

The Alpha King's Human Mate by HC Dolores

Chapter 37

Chapter 37 “There is no such thing as fun for the whole family.” Jerry Seinfeld

I told mom and Steve everything ~ how I got roped into attending a diplomatic meeting in Canada, meeting Griffin, deciding to run, and then leaving with Alessia.

By the time I was done recounting the story, they were both staring at me in disbelief. I couldn't really blame them. The past week of my life had been crazy, like the plot of some romance novel you found thrown in the clearance section at Barnes & Noble.

Except this wasn't fiction. Werewolves, royalty, and possessive mates ~ this was my actual life.

“Oh my,” my mother muttered, and she exchanged glances with Steve. “Clark, I...don't even know what to say.”

Steve looked just as shaken.

“I know it's a lot,” I said, “And if you don't want me here, I would understand. It's a risk asking you guys to get involved. I could find somewhere else to go.” “What? No,” Steve's voice boomed across the room, “No way we're letting you fend for yourself, kid!” He turned to my mom, and she nodded in agreement.

“Steve is right, Clark,” she said, “I know firsthand how dangerous the world of werewolves can be, and it sounds like you've got one of the most dangerous at your heels. Our home is always open to you, and you're welcome to stay here as long as you like.” *

A wave of relief flooded through me. Whatever anticipation and fear that I'd had about coming here — like my mom not wanting to see me or throwing me out once she heard about the trouble I was in — was rapidly disappearing.

In fact, I felt the most relaxed I had in the past week. Not only was I surrounded by other humans for the first time in years, but there were no possessive mates anywhere to be found. No werewolf politics to

worry about. (1)

It was just me, my mom, and Steve - the way it was meant to be all

those years ago.

“You have no idea how grateful I am,” I said, “I promise I won't be a burden. I just want to lay low for long enough until I'm sure Griffin isn't going to come after me

My mom reached over and squeezed my hand. “Honey,” she smiled at me, “You're my daughter. You would never be a burden to me. And it's good that you're here. It'll give us time to actually catch up.” “and maybe you can sample some of my cooking,” Steve piped in, “Your mother is on this vegetarian diet, and I've got nobody to tell me if my ribs are any good.”

“Of course, Uncle Steve,” I grinned.

Although I hadn't seen my mother or Uncle Steve in years, it only took me a few days to settle into a routine. Life with them was simple and predictable. My mother worked at the hospital during the day while Steve ran his own construction business, and then we'd have dinner together every night.

It was an easy routine, but it was a welcome one. In Yorba Linda with my mom, there were no pack functions to worry about, no patrols, and most importantly, no possessive mate hanging around.

I stayed cooped up in the house the first four days I was there. I was too paranoid that if I left, someone might be waiting to drag me back - maybe Griffin, maybe my dad, maybe even one of my siblings.

It didn't help that I started getting texts and calls from my family around day three. My dad left me several urgent voicemails. Apparently, Griffin and several of his guards had come to the packhouse, inquiring to know where I was.

In each voicemail that I didn't respond to, my dad got increasingly angry. He was the angriest in voicemail number five. “I can't believe how selfish you're being right now,” he spat through the line, “You've been given an honor that most female wolves can only dream of, and what do you do? You run away like a child! I want to know where you are right this second, Clark. You will come home and fix this. I'm ashamed to even call you my daughter right now.”

I'd be lying if I said his words didn't sting. Having my dad say he was ashamed of me wasn't a great feeling, but I also had no desire to talk to him either. Not after learning the way he had willingly kept me from my mother for seven years. (*)

Besides, if I go back to the pack, he'll just hand me over to Griffin. This isn't about him being worried about my safety...it's about me embarrassing him. 2)

Sebastian left a single voicemail too, but his was just concerned. I didn't have the heart to call him back, but I did text him to let him know I was safe but I couldn't come home right now. !)

Lily's voicemail on day four just made me laugh. “Did you forget to mention that you met my mate and you were chummy with her, Clark?” She had hissed into the phone but there was no real venom in her voice. “Oh, yeah, I've met Alessia. She arrived yesterday, and she already knew who I was ~ she said you were the one who told her. While I'm glad you got to meet my soul mate, Clark, it would've been nice if you would've told your actual sister about it! Anyway, you're being stupid right now. Running away won't solve your problems. Come home.”

Teven had a voicemail from Luna Grace by day three. No doubt my dad had pressured her into calling and trying to guilt-trip me into coming home, but it wasn't very effective.

“I know you're scared right now, Clark,” her gentle voice had spoken through the phone, “But there's no reason to be. Having a mate is a wonderful experience, and you should've seen how worried the King was when he came to the pack — especially when he discovered you weren't here. If you come home, we can talk about all of this. We're here to support you, honey, no matter what you want.”

Thad rolled my eyes at that last part. Grace's words might've sounded sweet but they were hollow. I'd lived with my dad long enough to know that his support came with terms and conditions. If you weren't doing things his way, you didn't get support. And me running out on my “role” in the werewolf world definitely wasn't “his way.”

If I came back to the pack, there would be nothing to decide. My dad would just keep me there until Griffin came to collect me.

I guess dad will just have to get used to being ashamed of me. I'm not going back.

With that thought in mind, I resolved to stop isolating myself out of paranoia and actually enjoy my new surroundings. I had been here for about a week. If Griffin knew where I was, he would've found me already. Until I knew otherwise, I was safe.

“Clark, you want to go grab some coffee with me? There's a cute little cafe in town,” Mom's voice suddenly rang through the room. She stood in the doorway, still wearing her scrubs from work.

Enjoying your new surroundings means getting out and doing things, Clark.

“Yeah, coffee sounds good,” I smiled at her, “Let me just grab my shoes.”

Even something as simple as grabbing coffee with my mom felt so freeing.

Maybe it's because I'm actually free here.

What I didn't know at that moment was that my freedom would be very short-lived.