

Chapter 0401

Mina is decked in a white strapless dress that has a small line of black metallic stones across the hem of her cleavage. The bottom hem has a soft ruffle that accentuates her toned thighs and a short slit up one side. Her dark brown hair has been pulled back into a half up style leading into soft curls that dance when she moves. You can see the faint hint of the red tint the summer sun brings out.

I am in my signature blue that Luna Anne seems to like best on me. My dress is a simple halter in the front with a very tiny peek-a-boo worked in just above my almost nonexistent cleavage. The choker style neckline wraps just at the base of my throat to clasp behind my neck and the back is the softest lack I have ever felt in my life. The attached skirt is more flouncy than my friends in three layers of stacked material with a soft wave like a skater skirt. A metallic belt around my waist completes the look and my blonde hair has been pulled up into a messy bun that somehow looks well put together.

We all walk out of the room to find the guys waiting for us.

"Seriously?! The blue dress was enough, now more skin is showing! I think you are trying to get me killed, mother! Sky you look beautiful, and that is not okay with anyone, just so you know." I laugh at Xander, just like the first time he saw me in a dress, he's overreacting. "But just so I can say I did

my job, come here so we can get a picture and I can get this round of abuse over with."

"What are you talking about?" I laughed at him.

"Well after your last Cinderella makeover, someone," He looked at his mother, "Leaked a picture to Luna Ava and the guys 'happened' to see it." He air quotes then rubs his face. "So now I am under strict orders to give them a first hand account of when you look this good so they don't have to be blindsided by it." He finishes with a roll of his eyes and Jena, Mina and I are all laughing. I think Luna Anne might be as well behind a well placed cough. ①

"Would it be helpful if we all posed for a picture with you? Mina asked. "Maybe they will feel less threatened by your proximity to her if you are outnumbered."

"Oh, that is a great idea and scares me all at the same time." Xander grimaces.

I roll my eyes and step next to him for the picture, Jena stands next to me and Mina plants herself on the other side of Xander.

"Oscar, you might as well join in and we can give them a full picture of Skylar's entourage tonight." Alpha Reggie is openly laughing. It's been a while since I have seen a full blown smile from him. It just hits the point home about how hard he is working on this whole Rogue King situation.

We snap a few photos and Xander sends one off in a group

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chat to the guys. If I was a little tall I would be able to read over his shoulder, but by the looks of it, he has kept pretty regular contact with them.

"Do you guys talk a lot?" I ask, trying to not sound too hopeful. "Do you keep up with all the future leaders like that?"

"I talk to everyone, since they are all going to be a part of my reign at some point, but I like the guys from your pack. They don't treat me like the future Alpa King, they treat me like one of the guys. I'm not a meal ticket to them, they don't aspire to be more than the leaders of their own pack and helpful to the kingdom as a whole. And they have something no one else does."



"What's that?"

"My cousin's attention." He winks and then turns away towards the elevators.

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Chapter 0402

Xander never did explain his comment about the guys having my attention. Even though I threw it in as often as possible throughout the night. The night was way less entertaining than I thought it would be. I don't know what I expected, but I was actually kind of bored with all the people. There was really no confrontation or dirty looks at all. Even Charlene and Olympia left us alone after a polite hello when we walked by them on our way in. Most of the Elders came to say a polite hello and tell me they were glad to see me back from my mission safely. I'm not sure how much they know of the situation, so I kept it to polite 'thank yous' and 'it's nice to see you again too.' Elder Bastian and Elder Vincent did not even look in my direction. So much so it was painfully obvious that I was being slighted or ignored. That made me smile. 1

"I think everyone is up to something or just in shock that you're here." Mina mindlinked me when I mentioned my thoughts to her.

"What do you mean? I mean I agree that something is up, but what do you mean they are in shock about me being here?"

"Think from their perspective. If you thought that your biggest threat was sent off on a mission where anything could happen and it would be ruled an accident or a risk of

the job. You were told they were being dealt with hours away from here and then they suddenly showed up out of the blue, looking like nothing happened, what would you do?"

"I would wait to see if I could figure out what happened, because something clearly went sideways or someone lied to me about the situation being handled.."

"Right, they aren't going to go out of their way to be any kind of way to you, nice or mean. They are going to keep their distance and see how this plays out."

"I wonder if this is why Alpha Reggie wanted me here. To see what they would do now that I'm back. Didn't someone say that the Elders were pushing really hard for a chosen mate for Xander in the last couple weeks? I mean more than the last time I was here. Even going as far as presenting a couple of girls for him to pick from."

"Something like that, from what I have heard. And with all of that in mind and everything that went on with your capture and what we know of the Rogue King using witches. There is now someone checking all the food and drinks for magic in case someone is using a spell instead of just the old fashioned poisons and potions."

"Oh Damn!"

"You know it's not fair to mindlink and not share right?"

Xander says into my ear as we walk around the perimeter of the party.

The meeting went smoothly and it was mostly just an information exchange and check in from each pack. Alpha Reggie did make a point to ask about the developments from Irontooth and the Shadow Pack as soon as we started. I think that was for my benefit and to remind those Alphas that I was here and the promised look into their safety measures has not been forgotten.

Now the Alphas and their guests were mingling and exchanging ideas about pack safety, rekindling partnerships and alliances, things like that.

I actually got to see Alpha Lucas and Luna Ava for a few minutes, but they didn't stay for the party. They did however take another picture with me promising to let the guys know they saw me and I was doing well. I'm pretty sure that Alpha Lucas was brought up to speed on my whole mission, by the way he looked me over and kept asking me how I really was. I don't think he will say anything to the guys about it though. No one is that dumb. I wish they could have stayed longer, but I still had a job to do and no matter how homesick I was for them, my pull to do well at that job is more than my inner little girl's need to be safe at home with the familiar. That didn't stop me from hugging both of them for longer than necessary before they left.

Chapter 0403

"You ready?"

"Huh?!" I look up at Xander confused, but he has a look on his face that tells me he is up to no good whatsoever.

"To dance. You do remember how right?"

"You mean the one and only time I was spun purposefully around the room by you, sure. I still can not do it on my own though, so I'm not sure what your expectations are exactly."

"I need to hit the dance floor, out of obligation of course..."

"Of course." I raise my eyebrow at him.

"And we may have to have a few pictures taken, up close and personal, you know, to make a point that I could possibly be involved with you somehow, considering I have never been to a party with a date, let alone the same person twice."

"Uh huh...and?"

"Alpha Lucas may have asked me to share some of those photos to motivate a few certain people to get their asses in gear. His words, not mine." He at least looked sheepish and I am glad he is warning me in his own demented boy way. "Remember, this is for Alpha Lucas and the guys. I am just going along with one of our most prominent Alpha's

reasonable requests.”

I roll my eyes and grab his hand. “You’re an idiot! You lead buddy and I can handle this embarrassment.”

Xander and I carry on like this for a while, keeping up mundane conversation, but we are both reporting what we see from the center of the dance floor. As boring as the meetings and updates were, this seems to be when things happen. There is so much going on that it seems like it might be easier to have secret meetings. I notice one in particular that intrigues me, but I don’t know if it is my general irritation of Elder Bastian or my distrust of Alpha Sharp that has me watching the two from the Shadow pack as they make their way around the room. Xander and I pose for many selfies, managing to get several of the groupings of people in the background, by accident of course. But We might as well let Jena use them to identify people later. I don’t really know what she needs to do her job, so I want to be as thorough as possible.

It seems random, but they have talked to and avoided the exact same people and have only approached someone for conversation after their target has talked to three people in between their interactions. I let Jena and Nathaniel know and they are making passes around the room getting Jena familiar with people and allowing her outside opinion to lead the observations.

“Prince Xander on your 6. A blonde looking very displeased

with the back of your head." Nathaniel links the both of us as he and Jena stop to my right about ten feet away as back-up.

I lean around Xander, wanting to know which girl it is this time and I am not disappointed.

"Olivia!" I basically shout the wrong name at her and cause Xander to spin around. She schools the murderous look on her face quickly though. I have to hand it to her.

"It's Olympia, Warrior." Touche. She places her hands on her hips and lets her perfected smile slip a bit. "Xander, you promised me a dance. It doesn't look very good for a Royal to go back on their word. People might start talking about indecisiveness and indecision and think you aren't fit to rule."

"That escalated quickly." Xander scoffs. "I'm not sure how many times I need to remind you though, that to you and the rest of the world my name and Title is Prince Alexander. And I believe that you are insinuating that being with Skylar is a negative because she happens to be a trained warrior. What you have yet to mention is what about being with you would be better?"

"My rank is higher for one." Both Xander and I don't hide our eye roll, we have already discussed this with her. "Second, your heirs need to have the distinction that I would bring to the royal family." She flips a blonde strand hanging from her updo back over her shoulder. Not sure what the point is, but

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it does give her a minute to come up with something else equally stupid to say. "She will never be as good as me and you both know it. I don't know why you keep playing these games with me Xander, but I won't have it. She needs to leave," She looks right at me, "And stop being a little homewrecker." Are those fake tears? She can cry on command?! Damn she is impressive, but before I can laugh in her face, Xander lets out a low menacing growl.

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