

## Chapter 86

“I’m shifting tonight. You’re not going to stop me. You’re going to be with me, holding my hand.”

“Absolutely the f\*\*k not,” Seth tells me, looking very angry with me.

“No, you don’t understand,” I tell him, crossing my arms across my chest. “You have all somehow forgotten the fact that you can’t control your first shift. It’s happening tonight, there’s no way to stop it.”

“S\*\*t,” he says, panic across his face. “You’re sure?”

“Yes,” I tell him, rolling my eyes. “Ask Altair.”

He looks at me for a second, confused, but then he stares off behind me. He looks pretty unhappy, but I’m pretty sure this is about his wolf, and not me. I place my hands in my lap, clasped together, while he continues to speak to his sneaky wolf, when he abruptly gets up and begins to pace at the end of the bed, raking his hands through his hair and looking over at me every so often.

He doesn’t say anything to me as he climbs into bed and pulls me to his chest. He kisses me on the top of the head and gently rubs my back. I’m nearly asleep when he finally says something.

“I’m terrified, Molly,” he say quietly and I let my arm fall his side, hugging him to me.

“I am, too,” I admit. “But we can’t stop it. Sage didn’t want to tell you.”

Seth sighs deeply. “I know. Altair is very upset with me. Please get some sleep. I’m going to have Sofia come with us, just to be safe. I’m going to do whatever I can to make sure you’re safe.”

“OK,” I whisper, not really happy that Sofia is coming with us, but not willing to say that. I can feel how worried he is and I know that it will not be negotiable. Seth continues to gently rub my back and I’m so tired that I fall asleep in just moments.

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“He’s going to let you shift,” I hear Sage say as I crack my eyes open and see the starry sky above me, illuminated by the full moon.

“I told you he would,” I say quietly, unsure how she’s feeling about me telling him when she didn’t want that. “I just couldn’t do that to him.”

She walks over and sits next to me as I sit up, propping myself up on my elbows. “You were right. Altair is still nervous he may try to stop you, but so far, he seems to be ok with it.”

“He’ll let me,” I say, looking to her and reaching over to pet her. “He knows what this means to me, and I don’t think he wants me to be sedated. He seemed pretty scared about last week.”

Sage lays down next to me. “He was terrified. You need to rest now. The shift is going to be hard, but you can do hard things, Molly. Remember- you can do hard things.”

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“Hey, Love,” I hear my mate saying and feel his hand gently brushing my cheek. I open my eyes and see him leaning above me as he smiles at me, making my hear skip a beat. “Hey, Sleepy Head. It’s time.”

“Already?” I ask, stretching my aching body. "I don't feel like I slept at all."

“Yeah, Love,” he tells me and kisses me. “The moon is almost at it’s fullest. We need to head out now. I, umm... I have a spot to go, if that’s OK with you.”

“Of course,” I tell him with a smile as I sit up and walk to the closet.

“Don’t bother changing. You’re going to have to take your clothes off, anyways,” he tells me and I stop, feeling silly.

I turn to him and blush, embarrassed that I didn’t even think of that. “Sorry. I’m new.”

“Hey, it’s OK,” he whispers and walks over, taking my hand. “You’re nervous. It’s perfectly normal. You sure you’re ready?”

I nod at him, not feeling very sure about this at all. “It’s going to hurt,” I whisper.

“Yes, it will,” he says, leading me out of our new home by the hand and down the hall. “I won’t leave your side. Not even for one second. Sofia is going to be nearby just in case, but she’s going to give us our space.”

I nod, feeling grateful that he realized I wasn’t entirely happy about her being there. We get on the elevator and he pushes the button, moving us down to the right floor and leads me out, down a long hall with dimly lit lights and out the biggest set of doors I have ever seen in my entire life.

When we step outside, I take a deep breath of the crisp night air, letting it calm my nerves. We take a few steps but I stop, reaching down to take off the sandals I had slipped on and letting my feet touch the earth, calming me even more.

Seth looks down at me and smiles, but I can see the nerves on his face as he leads me down a path that seems to be lined with beautiful flowers and into a large flower garden. There’s a clearing towards the back that’s full of bushes that are probably full of gorgeous blooms in the spring and that’s where we stop as he turns to me.

“I used to hide here when I was a kid,” he says with a smile. “I know it didn’t work out for us to be in a place that’s special to you, but I hope that being somewhere that’s special to me will help some.”

“It does,” I tell him with a smile and squeeze his hands, trying to hold back tears. “Seth, I’m really scared.”

“I know, I’m right here,” he says, kissing me on the head and looking up at the moon. “It’s almost time, Love. I’ve got you. I’m not leaving.”

I nod nervously as he reaches down and helps me remove my clothes and stands in front of me, holding both of my hands.

"I love you, Molly," he whispers and gently kisses me.

"I love you, Seth," I say, returning his kiss. "I can do hard things," I whisper, trying to calm my own nerves.

“You’ve done so many hard things. You can do this, too,” he says, squeezing both my hands tightly. “If everything goes well like Altair and Sage think it will, then I’ll shift as soon as you do, alright?”

I nod at him, unable to bring myself to speak.

“You’ve got this,” he whispers and smiles at me brightly. “Next moon, we’ll run together.”

I want to tell him just how much I love him, or how much I appreciate him, or that I can’t wait for the next moon, but instead I grimace as the first wave of pain hits my back. It’s excruciating, feeling every vertebrae in my back rip apart and start to shift and then the pain in my hips starts as my pelvis shifts.

Every single part of my body hurts, even my scalp, as my joints dislocate and muscles stretch and bones break. I cry out in pain, tears streaming down my face as I fall to the ground and curl into a ball, hoping for the pain to stop.

“I’m right here, love,” I hear Seth say, though it sounds like he’s miles away from me. “You can do this.”

His words remind me of what Sage had told me and I remind myself ‘I can do hard things.’

Another bone breaks. ‘I can do hard things’. My shoulders both dislocate and feel like they turn a complete 180 in my body ‘I can do this. I can do hard things.’

I can feel Seth’s hand on my angry back and it brings some comfort to know that he’s still here, still with me through this. I feel so tired as I pull my knees up towards my chest, hoping for the pain to stop. If it weren’t for the pain, I would probably be asleep. Every part of my body is in pain, but now it feels different, like it’s not my own- but it is.

You did it, I hear Sage say and I crack my eyes open, seeing everything clearly, like it’s daylight, but it’s not.

You did it, Molly. But I’m so tired.

I look up through Sage’s eyes and see Seth smile down at me. He stands, quickly removing his clothing and shifts into Altair.

“Mate” I hear a deep voice and realize it must be Altair’s voice. “You’re finally here. Are you alright?” he asks, nudging us with his nose gently.

“It hurts so bad,” Sage tells him quietly. “I’m so tired.”

“It’s OK, Sage, my mate. Shift back when you have the energy and Seth will care for you. I’m so glad you’re finally here.”