

## 1. That Traitor's Child.

I was lled with so much anticipation and anxiety, as today was my eighteenth birthday. Happy birthday, Bella, I thought sarcastically to myself. Today I should be to be able to shift into my wolf for the rst time. Although I doubt that will happen. We are supposed to get our wolf at sixteen years of age, but that never happened to me. I am yet to hear my inner voice, my other half. I would have liked to have someone else to talk to. It sure gets lonely here.

Today I am supposed to be able to scent my mate if he is nearby. But I pray that doesn't happen. I don't want to be bound to this pack. I would hate to be stuck here at Blood Moon forever. Although in saying that I can imagine that I would be instantly rejected as there seems to be a low opinion of me in this pack. And from what I know of the men here, there is no one I would wish to be my mate.

In no way was I looking forward to today. It would just be another day where I was mocked mercilessly and reminded of my place in this pack, and my apparent purpose in life, to serve others, and nothing else.

I had been in countdown mode for this day for years now. I had been meticulously planning today for the past few months and I was sure that everything was in order. Today I planned to leave this pack for good. I will make a fresh start. I will meet some new people, make some actual friends and forge ahead toward a brighter future, and I will never look back.

No one will miss me when I leave. They will miss their slave perhaps, but other than that no one will bat an eyelid. I don't have much of a relationship with any of my family or my fellow pack members for that matter. Things have always been this way for me. I guess I'm what you would call the black sheep. I am not sure why, but for as long as I can remember I have been treated differently from everyone else in this pack, even before they realized I was woless.

I had a lot to get done in a small space of time today. But rst I had to make the pack members breakfast. Usually, I would drag myself to the packhouse kitchen, but today I practically skipped there. I had a spring in my step today, as this would be the last time that I would be slaving away in the kitchen for a pack of lazy and ungrateful wolves.

A little while later, I had nally nished cooking and serving breakfast with some of the other omegas, and the pack was busily devouring their breakfast. There's nothing like making a bottomless pit of toast, waes, bacon, eggs, tomatoes, and mushrooms every morning. In all honesty, I actually enjoy making food for others. I mean sure it would be nice to get a thank you or a compliment once in a while. But I will take the empty dishes as a silent compliment to my cooking.

I had just nished the last of the cleaning up and taken the last remaining dishes out of the dishwasher. I was thankful that we had two large dishwashers, I've heard that some packs don't even have one. That would denitely be more time-consuming. I prided myself in leaving the kitchen spotless.

I had just prepared my second Nespresso of the day. It was one of the few pleasures I was permitted. Blood Moon was a mean pack, but it was a wealthy pack. So I was allowed the privilege of drinking unlimited coffee if I wished, so long as I nished my chores on time. Goddess knows I needed it for the workload that they expected of me.

I started walking towards the upper levels of the packhouse. Part of my chores involved collecting the ranking member's dirty laundry and then doing the pack house laundry before I could make my way to school. It was now 7.30 am and I would run out of time if I didn't get a move on.

My least favorite part of this daily chore was picking up the laundry from the alpha's son - Maddox's room. He was always in bed when I got there, and almost always completely naked. I was sure that he did that on purpose to intimidate me.

Lately, he had become lewder with his remarks and demands. I was beginning to become more uncomfortable as time passed by.

Maddox could have any she-wolf he desired, and usually did, so I don't know why he was so xated on me at times. I swear he used any excuse he could get to torment me. He had relentlessly teased me since preschool.

I knocked on his door, "come in" he called out loudly. I proceeded to walk through the doorway and into his room. Maddox was standing up in front of his bed, completely naked, with a she-wolf on her knees in front of him on the oor. I gasped out loud. I could identify that long ery red hair anywhere. It was Casey! My sister! Maddox smirked at me knowingly.

Casey didn't even stop what she was doing. She probably didn't even realize that I had walked in, that or she didn't care. I looked away quickly. I could feel the heat on my face. I was mortied. I had never seen anything like this in my life.

"Uh, I'll come back later!" I called out nervously and I made a run for the doorway. I slammed his door shut in a hurry, and put my hand over my mouth. I was so shocked. And then I was mad. How dare he allow me to walk in to witness that? Maddox was so vile. And as for my sister - well let's just say that I am hoping to avoid running into her again today.

I had decided to make my way to the Beta oor to collect my family's laundry. As I was collecting the laundry from the bathroom I could hear raised voices in the lounge. It was my Mother and Father, and they appeared to be arguing about me.

I decided to linger a little longer as I was confused as to how they could be arguing about me, being that they rarely even spoke to me, so I was curious to know what they could be arguing about.

"Finally, she's eighteen. We can tell her the truth!" My mother called out eagerly, clapping her hands.

"We have fullled our part of the bargain! Now we will get our payout from Grayson and then we can nally be rid of that traitor's child!" My mother continued.

I could feel my brow furrow. Was she referring to me? I felt so confused. So I continued to quietly listen.

There was a brief pause. Then I heard my father begin to speak. "Ah, yes, Alpha, it's about Bella, as you know it's her eighteenth birthday today!" My Father said, with obvious excitement in his voice. He must be speaking on the mobile phone, but it wasn't on speakerphone so I couldn't hear the other side of the conversation.

"I think you will agree that we have fullled our part of the bargain, and we are ready to hand her back to you. Yes, Alpha. Ok tonight then, after the ceremony? And about that compensation? Okay. Great! See you then." My father said once again trying to contain his obvious excitement. Then he ended the call.

"Well, what did he say? Come on. I'm dying over here!" My mother called out impatiently.

"He said he would take the mutt!" My Father declared happily.

I knew he didn't think much of me, and never had time for me, but to hear him refer to me as a mutt still felt disappointing. It also ignited a re inside me. I felt so angry.

"Finally! We don't have to pretend we are her parents anymore." Father called out, followed by a long breath out. It sounded like an overexaggerated sigh of relief I could imagine.

"I can barely stand the sight of her!" My father continued.

My mouth opened wide in shock. I didn't make a sound. I wanted to hear more. I should be heartbroken, but truthfully I was not overly surprised. I had my suspicions over the years and my hope that they weren't truly my kin. These cruel people have never treated me with love or care. No matter how many chores I did, or how much effort I made, they never reciprocated any real affection or love toward me.

"She looks just like him more and more as she ages!" My mother huffed.

"Alpha Grayson should have killed her right after he killed her Mother!" The man formerly known as my father called out.

My heart sank immediately. Alpha Grayson killed my Mother? My real Mother? I had fantasized about this moment my whole life and prayed that there was a loving family out there waiting for me, that they would accept me with open arms. This was not how I envisioned it.

For a moment there, I thought that my prayers had been answered. Only to have them cruelly ripped away from me. It felt like a sick joke.

"He was a coward! And a traitor! Now the alpha can get his revenge back by using his daughter to draw him out!" the woman that I had called mother snickered matter of factly.

I heard movement, so I quickly moved out of the bathroom and made my way toward the stairs. I quickly turned to make it look like I had just come up the stairs and walked toward them both.

"Good morning Mother, good morning Father," I called out to them sweetly, putting on my best smile. They both looked at me happily for a change. Ten minutes ago I would have just thought they were having a good morning, but now I knew differently, they were excited to be getting rid of me and that the charade was nally up.

They didn't respond to my greeting, they just quickly walked past me to exit the suite.

The joke was on them because I would be long gone before that ceremony nished. They would not be getting that money they were so desperate for. And that made my fake smile a more genuine smile. These obnoxious people would nally be getting their comeuppance.

While I yearned to nd out more about my real father. Now was not the time. I needed to continue with the current plan. I had no idea what Alpha Grayson had in store for me, or my father, whoever he was. Although I would denitely be asking Michael about this. If they knew, then surely he did too. Why would he keep that from me? That made me wonder if I could really trust him. I felt like I was being played like a rabbit hole. All these questions in my head. I needed to pull myself together. There was too much at stake today. I needed to focus on the mission at hand. I needed to play along for now and then get as far away from this goddess-forsaken pack as possible.