

## Chapter 50

I never considered myself a lover of dresses. Perhaps that was because I didn't actually get a lot of chances to dress up growing up, but I absolutely loved this one. So whether it was Fiona or anyone else who got this dress, I had to give them a huge hug.

There was no way I'd not be able to steal some of the spotlight from the actual woman of the hour, who, by the way, I had no idea was. I wasn't trying to be cocky, but it seemed like a given, considering how the dress and jewellery made me look like a princess.

The blue really brought out my eyes, and though I had to practice walking in heels for a while, I was absolutely obsessed with everything. I think I did a pretty good job with my hair and make-up without Fiona's help too. I had my hair in a goddess up-do with a few silver accessories I found in my jewellery box. It took me three hours to be done thoroughly, but it was definitely worth it.

With one last look in the mirror, I grabbed my purse and left my room. Maxim was already in the foyer waiting for me since I was running a little late. However, when I called Fiona, she declined the call but texted me that it was okay to be a bit late. I had no idea how she knew what I was calling about, but that's just Fiona.

They didn't come home either. I hadn't seen her or Leonardo, which only meant they were getting ready elsewhere. I had a feeling something fishy was going on, but I wouldn't know for sure.

I took careful steps around the winding staircase. I think it had been my first real challenge with heels, and though I was doing a pretty decent job, I still wanted to be careful.

As I reached solid land, I sighed in relief before heading towards the foyer, where Maxim was waiting.

The minute we caught eyes, we both took long glances down at each other's bodies.

I had never seen Maxim in a tux, and I was not being biased when I say he makes it work like a freaking model. I stood there gaping like a fish, suddenly developing a new obsession.

However, I was glad to see that my expression was mirrored, except he was staring at me like he wanted to rip my clothes from my body. And at this point, I wouldn't have minded if he did.

"You look... wow," he mumbled as he finally took my hand, placing a kiss on my knuckles.

I'm sure I was burning pink at his simple statement.

"And you look just as wow," I told him with all honesty. He chuckled a little.

"Come on. Let's go before I change my mind. You really do look perfect. So, fucking perfect."

I giggled. "No need to curse about it."

He returned my playful gaze before leading me to his car. It was already pulled out front and waiting. I was grateful. The last thing I wanted was walking too far in heels with zero official practice.

I used my free hand to hold the dress up as Maxim led me to the car. As he opened the door for me, I glanced at the Alpha house towards a window on the third floor-Lukas's office. I saw him there, standing and watching as Maxim helped me in the car. I sighed,

wishing I could wave or at least smile. But I simply turned my head and waited for Maxim to drive off.

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The final hint of the sun disappeared over the horizon as we pulled up to the pack conference hall. The crickets chirped from the shrubs, and fireflies danced around, going about their business as the night drew near.

The conference hall didn't look like a hall at all. It seemed like a sophisticated building that almost seemed like a hotel though it was one level. It was large enough to hold at least two packs, and it reminded me of the hall at home, except much more casual. According to Maxim, they barely used it. If there was a gathering, they'd simply gather at the packhouse since it was big enough for everyone and much more convenient. I had to admit: the hall really was a bit far.

About ten other cars were parked out front, and there was a hint of light classical music coming from inside. As I hopped from the car, I noticed that the little boy at the door suddenly ducked inside with an excited look on his face. I narrowed my eyes at the doubled door, seeing that the front part of the hall was dark.

"Oh, Fiona. What are you up to," I mumbled to myself as Maxim came to my side.

He chuckled as he offered me his hand. "Well, let's go find out," he said, and I nodded in agreement.

I could feel my heart beating a thousand miles in my chest as we pushed through the large door. The second set of doors sat at the end of the dark lobby area. My instincts told me what this was all about, but I really wanted to see it first.

With a deep breath, Maxim and I pushed through the second set of doors, which led up to a large room decorated in the most extravagant designs, looking nothing less of a ball. Everyone in the room was dressed formally, holding champagne glasses in the air as if they were giving a toast. I gasped as I froze at the door.

Below us was a glittery silver carpet that led straight to the stage area, where no other than Fiona and Leonardo stood. The room was equally decorated beautifully, with blue and silver streamers, with white roses everywhere. Tables sat on either side of the room with a bunch of white flowers for the centrepiece with a single silver star sticking out. And finally, at the stage was a banner that read, 'Welcome, Melissa', in equally glittery letters.

It all made sense now. The dress, the colour scheme, the secrecy. I almost cried until I remembered that my make-up wasn't waterproof, but it was a hard battle keeping the tears at bay.

I glanced at Maxim. He didn't seem shocked but slightly impressed.

"You were in on this?" I asked, and he shook his head, not taking his eyes from the stage.

"No. I had no idea, but I had a feeling." I tried laughing to keep away the tears as I glanced around even more.

It wasn't the entire pack, but it was probably half of them. They didn't even know me, and they all stared at me with such admiration. But most of all, I wanted to run to the stage and grab Fiona in a hug that would probably kill her baby if I wasn't careful enough.

This was the most beautiful thing I have ever seen.

"Introducing for the first time ever, Alpha Maxim Dalton, with his mate and soon to be



Luna, Melissa, Alexis," Fiona said into the wireless mic.

The lights suddenly went dim, and suddenly two glasses were placed in our hands. Maxim tugged at my arm and nudged his head towards the stage, and I tried my best to remember how to walk.

Slowly, we marched down the glittery carpet while a soft song played, and each member who was in reach clicked their glasses against ours as we walked.

I couldn't help it. Finally, the tears won, and I didn't care that I'd look like I dressed like a mourning bride for Halloween instead of a Luna. This was all too emotional.

As soon as I was close enough, I grabbed onto Fiona and squeezed the life from her. She laughed as she hugged me back, trying hard not to let our drinks spill.

"You did this?" I asked as Maxim gave Leonardo a quick bro hug.

Fiona giggled with a nod. "We usually have an annual gala, but we decided to make it a bit earlier this year," she admitted. "We always have it themed, and this year's theme is you."

"I love you," I mumbled as I hugged her again before doing the same with Leonardo. I had no idea how they planned an entire gala, and I didn't notice. Have I been so self-consumed that I didn't even notice the obvious?

Maxim and I stood to the side, looking cute as Fiona and Leonardo announced the procedures for tonight's event. I was shocked when she announced that I'd have to give a speech after dinner. I didn't prepare anything, and I was not good at impromptu. I instantly started sweating.

"Relax," Maxim mumbled in my ear. "You'll be fine. Enjoy the night, okay?" His voice was so soothing and soft that I couldn't help but relax. Luckily, I'd have time to come up with what I'd say. I had to get used to this anyway. I'd be Luna in a matter of days.

Eventually, Maxim had to say something since he was the Alpha. He seemed so natural up there, talking to the pack. The way they stared at him in respect and honour showed me he had been a great Alpha. Even the older wolves seemed respectful. However, I didn't miss how some of them glanced around in expectation, though, no doubt looking for their other Alpha.

I frowned a bit as I remembered seeing him before we drove off.

"Hey, you okay?" Leonardo asked me as Maxim talked about general pack stuff. "Is it the speech? I told Fiona that it was too much."

I chuckled. "It's not the speech. It's Lukas."

I saw how his eyes darkened a bit, but they returned to normal in a second. "Oh," he simply said. "He's here?"

"No. He's not here; that's the issue."

Leonardo studied me for a while through scrutinising green eyes. "You're not mad at him." It was more of a statement than a question, but the tone of his voice told me that he was still a hundred per cent mad at him.

I shrugged. "I forgave him. You don't have to be mad at him for me anymore. I'm fine now."

"It's not necessarily for you, Melissa. No offence," he added quickly.

I smiled. "None taken."



"I mean, I was mad at him for what he did to you. I mean, if it was Fiona, I'd kill him. I have no clue how Maxim stands to see him. I told myself that I was angry at him because of what he did to you, and I was. When I heard that you got rid of the mark, a huge burden was lifted from my head, and that's when Fi and I started planning this. But I still noticed that I was still mad at him, you know? I mean, you think growing up with someone makes you know them. But I have no idea who that love-crazed man who marked an innocent girl was. I don't know him anymore."

I nodded as I processed all he said. I mean, hearing it from Leonardo made me realise just how Maxim must've felt. They all grew up together. It wasn't all about what he did to me per se and simply about what he did-betraying their trust like that.

I gave his hand a soft squeeze. "If we didn't make mistakes, then we'd just be wolves, right? Not werewolves." The 'were' in werewolf goes way back to over a thousand years ago, where the 'were' means 'man'... which, of course, identifies the human side of us.

It was one of the first things we learned in werewolf school.

Leonardo seemed distant in thought for a while before he eventually nodded. "I guess." That was all he said until he went silent again.

I refocused on Fiona, who now had the mic again and bidding everyone a great time. Maxim stole me away again, and we were led to our table by two teenage boys. We shared a table with Leo and Fiona, and everything was just lovely and perfect. There was an empty chair with a place card that read 'Lukas'. It made me sad for a while, but eventually, things started to pick up for me.

We laughed, danced, and laughed-it was nothing less than perfect.

Soon, the time I dreaded came too soon, and I was being led to the stage to give a speech that I was having just about too much fun to plan in my head.

I collected the mic from Fiona as she gave me an encouraging pat on my back. I shot a glare as I glanced at the expectant faces. I then looked at my mate, who was staring at me with nothing but admiration and pride, and my heart instantly calmed.

I took a deep breath as I redirected my eyes.

"Hello, everyone," I began nervously. "Um, sorry about the entire zombie look. Fiona took me by surprise, and she didn't even have the decency to send me waterproof mascara along with everything else she left for me."

It surprised me when they actually laughed, causing me to smile a bit.

"Anyways, this was-is awesome. Trust me, I have never felt such love and appreciation in my life, and half of you don't even know me. I just want to thank you all for doing this. A lot has gone down lately, and this was exactly what I needed."

I paused a while as I turned to my table. "And the wonderful people who planned this." I blew a kiss in their direction. "Fiona and Leonardo, I am so grateful. There couldn't have been a better welcome, and trust me, I feel so welcomed. I feel at home. Living in the Alpha house with you guys has been a blessing. I truly believe that fate brought me here. And not just because it brought me to my mate, who I love and adore and cherish so much." I paused as I shared a look with him.

Being himself, he winked at me and sent something a bit too X-rated in our mind link that I almost dropped the mic out of shock and excitement. I quickly continued.

"This has been great, and I—" I stopped instantly as I glanced towards the back, where a certain Dalton brother stood, fully dressed in a black and white suit with his hands tucked in his pants. I instantly felt even more satisfied. Better late than never, right?



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