

Chapter 95

“Are you sure you want to know?” he asks me, looking unsure about what I’ve asked of him. “I don’t want to cause you any more hurt than I already have.”

I nod slowly. “I think I just need to know so I can understand why. And what you want from me.”

“No,” he says, sitting back down in the chair and taking my hand in his. “It’s what I thought I wanted, but I was wrong. I was so incredibly wrong. You are perfect, Love. I don’t want you to change a thing about who you are. I thought I knew better than the Goddess, and my wolf. The more I have gotten to know you, though, the more I realize just how perfect you are.”

“OK,” I whisper to him, feeling slightly uncomfortable at what he has said to me. “Seth, I just need to know.”

He releases my hand, and runs it through his dark hair as he does when he’s frustrated and takes a deep breath. “I’ve known Rob for a while. We’re friends,” he says and I nod, as I already knew this, but I don’t want to give him a reason to stop talking. “You would call him pretty often when we were training and rooming together, and you were usually upset. He would always calm you down so quickly. I could hear parts of your conversations and he felt he should explain, since I’d heard so much anyway.”

“Explain?” I ask him, not quite understanding what he meant.

“He told me how you were upset, and how people treated you. I truly didn’t understand how people treated you though, until I saw it at his Alpha ceremony. He had told me that you started working in the kitchen so you could contribute to the pack and I thought that was just insanity, and Alpha’s daughter, adopted or not, doing housework,” he sighs deeply, leaning forward, placing his elbows on his knees and holding his glass in both hands as he stares into it, like it would give him the words to say. “The more I thought about it though, I thought about how you probably weren’t contributing to the pack without a wolf. You called one morning and told him about an attack on the pack, and how you couldn’t get to the safe room.”

He looks up at me, clearly upset. “I’d just realized the day before that you were my mate. All I could see was how terrified he was, even though it was over and you were safe. I thought then you would be a huge liability, that I would spend my days constantly worrying about your safety, because I hadn’t even met you and I was terrified just from hearing his side of the conversation with you.”

“I was in the woods with Oliver,” I tell him, my voice barely a whisper. “We found a tree that had fallen. He made me lay down against it and shifted, standing in front of me to protect me. I felt so terrible, because he would have died to protect me.”

“There’s so many people who would do that willingly for you,” he tells me and meets my eyes. “You’re so loved, Molly. I just didn’t realize it then.”

Seth stands up and moves to stand in front of me, setting his glass down and taking mine to sit next to his. He takes both of my hands in his and squeezes them.

“I decided I needed a queen who had a wolf, and a strong one. I dated a girl whose dad was an Alpha out east. She was strong, and her wolf was vicious. It didn’t last long though because she met her mate and didn’t think about me for a moment after,” he says with a small laugh.

“I had to go out to an Alpha Challenge with Dad at a pack towards the south and met the daughter of a Beta there. She was very poised and forward. She came right up to me and made it known that she planned to be the next queen. Honestly, I thought her assertiveness was great,” he says and kisses my head. “She was the first girl I slept with. Altair was furious with me and if we’re being honest, it never felt right. I found out a few months later that she had met her mate and had him killed, with the plan to become queen. I brought her to the palace and she was here for about 2 weeks when mom found out. I’ve never seen my mom so angry and she quickly and willingly left after the encounter.”

He reaches up and gently runs his finger along the spot on my neck where his mark resides. “I didn’t know for a long time how Mom knew she wasn’t my mate. But after your experience with the maid, I think that it may have been her. She was absolutely terrible to her. I should have put a stop to it, but I thought she would be a great queen because of how tough she was. She wasn’t tough though, she was just mean.”

“She had her mate killed?” I ask him, shocked. “How could you be OK with that? Were you planning to have me killed?”

“No,” he says quickly. “It never crossed my mind, ever. Truly, please believe me. I NEVER would have hurt you. I had planned to just never meet you. Altair made sure it happened though, and I’m so glad he did,” he says and kisses me on the forehead.

“That’s not everyone though, right?” I ask him and he sighs.

“I casually dated a few other girls, all Alpha’s daughters,” he says, not giving many details there. “They had strong wolves, had grown up in luxury, thought they were worthy of being the Queen. And then... then there was Lydia.”

He takes a deep breath and places his forehead on mine, and I can feel his anxiety through the bond and another emotion, but I can’t quite place what it is.

“It’s OK,“ I tell him gently and hold onto his shirt. “You don’t have to tell me. I shouldn’t have pushed you.”

“No, Molly,” he says. “This is the one girl that you need to know about.”

“I met Lydia and thought I was in love. Like, I truly believed it, until I met you,” he says and stands up, looking down at me and I realize when I see his face that the emotion he is feeling is regret. “Molly, her brother is the Alpha of the pack we’re headed to later this week.”

“The one whose dad died recently?” I ask and he nods. “I’m guessing it’s going to be an issue.”

“No, it won’t. She broke up with me when she met her mate,” he says and looks down at his feet. “I tried to mark her, but I didn’t ask her. Altair wouldn’t allow it, though, thankfully. I could have ruined my whole life, and the whole kingdom.”

“What was so special about her?” I ask, not sure if I really want the answer.

“She was beautiful, and assertive. She wouldn’t take anyone’s s**t, and would take on anyone, head on,” he tells me and I feel myself shrinking as he speaks. I’m not assertive at all and I won’t take on anyone. I grew up without a wolf. I won’t fight anyone.

“She’s everything I’m not,” I say, feeling so small and looking down, not wanting to meet his eyes. I chew on my lip, feeling so nervous.

Seth reaches up and gently pulls my lip from my teeth. “I don’t want you to feel that way. I told you, I was wrong.”

“You would have marked her,” I say, my voice wavering.

“I would have been so wrong,” he says, pulling me to his chest and kissing the top of my head.

“Why did you break up with her?” I ask, not wanting to hear the answer but knowing that I need to know it.

Seth tightens his hold around me. “She broke up with me,” he says quietly. “I thought I’d never get over her. It’s why mom and dad drug me to Rob’s ceremony. I was so heartbroken that I thought I could just easily avoid you. Rob said you stayed in the kitchen to avoid people and I thought that it would be easy enough. I’m so glad that I was wrong.”

I try so hard to contain them, but a few tears escape. “You lied. You told me that they didn’t matter.”

“They don’t,” he says quickly, holding me close, probably so I can’t run. “I thought they did then, but the moment I looked through the window and saw your feet sticking out from where you were hiding from me, I knew you were the only person who would ever mean anything to me. I’m so sorry, but I’m not the first man to have other relationships before they met their mate.”

“Excuse me?” I ask, hoping that I had misheard him.

“Many men, especially higher ups and Alphas will have other women before they find their mate,” he tells me and I can feel my heart drop to my stomach. “I’m am sorry, that I did, though.”

“Are you serious right now?” I ask him, feeling my anger grow.

“Molly, I’m so sorry,” he tells me, but I don’t think he even realizes what he’s said.

“Seth, you didn’t just have relationships before me,” I say, pushing my way out of his arms, tears pricking my eyes. “You tried to replace me. It’s not that you had other relationships, it’s that you had them when you knew I was there, but you didn’t think I was good enough for you.”

I turn and walk away but he reaches out and grabs my arm. “I didn’t mean it like that, Molly,” he tells me, but I shake my arm away and walk out, leaving him standing there alone.