

## Graduation Day

When I was hit with all my memories of the attack on Silver Shadow, Iris was doing her best to talk me through it and calm me down. It's not the first time I've had some kind of panic attack, but it is the first time I've had to deal with my mind being overwhelmed like that. Iris spoke softly, reassuring me that I was alright and that I was not there anymore. After what felt like an eternity, my mind slowed down. Iris explained that when she went to her place in my mind to think, she spoke to the Moon Goddess. She said that we need to expect the unexpected and be cautious. That she is sorry we have had to go through such tragedy so young and the dreams I have been having are fate's way of helping me and the truth. After talking to Iris for a while longer, I drifted off to sleep. Tossing and turning with more questions and worry in my mind. I woke up with a start to my alarm going off at 7 am. Today is our last day of school, so, we don't have any work to do this morning, thankfully.

I dragged myself out of bed and quickly grabbed some clothes for the day. I didn't exactly get time to wash up before I fell asleep last night, since I was busy having a panic attack and all, so first things first, I desperately needed to shower. Peeking my head out of my room to make sure Kylie and her cronies weren't there, I dashed down the stairs to the shower block and actually managed to shower in peace. I made sure to wash my hair carefully and scrub every inch of my body. I decided a few extra minutes under the warm water couldn't do any harm, so I stood there for a little while. The water started running cold, so I hastily got out and dried myself off. I got dressed, brushed my teeth and returned to my room. I ran a brush through my hair, packed my graduation gown and cap into my bag, and put my shoes on before heading to the dining hall to get some breakfast. Of course, it was just left overs but food is food. Not long after I sat down, Billie joined me and we settled into a steady conversation about what we're looking forward to once we graduate and turn 18.

"Hey, isn't your birthday like tomorrow? Are you excited to meet Iris and maybe find your mate?" Billie whispered while she wiggled her eyebrows at me. Billie is the only person in the pack that knows I actually do have a wolf and she has been sworn to secrecy. She knows all about my past, well, everything I can remember at least. I think I'd spontaneously combust if I didn't have anyone outside of Iris that I could confide in.

"I can't wait to see Iris in her true form for sure. As for my mate, I honestly just hope he isn't from this pack. I don't know what I'd do if he was. You know as well as I do that any man from Mystic Moon will reject me straightaway because they think I don't have a wolf." I replied non-chalantly. Just like any she-wolf, I pray for the day I meet my mate. Iris is longing for her mate too. They are the other half of our souls, a bond created by the Moon Goddess just for the two of you. Your mate loves you with every fiber of their being and would devote their entire life to you. From their 18th birthday, a wolf can find their mate based on their scent. It tends to smell exactly like their favorite things. When your skin touches, it feels like a million tiny sparks going off, sending a tingling sensation to both of you. Once you both acknowledge the mate bond, it starts to grow stronger. Then you complete the bond through mating and marking one another, binding your souls to make them whole forever. They say it is the most euphoric feeling a wolf can experience. Sometimes, mates can reject their other half. Very rarely, the Moon Goddess may give you a second chance mate. It could be someone horrible that doesn't complement you at all as a punishment for defying her rule and wronging the person she hand-picked for you, thinking you know better than the goddess herself. Or, you could be rewarded with someone better that will cherish you and the mate bond, as your first mate should have if you have been ill-treated.

Billie clearing her throat interrupted me from my thoughts. She had finished her breakfast a while ago and was looking at me expectantly. "I'm sorry, did you say something?" I quickly mumbled out. "Uh yes girl. I asked you if you were alright because you kind of zoned out while I was talking about your potential future mate." She said while taking my unfinished plate and stacking it on top of hers to carry to the kitchen. "Oh sorry, I got lost in my thoughts. I'm okay, shall we head to school?" She shrugged her shoulders and dropped the plates off before we grabbed our bags and left the pack house.

Arriving at school, I couldn't help the smile that spread across my face. Looking around, everyone had started filling their backpacks with the contents of their lockers, so we did the same. The last day of school is the same day for everyone, but for the graduating year level we get to spend the day collecting our school work for the year, saying goodbye to friends we won't see for a while and preparing for graduation later that afternoon. Everyone else still has to attend their classes. Since Billie and I only have each other, we clear out our lockers and head straight for the sports field to enjoy some sun and reminisce about our time at school.

We take our time showing each other our school work, laughing and joking about how bad the class was or how messy our writing is. Then Billie pulls my sketchbook out of my bag.

"What's this?" Her face looking like the cat who caught the canary.

"My sketchbook, nothing interesting in there. Definitely not worth presenting at our little show and tell." I say while trying and failing to snatch it back from her. She starts giggling and running around while I chase her. "Come onnnnnn Billie, give it back!" I whine. "Nope! Not a chance! I want to see what's inside!" She screams back at me, laughing her head off. She finally plonks herself down on the grass, breathing heavily and opens the first page. I throw myself on the ground next to her and cringe inwardly because it's one of the sketches of my parents but has more likeness to a wonky stick figure. She icks through the pages, slowly taking in each detail in every drawing she looks at, while my face contorts from embarrassment. Suddenly she gasps out loud, I look over her shoulder and see she's looking at my most recent sketch. The beautiful black wolf. She glances back at me and I can feel my cheeks warming up under her gaze. I just know I'm red as a beet right now.

"Whose wolf is this?" She questioned. I shrug in response because I truly have no idea. "It came to me in a dream. I don't recall ever seeing this wolf. I'd remember his beauty, that's for sure." I giggled. "His?" A hint of amusement in her voice causing me to get redder than I already was. "Well, regardless, this sketch is amazing Autumn. The details are insane." She mused. With that I quickly grabbed the sketchbook and shoved it into my bag before she could say anything further. We made our way off the field and into one of the empty classrooms to prepare for graduation.