

## Chapter 16-1

After awkwardly washing my face with one hand and brushing my teeth, I walk back into the bedroom and climb into bed. Seth takes extra care to help me prop my arm onto a pillow and carefully places an ice pack on my nger. "Are you ready to take any medicine?" he asks.

"No. It was just in pain because I tried to bend it. It's not hurting as badly now." I tell him, snuggling down into the pillows. Seth lays down beside me on his side, facing me and pulls me close to his bare, muscular chest and wraps his arms around me.

"Is this OK?" He asks me.

"It's perfect, Seth." I tell him and snuggle into his arm chest. He kisses the top of my head and squeezes me gently as I quickly drift off to sleep. I dream about a green eld, and a woman's contagious laughter and dark green eyes. It's a familiar dream that I've had since I can remember and, while it still doesn't make sense, it's always brought me comfort. This time though, instead of just ashes of dark green eyes, they're on a small, dark gray wolf with one white paw.

The wolf comes to me and nuzzles its head to my face and leans its head down to lick my injured nger on my hand. It's hurting, but it helps it feel better. The wolf comes to sit next to me, and we just sit there in companionable silence. I wonder brieif if this is Seth's wolf, but it's a small wolf and there's no way a prince would have a wolf this small. The pain returns to my nger and the wolf moves to lick it again and places its head in my lap as we sit in the eld. Eventually, it walks off, leaving me alone and the pain returns.

I abruptly wake with sharp pains in my injured nger. I try to take deep breaths but it's getting worse and after laying as still as I can in Seth's arms for what feels like an hour, I decide to get up and see if I have ANY human medicine lying around that could help. I slowly wiggle out of his arms, placing a pillow where I was. He stirs, but squeezes the pillow and seems content.

In the kitchen, I begin my search. I drag a chair from the dining room table over to the cabinet and climb onto it so I can see the top shelf and pull down the bottle I have stashed up there. It's pretty uncommon for wolves to have human medication on hand, and it's pretty uncommon for a wolf to even acquire any. A few years ago, Oliver and I were hiking and I lost my footing and fell. Nothing seemed broken, but I had some pretty severe bruising. I attempted to sneak out of the packlands to go nd some human medicine but one of our warriors caught me. When I showed him some of the bruises, he went for me and never told my dad. I've used the same bottle for years and it's been so long since I needed any that I'm not even sure there's any left. As I pull the bottle down from it's hiding place, I hear a small rattle.

I open the bottle to nd that there's 2 left- the proper dose! Breathing a sigh of relief I hold the bottle close and begin to climb down when I'm startled. "What are you doing?" I hear Seth ask behind me, causing me to almost fall. He moves quickly and steadies me, helping me off the chair.

"Umm, I was just looking for something." I tell him, not sure how he will react to my human medicine and trying to tuck the small bottle away so he won't notice.

"Why are you acting so weird?" He asks, reaching for the bottle and taking it from my hand. "What's this?" he adds, inspecting the bottle.

"Umm... It's just some medicine." I tell him, unwilling to meet his eyes.

"Molly," he says sternly, "What's going on? Just tell me the truth. Why are you being so secretive?"

"It's, uh... it's human medicine." I whisper, afraid of his potential reaction.

"What does it do?" he asks, slightly more gently but concern still evident in his voice. "Is this something you're addicted to?"

"No!" I exclaim. "It's just to help with pain. It doesn't make me sick like the wolf medicine does." I tell him quickly, still not sure how this is going.

"Why are you hiding them then?"

"Because we're not supposed to have them. And I'd have gotten in trouble for getting them."

"You went to the human world?"

"No. I tried a few years ago when I got hurt, but one of our pack warriors caught me. He snuck out and got it for me."

"And these help you with pain?"

"Yeah, they do."

"Here, take these." He tells me, opening the bottle and giving me the remaining 2 pills and grabbing a bottle of water out of the refrigerator for me. "What is the warrior's name?"

"It's ne Seth. It was years ago."

"What. Is. His. Name?" he growls out. "Do not make me command you to answer me. I don't ever want to have to do that."