



398 The Therapist

Eve 1

This was uncomfortable, to say the least, but I had to push that aside for Elliot's sake. He had undergone a physiological assessment in the infirmary, and despite how extremely early his first shifting was, everything seemed to be alright.

That meant a psychological assessment was now needed—and I only trusted one person with Elliot, especially at a time like this. With all the ruckus going on, I didn't want the pack finding out that not only was the Alpha missing, but his underaged son had shifted too early—likely due to stress. I would hate to read that headline on the tabloids.

Lucinda was resting, and my arms had grown tired from carrying Elliot around. Though sleep evaded me, it did nothing to ease my exhaustion. There were too many loose ends, too many things at stake for me to even close my eyes.

Two Gammas escorted me everywhere now as



we made our way to the elevator.

Paranoia gnawed at me like termites on wood. I turned to address the female guard beside me.

"Did you ensure it was arranged?"

There was no hesitation.

"Exactly as per your orders, Luna. She had been thoroughly checked for the marks, none were found."

I nodded as I heard the distant ding of the elevator. Our steps quickened slightly.

We arrived just as the doors slid open and a wheelchair was wheeled in. Her familiar brown hair was tied in a bun, and her hazel eyes found mine as I closed the distance between us. Guilt welled up inside me at the sight of her—the first time I'd truly looked at her since the incident with the Nerexylin. That day I would prefer to forget.

"Good afternoon, Lia," I greeted, unable to hold eye contact for long before my gaze dropped. 1

"Good afternoon, Luna," she replied. "I would bow, but I'm paralyzed on one side of my body."



My eyes widened. A shiver licked up my spine. Bile rose in my throat from the overwhelming guilt.

"I'm so sorry," I murmured.

She smiled then.

"The doctor says I'll make a full recovery. Love the new look, by the way."

I blushed and tucked my now shoulder length hair behind my ear. "Didn't think you would notice."

Then her expression softened, worry etched into every line of her face.

"You deserve an apology too. I'm sorry for the lies. I truly wish I had been more genuine with you."

I had almost forgotten about that part of the story.

I didn't say anything. I simply moved behind her and grabbed the handles of her wheelchair.

"The last thing you need is to apologize to me. You had your reasons, and I know you didn't





mean harm. But for now, we have other fish to fry."

Elliot sat on a cushioned bench near the far wall, his hands balled into his sleeves like he always did when he was nervous. I could still feel the tightness in his grip from earlier—he hadn't let go of me until we stepped into this new space.

The door closed with a soft click behind us. I stepped aside to let Lia take the lead.

She glanced at me once, her expression unreadable, then turned her attention to the boy.

"Hi, Elliot," she said gently, her voice calm but not patronizing.

He looked at her—eyes wide, cautious. His glance flicked back to me, like he needed permission just to breathe.

I crouched beside him, whispering, "It's okay. She's here to help. You're safe."

He hesitated another second, then gave a small nod.



Lia wheeled closer, resting her good hand on the armrest of the chair.

"How are you feeling?"

Elliot tilted his head and looked down at his hands. He swallowed, lips tightening. Then, softly, he said,

"I'm fine."

It was automatic. Too automatic.

Lia smiled gently.

"That's what people say when they think they're supposed to be okay. But I'm not here for the right answer—I just want your honest one."

Elliot bit his lower lip, then shrugged.

"Tired," he murmured. "But not sleepy. Just... tired."

I wanted to wrap him in my arms and tell him he didn't have to be brave—but I held back. He needed this moment.

Lia nodded.

"That's fair. Can I ask... do you know your wolf's

name?"

He stilled.

That was the question he hadn't been expecting.

I saw his jaw twitch slightly, like he was considering something dangerous. Then his fingers began to fidget again, sleeves twisting tighter around his palms.

"It's okay," I whispered. "You can say it."

He looked up at Lia. Then back at me.

His lips parted, voice barely above a whisper.

"Knox." 8

Lia's brows lifted slightly, impressed.

"Strong name."

Elliot nodded.

"How did it feel?" she asked. "When it happened... when you shifted?"

His body curled inward slightly.

"Like... fire. But not bad fire. Just... big. Loud. I couldn't think. I just felt everything. Like I wasn't



in one body anymore."

There was a pause. Then he added, quieter still,

"But Knox wasn't scared. I was. He wasn't."

Lia leaned back slowly, absorbing his words.

"That's because Knox is part of you, Elliot. He's your strength. And you're his mind. He didn't feel fear because you carried it for him. That's how wolves and their humans work. You balance each other."

Elliot blinked at her—and for the first time since the shift, a faint look of wonder crossed his face. He looked to me again, seeking confirmation.

I smiled softly, brushing a curl from his forehead.

"That's exactly right."

When Lia spoke again, her voice was more serious.

"What were you thinking right before you shifted, Elliot?"

There was no hesitation.

"Mummy was in trouble. I could feel it. She was



scared and tired because of me."

The knot in my stomach tightened so hard it knocked the breath from my lungs. I opened my mouth—to speak, to tell him he had it all wrong—

But Lia stopped me with a glance and let Elliot continue.

"Mummy is always worried about me. Grandpa got hurt. Grandma is hurting us—even when she doesn't mean to."

"So how did you stop Grandma? You found your wolf."

"I looked for it," he replied. "I wanted to fight. I didn't want to be a liability."

"Who called you a liability?"

"Mama," he said.

"I wanted to protect Mummy... so I looked for Knox." 2

Silence.

I bit my lip until it bled.

"How long have you been looking for Knox?"



"Since Mama called me a liability. I wanted to show her I could be strong." 2

My heart cracked right down the middle.

Every word out of his mouth sank like an anchor into my chest—heavy and sharp. I clenched my fists at my sides, digging my nails into my palms just to keep from falling apart in front of him. The word liability echoed like a curse in my mind.

Felicia hadn't just hurt him—she had shattered his sense of self.

I couldn't breathe.