

Chapter 37

“Your parents are headed to us.”

“We should probably go inside so you can meet my other parents then,” I say, surprised that my dad has lasted this long not charging in.

“Do you want me to tell them to stop?” He asks, helping me stand.

I chew my lip for a moment thinking. “I don’t mind if they’re here, but we should ask Benjamin before they get to the border.”

Seth nods at me as I take his hand and we walk to the door. “You ready?” I ask him.

He takes a breath and looks down at me with a smile that makes my heart skip a beat. “It can’t go worse than when I met your other father.” and I can’t help the giggle that escapes me.

I knock on the door twice and Lily answers it. “You don’t ever need to knock, Molly. This is your home. You’re always welcome.”

I’m not sure how to respond to her, because while it may have once been my home, it doesn’t feel like it right now. Maybe once the spell is lifted it will. I just offer her a weak smile and we step inside the home. “Umm, this is my mate, Seth. Seth, this is my mother, Lily, and my father, Benjamin,” I say and he steps forward, shaking my mother’s hand, then moving across the room to where my father is standing up to greet him.

Both men are visibly tense as they get closer to one another, finally shaking hands with one pump of their arms, no doubt testing to see who has the stronger grip. They release their hands and Benjamin goes to sit down, motioning for us to sit on the couch with him. I slip out of my jacket and Seth does the same. I take them from him, hanging them on the rack Lily had used earlier, and quickly move so that I can sit in between them when Seth does something that leaves me absolutely stunned.

“Sir,” Seth begins, “I’m sorry for the actions of my father. There’s nothing I can do to change what happened, but I can assure you that I won’t let any harm ever come to Molly.”

“That’s very big of you, Seth.” Benjamin tells him with a look of surprise on his face. “You two were just children when everything happened. You had nothing to do with any of it. My only concern now is Molly’s continued safety.”

“Mine as well.” Seth tells him as his eyes glass over again. He sighs deeply, pinching the bridge of his nose. “Sir, Molly’s parents... umm, adoptive parents,” he awkwardly corrects himself “well, they are worried about her and even though I told them I am with her and she’s alright, they’ve decided to come as well. They’re very near the border now. Will this be a problem?”

Benjamin chuckles and Lily just smiles. “It brings joy to my heart that they would be willing to break our treaties to make sure sweet Molly is alright. I’ll send men to escort them up here.”

I didn’t realize how nervous I was about them coming until he said that and I felt the weight of my fears lift. I don’t know why I thought my parents would stay there. I knew better than to make that assumption.

“I’m sure you have many questions for me,” Benjamin says to Seth, but Seth just shakes his head.

“Today is about Molly. I want her to ask any questions she has, to find the answers she’s needed for so long. She filled me in on your conversation already. Anything I need to ask can wait.” Seth tells him.

Benjamin looks surprised, but not in a bad way. “I’m impressed, son. Perhaps you’re not like your father much at all.”

“Lily,” I begin to say, unable to keep my curiosity at bay any longer, “will you tell me now about how to lift the spell you placed on me? I damaged my finger pretty badly and we’re hoping that my wolf can help it heal.”

“I need you to understand that hiding you required a complex spell,” she begins and I start to feel worried about things just from the tone of her voice. Seth must feel it through the bond because he gently places his hand just above my knee and squeezes it gently for comfort. “I didn’t want to block your wolf, but in order to block the magic and change your looks and scent, it had to be done. The spell can only be broken by your wolf if all the criteria is met.”

“What is the criteria for her wolf to be able to do so?” Seth asks her.

“I don’t see your mark on Molly yet, is that correct?” She asks.

Seth nods at her inquiry. “My wolf was concerned that marking her could cause harm to her wolf.”

Lily smiles at us. “Good, I’m glad he sensed that, because it would have.” I bite my lip, feeling ridiculous that I was ever upset he wouldn’t mark me. “You must mark Molly outside, touching the earth, under the light of a new moon.”

I worry my lip even more knowing that the new moon is tomorrow night. “Is that all?” I ask.

“That is all that needs to be done by you. The rest is up to your wolf.” she says but looks sad. “The spell can only be lifted though, if your wolf deems your mate to be true to you, an ultimate protector and lover. If she does not feel this, the spell will not lift. If it does lift though, you’ll have your wolf. Your looks will change a bit, and your magic will be unlocked.”

“And Seth’s dad being the cause of everything could cause problems?” I ask her and she nods, a sad look on her face.

“I’m not my father, though.” he says, squeezing my knee. “I know I’ve made some mistakes, but she has to know how much I love you.”

I nod at him, agreeing with him. “What happens, happens. It will be ok, either way.”

“What do you mean by magic?” Seth asks her

“I’m a witch,” Lily begins. “There are some things we can all do. We also all have a special connection to different elements. I connect more strongly with fire. I’m able to do more complex spells where fire is involved.”

“Yours is the earth.” Seth says to me with a smile. “I’m sure of that.” and I see Lily smile at us from across the coffee table.

Seth must be able to feel my worry through the bond because he moves to place his arm around my shoulders, kissing the top of my head. “Tell me about Molly when she was little.” he says to my new parents with a smile.

“Oh, Molly was always the sweetest little girl.” Lily begins with a huge smile on her face. “She loved to play outside in the woods”

Seth chuckles. “That certainly didn’t change any.” and I shake my head with a smile.

Benjamin stands and goes to a bookshelf, lifting out a leather bound album. “We don’t have many, photos aren’t as common out in the rogue lands, but what we have are in here.” he says handing the album to us.

Seth takes the black book from his hands, placing it in my lap. I run my fingers across the cover, noting how worn the leather has become. Was it an old book, or did they spend so much time looking at it that the cover wore down? Instinctively, I just know it was the latter and it brings a sad smile to my face. We all lost so much. I slowly crack the book open and see the first photo, of a much healthier looking Benjamin sitting in a rocking chair that was too small for him, holding a tiny baby, wrapped in pink. All you can see is a squishy face with chubby cheeks- me.

I’m trying my best to hold back the tears that are coming to my eyes at finally knowing what I was like before, knowing the things I didn’t know, but knew had to exist. Seth sees this and squeezes my shoulder, leaning over to whisper in my ear “You were a fat baby” and I can’t hold in my laughter. He reaches across to turn the page and the next photo is of just me. In this one I’m wrapped in a yellow blanket, no hat this time, just tons of curly black hair and bright green eyes.

“Look at those cheeks,” Seth says with a smile, running his finger across the photo and looking up to me. “I don’t know how I feel about your looks changing,” he says honestly.

“It’s just her eyes and hair.” Lily says. “My girl was too beautiful to change too much. I did just enough to keep her safe,” and Seth nods at her in agreement.

We flip through a few more photos before we get to one of a little boy with dark brown hair, though his was straight, and bright green eyes holding a little me. “That was your brother, Andrew.” Benjamin says, a catch in his voice. “He was my youngest son and was so excited to be a big brother. He would visit and drag you around like a doll once you were able to walk.” he says with a wistful smile, his eyes shimmering with unshed tears.

“I’m so sorry”, Seth says but to my surprise he’s saying it to me, and not Benjamin and Lily. “I hate that so much was taken from you.”

“It’s not your fault, Seth.” Benjamin speaks up before I have the chance to. “Both of you had nothing to do with any of this, but you had to pay the price for it. The Goddess had her plan, though.”

Seth nods to him. “Yes, thank the Goddess.” he says and leans over, placing a chaste kiss on the top of my head.

We look through the sparse photos in the album and when we get to the end I gently close it. Seth takes it from me and places it on the coffee table in front of us. He opens it and pulls out his phone, taking a picture of a couple of photos. He looks up to see my confused face. “I thought you might want some of your own.”

“Thank you,” I whisper, unable to contain the emotions in my voice at how thoughtful this man can be.

He closes the book and turns to Benjamin. “Thank you for showing us.”

Before Benjamin can respond though, there’s a knock at the door and I smell my parents. I can’t help but smile. Lily stands to go answer it but Benjamin starts to stand. “No, let me get it this time,” he says and slowly makes his way across the room, relying on his cane to get him there.

He opens the creaky old door and I see my parents standing at the threshold. “Hello Randall, Celeste. It’s been a long time.”