

An Alpha Luna Story:

**"BETA-COLLIE,"**

By Leonardo Vidal

## **Chapter 4**

### **"Senses of Deception"**

The silver full-moon light washed the open countryside fields with cyan colors as two figures ran through it crossing a dirt road. One among them gracefully moved, her four limbs in perfect synchrony, as her black mane swayed in the wind. With striking lupine features, her muscular body, adorned with black, gray, and white hair, embodied a harmonious blend of human and wolf essence. She bore the name Luna, a nineteen-year-old lycanthrope.

A short distance away, a unique human figure trailed behind her, running with a graceful stride. This female companion shared only one peculiar similarity with the mighty Lycan – a bushy tail that swayed in sync with her running rhythm. Her name was Collie, a seventeen-year-old girl who, just a week ago, was merely an average bookworm, consumed by her grades and school. But now, she found herself beginning to identify as a werewolf as well.

Luna had the lead for at least eight seconds in advance, and before it could keep growing she instinctively reduced her speed as she looked back to the slim-looking friend who was still running with determination. Besides, Luna didn't have to run anymore as she reached a wall of tall pines blocking her way with a fence that traveled all the way from left to right. She looked at it measuring the potential danger that they could run into within the darkness beyond.

Meanwhile, Collie maintained her running posture from Gym class, utilizing a perfected breathing technique taught by her teacher. Surprisingly, she now ran twice as fast and experienced only a third of the fatigue she used to feel after a 20-minute run. However, as Collie noticed her friend rising onto her hind legs again, she instinctively began to slow down, or so she thought.

"Is... is everything alright?" Collie asked, her voice filled with concern. She stumbled clumsily, her feet tripping over each other as she desperately tried to regain her balance. Her arms flapped in front of her in a futile attempt to steady herself. Luna stepped forward, gently placing her hands on Collie's shoulders. With just that small touch, Collie found her center and regained her balance.

"Thank you!" Collie exclaimed, feeling a bit awkward running at such a speed with her tail. She shyly rubbed the back of her head and added, "I really need to practice more." Luna

smiled reassuringly and responded, "I believe you're doing great, just be cautious..." As she spoke, Luna's attention shifted back to the woods.

"We're not too far from where that howl came from. And if that wolf is not friendly we need to be cautious from now on, ok?" - explained Luna as Collie nodded before saying a timid "Ok".

Luna continued, her voice hushed, "Stay silent and stay close, following me through the shadows of the trees." She fixed Collie with a serious gaze, emphasizing the importance of their task. Collie's eyes lit up, her voice brimming with enthusiasm as if she had just been given instructions for a thrilling stealth mission. But Luna, seemingly able to read her thoughts, responded with a sigh, "This is no game, Collie."

"Wait, what about Fang? we should've called him! Maybe, if we howl now. Although I can't properly do it...you-" Luna quickly put a clawed finger in front of her muzzle gesturing silence. "If we do that now, whatever chance we have to find this other wolf will be gone." said in a lower tone.

She continued, "I hope he heard the same howl we did. If that's the case, he likely chose a different path from where he was. In any case, it's up to us now. Unless you'd prefer we turn back and forget about all of this." Collie swiftly shook her head, rejecting that idea. "You mentioned it was in pain. And I saw your eyes..."

"Really? Am I that easy to read?" Luna asked, a hint of embarrassment in her smile..." Well, we have been friends for a while," Collie answered.

"Well, to be honest, I'm not entirely sure about what I heard. It's just a gut feeling, but what do I really know about this whole werewolf thing? Maybe it was simply a dog, Collie. If you want, we could go back." Luna sighed, expressing her uncertainty.

"I trust your instincts, Luna. Besides, isn't it kind of exciting? We're experiencing something together as werewolves, you know?" Collie remarked, trying to find the positive side.

Luna let out a sigh and returned a smile. "Alright, let's stick together and be careful." With that, she gracefully turned around, flexed her hind legs, and effortlessly leaped over the barbed fence.

Collie, however, decided to duck under the obstacle, but a sudden pull stopped her tracks in an instant. "OW, Ow! No, No, No..." she looked back to see her tail being ensnared within these wires.

Luna looked over her shoulder, a puzzled expression on her lupine face until she noticed the issue. A muffled chuckle escaped her maw as she saw how Collie quickly pulled her tail from the trap. With a playful grin, Collie glanced back at her furry companion as they ventured deeper into the unfamiliar woods. Collie couldn't help but notice Luna crouching on all fours, instinctively prompting her to hunch her posture.

Tall pines blocked the full-moon night sky creating a cascade of small beams of silver light peeking through the cracks of the leafy ceiling.

As they strolled along, Luna couldn't help but notice how each scent was distinctly different from the last. It was like stepping into a moistened alley, with the unpleasant aroma of manure mingled with the dampness of fungi. Although not particularly delightful, it still held a certain intrigue for Luna, especially as a new werewolf. Even scents that were less than pleasant offered a unique experience for the female Lycan. As a result, Luna's muzzle contorted with odd expressions, causing her friend Collie to silently chuckle at her grimaces.

Further in she started to see an increasing light between the trees over the top of the hill. But her steps were quickly frozen as Luna's nose twitched again to a scent she couldn't quite understand. Her attention was then captured by deep gashes on the nearby log, emanating the distinct odor of dried human blood. Traces of a struggle were etched into the earth behind the log, with paw prints and shoe imprints intermingling amidst scattered fur fibers. Yet, there was something more potent concealed within the tapestry of scents. Gingerly, Luna extracted a strand of the enigmatic material with her clawed finger, triggering a shiver down her spine. There was something familiar about it, something she had smelled and felt before...

"Luna?" Collie asked in a timid voice, her words barely audible. Luna blinked, her mind coming back to the present as she shook her head. "Oh... just wait over there," she said, pointing to a nearby tree, diverting her friend's attention from the unsettling find. "Is it just me, or is there a terrible smell?" Collie remarked. While her nose was more sensitive than that of most humans, it remained structurally unchanged and couldn't compete with Luna's lupine senses. And in that moment, it was Luna's advantage, her ability to conceal her friend from the disturbing discovery.

Luna hesitated for a moment as she leaned closer to Collie. "There's something important I need to ask you", she began. Collie turned his full attention to her, intrigued by the serious tone in her voice. "If... if something goes wrong, promise me you'll run away without looking back. Can you do that?"

These words left Collie momentarily speechless, his mind racing to comprehend the reason behind Luna's sudden demand.

And while she wanted to know what was in Luna's mind, something firm and powerful was oozing from Luna's eyes that prevented her from protesting. "Y-yes..." she finally said. However, with a determined sigh, she continued, "I... I know I'm not suited for a fight, Luna. I know that. But... for the first time, I think...I feel can help you out with anything else. And I promise, I won't be a burden for you anymore." Collie stated with a determined gaze.

"Collie, you've never been a burden for me. I...I'm just being cautious, and...". Luna's pointed ears suddenly twitched as her gaze looked around her and toward the clearing. Collie quickly realized that Luna had picked up sounds that she wasn't capable of hearing just yet. Instinctively, Luna dropped to all fours as she crept through the dense foliage ahead. Collie followed suit, maintaining a low posture and using her hands on the ground only when necessary. As they reached the edge of the bushes, just before the clearing, they came to a halt. Luna cautiously peered between the trees and bushes, while Collie did the same by her side.

The area looked like a huge grassy arena where half of a soccer field could be put in. But a dirt road crossed it from side to side where Luna and Collie's eyes traveled following the path to the opposite side where it was lost between the tree shadows and a broken fence. From which a fuzzy chatter could be heard by werewolf ears.

Luna and Collie's eyes widened as three shadowy figures emerged along the path. Two of them resembled creatures with human-like proportions, but that was the keyword: creatures. They were covered in fur, and adorned with slim, long tails, sharp-pointed ears, and short muzzles reminiscent of feline features. One of them, a sturdy build with brown and black fur, took charge of the conversation, complaining about the distance they had walked. He carried a wooden stick with a sharp metal tip, secured by multiple layers of fabric straps. The other werecat appeared much skinnier, with a wavy, long white mane and gray fur. He wore a furred black cloak adorned with several bone collars hanging from his neck. Walking behind them was a reddish-brown and white wolf, staying close to the skinnier feline.

Luna's eyes were wide with a shocked gaze focused on the werecats below, she remembered now. She couldn't smell them from this distance just yet, but she was sure they'd match the scene she had just explored. And they looked like the image she had in her mind since one rude-looking classmate crossed paths with her. For some reason, that day at school she noticed the reeking smell coming from this guy after he forced her to trip over. And in that flashing moment of anger, she looked at him and saw this cat-like face in her mind as she froze in place. It didn't make any sense. But that'd be the same day; the same night she'd be forced to change into a werewolf for the first time. Luna suddenly thought, somehow this was all connected.

"Oh my god, what are those creatures? And a Wolf? Wait, do you think he did the howling?" said Collie softly, while Luna slowly came back from her trance to answer. - "It's not just a Wolf, Collie.." said Luna contemplatively. She knew better, his large size and build reminded her of how Collie looked the night before, there was no mistake in her mind as she understood that creature had been a human being, not too long ago.

With an instinctive start, she began utilizing her nose within their range. The wealth of information an adult Lycan could gather through scent alone was unmatched. Despite being new to her wolf existence, Luna's actions possessed a natural grace that left Collie in awe. It was as if she were observing a seasoned expert in her element. Collie couldn't help but marvel at Luna's seamless transition into a more wolf-like demeanor, embracing her feral nature.

Luna's gaze intensified as her quivering nose came to a halt, a newfound understanding dawning upon her. It was enough to prompt her to make a decision, while her human side reconnected with her friend's eyes.

"Collie, stay here," she said, her voice filled with concern. "I just need to have a chat with them. But if anything goes wrong, well...you know what to do."

Collie protested, "Wait, I should come with you..." but Luna was already sliding down the path into the clearing, leaving Collie with an outstretched hand and worried eyes, silently watching her every move.

Luna herself questioned her own recklessness as she descended the hill. However, her olfactory senses had revealed something unsettling: the felines emitted a stench identical to the one she had detected near the bloodstained log. Judging by the mingling scent of human blood on the ground, it seemed they were killers, human killers.

But what truly compelled Luna to brave this perilous encounter was the crimson-hued wolf. Yes, indeed, it was male. This wolf bore a striking resemblance to Collie after her transformation, which retained traces of human scent—youthful and untainted. Hence, if the wolf was associated with this peculiar group, why did his aroma remain so different?

If scents were visible and these creatures were human, it would be like observing two disheveled addicts walking alongside an impeccably dressed innocent child. Something about the scene felt unsettling.

In an instant, the robust werecat reacted defensively at the sight of Luna entering the frame. He brandished his wooden spear, bellowing, "BOSS, A DOG IS HERE!!" as he involuntarily spat a bit of saliva. Meanwhile, the leaner werecat maintained a composed demeanor, halting in his tracks alongside the crimson wolf.

As Luna entered within the same path she raised both of her pawed hands while saying "I mean no harm! If you don't attack me, I won't!"

From above, Collie was worried as she watched the meeting take place. By now her wolf side, which was only visible through her furry tail, was starting to creep under her skin restless, something wasn't right. Her human mind on the other hand was looking for answers as she thought: *"Were-cats? Fang didn't mention other creatures, did he?...wait. Luna's mom said something...oh my god... could they be...?"*

"ANIMAS? Is that what you are?" Luna inquired, gradually closing the distance while maintaining a safe space between them, as if a standoff had suddenly ensued.

"And who might you be? Wolf," inquired the leaner werecat with a deep, growly voice, assuming the role of a natural leader as he stepped forward, gesturing to his companion with a flickering eye. The red wolf obediently followed, positioning himself at his side.

However, Luna couldn't help but feel that something was amiss as she observed the wolf walking. He appeared weary, only reacting to the movements of the cat. His wolfish gaze failed to track Luna as he sniffed the air around him. Could he be blind? she wondered. Nevertheless, she quickly averted her gaze back to the cat, concealing her true curiosity.

"I'm Luna. I don't want any problems, I just want to talk," she stated firmly, while attentively studying the subtle gestures of their bodies. Both of them bore the marks of a recent battle, yet lacked any spoils to show for it. Their bodies were bruised and bloodied, especially the robust cat who seemed to have suffered the most.

The slender white-haired cat, seemingly missing his right eye, bore three claw marks diagonally across his face. The wounds, about a week old, were haphazardly patched with bandages that covered half of his visage. His white, flowing mane appeared so impeccably cared for, it seemed almost unreal. After a brief blink, he finally spoke:

"Oh, she just wants to have a conversation. Did you catch that, Murmur? These new wolves seem to understand proper etiquette, much like our companion here." He gently placed his clawed hand on the short mane of the wolf. "Oh, how rude of me! Allow me to introduce myself. I am Ycan, a humble shaman at your service." With a bow, he greeted the others.

Luna's human side could almost distinguish a thread of cynicism coming from each word. But she wasn't quite sure as she felt she needed to press on before coming to early conclusions.

" You didn't answer..." said Luna with a more serious look. "Oh, well yes. We are ANIMAS. But why is that important to you, Wolf? My guess is that you were bred and grown with the humans, is it not? And you don't even live in these lands. Why would you question me, then?" said with a calm, almost nonchalant tone.

"Animas killed the parents I once had..." said Luna with glowing eyes trying to hold onto her emotions.

"Oh. I'm sorry about that. But you see, we're not enemies now. Just because years ago our previous breed fought against each other.. that doesn't mean we should do the same. We should learn from our mistakes and move forward. Don't you think? Just look at me taking care of this puppy" said while rubbing the wolf's head who didn't seem to mind.

Luna was still unsure of his words as she noticed how Murmur wouldn't say a thing while exuding scents of fear. She could even hear his heart racing. But again, the red wolf was the issue. She knew he didn't fit in this group. And as she took a closer look she could see the red wolf's gloomy blue eyes locked onto the horizon as if she still didn't exist.

"May I speak to him?" Luna finally inquired. Ycan appeared mildly surprised, exchanging glances with his partner before responding, "Oh, yes, yes, of course!" His inviting gesture reassured her that it was permissible to approach.

Luna tried to connect her eyes to those of the wolf while kneeling just a few steps in front of him. "Are you alright, kid?" said Luna while not receiving any response or gesture.

"Oh, he is not." Ycan replied as he continued, "The poor lad used to live with his human father around this place. But his dad was shot by a horrible human who wanted nothing but his belongings, what a tragedy. The boy changed during the last night of the full moon. And the pain and sorrow consumed his being breaking his spirit and mind. And that's when we found him."

These final words washed away Luna's suspicions, as they mirrored her own experiences during her first transformation. Thoughts of her late mother and the fear of losing her adoptive one flooded her mind. Every word he spoke resonated with her. The wolf wasn't blind; it was simply in a state of shock. As Luna studied the wolf's vacant gaze once more, her heart sank. Despite the putrid stench that surrounded them, perhaps these werewolves were indeed honest creatures.

"Oh, and I apologize for Murmur's behavior. He's always like that. When we found our wolf here, he bit him and it took some time to convince him to trust Ivan. Murmur is still a little

afraid of Wolves like him and you, especially since he lost his parents to Lycans like yourself. So, you should understand."

This made perfect sense to Luna. Everything fell into place. And the Wolf's name was Ivan?

"How... do you know his name?" Luna questioned, her curiosity piqued. "Oh, I... I just gave it to him. It's the least I could do, hehe," Ycan responded, a soft smile gracing his lips.

Luna gazed at the wolf, Ivan, once more, taking a deep breath. Her decision was clear in her mind now. "I can take care of him," Luna suddenly declared, determination in her voice. "I will-"

"Oh, that's a nice gesture, my dear". Interrupted Ycan "...but this is something not negotiable...as you see, the bond I have with him can't be undone. He'll only listen to me, as I am the only face to which he can communicate." - "But..." the words failed to Luna as she didn't expect such a direct answer.

"Don't worry my dear...he'll be ok...besides he--" Ycan continued speaking, but his words abruptly came to a halt as the moonshine reflected off Luna's fang necklace. This simple adornment stirred up memories filled with hatred and anger, causing a visible stir in his countenance. Luna observed this sudden shift in his emotions, yet she couldn't discern the underlying cause for his behavior. Concerned, she swiftly inquired, "Is everything alright?"

Ycan quickly regained his composure, placing his right-clawed hand over his head. , "Oh, sorry...I, I just remembered something. But...you know. Now that I think about it, you may be right. Wolves should be together after all..." He smiled with a condescending face as he gestured Ivan to approach Luna.

For the first time, Ivan appeared to notice the werewolf friend as he raised his muzzle sniffing her out. Luna kneeled once more as she finally petted his head with a motherly smile.

Collie had been watching all this time as she finally rested her thoughts seeing Luna meeting this new wolf friend. A warm feeling filled her with emotions as if she had been gifted with a cute pet. "Aww Luna, this is so amazing..."

However, as Ycan walked closely beside Luna, his demeanor shifted, emanating a sense of menace. It was as if he was biding his time, waiting for the opportune moment. Just as he passed by the wolf's back, he whispered something in a foreign tongue. Luna, perceptive as ever, sensed the change in his aura and couldn't help but wonder if Murmur was about to attack from her back. Trying to catch a glimpse over her shoulder, she was suddenly overtaken by excruciating pain in her left arm, as Ivan's jaws clamped down with crushing force. A cry of anguish escaped her lips, "GAAAAH!"

Collie almost yelled her friend's name seeing this happen before her own eyes, but she was suddenly stopped by her own hands knowing this would make things worse. With her heart racing, she wanted to help, clenching her fist in rage and fear. "No No No!" she whispered repeatedly.

With swift movements, Ycan revealed a concealed dagger from beneath his belt. He brought it menacingly close to Luna's head, while his other hand tightly gripped her neck. "Now, surrender it to me!" Luna attempted to turn and face him, but her efforts were swiftly halted by Murmur's spear, pressing her chest firmly and pushing her against the ground.

He bellowed at her, "Stay right there, you wretched creature!" Ycan sliced Luna's necklace in two, triumphantly clutching the fang in his left hand, a malevolent smile spreading across his face. "Yes, once again, you are mine!"

Collie's blood was boiling up while her forehead sweated furiously, despite Luna's early words she could not leave her. Not this way. And as Collie focused on her sweaty hands clawing the dirt underneath, her heart raced up, and then...she felt it.

The same feeling of change she already experienced once; goosebumps of an electric and boiling nature were creeping through her skin in waves. But there was something different as this reaction was being fueled by the anger and the helplessness she felt. She wanted to run, to scream at her friend, but she was absorbing those emotions into herself and converting them into something new.

Her body quivered and convulsed as pain wracked Collie's being, forcing tears of agony from her eyes and causing her entire frame to perspire and spasm in response. Yet, she focused her gaze on her hands, where the pain seemed to intensify. Her veins were now dilated, and her nails split, revealing the darkened, bloody claws beneath. It was the confirmation she sought. She understood now that this was a necessary pain, one she must endure to aid her dear friend.

Luna's voice rang out with anger and frustration, her words lashing out at Ycan. "This is who you really are! A coward!" she exclaimed, feeling trapped in this situation. Meanwhile, Ivan continued keeping her firmly with his maw.

"OW ow, don't hurt my feelings! I haven't lied to you. Well... not entirely. And to be honest I was about to let you be on your way. I wanted to know if you were from a new pack of dogs. So I started to think I'd follow your tracks later....but then, I saw this thing hanging from your neck, what are the odds?! The very same rune I once stole from that stupid wolf."

"What?!" replied Luna confused while breathing in anger.

"Did you take it from the scarred wolf? That blonde stray, did you not?" Ycan sneered with a mocking grin. Luna, taken aback, replied, "Are you talking about Fang?!"

"Yes, you mean ME? You Fuck-Face?!" Fang bellowed, emerging from the shadows where the Feline creatures had once stood. He had transformed into a Lycan, his entire form adorned in shades of dark brown and yellow. Although slightly shorter than Luna, he was a well-built werewolf.

With swift determination, he leaped into the air, causing Murmur to raise his spear in defense. Fang, however, had already set his sights on Ivan's muzzle, delivering a forceful kick that freed Luna from his grip. Luna, though wounded, rolled away and quickly assumed a defensive stance, clutching her injured arm with a mixture of pain and anger.



Murmur was caught off guard, unable to react in time as he swung wildly, missing Fang by a wide margin. Luna, taking advantage of her momentum, swiftly rolled away and gracefully returned to a defensive stance. As she cradled her injured arm, a mixture of pain and frustration colored her expression.

On the other hand, Ycan appeared visibly stunned and enraged. He assumed a defensive stance, holding his dagger in front of him. "You, You!!" he shouted.

Collie was in shock as she saw Fang from above. Hyperventilating and covered in a hot sweat she didn't notice how her changes had slowed down to a halt. Much of the back of her body was covered in a light brown fur up to her shoulders with tufts sprouting from elbows, her cheeks and by the middle of her chest which was barely visible due to her tank top still on. In fact, other than her shoes and jacket, she didn't rip or discard any of her main clothes as her body, while toned, hadn't changed in terms of build. And with the hole in her shorts, her tail was unobstructed to flap in any direction.

"Ok, this.. is new," she managed to say between breaths. So far her change resembled what Fang had once mentioned as the "Anthro" form that werewolves could attain.

While not as big as the Lycan counterpart, Collie was also displaying sharp canine fangs ready to attack if needed, not counting her unsheathed claws over her hands and feet. These latter extremities had a much more canine appearance now, forcing her to stand on the tip of her toes while her ears had changed almost completely to her lupine design while being positioned halfway through the top and the side of her head.

Looking down at her hands and body, she realized she hadn't fully transformed into like her Lycan friends below. However, she felt a sense of calmness and readiness, as if a surge of energy flowed through her, making her feel weightless. Despite her initial excitement, a sense of serenity and unwavering resolve now emanated from her heart.

Without a moment's hesitation, Collie directed her gaze towards the exact spot where her friends stood. Her eyes, once filled with vibrant emerald hues, now radiated a deep, golden core. With unwavering determination, she gracefully bounded down the hill, mirroring her resolute spirit.



"OK, THIS.. IS NEW,"

The formerly timid Collie had wholeheartedly embraced her newfound nature. Although she still didn't comprehend the true reason for her "gift," she refused to ignore the call, driven by her deep longing to be with her friends. Perhaps, she pondered, this was the purpose bestowed upon her by the fang. It simply had to be.