

## Chapter 15-1

“Well. He certainly seems attentive.” my mom says, tossing Seth’s jacket down on the foot of my bed.

“Mom!” I exclaim, not knowing exactly what she heard, but I’m embarrassed to think she heard any of what we said. And she knows he was in the shower with me. I’m becoming completely mortified.

“Molly, I’d be worried if he wasn’t here. He’s your mate.” She says and gently guides me to sit at the vanity, picking up my comb. “You guys seem to be doing better than you were this morning. Did you work things out?” She asks me and she begins brushing through it.

“I think so. We talked a bit while dealing with my finger. I think we’re OK.” I tell her.

“Good. He made some poor choices, but he seems like a good man.”

“I think so, too. He could feel it when I got hurt and he was really worried. I think we’re OK though. I’m not happy about what he did, but we talked and I think I understand some. We’ll be OK.” I say with a small shrug.

“What are we doing with this mess?” She asks about my hair.

“Can you help me dry it? I’ll just leave it curly and save everyone the headache.” I say to her. And she smiles.

“That sounds great. Where’s the hair dryer?” she asks, and I grab it and the diffuser out of the drawer and hand it to her. She plugs it in and starts to dry my hair. My hair isn’t super curly, but it’s got some wave to it, for sure. I usually do something about it, but I’m just too tired to care about it today, especially since I can’t do it myself.

After a few minutes, my hair is dry and my mom puts the dryer back. “Ok kiddo, time for bed. Seth said to nap and I don’t think I want that man mad at me.” and I giggle a little. “He reminds me of your dad, a big scary Alpha with the pack but the kindest man to me,” she says with a smile and I know she’s right. My dad is terrifying. He’s an alpha. I know he’s killed other wolves to protect the pack, but he’s also the giant man who would put on a hat and have tea parties with me when I was small.

My mom helps me over to the bed and before I have a chance to move she grabs Seth’s jacket and wraps it around me. “I always sleep in your dad’s dirty shirts while he’s away. It helps to calm the bond some.” she explains to me and that makes a lot of sense. I can smell Seth and while I know he’s not there, I do feel more calm. Mom pulls back the blankets and helps guide me while I climb in and she tucks me in, just like she did when I was little. She walks out and comes back with my favorite bottle filled with water and places it on my side table. “Try to rest, it’ll help you feel better.” She says and walks out, leaving me alone.

Mom’s right, Seth does seem a lot like my dad. Many Alphas are so aggressive and possessive that there’s little respect for their Luna. Some of them have their Lunas just as a breeding machine to continue to produce heirs and strengthen their packs. Pregnancies with the offspring of Alphas can be rough. That’s why my parents only had Robert. I mean, they have me too, but mom didn’t have to give birth. Seth is an only child, so I think it’s a safe assumption that royal pregnancies aren’t any easier.

I wonder how many kids Seth would like. Would he insist on having more until he has a boy? And would he be happy if we had a girl? He’s been so attentive and gentle with me since I got hurt earlier. Surely he’d be the same with a daughter.

Knowing that Seth was ignoring the King earlier while taking care of me honestly made me feel pretty special. I can sense how much he seems to care, even if he’s made some mistakes and avoided me previously. It hurt so badly hearing him say that he’d hoped to replace me, but I know in my heart that he never treated anyone the way he’s treated me today.

After a while, I finally give up and drift off to sleep, wrapped in the scent of my mate and, for the first time in a few attempts to sleep, I’m actually able to drift off into a deep sleep. I awake feeling rested, still wrapped in his scent when I realize there's something on me. I crack open my eyes to realize that it’s Seth’s arm across me and I’m wrapped in his scent because he’s behind me, holding me as I sleep.

I wiggle and he lifts his arm enough for me to roll towards him. “Hi” I tell him with a shy smile. “Hi” he tells me back and kisses me on the forehead. “Did you sleep well?” he asks me and I nod.

“My mom was right about the jacket. Thank you”, I tell him gratefully.

“Of course. Are you hungry? I had dinner sent down here so we could eat alone.” he tells me and pauses for just a moment, seemingly unsure. “I hope that’s OK” he says, and it’s more of a question than a statement.

“Yes! Thank you!” I tell him enthusiastically. “I’m so tired and staying here sounds amazing.” and he smiles at me as he releases me and climbs off the bed, walking around and offering his hand to help me up as well. He leads me into the kitchen where there are two plates sitting on the bar and he helps me onto a stool in front of one. “Your dad contacted your friend about what you’d need. He said you wouldn’t be thrilled with the salad, but it’s what you need,” he says sheepishly.

“It’s fine.” I tell him with a small laugh. “I don’t love spinach but I don’t absolutely hate it either. It looks like he cooked the steak well at least.” I tell him with a shrug as he sits down next to me. “He made the same for you?” I ask, seeing we have the same thing and it’s not what had been planned.

“Solidarity.” he tells me, picking up his fork and knife to dig in and takes a bite. “You’re right. The steak is cooked well.” he says, going in for another bite.

“Of course it is. I taught them how to cook.” I tell him with a giggle, going to take a bite of my own, but realizing I’m struggling to cut the steak with my finger bandaged. Seth sees me pause, realizing my dilemma, and he reaches across, taking the plate and utensils from me and cutting it for me. He pushes it back towards me and squeezes my knee, no words needing to be exchanged.

“Thanks”, I tell him quietly and he squeezes my leg again. I try my food and realize that Oliver did really well. “It’s really good, but it would be better with some wine.”

“Absolutely not.” he growls out at me, an incredulous look on his face.

“I was joking.” I tell him with a smile. “No alcohol, only spinach. I know.” and as I look at him he smiles.

“How’s your finger feeling now? Still numb?” Seth asks me. “I can’t feel anything through the bond now,” he adds.

“It’s starting to hurt now. It’s like... half numb? I don’t know how to explain it, it just feels weird, honestly.” I tell him and he nods, furrowing his brow.

“I’m still not sure why I could feel it when you got hurt. That’s not normal, even with Royals and Alphas.”

“Who knows? It’s probably something to do with my broken wolf.” I tell him.

“Different wolf. Not broken” he says, looking at me and the way he’s looking at me tells me he’s not looking to discuss it. I make a mental note to not say broken in front of him again.

I finish what I can of my salad and the entire glass of water Seth had poured for me. I sit waiting for Seth to finish his food but I’m tired and I let out a big yawn. Seth smiles at me and, with the last bite of his food now gone, he stands up and picks me back up. “Back to bed with you,” he says, and turns back towards the bedroom.

“I can walk, you know.” I mildly protest, but he just holds me tighter until we’re at the bed and he places me back down on it, covering me with the blankets and kissing me on the forehead. He walks back to the kitchen and reappears, this time holding the medicine and vitamins. He hands me my water bottle and then the vitamins, but when he goes to hand me the medicine, I stop him. “It always makes me really sick. I’d rather not unless it gets really bad.” I tell him and he looks at me, torn.

“I don’t want you to be in pain,” he says to me, looking from me to the medicine. I take the vitamins willingly so he can see. Maybe he’ll realize I’m being very serious, but he still hasn’t put them down.

“If I take those you’ll be holding my hair back while I puke all night. I’d rather deal with the pain than the sickness unless it gets too bad.” and he looks up to meet my eyes.

“So you want me to stay with you all night?” he asks, his eyes burning into me.