

One Night with the Alpha King –

Chapter 7

Aurora's POV

The next morning, I arrived early, hoping to avoid everyone. But when I stepped into my office, I found a message on my desk.

Report to Mr. Whitmore's office immediately.

My blood ran cold. Whitmore was the head of compliance. Why would he want to see me? I hurried to his office, my mind racing through possibilities. Had the Alpha decided to fire me after all? Had someone complained about me?

Whitmore sat behind his desk, his expression stern. "Miss Bluey. Sit."

I sat, my hands folded in my lap.

"It's come to my attention that you've been fraternizing with members of the Blackthorn family in an inappropriate manner."

"Inappropriate? I had lunch with John. That's all."

"That's all?" He leaned forward. "The Alpha's brother specifically requested your company. You spent nearly three hours with him yesterday. And then you were seen entering the Alpha's office afterward."

"The Alpha summoned me. I didn't have a choice."

"Miss Bluey, I'll be blunt. Your behavior suggests you're using your position here to get close to the royal family. That will not be tolerated."

Anger flared in my chest. "I'm here to work. Nothing more."

"Then prove it. Keep your distance from both Blackthorn brothers. Focus on your designs. If I hear one more report of inappropriate conduct, you'll be terminated. Do I make myself clear?"

"Crystal."

I left his office fuming. Inappropriate conduct? I'd done nothing wrong. John had invited me to lunch. The Alpha had summoned me to his office.

But no one cared about the truth. They only cared about appearances! I buried myself in work for the rest of the day, ignoring everyone. When evening came, I practically ran out of the building.

I picked up Cody from Mrs. Brook and held him tight.

"Mummy, you're squeezing me too hard," he giggled.

"Sorry, sweetheart." I loosened my grip. "How was your day?"

"Good! I drew you a picture!" He held up a crayon drawing of two stick figures. "That's you and me."

My throat tightened. "It's beautiful."

He studied the drawing for a moment, then looked up at me. "I want to draw Daddy too. But I don't know what he looks like."

The words hit me like a punch to the gut. I knelt down to his level and kissed his forehead. "Then draw him however you imagine him, baby."

He nodded and grabbed another crayon, adding a tall stick figure beside us. I watched him draw, my chest aching. He'd given the figure big hands and a wide smile.

If only the real version were that simple.

The next two weeks passed in a blur. I avoided John whenever possible. I stayed far away from the Alpha's office. I worked harder than I'd ever worked in my life.

But I could feel eyes on me constantly. Whispers followed me through the halls. The other employees watched my every move, waiting for me to slip up.

Then, on a Friday afternoon, my office door burst open. The Alpha stood there, his face dark with fury.

"You." He pointed at me. "With me. Now."

"What's wrong?"

"Don't ask questions. Move."

I followed him to the elevator, my heart pounding. He didn't speak. Didn't look at me. Just stared straight ahead, his jaw clenched.

We rode up to his floor in tense silence. When we entered his office, he slammed the door so hard I jumped.

"Explain this." He shoved his phone in my face.

I looked at the screen and felt my stomach drop. It was a photo of John and me at lunch. But it had been edited to make it look intimate. His hand on mine. My head tilted toward him like I was whispering secrets.

"That's not real," I said immediately. "We were just eating. Someone doctored that photo."

"Really? Because it looks pretty damn real to me."

"I'm telling you the truth. Someone is trying to make it look like something it's not."

"And why would someone do that?"

"I don't know! Maybe they want to get me fired!"

He grabbed my arm, pulling me close. "Do you have any idea what position you've put me in? What position you've put my brother in? These photos are all over social media. The press is having a field day."

"I didn't do this. I swear."

"It doesn't matter." His grip tightened. "You're a liability. To me. To my family. To my company."

"Then fire me," I said, meeting his eyes. "If you think I'm such a problem, just fire me and be done with it."

His eyes flashed with something dangerous. "You think it's that simple?"

"Isn't it?"

"No." He released my arm and turned away. "You want to know why I can't just fire you? Because I can't stop thinking about you. Because every time I see you, I remember that night. Because you've gotten under my skin in a way no one else ever has."

I stood frozen, his confession hanging in the air between us.

"But I won't let you destroy what I've built," he continued, his voice dropping to a growl. "I won't let you use me or my brother for whatever game you're playing."

"I'm not playing any game."

He spun back to face me. "Then what are you doing?"

"Surviving! I'm trying to survive and take care of my son and keep my head above water!"

The words were out before I could stop them. His eyes narrowed. "Your son?"

My heart stopped. No. No, no, no.

"John mentioned you had a child," he said slowly. "How old is he?"

"That's none of your business."

"How old, Aurora?"

"Three. Almost four."

I watched the calculation happen in his eyes. Watched him count backward from the present to that night four years ago.

"Where is his father?" His voice was deadly quiet now.

"Not here."

"Where?"

"I don't know!"

"You don't know where your son's father is?"

I couldn't breathe. Couldn't think. "It's complicated."

"Uncomplicate it."

"No." I backed toward the door. "This conversation is over."

His hand shot out, gripping my throat. Not crushing, but firm enough to stop me in my tracks.

"Nothing is over until I say it is." His face was inches from mine, his eyes blazing. "You will tell me everything, Aurora. Every secret. Every lie. Every truth you've been hiding."

"Let me go," I whispered.

"Not until you answer my questions."

"You're hurting me."

His grip loosened slightly, but he didn't release me. "Is the boy mine?"

The question hung in the air, terrible and inevitable. I could lie. I should lie. But looking into his eyes, I knew he'd know.

"Yes," I breathed.

His hand dropped from my throat like I'd burned him. We stared at each other, the truth finally laid bare between us.

"I have a son," he said, his voice hollow.

"You have a son," I confirmed.

And then his expression shifted from shock to something far more terrifying. Rage.