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## **Chapter 31 : The King**

"I don't know if this is a good idea." I glanced toward Vicky, unsure.

Another dinner... Why did they keep forcing me to be in their presence? The last time I went to dinner, it was a disaster.

She smiled, gripping my hand with hers. "It's going to be fine. Stop worrying so much."

"You said that last time," I replied. "I have a bad feeling about this."

Vicky had outdone herself again while dressing me. My long hair had been curled and pinned up in a partial updo. My makeup was done to perfection, with small bits of blush highlighting my cheeks and giving me a more innocent look.

Even the long formal gown she picked was beautiful. Its deep blue color was a contrast to Ethan's light colored eyes. Those same eyes that I fixed in my mind's eye every night before I went to sleep. A part of me felt safe and protected with him around.

But tonight something felt off. Something about this dinner didn't feel safe, and I wasn't sure what it was... but I knew I was going to find out.

By the time Vicky and I reached the doors to the grand hall, Talon was already there. He greeted us with a smile, and I couldn't help but notice how dashing he looked in what he was wearing.

"Talon, you look amazing," I said, smiling politely at him.

A chuckle fell from his lips as he smiled. "I could say the same about you as well. Radiant as always, Miss Rosalie– shall we go inside?"

Nodding my head, I took his offered arm and followed behind him with Vicky at my back. She had tried to be highly reassuring, but I wasn't feeling as confident as I had other times. All the rumors I heard about the Alpha King, and the man he was, flooded my mind, and my nerves refused to allow me to ignore my fears.

The boisterous laughter of the people within filled the massive hall and bounced around the large vaulted ceiling, as if happiness was the only thing on their mind.

The men and women in front of me all turned and offered their smiles. I didn't recognize any of these people, and I supposed I should just assume they were various other allies.

As the talk continued, I realized I was almost invisible in their conversations, and that was something I was pleased with. I didn't want to be part of the discussion.

I noticed Ethan's gaze sweep over me as we got closer to the front of the hall. A dark, lusty look seemed to fill it.

The men all stopped in their tracks to look at us. Vicky and I both bowed in respect to the Alphas – and the Alpha King.

Ethan's gaze turned and swept over me as we got closer, and I watched as a dark lusty look seemed to fill him.

"Ethan!" The king's hearty chuckle filled the room once more, "you didn't tell me she's so lovely."

I was taken aback by the king's statement.

Quickly he made his way towards me. "Stand, let me look at you."

My eyes remained looking at the floor as I let him approach me. Slowly he lifted my chin and commanded my gaze to fall upon him.

He looked very similar to Ethan - handsome, graceful, but the few mild wrinkles on his face made him seem more approachable than I imagined a king would be.

"You picked well," he commented, looking at Ethan with a satisfactory smile.

As Ethan stepped closer to me, the king nodded, and let go of my chin. He turned around and rejoined the conversation with Romero's group.

"Rosalie..." Ethan's low voice pulled my attention back from the king to face him, "let's take a seat."

Nodding my head, I took the next few steps at Ethan's side towards the large table, where I was seated upon the most lavish of golden chairs I had ever seen in my life.

There was only one thing my eyes fell over that I had hoped wouldn't be present–Madalynn.

A subtle smirk was plastered to her face as she stared at me, and it left me beyond confused the entire time I was eating dinner. Every time I looked up, her eyes were on me, and a grin of pure pleasure was etched on her face.

"So Ethan, I have to admit that you were lucky to obtain such a beautiful breeder."

My eyes shot up and straight toward the king, shock written across my face.

Ethan frowned at his king with narrowed eyes. Apparently, he didn't expect to hear what the king just said either.

"My king-" he started to reply, but the king continued, "Ethan, it isn't a big deal. Many people have used breeders before."

He looked around the table, but, for some reason, not at me. I had a feeling that although the king mentioned me, I wasn't going to be his topic.

"However," he continued, "we do need to talk about something."

I watched as Ethan's fist clenched under the table, and then very quickly relaxed on his lap. He still had a decent smile on his face. If I hadn't been so close with him over the past few months, I wouldn't have recognized the anger lurking beneath his slightly furrowed brow.

"What does his majesty need to speak with me about?" Ethan said in a low voice. "Couldn't it wait till later, in a more private venue?"

"Nonsense." The king didn't raise his voice, but he was displeased with Ethan's request, "we are all allies here-friends, if you will. Plus, this involves Alpha Romero- and, to be honest, I think you will be happy with what I have to say in the long run."

"Indeed." Romero replied softly with a smile. "Wonderful news."

My eyes took in the men around me, and there was no way whatever they were going to say was wonderful news. Ethan knew it, I knew it... Even Vicky looked at me with worry and concern. Something bad was about to happen.

I knew I shouldn't have come down for dinner.

"Ethan, it's about time you take a Luna for your pack," The king said.

Everyone fell silent. My eyes went to Ethan's, but there was nothing written in them.

"I don't need a Luna, your majesty. I have a breeder to provide me with an heir."

I had heard many times that he didn't want a Luna or to be with anyone. Maybe subconsciously, it led me to think that I would be the only woman that he had a relationship with- even if that relationship was just a master-breeder one.

However, he was an alpha, and of course, he would find a mate or Luna, and settle down with that woman, forever.

This realization hurt me way more than I expected. Not only because that would mean I would have to serve her as well- or I would be cast out, and never able to see Ethan again- but to think he would be intimate with someone else...

My fingers clenched in my dress.

"I am not asking you anymore, Ethan," intoned the king loudly, and I instantly felt the crowd's attention on me. "While your breeder is lovely, she isn't Luna material. Romero has offered his daughter to you, and you will make her your bride and Luna. Do I make myself clear on this?"

"Sire... that wouldn't be fair to Miss Madalynn," Ethan said through gritted teeth. "I won't be able to love her or show her the affection she deserves. "

"One can never say 'never.' Things can change. Miss Madalynn comes from a good bloodline, has been raised with gracefulness, and can produce strong children. I'm sure such a fine lady will change your heart over time."

The king raised his glass for Madalynn, who was smiling back at him and Ethan.

"And with my daughter, you will no longer need your breeder," Romero said with a smile. "I would have no problem giving her a home with me. She would be well taken care of in my pack."

Fear swept over me, and my breathing came in more fiercely. As Romero glanced over towards me I saw the sinister, lust-ridden heat that was filling him.

"No," Ethan said firmly.

But he seemed to run out of justifications, and could not argue any more.

"I need time to think about this, majesty," he demurred. "Is that okay?"

The king's eyes looked to me once more, and a sigh left his lips. "Very well. You may have tonight to learn to accept this, but as of tomorrow, you are engaged to Madalynn."

The king was done discussing the situation, and quickly moved on to other topics.

It felt like I spent the rest of the evening in fog. I couldn't remember much, and when I was excused, I couldn't wait to get away from them fast enough.

Ethan – the man I had foolishly pretended was only mine during the time I had spent in the Drogomor pack – would have a bride.

I couldn't breathe. I knew how ridiculous I was for thinking this way, but I just couldn't help but feel heartbroken and ... jealous.

Would he choose to marry Madalynn?

Despite her overbearing presence, she was young and beautiful. And they would have the King's blessing.

Tears rolled down my cheeks as I pushed open the large wooden door to our room and stepped inside.

I just wanted to be alone, and given that Ethan hadn't come up after me– I knew I was.

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