

Chapter 11

1694 Words

We start down the path and as it gets a little more bumpy it's less an actual path as it is just walking on a lightly beaten path. Eventually, Seth lets go of my hand and I realize it's because he feels unstable on this terrain. "So, you and that Oliver guy used to come this way as kids?" He nally asks and I'm pretty sure he's concerned with my parents' decisions to let us frolic in the woods.

"We didn't come this way until we were older." I tell him with a smirk. "We stayed pretty close to the normal path when we were young, except that one time we got a little lost. Your dad was kind enough to share that story last night." I tell him.

"What made you like being outside? It's not exactly the most typical for an Alpha's daughter." Seth asks.

"I didn't t in with the other kids. Even before we all realized I didn't have a wolf, I realized I wasn't built like them. They were all fast and so good at sports that when I tried to join them it was embarrassing- or I got hurt. Oliver didn't exactly t in either, so it was just a friendship between two outcasts. We got picked on a lot and just ended up playing in the woods to stay away from it all. Turns out that if you spend enough time here, you can fall in love with it." I nish with a shrug. "I take it you aren't enjoying your time out here?" I ask.

"It's not that I don't enjoy it, I just don't have time. I'm always so busy with some royal duty that it doesn't leave a lot of time to just exist." He tells me while stepping off a large rock to look defeated at the sight of more rocks.

"Did your parents bother you, too, about nding your mate when you turned 18?" I ask him. "I don't know if their obsession with it was normal or enhanced because of my situation with the wolf."

"They wanted me to nd her, well, you. I was just hesitant," he says.

"Hesitant? Were you hiding away, too? Making sure you didn't meet anyone?" I ask in a joking tone.

"No, maybe. It's just..." and he stops. "It's nothing to worry about." He nishes awkwardly and attempts to change the subject. "So, do you have a boyfriend hanging around who's going to have his heart broken when you tell him we've met?" He ask.

"Umm, no. I'm a broken wolf, no one wants me." I tell him sadly, and it's true. "Short of some inappropriate comments made about me, no one has shown any genuine interest in me, ever."

"Molly, wait." he says and reaches out his hand for me. I take his hand and he continues "You're not broken. You're just different, I see that now. And you're absolutely beautiful. I'm sure more guys were interested, they were just terried of your dad and Rob." he says, and tries to pull me towards him, but I'm on a rock a foot lower than him and he's not exactly steady.

"You can see I'm different now? That kitchen tour really made a difference", I joke, but he's not laughing.

"Molly, I need to tell you something." He says to me and his face is so serious that I start to get nervous.

"Seth, if you want to reject me, I get it. But please don't right now while we're supposed to meet up with our dads. Please." I tell him quietly and full of emotion. "I don't want to be embarrassed in front of them." I add in a whisper, trying to hold back tears. I knew this would likely happen, but I had almost convinced myself it wouldn't.

"No, Molly. I'm not rejecting you, not ever. Can we sit down for a moment somewhere?" He asks, looking around, maybe for a bench? I don't think he realizes how far off any real path we are. I see a rock a few feet further ahead and walk towards it. I turn to sit down but Seth takes his jacket off and puts it on the rock for me to sit on. WE sit there for a few minutes before he gives any indication he's ready to talk. I know he said he's not rejecting me, but his behavior is odd and I can feel his emotions through the bond- I think it's fear, and maybe shame?

"Rob and I met 5 years ago. We were training together, and were roommates." I nod, because I already knew that but I stay silent so he can continue. "He told me about Lunar Falls, about his parents, about his big sister. He was so worried about you, that something would happen to you while he wasn't here. I remember you calling him in tears one time. I could only hear part of what you said but I knew it was that another full moon had come and gone and there was no indication you had a wolf."

"You already knew?" I assumed he had been told about me when he arrived and I ran away in fear, but I didn't realize he already knew.

"Yeah, I did. I actually knew a lot about you." He continues, "You would send him letters often, sometimes photos. Every few weeks you'd send a package of his favorite foods. They always smelled so good. Rob didn't share, ever. But one day he was at training and I was in the room alone and I stole one. It was the most amazing smell- orange and rose, with a hint of lavender. But then I ate the cookie and it was just a sugar cookie, it didn't taste like it smelled. I sniffed around and realized the box also had the smell and sniffed and came across the letters you'd sent and I nally realized that it was you I could smell, and you were my mate."

"You, you already knew?" I ask him, barely able to breathe.

"I did. But I was afraid. I knew about your wolf and Rob made you sound so fragile. I was worried you wouldn't be able to handle the demands of becoming Queen. I had been dating a girl I thought would be a better Queen, but my wolf, Altair was furious. I eventually dumped her, and dated some other girls, but Altair was always mad, to the point I wasn't sure they were safe around me because I wasn't sure I could control him." My heart breaks at hearing him tell me about the girls he dated just to avoid me. I've always known I wasn't a desirable mate, but it hurts to hear my mate tell me and I'm struggling to stay in control of my emotions as a tear slips down my cheek.

"I'm so sorry, Molly. I was an idiot." I hear him say as he tries to wipe the tear from my cheek, but I turn my head away from him quickly. "I honestly came here with the plan to stay away from you. I thought I'd be able to, Rob always complained about how you stay in the kitchen and I thought I could just stay in my room and, if I was careful, our paths wouldn't cross. But as soon as we stepped out of the car and I smelled you on your dad, I lost control of Altair and tackled Alpha Randall." He tells me and places his hand on my thigh. I want to pull away from him but the rock isn't big enough for me to move.

"Dad thought it best to move us out of sight, since it was pretty clear I wasn't in complete control. Your parents started to tell us about you and your wolf while Rob went to get you. I wasn't sure what to think when you ran off, it was a little insulting but mostly a badass move." he says and smiles at me. "I was looking out the window when I saw your feet sticking out of the leaves and I knew it had to be you. Altair was so excited to see you, even if it was your dirty, bare feet sticking out from your hiding spot."

"I'm so sorry Molly, you deserve to be treated better than that. I've barely even gotten to know you and you're not as fragile as your brother thinks and you're really, truly amazing. I made a huge mistake." We sit there in silence for a while. I'm not sure what to say and I think he's afraid of saying something else and making it worse.

"You knew I was your mate? For years?" I say, my voice full of hurt that I'm trying and failing to mask. "You were willing to live with the pain of knowing your mate was out there and not with you for years because the thought of being mated to me was worse?" I ask, my tears now falling in abundance.

"I can't put into words how sorry I am. I didn't want to even tell you this because I know how terrible it is, but my wolf wouldn't let me keep this from you." He says and tries to hug me, but I stand up quickly.

"Well, at least one of you isn't a selsh ass hole." I spit out at him. "Try to keep up, you don't want to get lost out here." I say as I continue on to the falls with no regard for his ability to keep up with me.