

The Alpha King's Tomboy Concubine

First Friend

1602 Words

JOANNA ~~ “I advise you listen to your servant, Princess Joanna.” The voice was deep, vibrating with an authority that made the hair on my skin stand. It wasn’t the King’s voice, but I could tell that this man, whoever he was, was an important figure. Yet, I didn’t make a move to obey my primal instincts to grovel at the feet of stronger wolves. I could bet he couldn’t take me down in a duel without his wolf. The only reason his aura was strong was that he had something I didn’t have. A wolf spirit. While I remained still, I let my eyes flutter open out of curiosity, turning my head just enough to see him step out of the towering shadows of the palace walls. Mina, on the other hand, didn’t share my views, or maybe she couldn’t afford to do that because of her status. She bowed like she had been programmed to do just that, stammering, “G-greetings, Royal Beta.” The same Royal Beta Axel? The one who was known to be the Alpha King’s best, or more accurately, only friend. The only one in his inner circle. I expected more than his lanky frame. I could see the outline of his toned muscles, but for someone who gets the gears of the realm running alongside the ruthless King, he should be stronger. My frown deepened as he stepped into the moonlight, his sharp gaze fixed on me. I urged to scream at the top of my lungs because the last thing I wanted was another man stepping in to disrupt my peace. The Royal Beta acknowledged Mina with a brief wave and a small smile before facing me. He moved with a perfect, predatory grace, crouching beside me on the cold floor. “Royalty and dirty floors don’t belong together, Princess Joanna,” He said, sounding like a tease. “Then it’s a good thing I’m not royalty,” I retorted, showing no interest in anything he had to say. I expected a long lecture or an order to stand. Instead, to my utter shock, the Royal Beta popped down, lying flat on the cold stone right beside me. He sighed, looking up at the moon as if we were old friends. “It’s a beautiful night, isn’t it?” I rolled my eyes, muttering to myself even though I knew he was expecting a response from me, “All I want is some peace and quiet. Is that too much to ask for, for goddess’s sake?” “Then you should have stayed in your room, Princess—” “Can you please not call me that?” I snapped, turning my head to glare at him. I eyed him like he was personally responsible for every misery I had endured since crossing the border. “What would you like to be called?” The Royal Beta queried, eyes widening as he added, “Would you prefer I call you Royal Concubine?” The way his brows were raised? It was as if he was daring me to do my worst. I itched to punch him in the face... and damn do I wish I could scratch that itch, break his nose, and let him be a lesson to everyone else in this pack. I could almost feel the satisfying crack of his nose under my knuckles, but I forced my hands to stay flat. I seethed through my teeth, “Joanna. That’s my name and what you all should call me.” “First-name basis, huh?” The Royal Beta let out a soft, boyish chuckle. “It’s only fair if you call me Axel then.” My brows furrowed as I wondered if this was truly the feared Royal Beta. He could have passed for an annoying young man with zero responsibilities. I also couldn’t believe he would utter those words to me and act like this... like we were familiar with each other. I didn’t want any of this. His carefreeness felt like a trap that I dared not fall into. “Royal Beta is perfect,” I said stubbornly. I didn't need friends. And I definitely didn't need a buddy in the King's inner circle. “Royal Concubine is perfect for you, I suppose,” Axel shrugged, wearing a childish smile I wasn't expecting from a man of his caliber. I gritted my teeth, detesting how he could get under my skin without trying. How many more crazy people do I have to deal with in this hellhole? But if it meant he wouldn't use that disgusting title that kills me more than being called Princess, I would gladly

play his games. "Fine, Axel." As if he hadn't intruded on my private moment and pissed me off, Axel uttered with unsolicited concern, "But seriously, you shouldn't be out here on the floor, Joanna. You have a room—" "So do you, yes? But here you are lying under the moonlight with me," I responded flatly, barely resisting the urge to yell at him. "But I am on patrol. I have reasons to be out here, unlike you." "Then leave me alone," I breathed, closing my eyes. "Go back to patrolling or whatever it is a Royal Beta does in the middle of the night. Just... go." "Are you always this mean to people who are trying to serve you better?" Axel asked, looking over at Mina before focusing back on me. "Or someone who is trying to be your friend in a new pack?" "In case you haven't gotten the memo, Axel," I said, my voice low and cold, "I do not need any service nor do I need friends." Especially not one so close to the man I was supposed to please like a common w***e. "Trust me when I say you would," Axel uttered, the playfulness vanishing. "If you want to survive the wrath of Elara and the King's attitude, you're going to need an ally." I didn't answer. There was no need to... or so I believed. After all, I had my own plans, and I just needed to focus on them. Survive. Ensure Blue Moon gets the resources it desperately needs. Then... disappear. Run so far, no one, not even the Alpha King, could ever find me. That would be better than living in this gilded cage for the rest of my life... Hell! Who knows what the King has in mind to do with me? I wouldn't wait to find out— "A word of advice from your first friend in Royal Moon Pack," Axel said softly, cutting off my thoughts. "You are not my friend, and I don't need your advice—" "Be patient with them," He interrupted anyway, giving his so-called advice. "They look strong, but they are softies. And from what I know about you, Joanna, I can boldly say there is not much difference among you three." "You three are perfect for one another," Axel added with a tone of finality. Before I could correct that ridiculous claim and remind him that the Queen was the only person perfect for her rude daughter and her heartless husband, Axel got off the floor. He dusted off his leathers and started walking away. "Return to your room before daybreak, Joanna," He called out as a parting gift. "Whether you like it or not, you are royalty now, and there are rules you mustn't break." With that, he left me to my thoughts. I managed to enjoy a few hours of peace while Mina sat beside me like a silent watchdog, but the quiet didn't last. Soon, I had to return to my room as the sky turned brighter, clearing for the sunlight. I stood up, and Mina led me back through the silent corridors of the palace. We reached the doors to my suite just as the sun began to peek over the horizon. I was relieved as we stopped before the door, grateful that we didn't run into anyone. "I will and prepare your bath as soon as possible so you can prepare for the Royal breakfast, Princess," Mina whispered. For a minute there, I considered correcting her again, but seeing the fatigue in her eyes as she didn't sleep well, I nodded, feeling the weight of guilt in my bones. Mina pushed the door open, but she stopped dead. A strangled, horrified gasp broke from her throat. I shoved past her, worry latching onto my soul. My breath hitched when I saw the state of the living room. It was a wreck. Every decoration was ripped apart. The furniture were broken but what made my heart sink was Sela... She has been bound like a sacrificial lamb to the only chair that wasn't tampered with. Her face was swollen, bruised, and smeared with blood... and maybe tears. "S-sela!" Mina cried out, running over to her. I moved to render help to Sela... to untie her and get her treated. However, as I knelt beside her, my attention shifted to the wall behind her. Written in dark, blood red paint were four words. LEAVE OR SUFFER, FREAK! Sela didn't have to tell me the details or even tell me that the entire chamber had been torn down for me to realize that Elara had made her first move.