

Chapter 9

Rory's Pov

The woman led me from the room, not once looking at the Alpha. I longed for him to look at me, for him to see my worth. I didn't understand why but I wanted him to see my value, if I had any. I wasn't entirely sure that I did but I needed him to just see me. We made our way down the hallway and I noticed her snie a few times.

"A-are you okay?" I asked, my throat still scratchy from not speaking for so long.

She looked at me and my assumption was right. She did have a few tears in her eyes.

"Oh, I'm ne. I swear I'm stronger than this. I just get emotional sometimes." she said and waved me off. "How are you? I'm sure this has all been frightening."

I hummed without speaking. This was hard. This was different. I hadn't walked on my own two feet in so long. My legs felt wobbly and I was grateful I had her next to me to catch me in case I fell. I was honestly shocked that I hadn't yet.

We walked past several doors and my wolf ached to go back to the room I was in but I remembered the way the Alpha looked at me. The disgust on his face when my voice cracked, the way he recoiled away from me. He hated me. The hatred poured off of him in waves. It made me nearly whimper at the thought.

We got to a room with a large wooden door and designs painted on with a shimmering gold paint. She opened the door and my jaw dropped. The walls were a light peach with white wainscoting. There was a four poster bed with a sheer white canopy attached to it. There were uffy pillows and a thick comforter neatly laid on the bed. There was a desk and chair along a wall as well as a few armchairs next to a bookshelf. There was a chaise sofa facing a large TV screen and a couple of doors along one of the walls that I'm guessing lead to a closet and a bathroom. Windows with sheer curtains to match the canopy caught my eye.

I walked over and looked out at the view. It was beautiful. There were large mountains with snow caps on them. It had started to snow again and the white powdery akes fell evenly through the night sky.

"This is beautiful." I said wistfully, taking in the rest of the room.

The dresser and wardrobe, the books on the shelf, the throw blankets draped on the sofa. There was a small kitchenette with a small refrigerator. There were water bottles, fruit, and some snacks inside and a bowl of snacks on the counter top. This room had been prepared and stocked it seemed.

I would never need to leave this room and after spending the past 15 years as a wolf living outside and like a wild animal, the thought of being trapped in a room to immerse myself in human life sounded like a dream.

There was a picture on one of the end tables next to the sofa. It was of Alpha and another woman. They looked young, maybe twenty or so. She was looking at the camera with such a large and jubilant smile and he was looking at her like she hung the moon and the stars.

My heart sank and I couldn't understand why. They looked happy together. But why was there a picture of them in this room? Surely I'm not in the alpha's room. I haven't seen the woman in the photo yet but it is the middle of the night. Perhaps I'll meet her tomorrow. I felt anger rising in me at potentially meeting this woman. This woman who had done nothing to me. This woman who was clearly mated to the alpha.

"Oh that's Paisley." the woman said walking over to me. I put the picture back on the table and looked at her. "She was a wonderful girl."

"Was?" I asked though I knew where this was going. Suddenly my anger towards her vanished and dread took its place.

"The plague has taken many souls from us. Including my son's rst mate." she said.

"First mate? He has a second?" I asked and she looked at me like I was ridiculous but then she shook her head.

"Have a seat." she whispered, gesturing towards the couch. I sat next to her clenching my hands in my lap.

"Do you know what mates are?" she asked and I nodded.

"Do you know how to tell when someone is your mate?" she asked next and I shook my head. My mother had never really gotten that far in the mate lessons. She was more concerned about my education and my survival skills than teaching me about a love that may never happen for me.

The woman sighed and looked out the window as if contemplating what to say next.

"The mate bond varies per wolf. Some feel it instantaneously, some need time to develop the bond. Usually, mates are drawn to each other. Feel safe with one another. There's like this instant connection usually at rst glance. Like you can feel a bond snapping into place. There's an innate desire to please and be close to your mate. When you're apart you long for your mate and the longer you're separated the more painful it gets."

The more she went on the more my heart started to race. Everything she was saying was all of the emotions and feelings I had towards Shawn. I couldn't possibly be his second mate. There's no way...

"I'm afraid he conrmed you're his second chance mate earlier when I spoke with him."

Why was she afraid of that? Was I not what was expected? Was she ashamed of me? Was I not good enough? Of course, I wasn't. I was a wild thing. I was practically feral.

"Calm your thoughts little one. I can hear your mind racing from here. I didn't mean anything bad by it. I'm thrilled actually. I just know you're one amazing omega. But it's dicult. Shawn lost paisley so young. They were madly in love. It damn near killed him when she died and he swore to never love anyone else. Never again. He's hurting still to this day. I'm asking you to be patient with him."

"What is expected of me? Why am I here?" I asked and she looked at me funny.

"You're expected to live. Flourish in pack life. You have no expectations other than to live a long, healthy and happy life. Even if that isn't with my son. You deserve happiness and here you'll get it. You have protection here."