

Chapter 141 Lady of the House

Moana

The rest of that day went by smoothly and quietly after Edrick left for work. As the day went on and I busied myself with taking care of Ella, I eventually forgot about my anxieties about the upcoming picnic. Maybe it would be fun just like Edrick said, and I hoped that Ella could make some friends while she was there. I knew that she felt isolated in this penthouse all by herself, and if one good thing came out of Edrick announcing our “relationship”, it was that Ella would no longer have to be hidden from the public.

Ella and I spent the afternoon going about our usual routine. Her piano teacher came to give her a lesson, and after that we spent the remainder of the day reading, drawing, and playing. By dinnertime, I was somewhat exhausted, but in a happy way.

Around dinnertime, I decided to help Selina and the maids prepare the meal. Selina chose to make a dinner that consisted of roast chicken, soup, potatoes and vegetables, and it was my job to peel the potatoes and cut the vegetables.

While the four of us cooked, the maids and I began to chat. Selina was usually quiet at times like this, solely focused on preparing the meal, but I knew that she was listening intently. Amy and Lily were a rather funny

duo, and I thought I even caught Selina laughing a little at the two sisters' banter when her back was turned.

"Are you going to another event with Mr. Morgan, Ms. Moana?" Amy asked as she stirred the pot of soup on the stove. "I overheard Mr. Morgan talking about it this morning. It's so soon after the last event."

I nodded and let out a small sigh. I hadn't thought much about the upcoming picnic since I had been busy all day, but thinking about it brought back some of my stress.

"Yes," I replied. "He said that there's going to be a work picnic tomorrow."

"Oh, that sounds fun!" Lily exclaimed. She was sitting over in a chair by the kitchen table, folding linens that had just come out of the wash. "I love picnics. The weather is going to be nice tomorrow, too."

Lily was right; the weather was supposed to be nice on Friday morning. But I wasn't particularly excited, and the maids could tell just from the look on my face.

"What's wrong?" Amy asked, c*****g her head. "You don't look very happy about it."

I shrugged and bit my lip for a moment before answering. "I don't know. I just... I think that a lot of the people who go to those sorts of events look down on me. I'm not exactly upper class."

Amy and Lily were silent for a moment. Meanwhile, Selina continued to work on the roast chicken. Her back was turned to us, but I saw her head prick up a bit as we talked, and I knew that she was listening intently; no doubt she was thinking of something wise and comforting to say. At first I wondered if maybe she thought that I was being ridiculous for being so nervous about it, but then I remembered our experience at the werewolf hospital and was reminded of how upset she had gotten when the

receptionist wouldn't serve us before the werewolf couple behind us. Selina was a werewolf, but she was still an Gamma, which meant that she was from a lower rank. Even dressed in her nice clothes for going out, other werewolves could still smell it on her. Since Gammas typically took on service roles such as the one that Selina was in as a housekeeper, many other werewolves often saw them as inferior. I imagined that it was even worse for werewolves who were lower than Gammas... And then below that, there were wolfless werewolves, and below them were humans. Those two were often lumped together.

Finally, Lily spoke up again and broke my train of thought.

“Well, they shouldn't be looking down on you,” she said, sounding somewhat agitated at the thought. “Mr. Morgan is one of the most wealthy and powerful men on the planet, and you're the Lady of his house.”

My eyes widened as Lily said this. I glanced back and forth between Lily, Amy, and Selina in shock, but both of them seemed completely unfazed by this statement.

Of course I had thought that I felt like the Lady of the house on occasion here and there, but I had never said it out loud. It was just a fantasy in my mind and nothing more. I couldn't possibly be the Lady of the house unless Edrick and I were married, and as things stood as of right now, it didn't seem that marriage was likely.

“Oh, that's sweet of you to say, but I don't think—” I began, but Lily shook her head and shot me a smirk.

“There's no denying it,” she said. “Aren't you and Mr. Morgan sharing a room together now?”

My eyes widened even more. Selina whipped around then and glared at Lily.

“Lily,” she said in an annoyed tone of voice, “focus on your work and leave Moana alone. It’s not polite to bring up personal matters like this.”

Lily fell silent, but her eyes stayed fixed on me. She had a knowing look in her eyes, and I knew at that moment that it was already common knowledge amongst the servants that Edrick and I shared a room together. Of course it was bound to happen, and neither of us had been as careful recently, but it was still a bit embarrassing.

I opened my mouth to say something else, but before I could, I suddenly heard Edrick’s voice coming from behind me.

“We are sharing a room,” he said.

All three of us, excluding Selina, who was now focused on cooking once more, whipped around to look at Edrick. I felt my face get hot and red, but much to my surprise, Edrick seemed more nonchalant than ever. In fact, he was simply loosening his tie from around his neck, as he always did when he came home.

He seemed perfectly relaxed, as though admitting that we were sharing a room in front of everyone was nothing. It reminded me of how matter-of-factly he admitted the same thing to Ella when she found us in the same room in the mountain estate, and I couldn’t help but wonder why exactly he had become so relaxed about it lately.

First he announced our “relationship” to the media like it was nothing, and now everyone in the house knew about our sleeping arrangement. I wondered if finding out that I was a werewolf had something to do with it; maybe he did secretly know after all that there was a chance that we were mates.

In some ways, it made me happy, but I also couldn’t deny the fact that there was a tiny shred of myself that felt a bit hurt that it took Edrick

finding out that I was a werewolf to be comfortable enough with our situation to tell anyone about it.

Beyond that, however, I was just glad now that everything was out in the open. We wouldn't need to sneak around any longer in our own home, and that made me incredibly happy.

And the way that Edrick's cool, gray eyes landed gently on me after he spoke made my heart skip.

Chapter 142 Family Debut

Moana

The next morning was the day of the picnic. I woke up feeling a bit nauseous, although I was unsure as to whether it was from the nerves of the upcoming event or simple morning sickness. Either way, I felt as though I needed to drag myself out of bed, but Edrick was kind and supportive along the way.

After eating a quick breakfast, I felt much better and got ready. I put on a comfortable, light sundress and a pair of flat shoes, then pulled my hair back into a bun and put on a very small amount of makeup. I dressed Ella in a pair of overalls and sneakers so she could play with other children. The entire time, she chattered nonstop about how excited she was to meet other children, and it made me smile.

Even though I wasn't particularly excited about this event myself, I was happy that Ella would have a chance to meet other kids, and I hoped that she would have plenty of opportunities to make even more friends in the future. After all, it was about time that she finally had a chance to socialize with other kids her age. She couldn't stay cooped up in a big penthouse forever.

Once we were all ready, Edrick, Ella and I headed down to the car, where the driver was waiting. Soon enough, we were on our way. Ella swung her

legs happily in her car seat and asked a million questions about what sort of food, games, and other children would be at the event.

And much to my surprise, Edrick answered all of her questions quite patiently. It really did feel as though the Alpha billionaire had gained a lot of patience with Ella over the past few months.

Finally, we arrived at the park where the picnic would be held. It was a much smaller event, and I was grateful to see that there were a lot of security guards who were keeping the paparazzi away. Because of this, the three of us got out of the car and made our way over to the park with no hassle. Ella walked between Edrick and I, holding each of our hands. It reminded me of the day that we went to the theme park, when she tricked the workers into thinking that Edrick and I were both her biological parents.

The park was also beautiful. I had never been to this specific park before, as it was located in the uptown area of the city. The park was surrounded by a tall brick fence covered in moss and vines, and the pathways were lined with cherry trees that I imagined were a beautiful shade of pink in the springtime. As we walked along the pathway and toward the center of the park where everyone was gathered, I thought to myself that I would have to come back here in the spring to see the cherry blossoms. At the center of the park, there was a beautiful green gazebo with a rounded roof on top. There was a microphone standing at the top of the gazebo steps, and there were folding chairs lined up in front of it. People were sitting in the chairs as well as mingling around, glasses of ice cold lemonade already in hand. In the distance, beneath a cluster of weeping willow trees, there were dozens of covered round tables and a long buffet with covered dishes. I could see workers running around in a bit of a frenzy as they finished preparations.

However, despite how happy it made me to be out with Ella and Edrick on a beautiful sunny morning, I felt my anxiety begin to bubble up to the surface when I saw everyone's eyes start to land on us. There were a lot

of employees and other business partners at the picnic, and as we entered, everyone turned to look at us. I could see some people whispering as they looked at Ella and myself, but it felt different this time compared to the last event; of course, there were plenty of people who seemed to be judging Ella and myself, but there were even more people who were smiling and waving at Ella. Ella waved back, grinning from ear to ear.

“Look, Moana!” she exclaimed, pointing toward a playground area. “Swings! Can I play on them?”

“Daddy has to give a speech first, Princess,” Edrick said. “Then you can play as much as you want.”

Ella seemed pleased with this. However, it also seemed that some people overheard the brief exchange, and they seemed puzzled. I quickly realized that it was because Ella had referred to me by my first name instead of calling me her mom.

My face instantly went red. I hadn't thought about that beforehand, and therefore hadn't had a chance to talk to Ella about it. Edrick never brought it up before, either, which made me wonder if he also forgot or if he simply wasn't worried. Ella referring to me by my first name when I was supposed to be her biological mother was bound to raise some eyebrows, and I felt myself get nervous as I wondered how long it would be before the inevitable questions regarding my true relationship with Ella were asked.

However, as we walked up onto the small gazebo for Edrick to give his speech to his employees, I swallowed my nerves as best as I could and put on a smile, just as Edrick asked me to do earlier that morning. He had told me to just smile out at the crowd, but that I could just stare over their heads so I wouldn't have to look at them.

And I did just that.

Ella and I stood behind Edrick while he stepped up to the microphone. I put my hands on Ella's shoulders and held her in front of me, but she quickly got nervous from the crowd and hid partially behind me with wide eyes.

The crowd let out a chorus of aww's at Ella's cuteness. Edrick turned around and flashed both of us a comforting smile, which helped Ella relax, and I wrapped my arm around her while she leaned into my hip.

Finally, Edrick gave his speech. It was a nice speech dedicated to his employees, and it seemed incredibly heartfelt. Hearing it made me smile, and I soon forgot my anxiety about the crowd. I even became a bit more comfortable, and without realizing it my eyes began to scan the crowd while I listened to Edrick speak, the smile still plastered across my face.

However, as my eyes scanned the crowd, I noticed a strikingly familiar face. I narrowed my eyes slightly to get a better look, and once I realized who I was looking at, I knew exactly who it was.

I felt my heart sink and a pit grow inside my stomach as I looked out at the face that was staring straight back at me.

I should have known that he would be here; he was an employee at WereCorp now, after all. But in all of the fuss of everything going on lately, I had completely forgotten, and so I hadn't prepared myself at all for the possibility that I might see him.

It was my ex-boyfriend, Sam. And he was staring up at me and Ella with wide, disbelieving eyes.

Chapter 143 New Friends, Old Friends

Moana

I felt my heart sink as I saw my ex-boyfriend, Sam, staring up at me from the crowd. His eyes were wide and disbelieving; of course he knew that I wasn't Ella's mother. And of course he knew that I wasn't Edrick's real fiancée, as Sam and I had only broken up a few months prior. I could spin the story to make it seem as though Edrick and I quickly got engaged after I found out that I was pregnant, but if Sam said anything publicly about how I wasn't really Ella's mother, there was no way I could possibly hide that.

Although I wanted to run away and hide from embarrassment, I put on a brave face, continued smiling as Edrick asked me to, and went back to staring above the crowd just like I had been doing before. And soon, Edrick's speech was over. We stepped down off of the gazebo as the crowd stood and made their way over to the picnic area for brunch, and now that I wasn't standing in front of everyone, I felt a lot less anxious about Sam being here. I just hoped that he wouldn't say anything to anyone about his past relationship with me, but at the same time, I had to have faith that Edrick would handle it if he did say something.

"See? That wasn't so bad," Edrick said, shooting me a smile and patting Ella's head. We then turned to see a group of other kids who were already on the playground. A few of them had gathered at the edge of the

playground area and were staring at Ella curiously. One of them waved at her, and Ella waved back.

“Can I go and play?” Ella asked, looking back and forth between Edrick and myself with wide, hopeful eyes.

Edrick nodded. “Go ahead. Come find me or Moana if you get hungry.”

Ella took off running to meet the other children, who immediately swarmed her and began asking all sorts of questions. She seemed to handle it well, which made me proud.

“She’s so good with other kids,” I said to Edrick as we watched Ella play. “She has no trouble whatsoever making friends.”

Edrick nodded. “Well, she didn’t get that trait from me, I’ll say that much,” he said with a laugh.

Suddenly, a female voice came from behind us.

“That’s a lie,” the voice said. Edrick and I both spun around to see a gorgeous woman standing behind us. She had long, black hair, tanned skin, and was tall and athletic-looking. She had on dark red lipstick and an attractive matching top and bottom set that made her look powerful and intelligent. As she spoke, she looked over at me with shining brown eyes that looked like caramel in the sunlight. “Edrick never had any trouble making friends when we were kids.”

“Well, I’ll be damned!” Edrick said with a laugh. “If it isn’t my old friend Mia. I didn’t think you would be here today.”

The woman, Mia, shrugged and smiled. “I got a little homesick. Decided to come home until I get sick of being here and get the itch to travel again.”

“And how long will that be?” Edrick asked. “A week?”

“Maybe less.” Mia’s smile widened, and then she turned to face me. She held her hand out for a handshake, and when I took it, her hand was warm. “I’m Mia. Edrick and I were friends growing up. I manage a few of his overseas branches.”

Much unlike Kelly, Mia was warm and inviting, and I immediately felt comfortable with her; although she was stunningly gorgeous, which made me a little jealous that she knew Edrick so well for so long.

“It’s nice to meet you,” I replied. “I’m Moana. Edrick’s...”

“Fiancée. I heard,” Mia interrupted with a warm smile. She then turned to look at Edrick and shot him a mischievous look, lowering her voice so no one could overhear. “I’m glad you picked her over Kelly. She’s gorgeous.”

I felt my face go red at Mia’s compliment. To hear that such a gorgeous woman also thought that I was pretty was more flattering than any compliment any man had ever given me, and it instantly made my tinge of jealousy melt away.

Edrick, however, said nothing. It seemed that even the mention of Kelly turned him cold.

“Well, it’s great seeing you, Mia,” he said. “Have a drink and something to eat. I have to speak to one of my business partners about something.” And with that, he turned on his heel and headed over to the picnic area, leaving Mia and I alone together. As I followed Edrick with my eyes, I could also see that there was a gaggle of the other wives that had formed at one of the tables, and they were all staring over their sunglasses at me like I was a complete outcast.

Mia must have seen this, because she turned to look at me and made a disgusted face.

“They’re all a bunch of bitches,” Mia said.

My eyes widened, but I couldn't help but laugh at her candidness. They were, in fact, a bunch of bitches. I was liking Mia more and more now.

“So...” I said, clearing my throat. “You and Edrick grew up together?”

Mia nodded. “Sort of. We were in the same training program. We kind of fell off after high school, but it happens.”

I glanced over Mia's shoulder to see Edrick talking to one of his business partners with what looked like a mimosa in his hand, then looked back at Mia. “If you don't mind me asking, what was he like as a kid? I've always been curious. He's not exactly...”

“Not exactly an open book?” Mia interrupted. I nodded. “He was a lot different then,” she continued. “He was fun. We all had a lot of fun—even Kelly. But, with a father like his, I think the pressure got to him. He went from being a little scamp who liked running around in the woods and turned into a full-grown man whose entire personality revolves around WereCorp. I don't blame him, though. I blame his father. That man's a jackass.”

I liked Mia's straightforward thinking. She seemed to be the type to always say what was on her mind, and I respected that.

“It's not just his father, though,” she continued. “Ever since his half-brother, Ethan, came into his life, I could tell that it bothered Edrick a lot. I still don't know if it was that he felt like he had competition, or if it was something else.”

I wanted to tell Mia what Ethan had told me before: that his father's cheating turned Edrick cold and made him lose faith in love and the power of the mate bond. But that wasn't my place, and by that point, someone else was waving Mia over anyway.

“I should go and mingle a bit, just for business reasons,” Mia said with a smile. “It was nice meeting you, Moana. I hope we can be friends.”

I smiled as I watched Mia go. I hoped we could be friends, too. I liked her. And between her and Tyrus, I felt as though I knew a little bit more about the Alpha billionaire.

But my smile quickly faded when I felt a tap on my shoulder and turned around to see Sam standing behind me with a frown on his face.

Chapter 144 Good Mom

Moana

As I watched Mia walk away, there was a smile on my face. I liked her; she was so much nicer and warmer than Kelly, and I loved meeting Edrick's old friends so that I could get a bit more of an insight on the way that the Alpha billionaire used to be as a kid. And it made me happy to hear that he used to be rambunctious and full of life, because I could see those little bits of his personality poking through his hard exterior more and more lately. Someday, I wondered if I could break down his hard shell entirely. I wanted to know the true Edrick.

But when I felt a tap on my shoulder and turned around to see my ex-boyfriend, Sam, standing behind me, my smile faded.

"Hey, Moana," he said before I could even say anything. He folded his arms across his chest and looked me up and down, his eyes lingering on my belly for a few moments. "Remember me?"

Of course I remembered Sam. Lately, I had been so busy with everything going on that I hadn't thought much about what he did to me, but seeing his face made it all come back so fast that it felt as though I had been hit by a train.

Just a few months earlier, Sam and I had been dating. I really thought that he was the one, up until I found him sucking on another woman's lips in the window of a fancy restaurant. And when I confronted him about it, he

didn't even show any remorse. All he cared about was getting his high-paying job at WereCorp, which his new girlfriend helped him get, and he didn't care that I had been by his side as a constant and loving support system for years. I had helped him get through college. I had helped him gain his confidence. And I supposed, by extension, I had given him the confidence to cheat on me.

I wanted to say all of these things, but I didn't. I couldn't; not here, at least. I didn't want to cause a scene. I especially didn't want to piss him off enough to make him reveal the fact that Ella wasn't actually my biological daughter.

"Do you need something, Sam?" I asked, glaring up at him in a way to show him that I wasn't scared of him. I had come so far since we broke up, and I wanted him to know that his mind games wouldn't work on me any longer.

Sam shrugged. "Just figured I'd come and say hi," he said. "It seems like a lot has changed since I broke up with you. We should catch up."

I scoffed. "Catch up?" I asked. "After what you did to me? Why would I possibly want that?"

"Come on, now," Sam replied, his face hard and his eyes cold as he eyed me up and down again. "Let's let the past be in the past. You certainly seem like you've moved on, anyway. How far along are you, huh? Three months? Tell me, was the CEO of WereCorp an intentional rebound, or did you just happen to run into him on the street?"

Actually, I did just happen to run into Edrick in the street. Everything that happened between us was nothing but pure coincidence, and I was quickly learning that those coincidences may have happened because there was a chance that Edrick and I were fated mates. Someday, Sam would find out that I really was a werewolf, and I wished that I could see the look on his face when that happened. After everything that he said to me, how I should have felt lucky that a werewolf would even give a human like me the time

of day, I hoped that he would feel like a real i***t when the truth finally came out.

“What does it matter?” I asked, lowering my voice and instinctively touching my belly in a protective manner. “You made your decision when you cheated on me. You have no right to know anything about my personal life.”

With that, I turned on my heel and began to walk away.

“Oh, really?” Sam called after me. “Did I not have a right to know about your daughter before then? You seem like such a good mom; I’m surprised you never introduced me to her.”

Sam’s words made me freeze momentarily and I felt my heart drop. My eyes widened as I looked around frantically, praying that no one had heard him say that. I supposed from the beginning, as soon as Edrick made his announcement on TV, that people would eventually learn the truth about Ella; but I didn’t want it to be today, and I didn’t want it to be Sam’s doing. I couldn’t let him win like that.

But thankfully, no one looked our way. Ella continued to play on the playground, the gaggle of nasty wives were preoccupied at their table as they compared the sizes of the diamonds on their engagement rings, and the other employees were too busy mingling and enjoying the picnic.

I let out a small sigh of relief and decided not to give Sam the pleasure of ruining my day. I was allowed to enjoy this picnic with everyone else, so I made my way over to the buffet and helped myself to a lemonade before spotting Edrick talking to one of his business partners. I wanted to be near him after what Sam just did, but I didn’t want to disturb his conversation or make him worried, so I nonchalantly sipped my lemonade as I walked up to him.

When I walked up to Edrick, he was in the midst of a conversation with his business partner about overseas manufacturers and labor strikes. Most

of it made little sense to me, so I quickly tuned it out; but as I walked up to him, Edrick absentmindedly reached for me and wrapped his arm around my shoulders.

I felt my heart leap in my chest at this casual romantic gesture. He didn't pause or lag in his conversation one bit; it really was just instinct for him. It reminded me of the day we went to the mall and the creepy man tried to hit on me, as well as the day that we took the elevator down after having lunch with Ella and he put his hand on my lower back. It was small, casual gestures of protectiveness like this that made me feel safe and warm, and I didn't even bother to glance back at Sam to see if he was still staring. In fact, I felt entirely comforted in Edrick's arms.

However, there was still a chance that Sam would expose our lie. If he didn't do it today, then he could easily do it another day. These people already hated me enough as it was, let alone if they found out that my relationship with Ella and Edrick was a lie; and I couldn't even imagine how stressful it would be for people to begin questioning Edrick's paternity over the baby in my belly.

I just hoped that, if something did happen, Edrick would take care of it. And when I glanced over my shoulder to see that Sam was still eyeing me from afar, I became even more worried that things would need to be handled today after all.

Chapter 145 Taking Care of Business

Edrick

We went to the picnic, where everything went well at first. Moana and Ella were the perfect picture of a happy family while I gave my speech, and I was proud of both of them for that. Some people seemed to notice that Ella was referring to Moana by her first name, though, which I knew I would have to handle later before people began asking questions. I knew that I should have talked to Ella beforehand, but I had to admit that I completely forgot. But it was nothing that we couldn't handle, even if people did start asking questions. With a child that age, it was easy to claim that she was simply trying out something that she saw in a movie, or that she was pushing parental boundaries. Besides, with the work that my PR agency did to mitigate the clips of me punching the paparazzi, I knew that people were unlikely to bother us much — at least for now.

After I briefly spoke to Mia, I decided to let Moana and my old friend get to know each other a bit, so I made my way over to speak to one of my business partners. I had to talk to him about something important that couldn't wait, anyway.

I had known Mia since we were kids. She was always a good friend, although we did fall off a bit after high school. It wasn't like it was with Kelly; Mia was her own person, and she never had any interest in marriage. She never followed me around like a lost puppy, and she wasn't

vindictive and cruel like Kelly was. Mia was just a good friend who I saw very rarely, and she was an incredible businesswoman. If I ever had to give up control of WereCorp, I always knew that I would offer her the position of CEO in a heartbeat; and I knew that she would gladly take the role and do incredibly well. Her branches of the company overseas were some of the most successful branches in the world, and she was a fair yet brilliant boss.

Either way, I hoped that Mia and Moana could become friends. I knew that Moana needed some allies in this brutal business world, and Mia was a wonderful person.

I quickly became engrossed in my conversation with my business partner. We had been having some issues with overseas manufacturers dealing with labor strikes, and it needed to be dealt with.

“I say we fire the lot of them and hire new people who won’t complain so much,” my business partner said in a gruff tone of voice. “I’ll tell ya... These humans. They’re never happy with anything.”

I frowned. “We can’t just fire thousands of employees and hire all new ones,” I replied. “Regardless of whether they’re humans or werewolves, they still deserve basic decency. The only way to go about this is to listen to their problems and do the best we can to accommodate them.”

My business partner scoffed. “You’re already too accommodating, Edrick. Give them too much slack, and they’ll keep taking and taking and taking. You need to learn to rule with an iron fist.”

“This isn’t the Dark Ages,” I replied with a bit of a chuckle. My business partner laughed, too, his big round belly jiggling as he did so. The event had only just begun, and his face was already red from too many mimosas.

Suddenly, I felt Moana’s presence beside me. And as I spoke, without even thinking, I put my arm around her. I felt so at peace with her by my side,

and despite the fact that my bigoted business partner kept shooting her dirty looks as though I wouldn't notice, I was happy to have her here. I knew that he and many others thought that she was human, and I couldn't wait for the day when the truth could finally come out. But first, I needed to know if she really was the Golden Wolf, because she could be in grave danger before her wolf emerged. And I certainly wasn't going to mention anything about her lineage until our baby was safely born.

“Well... I'll keep you updated, I suppose,” my business partner said. “Perhaps we can make a deal with them. But if they don't accept our first offer, I say we lay them all off.”

I watched as my business partner walked away, but his idiotic suggestions weren't at the forefront of my mind. In fact, I was already preoccupied by the fact that Moana kept glancing over her shoulder. I followed her gaze to find that she kept looking at one of my newer employees — a young man whose name I couldn't remember — and she almost looked frightened.

“What's wrong?” I asked, feeling myself become worried. “Are you okay?”

Moana snapped her head around to look at me and nodded rapidly. She took a sip of her lemonade, but I could see that her hand was shaking a bit as she held the glass, and it made me even more worried. “Yes, I'm fine.”

I frowned. “Tell the truth,” I said. “You look like you saw a ghost.”

Moana paused for a few moments, biting her lip as she stared down at the ground. I was just about to press her to tell me what was going on again when she finally looked back up at me with watery, worried eyes.

“That employee over there is my ex-boyfriend,” she said.

I glanced over at the employee again. I couldn't deny the fact that a bit of jealousy bubbled up already just from knowing that Moana's ex was here,

but I tried not to show it. But it still didn't explain why she seemed so worried.

"Did he say something to you?" I asked.

Moana slowly nodded. "We broke up on the day I met you, actually. When... Our baby was conceived. I found him cheating on me, with..." She glanced over at him again, then subtly pointed her index finger while she was still holding her glass of lemonade at a tall, blonde woman who was standing with him. "With her. I found them in a restaurant window, and when I confronted them, he threatened me and said some really horrible things instead of showing even a little remorse."

Although I couldn't deny the fact that I felt a bit more jealousy bubbling up inside of me as I learned that Moana had only just broken up with her ex on the very day that we met, I was more angry with him that he had done that to her.

"But it's not just that," Moana continued before I could say anything. "I'm not upset about it anymore. I hardly even think about it, actually. But I think he might try to reveal the fact that Ella isn't my biological daughter."

My eyes widened at this. It made sense... If this guy had been dating Moana only a few months earlier, of course he would know for a fact that Ella wasn't Moana's biological daughter. It would only be a matter of time before he revealed it and people began to question it. And if people questioned whether Ella was Moana's biological daughter, then they would surely question whether the baby in Moana's belly was even mine.

But I had dealt with assholes like this before, and as I took another glance at the little prick with his girlfriend that was clearly way out of his league, I knew that I could handle him, too.

And I would make him suffer for what he did to Moana.

“Don’t worry,” I said, tightening my grip around Moana’s shoulders. “I’ll take care of it.”

Moana’s eyes went wide. “I-I don’t want to cause a scene—” she began, but I cut her off with a wave of my hand and began steering us toward the one person who I knew would excel at a time like this.

Mia.