

Chapter 199

Tonight was long. Dinner was delicious as always, but I was ready to go home. The atmosphere was light and surprisingly not awkward at all. My gran and George left shortly after Charlotte served coffee.

Something about being up early tomorrow. I wasn't really paying attention but that was nothing new. I found it hard to stay out of my own head at times. I didn't have the best concentration span.

Overall, it was a lovely evening. Although I did wonder why Alanna never showed face.

"Leah, would you like more coffee?". Charlotte asked.

Stifling a yawn I shook my head. "I'm good thanks". If I had anymore coffee, I'd be up all night.

"Okay sweetie I'll sort you both with some leftovers before you head home". As she left the dining room Jake leaned over placing a kiss on my lips.

His dad had excused himself earlier to deal with some work stuff.

"You doing, okay?".

"I'm good". I smiled. "Stuffed and ready for bed but I'm good".

"That's good baby". He placed another kiss on my lips. "And your gran?".

"We talked a little. She wants me to go for dinner sometime this week. My aunt Claire is driving up, so she wants us all together".

"Think she's coming up to soften the blow?". He asked.

"Maybe". I shrugged. "But it doesn't matter. It's time we put it all behind us and move on".

"And that's what you want to do?".

I nodded. "Whether she's in my life or not it's not going to change anything. I just want to move on and focus on what's ahead".

"That's good babe". He kissed the top of my head. "You ready to go?".

"Yeah". I nodded.

We said goodbye to his mom and Jake carried the bag of leftovers to the truck. I swear when Charlotte cooked, she could feed the full street. We

had food that would last days.

I clipped my seatbelt into place as he started the engine and reversed out the driveway.

"Do you think she'll want to move back here?". I asked as we passed my old house.

"I think that'll depend on how your dinner goes". He pulled up outside our house and the first thing I noticed was the black SUV parked across the street. I wasn't sure if Jake noticed or not.

Disregarding it I unclipped my seatbelt and got out.

"Stay here". He spoke.

But me being me I didn't listen. I followed closely behind him as the door to the SUV opened.

My dad. I relaxed slightly. He wasn't a threat. Why did I have a feeling this was turning into a family reunion.

"Jake". He nodded. "Leah sweetheart it's good to see you again".

I did plan to see him again just not this soon. Why was he here? Or was he invited here by my gran as well?

"Hey". I frowned. "Is everything okay?". It was late and it took at least a few hours to get here.

"Yes". He nodded. "I've been summoned so I thought I may as well get here straight away".

Summoned?

"But it's late".

"It is". He nodded.

"Where are you staying?".

"I'll book into a hotel. I just wanted you to know I was in town".

"It's late and it's cold out here. Let's head inside". Jake slipped his hand into mine. "And as for the hotel you won't need one. We have room and you're more than welcome to stay".

I was not expecting him to say that or to be so considerate after what happened.

"I don't want to be a burden". My dad spoke.

"Just don't kidnap my mate again and you won't be". Jake smirked.

I bit my cheek to stop myself from laughing. I'm sure it wasn't a laughing matter. I squeezed Jake's hand as we made our way up the driveway and into our house.

He was doing this for me. He extended the olive branch and to me that was a start. In time I wanted me and my dad to have a relationship, and I had to have Jake on board with it.

"Beer Jack?". Jake asked.

"Sure". He nodded.

I left them to it as I headed upstairs to get changed.

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Laughter is what I heard as I was walking down the stairs. I caught sight of the two on them on the couch football on the tv.

It was weird but strangely nice and I couldn't stop myself from smiling. The little girl inside of me was doing a happy dance. I waited for so long to know where I came from and to have my dad in my life and now everything seemed to becoming together.

But I did still have my doubts, and I think I always would. My guard was still up, and it would stay there until I was certain I wouldn't get hurt.

"You two seem to be enjoying yourselves". I smiled leaning against the door frame.

"Bonding over our love for the Dallas cowboys". My dad grinned.

I rolled my eyes. "Are you hungry? We have some leftovers I could heat up for you?". I walked further into the room stopping by Jake.

"Okay". He smiled.

"I'm going to make some tea if you would like some?".

"Yes, please".

I was busy in the kitchen texting back and forth with Alanna when his arms found my waist and he lay his head on my shoulder.

"Your dads alright". He spoke.

I turned in his embrace. "He isn't he and thank you for doing this".

"Family is everything Leah and I wouldn't keep you from yours".

Everything seemed to be going in the right direction. Jake and I were better than ever. I had been accepted into college and now my dad was finally part of my life. Trying to ignore the little bit of doubt I had I placed a kiss on his cheek.

"I love and appreciate you and I hope you know that".

"I love and appreciate you too babe". He kissed the top of my head just as the microwave dinged. "I'm going to go for a shower I won't be long".

"Okay".

I was heating up some food when my dad cleared his throat behind me.

"I'm grateful for the hospitality you and Jake have shown me. It wasn't my intention to stay here, and I hope you don't think I planned this".

"No". I shook my head. "I don't think that, but I am curious as to why you came here tonight instead of waiting till morning".

"I like to get a head start on things and I thought we could spend a few days together. It would be nice to finally get to know my daughter. If that's okay with you".

"Yeah". I smiled. "I have plans tomorrow around lunch time but I'm free after that if you want to do something?".

"I would like to take you to dinner".

I nodded. "I'd like that. I love Mexican food just so you know". I grinned.

"Noted". He laughed. "I have something else to ask you". He spoke.

My stomach tightened, the dread settling. I always thought the worst before I even knew what was coming.

"Okay". I frowned.

"How would you like to meet your gran? Your other gran?". He asked.

Oh wow. Of course, I want to meet her, I want to meet all my family in time. We had missed so much. They had missed my full childhood.

"It doesn't have to be straight away but she's dying to meet you".

"Yeah, yes". I smiled. "I'd love to meet with her".

"Excellent". He smiled. "You could always come back with me and stay for a few days if you want?".

"Stay where for a few days?". Jake asked as he appeared at the kitchen door. "What's happening?".

I chewed the inside of my cheek. Somehow, I don't think Jake was going to let me go without an argument.

"I was asking if Leah wanted to drive back with me for a visit and stay for a few days".

"I see". He walked to the fridge and took out a bottle of water. "A few days?".

"She has a lot of people who want to meet her Jake. I can assure you she'll be safe the whole time she is with us".

"She doesn't need my permission, Jack. If she wants to go with you she can. I won't stop her".

I was at least expecting an argument but for him to just be okay with it kind of threw me off. He didn't like when I was away from him, didn't like us being apart I didn't either, but it was time for this to happen.

It was time we all came together as a family finally. I had gone so long without one and I wasn't going to give this chance up but right now I had so much going on with my gran here and my auntie Claire on the way.

I had to deal with them. I couldn't up and leave until we were all on the same page.

"I would like that but". I glanced at Jake. "I have a few things to sort out here first. Maybe in a few weeks?".

"Of course, sweetheart whenever you're ready".

I nodded giving him a smile. "Are you okay with eating this out the tub or would you prefer it on a plate?". I asked.

"It's fine just the way it is". He smiled.

I fixed him a mug of tea and placed his food on the table.

Did I mention it was still weird having my dad here?

It wasn't long before we were saying goodnight and heading to bed. Jake showed my dad where he'd be spending the night while I headed into our

room.

I was scrolling through my phone struggling to keep my eyes open when Jake joined me.

"I really like him". He pulled back the covers and got in beside me. "And I think it'll be good for you that he's here".

I placed my phone on the nightstand before I turned onto my side to face him. "If I go with him for a few days, can you come with me?". My eyes were already closed so I couldn't see his reaction.

Man, I was tired tonight.

"Do you want me to?".

I frowned. "Yes, of course I do. You're my safe place and I would like it if you came with me".

"Okay baby". His hands found my waist and he pulled me to him. "I'm proud of you do you know that". He kissed the top of my head, but I didn't hear anything after that.

I was dead to the world and no doubt snoring within minutes.