

The Alpha King’s Human Mate by HC Dolores

Chapter 42

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“Adapt or perish, now as ever, is nature’s inexorable imperative.” HG Wells

Punishment?

He’s going to punish me?

Griffin had said it so casually, like he was telling me about the weather or asking me my favorite food.

“Punishment?” I echoed, craning my neck to look up at him. Tucked into his side, it strained my neck to make eye contact with him but I managed.

A slow smirk spread across his face. My reaction didn’t seem to surprise him at all, and if anything, he just looked amused.

What a sadist. He enjoys freaking me out like this.

“Yes, little fox,” he said, and his tone was almost mocking, “If I don’t punish you, how will you learn your lesson?”

Oh, God. He’s actually serious, he’s not just joking. “I don’t understand...how would you punish me?” I asked. I couldn’t possibly imagine what Griffin’s “punishment” would entail. Was he planning to lock me up in the dungeon or something? Or was this more of a time-out-sit-in-the-comer sort of deal? Both options didn’t seem appealing, and the very thought of a “punishment” made me feel like a misbehaving child. Maybe that was the point. (=

“We’ll discuss it once we get back to the castle,” he said, and he went back to playing with my hair, “For now, I’m just happy you’re in my arms again. But we’ve got a long night and a long flight ahead of us. You should probably get some sleep.”

For a brief moment, my mind flashed to the airport. Of course, we’d be taking a flight back to Canada! Maybe I could escape at the airport. There would be people there, people who would never let some random man drag a kicking, screaming girl onto a flight.

As if he could sense what I was thinking, one of Griffin’s hands came up to cup my jaw and turn my attention back to him. “I already know that clever little mind of yours is trying to hatch a second escape plan, little fox,” he said with narrowed eyes, “But I’m going to stop you right here. Don’t even try.”

“What?” I feigned disbelief, “I was not thinking about trying to escape. I was thinking about what snacks I’d get at the airport. That’s all.”

I was a terrible liar and the unimpressed look on Griffin’s face proved it. I wasn’t fooling him. He sighed, his eyes roaming over my face. There was some sort of emotion on his face ~ sadness or guilt. I wasn’t sure which. “I wish it didn’t have to come to this,” he said, “But I knew it would. Even with my private jet, I can’t take any chances with you.”

I was too confused by his statement to notice how he rummaged around his pocket or moved his other hand to hold my jaw still.

And then I felt it.

He moved quickly, far too quickly for me to shove him away or fight back. Suddenly, there was a sharp pin-prick in my neck. (=

Instinctively, I tried to move my head away, but Griffin held me steady with one hand.

And then I managed to catch a glimpse at what he was holding in the other hand: a large needle that he’d shoved between my neck and my shoulder. The pin-prick I’d felt? It was him jabbing the needle into my neck, emptying some cloudy substance into my veins.)

It only took him a few seconds, and by the time I’d registered it, he was already done. “What was that?” I gasped as soon as he pulled the syringe out. I clasped my hand over the spot he’d stabbed, but it was too late.

Griffin pulled me close.

“Pm sorry, little fox,” he said, “It’s for your own good. Just to make sure you don’t cause any scenes out in public. By the time that wears off, we’ll be home.” Before I could argue or fight or throw some sort of fit, I began to feel it.

My limbs started to feel heavy, too heavy for me to hold them up on my own. I collapsed into Griffin’s side, and he began to stroke my hair. He just drugged me.

Oh my God, he just drugged me.

I wanted to yell at him, but my tongue was heavy with a sweet chemical aftertaste. My vision began to get blurry until Griffin, the driver, and the

open road ahead of us began to fade into colorless shapes.

The last thing I registered before the drug pulled me under was Griffin laying my head on his lap and pressing his lips to my forehead.

Yeah, that was definitely guilt on his face. (2

The first thing I noticed when I woke up was just how much my head hurt. It felt like a splitting dehydration headache times ten.

The second thing I noticed was silk sheets underneath me. The third thing my drug-induced brain noticed was that I wasn’t alone.

That final observation was enough for me to force my heavy limbs and sluggish brain awake. | blinked my eyes rapidly and it took several seconds before my surroundings became clear.

“Your Majesty,” a gravely, accented voice spoke nearby. “You’re awake.”

I managed to twist my aching head around to see where I was and to who that voice belonged. I was laying in a massive bed with navy blue silk sheets, a dark headboard, and a literal canopy.

The room was massive, more luxurious than anything I’d been in before ~ including Griffin’s old bedroom. This was an entire suite with gold and navy fixtures, an impressive vanity, and a couple of doors that seemed to lead...somewhere.

While I was sprawled out on the bed in the same cardigan and dress, a stout old woman was perched next to me. She was wearing a thin white coat, and from the medical supplies next to her, I could only assume this was a doctor or healer. *)

What happened to me?

“You were out for twelve hours,” she said, and her beady eyes peered down at me. She had a large hook nose that I tried not to stare at. “Do you remember what happened, Your Majesty?” \

I tried to open my mouth and form words, but my throat was so dry that I immediately started coughing. She quickly handed me a glass of water and I downed it in seconds. Do I remember what happened?

I remember being with Aiden. We were at the movie, I walked out and then...

I couldn’t suppress the gasp. The previous night’s events rushed through my brain in a flash ~ Griffin finding me on the street, bringing me into the car, sticking a needle in my neck.

That bastard drugged me! +

“From the expression on your face,” the woman said, “I can tell you remember. I told him not to use the diphenhydramine. No woman wants a needle in their neck like that or a nasty drug hangover ~ which is what I assume you’re experiencing right now.” The more she spoke, the more I was able to recognize her accent. Russian. (*)

I managed to nod. “What did he give me?” I asked, and my voice was still croaky, “Diphenhy ~ what was it you said?”

“Diphenhydramine,” she said, “It’s a sleep aid and you had a pretty big dose of it. The King wanted to make sure your trip here was... uneventful.” (4

Uneventful. More like Griffin was afraid I’d make a scene in public and escape again.

“Is your head hurting?” she asked me. One of her bony hands came up to touch my forehead. “Yeah,” I said, “It feels like I’ve got the start of a migraine coming on.”

“That’s a side effect of the drug,” she said, and then she turned to rummage through her bag, “Here. Take this. It’s a pain reliever.”

She handed me two little white pills, but I only eyed them. After being jabbed with a needle, I felt a little hesitant to take unnamed drugs.

The woman rolled her eyes. “Please, it won’t hurt you, Koponesa. It’s a weak opioid. It’ll help your headache.” Although the idea still didn’t thrill me, my head was pounding. If it meant getting rid of the hammering in my head, the risk might be worth it.

With the same glass of water, I swallowed the pills down and the old woman smiled at me. “Good, good,” she said, “My name is Dr. Inessa by the way. I apologize for not introducing myself, but I’m one of the King’s personal healers. He’s dealing with a little bit of business, but he asked me to check on you and make sure you were alright.”

“Oh, well thank you,” I told her. I watched her pack up her medical supplies. “Do you know where I am? What this room is?”

Dr. Inessa turned to look at me like I was a moron. “Where do you think you are, nama? These are the king’s personal quarters.” That was the second Russian nickname that Inessa had called me, and I could only hope they were positive ones.

I nodded. That made a lot of sense. Griffin was king now, of course he’d have new rooms. And I highly doubt he’d be cool with me waking up in anybody else’s bed but his.

“You should feel better very shortly,” she continued, making her way to the door, “But if not, just ask one of the guards standing outside to see me. In the meantime, please rest well, ama.”

“Thank you,” I called as Dr. Inessa closed the door behind her.

True to her word, I did begin to feel a lot better within the next few minutes, The pounding pain in my head completely subsided and my limbs no longer felt like they were weighed down by lead weights.)

still felt a little sluggish and numb - like I hadn’t been able to emotionally process what had happened over the past twelve hours. The thought that I was back where I started after a failed escape attempt? ‘Well, it wasn’t one that I wanted to linger on. | |

Instead, I decided to explore the new rooms. I started by checking out the vanity, and the thought of Griffin sitting down to do his makeup actually managed to make me smile. 4

Next, I went straight for the three closed doors. There was a separate door that Inessa had used to leave the room, but these three doors were different.

One led to an impressive marble bathroom with the biggest shower and jacuzzi tub I’d ever seen. The next door was a walk-in closet full of Griffin’s clothes and shoes. There were plenty of casual clothes like the ones I’d seen him in, but also much fancier stuff too. Dark, tailored suits and soft dress shirts with pants that probably cost more than my entire wardrobe combined.

And then I saw the other side of the closet. It was decked out in women’s clothes - casual jeans, pretty tops, sundresses, and more expensive ballgowns than I’d ever seen in my life. As I got closer, I began to realize that they were all in my size.

This is for me.

I combed through the clothing gently. It wasn’t just random stuff. I could tell that these outfits had been selected with care - with me in my mind. A lot of the casual stuff fit my existing style.

The thought of Griffin picking out clothing for me left a blush on my cheeks and a warm feeling in my chest. Of course, I would need clothes to stay at the palace (and maybe Griffin hadn’t even picked any of these out himself), but the gesture still felt sweet. If | had to be trapped at a fancy castle, at least I’d look good. (=)

I spent a few minutes pawing through the clothes before I managed to tear myself away to see what was behind door number three. Since I’d already seen the closet and the bathroom, I had no clue what could be behind this one.

And yet, when I opened the door, I couldn’t believe what I’d found. Canvases hung on easels, drawings littered a large table, and sketches hung everywhere ~ this was an art studio, (*)

However, an art studio in Griffin’s private bedroom wasn’t the most shocking thing. 2

No, what shocked me was that most - if not all — of the artwork was of me.(?)