

18–Bonding Time

Ari's POV

I always thought Alphas were overly possessive of their mates. But Finch is listening, asking questions and even laughing at stories about me and Kale.

Me- Juliet, you there?

Juliet- I am, sorry for being so quiet. My heart hurts too.

Me- I'm sorry.

Juliet- It's hard right now, but I think we can do this. Duke and Finch will help.

"I always thought that the steel drum thing was in movies," I tell Finch, who is laughing so hard he can't cut the lettuce. "So, when Kale's Dad started playing them, I laughed and asked why?"

Finch puts the knife down so he can come around the counter to hug me.

"What did Kale say?" He is holding my waist.

I give a fake pout. "He pulled out drumsticks and started playing too."

Finch laughs again and we start kissing.

"I love you," he whispers.

"I love you, too," I tell him, and we deepen our kiss.

"Hey, bond not fully broken, we feel that," Finley says, coming into the kitchen. "I thought there would be steaks."

Anderson follows and they both sit at the counter with me.

"The Grill is almost ready," Finch tells them and kisses my forehead.

"Thanks for talking to me," I tell him, not letting him go. "You were right, it helps."

"Anytime, Sweetheart," he kisses my lips quickly and heads back around the counter to keep working.

"What were you talking about?" Anderson asks. He has washed his hair and it's back to shiny and down.

"Kale," Finch tells them.

"I'm really sorry about what happened," Finley tells me with a tight smile.

I look at both Anderson and Finley. They don't look like Finch at all. Maybe they just favor their mother too much.

"Thank you, hum," I want to ask the question. I really, really do, but I don't want to upset Finch.

"I already asked, they swear it was not them. Carter swears too," Finch tells me as he lays a veggie and dip plate in front

of me.

"We don't have that kind of malice, or power," Finley says.

"We do have the imagination but are not heartless enough to take out a couple hundred innocents. We aren't monsters," Anderson tells me, looking me in the eye. "I promise, we are not THAT evil."

"Yet, your own father felt the need to ask," I say, biting a carrot stick harder than I needed to. Both Anderson and Finley wince.

"Touché," Finley says, taking a tomato and dipping it before eating it.

"You know you and I never talked before," I say to Anderson.

He reaches and takes a celery stick and scoops up a lot of dip.

"I was always there," he tells me before eating. "Who do you think stopped Carter from hurting you?"

My eyes go wide.

"I may not have wanted you as my mate, but I also don't want you hurt," Anderson confesses.

Juliet- I think this will be okay.

I swallow as the realization that Anderson kept me safe is the only reason I'm okay. Carter was, well is, very aggressive.

Finch lets out a low growl at Anderson and my prolonged eye contact.

I roll my eyes at him.

"Did you seriously just growl?" I ask. "What are you, 12?"

Finch narrows his eyes at me before taking a tray out to the grill.

I watch him leave and, oh, that man's ass is a work of art.

"So, should we call you Mom?" Finley asks, with a smirk.

"Sure," I shrug. "Or Ari, which would be less weird."

"I don't think there is a way to make this less weird," Anderson chuckles.

While Finch cooks, the two guys and I talk. We don't go too deep, because, honestly, we aren't friends. Hell, I have no idea how I am suppose to be family with them. But we can be civil.

"Hey, Carter is coming up," Finch announces.

I must have visibly tensed, because Finch starts rubbing my back.

"He won't hurt you," Finley tells me softly.

"I promise not to let him," Anderson assures me.

"I got you too, Sweetheart," Finch whispers, kissing my head.

Juliet- I'm hurting but he comes at you, I got you too!

I wrap my arms around Finch and hold him tight. As Carter's scent enters before him.

He and I lock eyes before he looks away.

"Steaks?" Carter says.

"Yeah, just coming off the grill," Finch smiles. He kisses my head before leaving to get the steaks.

Carter goes and sits at the table. Anderson and Finley follow. I got to the fridge and grab everyone a beer. This dinner is going to be awkward as FUCK!

"Thanks," Finley says, taking three of them from me.

"Perfect," Finch smiles, taking his beer from me. "Steak, Beer and most importantly, my family."

I sigh as we sit down.

"I can't believe you can just ignore the tension in the room right now," I say.

Finch smirks at me. "What tension?"

All three triplets laugh.

Carter and I look at each other again and he raises his beer to me.

I nod to him.



"Who's up for a game of Monopoly?" Finch asks, after he and I clear the table.

"Seriously?" I ask as Finley grabs a cardboard box.

"Come on, Mom, game night," Anderson smirks, trying not to laugh out loud.

"How do you play?" All four of them stare at me in disbelief. "I was never welcome to game night when I was home. And Kale and I only ever played strip poker."

"We can play strip poker," Carter jokes.

Finch slaps the back of his head.

"We will teach you," Finch tells me.

After a tutorial, we start to play.

"How in the hell did you end up with half the board?" Finley whines as he pays me rent again.

"Your father is a Simp," I answer, taking Finley's money.

"Am not," Finch defends himself.

"Of course, you aren't," I pinch his cheek.

Everyone laughs, even Carter.

I won two games before the triplets gave up. 1

We say goodnight and Finch and I head to my room.



"Want to sleep in our bed?" Finch asks me, pulling my hand.

"Not tonight, Finch. Can you just hold me?" I ask him.

"And NO kissing," The triplets say in unison.

I can't help but laugh.


"Come on," Finch holds me close and pulls me to my room.

"Two nights here and you haven't let me sleep alone at all," I tease him.

"And I never will," Finch pulls me into a hug.

Juliet- We need to make sure to hold him to that!

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