

Chapter 4

1653 Words

I'm back in my room, showered and re-curling my hair and makeup, but this time with Oliver. I realize now that I've caused the Alpha ceremony to begin late, causing the dinner to begin late and I've all but ruined my brother's day. Oli comes from my closet carrying yet another, but darker, green dress for me to put on and I realize my shoes I left in my kitchen are now in my room, but I'm too emotionally exhausted to care how they got here. Oli zips my dress and hands me the shoes.

"Good as new" he says, taking in my appearance with a critical eye. I'm nervous, but I know he wouldn't let me walk in to meet my mate looking anything less than amazing. He grabs my hand and starts to walk, but I'm hesitant to move. He turns to look at me and meets my eyes "No running this time. You have to meet him." I know he's right, but I'm still absolutely terrified.

We make our way across the packhouse to the Alpha's room. As we get closer, I begin to smell him, and I know, without a doubt, that my mate is in there. He smells like juniper, with orange and cinnamon and it's almost overwhelming. I feel so pulled towards him, and I've not even seen him. If this is how finding your mate feels with a broken wolf, then maybe it will be so strong for him that I won't be rejected. I grasp onto that sliver of hope as I turn the door knob to enter.

My Dad and Robert are sitting propped on the edge of their desk. My mom is sitting elegantly in the chair across from them and in the other chair is... Queen Audrey. With King Peter behind her. I briefly wonder why they are here for this, but thoughts are lost when I see my mate standing by the window. He is who I saw from out in the garden, but instead of looking across the grounds he's staring at me intently. Our eyes lock and I start to feel unsteady. Oliver places his hand on my back to steady me and whispers in my ear "go say hi". Biting my lip, I nod to him and start to close the space between us.

To my shock, my mate starts walking towards me as well and once we've made it to each other, he places a gentle hand on my shoulder and asks "Are you OK now?" He has kind, pale blue eyes and seems to be genuinely concerned for me. I can't bring myself to speak and I just nod in response. I see my brother out of the corner of my eye and feel such guilt about how I've behaved today on his day.

I walk towards my brother and I can tell he wasn't expecting me to, but he pulls me into a giant hug. "I'm sorry I ruined your ceremony", I tell him and it's the truth. I was so deeply in my feelings that I wasn't concerned with time, and I know it was set to begin hours ago.

"You didn't ruin anything, kiddo. You just delayed it." He tells me and smiles down at me. Releasing me from his hug, he grabs my hand and walks back towards my mate. "Prince Seth," he addresses him, "I'm glad to finally introduce you to my sister, Molly. Molly, this is my friend, Prince Seth." Prince? So that explains why the king and queen are here. "Prince Seth and I did all our physical training together. He's a really good guy, Molly." he tells me, squeezing my hand for comfort.

"Hi." I say, looking up at Prince Seth. He's big, the biggest in the room. He's so tall and his shoulders are broad and strong. His hair is dark and nearly to his shoulders, but he has his mom's light blue eyes. I know I should say something more, but this entire situation feels so intimidating. "Hi." He returns to me with a kind smile and reaches out his hand to me. I release my brother and place my hand in his and he surprises me by bringing my hand to his lips and places a gentle kiss on it. "It's so nice to finally meet the famous Molly that I've heard so much about." he says with a smile. Everyone is watching me, and I feel even more uncomfortable.

"Umm, maybe we should get the ceremony started soon" I say, turning to everyone in an attempt to take all the attention off of me.

"Yes, she's correct. We should get ready to start the ceremony soon. Why don't we head down and give Molly and Seth a few moments alone." My dad says as he stands and walks over to kiss me on the forehead. My mom follows over just behind him and grabs my free hand while she leans in and whispers "he's handsome" quietly in my ear.

They head to the door with Robbie while King Peter and Queen Audrey meet them there and they all exit with my dad closing the door behind them. I thought I'd feel more comfortable without everyone looking at us but now that we're alone, I'm even more nervous. He seems kind. I guess when he rejects me maybe he won't be too harsh.

"So" he says, breaking the silence between us, "Your mom thinks I'm handsome" and I can't help but laugh. I don't think she meant for him to hear her, but I'm glad he did, and that he can joke about it. He leads me over to the sofa in the corner by my hand, which I note he still hasn't let go of. I sit down with him sitting next to me. He's close, and he's warm and he smells so good but I can't allow myself to become too attached.

"I'm sorry I ran away earlier" I tell him, and it's the truth. He doesn't respond, just continues to look at me. "I wasn't trying to be rude", I continue "I know this is really disappointing for you", I wish as my voice lowers to just barely above a whisper.

"Why would I ever be disappointed with you?" he says and I can see from his face that he appears to be genuinely surprised by my words.

Maybe I read this whole situation wrong. Everyone, the whole of BOTH families was up in my dad's room while I sat in the garden and cried. They must have talked about me. Surely he knows.

"I, uh..." and I don't know the words to adequately describe what a mess I am, but I try because he deserves to know before he gets stuck with me. "I'm a broken wolf, Prince Seth."

And as I pause to figure out how to explain myself, he finally lets go of my hand, but only so he can gently place his fingers under my chin to pull my face to look at him.

"It's just Seth to you. You're my mate- my equal. Never Prince to you, only ever Seth. You'll be Princess Molly soon, and eventually Queen. But you'll always be my equal."

It's at that moment that it hits me that Prince Seth isn't just his name, but his actual identity and that being his mate comes with so much more that I'm not made for. Little girls dream of being a princess some day, but for me, it's an absolute nightmare.

"I can't be Queen. I'm not even a real wolf. I saw you in the window and thought my family would have told you. I... I'm so sorry." I say as my chest begins to hurt and I can barely breathe.

"You are a real wolf, though. It's in your scent. My wolf is sure of it."

"I'm not, though. I don't have a wolf. I've never shifted, I'm not built as muscular. If anything happens to me, I can't save myself. I'll just be a huge liability."

"No" he snaps at me and I can see a flash of anger in his eyes. "You are NOT a liability. You're my mate. The Goddess made you for me."

"The Goddess didn't make me for anyone, Seth. No one wanted me." I say as my voice begins to waiver. This isn't going how I thought. I never dreamed I'd have to convince my mate I wasn't good enough. But this man just keeps surprising me as he grabs me and pulls me onto his lap.

"There are people who DO want you, Molly. I want you. Your parents adopted you- they wanted you. Robert always wanted you, he never stopped talking about you during training. You're different Molly, but that doesn't mean you're not enough and that you're not wanted." he tells me as he just holds me on his lap.

"I think maybe we should talk about this later," I tell him as I stand up and he lets me, but keeps his hands on my hips. "I've ruined Robbie's day enough. We should head downstairs."

"OK Molly, we can talk about it later tonight." He says while standing. I note that he still hasn't let go of me as he leans down and kisses my forehead. "You are wanted," he says as he takes my hand and leads me towards the door. "You're mine."