The Alpha King's Human Mate by HC Dolores

Chapter 115

The Alpha King's Human Mate

Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (15) Bonus Chapter: Aria & Sebastian (15)

"You cannot swim for new horizons until you have the courage to lose sight of the shore."

William Faulkner

The party had started an hour ago, right as the sun slipped below the tree line. Aria could hear it, even nearly a mile away, tucked in Sebastian's bedroom with the new book he'd gotten her

There was some sort of lively music and an endless chorus of whoops and hollers, which only seemed to get more animated the longer she listened. She wondered if Sebastian was having fun. He'd said he'd only be babysitting a bunch of drunk werewolves, but surely, it couldn't be that terrible. He was probably socializing with people from other packs

Socializing with men. Women

Jealousy burned in her stomach - she knew it was irrational. Sebastian would never do anything to hurt her, she knew that, but would other people offer her the same courtesy? After all, he was the Alpha-to-be, and without a mate by his side, seemingly single..

She swallowed down the lump growing in her throat. She had to stop thinking about this. She was supposed to have a quiet night in, away from the chaos, and enjoying the new book her mate had given her

Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (15)

With a sigh, she opened the book to the last page she'd dog-eared and tried to continue reading. She liked the book — it was a refreshing change from the ones she'd read in Sebastian's collection. Many of those had been about children going on adventures, but this was an actual romance. She didn't understand much about human romances, but she knew they didn't have mates...or most of them didn't. There was no mate bond, no intuition that led them to their soul mate. They were driven solely by their hearts and their own choices

Werewolves had it easy, she supposed

Several laughs echoed in the distance, and she sighed. Those people, and her mate, were probably having tons of fun. Even Grace was there!

With the exception of a few nursery workers taking care of the newborns, she had to be the only person in the pack - and probably the surrounding packs — not attending this party

And it was more than just jealousy. At its core, this event was supposed to be diplomatic...and she was supposed to be the future Luna

Sebastian's priority might be protecting her, but how would these people ever come to know her, to respect her, if she never gave them the chance?

These people weren't Liam

Her mind flashed back to the voices in the hallway who'd gossiped about Sebastian being her caretaker. If she didn't do something, the rest of the pack would probably come to think the same

Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (15)

She let out a determined sigh and closed the book. There was a very good possibility this might end disasterously (and in tears), but she had to try. If she expected these people to accept her, she needed to show them she was worth accepting

And that started with showing up

Aria tugged at the magenta dress she'd put on, feeling more exposed than ever. The strapless garment was far from her usual wardrobe, but it was actually one of the more conservative options she'd been able to find in Lily's closet

It was a certainly a better pick than wearing one of Sebastian's shirts or a pair of pajamas

She felt a little bad about taking the dress without anyone's permission, but it's not as if Lily had need for it anymore

With a sigh, she began her trek to the pack house, following the raucous laughter and hollering. Her chest tightened a little at all the drunk male laughter that sounded eerily familiar

But these are not Liam's men. They're not here to hurt me or any of the other women present

Her flats crunched on the gravel walkway all the way to the pack house, and when she got close enough to see it, her breath caught

Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (15)

There were so many people

People lounging on the grass with drinks in their hands, families playing cornhole with their kids, and mated couples taking up lawn chairs. Fortunately, the crowd was so large that none of them seemed to notice her sudden appearance — and wearing the dress seemed to be the right choice. She blended in with the other women all dolled up here

I can do this. It's just people

It took a little maneuvering through the crowd, but eventually, she was able to slip in through a side door

Unfortunately, the inside of the pack house was even more crowded, with wolves packed in like sardines. She took a long, deep breath, and tried not to think about how cramped the place felt. She could do this

This was like exposure therapy. That's something people did to overcome fears and anxieties, right?

She didn't recognize anyone in this room, so it was impossible to tell who was from Sebastian's pack and who was from another

"Well, you look beautiful tonight."

Aria nearly jumped at the unfamiliar voice, and turned to find a large man practically hovering over her. He couldn't have been much older than her with blonde hair, blue eyes, and an untucked shirt that reeked of booze

Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (15) "Can I get you a drink?"

"No, thank you. I don't drink," she replied, and her voice came out quieter than she would've liked

The man leaned close to her, and her entire body tensed. "I can't hear you that well with all these people in here," he said, "Why don't we go somewhere a little quieter?"

Aria's eyes darted around the room. Where was Sebastian? She'd come here for him, and so far, he was nowhere to be seen. She was alone, and this man was too close to her, and -

"Hey, did you hear me? I asked if we could go somewhere with a little less noise," the man repeated. "What's going on in that pretty little head of yours?" He used a finger to reach for a strand of her hair, and tug on it

Something in Aria snapped

"Don't touch me," she growled, and pushed him off her. She hadn't meant to use so much force, but it sent him staggering backward

A couple of people nearby turned to stare at the commotion, and her cheeks burned. She hadn't meant to make a scene, but it was done now

And he was no longer invading her space

She slipped back into the crowd before the man could recover

Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (15)

After dodging various drunk werewolves rough-housing or making out, she made it to the living room — and her heart sunk to her stomach

There was Sebastian, lounging on a large L-shaped couch, with a soda in his hands and a tight, dark t-shirt that hugged every bit of sinewy muscle in his torso

However, none of that gave her pause

It was the petite brunette perched on the arm of the couch with one of her manicured hands on his shoulder. She had a large, plastic smile on her face, and from across the crowded room, Aria strained to hear the conversation

"Has anyone told you how good you look tonight, Alpha?" The woman's voice was practically a purr. She was dressed in a black, strapless dress that stuck like glue to every curve on her body and dipped low on her chest

"I'm not the Alpha yet, you don't need to address me like that. Besides, I'm not even your Alpha," he replied flatly

Sebastian, to her immediate relief, didn't appear to be giving the woman any real attention. He wasn't even looking at her, and when she tried to trail her fingers down his chest, he shifted farther down the couch

Aria didn't move. She should've — she should've walked over, and let Sebastian know she'd come to see him

Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (15)

But she didn't

Although he didn't seem interested in the woman's advances, some part of her was curious. Would he give in? Would he reciprocate her attention here, in a crowded room where she wasn't supposed to be and there was nobody to hold him accountable?

It was like standing in the middle of the road, waiting to see if a car would hit you

"Are you sure you don't want a drink, Alpha?" The woman seemed undeterred by his disinterest, and only scooched closer. "Anyone of age is drinking tonight — it's what makes these events more fun."

"No, I'm fine," he said, and he was looking at a pair of wildly drunk werewolves attempting to play beer pong. "Someone needs to remain alert in case anyone gets too rowdy."

Aria could swear the woman actually fluttered her eyelashes at that

"You're so responsible, Alpha."

For the first time since Aria had been watching them, he turned to face the beautiful she-wolf. "It's Sebastian, not Alpha," he told her with frustration lacing his tone

The woman giggled like she'd just been paid a compliment. "Right. I suppose there's no need for any formalities then, Seb?"

Red, hot anger rushed through her veins

Seb? Was she really calling him that?

Aria had heard that nickname before — from Sebastian's sisters, from people who'd earned the right to address him so intimately

This woman had earned nothing, and it made Aria burn with outrage

that she thought she had

This was her mate

She'd earned nothing

She'd already crossed half the room before she'd realized she'd taken a step at all, and a moment later, her palm was connecting with the

woman's face. |