

## Chapter 54-2

“It’s one thing to know that you’re going to be the queen, but it’s another to know that it’s actually going to happen, and soon, huh?” he tells me with a small chuckle.

I nod to him and gulp. “If we’re being honest, I’ve not really accepted it at all. It’s not something I’ve ever thought of, and it’s truly very intimidating.”

“That’s good,” he tells me with a smile. “That’s what will make you a great queen. You have an ability that most don’t, Molly. You can empathize with others and their struggles. You know the omega of your pack, and you’re truly the only person who has ever showed any concern to me about the living conditions of rogues. Your ability to consider everyone in the kingdom will help to make you a great queen.”

“It doesn’t feel that way,” I tell him honestly. “I feel like I’m in over my head. I don’t know anything about being a ruler of any kind.”

Peter smiles at me and holds out his hand to me. I’m still unsure of this man, but I’ve chosen to trust him, so I place my hand in his. “The job duties for a royal are taught, that is the easy part. Thinking of everyone in the kingdom and choosing to always do the right thing- that is the hard part. That is the part that so many have made mistakes with. It’s the part that is always overlooked. And it’s the part that I suspect you will excel in.”

“I’m glad you have some faith in me,” I tell him with a weak smile, “because I’m not sure about any of it.”

Peter looks up and motions for Seth to come join us, and he quickly complies. He reaches us quickly, reaching out to my hand and tugging it to lift me up, taking me into his arms.

“Everything OK, Love?” he asks me, looking into my eyes.

“You’d feel it if she wasn’t, son,” I hear Peter tell him and I can’t help the laugh that escapes me.

Seth looks at me, clearly a little offended. “He’s right. The bond is so strong I’m pretty sure you could feel it if I get even a paper cut.”

Seth releases me and sits next to his dad, pulling me into his lap. “Blood oath?” he asks and I shake my head at him.

“No,” I tell him, hoping he doesn’t get too mad. “I’m choosing to trust him. He won’t hurt me, because he won’t hurt you.”

Seth sighs deeply and lifts his hand, motioning my dad over to us. “She’s done as you expected,” he says to my dad as he reaches us and I furrow my brow.

“You’re sure this is what you want, Kiddo?” dad asks me and I nod.

“Their bond is strong, Randall,” Peter says to him and my dad nods. “Seth’s wolf was able to heal her. Before he marked her.”

My dad turns his head quickly to us, a look of shock on his face. “Bonds this strong are not common. You don’t hear about them often, but when you do, it’s because one of them ran into danger and was killed- and it killed them both.”

Seth nods his head at my dad. “I know, sir.” he tells him and dad runs his hands through his hair.

“You have to consider her life when you do anything, ANYTHING,” he tells him sternly. He’s clearly very upset about this. I thought it was nice that we had such an incredible bond, but I didn’t really understand the danger that comes with it. “You’ll take Albert with you when you leave us,” dad says, his voice booming with a tone of finality.

“Sir, we have a royal guard,” Seth tells him, squeezing my hand. “She’ll be safe, as will I.”

“Your guard does not know her, or care about her as a person- protecting her is just a job for them,” he says, crossing his arms. “Albert is one of my most promising young warriors, and he’s been a friend to Molly. He’ll be going with her.”

I can feel Seth becoming angry, but also being smart enough to not fight with my dad. “Have either of you stopped to consider that Albert may not want to?”

Seth gently rubs my back with his hand. “Molly, the only thing with more prestige for a wolf than being a top warrior in your pack is to be selected to protect the royal family. Our guards are the best in the kingdom. He won’t turn down an offer to protect the future king and queen.”

“I was telling Molly that I hope to retire and hand over the throne within the year,” Peter speaks up, thankfully putting the talk of guards to rest for now.

Seth takes my hand in his. “Are you OK with that?” he asks me, and I’m not really sure how to answer that.

“It’s not really like I have a choice,” I tell him with a weak smile and I point to my mark. “It’s too late to back out now.”

“I think it’s time for us to leave the two of you. Do you know when you’ll be OK coming home, Molly?” my dad asks and I just shake my head.

“Have you talked to mom, yet?” I ask him.

“No, kiddo,” he tells me, a sad look on his face. “She’s very upset about it, and she won’t talk to me. Peter and I each stayed in guest rooms last night.”

“Mom’s mad at you?” Seth asks his dad.

“Yes, son. She didn’t know about many things, and she’s very upset with me,” he says, looking down at his clasped hands. “She said she just needs some time to be upset.”

“Good, you deserve that,” Seth tells him, pulling me closer against him and I can feel how pleased this information has made him.

Peter and my Dad start to leave us and I feel a pang of guilt that I’ve messed things up so much for so many. “Maybe,” I speak up before they get too far, “I can make dinner for everyone tomorrow night? Since my finger is better.”

“That would be lovely,” Peter tells me with a smile. “I can’t wait to have some of the famous meals I’ve heard so much about. You’ll be joining us, too, correct?”

“Of course!” I tell him with a smile, thankful that we’ve reached a place like this when yesterday just felt so terrible. “We can all eat at my place. It’s small, but it will do.”

“I can’t wait,” he says and with that, the older men turn to leave us.

“You’re much more friendly with my dad than I expected so soon,” Seth says into my hair. “Does this mean things are OK?”

“I think we’ve reached an understanding,” I tell him. “I explained to him how strong our bond is, and he knows there’s a large chance that having me killed would also kill you.”

“And the past?” he asks me cautiously, placing a gentle kiss on my neck where his mark sits.

“He answered my questions honestly,” I tell him. “I didn’t expect him to actually admit that he would have killed me too, but he did. It’s a sick answer, but the honesty was oddly comforting.”

Seth holds me tightly, burying his face into my neck and slipping a hand slightly inside the edge of my shirt so he can feel my skin. “It’s hard to think that he was so close to killing my mate. If it weren’t for your dad, I wouldn’t have you.”

“I love you,” I tell him. He’s right. There were so many things that could have happened that would have prevented us from ever finding each other.

“I love you, too.”

“I think I’m OK with going back home now,” I tell him. “The memories are all back now, and they don’t come in flashes like yesterday, they’re just there for me to find.”

“That’s good, Love,” he says, helping me to stand. “Let’s go get your things and get you back home.”