

The Alpha King's Tomboy Concubine

Just Another Man

1079 Words

JOANNA ~~ There he was.... My breath of fresh air, standing in the middle of an unfamiliar but comfortable room. The sunlight caught the edges of his hair, hitting the rim of the eyes I have loved for three years. Oh, my Seth. His lopsided smile didn't fail to make my heart skip a beat as I walked closer to him, eyeing the bouquet of wildflowers he held. "Are those for me?" I breathed, a sweet smile tugging at my lips, my hands reaching out. But as my fingers brushed the petals, they began to wither. The once-vibrant colors rotted. A black decay spread from my touch, turning the blossoms into skeletal, shrinking husks. "Well, flowers aren't my thing anyway." I thought out loud as a cold shiver of dread crawled up my spine, replacing the smile on my face. I looked up at Seth, expecting him to laugh it off, even though I also couldn't shake off the gloomy feeling simmering inside me. But his face has shifted. No... everything has shifted, like a change I knew was fast approaching, like a brakeless truck. Seth was no longer staring at me, nor were his arms extended towards me. Instead, his love-infected orbs were on him. Caleb... and those arms were wrapped around him. "W-what are you doing—" I stuttered, fighting against memories I didn't recall until Seth pressed his lips to Caleb's with a kind of hunger that left me paralyzed with a sickening wave of grief. The air left my lungs as if I had been kicked. Hard... When he finally pulled away, his eyes found mine. They weren't kind anymore. They were sharp, cold, and burned with a mocking glint. "You wish you were him, don't you, Joanna?" Seth sneered, his voice echoing like a thunderous slap. "But look at you. You will never be loved. You will never—" The air I thought was fresh became toxic. I felt myself choking as Seth's words faded, but not fast enough to calm my erratic heart. Fortunately, I jerked awake, my breath shallow. My skin was slick with sweat, and for a moment, I didn't know where I was. Then my eyes caught the bright walls. "f**k my life..." I gritted my teeth as the realization sank in. I was losing my mind. Slowly, with every passing second. I had tried everything. Every single thing just to settle into this place... I couldn't even call it my room because it didn't feel like it. Even with the big windows wide open, I couldn't get enough air in my lungs, and turning off the lights did nothing to hide the flashy colors surrounding me. I—it was as if the wall were mocking me, and my body itched with every toss and turn on the very, very soft mattress. It's no wonder I was dragged into that nightmare, reliving the day that damaged me beyond repair. Knowing I wouldn't get a single wink of sleep in this cage, I rolled off the bed, grabbed my boots, and moved like a ghost, sneaking past Sela and Mina, who were fast asleep on the couch in the living area. "Is this place a maze or what?" Frustration slammed against my ribs after what seemed like an eternity of walking in circles in the corridors. There was no doubt that I was lost, the shadows playing tricks on my eyes until a soft voice caught me from behind. "The exit is three hallways back, then left, Princess." I spun around, sighting Mina in the shadows. She looked tired, but her eyes held a strange sort of pity that made me want to snap. To tell her I do not need her pity, but before I could, she gestured and whispered, "Please let me lead the way, Princess." Mina didn't wait for a response or even a reaction. She turned around and led me through a series of cold, stone passages that I tried to memorize but failed. Eventually, Mina pushed the heavy front doors, which groaned open, revealing the courtyard. I stepped out and released a breath I felt like I had been holding since I arrived at the Royal Moon Pack. I could finally inhale without suffocating. Without wasting another second, I walked to the secluded part of the courtyard, by the side of the palace, and dropped, lying flat on the cold, hard floor with my

face turned toward the moon. “Y-you can’t do that, Princess!” Mina blurted, her voice thick with panic. Although I have ignored the sting of that title in the past few minutes, I couldn’t this time. The sound of it reminded me of Elara’s screaming face. “I believe we already established that I am no princess,” I muttered, closing my eyes. “S-still, you can’t lie on the floor—” “Why not?” I cut her off quickly, hoping she would just stop talking. “Because you belong to the King,” Mina whispered, her voice trembling. “Your body has to be kept free of dirt and... and damage.” I sat up halfway, my eyes flashing with a sudden, hot anger that cut through the sadness of the nightmare I was still trying to erase from my mind. “Enough!” “If you want to keep yapping, Mina, please leave.” My voice came out harsher than I intended. But those words... “You belong to the King...” They made my blood boil. The King was just another man, like all the others who have failed me in this lifetime. My dad, who saw me as an object he could trade, or Seth, who saw me as nothing but a stepping stone to power... They were all the same. Power-hungry jerks and the King have to be the worst of them all. “Leave me alone or be quiet,” I muttered, a bit softly this time because Mina wasn’t the enemy. She smiled sadly, avoiding my gaze as she nodded, but didn’t move to leave. Sighing, I lay back down, trying to escape the thoughts eating me alive. I was just starting to find a sliver of peace when a deep, masculine voice hit my eardrums, causing my eyes to flutter open. “I advise you listen to your servant, Princess Joanna.”