The Alpha King's Human Mate by HC Dolores **Chapter 113**

Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (13) Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (13)

after that

popped out

The Alpha King's Human Mate

"Being a mother is an attitude, not a biological relation." Robert A. Heinlein

She was almost sure he was avoiding her

Although Sebastian's last words about waiting for her, as long as that may be, were nothing but reassuring, she didn't see much of him

He'd been nice enough to allow her to keep sleeping in his room while he spent his nights in the empty bedroom of his sister, Lily

It was a kind offer, although Aria began to resent the separate bedrooms almost immediately. Not only had Sebastian's scent become stale on the sheets, but sleeping in a different rooms only made it easier for him to steer clear of her

He was gone by the time the sun slipped over the horizon, and didn't return till the middle of the night

His absence was beginning to make her restless, but she didn't want to

Most of the time, the only reminder of his presence was the pillow she slept on and the quiet turn of the doorknob at odd hours

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draw him away from whatever pack business kept him busy so late

The only thing that helped were the books

And although she meant to leave them alone and shut the drawer, curiosity won out

Like everything else that belonged to him

That's how she read the entire Harry Potter series in five days. Once she'd started, her eyes were glued to the worn pages, which smelled faintly of her mate

She'd discovered her mate's small collection of human books by accident when she'd bumped into his nightstand, and the bottom drawer

After that, she moved onto the next series about a group of siblings slipping through a wardrobe, and finding a new whole world. ?)

The only other reading material she'd found around the house was

But these were true stories, not manuals or guides she needed to memorize

her meals alone, but at least the fridge wasn't empty, even if the house was

hear them, she sighed and began her trek downstairs to the immaculate kitchen

The kitchen was, in fact, not empty

offer with a wink

It was divine

her face

She'd never had access to this kind of writing back home, and especially not with Liam. Her mother had taught her to read with Keeping a House: A Woman's Guide to Being a Good Mate - as was standard for most little girls in their pack

Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (13) similar, and she'd lost interest in reading several years ago

The characters in each book were human - or at least assumed human — but she loved them anyway

suffering from a severe case of boredom Just as she was halfway through re-reading the first Harry Potter book one afternoon, her stomach grumbled

That meant it was time to sneak down into the kitchen, and scavenge the fridge for something to eat for lunch. It was a little lonely to eat

She strained to listen for Sebastian's footsteps (on the small chance he might actually come home at a decent hour), but when she didn't

Unfortunately, two weeks into their new routine, she'd devoured every book in the house (of which there were fifteen) and she was

Aria pushed open the kitchen door and froze

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Luna Grace turned around as soon as she heard the door open and gave her a genuine smile. "Oh, Aria," she said, "I was just going to come up and ask if you'd like a roll. I baked them for the nursery workers, but I always make a few extra for the household." She punctuated the

"Really, don't feel shy," Luna Grace added, "There's nobody else here to eat the extras except me, and Goddess knows I don't need all of them

My husband's been away, negotiating with a neighboring pack, and Sebastian's been so busy picking up his slack."

Luna Grace slid the plate onto the table, gesturing for her to sit down

"Well, if you have extra," Aria finally agreed, and the older woman's smile widened as she began plating one of the freshly-iced rolls for her

Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (13) She couldn't remember the last time she'd had a homemade pastry

The warm, sweet roll practically melted in her mouth, perfectly complimented by the sugary icing

"Im glad it has at least one stamp of approval before I give it to the ladies in the nursery," Luna Grace said, turning back to the sheet pan of remaining rolls with a sigh. "Now I've just got to package the rest of these up."

She swallowed the rest of the bite. "Oh, yes, it's delicious," she said with slight pink dusting her cheeks

"Oh, no, I couldn't ask you to do that." "You can," Aria replied, "I'd like to be useful. Please." It was a genuine request. As much as she loved the books she'd found in Sebastian's room, she missed being productive. Being here

Aria nodded and gobbled up the rest of the delicious cinnamon roll before joining Luna Grace at the counter "Just grab some Tupperware from that bottom cabinet and start cutting these out with a spatula if you would. I've got to mix up another

"It's alright," Aria replied, "Nursery work is always time-consuming...

She'd never been in the same room alone with the woman until this moment

Luna Grace looked at her for a moment before she broke out into

another smile. "Alright, as long as you're sure. That'd be great."

Anxiety twisted in her gut as she separated one cinnamon roll from another on the tray. "Not so much these days." "Oh, I see." Luna Grace must've sensed her tension, and changed the subject quickly. "I know Sebastian hasn't been around much either

since he's taken over for my husband. I've been hearing him stomp through the door at all hours of the night...although I suppose I can

Aria's cheeks went pink again, and after Luna Grace was done laughing at her own joke, she said, "I'm sure what's taking up most of his

Aria could only stare at Luna Grace in confusion. If it was this weekend, then it was only two days away, but Sebastian hadn't said a word

As if she could hear the spiral of Aria's thoughts, Luna Grace quickly assured her. "I'm sure Sebastian just didn't want to pressure you," she

said, "The party is supposed to strengthen the alliances we have with our neighboring packs, but I've attended enough of them to know

they're usually just an excuse for people to get drunk and stupid." She rolled her eyes. "The last one I attended was a bonfire, and they

time these days is preparing for our Bonds without Borders party this weekend. After that, you should see him around more often."

"Are these late hours normal for the Alpha of this pack?" Aria asked, tucking a stray piece of blonde hair behind her hair

you about that? We have it every two years. It's a large party with the entire pack in attendance as well as the two packs we share borders with. It's our turn to host this year."

Granted, she hadn't spoken with him much these past two weeks, but...

he was doing everything he could to avoid spending any real time with her

accidentally set a small portion of the forest on fire. Fortunately, Sebastian is hosting ours inside."

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Had he just forgotten, too consumed with the extensive planning the party probably required? Did he not want her there? Or, even worse, maybe the awkward moment they'd had a few weeks ago had affected him more than he'd let on. It certainly seemed like

"Yeah, maybe he didn't want to pressure me," she agreed, "He knows I

Aria nodded. Regardless of what his intentions might've been, it stung

Sebastian's sister, Queen Clark, was not Luna Grace's daughter. And since she was Sebastian's younger sister, that meant... "How did you deal with it?" She asked, and after a moment, she added, "Why did you deal with it?"

Luna Grace's eyes were kind as she said, "When Clark's mother drove that girl here and left her on our doorstep, I knew I had a choice. I

could refuse to raise another woman's daughter and force my husband to make a terrible choice. I could leave my family...or I could

don't like crowds, and being here...I'm still learning how to deal with the judgement of all these people."

"You know," Luna Grace said, quieter this time, "If there's one thing I understand, it's being judged."

werewolf we came across for years to come." "You still chose the third option." "Yes," Luna Grace said, "And not without anger or resentment, but I tried my best to keep it behind closed doors. I still faced plenty of scrutiny in public. There was no hiding that my mate had done to me what so many thought a mate could never do. And you'd think my

welcome her into our home, knowing I'd probably face scrutiny from every

for my mate again too — but not without years of him making it up to me

shame was carried by the women, whether it was theirs to bear or not "But you asked why I stayed," Luna Grace continued, "And I think, at first, I stayed for my children. Including Clark. She deserved to know her father, and she deserved to be loved. I'm not sure I always did the best job at that second part, but I tried. Eventually, I started staying

husband would bear the brunt of that scrutiny, but...people always find a way to blame the woman." ||}

He's still making it up to me."

Aria's heart twinged with sympathy. She certainly couldn't argue with that logic — she'd grown up in an environment where every bit of

Aria smiled, wide and genuine. "Thank you, Luna Grace."

with the woman - unless you counted that first day, when Aria watched from the background as she hugged her son

Since entering Sebastian's home, she hadn't had a single conversation

Aria glanced at the large, homemade cinnamon rolls she was icing

They smelled even more delicious than they looked

Probably not since she lived with her parents

"Would you like some help?" Aria asked

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batch of icing," the older woman instructed

It's been more time-consuming than I thought."

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me much about your mother. Do you talk with her often?"

hardly complain when I've been walking in at my own odd hours."

"Oh, Goddess, no," Luna Grace chuckled, "If that were the case, I'm not

home some days."

Leaning over the counter with a tray of cinnamon rolls was Sebastian's mother, Luna Grace

Aria did so with little hesitation, and took her first bite

"T'm guessing it turned out okay?" Aria popped one eye open - she hadn't realized she'd closed them — to see Luna Grace still standing at the counter, an amused smile on

without providing any real contribution to the household felt...wrong

There was a beat of silence between them as they started their own tasks, and it felt more awkward than Aria would've liked. She wanted to talk to her — she was Sebastian's mother after all — but she wasn't entirely sure how

Fortunately, Luna Grace was the first one to break the silence. "You know, I'm sorry we haven't gotten to chat until now," she commented

lightly, "Normally, I'm at home more, but the pack has had a bit of a baby boom lately and I've taken up more responsibility in the nursery

She didn't mean to bring up her mother, but the memories Luna Grace arched a curious eyebrow. "I'm not sure Sebastian has told

and exhausting. My mother used to manage our daycare almost entirely on her own, and she'd be dead on her feet by the time she made it

Her eyebrows furrowed. "Bonds without Borders? What's that?" This time, Luna Grace was the one to look perplexed. She paused in the middle of whisking to glance at Aria curiously. "Sebastian didn't tell

sure I would've had time to make Sebastian or his sister."

"The entire pack attends?" Luna Grace nodded. "Sebastian really didn't tell you?" "No."

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Aria almost asked what she meant by that until it dawned on her

But he still could've told her

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She began icing the cinnamon rolls as Aria dished the last one into a container. "I saw the fear in your eyes when you looked at my son the first day he brought you here. You're scared he's going to tire of you, of whatever you're trying to work through together, but there's no reason to be afraid. Mates are not perfect, but when I tell you that the mate bond can survive anything, I mean it. Mine survived. Yours will too."

The petite woman rolled her eyes. "Please. You don't need to call me Luna, not when it's a title you'll hold before too long. You're my daughter now. Call me mom."