

Alpha's Nala Chapter 24 -

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Chapter 24. Wait a Minute

Legaxy

“Hailey!”

“Flower!”

Both Howard and Axel yell upon seeing me. Then, without another word, they started racing towards me.

Frozen on my seat, I just watched them boys compete their way towards me. Until, it was Howard Martin Dyme, the big and muscular brother of mine, that got to me first.

He quickly picked me up from the chair I was sitting in with one swift of his broad, firm arms and started spinning me around.

“Oh my goodness! I have missed you so much, Hailey bear.” He shrieked gleefully, still spinning around.

“I miss you too, Howie,” I muttered, a giggle came out of my throat.

As he put me down and was about to greet me, Axel David Dyme – my tall and lean brother – popped in front of me and engulfed me into a long, bone-crushing hug.

“Hey! I was here first!” I heard Howard complain but Axel ignored him as he tightened his embrace around me.

“I miss you, my little Flower. Haven’t you bloom so well and,” he sniffed my hair, making me blush on his arms, “you still smell sweet... very, very sweet.” He continued in a gentle, quiet tone.

Why the nickname now?

Since Axel sees me as a fragile and delicate sister, apart from the reason Mum calling me Lily, he thought it would be suitable to nickname me as ‘Flower’.

I know, too cute... Let those eyes roll.

“I mi – miss you too Ax – Axel,” I stuttered, trying to cool down my burning cheeks.

Though, it wasn't fast enough. Axel, after freeing himself from the embrace, chuckled when he caught sight of it.

"Still hating the compliments, Flower?" He asked while gently caressing my reddened cheeks.

I swatted his hand away from my face.

"No. Ju-just the sniffing," I replied shyly, my eyes averting his delicate stare.

"Oh, just old habits." He chuckled again, "My apologies though." He's now scratching the back of his neck.

I smile upon seeing that.

"It's okay Ax. Just don't do it again, please."

He smirked.

"I'll try, Flower, I'll try." He promised and gave me a quick kiss on the forehead.

And there goes my blushing again.

"Dude, stop! She's getting red again." Howard laughed while grabbing Axel on his collar, pulling him away from me. Then, in Axel's place, Howard stand and gave me a formal hug.

"So, how's my Hailey be – oh wow, you look cute in pigtails. Did Mum do this?" Howard asked, feeling him touching the braid.

"Nope, I did," I respond casually.

"Oh, and where did you learn that?" He inquired after releasing me from the hug. His eyes currently studying my face.

The question, for some reason, caught me off guard, making my forehead wrinkled in question.

"Actually, I don't know. I just... well, I felt like I could do it. So, I did it and here it is." I slowly explained while touching my braided head.

Listening to this, I noticed Howard giving Axel a bothered look which Axel returned with a concerned gaze.

Then, both of them, at the exact same time, stared at me weirdly.

“What?” I blurted out.

“Hailey, don’t you think that unconscious act is part of your memory?” Howard cautiously spoke the words and when my silver-gray eyes landed on his cyan ones, I saw he was uncomfortable.

“I’m” – I licked my lips – “unsure... I only felt it. Does that count?” I sounded uneasy now and my brothers noticed that.

Axel, with one swift motion, pulled me into another hug.

“Yes Flower, but don’t think too much about it.” Axel whispered, “We just wanted to know if it’s still happening... the flashbacks. Any episodes this past few days?” He asks, feeling his lips moved on top of my head.

“Only one... happened today actually. But it’s the ‘normal’ case.” I told.

“What about the not-so-normal ones?” I heard Howard queried.

I lift my head from Axel’s chest to glance at Howard. He looks far more serious at the second, that if you took one look at him, you may think he was angry.

“Nothing, for this month.” I quietly replied, “The last one transpired a month ago, with the same voice, the same scene in the woods... The same” – I gulped – “screams of pain.” I added.

They didn’t respond after that, increasing the tension I was feeling...

Apart from the ‘episode’ I had undergone a moment ago, there are others that I have no idea about. Others that I, honestly, don’t like recollecting.

Not that it hurts to remember, it’s just unfamiliar memories to me. I can’t even tell if it’s mine or not...

To make matters worse, I don’t even recall the time on how or the reason why I have this amnesia in the first place.

I just woke up one day and it’s there; I just have it.

Odd?

Very...

“We are very sorry, Flower.” Axel cooed, his blue-green eyes were apologetic. “We were just a bit... disturbed, that’s all. We mean you no harm.” He added while tightening the hug.

I only nodded my response and from there, Mum called the boys for help in setting the table.

I didn't miss Mum's wink once the boys came to her side. As if saying she tricked them into doing the job and that I needed a break.

Finally.

I let out a sigh, feeling relieved since I didn't just get away from the blushing and last-minute table set up, but also from the serious atmosphere, my brothers created from interviewing me about my unnerving flashbacks.

Mum knew how I felt for those recalls and as quickly as she can, she tries to avoid me from any conversation pertaining to that.

And thank Goddess for that...

All of a sudden, out of the corner of my eye, I caught a glimpse of Seth with Dad – both having a serious conversation while standing on the threshold of the room. Then from serious, Dad became upset while Seth became wary, which made my mind suspect something was wrong.

Though I don't know what it was – or if it was related to me, because somehow their demeanor still looked calm and collected as their discussion continued.

'Must be a casual talk,' I assumed.

Shortly after, Seth caught my staring and flashed me his signature full smile – the one that sparkles, like a diamond ring under a bright light. He then excused himself from Dad and approached me.

Unlike the two boys, Seth only greeted me and we made small talks about our day – no, I didn't tell him about the invitation being misplaced. It was my fault in the first place, so – to redeem myself, I will be the one to search for it.

Hopefully, I could find it...

Then, when I was about to ask regarding the plan on how to announce the truth to everybody, Mum called us for dinner.

As expected, everyone talked to everybody during the meal. All laughing and chit-chatting to update each other about the missed time.

I was barely participating in the conversations because one, I was more of a listener than a talker, and two, I just love watching everybody enjoying themselves.

The boys didn't give up on me though...

They kept on asking me some random questions to make me talk until they came upon topics regarding my work. They were truly pleased with the success of their attempt because I, eventually, opened up about my hotel industry life.

"Hotel work sounds hard Hailey," Howard commented after a long discussion about the overall work I do at the resort.

Not to mention the errands I fulfill for Ms. Dawn.

"And brain wrecking too," Axel gently interjected. "Though, Flower, it never really occurred to me that you have that kind of job; one that requires you to become a follower."

I frowned at that.

"Well, what did you expect a Personal Secretary does, Ax?"

"Don't take my words as a mock, Flower. Though, if it does sound like one, then I am sorry." He paused and sighed, "Yet, I did expect you in a higher position. One that allows you to lead and lets you make your own decision." He admitted.

"I'm actually doing that, you know. It's part of the responsibilities." I reasoned.

"Still, you work under supervision," Axel argued.

My frown deepened and was about to defy him when Mum interrupted us.

"Okay, stop. You two" – she glared at me, then Axel – "quit it. Not in front of grace." She stated sternly.

Both of us instantly shut our mouths.

"Still Ax, you should be glad." Howard started after the short pause, "Hailey's work sounds better, SAFER than the other jobs she has mentioned a while ago." He pointed out.

"Howard's right, Axel." Dad seconded, "You don't want your sister to go through that task of getting into argument after argument with guests. Mainly, with them werewolf guests... pure headache son." He ended with a scoff.

I eyed Dad after his declaration and he made a fake innocent face as if asking me the 'what did I do' question – I could even hear it in Dad's childish tone.

Axel, on the other hand, was convinced and didn't further question me.

Even so, I got annoyed.

“You guys are unbelievable.” I finally muttered and they all started laughing at my sour face.

Well, not all.

I shifted my gaze at a troubled Seth.

His absence in the conversation, let alone his anticipated laughter to my funny reaction, made me tilted my head in wonder. I was about to ask what was bothering him when Mum got to him first.

“Seth, sweetheart, is something wrong?” Mum inquired, causing everybody else to quit their laughing and turned their puzzled gazes at Seth.

My big brother didn't say a word at first and me realizing it might be related to the secret he was holding up to himself, I swallowed hard.

Oh god, he's gonna declare it... Though, would he truly?

Particularly, in full details?

Knowing Seth, he's not really good at relaying a whole message towards us. Most especially, one that is dangerous and involves the whole family or one of its members.

He kinda has this quality that wants to keep the danger part to himself and tries to solve it quietly on his own. So, when you finally heard about the problem, it was already fixed.

I know, and as I said before, he was becoming selfish...

Or just scared?

With all eyes on him, he finally let out a heavy sigh and started speaking.

Still thinking that he may be spilling the truth on the spot, I held my breath and listen attentively.

“I'm sorry to say this but canine aggression is the least of our worries right now.” Seth stated in a rough, husky voice, “We have rogue vampires and black witches to address to.”

Oh.

That was it.

'Okay, not the one I was expecting to hear,' I thought to myself as I slowly exhale the held breath.

Nonetheless, the air in the room became heavy as I caught a glimpse of Dad becoming dead serious. He was always the cheerful one in the family and seeing him like this made me believe that the subject was far more important yet dangerous to ignore.

I gulped, while everyone else around me tenses up.

"Is there anything that we can do at the moment, to stop them?" Dad consulted Seth; sounds like he knew already about the matter.

'Must be the casual talk I saw earlier,' I thought once more.

Seth, who was very uneasy at the second, shook his head in a NO.

Dad sighed heavily.

"The Vampire King and Witch Queen will not gonna like this news," Dad mumbled while pinching the bridge of his nose, a sign he was stressed out.

Well, for a family like ours that solemnly swore to protect the community in any way we can, who wouldn't be stressed out about this?

Especially when the issue was causing disarray on the Coexistence Law – a law that keeps the peace between mankind and supernatural beings.

(The same rule being regulated at the Mallow Hotel).

So, if this continues, them rogue vampires and black witches running around freely – causing mayhem, I will not be shocked if another war comes out of this.

I'm not a negative here, but seeing Seth and Dad's reaction, there can be a possibility...

Not to mention, with another war means another ticket for extinction for the mixed-race – a total ANNIHILATION.

I swallowed hard at the idea.

"I heard their numbers are adding up, making the neighborhood unsafe for everybody," Howard announced, making me cringe.

"Stupid creatures. When will they ever stop?" Mum snarled.

"I just don't understand," Axel's forehead wrinkled, "from all the time in the world, why now make a scene?" He throws the question directly at Seth, eyeing him.

Seth stared back at him.

“They heard about the Ball.” He answered our brother, looking pretty upset. “They will be hunting at the occasion and because it’s their season, expect a massacre to happen.” His aura grew dark from here.

“What?” I asked, alarmed now. “No Seth, that’s not right. It can’t be... Does this mean will have to cancel the ball then?”

Dad took my left hand, encouraging me a smile. “Afraid so princess. We can’t afford any casualties to take place at the event.”

So from bad to worst...

I bit my lip hard.

Everyone around me became silent after hearing that, especially my brothers.

In my head, I know it was for the best because we wouldn’t want anyone to be hurt but in return, my brothers – and all the REDless out there – will have to suffer. They will have to wait for the next ball to occur, which will be next year.

Poor them.

My eyes move around the table and one by one, I looked at my brothers’ faces. Just looking how the HOPE in their eyes faded, especially in Seth’s, shatters my heart.

All I could think of then was them and how to help them...

Though, how exactly am I going to do that since I don’t know anything about the RED matching?

I don’t even know how it works.

“The important thing we should focus on right now is how to keep things manageable and low key to avoid panic upon the residents. Not to mention, and the most important one is, how to stop this once and for all.” Seth declared, sounding his signature Vampire husky, dark leader tone.

Everyone nodded, except me.

I was currently on a deep level of thought; busy pondering on the intensity of how serious this mess was, to the disappointment of the Ball being canceled, and to the point of finding solutions for each case.

I know it is not my battle to fight, but I am thoughtful enough to offer my help because that's how I am. That's how I function as a human and the family knows that, that's why they didn't question my silence.

So, I kept on deliberating with myself.

I know there must be some kind of a way to address all of this.

I just know...

“Wait, ” Axel announced, breaking the silence that engulfed us.

All our attention snapped at him.

He looks baffled as he glanced at Seth, asking, “Why will they hunt at the Red Moon Ball when all the attendees there are Vampires and Witches? Do they meant suicide brother?”

Upon hearing this, I noticed Seth's jaw ticked, while the others looked dumbfounded.

As for me, I completely wondered at the question.

Axel has a point.

If they want to hunt for food or a ritual sacrifice, they should rather go to a place or event where HUMANS exist. They basically can't do any of the feeding or rituals to their own kind, even if it means for survival –

Wait a minute...□□□