

Chapter 13

Olivia's pov.

As I examined my reflection in the mirror, I couldn't help but sigh. I had become used to wearing a mask every day, never letting anyone see my face, but it had become such a big part of me that I had started to forget who I was without it. The delicate lace mask that covered half of my face seemed to mock me, a constant reminder of the secret I harboured and the danger that loomed if anyone was to ever find out who I really was.

"Olivia, are you ready?" My handmaiden's voice interrupted my thoughts, causing me to jump slightly. She stood at the door, her eyes filled with concern as she watched me carefully adjust the intricate design of the mask.

"Yes, I'm ready," I replied softly as I turned to face her. "Let's not keep Victor waiting."

Together, we made our way down the corridors of the palace, the soft rustle of silk skirts echoing around us. As we approached the grand hall where Victor had told me to meet him, I felt a familiar knot form in my stomach. It had been three years since I had arrived in Avaloria, three years since Victor had taken me in and declared me his sister and one of the princesses.

But despite all the luxury and privilege that came with my new title, there was still an emptiness within me that refused to be filled. Alexander's memory still haunted me, leaving scars that no amount of time or distance could heal. Because of him, I had to lie to everyone and change my name and my life story.

As we entered the grand hall, Victor's presence filled the room. He stood tall and imposing, his eyes scanning the crowd until they landed on me. A small smile tugged at the corners of his lips as he made his way towards us.

"you look stunning as always," Victor said, his voice smooth and commanding.

"Thank you," I replied, offering a small curtsy in return. "The hall looks beautiful. Lidia will love everything."

Victor chuckled softly, shaking his head. "You know our sister all too well. She'll find something wrong with it, mark my words."

I couldn't help but laugh at his comment, knowing that he was right. Lidia is one of the pickiest people I have ever met. Finding flaws in even the most perfect of things.

As we made our way further into the hall, I couldn't help but admire all his hard work. He had asked me if I wanted to take over organising the ball for Lidia, but I turned him down because he knew her better than I did, and I was glad I had.

"I must say, Victor, you've truly outdone yourself this time," I commented as I turned around to look at him. His smile faltered slightly, and his eyes lost their usual warmth. I furrowed my brows in confusion, noticing the change in mood.

"What's wrong, Victor?" I asked, concern lacing my voice. "You're not your usual cheerful self."

Victor hesitated for a moment before finally speaking. "I'm really sorry," he began, his gaze shifting away from mine. "But since this ball is to

find a mate for Lidia, I had to invite all the Alphas and their Betas."

"I already knew that," I said slowly. "So why are you telling me again?"

Victor took a deep breath before meeting my eyes again. "Because... I had to invite Alexander to the ball."

My heart skipped a beat at the mention of Alexander's name. The memories flooded back, threatening to overwhelm me. My mask slipped slightly as I struggled to not let fear completely overtake me.


"Alexander?" I repeated, trying to keep my voice steady. "Why would you invite him? He is the last person that you would ever want to marry Lidia."

Victor reached out a hand to comfort me but paused midway. "I know it's risky," he admitted quietly. But he's an alpha, Olivia. We can't ignore his status. And we have kept him out of our kingdom for so long by not inviting him to so many things. If I didn't invite him to this, then he would start to pry, or worse, he would declare war on our pack."

My breath caught in my throat as I took in Victor's words. The thought of facing Alexander again filled me with fear. But I knew that Victor was right; we couldn't risk angering an alpha, especially one as powerful as Alexander.

"I understand, Victor," I said, trying to keep my voice steady.

Victor gave me a small smile before reaching out to touch my shoulder. "I promise you, Olivia, I will keep you safe. There's no way Alexander will recognise you with your mask on. Just stick close to me during the ball, and everything will be fine."

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I nodded my head before clearing my throat. "I'm sorry, Victor. I know I said I'd help you with the last few things for the ball, but I forgot that I had some urgent things that I needed to do today." I didn't wait for him to answer before I turned and left the hall.

As I rushed back to my room, my heart pounded in my chest. The thought of facing Alexander again filled me with dread. I closed the door behind me and ripped off my mask, gasping for air as if I had been suffocating all this time.

I paced back and forth in my room, trying to calm my racing thoughts. What would happen if Alexander recognised me?

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