

## Chapter 19-1

“Hey, Oliver” I say, walking into my office and finding him there at my desk. Though I guess it isn’t my desk any longer now. “Getting comfortable?”

“Nah, just keeping it warm for you.” He tells me with a smile.

I sigh, he’s not making this conversation easy. “It’s all yours now.” I whisper and hold up my hand. “There’s no way I’ll be back in here before I have to leave with Seth.”

“You finally did some real damage?” he asks, his attention now completely on me.

I nod in response. “Yeah, it seems so. Sofia stitched it up but it was too swollen to tell. Gotta go back this afternoon so she can look at it, but it’s still really painful. It’s probably the worst I’ve done.”

“She’s not really looked at it yet, then?” He asks, knowing the answer. “So there’s still a chance you’ll be back here. When are you leaving for the palace?”

“We haven't talked about it, really.” I say with a sigh. “He’s had something that he’s been working on from here, but I didn’t ask any questions. I know he wanted to see what the determination is on my finger before we make any plans. Sofia was worried I may need to see a human doctor.”

“Oh, shit. That does sound really bad, Molls. I’m so sorry.” He says, reaching for my good hand and I gladly take it. “You can’t name me head chef though, Alpha Robert has to.”

“He’s the one who told me that I needed to talk to you about it. It’s yours. You’re going to be amazing- you’ve already been so while I’ve been out.” I tell him with a sad smile. I know he’s going to do really well, but it’s still really sad for me. He’s about to say something but there’s a knock at the door and it cracks open.

“Hey, Molly. I’ve got the medicine that Albert went for” I hear a voice say.

“Come one in, Beta George” I tell my brother’s new Beta and he opens the door, smiling at us.

“It’s still weird to hear” he tells me and hands over the bottle. “Probably not as weird as ‘Princess Molly’ though” and he’s right- that is weird to hear.

“Gross. No.” I tell him and he laughs.

“You’re the only she-wolf in the kingdom who wouldn't be happy to be mated to the prince” Oliver says and he and George laugh at me.

“It’s not that I’m unhappy being mated to Seth. He really is great.” I tell them. “It’s the Prince part of it that I'm not entirely comfortable with. Or rather the part where I have to become a Princess. That’s the real issue.”

“Just remember us little people when you become queen.” George winks and turns to leave us.

“As I was saying, it’s all yours now, Chef Oliver. I’ll be here for a little bit to help if you have any questions and maybe if my finger isn’t too bad I can come cook with you a few times before we leave the Falls.” I say, trying to hold back tears.

Oliver stands and walks around the desk to pull me up and into a hug. “I’m happy for you, Molly. You do have a mate, and he cares about you.”

“I know. He really is great. It's working out for the both of us.” I tell him, returning his hug. “I’m going to go take the medicine and kill some time before lunch with my mom. I’ll come by this afternoon to let you know about my hand. I love you, Oliver.”

Squeezing me even tighter, I hear him say “I love you, too, Molly.”

I leave the office and walk across the hall to my home. I take the medicine and put it away in the same cabinet, but not hiding it this time. I have a bit of time before I have to go to find my mom, so I decide to go and read in the garden for a while. I grab my book and head outside to my favorite place and walk back to where I ran and hid just a couple of days ago in fear, but this time I’m at peace.

Seth really is a good guy. I know we’ve had some problems. There’s been some hurt, and he made some bad choices that really did hurt to hear about. But, he’s been kind and apologetic and I can feel they’re his true feelings through the bond. I know he really is sorry, and that’s enough. I climb under the trellis and begin to read my book, just relaxing and enjoying this time of actually not having anything to do.

I slip off my shoes and feel the ground beneath my feet- It’s always felt comforting. I can feel the energy of the earth and I feel at home with it. I love the feel of the sun on my skin, even though its fall and there's a crisp chill in the air. The sun brings warmth and happiness. The wind blows and it feels like a hug from an old friend and I begin to feel worried that the wind at the Palace won’t feel so comforting, nor the sun or the earth. I know it’s all the same, but is it really?