Chapter 68

As we reach the border I can see Alex's blonde hair, and around a dozen men with him. Stevie takes off running towards his dad and leaps into his arms.

"What were you thinking?" I can hear him ask his son, holding him at arms length, inspecting him for injury.

"I got lost," I hear Stevie respond with a lie. Interesting. I guess he's not going to sell out his brothers.

As we get closer, I see that 3 of the men look like older versions of Stevie, and 2 of them don't actually even look old enough to have shifted.

"Boys," Alex says, turning to the younger boys. "Take your brother home. Your mother won't be happy until she can see him herself."

We stop at the line, waiting for the OK to cross. I look at Alex and he motions me over. As I get close to him, he opens his arms and gives me a giant hug.

"Thank you," he whispers into my ear.

I nod and smile. "You know he's not telling you the truth, right?"

"I suspect my other sons had something to do with it," he says, releasing me. "No one is giving up any information yet, though."

"He may have gotten a little scared when he found out the King is still visiting our pack," I tell him with an unsure smile. "Prince Seth may have played into it to get him to talk. I swear though, he was never actually in any danger. We just scared him a little to get him to talk."

He nods at me. "Want to tell me why he was there?"

"Want to tell me why you didn't contact me about the missing she-wolves out here?" I return and he looks surprised.

He stares at me, not giving anything away with his face, and certainly not giving me any information.

"There aren't any missing from Lunar Falls and to the Alpha's knowledge, the pack has nothing to do with it," I tell him and he nods.

"The new Alpha, your adopted brother," he begins. "He's a good man?"

I smile a bright smile at him. "He's the best, Alex. HE made sure Stevie was safe the whole time, not me."

"May as well bring them on over," he says and waves them in. "I can fill you all in on the situation as we walk. Lily is very excited about seeing you."

"And Benjamin?" I ask him, looking down at my feet.

"We all know what you remember now, Molly," he says to me. "We all know you're going to need some time. Want to tell me what happened with your magic? Lily was thrilled to find out that you still have it."

"I accidentally used it," I tell him as Seth approaches us. "I cut down a tree, but I wasn't trying to."

"You uprooted it, Love," Seth says to me and holds his hand out to Alex. Alex bows slightly and shakes his hand.

"We didn't properly meet before," Seth says to him. "I'm Prince Seth. And you're Beta Alex, correct?"

Alex looks at him and c***s an eyebrow. "I am. I assume my son had a lot to say?"

"We didn't press for too much," Seth tells him. "We mostly wanted to know why you have wolves at the border."

"That's a conversation that would be best to have with Benjamin," he says and Seth nods at him, glancing at Robbie, who also nods once. "It's not a new issue, but it is resurfacing again now."

We begin to walk towards the cabin, Alex leading the way. Alex tells them a few funny stories of me as a kid, a couple of which I don't even remember. As we approach the cabin, I stop and take a moment, taking a deep breath. "You can do this" I tell myself, still unsure how I feel about having any kind of magical ability. I almost convince myself I'm ready and I see the cabin door start to open revealing Lily, who runs out to me and pulls me into a hug.

"I was so worried you'd never be back," she whispers to me, and I can feel her tears fall onto my shoulder.

I was so unsure about this, but now that her arms are around me, I can't help but return her hug. "I wasn't sure I would be. I'm sorry."

"It's OK, dear," she tells me and I nod. "A lot happened. I'll answer any questions you have, about the past, or magic, or anything. Just please, keep coming to see me."

"I... I can't," I tell her and I can feel her sob. "It's not you. After the full moon and I shift, we have to leave for the palace."

"Maybe we can visit you," she says hopeful, pulling back to meet my eyes.

"I'd like that," I tell her and she nods. "I'm not sure Benjamin would be willing, though."

"Maybe some day," she tells me, taking my hand in hers and leading us into the house.

I won't go far, Love. If you need anything, I'll be right there. I hear Seth say in my head.

Lily and I step inside with Alex, everyone else staying outside on the porch to give us some time. Benjamin stands as I enter and takes a few steps towards me, but doesn't come all the way to me.

"Hello, Molly," he says with an unsure smile.

"Hello," I say, chewing on my lip.

"Could we speak alone for a moment?" he asks and I was not expecting him to want to, but I nod. Lily squeezes my hand and walks into their bedroom while Alex turns and goes outside, shutting the door behind him. "Would you like to take a seat?" he asks, motioning to the couch, and I nod.

I sit on one end of the couch and he sits on the far end, leaving some space between us. "You were so young when everything happened, and I was so overtaken with grief. I saw the way that you looked at me once you woke up. I don't know exactly what you remember, but I know it was how I blamed you," he tells me and I nod, looking down at my feet, my eyes beginning to fill with tears.

"I'm sorry," I tell him, trying not to cry.

"It wasn't fair for me to blame you. You didn't deserve that, and it wasn't your fault," he says and looks off at the roaring fire. "Grief is a funny thing. I blamed you for their deaths and thought if you were away from me then I would feel better. But I was wrong. I just grieved the loss of all of my children, especially you. I didn't realize just how bad it would feel until after they adopted you and the bond we had left was completely severed. Yes, I lost my strength, but it was interesting that my strength was tied to you the whole time." None of this was anything that I even remotely expected him to say to me, and I don't know how to respond to him. I just continue to look down at my feet, clasping my hands together tightly.

"I had started to lose my strength before the adoption, if I'm being honest. That really did me in though. It needed to happen, though. The Bardulf's really took good care of you. We kept an eye on you, but to be honest, I was never really worried. I knew you would be safe with them."

"They really did love me. Do love me," I correct myself and look up at him.

Benjamin smiles at me. "I'm glad. I made many mistakes, but sending you away was what haunted me the most. I need to be completely honest with you, though," he says and I nod to him. "After the boys were killed it occurred to me that YOU were left to fulfill the prophecy, and I wondered if the Prince would be your mate. There was no way to be sure though, not until you were old enough to shift. I figured Peter would kill you, either way. The Prince is good to you though?"

Woah. He knew Seth was my mate. It's a bit hard to wrap my mind around that. "He's really good to me," I tell him with a smile.

"I still worry about his father," he says and looks off into space. "He took so much from me. What's to stop him from hurting you now?"

Maybe this is why our bond is so strong. I hear Sage in my head and I have to agree with her.

Do you think it's OK to tell him?

I think you should

"Our bond is strong," I begin to tell him. "Unusually strong. We're very sure that if one of us dies, the other will as well. Peter can't hurt me without hurting Seth. But I don't think that's anything that we ever need to worry about."

"I had wondered, based on what you told me," he says with a nod. "A bond like that is very rare."

"I know," I tell him. "So, umm, I spoke with King Peter. He will be passing a law before he steps down from the throne, completely outlawing the murder of children before their first shift."

"He's trying to make amends now," he says, looking a little upset.

"Actually," I tell him, and he looks at me. "He offered to take a blood oath that he wouldn't hurt me. I didn't feel it necessary, given our bond, and requested this as a formal law, instead."

"How can you be so forgiving of the man who murdered your brothers and took so much from you?" he asks me, looking upset.

"I have a list of offenses from multiple people that I have to find forgiveness for," I tell him, a little upset. "He killed my brothers. You blamed me and sent me away. Lily sent me away, twice. My mom lied. There's so much blame to go around for so many things. I find that I have to forgive him because he's my mate's father. We will have to live with him soon, and I need to come to terms that he's not the same man he was then. Just like I have to accept that you are not the same man who yelled at me and blamed me for my brother's deaths."

"These are not the same things though," he says raising his voice a little.

I look at him and square my shoulders. "No, they are not."

"Then how can you forgive him, and not come to see us, like we are bad people?" he asks loudly.

"It's not that I think you're bad people, I just..." I pause, not really knowing how to explain how I feel. "You blamed me, and you didn't want me anymore," I say, a few tears escaping. "I spent 18 years thinking that you didn't want me, but the way the memories work, I've only just remembered I even had brothers. It's hard. There's enough forgiveness for everyone, it's just going to take some time."

"I guess that's the best I can ask for," he says with a weak smile.

"I didn't know anything about Peter when I met him. He was kind, even when it seemed I didn't have a wolf. Seth struggled with that at first, but Peter was the one who helped. It's hard to think that the kind man I met then, who has been the most consistent one in reassuring me that I am made to be the queen, is the same one who I watched murder Jason. I truly don't think he's the same person he was then. Time and guilt have changed him, like you just said they've done to you." He nods a little and looks down at his feet and I note that I continue to do the exact same thing. He must be where I got that from, and the thought warms my heart a bit.

"Seth really is a good man," I tell him. "As is my brother. They came with me."

"To protect you from me," he spits out, his voice laced with venom.

"Yes. You've created a whole pack in the rogue territory, and then sent warriors to pace the border," I tell him with a shrug. "No one knew what was going on and if it would be safe."

"You'll never be in danger from the wolves in my pack. In a better world you would have grown up in this pack," he says, slightly less angry. "But it could have been you that was taken."

I look at him with sympathy, realizing how difficult this has been for him. "I know, and we want to help. Will you please tell me about the missing she-wolves?"

"I will, but I need something from you first," he says, and that piques my curiosity.

"What's that?" I ask, very curious to know what he wants from me.

"I assume you'll eventually leave Lunar Falls and move to the palace?" he asks.

I nod to him, slowly. "After I shift. I'm staying at the Falls for that."

He smiles slightly at that, and I'm not sure why. "I'd like for you to take Albert with you. Put him in your guard. It will make me feel better having someone from my old pack with you, even if he doesn't remember it."

I look at him and smile brightly, laughing a little. "Done. That was already the plan, though we haven't asked him, yet."

"Good," he says and glances up at the door. "He seems to have grown into a fine young man."

"He's always been very kind," I tell him. "He worked hard in school and worked his way up as a warrior. He really is one of the best the pack has."