

Chapter 5

Peter

It's late, and Calvin still hasn't returned. He's a grown man, I remind myself, but it's useless. He's not used to this, and what if something happened? Molly would never forgive me.

I kick the covers off and pull on sweatpants and a shirt, sliding my feet into shoes and heading out of the packhouse. I sniff around and catch his scent. Following it, I quickly realize it leads me to the Omega's area and into a... bar.

I smirk. Audrey told me he's a bit of a lightweight, so I suspect I will find him inside passed out. I couldn't have been more wrong, though, as I open the door to find him seated at a table, surrounded by she-wolves.

He turns to the door when I enter, and I can see the panic in his eyes. I give him a look, asking if maybe, just maybe, he's found her, but he shakes his head. No mate.

He turns back to a beautiful shewolf and smiles at her, a genuine smile! She says something, and he responds. He's relaxed, and everything that has been so difficult for him suddenly looks easy. He just hasn't been comfortable.

An older woman approaches me, smiling slightly. "They don't know WHO he is, and they won't recognize you when you're dressed like that. Stay for a drink."

I nod and accept the offer, knowing that I may need to help him back up to the packhouse if the empty glasses on the table are any indication. The beautiful shewolf beside him laughs and places her hand on his chest. I can see him tense, but he doesn't pull away from her.

"How's he doing?" I ask the woman.

"He's ne," she says with a smile. "He relaxed a bit, and the girls haven't left him alone."

Good. He needs that. "Who do they think he is?"

"A warrior for a visiting Alpha. He looks the part, so much like his father."

I nod in agreement. "I was shocked the first time I saw him. Their wolves are nearly identical, too."

Calvin comes and takes the seat beside me. "We should head back soon."

"I wasn't trying to ruin your fun," I tell him, draining my glass. "I'll go back."

"No, I'm tired," he says, and I nod. He's not tired, he's overwhelmed.

After some goodbyes and pouting shewolves, we head out and return to the packhouse.

"I have some questions," he says, so I stop outside, unsure if he wants to be alone for these questions or not. "... it's... Gus always told me to wait for my mate. He said having s*x with someone who isn't my mate wouldn't be good."

I nod in understanding. "I think Gus would have told you anything to keep you inside the safety of the bubble," I tell him gently.

"Girls are so... forward," he says. "They know I'm not their mate, but they're still so... soo..."

"Interested?" I offer, and he nods. "Listen, Gus lied to you. To keep you safe, but the fact of it is that having s*x feels good, even if it's not with your mate. But, when it IS with your mate, it's something that can't be described."

He nods and sits on the ground under a tree. "Did you?"

"I slept with anyone who would look at me," I tell him with a small laugh. I had, and I'd not felt bad about it at all. "I was the Prince, and girls were always there. But my best friend, the man who adopted Molly, well, he waited. It was important to him."

"Did Mrs. Celeste appreciate that?" he asks.

"Celeste had been with someone else before they met," I explain, and he looks shocked. "It's complicated, but in the end, it was more difficult for her to get past her guilt than for Randall to forgive her. Honestly, he never even thought there was anything to forgive."

He nods and leans his head back, looking up at the stars. "s*x is complicated," I continue. "For some, there's so much morality intertwined with it, and for others, it's not a big deal. The problem, though, is not knowing who you're mated to or how she will feel about it."

"I'm going to stay out here a while," he says. "I just need the quiet."

"Good night," I tell him at his dismissal and turn to go inside.

I knock on Calvin's door, and he opens it, standing before me in a worn pair of khakis and a black t-shirt that looks like it's holding on for dear life stretched across his muscles.

"I'm sorry," he says. "I just can't do another suit."

"I don't care," I tell him with a wave of my hand. "Let's go."

I place myself between him and Alpha Chris again, trying to keep the young Alpha from bombarding him with conversation. He's nice, but he's a kiss-ass. I should have taken Calvin to a different pack first. Today, we will meet with the higher-ups and head out to the next pack unless one of them is his mate. Well, we'll head out to the woods for a day and then go to the next pack.

We eat quickly and follow the Alpha to his office, where a few people are already gathered. Alpha Chris introduces us, and I politely shake the Beta and Gamma's hands before I'm introduced to their mothers, sisters, and a few cousins.

"No," Calvin tells me with a shrug, causing me to laugh a bit. Straight to business, as always.

"This is Queen Molly's brother," I explain to them. "We're on the search through the kingdom for his mate. Unfortunately, you ne ladies are not her."

A gorgeous blonde frowns, but Calvin doesn't even seem to notice. He was much more interested in the brunette at the Omega's bar last night.

I turn to him and find him standing a few steps back, his hands shoved in his pockets, uncomfortable again.

"Why were you comfortable in the bar last night?" I ask Calvin as we pull away from the packhouse. I have my suspicions, but I want to hear it from him.

He shrugs, not saying anything for quite some time.

"I know that you know why," I pry, not willing to let this go. "You were in a crowded bar and were more comfortable than I've ever seen you."

He sighs and leans his head back against the headrest. "Our pack was well off when I was a kid, but Dad made us work for everything. Then we were broke and in the Rogue land. It was really rough at first, but we were happy. Then, I was taken inside the bubble. We had necessities, but if Gus got held up, we had to scale back our use of things.

"I spent most of my life being poor, and then Molly came for me, and there's just so much of everything all of the time."

Just as I suspected. "You know, you deserve these things, too?"

He shakes his head. "I didn't before Molly became Queen," he argues. "You cast us out into the rogue land."

"I cast your father out because he kept breaking the statute of secrecy," I try to explain. "I never could have expected your mother to follow and take you kids with her."

His hands form fists in his lap, but he says nothing else.

"I made mistakes, Calvin. I recognize how much they cost you."

"I know," he says softly. "What if I'm mated to some rich Alpha's daughter?"

I furrow my brow in confusion as we near the place Alpha Chris said we can camp tonight. "Then you're mated to a rich Alpha's daughter."

He shakes his head. "I can't take care of someone like that. I have no job, no money, no home. I don't even have a pack to take her to. And Alpha's daughter will reject me, and she should."

"You are forgetting you have the Alpha gene, though," I remind him. "I don't know how you forget so easily because it rolls off you. Seth and Molly could give you a pack if something happens at another."

"I wouldn't deserve it," he tells me.

"There will be so many options, and they'll all depend on the shewolf you're mated to," I explain. "The Goddess doesn't make mistakes. She has the perfect wolf somewhere for you."

He nods, moving over to reach into his pocket, and pulls out a small piece of paper. "The girl from last night gave me this," he says, unfolding it to show me. "She said to call her if I don't find my mate."

I smirk as I glance at the phone number written on the paper.

"I don't understand," he admits.

"It's her phone number, Calvin," I explain to the poor kid. I hope he didn't say anything stupid when she gave it to him. "She's interested in you."

"Like, to marry me?"

I try my best not to laugh. "Maybe, or she may just want to sleep with you."

He stares at the paper before folding it and placing it back in his pocket. "She was rather beautiful."