

Chapter 39

My parents have headed to my childhood bedroom and Lily has brought us blankets and pillows, trying to make sure we're comfortable.

"We usually just let the fire die out overnight, but if you're cold you're welcome to keep feeding it," she tells us and Seth has a look on his face that tells me he's never had to feed a fire. To be fair though, neither have I, though I'm sure I can handle it.

"Thank you, Lily." I tell her, taking the blankets from her. "I'm sure we'll be just fine."

"I feel bad leaving such a large wolf to sleep on the couch, but I don't think any of you men would fit on that couch well," she tells Seth with a bit of a grin. She's right, they're all taller than the couch is long. I'm sure he'll survive for one night

She leaves us alone and I move to place the pillows and blankets on it. Seth turns to me and looks nervous.

"Molly, I think I need to mind link my dad and let him know none of us are returning this evening," he tells me and I nod. It's probably for the best. "I'll let Rob know as well. I'm just going to step outside." Grabbing his jacket, he steps outside.

I attempt to set up the couch in a manner that appears to possibly be comfortable, knowing that it absolutely won't be, but also recognizing that I made my own choices and did this to us. I look over at the fire and while it's lit, it is getting lower. I decide to put another log on- I don't have a wolf to help keep me warm like most everyone else here does.

As I wait for Seth to return, I sit on the couch and flip through the photo album again, this time taking a moment to look at the background of each photo. Many of the photos were taken outside, in the woods. I can see lots of very large trees, but in one photo I note the presence of a tire swing and realize it must be the tree Lily had pointed out to me earlier. In a few other photos, they seem to have been taken inside this cabin, judging from the look of the walls. I'm about to sit the book back down when I notice something tucked into the back cover.

I pull out the papers hiding in the leather and they're photos of me- but when I was older. There's a few school photos, and one of Robbie, Oliver and myself at a party when I was about 12. There are various other photos and I have no idea who could have taken any of them when I get to the last photo and it was taken the day of Robbie's Alpha ceremony, as I was outside with my parents greeting people for the brief time I was out there.

Seth returns just then, locking the door and hanging his jacket up. "Dad's not happy, but he won't attempt to come tonight. I may have to go back tomorrow morning to appease him, though" he tells me, and I nod in understanding.

"Look," I tell him and hand the photo out to him. "Someone was giving them pictures of me for years." I whisper and Seth moves to sit next to me.

He gently moves through all the photos there. "I don't think they're any kind of threat, but I wonder who it was."

"I know Albert's parents were involved with giving them information, but I don't ever remember being around them much at all." I tell him, wracking my brain for any memory that may have a clue. "I think it's someone else, maybe a few people."

"I'll try to find out from him tomorrow but I don't think you're in any danger from them" he tells me, handing the photos back to me. "Whoever it was was just giving them information" and I nod.

Seth takes his shoes and socks off and moves to kneel in front of me, untying my shoes, helping me take them off, and then my socks. He stands and begins to slowly unbutton his shirt, a look of hunger in his eyes.

"One more day, Love. One more and you're officially mine." he says, pulling his shirt off and handing it to me.

I can't help the blush that creeps across my cheeks at the thought of him marking me. "Are you really going to be alright if my wolf can't be helped and I can never mark you?" I ask him, my insecurities sneaking back in.

"Yes, Love," he tells me, pulling me up to stand and helping me take off my shirt and jeans. "You're mine, whether you can mark me or not." He places his shirt behind me and helps me put my arms through and buttons it up slowly for me.

He lays down on the couch, trying his best to fit, even slightly comfortably. Honestly, it's a bit funny to watch, but once he seems settled, he reaches his hand out to me and helps me climb over a leg to lay between his legs, head resting on his firm chest.

"It's not ideal, but it will do," he tells me with a smile. "I like having you this close. Maybe we'll get a twin-sized bed when we get back to the palace."

I giggle at him. "Absolutely not." I tell him with a smile. "This is pretty good for tonight, though. Good night." and I kiss his chest, snuggling into him.

"Good night, Love." he tells me, brushing my hair behind my ear gently.

I fall asleep almost instantly and find myself in the meadow- my meadow. I stretch out in the soft grass and look up at the fluffy white clouds in the crystal blue sky. It's so amazingly beautiful here. I sit up, looking around for the little wolf, but I find Altair sitting a few feet from me. His tail wags a little upon seeing me sit up and he moves to sit next to me.

"Have you seen her today?" I ask him and he looks behind me, off in the distance, on the other side of the creek.

I stand, wiggling my bare toes in the lush green grass and walk over to the creek, placing my feet in the cool water as Altair sits next to me on a large rock. The little wolf moves a few feet closer but doesn't come all the way to the water this time.

"It's OK," I tell her gently, trying to make her feel comfortable. "I know you're my wolf. This is our mate, Altair. He'd never hurt us."

The little wolf's ears perk up at hearing this, but she doesn't move. She continues to stare at us from her spot in the distance, unwilling to come close to me again. Altair moves to the very edge of the water and whines.

"Hey," I tell him, reaching out to pet his coarse black fur, "I think she's just scared. Give her some time, just let her know you're here."

Altair sits back down, but he's clearly still bothered. It's hard not to feel bad for him. His human kept him from his mate and then when Seth and I finally meet, Altair still doesn't get to meet her.

"She'll come around. I'm sure of it." I tell him, leaning my head against his.

I wake and find myself still lying on top of my mate's chest, his arms around me, hand in my hair. I'm not sure what exactly woke me but I see the sun peeking through the curtains and my mom sitting at the small dining room table, looking at us with a smile tugging at her lips. I attempt to free myself, but my movements cause Seth to tighten his hold on me. I try to reach his arm to pull it away when I hear him and feel his chest rumble slightly where my head is lying.

"Stay still, Love." he tells me and I can't help but giggle a little.

"I'm trying to get up so I can go talk to my mom," I tell him and he cracks his eyes open, looks around and sees her watching us.

"No," he says simply with a smile, tightening his hold on me, causing me to laugh and finally releasing me. I climb off of him, trying not to trip, and cover him back up. I go to kiss him on the head but he catches my arm and pulls me to his lips.

I head to the bathroom- thankfully the cabin has water, even though there's no electricity. After I'm done, I walk back out to the living room, grabbing a blanket and motioning my mom to follow me outside. I wrap the blanket around myself and sit on the top step, covering my mom as well as she sits next to me.

"You can't hate her forever, Mom," I tell her, knowing she'll know exactly who I'm talking about.

"It's just hard, Molly." She says, taking a deep breath. "I truly thought your parents were dead. We searched so hard and couldn't find anything. Not a single clue."

"I know," I tell her, squeezing her hand. "You did everything you could."

"Molly, she came into our packhouse. She sat in a room with you," she starts and I can see tears forming in her eyes. "She lied to us. You look just like her. We didn't realize it and I don't know how. I don't understand how a mother can leave her pup. I would never, NEVER have left you."

"It's different though. You've never been in danger like that," I tell her and she starts to open her mouth, but I continue. "If someone killed Robbie you would have done anything to keep me safe."

My mom shakes her head at me. "I'd never have left you. I'd have left your father with the pack and taken you, I wouldn't have left you."

"Mom, we're sitting in a cabin that looks like it's falling apart in the middle of the rogue land," I tell her, growing frustrated. "There's no electricity, we're all shocked there's water. They didn't have the resources to take me somewhere and not be found. They did what they were able to do."

"You deserved better, Molly." she says, tears falling down her cheeks.

"Maybe," I tell her, offering a sad smile. "Or maybe it was the goddess' plan. If I had remained hidden here, I'd probably have never met Seth. I wouldn't have had you, or Dad, or Robbie. Things were hard sometimes because of my wolf, but you guys gave me such a nice life."

Mom sighs, starting to understand

"You guys have always loved me and cared for me, and at a time when Lily and Benjamin couldn't. You'll always be my parents, but I've got extra ones now."

"I know, and I'll try," she tells me, wiping the tears from her cheeks. "It's just going to take some time. Let's talk about something else though- Seth's marking you tonight?"

"Yeah," I tell her with a smile. "It has to be a new moon, and he won't let me back on the pack lands unless I'm marked."

Mom nods at me firmly, clearly in agreement with my mate. "It's not safe, Molly. The King was willing to protect his throne at any cost back then."

"I'm not a threat though," I try to explain to her. "I'm not taking anyone's throne. His son is my mate. I'll be queen someday no matter whose daughter I am."

"It won't matter tomorrow," she says, dismissing the conversation.

I sigh, this isn't working out how I had hoped. "If no one is going to let me go back today, could you at least go get some things for me?"

"Sure, Molly. Or you can have Seth link your brother and have him get things together." she says, and I quickly shake my head.

"Mom, he's marking me tonight and I'm wearing the same clothes that I had on yesterday," I say to her astonished she'd tell me to have Robbie get my things. "I don't want my brother picking out my underwear! And I need my toothbrush and my medicine."

"Is it hurting?" she asks, her face stricken with concern.

"Yeah, it is," I tell her as I nod and look down at it. "I took medicine just before I left last night but it's worn off completely now and it's becoming really painful."

"Ok, I'll go get the things you need," she tells me and leans her head on my shoulder. "It really is beautiful here. It's no wonder you like being out in the woods all the time."

We sit there for quite some time, just watching the sun continue to rise and the early morning birds flying from tree to tree. It really is completely peaceful out here.

I hear someone walking towards the door and I smell him, knowing it's my mate. He opens the door and I turn back and look up at him with a smile.

"You should have told me last night your finger was hurting. With everything going on, I almost forgot you were hurt," he says to me and steps outside, barefoot and shirtless and seemingly unaffected by the cold morning air. "I'm going to go back to speak with my father today and I'll bring you everything you need."

"I'll come with you and pack everything while you talk to him," my mom tells him and he just nods.

"I'd like to leave soon if you're OK with that, Luna," he says to her. "I don't want her to be in pain any longer than possible."

"He's right, Molly. I'm pretty sure your dad will stay here to be sure you're safe," she says and I can't help the smile that spreads across my face about the thought of my dad staying with me. "Go change so you can give your mate his shirt back and we can go," she tells me with a smirk.