

Chapter 12

Leila looks away from his eyes. How dare she endear him when it brings pain to her heart knowing it only gives her a hope she shouldn't have. Afterall, the names were only to amplify their act to everyone and now the gig is up.

"Leila...that day when I married you, I meant every word, every promise," Tatum says in a calm voice, his eyes carrying an emotion Leila can't quite describe.

He promised a lot that day. He promised to always be there for her, to help and to protect, even though...they are not mates.

They aren't. Tatum knew that, and lied to the pack for her.

She once thought it might be the result of somewhat a small but real affection in his heart for her, but now...she realises it's only because her life was saved by his Luna. She is just a symbol of Carmela in his eyes. Nothing more.

None of them thought Carmela would come back. Only he did, only he kept searching for her.

The signs are there since Carmela returned, she cannot allow herself to hope, he will break his promise for his first love, it is inevitable.

"I know Tatum, you don't have to tell me that and I really do not have a problem with Carmela returning. She's your true mate and you've spent a long time searching for her. I'm happy for you," Leila replies with a gentle smile, slowly pulling her hands away from Tatum's

grasp. 1

Even if she has to step aside for the phoenix Luna to take her rightful place, her relationship with Tatum doesn't have to turn sour. They were good friends before and that doesn't have to change.

"If I didn't search for her, would that have made you happy?" Tatum asks in a slow calm voice, watching Leila's eyes closely.

'Of course. Everytime you left to look for her, it hurt,' Leila muses but she keeps her eyes void of any emotion and her voice turns even colder as she replies.

"I understand, really. I mean, someday, I'll find my mate too."

Tatum pulls away from her, an odd feeling churning in his chest as he stares at his feet before he picks up the menu.

Leila purses her lips, observing him intently, a storm of anxiety brewing in her heart as she glances at her bag, knowing the divorce paper or the pregnancy test result inside it could each set her life on a different path, depending on which she showed to him.

"Tatum, I want to discuss something important," Leila says, touching his shoulder.

"Have you tried their lamb chops before? I think we should order it," Tatum replies passively, not looking at her. 1

Leila knows he is trying to avoid the topic so she pulls his shoulder till he's facing her. She searches his eyes, bitter hope in her chest. IF he shows even the smallest desire of being with her. IF he just gives

her the slightest hope that she is not dreaming this past two years, she would give him the pregnancy test.

"Tat-"

"It's date night, can we leave the serious stuff for when we get home?" Tatum cuts her off, turning to face her this time and he heaves a sigh. "Seriously Leila, are you happy that Carmi is home? I feel like you have been off lately, is that why?" 1

"Of course I am, she's my best friend," Leila replies sharply but her heart sinks, knowing her far from the truth that is

How can she be happy? Happy that Carmela came back as a hero, and everyone instantly sees her as the Luna when no one can see what she has been suffering? She hates herself for not being happy, but she can't help it. She hates that she's greedy and wants him when he doesn't belong to her but this is where it all ends.

She grabs her bag and reaches for the divorce papers with trembling hands, her heart pounding really fast and as she takes it out, she hears Carmela's shrill voice fill her ear from behind.

"Leila! Alpha! How nice it is to bump into you two."

Leila quickly stuffs the document back into her bag and shoves it between her thighs. Any plans to tell Tatum anything tonight has definitely been ruined.

"Carmi....how good to see you," Leila stands up and hugs Carmela but clutched in Carmela's embrace, she is welcomed by the sneers of Tracy, Edna and another lady she recognises all too well,

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Carmela's niece, Philomena.

"Good evening Alpha," Carmela smiles broadly at Tatum who also stands up to hug her and Leila looks away.

Even if it is just a harmless hug, it does quite the damage to her heart, knowing their hearts are more connected than their bodies. She doesn't want to be jealous, she knows they belong together but her heart wants what her hear wants and that is to be with him.

"Awww.... They look so cute together," Edna blushes, squeezing her hands on her chest and smiling at Tatum and Carmela.

"What do you expect, Edna? Selene made them mates, they should look good together," Philomena replies, eyeing Leila up and down with contempt.



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