

## Chapter 65 A Change of Heart

Edrick

As I watched Moana walk into the hospital, I already had my doubts. I was already uneasy enough as we pulled up to the front doors, but seeing her walk away only solidified that feeling.

My wolf was just as distraught.

“You’re really gonna let her do this?” he asked with a growl. “It’s your baby, too. Think about what it was like when you held Ella for the first time, and then imagine how it would feel with this new baby. You’ve always secretly wanted to experience that feeling again, and now you’re letting this opportunity get away from you.”

I shook my head as I watched the doors close behind Moana, then put the car in drive and pulled out of the hospital parking lot.

“I know you don’t want this to happen,” I said to my wolf out loud now that we were alone, “and I know that you were excited before. But it’s her body, and her decision.”

My wolf didn’t respond after that. He was hurt and angry, rightfully so, but maybe Moana was right about this being the best decision. It was already difficult enough to have one illegitimate child, let alone a second one that also happened to be half human — and, even worse than that, the mother was from an incredibly low social status, and she was my

daughter's nanny. I didn't even want to imagine how my family would react to this sort of news.

I felt horrible for leaving Moana there overnight, but it really was best for her to stay out of the penthouse during the process. If she bled through her clothes, or if Ella saw the pills or the bloody menstrual products, Ella would certainly ask questions that would be difficult to answer. Furthermore, after doing some of my own research, I discovered that women could often have painful cramps, nausea, lightheadedness, and weakness during this process. I figured it would be best if Moana had some peaceful time away from Ella and the maids and for her to be under close medical supervision.

As I drove to work, however, I couldn't get the image of her sleeping with Ella on the morning after I learned about the pregnancy out of my mind. They had looked so peaceful together, truly like mother and daughter...

The thought of having another child for her to cherish in that same way, a sibling for Ella to love and to play with, made my heart ache. But it was too late; as I pulled up to the office building, I was certain that Moana was well along in the process by now. Besides, she had made her decision, and it would be right of me to try to change her mind.

I sighed, parking the car in the large parking garage, then took the elevator up to the top floor where my office was located. A few floors up, a couple of other employees got on the elevator. I nodded politely as they stepped on.

"Did I tell you what Tyler did for me last night?" one employee, a woman, said to the other.

"No," the other employee said, smiling. "What did he do?"

The first employee grinned widely. "Look at this." She took out her phone, then opened a picture on her camera roll. I tried not to look too

closely, but I caught a glimpse out of the corner of my eye of a little boy holding a big handmade drawing with a purple handprint on it.

“Aww!” the second employee said. “He’s such a cutie. I miss when mine were that age. Before you know it, they stop wanting to do nice things with their mother. It’s like they don’t know that I carried them for nine months, changed their diapers, held their tiny little hands...”

I felt another ache in my chest. The elevator doors slid open, and although this wasn’t my floor, I felt stifled. I had to get out. “Excuse me,” I said, brushing past the two ladies and out into the random office floor that the elevator just stopped at. I took a deep breath and straightened my tie, pushing the image of the new baby one day making cute little drawings for Moana out of my mind, and made my way through the maze of cubicles.

As I passed, various employees stopped what they were doing and greeted me with a combination of the utmost respect and a bit of confusion, seeing as how I’d never come to this floor before. I forced a half-smile, just wanting to get through to the stairwell so I could get to my office without any further fuss. If I could just get to work, then I wouldn’t think about the baby or Moana.

But, as I walked past the cubicles, I couldn’t help noticing the pictures of people’s children on their desks. I frowned, trying not to look, but one picture in particular caught my eye: it was a photograph of a little girl sitting on a picnic blanket. She was hardly older than a toddler, wearing a striped green dress. There wasn’t anything particularly notable about the photo, aside from the fact that her face and hands were covered in chocolate cake, and she was laughing with her eyes squeezed tightly shut. She reminded me so much of Ella on her third birthday.

I didn’t realize it, but I had stopped and was staring at the photo intensely. The young woman who was sitting at the desk looked up at me with wide eyes.

“G-Good morning, Mr. Morgan,” she said, standing and bowing slightly. “What brings you here today?”

I shook my attention away from the photo and forced another half-smile.

“Just passing through,” I said. I began to walk again, but it felt as though there was something stopping me.

I turned on my heel and walked back to the woman’s desk.

“Is that your daughter?” I asked, pointing at the photo.

She hesitated, then nodded. “Yes. Her name is Lucy.”

“How old is she?” I asked.

The woman’s face suddenly came across with a look of pain and sadness that I hadn’t been expecting. “She was three.”

“Three?”

The woman nodded again, then looked down at the floor. She seemed to be blinking rapidly, as though she was blinking back years. “Yes. She was killed in a drunk driving accident— The driver hit her side of the car at an intersection.”

“I’m — I’m so sorry,” I stuttered, taking a step back at this unexpected information. I imagined what I would have done if anything would ever happen to Ella, and it made the pit in my stomach grow deeper.

“It was a long time ago,” she said, finally looking back up at me and forcing a small smile. “Do you have children, Mr. Morgan?”

I almost said yes, but quickly remembered my vow to keep Ella a secret, and quickly shook my head.

“Oh,” the woman said. “Well, if you do ever have children... Cherish them.”

The woman’s words hit me like a ton of bricks. Suddenly, I knew exactly what I had to do.

“I will,” I said.

Without another word, I suddenly turned and rushed over to the stairwell. I flung the door open and began to race down the flights of stairs toward the parking garage instead of up toward my office. As I ran, all I could think about was that I had to get back to Moana in time and stop her before she aborted the baby.

I must have broken at least three or even four traffic laws on my way back to the hospital, but I didn't care. I whipped into the parking lot and came to a screeching halt outside, barely giving myself enough time to put on a surgical mask to hide my identity before I jumped out of the car and ran inside.

“Name?” the secretary said, chewing her gum in a bored fashion.

“Where's the OBGYN department?” I asked hurriedly. “I don't have time.”

The secretary frowned, but pointed to a set of elevators on the far wall. “Second floor.”

“Thank you,” I muttered as I sprinted to the elevators. I pressed the button over and over again, willing the elevator to come faster, but it was no use. I cursed to myself as I watched the number above the elevator slowly tick down.

Finally, the doors slid open... And out stepped Moana.

She looked incredibly pale.