

The Alpha King's Human Mate by HC Dolores

Chapter 57

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"A queen offers her hand to be kissed, and can form it into a fist while smiling the whole damn time."

Elizabeth Acevedo The next three days passed in the same mindless blur.

Griffin would leave early in the mornings to handle some sort of kingly business and I'd occupy myself around the bedroom. Sometimes with one of the books already in the room or with a movie on the big, flatscreen in Griffin's suite. Some servant who couldn't make eye contact with me would bring me breakfast and lunch. *)

Then, once evening came around, Mary or another castle girl would come to help me get dressed for dinner.

I'd dine with Griffin for dinner, usually in one of the many lavish dining rooms throughout the castle.

After dinner, Griffin would return to more of his kingly duties. It wasn't until late at night that he'd slip back into the room with me, cradling me close in bed. I was usually still awake when he wandered in, so there'd be enough time for touching or making out ~ but that was about as far as it went. I had a feeling he was just too tired from his long days to go much farther. Chapter 57

I never thought living in a castle would be boring, but in reality, this new routine felt like a snooze fest. And this was coming from somebody who loved lazy days. But there were only so many movies I could binge-watch on Netflix, only so many books on the shelf in Griffin's room.

So, by day four, I was determined to do something that wasn't counting the marble flecks on the bedroom floor. Part of me was nervous about venturing outside. Griffin hadn't forbidden me from leaving the bedroom, but he also hadn't encouraged it either. Besides the one I shared with him, my meals were brought to me. He'd told me that if I needed anything, I could just ask the guards stationed outside the door or talk to Mary.

Considering how territorial he was, it all felt like another subtle way for Griffin to show his possessiveness. Keeping me stuck in here, hardly interacting with anyone but him.

But if I spend another day stuck in this room, I'm going to go stir-crazy.

I decided to explore the castle. \)

After a hearty breakfast, I dressed in some comfortable sweatpants and a long-sleeved zip-up shirt. It would protect me from the chilly Canadian breeze, even if it did hide the claiming bite.

Oh, well. Griffin isn't here to be mad about it.

It's not my fault that he lives in Canada, the land of long sleeves and turtle-necks. Chapter 57 Just as I was feeling caffeinated and ready to take on the day, I met my first obstacle standing outside the bedroom door: two guards.

I forgot about them!

How could I forget that there are always guards out here?

I tried to mask the surprise on my face when I came face to face with the two large, burly men. They both had stony expressions, some of the broadest shoulders I'd ever seen, and stood nearly as tall as Griffin.

"Your Majesty," the guard on the left greeted me, "Is there something you need?"

Okay, you've got to play this right, Clark. Say the wrong thing and they'll just contact Griffin again.)

I tried not to falter as I met the left guard's piercing stare. "No, just a little fresh air," I said.

The guards exchanged glances with each other, like they were trying to piece together how to handle this. For all I knew, they were even mind-linking each other.

"Perhaps...you would like to wait for the King to escort you for some fresh air, Your Highness?" The guard on the left asked, sounding uncertain.

"Lm sure the King is very busy," I replied, "I don't want to pull him Chapter 57

away from his work. Maybe one of you wouldn't mind coming with me?" The idea of lugging around a burly bodybuilder all day wasn't the most appealing thought, but if I had to compromise to get out of the bedroom, I'd do it.

Another uncertain look passed between the two.

"We have strict orders not to leave our posts, Your Majesty," the guard on the right chimed in. "We could contact the King and see if he could

send someone else to escort you." Geez, does every decision have to go through Griffin around here?

I can't blame them for not wanting to get in trouble, but the last thing I want is to wait all day just for a supervised walk with Griffin.

"You know what?" I said. "Don't worry about it. I've already talked to the King myself, and he's fine with me wandering on my own. No need for an escort or to even contact him at all." >)

Neither of the guards looked the least bit convinced that I was telling the truth. I didn't know if that was because I was a terrible liar or if they just knew Griffin too well.

"seriously," I continued, "It's all good. You guys don't need to worry. I'll be back in less than an hour. If anyone questions you about it, you can just blame it on me."

Not that anyone will be. I'll be back here before anyone, including Griffin, r Chapter 57

realizes I went wandering alone.

The guards still didn't look comfortable about the exchange, but after another beat of silence, they finally nodded.

"If you're sure the King won't mind," the one on the left said, and he let me pass by. I almost felt bad for deceiving them, but once again - I'd be back before anyone even found out.

No harm, no foul, right? "He won't," I called one last time, leaving the guards in the dust. ')

Griffin would most definitely mind, but you know what? It's perfectly reasonable not to be locked up in a bedroom all day. I'm not a pet that's content to sit at home and wait for him all day. Even a fox, which he's so fond of calling me, would need more stimulation than this.

I dashed down the hallway before the guards could change their minds and decide they did need to check in with Griffin before letting me leave.

After passing through two separate hallways, I'd finally begun to relax. The hallways were almost completely empty, save for the occasional servant or guard. Some of the servants would ask me if I needed something as I passed by, but most of the guards just eyed me warily.

Even in casual clothes that hid my claiming bite from sight, most of them seemed to recognize me immediately. | wasn't sure if that had to Chapter 57

do with the red hair or their wolf-y senses picking up on the fact that I

was human. And they all knew who the only human in the castle was.)

Still, none of the guards came to take me back to the room - so I counted that as a win. It meant that none of them were mind-linking Griffin about my presence in the castle.

As I rounded another corner of the castle, commotion reached my ears. It sounded like urgent voices and scuffling, and it bounced off the wide, large walls of the stone hallways.

I debated turning back for a moment, but curiosity won out.

I could tell the noise was coming from an open door, and with quiet footsteps, I peeked my head in just enough to see.

"Again! Correct your form!"

I wasn't sure what I'd been expecting to see, but it hadn't been this. Standing inside a massive room that looked to be some sort of mini-gym was a man and several young boys. The bald man was middle-aged with the frame of a bodybuilder and a sharp, angled face. He was standing off to the side with crossed arms and periodically yelling at the young boys.

The teenage boys were performing push-ups at a supernatural rate while the middle-aged man watched on, looking thoroughly unimpressed. The scene resembled some of the warrior classes I'd had to participate in back home — but much more intense. The instructor Chapter 57

looked like he was training them for battle and the boys looked like they were preparing for it.

Geez, they're fast.

I'd seen werewolves in action countless times, but it still took me by surprise to see just how fast they moved ~ even young boys like this. None of them looked older than fifteen.

"You! You there!" The accented voice of the middle-aged man broke me

out of my stupor and I glanced over at him.

He was bald but he had some of the bushiest eyebrows I'd ever seen, and his glare looked like it could kill. Unfortunately, that glare was also currently fixated on me.

Well, that's just great. Guess I'm not as quiet as I thought.

"You're interrupting a private training session!" The middle-aged man snapped, pointing his finger at me. His yelling had drawn the attention of the boys, who had stopped their push-ups to stare at me.

"Lm sorry," I said sheepishly, shuffling my feet in the doorway, "I didn't mean to interrupt. The door was open and I just happened to be walking by. Sorry again." I could feel the heat of embarrassment on my cheeks. All I'd wanted was a little fresh air, and I'd somehow managed to become the center of attention. Chapter 57

Just as I was about to scurry away and pretend the entire exchange never happened, the man called out to me again.

"Wait! You are human?" he gasped, disbelief coloring his voice. His

nostrils were flared and his eyes narrowed — he must've sniffed me out.)

Is this the part where he realizes who's human I am and calls Griffin to collect me?)

My stomach sunk at the thought. I could only imagine Griffin would be even less happy about this than a quick stroll in the hallway.

There was no point lying to the man or any of the boys who were watching me with eager eyes. So, I just nodded my head.

The man just scoffed, muttering something under his breath. "To think they'd just let humans wander around here on their own," he rolled his eyes. I couldn't identify his accent but it was definitely European. "Let me guess. You're the mate of my low-ranking soldier" and you've got nothing better to do than twiddle your thumbs all day...so you're going to come here and interrupt my training session." ()

Now I was just confused. I didn't expect the entire werewolf world to recognize me, but I thought that word had spread to the entire castle by now. Most servants and guards seemed to recognize me on sight. Either this guy hadn't gotten the memo or he wasn't tuned into the gossip.

Before I could even refute his statement, he continued talking. "This is just my luck! I'm in the midst of training this castle's next generation of Chapter 57

warriors and guards. And now, not only have you interrupted my training session, but I've wasted even more time trying to explain this to a useless human." There were chuckles and gasps from the class of boys as the instructor's loud voice echoed throughout the room. If my cheeks weren't red before, they certainly were now.

The instructor's words sparked rage in my stomach.

Auseless human ~ that's what he'd called me. He probably had no idea what kind of old, festering wound he'd just poked but I did. How many times had I heard that over the years, felt that same superior attitude from my dad's pack members? (°

A year ago, I probably would've shrugged his words off and sulked about it in private. But right now, staring at his smug face, all I wanted to do was prove him wrong. I wasn't sure how, but I wanted to. I wanted to

wipe that smug superiority right off his face.

So, instead of shrinking into myself, I did the opposite. I squared my , "You're the

shoulders and met his glare head-on. "For the record," I sa one who wasted your time talking, not me. And just because I'm human doesn't mean I'm useless."

I could see surprise flit across his face, but when a couple of the boys began chuckling, the instructor's glare returned. "Actually, it does. If you're human, you're useless." (°)

That flicker of rage that he'd lit in my stomach became an entire forest fire. Chapter 57

"Sounds like you haven't spent a lot of time around humans," I snapped back. "We're more durable than you think."

"Oh?" He raised an eyebrow, glancing over at the group of boys. The entire class looked like they'd scored front row seats to a boxing match. They were eating up every bit of our argument. "If you're so convinced, why don't we put it to the test?"

I faltered momentarily.

He grinned at me, sharp teeth gleaming in the light. "Spar with me — we'll see how useful you are ina fight." 2