

Chapter 12

Violet

I stood in front of my mirror, finally finished getting ready. It was eleven already, and I couldn't be more disappointed or scared. All day I'd looked for my mate. I went to every store, every restaurant, every park. And nothing. I even went to the cemetery, only to find the old grounds keeper. That was probably the most productive part of my day; I went to say hi to my grandma and Grandpa, Dads parents who had died before I was born. I stopped by Gretas grave, updating her on everything. I still missed her cookies, she made the best ones, always sneaking Garrett and I extras when our parents weren't looking.

As it neared nine though, i finally just accepted that I was going through this by myself. I tried to comfort myself with the knowledge that lots of people did, people who didn't find their mates before their first shift. And they made it through. I kept telling myself this, but the knot in my stomach only grew more intense as the time went by. Trying to ignore it, I grabbed the white dress from my bed and left my room. Garrett stood on the other side of the hall, leaning against the wall.

"Ready?"

"As I'll ever be." I said.

We walked down the stairs together, saying few words. I turned the fabric over in my hands over and over again. Garrett held a white shirt and pants. Our clothes would be destroyed when we shifted, but we got pure white garments to put on after we shifted back, as was tradition. For this reason, I chose a plain black tank top, one of many I owned, and a pair of jean shorts that I didn't really care about. Garrett was dressed similar, in a plain blue t-shirt and old jeans, and both of us had bare feet.

At the bottom of the stairs were our parents and family, and to my surprise, Sophia. She gave Garrett a small smile, which he returned with a nod.

"Are you two ready?" Mom asked us.

We nodded.

"Alright. Let's go."

My brother and I walked behind everyone else out of the house and across the yard. My hands started to shake as we got closer and closer to the training yard, where the ceremony was being held.

"Hey." Garrett whispered.

"Yeah?"

"I'll be right there with you."

His words calmed me some. I gave a low laugh. "Thanks. But I think you'll be too busy with your own shift to worry about me."

His eyes landed on Sophia, and he nodded slowly.

"Hugo told me that our wolves are twins too." He said.

"I know. Hala told me as well."

"Pretty cool right?"

"Totally."

I knew he was trying to distract me. Unfortunately, it wasn't working. I kept looking around, hoping my mate would pop out of the night. I really, really, really didn't want to do this alone. My hope deflated when we reached the training yard, my face ashen. String lights had been set up, illuminating the area dimly. A low platform had been placed on the grass, and I watched as my parents stepped onto it along with Uncle Ben and Luke and their mates. Garret and I took our places in front of them, a good distance apart. To my right, Aunt Thara and Uncle Killian waved at me, both giving me sympathetic looks. I waved back shortly, looking around.

Groups of people, friends and family, were gathered around to support the shifters tonight. I saw a lot of proud faces, and a lot of nervous ones too. Everyone here knew what we go through tonight.

"Thank you all for coming." My Dads voice boomed out over us. I focused on him. "First, I would like to say how proud I am of my children. Violet and Garrett, you have both grown into incredible young adults, and it is a privilege to be here with you tonight." He smiled at us, and I forced a smile in return.

My skin started to tingle, and I looked at my mom frantically. She checked the watch on her wrist and nodded at me.

"Hala?"

"I'm right here Violet."

"Hala, I don't think I can do this."

"We don't have a choice."

"The time is upon us. Let me welcome the rest of Blood Moons shifters tonight." Dad said.

I felt a slow burning start somewhere inside me; It was hard to pinpoint exactly where it came from as it was moving steadily. The tingling turned into a painful itching sensation and I dropped to my knees, trying to prepare.

"You'll help me?" I asked my wolf.

"I will."

When the first bone snapped, I instantly starting cussing my mate, whoever he was. All I had was my parents who watched over me worriedly, and my wolf to help guide me. But none of them could take away the pain. My stomach cramped; worse than any period I'd ever experienced. The cramp moved to every muscle in my being, and my vision blacked out for a second. Briefly, I glanced to my right. This might

be the only time I was grateful for Sophia. Garrett was doing much better than I was, clinging onto his mate while his bones broke. Every so often he would twitch, while agonizing shrieks were coming from me. Our eyes met, his full of fear for me.

The pain then intensified, and I fell onto my side, screaming. Tears streamed down my face and I begged and cried for someone, anyone, to make it stop. Through my blurry vision, I saw my mom jump off the platform, coming for me. And then she stopped, a confused look coming over her face.

My leg snapped loudly, crunching and reforming. I opened my mouth to scream, only to realize it hadn't hurt. Raising my head, I saw a hand placed on my bare waist where my shirt had ridden up. My eyes followed it, down the toned arm, the broad shoulder and landed on Jaspers pained face.

"Mate." He breathed.

Distantly, I heard both of my parent's gasp, and a vicious snarl beside me. All of that was background noise though, as I stared into his eyes. The pull I felt for him and the way Hala was howling in my head, I couldn't deny it. Jasper Cole was my mate.

And right now, I didn't give a shit if he was a man-whore. I didn't care if he'd slept with ten million women. I clutched his hand for dear life, pulling him closer. He pulled me into a sitting position, my cheek resting against his chest. His bare chest.

"Mate." I sighed.

His arms held me tighter at the word, his lips connecting with my shoulder. Fur sprouted from my arms, my teeth growing and becoming sharper. Slowly, we repositioned ourselves so we still had physical contact, but as to not hurt each other when we completed the shift.

"Let go of him Violet." Hala said in my mind.

"Let go?"

"Now."

I did as she demanded, pushing Jasper away from me. The pain peaked, and once again I opened my mouth to scream. However, what came out was a howl instead. The pain disappeared, leaving me exhausted and honestly, thirsty as hell.

But I'd shifted.

The first thing I saw when I opened my eyes was a long snout and a black nose. Jasper's wolf stood over me, whining quietly, and sniffing me. I stood on slightly shaky legs, letting him know I was fine. He rubbed his face against mine, and Hala purred happily.

"Violet?"

I turned to my mom, shocked that I had to look down at her. I was at least a foot and a half taller than her in my wolf form. Was I as big as my dad? Bigger?

Mom smiled up at me as if she could read my thoughts.

"You're bigger than your dad. But still not as big as me." She laughed.

"Lily." We turned to the platform, where everyone was gaping at me. Mom turned back, her eyes roaming over me until her hands covered her mouth.

"What on Earth?" She gasped.

"What? Are we missing a leg or something?"

"You're so silly." Hala shook her head at my stupidity.

"What does it mean?" Mom was looking at Uncle Luke, who was staring at me. He shook his head.

"I-I don't know."

"Vie?"

I yipped as Jasper's voice entered my head. I forgot I could mind-link now. I turned my eyes on him.

His wolf was beautiful. He was almost as big as I was, his fur black as night. His eyes glowed silver, even more in this form than when he was human.

"You're my mate? Why didn't you tell me?" I asked him.

"I'll explain later."

"But-"

"Vie, you need to look at yourself."

"Why? What's wrong with me?"

He shook his big head. "Nothing. You're stunning. But you need to see this."

Another wolf nudged my side. I looked into his eyes, shocked to see they were also silver. Unlike Jaspers though, they literally glowed. It was such an intense color, they almost looked white. His fur was red, bright red. He stood at my height, eye to eye.

"Garrett?" I asked in disbelief.

"You, okay?" He replied. He gave Jaspers wolf a look, and I wasn't sure in this form, but I thought it was a dirty one.

"I'm fine. You? Hugo is beautiful!"

"I'm good. And you should talk. Come on."

We looked at our parents, who nodded and shifted. Mom stood towering over us, her wolf Aya coming over to scent us. Hala yipped happily, trying to nip at her ear. Dad stood off to the side, obviously pouting. I gave a throaty wolf laugh as I realized he was indeed, the smallest one out of us. What a blow to his ego. Nonetheless, our wolves went over to greet him as well. Garrett tilted his head, and we headed off into the forest. The rest

of the shifters joined us for their first run, and it was amazing. I was seeing the woods I loved so much through new eyes tonight, my senses sharper. We stopped at the nearby lake, some of the wolves jumping in and starting to play.

"Come here Violet." Mom mind linked me. I padded over to where her, Dad and my brother were standing by the water's edge. Jasper followed behind me. I looked into the water, and started. I was completely black. That wasn't normal, not for a she-wolf. As a rule, only Alphas were all black, right? But then... I looked at my brother. Why was he red? He was taking over as Alpha, not me. Even weirder, why was Jasper's wolf black? Wasn't his mother a rogue?

"Look at your side. And your eyes." Dad said to me.

Inspecting my reflection again, I got my second shock. My left eye was blue, as blue as Grandma Rose's were. My right was green, the same color as Mom's. But the most shocking thing was the fur on my side. Standing out against the black was white fur, perfectly shaped into a Crescent moon, a half-moon, a full moon, another half-moon and another crescent moon.

"What is it?" I asked Hala.

"A gift."