

# Mated To Five Alpha Brothers

## Chapter 32

The early morning sun peeked through the tall trees, coloring the sky with its soft orange hue. Sitting huddled in a blanket on one of the comfortable sofas in the guest house, I watched the beautiful scenery come to life. The birds chirped loudly in their greetings, the leaves rustled against each other and the darkness gave way to the start of another glorious day. Every life form was buzzing with energy – alive and thriving.

All... except for me.

If not for the faint breaths that strained out of my chest and the irregular beats that pumped life through my veins, I would be devoid of everything that constituted a "living being." I felt dead. A hollow shell, expending energy to live, yet not alive. My weary eyes burned from the hours of crying that I had succumbed to last night. The numbness that I felt on the inside rendered my mind and body unresponsive. My world was in turmoil and yet I didn't feel a thing.

"Tommy? Mia?"

The voice annoyed me. Why can't they leave me alone? After the dramatic conclusion to last night's episode, all I wanted was to be left in peace. To cry to my heart's content, to feel everything until I felt nothing, to drown and never come back up again. For resurfacing from the icy depths; where your senses are dulled and your pain is numbed, would mean that I would have to face the truth. Feel the pain all over again. And that was something my fragile mind couldn't deal with right now. Because when it came to the brothers and me, the truth had not set me free. It had trapped me in a world of hurt and pain – my own personal hell.

"Mia? What's going on? Where's Tommy? I tried to link him but he's blocked everyone out."

Somewhere deep within my paralyzed brain, the words registered. Even the voice sounded familiar. But nothing seemed to make sense while the conscious side of me remained silent.

"Hey... are you alright?" The gentle touch on my shoulder had me looking up into a pair of worried corn-blue eyes. Beautiful pale skin and striking blond hair. I blinked a few times, my cognitive functions moving at a slow pace as I tried hard to place the person in front of me. Some part of me was certain that this handsome creature and I had crossed paths before.

And after what felt like a lifetime, recognition finally kicked in, bringing along with it the depressing reality of my situation. I winced when the mental wall that I had built to keep the pain at bay cracked, letting the voices of insecurity, mockery, and self-deprecation slip through and wreak havoc on my sense of worth.

"L-Liam?"

My voice was hoarse, the words grating like sandpaper against my dry throat.

"Yes. Mia, are you feeling alright? You don't look well." The valley between his brows connected, his eyes taking in my appearance; which I knew was far from presentable. I was still in the same dress as last night. My makeup was probably all over my face, my eyes red from crying and my hair was likely a tangled mess.

Keeping my eyes trained on a spot over his shoulder, I shrugged while trying to hide the true state of my dysfunction. "I'm ok."

"No, you're not. Where's Tommy?"

My breath caught in my throat when a stab of pain hit my chest at the thought of Thomas. Turning away from Liam, I shifted my gaze to the tree line, my eyes narrowing in on the small gap between two old trees where I had last seen the silver wolf slip through and vanish.

"Gone."

Liam roved to the front, partially blocking my view of the woods. Kneeling down, he gently tilted my chin towards his crunched form. His eyes flared my face in confusion and worry. "Gone? Where?"

I grit my teeth when I feel the stirrings of the flood within, thrashing and beating against the dam that I had painstakingly constructed to contain it. A small tear slipped through, landing on the arm that was holding my face in a tender grip as the events from last night began to replay in my mind.

"W-what just happened Thomas? What was he talking about?"

Thomas' face scrunched in agitation, his eyes switching between silver and gold at a rapid pace that it felt almost hypnotic to watch. His hands continued to rub my back in an absentminded way while he spoke, his voice holding an undercurrent of forced calm. "Nothing you need to worry about."

I stared at him in disbelief, my tears long forgotten as I wondered angrily if he took me for a fool. "Nothing to worry about? Are you fucking kidding me? You were just demoted and I have essentially been given a life sentence of solitude! That is not nothing Thomas!"

His golden eyes snapped down, a subdued snarl curling around his features, his distaste for the subject clearly evident in his feral voice. "It's my punishment."

"Because of me? I hesitated, a pool of guilt building in my gut before I continued with a whimper. "Is it because I'm human?"

He sighed, closing his eyes while he exhaled a defeated breath. "Mia... I fucked up. Or at least... I think I fucked up. I'm so sorry baby. We are in this because of me. Not you... In fact, all of this is happening because my brothers can't seem to accept the truth."

"Which is?"

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Thomas eyed me with an air of caution, his worry etched across his creasing forehead and his lips paling into a thin line. "Every wolf is gifted with a mate by the Moon Goddess. Our other half. And the pair is connected through a bond called the mate bond. Sometimes, wolves born together share a bond... which means they end up with the same mate..."

My head was beginning to spin but I kept my gaze sharp, hoping and praying that he wasn't going where I think he was going.

"... For my brothers and I that other half is... you Mia. You belong to all of us and we belong to you."

My head snapped to the face kneeling in front of me when his vigorous shaking on my shoulders began to hurt.

"Huh? Sorry... What did you say?"

Liam huffed before narrowing his gaze on me. "I was asking if you were ok. You went pale all of a sudden and you weren't answering. Maybe we should go to the infirmary and -"

"No, I'm fine. I just..." My fingers automatically reached out to fidget on the edge of the blanket, my anxiety rising at the thought that Thomas may not return. "Um...Thomas and I had a fight after we came back from the meeting. I was hurt and he said some things and I retaliated... Anyway, he took off into the trees after that and hasn't come back."

My voice had dropped to a pained whisper but Liam seemed to visibly relax, his tense posture easing as he took hold of my hands in his. "Both your lives have changed overnight. It's normal to feel upset and angry. But believe me, Tommy will come back. You're his mate. He can't stay away."

I sighed, my eyes glancing at our entwined hands before rising towards the trees, hoping to catch a glimpse of silver fur but to my disappointment, there was nothing. My mind drifted to the last thing I had said to him last night.

"So, what you're saying is that I'm some kind of soul mate to all five of you?" My voice was filled with incredulity. All this talk of bonds and Goddesses was starting to go over my head.

Thomas' jaw ticked, his silence cementing the fact that my fears were indeed true.

I was magically connected to five brothers who happened to be mythical creatures and four out of the five were complete assholes who didn't want anything to do with me. And as much as I tried to find relief in that, I couldn't. It hurt. When Marcus had said that I was unfit, the pain in my chest had been searing. It had hurt to the point where I couldn't stop the tears from flowing. Whether from the physical pain or from heartbreak I wasn't sure. But it had felt brutal.

"Let's just get back to the guest house. We'll talk after."

I narrowed my eyes at Thomas. I wanted to argue, stomp my feet, and demand answers here and now but my mind had already begun to build a wall. Processing everything and facing the situation head-on seemed intimidating. Not only did I not have all the information but I was dealing with something that was unfathomable. A myth that was no longer restricted to the pages of a fantasy novel or folklore. It was staring right at me in the face and I was ill-equipped in every way to handle it.

Shutting down, on the other hand, felt like a shortcut to bliss.

So I simply nodded and together we exited the house to the waiting limo. Even the sight of Aidan couldn't shake the void that was beginning to settle in. I felt nothing.

And I sighed in relief.

Reaching the guest house, I remained silent. Thomas however was close to losing his mind.

"Will you say something?"

I watched his forced calm slip, his eyes flashing as he stared back, waiting impatiently for an answer.

"What would you like me to say?"

"Anything!"

We were standing in the living room, facing each other, unsure of how to proceed after the showdown with the brothers. But despite the mental him, I felt an itch at the back of my mind, a need to lay some blame for how fucked up my life had turned out to be ever since I had met him.

"Fine. Let's start with the reason why you didn't say something about this before. All the time you spent with me you hid your secret and look where it's gotten us! I -"

"You weren't ready! Fuck! This is not something you can drop on someone when you first meet! Besides, tell me when did we really have the time?! Between me getting beat up and you getting kidnapped when the fuck did we have time?!"

Deep within, I began to feel the first spark of rage that quickly rushed to the surface at his loud voice and arrogant words. "Perhaps the time before you made the decision to slide your dick in me, you could have said something along the lines of "Oh by the way I'm a fucking werewolf and have four brothers who have this witchy voodoo connection to you."

Thomas growled, his eyes taking on a darkness that had terrified me in the past. This time, it only heightened my temper.

"Don't act like you have nothing to hide."

"No, I don't."

A sneering laugh erupted from his chest, his eyes growing darker by the second. "Nothing huh? Is that why sometimes when I slide my dick into you, you panic? When I say certain words, you seize up? Don't think I haven't noticed that. Why is that, Mia? Is it cause you have nothing to hide?"

Flashes of my past hit me in full force. I gasped as my eyes filled with fresh tears. "Damn you Thomas! You know nothing about me! I fucking regret the day I ever met you!"

His body vibrated as a terrifying roar ripped through his lips, canines in full show and his eyes glaringly black. I took a step back, a small gasp of terror escaping me but before anything else could happen, Thomas turned towards the patio doors, wrenching them open with force and running out into the night. I watched in shock as his clothes ripped and his frame buckled until a silver wolf took his place and disappeared into the tree line.

"Will you please stop doing that!"

I glanced back down. Liam had a look of irritation on his face that he wasn't trying hard to hide. Taking a deep breath, I looked at the one person who had been kind to me from the minute I had arrived in this hell hole. "I'm sorry. I was just thinking."

"About the fight you two had? I told you... you are his mate. There is nothing that you can do or say that will push him away."

And before I could stop myself, the words tumbled out of my mouth unchecked. "Yeah? The other four don't seem to have a problem with that, do they? They seem only too keen to push me away every chance they get. Am I not their mate as well?"

A long pause greeted my words. Liam scratched his head, his discomfort apparent in the way he avoided eye contact. I cringed, cursing internally for sounding like I cared. That what the four were doing was bothering me to some extent. That their dislike of me was hurting in a way that I was unwilling to admit. Fuck my life!

Planting his backside to the floor, Liam sat back, his knees bent up with his hands clasping them to the front. "Mia... I'm sorry for what you're going through. Trust me, I understand. I had a choice mate once and that is someone who isn't your destined mate but someone you choose to claim and spend your life with. Anyway... it was the day of our mating ceremony when she disappeared. I was torn... miserable. I didn't know what had happened. We searched everywhere, thinking that she might have been kidnapped but a few weeks later I got a call. It was her... Hmph... Turns out she left me for an Alpha."

Liam paused, his eyes taking a far-off look before landing on me again. "She was just my choice mate and it had hurt like hell. I can only imagine how devastating it must feel to know that your destined mates...uh... well... you know..."

My heart understood at his unfinished sentence. My mates didn't want me. Why the fuck did it hurt so much? I shouldn't even care! "B-but I don't understand. I know that I don't want them. They can go to hell for all I care. But I feel this thing... with them... why?"

"Ah. Yes. That would be the mate bond. The bond pulls mates together and it's also how wolves recognise their mates. What you're feeling... that is the bond. Very hard to resist. In fact, nobody really tries to resist. It is considered a blessing in the shifter community."

I wrung my hands together awkwardly, heat and shame rising to my face at the next question that sat at the tip of my tongue. My mind debating if I should ask or not. But looking into Liam's eyes I realized that if there was someone who would give me answers without judging me then it would be him. From the moment he had met me, he had only ever tried his best to help. I took a deep breath, my voice wavering slightly at the emotions I was feeling at the moment.

"So... why don't they want me? They have only ever treated me like shit from the very beginning. Tricked me. Punished me. Alex even hit me twice and Marcus practically stated that I'm useless. Call me funny but I don't see them considering me... a blessing."

I released a sharp breath, the hurt behind his words forcing the wall to crack further. No! Hold it together!

A pained expression crossed his face, his hands covering his face for a second before sliding down half-heartedly. He remained still for a few seconds; the only change was his eyes that flashed gold when he finally lifted his face to see me. "Mia... Listen...What the Alphas and the Betas did was wrong. Don't let them give you a different idea about the mate bond or about yourself. How they have acted is a reflection of them and not some flaw that is in you. Any shifter in their right mind would have claimed you in a heartbeat...me included. Their actions and decisions go back to this pack's history. Nothing to do with you. You understand?"

My heart fluttered with fondness at his kind words. I was never one to seek out praise or approval from others but being told constantly that I was weak, pathetic, unfit, and useless had dented my self-confidence. And it certainly didn't help that it was my so-called "mates" that turned out to be the culprits in this situation.

The ache slowly began to subside as curiosity began to blossom within my chest at his last sentence. I leaned forward, showing my interest in learning further about this pack, and nodding at him to continue.

Liam cleared his throat, glancing at me once before lowering his gaze to his hands. "A very long time ago, this pack was one of the smallest and weakest packs you could ever find. The pack was constantly attacked. Our women were stolen or raped, pups murdered and our men were either enslaved or beheaded. There were a lot more atrocities and horrors that happened but I rather not get into all that."

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He shuttered, his eyes glowing as he continued the story. "Many of the members began to leave. They had lost faith in their Alpha who was Tommy's great Grandfather at the time. They did not believe that he could protect them. Keep them safe and help them flourish. They called him weak and claimed that his bloodline would never birth strong Alphas. The Carson name was tarnished. No shifter would follow a weak Alpha or swear allegiance to a dying pack."

Liam needed to shift his weight on the floor, a groan escaping his lips as he stretched one knee to get comfortable.

"... Needless to say, everything went to shit after that. The Alpha killed himself and Tommy's grandfather ascended to Alpha. Even though he was young, Alpha Victor was a force to be reckoned with. He had watched the pack wither under his father's rule and he watched how the other packs mocked his bloodline. So the day he ascended, he swore that he would one day bring "Power and Glory" to the Carson name. Which turned out to be his greatest act actually. His first mission was to strengthen the pack and let's just say that he came up with some... questionable ways on how he was going to achieve that. Aside from training the pack in combat, he encouraged incestual mating to strengthen the high-ranking wolves. The -"

"What?! That... that's just sick!" My gut churned when I tried to put myself in that situation.

Liam let out an unimpressed laugh. "Yep. It was to breed stronger wolves. So destined mates of the high-ranking wolves were rejected or killed if they didn't meet the status quo and power. And if they could not find a suitable mate within the pack then Alpha Victor's solution was to steal high-ranking wolves from other packs and force mate them. His goal was to breed a stronger generation which would ensure the safety and strength of this pack. Of course, he also did other things but that's a tale for another time."

I was pretty sure that my mouth was hanging open, the details too sick to even imagine.

"... This carried on until our pack slowly began to rise in status. When Tommy's Father – Alpha Nicholas took over he expanded into the human world. Business, politics... you name it. He couldn't enforce things like forced mating as the present times had changed and the rules had become much more strict. But he didn't need to. The Carson name had already gained recognition and our pack was already the fourth largest when he ascended. But the man made sure to teach his pups to follow in the family's footsteps. Which brings us back to your mates."

His gaze intensified when he spoke next. "Specifically, Alex and Marcus and their hatred for anything that makes them weak. You see weakness is not easily tolerated in this pack... at least not in the areas where it matters most. And that lesson has been ingrained in all of us since the time of our births."

I exhaled slowly, some parts of the story filling in the blanks when it came to understanding the behavior of the brothers. Especially the part about not accepting "weakness" in their bloodline. It made sense as to why they wouldn't under a human as a mate. How could a human be on par with a beast?

I glanced back towards the trees, seeing nothing. What kind of twisted shit was his family into? Would Thomas end up following his family's footsteps and regret his decision to want me? A sudden panic gripped my insides. How well did I know the man I loved? Did I even want to do this?

Although it physically hurt to ask the question, I knew I had to. Ignorance wouldn't lead to bliss in this case. It could get me killed.

"Liam, is there a way to you know... to break this connection between me and the brothers?"

He immediately straightened; terror clearly written all over his face. "Why would you ask that? Fuck! I shouldn't have said anything! Oh Goddess..."

"Hey calm down! I just wanted to know." I fidgeted nervously before continuing. "B-because... Cause I'm tired of being weak Liam! I'm tired of the brothers have this... this weird power over me. Like they can control how I feel. I hate it! I need some kind of an exit plan just to be on the safe side... you know... when the shit hits the fan."

Liam jumped up, his lean frame towering over me in an instant. His face was panicked, as he kept glancing towards the door as if he couldn't wait to get out.

"No shit is going to hit... what does that even mean? Mia... look... just because Tommy's family has a dark past, it doesn't mean he does. I have known him all my life and he is one of the most honorable and kind-hearted people you would ever meet. Give him a chance... and the rest will fall into place. Trust me."

He began to take a few steps backward as he continued to speak. "Let Tommy know that the pack announcement is at 7.00. A car will come around to pick up the two of you and drop you back here. Tomorrow I will take you to your new house on the north-western border. Oh... and Alpha has already ordered that your things be brought over to Portland. They will arrive tomorrow."

I stared in shock at his fast speech, unable to respond quickly enough as he turned to walk away.

"Liam! Wait... I-"

He turned around stopping my words with his impatient gaze. "I have to leave now Mia. Talk to Tommy. I'm sure you two will work everything out. Oh and one more thing - About the power and control that you think the brothers have over you...?"

My eyes narrowed in confusion as I nodded. "Yes, what about it?"

A gorgeous smile broke across his face as he gave me a sly little wink before adding, "That goes both ways you know. Use it well."

And with that, Liam disappeared from the room.