

Chapter 103-3

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After breakfast, I decided to walk to my lesson early in an attempt to please the queen, but when I arrived, I overheard her speaking with King Franklin about how she wants him to have me killed after the baby is born and weaned. I could hardly believe what I heard, and that neither of them smelled me. I quickly removed myself from the area and have been hiding in my room since.

I'm so afraid, and I don't know if there's anyone that I can trust here. They're going to take me from my baby.

-Core

Prince Joseph was upset that I have moved back to my room and stayed with me here last night. I told him it was because of the pregnancy and that I'm not comfortable, which isn't a complete lie. I'm not comfortable anywhere in this vast palace, though.

He insisted I see the doctor today and I've been placed on bed rest earlier than expected as the strain on my body has been extensive. My heart is struggling to beat properly and I am so so swollen. To his credit, Prince Joseph has not pushed me to move rooms and has made sure I have everything I need here.

I have been able to eat a bit more, though not much, but he has made sure that what I have been able to keep down is brought to me in abundance. The maid, Hazel, told me that he has instructed her to check on me every half hour while he is away, so I guess he plans to stay here with me.

I wonder if he knows of his parents' plans, if all of this is just to ensure he has a healthy heir. I want so badly to believe that some part of him actually cares for me, but I'm truly unsure if he is capable.

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"I have a surprise for you," I hear Seth say, bringing me from my reading.

"What's that?" I ask him, placing the journal gently in my lap.

He smiles at me, a mischievous smile that makes my insides tingle. "I think it's about time I took you on an actual date."

"Our first date?" I say with a silly voice. "And only after we're both merked?"

He chuckles at me, taking my hand in his. "You deserve the world, Molly. And I would like to take you for a lunch date today. In the human world."

"Oh," I whisper, unsure what to think of being in the human world. "Is it safe?"

"I wouldn't take you there if it wasn't. I've stopped here quite often on my way to the eastern peaks," he says, running his thumb gently along my knuckles. "They are under the assumption that I'm just a business man passing through and we've never had any issues."

"OK," I tell him with a wry smile. "If you're sure."

"I am. I would never, ever put you in danger," he says, reaching up and buttoning my shirt up more. "I'm not sure how to explain the merks, so we need to keep them covered as much as possible."

He releases me and buttons his top button, pulling the tie out of his belt and tying it. He reaches back into his belt and pulls out a small black box, holding it gently in his hands.

"We don't marry, we just mark our mates. It's more eternal than what humans do," he tells me, still looking down at the box. "But you'll be queen, and you're mine. I want you to have the best of everything. I don't expect you to wear it often at all, but, well, I got rings for us," he finishes, opening the box to reveal a delectable gold band holding a giant emerald with small diamonds to the sides of it.

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"I have a surprise for you," I hear Seth say, bringing me from my reading.

"Seth," I say, shocked at the beauty of it. "I can't. That's too much."

"It was Core's," he tells me with a lopsided grin. "You'll read about it eventually, but when I asked her if I could give it to you, instead of it just staying in the royal vault, she was elated. As you keep reading you'll learn that it gets a little better for her, but this was the ring that my grandfather gave her when my father was born."

"But it's hers," I whisper, taking it from his hand to look at it more closely. It's probably the most gorgeous ring I have ever seen. "I can't take something that's special to her."

"Just wear it today, and while we're at the Blood Moon Peak," he says, taking it from me and gently sliding it on my finger. I note that it fits perfectly and wonder how we're the same size, but I realize that Audrey had my jewelry box and probably checked for my size. "You can talk to her about it whenever you meet. But she'll tell you what I already have."

I look at it on my hand and look over to Seth to thank him, noting that he's slipping the gold band on his own finger. "I'm pretty sure I was supposed to get you a ring, not that you get your own."

Seth smiles at me and leans over, kissing my cheek. "I'll take you to the vault when we return home and you can pick whatever you'd like for me."

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