

## Mated To The King's Gamma by Jessica Hall, Mated To The King's Gamma, c8

Abbie

I stared at the forest surrounding the castle, wishing I could shift and feel the air in my fur and the dirt beneath my paws. I hardly shifted. Mrs. Daley forbade it. The only time I did was in our room back at the orphanage and Ivy would keep a lookout, not that Mrs. Daley came up to our room much, so I used to laze by the window where I could see the moon, feel its rays on my fur. I guess that is where the legend came from for humans about the moon and werewolves, etc. I felt drawn to the moon and night in general. I used to imagine what it would be like to roam freely and explore the woods, instead my paws only knew the floor boards of our tiny room.

Yet so close to the forest the urge was overwhelming and I took a step toward the forest feeling my body tense with the urge to change and realign so I could take my werewolf form. It was freeing the shift, yet also painful because I hardly did it.

ere

"Abbie!" Clarice calls out to me and I rush back to hang out the towels I was sent out to hang.

"Yes," I called back, looking toward the laundry door.

"Once done, come help me prepare for dinner," I nod to her quickly and quickly finish hanging the washing out, wondering if maybe I could sneak out while everyone sleeps to shift before I quickly dismiss the thought. The guards may stumble across me and think I was trespassing.

However, later that night I was sitting on the windowsill looking at the castle grounds below. My skin itches with the need to shift, it was a clear night yet as I watched from the window I saw the guards walking the forest edge and sighed.

Climbing down, I knew, once again, my only place of solace with my wolf would be confined to this room. Stripping my clothes off, I got to my hands and knees and a violent shudder rippled up my spine and

nap and clenched my teeth as my bones started breaking and realigning into position.

Hands became paws and skin turned to fur and my nose and face elongated. I was careful not to let my claws scratch the floor as I stood on my hind legs before jumping onto the window ledge sitting nook. I pressed my nose to the glass and laid down along the wi

ndow, wishing I could run through the forest, wishing to know what it truly meant to be a werewolf.

My mother used to tell me how freeing it felt to run on four legs, to zip through the trees and feel the air and heat blow through her fur, I guess I will never know what that feels like. It was foolish to miss something I had never experienced, or probably ever would.

I ended up falling asleep on the window ledge, and it wasn't until I heard a knock on the door that I woke and crashed to the ground with a thud. My entire body shook when I heard the door handle twist and I knew I was going to be caught. Lowering my body to the ground, I tried to fit under the bed, yet my furry body was much too big. Stupid Abbie, how could you fall asleep?

"Abbie?" Clarice's voice and peer around the edge of the foot of the bed. She gasps and I quickly shift back, reaching for the sheet on my bed to tuck around me.

"I'm sorry, I promise I was careful I didn't scratch the floors, and I will clean up the fur," I quickly told her, covering myself. Clarice stares at me, and my cheeks burn with embarrassment. I wondered how many lashes I would get for my stupidity.

"You're not in trouble, Abbie. I noticed you didn't come down for supper," she says, placing a tray with a piece of pie on the bed.

"Sorry, I will get changed and come down," I tell her. She stares at me for a second before nodding and heading toward the door when she pauses just as Gannon and Dustin walk past my door.

"You know, Abbie, if you want to shift, you can go in the woods. Just let the guards know you're out

there so they don't think you're a stranger." Clarice says and I tug the blanket tighter when I notice Gannon had stopped and is staring past Clarice.

"It's okay, it won't happen again," I assure her. Her brows furrow, and she looks at Gannon behind her.

"I'll take her for her run," Gannon offers, but I wiffle my head.

"No, it's fine. I think I will just go shower and come clean up the mess I made," I tell them. Gannon went to say something but closed his mouth. With a swift nod he walked off. I let out a breath and Clarice watched him leave, clearly me shifting inside angered him.

“try to get some rest, but if you want to shift, you can go to the woods to do so. I have told you Abbie, you aren't a prisoner here,” Clarice says before leaving me. Yet she says that, but I am not allowed to see Ivy, or go to that floor. I wasn't about to tempt the Lycans by doing something, even if allowed.

Mrs. Daley used to like to play those games, get our hopes up and say we could have a break and the moment we did, she would beat us b\*\*\*\*y. Or like the time she said we could eat with the children at the dining table, only to humiliate us when we sat down with them. She tossed our food on the floor and made us eat like dogs, and after that, when the children would beg for us to sit with them, we never asked again. We were only twelve at the time.

We had finally given into the children and thought for once we would ask; it sucked because the kids always asked. We only asked the once because it was Mrs. Daley's birthday and we spent all day preparing the cake and making sure we had an enjoyable meal made for her. We thought maybe if we worked extra hard and made her happy, she would let us join her and the other children. She had promised us that if we made her favorite chocolate mud cake, and cooked a roast we could celebrate with her and try the cake we painstakingly made for her.

We were so excited and when the other kids sat down and we served their food, we gathered our own plates. Usually Mrs. Daley gave us whatever scraps the kids didn't eat or sometimes if she thought we were being lazy, she gave the scraps to the pigs and we went without. We had been on our best behavior and she promised, even Katrina was excited for us and helped us bake the cake. Yet as we plated our food and went to take our seats, she snapped at us.

“What are you doing?” She snarled, and we both froze and looked at Katrina.

“Dogs don't sit at the table,” she said, getting up.

“I said you could join us because I was feeling generous, but filthy rogues eat like filthy rogues,” she said, snatching our plates. She emptied the plates in a pile on the floor.

“Now sit and enjoy your meal,” she ordered us. The humiliation and sadness at the broken promise nearly made me cry, but I held it back, knowing what tears earned us. With one last glance at Katrina, we saw her lips quiver, and she tossed her napkin before storming out.

I nudged Ivy as I went to sit on the floor, Ivy I could tell didn't want to eat it, though the floors were clean we would know, we cleaned them daily, yet she glared at Mrs. Daley and I had to nudge her, giving her a look to remind her we hadn't eaten in two days and she had fainted

the day prior. Who cares if it was now ruined? We still needed to eat, and Ivy especially. She always got less than everyone. Mrs. Daley was exceptionally cruel to her. I always sneaked her food scraps when I could, knowing she wouldn't receive even half of what I got or nothing at all.

"Please,"

I whispered to her, nudging her with my elbow. Ivy looked at me and dropped her gaze to the floor before sinking down beside me and scooping up a roasted potato from the floor and nibbling it.

Looking at the slice of pie on the tray, I wondered if Ivy had eaten and if maybe I could sneak it over to her. Ivy was always too shy to ask for food. She copped one too many beatings for it, so my conscience gnawed at me with how much I had eaten since being here that I completely forgot that Ivy may not have. I quickly got changed scooping up the tray before peering out the door before trying to sneak into the King's quarters. Yet it didn't take long before Trey, one of the guards here spotted me and sent me away.

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