

The Alpha King's Human Mate by HC Dolores

Chapter 46

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“Love cures people - both the ones who give it and those who receive

i@ @ Karl A. Menninger

Griffin got called away shortly after our little talk - the one where I'd accidentally confessed that I was scared he'd cheat on me like my father did his mate (and where he threatened to kill anyone I cheated on him with).

Griffin getting called away for kingly duties seemed to be constant trend with us. We'd have some sort of intense moment and then he'd have to go handle Alpha King business.

But this time, I didn't mind. My mind felt like it was at war with itself. I could no longer brush away this mate bond, not the way I'd tried to do when I fled to California. If there was one thing I could be certain about, it's that ignoring or pretending Griffin (and the bond) didn't affect me was a losing battle. He affected me. Everything he said, he did...it felt like he was burrowing inside of my heart, slowly attaching himself like a parasite.

Geez, I never thought I'd describe a love interest like a parasite.

Then again, I never thought I'd have a possessive werewolf mate either. The other part of me, the logical side, was screaming that I needed to pull myself together. I'd spent the last seven years trying to flee from this world and Griffin was directly responsible for pulling me back in — and trapping me here. Was I really so weak that I was ready to throw in the towel, give up college and a human life, just because some man with a few nice muscles were getting under my skin?

Before I could ruminate on it any further, a knock on the door sounded. “Who is it?” “Dr. Inessa, Koporea.” ()

The tiny elderly woman with the thick Russian accent - I remembered her. Hadn't I only seen her a couple of hours ago? She'd given me the painkillers for the drug-induced hangover I had, but why was she back?

Twas certain she wouldn't have any bad intentions so I called her in. Dr. Inessa entered promptly wearing the same serious expression and white lab coat I'd seen her in a few hours ago.

She looked over at me and I tried not to fidget under her intense stare ~ or think about how ragged I must've looked. I was transported to another country, drugged, and spanked all in the same outfit. My hair and my wrinkled dress certainly weren't holding up that well.

“What do you need?” I asked her, eyeing the box of medical supplies in her hand. “His Majesty asked me to look over you again,” she said, “He said you might need some...lotion to ease the pain.”

Oh, God. Did Griffin really send her here because of my bruised ass? Was humiliating me in front of other people also part of the punishment?

From the way she hesitated to say “lotion,” I could tell she was just as uncomfortable with the situation as I was - but she did hide it better. She certainly didn't go red in the face like I did.

“No, no, that's okay,” I stammered, “I'll be fine. I don't need lotion.” My aching ass wanted to scream in protest but there was no way I was going to lift up my skirt and let another person see my reddened ass — healer or not.

Dr. Inessa raised her eyebrow, not convinced I was “fine” by my fidgeting or the way I sat without putting any real weight on my backside.

“Well, how about I leave it for you?” she said, pulling a tiny white bottle out of her supply box, “Just in case you change your mind later.”

“Thank you.”

Inessa turned to leave, and I'm not sure what possessed me to call out to her, but I did. “Dr. Inessa? Can I ask you something?”

She stopped in her tracks and looked back at me. She didn't speak, just waited for me to talk.

“Have you ever felt like you're at a crossroads?” I asked. “Like you're torn between something you've wanted most of your life and something that feels like you can't escape from?” Much quieter, I added, “And maybe you don't always want to escape from it.”

Although I'd given no real details about what I meant, Dr. Inessa seemed to read between the lines flawlessly. She raised another eyebrow - I was beginning to realize that was her signature move - and pursed her lips. “Yes, Kopoaea. At my age, I've faced many hard decisions in my life...including ones that aren't so dissimilar to the ones you're

facing right now.” “Really?”

“Yes,” she nodded, and then a small smile graced her lips, “I know your human senses don't pick it up, but I am not...like others here. I am like

you.”

She didn't say the word, but my brain filled in the blanks anyway. Human. Dr. Inessa was human.

If she's living in the werewolf world, then she must have a mate.

“I found my mate when I was twenty,” Dr. Inessa said, “Well, he found me. [used to be a nurse in the human world, and he came into my hospital one day. Followed my scent and everything. He told me that he was a werewolf, that I was his mate, and that we were destined to be

together. Naturally...I tried to admit him into the psychiatric unit.” 7

I couldn't stifle my laugh. Although werewolves had never been a surprise to me, it was nice to hear from someone who'd also had the mate bond thrust upon them.

“But eventually,” Dr. Inessa continued, “He won me over. He was working as one of the King's guards, so I became a healer at the palace.”

“Didn't it bother you? That you had to give up your entire human life for him? I'm sure you had hopes and dreams before your mate. Human things you wanted to do with your life.”

Dr. Inessa smiled fondly like she was picturing a memory I couldn't see. “Of course I did. I wanted to become a combat nurse eventually and treat soldiers...you can only imagine how quickly my mate shot that idea down. I was upset initially. I thought I had to give up my dreams and my life to be with him, but I later learned that wasn't the case.”

“Tt wasn't?”

“No,” she shook her head, “I wasn't losing my hopes or dreams to be with a werewolf, but I was gaining new ones. I was carving out a new path for myself - one that involved a man deeply dedicated to me. Being a combat nurse was never my destiny or my fate, I only thought it was. But really, my mate, being a part of the werewolf, becoming a healer...that was my true path. I just had to change my perspective.” (°

Dr. Inessa's words echoed through my brain. Was she right? Were the things I wanted - going to college, traveling, living like a human - just part of a path I wasn't meant for?

“It does you no good to hold onto the past, Your Majesty,” Dr. Inessa said, “You can fight against fate, you can try to run from it. But its claws are already in you. It's just a matter of how long until you adapt and accept what's been meant for you all along.”

I was so wrapped up in my thoughts that I hardly noticed when Dr. Inessa slipped out the door.

Although I certainly wasn't ready to wear a crown or fall into Griffin's bed, I couldn't deny how much sense her words had meant. I'd already spent a lot of time fighting Griffin and everything he stood for.

Maybe it was time to see what acceptance and a little adapting could do for me.