

Chapter 92

“Hey, Love,” Seth says, walking into the bedroom. He smiles as his eyes land on me lying across the bed. He takes off his jacket and tie, throwing them over the arm of the couch and he flops down on his stomach on the bed next to me.

“How’d it go?” I ask him, closing my book and rolling to my side to face him.

His hand finds my leg and gently rubs the exposed skin on my lower thigh. “It was awful. They’re both assholes,” he tells me, rolling his eyes. “It looks like I’ll have to go there next week to watch one of them die. I’ll have to stay a few days as the winner assumes the pack.”

“Oh,” I say, upset about the barbarity of it all, but feeling sad that Seth will be gone.

“You can come with me if you want,” he says, though it feels more like he’s asking me. “You can’t try to stop them though. It’s the way things are done and if this is the stupid way they want to handle their dispute, we have to respect it.”

I nod to him, understanding, but not liking it. “I’d like to come. I promise to behave.”

He smiles and leans over to kiss me. “So, I have something to tell you. Don’t get mad…”

“What’s wrong?” I ask him.

“Nothing is wrong, but, well… I invited Benjamin and Lily for dinner,” he says, preparing himself for me to be upset.

“Seth! What time are they coming? You didn’t give me much time to cook!” I say, quickly getting on my feet and slipping my shoes back on, heading to the door.

“Woah, woah,” he says, coming behind me and hooking his arm around my middle, lifting me a little and sitting me back on the bed. “You’re not cooking. I didn’t tell you so you WOULDN’T cook. You still need to rest.”

“And just who is cooking?!” I say, outraged at having my biological parents come to our home for the very first time and some stranger is cooking them dinner.

“Molly. Stop,” Seth says, grabbing me by the shoulders and kneeling in front of me so we’re eye level. “Our chef has made dinner. It will be good. You will get to spend time with them and you’ll spend MORE time than you would have if you had cooked because you won’t be as tired, or cleaning up. Please, try to be reasonable about this.”

“I’m trying, I am. It’s just…” I say, stopping to find the right words.

“They’re not going to think less of you, Love. They’re so excited that you are awake and shifted, and they know you need to rest,” he tells me, calming me down some.

I nod, knowing that I can’t explain this feeling, but I can understand why he did this. I take a deep breath and nod to him. “When are they supposed to be here?”

“Any minute now,” he says sheepishly. “I knew you’d be frantic, so I just didn’t tell you. I came home to give you enough time to get dressed, but you still are.”

“OK,” I say, taking a deep breath and squaring my shoulders. “You could have told me, though.”

Seth chuckles. “I really could NOT have told you. You’d have gone into the kitchen and locked the staff out in some kind of hostile takeover.”

“Probably,” I say with a smile, knowing that he’s right. I did have a nice time talking to my mom and just taking a few moments to relax this afternoon. Perhaps it’s not worth being upset over.

There’s a knock at the door and Seth smiles at me, reaching out his hand to help me stand. I smile at take it and he leads me out. When we reach the entrance, I see that Anna has already let them in and I can’t help but smile, but when Benjamin looks up and our eyes meet, I’m suddenly overcome with emotion. Last time I saw him, he was dead. I tried so hard to keep him here, and Seth told me he was, but I didn’t realize how much I truly needed to see him to believe it. I rush over and wrap my arms around him and, to my surprise, he does the same.

We stand like this for a while, and I swear I feel a tear hit the top of my head. I hear Seth say something but I’m unable to process anything other than Benjamin really, truly being here.

“I can’t believe you made it,” I whisper into his chest.

“I have you to thank for that, Molly,” he says quietly.

“You saved Seth,” I say, squeezing him just a little tighter. “Thank you. I know you did that for me.”

He squeezed me back. “I owed you one. Besides, I couldn’t have you hurt, too.”

I step back and look at him, really look at his face. He looks better than he did. There’s less wrinkles now, for sure. He doesn’t look like he’s been living in the rogue land for 25 years, but like an older Alpha, dancing with retirement. “How did you shift? I thought you couldn’t.”

He shakes his head. “My wolf was so heartbroken for years, but when it came to protecting you, and I guess your mate, he jumped right in.”

He releases me and looks over my head. I turn and see Lily, realizing I had run right past her to hug him and it was probably really rude of me.

“Sorry,” I say, hugging her as well. “I just hadn’t seen him since, well…”

“There’s no apology needed. I’m just glad you’re here, and that you were there then,” she says, releasing me with a smile. “You have an amazing gift, Molly. But we can talk about that another time. I hear you’ve marked your mate.”

I smile at her, shyly. “I did.”

“I’m so happy for you,” she says and hugs me again. “I’m not a wolf and couldn’t mark your father. I know how much it means to those big, terrifying wolves, though.”

I hadn’t really considered that she wasn’t able to mark him before. I’m sure she really understands what it means, because I gained a fervent respect for it while I thought I’d never be able to.

“Congratulations, Son,” Benjamin says, stepping forward to shake Seth’s hand and he pats him on the arm with his other hand. “I’m sure I don’t need to tell you, but take care of our girl. She’s something special.”

“She is, sir,” Seth says, looking at me with a smile. “She truly is.”

“Excuse me,” we hear Anna say and turn to her. “Dinner is ready. Whenever you’d like. There’s no rush.”

“Oh, we’re ready now,” Lily speaks up, calming the poor girl.

“Thanks, Anna. We’ll be there in just a moment,” I tell her and lead everyone in. Seth pulls out a chair for me and takes a seat next to me, Benjamin and Lily sitting directly across from us.

“This is nice, Molly,” Lily says and I nod.

“Thanks. It’s really big, though,” I tell her and she nods.

She smiles at me and looks down the too big table. “Hopefully you’ll fill the table with kids of your own one day.”

I snort, my eyes bulging out. “That’s a lot of kids. I think I’d rather just get a smaller table.”

Anna brings in our dinner, placing a platter with an entire duck on the table and a few sides. I feel absolutely ridiculous, serving my parents who have lived in the rogue land for years a whole ass duck, but a gentleman wearing a chef’s coat walks in.

“Good evening. Tonight you will be having a whole roasted duck, fresh caught just this morning! It was slowly roasted with a rosemary orange glaze. We have seasoned green beans and roasted sweet potatoes to accompany them. Should you need anything, please let Anna know!” he tells us and bows, exiting the room as quickly as he entered.

We all sit there and I realize, Seth doesn’t know he’s supposed to cut and serve the duck.

You’re the man of the household. You’re supposed to cut and serve the duck.

You’re the chef and they’re your parents. I think you’re going to have to handle this, tonight.

I look up and catch Benjamin’s eyes. He must have seen our eyes glass over and realized the conversation as he smirks at me. I can’t help but smile back as I stand and expertly section the duck, serving it to everyone, leaving Seth for last- just for fun.

We begin to eat and, honestly, it’s really good. I won’t say it’s better than I would have done, but, well. It’s acceptable.

“Molly. Seth,” Benjamin says, looking at both of us very seriously. “We need to discuss and decide exactly what is going to be said about Molly’s parentage. You’re both marked now and here at the palace. It needs to be decided.”

I nod at him, staring down at my food, not wanting to have to ever deal with this.

“I am completely ok never being mentioned, truly,” he offers and I look at him, surprised.

Seth chuckles a little. “That’s a bit of an empty offer. She’s got your eyes, Benjamin. There’s plenty of Alphas still around that would know as soon as they see her that she’s your daughter.”