

## 6. Never alone.

Standing in the middle of the road was Jake, of all people. A loud gasp escaped me, as I did not have time for this right now. I calmly remained in my seat while he walked over to my car window.

Jake gently tapped on the driver's window, waiting for me to open it. But to my surprise, I did something I would never have done before today.

I stepped on the accelerator, and I drove straight ahead at maximum speed. I looked in the rearview mirror and I could see from this distance the unimpressed and dumbfounded stance Jake had taken.

Whatever he had to say to me could wait for now. Nothing was impeding my scan. I needed more information. I needed to see my pup. There would be plenty of time to talk to Jake later.

Once I was sure that I had enough distance between Jake and me, I slowly released my foot from the accelerator. I then began driving at an average speed, being that I was ahead of time and I was fast approaching my destination.

After ending somewhere to park the car, I made my way to the Radiology ooe. I spoke with the lady at the main reception and then I took my seat. Looking around me, I noted that most of the other pregnant women had their partners with them, and for a eeting moment, I felt a little sad until Indigo spoke to me internally.

"You are never alone, Kat. We are with you, always."

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The Sonographer placed the cool gel over my abdomen and picked up their transducer, placing it on top of my skin. After a few moments, an image came up on the screen.

"Is that my baby's heartbeat that I can hear?" I asked. It sounded strong, almost like a train.

The Sonographer nodded her head as if to say yes.

After some time, she lifted the transducer off me and handed me a paper towel to clean off the excess gel from my abdomen.

"Congratulations, your baby has a strong heartbeat! You'll be glad to know that everything looks normal for this stage in pregnancy," she reassured me.

"Our pup is strong!" Indigo called out internally with a sense of pride clear in her tone.

"That's great news," I exclaimed, turning my attention to the Sonographer.

I began shaking my head incredulously at the fact that I hadn't noticed the small bump that had once been my at stomach with prominent abs.

Being so busy with training and everything, I hadn't noticed my growing belly and my lack of a period. I guess stress will have that effect on you.

"Well, being that you are approximately twelve weeks along, I'm gonna give you a form to get some blood tests done. From there we can check for various genetic conditions, including Down syndrome," she said while taking measurements on the screen.

"Twelve weeks?" I repeated back to her, with a puzzled expression on my face, quickly trying to do the math.

"According to your measurements," she replied, nodding.

I took a moment to collect my thoughts.

"You seem a little shocked?" she replied with an empathetic glance.

"Ah, yeah, I just, I didn't know," I replied, shaking my head in disbelief.

"Well, you know now," shaking her head matter-of-factly while she reached out to squeeze my hand in support.

I half smiled at her for her caring gesture.

"Ah, the blood tests. Can I get them done today?" I asked, rubbing the back of my neck contemplatively, a sense of urgency setting in.

"Yes. There's a lab across the road. You might have to wait a while, it's a walk-in clinic, but no reason you shouldn't be able to get them done today," she replied.

"I noticed you didn't leave an address on your le. We will need to send the results to you from the scan," she said, looking up at me to gauge my response.

"Oh, I'm in between homes right now. Could someone call me with the results?" I blurted out nonchalantly.

"Yes, I'm sure we could do that. I'll just make a note on your le," she replied making a quick note on the computer she was focusing all her attention on.

"Thank you, I would appreciate that," I smiled softly. I tried to come across as headstrong and condent, but I was an anxious mess inside.

"Hmm, this is the strangest thing. I've seen nothing like it," she said, peering even closer at the screen.

"What is it? Is something wrong?" I blurted out anxiously.

"No, no, everything is ne, I wonder. Could you just lay back down? I just wanna check something out?" she asked, gesturing for me to regain my former position.

She quickly squirted the gel on my abdomen once again, placed the transducer on my abdomen, and after about thirty seconds, she let out an "aha!"

"What, what is it?" I asked concern in my tone, scared that something might be wrong with my precious pup.

"Would you like to know the gender of your baby, Miss?" she asked me.

"Can you tell this early?" I replied with raised brows and a scrunched-up wrinkly forehead, mouth wide open, and looking at the Sonographer as if she were speaking a foreign language.

"Not usually, but I can see it as clear as daylight. It's quite extraordinary," she replied, shaking her head, her palm resting on her cheek and astonishment visible on her face.

"Yes! Of course! I would love that!" my enthusiasm taking over me.

"You're having a boy!" she declared gleefully.

Exhilaration and elation coursed through me. "A boy! Oh, my!" I called out, touching my abdomen lovingly, tears gently escaping my eyes, and emotion overcoming me.

"Are you sure?" I asked timidly, looking up from my belly to her face.

"I am!" she replied proudly.

"Here, I'll just print out a photo for you, and you can see yourself," she exclaimed while going about the process.

"That would be amazing, thank you," I replied, feeling so grateful. This sweet lady made my nervousness disappear with her gentle, kind, and patient demeanor.

Wiping off the gel on my abdomen, she washed her hands, then moved to place the photos she had printed for me into a plain envelope.

"Here you go, don't forget those blood tests, they are very important, and I've made a note on your le regarding contacting you with the results, if the results show any concerns we will call you in for the result, and you have a good day now, and can you take this to the lady at the front desk, thanks dear," she nished before turning her back to me and setting up for her next patient.

"Thank you," I called out kindly as I made my way to the front desk. As I was doing so, I heard my stomach growl. Realizing that I needed to nd myself a snack, I made a quick detour to nd something to eat that wouldn't trigger my morning sickness.

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After a busy few hours in town, I got both my scan and my blood tests done. Now I just needed to wait patiently for my results. I silently prayed that they would be okay, but no matter what, I was just happy to know that my pup was alive and well.

As I made my way back to my car, I walked past a boutique baby shop. Unable to resist the urge to wander in. I knew it was still early days, but I felt the need to buy something small to celebrate my little miracle. I ended up leaving the store with a eecy baby blue blanket for my pup. The realization then hit me I would need to collect things over the coming months.

Knowing that werewolf pregnancies progressed faster and were shorter than human pregnancies, I would need to get organized fast. I would also need to see the pack doctor with no one else nding out my current condition. I knew I needed to keep this to myself for longer while I gured out what I would do next.

Driving back towards White Pine, I remembered my impulsive actions from this morning, speeding past Jake and leaving him in the dust. Would he be waiting for me to re-enter the pack grounds or would he nd me another time?

I felt panic grip me once again, as I realized that any day now Jake would instinctively sense that I was pregnant. Being that I was about to enter my second trimester, he should be able to smell my scent changing as it merged with my pup.

Not to mention that he should be able to hear his heartbeat. This was a disaster. I needed to prepare myself for the aftermath of everyone nding out I was pregnant by a wolf who had a fated mate.

Surely the pack would understand, I rationalized internally. It was only a few days ago that Jake and I ocially marked one another in front of the entire pack. The pack would surely understand that we did not do this after the fact. In actuality, I was just over three months pregnant. This had happened some time ago.

I pulled over for a moment to collect my thoughts and prepare myself for my encounter with Jake. He looked mad when he stood in front of my vehicle in the middle of the road, and then so shocked when I sped past him. How would he take the news that he had a pup, a little boy on the way? Would he be accepting, or would he want nothing to do with us? He was about to become the alpha of Quaking Pines, and I was sure now that he would rather produce an heir with his fated mate.

"Our pup will always be loved, we are all he needs, remember that," Indigo declared.

I sighed loudly, pondering my thoughts.

"Others might not welcome him, Katya. We need to prepare for that," Indigo said in an almost grave tone.

"What do you mean?" I asked quizzically.

"I have a feeling, I can't explain it right now, but I just know that it will all work out in the end," Indigo said reassuringly.

A feeling of nervousness passed through me. Indigo had always had good intuition, so I trusted her judgment. Whatever the outcome, we would face it together, and we would overcome all obstacles.

I stroked my protruding belly proudly. "I love you, my son," I said out loud. I realized momentarily that I would need to come up with a name for my pup. First thing was rst, I needed to get home and into bed. I was feeling drained from all the intensity of the day's events.

An hour later, I had showered and dressed in my most comfortable annelette pajamas. I made my way downstairs to make a quick snack. The packhouse was relatively quiet this time of the evening, only the kitchen staff were still milling around. Being that my stomach had been growling since I had returned home, I needed something to settle it.

Stepping into the kitchen, I sighed out loud in relief, as I realized that I had it to myself. I opened the fridge door, grabbed a chocolate pudding cup, ripped the foil lid off it, and slammed the door shut. I gasped loudly and jumped a little, as standing right in front of me was none other than Jake, his nostrils were aring, and his jaw clenched, as he towered over me. I gulped as I took in his hostile glare.