

Midnight

CHLOE POV

I sniffle as my tears fall down my face. I look up at the sky to try and pinpoint what time it is because my phone died hours ago, but clouds block my line of sight.

I wish I could ride the train to Outcast, but I can't. Since I shift tonight for the first time, I can't be on the train with others. Only after I shift can I ride the train. Which means tomorrow I can hitch a ride. But by then, I will probably be in the next pack over. Which that's okay as long as I don't leave the train station.

I wipe my cheeks for the thousandth time and sign. 1

"This is as good a spot as any," I mutter as I decide to stop for the night.

I move away from the train tracks I have been following for miles and sit down against a big tree.

I take a deep breath and lean my head back. I need to relax before my shift comes because not only do I have to have energy for my body to switch forms I also have to experience the horrific pain that comes with it by myself. And to be perfectly honest, I am scared.

I have already dealt with the pain of rejection today, and now I have to go through my bones breaking and realigning within my body by myself. I won't have my mate with me or a family member to cheer me on. I will be alone. Forever alone...all because of Logan.

"I hope I can do it," the evil part of my brain says, and I immediately focus on the worst-case scenario that is in the back of everyone's minds during their first shift.



On some rare occasions, a person's body is just too weak for their first shift. The person gets stuck between forms...and dies. It's rare but not unheard of.

As my brain begins to form images of my dead half-shifted body, I pull my knees up to my chest. I fold my arms on top of them and lean my head down as the images scare me to my very core.

The last thing I want to do is die...by myself in the woods next to the train tracks. Luna Kandace would probably jump up and down with glee when my body was found.

"Evil woman," I snap under my breath as the scene plays out in my mind.

As the air around me falls silent and my mind begins to wander away from the grim possibilities, I feel the fire beginning to spread within me. Fear gets to me for a brief second before I push it away.

I've learned about this my whole life. First, the heat comes to warm up your muscles and your joints. Then the pain slowly begins to make its appearance, and before you know it, you are shifting.

I've learned about it. I've prepared for it. I am strong. Luna Kandace is wrong about me...and I refuse to be anything but strong. I will be like my mother. I will be a warrior until the very end.

"You will not give her the satisfaction," I mutter to myself as pain joins the fire within my legs.

This is it. The moment I have been excited about my whole life. I don't need to think about the pain or the possibility of being too weak. I don't need to think about Logan or Luna Kandace. This is my time. I need to focus on my wolf and what I am going to say to her. I need to make her



proud that she has received me even though we were already rejected. I need to make her see that they were wrong. I am Hannah Patterson's daughter. I am Chloe Patterson, the Omega.

I grit my teeth as the pain reaches my hip bones. I refuse to scream! I can do this.

I close my eyes, and I picture my mom. I imagine her smiling and clapping for me, and the pain in my body dims just a tad. Her light brown eyes are full of love as she watches me shift for the first time, and I smile within my mind at the image.

Pain shoots up my spine, and my skull feels as if it is being ripped apart, but I keep smiling to myself even though my real teeth are clenched. Mom gives me a thumbs up in my head, and I laugh/cry as my elbow breaks.

My ankle breaks next, and then every joint in my body follows. Searing pain explodes all over my being, and I no longer fear death. I honestly would trade shifting for death.

A scream tears through my mouth as my promise to myself is forgotten. Fire and pain fill me completely, and nothing but easing the pain becomes essential.

I thrash around on the ground as the pain builds, but it doesn't help. My screams start to sound more and more like whimpers as time goes on, and suddenly the pain stops. The cracking sounds stop, and my body stops moving.

I take deep breaths to recover, but the movement feels different. The sounds that come from my mouth sound like pants instead of deep breathes, and I realize I did it.



Unknown- We did it.

The female voice echoes within my head, and I gasp as I hear my wolf for the first time.

Chloe- yes, we did. I was scared I wasn't strong enough to do it for a second there.

I admit the truth as I continue to lay perfectly still in the grass.

Unknown- We are both strong, my sweet human.

Chloe- Thank you (whispers)

Chloe- What's your name

Unknown- I don't have one. What's yours?

Chloe- Chloe

Unknown- Let's run Chloe. The shift is over. You can run. Use our body

Her excited voice makes me move for the first time, and the sensation freaks me out. Moving to stand up as a human would doesn't work, and I fall right back down into the grass. Embarrassment flicks within me as I realize I have no idea how I am supposed to do this.

Chloe- wow...moving four legs is different than moving two.

I joke lightly to ease my embarrassed feelings, and I feel my wolf's gentle emotions grow within me.

Unknown- Do you want me to do it. I can—no need to feel bad. We are a team. You are me, and I am you. We are just new to this.



Chloe - yes, please...thank you.

My body begins to move on its own instantly, and the weird feeling of not being in control comes over me. It's like sharing the driver's seat of a car, but I have no control over anything. I can only see through the windshield, and I have no say in the speed or direction of the car.

Unknown - let's run

My wolf barely says the words in my head before she darts into the trees, and I scream. Now I feel like I'm in an out-of-control car, and at any moment, we can crash.

Chloe - Wait. Wait. My stuff is back there. You are going too fast. I'm going to be sick. Please slow down. I can't....this is too much, too fast.

She barks happily in our head as if she is laughing at me and turns around. She slows down, but a mischievous, playful emotion fills me before she responds to my fear-filled request.

Unknown - I can always find our stuff. I am a wolf, remember. I can smell things.

The thought is spoken with such spunk and attitude; I almost grin at her, but I am still too scared. Sensing this, she adds a gentler feeling and emotion to her next link.

Unknown - Don't worry. Running like this for me is like you running with your legs...I won't crash or hurt us. You are safe with me.

Chloe - right...I'm sorry. I am being foolish. Of course, you won't crash.

A brief moment of silence falls before she asks the question I have been dreading.



Unknown- Where is our mate? He should be close.

My heart fills with pain as I hear her question filled with happy anticipation. I brace myself for the onslaught of guilt and hate before I answer her.

Chloe- he isn't here.

I whisper the words inside my head, and my body stops moving.

Unknown- What do you mean, Chloe? Is he hurt?

Chloe- No. He umm. He rejected me. He didn't want to have me as a mate.

I explain brokenly, and she immediately growls.

Unknown- WHY

Her growl is in my head instead of vocal, and the loud sound reverberates off the walls of my skull.

Chloe- I worked as an omega in my old pack. He decided I was too weak to be his Luna...I'm sorry, wolf. I couldn't convince him not to reject me. My Luna had ordered me to be silent. I couldn't even plead with him.

I explain, and she remains quiet.

Chloe- The Luna is the main reason he did it. But he didn't fight for us or argue with her...he agreed with her advice and cast me to the side in front of the whole pack. The pain was awful, but I didn't disgrace us by crying or acting sad. I looked him straight in the eye when I accepted his rejection.

My wolf suddenly growls again, but this time, the sound is on the outside.



Her emotions hit me like a canon, anger, betrayal, and determination.

Unknown- He is a weak match. A pack needs all, omegas included. I am a Luna. I will not be treated as if I am weak.

Chloe- I know. I'm sorry. He didn't think you would be weak, just me.

She huffs at my apology and begins to walk in the direction of my suitcase.

Unknown- There is no reason for you to say sorry...only him. He should be apologizing. We are a strong match, my Chloe. Your heart is like mine. I can feel your emotions...I can feel how determined you are to be the best. That is what makes a strong wolf. We are strong! They are wrong. We will overcome his decision, and when we see our other half again, he will be sorry.

Chloe- But I am sorry you won't get to be with your wolf mate. I know the two of you have never been apart. You were made with him.

Wolf- I will miss him, but you are my human, Chloe. My person! When I die, I will be with him again. For now, what's important is our bond. Your body and mine are one. 1

After a brief moment of silence, curiosity gets the better of me, and I change the depressing topic of our rejection.

Chloe-what do you look like?

I ask the question softly, and she falls silent. I feel a mischievous emotion growing within my mind again, and I smile at the apparent personality trait. My wolf likes jokes and messing around, apparently.

Wolf- Why don't you find some water and look for yourself.

Midnight



She links and then releases control of our body back to me. I fall flat on our face yet again, and she barks out her laughs in our mind instantly.

Chloe- very funny

I mutter the link while trying to learn how to move my new form. I need the practice anyway.



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