden light radiated outward, washing over the mountains, forests, and rivers. Every creature sensitive to the divine energy – dragons, wolf clans, and even distant beast-men – could feel the shift.

Bai’s act of burning the crystals had severed the chains of control the feral king held over Tony. He roared in frustration, his mind clouded as he realized his influence had been shattered. The bond that had allowed him to manipulate others was gone – free will surged back into the beings he had tried to enslave.

He slammed his claws on the stone floor, the sound echoing like thunder. “How... how could she...?” he hissed, his voice trembling with rage and disbelief. The golden warmth spreading through the

forest was a direct challenge to his dominion, a proof of power he could not yet comprehend.

For the first time in centuries, the Feral King felt powerless. The black crystals, his source of manipulation and fear, lay broken, smoldering, and useless. He realized that Bai — a mortal female, yet touched by divine guidance — had undone his greatest scheme.

His mind raced, plotting. If she can do this once, she can do it again... and if she gathers mates, grows her power... The thought alone made his fur bristle. The Feral King knew one thing with terrifying clarity: Bai Qing Qing was no ordinary female, and the world would never be the same with her alive and free.

In the quiet aftermath, only one thought consumed him: he had to find her... and fast.

The golden glow from the burned crystals faded into the distance, leaving the Feral King in the shadows, seething, powerless, and dangerously aware that the game had changed.

Bai Qing Qing, under the guidance of the divine voice, had finally reached the Greenwood bonfire. Her senses sharp, her heart steady, she scanned the crowd, already knowing who would become her mates. One by one, she approached them, and the threads of destiny began weaving their fates together.

1. Raelith – The King of Greenwood 🌲🦌

A strong and noble stag-beast man, with antlers glinting under the moonlight. His aura radiated calm authority, and his knowledge of the forest and survival was unmatched. Bai knew instantly that his wisdom and protective nature would make him her first mate.

2. Fynar – The wolf Prince 🐺

A cunning and loyal warrior, whose silvery fur shimmered in the bonfire's glow. Fynar had been a close ally to the kings of Greenwood and was known for his strategic mind. Bai smiled at his mischievous grin, knowing he would be indispensable for guidance and support.

3. Elarion – The Deer Healer 🌿🦌

Gentle yet powerful, Elarion was skilled in magical manipulation, capable of controlling plant life, herbs, and natural energies. His soft eyes belied his immense strength in healing and mystical arts, making him the perfect mate to safeguard her and her future cubs.

4. Azuris – The Blue Snake Beast 🐍

A formidable feral warrior with cobalt scales that shone even in darkness. His speed, strength, and combat skills made him an essential protector. Bai was intrigued by his silent, calculated demeanor — a fighter who could dominate without unnecessary words.

5. Kaelion – The Eagle Beast 🦅

A master of the skies, swift and perceptive, trained in emergency reconnaissance and aerial combat. His golden eyes scanned everything around, and his wings carried both authority and freedom. Bai knew he would watch over her and the other mates, ensuring safety from threats high above.

Bai's heart swelled with satisfaction. She had chosen not just mates, but pillars of strength, wisdom, and protection. Each one complemented the others, forming a perfect network around her. Their names, their powers, and their loyalty would soon intertwine with hers, creating an unbreakable force.

The air around them seemed to shimmer as Bai's aura pulsed, subtle yet powerful, marking the beginning of a new chapter — one where the Feral King's plans would be challenged, and her destiny as a leader of the beast world would unfold.

The divine voice echoed softly in Bai's mind that night, warm and steady like a mother's touch.

“Go and live in Elarion's town, my child. It lies within the folds of magic — unseen, untouched by evil eyes. There, you and your mates will be safe, hidden under the veil of nature's oldest enchantment.”

When Bai opened her eyes, the moonlight felt softer, the stars brighter, as if they too approved of her path. She turned to her mates, their faces lit by the flickering campfire.

“I've made my decision,” she said quietly, her tone filled with newfound strength. “We will go to Elarion's town — to the invisible city. The divine voice guided me there. It's the safest place for us.”

Elarion's amber eyes softened. His lips curved into a rare smile, calm yet full of reverence. “My city will welcome you, Bai. It's a place born from old magic, woven by the roots of ancient trees and guarded by light itself. No one can find it unless I will it.”

Raelith, the Greenwood King, nodded gravely. “Then it's settled. We will travel at dawn. The roads to Elarion's hidden city are long but pure — untouched by feral corruption.”

Fynar twirled his tail playfully, smirking. “Hidden cities, divine whispers, and now a secret queen? Bai, you're making this journey far too interesting.”

Even Kaelion, usually stoic, gave a low approving sound as his wings flexed slightly. “The air feels right. I'll fly ahead and keep the skies clear.”

But Tony — the great bear who had once harmed her — sat silently apart from the rest. His massive shoulders hunched forward, his golden-brown eyes distant. He smiled when Bai looked his way, but the smile never reached his eyes. It was full of guilt, regret, and the ache of knowing he had once broken what he now wished to protect.

Bai walked toward him without hesitation. Her steps were steady, her aura glowing faintly with warmth. When she reached him, she cupped his rough cheek in her small palm.

“You don’t have to smile like that anymore, Tony,” she said softly. “I know you’re sorry. And I... still need you. For my cuddles, my cute bear.” 🐻

Tony froze, his breath caught in his throat. Slowly, he lowered his massive head, pressing his forehead against hers — a silent gesture of surrender and devotion.

“Bai...” his voice cracked. “You’re too kind to me.”

“Maybe,” she whispered, a gentle smile curving her lips, “but you’re mine now. And that means you never give up on yourself again.”

Elarion’s city awaited — shimmering beyond mortal sight, veiled in invisible magic. As dawn painted the horizon, the small group began their journey, stepping toward a future where Bai would not just survive... but rise. 🌀🐉

The feral king, Varkros, a scorpion beast-man with jagged claws and a venomous tail, had been tracking Bai for days. His eyes burned with a cruel determination, convinced that no one would protect the female who had defied his shadow.

But before he could strike, Elarion — the hidden city itself — intervened. A wall of shimmering energy, alive with ancient magic, surged around Bai and her mates. In a single blink, the family was

transported safely past the city gates. The hidden city shimmered like a mirage, invisible to the outside world, its gates only opening for those who were meant to enter.

Bai stumbled as she reached the gates. Her legs shook uncontrollably, her breaths shallow, sweat beading her forehead. Azuris, the eagle beast-man who served as the emergency guardian, caught her mid-fall. He held her close, his wings folding protectively around her, and her small frame trembled in his arms.

Tony, sensing her panic, immediately crouched beside them, his large paws resting lightly on her knees. "Bai... it's okay. You're safe now," he murmured in his deep, soothing voice, carefully brushing back her hair. His presence, solid and warm, acted like an anchor, keeping her from sinking further into fear.

The other mates — Raelith, Fynar, Kaelion — gathered near the gate, their expressions a mix of worry and relief. "She's safe," Raelith muttered, glancing at the city's walls that sparkled faintly under the morning sun. "That's all that matters."

Bai's breathing slowly steadied, though her small body still trembled in Azuris's strong arms. Her hands clutched his feathers as if holding onto her only lifeline. Tony lowered his massive head, gently nudging her, his growl soft and reassuring. "You survived, little one. Nothing will harm you here."

For the first time in days, Bai felt a glimmer of calm wash over her. Surrounded by her mates, safe behind the invisible walls of Elarion, she realized just how powerful her family had become — and how fiercely they would protect her, no matter what Varkros or any other threat tried to do.

The hidden city was now their sanctuary, and Bai, though still trembling, knew she was finally home.

CHAPTER 47

High in the serene Light Mountains, Kritika stretched lazily across the soft furs in her cave, her gaze drifting down the slopes where her little family frolicked. The golden sunlight filtered through the treetops, illuminating the cubs' playful chaos. Tigers pounced on wolves, dragon eggs tumbled gently, and the youngest snakes slithered through the undergrowth — all under the watchful eyes of their devoted mates.

Kritika sipped from a cup of warm herbal tea, her mind calm yet sharp. Her AI whispered updates quietly in her thoughts, keeping her informed about distant events without breaking her tranquility. One of the reports caught her attention — Bai's progress in the hidden city.

A small smile curved Kritika's lips. Good, she thought, observing the young female's movements and decision-making from afar. Bai was clever, cautious, and resilient — traits Kritika knew were essential for survival in the beast world. Yet she also saw Bai's subtle growth, the lessons learned from previous mistakes, and Kritika's heart warmed. She's improving...

The cubs tumbled closer to Kritika's view, chasing shadows and laughter echoing across the mountains. Kritika leaned back, letting the warmth of the fire from her cave touch her skin, and murmured softly, "I won't make the same mistakes again. I will guide them, and protect them... carefully."

Her gaze flicked toward the horizon, where the sunlight kissed the peaks. Kritika's lips curved into a satisfied smirk. The past was behind her; her family thrived, and now she could watch over the new generation from a distance — guiding, protecting, and

ensuring that wisdom and love shaped the future of both the cubs and the female who had just begun her own journey.

The Light Mountains remained serene, bathed in sunlight, yet beneath the calm, Kritika's mind worked tirelessly — planning, observing, and always ready to step in when the moment demanded. She had learned, evolved, and now she ruled her world not just with power, but with patience.

As Kritika's cubs tumbled and played under the protective warmth of the Light Mountains, an entirely different energy stirred far below, deep in the unlit, hidden caves of the beast world.

Unlike the vibrant, sunlit peaks where Kritika ruled with wisdom and love, these caverns were steeped in shadow. Ancient stones hummed with a slow, awakening pulse, an energy untouched by divine light. Here, power slept, dormant for centuries, its presence felt only by the faintest tremor in the earth.

Kritika, seated on her high perch and sipping her tea, felt it — a subtle, almost teasing ripple. Her senses, honed by centuries of transmigration and divine connection, tingled with curiosity. Though the Light Mountains glowed in harmony, the hidden caves below whispered a different story.

Something is waking, Kritika murmured, her eyes narrowing with interest. Her cubs, sensing the shift, paused in their play, their instincts sharpening. Even the most playful of dragons and wolves twitched their ears toward the mountains' shadowed edges, aware of a force that had not yet fully emerged.

Deep within the dark caverns, ancient beasts began to stir. Energy that had long been sealed, feared by even the oldest divine guardians, pushed against its bonds. Shadows twisted, stones vibrated, and a low, almost sentient growl echoed through the hollowed chambers. The power was waking — and it was aware.

Kritika's lips curved into a knowing smile. She leaned forward, letting her aura ripple subtly across the mountain. So, the game begins, she thought. While I nurture the light, the darkness awakens... but let it rise. I am ready.

The cubs, the mates, even the distant forests seemed to hold their breath. Something monumental was stirring beneath the surface, a force that could rival even the most powerful divine energies — and Kritika's journey, and the balance of the beast world itself, was about to be tested in ways no one had yet imagined.

The Light Mountains glimmered peacefully above, yet in the shadowed depths, a storm of raw, untamed power waited... biding its time.

Kritika laughed softly, her arms still wrapped around her cubs as she stood from the garden bench. The flowers swayed gently in the breeze, reflecting the sunlight that bathed the Light Mountains in gold. But her father's expression was serious, the usual warmth in his eyes tempered with caution.

"Who troubled my father now?" Kritika teased, trying to lighten the moment.

Her father, the mighty Beast God, sighed and crouched slightly to meet her gaze. "Kritika... it's serious this time. A force long dormant is awakening — a snake beastman, over 4000 years old. He was sealed away because even the gods feared his power."

Kritika's smile faded, her playful demeanor giving way to focus. Her mother, the Beast Goddess, stepped closer, placing a gentle hand on her shoulder. Her aura radiated calm yet unyielding strength.

"This snake beastman... he is cunning, ruthless, and ancient," her mother added, her voice steady. "His awakening will disrupt the balance of the beast world. You must prepare, my daughter."

Kritika hugged both her parents tightly, feeling their immense energy envelop her. "I understand," she whispered. Her eyes sparkled with determination. "Don't worry. I've faced threats before — even those that should have killed me centuries ago. He won't catch us unprepared."

Her father nodded, though the worry remained etched in his features. "Remember, Kritika, this is not just about strength. His mind and will are as dangerous as his body. You must be cautious, for the cubs and your mates. They will feel his influence if he is not contained."

Kritika chuckled softly, ruffling the cubs' hair. "Don't worry, Father. My mates and I will handle it. I've built my family, trained them, and now... we are ready for whatever comes."

Her mother gave a small, approving nod. "Be wise, my daughter. This snake beastman is no ordinary foe. You may need to call upon powers you have not yet fully realized."

Kritika's gaze drifted toward the horizon, where the hidden caves pulsed faintly in shadow, a distant reminder of the awakening threat. Her lips curved into a sly smile. "Let him come. He'll soon learn why no one should ever challenge the daughter of the Beast Gods."

The cubs giggled, oblivious to the impending danger, and Kritika knelt to play with them again. But in the back of her mind, the ancient power stirring in the shadows was already sharpening its senses toward her — and the next chapter of the beast world was about to unfold.

The End - Part 1

BOOK 2

Epilogue: Shadows of the Ancient Beast

The Light Mountains glimmered softly under the moonlight, the cubs nestled close to Kritika as laughter and tiny purrs filled the garden. For now, peace reigned. Kritika's gaze wandered across her family — Curtis, Harvey, Winston, Shuu, Sulpher, Rahegar, and even Light — each mate a pillar of strength, each cub a promise of the future.

But somewhere deep beneath the layers of the earth, far below the hidden caves untouched by divine light, a dark energy stirred. Ancient and primal, the ground shivered as if awakening from a long-forgotten dream. A single, jagged claw scraped the stone, and a hiss echoed through the caverns — a hiss that carried power older than the mountains themselves.

Kritika's father and mother, the Beast God and Goddess, appeared at her side, their expressions tense. "A shadow that has slept for four thousand years is stirring," her father said, voice heavy with foreboding. "Its power rivals any in this world. You must be ready, my daughter."

Kritika's playful smile faded, replaced by a steely determination. She placed a protective hand over her cubs, feeling their budding energy thrumming against her own. "Then we prepare," she said softly. "Whatever comes... it will find us united."

Above the mountains, the wind carried a chill, and in the deepest shadows, golden eyes gleamed. The ancient snake beast, forgotten by time but remembered by the earth itself, was awake. Its coils slithered silently, and with every movement, it whispered a promise: The world of beasts will know fear again.

And somewhere, far beyond the Light Mountains, the divine energies stirred in uneasy anticipation.

The game had begun.