

Chapter 25

I'm awakened by Seth gently rubbing my back, "Hey, we've got to get going."

I sigh, knowing this means he's definitely going to try to go into the Rogue lands. "Are you sure there's no other way?" I ask, stretching myself awake.

"Unfortunately, I think this is the quickest." He says with a quick kiss on my cheek. "Rob and Albert are going to come down here and have breakfast with us and we'll head out before everyone upstairs notices, hopefully."

"OK. I'll get ready." I tell him, moving to get up. "Did you talk to Oliver about bringing breakfast over?"

"Your brother did." He tells me, getting up himself.

I go into the bathroom, using the restroom and then washing my face and brushing my teeth the best that I can with one hand. I attempt to figure out something to do with the mess that is my hair but there's not much I can do with one hand. And I don't think there's anything Seth can do, either. There's a gentle knock at the door. "Come in" I call out to my mate.

"What's wrong?" Seth asks me, seeing my frown.

"It's just my hair." I tell him, running my good hand through it, trying to tame it some. "It's just a mess. Mom will be here later, I'll have her help me. You'll just have to deal with looking at it like this." I say with a small smile. I've tried to act unbothered but the truth is that Seth's refusal to mark me very much bothered me. After he told me he wouldn't mark me last night I just rolled over, curled into a ball and went to sleep, completely ignoring what he was trying to say to me.

"Gladly." He says, wrapping his arm around me and kissing me on the cheek. "Breakfast is here, but can we talk before they get down here?" and I nod in agreement, terrified of what he has to say.

"I just want to make sure you're OK." He says gently. "You were pretty upset last night and I just want to make sure you're actually alright before I leave. I don't want to leave if things aren't fine between us."

I bite my lip, not sure where to begin explaining my feelings. "Altair wouldn't let you mark other women you were with before. What's wrong with me?"

"There's nothing wrong with you. He's worried it could hurt your wolf", he tells me gently, holding me tightly. I'll give it to him, the man understands that I run from my problems and he's holding me to be sure that I don't this time.

"If you don't want to mark me it's fine, I get it, but just tell me now." I tell him, trying hard to protect myself.

"It's your wolf, Molly. He's afraid it could hurt her." he growls at me in frustration.

"What if she is broken and there's no fix? I'll never be enough for you or your wolf."

"You are enough. I've told you over and over. Why can't you just trust me? If there's a chance we can help your wolf and then she can help you heal, then I'll do everything I can to make that happen." he tells me in frustration.

"And if she can't be helped?" I ask him, trying to hold back tears. "If I'm not marked then you still have a chance to get out of this."

I push out of his arms and walk out leaving Seth in the bathroom alone. I can sense that he's angry with me now, but his rejection really hurt. Especially since he blamed his rejection on his wolf.

I go to my closet to get dressed, grabbing some jeans, a black sweatshirt and knit hat. I move to the dresser and grab black underwear and put them on, but I'm having trouble getting the back of my sports bra properly in place. I debate whether or not I should ask Seth for help, but he walks out of the bathroom and immediately to me when he sees my struggle and helps me, saying nothing. Stepping away, I sit on the bed to put on my jeans, standing to button them, but Seth reaches forward and does them for me. I turn to put my shirt on but when I turn back I realize that he's left the room again. I grab my socks and hiking boots, sitting to put them on, unsure how I'll do so. I hear Robbie and Albert knock at the door and Seth lets them in. I hear them chatting and the scuff of the chairs against the floor, then silverware clanking on the plates. All the while, I stare helplessly at my shoes.

Eventually, I decide that I am strong and capable and can get them on myself, so I loosen the laces and get them on my feet, but I can't seem to get them tied.

"Molls, hurry up! It's getting cold." I hear my brother call from the other room, just like when we were kids.

Right. I can do this, but not with the splint. I unhook the velcro holding it on and slip my finger out. I slowly tighten the laces on my left shoe, being careful not to bend my finger. It takes a few minutes, but I do it! Now, to tie it. I try once, and fail. Twice. Another fail. I continue trying, and failing, accidentally bumping my finger a few times and bending it once, causing a substantial amount of pain. Tears of frustration begin to gather in my eyes and I finally decide that it's impossible and I go back to my closet to see if I can find shoes that will be ok for the walk, but that I can get on myself.

"What's taking so long?" I hear Seth from behind me.

I turn to see him leaning against the door, his arms crossed, frowning at me. He'd be beautiful if he wasn't so mad at me. I don't want to admit that I can't do something as basic as tie my shoes, but I don't have anything else that will work for this long walk to the border. "I can't tie my shoes and I don't have anything without laces that will work." I whisper, completely embarrassed.

I know he's upset with me, but I see his entire body visibly soften as he steps forward and takes my hand, realizing I'd removed the splint. "Why didn't you just come get me?"

"You're mad. I didn't want to bother you." I say, pulling my hand away and wrapping my arms around myself.

"I'm not mad. I just don't know what to do, Molly." he says, gently placing his hand on my hip and pulling me towards him slightly. His scent calms me some and he leads me back into the bedroom, pointing to the bed for me to sit. He surprises me as he grabs the splint and slides my finger back in before kneeling down and tying my shoes for me. To my surprise though, he doesn't stand immediately and places his forehead on my knees.

"I'm not going anywhere, Molly. Wolf or not, you're mine." He whispers to me and then looks up to meet my eyes. "But I'm not going to do anything that could potentially hurt you."

I nod at him, because the truth is that I do understand, but it still hurts. "I know. I just feel like I'm not good enough for you. Again." I tell him honestly.

Seth moves to sit next to me on the bed and takes my hand. "You have no idea how much I want you, Molly. I swear, I'll mark you soon. But Altair is screaming at me frantically not to, and I have to listen to that."

I nod at him in understanding as we both stand and go to the kitchen.

You good kid? My brother asks me, no doubt because of my tear-stained cheeks.

Yeah, just a little misunderstanding.

Are you sure? Need me to step in?

No, really. It's fine. I just got my feelings hurt, but we're OK now.

With that, my brother leaves it alone and we all eat in silence. Once done, we gather our things. After Rob and Seth go through their list of supplies to make sure it's all there, we head towards the door.

"Albert," Seth says, turning to face him before opening the door. "Are you sure you're alright with this? If you're not all in, that's alright, but we need to know now."

"I understand and accept what's been asked of me." Albert tells Seth very seriously.

Seth nods to him. "If anything happens, Molly is your only priority. Not the Alpha, Luna, even the King or Queen."

"I understand, your Highness."

"Good." Seth tells him. "Your loyalty will be rewarded when this is over, I can assure you."

"Thank you, sir. But that is unnecessary." Albert tells him. "Molly has always been a friend. There's no thanks or reward needed."

And with that, Seth opens the door and we all walk out, heading to the border. It's a pretty long walk, almost an hour and a half, and I have to lead the way because my brother isn't sure exactly how to get to the spot my dad told us to go to. "Can you guys get back when you're home?" I ask them.

"Yes, I've been paying attention." Seth tells me and I accept that.

We reach the spot and stop at the border. Albert stayed a few feet back to give us some time, but still close enough to jump in if anything happens. "You're sure about this? I won't be upset if you don't want to." I say to Seth but to my surprise, my brother is the one who answers me.

"Molly, we're going." Robbie says, a hint of irritation in his voice.

Seth steps towards me and kisses me deeply one last time before releasing me and taking a step across the property line, and then one step back, reaching back to guide me behind him. We stand there just a moment when we begin to smell the stench of rogue wolves. Two men appear, sickly thin and filthy, wearing clothes that seem to be two sizes too big as they stalk up to us slowly. Seth and Robbie both make a slight face at the smell but I begin to smell something else, it's almost like a faint smell of some kind of familiar chocolate, but the rogue stench is too strong to identify it.

One of the men, with dark eyes and sandy blonde hair, walks right up to Seth, stopping what seems like not even an inch away. He does something no one is expecting though, as he leans over to the side, looking past Seth and says "Hello, little Molly."