

## Chapter 19

“Hey, Oliver” I say, walking into my office and finding him there at my desk. Though I guess it isn’t my desk any longer now. “Getting comfortable?”

“Nah, just keeping it warm for you.” He tells me with a smile.

I sigh, he’s not making this conversation easy. “It’s all yours now.” I whisper and hold up my hand. “There’s no way I’ll be back in here before I have to leave with Seth.”

“You finally did some real damage?” he asks, his attention now completely on me.

I nod in response. “Yeah, it seems so. Sofia stitched it up but it was too swollen to tell. Gotta go back this afternoon so she can look at it, but it’s still really painful. It’s probably the worst I’ve done.”

“She’s not really looked at it yet, then?” He asks, knowing the answer. “So there’s still a chance you’ll be back here. When are you leaving for the palace?”

“We haven’t talked about it, really.” I say with a sigh. “He’s had something that he’s been working on from here, but I didn’t ask any questions. I know he wanted to see what the determination is on my finger before we make any plans. Sofia was worried I may need to see a human doctor.”

“Oh, shit. That does sound really bad, Molls. I’m so sorry.” He says, reaching for my good hand and I gladly take it. “You can’t name me head chef though, Alpha Robert has to.”

“He’s the one who told me that I needed to talk to you about it. It’s yours. You’re going to be amazing- you’ve already been so while I’ve been out.” I tell him with a sad smile. I know he’s going to do really well, but it’s still really sad for me. He’s about to say something but there’s a knock at the door and it cracks open.

“Hey, Molly. I’ve got the medicine that Albert went for” I hear a voice say.

“Come one in, Beta George” I tell my brother’s new Beta and he opens the door, smiling at us.

“It’s still weird to hear” he tells me and hands over the bottle. “Probably not as weird as ‘Princess Molly’ though” and he’s right- that is weird to hear.

“Gross. No.” I tell him and he laughs.

“You’re the only she-wolf in the kingdom who wouldn’t be happy to be mated to the prince” Oliver says and he and George laugh at me.

“It’s not that I’m unhappy being mated to Seth. He really is great.” I tell them. “It’s the Prince part of it that I’m not entirely comfortable with. Or rather the part where I have to become a Princess. That’s the real issue.”

“Just remember us little people when you become queen.” George winks and turns to leave us.

“As I was saying, it’s all yours now, Chef Oliver. I’ll be here for a little bit to help if you have any questions and maybe if my finger isn’t too bad I can come cook with you a few times before we leave the Falls.” I say, trying to hold back tears.

Oliver stands and walks around the desk to pull me up and into a hug. “I’m happy for you, Molly. You do have a mate, and he cares about you.”

“I know. He really is great. It’s working out for the both of us.” I tell him, returning his hug. “I’m going to go take the medicine and kill some time before lunch with my mom. I’ll come by this afternoon to let you know about my hand. I love you, Oliver.”

Squeezing me even tighter, I hear him say “I love you, too, Molly.”

I leave the office and walk across the hall to my home. I take the medicine and put it away in the same cabinet, but not hiding it this time. I have a bit of time before I have to go to find my mom, so I decide to go and read in the garden for a while. I grab my book and head outside to my favorite place and walk back to where I ran and hid just a couple of days ago in fear, but this time I’m at peace.

Seth really is a good guy. I know we’ve had some problems. There’s been some hurt, and he made some bad choices that really did hurt to hear about. But, he’s been kind and apologetic and I can feel they’re his true feelings through the bond. I know he really is sorry, and that’s enough. I climb under the trellis and begin to read my book, just relaxing and enjoying this time of actually not having anything to do.

I slip off my shoes and feel the ground beneath my feet- It’s always felt comforting. I can feel the energy of the earth and I feel at home with it. I love the feel of the sun on my skin, even though its fall and there’s a crisp chill in the air. The sun brings warmth and happiness. The wind blows and it feels like a hug from an old friend and I begin to feel worried that the wind at the Palace won’t feel so comforting, nor the sun or the earth. I know it’s all the same, but is it really?

Your mate is insisting I check on you and make sure you are OK. He’s concerned about what he can feel through the bond. I hear my father’s voice in my head.

Yeah, I’m fine. I’m just thinking about leaving here. Actually, don’t tell him that part. Just tell him I talked to Oliver.

You want me to lie to a member of the Royal family?! I hear my dad, though I know he’s joking

It’s not a lie. I did meet with him. He’s the head chef now.

I love you, kiddo. It’s going to be wonderful, you’re destined for great things. I’ve always known that about you.

Thanks, Dad. I love you, too.

After reading for a while, I head back inside, planning to go down to my suite but I run into Mom and Audrey as soon as I step inside the pack house. “Ahh, Molly! Just the girl we were looking for!” I hear Audrey say as I approach them.

“Hello!” I greet them, unsure why anyone was actually looking for me. “Did you need me for something?”

“We were just thinking that it would be nice to have lunch outside together, just the three of us, while the boys are locked away working.” my mom says, pulling me into a hug. “Did George get the medicine to you?”

“Yes, ma’am. And lunch sounds nice. I can go have Oliver get something together if you’d like,” I say and start to turn towards the kitchen.

“Oh, we’ve already spoken with him and it’s taken care of. He’s a lovely young man”, Audrey tells me and together the two of them pull me towards a lunch I’m not sure I want to be a part of. Don’t get me wrong, they’re both lovely women. But they are lovely women who are powerful and proper- and one of them is my mate’s mother.

Lunch truly wasn’t bad though. Mom and Audrey talked quite a bit, reminiscing about their youth and the fun they had together. Audrey did take the time to make sure I understood some of the things that would be expected of me though.

“When you’re ready to be marked let me know and I’ll begin to put together the ceremony for you, though if I’m being honest, I’ve been planning this since Seth was a little boy.” She says to me.

“A ceremony?” I question her.

“Oh, yes, dear. I forget that this isn’t common knowledge to younger wolves since it only happens every 20 to 30 years. When royals mark each other, it’s done publicly during a beautiful ceremony as opposed to in private as most wolves do.” she says excitedly, placing her napkin on the table. It’s obvious that she’s not thought the entire situation through with me.

Thankfully though, my mom speaks up to rescue me after seeing the look on my face. “Audrey, Molly doesn’t have a wolf like most others. She won’t be able to actually mark Seth.” I knew this. I’ve known this since I was a little girl and the others would talk about marking their mates, but it hurts so bad to see the realization on Audrey’s face knowing her son, the future king, won’t wear his mates mark.

“I’m sorry.” I whisper, feeling completely inadequate again.

Audrey reaches over and grabs my hand. “Molly, there’s nothing to apologize for. You’re Seth’s mate, and the goddess doesn’t make mistakes.” she tells me and squeezes my hand. “Perhaps this is her way of telling us that our ceremonies are unnecessary.”

“I feel like I’m ruining your traditions.” I tell her honestly, feeling terrible.

“They’re just that though, traditions. They’re not laws. Every marking ceremony is made different by each couple. If your way of doing it is to not have a ceremony, then that’s the new tradition, and some day your son will make it his own for him and his mate.” She says to me and it’s comforting to know that she’s so understanding of the situation. It’s also so odd to think about the possibility of giving birth to the heir to the throne. “It will be fine Molly. I’m sure we can work out something to make both of you happy.” she finishes with a genuine smile that puts me at ease.

I look at my watch and realize it’s time to have my hand checked. “I hate to do this, but I must go.”

“You’re right, we should be headed that way.” my mom says, standing to come with me. “It was a lovely lunch. Thank you for joining us, Audrey. Will we see you at dinner?”

“Absolutely!” She says with a smile. “We will all be there to celebrate your good update that is to come.” she says and mom and I turn to leave.

Mom takes my right hand and we walk to the Medical Center, hand in hand. Once we arrive, Claire takes us right back to the same room from yesterday and lets us know Sofie will be with us in a moment.

Shortly after, there’s a knock at the door and Sofie opens the door and walks in. “Hello, Molly. It’s nice to see you, Luna.” She says with a smile and looks around the room. “The prince isn’t joining us today?” she asks with a frown.

“No, he had some work to get done, so it’s just me and mom.” I tell her.

“Well, damn.” she says, disappointment evident in her voice. “Did you actually let him take care of you last night?”

“Yes, he took care of me.” I say and leave it at that.

“Sofia, Prince Seth discovered last night that Molly has been taking human medicine for a few years to help with pain.” My mom says, tattling to my doctor.

“Molly! How did you get them?!” She exclaims. “Why would you do that?”

I look at my feet, not willing to meet anyones eyes. “The medicine you always give me makes me really sick. I decided to try it one time when I got hurt. It works.” I say sheepishly, ending with a shrug.

“You should have told me. You should have been here when you took it the first time. You’re a wolf Molly, some of the human medicine could have killed you.” She says and I know everything she’s saying is true.

Trying to hold back tears, I whisper to her “I know, but I’m not a wolf. Not really.”

“Can I see the bottle so I know what does work for you?” she asks and my mom hands her the bottle. Sofia reads it and copies the information into my chart. “And is it helping you?”

“It does. It doesn’t completely take away the pain, but it helps a lot.” I tell her with a nod.

“Ok. I’ve added it to the file for the future. Let’s take a look at your finger, now.” she says, walking to wash her hands and turns back to me. She gently takes my hand and removes the splint and starts to unwrap the gauze on it. “The Prince did a really good job wrapping this up.” She says and I can’t help but smile.

“Yeah, he did.” I agree. “I accidentally tried to bend it last night and it started hurting really badly. He helped me get ice on it and kept it on most of the night.” I tell her and she nods.

She takes a good look at my finger and frowns. “It’s still pretty swollen. Can you try to bend it?” she asks and I’m absolutely terrified to try now. I nod and slowly attempt to bend it.

My finger moves the slightest and it starts shooting an excruciating pain. “It hurts really bad” I tell her through gritted teeth. “I can’t move it more than that.” I say sadly, looking to my mother. She reaches my right hand and squeezes it for comfort while reaching her other arm around my shoulders.

“Ok, Molly. I’m going to touch it. Let me know where it hurts.” she instructs and begins to touch various places on my finger, listening to my response and sighs.

“Molly, Luna, I think we may have to find a human doctor to take a look at this one. I think there’s a real possibility that you’ve damaged a ligament.” she says to my mom and I, her eyes full of sympathy.

I turn to my mom and see her eyes glass over. “Dad?” I ask her, assuming that’s who she’s linked.

“No dear, it was Seth. He and the king will be here in just a moment to make arrangements to find a human doctor.” she tells me with a sad smile and a squeeze of my undamaged hand.