

Mated To Five Alpha Brothers

Chapter 2

Checking myself one last time in the floor-length mirror, I tried to quell the panic that was threatening to seep out. Now that the meeting was just minutes away, my thoughts and emotions had begun to run wild. It was hard to reign it in when it felt like everything that I had worked for could be taken away in an instant. And though it wouldn't likely be the end of the world, it certainly came close to it.

My career was everything. It had given me purpose and a sense of control over the trajectory of my life. Something that my teenage self could only dream of as she cried herself to sleep through many a night.

That girl did not have a choice but to quietly take what was given. To silently endure, helpless against the hate of the adults who were supposed to care and provide... A sudden wave of nausea hit my gut unexpectedly, causing me to dry heave. Instantly, my hands flew up and clamped over my mouth, my eyes squeezing shut as I forced myself to calm down.

I'm not there anymore. Not there. Not with them anymore.

I repeated the mantra in my head, trying desperately to rid myself of the memories that vehemently clung to my soul. Memories that refused to leave, constantly resurfaced in times when my stress levels acted up.

But eventually, after a few deep breaths and some uncomfortable cramping in my gut, the discomfort passed. Feeling relieved but still a little rattled, I stood up straight and studied my reflection once again.

The black pencil dress clung to my curves effortlessly while the matching set of patent heels added to my height and emphasized my long legs. My dark hair fell past my shoulders in elegant curls, framing my face symmetrically and helping enhance my green eyes. And aside from the fact that my tan skin seemed a little pale, there were no tell-tale signs that spoke of the chaos I felt within.

Taking a deep breath and mentally bracing myself for the outcome, I walked out of the restroom and made my way to the upper floors.

The walk toward the boardroom felt almost robotic. My feet seemed to move of their own accord, oddly synchronizing with the accelerated beats that could be heard coming out of my chest. The surroundings passed by in a blur as my mind failed to focus on anything else.

And after what felt like a lifetime, I came to a standstill in front of a large set of double doors that read "Boardroom". A low murmur of talk could be heard coming from within, causing my nerves to flare immediately and dispel the calm that I had painstakingly gathered in the last few minutes.

Not wanting to risk another repeat of the episode that I had downstairs, I quickly raised my hand and knocked, keen to get this over with and return to the comfort of my home.

There was a pause in their talk before I heard Bob's voice call out.

"Come in"

Plastering on a smile that I certainly did not feel, I pushed the doors open.

It took a moment to adjust to the bright light and another one to realize that I had never been in this room before. The boardroom was rather large with an oval table in the middle spanning the entire length of the room. My eyes initially met with the massive panel windows through which the bright light was streaming, facing the city of Manhattan below. The tips of the tall skyscrapers touching the clouds was a sight to marvel and had it been any other day, I would have paused to stare. Unfortunately, it wasn't going to be today.

Closing the doors softly behind me, I turned towards my right, to face my fate.

Sasha's recount had been accurate. There were indeed five of them seated at the very end of the table. Bob and Mitch from the leadership team occupied the seats to the left, whereas, Jennifer and Brad, both in senior management sat to the right.

In the very middle, sat an unfamiliar figure staring intently in my direction. From what I could tell, he seemed to be well built, his large frame filling in the chair completely when compared to the other men in the room. And as my eyes zeroed in on the stranger's face, my world suddenly tilted on its axis. My breath hitched when our gazes met.

Striking grey eyes peered from underneath a deep frown highlighting the curiosity. confusion? hidden behind those orbs.

I was taken aback when a myriad of emotions struck me in full force all at once, squeezing the last bit of precious air left within my lungs in a loud exhale. Warmth, security, love, lust and an insane need to be possessed by this man ran through my body. To say I was "confused" by such a visceral reaction to another person would have been an understatement.

Oddly, at that moment, I couldn't recall the reason I was there. In fact, if someone had asked me my name, I would have struggled to remember it.

My musings, however, came to a halt when I was rudely brought back to the matter at hand. Brad's voice carried across the space, echoing loudly off the walls in the large room. "Ah, Mia, come on in and take a seat."

It was only then I realized that I hadn't moved an inch from the time I had laid eyes on this gorgeous stranger. Talk about stopping dead in one's tracks!

Mentally cringing and blushing furiously, I raced to where they were seated and pulled up a seat beside Brad before hastily sitting down. I glanced around sheepishly at everyone present. All of them appeared to be wearing a serious expression except for Jennifer of course. Her overly smug expression had my embarrassment melting away in an instant only to be replaced by a sudden urge to punch something. Fucking bitch.

Looking away before anyone could notice the disdain on my face, I eyed the stranger instead. His expression was unusual, to say the least. He continued to stare like he had never witnessed anything more fascinating in his entire life. It felt both complimentary and creepy at the same time!

Not wishing to fall under his hypnotic gaze again, I looked around the table, politely waiting for someone to start this meeting. I didn't have to wait long when Mitch who was seated opposite me, cleared his throat and sent a comforting smile in my direction.

"Hello Mia" he started in a somber tone.

The tone of voice combined with his serious demeanor sent alarm bells flying in every direction. Feeling apprehensive about the direction this meeting was heading, I tried to put on a brave face.

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Resting his hands on the table in front of him, Mitch continued. "Firstly, thank you for coming in this afternoon. I'm sure you are aware of the nature of today's meeting. But before we get into all that, I would like to introduce Mr Thomas Carson here. He is one of the partners from Carson & Sons and is here to oversee the transition process."

Mitch then turned to look at Thomas and pointed in my direction. "And this is Mia Sutherland. She is a part of our marketing research team"

I looked over at Thomas, ready to get the pleasantries out of the way but instead, I was held captive by his looks once again. I now understood why Sasha was fawning over this man. He did not seem like he belonged in this world. His absurd good looks appeared almost unnatural.

Caught under his stare, I felt the strange pull again. It overtook every thread of emotion and thought, piercing my very being until there was nothing left but him. My mind scrambled around frantically for an explanation as to why this was happening but seemed to draw a blank. Was this some insane chemistry? Attraction? Lust? Love at first sight?

But just as I shook myself mentally and tried to find the words to greet him, Thomas abruptly stood up. He seemed very bothered by something. His eyes were darker? somehow? and he appeared to be on edge.

Giving us all a quick glance, his eyes lingering on me for a second longer, he spoke in a rush.

"Forgive me. But...uh... something's come up and I must leave immediately. Let's reschedule this meeting for another time. Sorry about this."

And without another word or glance, Thomas Carson walked out, leaving the rest of us dumbstruck and utterly baffled.

What the fuck!