

The Alpha King's Human Mate by HC Dolores

Chapter 97

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“There are wounds that never show on the body that are deeper and more hurtful than anything that bleeds.”

Laurell K. Hamilton

I didn't hesitate to reach for the door, to follow after him even though I had a sinking feeling that he was long gone. I opened the bedroom door and walked through ~ only to walk straight into Sebastian.

His hands grasped my shoulder instantly, steadying me before I could stumble. “Clark,” he said with relief in his eyes.

“Seb,” I said, hugging him. I forgot about everything for a moment — the kidnapping, killing Ezra, even Griffin ordering me to leave. For a moment, I just lingered in the safety of my brother's embrace.

We stayed like that for a while, but eventually, he pulled away with reluctance. “Clark,” he said, “I've been looking for you. I want to talk to you.”

My eyes flitted to the empty hallway where Griffin had most likely disappeared. I wanted to find him and make him understand that he was wrong about me being safer in the human world.

But as I looked into Sebastian's eyes, I had a feeling he needed me even Chapter 97

more right now. “I saw you out there,” I said, “You found your mate, Aria”

“aria,” he repeated like he was savoring the name on his tongue. “So that's her name.”

“You haven't asked her name?” I asked, raising an eyebrow. “I mean, I was told it's been ten hours. I would've thought you would've gotten past first names at least.”

He sighed as if he had the weight of the world on his shoulders. “She won't talk to me,” he said with a strained voice, “She came back with us and I know she knows that we're mates, but she won't even speak to me. All she seems is terrified of me. She won't come near me, won't even make eye contact with me.”

He paused, and with something like hope in his eyes, he asked, “You spent time with her, right? She was there.” His lips curled up into a snarl at that last word. By ‘there,’ I could only assume he meant Liam's pack.

“she was there,” I told him, “But she was more scared than anything else. I don't think her being there was...much of a choice. Even if she feels differently.” I wasn't quite sure how deep Aria's brainwashing ran, if she still revered Liam the same way she had before he'd tried to kill both of us.

“I don't know how to interact with her,” he confessed, “I've waited years for my mate, but I'm not unrealistic. I didn't expect to have some Chapter 97

high-ranking female wolf or have some innocent virgin who'd waited for me. All I wanted was someone who wanted me at least half as much as I wanted them. I never expected my mate to be terrified of me.” |

My heart ached for my brother.

Sebastian had never been vocal about wanting a mate, but it had been clear for as long as I'd known him. It's what all wolves wanted - even if they didn't say it.

“She's only terrified because her world has been turned upside down,” I explained, “Two days ago, Liam was forcing everyone in his pack to refer to him like a king. Today, he's dead and she's stuck with people she's supposed to hate.” I paused before adding, “I think it's just going to take some time, but sooner or later, she'll realize that she belongs with you.”

I swallowed. In some ways, Aria wasn't so different than me. I'd never been abused like she was, but I'd been terrified of Griffin when I first met him. And even after I'd even realized he wouldn't kill me, I was terrified he'd trap me with him forever. That I'd miss out on the real adventures of life because I was stuck with some possessive werewolf.

And now that possessive werewolf is the one who wants me to leave.

Funny how the tables turn like that. I'm the one fighting to stay here, not the other way around.

“I hope so,” Sebastian said, “I want to help her, but I'm not sure how Chapter 97 when she practically shakes whenever I walk into the room.” “One of these days,” I replied, “Perhaps she'll be the one telling you

about why she shakes. It's just going to take time to get there, but if anyone is equipped to handle it, it's you, Seb.” 1)

“You think so?” he asked.

I smiled softly. “You're my brother. I'd like to think I know you pretty well. You're patient and gentle...and that's what Aria needs more than anything right now. The fact that you're trying to help her? That's more than some wolves would do.”

“I wish I could do more,” he said, “Help her in some worthwhile way.”)

“The patience and gentleness are worthwhile,” I said.

He nodded. “I suppose you're right didn't want to bother you ~ especially after what you've been through these past few days.” His eyes flitted to the bruises on my neck. “How are you feeling?”

Thank you for listening to me. I

“A little sore but it's not so bad,” I said. The biggest sore wasn't physical right now. I needed to talk to Griffin. I needed him to see that he was wrong, that he hadn't failed to protect me.

“Dad was so worried about you, you know,” Sebastian suddenly said, drawing my thoughts away from my mate. “When he heard you'd been taken, he sent every single one of his warriors into battle to save you. Chapter 97

I'm pretty sure he was gearing up to take Liam's head off himself.”

My mind flashed to the last conversation I'd had with my father - the way we'd fought.

That could've been the last conversation I'd had with my father. I was so angry, but that could've been the last time I'd talked to him.

“When my neck isn't so sore,” I said, “I'll call him and talk to him. We fought the last time we talked but...he's still dad. I know he loves me even if I wasn't happy about some of the decisions he made.”

“He hasn't been perfect,” Sebastian said, “I didn't always see that but I do now. He was so intent on keeping you in the werewolf world that I think he forgot you were half-human too.”

“Or human at all,” I said, “And to make up for it, I think I forgot that I was part-wolf. I'm both. I belong in both worlds.” 2)

But I belong with Griffin most of all.