

Chapter 8

Ari's POV

As night drew closer so did my time for my rst shift. I was nervous because I didn't know what I would be. Unfortunately like most packs there is a ceremony for all members who are shifting for the rst time. Whether they have already shifted before the celebration or not. We all still have to be presented to the pack and shift at the same time.

It is embarrassing to have to stand in front of thousands of people with little to no clothes on. Yeah yeah I know. We grew up around wolves and should be used to the naked body, and I am. I just don't feel comfortable showing everyone else out there mine.

"Ari, are you ready to go? We are going to be late if we don't leave now sweety." Mom said.

I look at myself once more in the mirror. My green eyes stared back at me as I looked from my black hair laying loose behind my shoulders, to the white dress that covered my body. It was a little more snug on me than I would have liked. It clings to my hips and thighs and my breasts. Making them seem even larger than they already are. I am not the typical werewolf type girl apparently. I have curves where most wolves are slender and look more like dancers than someone who enjoys her fried foods too much.

'Our mate loved our curves. Who cares if we don't look like a stick. Who wants to snuggle to a stick anyway.' Regina said.

I couldn't help but laugh at her. I turned from the mirror and yelled out, "I'm coming mom! Just nished brushing my hair." Even though I had been done for a while. I didn't want mom to know that I was feeling as nervous as I was standing in front of the whole pack. I sighed and left my room and hurried outside where everyone was waiting for me. We decided to go in one vehicle because according to my parents and Jen I would be tired after my rst shift and not able to drive.

My dad was driving my car tonight. It was bigger and had more room for all of us. We pulled up into the parking lot away from the packhouse closer to the forest. The celebration is taking place in a clearing not far from the back of the packhouse. I have been here before for the celebrations as it is mandatory for all pack members to attend, but it is the rst time I am here and having to take part in the show.

We all walked together silently to where we needed to be. I wasn't ready once we reached the clearing to line up with the other new to shift wolves. I put it off as long as I could just hanging back. Dad noticed and came over to me and said, "Ari, I know you don't want to shift like this, but we have to do as the pack laws state. It isn't so bad. By the time you start to shift the people around you won't matter. You will be focused on your wolf coming forward. Just remember to breathe and let her take over. You can do this sweetheart, and mom and I will be right here with you the whole time. I will intervene if I need to. I promise you that."

I smiled at my dad knowing that he would defy the alpha if he needed to just to help me through my rst shift. "Thanks dad. I needed that pep talk. I'll go stand in line I guess." I said.

"That's my girl. Go on kid. We love you." Dad said while he wrapped me in his arms for a quick hug and kissed my forehead before he pushed me towards the crowd.

'Come on girl. It won't be that bad. It will only hurt a little.' Regina said.

'I'm not afraid of the pain. I just don't want to be a spectacle. Unlike everyone else I don't know what I will shift into. I don't want to add on to the list of reasons the alpha doesn't like me.' I confessed to her.

'He won't be a problem darling. Trust me on that one. He will be begging for forgiveness from us soon enough.' Regina said cryptically.

"Hello, and thank you for joining us today on this momentous occasion as we welcome these new wolves into the pack for the rst time." The alpha said in his booming voice. That was our cue to line up in front of everyone. I nervously went to my spot and stood there as my breathing became labored. It wasn't nerves causing it though. I was starting to feel my shift coming. My muscles started to burn, not painfully but like I just nished a marathon of workouts. Then I felt the snapping of my bones and I screamed out in pain. I looked around me to notice I was the only one shifting right now. Everyone else was just staring at me.

Soon I started to hear a couple other people scream, but I stopped paying attention as I felt my face elongate and my teeth morphed to sharper ones. I fell to my hands and knees and I felt pin pricks all over my body and soon black fur was sprouting. It felt like forever before the nal snap of my spine and my tail elongated out. I had closed my eyes and could feel myself panting.

The pain was gone. There was silence all around. I opened my eyes to see everyone just staring at me with their mouths open. I looked at my dad and mom and I saw the smiles on their faces, but I could see the concern in their eyes. Oh no! Was I a lycan too? I looked down and breathed a sigh of relief when I saw I was on four paws. I wasn't sure what was wrong until I noticed the other wolves beside me. They were half my size and one of them was the soon to be beta of the pack.

'Stand proud Ari. We are majestic. We are beautiful. We are powerful. We are a dire wolf. One of the original wolves created by the moon goddess herself.' Regina said proudly.

A dire wolf. I read stories about the rst wolves the moon goddess created. They were vicious creatures that couldn't control their animal instincts and caused destruction to the land until the moon goddess created the lycan king. King Maddox controlled the dire wolves until even he couldn't control their animal instincts any longer. That was when the mate bond was created. To 'tame' the dire wolves. To my knowledge there hasn't been a dire wolf in existence for over ve hundred years.

"Let's welcome our new members. Everyone shift for the pack run!" The alpha boomed out.

'Arianna I would like to see you and your parents in my oce rst thing in the morning. Understood?' The alpha boomed in my mind. I could feel him trying to use his alpha command on me, but it didn't work. It felt more like an irritation than anything.

'Just answer him like you normally would. Do NOT let him know that we can ignore his commands.' Regina said.

'Yes, Alpha.' I responded to him.

My father and mother came up to me in their shifted forms and nuzzled me in greeting. Dad started us off on our family run and Jen joined us with her tan wolf that was larger than most wolves in our pack. We took off and ran through the forest. I let Regina take over completely as I was feeling tired. She ran with elegance and grace with the speed of nothing I have ever seen before. It was exhilarating just watching as she ran and enjoyed her rst shift with her family.

It was all over too soon for Regina's liking, but we went back to our car. Dad had shifted out in the trees and found a pair of gym shorts to change into. He opened up the back of my car and grabbed the robes we brought for everyone and I grabbed mine in my mouth and trotted over to the trees to shift in private. I thought about my human body and in moments I felt my bones shortening and morphing back into the shape of my human form. I quickly put the robe on and started to walk back towards the car.

After a few steps I felt my legs give out on me. Before I could fall to the ground the strong arms of my father caught me. "Don't worry Ari. I got you pumpkin. Rest now. You did so well tonight. Your wolf is absolutely gorgeous. She is all black with a white crescent moon on her forehead. Never did I even imagine that I would see a dire wolf in my time or that she would be my daughter. I am so proud of you. Sleep now." Dad said.

That was the last thing I remember before I let myself succumb to the darkness that was clawing at me.