

# Chapter 1

Willow

"It can't be my baby!" Reuben tossed the pregnancy report onto the bed where I sat, my eyes wide with shock.

"What do you mean?" I stammered, my voice hardly escaping my throat. My heart sank as I watched him deny his own flesh and blood.

"I returned from the pack after two months, and now you're telling me you're pregnant? Does that even make sense?" Reuben's growl was filled with frustration. My mind went blank as I stared at my soulmate. I had anticipated his return with excitement, expecting him to embrace me and share in the joy of our first child. I had imagined he would be overjoyed to know that he was going to be a father. However, I never expected Reuben to react with such rage to the news of my pregnancy, indirectly accusing me of infidelity and rejecting his own child.

"It's our baby, Reuben," my voice shook, "Have you forgotten that you showed up in my room two months ago when you were in a rut? We made love the whole night without protection." I tried my best to remind him of that night, desperately seeking Reuben's soft, love-filled eyes, but all I got in return was sternness and growing bitterness.

"So you're using my rut as an excuse?" he growled. "I was in rut, but you were in your senses, right? If I hadn't used a condom, you could have used the morning-after pill or birth



control to prevent this from happening. Or at the very least, you could have told me about our mistake that night."

"A mistake?" My heart shattered into tiny pieces at Reuben's heartless comment. Every moment I had shared with him that night was precious to me, but he reduced them to a mere mistake. I bit my lip and continued, "When I woke up that morning, you were already gone to the neighboring pack to deal with rogue matters, and our pack was in lockdown. I couldn't leave the territory in these two months. If an unmarried she-wolf had gone to the pack doctor for birth control or the morning-after pill, the news would have spread to every pack member within minutes. Do you think I was ecstatic when I found out I was pregnant?" I choked on my own words due to sadness.

Getting up from the bed, I took slow steps closer to Reuben, who did not tear his eyes away from me. "I was scared, Reuben... I was so scared. If someone asked who the father of the baby was, what was I supposed to answer? But I love our child more than anything else because this baby is a sign of our love." I smiled weakly, placing Reuben's hand on my belly.

However, I didn't realize that my actions had somehow triggered Reuben even more.

"Sign of our love?" He pulled his hand back with an angry growl that startled me. I looked at him with a pale face. He had never acted violently towards me before, but today... he was different. "This child would expose our mate bond to the pack members, Willow! They will find out I'm mated to you, an Omega," he grabbed my arms and pulled me closer to

himself, "Was I not clear when I told you that we have to keep our mate bond a secret until I take over my father's Alpha position?"

Reuben Emerald was the son of the Alpha of Emerald Bright pack and I was Omega, lowest in the pack. Moon goddess mated me to an Alpha, my secret crush was already surprising for me. Reuben and I were like sky and ground from the beginning.

My eyes watered up slightly, but I blinked away the tears to control my emotions as I spoke, "I know... but it just happened..."

"Don't give me excuses!" he gritted his teeth, releasing my arms angrily. "I can't believe you're using this baby to manipulate me into marrying you, Willow." Reuben clenched his fist, his eyes now filled with a hatred for me I had never seen before.

"Trick you with the baby for marriage?" I couldn't believe my ears. He accused me of being one of those women who would use their bodies and pregnancy to gain power and status. "I can't believe you think so little of me, Reuben," my emotions finally broke through. "For the sake of our love and mate bond, I patiently waited for a year for you. We mated on the day we recognized each other as mates, but I never asked you to mark me or reveal our mate bond. I did everything as you wanted. Now, as the moon goddess has blessed us with a baby, shouldn't we accept it?"

My voice echoed in the room as he looked at me with tear-filled eyes.

"Blessing? You already decided it's a blessing, but did you ever think about me? Did you consider whether I want a baby or not?" He and his wolf spoke in unison. I froze in my spot in surprise. Somehow, I felt myself growing distant from him. It was as if the Reuben I knew had disappeared, as if he had become someone else. This feeling was frightening for me.

"Reuben, don't talk like that. Of course, I care about you," my voice was like a whisper as I stepped closer to him, but his stern glares took me aback.

"Nonsense," he growled, turning on his heels to leave. His cold demeanor alarmed me. He was walking away. The distance between us seemed to be growing larger, to the point where I could no longer see the love I had once seen in his eyes.

"Reuben, wait! Don't go," I ran after him and held his hand tightly. I couldn't bear to lose him. My voice shook, barely audible. "Let's take a break and deal with the situation together, okay?" I forced a smile to hide the pain and fear that was rising in my heart. Reuben had never walked out on our conversations before, and it scared me.

"Together?!" Reuben snapped, pulling his hand out of my grasp. "I'm thrilled you even know the meaning of 'together' when you decide to become pregnant without my knowledge," he accused.

"Reuben..." I couldn't hold back the tears and broke into sobs. How could he say such things? Why couldn't he see that I was also in pain? I could no longer see warmth and care in his eyes. The happiness I had stored in my heart and planned to share with him seemed to have vanished. "Please..." I moved



closer to him until our bodies touched. "Please, don't do this to me. Let's talk, okay?" I cupped his face with my cold, trembling hands.

"There's nothing left to talk about, Willow," Reuben pulled his face out of my hands. "I don't want to see you," his face showed no emotion as he mercilessly crushed my heart with his cruel words.

"What?" I bit my lips, tears streaming down my cheeks. He did not want to see me? He hated me that much? As he turned to leave again, I cried, "Reuben, please, no..." I tried to follow him.

"Don't follow me!" he growled in warning and stormed out of the house.

I stood in the middle of the living room, a crying mess. My sobs were covered by the sound of pack members eagerly shifting into their wolves and heading into the woods to play and hunt. It was a full moon night, and the whole pack was waiting for the moon goddess to rise full and bright in the dark sky and bless them.

I gazed at the wide window where the full moon shone brightly. I touched my belly. I couldn't give up. My baby was also a blessing from the moon goddess, and there was no way it could be unwanted. Wiping my tears away, I left the house to catch up with Reuben.

He was my soulmate, my lover, my everything. I knew he was angry, but I believed that once we talked, he would understand me and our situation. No matter how upset he



was, he couldn't ignore his child. He couldn't ignore the emotions and feelings of a father. I put on a smile and left my courtyard,

"Willow, where are you going?" My best friend Ella met me on the way. She was heading to join others.

"I'm going to see Alpha Reuben," I began, but she cut me off.

"Wait, are you also going to visit Alpha Reuben's fiancée?" She smiled. "She is really beautiful! No wonder, Alpha fell for her at first sight," she giggled as she gossiped.

My face turned pale. "Fiancée?"

Ella nodded, "Yes, Alpha Reuben brought her with him. Didn't you know..."

"Ella, come on! The moon is about to rise. Let's go into the woods!" She was about to say more when someone called her name.

"Coming!" she shouted back, shifted into her wolf, and hurried away.

I stood there, frozen in shock. "Reuben... fiancée?" I gasped for air as I found it difficult to breathe. I had never paid much attention to the rumors about Reuben's arranged marriage with the Alpha's daughter that had been circulating in the pack for months. I had dismissed it as just another rumor, but it had turned out to be true. Reuben was... marrying someone else.



I fell to my knees on the ground, tears streaming down my face. From the beginning, I was well aware that an Omega and an Alpha were impossible together, but I had held a glimmer of hope in my heart that one day Reuben and I could be together. I had hoped that all the patience and penance I had shown towards our mate bond would eventually bear fruit. But now, all my hopes and dreams were crushed by Reuben's hatred towards our baby. The child that was supposed to bring a new beginning to our lives had become the end of our mate bond. Reuben had chosen another woman over me. He betrayed me. Betrayed our mate bond.

I stayed in that same position for hours, listening to the howls of the pack members as the moon shone brightly in the sky. I waited, desperately hoping for Reuben's return, but he never came. I was abandoned and indirectly rejected.

I clenched my chest, my wolf cried in pain in my head. Now, in my pregnant state, I had neither a soulmate nor a pack.

Heartbroken, I returned to my house, packed my belongings, and left the pack forever.



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