

The Alpha King's Human Mate by HC Dolores

Chapter 10

*"There is no such thing as fun for the whole family." @

– Jerry Seinfeld

Before

my brain could process Esther's words, Lily let out a strangled gasp beside me and all attention turned to her.

"The Alpha King wants to dine with us?" she asked skeptically, "Like in the same room? At the same time?"

Esther's smile didn't fade for a moment. "Yes, Ms. Bellevue. There are more than fifty different Alpha children here from across the world. The King won't have time. to meet with everyone, but he's hand-selected a few Alpha children he'd like to get to know better." (2

The possibility of having to sit across from the actual Alpha King and eat dinner with him – certainly didn't help my anxiety, but it's not like it was a total shock. I knew there'd be a possibility that I'd see the Alpha King at some point. I had just figured it would be while I was blending into the wallpaper at the diplomatic meeting, not during an intimate dinner party. 5

In a weird way, it helped that I wasn't the only one anxious about dining with the king. At least Lily seemed just as freaked out as I was.

"Who else will be there?" Sebastian piped up. As usual, his face was absent of emotion, but I knew him well enough to know he wasn't feeling comfortable with the idea either.

"The Alpha King has selected four Alpha children to join him," Esther replied, but she didn't elaborate beyond that. "Now that I've answered your questions, may I take you to your rooms?" (2

Deep breaths, Clark.

It's just three days.

Without waiting for a reply, Esther turned on her heel and began leading us down the long, stone hallway. The farther we walked, the more magnificent the castle became. We passed the large marble sculpture I'd seen on the way in, and it was even more impressive up close. It was of a towering man with a long beard, a crown on his head, and a human heart in his hands. (4)

Well...that's an interesting artistic choice. 2

On the bottom of the sculpture, the inscription read: King Xavier Bardot the Ruthless, 1783

"I hope you're as charmed by the artwork of our castle as I am," Esther commented, pointing to the sculpture. (2)

"It's, uh, nice," I told her.

There was more artwork too. We passed by a giant portrait of a man turning into a wolf in the woods. There was an oil painting of a young man and a woman holding a newborn baby in their hands.

"That one is the current Alpha King and the late Queen," Esther said, "Queen Cate died during childbirth with Prince Griffin. The Alpha King was – and is devastated by the loss, and he had this portrait done in her honor."

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I had to admit – the late Queen was beautiful. She was painted in a dark green dress that complimented her olive skin and green eyes. Her smile was wide and kind, entirely focused on the baby in her arms.

The king beside her was just as radiant. With dark hair and a golden crown on his head, the painted king held his Queen close but his eyes were focused on the baby too.

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I couldn't put my finger on it maybe it was because it depicted a dead Queen but there was something haunting about the image. It was supposed to look like a happy family, but there was something missing.

"And here are your rooms," Esther's voice brought me back to reality. She was standing in front of another arched wooden door, but this one was smaller than the

one at the south entrance.

“You’ve been given a suite to stay in,” Esther said, opening the door. We trailed behind her and I sucked in a gasp when I saw the inside of the suite. Q

Despite its large size, the bedroom had a cozy feel to it. The floors were shiny dark marble and maroon wallpaper covered the walls. However, the most eye-catching feature were the two large, king-sized beds on each side of the room. Each bed had its own canopy. There was an impressive vanity for the bed on the right and a large window cloaked in dark curtains on the left.

“This room is for the girls,” Esther pointed out, leading us farther into the room. “The bathroom is just to your left, and Sebastian’s room is connected by the doors.” I hadn’t noticed it before, but one of the walls was made up of a sliding glass door. The glass was opaque, and judging from Esther’s explanation, that would be Sebastian’s side of the suite. (2

“I’ll leave you three to get unpacked then,” Esther said, smiling widely again, “Dinner is at 8pm sharp. I’ll be back to escort you to the dining room.” With that said, Esther departed the room, the door clanging shut behind her.

There were several minutes of silence between us as we explored our rooms. Lily claimed the bed by the vanity and I took the one near the window.

As Lily unpacked her large suitcases, I couldn’t take the silence or the tense awkwardness anymore I had to say something. Awkward silences had never been my strong suit.

“So, that Esther lady. She’s real smiley, huh?”

As soon as the words were out of my mouth, Lily scoffed. “Yeah, that’s one word for it,” she said, “There was something weird about her. She was too nice if you ask me.” 1

“She was just doing her job,” Sebastian said. He leaned up against the vanity, watching us unpack. “Besides, I’m more curious to know why the Alpha King decided to have us, out of everyone here, at this dinner party. He only picked four others.”

“Isn’t it obvious why he wants us there?” Lily asked, and her eyes narrowed at me. “I bet he’s curious about Clark. She’s human, he’s probably going to poke and prod at her like a doll.” O

“Me? You really think he wants us there because of me?” I asked. Not a lot of

wolves had human children, I knew that – but was I so unusual that I peaked the Alpha King's interest? Q

So much for blending into the background like I was hoping.

"Well, I don't know for sure," Lily said, and she began pulling out clothes, "But I think it's a distinct possibility. Let's be honest here. Not a lot of Alphas have affairs. with human women, let alone pop out a child with them."

Almost immediately, the air grew thick with tension.

Dad's affair with my mom was a taboo subject at home. Sure, my siblings might've teased me about being human, but we never discussed why I was human. I knew it was because of Grace, although nobody ever confirmed that. Talking about my mom meant that Grace would have to think about how her husband, her mate,

cheated on her.

My mom might not have been the Dark Lord, but she was certainly She-Who-

Must-Not-Be-Named for the Bellevue household.

I scratched the back of my head nervously, and turned away to begin unpacking my own bag. "Yeah, I guess that's true," I said quietly. I wanted to say something else, but my tongue felt like it was glued to the roof of my mouth.

"Lily," Sebastian hissed.

"What?" Lily snarled, "I know that our family loves to pretend that it didn't happen, but dad did have an affair with a human. Clark got dropped off on our doorstep when I was twelve and you were fourteen, Seb. Whether we want to admit it or not, our family is fucked up and the entire werewolf world probably knows it." O

Her words were harsh, and I felt a stir of anger in my gut. It wasn't my fault that

I'd been dropped into this world, I couldn't help it. I hadn't asked for it, so why did it feel like her anger was directed at me?

"You know, Lily," I suddenly piped up, "Our family is fucked up, you're right. But it's not because of me. Dad is the one at fault, not anyone else. And I'm very aware that I don't belong here, you don't need to remind me."

There was a pause.

I kept my eyes on the clothes I was unpacking. I didn't want to see her face, but I could still feel her piercing gaze.

"Clark," she said, and I heard her sigh, "That's not what I meant. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to sound like I was blaming you for what dad did. I'm just on edge right now, I've been on edge since we left the fucking airport. This place is cranking my anxiety up to ten." 6

She plopped down on the bed, and the anger in my gut dissipated. Lily was a hothead and she often said things she didn't mean in the heat of the moment. I knew that and I couldn't hold it against her – especially when we were stuck in an isolated mountainous castle in the middle-of-nowhere Canada. 3

I approached her bed and hugged her from behind. "It's okay, Lil," I said, "We're all on edge. Must be something in the air here."

"Yeah," she snorted, squeezing my shoulders, "Definitely something in the air."

"Not to interrupt this Hallmark moment," Sebastian said, "But Esther said the dinner's at 8. We should probably start getting ready." (4

Right, how could I forget?

We've got a date with the Alpha King at 8.