

The Alpha King's Human Mate by HC Dolores

Chapter 44

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“Punishment is not for revenge, but to lessen crime and reform the criminal.”

Elizabeth Fry

Suddenly, everything that my brain had momentarily forgotten about — Griffin hunting me down in California, drugging me, dragging me back to the castle against my will - smacked me in the face.

Punish me? Is he insane? What does that even mean?

I took another step back from him and Griffin just watched me carefully. His hair was messy, a side effect of the way I'd tangled my hands in it during the kiss.

God, I can't believe I kissed him.

Tkissed the man who drugged me and kidnapped me ~ what is wrong with

me? Even worse, part of me hadn't wanted him to stop!

Heavy shame settled in my gut and I knew my cheeks were red — this time from embarrassment. I couldn't believe I had let myself get so carried away. And for what? Because he'd called me his muse and drew pretty pictures of me? This was not a fairytale and Griffin was no prince charming, regardless of what kind of title he held.

“You can't punish me,” I snapped at him, crossing my arms, “You drugged me and brought me here against my will. That's kidnapping! If anyone deserves to be punished here, it's you.”

Griffin's eyes flashed. “I wouldn't have had to kidnap you if you would've just stayed here in the first place,” he said, “You chose to run. That action has consequences.”

He took another step closer and I jumped back. Okay, he's not reasonable ~ time for a new approach!

“You're right, it was wrong of me to run,” I said, throwing my hands up in surrender. Griffin cocked an eyebrow, clearly unsure where I was going with this. “But I've learned my lesson. I will never run from you again, okay? I'm yours. I understand my mistake. No punishment needed.” (7)

Griffin looked amused. “As much as I appreciate the apology, little fox,” he said, taking another step, “You and I both know you don't believe it. You're saying that to placate me. If you were given another opportunity to run right now, you'd take it. The only way you're going to actually learn your lesson is with a...helping hand, I should say.” (7) I took another step back. “You want me to accept the mate bond, right? How am I supposed to do that if you hurt me? That's going to be making progress in the wrong direction.”

Griffin took another step and I went to retreat, but my back hit one of the walls in the art studio. I was officially stuck and he knew it. Griffin loomed over me, his arms caging me in.

His eyes danced with amusement. “Oh, little fox,” he said, and he brought one of his hands up to cup my chin, “Just because I'm going to punish you doesn't mean I'm going to hurt you. Not really.”

“You're not?” I asked. That felt a little bit like relief, but the word “punishment” still had plenty of bad implications. Was he going to lock me in the dungeon? Refuse to feed me?

“No, of course not,” he said, “I'd never hurt, Clark. Not like that.” He paused and then that same crooked smile reappeared on his face. “It still will be a punishment but I don't think you're going to hate it at all.”

Before I could ask what he meant by that, Griffin wrapped his arms around me and tugged me over his shoulder in one swift movement. I barely had time to let out a gasp ~ he really carrying me over his shoulder fireman-style.

“What are you doing?” I snapped at him but all I could see was his lower back. “Just relocating.”

He - or we, I should say - exited the art studio in just a few strides and then Griffin gently set me down on the bed.

We're relocating...to the bed?

I sat up straight on the silk sheets and Griffin stood a few feet away, arms crossed. I could no longer read the expression on his face, it was blank.

My heart was beating a million miles per minute. | knew Griffin wasn't

going to force sex on me - or anything else that would actually hurt me = but what he was actually planning? And why did it need to take place

on the bed?

He was silent for a few moments and the anticipation felt like it was killing me.

Maybe this is the punishment. Maybe he's planning to torture me with silence and anticipation.

Finally, Griffin seemed to move. He moved to sit down on the bed beside me, stretching his legs out. “Alright, little fox,” he said, “It's time.”

He patted his knee and looked at me like I was supposed to understand that gesture. I stared at him in confusion. “Time for what? What do you want me to do?” Was being cryptic and confusing also part of Griffin's punishment?

Griffin narrowed his eyes for a moment ~ like he was trying to figure out if I was just being difficult - and then he chuckled. “Sometimes, I forget how innocent you are, little fox. Come lay over my lap. I'm going

to spank you.”

My face immediately flushed red and I lurched back from him. “What? No!” I said, “You want to spank me? I'm not a little kid.”

“No, you're not,” Griffin said, narrowing his eyes again, “But you have been my disobedient little mate and you need to learn your lesson.” 7

I could feel my face heat up. There was no way I could blush harder

than I was right now. He can't be serious. “You can't spank me,” I pleaded with him.

“Oh? Why's that?” He asked with raised eyebrows. From the amused look on Griffin's face, he was enjoying my embarrassment.

“Because...because,” I sputtered, trying to come up with an explanation, “I've never been spanked before!”)

“Good,” Griffin practically purred, “Then I'm sure this will teach you your lesson.” He started to move closer to me, but I shoved my hand into his chest to stop him. I knew my strength was no match for his, but

Griffin still stopped.

“Isn't there...some other way you can punish me?” I practically had to force the word ‘punishment’ out of my mouth - it felt like dirty to say it.

“Well, there are other ways...but you're not ready yet,” Griffin said, “Now, enough stalling. It's time, little fox.”

Before I could do any more arguing, Griffin grabbed my arm and pulled me over his lap in one fell swoop. I had no chance to fall over him, my

chest and legs digging into his thighs. Oh my God.

He's really going to spank me.

For a moment, all I could do was chastise myself for not wearing pants. Why had I worn a dress for my date with Aiden? At the time, it had felt light and airy for California's warm breeze, but now, it was just going to

give Griffin easy access. ()

“Griffin!” I yelped when I felt one of his large hands brush over my clothed ass.

“Do you know what it felt like when I learned you were trying to run from me?” Griffin asked, his hands fluttering over my thighs and lower back, “I was in the middle of a meeting when one of my escorts mind-linked me. He told me you were at the entrance, trying to leave with one of the guests. He asked me if I wanted him to detain you.”

My breath hitched. So, Griffin had known about me leaving. The escort knowing my name...it all made sense now. He'd known from the start.

“You knew?” I breathed. “Why didn't you stop me?” From the position I was lying in, it was too much of a strain to see Griffin's face.

“I thought about it,” he said, “After waiting for you so long, I couldn't believe you would just leave like that...leave me behind like you'd never even met me.” There was obvious pain in his voice and I felt my heart constrict.

I hadn't known that leaving would Griffin. Well, that wasn't completely true. I had known it would hurt him but not this deeply. I had told myself that Griffin would just move on from me, forget about me even... that was an easier thought to stomach. But it had been a delusion. I had been around enough mates in my life to know they didn't move on from each other.]”

“But I also thought about how stubborn you were. You'd been fixating on this idea that we weren't meant for each other, that I'd find someone more suitable,” he continued, “And I realized that I needed to prove you wrong. There are some people that you can tell things and they listen. And there are some people that only listen when they've been shown something. You're the second type, little fox. That's why I decided to let you leave with that girl. I wanted you to think you could get away, that I'd maybe even forget about you ~ and then I'd hunt you down and bring you back.”

llaid there, processing his words. “How did you find me?” I finally asked.

“Iwaited a couple of days after you left to start hunting you,” he said, “and then I went to your father's pack. I didn't think you'd be stupid enough to just go home — and I was right. But I thought maybe he'd know where you had gone, have some sort of idea. When he didn't, I sent out the werewolf-version of a missing person's report.”

Iopened my mouth to ask what that meant but he continued before I could, “As the King, I can mindlink any wolf in the world. I mindlinked every Alpha in North America with your description and let them know Iwas looking for you. They spread word to their packs, and after a week or so, I got word of you. Some female wolf in this kitschy California town found you at a coffee shop of all places.”

I couldn't suppress my gasp. The coffee shop? Amber!

It must've been her. She was always my barista and she'd always look at me weird. She told me that I reminded her of someone. 2)

“And that's when I came to find you,” he said, and one of his hands tightened on my thigh. Not painful but firm. “Only to see my mate on a date night with someone who isn't me.”]”) “It wasn't a date,” I corrected him, “He was just an old friend that wanted to see a movie.” I wasn't sure why I felt so strongly about making sure Griffin knew it wasn't a date — maybe I was just trying to save my own ass. Pun intended.

“Oh, it wasn't?” He asked, disbelief in his voice. “So you didn't kiss him? You weren't physical with him at all?”

“No, no,” I said, “I would never!” “and why not?”

My brain went blank. Why hadn't I done anything with Aiden? He was cute, had seemed interested in me, and most likely would have reciprocated if I'd made a move.

“I know why you didn't,” Griffin said, his voice low, “It's because you knew you were mine, Maybe not consciously, but deep down, you did. You knew you had a mate coming after you, you knew you had me.”

I wanted to tell him that he was wrong, that had nothing to do with why I hadn't made a move on Aiden, but I couldn't. Because each time I'd tried to think about Aiden romantically, Griffin's face had flashed in my mind.

“You're still mine, little fox. You always will be. Till the day I die. You can't run from me, there is no denying the connection between us.”

Griffin flipped up my dress and exposed my pantied ass. I wasn't wearing anything overly sexy — just plain black panties. “We belong to each other, little fox. And now I'm going to remind you.”

I barely had time to process his words before I felt the first slap on my ass. It was fast and stung so much that I gasped.

“Don't worry,” Griffin said, and his voice was huskier than it had ever been before, “I'll go easy on you this time. I won't even make you count or call me Daddy.”

His words should've disgusted me, turned me off, embarrassed me — done anything but send a thrill a straight to my core.

God, is this actually turning me on right now?

I didn't have much time to think about it because Griffin spanked me again. This was even harsher, but when he massaged the spot he'd spanked immediately after, I almost groaned in relief.

This happened eight more times. He'd deliver a harsh, stinging slap and then gently rub the bruised skin. But as my punishment went on, I realized something unexpected was happening to me ~ I was getting turned on.

It hurt but each slap sent a new thrill to me. There was a warmth in my belly that I'd only ever felt late at night, with my hand under the covers. By the time he'd delivered the last smack - the tenth one - my fingers were digging into his thigh. But it wasn't from pain or fear, it was to prevent me grinding against the legs - from turning the warmth in my belly into release.

God, what is this man doing to me? He just flipped me over his knee and spanked me and I actually liked it.

Griffin pulled me off his lap and into his arms. My face was red with humiliation or embarrassment or lust...or some combination of all three. Either way, I couldn't bare to look him in the eye. He'd just spanked me so I dug my face into his chest. Even worse, Griffin's heightened senses meant he must've known how much I actually liked it.

“It's okay, little fox. You don't need to be ashamed about liking it,” he comforted me, his hand stroking my hair, “I knew you would.” (*)

“You did?” How could he have possibly known that? Even I hadn't expected I'd like that, not in a million years.

“Of course. We were made for each other.”