

BOUND TO THE ALPHA KING NOVEL

Chapter 3

The Decision

I don't know how many times I've walked in circles around this room, but I still can't make up my mind. I spoke to the girl I met earlier. Her name is Meryl and apparently, she's my maid.

She's been patient, answering all my questions like it's no big deal. She thinks I've got some memory loss from... whatever happened to me.

This world? It's nothing like Earth. It's a land where mythical creatures like werewolves, vampires, and magic aren't just fantasy stories. They're all real.

Aria's father is the king of the forest creatures. He rules over fairies, nymphs, and all the beings who rely on the forest.

I'm still having trouble wrapping my head around everything she said.

Maybe... maybe this is just a dream.

I've heard stories about people having crazy long dreams while they're in a coma. Maybe I'm in that state in the real world.

It can't be real, can it?

How is any of this possible?

But the pain... it feels so real.

I pinched myself hard. Yeah, it definitely hurt...a lot.

Whether this is real or not, I've got to make a decision. If I don't, the whole kingdom's going to label me as selfish. I don't think Aria wanted that. Maybe that's why she tried to end her life.

But is the Lycan king really that terrible? Would someone rather die than be with him?

What the hell did I get myself into?

I groaned and flopped down on the bed.

Man, this thing is so soft.

It'd be nice to just curl up and nap with these fluffy pillows.

A knock on the door jolted me upright. "Come in," I called softly, not wanting to yell. That wouldn't feel very princess-like.

Meryl peeked in and smiled when she saw me. "Princess, it's time for dinner," the girl chirped as she walked in. "You should head to the dining hall. Everyone's waiting."

"Oh... did you have dinner?" I asked with an awkward smile.

Meryl tilted her head. "No, Princess. We always eat after the royal dinner."

"Oh, right... I forgot."

Meryl pouted a little. "You really forgot a lot, didn't you? We used to have so much fun growing up. But now, you seem so distant like you've forgotten it all."

I chuckled awkwardly, scratching the back of my neck. "I didn't mean to make you sad, Meryl. My mind's still catching up with everything... I apologise—"

"Oh no, Princess! You don't have to apologize! I was just saying..."

I smiled and stood up. "Alright, I'll head to the dining hall. Do you want to tag along with me?"

"Okay!" Meryl beamed as she replied.

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The dining hall was filled with unfamiliar faces. Some people looked at me with sympathy, while others had their noses scrunched in disapproval.

I made my way quietly towards the king where an empty chair waited for me. Aria's father smiled at me, then cleared his throat to get everyone's attention.

"Everyone," he began, his voice firm. "I have something to tell you." He gently patted my hands. "We've decided to refuse the marriage proposal from King Cyrus." He announced suddenly, surprising everyone in the room, including me.

And then all hell broke loose.

The room erupted with gasps and shouts as everyone at the table started yelling at the king.

"How could you decide that?!"

"He's our only ally!"

"Are you really going to sacrifice us for your daughter?!"

"That's reckless!"

"We're all going to die because of this, King Lucas!"

"You're putting your family above the kingdom! That's not fair!"

The king sighed, his voice steady as he spoke. "Listen, everyone," he said and gradually the table fell silent. "I don't want to force her. This is her life. I can't make her do anything against her will. I'm looking for other ways to protect our kingdom..."

"We know there's no other way!" someone shouted from across the table.

"Your Majesty, this isn't a wise decision," an old man spoke up, his voice was filled with concern. "I love the Princess like my own daughter, but you're sacrificing our kingdom for her... That's millions of lives at stake."

I couldn't stay silent any longer.

It just didn't feel right so I cleared my throat, drawing everyone's attention. "I'd like to say something..." The room fell silent in a second.

It was almost surreal how they all stayed quiet, even though I knew most of them probably hated me.

"I... I've changed my decision." I said and the table erupted into murmurs.

I saw the king and queen exchange worried glances, their confusion clear on their faces. It must've been a shock to them. After all, I was their daughter—the one who tried to end her life rather than go through with this.

But I'm not Aria anymore.

She's gone.

"Dear..." The queen began, her voice soft with concern. "Are you sure? You don't have to feel pressured..."

"No, Mother... I've made my decision. I'm going to wed King Cyrus."

I could hear relieved sighs and soft prayers around me. They were all relieved that I had finally given in.

The king gently squeezed my hand. "Aria, this is an important decision... You cannot rush into it like this."

"I'm fine, Father..." I gave him a small smile. "I'm the daughter of the king. I should be considerate. The people of our kingdom are my people too. Their protection comes first."

"Aria... I still cannot—"

"Your Majesty," someone interjected, "Why are you opposing this if the princess is fine with it?"

The king sighed heavily. "I am not opposing... I just want to be sure she's came to this decision after careful thought."

"Don't worry, Father. I've thought about it a lot," I reassured him with as much confidence as I could muster.

The tension at the dinner table began to fade after that and within minutes, everyone started focusing on their meals.

I felt a wave of relief wash over me. These people were crazy intimidating.

They weren't like normal people. I could feel the power radiating off them. It was almost suffocating. I focused on eating slowly and waited for the king to finish before standing up.

Dinner was finally over. I let out a quiet sigh as I walked away. I'd made my decision. I hope it was the right one even though I have no idea what I'm getting myself into.

It looked like I spawned in a moment where I had to make an important decision. Which the previous owner of this body couldn't do.

My find felt hazy. I knew I was rushing into things. But I didn't have any time to spare.

Maybe this life was a second chance given to me. I had a family now. There was a man calling me his daughter. It...It felt surreal.

Aria's story ended here.

It was me now. I'm the princess. I'm the daughter of the king. The fate of this kingdom depends on me.

I couldn't let them down. I'm not that cruel.

"Aria..." a soft voice called from behind me. I turned around to see the queen walking up to me. "You are doing so much for this country," she said gently, her hand reaching out to caress my face.

Her touch was warm and comforting. Is this what it feels like to have a mother?

"My daughter has grown up so fast... She's a lady now," the queen said with a small chuckle. I could see her tear up a little.

I chuckled softly. "Are you proud of me, Mother?"

"I've always been," she replied with a gentle smile. "Now go get some rest. You need to look beautiful tomorrow."

"Is there something special happening tomorrow?" I asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Oh, you must have forgotten. King Cyrus will be here to see you..." Her voice trailed off.

I felt a lump form in my throat. I'd agreed to marry him, but was I really ready to face him? Especially since, from everything I'd heard, he was supposedly the cruelest man alive.

"Tomorrow is the day your marriage will be royally announced," the queen said softly. "We were going to refuse, but now that you've agreed..."

"I understand," I said with a small smile. "I'll get some rest, just as you said."

"Sleep well, dear," she whispered, pulling me into a warm embrace.

I closed my eyes, letting myself sink into the comfort of her hug for a moment before stepping back. "I'll see you tomorrow," I said, smiling again even though my voice shook slightly.

The queen nodded and placed a gentle kiss on my forehead. In that moment, I just wanted to break down and cry.

I couldn't help but feel overwhelmed with emotion. I felt like a baby, craving the warmth I'd never known. A mother's warmth was something I'd never gotten to experience, and now that I had, it felt almost surreal.

I walked to my room in a daze. Tomorrow, he'd be here.

My future husband.

I still couldn't wrap my head around the fact that I'd agreed to marry someone I'd never even met. What if he turned out to be an old geezer?

Oh my god...

I'm so screwed if that's the case.

"Princess, you're back," Meryl greeted me with a bright smile as I stepped into the room. "How was dinner? I knew you'd be tired, so I made your bed."

"Hey, Meryl," I said casually, kicking off my shoes.

She turned to look at me with wide eyes, waiting for me to talk.

"How old is King Cyrus?"

"Huh?" Meryl tilted her head.

"You heard me. King Cyrus—how old is he? Is he, like... an old man?"

Meryl froze for a second before breaking into a fit of giggles. "Oh my goodness!" she wheezed, trying her hardest not to burst out laughing entirely.

I pouted, crossing my arms. I was being serious! What's so funny about that?

"King Cyrus is not an old man, Princess," Meryl said, finally calming herself. "He's very young and very healthy. In fact, he's the most handsome man I've ever seen. If it weren't for his dangerous reputation, all the girls would be at his feet." She paused, smirking. "Not saying he doesn't already have girls after him. Plenty swoon over him, but from what I've heard, he doesn't even spare them a glance."

Meryl shrugged nonchalantly, as if she hadn't just dropped a bomb of information. "Oh, I should go now. Princess needs to sleep—tomorrow's a big day!" she added with a giggle before darting out of the room.

I stood there, processing her words, my mind whirling. "At least he's not an old geezer," I muttered as I flopped onto the bed. The soft, fluffy mattress wrapped around me like a cocoon, lulling me into peace.

And before I knew it, I was lost in dreamland.

