

Chapter14

Rory's Pov

There was a light dusting of snow on the ground but the air was mild. I wasn't shivering. Perhaps that was my shifter blood keeping me warm. The air here in Colorado was light, and natural. It didn't smell like the pollution down near the zoo where I lived. There was nothing but nature, forests, and wildlife for miles.

Julianna, Caroline and Samantha stood around me guarding my body while I stripped out of my clothes. Wolves had a natural anity for being naked but I hadn't been around many others in my life, and when I had been around others, I was just a child. The only ones who knew I could shift were my parents, and my alpha.

Others suspected, others feared the fact that I was different, let alone an omega. Those who feared me kept their distance, those who were indifferent acted accordingly. I was never treated terribly but I longed for a friend. A friend that I had in Julianna.

Shawn, James, Jeremy, and Kasen all stood off near the middle of the eld waiting for us. They were here to supervise my shift. My rst willing shift in so long. I was nervous, excited, scared. I could feel the tension in the air.

The anticipation of the pain I felt when I tried to force the shift with the magic holding me back. My wolf paced anxiously under my skin. I could feel her there, feel her own fear. I sent a bit of comfort to her, soothing her, imagining running my ngers through her fur, our fur. I talk like we're two separate beings but in reality, we're one. We're an embodiment of each other.

Julianna grabbed my hand and looked at me. She had a strength about her, a sense of calm and pride. She was good. I could sense it from her. She was nothing like the Dark Witches who attacked us that night. I lost so much, but so did she. She lost her mother that night.

Her black hair blew around her with the wind. She had her tattoos marking her as a light witch along her arms, and hands. She had her crescent moon on her forehead which was a mark from the goddess. A sign that she was everything good. A sign of hope for wolves.

Caroline, who looked like her mother, had blonde hair and bright green eyes. She had the aura of life, and healing. She was a lover, not a ghter though she seemed protective of those around her, her family and friends.

Did I fall under that category?

Samantha had a hand gently resting on my shoulder. She reminded me so much of my own mother and I welcomed her touch.

We got to the center of the eld and the only scent I could focus on was that spicy cinnamon. I didn't want to. I wanted to hate him. I wanted to be able to ignore him. I didn't want to crave him. The way he was able to not want me, the way he was able to be in my presence without losing control. I wanted to be able to do that. Would I ever be able to stay in this pack with him knowing that we would never happen?

"Are you ready?" Caroline asked, turning to me.

"Do I have a choice to be anything but ready?" I asked in return. She looked at me with a small smile.

"No." she chuckled.

I looked around. Everyone was watching me. I felt nervous with all of their stares on me but none seemed demeaning to me. They looked ready to act in case anything went wrong.

I got why the women were here. I got why Kasen was here. Wherever his mate went, he went. I kind of got why James and Jeremy were here. Beta and Gamma. James and I, whether I like it or not, have a connection. He knows my wolf. He rescued me.

Jeremy trains soldiers, including newly shifted wolves. My guess is they think I will be like a new pup during their rst shift, and to be honest, I probably will be. New pups go through a large amount of pain feeling their bones breaking and reforming. New shifts can last minutes or longer.

I envy those who can shift in seconds and barely feel a pinch of pain. I used to shift all the time and I was fast at it. My dad trained me well but after years of non shifting, no practice, there's no telling what my body will remember. What will be muscle memory or what was forgotten in the years of gathering dust in my brain? Oftentimes, new wolves could lash out from pain or confusion so Jeremy's job was to help ease new shifters, train them, and guide them through it. Keep them calm and if need be assert his dominance. If all else fails and the human fails to remain in control of their wolf, Jeremy will use his position and dominance to keep the wolf in line until the human can regain their strength and control.

But why was Shawn here? I know he's the alpha, King. He supersedes all. He controls everything. But it's just me. The one wolf who he claims to hate. The one who he says he wants nothing to do with, so why is he here?

"Rory, did you hear me?" Julianna asked, pulling me from my thoughts. I shook my head and focused my eyes on her. She smiled and nodded.

"I was just explaining how this was going to work. No magic will be involved unless necessary. I'm just here for support. You're going to shift. Without an alpha command."

So that's why Shawns are here...

"You're going to frolic, play, chase rabbits to your heart's desire. You're going to run with your pack. It helps bond your wolves and I just have a hunch that you will need to bond with your pack, and fast. If you cannot shift Shawn will give you the command."

"Why can't Kasen or James or even Jeremy give me the command to shift?" I asked out loud like a petulant child throwing a tantrum.

James smirked at me. Kasen looked from his son to me with a well, do you want to explain or should I look? Jeremy, like usual, stood there observing. I think I've maybe heard him speak 5 times, if that.

"Because no one will give you a command in this pack. Not when your mate is here." Caroline chimed in nearly singing the last part. I heard a growl and rolled my eyes when I saw Shawn's jaw clenched and his sts balled.

"But...he's not..." I started but Caroline interrupted me.

"Whether he wants to admit it or not, he's your mate. I don't bother trying to understand why men do the things that they do but that's a story for another day. Ready to get your wolf on girly?"

She was always so straightforward. So unafraid to say anything. She was always kind and bubbly like she didn't know how to not make a friend. I admire that about her. It was what made me trust her from the start.

There were chuckles all around before those around me started stripping. Shawn pulled his shirt over his head and my mouth watered at what I found underneath.

He was t. Strong. His body was lean and packed with muscle. Muscles that bulged and exed with every movement he made. His golden hair had grown a bit and I wondered what it would look like if he grew it out even longer? The undercut he had when I rst met him was long enough on the top now to tie it back but that way I itched to run my nger through it made me imagine all sorts of things I wasn't ready to be thinking about.

I turned away and felt the heat reaching my cheeks as I noticed his hands reaching for the button on his pants. I felt his stare on me too, knowing I had been caught red handed.

I heard the sounds of shifting around me. A wet nose pressed to my palm and the black wolf from that rst night, the one who crawled under the truck to me nudged me. Caroline.

Two gray wolves sat next to each other. One with his mouth open and his tongue lolling out to the side. James. The other I knew immediately was Jeremy. They were twins in their wolf fur just like their human skin but their mannerisms were the same. Jeremy sat on his haunches and sniffed the air while watching the eld around us. Always the protector it seemed.

A large black wolf, much larger than any of the others sat next to a gray wolf licking on her muzzle. Kasen and Samantha. It brought a smile to my face to see him acting like such a puppy in love.

"You overgrown furball." Julianna said to Caroline as she pranced around. She went and sat next to an enormous white wolf. His fur was so similar to my own. White, nearly blending in with the snow, covered him from ear to tail. His ember eyes looked like red against the ice of his coat. He was large, and bulky. The wolf looked like it could snap a tree in half if he wanted to. Shawn. I could still smell his scent but those eyes I would recognize anywhere.

Caroline wolf nipped at him and he growled back before plopping her on the head with a paw. This side of him was new. Him being playful and caring towards someone. He was playing with his sister and I had a feeling she brought that out of him more than he was comfortable with showing.

"When do I shift?" I asked Julianna. I wrapped my arms around my breasts shielding them from the bitter breeze. I didn't have the girls standing around me to protect me from the cold anymore.

"Are you ready now?"

I nodded and she gestured for me to begin. I felt for my wolf realizing she was already at the surface ready to come out. I felt the bond between us and stroked it. I opened the mental door that my mother used to tell me about. Inviting her to become one. Inviting her to join the shift.

I felt the fur sprouting on my skin and smiled while tipping my head back to the sky ready for the wave of pain I knew would come next. And it did. I felt my knees wobble before nally crashing to the ground in a wince.

Jeremy's wolf trotted over to me and sat next to me. His piercing gray blue eyes bore into mine. If there was a formed mind link between me and the pack, I was sure I would hear him, coaching me. Instead, his eyes said what his mouth couldn't.

When I cried out from a framer of pain and the snap of bones his muzzle nudged me. My ngers dug into the snow before reshaping into paws. Claws replacing ngers, fur replacing skin.

My eyes pinched closed, whimpers coming from my throat. I felt a lick on my snout before opening my eyes to Jeremy. His wolf comfirmed mine the way he would a new pup through their rst shift. There was a growl but Jeremy didn't seem to care.

I looked around at everyone who was staring at me in awe, tails wagging, waiting for me to join them. Even Shawn had a little wag in his tail before standing and walking towards me. Julianna crouched and ran her ngers through my fur.

"You did well, little one. Now go run."