

Chapter 11

Audrey

A knock at the door interrupts the quiet. Peter had tried so hard to make me relax after the meeting, after seeing my mother. After seeing my son. Seth did well as King, holding the meeting, keeping his emotions in check. He even corrected everyone, reminding us all that he outranks us. I couldn't have been prouder, but my heart still hurts.

For as well as he did as King, he broke my heart as my son. He wouldn't meet my eyes, not once. I could feel the anger coming off of him still as he sat there, trying to gure out what to do.

I can smell him as he enters the room and I don't know if I should be hopeful or hide away. I hear the mued voices of my two favorite men, so I decide to get out of the bathtub and dry off. I pull my robe on, wrapping it tightly around me as Peter sneaks in, a small smile on his face.

"I told you," he tells me, rubbing my arms gently. "He just needed some time."

"He's alright?" I ask hopeful.

"He's got a lot going on in his mind," he tells me, reaching for the underwear I had laid out on the bathroom counter and hands them to me. "He's getting there, but this isn't something that can't be repaired."

I nod, slipping the clothes on and moving to grab the pajamas. I'd put on something better if it wasn't in the room with my son, but this will just have to do.

Peter walks back to the door but pauses and turns to me with tears in his eyes. "He hugged me, Auds," he says softly, his voice cracking a bit. "I don't know the last time that he did. Certainly, before he learned what I did to Molly's brothers. What I did to Molly."

My heart swells at hearing this. We both know that Molly had forgiven him completely, no hint of malice ever being there. Seth on the other hand- well, I wasn't sure my son would ever forgive his father, so protective of his mate. Maybe there's room for forgiveness for the both of us.

Peter leaves, allowing me time to nish dressing and pull myself together. I look at myself in the mirror, my makeup long washed off, just some leftover eyeliner that smeared and wouldn't come off. My son won't care, I remind myself gently. My son.

I walk out and nd him seated on the small couch on the far wall, his hands folded together as his elbows rest on his knees. He's wearing sweatpants and no shirt, an odd look for a conversation with his mother and I realize that he probably couldn't sleep and Molly made him come.

I look around and realize that Peter left, giving us time alone, and something about that makes me feel so vulnerable. There's no one here to help me, no one to protect me from dealing with the anger and hurt, but it's what I caused.

I walk over and sit next to him, unsure what to do, so I fold my hands together and place them in my lap. "I'm sorry," I whisper to him, unsure what else to say.

"I know," he says softly, unmoving. "She told me."

I'm not exactly sure what he means. I'm sure 'she' is my mother, but I'm not sure what exactly she told him. Would it even have been the truth? I stay silent, waiting for him to continue.

"She told me you tried to apologize, that you wanted her to meet me," he says, swallowing hard as his shoulders slump. "But she refused. She didn't want to see me."

I feel my lip quiver upon hearing this. "I never wanted you to know that."

He nods, still staring at the oor beneath us. "It was easier to tell me that she was dead than to tell me she didn't want to meet me."

It's not a question, but a statement. It's a statement that's laced with all the hurt he's feeling. I can't take it anymore and I slip my arm around his bicep, leaning my head onto it. "It was," I tell him. "I just wanted you to be happy."

"I know," he tells me, nally looking over at me. "I couldn't understand it at rst. After I talked to her I went and held the twins and I just... I got it. I'd do anything for them. Molly pointed out tonight that she was able to forgive dad for everything because she knew that if she didn't, I'd have walked away from you both."

"I expected you to when he told me," I tell him honestly. "I was furious about what he had done, but even more so when it meant that it may take my son. But then Molly invited us for dinner and there was hope."

Seth nods and remains silent, sitting back against the couch and pulling his arm from my grasp. He surprises me as he puts his arm around me and pulls me to his side, holding me tightly.

"I'd burn the whole kingdom down to protect the kids," he tells me. "Especially Cora. I don't want either of them to ever hurt."

"I know," I tell him. "She's lucky to have you."

He sighs, looking up at the ceiling. "Your mother told me I'm going to mess up. I'm going to do SOMETHING to hurt the kids."

"You won't," I reassure him, rolling my eyes at my mother. "You're a wonderful father, Seth."

"She's right, though," he tells me and he looks so defeated. "You tried to protect me and told me my grandmother died. Dad tried to protect me and killed Molly's brothers. Benjamin tried to protect her and wiped her memory. Did you know she grew up thinking that no one wanted her? She was so fragile when we rst met, and I know I didn't help the situation, but she lived her whole life thinking that no one would want her because her biological parents didn't. And all that happened because someone was just trying to protect their kid."

"Randall never failed her, though," I remind him. "He's one of the best wolves I have ever met. He protected her when she was Benjamin's and he protected her again when he found her and didn't know who she was. He protected her, but did it the right way."

He looks at me and nods. "He's probably the only one who hasn't done something to her. Well, and you."

I smile at him. "You're a good man, Seth. As good as Randall is. Just be like him. Think about what he would do in a situation and do THAT."

He smiles at me, leaning down to kiss my head. "I'm going to ruin Andrew with my fears for Cora. He'll either think I love her more or I'll push him too hard to protect her."

"So don't do that," I tell him simply. "That's such a silly thing to worry about. She's different, and it's going to make things dangerous for her. He'll understand. We could never give you a sibling, so you don't understand. Even now, Austin would do anything for me. Robert would do anything for Molly. It's just how siblings are."

"But there's Dad and Lucas," he says with a sigh. "Lucas would kill him if he ever has the chance."

I pat his hand. "It's different when you're the King," I say gently. "Part of their issues stem from their father, and the other part of is just jealousy. Your father was adamant we not have any more kids after you and while that hurt a bit, I wasn't completely against it. I didn't want you to have to deal with the issues that they have."

He nods, leaning his head over on top of mine. "I love you, Mom."

"I love you, too, son."