

Chapter 4 Images in the Fire

Catherine's POV

"Mate!" Kia yelled out, excited in my mind.

Yet I was unable to respond; the scent was sending me on an intoxicating trip.

"Mine!" A familiar husky voice echoed in my ears, breaking the spell on me, and I lifted my gaze, finding Brian before me.

My heart fluttered in my chest, and a smile followed on my lips.

Brian grabbed me around the waist and pulled me into his rock hard chest!

"Thank the Goddess!" Brian said, happily, "I was starting to worry..."

I pulled away from him, and he carefully wiped the tears from my face.

I hadn't even noticed that I was crying out of joy.

"I think you should go redo your makeup," he suggested after a silent moment, "Everyone would know you have been crying."

I didn't argue and nodded my head. I turned around, grabbed my makeup bag, and walked back toward my washroom.

I sighed, relieved when I closed the door behind me.

Finally, I could tell the world that Brian was my mate, and I didn't need to worry that he would claim someone else. Finally, the worry was over!

I closed my eyes and silently thanked the goddess for mating me with Brian. Brian lay on my bed with his arms behind his head, waiting patiently for me to get ready. He, too, looked relaxed and happy. The stress of not knowing was gone, and everything was now slowly falling into place.

"Ready?" I asked, as he seemed to be lost in thought. He didn't hear me opening the door of the washroom.

His eyes snapped towards me, and a smile appeared on his lips.

"Yes," he said, "we had better go before your mother sends the warrior on a search for you."

I chuckled and walked closer, and Brian pulled me into his lap.

Our gazes locked, and Brian didn't hesitate to crush his lips on mine.

On the spur of the moment, the kiss intensified, and before we knew what we were doing, we were both n'ked...

"Catherine Jones!" My mother's voice growled over the mind link, startling me in the process.

"If you do not present yourself in less than five minutes, I will come and get you myself!"

I flew o the bed, searching for my clothes, and Brian looked at me, bewildered.

"What?" he asked.

"Mom..."

That was all I said, and Brian jumped from the bed, searching for his clothes.

It was the fastest I have ever gotten dressed and ready...

Mother found us on the stairs, giving me a death glare—that was until she saw the lazy smile on Brian's lips.

"My apologies, Luna; it is my fault that Kate is late."

"You are mates!" She gasped, and a smile immediately followed on her lips. "No wonder..." she trailed o .

We stood frozen for a second before my mother got over her shock.

"We had better go..." she said. "Everyone is waiting..."

The trip down to the clearing didn't take long, and a huge bonfire was already packed for tonight's proceedings. A small stage was set up a couple of feet away from the bonfire. The stage wasn't big, but it was set up just high enough so that the pack members could see who was on stage.

"Are you ready, girl?" Kia asked. Her presence had become more noticeable.

"I'm nervous," I answered, truthfully.

"Don't be..." she said, "When the moon reaches its peak, I will take over, and we will have our first shift... There is nothing to worry about..." She tried to reassure me. Yet, I had a feeling that something was o , but I just couldn't put my finger on it.

"Will it hurt?" I eventually asked, hoping it was because of the shifting that I felt so nervous.

"The shifting?" she asked.

"Yeah?"

I have heard stories of wolves who were stuck in their transformation for hours, whimpering out of agony.

"The first shift is always the worst," she answered, "but the more we do it, the easier it will get..."

Brian pulled me closer, and his arm snaked around my waist. He must have noticed my worry.

He gave me a look of knowing, yet he didn't say anything... He had his first shift a couple of months ago, and I remember that he whimpered at the beginning...

"Relax," Brian said as we got closer. "I will stay by your side..." he promised. "And don't worry, it will be over before you know it..."

"Hmmm," I said, unable to form any proper words.

"It only hurts for a few minutes," he continued and dropped his gaze towards me, "that's until the process is complete."

Bloody hell, as soon as we reached the bonfire, my heart started to pound out of control in my chest. I felt nauseous, and fear rose in me.

"Alpha, Luna, Ranks, pack members, and pups, we welcome you all to Alpha's daughter's shift!" Beta Harold Scott, my father's beta, and best friend, announced from the stage, and the pack members went wild and howled into the quiet night, welcoming me to adulthood.

I moved my gaze over to the gray headed man's features who was making the announcement.

Only love and respect could be read in his chocolate brown eyes.

My heart warmed when his gaze fell on me. And I resisted the urge to go to his side. Beta Harold was like a second father to me, and he is Brian's father.

My father walked over to the stage, climbed the few steps, and met Harold on stage.

"Congratulations, Alpha," Beta Harold said, and the two men shook hands before my father turned toward the pack.

"Evening everyone," my father started, "as everyone knows, my daughter Catherine has reached the legal age of 17, which will allow her to shift for the first time and maybe meet her mate."

My father became silent for a few seconds before he continued.

"My apologies," my father announced, "my daughter has already found her mate..."

Everyone turned their gaze toward me and rejoiced.

I turned crimson while Brian was standing next to me like a cat who had just received a big bowl of cream.

My father came down the stage and handed me a torch to light the bonfire. It was a custom in our pack that when an Alpha's pup came of age, he or she would light a bonfire as a sign that the new generation of ranks would be taking over soon.

"With this torch, we welcome the soon to be Alpha and Luna to the pack," my father announced.

I walked toward the bonfire and dropped the torch on the stack of wood, and the bonfire sprang to life.

"Wow!" Brian gasped next to my side, and I turned to look at what he was seeing.

My gaze ended on the bonfire, and the flames creating images of di erent wolves moving in the flames. A pair of young wolves came to the front. They looked like mates and seemed to look happy. Then they were ripped apart, leaving the she wolf heartbroken.

The images in the flames suddenly changed to a more hostile atmosphere, and I couldn't help but notice that some of the wolves looked sad, disapproving, and distant. All these wolves vanished into the flames, turning their backs on the heartbroken she wolf. The she wolf looked lonely and sad, but something about her tickled my interest. A new set of images appeared in the flames, burning brighter than any of the other images. Three huge wolves walked out of the flames, intensive power and dominance radiating from them. They must be Alphas!

They stood there looking at the she wolf with so much care, and the most dominant wolf between the three wolves' gaze turned to the lonely and sad she wolf.

A warm, fuzzy feeling of unconditional love moved through me, and I wondered what it meant.

The images changed again with a warning of war coming, and the three wolves protected the lonely she wolf...

My father came and stood next to me and placed his hand on my shoulder, as the images in the flames disappeared...

"The Goddess has sent you a message," my father whispered. A soft smile appeared on my father's lips.

"It is believed that only the most powerful wolves walking on this earth would be able to communicate and receive warnings from the goddess herself," he said.

"Yes," I answered, "that I understand, but what does the images mean...?"

"I can't tell you," he answered, smiling.

Before I could ask my next question, my father's face became blank, and I knew he must be busy linking someone.

When his gaze turned back to normal, horror and worry crossed his eyes.

"We are under attack!" he roared.
