

## Chapter 176 Live-In-Caretaker

### Moana

The relief I felt when the doctor said that Edrick would be okay couldn't even possibly be put into words.

“Well, I think you'll be okay now,” the doctor said as Edrick got up to his feet with no trouble. “Rest today and you'll be fine by tomorrow.”

Edrick nodded. Both of us watched as Selina and the doctor walked out of the room, leaving Edrick and I alone once more. Instantly, I turned toward him with a frown.

“Don't scare me like that,” I said in a scolding, yet quiet voice. Before Edrick could answer, I ushered him over to the bed and forced him to lie down, just as the doctor ordered.

“Geez,” Edrick said, lying down. “I get it. You don't need to worry about me now, though.”

I shook my head and frowned even more. There was so much I wanted to say; I wanted to tell him that he was a bloody fool for pushing me away. I wanted to ask him if he realized now that he needed me after all, and that it wasn't smart of him to take my presence for granted. But as I looked down at him and watched as he pulled the blankets up to his chest and stared up at me with his icy gray eyes, I couldn't bring myself to scold him. I was just glad that he was okay, and I wanted to take care of him.

“I’ll get you some tea,” I said quietly. I turned on my heel and walked out of the room, then made my way over to the kitchen to put the kettle on. Selina was still giving the doctor the remainder of Edrick’s leftover pill bottles by the front door, and I could overhear him giving her strict instructions on how to keep an eye on him to make sure that he didn’t try anything else to sleep, such as illicit drugs or too much alcohol. While they talked, I prepared a pot of chamomile tea and waited for the water to boil.

I tried to reach out to my wolf again to see if she was feeling better, but still got no response. She seemed to be sleeping again, and when she stirred a bit, it wasn’t for long. This made me nervous; I decided then and there that if this went on for too much longer, I would have to figure out why this was happening. I still figured that it was just the pregnancy, but I couldn’t be too sure.

Suddenly, Selina came into the kitchen and saw that I was preparing Edrick tea. I had even begun to make breakfast for the two of us without fully realizing it; even I was exhausted after the night before and the whole ordeal from that morning.

“You look tired,” Selina said with a sigh. “Let me take care of Ella today.”

I shook my head and stifled a yawn. “It’s okay. I won’t make you do that.”

Selina frowned as she looked at me. “Nonsense. Besides, Edrick needs someone to keep an eye on him. Doctor’s orders; and that person might as well be you...”

A little while later, I returned to Edrick’s room with a tray laden with tea and breakfast. He was no longer in bed when I walked in, which caused me to panic for a moment until I heard the bathroom door open. Steam poured out of the bathroom as he walked out, drying his hair with a towel. He was only wearing his pajama pants with no shirt, and I felt myself blush as I set the tray down on the bed.

“I’m really fine,” Edrick said. “You don’t need to go to all of this effort.”

“It’s the doctor’s orders,” I replied. “Just eat your breakfast and don’t complain.”

I thought I saw a bit of a smile flash across Edrick’s lips, and I couldn’t help but smile a bit, too.

“Well... Thanks,” Edrick said quietly as he sat down on the bed and picked up a cup of tea. “I do appreciate it. I appreciate you.” Edrick’s words made my face turn a deep shade of scarlet red. Without a word, I nervously sat down across from him and joined him in eating breakfast in bed.

However, after our argument from the night before, the air between us was awkward and silent as we ate. Finally, after several minutes of eating without a single word said between the two of us, Edrick opened his mouth to speak. Part of me thought that he was going to apologize... But instead, he pointed at the TV.

“Wanna watch a movie while we eat? I found a good one that I think you’ll like.”

“Um... Sure,” I replied. Edrick nodded and turned on the television, then turned on the movie. Much to my surprise, it was a romantic comedy; Edrick had never struck me as a movie-watcher, let alone someone who liked romantic comedies. But soon enough, I found myself laughing alongside him. In fact, when we finished the movie, Edrick suddenly jumped up and ran out of the room, only to return a few minutes later with his arms full of snacks. Her threw the bags of popcorn and chips down on the bed like a little kid who had just raided the pantry, and put on another comedy movie.

It was odd seeing this side of him after our argument from the night before. Edrick never brought it up or apologized for it, but in a way, I almost felt as though this was his way of trying to make it up to me. I even caught

him looking at me sheepishly on more than one occasion, as though he knew that he had hurt my feelings the night before and that he had scared the hell out of me that morning.

As we laughed and ate too many snacks, watching movies well into the night, it reminded me of the night that we had watched the live comedy show at the networking event. I remembered how much I loved seeing him laugh loudly and naturally that night, and that was what he did tonight. The sound of his laughter filled the air, and regardless of everything that was said during our argument and regardless of what had happened that morning, I couldn't help but smile as well.

Somehow, we managed to spend the entire day and all evening laying in bed and watching movies. Once Edrick knew that Ella was asleep, he sneakily ordered food to be delivered to the penthouse. We spent the rest of the evening eating take-out burgers and laughing at more funny movies, and soon enough I found myself not thinking about our argument or his accidental overdose at all.

In fact, that night I fell asleep on Edrick's chest as the movie played. And just before I slipped off into sleep, I felt his arm gently wrap around me, and I felt his lips kiss my forehead. I pretended to be asleep and hid my expression.

But secretly, I was still hurt over what Edrick had said the night before. And now, I hoped that I wasn't just a sleeping pill or a live-in caretaker to him.

## Chapter 177 Caffeine Crash

### Moana

The rest of the weekend went by too quickly. I spent all of Sunday with Ella to make up for not seeing her on Saturday, and soon enough Monday morning came around.

However, I noticed something over the weekend as well as the first few days of the week: Mina's sleepiness wasn't getting any better. In fact, it only seemed to be getting worse, and it was making me nervous. At first, I thought it was just the pregnancy, but now I was beginning to think otherwise.

And in fact, there was something especially odd about it.

Mina seemed to get better at nighttime. She still had very little energy during that time, but it was an obvious improvement nonetheless. This slightly heightened energy would go on through the night and the early morning, but then she would get extremely sleepy again whenever I drank my morning coffee.

By Thursday, I was beginning to get suspicious. I decided then to try an experiment; on Thursday morning, I decided not to drink my morning coffee.

"Good morning," Selina said as I walked into the kitchen. I was already dressed for work, and Ella was already sitting at the kitchen counter and eating her toast and eggs before school. I kissed Ella on top of her head

and smiled at Selina, who had just placed a plate of breakfast down for me.

But when I sat down, I saw that my coffee was there. I subtly pushed it away and ate my breakfast without mentioning it, but Selina noticed that the cup was untouched as I finished eating and stood up to get ready to leave.

“You didn’t like your coffee?” she asked, looking a bit confused. “I thought you loved your morning coffee.”

“I do,” I replied with a nonchalant smile. “I’m just not in the mood for coffee this morning, I’m afraid.”

Selina looked at me for a moment, then nodded and poured the cup of coffee down the sink. I felt a bit bad for wasting it, but I needed to find out if the coffee had something to do with my wolf’s sleepiness. Maybe the caffeine was interacting strangely with my body due to the pregnancy.

Edrick was waiting for Ella and I in the foyer when we walked out. He smiled at us as the elevator doors opened, but what he said in the elevator baffled me.

“I heard you didn’t want your coffee this morning.”

I couldn’t help but raise an eyebrow and look at Edrick with a bit of confusion. Why did it seem as though both Selina and Edrick were overly concerned about whether I drank my coffee or not that morning?

“Yeah,” I said as the elevator doors opened to the lobby and we stepped out. “I didn’t want the caffeine this morning.”

“Hmm.” Edrick almost seemed a little bit put off by that, which I thought was strange. However, he didn’t bring it up again, and instead had pleasant conversation with Ella and myself as we walked to school. By the time we arrived and waved goodbye, I had almost forgotten about it.

However, as I taught my classes that day, I noticed that Mina's energy was indeed higher than it had been recently. In fact, by the time school was out and I walked out of the school with Ella, Mina's energy seemed almost normal again.

Maybe it was just the caffeine interacting poorly with my body because of the pregnancy.

"Hi, daddy!" Ella said as we walked up to meet him. Edrick grinned and crouched down to let Ella climb up onto his shoulders. As he stood once more, however, I noticed something.

He was holding a smoothie in his hand.

"Here," he said with a smile, holding the smoothie out for me. "I got you something. It's hot out, so I thought this might be refreshing for you after working all day."

"Oh," I replied, taking the cold smoothie cup out of his hand. "Thank you."

"Daddy, did you get a smoothie for me?" Ella asked.

Edrick sighed and shook his head. "I'm sorry, Princess," he replied. "I forgot. We'll pass the smoothie cart on the way back, so I'll get you one. Okay?"

"She can have mine," I said, holding the cup back out. "I don't really need it."

Suddenly, Edrick's face changed in an unexpected way, and his eyes widened. "No!" he said, almost shouting.

My own eyes went wide. I was taken aback by Edrick's insistence, and stared up at him confusedly. "Well... Why not?" I asked, looking down at the large smoothie cup. "I don't mind sharing. Heck, all three of us could share. It's a big cup."

Edrick went silent for a moment. He kept opening and closing his mouth, as though he was trying to come up with something to say. Seeing him like this made me nervous, and I couldn't help but think back on Edrick's strange obsession with my coffee that morning. I looked back down at the smoothie cup then and started to have an odd feeling in the pit of my stomach.

"I just... don't think that Ella would like that flavor," Edrick said with a smile. "Besides, it's yours. If you can't finish it, that's okay."

With that, Edrick began to walk with Ella on his shoulders. I watched after him for a moment before catching up, but I couldn't stop wondering what his deal was today. But the longer I thought about it, the more I figured that he was just having an off day; maybe he still felt bad about what he had said on Friday night and was trying to make it up to me. And besides, it was incredibly hot out that day, and the smoothie did look cold and refreshing. I decided to take a sip, and found it surprisingly delicious. In fact, I had drunk half of it by the time we stopped at the smoothie cart to get her her own, and I had finished it by the time we got home.

As we took the elevator back up to the penthouse, Edrick noticed my empty cup and almost seemed to relax a little bit.

And within the hour, I was pretty certain that I realized why; something was in that smoothie, because Mina's energy suddenly dropped again.

Had Edrick been putting something in my coffee, and when he noticed that I didn't want my coffee that morning, he put something in that smoothie? But why would he do that? Selina had made a comment about my coffee that morning, too; was she in on it as well?

After dinner, I quickly excused myself to my room to think. I paced for a while before suddenly freezing, my eyes widening.

Olivia.



I had nearly forgotten about my conversation with her. I had come to the conclusion that she was being paid to spread lies about Edrick, but now...

What if she had the same experience as I did?

If Olivia had similar symptoms while she was living with Edrick, then it would be extremely concerning. I needed to know if someone was trying to drug me, and why they would do that; but I couldn't just walk up to Edrick or Selina and ask.

As I thought back on my conversation with Olivia, I remembered that she had given me her business card — and when I quickly rifled through my purse, it was still there.

I held the business card in my shaky hand, wondering if I should call her.

## Chapter 178 Coffee with A Friend

### Moana

As I held Olivia's business card in my shaking hand, I wondered if I should call her.

I needed to know if she, too, had experienced these sort of strange occurrences. Although I couldn't imagine why Edrick would ever want to give me something that would make my wolf sick, if someone really was intentionally poisoning me, then I needed to get out and get my baby to safety. However, I still had no way of knowing for sure, and I was afraid to ask Edrick or Selina about my wolf's symptoms in case either of them were in on it and got suspicious of me.

But I still couldn't be sure. Not only was I unsure of the situation with my wolf, but I was also still unsure of Olivia. I still couldn't help but wonder if she really was an actress hired by Michael or someone else to get between Edrick and I, and so with a sigh I slipped the business card back into my purse and decided not to call her yet.

After all, Edrick had never really given me a reason not to trust him... Right?

However, as the night went on, I found myself unable to sleep. Edrick was staying up late in his study, and as I laid in his big king-sized bed in his dark bedroom, I kept tossing and turning relentlessly. The whole situation with the coffee that morning, followed by the smoothie, was suspicious to

say the least. My first conversation with Olivia kept swirling around my head, and I couldn't forget the fact that Edrick had stolen my wolf tooth at one point. And the worst part about it was that I couldn't even talk to my wolf, who was normally a voice of reason, because she was too sleepy to even hear me. I felt alone.

Finally, I decided that I couldn't sleep without contacting Olivia. If I really was being poisoned, and if it really was dangerous, then I couldn't risk another day of practically being force-fed whatever was making my wolf sleepy. And if Edrick or Selina got too suspicious, then I had no way of knowing what other sorts of methods they would try to give me the poison.

While Edrick was still in his study, I quietly made my way to my room and retrieved the business card from my purse. I held it for a moment, reading the number in the dim light of my bedroom, before I took a deep breath and punched her number into my phone.

"Hi Olivia," I typed. "It's Moana. Can we talk? It's important."

When I hit send, the deep breath that I had taken in finally came out. I hid the business card back in my purse and quickly made my way back to Edrick's room; and, by the time I got to his room, my phone buzzed already.

"Sure thing," Olivia's text replied. "I've been meaning to show you something, actually. Let's meet up for coffee on Sunday?"

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On Sunday morning, I prepared to meet Olivia for our conversation. Leading up to that morning, I had hidden the fact that I wasn't drinking my morning coffee; lo and behold, Mina's energy came back almost completely. Edrick and Selina didn't seem to notice that I was secretly pouring my coffee down the sink when they weren't looking, and by now I was almost entirely certain that they were, in fact, putting something in my coffee. There was no doubt about it; the way that my wolf's energy

perked up whenever I didn't drink my morning coffee was too distinct to think otherwise. Of course I was still paranoid about anything else I ate or drank that had been prepared for me, but thankfully nothing other than the coffee seemed to be causing the issues.

That morning, I got dressed to meet with Olivia. I wore something nondescript and casual — a pair of jeans and a light jacket, since the weather was cooling down now with autumn just around the corner — which was quite different from what I normally wore and would hopefully keep people from noticing me easily.

The night before, I had already told Selina and Edrick that I planned on going out on Sunday morning; when they asked where I was going, I simply said that I was having coffee with an old friend from college who was visiting town.

Once I was dressed, I inspected myself in the mirror for a moment before taking in a deep breath and steadying my nerves, then headed out into the living room.

Edrick was sitting in the armchair when I came out. He looked over at me, seemingly taking in my appearance, and shot me a slight smile.

“You look nice.”

“Oh...” I smiled weakly. “Thank you.”

Edrick looked at me for another moment before returning to his newspaper. “Make sure to bring the driver with you,” he said. “And maybe you should wear a surgical mask. It makes me nervous that you're going out in public alone, now that people know who you are.”

I nodded hesitantly. Although I hated that I had to hide my identity in order to feel safe, I couldn't deny the fact that Edrick was right. The media attention since Edrick had announced our relationship had died down a bit, but the paparazzi were still roaming around like tigers pacing their cages in the zoo. Even when Edrick and I walked to school with Ella

during the week, we occasionally got bombarded by cameras and annoying questions. And now, I especially didn't need to garner any attention lest Edrick find out that I was meeting up with Ella's supposedly dead mother.

"Sure," I replied. I fished a blue surgical mask out of my purse and held it up with a smile. "Got it right here."

Edrick, without looking up from his newspaper, nodded. "Well, have a nice time," he said.

"Thanks," I said, trying to sound as nonchalant as possible. It was difficult, though, knowing that I was about to meet up with someone that would likely make Edrick feel incredibly angry if he found out about it. "I'll be back soon."

With that, I stiffly walked out of the living room and stepped into the elevator.

On my way down, I did wind up putting on the surgical mask. I put on my sun hat as well to hide my distinct hair. However, when I walked out into the lobby, there was one bit of advice that I didn't take from Edrick.

I decided not to have the driver take me.

After all, I didn't need the driver revealing any information about who I was meeting up with. I didn't know whether the driver knew Olivia, or even if he relayed all sorts of information back to Edrick. I needed this to be as discreet as possible, because if Edrick really was poisoning me for whatever reason, I would need to escape safely with my baby. If he knew too much, then there was a good chance that I would never escape.

Therefore, I walked out onto the street and took a right down the sidewalk, keeping my head down so as not to be noticed by the driver or anyone else.

## Chapter 179 Discovering the Truth

### Moana

A little while later, after walking a few blocks through the city, I arrived at the coffee shop where Olivia and I planned to meet. It was a small, nondescript coffee shop that didn't appear to be well known, which would be helpful in keeping our meeting secret.

When I stepped into the little coffee shop, I looked around and didn't see Olivia yet.

"Can I get you anything?" the barista behind the counter, a bored-looking teenage girl, asked.

"U-Um, just an iced latte," I replied, fishing through my purse for my wallet. The barista lazily made my drink and handed it to me, and I gave her the money before sitting down. I made sure to sit away from the window, just in case anyone would see me with Olivia.

A few minutes passed, and finally the bell on the door rang as someone came in. It was Olivia. She shot me a stiff smile and ordered her own coffee before sitting down across from me. Although we had planned to act nonchalant, as though we were just old friends meeting up to chat, I found it difficult to feel natural as I sat across from the spitting image of Ella. She seemed to look even more like Ella now, with her hair pulled back in a slightly messy ponytail, and she was wearing a plain shirt and

jeans. I could see why Edrick would have liked Olivia, but it was all the more confusing knowing that he had claimed that she was dead.

“How is everything going?” Olivia asked, keeping her voice low.

“Um...” I didn’t know where to begin. Already, I could feel my voice beginning to shake. Olivia, somehow noticing this, smiled and reached across the table to give my arm a squeeze.

“Is he hurting you?”

I shook my head vigorously. “No. He’s been... He’s been wonderful. On the outside, at least. But I’ve been feeling as though he’s up to something and I don’t know what.”

Olivia nodded slowly and pulled her hand away. She didn’t seem surprised in the slightest. “Tell me everything.”

Taking a deep breath, I began to speak. “First of all, I know that this isn’t public knowledge, but you need to know for the context of the story: I’m a werewolf, and not a human. I didn’t know myself until recently, when my wolf suddenly began to manifest. But lately, I’ve been noticing that my wolf has been feeling strange and tired. At first, I thought that it was just my pregnancy hormones or something, but then I noticed that it was always worse after I had my morning coffee. So the other day, I decided not to drink it, and I noticed that my wolf felt better. But Edrick noticed, too. And when he picked me up from work later, he had a smoothie for me — which is sort of random.”

“Did you drink the smoothie?” Olivia asked, to which I nodded. “What happened?”

“The symptoms came back within a couple of hours. And Edrick was... weird about it. It was like he was insisting on me drinking it. Ella wanted some, and when I offered to give her a sip, he suddenly freaked out.”

As I spoke, Olivia's eyes slowly began to widen. I could instantly tell from the expression on her face that she had experienced the same thing, or had at least experienced something very similar, when she lived with Edrick.

"You haven't been drinking anything else they've given you, right?" Olivia asked, leaning across the table a bit and looking at me intensely.

I shook my head. "No," I replied. "And I've been feeling better. My wolf's energy is back up."

Olivia seemed to let out a small sigh of relief. "Have you noticed any other strange occurrences?"

I furrowed my brow, thinking for a moment, before I remembered the incident with the wolf tooth, as well as something else. Something tiny, that I didn't think much of at the time, but now it felt as though every little thing was evidence of a conspiracy.

"Well, first of all, I have this wolf tooth." I pulled it out — ever since the initial incident I had been keeping it in my purse — and slid it across the table for Olivia to see. "I showed it to Edrick when he found out that I was a werewolf. He started acting strange about it, though. He seemed to look at it intensely when I showed it to him, and he said that it's an Alpha tooth. But that's not all; a little while later, right after I met you, actually, he stole it."

Olivia gingerly picked up the tooth, turning it over in her hand. Her eyes widened when I said that Edrick stole it. "Why did he do that?" she asked quietly.

I shrugged. "He just said that he was taking it to have it analyzed so he could see whether it was an Alpha tooth or not. Of course, it made me think about what you told me..."

"That he's only interested in producing Alpha heirs.

I nodded slowly. There was a long silence as Olivia inspected the tooth carefully before she handed it back to me. But I wasn't finished.



“There’s something else,” I said. “Maybe it’s nothing. But on the same morning that he had taken the tooth, I found a pair of scissors on his bedside table. And he was gone when I woke up. Like I said, maybe it’s nothing, but—”

Olivia’s eyes suddenly went even wider than before. “Check your hair,” she said.

I furrowed my brow. “What?”

“Your hair,” she continued. “Is any of it missing? Like it’s been cut? Check underneath, where you’d be less likely to notice.”

A slight chuckle escaped my lips, but Olivia didn’t seem to be joking. My smile faded, and I slowly raised my hand to grope around on the underside of my hair. I didn’t notice anything at first, until...

My eyes widened.

“There’s a shorter piece, isn’t there?” Olivia asked, to which I nodded slowly. On the underside of my hair, there was a shorter piece than the rest. When I pulled it out and brought it around to look at it, I could tell that it had been cut judging from how straight and perfect the chunk was, making it obvious that it hadn’t grown like that naturally. Olivia’s face darkened and she shut her eyes for a moment, sighing.

“I knew it,” she whispered.

“What is it?” I asked, feeling my voice shake. “What does all of this mean?”

Olivia shook her head and passed her hand over her face. “I have no way of knowing for sure. But all of the signs are pointing to him going to a witch. I think he’s slipping potions into your coffee.”

My blood ran cold at Olivia’s words. I opened my mouth to speak, but nothing would come out for a long time, as the shock of it all made it feel

as though my throat closed up. Why would Edrick want to do something like that?

Suddenly, Olivia dug into her purse and pulled out a folded piece of paper. She opened it, then slid it across the table for me to look at. It was an old newspaper clipping about a woman who had been found dead.

“What’s this?” I asked quietly, picking up the newspaper. Olivia didn’t answer, but she didn’t need to; as I read the article, I got the answer I was looking for.

“Just this week, a local Beta woman was found dead,” the article read. “Although her cause of death is unknown, one thing is for certain: just a few months prior to this event, this woman, whose family have decided to keep her name anonymous for personal reasons, was discovered to have given birth to a son. According to birth records, the newborn son’s father is none other than Alpha billionaire and CEO of WereCorp, Michael Morgan. While Mr. Morgan has not given a statement at this time, some are speculating that he or his wife, Verona Morgan, may have had something to do with the mystery woman’s death, as this child was the result of an extramarital affair. Of course, this is all speculation.”

By the time I finished reading, my hands were shaking violently. I unintentionally dropped the newspaper article, allowing it to flutter down to the table as I covered my mouth with my shaking hand. Meanwhile, Olivia only looked back at me with a look of sadness and concern drawn across her face.

“That’s not all,” she said.

## Chapter 180 Poached for Profit

Moana

“That’s not all,” Olivia said, looking at me with a sickening combination of sadness and concern on her face that only filled me with dread.

I had already just read that a woman — who was likely Ethan’s mother, judging from the information in the newspaper article — had died under mysterious circumstances around the Morgan family. Not only that, but I had discovered that it was very likely that Edrick had taken my wolf tooth and a lock of my hair to a witch, and he was now putting some sort of potion in my morning coffee.

I couldn’t fathom why he would want to do that, but now that I had read the newspaper article about Ethan’s mother, I was beginning to wonder if that poor woman had met a fate that I was bound to meet if I continued being poisoned.

And now, before I could even process all of this, Olivia was saying that she had something else to reveal to me, as though there was even possibly anything else that could add another layer to this twisted mess.

“W-What else is there?” I whispered, my voice shaking just as much as my hands.

Olivia, with a sigh, reached into her purse again and retrieved something else. It was another folded piece of paper. She hesitated with it in her hands, then looked up at me. “Can I see the tooth again?” she asked.

I froze for a moment, then nodded and handed it back to her. As I did, she opened the folded piece of paper to reveal what looked to be a page ripped out of a book. She put both of the objects in the center of the table. The page had an illustration of a wolf tooth on it, with text all around. Immediately, I could see two words that stuck out to me: Golden Wolf. And now that my own wolf tooth was laying next to the illustration, they looked eerily similar.

“You’re the Golden Wolf, Moana,” Olivia said. She was whispering now, as though she didn’t want anyone to overhear a single word of what she was saying. It instantly transported me back to the night that Ethan told me about the story of the Golden Wolf, and how people would hunt the Golden Wolf if it was real.

But that was just a fairytale.

I let out a wry chuckle and shook my head. “Very funny,” I replied, sitting back in my chair. “But I know that that’s just a story for kids.”

Olivia just stared back at me with a serious expression on her face. My smile slowly faded, and my eyes started to widen.

“It’s true,” she said, pushing the illustration a little closer to me and tapping on a specific paragraph. “Look here. ‘The Golden Wolf will manifest as a pure soul who is thought to be human. They will possess a single tooth, the only link to their true lineage.’ That’s you, Moana. Everything that you told me points to this. And the tooth that you have... Have you looked at it in the moonlight, by any chance?”

I shook my head, still too shocked to speak.

“Try it tonight,” Olivia said quietly. “It’ll glow a golden color, but only in the moonlight. I promise you, it’s true.”

I didn't know what to say. All along, I thought that this was nothing but a fairytale meant to entertain kids, not a true story. And yet, the more I thought about it, the more it made sense. And it made me wonder...

"Do you think that Edrick knows?" I whispered.

Olivia nodded slowly. "I think so," she replied. "He may have known from the beginning. For all we know, he knew that you were the Golden Wolf when he met you, and that was why he got you pregnant. It all lines up too perfectly with his agenda to produce the best heirs possible. How did you two meet, anyway?"

"Um... I was just walking down the street, and we ran into each other," I said, not wanting to go into the full details of our fateful encounter.

"And you think that that was just pure coincidence, for you to just randomly run into an extremely famous Alpha CEO in the middle of the street one day?" Olivia said.

My eyes widened. "But I think Edrick is my mate," I replied. "I thought that was why. I thought it was fate."

Olivia shrugged and leaned back in her chair. "Maybe. But do you know for certain that he's your mate, or is that just what he told you?"

Olivia's words made me think deeply. I had thought that he was my mate, and my wolf seemed to think so as well, but then again... With the way that my wolf had been so sleepy lately, I had absolutely no way of knowing now. For all I knew, Edrick was giving me potions to hide the fact that he wasn't my mate.

"I... I don't know," I whispered, feeling hot tears beginning to prick at the backs of my eyes. "I don't know what's real and what isn't anymore."

With a sigh, Olivia reached across the table again and squeezed my hand once more. When I looked up at her, I could see a soft, gentle expression on her pretty face. "That was how I felt, too," she said quietly. "For

months, I had no idea what to think or who to trust. But you can trust me. And I don't want to see you get hurt."

I had never thought that Edrick would hurt me, but now I wasn't so sure. What if he just planned on producing a child of the Golden Wolf, and then he was going to discard me in the same way that his father had discarded Ethan's mother? What if the potions would keep me from being able to fight back and defend myself?

Finally, I looked back at Olivia with tears in my eyes.

"Thank you for telling me the truth," I whispered.

Olivia nodded, still holding my hand across the table. "If you ever want to escape," she said, "I'm just a phone call away. I can get you out of there."

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Olivia and I finished our conversation and parted ways. She left first, and as I watched her walk down the street through the window of the coffee shop, I couldn't help but think that maybe I should take her up on her offer.

All of the signs right at that moment pointed to Edrick being up to something sinister. Olivia was right; my first encounter with Edrick had been too perfect, almost as though it was planned. And although I had been beginning to think that it was fate bringing two mates together, I was beginning to think otherwise now.

However, I needed more evidence first before I jumped into anything. I needed to know for sure that Edrick was up to something before I potentially made a mistake by trusting the wrong person.

But I did know one thing for sure: if I decided to take Olivia up on her offer and run away, I was going to bring Ella along with me so that I could reunite mother and daughter once more.