

Chapter 22 First Shift

Lila's POV

I didn't feel the pain at first; the cracking of my bones sounded through the night, echoing across the trees. The sound was a lot worse than I could have ever imagined. The sound was what made me wince at first.

I caught the worried eyes of my mom as I heard more cracking; my arms were twisted in a position unimaginable. She made my brother and sister stay at the house while a few of us stood in the woods. She was sending me light and energy from her powers, trying to keep my mind occupied and my body calm.

It wasn't until my neck twisted and my entire form fell to the ground that I really started feeling the pain. I couldn't even hear my wolf speaking; I felt her canines ripping through my mouth. My teeth were growing, just as my mouth began to shift form.

I screamed as the pain began to course through my entire body.

My mother had told me to keep breathing, but I was finding it difficult to maintain my breath. My heartbeat was speeding up to a point where I thought it was going to bust through my chest.

I dug my fingers, which were growing large and growing white fur, into the dirt that surrounded me. My nails were bleeding as claws formed through my flesh. It was like my skin was being forcefully peeled off my body.

Tears burned in my eyes.

I knew this was going to be a painful experience, but I thought I was prepared for it.

They had told me that it was only the first shift that was truly painful, but I was starting to doubt that. I couldn't imagine that shifts after this would be much easier.

As I fought to catch my breath, a growl escaped from the depth of my throat. I had never heard my wolf growl like this before, but she was really struggling to maintain herself. She was trying to get me through this as painlessly as possible.

I was beginning to grow defeated.

My body lay limp on the ground, jerking around involuntarily.

I felt the soft hands of my mother on my back, trying to provide me some sort of comfort, but it was ripped away when my father took her arm and pulled her away from me.

"Stay back," he warned her.

Their voices became distant. I managed to glimpse into her tearful eyes. I knew she hated watching this.

I screamed again as I felt my spine breaking its way through my back. My muscles were growing, and I was soon starting to feel stronger despite being in so much pain.

I've heard that the first shift could take an entire night to complete. My mother's didn't last that long though and I was hoping mine wouldn't either.

Just when I thought I couldn't handle any more of this extreme pain, it was over.

I remained gasping, kneeling to the ground, but I was now in my entire wolf form. I couldn't look down at my body, I could only look straight ahead. My vision was so clear that I felt like I was looking through a telescope; I could see for miles, and so perfectly clear too.

I could hear everything as well; my senses were heightened, and it made me look around wildly as I tried to get a glimpse of everything.

It was like I was still me, but at the same time. I wasn't.

"It feels so good to be free!" I heard Val echoing in my mind.

As soon as I was in my wolf form, the pain was gone instantly. Like it was never there, to begin with.

"Lila bean, are you okay?" I heard my mother's voice echoing in my mind and realized she had shifted into her wolf form as well. My father stood beside her in his wolf form, a look of pride in his dark eyes.

"I'm better than okay," I replied, finally able to catch my breath.

Brianna, Uncle Blake, Aunt Sophie, and Uncle Aiden were all in their wolf forms as well. Each of them has different colors and different sizes. Brianna was quick to be by my side.

"Let's go for a run!" She finally said, excitedly.

I couldn't wait to go for my first run. Without saying anything, I turned in a random direction and began sprinting.

Enzo's POV

"Is this Leah, from Leah's Photography?"

"Speaking," the young woman, Leah, said on the other end.

"Hello, this is Alpha Enzo of the Calypso Pack. How are you doing this evening? "

"I'm well. Alpha. Is there something I can do for you? Do you need photos taken? I can book you an appointment. I have an opening later this week unless you need it more urgently."

"No, that's not the reason I am calling," I say, stopping her words.

She pauses for a moment.

"Oh, then how can I help you?"

"You have recently taken photos for a party held by Alpha Bastien, for his daughter Lila, at the Nova Pack. Is that correct?"

"Yes, Alpha," she says in return. "The photos haven't been developed yet. I'm a little behind. But they should be ready within the next day or two..."

"Once they are developed, would you mind giving me a call? I would like a copy of each picture; unedited if possible."

She was quiet for a moment.

"May I ask what the reasoning is?"

"As you might know there was an incident at the party and there might be a clue as to who had done it via your pictures. Alpha Bastien has trusted me to get to the bottom of it. I would like to see the images as soon as you can get them developed. The sooner, the better."

"Oh of course," she breathed. "I would be happy to help. I'll make sure to get them developed as soon as I can, and I'll give you a call. Is this the correct number you would like me to call?"

"Yes, that would be great. I really appreciate it."

"Of course, Alpha."

Without another word, he hung up the phone.

Now, I just had to wait; there had to be some kind of evidence in those photos that proved that Sarah was the one who poisoned Lila. Once I got the evidence I needed, I would be able to bring it to the school board.

Sarah's father wouldn't be able to do anything about it if I had proper evidence.

I left Bastien's office without touching anything else. Thankfully, nobody noticed me entering or leaving the office.

I made my way down the stairs and outside, Lila and her family were already gone. Max could sense, a moment ago, that Lila was in a great deal of pain. It was probably better if we didn't see that happening; I'm not so sure Max would be able to keep his cool if he saw Lila shifting for the first time.

The pain that Lila felt thankfully didn't last too long though. In some cases, the first shift could take hours, maybe even an entire night. But in her case, it only took a few minutes before she was running through the forest in her wolf form.

The scent of honeysuckle and salt water was wafting through the air; it was even more potent now that she was in her wolf form.

Max wanted to join her, but I refrained from shifting.

"Alpha!" Beta Ethan said in a mindlink. "There's been an emergency. You need to go to our pack hospital!"

"What is it? "

"It's your mother... she's been attacked."

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