

The Prince's Unwilling mate by Mutya the Author

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209 Ayla

"Why did you not tell me soon Ayla?" Griffin's lack of a cute. nickname always is the first sign he is angry with me.

Or worse disappointed, I just wanted to have one relaxed night. Enjoying a BBQ with my family and friends. But with the look. Krystel gave me, I knew I wouldn't be able to keep this from Griffin until after the BBQ. Not that I blame her, she is my friend, my Beta. But she is Griffin's cousin too. Of course, she is going to be loyal to both of us. The thing is I get why Griffin is so worried, sometimes it's just stifling. Before meeting me he was afraid he would not find his mate. I know he prayed a lot and made a ton of offerings to the Moon Goddess to find me. Promising to do everything he could to keep me safe. Before he even knew who I

was.

I realize to him, not being able to prevent me from being kidnapped, abused, and raped was a failure. He felt like he failed me and the Moon Goddess herself by not only not keeping me safe. But taking so long to find me, I could not make him see it was not his fault. When I was in my coma he kept asking me to come back to him. Crying swearing to me that he would keep me. happy and safe. To me, he did, to him it never was enough. To him, the fact that Cynthia caused some issues was another failure. Losing track of where Hannah moved; was another failure. Still **not** knowing where David was; yet another failure.

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209 **Ayla**

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It was sweet he was so worried about keeping me safe, and I appreciated it. I did, but for most of my life, other wolves saw me as weak or fragile. Unable to protect myself and I needed my mate to be different. I needed Griffin to trust me and know I was more than capable of defending myself if something happened to me. David had caught me by surprise, but since I was never going to be able to travel alone again anymore, that would be much harder to do.

“Because I just wanted to relax tonight Griff. I was going to **tell** you but she didn’t mean any harm. She didn’t seek me out I walked into her workplace. Because we didn’t know she worked there.” I tried to be patient because with moving in together and marking each other all while constantly being under a lot of pressure was starting to take its toll on both of us.

We still loved each other, and we never had big arguments or one that would go on for very long. Usually, we just had some words. and talked it all over before things would escalate. Still, sometimes it felt as if our relationship could be better. Stronger, several people told me that it’s normal. How every couple will bicker a bit when the honeymoon phase is over. And they are adjusting to their new normal. It was a comforting thought to know we weren’t alone in this. That of course didn’t mean that I like arguing with the love of my life. Our being upset with each other.

Griffin sighed audibly, our guests kept quiet busying themselves with filling their plates with sides and eating or grilling the meat. They were right not wanting to get involved, but the situation still was very awkward. I wanted to be over with **it**, so we could go

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209 Ayla

back to enjoying our time together.

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“You are right Darling, sometimes I should trust you. The time. when I knew you were hurting without me being able to do something. It broke me, and I just can’t shake this ominous. feeling.” He confessed, and I could not blame him for any of it.

In fact, I was touched by how honest and vulnerable he was with me. In front of everyone else, we loved it too. I felt the need to comfort him, I had been unable to show him how safe we we now. Honestly, I am unsure if I ever will be able to make him see. how safe we are now. I hoped I could at least make him feel how much I loved him. How I would always support him, even if I did not always fully agree with him. So I

hugged him, pulling his face into the crook of my neck, making sure he could breathe in my

scent.

“At least we know she is living in the closest human town, working in the baby store. That’s something right?” I mindlinked him, for the simple reason that using my voice felt like it would interrupt our personal bubble.

As Griffin nodded before kissing my head I could tell he still had something on his mind. I was not going to pry, he had the right to come to terms with things in his own time. He clearly was somewhat reassured as his bright smile was genuine. He shooed my father away from the BBQ and started grilling the meat.

The rest of the night we spend having a lot of fun, Griffin even let

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209 Ayla

1288 Vouchers

go enough to drink some beers. Not enough to get drunk not with his wolf metabolism. Just enough to make him extra happy and extra affectionate though. He had trouble keeping his hands to himself when our family still was there. He never crossed a line but he also found every excuse there was to touch me.

“Okay, thanks for dinner Kiddo’s I am going to get some shut-eye. Not see how my oldest born is getting lovingly groped every other second” Dad joked, he was the first to get ready to leave.

Griffin was still sober enough to say his goodbyes to Dad, apologizing for his behavior but telling Dad he just loved me to bits. With a seriousness that could only come from being tipsy. I

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could tell no one was really offended. Again they were all just happy to see how happy we were.

When everyone left soon after my parents did, I told Griffin to get a shower. Hoping would sober him up a little bit. I cleared the table, loaded the dishwasher, and cleaned the BBQ. It left me exhausted, Griffin had been quiet so a part of me was hoping he had fallen asleep. With how handsy he had been I was sure sleeping was the last thing on his mind. And I could never refuse the man, not with how he knew how to kiss me and touch me exactly how I wanted it. Tomorrow we had an early day so I honestly wanted to get a good night's sleep. Which would not happen if Griffin would keep me up for another few hours. The man seemed unable to do a quickie so I knew what we were in for if anything started.

I slipped into our bedroom, wanting to be quiet and not wake him. if he had indeed fallen asleep. But he hadn't he was just sitting at

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209 Ayla

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the edge of the bed. Clutching one of the onesies we had gotten for our pup. Staring at it like he expected that little piece of clothing to give him the answers to all of the world's mysteries.

"Baby, what is going on, why are you staring at that onesie? Are

you okay?" I asked but he wouldn't even look up at me.

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210 Griffin

I had known I was going to be a Dad for a few weeks now. And I had been happy about it from the start. But it had been a distant concept, we couldn't talk about it to anyone else. Ayla and I daydreamed about our pup. We made plans, thought about names, and decided we would honor the tradition of naming your pup after one of the important

Elders in your life. Somehow becoming a father, and starting the family I used to pray to the Moon Goddess daily felt abstract.

After the BBQ Ayla had shown us what she and the other girls had gotten for our pup on their shopping trip. We had already decided on what room we would turn into a nursery but we hadn't started on it yet. We couldn't because decorating a nursery would make it very obvious we were expecting. Our own chambers or apartment as Ayla liked to call it in the castle was private enough. You just had to get in and out through the main halls of the castle. Where everyone and their mother could see you. Which hardly ever was a problem, it is just one of the things that comes with pack living. Let alone in the castle that's our pack house as well.

Probably in a rush and with no real place to put all the baby stuff they bought Ayla had just put it on our bed. I was about to pick it up to move it to a half-empty dresser drawer when the cute wolf onesie Jessa got us caught my eye. In about six months from now, I would have my son or daughter in my arms wearing this

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210 Griffin

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very onesie. And I couldn't be more excited about it. Holding this onesie finally made it real, made it less abstract. I sunk to the bed and could only stare at the onesie. No doubt my tipsy state had something to do with how much the idea of being able to hold my pup in my arms in six months affected me. It was a genuine happiness though, it just came in raw and unfiltered and I liked it.

Because lately I had been consumed by worries, something felt so off. Conan was perpetually alert too and it was taking a toll on me. Most of all it was taking a toll on my relationship. I mean we were still good, but it was the little things. Ayla is less inclined to tell me things like her meeting Hannah. I one hundred percent believed her when she told me she just wanted to wait until it was the right moment. Because she didn't want to spoil our night with our family. I trusted her gut instinct too. If she said Hannah was not trying anything I believed her. The thing is she didn't know if I would, and that's why she tried not to tell me during the BBQ. Sadly she was right to do so, because while I believed her. And I genuinely wanted to just have a nice night with friends and family. The worry kept gnawing at the back of my mind.

It was

why I drank a little too much, it was the reason my pregnant mate, who in reality still was recovering from all that happened to her. Both mentally and physically was out

there cleaning up the remains of our party. I needed to go shower and go to bed to get my head on straight again.

“Baby, please answer me?” I suddenly noticed Ayla was in the room with me. And her question suggested that she had been talking to me before. She was worried again, I could sense it and I could see it on her face. This was going to stop now!

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210 Griffin

288 Vouchers

“Sorry, Darling, holding this onesie just made it all so real. I was just daydreaming about our future. Let me take you on a date. tomorrow. We will go and look at things like cribs and wallpaper. I will take you out for lunch. We need some quality time together right?” I tried hard to keep my voice cheery and even. Maybe it was lying to her again, but I don’t want her to know how worried I still am.

Because I was not going to act on it anymore, I needed to stop frantically scouring all the CCTV images for any hint of imminent danger. Our fighters and our guards were well-trained, good at their jobs, and motivated. Their job was to make sure we were safe without having to take a lot of time out of our days. Taking time away from our roles, to maintain safety for us and the rest of the pack. I was doing not only them but my relationship a disservice by doing their job alongside my job.

“If you’re sure, we can find the time. I would actually love that and I feel it would be good for us to just spend some time together. Allow ourselves to remember why we love each other so much.” Ayla agreed, she is always thinking about our duties to the pack.

She is going to make a wonderful Luna, Queen, and more importantly so an amazing mother to our little pup. I will forever be grateful to the Moon Goddess for blessing me with such an astounding mate. The events of today wore me down, when I was still buzzed I could not keep my hands off her. I planned to make love well into the night but I was tired. And from the looks of it, Ayla was too. Instead of trying to seduce her, which honestly always worked out. I pulled her close to my chest wrapping my arms around her so that she could bury her nose in the crook of

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210 Griffin

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my neck. As I buried mine in her soft chocolate-colored hair.

“Did, you manage to find a suit and groomsmen suits?” Ayla mumbled sleepily.

I I I did but it reminded me of the fact I never asked if she found her wedding gown. I had almost ruined the shopping experience for her and now I had been too stuck in my own head to ask her about it. Telling her I did find a suit, asking her if she could tell me if she found a wedding dress or if she wanted to keep it a secret. Felt like I was lacking yet again, another not-so-subtle reminder that I needed to do better. Selene had told Ayla when they met during Ayla’s coma that she only connected fated mates, she made them feel love for each other. She could not force mates to be good partners, and right now I was not being one for Ayla. The knowledge I was failing my mate, the knowledge that I was given. the one thing I prayed for so long. Only to not respect it like I should broke me a little. In the end it kept me up for most of the

night.

I almost slept through my alarm, it would have been the first time. since finding Ayla I would not wake her up with a coffee in bed. Scolding myself I rushed out just in time, just before she woke up. Today would be the first day of the new Griffin. Today would be the first day of the new life where I would be the best mate to Ayla I could be.

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211 Ayla

Normally I would wake up to the smell of coffee and the sounds. of Griffin placing the mugs on the counter. Today I woke up to Griffin cussing and running out of bed to the kitchen. It was cute. I don’t know what got into him yesterday when he clutched the onesie. He was a bit like how he was when we just met. Nervous, and only focused on making me happy. I actually like the fact that he seemingly was more at ease around me. That he was just being himself, not some curated version of himself.

Our relationship had been a little rocky though, he was right we needed this one day to ourselves. I hoped this slight panic at oversleeping was just because he wanted today to be perfect. I’d hate for him to go back to his insecure self. Or insecure about the relationship because that was it. He wasn’t insecure about himself. He had all the confidence you would expect from a royal alpha wolf.

“Here you go Darling, your coffee” I was so deep in thought I hadn’t noticed Griff walk back into the bedroom with me. Not until he placed my coffee mug on my nightstand. Now that I was pregnant I was very limited in my coffee intake. This morning’s coffee we shared in bed was almost sacred though. Griffin knew, so it was sweet of him to care so much about getting me my coffee. I decided to not worry about it, I would often worry about little things, blowing it out of proportion and I wasn’t going to do that again today. ·

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211 Ayla

288 Vouchers

First, we would take my family to the airport and say our goodbyes. Then we would drive a little further so we could go to a big baby and kids store in human territory. Not only was it one of the biggest stores in the state, and fairly close to us. It was just far enough so that we would not run into pack members. Of course discovering a new town, finding new places to eat at would be a lot of fun too.

“What’s on your mind, Darling?” Griffin asked, I hadn’t even realized I just sat there in bed. Silently sipping my coffee thinking about how much fun we were going to have today.

“Just how much I am looking forward to today, baby.” Griffin was too so we spent our morning drinking coffee in bed and just chatting about our plans. Not just for the day but for our wedding and the pup and their nursery too.

“I know you’re a smart she–wolf, but just be careful okay? Don’t forget you’re pregnant now, it’s not just you, that you need to take care of.” Grandpa whispered in my ear as he hugged me.

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Much like Griffin, he meant well, so I couldn’t be mad at him. Like I couldn’t be mad at Griffin every time it felt like he was being overprotective. But it sucked, every time anyone around me was extra careful. Or prompting me to be more protective than I normally would be. It stopped me from moving on. It held me back more than anything and the only thing I wanted to do was to move on. I just didn’t know how to tell my family to stop worrying about me so much. Not without losing my cool, not without

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211 Ayla

288 Vouchers

snapping at them. That was the last thing I wanted to do. So just like with Griffin I told Grandpa I knew, hugged him back, and tried to just ignore it. More so because he was traveling back to the White Oak pack, and I had no idea when I was going to see them again.

Even if I felt safe now like my life finally was how it was supposed to be. The kidnapping left some scars. More than anyone I knew the importance of goodbyes. When I was kidnapped by David I at least knew the last words I said to the people I loved were kind. It instilled a fear in me of being angry or saying something angry or something that made the other person feel bad about themselves.

Two hours after we saw the plane that had my family in it take off we arrived in the town that had the baby store. After such a long drive and such an early morning I was craving a snack. It still was far too early to have lunch, but to my luck, my mate was a mind reader.

“Darling, want to go find a restaurant we can have breakfast at? I mean I am kinda hungry again and I can’t imagine you’re not?” He asked the second he parked the car.

That’s what we did we found a dinner that served breakfast. I

could not have a coffee with it but other than that breakfast was perfect. There was just one thing we needed to discuss that was somewhat work-related. Even if it was a personal matter too. Griffin’s gamer friends now knew what we were. Riven would get

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211 Ayla

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an invite no doubt. We would invite all the Alpha’s and Luna’ from the packs in the entire country. We had to, nothing we did was just for us. Not even our wedding, but I did not mind inviting all the leaders of the packs didn’t bother me though. I hardly knew them all but most leaders were good and kind wolves wanting the best for their packs. And we

wolves know how to party. Other than the leaders of the packs we were free to invite every other wolf we wanted present.

Therein lies the problem, because we didn't just want to invite wolves. And to be able to invite humans, open the pack to let them in. Always required permission from your Alpha and Luna. Rodrick and Isabella in our case. We were cautious that they might be a bit reluctant since it was no normal wedding and no normal pack we would invite our human friends to. We needed to get an answer soon because we would need to send out the invites. To make sure everyone had enough time to RSVP and make arrangements to come to us. We decided we would ask Rodrick and Isabella first thing in the morning tomorrow. Today we will not talk about the pack business.

Leaving the pack behind, leaving all our responsibilities behind even for just one day felt liberating. Griffin must feel the same, he was back to the person after I accepted him as my mate. And before I got kidnapped, I didn't know that it was possible but I fell even more in love with Griffin. As he wandered about the baby store, getting excited about the furniture options there were to decorate the nursery. We had the same tastes and the same ideas of what we wanted not only for the nursery but even the clothes we picked out. It was fun and romantic, again it made me

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211 Ayla

288 Vouchers

wonder if we would ever be able to get back to this feeling. To make our relationship this strong when we needed to lead a pack and a country. We were just training now, helping our Rodrick and Isabella. And we barely managed it, the pressure on **our** shoulders would only grow heavier. What are we supposed to do if we find ourselves unable to hold on to the best parts of our relationship when we were leading the country?

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