

Chapter 10

Seth

"Walk an old lady out?" my grandmother asks of me. I turn back to Molly to nod her nodding encouragingly as she moves to talk to her dad.

"I'd love to," I say to her, trying not to let her know that I'd really rather not, especially not without Molly. But I offer her my arm and lead her out of the room. "I'm sorry. I'm not familiar with the Packhouse. You'll have to direct me."

"Down those stairs and out the door," she says kindly. "I need to have a talk with you."

I try my best not to sigh in frustration. I need to talk to Molly about the situation with David. I was leaning towards making him the Alpha, making it easier to keep my eye on him, but Molly will never go along with that if there's a chance that the bond between him and Celeste could return. Hell, Randall would rip my head off.

"Can you tell me about Molly's mom when she first arrived here?" I ask her and she bristles a bit, but continues as we exit the door. She points off to a bench and I lead her to it.

"She was young and terrified," she says, taking a seat. "Her first shift was while running for her life, and it left her injured. Nothing too bad, but the whole situation was so traumatic. She stayed with us for a few days, and then in our basement when her heat cycles began."

Heat cycles? That's not common for an unmated shewolf. "Did they begin because of the bond?"

"Possibly, or because she shifted so early," she tells me. "It's hard to know, but her wolf told her once it was from the early shift. I didn't ask you to come with me to talk about Celeste, though."

I nod to her, realizing that she's right. She obviously needed me to discuss something else. "I'm sorry. I thought perhaps I could get more information about it all."

"It's alright, Seth. King Seth," she corrects herself and I inch.

I rub the back of my neck uncomfortably. "I'm sorry about that. Because our parents are so close, and because my dad used to do the job, I sometimes think they forget that the final decision on matters lies with me."

"And your mate," she says with a smile and I nod.

"She'd never let me forget her."

She nods to me with a knowing smile. We sit in silence for a moment as I wait for her to tell me why she wanted to speak with me. She looks at her feet, at her hands, off in the distance, but for the longest time, she doesn't speak.

"I'm sorry," she says softly and I turn to look at her in confusion. This isn't at all what I expected. She sighs slightly, making me smile as it reminds me of myself.

"I don't believe you have anything to apologize for," I tell her, shaking my head.

"But I do, Seth. I do," she tells me, gently patting my knee. "Do you remember coming here as a kid?"

I nod. "Yes. But you weren't here."

"I was, but I did not meet you," she tells me, wiping a tear from her face. "Your father had business here and your mother tagged along with you. She tried to apologize to me, tried to introduce you to me, but I wouldn't listen to any of it. I was still so angry with her."

"Because of the order?"

"Partly. But mostly because she had placed her friendship with Celeste over me, or that's what it felt like. I grieved so deeply for my mate. I realize now that it clouded my judgment. I missed out on many things, but my biggest regret is missing out on knowing you. She was so proud of you, so excited for me to meet you, and I just refused."

Her words sting, and I frown slightly. "And now you're past it? What took so long?"

"Honestly," she begins. "It was the article your mate published. I knew you had found your mate, but I didn't know who she was until then. I realized when I read it that the girls wolves must have known, on some level, that you two would be mated to each other. They knew that it was important to protect Celeste, because they needed to protect your mate."

She's probably right. Our wolves always know more than we do, even if they don't realize it. Our mom's wolves always protected each other because they were protecting their mates mothers. If anything had happened to either of them, one of us may not be here.

"I'm sorry I refused to meet you that day, Seth," she tells me, holding her hands together in her lap. "I missed out on your entire life."

"You missed out on Mom's life, too," I say softly, remembering that time I heard her crying, telling my dad how she just needed her mom to tell her what to do. "She needed her mom to be there when she became a mom."

She sighs and looks at me, a small smile tugging at her lips. "Molly told me that you're a good man. She was right. You're going to make a great king, but more importantly, you're going to be a good father. I saw you when they arrived. Your little girl is smitten with you."

I can't help but smile at her words and the thought of my pups. "Cora. She has magic."

She nods. "Queen Molly told me."

"I'm terrified I won't be able to care for her," I say softly. I don't fully understand everything that happened between her and my mom, but I know that she's someone I can confide in. "She's so different, and so special. I want her to be safe, but I'm also afraid I'll smother her. And I'm afraid I'll push Andrew to protect her so much, that he'll keep his distance when he's old enough to make his own choices."

"You're going to screw it all up," she says with a small laugh. "It's part of being a parent. We make mistakes and, hopefully, our kids will forgive us for them. They'll know how much you love them."

I walk my grandmother back to her home and head back to the packhouse in silence, lost deep in my thoughts. There's been so many secrets, and I feel so much hurt, but it's drug up all my own fears and insecurities as a parent. I walk upstairs, following the scent until I find the room they've set the twins up in.

As I crack the door I can see a very pregnant Molly sitting in the room with them, handing them toys and smiling. Andrew is holding a toy rattle that he's shaking around, a giant smile on his face as Cora tries to place a triangle shaped block into a hole on a box. I try to be as quiet as possible as I sneak in, closing the door softly behind me, but my favorite girl spots me.

"Dada!" Cora exclaims, tossing her toy aside and crawling over to me.

I reach down and lift her into my arms, walking over to sit in the room next to my mate. I place Cora on one leg and reach over, lifting Andrew and placing him on my other leg. I wrap my arms around them and pull them tight to my chest, inhaling their scents. My grandmother is right, I'm going to screw it all up. I just hope they can forgive me for any mistakes.