

# The Alpha King’s Human Mate by HC Dolores

## Chapter 36

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“Growing up happens when you start having things you wish you could go back and change.” (1)

Cassandra Clare | \*

Steve had brewed herbal tea for both mom and me, but none of us had taken a sip yet. She stared at her hands, wringing them together and I watched the steam rise from my tea. I knew she was gearing up to tell me something big, so I didn’t rush her.

I was still trying to make sense of what she had said about my dad just a couple of minutes ago. He had stopped her from contacting me ~ could that really be true? I didn’t want to believe it, but I couldn’t help but think of every time he’d brushed me off when I asked about my mom.

I knew she - and the fact that she’d hidden my existence from him for eleven years was a sore spot for him. But had he really told her never to contact me?

“I guess I’ll just start from the beginning,” mom finally spoke, and her eyes were glassy with unshed tears, “You remember when we were living out of that dingy little motel on Burke Street? When you were

eleven?” “Oh, definitely,” I smiled, “I remember that old little TV in our room. It only got, like, two channels and you had to keep the satellite in the perfect position.”

My mom smiled ruefully. “God,” she said, “I can’t believe we really lived there - that I let you live there for so long.”

“Mom, it’s okay,” I said, “It wasn’t that bad. We had food and electricity

“Oh, Clark,” she cut me off, “It was that bad, honey. You were just a kid, and I was doing my best to hide it from you, but I was spiraling. My drug addiction was getting worse. I could hardly keep food on the table for you. My debt was so bad that the only places I could live were off friends’ couches or dingy motels like that one. And it was only going to get worse from there.”

I sat in silence and let her talk.

“Steve was the one who finally got through to me,” she said and placed her hand over his. They exchanged smiles. “When I called to borrow money from him for the thousandth time, he finally gave me a bit of tough love. He told me I couldn’t continue on like this, and if I did, he couldn’t watch me do it. He told me I needed to get help. Real help ~ rehab.”

“All I knew,” Steve added, “Was that I was watching the woman I loved hit rock bottom and drag the kid I love down with her.” “Well, you were the first one to get through to me,” she told him and then turned back to me, “But the only problem with rehab was that I couldn’t take you. Most programs were six months and that was too long for me to let you stay with a friend I trusted — even Steve. I needed someone that could be your actual parent, your legal guardian while I was away. It only left one option.” (7)

“Let me guess,” I said, “My biological father.”

“I didn’t want to, Clark,” she said, practically pleading. “You have to know that I never wanted you to be involved with his world. With

werewolves.”

I looked up at her in shock, glancing at Steve. He looked completely unfazed. I had been pretty sure my mom knew about the existence of werewolves, but I had no idea that Uncle Steve was also aware.

“Don’t look so surprised, kid,” Steve said, chuckling, “Your mom has told me everything. I’m well aware that your biological father shapeshifts into a giant furry dog.” (8)

I cracked a smile at that.

“and if you have to know,” my mom continued, “Had I known what your father was going to do, I wouldn’t have brought you to live with him. I’m not sure what I would have done, but I would’ve figured something else out. I wouldn’t have just let him take you like that.”

At that moment, she looked fragile and broken in a way that couldn’t have been faked. “I don’t understand,” I said, “Why did he just take me like that?”

It was definitely a question best saved for my dad but I wasn’t here with him. I was here with my mom.

“Well, you’ve been around wolves,” my mom smiled bitterly, “You know what they’re like. Possessive and territorial. They want to be in control of everything — including their kids.”

“You’re telling me,” I couldn’t help but roll my eyes.

“Pm sure it didn’t help that I kept your existence from him for eleven years,” she said, “He was incredibly angry with me. I think cutting off contact was his way of punishing me for keeping you away so long.”

A tush of anger flooded through me. “Punish you?” I repeated, “You’re my mom! And it wasn’t just you he was punishing. Keeping you away punished me too.” (9)

My mom nodded and I watched her close her eyes, like this conversation physically pained her. “I know. Trust me, you have no idea how much I wanted to talk to you all these years. How much I just wanted to hear your voice. I even made Steve drive me to the border of your dad’s pack a few times, but the guards would never let us past the

entrance.”

My heart constricted. How could my dad do that? How many times had T been within a few miles of my mother and not even known about it?

“Thave to ask,” I said, “Why didn’t you tell him about me? Why wait eleven years?”

She sighed. “I guess you don’t know much about the night I met your father.”

I shook my head. “Not really,” I said, “He’s never talked about it, but my brother - Sebastian — he said it was a one-night stand.”

“That’s true, but there’s more to the story than that,” she said, chuckling awkwardly, “I used to work at this bar in Northern California Your father came in one night, looking like he had the weight of the world on his shoulders. That was more than eighteen years ago. He was definitely more handsome then.”

I cracked another smile and I saw Steve roll his eyes.

“He started coming in a couple of times a week at first and then it was every night,” she said, “And he confided in me. He didn’t tell me a lot of specifics at first, but eventually, he opened up. About everything. About the fact that he was a werewolf and had just become the Alpha of his pack.”

I raised my eyebrows. “And that didn’t send you running for the hills?”

“It certainly surprised me,” she shrugged, “But I came around to it. I bought into your father’s entire story — how he was terrified to let his pack down, how much pressure he was under. And I think he liked talking to me. I had no idea about any of that stuff, so I was just an unbiased third party to hear his side.”

“A pretty third party,” Steve chimed in.

“That too,” my mom smiled, “Everything started out platonic between us but I did have a little crush on him. And then one night, he came in and I could tell he’d had a rough day. He drank more than usual and he started sweet-talking me. One thing led to another and, well...he ended up back at my hotel room.”

It was definitely awkward to think and hear about my parents having sex, but I was also glad to have some answers. The subject had always been so taboo before. But there was one thing I was still curious about.

“Dad was with Luna Grace when he met you and you guys had the one- night stand,” I said, “Did you know he had a mate?”

My mom chuckled bitterly. “This is where the story gets a little complicated. Your father told me that werewolves had soulmates but he conveniently left out the part about already meeting his...until the morning after our little one-night tryst.”

Traised my eyebrows in shock. “Wait, what?” My mother took a sip of her tea. “Yeah, the morning after... woke up in

your father’s arms, thinking this was the start of something special. As I said, I had a little crush on him. But when your dad woke up, he just started freaking out. He began carrying on about how our one-night stand was a mistake and should’ve never happened...and that ’s when he decided to open up about how he already had a mate, someone he was committed to. I was heartbroken about it, but I wasn’t going to worm my way into his life if he didn’t want me there.

“Unfortunately,” she continued, “Two months and two missed periods later, I realize I’m pregnant with you. I knew it was your father’s. I hadn’t been with anyone since...that’s when I decided I was going to go at this alone. On my own.”

“But didn’t you think he deserved to know about the pregnancy?” I asked.

“It’s not like I didn’t think about it, Clark,” my mom sighed, “But your father had made it clear our little affair was a mistake and that I should stay away from him forever. And frankly, I wasn’t thrilled about forcing you into that kind of world. The way he had explained things to me...I didn’t want that for you. I was also scared that your father would take you away from me and try to pass you off as this other woman’s kid if I told him. I wanted to be the one to raise you...even if I hadn’t realized how ill-fitted I was for the role.”

Yeah, I didn’t want to grow up in the wolf’s den either, | thought to myself.

Mom’s story was a lot to process. I had only ever had bits and pieces of my origin story growing up, but finally, I had the whole tale. Her logic and her actions weren’t perfect but neither was my dad’s. They’d both chosen to keep me from the other one, stealing and locking me away like I was a toy.

“But now that I’ve spilled my guts to you,” mom said, looking at me with curious eyes, “I want to know why you’re here, Clark. Don’t get me wrong - I am more than overjoyed to see you, but I also know something must’ve driven you here. Your father would’ve never let you come willingly.”

I sighed. This had been the part I was dreading, but my mom was right. If she could tell the truth about what happened with my father, I could tell her I was on the run from the most powerful werewolf in the world.

“Well, remember how dad told you about mates?” I asked, and she nodded. “How werewolves have their one true mate that they recognize at first glance?”

“wait, is that really how it happens?” Steve asked, “They make eye contact with someone, and suddenly they’ve got a soul mate? That’s all it takes?” He looked incredulous, and clearly, my mom hadn’t given him an in-depth history lesson about werewolves.

“Yep,” I told him, “That’s it. A little eye contact and suddenly you’ve got the person you’re spending the rest of your life with.”

“How do you know if someone is a suitable life partner based on eye contact? Is it just me or is that a little shallow?” Steve scoffed. \* |

I barely held back a laugh. I had only ever heard people hype up the sanctity of mates my entire life, so it was nice to see someone be a little skeptical.

But you’ve felt it yourself, Clark. You know what all the tingles and the sparks and the butterflies feel like.

Don’t pretend like you don’t. |

“Look, I can’t tell you how it works,” I said, looking at both of them, “But here’s my problem. Even though I’m human, I somehow still have a werewolf mate...you can blame it on Dad’s Alpha blood, it doesn’t really matter. What does matter is that I ran away from him and I kind of need somewhere to lay low for a while.”

Both mom and Steve stared at me with wide eyes and slack jaws.

Guess they weren’t expecting that revelation.