

# The Alpha King’s Human Mate by HC Dolores

## Chapter 109

The Alpha King’s Human Mate AKHM - Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (9) Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (9) “Changing is what people do when they have no options left.” Holly Black

Victim or survivor?

Those three words rattled through Aria’s brain for the next few days as she avoided anyone with a pulse, including her mate. She knew that it hurt him ~ he’d knocked on her door a few times per day, but after several minutes of no reply from her, she’d always hear his footsteps echo away.

Victim or survivor?

Aria wondered if it was really that simple. Alessia had made it sound so easy like flipping a switch.

And maybe it was, but Aria had no idea where that switch was.

On day three of her self-imposed isolation, Sebastian came knocking

again — and this time, he didn’t take no for an answer.

“aria,” he said, and she swore she could hear the frustration in his voice, “I know you’re in there, I know you don’t want to talk to me...or

anyone else, but we need to.” AKHM - Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (9) She laid in the guest bed, curled into the fetal position and ready to wait till he left, but his next words made her freeze.

“aria, I’m leaving.”

Her breath caught ~ leaving?

She didn’t say it out loud, but he answered her unasked question anyway. “I don’t want to, but I’ve been here much longer than I was supposed to,” he explained, his muffled voice floating through the closed door. “My father and my pack need me, and I can’t delay any

longer. I have to leave in the morning.”

Something cold and paralyzing shot through her as her wolf howled inside her head ~ he’d be gone in less than twenty-four hours.

He was leaving. Leaving her.

Sebastian’s voice cut through her internal spiral once more. “I came to ask if you’d come with me,” he said, and there was a new tinge of nervousness to his tone. “I know that we’ve had a...rocky start, but

we’re mates. We’re meant to be together. I want to show you my home. I

want it to feel like yours.” So, he wasn’t leaving her. He wanted her to come.

There was a moment of relief as she realized he didn’t intend to leave AKHM - Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (9)

her there ~ only to have it followed by crushing fear.

Flashes of her father and mother ran through her head, of the way her mother was never allowed to leave the grounds without their father’s permission.

And then flashes of her, just as trapped at Liam’s pack. Is that what it would be like with Sebastian? She wondered.

For the first time in days, Aria spoke just loud enough for him to hear it through the door. “A-are you ordering me to come?” She asked, and she barely recognized her own voice.

She’d have to go if he said yes — of course she would - but the thought of being trapped like she’d been with Liam...

She wasn’t sure she could handle it. There was silence on the other side.

Just when she was beginning to wonder if he’d heard her, he answered. His voice was quiet and sad, like a kicked puppy. “Order? No,” he said.

‘Then, even more quietly, he said, “After all this time, you still think I’d order you to do something you didn’t want to? The choice is yours, it was always yours. I thought...” He paused. “I thought you might want to come with me because you were willing to try with me.” (7)

Oh. AKHM - Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (9)

Allat once, the crushing fear was replaced by guilt as she realized that Sebastian hadn’t been trying to trap or lock her away the same way she’d been with Liam. He hadn’t been trying to leash her the way her mother had been leashed her whole life.

He’d wanted to give her a choice, let her choose to come solely because they were mates.

She opened her mouth to say something ~ she wasn’t sure what ~ when his dejected voice floated through the door. “I know you want to be alone,” he murmured, “So...ll leave you to it.”

She listened to his footsteps echo through the halls, and a massive lump swelled in her throat.

Why had she said that? He’d proposed it like a question, not an order. She’d been the only one to call it that.

Sebastian wasn’t Liam or her father ~ he hadn’t acted like either of them for a single second.

He wasn’t a monster, and she wasn’t sure why her brain constantly made him out to be one.

G!9OIOP? Suffice to say, Aria did not sleep that night.

She tossed and turned with only one thing on her mind: Sebastian’s AKHM - Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (9)

offer.

She knew that he had good intentions. He was offering her to come with him because he wanted to work things out — although Aria wasn’t entirely sure how to “work things out.”

Her life felt like a mismatched puzzle, half of the pieces missing, and she wasn’t sure how to put it back together again. Sebastian might’ve been willing to try, but he’d give up eventually.

Victim or survivor?

Alessia’s words sliced through her train of thought.

“Was it really that simple?

Could she just decide she wanted to be a survivor, and that’d solve everything?

And even if she did, what would a survivor do in this situation? Probably swallow down all their fears and anxieties and leave with Sebastian.

But surely she couldn’t do that...right?

She could choose victim, although part of her wondered if she’d been choosing that since the moment she arrived at this castle.

And what would I be if I continued to stay here? A victim forever? AKHM - Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (9)

That thought sent a chill down her spine. As safe as her isolated little guest room might’ve felt most of the time, she knew it wasn’t feasible forever.

One day, she was going to want to venture outside, to see if she could put the pieces of her life back together with Sebastian, but it could be too late by then.

She knew she had to choose new.

And as the rays of dawn filtered through her window, the choice became clear.

She’d be a survivor today if it meant not staying a victim forever. But Sebastian said he was leaving this morning...what if I’m too late?

The thought of him heading home, still convinced she thought him to be some monster, was enough for her to open her bedroom door for the first time in days. She was only wearing pajamas, but that hardly crossed her mind as she sped through the hallways.

There was no sign of Sebastian. Had he left already?

She turned a corner and nearly ran into what looked like a burly castle guard.

“Sebastian,” was all she got out, “Where is he? Has he left yet?” AKHM - Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (9)

The guard looked startled by the abrupt question as well as her urgency, but after a moment, he said, “Bout to leave by the west gate last time I checked.”

He seemed to catch onto her next question because he added, “I can escort you there.”

She nodded frantically, and let him lead the way.

Her heart was pounding a million miles per minute. What if she was too late? What if he’d already left? Would he still want to come even after yesterday?

She was practically hyperventilating by the time they made it to a large arched entrance. The guard threw open the double doors, and the cool Canadian air hit her all at once.

Her bare arms bristled under the cold, but she hardly noticed. She scanned the empty snowy lawn for any sign of him, but there was nobody there. Not even a car to take him down the mountain - she must’ve missed him.

She had been too late.

I should’ve found him sooner, made this decision last night.

He’d left, probably thinking she hated him, and -

“Aria?” AKHM - Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (9) His voice almost felt like a dream, but as she whipped her head around

and caught sight of him, she knew it wasn’t.

He was standing behind her, in the doorway, with flushed cheeks from the cold, a puffy jacket, and his hands stuffed in his pockets. His eyes roamed over her immediately. “What are you doing out in the cold like that? It’s freezing.” He was taking off his jacket, dragging it over her shoulders before she could reply. It smelled like him, and Aria had to resist the urge not to nuzzle her nose into the clothing.

The same lump swelled in her throat again, but this time, she managed to swallow it down. “I thought you left,” she said.

His eyebrows furrowed together. “I was about to, I was just waiting for the driver to arrive. I stepped inside to get out of the cold.”

“Oh,” she said lamely. Survivor.

Survivors didn’t let fear consume them - they said what they intended

to.

With that growing lump in her throat, she managed to say, “I was hoping to catch you before you left.”

Something that looked like hope sparked in his blue eyes. “You were?”

She nodded. AKHM - Bonus Chapter - Aria & Sebastian (9)

“I...” She could do this. It was her choice. “I thought about your offer.” “You did?” He asked, and she could hear the hopefulness.

“Yes,” she said, “And I was thinking...”

She was a survivor. She was choosing to be one.

“If it’s not too late,” she finished, “I thought maybe I could come with

you. Back to your home.”

She readied herself for rejection, for him to tell her that she’d taken too long to decide or he was tired of her, but it never came.

Instead, a breathtaking smile overtook his face as he replied, “Of course it’s not too late.” He stepped forward and took one of her hands in his. “Let’s go home, Aria.”