

## Chapter 117

As Seth opens the door to leave, Daphne and Lydia both arrive, carrying dresses and cases that I assume are full of makeup. Audrey welcomes them in as my mom drags a chair over to a table and starts plugging in straighteners and curling irons.

“Mom,” I say, looking at everything. “This is too much.”

“Nonsense,” she says with a smile and a wave of her hand. “It’s your first time being introduced as a Princess and I’ll be damned if there’s a single hair on that head out of place. I’ve lived for the day you would let me dress you up as an adult. Now sit down.”

I can’t help but giggle at her. “Yes, ma’am.. I will,” I tell her. “But I need to jump in the shower real quick. I promise won’t get my hair wet.”

I do as I say, showering as quickly as I can and wrapping myself in a robe after I’m dry. When I exit the bathroom, my mom is waiting for me, a look that I can’t quite place on her face. She pulls my hair down from the messy bun it’s in and starts to straighten the roots of my hair.

You failed to tell me that girl was with your mate.

Oh. I’m sorry. I didn’t even think about it. She’s... not in a good situation here.

You’re alright with this?

I think so. Her brother is the Alpha. There’s a lot currently happening, and a lot that has already happened. But she told Seth and I in confidence that her dad’s Beta forcibly marked her.

I can see my mom’s face soften as she continues to work on my hair behind me.

There’s nothing there now, I tell her, hoping she’ll understand. But she needs help to get out of the situation she’s in.

Alright, Molly. I’ll be nice to her, but I’m having trouble with it.

I know. I won’t lie to you, I am as well, but she told Seth that she never even wanted to be with him. Her father forced her and sent her mate she had just found to another pack.

I only hope that one day I can love and care for my kids the way that my mom always has for me and Robbie. Truly, she’s always been the best mother. I think that’s partly why I had such a hard time when I found who I was, and especially when I first met Benjamin and Lily. I had been taken in by such amazing people that it’s hard to accept that there could have been anything different. Growing up, it was easier to think that where I came from would not have been better than what I got, but the truth of it is that I would have been immensely loved no matter which scenario had played out.

“Can I see the tiara you’re wearing today?” she asks me and Audrey hops up, excited to grab it. She brings it over to my mom and she nods. “I think we’ll definitely pull your hair back with this.”

She finishes with my hair in some kind of fancy ponytail and then pushes my chair over, pulling out my makeup.

“Would you mind if I helped with this?” Daphne speaks up. “I was hoping to become a makeup artist when I found my mate was an Alpha.”

“Sure,” I tell her brightly. “I never wore much makeup, so it’s not something I’m very good at.”

“You didn’t have to wear them for all the balls and parties your pack had?” she asks.

My mother snorts in laughter. “You must not know much about Molly. She convinced her dad to let her become the head chef of our pack. Any time there was any kind of gathering, she was locked away in the kitchen. The only reason Seth was even able to find her that day was because it was her brother’s Alpha Ceremony and her dad forbade her from being in the kitchen that day.” I roll my eyes at her story telling, though it is mostly true.

“Really?” Lydia asks and I nod to her.

“I just really like it,” I say with a shrug. “Honestly, I really miss it now.”

Lydia sits down in front of me and gets to work, putting all kinds of stuff on my face and before I know it, I catch myself in the mirror and realize it’s probably the best I’ve ever looked. “Wow,” I say shocked, looking at how natural it looks, but making me look flawless. “Thank you.”

“You two should get ready and we’ll get Molly into her dress,” Audrey tells them and they nod, moving to put their own makeup on. “Lydia, we really need to talk, though.”

“Yes, your majesty?” she asks, suddenly looking very uncomfortable.

“Your mate isn’t your true mate, is he?” she asks, though it’s more of a statement.

She nods sadly and Daphne reaches over, taking her hand. “He is a horrible old man,” Daphne tells us. “I’m sure Prince Seth told you that he’s blackmailing us. He treats Lydia like property, just using her to get to Stephen.”

“Seth did mention it, though he didn’t give us specifics,” she says, but I can tell from her face that she knows everything. “We’re going to help you get out of this mess if we can. I know you weren’t Seth’s mate, and we love Molly, but you were always kind to him, and we want the best for you. Just stick as close to one of us as you can. Molly’s parents are here to help you, too.”

Mom zips the back of my dress for me, pulling me over so that I can see myself in the mirror. She picks up the tiara to place it on my head but Audrey places her hand on it, stopping her. “No. Seth needs to do it.”

“I didn’t realize that was a rule,” my mom tells her, surprised.

Audrey smiles at her, and looks at me. “It’s not, but I know how it felt the first time Peter placed a tiara on my head for my first official outing. I would never take that feeling from anyone.” Her eyes glass and a few moments later, Seth knocks on the door.

Audrey lets him in, stepping out with everyone else, letting us know they’ll see us there.

“You look amazing, Love,” he tells me, his voice quiet and a small smile on his face. “You’re the perfect princess.”

“I hope they think so,” I whisper, feeling very nervous. He walks over, turning me towards the mirror and standing behind me.

“It makes me smile that you wear the earrings your dad gave you,” he says.

“I was worried I’d be nervous, and thought it would help me feel like he was here with me,” I say with a giggle. “But now he really is here.”

He reaches up and unclasps the necklace of the sweet little sage leaf, switching it with the diamond necklace, just as I had promised Audrey. Then, he picks up the tiara, gently placing it on my head.

Our eyes meet in the mirror and I realize his mom was right. This is an intimate moment between us that I’m glad she made sure I had. Seeing the look in his eyes as he looks at me, and feeling his emotions through the bond, it’s nearly overwhelming. He looks proud, proud to have ME.

I think back to the day we met, when I told him my wolf was broken and he told me that he still wanted me. I thought that the way he looked at me then was the most amazing look, but I was wrong. He wanted me then, and it’s taken a bit, but I understand now that he truly wanted me. But the way he’s looking at me now is possessive. He doesn’t just want me now, he’s proud that I am his.

My eyes wander to my mark on his neck, peeking over the top of his shirt where he left it unbuttoned a bit, just because I wanted Lydia to see it. He’s not ready, though. Not yet.

I reach forward, picking up his crown off the table and turning around in his arms. I lift the crown and gently place it on his head, shifting it around until it feels secure. I can’t help but smile at him. He looks so perfect.

Smiling down at me, he gently turns me back around, wrapping his arms around me tightly, with one hand landing over my stomach- over our growing pup. “I love you, Princess.”

“I love you, Prince Sugar Plum,” I tell him with a giggle.

“You’ve got to come up with something better,” he tells me with a smile and a shake of his head. “It’s time to go, now. Whatever happens, don’t let them see your fear. If Stephen loses, we have enough people here to surround you and get you out, alright? If anything happens, stay with Albert.”