

A Party or a Gathering of Enemies?

Catalina's POV

I am getting ready for the party, FaceTiming Rachel for help with my hair and just to chat. I am not going to tell her I'm pregnant just yet. But I let her tell me all about her own pregnancy and everything else that's going on with the pack.

"Lina we already miss you so much." Rachel says.

"I will be back before you know it."

"Let me see your dress." Rachel says. I pick up my dress and stand in front of my phone.

"That is beautiful Lina. Do you get to keep it?" She asks.

"I have no idea. I didn't ask." I say.

"Well I'll let you nish getting ready. Send me a picture of you in your dress, alright?" She asks.

"No problem. I will talk to you later."

"Bye!" And I hang up. I am a bit nervous about tonight. I've never been around so many different types of magical creatures. I slip into the dress, but the zipper is in the back and I can't reach.

"Do you need any help, High Alpha." I hear Fayne on the other side of the door.

"Actually, I can't get the zipper in the back of the dress." I say. A minute later a woman walks in the room. She looks to be around Fayne's age. She is around my height and her hair is blonde and short.

"High Alpha." She bows.

"High Alpha, this is Lisa, my wife, she will help with the dress." Fayne says before closing the door. The girl looks very composed, like Fayne. She keeps her eyes down and her hands folded in front of her.

"Hello Lisa. Could you help me with the zipper?" I say calmly.

"Oh yes of course." She hurries to the back of the dress and zips it up. It is a bit loose at the top of the dress.

"Let me get some tape and secure it." Lisa says and turns to leave the room. She stops at the door.

"Would you like a drink or anything else I can get for you?" She is still looking down at the ground.

"I would love it if you looked up." Her eyes met mine. she had lovely green eyes.

"That's better. A glass of water would be lovely, thank you." I say. She smiles and bows before leaving the room. When she returns she has a glass of water in one hand and something I can't quite make out in the other. She hands me the water, still not making eye contact. I could not imagine demanding people not look me in the eye. The eyes are like the window into a person. I drink some water as Lisa secures my dress. Then she walks in front of me holding out some thing in her hand.

"What is that?"

"It's a knife holder. Shall I put it on you?" Her eyes ick up and back down.

"Why do I need this?"

"My lady, it is for protection." She says as if I should know this.

"I don't normally walk around with weapons on me." I say.

"Are you normally around vampires, dwarves, and elves?" Her eyes ick back up to mine. I like the way she is testing me to see how I will react to her boldness.

"Very well. But I've never worn one of these before. Can you show me how to put it on?" I ask. Lisa smiles.

"Of course. Since you are wearing a long dress this is an ankle holster. If you were wearing a shorter dress you would want a thigh holster." She kneels on the oor and I lift my dress. She straps two straps, one around my ankle and one around my mid calf. She tightens them so they are secure and doesn't move. When she is nished she stands.

"Also High Alpha there is this." Lisa holds out a beautiful necklace. But then she ips it over and there is a small red button. I look at her confused.

"This is like a panic button." She puts it on me.

"If you are ever in trouble push down on it and it will emit an extreme energy wave. It will push everyone away from you and give you some time to escape." Okay they're actually making me really nervous.

"Why are we planning for something bad to happen?" I ask.

"It is better to have a plan and nothing happens than for something to happen and not have a plan." She smiles at me.

"I am grateful." Lisa's face beams with pride. She bows to me.

"So. How do I look?" I hold my arms out and turn to each side.

"You look beautiful, High Alpha."

"Well I guess I am ready to go into the lions den." Lisa giggles a bit. Fayne walks in. I notice he gives Lisa a quick look.

"Councilmen Eric is here to escort you." Fayne bows to me. I walk past them and down the hallway. I see Eric standing by the replace. The re is at a low roar, letting off a warm orange light. Eric is dressed in a nice dark blue suit. His suit has details of owers in a shade lighter blue. He has a crisp white button up shirt and white shoes on. He looks very fancy.

"Lina, you look stunning. Did you speak with Andrew?" He asks. "You look pretty dapper yourself. Yes we talked."

"Is he coming here?" He asks.

"Actually, we came up with a deal. He will stay at the pack lands until I start to show."

"Really? Now that's a surprise. Are you happy with that?"

"I am. I'm just ready to get this night over with and start my training."

"You sound like me when I rst got here. You'll do splendid. As long as you are happy, so am I. Come, let's not keep the public waiting." Eric holds his arm out for me to take it. I take his arm and we head out the door. We head to the elevator and down to the banquet level. The elevator doors open to the grand banquet doors. The doors are open and people are mingling in front. The doors and frame are solid wood and reach all the way to the top of the ceiling. As we walk closer to the entrance, I notice people stop talking and turn towards us.

"Just keep your head high and eyes forward. This is a different crowd Lina. You want their respect, not to be their friend." Eric mind links me. So I x my eyes forward and keep my head up as we walk in. As we pass the threshold, it takes every bit of control inside me to keep from gasping at how beautiful it looks inside. We walk into a huge room with four levels of balconies on both sides. There are steps leading down to the rst level. The walls are covered in gold accents and the ceiling has large crystals chandeliers hanging from them. The rst oor is full of people, who turn and look at us as we walk down the steps.

Im focusing all my energy on staying up. Don't fall. Don't fall. Do not fall! I feel Eric's grip tighten on me and I am appreciative. I see a familiar face in the crowd. I smile when I see her. She makes her way over to meet us at the bottom of the stairs. I know I should contain myself but every part of me wants to just run down and hug her. But I stay strong and continue our pace. I search the room for more familiar faces. I see a lot of people I don't know, some have very pale skin, some pointy ears, and some were very short. We nally reach the bottom of the stairs and Lilith is standing there with a smile on her face.

She bows to me, such a weird feeling.

"Is that really necessary?" I whisper to her.

"I think with the present company it is." She whispers back. She is probably right.

"High Alpha, I would like to introduce you to Ailwin Inavyre. His is one of the elven elders." Lilith says. Ailwin has long straight white hair. His face is full of sharp angles and clear blue eyes. He is slim and stands well above me and Lilith. He is wearing a dark and light blue dress robe. He looks very intimidating and proper.

"High Alpha. It is a pleasure to nally meet you." Ailwin says and bows to me.

"Do I bow back?" I mindlink Eric.

"Only head bow. Bend at the neck only." Eric demonstrates. I head bow.

"Nice to make your acquaintance." I say.

"Good luck in here. You are going to need it." Ailwin darts his eyes around the room and a ash of disgust crosses his face. But as soon as it is there, it is gone. He bows to me again and he leaves.

"Elves do not like mingling outside of their kind. Especially the elders." Lilith says in a low tone.

"Come, there are many to introduce you to." Eric says. He leads me further into the hall and introduces me to more people than I can remember.

"How am I suppose to remember everyone?" I ask Lilith halfway through the night.

"Don't try to remember them all. Half of them you will never see again." The night drags on and so do the introductions. Lilith and Eric don't leave my side, and for that I am grateful. One of the last people I met was a vampire named Zane.

"High Alpha, my I introduce Zane. He is part of the vampiric council." Eric says. Zane slightly bows to me, much less than anyone else. I meet his slight bow with my own, barely bowing my head. His eyebrow raises slightly in amusement.

"High Alpha. How nice to nally meet you." He says slightly loud to draw attention.

"Nice to make your acquaintance."

"It might not be. Tell me High Alpha, when you were off ghting the Gods, who was protecting the rest of your kind around the world?" He asks. Is he trying to embarrass me in front of all these people?

"You are referring to the rogues?" I try to keep my voice from showing emotion.

"Yes, the rogues." He hints the word rogues hard to show emphasis.

"Well unfortunately, most rogues have been cast out of their original packs. They don't follow a leader. But I am working on trying to get them under some form of protection." I say.

"You are referring to Dolus? The god spirit that inhabited your mate and tortured him? You trust him now to negotiate with the rogues?" I feel all eyes on me and I hate that he is getting under my skin. I try to compose myself.

"He is trying to goat you into a reaction. You are the High Alpha. Don't let him." Eric says to me in mindlink. I let go of Eric's arm.

"Take a step back." I tell him. Eric steps back.

"I am sorry you are under the impression you can question me and my people. I am the High Alpha and I answer to no one." My voice grows in intensity. I feel heat rolling off me and everyone takes a step back to get away from the heat. All except Zane.

"High Alpha." He says in a less than respectful manor. "Please forgive me. I was only curious to know why you would trust such a creature."

"You disrespect my position and you disrespect me. I will ask you to take your leave." The heat I can feel is getting hotter, but he doesn't move. He does however bow to me again, slightly lower than the rst time.

"As you wish High Alpha." He walks towards the stairs. Once he is gone I calm down.

"I don't know if I just made a mistake or not." I say to Lilith.

"You did wonderfully. Vampires always have something up their sleeves. But when were you going to tell me you were working with Dolus?" She asks. In honesty, I wasn't planning on telling anyone I was working with him.

"I wasn't going to until something came out of it. And I'm not working with him. He is trying to get me a meeting with the rouge leader, that's all." I say. Her eyes look amused.

"Be careful with him. As air tight as the wording you use can seem, there might be a loophole we can't see. He is tricky." Lilith says.

"I will be." I say. The rest of the evening was uneventful. Eric takes me back to my room.

"You did wonderf tonight. I want to talk to you more about Dolus, but that can wait for tomorrow. Get some rest, your rst day of training tomorrow." Eric bows slightly to me.

"I'll see you tomorrow." I say and walk into my apartment. Fayne and Lisa are waiting there for me.

"High Alpha." Fayne says and they both bow. The bowing has gotten old.

"Lisa will help you get undressed. Do you need anything else this evening?" Fayne asks.

"No, I'm just very tired." I say.

"Very good. I will leave you. I will be back tomorrow before you wake up." He bows and then leaves. I walk to my bedroom and Lisa helps me out of my dress. She runs me a hot bath and then leaves. I soak in the warm water and wash my hair. I get out and wrap myself in a nice uffy robe. When I walk into my bedroom I jump at the gure on my bed.

"Dolus?! What are you doing here?" I wrap the robe around me tighter.

"Good to see you too." He raises an eyebrow to me with a smirk. I tuck a strand of wet hair behind my ear.

"I'm really tired. What is it?" I say.

"Right to business? Alright. I spoke with the rogue leader and he would like to meet."

"When?" I ask.

"Soon. I told him you were away for awhile, but I wouldn't put him off for too long."

"Very well. I will let you know when I'm available."

"You brought my stone with you?" He asks.

"Yes I did." He smiles to himself as he gets up off the bed and walks over to me.

"Good." He stops right in front of me. He stares down at me, with an expression I can't read. Like he wants to say something, but decides not to. "I will be waiting." And then he was gone. I let out a breath and op down on my bed. Maybe it is a bad idea to work with Dolus. Maybe I'm being naive.