Chapter Six – Lucy

Captain Smith's face was red with rage as he stormed through the bullpen towards Lucy's desk. She hurriedly closed out the search she had been running on Johnathan Anthony, her heart in her throat. A pang hit her stomach, but she ignored it. She got to her feet as Smith stopped right in front of her desk.

"You're *pregnant*?" he shouted.

The normal hustle and bustle of the precinct cut off instantly. Everybody stared at her and the captain. Lucy felt the blood draining from her face. A hand automatically moved to her stomach. How had he found out?

"Pregnant, but that's not enough. You're pregnant with a suspect's baby? A *shifter's* baby!"

Lucy took a deep breath, trying to calm herself. What were her options here? She could stand still and let the captain scream at her, humiliating her in front of the entire precinct, or she could take action to stop it. Either way, she was fired. She held her head a little higher and stared the captain in the eye. Her pregnancy wasn't something she was ashamed of. Lying to Levi was wrong, but what was between them wasn't. And she would make it right, somehow.

"Yes, I am pregnant. But you sound more outraged that I'd sleep with a shifter than a suspect – and he wasn't even a suspect when—"

"You are *through*. Pack your things. I am not going to have detectives like you at my precinct!"

Lucy opened her mouth to argue, but before she could, one of the guards ran out from the holding cells. His face was twisted with worry. "Medic! We need a medic in here! One of the dogs has gone into convulsions!"

Dogs? Lucy's heart stopped. Levi. She stepped towards the holding cells. The captain grabbed her arm and turned her roughly to face him.

"Where do you think you're going? The medics will take care of the shifter. I—"

Lucy balled her fist. She reared back and let it fly, striking the captain square in the mouth. There were a few gasps from the others in the room, but she didn't pay attention to them, running to the holding cells. The door to Steven and Levi's cell

was thrown open. Levi lay on the ground, shaking with violent spasms. Lucy cried out and started forward, but one of the guards grabbed her and pulled her back.

"Levi!" she shouted.

Levi's convulsions slowed for a moment. He raised his head, staring wild-eyed in every direction. Sweat seeped down his hairline over his face. He let out a mighty groan as his hands fluttered in the air. His fingers grasped at nothing.

"Lucy," he cried. "Lucy, I love you!"

Her heart jumped to her throat. She tried to fight her way free of the guard, screaming Levi's name again. Steven jumped up from where he was kneeling by Levi and rushed to her. He reached for her hands between the bars.

"He'll be fine," he said soothingly, then added in a higher, panicked voice. "As long as he gets medical attention right away!"

Wait, did he just wink at her? Lucy's gaze switched between the two men, her struggles flagging. Was this some sort of prank? A trick to get Levi out of jail? Her stomach clenched, but she shook it off, concentrating on the situation at hand. If this was a plan to get Levi out, she had to help. She was already fired, and working together might be the only chance they had at taking down Captain Anthony.

"Somebody help!" she shrieked, thrashing once again in the guard's grip. "Where are the medics? Levi, hold on. I promise I will find out who did this! I will clear your name!"

"Get her out of here," Smith ordered from the side. "The last thing I need in my precinct is a hysterical woman. I said get her out."

Levi's eyes rolled into the back of his skull and he went limp. The guard hustled Lucy out of the room and back into the bullpen. Her heart hammered, resisting but not actively fighting anymore. What if she was wrong? What if this wasn't a trick, and Levi really was in trouble? What if he had been poisoned, or had a medical issue that she wasn't aware of? What if he…

Another cramp hit her hard, making her cry out. The guard had to half-support her as he hauled her to her desk. Once she was there, he glanced at her worriedly.

"Are you okay?"

She needed to keep him here. A glance at the holding cells showed the medics finally entering, carrying a stretcher. The more attention that was diverted to her, the better chances of Levi's escape was.

She clung to the guard's arm as another cramp hit her. These were not normal cramps. Something was wrong with the baby. She couldn't suppress a scream as she leaned heavily on the guard.

"The baby," she gasped.

The guard's eyes turned into saucers. "The what?"

"I'm pregnant. And something is wrong."

She didn't have to act this time. Another pain hit her like a punch to the stomach. It wrapped around her back and shot straight up into her skull, blinding her for a second. Somebody shouted her name. When she looked up, she saw Levi bounding off a stretcher. Behind him was Steven, handcuffed, being dragged from the holding cell by Smith. Levi ran for her, but she shook her head and waved her hands.

"No! Just get out!"

"Go!" shouted Steven. "Levi, get out of here."

Levi hesitated for just a moment while all around guns were drawn and pointed at him. With a pained howl, he leaped towards the exit. In a single bound, he shifted into his Coyote's form, marbled gray and brown fur sprouting from his skin. Lucy screamed, doubling over, at the same time Smith shouted. Nobody heard a word he said. A few detectives went after Levi, but most turned towards Lucy. The guard was fully supporting her by this time. Something hot and wet splashed down her leg. Her heart seized.

"No," she whimpered.

Smith charged over to her, face as red as a tomato. Gobs of spittle flew from his mouth as he screamed at her. "You're finished! Do you hear me? Your career is over. You are going to jail. You're an accomplice and—"

She screamed again, knees buckling.

"She's got a moon baby," Steven shouted from across the room. "She has to go to a hospital right now or both she and the baby will die!"

"Do you expect me to believe that?" Smith snarled.

Steven growled low in his throat. "Look at her pants. She's bleeding!"

Head spinning, Lucy looked down. Her cream colored trousers of her business suit were stained red on her thighs.Smith cursed.

"You've got medics right here. Get her to a hospital," Steven ordered.

Smith turned towards the Alpha, eyes narrowing, but the medics were already on their way to her. With her coworkers looking on worriedly, the medics directed Lucy to lie down on the stretcher. She did so, tears flooding her eyes. It was hard not to writhe as the pain kept coming. Her stomach felt like it was full of snakes.

"Is the baby going to be okay?" she asked to no one in particular as she was wheeled to the elevator. "Is my baby going to be okay?"

Nobody answered. Not that she expected them to. She closed her eyes, trying not to cry. The air went from pleasantly cool to dry and warm, and the noise from around her increased. It all sounded distant, somehow, like it wasn't quite real. Some part of her mind said it was because of the blood loss. Her head was light, her body being wheeled away too fast for it to keep up.

At some point, she knew she fell unconscious because she woke suddenly to being thrown to one side. She groaned, twisting away from a bright light that shone into her eyes. There was a screeching sound, and then a voice that sounded vaguely familiar.

"Get her inside, quick." The voice was panicked. "She's got a moon baby. Hurry!"

The stretcher moved again, leaving the bright light behind, and she realized she was in an ambulance. Or rather, leaving an ambulance. She looked around wildly, trying desperately to find the voice. Levi's face swam into view, and she reached for him. His hand grasped hers tightly, his lips pressing to her mouth.

"It's going to be okay, Lucy, just hold on. Do it for me, darling. Do it for the baby."

Lucy clung to his hand as she was wheeled into a building. It didn't smell like a hospital. It smelled like a bakery. Like fresh, warm bread. The coiling in her stomach relaxed a little, letting her woozy mind form a coherent question.

"Where are we?"

"It's a shifter hospital," Levi told her. "You'll be safe here. Don't worry. We know how to take care of our own. You're going to be fine. So are the babies. We're all going to be fine, my love. I promise. Just keep holding on."

"We'll have to sedate her," another voice said. "These moon babies are too far gone to turn back. We have to operate."

Lucy opened her mouth to protest, but before she could, something sharp bit her arm. Her mind went woozy again and she fell back into unconsciousness.

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The sound of whimpering woke her. Lucy swallowed with difficulty, her throat feeling like a desert full of boulders. The whimpering tore at her heart, and she forced her eyes open. She was in a dim room, full of smells of sandalwood and lavender. Beside her, something shifted, and when she turned her head, she saw Levi staring at her.

She jumped, making pain flash through her body. "Levi! What are you doing?"

"Watching you. I'm supposed to do that since you were so badly…" he trailed off and kissed her forehead. "I thought I was going to lose you."

Lucy flinched as she remembered what happened. "The baby! I heard something about an operation. Is the baby okay?"

"Yes. And *babies*. We have more than one… The doctors had to do an emergency C-section."

Her heart thudded. Bile rose in her throat. Even though Levi had just told her the baby – no, babies – were okay, after hearing they were already delivered, she couldn't believe it. Not after only a month. It didn't matter if Coyote pregnancies were different.

"How do you feel? You're getting a transfusion of shifter blood that will help you heal."

"They're too little." Tears rolled down her cheeks. She had just gotten used to the idea that she was pregnant, and now she wasn't. If her babies were so suddenly taken from her… "They couldn't survive this early. It's only been a month! They won't be developed enough."

"They're fine. Can't you hear them?" Levi smoothed her hair. "Yeah, they could have had more time before coming out, but the doctors say they're healthy. It'll be two or three months before we can take them home, but they're strong."

Lucy let herself relax again. She let out a deep breath. "What happened? Steven said that I had a moon baby?"

Levi nodded. "When the babies shift from one form to the other inside the womb, we call them moon babies. It's very rare, especially with human mothers, and very dangerous. Almost ninety percent of mothers who have moon babies lose them. In cases when there are survivors, usually it's only one out of the litter. But all four of ours survived."

"Four?" Lucy sat a little straighter, wincing as she did. "Are you telling me we have *four* babies?"

"Not so much babies in the way you'd think. More like pups." Levi offered her a hesitant smile. "At the moment, they're in their Coyote form. They won't start shifting until they're more developed."

"I want to see them."

Levi nodded. "They're right over there. Here."

An incubator sat at the window, bright sunlight filtering through it. Levi helped her sit up. Lucy strained to see as the Coyote wheeled the bed over to the incubator. Inside were four impossibly tiny puppies. Lucy's heart lurched. Despite what Levi had told her, she hadn't really expected to see puppies instead of babies.

She pressed her hands against the warm glass. They were whimpering, their tiny bodies pressed together. Their eyes were sealed, their little necks hardly strong enough to hold up their heads.

A rush of love overwhelmed Lucy. These were her children. They were shifters like their father, but looking at them in their Coyote forms was no different than if they had been tiny human babies. She wasn't going to let anything happen to them.

"They're beautiful," she whispered.

"Yeah, they are." Levi kissed her cheek. "Just like you. But don't think that you're off the hook for lying to me for a month."

Lucy closed her eyes briefly. All the reasons she had done what she had done weren't enough to fill the ache in her chest. She took a deep breath and nodded. "I know. I could say I was following orders, but the truth is… when we slept

together, I knew that I would be investigating the pack. I knew who you were and I slept with you anyway."

Levi crouched beside her and pressed a hand to the incubator. There was such love on his face as he gazed in at their children that it broke her heart.

"I'm sorry I hurt you."

"I know you are. But why did you sleep with me? You say you knew what it would bring, so why did you do it?"

Lucy sighed and shook her head. "I didn't know that we'd get closer. I didn't expect that Captain Smith would order me to get closer to you to get information. I didn't even expect us to sleep together. Those condoms in my nightstand? At least six months old. I've kept a box ever since high school when my mom lectured me about how unexpected pregnancies ruined girls' lives."

"Six months. No wonder it broke." Levi grinned at her. "But you didn't answer me."

"I don't know why, honestly. Maybe it was just me being selfish. We were there, and you are such a good kisser. I wanted to be with you and I didn't care about anything else." Lucy hung her head, ashamed of herself.

That was the truth of the matter. She had been selfish and thoughtless, and look where it had gotten her. Innocent people were facing jail time.

Levi ran his fingers through her hair, making her shiver. "It hurts and it'll continue to hurt, but you were doing your job. You were trying to protect people by taking down a drug ring. But there are just two things I need to know."

"Anything."

"You're sure you knew I was a Coyote when you slept with me?"

Lucy nodded.

"And you didn't sleep with me because of your job?"

"No. I slept with you because I wanted to."

Levi nodded, as though that satisfied him. "Good. That's all that matters, then. I'll get over it."

Lucy stared at him in shock. "How? How can you forgive me for that? I lied to you. I used you."

"You were doing your job. It hurts, but I understand."

Tears blurred her vision. "And you stole an ambulance for me. Even after what I did."

"Darling, I would steal a jet plane for you. I love you."

Lucy turned her face away. How could she respond to that? She had spent the past month lying to him. What if when he learned more about who she was outside of her job, he didn't like what he saw? Could she take the heartbreak if that happened?

It wasn't going to happen unless they cleared his name. She was feeling better already, thanks to the blood transfusion. Her eyes became steely.

"Captain Anthony wants to jail you for something you didn't do," she said. "We have to stop him."

After a moment, Levi nodded. "Yes, we do. And I think I know how."