

# Mated To Five Alpha Brothers

## Chapter 51

Stumbling through the doors, I was relieved to be welcomed by the warmth in the building. Though the shivering continued, the warm air on my face, softened some of the stinging. Alpha Ezra held onto me as we made our way down the very hall that I had come through earlier that evening. Having been distraught at the time, I had failed to notice the massive portraits that decorated the walls on either side.

Painted in Victorianish stylish portrait had that classic stern look thees of its occupants, who I could only assume were important members of the Carson family. Though they were none that I recognized most of them held a strong resemblance to the current members of the household. Especially the eyes.

My observations came to an end abruptly when the Alpha beside me paused in his steps, his eyes centering at the end of the hallway that was dimly lit. Catching myself in time, I looked down the empty hall, confused, before glancing at him once again. The mystery, however, made itself known, when a few seconds later I heard footsteps coming in our direction.

Two men appeared round the corner carrying what seemed to be trays of food, chatting amongst themselves light-heartedly. Their banter immediately ceased when they spotted us, their backs straightening at the sight of Alpha Ezra before their gaze turned perplexed at the sight of me, who was not only bundled in the Alpha's robes but also practically plastered to his side like an infant being carried around by its parent.

I shut my eyes briefly, cringing on the inside. These shifters obviously belonged to the Portland Pack, which meant, that they not only knew who I was but who it was that I belonged to. And it was certainly not to this man who had his arms wrapped around me protectively and was staring down at them.

"Is there a room with a fireplace?"

It took them a second to wipe the looks off their faces before they bowed low in a show of respect for the Alpha's presence.

"Yes, Alpha."

Ezra pulled me up against him, his voice devoid of any awkwardness at being seen at my side.

"Good. Take us there and bring your Beta female something warm to drink and maybe something light to eat."

They bowed together again. "Yes, Alpha."

One of them handed his tray to the other before glancing back at Ezra. "This way."

He led us down the hallway and past the packed hall, where the party seemed to be in full swing. I bit my lips nervously, trying my hardest to create some distance between the Alpha and me as we followed the shifter. The last thing I needed was to be caught in the arms of an Alpha who just so happened to be a rival of this pack.

The man led us past the foyer before coming to a stop in front of a room that was adjacent to a small bar area. Without a pause, he opened the door and turned on the lights before standing to the side to let us through. He bowed as we walked past avoiding any form of eye contact with either of us.

The room had a seating area with an old fireplace that was unlit. There were some books and what looked like an old record player, tucked away in a corner reading nook. The place had an old smell like it hadn't been used in a long time.

The shifter moved past us, making his way to the logs piled neatly beside the fireplace. Throwing a few in, he began the task of lighting the fire while the Alpha led me to one of the comfortable sofas close to the fireplace before helping me down gently. I looked up as I sat down, wanting to thank him but all I could manage was a pained grunt.

He smiled understandingly as he pulled the robe tighter against my body, making sure that no skin was left exposed.

"I'll bring the food and the drink. Would you like something as well, Alpha?"

Ezra turned to inspect the fire that was slowly coming to life before turning to face him. "Nothing for me. Thank you."

The shifter bowed again before turning on his heel disappearing through the door and closing it behind him.

My shoulders sagged, the relief sinking down to my chilled bones as I stared at the fire that had begun to crackle merrily. The evening felt like a blur, the events making little sense to my tired brain. Why was I out there? How did I not feel the cold?

A long sigh went past my lips. Nothing seemed to make sense anymore.

"I thought the fire would help you get warm quicker."

I glanced up, noticing the Alpha standing beside the fireplace with one of his arms resting on the mantle. The light from the flames enhanced the silver-blond in his long hair making him seem ethereal, almost like an elf described in one of those Tolkien books.

Smiling in response, I internally thanked his intuitiveness and consideration. Although this room, along with the rest of the building was relatively warm, the state that I was in required a lot more heat to recover, which now, thanks to him, was gradually starting to happen.

The door opened just then and a tray laden with food came into sight before the shifter carrying it entered. He nodded at the Alpha, giving me a quick glance before making his way into the room and placing it on the table in front of me.

"Anything else that I can get?"

"That will be all."

The shifter bowed, giving me another once-over before walking out of the room.

"You must eat and drink. It will help."

I nodded gratefully before reaching for the hot cup of tea. The warmth from the cup seeped into my skin, instantly loosening some of the rigidity in my fingers and helping me grasp the handle better.

The first few sips were soothing, the drink reviving my parched throat as the hot liquid flowed past my tongue.

I was very soon reaching for the snacks, my hunger making its presence known, now that I was no longer in danger of freezing to death. Alpha Ezra for his part, remained silent and did not help himself to any of the food. But he stood watching me closely as I continued to eat and drink for the next few minutes.

The warmth from the fire combined with the food in my belly began to have the desired effect as the numbness subsided and the sensation returned to my limbs. I closed my eyes contently, enjoying the moment and forgetting the whole ordeal if only for a second.

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"Better?"

Peeking through my lashes, I offered the man a grateful smile.

"Yes, thank you... Thank you for helping me."

The Alpha smiled and moved to sit across from me. "I'm glad you're feeling better. You had me worried there for a second."

Pausing before my next bite, I glanced at him, wondering if he was going to start questioning about finding me outside. But to my relief, he fell silent once again, his eyes watching the fire instead.

The memory of catching his gaze at the packed hall entered my mind along with the little titbit that Isabelle had shared.

"I heard you don't attend any events."

His eyes turned towards me, a laugh falling from his lips. "I don't. If you've lived as long as I have and been through countless gatherings such as this one, you soon realize what a tremendous waste of time they are. Besides, shifter gatherings are nothing but a pissing contest if you haven't already noticed."

I couldn't help but let out a laugh, recalling the ostentatious décor, the over-the-top clothes, and all the unnecessary posturing.

"So, what made you come to this one...?"

Keeping in line with his humor about the whole thing being a pissing contest, I continued jokingly. "...Were you keen to see how your rivals were faring?"

He snorted before letting out a deep laugh. "I would hardly call a bunch of adolescent pups with troubling daddy issues, as worthy rivals."

It took a second but when I realised that he was talking about the Carson brothers, the laughter burst from my lips at the accurate description that he gave them.

I definitely could not argue with that!

The Alpha smiled at my response, amusement dancing in his eyes as he regarded me laughing uncontrollably.

It felt refreshing, alive even, to simply have a conversation and enjoy someone's company. I did not realize how desperate I was for such normalcy.

As my laughter died down, I smiled at him, eager to hear more. He was an enigma and a charming one at that. "Why put yourself through this then? It can't be"

A loud crash stopped me mid-sentence as I looked up wide-eyed for the source.

The shock soon turned to alarm when I realized that the door had been slammed open and the culprit stood in the doorway, his eyes intensely yellow as he stared at me and the Alpha.

Alpha Ezra on the other hand, slowly rose to face the intruder. He remained calm and hadn't even flinched at the sound which led me to believe he had known what was coming.

"Beta James, care to join us?"

I gulped watching James bristle, his skin rippling as the yellow in his eyes darkened. His eyes moved between Ezra and me multiple times as if to gauge what was happening before coming to rest on the robe that was tightly swathed around my body.

His lips pulled back, revealing those dangerous fangs.

And this time, I shivered for a different reason. I had never seen James like this before: unbridled, furious, and seemingly out of control. He always proved to be the voice of reason amongst the brothers but now, the very sight of him made me cower.

The Alpha, however, took a step back and used his body to shield me from view and that was enough to goad James into talking.

"Mia, come."

Another shiver wracked my frame at the sound of James's voice. Somewhere between a growl and a harsh tone, the words echoed across the room, not as a request but as an order.

"Miss Sutherland here has promised me a dance..."

Turning towards me, Ezra smiled reassuringly while I gaped at him in shock. A dance?! Was he trying to get me killed?!

"...and I'd be very disappointed if I didn't get one."

I threw a nervous glance at James, not sure of the response to give but Alpha Ezra had other plans on his mind as he casually took my arm and led me towards the door where a very furious James stood, looking just about ready to explode.

Surprisingly, however, he stepped out of the way when we drew close, his eyes narrowing on Ezra first and then at me. I held my breath as we walked into the hall, worriedly throwing glances at both men who clearly radiated polarising emotions.

While one was on the verge of drawing blood, the other exuded confidence and complete nonchalance. And I for one, wanted nothing to do with either of them. But being forced to choose in this very instance, I knew I'd rather be at Ezra's side than face the wrath of any of the brothers.

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My breathing came fast as Ezra and I made it to the foyer and continued toward the packed hall. I stole a glance at James over my shoulder and regretted it instantly.

While he was keeping a good distance in following us, his eyes appeared to be misty grey.

Fuck!

I dreaded to think who he was mind-linking but whoever it was, was probably getting a minute-by-minute download of what was going on between Ezra and me.

Making sure that he wouldn't overhear, I whispered nervously.

"Why would you do that?"

Ezra's expression remained unperturbed. "I was just following your cues..."

He turned his gaze to me, appearing contemplative. "...you were giving off a lot of fear. I assumed you did not want to go with the Beta. So, I improvised."

Fair enough.

I fell silent. While I felt a sense of momentary relief at escaping James's clutches, I knew it wouldn't last long. Once the party was over, I would have to face whatever was coming my way and there would be no escape.

You're not alone.

I paused as that thought crossed my mind. Where had I heard that? And who had said that?

"Wait, let's get this off you before we walk in."

I looked up to realize we had reached the packed hall and Alpha Ezra was removing the robe off my shoulders. Suddenly, I felt naked. Seen. And at this very moment, after everything that had happened, I did not wish to be seen. I wanted to disappear.

But before I could maneuver my body behind his large frame, the Alpha had looped my arm over his and was leading me into the hall, his strides confident and self-assured. Something, I desperately wished I could feel as the stares from the crowd started to turn our way.

I tried to concentrate on the walls at the far end of the hall but the stares were hard to ignore. There were people standing around in circles, chatting and laughing while others were in the middle, whirling and twirling to the live music, and some others sitting around, observing.

But no matter how occupied they seemed to be, they all appeared to spare more than a look at Ezra and me, now walking to the center of the dancefloor.

"Relax."

I had to grit my teeth in annoyance at Ezra's pointless advice. There was no stopping the way my heart was jumping to calm my irregular breathing or to quell the fact that I wanted to throw up.

As we reached the center, Ezra turned me towards him with a smile, ignoring the fascinated onlookers.

"Shall we?"

He did not wait for a response as he held my waist and drew me to him. Bodies touching close, we began to move, the Alpha gracefully leading me into a rhythmic routine that wasn't too hard to follow.

And so, we danced, the movements slow as we both found a comfortable pace to settle into.

"I wanted to ask you something just before we were rudely interrupted."

Given the huge height difference at this level of proximity, I had to crane my neck to catch his eye. "What is it?"

Rather than immediately answer, he pulled me closer and leaned into my neck. Alarmed, I tried to pull away but stopped short when he held tight and began to urgently whisper.

"I must know if you are truly bonded to the Beta of this pack. It's the reason why I have come here today. I had to be sure."

Glancing around nervously at the kind of attention we were receiving; I lowered my own voice. "Why are you asking me this?"

He led me into a twirl before gently pulling me to his chest. "Because what is at stake. A time when humans will no longer rule this world. And if the shifters were to join this war, I need to know exactly what is at stake."

Suddenly, I remembered the conversation that I had overheard outside.

"Are you planning a war? Against humans?"

He turned slowly, his head tilting to the side as if he was contemplating his answer. "May not be tomorrow... may not be in the next ten years.. May not even happen during your lifetime but make no mistake...it is coming. Which is why I must know if the bond is true."

I swallowed hard as I tried to digest everything that he said. The world suddenly felt big. Bigger than my own little cocoon of problems.

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I hesitated for a second but answered truthfully. "Yes, I am."

He inhaled an almost relieved sigh. "Then maybe all is not lost for those of us who haven't found our mates. Maybe there is a change in the human world..."

His eyes took on a longing look that stung me deep inside. Here was a good, kind-hearted man who longed to have a mate bond, and the ones who were blessed with it, were doing everything in their power to get rid of it.

To get rid of me.

I fought against the overwhelming urge to cry.

"...I would be a very happy man indeed if I found a human mate like you. Would kiss the very ground she walked on..."

Every word was a knife to my heart, slicing in deep. Why? Why did I have to be bonded to the cruelest of them all?

Before I burst into tears and embarrassed myself in front of the whole shifter world, I realized I needed to get out.

"Sorry, I must go..."

The Alpha stopped midway through his sentence and halted our steps.

"Are you ok?"

"Yes...yes...uh...just want to freshen up."

Alpha Ezra smiled, bowing slightly as he raised my hand to his lips. Giving it a light kiss, he straightened to his impressive height. "It was an honor meeting you, Mia. I wish you the very best."

Unable to say anything, I smiled tightly before whirling around and heading across the floor. I tried not to hear the whispers or pay attention to the looks, but they followed me all the way to the door where I noticed the Dawson sisters.

Isabelle flashed a smile and offered a cheeky wink while Amelia threw me a filthy look.

Ignoring them, I raced out of the hall and headed back towards the room with the fireplace. I needed somewhere quiet to think, to process, and to digest. It was all too much for one night.

My heels clacked along the floor as I walked hurriedly, glancing behind at intervals to make sure that I wasn't being followed. But just as I made it past the foyer, I felt someone grab my arm and yank me behind a wall around the corner.

My shocked scream died instantly as I was pinned against the wall with the attacker pressing into me from behind. A warning growl sounded in my ear when I made another effort to call for help.

"Not another sound from you, my little slut. Now tell me...were you planning to fuck every single man who gave you a bit of attention tonight?"

Terror seized my heart as I recognized the voice.

Alex.

Grabbing me by the hair, he smashed my head against the wall making me yell out in pain.

"I kept telling them we were taking it too easy on you... Not anymore."

Yanking me with my hair held tightly in his fist, he dragged me through the hall and up the stairs that led to their office and residential suites.

My skull felt like it was on fire with the way he was holding on.

"Alex...please..."

"SHUT UP!"

Letting go of my hair, his arm came around my neck and squeezed my throat. "You think I didn't know what you were up to?"

I gasped as he began to squeeze harder, my steps stumbling as I tried to breathe. Reaching the first floor, he dragged me past the rooms, uncaring of my burning lungs or my faltering footsteps. Reaching a large set of open doors, he let go of my throat and pushed me into the room with brutal force.

Time seemed to slow as I felt airborne for a second before my body crashed to the floor, hard.

I groaned in pain as the air came rushing back to my lungs and my head swam dizzily. I could hear footsteps as they drew close before stopping right beside my head.

Through the blur, I could see four pairs of shiny shoes and as my tear-filled gaze followed them up to the faces of their owners, I froze.

Standing tall and looking down at me like an omen of death were Alex, Marcus, James, and Kole.