

# The Alpha King's Human Mate by HC Dolores

## Chapter 31

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“If we act like prey, they'll act like predators.” - Alyxandra Harvey

For the remainder of the two-hour drive to the airport, I was on edge. Benito knew my name ~ he knew who I was. Did that mean that I'd been caught? Did Griffin know I'd left? Was he on his way to stop me? \\*)

‘The car was completely silent but it felt like the driver was going to pull over any minute now and tell me the ruse was up, that Griffin was on his way to drag me back. Or even worse, that Griffin would be waiting at the airport for me and ready to stop me from getting on that plane. (”)

Although I felt like a bundle of frazzled nerves, Alessia spent most of the drive napping. Since we had gotten into the car, her anxiety seemed to disappear ~ she clearly thought our escape attempt was

a success.

Thad two options. I could wake her up and tell her that something was wrong, that Benito shouldn't have known my name. Of course, we weren't really alone. The driver was only a few feet away from us and he'd definitely hear the entire thing. If Griffin wasn't already alerted to my disappearance, he probably would be. Any chance we

might still have at an escape would be ruined. |)

The second option was that I could remain silent and hope Griffin wasn't waiting at the airport, ready to pull the rug out from under me. And if he was, I'd deal with it then.

I decided to go with option two.

It's going to be okay. You might still be able to get away. You don't know for sure that you've been caught, I told myself. While it did little to actually help my anxiety, I still repeated that to myself the entire rest of the ride. \*

“alright, passengers. You'll find your oxygen masks located in the overhead bin. Should the cabin lose pressure, oxygen masks will drop down. Please place the mask over your own mouth and nose before helping others.” The flight attendant's voice was monotone and tired as she lazily demonstrated how to use the oxygen mask. It was clear that she gave this same speech several times a day.

“Now, I'll be coming around to make sure you've gotten your seatbelts fastened,” she said, “We'll be wheels up and on our way to

LAX in less than ten minutes.”

I breathed a sigh of relief. Alessia and I had made it to the airport. Not even just the airport — we had already boarded the plane. When we had arrived at the terminal, we had two tickets waiting for us — one for her and one addressed to Clark Bellevue. Given that Benito had addressed me by name, I guess I shouldn't be surprised that he had put the ticket in my name either.

That still made me uneasy, but there had been no sign of Griffin or any of the castle guards at the airport. I had kept my eyes peeled the entire time. Alessia had berated me for being too paranoid, but I could tell she was on her guard too.

“Something isn't right,” Alessia suddenly muttered beside me. We were already in our seats, seatbelts fastened. I watched her eyes

narrow as she scoped out the rest of the passengers. (7

Up to this point, she hadn't made a single comment about our escape so I was surprised to hear her speak up.

“That ticket,” she said, gesturing to the paper in my hand, “It's addressed to you. Your full name.”

“Yeah,” I said, “And Benito used my name when we were leaving.

He called me Clark. He knew who I was.”

“He did?” her eyebrows furrowed, “Damn, I didn't even catch that. Something is definitely off here. Our entire plan was pretty flimsy

and last-minute, I wasn't even completely sure we'd succeed. This entire thing feels...”

“Too easy?” I finished, “Yeah. I've been secretly waiting for a bunch of guards or Griffin to show up out of thin air and drag me back. If Benito knew who I was, he must've known I was Griffin's mate too.

Why would he let me leave? Wouldn't he get into trouble?”

Alessia hummed thoughtfully. “Definitely. Letting his King's human

mate leave? That'd be like signing his own death warrant. Unless...” )

“Unless what?”

Alessia's bright eyes were thoughtful like she was trying to decide if she should say the next part out loud.

“Unless Griffin knew that you were leaving. I saw Benito use his mind link just before he let us go. I thought he was letting someone know that we'd need the extra ticket, but maybe he was alerting

Griffin to the fact that you were leaving.”

My eyes widened. I had seen Benito's eyes glaze over too, but I hadn't considered that he might be mind linking Griffin.

“Okay,” I said, “Let's say he was mind linking Griffin. Why wouldn't he stop me? Surely Griffin would want me to stay?” (7

Maybe Griffin finally realized having a human mate wasn't worth the trouble. .°) Based on the way Griffin had acted before, it seemed unlikely he would change his mind so quickly, but then again, it's not like I knew him very well. We had literally only spent one day together. He had told me that he wasn't going to let anything keep us apart but maybe he had just said that to intimidate me into staying.

Griffin knew I wasn't happy about the mate bond, but maybe he assumed I would be too scared to run.

Well, if that's the case, he was dead wrong.

Could it really be that easy though? Griffin letting me go free and deciding to move on? I wanted to believe it but the explanation felt empty. As little as I knew Griffin, he didn't seem like the type to let go so easily ~ especially not after nine years of searching.

A surge of guilt washed over me. Although I knew running away was the best choice for me, it didn't do much to soothe the guilt. I knew I was leaving Griffin high and dry - I could only hope he'd understand my reasoning after he read the note. And as a young, attractive werewolf king, I had no doubts he'd have a line of way-

more-suitable replacements out the door.

“T have a theory,” Alessia said, turning to me, “But I don't think you're going to like it very much.”

I swallowed. “Lay it on me.” “You asked why Griffin would let you go so easily, assuming Benito

was mind linking him,” she said.

I nodded.

“Maybe he was giving you a headstart,” she said. (7)

“A headstart?”

Alessia gave me an amused look. “Think about it, Clark,” she said, “How would you rather eat a rabbit? By buying it at the store or

catching it yourself?” (\*) “Personally, I'm not a big rabbit person.” “)

Alessia chuckled. “Well, for wolves, we'll always prefer to catch it ourselves. And Griffin is an Alpha wolf like me. He's a predator. Hunting is embedded into our DNA, we love it. And the best part of the hunt?”

There was a dark look in her eyes. It reminded me of the first night we'd met, when she had told me how she slaughtered her pack's beta. “The best part of the hunt is when you finally catch that rabbit after it's led you on a wild goose chase. There's something so satisfying

about finally trapping it, seeing the look in its eyes. When you've got it between the teeth, the rabbit realizes that it's been beaten...that it will never get away from you again. That's the best

part. That's when you know you've won.” [?) Alessia might have been using an analogy but I could read between

the lines.

“That's what you think Griffin is going to do to me?” | asked, “Hunt me like prey?”

But I'm not a fucking rabbit and I highly doubt he'd want to eat me for dinner.

Alessia shrugged and the dark look in her eyes seemed to have vanished. “It's just a theory,” she said, “But someone definitely gave Benito the OK to let us go and my money is on Griffin.”

“Yeah, but come on,” I said, “I know you said werewolves love the hunt but I'm not anyone's prey. I'm his mate. Why would Griffin want to hunt me like a rabbit or something?”

Alessia raised an eyebrow and chuckled. “You're right,” she said, “You're not prey to Griffin. You're the ultimate prey.’ =)

Before I could ask for more clarification, she continued. “You're human,” she said, “Weak, fragile, and usually helpless. Like prey. Griffin might not be hunting you down to tear out your throat but you're still the prey and he's still the predator. Whether he already knows that you leave or he finds out soon, there's no use pretending that he won't come after you or that he's going to move on to someone else or whatever other bullshit you've been trying to

convince yourself of.” I opened my mouth to protest but Alessia didn't give me the chance. “Griffin isn't just an Alpha werewolf,” she said, “He's the Alpha of Alphas. So, really, that makes him the strongest predator in the world. And sure, leaving probably pissed him off, but you — the ultimate prey — have also just given him his most exciting hunt

yet.” @)