

## Mated To The King's Gamma by Jessica Hall, Mated To The King's Gamma

### Chapter 6

"Is Ester being troublesome?" Clarice asks, going back to drying dishes, and Gannon grunts as an answer and Clarice sighs. "

"Well, since you are free then, Abbie, you might as well come into town with me," Clarice says, and I stop mid-bite.

"Is that allowed?" I asked her, shocked that I could leave the castle grounds.

"Yes, why wouldn't it be? You're not a prisoner here," Clarice laughed, shaking her head while I stared at her in confusion. Wait, I could leave the castle grounds? It made no sense that a rogue servant could come and go.

"I am off for a few hours. I will come with you," Gannon says with a shrug, and Clarice looks at him.

"You want to come grocery shopping with us?" Clarice asks.

"Or you can give me the list, and I will take her," Gannon says, finishing the last bite of his sandwich before taking his plate to the sink. Clarice watches him before she shrugs. "Works for me. I wanted to send Ester, but seeing as she is now preoccupied and you're willing, you can go with Abbie."

I watched as she retrieved a pen and paper; she scribbled on it and handed it to me before handing me a keycard. I had seen one before but never used one. Mrs. Daley usually sent us with a list into town but never gave us money. The townspeople would just take the list and bill her at the end of the month.

"Just grab these things. They weren't on the delivery," Clarice says with a sigh. She held the list out to me, and I took the list and glanced at her cursive writing and gulped. I chewed my lip, wondering if I should tell her I couldn't read it, yet I didn't want to embarrass myself. So I remained quiet, and I figured I could just ask the clerk at the store. I put the list in my apron pocket as Gannon walks off toward the doors before stopping and waiting for me.

"Are you sure I can leave?" I whispered to Clarice, not wanting to get in trouble with the King. He was the one that put me on that floor, so I could be close to Ivy, yet I hardly saw her.

"Gannon is with you. And as I said. You're not a prisoner here, Abbie. If you want to go to town, you only have to ask," Clarice says, confusing me.

"Abbie," Gannon says, and I hurry over to him, not wanting to anger him. Gannon leads me out of the castle, and I follow a few steps behind him.

"I'm not walking. Come on. I will drive us," he says, gripping my arm and leading me to some garages at the back of the stables. He rummages in a little cupboard full of keys before finding the ones he was after.

I pause, watching as he moves toward a car. It made me nervous about getting in the car with him. Not that I had any reason to be, and Clarice knew where I was and who I was with, yet unease crept over me at the thought of being in a confined space with the intimidating man.

He opens the driver's side door before glancing at me. "Abbie?" he says, and I chew my lip before he sighs, walking over to me.

"I don't bite," he says, grabbing my hand, and I pull away from him. His brows furrow. I knew these sorts of niceties, and they always led to some expectation.

I knew that better than anyone. The butcher was nice at first, then he started stealing touches, then forcibly taking them until Mrs. Daley told me if I didn't help him in the basement, she wouldn't let us eat, promising us food if I just helped him. Panic courses through me. Is that why he was being nice? Clarice said to steer clear of him, so I found it odd he was trying to be near me. What were his intentions?

"I won't hurt *you*, come on," he says, stepping away and toward his car. He walks around the other side and opens the passenger door.

"Abbie, please get in the car," he says, and I glance at the roller door leading in. Briefly wondering what my chances of escape *were*, yet even I knew it would be pointless. If I upset him, what if that got Ivy in trouble? So I reluctantly did as he asked.

Gannon shut the door behind me, and I jumped at the bang of it before he walked around the other side and climbed in.

I glanced around his car to notice duct tape, rope, and some other equipment that made my heart race faster. You idiot Abbie, I should have run. My fingers trembled as I reached for the door handle as he started the car. The movement did not go unnoticed by the man, who quickly looked at me before following my gaze to the things on the floor. Gannon leaned over, snatching the crowbar up from the footwell just as I clicked the door handle.

His hand falls on my knee, and my lip quivers as I look at him to find him staring at me.

"Sorry, I should have checked the car beforehand," he says, leaning down and snatching up the rest of the stuff in the footwell.

My hands trembled as he gathered the things in his arms before opening his door. "Just work equipment," he says, getting out and moving toward another car where he opens the back door. He tosses the stuff on the back floor while I try to calm my racing heart.

What kind of work did he do that required duct tape, rope, and a b\*\*\*\*y crowbar? Gannon climbs back in the car. Yet my hand was still on the door handle when he leaned over, pulling my hand away that had a death grip on it. He sets my hand in my lap before quickly closing the door.

"You spook easily," he mutters more to himself. I watched him as he clipped in his seat belt and turned his attention back to the front. I fiddled with my fingers as he pulled out of the garage while playing with the radio.

"Do you like music?" He asked, and I nodded, chewing on my fingernails. I know it was a terrible habit, but I found comfort in it while he found a station he liked.

I stared out at the scenery as he drove. The drive to town was awkward and silent, and I hadn't noticed I had chewed one cuticle from my fingertip with my nervousness until Gannon stopped the car and snatched the hand I was chewing on, and made me jump. The man curses under his breath.

He growls, holding my hand up and examining it while I gasped at what I mindlessly had done, not realizing I had chewed it entirely down to the flesh beneath. He clicks his tongue and curses before reaching into the glove box, where he pulls out a tissue. Gannon wraps it around my fingertip, holding pressure on it.

"You didn't feel that you had bitten it off?" He asked. Disapproval is clearly on his face. I don't answer. I hardly felt pain, especially mediocre pain like that. It was merely a flesh wound, and it would heal quickly enough.

He checked my finger, and it had stopped bleeding. He pocketed the b\*\*\*\*y tissue and shook his head before climbing out of the car. We had pulled up at some kind of general store, and I quickly climbed out of the car just as Gannon reached my door. I step away from him instantly, putting space between us.

"You got your list?" He asked, and I nodded, pulling the folded piece of paper from my apron. He nods, walking ahead and opening the glass shop door. A bell sounds as we enter, and I see aisles of stock lining the store and a friendly enough looking woman behind the counter. The woman says hello to Gannon before waving him over.

"Hey, Leisha," he says, nudging me toward the aisles and passing me a basket. I take it while he wanders off to speak with the friendly clerk he seems to know. She was an older woman, about Clarice's age.

I opened the note Clarice gave me, trying to match the cursive writing to what was written on the products on the shelves, but after a few minutes, I still hadn't found a

single thing that matched her handwriting when I felt a presence behind me. The warmth of him seeped into my back as he leaned down behind me and peered over *my* shoulder at my empty basket.

“What are you doing?” He asked curiously. Heat flooded my cheeks as I showed him the list. He takes it, looking at it before looking at me. My cheeks burn with humiliation, knowing I had to admit I couldn’t read it,

“... I can’t read,” I whisper to him, and Gannon seems taken aback.

“Why didn’t you ask? I would have helped you,” he whispered, taking my basket and grabbing my hand.

Gannon looks at the list before glancing around and dragging me to a different aisle. He reads each thing out, grabbing it from the shelf and placing it in the basket. He had found everything in a matter of minutes before walking back to the counter. The woman scanned and bagged everything before telling me

the total.

I went to hand the woman the card when Gannon took it from me and tapped some small box on the counter. The woman behind the counter smiled, and Gannon handed me the ca buy smokes while I stood there awkwardly, not knowing what to do next.

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“We just have to go to one more store, then we can head back,” Gannon tells me, and I nod, gathering up the bags, but he swiftly took from my hands. I waved to the woman, and she smiled softly, saying good bye as we walked out to the car.

Gannon loads everything into the trunk before grabbing my hand and tugging me across the road to some candy store.

“Liam likes licorice, so I might as well grab it while I am here,” he tells me and I nod, following him in side the store. A man stood behind the counter with a huge smile on his face. It was clear he knew Gannon, and Gannon knew the store.

Gannon leaves me while walking up the back after the man told him what he was looking for was out back.

“Are you one of the new servants at the castle?” the man asked, and I nodded, chewing my lip as I looked at the color display of candies when he held a jar out to me. “Try these. I made these last night,” he says, but I shake my head.

Mrs. Daley would get so angry if she found out," I thought to myself before remembering she wasn't here. Still, I couldn't bring myself to accept the offer when Gannon returned. The man frowns when I refuse his offer.

"Kyle has won awards for his candies. Try one," Gannon tells me, and I chew my lip before taking one of the sponging red clouds from the jar. It was covered in sugar and smelt delicious. I popped it into my mouth, and an explosion of flavor made my mouth salivate.

"Good, the man asks?" He seemed genuinely interested if I liked his candy. I nod, licking my lips, and Gannon chuckles.

"Here," he offers me another one, but I shake my head.

"No, thank you, I shouldn't," I tell him. The man named Kyle seemed disappointed when Gannon set the licorice on the counter.

"And the clouds," Gannon tells him. The man nods, bagging them in little paper bags while I wait. We leave the store and go back to the car. I climb in while Gannon puts Liam's candy in the trunk. Only when he gets in the car does he drop the paper bag of clouds in my lap.

Before I could look at him, he spoke. "There for you," he says, starting the car. "No, you didn't have to," I tell him, trying to give them back, but he pushes the bag back toward me.

"I know I didn't have to, Abbie. I wanted to. I could tell you liked them." His words confused me. Did he expect something in return for them?

"No, I shouldn't," I tell him, and he looks at me, confused.

"And why is that?" he asks, reversing out. I didn't answer his question was stupid. He knows why. Every one knows why

"You didn't answer," he says, navigating around the streets.

"Because I am rogue!" I tell him. His brows furrow.

"What has being rogue got to do with candy?" he asked.

"Rogues don't deserve sweets. We should be grateful we're allowed to live," I found myself reciting Mrs. Daley's words before I could stop myself. Gannon growls, making me jump.

"Which twit told you that?" he demanded. His anger startled me. I lift my hand when Gannon grabs it before I can chew on my thumbnail, not realizing I was about to do it.

“Eat the candy, Abbie,” he says before he lets go of my hand. I offer him one.

“Will you try one?” I asked him, feeling odd eating them in front of him as he pulled into the castle grounds.

“Are they sour?” he asks, and I shake my head.

“You haven’t tried them?”

“No, I mainly go there for Liam’s licorice,” he answers as I dig one from the bag for him. Yet instead of taking it from me, he leans over, plucking it from my fingers with his lips, sucking my fingers with it before pulling back. I stare at him, shocked, when he laughs, sending me a wink. I chuckle, my face heating as I laugh at his playfulness. He chews on it before swallowing it.

“It’s very sugary,” he says, licking the sugar from his lips. I offer him the bag, not wanting to lose my fingers, but he shakes his head, “No, you enjoy them,” he says, pulling into the garage.

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