

# Mated To Five Alpha Brothers

## Chapter 46

The gold embellishments on the evening dress glimmered under the lights, shooting off a kaleidoscope of colors in all directions and encasing my body in its mesmerizing glow. The pale green of the fabric complimented my skin tone beautifully while simultaneously deepening the green in my eyes. The off-shoulder that bared my neck and chest, clung tight to my torso before flowing over my legs gracefully and ending in a long train.

The large diamond and emerald necklace that adorned my neck, glittered in a hypnotic and alluring way as it brought the whole outfit together in true glamorous fashion. The makeup was subtle and my long locks were pulled to the back in an intricate hairstyle, keeping the focus on the outfit but at the same time adding to that polished shine.

A small golden clutch and a pair of striking stilettos finished everything off nicely as I stood and admired the final result in the mirror.

I had never been one to stare at myself repeatedly, but this time, I did. Despite the fact that my collar bones protruded, my skin felt dry and my eyes red from all the crying, I felt... beautiful. The outfit played a part of course, but what I was feeling was much deeper than the surface. There was a light that burned from within, albeit dimly, but it was there. The promise of a better tomorrow, which had initially caused doubt and disbelief, soon took root, growing steadily and filling me with hope and cautious joy.

The aftermath of the meeting with the former Alpha had unleashed a whirlwind of emotions. I had sobbed, laughed, and screamed hysterically in the shower, unable to control myself once the floodgates had opened. Months of silent pain, the descent into madness, my thwarted escape... everything swirled in my mind, consuming every atom in my body until I screamed it all out, pouring my grief into the warm water as it gently washed it all away.

Standing here now, I felt a certain sense of calm like never before. All of the self-loathing and pity seemed pointless. Questions that I had asked myself over and over again felt like a massive waste of time. Why did it have to be me? Why was I dealt such a hand? Why didn't they want me? Why...why... why...

The why did not matter anymore.

One would never truly grasp as to why things happen the way they do. Some attach a religious meaning, some blame fate and some say that life is simply unfair. I would never know. But what I did know was that despite it all, I was still here. Mistakes, flaws, and all. I had lost a lot of battles but I was still here.

And it was that spark, that resolve, that felt beautiful tonight.

Not even James's icy cold silence as he showed me to the room nor the strange looks that the shifter females tossed in my direction while getting me dressed, could dim that glow.

Taking a deep breath, I repeated the mantra in my head. A few more hours...you can do this...few more hours and you'll leave this place...few more...

A knock on the door broke through my silent thoughts. A few more hours... a few more hours...that's it.

Steeling myself while glancing at the mirror one more time, I called across the room in a voice that was shockingly confident and collected.

"Come in"

I turned just in time to see Liam enter the room, looking dapper in his tux. With his blond hair styled neatly to the side combined with those corn-blue eyes, he certainly looked the part of a perfect prince charming.

My smile at the sight of him was automatic, something that I realized he always brought out in me.

"Hey you"

Liam stood still as he stared with his mouth slightly ajar. His eyes held a twinge of gold as his gaze roved all the way from my head down to my toes.

I blushed, the heat rising to my cheeks as he continued to stare, making me feel like a girl on her very first date.

"Are you going to say something or just stand there?"

He opened his mouth and then closed it as he blinked several times before clearing his throat. "Sorry...!" His face turned a light shade of pink as he fumbled for words, making me giggle in the process.

Closing the door behind him, he made his way across the room in a few strides, his eyes never leaving my face even for a second. The giggles tapered off when he stopped inches away, looking even more beautiful with his perfect features set in an expression of awe and appreciation.

"Mia... you are...you look...so beautiful...I mean, I don't think beautiful covers just how stunning--"

Aside from my blush deepening, I felt myself glow from within at his words, my ego enjoying a much-needed boost after being trampled upon for months. But as I listened to him fumble around for the right words, his eyes alight with genuine affection, my smile quickly faded when I realized that this would be the last day that I would spend with him. Why? Why did have to be like this?

"...I mean... you're always beautiful but tonight..."

My heart swelled with the most bittersweet feeling as I gazed at him. Liam had been there. Had always been there even when Thomas was not. He had consoled me when I was upset, distracted me when I was alone, cared for me when I was weak, and had seen me at my worst, and yet... he was here. Never a frown on his face or a harsh word on his lips, Liam cared when everyone else did not.

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And I was going to lose him. Just like I had lost Sasha.

Unable to hold back anymore, I threw myself into his arms with my face against his chest as I drew him into a tight embrace. Emotions flared while tears brimmed my eyes as I thought back to the times we had spent together.

In the real world, Liam would have been the kind of guy that I would have dated. Everything felt natural when he was around. It came easy unlike my time with the brothers or my time with Thomas. For the longest time, I had accepted my sudden obsession with Thomas as some form of intense love but since I had learned about the accursed bond, I couldn't help but wonder if my feelings were genuine or just a by-product of some supernatural love charm.

Aside from that, there was also the fact that he was tied to his brothers and had to obey his Alpha who just so happened to be an egotistical maniac.

One complication after the next.

But with Liam, there were none. Except for the fact that I wasn't his mate.

"Mia?"

I worked it out - life, it seemed, was simply unfair. The tears fell as Liam stood stiff; his voice unsure as I held him close.

"Why?"

His arm snaked between us to cup my face and tilt it upwards. Even with my blurry vision, I could clearly make out the worried expression on his face.

"Why, what?"

I swallowed the ever-growing lump in my throat but in spite of that, my voice came out strangled.

"Why was I mated to them... and not you?" If I had to be cursed with a bond, why couldn't it have been with him? It made perfect sense.

His eyes widened in shock but the gold in them glowed brighter as he stuttered and choked. "W-why...why would you ask that?"

"Because I wish it had been you"

Even though I had whispered those words, the sound felt like a blast in the room. The blue in his eyes disappeared as the gold took over, burning bright-hot like the sun. His hold on my face tightened but his thumb drew back and forth against my chin soothingly. "These are dangerous words, Mia. Promise me that you won't ever repeat them...not to me...not to anyone..."

Lowering my eyes, I gave him a simple nod in response. I wasn't capable of putting my feelings into words when they felt jumbled and complicated, which was another thing I had to contend with ever since I was brought here. And of course, I understood the implications that such words could have, should I choose to voice them out loud.

While the brothers would never truly harm me, they wouldn't hesitate to hurt Liam or anyone else who got in their way. And no matter how much I longed to drown in the comfort of his body close to mine, I decided to pull away. No one would come to harm because of my selfishness. Especially not Liam.

But just as I withdrew my arms, his came around, tugging me close. Confused, my eyes found his, a swirl of blue and gold that looked both beautiful and hauntingly sad.

"But...tell me what brought this on..."

What brought this on? How could I answer a question that seemed innocuous but held layers upon layers of reasons, events, twists, and turns that had led me to this? Feelings that perhaps required more reflection, more foresight, and more... time. But time, was the one thing I did not have.

"I'm leaving tomorrow. Did you know?"

The arms around me instantly tightened. "Yes."

Raising my hands to his face, I cupped his cheeks on either side while gazing into those golden-blue eyes. "I'm going to miss you. You were there for me... through everything..."

I paused to control the torrent of emotions that were slamming from within before uttering the only words that I could. "...thank you."

His eyes searched my face, which reflected the same sense of sadness and defeat that I could see in his. Resting his forehead against mine, he closed his eyes and sighed. "I wish I had done more... I wish I could take away your pain and the sadness that I see..."

Leaning into him, I held back a sob that threatened to burst. His eyes opened but his face was scrunched in a look of pain.

"No, there's nothing more you could have done..."

I felt dizzy, overcome with emotions as my eyes dropped down to his lips, my voice just above a whisper. "...you did your best..."

With a tilt of my chin, we moved in unison. Lips seek solace against one another while our bodies are molded into one. Arms squeezed my body while mine went around his neck, pulling him closer. The taste of him was bliss, an escape from everything going on and a cruel reminder of our story that will never unfold.

I opened for him as he groaned, a sound that sent shivers down my spine. But I did not experience tingles or that unnatural burn in my nether regions or that crazed need to have him inside me. This felt natural, and organic in its development. Just like it would if I was with a human male.

And how I had longed to experience a feeling that wasn't forced or provoked by a magical bond. Where I could choose and consent to the events rather than be a puppet under its strings. I did not realize until now the importance of choice and free will, something that we as humans take very much for granted.

The kiss was tender and urgent at the same time but what surprised me the most was Liam's reaction. He came alive, his longing clear in the way that he held me and the way he moved his lips and tongue over mine. Did he have feelings for me?

I could feel the sharp pinch of his fangs as he took charge and delved in. I was breathless, dazed, and euphoric. A surge of endorphins pumped through my system as he dragged his hands all over my back while moving his lips to my throat. A moan escaped as he nipped my skin before soothing it with his tongue.

But as I tried to move him back to my lips, Liam's body shuddered before going ramrod straight. He pulled away abruptly, panting and breathless as I noticed his eyes turn a misty grey. Someone was mind-linking him and I had a feeling I knew who it was. Thankfully, they would never know what had happened as the bond remained quiet like it had for weeks.

For a few seconds, he remained that way before his eyes returned to his normal blue.

Our gazes met; a thousand words were spoken at that moment. We both understood that this was never meant to be and that what had transpired would remain in this room, locked away forever.

Silently moving away, he grabbed my hand and tugged, "Come" and began walking us in the direction of the bathroom.

Once in there, we took a moment to gaze at each other in the mirror before he tore his eyes away which carried guilt and a heavy sense of sadness. "Fix yourself"

I glanced at the counter and without another word began to redo my makeup while Liam washed his hands and face before drenching himself in a tonne load of cologne.

The strong smell forced a sneeze and before I could comment on it, he picked up another bottle of perfume and drenched me in it. And that's when it clicked - he was masking our scent. Somehow, that knowledge made me feel bitter and guilty all at once.

Even though I knew they wouldn't have felt anything through the bond, I had to be sure. "Would they have...felt that?"

Liam looked at my eyes finding a multitude of emotions, understanding precisely what I was talking about before he shook his head. "No. You're not marked...the bond projects a medley of emotions and unless they are tuned in, it's hard to pick up anything."

That felt reassuring. But there was still something I wanted to know... had to know before I left and never saw him again.

As he walked me to the door and turned the handle, I pulled him back. His forehead creased in confusion as he looked down the hall before turning back towards me.

My insides felt watery, unsure, and jittery but I had to know. "Liam... do you... what happened between us...is there something..."

He stopped me mid-sentence by placing a finger on my lips, his eyes conveying a million different emotions as he gazed at me intensely before uttering the words that shattered me from within.

"You have my heart"

My mind blanked as he turned and took me out the door. He spoke no more but my heart felt light, and a small spark of happiness radiated through my body as we made our way down the stairs and toward the packed hall. Liam liked me. It was beautiful and bittersweet.

Lost in my little moment of happiness, I didn't realize that Liam had stopped. Glancing up, I inhaled sharply at the sight - six people standing at the entrance of the hall and everyone looking in our direction.

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Alpha Nicholas Carson stood to the front while Alex and Marcus stood to the side. To the right stood James, Kole, and finally...Thomas.

My heart leaped in my chest, accelerating at the sight of him. But Thomas did not look like himself. His skin was pale, eyes heavy with bags and he appeared to be standing to one side, as if he could not put his weight on both legs. What the fuck happened?

"Not bad. You clean up well for a ...human"

I turned to the Alpha who was looking at me with a glint in his eye. Not the appreciative kind but one born of distaste. My body moved closer to Liam involuntarily, seeking protection from the hate I could feel radiating from them collectively.

I remained silent, not breaking his gaze as he addressed everyone present. "Tonight is a historic moment for our pack. We will be aligning ourselves with the North Dakota pack, a pack that is just as strong and capable as us. It will mark a new beginning, a change for us in the right direction..."

He turned around to glance at his sons, "...after all your fuckups, this will be your redemption. So, try not to be a disappointment... again"

His gaze then fell towards me before moving towards Thomas. "Everyone will be curious about the human of course and we will stick by the story that the reason she hasn't been marked is because she needed time. Do not engage in unnecessary explanations. Keep it to the point. And once you four have been marked and mated, Thomas can then claim his human..."

Staring at Thomas with both were tall and lean with a hint of muscles peeking through their evening gowns. They looked similar, both brunettes, pale skin and beautiful brown eyes. One was slightly shorter than the other which happened to be the only difference I could find.

I watched as they went straight towards Alex and Marcus, the shorter one standing beside Marcus and the other next to Alex. They smiled and bowed to Alpha Nicholas before turning towards the men beside them. It took me but a second to realize who they were.

Alex and Marcus's chosen mates.

Alex spoke before I could gather my thoughts, his eyes watching me closely as the brunette next to him, looped her arm over his. "This is Amelia Dawson and her sister Isabelle Dawson. They are the Alpha's daughters from the North Dakota pack. And this is Mia... my brother's fated mate."

I waited for the surge of jealousy, the violent twisting of the bond, the repulsion but nothing came. I blinked, confused as I turned to look at every one. Every single pair of eyes was trained on me, waiting for my reaction. I searched inside myself for the hate or any reaction but the bond never answered. For a few seconds, I waited and when nothing happened, I felt a sense of relief. A sense of freedom in the knowledge that as long as the bond didn't interfere, I knew I could do this. I could play my part for the next couple of hours.

So, with a big smile plastered to my face, I turned to look at the brunettes who were politely smiling in my direction. "Welcome to the family. I'm so happy that we'll be sisters soon."

The reaction was instantaneous from the men in the room. While the former Alpha tilted his head in reluctant approval at my words, the brothers, on the other hand, frowned, each one searching my face and trying to get a read on what was happening. Liam shifted on his feet awkwardly but my eyes sought out the two that had wildly different reactions.

Alex seethed with unbridled rage while Thomas avoided my gaze altogether.

A few more hours... a few more and I'll leave this place...

Alpha Nicholas gave the nod and everyone moved at once. I watched as Alex and Amelia took the front followed by Marcus and Isabelle.

Liam moved suddenly, taking my hand in his grasp and beginning to walk towards Thomas, who was already taking his place behind Marcus.

As we reached him, Liam hesitated but let go just as Thomas took hold of my other arm and moved me in line. Before I could catch his eye, Liam moved away allowing Kole, James, and Alpha Nicholas to take up the rear.

And it was in this order, that we moved into the packed hall to welcome our guests for the evening.