

# Mated To Five Alpha Brothers

## Chapter 34

I took tentative steps around the large room, my eyes scanning every inch of the masculine interior with open interest. The space held an undeniable sense of mystery with its tasteful but odd choice of decor. Thomas had called it the "Alpha's office" when he reluctantly left me here to meet with the terrible four. And that was half an hour ago! Glancing back at the door, I huffed in irritation when I saw no sign of him.

At first, the uncertainty of being on my own had me nervously pacing close to the hallway, hoping that this "discussion" would be brief before we made our way for the pack announcement. But as the time wore on and my patience had begun to wane, I chose to wander into the room in the hopes of seeking a distraction to help pass the time.

Peeling my eyes away from the partially open door, I studied the room once again. Although it had all the modern furnishings to suit the needs of an office, it did not feel like one. It was so much more.

While ancient maps adorned one side of the wall, another held blades and weapons that seemed like they belonged to the Viking era. Display cabinets and shelves ran throughout the room, filled to the brim with objects that both fascinated and unsettled me at the same time. Like the monstrous taxidermy head! What in the name of God's creation was that thing?! The creature seemed to be a cross between a wild boar and a mutated bear! Its beady eyes staring creepily from its mount caused a shudder to ripple through me as I turned away in mild disgust.

Looking to my right, I felt my eyes widen at the sight of a beautiful tapestry on the opposite side of the room. My feet moved automatically, carrying me across the floor in a daze before I found myself standing in front of it. Lips parting in awe, I stared at a family tree. The Carson family tree. Woven intricately with golden threads that shimmered against a pale green backdrop, the tapestry was stunning. The family crest sat bold and proud at the very top, my eyes lingering on the words woven underneath it. Gloria et virtute.

Power and Glory. Staring at the small yet significant words, I was reminded of the uncomfortable conversation from earlier in the morning. Liam's story about how the pack came to be. Their pain, loss, and suffering, and the determination of the former Alphas to ensure the safety of its members. Could I really blame the brothers for not wanting to throw away everything they have worked for?

After hearing that story, I wasn't so sure anymore.

Sighing in defeat, I began to go through the names, a small smile curling my lips when I noticed the single golden thread that connected the names of Nicholas and Layla Carson to a set of names below. The Carson quintuplets. My mates.

I balked at that thought, my body going rigid with tension despite the thrill of excitement that shot through me in that instant. Did I just refer to them as my mates? What the fuck! Snorting in disbelief, I quickly stepped away, the tension knotting in my gut uncomfortably. Ever since the little demonstration with Thomas where I had experienced the pull of the bond, my thoughts and feelings have been running amok. They didn't feel like mine anymore. I felt open and vulnerable, helpless in the face of something I couldn't fully understand.

Groaning in frustration, I moved over to a glass cabinet, my thoughts immediately shifting to one of curiosity at the object in front of me. A silver blade about the size of my forearm was mounted on a stand. Strange tribal markings were engraved along the side of the sheath and the hilt was covered in precious stones that sparkled brilliantly under the small display light. Mesmerized with the blue, green, and red sparkle of the gems, I reflexively reached out to touch it, only wanting to experience the feel of the stones beneath my fingertips but instead ended up knocking it off its mount with a shocked cry when I heard an amused voice behind me.

"Marcus doesn't appreciate anyone touching what is his"

Spinning around with a hand over my chest, my breath stalled when my gaze collided with a pair of icy blue ones. A color similar to his older brother's electric blue but unlike Alex, these eyes did not bubble with hatred or malice but held a hint of mischievous humour behind them.

Kole tilted his head to the side, blue eyes narrowed in curious expectation. Still caught up in my initial shock, all I could do was respond with a blank stare. Besides, I was painfully aware of the fact that I was found sniggering through his brother's things. Marcus's things. Of course, the mysterious, creepy office belonged to the dark and broody Alpha! Shifting nervously on my feet, my cheeks grew hot with embarrassment as the seconds ticked by. But Kole on the other hand, seemed immensely entertained as he chuckled lightly before taking a few steps in my direction and closing the gap between us.

Just as he encroached into my personal space, I snapped to attention and hastily took a few steps back, placing some distance between us. Although watched my every move, my retreat didn't seem to faze him as he reached out for the blade and held it between his fingers before unsheathing it.

Twirling the blade, he studied it with a fond look on his face. His tone was one of reverence when he spoke. "This blade happened to cut the head of an Elven Prince." Holding the blade higher, his gaze returned to my shocked face, a smirk playing across his lips before he continued, "But technically he wasn't really a Prince. Just a bastard child of Elven Royalty but he definitely deserved what he got. Fucking prick." Laughing indulgently, he held the blade towards me, his voice electrified with excitement. Like a child who sought approval from the adults for his stick figure drawings, his eyes eagerly searched mine. "Look... It still has some blood on it!"

Warily, I studied him before focusing on the brownish-red streaks that ran across the blade. Swallowing back the disgust, I tried hard to think of a response. What the fuck do you say when you learn that your so-called mates get a thrill from decapitation and that Elves actually exist in the same sentence?!! Deciding not to discuss their morbid methods in assassinations, I went with the simpler topic.

"Uh... Elves?"

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A hearty laugh left him as he sheathed the sword and placed it carefully back on its stand. "Oh yeah. Total dicks but they put on some of the best orgies you will ever find in this side of the world. Goes on for days." His eyes took on a far-off look as if in reminiscence of said days. Somehow that look seemed to trigger an odd pang of irritation as I pictured him fucking some pointy-eared-bitch. My jaw clenched with the effort to hold back a nasty retort. Instead, I stared at him in open revulsion. But Kole didn't seem to notice as he smiled, his tone taking on a salacious note. "And you know what the best part about those parties is?"

He looked at me then, his blue eyes taking on a golden hue as he seductively added, "Anything goes."

And just like that, I realized that I had nailed my first impression of him. He was definitely the wild, bad boy that women fell for alright. And that confirmation only served to fuel my distaste even further. With a hard glare and an icy tone to match, I fired back at his smug face. "Well.. if they let a flea-infested sleazeball like you join in on their fun then I can only assume that they have zero standards."

His grin fell, his face appearing stunned at my response. For a moment I panicked, thinking I had crossed the line. Kole may not have done anything to me directly but I still had a healthy fear of the terrible four. So I was surprised when Kole chuckled good-naturedly and strangely I felt myself relax at the sound. Had this happened two days ago when I was clueless about mates and bonds, I would have never let my guard down. But armed with the knowledge that the terrible four would never dare kill me without risking their wolves, I felt less afraid and more confident in my approach. Guess knowledge is power after all.

I was yanked out of my thoughts when I felt a shift in the air around me, my hair whipping over my face as a startled squeak fell from my lips. Suddenly, I found myself in Kole's arms, his body pressed close while his face dipped into my neck as he inhaled deeply and nipped at the sensitive juncture with his teeth. His voice sounded husky, heating me from within. "You have so much to learn princess and who better to teach you but me?"

A harsh nip to my earlobe made me gasp in surprise. Using that to his advantage, Kole leveled his face with mine before ravaging my lips with his. There was no gentleness in the way he took control. He was ruthless as he bit and tugged my lips into his mouth. Tingles and sparks flew all around us as a slow burn erupted at the spot just below my chest, pushing the heat down to my core. I moaned into his mouth, my eyes shuttering in absolute rapture.

A primal growl vibrated from him as he pulled my hair and tilted my head to the side to deepen the kiss. His tongue explored every corner of my mouth while his hand dropped to the long slit in my dress. It was the same dress that Alex had "gifted" as part of his scheme to bribe me. But now since I had denied him of the result he craved; I was no longer on the receiving end of his "generosity." So here I was, clad in the same revealing dress, providing easy access for Kole's ministrations.

I shivered when his hand delved between my thighs and grazed against my hot and wet womanhood. He groaned with need, breaking from the kiss to push his hips against mine and whispering in a seductive tone. "Does my baby brother get you this wet with just a kiss?"

My eyes shot open at his question. A feeling of being doused in ice-cold water washed over me in an instant. How could I do this to Thomas? Fuck! Reining in the last bit of self-control that I possessed, I managed to bring my hands to his chest and pushed with all my strength. And that appeared to do the trick when his attack on my body abruptly stopped. A look of surprise took over his features for a second before his eyes flashed bright gold and a vicious snarl tore from his lips.

Suddenly his hold on me tightened, his hands gripping my sides punishingly as he pulled me tightly back into his arms and began to growl in agitation.

"Kole... I-I don't want to do this" My voice betrayed my nervousness as I squirmed to get out of his grip. This seemed to irk him further when he growled furiously and moved towards my neck, his large incisors descending rapidly. And just as I yelled for him to stop, a louder voice sounded from the doorway, drowning out my words and halting Kole's actions.

"Kole! What the fuck are you doing?"

I glanced over Kole's shoulder to find the enraged form of James by the door. His hazel eyes shone gold with fury as he gritted out his next question.

"What are you doing here? Thought you said you were heading upstairs to get ready for the announcement."

Kole didn't respond but instead pushed me behind him and continued to issue low warning growls as the two brothers stared each other down.

"Leave now. We will be heading to the communal hall in a few minutes."

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Kole growled louder, his muscles shifting restlessly underneath his skin. There seemed to be a silent exchange as James remained still and didn't speak after that. I stood rooted to the spot not daring to move a muscle in case Kole lost control once again. But after a few minutes of dreaded silence, his aggressiveness began to subside. His body relaxed and his threatening stance eased.

Taking a deep breath, he threw me one final look over his shoulder before making his way past his brother and heading out of the room. I watched him leave with a mix of sadness and guilt. This bond thing is really starting to fuck with my head. My eyes lingered on the door before turning towards James who stood in stony silence with an unreadable expression on his face.

His eyes had reverted to their beautiful hazel, bringing back the soft kindness to his face. However, his features were scrunched in concentration as he appeared to be debating something in his head. Sensing his hesitant turmoil, I decided to jump in with the only words that I could manage at the moment.

"Thank you...for stepping in."

Aside from a stiff nod and a look of mild surprise, I didn't get anything from him. Not until he turned to leave and stopped by the door, his voice and stance rigid. "Be careful around Kole. He's not always in control of his wolf. You could get hurt."

Offering a small smile in return for his concern, I nodded in understanding. Seeming satisfied with the gesture, James turned and walked out the door.

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Twenty minutes later, Thomas and I were heading towards the communal hall with our prickly entourage in tow. The brothers stuck close, each dressed handsomely in their dark suit and formals, emitting a fierce aura as a formidable unit. Alex and Marcus walked ahead with James and Kole flanking the rear. Thomas's arm lay possessively on my waist, his jaw set in a hard line as we took the spiraling staircase to the ground level.

I was still in awe of this beautiful mansion, paying close attention to every little detail as we descended. Only seconds later did I realize what a terrible mistake that was when I ended up missing a step, the edge of my heel twisted painfully before sending me flailing forward. Expecting a horrible tumble, I sucked in a breath but luckily the fall never came. Squinting my eyes open, I realized that I was secured tight in two sets of arms. Thomas to my side and Kole from behind.

"Careful princess. Don't want anything ruining your special day now do we?"

He gave me a cheeky wink just as I turned to stare. And before I could flip the bird, a threatening snarl from Thomas jolted me out of my skin.

"What did I tell you about touching my mate? Do I need to punch you again?"

"Enough! The two of you!" The pack's waiting, let's go."

Marcus's command seemed to break up the mounting tension between Thomas and Kole but they still snarled and growled lowly in their throats.

The guilt came rushing back all at once as I recalled Thomas's actions right before we left. He had been acting strange ever since he had walked into Marcus's office, paying more than his usual share of attention by sniffing, growling, and rubbing against my skin. And at that time, I didn't give it a second thought until Kole showed up. Thomas had lunged at him, throwing a nasty punch to his face and warning him to stay away from me. Turns out, he could "smell" Kole's arousal all over me. Fuck! Aside from feeling mortified, I was also left wallowing in guilt.

Deciding to explain and apologize for my actions at a later time, I shoved the depressing thoughts to the back of my mind as we reached the bottom of the stairs and turned left to head towards the hall. I could already hear the boisterous talk and laughter coming from the large room down the corridor. My nerves began to kick up at the thought of walking into a "den" full of wolves - literally. As if sensing my stress, the brothers banded together to form a shield around me.

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A reassuring squeeze to my waist had me glancing at Thomas who gave me the warmest of smiles before he mouthed the words "It's ok". Taking comfort in his words and in the presence of the brothers, I strode into the hall with my head held high.

The reaction was immediate.

Everything came to a sudden halt as a hush fell over the room. All eyes turned in our direction, their gazes analyzing our group with varied reactions. Some with mild interest, some looked horrified, some were curious and some wore disapproving snarls. I pressed close to Thomas while I observed everything. The hall itself appeared to be half the size of a football field with long tables arranged in the centre and a few private tables to the side. To the far corner were several buffet tables laden with delicious food. Three enormous chandeliers lit the entire room with soft light while every corner was decorated with fresh flowers and beautiful sculptures.

As our group progressed towards the front of the hall, everyone took a seat and waited in absolute silence. Stopping in front of the three tables, Alex and Marcus shifted towards the side, placing us in full view of the crowd. There appeared to be at least two hundred faces staring back in our direction. Not one to enjoy being the center of attention, I forced myself to take steady breaths before a calm scenario in my mind. My skin prickled with unease at the amount of intense gazes directed at me before Alex stepped forward to address his pack.

With a broad smile that made his eyes sparkle, Alex spoke in a loud and dominant voice. "Good evening everyone. Thank you for waiting. I wanted to address everyone today because today is a very special day. Not just for the Portland Pack but for me and my brothers as well."

Glancing in our direction, Alex continued. "My brother - our Tommy has found his mate!"

For a minute there was no response. Everyone simply stared between Thomas and me.

And then it was sheer chaos. The good kind.

Everyone was up on their feet with shouts of congratulations and excited howls sounding through the air. I couldn't help but let out a relieved laugh. Thomas turned and grinned before bending down and laying a gentle kiss on my forehead. The sounds from the crowd increased before Alex raised his hands in the air and gestured for them to settle down.

"Portland Pack... I give you Mia Sutherland. Our newest member and my brother's mate." Alex allowed the claps and calls of welcome to interlode before he continued. "Yes... she is human but we will not hold that against her. She is part of our family now and I want everyone to make her feel welcome. As for my youngest brother, Thomas will be stepping down from his duties as Beta to help Mia while she learns our ways. They have also decided to stay away from the pack grounds until she is ready to join our ranks. So, let's raise our glasses and celebrate their joining. To Thomas and Mia!"

To Thomas and Mia!

Glasses were raised and everyone toasted to our happiness. Soon after, people began to make their way towards us. Congratulations and introductions were all around. Most looked at me in awe and delight, welcoming me and promising get-together in the future. Of course, there were those who threw nasty looks but they were the minority.

Thomas held me close all night, a look of pride shown on his handsome face as he gazed at me with absolute adoration. My heart swelled with joy for the first time since I got here. All around us people sat together, eating and drinking and having fun. Like one big family.

And as the dinner carried on with more talk and laughter, a quiet thought entered my mind, making me smile from within.

Maybe... I could be happy here.