

## Chapter 41-1

Benjamin and I take our time returning to the cabin, neither of us saying much, just enjoying being around each other. He’s given me quite a bit to think about, and his offer really helped to take off some of the pressure that I’ve been feeling. There is so, so much riding on his mark being what reverses the spell that it really makes it feel far less special than it should be. Will my wolf feel that? Will it affect the outcome?

We reach the cabin and I can’t help but look at the old cedar tree that used to be home to a tire swing. I have no memories of it, and the only way I know it was there was that it’s in the background of an old photo, but I can feel the happiness that once came from there. I close my eyes and take a deep breath and I swear that I can feel the sound of kids laughter. I know that doesn’t make any sense, but it’s the only way I know how to describe it.

“You loved the tire swing that was there,” Benjamin says and I look up to see his smile. “You all four did. You all spent so much time swinging on it, and fighting over it,” he finishes with a chuckle.

“I can feel the happiness from the area,” I tell him and he smiles down at me.

“Your mate is probably right,” he says to me with a nod. “You can probably feel the vibrations from the earth, from the tree. There was once so much happiness there”. He puts his arm around my shoulders and gently squeezes. “I know it’s weird for you, and you don’t remember anything, but I’m so glad you’re here, Molly.”

“I’m glad, too,” I say with a smile, leaning my head into him. “I hope that someday I’ll remember.”

“You will,” he tells me. “I’m sure of it.”

He releases me and we walk inside. I take my jacket off and Benjamin takes it from me, hanging it up. My dad looks up from his same place in the same chair. I’m not sure he moved the whole time we were gone.

“Hey, Kiddo,” dad says to me with a smile. “Find any cool trees?”

“Actually, yes!” I tell him, excitedly. “There’s sugar maple trees and Benjamin said some of the local rogues make syrup!” I tell him as I sit on the couch across from him.

“Your mate may have something to say about your plans to move out here and become a maple syrup farmer,” he tells me with a chuckle.

I smile at him. “He’d probably move here willingly. Just abdicate the throne and make syrup. It sounds wonderful.” I tell him with a giggle.

“I think the whole kingdom may have something to say about that,” Benjamin says with a laugh, sitting down on the couch next to me.

“I think the whole kingdom is going to have plenty to talk about, anyway,” I say with a shrug.

My dad moves to pick up the photo album, looking through all the old photos of me that are there. “Your hair was so curly,” he says, smiling at me. “And you were so chubby.”

“I know. It’s weird.” I tell him, being completely honest. I know Lily didn’t change my looks much, but it’s weird to think I’ll look different.

“Molly,” Lily says, poking her head around the corner from the kitchen. “I’m heating some water for you now. Would you like some help washing your hair?”

I feel awkward, and I’m not sure how to explain it to her. “I think I’ll be OK, but I’ll let you know if I have any problems.” I say to her with a smile that feels forced. I know that she’s my biological mother, but to me, she’s a complete stranger. I’m not sure how I’ll be able to wash it, but I’ll figure it out.

We sit there a bit longer and I glance through a book sitting on a nearby table. After a bit, Lily lets me know the bath is ready. I head into the bathroom to the old, worn clawfoot tub. She’s laid out a couple threadbare towels and I notice a pair of old pajama pants and a shirt as well. It’s very thoughtful and I feel bad declining her help even though I’ll probably need it.

I undress, managing to untie my shoes myself and climb into the water, sinking down. The water is warm and inviting and I’m thankful it’s not freezing cold like I was worried it would be. I wonder who I would be as a person if I had grown up here. They have what they need, but it’s obvious that money isn’t abundant, though I guess they have more than most rogues do.

I grab the washcloth and use the bar of soap there- it’s just a boring, unscented soap, and begin to wash myself. I rub my shoulders, down my arms and back, moving down to my breasts when I catch the beloved juniper scent of my mate. There’s a gentle knock at the door and it cracks open as Seth quickly enters the bathroom.

“Hey, beautiful.” he says with a smile that makes my heart skip a beat.