FLL Robotics Competition

By: Avichal Goel

The FLL (First Lego League) is a robotics competition with three parts to it: the robot game, the project, and core values.

The robot game has missions that resemble challenges seniors face every day. For example, the Service Animals mission (at the top-left of the diagram), where you program the robot to navigate around the field and push a disc that will send a Lego dog holding a remote toward the base. This resembles a service animal helping the senior bring a TV remote to them.

The FLL Robot Competition Field Setup:
In the Senior Solutions Project teams had to:

- Find a senior partner
- Identify and learn about a problem faced by seniors
- Create an innovative solution to the problem they identify
- Share the problem they identified and their solution with others

Even though it might not seem important, Core Values are a big part of FLL. The FLL Core Values are the cornerstones of the FLL program. They are some of the elements that distinguish FLL from other programs of its kind. Core Values are important so that participants learn that friendly competition and mutual gain are not separate goals, and that helping one another is the foundation of teamwork. FLL has trademarked two terms, Gracious Professionalism® and Coopertition®, which talk about competing fiercely and at the same time treating everyone with respect.

- We are a team.
- We do the work to find solutions with guidance from our coaches and mentors.
- We know our coaches and mentors don't have all the answers; we learn together.
- We honor the spirit of friendly competition.
- What we discover is more important than what we win.
- We share our experiences with others.
- We display Gracious Professionalism® and Coopertition® in everything we do.
- We have FUN!
Sanchez or Theriot? Who's a better backup?

The Giants have a problem at second base. Re-signing Marco Scutaro is a must, but who will be the backup? Sanchez and Theriot are both free agents now and whom will the Giants choose? Granted Freddy Sanchez was playing wonderful until a season ending shoulder injury catching a ball at AT&T Park on June 10, 2011 vs. the St. Louis Cardinals. After that Sanchez was plagued by even more injuries. Ryan Theriot, on the other hand, has had no major injuries this season. He played well, with a batting average of .270 this season with 104 games. Overall I believe Theriot to be a better choice because he is more reliable, and an all around good player; Sanchez’s baseball skills are probably a little rusty.

People have committed heinous crimes over the centuries. Some were worse than others. Yet, in the last millennium, there has been very little law to stop them. The government was weak, and didn’t bother trying to fight any of the gangs who infested the universe. I was there last research scientist, not kidnapped by gangs, or assassinated. I did my best to try to make inventions to help the government but it wasn’t enough. The government was losing what little territory it had, near its capitol in the Milky Way. I had to do something I vowed I wouldn’t do. I was forced to create a weapon, so powerful, even the gangs would tremble beneath the government. Once built, I could create armies out of rocks, monsters out of trees; my invention I began was the gene-splicer.

It was the year 4136. The funders of my science research where greedy and bad people. I couldn’t do anything about it however because I was just a scientist. I was being held by this gang planning on taking over the galaxy with my machine. They had kidnapped me when I was beginning to perfect my gene-splicer. I tried to keep it secret, but someone in
the gang must have found out. They were the strongest people in the galaxy. I thought I would be safe in the center of the Milky Way, a ways away from any gangs, but I wasn’t far enough. They brought me to earth and forced me to finish my machine. I had tried to escape several times. I made gas pellets and slipped them in my guards drinks, hacked into the security system, blew a hole in the wall, brewed an invisibility potion, but nothing worked. I never had enough time to build a teleporter before they found me. Eventually, I did try using the creation they forced me to make in a last ditch attempt to escape when it was done. I took a black lab retriever, and used the genes witch helped it understand humans, used my genes to make it smart, and a Raliker’s genes to make strong. This was the best quick, makeshift, animal that I could control. I built an aging machine to get it to the height of its age, and used a knowledge transmitter to teach it everything I know and rode from California all the way too Kansas, before I was caught.

Now they had the gene splicer though, they could make people with machine guns as arms. They could make giants, from people and Blue Whales. They would be nearly undefeatable. I was dropped off near the edge of their territory, on Jupiter. This gang ruled this area with an iron hand. These people were angry, starving, and powerless. The few guards on the planet were heavily armed and of a different species then most of the people who lived here. This gang had been gaining territory in the Milky Way recently and they took Jupiter only 15 years ago. When I got there I was dropped off in a crater. Red dust swirled around me. I sat there for several days. I thought about what had happened. I felt depressed, frustrated, and above all, powerless. Soon I realized this gang put this weapon into a scanner to be cloned so they could mass-produce it everywhere. It will take them about 5 days to scan it then the file of the scan would be in production everywhere. The terrible truth finally hit me. I had given them a weapon to take the universe into their evil hands and I had less than 4.5 days to make it right.

I got up, and got my bearings. The people here were angry, hungry, and scared of this gang. I could use that. If I got these people to rebel, I could have them help me make an escape by taking out the guards, and stealing a ship. I could make weapons, bring the people to earth, and storm the factory in which they imprisoned me. What I would do when I got there I didn’t know but I didn’t have time for that. I had to hurry.

Continued next issue.

Friendships and Loss – Chapter 2: Wolfbane

By Dani Wang

Chapter 2: Wolfbane

“Well what do we have here? A trio, huh? Where were you guys heading? To the Dark forces headquarters? Hmmm, what do have to say for yourself you naughty children?” whispered the official. He snapped his fingers and a bright light forced us to turn back into our human form.

Silence, it was too quiet. What had happened with the panthers?
“Don’t worry about the panthers, Wolfbane got them.” Answered a voice in my brain that wasn’t mine. Who’s Wolfbane? How were the panthers defeated? How did puke get into my brain and suddenly start talking to me?

“My name isn’t puke.” Too bad, I thought. It fits you quite nicely PUKE.

“You’re hopeless you know that?” Thank you puke; now excuse me while I go throw up sparkly unicorns and rainbows when you claim that you aren’t. I hate you Luke.

“I’m not hopeless. Now let’s see those unicorns and rainbows. I want to ride a sparkly unicorn! And you just called me Luke.” See, Hopeless. It’s too weird hearing him act like a 5 year old.

“Wipe those smirks of your pretty little faces before I do it myself, scum.”

“I have a question. You obviously have no idea what danger you’re in, and the worst insult you can come up with is scum? Talk about pathetic.” I spat.

“What dangers can a group of three teens pose?”

“Make that a group of four AWESOME teens.”

The official suddenly fell unconscious at our feet, with a sword butt aimed at where his head was, the forest quieter than a mouse shuffling under a cat’s nose.

The undergrowth behind the man lying in front of us shuffled and the sword was rotated to reveal a beautifully forged blade. But how did the blade lift itself? I’m so confused; it’s not even funny. Suddenly, a guy about my age appeared. He was tall; blue eyed, and had flattish brown flippy hair. He was probably British or at least some kind of European person. His eyes lit up when saw me.

“Hey, I’m Wolfbane, and big shocker, but my talent is invisibility and I can walk or even scream and no one will hear if I want to be like that. I also love to sing.”

“I’m Annalise, here against my own will, kidnapped by yours truly, Puke.”

“Wow, you call him that too? We’re going to get along real well bird.”

“Bird is the British slang for lady, or girl.” Spoke the girl next to me, not even daunted by the dead body she stepped over as she gave Wolfbane a hug.

“I’m Lottie, his sister and only remaining family that cares. Our parents were terminated when the government found out that they were shape-shifters.”

“You’re hella lucky then, at least compared to my past.” I accidentally blurted out. I didn’t enjoy having people who knew about my past. No one knew about it either, except for Luke. He technically doesn’t count when I say that nobody knows.

They turned around, and stared at me curiously. Wolfbane’s eyes were especially interested, and I noticed that they were blue-gray, not just blue.

“Care to explain?” Lottie prompted.
“Umm...well...my uncle, parents, older brother and younger sister are all dead. My parents didn’t make the first explosion, and my uncle and siblings died after the second one. My brother was 9 at the time, my sister was the happiest 6 year old ever, and I was 8. My uncle died saving me. He wasn’t older than my dad, who was 59 when he passed. We were shape-shifters too. I told my only real friends about that and she was terminated a few weeks after her sister who also was my friend. I’ve never had a friend who hadn’t ditched me or achieved a termination status since then.” I realized that I was crying. I hate crying more than anything, it makes me feel helpless. I sunk to my knees and stared at the ground. Hard to believe my life, especially since I was a mere 13, having everyone I cared about was gone.

“Shhhh, shhh, don’t cry love. I’ll be your bestie, and I swear I won’t leave you. I can’t bear ta see ya cry.” I suddenly felt a pair of arms wrap around me and rock me in a comforting way. Confused I looked up I realized that I was in the embrace of Wolfbane, and much to my surprise, his eyes were watering. No one has even tried to comfort me since Luke, much less say that they’ll be my friends. After a few minutes of bowed heads to honor all those who had died, I peeled myself away from Wolfbane.

“I haven’t ever been one to mope much about my past. Let’s go kick some serious butt out there. What’s the plan peeps?” I declared still hurting inside. I earned lopsided grins from Luke and Wolfbane, and a giggle from Lottie.

“Well, the mission that we were sent to do after picking you up was to capture the capital of this state and turn it over to the Dark forces. We aren’t really ‘dark’, its’ just that we want to overthrow the government and justify the laws, making it safe for everyone to live in peace, harmony and freedom. The government isn’t especially happy with us, and considering the amount of people volunteering to join us; they have a reason to be scared. Our plan is to take over each of the capitals of the nation’s states, and the capital we’re assigned to is one of the more important ones.” Said Puke a.k.a. Luke.

“Who organized this? It seems very well thought through and planned. And how are the four of us supposed to overthrow the capital we were assigned to, I mean we’re a really small group?” I asked.

“Annalise, you are our leader in this operation, that’s why we had to pick you up. And this was planned by your parents through their wills. They were pretty influential people in their time. You also need to come up with a plan. Fortunately, Lottie, Luke and I are some of the best-trained people in the Forces. We’ll help you come up with one that will succeed, even if we are a small group.” Replied Wolfbane.

“Funny how we were talking about sparkly ponies,”

“They were unicorns.” Said Lottie “Luke broadcasted your conversation to all of us.”

“Whatever, sparkly unicorns, rainbows,” Wolfbane snorts, “lost ones and then nation domination, hey, that rhymed but whatever. Let’s get moving from this place, they’re probably still looking for us and the officers due to wake up soon.”

“But Puke and I won’t be able to keep up with you and Lottie.” Whines Wolfbane.
“Sure you will. Lottie and I will turn into horses. And Lottie, I call dibs on letting Wolfbane ride on my back. I don’t want Puke to sit on me, actually, I generally don’t want to be sat on, but sorry, Lottie you’ll have to carry the fat one.” I said.


“The weighing scale may say otherwise.”

Chapter 3: Maniac plans

“I think that we should stop here. We’re right outside the border of the capital city, and if we go in there, then we risk the chance being caught. Being a small group of teenagers that just killed two ‘invincible’ panthers, and a trained official, I think that they’re going to be searching quite hard for us.” I whispered, watching the bright city lights.

“How would they know that there are four of us?” asked Lottie.

“Our slight foot impressions would give us away. It was raining about two days ago, and there’s been an on/off drizzle ever since.” I replied.

“Smart. I guess that you aren’t as helpless as you tell us you are.” Wolfbane spoke softly in my ear.

Shivering, I replied “I think that I have a plan already, but we need to wait until daybreak. You people should get some sleep.”

“I’ll take first watch, I’m not that tired.” Luke spoke up.

“Good, since you were the one who was sleeping the most over the last 18 hours. I barely got any.” I whined.

“OK, wake me up when you are done Luke. I’m next.” Lottie whispered tiredly.

I turned into an Arctic fox, turned around three times and settled down between the roots of a large oak. I saw Lottie turn into the dog thing again, and lay beside Wolfbane talking urgently. I closed my eyes and let the much-welcomed sleep take over my body.

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“Ok now we’re here. Step two; Get Luke into ‘jail’. I whispered, hiding behind a dumpster, watching the main street carefully.

“Are you sure it is going to work?” Puke asked.

“Of course, I turned off the security system in the chips located in their brain that blocks mind readers like you. You should be fine. Follow the plan and just knock out everyone in the building with your super awesome ninja mind skills, ok Luke?” Whispered Lottie, “Don’t you trust me?”
“Sure, but I don’t trust the maniac who came up with this plan.” Puke punched my shoulder. “See you at the entrance of the building.”

“Here goes nothing.” I said as I spotted a tank.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH
corner, hugging himself and whimpering. I could have laughed if all that crazy attention wasn’t pointed directly at us.

“We need to get out of here,” I growl and let Samantha up.

I can hear police sirens in the distance, and I know that it won’t be long before the police get to the school. Samantha follows me as I run towards the school gate. We jump the fence, not daring to look back. I run through the streets, stopping pedestrians and cars that yell and honk their horns. All the noise and panic doesn’t matter to me. I just run, hoping that no one can catch up to us. But they do.

I smell them before I see them. The scent of a truck, filled with dogs, cats, and other miscellaneous pets. I consider turning into a human, but that would get us into more trouble than we were already in. I slow down and let Samantha pass me; I want to protect her from the animal control officers. I had known when we ran that they would try to stop us. I expected nets or tranquilizer guns, but I didn’t expect them to get out their rifles.

The first bullet misses me by an inch and flies by Samantha’s head. My heart starts to race and I speed up. “Be careful!” I shout to Samantha.

Samantha heads for a tall gate that separates the city from a large field. I follow her knowing that we can jump the fence, and the officers can’t. I watch Samantha leap the fence, land on the other side, and continue running. I jump too, just barely making it over the spikes on the top of the fence. That’s when the bullet hits me.

It grazes my left leg, and suddenly all I can think about is the searing pain. I spin in the air and slam into the ground on the other side of the fence. I yelp out to Samantha and she stops and spins around. I see her eyes widen as she looks at me, and she sprints over. My vision is getting fuzzy, and I look to the other side of the fence. The officers have pulled up and gotten out of the car. They look at the fence, and then they look at us. Samantha grabs my fur in her mouth and drags me away. As I move away, I see one officer go into the truck and pull out a huge ring of keys. He moves over to a gate a few feet away. He tries the first key. It doesn’t fit. Then I black out.

I wake up in a forest. At first I think that we are back home, but I can’t smell the familiar scents of our house. I look up and watch Samantha standing over my leg. She is in her human form, pressing leaves against the wound in my leg. She notices my movement and stops. She goes to my head and starts to sign.

*I am so sorry Will. I tried everything I could, but I can’t get it to stop bleeding! We need help. This is all my fault!*

Tears pour down her face and I lick them away. They taste salty, but Samantha smiles and signs again.

*We need to move before the officers find us again. They were trying to find the key to open the gate. They had a lot of keys, but I’m sure they’ve found the right one by now. Can you turn into a human?*
I nod and concentrate. I feel myself shrinking, losing my fur and growing back my fingers. It hurts, but it’s not unbearable to change. I sit up and inspect the wound. Samantha’s right, it is pretty bad. The big gash in my calf is still bleeding, and just looking at it makes my head spin. I try to stand up, but I just can’t do it. I’m too weak. So Samantha turns into a panther and lifts me onto her back. I grab onto her fur and try to settle myself so that I don’t fall off.

Samantha goes slowly, but the ride is still very painful. We exit the forest in the opposite direction of the gate, and somehow find ourselves back in the city. We take back roads and alleys, not wanting to be spotted. I’m too turned around to know where I am, but Samantha seems to know exactly where to go. We follow the signs to the hospital, and I finally see the big, white building. Samantha gently sets me down and turns into a human. Then she drags me to the hospital entrance. Ready Will?

*As ready as I’ll ever be.*

Then she pushes open the door and drags me in.

*To be concluded....*