

## Chapter 12-3

After a while, she nally pulls back a little and says “Talk to me” gently, like she always does when I’m upset.

“He doesn’t want me, mom.” I whisper to her and admitting it aloud to her, and myself, gives me a physical pain in my chest.

“You don’t know that. Feelings are complicated.” she says, brushing my hair back from my face.

“He doesn’t though, and he’s stuck with me. I think just being rejected would be better. I’ll always be the mate he’s stuck with.” and she just lays there, listening to me, letting me talk through all my feelings and the thoughts running through my head.

“He knew, mom. For 4 years he KNEW I was his mate, and he knew I wasn’t good enough. He said he didn’t think I’d be a good queen, that he searched for someone who would be better than me. It’s like he’s assuming that ‘I think I’ll be a good queen, and I certainly know I won’t. I can’t shift, I can’t link my pack. I can’t even mark my mate, mom. Looking at him markless would be a daily reminder of every way I’m not good enough.” I say to her and she kisses my head, still holding me.

“What if I can’t have pups? Or I die trying to deliver them? Or worse, I pass on the broken wolf to the future king?” I say between sobs.

“Molly, the worst of those would be you dying. If you pass it on, you pass it on. The Goddess does not make mistakes. If that’s what is supposed to happen, then it’s what will,” she tells me.

“He hates me, mom. And he’s stuck with me. The whole kingdom is.”

“You don’t know that he hates you. I’ll admit, he made some very poor choices, but he’s here now and you know about each other and you’re kind of stuck in this together now. “ Mom tries to reason with me. “It’s only been a day, but it’s been a busy one and I know how the mate bond can be. Give it some time, get to know each other better.” She tells me and I know she’s right but it all just hurts so much.

We lay there a while and I fall asleep, though it’s anything but peaceful. I’m too hot, and I’m too cold. I can’t get comfortable. I wake completely and realize that mom is gone and I’m alone in their room again. I nally decide to get up and head down to my suite. I grab my things and attempt to sneak down but I nd that the pack house is unusually empty. Thank the goddess, I quickly move through the house and down the stairs and lock myself safely in my home.

I realize that the bond isn’t going to let me sleep well while both of our emotions are so high, so, giving up, I decide to shower quickly and head to the kitchens to see if there’s anything I can help with. I never really arranged anything with Oliver for this afternoon and evening, but I’m sure that when I didn’t show up he jumped in and is taking care of things.

I put on some jeans, a tshirt and a white chef’s jacket and head across the kitchens to nd them just as I expected and running smoothly. I peek in my ope and see Oliver and he looks up at me. “You look like shit.” he says to me and I’m thankful for him.

“I know. And I feel like it. I’m sorry I didn’t show up, but thank you for handling everything.” I tell him.

“Of course. But is everything ok?”

“Yeah, it’s ne. Things just got a little complicated.”

“Ok. But why is your brother ghting your mate?”

“Excuse me, what??”