

The Alpha King's Claim chapter 3

Serena

I woke up surprisingly without a pounding headache despite remembering I lost consciousness in the middle of a balcony—the so-called king's balcony no less. I should have hit the ground, gained a concussion, or maybe broken my spine, but I felt as healthy as I was before this entire hullabaloo started. Either the balcony had seriously soft ground or my fall was cut—I couldn't really remember what happened after I lost consciousness, but either way, it was to my advantage.

All memories of over the last few hours—or minutes? or days? I couldn't be so sure—had returned to me like a flood the moment my eyes flitted open. My instant comment was, 'Yes, I'm actually inside a fantasy world, how great is that?!" But my sane mind interjected, reminding me that yeah, my head was under threat of dismemberment. That arrogant man who called himself king promised I'd be beheaded in the first light of day.

Quickly, I surveyed myself and the place I was in. I was on a bed with a very soft mattress and pillows, wearing a rather silky short dress that was up to the knee. I scrunched up my nose. Clearly, I wasn't on my own bed and in my pajamas, and that meant I wasn't dreaming of the events I remembered with those men.

The bed was a four-poster, its thick drapes were spread up to cover the mattress entirely. Darkness enveloped me inside. I had to extend my arm just so I could reach the cloth and check the outside environment.

My heart skipped a beat thereafter. It was daylight. Possibly even morning. Meaning, my time was up and I'd likely kiss my head goodbye soon.

A feeling of dread washed all over me then.

"Oh no..." I muttered, shaking my head. "No, no, no, no, no! I got to find a way out of this place!"

I scrambled to leave the bed, pushing myself out of the darkness and into the light. When my feet hit the cold, shiny floor that's when I saw two guards standing near an open door on the right, dressed in armors and helmets. They looked seriously like Mobile Legend wannabes with all the dangerous vibe and pointed heavy-looking spears.

I placed a hand over my mouth to stifle my gasp. Despite their covered faces, I felt their eyes on me, but luckily, they didn't move. Not an inch. Just like those guards in the Buckingham Palace. Good.

Turning around, I looked for another way out of the room. There was a second door on the left, near the bed, so slowly so as not to arouse suspicion, I neared it. Once inside, I groaned, feeling disappointed upon seeing the familiar set-up of a comfort room with glass walls and a huge, steaming pool.

"You'll find the water very comforting on your skin once you dip in the pool. Try it, I insist," a male voice suddenly stated behind me.

I whirled around to see my intruder and there he was, the man whom I remembered to be the king's brother.

"I am Prince Elijah at your service, brother of King Aero of the Kingdom of Phanteon, Royal Adviser to His Majesty and a self-confessed ladies man. May I know your name, Beautiful Maiden?"

Instead of answering him, I furrowed my brows and said, "Pleasantries are useless when you are here to assist me to my doom."

"Doom?" his brow arched up and he looked confused. "What made you think that?"

I scoffed. What was this man playing at?

"If I recall correctly, your cruel brother sentenced me to death by beheading for stupid reasons."

"Oh, no, don't worry about that," he quickly shook his head. "He was just talking nonsense. Don't take it personally."

"He threatened me," I placed a hand on my chest. "Of course, I'd take it personally."

But my show of bravado was ignored. He just shrugged his shoulders and looked unconcerned.

"You'll get used to it, promise. Plus, my brother doesn't always have that acidic attitude. You'll find that he has a caring side too."

"What makes you think I want to know more about him?" I hissed. "I'm supposed to be at home. Where is this place anyway and why am I here?"

As much as I'm a fan of fantasy, I didn't think staying in this place would be healthy. One, I have no idea how to survive. I have no money, no shelter to call my own, no belongings even, and no Akita, my favorite Siberian husky pet to give me my daily dose of happy pill. Second, I'm not even sure where this place is. It seems like Earth to me, but I don't know what food they eat or if they even eat at all. Them using English as a language was a bonus, but still, that advantage was outweighed by the many disadvantages.

The man named Prince Elijah didn't seem offended by my authoritative tone of voice. He looked amused even.

"Well, uhm, instead of bringing you to the dungeon as per the king's wishes, I took you to this manor instead," he answered. "This place is far from the castle, don't worry. This is a safe place for you to stay while we sort your uhm...situation."

You said so yourself you just touched a painting and then poof, you were suddenly transported to the king's bed."

I hesitantly nodded. "Yes, that's a simple way to put it." I couldn't wrap my head around what actually happened back in my room, but at least now, I had somebody who might possess some information, or at least that's what I was hoping for.

"The king's guess is as good as mine, you may have come from a different realm," the prince stated. "Can you morph into a creature? Show fangs instead? Or drink blood? Maybe cast spells? Produce scales and horns? Or maybe you're like those fae people with their ethereal beauty and irresistible sensuality. You certainly are beautiful and sexy, definitely perfect for my bro—"

"What are you talking about?" I frowned. Whatever he was going with his conversation, I didn't want any part in it. This man must have had his head deformed. If I was right with my hunch, he was certainly referring to cryptozoology stuff.

"Hmmm, judging from your answer and your odd reactions last night, I now know what you are," he bobbed his head up and down as if sure with his guess. "You're a human."

I blinked many times when he said it and for a moment, I wanted to laugh.

"So are you," I replied, tossing him a pointed look from head to foot. I mean come on, it was a no brainer. He looked like a human in my eyes. He had a normal-looking head, limbs, and torso. And he even had a bulge—maybe not as visible as the king's, but a bulge still—under his pants that housed that anatomical part for procreation and other purposes...

The prince then laughed a little. "Oh no, no, no. I'm different. I...uhm...well, this is difficult. How do I say this." He scratched his head looking almost shy. "Since the realms were created, there never has been a report where a human trespassed worlds. We made sure humans were clueless of our existence and we kept that law sacred, even until now. You are the first in this kingdom to appear."

"Realms?" I parroted, almost choking up the word. "That's quite a strong word to use. Let me guess, you are creatures that only exist in books."

"Pft!" Now the man truly laughed out loud.

I glared at him, taking offense in his reaction.

Luckily, a few seconds later he stopped.

"I'm sorry, that was wrong of me, but I can't help it. We are real after all," he declared. "We are not just characters in books. You are in the Kingdom of Phanteon, a world where only werewolves and lycans exist."

That's it. This prince really had brain damage, but after everything I experienced last night and these past few minutes, I certainly could tell he was telling the truth.

"Werewolves... Lycans..." I tested each word on my tongue. They felt rough and unusual, and totally bonkers, but another part of me was trying to make good sense of the words. "You mean like Teen Wolf and Underworld?"

Prince Elijah opened his mouth, looking dumb. "I don't get what you're saying. Is that a thing in the human world?"

'Huh,' my mind laughed at the irony.

"I'd already tag you as a certified nutjob if it wasn't for this weird room I'm in or the guards flamboyantly dressed near the doorway. I remember what I saw last night too: a balcony view of a settlement that I'd only believe exist in the fantasy world, and I remember just how instantly I changed locations after touching the painting, like magic, so I'd say you are really telling the truth."

"I like that your dissecting information in a rather calm way," he grinned.

"What would you have me do? Shout like a lunatic? Ask you to—what?—transform in front of me? No way is that going to happen. I already passed out last night because of sudden surprise. I don't want that to happen again."

"May I know your name please?" he suddenly changed the subject. This time, I could tell in his eyes he was being genuine.

"Serena McAllister," I blurted out.

"Hmm, Vasílissa Serena. I like the sound of it."

At that, I tossed him a confused and sharp look. What was he talking about? I'm pretty sure he used Greek language, but what did the word mean? And how does this man know how to speak English and Greek to begin with?

"Anyway, I know some people who might have an answer to your situation," he walked past the door and into the interior of the bathroom, stood near the steaming pool, and stared at me again. "Who could even bring you back to the human realm. I'll help you, but in return, you must help me too."

I hauled in a deep breath.

"I'm not sure if I should trust you," I said without any hesitation.

He placed a fist over his chest and briefly dipped his head towards me.

"I'm the king's brother. I'm a royal and royals always keep their word. Plus, I just saved your life from execution didn't I?"

At this point in my life, I didn't think trusting him could harm me. Considering the situation, I didn't have much advantage to begin with. I'm vulnerable in this kingdom he called Phanteon and as much as I hated it, he was my only hope for survival and returning to my home.

I hissed. "Okay, point taken. What do you want me to do?"

"Oh well, nothing," he was for a moment a little hesitant to continue. "I just...well..I want you to rid of the king's hate of women."

"Your brother hates women?" I asked, taken aback. No wonder the prick looked at me like a pest last night. Does he actually have gynophobia? That's tough.

"Yeah," the prince trailed off. "It's an issue the kingdom has for many years now and because of it, we are having difficulties getting an heir."

My jaw tensed. "If you're saying I carry his children then I'm out."

Don't get me wrong, I love children. I even volunteered to work in a nearby orphanage house to take care of the orphans once a week after my day job. I just didn't like the idea of spreading my legs in exchange for a favor. That's just downright immoral. I wouldn't stoop that low even if it meant I wouldn't be able to return to my world and be stranded in this God-damned realm.

"No," the prince quickly answered, but then he diverted his eyes from me to the pool and trailed off once again. "No... I just want you to gradually desensitize him using your presence—just your presence and maybe establish conversation too? One that will not lead to an argument? My brother is very blunt with his words."

I groaned inwardly. "I'm aware. I got a taste of it last night."

"Well, good," he flashed a grin. "You have a head start. Is it a deal then?"

"If you promise I could return home, then it's a deal," I boomeranged.

"Promise..." He trailed off the third time. It was getting on my nerves. I shouldn't trust this man completely.

"When will we start?" I asked.

He smiled at me and answered, "Now, actually. This manor is the king's sanctum. He always comes here every day." He looked up at the giant glass dome directly above the pool, stared at it for a couple of seconds, and then continued, "Right about now actually. He is on his way here, so that means I probably should get going. I certainly don't want to receive his ire early in the morning. He'd likely put two and two together and will immediately blame me for your presence here."

"What?!" I gasped, surprised by his words. I didn't think I'd be seeing the king so soon and here in this place no less. "I thought I'd only meet the king in court and royal gatherings," I voiced out as he walked past me and into the bedroom.

“That’s usually the case in my world, not unless I’m family or the...mistress of the king, but I’m not. Don’t you think I’d be sentencing my head again when he sees me here? He certainly didn’t approve when I appeared in his chamber last night.”

Prince Elijah paused from walking and gave me a thumbs up, “You’ll be fine. I have great faith in you.”

“That’s not very assuring, Your High—ness,” I frowned at him.

“I’ll see you at the castle soon.” He winked at me and without a wave goodbye, waltzed out of the room leaving me to defend myself against the biggest, baddest wolf in this kingdom.

Literally.