

The Alpha King’s Human Mate by HC Dolores

Chapter 87

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Chapter 87 Chapter 87 “Don’t underestimate the power of being underestimated.”)

Tim Fargo

I'd begun to notice a pattern when Aria visited my cell. She came three times a day, always with food and a bottle of water. Most of the time, it was just sandwiches or leftovers - probably scraps from wherever their kitchen was.

It was three meals per day, and after six visits, I was able to piece together a time frame: it had been two days since I'd been kidnapped. Her visits barely lasted a minute, and while I would try and make conversation with her, she was too flighty. She looked like a deer in headlights whenever I asked a question, and she'd usually just ignore me.

But I wasn't done trying.

The initial panic and terror I'd felt upon realizing I'd been kidnapped

had dulled, especially since Aria was the only person I'd seen for the

past few days. Alpha Liam never returned after that first conversation,

so I could only assume he was giving me more time to “think it over.” } Chapter 87

Spending all my time in a dingy prison cell wasn't pleasant, but it at least gave me time to think. Time to think about how I was going to get out of this situation. Time to think about how stupid I was to accept a drink from a stranger. (*)

Come on, Clark. You're a teenage girl. What's the number one rule at parties? Don't accept drinks from strange men. That doesn't change just because you're around werewolves or a Queen.

I replayed that moment over and over again in my brain. Each time, I did something different. Sometimes, I would take the drink Ezra offered, throw it in his face, and scream for the guards.

Other times, I never even left to get fresh air at all.)

But hindsight could do nothing to change my current predicament, and Thad to force myself to stop thinking about it. I'd have plenty of time to ruminate on my stupid decisions when I was out of here, but first, I needed to figure out my escape plan.

When Aria entered the cell with my dinner that night - a turkey sandwich with chips and a water bottle — I was more determined than

ever to make use of the limited human interaction I got.

“You said you worked for ‘the cause,’” I said as I sipped the water. Aria practically froze on the spot, her blue eyes widening. “How did you get involved with Alpha Liam?” I knew it was a personal question, but I had to start somewhere. Maybe if I got Aria comfortable enough to open up, I could probe her for information that would help me get out of here. Chapter 87

“Oh, I'm not sure if I...”

“You don't need to worry,” I cut her off, “It's not as if I can do anything with what you tell me. I couldn't even get you in trouble if I tried - you're the only person who visits me.”

Aria still looked hesitant so I continued. “You don't have to answer either,” I said, “It's just that...’m down here alone. The isolation has been making me chattier than normal.”

Aria bit her lip, glancing at the open doorway. I began to wonder if this was another failed attempt when she finally spoke, her voice just as meek as I remembered. “Alpha Liam is a family friend of my father,” she murmured, “He's an Alpha too. I've known Alpha Liam my entire life, he's been sharing traditionalist views with my family for as long as I can remember. Now that I'm old enough, I can finally help.”

“and how do you help?”

Aria averted her eyes to the dirt-coated stone floor. “I don't think it's a good idea for me to be giving you details...”

I knew I was treading a thin line. If I pushed her too far, Aria would clam up and leave — and possibly tell Liam I was fishing for information.

“Look,” I told her, “I'm not sure how much you know about me, but I'm not exactly a threat to you or your cause. I'm stuck down here for as long as Alpha Liam wants, and if I'm being honest, I don't know that Chapter 87

much about the traditionalists. I guess I'm just a little curious to know what's got everyone so worked up that they'd kidnap a Queen and overthrow a King.”

My explanation seemed to soothe some of Aria's hesitation because she started talking again. “I help the cause in the ways I'm allowed,” she said, “I cook for the warriors and split up the domestic duties with the other women here. It's an honor to be able to serve the way I was meant to.” Her tone was full of sincerity, and from the way that she squared her shoulders, I could tell she was proud to “serve” the cause.

Even if serving this cause means serving up food and freshly-cleaned laundry, I guess.

I suppose I shouldn't have been surprised. After all, traditionalists believed that women were only capable of handling domestic duties. Why would Alpha Liam run his pack any differently?

“and you're happy with that?” I asked, “Cooking dinner or bringing down meals to a prisoner while the men handle all the plans and the fighting, I assume.”

Aria bristled. “What are you getting at?”

“I don't know,” I shrugged, “I guess if it were me, I'm not sure I'd be satisfied with that.” I knew I probably should have shut my mouth and stopped talking. There was no way I wasn't going to upset her by saying that, but I couldn't help myself. There was some twisted curiosity inside me that wanted to know how far these traditionalist beliefs and their Chapter 87

brainwashing ran, especially in a girl who couldn't have been much older than me. (+

“Well, you're not one of us, so you wouldn't know,” Aria shot back, and her voice was as hard as I'd ever heard it. She was definitely pissed off, that much was obvious. “But for female wolves, we can only be happy when we're serving our mates, our packs, or our Alphas. Not that I'd know much about that first one yet, but one day I will.” ()

“But don't you ever want someone to serve you? You know, something that feels a little more equal?”

“They do serve me,” Aria said, “The men in this pack protect me. They protect all the women here. Without them, without Alpha Liam, we'd be vulnerable and alone.”

“What is he protecting you from?”

“From the world, of course,” Aria snapped, and her voice began to rise, “The world is dangerous, but it's men like Alpha Liam that know how to keep us safe. You asked me if I was happy to serve, and I am - I owe him everything. He's willing to put his life on the line to lead and protect women like me from the dangers of this world.”

“So, he protects you from the world and that means you're stuck spending the rest of your life ironing his shirts and doing his dishes?”

Her eyes narrowed dangerously. “It's an honor to serve Alpha Liam in any way that I can - the kitchen, the laundry room, his bed.” She Chapter 87

immediately stopped talking, her eyes going wide. \) His bed?

From the way that Aria's face began to turn red, I could tell she hadn't meant to say that last part.

“His bed?” I repeated, “Are you his mate?”

The red was starting to spread down to her neck, and she could no longer look me in the eye. “No, I'm not lucky enough to be his mate,” she murmured, and there was no more fire in her voice, “But that doesn't mean I can't serve him when he needs it. He spends so much time protecting us, trying to better this world...he has needs like any other man.” There was a pause, and then she added, “I'm happy to do it...really. I told you — I owe him everything.”

My stomach began to twist into knots, and whatever appetite I'd had was definitely gone now.

Aria took a step back, clearing her throat. “You have your dinner,” she said, glancing down at the untouched sandwich in my hands, “I'll take my leave now.”

She scurried to the door, but she stopped at the threshold of the room to look back at me one last time. “Clearly, you've had a lot of time to think,” she said, “I'm sure Alpha Liam will be happy to hear that — he's been waiting to talk to you again.” Chapter 87

My stomach was a pretzel by the time the door shut and her footsteps echoed down the hall.