

## Chapter 17-1

Seth just stands there holding me, letting me cry on his chest until I don't have any tears left to cry as he lifts me and carries me back to bed. He gently props my arm on a pillow before tucking me in and climbing in the other side of the bed and pulling me back to his side, just as we were before. We lay there a while, neither of us falling asleep. Seth just holds me, gently rubbing my arm, sometimes my hair, holding my uninjured hand. He's so caring and attentive, it's hard to believe I was afraid to tell him about my hidden medicine.

"I'm sorry." I say, though sound barely comes out after crying for so long.

"Why are you apologizing?" He says to me, confusion upon his face.

"I didn't tell you about my medicine. I just didn't want Albert to get into trouble for helping me."

"It's dangerous for wolves to take human medicine. Our bodies don't metabolize things the same as theirs. But if it works for you, and you already know that it does, there's no harm. Especially when there's a wolf in your pack who knows exactly where to get it." He tells me.

"I knew it was dangerous to take it the first time I did." I tell him, remembering how scared I was. "But the medicine for wolves makes me so sick that it made sense for the human medicine to be safe for me." He doesn't say anything, just kisses my temple. "If it helps ease your mind, Albert checked on me a few times each day for like a week after."

"That does help. I hate that you did that without telling your parents. Your dad would have moved a mountain to do something if he thought it would help you. Just as I will now." and I know he's right.

"It was a really hard time for the pack when it happened. And I'd snuck out when I got hurt, and then got caught trying to sneak out of the packlands. I know he would have done anything to take care of me, but I didn't want to cause more stress. And I didn't want Albert to get into any trouble."

"What's done is done. Is there anything else I need to know about, though?" He asks. "No more secrets hiding around here?"

"No, I don't think so. That was the only bottle of medicine I had and I know it won't make me sick."

"Good." He says, kissing my head again. "You're such a mystery to me and when I think I'm getting you figured out you do something to completely surprise me." He says in my hair.

"You'll probably never figure me out, Seth." I tell him with a small giggle.

"Oh, I don't know about that. You know you're loved, but you still feel the need to prove yourself and that you belong. You're worried about being a burden even though you enrich the lives of everyone around you. You care so much, and about everything and everyone and you care deeply how your pack appears to others, even though you very much pretend that you don't. You pay attention to the smallest details that are often overlooked and I'm pretty sure you do that because you feel like a small detail in the pack, even though you shine brighter than everyone else here." he says, taking my much smaller hand into his.

"I definitely don't shine brighter than everyone else in my pack." I tell him, trying to hold back tears.

"Molly, you're more amazing than you could possibly realize. I spent years assuming you wouldn't be a good queen because you're a little different, but it took just a few minutes for me to realize how very, very wrong I was."

"But I won't be a very good queen to the wolves. I'm barely a wolf." I whisper out such a big insecurity.

"You're more amazing than you can even possibly fathom. Molly, you actually work. Not like how many higher-ranking wolves work, but you're doing actual, hard work and you do it to care for your pack. And honestly, you do it with lower-ranking wolves, but you treat them as equals and that's so important and what the wolf kingdom needs. We have so many Alphas and Lunas that don't know everyone in their pack. They couldn't tell you any Omega's names. I have a feeling there's not a wolf in this pack that you DON'T know. And not just their names, you know who they are."

"You're right, but it didn't start out with me wanting to get to know them. I became friends with the Omegas in school because the kids of the higher ranking wolves made fun of me for being so weak. They didn't care though, how strong I was, or what I could bring to the pack. They just liked me for who I was. And when it became more and more obvious that I wasn't going to shift, that I really didn't have a wolf, they didn't care. They didn't see me as a liability. The warriors protect the pack. That's what they're meant to do. So when there's something slowing the pack down, something opening the pack up for attack, they get rid of it. But I'm the Alpha's daughter, so they couldn't just get rid of me. The Omegas always came together to make sure I was safe if there was an attack. Most of the Warriors protected the pack as a whole. I think some probably were hoping I'd just be killed in an attack and wouldn't be a problem any more."

"I'm sure they're regretting their treatment of their future queen now." He says, gently rubbing his hand up and down my arm in comfort.

"I'm sure they're glad I'll be leaving with you and becoming your problem now." I giggle.

"You'll be the best problem I've ever had." He tells me. "The absolute best. The goddess blessed me by making your beautiful, difficult, curious self my mate." he adds, and pulls my face towards him as he leans in and kisses me. "I'm the luckiest man in the kingdom to have you," he tells me between kisses. As his kisses become more intense, I can feel him harden against my leg and he gently groans. "I want you so badly, Molly."

"I... I know. But I'm scared." I tell him quietly, barely even a whisper.

"I know, Love. I know." He says as he places his forehead against mine.

"I like that." I tell him with a shy smile.

His brow furrows in confusion. "Like what?"

"When you call me love." I answer, leaning to kiss his cheek.

"You are. I never knew I could care about someone so deeply, so quickly, but I do."

"I do, too. I just don't always know how to say it."

"It's OK, Molly, I can feel it." He says, kissing me one last time. "But you need to get some sleep now." He says, checking my arm and pulling the covers up to snuggle into. "Goodnight, Love."

"Goodnight, Seth." I tell him and try to sleep but I can't, as I'm thinking about the green-eyed wolf from my dream.

"Seth?" I whisper, hoping he's still up.

"Yes, Molly." I feel him smile against my head.

"What color are your wolf's eyes?" I ask.

"They're black. Why?"

"Nothing. Just something from a dream last night." I say.

"Was my wolf in your dream?" he asks, tilting his head to look at me.