

The Alpha King's Human Mate by HC Dolores

Chapter 79

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“You are enough to drive a saint to madness or a king to his knees.” Grace Willows

You'd think a coronation would last for hours, but all things considered, the ceremony was relatively short. When Nadia had told me that Griffin was only crowning me, she meant it.

I wasn't complaining though. Having so many eyes on me was unsettling, and the less time I had to spend in front of a crowd, the better.

After the Alphas had finished bowing to me, I saw Nadia emerge from the crowd. It was the first time I'd seen her during the coronation, although frankly, I hadn't really seen anyone. I didn't recognize most of the faces and I wasn't trying to. Seeing someone I knew — like my father or Uncle Steve ~ might just trip me up when I was already nervous enough. I wanted to save those interactions for the reception.

“Please make your way to the exit,” Nadia said, clapping her hands together to get their attention, “You'll see several escorts posted by the doorway. They'll take you to the reception - we'll have food, drinks, everything you need. The King and Queen will join you shortly.” That was as much encouragement as most Alphas seemed to need. Chapter 79

The heavy air of the room seemed to lift as well as the silence. The important part was over. Gradually, the Alphas began to move toward the doors, conversation picking up between them. As they passed, many of them bowed their heads to me again and I inclined mine. If they were going to show respect to me, I wanted to show it back.

As soon as the last Alpha had walked out of the throne room, I took a few steps toward the door but Griffin's hand clasped over mine to stop me. “What are you doing?” He asked, looking confused. His face looked much softer now than it had a few minutes ago, and I had no doubt it was because we were alone now.

Whenever we were around other people, especially other Alphas, Griffin wore a mask. Not a literal one, of course ~ but a facade to keep his face from betraying too much emotion.

When we were alone, the mask slipped off. He didn't feel the need to put up a facade around me. Since I'd accepted the mate bond, I didn't either.

“Isn't there a reception?” I asked. “That's where everyone is going.” “There is.”

“Don't we need to go too?” I asked. “I mean, the reception is to celebrate the coronation.”

An amused smile spread across Griffin's face. “I'm sure they won't mind getting started without us,” he said, and then he pulled me into a Chapter 79

long, lingering kiss.

My hands flew to his biceps, and I had to restrain myself from pulling him closer. It took almost all my willpower to pull away but I did.

“What are you doing?” I asked. Griffin's smile was even more teasing now.

I glanced around the room — at least we were alone. Not a guard in sight and someone had closed the throne room doors.

Well, that's totally not suspicious.

“I'm just enjoying my Queen,” Griffin said, and then he leaned down to graze his lips over the claiming bite. The spot was as sensitive as ever and I barely held back a moan. “Do you have any idea how beautiful you look in this dress?” He fingered one of the blue straps.

My cheeks flushed

“When you walked in and I saw it,” he continued, his lips ghosting over my neck and the shell of my ear, “All I could think about was how gorgeous you looked. And then I thought about how I wasn't the only one seeing you in this dress, and I considered whisking you away so that I was the only one who could look at you.”

“Well, it's a good thing you didn't,” I managed to say, “I couldn't have been crowned if you whisked me away.”

“You're right,” he said, and his tongue ran over my claiming bite until I moaned, “That's why my second thought was just to claw out all their Chapter 79

eyes. That way, the coronation could go on but they wouldn't be able to look at you.” (*)

He couldn't see it, but my eyebrows shot to my hairline at that sentence. I hoped he was kidding, but with Griffin, I couldn't say for sure,

“Well...I'm glad you didn't claw out their eyes,” I said. I wasn't quite sure what to say to that, but Griffin didn't seem to mind. He just hummed in response, continuing his assault on my neck.

Griffin's lips and hands felt more passionate than ever, like he couldn't get enough of me.

What triggered this? The coronation?

“And when you were on your knees in front of me,” he said, pulling back to look at me, “Well, you don't want to know what I was thinking.” If the animalistic look in his eyes was any indication, I had a pretty good idea.

I wasn't sure what triggered me to say it - probably a lingering confidence boost from the coronation. “If anyone should be on their knees, it's you,” I teased him, “I just got crowned Queen after all.”

My breath hitched as soon as the words were out of my mouth. I was teasing but Griffin was unpredictable.

Is he going to punish me for saying that? Chapter 79,

The very thought sent an electric thrill down my spine. Amusement only danced in Griffin's eyes. “Is that so?”

I knew that I was treading a dangerous line, but I couldn't help myself.

“Yes,” I said, smirking, “Aren't you going to show some loyalty to the new Queen?” My heart rate thumped dangerously in my chest.

Something unreadable passed through Griffin's eyes, and for a moment, I wondered if I'd crossed the line.

Then, a soft, teasing grin overtook his face. “You know, I've never bowed to anyone in my life,” he said, “People bow to me, not the other way around.”

Just as I was getting ready to roll my eyes at that sentence, Griffin's next move left me with a slack jaw and wide eyes.

With his gaze trained on me, he bent down until he was kneeling on the cold marble flooring.

I stared at him and I could feel my cheeks beginning to turn hot again. “T thought...”

“But I would bow to you,” he said, his eyes brimming with emotion, “Only you. My Queen.” He reached for my hand, pressing his lips to my palm. (9)

I was speechless. There was a lump in my throat that wouldn't go down, Chapter 79

and I grappled with finding the right words for the gesture.

Werewolves, especially Alphas, did not bend the knee easily. And rulers, kings like Griffin, did not bend the knee at all. This was him displaying a new kind of vulnerability ~ a vulnerability that only I could see.

“You don't need to bow to me,” I finally said, and I tried to keep my voice from cracking with emotion. His lips continued to pepper kisses along my hand and the pulse point of my wrist.

“I don't have to, but I would,” he said, “I have never bowed to anyone in my life, never thought I would. But I'd bow to you, my mate.” His mouth ghosted over my palm.

I took a moment to soak in the image of him kneeling there, merely content to stay on his knees for me. Griffin was so tall that the height difference between us seemed shorter when he was kneeling than when he stood at full height.

“Rise,” I said and he did. | *

As soon as he was on his feet, I was practically throwing myself at him, my lips on his. “You bow to me,” I said, pulling back, “Just as I'd bow to you. Equals ~ as we should be.”