

## Chapter 38

“Hello Randall, Celeste. It’s been a long time.”

“Hello, Benjamin.” I hear my dad say. I hadn’t really realized they had known each other.

“Please, come in.” Benjamin says, stepping to the side to allow them to enter. “As you can see, both Molly and Seth are here, completely unharmed.”

My mom looks directly to me, waiting for my verification that I am, in fact, completely unharmed as he said. I nod to her and a satisfied look appears on her beautiful face.

“Robert wouldn’t tell us anything, just that you had crossed to meet your biological parents.” Dad says to me and I nod. “And we were correct in our guess?” and I nod again. Dad just sighs and pinches the bridge of his nose, unsure what to make of the situation.

Mom looks around and her eyes land on Lily. “Are you able to help her?” she asks her, a hint of desperation in her voice.

Lily looks at me, and then back to her. “I have told the kids what needs to be done to try,” is all she says and my mom looks displeased.

“You came into our home and lied to us,” mom says to Lily with a scowl, taking a step closer to her. “You told us there was no magic.”

Lily meets her eyes, unafraid and unwilling to back down to my mom’s anger. “I had to protect my daughter.”

“Your WHAT?” my mother hisses at her and rapidly looks between Lily and myself. “How could you just leave her? She was just a tiny child, so small and scared.”

“The king would have taken her from you if you had known.” Lily snaps at her, taking a step towards her.

“We never would have told him!” mom yells, throwing her hands in the air.

Lily looks absolutely furious. “You and your mate assisted in the murder of the boys! You would have turned her over to him in a heart beat!” she yells at my mom and I can feel my chest tighten with anxiety.

“ENOUGH!” Seth bellows out at them, standing quickly, unwilling to listen to them fight any longer. “None of this has anything to do with the present. I’m taking MY MATE outside to give you all a chance to say whatever it is you need to and when we return I expect her feelings to be taken into consideration when choosing your words.”

Seth offers his hand to me and I quickly take it. He lifts me to my feet quickly, placing his hand on my lower back, and leads me outside grabbing our jackets as we exit. Once the door closes behind us he turns me to him, helping me into the jacket and placing his hands gently on my shoulders.

“Are you alright, Love.” he asks me gently, lifting a hand to wipe a tear that had escaped.

I try to contain them but I can’t as my lip quivers. “Hey, it’s OK. Their issues have nothing to do with you.”

“They have everything to do with me.” I tell him between sniffles.

“Nothing is your fault.”, he tells me, leading me away from the house over to a tree nearby and sitting on the ground, patting next to him for me to take a seat as well. “Their problems are their own. And while you’re the subject, it’s not your fault at all. They all love you so much, they just want to protect you and I think they all feel like they failed.”

I nudge Seth’s legs apart and sit between them, my back to his front, and he wraps his arms around me tightly, kissing the spot on my neck where his mark will go. “The new moon is tomorrow.” I tell him, unsure how he’s feeling about everything now.

“I know.” he says quietly in my ear, bringing his hand up to gently graze my neck. “I’m nervous to mark you now. There’s so much riding on it, and I don’t want to mess anything up.”

“I’m ready.” I tell him, simply.

Seth leans his head on mine and breaths deeply, his breath falling in sync with my own. “What if I messed things up? I tried to replace you. I decided you weren’t good enough before I ever even met you. I was a fool, and you may be the one who pays the price for it.”

“It will be alright, Seth. If it works, that’s wonderful, but if it doesn’t, that’s OK, too.” I tell him, gently rubbing his arm. “I love you. I’ll be happy if the only thing that happens is that I’m really yours. Getting my wolf, and apparently magic, is just an added bonus.”

“I never did a thing to deserve you, Molly. The goddess blessed me with you,” he tells me.

We sit there for a while, just being together and looking up at the sky. The sky is clear and the stars are so bright this evening. It’s so peaceful, except for the occasional sound of someone shouting from inside the house, thankfully not quite loud enough to make out what’s being said.

“I never asked them my birthday.” I whisper, mostly to myself. “I’ve never known my birthday. I’ll finally know how old I actually am.” I feel Seth tighten his hold around me for comfort.

“You were such a beautiful baby,” he tells me and I can feel his smile in his words.

“I’m nervous you won’t like the way I look if the spell lifts,” I tell him, admitting a fear that I didn’t even know I would have until tonight.

“I love you no matter what you look like,” he tells me, kissing my head. “But I know you’ll be absolutely beautiful, just as you are now.”

Our peaceful moment is interrupted, yet again, by the sound of shouting. “Should we wait for this to end or just go home?” I ask him and I feel his body stiffen.

“Molly,” Seth starts cautiously. “You can’t go back to the Falls tonight. You can’t go back until you bear my mark.”

“What?” I say, irritated at being told what to do. “Why the hell not?”

“It’s not safe, Love.” he says, brushing my hair behind my ear. “Not like going to the cave wasn’t safe, but it’s really, truly unsafe. If my dad figures out who your father is, he may try to kill you and he’s the one wolf in the kingdom that’s stronger than I am. I’m not sure I could protect you from him.”

“Seth, he won’t try to hurt me.” I tell him, sure of my words. He’s always been so kind to me. “I just know that he won’t.”

“I’m not taking chances, Molly. If I could mark you right now I would, but we have to wait until tomorrow.” he tells me and I take a moment to feel the bond, feeling the depth of his fear. “He killed your brothers when they were children. If you’re marked he can’t hurt you without hurting me, and he won’t risk that.”

His logic is sound, but I truly don’t believe that he would hurt me. He would never chance hurting his only son, his only heir, especially with what they’ve said about Seth’s uncle. Surely though, Audrey would step in if he tried anything, but I don’t think Seth is willing to budge on this.

“It’s a bit quieter now. Let’s head back inside to see if they worked anything out.” Seth tells me, releasing me from his grip.

I stand up and offer my hand to Seth. He chuckles a bit, but pretends to let me help him stand. He doesn’t let go of my hand, he just pulls me close to him, gently pushing me back against the tree and kissing me deeply, his hand slipping just inside the edge of my shirt.

“Molly, I love you so much. I don’t know what I’d do if anything happened to you,” he tells me, running his rough thumb against my bottom lip and kissing me again. Breaking the kiss and murmuring against my lips he says “Tomorrow night and you’ll officially be mine.”

I gently nod against him. “Tomorrow.”

He releases me and takes a step back, taking my hand in his and leading me back towards the cabin. He knocks on the door twice but doesn’t wait for anyone to answer and opens the door. Both of my dads are standing on opposite sides of the room while both of my moms are sitting on the couch, with ample space between them. I let go of Seth, hang my jacket and move to the couch to sit between them.

“Is everyone alright now?” Seth asks and no one says a word. Seth sighs deeply, running his hand through his hair in frustration. “Molly needs to stay here tonight. It won’t be safe for her to be in the Lunar Falls territory until I mark her tomorrow evening.”

“Tomorrow?” my mom asks, looking at me.

“Yes, it’s part of what has to be done to try to release the spell,” I tell her simply.

“Try?” she says, looking past me to Lily. “You couldn’t use a spell that could be broken?”

Seth takes this moment to interject himself into their argument. “If the spell is not broken it is solely because of my choices and actions. Neither Lily nor Molly have anything to do with that.”

“Molly is welcome to stay here any time she wants,” Benjamin speaks up. “As are you, Seth.”

“I’m not leaving my daughter here,” my mom says stubbornly.

“You both are welcome to sleep on the couch,” Benjamin tells her and she nods curtly. I’ve never seen my mom act like this and, quite honestly, it’s embarrassing.

“Molly, your room is just over here,” Lily says, indicating a small hall with a door. “We never changed it, hoping you’d be back some day.”

“Thank you,” I say, walking over to the door she indicated and slowly opening it. I take a step inside, and realize I didn’t bring a lantern with me. Lily must have realized it as well, because she’s right behind me with a lantern and hands it to me. She steps back though and leaves me alone in the room, closing the door behind her.

I take a look around, taking everything in. There’s a full-sized bed pushed against one wall with a small night stand. There’s a green and brown quilt on the bed and I see a small doll on it that looks handmade. There’s a toy box on another wall with a dollhouse sitting next to it. I walk over and sit on the floor in front of the doll house looking at it closely. It appears to have been handmade as well, with little wooden dolls and furniture to go with it. There doesn’t appear to be much in the room, and what is here isn’t fancy, but it was made with love.

I hear a tap at the door and it opens to reveal my mate in the doorway.

“Can I come in, or do you want to be alone a while?” he asks me.

“Come in.” I say to him with a smile, standing up and handing him the lantern as I walk over to the bed and sit on it. I pick up the doll and look at it, realizing it has brown curly hair and bright green eyes, just like little me did and it makes me smile. I look up to Seth, tears filling my eyes.

He comes to sit next to me, placing the lantern on the night stand and wrapping his arms around me. “It looks like you when you were little.” he says with a smile and kisses my temple. “Maybe some day we will have our own little green-eyed daughter that you can give it to.”

We sit there for a few minutes when I look over at him. “You know I’m going to tell my parents to sleep in here and we will take the couch, right?” I ask him.

Seth gently chuckles into my hair. “Whatever you want, Love. I’ll stay wherever you are, always.”