

The Alpha King's Human Mate by HC Dolores

Chapter 54

Chapter 54

Chapter 54

“Time flies when you grow fangs and fur.” ☺) Dianna Hardy

I was not ignorant about claiming bites. Although I had slept through plenty of werewolf education in my life, the lesson about claiming marks and bites wasn't one of them. It was a hard lesson to miss, especially when I was used to seeing the evidence on every mated female wolf I saw.

Claiming bites were just that — bites that represented the claim of a wolf on another. It was standard practice for male wolves to leave them on their female mates, and in cases of same-sex mates, the dominant wolf would leave one on the submissive wolf. Even learning about it in school, I'd never liked the practice. |)

It had always felt so one-sided to me. Just another way for male wolves to show their mates off like property, even parade them as such. The female wolf never got to leave her mark on the male wolf, she could only ever wear the mark. |

At school, the female wolves used to gossip about what it would be like to wear their soul mate's claiming mark. To them, it was an honor. They didn't once they'd met their mates and gotten their marks, every mated

just accept the display of possessiveness, they wanted it. And

woman I'd known had bore her bite proudly.

T'd seen the evidence countless times - most notably on Luna Grace. It wasn't always visible around the house, but whenever she interacted with pack members, she'd wear shirts or dresses with low collars that left my dad's mark visible. You could always the indent of his teeth, the exact spot he'd sunk his canines into her. The mark had obviously scarred over but it never faded. It always seemed to shine in the light and even more on full moons.

I didn't understand the werewolf biology that went into claiming bites perfectly. They all looked like bite marks to me, but to a wolf, it was supposed to smell like your mate, It was irrefutable evidence that you were taken and claimed by someone else.

So, when Griffin brought up the idea of claiming me, I practically bristled. My brain barely registered the second part of the sentence - the part about me becoming his Queen. I could freak out about that later.

“You want to claim me?” I gaped at him, “Like with a claiming bite?” He was splayed out beside me, hair tousled and half the buttons on his dress shirt undone. I could hardly blame him for his disheveled appearance ~ after the way he'd just eaten me out, I was sure that I looked ten times more discombobulated.

“Is there another way you'd prefer me to claim you?” Griffin asked, his eyes shining with amusement. “I suppose I could get you a cute little collar if you'd prefer. Maybe one with a bell —”

“No,” I cut him off. The picture that my mind conjured up was definitely humiliating but not completely awful. But certainly not a realistic way that I'd ever want anyone in the castle, even the werewolf world, to actually see me.

“Is there a reason you're against wearing my mark?” Griffin asked. He still looked relaxed and amused but there was an edge to his voice now.

I tried to pick my next words carefully - I didn't want to risk offending him or his animal instincts. “Look, it's not you,” I said, “It has nothing to do with you specifically...it's the bite itself. Maybe I'd feel differently if I was a wolf, but I'm not. I don't understand why I need to have a physical indent of your teeth on my neck.”

It's not as if I'm going to fly under the radar anyway. I suspect everyone in this castle knows whose mate I am by this point.

Griffin seemed to take my hesitancy in stride, which was a surprise. If anything, it seemed to amuse him. ““A physical indent of my teeth”” he echoed, shaking his head lightly, “Is that all you think claiming bites are, little fox?”

“aren't they?” I shot back. “I've seen plenty of them when I lived at my dad's pack, I don't need one. I already live in your castle, spend plenty of time with you. Everyone here knows I'm your mate ~ I don't need a bite too.”

“That's where you're wrong, little fox,” Griffin said, and something primal flashed behind his eyes, “A claiming bite is more than just a mark or a scar. It's protection. It's a warning system for any wolf who tries to go near you. They'll smell my scent on you, they'll know you're mine. No other wolf will ever be able to mark you, they won't even want to try. Argue all you want, but there's no way I'm letting you roam around these halls ~ or anywhere else ~ without my mark.”

I knew Griffin well enough to know that he wasn't bluffing. Still, I continued to push. All I could think about was the elated girls at school, who gushed over their claiming bites like they were new jewelry or clothes. And while they got stuck literal fang marks in their necks, what about male wolves? What did they have to show for their mating? There was no mark, no bite they were expected to display.

No matter how hard I tried, the implication didn't sit well. I would not tum into another dumbstruck submissive mate, just happy to be shown off and follow orders mindlessly. Regardless of what my destiny might've had in store for me, I knew that wasn't it. (>)

“Look,” I ground out, trying to keep my voice even, “I think there's something we need to get straight here. About us. About claiming bites, about this mate bond.”

“Oh, and what's that?”

“I know you have traditions and expectations, but I spent part of my life in the human world,” I told him, “I have expectations too. I'm not going to be your mindless little housewife that you can store on the shelf like your other possessions. If that's what you think you're getting here or what you're going to turn me into, then you've got another thing

coming. I know that's how a lot of mate bonds work, but this one can't. T won't let it.”

The words spilled out of me before I'd even thought about saying them, but they were true. I readied myself to be met with some form of protest from Griffin, but to my surprise, he just stared at me in awe. It was as if I'd just told him I'd hung the moon and the stars.

Well...hopefully, that means he isn't offended.

That awed, dumbfounded look remained on his face for several moments before he finally pulled himself together. Griffin reached over to cup my jaw, his face still full of admiration. “You never cease to surprise me, little fox,” he said, “Every moment I spend with you feels like I'm discovering new ways that you're my perfect match.”

I certainly hadn't expected him to say that, and I had to fight not to avert my eyes. His gaze was so intense, like I was swimming in his eyes. “I have never wanted some mindless little housewife,” he continued, “I have no need for one. What I need is a Queen. Someone who can rule beside me, who won't crumble under the weight of this world. I'm not sure how you ever doubted we weren't right for each other ~ can't you see how perfect you are for me? For this castle? For this world? You so clearly belong to me.”

It wasn't the first time that Griffin had called me his, but this time felt different. There was a lump in my throat - I wasn't sure if it was from his sweet words or the way he'd alluded to me belonging to the werewolf world. I had always been an outcast to the werewolf world,

never someone who belonged. That was before Griffin, my mind countered.

That was it, wasn't it? Maybe my place in the werewolf world hadn't been with my father's pack but here. With Griffin. I didn't need to be anyone else, to measure up to some impossible standard that I'd never meet as a human, Me — in all my humanness — was already good enough. I was already an equal. |(^)

And if I'm Griffin's equal, then I want others to know it too.

“If belong to you,” I finally managed to say, “And you belong to me, then I'll wear your claiming bite.” Griffin's eyes lit up and I could see a smile tugging at his lips.

“On one condition,” I continued, and I could see his eyes narrow, “I want to claim you too.” |