

## Chapter 21

Seth gently places his hands on either side of my face. “Molly, are you OK?” I finally hear him speaking to me and I just slowly shake my head. “OK, let’s go home. Do you want me to carry you?” and I just shake my head again, not trusting myself to speak, but I do stand and start to walk out. Seth goes to grab my arm but I just continue walking with my arms crossed, almost hugging myself, as I make my way back to the pack house quickly. He doesn’t say anything else, just follows me closely, stepping in front of me to open the door for me. I can see concern on his face as he does, but I can’t bring myself to say anything yet and just continue on, down the stairs and into the safety and comfort of my home.

Seth follows me in, quietly closing the door behind us as I walk to my couch, grab a pillow and throw it across the room. Feeling slightly better, I throw another, and another. I grab the wooden coasters off the table and throw them across the room one by one, yelling as I do. Seth doesn’t move, he just stands by the door and lets me release the anger I feel. All books and pens in my living room are now across the room and I’m out of things to throw in here, so I head to the kitchen looking for more. I grab a glass and throw it into the sink watching it shatter and feel somewhat better, but Seth quickly makes his way to me and grabs my arms at the wrist.

“I can’t let you do that, Molly. I can’t let you get hurt.” he says, looking down at me concerned. I look up at him, breathing heavily from my outburst of anger and my eyes well with tears. “It’s going to be ok, love. I’m going to make sure of it.”

“I know you will.” I whisper to him and he looks at me confused.

“Why all the throwing?” he says and releases my arms, reaching up to brush my hair behind my ear, gently running his hand along my cheek. “What’s going on in that mind of yours?”

“L…” I begin, but I’m too afraid to say the words. “I’m not sure I’m ready to talk about it.” I tell him.

“That’s ok, Love. But I’m right here when you are.” He says and leans down and places a gentle kiss on my lips. “Will you come take a bath with me?” he asks me and I nod. “Good. Go and start the water while I clean this glass. I don’t want any more accidental cuts.” he says and I do as I’m told. I’d like to tell him I’m perfectly capable of cleaning the mess, but he’s concerned about me, so I just walk away to the bathroom and begin to run the water.

A moment later, Seth walks in behind me and starts opening and closing drawers. “What are you looking for?” I ask but he ignores me and continues his search. Not finding what he’s looking for he walks out and I can hear him opening drawers and doors in my bedroom when he returns with a few candles and a lighter. He places them around the bathroom, lights them and turns off the overhead light. Walking over to the bath, he adds some of the lavender-scented bubble bath and turns, grabbing 2 clean towels out of the closet.

“I’m surprised there’s such a big bath tub in the service quarters,” he says and I can’t help but giggle a little.

“There wasn’t before I moved in,” I tell him with a smile. “Dad renovated it before he would agree to let me move down here.”

“That man really, truly loves you, you know?” he tells me and I’m taken aback by his words. “Adoptions aren’t common among wolves. Most that I’ve encountered have had ulterior motives behind them. I always knew Rob considered you to truly be his sister, but I always just assumed your parents had other motives somewhere hidden from him.” he says, walking up to me and gently placing his hands on my shoulders. “They love you, though. Like, really, truly love you. More than some love the children they’ve given birth to.”

“I know,” I whisper to him, trying to contain my emotions. “I’m really lucky. They’ve loved me from the moment dad found me. I always knew I was safe.”

Seth doesn’t say anything else. He turns off the water and walks back over to me, reaching up to help me take off my cardigan and tossing it to the floor. He reaches the hem of my shirt but stops to look at me for permission. “I’m ok with this.” I tell him quietly and he leans down to kiss me, pulling my shirt above my head and gently freeing my injured hand. I step out of my shoes and he reaches down to unbutton my pants. Slipping them down my hips and then legs, trailing his hands along my skin the whole way until I step out of them.

This beautiful man is standing in front of me now just looking at me and I feel so self-conscious. He’s so beautiful, too beautiful for me. He reaches out to touch my hips, pulling me towards him. “I don’t think I’ll ever get tired of looking at you”, he tells me and I blush deeply. I don’t know what to say so I just reach forward to grab the hem of his shirt and lift it over his head, but I’m not tall enough to reach, especially with my finger in a splint. Thankfully, he realizes and leans down enough for me to pull the shirt over his head, messing up his hair. “Sorry,” I murmur. “I’m short”.

Seth chuckles and cups my face with his hand. “You’re perfect,” he says, calming my nerves. I reach for the waist band of his jeans but I’m suddenly nervous all over again and don’t unbutton them, I just stand there touching him. “It’s OK, love. You don’t have to.” and I bite my lip, unsure of myself.

“I want to,” I begin quietly, not daring to meet his eyes. “I’m just nervous. I don’t want to do anything wrong.”

“Oh, Molly. You have become so precious to me, so quickly.” He tells me, gently rubbing his hands on my arms. “There’s nothing that you could ever

do wrong. You were made for me, you’re my perfect mate. I know you’re nervous but you have no reason to be. I crave your touch more than anything in this life.”

I nod at him and chance looking up to see his face. I can see how much he truly cares just from the way he’s looking at me and it eases my nerves a bit. I try to unbutton his jeans but find that I can’t do it with my finger. He reaches down to unbutton them and I move my hands but he quickly grabs my hands and puts them back. “Please, don’t stop. I’ll help you, but please don’t stop touching me.” he says and gently holds my hands in place. I nod and he releases me, reluctantly. I do as he’s requested and continue, unzipping his jeans and pushing them down his hips so they fall to the floor. He steps out of them and kicks them away, grabbing my hands so he can pull me towards him.

As we stand there in an embrace, he rubs his hand up and down my back in comfort. “Do you feel the bond?” he asks me, but before I can answer him I continue. “I know you have wolf hearing and smell like a wolf, but did you get the part of your wolf where you can feel the bond, or do you just believe we’re mates because I’ve told you we are?”

“I can feel it, but I don’t think I feel it the same way that you do.” I tell him honestly. “I knew when I was outside and saw you up in the window the first day that you were my mate. I don’t know why, but I just knew. I want to be around you, I can’t sleep well without you, but I don’t think I feel it as intensely as you seem to.” I tell him and I feel him reach and unhook my bra, pulling it off, his fingers touching me leaving trails of warmth.

“I like it when you touch me.” I say, more quietly than before, feeling shy to admit it. “It’s comforting, but it also feels warm. Like wherever you’ve touched was touched by fire- but in a good way. I don’t know how to explain it.” I tell him and he reaches down to my underwear, guiding them down my hips and legs and helps me step out, leading me to the bathtub.

“Mind your finger” he tells me as I step in and sit down, careful to keep my hand up. He releases me and reaches to remove his boxer briefs. I’m not as uncomfortable as I was before, so this time, I don’t turn away. He looks up at me and c\*\*s an eyebrow.

“I’m trying.” I tell him and he nods, removes the last of his clothing and steps in, sitting down opposite of me. Wolves aren’t generally shy about being naked, as everyone shifts back and it just is what it is. It’s nature, and it’s natural. But this is my mate, and I’ve not really been naked around anyone as I’ve never shifted. This is probably really frustrating for Seth, but the man is being quite patient with me. He reaches out and grabs one of my feet and starts to rub it.

“I knew you were my mate because my wolf told me. I knew there was something special about your smell, but Altair was the one who told me what it was. Then, when I smelled you on your dad, it was Altair again who knew immediately, and I lost control.” he tells me. “I crave your touch. If I’m next to you, my wolf is demanding that I touch you. If I smell you, my wolf is demanding to find you. When I felt you get hurt, Altair almost forced a shift while I was in the middle of a meeting. It’s always my wolf who knows. I really think you have a wolf in there who is just confused and needs help. I think that’s the little wolf who was in your dream, Altair is sure it is.” He tells me so seriously and I don’t know how to respond.

He’s probably right- just because I can hear and smell like a wolf. Those aren’t genetic traits, those are wolf traits. “But I don’t know how to reach her. I’d never seen her before last night, just the eyes.”

“I think she’s been watching you. Something was holding her back, but that’s letting up and she’s able to get through a little more.” He says after a moment. “Maybe if you see her in a dream again, just ask her. It can’t hurt to try.”

“What could possibly be holding her back though?” I ask, afraid of what his answer could be.

“It could be magic, Molly.” he says and looks to meet my eyes. “Altair is sure that’s your wolf. The only thing I can think of that would contain a wolf inside is magic, and that’s something that wolves don’t understand.”

That’s the problem, though. “I’ve already been checked, well, to see if there was magic holding back my memories.” I start to tell him, realizing he doesn’t really know these things about me. “When my dad found me he thought I was just too scared to tell them where I’d come from. After a while though, they realized that I truly had no memories before waking up under a tree in the woods. I was out there a few days,” I tell him, trying to hold back my tears. “I was alone, and scared. I knew my name was Molly- no middle name, no last name- and that was it.” I tell him, a few tears escaping. Seth notices my tears and reaches for my right hand, pulling me into his lap and in his embrace. He doesn’t say anything though.

“After a few weeks, I think, they realized that I wasn’t just too scared to tell them and I really didn’t know. They found a witch that lived not far from our lands and she came to check me. She was nice, but she looked so sad and it made me sad. She said there wasn’t magic holding my memories back.” I tell him, afraid to speak the rest. “That’s why I was so angry when I got back. What if there is magic holding my wolf? Or what if she lied?” I say, tears escaping freely now. “Why would someone lie about something like that, though?”

We remain like this for a while, Seth just holding me, comforting me. I’m slightly nervous to be so close to him right now, completely naked and crying against him, who is also completely naked. It’s comforting though, like we complete each other. Being with him calms me, I feel how much he cares.

“Molly,” Seth says, breaking me out of my thoughts, “If we were able to find out who you are- who you were before you were found- would you want to know? If your biological parents are still alive, would you want to meet them?”

“I don’t know Seth, but I doubt it’s possible, but I’d like to know where I came from.” I say, struggling into him just a little bit more for comfort and he wraps his arms around me tighter. “Mom and Dad tried to find where I came from before they adopted me. They didn’t want to do an adoption if I had a family that loved me. I didn’t though.” I tell him, whispering the last part.

“They gave you a family who loves you, though” he tells me and kisses my temple. “Now you get to start your own family to love you, with a mate who loves you” he says as he reaches for my chin, pulling my face towards his and placing a gentle kiss on my lips.

“You really love me?” I ask, “Even though I’m not going to make a good queen?”

“My love, you’re going to make the absolute best queen. The Kingdom is lucky to have you, but not as lucky as I am.” He tells me, his eyes burning into mine. “I love you more than I ever dreamed possible, Molly. Truly.”