

Chapter 62

I follow my mom to the garden after saying goodbye to Audrey. I know we need to talk, but I really don't want to. I feel like I've come to somewhat accept what happened, and talking may just make me feel worse about it. I look at my mom, sitting across from me at one of the table under a large oak tree and I can see on her face how much she needs to talk to me. It's probably for the best, but I'm not sure I want the answers she has to give me.

Mom had contacted Oliver and asked him to send out lunch for us. I didn't have the heart to remind her that I am able to link people now, too. It's just another change that we'll all have to get used to. We sit under the tree for a while enjoying the beautiful day, even if it is slightly chilly. Eventually, one of the Omegas who helps in the kitchen brings out lunch for us- a kale salad with grilled chicken.

"You need to eat as healthy as you can the next few weeks," she tells me. "My wolf said it will help you when you shift."

"Thanks," I say to her, taking a bite of the food.

We sit there for a while eating, neither of us willing to be the one to bring up the past. Finally, my mom places her fork down and reaches out for me. I place my hand in hers, but I am too nervous to look at her.

"I'm not sorry, Molly," she says and I slowly look up at her through my lashes. "I'm never going to apologize for adopting you. You're the best thing that happened to our family. I am, however, sorry for how it happened. I'm sorry that I didn't tell your dad. And I'm sorry that you got hurt. Can I explain a few things, though?"

I nod at her, interested in what she has to say after that.

"When Lily showed up, I could see you in her immediately. I was furious that she would come in and act like she didn't know you. You had been with us a few months, and we had grown so attached to you. When she said that she wanted to leave you I could hardly believe it. I wanted you, I always wanted you to stay with us, but we knew that you had parents somewhere that would be missing you. How could they not? You were such a precious little girl. I couldn't believe that she would be willing to just leave you, Molly."

I look up at her and see that she has tears in her eyes. "You were such a tiny little girl, and just so sweet. I couldn't imagine how a mother would be willing to leave her daughter like that. We knew an adoption would hurt your biological parents if they were alive, but when she was willing to leave you, I was more than happy to. Anyone willing to leave their child like that deserved the pain they would have from having the bond forcibly severed.

Molly, we love you so much. We always have. Whatever happened to get us to the point of adopting you is irrelevant because it's what we always wanted."

"I can remember them fighting about leaving me," I tell her quietly, ashamed that I had done something so terrible that my parents didn't want me. "Lily didn't want to, and she was mad at him. She did it anyway, though."

"When we talked at the cabin you defended her," she says, not accusatory, but like she's trying to understand.

I nod to her sadly. "I didn't have all the information, then. I only had what they told me when I met them. I didn't know then how Benjamin blamed me for Jason's death. He was worried I would mess up his plan for the Rogues. He said she couldn't control me."

My mom does something I've rarely heard her do, and snorts in laughter. "You were a free-spirited little girl," she tells me with a loving smile. "No one should have ever attempted to control you. They should just have been better parents. Nothing was your fault, but I'm sure it was just easier to blame you than it was to blame themselves. I can't imagine the pain of losing a child, and I hope I never know it."

"I know you're right," I say, agreeing with her, "but it really hurt to remember. And it hurt to remember right after they had acted like it was so great to have me back."

"Maybe Lily really was happy," mom says with a small smile. "You said she didn't want to leave you."

"She could have left him, Mom," I tell her, trying not to become upset. ""She could have taken me anywhere else, but she chose to leave me with strangers, and stay with her mate. They just left me in the woods, alone."

"I know, Molly. I know," she tells me and gets up and comes around, sitting on the wooden bench next to me and pulling me into a hug.

I can't hold in all the hurt I've felt, and it hurts more now that I have faces and names to blame. "I didn't even know my birthday, Mom. I never had an actual birthday party. You guys tried, I'm not mad at you. But I never had a party on my actual birthday. I had brothers I didn't know about. They loved me, Mom. They just took those memories away from me and left me there, feeling scared and unloved."

My mom doesn't say anything. She just lets me cry, rubbing my back, letting me get out everything that I need to. It's nice to be in my mom's arms. The arms of the mom who loved me even though she didn't have to. I know I've been upset with her, and I still am, but she'll always be my mom. "You never would have left me. Ever," I tell her.

"You're right," she says to me with a nod. "There's nothing that would have ever made me leave you or Robert. Nothing. It's ok to be upset. You deserved better than that."

Her admission makes me cry harder, feeling even more hurt that Lily had willingly left me not once, but twice.

"Seth will never ask you to leave your kids. I'm sure of that," she tells me and I nod against her shoulder. I haven't said it to her, but she knows my deepest fear.

I can smell him before I see him and the smell brings me so much comfort. I look up and see my mate approaching us, concern etched on his face.

"See, he felt that you were upset and came running to you. He's a good man, Molly. Not just a good mate, but a good man. Your kids will always be safe with him around."

"I know," I tell her with a small smile and I look to Seth, shaking my head, indicating for him to stop. He looks at me, torn, but ultimately decides to leave us and turns around.

"Why did you tell me I'd have my wolf when Lily told you I wouldn't be able to?" I ask her the question that's been haunting me since I obtained that memory. "Why did you give me false hope?"

"It wasn't false though, was it? You found your mate, a wonderful mate," she tells me and releases me, moving to sit next to me, placing her hands on the bench on either side of her. "My wolf knew you would. She constantly assured me that you would. She told me the morning of your brother's ceremony that you'd meet your mate that day. I had no reason at any point to believe a woman who had left you in the woods over my wolf."

"Really?" I ask her, unsure how to respond to that. I never knew her wolf told her that.

"Yes. She was insistent, and I didn't want you to give up hope. To be honest, I didn't want to give up hope. You deserve to have a mate to love you and protect you."

"Did dad tell you about the day he found me? When Jason died," I ask her and she nods.

"Thank the goddess for your father," she says with a small smile on her face. "I really can't imagine our lives without you in it, Molly."

"I can't imagine what it would have been like growing up with Benjamin and Lily," I tell her in a whisper. "You saw the cabin. The place is a dump. They fought a lot, and she said something about his PLANS. I don't even want to know what that was. I'm not sure I ever would have been a priority to them."

"What they did was terrible, and horrible," she tells me and takes my hand. "But I'm glad that you're ours."

"I'm glad, too," I tell her with a smile and a squeeze of her hand.