Chapter 6 My First Shift

Catherine's POV

"Kate, NO!" Brian roared over the mind link as he saw me sprinting into the blazing pack house.

I was not going to let the pups die.

I dashed towards the stairs as balls of black smoke poured in. I hurried up the steps as fast as I could, covering my nose and mouth.

The second set of stairs appeared to be smoke free, but as I stepped around the bench, raging red flames greeted me, and I took a step back, feeling the burning heat roll down the hallway.

"F*ck!" My pulse raced as I swore, the pup's nursery was on the third floor. I might reach them, but I will not be able to bring them down this way.

"Think, Kate! Think!"

"You better be moving," Kia urged. "The moon has almost reached its peak, shifting here..."

"... will have us killed." I cut her o and climbed the stairs toward the third floor, rushing down the silent hallway.

The silence on the floor was intimidating, yet I ignored it and ran toward the nursery.

Whimpering and crying came from inside the room, and I sighed in relief as I opened the door, finding the pups alive and still safe.

"Thank the Goddess," I said, picking up the first pup from his cot and setting him down next to me.

Twelve small faces looked at me with tears running down their faces. They are scared shitless...

My heart pinched as I panicked to find a plan to get them out of the nursery safely.

"What do I do now?" I whispered to myself, seeking a way out that would be safe enough for all of them. My gaze moved from side to side, yet I just couldn't find a safe enough place.

"Windows..." Kia commented, and my gaze snapped toward the window.

"Yeah," I growled, "I will not be able to move twelve pups at once."

"True," she answered, and I sense she was rolling her eyes at me, "tell your father you will be dropping the pups from the window. They should stand ready to catch them below."

"Are you insane?" I gasped, bewildered at her idea.

"Do you have a better plan?" She growled, "We don't have much time! We are about to take form!"

I shook my head; there was no other way around it, so I gave in and did what she suggested.

I mind linked with my father and explained what I was about to do, then opened the window.

The full moon was shining high, lighting the surroundings below.

I looked down, flinched at the height, and felt a knot in my throat. I was afraid for the pups' sake...

A pack member spotted me and gestured to the window, and a group of wolves ran closer.

"Kate," my father yelled, looking worried, "is everyone still, okay?"

"Yeah, Dad," I answered, screaming against the wind, "they are just frightened. Are you guys ready?"

"Yes, you can drop the first pup," Beta Harold yelled from below.

He had a group of wolves holding a blanket in their hands, ready.

I turned to the pups and picked up the first one, and as I held him, I walked toward the window.

"Okay, little ones," I said, "the only way we can escape the fire is through the window."

"There is a group below that is going to catch you, okay?" I told them.

"Kate, we are scared," a little blond girl said, and I pulled her to me. Her blue eyes were full of tears, and she shivered out of fear.

"I know, little one," I said, lifting her gaze to look at me, "so am I... but this is the only way out, okay! They will catch you, and you will be safe."

She nodded her head, and I turned to the window with the little pup in my arms.

"Drop the first pup!" Beta Harold yelled, and I climbed on the windowsill, shifting my leg over as I held the pup.

"Don't look down," I told him, and he nodded his small head, crying out of fear.

"Shhh, little one, it will be okay," I said as I bent over and stretched my arms out.

"Oh, Goddess, protect them..." I whispered, closed my eyes, and let go.

He screamed, yet the scream died a second later.

Pack members cheered, clapped, and howled. It seems to work.

"Kate," my father yelled, sounding relieved, "drop the next one."

I did as he said, going as fast as I could. Thank the goddess, the pups were aged between two and five. If they were smaller, I wouldn't have been able to drop them.

By the seventh pup, the pain hit my body, and I whimpered out of agony, and my eyes snapped toward the moon.

It was about time...

"Kate, are you okay?" A little boy came to ask. He was the older one who can sense something was happening.

"I'm f f fine!" I stuttered, "Come on, it is your turn."

"Kia," I yelled out in desperation, "let it stop!"

"I can't, girl," she whimpered, worried.

"Do something then, please! I can't let them die!" I cried out in desperation.

"I will try and delay the process." She gave in, worry laced in her voice.

"Thanks," I said, biting down hard on my jaw, fighting against the pain.

I moved my attention back to the task at hand, took the next pup in my arms, and dropped him to safety.

"Kate?" Brian yelled from below. He had shifted back and was helping to catch the pups. "Are you okay?"

I shook my head.

"Y y you will need to catch them quicker," I yelled and whimpered in pain. "I am about to shift..."

Worried gasps sounded from below. They knew what would happen if I shifted while I was still inside the pack house. Besides that, my shifting might endanger the pups' lives.

My legs gave in, and I crawled to the next pup, grabbed her in my arms, and sailed back to the window. Then I set her down and pushed my body upright against the window. I grabbed her by the arm, lifted her, and set her on the windowsill.

At least the girl was a bit older, and she could understand.

"I need you to jump, okay?" I told her gently.

Tears streamed down her pretty face, yet she nodded her head as fear crossed her eyes.

"I will count to three," I told her.

"Okay," she whispered as I held her body.

"One," I started, "two," she shivered, "three..." I let go and pushed her over.

Her screams died a second later, and a smile appeared on my lips. I could hear her crying, with her mother calming her down.

The two pups that were left with me got closer. The eldest of the two just nodded his head and went to the windowsill.

He smiled at me, even though he was scared, and took my hand.

"You are such a brave little man," I said.

"Come, Johnny," he called to his brother. I helped little Johnny onto the windowsill, next to his brother.

Pain hit me from the side, and I moaned out of agony.

"G g go!" I said, trying hard not to show them how much pain I was in.

The eldest of the two boys pushed his brother out the window, and seconds later, he turned and waved at me before he jumped as well.

"Kate!" My father yelled, and I pushed myself up against the window to push my head out the window.

"You need to jump as well," my father urged.

"F f f... urgh!" I moaned, sinking back to the floor. The smell of smoke hit my nostrils, and the room started to heat up. As the flames burned the outside wall, the only way out was by the window.

Thick clouds of smoke pushed from below the door, making me gasp for air and cough.

"I can't delay it anymore!" Kia whimpered, and I could feel how she struggled to hold on.

My body started to twist and turn, leaving me in excruciating pain.

"Oh, Goddess..." I whimpered. "What have I done?"

The sound of bones breaking sounded in the small room, and a scream of agony left my lips.

I was in so much pain that I couldn't lift my head.

The heat under the floor was adding to my discomfort, making my first shift even worse.

"I need to get out of her," I coughed out against the smoke and lifted my head, "or I will burn and su ocate to death."

I tried to move, yet it was still impossible; my bones were moving into position.

"Kia," I yelled, "help me get to the window."

"But..."

"We will die if we stay here!"