

### Chapter 5: Lily

I couldn't sleep at all last night, worried that I had finally pushed Aolis too far. When the sun finally starts to rise, I've made my decision. Aolis is mine. Even if my feelings for him are brotherly, I can't lose him. In the year I've been 'dating', spending time with interested werewolves, none of them have come close to my feelings for Aolis. I need him in my life and that's enough for me to finally make my decision. 2

'It's about time.' Hera grumbles in my mind. 'I was afraid I was going to have to start killing Alphas to get my point across. I won't accept anyone but our mate.'

'I know. I've taken too long to get with the program, but I'm here now.'

'Good. Let's go get our mate.'

I call Leana. If I'm going to Araphyra, I know my parents won't want me going alone. My best friend is the only person I want with me.

"Lily, it's so early, is everything okay?" She doesn't sound like I've woken her. We're both used to being up early for morning training. I don't waste any time getting to the point.

"Want to go on a road trip to Araphyra with me?"

She quiet for a moment. "What happened, Lily?"

Leana knows me well. Better than anyone, except Aolis.

"I'll tell you on the way. Please say you'll go with me?"

"Of course. I need to talk to Rich. He'll need to make alternate plans since I've been his acting Luna for a year. But I know he'll let me go. Especially if he hears I'm going with you."



"Please don't tell him it's about Aolis." I say, not wanting anyone else to know what's going on.

"I would never Lils. But he'll want to know where I'm going. You know how our brothers are. They're as protective of us as our fathers."

"Sometimes more." I agree.

"When do you want to leave?" She asks.

"He gave me a week. I need to leave today."

"Wolf or car?" She asks, wanting to know how I plan to get there. 2

"Wolf, it's faster." 1

"Okay, give me a couple of hours." She says before we say goodbye.

I shower and pack some basic clothes before going to find my father. He's just finished training and I catch him walking into his office before heading to his room to shower.

"Lily, I missed you at training today."

I follow him into his office and close the door. He turns when he hears it click and after noticing the look on my face, he changes position to sit on the couch, tapping the seat beside him.

"Come tell me what's going on, Peanut."

Peanut. My father's nickname for me. My mother loves to tell us the story of how dad would go "peanut hunting" when she was pregnant. Maybe it's because I'm the oldest or maybe because I'm his only daughter, but I've always been the one he called Peanut.



"I've made my decision, Dad. I'm going to accept Aolis as my mate. I need to go to him." My voice wavers at the end, thinking of the hurt on Aolis's face last night. A hurt I caused him. I have to make this right.

"Do you want to talk about it?" He asks me gently.

I shake my head no. He pulls me into a side hug, wrapping his arms around me and kissing the top of my head. "You know I love you, Peanut. I support you, no matter what. If Aolis is the person you want as your mate, I think you are making a good decision. I also think you will make a fine queen one day."

I sniffle against his chest, tears falling down my face. My father has always been so supportive of me, always made sure I knew that he would never allow anyone to push me into a mate bond.

"Is someone going with you, or do I need to send a guard?"

I sit back, letting him dry the tears off my face with his thumbs.

"Leana is talking to Rich. She's going to come with me."

"Do you need a car?"

"No, we're going in wolf form. It's faster. He's waited for me long enough."

"That's my girl. When are you leaving?"

"I'm going to get breakfast quickly, then head out."

"Make sure you stay in touch. I want a call every day, so I know you're okay. Deal?"

"Deal."



He kisses my forehead and I stand, walking to the door. "For what it's worth, I think you're making the right decision, Peanut."

I stop and look at my father. He's never given me any indication one way or the other how he feels about Aolis. Sure, he's allowed him to be here, chronicling the Guardians history, but he's never pushed me toward or away from Aolis. He's truly let me make my own decision. In this moment, I love my father more than I ever have for being the wonderful man he is.

I rush back into his arms and hug him tightly. "Thank you, Daddy."

I feel him chuckle at the use of my little girl name for him. "You're welcome, Peanut. Make sure you say goodbye to your mother before you leave. I have no interest in getting into trouble because I knew you were leaving, and she didn't."

I turn to him as I open the door. "Bye, Dad. I'll be in touch soon."

"Make sure you are, or I'll be sending out a fleet of warriors to come find you."

I nod and go to find my mother. I find her in the kitchen.

"Hey mom, do you have a minute?"

"For you, sweet girl, always." She says, grabbing a couple of breakfast sandwiches and two mugs for coffee before turning back to me.

"Dining room or my office?"

"Office."

"Samantha, can you bring a pot of coffee to my office please?" Mom asks one of the kitchen omegas.




"Cream and sugar?" Samantha asks her.

"You know me well." Mom smiles before turning and walking with me to her office.

She sets up our breakfast on the table in her office and waits for Samantha to bring in the coffee before looking at me.

"What's on your mind, Lily?"

I take a bite of my breakfast sandwich, which is delicious. Canyon Ridge really does have the best food. 

"I'm going to Araphyra, mother. I'm going to accept Aolis as my mate."

"Finally!" She says leaning back in her chair and looking at me. Her eyes narrow as she takes in my face. I've never had a good poker face.

"Why now? Didn't you just go on a date last night?" My mother has always been very insightful, always observant, especially with her children.

I look down at the sandwich, feeling shame wash over me. "I did."

I look up at her when her hand comes to cover mine. "What happened?"

"He kissed me. I didn't want him to, but he did it so quickly and I was so shocked..."

My mother looks thoughtful for a moment. "That's why it poured rain last night." It's a statement, not a question. She's known Aolis almost his entire life. She's known King Ailduin for over 20 years. She understands the impact the fae have on the environment.

"Yes." I whisper.



"And, what made you decide that you want Aolis? This kiss?"


"No. He was here. He's given me a week to make up my mind."

She looks at me for a long moment. "And you're sure you want him as your mate?"

"I am."

"Then you better eat quickly and get out of here. You've spoken to your father?"

"Yes."

We finish eating quickly and when we stand, my mother pulls me into a long hug. "You're going to make an amazing queen, Lily Forte." 

"Thanks Mom." I tell her before rushing to grab my bag and shifting to head to Shadow Falls to get Leana.