

Chapter 7

3192 Words

The ballroom is crowded, but no one is paying much attention to us as we enter, as everyone is looking for their seats. We reach our table, which also has both of our families seated at it and they're already seated. I did not miss how every single set of eyes at our table made their way to our connected hands, but thankfully no one said anything.

Seth releases my hand and pulls a chair out for me, grazing his hand across the small of my back. I'm fairly sure this man will miss no opportunity to touch me in some way. I'm seated directly next to Seth, something that I doubt was originally planned but my mother had changed once we met. My mom is to my right, my dad being seated next to her. Robert is seated across from my parents with the King and Queen to his right, directly across from Seth and me.

We've barely been seated when I feel Seth's hand go to rest on my thigh. "You good?" he asks me.

"Yeah, I'm OK." I return to him and I really am.

"Dad, do you think you'd like to go for a hike with me to the falls in the morning?" I ask my dad. I thought he'd jump at the chance, but he looks at me hesitantly.

"I'm sorry, Molly. I'm actually taking King Peter down there in the morning," he says.

"Oh, that's ok. Another time." I tell him and I feel Seth squeeze my leg to comfort me. I can tell he's about to say something when King Peter speaks up.

"I'd actually love to have you join us, Molly. It'd be a great chance to get to know you, and from what I remember your dad saying while you were young, you probably know a path or two to get there that the old man doesn't even know." he says with a chuckle.

I'm unsure what to say to that, and who knows what my dad told him. "That would be nice, thank you. I'll make dad's favorite muns to bring along for breakfast." I tell him and add "and yes, I'm SURE I know a few paths dad's never seen."

"I doubt that, kiddo. I haven't always been the Alpha, stuck in my ope running my pack" my dad jumps in, and while I'm sure he's spent plenty of time out there, I'm also sure that Oliver and I created quite a few new paths while we spent time out there as kids.

Seth leans over to me and whispers in my ear, "Do you want me to get my dad to stay behind so you can be alone with yours?" he asks me.

"No, it's ok." I whisper back and it's honestly so thoughtful of him.

"Seth, do you want to join us?" my dad throws out, interrupting the small moment between us.

"I wouldn't want to impose," he says and leans over to me where only I can hear. "Only if you want me there."

"You should join us" I say to him, so everyone can hear.

"Fantastic!" my dad exclaims. "I'm looking forward to those muns," he says to me with a smile.

"So, you like being outside?" Seth asks.

"Yeah. A lot." I tell him. "When we were small, Oliver was the only kid other than Robbie who didn't pick on me. We used to sneak out of school early and go down to the falls."

At hearing this, King Peter joins in "I remember being on a call with Alpha Randall one time when he got word Molly was missing from school. He was in a panic and I was about to head out here to help, thinking the poor dear had been kidnapped when they realized her little friend was also missing. Randall called me later to let me know she had been found, with the little boy hiding in the woods covered in mud. They realized they were in trouble and hid for hours trying to sneak back." He told the store with a laugh.

"A little boy?" Seth says, arching an eyebrow at me, and I can see the danger in his eyes. He's unhappy at that thought.

"Yeah. It was just Oliver." I reassure him and I can feel him relax.

"Molly and Oliver used to sneak out and go out in the woods for hours. They'd come back covered in dirt and leaves. I'm pretty sure I heard a rumor of them nding a cave out there one time, but neither would ever admit to it." my brother said, jumping into the conversation.

"A cave?" my dad said with a hint of anger in his voice. I just looked at Robert, knowing he did this on purpose.

"Just because you're the Alpha now doesn't mean I'm going to tell you all the secrets of the Falls" I tell him. "You're going to have to get out there and nd them on your own. But yes, there's absolutely a cave. Two of them, actually."

"Molly. Did you two leave the packlands?" My dad asks authoritatively and I realize that he's worried we could have been hurt.

"No, sir. The caves are on our land. I'm sure. We never, never left our territory. I promise." I tell him quickly to avoid a lecture.

Sorry, kid. I hear from my brother as I realize he mind linked me, and didn't audibly say it.

Robbie! I can link you! I respond back to him, thrilled with the development.

Just then, the Omega staff come out carrying plates for dinner. I'm suddenly nervous. This is my team and I know they're capable of handling all of this, but if something goes wrong it falls back on me still, and there are so many guests here to critique the entire meal.

Robbie stands as plates are being placed in front of all the guests to give a speech before we all eat. "Thank you all for joining us today. It's been a great honor to be handed the pack and trusted with the safety and wellbeing of everyone in it. And I want to thank the Omegas of the Lunar Falls Pack that are here serving all our wonderful guests here. You all are what make the day to day in this pack run smoothly. Well done! I'm honored to be your Alpha and will spend my time showing appreciation for everyone in this pack for all that you contribute. Thank you for making this day, and every day in this pack wonderful. Now, let's eat!" he nishes and sits down like he didn't just say something that no other Alpha would say.

My dad is staring at him, unsure what to say, while my mom smirks, proud to have raised a son who is considerate. I'm debating glancing in front of me to see how the Royals are taking this when I hear King Peter stand and start applauding. Seth follows and I see Queen Audrey join. I stand and join them, as do my parents. Robbie is staring at us like we're crazy, and I realize he really didn't realize the impact his speech would have. I can hear others begin to join us behind us and, after a glance over my shoulder, I realize that not everyone shares his feelings but no one would dare not follow the Royal Family in their applause.

Molls, please sit down. This is embarrassing. I hear Robbie in my head.

You're the one who did it. Out here telling Alphas to respect every member of their pack. I giggle and Robbie rolls his eyes. But as a good sister, I went ahead and sat down, my dad following, and then the rest of our table. After a moment, the room quiets and I can hear the sound of people beginning to eat.

"Were you two planning to let me know that you can link each other now or were you just planning to team up and cause havoc together in silence?" My mom asks Robbie and me.

"Mom, I'm the Alpha now. I answer to no one!" Robbie answers her jokingly with a laugh.

"In our defense, we did just discover that we could." I tell her.

"That's great! Though I must admit, I feel a little left out now that you can all link but I still can't reach you Molly." She says and I know she meant it as a joke, but I feel a pain that I've made things dicult for her. Seth must be able to feel my emotions like I've been feeling his, because his arm immediately reaches my shoulder that is opposite to him and he pulls me towards him and kisses my head. No one says anything but Queen Audrey's face is showing that she denitely didn't miss the action.

Finally, the Omegas reach our table with the food. "I'm so sorry Molly," Stella, a young omega tells me. "It was Courtney's rst event and she started serving from the back." she tells me. "I'm truly sorry, Alphas, Your Majesties." She nished, ustered and with a bow.

"It's ok Stella." I reassure her. "If Oliver did his job right, it's all edible." I tell her and she giggles. "He DID do his job, right?" I ask her and she continues to giggle.

"Really though, Stella. It looks great." I tell her. "You all did a great job without me." and she beams at the compliment. With another bow to the royals and a slight smile at my brother, she offers her thanks and leaves us.

"Tell me about her." my brother snaps at me aggressively.

"It was a mistake, Robbie. It wasn't even hers and she apologized." I tell him, confused about why he's acting ilke this.

"I'm not mad. Just tell me about her. Stella, right?" He asks, and I realize he's ghting his wolf back.

"Yeah, Stella. She's sweet. Her dad was a pack warrior and died a few years ago. Her mom died a few weeks ago but she worked in the kitchen with me. Stella asked to take her place but she's still in school so I have her helping in the kitchen around her school schedule. She's in her last year, so I plan to let her move into the kitchen full time when she's done if she wants."

"You're making her work?" he snaps at me.

"She asked me to. I wouldn't let her drop out and work full time like she had wanted when it's so close to the end of the school year. And I only let her work when her homework is done. I also won't let her work on Friday nights so she can hang out with her friends and be a kid. Her parents both died, she needs the money." I tell him defensively. I've not done anything wrong. I thought I was helping her out.

"She shouldn't be working," he continues with his attitude.

"Robert," my mom interjects. "I don't think your sister is forcing kids to work in the kitchens. It sounds like she's been working to nd a way to help her- Stacy, was it?"

"Stella." I correct.

"She's mine." Robert growls out lowly, where only those closest could hear.

I realize then that he thinks she's his mate. "Robbie, that can't be. She's not 18 yet. And you've met her many times before."

"Molly, I'm sure of this. When is her birthday?" He demands.

"I think next month. I wrote it on the calendar we keep in the kitchen recently. I can check for you later." I tell him, still in disbelief, he thinks she's his mate.

"There have been reports of Alphas being able to nd their mate before they shift." King Peter adds to the conversation. "But there's not much information on it. And I've never actually met someone who experienced it. It's supposed to be a sign of a very strong wolf, though," he continues.

"You can't tell her until then." I tell Robbie. "You'll scare her if you try to," and he nods in understanding. "She really is great. I'm sure she'll make an amazing Luna."

I'm happy for Robbie, but I'm sure he'll do something to embarrass himself while waiting for her birthday.

"The dinner is really good." Seth tells me, changing the subject from my brother, and honestly, it makes me feel really good that he likes it.

"Thank you," I tell him. "It's Robbie's favorite," and it's true. My brother would sell his soul for my roast chicken. He picked potatoes and broccoli to go with it.

"It doesn't taste quite the same as when you make it, but it's close. Still, it's better than you'll nd at other packs, for sure." Robbie says with a smile.

"You had better get used to this version of it." Dad states. "Molly will be leaving with Prince Seth and then we'll all have to eat sub-par meals while the Prince gets the good stuff every day."

"Molly won't be in the kitchen every day." Seth tells my dad, "But I do hope you'll cook for me sometimes if it will always taste this good." and I know he means well, but I don't like the sound of that one bit.

I want to say something in response but there's a lot of people around so I decide to just let it go and talk to him about it later. We're just met, and I still think there's a chance he'll reject me. We haven't talked about what is to be expected of me if he doesn't. And what does a princess actually do, anyways?

We sit in the quiet for quite some time when the omegas appear to clear the tables. I realize that Robbie is looking for Stella, but I'm not sure if he wants her close or not. Robbie, do you want her to come over or stay away? I mind link to ask him.

Probably best to stay away for now. He responds, so I do what any decent sister would do.

"Nick!" I call out to a different omega and he walks over to us. He reaches me and then realizes who is at the table and stops to bow.

"Is everything ok, Molly?" he asks me.

"Yeah, it's great." I tell him. "Grab those plates, would you? I'll help you take them over. I have a secret mission for you." I say, making a silly face so he knows he's not in trouble. I stand and take Seth's plate. He frowns at me and I realize it's probably because I'm helping. Whatever. It's just who I am and my place in this pack. Nick and I get everything situated on the tray and walk off.

I look back and see Seth frowning, but he turns and is speaking with my parents now.

"What did you need, Molly? Everything ok?" Nick asks me.

"Yeah!" I tell him. "I was going to ask you to grab the cake I made for my dad but I'll just go down and get it." I tell him.

"Not in those shoes, you won't", Nick tells me with a laugh. "When do you want me to bring it up?"

"That's a fair point." I tell him and he's not wrong. I'm good in heels, but I'm not sure how good I am going up stairs in them while holding a cake.

"When Robbie's cake is up and everyone is paying attention to him, it would be best", I tell him. "He wouldn't want it to be a big deal. He was adamant that today would be about Alpha Robert."

"So you made him his own cake?" He asks, confused.

"It's who I am, Nick. It's who I am." I tell him with a smile and walk back to my seat.

I sit down and as soon as I do, Seth leans in to whisper "Is everything ok with this Nick?" and the way he emphasizes his name I know he's unhappy. But I just walked off to the side of the room. I'm not even sure what he thinks he has to be upset over.

"It's ne." I tell him meekly, unsure about what to say. "He's helping me with a surprise for later." and I offer a smile, hoping it will help ease the tension.

Things ease a bit as our dads continue their conversation about stories from their youths, the details exaggerated, no doubt. Seth and Robert throw in a few stories from their time training and we all laugh along. After a while, the omegas bring up the large cake I had made for Robert.

"Who made the cake?" Robbie asks me.

"Me, of course!" I tell him. "I turned over my kitchen so I'd be here with you but you didn't think I'd trust someone else with your cake, did you?" I ask.

Robbie stands up and walks around the table, grabbing my arm to pull me up and into one of his giant bear hugs. "Thanks, kiddo. I'm really going to miss this."

"Don't worry." I say into his chest sadly. "There's still time for him to reject me."

"He won't," he says and places a kiss on the top of my head and walks over to the cake.

Everyone is looking at the new Alpha Robert and his giant cake. I glance over and see Nick in the door holding the small cake. I walk over and take it from him and when I turn around I see Seth staring at me, but I can feel his anger nally start to subside. I continue towards the table to stand behind my dad, placing the cake down in front of him and kissing him on the cheek.

He looks down and laughs one of his loud boisterous laughs that I love so much as he looks down and reads his cake.

"Happy Retirement, Old Man"