

The Alpha King's Human Mate by HC Dolores

Chapter 35

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Chapter 35 "a mother's love endures through all." 7 Washington Irving

For a moment, we were both frozen. Her eyes roamed over me like she was taking in every new freckle or strand of hair that had grown since we'd seen each other last.

And I was doing the same. She definitely looked older than the last time I'd seen her, and yet, she didn't look quite as tired as I remembered. There was a youthful glow to her, a spark in her eyes that Pd never seen before. Although it was clearly her, the amount of life in her felt unrecognizable. This was not the tired, strung-out woman I'd spent the first eleven years of my life with. This was someone else.

"My God," she whispered, "You look...so grown up." Her eyes had been watery before, but now, she was actually crying. There was a tight feeling in my chest. Every part of me was overjoyed to see her - and yet, a tiny voice continued to whisper in my head. She abandoned you, remember? She didn't even bother to call.

Still, that little voice seemed to fade into the background when she clasped her arms around me and squeezed.

The warm feeling in my stomach spread all the way to my toes. I was hugging my mom. In the flesh. And she smelled exactly like I remembered - like the vanilla perfume she always wore.

"You have no idea how much I've missed you," she pulled back and I

saw the tears streaming down her face. She had missed me?

The fear of rejection that I'd had about coming here, that my mom was going to turn me away, seemed to evaporate. I felt like I was a little girl again, clinging to my mother. She had missed me as I'd missed her.

"Come on, May," Steve interrupted, sliding a bowl of mac and cheese toward me, "Why don't you give the poor girl a moment? She's got to eat. She's been traveling all day."

"Of course," mom said, smiling at me with teary eyes. She cradled my face like she was afraid I was going to disappear right in front of her. "I just can't believe you're here. I was worried that..." She didn't finish her sentence, but instead, looked away and pulled out a chair.

But she didn't need to, I knew what she meant. She was afraid she'd never see me again.

But why was she afraid? All she had to do was pick up the phone or swing by for a visit.

Thad every intention to ask her, but after another stomach growl, my body reminded me of its priorities. Food first, answers after. I shoveled mac and cheese into my mouth and had to hold back a smile. How could something so simple and easy taste so good?

"How was work?" Steve asked, taking the seat opposite my mother. She continued to stare at me like my poor table manners were the best thing she'd ever seen.

"Oh, it was fine," she tore her attention away to look at Steve, "Same as usual." Just then, I noticed she was wearing scrubs. Steve had said she was coming from work, so she must work at a hospital or doctor's office

now. Well, that's definitely new.

When I used to live with her, my mom had bounced from job to job but she was usually too strung out to keep anything for too long. She certainly didn't look strung out now. She looked clean, and that was a way I'd hardly ever seen her before.

"You work at the hospital now?" I asked her.

"Oh, you'd be proud, Clark," Steve boasted, "Your mom went back to school a couple of years ago and got her CNA license. She's been working at the local hospital ever since."

My mom smiled sheepishly. "Oh, it's not that big of a deal."

"It is, May," Steve smiled, and I watched him take hold of her hand, "You should be proud of yourself. I know I am." I stared at their conjoined hands and a realization suddenly washed over me. Steve had said my mom was staying with him and that he was seeing someone ~ God, could my brain work any slower? (7

Steve is seeing my mom. My mom is seeing Uncle Steve. =)

When the hell did they start dating? I know that was never a thing when I was around.

The confusion on my face must've been evident because Steve actually chuckled. "Oh, right," he said, "This must look a little odd, huh? Me and your mom together?" |!

"I don't understand," I said, "I thought you guys were just old friends... was this going on when I was around?" I wracked my brain, trying to remember moments where Steve and mom's relationship might've been romantic but I couldn't find any.

Now it was my mom's turn to laugh. "Oh no!" she chuckled, "Steve and I didn't get together until about five years ago. It was after I finished my time in rehab and was starting my CNA license."

"But I'd had a thing for your mother much longer than that," Steve said, "I just didn't want to overwhelm her."

"More like you were waiting for me to get my life together," mom rolled her eyes. There was a lot to process here, but all I could think about was —

"Wait, you went to rehab?" I asked. "And you're dating Uncle Steve. And you have a CNA license."

All the anger and rejection that I'd been feeling earlier rose back to the surface. Clearly, my mom was doing just great on her own. She went to rehab, had a steady job, and was even dating Uncle Steve. She had - as she'd already pointed out - gotten her "life together."

But why did she have to dump me off at my dad's house and abandon me to become clean? Was I such a burden that she needed to discard me so that she could focus on herself? Was it so hard to parent me that she couldn't even call?

The mac and cheese tasted like lead in my mouth.

My mom sighed. She wasn't crying anymore but there was a sadness in her eyes that I hadn't seen before. "Clark," she said, "There's a lot I need to tell you. There are things I couldn't tell you before, but now that you're here, I can actually be honest with you. I know you must be angry with me -"

"Oh, really?" I spat out, "Look, I'm glad that you were able to get clean and pull yourself together. Really, I am. And if you had to drop me off at dad's for a little while to do that, I would've understood. But that doesn't explain why you never came to visit or bothered to call. You just disappeared from my life! You abandoned me." Now that I had opened

the floodgates, it felt like every bit of anger and resentment I'd been feeling these past seven years was pouring out of me. My mom sat there in silence but flinched at my words. "Clark," Steve piped up, "You don't understand —"

"Please," I cut him off, "You didn't check on me either. You were like a father figure to me for eleven years, and then you disappeared just like her. Did you ever care about me at all or were you just trying to impress my mom?"

I stood up, and Steve and mom watched me with wide eyes. "I thought this was the best place for me to go...that it might actually be good to see you after all this time," I said, "But maybe coming here was a mistake." I pushed the half-eaten food aside and took a few steps

toward the door. All I could feel was anger and rejection. It didn't matter if she was my mom. If that wasn't enough for her to pick up the phone for the past seven years, so it wasn't enough for me to stay and hear her out now.

"Clark!" She shouted after me, "Wait!"

Her eyes were wide and pleading. "Listen to me, honey," she said, "I know you're angry, but my lack of contact all these years? It wasn't by choice."

I stopped in my tracks and turned to look at her. "What do you mean?"

She sighed. "Your father wouldn't allow me to contact you," she said, "Not to visit, not to even call you on the phone. When I dropped you off all those years ago, he made me promise I'd never reach out to you again."

"What?" I asked, "I don't understand...why wouldn't dad let you contact me?" @

She sighed again. "It's a long story, and if you sit down, I promise I'll tell you everything."

Although I was still angry and resentful, I wanted answers. If there was a missing piece to my mom's story, some actual reason as to why she abandoned me, I wanted to know.

I hesitated for a moment and then I took a seat.