

Chapter 32-2

I open a bottle of wine, pour myself a glass and go curl up on the couch next to him with a book of my own until it's time to put the cookies in to bake. I read, and bake, and cook, enjoying having my mate near in a moment that just feels normal for a change. As I'm working on cooking dinner, I feel Seth come up behind me and wrap his arms around me.

"How long did I sleep?" he asks gruffly.

I smile, just enjoying being together. "I don't know, a couple of hours I think. Are you OK with an early dinner? I thought it would take me longer but once I got used to my hand it's been going well."

"An early dinner sounds great, Love. Do you need any help?" he asks.

"That's alright, I've got it." I tell him with a smile, happy to be doing what I love.

Seth goes to sit at a barstool behind me and it's nice having him here with me. "Are you ready for tonight?" he asks me.

"Yeah," I tell him, unsure how to feel about it. "I'm nervous, but excited."

"Molly, promise me you'll be careful," he says seriously, and I nod in response. "Listen to your gut. If something feels off, then get out quickly."

"I'll be careful," I tell him, turning around to look him in the eyes. "I promise. I remember her from when I was a kid. She seemed really nice. I honestly don't think I have anything to worry about."

"I know, Love. It's just hard that I can't go with you to protect you." He says, looking down at his hands. "I'm supposed to protect you, but she won't let me be there. It's concerning."

"It will all be fine. Maybe I'll come home tonight with a wolf." I tell him, smiling and unable to hide my excitement.

Seth stands up and walks back over to me, placing his hands on my shoulders. "Are you going to be ok if there's nothing she can do? I'm worried that she'll tell you your wolf is just stuck and I won't be there with you."

"I'll be ok, Seth." I tell him, placing my hands on his arms. "I didn't want to get too excited, but I just have a really good feeling about it."

"Whatever happens," he begins "I'll be right here," and places a sweet kiss on my lips.

We eat dinner, still just talking and learning more about each other. Seth attempts to help me clean up. It's clear that he's never washed a dish in his life, but he was willing to try. We decide to watch a movie, knowing that we're both growing nervous as it gets closer to time to leave. Seth pulls my feet into his lap and we curl up under a blanket, pretending to watch a movie that neither of us are paying attention to, both lost in our own thoughts.

"It's almost time, Love." He tells me and stands up, walking to my closet and returning with my hiking boots. "You're still sure about this?"

"Absolutely!" I tell him with a smile that I hope he finds comforting as he kneels down and helps me get my shoes on and tied.

He moves and sits on the coffee table right in front of me, taking both my hands in one of his and brushing a strand of hair behind my ear, then moving to cup my cheek. "I love you. Whatever happens, you're mine. Wolf or not, it doesn't change my feelings about you, it just changes how we handle things."

"I love you, too." I tell him and lean forward to kiss him. "Are YOU going to be OK while I'm gone?"

"Honestly, I'm probably going to be out of my mind with worry. But I'll manage." he tells me and his honesty is disarming. He seems to be taking the conversation with my dad this morning to heart, and I truly appreciate the effort. He's about to say something else but we're interrupted by a knock at the door.

"Just a moment," Seth calls out and he stands, gently pulling me up with him. He wraps his arms around me, his hands slipping under the edge of my shirt to find my skin and he takes in a deep breath, inhaling my scent.

I gently reach up and place my hands on his chest. "I'll be just fine. I love you." I tell him, running my hands slowly up and behind his neck. He leans down so I can reach him and I kiss him deeply, pouring all my emotions into this moment, knowing that it could be dangerous, but also feeling an overwhelming sense that this is the right thing for me to do.

"I love you so much, Molly." Seth says, breaking our kiss. I open my eyes and see that he's holding back tears.

"I'm going to be just fine, Seth. I can feel it in my soul." I say, giving him a small smile that he tries to return.

"You should go. I promise, I'll stay here and won't interfere unless I can feel you're injured through the bond." he tells me and kisses me one last time. "In a few hours you'll either have a wolf or I'll be marking you if you still want me to."

"I could get my wolf AND you still mark me, ya know?" I tell him and he chuckles.

"That's an option, too. Now go, so you won't be late." he says, releasing me and walking to the door, opening it to Albert, and surprisingly, both of our moms.

"We're here to babysit your mate" my mom tells me on seeing my confused face and I can't help but giggle as she walks in.

"Ready to go, Molly?" Albert asks me, but looking at Seth.

"Just let me grab my jacket and hat." I tell him and cross over to the rack, putting the jacket on.

Seth doesn't say a word, he just stands there looking at our moms as they come in and sit down and then back at Albert. He looks so nervous and it's so odd to see from this big, brave man.

"Don't worry, sir. I'll protect her, with my life if necessary." and Seth just nods once, not making a sound.

I walk over, jacket on and hat in hand ready to walk out when Seth reaches out and grabs my arm. I turn to look at him as he reaches down, taking the knit hat from my hands and pulling it onto my head, placing one last kiss on top and whispering "Good luck. I hope you find the answers you need."